

CALL FOR PAPERS



'The Royal Exchange of London' by Wenceslaus Hollar. NPG D18675 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Imagining Difference in Early Modern London

Elm Bank, Coventry University
22-23 March 2027

Keynote speakers: Chloë Houston and Nandini Das

Cfp deadline: 31 October 2026

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were a time of significant social change, in which London's population growth was driven by rising levels of immigration and internal migration. Increasingly, Londoners' daily lives were inescapably shaped by encounters with both overseas immigrants and 'Englishmen forren' who migrated from rural areas. The resultant cross-cultural encounters have typically been read as either wary cooperation or outright xenophobia, yet parish records reveal a pattern of sustained interaction between migrants, immigrants, and Londoners, who lived alongside each other in areas like Silver Street, routinely intermarried, exchanged goods, and employed each other. 'Imagining Difference in Early Modern London' invites scholars to nuance such readings and to consider the ways in which these regional, social, religious, and cultural differences may have been assimilated rather than resisted. Participants are particularly encouraged to consider how these histories have influenced our thinking about migration today.

Proposals are invited for 20-minute papers or 60-minute panels (composed of three 20-minute papers each) in English that explore how Londoners experienced and negotiated forms of difference during the period c.1558-1685.

Papers might focus on, but are not limited to, topics such as:

- Immigration, exile, captivity, or internal migration
- Embassies and diplomacy
- Traffic and trade
- Crafts, trades, and workers
- Hospitality and charity
- Language learning and/or translation
- Legal definitions and regulations
- Literary, artistic, or cartographic depictions of difference
- Identity and belonging
- Forms of difference (religious, racial, gender, class, regional, national)
- Other similarly active metropolitan areas such as Norwich or Bristol
- Transcultural spaces (e.g. the Royal Exchange, trade companies, Lombard Street)

We encourage submissions from scholars of underrepresented backgrounds, particularly those working outwith Europe and North America. We especially welcome papers from graduate students and ECRs.

Submission

To submit an abstract (no longer than 250 words for an individual paper or 500 words for a three-person panel), please fill out the form [here](#) by 1 October 2026. Please contact Chloe Fairbanks (chloe.fairbanks@coventry.ac.uk) with any questions or if you have any issues accessing the form.

Registration

This conference is generously funded by a Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant. We are able to waive registration fees for self-funded PGR students and/or non-waged ECRs. We are also able to offer a small number of self-funded student and/or non-waged ECR travel bursaries. Please indicate if you would like to be considered for one of these at the time of application.

Imagining Difference is generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

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