



**Newcastle**  
University

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# Newcastle University Family Histories Forum 2021

Speakers and Abstracts



CPT/PA/10, Trevelyan (Charles Philips) Archive, Newcastle University Special Collections, GB 186

For information on the Newcastle University Family Histories Forum contact co-convenor  
Anton Caruana Galizia: [anton.caruana-galizia@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:anton.caruana-galizia@newcastle.ac.uk)

**Newcastle University Family Histories Forum  
Programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Session Time</b>	<b>Panel</b>
22/03/21	10:00 – 12:00	Welcome Historians Collaborate Nick Barrat: Historians Collaborate – working together, better. Mike Esbester: Family history & the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' Project. Networking Session Iain Flood Q&A
22/03/21	14:00 – 16:00	Tim Barmby (NU): The Bargain Documents of the Allendale and Weardale Lead Miners. Linda Bankier (Northumberland Archives): Twixt Thistle and Rose: Revealing the family history potential of Berwick's Borough Archives Kate Gill (Weardale Museum): The Weardale Museum and its Genealogical Collections. Alison Atkinson Philips Q&A
23/03/21	14:00 – 16:00	Fergus Campbell (NU): Finding history at home. John Heckels (NDFHS): Introduction to DNA in Family History Research. Margaret Hedley (Pastuncovered): The Problem with Family History Iain Flood Q&A
24/03/21	10:00 – 12:00	Christine Seal: Free or Felon: The Settling of the Swan River Colony. Alexandra Healey (NU Robinson Library): Re-generations, the Trevelyan Archive Project. Emma Gooch (NU): Illustrating the Family in Ancient Athens. Fergus Campbell Q&A
24/03/21	14:00 – 16:00	Keynote: Matthew Kelly (Northumbria University) <i>Finding Poland</i> Revisited Roundtable and Conclusion Annie Tindley Chair

**Linda Bankier** is the Berwick Archivist and runs the Berwick Record Office which operates as part of the Northumberland Archives Service. She has been the Archivist there for over thirty years, building up extensive knowledge of Berwick and North Northumberland in relation to both family and local history. She has also written and tutors online Modules for English Local and Family History and Palaeography run by Dundee University.

Contact: [lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk)

### **Twixt Thistle and Rose: Revealing the Family History Potential of Berwick's Borough Archives.**

Berwick-upon-Tweed is the mostly northerly town in England. It has had an unusual history and created an amazing series of records covering 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To make these records accessible outside the town, the Berwick Record Office has been running **The Twixt Thistle and Rose Project** since 2019. This project aims to create an online catalogue for the collection and also run outreach events to highlight its richness as a resource for all.

The overview online catalogue became available online at the end of February 2021, but this is only the start. Throughout the project we have been working with over 30 volunteers whom we have trained to create catalogue entries for records which will be useful for both family and local historians. To date, the volunteers have created catalogue entries for various records including the following:

**POLICE POSTERS** - Over 2000 posters and bills sent to Berwick Police Force from all over the country looking for criminals, missing persons or offering rewards for information. They cover the period 1880 to 1900 and provide detailed descriptions of individuals and give an insight into life at the time

**GUILD OF FREEMEN RECORDS** – the Guild governed the town until 1835 and their records provide detailed information for the family historian including proof of parentage to claim the freedom on reaching 21 and petitions and memorials to the Guild.

**POOR RELIEF** pre 1834 – The Borough gave out Oatmeal to the needy and over 500 certificates survive for 1820. These are in poor condition but extracting the names and cataloguing them will mean that they no longer need to be handled. There are also removal orders for Tweedmouth parish for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**COURT RECORDS** - Berwick held its own Quarter Sessions Court separate from Northumberland until 1951 and has created many records relating to Crime and Punishment including information (sworn statements by witnesses) and notices of convictions. These are particularly name rich for family historians

**REGISTRATION RECORDS** – The Quarter Sessions also dealt with registration for Customs Officers and Freemasons. The Port of Berwick extended from St Abbs in Scotland to Alnmouth in Northumberland and so the oaths of Customs Officers from 1732 to c 1810 cover a wider area than the town.

**POLICE** –The town had its own police force until 1920 and has weekly paysheets and notebooks for individual policemen. One volunteers has researched and transcribed extracts from PC John Carr's notebook for 1862 giving insight into the life of a policeman at the time

**TITLE DEEDS** – the Record office has bundles of enrolled title deeds which have never been accessed and used. One volunteer has worked on over 250 of them for the early 18<sup>th</sup>

century extracting names and family relationships. Many of these mention women at a time when they don't even appear in church baptism registers.

