

HST



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CONNECTIONS



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FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CONNECTIONS



Hyde Park, Leeds.

Letter from the Editor

As with the previous two issues, this year we have explored historical themes that have become increasingly relevant during 2020 and 2021. So, as a final issue for the year 2020/21, I thought that it would be poignant to celebrate and explore the importance of family, relationships, and connections throughout history in 'Family, Relationships, and Connections.'

With the COVID-19 pandemic, our connections with family, friends and other loved ones have proved invaluable. In such difficult times, past and present, we rely on our support networks to keep us strong and moving forward towards brighter days.

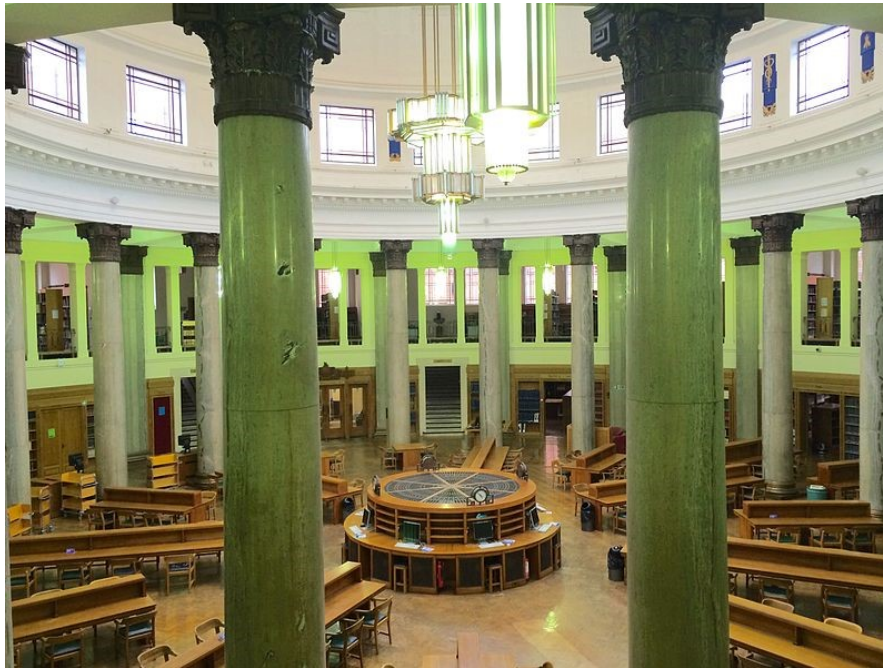
It has been a pleasure to be the Editor of History Student Times for the challenging and extraordinary year of 2020/21 and I would like to thank everybody that has been involved for sharing their enthusiasm, talent and resilience under such unprecedented circumstances.

Jenny Speakman

NOTE: The content and discussion in this issue will necessarily engage with disturbing and/or violent historical events. Much of it will be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. I have tried my best to flag especially graphic or intense content that might discuss elements that some readers may find triggering. CW = Content Warning.

Cover image: The image shows a gathering of the family of John Mossman and Adelaide Hudd on their farm at Bletchley. The occasion was probably to farewell the soldier John Yeo Hudd (1896-1950) who enlisted in the AIF in March 1916. [Link below.](#)

Teaching History in 2020-21



On 16 March 2020 I gave a lecture on 'Plague' to an empty lecture theatre so it could be recorded for the students on my second year Body, disease and society module. That day was the last time that I taught on campus. While as a historian of disease I had been watching the unfolding of the pandemic and did not expect us to be back on campus for several months, as a natural optimist I had hoped that we would be able to interact in person again by September. Over the summer, even as COVID-19 persisted, university staff discussed and planned ways of maintaining the face-to-face experience.

There are many viewpoints about what universities should have done for students and staff this academic year. Even if the move online was important from a public health perspective, one thing is clear: no one wanted it to be this way. Staff in the School of History like spending time with students. Classes – especially seminars – are the hours of the week that we enjoy the most. We like hearing your ideas and seeing you progress during a module and over the course of your degree. While Teams, Zoom and Collaborate have kept us connected this year, we've been genuinely sad that we haven't been able to meet you in person – especially when we've worked with you very closely across the whole year, as with our special subject students.

The year has been challenging for students and staff in lots of different ways. Teaching online has required us to get up to speed with new digital platforms, battle with unreliable wi-fi, and find new ways of doing things. We've appreciated your patience when things haven't worked out first time. While we are looking forward to when we can

get back together in person, it would be good if we can reflect collectively on what we might have learned from these new ways of teaching and learning and what we might want to hold on to. If you've got any thoughts on this – please do get in touch to share them at a.bamji@leeds.ac.uk. I've felt that office hours have worked well online. Being able to type in the chat meant I wasn't subjecting anyone to my terrible handwriting on the whiteboard. And shifting all resources online has saved several trees worth of paper.

As historians, I hope the pandemic has and will continue to prompt us to think about what history can contribute at times of crisis. Pandemics have affected humanity for millennia, and measures that have been prominent like quarantine, vaccination, and public information campaigns all have long histories. Pandemics raise questions about the responsibilities of the state, the role of medical expertise, the importance of communication, the interplay of public health measures and the economy, and the impact of globalisation. These are questions for historians as well as for doctors and politicians. Historians have the ability to reflect on longer-term dynamics, to evaluate the impact of disease and death on society, and to analyse why humans behave in particular ways. Such scrutiny has the potential to deepen the understanding of what we are experiencing and to enhance society's response.

Dr Alex Bamji

All in the Family: The Crusades and Kinship

Given the nepotism of the Middle Ages—a time of dynasty-building through patrilineal inheritance and astute marriages—it is perhaps no surprise that so many crusaders were related to each other. Successive generations of nobles, such as the counts of Champagne and Flanders, participated in crusades and consciously memorialised their achievements as a source of chivalric and masculinised prestige. Yet by investigating kinship networks in the crusades, we see not only how important family allegiances were in the Middle Ages, but also that the very definition of family was much more fluid.

Crusading was a family affair from the First Crusade, even before generations established their primacy in the movement and social pressure to crusade—both from family members and the wider crusading culture—took hold. Historians of the crusades are increasingly examining relations in the somewhat impenetrable private sphere. We see evidence of would-be crusaders consulting their spouses and children—indeed, until the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216), wives had to consent to their departure. Moreover, the question of whether to take the cross would have vast implications for the family—for instance, should spouses go on crusade together, as in the famous case of Eleanor of Castile and Edward I of England.

Once the crusading movement was more established and more interwoven into medieval culture, recruitment efforts called on the nebulous yet accessible idea of ancestral duty. The papacy constructed crusading as a tradition, calling on Latin Christians to defend their fathers' efforts in the Holy Land. Drawing on a higher order, on something larger than the individual crusader

Harriet Purbrick

and crusade was a common rhetoric of crusading recruitment. Indeed, it was hard to justify the extensive travel, let alone the fear of death, of fighting a religion few crusaders knew much about (with the exception of those in places with high Muslim populations like Spain and Sicily). Calling on this sense of familial duty, of what it meant to be a son and to honour the fallen, was a way of abstracting the crusading movement away from its reality. It created a sense of masculine, Christian commonality, a sense of shared enterprise for the “health of Christendom”.

Some crusaders self-identified through elite kinship ties to the crusade movement. Geoffrey V of Anjou signed his letters, “son of the King of Jerusalem”. Interestingly this is standard practice in other cultures, for instance, the Latins' contemporaries, the Muslim Ayyubids, used the title “Abu,” meaning “father of”—yet the rarity of this in Western culture makes this all the more significant. Additionally, affinal relations were often at the forefront of this crusading identity—the crusader and chronicler Jean of Joinville comfortably described nobles Geoffrey II of Sarrebruck and Gobert of Apremont as his cousins, referring to a marriage that occurred three generations ago.

Ultimately, ideas of family in the crusade movement were predicated on themes of access and power. As one historian puts it, “lineage was not a fixed social structure, but a way for the family to talk about their shared past, and thus their collective identity.”



Peter the Hermit Preaching the First Crusade

The Decameron: Women's Looks and Character in Boccaccio's Fourteenth-Century Florentine Novel

"On arriving, he first looked the girl over and commented approvingly on her beauty."

He refers to king Frederick of Sicily's admiral, who went to see what commotion was happening on the main square of an unnamed city. In the square, he found 'her', a woman named Restituta, and her lover Gianni, both tied to a stake. This small fragment is taken from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Decameron*, a fourteenth-century novel consisting of a hundred stories told by its ten main characters to pass the time after fleeing plague-ridden Florence. More specifically, the fragment is part of one of the stories, titled 'The Narrow Escape of Gianni di Procida and His Beloved'. It tells the story of Restituta, kidnapped by Sicilians and given to Frederick as his bride, and of Gianni who tracked down his love. Gianni finds Restituta and the two share a night together before being discovered by Frederick, who sentences them to burn at the stake (though they are saved in the end and get married). The aforementioned admiral is one amongst the many men present at the square to admire Restituta's beauty, rather than focusing on the unfortunate situation. In fact, it is the first thing the admiral notices. Evidently, Restituta's beauty is an important theme within this story, along with her carefulness to stay chaste. Even though she 'breaks' her chastity, she is not written differently than before and she remains the beautiful woman who is worth saving in the end.

