

25 January 2024: Alexander Wakelam (Cambridge)

A Run on the Bank of the Person: A crisis in London's informal credit market, 1761

In the summer of 1761, London commerce appeared on the verge of collapse. Newspapers spoke of the end of trade, thousands were hurried into debtors' prison, and civic authorities demanded the immediate intervention of parliament. As quickly as the Compulsive Clause crisis arose – a result of misinterpretation of otherwise mundane insolvency legislation – it was forgotten, commerce restored unaltered as if nothing had occurred. This paper examines this previously unexplored panic in informal credit networks to reveal the surprising fragility of mid-century trade and highlight the contribution of population growth in the development of modern transactional mechanisms.

8 February 2024: Amy Erickson (Cambridge)

'Let not the flesh seduce thy soul, but remember these things well and learn to spell': London girls' education in the first half of the 18th century

Much has been written on the marked increase in literacy and publication of the later seventeenth century, especially among women, and on the girls' schools and educational tracts of the late eighteenth century. This paper uses a sampler – that quintessential emblem of female education – to explore the range of education for girls in the capital in the missing first half of the eighteenth century.

22 February 2024: Perry Gauci (Oxford)

Friends and Countrymen: The London private banker and eighteenth-century society

This paper examines the emergence of a distinctive London banking profession across the eighteenth century. While the business side of this important development has received much attention, this study will prioritize the social and cultural forces behind this process as a guide to wider metropolitan change. It will analyse a variety of exchanges between bankers and customers as the former sought both professional and individual advancement. Their experience can illuminate the broader interaction of the commercial and landed classes at a key stage of societal transition.

7 March 2024: Juan Rivas Moreno (London School of Economics)

Faith and Finance in the Early Modern World: The capital market of Manila and the financing of the Pacific Trade, 1668-1820

This paper reviews the role of endowment funds and religious associations in structuring the financing of the Pacific trade between Asia and Spanish America during the long eighteenth century. The city of Manila, the centre of this trade, evolved a model of trade finance different from the joint-stock East India companies or private networks and cultural coalitions, yet equally capable of solving the challenges of long-distance trade during the first wave of globalization.

The seminar meets **Thursdays at 5 pm in Room 11** of the History Faculty.
We normally have dinner with the speaker afterwards, to which all are welcome.

Conveners: Amy Erickson, Charmian Mansell, Craig Muldrew, Eamonn O'Keeffe

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