

Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Alumni Newsletter

Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

Issue 10 September 2019



Who is this veteran warrior? Find out about the activities to commemorate his retirement inside.



Hwæt! once again, and welcome to this year's Alumni Newsletter.

As ever, there's been plenty going on this year in the Department, and for ASNCs everywhere.

This academic year, we are thrilled to be saying hello to not one but two new lecturers to the Department. As of 1 September, Erik Niblaeus has joined us (from Durham) to become our brand new lecturer in manuscript studies, and Rory Naismith (from King's College London) to look after the History of England before the Norman Conquest. The very warmest of welcomes to them both. Elsewhere in this issue we bid a very fond farewell to Simon Keynes, who is retiring after twenty years as the Elrington and Bosworth Professor, and forty-one years altogether as a lecturer in the Department. We are delighted that Simon is succeeded in the Chair by our very own Rosalind Love, who will occupy it with the very greatest distinction.

The ASNC named lectures this year were very much brought to you by the letter 'J' — as leading scholars Jayne Carroll (Nottingham), Judith Jesch (Nottingham) and Jacopo Bisagni (NUI, Galway) gave the Quiggin, Chadwick and Hughes lectures respectively. We thank them for delivering such memorable and brilliant accounts of 'watery place-names and the medieval English landscape', 'the poetry of *Orkneyinga saga*' and 'the Irish tradition of the divisions of time in the early Middle Ages'. Congratulations also to MPhil student Ellis Wylie, who won the annual Clemoes Reading Prize back in May with an amazing performance of *Lokrur*, in Old Norse.

The Department's research project 'Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago: Contact, Myth and History, 450–1200' recently reached a successful conclusion, and the first phase of 'The *Gersum* Project: The Scandinavian Influence on English Vocabulary' will also come to an end in October. Our other major projects continue their work, including 'Text and Meaning: Contributions to a Revised Dictionary of Medieval Irish' and '*Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae*: The Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints', and they will be succeeded (from January 2020) by a brand new project — the very excitingly named 'Latin Arthurian Literature and the Rise of Fiction'!

We were sad to bid farewell recently to 'Text and Meaning' Research Associate Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, who leaves us to return to a post-doctoral position in Dublin. Also off to pastures new with our warmest congratulations are recent PhD students/post-docs Ben Allport (to a Visiting Fellowship at the University of Bergen), David Callander (to a Lecturership in the School of Welsh at the University of Cardiff), Jonathan Hui (to a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Hong Kong), Emma Knowles (to an Associate Lectureship in English at the University of Sydney), Hattie Soper (to the Simon and June Li Fellowship in

English Literature at Lincoln College, Oxford), and Rebecca Thomas (to a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at Bangor University). Heartiest felicitations also to Becky Shercliff, who is about to start a Junior Research Fellowship at St John's, and who has been awarded the Johann Kaspar Zeuss prize for the best PhD in Celtic Studies completed this year. Becky and Ben have also been doing massively important outreach work for the Department, creating some brand new resources for schools teaching ASNC-related subjects, including a magnificent new website about the Vikings.

You can read the latest news about all our projects, and other research, symposia and workshops happening in the Department, elsewhere in this issue, including about new books from David Callander, Richard Dance, Rosalind Love, Rory Naismith, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Elizabeth Rowe.

As always, it's been fabulous to see so many of you in person — including at the alumni reunion drinks last September, at the Black Tie Dinner in Newnham in January, and at the Garden Party in June. It was also great to catch up with a number of alumni at events connected with the British Library's wonderful 'Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms' exhibition earlier in the year. Courtesy of Simon Keynes, some very fetching pieces of cardboard were 'rescued' from the exhibition and have since been spotted around the ASNC corridor. We are now proud owners of a blow-up of the Tiberius world map (now adorning the second-floor stairwell at 9 West Road), and a life-size cut-out of King Edgar!

Other news in this issue includes a number of births and weddings, and we send our warmest congratulations to everyone who is celebrating.

Enormous thanks as always to Brittany for editing this newsletter, and greetings to ASNCs everywhere. Please keep on staying in touch and let us know what you've been doing: you can reach us any time through the Alumni Facebook group, or through email, or by more old-fashioned means (though no more rune stones, please, they don't fit in my pigeon hole ...).

Richard Dance
Head of Department



New Staff

Dr Erik Niblaeus

Lecturer in Manuscript Studies

Erik Niblaeus, native of Stockholm, joins the department as lecturer in manuscript studies from Durham, where he has lectured in medieval history since 2014. Before that he did postdoctoral research in Cambridge (at CRASSH) and at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Erlangen. He did his PhD at King's College London, and his undergraduate degree and MPhil in ASNC.

Erik's research interests include liturgical manuscripts, parish churches and parish formation, Latin history-writing in medieval Germany and Scandinavia, conversion and Christianisation, and church reform. His first book, on German influence in Scandinavia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2020. It includes a re-evaluation of the missionary project based in the double archdio-

cese of Hamburg-Bremen, and its chronicler Master Adam, as well as an analysis of German influence on liturgy in medieval Scandinavia and the importation of German liturgical books in the final stages of the Christianisation process.



Dr Rory Naismith

Lecturer in England before the Norman Conquest

Rory read ASNC in the early 2000s at Trinity (during which time he met his wife, Brittany Schorn, also then an ASNC student), and stayed around in the Department for a long time: as an MPhil and PhD student, then from 2009 as a Junior Research Fellow at Clare, a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow and finally a Mellon Re-

search Associate. In 2015 he left Cambridge to take up a position as lecturer in early medieval British history at King's College London, from which he is returning to take up Simon Keynes's old position as lecturer in England before the Norman Conquest.

As befits his ASNC heritage, Rory has wide-ranging interests in early medieval history. He has written about Latin and Old English texts, charters, chronicles and particularly coins. An ongoing interest, which will be the subject of his next monograph, is the impact that coined money had on the real life of people in the early Middle Ages. Was it a problem that only relatively few silver pennies, quite high in value, were available? Rory is seeking to turn that question around, and consider who gained and why from making or using coins.

He is extremely pleased to be returning to his academic home, and looks forward to meeting and working with a new crop of ASNC students.



