

28 May 2012

Sophie Carney (Roehampton University and National Maritime Museum)

**Legitimising Queenship, Visualising Love: Henrietta Maria and the Decoration of the Queen's House at Greenwich**

Ceri Law (Cambridge University)

**The University of Cambridge and the Elizabethan Court, 1558-1585**

This meeting, a joint event with the IHR's Tudor and Stuart seminar, was held at the Queen's House at Greenwich, an appropriate setting as the first of the two papers pondered the significance of some of its decoration. The Queen's House remains a deeply puzzling building. Begun by Anna of Denmark in 1616, it was not completed until the late 1630s, probably in a form rather different from what had originally been intended. A further difficulty is that much of it has since been radically altered. What does survive from the 1630s is the ceiling of what was then the Queen's Bedchamber. Sophie Carney's paper teased out some of its very obscure iconography. Although the ceiling's full meaning remains elusive, what can be deduced is that it was meant to celebrate the union of Henrietta Maria with Charles I, as well as the offspring that marriage had already produced. The second paper considered the role of some of Elizabeth I's courtiers in the politics of Cambridge University. As Ceri Law explained, this was always a two-way process, as effective interventions by courtiers in university affairs required them to be well-informed about any local background. The dominant court figure in Cambridge in this period was Lord Burghley, who was an active chancellor of the university but who found that his powers in that position were ill-defined and open to challenge. The case study of the religious controversies at Gonville and Caius during the 1580s, in which the vice-chamberlain of the household, Sir Christopher Hatton, clashed with Burghley, illustrated how university disputes could become entangled with factional politics at court. Law concluded that the benefits to courtiers of involvement in university politics were usually limited, but that it could be an effective way for them to recruit capable clients who might then be useful to them elsewhere. **AB**