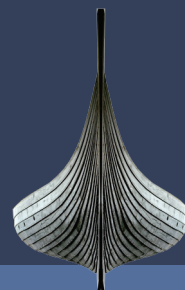


Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Alumni Newsletter



Issue 6 August 2013



The ASNC contingent at the Broch of Gurness, during the Orkney field school. From left to right: David Baker, Matilda Watson, Ellie Rye, Rebecca Merkelbach, Ellie Heans-Glogowska, Judy Quinn, Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough; (front row): Maria Theresa Ramandi, Jo Shortt Butler, Elizabeth Rowe and Brittany Schorn. Photo credit: Nicola Lugosch.

No year in ASNC is ever less than busy, but this one has presented its own extra layer of challenges. It has been, and continues to be, a year of scrutiny. In Lent Term we underwent a Learning and Teaching Review, a routine University inspection, which involved gathering a vast amount of information for scrutiny by a committee that then visited us for a day. The resulting report was in fact glowing, full of commendations, and recommendations of good practice for other parts of the University. At the same time, our research is being scrutinized as part of the ongoing REF (Research Excellence Framework). This applies to all higher education institutes in the UK, and considers not just published research but also 'research environment' – another huge pile of documentation.

Yet underneath all that paperwork, the Department continues to be exceptionally vibrant and productive. Thanks to funding from the respective governments, classes in Modern Icelandic and Modern Irish continue, alongside one-off events like *Kennings in the Community* and the Scandinavianists' trip to Orkney, featured elsewhere in this newsletter. There have also been plenty of individual successes to celebrate. Warm congratulations go to Fiona Edmonds on the birth of Aidan (with a name like that, he has to be a proto-ASNaC), and to Elizabeth Rowe and Fiona Edmonds on their promotion to Reader and Senior Lecturer respectively. ASNaCs continue to populate the world's medieval departments: many congratulations to Lizzie Boyle who has been appointed to a Lectureship in Early Irish in Maynooth; to Eleanor Barraclough who has been appointed to a Lectureship in Durham (a fortnight earlier she had been selected

Continued overleaf



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by the BBC as one of the New Generation Thinkers for 2013 – so listen out for her on the radio); and to Brittany Schorn who is taking up a post of Research Associate on the Interpreting Eddic Poetry Project at St John's College Research Centre, Oxford. In addition Rory Naismith was awarded the 2012 Jan H. Nordbø scholarship and medal by the Norwegian Numismatic Society. And talking of ASNaCs going far ... George Potts, recent alumnus (Homerton, 2009), stars in the latest Virgin Trains ad.

Outreach and undergraduate numbers continue to exercise our minds, especially with the widely acknowledged national drop in applications in Arts and Humanities subjects. We say this quietly, but so far ASNC applicant numbers have held up. This may be because the characteristic bloody-mindedness of the wannabe ASNaC just sees all of the fee issues as something else standing between them and their beloved subject, but sustaining it will certainly have much to do with our commitment to outreach and school-visits. This year we are doing two Sutton Trust sessions and in early July a group of us are doing an Away-Day to speak to pupils from state schools in Plymouth (funded by the University's Admissions Office). In that respect, Lizzie Boyle's input into outreach, as well as much else (as Director of Studies, Lecturer and Supervisor) will be greatly missed as she heads off to Maynooth.

Paul Russell, Head of Department

Fiona Edmonds gave birth to a son, Aidan, on 19 April. Aidan arrived ten days late and weighed in at 8 lb 13 oz. He is primarily interested in feeding and sleeping, but Fiona has also been reading him stories of his saintly namesake. She hopes to take him to Lindisfarne and Bamburgh for his first holiday.





