

Women's History

MAGAZINE

*Kathryn Eccles on
The Women's University
Novel*

*Deborah Simonton on
Women and Education,
1700-1850*

*Reclaiming Women's
Histories:*

*Peter Smith on
Opera Singer
Elizabeth Burgess*

*Plus
Bletchley Park
Oral History Project
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Six Book Reviews
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HISTORY
NETWORK

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17th Annual Conference of the Women's History Network

Gender & Generations

Women and Life Cycles

University of Glasgow, 5-7 September, 2008

CALL FOR PAPERS

Concepts and experiences of the life-course have been critical to making sense of gender difference and women's lives in the past, and have traditionally been a central concern of historians of women.

Integral to pioneering work on the history of reproduction and the family, work and leisure, and the body, science and medicine, analysis of the life cycles of women has nonetheless left many questions yet to be explored. This conference encourages comparison of women's life cycle experiences both across the widest possible range of times and places, and with the life cycle experiences of men. The focus will also be on inter-generational relations as an important, yet often neglected, explanatory factor in either continuity or change over time.

Keynote speakers include Professor Lynda Coon, University of Arkansas and Dr. Michael Roper, University of Essex.

Possible themes include: fertility and virility; reproductive rituals; the history of the body; motherhood and fatherhood; productive and reproductive divisions of labour; inheritance, women and property; the history of childhood; youth culture; courtship and marriage; gender and old age; death and dying; family histories; sibling relationships; inter-generational conflict; generations and change.

Proposals for individual papers of no more than 20 minutes or for panels of up to three papers are welcome. Panel proposals should be thematic in focus with cross-cultural coverage or the inclusion of papers that enable comparison across chronological boundaries.

For individual paper proposals, please send an abstract of no more than 500 words and a one-page CV. For panels, please send a CV for each speaker, and an overall rationale for the panel, in addition to the abstract. Please send proposals by **31 January 2008** to:

Dr. Rosemary Elliot, Department of Economic and Social History, University of Glasgow
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Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Women's History Magazine*. This issue kicks off with Kathryn Eccles' thoughtful and meticulously argued consideration of the 'Women's University Novel' in the 1920s. Focussing her analysis on Radclyffe Hall's *The Unlit Lamp* (1924) and Rosamond Lehmann's *Dusty Answer* (1927), Eccles demonstrates how these authors, who had both benefited from a university education themselves, challenged popular stereotypes of women graduates of previous decades to negotiate a new and more accurate representation of the educated woman. Neither author was afraid to address some of the more controversial aspects of higher education and its connections to femininity, and 'they indicate that higher education did not necessarily emancipate women from traditional expectations and outcomes'.

Deborah Simonton extends the discussion from representation to women's access to, and experience of, what is best called *further* and *higher* education in eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Britain. Simonton is broad and inclusive in her analysis, and uncovers a range of institutional types, some more familiar than others, which presented a range of opportunities for women to develop both skills and intellect. In doing so, she provides valuable insight into how earlier initiatives created the conditions for a more recognisably 'modern' form of adult and higher education to emerge later. As we are reminded, such education 'did not occur in a vacuum, nor was it only the brainchild of the nineteenth-century woman's movement'.

It is always pleasing to the editors when a piece in *Women's History Magazine* sparks debate or leads to further interest. Our third article has been written in direct response to a contribution contained in the Spring 2007 issue. As Peter Smith explains, '... an article earlier this year by Alexandra Wilson about the life of aspiring opera singers in the early twentieth century, awakened my interest in a suitcase of mementos and press cuttings about my great grandmother.' The result is a quirky, personal account of 'Madame Elizabeth Burgess', her career on the stage, and some of the more unusual aspects of her family life.

Many of you will have attended the Network's annual conference at Winchester in September, 'Collecting Women's Lives'. Socialising with other members is one of the great joys of the WHN conference and delegates often remark on how warm and welcoming our event is. (Note, if you have not attended in the past, resolve now to join us in Glasgow – details on the adjacent page.) Reports of the Winchester conference from different perspectives can be found in this issue. There were so many highlights: the diversity and quality of papers, the impressive venue which was attractive and user-friendly, invisibly efficient organisation, and innovative new features such as 'Artist in Residence', the exceptionally-talented Alex Hoare. Sincere thanks for all this must go to our equally talented 2007 conference organisers: Joyce Goodman, Andrea Jacobs, Zoë Law, Camilla Leach and Stephanie Spencer.

Getting to Know Each Other A big thank you to

WHN members who filled out a form at the conference telling us about themselves and/or nominating another member for possible profile in *Women's History Magazine*. This new feature is part of our initiative to open up the Magazine as a forum for members, to encourage 'networking' and, altogether, to provide a better service to you. We will be moving on with this initiative in forthcoming issues. If you were not at the conference but would like to contribute, please email magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Finally, we are pleased to include no less than six book reviews in this issue, which we trust is good news for both members and authors! Despite this, our Book Reviews Editor, Jane Potter, has a number of books awaiting reviewers. We urge you to read the 'Books Received' section and email Jane, bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org, if you are able to offer your services.

The Women's History Magazine Editorial Team:

Gerry Holloway, Claire Jones, Jane Potter, Deborah Simonton.

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Front Cover: Rosamond Lehmann. By permission of Virago Modern Classics, publishers of Lehmann's novels

Degrees of Freedom?: Radclyffe Hall, Rosamond Lehmann and the Women's University Novel

Kathryn Eccles
University of Oxford

Radclyffe Hall and Rosamond Lehmann were among a new and prolific generation of university-educated women novelists that included Rose Macaulay, Stella Gibbons, Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Storm Jameson and Dorothy L. Sayers. During the early twentieth century, many of these writers provided portraits of educated women who, like them, had challenged society's expectations by attending university and following unconventional careers.¹ This article considers the first novels of Radclyffe Hall and Rosamond Lehmann in the light of these changes, suggesting that their novels addressed some of the more controversial aspects of women's education, and they indicate that higher education did not necessarily emancipate women from traditional expectations and outcomes.

From 'bluestockings' to 'sweet girl graduates', representations of educated women have tended to reflect popular fears as to the effects of such an education on femininity and gender relations. Popular representations of the 'new woman' in the late nineteenth century frequently referred to her higher education, linking higher education for women to the 'new woman's' perceived demand for careers and professional identities, political and property rights, rational dress, and sexual liberation.² Images of bookish, masculine looking females were employed by the popular press to suggest the devastating effects of higher education on women, while medical experts predicted damage to the mental and reproductive health of those women who were foolish enough to undertake such training.³

Hall and Lehmann both interrogate these popular stereotypes, using the opposing images of the 'bluestocking' and the 'sweet girl graduate' to negotiate a new and more accurate representation of the educated woman than had been inscribed in male-authored literature by G.B. Shaw, H.G. Wells and Grant Allen.⁴ Their literary constructions of the educated woman also reflect a departure from popular representations of the educated new woman of the fin-de-siècle, whom Emma Liggins has argued were 'just as likely to be satirised as admired for [their] learning'.⁵ Girls' fiction of this time featured heavily the widening opportunities of higher education, and 'college' novels became increasingly popular. Such novels followed the heroines' often difficult but ultimately successful route to college, explored the college environment in full, and often concluded with a choice between an independent professional life or marriage which Sally Mitchell has argued, did not necessarily mean subordination. Girls' college fiction, Mitchell suggested, presented a positive range of both traditional and modern outcomes for girls.⁶

The novels explored in this paper depart from such familiar narratives by presenting a more complex path towards personal enlightenment. Neither protagonist

achieves fulfilment by the end of the novels, and the reader is left feeling that the choices presented to each made their decisions more complicated and less easily resolved. Both *The Unlit Lamp* and *Dusty Answer* indicate the difficulties faced by educated women in a society that remained uncertain as to the motivation behind their education, its usefulness, and its outcomes. Both novels were written at some distance from the 'new woman' debates of the late nineteenth century, at a time when women had gained full rights at every British university except Cambridge, and debates about the suitability of women's higher education had become entrenched.⁷ Both novels probed the difficulties associated with attending university at a time when, as Carol Dyhouse has argued, 'an undercurrent of misogyny lingered on' in the sphere of higher education and the perception remained that higher education was wasted on women, 'who would marry and fail to make use of their degrees'.⁸

The authors' own university education in this period can also be argued to have affected their presentation of the debates surrounding women's higher education. Both Radclyffe Hall and Rosamond Lehmann had first hand experience of attending university; Hall had attended King's College, London, and Lehmann, Girton College, Cambridge, and their first novels deal explicitly with the choices facing young women students and graduates in the early twentieth century. The novels offer a view of university life that may not be autobiographical, but was certainly informed by the authors' own experiences. The novels experiment with a range of stereotyped imagery connected to the movement for women's higher education and emancipation, as well as their own individual experiences of gender relations and identity.

Radclyffe Hall is perhaps best known for the lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), which was the subject of an obscenity trial following its publication and was subsequently banned. *The Unlit Lamp* (1924), the first novel she wrote but the second to be published, foreshadows many of the themes examined in her most famous novel in dealing with changes in the definition of gender roles and the concept of femininity. The novel's central character, Joan Ogden, is a clever young woman living in the confined society of a seaside town when her future is thrown into question by the arrival of her Cambridge educated governess, Elizabeth. Elizabeth convinces Joan that she may be able to attend university despite her family's disapproval, even offering to part-fund the venture herself when it becomes clear that Joan could not. Cool, thoughtful and practical, Elizabeth plans many escape routes for Joan, none of which she is able to take, despite coming painfully close.

Rosamond Lehmann's *Dusty Answer* (1927) describes the difficulties faced by a woman student,

Radclyffe Hall The Unlit Lamp



A Virago Modern Classic

Judith Earle, at Cambridge in the early 1920s. The novel follows Judith's growth, from her early experiences as an intelligent child brought up and educated in a lonely and isolated location, to her years at Girton College and ending with the dilemma on completing her degree as to what to do next. Lehmann describes a Cambridge hostile to women, whose position on the periphery of the city and the intellectual life of the university was held on sufferance. The novel captures the complexity of the situation for women at Cambridge during this period, providing portraits of the many different women at the college and their motivations for attending, and presenting an ambiguous view of the benefits of Judith's education.

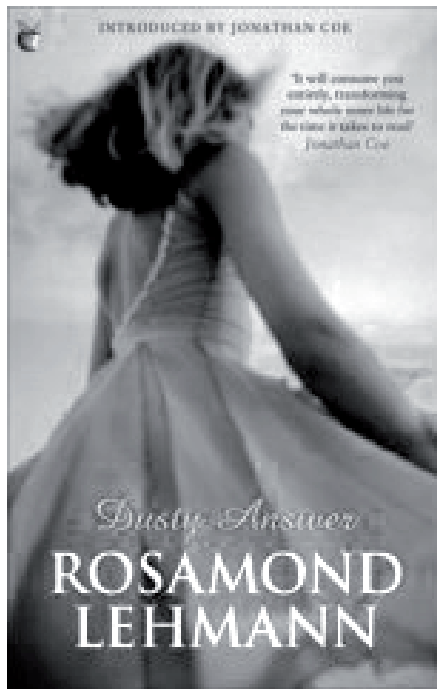
Both Hall and Lehmann examined the process of getting to university, offering different perspectives which reflect the importance of parental support in a woman's success in attending university during this period.⁹ The difficulties faced by Hall's protagonist, Joan Ogden, in attempting to persuade her parents to support her ambitions for higher education, dominate the novel. Joan is inspired by the possibility of a university education, and attracted to the idea of living an independent life. Elizabeth herself is unusual, having attended Cambridge and benefited from the environment of a women's college. She makes occasional references to college friends who have sought independence, influencing Joan's decision to aim for freedom via a university education and introducing

a modern, feminist narrative to the novel.

While Hall's protagonist is influenced by a university-educated woman, Lehmann's Judith is encouraged to follow her father's footsteps to Cambridge. Judith also grows up with governesses, whom she shares at times with her neighbour Mariella, who is four years older. Judith is found to be 'an exceptionally clever child' whereas Mariella 'would not progress' and goes on to a girls' school where 'she doesn't learn *anything* and plays hockey *all day*'.¹⁰ In contrast, Judith receives lessons by herself from a vicar who coaches boys for Oxford and Cambridge, music lessons from a teacher who comes from London specifically to teach her, and Greek and Latin lessons from her father. She confesses that 'my Mother and Father don't believe in girls' schools... But I do. It's awfully dull by myself'. (p. 31) Lehmann indicates a clear demarcation between feminine and masculine education. Mariella receives a standard 'girl's' education whereas Judith is taught 'male' subjects such as Greek and Latin by her father and receives other lessons from teachers who are usually employed to teach boys.

Neither Joan's nor Judith's role model offer a straightforward path to higher education. Joan's parents are unsympathetic, perceiving their child's cleverness and dreams of higher education to be a defiance of their authority. When Joan announces her ambition to become a doctor, her father is outraged, exclaiming 'I'll have none of these new-fangled woman's rights ideas in my house'.¹¹ He fears that his position at the head of the family is threatened by the possible independence of his daughters. In contrast, Judith's father has mapped out her route to Cambridge for her. Cambridge was clearly Daddy's world, and in gaining her scholarship there, Judith feels a certain acceptance and admiration from her father. Her pride in attending, however, is precluded by her father's unexpected death. She is abandoned in a strange land where she cannot speak the language: 'He had vanished and left her stranded among creatures who dared to assume he was still alive... Trips. Labs. Lectures. Dons. Vacs. Chaperons. The voices gabbled on'. (p. 110) Judith's experience of College is dominated at first by her father's memory and the expectations to which she had wanted to aspire. It becomes clear that as a woman she could never have aspired to 'his' Cambridge due to the stark difference between the central men's colleges and the distant Girton: 'If he could have seen how very unlike his Cambridge this place was! Too late now... There was not a spire, not a light of Cambridge to be seen, not a whisper to be heard... even its unseen nearness was no comfort'. (p. 116)

Clare Hanson draws attention to the clash of masculine and feminine within Judith and in *Dusty Answer* as a whole, alluding to Helen Cixous' account of binary oppositions, which, in Western culture, associates the father, or masculine principle with intellectual life.¹² In contrast to her father's Cambridge, Judith finds Girton to be a remote and distinctly female environment. Having grown up within a small group of friends, all from one family, she mixes and forms relationships more easily with men. She is unpractised at communicating with other



well-educated young women and finds it very difficult to assimilate: 'I'm rather frightened, – not about the reading, – about the girls, all the people. I don't understand a bit how to live with lots of people'. (p. 92)

Both novels confront the stereotyped imagery of the educated woman. Throughout the 'new woman' debates of the late nineteenth century, women who were perceived to have transgressed the gender order, particularly by seeking higher education, were frequently portrayed as mannish.¹³ Hall's Joan is considered both masculine and unnatural throughout the novel. She is described as having been 'lanky as a boy', and having refused to allow her hair to grow, even resorting to cutting it with a pen-knife when she is denied scissors. (p. 11) Her appearance is juxtaposed with that of her sister Milly, who was 'in all respects a very normal girl, adoring personal adornments and distinctly vain'. In contrast, Joan 'suggested a well set-up stripling who had borrowed his sister's clothes'. (p. 116) Her cleverness, however, is presented as having redeemed her lack of obvious feminine charm. She attracts both Elizabeth and Richard because she is clever and there are many others who support her rejection of the obviously feminine in order to concentrate on her studies, which are recognised as her route to eventual emancipation. A neighbour of Joan's found the fact that there was 'something distinctly unfeminine about the girl' gave her 'an added interest'. (p. 117)

When, at the end of the novel, Joan sees two young women 'with bobbed hair and well-tailored clothes', and realizes that her style has become commonplace, she is struck by the difficulties she had experienced by assuming it in an earlier period. The two young women see Joan as 'what they used to call a "new woman"... a forerunner'. (p.284) Laura Doan has argued that during the 1920s, the assumption of 'mannish' dress was culturally accepted as representing fashionable modernity, rather than explicitly signifying lesbianism or difference.¹⁴ By presenting the

younger women in this way, Hall perhaps suggests that Joan's choices need not be considered so politically charged.¹⁵

Hall also presents a sympathetic view of Elizabeth. Despite her dubious status as a Cambridge woman and her unconventional relationship with Joan, Elizabeth's femininity and sexual attractiveness to men is never in question. She receives a proposal from a man with whom she had had a conversation on the subject of the advisability of education for women in consideration of their subsequent prospects of marriage, despite drawing out the declaration, 'I hate clever women', from her suitor. When it is suggested that 'perhaps a really manly man prefers the purely feminine woman' rather than one with a university education, he agrees that, 'I'd like her more if she knew less'. (p. 59) At the end of the novel, Elizabeth has married her suitor, and we hear that they have a very successful marriage. Elizabeth is described as having remained a 'fine looking woman' and, as Lady Benson, does a great deal of charitable work: 'she's a kind of social leader in Cape Town'. (p. 293) Neither her education nor her attachment to Joan has threatened her capacity for the conventional route of marriage.

