

CENTRE FOR ARTHURIAN STUDIES, BANGOR UNIVERSITY



Welcome to the inaugural newsletter for the Centre for Arthurian Studies at Bangor University. Launched in 2017, the Centre functions as a hub of international research exchange in Arthurian Studies, and aims to bring together diverse expertise from across the chronological span of Arthurian legends, from medieval to the modern period.

The Centre celebrates more than a century of scholarly activity in the field of Arthurian Studies at Bangor University, and aims to foster an inspiring environment for current and future scholars to pursue their work in Arthurian Studies.

We are pleased to provide news of current and forthcoming events conducted by members of the Centre for Arthurian Studies, and to share our hope that the Centre will facilitate ongoing dialogue between members of the international Arthurian community.



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May 2018



Bangor University Library's Arthurian and Celtic Studies collections have their inception at the time the University Library was founded in 1884. The ongoing tradition of Arthurian Studies at Bangor University – strengthened through personal donations, acquisitions initiated by experts in the field, and the personal Chairs held by Arthurian scholars (Emeritus) Professor P.J.C. Field, Prof. Peredur Lynch, Prof. Jerry Hunter and Prof. Raluca Radulescu – has seen the collection grow to become one of the largest libraries of Arthurian books in the United Kingdom.

In 2014 Bangor University Library acquired an important collection of Arthurian books from Flintshire County Libraries. Standing at over 2,500 volumes, the Flintshire Harries Arthurian collection, a predominantly, though not exclusively, English-language collection of post-medieval books, enhances Bangor's existing collection through the addition of dozens of rare volumes, and is of considerable interest to scholars and general readers alike.

The joint Bangor University/ Flintshire Harries Arthurian collections are now fully catalogued and can be accessed via the University Library online catalogue. Among the treasures housed in the Centre for Arthurian Studies, include, but in no means limited to

T.W. Rolleston, *Parsifal*, 1912

Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. William Stansby, 1634

John Dryden, *King Arthur*, 1691

Gildas, *de excidio & conquest Britanniae*, ed. Ioannes Daius, 1568

Tennyson, *Vivien*. Illus. Gustave Dore, 1867

Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, illus. Aubrey Beardsley, 1893-94

Prophetia Anglicana & Romana, hoc est Merlini Ambrosii Britanni, ed. Joannis Jacobi Porssii, 1608

The Dore Gift Book of Illustrations to Tennyson's Idylls of the King, 1878

Recently a blog was launched to document the experience of Bangor University staff, students and visiting scholars to the Centre for Arthurian Studies, and to promote current research supported by the Centre. Visiting scholar Dr Anastasija Ropa (University of Latvia), found herself ‘trapped in an enchanted tower’ during her week-long visit to the Centre (as the winner of the competition jointly funded by the UCL/British Library/AHRC ‘Academic Book of the Future’ project and the British Branch of the International Arthurian Society) from which she discovered T.W. Rolleston’s little-known 1912 poem, *Parsifal or the Legend of the Holy Grail*. Her research into this rare book culminated in the publication of an article in the 2017 issue of the *Journal of the International Arthurian Society*. Dr Samantha Rayner (UCL) and Dr Rebecca Lyons (Bristol), on their visit to the Centre, made an exciting discovery: a rare version of the 1893-94 edition of the *Morte Darthur* with illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley; the book is now being restored by University archivists. Numerous local, national and international visitors continue to view and use the collections.

The blog is currently undergoing expansion, and it is hoped that more students and visiting scholars will share their experiences of the Centre – as well as their research – to facilitate ongoing discussion.





Online Exhibition: **‘Malory and his Followers’**

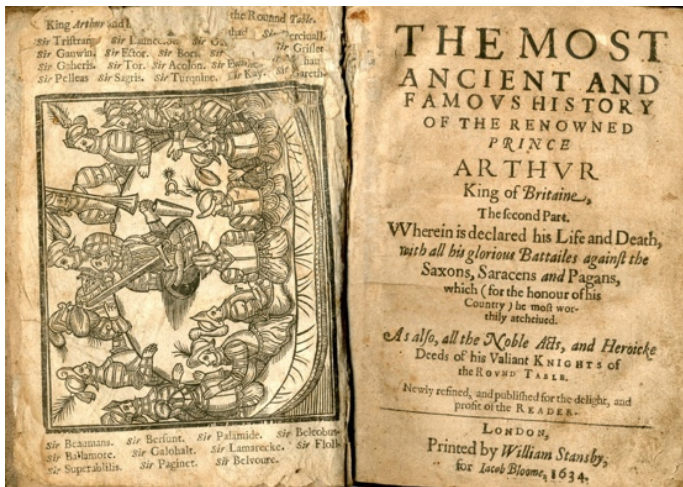
Our ‘Malory and his followers in the Bangor University Arthurian collections and the private collection of Alan Lupack and Barbara Tepa Lupack, USA’ is an online exhibition of selected rare books and artwork, tracing the journey of Arthurian legends in their material (predominantly book) format inspired by the best-known author of the English-language Arthurian romance of the middle Ages, Sir Thomas Malory (the fifteenth century) through some interesting nineteenth- and twentieth-century works.

