

2026 CONFERENCE - SPEAKERS

Jude Rhodes

Based in the Yorkshire Dales, Jude works with clients to research their genealogy, family history and heritage. Her approach to genealogy is very much a family history approach which encompasses the local and social history of the people and places, thus providing sense of identity and a glimpse into the lives of people in the past.

Jude is a qualified Genealogist through the Pharos Tutors and Society of Genealogist Advanced Skills and Strategies course and is a member of The British Association for Local History Outreach Committee and an AGRA Associate.

“Unsanitary: Privies, Open Sewers and Cholera”

The history of human waste disposal, the living conditions and health risks. How an epidemic changed the way society disposes of waste.

Mark Bayley

Mark is the Head of Development at *The Genealogist*.

“Pinning Down Your Ancestors”

Mark demonstrates how map-based records can transform the way you research your family history. Moving beyond names and dates, Mark demonstrates how to use tools such as surname mapping and heat maps to uncover where families lived, how they moved over time, and how communities were shaped.

Discover how to use geo-referenced census records, land surveys, and other location-based resources to place your ancestors in their exact streets, properties, and neighbourhoods. By combining powerful search techniques with detailed cartography, this session shows how geography can provide the missing context that brings your ancestors' lives into sharper focus.

Ian Keable

Waiting for bio information

"The Century of Deception: The Birth of the Hoax in the 18th Century"

The 1700s was a period when the people of England seemed to be especially gullible. They believed a woman could give birth to rabbits; a man could climb inside a two pint bottle and sing inside it; and where a blond-haired European could write a book claiming that he was born in Taiwan. These hoaxes weren't just written about extensively in newspapers and journals but also brilliantly and amusingly depicted by satirical artists such as William Hogarth and James Gillray. In this entertaining talk Ian demonstrates how 18th century hoaxes are memorable not only for their imaginative nature but also because of the differing motives of the tricksters.

Geoff Boyce

Geoff retired in 2009, having taught history for 40 years, but still works part-time as the Senior Caseworker for Croydon National Education Union. Geoff has been researching family history since 1966. He believes that family reconstruction is the key to unearthing interesting family history, thus discovering along the way that his father's second cousin married Billy Smart, making the circus impresario's rich children his third cousins. Rich? Billy Smart sold the winter quarters for his circus animals some time ago - it's now Legoland!

He also discovered early on that his paternal grandfather's first cousin was Joe Beckett, (1892-1965), who retired in 1923 as the longest reigning undefeated Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the British Empire ever, having been born fatherless in a humble Hampshire Gypsy vardo. The Pathe news clip of Joe's 1923 wedding is on YouTube. He also learned that Joe joined the B.U.F and was interned in 1940 - another story one day, perhaps?

"The Boyce and Beckett Trail"

This is a story of determined detective work - essential when dealing with family members of Romany stock and other itinerant travellers such as the brick making fraternity, much inclined to mislead all and sundry when it comes to documentation. It details the steps Geoff had to take to prove that Joe Beckett's

father was actually born and registered as Joseph Boyce and was the elder brother of Geoff's own great-grandfather, Samuel Boyce. Samuel died when Geoff's own grandfather was only eleven and so much of the family history that his grandfather was able to pass on to him was of dubious authenticity - some even deliberately misleading.

This is an updated version of a presentation Geoff presented to the 2016 AGM of the Romany & Traveller Family History Society, for whose quarterly journal, Romany Routes, Geoff has been an occasional contributor.