Lehmann also confronted stereotypes of the educated woman, contrasting Judith with the character of Mabel, an industrious but unintelligent student. Mabel emphasizes the danger of a woman concentrating too hard on the development of her intellect. She is described as being physically repellent, and in such a way that implies that she has neglected her appearance: 'her skin was greasy and pink was not her colour; and her hair smelt lank; and when she talked she spat'. We know that Mabel is intellectually inferior to Judith, as she fails the scholarship exams in which Judith is so successful, relieving Judith's fear that 'perhaps this was what really clever girls looked like'. (p. 113) Lehmann makes it clear that it is the effort at pursuing intellectual concerns that makes Mabel such a grotesque figure, she is out of place at Cambridge and at Girton, incapable of following the work and unable to relate to the other women: 'Once or twice Judith tried to draw her into the evening circle, explaining her loneliness, appealing beforehand for her pathos... But it was no good. She was of another order of beings, – dreary and unadaptable'. (p. 134) Lehmann makes it clear that it is the effort at pursuing intellectual concerns that makes Mabel such a grotesque figure, she is out of place at Cambridge and at Girton, incapable of following the work and unable to relate to the other women.

Lehmann's portrait is of a woman for whom higher education was not really designed, whose intellectual abilities are far weaker than her innate common sense. The 'nightmare of the Tripos', which had 'crushed her to the earth' defeminizes Mabel, distancing her from the unassuming community in which she grew up and from the demanding community of women at Girton. (p. 134) During examination time the gendering of certain aspects of College life becomes increasingly important and relevant. The charms of the College grounds must be ignored, as there is no time for anything but work: 'you noted them with a dull eye from behind the stiff ponderous academic

entrenchments of your mind'. (p. 181) Judith describes the rows of 'meek untidy heads' of the girls in the library, whose faces, when lifted, are revealed to be 'feverish and blurred with work.' The overall impression of this period is that the pressures of work and examinations defeminize these women and make them behave unnaturally, 'Somebody tapped out a dreary tune on her teeth; somebody giggled beneath her breath; somebody sighed and sighed'. (p. 181) The placing of a 'kind of broad cow-like creature' behind Judith in the examination hall adds to the air of utility as opposed to the usual female preserve of decoration. (p. 182)

This juxtaposition of the masculine and feminine, utility and decoration within the novel is closely related to the antagonism with which the movement for equality in women's education was met. As indicated above, the caricature of the 'new woman' was often of a sexless or mannish intellectual, and it was feared that any woman indulging in higher education would become that feared creature, a 'bluestocking'. Women at Cambridge in the early twentieth century were expected to behave like ladies, subjected to chaperonage until they could be trusted to do so, whilst at the same time distinguishing themselves in the masculine educational system.¹⁶ Judith manages to achieve this dual success, but Lehmann intimates that other women were not so successful. By presenting both Judith and her friend Jennifer as both attractive and intelligent, Lehmann complicates the conventional stereotype of the 'bluestocking', but her alliance of overwork with the loss of femininity suggests that some stereotypes were more robust.

The examination of 'romantic friendships' and same-sex desire is at the heart of both novels. Joan and Elizabeth are bound in an unusual friendship, which is perhaps best described as homoerotic, a term often used to refer to the friendship between women in single sex communities who relied upon each other for support and comfort.¹⁷ Such a friendship is observed in Lehmann's *Dusty Answer* between Judith and her college friend Jennifer. *Dusty Answer* was also assumed to focus upon this 'lesbian' affair, a reading that apparently concerned Lehmann.¹⁸ Bound by a common search for knowledge and the similarity of the experience of attending a women's college, these friendships can be seen as a development of the permitted 'romantic friendships' common in the nineteenth century which did not go so far as the definition of 'lesbian'. 'Romantic friendships' were permitted as precursors to heterosexual relationships or as acceptable for women who could not find a suitable male partner.¹⁹ Elizabeth Edwards has argued that these friendships were acceptable because they did not challenge hegemonic discourses of gender and power, but when new areas of study in sexology and psychoanalysis established the idea of innate lesbians, women involved in such friendships were considered to be predatory and perverted.²⁰ The idea of a 'pseudo-man' preying upon normal, healthy women and interrupting the established heterosexual discourse became a matter of public outrage, as demonstrated by the 1928 *The Well of Loneliness* trial.²¹

The debate over the possible homosexual

relationship between Joan and Elizabeth is relevant only because if one assumes that they are lovers, the dynamics and importance of the relationship between Elizabeth and Joan are altered. If one accepts that they are lovers, it is easier to understand their initial rejection of the proposals from their suitors and their commitment to the pursuit of a flat in London and Joan's education. This would remove them from the sphere of Joan's family and establish the necessary distance for them to conduct such a controversial relationship. If they are not having an affair, it is merely friendship and concern for a fellow being that encourages Elizabeth to give up so much for Joan. In those circumstances, their rejection of their male lovers must be put down to Elizabeth's commitment to Joan's freedom and Joan's refusal to seek her freedom through marriage rather than education. As pioneering women seeking intellectual stimulation and independence through study and work, Joan and Elizabeth are bound by situation and solidarity, and such friendships did occur in the early part of the twentieth century between women in unusual educational or residential situations.²² Either reading suggests an unconventional relationship, and a departure from the conventional romance plot of girls' college fiction.

Similarly, Judith's relationship with Jennifer was perceived by some to be homosexual and to confirm the popular opinion that intellectual women were inherently 'unnatural'.²³ The friendship between them is exclusive and suffocatingly close, as Jennifer describes:

People have to love her and then she seems cruel. But she doesn't mean to be. There's something about her – people don't seem to be able to love her clearly and serenely: they have to love her too much. Everything gets dark and confused and aching, and they want to – touch her and be the only one near her; they want to look after her and give her everything she wants. It's tiring. (p. 169)

When it becomes clear that Jennifer has transferred her affections to another woman, Judith is left bereft. Lehmann describes the experiences of Judith and Jennifer as though they were lovers, '[t]here's one thing certain in my life: that is, that I shall always love you' (p. 153) and when the relationship founders, Judith responds, 'life had ceased to bear her along upon its tide.' (p. 162) Jennifer is eventually drawn towards the 'coarse and masculine' Geraldine, who 'smoked like a man' and implied that 'she knew things about Jennifer of which [Judith] had no knowledge. She was a terrible woman.' (p. 171) As a result of the relationship with Geraldine, Jennifer finds herself both gossiped about, and neglecting her work, which results in her premature departure from college. (p. 164-71) In a letter to Judith sent after Judith has come down from college, Jennifer writes, 'I met Geraldine, and I realised a lot of things. You know what I am – she swept me off my feet'. She describes Judith as 'an innocent baby' who 'used to ... kiss me as if you were my mother', whereas she presents herself as 'the most corrupt disreputable' and 'Quite a Fallen Woman'. (pp. 288-9)

Hall and Lehmann present an ambiguous view of these relationships, and their lack of long term success suggests that they were difficult to negotiate, even within the confines of a women's college. Joan is unable to commit to the relationship and the escape route offered by Elizabeth, while Judith's relationship with Jennifer comes to a safe conclusion as Jennifer follows a more difficult path. While these relationships suggest an alternative route to freedom, friendship and fulfilment, the authors clearly present the complications associated with such a choice.

Both novels indicate that the outcomes of university-educated women in this period were by no means predictable or secure. *The Unlit Lamp* suggests that university education for women remained a somewhat unusual and controversial choice, and that considerable courage was needed by women who chose to take this path. Joan's means of escape via Elizabeth would have included a Cambridge education, a flat in Bloomsbury and medical training in London. In terms of the aims of proponents of women's higher education in the early part of the twentieth century, Joan would have received the most modern education. In 1891, there were only twenty-five women on the medical register and feminists looked to 'lady doctors' as 'key exponents of women's claims and capacities in the workplace and in the public sphere'.²⁴

This is certainly how Elizabeth saw Joan's ambition and, having made limited use of her own university education, she was keen to see Joan reach her full potential. As she finally realizes that Joan will never leave Seabourne, she confesses that she has felt 'stunted and coerced, checked at the very roots of me, hungry for my birthright.' (p. 260) Having been to Cambridge and worked for a time in London, she is aware of the many opportunities for women at this time, and considers that rather than having to beg for the chance to take them up, women should claim them as their 'birthright': 'I cannot see why women should be debarred from a degree, or why they should get lower salaries when they work for the same hours, and I don't see why they should be expected to do nothing more intellectual than darn socks and have babies'. (p. 200) Elizabeth is devastated by what she perceives as her failure to rescue Joan from her mother's clutches which she believes will 'ruin' Joan, and in turn, herself: 'I must escape from the ruin or let myself be crushed to death'. (p. 260) Elizabeth makes a successful marriage but to a man she does not love, having given up her ambition to return to professional work in London.

At the end of the novel, we see Joan living the life she had always dreaded, working without pay as a companion for her mother. On their annual holiday Joan is poignantly reminded of the choices she faced, seeing her former suitor, Richard, for the first time in many years, and two young women she perceives to be 'active, aggressively intelligent women, not at all self-conscious in their tailor-made clothes, not ashamed of their cropped hair'. These women symbolise what she could have been and what she has become, whereas Richard presented an alternative and more traditional possibility, one successfully taken by Elizabeth. (p. 284) Joan overhears the young women



Radclyffe Hall, courtesy of Virago, publishers of Hall's novels

describe her as a 'kind of pioneer,' but states, 'Joan Ogden was the forerunner who had failed, the pioneer who had got left behind, the prophet who had feared his own prophecies'. Recognizing that the path she could have taken, and that others took, was difficult, she states: 'if the world was not quite ready for them yet... they were at least brave, whereas she had been a coward, conquered by circumstances'. (p. 284) Joan, unable to summon the courage to pursue her dream of a university degree and a medical career, ends the novel as an isolated figure, full of frustration and resignation.

While Joan was never able to reach Cambridge, Judith is shown to have squandered her time there. At the end of her three years, Judith reflects on the experiences that she might have had if Jennifer had not distracted her from them, 'so much that might have been of enduring value had offered itself: so many possible interests and opportunities had been neglected'. (p. 187) Lehmann allows other women at Girton a fleeting appearance, describing them as 'charming, so gentle, so sensitive and intelligent: fascinating creatures', suggesting that these are the most surprising characters, those who are so satisfied to be at the college. Judith asks them 'Does it mean so much to you?' to which one student replies, 'Something that matters – terribly to me is over.' (p. 186) The presence of such women, although ephemeral, suggests that the experience of attending college could be immensely rewarding for those women who knew what they expected from it. Lehmann intimates that these women had deserved their place in college, whereas women like Judith and Jennifer, who had both wasted their opportunity, were not ready for all that Cambridge had to offer.

Vera Brittain makes a similar point in her first

novel, *The Dark Tide* (1924), in which her protagonist Daphne mourns her own missed experiences of college life: 'Don't you think... that people go to places like [this] when they're much too inexperienced? I mean it seems to me that you ought to have learnt wisdom before you ever go there'.²⁵ The motivations behind students' college education and its expected rewards were presented as being very different. In emphasising the unsatisfactory university careers of both Jennifer and Mabel, Lehmann intimates that the university experience is perhaps not appropriate or suitable for every woman and that the rewards of attending college were often very different to those anticipated. Both Lehmann and Hall suggest that the position of women in general must improve before they can achieve the most success out of their educational experiences, as the university environment encourages them to realise and work to their full potential. While the position of women in society continued to be equivocal, the experiences of women preparing to enter that society were bound to be so also.

It is possible to see in Judith the antithesis of the ideal of the educated new woman. She has no financial need of a Cambridge education and we hear little enthusiasm either for her chosen subject or for the intellectual stimulation of Cambridge. She appears to require an escape from the rigours of college life, and this comes through the very worldly Jennifer, who shares Judith's view that she 'can't live in ugliness' (p. 107) and through meeting her male friends. Lehmann's portrait of the hapless Mabel is in direct opposition to that of Judith who is beautiful, graceful, cultured and effortlessly successful academically. We even learn that Jennifer, who is presented as intensely physical and who declares that she has 'a prejudice against intellectualism' (p. 118), is 'the most brilliant history student of her year. Easily. Of course she's never worked, but she could have done anything she wanted'. (p. 171)

Judith's reaction to the varied community at Girton, especially to those whose lives have nothing in common with her own except for their mutual attendance, while initially one of confusion, however, is followed by a gradual awareness and understanding of their differing social and intellectual reactions to Girton. Having been disappointed by the modern woman's education, succeeding effortlessly but with no obvious purpose in mind, Judith seeks fulfilment through romantic attachments, but is ultimately wise enough to know that she must make her own way: 'she was rid at last of the weakness, the futile obsession of dependence on other people. She had nobody now except herself, and that was best'. (p. 303) Her education has provided Judith with the opportunity to decide her own fate, and whilst it remains unclear which path she will choose, it is clear that having been able to take advantage of the opportunities open to modern young women of this period, she is the most fortunate of the women in the novel.

Conclusion

Hall and Lehmann captured an uncertain period of women's history at British universities, where women who

sought intellectual independence found that the goalposts were constantly shifting and the notion of what was proper for a woman was a somewhat ephemeral concept. Disputing nineteenth-century popular and literary views of educated women, their treatment of certain shared themes and taboo subjects, such as the 'romantic' friendships between Joan and Elizabeth, Judith and Jennifer, and the disappointed ambitions of the weak-willed Joan and the intellectually frail Mabel, show a willingness to address the most controversial aspects of women's emancipation. The variety of characters employed by both Hall and Lehmann emphasised this fact, showing that the experience of being an educated woman in the early twentieth century was somewhat fraught.

Their novels also provide something of a feminist commentary on the fate of the educated woman in the relatively early days of women's education. Hall and Lehmann each describe worlds in which women who successfully completed their education did not necessarily succeed in their ambitions due to the lack of sympathy with which they were received by an unreceptive society. Examinations of literary culture in the inter-war years focussing on the feminine or middlebrow novel have shown that middle-class women who were faced with a multiplicity of social and cultural opportunities, different images and identities with which to experiment, often had trouble in resolving these dilemmas, especially after marriage and motherhood had intervened.²⁶ The work of educated women, such as Hall and Lehmann, explicitly addresses these issues, suggesting that these were at the heart of the educated woman's experience in this period.

Endnotes

1. Rose Macaulay regularly used educated women characters in her novels; see for example *Potterism* (1920), *Dangerous Ages* (1921) and *Keeping Up Appearances* (1928). For Brittain, see *The Dark Tide* (1924), for Winifred Holtby, *The Crowded Street* (1924), and for Dorothy L. Sayers, *Strong Poison* (1930) and *Gaudy Night* (1935).
2. See Chris Willis, "'Heaven defend me from political or highly-educated women!': Packaging the New Woman for Mass Consumption' in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (eds), *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin de Siècle Feminisms* (London: Palgrave, 2001); Susan C. Shapiro, 'The Mannish New Woman: Punch and its precursors', *Review of English Studies* 42/168 (1991); pp. 510-22, Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England: 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (University of Kentucky Press, 1990).
3. See Joan Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Elaine Showalter, 'Victorian Women and Menstruation' in *Suffer and Be Still*, Martha Vicinus (ed.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

1973) and Anne Digby, 'Women's Biological Straightjacket' in Jane Rendall and Susan Mendus (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 192-220.

4. Examples include G.B. Shaw's Vivie Warren in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1898), H.G. Wells' eponymous heroine *Ann Veronica* (1909), and Grant Allen's 'Girton Girl' in *The Woman Who Did* (1895).

5. Emma Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman, and Urban Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 73. See also Chris Willis, "'All agog to teach the higher mathematics": University Education and the New Woman', *Women: A Cultural Review* 10/1 (1999), pp. 56-66.

6. See Mitchell, *The New Girl*, pp. 45-73.

7. Cambridge continued to deny women full status until 1948, until which time they were granted 'titular' degrees. See Rita McWilliams-Tullberg, *Women at Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

8. Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities 1870-1939* (London: UCL Press, 1995), p. 242.

9. Carol Dyhouse, 'Family patterns of social mobility through higher education in England in the 1930s', *Journal of Social History* 34(4) (2001) pp. 817-42, and 'Graduates, mothers and graduate mothers: family investment in higher education in twentieth century England', *Gender and Education*, 14/4 (2002), pp. 325-36.

10. Rosamond Lehmann's *Dusty Answer* (London: Penguin, 1936), pp. 7-8. All further references will be to this edition and will appear in the text.

11. Radclyffe Hall, *The Unlit Lamp* (London: Virago, 1981), p. 111. All further references will be to this edition and will appear in the text.

12. Clare Hanson, *Hysterical Fictions: The 'Woman's Novel' in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 27.

13. See Richardson and Willis (eds), *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin de Siècle Feminisms*, Shapiro, 'The Mannish New Woman', and Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*.

14. Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 95-125.

15. Although, of course, Hall would go on to publish *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), in which lesbianism and cross-dressing were explicitly connected and explored.

16. Sara Delamont has examined the problems associated with this approach, which she calls 'double conformity'. See Sara Delamont, 'The Contradictions in Ladies' Education' in Delamont and Lorna Duffin (eds), *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

17. Vicinus first used the term to describe close friendships

between women in residential educational communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ('One Life to Stand Beside Me: Emotional Conflicts in First Generation College Women in England', *Feminist Studies* 8/3 (1982), pp. 603-627, and *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985)).

18. Selina Hastings, *Rosamond Lehmann: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2002), p. 95.

19. A discussion of the positioning of the term 'homoerotic' in the context of women's colleges is given in Elizabeth Edwards, 'Homoerotic Friendship and College Principals, 1880-1960', *Women's History Review* 4 (1995), pp. 149-163.

20. Figures such as Richard Kraft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud all wrote with differing opinions on lesbianism in this period. See Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* (London: Penguin, 1995) pp. 257-65.

21. For more on the trial, see Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (eds), *Palatable Poison: Critical Perspectives on The Well of Loneliness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), and Maroula Joannou, 'Ladies, Please Don't Smash These Windows': *Women's Writing, Feminist Consciousness and Social Change, 1918-38* (Oxford: Berg, 1995).

