

Post Print

RRR's Newsletter

New year, new Leadership Team for *RRR*

In keeping with journal tradition, this January has brought with it another busy start to a new year. In addition to our annual conference, this year held in person at and online via the University of Kent, the last month has included the annual handover of senior leadership roles within the *RRR* editorial board.

After a year as Editor-in-Chief, **Johanna Harrison-Oram** (Royal Holloway, University of London) announced that she would be stepping down from the role in January of this year. Johanna first joined the board in 2021 and served as Deputy Editor between January 2023 and January 2024. During this time, Johanna organised and chaired the journal's highly successful 2024 conference, 'Labour in the Long



Nineteenth Century', which was held at the journal's home institution, the University of Southampton, and proved truly international and interdisciplinary in

spirit. Johanna balanced all of this alongside welcoming two of the journal's first ever junior editors, Arthur and Atticus, who were born during Johanna's tenure in November 2023.

Since becoming Editor-in-Chief in January 2024, Johanna has continued to lead the journal from strength to strength, culminating not least in the publication of Issue 7, which is available to read [here](#). The success of this issue is testimony not only to the journal's growing reputation but also, importantly, to Johanna's astute and capable leadership that has facilitated this growth.

We would like to thank Johanna for all her hard work and dedication to *RRR*, its wider community, and to the fields of PGR publishing and nineteenth-century studies more broadly. We would also like to wish her the very best of luck in finishing her PhD thesis, and are delighted that she will remain on the board as a PGR Editor during this remaining period.

In Johanna's place, we would like to officially welcome and congratulate **Sophie Thompson** (University of Kent) as our new Editor-in-Chief. Sophie joined the board as a PGR Editor in June 2022 and served as Deputy Editor between January 2024 and January 2025. We look forward

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to seeing how the journal continues to flourish under her leadership, beginning not least with the Call for Papers for Issue 8, which is now live (and available to read below). This CfP follows on from our recent conference, chaired by Sophie, the success of which is no doubt a sign of great things to come over the course of the next year!



Finally, in Sophie's place, we would like to welcome and congratulate **Katie Maclean** (University of Stirling) as our new Deputy Editor. Katie joined the board as a PGR Editor in Spring 2024 and was voted into her new role shortly thereafter. Chris Prior (University of Southampton), meanwhile, will continue in his new role as Lead Academic Editor for 2025.



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The board is truly delighted to have secured such an excellent leadership team for the next year and looks forward to seeing the new directions and heights that *RRR* goes on to achieve with Sophie and Katie at the helm.

'Labour in the Long C19': Conference Report

Another New Year, another exciting Romance, Revolution and Reform conference. We welcomed speakers in person and online at the University of Kent on an appropriately cold, crisp day in January. The university overlooks a hill, and Canterbury Cathedral can be seen in the distance (I assume, it was cloudy that day). Organised and chaired with exceptional agility by incoming editor-in-chief of the journal Sophie Thompson, the topic this year was 'Play in the Long Nineteenth Century,' a theme that invited a creative variety of contributions, meaning we were able to host panels on an impressive breadth of topics with a truly interdisciplinary focus.

The conference was held across two rooms, enabling guests and delegates to choose which panels they would like to attend. The hybrid format was seamlessly integrated in the running of the conference, and we were able to welcome speakers from Mumbai, Canada, Paris, Rome, and even Australia.

The first panel I attended: 'Reading a Writing Play', included contributions from Michele Brugnetti (University of Sapienza and the University of Silesia), who presented a paper on Arthur Symons' short story: *An Episode in the Life of Jenny Lane* and the playfulness of aesthetic

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reading practices. The second was a paper by Rebecca Cohen (University of Cambridge) who took us to the fast-paced world of mid nineteenth century periodicals with her paper on the sketches of Charles Dickens and Washington Irving, exploring Dickens' commentary on the ever-increasing pace of print culture with his sketch 'Shabby Genteel People'.



