



DEAN'S WELCOME

Welcome to the summer edition of the CSH Newsletter - and congratulations to all staff and students for achieving so much during an incredibly challenging academic year!

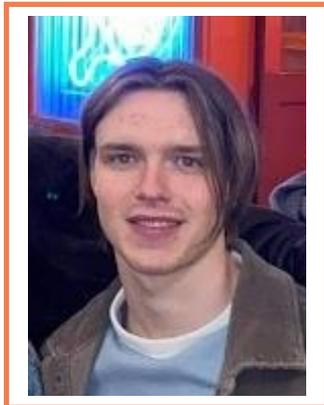
In this edition we focus on opportunities for continuing education as a postgraduate – whether that be taking a course at MA level, or eventually proceeding to work on a PhD.

Once again, we look at activities across all 3 subject areas, and this time we have also included improvements proposed by Applied Humanities students in relation to presentation, student support, introduction of a regular wellbeing feature, and more ways for you to add to the student voices that speak through this newsletter.

Prof Andrew Cooper

STUDENT FOCUS – POSTGRAD STUDY & RESEARCH IN CSH

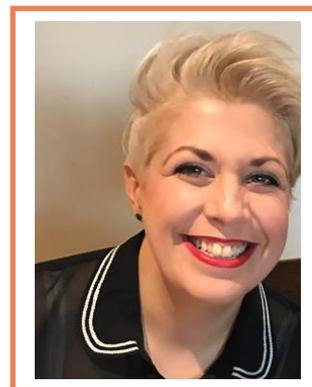
My name is Tom, I'm 21 years old and currently in my final year of studying on the **MA Social History** course at Leeds Beckett. I love football and exercise, going to gigs when I can, going out with mates. The course has been great with a variety of interesting and challenging modules based on the research of some very passionate lecturers at Beckett.



Having graduated in 2020 with a degree in History I've gone straight through the education system without a gap, meaning I'll definitely be taking a break after the MA for a well-deserved rest! Since my childhood, I've always been interested and passionate about History which is probably a result of my obsession with *Horrible Histories* when I was younger and it was my favourite subject at both primary and secondary school, as well as college. During the final year of undergraduate, I was offered a place to study the MA and having considered other universities I felt that Leeds Beckett was the best option as I loved my time at the university beforehand and I knew I'd feel at home here.

Working on the MA has been challenging as it's been a great step up from the undergraduate level allowing me to put my academic skills to the test and it has allowed my research to flourish and explore my main areas of interest. The beauty about the course is that it's engaging with some brilliant modules such as the Victorians in Italy, Journeys & Discoveries and Food History in a Global World, which have all provided a great insight into what further studies would entail as each lecturer has presented their own areas of interest and research. The lecturers are passionate about their research which comes across in every seminar and helps with student engagement. The pandemic has disrupted the MA a little and whilst the course started with and is now returning to in-person teaching most of it's been online, which can be frustrating but at least it's meant we can stay in our comfy clothes with a cuppa! Whilst assignments are often quite daunting the school of Cultural Studies has kept us on our toes with some varied and quirky forms of assessment. The one that stands out for me was on Grainne Goodwin's Journeys and Discoveries module where we had to forge an extract from one of the texts of travel studied on the module, it was a great way to engage with historic texts and a brilliant way to test our creativity that will help in the working world and later life. Working on the MA has been brilliant, and I can't fault the course or lecturers at all!

Leeds Beckett has done everything they can to assist students during the pandemic and the school, in particular, has been brilliant with helping us out and keeping us updated. With restrictions now easing, I think all students will be glad to see a return to reality with the opportunity of attending in-person teaching for some modules.



My name is Zoë Moreton and I'm a **Postgraduate Researcher**, in my final year. My PhD focuses on the representation of the maternal in posthuman, science fiction films. Posthumanism is a far cry from my undergraduate days of Psychology and Media, and I think it's fair to say I have taken the 'scenic route' to becoming a PhD student in the School of Cultural Studies

and Humanities. After graduating, I took a position in the careers service, running many projects for them and several colleges in Leeds before starting a family. A stint running my own business led to training to become a

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ALUMNI FOCUS – Q&A WITH LIZZIE ANTISS

primary school teacher. It was this return to study that reignited my passion for learning, research, and discovery. This renewed interest was a nagging itch that underpinned my teaching career, an itch that eventually had to be scratched. I left teaching to take up an MA in Interdisciplinary Psychology at Leeds Beckett. It was about halfway through this course that I knew my studies would continue to fulfil a lifelong dream of undertaking a PhD. This was cemented by two 'WOW' moments on this course: One was an essay I wrote about motherhood, where I discovered I could be quite vocal on the matter! The second was my final project that looked at female cyborgs in science fiction films. My supervisor for this project signposted me to the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities armed with a proposal that combined these two interests. The rest, as they say, is history.