Saileog and Andrea Palandri (Homerton, 2011) in the Red Bull after the concert
(photo: Margo Griffin-Wilson)

In March ASNC was delighted to welcome the Irish singer Saileog Ní Cheannabháin to perform a selection of songs from the Connemara *Gaeltacht* in a traditional style of singing known as *sean-nós* ('old-style'). Ní Cheannabháin, who has made a significant contribution to the Irish songs tradition, gave a memorable and moving performance which captivated listeners in the packed ASNC common room, and conveyed the thematic range of *sean-nós* singing in a selection of Irish laments, love songs and witty verses. She ended by inviting members of the audience

to join in singing the refrain of *Bean Pháidín* 'Páidín's Wife' and *Na Ceannabháin Bhána* 'The fair Canavans', songs well-known in Connemara. Inspired by her beautifully articulated performance, the audience sang (in Irish) in full voice. This wonderful concert was part of ASNC's marking of *Seachtain na Gaeilge*, an international celebration of Irish language and culture (4-17 March).

Dr Margo Griffin-Wilson

Departmental News & Events

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) recently ran a pilot scheme funding short-term postdoctoral projects through a Cultural Engagement Fund, and one of its awards went to Judy Quinn and Debbie Potts for two outreach projects, *Modern Poets on Viking Poetry* and *kennings in the Community*, both based in ASNC from 1 February to 30 April 2013. Debbie writes:

'Modern Poets on Viking Poetry was a cultural translation project where over forty poets worked in collaboration with Old Norse scholars to produce responses to skaldic verse. The poets were offered complete creative freedom in their engagement with the Old Norse texts and this led to the production of a wonderfully diverse collection of poems which you can read on the project's website (asnc.cam.ac.uk/resources/mpvp). The project culminated in two events at the end of April (in Cambridge and London), where Orri Tomasson's captivating performance of the original texts in Old Norse accompanied readings of the cultural translations (see *photo*).



The sister project, *kennings in the Community*, sought to develop teaching resources for creative writing workshops based on kennings. I collaborated with the riddle-smiths Jane Monson, Lucy Hamilton and Emma Hammond in the delivery of three poetry workshops for members of the public. If you fancy trying your hand at crafting some kennings, resources adapted from the workshops are also available on the above website. One of the more bizarre exercises involves "translating" Des'ree's 1990s pop-hit *Life* into kennings – I thoroughly recommend it.'

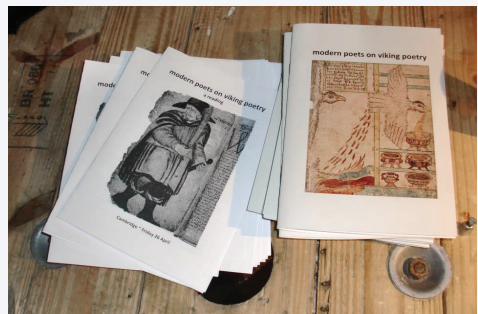
Clockwise, from left:

Orri Tomasson (currently the teacher on ASNC's Modern Icelandic course) performing as a Viking warrior-poet

Apprentice riddle-smiths at Emma Hammond's workshop

Pamphlets from the Modern Poets reading

Photos by: Debbie Potts



Departmental News & Events

It has been a busy year for the 'Converting the Isles' research network. Led by Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Roy Flechner (formerly Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, and now at University College, Dublin), the network is funded by the Leverhulme Trust, which enabled the appointment of Brittany Schorn as network facilitator, based in ASNC. The cross-disciplinary network links scholars across Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia to investigate the conversion to Christianity, combining historical and geographical analyses with social-scientific approaches and making comparisons across periods and places. A number of current and former members of ASNC have contributed, including Lesley Abrams, Helen Foxhall Forbes, Barry Lewis, Anthony Harvey, Rory Naismith, and Erik Niblaeus.

