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9 – 11 September 2011

20 Years of the Women's History Network

Looking Back - Looking Forward

The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University

The conference will look at the past 20 years of writing women's history; asking the question **where are we now?**

We will be looking at histories of feminism, work in progress, current areas of debate such as religion and perspectives on national and international histories of the women's movement.

The conference will also invite users of The Women's Library to take part in one strand that will be set in the Reading Room. We would very much like you to choose an object/item, which has inspired your writing and thinking, and share your experience.

Conference website: www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/aboutthecollections/research/womens-history-network-conference-2011.cfm

Further information and a conference call will be posted on the WHN website

www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Editorial

As autumn is well and truly upon us, the halcyon days of the Annual Conference may seem a distant memory. However, in this autumn issue of the *Women's History Magazine* we invite you to experience some of the pleasures of the excellent conference in Warwick in September with reports on the conference and the prize-givings spread throughout the weekend. We have to thank the organisers for such an enjoyable and highly successful event. As 2011 brings the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Women's History Network, we will reconvene in London and the Women's Library between 9 and 11 September to mark the occasion by 'Looking Back - Looking Forward'.

This issue also brings you a rich diet of articles to help light up the autumnal evenings and provide, we hope, something of interest to all our readers. This issue moves backwards and forwards in time, beginning with events many of us will remember. Jean Spence writing about the miners' strike of 1984-85, explores how supporting the miners, husbands and sons particularly, changed the lives of 'ordinary' women. As she writes: 'The political consciousness engendered in the process was expressive of gender as well as class identities, of personal as well as employment issues.' Their independence of action and the level of mobilisation were, as Spence argues, unprecedented.

Shifting to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and moving us to Finland, Pälvi Rantala explores women's roles and explicitly motherhood from an oblique angle, looking at the life of Matleena Herajärvi, 'a poor girl, a farmhand and the mother of eight illegitimate children'. Described in her time as a 'bad mother', Rantala sets out to examine this presumption and shifts the focus to the multiple ways the life of a woman who was in many respects unremarkable from the archival material can be understood.

Many of our readers will have some familiarity with the battle for higher education in nineteenth-century Britain; we also know that similar struggles took place elsewhere. Irene Gill, writing about her grandmother, Olga Hempel, gives us insights on one such young woman who sought to study medicine in the period after the foundation of the German state. Using a handwritten memoir and a copious correspondence she pieces together the story of this remarkable woman, displaying her perseverance and humour. Finally, there is a bundle of book reviews and the prizewinning essay by Natalie Drew on the contribution of the WSPU to the achievement of women's rights.

The magazine team is joined in this issue by Juliette Pattinson who will take on responsibility for the WHN Steering Committee news and liaison between the committee and the magazine team amongst other editorial tasks. Juliette is a social and cultural historian of twentieth-century Britain and Europe, with particular interests in gender, personal testimonies and war. She is Lecturer in Modern British History at the University of Strathclyde, the Deputy Director of the Scottish Oral History Centre, the Secretary of the Social History Society, serves on the Peer Review College for the Arts and Humanities Research Council and is on the steering committee for Women's History Scotland. Her monograph, entitled *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War*, was published in 2007. We are very pleased to welcome Juliette to the team.

Susan Hawkins, Ann Kettle, Juliette Pattinson, Jane Potter and Deborah Simonton.

New editorial team member Juliette Pattinson

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Front cover: detail from 'The Potato Planters' by Jean-François Millet from *Artist and Public* by Kenyon Cox (New York, Charles Scribner, 1914)

Female activism, external support and learning in the 1984-1985 UK miners' strike

Jean Spence
University of Durham

The 1984-1985 miners' strike was a seminal moment in the history of class relationships in the UK, not least in its mobilisation of working class women. After a year's struggle, the miners returned to work without having wrung any concessions from the government. The subsequent closure programme culminated in 1993 in the effective annihilation of the industry and its associated way of life. Mining work and life was based on heavy and skilled industrial male labour. Local community, social organisation and politics revolved around male work and women traditionally took responsibility for family and neighbourhood relationships.[1]

Industrial disputes in mining had always included women to some extent. In 1926, women raised funds, worked in collectivised kitchens, and participated in political organising.[2] Women also contributed to the successful miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974.[3] However, in 1984-1985, the extent of the mobilisation of women exceeded all historical precedents and their participation was distinguished by the independence of their organisation. The political consciousness engendered in the process was expressive of gender as well as class identities, of personal as well as employment issues.

An extensive strike literature, including their own publications, records the women's contribution.[4] The story that emerges is of miners' wives who organised spontaneously, to sustain their families through the crisis.[5] Their movement began within traditional female roles as they organised collective kitchens, but they became increasingly politicised as the strike progressed, to the extent that afterwards, they could 'never be the same again'.[6] As one miner's wife explained: 'That first night I was a good little wife packing his sandwiches and looking after his children. On the last picket there I was by his side, fighting as hard ... as he was.[7]

This is a powerful narrative expressing a dynamic symbiosis between the public, industrial politics of trade unionism and the personal relational politics of feminism in what appears to have been a uniquely working class women's movement. However, its generality inevitably conflates and obscures the complexities of women's identities and experiences. Many strike activists characterised under the catch-all description of 'miners' wives' had a pre-history of political involvement in the Labour Movement, and many of them were not directly related to miners.[8] Political experience and knowledge were crucial to the effectiveness of local and national female organisation beyond the need to feed striking miners and families. Moreover, the processes of politicisation were informed by alliances made outside the immediate field of mining work and life.

The organisation of women encouraged a wide constituency of support. Because the miners' strike was about jobs in an industry around which a whole way of life had evolved, it spilled into areas beyond industrial relations. In these areas, related to personal and community interests, female activism became particularly significant. The women gained support from a 'rainbow coalition' because of their location in a broad personal-political field, and they became engaged in a network of friendship and comradeship which radically influenced all those involved.[9] This article considers the relationship between the women and external supporters and the contribution which external contacts made to the processes of political learning.

Insiders and outsiders

Female activists from mining families were keenly aware that they were mobilising to protect male work but pit closures threatened the long-term security of families, traditional social structures and the prosperity of localities. In many mining localities, traditional social roles and interdependencies were already weakened by 1984, but mining remained dominant. In areas where there was little comparable work available, pit closures threatened women as well as men.[10]

Local prosperity was dependent upon the industry and therefore most local business people made common cause with the miners.[11] Business did not usually have direct links, nor would there necessarily be agreement with the views of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). As such, good-will gestures could most readily be made through informal social connections with the women:

> The whole year they got a meal at dinner time. One man had a fish and chip shop and he sent us flour and everything and once a week he made us fish cakes and chips for them. He used to send potatoes and the lard for the pastry. I used to do the pastry and take it over there and do the corned beef mash. The girls used to put it into the tins for us and I used to roll out and they used to put the tops on for me and I used to milk them. The lad who was the baker had been a school friend of my husband's and he said, 'If you like, I'll be putting the ovens off and I can finish off the pies for you.' So he used to cook them and bring them up for us.[12]

It could be argued, using Putnam's concept of social capital, that such gestures enhanced 'bonding' social capital in the traditional female sphere of neighbourhood reinforcing a particular understanding of the relations of

community in mining life.[13] In this regard, local female activism in the strike involved the re-enactment of an older and sometimes romanticised version of the mining community, in which the women held everyone together in times of crisis. Whatever the realities of 1984, romantic perceptions contained sufficient truth for the women to use them effectively to emphasise the importance of solidarity in everyday life, including the necessity of women standing 'side by side' with their men.[14] Their campaign thus rested upon value-based assumptions which bound women to a moral defence of their traditional roles, in a context in which the strike promoted the virtues of justice and equality with reference to work, class and community.

Valuing the ideal of the tightly bonded mining community helped to sustain those who opted into it. It appealed to external supporters nostalgic for the old solidarities of working class life. However, it also hardened divisions, identifying strike detractors and non-aligned outsiders as a real or potential threat to security and wellbeing. This led to the personal dehumanisation of strike breakers as 'scabs'. However, it also allocated outsider status to abstract groups such as 'feminists' and 'intellectuals' whose inclusion might highlight internal tensions and fracture delicate solidarities.

Questions of 'insider' and 'outsider' status became part of a lexicon of defensiveness during the strike. Identifying the boundaries of trust drew upon historical experiences and memories, and in the absence of 'objective' rules of membership, such as those available to the men through the NUM, the women were often highly sensitive to subjective class, regional, and community identities. Thus, the Hetton Miners' Support Group decided not to admit 'outsiders':

> All the women in our support group had connections with the mining community. That was a rule we made at the start. We really didn't want any outsiders in our kitchen or professional do-gooders. We said it wasn't going to be like 1926 with people shuffling up to the soup kitchens demoralised and degraded. It was going to be miners' wives, miners' mothers, miners' sisters serving miners and their wives and families.
>
> We didn't want any sort of intellectuals coming down to play around in soup kitchens. It was a working class women's movement and that's why we were so proud of it.[15]

Similarly, at the end of the strike, the national organisation, Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC), decided that membership was primarily for miners' families, allowing 25 per cent ex-officio membership for 'outsider' women who had given 'an unusual amount of support to miners'.[16] These decisions, prompted by questions of identity, were reinforced by experiences of factionalism and entry-ism during the strike. The women were concerned that outsiders would usurp their campaign or use it as a platform for other political goals:

> ... the organising group became intensely politically interesting to a number of groups in Cardiff—trade unionists, left wing groups and radical causes. Eventually a deep split emerged. In the Welsh Women Against Pit Closures, a takeover by Socialist Action was suspected. The Women's Support groups withdrew and started to run their own programme of food and fund raising.[17]

Among some groups the suspicion of outsiders included suspicion of middle class socialists who patronised working class women: '… come and see her/The pet miner's wife/ It's amazing isn't it/The way she's so articulate?' [18] External support was not experienced therefore as an unmitigated good. Maintaining the centrality of their own experiences and identities was an ongoing struggle for the women. Speaking about the campaign 'Justice for Mineworkers', Anne Suddick said:

> … too many political organisations wanted to be involved in it and to do it their way. … they have their own agendas. And they found it a good platform to speak for their own things. So we had a hell of a time trying to keep it together.[19]

As Shaw and Mundy argue, this created complex layers of organisational and personal ambiguity which were highlighted as other issues impinged upon the women's campaign.[20] In particular, there were questions to address about gender and gender roles in mining communities. However threatening, encounters with feminism were unavoidable as the traditional dependence of female roles associated with the 'mining community' was contradicted by the independence of strike activism. Sustaining the central strike reference to employment in mining demanded clarity and self-management. In this regard, the women's groups acted as safe 'insider' spaces for addressing and resolving issues, which had personal as well as political implications for the women.

Despite the difficulties and the reinforcement of bonded community, 'outsiders' became essential to the maintenance of the strike. They contributed time, skill and intellectual resources as well as raising funds. Women whose activism was prompted initially to meet life's basic necessities, almost immediately found themselves negotiating with local politicians and other organisational representatives in relation to using premises, organising kitchens, and publicising activities. As they began to receive donations so they became involved in correspondence and bookkeeping. When they offered care to those in need, they found themselves dealing with public utilities and services. The need for effective and efficient organisation, for clear systems and knowledge thus began to press at an early stage. 'Things kept cropping up and had to be dealt with there and then and each thing taught us something new. And each new piece of knowledge made us stronger in our resolve to keep fighting.' [21]

There was an ever-present and emergent need to access resources and knowledge beyond the everyday range of many women. Faced with problems, the support

of others was both solicited and welcomed. Anne Suddick described how Neil Clyde, a welfare rights worker contributed:

> welfare … was causing a lot of concern, and one of the first things we did was to print up a list of benefits that miners were entitled to and we distributed those to all of the unions. This was done through the support groups. That guy … was Neil from the Hetton-le-Hole Advice centre. You see, I was never the one that gave the advice – I was the one that provided the people.[22]

Welfare rights was the means whereby Anna Lawson became an 'insider' in the Durham women's organisation. She did not belong to a mining family and her first commitment was to Peace Action Durham. There she had argued against supporting the miners' strike because of the reports of violence associated with it. Then:

> … one of the women stood up and challenged me to come to go with her to the Strike Centre in Sacriston where I lived, and see for myself what was really happening. I met some members of the NUM ... I was moved and interested by what they told me ...
>
> … there was much confusion at the beginning of the strike as to the entitlements of the families of strikers ... I became very interested in this aspect and bought my first Welfare Benefits handbooks ... the first electricity disconnections were about to take place in the homes of striking miners ... the women formed lines around the affected house in an effort to avert the disconnection ... I thought there must be other ways. I got interested in the legal side and looked at moratoriums etc. It helped sometimes in persuading the fuel companies not to disconnect.[23]

In such examples, it is possible to see 'bridging social capital' emerging in association with the need to address issues such as the benefits system, which were not 'internal' to local community relations. According to Putnam, whereas 'Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity', bridging social capital involves networks which 'are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion' and can 'generate broader identities'.[24] Building 'bridging' networks often began through local contact with 'external' people who could make a contribution through specialist knowledge or skill. In their case, 'identity' was not at the centre of their activism but rather identification. Women such as Anna Lawson who could identify in this way often become directly involved in the women's support groups, whereas men such as Neil Clyde contributed directly through the work of the women in the community sphere.

Networks and political education

Independent female organisation

The miners' strike presented a unique opportunity through which a range of political interest and identity groups, threatened by the neo-liberal reforming zeal of the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher, and frustrated by the weakness and powerlessness of the Labour opposition, might express their dissent.[25] The early 1980s was a time of accelerated economic and political transition. The government was intent on 'modernising' the British economy by freeing the market from the interference of trade unionism.[26] In their 1974 strike, the miners had brought down a Conservative government in which Margaret Thatcher had been a minister and this was not forgotten by either side. There was much to play for, and mining represented the vanguard of the organised labour movement. Left wing romanticism equated mining life with some central ideals of socialism: collectivism, trade union organisation, solidarity, loyalty, pride in work, dignity, self help and self-discipline, and great hope was invested in the strike in these terms by a wide constituency of support which was not part of the NUM. The entry of the women into activism offered the opportunity for non-miners to play a role in the strike with regard to these broader socialist ideals.

The NUM was a self-contained and powerful union, with its own national and international networks and allegiances. It was entirely male dominated, given the nature of the industry that it represented. Most female activists were either members of other unions or outside the trade union movement altogether, although a minority were NUM members.[27] Personal and formal links with the NUM were important, but the women created their own flexible and accessible organisation, which was more directly responsive to the immediacy of the strike.[28] WAPC offered an organisational space which gave scope for participation with reference to broad issues of community, values, identities and the general principles of socialism.

The women's organisation contained features akin to the new left and community development of the 1960s and 1970s, located in feminism, in identities, and in community activism operating in co-operation with party and trade union organisations pursuing traditional work-based class politics. Linking with the women's campaign offered the means whereby female activists in the labour and trade union movement could be at the heart of political action in a very important male strike. Meanwhile, non-aligned socialists, and a variety of campaigning and identity groups for whom the NUM was inaccessible, could mobilise their political dissent by supporting the miners via the women's groups.

