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The St Andrews Historian

A magazine for History graduates of the University of St Andrews

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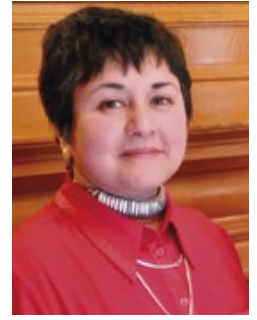
Principal and Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Sally Mapstone

Letter from the Editor

Dear All,

A warm welcome to the 2017 Alumni magazine.

The articles in this issue have a distinctly outward looking and international flavour as befits a university like St Andrews in the twenty-first century. Both the Head of School's reflections and those of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor in our 'In Conversation With' feature, underline our achievements as well as our aspirations in a post-Brexit and increasingly globalised world. Continuing with this theme, we shine a light on our international collaborations through our Exchange programmes with Tel Aviv University and the College of William and Mary. We also have a report about the lecture delivered in St Andrews by Sir Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, on 'Resurgent Russia'. Finally, we continue with our tradition of featuring staff research – in this issue we have three essays from colleagues working on themes in Medieval, Early Modern and Modern History.



I would encourage alumni to get in touch with me directly with any feedback and reflections. I would be particularly grateful for any offers of articles for future issues of the magazine or suggestions of what you might like us to focus on. My email: ck24@st-andrews.ac.uk

Dr Chandrika Kaul



Reflections from the Head of School, Professor Colin Kidd

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome back to History at St Andrews. It has been a fascinating and topsy-turvy year for those of us who think about the relationship of past and present.

Twenty-five years ago in a celebrated and widely publicised book, *The End of History* (1992), Francis Fukuyama argued that with the end of the Cold War and the fragmentation of the Soviet bloc, humankind had reached its ideological endpoint: liberal democracy and the rule of the market. Of course, there would still be discontents, but there was only one serious ideal now left in play. At the time, the claim seemed tinged with hubris. The world still played host to a wide range of political institutions, and the various ideas which underpinned them, many of them religious, were not conspicuously in retreat. Nevertheless, Fukuyama's thesis offered a plausible description of Western politics, and the temperature of partisan debate appeared to be cooling.

A quarter of a century on, the landscape looks strikingly different. 2016 will go down as a memorable year in world history, its significance on a par with 1848, perhaps, or 1989. The momentous events of 2016 pose particular problems for the historian. While history is not, of course, a predictive science, its utility – for statesmen and policymakers – resides in a certain regularity. There will always be mishaps, accidents and the occasional unexpected event, but history suggests a plausible set of parameters within which human societies are, and will continue to be, organised. After 2016, however, historians are much less confident about their professional capacity to relate the past to the present.

Perhaps the ability to peer ahead and to make out the lineaments of the future never really belonged to the historian. Perhaps we are right to cede pride of place in this area to clairvoyants, astrologers and racing tipsters.

Nevertheless, the School of History has not entirely resigned itself to an era of randomly chosen cards, roulette wheels and the decipherment of tea leaves. Our new appointment, Malcolm Petrie, whose main area of expertise is twentieth-century Scottish history, has begun to explore the history of the referendum in modern British politics since the 1970s. Chandrika Kaul, whose centre of gravity is modern India, works on the global reach of the press and mass media. Ali Ansari appears frequently in the media bringing balance and historical perspective to the controversial topic of modern Iran and its place in the global order. And it is not just our modern historians who contribute to such themes. One of our early modernists, Jacqueline Rose, who works on political counsel, is co-organising a workshop in Oxford which brings together politicians, civil servants and academics to discuss the very salient theme of Political Advice: Who gives the advice? And do politicians really listen?

We hope they do, and that some of them might be readers of this magazine.

Visiting Speakers: Lecture by Sir Michael Fallon

Report by **Dr Rory Cox**

Sir Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, returned to the University of St Andrews – his alma mater (MA Classics and Ancient History, 1974) – on Thursday 2 February to talk with students and staff, and to deliver a lecture on “Resurgent Russia”. This event was organised as part of a series of launch events for the new Institute for War and Strategic Study. The lecture was a joint initiative between the School of International Relations, the School of History and the Tayforth UOTC.

Speaking to a packed auditorium in the Buchanan Lecture Theatre, with the lecture having to be live-streamed to Schools II and III due to a very high turnout, Sir Michael explored the changing role of Russia in international affairs over the past decade. Sir Michael particularly explored the various threats Russia now poses to the security of the UK, Europe, and NATO more broadly.

