



FAMILY HISTORY Federation

Family History Federation's *Archive Liaison Newsletter*

June 2025 Issue 2

A note from the editor!

A big welcome to the second issue of the ***Archive Liaison Newsletter***.

Since the last issue I have been busy making valuable contacts with many people in archives, family history societies and other groups. I have had some really useful conversations – it's always good to chat to folk in the know. It's also one of the best ways to build a more comprehensive picture of how archives and societies work and how they could both profit from working together. The potential that mutual support and collaboration could bring is very exciting. As you will read in this newsletter, there are some fascinating and innovative projects taking place. These often wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of archivists and volunteers. Thank you to you all!

If you have an event on the horizon or a new dataset which has been published or a project that needs support, then please get in touch.

The Federation is here to help and support you.

Sadie McMullon – Editor

In this issue you can find...

Details about the National Records of Scotland—Scotland's People

Signposts to the Past - Northamptonshire Records Society

Local history information on Bedfordshire Community History

New virtual innovations at the Buckinghamshire Archives

PLUS...

How can ***you*** help the Federation?

And...

What can the ***Federation*** do for you?



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The National Records of Scotland Scotland's People

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) was formed in 2011 following the merger of the National Archives of Scotland and the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). The NRS of today continues the work these institutions did in the past. They carry out the registration and statistical functions of what was the GROS, and they keep the archives of Scotland – and make them accessible to everyone.

The archive holds records spanning from the twelfth to the twenty-first centuries which touch upon virtually every aspect of Scottish life. Stretched end to end, they would cover nearly fifty miles! NRS is the principal repository for the public and legal records of Scotland, but also hold many local and private archives. Their aim is to be the keepers of the most varied archive collections in Britain.

it is also a building of firsts - the first proper repository for the records of Scotland and the first purpose-built public record repository in Britain and Ireland. It also has a good claim to being one of the oldest in the world still in use for its original function.



Adam Dome

The foundation stone for GRH was laid on the 27 June 1774 and is currently in its 250th anniversary year. Remarkably it remains the home of the records and our public search rooms. There are three search rooms where you can access the archives.

The Historical and Digital Archive Search Rooms

Users can access physical records and surrogates (digitised copies of selected records). Access to these records is free but visitors must have a reader's ticket.

The Scotland's People Search Room provides digital access to records primarily relevant to family history. Access is available onsite and online.

Scotland's People –
www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

The Scotland's People service is run by NRS and is the starting point for those researching their Scottish ancestors. It provides access to a number of key records that are essential for genealogical research. These include, but are not limited to



General Register House, Princes Street, 30 July 1772.
CC, NRS, RHP6082/7

Large and elegant

The National Records of Scotland is housed in the magnificent General Register House (GRH). Sitting proudly and prominently on Edinburgh's Princes Street, the building is central to the New Town and is positioned directly opposite North Bridge. (If coming by train, Waverly Station's Princes Street entrance is diagonally opposite GRH.) General Register House was designed by renowned architect, Robert Adam;



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Parish register

the following:

- statutory Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages (1855 to current day)
- old Parish Registers (1553-1854)
- census returns (1841-1921)
- wills and Testaments (1513-1925).

Years ago, in order to search these records you would have had to order each volume and then worked through each volume separately. This would have been a very long and labour-intensive process. Today the records have been digitised and can be seen online, either from the comfort of your own home or from the Scotland's People Centre. The Edinburgh Centre is in GRH but there are also centres in Kilmarnock, Alloa, Hawick, Inverness or Glasgow.

Where to begin?

Like all archival research, before starting I would recommend a bit of homework. For family history, speak to your relatives and family friends. Gather as much information as you can about family members and their stories. Consider details that will help you confirm that you have the right record - significant dates, middle names, sibling information and where they lived or moved to etc. You might also seek out family records that help add more leaves to the branches of your family tree such as photographs, newspaper clippings, letters and diaries.

Once you are armed with this information, the next step is to register an account on Scotland's People.

Visit this page www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/getting-started and you will see a link to register. There is also information on searching, how to visit and the *news and articles* section.