22. See Edwards, 'Homoerotic Friendship and College Principals', and Martha Vicinus, "'One Life to Stand Beside Me": Emotional Conflicts in First Generation College Women in England', *Feminist Studies* 8/3 (1982), pp. 603-627.

23. Joan Burstyn writes on contemporary medical and religious theories on the unnatural tendencies of the intellectual woman, including detailing biological impairments that would befall a woman who sought education, in *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1980).

24. Carol Dyhouse, 'Driving Ambitions: Women in pursuit of a medical education, 1890-1939', *Women's History Review*, 7 (1998) 321-343.

25. Vera Brittain, *The Dark Tide* (London: Virago, 1999), p. 174.

26. See for example, Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), Heather Ingman, *Women's fiction between the Wars: Mothers, Daughters and Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Nicola Beauman, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-39* (London: Virago, 1983), Joannou, 'Ladies, Please Don't Smash These Windows'; and Hanson, *Hysterical Fictions*.

'Even some ladies talk with facility about oxygen ...'

British Women and Higher Education, 1700-1850

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Further and higher education are modern terms, but they best describe the forms of 'additional' education that was available to women in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain.¹ Such education was central to raising the standards in schools by providing education for potential teachers and governesses, but it was also fundamental to bringing female opportunities within the ranges of males' education. This early period has been largely ignored in the literature because historians looked for the kinds of institutional forms that existed in the twentieth century. That is, the historiography has usually been framed by a feminist agenda, so that historians looked for institutions that gave qualifications and access to professional standing. 'The basis of this historiography lies ... in the preoccupations of certain theoretical trends in women's history,' which describe 'a period of total exclusion [from educational provision] ... followed by a push by women for full educational rights after 1860.'²

Similarly, the nineteenth century has normally been considered as the first period of adult education. But women as well as men benefited from important eighteenth-century developments. Within Enlightenment thought, 'improvement' was a central aspect of human development, and the spirit of the age generated many of the adult learning opportunities. In fact, a range of training and educational genres existed, including midwifery training, 'teacher training', and liberal arts and scientific studies, to which numerous women turned in their personal journey toward 'improvement'. Such adult education was often attached to existing child-oriented schools or other institutions. However it could also be structurally very informal relying on 'leisure' activities that were 'improving'. Indeed the line between entertainment and instruction was as ill-defined as in today's evening classes. The patterns of adult education were not always consonant with 'current usage [which] nearly always implies a measure of formal instruction, a relationship of teacher and taught.'³

No school that taught only adults is documented before 1798, and all early opportunities seemed to have been attached to children's schools. In 1700, Mr. Taylor of Wigan wrote of his intention to teach servants at night while the following year Mr. Margetts of Bedfordshire reported:

twice in the Week [John Pierson] meets another Company of Adult Persons (about 8 in number) in the Town, and hears them read, and train's them up in Bishop William's Exposition of the Church Catechism. [John Reynolds] instructs gratis another Company every night at his house, in the Catechism, in Reading and Serious Principles, and indeavours [sic] to bring them to an awful sence [sic] of God and man.⁴

John Wesley, establishing a charity school at Kingswood in 1739, planned to teach adults 'in the inner rooms, either early in the morning, or late at night, so that their work may not be hindered,' but there is no evidence that the scheme came to fruition.⁵ The main adult opportunities were in Wales and Scotland. In Wales, itinerant teachers, or circulating schools, were used to reach the sparse populations. They lasted only a short time, usually during slack agricultural months so that people missed little work, and they taught both child and adult learners. In 1739, Griffith Jones, Rector of Llanddowror and 'the most distinguished figure in the history of education in Wales', reporting on the progress of the Welsh circulating schools claimed

In most of the schools, the adult persons do make about two thirds of the number taught in them. ... I am informed of two or three women aged about sixty, who knew not a letter before, did attend constantly everyday, except sometimes when they were obliged to seek abroad for a little bread; ... and lamenting that they had not an opportunity of learning forty or fifty years earlier.⁶

The Vicar of Trelech near Monmouth reported similar developments in 1754.⁷ Griffith Jones estimated that adult scholars outnumbered two or three times the number of children attending such schools.⁸ The tenor of such accounts indicates an enthusiastic response by poor unlettered people to the opportunity provided. Similarly the local clergy appear to have been won over by the tact of Griffith Jones and the 'noticeable alteration in the habits and behaviour of the peasantry.'⁹ In Scotland, the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge instructed its Highland schoolmasters to provide night schools for servants and adults who could not leave work during the day.¹⁰

Sunday schools presented another opportunity for channelling the enthusiasm of adult learners. In the north of England and Wales, adults attended Sunday Schools alongside children, while in other areas adult schools connected to Sunday Schools were established. For example, Manchester Sunday Schools taught reading to adults on Sunday evenings.¹¹ By 1813 in Bristol, there were 21 such schools teaching 540 men and 23 teaching 708 women.¹² Notably more women than men attended them. Jonas Hanway, philanthropist and merchant, commented: 'In some young women learn to read. As to men, they do not appear to have any such ambition. If they have not been taught in their childhood they prefer ignorance.'¹³

The first fully documented English school specifically for adults was founded in 1798 in Nottingham. It was a Sunday school designed explicitly to meet the needs of

young women in the lace and hosiery factories, and it taught them 'Bible reading and instruction in the secular arts of writing and arithmetic'. The male and female teachers were drawn from the employees of Samuel Fox's grocery shop, since 'It was a thing understood in the old-fashioned Quakerish economy, that all the shop assistants, male and female — they were principally female — should help at the Adult School on First Day morning'.¹⁴ Although it later became useful for training Sunday school teachers, it was designed for the instruction for working women, and a men's class was only added as an afterthought. In 1799, the Congregational Union in Essex broached a plan for teaching reading to 'lads going to daily labour and young women in service'.¹⁵ These are clear indications that women sought and were offered forms of education as adults to replace or supplement whatever learning they had managed as children. The evidence is too scant for comparison with the extent of men's opportunities, but enough to substantiate female interest in at least basic knowledge.

The adult Sunday school idea blended with self-help efforts by the working classes to improve their education. The bulk of the evidence describes male 'mechanics' groups, but here and there are glimpses of women. A concerted effort was the Birmingham Sunday Society created in 1789 by Sunday school teachers in order to instruct young men in writing and arithmetic after they left school. Later geography, bookkeeping and drawing were added. The Society then extended the options by creating a branch of the organisation for mutual improvement in useful knowledge. This instruction included mechanics, hydrostatics, electricity, pneumatics and astronomy. Following on from this development, members of the Society exchanged their knowledge with their working-class peers by giving lectures on mechanics and other branches of natural philosophy. After 1795, the activities of the Society also led to the founding of an Artisan's Library. After the 1791 riots, the best pupils were selected to qualify as teachers and gave their services free.¹⁶ Clearly in Birmingham there was a vital network of adult education and self-help improvement activities.

Both the Old and New Meeting Sunday Schools in Birmingham provided places for girls, with paid female teachers working under the direction of voluntary visitors. Also, women as well as men attended the Birmingham Sunday Society lectures. As a member described: 'The admission to all these lectures was gratuitous, and as the style of the lecturer was remarkably simple, his manner earnest and unassuming, and his illustrations particularly felicitous, the interest which they excited occasioned them to be very numerously attended by persons of both sexes'.¹⁷ However, one of the founders of the Society, James Luckock, claimed that 'it does not appear that any eligible extension of the plan suitable for the girls, could be adopted, similar to that in use for boys'.¹⁸ Thus, women largely had to join the men and share lectures, since dedicated adult provision seems to have eluded them in contrast to the apparent interest and activity in male adult education in Birmingham.

The Birmingham and Nottingham efforts at adult education were unusual in being chronicled and in

embracing a well-integrated network. Together with other similar adult education opportunities cited in histories of adult education it becomes clear that while a 'movement' hardly existed, there was a multiplicity of local, casual attempts to provide further education in basic and more sophisticated branches of knowledge.

From 1796, the Birmingham Society became the Birmingham Brotherly Society, with friendly society and educational roles.¹⁹ So far it has not been possible to make clear and direct links between female friendly societies and adult education for women during the eighteenth century. For example, the rules of the 'Original Female Friendly Society' formed in Lichfield, Staffordshire in 1794, are those of a straightforward sick club. However, Catharine Cappe joined the two concepts in her tract on charity schools, and Hannah More was involved in establishing both schools and friendly societies. Nicola Reader recently explored other aspects of female friendly societies and found that societies with middling and upper-ranked women as patronesses were closely connected to the education of younger children, while many such societies were connected to schools that did teach women basic literacy and other skills to equip them for domestic service. Poor women were encouraged to take part in administration of the clubs and their very participation was a source of education in itself, while lack of education was often cited for a club's failure. This question certainly bears more investigation.²⁰

Lecture series were also offered in many British towns throughout the century. Most were open to women; some even offered concessions to women. Large numbers of women attended in Manchester, London, Bristol, and Newcastle. In 1803, it was noted: 'Even some ladies talk with facility about oxygen ... hydrogen and the carbonic acid'.²¹ Some lecture series were little different from evening classes such as those in mathematics started from the 1750s in Newcastle, Salford in 1772, Leicester in 1788 and London, Soho in 1789.²² By the 1840s, most Mechanics' Institutes also had women members.

Ladies were encouraged at The Robin Hood Free Debating Society and the Amicable Debating Society in Birmingham. On 2 May 1774, the Robin Hood Society resolved:

That as this Society is intended to be of general Advantage that such Ladies who choose to hear the Debates shall be admitted. — The President therefore gives Notice that the Upper Part of the Room will be railed in for the Reception of Ladies, that they may sit without interruption, but no Gentleman is to be permitted to sit within side of the Rail. — The Ladies will be admitted without Expense. — Admittance 6d. each Gentleman.²³

Later that summer, it announced that ladies were to be allowed to speak to the proposed questions.²⁴ The 'Gentlemen' referred to included artisans or other working men. As one critic wrote, 'Besides the outward Garb of many of those who spoke was rather indecent; a clean Shirt and Stock should surely be procured for this night, even though Sunday went unprovided; the Ladies are permitted Gratis, and Cleanliness is a Compliment due

to the Sex everywhere.²⁵ Similarly craftsmen, tradesmen and mechanics attended the earlier Robin Hood Society in London (1742-73).²⁶ Whether ladies were always 'ladies' is not possible to tell. Contemporary comment about the extent to which servant girls emulated their employers, the practice of giving 'cast-offs' to servants and the servants' own interest in fashion tended to blur visual marks of class distinction.²⁷ If working men attended, working women may well have done so. Most other references to debating societies and clubs are sufficiently unconscious of gender as to leave the issue open to speculation.

The adult education described above illustrates that there were viable self-education developments amongst the eighteenth-century working classes. Certainly they represented different levels of knowledge, and different levels of social access. Many of the intellectual activities may have been predominantly aimed at and attended by the middle classes, charging fees that workers could not afford, and existing as part of a cultural milieu separate from the working classes. Yet the Birmingham example provides clear evidence that working people of both sexes attended many of the lectures, which were offered in an atmosphere of scientific curiosity and free enquiry, and contributed to teaching and lecturing. However, such activities were more likely to take place in urban rather than rural areas.²⁸ Additionally, the intellectual activity seemed to emanate from and to be directed toward the upper echelons of the working classes and the middle classes. As a consequence, rural workers and labourers were unlikely to come into contact with more than evening or Sunday schools attached to charitable foundations. Females may have been further restrained by familial responsibilities so that the influence was probably nominal on the typical working-class woman. Women were interested in the opportunities provided however, and single women and those whose responsibilities were not too onerous took advantage of those opportunities that sprang up on an *ad hoc*, temporary basis around the country.

Some of the open or 'extramural' lecture series that emerged across Britain clearly were associated with the universities. Lectures on Experimental Philosophy at Oxford included women from 1710, while other lectures were attended by 'persons', or in Glasgow, by the 'town's people of almost every rank, age and employment'.²⁹ Lectures at University College, London (UCL), were open to women from its foundation in 1825. Announcing its [failed] intention in 1742, an advert stated, 'all liberal Arts and Sciences will be most usefully, critically and demonstratively taught in the mother tongue in a proper course of lectures ... so as to be entertaining to all and particularly to the ladies.'³⁰ Despite the founding of UCL as a response to the religious and social exclusivity of Oxbridge, admission of females was not usual, and women had to fight many of the same battles for admission and matriculation as in other British higher education institutions across the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Royal Institution in London admitted women to the audience from its inception, though, notably, not as speakers. These lectures were not cast as 'matriculation' and were thus informal, and perhaps not as challenging as the later campaigns for matriculation, with their association with

professions or occupations, such as medicine, which were seen as threatening men's livelihoods and prestige.

An important feature of 'higher' education during this period was that graduation was not the focus of study — learning was. At Edinburgh, 'graduation was simply unimportant' before the nineteenth century and fewer than 12 per cent of medical students 'bothered to graduate' each year. Indeed, 'graduation before 1858, except perhaps in Aberdeen, seems to have been something of an eccentricity'.³¹ It was similar in the ancient English universities, so while 70 per cent graduated, the absolute number was small, and the value of a degree was in itself minimal.³² Therefore, the degree was of less relevance than access to courses of study, lectures and exposure to a range of educational experiences. Similarly, the growth of 'dissenting academies' represented the need for a different sort of education — that is, the social education of Locke and an interest in science and commerce among the middle classes. Enlightenment thought and new approaches to learning stimulated debate on the curriculum in Aberdeen with George Turnbull, who taught at Marischal College from 1721 to 1727, advocating a focus on mathematics, science, history and politics over the traditional classical curriculum, and such innovations were introduced across Scottish universities (St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Marischal and King's in Aberdeen) by the middle of the eighteenth century.³³

So in Scotland, a broader curriculum already existed, and universities were non-residential, making access easier for women.³⁴ John Anderson, professor at Glasgow for over forty years, and strongly committed to the application of democratic principles through higher education, was instrumental in founding a unique institution that from its inception included women. In his bequest in 1796, Anderson proposed a 'Ladies course', and also proposed that women attend 'several of these Courses of Lectures' over a period of time, 'in order to gain an education that would "make them the most accomplished Ladies in Europe"'.³⁵ There seems to have been no question that women should not have access to higher education, and the first Professor of Natural Philosophy, Thomas Garnett, utilized a system in which each ticket admitted either 'a Gentleman and a Lady,' or 'Two Ladies', thus actively encouraging female attendance.³⁶ This was so successful that half of the attendees at the first course of lectures were female. Thus Garnett could comment that the Andersonian was 'the first regular institution in which the fair sex have been admitted to the temple of knowledge on the same footing with men; and it must be said in their praise, that they have not neglected to avail themselves of it'.³⁷ It continued to admit women, and as it developed into a full university, women had access to a more varied curriculum.

Professors of medicine also began to give courses of lectures specifically to women who wished to qualify as midwives. In the 1760s, John Memus of Marischal College, Aberdeen, advertised regularly in the *Aberdeen Journal*,³⁸ and Thomas Young, Professor of Midwifery at Edinburgh University, signed certificates confirming the strenuous nature of his courses. Women passed admission interviews and attended three full courses of

lectures, followed by practical tuition at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. They then passed examinations — having paid six guineas for the privilege. James Hamilton, Young's successor, estimated that he had taught 1,000 women between 1760 and 1817.³⁹

One of the motivations for providing women's higher education was the need for teachers. While the relative lack of good widespread education for girls was a limiting factor in providing the students and promoting the idea of higher education, the need to address the growing pressure for more teachers and better education for all children also contributed to opening the door to higher education and providing the venues to pursue it. By the late eighteenth century, early reforms in girls' schooling, a clutch of committed teachers and a wider interest in education, helped provide the foundation on which true higher education could be based. Certainly by the middle of the nineteenth century the reformist pressure had generated a momentum that would lead to higher education institutions. The foundation of Queen's College, London, and Bedford College in 1848, are seen as landmarks within women's educational history. They provided an establishment to give governesses and teachers a better educational grounding, thus marking the acknowledged beginning of higher education for women in Britain. However, Sarah Smith has documented the emergence of Queen's College, Glasgow, in 1842, as a women's higher education institution, some six years earlier.⁴⁰ It operated four departments — Religion, Literature, Science, and Fine Art — with a wide curriculum and high-calibre lecturing staff. Its aim was to provide a solid educational experience, and 'induce habits of sustained and steady application, instead of ... the desultory and irregular mode hitherto so characteristic of female education.'⁴¹ The aim was to provide full-time education and innovative 'clash-free' timetabling allowed the students to attend classes across the academic spectrum rather than limiting them to their chosen fields of study. It was also clearly higher education: 'intended principally for Ladies who have completed the ordinary courses of education given in schools [who] are desirous of pursuing branches of Literature and Science hitherto partially or entirely inaccessible'.⁴² The institution had high-level support from the outset, as specifically higher education for women, and by implication, women from the middle classes who could afford the money and time and who were most likely to meet the educational prerequisites. It functioned for at least three years, but despite its apparent good organisation and strong backing it appears to have disappeared within about ten years. As Smith acknowledges, 'it might have been expected to have had a long life. However, no records of the college have yet been found, no later institution or local history book appears to mention it, and even champions of women's higher education in Glasgow at the end of the nineteenth century fail to cite it as an example.'⁴³ She further argues that its demise may have been associated with a number of changes in British society, which reflected the tension between the notion of the domestic woman and the educated woman. Also women did not have the motivating factor of employment and qualifications, which increasingly influenced male higher education. Despite promising

developments in secondary schooling, the impact of the construction of femininity in the early nineteenth century could curtail or limit girls' access to appropriate preparation for higher education so that other institutions, including Bedford and Queen's College, London, found that female students were often inadequately prepared for higher study.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the face of British women's education had changed significantly. At elementary level there was state funding and state involvement starting to regulate standards. Secondary education also was better established and reform of standards was central to the foundation of more schools with serious intentions. Women themselves were notable for pushing forward the next phase of development. Education was associated with the woman's movement and the push for suffrage, so that there clearly was a far more public and overt awareness of educational issues. However, in the 150 years previously, opportunities had existed for women of all ages to benefit from teaching and learning. These were widely varied, and often were 'elementary', making up for a lack of opportunities as children, or building on childhood attendance of a few years at school. Other initiatives were more advanced, and while often very informal, they were important to the women themselves, who clearly joined classes and lectures, took certificates, and filled the lecture rooms and classes across Britain. Thus the emergence of a form of adult and higher education that is more recognisable to contemporary eyes did not occur in a vacuum, nor was it only the brainchild of the nineteenth-century woman's movement.

