

During my course of undergraduate studies, I was particularly inspired by a module in English Social History, 1500-1700. Over this course I read the works of historians such as Adam Fox, Keith Thomas and Margaret Spufford, in particular their analyses of the amorphous boundary between oral and literate cultures in the early modern period. As an avid fan of folk songs myself, I found this very exciting, especially given the enduring resonance of such music even in this day and age. The themes that were brought up in seventeenth-century broadsides and ballads reflected the realities of everyday life, a broad range that constituted the everyman's daily considerations. 'Stories and songs,' as Chris Wood says, 'explain who we are.'

Coupled with insights from reading Thomas and Fox on the various uses of popular print and the various levels of popular culture, I am interested in pursuing further research into this subject, especially by investigating the role played by these folk songs, whether in printed, illustrated, or sung form, in the lives of the common folk during the early modern period. These would concern the historical, folkloric, political, local, moral, occupational and personal aspects of early modern existence, and articulate something of the *zeitgeist*.

Broadsides are a source only recently coming into prominence in the field of early modern studies, and as such are a gold mine for fresh insights as well as a great foundation for future research. Current forays into the field have produced very inspiring and insightful results, and it is into this burgeoning canon that I would like to eventually make my contribution.

The MA in Religious and Social History at Warwick is the ideal course for such a study. Apart from the core module in Theory, Skills and Method, which will provide a crucial methodological grounding for a career in academic research, the department's strength in early modern social and cultural history offers a great wealth of experience in the form of its researchers whose guidance I hope I may continue to benefit from in my postgraduate work.

During my Undergraduate Studies I was funded by the Ministry of Education in Singapore, which provides for six years of employment as a teacher following my graduation. During this period of time I hope not only to be able to pass on my enthusiasm for my discipline, but also to further it by preparing for a course in doctoral research. Being able pursue my masters will indulge my passion for history and help me prepare for further studies, but also, I believe, aid in my role as an educator. This is quite important to me, as I value very much my own educational experience, and feel that it performs a crucial role in character formation. My long-term plan involves a career in academia, specializing in social history, for which the Warwick MA would provide the ideal springboard.