



**BASR**

British Association for  
the Study of Religions

*Bulletin*

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May 2009

## ABOUT THE BASR

The British Association for the Study of Religions, formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) Its object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through international interdisciplinary collaboration. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions. Membership of the BASR confers membership of the IAHR and the EASR.

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome,  
'The RAE is dead; long live the REF!'  
There were mixed results for scholars working in the study of religions and the fallout of the process, financial and emotional, will continue for some time. Will the new system be any more effective in quantifying research quality?

Professor Lewis Elton, father of the comedian and patriarch of quality and enhancement conferences, has noted that the best examination of quality occurs in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert M. Pirsig. Pirsig famously refuses to provide a definition for quality though he

argues it is possible to grasp it through a Zen-like direct experience of reality. Scholars of religion may recognise resonances of the essentialist-intuitive *verstehen* or eidetic intuition of early phenomenologists. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* has its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of publication this year. Pirsig explains that, despite its title, "it should in no way be associated with that great body of factual information relating to orthodox Zen Buddhist practice. It's not very factual on motorcycles, either." We must hope the REF across disciplines is properly associated with the full range of research undertaken in HEIs.

The REF will raise as many questions as did the revamped RAE, right up to the allocation and weighting of funding after the panels had judged the quality of each submission. Is it possible to measure the impact of publications on their readers? Will we avoid a pernicious nepotism of references to friends and self-references? Will the disbursement of research funding be fair, equitable and appropriate? Do we hear echoes of Orwell, 'Four legs good; two legs better' and a return to such simple questions and views as, is the author already well-known? does she or he work at a prestigious institution? Perhaps though, there will be new and effective ways to measure quality and impact. Flaws in old systems should not discourage us from aiming for the best in a new scheme.

Within this *Bulletin* our outgoing President, Marion Bowman, has provided the Association with a valuable summary of new directions and impetuses relevant to research in religious studies. The development of ERIH (European Reference Index for the Humanities) and A-HUG (The Arts & Humanities User Group) indicate clear efforts to identify quality publications in Humanities – and that this is a job easier to define than to accomplish. 'Third mission' – the dissemination of University activity to the wider community – is increasingly significant in government policy debate. Scholars in the study of religions need to promote and advertise widely our activities

in wider dissemination of our work through tools such as HEBCIS (Higher Education Business and Community Interactions Survey).

The executive of BASR would like to encourage colleagues within the association and outside to visit and use the BASR website <http://www.basr.ac.uk/> . Add it to your 'favourites/bookmarks' for easy access. Here, you will find information on a range of areas including our hosted journal *Diskus*, topical announcements, past copies of the *Bulletin*, occasional papers and links to partner organisations. You will also find our constitution.

One key element of the constitution is for members to play a role in the development and management of this charitable association by election of its officers. Graham Harvey is retiring as secretary because his term of office has expired. He cannot be re-elected and we therefore need a new secretary. Dermot Tredget's first three year term of office ends at the AGM but, subject to his agreement, he can be re-elected. Graham Harvey and Dermot Tredget, have been active and hard-working on behalf of members during their period of tenure. Indeed, an updated version of the 2007/8 accounts can be found in this edition of the *Bulletin*.

The executive also welcomes nominations for life members of the Association. Details and criteria are available on the website.

Secretary and treasurer nominations should be submitted before our next AGM to be held at our conference in Bangor in September: The relevant section of the constitution reads:

#### COMMITTEE

The notification of any General Meeting shall include intimation of any vacancies among the officers or members of the Committee occurring through expiry of their term of office, and shall call for nominations of members to fill those vacancies.

Nominations, which shall be in writing, signed by two members of the Association and accompanied by the assent of the members proposed, shall be in the hands of the Secretary before the General Meeting at which the vacancy falls to be considered. In the event of there being more valid nominations than places to be filled, a ballot shall be held of members present at the meeting.

**Please note: Secretary and Treasurer nominations forms are available on the website**

If either post is contested the ballot will be held at the AGM at the annual conference. The conference this year is being hosted

by Bangor University from 7-9 September. The exciting and broad title, 'Religions, Landscapes and Other Uncertain Boundaries' will bring creative and diverse papers. The call for papers is open until 1<sup>st</sup> June and the booking form must be completed by 24<sup>th</sup> July. We have already received a good number of postgraduate applications for bursaries (now closed).

Included within this *Bulletin* is a short article by Olav Hammer on the pressures faced by scholars in the study of religions to produce marketable, fund-focused research. Olav argues for the continuation of research that is not constructed by the immediate demands of funding bodies or political whims. We hope his paper will provoke some responses from colleagues so the conversation may be continued in future editions of the *Bulletin*.

There are also a small number of members publications listed at the end of this edition. We remain happy to publish lists of publications as they come and remind members that this is a simple and convenient way to disseminate at least the titles of the fruits of their labours.

Dominic Corrywright  
Helen Waterhouse

**BASR – 2009 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**  
***‘Religion, Landscapes and other Uncertain Boundaries’***

**School of Theology & Religious Studies – Bangor University – Wales - LL57 2DG**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**PROGRAMME DETAILS**

Religions, landscapes and other uncertain boundaries” draws attention to questions of the location and environment of religious activities. It suggests interests in the permeability of boundaries and even their transgression. All these terms may be treated as references to material, geographical locations and boundaries or, metaphorically perhaps, to the cultural contexts in which “religion” is practised and observed. Pilgrimages, sacred sites, religiously motivated environmentalism, built environments, worldview changing in the face of climate change, regionalism, nationalism, diasporas, globalisation, and many other possibilities emerge from the title.