Endnotes

1. This article is based on research in Deborah Simonton, 'The Education and Training of Eighteenth-century English Girls, with special reference to the working classes', PhD Thesis, University of Essex, 1988, chapter 6. See also Deborah Simonton, 'Education' in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, eds, *Women's History Britain, 1700-1850, An Introduction* (London, 2005), pp. 47-51. The standard work on adult education in Britain is Thomas Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain* (Liverpool, 1970). Other relevant secondary works include Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860*, London, 1998; also her 'Knowledge is Power — Unitarians, gender and education in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *Gender and Education*, 1989, vol. 1, pp. 35-50 and Barbara Taylor's discussion of Owenite schools in *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (London, 1983). For an overview of nineteenth-century England see June Purvis, *Hard Lessons: the Lives and Education of Working-Class Women in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1989). For Scotland, see Anthony Cooke, *From Popular Enlightenment to Lifelong Learning: a History of Adult Education in Scotland 1707-2005* (Leicester, 2006) and for Wales, Leslie Wynn Evans, *Education in Industrial Wales 1700-1900*.

2. Sarah Smith, 'Retaking the register: women's higher education in Glasgow and beyond, c.1796-1845', *Gender*

and History, 2000, vol. 12, p. 311. I am grateful to Sarah for sharing a pre-publication version.

3. Thomas Kelly, *A History of Adult Education*, preface; for eighteenth-century views of adult education, see J.F.C. Harrison, *Living and Learning, 1790-1960, A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement* (London, 1961), pp. 3-4.

4. Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, Early Eighteenth-Century Archives, Part C: Letters and Memorials, Abstract Letter Books (Correspondence received and sent), 1699-1701, vol. 1, 8 March 1700/01.

5. John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols, ed. by Nehemiah Carnock (London: c.1909), vol. 2, p. 323.

6. Griffith Jones, *Selections from the Welch Piety*, ed. by W. Moses Williams (Cardiff, 1938), pp. 32, 35. The quote about Griffiths Jones is from Mary G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement, A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938; reprint ed., 1964), p. 297, and refers to his role in establishing the circulating schools in Wales.

7. Thomas Pole, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools*, ed. by Victor E. Neuberg (1816; reprint ed. London: 1969), p. 2.

8. Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 310.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 188; Sir John Sinclair, ed. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799*, Donald J. Witherington and Ian R. Grant, general eds, (Wakefield, 1982), *passim*.

11. A. P. Wadsworth, 'The first Manchester Sunday Schools', as cited in M. W. Flinn and T. C. Smout eds, *Essays in Social History* (Oxford, 1974), p. 315.

12. Robert Peers, *Adult Education: A Comparative Study*, ed. W. J. H. Sprott, (London, n.d.), p. 11.

13. Jonas Hanway, *A Comprehensive View of Sunday Schools for the Use of the more Indigent Inhabitants of Cities, Towns and Villages, through England and Wales*, (London, 1786), p. 32.

14. J.W. Rowntree and H.B. Binns, *A History of the Adult School Movement* (1903), p. 10.

15. Essex Record Office D/NC 9/1.

16. The prime sources for its history are by one of the founders, James Luckock, *Moral Culture, to which is appended an account of the origin, progress and success of the Birmingham Sunday Society*, 1816, and his 'Narration of Proceedings relative to the erection of the Old Meeting Sunday Schools, Birmingham,' MS c.1832 and by a co-member from 1792, William Matthews, *A Sketch of the principal means which have been employed to ameliorate the intellectual and moral condition of the working classes at Birmingham* (London: 1830).

17. Matthews, *A Sketch of the Means*, p. 15.

18. Luckock, *Moral Culture*, pp. 273-74.

19. A friendly society was a 'sick club', which members of the working classes might set up with contributions from members, as a way of providing some form of insurance if a member became ill or unable to work.

20. 'Rules, Orders and Regulations for the Original Female Friendly Society,' held at Vicar's Hall, Lichfield, Sept. 9, 1794; Catharine Cappe, *Observations on Charity Schools*,

Female Friendly Societies and other subjects connected with the views of the Ladies' Committee (London, 1805). I am grateful to Nicola Reader, School of History, University of Leeds, for sharing her views and knowledge based on her doctoral research.

21. As quoted in William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Warwickshire* (Oxford, 1904) vol.7, p. 212.

22. Kelly, *Adult Education*, p. 101; Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951), pp. 136-60.

23. *Aris' Birmingham Gazette*, 2 May 1774, p. 3.

24. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1774, p. 3.

25. *Ibid.*, 20 June 1774, p. 3.

26. Kelly, *Adult Education*, p. 93.

27. Daniel Defoe, *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*, (London, 1725), p.6; Defoe, *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd; or, the Insolence and Insufferable Behaviour of Servants in England duly enquir'd into* (London, 1724), p. 284; J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956; reprint ed. 1980), pp. 115-123. However, Fanny Burney clarified that clothing alone was not a mark of position, *Evelina* (London, 1778).

28. P.J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford: 1982), pp. 142-43.

29. See Smith, 'Retaking the register', n. 20.

30. Hans, *New Trends in Education*, pp. 136-7.

31. J. B. Morrell, 'The University of Edinburgh in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Isis*, 1971, pp. 168-9; J. Scotland, *The History of Scottish Education: I*, (London, 1969), p. 153.

32. Hans, *New Trends in Education*, pp. 43-5.

33. David Ditchburn, 'Educating the Elite, Aberdeen and its Universities', in E. Patricia Dennison, David Ditchburn and Michael Lynch, eds, *Aberdeen before 1800, A New History* (East Linton, 2002), p. 339.

34. Christina Struthers, *The Admission of Women to the Scottish Universities* (Aberdeen, 1883), p. 13.

35. Strathclyde University Archive, B1/1, John Anderson's Will, Andersonian Minute Book, as cited in Smith, 'Retaking the register,' p. 317.

36. S. G. E. Lythe, *Thomas Garnett, 1766-1802* (Glasgow, 1984), p. 17.

37. Thomas Garnett, *Observations on a Tour through the Highlands*, as quoted in Smith, 'Retaking the register', p. 318. This institution, after a number of mergers has become Strathclyde University. For the institution's history see J. Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy: The University of Strathclyde and its Antecedents 1796-1996* (East Linton, 1996).

38. See *Aberdeen Journal*, 2 September 1765, advertising his book, *The Midwife's Pocket Companion*, praised by Thomas Young.

39. Elizabeth C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 53-4, 59.

40. Smith, 'Retaking the register', pp. 322-5.

41. *Glasgow Constitutional*, 3 November 1842.

42. *Ibid.*, 15 October, 1 November 1842.

43. Smith, 'Retaking the register', p. 325, see also pp. 328-9.

Reclaiming Women's Histories

Editors' note: Readers may remember that in the Spring 2007 edition of *Women's History Magazine* we carried an article by Alexandra Wilson, 'Prima Donnas or Working Girls?', which examined how female opera singers were used as 'undisputed poster girls' during the first two decades of the twentieth century. These women were cited in the periodical press 'to negotiate 'suitable' models of female behaviour and professionalism in an era in which women's role in society was evolving with disorienting speed.' Inspired by Wilson's article, the following is a personal account of one such woman written from memories, newspaper cuttings, family correspondence and other sources.

Madame Elizabeth Burgess

Peter Smith

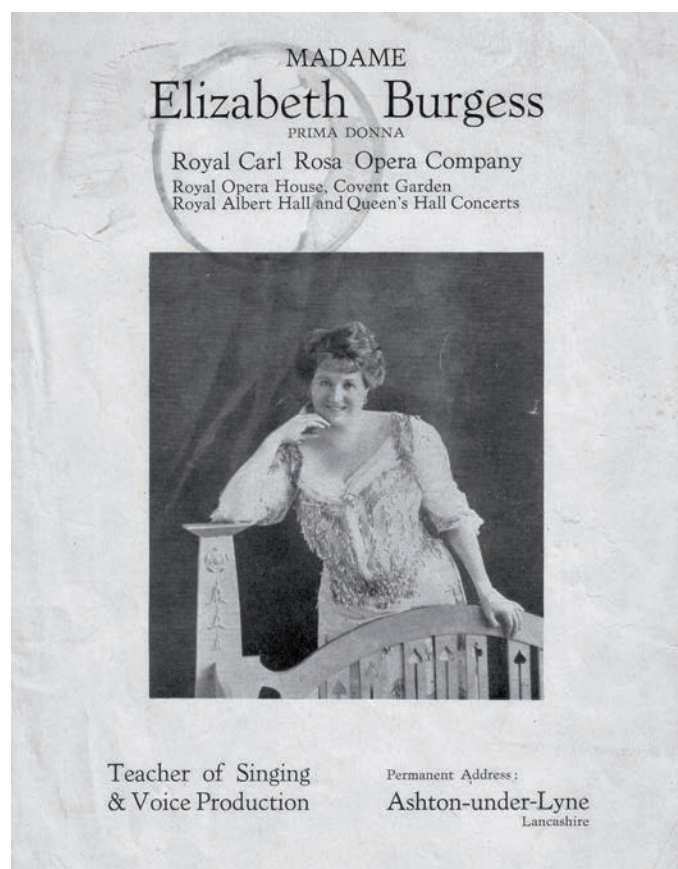
Eastertown, Somerset

The article published in *Womens' History* earlier this year by Alexandra Wilson about the life of aspiring opera singers in the early twentieth century, awakened my interest in a suitcase of mementos and press cuttings about my great grandmother. My mother just remembers 'Grand-mere' testing the chest expansion of her three granddaughters in the kitchen, to see if they had any potential as singers. My grandfather never mentioned her, except to once remark that she was always falling out with her managers. In my college years, a friend who was passionate about opera found that she had performed eleven times at Covent Garden but little else was recorded.

'Lizzie' Burgess was born in Hurst near Ashton-under-Lyne in 1869 and, in the words of one of her contemporaries, became one of England's most prominent, yet almost unrecorded, operatic singers at the turn of the last century. Hundreds of newspaper cuttings have been kept in a volume that has remained in my family's possession, along with a number of contemporary photographs of Lizzie and members of the opera companies in which she worked. Apart from marginal notes to record the newspaper of origin and date of publication, none of the authors are known.

It was said that Lizzie Burgess possessed a beautiful natural voice, flexible and pure, of a 'nightingale' quality, with a wide range. Opera critics wrote of her perfect intonation and faultless emission. Coupled with this she was reputed to have had a charming personality, physical fitness, courage and ambition, all of the necessary attributes for a successful operatic career. This career was forged within the constraints of a failed marriage and the need to provide for her only child.

The Burgess family were mainly associated with the Lancashire cotton industry and the 1871 census shows them to have been living at 131 Queens Street in Hurst. Her father Thomas was a 'self actor minder' who operated a 'Self Acting Mule' – the name of a multi thread-spinning machine. Mrs Mary A Burgess is recorded as a shopkeeper in Kelly's Directory of Hurst in 1905. Lizzie was the youngest member of the family. By the time she was three, her two older brothers and two sisters were either of school age or working in the mills as well. Like many other singers, Lizzie started her career in local chapel and church choirs; she was greatly encouraged initially by a group of well-known local men who supported



the churches and music societies. She also studied with a certain Madame Farrer-Hyde, of whom she always spoke with affection and gratitude for providing her with a sound basic training in vocal methods. When eighteen years old, she joined the Ashton Philharmonic Society (well regarded in the Manchester area in its day) and she was given an audition by Carl Rosa himself in Manchester. He immediately offered an engagement but her mother considered her too young to go on tour.

A year or two after that audition, Carl Rosa made another offer and this time it was accepted. Lizzie made her first bow, at the age of twenty-two, in the role of 'Michaela' (Carmen) before a London audience on February 9th 1891. This would appear to have been at the time of a national farewell tour for Marie Roze (1846-1926), the wife of James Henry Mapleson. Lizzie's arrival on the operatic stage was commented upon in many regional papers.



*Carl Rosa Company – Hastings.
Photograph owned by author.*

Lizzie had previously appeared with the Carl Rosa Company at Bradford, Yorkshire, on December 20th 1890, playing 'Arlene' (Bohemian Girl) along with the famous tenor, Barton McGurkin, who was also in the cast. He complimented Lizzie on her success, especially as she had sung the part without previous rehearsal with the Company. She was a quick student and possessed a retentive memory, both valuable assets in an operatic singer. Lizzie then proceeded to study other roles and for two years trained in stage technique with the famous Moretti in Milan; from him she gained a command of the stage, together with a new deportment and repose, which was reportedly the delight of her public and often the envy of her fellow artistes.

Then something happened. She went and got married, breaking her three years engagement with the opera company. Carl Rosa was inclined to appeal to law but changed his mind when he discovered that his protégé was in significant difficulties. Her marriage to William Holding Leech was very short lived. Lizzie had a baby (my grandfather) who was named Stanley Burgess Leech, but William went to South Africa, apparently in disgrace, and was never heard from again. No photographs of William or their wedding, or the couple after the birth of Stanley, have been kept. Lizzie resorted to concert singing and oratorical work around the country to support herself and her child. While singing at Southport she was, by chance, staying at the same lodging house as Mr Charles Manners. One evening she was rehearsing in her room, unaware that the impresario was in the house. Mr Manners immediately

offered her a trial at Hammersmith and she joined the Moody-Manners Company, quickly appearing with Fanny and Lily Moody.

Her fortuitous meeting with Charles Manners was probably the saving of her career as a singer. Without such an opportune reintroduction to the world of the professional stage, she would very likely have had to return to her home



*Eliazbeth Burgess with Stanley Leech.
Photograph owned by author.*



*Elizabeth Burgess as Arline.
Photograph owned by author.*

town in Ashton-under-Lyne and eek out a living as a music teacher. She spent just a year with the Moody-Manners Company but it appears to have been a very useful education. During one performance, Mr Manners came to the front of the curtain and announced that Madame Moody was indisposed and could not continue to fill the part, and that her place would be taken by Miss Burgess. During the next act Miss Burgess was regarded with considerable interest and followed with special attention. From the outset, her surprising talent at once captivated her audience.

Despite her earlier contractual difficulties, Lizzie then rejoined the Carl Rosa Company and stayed with them almost to the end of her career. During this time it would seem that Stanley travelled frequently with her and spent a lot of time in the company of the children of other performers in the company. He recalled playing with Eugenie and Sidonie, the children of Eugenie Goossens, the conductor of the orchestra, during rehearsals when on tour. Eventually he was placed in a boarding school in Hitchin in Hertfordshire and was deeply unhappy. Many times he spent the holidays alone in the school whilst the others went home to their parents.

During her time with the Carl Rosa Company, Elizabeth's voice developed broader and more luscious tones and she devoted her study to more difficult Wagnerian roles, in which she scored some of her greatest and most lasting successes. Praise from many different critics flowed and numerous press cuttings from her private collection attest to her 'wonderful repose' and restraint, but also to her musical abandon and passion. Madame Burgess, as she became known, went on from one success to another and not the least of her triumphs were her 'Pamina' (Magic Flute), 'Suzanna' (Figaro) and 'Elvira' (Don Giovanni). The *Ulster Echo* (30th November 1905, from Elizabeth Burgess's collection of cuttings) wrote:

Miss Burgess sang brilliantly. Her fine soprano seems to have gained in tone and volume; its liquid purity, especially in highly florid passages, was delightfully demonstrated in Suzannah's great song immediately prior to the finale. (The Marriage of Figaro)

After Wagner, Mozart was her favourite composer, and during one period Madame Burgess was hailed as the 'Mozartian singer of the stage'. During the Covent



*Elizabeth Burgess after her foot accident.
Photograph owned by author.*

Garden season she sang all of the principal roles in the Mozart operas. Apart from her many stage performances in all parts of the United Kingdom, Madame Burgess also performed in various Halls such as at the Halle Concerts in Manchester and the Albert Hall in London.

During this time she also began an affair with Theodore Sverdlhoff the leader of the orchestra. It would seem that her son Stanley did not approve of the relationship but in spite of this Lizzie married Theo (bigamously in 1916) and they were very happy. It is not known how long the relationship lasted. Theo apparently founded his own orchestra later and was performing in Stockholm and elsewhere in Europe. Lizzie tried to get Stanley to accept Theo and some of her cards sent to her son during her various tours include references to her new husband and implore Stanley to write to her.

