

centre for material texts

annual report 2011-12

introduction

The Cambridge Centre for Material Texts was constituted by the English Faculty Board in July 2009 to push forward critical, theoretical, editorial and bibliographical work in a very lively field of humanities research. Addressing a huge range of textual phenomena and traversing disciplinary boundaries that are rarely breached by day-to-day teaching and research, the Centre fosters the development of new perspectives, practices and technologies, which will transform our understanding of the way that texts of many kinds have been embodied and circulated. This report summarizes the activities of the Centre in its third year.

I committee

The Centre is run by a Director (currently **Jason Scott-Warren**) and a Steering Committee. In 2011-12 the committee lost one existing member and gained two new ones. It now comprises: **Abigail Brundin** (MML), **Sarah Cain** (English), **Stefano Castelvevchi** (Music), **Mina Gorji** (English), **Fiona Green** (English), **Stella Panayotova** (Fitzwilliam Museum), **Ed Potten** (University Library), **Paul Russell** (ASNC), **Anne Toner** (English), **Tessa Webber** (History), and **Andrew Zurcher** (English). It met three times, at the start of the Michaelmas, Lent and Easter terms.

In 2011-12 the CMT also set up an Advisory Committee to oversee its activities. Current members are: **Mary Beard** (Classics), **Helen Cooper** (English), **Philip Ford** (French and Neo-Latin), **Simon Franklin** (Slavonic Studies), **Robert Gordon** (Italian), **David McKitterick** (History/Wren Library), **John Rink** (Music), **Jim Secord** (History and Philosophy of Science), **Nicholas Thomas** (Anthropology), **John Thompson** (Sociology), **David Trotter** (English), **Mark Turin** (Anthropology), and **Alexandra Walsham** (History). Members of the Advisory Committee are invited to comment on the Agendas and Minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee, and to alert the Director to current developments and opportunities.

II website

The website sets out the aims of the Centre, reports back on conferences and colloquia, advertises news and events, and publicizes the research interests and activities of its members. Across the course of the year, **Harriet Phillips**, **Marie Léger-St-Jean**, and **Alison Knight** were employed successively to update the site and to circulate information to the mailing list. Marie also turned the mailing list into a user-driven listserv, which simplifies the process for those wishing to register.

This year, one new item was added to the 'gallery space': an account of the AHRC-funded project '**Wrongdoing in Spain 1800-1936: Realities, Representations, Reactions**', written by the PI for the project, Professor **Alison Sinclair** (MML).

The 'Projects' section of the website was updated with details of the Fitzwilliam Museum's **Illuminated Manuscripts Pigment Analysis Project** and a description of the **National Trust Libraries Project**. A new page was added describing the Centre's **Research Themes**.

The **blog** provides a space for lively commentary on all manner of things: exhibitions, museum displays, new books and articles, conferences and events, and chance finds. The majority of contributions this year were by Jason Scott-Warren and Lucy Razzall, with occasional postings by James Freeman.

A new development this year was the creation of a CMT **Facebook page**, which provides broader publicity for the website.

III events and activities

Seminars

The Seminar for the History of Material Texts, convened by Sarah Cain, Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher, flourished in 2011-12. The seminars this year were:

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| 13 October | John Rink (Faculty of Music), 'The Virtual Chopin' |
| 10 November | Linda Bree (Cambridge University Press), 'Scholarly Publishing and Technological Change' |
| 9 February | New Directions in Early Modern Book History Dunstan Roberts (Trinity Hall, Cambridge): 'Ordinary and Exceptional Evidence in the Study of Readers' Annotations' Edward Wilson-Lee (Sidney Sussex, Cambridge): 'How Galileo read his Petrarch' |
| 8 March | Mark Purcell (National Trust) on National Trust Libraries. |
| 17 May | Juliet Fleming (NYU) discussing pre-circulated sections from her book-in-progress: <i>Counterproductions: Bibliography After Derrida</i> |
| 31 May | Daniel Wakelin (St Hilda's, Oxford), 'Some Scribes Thinking' |

Conferences and Colloquia



The main event in the CMT calendar this year was a conference entitled '**Texts and Textiles**', which took place over two days (11-12 September 2012) at Jesus College. This event, co-organized by **Lucy Razzall** and **Jason Scott-Warren**, and generously supported by a grant from the Faculty of English, responded to the Centre's current research theme on 'The Material Text in Material Culture'. Speakers and

delegates from across the world converged on Cambridge for the conference, literary critics, historians and anthropologists mingling with textile designers, artists, and librarians. At the heart of this gathering was a curiosity about how the fabrics of language intersect with the languages of fabric. This was an issue which our fifteen panels and forty-four speakers approached from numerous angles.

