The ISBGFH
Heritage Dispatch
October 2026

Welcome to this month's edition of the *ISBGFH Heritage Dispatch*. Our society continues to grow as more genealogists discover the value of specialized education focused on British Isles and Commonwealth family history.

When one door closes, another door opens up

We spoke last month about the kiddos getting ready for school to start and how they are not only excited but learning new things, like our 5th-grade grandson called and asked us if we had ever divided fractions before. Our answer was "of course we have", use the old "keep, change, flip method"– which got me to thinking about how we have grown from when we first starting to learn how to do genealogy, and when is it time to keep, change, and flip some of our ways in doing so. Keep: leave things exactly as they are. Change: make sure you have all the correct data with the correct name with the correct person. Flip: start using different resources to correct errors, add new resources, cite your sources, fix all the beginner errors, which we have all been beginners at one time or another.

So speaking of learning, it is time to settle in and get ready for the cooler weather to change our wardrobe from short sleeves to hoodies, but schedule some learning opportunities to help you with your ancestor adventure. We are in the process of finalizing a lot of programming during these upcoming cold weather months to keep you growing with our research resources. Save the dates on your calendar, and get ready to acquire new skills, learn new tools, and build your tree. Don't forget to cut down those broken branches – you're going to need that "wood" to keep you warm this winter!
Visit the ISBGFH website www.isbgfh.com for more details such as times, topics, and teachers. If you have any questions, contact me at EducationDirectorISBGFH@gmail.com

Did You Know?

Sometimes you just want to read something that "isn't all genealogy", but sometimes it can be just the title that catches your eye, or the brief reviews of a book that just makes you want to find that comfy seat, mute your phone, and settle in for what I like to call "me time." Well, this month, there are two books that are here within arm's reach and are calling my name. Check out these two books – you will enjoy them…. So head for your local library, or used bookstore, or online bookseller and grab that beverage and some snacks. Just saying.

1. ***Two Truths And A Lie - A Murder, A Private Investigator, And Her Search For Justice***
   by Ellen McGarrahan. Ellen worked for a decade as an investigative reporter at newspapers in New York City, Miami, and San Francisco before accidentally finding her calling as a private investigator.
2. ***Long Time Gone***
   by Charlie Donlea. On the first day of an elite two-year fellowship, Sloan Hastings receives a research assignment in the emerging field of forensic genealogy. It's the exciting, rapidly evolving science behind the recent breaks in high-profile cold cases from the Golden State Killer to the Cameron Young murder, and Sloan enthusiastically begins by submitting her own DNA to an online genealogy site. Her goal is to better understand the treasure trove of genetic information contained on ancestry websites, but the results she receives are shocking.

Here are the latest dates for 2026.

5-9 October – Monday – Friday
"British Institute featuring Paul Milner: Scottish Research: The Fundamentals and Beyond"

7 November – Saturday, Winter Webinar
21 November – Saturday, Winter Webinar
5 December – Saturday, Winter Webinar
19 December – Saturday, Winter Webinar

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY HISTORY MONTH

To help you celebrate Family History Month, this year the theme is to DISCOVER AND PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY. This month, we will be offering several PDF downloads on how you can participate and make your projects manageable and successful. Topics will include Scan and Label Family Photos and Documents, Record and Preserve Family Memories, Write and Share Family Stories, and Join the Family History Community. The downloads are listed below.

ISBGFH FAMILY HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL – NEW MEMBERS ONLY!

Tip of the Month

1. **Search local histories**: Look for county and town histories that often include biographical sketches of early residents.
2. **Use exact names and places**: Enter your ancestor's name alongside the specific town or state where they lived into the search bar.
3. **Review snippet views**: Even if a book is not fully viewable online, snippet views can highlight name matches and provide vital clues.
4. **Explore alternate spellings**: Try wildcard searches or variant spellings, as older indexes and optical character recognition (OCR) can contain typos.

This Month's FREEBIE!

Get started with your genealogy research and uncover your family's rich history.

DISCOVER AND PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY

As we celebrate Family History Month in October, NGS is excited to support you and the genealogy and family history community with a few ways to explore, preserve, and share unique stories and memories from our families.

There are 5 FREE DOWNLOADS that you can access using the link below. ENJOY!

https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/family-history-month/

Spotlight
ISBGFH Board, Trustees, and Members
Wendy Wood

I have been a member of ISBGFH since 2020 and have proudly served on the Board since 2023. Originally from Michigan, my husband and I have called Arkansas home for many years. We have two grown sons who live in New York City and Los Angeles and two grandsons.

After 30 years as a special education teacher, I am now retired and enjoy pursuing my passion for genealogy. That passion began with my grandmother, who immigrated to the United States aboard the *Lusitania* in 1911. My memories of her inspired me to research her family and began my lifelong journey into genealogy.

I am currently working toward genealogy certification, which I plan to complete by 2027. I invite you to join ISBGFH and connect with others who share a passion for discovering and preserving family history.

