

Centre for Anglo-German  
Cultural Relations (CAGCR)  
Annual Report for the Academic  
Year 2010-2011



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# Introduction

It is with an eye on both the past and the future of the CAGCR that I write the Introduction to this, the fifth Annual Report of the Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations. I was recruited to the CAGCR in September 2005 by the CAGCR's Founder and Director, Professor Rüdiger Görner. At that time we were a brand new research Centre and the beneficiaries of faith, good will, and financial support from a range of parties and institutions. The academic community in Humanities and Social Sciences at Queen Mary, under the leadership of Professor Philip Ogden, and in the School of Languages Linguistics and Film, under the stewardship of Professor Peter Evans, believed in and supported our vision of a research centre devoted to the study of the close and complex cultural relations between the Anglophone and German-speaking worlds. At the launch of the Centre in December 2005, the then German Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Thomas Matussek, commenced what has been a fruitful relationship between the CAGCR and the German Embassy in London, which has seen collaborations on a number of important and high-profile events and initiatives. My own academic post between the years of 2005 and 2010, firstly as Deputy and then as Acting Director of the CAGCR, was financed by the Claussen-Simon Foundation under the auspices of the Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft. And our general activities over the past six years have seen us working closely together with institutions such as the Goethe Institut in London, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Deutscher Literaturfonds, and more recently Shakespeare's Globe and the Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache.

Six years is not – when seen against the backdrop of the cultural relations between the Anglophone and German-speaking worlds over hundreds of years – a particularly long time. But in this short period we have achieved some worthwhile goals: launching our Yearbook for Anglo-German Cultural Relations, *ANGERMION*, and seeing it become an important publication in the field; having three successive years of graduates from our MA in Anglo-German Cultural Relations finishing their degrees, winning prestigious academic prizes, and entering the workforce; and enjoying the lectures of prominent cultural figures such as A.S. Byatt, Durs Grünbein, Anthea Bell, and Alfred Brendel at our events and in our teaching sessions. This year has also seen the CAGCR working at the very heart of the German Studies community in the United Kingdom and Ireland, in our capacities as hosts, alongside the Department of German, of the Association of German Studies Conference at Queen Mary.

This taking of stock arises from the fact that from October 2011 until April 2013, I will be on leave from the CAGCR, in my capacity as an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach and at the Institut für Literaturwissenschaft at the University of Stuttgart. It is with a sense of confidence in the future of the CAGCR – arising from this reflection upon our short but eventful and productive past – that I will temporarily be relocating to Germany, and also very much looking forward to my return.

**Dr Angus Nicholls**  
**Acting Director of the CAGCR**

# The Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations at Queen Mary, University of London was founded in December 2005

## 1. Aims and Structure of the CAGCR

The Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations at Queen Mary, University of London was founded in December 2005. The Centre is housed in the Department of German, within the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film. The Centre's website can be found at: [www.qmul.ac.uk/cagcr](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/cagcr)

The CAGCR aims to: facilitate research on Anglo-German cultural relations with special reference to the fields of literature, language, intellectual history and comparative cultural practice; disseminate said research through colloquia, international conferences, and the CAGCR Yearbook *ANGERMION*; provide high quality postgraduate teaching through the Centre's MA Programme on Anglo-German Cultural Relations.



The CAGCR's Director is Professor Rüdiger Görner; Dr Angus Nicholls is Acting Director and Dr Martina Deny runs the CAGCR's Writer in Residence Programme. The Centre's research activities are divided into the following four sections of research interest, each of which is convened by a staff member in the Department of German at Queen Mary:

- Literature (Dr Astrid Köhler)
- Language and Linguistics (Dr Falco Pfalzgraf)
- Intellectual History (Dr Angus Nicholls)
- Cultural Transfers and Drama (Dr Robert Gillett)

Within any given academic year, one of these sections functions as the principal area of research interest for the CAGCR. The principal area of research interest for 2009-10 was Literature; due to a preponderance of conferences and public events on literature and culture, the principal area of research in 2010-11 was again literature, alongside a broader emphasis on the reception of German culture in the British context.