The effects of a bullish Russia have been felt in a variety of contexts. It came as little surprise that the Secretary for Defence criticised the Russian annexation of the Crimea and its role in the Syria conflict. Particular attention was paid to the realm of cyber-security, and the growing number of cyber-attacks linked to the Russian state. Such attacks have been alleged to have taken place in France, Germany, Bulgaria, and, perhaps most notably, the United States. Sir Michael’s lecture was certainly designed to draw attention to this threat, as well as to advertise the unveiling of a new government funded cyber-security hub, operating largely under the remit of the Ministry for Defence.

While there were a few cautious notes of optimism in Sir Michael’s speech, he highlighted the necessity of a continuing dialogue with Russia informed by realism – hoping for the best but planning for the worst. To this extent, Sir Michael underlined the strategic importance of NATO and



Sir Michael Fallon

urged that both the US and European states maintained their commitment to military spending.

The Defence Secretary spent 30 minutes taking a range of astute questions from the audience; Sir Michael noted afterwards how impressed he was by the intelligence and confidence of St Andrews’ students, who did not shy away from tackling difficult issues. The conversation between Sir Michael and St Andrews staff was continued at University House, where the Principal hosted a thoroughly engaging dinner.



In Conversation With

The editor, Dr Chandrika Kaul, met the new Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sally Mapstone, on Friday 31 March 2017, for an informal conversation about St Andrews, History alumni relations and much else besides.

Chandrika: Thank you so much for meeting with me. Please tell us about your first impressions of St Andrews, coming from Oxford. I remember when I came over a decade ago, it didn't seem very different, at one level, with both being ancient university towns.

Principal: Coming to St Andrews in September wasn't the first time that I had come to St Andrews, because I have been coming for 30 years as a scholar, as a visitor, occasionally as a golf caddie as my husband plays golf! I have written a lot about William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas in particular, both of whom are very distinguished undergraduates of the University, and also Walter Bower, one of the earliest graduates of St Andrews. St Andrews has things in common with Oxford, but St Andrews, I think, is very different from Oxford. It is smaller and much of its striking appeal lies in the fact that the academic part of the University is one square mile, and of course it is so strikingly international. Oxford is an international university, but I think you feel this more in a concentrated way in St Andrews, particularly in the student community, which is so diverse and international. So I feel very conscious of that, and also of course, very conscious of the particular Scottish context in which we are operating at the moment, which is both the UK context and against the backdrop of Brexit, but is also a Scottish context against the backdrop of a possible second referendum. I have a sense of St Andrews as a very high achieving place, a very open place, a place with a very strong sense of community, and I mean that both in terms of the University and in terms of the gown/town relations, which are pretty important to me, and, I think, it is also a university with fantastic opportunities. So it is not a time for standing still, it's a time for building for the next 600 years.

Chandrika: I just wondered if I could draw you out a little more on how you would reflect on St Andrews in a global context and if you had any thoughts about how History might play a role in that. In terms of the History curriculum we offer, how significant is it that this should reflect a wider appreciation of non-western and global history?

Principal: I find this very interesting, because one of the last things that I was presiding over in my former role at Oxford as Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, was to see through, from the University's perspective, the revisions to the History syllabus at the undergraduate level, where they have looked at ways in which the existing syllabus can be made less European and more open to thinking about world and global history. So it is not a question of setting aside an existing curriculum, it's of opening up what you have. Now that structure in Oxford is very different from what we do here, because we teach here in a modular structure. I think in St Andrews one would approach this from a slightly different perspective, in the



sense that there are ways in which we already have a very good global focus, I think we are so strong in International Relations and we make a point of doing International Relations with other things – the striking example would be International Relations and Arabic – which I think is a really important and interesting combination, and which shows a willingness to think outside the European box in a way that I would agree is increasingly important. So I think that curriculum reform is something that needs to be incremental and it needs to be collegial, so that nobody should feel challenged in an adversarial or critical way. One of the things you also have to understand is that you can't do everything, and you have to play to your strengths, but you also have to sometimes ask some quite challenging questions about where are the areas that we might like to open up.

Chandrika: I agree with you entirely. When I was appointed I was the only South Asianist and the first woman in that context and the next appointment in the field took another decade to occur! In terms of going places, I know you have been very active in meeting alumni overseas, even before you took up your post here. What role do you think History alumni might be able to play in your vision of greater interactivity?

