

HERITAGE AND HISTORY IN PRACTICE

Workshop 3: Interpreting Heritage for Public History

15th April 2026

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Institute of
Creativity,
Communities
& Culture



UK Research
and Innovation

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Today we will:
 - Explore how heritage materials can be interpreted
 - Explore the value of family history
 - Produce your output title using the Title Production Sheet
- During the second half of today's workshop, there will be one-to-one support sessions.
- **By the end of today, you will have begun to write/create your output.**

WHAT I HAVE BEEN UP TO

- Exhibition Launch promotion (physical posters and flyers will be available for distribution by Workshop 4). Electronic poster and flyer will also be emailed to you following tonight's workshop. A roll banner is also in the works!
- Projector screen and projector booked. Catering and staffing are also in place for the Exhibition Launch event.
- Arrangements are being made for our podcast episodes (forms need filling today if possible).



Heritage and History in Practice

EXHIBITION LAUNCH

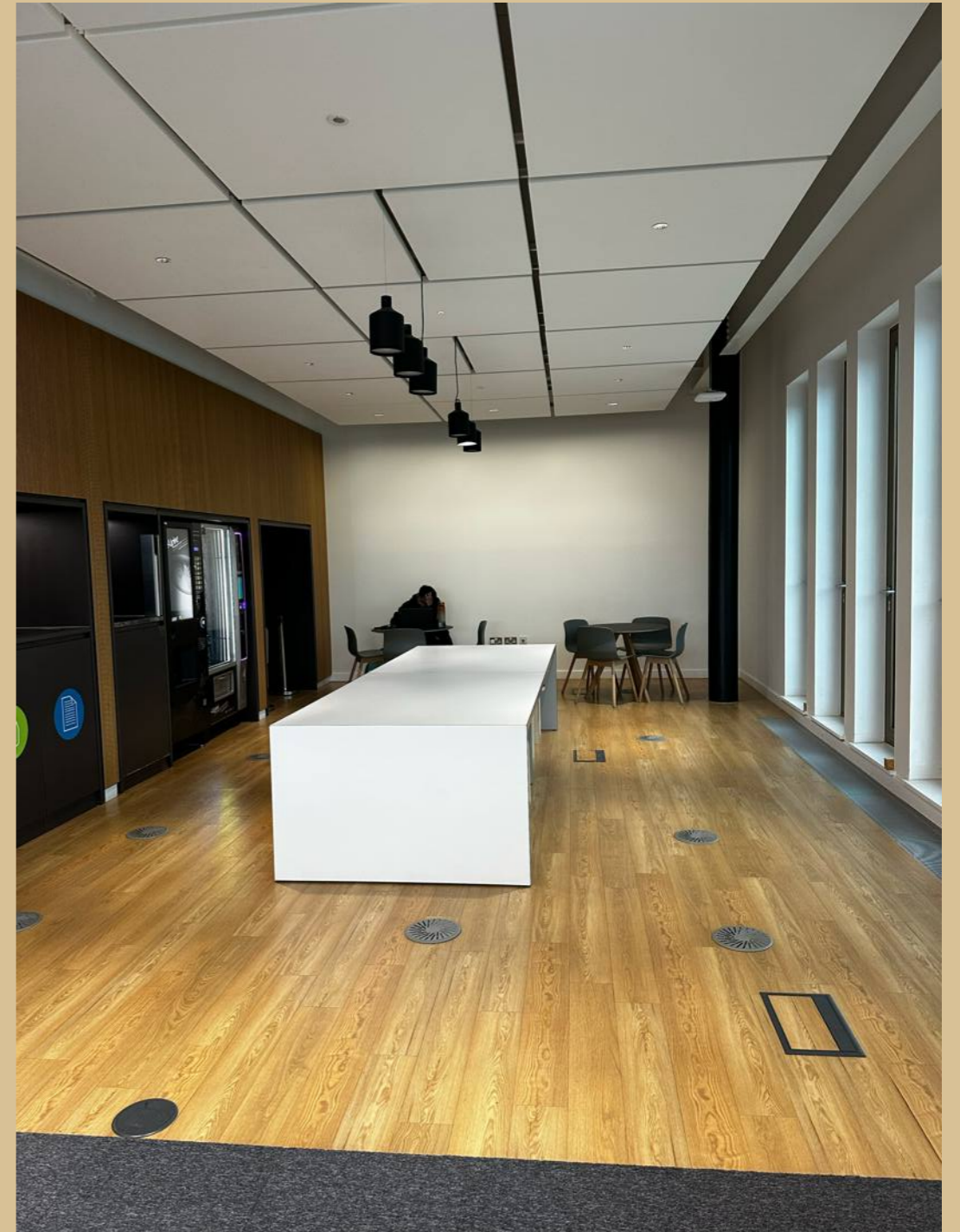
24TH JUNE 2026
6–9pm
University of Lancashire
Student Centre, Preston,
PR1 7DP

