

Voice of Humanities Conference Report 2012

The Voice of Humanities conference – held annually – offers postgraduate students in the Humanities an excellent opportunity to present their work to other researchers, to exchange ideas and to establish new professional networks.

The standard of applications for this year's event was impressive, and the conference committee received applications across a diverse range of topics. A friendly and supportive atmosphere was apparent from registration onwards: participants were keen to talk to others about their academic work, and also found that the environment enabled them to share their experiences of the research process itself: such occasions are valuable and often all too scarce!

The conference was well attended, such that most of the Humanities schools across Cardiff University were represented in some capacity: this also made it possible to learn more about a rich variety of topical, theoretical and methodological perspectives. Emphasis was given to the notion of interdisciplinary research throughout the day. Indeed, the keynote address – delivered by Dr. Paul Bowman from the school of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (JOMEC) – provided an insightful consideration of the benefits, tensions and occasional difficulties associated with such approaches. His accessible, sensitive and self-reflexive presentation was well received, and set the tone very nicely for the day's schedule.

Both the posters and talks presented at the conference were of excellent quality. The speakers on the day – across four fascinating panels – delivered confident and engaging presentations, and delegates participated enthusiastically in discussions at the end of each session. Presenters made good work of communicating their ideas to a non-specialist audience, fielding a wide range of questions accordingly. The criteria for judging both posters and oral presentations focused greatly on the extent to which the work in question could be clearly appreciated by researchers from across the humanities disciplines. Whilst visual appeal and careful design were considered crucial for posters, speakers were expected to deliver their presentations in a clear, coherent and well organised way. The winners in the oral presentation category were:

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1st Prize: Dweezil Vandekerckhove (SHARE) - *The Armenians in Cilicia: Armenian Rural Settlements and Fortifications in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the 11th to 13th century*

2nd Prize: James Wakefield (EUROS) - *Lifeboats, Love and Legitimate Parental Partiality in Ethics*

Both presentations were enthusiastically received, and generated some excellent discussion, as well as a host of interesting questions from the audience.

The Best Poster award was won by Helen Sivey (ENCAP), entitled *Queer Digital Pasts: Creating a Community Archive with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth*. Helen's work was unanimously voted by the judges as being the best of those on display: her approachable manner in terms of answering questions, etc. was also valuable in this respect.

The prize-giving session at the end of the conference was also well attended, and delegates seemed to benefit greatly from the informal and relaxed opportunity to reflect on the day's events. The committee were delighted to have participated in such a successful and enjoyable day, and excellent feedback was received from all concerned.