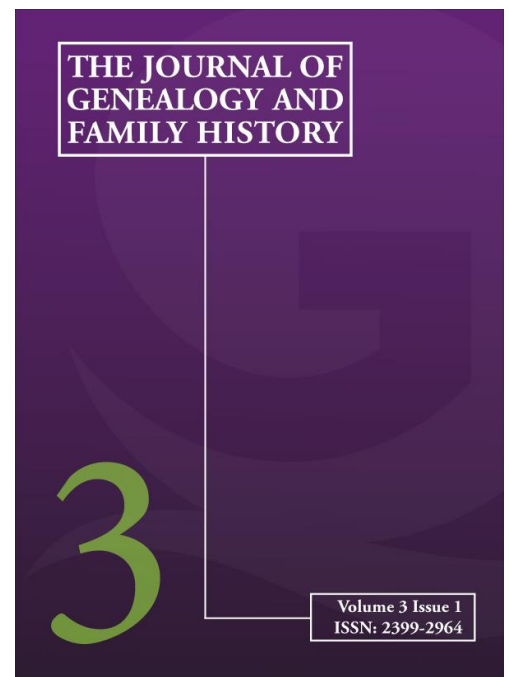




**REGISTER OF QUALIFIED
GENEALOGISTS
Zoom Conference 2021**

**Genealogy and Social
History: Know your
Ancestors**

25 September 2021



Forward by the Register of Qualified Genealogists Chair

“We are delighted to welcome you to the second RQG conference today and very much hope that you enjoy the sessions that we have planned for you.

As you may know, the conference was due to have been held in 2020 in Manchester but sadly this was not to be.

Things have now moved on apace since that time and life has changed somewhat. What has not changed, however, is a thirst for learning and a desire to better ourselves through education and the sharing of knowledge. If anything, the need to learn has increased throughout education as a whole and genealogy is certainly no exception to this.

There have been significant challenges to overcome in putting together a whole day, online conference but we know that the end result will be informative and entertaining for all who take part.

We have an outstanding line-up of speakers and sessions for you to listen to and engage with, and we are very much looking forward to taking you with us on that learning journey.”

Toni Sutton



RQG would like to thank the Institute of Genealogical and Heraldic Studies, the University of Dundee and the University of Strathclyde for providing sponsorship for the conference.



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**Strathclyde
Glasgow**

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Register of Qualified Genealogists Conference programme 2021

Genealogy and Social History: Know your Ancestors

Time	Activity	Person	Subject
09:45 - 10:00	<i>Test your tech</i>		Opportunity for delegates to get set up for the conference.
10:00 - 10:05	Chair's opening remarks	Chair	
10:05 - 10:35	Speaker 1	Caroline Gurney	What genealogists and social historians can learn from each other.
10:35 - 10:45	Break		
10:45 - 11:30	Keynote 1	Melanie Backe-Hansen	Finding your ancestors at home: researching the history of houses.
11:30 - 11:40	Break		
11:40 - 12:10	Speaker 2	Elizabeth Walne	Business histories putting our ancestors into their commercial communities.
12:10 - 12:40	Speaker 3	Diana Nicoll	Who was Kastian Richardson? From family story to theatrical social history.
12:40 - 13:25	Lunch		
12:50 - 13:20	<i>Student Hub</i>		<i>The Zoom link for the member hub will be available on the day of the conference. Any conference delegate is welcome to attend.</i>
13:25 - 14:10	Keynote 2	Helen Johnston, Professor of Criminology, University of Hull Heather Shore, Professor of History, Manchester Metropolitan University	Researching your criminal ancestors.
14:10 - 14:20	Break		
14:20 - 14:50	Speaker 4	Valerie Brenton	Dusting and Digging: The work of women, 1796-1829.
14:50 - 15:20	Speaker 5	Anne Sherman	Life of the Early Victorian Deaf and Dumb (A Yorkshire Study).
15:20 - 15:30	Break		
15:30 - 16:00	Speaker 6	Audrey Collins	Hidden history: Tales of everyday life in Newspaper Advertisements.
16:00 - 16:30	Speaker 7	Kate Keter	Jilted! Or the insights offered in a breach of contract of marriage cases.
16:30 - 16:40	Break		
16:40 - 17:25	Keynote 3	Dave Annal	Lying Bastards: the impact of illegitimacy on family history research.
17:25 - 17:30	Chair's closing remarks	Chair	
17:30 - 18:00	<i>Post conference chat room</i>	<i>for members of RQG</i>	