After her many successes with the Carl Rosa company, Madame Burgess signed a contract for a tour of the Halls, but finding this work uncongenial, she returned to the stage and remained with the Company until an accident with her foot compelled her to retire. Her repertoire included about thirty of the principal operatic roles, in addition to a

comprehensive collection of oratorios and classical arias and songs. She returned to her native town and settled down to teaching. She quickly gathered around her a number of pupils and, in addition to teaching them singing and vocal methods, became their counsellor and friend. Whenever a pupil showed sufficient promise to make a success of a musical career, she never failed to secure an audition in the proper quarter. One such pupil was Dame Eva Turner who hailed from Oldham and began her career in a similar manner to Lizzie. Before the end of her career, Lizzie was able to make a number of recordings. The only copies that were in her own possession were unfortunately lost when she accidentally sat on them one day during a faint whilst visiting her grandchildren. She died in 1934 at the age of sixty-five, in a London hospital after Stanley had travelled to Ashton to bring his mother home following a sudden deterioration in her health.

Stanley never encouraged his daughters to attempt a musical career. He had married a local girl from the Ashton-under-Lyne area and made a career for himself as a draftsman in the engineering industry, moving progressively southwards to London and the East End.

Bletchley Park Oral History Project

Britain's Pioneering Women

One of the best-kept secrets of the Second World War was the work conducted at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire. This large estate was the location for the Government Code & Cipher School, which was instrumental in conducting de-coding operations throughout the course of the war. Because of the high level of secrecy required for these activities, little has been chronicled about the contribution of hundreds of women who were stationed at the Park and its outstations. As a consequence of this there is a significant lacuna in the corpus of work written over the past few decades on women's wartime history.

The British Computer Society (BCS) and the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) became aware of this largely 'hidden history' when the chair and founder of BCSWomen, Dr Susan Black, visited Bletchley Park in 2004 and recognised the importance of the role that women played in helping to break coded German messages and their involvement with early forms of computerisation. The BCSWomen group is aware of the current decrease in the number of women entering careers in IT and computing and is concerned to reverse this trend. The BCS and UKRC therefore decided to fund a project in 2006 to collect and record the personal memories of those women who had served at Bletchley Park and to use extracts from these on a linked BCS website, later depositing the full recordings with the Bletchley Park Museum as part of their archive. They hope that the memories of these pioneering women from the Second World War will inspire women today to

challenge some of the limitations placed on their career opportunities.

In the early years of the war, much of the de-coding work was conducted by men and women culled from British universities, particularly Cambridge and Oxford. At this time, the work was done by hand but an increase in the number of messages received meant that a more efficient method had to be implemented. Two mathematicians, Gordon Welchman and Alan Turing, invented a machine called the Bombe, which was based on a punch-card system developed at the British Tabulating Machine Company. It was decided to use WRNS to operate the new machines and in 1941 eight of them were despatched to Bletchley Park as an experiment, although 'it was doubted if the girls could do the work.'¹ The 'girls' not only demonstrated clearly that they could operate these machines efficiently, but proved their worth so well in all areas that by 1945, there were thousands of Wrens working at the Park and at various outstations, such as Stanmore and Eastcote in North London. The Bombe was an electro-magnetic machine but in 1943 another machine, the Colossus, was installed at Bletchley Park and was also operated by Wrens. The Colossus was the first electronic programmable computer used in Britain and thus the women who worked on it were the first computer operators.

The oral history project resulted in recorded interviews with 20 women, some of whom worked as Bombe operators, some on Colossus and some as teleprinters and telegraphists, as well as one cryptographer and two



A group of Wrens at Bletchley Park in 1941

linguists. It has become clear from these recordings that the majority of the women were proud of their contribution to the war effort and that their predominant memory is the friendships they formed. As one interviewee says, 'I think it was the feeling of comradeship we found there ... I think I probably grew up there and certainly gained a lot of confidence. It was wonderful to know I could do a job and do it well ...'² Whilst most of the women were happy to leave at the end of the war and return to normal life, some went out to Colombo in what was then Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to help with de-coding Japanese messages and some went on to have other careers. Their wartime work clearly had an impact on their perceptions of their own abilities and expectations for the future. One WAAF telegraphist summed this up by saying, 'You suddenly realised that life was full of possibilities, that a new world was opening for us all, instead of being at home and helping look after the babies and put the flowers in the vases, I could do something else, so I did ...'.³ All these women were truly pioneering in demonstrating new possibilities for other

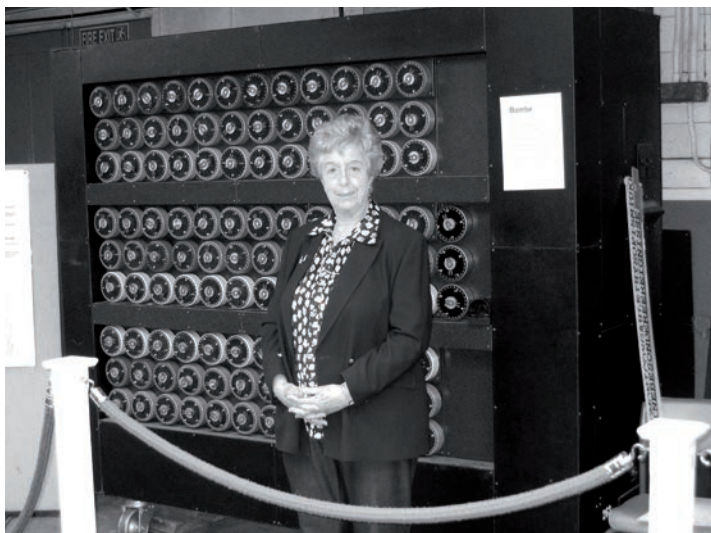
women and it is particularly significant that many of them were involved in the early days of computing.

New Website

The BCS will be launching their new website in November, 2007 and this will be linked to their main website at www.bcs.org. A full article on the oral history project will be submitted to *Women's History Magazine* for a later issue.

Endnotes

1. PRO, HW3 164, Report on Squadron-Leader Jones Section (the Bombe section), June 1997
2. Mrs Silvia Pulley Bombe operator & Supervisor, interview 16 August 2007
3. Miss Barbara Mulligan, Telegraphist/Morse Code reader, interview 20 August 2007



Mrs Ruth Bourne in front of the rebuilt Bombe machine

The Bodichon Restoration Appeal

'a true woman, of noble character, strong in purpose, and quick to act on any sensible suggestion, if someone would be blessed by it'

BARBARA LEIGH SMITH BODICHON, 1827-1891



By permission of 'The Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge'

One of Britain's greatest feminist activists, Barbara Bodichon, lies buried in a largely forgotten and neglected grave in a corner of St Thomas à Becket churchyard in Brighton, Sussex; a spot chosen by Barbara herself. To date, it is not even recorded in the church guide that she is among those buried there. And yet Barbara Bodichon's work to promote women's rights has positively affected the lives of all British women today, in a variety of ways. She was a key activist in the campaign for the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857 and for the Married Women's Property Act 1882. Her support (intellectual and financial) made a major contribution to the education of women, including higher and further education. As one of the

Ladies of Langham Place, she instituted efforts to help women get decent and decently-paid employment, as well as campaigning for women doctors, editing the *Englishwomen's Review* with Bessie Parkes and being one of the early women's suffrage activists. She herself worked, even after she married, earning a substantial amount from her labour as an artist and making her a role model for modern women. George Eliot recognised this, using her as the inspiration for her complex and powerful heroine in *Romola*. Such a figure deserves to be remembered. Instead, broken and rusty railings surround her tomb, and its inscription is nearly illegible. Only accident would lead you to it.

However, while dilapidated, the grave is not beyond repair. The Brighton PCC has been quoted a sum of c£1200 for the tomb and its surrounding railings, which will ensure that her grave is restored to a fitting state. We are looking, also, for an extra sum, of £600, to ensure that the grave and its surroundings can continue to be maintained for at least the next quarter century, as a tribute to the persistence and bravery of a Victorian inspiration for today's women, and also a woman who cared about her neighbours. She never neglected the small things when fighting for the great causes. In restoring the grave in this way, there is more than simple nostalgia or reverence for the dead. There is much still to be done by women to gain



The Grave at Brighton in its current state

true equality in education, employment, politics and daily life: remembering what her achievements were, and how she achieved them, is a useful reminder of tactics that work, as well as a tribute.

The Bodichon Appeal Committee, with the Brightling PCC, is launching an appeal to raise £1800 for the architectural repairs and for a maintenance fund. Any surplus will be used to fund an appropriate Barbara Bodichon prize for art at nearby Dallington Primary School, which serves Brightling.

To donate: please either send a cheque made out to 'Brightling PPC – Barbara Bodichon Fund' or a postal order to: Mrs Irene Baker, Secretary, Brightling PPC, Brightling Rectory, Brightling, East Sussex, TN32 5HE.

Or: email Judith.Rowbotham@ntu.ac.uk to arrange to pay a donation into the SOLON Account to be forwarded on to the BPCC Appeal account.

At her funeral in 1891, *The Hastings & St Leonard's Observer* wrote:

Those who were present will never forget the sight so long as they live... From the house to the grave-side sad faces and tear-rimmed

eyes filled the roads... [Inside the church were heard] sobs that would not be stifled... She gave with a free hand, and left before the recipient had time to thank her... She was a true Englishwoman, of noble character, strong in purpose, and quick to act on any sensible suggestion, if someone would be blessed by it.

For further information on Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon see

www.girton.cam.ac.uk/about/history/bodichon.html

The Barbara Bodichon Appeal Committee

Lesley Abdela; Judith Rowbotham; Amanda Sackur; Tim Symonds

For more information, please contact Judith Rowbotham:
Judith.Rowbotham@ntu.ac.uk

This appeal is supported by SOLON:
www.research.plymouth.ac.uk/solon

Book Reviews

Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey*,

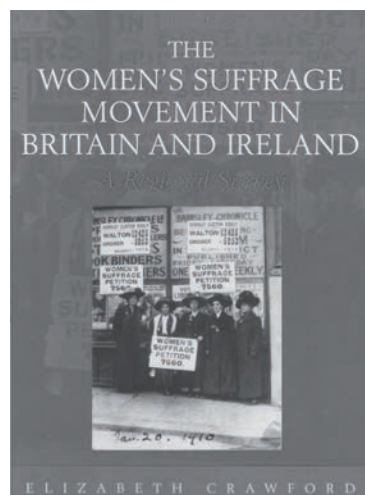
London and New York: Routledge, 2006. £100, 0 415 38332 3 (hardback), pp. x + 305

Reviewed by Gerry Holloway
University of Sussex

This book is the long-awaited and much-needed companion to Elizabeth Crawford's *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928* (1999). Read alongside each other one can not fail to admire Crawford's encyclopaedic knowledge of the British Suffrage Movement. Although there have been some regional studies of the Suffrage Movement (Eg. Krista Cowman, *"Mrs. Brown is a Man and a Brother!" Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations, 1890-1920* (2004); Jill Liddington, *Rebel Girls* (2006)), this is the first attempt at a suffrage history organized by regions. In this book, Crawford sets out to challenge the idea that London was the centre of the British suffrage universe and that nothing much happened in the provinces and this she does to great effect. Even the structure of the book does this by starting with the Northwest of England, then wending its way southwards ending in the southeast and London. Sections on Wales, Scotland and Ireland follow. Each section is full of detail and I learned something new in each.

For example women were granted the vote in 1880 in the Isle of Man; the tiny town of Aldeburgh in Suffolk was the home of 19 of the 48 women who signed the 1866 suffrage petition; and there was even a branch of the WSPU in the Orkneys.

The main benefit of the structure of the book is that it draws out interesting patterns. Friendship and kinship networks are possible to track and although the movement is predominantly female and middle class, Crawford also notes attempts to engage working-class women in the movement from the early days, not just the radical suffragists of the North West, but also in lesser-known areas of the countries. Overlaps in interests are also highlighted. Others have written about links between suffrage and other campaigns such as education or the Contagious Diseases Acts but in this study one can see how this developed on the ground. Men's support for Women's Suffrage also becomes apparent as one reads of local male dignitaries willing to support meetings and speak on behalf of the Cause. Another issue that interested me in particular was how important local organisers were in keeping the movement



active, especially in the lean times. Local societies floundered when their organiser moved on and this underlines a problem with many women's organisations at this time as they relied too heavily on individuals and did little to encourage the membership to participate in the management of a branch.

However, although the book is a cornucopia of fascinating detail, it is not the best point for a suffrage novice to begin their research into local suffrage history. I would advise the novice to start with Crawford's earlier book *The Women's Suffrage Movement* and use this later book as a way of adding detail to the material presented in the former. It is not always easy to find information by just dipping into the book. I would have liked names of towns to be in bold like the names of individuals. A timeline for each region would also clarify histories in some instances. The biographical details of main players at the end of each section is useful but I think that referring to the earlier book for the biographical entries of some of the women reinforces my feeling that these books must be used together. There are also a few glaring biographical absences, for example, Clementina Black who was the editor of *The Common Cause* for a while and was well known on the suffrage lecture circuit.

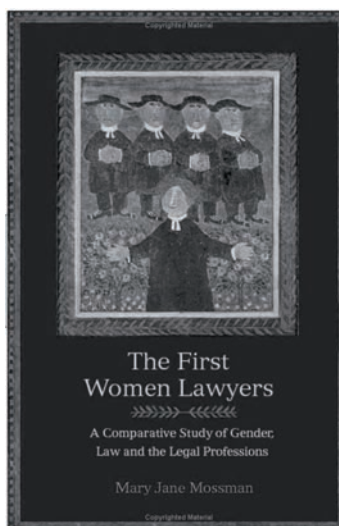
On the other hand the suggestions for further reading are valuable, with many references to regional histories, local repositories, and privately published material which is of immense use for the professional researcher and student alike. The sheer energy and determination of the suffrage organisers as they traveled the length and breadth of the country and communicated their ideas to communities large and small is indeed heroic in a time when the telephone was in its infancy and rail travel not the most comfortable mode of transport. This book illustrates the breadth of activity of the movement both in the large cities where much of the research to date has focused but also in the small towns and villages throughout the land. I recommend it to anyone who intends to undertake a local study or is interested generally in filling in those gaps in suffrage scholarship.

Mary Jane Mossman, *The First Women Lawyers*,

Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing Limited, 2006. £25, 1 84113 590 9 (paperback), pp. xi + 329

Reviewed by Dr Paula Bartley
Pécs, Hungary

Historians and legal scholars will be delighted by Mary Jane Mossman's latest book. *The First Women Lawyers* is a detailed comparative study which tracks the experiences of some of the first women who sought entry to the exclusively male legal professions in America, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and Western Europe. Set at the turn of the twentieth century the book tells the stories of remarkable women who together changed



the course of legal history. The chapters are organized geographically – the reader is taken through the various legal jurisdictions one by one – and in this way Mossman can place each struggle within its own particular historical context and make cross-cultural comparisons.

The book effectively combines a number of theoretical approaches: it is a comparative study which seeks to draw similarities and contrasts between different legal systems;

it utilizes biography as a theme in which to examine these; and it examines shifting notions of gender within the various legal systems. As Mossman and others have pointed out, gender was a contested category in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as women and men sought to challenge existing notions of femininity and masculinity. Undoubtedly, *The First Women Lawyers* is a rich historical treasure trove in which one can find lots of theoretical and evidential jewels.

The First Women Lawyers places women's struggle for acceptance in the legal profession within the context of expanding opportunities for women and the history of gender equality movements. Some women contested prevailing ideas about women's roles whereas others reinforced them. The English suffragist and equal rights campaigner Eliza Orme, who established her own successful legal practice, embraced the emerging feminist cause. In contrast, Cornelia Sorabji, an Indian who was the first woman to study law at Oxford and who became the first woman to plead before a British judge in any part of the British Empire, eschewed feminism, viewing her role as supplementing rather than supplanting men as lawyers. Even so, both women worked at the interstices of the legal profession: Orme concentrated on conveyancing work whereas Sorabji worked for the British Administration and represented women living in purdah who were precluded from using male lawyers.

Not surprisingly, women the world over faced the challenge of reconciling their roles as women with their identity as lawyers. Canadian social etiquette required that 'ladies' wear hats in public but court etiquette demanded that they take them off. Thus even a simple question of whether to put on a hat or not left women with the challenge of not just opening her hat box but Pandora's too. Mossman recognizes that gender is not a fixed category and she places the first women lawyers into specific historical and geographical context. American women first gained admission to the legal profession in the late 1860s and 1870s and by the turn of the century there were 300 women lawyers in practice. Their success was facilitated by the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction which brought about a new era of equal rights and an expansion in higher education for women. Neighbouring

Canada on the other hand had admitted only one woman, Clara Brett Martin, by the end of the nineteenth century. However between 1906 and 1918 women were permitted to become lawyers in most Canadian provinces, a success fuelled by an expansion of higher education, an increase in economic independence and better employment prospects. Meanwhile in Britain the old familiar story was taking place. English law stated that only 'persons' could practice law and as the courts decided that 'persons' meant men only, women were excluded until the 1919 Sex Disqualification Removal Act eliminated such employment barriers.

Mossman's archival work is impressive. She has gathered a wide range of sources, including letters, diaries and private papers, from archives in Belgium, Britain and Canada. Her assiduous approach to research, combined with her wide knowledge of previous work on women's entry into the legal profession, has enabled her to make useful cross-cultural comparisons and new theoretical points.

