

# Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Alumni Newsletter

Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

Issue 8 August 2017



The ninth-century Oseberg ship in Oslo — as photographed on a recent re-  
search trip to Norway by current PhD student Ben Allport (Clare, 2010).



## Departmental News and Event



*Fiona Edmonds and Rosalind Love at the 2016 departmental garden party.*

Just now, deep into August, ASNC's corner of 9 West Road is the quietest it ever gets, but even so I can hear the gentle murmuring of graduate students in the common room, and I know that some of my colleagues will be busy at the summer admissions pool today: nothing here ever completely stands still. A few weeks ago at the annual Departmental Open Day I was powerfully struck by the optimism and on-wards drive with which we pass through the yearly cycle, from welcoming a fresh crop of ASNaCs in October, interviewing those of the future in December, through to examining the third-years and the MPhils and bidding them farewell, at the very same time as we are greeting prospective applicants at the Open Day; and of course the graduate students are a vibrant strand threaded through it all. It has been wonderful to see so many ASNaCs coming back to various events during the year, whether it be our September drinks reunion, the Black Tie dinner or the Garden Party, and we are also always delighted to hear news of what people have been doing since graduating. As a way to spread news effectively, we recently set up an Anglo-Saxon,

Norse and Celtic Alumni Facebook group. In a bid to steward our resources as best we can, we have taken the difficult decision not to send this letter out in hard copy by post, but only as an e-newsletter, and hope not to cause too much disappointment thereby.

Since there was no alumni newsletter last year we have a certain amount of news to catch up on. In the summer of 2016 we bade a deeply fond, sad fare-

well to Fiona Edmonds, as she moved on to a post as Lecturer in Regional History at the University of Lancaster, spreading the ASNaC love north-westwards (the picture is from the 2016 ASNC Garden Party, at which various presentations were made to Fiona, including a martially-clad frog, also depicted, frogs being one of Fiona's lesser-known enthusiasms). Because of Fiona's continuing involvement with the Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago project, we still have an excuse to hold on to her tightly, though. We had also waved goodbye to Phil Dunshea, who had covered Fiona's maternity leave and then worked alongside her when she returned from leave: Phil headed yet further north, to Glasgow, taking ASNC's warmest wishes with him. So it was that in January 2017 we were delighted that Ali Bonner took up the position of lecturer in Celtic History (see her profile in this newsletter for more) and has very quickly settled into the post. Another new beginning in January 2017 was the AHRC-funded project (ASNC's third!) *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae*, focused on the Latin Lives of the Welsh saints, which got off the blocks swiftly with Ben Guy as the Research Associate based in the Department (with more detail elsewhere in this newsletter). Ben will be succeeded in October by David Callander. 2016 brought news that Máire Ní Mhaonaigh had won a British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship enabling her to take time away from teaching and admin duties to complete her edition of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*. To cover Máire's teaching we were very pleased to welcome back from the other place Mark Williams for the year 2016-17: alas, though, that other place has drawn him back for next year, since he has been appointed the Fitzjames Research Fellow at Merton College (congratulations, Mark!).

Rather like someone who emerges with surprise and rather tousled at the bottom of a very tall helter-skelter, having only seconds before ascended to the top

full of fearful anticipation, I find myself already almost at the end of my term of office as Head of Department. While I confess that there are some aspects of the job that I won't miss much, when I hand over to Richard Dance at the end of September, it will be with a strong sense of the very great privilege that it has been to do my best to enable such a thriving institution to function successfully and with immense gratitude to my patient and hard-working colleagues and to the ever-enthusiastic students and alumni.

Dr Rosalind Love, Head of Department



# Departmental News and Events

## New Teaching and Research Staff

### Dr Ali Bonner

*Lecturer in Celtic History*

After reading for a degree in Classics at Oxford Ali worked in television for 15 years, before studying ASNaC, and



Celtic in Cambridge, where she gained her BA (Aff.), MPhil and PhD in the department, working on the manuscript transmission of Pelagius' *Letter to Demetrias*. She was a British

Academy Postdoctoral Fellow 2012-15. Her research has focused on Pelagius and Faustus of Riez, two British authors of the fifth century who wrote in Latin; overall her interest lies in the history of the peoples of the Insular milieu from the fifth century to the Conquest. She has published on St Patrick and Pelagius, and the manuscript transmission of Pelagius' works. Ali teaches Celtic history, as well as Latin and Medieval Welsh, and has just completed a book, *The myth of Pelagianism*, which will be published by the British Academy.

