

## **Taking the Past Into the Future: An Unconference Towards Innovation in Historical Studies**

*University of St Andrews, 4th-7th August 2015*

How do you think historians can achieve greater impact? Do you think Open Access policies work as well as they could? Can communications technology open up new forums of debate and collaboration in academia? If you could improve one thing in the historical profession today - what would it be, and how would you do it?

*Taking the Past Into the Future* is intended to provide postgraduate researchers with the opportunity to proactively engage with the issues that will shape the academic careers of the future. Participants will be encouraged to experiment with radical ideas that are usually left unvoiced, before considering how positive change may be effected within real-world limitations.

We would like to invite postgraduate historians of any period to propose 'position papers' on any area of potential innovation within historical studies. These could include responses to current matters of academic policy, or completely new ideas. You could propose a model for a 'virtual conference', discuss the economics of funding historical research, argue for a PhD-by-historical-documentary: the (blue) sky is the limit.

Proposals should be no longer than 500 words and should answer the following questions:

- What is your proposed idea or innovation?
- What does it seek to improve (e.g: levels of engagement with history, career progression issues for young researchers, quality of collaboration between different groups of historians)?
- In an ideal world, how would this innovation be implemented?
- How might the idea need to be adapted to work in the real world?

As an 'unconference', *Taking the Past Into the Future* will be a participant-driven meeting which emphasizes the importance of peer-to-peer discussion and collaboration in a supportive setting. It will be residential and small-scale. Participants will circulate their full position papers (2,000-3,000 words) in advance of the meeting. During the unconference the papers will be discussed and written up into proceedings which will be made freely available, deposited in institutional repositories, and shared with relevant policy-makers.

There will be a registration fee of £20, with generous sponsorship allowing a considerable subsidy, with accommodation for three nights and food provided. The unconference will be held in Hayston House, a Georgian farmhouse near St Andrews, and will be self-catered, with participants cooking together to allow further time for informal conversation and community-building.

**The deadline for proposals is Friday 29th March.** Please send proposals, and any questions, to [unconference.past.future@gmail.com](mailto:unconference.past.future@gmail.com)

For further information please see [www.pastfuture.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.pastfuture.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk)



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*Generously supported by  
St Andrews School of History and  
CAPOD (Centre for Professional and  
Academic Development).*