INSTITUTE OF
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF
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UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

IHR Winter Conference 2018

Home: new histories of living

8-9 February 2018
Wolfson Conference Suite
Institute of Historical Research
Malet Street
WC1E 7HU

www.winterconference.blogs.sas.ac.uk

Thursday 8 February

09:00am	**Registration & Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
09:30am	**Welcome** (Wolfson Room I) **Jo Fox** (Institute of Historical Research)
09:45am Plenary lecture 1	*A social democratic microcosm: St Mary's Estate, Woolwich* **Owen Hatherley** (Architectural historian and journalist)
10:45am	**Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
11:15am Panel session 1 **Reconstructions: imagining domestic experience**	**Convenor**: Catherine Richardson (University of Kent) *Digital imaging, imagining and imitation of historic interiors* **Graeme Earl** (King's College London) *Research to re-creation: The practicalities of physically recreating historic interiors* **Charles Kightly** (Historical Interiors and Exhibitions Consultant) *Dream kitchens, 1600-1850* **Sara Pennell** (University of Greenwich)
1:15pm	**Lunch** (Wolfson Room II) *10 minute object biographies: stories behind 3 household items* (Room TBC)
2:30pm Plenary lecture 2	*House and home in early modern London* **Vanessa Harding** (Birkbeck, University of London)
3:30pm	**Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
4:00pm Panel session 2 **Rooms: furnishing the idiosyncrasies of private life**	**Convenor**: Sonia Solicari (The Geffrye. Museum of the Home) *The 'other' side of the kitchen: the political liveliness of the domestic* **Rachael Scicluna** (University of Kent) *The servants' bedchamber in the late 18th century imagination* **Tessa Chynoweth** (University of Birmingham) *Kitchen spaces and places in the mid 19th century: the evidence of inventories* **Lesley Hoskins** (Royal Holloway, University of London)
6:00pm	**Conference Reception** (IHR Common Room)

February 9 February

09:00am	**Registration & Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
09:30am	**Welcome** (Wolfson Room I) **Philip Carter** (Institute of Historical Research)
09:45am Plenary lecture 3	*Finding Home in Institutions: Inside Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* **Jane Hamlett** (Royal Holloway, University of London)
10:45am	**Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
11:15am Panel session 3 **Home-work: reframing gendered spaces**	**Convenor**: Lynne Walker (Institute of Historical Research) *Homes or institutions? Communal "homes" for single men in early 20th century Finland* **Laika Nevalainen** (European University Institute) *Try This at Home: Housing and Identity in 19th century London* **Lisa C. Robertson** (University of Warwick) *"A bit of place": home, work and gender in Victorian surveys of working-class neighbourhoods* **Emily Cuming** (Liverpool John Moores University)
1:15pm	**Lunch** (Wolfson Room II) Lightning workshop on using 3D for domestic research (Room TBC)
2:15pm Plenary lecture 4	*Title TBC* **Dan Cruickshank** (Architectural historian, writer and television presenter)
3:15pm	**Refreshments** (Wolfson Room II)
3:45pm Panel session 4 **Dream Homes: envisioning alternative future for residential experience**	**Convenor**: Elizabeth Darling (Oxford Brookes University) *Municipal Dreams* **John Boughton** (Municipal Dreams) *Suburbia: where the suburbs meet utopia* **Alistair Fair** (University of Edinburgh) *Bohemian Bedsits, Radical Squats and Gay Gentrification: Queer Homes Beyond London from the 1960s to the 2000s* **Alison Oram (**Leeds Beckett University)
5:45pm	**Rapporteur address** **Alison Blunt** (Queen Mary University of London)
6:05pm	**Conference close** **Jo Fox** (Institute of Historical Research)

Abstracts

Plenary Speakers

Owen Hatherley (Architectural historian and journalist)
A social democratic microcosm: St Mary's Estate, Woolwich

In the bombed out area around Woolwich dockyard in south-east London is a large council estate that has included within it practically every facet of the post-war housing experience: a comprehensive development project of the late 1940s built by direct labour, ambitious Corbusian towers, system-built points, demolished deck-access Brutalist complexes, 1980s self-build, recent Housing Association regeneration and speculative towers. It is also where I lived between 2011 and 2017. Here I will discuss the ways in which the estate developed along with fashions in architecture and shifts in sociology, and my experience of it as a place to live.

