Organizers:

Sarah Crawford
Jamie Dunk
Peter Hobbins
Chris Holdridge
Lizzie Ingleson
Matt Kennedy
Louise Prowse
Tillie Stephens

Special Thanks:

Department of History
School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry
Barbara Caine
John Gagne
Andrew Fitzmaurice
John Hirst

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM
28 November, 2012

Registration: from 9:00
Quad Alcove

Conference Welcome: 9:30
Barbara Caine, Head of School
Lecture Theatre S 224

First Morning Panels, 9:45-11:15

A: Nineteenth Century Moralities Room S225

Chair: Peter Hobbins

The British Antivivisection Agitation and the Fear of Premature Burial in the Long Nineteenth Century: Is There a Connection?
Greg Murrie

Going Nowhere?
Pieter Koster

Roger Casement, Humanitarianism, and Sexuality
Sarah Kennedy Bates
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B: Women in Negotiation  Room S227

Chair: Tillie Stephens

Divorce on the Basis of Cruelty in Late Medieval York
Sarah Crawford

‘Runaway Girls’: The Queensland Government and Aboriginal Women’s Labour
Eirini Cox

Glorified, Vilified and Saved: A Modern Working Girl’s Trip to Melbourne
Dierdre O’Connell

Morning Tea, 11:15-11:45

Second Morning Panels, 11:45-12:45

A: Politics and Governance  Room S225

Chair: Lizzie Ingleson

How the Grand Countess Matilda of Tuscany Replaced the Rules of the Salian King Henry IV with Her Own
Penny Nash

The Honour of the Crowd: Anti-Convict Protest and the Ontologies of Freedom and Governance in the Cape Colony and New South Wales
Chris Holdridge

B: Military Complexities  Room S227

Chair: Matt Kennedy

The Reporting of Suicides of Rejected Volunteers in Australia during the First World War
David Garner

Intimidating History: Kokoda - Myth and Fact in the 'Battle for Australia'
Angus Britts

Lunch, 12:45-2:00

Afternoon Panels, 2:00-3:30

A: Contesting Identities  Room S225

Chair: Sean Cosgrove

Between Loyalty and Disobedience: Soldiers in the Seventeenth Century Spanish Pacific
Stephanie Mawson

Reason and Insanity on Norfolk Island, 1840-44: the Limits of Reformation
Jamie Dunk

Proselytizing Perfection: Cultural Anarchism and the Quest for Moral and Physical Enhancement (Spain, 1930-37)
Micaela Pattison
2012 Annual History Postgrad Conference: Moving Histories

B: Projecting Australian Heritage

Room S227

Chair: Hugh Chilton

‘The Migrant Follows the Tourist’: Australian Immigration Publicity after World War II
Justine Greenwood

They Came in Chains to Build a Television Nation
James Findlay

Authentic Facades: How the Main Street Program ‘Beautified’ the Heritage Streetscapes of New South Wales Country Towns 1974-2010
Louise Prowse

Afternoon Tea, 3:30-4:00

Panel Discussion: Death of the Monograph?

Panelists:

Stephen Robertson, Department of History
Rhiannon Davis, History in the Making
Susan Murray-Smith, Business Manager, Sydney University Press
Megan Martin, Head of Collections and Access, Historic Houses Trust
Emma Grahame, Dictionary of Sydney
Lisa Murray, City Historian of Sydney

http://usydhistoryconference.wordpress.com

Closing Address
Andrew Fitzmaurice, Department Chair

Thesis Confessional
John Hirst, La Trobe University

Conference Dinner (RSVP Required)
Fountain 77, Glebe Point Road (see map)

7:00

Map of Conference Locations:
Abstracts (in order of the panels):

Greg Murrie, The British Antivivisection Agitation and the Fear of Premature Burial in the Long Nineteenth Century: Is there a Connection?