Abstracts - Keynote speakers

David Annal

Biography

David Annal is a professional researcher with over 40 years' experience. He is a former Principal Family History Specialist with the National Archives and worked at the Family Records Centre for many years. David has written several family history books including the bestselling beginner's guide *Easy Family History* and, with Peter Christian, he is the co-author of *Census: the Family Historian's Guide*. He is also a regular contributor to *Family Tree Magazine* where he is currently running the Family Tree Academy, is a popular speaker on the family history circuit and has been researching his own family history since the mid-1970s - he hasn't finished yet! Website www.lifelinesresearch.co.uk



Abstract

Lying Bastards: the impact of illegitimacy on the records that our ancestors leave behind.

Melanie Backe-Hansen

Biography

Melanie Backe-Hansen is an independent historian, writer, and speaker, specialising in the social history of houses across the United Kingdom. The focus of Melanie's work involves original research for homeowners and corporate clients across the country to provide research reports and bespoke house history books. Melanie is a research consultant for A House Through Time (BBC Two) and was also the series historical consultant for Phil Spencer's History of Britain in 100 Homes (More4). Melanie is also the author of House Histories: The Secrets Behind Your Front Door (revised edition publishing November 2019), Historic Streets and Squares: The Secrets on Your Doorstep, and she is currently working on a new book due out in 2020.



Melanie regularly contributes to the national media, including The Times, The Telegraph and The Daily Mail, along with several lifestyle magazines. She has also appeared regularly on television, radio and online media. Melanie is a regular speaker, including The Ideal Home Show and Gloucester History Festival, as well as Bath Spa University and The University of Portsmouth. Melanie is a member of the Royal Historical Society, The Society of Authors, and the Historical Writers' Association, and is an honorary teaching fellow at the University of Dundee, tutoring the house history module. Formerly, Melanie was the first and only historian to be employed by a UK estate agent to research the history of houses and streets. She is also actively engaged in social media, with over 11,000 followers on Twitter as @househistorian. Website www.house-historian.co.uk

Abstract

Finding your ancestors at home: researching the history of houses.

In recent years, researching the history of houses has gained popularity. Even the recent lockdowns, with everyone stuck at home, has inspired more people to look around their home and wonder about its history. In addition, the recent BBC series, A House Through Time, with its rollercoaster ride of stories in the life of a house, has piqued the interest in house histories. I have been researching the history of houses for over 15 years, along with being a research consultant for the television series, and co-author of the book to accompany the series, with David Olusoga, and I will be bringing the world of house histories to the RQG conference.

While there are many similarities between genealogy and house history research, there are also several sources unique to house history. I will discuss these sources and how they are used in piecing together the history of a house, while also revealing stories of houses I have researched during my career. A key element to my research is the social history of a house and revealing the stories of people from the past. Those who lived and worked in our homes; those who were the first to walk across the threshold; and the stories of our ancestors through the life of a house. Some former occupants and owners might have become headline news and their stories might read like something out of a soap opera, while others might offer a glimpse into the way our ancestors lived and worked, while others might provide a window into a much wider historical event in our nations' past. Researching the history of houses allows us another avenue in getting to know our ancestors.

Keywords: House history, Housing and social history, Lifestyles, Skills.