Principal: That's a really, really good question, and I should say I do take alumni relations incredibly seriously, and this will form a dominant part of my Principal-ship, as it did in the first 100 days. I wanted particularly to go to China and Hong Kong, partly because we have so many alumni in Beijing and it was just wonderful to meet them and because we have a foundation we have recently set up in Hong Kong. I always find it really interesting to meet alumni, including historians, and I think that historians bring a particular perspective that is more than ever valuable to our University, because the thing about history and the study of history, is that by understanding the past, you get a better way of thinking about the future. The way in which we reinterpret, we engage with the past – and there are many different forms of the past – and the sense in which we strive to understand different cultures and what they have fed into our own culture and how we strive to understand different movements and moments, to me it is really essential in terms of building up a depth of understanding and a comparative base that enables us to deal with the extraordinary unpredictabilities that we find ourselves engaging with. But then we must remember there was always turbulence: you know turbulence is not the prerogative of the twenty-first century. So when this University was founded in 1413, the then King of Scotland wasn't in Scotland, he was being moved around from one English prison to another. Scotland was being governed by a minority of his uncles who didn't get on with each other, but this University thrived in those circumstances. So I think a kind of understanding of those sorts of things, which historians always bring, they give you that bit of detail and that capacity to locate a moment and see it in a broad

context, I always find that invaluable. So I generally find that historians have a really generous way of conceiving of their role as individuals and in the broader community, and I think more than ever we need people like that.

Chandrika: I agree. You need a sense of the past even though history doesn't repeat itself, but it is important to help us contextualise the present. In terms of building alumni relations, what are your views on fundraising?

Principal: I have no reservations about fundraising, and actually I think it has been a way of life for this University since it was founded. Also you are asking people to support something that is demonstrably successful and why would they not want to do that? If you accept the premise that education is a lifelong experience, that universities always add value and that they drive much of the economy and it is where you find invention, innovation and dialogue and debate. Most people want to support that. So I see fundraising as a fundamental aspect of what I have to do and I am proud of it. There is some sensitivity and nuancing and most fundraisers will say to you that there is alumni

relations and there is fundraising and they intersect to some extent, but they do not fully intersect. Actually a lot of alumni relations is just about engaging with alumni, it's about saying you remain a member of this University for as long as you are alive and a lot of that is just staying in touch. Now, if out of that, groups of alumni feel they can

work together and do things for the greater good of the University, then we will always be very grateful and pleased with that, but I would never want alumni to think that our primary relationship with them is transactional, because it isn't. It's about the balance.

Chandrika: Finally, if there was one specific change or achievement that you would like to be involved with in 2017, in terms of your top priority as well as in connection with alumni relations, what would that be?

Principal: My great aspiration for the moment is that we manage to reach agreement with Fife Council to provide a site for a much-needed new secondary school in St Andrews, in return for the current Madras College site in South Street. I think it is a site that has fantastic potential for our Arts Schools, and I think our historians in particular would find themselves very interested in what we might be proposing. My aspirations are always for as many alumni as possible to feel really involved with St Andrews; that sounds like a very basic priority, but it would be that I want people to feel connected. I'm hoping that the vision we have got for St Andrews will grow the number of people who will feel abidingly and closely connected with what we are trying to do here.

St Andrews International Exchange Programmes

St Andrews-Tel Aviv Visiting Fellowships

Report by **Dr Chandrika Kaul**

Under this scheme, the School of History funds one member of staff every academic year to travel to Tel Aviv University and deliver a lecture hosted by them but open to the public. TAU does the same in turn. The idea for the exchange was first mooted by Professor Rob Bartlett (Department of Mediaeval History), when he was a fellow at TAU's Institute of Advanced Studies in 2001, notes Miriam Eliav-Feldon, History Professor at TAU (now emerita) and Chairperson of The Historical Society of Israel. In the beginning, it was meant to be an exchange of mediaevalists under the auspices of TAU's Department of History (later sponsored by the Morris E Curiel Institute for European Studies) and St Andrews Department of Mediaeval History, later taken over by the School of History. And indeed for several years we hosted some of the leading mediaeval historians from St Andrews (among them Professors Chris Given-Wilson, Frances Andrews, Michèle Mulchahey, Julia Smith and others), who each gave at least one lecture and met with graduate students. And each year we sent one of our mediaevalists (from History as well as from other departments) to St Andrews.