## 2. Principal Area of Research for 2010-11: German-Language Literature and Culture in Britain

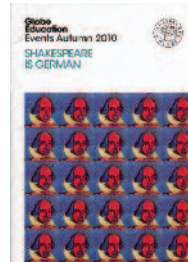
The relations between Britain and the German-speaking world, and the reception of German-language literature and culture within the British Isles since 1800, are complex and many-faceted subjects. These subjects were addressed by a range of the CAGCR's activities during 2010-11. One of the key events for both the CAGCR and for the Department of German at Queen Mary was the Seventy-Fourth Conference of the Association of German Studies for Great Britain and Ireland (see point 4 below), the lead panel of

which was concerned with the theme of *London in German Culture / German Language and Culture in London*. Other important CAGCR events dealing with the reception of British texts and themes within German-language culture included the series of events on the subject of *Shakespeare is German* (see point 3 below), the *ANGERMION* lecture with Alfred Brendel and Klaus Reichert (see point 10 below), and two international conferences on German-language authors (Wolfgang Hildesheimer and Ilse Aichinger), both of whose fates were connected with life in Britain during the years of National Socialist rule in Germany, and who accordingly engaged with British life and culture in their works (see point 6 below).

### 3. *Shakespeare is German*

The 2010-11 academic year began for the CAGCR with a new collaboration between the CAGCR, Shakespeare's Globe, the German Embassy London, the Goethe Institute London, and the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies. This series of events, held under the provocative proposition that "Shakespeare is German", was comprised of staged readings, a lecture series, and film screenings. The prominent German actor Sebastian Koch (*Das Leben der Anderen*), gave a well attended staged reading of selections from Shakespeare's works in the German translations by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Johann Ludwig Tieck. Professor Rüdiger Görner opened a series of lectures on the German reception of Shakespeare by offering a rich overview of this complex and many faceted case of cultural transfer, under the title "A Tale for All Seasons: Reflections on the German Preoccupation with Shakespeare", while the

Goethe Institute London screened a number of German screen adaptations of Shakespeare's works, including Paul Felner's *Kaufmann von Venedig* (1923), and Helmut Käutner's Hamlet adaptation *Der Rest ist Schweigen* (1959). This series of events gained wide media attention, including coverage by *The Guardian*, *The Evening Standard*, BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4 in the United Kingdom, and by *Deutsche Welle*, *Deutschlandfunk* and *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* in Germany.



The programme for *Shakespeare is German*, produced by Shakespeare's Globe

### 4. Seventy Fourth Association of German Studies (AGS) Conference at Queen Mary

On 13-15 April 2011, the Seventy Fourth Meeting of the Association of German Studies for Great Britain and Ireland was hosted by the Department of German at Queen Mary. This was the first London meeting of the AGS – formerly known as the CUTG or Conference of the University Teachers of German – since 1982. The CAGCR's Acting Director, Dr Angus Nicholls, coordinated the conference in collaboration with the AGS Conference Secretary Dr Melani Schröter. In order to highlight the importance of German-language contributions to London's cultural life, two of the CAGCR's section convenors – Dr Astrid Köhler (Literature section) and Dr Robert Gillett (Cultural Transfers / Drama section) – organised the conference's lead panels under the theme of *London in German Culture / German Language and Culture in London*. The

literary component of these panels saw speakers engaging with images of London in works by authors as various as Elias Canetti, Stefan Zweig, Paul Celan and Thomas Bernhard. On the final day of the conference, a special round table panel was devoted to practitioners of German-language culture in London, with an emphasis on literary translation, theatre and cultural heritage. Guests included: the publisher Maike Ziervogel (of Peirene Press, the renowned publisher of German language literature in English translation, including authors such as Friedrich Christian Delius, Matthias Politycki, Alois Hotschnig and Richard Weihe); Mark Leipacher of the Faction Theatre Company (currently engaged in staging productions of Schiller's theatrical works in English translation); the Editor of *New Books in German* Charlotte Ryland; Stefan Tobler of the publisher And Other Stories (publisher in English translation of the young German author Clemens Meyer); and Steve Pilcher of St. George's German Lutheran Church in Aldgate, the oldest German Church in Britain.



Maike Ziervogel of Peirene Press entertains (from left to right): Dr. Robert Gillett (CAGCR), Stefan Tobler of the publisher And Other Stories, Mark Leipacher of the Faction Theatre Company, and Charlotte Ryland, editor of *New Books in German* (photo by Margit Dirscherl)

On the first evening of the conference, following the conference dinner held in the Octagon in Queen Mary's Queens Building, delegates were addressed by Dr. Emil Brix, the Austrian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, by Georg Boomgaarden, the German Ambassador to the United Kingdom and by Minister Urs Schmid, Deputy Swiss Ambassador to the United Kingdom. All three speakers focused in their remarks on the importance of teaching the German language and its diverse (Austrian, German and Swiss) cultures. This was an important demonstration of support for British German studies during difficult economic and political times, and underscored the importance of foreign government led initiatives to the future of the discipline in the United Kingdom. The CAGCR would like heartily to thank the Austrian, German and Swiss Embassies for supporting both the AGS Conference and also the on-going activities of the CAGCR.