Helen Johnson

Biography

Helen Johnston is a Professor of Criminology at the University of Hull. She is an expert on the history of crime and criminal justice. Her work particularly focuses upon the history of imprisonment, both local prisons and convict prisons, licensing and early releases mechanisms and prison architecture. She has led and collaborated on funded projects supported by the ESRC, AHRC, British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. She has published widely in these areas, her most recent books are *Crime in England, 1815-1880* (Routledge, 2015) and *Victorian Convicts* (with Godfrey and Cox, Pen & Sword 2016). She is currently co-writing a book about penal servitude. Website AHRC Our Criminal Ancestors project www.ourcriminalancestors.org



Heather Shore

Biography

Professor Heather Shore, Professor of History, Manchester Metropolitan University has published widely in the field of crime and penal history. Her research encompasses the history of youth offending, the historical evolution of the idea of the criminal underworld, and British organised crime in the interwar period of the twentieth century.



Heather is the author of two previous monographs, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Boydell, 1999) and *London's Criminal Underworlds, c. 1720 - c. 1930: A Social and Cultural History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). More recently she was the co-author of *Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses from 1850* (with Godfrey, Cox and Alker, OUP, 2018), based on the historical life courses of delinquent youths who spent time in reformatories and industrial schools in the north-west of England during the Victorian and Edwardian period. She has also co-edited two collections of essays and published in major history journals. She has led and collaborated on awards from the AHRC, ESRC, British Academy and Leverhulme Trust. Heather has been co-convenor of History UK (HUK) and is currently co-editor of the Royal Historical Societies, *New Historical Perspectives* book series.

Abstract

Researching criminal ancestors.

In recent years the expansion in the digitisation of historical records used by genealogists and family historians has led to the wider availability of material relating to crime, policing and punishment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Material on criminal registers, institutional prison records and photographs or 'mugshots' are often used by archives and museums to draw in the reader. This keynote will consider the availability of records as well as the wider issues relating to finding out about crime and the criminal justice system in the past.

As today, most offenders appearing in the criminal justice system in the past did so for petty crimes. Overwhelmingly, this was made up of minor public disorder, drunkenness, assault, petty thefts and therefore the imprint of these offences on the historical records of the past can be small. More evidence exists of more 'serious' offenders and offences (though this also varies across the country) but our perceptions of crime in the present need to be evaluated against a system of the past that saw property offences as largely being far more significant than our present-day emphasis on

interpersonal violence. Thus, even the more serious punishments that were meted out by the courts in the nineteenth century could be the result of prosecutions for property offences. The majority of people sentenced to transportation or serving sentences of penal servitude (long-term imprisonment after 1853) were also doing so for theft; larceny of money, property, clothing and from the person and lesser violence, serious violence was in the minority.

Our Criminal Ancestors is a project led by Professor Helen Johnston and Professor Heather Shore, originally funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. You can find out more about the project and find guidance, tips and source guides for researching criminal, police and prison ancestors on our website www.ourcriminalancestors.org or follow us on Twitter @ourcriminalpast

Keywords: Criminals, Sentencing history, Police and prison research, Institutions, Skills.

Abstracts – call for papers

Valerie Brenton

Biography

Valerie Brenton is an alumna of the University of Strathclyde's MSc course: Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies. Her final dissertation examined documents of the National Trust's Bankes Archive at Dorset History Centre exploring the lives of the individuals who lived on the Kingston Lacy estate at the beginning of the 19th century.



Valerie balances managing her own genealogical research business, Penguin Genealogy: www.penguinenealogy.co.uk, alongside being a volunteer researcher for Dorset History Centre. Projects have included producing materials for the "Strong Women" display at Kingston Lacy and school resources exploring letters from the past.

Abstract

Dusting and Digging: The work of women, 1796-1829.

