

The Pastons and their England

Start date	21 April 2017	End date	23 April 2017
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Rosemary Horrox	Course code	1617NRX077

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Rosemary is a Fellow & Director of Studies in History at Fitzwilliam College; Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Honorary Fellow of the Historical Association; Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of History; General Editor of the Cambridgeshire Records Society and Series Editor of Manchester University Press medieval sources.

Her teaching style is standing and talking with minimal technology and questions/discussion are always welcome. She has taught over 110 weekend courses at Madingley and has taught on our International Summer Programmes from the mid-1980s.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	An introduction to the Paston family
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Local Government: the Pursuit of Lordship
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	The Medieval Family: Men and Women
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	The Medieval Family: Parents and Children
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	The Fifteen Century Lifestyle
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	The Medieval Church
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	The Medieval World-View
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

This course will introduce students to the Paston Letters as a source for fifteenth-century social and political history.

Content:

The Pastons were a wealthy Norfolk family active in the fifteenth century, immortalised by the survival of their letters and papers which provide a uniquely detailed source for the social history of the period. Using these letters as a basis, but drawing also on other contemporary sources, the course aims to explore various aspects of fifteenth-century life. It will begin with an introduction to the family itself, descended from a 'good, plain husbandman' whose son William founded the family fortunes by becoming a judge and investing the proceeds in land in his native county. William's descendants built on these beginnings to become a substantial Norfolk family. As such they were active in local government and the second main topic to be covered is their involvement in contemporary politics. Throughout the century the family attempted to manipulate local affairs to their own advantage, with mixed success, and their letters provide an inside view of the rivalries and tensions within local government of the period.

Perhaps the most engaging aspect of the letters for the modern reader, however, is the light they shed on domestic matters, and particularly on the contemporary attitude to marriage and the family. On the whole the Pastons took a determinedly practical view of marriage: for them, as for most contemporaries, it was simply a business arrangement, with monetary considerations predominant. But the letters also give another side to the picture with the love affair of Margery Paston and Richard Calle, the family's bailiff, who married in the face of violent opposition from the rest of the family.

Finally the medieval church will be studied, primarily from the viewpoint of contemporary laymen. Throughout the middle ages the parish church had occupied a central place in the local community, but in addition to this familiar pattern the fifteenth century saw the development of new attitudes to religion. These may be exemplified by two very different Norfolk women: Margery Kemp of King's Lynn and Julian of Norwich. For most contemporaries the church's influence derived ultimately from its control over the damnation or salvation of the individual's soul and in this context the medieval attitude to death will be explored, and in particular attempts to achieve salvation through good works and the endowment of prayers for the dead.

Presentation of the course:

Through lectures and discussion.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. made aware of fifteenth-century social and political assumptions;
2. introduced to the Paston Letters and made aware of their strengths and weaknesses as a source for late-medieval English history.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Castor, H.	<i>Blood and Roses</i>	Faber, 2004 ISBN 9780571216703 Hardback
Richmond C.	<i>The Paston Family: the first phase</i>	Cambridge University Press 2002 ISBN 9780521520270 Paperback
	<i>The Paston Family: Fastolf's will</i>	Cambridge University Press 2002 ISBN 9780521520287 Paperback
Horrox R. (ed).	<i>Fifteenth-Century Attitudes</i>	Cambridge University Press OUT OF PRINT

The Paston Letters – various editions are available

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 03 February 2017