The Director of the CAGCR, Professor Rüdiger Görner, addresses AGS delegates at the conference dinner held in the Octagon at Queen Mary (photo by Margit Dirscherl)

A special event on the second evening of the AGS conference was a reading given by the renowned German author Ingo Schulze at St. George's German Lutheran Church in Aldgate. After being introduced to the history of St. George's by Mr Steve Pilcher, delegates were treated to a reading of Schulze's *Wenderoman* of 2005, *Neue Leben*.



Ingo Schulze reading in Berlin in 2004  
(photo by Caren Müller)

### 5. International Conference on British and German Nationalist and Anti-Semitic Discourse (1871-1945)

This conference, held on 10-11 November 2010, was part of an on-going Leverhulme funded research project coordinated by Professor Felicity Rash (Queen Mary), Dr Geraldine Horan (University College, London) and Dr Stefan Baumgarten (Queen Mary). Held in association with the Leo Baeck Institute at Queen Mary and its Deputy Director, Dr Daniel Wildmann, the conference brought together a range of local and international scholars from disciplines such as discourse analysis, political science and historiography in order to analyse British and German expressions of nationalism and anti-Semitism between 1871 and 1945, including their similarities, differences and interrelations. Topics covered by speakers ranged across anthropological, sociological and psychological

theories during the period in question, press coverage of nationalist and anti-Semitic issues, anti-Semitic propaganda in both nations, nationalism and anti-Semitism in youth movements, nationalism in imaginative literature, British perceptions of German anti-Semitism, and the colonial discourses of both nations. Keynote addresses were given by Professor Ruth Wodak (Lancaster) on "The Discourse of Syncretic Anti-Semitism", and Professor Andreas Musolff (East Anglia) on the "body politic" metaphor leading up



Professor Felicity Rash (Queen Mary) with  
Professor Ruth Wodak (Lancaster)

to and during the Third Reich. Selected papers from the conference will appear in a volume to be edited by the organisers.

### 6. Two Conferences on Twentieth-Century German Language Authors and Their Relations with England

Twentieth-century Anglo-German Cultural Relations were of course marked by the events leading up to, during and following the Second World War. Due to the catastrophe that unfolded on the European continent during this period, many German-language authors and cultural figures, or members of their families, made connections with the British Isles, often out of necessity in the case of those who were subject to persecution. This aspect of Anglo-German Cultural Relations is of particular interest to the CAGCR, particularly due to its academic home being at Queen Mary in London's East End, which was formerly home to many German-speaking immigrants who fled the European Holocaust.

The first of these two conferences, held on 15-17 September 2010 and organised by Professor Rüdiger Görner and his PhD student Isabel Wagner, was concerned with Wolfgang Hildesheimer. The son of German-Jewish parents, Hildesheimer came to Britain during the 1930s in order to study painting and set design. One of Hildesheimer's major contributions to Anglo-German cultural relations was his work as an interpreter during the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-6, and his prodigious linguistic abilities were also reflected in his work as a literary translator, through his translations of German authors such as Stefan George and Franz Kafka into English, and of English language authors such as James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and Djuna Barnes into German. This conference, involving a number of important international guest



Wolfgang Hildesheimer

The eminent Austrian writer Ilse Aichinger will celebrate her 90th birthday in November 2011. On 10-11 March 2011, the CAGCR staged an international conference in honour of Ilse

speakers and organised with the collaboration of the Swiss Embassy to the United Kingdom, focused on Hildesheimer's manifold activities as a translator, travel writer, author of fiction, biographer and art historian.

Aichinger, organised by Professor Rüdiger Görner and Dr Christine Ivanovic in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum in London. The daughter of an Austrian-Jewish mother, Aichinger's life was shaped by the German *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938. In 1938 Aichinger's twin sister, Helga Michie, was able to escape to Britain on one of the last *Kindertransporte*. Aichinger herself was, however, forced to remain in Austria with her mother, where she survived the war years and then established herself as one of the most prominent German-language authors of the post-war period, associated with the *Gruppe 47*. This conference focused on the Anglo-German dimensions of Aichinger's life, with a particular emphasis on her correspondence with Helga Michie and on translations into English of Aichinger's novels and poetry.