> Everybody was pulling together, the feminists and the Labour Party. The common enemy was the Government and the Coal Board. And it was a rallying point for a lot of trade union activists, no matter what union you were in. The Teachers Union was brilliant, and even some stars were brilliant; Alun Armstrong looked after the Burnhope group.[29]

As a consequence: 'Our world got bigger – professionals, feminists, punks, lesbians and gays, black people and Asians, we met them all.'[30]

Relationships between the leadership of the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock and the NUM under Arthur Scargill were fraught. Nevertheless, a great deal of support came from grassroots Labour Party activists across the UK. Sponsoring and adopting particular women's groups was one means whereby Labour Party members and related interest groups, could express their allegiance with the miners whilst sidestepping the intricacies and tensions of formal politics.

> I will never forget how I came into contact with another dear friend who lives in London. His name is David Townsend. He is a Director of Social Services. David rang up our strike centre one Monday morning. He belonged to a group called Deptford Fabian Society. They would like to adopt our pit ... and within a few days they had sent us a cheque for £50. We were now alright for another week's food. David explained later that as he had roots in Derbyshire and Yorkshire his group had decided to pick a pit in that area … Whenever we were in trouble or needed anything, they were there.[31]

Often the external support groups began, as had Deptford Fabian Society, by raising funds locally to send to specific mining areas. This lasted throughout the strike and beyond. Fund-raising could be maximised by personal contact and there was an irresistible demand for activists from mining areas to visit and speak to meetings of external support groups, or to host visits from members of such groups. The process of articulating their political perspectives began here for many women.

Public speaking

Invitations to speak at meetings, conferences and rallies involved communicating with strangers. Although the women recognised the necessity of this activity, it was not undertaken easily. Most had never before spoken on a public platform, let alone travelled away from homes and families to do so. Recollections consistently describe their nervousness, the mishaps – including setting fire to notes with a cigarette and spilling water on the chairman. Then they recall the sympathy of the audiences who welcomed them, listened and applauded them, their relief in having been able to give voice to their experiences, and the self confidence which they began to develop from the realisation that the miners' struggle connected with issues faced by others.

Norma Dolby recalled speaking during a fundraising visit to Great Yarmouth where she emphasised the importance of the struggle to those not involved directly in mining:

> Now the chairman was speaking. 'These ladies are from Derbyshire. They would like to tell us how the miners' strike is affecting them and their families' ... .

Souvenir fundraising newspaper produced by supportive trade unionists from the Sun and the News of the World, Sept. 1984

> All my thoughts spilled out. I really let myself go. All our fears, pain and hopes came tumbling out of my mouth. I just had to let them know that we were fighting for our survival. Not only was it our fight, but the fight of every decent person in Britain. If we went down, what hope had anyone else of surviving Maggie's slaughter of jobs ... The whole room went quiet ... but relief, everyone was now clapping.[32]

Public speaking demanded an ability to state a point of view clearly, but many women had never before participated in political conversation or debate. Jean Stead reported that: 'It is said by women in the support groups that when they started there were women who did not know what the initials TUC stood for.'[33]

Most resolved their difficulties simply by speaking 'from the heart', connecting with audiences through the personal aspects of the struggle. Nevertheless, this could not be divorced from the political context. Especially when they found themselves being interviewed by journalists, it became necessary to move beyond experience and emotion and to have objective knowledge of the strike – to be able to assert some 'facts' relating to the case for coal, to engage in the debates about whether or not there should have been a strike ballot and to defend the actions of the miners. In this process, female knowledge of the politics of the strike became increasingly refined.

Unknown territory

As the organisation of women in support of the strike became increasingly effective, so they developed a collaborative web which moved them outside their normal sphere of life. Engaging in public speaking, participating in rallies and responding to invitations to events organised by other campaigns became integral to their activism. Through this, they stayed as guests in people's homes, experienced new landscapes, lifestyles and ideas, developed unlikely friendships and encountered different

issues, all of which set in train a complex dynamic of learning. Thus links with the Cambridge support group impacted upon Nottinghamshire women:

> Walking around the streets of Cambridge I began to realise how beautiful, how big and how clean it was ... There was so much green, I'd never seen so many beautiful parks, there seemed to be grass in every direction.
>
> The march finished at the Fair ... As we walked around none of us could get over what we were seeing around us ... there was loads of odd food on different stalls. Strange rices, beans and all sorts of vegetables chopped up were being sold like salads, but they were not the sort of salads we had. Then there were all sorts of breads and cakes made out of things like carrots and bananas. I'd never come across food like it before ...[34]

Such visits and a holiday stay with a Cambridge family led to a series of extended reflections on the part of Pauline Radford:

> I was thinking about … the differences in our lives. I wouldn't really want to change my lifestyle to theirs although I enjoyed it when I was there, but I was also quite happy with my own. Then I started to think about choices and I realized that the difference was that they had choices about what they did, and we didn't have those choices. There shouldn't be any classes.
>
> I don't think we should individually try to become middle class, that's not the answer. It's a fight for the whole working class ... we shouldn't have to work seven days a week to be able to afford a comfortable house ... A lot of it has to do with the education system, the working class children aren't given the same opportunities as the middle class children are ...
>
> I was beginning to think it was a vicious circle. I'd never really thought these thoughts so clearly before but the injustice of the whole system was presenting itself to me ... We were fighting this Government because it was hell-bent on maintaining the rule of the higher classes.

In discussing the contact with the Cambridge group, Doreen Humber asserted that:

> … we were increasingly learning all sorts of things from them, and they felt very involved in our struggle and were learning from us. The exchange between the two communities was a very rich one and I think it benefitted everyone in many more ways than just the material support we got from it.[35]

Not all supporters were like the people in Cambridge. Different social barriers and prejudices were brought into sharp relief by contact with supporters:

> 'Nettie' Bone and Joan Preston ... described their horror of leaving Bilsthorpe and going into unknown territory, where the women they were to meet included prostitutes and lesbians, and where some of the women lived in squats ...
>
> 'We couldn't believe that people could live in such a muddle; things all over the place and nothing belonged to each woman, they shared everything. What were they doing supporting us when they didn't have two pennies to rub together for themselves?' ...
>
> 'They were out at meetings collecting for us every night and on the streets collecting every day. They were marvellous women and we really liked them when we knew them. We forgot how different we were because we were really the same in lots of ways. They showed how good people can be, unselfish even when they haven't got anything for themselves ... They learned about us and it is good to feel that women are linked together.[36]

Experiencing solidarity from people who lived completely different lifestyles, enduring different types of oppression and campaigning for justice and rights in different conditions, was a significant feature of the political learning inspired by the women's campaign which extended for some of them beyond the national and onto the international stage.

Internationalism and the national state

Thanks mainly to the international contacts maintained by the NUM, female activists were invited to places as far afield and as politically different as France, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, the USA, Cuba and Chile. Whether their visit was a holiday for themselves and their children, or undertaken as a speaking tour, the women were invariably welcomed as comrades and friends. International networking generated comparisons and connections between struggles.

> The women began to see links between our various campaigns – the anti-nuclear movement, the peace protesters and the proposed decimation of the mining industry.
>
> Similarly, the National Union of Mineworkers was opposing the importation of cheap coal through the Rotterdam market from South Africa. The apartheid regime of South Africa had invaded Namibia to exploit their mineral rights and Namibian miners were mining coal in appalling and dangerous conditions to export 'cheap' coal to importing nations, including Great Britain.[37]

Such widening of the terms of reference of the miners' strike, emphasised the relationship between international solidarity and world peace:

> Barnsley Women Against Pit closures were presented with this Peace Candle on the 9.3.85 at the International Women's celebrations organised by I.G. Metall, Stuttgart, Germany.
>
> We brought it to England and the Candle was lit at Barnsley Women Against Pit closures meeting on 17.3.85 and also at a joint social evening between BCND and BWAPC. Women from Greenham Common Peace Camp were present and peace poetry was read.
>
> 14 children and 7 women from BWAPC were guests of Russian miners from 5.4.85 to 21.4.85, and left the candle in Russia.
>
> BWAPC and BCND wish to express their desire for peace with the USSR and the rest of the world.[38]

The internationalism of the peace movement informed the connection at home between women of the coalfields and the women's peace camp at Greenham Common. There were huge concerns about American missiles stationed at Greenham with their inherent threat of nuclear war at a time when relations between the USA and the Soviet Union were particularly tense. Women had been camping outside the American base at Greenham in protest since 1981. Their anti-nuclear stance resonated with the miners' case for coal against nuclear power and common cause was made between the two women's struggles. The ensuing dialogue brought with it further questions about feminism and separatism within the women's movement:

> We had heard of Greenham Common in the newspapers and the TV and respected women for protesting about peace but at the same time thought they were a bit odd: deviant, short haired and gay. Why did it have to be women only at Greenham? We had been subjected to media propaganda ...
>
> After the generosity of the Greenham women ... [w]e made visits to Greenham and women from Greenham came up to stay with us.
>
> ... Most have husbands and children just like us, they look a little strange but so do we, after spending the night sleeping in a plastic bag. They have been subjected to police harassment for years before our struggle began ...
>
> ... Women are now prepared to identify as women and be proud of it rather than embarrassed or awkward.[39]

Questions generated within feminist debates, highlighted within the contact with Greenham Women, could be troubling to women from mining areas and resulted in a great deal of soul searching about questions of gender inequality both in mining families and amongst working-class people in general. Such tensions were not abstract – they had implications for personal relationships as well as for political organisation and allegiance. In supporting a trade union strike, gender issues needed to be resolved within the terms of reference of the trade union and class struggle. Even though growing consciousness about gender inequality prompted them to make common cause with other women locally and internationally, class identities therefore remained foremost in the female politics associated with the miners' strike. The particular contribution of the coalfield women in this arena was to broaden class politics beyond working relations into universal personal, community and identity concerns.

Growth in international understanding impacted not only upon the politics of peace, but also informed awareness of how the politics of colonialism played out through the British state. The national political climate at the time was volatile and intertwined with international issues. The Conservatives had been recently re-elected on a high wave of nationalism after defeating the Argentinians in 1982 in the South Atlantic war over the Falkland Islands (Las Malvinas to the Argentineans). In Northern Ireland, ten hunger strikers had died in the summer of 1981 and Sein Fein was experiencing a surge in its support. In October 1984, in the middle of the miners' strike, an Irish Republican bomb killed five and injured thirty-four delegates to the Conservative Party conference at the Grand Hotel Brighton, where the Prime Minister was staying. Meanwhile, Margaret Thatcher had chosen to emphasise the depth of her antagonism to the miners by labelling them 'The Enemy Within': 'We had to fight the enemy without in the Falklands. We always have to be aware of the enemy within, which is much more difficult to fight and more dangerous to liberty.'[40]

The strike was perceived on both sides of the conflict as akin to a civil war. Pre-existing relationships were fractured as people took opposing sides, to be replaced by new friendships based upon political alliances. Both negative and positive relationships were hardened as the struggle became more intense, bringing miners and their supporters, including the women, into direct physical conflict with the forces of the state. For many of the women their encounter with aggressive policing was a catalyst for identifying with other groups and understanding a broader set of issues about the British state and international capitalism.

Conflict with police

The strike witnessed direct and violent confrontation between police and miners. Picket-line confrontations spilled onto local streets as the police were drafted in to ensure that miners who wanted to work could do so. The 'Battle of Orgreave' in June 1984 made it apparent that the government intended to use strategic mobilisation of the police to help defeat the miners.[41] Confrontations between the police and strike supporters occurred on a daily basis in local neighbourhoods and women activists found themselves assaulted and insulted by representatives of

a force which they had previously held in high esteem.

> They saw for themselves in the picket lines how the state mobilised its police force. They experienced for themselves police violence and were treated like criminals when they were arrested. Their crime? Fighting for jobs for their husbands and children. In twelve months this total education the women received could not have been achieved in any college or university.[42]

Personal feelings and emotions became politicised in this situation:

> Surely we were now living in a police state ... The police refused to let us stand on the pavements. We were all herded into people's gardens. Standing beside me was a young mother, very upset and crying, as she had been separated from her small child. She was pleading with the police: please can I go for my baby? But they refused to let her go. I could not believe my ears ... The child was only about two years old; it was playing further down the street. But here were the police joining arms to stop her passing. I really felt hatred for them at that moment.[43]

Directly witnessing and experiencing police violence encouraged women to make common cause with other groups who identified the police as representatives of an antagonistic state.[44] They heard representatives from Black and Asian communities complain of harassment from the police:

> A representative of Sheffield's Asian community stood up and pledged solidarity with 'our white brothers and sisters' but pointed out that what the miners were experiencing – the harassment, criminalisation, lack of basic freedoms – was nothing new; they had suffered the same for years ...
>
> I do hope that one of the many positive things to come out of this strike will be a better understanding of other people's struggles ... so that when we talk about community we can extend the meaning across national and racial boundaries.[45]

Further, they related their experience of oppressive and aggressive policing with the republican cause in Northern Ireland:

> Elsie Henderson from Wellbeck went to Derry to organise a women's support group and saw for herself how police trained in Northern Ireland had brought to the coalfield their techniques of control and intimidation. Her diary ... describes her feelings ...
>
> '... Every time I see a policeman I get out of the way, it makes me nervous even though they are part of the scenery. I don't like their guns and rifles. I wish you could see the police station itself, it's just like Stalag 19 ...'[46]

Thus, the direct experience of the women consistently heightened their sense of the scale of injustice bringing them into sympathy with an ever-widening group of political allies. Hearing about and empathising with other people's struggles, stimulated analysis of the condition of the national state and its institutions. Such analysis led them beyond immediate experience and personal identities. For some, this in turn fuelled a desire for further learning and understanding to inform their political understanding.

Teaching and learning

Whilst process-based learning proceeded continuously through the experience and dialogue of struggle, there was from the outset an element in the women's activism which consciously sought to stimulate and access education. This was largely achieved through the 'bridging' networks.

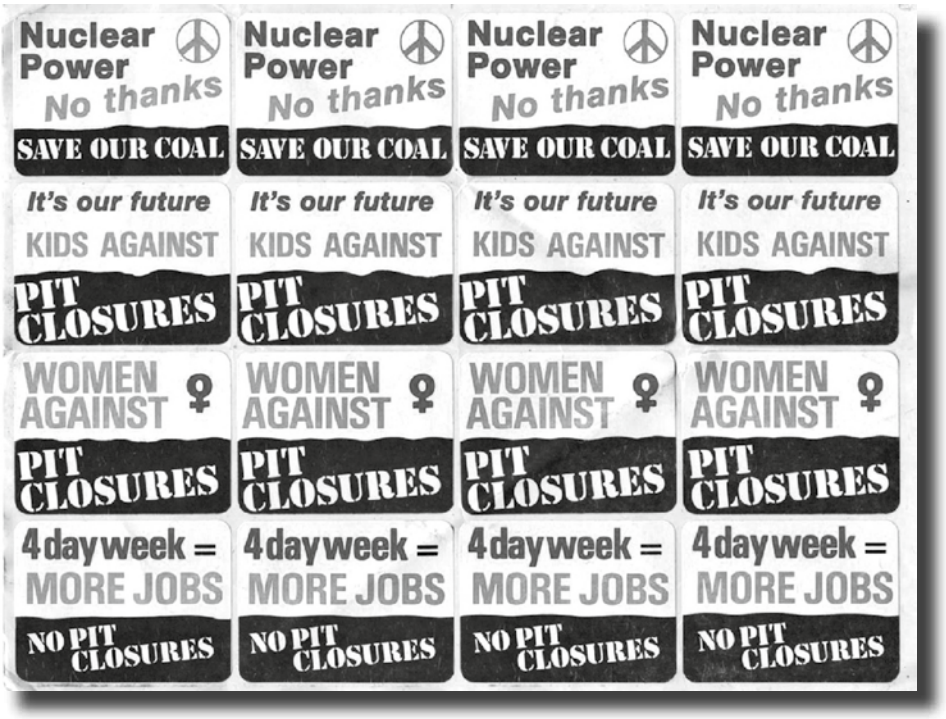
> That's the whole business, I mean, some of the things that we were taught during the strike, and I mean taught, I don't mean we drifted into it and accidentally learned all these things, but we were taught by the people that took us in … you are getting new experiences and you are being taught in a way that showed solidarity.[47]

Through their strike activism the women began to become self-consciously alert to the value of their pre-existing skills and knowledge, but they also encountered their limits. One of their first learning needs related to political language and procedure. Although informal and neighbourhood-based activism was effective at some levels, it did not easily facilitate democratic decision-making, planning, the organisation and distribution of resources, and financial management and accountability.