### Dr Mark Williams

*Teaching Associate in Celtic Literature*

Mark Williams joined the Department for a year to teach the Irish papers during Prof. Ní



Mhaonaigh's research leave. He has most recently been Darby Fellow in Old and Middle English at Lincoln College, Oxford, and before that was a Research Fellow at Peterhouse. He received his doctorate in Celtic from Jesus College, Oxford, in 2008. His research focuses on mythology and the supernatural in medieval Celtic literatures, and his most recent book is *Ireland's Immortals: A History of the Gods of Irish Myth* (Princeton, 2016).

### Dr Ben Guy

*Junior Research Fellow, Robinson College*

I'm delighted and honoured to announce that I have been offered



Robinson College's first Junior Research Fellowship. I take up the position in October 2017, and hope to begin a new research project in conjunction with it. As an ASNC doctoral student, I became immersed in the tangled world of medieval Welsh genealogy, and more recently I have been enjoying the delights of Welsh hagiography in my role as a Research Associate working on ASNC's *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project. But in Robinson I hope to turn to another of the core problems of early medieval history: the relationship between politics and culture. My key case study will be the region of the river Dee in the northern Anglo-Welsh march. This is a region that has received little detailed and sustained attention, lying on the periphery of the core English and Welsh

polities. Yet it is a region that has much to offer the historian interested in how the languages, practices and identities of local people changed in response to fluctuations in patterns of lordship and power. There's much to be done, and judging by what I can recall of the infamous ASNC black tie dinner of January 2011, Robinson should provide just the right kind of atmosphere to do it in.

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### Hattie Soper

*Junior Research Fellow, Corpus Christi College*

Hattie plans to use the great opportunity presented by Corpus Christi's three-year research fellowship firstly to write a monograph based on her doctoral research, addressing representations of the human life course in Old English poetry and prose, including centrally the *Exeter Book* riddles and *Beowulf*. She then intends to embark on a companion monograph addressing various concepts of death in Old English literature, including death-as-sleep and death at an intersection with geography. Both projects will be founded on close reading, contextualised in cultural and intellectual history as well as contemporary theory. The work is intended to challenge long-standing scholarly assumptions such as the presumed irrelevance of texts which describe non-human life progression and death (that of animals and objects)



with regard to human experience. Ultimately the research will attempt to engage with Anglo-Saxon conceptualisations of life course development and the end of life without losing sight of issues of genre, language, style and form.

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### David Callander

*Research Associate, Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae project*

David Callander will be joining the staff of ASNC as a post-doctoral researcher on the *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project. His role will involve editing, translating, and commenting on the Latin lives of the Welsh saints. Originally from Cardiff, David read English at Oxford before joining the department in 2012, where he has been ever since. His research focuses on comparative study of medieval Welsh and English literature, especially poetry and poetic structure. Examining the contrasting narrative trends in early Welsh and English poetry formed the basis of his PhD. Other interests include textual criticism, narrative theory, and collecting early printed Welsh books. David is committed to linguistic diversity inside and outside academia, and works in Welsh and German as well as English. He is looking forward to the ample opportunity the *Vitae*

*Sanctorum Cambriae* project will provide to look at how texts travel and are transformed across borders.



## Departmental News and Events

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### **Irish Harp Music: Traditional and Modern**

*Margo Griffin-Wilson*

Dr. Úna Monaghan, Rosamund Harding Research Fellow in Music at Newnham College, Cambridge, performed 'Irish Harp Music: Traditional and Modern' in the English Faculty Drama Studio on 9 March, 2017. Dr. Monaghan, a harper, composer and Irish speaker from Belfast, read Natural Science (Astrophysics) at Cambridge and holds a Ph.D in New Technologies in Contemporary Irish Traditional Music from Queen's University, Belfast. Her research explores intersections between Irish traditional music, experimental music and interactive technologies, and her memorable performance conveyed the depth of the tradition while pushing the boundaries of experimental techniques.

The Drama Studio was filled to capacity, and the performance opened with compositions by the blind harpist Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738), which gave expression to the traditional form. As the performance progressed, the traditional instrument became part of a complex configuration of contemporary technological tools and computer sensors, revealing Dr. Monaghan's skill as a sound technician as well as a harpist. In the inventive piece, 'The Chinwag', harp music intersected with recorded conversations of women in rural Donegal, in what Monaghan describes as 'a merging of melodies and life stories'.

Dr. Monaghan's performance follows upon her other featured works and awards. (<http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/directory/una-monaghan>). The event was organized by Dr. Margo Griffin-Wilson (Teaching Associate, Modern Irish), with the support of a grant from the Irish Government.



