



Seminar in Early Modern Economic and Social History Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, Lent 2014

The seminar meets every alternate Thursday in term at 5pm in the Linnett Room in Robinson College. We normally have dinner with the speaker afterwards. All welcome.
Convenors: Amy Erickson and Leigh Shaw-Taylor.



23rd January: Dave Postles (Leicester)

Capital accumulation in the English provinces in Tawney's century

The 'factors' of production – land, labour, capital – have been much re-examined. Brenner's 'agrarian capitalism' has been pursued (Whittle) and 'improvement' has been revisited. (Household) labour productivity and aggregate demand have been addressed by Woodward, then deVries and Muldrew. Exploration of capital formation and accumulation has concentrated on the City (Ashton, Brenner), more recently seduced by the dramatic representations and rhetoric of the City Comedies (Leinwand; Hawkes). Perhaps there are (at least) two *desiderata* for the provinces: *pace* Muldrew's 'culture' of obligation, assessments of the penetration of finance capitalism (i.e. on specialties); and perspectives on capital accumulation and deployment.

6th February: Alex Shepard (Glasgow)

Maintaining oneself in early modern England

This paper explores the responses provided by witnesses in the English church courts to questions about how they maintained themselves or got a living, drawing on a dataset of over 13,500 statements recorded between 1550 and 1728. The discussion reflects on the evidence of women's productive activity and on the discrepancies between male socio/occupational titles and what they actually did for a living, in order to argue that there was rather more gender convergence in the working lives of men and women than is conventionally acknowledged either by economic historians or by historians of women. The paper also argues that a gradual shift of emphasis from *having* to *getting* a living began to reshape concepts of work for both men and women from the later seventeenth century.

20th February: Samantha Williams (Cambridge)

The punishment of unmarried parents in London, 1695-1834

The parents of illegitimate children were liable to punishment by the church and secular courts. Under canon law church courts could hear sexual offences, including fornication, cohabitation, and bastardy. However, far more cases of bastardy were prosecuted by recognizance or indictment at quarter sessions. An Act of 1576 made provision for the imprisonment of unmarried mothers in the house of correction for one year as 'lewd women' where they could be set to hard labour. The failure of both parents to maintain their child could also result in commitment to gaol. This paper will examine the implementation of the law for bastardy in London between 1695 and 1834.

6th March: D'Maris Coffman (Cambridge)

The brewing industry in England revisited

Based on joint work with Richard Unger on a comparative history of British and Dutch brewing, this paper re-examines the trajectory of the English brewing industry in the late 17th and early 18th centuries against the experience of Dutch brewing. Particular emphasis is paid to how the London Company of Brewers lobbied the excise and how the advent of duties on malt and later hops affected the structure of the industry, especially since the wardens' accounts of the London Company of Brewers shed light on these efforts. Fifty-five years after the publication of Peter Mathias' seminal work, the paper ends by reflecting on why his account remains such an important study.

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