A series of colloquia has facilitated collaboration and encouraged reappraisal of fundamental questions about the nature of arguably the most revolutionary social and cultural change that Europe experienced in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

At the 'Converting Landscapes' colloquium at Bangor University in March 2013, we considered the evidence of burials, stone monuments, technology and coins as well as texts, and compared case-studies of a few extremely significant sites such as Nendrum in Northern Ireland, Ribe in Denmark and Lyminge in Kent. Nancy Edwards led a fascinating but freezing excursion to view inscribed stones on Anglesey (see picture). You can listen to podcasts from Bangor and indeed all of our colloquia at: asnc.cam.ac.uk/conversion.

The final colloquium on the 'Isles and the Wider World' will be held in the Department this September. It will set Insular conversion within a broader geographical and chronological framework, and an exciting programme includes sessions on the late antique context, Insular missionaries abroad, and comparisons with Francia and northern Europe, with central and southern Europe, as



Nancy Edwards on Anglesey; photo credit: B. Schorn



well as broader considerations of the meaning and process of conversion. Speakers include Rowan Williams (now Master of Magdalene College), Bernard Maier, Kristina Szilagyi, Chris Wickham, Ingrid Rembold, Geneviève Bühler-Theiry, Jörn Staecker, Stanislaw Rosik, Fenella Cannell, Tomas Sundnes Dronen, Jean-Michel Picard, Sébastien Bully, James Palmer and Sven Meeder.

Brittany Schorn

Research in ASNC

Peter's Pence and Beyond: Monetary Links between Anglo-Saxon England and Rome

In 2011, Dr Rory Naismith (Trinity, 2002, now a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow in ASNC) and Dr Francesca Tinti (Ikerbasque Research Professor at the University of the Basque Country, and Honorary Research Associate in ASNC) received a research grant from the British Academy to spend time from 2012 to 2014 studying monetary connections between England and Rome in the Anglo-Saxon period. Since then they have been on two research trips to Rome, and are actively collaborating on several publications.

Their project considers several sources for the special relationship between England and Rome, ranging from the metallic contents of early papal coins to written attestations of Peter's Pence (an annual tribute from England to the papacy) and other forms of payment to Rome. At the invitation of the Museo Nazionale Romano, they are also producing a monograph on the Forum hoard: a collection of 840 coins, almost all of them Anglo-Saxon from the 880s to the 940s, found in excavations of the House of the Vestal Virgins in 1883. The two photos show Rory and Francesca standing near the spot where it was discovered, on a sunny day in September 2012. This well-known hoard has never been published in full, and is especially important for including two silver fasteners from the bag that once held the coins, which name the recipient of the treasure: Pope Marinus II (942–6).



Research in ASNC



Post-docs take refuge at the Broch of Gurness; photo credit: Jo Shortt Butler



The Orkney Viking Heritage Project Field School: a report by David Baker

In April, eight current and three former members of the ASNC Department (see *front cover picture*) travelled to the Orkney Islands to take part in the field school of the Orkney Viking Heritage Project. This AHRC-funded interdisciplinary training programme brought together scholars and heritage professionals to explore the literature, history and material

culture of Viking Orkney and provide hands-on experience of working with a heritage landscape. Together with fellow students and colleagues from the universities of the Highlands and Islands, Oxford, Nottingham, York, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Birmingham, Cardiff and King's College London, the ASNC contingent spent a happy week on the islands searching for, talking about, and seeking to contextualise those traces of Orkney's Viking past left to us today (medieval texts, artefacts, place-names, language, etc) within the reality of the present physical landscape.

During the week, they saw Viking graffiti on neolithic monuments at the Ring of Brodgar and the burial chamber at Maeshowe, and visited the ruin of St Magnus' Kirk on the small island of Egilsay where St Magnus was killed (photo bottom-left; by David Baker), along with the imposing St Magnus Cathedral established by the saint's nephew, Earl Rögnvaldr, in Kirkwall on the Mainland. The group also paid a visit to the Brough of Birsay and Orphir, both early centres of power belonging to the Norse Earls of Orkney and important sites for the history of Christianity in the islands. With the help of local academics, heritage professionals and Orkney residents, those who attended the field school also explored how the islands' Viking past, together with modern perceptions of that past, continue to inform the way current islanders define themselves and relate to the landscape around them.