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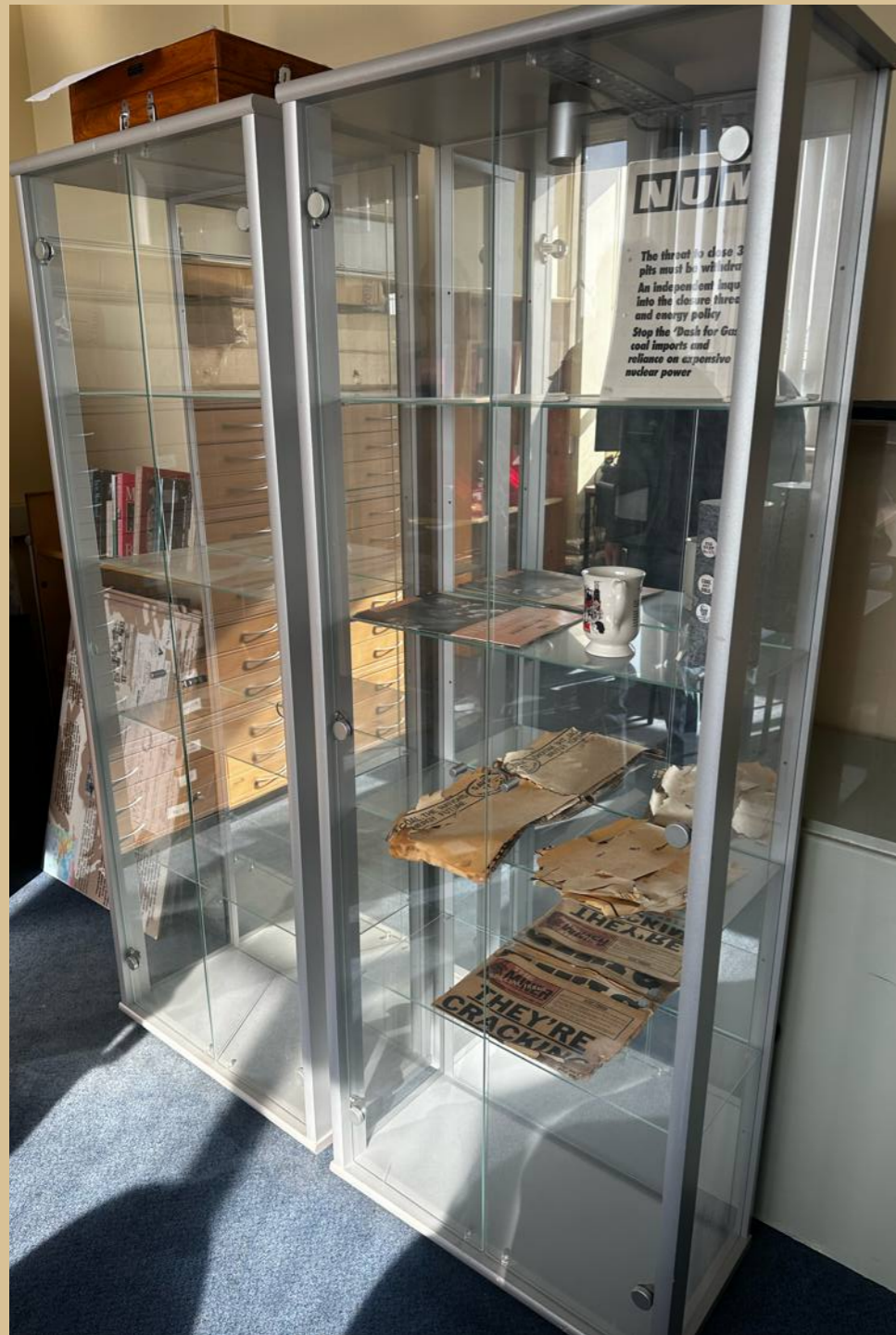
Family Archives | Community Voices | Shared Histories