Restituta's good looks correspond with her supposed 'good' character; her looks, in fact, make her a good character. Another medieval novel, albeit twelfth-century Byzantine, *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, at first calls one of its female characters, Myrilla, a "lovely enamoured maiden". But, after jealousy caused her to try and kill Rhodanthe, her crush's (Dosikles) lover, she "looked like a victim of black bile". The reader is meant to read Myrilla as a good character at first, caring for the mourning Rhodanthe, before she changes into an attempted murderer with less lovely looks.

Both women are in love; Restituta is in a relationship with Gianni (later becoming his wife), and Myrilla is in love with Rhodanthe's lover. Evidently, their good looks not only relate to their character (good or bad) but also to their potential as a lover or wife. Myrilla is first written as a cute girl, worthy of love, although the reader knows Dosikles is with Rhodante. After her change in character

and looks, the reader is meant to root for Rhodanthe's romantic happiness, while hoping Myrilla remains single. Next, Restituta's story is a love story; the reader is meant to hope for her reunion with Gianni and their happiness. Her chastity, although gone, makes her no worse partner for Gianni.

One reason these women's looks are such a defining factor in their character and potential as a romantic partner is the discipline of physiognomy. In the twelfth century, this ancient philosophy emerged as a practical discipline in the West. It taught that one's physical appearance and character were connected. In order to judge one's physical appearance, they used the theory of bodily complexion. This theory originated in the fifth century BCE with Empedocles, where he gave specific qualities to the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air). Later in that same century, the Hippocratic School connected these qualities and their elements to the four humours, which make up the body. The Hippocratic theory was then taken another step further by Galen, who attributed a combination of two qualities to the humours. Thus, black bile (earth) was a combination of dry and cold; phlegm (water) was cold and moist; blood (air) was moist and warm; yellow bile (fire) was dry and warm. One's bodily makeup was thought to affect one's complexion, therefore the theory of bodily complexion.

This last theory thus proved useful for judging one's appearance, which, according to physiognomy, was a way to determine one's character or personality. This discipline was not unknown to authors. In England, for example, Chaucer used physiognomic sketches for the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*. In Italy, Boccaccio did the same with his female (and male) characters in the *Decameron*.

One of these female characters is one of the leading characters in 'The Trials of Madame Zinevra'. Compared to Restituta's story, it draws similar connections between looks, character, and the potential to be a romantic partner. The story itself focuses on Zinevra, whose husband Bernabò makes a deal with a fellow merchant, Ambrogiuolo, to test his wife's loyalty. As a result of Ambrogiuolo's cheating, Bernabò tries to have Zinevra killed. She escapes, dressed as a man, and becomes the trusted servant of a Sultan.

At the start of the story, before the reader is introduced to Zinevra, Bernabò, Ambrogiuolo and other merchants discuss their wives' loyalty. All but Bernabò are convinced their wives have cheated on them during their time away. Bernabò disagrees, calling Zinevra the perfect wife: not only was she learned in anything a lady should be learned in, but she was also polite, discreet, pure, loyal, and physically attractive and youthful.

Compared to Restituta, Zinevra's impression as a good character and wife does not depend on her looks and chastity alone, even if Boccaccio thought it worthy to mention. But it is amongst the many reasons why Zinevra is the perfect wife, thus placing importance on her looks. So, although to a lesser extent than with Restituta, Zinevra's beauty characterises her as a 'good' married woman.

A final story from the Decameron is much closer to Restituta's. Titled 'Pietro Boccamazza flees with Agnolella', it tells the story of the unfortunate separation of lovers Pietro and Agnolella, whom reunite in the end and get married. Agnolella, like Restituta, does not have much of a character besides her beauty. At the start of the story, she is described as "a charming and very beautiful girl". For the remainder of the story, the only other characteristic she possesses is her love for Pietro. Clearly, Agnolella's looks are the defining factor of her 'good' character and her potential as a lover.

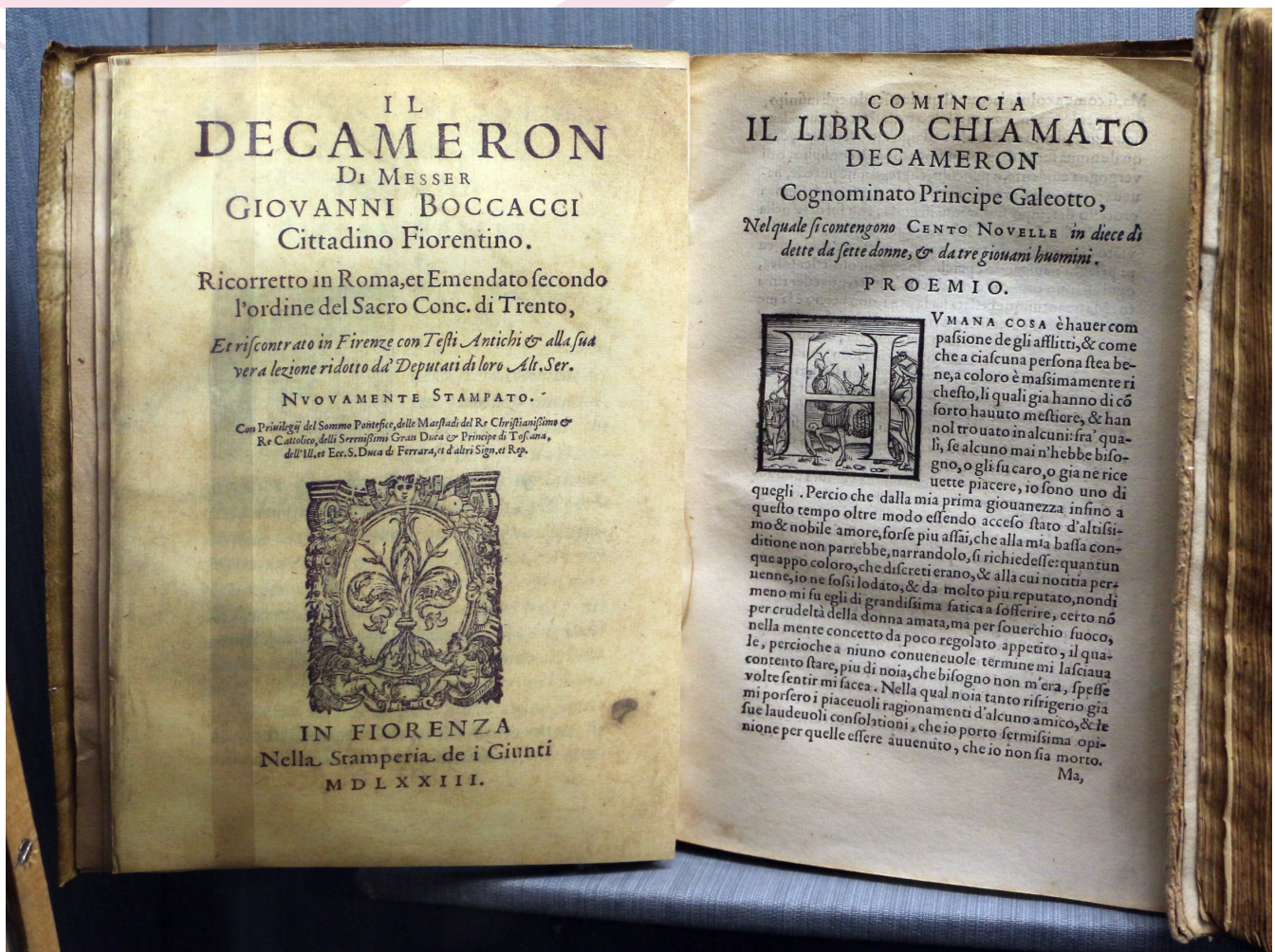
Concluding, Boccaccio's use of beauty to describe his characters reflect contemporary ideas in accordance with physiognomy. Given that three out of the four female characters mentioned here are written as protagonists worthy of their partners, their beauty is a sign of their good character. The only character who made a switch in character type ('good' side character to an antagonist) was Myrilla, albeit not written by Boccaccio, but whose looks and potential as a partner changed for the worse as her character changed.

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Resnick, I.M., *Marks of distinctions: Christian perceptions of Jews in the high Middle Ages* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012)

Quinty Uitman



Like Mother, Like Daughter: The Lives and Works of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley

Rebecca Nimmo

Today, Mary Wollstonecraft is known for being one of the most important political thinkers of the Enlightenment era. Regarded by many as the founder of modern feminism, her 1792 work 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' remains an integral text to the feminist ideology. She reasons that women and men are equally capable and rational, and that women of her time were oppressed into positions of inferiority through their lack of education. Therefore, providing women with the same opportunities as men will produce people of equal ability, as ability is not dictated by gender. Such beliefs seem to be commonplace in modern society, but in Wollstonecraft's time, such beliefs were revolutionary. A consciousness was awakened within women that they were far more capable than society had led them to believe.

Wollstonecraft's reputation was not always positive. Her life was incredibly turbulent, and it was her deeply unhappy childhood, ill-fated personal relationships, illegitimate daughter, and mental health issues that she was remembered for until the twentieth century. This diminished her achievements, especially considering her decision to become an author was a perilous one, and a radical one for a female during her time. It exemplified the oppression of women that Wollstonecraft was so vehemently against - she was viewed purely through the gender role imposed on her, rather than for her achievements. As society evolved, and these gender roles began to disintegrate, her achievements and political philosophy came to be rightfully celebrated.

