

RLI Fund Report: BCCS Graphic Scholarship 2016

Introduction

The day followed on from last year's inaugural event of the British Consortium of Comics Scholars, which had also been supported by the RLI fund. The aim of the day was to share research among a group of current PhD students working in the field of Comics Scholarship in the morning, and then in the afternoon to conduct an open event for all interested parties to attend talks and a workshop in the use of graphic narrative to conduct scholarship.

The organising team were [REDACTED] (English) and [REDACTED] (MFM), with [REDACTED] (English) in support.

The brief of the day and the afternoon schedule was as follows:

Graphic Scholarship: Theory and Practice

A one-day symposium at Sussex University
4th June 2016

How is scholarship being *done* via the medium of comics? Comics can enable scholarship to be disseminated in accessible, reworked form for a wider audience; and can aid 'making learning fun' for younger students or interested amateurs -- but how does graphic narrative work as a way of thinking, as a way of data gathering, as a way of organising and enacting the research itself: a tool for scholars?

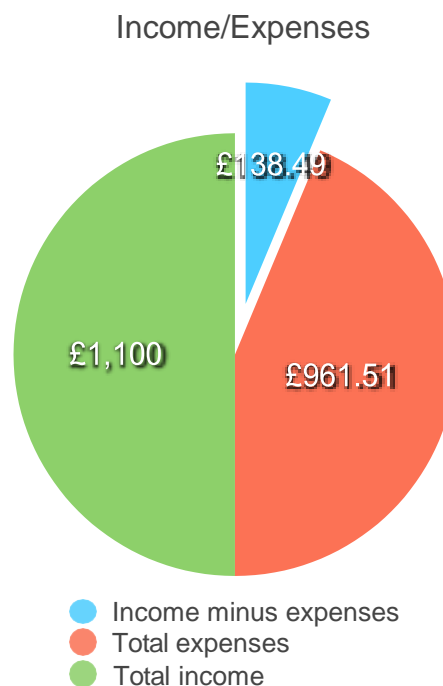
Time	Event	People	Place
9.30-12	Research sharing seminar	Chair: Roger Sabin Louisa Buck, Paul Davies, Sarah Lightman, Pen Mendonca, John Miers, Nicola Streeten Not presenting: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]	Jubilee flexible space G30
12.00-1.00	Registration and lunch	BCCS + helpers	Jubilee reception
1.00-2.30	Panel 1: Applied Comics Scholarship	Chair: John Miers Ian Horton Lydia Wysocki Chris Bailey	Jubilee mini lecture theatre 144
2.30-2.45	Break	BCCS + helpers	Jubilee flexible space G30
2.45-4.15	Practical Workshop	Louisa Parker Pen Mendonca	Jubilee double room 155
4.15-4.30	Break	BCCS + helpers	Jubilee flexible space G30
4.30-6.00	Panel 2: Graphic Medicine Applications	Chair: Nicola Streeten Ian Williams Martha Turland Muna al-Jawad	Jubilee mini lecture theatre 144
6.00-6.10	Wrap-up, thanks, final comments	[REDACTED]	" "
6.10-7ish	Wine reception	All! BCCS + helpers	Jubilee reception / flexible space G30

Budget

The event was free, though signed up for via EventBrite. We came in under budget, able to feed the attendees and cover costs for the speakers who otherwise gave their time for free. Expenditure broke down as follows:

Statement of Expenditure: BCCS Graphic Scholarship Symposium 2016

MONEY OUT	
Catering	£447.00
Travel Expenses: CB	£60.72
Travel Expenses: LW	£187.61
Travel Expenses:PM	£57.00
Printing Costs	£51.91
Workshop Materials	£44.73
Wine Reception	£64.04
Post-conference Meal for Invited Speakers	£48.50
Miscellaneous	£0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	£961.51
MONEY IN	
RLI Fund	£1,000
Additional Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies	£100
TOTAL INCOME	£1,100
MONEY LEFT OVER	
Income minusexpenses	£138.49



This meant that even if we had not found the generous top-up cash from SCCS, sourced by co-organiser [REDACTED], we still would have had cash remaining. Sussex catering services were excellent, and we were very well supported by [REDACTED] and the Jubilee building staff.