All Welcome | Free Event

SOCIAL LEARNING EAST



EXHIBITION CABINETS



TO DO LIST

- Complete **Co-researcher Confidence Survey** if you haven't already (only 12 have answered so far).
- Complete **Output Planning Sheet** and hand in to me for the co-researcher folder (for those who haven't already).
- Complete the **Title Production Sheet** and hand in to me.
- Fill out the **Podcast Participation Sheet**. We have Tuesday 14th July and Thursday 23rd July available (11am to 3pm) in the Media Factory Podcast Studio. I will meet you outside the Media Factory.

CONFIRMATION OF IMPORTANT DATES

- **Workshops:** 4 (29 April), 5 (13 May), 6 (27 May). All starting at 6pm. Workshops 5 and 6 will now take place in LH009 nearby.
- **Exhibition Prep Workshop** (optional): 10 June from 6pm in LH009. This will also be the Exhibition Printing Deadline.
- **Exhibition Launch:** Wednesday 24th June from 6pm until 9pm in Social Learning East in the Student Centre.
- **Exhibition:** 6th to 31st July (I'm still in touch with the University events team to try to find a suitable location — PR1 Gallery never got back to me unfortunately).

RESPONSES TO CO-RESEARCHER QUESTIONS

WRITING FAMILY HISTORY

- There are different styles of writing:
 - Academic writing: structured, evidence-based and referenced.
 - Public / Creative Writing: clear and engaging, accessible and story-focused.
- In this project, we aim for a balance of both.

CREATING A FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITE

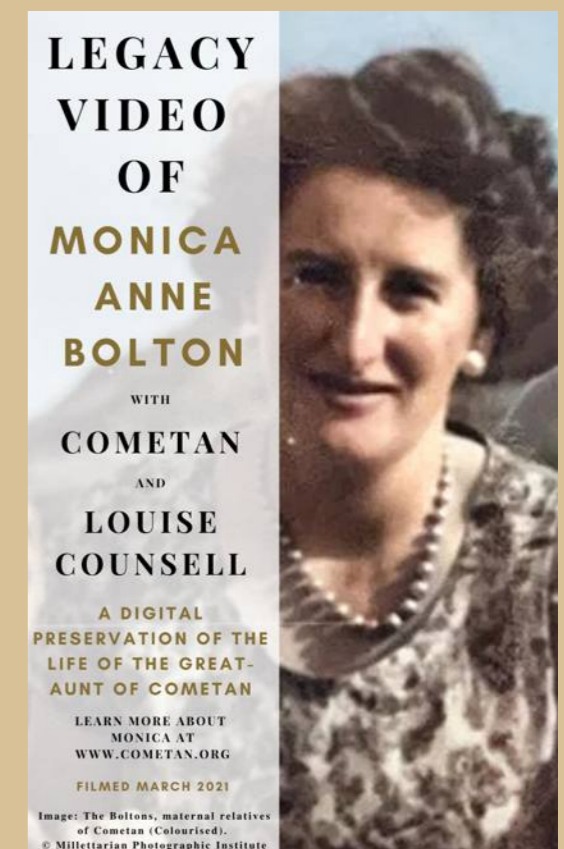
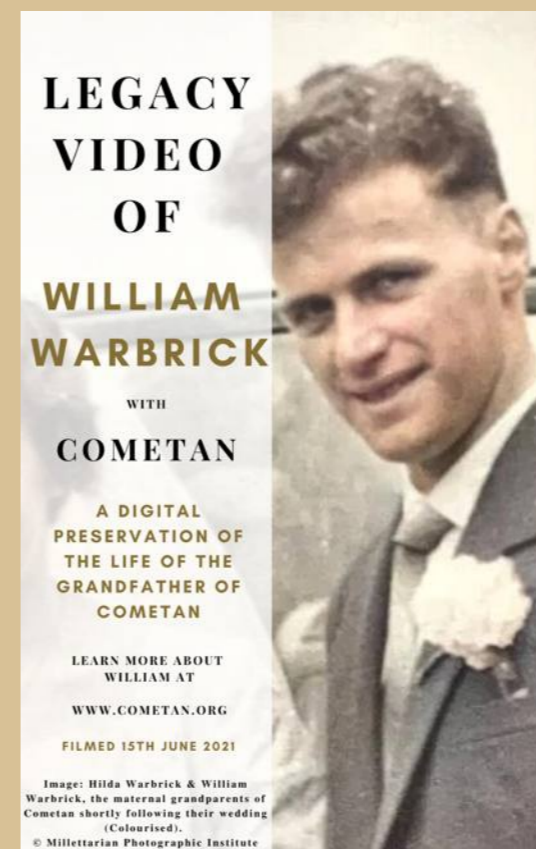
- When writing for a website: keep paragraphs short, use clear headings, focus on one main idea for each article and explain context simply.
- You can use platforms such as WordPress, Wix and Squarespace.
- Steps to take:
 - (1) Choose a theme; (2) create pages (e.g. "Family History", "Articles"); (3) upload images and text; (4) publish regularly.
 - I'm hoping to get each of your outputs published on the blog of www.antiquephotographs.co.uk!
- You could include: family tree overview, ancestor profiles, short historical articles, photographs and documents, research notes.