'Registration Page' on Scotland's People

'Getting Started' page on Scotland's People with relevant sections highlighted

I'd also recommend perusing the Records and Topic Guides section:
www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/help-and-support/guides. These guides introduce you to some of



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The Historical Search Room

the topics covered in the records, as well as detailing some specific record sets, what they contain and how to search them.

Once registered, you can search the record indexes online for free. For the majority of records, there is then a charge to access record images. If you wish to visit a centre in person, it is essential to book your seat in advance to avoid disappointment. The centre in GRH is open Monday to Friday, 9.00 am till 4.00 pm and there is a flat charge of £15 for the day. During your visit, you can access as many records as you would like. See www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/visit-us the online catalogue (www.nrscotland.gov.uk/catalogue)

The Historical Search Room (HSR) and Digital Archive Search Room (DASR)

The HSR and DASR will be of interest to those that have already significantly advanced their family tree and are looking now to add more foliage. Those looking to access records must have a reader's ticket. To acquire one you will need proof of name, address and two recent passport-sized photos of yourself. More details can found at www.nrscotland.gov.uk/records-and-archives/accessing-our-search-rooms/catalogue).

The vast array of records can be searched via the

online catalogue (www.nrscotland.gov.uk/catalogue)

This allows you to search the descriptions of the records by keywords, dates and references. NRS also provides a number of research guides that are extremely useful and cover some of our key record sets.

Visit www.nrscotland.gov.uk/records-andarchives/ and see 'Research Guides' for further details.

Useful information and events

The records range from the beautiful to the plain, to the world-famous to the apparently unimportant. The documentary heritage provides evidence of human activity and life of all kinds from every period. The NRS looks to provide different access points to visitors in person and online to help provide information on what the records hold, and how to navigate them.

Alongside research guides, we regularly host free public talks on different topics and records. These are always advertised via the NRS Event brite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/national-records-of-scotland-13420221531>



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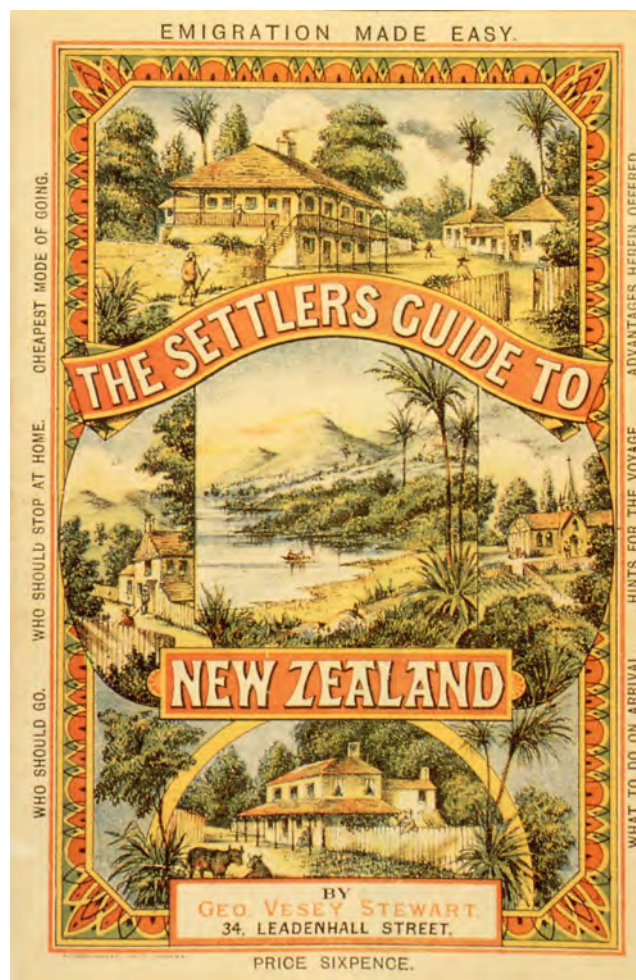


The village of Dregghorn, 1789. NRS, RHP3/18

Where permission is granted, recordings of talks are also made available via the NRS YouTube channel. See <https://www.youtube.com/@nationalrecordsofscotland/videos>.