Publicity

The event was advertised via Twitter (handled by [REDACTED]) and Facebook, and distributed through a number of sources including Comics Forum, Laydeez do Comics, Graphixia and more. The Doctoral School, the School of English and BSMS also distributed information and invitations.

Websites and social media were as follows:

<https://www.facebook.com/britishcomicsscholars/?ref=ts>

https://twitter.com/ukcomicscholars?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

<https://britishcomicsscholars.wordpress.com>

These sites now host photos and sketches from the event.

The poster was drawn by Dr [REDACTED] and edited by [REDACTED], and the Programme featured the poster cover and excellent printing quality from Sussex reprographics service, which was prompt and reliable. Reproductions below:

Supported by the Doctoral School's Researcher-led Initiative (RLI) Fund www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoral/doctoralinitiative/ and Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies

Apologies to Hunt Emerson (1977) and Scott McCloud(2006) for the adaptation of their images.

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How is scholarship being done via the medium of comics? Comics can enable scholarship to be disseminated in accessible, reworked form for a wider audience; and can aid 'making learning fun' for younger students or interested amateurs -- but how does graphic narrative work as a way of thinking, as a way of data gathering, as a way of organising and enacting the research itself: a tool for scholars? We will be exploring these questions with a range of speakers and a practical workshop.

Organising committee: Paul Fisher Davies, Nicola Streeten, Paddy Johnston, John Miers & all BCCS members.

Schedule

Time	Event	Place
12.00-1.00	Registration and lunch	Jubilee reception / flexible space G30
1.00-2.30	Panel 1: Applied Comics Scholarship Chair: John Miers Ian Horton Lydia Wysocki Chris Bailey	Jubilee mini lecture theatre 144
2.30-2.45	Break	Jubilee flexible space G30
2.45-4.15	Practical Workshop Louisa Parker Pen Mendonca	Jubilee room 155
4.15-4.30	Break	Jubilee flexible space G30
4.30-6.00	Panel 2: Graphic Medicine Applications Chair: Nicola Streeten Ian Williams Martha Turland Muna al-Jawad	Jubilee mini lecture theatre 144
6.00	Wine reception	Jubilee reception / flexible space G30

Coffee and tea will be provided during the breaks. **Wifi** is available via eurodam.

Panels

Applied Comics Scholarship

- Ian Horton**
What Did Graphic Scholarship Ever Do For Us?
- Chris Bailey**
Comic Explorations: Representing data and visualising complexity
- Lydia Wysocki**
Setting boundaries, communicating, and reflecting: 3 projects using comics as a method

Graphic Medicine Applications

- Ian Williams**
An Iconography of Illness: Comics as New Knowledge
- Martha Turland**
'It doesn't look like the patient': drawing and mark making in clinical communication
- Muna Al-Jawad**
Comics as Research: examples of how I use comics to research our healthcare practice

About the participants

- Muna Al-Jawad** is a geriatrician at The Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton. She makes comics about her practice featuring her superhero alter ego Old Person Whisperer. She has managed to convince some people that these comics are practitioner research.
- Chris Bailey** is currently working on his PhD at Sheffield Hallam University; this ethnography seeks to explore the 'lived experience' of a group of children playing Minecraft in an after-school club. Comics form an unplanned but integral part of this study, emerging as a result of pursuing a responsive, visual and participatory approach to research.
- Ian Horton** Ian Horton is Contextual and Theoretical Studies Coordinator across the School of Design at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His present research is focused in three related areas: experimental typography, Dutch graphic design and comic books.
With Professor Roger Sabin he organizes the Comic Studies Network at the University of the Arts London. He has recently presented papers on self-published comic books and creative freedom; experimental typography and curatorial practices; information design and graphic narratives at international conferences by organisations such as the Comics Forum, Comics Grid, Graphixia and the International Association of Word and Image Studies.
- Pen Mendonca** has been an independent graphic facilitator and cartoonist for twenty years. She facilitates public engagement processes, co-production and partnerships including multiple stakeholder groups. Pen's 'live' recordings, strategic pathways, comic strips and animations are widely published within the public sector.
Pen is a PhD candidate and associate lecturer at University of the Arts London. Her research includes a critical examination of live visual recording and cartooning as a means for exploring and representing contemporary social issues, specifically single mothering/motherhood. An extract from Pen's graphic novel is soon to be published by Demeter Press.
- Louisa Parker** is an artist and writer. Senior Lecturer at York St John University for a new BA Hons Illustration, specialising in narrative forms of graphic work, at York St John University. Louisa publishes comics under the pseudonym Una. She is currently writing up a fine art practice PhD at Loughborough university.
- Martha Turland:** Martha has research interests in contemporary medical illustration and in drawing practices in health care. She lectures in Cultural & Critical Studies and coordinates the module for design courses at the University of Brighton.
Her work examines graphic novel formats and their use in investigatory medical contexts, also the social implications of surgeons' informal illustrations for patients. An application for research ethics and governance approval from Papworth NHS Trust is currently under review.