**We invite offers of papers or panels. Department TRS, Bangor University, Gwynedd, Wales, LL57 2DG [b.schmidt@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:b.schmidt@bangor.ac.uk) The closing date for conference paper submission is 1<sup>st</sup> June. Programme enquiries should be sent to the local conference organiser, Dr Bettina Schmidt.**

**REGISTRATION DETAILS**

***Please register and pay in full by Friday 24th July in order to confirm accommodation and catering. You can use the paper form enclosed or, if you don't want to cut your Bulletin, download a form from the website.***

1. Conference with overnight accommodation: The full conference fee of £180 includes the registration and conference fee, all meals, conference reception, teas and coffees. En suite accommodation will be provided on the university campus which is a ten minutes walk from the conference venue. Ground floor rooms are available. Some rooms have been provisionally reserved on Sunday night (£32 extra) for delegates who might find it difficult to arrive at Bangor in time for the opening session on Monday at 4.00 pm. If you require a double room (£65) contact the Treasurer as soon as possible. Please see the conference page of BASR web site ([www.basr.ac.uk](http://www.basr.ac.uk)) for further details as they become available.

2. Conference Day Fee only: The registration and conference fee for attendance on a day basis is £83 for the two days or £43 per day. The day rate is charged from afternoon tea on one day to lunch on the next. This fee includes attendance at the conference, conference reception, buffet lunch, teas and coffees. For non-residents dinner is available on Monday and Tuesday evening at extra cost (see booking form below).

3. Deposit & Payment: Please include a deposit (non-returnable) of £45 with your booking form (£30 if booking on a day rate basis). The deposit will be deducted from the total conference fee. The balance should be paid by Friday 24th July. If you prefer to pay by credit card (which will attract a 5% transaction cost) please email the treasurer in advance for details. For security reasons do not E mail your credit card information.



### BOOKING FORM

Name(s) in capitals please, in the form you wish it to appear on your name badge:

Institution:

Address for correspondence:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Email:

May we include your name/email/institution on a conference participants list? Yes  No

6. Please tick the boxes to indicate which days you will be attending and accommodation requirements

	Conference Day Rate only WITH OR WITHOUT DINNER				Conference with Overnight Accommodation EN SUITE ROOM		
	NO DINNER		DINNER		INCL. CONFERENCE, BREAKFAST & DINNER		
[Sunday]					[Sun night B&B only]	[£32]	
Monday only	£43		£60		Mon night only	£88	
Tuesday only	£43		£68		Tues night only	£95	
Entire conference	£83		£125		Entire conference	£180 [£212]	

7. Are you vegetarian  vegan  other diet  if so please specify here

.....

8. Do you require a ground floor room?

9. Deposit enclosed £45 (Full Conference) or £30 (Day only)

10. Confirmation of registration will be sent by email.

11. Do you require a receipt? Yes  No

Please send your registration form and deposit cheque, payable to 'BASR' to:

Dermot Tredget (BASR Treasurer)  
Douai Abbey  
Upper Woolhampton  
READING Berkshire RG7 5TQ

Telephone: +44 (0) 118 971 5325  
E mail: basrconference@hotmail.co.uk  
BASR web site: www.basr.ac.uk



**BASR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**  
For the year ending 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008

<b>RECEIPTS</b>				<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
<b>General Fund</b>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>2007-8</i>	<i>2006-7</i>		<i>Notes</i>	<i>2007-8</i>	<i>2006-7</i>
				Internet Charges		0	-94
				Printing & Postage			
				Bulletin		-569	-408
				DISKUS & Papers		-100	0
				Committee Expenses	<i>v</i>	-1075	-379
<b>Balance at 16 Aug 2007</b>		<b>7667</b>	<i>7161</i>	EASR/IAHR Membership		-408	-367
Inland Revenue	<i>i</i>	517	0	Donation to IAHR/EASR		0	0
Subscriptions	<i>ii</i>	2849	2852	Bank Charges	<i>vi</i>	0	-42
Bulletin inserts		0	0	Insurance		-227	-198
DISKUS & Papers	<i>iii</i>	391	45	Conference subsidy	<i>vii</i>	-1000	-1317
Bank Interest	<i>iv</i>	782	415	<b>Balance in hand 15 Aug 2008</b>		<b>8827</b>	
		<u>12205</u>	<u>10473</u>			<u>12205</u>	
<b>Conference Fund</b>							
				2007 Conference		-	
<b>Balance at 16 Aug 2007</b>		<b>10305</b>		Expenses	<i>viii</i>	14552	
2007 Conference Receipts		7902		2008 Conference			
2008 Conference Receipts		7500		Expenses	<i>ix</i>	-161	
		<u>25707</u>		<b>Balance in hand 15 Aug 2008</b>		<b>10993</b>	
						<u>25707</u>	

**BALANCE SHEET as at 15th August 2008**

<b>Cash/Bank Accounts</b>			<b>Represented by:</b>			
Lloyds Current	1001	325	General Fund		8827	7667
CAF Cash	5565	7041	Conference Fund	<i>x</i>	10993	10305
CAF Gold	12814	10262				
PayPal Holding	410	344				
Petty Cash	29	0				
<b>Total</b>	<b>19819</b>	<i>17972</i>			<b>19819</b>	<i>17972</i>

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 15th AUGUST 2008**

<b>Balance as at 16th August 2007</b>	<b>17972</b>	<i>7560</i>
Total Receipts	19940	<i>16077</i>
Total Payments	-18093	<i>-5665</i>
Net Receipts/Payments	1847	<i>10412</i>
<b>Balance as at 15th August 2008</b>	<b>19819</b>	<i>17972</i>

