

## Writing Up your One-Name Study

by Gill Blanchard, historian, researcher, tutor, author

Gill led us through what we needed to think about: chronology, story, how to create an interesting family history, challenges and anomalies, format and structure, and writing in an interesting way.



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She outlined the importance of the who, what, when, where, why, and how – whether for a person, place, or generation.

She set out some key considerations for starting out: the importance of planning and organization; making it interesting (not just facts and dates); the craft of your writing; goals; readers' knowledge; and style of presentation (fictional, factual, etc.).

Gill also went through the common elements of good stories: how to explain the missing pieces and anomalies, adding local social history, timelines, and advice on using resources. She also addressed copyright and plagiarism. In the long run, you are bringing your family history to life.

For more detail, read her book or attend her course. [\[See page 30 for special Guild discount offer for Gill's classes.\]](#)

Throughout this session and Janet's, I recalled my own experiences. My background is in teaching design, craft, graphics, etc., but I am also a qualified author of learning/training materials for the computer. All used the processes of analysis and synthesis, knowing who your audience is, their interests, which team they support, etc. These give you a range of points to focus on. My own family history has a rugby league star, a popular BBC radio and clubland singer from the '50s, four generations of policemen, and six generations of miners. I could even focus on the eight families of the same name that lived in the same lane (yard).

So, as with all good things, the seminar came to an end. Five excellent speakers, slide presentations, and informative sessions, gave us plenty to think about and explore. Writing up your one-name study was of particular interest to me, having not gotten to grips with mine yet.

A few displays were on show: 1939 register, books by Janet Few, *Writing Your Family History* by Gill Blanchard. You could even buy your marmalade for your Sunday morning breakfast.

The organisers are to be congratulated for some of the best pre-seminar information I have seen – details of the programme, directions, public transport, parking, overnight accommodation – and to an excellent day. ■