*Dr Úna Monaghan performing.*



## Departmental News and Events

the Irish-speaking island of Inis Bó Finne, John O'Brien, who campaigns on behalf of the islanders (and minoritised fishing communities across the EU more broadly) to regain rights to the traditional catch.

One year later, in March 2017, Jourdain was invited to screen the film at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event was attended by John O'Brien and fellow islanders who continue to work for fishers' rights. Since O'Brien first raised the plight of island and coastal communities, support for small fishers has grown. Mairéad McGuinness, Vice-President of the European Parliament and MEP for the Midlands-North-West of Ireland, spoke at the screening on the need for more EU and Member State support for local fishing communities, and the need for the EU to 'take on board their concerns'.

A large group from LIFE (Low Impact Fisheries of Europe), <http://lifeplatform.eu/7739/>, including Deputy Director Brian O'Riordan and representatives from the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and France and elsewhere, provided a clear voice at EU level for the smaller scale European fishers.

Women from AKTEA, <http://akteaplatform.eu/> the European network of women in fisheries and aquaculture, voiced the particular issues of women. Dr. Margo Griffin-Wilson, Teaching Associate in Modern Irish, was invited to attend the event and meet with the Irish and European representatives.

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### Medieval History Day

*Máire Ní Mhaonaigh*

The Department contributed to a Medieval History Day for teachers organised by the Faculty of History on 26 June 2017. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh gave a lecture on Vikings, one of a range of subjects offered on the day ranging from Early Islam to the Black Death. Teachers were also provided with summary material on a topics within the Department's remit, including material on 'The Impact of the Vikings on the English Language' drawing on the research of GERSUM ([www.gersum.org](http://www.gersum.org)), and on 'The Causes of the Viking Age' prepared by Dr Elizabeth Ashman Rowe.

The Department is keen to support the teaching of the new key units offered at A-level History, including 'The Viking Age c. 790-1066'; Anglo-Saxon England; and 'Britain: Migration, Empires and the People from c. 790'. We would be delighted to work with ASNCs now involved in the teaching profession to help with access to resources. Do get in touch!



*Máire Ní Mhaonaigh at the Medieval History Day*

## ***Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae: the Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints*** *Ben Guy*

When it comes to text-based Asnacery, you can't beat a good saint's Life. Whether you're into the sea-faring voyages of St Brendan, the dragon-thwarting abilities of St Samson, or the raucous harp-playing of St Dunstan, you're bound to find something that sends the curiosity nerves tingling.

With such factors in mind, members of the ASNaC department have recently turned their collectively penetrating gaze upon the comparatively under-studied corpus of Latin saints' Lives written in medieval Wales. Approximately fifty-four such hagiographical texts survive concerning some twenty-five saints. Some of these are well-known, such as Rhygyfarch's Life of St David, written late in the eleventh century during a crucial period of diocesan reform and political antagonism. Others are rather more obscure, such as the Life of St Justinian of Llanstinan (near Fishguard), surviving only in a fourteenth-century abridgement. Some of these texts are woefully understudied, no doubt due in part to the general lack of reliable modern editions and translations.

ASNC's new AHRC-funded project, entitled '*Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae: The Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints*', seeks to remedy this situation. The project aims to transcribe all copies of the fifty-four texts, and then to edit and translate each text individually, providing supporting commentary in accompanying notes. Ultimately, this substantial body of edited material will become available for free on the web.

The project is a collaborative venture between the ASNaC department

and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth. Heading up the ASNaC team are senior staff members Professor Paul Russell (Principal Investigator) and Dr Rosalind Love (Secondary Investigator), working alongside Research Associate Dr Ben Guy (Selwyn, 2009). The Aberystwyth branch of the project is being managed by another ASNaC alumnus, David Parsons (Corpus Christi, 1990; also Secondary Investigator), working with Research Fellows Dr Angela Kinney and Dr Martin Crampin.

## eDIL

*Máire Ní Mhaonaigh*



Medieval Irish words and their meanings are

at the centre of a collaborative project based in the Department of ASNaC and at Queen's University Belfast. The electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL) is being updated and extended by Dagmar Wodtke and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh from the Department, alongside colleagues in Belfast. The work will result in 5,000 additions or so being made to this invaluable resource.

Among these additions is the word *rimaire* which lives on in the modern Irish word for computer *ríomhaire*. 'Computers' were a medieval necessity, since the calculation of time and of important liturgical dates such as Easter were important. Medieval attestations of *rimaire*, therefore, will be included in the new eDIL.