**NOTES TO ACCOUNTS**

- i* 2006-2007 tax claim from 95 donors (106 gift aid)
- ii* 129 full, 9 life & 78 retired or student members (127 standing orders) Total members 216 £695 arrears
- iii* Includes £340 DISKUS copyright charge
- iv* Higher interest rates and larger sums held on deposit for longer
- v* Includes executive committee travel to represent BASR
- vi* Bank charges this year nil because covered by PayPal transaction charge
- vii* Represents subsidy for postgraduate bursaries
- viii* 2007 Edinburgh Conference Receipts £15,631 Expenses £15,450 Actual Surplus £181 (96 delegates)
- ix* 2008 York Conference Budget Receipts £9,595 Expenditure £9,188 Budgeted Surplus £407 (89 delegates)
- x* £9,188 of this will be paid out in expenses for current conference

## BASR WEBSITE NEWS

Graham Harvey has been busy developing the BASR website so that it now includes details about several aspects of the Association's activities.

For example you can:

- Access *DISKUS*, BASR's online journal.
- Download pdf copies of past *Bulletins*.
- Find details about this year's conference and past conferences.
- Catch up with news from EASR and IAHR
- Order Occasional Papers.
- And, of course, you can find details about the BASR, its membership and constitution and also read announcements.

Please take a moment to see what we have on offer.

Of particular significance at the moment is the need to nominate a new Secretary and a Treasurer. You will find nomination forms on the website.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is pleased to announce that there is now a searchable version of the AUDTRS (Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies) Handbook 2008 edition available online, in pdf format, hosted on our website:

<http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/audtrs/index.html>

Every academic working in a member department should have received an email informing them of the details of the username and password. If you have not, and would like access, please contact the Subject Centre on [enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk)

## The study of religion – an optimist's view

Olav Hammer

The bad news first: the study of religions as an academic field is in trouble. Our academic environment is driven by the most brutal form of social Darwinism. Of the thousands of eager students who every year enroll in entry-level classes, a mere fraction graduate. Of those, a much smaller number have the motivation, talent and financial backing to proceed to the next level and complete a Ph.D. Of these, again, only a small proportion manage to go on to yet another level in this struggle for survival and find a salaried employment. For many of those who do, endless administrative tasks, untold hours of teaching and massive amounts of unpaid overtime await.

Unless, of course, one strikes gold and funding should be forthcoming from one of the various external agencies. This is after all where most research comes from: incurring the fickle favors of funding agencies, too often regulated by bizarrely misapplied neoliberal ideologies, according to which we should fiercely compete with our friends and colleagues for the all-too-meagre sums available to the humanities.

And there is the rub: we have so little to compete with, in a world ruled by money. In the world of academia, the trend has increasingly gone toward what the Danish

minister of science, Helge Sander, without a trace of self-irony called "from idea to invoice". So what should we do to compete with our more fortunate academic colleagues, whose passionate interest in nanotechnology or semiconductors allows them to send in those bills that we so seldom are able to present to satisfied customers? Should we join the general trend? Perhaps offer to supply religious messages to be displayed on the Nokia mobiles of Catholic or Sunni subscribers? Or devise methods to slash the costs incurred by the Meccan authorities in connection with the hajj, and send the invoice to the Saudi government? Or more reasonably, throw ourselves like lemmings at funds earmarked for practical, instantly applicable research carried out in order to combat political extremism in Muslim milieus?

These are concerns that we have surely all shared, and I am certainly no exception. Nevertheless, I will suggest a different response than simply giving in to the *Zeitgeist* of immediate practicality and usefulness, and to the incessant clamor of "apply for more money or perish".

Firstly, because our discipline will wither and die if we all think with in terms of finances and research grants. If our

scholarly interests genuinely gravitate toward an investigation of the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in contemporary Islamic politics, so much the better. But surely there must be space for the historical, the exotic, the unusual and the not-so-practical as well. What would happen if not a single young scholar were to learn to read Ugaritic, or care about medieval Buddhist rituals? Would our field not become infinitely poorer by this loss?

Secondly, because our discipline, like any other human activity, is caught up in the contingency of history, and none of us can tell in advance what will be marketable ten or twenty years from now. Imagine a young graduate in 1975, scouting for a topic on which to spend the next four or five years, deciding to learn Persian and to do research on Shiite legal theory and practice. He or she would surely have been laughed at, or warned of the dire

consequences of choosing a path condemning one to life-long unemployment. A few years later, in-depth knowledge of Iranian legislation would have been considered an invaluable asset.

Let us therefore go against a global trend, and continue pursuing our deepest and most heart-felt interests. If we are truly outstanding at reading Ugaritic or understanding Buddhist rituals, our books will be published and jobs are still available. We may perhaps never be invited to join a major political think-tank, or receive multi-million grants to pursue our avocation. We will, however, have enriched our field, spent some of the best years of our life with a topic of endless fascination, and have dared to take that slim off-hand chance that Ugaritology, for some as yet unheard-of reason, will one day become a matter of vital interest to society.

**ERIH (European Reference Index in the Humanities)  
and A-HUG (The Arts & Humanities User Group)  
Marion Bowman**

At the 2008 AGM both ERIH (European Research Index in the Humanities) and A-HUG (The Arts & Humanities User Group) were mentioned in the presidential report. It is worth outlining the background to each, as they are directly related to the interests of religious studies as a subject,

and to the BASR and its membership.