**FINANCIAL RECORDS** – often seen as boring but these can provide nuggets of detail for a family historian who were trades people or craftsmen

**COW KEEPERS' LICENCES** – Keepers of cows and purveyors of milk in Berwick had to be licenced by the local Council in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These records provide names and locations which can be used to pinpoint ancestors between the censuses.

The collection contains so much for the family historian and starting next month, we aim to gradually upload this detailed information into the electronic catalogue. This really opens up the collection and makes it a valuable resource for the family historian, providing them with details about their ancestors which bring them to life and make them real people and much more than just a name and a series of dates of life events.

The catalogue can be viewed on [www.northumberlandarchives.com/catalogue/](http://www.northumberlandarchives.com/catalogue/) . Enter BA\* in Advanced search to see the whole collection. You can also enter a name or subject in the free text section to narrow this down. Have a go. You never know what you will find!

**Nick Barratt** is an author, broadcaster and historian best known for his work on BBC's 'Who Do You Think You Are'. He is an honorary Associate Professor of Public History at the University of Nottingham, the Director of Learner and Discovery Services at the Open University, a Teaching Fellow at the University of Dundee, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. His latest publication, *The Restless Kings*, explores the reigns of Henry II, Richard I and John. He is currently the President of the Family History Federation, sits on the Executive Committee of the Community Archives and Heritage Group, and is part of the Midlands 4 Cities Doctoral Training Partnership Advisory Group.

Contact: [historianscollaborate@gmail.com](mailto:historianscollaborate@gmail.com)

### **Historians Collaborate**

Historians Collaborate was a movement born on Twitter, emerging from an exchange between family historians and academics who were debating why it was so hard to engage, communicate and collaborate effectively – despite the fact they often shared the same source material, archives and libraries, and areas of interest.

A small group formed, with a range of different stakeholders present that included academic historians with a diverse range of interests, as well as practitioners from the fields of family, local, oral and social history to name a few, as well as traditionally marginalised groups represented by networks such as [Community Archives and Heritage Group | Supporting and promoting community archives in the UK and Ireland](#).

The group explored areas of misunderstanding so that we could move to opportunities to share best practice and re-think the way collaborations formed and operated. There is now a website [Home - Historians Collaborate](#) and seminar series supported by the Institute of Historical Research - [Historians across Boundaries: collaborative historical research | Institute of Historical Research \(history.ac.uk\)](#) – and membership is global. Founder members have been invited to share their work at international conferences, although the pandemic has disrupted some of those plans!

By showcasing best practice and case studies that demonstrate the positive societal impact of applied family history, such as the Ryde Social Heritage Group [Welcome to the Ryde Social Heritage Group Website - RSHG RSHG](#), the group hope to make a difference in the way academics approach local groups to co-design projects prior to the award of funding – thus building in collaboration and meaningful impact from the outset.

**Tim Barmby** held academic posts at Newcastle and Durham before taking up the Jaffrey Chair of Political Economy at the University of Aberdeen which he held until his retirement in 2016. Tim now has a visiting affiliation in the School of History Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle University. As an empirical labour economist, he has continued to develop his interest in economic history, and in particular the labour contracts of lead miners in Allendale and the Northern Pennines. He is currently researching the labour market of metal miners in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and has an interest in how academic work can inform and be informed by Industrial Heritage and Industrial Archaeology.

Contact: [tim.barmby1@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:tim.barmby1@ncl.ac.uk)

### **The Bargain Documents of the Allendale and Weardale Lead Miners**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries groups of metal miners entered into labour contracts each quarter with the Beaumont/Blackett's lead mining concern in the Northern Pennines. These contracts were called "Bargains" and specified a rate of pay by weight of ore raised from the mine. The amount paid out on these bargains can almost always be traced in the subsequent quarterly accounts, so for the Economic Historian, these documents represent a rich source of information on earnings as the economy moved towards full industrialisation.

Most of the documents, which span around 100 years from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> when the industry was in decline, are held in the Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn (though some have found their way into other archives and smaller collections).

The bargains record the names of each signatory, which is quite unusual as mining records of this type often only record the name of the foreman. This aspect expands the potential use of the records substantially. For the economic historian it allows the reconstruction of earnings for individual miners over extended periods of time. This allows examination of the performance of contracts and the implications for labour productivity which are central for narratives dealing with the emergence of capitalist enterprise.