Underpinning research

This paper is the result of quantitative and qualitative research conducted whilst an MSc student at the University of Strathclyde studying Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies (2016- 2019). The dissertation focussed on Georgian agricultural workers on the Kingston Lacy Estate, East Dorset. The unexpected findings that emerged regarding women workers are of particular interest as they contradict perceptions such as women never transferred from working in the fields to working indoors and always stopped paid work once married. For a genealogist, this paper demonstrates the exciting potential of estate records to illustrate the normally hidden lives of working women.

Summary

- Introduction to the primary source, an un-indexed wages ledger:
 - What the wages ledger for the Bankes estate in East Dorset appears to cover and what supporting documents do not survive.
 - The surprise at finding so many female day labourers named in a wages ledger that initially appeared just to detail male day labourers.
 - Through the payment of board wages, the names and occupations of some of the domestic staff are revealed.
- Theory:
 - Presenting a snapshot of how the female workforce was employed on the Bankes Kingston Lacy estate: daily and weekly wage rates, hours worked and length of employment.
 - The possible effect of the Napoleonic Wars on female employment on the Bankes Kingston Lacy estate.
 - This primary data will be compared with published research on wage rates to identify similarities and differences.
- Application - using case studies to show:
 - Women could move from being outdoor day labourers to indoor staff.
 - Staff moved on - domestic service was not necessarily a life-long commitment.
 - Widowed women continued to ply their husband's trade.

Keywords: Agriculture; Rural economy; Economic history; Wages; Female labour.

Audrey Collins

Biography

Audrey has been researching her own family history (and other people's) for more than 30 years. After several years as a freelance researcher, she started work at the Family Records Centre in 2002, and for the last 10 years has been The National Archives' Family History Specialist. She is a regular speaker at family history events in the UK and worldwide, and is the co-author of 'Birth, Marriage & Death Records' with Dave Annal. She had the good fortune to live near the Newspaper Library when it was housed at Colindale, which led to her interest in newspaper research.



Abstract

Hidden history: Tales of everyday life in Newspaper Advertisements.

Historic newspapers provide wonderful source material for genealogists, but one aspect is often overlooked - the advertisements. A name search in online newspapers may find some incidences of an ancestor's name, but there is much more to discover about their life and times by reading, rather than searching. A succession of front pages - mainly consisting of ads and official announcements - in 19th-century provincial newspapers will paint a picture of everyday life in a town. Family and business dramas are played out in these columns over a period of weeks or months, and the ads contain clues that can be followed up in other unofficial sources such as trade directories and official records. Probate and parish registers may be comparatively easy to find online, while others may require on-the-ground research in archives but will repay the effort. These include poor law records, bankruptcies, and disputes in the law courts.

The material in this paper is based on research in mid-19th century newspapers of Maidstone, Kent. The original scope of the project was to examine the role of women in business and public life in an English provincial market town, but it was impossible not to notice material that sheds light on many other aspects of everyday life. These include ads placed by retailers providing details of merchandise for sale, from auctioneers describing buildings and their contents, or the tools of various trades; 'situations vacant' may include job descriptions and pay, you can learn about play, as well as work, in announcements of forthcoming performances and sporting fixtures, and transport links, with times and fares. The more you look the more you will find, much of it not available from any other source.

Keywords: Newspaper advertisements; Business; Events; Auctions; Vacancies.

Caroline Gurney

Biography

Caroline Gurney QG is a professional genealogist whose work includes family and house history, tracing living people, DNA analysis, and research for businesses, authors, and the media. She has a 1st class honours degree in History and a Master's degree with Distinction in Family and Local History. She is currently researching for a PhD at the University of Bristol on Bristol's Jewish community in the 18th and 19th centuries. Caroline writes a quarterly column on English genealogy for British Connections and is an international speaker on genealogy skills and sources. She is a Director of the Register of Qualified Genealogists.



Abstract

What genealogists and social historians can learn from each other.

This paper explores the differing approaches of genealogists and social historians to their study of the same historical circumstances and issues. What can each group learn from the other and how can past barriers between them be broken down? In future, how can they genuinely collaborate and mutually contribute to public understanding of social history?