Dr Becky Shercliff

Junior Research Fellow at St John's College

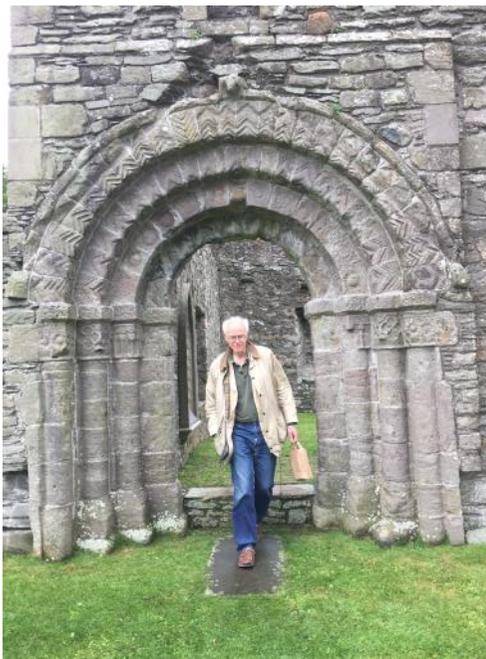
Becky studied ASNC at undergraduate, MPhil and PhD level, at St John's College. Her research interests centre on medieval texts and their development in the context of their social, historical and literary background, with a particular focus on producing new editions and translations of previously neglected works. She has published research on both medieval Irish literature and Welsh Arthurian literature. For her PhD thesis, she edited and translated a medieval Irish saga text entitled *Tochmarc Ferbe* ('The Wooing of Ferb'), while also analysing the significant role played by the tale's female characters. During her research fellowship, she will be exploring the ways in which medieval texts which are attested in multiple versions can illuminate how medieval authors went about composing or reworking their texts, and what motivations prompted these activities. Becky has also been involved in developing the website *eSenchas* (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/esenchas/), an electronic resource for the study of medieval Irish texts, and various resource packages for schools, which are available to download from the Department website.



Marking the Retirement of Prof. Simon Keynes

Dr Rosalind Love

At the stroke of midnight on the 30th of September, a certain much-loved member of ASNC will shake off the shackles of office and the burdens of administration, springing gazelle-like into the freedom of retirement – no more 9am Departmental meetings, no more Tripos exams to set, no more inspections or Faculty Board meetings. Professor Simon Keynes will have served for twenty years as Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon and even longer (since 1978) as lecturer in the Department. Of course, since he himself read the ASNC Tripos, his connection with the Department goes back even further, so that Simon is, one might say, like a stick of rock with ASNC written all through. Generations of students have bounded up to his rooms in Trinity for inspiring supervisions, many more



have enjoyed his wonderful lecture-handouts and the sharing of profound knowledge with his inimitable lightness of touch, textual and material evidence blended engagingly and clearly.

ASNaCs wrote in from all corners of the world with affectionate messages for Simon and fond reminiscences when we marked his retirement at the ASNC Garden Party back in June with a book of memories. Needless to say, it is not just students who have benefited from Simon's enthusiasm, boundless curiosity and deep learning: his work has shaped the field in important and lasting ways, both in scholarly publications and genial presence at conferences but also in things that reach a wider audience, like the Penguin *Alfred the Great*. The *Alfred* translation, co-written with Michael Lapidge

(‘he started and one end and I started at the other...’), stands as a testament to Simon’s generously collaborative spirit, which also meant that he was repeatedly successful in winning external funding for key projects that generated hugely important and freely-available resources like the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* and the *Electronic Sawyer*. If ASNC shaped Simon, much more so has he shaped ASNC, from the early formative days of the so-called ‘gang of four’ (SDK, David Dumville, Patrick Sims-Williams and Michael Lapidge) to the move, in 2004, to our quarters in the new Faculty building at 9 West Road, which, as Head of Department, he personally worked so hard to make into the congenial and attractive space it is. He leaves his mark, too, in the foundational drafting of many key Departmental documents – such as the guidance for examiners and for exam candidates, and many sections of the ASNC website – behind which one can hear his

gently humorous tone. As the occupant of the office in ASNC next door to Simon’s for the last 13 years and someone who has been lucky enough to have collaborated with him on piece of research, I want to say how much I have loved and admired his way of managing to know so much while humbly thinking there’s always more to learn, of sweetly asking for advice about things as if one were just as learned, always fostering and encouraging, open to new ideas, but rigorous in considering them. Many ASNaCs will recall from the past the parties Simon hosted at his parents’ home in Herschel Road or in his rooms in Trinity and his generosity as both scholar and fundamentally decent person mark him out as a very special occupant of the Chair. We all hope that Simon will enjoy the freedom retirement confers, but, since we will miss him desperately, we also hope that he will come back and see us very often indeed: once an ASNaC, always an ASNaC, after all.



Prof. Keynes explains to Prof. Sawyer just how long the horns on the vikings’ helmets really were.

Dr Rosalind Love Appointed to Elrington and Bosworth Chair of Anglo-Saxon: 'Sitting in the Skeat Seat'

Rosalind Love

When we first moved into the new 9 West Road, a special chair used to occupy the corner of the ASNC Common Room, placed there by Simon. It had been passed down by successive occupants of the Elrington and Bosworth Chair, along with a 'writing slope', as having belonged to the first Professor, Walter William Skeat. In those early days in the new building, we had a group of US scholars visiting for a summer school taught by some members of ASNC, and for reasons that are too long-winded to explain (look up 'skeet-shooting'), we all took turns to be photographed in what was termed the 'Skeat seat'; in fact, in haste to provide an at least passable not-wild-hair profile picture for the ASNC website, I used the one taken of me thus seated. I seriously hadn't the least notion that some thirteen years later I would be fortunate enough to be on the point of inheriting that same item of furniture and succeeding Simon in the Chair. The process of the election in October taught me a lot about what matters most to me and strongly reinforced what I already knew very well, namely what wonderful and great-hearted colleagues I have. It is a profound honour that I am anxious to live up to – every time I pass under the photo-gallery of previous holders of the Chair, I gasp with surprise inwardly at how far I've come from a timid soul at primary school in rural Wales, where we were taught the stories of the



Welsh saints and I first learned to love all things medieval, poring over my parents' old copies of *Beowulf* from the days when Old English was a compulsory part of the University of London English degree. A certain unnamed ASNC graduate student has already suggested I will become known as El-Bos Ros: if that's what is it to be, then El-Bos Ros will strain every sinew to be the best scholar she can be, to represent ASNC to the University, indeed the world, in difficult days for medieval studies globally, but also to give the most steadfastly loving support I can to all the members of the Department, from fresher undergraduates to my elders and betters among the ASNC staff.