For the family historian, this name-rich resource allows sight of individuals as they bargain each quarter, as they change groups (the groups of miners were self-selecting), and, with the earnings data, see how they fared economically. There are many research directions in which this resource could be taken. The extent to which the groups appear to be formed on a family basis, linking the records to the census, these are all, as yet, unaddressed.

**Fergus Campbell** is Reader in social and cultural history at Newcastle University and teaches 19th and 20th c Irish history. He is currently working on the history of psychoanalysis in Ireland.

Contact: [fergus.campbell@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:fergus.campbell@newcastle.ac.uk)

### **Finding history at home: using family history to help first year students transfer from home to university**

In this paper, I discussed a module that I designed and taught to first year students at Newcastle University during semester one of the 2020-21 academic year. The aim of the module was to support students during the pandemic and to help them develop a range of new skills, especially doing their own research and thinking for themselves.

Each student was tasked with finding a family member to interview and from that interview finding an episode in their family history that they could write up as a 1,000-word essay. Of the 40 students who undertook the module, 33 voluntarily submitted 1,000-word essays. Most of the students undertook an oral history interview and many also found archival material and only a small number did not submit work at the end of the module but even they completed the research part of the module. The material that the students found was extremely rich and included many war stories but also more personal stories about evacuees, entrepreneurs, migrants and even Irish baseball players.

In the paper, I concluded by reflecting on the value of a family history module for first year students. The module enabled the students to connect with home (often with older relatives who were shielding due to the pandemic) while developing new skills; the students also developed their capacity to connect imaginatively and empathetically with people who lived in the past; and the module provided a great deal of support to students during a key transition at a very difficult and challenging time. I suggested that a family history module could work well in future for students experiencing this or similar transitions.



**Mike Esbester** is an academic historian at the University of Portsmouth, interested in the history of safety, risk & accident prevention in all walks of life in 19th and 20th century Britain. He is the co-lead for the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project from which his particular interest in collaborative research has grown - including involvement with the 'Historians Collaborate' movement.

Contact: [railwayworkeraccidents@gmail.com](mailto:railwayworkeraccidents@gmail.com)

### **Family history & the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' Project**

In the talk I briefly introduced the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project, its use for family historians (and more), and how we've been working with family historians. The project is documenting and researching accidents to railway employees in Britain and Ireland before 1939. We are a collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, the National Railway Museum and the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick; we also work with The National Archives of the UK.

The railway staff accident records we're using were produced by state accident investigators, the railway companies and the National Union of Railwaymen. Small teams of brilliant volunteers at each of the archive institutions are transcribing accident details, which we're making freely available via our website. We also encourage the volunteers to research any cases they find particularly interesting. I'd note here our huge thanks to all contributors to the project – we couldn't do it without them.

We want all sorts of researchers to make use of the project resources (and ideally to tell us about what they find that's relevant to them!). The accident reports are name-rich – we estimate there will be around 80,000 individuals named by the time we're finished. They also tell us about what people were doing at the time of the accident, so they're a great way of understanding what working on the railways involved before the Second World War, as well as the dangers of that work. So far we've made around 6,500 cases available.

It's also not just railway staff who appear in the records. Sometimes people had reason to be on railway property and had an accident – for example, coal or timber merchants collecting goods, post office staff and farmers. We also expect to get a few passengers, trespassers and suicides appearing in future additions. At the moment the ages of those who had accidents and are featured in our data range from 7 to over 80. Most accidents that were investigated involved men, often in manual roles, but some women employees feature too. So – think railway ancestors by all means, but that's not all our project has!

We want to be as collaborative as possible in our approach. We warmly invite you to make use of our resources. It's really valuable to us to hear from you, as it helps make the case for continued support to the institutional partners: at the moment the project is unfunded, though supported in kind via the volunteer time (the big contribution!) and some staff time. We'd love to hear back from you about:

- What you find from our project and how it fits with your research.
- If you fancied 'writing up' a railway accident in your family past (ideally staff, but it could be someone else).
- What the project could do in the future that would be useful.

You can find out more about the project, including the free resources, at: [www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk](http://www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk). Follow us on Twitter: @RWLDproject



**Kate Gill** spent most of her working life with Sunderland City Council working in Social Services and Housing. She has been a family history researcher for over thirty years and runs her own research service - Northumbria Roots. She has also been running a small volunteer led museum in Sunderland for the last ten years. She began volunteering with the Weardale Museum after she moved to Stanhope and retired from full-time employment, initially as a Steward then a Trustee and currently the Museum Curator. She holds a B.Sc in Management Studies from Sunderland University, a Certificate in Family History and M A in North East History, both through Newcastle University.

