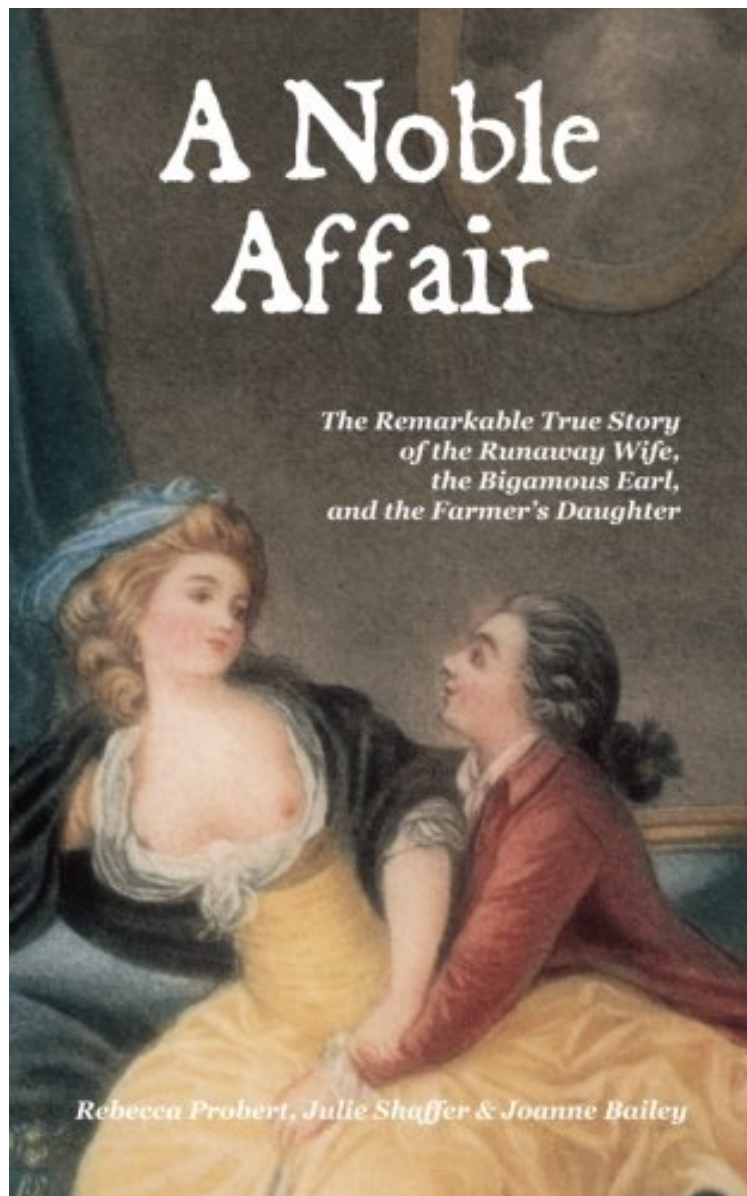


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A Noble Affair: The Remarkable True Story of the Runaway Wife, the Bigamous Earl, and the Farmer's Daughter

Prof Rebecca Probert

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Prof Rebecca Probert : A Noble Affair: The Remarkable True Story of the Runaway Wife, the Bigamous Earl, and the Farmer's Daughter before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Noble Affair: The Remarkable True Story of the Runaway Wife, the Bigamous Earl, and the Farmer's

Daughter:

Brought up in the stately grandeur of Burghley House as heir to the earldom of Exeter, Henry Cecil seemed to have made a suitable match to the heiress of Hanbury Hall, but their marriage ended in disaster when Emma eloped with Henry's friend, the local curate. Heartbroken, Henry turned his back on aristocratic life, taking up residence in a remote Shropshire village and marrying a farmer's daughter - without having divorced his first wife.... The story of Henry Cecil's matrimonial entanglements became part of the "sex panic" literature of the 1790s before being reinterpreted by the Victorians as a classic Cinderella tale of rags to riches, and even through into the twentieth century it was still being told and retold. "A Noble Affair" untangles fact from fiction, illustrates just how limited the options once were for those who experienced marital breakdown, and discovers that in some respects Henry did indeed behave nobly.

About the Author Professor Rebecca Probert is Professor of Law at Warwick University. She has written widely on the laws relating to marriage and cohabitation since 1600, a subject on which she is a leading authority. Dr Julie Shaffer is Professor in English at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Her work has focused on women novelists of the Romantic era and the British novel in the 18th and 19th centuries, and she has written on the scandalous lives of such female authors as Mary Robinson, whose lovers included Prince George. Dr Joanne Bailey is Reader in History at Oxford Brookes University, an expert on the history of the family and marriage in Britain, and author of numerous books and articles on married women and the law. Rebecca and Joanne have appeared on BBC TV's *Who Do You Think You Are?* and on a number of TV and radio programmes talking about the history of marriage and family life. It was one of these Great Houses, with Julian Fellowes that sparked their interest in Henry's story.