



EIGHTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
DISCOVERIES AND IMPROVEMENTS, 1660 – 1740

GUILDHALL, LICHFIELD, UK

3–5 JULY 2025



AT-A-GLANCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY 3 JULY		
Day / Time	Ashmolean Room	Whytmore Room
Thu 1.30 – 3.00	Panel 1a: Improving Knowledge	Panel 1b: <i>Crusoe</i>
Thu 3.00 – 3.30		Coffee break
Thu 3.30 – 5.00	Panel 2a: Religion	Panel 2b: Crime and the Law

FRIDAY 4 JULY		
	Ashmolean Room	Main Hall
Fri 9.30 – 10.30	Panel 3a: Textual Improvements	Panel 3b: Gender, Class & Conduct
Fri 10.30 – 11.00		Coffee break
Fri 11.00 – 12.30	Panel 4a: Pirates	Panel 4b: Afterlives
Fri 12.30 – 1.30	Lunch (provided)	
Fri 1.30 – 3.30	Off site: walking tour, performance, or self-exploration	
Fri 3.30 – 5.00		Presidential Roundtable: Endings
Fri 5.00 – 6.30		Plenary Lecture: Paddy Bullard

SATURDAY 5 JULY		
	Ashmolean Room	Main Hall
Sat 9.00 – 10.00	Panel 6a: Stoke Newington Edition	Panel 6b: London
Sat 10.15 – 11.45		7: Roundtable: Teaching Defoe
Sat 12.00 – 1.00	Panel 8a: Book History	Panel 8b: Defoe and the Novel

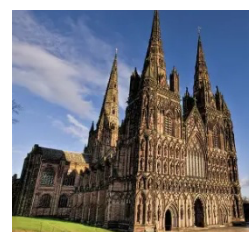
Friday activities

After lunch on Friday, delegates can choose either to attend a performance or a join walking tour. Please use this form to sign up to one or the other.



Play: *Tea with Mrs Thrale*

Written and performed by Christine Genders; this one-performer play is based on the life of Samuel Johnson's friend and biographer. Location: Birth Room, Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum. Duration: 60 mins.



Walking Tour: *Samuel Johnson's Lichfield*

Sarah Dale from the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum will lead this walking tour, taking in the medieval Cathedral, Erasmus Darwin House, and sites connected to Johnson and his circle. Duration: 90 mins.

THURSDAY 3 JULY

1.30 – 3.00 Panel 1a: Improving Knowledge

Time: 1.30 – 3.00 Room: Ashmolean Chair:

1. Siobhan Talbott (Keele University), “Merchants and the Improvement of Meteorological Knowledge, 1660–1730”
2. Jane Cooper (University of Oxford), “Royalist Chauvinism vs Epistemic Humility: Pindaric Odes on the Early Royal Society”
3. Alessio Mattana (University of Turin), “‘The Knowledge of Things, not Words’: The Question of Science Literacy in Defoe’s *The Compleat English Gentleman*”

1.30 – 3.00 Panel 1b: *Robinson Crusoe*

Time: 1.30 – 3.00 Room: Whytmore Chair:

1. Ikram Arfi (Sorbonne University), “Defoe’s Adventure Novel: from Crusoe’s Island Past Ethos Revival to the New Land Logos Innovation”
2. Christopher Loar (Western Washington University), “Robinson Crusoe, Prophet”
3. Andrew Bricker and Eru Fevery (Ghent University), “An Island unto Himself: *Robinson Crusoe* and the Spectre of Cannibalism”

3.30 – 5.00 Panel 2a: Religion

Time: 3.30 – 5.00 Room: Ashmolean Chair:

1. Judith Stuchiner (Independent Scholar), “Improvement and Dissent”
2. Penny Pritchard (University of Hertfordshire), “Improvements in Medicine: Good Doctors but better Christians: The Medical Profession Represented in Conduct and Commemorative Literature after 1660”
3. Rebekah Andrew (Independent Scholar), “‘The Plain and General Principles of the Christian Religion’: Defoe’s Theological Beliefs and *The Family Instructor* (1715)”

3.30 – 5.00 Panel 2b: Crime and the Law

Time: 3.30 – 5.00 Room: Whytmore Chair:

1. Claude Willan (Durham University), “Moll Invents the NDA”
2. Jeanne Clegg (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia), “Preventing Street Crime in 1720s London: The Plain and Practical Proposals of Andrew Moreton”
3. Ashley Xiong (Peking University), “Self-Knowledge Through Dialogue: Defoe’s Refinement of the Criminal Narrative”

