



Seminar in Early Modern Economic and Social History Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, Easter 2018

The seminar meets Thursdays at 5 pm in Room 12 of the History Faculty.

We have dinner with the speaker afterwards, to which all are welcome.

Convenors: Amy Erickson, Craig Muldrew, Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Paul Warde

26 April: Matthew Pawelski (Lancaster)

‘Women’, ‘Lads’ and ‘Copers’: Household, community, and the divisions of labour at the Derbyshire lead mines, c.1736 – 1765

Research based on account books from Miners Engine Mine, Derbyshire, shines light on the divisions of labour in an eighteenth-century workplace. The findings suggest continuities in the artisanal structures of the industrial workforce during the eighteenth century, and highlight the importance of household and community in determining the roles of age and gender groups.

3 May: Eleanor Robson (Cambridge)

Contested ground: Agricultural improvement in Hatfield Level, 1625-1660

Seventeenth-century drainage of the English fens was a flagship project of state-led ‘improvement’, which promised to alchemise unproductive wetland commons into profitable, enclosed terra firma. This paper examines how drainage was experienced and navigated by local people in the northern fens to illuminate how it produced differential improvement and contested environments.

10 May: Kathryn Gary (Lund)

The extreme seasonality of early modern casual labour and what it means for workers’ incomes: Sweden 1500-1830

Using observations of over 151,000 individuals’ workdays in the construction industry, this paper investigates individual work patterns, work availability, and the changes in work seasonality over time. The sample includes unskilled men and women as well as skilled craftsmen. Some are ‘full-time’, but even these do not work as many days as real wage models assume. Real wage methodology becomes more problematic the further into the past we look.

24 May: Tawny Paul (Exeter) and Jeremy Boulton (Newcastle)

Debtors’ schedules: a new source for understanding the economy in 18th-century England

Debtors’ schedules, or inventories of wealth produced in the wake of Debtor Insolvency Acts, constitute a significant and relatively unused source related to the economy of eighteenth-century England. This paper presents new research on the scope and significance of schedules. It explores their potential to provide new insights into wealth, credit and work, and considers their relationship to probate material.

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