ASNC Staff Moving On

Ben Allport has been appointed to a Visiting Fellowship at the University of Bergen, funded by a Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentship. He will be working on social network analysis of the kings' sagas.

David Callander, currently a Junior Research Fellow at St Catharine's College, has been appointed as a lecturer in the School of Welsh at Cardiff University. David hopes to investigate in particular the later textual traditions and development of early Welsh literature.

Caitlin Ellis, formerly an undergraduate and graduate student in ASNC, has been appointed to a postdoctoral scholarship in Stockholm, from the Royal Adolphus Academy.

Emma Knowles has been appointed Associate Lecturer in English at the University of Sydney.

Hattie Soper, formerly a PhD student in ASNC and Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College, has been appointed to the Simon and June Li Fellowship in English Literature at Lincoln College, Oxford.

From autumn 2019, Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, formerly research associate of eDIL in ASNC, will take up a new position at Trinity College Dublin a postdoctoral fellow, working on historical poetry.

Rebecca Thomas has been awarded a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship to work at Bangor University, on the development of Welsh identity in the central Middle Ages.

Beowulf Festival

Debby Banham

On May 4th, four students, one alumna and I set out once more for the Beowulf Festival at the Suffolk town of Woodbridge, just across the estuary from Sutton Hoo. The replica Sutton Hoo ship was on the water as the first boats built in Woodbridge this century were launched onto the River Deben, to great acclaim. The students, James, Brigid, James and Ela, plus Amrit the alumna, performed a scene from *Beowulf* in the original language, with mimed actions, this time the slanging match between our hero and Unferth, complete with *merefisc* and *hronfisc* (see photo). Later in the afternoon I gave a talk entitled 'What would Beowulf eat, II: bread and cereals' to an audience including three re-enactors in Anglo-Saxon costume and a volunteer from Sutton Hoo, and talked them afterwards. The afternoon culminated in a demonstration of the Tide Mill grinding flour, driven by the power of the

North Sea. Most of the party were wise enough not to brave the rain to see the bands performing on the fishing boat Marie in the evening; the weather was alas not as good as last year.

Earlier this year, I gave a talk at the British Library on 19 January, on the topic of food and farming in Anglo-Saxon England, as part of a day-school held in connection with the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms exhibition there. Other talks ranged across Old English literature, Anglo-Saxon art, medicine and archaeology, and were discussed enthusiastically by a full house of students ranging from their teens to their eighties.

And at the end of last year, I spoke about the Early English Bread project (a collaboration with alumna Martha Bayless) at Blackfriars Restaurant in Newcastle, on 20 October. That was the first time I've been able to talk about medieval food then eat it immediately afterwards. I also had very interesting discussions with an audience that included students, academics, re-

enactors and food professionals. Plans are afoot for a further food-related event in the north-east.



ASNC Outreach

Becky Shercliff and Ben Allport

This has been an exciting year for ASNaC outreach. Since July 2018, we have been involved in numerous outreach events relating to our two projects: Ben has been working on an online resource to tie in with the OCR 'Viking Age' A-level modules which provides an introduction to the history, society and culture of the 'Vikings' at home and abroad. Becky has been designing resources for use in British and Irish schools, linked to the Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL), which explore the language and culture of medieval Ireland.

Most recently, we were invited to partake in a Widening Participation event called Insight Explore, targeted at GCSE students. Our aim was to convey, over the course of a two-hour workshop, the breadth and interdisciplinarity of the ASNaC undergraduate course. With this in mind, we kicked off with a break-neck, interactive introduction to Old English. The students were particularly intrigued by the changes between modern and Old English vocabulary

and pronunciation, which we explored by tracing versions of the Lord's Prayer back in time. They then tested out their newfound skills by investigating an extract from Beowulf: Grendel's approach to Heorot. This led to a discussion of monstrosity in the poem and a consideration of the blurred line between man and monster. In a complete change of topic, the second half of the session focused on the interconnectivity of the Viking world. We finished up with an activity using Norse loan words as evidence for cultural interaction between the Norse and the Irish, sorting them into thematic categories that give an insight into Norse activities in Ireland.

The feedback we received from the students themselves was unanimously positive (particularly regarding the Old English and Beowulf activities), but also constructive, and we look forward to further events in the future!

PS. If you are a teacher or know a teacher who might be interested in our resources or outreach sessions, please contact us at rms90@cam.ac.uk.



The Old Norse term *víkingr* referred to a raider, although the term "Viking Age" is used to refer to the time period in which Scandinavians increasingly interacted with north-western Europe through processes of raiding, trading, migration and settlement.

This website is intended as a resource for teachers and students of the Viking Age up to undergraduate level (including the OCR A-Level course "The Viking Age"). It covers the history, society and culture of the Scandinavian peoples and their engagement with Britain and Ireland.

ASNC Society

Emilie Colliar and Nia Griffiths



Following in the footsteps of our esteemed predecessors, the ASNaC Society has continued to be full of life in 2018-9.

Last year's Yule Play spanned William to wolf onesies, serpents to '66, as well as a Fidchell tournament, Doctor Who, and the return of Aldhelm's Sisters for their new song Uptown Monk.

January saw several of us travel to the Isle of Man, where we navigated tiny airports, neolithic tombs and the dress-up sections of several museums. There were the delights

of campfire songs, picturesque beeches, and we even managed to introduce our excellent driver to the delights of the Yule Play...

Our term-time social activities continued in full force, including adding new locations to our weekly Pub, yoga, and playing ASNaC-themed Dungeons and Dragons featuring an escape from the University Library.

The Black Tie Dinner saw 103 alumni, lecturers and students gather in Newnham for a delightful evening, featuring

a performance from our very own Quire and rousing speech from alumnus Dan Starkey. As the newly-minted presidents of the Society we would like to thank Kate and Ela for all their achievements this past year, and can only hope to fill the big shoes that have been left. Here's to another year of shenanigans!

