

Friends of the Argyll Papers seminar series 2022/23

Julia Bracewell

'The Double Duchess – the life of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton and Duchess of Argyle.'

Fri 24 March @ 14:30 UK time on Zoom

In this talk Julia Bracewell explores the rags to riches life of the celebrated Beauty, Elizabeth Gunning, wife of the Duke of Hamilton and Jack Campbell the 5th Duke of Argyll. A celebrity, who was mobbed in her day, her rise was meteoric when a bet laid by the Duke of Hamilton led to their clandestine marriage. When the Duke of Hamilton dies, Elizabeth has creditors, including the artist Sir Joshua Reynolds, baying at her door. But in two short years, she turns her life around. She marries Jack Campbell, survives a dangerous illness and is sent to Germany to bring the young Princess Charlotte to England to be crowned Queen to George III. As a Lady of the Bedchamber to the new Queen Charlotte, Elizabeth uses her position to secure the finances of her family, a Parliamentary seat for Jack, a baronetcy in her own name and a glittering marriage for her daughter Betty. But she is also embroiled in the famous legal case the Douglass Cause, and when the antics of her children lead to scandal, her relationship with the Queen is rocked to the core. Will Elizabeth put duty or family first? And how will this decision affect the final years of her life?

Elizabeth was one of the most prolifically painted non-royal women of her day. The talk will include paintings and quotes from the correspondence and diaries of her friends and relations.



Julia Bracewell is a lawyer and Olympian, who was awarded an OBE for services to sport. She is fascinated by the lives of inspirational and historic women. Through her website juliabracewell.com and Instagram account, Julia tells the stories of women who, although famous in their time, have been lost to history. She first came across Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll, in James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*. Wanting to know more about the woman who caused Boswell such angst, Julia started researching Elizabeth's life. For almost two years she has explored online archives, and visited archives the length and breadth of Britain. She is especially grateful to the Duke of Argyll for making the Argyll Papers available to researchers and to Alison Diamond, Archivist of the Argyll Papers for all her help in unveiling Elizabeth's life.

Seminars are free for members of the Friends. Non-members are welcome to attend and are invited to make a donation of £5 per seminar at <https://friendsoftheargyllpapers.enthuse.com/#/>.

Book your place and receive joining instructions by emailing: friendsoftheargyllpapers@gmail.com

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