However, after several years, both sides ran out of mediaevalists, so the programme was extended to include historians of other periods as well. Professor Eliav-Feldon, who was for many years the guiding force behind this initiative at TAU, concludes that, 'On the whole this exchange programme has been very successful. Colleagues and students at TAU have benefited from getting to know St Andrews scholars – and not just in hearing their lectures but also in sharing meals with them and having informal discussions. I hope the visits of the Israeli historians have also been beneficial and pleasant for the staff and the students of St Andrews. At St Andrews, I took over the running of this scheme in 2013 and echo Miriam's sentiments. We look forward to receiving our colleagues from TAU every year and work across the departments of the School to ensure that they have a successful visit. Indeed, later in 2017, we will co-host a TAU fellow from the Department of Classics (in TAU this is part of their School of History), with the School of Classics here in St Andrews. I look forward to many more years of continued and happy co-operation.

Dr Rory Cox reflects on his visit to Israel

In April/May 2014 I was pleased to be appointed as a TAU visiting fellow. I spent four stimulating and enjoyable days in Israel, during which time I was able to meet many of the staff from TAU and enjoy the university's hospitality. I gave a lecture to TAU staff and students on "Celestial Warfare and Medieval Just War Doctrine", chaired by Professor Gadi Algazi. The lecture was followed by a meal, which provided the opportunity to continue the conversation well into the evening! During my time in Israel I also had the opportunity to visit the old port of Jaffa (now a southern district of Tel-Aviv), as well as Jerusalem, just a couple of hours by bus

from Tel-Aviv. Walking the massive Roman walls of the old city, seeing the gleaming Dome of the Rock, and wandering through the maze of chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were unforgettable experiences for a historian of the ancient and medieval world. Indeed, the history of the city seems to ooze out of the stonework that surrounds you. It is hard to think of a more evocative and tragic city. Plus, the falafel is unbeatable. All in all, my visit to Israel as part of the exchange was hugely rewarding, both academically and personally. I would thoroughly recommend taking part in the exchange to other members of the School of History.



William & Mary Exchange Programmes

Report by **Dr Kostas Zafeiris**



When a few years ago the University of St Andrews decided to pursue the idea of a joint undergraduate degree with the College of William & Mary, in Virginia, USA, the School of History was one of the first to respond to the call and take part in the initiative. The concept was that the new programme would build on the long tradition and experience of the two oldest universities in the world (the University of St Andrews, founded in 1413 by the issue of papal bulls, is the third oldest university in the English-speaking world, and the College of William & Mary, founded in 1693 by royal charter, is the second oldest institution of higher learning in the United States); and combine the strengths of both universities, by bringing together the in-depth study of a single academic subject that St Andrews is doing best, with the breadth of study provided by the superb liberal arts education of William & Mary.

The result of this endeavour is the BA (International Honours) Joint Degree, which accepted its first students in 2011. Students get to spend one sub-honours and one Honours year at St Andrews, and the same at the College of William & Mary. This may be challenging, both personally and academically, but the students in the programme have

embraced the idea and have been thriving in both places; the first graduates of the degree have stressed how much they have grown and benefited as a result of ferrying across the Atlantic for their studies, immersing themselves in two distinct academic and intellectual traditions, and different local cultures.



Graduation day for BA (International Honours) students

The Bachelor of Arts (International Honours) in History builds on the excellent existing courses, the merits of the academic staff of both Schools and their strong research. The History programme has been designed to complement the modules taken at the other institution, while allowing students to explore other academic subjects by encouraging a considerable breadth of study. As the programme recognises the importance of foreign languages, both for historical research and as an invaluable skill in the job market, it includes the study of a foreign language as a requirement, which the students are allowed to take at Honours level. As they reach their Senior Honours year, the

students are encouraged to hone further their historical research skills and prepare for a research module (such as a Dissertation or an Honours Project), regardless of where they spend their final year of studies. All students are supported by two Academic Advisers (currently Professor Gerard Chouin in William & Mary and Dr Kostas Zafeiris in St Andrews), who are in contact throughout the year, and make sure students take modules appropriate for

their skills and requirements at each institution. At the end, students get the opportunity to take part in two graduation ceremonies, the William & Mary commencement in May and the St Andrews graduation in June!

In addition to the teaching aspect, the Joint Programme has also laid the foundations for close collaboration in academic research. Each year, a member of staff from each School visits the other one, to give research papers in seminars, pursue joint research projects, and often co-teach undergraduate and postgraduate students. The School of History also takes part in the bi-annual Joint Degree Symposium, where staff from all participating degrees meet alternatively in St Andrews and Williamsburg, to present their recent research findings.