For nineteenth-century British antivivisectionists, who appealed to Continental models as examples of the deleterious effects unregulated vivisection could have in their own country, the ultimate nightmare that vivisection presented was symbolized in the use by the French physiologist Claude Bernard of curare, a drug which paralyzed the animal being vivisected in order to allow ease of vivisection, yet which had no anaesthetizing properties. The spectre of an animal in the process of vivisection, experiencing extreme pain but yet unable to register this, moved the Victorian imagination profoundly.

Contemporary with this, a growing fear developed in Britain in the nineteenth century, as in Continental Europe and America, of the possibility of premature burial. Anti-premature burial activists founded societies and journals devoted solely to lobbying for burial reform.

In this paper I examine the historical contexts of both the debate over the use of curare in vivisection and of the fear of premature burial, and also examine the parallelism of antivivisectionists’ self-identification with the curarised animal and fear of premature burial. Is it a historical accident that of at least four of the most prominent British antivivisectionists in this period, all four explicitly feared premature burial and took steps to prevent their own, one was the co-founder of the London Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial, and another lectured extensively around Britain to raise awareness of the issue?

Pieter Koster, Going Nowhere?

Ellen Augusta Chads (1837-1923) was an eighteenth century Australian writer, art critic and animal rights advocate whose work and life have been all but forgotten, and perhaps deservedly so. My paper recuperates her life, focusing on her self-representation as a respectable citizen of the Empire. Born in Jersey, married in Mauritius and living in Melbourne, she has family connections with naval and military arms of the empire. But the movement of her life was not just physical. She also suffered a loss of status through her husband’s cashiering from the army and his continual indebtedness resulting in court action.

Ellen Chads was a ‘reluctant’ mover, geographically, socially, and ideologically. Her moving story breathes life into the issues for which the ‘first wave feminists’ sought new solutions. She wrote in the 1880s and represents an opportunity to see life in that era through the eyes of one who lived it.

Sarah Kennedy Bates, Roger Casement, Humanitarianism, and Sexuality

Roger Casement (1864—1916), a knighted humanitarian imperalist-cum-radical Irish separatist, continues to be a controversial figure in the popular historical memory of Ireland, and in the scholarship surrounding humanitarianism and sexuality. Despite and perhaps because of this prominence, however, the impact of Casement’s movement between imperial spaces on changes in his political thought has been inadequately acknowledged, and his ideas characterized as incoherent contradiction. This paper takes Casement’s surviving diaries, reports and letters as serious documents for the examination of drastic change in his political thought, exploring the way in which experiences of imperial violence shaped his nationalist discourse and provided an internationalist framework for action. Whilst Casement’s public life suggests that he turned from a vehement pro-imperialist to a violent anti-imperialist in only three years, a close study of his writings will be used to argue that his change was neither sudden and hypocritical, nor conversely, a smooth trajectory of radicalization. Rather, Casement’s changing political thought and the relationship between his humanitarian imperialism and Irish separatism is best understood hermeneutically and as dialectical.

Sarah Crawford, Divorce on the Basis of Cruelty in Late Medieval York

Divorce on the basis of cruelty was rare in the later Middle Ages. Violence against wives was not typically considered to be the business of the various jurisdictions that constituted the medieval English legal system. While violence against wives does appear in equity and common law courts, it is only in ecclesiastical courts that the violence is considered in its own right. Abused wives could bring a suit against their husbands in the Consistory Court at York in order to be divorced a mensa et thoro.

The cases provide a wonderful insight into the unwritten rules governing the amount of force that was considered acceptable by the wider community. Witness depositions stress the well-known and public aspects of the violent incidents committed by errant husbands. These men had stepped outside the acceptable boundaries of behaviour that governed their communities.

This paper explores cases for divorce on the basis of cruelty brought before the Consistory Court at York from 1450 to 1600. The success of these cases depended on the plaintiff proving that her husband had violated the unwritten community rules regarding the treatment of wives. It is only through the transgression of these rules in the eyes of the witnesses called before the Court that acceptable and unacceptable levels of violence against wives can be established.