More information on the project, including the contributions made by several of the participants to the project's blog, along with photos, podcasts and other resources, can be found on the Orkney Project website (orkneyproject.org). A travelling exhibition created in connection with the project, which was first shown at the Midlands Viking Symposium at the University of Nottingham on 27 April, will also be making an appearance at an event in the Department as part of the University's annual Festival of Ideas.

Staff News



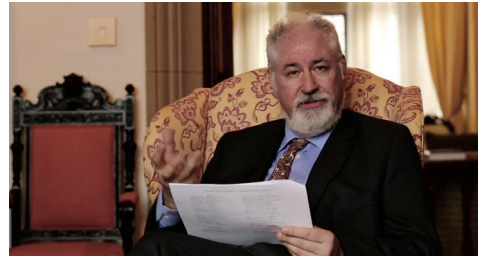
Elizabeth Boyle's departing reflections on eleven years in Cambridge

A SNC's current home is now so familiar that I often forget that it was just a twinkle in an architect's eye when I came in 2002. Those who are so much at the heart of ASNC now, such as Paul Russell, Fiona Edmonds and Elizabeth Rowe, were also yet to arrive; indeed, I'm privileged to have been taught by some of their predecessors, particularly David Dumville and Oliver Padel. I've seen a generation of students pass through all stages: two undergrads I supervised in Brittonic History, Levi Roach and Ellie Barraclough, have gone on to lectureships (Exeter and Durham respectively). Other supervisees have pursued careers ranging from law to stand-up comedy, and I'm sure their knowledge of the Pictish king-lists has aided them immeasurably in their professional lives.

Another change has been ASNC's enthusiastic embracing of the University's initiatives to widen participation in Higher Education. I have been very proud to be associated with our hugely successful Sutton Trust Summer School, opening the door to Cambridge for talented young people from non-privileged backgrounds. One of the most exciting aspects of my new post at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth is NUIM's access projects, particularly in schools in North Dublin.

Yet one thing that has not changed is ASNC's ethos: it is still one of the most dedicated, most interdisciplinary and most sociable of all the University's departments. There can be few who go to Ireland hoping to give their

poor liver a rest, but I'll be one. I shall miss the ASNC pub nights, post-lecture receptions and dinners, evenings of stimulating conversation, generosity of thought, and intellectual engagement, which I have found profoundly inspirational. I've had some of my best ideas chatting to other ASNaCs and visiting lecturers over a few pints in the Red Bull, the Castle or the Maypole: and I've even managed to remember some of those ideas the morning after.'



Andy Orchard heads for Oxford

Cambridge continues its record of producing occupants for Oxford's Rawlinson and Bosworth chair in Anglo-Saxon by replacing Malcolm Godden (Pembroke, 1963), who retired in September 2012, with Andy Orchard (Queens', 1983). Andy's departure from Toronto, where he has been Provost and Vice-Chancellor of Trinity College since 2007, has prompted such headlines as 'U of T prof to take up post once held by J.R.R. Tolkien'. It's very clear that Toronto will greatly miss the occupant of 'Andy's Orchard', its 'beloved literary scholar and administrator' (*U of T News*, March 25, 2013). Andy, who taught in ASNC for nine years before going to Toronto in 2000, is quoted as saying of his appointment 'The primary pull of Oxford is purely romantic, perhaps, but I have some pretty practical plans to shake up the place too, so I hope they know what they are getting.' We hope so too. Congratulations, Andy!