We also regularly publish articles about the archives. These can be located at: NRS Open Book: <https://blog.nrscotland.gov.uk/> NRS website: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/learning-and-events/> Scotland's People News and articles: <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/news-and-articles>

Jocelyn Grant
Head of Outreach



Settlers' Guide to New Zealand, c1886. NRS, AF51/158



OVER 500 LINKS TO FREE LOCAL HISTORY

Northamptonshire Records Society Signposts to the Past

Northamptonshire Record Society is an educational charity which promotes knowledge and interest in the history of Northamptonshire. Traditionally, it has focused on publishing hardback transcriptions of historical documents and their learned introductions. An annual journal *Northamptonshire Past & Present* containing articles of up to about 7,000 words is also produced.

As with most aspects of life, an increasing proportion of our activities now take place online. These include a page on Facebook and our own website at <https://www.northamptonshirerecordsociety.org.uk/>

During the past year, the website has been redesigned and vastly extended. The picture on the home page displays a selection of publications in the care of enthusiasts who are some decades younger than the average age of our membership. A landmark development is the launch of the 'Signposts' section which provides a structured directory of free online resources relevant to the history of the county. Entries are arranged by subject categories, within which they appear in alphabetical order either by title or, where appropriate, by surname or place name. To limit the size of the main Signposts page, the larger categories such as county histories, people and places, have their own pages on the site and are cross-referenced from Signposts itself.

The sources used to harvest relevant links include Internet Archive, FamilySearch and university sites

where these have been digitised and made freely available. Naturally, Internet search engines have also played their part. Links are provided to indexes, videos and to some of the many websites run by organisations such as village history societies or even individuals, but only if they contain a substantial amount of material relevant to the history of the county.

The majority of the books and journals published by the Record Society have been digitised and are available as PDFs free of charge. Work has started in categorising articles to be found in recent issues of *Northamptonshire Past and Present* and flagging them up in the relevant categories at Signposts.

A previously little-known resource that we have brought to light is the series of Medical Officer of Health reports from the period 1888 to 1974 which have been digitised by the Wellcome Foundation. The number of reports available for local authorities that operated in Northamptonshire alone amounts to 977. The page on our site that provides orderly access to this particular collection of reports for the county has attracted one of the greatest number of hits.

We do advise readers that while the resources can be seen free of charge they are not necessarily free of copyright restrictions. We point to the advice in *Copyright and related rights*, a paper published by The National Archives which includes very helpful flowcharts about the duration of copyright both where Crown copyright is involved and otherwise.



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A selection of Northamptonshire publications

<https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/copyright-related-rights.pdf>

We are grateful to James Slattery-Kavanagh, trading as Quotes, for his major contribution in the design and search-optimisation of the site.

The primary use of Signposts is clearly for those who are interested in the history of Northamptonshire and neighbouring areas. I hope that readers interested in developing similar directories for other places and topics on their own sites will also pay us a visit.

Just in the last few months the number of Signposts, to freely available online resources, has increased from 250 to 500.

Please send any comments or questions to the email address.

Francis Howcutt

Digital Publications Editor, Northamptonshire Record Society

DigitalEditor@northamptonshirerecordsociety.org.uk

Buckinghamshire Archives New Virtual Offers



Visualiser

Here at Buckinghamshire Archives we look after over 800 years of history. This is stored in documents like registers, censuses, maps, newspapers, and journals, and is an invaluable resource to anyone researching family history.

Towards the end of the year, the archive will be closing to the public, with a reopening in a new location scheduled for Summer 2026. But, even if we're going to be physically closed, you can still use us to research virtually. Our online service is already up and running and you can access it today.

Since November 2024, we've been offering monthly *Ask an Archivist* sessions. These are free online research surgeries where you can speak with a member of our collections team, one to one, and discuss where to take your research next. These are short sessions of around fifteen minutes, aimed to overcome any roadblocks you might have found in your research and to point you in the right direction. If possible, we will recommend documents in our collection that might be of use or direct you to other archives or services that might be more appropriate.