Literary Perspectives

The text/textile interface has often been an explicit preoccupation in literature. **Giovanni Fanfani** and **Ellen Harlizius-Klück** (Centre for Textile Research in Copenhagen) explored the structural similarities between ancient Greek textual analysis and techniques of weaving, with particular attention to the relationship between the 'starting border' of a cloth and the *prooimion* of a text such as Hesiod's *Theogony*. **Andrew Zurcher** (Cambridge) followed the migration of the shirt of Nessus from Sophocles and Ovid, via Seneca, to Shakespeare. As it travels, this poison-soaked garment raises important questions about agency and criminal culpability and perhaps hints at a tragic association between threads and fate. **Megan Cavell** (Toronto) took us to Anglo-Saxon England, where poets ostentatiously bound, locked and interlaced their words, giving them the solidity of textiles or metalwork—forms of 'cræft' that could also carry troubling connotations of deception and treachery.

Several papers addressed the role of textiles in seventeenth-century English texts. **Alison Knight** (Cambridge) examined the poems of George Herbert as a response to the Protestant notion that the Scriptures present a tight verbal weave that cannot be broken or torn without loss. As they wield their chapter and verse, Herbert's lyric speakers are themselves cut adrift, and can only find peace through a recovery of

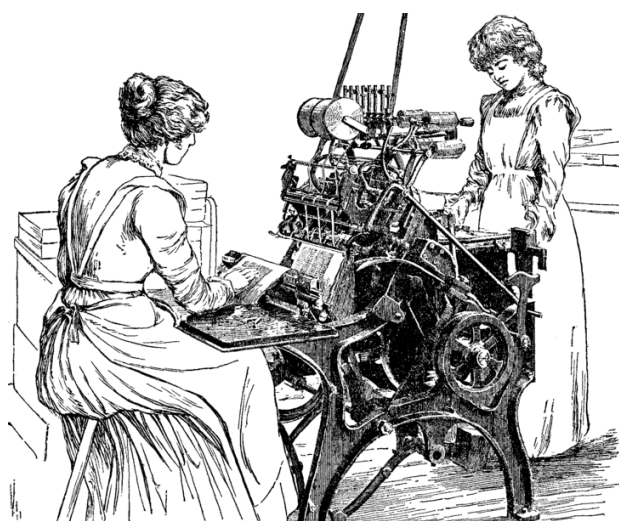


Biblical 'contexture'. **Christopher Burlinson** (Cambridge) pursued a skein of spider's silk into the web of textile metaphors in Robert Herrick's *Hesperides*. In the seventeenth century there was no certainty about what gossamer was, and its elusive insubstantiality might be said to model the mysterious connections of Herrick's poetics. **Deborah Rosario** (Oxford) studied Eve's floral bower in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, inviting us to think about the relationship between natural and manmade artifice in this highly 'wrought' environment.

Moving further forward in time, and crossing the Atlantic, **Katie McGettigan** (Keele) looked at the playful exchanges between rags and paper in Melville's *Pierre*, contextualizing them in relation to a broader cultural fascination with the mysteriousness of paper-making, while **Rebecca Varley-Winter** (Cambridge) pondered the relationship between collage-poems by Mina Loy and Marianne Moore and the surrealist assemblages of Max Ernst. And, bringing our literary tour bang-up-to-date, **Maria Damon** (Minnesota) exposed some of the paradoxes that bedevil the 'slow-poetry' movement and the recent renaissance of craft-based making. Ought we to applaud these attempts to make critical space amid the frenzy of modernity, or should we be put off by their 'suspicious nostalgia'?