CREATING LEGACY VIDEOS

- Focus your questions on the person's life journey, their achievements, struggles, values and wisdom. A mixture of funny anecdotes and real-life struggle always works the best.
- Its best to conduct the interviews in the person's home so they feel comfortable. Also make sure you have good enough lighting and your voice is loud and clear enough.
- Open-ended questions are the best and it is important the interviewer listens attentively.
- When editing, it is nice touch to include a slideshow of images of that person's life over the favourite music to introduce the video.

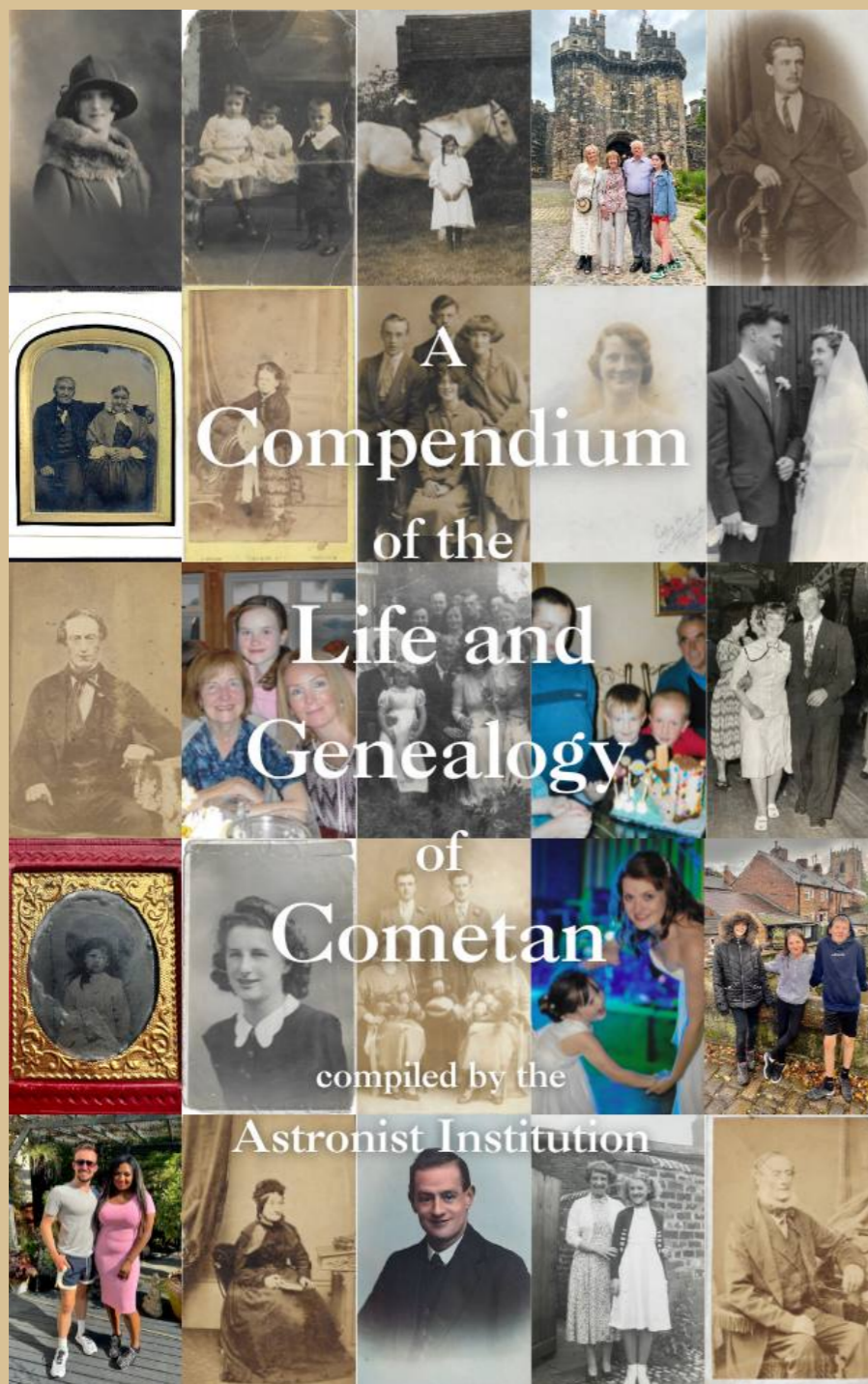


Interviewing my grandmother Hilda Warbrick, 5th November 2020.



Examples of legacy video covers.

OPTIONAL PROJECT: GENEALOGY BOOK



A Compendium of the Life and Genealogy of Cometan (1st Edition)

Marriage

Seán Taylor, working as a vending operational manager at the time, married supermarket customer service adviser Nadine Lathrope on 24th April 2009 at St Mary's, Bamber Bridge. Their wedding reception was held afterwards at Farington Lodge. The witnesses to the marriage were Seán's best man, Jamie Humphrey, and Nadine's father, Brian Lathrope.



Group 5 at St Chad's Primary School, Whittle-le-Woods. Theresa Prescott can be seen on the far left on the middle row with her older sister Mary standing beside her.

Further offspring

Kieran Taylor (born 6th February 2007), Kent Taylor (born 17th July 2008), Zara Taylor (born 17th July 2008), Jay Taylor (born 17th September 2009) and Edie Taylor (born 27th February 2011).



St Chad's Elementary School, Whittle-le-Woods, circa 1909.

THERESA BLACKLEDGE (née PRESCOTT) (1899–1976)



Maternal great-granddaughter of Cometan

Theresa Prescott (1899–1976) as a bridesmaid at her sister Mary's wedding to Henry Warbrick on 11th November 1924.

Birth

