

## Hidden lives: domestic servants in the European country house, c.1700-1850

This AHRC-funded network brings together heritage professionals and researchers from a range of disciplines and countries to share research on the lives of servants in country houses across Europe: a surprisingly neglected area that has huge potential to inform the understanding and presentation of the country house. It comprises a series of four workshops through 2024 and 2025.

Call for Papers

### *Workshop 2: Representations of country house servants: visual, literary and prescriptive*

Manchester Metropolitan University, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Servants, both female and male, formed an integral part of country house living. They were an essential prop to leisured lifestyles, displays of status, and domestic comfort: roles that entailed them sometimes being highly visible and sometimes being hidden or effectively invisible. This workshop focuses on the ways in which servants were represented in paintings and prints, novels and poems, conduct books and servants' guides. It will bring together researchers from a range of European countries to examine what these representations meant and the impact they had; what they can tell us about servants' lives and how they varied over space and time. It also asks whether it is possible to glimpse servants' representations of themselves and thus grasp something of their self-identity. Overall, we seek to further our understanding of the significance of representations of servants in histories of the country house.

We invite papers on any aspect of the representation of country house servants, but especially encourage contributions that focus on:

- comparative analyses that examine representations in different countries or different media
- representations of servants of different nationalities, races and colours, especially looking beyond the “fashionable” black footman/boy
- the ways in which representations are structured by the gender and rank of servants
- stereotypes and “realistic” representations
- self-representation by servants, in any media
- how representations change over time

Funds are available to help defray travel costs, with priority given to ECRs. Overnight accommodation will be provided by the organisers.

Proposals of c.300 words, a short biography, and an estimate of travel costs should be sent to Jon Stobart ([j.stobart@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.stobart@mmu.ac.uk)) and Kristine Dyrmann ([Kristine.dyrmann@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Kristine.dyrmann@history.ox.ac.uk)) by 18<sup>th</sup> April November 2024.