Vanessa Harding (Birkbeck, University of London)
House and home in early modern London

Almost every aspect of house and home in early modern London was affected by the capital's unprecedented demographic and economic growth and the increasing divergence of experience of rich and poor. Thousands of new houses were built and many existing properties altered and subdivided in response to the demand for accommodation. An emerging urban 'middling sort' enjoyed secure, comfortable dwellings furnished with an increasing array of domestic goods, while poorer people crowded into tenements and lodgings, sharing access and facilities with strangers and moving on frequently. Household composition was affected by high urban mortality rates, by changing patterns of marriage and remarriage, and by the increasing prevalence of domestic service.

London's evolving economy meant that fewer homes were also workplaces, husbands and wives worked separately, and apprenticeship declined in relative terms. In these circumstances it may seem that 'house' and 'home' had no stable meaning or connotation, but it is clear from a range of contemporary sources that some assumptions persisted: the idea of the autonomous household; the role of the household head; hierarchies of age and gender; the importance of family and kinship; a spectrum of private and public spaces. This paper will trace continuities and changes in London homes, houses and households between *c.* 1500 and 1700.

Jane Hamlett (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Finding Home in Institutions: Inside Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England

This talk will explore the influence of ideas of home and domesticity in Victorian and Edwardian England by showing how they informed the management and material worlds of institutions. Focusing on 'lunatic asylums' (as they were known to contemporaries), lodging houses and public schools, the talk will consider how domesticity was fashioned differently for the poor and working men, middle-class boys and girls and the mentally ill from both groups.

The talk will draw on an archival survey of case-study institutions in London and the South East, conducted as part of the recent ESRC-funded project 'At Home in the Institution'. While asylum attendants, lodging house authorities and head teachers often deployed domestic ideals for institutional ends, these were not always well received by inmates. The role of home in the emotional lives of patients, lodgers and schoolchildren will also be considered, and the question of whether it was ever possible to feel at home in an institution in this era.

Dan Cruickshank (Architectural historian, writer and television presenter)

Title and abstract TBC

Panel Speakers

Reconstructions: imagining domestic experience

Graeme Earl (King's College London)

Digital imaging, imagining and imitation of historic interiors

This paper will explore the methods employed to digitally capture, represent and recreate historic interiors. It will use examples from a range of archaeological and historical contexts to discuss the opportunities offered by digital approaches and in particular concepts of realism in terms of multimodal representations of the past. The paper will also place this digital simulation in the context of imagined pasts, and of the focus of such work on high-status and ceremonial spaces. Finally, the paper will identify and critique new opportunities for place-making in the virtual world, through different forms of interaction.

Charles Kightly (Historical Interiors and Exhibitions Consultant)

Research to Re-Creation: The practicalities of physically recreating historic interiors

Over the last 27 years, the author of this paper has undertaken the re-creation of more than 30 historic interiors in Wales, England, Belgium and Scotland. These have ranged from a corner of a single room to a section of a 15th century Flemish village, and in period from the 13th century to the 1970s, with a concentration on the late mediaeval and early modern periods and on beds and wall hangings. This paper will briefly address the practicalities of the work, including:
  • Recreation or evocation, set-dressing or fake: how accurate should we be?
  • How accurate can we be?
  • Researching and using the sources: contemporary documents and their pitfalls; contemporary depictions, how reliable?; the vital role of original examples of furniture and textiles.
  • The crucial importance of sympathetic craftspeople.
  • What messages should we convey?
  • Interactive beds and dressing up clothes; education and historic interiors.

Sara Pennell (University of Greenwich)

Dream kitchens, 1600-1850

Kitchens are one of the most re-worked spaces in contemporary dwellings. Such re-making is fuelled by a panoply of resources for imagining (if not realizing) one's 'dream kitchen': from dedicated magazines, to showroom model kitchens to Pinterest boards, the ideal kitchen is a zone of (often unsated) consumer desires. Kitchens are also still very much seen as the emotional and productive hub of (western) households: the dream kitchens promoted through these media also plot the prevailing norms around social and emotional networks and labour in home-making.

Until recently, it was only the late 19th and 20th-century western kitchen that was seen to contribute historically to such contemporary readings: the pre-modern kitchen was all too often read as an unchanging and (mostly) functional space that 'we' remodeled as we became 'modern'. But early moderns imagined the kitchen as a moral and perfectible space in no less complex ways than us, emphasizing it as a site where order and oeconomy had to prevail for households not to descent into 'meer bedlam' (Mary Astell). In this paper I will explore the media by which such ideals were propagated and consumed and what such idealisations – especially cookery book frontispieces and experimental model kitchens – can tell us about the technological shifts and social engineering shaping the discourses of home-making around the pre-Victorian kitchen.

