

Call for Papers

Conference

Spaces and Places of Leisure, Recreation and
Sociability in Early Modernity (c. 1500-1800)

German Historical Institute London, 19-21 May 2016

Convener: Angela Schattner

This conference looks at practices of leisure, recreation and sociability in pre-modern societies and how these were reflected in and shaped by spatial practices. As is the case today, sociable, leisure and recreational practices and events were important means for strengthening associations and social bonds, creating local and regional identities, and maintaining distinctions. While the role and practices of sociability in clubs, societies and guilds have been well explored in recent decades, their connections with leisure and recreation have been neglected. Sociability has in recent years featured prominently in histories of consumer societies and material culture. A new interest in spatiality has also led to an intensive investigation of sociable public places such as coffee houses, clubs, salons, shops, and taverns and their connection with the emergence of a (political) public sphere. (Spatial) practices and modes of sociable leisure and recreation in early modern society, however, have received much less attention. The main research undertaken in this area is largely concerned with English urban developments in commercial leisure in the eighteenth century, while practices and spaces of recreation, diversion and sociability before 1660 and beyond Europe have only very recently come into clearer focus.

The aim of this conference is to take stock of the current state of research in the field of spatial practices of leisure, recreation and sociability. It aims to bridge the gap between

histories of recreation, leisure and sociability in the eighteenth century and earlier periods, and to facilitate conversations between historians working on different case studies in Europe and beyond in order to develop comparative perspectives. Contributions might investigate spatial practices or the creation and usage of public, economic, exclusive or private places and spaces for leisure and sociability in urban, courtly or rural contexts. Papers are also welcome to explore different forms of leisure and recreation (sport, games, performances, drinking and eating etc.) and sociability (for example, with family, friends, neighbours, status groups, work and religious associations etc.)

Papers could address issues such as the following, but are not limited to this list:

1. Topographies of places and spaces. What are the different places and spaces of leisure, recreation and sociability in early modern towns and villages? How are they connected? Are different spaces used by the same groups on different occasions or do they co-exist?
2. Multi-functionality of spaces. What other purposes do sociable places serve and does the multi-functionality of places influence or reflect on the practices of leisure and sociability?
3. Comparisons. How do practices and spaces differ between town and country, between different regions, between countries? Are there similarities?
4. Transfer of practices from town to country and vice versa, between cities, between countries. Who are the agents of transfer? How are fashions created and transferred?
5. Change over time. How did spatial practices of leisure and sociability change over time? Which spatial practices or places formerly in use were abandoned, and what replaced them? Who or what initiated these changes? Who opposed these changes and how?

6. Social relations created in sociable places and spaces and modes of inclusion or exclusion (gender, status, age).

The conference will be held at the German Historical Institute London on 19-21 May 2016.

Proposals from scholars at any stage in their career are invited and papers with an interdisciplinary approach are particularly welcome.

Standard travel expenses and the cost of accommodation for the duration of the conference will be reimbursed.

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please submit an abstract of up to 300 words and a short CV by **8 November 2015**.

All enquiries and proposals should be sent to Angela Schattner: schattner@ghil.ac.uk