

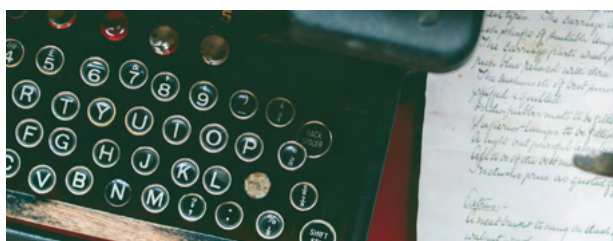


UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

RES^oEARCHER

Research News from the Leeds School of English

Summer 2026



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- News: QS success, open research, book launches
- Awards, prizes, and fellowships
- Publication news
- Funding successes
- Recent PhDs and MRes
- Impact activities and public engagement
- Conferences, keynotes, and workshops
- Upcoming research events in the School

Welcome back, RESoEARCHERS!

In this issue of *RESoEARCHER* we'll be showcasing the many research achievements, activities, and events from across the School of English from the first half of 2026. *RESoEARCHER* aims to celebrate the School's research culture in its widest sense, and to continue to foster an inclusive and welcoming intellectual community. Alongside information about members of staff, you'll find updates here about a number of current and former postgraduate researchers' publications, activities, and impact initiatives, plus details of recently awarded PhD and MRes degrees.

We're sorry to be bidding farewell to a number of colleagues over the summer. **Paul Hammond**, **Michael Brennan**, **Ian Fairley**, and **Alison May** are all taking a very well-deserved retirement from academic roles. **Caitlin Stobie** and **Alaric Hall** are also leaving the School at the end of this year. As Head of School **Hazel Hutchison** writes, 'these colleagues have contributed a tremendous amount to the teaching, research and leadership of the School over many years, and will be greatly missed by staff and students alike. In our support team, we are also saying goodbye to **Pam Rhodes**, **Lee Dalley**, and **Janet Perry** after many years of exceptional service to the School. We're extremely thankful for the great amount of work and friendship that these colleagues have brought to our community in recent years, and we wish them all the very best for their future plans'

To contribute stories to the next issue of *RESoEARCHER*, email Matt Woodcock, Research & Impact Support Officer m.woodcock@leeds.ac.uk



RESEARCH NEWS

Fiona Douglas's contributions to the digital humanities were celebrated in an article published by web development company ammba and publicised via their newsletter: 'Celebrating Women who are driving digital innovation in the GLAM sector'

A new track by Leeds-based rapper/ spoken word artist Lence also includes a familiar voice from the School of English. Released as a single in April, Lence's latest track - 'Explain it all away' - is based on his reading of Emily Brontë's poem 'No Coward Soul is Mine'. The track opens with a sample of **Denis Flannery** talking about Lence, taken from a BBC interview.



photo credit: cover art for 'Explain it all away' single by Matt Seel

Open Research

Kimberly Campanello's *MOTHERBABYHOME* has been digitised and made available via Brotherton Cultural Collections. Since its 2019 publication, it's been widely discussed in international literary and academic contexts, featured on university and school curricula, and continued to highlight ongoing injustices in the context of the mother and baby home system run by religious institutions on behalf of the Irish state throughout the twentieth century.

Kate Spowage is leading an initiative to transition *Key Words: A Journal of Cultural Materialism* to diamond open access. With **Tony Crowley** and former School of English PGR **Hayley G. Toth**, Kate is a member of the journal's editorial committee.

QS World Rankings Success

In the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject the School of English has risen seven places from last year and now comes in at number 29 in the world for English. This is a great result, and the first time in recent years that the School has placed inside the top thirty in this ranking. QS is an important international league table, regularly used by governments, recruitment agents, and students to make decisions about where to study.

Fellowship News

Alexander French (PGR, English) undertook a fellowship at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas this spring funded by the AHRC's International Placement Scheme. During his fellowship, Alexander undertook research for his PhD on the archives of British novelist and playwright Patrick Hamilton (1904-62) (pictured below). The collection includes extensive correspondence between Hamilton and his brother, the lesser-known author Bruce Hamilton, offering fascinating insights into the author's life, perspectives on his own works, and the development of his writing.