We have also recently launched a Virtual Searchroom. This is an entirely free online service where you can view documents while being supported by a member of the archive team. If you



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Archive boxes

are unable to visit the archives in person, this is the perfect way to research using our collection. Sessions are available on Thursdays and Fridays each week but for more information, please head to our website: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/archives/book-a-session-in-our-virtual-searchroom/>

Our collection covers a huge range of history, with everything from medieval deeds to the Paralympics finding a home with us. We know that people from across the world have connections with Buckinghamshire, so these online services are ideal if you're tracing family history from abroad.

If you're interested in accessing us virtually, get in contact at archives@buckinghamshire.gov.uk, or call us on 01296 382 587.

Callum Walker
Community Engagement Officer
Buckinghamshire Archives



Documents on archival shelving



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**Bedfordshire
Archives**
established 1913

Bedfordshire Archives Community History pages are our online resource for the parishes and communities of Bedfordshire. The pages include research on properties, churches, manors and licenced premises, as well as many other topics. Much of this research has been contributed by staff over the years, but we have also been very lucky to have some fantastic volunteers who have carried out research and contributed additional pages to the ever growing collection. We have had quite a surge of new material added recently, with over 370 brand new pages added.

The recent surge has been down to a few projects that are currently underway. Our volunteer John has been busy making his way through the individual buildings along Bedford's High Street, looking at their previous uses and occupants. Many of these are now uploaded and available to view on the Bedford Street Index. As well as the High Street, seven parishes have had their pages added to. These are: Houghton Regis, Barton-le-Clay, Langford, Stotfold, Dunton, Sharnbrook and Haynes. These parishes previously had no Community History pages, so it has been exciting to have them as new additions. Some of the research that has been added has come from the In Step with History outreach project undertaken last year by our archivist, Natasha Kikas.

As well as adding new pages, we are also updating our previous ones. This includes adding new photos, updating the research to reflect any new collections that have come in, as well as adding reference lists at the bottom of the pages to make it easier to see what documents we have regarding particular topics. This is an ongoing project, so please bear with us as we make our



way through all the individual pages. We still have plenty of communities to research, so please feel free to get in touch if you would like to contribute to any of our communities. If you have any additional information on any of our pages or, indeed, information on aspects of the community that are not covered, we would love to hear from you and could publish your research online, giving credit, of course, where it is due.

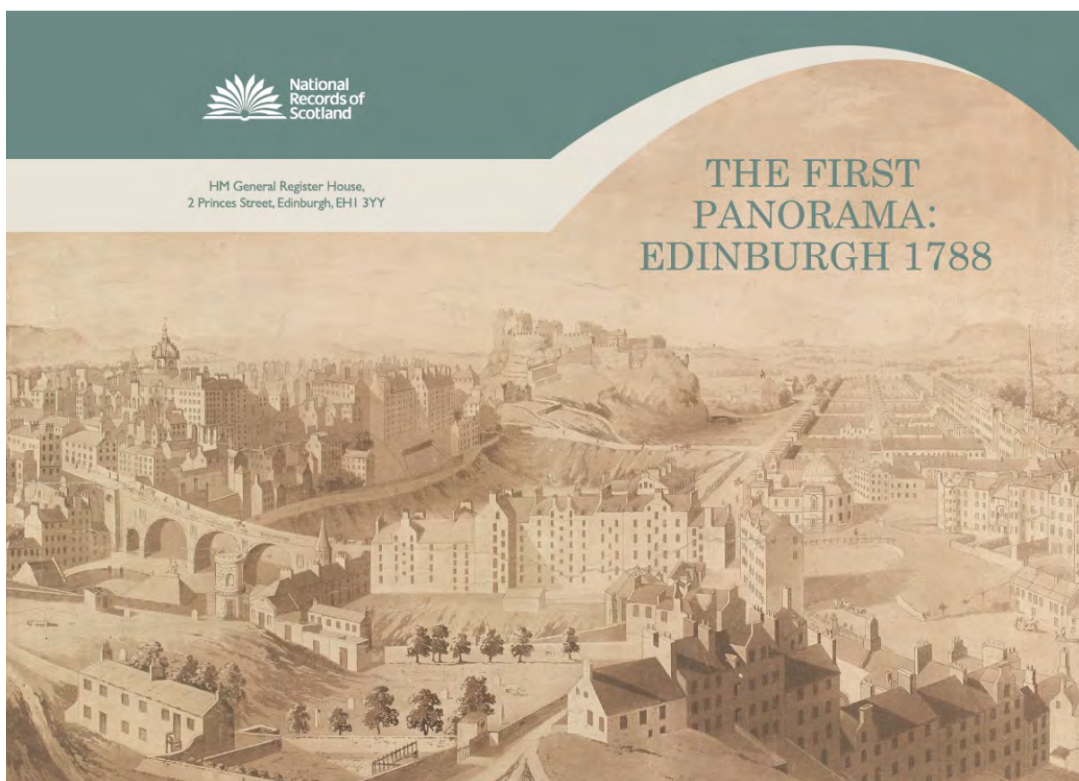
archive@bedford.gov.uk
<https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/Archives-Service.aspx>