Ilse Aichinger (left) with her twin sister Helga Michie, early 1950s

## 7. Postgraduate Colloquium on *Alltags-Surrealismus* (nicht nur) in der deutschen Literatur

Held on 28-29 April 2011, this two-day postgraduate colloquium was organised collaboratively by Professor Sven Hanuschek (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich) and by Margit Dirscherl, a PhD student in Queen Mary's Department of German. Chaired and introduced by Professor Hanuschek, it invited research students from Munich and London to present their interdisciplinary research in fields such as film studies, comparative literary studies and sociology. Presentations were held on works by Louis Aragon, Wolfgang Bauer, Josef Holub, Heinar Kipphardt, Stanislaw Lem, Arno Schmidt, Yoko Tawada, Ror Wolf, and Juli Zeh, followed by extensive discussions, which enabled a comparison of the individual approaches to "Everyday-Surrealism," as well as a clarification of this concept.

The conference was funded by Queen Mary's School of Languages, Linguistics and Film and by the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, thereby continuing the collaboration between these institutions that dates back to an Erasmus Exchange agreement signed in 2004. By extending this agreement to postgraduate activity, the colloquium



Participants in the postgraduate colloquium, including Margit Dirscherl (centre) and Professor Sven Hanuschek (far right)

aimed at deepening the relationship between both universities, and at offering a forum where the academic cultures of Britain and Germany could interchange. In 2012 the papers delivered at the conference will be published by *edition text + kritik* as part of the series *NeoAvantgarden*.

## 8. MOVENS Conference on Anglo-German-Indian Cultural Relations

MOVENS is an academic network for international collaboration and postgraduate mobility in the field of German Studies, which was founded in Sweden in 2005. This network organizes a conference every year at one of the participating institutions to explore aspects of 'Grenzüberschreitungen' or 'crossover phenomena'. Postgraduate students are particularly welcome at these conferences, so that PhD projects can be explored and developed in collaboration with established international scholars. On 15-19 June 2011, the MOVENS Conference was hosted by the CAGCR's convenor of Cultural Transfers and Drama, Dr Robert Gillett. Drawing on ERASMUS mobility agreements and funding from the German government, he broadened the scope of the event to include a summer school for MA students. The aim of the conference was to explore the many facets of cultural relations, including the multicultural setting of Queen Mary within London's East End. Dr Angus Nicholls, Acting Director of the CAGCR, prepared the ground with a lecture on 'Anglo-German Conceptions of Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain'. One of the defining themes of the conference was the relationship between the British and German cultures and the diverse cultures of the Indian subcontinent. On the first day of the conference, Dr Nazneen Ahmed (University of Kent) delivered a lecture on the



literature of the Bengali-Bangladeshi diaspora, which touched upon the position of Bengali-Bangladeshi culture in Britain and particularly in London's East End. This research strand of the conference was strengthened through collaborations with Queen Mary/Geffrye Museum Centre for Studies of the Home and the College's Centre for the Study of Migration. Alison Blunt from Queen Mary's Department of Geography delivered a lecture on 'City and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian and Chinese attachments to Calcutta', while Annja Neumann, a PhD student in Queen Mary's Department of German, ran a PhD workshop on the 'Poetics of the Orient: The Indo-German Ideal from Goethe to Grünbein.' On the final day of the conference, Dr Gillett and Dr Astrid Köhler (Literature convenor, CAGCR), explored British-Indian film productions in their seminar on 'The Indian Sub-continent and the East End of London: *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Brick Lane*, *Slumdog Millionaire*.' Delegates were also able to enjoy extra-curricular cultural experiences in Brick Lane and at Neasden Hindu Temple. A further feature of the Summer School was the presence there of Dr Gisela Holfter, Director of the Centre for Irish-German studies, who gave an account of her work and expressed interest in collaboration with the CAGCR.

### 9. Writer in Residence Programme

Established in 2005, the CAGCR Writer in Residence Programme showcases recent developments in contemporary German literature. This initiative is financed by the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* and on a regular basis by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). It is administered by the German Department's DAAD Lektorin, Dr Martina Deny.

The CAGCR hosts writers whose work is representative of contemporary literature in German and enables visiting authors to reside at Queen Mary for periods of approximately ten weeks. The CAGCR writer in residence for 2010-11 was Kai Weyand. Born in 1968, Weyand was formerly Director of the Freiburger Literaturbüro. During a well attended event at Queen Mary's



Kai Weyand, the CAGCR's  
Writer in Residence during  
2010-11

Lock-Keeper's Cottage, Weyand read from his comic novel *Schiefer eröffnet Spanish* (Wallstein Verlag, 2008), which deals with the tribulations and pitfalls of working as a secondary school teacher in Germany.

