

Horace Walpole and the Queer Eighteenth Century (London, 15–16 Feb 19)

St Mary's University and Strawberry Hill House, Feb 15–16, 2019

Deadline: Aug 31, 2018

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Text Artefact Identity: Horace Walpole and the Queer Eighteenth Century

Hosted in collaboration between:

Department of English, St Mary's University, Twickenham

The National Trust

Strawberry Hill House

This international conference will bring together scholars and curators from the disciplines of Literature, Cultural History, Art and Architectural History, and Heritage to investigate LGBTQ perspectives on the 'long' eighteenth century.

Hosted inside Horace Walpole's Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill in west London, it will complement a major exhibition taking place October 2018-March 2019, 'The Lost Treasures of Strawberry Hill', which will bring together, for the first time since 1842, masterpieces from Walpole's collection.

Confirmed speakers

Matthew Reeve (Queen's University, Canada)

George Haggerty (University of California, Riverside)

Alison Oram (Leeds Beckett University)

Ulf R Larsson (University of Texas, Austin)

Daniel Orrells, (King's College, London)

We invite papers exploring any aspect of queer history, culture, heritage and writing of the 'long' eighteenth century; there will be a particular but not exclusive focus on Horace Walpole and his circle. Please see the full Call for Papers below.

The conference will take place in the beautiful Georgian and Victorian Gothic rooms of Strawberry Hill, and there will be a formal dinner in Strawberry Hill House.

Call for papers

We invite proposals for papers (25 minutes) exploring queer perspectives on the long eighteenth century, covering aspects that include, but are not limited to: art collecting, the opposition between the gothic and classicism in architecture and literature, homoerotic subcultures and homosocial networks, the relationship between queer style and queer performance, and the historiography of sexuality in the long 18th century. Rather than providing certainties, this conference

aims to contextualize certain questions about Walpole's sexuality in relation to his taste, language and social networks.

Although all aspects of LGBTQ perspectives on the long eighteenth century are welcomed, as the conference complements a major exhibition of Horace Walpole collection, Strawberry Hill, Walpole and the Gothic will be a particular focus. His sexuality has been the object of speculation, historical enquiry and theoretical interest. In recent years, scholars have started to engage with the aesthetic consequences of Walpole's sexuality and have begun to look at his 'Strawberry Committee' as the expression of a sexual style. Walpole's homosocial networks, the linguistic codes used in his epistolary exchange and the "queer" poetics of his literary writings and architectural creations have all inspired a variety of scholarly responses. In particular, attention has been given to the sexual consequences of Walpole's aesthetic decisions for the design of Strawberry Hill, a topic that has traditionally been largely overlooked or ignored.

Since Timothy Mowl made the claim that much of Walpole's Gothic sensibility is an expression of 'high-camp defiance of normal conventions', particularly as a challenge to the Palladian architecture of his father's house Houghton Hall, the issue of the relationship between Walpole's sexual identity and aesthetic taste has been much discussed. Interestingly, one room in Strawberry Hill was entirely dedicated to his father and his father's taste. Recent research into Walpole's collection and house has demonstrated the presence of classical features at Strawberry Hill, and, therefore, Walpole's devotion to a classical discourse alongside his Gothic taste. How, then, do we make sure that his interest in classicism is not overlooked because it does not fit the queer effects of the gothic revival? And are classicism and the Gothic mutually exclusive when we think about Walpole's sexual styles?

Registration

Bookings for the conference will open soon. Conference subscriptions are likely to be in the region of £200 for funded delegates (including food), but there will be substantial discounts for unfunded and postgraduate scholars.

There will also be a prize for the best-proposed paper by a postgraduate student, which will cover travel and accommodation costs.

For further information, please contact Dr Peter Howell, Director of English, St Mary's University on peter.howell@stmarys.ac.uk with any questions.

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FB: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/460070734415423/>

TW: @StrawHillGothic

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Reference:

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