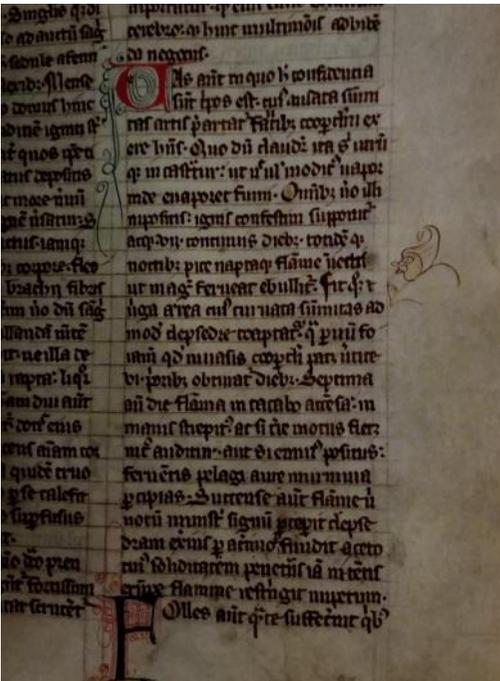


Latin Arthurian Literature and the Rise of Fiction: a new departmental project funded by the Leverhulme Trust

Rosalind Love and Francesco Marzella

Everyone knows about the Sword in the Stone and the Knights of the Round Table. But what about Merlin's madness and his escape to the forest to become a wild man of the woods, King Arthur challenging a king who turns out to be a werewolf, Gawain fighting in single combat for days to help capture Jerusalem...? These and tales like them are told in a group of Latin texts that are the focus of our project. Although the Arthurian legends are most commonly associated with famous works in

the vernacular languages, the first person to tell the story of King Arthur extensively wrote in Latin, namely Geoffrey of Monmouth and his *Historia regum Britanniae* ('History of the Kings of Britain'), finished in 1136. There are other twelfth-century Latin texts recording stories of Arthur and his circle too; we will focus on five of them: their titles, translated into English, are *The Life of Merlin*, *The Rise of Gawain*, *The Story of Meriadoc*, *The Story of King Arthur and King Gorlagon the Werewolf* and *The Norman Dragon-Banner*. Earlier scholars dismissed these texts because they seem too fantastical and focused mainly on entertainment, too far from historical reality to be 'useful'; also, they have been overshadowed by the much-loved French and English Arthurian texts. To contradict this dismissive view, we will use these texts to test a new hypothesis. Latin, the common language of high culture across Europe, was crucial for circulating the Arthurian legend via the well-established medium of historical narrative (that is, in Geoffrey's *Historia*). But we suggest that when authors tried the bold next step of composing more flagrantly fictional Arthurian stories in Latin, they did not find an obvious audience and the attempt failed. Twelfth-century readers were hungry for texts in their native languages telling of romance and adventure, while Latin, especially prose narratives or epic poems, seemed too bound up with old ways and dull themes. If that hypothesis works, then our texts are fascinating remnants of a failed experiment in fanta-



A section of *The Rise of Gawain* (© British Library Board, British Library MS Cotton Faustina B VI, fo. 32r)

sy-fiction. Despite that failure, their very existence counters the conventional view of medieval Latin as rather conservative compared with the adventurously innovative vernacular languages. As well as placing our texts within the bigger picture of twelfth-century fiction, our project's goal is to provide new editions of these texts, with English translations and explanatory notes that will introduce them to a wider audience.

The electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL) 2014-2019

Prof. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh

For the past five years medieval Irish words have been at the heart of a collaborative project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council based in the Department of ASNC and Queen's University Belfast. Researchers at the two universities under the direction of Prof. Gregory Toner in Queen's and Prof. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh in ASNC analysed the specific meaning of words and phrases in a large corpus of printed editions of medieval Irish texts published since the print *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language* came into being. The result was more than 5000 changes to the electronic version of that Dictionary (eDIL), freely accessible online at

The changes in question are varied. In some cases, grammatical information was added to a head-word supported by forms in particular texts. In others, new meanings were added since these were attested in the text-editions scrutinised by the team. The adjective *gésachtach*, for example,

had been known in the meaning 'screaming, clamorous' but was found also to refer to a particular screeching bird – a peacock. And then there are entirely new words: these include *reconn* which indicates the quality of having good sense before an event, so some people at least had forethought in medieval Ireland. Among the newly discovered verbs are *brachaid* 'oozes pus', one of a large group of lexical items connected with medicine which Dr Sharon Arbutnot, currently an Honorary Research Associate in ASNC, brought to the fore. She was joined by Dr Dagmar Wodtko for the first part of the project and Dr Marie Luise Theuerkauf for the final eighteen months, who, alongside Sharon, jostled with the precise meaning of entries and entering them in xml into the electronic Dictionary in revised form. Occasionally, they deleted entries when there was no evidence for the existence of the word in the medieval period. Among these was *brillin* a term for clitoris, which is only attested in a nineteenth-century source.

eDIL covers an earlier period, stretching from about the sixth century to the sixteenth, and geographically it includes the Gaelic language of Ireland and Scotland during that time. Some of the new words are attested only in a Scottish context, *scaitech* 'sharp-tongued', for example, or occur only in specific meanings in Scots Gaelic sources, such as *coibnius* meaning 'kindness'. The earlier meaning of 'blood relationship' is attested across the Gaelic world. For those of you particularly interested in this Scottish dimension, you can read a piece by Sharon Ar-

buthnot on this aspect of eDIL's work: https://gaelic.co/uniquely-gaelic-words/?fbclid=IwAR1ufvIun1G_TBvAid3MCB M2IIPHcxAgHKp7OiPCVgMjp8H3xOf6mb10zAA. Sharon has also published an article on her favourite new eDIL words: <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2019/0822/1070283-10-medieval-irish-words-we-didnt-know-about-before-now/>. And you can get a further flavour of eDIL 2019 in this University of Cambridge report: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/lost-irish-words-rediscovered-including-the-word-for-oozes-pus>.