The last year of Wollstonecraft's life, 1797, was one of the most significant. In this year, she married William Godwin, who is considered to be one of the 'fathers' of the anarchist ideology, and by Godwin, she had her second daughter, Mary. Tragically, Wollstonecraft died eleven days after giving birth to Mary, aged thirty-eight. Wollstonecraft's legacy lives on to this day and continued to live on directly through her daughter. Born Mary Godwin, her daughter went on to marry the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, thus becoming Mary Shelley, the name she is known as today. Her parentage seemingly ensured her genius, but Shelley forged a reputation for herself in her own right.

Shelley was provided with a thorough but informal education through her father, one which was uncommonly advanced for a woman in the early nineteenth century. This intellectual stimulation proved her mother's education to be correct - Shelley's own ability thrived as a con-

sequence of the opportunities her education provided her, as can be seen through her career as an author. Her Gothic novel, 'Frankenstein', published in 1818, is a ground-breaking work of science fiction, and in many ways, this work reflects that of her mother, in that she incorporates feminist critiques of the novel's main character, Victor Frankenstein, into the novel. This is done through the presentation of female characters, as well as through symbolism and other themes, such as the presence of the moon - a traditional symbol of femininity - during several key points in the novel.

Furthermore, Wollstonecraft and Shelley's personal lives mirrored in several ways. Despite Shelley having a relatively happy childhood, which is the opposite of her mother's experience, both lived through financial deprivation and debt in their youth. In addition, both women had experiences of good and bad personal relationships, and married intellectuals from within their own fields - Wollstonecraft marrying a fellow political philosopher, and Shelley marrying a literary contemporary. Moreover, both experienced bouts of depression, Wollstonecraft after being abandoned by the father of her first daughter, Gilbert Imlay, and Shelley after the loss of her first child in 1815.

Ultimately, the lives of both Wollstonecraft and Shelley shaped their works. For Wollstonecraft, her work was a product of the time in which she lived. Wollstonecraft aimed to craft a direct response to the Enlightenment and the events during the French Revolution period in particular. Consequently, she highlighted the importance of women's rights in a period in which human rights were becoming increasingly integral to the foundations of society. For Shelley, on the other hand, her work was a product of her personal life. 'Frankenstein' focuses heavily on the theme of parenthood and was directly influenced by Shelley's loss of her first baby. Additionally, the link between Wollstonecraft and Shelley cannot be overlooked here. Shelley was, herself, raised without a mother, in the same way that the Creature in 'Frankenstein' is raised without a maternal figure. This, along with feminist themes in the novel, demonstrates how much Shelley's work was influenced by her mother.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley were ground-breaking in their respective fields. Through their intellectual brilliance, both forged their own paths in male-dominated industries, creating works that still resonate over 200 years later.



Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)



Mary Shelley (1797-1851)

Leveraging Motherhood: Black Women's Action in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean

CW: Racial Oppression

Mass enslavement in the Caribbean saw the violent dispossession of enslaved Africans from their families and community ties, which subjected enslaved families to a traumatic lifetime of separation and exploitation. It can be easy to slip into thinking of enslaved people, and formerly enslaved people, solely as individuals, ignoring complexities of enslaved family life and inadvertently carrying forward notions of enslaved people as 'socially dead.' Emphasising the importance of family and emotional ties to life during the slavery era, and in the post-emancipation era, can help us to shed old misconceptions of enslaved and free black people as 'kinless.'

Britain's 1833 Slavery Abolition Act massively fell short of granting formerly enslaved people with immediate freedom. Because abolition was swiftly followed by the introduction of the system of 'apprenticeship' from 1834-38, the initial post-emancipation period in the British Caribbean was characterised by resistance and conflict between formerly enslaved people and white planters. Labelled by colonial authorities as a transition period towards full freedom, this new system of apprenticed labour served as a means of keeping the black population tied to their former plantations. Free black people were required to perform compulsory, unpaid labour for their former masters, creating a situation that seemed to many like a continuation of slavery.

The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807 meant that planters in the Caribbean were suddenly forced to rely solely on enslaved women to reproduce their labour force. The 'amelioration' period during the final years of slavery saw some (weak) attempts to improve conditions for enslaved women, with hopes of boosting fertility and maintaining the enslaved population. However, many of the 'privileges' that had been granted to enslaved women during the 'amelioration' period were abruptly dropped with the introduction of apprenticeship. The worsening of working conditions disproportionately affected working mothers, who carried the primary burden of childcare and domestic duties. For example, enslaved mothers to 6 or more children had been exempt from fieldwork during slavery, but this was practice was eliminated under apprenticeship. Working mothers were also forbidden from tending to their children in plantation fields and faced punishment for doing so. Continued colonial oppression in the Caribbean exacerbated these poor living and working conditions, leaving freedwomen with a firm drive for resistance.

Recent historians have argued that women were far more prominent in resistance to apprenticeship than has been previously thought. Women's avoidance of labour during the apprenticeship period was far more extensive than men's was and is now often conceptualised as a means of consolidating and protecting family ties. For example, mothers widely refused to apprentice their children and frequently arrived at work late, using the justification that they were busy caring for their families. Aware of the symbolic weight of motherhood to the British Victorian public, female workers strategically cited their domestic, familial responsibilities in order to challenge colonial exploitation and control of black families. Other women withdrew from plantation labour altogether, migrating to urban centres, such as Kingston, in order to protect their personal and household autonomy.

Dismissed as neglectful mothers during the period of slavery, black women's post-emancipation action directly challenged such falsehoods. While historians of the slavery era have tended to emphasise the exhausting nature of women's dual burden, Mimi Sheller has argued that women's awareness of the duality of their role empowered them to challenge exploitation from planters. Women used their unique position as mothers and workers to demand better labour conditions during apprenticeship on the grounds that they had children and families to support, knowing that this set them apart from the complaints of male workers.

Far from being dispossessed individuals, black female action in the post-emancipation period demonstrates the importance of community and family solidarity to collective action. Mobilising across kinship ties directly challenged colonial authorities' grip on the black population. Citing social duties as mothers did not indicate women retreating to their 'feminine' roles, but was a means of protecting their family ties and rejecting the sense of kinlessness that the system of slavery had attempted to render them with.

Further reading:

Sheller, Mimi, 'Quasheba, Mother, Queen: Black Women's Public Leadership and Political Protest in Post-emancipation Jamaica, 1834-65', *Slavery & Abolition*, 19.3 (1998), 90-117

Amelia Wood

The Fateful Story of The Donner Party



The Donner Party Monument

CW: Cannibalism

In April 1846, a group of pioneers set out along the Oregon Trail in search of more prosperous lands on the West Coast of America; barely half of the group would make it to California, the rest would perish along the way. The story of the Donner Party is filled with tragedy and curiosity and holds a strange place in American history.

The group known as the Donner Party mainly consisted of four families: The Reed family, the Breen family, the Murphy family, and the Donner family. The families were headed by husbands and wives who had uprooted their children in the hope of a better life. In addition to the families, fifteen solo travellers also joined the group.

The migration to California had been completed successfully by groups before, but a series of bad decisions and mishaps followed the Donner Party along the trail. The migration was a precise science and leaving at the right time in the season was crucial. A combination of the party leaving late and taking an untested trail route meant that by the time they reached the Sierra Nevada mountains, it was too late in the season and the group were stranded there during the Winter of 1846. In the harsh conditions, many starved or died due to malnutrition, but the party is best remembered for the fact that many turned to cannibalism to survive. The bodies of the party members who had perished along the way were kept from decomposing by being placed in the snow. So, after oxen and dogs had been eaten, surviving members turned to them. Some of the pioneers kept journals and diaries in which they openly admit that the deceased were chopped up, cooked and then fed to the children who were too hungry to ask questions.

The portrayal of the group in history is intriguing as the events occurred in a time when cannibalism was seen as the ultimate sin. Historians have spoken to descendants of the party in attempts to debunk sensationalist myths, yet some members have still been particularly vilified. When a relief group reached solo traveller Lewis Keseberg in 1847,

he was reported to have said that he now enjoyed the taste of human flesh and it was all he would eat from then on. The press of the time latched on to this comment with fervour.

The experiences of the Donner Party can be viewed as a microcosm of wider events occurring in nineteenth-century America. European settlers to North America were attempting a tumultuous and questionable expansion westward under the guise of Manifest Destiny when in reality, it was at the cost of the suffering and displacement of Native Americans.

Although a dozen families began the trail in Illinois, only two of them, the Reeds and the Breens, made it to California without suffering a single death. The brothers George and Jacob Donner lost both their wives and four of their children. Interestingly, the solo travellers fared the worst and thirteen of the original fifteen did not make it. While many of the parents sacrificed what they could for their children, the solo travellers, it would seem, were often left to fend for themselves.

While we will never fully know the extent of the events that occurred in this fatal migration, it is clear these families were willing to take the most extreme measures to ensure their own survival.