Some may already be aware of the proposed European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH), an initiative originating with the European Science Foundation. The ERIH is an attempt to grade journals

in the humanities, proposing a league table of academic journals, with premier, second and third divisions. According to the European Science Foundation, ERIH “aims initially to identify, and gain more visibility for, top-quality European Humanities research published in academic journals in, potentially, all European languages”. It is hoped “that ERIH will form the backbone of a fully-fledged research information system for the Humanities”. There is some concern, however, that the subtext is that ERIH could provide funding bodies and other agencies in Europe and elsewhere with an allegedly ‘exact’ measure of research quality; thus if research is published in a premier league journal it will be recognized as first rate, if it appears somewhere in the lower divisions, it will be rated accordingly. Furthermore it is feared that this may have funding implications. The British Academy, for example, concluded that “the European Reference Index for the Humanities as presently conceived does not represent a reliable way in which metrics of peer-reviewed publications can be constructed” (*Peer review: The challenges for the humanities and social sciences*, September 2007: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/reports/peer-review>).

In February 2008 a meeting was organised by AHRC to discuss the widespread dissatisfaction with ERIH. The current BASR executive initially did not receive an invitation to this event, as the AHRC records

were out of date (despite our wonderful website!), but, alerted to the meeting by AUDTRS, it was possible to contact AHRC who invited our opinion as part of their consultation – for example, we pointed out that a number of highly significant journals relevant to Religious Studies not only did not appear in the first category, but did not appear at all.

After consultation, Professor Robin Osborne (University of Cambridge), expressed the concerns of a number of learned societies and subject groups in relation to ERIH in a letter to the AHRC in August 2008. First among these was the lack of challenge to ‘ESF claims that ESF rankings are not qualitative’:

when the ESF describes ‘A-rated’ journals as ‘High ranking, international level publication’ and ‘B-rated’ journals as ‘Standard, international level publication’ no ordinary reader can understand the distinction between ‘high-ranking’ and ‘standard’ as other than qualitative.

Secondly, it was pointed out that many journal editors, even those with the highest ranked journals, would find the ERIH system problematic.

There is a wide variation in the impact and quality of articles even in the very best journals. A good proportion of work rejected by the most

highly rated journals and appearing in less highly rated ones is as good or better than work published in the most highly rated ones. Anything which suggests that the continuum of journal publication divides into distinct categories and gives those categories labels that can only be interpreted as a hierarchy is bound to coerce authors into aiming their submissions more exclusively at the category at the top of the hierarchy. But for editors of A-rated journal to be inundated with contributions which are an imperfect fit for the journals aims makes their task very much more difficult. The more editors are overwhelmed with contributions, the more difficult it becomes for them to set up appropriate peer review and the more likely it is that the quality of publication becomes more uneven. . . . It has been noted that in the social sciences, where some fields have themselves encouraged the idea that there is a hierarchy of journals in a field, the most influential papers turn out not to be published in the journals at the top of that hierarchy.

The third point related to the importance of peer review, commenting that the experience of the RAE underlines the importance 'peer review not of journals in the abstract but of particular research outputs.' The letter ended by calling upon the AHRC to

take the following actions:

- a) to advise all Arts and Humanities subject associations and learned societies that, while the ERIH descriptions of journal categories A and B continue to indicate that A journals are of a higher standard than B journals it cannot support the ERIH and that it is requesting of the ESF that no journal edited in the UK be listed in the ERIH rankings;
- b) to undertake a campaign within the members of the ESF to demonstrate that the aims of the ERIH would be better met by constructing a system for robust peer review based on an extension of the peer-review network which the AHRC is itself establishing.

On 28 May 2009 there will be an AHRC Consultation (at which BASR will be represented) where points for discussion will include maintaining 'the distinctive and valued role of arts and humanities research' and 'some concerns in the academic community about how to express the wider impact and value of academic research.'

The idea of A-HUG (The Arts and Humanities User Group) was mooted in August 2008 by Robin Osborne in an email to various subject groups and associations:

When Universities' decisions were independent, academic depart-

ments needed to link with other departments within their universities and to acquire support from their subject groups from outside their universities. Large subject associations developed to supplement existing learned societies in offering this. Universities' independence has been very seriously eroded as more and more of their activities are directly funded by national and international bodies or monitored by government. Individual academic departments continue to need support from subject groups, but those subject groups themselves need to be linked to each other if they are to exercise any influence upon the policies pursued by the outside funding bodies.

Born out of the co-ordinated resistance mounted by arts and humanities subject groups to the ESF initiative The European Reference Index for the Humanities, A-HUG, the Arts-Humanities User Group, gives the academic community in the Arts and Humanities a chance to speak with united voice on the major issues and challenges facing University education. It expects to make a wide range of interventions both to stimulate debate and action in areas where action is needed but no initiative is being taken, and to

offer rapid and representative reactions to initiatives taken elsewhere. Aware that national and international funding bodies come under pressure from many directions, A-HUG seeks to ensure that initiatives and decisions that are taken command the confidence of the arts and humanities community in UK universities.

A-HUG (The Arts & Humanities User Group) was born out of extreme disquiet about ERIH, but this highlighted a need in the broader context of rapid and far-reaching developments in Higher Education for concerted action. The *modus operandi* for the group that has been agreed is that when issues relating to arts and humanities arise, either in the media or at policy level, a response of some kind is drafted and sent to A-HUG participants, who must respond within a particular time limit if they want their association's name to be appended to the communication. This means that there will always be consultation before we commit to any public statement or communication. BASR feels that this is a worthwhile initiative, and will help to give Religious Studies a voice in the broader context of UK Higher Education.