Good history books usually point the way to further questions and research. How did women like Sorabji transcend both racial and gender barriers? How did Orme manage to practice without a law degree? Further work on female philanthropic networks would help us understand how pioneering women managed to succeed despite financial barriers. Was there a distinct group of women who supported other women financially? Was this a unique form of philanthropy? More theoretical work on the way in which concepts of gender mutate over time and place would also be welcome. There are many more questions that jump out at the historian from this highly readable, fully documented and fascinating book.

Hugh V. McLachlan, ed., *The Kirk, Satan and Salem: A History of the Witches of Renfrewshire*

Glasgow: The Grimsay Press: 2006. £25.00, 1 84530 034 3 (paperback), pp. 506

Reviewed by Jane McDermid
University of Southampton

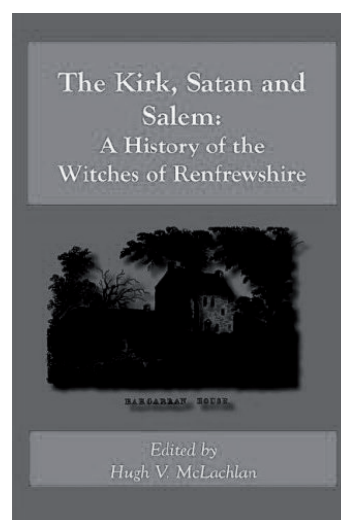
In his introduction, the editor points out that the history of witchcraft is more complex than a story of persecution or misogyny. The Scottish case study presented here, the Paisley or Bargarran witch-hunt of 1696-97, is told through diverse sources, including material written at the time, nineteenth century editions of the original *History of the Witches of Renfrewshire*, and a 1996 psychiatric assessment of the trial. McLachlan himself argues for the exoneration of the young girl at the centre of the trial, Christian Shaw (1686-1737), who has variously been seen as a malicious fraud, mentally ill, or, in his view, manipulated by adults who were themselves influenced by the events of Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. The editor provides a brief

overview of the Salem witch-hunt, drawing out the links and similarities to the Bargarran trial, such as that both involved children as alleged victims and clergymen played an important (and not always malign) part in the proceedings. What is also clear is that whereas Salem is the most well-known of such trials in colonial America, it was not typical of New England cases, and nor indeed was Bargarran of Scottish trials. Indeed, there was

a second, less famous, but linked series of allegations of witchcraft in the area in 1699, of which a previously unpublished document is included showing that although the charges were very similar, the case was dropped. The editor sees this as a reflection of how unusual the first Bargarran episode was.

Witches, he reminds us, were not thought to be possessed by the devil(s) but rather to be willing accomplices; and whereas the belief that witches tried to persuade their victims to become witches was not prevalent in Scotland, it was in the Bargarran case in which four women and three men were tried and executed. It is important to consider the context for Bargarran, which was the troubled decade of the 1690s, with famine, political, social and economic crises, tension between Scotland and England as well as fear in Renfrewshire of a French (Catholic) invasion. In fact, most Scottish parishes had no witch-hunt; the majority accused of witchcraft were female, with around 15 per cent male; church courts were involved, but as witchcraft was a crime, only civil courts could pass a verdict of execution, which in any case was not the typical outcome of such trials; ill-treatment and torture were common, but confessions were not considered proof enough of guilt. Moreover, the evidence and arguments put forward for the prosecution were not accepted in a significant number of cases, as the second Bargarran outbreak shows.

The 1696-97 Bargarran case, then, seems to be exceptional, and readers interested to place it within the wider context of such trials should examine the University of Edinburgh's online project, with a database of around 4000 people accused of witchcraft in early modern Scotland: 'The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft', www.arts.ed.ac.uk/witches/ (archived January 2003) by Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman. McLachlan also has an interesting item in the Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women (Edinburgh University Press, 2006) on Christian Shaw, who became a prominent businesswoman in Renfrewshire, where he makes the case for a full-length study of a fascinating life. Finally, he suggests that the situation in the 1690s, of not so much hysteria as heightened fear and perceptions



of unknown danger or threats, is similar to present-day reactions to terrorism. This is a useful corrective to the assumption that the period of witch-hunts was based on superstition and lapses of reason and fairness which would not happen today; but his brief discussion (pp.52-54) of whether torture is ever morally or legally justified makes for uneasy reading. Nevertheless, this mixture of editorial commentaries, seventeenth-century narratives, nineteenth-century editions and late twentieth-century appraisals provides a rich basis for us to attempt to engage with the different ways in which such stories can be told and understood.

Helen M. Jewell, *Women in Dark Age and Early Medieval Europe c.500-1200*,

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
£17.99, 0 333 91259 4 (paperback), pp. vii + 175

and

***Women in Late Medieval and Reformation Europe 1200-1550*,**

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
£17.99, 0 333 91257 8 (paperback), pp. viii + 171

Reviewed by Sarah James
University of Kent Canterbury

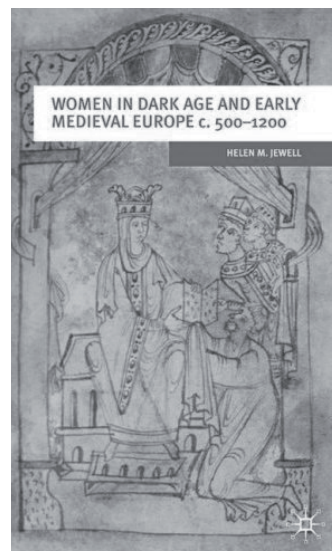
These two volumes are published in the Palgrave 'European Culture and Society' series, which aims to provide affordable textbooks on a range of cultural and social topics. The two books follow identical formats, the Introduction being followed by a chapter on 'Contemporary Gender Theory and Society's Expectations of Women'. Further chapters cover women in rural and urban communities, women and power, and women and religion, as well as women who in some way exceeded the expectations of their society. The books can be read separately, but it is extremely illuminating to read them as a pair, when the changing patterns of female power, authority and value within their societies through time become very clear. The picture drawn by Jewell is certainly not one of continued improvement in the lot of medieval women, as gains in some aspects of life are outweighed by losses in others.

The 'Europe' covered by these texts is western continental Europe, along with Britain and Ireland, and there is much useful material on Scandinavia, particularly for the period 500-1200. There is a welcome freedom from anglo-centric bias, with extensive coverage across all the countries considered. Naturally the focus varies somewhat across topics and between volumes, depending on the type and amount of source material available; Spain is very well served in both books, while the Florentine *catasto* provides much valuable documentary evidence for that

city in the later period, for example. Given the geographic coverage of the texts, it might have been helpful to include a small number of maps, which would have made it easier to follow some of the discussion, particularly in the earlier period when national and dynastic boundaries were very different from those in modern Europe.

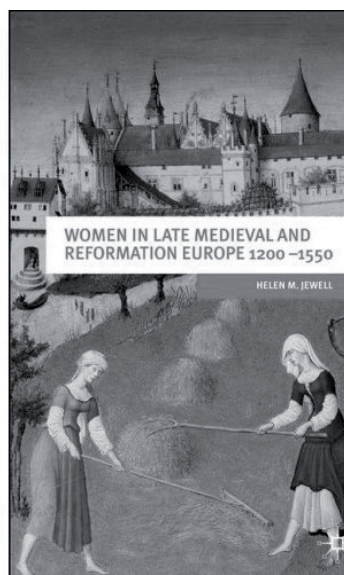
Both introductory chapters include an extremely helpful section on historiography, providing an excellent survey of scholarship in the field over the last 25 years. Anyone new to the subject could do worse than to consult this section and use it to form a reading list for further study. While the study of women in history is still a relatively new field, it is already thickly populated with scholarly texts and Jewell's guidance through the material available is likely to remain of use for some time to come.

One of the great strengths of these volumes is the way in which Jewell draws together a range of sources to create convincing hypotheses, and from this offers vignettes of women's experience which provide colour and add a real sense of drama and excitement. For example, there is a fascinating discussion of the power exercised by empress Adelaide, third wife of Otto I, and her daughter-in-law Theophanu. Adelaide's name appeared jointly with that of her husband on coins struck in Italy, and she was a patron of Cluny, as well as involving herself in certain aspects of administration; after Otto I's death she ruled jointly with her son for a year, and subsequently became regent for Otto III. Theophanu also acted as regent for Otto III, and is named in official documents, issuing charters under her own name and even being styled 'emperor' in one of these. In the book covering the later period, there are quite startling, and very revealing, details about the lives of queens and princesses. For example, the household of the infant bride of the dauphin, Marguerite of Austria, which included 87 staff as well as ponies, dogs, falcons and a parrot, seems somewhat excessive for a three-year old. The early betrothals and marriages of noble and aristocratic women, their numerous pregnancies, and the still births and children dying in infancy which so often resulted, read like a lament; considered cumulatively, the effect is surprisingly moving, although Jewell certainly does not linger sentimentally over this sometimes distressing material.



The lives of women from the lower orders are not neglected, although the documentary record is, of course, much less substantial. Nevertheless, much information about the activities of women can be gleaned from, for example, taxation records and coroners' inquests; the latter demonstrate the generally very clear division of labour between men and women, untimely deaths of men often attributed to accidents in the fields, while for women

they frequently occurred in the home (scalded to death by overturned cauldrons) or while fetching water from wells. Lower class female occupations such as wet-nursing and prostitution are also carefully considered, as is the lot of female slaves. In the earlier period the documentary evidence is, of course, much more sparse, but Jewell makes good use of that which does exist, together with the archaeological record, to provide compelling insights into women's lives.



The chapters in each volume on women and religion include very welcome discussions of non-Christian women, thanks in part to the enviable amount of source material extant from Castile. The religious observances of Jewish and Moslem women, and their interactions with their Christian neighbours, are thoughtfully explored.

Within medieval society women did not customarily enjoy the educational and other opportunities which would allow them to rise to prominence in their own right, and therefore those who did so are arguably worthy of particular attention. The chapters on women who exceeded society's expectations are perhaps the most difficult to judge; inevitably different readers will have divergent views about what constitutes an exceptional woman. Jewell's choices may seem idiosyncratic to some, especially for the later period, in which St Clare, Joan of Arc and Christine de Pizan are singled out for attention; however, there is much enjoyment to be gained from devising one's own set of alternative 'exceptional women'.

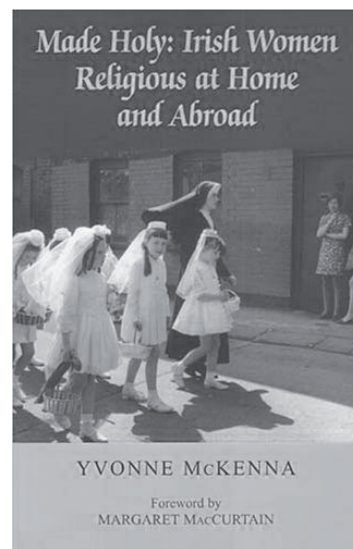
There are just a few minor quibbles. Occasionally the clear and uncluttered prose gives way to a rather more demotic tone, sometimes enlivened with unnecessary exclamation marks. This may be intended to appeal to a more popular readership, but the tone is not consistently maintained. Specialist terms are not always defined: can readers of a textbook necessarily be expected to know the meaning of *chavauchée* or *écorcheurs*? More frustratingly, the referencing is rather inconsistently applied. Understandably for a textbook, there are fewer footnotes than one would expect in an academic monograph; however, at times fascinating material is adduced without any clear indication of its source, either in the footnotes or in the suggested further reading for each chapter. This grumble aside, these volumes offer an excellent introduction to the study of medieval women across a substantial geographical and chronological span, and with plentiful suggestions for reading in order to pursue further study.

Yvonne McKenna, *Made Holy: Irish Women Religious at Home and Abroad*, Dublin and Portland Oregon: Irish Academic Press, 2006. €60, 978 0 7165 3341 3 (cloth); €27.50, 978 0 7165 3342 1 (paper), pp. xii + 268

Reviewed by Rosa MacGinley
Golding Centre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality
Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

This book is essentially a sociological study of 30 Irish women religious, all of whom spent significant periods of their religious lives outside Ireland, 17 in England, eight on foreign missions and five involved in both situations. The author explores, predominantly by means of interviews, the experiences of migration for each woman, with reference to England as destination or a foreign mission (here chiefly in Africa, but also Latin America and Asia). She locates the migration from Ireland of female religious as a special – and so far under-researched – category of the much wider phenomenon of Irish migration in general. Quoting that, by the late 1960s, there were almost 15,000 women religious in Ireland, she uses her sources to estimate that a further 15,000 were resident overseas (p.1). Such a migration stream, with its multiple destinations, indeed merits research.

McKenna begins her study with a well documented survey of Irish society over the relevant years for the women interviewed (born between 1911 and 1950 and aged between 49 and 86 when interviewed). She gives a resumé of family circumstances (mainly middle-class) and explores influences on their choice of a religious life-style. She found that, for each, this was a conscious choice, though made within a milieu where the predominating values and ethos of Catholicism in Ireland, as they evolved from the mid-19th century, were taken for granted. The women rejected the suggestion that lack of marriage options may have influenced them. Their subsequent decisions and reflections on them indicate articulate, perceptive women. The author stresses that her exploration is not 'a definitive study of all religious or even of *these* women religious' (p.7). Among them, they entered nine congregations, to which she has given pseudonymous titles though quoting from the constitutions of four of them. Nine of the women joined one English congregation, whose constitutions are also the most frequently quoted.



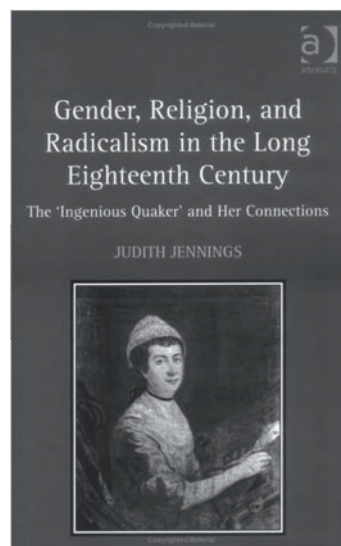
The book then explores the experiences and reactions of the women who spent years in England. McKenna found a high level of homogeneity, though not unanimous, in their sense of experiencing 'otherness', though in a different category from that experienced by Irish lay people in England, which is well documented in her text – chosen membership of a religious congregation and the degree of independence this conferred ensuring this difference. In contrast with their reservations regarding life in England, the experience of foreign missionary service was overwhelmingly positive. They loved the mission environment, however hazardous, and felt their emotional investment well reciprocated by the local people they had come to serve. The final section of the book deals with return to Ireland, where the immediate response of a sense of being at home was soon qualified in various ways. Most found the expectations placed on them by family and older Catholics outdated and a burden; they found a changed Ireland where one, in a job search, would not admit to being a religious for fear of immediate rejection; a number now expressed appreciation of anonymity and absence of expectations, as well as possible avoidance, in England.

The responses in each of these areas are individually distinctive, honest and in no way imply rejection of their life choice. Yvonne McKenna, while perhaps over-situating the respondents' replies in sociological analysis drawn from a wide spread of texts – all relevant – is careful to offer even-handedly qualified interpretations. The impression that this reviewer is left with is that of a study almost of a 'time warp' – of an Irish society which has rapidly undergone unprecedented change with a high level of reaction against the immediate past and of a segment of female religious life also deeply affected by radical change and consequent reaction. From both aspects, it is an exploration of the dying end of an era and there is value in this.

I follow with some more personal reflections, having recently completed a history of 25 women religious (all Presentation, with 22 Australian and three Irish) on mission in Papua New Guinea, 1966-2006. Their response closely echoes that of McKenna's respondents to their overseas missionary involvement – does this say something about the need for more basic challenge to equate with what has been the totality of the demand of the religious life-choice? These women also do not appear to have felt the restrictive degree of earlier religious training that McKenna's respondents did. Their constitutions, perhaps older, do not contain the behavioural inhibitions, especially female-directed, of the constitutions quoted. A final query: where is one able to find the 'official Church teaching that religious were asexual' (p.84)?

Judith Jennings, *Gender, Religion, and Radicalism in the Long Eighteenth Century: The 'Ingenious Quaker' and Her Connections*, Hampshire, UK and Vermont, USA: Ashgate, 2006. \$99.95/£50.00, 0754655008 (hardback), pp. 196

Reviewed by Carmen M. Mangion
Birkbeck College, University of London



Judith Jennings in *Gender, Religion, and Radicalism in the Long Eighteenth Century: The 'Ingenious Quaker' and Her Connections* sets out to explore three stated themes: female radical political activity; the functioning of gender; and the changing role of Quakers in the long eighteenth century (p. 2). This is not a biography in its traditional sense. It is rather, a double-layered narrative that focuses on the life story of one Quaker woman, Mary

Morris Knowles (1733-1807) to explore the connections between her actions and the social changes that were transforming Georgian Britain. It is an important book, which has implications far beyond reshaping our picture of one eighteenth-century woman.

Mary Morris, born in a prosperous Quaker family, is revealed as an educated and deeply religious woman with an independent spirit and a willingness to participate privately and publicly in the political and religious debates of the times. Her 'celebrity' begins with the domestic pursuit of needlework and her particular skill at 'needle painting'. She was commissioned by Queen Charlotte to create a needlework painting of King George III in 1771 (now in the Royal Collection) and this made her a veritable 'celebrity' (p. 38). This fame, along with her talent, intellect and sociability, allowed her to foster relationships with King George III and Queen Charlotte as well as Samuel Johnson and other members in his network of literati. These relationships and her interactions with other prominent non-Quakers gave Knowles an extensive and distinguished audience for her published accounts and verbal dialectics on religion, gender and politics (p. 161).