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Eirini Cox, ‘Runaway Girls’: The Queensland Government and Aboriginal Women’s Labour

Lily McKenzie, a young Jinibara girl, was working as a servant at Kilcoy Station, on Jinibara country, south-east Queensland, in 1899 when she fell pregnant and was ‘removed’ by the Chief Protector to the Magdalen Asylum at Woolloomin in Brisbane’s north. Over the next four years Lily was directed to work in various positions of domestic labour, including the commercial laundry at the Magdalen Asylum. Her movement, her body, and her labour were under the control of the newly established Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Archibald Meston, and, while in Brisbane, under the charge of the Aboriginal Protectress Mrs Frew. Lily McKenzie ‘ran away’, back to her country in March 1903, but, Mrs Frew intervened, and Lily was arrested and returned to Brisbane where her labour was in high demand.

Through Lily McKenzie’s story this paper will explore the role the Protectors played, and the power they held under the Aboriginals Protection and the Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897, an Act which aimed to control and colonise Aboriginal women’s labour by restricting movement, wages, and personal relationships under the guise of ‘protection’.

Dierdre O’Connell, Glorified, Vilified and Saved: A Modern Working Girl’s Trip to Melbourne

A ‘Harlem Nightclub’ – according to American club promoters of the 1920s – was a ‘coloured’ floorshow, ‘Negro jazz’ dance band and an exclusively white audience. The Plantation Club – where Australian talent scout Harry Muller discovered the Sonny Clay Orchestra – was Los Angeles’ premiere ‘Harlem Nightclub’. The term conjured up the fad for slumming that characterized the American Jazz Age. For a generation who delighted in pushing boundaries, racial transvestism was all the rage. Harry Muller wanted Australians to experience these liminal enchantments too. But in a nation founded on racial unity, would authorities stomach an entertainment born of ‘cultural miscegenation’?

By an act of semantic gymnastics, Muller wrangled entry visas for Sonny Clay’s ‘colored’ revue. But within days of their arrival, a government intelligence agency began scheming their deportation. Nine weeks into the tour, police raided a Melbourne house party and arrested six white women for ‘consorting’ with the musicians. Press reports of the subsequent trial unleashed a wave of moral panic. Authorities levered the scandal to tighten the Immigration Act, institutionalize wayward young women and eradicate, once and for all, the menace posed by undiluted ‘Negro’ jazz.

This paper will examine this scandal for the perspective of Edna Langdon, a 19 year old dancer and beauty queen arrested in the raid. Her life story offers insights into anxieties about the “weak-minded and frivolous women” derailing the White Australia mission.

Penny Nash, How the Grand Countess Matilda of Tuscany Replaced the Rules of the Salian King Henry IV with Her Own

What can a powerful woman do when there are no longer any rules – cajole, bully and go to war? In the latter half of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, when the king possessed uncertain power and the Church turned inwards desperately searching for a new identity, Countess Matilda held sway in Tuscany and north of the Appennines. Repudiating two husbands, defying the king and alloying herself with the pope, Matilda ruled a vast empire and fought for church reform engendering loyalty in her followers and fear in her enemies with both quick-witted and well planned strategic and military campaigns.

Chris Holdridge, The Honour of the Crowd: Anti-Convict Protest and the Ontologies of Freedom and Governance in the Cape Colony and New South Wales

In the period following a decision by Earl Grey and the Colonial Office in 1848 to expand convict transportation within Britain’s empire, the streets of Sydney and Cape Town were scene to large public protest meetings. Drawing on methods employed by British reform movements, petitions were signed, boycotts initiated, and effigies of colonial officials and opponents burnt. In the lead-up to the granting of settler self-government, colonial resistance to sending convicts was used to shame the British administration over the so-called ‘convict stain’ and highlight the importance of free institutions as a British birthright. Honour was central to rhetoric and sensibilities. As the Cape leader John Fairbairn threatened, colonists would ‘cut off all connexion with a Government incapable of protecting its own honour.’ This was not peculissionist intent, but an attack on perceived ministerial corruption. With the Queen upheld as faultless, colonial administrations were derided as dishonoring their duty to the Constitution and sound governance. Notions of civic virtue were integral to reimagining political order in the differing contexts of each colony, points of contention that pitted the paternalism of viceregal power against colonists as claimants for the scope of enfranchising rights.