The aim of this exhibition is to highlight the place occupied by Bangor University’s Arthurian collections in the wider scholarly world, and to draw together Bangor-based scholars, Bangor alumni and international scholars. As such it provides a starting point, and not the final stop in the exploration of Arthurian legends – and an invitation to visit the Centre for Arthurian Studies and continue the research into this area of enduring interest.

The exhibition remains ongoing, and a selection of digitised works from the Bangor and Lupack collections can be viewed on the Centre’s website.

Funding Award for 'The Arthurian Quest' Project

A new impact-generating collaborative project on the topic of 'Hymgais - Arthurian Quest' has been awarded funding from the ESRC Bangor University Impact Acceleration fund. Principal investigator, Prof. Raluca Radulescu will work with Gillian Brownson, local creative practitioner, and Kate Stuart, MPhil student in the School of Creative Studies and Media (Bangor University), on a programme designed to raise levels of engagement and literacy among secondary school pupils in the local area.



Members of the Centre for Arthurian Studies have been involved in a number of activities intended to raise awareness among local residents and school children of the cultural importance Arthurian legend has to a national (Wales; UK) and international audience. Activities have included a 'King Arthur Fun Day' for local children, and a series of Arthurian inspired workshops attended by over 500 school children at Caernarfon Castle. In 2015, a public exhibition celebrating Arthurian Studies at the University was initiated by a public lecture given by Dr Roger Simpson on the subject 'Arthur: The King that Never Left Us'. Prof. Raluca Radulescu officially opened the Centre on 20 January, 2017, with a well-attended public lecture, 'Portable Arthur: why medieval legends are still relevant to us.' (Recordings of the lectures given by Dr Simpson and Prof. Radulescu can be found on the Centre's website).



The Centre for Arthurian Studies now operates as the repository for the International Arthurian Society British Branch. More than thirty boxes of documents have recently been deposited with the Centre, and University Library staff are in the process of organising and cataloguing the archive to be made available to students and visiting scholars. (More information to follow in due course).



Recent acquisitions to the Centre for Arthurian Studies include a collection of six plates designed by Royal Worcester featuring scenes from the Arthurian Legend, kindly donated by Mrs Rawlinson, née Johnston, who also donated a number of documents (press clippings, photographs, etc.) pertaining to the first International Arthurian Society congress held in Truro, 1930.

Anyone interested in donating to the Centre, or in viewing the collection, please contact Prof. Raluca Radulescu in the first instance: r.radulescu@bangor.ac.uk

Forthcoming Symposium:
‘Arthurian Legends in Wales and Beyond’

‘Arthurian Legends in Wales and Beyond’ is a day symposium hosted by Bangor University and organised by the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies through the Bangor Centre for Arthurian Studies. It will take place on 28 June, 2018 (9am-5pm, in Cledwyn 3 – Terrace Conference Room 3).

The event will provide an opportunity to celebrate the expertise members of the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, in particular, but not exclusively, members and collaborators of its component centre, Bangor University’s Centre for Arthurian Studies.

The symposium will consist of 3 main panels focusing, respectively, on: Arthur in Wales (medieval), Arthur’s travels from Wales to the Continent (medieval), and Arthur from Wales in the world (medieval to modern).

Bangor University’s MA in Arthurian Literature (the only one of its kind in the world) is an exciting, long-standing, and successful academic course that benefits from the expertise of world-class experts in the field of Arthurian Studies. Students traverse the vast canon of Arthurian literature, from medieval to modern, while actively participating in the activities of the Centre for Arthurian Studies, with the opportunity to co-organise the annual international postgraduate conference, ‘Medievalism Transformed’. All enquiries about the MA should be directed to Prof. Raluca Radulescu.

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Follow the Centre on Twitter @ArthurBangor

For further details about the Centre for Arthurian Studies, including information about current projects ‘Malory and his Followers’ and ‘Arthur at Bangor and Beyond’, access to digitised texts held at the Centre, and to read new (and forthcoming) entries to the blog, see our website: **<http://arthur.bangor.ac.uk>**

For information about the International Arthurian Society and the *Journal/ Bibliography of the International Arthurian Society*, see: **<http://www.internationalarthuriansociety.com>**; the *Journal of the International Arthurian Society* can also be followed on Twitter @JIASArthurian

All enquiries regarding access to the Centre, or any other related business, should be directed to Professor Raluca Radulescu/ Dr Aled Llion Jones.