Further Reading:

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Wallis, Michael, *The Best Land Under Heaven: The Donner Party in the Age of Manifest Destiny* (New York: Liveright, 2017)

Georgie Burgess

'The Loneliest of All the Tommies?': The Social Treatment of Disfigured First World War Veterans

CW: Injury

It is frequently argued that social media is responsible for a decline in community interaction, making meaningful personal connections difficult in the modern era. However, more recently, due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of relationships and human connection has come back into the forefront of our minds. When looking back at history, a notable yet widely unknown example of the importance of human connection can be seen through the disfigured veterans of the First World War. These men who suffered horrific injuries, highlight how social connections can be the key to fundamental survival, and they should be used as an example to make positive societal changes in the present day.

The First World War created colossal devastation on a number of fronts. Due to the nature of the new type of warfare and weaponry used in First World War battles, an unprecedented number of men received serious facial injuries in the trenches, a cruel and novel phenomenon at the time. As well as enduring complex and difficult medical procedures, the facially-injured men encountered social challenges and stigma which often led to social ostracization, and thus a lack of human connection. In contemporary newspapers, like the Sunday Herald, the disfigured soldiers were described as 'the loneliest of all the tommies'. Furthermore, those who came into contact with the facially-wounded, such as the orderly Ward Muir, observed that they would never be able to make a meaningful human connection again because of their 'gargoyle' like appearance. In an article for the BBC, historian Ellie Grigsby highlights how many of the soldiers, due to taboos over facial disfigurement and 'different' appearances, were rejected from the norms of social integration, with wives, family members and the public being scared of the men.

Nevertheless, many of the men were able to defy this pariah status; there are tales of comradeship and other social interactions, which provide evidence of successful rehabilitation and reintegration into civilian life for the affected soldiers. Historian Andrew Bamji in *Faces from the Front*, relates many personal narratives of veterans with disfigurements, counteracting their perceived view of isolation and going on to live full and sociable lives. Veteran Arnold Gyde celebrated the fact that people treated him as a normal human being, and that he was able to build comradeship with other patients at the hospital. In cases where there was not a 'culture of aversion' present among family members, friends and the public, there is evidence to suggest that there was the potential to save the lives of many veterans. Contemporary accounts in the newspapers of the time highlight the high levels of suicide among this

category of the soldier from the First World War, especially if they were forced into a life of social isolation.

The historical treatment of these veterans shows the importance of taking care of all members of society, whether that be those with a physical disability or disfigurement, mental illness, or people impacted by the current pandemic. The modern social and political world has often neglected this aspect of human compassion, but a conversation, a smile or a simple hello in both the historical and current era was and is vital for the people who feel most alone in society. Whilst I am writing this, it is Facial Equality Week in the UK, during which the charity Changing Faces is advocating 'to celebrate visible differences', and to end the stigma around facial disfigurement. The fact that to this day, nearly one-quarter of people 'feel self-conscious or embarrassed going out in public as a result of their visible difference', shows the utmost importance in listening to the accounts of the underrepresented people from the past, both to learn from them, and to improve the connections experienced by the vulnerable in the modern-day.



Further Reading

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Hannah Taylor

Men Not Numbers

There is something about the study of history that makes a person cold. Once numbers get above a certain threshold, we simply stop being able to truly grip the full weight of the figure. 100,000. 500,000. 1,000,000. These numbers are simply too large for us to fully wrap our heads around. The remedy for this could be to give at least some of those lost in this sea of numbers faces and names.

White crosses in fields too vast to count become Lance Corporal William Smith, died 30th September 1918. Martin Mueller, Luftwaffe, died 30th June 1941. Or John Joseph Johnson, 80 Anti-Tank Regiment, died 19th September 1945, 28 years old. Just by reading these names and dates, we start remembering those who fought as men and not as numbers.

For me, the name John William Parkinson of the York and Lancaster Regiment humanises the half a million men who died during the Battle of Passchendaele. The final of three major engagements to hold the Ypres Salient from capture by the German Army, Passchendaele saw the forces of the British, Empire, France and Belgium launch a combined offensive under the command of the 'Butcher of the Somme', Douglas Haig. John Parkinson, a relative of mine, was killed in action on the 23rd of October 1917. Years later, in 2017, I visited Tyne Cot, laid a poppy by the plaque showing his name and said a few words. It was at that moment that I realised how our families can deepen

our understanding of history and make us feel the weight of human suffering and the cost of the war.

It is often questioned why history is important, Friedrich Hegel once claimed that "We learn from history that we do not learn from history," but it is implicit in that quote that we find the importance in the study; to learn from the mistakes of the past lest we are doomed to repeat them. Following the Second World War, we find ourselves in what people have come to call "The Long Peace" and whilst war still exists, it is wrong to claim we have learned nothing from the mistakes of the 20th Century but to maintain these lessons, we must never forget the war of the past and the men who died, or that peace shall end.

As of May 2021, no soldiers of the 'Great War' are still with us. Harry Patch, the last active combat soldier of the war, died in 2009 and with his passing we lost any direct personal connection with the conflict that shaped the 20th Century, crushed four empires and killed about 20 million soldiers from 30 different nations. But can you conceive of such a figure? Can you feel the weight of loss from such a number? I confess that I cannot. But I can think of John William Parkinson and, through this personal connection forged by the power of family, can recognise the sheer human cost of the seminal tragedy and that suffering they endured will allow us to learn our lesson and prevent history from echoing itself once again.

Ted Parkinson



The Importance of Family During the Blitz: An Interview with my Grandparents

Lottie Almey

CW: Bombing

My grandparents were both children in the famous Blitz during the Second World War. Being born in 1934 and 1937 respectively, they were both very young, but it is not surprising that they have clear and distinct memories of this distressing time in their childhood. Like most people during this time, the Second World War brought trauma right to their front door. In fact, my Grandma emerged from an air raid shelter one night to find their front door halfway up the stairs, having been blasted off.

Both grew up in Hull, the most severely damaged British city during the war, with 95% of houses damaged, and more than 1,000 hours spent under alert during raids. Similarly, around 38,000 children were evacuated from Hull, my Grandparents being two of them. When asked about their most prominent memories of the war, both said it was being dragged from a warm bed into a cold air raid shelter and being frightened.

There have also been long lasting effects; throughout his life my Grandad has always struggled with sleep, a result of being dragged out of bed so frequently.

My Grandad was a member of a large family with two elder sisters, a younger sister, and a younger brother. During the war, his father was conscripted to a military hospital in Oxford as a member of the RAMC. He remembers the air raids night after night, sitting in a cold and crowded shelter waiting for the bombs to stop, and how the sky was often blood red with fire.

My Grandma lived with her Mum and Dad – a policeman and Air Raid Warden – and her older brother and younger sister. She also remembers a raid where their neighbours a few doors down suffered a direct hit, killing everyone in the house. She remembers the awful smell of destruction and burning that filled her nostrils when exiting the shelter after the all-clear.

I chose this topic for this issue because of one clear theme throughout their memories and experiences of the Blitz: the belief that the strength of the unit that was family was the key to helping them get through. My Grandma spoke of an occasion where her family knew they were not going to get to the shelter at the bottom of the garden in time, so their neighbours – whose shelter was right outside their back door – helped them across and sang to the children throughout the raid to calm them down.

They both speak of the sense of community they experienced. My Grandad mentions how they took it for granted that they knew there was always someone around you to help you get through it. They are both grateful that at that stage of their life, my Grandad being 6 years old, that he had lots of people around him with an abundance of family support. Neither of my grandparents felt isolated and they even have a few happy memories of the war. Being a child through wartime, Grandad remembers how on the way to school there was almost an inner class competition on who could collect the best pieces of shrapnel either from planes or from the AA guns. At breaktime, they would play marbles and if you hit the shrapnel piece you won it! They still played games at breaktime like any other children throughout history have, which goes to show that the war was a traumatic event where everyone suffered from loss, whether that be a family member, a job, or a house, but it was the strength of connections that helped everybody get through it.

In a time when we have been forced to be apart from our loved ones, it is nice to see the power and strength of human and family connections and bear this in mind in the return to some kind of normality in 2021.



Children of an eastern suburb of London, who have been made homeless by the random bombs of the Nazi night raiders, waiting outside the wreckage of what was their home. September 1940.

Part of the Family: How TV Changed the Image of the Family Ideal in Post-War America

The commercial introduction of TVs during 1950s Post-War America created a seismic shift for family life, moving from the Victorian ideology of separate rooms to enjoying more leisure time together. It has certainly made a significant impact on today's society and on the family household, with 95% of UK households now owning a TV. While this newfound 'family time' was created, it wasn't short of scepticism and the fear of abandoning traditional family values.

After the Second World War, America's economic industry boomed and a larger suburban middle-class emerged. Factories were churning out hundreds of new technological luxury goods such as radios, and speedy domestic items such as vacuum cleaners. TVs quickly became an essential item added to the list. New domestic gadgets saved time, and with more disposable income to spend, many families found that they had more free hours to sit together and enjoy listening to the radio or watching TV rather than going out.

The more time the family spent together, the further away they were from previous segregated Christian Victorian ideals. The domestic space was not designed for a family; it was the wife's place of work and she would pride herself in completing all her domestic duties such as cooking and cleaning. If her husband had finished with his work in the office, particularly during the weekends, he would be expected to go out for leisure time with other men or complete DIY activities at home. The children would also be expected to play outside or at least in their own separate spaces. The only situation where a family would spend significant time together would be at mealtimes.

