

#1 Meeting the Organisers of BARS 2019

Hello and welcome to the first BARS 2019 Nottingham blog!

We're Ruby and Colette, PhD students at the University of Nottingham. We decided to kick off this blog series by giving you the chance to find out more about the people organising the conference, so we asked Professor Lynda Pratt and Dr Máire ni Fhlathuin some questions...

Ruby and Colette: Can you tell us a little bit about yourselves and your history with BARS?

Máire: I first went to a BARS conference in 2003. I was just beginning to work on Romantic-period literature at the time, and was overwhelmed by the range and depth of knowledge present – I have never looked back.

Lynda: My first BARS conference was at St Mary's University College in Strawberry Hill, where I gave a paper on the British navy and national identity. Among my fellow speakers was someone who is giving one of our keynote lectures for BARS 2019.

Ruby and Colette: How did you come up with the theme for this conference?

Lynda and Máire: We wanted a theme that could encompass the diversity of the Romantic period, from Humphry Davy's science to Byron's imagined Orient and from Caroline Herschel's discovery of new comets to Mary Shelley's invention of a newly animated body. We hoped 'Romantic Facts and Fantasies' would inspire researchers to explore the intersection of every aspect of this most paradoxical and fascinating age.

Ruby and Colette: What is your favourite part of attending a conference?

Lynda: Conferences are the best place to find out what's really happening in the newest of new research. You have amazing scholars giving papers where the process of articulating an argument and then answering questions from really switched-on audiences results in a kind of jointly created insight. And then over the days of the conferences you have people carrying over ideas and approaches from one session to the next, and new terms and questions get used in different contexts, and by the end of the final day everyone is going off with a fresh sense of what their work is all about, and hopefully renewed enthusiasm as well.



Newstead Abbey. Andy Stephenson / *Newstead Abbey* / [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Newstead_Abbey_(geograph_3691391).jpg) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Newstead_Abbey_\(geograph_3691391\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Newstead_Abbey_(geograph_3691391).jpg)

Máire: I always like the Saturday afternoon excursions at BARS conferences. It's brilliant literary / historical tourism, especially when the sun is shining – I'm looking forward to Newstead Abbey at BARS 2019!

Ruby and Colette: Can you tell us about your first ever conference/funniest memory from a conference (that you'd like to share!)?

Máire: I remember listening to a speaker heroically trying to keep her paper on track while being drowned out by the sound of a window cleaner outside loudly and squeakily polishing the glass. She tried to draw the blind and managed to pull the whole thing down on top of herself. Actually, perhaps that's more tragic than funny but it was certainly memorable.

Ruby and Colette: Finally, what are you hoping for from this conference?

Lynda and Máire: Great papers, lots of them! And for everyone to have a good time, to be inspired and enthused, and to enjoy our beautiful campus.



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We hope you enjoyed this quick introduction to BARS 2019 – we're excited to welcome everyone to Nottingham next July. Look out for our next blogpost about the conference keynotes which will be out next month!

And, just as a quick reminder, the Call for Papers can be found here: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-arts/english/romantic-studies/call-for-papers.aspx>

If you have any questions, please email: bars2019@nottingham.ac.uk