Happy New Year!

Welcome to the January edition of the Newsletter. The project continues apace; below are some of the recent developments in research, and forthcoming events.

**The Politics of the Wall:**
**National Identities in Wall Studies**

Richard Hingley has been working on antiquarian volumes and documents for the history of studies of the Wall from the eighth to nineteenth centuries. He has been developing ideas that relate to the Wall as a boundary between Roman-inspired civility and native barbarity. These ideas were derived from classical texts and projected onto the geography of the Wall zone of central Britain from the time of the author Gildas in the sixth century. Before the subduing of the Highlands of Scotland by the Hanoverian army in the eighteenth century, the Wall was often used to project this Roman-derived idea. By contrast, the area of northern England and southern Scotland between Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall had a marginal status in a number of antiquarian works. From an English perspective, it was figured to be outside the zone of civility but from the point of view of classically-educated Lowland Scots, it enabled a contrasting claim of civility to be developed. Members of the Scottish educated classes, projected ideas of barbarity onto the populations of the Scottish Highland and Islands. Such ideas, which cease to be articulated in works during the late eighteenth century, have interesting echoes in the works of later authors, including the Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson.

**Visualizing the Wall:**
**Material and Visual Culture on the Wall**

Divya Tolia-Kelly’s recent ‘Maps of the Known World/Nurturing Ecologies’ exhibition in collaboration with artist Graham Lowe was recently hosted by the Durham Light Infantry Museum Print Room. The paintings reflect the feelings and emotions that a “British landscape” has on different communities in the North West and the project contributes to an understanding of environmental values and their importance in migrant communities dealing with social exclusion, marginality and disenfranchisement. The exhibition is an excellent example of the kind of methodologies that will be applied to the Wall, in order to understand the feelings of identity, belonging, or displacement that the Wall-scape engenders in various communities.

[http://www.dur.ac.uk/roman.centre/hadrianswall/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/roman.centre/hadrianswall/)
Experiencing the Wall: Monumentality and Landscape

The iconic image of Hadrian’s Wall is a stone ruin, striding into the distance, up and down crags within a wild and deserted landscape. This leitmotif is repeated in paintings, photographs and postcards. It pervades popular perceptions of the Wall from school books to tourist literature to local company branding and websites. Such a strong visual representation inevitably conditions understanding of the Wall. During summer 2008, the TOTF project will conduct participant studies to explore how the representation of Hadrian’s Wall shapes people’s prior expectations and their physical encounters of the Wall. In particular, we will draw on recent archaeological and geographical landscape studies to consider how groups and individuals respond to both the monumental remains of the Wall in the central sector, but also those places along the Wall’s route where no physical traces survive - the place names, plaques and fossilized street patterns of urban Newcastle and Carlisle. As more people ‘walk the Wall’ from end-to-end, so more people experience the peculiar diversity of the National Trail. When fieldwork is complete, we aim to put these results into an historical context and to consider how the whole idea of ‘walking the Wall’ has developed, from William Hutton to the National Trail.

Interpreting the Wall: Archaeology and Pilgrimage

The nature of travel and experience along the Wall was researched for the recent paper delivered at TAG 2007 ‘Hadrian’s Wall and the secular pilgrimage: dislocated experience of a linear monument’. This revealed some interesting ideas about the way in which the monument was travelled and the experience that this created. Early visitors to the Wall it seems rarely journeyed the full length of the monument; the first individual we know to have walked the length of the Wall observing it carefully is William Hutton, his successors, Collingwood and his Pilgrims toured the Wall differently, selecting ‘interesting’ places to visit. This dislocated experience of the Wall is more akin to that of the modern visitor, raising questions about how fully we experience the Wall if we visit only select sites, as opposed to ‘walking the wall’ and how this influences our understanding of the monument.

Forthcoming Events

Richard Hingley - Tales about the Frontier, Senhouse Museum, Maryport, 16 February 2008

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