- Ian Williams** is a comics artist and doctor. His graphic novel, *The Bad Doctor*, was shortlisted for the Medicine Unboxed Creative Prize 2015, highly commended in the BMA Book Awards 2015, and is currently included in *The Great British Graphic Novel* exhibition at the Cartoon Museum in London. He is currently working on his second graphic novel, *The Lady Doctor*, due to be published in 2018 by Myriad Editions.
He founded the *Graphic Medicine* website in 2007, which he currently edits with MK Czerwiec and is co-author of *The Graphic Medicine Manifesto*, from Penn State University Press, which has been nominated for an Eisner Award. He has contributed to numerous medical, humanities, and comics publications and draws a weekly comic strip, *Sick Notes*, for *The Guardian* newspaper.
- Lydia Wysocki** is an educator, artist, editor, publisher, Editor in Chief of Newcastle Science Comic, and founder of Applied Comics Etc. All that wouldn't fit on her business card, so it says Comics Boss. She's also a part-time NEDTC/ESRC-funded PhD student in Education at Newcastle University.

About BCCS

The British Consortium of Comics Scholars (BCCS) is a PhD student-led initiative. It was started by PhD student, Paul Davies (University of Sussex) in 2012 as a reading group for discussion of comics theory with doctoral researchers from three universities. This expanded to welcome new research students to join from five British universities: University of Sussex; University of Brighton; University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins; Open University and Loughborough University.
In 2014 it was developed into a half day symposium held at University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins, hosted by Professor Roger Sabin, (Professor of Popular Culture, University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins) and Dr Ian Horton, (Coordinator for Contextual & Theoretical Studies, University of the Arts London, College of Communication). Discussion at the symposium focused on the value of a

group visit to the annual International Festival of Comics in Angoulême, France, 2015, the largest and most significant international festival of comics.

The BCCS was officiated in 2015 with the inaugural symposium hosted at University of Sussex, chaired by Nicola Streeten and enabled by a RLI grant and support from SCCS. It consolidated and developed activity to date, bringing together scholars and artists and ensuring continuing innovation within a growing area of scholarship. This follow-on event extends the conversation about graphic narrative form within comics scholarship, and if these symposia are welcome, then they may become a regular or semi-regular feature of BCCS's work.

If you would like to join the reading group, please contact us at britishcomicsscholars@gmail.com.

Let us know what you think

Please tweet us @ukcomicsscholars, visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/britishcomicsscholars and comment, or email us above with your comments, questions, and feedback.

Sketchnotes

In the spirit of the event, notes on the proceedings were recorded as comics sketches and distributed on social media. A selection follows:

BCCS COMICS SCHOLARSHIP 2016

THEORY + PRACTICE

PROBING

Why do British Political cartoonists use images from Greek mythology in their work?

There are examples 1814 - 2005!

ESP. SISYPHUS!

I keep an annotated illustrated journal...

Visual diaries we used by ARTISTS and THERAPISTS

Psychoanalysis explores CULTURAL MEMORIES...

RECEPTION THEORY uses material from the past, offering NEW interpretations.