I was also lucky enough to chair two fascinating panels. The first, 'Play and Politics' was broad in scope. Aditi Behl (IIT Bombay) presented her research on the Urdu poet Insha Allah Kahn's *Rani Ketki ki Kahan* and the politics of playing with language in the cultural context of northern India in the nineteenth century. She suggested that linguistic playfulness constituted shared cultural 'tastes' across the region, despite language differences between Urdu and Hindi. Christopher Blandford (University of Kent) spoke about Robert Browning's use of the closet drama genre and playful homage to Greek writers, while Travis Seetoo (Brock University) presented an original interpretation of the Bronte siblings 'Glasstown' juvenilia as an example of an early manifestation

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of tabletop role-playing games, in the vein of Dungeons and Dragons.

The second panel I chaired was somewhat more on the nose: 'Playing Games'. Soomin Hong and Gavin Davies both spoke about the history of board games – firstly in Europe, where Dr Davies (Independent) explored the propriety politics of didactic board games in the eighteenth century (though he mentioned to me after his talk that a lot of those early games lacked quality gameplay, which is a shame as they looked like a lot of fun). Soomin Hong (University of Sydney) showed us Sugoroku – a war game similar to backgammon, which she argues functioned as war propaganda and national indoctrination in imperial era Japan. Zahra Kandah Kar (University of Haute-Alsace) spoke about Wordsworth's memories of childhood games in *The Prelude*.

Some excellent vegetarian catering kept us company throughout the day, and lots of tea and coffee were had, with good conversation. The conference dinner was held at the Parrot, a quaint 14th century pub befitting Chaucer's pilgrims (and us).



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Finally, we owe a deal of gratitude to our keynote speaker Dr Timothy Gao from the University of Bristol, whose talk ‘Messing Around with M. P. Shiel’s *The Purple Cloud*’, shed light on this fascinating turn of the century novel.

*This year’s PGR Paper Prize, chosen by the board, was awarded to **Soomin Hong** from the University of Sydney for her paper titled ‘Gamification of War in Meiji Japan—in Case of Sino-Japanese War Sugoroku’.*

*Congratulations, Soomin, and thank you to PGR Editor **Megan McInenrey** (University of Surrey) for contributing this excellent report.*

Viva Victories

We would like to congratulate **Michelle Reynolds** (University of Exeter), who passed her PhD viva on 12 December 2024 with a thesis titled ‘The New Woman Illustrator and Cartoonist in Britain, c. 1870-1914’. Michelle plans to revise her thesis into a monograph, which will explore how fin-de-siècle women designers turned to commercial illustration as they forged professional identities and shaped the socio-political and cultural phenomenon of the New Woman. Having been a longstanding and valued ally of RRR since 2021, Michelle will be stepping down from the board this month. We would therefore like to thank her for all of her hard work for the board in her time as a PGR Editor, and to wish her all the very best of luck in her future endeavours.

Researcher Insights

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In the last issue of Post Print, we were delighted to trial a new section titled ‘Researcher Insights’, with the idea being that each future issue will feature details about the current and future research of our PGR and Academic Editors, thereby providing some insights into the breadth of work being completed collectively by the board at any one time. This month, we are very happy to share insights from **Benedict Taylor**, who is Professor of music at the University of Edinburgh, with thanks to him for his time and words.

“My research interests and teaching centre on Western music of the (very) long nineteenth century, and move between the ostensible twin poles of philosophical questions of musical meaning and more technical, analytical matters. I think the latter must result from a creative urge that never quite made it successfully into being a composer! But underlying both is a concern with trying to understand *how* music is made and creates its variety of meanings. And there is so much between those two conceptual terms. History is obviously informing everything, but I don’t see myself as simply a historian, at least not in any urge to antiquarianism: for me there has to be an intertemporal dimension, something of contemporary relevance – often reflecting the persistence of earlier art in the present. (Another way of saying this is a commitment to the category of the aesthetic, however contested, however unfashionable that might be at present.)