Knowles exhibited her radical political activity by defending her Quaker faith, her gender and her politics to non-Quakers. In this way, Jennings argues, Knowles contributed to religious toleration, challenged gender relations, furthered women's participation in politics and developed new forms of polite 'Quakerliness' (p. 173), 'Quakerliness' being defined as 'behaviours and attitudes considered appropriate for Friends' (p. 10). Jennings offers numerous examples of this radical political activity.

Despite this critique, Jennings is to be commended for her rigorous examination of Knowles's interactions with those outside Quaker circles (p. 159). Her methodology of focusing on one individual life to inform new theories and understandings of the long eighteenth century (p. 174) is successful on many levels. Mary Morris Knowles carefully constructed her identity as a religious woman, an intellectual woman and a political woman. Knowles though her talent, intellect and sociability led a life which transcended the typical boundaries of class, gender and religion yet gives us a better understanding of the diverse functioning of gender and female radical political activity.

Peter Zheutlin, *Around the World on Two Wheels: Annie Londonderry's Extraordinary Ride* (Citadel Press)

Book Reviews

Women's Library News

New acquisitions

We are very pleased to announce that the collection of Jill Craigie (1911-1999), feminist filmmaker and campaigner, has been deposited with The Women's Library. The collection includes papers related to Jill Craigie's filmmaking and her feminist activities as well as her unpublished writings on the suffrage movement. Jill Craigie actively collected suffrage material and her collection includes many rare suffrage items, including the papers of militant suffragette Grace Roe.

Jill Craigie's book collection has also been donated to the Library and includes feminist texts, such as early works by Mary Wollstonecraft and Margaret Fuller. Many of the books have an interesting provenance and carry signatures of their previous owners, such as Christabel Pankhurst, Kitty Marion, Constance Lytton, Mary Gawthorpe, Mary Home, Esther Knowles, the Pethwick Lawrences and Rebecca West.

This is a large collection of material, which will take some time to sort and catalogue. We will let WHN members know, via the *Women's History Magazine*, when the collection is available for consultation. The Women's Library would like to thank June Purvis for all her help in securing the Craigie collection for the Library and for sorting it and advising on its contents.

Newly catalogued material

A number of collections have recently been catalogued and are now available for consultation in The Women's Library Reading Room. These include the papers of Helena Normanton (1882-1957) who was the first woman to practice as a barrister and prosecute at a murder trial in England, and the first married woman to legally retain her maiden name. The papers (ref 7HLN) cover Normanton's career and legal work, organisations to which she belonged and her publications and articles. This collection also includes photographs of Helena Normanton and her barrister's robe, bands and badges.

In addition the papers of Lady Simon of Wythenshawe (1904-1974) (ref 7SDS) are now available for research. These consist of correspondence, press cuttings and copies of speeches relating to her education and work as a local councillor in Manchester, with some additional biographical material.

Further information about these collections can be found at

www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk/archivemuseumcatalogue

Josephine Butler's International Campaigns

A three-year project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust and led by Dr Anne Summers, to coincide with the Butler centenary, has now been completed. The project explored the international dimensions of Josephine Butler's work, her influence outside Britain and her legacy

in Europe and its colonies. Details of the outcomes of this project, including colloquia, publications and an inventory of letters identified in European archives can now be found on The Women's Library website at

www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/aboutthecollections/butler/

Autumn events

Our new programme of events for Autumn 2007 features several study days which will be of particular interest to WHN members, as well as public talks, reading groups and our ever-popular East End guided walks.

New Perspectives on Lone Mothers (23 November) showcases new research into a range of issues around lone motherhood, with Pat Thane and Hilary Land as principal speakers, and *When Fiction Meets History* (17 November) looks at the various ways authors negotiate between historical fact and fiction, featuring a keynote talk by Rose Tremain. Ticket information and full details are available on our website www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk or by calling 020 7320 2222.

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Conference Report

Women's History Network 16th Annual Conference **Collecting Women's Lives** *West Downs Conference Centre, University of Winchester, 7-9 September 2007*

This is a personal account of my first WHN Conference. My doctoral research looks at feminism in the inter-war years with special reference to birth control campaigns and sometimes it feels as though I know 'more and more about less and less'. Therefore, the WHN Conference came at just the right time as it has broadened my outlook. There were conference papers which included lives from India, Africa, Scandinavia, Israel and the U.S.A., as well as the United Kingdom. The time span was equally broad. I had expected to learn about lives which impinged on my own period of study such as the suffragettes, but I was fascinated to learn of the experiences of the early modern women religious. Often History restricts itself to the study of literature but the WHN underlined the importance of images drawn from visual material. The Artist in Residence, Alex Hoare, brilliantly captured the spirit of the conference in film and collages.

The three Plenary Sessions illustrated the diversity of the Conference. On Friday afternoon, Beverly Kemp, Jane Potter, Joyce Goodman and Gerry Holloway set the context of the Conference with their interpretations of 'Collecting Women'. On the Saturday the Conference was privileged to hear from Dorothy Sheridan, Head of Special Collections at the University of Sussex, on the Mass Observation Archive based there. This is somewhere I have long wanted to visit as it is such an important source of material. Significantly the majority of diarists are middle-aged women! Dorothy discussed the challenges that new technology presented to the Archive. The final Plenary Session was by Barnita Bagchi on 'The History of Women's Education in South Asia: Voices, Resources and Networks'. Barnita, whose entry in the Wikipedia describes her as 'a feminist academic who works at the intersection of gender, education, narrative, social capital and human development', gave a perceptive account of



Socialising at the conference.



The Conference Venue

the educational experiences of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and Priyabala Gupta whose 'dreams were deferred or destroyed'.

The Conference was divided into Strands where papers were themed. This made the Conference manageable but it was frustrating as I would have liked to attend more than one Strand! This is an account of the three Strands I attended and the fourth in which I gave a paper.

The Strand on Historiography and Theory had a special reference to auto-biographical lives. Jane Martin spoke about how an exploration of the work of the school teacher and activist Mary Ann Bridges could be used to study connections between personal and political worlds. Jenna Bailey raised some of the issues she faced when publishing the intensely personal writings of the Co-operative Correspondence Club which was formed in 1936. I had already admired her book, *Can Any Mother Help Me?*, which collected writings of a group of housebound mothers. The audience was appreciative of the way Jenna had edited the mothers' writings which she had discovered in the Mass Observation Archives.

The Strand on Visual sources 'Photographic Lives' showed the importance of this technology. Margaret Denny illustrated how photography had shaped Victorian fashion, whilst Jane Hamlett showed us Victorian marital photographs. Rebecca Preston illustrated her talk with 'real' domestic photographs of house owners and house fronts taken in 1902-1914. In contrast Victoria Kelley drew our attention to the photographic depiction of signs of wear, abjection and decay.

The Historiography and Theory Strand had three very different perspectives on Political Lives. June Waudby highlighted the importance of forgotten women of the Restoration such as Anne Locke, the young religious exile. June is piecing together the fragments of information of her 1557 journey. Federica Falci also wanted recognition in contemporary Italian political life for the Communist Nadia Gallico Spano and the Catholic Filomena Delli Castelli. They were the first elected women in the Italian national assembly when universal suffrage came in 1946. June Purvis was concerned with issues arising out of the UK suffrage. She shared with us her reassessment of

Christabel Pankhurst, the suffragette leader. By stripping away negative writings of family and male historians, June revealed Christabel's achievements as a strategist and orator.

I presented a paper in *Defining Women's Lives* and was fortunate to be with Grey Osterud from the USA, and Angela Davies from Oxford University. We had all used oral history techniques: I had interviewed the suffragist and birth control pioneer Elsie Plant; Grey interviewed rural women in an isolated part of New York State; Angela interviewed women in Oxford about their experiences of motherhood in 1945-70. At Grey's initiative we had exchanged papers beforehand. This made us recognise the importance of the social constraints of motherhood and the significance of contradictions in narratives.

The Conference was a veritable cultural feast. On Friday evening the Hampshire Youth Orchestra played at the Reception generously sponsored by the Sybil Campbell Library. Later we watched the remarkable film 'The Ladies'

Bridge' about the reconstruction of the Waterloo Bridge by female labour in World War II. On Saturday, Routledge sponsored a Reception showcasing three new books by WHN members. The evening was rounded off by lively circle dancing.

Many thanks to Joyce, Stephanie, Camilla and their team for making this such a marvellous Conference. By coincidence I first attended the University of Winchester forty seven years ago when it was King Alfred's College and was amongst the first women to be admitted to the male teacher education college. It was therefore appropriate that history should come full circle with the women's discourses at West Downs.

Clare Debenham
University of Manchester

Bursary Holders' Report

Confessions of a conference novice

Trine Louise Bernicken
University of Southern Denmark

When the idea was first introduced of presenting our work as papers at the WHN Conference 2007, it seemed incredibly exciting and not a little bit scary. There were three of us, all with different approaches to history and all with very different stories to tell. There were also a lot of similarities between us as young women, scholars, and fellow students of a brilliant and inspiring professor who encouraged us to take our studies further and explore new territory.

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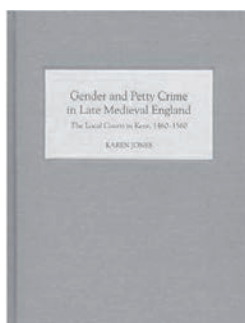


Stephenie Spencer (left) accepting flowers from Mary Joannu on behalf of the conference team.

WHN Book Prize Awarded

The WHN Book Prize worth £1000 has been awarded to **Karen Jones** for her book *Gender and Petty Crime in Late Medieval England: The local courts in Kent, 1460-1560* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).

Karen could not pick up the award in person at the WHN Conference at Winchester in September due to illness, but she did send some words to be read out on her behalf:



I'm very sorry I can't be there in person to receive the prize and to thank the WHN Committee and the panel of judges. I need hardly say I'm very honoured and delighted. Also, at a time when medieval history seems to be becoming ever more marginalised, I like to think that my book may in a small way contribute to showing that the study of gender history in the not-so-recent past is a worthwhile pursuit.

In surprisingly many ways the period of my research, about 500 years ago, was very similar to our own time. Concern about anti-social behaviour, for example, was as widespread then as now, and largely fruitless efforts were being made to force reluctant fathers to support their offspring. The recent suggestion that the Child Support Agency should 'name and shame' backsliding fathers on the internet is nothing more than a

21st century version of the much more picturesque shaming punishments devised by our ancestors, such as the pillory and the ducking stool.

I'm afraid my book is much too expensive for me to ask you all to buy it, but I'd be very happy if you'd try to get it ordered for your various university libraries! I'm very proud to have been a member of the WHN since its early days, and I wish it, and all of you, every success in the future.

As I write, precisely three weeks after the conference, I have at last stopped thinking in English and returned to Danish, which is after all my native tongue. So how was it? Well, the short version is that it was a three day-full-immersion-experience in terms of language, female companionship, book shopping, scholarly discussion and exchange of ideas, international networking and academic culture, with just a dash of slumber party. We all loved it! If we were a little nervous about entering the sphere of so many renowned authors and scholars, our minds were soon put at ease by the forthcoming and friendly people we met with from the first moment. Everywhere we went, people were eager to talk and did not seem hesitant to converse with second-language speakers, and we simply decided to stick to English even amongst ourselves, which was a lot easier than switching back and forth. I suspect this decision also made us a lot more approachable both as a group and as individuals.

Anxious as we were about giving our first papers ever, we soon realised that even some of the most experienced scholars there felt some anxiety about their papers, which helped soothe any performance jitters that we might have had. As it turned out, I came to need all the level-headedness I could muster when my USB stick crashed on me 10 minutes before our strand was to begin. I had left the room empty in a slight panic to go look for any kind of IT-person, and when I came back dealing with the fact that my entire paper was gone, the room was full of people. It was truly a baptism of fire! As I was the last of us to give my paper, I had time (in the room) to clear my head and decide what to do with my twenty minutes now the USB stick was useless. Instead of giving the paper I had planned, I ended up practically reinventing my original paper using the notes and pictures that I had in print.

We had been worrying slightly if we would even have an audience for our papers, but we found ourselves with an amazing eleven people, all of whom were very supportive, asking many interesting and interested questions.

Once the weight of presenting had been lifted from our shoulders, we needed some air – and I for one needed to get my breathing back to normal! A few hours of sightseeing (and more book shopping) in Winchester really only serve to make you want more, but at least now I have been to Jane Austen's grave. We missed the Library though, so I will definitely have to return sometime... Can't wait! Saturday was the official conference banquet and we all had a wonderful time engaged in academic as well as more personal discourse, exchanging ideas, and making new acquaintances.

At some point, the thought occurred to me that the (nearly) all-female society of the conference had an atmosphere markedly different from other more mixed-gender societies. The energy seemed different and much less aggressive than it often seems when men and women attempt to impress each other, consciously or not, and only once during the entire weekend did I hear someone voice a desire for a male dancing partner. I also noticed that we all complimented each other on our looks, clothes, and accessories, which, if I may venture a generalisation, is an element of female society, not male.

Like any novice will soon realise, practice makes – well, not perfect, but better. For my next conference, I will try to plan ahead which strands to definitely go to, but also leave room for spur-of-the-moment decisions, because everyone you meet will be able to tell you something of their paper and, more often than not, they will make you want to hear more. I had been warned about the temptations of the in-house bookstalls, and I was indeed



*From left:
Jannie Søgaard,
Emelie Korsgaard and
Trine Louise Bernicken.*

*Bursary holders from the
University of Southern
Denmark.*

tempted beyond resistance. I spent much more money than I had planned on, but not half the amount temptation prompted me to. Next time, I will bring a larger suitcase for the many, many books that I will want to buy. Oh, and I will bring several USB sticks with copies of my power point slides and notes AND remember to email them to myself beforehand (thanks for the tip)!

Trine attended the Winchester conference along with fellow students Emelie Korsgaard and Jannie Søgaard, and Deborah Simonton, Associate Professor.

Alex Hoare

Artist in Residence for *Collecting Women's Lives*

During the WHN Conference in Winchester artist Alex Hoare collected material relating to delegates and to the women whose lives they are studying. The result was an amazing art installation which reflected on relationships between women through the ages.

The project was designed to produce an installation on the Sunday of the Conference; a permanent work of art for display at the University of Winchester and archive material in the form of a DVD. Alex began with photographs and quotes given to her by delegates about the woman/women they were researching; she then filmed quotes and faces from those attending (and willing). The images and sound were then crafted into an installation drawing on the lives of the women from history and the women attending the conference, a meeting across time.

Women's History Magazine Back issues

Back issues of *Women's History Magazine* are available to buy for

£4.00 inc postage (UK)

£4.50 inc. postage (Overseas)

Most issues are available, from Spring 2002 to the present. To discover the contents of each issue please visit www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

To order your copies please email magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



Artist Alex Hoare at work at the Winchester Conference on the Saturday evening – she worked into the early hours of Sunday morning to produce a stunning installation.



Conferences

Postgraduate conference Oral History, Testimony and Memory: Interdisciplinary Approaches

Venue: University of Bangor
January 14 and 15 2008

This event is sponsored by the AHRC. Papers will be presented on all aspects of oral history, testimony and memory.

For information please contact the conference organiser, Michelle Walker, email: hip201@bangor.ac.uk

Southern Women's History Network Study Day: Women and the Law

Venue: University of Kent, Medway Campus
9 February 2008

The Southern Women's History Network study day will focus on any aspect of the history of Women and the Law, in the UK and elsewhere. Themes may include:

- Property law
- Employment law
- Criminal law
- Law and gender
- Legal education
- Women in the legal profession
- Sex workers and the law
- Campaigns for legal change (e.g. suffragism).

For information contact Dr. Anne Logan at A.F.Logan@kent.ac.uk

Annual Gender and Medieval Studies Conference Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages

Venue: University of Edinburgh
January 11-13 2008

The concept of difference enables us to explore medieval gender in a number of ways. It allows us to think about the construction of gender through its relationship to other categories of difference such as social status, sexualities, ethnicity and age. It also allows us to think about how gender is used to construct, articulate and represent various forms of difference. Explorations of the gendering of objects and the monstrous, for example, can illuminate, blur, or challenge binary distinctions. This conference seeks to provide a forum in which such approaches can be discussed and developed. Papers will embrace a wide range of disciplines such as art history, literature, archaeology and history. In particular, the conference hopes to encourage interdisciplinary discussion about the theoretical and practical implications

that ideas of difference have on gender studies.

For information please visit www.medievalgender.co.uk or contact Kirsten Fenton, email: gms2008@ed.ac.uk

International Conference Waged Domestic work and the Making of the Modern World

Venue: University of Warwick
May 9-11 2008

An international conference to explore the role of waged domestic work in the making of modern economic, social, and cultural formations. The Conference will explore the absence from most national histories of the workers who performed domestic labour, and the full implications of the convention of not including housework in measures of national income, past and present. New work on the globalized market for domestic employment provides one of our most important perspectives. We want also to explore new representations of the domestic worker in the novel and in film.

Conference organisers: Prof. Carolyn Steedman and Kate Smith.

For further information please visit www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/people/csteedman/conference/ or contact Kate Smith, email: Kate.E.Smith@warwick.ac.uk

Labouring Feminism and Feminist Working-Class History in Europe and Beyond

International Conference

Venue: Stockholm
28-31 August 2008

In September 2005 the first 'Labouring feminism conference' was held at the Munk Centre, University of Toronto. We have the great pleasure to invite everyone to participate in continuing this initiative to focus on labour and gender from a historical perspective in Stockholm in August 2008. The aim of the conference is to bring together a wide variety of feminist scholars working on various aspects of labour history, broadly defined, to share their research, to carry on a dialogue across generational, theoretical, national and disciplinary boundaries, and to continue the debate on how to re-conceptualize working-class history in more inclusive ways.