Alexander discovered a wealth of unpublished works, including typescripts for two unpublished radio plays (*Caller Anonymous* and *John Brown's Body*), and handwritten drafts of two books Hamilton began writing in his final years: an autobiography, *Memoirs of a Heavy Drinking Man*, and a novel, *The Happy Hunting Grounds*.



BSA Conference, Leeds 2027

The School of English will be hosting the 2027 international conference of the British Shakespeare Association (BSA), which will take place next year from 14-17 July. The BSA is the UK's premier professional association dedicated to promoting the study, performance, and enjoyment of Shakespeare's works. Its widely international membership includes academics, teachers, actors, creative practitioners, students, community workers, and members of the public in around 30 countries around the world.

Three members of the School of English are among its current Board of Trustees: **José A. Pérez Díez** as Chair (jointly with **Maria Shmygol**, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies), **Alexander Thom** (Membership Officer), and **Brett Greatley-Hirsch** (Chair of the Awards Committee). More information to follow.

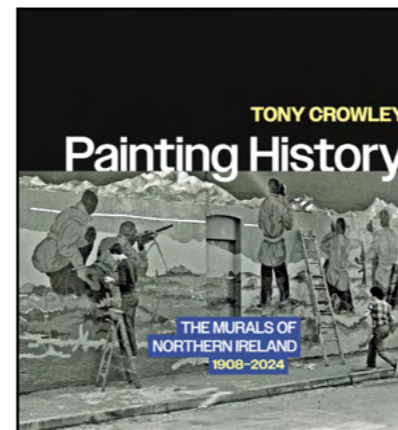
RESEARCH NEWS

Book Launches

The School has continued to celebrate the publication of new research at a number of book launches that we hosted during spring semester.

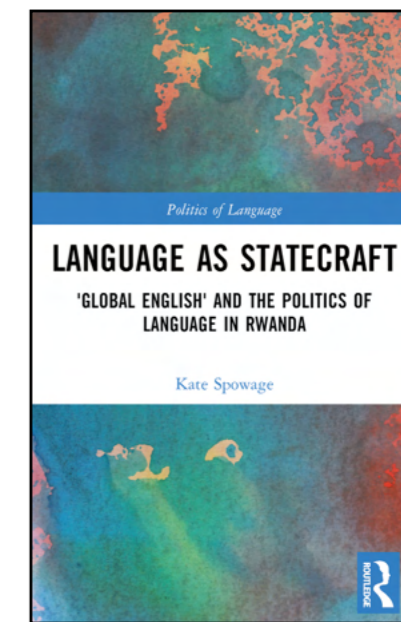
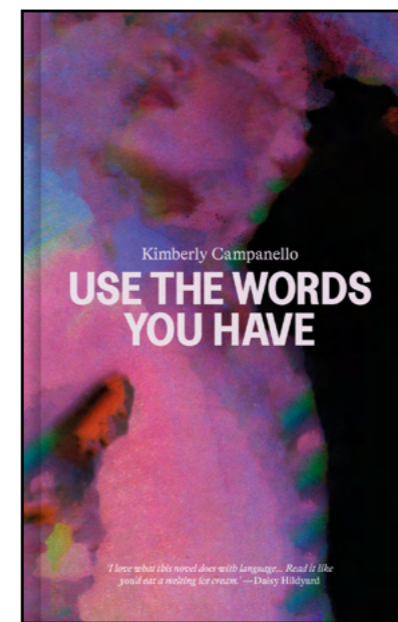
In February, we marked the publication of **Tony Crowley's** *Painting History: The Murals of Northern Ireland, 1908-2024* at an event involving readings and a Q&A led by **Kate Spowage**.

The following month, **J.R. Carpenter's** latest poetry collection *p a u s e* was launched at an in-conversation event chaired by **Kate Simpson**.



Chengdu Exchange

In April, **Simon Armitage** and **John Whale** led Leeds-based poets on a creative exchange in Chengdu, China. Co-hosted by Southwest Jiaotong University, Poetry@Leeds, and the Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing, 'Lines of Transport' included readings, cultural exchange, and discussion about poetry and translation. The delegation featured poets from Leeds including **Kimberly Campanello**, **Caitlin Stobie**, **Zaffar Kunial**, **Jess Richards**, **Helen Mort**, and **Shara McCallum**, an American/ Jamaican poet and Cheney Fellow. For the full story about this visit, follow this link.