> After her first meeting in Hetton, Florence said that she practically reeled off the platform, because she had been used to council meetings and the women's meeting had been one of the most confused she had ever attended in her life.[48]

Florence Anderson, a long-term Labour Party activist, subsequently taught the women how to chair committees and Julianna Heron, who was later to become mayor of Sunderland, identified her as her political mentor.[49] Across the country women in the coalfields were learning these skills. Paul Thompson, a schoolteacher, taught the women in Nottinghamshire:

> Paul Thompson had been up to the picket line and talked to Annette and Betty about raising funds. He'd suggested writing a leaflet for distribution in Nottingham to launch an appeal, he'd also talked about the need for organising a proper committee with a secretary, treasurer and chairperson.[50]



Campaign stickers

> Paul said that he had prepared an agenda. Most of us did not know what that was, so he explained that it was a list of things that we needed to discuss. He taught us to go through the Chair every time we wanted to speak, we had to put our hand up. I thought that was very funny, I felt like I was back at school again. But it was very exciting too.[51]

As the women became increasingly caught up in the different parts of the strike, so they encountered situations where they needed specialist information. The case of welfare rights has already been mentioned and some professionals, such as the Welfare Rights Officer in the Centre Against Unemployment in Barnsley offered lessons on how the Benefits System worked, and how to calculate entitlements.[52] Similar educational opportunities were sought and offered, according to the particular need. After one experience of picketing when the women were harassed by the police, Kath Mackey reports: 'From then on we needed to know our rights on picketing. We listened to Greenham women talk of their experiences, women solicitors were contacted to give advice, and guidelines were drawn up for the women to study in relation to their rights.'[53]

Ad hoc knowledge and information was supplemented by coherent educational opportunities designed specifically for the women and offered by supporters, mainly operating within the labour movement tradition of worker-education. Speakers were invited to meetings to discuss matters such as 'energy policy, and nuclear policy'.[54] Talks, conferences and short courses provided opportunities to learn in more depth about the issues that impacted upon the strike. Norma Dolby described her participation in a weekend course at Northern College:

> This is a college for further education. We were going on a course especially for us miners' wives ... The most interesting part for me was learning how stories for newspapers are put together, and how different papers vary about the same story. We also learnt how to give a good interview for the television ... Little did I know ... just how useful this would be to me in the months ahead.[55]

Within ongoing dialogue and discussion, supporters proffered information, answered questions and outlined their own political positions. Many who participated were keen educators, often teachers, trade unionists and socialists who consciously facilitated the efforts of women who sought deeper understanding of the issues at stake. In Nottinghamshire: 'Denise Gladwin a local Labour Party activist, helped the women analyse and interpret their experiences and make connections between their ideas and the philosophy of socialism.'[56]

Norma Dolby accessed an informal opportunity to talk to a headmaster who seems to have used a consistently educational approach:

> I could go and talk to Paul whenever I felt really low. Paul is headmaster of our community school. He was so understanding, he let me babble on and on about all my troubles and fears ... I remember that Paul always followed my line of thought, which made me think more clearly and be able to reason things out a lot better.[57]

Joan Witham, who compiled the book '*Hearts and Minds',* had also been a school teacher and was similarly keen to be involved in an educational process with the women, particularly around the politics of gender. As she records in the book:

> Joan, Janet, Liz and Kay … tell me that I had some influence on them …The women ... were really interested, when they had time to sit down and talk about things … I encouraged the women to see how capable they really were, with their own points of view, well worth expressing.[58]

An element of external support thus engaged with the women using methods associated with community education and the traditions of worker education, but these methods would have had no impact unless the women were open to learning, asking questions and seeking answers. Whilst not all women activists were seeking education, for some the strike was the beginning of what became a much longer term commitment to their own and more generally to working class and women's education.

Conclusion

As Betty Cook exclaimed,'The women in the strike had a great political education.'[59] Engagement with the strike at the least made them more self-conscious about the skills and knowledge, which they already possessed and the success of their actions brought with it a confidence which came from achievement.

The strike attracted a wide variety of supporters who had a broader political agenda, and the women's involvement offered an organisational platform, which offered space for expressing their oppositional stance to neo-liberalism. Connections with supporters created a whole new field of opportunity and challenge for the women. At one level, these connections challenged the moral foundation of the women's position as it related to their traditional roles. At another level it created the conditions for broadening experience and stimulating dialogue which enhanced the understanding and knowledge of all involved, challenging received roles. Further, it helped to emphasise the relationship between global and local politics, and helped women to make connections between different struggles. From this engagement, those who participated discovered opportunities to extend their education and for some this was a life-changing experience.

Participation in the strike raised questions for all those involved and the answers were sought in the everyday reality of the relationships forged through networks of support. As Anne Suddick reflected,

> It didn't come from a book. It was going along to something, and suddenly making me stop and look at the whole situation. Whether it was a gesture of solidarity or somebody who hated you. Suddenly you had to stop and think 'Why do they do that?'[60]

As the women became interconnected with an ever-widening network, so they were able to call upon and were offered access to expertise, knowledge and opportunities for answering questions which had hitherto been beyond their reach.

The formal defeat of the miners could not undo the experiential learning that had taken place amongst those who participated in this momentous struggle. Within this, there are insights about cross-class solidarities, the limits and possibilities of feminism as it applies to the lives of working-class women and the possibilities of 'rainbow' alliances over and above traditional labour movement politics. Of particular interest in the women's experience of contacts with external groups is the impact of internationalism on their understanding of domestic politics, and the extent to which alliance with groups experiencing discrimination on the basis of identity provoked an awakened understanding about the politics of injustice and inequality.

Frequent reference to new friendships in the women's accounts offers insight into the importance of the personal and the emotional within broader alliances based on common interests. Interpersonal relationships underpinned the ideological solidarities and enmities of the strike. The political was personal in this sense, and it was the political which provided the opportunities for the personal development and learning which ultimately enabled so many of those who were involved in the struggle to transcend, as individuals, the ignominy of organisational defeat and the ultimate loss of the mining industry and mining life. It is tempting to speculate that had the organisational defeat not been so total, such learning might have provided the basis for a type of community regeneration in ex-mining areas which no formal government policy could ever achieve.

Notes

1. Linda McCullough Thew, *The Pit Village and the Store. The portrait of a mining past* (London, 1985) describes the dominance of men as miners, but also reminds us of the range of women's involvement in social and political matters during the first half of the twentieth century.
2. Elizabeth Andrews, *A Woman's Work Is Never Done* (Dinas Powys, 2006); Ellen Wilkinson, *Clash* (London, 1989 [1929]).
3. See for example, Rita Abbott quoted in Joan Witham, *Hearts and Minds* (London, 1986), 9.
4. See for example, *The Last Coals of Spring, Poems, Stories and Songs by the women of Easington Colliery* (Peterlee, 1985); The Coventry Miners' Wives Support Group, (CMWSG) *Mummy ... What did you do in the strike?* (Coventry Miners Wives Support Group, 1986); Barnsley Miners Wives Action Group, (BMWAG) *We struggled to laugh* (Barnsley, 1987); Norma Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary, An Account of the Great Miners' Strike* (London, 1987).
5. Monica Shaw and Mave Mundy, 'Complexities of class and gender relations, Recollections of women active in the 1984-5 miners strike' *Capital and Class,* 87 (Autumn, 2005), 151-174.
6. Jean Stead, *Never the Same Again, Women and the Miners' Strike* (London, 1986). Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* records, 'Never will I take anything for granted again … None of us will ever be the same again', 25.
7. BMWAG (1987), 25.
8. See Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, 'Female Involvement in the Miners' Strike, Trajectories of Activism', *Sociological Research Online,* 12 (March 2007).
9. CMWSG (1986), 'If mining families underwent great personal change during the strike, we should not forget the extent to which many of those closely involved with the support groups have also become different people', 160.
10. See Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, 'The politics of the doorstep, Female survival strategies and the legacy of the miners' strike 1984-85', in *Community, Work and*

Family, 10 (3) (August 2007), 309-28.
11. See 'Deiadra's Story' in Gwen Newton, ed., *We are Women We are Strong, The Stories of Northumberland Miners Wives* (c. 1986) for an account of a local retailer's antagonism to the strike.
12. Myrtle MacPherson, interviewed by Carol Stephenson and Monica Shaw, 2003.
13. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone, The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London, 2000).
14. See the 'women's song' written by Mal Finch, *We are women we are strong.* See also Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, 'Side By Side With Our Men?' Women's Activism, community and Gender in the 1984-1985 British Miners' Strike, *International Labor and Working Class History,* 75 (Spring, 2009), 68-84.
15. Quoted in Stead, *Never the Same Again*, 29. Regarding feminists, see Shaw and Mundy, 'Complexities of class and gender relations', 153.
16. Stead, *Never the Same Again*, 22.
17. *Ibid,* 18.
18. Lynne Dennett, 'The Pat on the Head', in Witham (1986), 143.
19. Anne Suddick, interviewed by Carol Stephenson (2004).
20. Shaw and Mundy, 'Complexities of class and gender relations'.
21. Pauline Radford, Getting Places, in Lynn Beaton, ed., *Shifting Horizons* (London, 1985), 100.
22. Anne Suddick, interviewed by Monica Shaw and Carol Stephenson (2003).
23. Anna Lawson, written response to interview questions from Monica Shaw and Carol Stephenson, (2004). Anna subsequently developed her expertise in Welfare Rights and worked in that field after the strike.
24. Putnam, *Bowling Alone,* 22-3.
25. See for example, Polly Vittorini, Nicola Field and Caron Methol, 'Lesbians Against Pit Closures' in Vicky Seddon, ed., *The Cutting Edge, Women and the Pit Strike* (London, 1986), 142-8.
26. John MacInnes, *Thatcherism at Work, Industrial relations and economic change'* (Milton Keynes, 1987).
27. See for example, Liz Marshall and Barbara Drabble, 'Not All the Strikers Were Men' in Seddon, *The Cutting Edge,* 97-123, and Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 58-59.
28. See Anne Suddick, 'The past we inherit, the future we build', Preface to *Capital and Class,* 87 (2005), 6-7.
29. Anne Suddick interviewed by Shaw and Stephenson, (2003).
30. Quoted in Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 130.
31. Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* 17.
32. *Ibid*, 31-2.
33. Stead, *Never the Same Again*,14.
34. Pauline Radford in Beaton, ed., Shifting Horizons, 160-1.
35. *Ibid*, 184 and 193.
36. Quoted in Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 76-7.
37. Anne Suddick, 'Links-twenty years on'. Draft article prepared for *Red Pepper* sent to the author, 11 October 2004.
38. *Women Against Pit Closures, Barnsley Women, Vol. 2* 'People's History of Yorkshire', 12 (1985), 100. The Peace Candle had previously been to Finland, Belgium and Holland (ibid, 99).
39. Barnsley Women Vol. 2 (1985) 'Food sent from the women at Greenham Common', 57.
40. Margaret Thatcher in a speech to the Conservative 1922 Committee, 19 July 1984.
41. The miners had organized a mass picket at the British Steel coking plant at Orgreave and were met with mounted police in riot gear.
42. Betty Cook, BMWAG (1987), 9.
43. Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* 18.
44. For example, Betty Cook had her knee fractured by a police truncheon on the picket at Wooley Edge in February, 1985. See BMWAG, 52.
45. *Barnsley Women, Vol. 2* Pauline, 'Operation Policewatch', 11-12.
46. Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 73-74.
47. Anne Suddick interviewed by Stephenson, (2004).
48. Stead, *Never the Same Again,* 117.
49. Julianna Heron in Women's forum discussion, Northumbria University Conference, *The Miners' Strike. Twenty Years On* (July, 2004); Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* 93.
50. Beaton, *Shifting Horizons*, 88.
51. *Ibid*, 101.
52. See *Barnsley Women, Vol 2* (1985) Yvonne and Maria 'Welfare Rights', 10.
53. In Seddon, *The Cutting Edge*, 59.
54. Pat MacIntyre on the activities of the Durham Miners' Support Group, at the Women's Forum, Northumbria University (July, 2004).
55. Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* 93.
56. Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 151.
57. Dolby, *Norma Dolby's diary,* 60.
58. Witham, *Hearts and Minds*, 125.
59. BMWAG, 9.
60. Anne Suddick, interviewed by Carol Stephenson, (2004).

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The possible lives of Matleena Herajärvi
A poor woman's positions in Northern Finland in the nineteenth century

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Introduction

Matleena Herajärvi was born in 1801 in Alatornio, Northern Finland, in a village called Ruottala. Finland was the eastern part of Sweden then, but not for long; when Matleena reached the age of eight, she had become a citizen of the Russian empire. Alatornio was situated in the borderland with only the Tornio River separating the two states, Sweden and Russia-Finland. The political changes did not have much effect on Matleena's life, and she herself did not provoke any political issues. She was a poor girl, a farmhand and the mother of eight illegitimate children. She is the main character in this story, as herself: a woman hidden in the past.

The only thing that made Matleena stand out in the archive material and in local folklore was her son, a vagabond and a local mock poet, Pietari, known as 'the Preacher of Kalkkimaa'. Several authors have written about him and most say that his mother did not take care of him, so that he became a beggar as a little child.[1] These texts assumed that Matleena was a bad mother who did not love her son enough to look after him. The first time this assumption appeared in print was in 1882, but it is repeated even today. The aim of this article is to break down and rebuild this assumption and to look at Matleena as a person in her own right, not only as somebody's mother. This article makes the options in her life visible and looks at her mental, material and cultural conditions. It also reconstructs the context she lived in: the positions, social relations and different kinds of roles that were available to her. The article asks how Matleena's roles can be interpreted, and how her social and civil status affected expectations of her.

Matleena did not write memoirs, and there is very little written about her. We can find evidence of her life in parish archives: her birth, her confirmation, the births of her children and her changes of residences are all documented. Evidence of her life and her children are also in the poor relief documents. In addition, she was convicted in the district court. These documents were written in Swedish by educated men to serve specific purposes. The documents were not written to serve researchers, but to serve the public good, organization and social order.