### 10. Launch of the third issue of *ANGERMION*, Yearbook for Anglo-German Cultural Relations (2010), with Alfred Brendel in conversation with Klaus Reichert.

The third issue of the CAGCR's Yearbook for Anglo-German Cultural Relations, *ANGERMION*, was launched at an event held in the Residence of the German Ambassador on 7 December 2010. The focus of this event were two native German speakers with long and distinguished histories of engaging with the culture of the British Isles: the Austrian born pianist and poet, renowned interpreter of German classical music, long time resident of London, and Patron of the CAGCR, Alfred Brendel KBE, and the President of the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung*, Professor Klaus Reichert. Chaired by

Professor Rüdiger Görner, this fascinating conversation ranged across themes such as the German speaking diaspora in London during the post-war period, German language interpretations of Anglophone literature (Shakespeare, Joyce), the relationship between literature and music, and the cultural locales of London and their transformation over time (the British Library, the British Museum). The evening was concluded with readings from Brendel's recent poetry, which explicitly refers to matters concerning Anglo-German cultural relations.



Left to right: Alfred Brendel KBE, Professor Rüdiger Görner, the German Ambassador to the UK Georg Boomgaardten, and Professor Klaus Reichert

### 11. First Issue of the Postgraduate Journal *e-Transfers* is Published

The first issue of the online postgraduate journal for literary and cultural studies, *e-Transfers*, was launched in early 2011. This is a collaborative project between the CAGCR and the Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, and was initially funded by a Westfield Trust Grant awarded to the German Department's then German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Lektorin, Dr Susanne Frane. This project is designed to give postgraduate students in Britain

and Germany the opportunity to gain experience of either running an academic journal (including writing calls for papers, organising peer-review of submissions, editing submissions, preparing copy, gaining publicity) or in publishing in a refereed publication for the first time. All submissions to the journal are double-blind refereed by one postgraduate student and one established member of academic staff. At Queen Mary, the editorial team for *e-Transfers* consists of both academic staff (Dr. Angus Nicholls), and of postgraduate students from the German Department (Margit Dirscherl) and the School of English and Drama (Philipp Hunnekuhl and Ammara Ashraf); a similar mix of academic staff (Beatrice Michaelis, Kai Sicks) and postgraduate students (Mirjam Bitter, Anna Rettberg) exists at the GCSC in Giessen. The first issue of the journal included the following papers: an interpretation of Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* from the perspective of cognitive science (Stefan Freissmann); a reading of James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* through the lens of Martin Heidegger's existential analysis of *Dasein* (Michael Gilbert); an examination of British writings on the German Democratic Republic between 1973 and 1989 (Jamie Lee Searle); and a gender- and religious-studies influenced reading of Nadeem Aslam's novel about contemporary Pakistani migrant communities in Britain, *Maps for Lost Lovers* (Jutta Weingarten).

## 12. Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship Awarded to the CAGCR's Acting Director

The CAGCR's Acting Director, Dr Angus Nicholls, has been awarded an 18 month Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which will see him being based at the *Deutsches Literaturarchiv* in Marbach am Neckar and the *Institut für Literaturwissenschaft* at the University of Stuttgart. Dr Nicholls will be writing a monograph for the publishers Routledge on the twentieth-century German philosopher and literary theorist Hans Blumenberg. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, fosters academic cooperation between German and international scholars. Dr Nicholls' membership of this Foundation will provide the CAGCR with on-going access to academic exchange networks both within and beyond Germany. Dr Falco Pfalzgraf will take over from Dr Nicholls as Acting Deputy Director of the CAGCR in 2011-12 and 2012-13.



Dr Angus Nicholls, Acting Director of the CAGCR and Alexander von Humboldt Fellow

## 13. The Year Ahead: 2011-12

The 2011-12 academic year will see the CAGCR hosting the conference of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society of Great Britain and Ireland on 9-11 September – entitled *Between Reason and Unreason: Nietzsche, the Enlightenment, Romanticism* – including an emphasis on Nietzsche's reception in Britain; and an international conference on the subject of *Stefan Zweig and England* in collaboration with the International Stefan Zweig Centre, Salzburg, and the Austrian Cultural Forum, London.

One major thrust of the CAGCR's activities in 2011-12 will also be laying the foundations for an Anglo-German TV/Internet channel, facilitated by a number of eminent media advisors and the management consultancy firm Roland Berger UK.

## 14. Follow the CAGCR on Facebook and Twitter!

You can now befriend the CAGCR on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/anglo-german> and you can follow us on Twitter at **CAGCR\_QMUL**.





**Queen Mary**  
University of London

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