The discovery of new citations will ensure that the existence of other

# Research in ASNC

words which had in fact been considered doubtful is much more secure. A word for a cloud, *nin*, had only been known from what looked like a fanciful explanation of another word. Two new examples of *nin* have been found in a version of 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley' (*Táin Bó Cuailnge*) underlining the fact that it was a real word in Medieval Ireland. Indeed it is linked with the pre-eminent hero, Cú Chulainn, who may suddenly appear *a ninaib ocus aeraib* 'out of clouds and the air'.

A flavour of the Dictionary is given regularly in the project's Word of the Week feature. Why not visit the website ([www.dil.ie](http://www.dil.ie)) to check it out, and you can also follow us on Twitter. **IL\_Dictionary.**

## Leeds International Medieval Congress 2017

The Gersum Project and eDIL teamed up for two sessions on lexicography and loan-words at the IMC in Leeds in early July.



*Richard Dance (Gersum) and Sharon Arbuthnot (eDIL) at the IMC.*

## Gersum Project

*Brittany Schorn*

One of the most lasting impacts of the Viking Age, especially in the north and east of England, and probably its most enduring and significant effect, was on the English language. Richard Dance's cutting-edge research into this borrowed Scandinavian vocabulary – and how we can identify it – now forms the basis for the Gersum Project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This collaborative project's team also includes ASNaC alumna Sara Pons-Sanz (now Cardiff University) as Co-Investigator and Brittany Schorn and Research Associate. The project's aim is to understand Scandinavian influence on English vocabulary by examining the origins of up to 1,600 words in a corpus of Middle English poems from the north of England. The project is named after the Middle English word *gersum*, borrowed from Old Norse *gersemi* 'treasure'. English words with Old Norse origins enriched the language and include such basic items as *sky*, *egg*, *law*, *leg*, *call*, *take*, *window*, *knife*, *die* and *skin*, and the pronouns *they*, *their* and *them*, as well as others as diverse and intriguing as *hernez* 'brains', *muged* 'drizzled', *stange* 'pole' and *wothe* 'danger'. The Gersum Project began in 2016 and will run until early 2019, when a freely accessible online database of these words will be made public. In the meantime, more about the project and its public events is available at [www.gersum.org](http://www.gersum.org), and be sure to follow **@GersumProject** on Twitter for **#Gersumwow**, your Norse-derived word of the week!



**Mapping Conversion** is a database of conversion episodes in Insular hagiography. A pilot project funded by the Isaac Newton Trust, it was launched in June 2016 featuring Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Irish saints Lives. Welsh saints Lives have recently been added by Myriah Williams with assistance from members of the Welsh saints' project team, Ben Guy and Paul Russell, as well as from Sarah Waidler and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh who were part of the initial project (along with Rob Gallagher, Jennifer Key and Helen Oxenham). So it's a thoroughly ASNC project bringing together researchers from various subject areas. Some of the saints ranged across those areas also, including St Cadog who went to St Andrews in Scotland and was bidden by God to remain there for seven years to convert the locals. He did more than that since he also ensured that a giant who had been suffering in hell could atone for his sins and make his peace with God. To peruse the miracle of Cadog and the giant and others like it associated with conversion across the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic worlds, check out the website at <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/>

[mapping/index.html](http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/mapping/index.html).

### **Bergen International Postgraduate Symposium**

*Tom Grant*

At the start of April, many of the department's Norsicists made the annual pilgrimage to Norway for the year's Bergen International Postgraduate Symposium in Old Norse Studies. Alongside students from Bergen, Durham, Oxford, Nottingham and Reykjavík, ASNC MPhils and PhDs presented their research to an international audience of scholars working on medieval Scandinavia.

Between giving and listening to papers, the Cambridge cohort also had time to soak up some Norwegian culture. On the first day, they were led through Bergen's charming medieval streets and saw some of the city's most striking churches and historic buildings. A fascinating trip to the university library's Special Collections followed on day 2, and on the third day the group marvelled at some of Norway's finest stave church portals in the university museum.

When the papers drew to a close, all attendees had a well-earned break and spent a day outside the city. The group paid a visit to the ruins of the Cistercian monastery of Lyse kloster, and then the impressive Hordamuseet. And of course, no great visit to Norway would be complete without unrelenting rain.