The point of view of this article is microhistorical. By telling Matleena's life and placing her in the centre of the study, we can also generalize about poor women of Northern Finland in the nineteenth century. Using Matleena's story as an example opens an opportunity to examine ideas concerning other poor women of Northern Finland in the nineteenth century. Moreover, taking a closer look into one case, we can see how the way we view the past varies in time and place. Matleena was a so-called 'normal exception' or 'incongruous normal' that microhistorians like Giovanni Levi talk about.[2] She was normal enough to represent others like her, and exceptional enough to leave marks about her life around her. The influences of this article come from cultural history, gender studies and women's history. The power and significance of specific cases in history writing has been demonstrated in many studies, such as Natalie Zemon Davis and Maarit Leskelä-Kärki's.[3] In these studies, women who have been forgotten have risen to the centre stage and thus have been given voices. Like Matleena's, every life has a meaning in itself, but also a more general meaning.

Matleena's life

Magdalena Herajärvi was born in Ruottala on 4 June 1801. Her parents, Antti and Maria, lived in a house ruled by Antti's older brother Heikki. Antti and Maria had seven children, but three of them died very young. Magdalena, who was called Matleena or by the nickname 'Mallu', was baptized at the age of three days. Children then had to be baptized within eight days of their birth. It was common, though, for a midwife to give an emergency baptism if the child was weak, and the priest confirmed it later. In Northern Finland, the long distances between villages altered practices; a child was baptized when the priest happened to be present.[4] The people of Ruottala usually went to Kemi's rural parish church, which was closer than their own church twenty kilometres away in Alatornio, which would have taken a whole day to reach.[5] Matleena's godparents were relatives, which was very common. She had five godparents, which also was typical. The godparents usually came from the same social class as the parents.[6] Matleena took part in a confirmation class at the age of seventeen, in 1818. Usually the age of confirmation was a bit younger, fifteen or sixteen. She could read a bit and had basic knowledge of the Bible. Confirmation was a prerequisite for marriage, and because one document confirmed that Matleena was 'able to get married', she had to have been confirmed.[7]

At the age of 18, in 1819, Matleena moved to the neighbouring parish, Karunki, to become a farmhand. Like many other girls in her social position, she had to leave home to earn a living. It was a necessity to have a place to work, a so-called legal protection in a household. Without this protection, a young person who could not stay with her or his parents could have been treated as a vagabond. In that situation, she could have been compelled into forced labour; male vagabonds could be sent to the army.[8] A 'moving license' mentioned that Matleena was

to work as a maidservant. Unfortunately, no record of her position can be found in the household's documents. Because households were registered with the names of the masters, farmhands were only mentioned by their first names. In general, in the archives of the period, women were recorded as wives while men were seen as heads of household.[9]

Matleena worked in Karunki until the end of 1822. She was known as a girl with a good reputation – until her position changed in 1824. At the age of 23, she gave birth to an illegitimate child.[10] She probably had somebody, maybe her mother, help with the actual childbirth. In Finland, the sauna was a common place for giving birth.[11] Matleena's first son was born during winter and it would have been very cold, even minus 20–30 degrees Celsius; so, the sauna was the best place because it was warm, private and safe. The little son was named Johan Petter the day after his birth. His godparents were again from Matleena's immediate surroundings: her brother Antti, neighbours and the farmhand in the household.[12] Little Johan only lived for two weeks, dying of typhoid fever.[13] In 1824 in Alatornio, 970 children were born and 67 of them were illegitimate. One third of the illegitimate children, 27, died before their first birthday.[14] Children's weakness and mothers' bad living conditions were partly to blame, but also various diseases caused deaths.

Matleena's second child, a daughter called Elsa Caisa, was born on 25 May 1825. There is only one note of her in the archives, but she also died as a newborn. Matleena was no longer a girl with a good reputation: the vicar of Alatornio wrote that she had not broken the Lord's Supper for many years. Her reputation did not get better; she had her third child, Petter Abram in the autumn of 1830.[15] He was the first one to survive, even though Alatornio suffered from a very bad famine during those years.[16] Matleena and her son lived in her home village, Ruottala, where the taxation lists recorded that she occasionally worked in households and turned beggar.[17] Poor relief in the parish was based on family help, begging and a system called 'ruotu', in which a person stayed in a household for some time and then moved to another household. Households also helped the poor by giving them food.[18]

After Petter Abram, Matleena gave birth to five more children: Johan in 1837, Carl Gustav in 1838, Maria in 1841, Nils who died as a newborn in 1842 and Brita Carolina in 1844.[19] All her children were born out of wedlock, and there is no indication as to who their father(s) might have been. Maybe they all had the same father, maybe not. Matleena never married, nor is it likely that she had a partner with whom she lived.

A woman who had given birth was not a part of the church until she had gone through a ceremony called 'kirkottaminen', or churching. This ceremony took place six weeks after giving birth. A woman who had not been churched was, at least in the tradition, seen as impure and a possible danger to others.[20] The ceremony implied gratitude because of the birth, but if the mother was unmarried, it also involved punishment.[21] Some of the ways used to punish an unmarried mother included a confession, which took place either in privacy or publicly, a penalty or excluding the woman from the Lord's Supper.[22] The church punished Matleena after Pietari was born, and she worked for the church as penalty. The district court also punished her in 1846, because she had given birth to eight illegitimate children. She was accused of fornication and fined 2 roubles and 40 kopeks. She could not afford to pay, and so was taken to Oulu crown prison for seven days, from 24 until 31 January 1847. Her escort was the rural police chief, Carl Hjulberg, who had also been the prosecutor in court.[23]

Matleena lived the last years of her life with the help of parish poor relief. She received handouts from several households, and probably worked in them as much as she could and helped take care of children. She died on 21 December 1864 at the age of 63. The lives of her children showed that poverty, social class and illegitimacy were connected to the fate of children.[24] Three of Matleena's children died very young. Petter Abram became a beggar and died at the age of 55, in 1885. Johan died at the age of 28, Maria at 27. Brita became a vagabond, and also gave birth to an illegitimate child. Carl Gustav was the only one of the eight who raised a family.

Interpretations of Matleena's roles

We have now followed the main course of events in Matleena's life, have glimpsed her living conditions and seen who the main people in her life were. Next, using contemporary literature and research on women's history, we will move on to take a look at her different community positions concentrating on four key roles: a working woman, a mother, a disreputable woman and an abused girl. Of course, we do not know which of them Matleena might have identified with herself.

A working woman

The first impression we get of Matleena, from the parish documents and the stories about her son, 'The Preacher of Kalkkimaa', is that she was an unmarried mother. In her own time, nevertheless, her first identification was probably 'piikatyttö', a female farmhand. Work was the most important thing in the lives of men and women in that period. It was obviously a way to earn a living, to stay alive, but it was also a burden and a thing that meant everything for an individual. The esteem of work linked to the social, political and economic structures of the community.[25] Work had a strong influence on a person's position in society.

In modern Western culture, work has been seen to be important for people in the process of constructing self-consciousness, dignity and self-esteem.[26] In hospitals, especially in the field of mental care, work therapy and strict discipline were used as stimulating and purifying methods to help people remain industrious and not lazy and thus to be, again, a member of society.[27] Nonetheless, the most important implication of work has been the idea of serving God. Laziness was seen as a sin, and a lazy person was perceived as a bad person. Work was a way to serve God, but not every kind of work was good enough: the noblest way was stable, regular, professional work, performed because of a vocation.[28] Work also had moral implications.

Many jobs in rural culture were divided into men's and women's work with a social, spatial and emotional distance between the two genders.[29] Nevertheless, some studies present men and women as almost egalitarian partners in work in Finnish agrarian culture.[30] When considering Finnish agrarian work culture we also have to take note of age, social position and one's position in the household. Women were not a homogenous group; the work and life of the lady of the manor differed from those of the crofter's wife.[31] In general, women's work consisted of the duties done inside like cooking, milking, taking care of the children and most of the animals, and outside duties like sowing and other work in the fields. Usually the farmhand took care of the hardest jobs.[32]

When Matleena began to work as a farmhand, did she know what her duties were? Probably someone, the housewife or an older maid, gave her advice at first. Her work was very physical and rough and probably not too satisfying. Farmhands worked from early morning until late at night, but almost all the signs of their work – which kept things going – have disappeared. In general, there are only a few documents of women's work, and maid is one of the rare female occupations that appear in the archives and parish documents.[33] Female farmhands were controlled in many ways: they were members of the household and under the patronage of the master. They were also part of the labour of the household and thus important to the household unit. However, their rights to their own time, body and privacy were very fragile.[34]

Because of the lack of sources on the nature of the work performed by farmhands, they often appear in other roles like unmarried mothers, lovers or sexual creatures. This is largely because most of the sources consist of court documents, so the picture is distorted; crimes and sexual life are exaggerated and there are only a few marks left of everyday lives of servants. We can barely see what kind of relations farmhands had with their families, how they kept contact with them or what they did when they had a day off.[35] Female farmhands and maids – the women of the lower social classes – have often been seen as morally questionable and immoral. That is especially true in literature. In Finnish novels from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, female servants had a dual role: on the one hand, they represented innocence, inexperience and humility, on the other hand they were seen as promiscuous, sluggish, senseless and rebellious.[36] None of these attributes has much to do with the real daily work or life of farmhands.

A farmhand, in the countryside and a maid, mostly in towns, were general concepts, and 'piika' was a typical position for a young woman. Usually they later got married and began to work in their own household.[37] Women who had no steady position could support themselves in several ways: sewing, selling handicrafts, alcohol or coffee, as street vendors or helping in harvesting, baking or cleaning. Their jobs were seasonal, and many wandered around at least some parts of the year.[38] Matleena probably earned her living from several sources. Sometimes she lived in a small cottage, sometimes in other houses, wandering from one household to another.[39] Matleena also lived as a vagabond at least every now and then. A woman's place and social sphere were more restricted than men's, and the life and situation of a woman without a home was not secure. Furthermore, it was seen as morally suspicious.[40] Matleena wandered mostly around villages where she was known, and she was probably given food and a place to sleep. In any case, attitudes to vagabond women were different than to men in the same situation. A romanticized picture of the 'carefree tramp' does not reflect Matleena's kind of woman.

A mother

The historical sources available do not reveal much about Matleena as a mother. She had eight children, and three of them died very young, which was not exceptional at the time. What kind of mother she was, how she treated her children and what her relationships to her children were like are questions we can never answer. Yet, we can make the assumption that Matleena and her children had a very poor life; they probably did not have a permanent place to live, and there were days they had almost nothing to eat. Sometimes, maybe even often, they had to beg to sustain themselves. Northern Finland suffered from a great famine at the beginning of the 1830s, and that made life even harder for everyone. Two of Matleena's youngest children were fostered in other people's homes by the parish poor relief system. Despite the strict moral code of the church, during Matleena's own time and in her society, an unmarried mother was not so much of an exception. There were many women with illegitimate children. In Alatornio, 13 per cent of all children born between 1810 and 1860 were illegitimate.[41] Usually, however, the number of children born out of wedlock to a mother was one or two. Thus, Matleena can be seen as an exception: eight illegitimate children were far more than most of her contemporaries had.

Nineteenth-century society operated on the assumption that mothers took care of the children. Fathers, of course, also bore an economic responsibility if the couple were married, but the moral and practical responsibility lay on women's shoulders. If a child was born out of wedlock, the mother was the only one responsible, unless the father could be identified.[42] During the first decades of the nineteenth century, it was also the parent's duty to give children an education. If an unmarried woman could not take care of a child on her own, her family and relatives were the next ones to turn to. Only in the unhappy situation where the family was incapable of looking after children, was it the duty of parish poor relief to help. If children were sent to live in a household, they had to contribute labour to that household.[43]

When a child was born to an unmarried woman, only the mother's name would be recorded in the parish documents, and no traces to the identity of the father can be found. Even if the mother and the father lived together and were engaged, the child would still be recorded as a bastard. Most unmarried mothers belonged to the lower social class.[44] Sometimes the father paid some amount of money to nurture the child. This was not probable in Matleena's case; there is no information about the fathers in the documents. Still, it is a bit odd that the father of her children is so invisible. In all the available sources,

including historical documents, stories and folk tradition, the children of Matleena Herajärvi were 'fatherless'. Never was a father accused of abandoning his children.

In stories about the 'Preacher of Kalkkimaa' most of the writers from the 1880s until the 2000s assumed that Matleena abandoned her son and did not take care of him. These stories reconstructed a portrait of a bad mother. It may, of course, have been true: Matleena could have had her reasons to abandon or ignore the boy. Maybe she just could not support him because of her poor living conditions. Or, she could have been immature herself, not capable of taking care of another person. It is even possible that she just did not like the child, or could have suffered from complications, stress, overstrain or even postnatal depression.[45]

In the beginning of the century, the women who shared Matleena's social group and situation, as poor single mothers, all worked; there was no opportunity to be a full-time mother. The interpretations of motherhood that we now share are mostly based on the ideas of the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Thinking of Matleena as a mother in the early 1800s differed significantly from the situation at the end of the century. The assumption that she was a bad mother who did not fulfil a mother's responsibilities first appeared in print in 1882. In an essay, a student with the pseudonym 'Linnanen' wrote: 'The mother of the Preacher of Kalkkimaa did not take care of him, so as a poor little boy he was left to live with the support of parish poor relief'.[46] This text has been the main source for many writers since. Yet, Linnanen projected the ideas of his own time and culture onto those of Matleena's time; he was much younger than the Preacher of Kalkkimaa, so he could not know the true circumstances of his childhood.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of the family gained an ideological meaning that it did not have previously. From the ideas of a key group in Finnish society, the cultural elite mostly consisting of middle-class men, the ideal image of the family and good motherhood spread throughout the whole of society.[47] In public discourse, women in Finland were represented in the context of nationalism: they were not only mothers of their own children, but also in a wider sense, mothers of the nation. The ideal mother, then, was a loving and caring person, who also took care of the civilization, education and moral and ethical upbringing of children who could thus become decent citizens of the Finnish nation.[48] These ideas about an ideal mother were not part of Matleena's own time and culture and the later interpretations of her role were probably not seen from the perspective of her own community. Nevertheless, her role as a mother has afterwards derived from this later perspective of the loving mother, who placed children first in her life. We can assume that in her own community Matleena was expected to take care of her children. Yet her motherhood can be seen from many different perspectives: economic, moral, ethical, educational, social and so on. Motherhood and the image of a good mother varies from one time and culture to the next, as do the possibilities available for women trying to fulfil such an image.[49]

A woman with a reputation

As I have shown, the general impression of a female farmhand in the nineteenth century was not that of a woman earning her own living, but more like that of a disreputable woman and a 'bad' girl. This may of course have been Matleena's main position in her own society. Yet it is commonplace that the presumed misery and exclusion of women were presented later in fiction and in research. Attitudes concerning an unmarried mother can be seen from many different perspectives depending on the writer's position, opinions, research interests and political views. The standpoint of the woman herself, her children or her closest friends differ considerably from that of the educated people of her time or those who describe the phenomenon afterwards.

The phenomenon itself was not very simple either; the high rates of illegitimate births were a result of different social processes, economic situations and the way births were documented.[50] If a child was born outside of marriage, he or she was recorded as illegitimate even when the parents actually lived together. The only name registered in the documents when the child was born and baptized was the mother's.[51] Thus, the official number of single mothers is probably higher than the number actually was. In Matleena's case, it is obvious that there was no man to support her and their children. She had to carry the responsibility alone.