AWARDS, PRIZES, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Bridget Bennett's book *Antislavery in the Dissenting Atlantic: Archives and Unquiet Libraries, 1776-1865* received an Honourable Mention for the British Association for American Studies Book Prize 2026.

Kimberly Campanello's 2025 novel *Use the Words You Have* has been shortlisted for the Society of Authors' Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize.

Tony Crowley's *Painting History: The Murals of Northern Ireland 1908-2024* (2025) has been nominated for the Berger Prize for Art History.

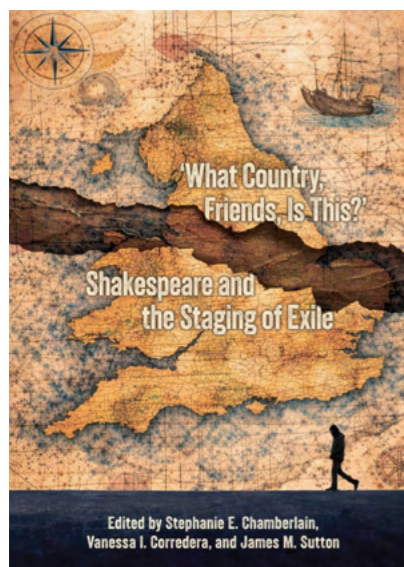
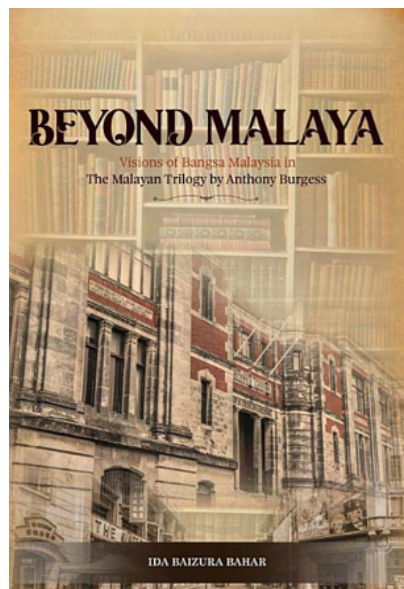
Sophie Fennelly won Postgraduate Researcher of the Year 2026 at the AHC Partnership Awards.

Brett Greatley-Hirsch has been elected as a Fellow of the English Association.

Jess Richards's work-in-progress poetry collection/ chapbook *Everything Becomes Ghost* has been shortlisted for The Papers School Inaugural Poetry Chapbook Prize. Jess's flash fiction story 'Within the Rain (drop) Community' won second prize in the Fish Publishing international competition; it will be published in the Fish Anthology this July.

Esther Rutter's *All Before Me: A Search for Belonging in Wordsworth's Lake District* (Granta, 2024) has been short-listed for the Lakeland Book of the Year Award.

Kate Spowage's monograph *Language as Statecraft: 'Global English' and the Politics of Language in Rwanda* (2025) has been shortlisted for the British Association for Applied Linguistics book prize.



SCHOOL OF ENGLISH PUBLICATION NEWS

Simon Armitage's *Gilgamesh: A New Verse Translation* was published in the USA.

Ida Baizura Bahar's *Beyond Malaya: Visions of Bangsa Malaysia in The Malayan Trilogy* by Anthony Burgess (UMK Press), came out in April. Ida was a Visiting Scholar in the School of English last year.

J.R. Carpenter's collection *pause.* (Broken Sleep Books) came out in January. Two new poems appeared in *The Manchester Review* 28. J.R. also published a poem 'the slow-worm's way', in *Ensemble Park: A Journal of Human + Computer Writing* in April; a chapter 'It's Fine: An Ecopoetics of Exhaustion in Weather Writing', in *Transformative Repetition* (U of Edinburgh Press); and a poetry chapbook *shore thing* (above/ground press).