It addresses how genealogists can learn from social historians about historical context, research methodology, and relevant research and literature. At the same time, it argues that today's academics have much to learn from genealogists about using a wide range of primary sources, building coherent narratives from fragmentary evidence, and developing practical skills such as palaeography.

The paper draws upon the author's own experience, as both a genealogist and academic historian, to highlight the pitfalls of a narrow focus in either discipline and the potential which can be unlocked by mutual learning and collaboration. It uses practical examples, drawn from both fields, to illustrate the arguments.

Looking to the digital future, the paper argues that the ease of access to historical evidence made possible by technology can only escalate. This will make it necessary to develop radically new ways of working across current boundaries. The methodologies of collaboration must become more democratic and social historians more aware of the positive impact genealogical research can have upon their projects and standards. RQG's role in the development and acceptance of genealogy as an academic discipline will be crucial to these changes.

Keywords: Genealogy, Social history, Context, Methodology, Sources, Evidence, Skills, Collaboration, Digitisation.

Kate Keter

Biography

Kate has been researching family trees for over 30 years. What started as a hobby soon became an obsession and ultimately led her to complete an MSc in Genealogical, Palaeographical and Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde in 2016. Since then, Kate has worked as a professional genealogist based in Linlithgow, a small town to the west of Edinburgh, and is also a tutor on Family History Research short courses at Strathclyde University's Centre for Lifelong Learning. Kate is a member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists (RQG) and the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (ASGRA).



Abstract

Jilted! Or the insights offered in breach of contract of marriage cases.

When, in early 1817, Miss Orford accepted the offer of marriage from Mr Cole little did she know that a year later, details of their relationship, the contents of their letters and an analysis of her character would be played out in court and printed in the newspapers for all to see. Mr Cole married someone else thus breaching his contract of marriage to Miss Orford and she sued for compensation. Having listened to all the arguments, the jury awarded her £7000 in damages.

Newspaper reports of the proceedings in the court of breach of contract of marriage cases can be amusing, or in some cases tragic, depending on the nature of the complaint. There are often verbatim reports of what the lawyers asked and the responses they received – including reports of “laughter” in court at some of these. Letters, originally sent in good faith by the aggrieved partner to their lover are read out for all to hear, particularly if the writer has used some affectionate terms or nicknames. Witnesses are called to attest to the characters of the parties involved and can sometimes be unsparing in their honesty.

While it can be difficult for today's reader not to smile at the content of these reports, what they offer the genealogist and social historian is an insight into the love-lives of our ancestors. We can learn how they conducted their relationships, how they prepared for marriage and how they dealt with disappointment when their plans fell through.

This talk will look at examples of these newspaper reports and demonstrate how they help us to gain a better understanding of the way our ancestors lived.

Keywords: Marriage; Divorce; Court; Letters; Love; Sources.

Diana Nicoll

Biography

Diana Nicoll is a family and social history researcher based in North Somerset. Following a career in information resources and management, she obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Genealogical Studies from Strathclyde University to bring academic rigour to her personal interest in family history.



Diana is also a genealogy volunteer at the Brunel Institute/SS Great Britain, which has led to some interesting discoveries and has recently researched the history of Citizens Advice in North Somerset, culminating in an exhibition at Weston Museum.

Abstract

Who was Kastian Richardson? From family story to theatrical social history.

What started as a relatively simple genealogical search for an ancestor has turned into a social history project looking at the development of theatre and film in the first half of the 20th Century and its impact on actors, their families, migration and interconnectedness across several continents, most notably Australasia.

This paper explores how media resources, particularly newspapers, held the key to this research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are outlined. The use of newspapers has enabled an iterative approach to searching other record sets and substituted for the lack of some records, such as census records for Australia.

Barriers to this approach are discussed, including the pros and cons of using newspapers as a primary source, the difficulty of access to some digital resources, and coping with a large volume of information. Some solutions are suggested.

