From the Archives - J. J. Park Memorial Lectures

John James Park was the first professor of law at King's, a founding member of the Faculty in the early days of Law being taught as a distinct discipline at our Universities, pioneered at London and Oxford in the mid-nineteenth century. He was appointed Professor of English Law and Jurisprudence in 1831 and delivered his inaugural lectures The Dogmas of the Constitution the following year. Tragically he died in 1833, aged only 38 years, and has been a largely forgotten and overlooked early scholar of English constitutional law and history.

The Centre, and its Director Robert Blackburn, regard Park as a pioneering and radical thinker on the nature and reality of English constitutionalism, a precursor to the much more widely known writings of Walter Bagehot a few decades years later. Park drew a sharp distinction between the theory and reality of English government and the constitution, which Bagehot in The English Constitution (1867) developed into his terminology and concept of dignified and efficient parts of the constitution.

Above right - Centre has organised many events to celebrate Park's constitutional writings. From the Centre's archives the lecture series above is interesting for the fact that several of the subjects debated over 25 years ago remain still unresolved and topical today.

For a facsimile of The Dogmas of the Constitution by J. J. Park, see
http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/archives/beginning/staff-students/park

For an archive exhibition on J. J. Park at King's see
http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/archives/beginning/staff-students/park