Theresa (sometimes also spelt Teresa) Prescott was born on 14th December 1899 at Miry Fold Farm, Brier's Brow, Wheelton, to farmer Joseph Prescott and his wife Elizabeth Prescott (née Moon). Theresa was soon thereafter baptised into the Catholic Church, most likely at St Chad's, Whittle-le-Woods.

By the time she had turned twelve years old, Theresa had moved with her parents and siblings to Wilson Nook Farm in Whittle-le-Woods.


Marriage

Theresa Prescott, spinster and cotton weaver of Town Lane, Whittle-le-Woods, married Joseph Vincent Blackledge, bachelor and cotton weaver of Sheep Hill, Clayton Green, on 1st October 1928 at St Chad's, Whittle-le-Woods. The witnesses to the wedding were Theresa's nephew Harold Prescott and her sister Ellen Livesey and the couple were married by Father George

DEEP DIVE: GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

www.gro.gov.uk

- The General Register Office (GRO) charges £3 per record for a digital image; £8 for a PDF version; and the physical copy £12.50 for standard delivery.
- Beware, the digital image format is automated and sometimes cuts off a piece of the record (GRO usually offer refunds in this case but will suggest you get the PDF version for such records).
- Once you start acquiring birth certificates (either in physical or digital format), ensure you organise them so you have easy access. Label them clearly and organise them either according to person or certificate type (you can have all of your birth certificates in one computer folder and all your death certificates in another).

 **HM Passport Office**

General Register Office
Official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales

Search the GRO Online Indexes

Which index would you like to search?
Events registered in England or Wales:

Birth Death

When was the birth registered?
Year: +/- year(s)

Please enter your search criteria, mandatory fields are indicated with a *
Up to 250 matching results will be returned so providing any additional information you know will help locate the registration you are looking for.