The School of Cultural Studies and Humanities has become my academic home, I have amazing supervisors who have helped me develop my skills and my writing ambitions, other staff are supportive and genuinely interested in my research and the PhD community is growing in strength all the time. What I have found most surprising is the overlap of interests and areas of specialism the school has across the disciplines. This leads to some interesting conversations where new ideas are generated making a PhD journey in the school truly interdisciplinary. The school has also offered me the opportunity to teach on the Media course, develop my knowledge of Higher Education (HE) by being the Post Graduate Rep and present at conferences and seminars.

COVID-19 has impacted PhD students, but the school has tried hard to develop the community despite the restraints of the pandemic. We have a virtual office, 'Work in Progress Seminars' where we meet virtually to discuss our work with other students, and online social events. In many respects, the virtual world has allowed me to access many more seminars and sessions than I would have been able to before.

On a more personal note, the pandemic has brought its challenges, working from home has confronted many people. Pre lockdown I could choose from the quiet study space offered by my empty house or the support of the PhD office in Broadcasting Place. Almost overnight the house was full of the daily bubble of 3 teenagers trying to access online lessons, a furloughed husband, and no means of escape! My supervisors checked in with me regularly and together we worked out an adjusted time scale that took away the pressure (and guilt) I was feeling from not devoting more time to my research. Thankfully this space and shared understanding meant that I am now back on track, and I am looking forward to the challenges that the concluding phase brings.

If you feel inspired to continue your studies as a postgraduate student, you can view our courses [HERE](#).



What course did you study?

I was a student at Leeds Beckett from 2011 to 2015, first for my English Literature undergraduate and then my Contemporary Literature Masters.

What has been your career progression since graduating?

I've worked for the same educational software company for 5 and a half years since I finished my Masters. I joined as a Technical Author before moving on to be a Bid Writer and now a Proposals Manager. I had no idea that these jobs existed, let alone what they entailed, before working there.

I stumbled upon the job advert for the Technical Author role when job hunting towards the end of my Masters. I applied on a whim really and was not expecting to get an interview - it sounded way too technical for me, but the advert did say it was ideal for English graduates. It's much more important for a Technical Author to be a skilled writer than have technical knowledge. The job requires you to provide guidance on how to use software and so you, therefore, need to be able to translate jargon into clear instructional language. Sure, this sounds potentially a bit dull, but I enjoyed the linguistic challenge of helping people understand complex processes.

The longer I worked in the company, the more I got involved in bid writing. Bids are formal documents that companies send out when they are wanting to buy new products and services. So, we receive a request for a bid, and we respond by writing about the products we develop in the hope that we are successful and win the business. It is a major part of business-to-business sales (and doesn't involve any unpleasant sales, cold calling etc.).

How did Leeds Beckett equip you for life in this role?

Bid responses are often major documents and as a Proposals Manager, it is my job to coordinate our response, make sure the tone is consistent and positive, as well as other project management activities such as meeting deadlines, communicating problems to senior staff and leading meetings. Our bid responses are usually 50 - 100 pages long and they are made up of things my company is asked all the time and other things that require more thought and creativity. Responses are evaluated against strict criteria (a bit like an essay mark scheme!) so the language must be clear. If we win the bid, they also form the basis of the project as a whole, so you have to be accurate, otherwise, you risk causing damage to a new business relationship with a company.

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What would be your top tip for students embarking on a similar degree?

If you want writing to be a major part of your career but you're not sure where to start, my main advice is to trawl the job sites for anything with 'writer' or 'author' in the title. This will give you a good overview of the writing jobs on the market and if they seem too technical or corporate for your skills so far, don't be put off! In my team, I want people who can write more than any other skill. Software, business processes and industry knowledge can all be learned, but writing well is a fantastic skill that - believe me - not everyone has.

You can read Lizzie's blog [HERE](#).

WELLBEING AND SUPPORT

In his blog for World Autism Awareness

Week 2021, Dr James McGrath focuses on some aspects of autistic experience that aren't always widely discussed: imagination; 'face blindness'; and the burdens of stereotyping.



You can read Dr McGrath's blog in full [HERE](#).

Do you have questions about your studies or need help?

Your *Course Administrator* is one of your key contacts at university. Their purpose is to ensure that you have the smoothest possible student experience, so if you have a question about your course or if you experience any problems, they are the best person to ask first, including if you need help with the following:

- ✓ If you need help submitting your assignments
- ✓ If you need an extension
- ✓ If you need a referral to teaching staff or specialist professional services

The CSH Course Admin Team can be emailed at: AdminCulturalStudiesandHumanities@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Your *Academic Advisor* is here to support your academic development and will provide advice on how to get the most out of your learning experience. To find out who your academic advisor is please ask your course administrator.