Many studies have suggested that it was important for a woman of that age to maintain her ability to work; if she could manage her duties, a baby was not such a big burden.[52] A child born outside wedlock was a question of morals, but firstly, it was an economic problem. Illegitimate children were seen as a burden for the community, if mothers could not take care of them. It was rare that a woman from the higher social classes had an illegitimate child; women who gave birth to illegitimate children were mostly from the lower classes.[53] Thus, their ability to maintain children was weak to begin with. Matleena was poor, and she came from a poor family. It is unlikely that her parents could help her to support the children. She had to work, but if she was incapable of working, she had to lean on the parish's help. That put her in a position with little possibility to control her own life: if the community helped her, she also had duties to perform to compensate for that help.

Attitudes towards a woman, who had a child outside of marriage, and to the child, were based on the social order and religious and moral standards of the Lutheran church. Marriage was a part of the Christian ideology and set by God. It also upheld the morals of the society. The church, legislation and social control were closely linked to each other, and they all supported the system that limited sexual relationships as belonging only in the sphere of marriage. It was especially the upper class's duty to support and control moral order. Furthermore, it was the householder's and housewife's task to attend to the behaviour and morals of their respective subordinates.[54]

However, there could be different kinds of moral and sexual norms present in the community at the

same time. Official and unofficial norms could also differ considerably.[55] The common people's attitudes towards a woman with an illegitimate child could vary from reprehension to pity or even tolerance. Of course, it was easier to tolerate a woman who herself did her best to support the child. In any case, many women with an illegitimate child lived with their parents after the child was born, so they had at least some kind of a safety net.[56] Regardless of her circumstances, the woman's position in the community changed after the child was born.

The position of unmarried women in Nordic agrarian culture has been well researched.[57] In these studies, the perspectives used vary widely. Some emphasized the negative aspects: that the woman was socially murdered, excluded from the community and severely punished.[58] Another view saw that the woman was accepted as a member of the community, but in a new position.[59] One reason for the differences in perspective is that the studies are based on different kinds of source material. The world and people's attitudes are presented differently in, for example, folklore, parish documents, court documents and interviews. In each type of material the position and social group of the writers are different. It is also important to note the time of the study in question: did it use contemporary sources or tell about the past in a way that the material reflects things before their writer's own time and culture? A common mistake is to see the past as a tightly knit society with control and force, without exceptions, variety or personal possibilities to choose. Attitudes towards the unmarried women have probably varied from one situation to another, and the woman's own acts and behaviour could also have an effect on public opinion.[60] It is probable that Matleena was not totally excluded from her society, but her position was not as respectable as a married woman's, either. It cannot be assumed that the way she was treated in the society was always the same, in spite of the situation and the persons in question. The other side of the coin would be how Matleena herself experienced people's attitudes and her own position.

An abused girl?

Did Matleena want to have eight children without marrying their father; was it her voluntary decision? One possible way to answer this question is to assume that she was abused in one way or another. Matleena's life can also be interpreted from the perspective of gendered abuse and violence. Gendered violence is a historical and cultural phenomenon, and it can be studied both from the structural and individual viewpoint.[61] Sexual violence against women, as seen from a gender perspective, is not an assumption or a feature of one individual. Thus, it is not the problem of the single man or the single woman alone, but a power relation that is based in gender.[62]

Of course, we cannot know how men in her community treated Matleena or whether she encountered violence or not. The subjective, bodily experience is out of reach. Still, we can examine the structures and the practices of where gendered violence may have taken place, as well as the attitudes, norms and punishments concerning violence and the power relations between men and women. What was typical behaviour for a woman or a man in her time? What kind of norms did she have to obey in her social position? There are many ways to see sexual norms, sexual violence against women and the abuse of women. Popular culture like films and novels have affected the interpretations widely: the picture of a young and innocent girl abused by her master may be true, but still over-emphasized. Also, studies of women in history have often stressed the point that especially girls with low social standing were victims without a chance to control their own sexuality.[63]

From this point of view, it can be thought that Matleena's social position as a farmhand, a poor girl from the lower classes, was a factor that could lead to being abused. A young maid did not have much power over her own body and integrity. The master of the house and his sons, but also male farmhands, could see a girl as being 'available'.[64] After the birth of Matleena's first child, she could have been seen as a sexually immoral woman, not as one of the honourable women of the community. She could have thus been seen to be indecent and sexually 'usable'.[65] The limit between acceptable and not acceptable sexual behaviour of a man was flexible. The idea of man being sexually active by his nature and without a possibility to control his sexuality was also widely accepted. It was the woman's duty to take care of her morality, so that she would not stimulate the man's desire.[66]

Whether we see Matleena as a victim or not, it is presumable that she was not in a position where she could fully control her own sexuality. In the agrarian community, there was not much space for privacy. Especially those who did not own land had few possibilities to shelter. Social control in general protected marriage, the order of the things in the community and the religious world view, but it did not shelter the individual, man or a woman.[67] If a woman who was not married was raped by a young man who came from the same social class, the crime was not seen as great as when the woman was married and came from the higher classes. In Swedish statistics, it was most typical that men and women who committed sexual violence shared a social position. Of course, there may be many cases where a man with a high position attacked a woman; this is not apparent in the statistics if a woman did not accuse him.[68]

Did Matleena's child, or children, originate from rape? Or did she have a relationship with someone? We cannot know. Alatornio was close to the new border, and the circumstances were quite troubled when Matleena was young.[69] It was easy to accuse 'strangers' of all the bad and immoral things that happened. It may be typical for all communities to see badness outside the community, thus dividing the world to 'us' and 'them'. The father(s) of Matleena's children could, of course, have come from outside: there were many tramps, seasonal workers, lumberjacks and soldiers nearby. But it is also possible that the father was from the same social group as Matleena. In any case, all of Matleena's eight children had a father; they were not 'fatherless' as it is often said. Calling children fatherless hides the fact that men do not take, or are not made to take, responsibility for the children. Matleena could have sued the father in court, but without witnesses it would have been impossible to win

the case if the father wanted to deny his fatherhood. By accusing and naming a man without evidence, the woman could have been penalized. Quite often, the mother and father made a contract whereby the father paid the child's living expenses if the mother did not reveal his name. Even in these cases, the shame, the child and the practical responsibility of raising the child were only the woman's.[70]

One possible way to think of Matleena is to see her as a prostitute, a so-called village whore. This perception gives her at least a small chance to control her own life and sexuality. Prostitution was not as institutionalized in rural contexts as it was in towns and cities.[71] There may have been one or a few women who were paid for sex and who could have had many customers.[72] Anyway, in rural communities there would have been few potential customers. In Matleena's case, as in many cases concerning a 'relationship' between the master of the house and the maid, money was not paid but the girl was practically in the position of a prostitute.

If Matleena had earned her living as a prostitute, she probably would have been accused in court earlier. It is more probable that she was abused either because she was a poor girl or because she was a bit childish, or both. Matleena could read, but in one document she was called 'little knowing'. This term can, of course, say more about the writer, a higher-class man, who could not understand the life of Matleena and her kind.[73] But it may also tell us something about Matleena. She could have been immature, or maybe even a bit retarded. Of course we cannot know for sure, but it could explain why she was not accused in court earlier, and why she had eight children without getting married, which was very atypical of the time and place.

Again, I see Matleena through the lens of my own time and culture and the scientific paradigm of feminism and gender studies. To see her only as a victim of sexual violence does not take into account the possibility that she voluntarily had sexual relations with men. However, it is presumable that Matleena lived in a society, in a patriarchy, where a woman with low social status, no income and no marital position had not much power with respect to sexuality.

Conclusion

This article has explored the different interpretations that concern an unmarried mother who lived in Northern Finland in the nineteenth century. It has tried to discover the possible expectations and assumptions that Matleena Herajärvi met in her own time and community. There are different levels of norms and interpretations at play here. First, how did Matleena's neighbourhood treat her? What were the norms of that specific community? She was a poor woman with a low social status, but it is probable that she had some kind of safety net in her community. Her position in the community was still different, probably worse, than the position of a married woman.

Secondly, in the official context she was perceived as one of the unmarried mothers and servants, a woman of the lower class of society. Public authorities and clergymen had the power to define the official norms and laws. They also wrote all the surviving documents about Matleena. Thus, all the information that we have about Matleena's life is built up from the official documents, which are reflections of the norms and ideals of the higher classes in her society.

Thirdly, Matleena's role and position as an unmarried mother has been interpreted in different periods. Every time and culture has its own ways of seeing things, and this is visible also in the material that was written and recounted about Matleena and her son Pietari, the Preacher of Kalkkimaa. The ideals of 1800s Finnish Nationalism affected the ways in which the portrayal of a good mother was formed. Thus, the way Matleena was seen afterwards can be completely different from the way her contemporaries saw her. Also, literature, history writing, films, etc. affect the way we see the past.

And yet, the interpretations I make of Matleena's life in my own time have been transmitted through decades. My own culture, my position as an academic researcher who shares the paradigm of cultural history and microhistory, the idea that everyone's life is important to explain, of course affects the way I see historical research and the past. Also, my position as a feminist and a Finnish woman believing in equality between the sexes and the independence of women are present in my study.

To conclude, every interpretation about the past is linked to its own time and context. In the beginning of this article, I introduced the concept of the 'normal exception'. If we take into account the time and place in which Matleena lived, her life can be seen as normal: to have an illegitimate child in Alatornio at that time was common, and obviously, being a poor farmhand was very common, too. However, if Matleena had had only one illegitimate child, her life probably would have been different. Maybe she would have married the father of the child later, or perhaps some other man would have taken on the role of the father. Had this happened, the sources that tell us about Matleena's life would be different, probably much fewer and the whole story would be different. Matleena's life was exceptional enough to leave signs behind. Although she did not write letters, diaries or memoirs, and thus did not leave any written notes about herself for us to read, her life can be reconstructed. The interpretations I have made about that life are, obviously, made from our time and my researcher's position, but I still believe they do justice to Matleena, her time and her life. I set out to deconstruct the assumption and common image of Matleena being *only* a bad mother. I cannot deny that she could have been that; of course, it is possible that she did consciously abandon her child(ren). Yet, I have presented other interpretations of her life, other possible positions she could have had in her social sphere. It is likely that in her own community Matleena had all those positions, and possibly even some others which remain unknown to us looking at her from a historical distance. This article presents Matleena as herself, not just as somebody's mother, to make her life and living conditions understandable to those who share our time and culture.

Notes

1. Over 200 items concerning the Preacher of Kalkkimaa are listed in my doctoral thesis *Erilaisia tapoja käyttää kylähullua. Kalkkimaan pappi aatteiden ja mentaliteettien tulkkina 1800-luvulta 2000-luvulle* (Turku, 2009).
2. Giovanni Levi, 'On Microhistory', in Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 2001), 97–119.
3. Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, *Kirjoittaen maailmassa. Krohnin sisaret ja kirjallinen elämä* (Helsinki, 2006); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-century Lives* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).
4. Päivi Happonen, *Sukututkimuksen asiakirjaopas. Väestöhistorialliset arkistolähteet* (Mikkeli, 2004) 37; Wiljo-Kustaa Kuuliala, *Entisajan talonpoikaisyhteisö ja kirkko* (Helsinki, 1960), 270.
5. Reija Satokangas, 'Polkkapareja ja äpäriä – 1800-luvun lopun ja 1900-luvun alun siveettömyysongelmat Kemijokisuussa', in Kimmo Helomaa and Antero Torvinen, ed., *Historian viesti* (Oulu, 1999), 245.
6. Happonen 2004, 39; Kuuliala 1960, 208; Markku Teinonen, 'The Social network and choice of Godparents of a family moving from the Country to a Town', *Ethnologia Fennica,* 18 (1990), 30–33.
7. Kuuliala, *Entisajan talonpoikaisyhteisö*, 217.
8. Sten Carlsson, *Fröknar, mamseller, jungfrur och pigor. Ogifta kvinnor i det Svenska ståndssamhället* (Uppsala, 1977), 83–84; Veikko Laakso, 'Kirkkokurista kunnalliskuriin. Järjestyskysymys ja paikallishallinto Suomen maaseudulla', in Ulla Kivistö, ed., *Arki ja läheisyys* (Turku, 2002), 97; Pirjo Markkola, 'Suomalaisen naishistorian vuosikymmenet', *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* (Helsinki, 1/2003), 73–76; Panu Pulma, 'Köyhästäkö kansalainen? Köyhyys poliittisena ongelmana', in Pertti Haapala, ed.,*Talous, valta ja valtio. Tutkimuksia 1800-luvun Suomesta* (Tampere, 1992), 190–192; Marjatta Rahikainen, 'Naiset näkyvät Suomessa tekevän vaikka mitä', in Marjatta Rahikainen and Tarja Räisänen, eds, *'Työllä ei oo kukkaan rikastunna'. Naisten töitä ja toimeentulokeinoja 1800- ja 1900-luvulla* (Helsinki, 2001), 19; Riitta Räsänen, 'Piika ei oo ihminen, eikä ihra voita – sukupuoli ja omakohtainen näkökulmina kyselyaineiston tulkinnassa', in Pirjo Korkiakangas, Pia Olsson and Helena Ruotsala, eds, *Polkuja etnologian menetelmiin* (Helsinki, 2005), 259.
9. Anneli Mäkelä, 'Historian naiset löytyvät', in *Selvitä sukusi*, Marja-Liisa Putkonen, ed. (Helsinki, 1992), 144.
10. Alatornio Parish Archives APA (Tornio, Finland).
11. Hilkka Helsti, *Kotisynnytysten aikaan. Etnologinen tutkimus äitiyden ja äitiysvalistuksen konflikteista* (Helsinki, 2000), 71, 74–76, 146–147.
12. APA.
13. APA.
14. Statistics Finland (Helsinki).
15. APA.
16. Kaisa Kauranen, *Rahvas, kauppahuone, esivalta. Katovuodet pohjoisessa Suomessa 1830-luvulla* (Helsinki, 1999).
17. National Archive (Helsinki).
18. Heikki Rantatupa, *Alatornion historia* (Tornio, 1988).
19. APA.
20. Jonas Frykman, *Horan i bondesamhället* (Lund, 1977), 135, 142; Armas Nieminen, *Suomalaisen aviorakkauden ja seksuaalisuuden historia* (Helsinki, 1993), 35–38; Juha Pentikäinen, *Suomalaisen lähtö. Kirjoituksia pohjoisesta kuolemankulttuurista* (Helsinki, 1990), 136–137.
21. Frykman 1977, 135–137; Kuuliala 1960, 211.
22. Toivo Nygård, *Itsemurha suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa* (Jyväskylä, 1994), 97–103; Kirsi Pohjola-Vilkuna, *Eros kylässä. Maaseudun luvaton seksuaalisuus vuosisadan vaihteessa* (Helsinki, 1995a), 57.
23. National Archive, District Court, Tornio, 1846.
24. See Kaarina Jousimaa, *Jokainen lapsi on pelastettava elämälle* (Helsinki, 1983), 14, 16; Katja Sipri, *Avioton äiti ja lapsi 1800-luvun maalaisyhteisössä* (unpublished, 1994), 55.
25. See e.g. Tatu Leskinen and Laura-Kristiina Moilanen, 'Ihanteena sivistynyt suomalainen. Identiteetin rakennusaineksia 1880-luvun sanomalehdessä ja romaanissa', in Laura-Kristiina Moilanen and Susanna Sulkunen, eds, *Aika ja identiteetti. Katsauksia yksilön ja yhteisön väliseen suhteeseen keskiajalta 2000-luvulle* (Helsinki, 2006), 235; Jyrki Piispa, 'Terve ruumis ei työtä kaipaa', in Kaisu Kortelainen and Sinikka Vakimo, eds, *Tradition edessä. Kirjoituksia perinteestä ja kulttuurista,* (Joensuu, 1996); Anna-Maria Åström, 'Työt ja työnteko Savon kartanoissa 1800-luvun alkupuolella', in Raimo Parikka, ed., *Suomalaisen työn historiaa. Korvesta konttoriin* (Helsinki, 1999), 12.
26. Nygård 1994, 86–88.
27. Roy Porter, *Madness; A brief history* (New York, 2002), 114–16.
28. Sakari Ollitervo, 'Max Weber ja vastakohtien maailma', in Hanna Järvinen and Kimi Kärki, eds, *Avaintekstejä kulttuurihistoriaan* (Turku, 2005), 152; Max Weber, *Protestanttinen etiikka ja kapitalismin henki* (Helsinki, 1980).
29. Helsti 2005, 100–101; Jan Löfstöm, '"Mies" ja "nainen" ynnä muut sukupuolet', in Bo Lönnqvist; Elina Kiuru and Eeva Uusitalo, eds, *Kulttuurin muuttuvat kasvot. Johdatusta etnologiatieteisiin* (Helsinki, 1999), 254–260.
30. See Markkola 2003, 60.
31. Ann-Catrin Östman, 'Kaskenpoltosta moderniin maatalouteen', in Anssi Mäkinen, Joni Strandberg and Jukka Forslund, eds, *Suomalaisen arjen historia II* (Helsinki, 2007), 37–39.
32. Marjatta Rahikainen, 'Kadonneen työn jäljillä', in Marjatta Rahikainen and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, eds, *Työteliäs ja uskollinen. Naiset piikoina ja palvelijoina keskiajalta nykypäivään* (Helsinki, 2006), 25.
33. Rahikainen 2006a, 7; Tarja Räisänen, 'Syytinkimuoreja ja loiseukkoja. Ikääntyneiden naisten selviytymiskeinoja maaseudulla 1850–1920', in Rahikainen and Räisänen, eds, *'Työllä ei oo kukkaan rikastunna',* 48–59.
34. Räisänen 2005, 246–247.
35. Rahikainen 2006, 8, 26.
36. See Anna Halme, 'Maaseudun piika suomalaisessa kaunokirjallisuudessa', in Rahikainen and Vainio-Korhonen, eds, *Työteliäs ja uskollinen,* 176, 187; Ulla Heino, 'Se tavallinen tarina eli langennut nainen 19. vuosisadan alun länsisuomalaisessa maalaisyhteisössä',