POLITICAL CARTOONISTS adopt + recombine material from the past INTERTEXTUALLY.

Deja dit - deja écrit!

the image is understood through the story of SISYPHUS!

LOUISA BUCK

The Fine Art in Comics

SARAH CLAYTON

As well as classical, comics can adopt BIBLICAL imagery + MEMES.

WILL EISNER "A contract with God"

SHARON RUDANE "The Star Sapphire" uses ADAM + EVE leaving EDEN

Circular panels may carry thematic/representational meanings!

I think of it as a THEOLOGICAL COMIC

JOHN MIERS

CS PEIRCE used visual diagrams as a way of thinking... of LOGICAL ANALYSIS.

And also some more playful images!

My own work is between these... visual metaphor, arrows, enclosures, links...

It's important to capture the social experience of comics scholarship as well as visual metaphor + DIAGRAM.

water colour mark is a flash of insight becomes CHASM

Practical Workshop

LOUISA PARKER + PEN MENDONCA

LISTENING + DRAWING are at the heart of my PhD project.

I'm a professional GRAPHIC FACILITATOR.

IT'S NOT ABOUT DRAWING WELL - we're going to LISTEN + then SKETCH. It'll be FUN!!

in PAIRS!

FIRST & SECOND

SOMETHING YOU CONNECTED WITH!

ON THE CLOCK! tick! tick!

keep it clean!

sometimes THAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT

how did it go? could you keep quiet?

Panel 2: Graphic Medicine

AN ICONOGRAPHY OF ILLNESS: COMICS AS NEW KNOWLEDGE

the interface between the rhetoric of comics + the discourse of healthy care.

When comics artists depict their own illness - how does that affect the way we perceive it?

IMAGES STRUCTURE the SCHEMATA of illness. Medical images have been made by PROFESSIONAL image makers - NEUTRAL - seeming.

How has it become DIFFERENT?

SELF-IMAGED digitally... and SELF-DRAWN COMICS highly personal, physical, linked to bodily IDENTITY.

could be NON-REALISTIC through scans, amputated limbs...

3 CATEGORIES of conditions

The MANIFEST

The INVISIBLE made visible through BEHAVIOUR... ABSTRACT LINE

The CONCEALED eg. Psychological illness

done with DIFFERENCE...

Feedback

There were 37 total Attendees of an anticipated 40. 50 signed up — the event was free, so many did not attend; but four arrived on the day without booking. There was a diverse crowd of attendees: from BSMS, Sussex and Brighton Universities, featuring a range of ages, genders, and backgrounds. Several attendees emailed with thanks for the event:

Thanks so much for a fantastic day on Saturday, it was great to hear from the range of speakers and participants, in such a friendly environment.

—

Thank you for making Saturday a seamless and enjoyable day...

—

Hi **paul**,

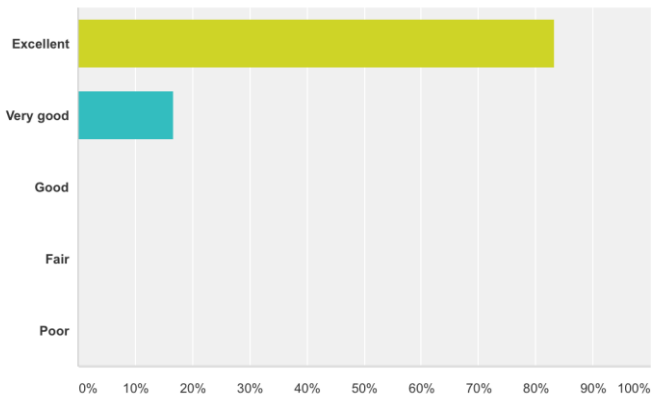
Just to say what a good day Saturday was and to thank you and **Claudia** for all your hard work in making the thing happen.

See you at the next event.