*At the feet of Snorri Sturluson in Bergen harbour*

## Research in ASNC

### Using your *hlaf*: the Early English Bread Project

Debby Banham

Two ASNaC alumnae, Martha Bayless (now at the University of Oregon) and Debby Banham (affiliated lecturer in the Department), have been awarded a collaborative research grant by the American Council of Learned Societies for 2016–17,

Conclusions so far: They did eat bread, but not always as we know it. It might not be made of wheat, or not only of wheat; the only loaves surviving from early medieval England consist of wheat and rye. It might not be raised with yeast, or at all; lots of early medieval bread was flatbread. And most of it probably wasn't baked in an oven, but on stones by the hearth, or even in the embers of the fire. Us-



*Debby and Martha with some bread! (photo O. Arditi)*

to work on bread in early England. The project investigates not only what Anglo-Saxon bread was like and how it was made, but what people thought about it, and how they used it. Research has involved baking, cultivation, visiting a mill, and collecting references to bread from early medieval written sources, place-names, archaeology and anywhere else they might be lurking. Another alumna, Katie Haworth, has contributed archaeological information.

es of bread, apart from eating it, included magic: it could be buried in a field to make it fertile, or given to a horse to cure its ailments, as long as you said the right charm, or, if you weren't sure your husband really loved you, you could feed him bread that had been kneaded on your naked buttocks.

Follow the project blog at <https://earlybread.wordpress.com/> and the twitter feed: @earlybread.

The **ASNaC Society** has continued to support ASNaCkery in all its more or less (but mostly less) serious forms. Last Christmas's Yule Play featured drunk monks, safety-conscious Vikings, St Brendan's epic voyage and gangs of vigilante tonsure barbers; we were also reliably informed that 'Nuns Just Wanna Have Fun', thank you very much, Mr. Aldhelm.

The Trip this year took us to Northumbria, where we visited the Wall, Lindisfarne, and the newly-rebranded not-Bede's-World-anymore, Jarrow Hall. We also managed to meet two of Durham's supply of ASNaCs, with Dominic Rivers joining us in the pub and Maura McKeon imparting valuable knowledge on a Bede lover's tour of Durham Cathedral.

107 ASNaCs past and present converged on St John's for our Black Tie Dinner this year, and

happily ASNC Pub was relaunched to great success in Easter term, with a new rotating pub schedule. The Society's online presence has been amply supplemented by two new ventures: the Access Officer's Twitter account @cambtweetasnac, as well as the immensely popular 'ASNaC Memes for Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Teens' on Facebook: do have a look!

We are also on YouTube, with this year's Yule Play joining the previous four offer-

ings there; some brand-new access videos are soon to appear along with some performances by ASNaC Quire.

Exciting plans for the next year include reprinting volumes of old Gestas and moving the Hallowe'en pub crawl to coincide with the auspicious occasion of St Rumwold's day.

*Amrit Sidhu-Brar &  
Robin Allez*



ASNaC lunch

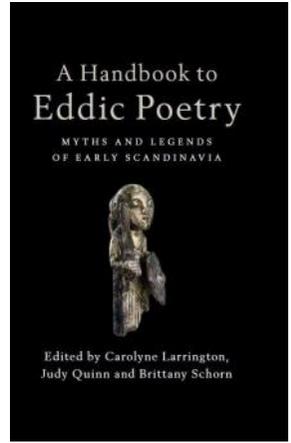


*St Brendan and his intrepid monks encounter some local wildlife in the Yule Play (Amrit Sidhu-Brar and Robin Allez)*

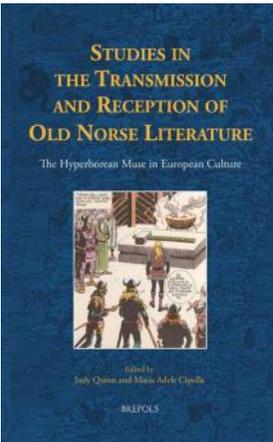
# New Books by ASNaCs

## *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia*

Rooted in the Viking Age, Old Norse eddic poetry is a critical source for the study of early Scandinavian myths, poetics, culture and society. It relates the most famous deeds of gods such as Óðinn and Þórr with their adversaries the giants, and brings to life the often fraught interactions between kings, queens and heroes as well as their encounters with valkyries, elves, dragons and dwarfs. Eddic poems dramatically recreate voices of the legendary past to distil moments of high emotion, as human heroes and supernatural beings alike grapple with betrayal, loyalty, mortality and love. Edited by ASNC's **Judy Quinn** and **Brittany Schorn**, together with Carolyne Larrington of Oxford, this book represents the first comprehensive and accessible survey of this material in English.