in Eero Kuparinen, eds, *Työ tekijäänsä kiittää,* (Turku, 1989); also Jutta Ahlbeck-Rehn, *Diagnostisering och disiplinering. Medicinsk diskurs och kvinnligt vansinne på Själö hospital 1889–1944* (Turku, 2006).

37. Pertti Haapala, *Tehtaan valossa. Teollistuminen ja työväestön muodostuminen Tampereella 1820–1920* (Tampere, 1986); Antero Heikkinen, *Kirveskansan murros. Elämää Kuhmossa koettelemusten vuosina 1830-luvulla* (Helsinki, 1997), 14; Sipri 1994.

38. Pirjo Markkola, 'Pirtissä ja pellolla, kotona ja konttorissa', in Kari Immonen, ed., *Naisen elämä. Mistä on pienet tytöt tehty, mistä tyttöjen äidit?* (Helsinki, 1990), 370; Räisänen 2001, 48–50.

39. National Archive.

40. See Ahlbeck-Rehn 2006, 36; Kustaa H. J. Vilkuna, 'Alkoholin nauttimispaikka, juopottelijat ja juomisen ajankohta 1500–1700-luvun Suomessa', in Heikki Roiko-Jokela and Timo Pitkänen, eds, *Sisä-Suomen tuomiokirjat tutkimuslähteinä ja elämän kuvaajina* (Jyväskylä, 1995), 273–75.

41. Lähteenmäki 2004, 235.

42. Jousimaa 1983, 12.

43. Maria Lähteenmäki, *Kalotin kansaa. Rajankäynnit ja vuorovaikutus Pohjoiskalotilla 1808–1889* (Helsinki, FLS, 2004), 201.

44. Reija Satokangas, *Talonpoika ja teollisuus. Vastakkain ja rinnakkain. Kemijokisuun agraariyhteisön muutos 1869–1938* (Rovaniemi**,** 2004), 63.

45. See Katariina Kokko, 'Yksin lapsen kanssa. Aviottomia äitejä 1900-luvun alun Helsingissä', in Marjatta Rahikainen, ed., *Matkoja moderniin* (Helsinki, 1996), 97–98.

46. Linnanen [Castrén, Kaarlo Alarik], 'Kalkkimaan pappi', in *Suomen ylioppilaskunnan albumi Elias Lönnrotin kunniaksi, Hänen täyttäessään kahdeksankymmentä vuotta* (1882).

47. Kai Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata. Perheen ihanne ja sivistyneistön elämäntapa 1800-luvun Suomessa* (Helsinki, 1994).

48. Lappalainen, '"Äiti-ilon himo". Naiset ja kansakunnan rakentuminen 1800-luvulla', in Tero Koistinen et al, eds, *Kaksi tietä nykyisyyteen. Tutkimuksia kirjallisuuden, kansallisuuden ja kansallisten liikkeiden suhteista Suomessa ja Virossa* (Helsinki, 1999), 109–110; Ilpo Helén, *Äidin elämän politiikka. Naissukupuolisuus, valta ja itsesuhde Suomessa 1880-luvulta 1960-luvulle*' (Helsinki, 1997), 151; Häggman 1994, 141, 179.

49. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1999), xi–xiii.

50. Frykman 1977, 13; Matti Mikkola, *Avioton lapsi* (Helsinki, 1972), 18; Hans Norman, 'Inledning', in *Den utsatta familjen. Liv, arbete och samlevnad i olika nordiska miljöer under de senaste tvåhundra åren*, ed. Hans Norman (Stockholm. 1983), 11; Satokangas 2004, 63; Sipri 1994, 32.

51. Satokangas 2004, 63.

52. Carlsson 1977, 93; Frykman 1977, 164–165; Heino 1989.

53. Ahlbeck-Rehn 2006; Pirjo Markkola, 'Emännäksi, piiaksi vai tehtaaseen. Tampereen ympäristössä syntyneiden naisten elämänvaiheita 1830-luvulta 1930-luvulle', in Kyösti Kiuasmaa, ed., *Yksilö ja yhteiskunnan muutos* (Tampere, 1986), 80–81; Ann-Sofie Ohlander, 'Farliga kvinnor och barn. Historien och det utomäktenskapliga', in Yvonne Hirdman et al., eds, *Kvinnohistoria. Om kvinnors villkor från antiken till våra dagar* (Stockholm, 1993), 72–73; Satokangas 2004, 63.

54. Satokangas 1999, 35, 37 and 2004, 60.

55. Frykman 1977, 110; Markkola 1986, 80–81; Pohjola-Vilkuna 1995a, 83; Panu Pulma, 'Kerjuuluvasta perhekuntoutukseen', in *Suomen lastensuojelun historia,* ed. Panu Pulma and Oiva Turpeinen (Helsinki, 1987), 50; Satokangas 1999, 35 and 2004, 60.

56. Heikkinen 1997, 62.

57. See e.g. Kaijus Ervasti, *Lapsenmurhat Suomessa. Oikeushistoriallinen tutkimus lapsenmurharikoksista Suomessa erityisesti autonomian aikana* (Helsinki, 1994); Frykman 1977; Heino 1989; Nygård 1994; Pohjola-Vilkuna 1995a; Sipri 1994. Also Mikkola 1972.

58. Heino 1989; Armas Nieminen, *Taistelu sukupuolimoraalista. Avioliitto- ja seksuaalikysymyksiä suoalaisen hengenelämän ja yhteiskunnan murroksessa sääty-yhteiskunnan ajoilta 1910-luvulle* (Helsinki, 1951), 83–86; Ohlander 1993, 76–78.

59. Frykman 1977, 119–122; Marjatta Rahikainen, 'Maatalouden piiat pitäjänhistorioiden valossa', in Rahikainen and Vainio-Korhonen, eds, *Työteliäs ja uskollinen*, 168.

60. Satu Apo, 'Huoraksi nimittely suomalaisessa perinteessä', in Aili Nenola, ed., *Louhen sanat. Kirjoituksia Kansanperinteen naisista* (Helsinki, 1990), 149.

61. See Inger Lövkrona 'Kön och våld. Historiska och kulturella perspektiv', in Inger Lövkrona, ed., *Mord, misshandel och sexuella övergrepp. Historiska och kulturella perspektiv på kön och våld* (Lund, 2001), 34–36.

62. Åsa Bergenhem, *Brottet, offret och förövaren. Vetenskapens och det svenska rättväsendets syn på sexuella övergrepp mot kvinnot och barn 1850–2000* (Stockholm, 2005), 19.

63. See Halme 2006.

64. Frykman 1977, 194–195; Pohjola-Vilkuna 1995a, 104.

65. See Apo 1990, 50.

66. Bergenhem 2005, 79.

67. Ann-Catrin Östman, 'Oenighet och äkta kärlek. Behandling av äktenskapliga "trätor" i ett agrarsamhälle på 1800-talet', in Lövkrona, ed., *Mord, misshandel och sexuella övergrepp,* 81–82.

68. Bergenhem 2005, 94–95.

69. Kaarlo Airas, *Vuosisata elämänliikettä Tornionjokilaaksossa. Kirkollista elämää ja hengellisiä liikkeitä vv. 1809–1900* (Jyväskylä, 1941), 50–65; Lähteenmäki 2004, 52–59.

70. Antero Heikkinen, *Kirveskansan elämää. Ihmiskohtaloita Kuhmon erämaissa 1800-luvun alussa* (Helsinki, 1988), 169–170; Antero Heikkinen, *Kirveskansa ja kansakunta. Elämän rakennusta Kuhmossa 1800-luvun jälkipuolella* (Helsinki, 2000), 184.

71. Nieminen 1951, 94–97.

72. Antti Häkkinen, *Rahasta – vaan ei rakkaudesta. Prostituutio Helsingissä 1867–1939* (Helsinki, 1995), 215–217.

73. See Ahlbeck-Rehn 2006.

How German women stormed the male bastion of the university at the turn of the twentieth century

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Introduction

In 1899, Chambers Encyclopaedia wrote: 'The Universities of Germany have left all others behind in the fame of their teachers and their contributions to the sum of knowledge.' There were 21 universities in Germany then, with an average attendance of 1,400 students; 72 per cent of costs were covered by the state, 9.3 per cent by student fees, the rest by endowments.[1] But in one respect the British were ahead of the Germans: in admitting women. Queen's College Glasgow was founded as a female institution for higher education in 1842, while in London Birkbeck College accepted women from 1830, and both Queen's College and Bedford College from 1848. Newnham College for women was founded in Cambridge in 1871, Girton two years later. At Oxford Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville and the 'Society of Home Students', later to become Anne's College, were all founded in 1879 with St Hilda's following in 1893. These are now coeducational colleges, like all the Oxford colleges. As Simonton records, it was part of a Europe-wide trend.[2] Switzerland admitted women to Zurich University from 1847, though in the 1880s and '90s Poland still did not accept women, forcing Marie Sklodowski, later Marie Curie, and her sister to go to Paris and study at the Sorbonne, which had been admitting women since 1880.[3]

In the 1870s, women were still campaigning for entry to universities in Germany. Victory in the war with France had led not only to the country's twenty-five independent states of very various sizes coming together in a *Reich* (empire) with a *Kaiser*, the Prussian King Wilhelm: it also led to great prosperity – a period often called *Gründerjahre* (the Foundation Years), as so many new industries and businesses were founded (*gegründet*). Maja Riepl-Schmidt, in her book about the emancipation of women in Stuttgart, points out that 'the industrialisation of the nineteenth century, which led many women hitherto occupied in the home to work outside, meant that as they became more independent they also felt a stronger urge to declare their desire, their need, to be trained and educated.'[4]

Elementary education up to the age of about fourteen was universal in Germany. Now the wives and daughters of the prosperous entrepreneurs began to assert themselves. While the boys moved up into *Gymnasien* – grammar schools – and took the *Abitur,* which opened the door to university, their sisters had to learn feminine domestic arts and skills, French and possibly English, music and dancing, with private tutors. Some rich middle-class and aristocratic families could afford to send their daughters to boarding schools. Women's desire for a proper education, equal to boys' and men's, intensified. There were *höhere Töchterschulen* – literally 'Higher Daughters' Schools' – for upper class girls; the first was opened in Halle in 1835. They were designed to prepare girls for their duties as wives and mothers – not for the *Abitur.* The only opening for them to establish a paid career was a *Lehrerinnenseminar* or teacher training college, where they might qualify to teach in elementary schools. Then there was nursing and midwifery, traditionally women's work, mostly for working-class women.

What they were up against

It was a long, hard struggle to overcome the widespread prejudice against higher education for women in Germany – as elsewhere. The only way women in Germany could communicate with government was by organising petitions since they did not have the vote, and there were a large number of these in different parts of Germany pleading for access to universities for women. The responses were astonishing. Ute Scherb lists some of them in her study of female students in Freiburg. In 1889, the Government of Baden set up an inquiry, which in due course reported that a woman would have to divest herself of the feminine qualities of delicacy, mildness and grace and turn herself into a '*Mannweib'* – a man-woman – if she were to study medicine. Moreover, they would be competing with men for jobs. Alban Stolz, a writer and theologian (1808–1883), maintained: 'The female sex is not only physically, but also mentally weaker than the male ... so it is not only a rare exception, but in fact a kind of abnormality when a woman achieves anything significant in art or science.' Woman's 'physiological feeble-mindedness' was the theme of a pamphlet by the neurologist, Paul Julius Moebius (1853–1907), in 1900. Karl Heilig's 1905 cartoon caricatures a woman student: ugly, short-haired, inelegant, and contrasted with a fashionable lady with a huge hat, long gown and tiny waist; the caption suggests that a woman striding along on flat heels and holding a book would support a left-leaning professor.[5]

Freiburg's first Professor of Psychiatry, Hermann Emminghaus, feared women might be overwhelmed by witnessing psychiatric illnesses involving sexual excitement and obscenity. Abrams lists similar prejudices voiced in different parts of the world:

> ... a woman's reproductive capacity would be damaged by much intellectual stimulation; ... her brain was too small ... (she) risked a

Abb. 11
Karikatur von Karl Heilig, 1905.
Original-Bildunterschrift: »Verräterischer Gebrauch. ›Schau mal, Spund, was diese Kommilitonin dort für große Füße hat.‹ – ›Weiß schon ... hab' sie gestern im Kolleg bei Professor Schmid Beifall trampeln hören.‹«

1905 cartoon by Karl Heilig, lampooning female university students. Augustinermuseum, Städtische Museen Freiburg, Inv.Nr. G 42/014b

> future blighted by 'neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria and other derangements of the nervous system' ... diverting 'blood from the reproductive apparatus to the head'.

