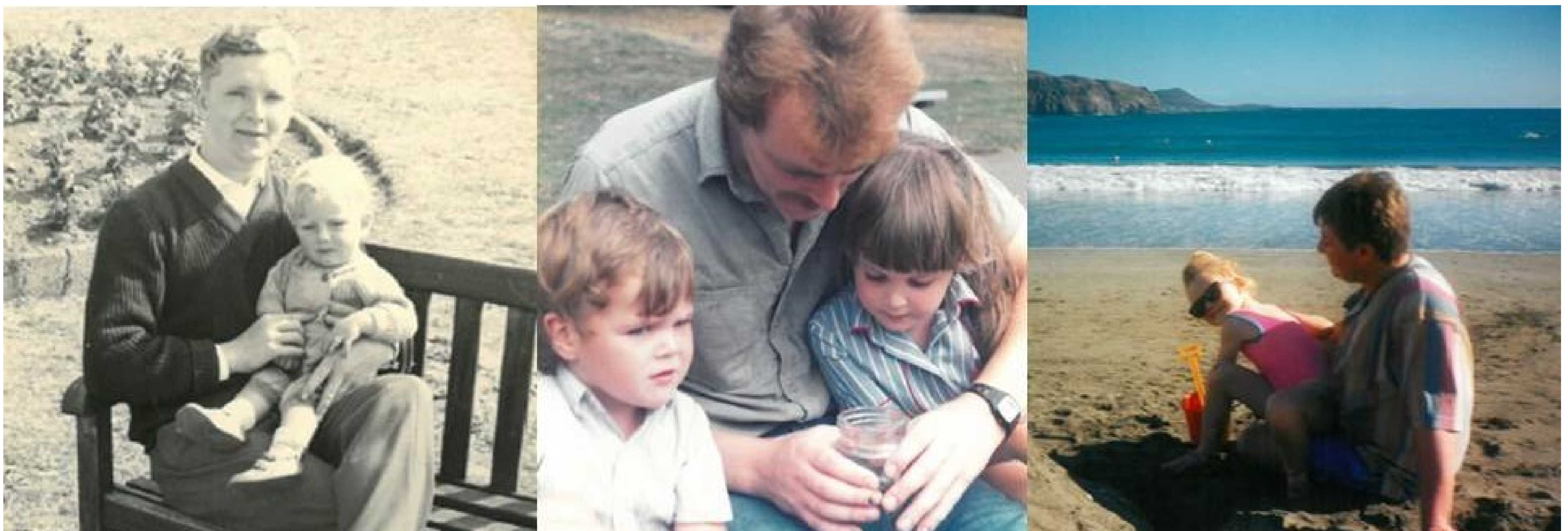


On the Margins of Family and Home?

Working-class Fatherhood and Masculinity in Scotland, c.1970-1995

This ESRC funded project aims to explore the nature of fatherhood in late twentieth century Scotland, examine stereotypes and assumptions about the role of fathers in working-class families, and recover fatherhood to modern Scottish history.



Public and political interest in fathers and fatherhood has intensified in recent years. From moral panics over 'deadbeat dads' to celebrations of the 'new' man, the role of the father has become increasingly visible and discussed in contemporary Britain. A growing number of fathers are now stay-at-home dads, most attend the births of their children, and paternity leave is a legal right. Yet fathers have largely remained 'hidden in history', often neglected in historical studies of the family, and appearing only on the periphery of family life (if at all). In Scotland, the history of fatherhood is almost non-existent. Scottish working-class fathers have more commonly been associated with a 'hard man' masculinity and the 'public sphere' of work, politics and male leisure pursuits as well as presented negatively in representations of the family. Using oral history and a range of archival sources, this research examines men's relationships, attitudes and practices in relation to family and home life in late twentieth century Scotland, a transitional period in conceptions of parenthood, the family and gender relations. How was 'fatherhood' constructed in public and political discourse over this period? Did this reflect the realities of everyday life and what implications did this have for fathers, mothers and their children? To what extent was there a shift towards a more 'family-oriented masculinity' and involved fatherhood (or had this already been established)?