Who are you searching for?

Surname at Birth: Include:

Search for records with a matching surname

First Forename: Include:

Search for records with a matching first forename

Second Forename:

Sex:

Mother's Maiden Surname:

Where was the birth registered?
District of Birth:

Do you already know any GRO Reference details for the registration?

Quarter: Page:

Volume:

- ▶ Logout
- ▶ Main Menu
- ▶ 'How to Order' Guide for Customers
- ▶ Dolen canllaw fideo "Sut i Archebu"
- ▶ Place an Order
- ▶ Search the GRO Online Index
- ▶ Data Quality & Error Reporting
- ▶ My Details
- ▶ My Orders
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions
- ▶ Contact us
- ▶ View GRO information on GOV.UK
- ▶ Births & Adoptions
- ▶ Marriage & Civil Partnership
- ▶ Death
- ▶ Family History Records
- ▶ Cookie Policy
- ▶ Apply online for a UK Passport

General Register Office Online Indexes.

DEEP DIVE: USING THE WEBSITE

www.gro.gov.uk

- The freestyle search option allows family historians to input names, dates and places themselves to search for birth and death records (this is not available for marriage records).
- However, there are restrictions. For deaths, freestyle is only available for records between 1837–1957 and from 1984–2023 and for births, freestyle is only available for records between 1837–1934 and from 1984–2023.
- Also, note that if you are searching for a recent record, you need to wait six months after the birth or death to access it using the GRO website.

The screenshot shows the 'Search the GRO Online Indexes' page. At the top, there is a header for 'HM Passport Office' and 'General Register Office' with a sub-header: 'Official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales'. The main heading is 'Search the GRO Online Indexes'. Below this, there are several sections for search criteria:

- Which index would you like to search?**
Events registered in England or Wales:
 Birth Death
- When was the birth registered?**
Year: +/- year(s)
- Who are you searching for?**
Surname at Birth: Include:
Search for records with a matching surname
First Forename: Include:
Search for records with a matching first forename
Second Forename:
Sex:
Mother's Maiden Surname:
- Where was the birth registered?**
District of Birth:
- Do you already know any GRO Reference details for the registration?**
Quarter:
Volume: Page:

At the bottom right, there are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons. On the right side of the page, there is a navigation menu with links such as 'Logout', 'Main Menu', 'How to Order' Guide for Customers, 'Dolen canllaw fideo "Sut i Archebu"', 'Place an Order', 'Search the GRO Online Index', 'Data Quality & Error Reporting', 'My Details', 'My Orders', 'Frequently Asked Questions', 'Contact us', 'View GRO information on GOV.UK', 'Births & Adoptions', 'Marriage & Civil Partnership', 'Death', 'Family History Records', 'Cookie Policy', and 'Apply online for a UK Passport'.

General Register Office Online Indexes.

- If what you know about the person whose record you are searching for is scant, GRO will search the year before and year after the one you input. You will need to name the surname of the person at the time they died and their sex at death.
- Initially, input as much information as you can but be prepared to swap and change information if nothing comes up the first time. It may take you a few attempts to find the right record. Also, don't be disheartened if you pay for the wrong record.
- Sometimes it is a case of trial and error. Unfortunately, GRO do not offer refunds simply because it is not the record you were looking for. Once you have inputted the information you know, you will be presented with a list of records that in some way match your search. Sometimes it is actually better to input less information into the search so then you can wade through a longer list if you didn't find the right record the first time.
- The list will tell you first name, surname, the place where the death was registered and the age of the person at death. Be aware of different or erroneous name spellings as these can prevent you from finding the correct record.

The screenshot shows the 'Search the GRO Online Indexes' page from the HM Passport Office. The page is titled 'General Register Office' and provides official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships, and deaths in England and Wales. The search interface includes several sections: 'Which index would you like to search?' with radio buttons for 'Birth' and 'Death' (selected); 'When was the death registered?' with a year dropdown set to '1888' and a range of '+/- 0 year(s)'; 'Who are you searching for?' with fields for 'Surname at Death', 'First Forename at Death', and 'Second Forename at Death', each with an 'Include' dropdown set to 'Exact Matches Only'; 'Where was the death registered?' with a 'District of Death' field; and 'Do you already know any GRO Reference details for the registration?' with fields for 'Quarter', 'Volume', and 'Page'. A 'Search' button and a 'Reset' button are located at the bottom of the form.