Mel Evans published (with Caroline Tagg) 'Online Authenticity and Communicative Choices in 2010s Cue-Card Vlogs', in *English Language Contacts and Change in the Digital Age*, ed. H. Paulasto, et al. (Brill, 2026); and 'Reading Aphra Behn's authorship, style and reputation: new evidence for *The Debauchee* and *The Revenge*', *Philological Quarterly* 104.1-2 (summer 2026).

Brett Greatley-Hirsch has been commissioned to co-edit *Macbeth* for the New Variorum Shakespeare.

Christiana Gregoriou published 'Sharp Wit, Northern Grit and Verbal Sparring in *Happy Valley*', in *Practising Stylistics*, ed. C. Neary, et al., (John Benjamins, 2026); and (with A. Lynes and G.S. Larke-Walsh), 'On the Afterlives of Incarceration: An Interdisciplinary Examination of Narrative Construction at Shrewsbury Prison Museum, UK', *Crime, Media Culture* (2026): 1-23.

Natalie Hopwood published 'Never a Frown, With Golden Brown: The Medieval Revival of TikTok', in *The So What* (an open access part of the journal *Arthuriana*), in the special issue 'Social Media and the Medieval'.

Jim Mussell's chapter, "'Click, Click, Click': Capturing the Time of Hot-Metal Composition in the Late Nineteenth-Century British Press", appeared in *Flüchtigkeit fixieren / Capturing Ephemerality*, ed. Vincent Fröhlich, et al. (Wehrhahn Verlag, 2026)

Brendon Nicholls published 'Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Writing of Political Freedom', *African Studies Review* 69.1 (2026): 176-180.

Dan O'Gorman published "'None of the Guilty Will Be Spared": Atmospheric Terror in George Brant's *Grounded*', in *Human Rights in the Age of Drones: Critical Perspectives on-9/11 Cultural Literature, Film and Art*, ed. Muhammad Waqar Azeem (Palgrave Macmillan, 2026).

Sarah K. Perry's short story 'Cat Day' appeared in the anthology *Out of Sorts*.

Jay Prosser's *Loving Strangers: A Camphorwood Chest, a Legacy, a Son Returns* (Black Spring Press, 2024; winner of the Hazel Rowley Prize for biography) comes out in paperback this summer.

Jess Richards's poem 'Surveillance: the route to heaven' was published in *Ten Poets Do Their Bit For The Secret Service* (Sidekick Books, 2026). Jess's prose poem/ flash fiction 'you let the wind whisk egg yolks' was in the online *Flash Frontier*.

PUBLICATION NEWS CONTINUED

Kate Spowage's open access article 'Anything, Anytime, Anywhere: Semiotic Landscapes, Labour, and Ideology in *The Last of Us*' appeared in a special collection of *Open Library of Humanities* journal entitled 'Gaming and the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Essays on *The Last of Us* (2013-)', which Kate co-edited with Adrienne Mortimer.

Alexander Thom published 'Agamben's Ministerial Office in Post-Reformation English Thought', in *Law, Ethics and the Office of the Jurist*, ed. Peter Goodrich and Shaun McVeigh (Routledge, 2026); and 'Breathing Banishment: Shakespeare's Sentences of Exile', in *What Country, Friends, Is This?: Shakespeare and the Staging of Exile*, ed. Stephanie E. Chamberlain, et al., (ACMRS, 2026).

FUNDING SUCCESSES

Kerri-Ann Butcher's ESRC-funded research project, 'The Social Differentiation of Norwich Revisited', revisits Peter Trudgill's seminal 1974 study of Norwich English and includes a series of dialect workshops, curriculum materials, and a public-facing website through which speakers from across East Anglia can contribute to a new regional speech corpus.

Amelia DeFalco won British Academy Small Grant funding for her project 'Building robots for care: Designing inclusive, accessible care robots with difference in mind'.

Fiona Douglas received a Development Grant of £175,916 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the 'Dialect and Heritage: More than Words' project.

Mel Evans was awarded the Ian Roy Institute of Historical Research bursary to fund use of the IHR's on-site library resources for her research on and editing of Aphra Behn's letters.