And what about the effect on men? 'The presence of women in lectures would be too distracting ... .'[6]

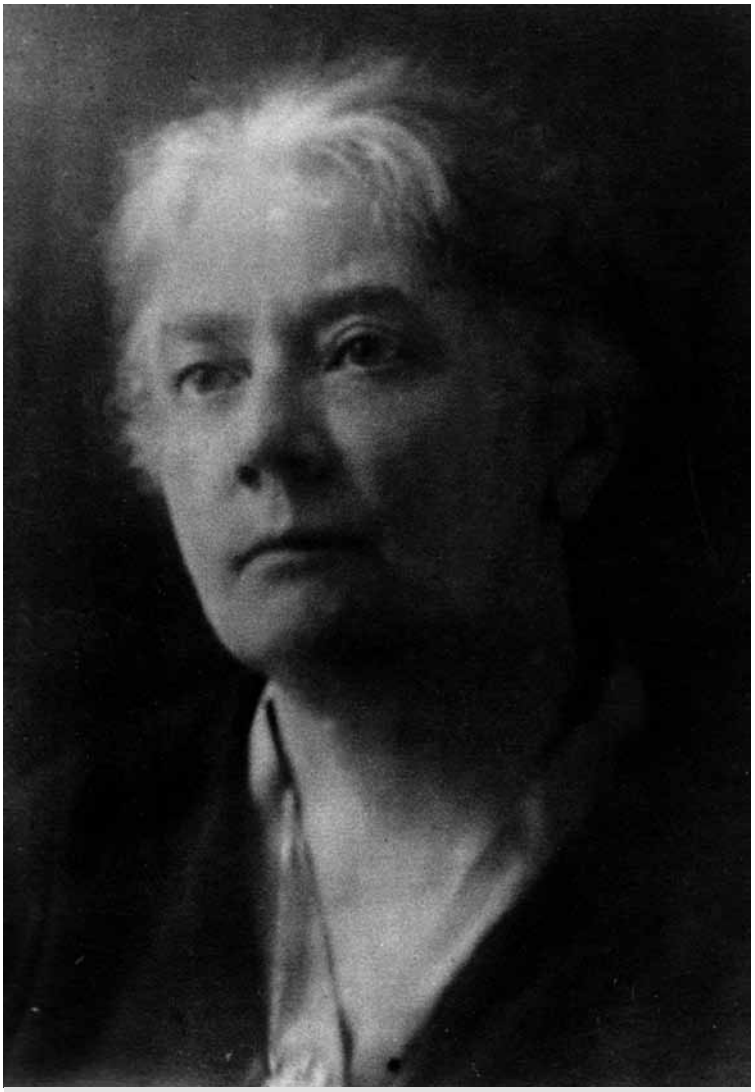
Patricia Mazon describes how Professor von Treitschke interrupted his lecture when he noticed a young woman in the audience and personally escorted her out, giving instructions that no female should ever be allowed into his lectures again. She explains that to the educated German middle class, education was 'a defining characteristic of its male members only' [*sic*].[7] After the strict discipline of home and the *Gymnasium*, young men had four years of freedom at university. They made friends with other men; they could choose which subjects to study, or drop; apart from a final examination no demands were placed on them; they lived in digs, in rooms in citizens' homes; they drank and sang and misbehaved and duelled and visited brothels – and all too often developed syphilis. It was the thought that young women would be exposed to such rowdy misbehaviour, or even take part in it themselves, that was used by some as an argument against women entering universities. It also led to some dubious 'humour' – cartoons and comedies – as Mazon records.

One student that we know about, and who lived up (or down) to the general view of students at Königsberg (Kaliningrad) University, was Heinrich Fajans, the brother of my grandmother, Olga Hempel *née* Fajans. In her memoirs, on which much of this article is based, she describes how the family were alarmed when they did not hear from him for a long time. She set off from home in Danzig (Gdansk), secretly, to sort him out. It soon became apparent that he was in debt – she paid off his debts; but she also had to arrange for medical treatment for syphilis for him. This seemed to be successful; he became a lawyer and a father; however, the disease returned and he died young, as did so many.

Yet, despite the irresponsible behaviour of so many students, German universities were living up to their international reputation as centres of excellence. Mazon describes the influence of Herder's ideas about *Bildung*, a word that means so much more than 'education'. It conveys a sense of intellectual probity, of devotion to the truth, of culture, of being a whole, fully-formed human being: an aristocrat of the mind. When Humboldt, Fichte and Schleiermacher founded Berlin University in 1810, it soon set standards of teaching and research to which others aspired. *Wissenschaft*, another untranslatable word, embodying knowledge, wisdom, science and scholarship, became all-important for serious students. Women protested at being excluded from that world.

One remarkable woman

As in most other countries, German women were beginning to feel the urge, the desire to get out of the dolls' house, and to use their brains and earn their own living. One woman who was not prepared to live the pointless life of a middle-class woman was my grandmother, Olga Hempel. In her memoirs, she described her early life as a rebellious, independent-minded child right through to her medical studies and practice, her marriage, motherhood, divorce, and necessary emigration in 1938 – she was of Jewish descent. She wrote the memoirs by hand, in three black exercise books. These battered books, and hundreds of letters – she must have written to my mother every week after she left home – and photographs, came into my possession when my mother died in 1993. I found them fascinating. She wrote vividly, humorously, emotionally. It was a living voice from the past; history filtered through one remarkable woman's life. I felt more people should read them, and get to know her and the tumultuous times she lived in. Copies of the memoirs have been deposited in the archives of Freiburg University and the Institute for the History of Medicine in Berlin.[8] An edited version was published by Professor Erhard Roy Wiehn and myself, in 2005 with the title: *Olga Hempel – Immer ein bißchen revolutionär. Lebenserinnerungen einer der ersten Ärztinnen in Deutschland 1869–1954* (Olga Hempel– Always a bit revolutionary. Memoirs of one of the



Doctor Olga Hempel

first women doctors in Germany 1869 – 1954). Translated into English, the memoirs constitute a large part of my book: *Oma, Mu and Me*, published 2006, revised edition in 2009.[9]

Olga was unique – a pioneer who broke through the barriers of German academic sexism to build a career. Born in 1869, she grew up in Danzig, when it was a German city, the third of the four children of a prosperous grain merchant. She described episodes in which she boldly sorted out family problems: the visit to her syphilitic brother in Königsberg was typical. Life for the young Olga was pleasant enough. There was always something going on in their house – live music, parties, arguments, visitors. She sang in a choir, took part in amateur dramatics, attended tutor groups with a few friends, spent summer holidays at nearby Zoppot, sea bathing and walking with her dog, read a lot, and went on trips to rural beauty spots and elegant cities. Her sisters got married, but the man she wanted to marry did not return her feelings and she would not marry anyone else. She spent a year in England, teaching German at a small girls' finishing school. She was by nature 'always a bit revolutionary', as she wrote in her memoirs. In her late twenties, she decided to do something with her life. Not to go into teaching, as so many women did, but to go to university, to study, to become a qualified doctor. At that time, this was only possible in Switzerland. James C. Albisetti reported that 'The first two German women to become physicians, Emilie Lehmus and Franziska Tiburtius, graduated from there [University of Zurich)] in 1875.'[10] More followed in the 1880s and '90s; but Olga did not consider that route. She had set her mind on Freiburg.

One hurdle that had to be crossed was to get the *Abitur.* One of the women's movement's objectives was to enable women to get an education and professional qualifications. As Simonton puts it: 'The pressure for improved female education, and in particular, demands for access to higher education and to the same education as males, were a central focus of the woman's movement. Singular young women had received a higher education, informally and through various forms of private education, for centuries.'[11] Olga was not a feminist. But she was certainly a 'singular young woman'. Her motto was: '*Was ein anderer kann, kann ich auch'* (what another person can do, I can do too). She was an intelligent, very self-confident and somewhat eccentric person, and was going her own sweet way – which happened to fit in with a Europe-wide trend. Voices were being raised for women doctors to treat women's diseases, and Albisetti points out that as time went on, and more women did become doctors, a majority did specialise in areas like gynaecology.[12]

One day, Olga wrote in her memoirs,

> I made up my mind to become a doctor. This again was quite eccentric. Women were not allowed to study or take exams in medicine in Germany, and there was no one else in our town who had hit on such an 'absurd' idea. A woman might perhaps get permission from individual professors to sit in on their lectures, but she could not be matriculated, nor take any medical examinations. But I was encouraged by some professor friends, who wanted to use me as a sort of guinea pig for the experiment of women's studies, and so I resolved to try my luck at a German university whose rector was willing to back me up: Freiburg. ... I had never been to school, had only shared in occasional private lessons ... But I was already 26, and I was in a hurry. I gave myself a one-and-a-half year deadline: I would sit and pass the exam in 1897.[13]

So in 1895, needing to catch up on years of study to get an *Abitur,* she approached the leading feminist and educationist, Helene Lange, and asked her to recommend a tutor for Latin and Greek. But her meeting with Lange was not fruitful. She wrote: 'Not for the first time I observed that very competent, unmarried females are simply insufferable: self-confident, domineering, like sergeant majors.'

This controversial opinion had been formed in

London, when she was twenty-one. She had applied to the Adelmann Teachers' Institute in London for an *au pair* position as a teacher of German. Miss Adelmann was outraged by the glowing reports Olga's tutors had given her: she must have made them up herself. Adelmann would sit at the head of the table and shout at any of the young women for some misdemeanour like helping herself to bread. She would have all the aspiring teachers line up and then pace along the ranks like a general, slapping those who met with her approval hard on the shoulder, sentencing any whose hair was in a fashionable fringe to solitary confinement until it was long enough to be plaited; they all had to wear bonnets, and so on. Olga could not stand that, and accepted the first position available, at a girls' finishing school at Burnham Beeches, and stayed there for a year. She came home, expecting her beloved to have realised that he didn't want to live without her (she was wrong there) and that her father would recognize her maturity and independence and give her an allowance similar to her brother's. After some deep thought, he agreed.

Now, some five years after Adelmann, she was similarly repelled by Lange, who also poured scorn on her mental capacity: no-one could get the *Abitur* in 18 months! Olga marched out indignantly. She found the necessary tutors, worked extremely hard, got her *Abitur* as planned, and in Spring 1897 entered the University of Freiburg. She had to ask her father to pay. He characteristically asked for twenty-four hours time to think about it, before finally agreeing.

It was inevitable that Olga and Helene Lange would clash. Lange, twenty years Olga's senior, a brilliant and powerful woman, was in the forefront of the battle for access to education for women. But even she believed in the 'fundamental difference between the sexes': women generally lacked the intellect and the ability to grasp abstracts; what they did have, in her view, were social talents linked to their innate motherliness. Mazon remarks that she was disappointed with John Stuart Mill's *On the Subjection of Women*, saying he missed the main point: that there were many things that only women could do, that educating women would provide a feminine ideal, a fitting counterpart to the idealised 'strong man'.[14] Olga was really only interested in justifying her existence to herself – and in enjoying herself.

Lange (b. 1848) had worked as a teacher and governess. In 1887, she wrote a *Gelbe Broschüre* (Yellow Brochure) to accompany a petition by Berlin women to the Prussian Ministry of Education demanding equal education for girls and boys – and that girls should be taught by women, not men. In 1889, Lange had founded *Realkurse für Frauen* in Berlin *('Realschulen'* were middle schools), later *Gymnasialkurse* (grammar school courses), which included Latin, Mathematics, Science and Economics. She was a leading member of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (ADF) (General German Women's Union) and in 1890 she founded and presided over the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein* (the General German Women Teachers' Union), which campaigned for girls to be taught up to *Abitur* by women rather than men and for women to have access to universities and to be able to obtain university degrees in teaching and medicine. First, there would have to be schools where girls could be prepared for the *Abitur.* The *höhere Töchterschulen,* as has been mentioned, did not do so. Marriage and motherhood and running a staff of servants were the only careers open to middle-class and aristocratic girls. Failing marriage, they might teach in elementary schools, or work as governesses. The two-year courses in the *Lehrerinnenseminare* catered for this. Working-class women attended elementary schools to prepare them to work as domestic servants and the like. Nursing was one field where both well-to-do and working class women could work, as Susan Hawkins points out.[15] The ADF wanted to add a grammar school branch (*gymnasialer Zweig)* to the *höhere Töchterschulen,* where academically qualified teachers would prepare girls for the *Abitur.* This would pave the way for women to become lawyers, doctors, ministering to women and children only, and what we would call Sixth Form teachers for girls. Girls should not be taught by men, as was the rule then.

Baden leads the way

Freiburg, where Olga started her studies, is in South West Germany by the Black Forest in what was then the Grand Duchy of Baden. Ute Scherb has produced a monumental and meticulously researched book about women at Freiburg University: much of what follows is taken from her early chapters.[16] Baden had two universities: one in Heidelberg, founded in 1386, and the *Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg,* founded in 1457. Neither of them accepted women students in 1897, when Olga arrived – nor did any other German university at that time – though some of the wives and daughters of professors had been able to attend the lectures of their husbands and their husbands' colleagues. Qualified women school teachers and women who had obtained the *Abitur* or equivalent abroad were also admitted – not as students, but as visitors, or auditors. They could be removed at any time at the professor's whim. They could not take a national examination. In 1883, a wealthy Swiss woman, Louise Lenz, had offered the university 100,000 marks to be used for scholarships for women studying medicine, chemistry and pharmacy. It was refused, because 'The University of Freiburg is not to be open to any women's studies'.[17] In 1897, Margarete Heine applied to the University of Heidelberg to study medicine. She, like Olga Fajans in Freiburg, was admitted, as an experiment. It was argued that in the years to come there were likely to be more such applications from females, and the authorities' experience with this case might help them to decide whether they should be accepted or turned down. Things were changing. German women were studying in Switzerland and Holland, growing numbers of academics were in favour of women studying, and soon more and more girls would be getting the *Abitur*.

Olga arrived In Freiburg in the Spring of 1897,

> … full of the highest expectations. I was met at Freiburg station by two of my Danzig friends,

> and by Franz Keibel, Professor of Anatomy. He walked on my left side and explained, in deadly earnest, that being the first and only female at the university I would have to be tremendously careful, virtuous, reserved, since not only the whole university, but the whole town would be watching and criticising. 'You cannot possibly live in students digs', he said. 'I have taken the liberty of booking you into a boarding house where you will be, as it were, under supervision and well looked after.' But on my right side my two friends, Georg and Pieter, were whispering about some digs they had found for me, 'right close to where we are. You'll be your own boss there, independent, unsupervised, and live the way it suits the three of us!' My good angel on one side – two tempters on the other! In the end I accepted that it would be best for me to stay in the respectable boarding house, at least at first.[18]

She found the work difficult, especially physics and chemistry. But she thoroughly enjoyed her two years in Freiburg:

> My days were brimful of amusing little events … The students, all younger than me, could not keep their eyes off me, even during lectures. They had no idea that I was already 28; they thought I was very attractive and were keen to get to know me.[19]

She got a bicycle and was nicknamed '*Die Strampel-Olga'* (Trampling-Olga). If she entered the lecture theatre wearing a new blouse, they would stamp their feet enthusiastically. 'The professors all fussed over me as if I was a dainty little creature. ... They would ask me solicitously: "Are you keeping up all right?"'[20]

She passed her exams after two years and moved to Breslau (now Wroclaw) to complete her studies. That was a mixed experience. The professors, especially Mickulicz, the famous surgeon, were encouraging, even solicitous. She felt it was because they had never come across an academic woman before. But mathematics was difficult. The problem: 'How much of the actual substance will a patient receive from an injection of a 3.5 per cent solution?' baffled her. She remembered: 'While most of the others quickly wrote down the answer, I had to brood long and deep and cover reams of paper to work it out. ... In fact, my thought processes were often different from other students.'[21] She quoted another example: when she could not make sense of a section of an embryo she was studying in a microscope, a young fellow student jumped up, crouched down, poked his head between his legs in a foetal position and showed her how the section had been cut. His name was Hugo Hempel and she later married him.