<u>What would you like to read or hear about?</u>

<u>We received another email:</u>

Since the British Institute is about Scotland, I would like to know some places that I can do my research from home. I am unable to travel, so hope that you have a few recommendations for me to work on my ancestry. Thank You

Answer:

A great question for this month! We would recommend the following websites and organizations that you can work with. FamilySearch and the FamilySearch Wiki, ScotlandsPeople, FindMyPast, National Library of Scotland, trove.scot, reach out to genealogical and historical societies in the area of your ancestors, and visit museum websites too! Best of luck searching for your family. You may also want to reach out to one of our authors of the *British Connections,* Chris Paton. He has the ScottishGENES newsletter. Visit: http://scottishgenes.blogspot.com

If you have any advice or suggestions, please send the details to me and I can either post them in the next Heritage Dispatch, or send them directly to the sender.

WINTER WEBINAR SERIES

The next season of our Winter Webinar Series will begin on November 7th. The events are on the first and third Saturdays of November through March. Watch our website for the speakers, topics and times to be posted next week. As a member benefit, attend these programs and having access to all the recordings and handouts. The recordings will be available to view until August 1, 2027.

ISBGFH Annual General Membership Meeting

October 7, 2026, 6 p.m. Mountain Time

Join us for our Annual General Membership Meeting! We'll review the past year and introduce you to our board members and trustees.

The Zoom link is HERE.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions prior to the meeting!

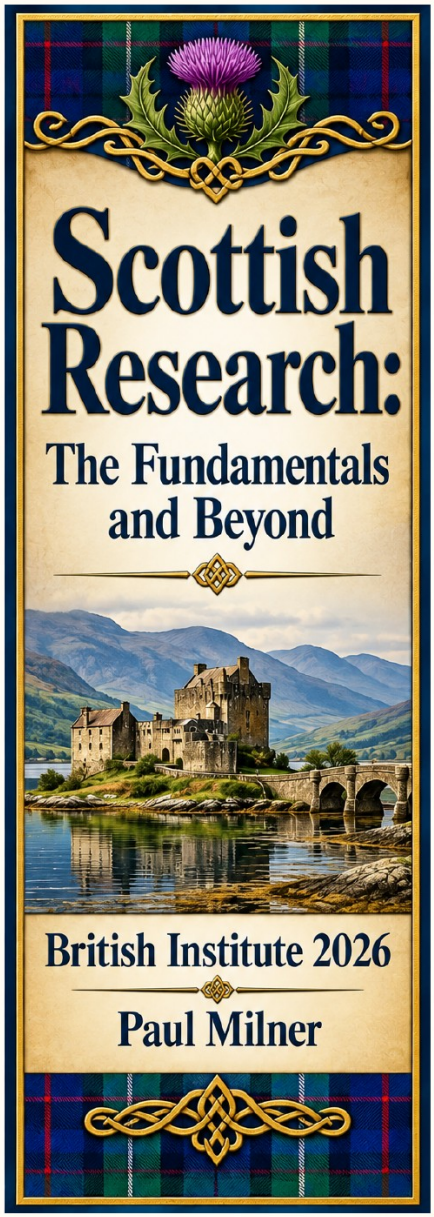
Megan Heyl
Education Director, ISBGFH
educationdirectorisbgfh@gmail.com

YOU CAN STILL GET ACCESS TO THIS PROGRAM – PURCHASE THE RECORDINGS

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

DON'T MISS BRITISH INSTITUTE 2026!

BEGINS OCTOBER 5 • PAUL MILNER • SCOTTISH RESEARCH



There's still time to register for **British Institute 2026**, beginning **October 5**, featuring internationally recognized genealogist and educator **Paul Milner** presenting **Scottish Research: The Fundamentals and Beyond**. And there's an important reason you won't want to miss this year's Institute: **this will be Paul's final time presenting his Scotland course!** If Scottish ancestors are hiding somewhere in your family tree, this is your opportunity to spend dedicated time learning from one of the field's most experienced Scottish researchers.

Journey through **Scottish research from the 17th through the 20th centuries** as Paul takes you beyond the fundamentals and explores the records, resources, research strategies, and challenges that can help bring your Scottish ancestors to life. Bring those questions you've always wanted to ask - even the ones you were afraid to ask!

ISBGFH members receive a discounted registration rate, so if you've been thinking about joining the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History, this is a great time to become a member and take advantage of the savings.

Don't wait until it's too late! British Institute 2026 begins **October 5**. Visit **www.isbgfh.com** for complete Institute details, registration information, and FAQs.

Questions? Contact the **ISBGFH Institute Director** at InstituteDirectorISBGFH@gmail.com

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Scotland is calling - will you answer?

International Society for British Genealogy and Family History | www.isbgfh.com

This vs. That: Same Name vs. Same Person

SAME NAME: Finding someone with exactly the right name in exactly the right town can feel like striking genealogical gold—but names alone do not establish identity. Two unrelated John Smiths may have lived within miles of each other, been close in age, married women with similar names, and even had children with some of the same given names. Researchers who assume that every record bearing the right name belongs to their ancestor can unintentionally combine two families into one.

SAME PERSON: Establishing that records actually concern the same individual requires comparing multiple identifying details. Age, occupation, spouse, children, residence, associates, property, religion, signatures, migration patterns, and other clues can help distinguish one person from another. The question isn't simply, “Does the name match?” It is “Does the entire person match?”

Remember, if you are not an ISBGFH member, consider joining!
Hint: October – November, there will be a deal you can’t miss!
Discover your past — visit our website at www.ISBGFH.com

Got something to share? Contact us! Send it to EducationDirectorISBGFH@gmail.com. Please put in the subject line ISBGFH DISPATCH – and Thank you for reading and sharing this Heritage Dispatch!