

Stefka Ritchie

Doctoral researcher

Department of History

About

PhD title: Dr Samuel Johnson as a promoter of social improvement.

Supervisor: [Dr Malcolm Dick \(/staff/profiles/history/dick-malcolm.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/dick-malcolm.aspx)

PhD History (</postgraduate/courses/research/history/modern-history.aspx>)

Biography

I am almost at the end of my fifth year of part-time PhD research studies on Dr Samuel Johnson as a promoter of social improvement, under the supervision of Dr Malcolm Dick at the School of History and Culture at the University of Birmingham. 2012 should mark the final year of my official registration, which is to be followed by a six-months writing-up period. It is a long time by anybody's account!

Those who have successfully reached the end of their postgraduate studies will agree that it involves not only acquiring knowledge but also strong will and determination. As the researcher needs frequent resuscitation in this arduous yet worthy process, the enduring support of the supervisor proves vital.

Research

During the years of my PhD research studies Dr Dick has been a pillar of support. In fact, my association with Dr Dick goes back to 2002, when I had just completed my MPhil research on Dr Johnson and Science at the former University of Central England. He asked me to contribute a piece on Dr Johnson and the Midlands to a pioneering website dedicated to eighteenth-century Midlanders who had been revolutionary players in the early stage of the Industrial revolution www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk (<http://www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk>). Through many of the events organized under the flagship of the **Centre for West Midlands History** (</research/activity/cwmh/index.aspx>), I have been able to enrich my knowledge of local history and meet researchers whose efforts in delving into the eighteenth-century past have proved inspirational to my own research.

I have found current and archival sources in the main University Library as well as in Special Collections, which relocated not long ago to new premises in Muirhead Tower. Also, I have attended a variety of IT day courses, run by proficient members of staff, specially designed for researchers to help them improve their IT and presentation skills. I have found current and archival sources in the main University Library as well as in Special Collections, which relocated not long ago to new premises in Muirhead Tower. Also, I have attended a variety of IT day courses, run by proficient members of staff, specially designed for researchers to help them improve their IT and presentation skills.

I can say that my research experience so far has been an upward spiral forged by own efforts and those of others. I hope to bring my research to a successful fruition within the recommended study time. See also: www.stefkaritchie.co.uk/ (<http://www.stefkaritchie.co.uk/>)