

Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship 2013

Michael Braddick

'John Lilburne's Sufferings: Political Mobilisation in Revolutionary England'



As part of its international research collaboration, the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions funds outstanding international scholars in the field to visit one or more of the Australian nodes for a period of between four weeks and two months, to work with members of the Centre on a research program of their choice. Visitors are invited to present their work in lectures or symposia, where they will receive feedback from and engage in discussion with members of the Centre, promoting collaborative research.

Michael Braddick is from the University of Sheffield, and was awarded a Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship in 2013. He spent six weeks working with the Centre at the University of Adelaide.

Michael was educated at Cambridge University where he took both a B.A. and Ph.D. degrees. He was Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama and Assistant Professor at Birmingham-Southern College, Alabama before coming to Sheffield in 1990. He has held fellowships from the British Academy, the Nuffield Foundation and a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust. He has also held visiting scholarships at the Huntington Library, California, the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, and an ARC distinguished visiting fellowship at the University of Adelaide. Michael has published widely on aspects of state formation and forms of political resistance in early modern England. He's also co-editor of two essay collections and of a major edition of seventeenth century letters. His most recent publications are *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* and edited collections on *The politics of gesture: historical perspectives* and *The experience of revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland*, the latter co-edited with David L Smith. Michael was previously Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

When asked to comment on his time with the Centre, Michael observed that it was “a great experience, academically and more broadly”, noting in particular the benefits to his current research. He shares his thoughts on his Visiting Fellowship below.

I was a visiting fellow at the Adelaide node for 6 weeks from the beginning of November 2013, sharing a fellowship with Dr Karen Harvey, also of Sheffield. My project was the public presentation of John Lilburne’s sufferings as a persecuted opponent of successive political regimes in England during the 1640s and 1650s. The particular interest is how Lilburne took a standard account of Christian martyrdom and turned it to secular ends, dramatizing and mobilizing support for abstract secular principles (equality before the law and, arguably, popular political sovereignty). His serial clashes with English governments — monarchical and republican — were presented as threats to the rights of all Englishmen (and, possibly, women) rather than as the sufferings of a Christian, or of a Christian of a particular denomination. This emotional appeal helped to create an English imaginary, in which a shared identity rested on shared access to civic rights, rather than shared religion, and without limit by class (or, possibly, gender). The success of this appeal literally saved his life, on more than one occasion, as juries acquitted him of treason and other capital political crimes, declaring at one point that he had done what was claimed, that it was indeed illegal, but that it should not be. This imaginary clearly had some power, and bears comparison with Habermas’s idea of civic patriotism.

I was able to work in detail on Lilburne’s publications while in Adelaide, teasing out what was distinctive about his use of the martyrological tradition, and how he dramatized his sufferings so effectively. This will lead to a publication, ‘John Lilburne’s sufferings’ in a book to be edited by myself and Joanna Innes, *Suffering and Happiness in Early Modern England*, due to be published by OUP in 2016. It is part of a broader study of *John Lilburne and the English Revolution*, in which I aim to reinterpret the radicalism of the English revolution: both the content of radical thought, and the means by which it was promoted and support was mobilised.

This was the main work and output of my visit. I presented a paper on this theme which led to a very helpful discussion, which considerably sharpened my approach. A number of other informal discussions were also very helpful, particularly those with David Lemmings, Claire Walker, Merridee Bailey, and Francois Soyer about methodological issues in the study of the history of emotions. But all the members of the Centre were very welcoming and interested, and we had regular lunches and discussions. I was also able to meet other members of the Adelaide history department with interests in early modern England, or in popular politics and the sociology of radicalism, and I was particularly grateful for discussions with Wilf Prest, Tom Buchanan, Frank McGregor and Gareth Pritchard. I have since been an examiner for a PhD in the Department and have refereed a submission to *Parergon*.

My visit to Adelaide followed on directly from 5 years in administrative office in Sheffield, and I was also able to share my thoughts about some strategic issues with the Department. Karen Harvey and I presented a session on research impact, and I had a number of informal discussions with Vesna Drapac.

I hope that these links prove durable. I had a fantastic time at the Centre—it was intellectually stimulating and I felt very welcome. Janet Hart did a fantastic job of organizing the visit, including help with finding accommodation and schools for my children: it could not have been less practical trouble.

One memorable highlight of the visit is that I fulfilled a boyhood dream of watching England play test cricket in Australia, and at the Adelaide Oval in particular: it proved the truth of the old adage 'Be careful what you wish for'.