



## IHGS Diamond Event, 10am, 18 October 2021

### **SPEAKER**


Dr. Sophie Kay

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### **TITLE**

Genealogical Marshmallows: *Biases  
& Willpower in Family History  
Research*



Can *you* resist a good research discovery?

Decision making lies at the heart of every genealogical process: which record set to look at, how to search, and how to interpret what we find. Each new page in a family's narrative has the power to intrigue, shock or delight us with its revelations – yet our research can sometimes be a delicate dance between the joy of discovery and the battle with biases as we try to judge the evidence before us.

In this talk, I'll lift the lid on *how* we make decisions in family history research. Taking inspiration from Mischel's famous "marshmallow test" of willpower, we're going to hunt down the *genealogical marshmallows* in our work: those moments where the tempting promise of a new discovery might sway our judgment. Journeying through some real-life examples, we'll identify common cognitive biases, explore how they can influence our work and how we might combat them, and embrace genealogical thinking for the digital age.