Contact: [kate.gill@weardalemuseum.org.uk](mailto:kate.gill@weardalemuseum.org.uk)

### **The Weardale Museum and Genealogies**

This talk considers the range of genealogical resources held at the Weardale Museum. A large collection of family and local history records relating to Weardale, its people, social life and employment has been built up over many years.

The unique feature is the Weardale People database which holds information on over 70,000 individuals and 600 interconnected Weardale families. This has been the culmination of many hours of work by Museum volunteers and brings together information from census returns, baptisms, marriage and burial registers and other sources.

In addition, visitors to the Museum, or those accessing our Research From A Distance Service, can access a wide range of records many of which are in the format of fully searchable spreadsheets and a range of paper records which include:

**Wills:** A growing collection of copies and transcripts of wills of Weardale dating from 1569 to 1974 most of which are transcribed.

**Misc:** The Weardale Graveyard Project was undertaken between 2005-7, not by the Museum, but we do have a copy of all their work. The project recorded the memorial inscriptions on all of the extant gravestones in every churchyard and cemetery in Weardale. These were fully transcribed and indexed and photographs of most of the memorials are available. A full searchable copy of the project and the images are available at the Museum.

**Censuses:** We have fully computer-searchable transcripts of the complete censuses for the Parishes of Stanhope and Wolsingham. They can be searched by name, address, birthplace, occupation, etc – so that researchers can quickly locate all entries relating to a particular family or place.

**Parish Registers:** The Museum holds copies or transcripts of many of the Parish Registers and Bishop's Transcripts for Weardale villages with some dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> C; work is continually ongoing to add more to the collection

We also hold Presbyterian baptisms at Ireshopeburn; this was the only Presbyterian church in the Dale and there are some records from the Methodist Circuits.

Tithe records consisting of:

1. Digitised tithe map images of Stanhope Parish and Wolsingham parishes.
2. Transcriptions of apportionments.
3. Images of the apportionments for Stanhope Town & Newlandside Quarters and for Wolsingham Parish.

**Emigration:** We have some series of letters between local families and their relatives who emigrated to the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

In September 2019 the adjoining High House Methodist Chapel was closed, and the Museum offered the opportunity to purchase the building. Once funding is available there are plans to convert the 2 buildings into one Museum and Heritage Centre.

The family history resources will move into a downstairs room in the current museum, and with internet access, more 'joined up' family history research can be done by visitors. It is hoped that we will run family history talks and short courses and a Family and Local History group who, as well as researching their own families, may help with wider research and transcribing documents and records.

The records and collections relating to both family and local history at the Museum make them a key resource for those wanting to explore, not only their family tree, but to investigate the lives of those who lived in the Dale over many years.

**Emma Gooch** is a PhD candidate in Archaeology at Newcastle University. She is currently working on the final writing up of a thesis which investigates the social identities of children in Geometric, Archaic and Classical Greece (9<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE). She is particularly interested in the material culture associated with children, how it was used to construct their identities, and how children used and interacted with private space within domestic contexts. Her research interests also include: the extended life course, the family and motherhood in ancient Greece, relationships between animals and people in ancient Greece, ancient Attic material culture and iconography generally.

Contact: [e.l.gooch2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:e.l.gooch2@newcastle.ac.uk)

### **Illustrating the Family: A Changing View or a Different Artist?**

My research investigates the social identities of children in Geometric (900-700 BCE), Archaic (700-480 BCE) and Classical (480-323 BCE) Greece, especially Athens and Attica. As an archaeologist, I focus upon material culture used to construct and demonstrate juvenile identities, especially as they were experienced amongst families in domestic contexts.

For this *Family Histories Forum* event, my presentation discussed trends in how children were depicted in scenes on painted pottery between 760 and 323 BCE. I spoke about what trends in how children were depicted suggest about children's relationships with members of their families, and what those trends indicated about how much agency certain individuals – namely children's mothers – had to commission iconography that characterised children in ancient Attica. I provided detail about Geometric painted pottery (produced 760-700 BCE), black-figure pottery (produced 630-400 BCE) and red-figure pottery (produced 530-300 BCE). I outlined that Geometric scenes characterised children as 'adults in training', never showing them acting in specifically child-like ways and not associating them with particular examples of material culture. I summarised that black-figure scenes also largely depicted children as miniaturised adults until the fifth century, when they started to be shown alone, and sometimes playing with toys identified as toy carts or rollers used as walking aids. I mentioned domestic-themed scenes were innovatively illustrated from around 575 BCE, and they gained popularity in red-figure; they show children amongst family groups in intimate household contexts. I argued it was in fifth century red-figure iconography that children were first properly shown as quintessentially juvenile figures that played, including with toys, other children and animals.

