

2025 PhD Projects

Project title	Building communities: Mathematical training and expertise in Britain, 1700–1950
Principal supervisor	Dr. Brigitte Stenhouse
Second supervisor	Prof. June Barrow-Green
Discipline	History of mathematics
Research area/keywords	Modern mathematics, research community
Suitable for	Full time applicants, Part time applicants

Project background and description

Over time mathematics has become an increasingly collaborative discipline, sustained by national and international networks including academies, universities, publications, learned societies and, more recently, funding bodies. These networks and communities have varied greatly over time, and exerted a significant influence on the direction and content of mathematical research. However, the access granted to such mathematical spaces has not been equitable or equal for people of differing gender, social class, or race.

In this project, we will use archival research to investigate the ways in which people accessed mathematical knowledge or presented themselves as mathematicians in Britain and the British Empire, between 1700 and 1950. We will focus on how mathematical communities were cultivated, sustained, and delineated. This could include exploring access to education, methods used to circulate work, and opportunities for paid employment.

Research students will be expected to identify relevant archival materials to consult, locate published and/or digitized primary source material, and develop and apply tools of historical analysis to these sources.

Background reading/references

- K.H. Parshall and A.C. Rice, *Mathematics Unbound: The Evolution of an International Mathematical Research Community, 1800–1945*. Providence: American Mathematical Society, 2002.
- C. G. Jones, *Femininity, Mathematics and Science, 1880–1914*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- B. Stenhouse, 'Mary Somerville's early contributions to the circulation of differential calculus', *Historia Mathematica*, Vol 51, Pg 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hm.2019.12.001>.
- D. L. Opitz, S. Bergwik, and B. Van Tiggelen (eds.), *Domesticity in the Making of Modern Science*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.