We also ran a short SurveyMonkey followup questionnaire; not all the attendees responded, but the feedback was positive:

Overall, how would you rate the event?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



What did you like about the event?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

Responses (6) | Text Analysis | My Categories

Categorize as... | Filter by Category | Search responses

Showing 6 responses

- Getting to know other people doing creative-practice PhD dealing with similar ways to engage people in taking creative-practice as serious research
6/9/2016 12:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- people who were presenting, community of BCCS as a whole, conviviality
6/9/2016 11:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I liked the range of speakers, the friendly and supportive atmosphere, the workshop, the discussions and the wine. Oh, and the signs that directed me from the train stop - they were good too.
6/9/2016 10:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- very interesting and fun
6/8/2016 3:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- All of it (though particularly the morning session which I appreciated being able to attend)
6/8/2016 1:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- There was a great mix of attendees -- people from comics backgrounds, non-comics, old, young, mixed genders and ethnicities. It wasn't too big and wasn't too small.
6/8/2016 12:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

What did you dislike about the event?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 1

Responses (5) | Text Analysis | My Categories

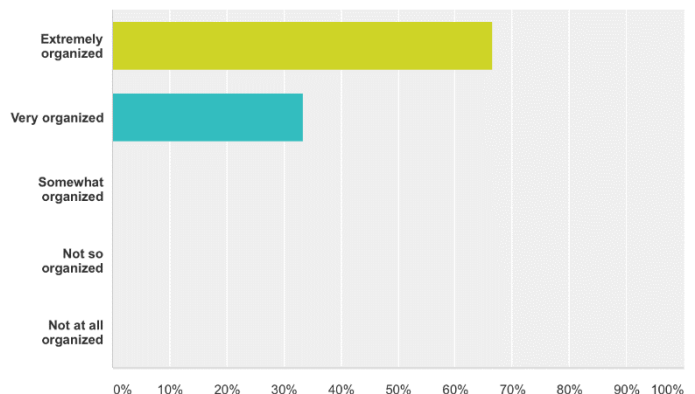
Categorize as... | Filter by Category | Search responses

Showing 5 responses

- Not dislike, but I'm sure others would have enjoyed morning presentations too...
6/9/2016 11:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- There was nothing that I disliked about the event.
6/9/2016 10:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- nothing
6/8/2016 3:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Now!
6/8/2016 1:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- It was surprising that some who'd signed up didn't show up -- but others joined on the day.
6/8/2016 12:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

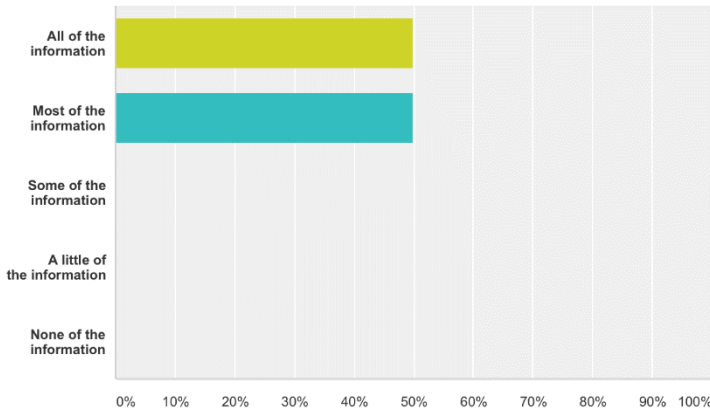
How organized was the event?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



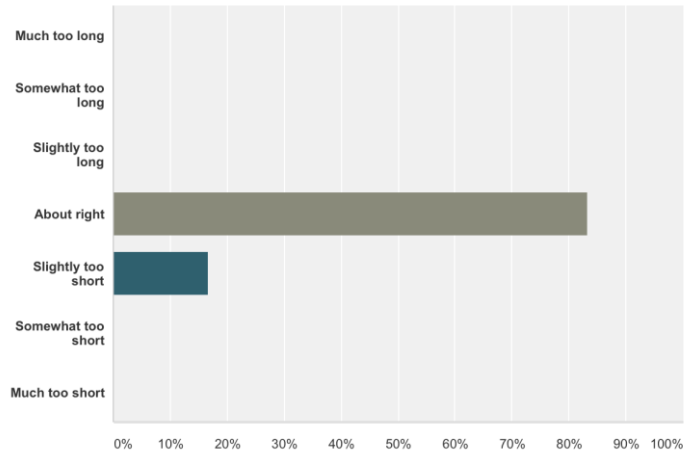
Prior to the event, how much of the information that you needed did you get?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