Rooms: furnishing the idiosyncrasies of private life

Rachael Scicluna (University of Kent)
The 'other' side of the kitchen: the political liveliness of the domestic

This paper is concerned with issues of agency and resistance that arise out of the ways in which older lesbians engage with the larger structures of institutional power. It aims to show, through various types of power relations, how older lesbians have resisted and transgressed social inequalities by politicising seemingly trivial domestic practices across their life course. Within this context, the kitchen transforms into a contested and subversive social space that challenges the hegemonic power of heteronormativity and the state, and where a new consciousness is created from the fringes of society. To address this complexity, I look at how contemporary politics, discourse and policy portray a 'good family' as one which is heterosexual and economically active within the labour market. This political and social context is core in unravelling how the dominant normative family constructs are inculcated in public consciousness by political discourse that corresponds to the ideal representation of the kitchen-as-hub. In this paper, the kitchen emerges as a site of transition and transformation, where new social relations and rights are negotiated and an alternative notion of gender is performed and constructed along the way.

Tessa Chynoweth (University of Birmingham)
The servants' bedchamber in the late 18th century imagination

Beds and bedchambers have been recognised as important historical spaces, and to register significant aspects of a particular culture's material priorities, bodily boundaries, and historically-specific temporal priorities and domestic practices. Servants' bedchambers have somehow been neglected from this analysis, and assumed to be low status rooms which simply reflected the subordination position of servants within the household. Through an examination of the motif of the servants' bedchamber in contemporary prints, this paper argues that these spaces be understood not simply as low-status rooms via-a-vis those of their masters and mistresses, but as rooms which existed alongside other types of 'class' and gendered spaces in the contemporary imagination. Building on recent work which has demonstrated the power of representation, particularly of the working poor and of the 'imagined interior', this paper argues that these images offer important insight into this most elusive of spaces, and demonstrate the complexities of the co-habitation of different 'sorts' of people at a time when latent class- identities were crystallising through deep-rooted and developing understandings of the meaning of 'home'.

Lesley Hoskins (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Kitchen spaces and places in the mid 19th century: the evidence of inventories

We know a lot about 19th century living rooms but much less about the period's kitchens. Perhaps this is because kitchens were so complicated. They could have many functions: food preparation, cooking, and washing up; storage, laundry, personal washing, cleaning; often they accommodated eating and leisure, or hospitality, or home-based work. Further, these core activities could be spread across a number of differently named rooms, while provision varied with matters such as wealth, occupation and geography.

Focused investigations of nineteenth-century kitchens have relied considerably on ideal (or demonised) representations and unoccupied house plans, but in this paper I try to get some grip on what people's kitchen arrangements were like in practice. The main source is a group of about 350 household inventories, from 1841-1881, relating to the homes of people of varied social, economic, occupational, and geographical backgrounds. On the one hand I interrogate the series as a whole in a search for broad typical patterns of spatial, terminological, and material provision for 'kitchen' functions. On the other hand I look closely into the arrangements of several individual households in order to get a sense of the nature and place of kitchen rooms in those particular homes.

Home-work: reframing gendered spaces

Laika Nevalainen (European University Institute)

Homes or institutions? Communal "homes" for single men in early 20th century Finland

This paper examines different types of communal housing built and offered to groups of (mostly) men in early 20th century Finland from the perspective of gender, class as well as marital status and age. The examples of communal housing types include student homes, sailor's homes, homes for older men and municipal working-class housing built for single men. Firstly, the paper discusses the aims and motivations behind the setting up these different types of "homes" as well as their practices and material culture. Secondly, the paper looks at how home was understood within the context of these "homes" and how home was used as an educational tool. Specific attention is paid to how the idea of home as well as the practices, spaces and material culture of the homes were gendered. Thirdly, by comparing and contrasting the elements and practices of these communal "homes" with the needs and desires bachelors expressed in diaries, letters and memory writings, the paper asks whether these communal housing forms were in fact experienced as homes and in what ways was their homeliness limited.

Lisa C. Robertson (University of Warwick)

Try This at Home: Housing and Identity in 19th century London

This paper examines several forms of new urban housing that emerged in London during the latter half of the nineteenth century – for instance, model dwellings, women's hostels, apartment buildings, and settlement housing – and explores the ways that these architectural projects responded to specific shifts in patterns of women's labour. It focuses specifically on the ways that women's writing about these new forms of housing, both fiction and non-fiction, develops discursive strategies that grapple with economic, political, and cultural changes in the city. Drawing upon literature, as well as architectural plans and illustrations, this paper evaluates the ways these new housing projects served to complicate definitions of home and identity. Finally, this paper proposes that the literary responses to the housing of a previous era offer important resources for the present both materially and imaginatively.