By the early 1900s, these outdated Victorian 'separate sphere' ideologies were shifting to a much more blended homelife. Women were able to participate in the social sphere and men took more domestic responsibilities. But major domestic change was yet to come. After the Second World War, wireless technology and broadcasting tools were used for leisure and, in turn, the introduction of radios and TVs to the house meant they became a must-buy for many. By 1955, around 65% of households in the US had a TV. This brought a sense of 'togetherness' which the family had never experienced before. The TV was slowly replacing the fireplace as the central feature of the living room and more 'family time' was spent together. Advertisements on TV and in magazines even pushed the ideal

Henna Ravjibhai



1950s Family Watching Television

of the nuclear family all watching TV together, a huge shift from before. TV also became a remedy for various family problems: troublesome children were put in front of the TV to keep them quiet and therefore spent more time with a husband which might not have happened in the past. It was also a pastime held in common by all members of the family. In contrast to their work or school, this was an activity that they could all engage with as one group.

However, TV, like any other modern technology, was also faced with many negative reactions. In fact, some claimed it did the reverse of uniting the family. Many people found TVs a distraction and an alienating way of being together and alone at the same time. Furthermore, there was also apprehension of technology taking over lives, especially children going 'bug-eyed' by watching too much TV. It was feared it would become an addiction equal to taking drugs.

Sceptical or not, without a doubt, the introduction of TVs into the household has made a huge impact on family and wider social life. Especially in these times, the need to be connected through a common TV show such as the Line of Duty finale, Bridgerton or Tiger King, has proved how valued TV is in unifying people and changing social ideals.

East and West Germany: Rejoined But Not United



Berlin 1989; picture taken soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9

There are two historical misconceptions about the Berlin Wall. The first is that the Wall only confined the German capital, where in actual fact similar restrictions were happening at all of the GDR's borders. The second is that prior to August 13th, 1961, Germany was divided only in name.

The truth is that German families were forcibly separated long before the Wall was erected. The '50s was an inconsistent decade, with moments of liberalisation from around June 1953 to early 1957 strangled by repressive travel restrictions. In 1958, only 612,686 people were given permission to go to the West, less than a fourth of 1957. Family reasons were often rejected. *Grenzgänger*, those that lived in the East but worked in the West, and *Republikflucht*, refugees to the West, were largely responsible for these restrictions. Both of these groups used the permeable Berlin as the transition point between East and West. Those who fled and committed *Republikflucht* had their families punished, and both *Grenzgänger* and *Republikflucht* soon earned the ire and resentment of many who had to live through the measures made to crack down on such crimes. We see here the beginning of a cultural separation between East and West Germany, and a mutual resentment.

These cultural, and crucially economic, differences had time to embed themselves from August 13th, 1961 to November 9th, 1989. Twenty-eight years took its toll, and optimism for reunification soon soured. It was perhaps too good to be true to believe that two communities that were once one could go back to the way things were after such a

long time apart. Take any look at German economic or political maps, and the border is still there. Disposable income in the West far outranks that in the East, whilst the opposite is true for rates of unemployment. The former FRG is also far more diverse and has a much younger, active population, compared to the ageing East, where the far-right AfD party finds most of its support. An East German interviewed by the historian Richard Major lamented that when the wall was up, 'everyone thought the grass was greener on the other side; now the grass closer to home seemed greener through rose-tinted spectacles.' *Ostalgie*, nostalgia for the former East Germany, is a popular phenomenon among Easterners. Few missed the repression, understandably, but with the idea that East Germany was 'annexed' by the former West (a point difficult to argue, considering that 85% of Eastern businesses were purchased by Westerners in the 1990s) led many to harken back to a time when they weren't second-class citizens.

It has been thirty years since reunification, yet the border still spiritually remains. Former FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt was right when he said, 'Walls in the head often stand for longer than those erected from concrete blocks'. The East-West division in Germany persists, and it does not seem likely that the communities on either side will go back to what they once were. The shadow of the Wall persists, thirty-two years after falling.

Alfie Coulstock-Cockeram

An American Dynasty: The Kennedys

CW: Mental Health, Violent Death

The Kennedy family are an American political family that has become renowned across the world due to the positions of power that its members have held. Most famous are John F Kennedy, who became president of the USA in 1961, and Senator Robert 'Bobby' Kennedy who served as Attorney General. American political dynasties almost seem contradictory in their very nature. After all, the USA was founded on principles that rejected inherited status and opposed the authority of the British royal family. Therefore, the 'phenomenon' of American political families challenges the foundational myths of the modern democratic state.

The Kennedys' grasps of political power began in 1884 when Patrick Joseph Kennedy was elected to the Massachusetts General Court. Patrick's son Joseph Senior married Rose Fitzgerald, and their nine children held some of the highest offices in the US. Their second eldest son was President Kennedy, their third son was Robert Kennedy, their fourth son was Edward 'Ted' Kennedy, who served as Senator for Massachusetts for 47 years until his death in 2009 and made a presidential campaign in 1980. To name but a few, JFK's daughter, Caroline, served as ambassador to Japan from 2013 to 2017 and Bobby's granddaughter, Maeve, served in several important health positions in the Obama administration. The Boston Globe notes that a member of the Kennedy family has served in a federal elective office every year from 1947 to 2011, and Business Insider ranked the Kennedy's as the second most influential political family in the USA.

The Kennedy 'curse' has been discussed in many circles, from political historians to fans of superstitious occult, referring to the series of tragedies that have plagued the family. Of Joseph Sr's nine children, he tragically outlived four. His eldest son, Joseph Jr, died at the age of 29 while serving in the Second World War, and his father had originally planned for him to reach the office of presidency. JFK and Bobby Kennedy were both assassinated only 5 years apart from each other in scenes that shocked the nation. His second eldest daughter Kathleen passed away in a plane crash in 1948 at the age of 28. Her father was the only one to attend her funeral, as her mother fervently deplored her new relationship with the still-married 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, following the death of her first husband. Their first daughter, Rosemary suffered from either mental illness or a mental disorder (it is not clear which as efforts were made to cover up her severe depression to avoid electoral embarrassment) and was subject to a lobotomy which left her institutionalised for the rest of her life.

Esmee Fitton

The 'curse' passed down generations, as JFK's son, JFK Jr, was killed in a plane crash that also killed his wife and her sister. JFK's wife suffered a miscarriage, a stillbirth and the loss of their son 39 hours after birth, only three months before his father's assassination.

The children of Bobby Kennedy did not escape the 'curse' either. His son David suffered from an overdose after years of drug addiction struggling from his father's violent death. Another son, Michael, was killed in a 1997 skiing accident aged 39. Grandchildren of Ted and Bobby have also suffered from the 'curse', with the most recent casualty being Maeve Kennedy McKean and her young son in 2020, who went missing in Chesapeake Bay in a canoe. Their bodies were found after the search party was called off a day later. There are more tragic stories to tell, that have certainly piqued the interest of investigators.

The issue of family relations in American politics is topical, with the Clintons and the Bushes being obvious examples. Problems with the involvement of Trump's children during his administration and controversies over Biden's son, Hunter, have put the issue front and centre, and many draw parallels to one of the most prominent political families of the 20th century, the Kennedys.



Photograph of Kennedy Family with Dogs During a Weekend at Hyannisport, August 1963.

Photograph of Kennedy Family with Dogs During a Weekend at... | Flickr

An American Dynasty: The Bushes

While Business Insider ranked the Kennedys as the second most influential American political family, the top spot was granted to the Bush family. The Texan political dynasty have become known for many significant family members, , fostering two presidents, other government officials, a National Football League executive, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame and two TV personalities. The family spans back to Obadiah Newcomb Bush, born in 1797, but most would recognise the union of Prescott Sheldon Bush and Dorothy Wear Walker as creating the Walker Bush clan, with their son George H. W. Bush becoming the President in 1989 after serving as vice president under Reagan. The family are not without their controversies, however, and many would credit them with bringing the notion of an American political dynasty into the 21st century.

The Bushes grasp of political power began with the succession of Prescott Bush to the US Congress, as Senator from Connecticut in 1952. Prescott's father had been a steel industrialist, building up the wealth of the family. Prescott himself worked as a successful investment banker, becoming a partner at his Wall Street company before running for Senator. He helped his five children be successful by using his vast network of connections, aiding George H. W. to have a fruitful business career after relocating to Texas, where his oil companies made him millions before he moved on to politics. His positions varied widely, from Representative from Texas in Congress, UN Ambassador in the early 70s, to Ambassador to China from 74 to 75, Director of the CIA, before the prize of the White House. His son George W. Bush was less successful – thanks to his father he went from the military to Yale to the oil business yet struggled to make much of his name for a long time. His younger brother, Jeb, was more successful, becoming governor of Florida in 1998 and remaining in this position until 2007. Their younger brothers, Neil and Marvin, entered business easily but have so far stayed away from politics.