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Forthcoming Events



The First Panorama: Edinburgh 1788

The First Panorama – Edinburgh 1788
26 May – 27 June, Mon-Fri, 9.00am – 4.00 pm.
HM General Register House, Adam Dome

A reproduction of a panorama showing Edinburgh's eighteenth-century skyline will be on show at General Register House by National Records of Scotland. Visitors can step inside the circular panorama for a view of the city as it was in 1788. The painting shows the Old and New Towns, and landmarks including Edinburgh Castle and General Register House itself.

Robert Barker was a successful Irish painter of portraits and miniatures. While taking a walk on Calton Hill in Edinburgh, he was struck with the idea of capturing the breathtaking view of Scotland's capital in its full splendour. He wondered if it was possible to present the whole view in one picture. With the help of his young son, Henry, Barker created and displayed the first panorama of Edinburgh in the city in 1788.

Visit to see Barker's invention and take in the view of 18th century Edinburgh.

Learn more at www.nrscotland.gov.uk/panorama.

Scots on the Move: Railways and Tourism in Victorian Scotland
4 – 29 August, Mon-Fri, 9.00am – 4.00pm
HM General Register House, Adam Dome

Join us and find out how tourism in Scotland was transformed by the birth of the railways during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). For the first time, everyone could travel: from a day trip to the seaside in a third-class carriage to a holiday in the Highlands for extravagant hunting and shooting trips. Discover more through the National Records of Scotland's archives in this free exhibition.



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Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture

The Archives and Records Association (ARA) is pleased to announce in Volunteers' Week 2025 that the *Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture* project by Lancashire Archives has won the national ARA Archive Volunteering Award 2025.

The award was presented at Lancashire Archives on Tuesday 3rd June by the President of the Archives and Records Association UK and Ireland. The award presentation is part of a wider celebration of Lancashire Archives' volunteers.

The ARA Archive Volunteering Award is given each year to projects which demonstrate how archives have supported volunteers in the previous twelve months. The awards are supported by the Archives and Records Association (who also administer the awards), the UK National Archives, the National Records of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government.

The judging panel (drawn from employees of the supporting organisations) said:

'This is an ambitious and impressive project with real local significance, reaching groups that are under-represented as users of archives and heritage collections. It is also a good example of archive services working with colleagues in libraries to increase access to collections and improve the standard of care.'

The Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture (KELP) has brought together volunteers, of different ages and backgrounds, to make the historic photographs stored in four Lancashire libraries (and managed by Lancashire Archives) more accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The project was funded by: The National Lottery Heritage Fund (£192K funding) and The Friends of Lancashire Archives (£30K funding).

Some seventy five volunteers across four libraries, supported by a project archivist and project assistant, had (at the time of submitting the award nomination) given 5,489 hours of time and scanned



47,500+ images. These will be made available to people to view free via Lancashire Archives' Red Rose Collections.

KELP has also worked closely with eight primary schools (working with 448 pupils), one secondary school (working with thirty pupils) and two South Asian heritage community groups to create new photographic content for the collections and new digital images are being added with significant collections of local photographs donated by local voluntary photographic societies, families and other community projects.

The project aims to improve access to photographic collections in East Lancashire with an additional focus on developing audiences for volunteering within South Asian heritage community, younger people and people interested in the history of their local area.

