

Online CHAS Centenary ‘Canterbury in History’ FREE half-day conference

(jointly organised by CHAS and CKHH)

Saturday 13 February 2021 [online using Microsoft Teams Live Event]

The four talks on different centuries highlight the role and importance of specific people, places and events in Canterbury’s long and colourful history. Taking different dates relating to ’20, the speakers will explore what was happening in Canterbury at the time and how this fits into the context of local, regional, national and international issues relating to topics such as famine, pilgrimage, religious change, migration and colonisation, and world war. All the speakers have worked on Canterbury and Kent, and between them have an impressive array of publications. This half-day conference celebrates Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society’s centenary and is organised jointly by the Centre for Kent History and Heritage and Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society.

Programme:

9.45-10.00 People log-in

10.00-10.10 **Welcome**

10.10-11.25 **Medieval & Tudor:**

Famine and Feast: changing fortunes in 1320 and 1420 – Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh (CCCU)

1520 Canterbury: Turbulence, Transition and Tents – Dr Stuart Palmer (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge)

11.25-11.35 Break

11.35-12.50 **Stuart & Modern**

Robert Cushman and The Mayflower 1620: Saints or Sinners? A Revisionist Interpretation of the Mayflower legacy – Dr Lorraine Flisher (CCCU)

Good-bye to all that?: Canterbury in 1920 – Dr David Budgen (CCCU)

12.50-13.00 **Concluding remarks**

Booking not required: join about 5 to 10 minutes before start time – see joining url below: to join Teams (as you would for Zoom) click on the link or paste in your web browser. Then on the screen click on 'Open Microsoft Teams' (centre, top in the little panel, not the buttons in the middle of the screen). Then to get you into the lecture as an attendee click 'Join now' (as you would for Zoom).

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZGZjYTYzOGltZjI0Ny00OWZiLTlhODQtMjjjODQxZWE4ODE3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%220320b2da-22dd-4dab-8c21-6e644ba14f13%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%225438ffb7-ff66-44f6-9ccf-cf504309571b%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d

10.10-11.25 Medieval & Tudor:

Famine and Feast: changing fortunes in 1320 and 1420 – Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh (CCCU)

According to Christ Church Priory accounts, in 1319/20 the sum of £570 was collected at the four sites of veneration for Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral and a century later the same sum is recorded. Yet conditions in Canterbury were very different because in 1320 Canterbury, east Kent and the nation had been experiencing what has come to be known as ‘The Great Famine’ that brought consequent unrest, while in 1420 the bailiffs in Canterbury congratulated themselves on a spectacularly successful Jubilee during which everything had gone according to plan, foodstuffs had been available for all and the city and country were still basking in the successes of Henry V.

This talk will look at the conditions a century apart and consider how such different circumstances can on the face of it have produced the same result for the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury.

1520 Canterbury: Turbulence, Transition and Tents – Dr Stuart Palmer (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge)

The opening decades of the sixteenth century saw transformative change in the City of Canterbury and the wider nation. As some certainties of the medieval world were being undermined by new intellectual traditions, the growing assertiveness of centralised state authority and emergent religious controversies were disrupting many of the patterns of life and governance in cities like Canterbury. This talk will explore the year 1520 in Canterbury, a smaller-scale context in which we can glimpse many of these national and international transitions exemplified in different strands of the city’s history that year. By examining three of these: Henry VIII’s lavish visit to the city, growing suspicions of an emergent Lutheran underground in the city, and ongoing tensions between civic and religious authorities, the talk will outline how the civic governors of Canterbury were adjusting to the changing realities of Tudor England and how their efforts helped to shape the future of Canterbury for decades to come.

11.35-12.50 Stuart & Modern

Robert Cushman and The Mayflower 1620: Saints or Sinners? A Revisionist Interpretation of the Mayflower legacy – Dr Lorraine Flisher (CCCU)

The events surrounding the Mayflower in 1620 can be seen as an origin myth of the United States of America, when like the Garden of Eden everything was new and full of hope and innocence. However in the wake of Black Lives Matter and the toppling of statues, what significance should we attach to the colonization of New England by a group of seventeenth century English separatists and how does Mayflower 400 inform attitudes in the present?

This paper takes as its focus Robert Cushman, considering his connection with Canterbury and contribution to the Mayflower voyage. Born in Rolvenden, Kent in 1577, Cushman was apprenticed to a Canterbury grocer in the parish of St George the Martyr where his separatist beliefs were strengthened by his association with like-minded religious radicals in the city. In Leiden, Cushman became the principal business agent in negotiating and securing financial backing from the ‘Adventurers’ and a patent from the Virginia Company for the Mayflower endeavour.

The legacy of the Pilgrim Fathers is complex and bound up in the culture wars. Two competing histories have emerged – one a symbol of all that is good about America and

another of how white Europeans appropriated the land and committed acts of atrocity against Native Americans. In trying to separate the history from the mythology I will consider the ongoing dialogue between the present and our colonial past. What are the national traits that have traceable roots to the first separatists and puritans, and how do they impact on the national character of the US? What is the legacy of the Mayflower 1620?

Good-bye to all that?: Canterbury in 1920 – Dr David Budgen (CCCU)

In ‘The Canterbury Tour’, a film made in 1920 and subsequently published online by the National Archives, a camera operator in the back of a truck films as it begins its journey in St Dunstons and passes through the city centre. The streets throng with pedestrians and cyclists, automobiles and horse-drawn carts. Aside from the area destroyed during the Baedeker raids of March 1942, the scenes look very familiar. Filmed just two years after the end of the First World War, the citizens of Canterbury were part of a very different society from that which had entered the conflict in 1914. They had been shaped by the experiences of wartime; they were grieving for loved ones and adapting to changed circumstances. There had been positive changes too. After the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 men and women now lived in a more democratic country. Many Canterbury citizens were newly enfranchised.

The people of Canterbury were, like many others in Britain, caught between a need to remember the past, and look forward to the future. Indeed, Canterbury was a city in which tradition sat alongside the modern. While cars darted through the medieval streets, livestock grazed upon the cricket ground. This paper will therefore focus on Canterbury in 1920. It will examine the legacy of the Great War in the city, explore local responses to the momentous societal changes of the era, and show how life after the war balanced the normal with the abnormal.