The Stuff of Books

Many contributions to the conference pursued the textile into the material fabric of books and documents. **Allison Jai O'Dell** (Corcoran College) spoke (via Skype) about the importance of establishing a precise classification and terminology for sewing structures within the bibliographical study of bookbinding. **Georgios Boudalis** (Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki) reviewed a number of sewing structures found in the history of bookbinding, suggesting parallels between ancient methods used in the making of books and socks. (This prompted some debate here about the relative cultural significance of books and socks!) **Clemence Schultze**



(Durham) explored the evidence for the writing of ritual texts on linen in ancient Rome, while **Katya Oichermann** (Goldsmiths) unfurled the stories and histories that circulated in the cloths that swaddled German Jewish boys during their circumcision ceremonies, which were later transformed into highly decorative 'Torah binders', for wrapping the sacred scrolls when not in use.

Ralph Isaacs OBE (Director of the British Council in Burma from 1989 to 1994) displayed and discussed some exquisite Burmese manuscript binding tapes, decoding their rich symbolism and the record they offer of their own making. **Joy Boutrup** (Kolding School of Design) and **Janice Sibthorpe** (Royal College of Art) both discussed the art of the seventeenth-century English loop braid, which could be used as love token, purse-string, or bookmark, as long as it came festooned with symbols and texts. **Georgianna Ziegler** (Folger Shakespeare Library) discussed some wonderful images

of early modern books (including a particularly beautiful binding in cut-work vellum), demonstrating the close connections between calligraphy and lace-making in both aesthetic and authorial terms ('printer's lace' will never look the same again). And, staying in the early modern period, **Claire Canavan** (York) taught us how to judge a book by its cover, exploring a seventeenth-century stumpwork binding bearing an image of Sarah and Hagar. Such a binding didn't just hold a book together; it also bound it outward to its environment and made it 'articulate in use'.

Seeing and Touching

Other papers turned their attention to the visual arts, with which textile work has always had an intimate relationship, despite the fact that it has often had to play second fiddle. **Beth Williamson** (Tate) offered a history of textile education at Goldsmith's College, dwelling on the increasing integration of textiles into fine art, and the slow erasure of any clear demarcation between the two fields. **Georgina Gajewski** (North Carolina at Chapel Hill) focused on a single embroidered landscape executed by a student at the Raleigh Academy in North Carolina in 1826. Her paper offered a nuanced account of the intertwining of ideals of femininity with political aspirations and aesthetic codes in the period.



Linda Newington (Winchester) shared some of the riches of the knitting reference library at the Winchester School of Art (an absolute treasure-trove for social historians as well as knitters, containing patterns and knitted objects) and also described the library's evolving collection of 'artists'

books'. Her images included many beautiful and thought-provoking examples which raised questions about the hand-made, the relationship between object, image and text, and the ever-expanding category of 'the book'. (Among her examples was a printed cloth guide to making a stuffed toy rabbit, its final instruction surely more widely applicable: 'hang from ears and hope for spring'). **Sophie Aymes-Stokes** (Bourgogne) presented a detailed account of changing practices in book illustration in relation to evolving attitudes towards the 'photographic' and the 'mechanically reproduced'.

The creative practice of the Bauhaus emigrée artist Anni Albers, whose encounter with pre-Columbian Andean textiles inspired her to create a new visual language, was the subject of a paper by **Marianna Franzosi** (an independent scholar). **Angela Carr** (Montréal) tracked the archival remains of the Chicana writer and critic Gloria Anzaldúa, whose papers went to Austin, Texas, while her material things (including altar cloths and tapestries) were left to the University of Santa Cruz; Carr reconsidered the latter with reference to the Aztec concept of *nepentla* or in-between space.

Drawing on film theory which presents the cinema screen not as a window to look through but as a surface to linger on, **Athena Bellas** (Melbourne) drew our attention to the rich sensuality of the fabrics which invite viewers to feel as much as see Bella's bedroom as a luxurious and erotic space – a reading which challenges the frustration many commentators feel at Bella's narrative positioning as passive and reactive. The revelation that Target, the second largest discount retailer in the United States, brought out its own line of 'Bella bedding' in response to the success of the first film took us forward into questions of reception, and the ways in which a teenage audience might appropriate for themselves the fantasy space of the film.