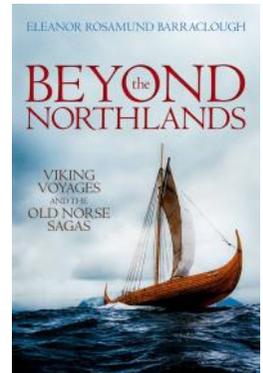
## *Studies in the Transmission and Reception of Old Norse Literature: the Hyperborean Muse in European Culture*



The compelling world of the Vikings and their descendants, preserved in the sagas, poetry, and mythology of medieval Iceland, has been an important source of inspiration to artists and writers across Europe, as well as to scholars devoted to editing and interpreting the manuscript texts. A variety of creative ventures have been born of the processes of imagining this distant 'hyperborean' world. This book examines the scholarly and artistic reception of a variety of Old Norse texts from the beginnings of the manuscript tradition in twelfth-century Iceland to contemporary poetry, crime fiction, and graphic novels produced in Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Iceland. It is the outcome of a 2011 collaboration between **Judy Quinn** and co-editor Maria Adele Cipolla of University of Verona, funded by the Co-operInt Programme.

## *Beyond the Northlands: Viking Voyages and the Old Norse Sagas*

The Norse travelled to all corners of the world and beyond; north to the wastelands of Arctic Scandinavia, south to the politically turbulent heartlands of medieval Christendom, west across the wild seas to Greenland and the fringes of the North American continent, and east down the Russian waterways trading silver, skins, and slaves. *Beyond the Northlands* explores this world through the stories that the Norse told about themselves in their sagas. **Eleanor Barra-**



**clough** (ASNaC alumna, now of Durham University) illuminates the rich but often confusing saga accounts with a range of evidence: archaeological finds, runestones, medieval world maps, encyclopaedic manuscripts, and texts from as far away as Byzantium and Baghdad. By situating the sagas against the background of this other evidence we can begin to understand just how the world was experienced, remembered, and imagined by this unique culture from the outermost edge of Europe.

ASNC alumnus **Rory Naismith** (now King's College London) had three books come out in late 2016 and early 2017. All three have been a long time in the works. *The Forum Hoard of Anglo-Saxon Coins* (winner of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists prize for Best Research Aid ) concerns a remarkable

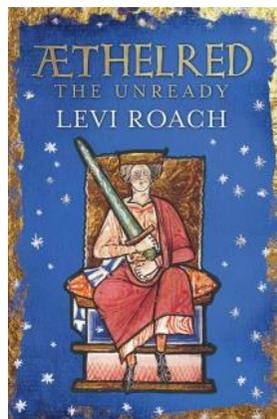
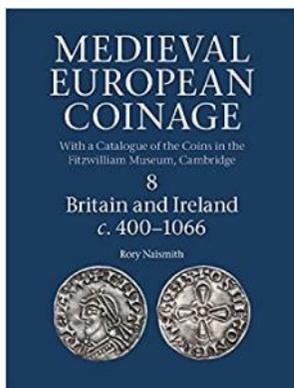
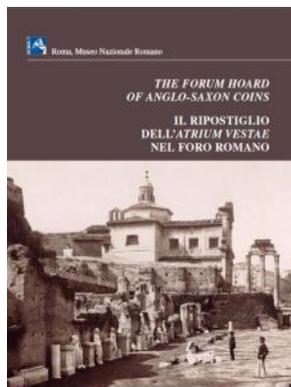
group of English coins buried in the Roman Forum in the 940s. It was written by Rory and **Francesca Tinti**, fuelled by pasta and ice cream in Rome thanks to a generous

grant from the British Academy. *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles: British Museum II* is a catalogue of coins in the world-leading British Museum collection, from the time of Offa of Mercia (757-96) to Alfred the Great (871-99). Last but not least, *Medieval European Coinage 8: Britain and Ireland c. 400-1066* presents a conspectus of monetary history across the ASNC world, accompanied by a catalogue of more than 2,700 relevant coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum (many

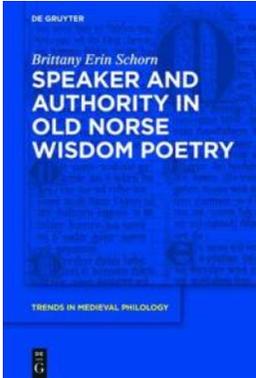
of which will be familiar from ASNaC teaching).

### *Æthelred the Unready*

As any ASNC should know, Æthelred is where it's 'at' - and has been since Simon Keynes lay his hands on the subject in the 1970s. This new book by **Levi Roach** (ASNC alumnus, now of the University of Exeter) seeks to distil the tenets of Keynesian orthodoxy, whilst extending and developing these in new directions. It is born of teaching received in ASNC, built on ideas developed during doctoral study within the Department, and dedicated to its longest-standing member of staff - a more ASNC book would be hard to imagine! Levi's book has been awarded the Longman-History Today Book Prize 2017— congratulations!