Desperate to make himself a success, George W. committed to a life-changing regime, becoming teetotal and more devoutly Christian and family centred. He became the governor of Texas and later achieved the presidency. The father-son presidents have naturally provoked a lot of direct comparisons, with them launching wars in the Middle East, both speaking at Reagan's funeral, their Republican policies compared and contrasted. The appetite for the Presidency did not end there, however, as Jeb launched a 2016 campaign that was overshadowed by Trump. The very concept of his running led to the possibility of a Clin-

Esmee Fitton



President George W. Bush and Family Attend Easter Service at Camp David

ton vs Bush campaign season, setting two of the most important political families against each other. Most recently, Jeb's son George Prescott Bush has been stirring attention, as he currently stands as Texas Land Commissioner since 2015 and many predict a fruitful political future for him.

All of this begs the question as to why America has successful political families, especially one that can produce two presidents only eight years apart. Some answers can be illuminated with the passing of George H. W. in 2018, aged 94, only seven months after the death of his wife Barbara, aged 92. Cartoons by the artist Marshall Ramsey were circulated, showing Barbara being welcomed in heaven by her daughter Robin, who had lost her battle with leukaemia aged 3. Ramsey published another cartoon, showing the three reunited after George passed away, and this emotional response showed the nation mourning the loss of Bush as not just a previous president, but as a husband, father, and family man. Arguably, it is much easier for the electoral populace to make emotional connections to political figures when their family members are already well known. George W.'s emotional speech at his father's funeral displayed him as a son, a father, and a grandfather himself, a human being with vulnerabilities and family connections like the general public. In the soap opera drama of politics, it is natural that candidates who have links to already recognised 'characters' will have an easier time. The Bush family has been successful in appearing relatable, despite the mass of wealth they have consolidated for themselves. Ultimately, this American dynasty seems to be going nowhere.

Houses in New York's LGBTQ+ Ballroom Culture

The house-ballroom community, established by predominantly black and Latino gay and bisexual men and trans-women, rose out of the Harlem Renaissance of New York in the 1920s. The community developed into a vibrant underground sub-culture of great cultural significance that still holds prominence today. Carrying a long legacy in New York's nightlife, balls were an opportunity for individuals to showcase their fashion, creativity and art and offered unique freedom for nonheteronormative personal and gender expression. Contestants 'walk' in different categories that commented on popular culture and centre on high energy voguing, Haute fashion and the appropriate attitude in hopes to win trophies, prizes and 'legendary' status.

This underground community was introduced to the mainstream in Jennie Livingston's seminal 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning* and *Voguing*, a dance style originating in ball culture, taking the forefront in Madonna's 1990 'Vogue' music video.

Groups, known as houses, are formed by individuals who compete against each other during balls and often act like a family for marginalized members of the LGBTQ+ community, offering a figurative, and sometimes literal, second home. These chosen families provide a sense of belonging and a support network for gay, gender nonconforming and transgender youth. An alternative from the harsh reality of ostracization often presented within their conventional support systems. Non-gender specific 'mothers' and 'father' figures make up these houses, along with other family members such as 'aunts' and 'uncles.'

Houses are named after iconic fashion designers, for example, the House of Mugler and House of Balmain, or pioneering ballroom cultural figures. Here is a quick overview of three, but not all, of the legendary houses in the ballroom community.

House of LaBeija

The House of LaBeija was founded by legendary drag queen Crystal LaBeija in 1977 and is considered one of the first families in ballroom culture. In a scene now memorialized in the 1968 documentary *The Queen*, LaBeija proclaimed her indignation towards the overwhelming white-centric pageant environment of the 1960s and 1970s, where queens of colour were routinely snubbed for their white counterparts, after she placed 4th overall in *Miss All-America Camp Beauty Pageant*. A previous winner of 'Miss Manhattan,' she began hosting balls for black queens under the banner of the House of LaBeija. Crystal was succeeded as 'mother' by Pepper LaBeija who was highlighted in the documentary *Paris Is Burning* and continued to help

Aisling Lantorp

cultivate a space where young, queer people of colour could live out their fantasies for the next 30 years.

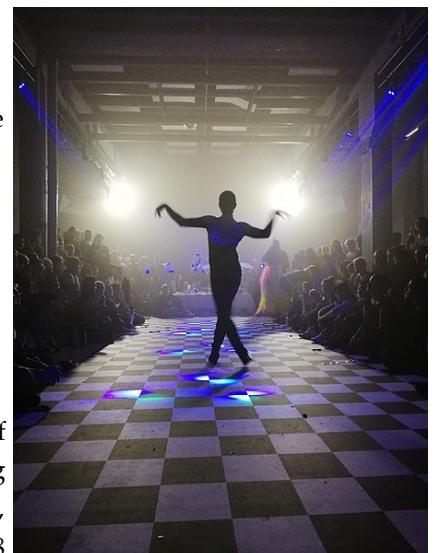
House of Xtravaganza

Under Hector Xtravaganza's pioneering vision, the House of Xtravaganza, the first Latinx house, was established in 1982, with Angie Xtravaganza becoming the dominant 'mother' of the house. The house quickly became extremely culturally significant, with members appearing in 1988's *December Vogue* alongside Naomi Campbell. Jose and Luis Xtravaganza, children of the house, worked as lead choreographers and dancers for Madonna, rising to fame and breaking barriers at a time where HIV/AIDS were taking more and more young LGBTQ+ lives. Paris Is Burning highlighted legendary child Venus Xtravaganza, who held a strong presence in Harlem's ball scene. Venus' murder, a few days before the completion of documentary filming, acts as a heart-breaking reminder of the ever-present threat of violence that trans women face.

House of Latex

The House of Latex was created in collaboration between Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) and members of the ballroom community to increase awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that was having a sweeping effect on the community and threatening to significantly decrease its population. The first annual GMHC Latex Ball was held in 1993 and acted as a central part of the organisation's outreach program. Ballroom offered intervention in a unique way with the house structure assisting through means of prevention and support. In an interview with VICE during *The Latex Ball 2017*, a key figurehead in the community Luna Ortiz commented that 'with AIDS coming in the 80s, balls became even more important because we were able to comfort each other and celebrate each other in the midst of all of the madness of our friends dying... Ballroom is a form of activism in its own way.'

Voguing ball as part of "Give me life" voguing festival in Berlin, November 2018



'Cash for Class': The American Heiresses that Saved the British Aristocracy

George Helliwell

'I'm not just a last name, I'm a legacy', declares Sonja Morgan in the title sequence of *The Real Housewives of New York City*. Her high-profile divorce to the grandson of banker J.P. Morgan brought her financial difficulties, but her last name embodies the dynasty he left behind. Indeed, his immense fortune, estimated around twenty-five billion dollars today, enabled the family to reach the pinnacle of New York, and American, society. However, his vast wealth was not enough to make the family distinctive from the rest of New York's elite families who made their fortunes during the Gilded Age.

In the 1870s, wealthy Americans came up with a scheme that would make them distinct from their counterparts. They decided to marry their daughters to the aristocratic men of Europe so that their daughters would be titled. In a country without an aristocracy, suddenly every wealthy family aspired to have a daughter that was a duchess, or even a princess. The young women often did not have any choice in the matter and became known as the "Dollar Princesses".

In 1899, Mary Harcourt, J.P. Morgan's niece, married Lewis Harcourt, the 1st Viscount Harcourt. Even though he was only a Lord of the manor at the time of their wedding, he became a Viscount in 1917. She brought her wealth, including the 'Harcourt emeralds', and her charisma which, as *The New York Times* stated in her husband's obituary, 'doubled her husband's social successes' as she was 'very popular'.

Despite marrying a Vanderbilt, a name synonymous with the wealth of the Gilded Age, Alva Vanderbilt felt that herself and her husband were ignored by New York high society. She particularly resented the fact that Caroline Astor, known to society as "The Mrs Astor", who led the Four Hundred (a list of the elite of New York society), did not invite the couple to her annual ball. Mrs Astor did not like the Vanderbilts since they had earned their wealth rather than having inherited it. She believed that they were buying their status. Alva decided to hold her own costume ball in 1883, resulting in Mrs Astor having to ask for an invitation and acknowledging the family.

When Alva divorced her husband in 1895, who had long been unfaithful, it was extremely rare for couples in society to get divorced as it was considered not the "done thing". Indeed, the elite of New York men would quietly have affairs, and there was nothing their wives could do about it as it was not discussed. The well-publicised divorce portrayed Alva coming out on top, keeping her man-

sion on Fifth Avenue, her summer cottage in Newport and custody of her children. However, she did not retain custody of her cherished social standing.

Alva decided she would not only regain her social standing but improve it. The scheme depended on her daughter, Consuelo, who had just reached eighteen. While travelling in Europe, Alva arranged for Consuelo to meet the ninth Duke of Marlborough, Charles Spencer Churchill, one of the most eligible bachelors among the British aristocracy. The Marlborough's desperately lacked money but the Vanderbilts had it in abundance. Alva brought the Duke to America in August 1895 and kept him at her home in Newport. Consuelo's engagement to the duke later that month made front-page news across the country, and everyone in society wanted an invitation. Even Queen Victoria sent a telegram congratulating the couple on their wedding day. Consuelo brought a dowry of seventy-five million dollars leading popular opinion to believe that the duke only married Consuelo for her money. Mary Elizabeth Lease, the American lecturer, writer and political activist, declared the marriage a disgrace to American heritage and said 'once we made it a boast that this nation was not founded upon class distinctions, now we are selling our children to titled debauches'.