## **'THIRD MISSION' and HEB CIS**

(Higher Education Business and Community Interactions Survey)

Marion Bowman

Some of you may have become increasingly aware of the phrase 'Third Mission' in recent years, and wondered what it was and why your institution has started to ask you about it! While research and teaching count as our first and second mission activities in higher education, third mission is very much about the dissemination of university activities, teaching or research, to the wider community. Current emphasis is being put on the 'impact' universities have on the economy as well as society as a whole and information on this is gathered annually through the Higher Education - Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) Survey.

As one discovers on the HE-BCI site, surveys have been published since 2001 and they

provide information on a range of activities, from the commercialisation of new knowledge, through the delivery of professional training, consultancy and services, to activities intended to have direct social benefits. 'Business' in this context refers to public and private sector

partners of all sizes and sectors, with which HEIs have a broad spectrum of interactions. 'Community' in this context is taken to mean society as a whole outside the HEI, including all social, civic and cultural organisations and individuals. (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/buscom/hebcis/>).

The information collected for HEB CIS (Higher Education Business and Community Interactions Survey) goes to HEFCE; this information is then used to help calculate HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund) money, so there is some similarity with the relationship between the RAE and the QR money institutions get. Although we in Religious Studies may not be generating huge income from the commercialisation of our knowledge, the chances are that some of us do participate in third mission activity through community activities like public lectures. It is worth keeping a record of such activities, as they can be used for HEB CIS returns, and can help boost the Arts and Humanities presence in Third Mission figures.

**Other useful sites in connection third mission and knowledge transfer are:**

The Government review on HEI-Business interaction by Richard Lambert:  
[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/lambert\\_review\\_business\\_university\\_collab.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/lambert_review_business_university_collab.htm)

AHRC Knowledge Transfer Strategy:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Pages/KnowledgeTransferPolicy.aspx>

HEFCE's view:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/>

**The IKT's Research Into Knowledge Transfer Practice seminar focussed on engaging arts and humanities with knowledge exchange is to be held at the Institute of Physics, 76 Portland Place, London on 4 June 2009.**

This is the second of a series of research seminars to be organised by the Institute of Knowledge Transfer (IKT) for academic researchers, knowledge transfer (KT) practitioners and business to explore research into approaches into developing a better understanding of KT by considering particular themes or topics in depth.

Our keynote speaker is Clare Morgan, Fellow of Kellogg College and director of the University's graduate programme in creative writing. Clare will be leading a session on 'Poetry Workout - Thinking Beyond the Facts', looking at what poetry brings to business and exploring alternative approaches to think about what you do and the decisions that you make, and managing and thinking on your job.

Other speakers include:

- Derek Hales, Principal Lecturer in Digital Media Design at the University of Huddersfield on the Artist in the Science Laboratory;
- Philip Morris, York and Caroline Hyde from Anglia Ruskin University on Knowledge Transfer and the Humanities;
- Professor Andrew Linn, Sheffield on managing KT in the Arts and Humanities.

The final programme will be announced during May.

Admission to the seminar is free to IKT members and £30 is payable by non-members on the day (£25 if paid in advance) . If you are interested in attending or would like to reserve a place, contact Linda Baines (email: [Linda.Baines@ikt.org.uk](mailto:Linda.Baines@ikt.org.uk) /mobile: 07770 652509).

The IKT aims to develop an on-line journal and/or a book from this series of Research Seminars which will provide an opportunity to disseminate their research and papers. A special edition of IKT's newsletter, 'Exchange' will be produced at the end of the seminar series to reach a wider audience of KT practitioners. Presentations and relevant information will also be made available on IKT's website at: [www.ikt.org.uk](http://www.ikt.org.uk) <<http://www.ikt.org.uk>> .

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.**

Paul Williams, 2009, London and New York: Routledge. pp.438 ISBN 978 0 415 35653 4 p/b

(also available in hardback and as an e-book)

The first edition of Paul Williams' book on Mahayana Buddhism has been a standard work since its publication in 1989. This second expanded edition is a radical revision in the light of new scholarly work since then, for example that of Paul Harrison and Gregory Schopen, but of others, too. Williams says in his Preface 'although it is recognisably the same book, organised according to the same structure as originally, in this second edition every sentence has been considered anew and is rephrased or replaced where it was felt necessary'. As with the first edition, discussion of Tantric and Zen Buddhism is omitted, but there is more material on China and Japan. The Part I and II headings on Wisdom and Compassion have been removed and there is now a straight run of 10 chapters, all with sub-sections. There are other relatively minor changes, such as the heading for Chapter 10 where the term

faith is replaced by trust and self-abandonment, but the word faith is still used in the discussion, which is not radically changed and focuses on the cults of named buddhas and bodhisattvas.

It is an indication of the amount of new research that has happened in the last decade that this second edition is significantly larger than the first, with the amount of text on each page and also the number of pages increased. There are now 438 instead of 317 pages with 122 of those containing detailed scholarly notes as distinct from the original 13 pages. These up to date notes take the reader into the discussion of many interpretations, further textual points and publications linked with the very full bibliography. There are now also separate indices for names and subjects replacing the original general index.

