**Steampunk: Then, Now, and Then Again**

**Bishop Grossteste University, Lincoln**

**25th – 27th August 2017**

‘The past is a kind of future that has already happened.’

Bruce Sterling, Co-author of *The Difference Engine*

Despite the development of both science fiction and Neo-Victorian studies, academia has been slow to engage with the phenomena of steampunk and steampunk cultures. In part this may be because it has diversified massively from its literary sub-genre origins in the 1980s, growing to encompass creative design, fashion, craftsmanship, and all forms of media. In doing so, it sprawls beyond the confines of any one academic discipline.

The huge success of the annual Asylum Festival, organised by the Victorian Steampunk Society, is evidence of the fact that, over the past few years, steampunk has been appropriated into a more mainstream culture. A celebration of the creative and the performative, steampunk’s ‘spectacle’ is always underpinned by historical understanding and a politicised stance that has as much to say about contemporary society as it does about our attitudes to the past. This agenda-setting conference will run alongside the Victorian Steampunk Society’s 2017 Asylum Festival, the largest and oldest steampunk festival in Europe. Those presenting papers at the conference will also have access to the Asylum Festival.

We invite contributions from academic disciplines across the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences. Papers might consider, but are certainly not limited to, the following topics:

* The timing of steampunk – why now? Why the Victorians?
* Steampunk’s Victorian predecessors – literature, science, technical design, and imagined futures
* The purpose of steampunk – political, cultural, social
* Steampunk as punk culture
* The ethics and aesthetics of appropriation – historical and material
* Steampunk’s relationship to past and present technologies
* Alternative histories, counterfactual histories, and postmodern temporalities
* History, nostalgia fetishism, and the politics of reimagining the past
* Steampunk, science, and science fiction
* Steampunk literature and its precursors
* Steampunk art and craft; cultures of recycling/reimagining
* Steampunk couture and fashions
* Steampunk subculture, cos-play, and science-fiction fan cultures
* Steampunk’s cultural transformations – from subculture to mainstream
* Steampunk and popular culture – film, TV, anime, comics, manga, and graphic novels, roleplaying games, art, music
* Local, national, and global steampunk cultures
* The future of steampunk and retrofutures

Please send an abstract (250-300 words max) and a short bio (150 words max) to [karl.bell@port.ac.uk](mailto:karl.bell@port.ac.uk) and/or [christine.berberich@port.ac.uk](mailto:christine.berberich@port.ac.uk) by Friday **14th April 2017**.