Buying noble titles was not a new practice, but Americans during the Gilded Age took it to new heights with some of the most lavish dowries in history. In the series *Downton Abbey*, Cora Crawley, wife of Lord Grantham, is based on these "Dollar Princesses". In real life, Highclere Castle, where *Downton* was filmed, was saved by Almina Wombwell, the illegitimate daughter of the millionaire banker, Alfred de Rothschild, who, in 1895, married the fifth Earl of Carnarvon, George Herbert. She used her dowry to sustain the castle, as well as enabling Herbert to be the financial backer in the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

As the 19th century progressed, the aristocratic families were struggling with their expensive lifestyles and the depression in agriculture. Their solution, therefore, manifested in the form of marriage to American heiresses. By the 1930s, some 350 American heiresses had married into the British aristocracy and had brought with them an estimated one billion dollars in today's money.

Familial Separation and Cultural Erasure in Xinjiang

“You are a bad person. The Chinese police are good people.”



CW:
Racial Oppression

This quote is from a seven-year-old Uyghur girl on a rare phone call to her father, Tahir Imin, a prominent Uyghur academic who currently resides in the United States. Tahir has not seen his daughter for many months, as she has become yet another casualty of the massive internment camp system which has operated in Xinjiang, a large, sparsely populated region in the northwest of China. These camps, which predominantly target Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities of China, ostensibly exist to ‘cure’ these people of ‘extremist thought’ through vocational training and ideological instruction.

There are over one million adults in this system of systemic repression, with widespread reports of beating, rape and forced sterilisation. However, what has happened to the children of these Uyghurs who have found themselves at the mercy of the Chinese state? It appears that a parallel system of ‘orphanages’ have sprung up and many thousands of children with ‘double detained’ parents have found themselves in state care. These children are reportedly ‘happily growing up under the loving care of the Party and the government’ according to a government source, yet the truth is far more concerning. These children, some of whom are extremely young, are subjected to a comprehensive education in the follies of Islam, Uyghur culture, and the actions of their own families. This is only one part of a ‘Sinicization’ of Xinjiang that has been occurring since at least the 1980s and has encompassed ideological and moral factors. These children will likely grow up in state care, with limited contact with their detained relatives, while being taught to renounce their parents’ actions, many of which are completely innocuous.

The physical separation of Uyghur families is just one facet of the breaking of familial bonds among Xinjiang’s Uyghurs. The CCP has also honed in on much more fundamental aspects of the Uyghur family unit, that of language and culture. Since the 1980s, the Xinjiang government has pursued what it calls a ‘bilingual’ education policy, with classes and subjects being shared between native language and Putonghua, the name for the standardised Mandarin promoted by the CCP. However, bilingual education is something of a misnomer, as instead of equal support for minority languages, Putonghua has steadily become the only viable language in China. Almost all high schools and higher educational institutions in Xinjiang solely use Putonghua as a medium of instruction now. Many elderly Uyghurs can no longer converse with their younger relatives. The ideological nature of State-Run Education has meant that many young Uyghurs are far more supportive of the Chinese government than their elders, and more willing to censure their own family.

It is becoming increasingly likely that due to these policies, the new generation of Uyghur youth will grow up unable to fully connect with their rich cultural heritage or language and will more readily assimilate into the Han-centric view of China promoted by the CCP. A whole ethnic group will slowly but surely start to disappear, as Uyghur history is forgotten, and the Uyghur language phased out.

Luke Anderson

Mrs Hinch: Liberating or Oppressive?

Is the newest social media trend of women becoming absorbed in housework for online content creation liberating, or does it maintain oppressive social media norms that have been intensified over the coronavirus pandemic?

Coronavirus has accelerated our use of social media amongst many different platforms, from the more traditional social media outlets like Pinterest and Facebook to the newer Instagram and TikTok. One may notice when scrolling, that many people have accounts, groups or posts dedicated to what they are interested in. This idea has translated into many women creating accounts to express their housework. Through looking at the way women have come together to all express their passion for housework, it needs to be analysed as to whether this allows women to indulge in something they enjoy or if it is another tool fuelled by oppressive gender stereotypes.

Traditionally, gender roles have always been set in stone. Women were expected to raise children, stay in the home to allow the man to be the breadwinner and provide for the family. This system is denounced by Marxist feminists, as women complete the unpaid labour of housework and raising the child, which allows capitalism to thrive. The fact that this trend is being seen now within the realm of social media is extremely interesting. Many people have slammed influencers for pushing gender norms. Many have described it as putting a 'bow on oppression'.

'Mrs Hinch' in particular has racked up 4.1 million followers on Instagram. She often shows videos of how she cleans her oven, toilet or how she cooks her favourite dinner. Furthermore, she also does hauls of cleaning products. She boasts about the different varieties of bleach she has obtained. This substantiates the idea that women do 60% more domestic labour than men do. The housework is unpaid and takes on average three hours a week. This is three hours less for women to relax, progress their careers or enjoy a hobby.

However, it is the fetishization of women cleaning on the internet that is ignorant of the reality. Despite there being some men on the internet that take part in this new culture of cleaning and posting about it on social media, it is mostly women. With regards to the argument of liberation versus oppression, on one hand, women are choosing to take part in this activity. They are actively creating positive communities where women all over the country and the world and create positive relationships. However, is this a way that oppressive gender norms have been concealed as a hobby? The striking similarities to the 1950's housewife push a narrative that has historically oppressed women. In the 1950s, very few women worked after getting married.



Retro Vintage Home - Free Image on Pixabay

Despite these women taking part in strenuous activities and unpaid labour, they were left with no money of their own; trapping them in marriages whether they wanted to be in them or not. Furthermore, there were no supermarkets, dishwashers or washing machines that would help women with their work. Being a housewife historically was extremely time-consuming. The lack of freezers meant more trips to the shops were needed, and the fact supermarkets did not exist meant they had to go to many different shops to get their daily food. Despite technology having advanced since then, it raises the question of whether those taking part in this social media phenomenon are aware of the oppression women faced 70 years ago and have faced throughout history.

The answer to the question is different depending on the woman. Feminism is all about choice, and thus if these women are choosing to clean, then they must feel liberated. Or is there a reason why they are choosing to clean, to maintain an expectation that is placed on women to create a happy and clean house for the family? Mrs Hinch and other influencers like her may just make this housework more bearable. However, it is important to maintain the argument that whether this liberates or oppresses women, there still should be an equal split of domestic labour within a partnership. Whether modern-day women feel liberated or oppressed by the standards of feminine domesticity, the split of housework within a heterosexual partnership remains a strong concern within feminist debates. The simple act of housework holds intense historical weight and embodies the struggles and oppression of women throughout time.

Bethany Keyte

“He has also ruined my life, so I can’t help loving him”:

The Queer History of Love Through Written Word

There is certainly no shortage of the history of the written word, particularly in relation to the concept of love. Whether it was acclaimed novelist Ernest Hemingway to Marlene Dietrich, Georgia O’Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz, or even the infamous scoundrel Henry VIII to the ill-fated Anne Boleyn, our history books are littered with their words of love and affection. What I seek, however, are the harder to find verses of adoration, of relationships between adults of a queerer persuasion. It’s these hidden words of history that allow us to see a more elusive, and diverse past.

The first couple we look to is that of author Vita Sackville-West and novelist Virginia Woolf, whose correspondence spans almost twenty years. After reading through pages and pages of introductions including ‘my darling’, ‘dearest honey’, and even ‘dearest creature’, it is hard not to feel like an unfortunate third wheel.

Vita writes in 1928, “Was your telegram intended to convey a command or merely a message? I mean, should it be written ‘Love Virginia!’ - an imperative, - or ‘Love. Virginia.’? Whichever way you read it, it was very nice and unexpected, and if a command it has been obeyed.” Knowing that this relationship was the catalyst for *Orlando*, one of Woolf’s most recognised novels, brings great perspective into its conception. These letters in particular have been used in a more modern sense, being the basis of the 2018 film *Vita & Virginia*, of which their correspondence played a vital if not pivotal role in contextualising and spurring the film on. While we know this relationship was not one of permanency, you don’t have to scour through subtext to see how special it was to those involved.

Looking to another literary couple we discuss the letters of Oscar Wilde to Lord Alfred Douglas. One letter to Alfred from September 1894 ends, “You are more to me than any one of them has any idea; you are the atmosphere of beauty through which I see life; you are the incarnation of all lovely things. When we are out of tune, all colour goes from things for me, but we are never really out of tune. I think of you day and night.” A selection of Wilde’s letters to Alfred would ultimately be used against him on charges of ‘gross indecency’ in the trials that led to his imprisonment from 1895 to 1897. It’s difficult to imagine similar words of fondness could be used in a case to incriminate someone. The article title itself being Wilde’s description of Douglas after his imprisonment showing just how complex the relationship was. And they say romance is dead?

Finally, to George Cecil Ives, a campaigner for British homosexual law reform. Historian Matt Cook looked to his diary to answer questions on queer lives and the family. The diary, roughly three million words, details Ives’ life

from 1886 to 1950. What is notable is his sincere defining and redefining of the relationships in his life, those biological and not, describing the daughter of a couple who resided with him for over thirty years as, “the youngest of my adopted family - and she is 47!” During this time, culturally, the importance placed on the home and the so-called ‘nuclear family’, as well as its role in ensuring national and imperial wellbeing, was key. Therefore, Ives’ diary is vital as a literary source as it shows non-conventional familial practice that was far different than what was considered ‘normal’ in mid-twentieth century Britain. In viewing this, however, it is important to keep in mind Ives’ wealth. His privilege certainly made living more freely an easier option. Despite his unusual and sometimes unpleasant personality, given his harsh opinions of working-class people, his words show us a cultural history of people that are usually left unseen and thus left invisible.