As the two institutions are preparing to celebrate the graduation of the third cohort of Joint Degree students in 2017, the Joint Programme is hailed as a great achievement, to which History has been instrumental. The School is delighted with this success, and the accomplishments of the first History students and graduates, and is looking forward to welcoming more students in the programme and the two ancient sites of higher education.

Staff Research IN FOCUS

Looking for powerful women in early medieval Germany

by **Professor Simon MacLean** (Professor in Medieval History)



In 2008, archaeologists working on the cathedral at Magdeburg, in eastern Germany, opened an ancient tomb and rediscovered the bones of an Anglo-Saxon princess called Edith. She had died in the year 946, aged only about 30. Her remains were brought to England for scientific tests which verified the identification via tests on her tooth enamel, indicating that the bones belonged to someone who had grown up drinking water from the chalky landscapes of southern Britain. This Edith was none other than the granddaughter of Alfred the Great (871-99), the King of Wessex who had defeated the Vikings and laid the foundations for the conquest of England, and the creation of the first kingdom of the English, by his ancestors. The find was therefore celebrated in the British media as a window onto this legendary moment of English state formation.



Inside the sarcophagus of Queen Edith
(Photo: from Wikimedia Commons)

It is understandable that the British press should focus on the local angle: after all, the skeleton represents the oldest complete set of remains from any English royal family. But Edith was not only an Anglo-Saxon princess. She was also an Ottonian queen. The Ottonians are one of the great dynasties of German history, and have often been regarded as the founders of Germany. They began as mere dukes of Saxony (of which Magdeburg was the key ecclesiastical centre), but in 919 acquired the kingship and gradually became the most powerful and successful of all the royal dynasties who ruled Europe in the tenth century. Five members of the family ruled East Francia – the common contemporary name for the territory now called Germany – between 919 and 1024. They added the northern half of Italy, and acquired the imperial title, in the 960s. On top of that, they intermittently wielded informal influence in West Francia (aka France), and in parts of eastern and northern Europe (notably Poland). The names of these five kings are mercifully easy to remember (a Henry, three Ottos, then another Henry) and their deeds are well documented. But what makes the Ottonian family really stand out is the remarkable power of their wives and daughters, whose careers have been the focus of my research over the last few years.

There were six Ottonian queens, and they rank among the most famous and powerful of the entire Middle Ages. With her marriage to Otto I in 936 Edith became the second of

the queens. Unfortunately, she is the one about whom we know the least, though contemporary sources do celebrate the depth of her English royal heritage and the prestige that it brought to her husband's nouveau-royal family. Edith's mother-in-law Mathilda was the matriarch of the family, ruling as queen from 919 and outliving her husband Henry I by three decades. She founded several important

monasteries (which also acted as political centres) and shortly after her death in 968 was the subject of two biographies. The third and sixth queens discussed in my book are Gerberga (d. 969), a sister of Otto I who was married first to a duke of Lotharingia and then to one of the kings of West Francia, and Cunigunde (d.1040), the wife of Henry II. Both these queens are very prominent in contemporary sources, controlling succession, defending cities and controlling the levers of politics. But the real stars of the dynasty were the empresses Theophanu and Adelheid. Theophanu was a Byzantine princess who married Otto II in 972 and became in effect the ruler of the Ottonian empire in place of her infant son between her husband's death in 983 and her own in 991. So extraordinary was her status that we have a document from 990 dated to the years of her reign as 'Theophanius imperator [emperor]'. Her mother-in-law Adelheid was not only Otto I's second



The marriage charter of Theophanu and Otto II (972)
(Photo: from Wikimedia Commons)

wife but also a daughter, sister, mother, and widow of kings. She presided over three generations of Ottonian power in East Francia and Italy before her death in 999. The lives of these two women were transformed into legends in the centuries after their deaths, thanks to the mythologizing efforts of a plethora of artists, novelists, and composers (including Handel). The power of these six queens was not just a matter of their ability to influence their powerful husbands. They were rulers: that is how they saw themselves, and that is how contemporaries respectfully and fearfully described them. Little wonder that Pauline Stafford, a pioneering historian of early medieval queenship, argued that the European tenth century was 'a century of women'.