I highlighted that children were associated with a range of material culture in red-figure scenes, including strings of protective amulets, feeding cups, jugs that commemorated a rite of passage children celebrated when they were around three years old, knucklebones, balls and dolls. I demonstrated that there was a particular peak in the number of depictions of children dated to the period 450 to 400 BCE, and I illustrated the historical context of that; it was a time during which socio-political reform was prevalent, having a major impact on who could claim citizenship rights in Athens, and it was a period during which Athens was frequently at war, including with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War.

Previous scholarship has suggested children were depicted more often because they were celebrated as the perpetuators of society, and they were all the more valuable when society was so in flux, but I argued that does not fully account for why children were depicted more often, depicted more naturalistically and more often shown in true to life guises, often in domestic-themed scenes. I suggested, with reference to analyses of the distribution of children's material culture in houses and to ancient literary sources, that children had the closest relationships with women. They spent time in spaces within houses that were

primarily occupied by women. Ancient sources recorded that women spent most of their time within the household and were the primary caregivers for children. I postulated that when Attic society was particularly unsettled in the later fifth century, when men were often away at war, women had more agency to commission painted pottery and they requested that children were illustrated in new ways. I argued the fact there was also an increase in the number of vessels produced for women and an increase in the number of domestic-themed scenes generally, which illustrated women's concerns and activities, supported my suggestion that women could have become the primary consumers of painted pottery at times during the later fifth century.

In summary, I suggested the view presented – what childhood was, and what children's experiences were – did not change markedly in the fifth century to constitute the impetus for depicting children so much more on painted pottery; rather, the artist was encouraged to see, and present, the view differently because, temporarily, his main consumers were not men that prized children for perpetuating families, but women who cared for children on a daily basis.

**Alexandra Healey** is a Project Archivist in Special Collections at the Philip Robinson Library at Newcastle University. She is passionate about exploring how archives can be used to provide inspiration and support learning across different disciplines and is the Chair of the Archives for Learning and Education Section of the Archives and Records Association. She is also interested in the use of digital technologies to widen access to archive material and providing innovative engagement and research opportunities.

Contact: [alexandra.healey@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:alexandra.healey@newcastle.ac.uk)

### **Re-generations: The Trevelyan Archive Project**

Newcastle University Special Collections and Archives is responsible for collecting, preserving, promoting and providing access to the unique, rare and distinctive rare book and archive collections which belong to Newcastle University. Based in the Philip Robinson Library, its remit has long been to use its collections to support research and education within the University.

University Archives such as this are not frequently made use of by family historians, however our collections are not just the records of the University itself. The varied nature of the collections means that valuable evidence of people's lives can appear in unexpected places. What University archive services need to do is ensure their collections are well listed, indexed and shared in ways which make them accessible to all researchers. One such project which aims to achieve this at Newcastle University is the Trevelyan Archive Project.

Newcastle University's Trevelyan archives originate from the Trevelyan family of Wallington Hall. Originally catalogued in the 1970s, the resulting typewritten catalogues could not easily be shared with other platforms and the name indexes were incomplete, anticipating researchers from the 1970s academic community. These limitations combined with the presence of some uncatalogued content and a donation of family photographs albums from the National Trust in 2014 became the catalyst to launch a dedicated project.

The intention was to:

- Create an updated digital catalogue, providing a more comprehensive listing of the contents of these archives
- Increase digital accessibility to the materials, both through improved finding aids, and digitisation and online sharing of key content
- Raise awareness of the archives and promote their use both within and beyond the University community

Due to reduced access to the collections resulting from COVID-19, the project is still ongoing, and achievements to date include:

- Digital, fully searchable catalogues have been published on the Archives Hub for two of the four collections, representing around 400 boxes of content. These have additional names indexed, not just those deemed to be of interest to academic researchers.
- Family photographs albums and other digitised content have been made freely available to search and browse online, including names of those who appear. Has been used as basis for education outreach sessions in schools.