This paper will be of interest to those researching the acting profession, particularly in the “colonies”, migration and alternatives to traditional family networks, and give some insight into how newspapers can be used in your genealogical and social history research.

Keywords: Acting; Migration; Sources; Alternative family networks; Managing information; Newspaper.

Anne Sherman

Biography

Anne Sherman is the owner of Leaves Family History Research Services based in East Yorkshire, England. She has over 30 years of genealogical research experience and has completed several family history courses including a Postgraduate Diploma in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies at Strathclyde University. Anne has been an active member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists (RQG) since 2016.



In 2015 Anne assisted the Wall to Wall Media production company by researching part of Paul Hollywood's ancestry for the Who Do You Think You Are? television programme.

You can learn more about Anne and what she offers at: <https://leavesfamilyhistory.co.uk>

Abstract

Life of the Early Victorian Deaf and Dumb (A Yorkshire Study).

This presentation looks at the result of a study of the lives of children in Hull and East Yorkshire, who were born deaf, or became deaf during infancy, between 1840 and 1850. The study looked specifically for any family history of deafness (relating to their parents, siblings and their offspring), and if their education affected their choice of occupations and how those occupations compared to those of their parents and hearing siblings.

The original research focused on four specific areas: Causes of deafness in infants – illness v genes, Education, Occupations and Marriages.

A range of sources were used to identify relevant children, including the 1851 and 1861 Census returns and reports, a list of students at the Yorkshire Institute for the deaf and dumb, people identified from any other records, and newspaper reports to assist in obtaining details of the lives of deaf-and-dumb people in general at that time.

Contemporary reports suggested that most deaf children were born to deaf parents. The study demonstrated that this was not true and agrees with the statistics from 30 Victorian deaf educational establishments in the UK, which found that less than 2% of children had two congenitally deaf parents. Some contemporary literature also suggests the uneducated deaf would be unable to work, and therefore would spend their lives in the workhouse, however, the report argued that in most cases the occupations reflected those of their parents and/or hearing siblings, regardless of their education.

Keywords: Yorkshire; Victorian; Deaf; Children; Causes; Medical

Elizabeth Walne

Biography

Elizabeth Walne is a qualified genealogist with an MSc in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde. She spent several years working in archives in Norfolk, and in the last decade has authored books, research guides and blogs. Until her two small children were born, she was a regular speaker and workshop leader - and she's now picking up her slide clicker again! Elizabeth is currently writing a new book: the story of a Suffolk community through the lens of a former manor house, its occupants, and their employees; a blend of house, social and local history.



Abstract

Business histories putting our ancestors into their commercial communities.

We research our family histories and, increasingly, house histories. But what about commercial histories? Like us, our ancestors spent a great deal of time with their colleagues, employees and bosses. Sometimes, the businesses they carried on (or the companies they worked within) still exist today - sometimes they don't - but either way, researching a business helps us put our ancestors into their communities in new ways. It can help us understand them better and connect them to their associates and characteristic networks.

A business incorporation might be likened to a birth, a partnership dissolution compared to a death, but just like families, one generation of a business influences the next. By researching the history of a business, we might see a town develop and observe how business people and their families took advantage of opportunities and attempted to adapt to legislative, environmental and market changes. In addition, we begin to tease out connections that are not genetic or marital but social, religious, economic, or born from membership to clubs or volunteer groups.

Through a qualitative case study of a corn merchant's business in Framlingham, Suffolk, 1821-1939, this talk follows four generations of business people as they navigated enormous changes: the corn laws, steam mills, the railway, the agricultural depression, the First World War. It also looks at their networks and the non-familial ways in which they were connected to each other, from Volunteer Corps to the Freemasons. We find, again and again, connections to other corn families, both in Framlingham and beyond. Through microhistory, memorabilia and example records, we begin to understand how this commercial community responded to both local and national events.

Keywords: Employment; Business; Economic impact; Networks; Microhistory