Otto II and Theophanu
(Photo: from Wikimedia Commons)

But what was it about the tenth century that enabled Ottonian queens to wield such enormous power? This question has no settled answer. Formidable personalities are often given as the reason, but we do not have the kinds of sources that give reliable personal information, so this is not much more than a guess. Another explanation has been sought in attitudes to gender in the Ottonian homeland of Saxony, where female monasticism was very prominent. A third

common argument is that tenth-century queens inherited an institutional version of queenship from the Carolingian Empire of the ninth century. While there is something in all of these perspectives, my own argument is that powerful Ottonian queenship was a product of the peculiar conditions of tenth-century politics. This was an era in which the old certainties of the Carolingian era were breaking down, and in which territories once ruled by members of the same family were now ruled by unrelated dynasties who had to fight to convince others to regard them as royal. In this competitive dynastic environment they married already-royal women who could bring them prestige – and they activated that prestige by insisting on the high status of the queen. Elevating queenship into a central category of political action was a strategy that helped kings to dominate their rivals

and their own families in a period where the established patterns of Carolingian politics had broken down. But it was a category that was ultimately inhabited, manipulated and lived by the queens themselves. This is how, in the fluid and uncertain world of tenth-century Europe, outsiders like Theophanu, Adelheid and Edith became rulers of kingdoms and empires.

Rethinking political advice

by **Dr Jacqueline Rose** (Lecturer in Early Modern History)

Advice is something we all seek on a regular basis. We look for expert guidance when undertaking legal or financial transactions. We draw on the experience of our colleagues in our professional lives. At home and at leisure, we lean on the support of family, friends, or spiritual mentors for counsel and comfort. We also commonly expect that those involved in government will seek out and use advice, both in formal settings (cabinets, parliaments, committees, senates, summits) and in more informal, though increasingly prominent, ways (special advisers). And we expect that they will know how to process and use the advice they get. Some readers of this may, of course, be involved in these latter types of counsel. Advice is therefore at once an everyday matter and a highly charged one; subconsciously sought, but rarely interrogated. Giving and receiving advice has its rules and structures, its hierarchies and assumptions. But these, like the advice itself, are not normally explicitly recognised and written down. This provides both the fascination and the frustration of my current work on political advice – the content and process of advising or counselling are at once everywhere in political life, and yet remarkably elusive to trace in the archives. Counsel first thrust itself on my attention when I was researching my first book, on Tudor and Stuart governance of the Church of England. Counsel kept appearing in my sources as the way in which Anglican clergy professed loyalty to their king or queen's position as supreme governor of the Church while aggressively

telling them how to govern that Church. I asked myself whether their understanding of counsel, and their justifications for providing it – conscience, expertise, Biblical and early Christian models of free speech – were unique to them, or shared with other advisers.

Were zealous preachers like Hugh Latimer (shown in the image here giving advice to Edward VI and his court) representative of a wider practice of counsel?

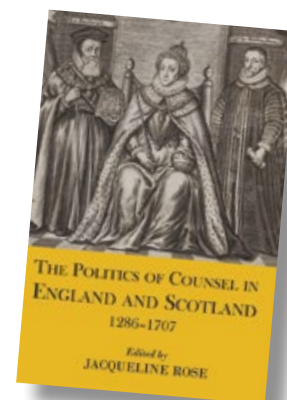
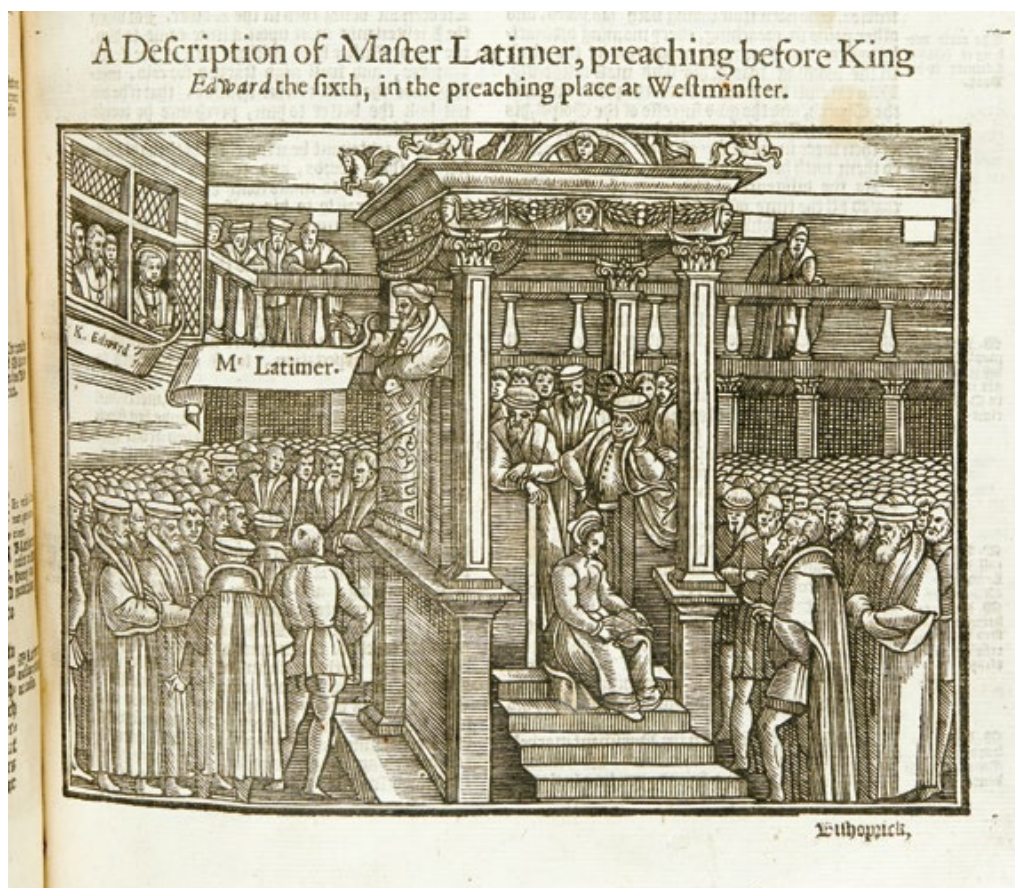