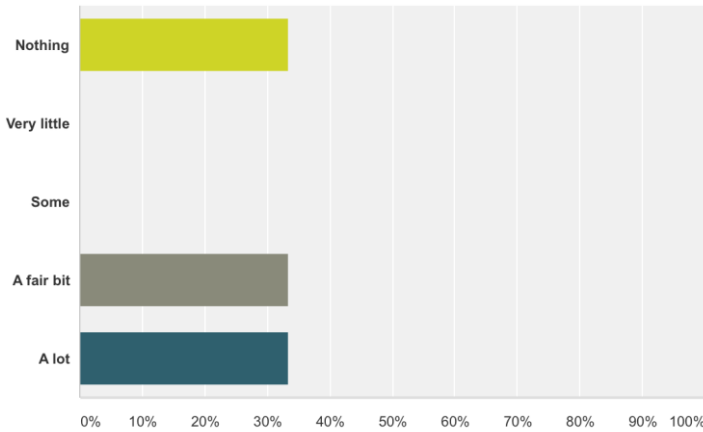
Was the event length too long, too short, or about right?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



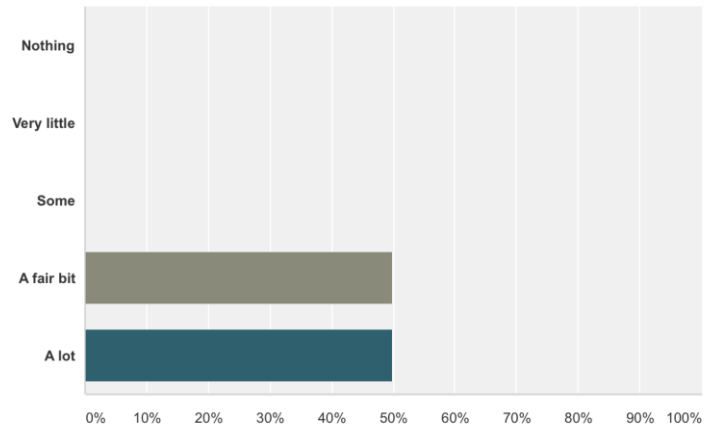
Before the event, how much did you know about 'graphic scholarship', using comics to do research?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



After the event, how much do you now feel you know about 'graphic scholarship', using comics to do research?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



Is there anything else you'd like to share about the event?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 2

Responses (4) | Text Analysis | My Categories

Categorize as... | Filter by Category | Search responses

Showing 4 responses

- I would have liked to attend the 'closed' session in the morning as more opportunities to see artists research projects in progress in relation to the day's theme
6/9/2016 11:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I was really excited to be invited to talk and felt very welcomed by all attendees and organisers. I hope to be able to keep in contact as this is a real area of interest for me and this is a very valuable community in relation to this work.
6/9/2016 10:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Thanks for organising it and I thoroughly enjoyed it - the refreshments were a welcome surprise too.
6/8/2016 3:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I look forward to similar events in the future!
6/8/2016 1:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

One of the voices in particular would have liked a more open morning session; this was intended as a 'safe space' for scholars to share developing ideas, but we might reconsider how this is organised and presented should the event be repeated. This session over-ran, so arriving attendees were aware that something was happening to which they hadn't been invited; perhaps if it remains closed, it might be held in another location or more buffer allowed between morning and afternoon sessions.

Conclusion

This was a very enjoyable and successful day, and I am very grateful in particular to the Doctoral School for the opportunity presented in running it, and to the School of English and Media, Film and Music for their additional support. This day brought a range of scholars together with an eclectic range of interests and experience, and enabled discussion and reflection about an area of research practice that is innovative and fresh.

I would like to thank all at Sussex who enabled and supported the symposium, and hope that other members of the consortium will be in a position to continue the work the BCCS has been doing.

██████████

July 2016