One of the most exciting outcomes has been the new stories it has uncovered and the resulting research potential. This includes siting Mary Trevelyan nee Bell within the context of relationships between female family members, and also the lives of her children. These

archives also include fragments of stories for figures who only appear fleetingly – staff, estate residents, constituents and others.

As a result of this project the Trevelyan archives have experienced increased usage from internal and external users, and we are better placed to support all kinds of research. We are continuing to work towards completing updated listings for all of the material, as well as exploring new digital platforms to increase its visibility to as wide an audience as possible.

**John E. Heckels** is a Newcastle graduate and Emeritus Professor of Molecular Microbiology at the University of Southampton. He has also had a lifelong interest in family history and genealogy. Since formal retirement he has relocated back to the North East and has been able to focus on researching his family roots, most recently by using DNA studies. He is a Trustee of the Northumberland & Durham Family History Society, Chairman of the Durham Branch, and gives talks to various local societies.

Contact: [magpie960@gmail.com](mailto:magpie960@gmail.com)

### **An introduction to DNA testing in Family History Research.**

The last decade has seen increasing interest in the use of DNA testing in family history research, partially prompted by television programs and advertising which encourage people to ask “who am I” and “where do I come from”. For family historians however DNA represents a powerful aid to confirming conclusions reached by traditional research methods and for discovering previously unknown “cousins” to extend the branches of their family trees.

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the blueprint for life, forming the genes which contain the code that acts as a blueprint for the components of a living being. In order to choose which companies’ test to take and to understand the implications of their results, it’s important to understand something of the way in which DNA is organised in human cells. Our genes are organised into 23 chromosome pairs. Twenty-two of these pairs, which have a copy of the same chromosome coming from each of the parents, are known as autosomes and these form the basis of the autosomal or at-DNA test. The twenty third chromosome pair is either two copies of an X chromosome in females or an XY pair in males. The Y-DNA test which follows the male line, corresponds to the surname line in traditional western cultures and can only be taken by males. In addition to chromosomes, cells also contain additional DNA located in organelles known as mitochondria. This mitochondrial DNA (mDNA) follows the female line, being handed down in the egg to both daughters and sons.

Both Y-DNA and mDNA are passed down unchanged for many generations and so can be used to trace family lines over hundreds of years. Testing of mDNA from living descendants of his sister was used in identifying the remains in the Leicester car park as probably being those of Richard III. In contrast at-DNA is “scrambled” at each generation so that family lines can only be followed 4-5 generations, but it provides the possibility of identifying a much wider set of potential relatives

The most popular company for DNA testing only provides at-DNA testing which it uses provide an “Ethnicity Estimate”. This may be accurate in revealing broad ethnic differences but may be less successful in pointing precise geographical locations. However, for many people with no previous interest in tracing their family history this may be the main motivation for taking a DNA test. All companies also provide a “hit” list of related people in their own database and a means to make contact with them, usually anonymously. If the individual responds it may confirm previous research and provide access to previously unknown branches of the family tree.

Before taking a DNA test individuals must carefully consider the possible consequences from the results obtained. It has the power to disprove conclusions based on many years of painstaking work using on traditional sources such as parish records, census returns and civil registration. More importantly many families may have “secrets” not talked about and these can be dramatically revealed by a DNA test.



**Margaret Hedley's** professional background is in secondary education and her interest in family history stems from her research into her own family. This combined with an abiding interest in local and social history. In 1995 she set up a local history group in East Durham and began researching the lives of women married to coal miners in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 2000 she undertook an MA course in local and family history at the University of Teesside, in which she developed this research further, writing a dissertation on "Women in the Durham Coalfields in the 19<sup>th</sup> century". That dissertation led to one book and then another, and she is very keen to reach ever wider audiences with her research and writing.

Contact E: [margaret.hedley2@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.hedley2@btinternet.com) W: [pastuncovered.co.uk](http://pastuncovered.co.uk) M: 07977546332

### **The Problem of Family History**

My talk will look at how my interest in family history came about and how it developed. I will of course mention my lack of history background and why I decided to join a part time MA course in History (local and family) at the University of Teesside.

I will mention my naivety at the realisation that a hierarchy of historical topics existed, and that family history was probably near the bottom of it and my absolute shock when told that my dissertation topic was not suitable for my dissertation.

I carried out an investigation into the life of my great great-grandmother (Hannah), an illiterate woman born in the Durham coalfield 1819, she became the daughter, sister, wife, mother and grandmother of coal miners and using formal government records, family history research methods, family stories and photographs, newspaper accounts of what was going on around her, I was able to piece her life together.

