



Call for Papers - Centre of West African Studies – Cadbury Conference 17th and 18th May 2013 'African Newspaper Cultures'

The Centre of West African Studies at the University of Birmingham (www.cwas.bham.ac.uk) invites the submission of abstracts for the 2013 Cadbury Conference, on African newspapers, past and present.

Abstracts should address themselves to the below themes:

Theme: African newspaper cultures

Newspapers and print culture are an important emerging theme in African Studies, shedding light on the constitution of new publics, new genres and new forms of political and social expression and affiliation.

Newspapers provide a substantial and unique resource for scholars researching Africa's cultural and political history. They provide abundant traces of the events, concerns, idioms and debates of bygone times. They offer a form of access to current social life which, though inevitably partial and selective, is also detailed, taken at close range, and constantly unfolding. For these reasons, newspapers have often been exploited as a source of historical, social, cultural and political information – not only about events and ways of life, but about changing attitudes to these. However, it is less common, in African Studies, to find detailed studies of the newspapers themselves: – as a textual form; as a product of local business practices; as a site of discursive experimentation; and as a network or space where specific kinds of interaction take place. In this workshop our object of inquiry is newspaper culture. We wish to explore the ways in which readers, writers, and editors in Africa have been able to experiment with different forms of public address and new genres of writing, and the ways in which the press convenes new kinds of public through the medium of print. Research topics may focus on any region of Africa and any period in the history of newspaper culture, up to and including the present day.

Among the questions we will be addressing are:

- How have newspapers helped to produce diverse political identities?
- How do newspapers interact with street talk, oral genres, media channels, and social networking sites? And what kind of linguistic interfaces (between English, pidgins, and African languages) do they produce?
- What kind of new publics have been convened by newspapers?
- How do newspapers create a space for textual experimentation, and what new genres and styles of writing have been forged in newspapers and magazines?
- How do local social/ economic/ business conditions affect the production, distribution and readership of newspapers and magazines?
- Who are the newspaper audiences, and how do they read?
- In what ways do newspapers and magazines furnish sites for the creation of celebrity, self-invention and misinformation?

Participation in the Interdisciplinary Conference (17-18 May 2013)

If you wish to present a paper, send an abstract of up to 250 words to David Kerr (d.kerr@bham.ac.uk) by Wednesday 15 February 2013. Participants will be expected to seek means from their own institutions to attend. We will be in touch with everyone who submits an abstract for the conference by 29th February.

Deadline: 15th of February 2013

Applications can be sent by e-mail to d.kerr@bham.ac.uk