Early Modern Research Centre, University of Reading

Reading Conference in Early Modern Studies, 18-20 July 2011

The Reading Early Modern Conference continues to establish itself as the place where early modernists meet each July for stimulation, conversation and debate. As in previous years, proposals of individual papers and panels are invited on the most interesting developments and research in any aspect of early modern studies relating to Britain, Europe and the wider world. This year we will be joined by Professor Andrew Hadfield (Sussex) and Professor Howard Hotson (Oxford) as our plenary speakers.

The informal theme of the conference this year will be *Communication and Exchange*. We hope that this might provoke new thinking and debate on such questions as:

- What forms did communication and information take – oral, printed, numerical or even visual – how did its forms change and how was it circulated?
- What did people know about the world outside their own immediate spheres in the early modern period? How did farmers know about prices and innovations, migrants about opportunities, landowners about their estates, merchants about the supply of and demand for goods, laity and clergy about religious innovation and the subjects of princes about the policies of their monarchs?
- What new techniques for the calculation and expression of information appeared? How far were they driven by the needs of commerce? And who were the people who offered professional information skills – secretaries, surveyors, lawyers – or who brokered information for profit?
- How far was information managed by government through propaganda and censorship or the maintenance of secrecy?
- How did the stock of knowledge of the world increase through the endeavours of seamen, merchants, factors and adventurers as well as scientists, and travel writers, and what part did patronage and the commerce in books and manuscripts play?
- What role was taken by the aesthetic in the processes of communication and exchange? Did changing practices of communication stimulate the emergence of new genres? How can we understand translation and imitation in terms of cultural exchange?

Proposals for panels should consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of four papers. Each panel proposal should contain the names of the session chair, the names and affiliations of the speakers and short abstracts (200 word abstracts) of the papers together with email contacts for all participants. A proposal for an individual paper should consist of a 200 word abstract of the paper with brief details of affiliation and career.

Proposals for either papers or panels should be sent by email to the chairman of the Conference Committee, Professor Richard Hoyle, by 31 January 2011, r.w.hoyle@reading.ac.uk.

Proposals are especially welcome from postgraduates. The conference hopes to make some money available for postgraduate bursaries. Anyone for whom some financial assistance is a *sine qua non* for their attendance should mention this when submitting their proposal.