My many presentations about the Hannah's Story and Women of the Durham Coalfield in general had always been very popular but when Professor Batho from Durham University asked if he could publish my dissertation in 2005, I was blown away!! However, after the initial euphoria, I made the decision that, if the story were to be told, I would want the presentation to be different to an MA dissertation. Professor Batho pursued me for several years, always eager to publish and thoroughly frustrated at my refusal.

I tried, over the years, to adapt the dissertation to a more reader-friendly publication that would appeal to a wide range of people and eventually in 2017 I managed to find a format that I was happy with. It blended local and national events with the private events in Hannah's family and in order to add value, I added conversations that may have taken place. Of course, I had no idea what was said over 100 years ago to situations that affected Hannah's life, but I had become her biographer and felt that I knew how she would react in these situations. The conversations were well received by most but not by some historians.

Some accused me of misleading my readers which of course was never my intention. They felt the work ought to have been published as a work of fiction and not by an historical publisher. My intention was to pique the interest of people who had never read a book before, people who thought they didn't like history and perhaps encourage them to look further into aspects of the history that had been presented.

My book brought to the public record previously untold stories which I felt were of value to historians and were capable of changing how we looked at the past. My research methods didn't detract from the quality of the research I carried out – I wanted to engage readers without distorting the facts, passing on the narrative of my research, shaping, selecting and emphasising – dealing in the art of good communication, similar to how I believe an historian would want to pass on their research.

**Christine Seal** is retired from a career in Administrative Services at the University of Oxford. She has a PhD from the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, with a thesis on relief of the poor in the community and in the workhouses of Belper and Cheltenham. Now residing in Hexham, Christine is the Circuit Archivist for the Methodist Church in the Tynedale Circuit and is a volunteer with the conservation group at Hexham Abbey, helping to record the textiles and memorials in the Abbey. As Secretary of the NE Methodist History Society, Christine is working with others to produce booklets on Methodism in various places in the North East. She is a member of the Family and Community Historical Research Society (FACHRS) and has contributed two papers in the national project on Communities of Dissent. Her current research interests include: Convicts in the North East of England and their transport to Western Australia; Methodism and Methodist preachers in Australia and the North East of England; and homes for aged miners.

Contact: [chrisvseal@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisvseal@hotmail.com)

### **Free or Felon: The Settling of the Swan River Colony**

The presentation discussed the development of Western Australia. Capt Edmund Lockyer was dispatched from Sydney to New Holland (now Western Australia) to forestall a possible French annexation, and arrived in King George Sound in December 1826, with a detachment of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Capt James Stirling sailed along the west coast of Australia in 1827 and led an expedition up the Swan River to look for a suitable place to establish a British colony. He presented his report to London and the proposal was agreed, but the government would not grant assisted passages. Stirling left England with two ships comprising settlers, both military and civilian, a detachment of soldiers for defence, and proclaimed the founding of the colony on the 18 June 1829. It was to be referred to as *The Swan River Colony* and it was not until later that the whole of that part of Australia would become known as Western Australia.

The port at the mouth of the Swan River was named Fremantle and the main settlement Perth but there were problems from the beginning, with no roads, the land was difficult to clear, and there was a lack of manpower and labour to build the infrastructure. Initially, too many people arrived in the colony, then too few, and the population declined with people leaving for the eastern colonies.

Capt Stirling (later Sir James Stirling) became the Governor and in 1832 appointed a Legislative Council to assist him in administering the colony until his departure in 1839. The first permanent building was the Round House with a design influenced by Jeremy Bentham's plan for the model prison. The prison opened in 1831 and four years later a courthouse was added to the building.

Another problem for the colony was a depression in 1843-4, the founding of South Australia, (a free colony), and some of the free settlers left to go there. The Governor wrote to London in 1845 that the colony was in straightened circumstances, the population was reducing, and the economy in dire straits. The early settlers struggled for 20 years and then were forced to petition the British Government for convicts. The colonists' goals were to obtain cheap labour, to attract imperial funding and to construct public works. Transportation of convicts had ended in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in 1841. The colony imposed three conditions: no female convicts, no political prisoners and no convict convicted of a serious crime. The first condition was met but the other two conditions were broken over time.

The first ship, the Scinden, arrived on 1 June 1850 with 75 convicts, guards and their families, and a staff of officers. The presentation went on to discuss the building of the Convict prison and public buildings in Fremantle and Perth, and a successful convict, Joseph Horrocks. At the time of the last convict ship's arrival in 1868, the population had grown to 33,000 of which 42% were convicts.