Screenshot of the search console for death records on the GRO Online Indexes

CHALLENGES WITH MARRIAGE RECORDS

- In the GRO's database, you will find that you cannot research free-style for marriage certificates but instead a GRO officer must search for the record based on the information you provide them.
- Two pieces are information the GRO require to conduct a search are the exact date of marriage if possible and the place of marriage (usually the village, town or city nearest to where the solemnisation took place).
- If you do not know the exact date of marriage then GRO allow you to type in 01/01/1884 for example and they will search the specified year and one either side.
- GRO also provide the option of inputting the names of the bride and groom and their mother or father's names (it is important to input the father's name here as that is what appears on the certificate or the surname at the very least).

www.gro.gov.uk

HM Passport Office | General Register Office
Official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales

Application for an England and Wales Marriage registration record

Before you contact GRO for assistance, please refer to the 'How to Order' videos here:
[General Register Office - 'How to Order' Guide for Customers](#)
[Swyddfa Gofrestru Gyffredinol - Canllaw 'Sut i Archebu' ar gyfer Cwsmeriaid](#)

Below is an England and Wales Marriage Registration Record Application Form where full information is required.
Required fields will be followed by the * character.
Please complete the form and press the "Submit" button to add the application to your basket.

Particulars of the couple in the entry required

A minimum of one name and forename for the same party must be given

Year marriage was registered	1888
Party 1 Surname	<input type="text"/>
Party 1 Forenames	<input type="text"/>
Party 2 Surname	<input type="text"/>
Party 2 Forenames	<input type="text"/>
Date of marriage (dd/mm/yyyy)* <small>(If you do not know the exact date enter 01/01/1888, we will search the specified year and one either side)</small>	<input type="text"/>
Place of marriage*	<input type="text"/>

Screenshot of the GRO search page for Marriage records in England and Wales

Another challenge is that GRO only provide a physical option for marriage certificates, costing £16 for each copy using standard delivery (despatched on the 15th working day from the receipt of order). If you have a large family tree, this could get expensive and there's no way around this.

**ANY QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS SO FAR?**

INTERPRETING HERITAGE MATERIALS

HOW HISTORIANS INTERPRET SOURCES

- When historians examine heritage materials, they ask questions such as:
 - Who created this material?
 - When was it created?
 - Why was it produced?
 - What does it reveal about people's lives?
- These questions help transform objects and images into historical evidence.

ACTIVITY: INTERPRETING YOUR MATERIAL

- Discuss with another participant:
 - What historical clues are visible?
 - What might these clues suggest about the past?
 - What historical story might the material reveal?
- Try to identify one possible interpretation.

ACTIVITY: MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS

- Historical sources often allow more than one interpretation.
- Different viewers may notice different details.
- Take 10 minutes to discuss your materials with others on your table or in the room:
 - What interpretations did others suggest?
 - Were there details you had not noticed before?





DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY

- Historians rarely have complete information.
- Oftentimes we must work with:
 - Incomplete records
 - Missing information
 - Uncertain dates
- But acknowledging uncertainty is part of good historical interpretation.

TASK: PLANNING YOUR OUTPUT TITLE

- Please now begin filling in the **Title Production Sheet** in front of you.
- Take a few minutes to consider the questions.
- Have a go at drafting a title for your output.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY IN PRACTICE

TITLE PRODUCTION SHEET

Which type of title works best for your material? You can combine types.




- Descriptive** (e.g. A Family Portrait in Preston, c.1920)
- Thematic** (e.g. Exploring Working Lives in Industrial Lancashire)
- Question** (e.g. What Was Life Like for Pupil Teachers in 1870s Chorley?)
- Narrative** (Trade and Trust: Pawnbroking in 19th-Century Liverpool)

What wider topic does your material connect to?

What is the key message you want visitors to take away?

Draft Your Title. Write 2–3 possible titles:

Refine your title. Choose your strongest title and improve it: Is it clear? Is it engaging? Does it reflect your historical idea?

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**10 MINUTES BREAK
FOR REFRESHMENTS**

LET'S DISCUSS!