The book that I’ve just finished certainly falls

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somewhere in the middle: a short volume on Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha* trilogy for Oxford University Press's *Keynotes* series, which is set to be published later this year for the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth. Coleridge-Taylor, for those who haven't heard of him, was an English composer of mixed-race (Sierra Leone / British) ancestry, who became in his time enormously successful, above all for his three cantatas (1898–1900) based on Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*. Sadly he died rather young, in 1912 at the age of only 37. What is fascinating here is that his story runs counter to a familiar assumption that composers of colour in the past were inevitably marginalised by their less enlightened times (with the unstated corollary that we are ever so much more virtuous now...). The problem is rather the contrary: that Coleridge-Taylor was enormously successful and championed by many influential voices in the Edwardian era, at the height of empire, but then over the course of the twentieth century and until very, very recently, became ignored. Then there are issues with the source text, Longfellow's faux Native American epic, with its subtext of cultural appropriation and whitewashing of history, which sit much more uneasily now. Added to this, too, the piece and its composer became a focal point for aspiring African American communities and their hopes of racial uplift at the turn of the century. It's got quite a lot going for, against, through, and around it! When I first got to know this music as an undergraduate over two decades ago no one was interested in a group of late-

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Victorian cantatas once beloved of middle-class, middle-brow choral societies, but times have changed, and now Coleridge-Taylor is everywhere on the radio and concert hall. Obviously his story is a fascinating one, but his music is so appealing, well crafted, and tuneful, that it is hardly a surprise that audiences are rediscovering this music with delight.”

Issue 8 CFP NOW LIVE

Following the very recent publication of Issue 7, which is now available to [read on our website](#), we are thrilled to announce that the call for submissions for Issue 8, 'Play in the Long Nineteenth Century', is now **LIVE**. Issue 8 will be published in January 2026, and all submissions should be sent to rrr@soton.ac.uk by **midnight (BST) on Friday 18th April 2025**. Please direct all queries to the same address. Further details can be found in the full Cfp, attached to the end of this newsletter. We look forward very much to hearing from you!

In the meantime, we would like to wish all our readers a happy and healthy start to the new semester.

As ever, to join our mailing list, or to respond to our Call for Reviewers (which is currently LIVE), please visit our website's [contact page](#).

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Romance, Revolution and Reform, Issue 8
Call for Submissions:
Play in the Long Nineteenth Century

While the long nineteenth century is not immediately associated with playfulness, scholars recognise it as a period that revolutionised play. Games were ubiquitous, hundreds of dedicated recreational spaces (museums, playgrounds, parks) were established, and a new cult of leisure took root, reshaping both public and private life. Play was also central to Victorian and Edwardian ideals of childhood, laying the groundwork for modern conceptions of child development. The fluidity of play as a concept reflects its inherent contradictions and multiplicity of meanings.

In the seminal text on play studies, Johan Huizinga characterises the nineteenth century, with its rationalising tendencies, as "the end of play" (*Homo Ludens*, 1944). Others still have identified play as "a totalizing concept" which "pervades nineteenth-century literature and culture and forms the foundations of the modern self" (Matthew Kaiser, *The World in Play*, 2011). Structured or spontaneous, subversive or conformist, innate or transformative, play offers a mode of looking at the broader cultural and societal dynamics of the long nineteenth century as well as our own era.

This issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* is looking for papers of 5,000-8,000 words on 'Play in the Long Nineteenth Century' (1789-1914) in all its forms and in a global context. We encourage broad interpretations of play and invite submissions that explore its fluid and multifaceted nature. We welcome playful and creative approaches. The journal encourages multi- and interdisciplinary papers from across the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities and invites contributions from those at any career stage, including PGRs and ECRs.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Leisure and recreation
- The politics of play; access to play
- Theatricality and spectacle
- Comedy
- Music
- Spaces for play: playgrounds, the nursery, parks, the music hall, the seaside, etc.
- Education and play; child development
- Public/private pleasure
- Play and sexuality
- The commodification of play
- Literary playfulness; the aesthetics of play
- Toys and games: board games, gambling, imaginative games, sport, etc.
- Decadence; hedonism

The closing date for submissions is **midnight on Friday 18th April**. Papers should be submitted to **rrr@soton.ac.uk**. Early expressions of interest are welcomed.