Many who have used the first edition will be familiar with the emphasis on the diversity of Buddhism in general and its Mahayana forms in particular and the countering of the essentialist fallacy which is not only emphasised in the Introduction but also in the final

(unchanged) words which state 'There is probably no clear-cut, unchanging core to Buddhist doctrine. Buddhism as a religion in history has no essence, although the truth – wherever it will finally turn out to be – remains forever'. These highly quotable passages remain, as with sections such as that on 'the nature of the book' in respect of Mahayana Sutras which begins chapter 2 and which points out the differences between the expectations of 'those of the modern westernised world' and the intentions and use of these texts (p.45). But in addition new insights are inserted such as the fact that scholars are less sure now that the verse sections of sutras are earlier than the prose (p. 46). As well as such short though significant adjustments there are also whole new sections such as that within chapter 5 on the Tathagathagarbha where seven new pages are added called: *On some contemporary issues: Critical Buddhism and a debate on not-Self in Thai Buddhism*. This discussion is supported by ten very full notes which draw especially on an unpublished M Phil. thesis done in Bristol where Williams is based. There is so much here that is basic to the general understanding of Mahayana Buddhism as well as of interest to the

finesse of research. Emphasis on the plurality of Mahayanas (p. 279) as spiritual movements probably of lay and monastic ascetics which can be seen as the spiritual vocation of the bodhisattva and the vehicle to the great (buddhahood) may be new to some. That there are alternative Sanskrit versions of the usually translated bodhisattva which can mean 'directed towards enlightenment' or 'capable of enlightenment' (pp. 271 and 286). That a better translation of prajna is discriminative understanding or correct discernment rather than wisdom and is not exclusively 'religious' will stimulate further reflection. The title of the book emphasises doctrinal foundations, but there is also a great deal here relating to practice, the recitation / chanting of sutras and practices of remembrance and meditation. The detail is at all times impressive, but so too is a style which engages as well as informs and everywhere challenges many of the presuppositions that are held about this complex and widely spread set of movements. A magnum opus indeed.

Peggy Morgan  
Mansfield College, University of oxford

## ***Mi'kmaq Landscapes: From Animism to Sacred Ecology***

Anne-Christine Hornborg, 2008, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Published in Ashgate's *Vitality of Indigenous Religions* series, the subtitle is somewhat misleading as little space is given to a discussion of the concept 'animism' – it seems tagged on, only given a few pages in the second chapter – in what turns out to be a detailed and carefully researched inquiry into the Mi'kmaq being called Kluskap, with a focus on storytelling and how elements in the stories changed from early colonial times to the present day, when Kluskap becomes part of the 'sacred ecology' of the Mi'kmaq in their fight to save Kelly's (or Kluskap's) Mountain from becoming a super-quarry. Some of the points about storytelling or the 'romanticised' image of the Indian and their relationship to the land get lost in the digressions and at times an Indian perspective is set against an essentialised Western one.

Kluskap has been described as a 'culture hero' and appears in early stories as maker of the landscape, although not a 'creator god', one who triumphs over the British, a prophet and more recently as a saviour-figure who will return to deliver the Mi'kmaq from oppression. The book is divided into historical periods to show how the stories adapt to and take on elements

from each age, with Kluskap becoming 'dormant' during the most difficult period in Mi'kmaq history when children were forcibly taken from their families and placed in a residential school where they were not allowed to speak their own language, severing the cultural continuity between the generations. While I was conducting fieldwork among the Mi'kmaq in 2003, one sweatlodge keeper told me it is mainly the survivors of residential schools who had turned to traditional ceremonies for healing. In Hornborg's book, the fight against the excesses of modernity also led some Mi'kmaq to retrieve traditional knowledge as providing an alternative model. Hornborg acknowledges that today's 'traditional culture' is not to be equated with pre-Columbian culture as only some elements are retrieved or given new prominence, such as stories about Kluskap, whereas other 'traditional elements' are left behind, such as living in wigwams. Emphasising continuity and change, she eschews the problem of authenticity by arguing that what Mi'kmaq do *is* Mi'kmaq culture.

Suzanne Owen,  
Leeds Trinity

## **Dharma to The UK: A Centennial Celebration of Buddhist Legacy**

Mahinda Deegalle ed. 2008, World Buddhist Foundation, 309-311, Kingsbury Road, London NW9 9PE pp.296. ISBN 0 9518957-2-9. p/b

This book was launched at a centenary celebration of the Buddhist legacy in UK on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 at Brent Town Hall. The occasion was sponsored by the World Buddhist Foundation, the Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre and the Sri Lankan Educational, Cultural and Welfare Foundation. It included a very interesting exhibition on Ananda Metteya (Allan McGregor Bennett 1872-1923), who led a 6 month mission to UK in 1908 which was the 'significant symbolic' centenary event. Workshops on his contribution to the spread of Buddhism in the West were also organised. In the evening there were cultural performances and keynote addresses by Richard Gombrich and Ananda Gurge.

But the lasting contribution of this celebratory day is a very interesting volume of twelve essays introduced and edited by Mahinda Deegalle which includes Rupert Gethin's reflections on the edit-

ing of Pali texts. The importance of key individuals are covered by John Crow and Elizabeth Harris on Ananda Metteya and Jinadasa Liyanaratne on Ven. Saddhatissa. The contribution of Myanmar (Burma) is analysed by U Ko Lay and Richard Hayes looks at the adaptations of FWBO whilst the transplantation of the Forest Monastic tradition and the development of the Theravada nuns are considered by Robert Bluck and Sarah Shaw respectively. Jo Backus and Denise Cush contribute an overview of the place of Buddhism within the English state school system and Sandra Cate analyses the transplantation and adaptation of Thai Buddhist art and architecture in UK. This useful volume of original chapters has an index, full bibliography and paragraphs on each of the authors. It adds to the contribution already made by the World Buddhist Foundation in an earlier volume of nine essays which followed a seminar in 2003. This is called *Buddhism in The West* edited by Piyadassi, Perera and Wijetunge and is also available from the World Buddhist Foundation.

