



## Call for Papers

# Place and the periodical: An international conference on the regional magazine

[University of Chester](https://www.chester.ac.uk), UK, 25-26 June 2024

## Keynote speakers confirmed so far

- **Professor Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel**, University of Geneva, leader of the Visual Contagions project, studying the global circulation of images in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- **Joanne Goodwin**, editor of *Cheshire Life*, the UK's most successful county magazine

Magazines are usually associated with the metropolis, with capital cities, and with national and international movements and identities, for example *Paris Match* or the modernist titles *Blast* (London), *Noi* (Rome) or *The Dial* (New York). But what happens to the magazine when it appears in the provinces, the periphery, the regions, the counties – for example *¡Hola!* (Barcelona), the *Double Dealer* (New Orleans), *Cheshire Life* (Middlewich, Manchester, Chester) or *De Stijl* (Delft, Leiden)?

Equally, studies of print culture and geographical identities have focused mainly on the nation (Benedict Anderson), occasionally on the local (Simon Gunn on 19<sup>th</sup>-century satirical city magazines) – but almost never on those administrative units between national and local: county, province, region, oblast, canton, département, voivodship, federal state, Bundesland, etc. (Royle is a rare exception.)

Literary scholars such as Moretti, McDonagh and Gibson have developed Raymond Williams's idea of the regional and provincial as value-laden metropolitan ideological constructions. Some of the most interesting work on the idea of the regional and provincial comes from scholars of the nineteenth-century novel. Livesey argues that provincial fiction e.g. Eliot, Gaskell, focuses on the 'interesting' as opposed to 'the beautiful, the sublime, or the picturesque', pushing us to 'judge a thoroughly inaeesthetic object in the form of art.'

There is growing interest in representations of place and landscape (Readman; Burchardt), rural modernity and its challenge to the cultural hierarchies of modernist scholarship (Shirley; Bluemel and McCluskey), and the reclaiming of the middlebrow (Hamill and Smith). Yet historians of the magazine such as Beetham have questioned the viability of magazines outside the metropolis. There is a small body of work on the regional magazine, including studies of the English twentieth-century county magazine and the aspirational appeal of the elite 'county set' (Hobbs), the Italian Northern League titles *Il Sole delle Alpi* and *Quaderni Padani* and their anti-urban mythology (Guidali) and the perceived difficulties of the New Orleans-based *Double Dealer* in being modernist but not metropolitan (Round).

This conference aims to expand this area of scholarship, and invites contributions on a neglected magazine genre, from any era or nation, exploring such questions as:

- How significant is place of publication? Is the magazine a placeless media form?
- Can a regional magazine be international?
- What are the subgenres of the regional magazine?
- Who produces regional magazines, and why?
- How has the regional magazine changed over time?
- What techniques do regional magazines use, in their text, images and advertising, to exploit place identities?
- What is distinctive about the language of the regional magazine?
- What can regional magazines do that metropolitan magazines cannot?
- How are these magazines affected by trends of centralisation, devolution or regionalism?
- Can a magazine be radical whilst regional, or is conservatism the norm? How does nostalgia function in regional magazines?
- Is the regional always middlebrow? Can a magazine be highbrow, or avant-garde, yet provincial?
- How should we judge the regional magazine? Always in comparison, or on its own terms? Was Matthew Arnold correct in seeing the provincial as inferior? Is there value in studying the unoriginal and the second-rate?
- How does the regional magazine connect to other media, e.g., broadcast, fiction, countryside publishing, tourist literature?
- How does place intersect with social class in the regional magazine?
- Does success always mean a move to the metropolis?
- How do regional magazines represent landscape, the countryside, the rural?
- How do they connect imaginary territories with administrative areas?
- Zines are a famously decentered media form, but do they only represent communities of interest, never geographical communities?

We also welcome case studies of individual titles, and of editors and contributors.

We hope that a range of disciplinary and geographical perspectives will produce a rich, comparative conference, of interest to scholars of magazines, literature, publishing and place identities. This topic would particularly benefit from methods such as mapping,

discourse analysis or network analysis, for example, and methods accounting for the multimodal nature of magazines, combining word and image, in editorial and advertising.

**Keywords:** magazine; place; identity; region; province; county; rural modernity; place identities; placemaking; middlebrow.

The conference language is English.

Selected conference papers may be published in a planned *Edinburgh Companion to the Regional Magazine* (Edinburgh University Press), providing a significant opportunity for scholars to develop work based on fresh research.

**Please send 200-word proposals for:**

- panels of 3 papers, 20 minutes each (panel proposal + paper proposals)
- round tables
- individual papers of 20 minutes

to [placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com](mailto:placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com)

**Include a 100-word speaker biography.**

**Deadline for proposals: 31 January 2024.**

**For more information please email [placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com](mailto:placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com)**

**X (Twitter):** @PlacePeriodical

**Mastodon:** @PlacePeriodical@mastodon.social

**Threads:** PlaceAndThePeriodical

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## Conference organisers

**Dr Andrew Hobbs** is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire, UK, and author of the first academic studies of the English county magazine, including 'Lancashire Life Magazine, 1947–73: A Middle-Class Sense of Place' (*Twentieth Century British History*, 2013) and 'Cheshire Life, 1934-39: The birth of the modern county magazine' (*Manchester Region History Review*, 2023). His monograph, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900* (2018) won the 2019 Colby Prize from the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

**Dr Naomi Walker** is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Chester and an Associate Lecturer at the Open University. She co-edited and co-introduced the book *A Space of Their Own: Women, Writing and Place 1850-1950* (Routledge, 2023) with Katie Baker. She also wrote a chapter in this edited collection on Mary Webb and the rural space. She has recently written a chapter on Mary Cholmondeley for the *From Brontë to Bloomsbury* series (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). She has written an article on walking in the countryside for the *Literary Geographies* journal (2020) and is currently writing a chapter for the *Literary Geography: Theory and Practice* series published by the University of Wales Press.

**Dr Matt Davies** is a Senior Lecturer in English Language at the University of Chester (UK) and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is author of *Oppositions and Ideology in News Discourse* (2013 Bloomsbury,) and a number of more recent articles / book chapters (Routledge, Edinburgh University Press) which employ critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic methods to analysis representations in the UK press. He has also published on the use of computer-assisted stylistic techniques to analyse a corpus of song lyrics, notably Mark E Smith and The Fall (in *Always Different, Always the Same: Critical Essays on The Fall*, 2022). Most recently he edited and wrote the preface for *A Part of No Tribe: My Life Through One Thousand Singles, 1980-89* (2023), by Ian Moss. He is currently leading the 'Changing Chester' strand of the English department's *Cestrian English* project, exploring representations of the city of Chester from past to present.



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