The research has resulted in an augmented and revised scholarly resource. But anyone with an interest in medieval life in Ireland and Scotland can dip in and search for terms (using an English search-word also). The general public and school pupils and teachers may also be interested in a series of worksheets focussing on specific words and concepts, such as the many words for women or Vikings therein. These were prepared by ASNC researchers, Dr Rebecca Shercliff and Brigid Ehrmantraut and they will soon be available on the ASNC website. And finally look out for *A History of Ireland in 100 Words*, a quirky look at Ireland's history drawing on 100 of eDIL's words, written by Arbuthnot, Ní Mhaonaigh and Toner – coming soon to a bookshop near you.

eDIL Launch Party

Dr. Margo Griffin-Wilson, Teaching Associate, Modern Irish

It was a pleasure to be present at the launch of eDIL at the Royal Irish

Academy in Dublin on 30 August, 2019—an event which gave full recognition to the achievements of Professors Greg Toner and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and their team of dedicated scholars, Drs. Sharon Arbothnot, Dagmar Wodtko and Marie Luise Theurerkauf. Professor Richard Sharpe (Oxford University) launched eDIL and, with the insights gained from his work as a lexicographer of medieval Latin, spoke of this momentous culmination of sixteen years of the dictionary's 'digital history' (2003-2019) not as an end, but as another milestone in the colossal task of presenting a Dictionary of the Irish Language: 'We are marking today the completion (for now) of 167 years progress towards the dictionary.'

The task undertaken by Professors Toner, Ní Mhaonaigh and their team continues the vision, planning and linguistic work of past of scholars who gave us the dictionary in print, among them John O'Donovan, R. I. Best, Gordon Quin and Eleanor Knott. Sharpe praised the work undertaken by the eDIL team, as they corrected and augmented thousands of entries and brought the insights of modern scholarship to bear on the analysis of Old and Middle Irish texts and linguistic forms. The vital support of the Royal Irish Academy was also recognized. Sharpe recalled Richard I. Best statement, in 1946, that the dictionary was 'the greatest single undertaking of the Academy', and the eDIL launch made it clear that the Academy's commitment to the Dictionary of the Irish language in the digital age remains strong.

Professor Máire Ní Mhaonaigh graciously presented gifts to each member of eDIL team, honouring both their unique and collective contributions.

The recollection that, at the initial planning of the Dictionary of the Irish Language in 1860, John O'Donovan remarked, 'we will not live to see it completed', emphasised the vision and effort required at every stage of the work. All gathered at the Academy were invited to raise a glass and celebrate the fact that 'we are getting there', and Professors Toner, Ní Mhaonaigh and their team were honoured for bringing us a huge step forward toward that goal.

The eDIL launch party at the Royal Irish Academy.



Modern Irish in Cambridge University 2018-19

Dr. Margo Griffin-Wilson, Teaching Associate, Modern Irish

Modern Irish language classes in the ASNC have once again been awarded a generous grant from the Irish Government, assuring the continued support of Modern Irish language teaching in 2019-22. The classes showcase Modern Irish as a vibrant international language, and have drawn a diverse group of Cambridge University students from the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man, Ireland, South Korea, China, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. ASNC students contribute their unique knowledge of the medieval languages to the classes and explore links between the medieval and the modern.

Ph.D. student Alice Taylor-Griffiths, who researches Old Irish legal glosses and attends the Advanced Modern Irish classes, organized a departmental conference on 'Tales & Transmission: Storytelling in Irish and Scottish Gaelic 700 AD to the Present' (27-28 April 2019). She was assisted by Ph.D. candidate Anouk Nuijten, who studied Old and Modern Irish in Utrecht University and has advanced her linguistic and textual skills in the ASNC Department. The conference featured an Irish storyteller and performance of Scottish Gaelic singing, and Modern Irish students were among the speakers. Post-doctoral research scholar Rebecca Shercliff presented her edition of the Old Irish tale *Tochmarc Ferbe*. Andrea Palandri, a



Cambridge graduate students at 'Literature Speaks'.

graduate of the ASNC and the Department of Modern Irish, University College Cork, examined narrative styles in Irish translations of Marco Polo's travels—research which he has undertaken as a scholar at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. Conor McCabe (Linguistics), a recipient of the Ussher Fellowship at Trinity College Dublin, spoke on 'Adaptive uses of traditional Irish storytelling', drawing on recordings of Irish speakers in Ring, Co. Waterford, which he collected while a student in the Cambridge Modern Irish classes.

In response to an invitation from the University of Liverpool, London, Cambridge students from the Beginners and Intermediate Modern Irish language volunteered to recite Irish poetry in the session 'Literature Speaks' at 'The Irish Language: A Day of Literature, Film and Song' (23 February 2019). Their performance brought an international voice to the diverse community of Irish speakers and learners in the

United Kingdom. ASNC first-year student Ben Webb impressed the audience with his rendition of a traditional hymn to St. Bridget; Linguistics student Erin McNulty recited a traditional poem from the Isle of Man; Elena Sottilotta (MML), who is researching Italian and Irish women folklorists, recited Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's *Ceist na Teangan*; Jin K. Jang, a Ph.D. student in Modern Irish History, recited poems by Pádraig Pearse. Ferdia Sherry and Sophie Tobin (Mathematics) and Cambridge staff member Bella Stewart read works by other modern poets.

The Irish Government Grant also supports language study in the Irish Gael-tacht, and three ASNC students were awarded scholarships in 2019. Dr. Rebecca Shercliff attended summer classes at Coláiste na Rinne, Co. Waterford; Ben Webb and Claire Gamble participated in intensive Irish classes in Co. Galway and Co. Donegal. The Irish grant is overseen by Professor Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, and Irish language study in ASNC has gone *ó neart go neart* (from strength to strength).

Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae

Dr. Francesco Marzella

In the last three years the *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project, run between ASNC and the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, has been digging deep into the Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints to provide new transcriptions, critical editions and translations. The past academic year, in particular, was remarkable for the number of events that gave us the opportunity to share the major outcomes and discoveries related to the project. In November, the team arranged an afternoon of talks at the Chapter House of Gloucester Cathedral focusing primarily on Welsh Saints connected with Gloucester and on the role played by the abbey as the focus of the collection of traditions relating to saints in Wales. In April, David Callander spoke about his recent discovery of the Yale Life of Cybi, at the *Celtic Studies Association of North America Conference*, Harvard, and in July, Martin Crampin presented his work on images of saints in Catholic

churches in Wales at the *Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts II: Legacies and Revivals Conference*, Durham. In the summer, the project was well represented at two major conferences. Nine papers were presented in three sessions at *Leeds International Medieval Congress*, and further papers were also presented at the 16th *International Congress of Celtic Studies* in Bangor (22–26 July). The season was ideally concluded by the major project's conference recently held in Cambridge (26-27 September): this successful event – in which the traditions of the Welsh saints were tackled from different perspectives by current and former members of the team and by other leading scholars across Europe and America – was also the occasion to present the website <http://www.welshsaints.ac.uk/>, a fundamental resource developed to hold all the editions and translations of the *Vitae*, together with other major outcomes of the project.



The Welsh Saints conference in progress.

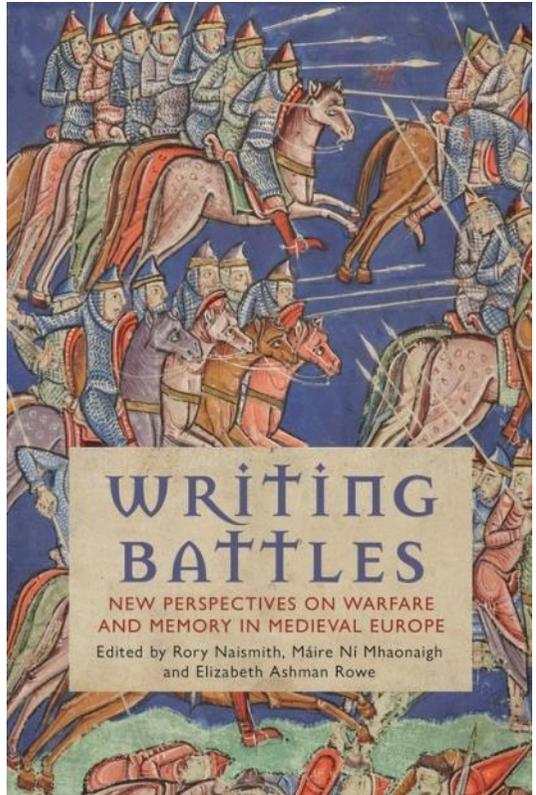
Writing Battles: New Perspectives on Warfare and Memory in Medieval Europe

By Rory Naismith, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Elizabeth Ashman Rowe

Battles have long featured prominently in historical consciousness, as moments when the balance of power was seen to have tipped, or when aspects of collective identity were shaped. But how have perspectives on warfare changed? How similar are present day ideologies of warfare to those of the Medieval period?

Looking back over a thousand years of British, Irish and Scandinavian battles, *Writing Battles: New Perspectives on Warfare and Memory in Medieval Europe* examines how different times and cultures have reacted to war, considering the changing roles of religion and technology in the experience and memorialisation of conflict.

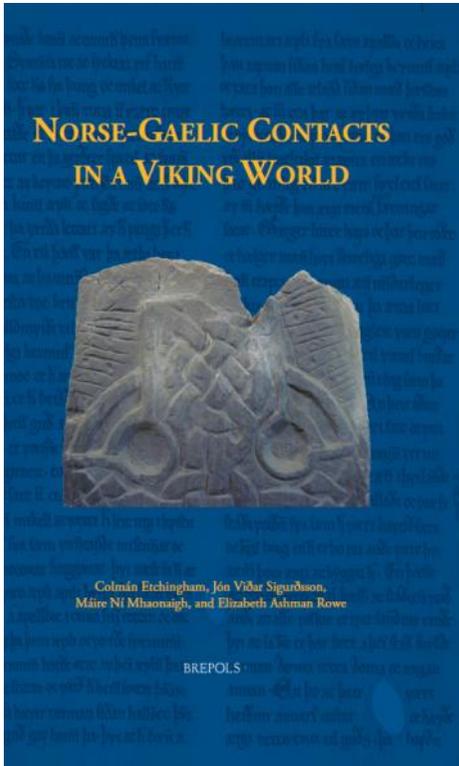
Fighting and killing have been deplored, glorified and everything in between across the ages, and *Writing Battles* reminds us of the visceral impact left on those who come after. Bringing together selected papers from a series of conferences held in ASNC on the anniversaries of key early medieval battles in 2014, 2015 and 2016, this volume will include contributions by leading scholars on both medieval and modern material, including Brendan Simms, Robert Bartlett, Matthew Strickland, Natalia Petrovskaja, Tony Pollard and Robert Tombs, as well as the three editors.



Norse-Gaelic Contacts in a Viking World

By Colmán Etchingham, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Elizabeth Ashman Rowe

This co-authored volume involving ASNC researchers Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, as well as Colmán Etchingham (Maynooth) and Jón Vidar Sigurdsson (Oslo), examines the interplay of Norse-Gaelic literary traditions in the thirteenth century in particular. Focussing on four specific case-studies, three Norse and one Gaelic, the book illuminates how the text reflect political and cultural contacts throughout an expansive geographical re-



gion, highlighting the pivotal place of the Isle of Man.

Elizabeth Ashman Rowe offers some personal reminiscences of the project behind this book: 'I can remember the moment that led to Norse-Gaelic Contacts in a Viking World as though it were yesterday, although it was the winter of 2011/2012. At a reception at St John's, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh had just introduced me to Colmán Etchingham, he and I soon discovered a mutual interest in Ireland and Iceland, I said something about the idea of Ireland in the Iceland sagas, and Colmán looked me right in the eye and said, 'How about it?' This challenge somehow turned into a series

of workshops on 'Communication and Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Community 1000-1300', with a small core of dedicated contributors, namely Máire, Colmán, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, and myself. Over the subsequent years the four of us settled on four case-studies and met (usually in Máire's rooms at John's and Jón Viðar's dining room in Oslo) to go through our texts line by line. By pooling our knowledge of literature, history, and manuscripts, we were able to achieve unexpected insights into the material while holding each other to the most rigorous scholarly standards. The entire book was written jointly, with one or more of us drafting each chapter and then all of us together in person going over the drafts line by line to produce the final version. It was slow but intellectually very rewarding, and we are extremely pleased to have the book out at last.'