David Garner, The Reporting of Suicides of Rejected Volunteers in Australia during the First World War

This paper examines reporting of suicides and suicide attempts by those who had been rejected for enlistment in the AIF. These form a strategic research site, through which to examine the social conditions surrounding recruitment, rhetorically deployed expressions of the ideology of male citizenship, and the meanings ascribed to death in war. In reports of these suicides, the frustration of a man’s desire to enlist, to dutifully serve, and to accept self-sacrifice for family, nation, and empire, when combined with acts of social condemnation directed towards him, were articulated as comprehensible – if not morally approved – rationale for his attempted or successful suicide.
2012 Annual History Postgrad Conference: Moving Histories

Angus Britts, Intimidating History: Kokoda - Myth and Fact in the 'Battle for Australia'

In recent weeks yet another prominent Australian military historian, Professor David Horner, has been subjected to public criticism for suggesting that the Japanese were never serious in their contemplations of a full-scale invasion of the Australian mainland during the course of World War II. Politicians, the Returned Services League and other interested parties have labelled Horner as disparaging the memory of the Kokoda campaign in much the same fashion as they did so with Peter Stanley and others some years ago. Much of this criticism can be traced to the so-called 'Battle for Australia' genre. The question at issue is what does this genre truly represent. Does it seek to pursue real history, or stand guard over national myth? And in doing so, is it not the case that the genre in question is actually ignoring other more valid wartime threats to Australian national security as a result of its apparently blinkered defence of the invasion concept?

Stephanie Mawson, Between Loyalty and Disobedience: Soldiers in the Seventeenth Century Spanish Pacific

The role of soldiers within the colonisation of the Pacific during the seventeenth century is not as straightforward as the current historiography would suggest. Far from the image of the cavalier Spanish conquistador motivated by the pursuit of personal wealth, the soldiers engaged in the conquest of the Pacific were poor, underfed, often criminals sentenced to hard labour and frequently natives of the region themselves. This conference presentation will examine expressions of both loyalty and disobedience amongst the soldiers who were engaged in the conquest, religious conversion and settlement of Pacific territories. Thrown into situations of violent confrontation with rebellious communities, confronted by excessive isolation and precarious conditions, their loyalty to the empire was sorely tested on a day to day basis, leading to constant problems of desertion, not to mention mutiny. While soldiers were ultimately indispensable to the project of colonisation in the Pacific, their loyalty to this project could never be assumed. Loyalty became a precious commodity which soldiers could withdraw at any time; when they did so they destabilised the imperial project. Inevitably, this story challenges not only our conception of the identity of the ordinary soldiers that conquered the territories of the Pacific, but also the immutability of empire in its own right.

Jamie Dunk, Reason and Insanity on Norfolk Island, 1840-44: the Limits of Reformation

In May, 1842 Edward Breen confronted the commandant of Norfolk Island with a knife, demanding a pardon. None forthcoming, he soon stabbed another prisoner while he lay asleep; was imprisoned, subjected to several weeks' observation on the suspicion he was feigning, and sent to the asylum in Sydney. The surgeon had to refer to the records to find that Breen had been frequently punished during the last three years for idleness, insolence and assault, and spent 'the greater part of the day alone, in his Garden'. He had been considered of unsound mind for two years, thought harmless. He lived amongst men convicted and re-convicted, obliged under the experimental Mark System to obtain freedom through restraint and self-control. For the insane, who would never achieve freedom under such a system, there was no plan, only to return the 'very flagrant' to the mainland.