For all other aspects of student support, including wellbeing, money, and accommodation advice, a full list of contact details and support information can be easily accessed in one click [HERE](#).

EVENTS

Since the publication of the last Newsletter, the School has contributed a number of fantastic events that have formed part of the University's wider coverage of a variety of topical issues.

- As part of the **LGBTQ+ History Month** at Leeds Beckett, the School organised an engaging online event with Nathaniel Hall, a freelance theatre-maker, writer, performer, producer and HIV activist. In his talk, Nathaniel Hall took the audience on a journey through his own history of HIV within the framework of the broader history of HIV and AIDS and detailed how his creative expression informs his activism both on and off the stage, including his award-winning play, *First Time*, and the Channel 4 sensation, *It's a Sin*. He also stressed the continued need for HIV activism to break deeply ingrained stigmas and stay positive in a negative world.



As part of the **BECKETT TALKS PODCAST SERIES**, and in honour of **LGBTQ+ History Month**, episode 5 hosted Professor Susan Watkins and Professor Ruth Robbins in conversation around

what we can learn about gender and sexuality from Virginia Woolf's novel, *Orlando*.

- It was great to see the School Featuring in the University's Coverage of **international women's day**. Professor Jayne Raisborough features in episode 10 of the **BECKETT TALKS PODCAST SERIES**, *Breaking out of stereotypes*, and tells us about the breadth of her research around culture and inequality, representations and stereotypes, invisibility and hyper-visibility and the consequences this on the way we see and understand issues around age, weight, health and our own bodies.
- This year's **Leeds Lit Fest**, hosted for the first time in digital form due to the pandemic, saw one of our academics, Dr Emily Zobel Marshall, hosting one of the key events: an interview with Monique Roffey, fresh from her 2020 Costa Book Award win for *The Mermaid of Black Conch*. Dr Zobel Marshall also shared poems at the launch of a new anthology from the Leeds based publisher Peepal Tree Press's

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Inscribe Readers and Writers Group – which supports writers of colour to creatively advance their work. You can read more about the event [HERE](#).

- On Tuesday 11 May, the School hosted an online event with **Melissa Fojt of Emerald** – the global, academic publisher based in Bingley. An ‘in conversation’ format, the event focused on Melissa’s journey into publishing, insights into the many roles available in the field (not just editing!), the future of publishing industry and how students can best gain access.

GETTING TO KNOW...

Dr Emily Zobel Marshall - Reader in Postcolonial Literature



The first two years of my life were spent in a commune in Buckinghamshire. Yes, my parents were hippies – and in their pursuit of a more sustainable and harmonious life they set up a commune in the year I was born (1978) of 17 children and 17 adults in an old stately home. It was real success, and the commune is still going strong today, you can read more about it [HERE](#).

My parents then moved to the mountains of Snowdonia in North Wales to a house right in the middle of nowhere (they must have been really tired of communal living!). My mother is French Caribbean, so I grew up speaking French, Welsh and English. I loved reading – especially as we didn’t have a TV – so my obsession with books developed early.

I now live in Headingley with my two children Theo (11ys) and Rose (8ys) and husband Tom, owner of [Welcome Skate Store](#) in Leeds city centre and skateboard obsessive. When I’m not teaching, I write poetry and find ways to try and have mini-adventures, especially in the mountains – hiking, staying overnight in my van in the Lakes, running and wild swimming.

CSH RECOMMENDS...

If you need some reading or viewing inspiration over the coming weeks, how about trying some of these:

- *My Brilliant Friend*, by Elena Ferrante - a book that captures the social and emotional intricacies of friendship from childhood to adulthood, set in the 1950s in Italy.
- Ian Williams’ latest book of poetry *Word Problems* – features, among other things, a poem that’s printed horizontally, and spans dozens of pages in length, as well as poems written in interlocking circles, and ones that use the language of maths problems in school – all against a contemporary BLM backdrop. Link from the publisher [HERE](#).

GETTING IN TOUCH

Keep in touch with us and indulge in our online conversations through our [Twitter](#) here:

[@BeckettCSH](#), [@Centrcultureart](#), [@BeckettEnglish](#), [@LeedsBeckettMCC](#), [@becketthistory](#)

Go to our **School webpages** [HERE](#) to read our diverse range of student blogs and find out about the exciting research and projects that take place across the School.

You can read more in the recent [Good News article here](#).



Broadcasting Place, home of CSH

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Working with students is something that we pride ourselves on in the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities. If you would like to get involved in contributing to future editions of our School Newsletter, please contact us! You may want to submit your own article or have a specific item or topic that you would like us to include – if so then we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to get in touch with us via email:

CSHInbox@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

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