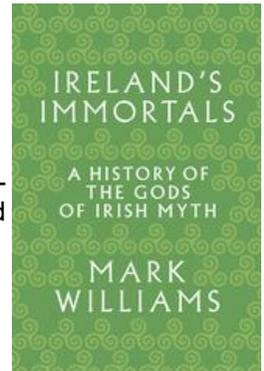
# New Books by ASNaCs



*Speaker and Authority in Old Norse Wisdom Poetry*  
Much of Old Norse eddic poetry, including the famous *Hávamál*, is devoted to cataloguing, transmitting and interrogating wisdom. Wisdom literature is a common feature of societies before or in the early stages of literacy, but the concept of wisdom itself is infinitely varied, shaped by its specific cultural context. **Brittany Schorn**'s book examines the preoccupation of the Old Norse tradition with the fraught and unreliable nature of knowledge expressed by its exchange through adversarial dialogue, often between hostile supernatural beings, such that the god of wisdom asks of himself 'how can his word be trusted?'

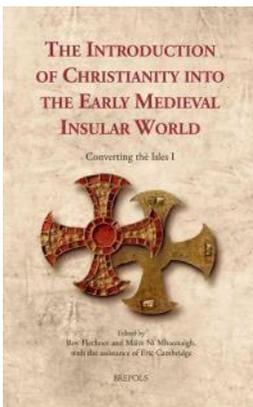
## *Ireland's Immortals: a History of the Gods of Irish Myth*

*Ireland's Immortals* by **Mark Williams** is the first overarching history of the gods of Irish myth---known as the Tuatha Dé Danann or the people of the sid---who are the protagonists of the Mythological Cycle. Part I reads about a dozen major medieval Irish narratives (some of which will be remembered fondly by those who did Irish), and then Part II turns to the reception of the Irish gods in English-medium writing. Recovering the Tuatha Dé as a national pantheon was a phenomenon of the 19th century, and Mark looks at the roles played by Standish O'Grady, W. B. Yeats, and George Russell in this process. It ends with a consideration of the Irish gods in 20th-century literature and poetry, fine art, classical music, and modern forms of spirituality.

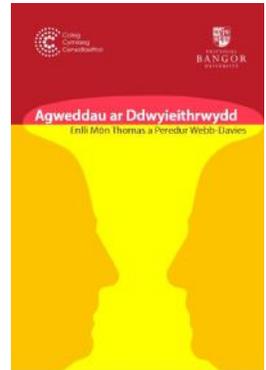


## *The Introduction of Christianity into the Early Medieval Insular World*

Conversion to Christianity is arguably the most revolutionary social and cultural change that Europe experienced in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Christianisation affected all strata of society and transformed not only religious beliefs and practices, but also the nature of government, economic priorities, the character of kinship, and gender relations. This study showcases research generated through the 'Converting the Isles' Network, led by **Máire Ní Mhaonaigh** and Roy Flechner. By adopting a broad comparative and crossdisciplinary approach that transcends national boundaries, it offers novel perspectives on conversion that challenge existing historiographical narratives and draw on up-to-date archaeological and written evidence in order to shed light on central issues pertaining to the conversion of the Isles.



*Agweddau ar Ddwyieithrwydd (Aspects of Bilingualism)* **Peredur Glynn Webb-Davies** has co-authored a Welsh-medium textbook with Prof. Enlli Thomas, published in summer 2017 by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol as an e-book. This book introduces readers to major cross-disciplinary themes in the study of contemporary and historical bilingualism, from both a Welsh and global perspective, with major chapters on bilingual acquisition, the grammar of code-switching, contact-induced language change and the cognitive benefits of bilingualism.



## Alumni News

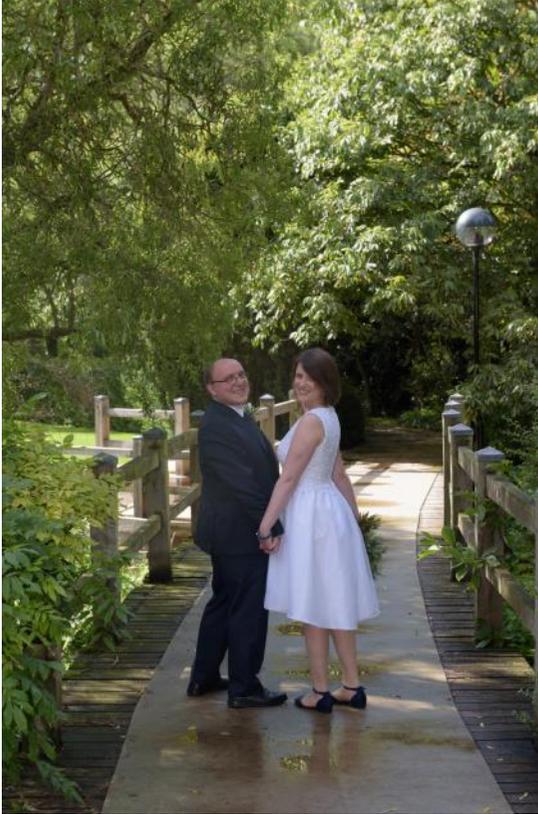
Emilia Henderson (Catz 2012) has been awarded the AHRC-funded collaborative PhD studentship on ninth-century Franco-Saxon manuscripts, jointly supervised by Kathleen Doyle at the British Library and Jo Story at University of Leicester. Congratulations!



*The ASNaC guests at Eleanor's wedding (Photo: James Appleton).*

Eleanor Holdsworth (née Perkins) (Trinity 2004) married Steve Holdsworth, and their wedding was full of ASNaCS! James Appleton (Girton 2004) was the photographer and bridesmaids included Rosie Bonté (née Marshall) and Amelia Combrink (née Downs, Selwyn 2004). Amelia also sang beautifully during the signing of the register and Rachel Hilditch (Sidney Sussex, 2004) helped to lead the prayers.

# Alumni News



*Matthias and Ronni at their wedding in Robinson College (Photo: Jean-Luc Benazet Photography).*

In August 2017 two ASNaC alumni—Matthias Ammon (Robinson 2001) and Ronni Phillips (St John’s 2008)—celebrated their wedding at Robinson College, joined by ASNaCs past and present. Some of them assembled for their own homage to the Oscars selfie ...

In 2017 Maura McKeon (Homerton 2012) was elected as Labour councillor for Coxhoe on Durham County Council, a unitary authority and one of the country’s largest councils. She is also the cabinet support member for children and young people’s services, looking at schools and children’s safeguarding measures across County Durham. It just proves you can do anything with ASNaC!

Peredur Glynn Webb-Davies is co-PI on a joint grant with the AHRC and the American National Science Foundation. Bangor University and the University of Arizona have been awarded this grant to study mutation in contemporary spoken Welsh. Data were collected during summer 2017. The aim is to find out how regularly speakers mutate, what inhibits or encourages mutation, and to what extent children mutate.



*The ASNaC selfie! (Photo: Peredur Glynn Webb-Davies).*

All in 9 West Road unless otherwise stated.

### **ASNC Alumni Reunion:**

23 September 2017, 5–7 pm drinks in the ASNC Common Room

### **University Festival of Ideas: Truth**

18 October – 25 October 2017 Join the department an evening talk from Simon Keynes on 18 October, a full afternoon of talks and activities on 21 October (featuring Elizabeth Rowe, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, Jon Hui and Katie Olley), and a quiz evening on 25 October (with Richard Dance, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Brittany Schorn). For details see [www.cam.ac.uk/cambridge-festival-of-ideas](http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambridge-festival-of-ideas).

### **Quiggin Lecture:**

30 November 2017, 5 pm: Professor Pierre-Yves Lambert (EPHE, Paris)

### **ASNC Society Black-tie Dinner:**

Date in January/February 2018 to be confirmed.

### **Chadwick Lecture:**

15 March 2018, 5 pm: Professor Greg Toner (Queen's University, Belfast)

### **Kathleen Hughes Lecture (at Hughes Hall, Pavilion Room):**

30 April 2018, 5.45 pm: Dr David Parsons (University of Wales, Aberystwyth)

### **ASNC Summer Garden Party:**

Wednesday 20 June 2018, 6 pm: Trinity College, Fellows' Bowling Green

**ASNC Alumni are warmly welcome to attend any of these events** (see [www.asnc.cam.ac.uk](http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk) for updates)

You are warmly invited to join the ASNaC Alumni **Facebook** group (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic Alumni) for further announcements and updates, and to keep in touch! If you are interested in finding out more about our current research and teaching or our future plans, or would like to tell us news that you would like reported in future newsletters, please contact us through the Departmental Secretary at [asnc@hermes.cam.ac.uk](mailto:asnc@hermes.cam.ac.uk) or by post: Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP, United Kingdom. The Departmental website also has an alumni section ([www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/alumni/index.htm](http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/alumni/index.htm)).