The conference is structured around five overlapping and inter-related themes:

- Gendering working-class history;
- Labour feminism and female activism;
- Women and work (paid and unpaid);
- Bodies (trade and consumption);
- Local, regional and international perspectives

For information contact: labouring.feminism@arbark.se

15th International Oral History Conference 'Oral History - A Dialogue with our Times'

Venue: Guadalajara, Mexico

September 23 - 26, 2008

The International Oral History Association, in collaboration with the University of Guadalajara and the Mexican Oral History Association (AMHO), invite you to the 15th International Oral History Conference in Guadalajara, Mexico. Themes will include:

- Contributions of Oral History to the understanding of the 20th Century.
- Time in Memory: Lived experience; what is remembered and what is forgotten.
- Spaces of Memory: Community, the local, the global and everyday life.
- Ecology and Disasters: Environmental themes, natural heritage, cultural resources.
- Memory and Politics: Experiences of political participation; NGOs, political groups, political agency and individuals.
- Family and Generations.
- Migrations: Diasporas, international and local migratory movements, networks, borderlands, religious migration, the human capital of immigrants.
- Sharing and Transmitting Faith: Religious traditions.
- Oral Tradition.
- Theory and Method in Oral History.
- Memories of Violence and War: Justice, trauma and memory, survivors, civil rights and human rights.
- Memories of the Body: Dance, tatoos, dramatizations and the emotions.
- Work: Experiences, conceptions and modalities of work.
- Health: Illnesses, healing, myths, the handicapped, elderly and retired people.
- Gender.
- The Teaching of Oral History: Experiences in formal and informal education.
- Archiving Memory: The interview as a source for social research, multiple readings of interviews, publication and dissemination of oral history, audio archives, audiovisual media, access and questioning.
- Museums and Oral History.
- Oral History and the Visual Image.
- Legal and Ethical Issues in Oral History.

For information visit: www.congresoioha2008.cucsh.udg.mx

Calls for papers

Women's History Network Midlands

'She does what?!'

The Unexplored Expertise of Women

Venue: University of Worcester

May 3 2008, 9.30 am – 1 pm.

This conference offers a forum for the presentation of papers that present women in (perhaps) unexpected places, undertaking jobs or leisure activities with authority, expertise, skill and enjoyment. e.g. *The Victorian Female Angler*.

Papers are invited for this event and abstracts of 300 words should be sent to Sue Johnson, AHSS Dept. University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ. Email: s.johnson@worc.ac.uk

Deadline: March 11 2008.

University of Central Lancashire and People's History Museum International Inter-disciplinary conference on the British Labour Movement and Imperialism

Venue: University of Central Lancashire,
Preston

June 26-28 2008

The Department of Humanities at the University of Central Lancashire and the People's History Museum invites offers of papers for an international, inter-disciplinary conference on the relationships between the British Labour Movement and Imperialism (including the imperialisms of Britain and other countries), to be held on 26-28 June 2008. The conference organisers welcome papers which encompass all sections of the British Labour movement, including trades unionists, socialists and communists. The conference is a major collaboration between the University of Central Lancashire and the People's History Museum based in Manchester.

The conference will be interdisciplinary and will welcome proposals and contributions from the fields of History, Politics, Sociology, Film and Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Literature and other related disciplines. It is expected that the range of themes may be very wide, and may include the following:

Labour, Gender & imperialism
Labour, Popular Culture & Empire
Labour, 'race' and migration
Labour and the economics of Empire
Labour and cultural imperialism
Labour, war and imperialism
Labour & Ireland

We welcome proposals from doctoral candidates as well as from established academics and practitioners in related fields. Proposals (200-300 words) should be sent to Dr Anthony Webster, email: awebster2@uclan.ac.uk,

or Dr Billy Frank, email: bfrank@uclan.ac.uk

Deadline: First call November 30 2007; last call January 5 2008.

**British Society for the History of Science,
Canadian Society for the History and
Philosophy of Science and the History of
Science Society
Sixth Joint Meeting: Connecting Disciplines**
Venue: Keble College, Oxford
July 4-6 2008

The theme of the meeting will be *Connecting Disciplines*. The Programme Committee seeks papers or sessions that reflect this broad theme and encourages participants to respond to the diverse meanings it has for historians of science, technology and medicine and their colleagues in the wider scholarly community. Proposals are welcomed for sessions or individual papers from researchers of all nationalities at all stages of their careers. Participation is in no way limited to members of the three organising societies.

Session proposals should normally consist of three or four papers, with or without a commentator. Sessions will be 90 minutes to 2 hours long. If you wish to depart from this rule or wish to submit a session of a different type (eg. round-table) please discuss this with us in advance of the Call for Papers deadline. Proposals for individual papers should include an abstract of no more than 250 words.

For information visit www.bsbs.org.uk or email: 3socs2008@bsbs.org.uk

Deadline: December 3 2007.

**Reading and Writing Recipe Books:
1600-1800**
University of Warwick
8-9 August 2008

This international interdisciplinary conference will provide a much-needed environment that allows recipe book scholars to meet and discuss important issues such as comparative methodologies and periodization, thereby offering a key opportunity to shape the course of future research on this genre.

Proposals for 20 minute papers on any aspect of recipe book studies are welcome, though we particularly encourage papers on the following topics:

Methodological essays from the disciplines of history of medicine, literature, material culture, culinary history, etc.

Periodization of generic conventions

Possibilities of new scholarly directions (e.g. recipe books as life-writing sources)

Editing recipe books for modern audiences

Evidence of larger cultural influences, such as gender, social status, and geography

How manuscript and printed recipe collections relate to one another.

Please send your 300 word proposal to one of the co-organisers: Michelle DiMeo m.m.dimeo@warwick.ac.uk or Sara Pennell s.pennell@roehampton.ac.uk

Deadline: 31 January 2008.

For more information, please see www.warwick.ac.uk/go/recipebooksconference

**Recording Leisure Lives: Histories,
Archives & Memories of Leisure in 20th
Century Britain**
Venue: Bolton Museum
March 18 2008

The opening of a permanent exhibition at Bolton Museum of Humphrey Spender's photographs from Mass Observation offers a timely opportunity to reflect on how leisure has been recorded, archived and understood in 20th century Britain. This one-day conference will explore both leisure practices and contexts and the historicisation of leisure in the 20th century. We welcome abstracts that address one of the conference themes: Everyday leisure practices; Leisure customs: heritage and nostalgia; Archiving and representing leisure; Mass production and mass consumption; Mapping the history of leisure spaces; Whose leisure lives? Social identities and leisure.

For further information please visit the conference website at www.bolton.ac.uk/conferences/leisurelives or contact Dr Bob Snape, email: r.snape@bolton.ac.uk

Deadline: January 7 2008 (call for papers); March 7 2008 (registration).

**The Children's Act 1908: Centennial
Perspectives and Contemporary Reflections**
Venue: University of Kent at Medway
June 30-July 1 2008

The Children's Act forms an integral part of the reforming legislation of the Liberal Governments of 1906-1914: it introduced the juvenile court system to Britain whilst codifying a raft of existing legislation. It therefore forms part of a gradual yet important shift in British political thinking towards collectivism and the formation of the welfare state from the 1940s onwards. Yet it also marks continuities in practice and attitude, from the late nineteenth century through to the present day.

The aim of this two-day conference is to bring new and established researchers to reflect upon the historical impact of the Act in its centennial year whilst engaging with its resonance for contemporary practitioners. The conference will bring together researchers from a wide range of disciplines: history, social policy, sociology, criminology, social work, psychology, human geography, and anthropology amongst others. Papers are particularly welcomed from postgraduates and early career researchers.

For more information or to submit an abstract (200 words), please contact Dr Kate Bradley, email k.bradley@kent.ac.uk

Deadline: January 14 2008 (call for papers); May 5 2008 (registration).

To advertise your conference and events in
Women's History Magazine email
advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org.

Publishing Opportunities

Journal of the History of Sexuality

The *Journal of the History of Sexuality* is soliciting articles for a special issue on sexual labors throughout the world, under diverse economic and state systems, and in all historical periods. This special issue, guest edited by Eileen Boris, Stephanie Gilmore, and Rhacel Parrenas, will appear in late 2008.

The guest editors seek manuscripts on all types of sexual labor – paid and unpaid as well as legalized and criminalized forms – with the understanding that what constitutes 'sex' and 'work' varies from culture to culture across time and space. The editors seek analytically and historically grounded submissions that deal with sexual labor within the family or household; as part of public entertainment or space; rights of sex workers as laborers; relations of power and authority vis-a-vis sexual labor; globalization and sexual labor; representations and subjectivities of sexual labor; the relationship between sex and work; and the politics of sex work historically (including reform, regulation, and abolition). They are also interested in the difference that age, race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status make in sexual labors and the discourses around them.

The deadline for submissions is **31 January 2008**. The editors will review manuscripts and have decisions regarding publication by 15 June 2008. Please submit your manuscript via email (preferred) to Stephanie Gilmore at stephanie.gilmore@trincoll.edu or via postal mail to Stephanie Gilmore, Department of History, Trinity College, 300 Summit Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

Websites

Women's History Scotland

Women's History Scotland have recently launched an impressive new website. Be sure to visit it at www.womenshistoryscotland.org

The Australian Women's History Forum (Incorporating Women's History Month)

The Australian Women's History Forum (AWHF) is a volunteer organisation dedicated to telling the stories

of women in Australian history. We do this by maintaining a specialised website on women in Australian history, by promoting activities to celebrate Women's History Month each March, and by sponsoring a special category in the annual Australian History Challenge in Australian schools. The AWHF's work is supported by an Expert Panel which provides us with professional advice and assistance.

The AWHF website, at www.womenshistory.com.au, provides a gateway to information, linked to key sites, to Australian women who have made history in many different ways. Designed for both a national and an international audience, the AWHF website is a resource for teachers, students, media professionals, travellers, professional historians, family and local historians, writers and filmmakers, librarians, archivists, curators and collectors.

The Victorian Women Writers Project

The goal of the Victorian Women Writers Project is to produce highly accurate transcriptions of works by British women writers of the 19th century, encoded using the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML).

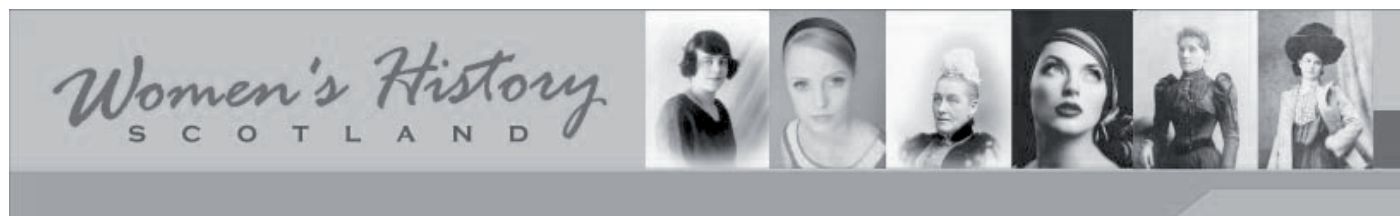
Works selected include anthologies, novels, political pamphlets, religious tracts, children's books, and volumes of poetry and verse drama. Considerable attention will be given to the accuracy and completeness of the texts, and to accurate bibliographical descriptions of them. Selected texts will be made freely available through the World Wide Web. Find the Victorian Women Writers Project at www.indiana.edu/~lettrs/vwwp/index.html

Moves and News

Congratulations to **Mary Joannou** who is now *Professor of Literary History and Women's Writing at Anglia Ruskin University*. Mary has been a member of the steering committee of the Women's History Network, serving as Convener until September when she stepped down after her term of office.

Congratulations too to **Carmen Mangion**, who has served on the WHN steering committee in the past, on her appointment to the one-year post of *Lecturer in The History of Medicine and Science since 1700 in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck College, University of London*.

We are keen to celebrate the achievements of our members; if you have any news to share please email magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



Committee News

The AGM held at Winchester on September 8 2007

This year the focus of the AGM was on financial planning for the Network now that we are a registered charity. It was agreed that we had achieved our goal to reduce the amount of surplus in the WHN bank account planned at the AGM in 2004. However, we need now to look to increasing our income in order to continue with our chief aim of promoting women's history in a range of contexts. We made a loss at the Durham conference in 2006 but the organisers of the Winchester conference expect to make a small profit or at least break even. The editors of *Women's History Magazine* have also found ways to reduce the production costs of the Magazine. We shall not be complacent though, and will be using the next committee meeting to review our activities and to look to ways of generating income.

Income generation – you can help

There are ways that you can help generate income for the Network. Firstly, you can check that you are paying the right amount of membership fee. It is easy to lose track, especially if you have a standing order. Secondly, if you pay income or capital gains tax, you can fill in the Gift Aid declaration at the back of the Magazine if you have not already done so. We receive 28p for each pound gifted to us. Thirdly, you can encourage friends, colleagues and students to join the Network. There is a membership form at the back of the Magazine or one can be found online at www.womenshistorynetwork.org/WHNMemberForm.htm. Fourthly, you can encourage your institutions to become Institutional members and to advertise their programmes in the Magazine. And finally, you can sell copies of the Magazine at conferences and other events that you attend. Please contact us if you want to do this at magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org and we shall send you some back copies. The Magazine is a good way to advertise the breadth of work that the Network does.

Steering Committee changes

As usual there were some changes to the make-up of the committee. We said goodbye to Mary Joannou our Convener, and to Moira Martin our Membership Secretary. Many thanks to both of them for their hard work and support during their time on the committee. Three committee members, Jane McDermid, Jean Spence and Zilan Wang were re-elected for to serve a further two years and we welcome two new members to the Committee, Professor Krista Cowman from Lincoln University and Jessica Holloway Swift, a non-academic member from Cardiff.

Women's History in the Regions and Scotland

Activity in the regions has been good this year. Conferences were held in the Midlands, South West and Wales, Southern and Northern regions. Of course, the

Annual Conference next year will be held in Glasgow on the theme of 'Gender and generations: life cycles and change in women's history'. More details will appear on the website soon.

The AGM ended with a vote of thanks to the conference organisers, Stephanie Spencer, Andrea Jacobs, Joyce Goodman, Zoë Law and Camilla Leach.

Next Steering Committee Meeting

All WHN members are welcome as observers at steering committee meetings. Meetings are held at the Institute for Historical Research at Senate House, Malet Street, University of London. If you would like to attend please email convener@womenshistorynetwork.org for full details.

CLARE EVANS PRIZE

In memory of Dr Clare Evans, a national prize worth £500 is offered annually for an original essay in the field of women's history or gender and history. Essays are considered by a panel of judges set up by the *Women's History Network* and the Trustees of the *Clare Evans Memorial Fund*. Subject to the normal refereeing criteria, the winning essay is published in *Women's History Review*.

2007 Prize: The panel of judges were unable to award the prize this year. The Clare Evans Committee is currently considering the future development of this award and will be making further announcements in due course.

Clare Evans was an outstanding woman who died tragically of cervical cancer on 30 November 1997, aged just 37. Born in Bath, she read history at the University of Manchester, graduating in 1982. She continued her studies, registering for a PhD at the University whilst preparing and delivering seminars on feminist history, creating the first feminist historiography course in collaboration with Kersten England and Ann Hughes. Clare would have approved of an award which helped women to publish for the first time, giving them the confidence to further develop their ideas.



What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national charity concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

What does the WHN do?

Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the Women's History Magazine, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Joining the WHN

Annual Membership Rates

Student/unwaged	£10	Overseas minimum	£30
Low income (*under £16,000 pa)	£15	UK Institutions	£35
High income	£30	Institutions overseas	£40

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker's Order forms are available on the back cover.

Women's History Network Contacts:

Steering Committee officers:

Membership, subscriptions, Dr Louise Wannell:

membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to

WHN Membership Secretary, c/o Jane McDermid,
School of Humanities, Avenue Campus (Building 65),
University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ.

Finance, bursaries, Dr Elizabeth Foyster:

treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convener, Dr Katherine Holden:

convener@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Officer, Jessica Holloway Swift:

webadmin@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Professor June Purvis:

bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for
Research into Women's History, Professor June
Purvis:

ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors, submissions: Dr Debbi Simonton, Dr Claire

Jones, Dr Jane Potter:

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Book Reviews, Dr Jane Potter:

bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

or send books to her at Oxford International Centre for
Publishing Studies, Oxford Brookes University, The
Buckley Building, Gipsy Lane Campus, Oxford OX3 0BP.

Advertising, conference notices, calls for papers, Dr
Gerry Holloway:

advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Administrator

All other queries, including back issues of magazine,
please email Dr Claire Jones:

magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Membership Application

I would like to *join / renew my subscription to the Women's History Network. I */ enclose a cheque payable to Women's History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker's Order Form / for £ _____. (* delete as applicable)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Tel (work): _____

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity: ☐

Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Louise Wannell, WHN Membership Secretary, c/o Jane McDermid, School of Humanities, Avenue Campus (Building 65), University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

----- Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: Women's History Network

Name :

Address:

..... Post Code:

I am a UK taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: _____ Date/...../.....

Notes

1. If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future:
 - Please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
 - You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity – it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

----- Banker's Order

To (bank) _____

Address _____

Account no.: _____

Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60-02-05), on _____ 200_, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £ _____ (in words) _____.

Signature: _____