Natalie Hopwood received grants from the Scottish Society for Northern Studies, the Viking Society for Northern Research, and the Medieval Academy of America to attend the Summer School in Scandinavian Manuscript Studies in Reyjavik, Iceland this June.

Carlos Pons Guerra (PGR, English) received a £31K grant from Arts Council England for a practice-based project to develop his doctoral research on queer dance adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*. The project involves Carlos's dance company DeNada Dance Theatre and is supervised by **José Pérez Díez** and **Denis Flannery**, as well as Ollie Jones (York).



Julia Snell (with Ian Cushing, Manchester Met) received £10,780 from the UKLA for a project, 'Co-producing futures of linguistic justice in England's schools', that will enable her to extend impact work on socially just oracy education.

Kate Spowage won LAHRI Pump-Priming funding to support archival work in London, examining holdings on anticolonialism and language in the George Padmore Institute and SOAS.

RECENT PHDS

The following PGRs in the School of English have recently completed their viva. Congratulations to everyone!

Daniel Gander, 'The Ecological Swimmer in Contemporary Nature Writing' (supervisors: David Higgins and Hamilton Carroll).

Jonathan Gilbert, 'Reading Sensation: The Sound and Visual Poetry of Bob Cobbing and Steve McCaffery' (supervisors: Fiona Beckett and Kimberly Campanello).

Blaise Sales, 'Models of Cognition and Contemporary Ecological Fiction' (supervisors: Clare Barker, David Higgins, Irena Hayter).

Kate Simpson, 'Polytemporal Poetics: Reimagining Deep Time' (supervisors: Caitlin Stobie and Alexander Dunhill).

MASTER'S BY RESEARCH

Mathew Hunter, 'Masculinity and Meat Eating in Late Twentieth-century British Literature' (supervisors: Richard De Ritter and Emma Trott).

IMPACT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Wellcome Trust-funded LivingBodiesObjects (LBO) project, **Clare Barker**'s work with the Bhopal Medical Appeal (BMA) has focused on the development of a **new digital interactive storytelling platform** about the long-term environmental, social, and personal legacy of the 1984 gas disaster at Bhopal. The story draws attention to the ongoing impact of contaminated water supplies in Bhopal and forms a major part of the **BMA's campaigns**. A related exhibition developed during the LBO project was part of this year's Brighton Fringe Festival (20-24 May).

Drawing upon her ongoing practice research and translation work on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, **Kimberly Campanello**'s 'Journeying in Place' project (funded by an Ignite Award) has been bringing creative translation and poetry to the heart of Seacroft, one of Leeds's most diverse and dynamic communities. Through a series of workshops at Chapel FM Arts Centre, residents co-created '**The Seacroft Canto**' — a new poetic work that reflects their lives, languages, and local and interconnected transnational experiences and histories. Filmmaker Charlotte Ginsborg documented the creative process at Seacroft and produced a short documentary film to be screened for the first time at the Leeds Literature Festival on 14 June.

Victoria Clarke delivered the annual Luddite Memorial Lecture at Huddersfield, reflecting on the life and work of the radical publisher Joshua Hobson.

In March, **Natalie Hopwood** collaborated with the new folklore initiative, **The Folk Union** (run by Mike Hankin) to host a Folkmoot titled 'The Myth of the Vikings', in which she spoke with Irina-Maria Manea (Signum University) and Adam Parsons (Oxford Archaeology) about origins behind the myths and stereotypes associated with the Vikings. Natalie was also a guest on **the American Medieval** podcast, in the 'Medieval Comics' episode, speaking about her research on Old Norse intertextuality and monstrosity, as well as the prevalence of medieval topics and themes in superhero comics like *The Mighty Thor* and *The Demon*.

Jay Prosser played major roles in two research projects - **Rethinking Jewish Cultural Heritage Today (R-JCH)** and **Digitally Reconstructing a Desecrated Holocaust Torah Scroll** - supported by recent funding successes that are enabling collaborations between archivists, researchers, creative practitioners, heritage and museum professionals to rethink Jewish cultural heritage through the ethical lens of repair ('Tikkun'). Bringing together interdisciplinary research with curatorial, artistic, and digital practice, these projects address contested forms of Jewish heritage with a view to restoration and renewal in the present. Key partners include museums—established and new—dedicated to refugees, exile, and the Holocaust.