FRIDAY 4 JULY

9.30 – 10.30 Panel 3a: Gender, Class and Conduct

Time: 9.30 – 10.30

Room: Main Hall

Chair:

1. Stephanie Hershinow (Baruch College), “Improving Marriage”
2. Megan D. Bennett (University of Sheffield), “Those of Quality, Those of the Vulgar: Alcohol and Class in Early-Eighteenth Century Art and Literature”

9.30 – 10.30 Panel 3b: Textual Improvements

Time: 9.30 – 10.30

Room: Ashmolean

Chair:

1. Claudine Van Hensbergen (Northumbria University), “Editing Aphra Behn for the 21st-Century Oxford Authors Series: A Visual and Material Approach”
2. Nicholas Seager (Keele University), “ ‘Great Additions and Improvements’: The Textual History of Defoe’s *Tour thro’ Britain* in the Eighteenth Century”

11.00 – 12.30 Panel 4a: Pirates

Time: 11.00 – 12.30

Room: Ashmolean

Chair:

1. Keith Byerman (Indiana State University), “Representations of the Other in *Captain Singleton*”
2. Manushag N. Powell (Arizona State University), “Lessons from *The General History of the Pyrates* at 300”
3. Aleksandra Jarecka (Kazimierz Wielki University), “Why did Poland have to have colonies? The 1933 Polish Translations of Defoe’s *Captain Singleton*”

11.00 – 12.30 Panel 4b: Afterlives

Time: 11.00 – 12.30

Room: Main Hall

Chair:

1. Daniel Cook (University of Dundee), “Gulliver the Ghostwriter”
2. Adam James Smith (York St John University), “ ‘A Table Made Again for the First Time’: Reading and Improvement in Kate Briggs’s and Jane Gardham’s Appropriations of *Robinson Crusoe*”
3. Jakub Lipski (Kazimierz Wielki University), “Three-volume *Crusoe* for the Polish Reader: Discoveries and Improvements”

12.30 – 1.30 Lunch

1.30 – 3.00 Tea with Mrs Thrale or Walking Tour: Johnson’s Lichfield or Self-explore Lichfield

3.30 – 5.00 Panel 5: Presidential Roundtable: Endings

Time: 3.30 – 5.00 Room: Main Hall Chair: Katherine Ellison (Illinois State University, Normal)

5.00 – 6.00 Plenary Lecture

Time: 5.00 – 6.00 Room: Main Hall Chair:

Paddy Bullard (University of Reading)

“Crusoe and Gulliver at 300”

Conference Dinner: Ego Mediterranean, 8.15pm

SATURDAY 5 JULY

9.00 – 10.00 Panel 6a: The Stoke Newington Edition of Daniel Defoe

Time: 9.00 – 10.00 Room: Ashmolean Chair: Kit Kincade (Indiana State University)

9.00 – 10.00 Panel 6b: London

Time: 9.00 – 10.00 Room: Main Hall Chair:

1. Julie Beq (University of Caen, Normandy), "Nature and the Destroyed City: Discovering and Improving (Un)familiar Spaces in the the Age of Defoe"
2. Kyung Seo Chung (Tufts University), "The 'very, very, very dreadful' Body of London in Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*"

10.15 – 11.15 Panel 7: Teaching Defoe, A Roundtable

Time: 10.15 – 11.15 Room: Main Hall Chair:

Daniel Cook (University of Dundee)

Katherine Ellison (Illinois State University, Normal)

Penny Pritchard (University of Hertfordshire)

11.30 – 1.00 Panel 8a: Book History

Time: 11.30 – 1.00 Room: Main Hall Chair:

1. Leah Orr (University of Louisiana, Lafayette), "Improvements and Discoveries in the Secondhand Book Trade"
2. Stephen Gregg (Bath Spa University), "Dirt in the type; or, the life and adventures of the book at EC7.D3623.704e"
3. J. A. Downie (Goldsmiths, University of London), "Defoe and the Book Trade"

11.30 – 1.00 Panel 8b: Defoe and the Novel

Time: 11.30 – 1.00 Room: Ashmolean Chair:

1. Fahime Serhatti (Yuksektas University), "Defoe's Conscious Art of Fiction: Thematic and Structural Improvements from *Robinson Crusoe* to *The Fortunate Mistress*"
2. Aditya Banerjee (Harvard University), "The Character of Evidence: Credibility, Narrative, and Fact in *Moll Flanders* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*"
3. Selena Ozbas (Istanbul Yeni Yuzyl University), "'and my Passion was so great': Defoe's Anti-Senecanism in *Roxana*"