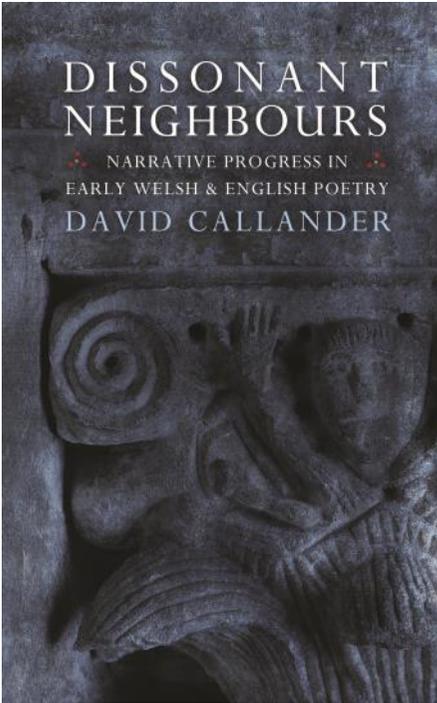
Dissonant Neighbours: Narrative Progress in Early Welsh and English Poetry

By David Callander

David Callander, Junior Research Fellow in ASNC at St Catharine's College, has published his first monograph *Dissonant Neighbours: Narrative Progress in Early Welsh and English Poetry*.

This book places in productive contrast the strikingly different stylistic traditions of early Welsh and English verse, focusing in particular on narrative.

It has been described as 'a landmark in the study of early Welsh



verse' (Marged Haycock) and representing 'comparative literary study at its most illuminating' (Emily Thornbury).

Dissonant Neighbours is published by University of Wales Press.

Words Derived from Old Norse in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: an Etymological Survey

By Richard Dance

Dr Richard Dance has published his latest book, *Words Derived from Old Norse in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: An Etymological Survey* (Publications of the Philological Society 50, Wiley-Blackwell).

The English language is well known for the diversity of its historical origins. But as well as words from the Anglo-Saxons, and borrowings from familiar sources like French, Latin and Greek, a crucial element of English vocabulary

comes from contact with another language beloved by ASNCs, Old Norse. Hundreds of English words can be traced back to these Scandinavian beginnings. And not only have these items become essential to the everyday modern language (where would we be without words like *take*, *window*, *law*, *happy*, *sky* — and even *cake*?), but they also form a vital part of the rich, difficult lexicon of masterpieces of medieval literature like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Richard Dance's new book is the first full-length survey of the extensive and complex evidence for the Norse borrowings in this famous poem. Over more than 800 pages, it presents an in-depth study of the origins of 496 individual words (everything from *blaste* and *cakled* to *mensk* 'honoured', *muged* 'drizzled' and *wothe* 'danger'), which have been analysed in the light of a groundbreaking new etymological methodology. This book is the most detailed description ever undertaken of the Scandinavian influence on the vocabulary of a major Middle English text, and a new model for the collection and analysis of Norse loans in any English source. It forms the foundation for the work of 'The Gersum Project', the major collaborative investigation of Old Norse input in late Middle English alliterative poetry, which is hosted by the ASNC Department.

The book is available to buy in electronic form from the Wiley-Blackwell online library (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/1467968x/2018/116/S2>), and volume 1 can also be ordered as a paperback.

Bede: On First Samuel

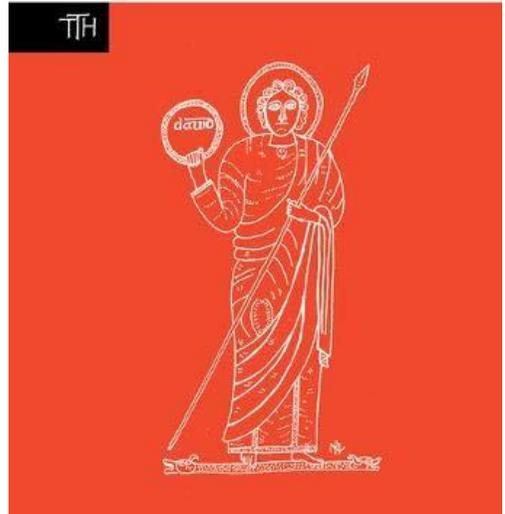
Translated by Scott DeGregorio and Rosalind Love

The Old Testament book 1 Samuel (known as 1 Kings in modern Bibles) contains one of the most dramatic stories in the Old Testament, with its tense narrative about Israel's first attempts to govern itself by kingship, and a cast of famous characters who drive the story - the priest and prophet Samuel, the tragic figure of King Saul, and chiefly David himself, the youngest son of Jesse, who slays the Philistine's champion, Goliath, and gains God's favour in replacement for Saul. The Venerable Bede (672-735 AD), Anglo-Saxon England's foremost interpreter of the Bible, wrote many commentaries on the Old Testament, but his treatment of 1 Samuel stands out in particular: it is one of his longest commentaries, one of

his first sustained attempts to deal with the Old Testament without support from an earlier commentary, and one of the few commentaries he wrote that can be dated precisely. Bede sets out to read the story of 1 Samuel as full of details which demonstrate the prophetic nature of Old Testament history, an attempt that is boldly experimental in its application of the allegorical method of interpretation. Historically, the commentary is of special interest for its detailed reference to the departure of Abbot Ceolfrith from Wearmouth-Jarrow in June 716 AD, which has allowed scholarship to firmly date the work and explore some potential links to the turbulent political scene in Northumbria that marked that decade. This English translation is the first rendering of the Latin into another language. The translation is preceded by a substantial introduction that places the work in the context of Bede's oeuvre, discusses his sources and exegetical methods, and offers a reading of the work's contemporary context in the light of current scholarly debate.