## Keynote

**Matthew Kelly** is Professor of Modern History in the Department of Humanities. He works on modern British history, focusing on the development of environmental policy in the post-war period, the cultural history of landscape, and the history of National Parks and nature conservation. Matthew joined Northumbria in 2016 as a professor. Between 2006 and 2016, he was a lecturer and then associate professor at the University of Southampton, and between 2003 and 2006 he was a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. In 2012-13, he was a Fellow of the Rachel Carson Center, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich and in 2016 he was a Visiting Researcher at St. John's College, Oxford for Michaelmas term.

Contact: [matthew.j.kelly@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.j.kelly@northumbria.ac.uk)

### **Finding Poland Revisited.**

In his talk, Matthew Kelly revisited his family history *Finding Poland: from Tavistock to Hruzdova and back again* (2010). That book detailed the story of his Polish ancestors and their experiences during the turbulent decades following the First World War until the mid-twentieth century when they settled in England.

In the first part of his talk Matt drew on a series of photographs of his great-grandparents and grandparents. He noted the use of photographs in historical work and how the choice of one image over another could frame narratives in different ways. The family story that emerges is one of a series of displacements. First to the North East of Poland as part of a policy of Polonisation and colonisation in territories newly incorporated as a result of what was viewed at the time as a heroic national struggle. Then, with the outbreak of the Second World War and the resulting partition of Poland between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, their forced deportation to collective farms in Kazakhstan and work camps in Siberia. Following the reversal of alliances during the Second World War, the family, now reunited, joined their fellow displaced compatriots in British Mandatory Palestine, where the Polish Anders Army was assembled. From there they moved to a part of British India, in what is now Pakistan, and at the end of the Second World War were among the Polish diaspora that settled in the United Kingdom. In the case of Matt's grandparents, near the town of Tavistock in Devon. The story Matt told was centred very much around the women in the family, and his grandmother in particular.

In the second part of his talk Matt offered a series of reflections on the process of writing the book and the context in which it was written. He noted his reliance on translators and how linguistic knowledge is an important element in the kind of 'family-history' he was writing – one that involved movement across linguistic and political boundaries. At the time that he was preparing the book for publication family-history was in full vogue, as attested by the popularity of the television series 'Who do you think you are', on which Matt offered a reflection on the link with celebrity culture. The element of inter-generational relationships was part of the experience of writing the book. On this point Matt noted the importance of women in the creation of memory and cultural continuities.

In concluding his talk, Matt made reference to the atmosphere of optimism that existed in Polish historiography at the time that his book was published. How this reflected an openness to a discussion of problematic aspects in Poland's past. This liberal spirit has since abated, and Matt voiced his concern with the current situation in Poland in which historians are being prosecuted for undertaking historical research which is deemed "unpatriotic". This also prompted a reflection on the climate of historical debate in the United Kingdom which, although not quite as dangerous, Matt emphasised, is similarly of concern.

In the Q&A session that followed, Matt addressed questions related to how his grandparents negotiated their identity, and how the experience of the Soviet Union influenced his grandmother's politics. There followed a discussion of the legacies of the Polish communities in the United Kingdom in the form of Polish clubs and societies. In relation to this, Matt noted how Polish migrants in the UK reacted to the arrival of their erstwhile compatriots following Poland's accession to the European Union. Matt also spoke about how the commemorations or acknowledgement of Polish participation in the allied effort during the Second World War are current in historical memory.

## List of websites and internet resources

The links listed here were those put on the 'chat' during our sessions. Some of them relate directly to presentations, others are of more general interest. The webpages have their own descriptions.

[www.historianscollaborate.com](http://www.historianscollaborate.com)

Twitter hour is #HistoriansCollaborate at 8pm GMT on 3rd Wednesday of the month. You can follow the account @histcollab.

<https://www.history.ac.uk/partnership-seminars/historians-across-boundaries-collaborative-historical-research> (IHR seminar)

<https://rshg.org.uk/>

Portsmouth <http://porttowns.port.ac.uk/jutland-map/index.html>

<https://le.ac.uk/own-write/about>

<https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/>

<https://www.layersoflondon.org/>

<https://merl.reading.ac.uk/> - Museum of English Rural Life

People of 1381 - <https://www.1381.online/>

<https://www.york.ac.uk/research/impact/englands-immigrants/>

<https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/home.html> another name-rich source

<https://tudoraccidents.history.ox.ac.uk>

British History Online: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk>