



Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru  
University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies



The Leverhulme Trust

## Call for Papers

### THE AMATEUR HISTORIAN AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

Plenary Speaker: **MONIKA BAÁR** (University of Groningen)

**Saturday, 24 October 2015**

An international workshop organized by  
The Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth,  
at the National Library of Wales  
with the support of the Leverhulme Trust

The series ‘Writing the Nation’ – a corner stone for researchers of nineteenth-century historiography, nationalisms and internationalism – was one of our reference points in developing the Leverhulme-funded project ‘**Knowledge Transfer and Social Networks: European learning and the revolution in Welsh Victorian scholarship**’ at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth. The project explores how Thomas Stephens (1821–1875), a pharmacist by profession, yet successful as a historian and social reformer, utilized local and regional patronage and cultural infrastructures to gain the access to European networks of knowledge that enabled him to revolutionize Welsh learning. This was achieved from within the industrial community of Merthyr Tydfil, which was bereft of almost any formal institutions of learning, and whose culture was considered at best marginal, at worst dangerous by the British state.

The **role of amateur scholars** like Thomas Stephens has been neglected in national historiographies and in international comparisons. They often operated in non-state nations and (former) colonies, in underprivileged and civically underdeveloped communities, and on what are perceived to be geographical peripheries of Europe. Thus marginalized in several ways, they have escaped the attention of historians, who have often focused on centres of power and on metropolitan and state institutions of higher learning towards the end of the nineteenth century.

**History-writing was as important for non-state nations like Wales** as it was for the central powerhouses of European politics. Since the former were typically late in the process of academic professionalization and institutionalization, amateur research and non-institutional infrastructures of learning and knowledge exchange assumed great importance. In this **travel**, connections between **learned societies** and **correspondence** enabled **international knowledge transfer between amateur scholars**.

**In order to explore this subject area, we are inviting papers on:**

- The role of the amateur scholar before *c.* 1875
- Rural and urban environments and infrastructures of research
- Advantages and disadvantages of financial and social patronage
- Communities and societies of amateur researchers
- International and transnational collaboration and exchange
- Correspondence, travel and the amateur researcher
- Knowledge transfer between institutional centres and non-institutional ‘peripheries’
- Colonies, empires and knowledge transfer
- Perceptions of marginality in research and history-writing.

Please e-mail informal enquiries or proposals of no more than 300 words to the conference organizers, Marion Löffler ([marion.loeffler@wales.ac.uk](mailto:marion.loeffler@wales.ac.uk)) or Adam Coward ([adam.coward@wales.ac.uk](mailto:adam.coward@wales.ac.uk)), by 31 May 2015. Alternatively, give us a ring on 0044-1970 636 543 / 631 023. The outcome of the workshop may be published. Please note that we would like to focus on Europe before *c.* 1875 and papers should be no longer than twenty-five minutes.

To learn more about the  
**UNIVERSITY OF WALES CENTRE FOR ADVANCED WELSH AND CELTIC STUDIES**  
Aberystwyth SY23 3HH  
Wales / UK

and the project ‘**KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND SOCIAL NETWORKS: EUROPEAN LEARNING AND THE REVOLUTION IN WELSH VICTORIAN SCHOLARSHIP**’, please visit [www.wales.ac.uk](http://www.wales.ac.uk) and click on ‘**Celtic Research Centre**’.