I approach political advice in two ways. One approach looks at different types of advisers. Monarchs were given advice (whether they wanted it or not!) by privy councillors, courtiers, members of parliament, preachers, playwrights, nobles, and so on. We might add their consorts, friends, and fellow monarchs. These groups might provide advice in relatively formal, institutional settings ('councils') or in more fluid non-institutionalised ways ('counsel'). The first looks easy to identify archivally, but – as many readers will know from meetings they attend – minutes record decisions, not discussions. Informal counsel is even harder to trace: we don't write down daily conversations. Lots of early modern people, it is true, wrote books about how to be a good ruler or counsellor. But these prescribe the ideal – they don't describe the real.

Increasingly, therefore, I've been thinking about the functions advice serves – functions that have relevance beyond my own period. Advice moved information to where it was needed. It therefore provided necessary data for rulers to process as well as, sometimes, helping them work out what conclusions to draw from it. This is our present-day 'expert' advice. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the growth of government activity, combined with managing the multiple kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland and their growing territories around the globe, put pressure on the political system. Could advice be used to manage tensions and foster cohesive relationships between these areas? This is a question that is surely pressing today. Like many things, counsel becomes prominent in the historical record when it goes wrong. Problems make it into the archives in a way that successes do not. Paradoxically, though, counsel often went wrong not because rulers were inept (though some were), but because it was so useful that people wanted it to do multiple contradictory things. Large councils seemed representative, inclusive, and helped accountability. But small councils avoided faction, encouraged cohesion, and better protected secrecy. Free speech offered usefully frank advice – flattery was often condemned – but its bluntness undermined a ruler's sovereignty. These tensions were not solved, but they did cause everyone to keep turning to counsel as the hoped-for solution to political crises. We hear the same contradictory hopes today that advice and advisers can simultaneously restrain, support, and guide rulers.

There can be few better places to pursue this project than St Andrews. The recently published edited volume on the topic stemmed from two workshops held here in 2012 and 2014, funded by a Small Research Grant from the British Academy and supported by the School and its various research institutes (Scottish Historical Studies, Intellectual History, Reformation History). I've been fortunate to work with a range of colleagues – staff and postgraduates – whose own interest and advice has helped me think about it in new ways. Now, alongside my own research on the topic, I'm working with the Head of School on impact events to make connections with current politics. (Any readers interested in this from their own professional perspectives, please do contact us!)

Rethinking political advice means recognising that it both contributes to and reflects the health of the political system in which it operates. A well-functioning exchange of counsel fosters good relationships between rulers and those they govern. When advice goes wrong, it both reflects other political, financial, religious, or foreign policy problems and stymies attempts to heal the political relationships that have broken down. Nevertheless, I've come to the conclusion that effective use of counsel doesn't require a ruler to invariably follow or sincerely take advice. Appearing committed to counsel was necessary. But its utility might lie in the ability to cite it as a delaying tactic in international negotiations or use it to scapegoat a minister. A complaint about 'evil counsel', often made by rebels, could also be very useful to rulers. Special advisers: beware.