Ultimately, one has to ask themselves if, as readers looking at the words written to a loved one, a diary, or a confidant, have we overstepped our bounds as simple historians and become a sort of relationship voyeur? Were these words not meant for the letter recipient or the diary owner themselves? Did the author imagine that, down the line, their heartfelt revelations would be free to access by curious onlookers?

Erla Halldórsdóttir addresses this question within her article, ‘Fragments of Lives – The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research’. She summarises, “Private sources are problematic; there are ethical questions regarding how and what to use, how to interpret or represent the results, what perspective should be used.” We, as casual observers, can never properly understand the dynamics of relationships we were not a part of. Yet the trouble is, in seeking aspects of queer history that were so long considered ‘indecent’, sometimes we have to seek out the private word of our elusive historic counterparts. If not, we run the risk of having one very generic looking history, leaving some of us longing for more.

And while I love to yearn just as much as the next lockdown deprived romantic, we don’t want to yearn forever.

Further reading

Erla Halldórsdóttir, ‘Fragments of Lives - The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research’, *Nordic Journal of Women’s Studies*, 15.1 (2007), 35-49

Liv Casapieri

There's No Place Like Home: Queer Communal Living and Alternative Family

Becca Iliffe

At some point in the last year, many a mind will have considered the possibility of running deep into the woods and starting a new life, living off the land, at one with nature. Some might say it's the mounting pressure and rising expectations of a fast-paced modern life that's provoked a recent resurgence of this fantasy on social media platforms like TikTok. But the escapist dream of setting up a brand-new living environment outside of societal norms isn't new; communal living as a concept has existed for centuries. Queer communes specifically are an amazing example of how alternative lifestyles and ideas of the family have been used to push conformist boundaries.

Queer communal living typically takes the form of LGBTQ+ adults living together in a building or space and sharing out chores. Sometimes the goal is to create a safe space within the community and discover an alternative form of family. Sometimes the goal is experimentation, pushing boundaries of gender roles, dismissing monogamy and building a space to allow creativity to flourish. In the past, these spaces often ended up becoming centres within queer communities, providing a zone where the personal and political closely overlapped.

Houses in cities like London and Toronto provide examples of these alternative families. In 1981, Diana Meredith moved into a lesbian commune house on Washington Avenue, Toronto, that ran for five years. She described how the occupants would use the living room for political meetings, look after a child once a week as part of an anthropological experiment in parenting, and create networking charts that mapped each person's overlapping relationships within the community. In the same city, Dennis Findlay set up a gay rooming house in 1976. Here, the kitchen became the social centre of the house, with cooperative living chores shared out amongst the occupants, and spontaneous dinner parties often occurring. In Brixton 1974, squatters set up the South London Gay Community Centre, developing a space which some used to escape oppression and others to experiment with socialist living and polyamory. Washington D.C. Gay Liberation House in the 60s was used as a de facto community centre, coordinating dances, religious festivals, and providing lodging for people attending Black Panther rallies.

Communal houses in cities soared in popularity from the 1960s onwards, swept up in the counterculture movement which made challenging the conformist structures of society seem more achievable. For the queer community, radical houses like these have been represented as reactionary to the quieter, de jure queer activism of the 1950s. However,

queer alternative living also existed long before the later twentieth century. Moving to more rural pastures, Charleston Farmhouse was created by artist Vanessa Bell, her lover Duncan Grant, and his lover David Garnett in 1916. It was intended to be an alternative creative spot for art outside of London. Many of the Bloomsbury Group frequented the house, using it to experiment with sexual borders. It flourished not just creatively, but as a centre of alternative family, with Bell's husband and children often visiting. It still runs as a hub for the arts today, leaving a deliberate legacy from its attempt to conceive an alternative form of living.

Of course, as much as these communes can be viewed through rose-tinted glasses, they had their fair share of problems. Many communes created by American men on the back of the liberation movements of the 60s had issues with racial diversity, lacking intersectional goals. Clashes over class have also been reported within commune houses, even between people who consider themselves family. Diana's account of her time in Toronto described how she was often branded as entitled by others, which made her defensive and caused disagreements. Arguments between commune members who worked and those who could afford not to also disrupted the spaces, such as in the particularly wealthy area of San Francisco. Queer communes can also be very visible and easily identified, which unfortunately has led to many being the target of hate crimes.

Yet the history and incredible stories that come from these communes remain. The idea of removing yourself from mainstream society and creating a better, more inclusive environment isn't new. A potential resurgence in the popularity of queer communes might provide an avenue for a new generation to experiment and find a happier lifestyle than ones they feel they're forced into. In the past, queer communes have been a sight of alternative family and spaces where binaries can be challenged creatively. Looking further into these histories and incorporating them into the field of family history more generally will provide a whole new avenue to be explored.

Further Reading

Any Other Way: How Toronto Got Queer (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2017)

Steven Vider, "'The Ultimate Extension of Gay Community': Communal Living and Gay Liberation in the 1970s", *Gender & History*, 27.3 (2015), 865-881

What Does the Historic Decline of the UK High Street Mean for Society?

During 2020, 17,500 stores closed their doors to the British public. This is an average of 48 store closures per day, and has had a significant impact on the way our high streets are starting to look and feel. This trend of closures is due to many factors, chiefly amongst which is the relatively recent proliferation of online shopping, with 87% of purchases now being made online. On top of this, the coronavirus pandemic has caused thousands of stores to close their doors to British shoppers, with the ill-fated businesses unable to weather multiple government government-mandated closures throughout the last year.

The decline of the high street, whilst having increased in recent years has been an historical trend for far longer. The origins of the high street in the UK go back as far as 1688, by which time there were at least 50,000 shop vendors in Britain. It was not until the mid 19th century however that the high-street as an institution began to thrive, with culminations of the most important shops forming the central points of commerce that 21st-century shoppers would find recognisable across the country today. A clear departure away from the market style of shop that defined the earliest stores can be seen around 1850; merchants became more inclined to purchase permanent premises to display their goods, and the use of glass windows to separate the produce from the customers became popularised. The technological advancements of the industrial revolution had begun to transform our city centres into the bustling communal areas that the high streets within them came to represent, becoming microcosms of a society that was booming at large.

When then, did this state of decline become endemic to the high street's existence? High street retail employment fell in more than three-quarters of all local authorities between 2015 and 2018 according to the Office of National Statistics. This is an observable trend since the start of the current century however, emblematic of the decrease in the frequency of in-person shopping, as well as the more general economic decline within the retail sector as perceived in the UK over the past decade. All of these factors have been further exacerbated by the decrease in numbers of small shops in favour of larger chain stores, creating so-called 'clone' town centres, characterized by less variability and undoubtedly a factor in the decrease in popularity of high street shopping.

One often often-overlooked consequence of the decline of the high -street, is the fact that it has taken away a fundamental opportunity for us to experience human connection. High streets serve as vital vectors for social interaction, something that seems increasingly easy to forego in the modern world. This may have come in the form of in-



teracting with vendors and shop assistants, or through chance encounters with friends and family whilst shopping. The specific problem with these interactions, are is that they are not the primary reason behind high streets' existence; they are often an unnoticed consequence of many people being in the same place together, and such seemingly insignificant social interactions can therefore be taken for granted. Loneliness is on the rise according to recent research, and this is only predicted to worsen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and through the increased scarcity of physical shops in which to do ones your shopping. For this reason, it is important we must reframe our perception of the declining high -street as an issue of primarily economic importance, into one of social and cultural significance too. With less fewer opportunities to leave the house and make connections with people outside of our own home, this crucial aspect of the high street may well become one that we only truly appreciate before it is too late.

Some take a more positive outlook, however. With the removal of outdated shops, and obnoxious retail parks consisting of outlet stores coupled to with vast car parks, we have an unprecedented opportunity to redefine our public spaces. The re-pedestrianisation of these plots could be a huge positive for both society and the planet at large, with new green spaces and parks replacing commercialised shopping areas, as has been tested by a scheme in Birmingham. We are therefore at a crucial moment as a society, one in which we must look beyond the economic benefits that online shopping has brought us, and instead place a higher value on human connection in an increasingly disconnected world. This should be taken up by our local authorities in an effort to turn the terminal downfall of our high streets into something more positive,, providing and ensure that the alternative continues to provide the spaces for communal activity that our town centres are increasingly less able to provide.

Evan Holt



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ALLEN & OVERY



Hi fellow historians!

Wow, what a semester it's been for us all! A massive congratulations to everyone on completing their dissertations, exams, and essays - time to kick back and relax for a bit now.

A massive thank you to everyone who joined in with all the socials that Histsoc has hosted over the last year - it's been a bit different for all of us but we still had tons of fun.

Congratulations again to the new committee who I'm sure will be hosting even more brilliant events for you all next year - hopefully this time without any covid restrictions involved!

Thanks again for the final time before we hand over to the new committee,

Megan Glanville (Academic Sec)

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