**Gut Feeling: Digestive Health in Nineteenth-Century Culture**

An interdisciplinary workshop, 26-27 May 2017, University of Aberdeen

CALL FOR PAPERS

Gut health has become a buzzword in contemporary culture. Ground-breaking research is pointing to potential links between the gut and such diverse areas as our mood, weight, and thought processes. The current debates on the digestive system and our physical and mental health, however, are not without precedent. The stomach occupied a central place in the development of medicine in the nineteenth century and the number of medical, literary and popular publications on digestion proliferated from this period onwards. With the exception of anorexia and obesity, however, few scholars have examined the cultural significance of the gut in the modern period, confirming the lowly status the abdomen has endured in the Western intellectual tradition.

This workshop aims to develop a new understanding of gut health in modern history by establishing a dialogue between different scholars on this aspect of the body. The preoccupation with guts and the bowels in the Early Modern period developed a new urgency in the nineteenth century through the rapid progress of medicine and the increased concern with the stomach as a site of self-fashioning. The obsession with the gut during this period was a highly cosmopolitan phenomenon crossing many fields of experience, and the workshop aims to bring together scholars from a range of specialisms, including English studies, Modern Languages, History, History of Medicine, Anthropology, Philosophy, Visual Studies, Religious Studies and History of Science.

Applications from postgraduate and early career scholars are particularly welcome.

Topics include, but are not limited to:

- The history of  psycho-gastric conditions

-  The history of nutritional physiology and metabolism

-  (In)digestion as a metaphorical framework

- Literary portrayals of digestion, constipation and defecation

- Digestive and excretory labours and authorial identity

- Visual portrayals of the digestive system

- The gut as a site of self-fashioning

- Digestion and nationhood

- Digestion and public health

- Gut-brain connections

- Digestion and modernity

- Digestion and constipation in philosophical thought

- The role of digestion in social relations

- Digestive health as spiritual practice

Interdisciplinary approaches and international comparisons are strongly encouraged.

Contributors will be invited to submit developed papers for consideration for publication after the event.

Proposals should be no more than 300 words in length and a short biography should also be included. Please send to [m.mathias@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:m.mathias@abdn.ac.uk) by **31 January 2017**.

This two-day workshop is funded by the University of Aberdeen School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture; the Society for French Studies; the British Society for the History of Science; and the British Society for Literature and Science.