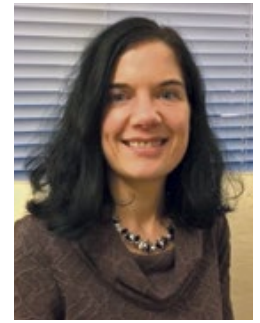


Counsel in action: Hugh Latimer preaching to Edward VI, in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* ('Book of Martyrs').

Reproduced from the 1641 edition courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library, classmark r17 BR1600.F7C41.

Popular Music and Inter-Generational Relations in Britain c.1955-1970

by Dr Gillian Mitchell (Lecturer in Modern History)



The emergence of a distinctive youth culture is often considered a defining feature of the post-war period. Popular music – from rock ‘n’ roll to skiffle and ‘beat-group’ – played a critical role in the formation of this culture; many youngsters of this era felt a keen ‘generational ownership’ of the music as they revelled in its infectious rhythms. That it embodied a world to which their uncomprehending elders should not have access seemed self-evident to many of them. We continue to celebrate the uniqueness of the ‘rock ‘n’ roll generation’; various media maintain the mystique which surrounds this distinctive cohort and the music which gave it such a vibrant voice.

It may, thus, seem odd to wish to investigate the extent to which the ‘older generation’ truly disliked, and felt alienated by, the music enjoyed by young people. Historians are, of course, always keen to pursue opportunities to ‘revise’ preconceptions of the past (indeed, scholars have already identified considerably older roots for this apparently unprecedented youth culture), and there has been, in recent years, increasing scholarly interest in challenging the myths and stereotypes surrounding the fifties and sixties. However, amid stories of clergy denouncing rock ‘n’ roll as ‘devil’s music’, and of disapproving parents confiscating transistor-radios from Beatle-fixated youngsters, the challenge of locating ‘grey areas’ amid such an apparently ‘black and white’ picture seems considerable.

Nevertheless, one can discern certain nuances within this familiar narrative of inter-generational antagonism. Assumptions of outright condemnation do scant justice to the variety of views on popular music exhibited by adults in post-war Britain. Some were, in fact, quite effusive in their admiration of the modern styles, hearing, in the music, welcome reverberations of the jazz-based styles of their own youth. Others, admittedly, felt less enthusiasm for modern pop, but endorsed the right of youngsters to enjoy it. Historians have observed that post-war parents often willingly facilitated the leisure activities of their children, desiring, for them, more fulfilling adolescent lives than they had known. (Selina Todd & Hilary Young). Such parental encouragement frequently extended

to popular music-based pursuits, whether this entailed listening, dancing, or even, at a time when many dreamed of becoming ‘the next Beatles’.

Particularly interesting are the attitudes of those who saw, in popular music, a means of ‘reaching’ youngsters in some regard – the church youth leaders who organised vibrant ‘disc evenings’ to welcome teenagers into a religious environment; the Variety Theatre managers who presented fledgling rock ‘n’ roll acts alongside traditional performers, hoping that affluent teens would revitalise their struggling establishments; and the schoolteachers who accepted ‘pop’ in the classroom, believing that it would provide a route into a wider world of music, whilst observing the confidence which free-form, rhythmic dancing could instil in the most diffident of pupils. The post-war years witnessed much turbulence, as older socio-cultural and familial structures and values appeared increasingly imperilled. As Bill Osgerby argues, ‘youth’, with its vivid culture and alleged rebelliousness, became almost symbolic of ‘the wider preoccupations and anxieties’ of this unsettling era. Undoubtedly some adults sought to use music with a view

to ‘policing’ or exploiting the young; others believed that, if they could ‘solve the problem’ of youth, then other, deeper social issues might similarly be resolved. However, when examining diverse case-studies, what becomes apparent is that, beneath dramatic narratives of socio-cultural upheaval, instances of harmonious inter-generational relations and mutual respect are discernible. Young popstars and Variety veterans learned from one another. A Bristol church minister devised a ‘rock ‘n’ roll Passion Play’ to capture the interest of his youth club members. Parents of aspiring musicians helped their children to save for their dream guitars, and willingly transported them

to concerts and auditions. Popular music, ultimately, proved itself almost as capable of bridging generational divides as it was of exacerbating them. Recognition of this undoubtedly enriches our understanding of the fascinatingly complex post-war decades.



Tommy Steele, 1957

(Photo: from Wikimedia Commons)

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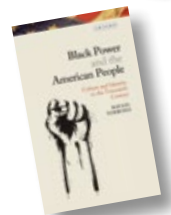
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