Bede On First Samuel

*Translated with introduction and commentary
by Scott DeGregorio and Rosalind Love*



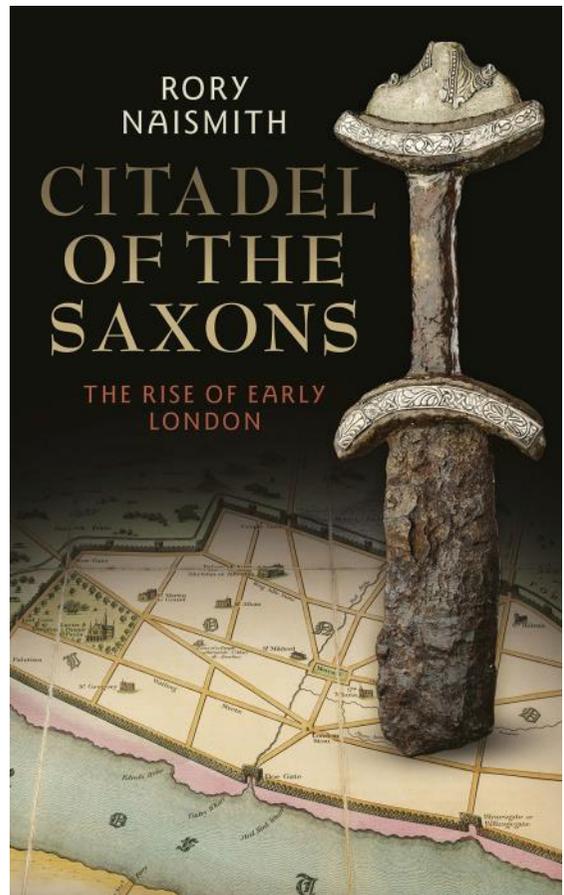
Citadel of the Saxons: the Rise of Early London

By Rory Naismith

With a past as deep and sinewy as the famous River Thames that twists like an eel around the jutting peninsula of Mudchute and the Isle of Dogs, London is

one of the world's greatest and most resilient cities. Born beside the sludge and the silt of the meandering waterway that has always been its lifeblood, it has weathered invasion, flood, abandonment, fire and bombing. The modern story of London is well known. Much has been written about the later history of this megalopolis which, like a seductive dark star, has drawn incomers perpetually into its orbit. Yet, as Rory Naismith reveals - in his zesty evocation of the nascent medieval city - much less has been said about how close it came to earlier obliteration. Following the collapse of Roman civilization in fifth-century Britannia, darkness fell over the former province. Villas crumbled to ruin; vital commodities became scarce; cities decayed; and Londinium, the capital, was all but abandoned. Yet despite its demise as a living city, memories of its greatness endured like the moss and bindweed which now ensnared its toppled columns and pilasters. By the 600s a new settlement, Lundenwic, was established on the banks of the River Thames by enterprising traders who braved the North Sea in their precarious small boats. The history of the city's phoenix-like resurrection, as it was transformed from an empty shell into a court of kings - and favoured setting for church councils from across the land - is still virtually unknown. The author here vividly evokes the forgotten Lundenwic and the later fortress on the Thames - Lundenburgh - of desperate Anglo-Saxon defenders who retreated inside their Roman

walls to stand fast against menacing Viking incursions. Recalling the lost cities which laid the foundations of today's great capital, this book tells the stirring story of how dead Londinium was reborn, against the odds, as a bulwark against the Danes and a pivotal English citadel. It recounts how Anglo-Saxon London survived to become the most important town in England - and a vital stronghold in later campaigns against the Normans in 1066. Revealing the remarkable extent to which London was at the centre of things, from the very beginning, this volume at last gives the vibrant early medieval city its due.



Old Norse Graduate Symposium in Bergen

By Lee Colwill



As has become an annual tradition, this April a number of Norse and Norse-adjacent graduate students from the department attended the International Postgraduate Symposium in Bergen. The papers covered a wide range of topics, including digital palaeography, social network analysis, gender theory and cannibalism.

It's always interesting to learn more about topics that intersect with your own research, as well as to meet students from other institutions, and this conference was a perfect opportunity to do both.

Bergen's few days of good weather once again coincided with our stay, and we were able to explore the streets of Bergen and the nearby mountain of Fløyen in glorious sunshine, taking in a surprising number of slides and swingsets,

as well as perhaps the fluffiest cat in Norway, on our way! Our hosts also arranged tours of several museums and art galleries, including a guided tour of KODE 3's new Edvard Munch exhibition and a very interesting display by the Historical Museum of the objects recovered from their recent break-in.



There are several bonny new babies born to ASNC alumni. **Catherine Flavelle** and **Levi Roach** welcomed Clara Amelia Maeve Roach, born 19 April 2019 in Exeter. **Ben Guy** and his wife **Rose** are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Elinor Rhiannon Guy. **Brittany Schorn** and **Rory Naismith** celebrated the birth of Yseult Olivia Naismith-Schorn, born 14 September 2018 in Cambridge. Congratulations to all!

Congratulations also to Alice Hicklin and Erik Niblaeus, who celebrated their wedding in Tuscany in summer 2018!



Clara Amelia Maeve Roach.



Ben, Rose and Elinor.



Erik and Alice in Tuscany.



Yseult Naismith –Schorn.

All at 9 West Road unless otherwise stated.

ASNC Alumni Reunion:

September 2020, date TBC in the ASNC Common Room

University Festival of Ideas: 14-27 October 2019

The theme of this year's Festival will be 'Change', and feature a number of talks by members of the department, including Prof. Love and a number of current graduate students. For details see www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk/.

Quiggin Lecture:

5 December 2019, 5 pm: Professor William Ian Miller (University of Michigan)

ASNC Society Black-tie Dinner:

Date in January/February 2019 to be confirmed.

Chadwick Lecture:

12 March 2019, 5 pm: Professor Sarah Foot (University of Oxford)

Kathleen Hughes Lecture (at Hughes Hall, Pavilion Room):

27 April 2019, 5.45 pm: Dr Caroline Brett (University of Cambridge)

ASNC Summer Garden Party:

17 June 2019, 6 pm: location TBC.

ASNC Alumni are warmly welcome to attend any of these events (see www.asnc.cam.ac.uk for updates)

You are warmly invited to join the ASNaC Alumni **Facebook** group (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic Alumni) for further announcements and updates, and to keep in touch!

If you are interested in finding out more about our current research and teaching or our future plans, or would like to tell us news that you would like reported in future newsletters, please contact us through the Departmental Secretary at asnc@hermes.cam.ac.uk or by post: Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP, United Kingdom. The Departmental website also has an alumni section (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/alumni/index.htm).