



2026 RSVP Digital Event

“Commissioned Letters to *The Times*” by Graham Law

Chat Transcript

- 10:01:48 From Matthew Stephens : Hello from Liverpool, England.
- 10:01:56 From Ardyn Tennyson : Hello from right outside Washington, DC!
- 10:02:00 From Isabel Seidel : Hello from Aberdeen, Scotland.
- 10:02:02 From Gillian Walters : Hello from Louth, England
- 10:02:22 From Lauren Ottaviani : Hello from Antwerp, Belgium!
- 10:02:32 From Andrew Hobbs : Hello from the weak sunshine of Preston, Lancs, UK
- 10:02:51 From Kathy Malone : Hello from Brookings, South Dakota!
- 10:03:06 From Clare Horrocks : Hello from a sunny Yorkshire!
- 10:03:26 From Sarah Flew : Hello from London - I research C19th philanthropy. Lots of charities used letters to the Editor of The Times to solicit donations
- 10:03:45 From Lindy Moore : Hello from a sunny North Wales, Britain
- 10:05:04 From RSVP Host : Welcome everyone! This is Alison Chapman behind the RSVP logo.
- 10:26:27 From Clare Horrocks : Carolyn Oulton would find this work on Holidays at the Seaside fascinating
- 10:31:28 From Patrick Leary : Re: the Cobden-Delane clash, some of the Cobden letters online have lots to say about the controversy, and Cobden's opinion of the Times:
https://www.cobdenletters.org/letter/ecl_1863_12_26_5238?keyword=delane

10:32:17 From Clare Horrocks : I do wonder if this data could be used to enhance the exiting Gale digital archive of The Times?

10:32:45 From Andrew Hobbs : I understand the Times wanting to distance itself from e.g. the 'S' letters, but why the letters format for other examples? Why did they commission letters?

10:33:09 From Andrew Hobbs : Fascinating talk, using some amazing archival material, of course!

10:34:59 From Sarah Flew : The News UK Archive is a very under the radar archive. Can you tell more about what is in the archive - was it difficult to access the material? Or is it easy to visit?

10:35:11 From Clare Horrocks : Reacted to "The News UK Archiv..." with 

10:37:19 From Clare Horrocks : Sadly have to go as I have a family problem to sort. Thank you for a wonderful talk Graham, I have fond memories of spending time with you and Barbara Onslow at a conference in Manchester.

10:37:20 From Andrew Hobbs : I've come across letters published in provincial papers by arrangement with/encouragement of the editor, but not for payment -- that's a new one on me!

10:38:33 From Annemarie McAllister : Reacted to "I've come across let..." with 

10:39:18 From RSVP Host : It's incredible that Graham's vast number of Times attributions will make their way into the Curran Index ! — a really exciting update to the attribution database

10:39:30 From Kaari Newman : Graham's Curran Report:
https://rs4vp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025_Curran_Law_Report.pdf

10:39:45 From Jennifer Phegley : Reacted to "Graham's Curran Report: https://rs4vp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025_Curran_Law_Report.pdf" with 

10:39:50 From Matt Poland : Reacted to "Graham's Curran Repo..." with 

10:39:52 From Jennifer Phegley : Reacted to "It's incredible that Graham's vast number of Times attributions will make their way into the Curran Index ! — a really exciting update to the attribution database" with 

- 10:40:03 From Andrew Hobbs : Reacted to "It's incredible that..." with 
- 10:41:19 From Kaari Newman : Reacted to "It's incredible that..." with 
- 10:42:00 From Sarah Flew : Details here re the archive
<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/a/A13533062>
- 10:43:07 From RSVP Host : RSVP's Curran Fellowship information:
<https://rs4vp.org/awards/curran-fellowship/> (applications open 15 August!)
- 10:46:23 From Matt Poland : I'd love to hear more about the way that the seaside letters treated Northerners as "anthropological subjects" (or perhaps objects!). Thanks for a fascinating talk!
- 10:46:38 From RSVP Host : Reacted to "I'd love to hear mor..." with 
- 10:47:51 From Catherine Waters : It sounds like Alpha's letter share a stylistic similarity with the graphic reportage of special correspondents more generally.
- 10:48:00 From RSVP Host : Reacted to "It sounds like Alpha..." with 
- 10:48:24 From Annemarie McAllister : Reacted to "It sounds like Alpha..." with 
- 10:50:39 From Iain Crawford : Harriet Martineau reviewed Spence's book in the Daily News (January 28, 1862) — she, of course, led the DN's support of the Union cause against The Times and other pro-Southern periodicals
- 10:50:52 From Kaari Newman : Reacted to "Harriet Martineau re..." with 
- 10:51:07 From Kaari Newman : Replying to "Harriet Martineau re..."

Yes, I was thinking of that too, Iain, based on our summer research years ago!

10:52:52 From Erica Haugtvedt : Wonderful conversation, but I need to go teach. Thank you, everyone!

10:52:59 From Matthew Stephens : For me this is a fascinating perspective on the breadth of the commercial activities of the paper. Your case studies highlight how difficult it is to separate that commercialism from the image of objectivity that especially the Times tried (and still tries) to project. Very thought-provoking, thank you!

10:53:12 From Matt Poland : Reacted to "For me this is a fas..." with 

10:53:14 From Patrick Leary : Reacted to "For me this is a fas..." with ❤️

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10:53:24 From Patrick Leary : Reacted to "Harriet Martineau re..." with 👍

10:53:39 From Catherine Waters : Good question, Andrew. Why did they not pay Austin to write a series of letters as special correspondent?

10:53:56 From Andrew Hobbs : Reacted to "Good question, Andre..." with 👍

10:54:35 From Rajarshi Mitra : Thoroughly enjoyed the talk. Have to leave. Bye. Rajarshi from India.

10:54:42 From Patrick Leary : How much money are we talking about with these payments? and how did those payments compare to those to leader-writers and others?

10:55:08 From Annemarie McAllister : Reacted to "Good question, Andre..." with 👍

10:57:01 From Rachel Cleaver : Reacted to "How much money are we talking about with these payments? and how did those payments compare to those to leader-writers and others?" with 👍

10:57:17 From RSVP Host : Reacted to "How much money are w..." with 👍

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Our next DigiEvent is 15 May 8am Pacific: Expanding the Field Roundtable. All past winners of the RSVP/Victorian Periodicals Review's Expanding the Field Prize will address how their research works to expand Victorian periodical scholarship and where the field is moving next. Registration: in our newsletter and coming soon on RSVP's website

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11:01:34 From Catherine Waters : Fantastic talk, thank you Graham!

11:01:37 From Ardyn Tennyson : Thank you very much for such an interesting presentation and discussion!

11:01:40 From Sarah Flew : Loved this talk - thanks everyone!

11:01:51 From Jennifer Phegley : Wonderful talk! Thank you.

11:01:54 From Iain Crawford : Wonderful talk!

11:01:56 From Andrew Hobbs : Thank you Graham

11:02:02 From Kathy Malone : Thanks, Graham! Fabulous talk!

11:02:12 From Matthew Stephens : Informative and entertaining - thanks Graham!

11:02:20 From Lindy Moore : Thank you, very interesting,