This paper will explore the ways in which insanity was understood in a penal settlement, within an experimental regime of self-regulation, idealism and discipline. In a natural, island prison driven by reason and society, a well-alienated man like Breen might be left, at large for many months, mostly alone, thinking of freedom. What could this mean?

Micaela Pattinson, Proselytizing Perfection: Cultural Anarchism and the Quest for Moral and Physical Enhancement (Spain, 1930-37)

Spanish anarchists embraced eugenics, presenting it as a crucial component of the revolution and a cultural base for the new stateless society that it would bring. The centrality of ideas about heredity to anarchist engagement with questions of health and sexuality presents an important challenge to the historiography of eugenics; it tests the assumption that eugenics, by definition, calls for the intervention of the state into the private lives of its citizens. In this paper I argue that 'anarchist eugenics' emerged from and superseded an existing neo-Malthusian tradition and was successful because it appealed to the individualists ideals of self improvement and the cultivation of intellect and spirit, and to an existing aesthetic culture that glorified the healthy body in its natural state.

Justine Greenwood, 'The Migrant Follows the Tourist': Australian Immigration Publicity after World War II

After World War II people around the world were on the move and the Australian government was determined to attract their attention by positioning Australia 'firmly inside the migrant horizon'. This paper explores those initial years of recruitment across Britain and then Europe, as the Department of Information rushed to create publicity worthy of selling Australia on the world stage. Previous research has considered this publicity largely as a response to the needs of the immigration program. Through the use of previously unopened files relating to the international tourism ambitions of the Department of Information, this paper argues that immigration and tourist publicity were seen as linked. As a consequence, immigration publicity was not produced in isolation but rather as part of a much broader international publicity campaign pursued by the Department. Its desire for a coordinated national image across immigration and tourism can be seen as a precursor to more recent government plans to create a national 'brand'. The difficulties faced by the Department in attempting to produce publicity that both attracted and informed migrants continues to be an unresolved issue for governments trying to align multiple images.
James Findlay, They Came in Chains to Build a Television Nation

After much delay television was transmitted into Australian homes in 1956. Though initially heavily reliant on America content, by the early 1960s broadcasters began tentatively producing dramatic serials that fictionalised Australian stories. For both the ABC and ATN-7 convict histories provided narrative inspiration for these early dramatisations. These forgotten serials and the spate of popular historical mini series that followed presented a vision of convict life that countered the dominant mode of convict representation as brutalised innocents. By celebrating the exploits of the emancipist class these re-imagined histories reflected a new and robust nationalism emerging within the context of a populace awakening from a social ‘amnesia’ with regard to Australia’s convict heritage.

Louise Prowse, Authentic Facades: How the Main Street Program ‘Beautified’ the Heritage Streetscapes of New South Wales Country Towns 1974-2010

One of the most dramatic transformations of Australian country towns occurred in the 1990s, as they found new ways of connecting with their pasts. The Main Street Program was introduced in 1988 with the aim of revitalising town centres through physical, economic and design initiatives. This paper explores how the Main Street Program was implemented in a context of fear of decline and how heritage came to mean beautification in country towns. Drawing from the experiences of five New South Wales country towns, it investigates how broader attitudes towards heritage came to be manifested in a town’s main street.

While local historical museums declined in popularity during the 1980s, heritage walks increasingly became the preferred way to experience the past in country towns. With this increased focus, towns became uncomfortable with their cladded, modern facades and cringed at the physical markers of long-term decline. The NSW Heritage Council provided funding for ‘main street’ studies and conservation. Restored buildings, street furniture and medleys of heritage colours assimilated the main streets to an imagined authentic ‘historic character’. The Main Street Program made a specific past more accessible and provided new ways to engage with it. In their endeavour to defy decline, country towns looked to their pasts for distinction and found a shared standard of aesthetic beauty in heritage.