

Narratives of the Family:

Exploring Constructions of Kinship and Community

County Hall Truro

Saturday 16 August 2008



On 16 August the Cornish Audio Visual Archive was delighted to welcome Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, to open its 2008 Narratives of the Family conference at County Hall in Truro. Lectures were given by Merv Davey, Bernard Deacon, Anna Green, Audrey Linkman, Kayleigh Milden, E.V. Thompson and Garry Tregidga. Some sixty delegates attended this event, which concluded the 2007-08 public education series of the Narratives project. The conference programme explored different methodologies that can be used by individuals and groups in the study of the family alongside practical examples of kinship in relation to music and literature.

Graham Spink of the South West Film & Television Archive also gave a film presentation of archive footage from locations across Cornwall, including St Agnes and Bodmin Moor, which provided a fascinating insight into family life in the 1960s.

A key aim of the conference was to build on the huge interest in family history in recent years by asking questions about how people have considered family and kinship down the ages to the present and what family actually means to different people. Many of the talks also highlighted the importance of the migration process. Kayleigh Milden, Project Manager and conference organiser, said 'This is very appropriate in Cornwall, where there is a strong sense of kinship that can encompass both people who have migrated into Cornwall and those who have emigrated away from the homeland. To this day many Cornish descendants are very passionate about belonging to this global "Cornish Family".'

In addition, delegates were invited to bring along old family photographs to the conference so that they could be analysed by Audrey Linkman, a photographic historian from the Open University. She explored the social history behind the photographs and explained what they tell us about issues such as social class and contemporary values. Audrey also provided advice to delegates at the conference on how to deconstruct their family photos by considering elements such as dress, lighting and poise.

There were also opportunities at Truro to find out more about the ongoing work of Narratives of the Family. Tim Robins gave a presentation on the project's DVD/CD programme that was linked to an archive exhibition in the Long Gallery at County Hall. There were supporting exhibitions by project partners, notably the Cornwall Family History Society, Cornwall Record Office, the Cornwall Centre and the Equality & Diversity Service, alongside cultural organisations like MAGA (the Cornish language partnership) and the Rescorla Centre. Links between family and community were explored in an exhibition focused on 'Little Moscow', a community of railway workers in Truro from the 1920s onwards, which was organised by Veronica Kelly with the support of Ann Philips

Conference Programme

09:45-10:15: Registration and Refreshments

10:15-10:30: Welcome by Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund

Keynote Speakers: Methodologies in Studying the Family (Chair: Kayleigh Milden)

10:30-11:00: Bernard Deacon (University of Exeter),
'The Cornish Family: from public narratives to conceptual narratives'.

11:00-11:30: Anna Green (University of Exeter),
'Collective Memory and Community Stories'

11:30-12:00: Audrey Linkman (The Open University)
'Interpreting Family Victorian Photographs'

12:00-13:30: Lunch

Narratives of Family and Kinship (Chair: Joanie Willett)

13:30-14:00: Kayleigh Milden (University of Exeter),
'Narratives of the Family: Oral Histories of Kinship and Identity in Cornwall'

14:00-14:15: Tim Robins (CAVA),
Presentation of *Narratives of the Family* CD Series

14:15-14:45: Merv Davey (University of Exeter)
'Folk tradition, families and generational perspectives'.

14:45-15:15: Garry Tregidga (University of Exeter)
'Family and Locality: The Case of Mid-Cornwall'.

15:15-15:45: Refreshments

Kinship in Written and Visual Culture (Chair: Shelley Trower)

15:45-16:15: **Keynote Speaker:** E.V. Thompson (Friends of Rescorla),
'The Family in Fiction and Fact'.

16:15-16:45: Audrey Linkman (The Open University), 'Analysing Family Photographs'.

16:45-17:15: Graeme Spink (The South West Film & Television Archive)
'Exploring Cornish Kinship through Film' (Archive Film Presentation).

17:15-17:30: End of Conference Discussion



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