Image, above-right: Andy giving a preview on YouTube for a lecture on rude food in Anglo-Saxon riddles; Photo credit: John Guatto

Student News



The ASNC Society has flourished under the joint presidency of Caitlin Ellis and Caroline Purse (Caius and Clare, 2010; *pictured above, with the members of their committee*). For the first time in its history the Yule Play, brought together by Page Sinclair and Adam Kirton (Newnham and St Catherine's, 2010), was captured on video and can be enjoyed via YouTube (*pictured right*). A snowy January night saw one of the best-attended black-tie dinners ever, held at Peterhouse and preceded by a fire show, courtesy of Frankie Dubery (Newnham, 2007) and her company, Wildfire Productions. The black-tie dinners have seen increasing numbers of returning ASNaCs, and this year's was no exception. Also in January an intrepid band of ASNaCs (*pictured right*) went on pilgrimage to Northumbria, including a visit to Bede's World at Jarrow (curated since 2000 by an ex-ASNaC, Laura Sole, Robinson, 1992). Another highlight was the guest-lecture given in March by the historian and television producer, Michael Wood. Entitled 'Æthelstan: Maker of England', it included some clips from his forthcoming TV programme on that king, as well as revisiting the famous Brunanburh-seen-from-a-helicopter sequence from Michael's 1981 BBC documentary *In Search of Athelstan*.

The Clemoes Reading Prize 2013 featured the usual impressive array of entrants to entertain the judges, including a semi-staged cross-dressing team-performance of *Brymskviða* and a medley of Old English news and weather



(*Her sunne apystrode... Her wæs se myccla winter* [ASC 664, 761], etc). The prize was awarded jointly to David Baker (Magdalene, 2010) for his tender performance of selected verses from *Orkneyinga saga*, and to Rachel Fletcher (Magdalene, 2011), who managed to recite the tricky Old English *Riming Poem* while accompanying herself on plucked strings, bringing to life the lines *scyl wæs hearpe / hlude hlynede* ('the harp was clear / ringing loudly').

Student News



The Year After ASNC

Shelby Switzer (Trinity, 2009) writes:

Four hours after graduation, I hopped on a plane at Heathrow and twelve hours later, woke up in Kuala Lumpur. For the next three months, the dulcet squawking of monkeys and tropical birds was my constant companion as I managed the Shalini Ganendra Fine Art gallery in KL suburbs as part of a 'Exploring East' residency program. I travelled around South East Asia, camping with orangutans (pesky thieves who love condensed milk) on Sumatra, stumbling over temple ruins in Thailand, and decidedly *not* dying on a tubing trip in Vang Vieng, Laos. Eventually I made my way to Nepal with my cousin, where we trekked to Everest Base Camp, snapped some classic shots in front of the mountain, and quickly descended back to Lukla to wait for the plane to carry us off the cliff-*cum*-runway back to Kathmandu. I stayed on in Nepal, hanging out with other trendy hippies and searing my taste-buds with Nepali chili. Then I spent a month in a small village in the Himalayan foothills, teaching English at a school of about 300 students. Before this, I had thought Palaeography exams were the most difficult thing I'd ever do. I was wrong.

Since returning to the States in December I've jumped back into academia, helping Scott Gwara (Corpus, 1984) finish his book

on the manuscript dealer and biblioclast, Otto Ege. I've also been working with various organisations in my State: aside from freelance writing and content strategy projects, one of my main jobs is with the South Carolina Center for Children's Books and Literacy. There, I review and edit submissions to the children's book imprint of the University of South Carolina Press and work on special literacy projects. I also work with a start-up company called Voterheads, focused on making citizen participation in local government easy and informed. I've become pretty passionate about community development and nonprofit education, so I'm applying to study Intercultural Education in Berlin next year to delve deeper into the theory and practice of teaching cross-cultural understanding. Meanwhile, I've actually found a few people in South Carolina who speak Irish, and the Scotch-Irish trad scene here in the Appalachians would make many in Cambridge jealous. What with all the Gaels and medievalists running around, South Carolina should really be next on the list for an ASNaC Society field trip!