Peggy Morgan  
Mansfield College, University of Oxford

*The ancient bards have walked in a newer step - èg Veda 9, 23, 2*

## **26<sup>th</sup> Annual STIMW Seminar**

**Fri 29 May 2009 10.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.**

**Martin Harris Centre, G16a, University of Manchester**

### **Programme**

- |             |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.45-11.10 | Coffee and registration                                                                                                                                          |
| 11.15-12.00 | <b>Laurie L Patton</b> (Emory University)<br>A Contemporary Mother: Sanskrit and the Feminine in Present Day India                                               |
| 12.05-12.25 | <b>James Madaio</b> (University of Manchester, UK)<br>Research report: 'Studying Spoken Sanskrit'                                                                |
| 12.30-1.35  | Lunch                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1.45-2.25   | <b>Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad</b> (University of Lancaster, UK)<br>'The Self in Advaita'                                                                            |
| 2.30-3.10   | <b>Kiyokazu Okita</b> (University of Oxford/University of Hamburg)<br>'The World-Affirming Vision of Non-Duality: Vaiùðava Vedànta Contribution to Deep Ecology' |
| 3.15-3.45   | Tea                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3.45-4.25   | <b>Lynn Thomas</b> (Roehampton University, London, UK)<br>'Gift, Gender and Genesis: rethinking the story of Agastya and Lopàmudrà'                              |
| 4.30-4.45   | <b>STIMW 2010</b>                                                                                                                                                |

For further details, please see <http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/stimw> or contact [jacqueline.hirst@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jacqueline.hirst@manchester.ac.uk)

For administrative queries, please contact [debbie.woods-2@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:debbie.woods-2@manchester.ac.uk)

## **Beyond the Ordinary: Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religious Studies**

Wednesday 24 June 2009  
C4C Centre | York St John University

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies and C4C CETL are organising a one-day workshop to bring together academics, students and other interested parties to discuss creative approaches to learning and teaching at under- and postgraduate levels in the UK. The workshop aims to highlight recent developments in creativity in Theology and Religious Studies, to showcase and share examples of creative approaches to learning and teaching Theology and Religious Studies in higher education institutions in the UK, and to provide a forum for discussion of the key issues involved. We expect the discussions to be informative, lively and interactive where possible, inspiring work in the area of growing interest.

Speakers include:

Dr Susan Yore	York St John University
Richard Noake	York St John University
Dr Mahinda Deegalle	Bath Spa University
Pekka Pitkkanen	Open Theological College
Cassandra Farrin	Lancaster University
Dr Deirdre Burke	Wolverhampton University
Chris Maunder	York St John University
Lynn Comer	York St John University

Abstracts can be viewed online at [www.c4ccetl.ac.uk](http://www.c4ccetl.ac.uk)

For further information and online booking please visit  
[www.c4ccetl.ac.uk](http://www.c4ccetl.ac.uk)

Deadline for Registration: Friday 29 May 2009

This event is provided at no charge to those working and studying in higher education in the UK. However, places are limited, and we reserve the right to make a £25 charge for cancellations received after Wednesday 17 June.



## **Sacred Modernities: Rethinking Modernity in a Post-Secular Age**

**Taking place: Oxford Brookes University**

**Thursday-Saturday, 17-19 September, 2009**

Speakers include: Zygmunt Bauman (University of Leeds – subject to confirmation); Patrick Curry (University of Kent); Paul Heelas (Lancaster University); Alex Houen (University of Sheffield); Roger Griffin (Oxford Brookes University); Aristotle Kallis (Lancaster University); Vincent Lloyd (Georgia State University); Michael Saler (University of California, Davis); Graham Ward (University of Manchester).

The age of globalization confronts the observer with more ironies than certainties. It was once assumed that the growth of modern institutions - democracy, capitalism, science - would be attended by a series of mutually reinforcing social processes, most notably secularisation, rationalisation and disenchantment. Not only has the global spread of these institutions proved patchy and uneven, religious movements and belief systems have doggedly refused to assume the private status once thought to be their natural destiny. In both the West and the wider world, religion continues to make competing claims on the public sphere and public morals. Developments like this have been accompanied by conceptual critique and innovation. Increasingly, traditional accounts of modernity are seen as Euro-centric and prescriptive, while there has been renewed interest in the question of political and civil religions and the more general relationship of the political and the theological.

### **Aims and agenda**

The aim of this conference is to take stock of these transformations in the context of what is often referred to as a 'post-secular' age comprised of 'multiple modernities'. Its agenda is emphatically interdisciplinary and welcomes scholars from the fields of history, sociology, cultural studies, theology, and others. In the same spirit, the conference adopts a broad, abundant understanding of the term 'sacred' to encompass not only formal religious worldviews, but also that which, in whatever fashion, disturbs, complicates, and perhaps abolishes, the distinction between the sacred and the secular. Accordingly, it is just as much interested in manifestations and logics of re-enchantment and resacralization, as it is of desecularisation understood as the persistence and revival of traditional religions. In sum, the aim of the conference is to rethink the equation of modernity, secularity and disenchantment, and to explore the various conceptual and historiographical perspectives through which we might better understand the present.

### **Attending as a delegate**

The deadline for the submission of proposed papers has now passed. If you would like to attend as a delegate please contact Dr. Tom Crook (Oxford Brookes University) by email ([tcrook@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:tcrook@brookes.ac.uk)). The deadline for delegate registration is July 2009.