Ross Raisin gave a keynote talk, 'Creativity and the School Curriculum', at the Lowry, Manchester, to school and university leaders, the Arts Council, school charities, and other related stakeholders. Ross has also worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Durham University on a prisoner literacy project, and at this year's Guernsey Literary Festival was guest editor of an anthology of island writing and led school and adult writing workshops.

Jess Richards read her short fiction, 'Skin, Stilt, Rump: a fairytale, dreamed backwards', at a British Association of Decadence Studies event at Goldsmiths in March.

Funded by a recent Sapling award, the '**Legacies of Loss and Decolonial Care: Ethics, Enslavement, Identity**' project, led by **Alison Searle** and **Jo Sadgrove**, builds on an existing collaboration between the School of English and United Society Partners in the Gospel, an Anglican mission agency, which owned the Codrington plantations in Barbados. The funding will enable qualitative data-gathering and analysis for research contributing to a potential impact case study focused on a major reparative project rooted in archival research.

Following the UK government's announcement that a new national oracy framework will be introduced to embed oracy across the curriculum, **Julia Snell** has been working with the DfE, primary and secondary teachers, and the oracy charity, Voice 21, to develop a framework for socially just oracy education, informed by her research on spoken language, classroom dialogue, and educational inequalities. This work is being supported by the University of Leeds through the HEIF Maturing Impact fund.

CONFERENCES AND KEYNOTES

On 15 May, Leeds hosted the fifteenth 'Norse in the North' post-graduate conference. This year's theme was 'Mind and Body', with 8 papers given by Old Norse students from around the world and a keynote by Dr. Rebecca Merkelbach (Tübingen).

The British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies held its first graduate conference in the School this May. Co-organised by **Alberto Andrés Calvo**, alongside Leeds alumni Max Shirley and Liam Young (Loughborough University), it included panels on the form of the novel, contemporary film, and new forms of critical engagement with literature. The conference included over 40 papers, with contributions from English PGRs **Maia Elsner**, **Yara Rodrigues Fowler**, **Jack Rondeau**, and **Ash Burnel**, and those from a number of LCS PGRs.

Melissa Brakel and **Gracie Marsh** (both PGR, English) co-presented a paper at the 'Empathy in Action' conference held at the University of Leeds in June.

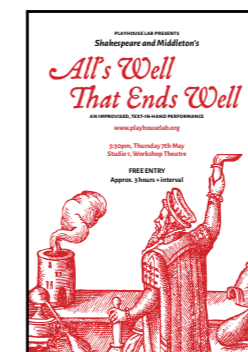
J. R. Carpenter gave two poetry readings and presented her research on mudlarking at Waterman's Hall, London in March 2026; and gave a keynote at the 'Poetry and Performance' conference in Porto in April.

Victoria Clarke gave an invited paper at the Sorbonne University, Paris, on 'Literary Tastemaking and Reviewing in the Chartist Press' in April.

SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

At a special event in March, **Denis Flannery** was in conversation with playwright, screenwriter, and librettist Enda Walsh. Topics included Ireland, migration, the processes of writing for stage, screen, and radio as well, as questions around longing, lost loves, and expressionist worlds. Walsh shared insights into collaborating with Steve McQueen, Cillian Murphy, Ivo van Hove, and David Bowie; plus hints about his forthcoming projects.

Playhouse Lab's Annual Shakespeare Show, *All's Well that Ends Well*, took place in the Workshop Theatre on 7 May.



Jim Mussell presented at the Midwest Victorian Studies Association at Xavier University, Cincinnati in April; and at 'From Archive to Dataset: Building Digital Infrastructures for Archival Humanities Projects' at Leeds Beckett in May.

Esther Rutter (PGR, English) gave a paper on female rural geographies at the Queer Mundane Conference at the University of Bergen, Norway; and a keynote at the British Association for Local History conference in Grassington.

Kate Simpson presented at the European Geosciences Union Annual Assembly in Vienna this May.