Images top-left: Shelby and some of her Nepalese pupils; right: Shelby and a yak



Alumni news

The ASNC empire continues to grow as former students take up posts in other academic institutions: Durham is gaining not only Eleanor Barraclough, but also Helen Foxhall Forbes (Trinity, 2001), who is moving from Exeter to take up a post as Lecturer in Early Medieval History. Since our last newsletter, Chris Abram (Robinson, 1996) has left UCL to become an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Notre Dame, though he and his wife, Amy, and little Henry, their son, will continue to return to their home in the Fens each summer. Emily Lethbridge (Emma, 1998), having completed her Sagasteads adventure, is now a postdoctoral researcher at the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík; ever intrepid, she has also been training for mountain rescue.

Phil Dunshea (Sidney, 2008) has been appointed Temporary Lecturer in Celtic History in ASNC for 2013-14, as cover for Fiona Edmonds' maternity leave; within a few days of the job interview, he underwent another major life-event by getting married to Caroline Whiting in showery but nonetheless beautiful Madingley (see *photo*).

We also send our congratulations to Phil Howard (Robinson, 2003) and Rose Fletcher (St John's, 2001), who were married on 29 June, and to Nevsky Everett (Caius, 2007),

who was ordained deacon at St Albans Abbey the following day. By the time this newsletter hits doormats, Levi Roach (Trinity, 2003) and Cathy Flavelle (Murray Edwards, 2007) will have tied the knot in St John's College Chapel, doubtless providing a rousing reunion of ASNaCs in the Castle in the evening.

Like Fiona's little Aidan, there is another baby out there who name evokes his thoroughly ASNC origins, namely Cuthbert ('Bertie') Baker, born to Emma (née Connolly) and Matthew (both Trinity, 1997) in September 2012. Current ASNC PhD Rosie Bonté (née Marshall, Trinity Hall, 2004) has taken a year out to enjoy her baby, Tristan (see *photo*), and ASNC love goes also to Rosa Maria Fera (St Catherine's, 2004) on the birth of her daughter, Joyce.

An ASNaC from the days before the three-year Tripos, Philip Jenkins (Clare, 1970), who retired in 2012 after many years at Pennsylvania State University, has recently written in with news of a blog-post in which he reflects on the sometimes unexpected ways in which his training in ASNC informed his later research into global Christianity (patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2013/02/the-dark-ages).

Apologies if we haven't managed to include your news this time: please do write to us, or visit, to tell us what you have been doing.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (all in 9 West Road unless otherwise stated)

ASNC Alumni Reunion:

28 September 2013, 5–7 pm drinks in the ASNC Common Room

University Festival of Ideas:

23 October – 3 November 2013, including a lecture by Professor Simon Keynes on 'Rivers as Frontiers' (details: cam.ac.uk/cambridge-festival-of-ideas)

Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture (at the British Academy, Carlton House Terrace, London):

26 November, 6 pm: Dr Richard Dance, 'Getting a Word In: Contact, Etymology and English Vocabulary in the Twelfth Century'

Quiggin Lecture:

Thursday 5 December 2013, 5 pm: Dr Mark Stansbury, NUI Galway

ASNC Society Black-tie Dinner (at Christ's College):

Saturday 18 January 2014, 7 pm (contact ko302@cam.ac.uk to book)

Chadwick Lecture:

Thursday 13 March 2014, 5 pm: Professor Margaret Clunies Ross, University of Sydney

Kathleen Hughes Lecture (at Hughes Hall):

Monday 28 April 2014, 5.45 pm: Professor Nancy Edwards, Bangor University

ASNC Summer Garden Party:

Wednesday 18 June, 6 pm: Trinity College, Fellows' Bowling Green

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

From the ASNC Alumni Outreach and Fundraising Committee

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 (asnc.cam.ac.uk/alumni/index.htm).



Chris Bissell (Jesus, 1969) and Antony Harvey (St Catherine's, 1977) at the alumni reunion



Richard Dance in action at the 2011 Festival of Ideas