Sharing the project with the people of the area, historic photographs provided to a local newspaper during 2024, resulted in 92,902 views and over 8,300 people engaged with the exhibitions held in the four participating libraries. Over 6,900 people attended KELP events. Lancashire Archives' collaboration with Aawaz (South Asian Heritage Women's Group) involved 337 visits from volunteers to contribute their time over 278 hours and a joint engagement project with Hyndburn District Council in the *Enlighten* project resulted in 5,000 attendees over the weekend event.

The project has significantly increased the number of volunteers for Lancashire Archives and introduced archive volunteering in East Lancashire. Volunteers include people of South Asian heritage, two younger volunteers have



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secured full-time work since finishing a volunteering role, and volunteers have enjoyed organised trips to Lancashire Archives, Queen Street Mill and had the opportunity to meet the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire.

Volunteers said:

'As a genuinely computer illiterate, I feel I have gained some skills . . . We have both felt a sense of community, meeting like-minded people. Our overall experience of KELP has been, and no doubt will continue, to be positive and enjoyable. By contributing in our small way to a greater project, we have gained a sense of renewed love of our own heritage.'

'Through the journey of the project I have learnt how to digitise images and realised how important it is to preserve our history and culture for our future generations.'

'I have been having conversations with my grandchildren about heritage items, they were very keen to know about the project. Lots of questions from my granddaughter and I have been telling stories about my childhood and how important these items are.'

John Chambers, Chief Executive of the Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland said:

'It has been encouraging to see the depth and breadth of entries this year and some really great projects. Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture is a great winner and demonstrates how important archives are to the communities they serve.'

About the Archive Volunteering Awards 2025

Seven projects were nominated for the awards in 2025 and the project [Crowdsourcing The Welsh Women's Peace Petition](#), by The National Library of Wales, was Highly Commended by the judges. The judging panel commented on the quality and range of the projects put forward:

'A strong series of nominations, it has not been easy to choose between them. While the level of resources available clearly differs between the nominees, the commitment and ambition demonstrated

is a credit to our sector and shows the seriousness in which archive services are tackling issues of inclusion, reaching new audiences and representing marginalised communities. This process has been an inspiration and I thank all of the nominees for sharing their experiences.'

Case studies for each of the nominated projects can be found here: <https://www.archives.org.uk/ara-archive-volunteering-award>

These national awards are an opportunity to thank our volunteers for all their continued support and work. Awards are given to projects which demonstrate how archives have supported volunteers through the past year and have adapted projects to suit their circumstances whether remotely or in new ways of working together.

Winners have a national platform to celebrate their volunteers' contribution to the service and gain publicity for their archive's role in supporting individuals and community through volunteering programmes.

Details of the awards process and previous award winners can be found here: <https://www.archives.org.uk/ara-archive-volunteering-award>

The awards are administered by the Archives and Records Association and are supported by:

- The Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland
- The UK National Archives
- National Records of Scotland
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
- The Welsh Government

About the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland)

Our vision is to be the leading professional and sectoral body for archives, conservation, records management and information governance ('the record-keeping sector'). We support professionals and stakeholders in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and internationally.



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - please! **How YOU could help?**

Family historians everywhere need to be kept up to date with recent record releases. In order to accomplish this, I could do with a small team of volunteers to help with this task. Can you help?

The intention is that these volunteers will make contact with their local archives and repositories on a monthly basis and gather information about any new record releases. Then they would feed this information back to me so that it can be included in the next newsletter.

This role should only take two or three hours a month – and it is also a way of getting to know your local archivists well! It doesn't sound much but it is vital that the Federation can keep family historians as well informed and up to date as possible.

So please consider volunteering to help this new team.
If you need more information, please get in touch with me.
You can email me at – archives.liaison@familyhistoryfederation.com

What can the Federation do for us?

How archives, repositories, community and heritage groups can help too.

You can see we are trying to join things up and get more information about archives out there amongst our members.

If you are an archives or repository, community or heritage group then the Family History Federation is here to help and support **you!** We know you have many *name rich* records and we want to help you make your collections accessible to family historians everywhere.

If you would like to help and if you would like information about your archives or record release included in the next newsletter, then please get in touch.

Please contact me to discuss your needs and to find out more.
You can email me at –

archives.liaison@familyhistoryfederation.com