Poetry's Environments

The 'Poetry's Environments' international conference took place on 9-11 June, organised by the School of English's Poetry@Leeds in partnership with the National Poetry Centre, the Poetry Book Society, Leeds Literature Festival, Modern Poetry in Translation, Banshee Press, Guillemot Press, Hazel Press, and the Galleries and Cultural Collections at the University of Leeds.

The programme involved significant representation from our School, including contributions from **Simon Armitage**, **Catherine Batt**, **Kimberly Campanello**, **J.R. Carpenter**, **Maia Elsner**, **Jon Gilbert**, **Emily Middleton**, **Jess Richards**, and **Kate Simpson**.

In May, the Critical Life Collective seminar welcomed Dr Rita Sakr (Maynooth) to speak on 'Narrating Gaza After the Severings'.

Sarah K. Perry organised a day-long event in May exploring links between practice research and the literary industries.

Academics, educators, creative practitioners, and GLAM-sector professionals met for the final workshop on the AHRC-funded 'Shakespeare and Early Modern Proverbial Culture' Curiosity project. Co-led by **Mel Evans**, May's workshop considered theoretical aspects of interpretation and recognition, as well as the scope for digital resources to support educators and editors.

Hosted by the School's Critical Life Collective and the British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies, and organised by **Yara Rodrigues Fowler**, Gabriele Lazzari (Surrey), and Elia Cugini (Manchester), a one-day symposium in May, 'Abolitionism and Contemporary Literary Studies', brought contemporary abolitionist struggle and creative practice into dialogue with research in Literary Studies.

COMING UP IN THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE, AND SOCIETY (LDS)

RESEARCH GROUP EVENTS

Wednesday 24 June

Dr Colin Reilly (Stirling) visits the School for a special afternoon featuring a research talk, titled 'Multilingual markets: language and the informal economy in Malawi', and an interactive master-class for PGRs/ ECRs on collaboration. These events are part of the LDS end-of-year celebration, with a drinks/snacks reception after the talk. All are welcome to attend; please sign up here.

ALLIANCE FOR THE STUDY OF ADOPTION AND CULTURE (ASAC) CONFERENCE

Thursday 25 – Saturday 27 June

John McLeod is collaborating with Dr **Laura Lucia Rossi** (LCS) in bringing this biennial conference to the University of Leeds. Titled 'Adoption, Culture, and Law', this conference is inspired by this year's 100th anniversary of the first Adoption of Children Act (1926) in England and Wales. Keynote speakers include Dr Michael Lambert (Lancaster) and Dr Maeve O'Rourke (Galway). The event features over 60 speakers drawn from 19 countries and will be the first time ASAC has held its biennial conference outside of the USA.

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Wednesday 4 November

We currently have one professorial inaugural lecture planned for the autumn semester, to be delivered by **Jim Mussell**. Further information on this will be available in a few months.

TRANSATLANTIC REASONINGS CONFERENCE

Thursday 12 – Sunday 15 November

Organised by School of English PGRs **Garfield Campbell** and **Jack Rondeau**, together with **Jo Sadgrove** (PRHS), this conference, taking place in Montego Bay, Jamaica, addresses the theme 'The Possibility of Forgiveness? Encountering the Legacies of Colonialism in the 21st Century'. The conference is part of a new interdisciplinary, international, and multi-organisational project that seeks to create an ongoing conversation about the legacies of colonialism in the Caribbean and beyond. For further details, see the conference website.

REF Ready?

School of English colleagues can ensure that their outputs are Open Access compliant for REF 2029 by following this [link](#)

REGULAR RESEARCH EVENTS

In addition to the individual events listed above, we have the **New Inklings** research conversations, and the **Research M[]tters** seminar series. The School's **peer-to-peer developmental reading** programme also runs throughout the year. Further research-related initiatives, support, and resources will be announced next semester.



RESoEARCHER is produced twice a year. Issues are circulated in winter and summer. The next issue will appear in winter 2027. A call for contributions will be announced towards the end of the autumn semester.

There is a lot taking place in the School of English, but you can always keep track of forthcoming events on our [website](#). While there, check out the new **Research Bookshelf** feature that provides details of recent long-form publications produced by members of the School

Previous issues of *RESoEARCHER* can be found on the School's website by using this QR code:



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