### **Organisers**

Dr. Tom Crook (Oxford Brookes University),  
Dr. Matthew Feldman (University of Northampton).

## MEMBERS RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### **Peter B Clarke**

(ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: OUP, 2009.

'Towards a more organic understanding of religion in a more global framework' in Peter B Clarke (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: OUP, pp. 1-27, 2009

and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, 2009.

'Millenarianism: historical and social roots', in Peter B Clarke and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, pp. 353-365, 2009.

'New Religions: A Global Perspective' in Peter B Clarke and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, pp. 381-90, 2009

'NRMs in Africa and the Middle East' in Peter B Clarke and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, pp. 417-30, 2009

'NRMs in East Asia' in Peter B Clarke and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, pp. 430-42, 2009.

'NRMs in South and Southeast Asia' in Peter B Clarke and Peter Beyer (eds) *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations*, London: Routledge, pp. 442-54, 2009.

'New Religions, Women, Empowerment and Gender Equality' in Weiblicker Blick-Mannerglaube/ Religions d'hommes-regards de femmes, (ed) Nadine Weibel, Munster: Waxmann, pp. 175-83, 2008.

### **Jeaneane and Merv Fowler**

*Chanting in the Hillsides: The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin in Wales and the Borders*. Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009.

### **Simon Ross Valentine**

*Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at*, London: Hurst & Co, 2008.

### **Melanie Wright**

Judaism' in J. Lyden (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*, Routledge, pp. 91-108, 2009

'Every eye shall see Him: Revelation and film' in W. J. Lyons and J. Økland (eds) *The Way the World Ends? The Apocalypse of John in Culture and Ideology*, Sheffield Phoenix, pp. 76-94, 2009

## GUIDELINES FOR *BULLETIN* CONTRIBUTORS

The Editors welcome contributions on events and issues relating to the Study of Religion. The following guidelines on length should be observed.

Conference reports (short, one-day)	500-800 words
Reports on major conferences	1,000-1,500 words
Notices of forthcoming conferences	Not more than one page
Book reviews	500-800 words
Religious Studies in location	800 words
Changes and Movements	500-1000 words
Research in progress	800-1,000 words
Turning Point	800-1,000 words
Tributes	normally 500 words

We welcome, in particular, accounts of research in progress by post-graduate students, articles describing RS at a particular location and reports of changes and movements.

The *BASR Bulletin* will carry notices of relevant conferences and calls for papers (up to one page) free of charge. Preference is given to conferences where members may offer papers; other non-participatory conferences, which are more akin to courses, may be included if space permits. The deadline for the next edition is 15th October 2009.

Flyers may be sent out with the Bulletin, for a pre-paid charge of £50 each.

## OCCASIONAL PAPERS

£3.00 each inc. p&p. Write, enclosing payment (cheques made out to BASR), to Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or order from the BASR Web site.

- 1 Miranda Green, *Women and Goddesses in the Celtic World*, 1991
- 2 Christine Trevett, *The Quaker Margaret Fell: Religion and Gender in a C17th Dissenting Group*, 1991
- 3 Ann Bancroft, *Hildegard of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead*, 1991
- 4 Julia Leslie, *Religion, Gender and Dharma: The Case of the Widow Ascetic*, 1991
- 5 Peter Antes, *How to study religious experience in the traditions*, 1992
- 6 Marion Bowman, *Phenomenology, fieldwork and folk religion*, 1992
- 7 George Chryssides, *Unificationism: A study in religious syncretism*, 1993
- 8 Michael Pye, *Syncretism versus synthesis*, 1993
- 9 Ria Kloppenberg, *A Buddhist-Christian encounter in Sri Lanka: Pandura Vada*, 1994
- 10 Peter Donovan, *Maori rituals add magic to contemporary civic life*, 1995
- 11 Ninian Smart, *Sacred nationalism*, 1995
- 12 W. S. F. Pickering, *Locating the sacred: Durkheim and Otto*, 1995
- 13 Terence Thomas, *'The sacred' as a viable concept in the contemporary study of religions*, 1995 (bound together with 12)
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- 15 Chris Arthur, *Media, meaning, and method in the study of religion*, 1996
- 16 Gerrie ter Haar, *Chosen people: The concept of diaspora in the modern world*, 1996
- 17 Richard Gombrich, *Religious experience in early Buddhism*, 1997
- 18 James Cox, *Alterity as identity: Innovation in the Academic Study of Religions*, 1998
- 19 Elizabeth Amoah, *African spirituality and religious innovation*, 1998
- 20 Ian Reader, *Religion, conflict and the sacred mission: On understanding the violence of Aum Shinrikyo*, 1999
- 21 Brian Bocking, *Religious Studies: The New Queen of the Sciences*, 2000
- 22 Kim Knott, *The Sense and Nonsense of 'Community': A Consideration of Contemporary Debates about Community and Culture by a Scholar of Religion*, 2002
- 23 Armin Geertz, *Religion and Community in Indigenous Contexts*, 2002
- 24 Guilia Sfamini Gasparro, *Religion and Community in the Ancient World*, 2002
- 25 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State*, 2002
- 26 Rosalind Hackett, *The Response of Scholars of Religion to Global Religious Violence*, 2003
- 27 Ursula King, *Cherished Memories, Fractured Identities and New Subjectivities: Celebrating Fifty Years of British Scholarship in Religious Studies*, 2006.

Subsequent annual lectures are published in DISKUS <http://www.basr.ac.uk/diskus/>