Emily Cuming (Liverpool John Moores University)

"A bit of place": home, work and gender in Victorian surveys of working-class neighbourhoods.

This paper explores representations of domesticity and domestic interiors in the context of the remarkably diverse configurations of home to be found within working-class and labouring communities in mid-C19 Victorian London. Using Henry Mayhew's Morning Chronicle report (1849-50) as a case-study, I show how many present-day theorisations of home that explore the manifold and complex ways in which families and strangers dwell together, are present within this classic Victorian survey. I argue that Mayhew's often strange and disorienting representations of working-class interiors provide distinctive examples of the flexible (and sometimes inventive) ways in which homes were formed and shaped around the pressures and contingency of labour. With examples ranging from female lodging houses to merchant sailors' homes to a ratcatcher's parlour, the diverse domestic world of the urban Victorian working class offers a range of images and examples that can advance our understanding of 'new histories of living'.

Dream Homes: envisioning alternative future for residential experience

John Boughton (Municipal Dreams)
Municipal Dreams

Municipal Dreams is a blog about council housing which has around 230,000 views and 140,000 visitors each year. I will talk, firstly, about why I think the blog has attracted such a large and diverse audience and the advantages of its form as public history. I'll suggest that the blog's eclecticism in terms of subject matter and approach offers a freedom and outreach unavailable to academic historians. Secondly, I'll explore the deliberate oxymoron of the blog's name which captures a creative ambiguity in council housing's history as something both rooted and prosaic, idealistic and visionary – tenants' 'dream homes' which seemed drearily suburban to others, more utopian schemes later labelled dystopian, and, overall, lived experience dictated less by architecture than by politics and economics.

Alistair Fair (University of Edinburgh)
Suburbia: where the suburbs meet utopia

Barbara Jones declared in 1947 that 'It's easy to be funny about suburbs', considering them 'good for a laugh'. Yet the expansion of the suburbs is a significant development in twentieth-century architectural and urban history, albeit one which, in the case of private developments at least, has attracted less attention than contemporaneous public-sector housing developments. Partly the reason for this gap in the historiography is methodological, private developers being less likely than public authorities to have maintained records. Another reason relates to the perceived value of commercial developments and the extent to which architectural discourse has privileged the apparently more worthy (and potentially architect-designed) products of the public sector.

This paper will examine three examples of private-sector developments in Scotland. The first is the work of the firm Mactaggart and Mickel. Here, the 'alternative future' envisioned in the firm's advertising was of home-ownership in place of renting, in a bungalow or house with a garden in place of a tenement flat. The second example is an architect-designed flatted development in Edinburgh of 1936, which was intended to suggest a new, more ostensibly 'Scottish' pattern of suburban living. The final example turns to Glasgow in 1961, where the academic Edwin Morgan furnished his new suburban flat. What can his experience tell us of the way that 'alternative futures' were actually experienced in the post-war context of affluent consumerism?

Alison Oram (Leeds Beckett University)
Bohemian Bedsits, Radical Squats and Gay Gentrification: Queer Homes Beyond London from the 1960s to the 2000s

This paper draws on research for an AHRC-funded project Queer Beyond London, which explores LGBTQ life and community in four provincial cities: Manchester, Brighton, Plymouth and Leeds since 1965 (*www.queerbeyondlondon.com*). National trends of increasing acceptance punctuated by political and social hostility (e.g. to gay 'pretended families' in the 1980s) were felt in each city, but each developed distinct queer place-identities which inflected their LGBTQ homes and families.

Using oral histories, press reports and locally-gathered LGBT community sources, this paper will discuss how heteronormative concepts of home were contested in these cities. How does the type of housing stock (bedsits in bohemian Brighton, postwar family homes in Plymouth) shape queer domesticity? Is the development of gay gentrification in the large and diverse city of Manchester different from that of Leeds or Brighton?

The paper will show that the distinct character of LGBTQ community and politics in each city has had marked effects upon both the ideals and practical application of queer home-making within them. These range from the LGBT squats of the 1980s – often radical and separatist – to pioneering self-insemination networks of lesbian mothers, creating queer 'families of choice'.

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