**WHAT IS THE VALUE
OF FAMILY HISTORY?**

IDENTIFYING FAMILY HISTORY VALUE

- Family history is often seen as a **personal activity**, but it can also be an important source of **historical knowledge**.
- Family archives can include: photographs, letters and diaries, certificates and official documents, and oral memories and stories.
- These materials help historians understand how people experienced the past in everyday life.

FAMILY HISTORY AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

- Family materials can reveal details that may not appear in official records. For example, they can help historians understand:
 - Everyday working life
 - Migration and movement
 - Family relationships and social roles
 - Community traditions and cultural identity
- These sources help historians study the **lived experiences of ordinary people**.

FAMILY HERITAGE AS HIDDEN HISTORIES

- Many historical stories remain **hidden in private collections**. Photographs and documents kept in family homes may contain information about:
 - local communities
 - occupations and industries
 - religious or cultural traditions
 - social change over time
- By studying family materials, we can bring **new perspectives into historical research**.

CONNECTING PERSONAL STORIES TO WIDER HISTORY

- A family photograph or document may reflect **larger historical themes**. For example:
 - A factory photograph may reveal **industrial history**
 - A migration document may reflect **population movement**
 - A military photograph may connect to **national conflicts**
- Family history can help us understand how historical events affected individuals and communities.

WHY FAMILY HISTORY MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HISTORY

- Family history is valuable because it:
 - Preserves personal and community memory
 - Contributes to historical research
 - Helps people understand their **connections to the past**
 - Encourages public engagement with history
- Projects like this help transform personal heritage into public history. This is one of the themes I wish to discuss in the upcoming podcasts.

LIMITS OF FAMILY HISTORY AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

- Family history can be extremely valuable, but like all historical sources it also has limitations. Some potential challenges include:
 - Memory and storytelling can change over time
 - Family stories may emphasise positive or heroic narratives
 - Important details may be missing or forgotten
 - Some information may be based on assumptions rather than evidence
- For this reason, historians treat family history as **one piece of historical evidence**, rather than the whole story.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIANGULATION

- Historians strengthen their research by comparing **multiple sources of evidence**. This process is often called triangulation.
- Family history can be checked and supported using sources such as: census records, parish registers, newspapers, local archives, historical books and academic research.
- Using multiple sources helps ensure that interpretations are **accurate, reliable, and historically grounded**.

ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR WRITTEN OUTPUTS

- Participants producing **short articles** should try to support their interpretation with **additional historical sources**.
- This might include: local history publications, academic articles or books, archival documents and historical newspapers.
- Combining family materials with wider historical evidence strengthens your historical argument.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT WITH OUTPUT

TASK: COMPLETE ANALYSIS SHEET

- Please now begin filling in the **Heritage Material Analysis Sheet** in front of you.
- Take a few minutes to consider the questions.
- We will talk through the sheet during one-to-one support.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY IN PRACTICE

  **HERITAGE MATERIAL ANALYSIS SHEET**  

Describe the material (what can you see?) or the story (what do you know?)

Establish a date or approximate date and possible location

Historical clues and context (if a photograph, consider clothing and setting)

Historical significance (What does this reveal about the past?)

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BECOME A HISTORICAL DETECTIVE

ACTIVITY: BECOME A HISTORICAL DETECTIVE

- Historians often work like detectives. They examine small details in sources and use them to understand the past.
- In this activity you will investigate your heritage material by identifying **historical clues**.
- Work in small groups.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Examine your heritage material or story and try to identify clues relating to:
 - **Time** – when might this material have been created? Or when does the story originate from?
 - **Place** – where might it have been produced? Or where does the story originate from?
 - **People** – who might appear in the material or story?
 - **Context** – what might the material or story reveal about society at the time?
- Write down at least **three clues** that might help interpret the material.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Please briefly share:
 - The clues you identified
 - Your possible interpretations
 - What additional research might help confirm your ideas
- This shows how historical interpretation is **collaborative** and **exploratory**.

NEXT STEPS

- In the next workshop we will learn:
 - What makes a good public history story
 - How to write captions
 - How to develop a story and build a narrative
 - How to balance accuracy, clarity and accessibility



Thank you for listening

Next workshop: 29th April

**Any questions in the
meantime? Email me:
brtaylorian@lancashire.ac.uk**