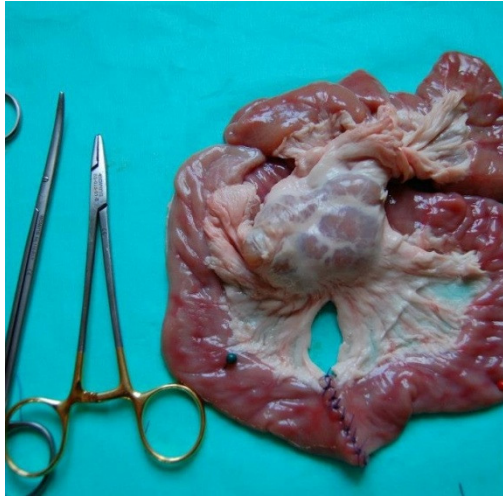
Talking Textiles



Some textiles conjure forth extraordinary language, or extraordinary amounts of commentary, while others seem to be unspeakable, utterly resistant to verbalization. **Jennifer Burek Pierce** (Iowa) considered the proliferation of knitting blogs, which in her analysis work to foster an international

community committed to a single craft. **Kandy Diamond** (Manchester) analysed the language of knitting patterns, asking how new technologies are likely to change long-established codes for the transmission of complex instructions. The value of textile thinking to large corporations was the subject broached by **Anne Rippin** (Bristol), who also talked winningly about how academic prose, with its holes and seams and bodes, is like cloth.

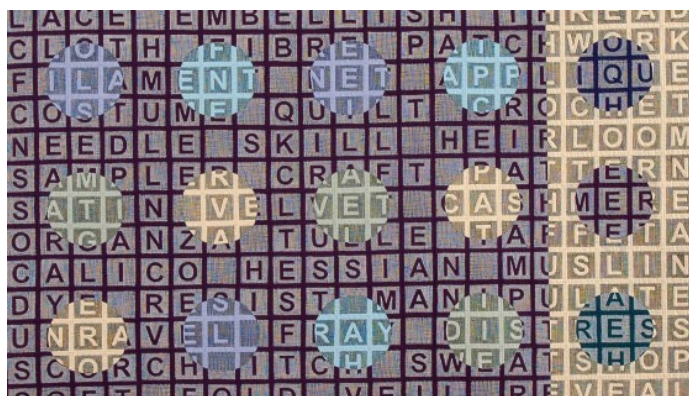
In her paper on eighteenth-century patchwork, **Bridget Long** (Hertfordshire) teased out a contradictory relationship between practice and discourse. The making of patchwork quilts and covers was integral to the well-ordered, well-run household, but in common parlance 'patchwork' served as a term of abuse for anything that was perceived to be second-hand or incoherent. Elsewhere, in one of the conference's many striking juxtapositions, **Kelvin Knight** (East Anglia) pondered whether silk might be the unifying thread in W. G. Sebald's travelogue *The Rings of Saturn*, while **Victoria Mitchell** (Norwich) lifted the covers on the dazzling eighteenth-century fabric pattern-books which Sebald described as 'leaves from the only true book which none of our textual and pictorial works can even begin to rival'. That sense of competition between text and textile was not perhaps reinforced by the pattern-books, in which each swatch of calamanco comes with its own beguiling name that renders it both identifiable and desirable.



The prize for the most startling exploration of the language of textiles went to **Olivia Will** (West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust), who brought a mini operating theatre, bristling with sharp implements, along to the Jesus College Upper Hall. While a surgeon with an extraordinarily steady hand showed how bodily tissue—here, the intestine of a pig—responds to the needle, Will explained the discrepancies between the textile argot used by medics in the operating theatre and what patients themselves get to hear. As the body is reduced to an object for the purposes of invasive surgery, so it is reduced to a series of fabrics, which can be stitched, tied, patched and buttonholed.



Writing with a needle



One of the conference's most engrossing sessions was entitled 'Writing with a Needle'. This panel brought together four textile artists to explore the intersection of writing and fabric from what one might call the sharp end. **Alison Stewart**, currently an art student in her final year at Chichester, described how her dyslexia had prompted her to invent 'newsfabrics', newspapers in which the words are covered up by patches of gingham that mimic the appearance of text at the same

time as they occlude it. **Sara Impey** brought in some of her quilts (illustrated here), stitched with texts that are often deliberately inconsequential and full of phatic elements, in order to subvert the sampler tradition in which stitched text has to earn its keep by being morally improving. **Rosalind Wyatt**'s work involves sewing immaculate facsimiles of handwritten texts onto garments that memorialize the lives of their wearers; she brought with her a running shirt that had belonged to Stephen Lawrence, together with one of his last school essays, which she was about to stitch-copy onto it. **Lindsey Holmes** continued this meditation on presence and absence by describing her work recreating pieces of costume at the Keats House. An exhibition about the poet's relationship with Fanny Brawne allowed visitors to try on bodices, mitts and shoes closely resembling those worn in the period, thereby materially involving themselves in the past; and visitors responded enthusiastically to the invitation. The four papers generated rich discussion, with much reflection on the how the needle cut against the rhythms of reading and unmoored words from their everyday business of signification.

Wearing Text

As Wyatt and Holmes reminded us, clothing is one of the most eloquent forms in which we encounter textiles. Several papers tackled it explicitly. **Ben Cartwright** (Cambridge) discussed the way that clothing 'regestures' the body, and emphasized the need to wear rather than merely to look at clothing in order to understand its histories. In the Shetland and Norse communities that he studies, clothing at once makes inhabitation possible (it is proverbial that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing!) and intimately conditions it. **Patricia Pires Boulhosa** (Cambridge) introduced us to a medieval Icelandic manuscript which had been cut up in the seventeenth century to be used as pattern pieces for making clothes. The leaves have now been reassembled again into a bound volume, but the resulting fragmentary object embodies the slippage between the stuff of the household and the stuff of the book.

Sally Holloway (Royal Holloway) reminded us of how clothing could be freighted with emotion, as she connected a variety of eighteenth-century birth and courtship tokens, including garments hand-made by courting sweethearts and pincushions made for the mothers of newborn babies. One example of which reads 'Health to the little Stranger'. Give a pin-cushion before the birth and the labour will be painful (Holloway's proverb was 'more pins, more pain'). Here the emotional shades into the magical, gift into charm. And **Mimi Yiu** (Georgetown) unfolded the intriguing history of a particular stitch: blackwork, also known as the Spanish stitch or true-stitch. Probably originating in Mamluk Egypt, blackwork retained its association with the foreign, and was described by John Taylor, the fabric-conscious water-poet, as coming from 'Beyond the bounds of faithlesse *Mahomet*'. Despite contemporary suspicion and fear of both the Ottoman Empire and of Spain, the stitch's foreign origins added a fashionable frisson to elaborately worked collars and cuffs. Moving on to the terminology of 'true-stitch' (so called because the patterns appear the same on both sides of the



fabric), Yiu argued that it was in the language of love that the stitch became more contested, as poets and playwrights deployed the term to argue not for women's domestic constancy but for their fashionable fickleness.

Another paper that focused on clothing was given by **Hester Lees-Jeffries** (Cambridge). Here we were dazzled with a series of exquisite images, highlighting both the artistic skill and the intense domestic labour which went into producing the elaborate folds and pleats of Elizabethan and Jacobean costume. Meditating on the language of folding and unfolding in Shakespeare's poems and plays, Lees-Jeffries encouraged us to consider connections between sensation and narrative movement and to restage the visual and verbal encounters invited or imagined by fabric and folds. Reminding us that the story of the play unfolds on stage or in reading but is folded (as paper) to form a readable book, she also raised intriguing questions of what happens within the fold, where material is not lost but concealed. Stories and patterns disappear and re-form in movements that mimic the structures of early modern literary composition.

As well as looking at what people wore, the conference also attended to spaces, and in particular to the domestic sphere and the forms of production that emerged from it. **Helen Smith** (York) reassessed the association of domestic biblical embroideries with female oppression. Scrutinizing the terms in such embroideries were described in the period, she uncovered a strong association between the female needleworker and the God who 'wrought' his creation, alongside plentiful evidence for the affective force of stitched Scriptures. **Leah Knight** (Brock) described the reading practices of Anne Clifford in relation to the spaces, decoration, and management of her household, with particularly fascinating discussion of the choice of motifs and colours for the decor of the rooms in which reading might be located and the pinning up of texts upon their walls.



Telling by Hand

As this description will suggest, the proceedings of the conference were richly various, the discussion lively and occasionally combative. It was appropriate, then, that our plenary speaker was someone whose own work is characterized by its omnisciousness, as well as by the pungency of its multidisciplinary synthesis. **Tim Ingold** (Aberdeen) gave a talk entitled 'Telling by Hand: Weaving, Drawing, Writing', that offered an extraordinary series of reflections on the workings of the human hand. (Fittingly, he was framed throughout by the

many hands of Richard Long's mural 'River Avon Mud, 1996'). Drawing on the work of Heidegger and Sennett, Ingold offered a sense of what we stand to lose in a push-button world, where the education of attention involved in 'telling' is sidelined in favour of prepackaged and articulated knowledge, or 'joined-up thinking'. Somewhere near the heart of the paper was a breathtaking account of how you set

about making a piece of string by hand. In its taut simplicity, its precision and clarity, Ingold's plenary really did pull everything together.

Report by Jason Scott-Warren. Thanks to Patricia Pires Boulhosa and Helen Smith for photographs, and to Christopher Burlinson, Mary Laven, Hester Lees-Jeffries, Lucy Razzall and Helen Smith for their summaries of papers. The Impey quilt, from the Quilters' Guild Collection, is reproduced by permission of Sara Impey. Photo: David Guthrie.

Other Events and Workshops

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| 4 October 2011 | The Cultures of the Digital Economy Institute (Anglia Ruskin University) & CMT Book Publishing Histories Seminar Series |
| | Seminar II: The Impact of Digital Publishing Platforms for Academic Scholarship on Libraries and Readers |
| | Hannah Perrett (Cambridge University Press) |
| | Jayne Kelly and Sarah Stamford (ebooks@cambridge) |
| 10 November 2011 | Start-of-year C M Tea |
| 25 January 2012 | Digital Editions Working Lunch @ CRASSH |
| 13 March 2011 | The Cultures of the Digital Economy Institute (Anglia Ruskin University) & CMT Book Publishing Histories Seminar Series |
| | Seminar II: Publishing Texts in the Medieval and Digital Ages |
| | James Wade (Emmanuel, Cambridge) |
| | Peter Stokes (King's, London) |
| 31 May 2012 | CMT Lunchtime Seminar |
| | Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri (Jadavpur University) |
| | 'Tagore's Text: An Online Variorum' |

IV research grant applications

In 2011-12 the pilot study for the CMT's National Trust Libraries Project (described below) received funding of £12,000 from the School of Arts and Humanities and an AHRC Research Networking Grant of £29,000. The PI for the project is Dr Abigail Brundin (MML); the RA is Dunstan Roberts. Colloquia relating to the project will take place at Cambridge and Belton during the academic year 2012-13.

National Trust libraries: an untapped resource.
A pilot study of Italian holdings at Belton House, Lincolnshire.

The National Trust owns and manages over 150 properties in the U.K. that contain collections of books, the majority still housed in the buildings where they were assembled and read by their original owners. Between forty and fifty of the libraries in National Trust properties have been described as being of 'major national significance' (Purcell and Shenton, 2005), constituting an unparalleled resource for the study of the history of private book ownership in the United Kingdom. To date, almost no work has been done on most of these collections, although the process of cataloguing the major libraries is underway and ongoing, the results accessible to researchers on the Copac Catalogue as they become available. The proposed project will function as a pilot study, in order to showcase future research potential in these exciting collections, which form an intrinsic part of our national cultural heritage. The project brings together interested parties from a variety of backgrounds to discuss initial findings and collaborate on the way forward in future.

The pilot study will examine the place of Italian books in an English great house library in the wake of the Reformation. The opportunity to map the passage of Italian texts across the English Channel enriches the picture of Italian cultural vibrancy after the Council of Trent, directed outwards towards Protestant nations despite the religious conflicts. It highlights related questions concerning the impact of Italian works within the English context, probing issues of acquisition, reception and dissemination of 'Catholic' models. The holdings of an early modern private library help map the competing influences on that house and family, the works arriving from other contexts, their passage from reader to reader within the household and beyond it. Thus a library, more than simply a collection of books, becomes a repository of the social history of a place. More widely, the findings of this study engage with larger questions about English cultural permeability in the early modern period, explored for example in recent work by Michael Wyatt.



The pilot study will take place at Belton House in Lincolnshire. Belton houses the Trust's second largest library (over 11,000 titles), assembled by successive generations of the Brownlow family, and the collection has now been fully catalogued. 229 works are in Italian, published between 1500 and 1800, across a variety of genres and subjects. Analysis of the Italian holdings will form the basis for two themed workshops and an exhibition of books at Belton House.

V the future

In a busy third year the Centre has continued to demonstrate its significance to the research landscape of the University. Our general aims, as stated in last year's report, remain central to our activities in the future: "We plan to make the Centre more eclectic and interdisciplinary; to offer a wide range of seminars, colloquia and conferences; to offer more bespoke graduate training seminars; to strengthen links between the Centre and the University's library community; and to support the generation of research grant applications in the field of material textuality."

Several of the objectives outlined in previous reports remain in place. In particular, now that the CMT is starting to generate grant income, it will be important for it to acquire official status within the University. Due to pressure on space in the Faculty of English, we have recently lost our office space there. Some sort of permanent administrative base for the Centre remains a desideratum.

Our activities in the coming year will continue to be shaped by our three **research themes**:

(i) the material text in material culture

There has in recent years been an increasing interest in the study of material culture, a fascination with the ways in which our lives shape and are in turn shaped by physical objects and environments. This theme focuses on the interrelations between the textual and the material, and explores the processes by which texts are produced, circulated and consumed, as objects alongside other objects, or sometimes on or in objects (since the things we live among are often notable for their loquacity). Our 2011 colloquium 'Eating Words: Text, Image, Food' offers a good example of the kind of interaction between writing and the world of things that a postdoctoral research fellow in this area might be dedicated to exploring; so too does our planned colloquium for 2012 on the theme of 'Texts and Textiles'.

This theme has given rise to two conferences in the past two years, and we are currently working to develop publications based on those events. Members of the Centre have also played a significant part in shaping the CRASSH research seminar on '**Things: Material Cultures of the Long Eighteenth Century**', and will continue to be involved in that seminar as it takes on a broader early modern remit.

(ii) digital editing and digital curation

As soon as academics became aware of the internet, they became excited about the possibilities for new kinds of readerly engagement that it might open up, whether through hypertext editions that would encode multiple versions of variant texts, searchable ebooks that would hugely expedite research, or digital facsimiles that would allow unprecedented access to previously restricted materials. Two decades and many experiments later, it is time to assess how far we have travelled. Is it possible to extrapolate rules for a successful digital edition or curatorial project? What challenges do readers and scholars face in dealing with new technologies, and how might they be overcome? What might curators and editors of films, of music

manuscripts, of theatrical ephemera, of cuneiform inscriptions learn from one another? And does the future lie with the increasing capitalization of the digital sphere, or with an efflorescence of open-access initiatives? A postdoctoral researcher appointed under this scheme might, for example, help to develop the English Faculty's 'Scriptorium' project, a digital collection of medieval and early modern manuscript miscellanies.

This theme is nourished by our ongoing relationship with the **Cambridge Digital Humanities Network** (<http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/page/276/digital-humanities.htm>). The AHRC's 'Digital Transformations in the Arts and Humanities' research theme offers a promising source of research grant funding for work on the past and future of digital editing.

the library and its publics

This theme focuses on rare book and manuscript libraries—with which Cambridge is unusually blessed—and explores the nature of their relationship with a variety of publics. What purposes will special collections come to serve in the twenty-first century? How might libraries best exhibit their collections and publicize their activities? Do new technologies create fresh possibilities for reaching out both to the academic community and the general public, or do they instead prove a costly distraction from the core business of curating and managing special collections? How might we increase the frequency and scale of academic collaborations with libraries? The Centre's current project on National Trust libraries, initiated by Abigail Brundin in MML, represents the kind of work that might be undertaken by a postdoctoral research fellow under this rubric.

This theme is being pushed forward principally by the **National Trust Libraries Project** (see above). We are currently planning a colloquium, '**National Trust Libraries: Mobility and Exchange in Great House Collections**', to be held at Gonville and Caius College in February 2013. A second colloquium, based at Belton House in Lincolnshire and coinciding with the opening of an exhibition based on the findings of our pilot project, will take place later in the year. We are currently making further grant applications in relation to this project.