However, she recorded:

> Some of the assistants were opposed to women studying. They argued that if a woman wanted to study like men then she should not expect to be treated like a lady; in fact they treated me as coarsely as possible, taking delight in allocating patients to me whose ailments were located in parts which I would find really embarrassing. One day I was assigned a patient with a diseased penis. I was in despair, and gave Mickulicz, the wonderful surgeon, a despairing glance as I walked past him. He quickly grasped the situation and yelled at the malicious assistant: 'Dr X! Miss Fajans will have this patient!' – a case of breast cancer.[22]

On another occasion,

> On the delivery ward, each student was allocated a pregnant woman. ... Many of the women were 'house pregnancies' – wretched women and girls, often unmarried, who did domestic work and made themselves available for examination by the students, often for months, in exchange for free confinements. I was deeply affected by the groans and screams of the women giving birth. But one very tall student was inspired to imitation. He lay on a bed, and, merrily assisted by the nurse on duty, and to the great mirth of the other students, he mimed a birth.[23]

She also worked at a small hospital as assistant to a young doctor, Dr Tietze. She described her time there as an apprenticeship; she gained practical experience in many medical procedures under his command, which enabled her to perform operations years later as a country doctor without a qualm.

Her married life began in Munich, where Hugo started specialist ear, nose and throat training; she worked in a children's hospital, where her immediate superior was a Dr Hutzler, whom she described as a sadist, and probably later, a Nazi.

> The little patients were terrified of him – and that seemed to please him. One small boy had had a tumour removed from his chest and was now given a new dressing almost every day. ... He started screaming as soon as he saw Hutzler ... He was one of a number of doctors I got to know who could and probably did later support the Nazis in their ghastly experiments.[24]

She soon had two daughters, and some time later a son, while Hugo had a very successful ear-nose-throat clinic in Berlin. For some time, she was able to continue research and worked in a children's outpatients clinic. After some years, they were able to buy a holiday home with a smallholding in Ferch, a village on a lake near Berlin, where they spent all their weekends and holidays; here

she used her medical skills to help the peasant families. Her descriptions of some of the treatments and operations she performed are heart-stopping, but characteristically she asserts that they were all successful.

> My main speciality was 'minor surgery'... without any anaesthetic. ... After the first vigorous cut the patient fainted because of the pain and keeled over on the couch. While he was unconscious I continued operating, bandaged him, and finally brought him round with cognac or rum ... However this method of anaesthetising by pain does not work with women: they just scream and scream.[25]

But Hugo's experiences as a doctor on the Western Front left him practically deranged. Life was unbearable with him, so in 1919 she left him and took the three children with her to Freiburg, where she had been so happy as a student. She earned a precarious living taking on any work that was available, finally working in a pharmaceutical company as the children grew up and left home. As it happened, Germany's defeat later led him to embrace Nazi doctrines. Olga was of Jewish descent. True to her self-confident nature, she treated the rise of Nazism with amused contempt and was not afraid for herself; but she did leave Germany for good in 1938.

Pioneering women

What about other women students in Freiburg? One of the first *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) for girls was started in Karlsruhe, the capital of Baden. In 1899, it had produced the first women with a regular *Abitur*. The wife of Freiburg's vice principal, Adelheid Steinmann, was the leading light of the Freiburg branch of Helene Lange's *Verein Frauenbildung-Frauenstudium* (Society for Women's Education and Study). She encouraged the Karlsruhe girls to apply to Freiburg University. One of them, Johanna Kappes, did so, in November 1899, and in due course, after some debate, was accepted. Then the Ministry in Karlsruhe, the capital of Baden, decreed in December 1899 that both the universities in the Grand Duchy – Freiburg and Heidelberg – should henceforth accept women students. Now the university authorities invited them to apply, and five were duly accepted (*immatrikuliert*). These five were the first officially accepted women students in Germany. The Grand Duchy of Baden was then the most progressive *Land* (state) in Germany in this respect.[26]

In the early years of the twentieth century, more women started attending university, including Freiburg. In 1906 the 2,350 students included just 58 women; by 1911, this had risen to 149 women among 3,000. Some were fairly young girls whose parents paid for them and were most concerned that their accommodation, etc. should be respectable, as Professor Keibel had been for Olga. The University did not provide accommodation, but there were numerous long established houses offering rooms and some meals to students. The University had no refectory; most male students belonged to one or other of the clubs in the town that provided meals, etc., but they did not accept women. In 1906, a Women's Club was founded to provide recreation and meals. Some of the women students were older and had been teachers. Now that universities were accessible, they hoped to improve their careers and started studying side by side with much younger women and men. Some of these mature students, whose parents were not paying for them, supported themselves by coaching children, and there were some grants and scholarships available.

One of the recipients of a grant was Mathilde Spiess. Like so many women of her generation who were not allowed to take the *Abitur*, she had made the most of such educational opportunities as were open to her: girls' high school and teaching seminary. Then, in 1901, when it was at last possible, she started studying medicine in Freiburg. Her fees were covered by a grant from the *Verein zur Vergabe zinsfreier Darlehen* (Society for allocating interest-free loans), which was founded in Berlin in 1900, closely linked to the ADF, the women's movement; but she still had to give private lessons for her living expenses. She became famous, or infamous, in later life as the wife of General Erich Ludendorff, whom she married in 1926; she would write anti-Semitic, rabble-rousing pamphlets for the Nazis.

These early women students were not always, it seems, treated with the same affection and solicitude as Olga. They were identified with the women's movement generally. Instead of corsets, which were normally worn by women under their long, elaborate gowns, and which Abrams suggests may have been responsible for women's ill health and fainting fits, they wore '*Reform-Unterkleidung'* (reform underwear) specially designed to be comfortable, healthy, and decent.[27] They were derided for cutting their hair short, striding along on flat-heeled shoes, carrying books not handbags, wearing simple caps rather than the fashionable cartwheel hats, and generally being unfeminine. Scherb also describes a branch of the 'League against Women's Emancipation' in Freiburg, which campaigned against women's studies. Among its most vociferous supporters were Karl Ludwig Schemann, an outspoken anti-semite, and his wife Bertha. She was probably the author of an article in the local Freiburg newspaper in August 1912, which argued that the only possible result of women studying would be to rob men of their jobs as doctors, lawyers, teachers – 'stealing men's bread'. Women would only find true fulfilment as housewives and 'understanding supporters' of men, not competing with them in 'intelligence and professional salaries'.[28]

One of the early women students, Amanda Gruner, was urged by her father to study medicine. In a memoir she wrote for her grandchildren later, she recalled: 'I attended lectures, studied anatomy, suffered unspeakably as my feminine susceptibilities were offended, ... in a word, I was very unhappy. ... But then I met your grandfather. ... He encouraged me in my dislike of the course as it ran counter to his ideal of womanhood.'[29] So she withdrew from the University, much to her father's distress: he was a strong believer in higher education for women. A medical student,

Karen Danielsen, wrote in her diary: 'I will never forget these my first days here, days of desperate loneliness, full of the miserable feeling of abandonment.'[30] But after some months, she made friends and experienced a 'deep, pure happiness' in her studies. Elly Knapp, who was studying economics, felt a similar delight: 'I'm standing in the sun and feeling my wings growing' – words Ute Scherb chose for the title of her book, as they express the sense of liberation women experienced when at last the male bastion of the universities was broken into and they could use their intellects.[31] Her later career contrasted with that of Mathilde Spiess: Elly Knapp was active in liberal and feminist politics and married Theodor Heuss, the progressive liberal who later became the first President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

What became of the other pioneer women students at Freiburg? Many, especially those that had belonged to the *Freiburger Studentinnenverein*, the women students' union, were active in the Women's Movement. Several contributed to the feminist periodical *Die Frau* (Woman), for instance the historian Lina Kulenkampff and the doctors Else Liefmann, Marie Bieber and Martha Ulrich. Paula Schlodtmann (Philology) was a leading light in the *Verein Frauenbildung-Frauenstudium* (Union for women's school and university education). Johanna Kohlund campaigned for women's rights and joined the *Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DPP)* (German Democratic Party); in 1933 the Nazis subjected her to *Berufsverbot* – exclusion from the professions – for her political activities. She was not, like most people who were so treated, Jewish. She stayed in Germany and was politically active until her death in 1968. Gerta von Ubisch was also an active member of the DPP. Käthe Frankenthal completed her studies in Freiburg in 1914 and joined the Social Democratic Party (SDP), switching later to the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP) and becoming a member of parliament until 1933, when the Nazis expelled her for being not only a socialist, but also a Jew. She moved to the USA. We have already noted the contrasting careers of two: Mathilde Spiess who married Ludendorff and was a committed Nazi, while Elly Knapp was an active feminist and wife of Theodor Heuss, the liberal democrat who became the first President of the German Federal Republic (West Germany). Three of the five women listed as the first women in Freiburg, who all studied medicine – Maria Gleiss, Käthe Kehr and Margarethe Breymann – remained single and set up and ran medical practices; Elisabeth Föllinger married but practised independently, while Johanna Kappes shared a practice with her doctor husband, Heinrich Worminghaus.

At first, the outbreak of World War One was greeted with great patriotic fervour by the female students in Freiburg, as by so many. On the title page of the *Academic Journal* for the Winter semester 1914/15, it said: 'Now greatness, heroism, action has become the thrilling, liberating content of our days. Germans today are once again the equals of our iron compatriots of yore.' The women were on the 'Home Front', serving the Fatherland. Many gave up their studies to train for nursing in military hospitals. Some managed to combine nursing with continuing studies, but at least one felt that her subject – fine art – was sacrilegious when her fellow students were being killed at the front. So she switched to a useful, practical subject: economics. Many women students worked in the munitions factories. Yet, with so many male students away in the war, many disabled or killed, the numerical balance started to tip away from the overwhelming male majority. Numbers were down, of course: there were only five or six hundred students – but a quarter or even more of them were women. Some even gained positions as assistant lecturers. This shocked anti-feminists like Hindenburg. They were accused of taking advantage of the men's sacrifices in the field – so they were as bad as war profiteers. Hindenburg went so far as to urge that the universities should be closed for the duration of the war: there was no point keeping them open for women, since the scientific gain would be slight, family life would suffer and it was grossly unfair that a young man who was giving his all for the fatherland should be forced into the background by women. They should be working in the factories, replacing the men in industry who were being taken out to fight.[32]

The end of the war brought little relief. Abrams describes how women suffered during and after the war, especially in Germany, where hunger caused by the blockade, and the deep depression caused by the defeat and the harsh terms of the Versailles treaty, exacerbated the fear and grief felt in all the warring countries. And yet, the fourteen years of the Weimar Republic, from 1919, saw some splendid cultural achievements, though the famine continued after the armistice, and political passions often took the form of street battles and physical violence, while economic chaos culminated in the hyperinflation of 1923. Many men had been killed or disabled in the war; many families had lost fathers, husbands, sons. Now, with the shortage of men meaning that many women would not get married, the demand for professional qualifications for women leading to worthwhile careers grew stronger. Also, many men wanted their wives and daughters to be treated by women doctors, not men, for reasons of delicacy – especially gynaecologically – so there was a real demand for women to study medicine. But soldiers returning to civilian life were often hostile to women students, as Hindenburg had suggested.

Some women became engaged in an extension to the struggle to gain admittance to universities as students: they wanted to get appointments as lecturers, as professors. This outraged men. The philosopher Professor Martin Heidegger for instance proclaimed in 1927: 'Women pursuing an academic career are bound to be dilettantes. A professorship is not a woman's thing.'[33] In fact the first woman to become a professor in Freiburg was the dermatologist Berta Ottenstein, in 1931. But not for long. She was Jewish. In 1933 she was dismissed, like so many. So the struggle for German women to achieve equality with men in education suffered repeated setbacks, in the First World War, and again under the Nazis. Not only Jews suffered. Laws were passed almost as soon as Hitler got into power in 1933 to encourage women to be healthy, marry young, and have many children, rather than successful careers. The mounting horrors of the Second World War and its aftermath, the division of Germany, made simple survival their chief concern.

Nothing daunted, some women continued to fight for the right to use their brains – a fight that continues to this day. Nowadays in the Federal Republic almost half the university students are women. The *Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz* (General Academic Conference) in Bonn reported that in 2007, the new intake of students totalled 361,360, of whom 190,001 were women, i.e. about half. But academic careers are still unevenly distributed. In the same year, of the 23,843 doctorates awarded, only 10,068 went to women, i.e. 42.2 per cent. As for actual professors, there were 38,020 in the country, of whom 6,173 were women, 16.2 per cent.[34] Not a very good ratio, perhaps. But on the other hand, Germany now has a woman chancellor. Angela Merkel got her doctorate for a thesis on quantum chemistry at Leipzig University in 1978. She is one of the many high-powered career women who have benefited from the struggles of the late nineteenth century.

Notes

1. *Chambers Encyclopaedia*, 1899, Volume X, p. 399.
2. Deborah Simonton, *Women in European Culture and Society: Gender, Skill and Identity* (London, forthcoming 2010).
3. Helen M. Pycior, 'Marie Curie's "Anti-natural path"', in *Uneasy careers and Intimate Lives, Women in Science 1789 – 1979*, ed. Pnina G. Abir-Am and Dorinda Outram (New Brunswick NJ, 1987), 191-214. On the Sorbonne, see Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarred, *A "Belle Epoque"?: women in French society and culture, 1890-1914* (London: Berghahn, 2006), p.309.
4. *Wider das verkochte und verbügelte Leben. Frauen-Emanzipation in Stuttgart seit 1800. (*Against life cooked and ironed away: Women's Emancipation in Stuttgart since 1800*) (*Silberburg-Verlag Tübingen, 1998), 184) . All German quotations translated by the author.
5. Ute Scherb, *Ich stehe in der Sonne und fühle, wie meine Flügel wachsen. Studentinnen und Wissenschaftlerinnen an der Freiburger Universität von 1900 bis in die Gegenwart.* (I'm standing in the sun and feeling my wings growing. Women Students and Scientists in the University of Freiburg from 1900 to the present.) (Königstein/Taunus, 2002), 26-7.
6. Lynn Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman* (London, 2002), 278-9.
7. Patricia M. Mazon, *Gender and the Modern Research University. The Admission of Women to German Higher Education, 1865 – 1914* (Stanford CA, 2003).
8. *Archiv des Instituts für die Geschichte der Medizin, Humboldt Universität, Berlin.*
9. Both books – *Olga Hempel* in German and *Oma, Mu and Me* in English, are obtainable from Irene Gill, 38 Yarnells Hill, Oxford, OX2 9BE. Each costs £14 incl. p&p in Britain.
10. James C. Albisetti, in 'Women and the Professions in Imperial Germany', In *German Women in the 18th and 19th centuries*, ed. Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes (Bloomington, 1986), 96.
11. Simonton, *Women in European Culture*.
12. Albisetti, 'Women and the Professions in Imperial Germany', 96-7.
13. Gill, *Oma, Mu and Me,* 34.
14. Mazon, *Gender and the Modern Research University,* 76.
15. Susan Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour in the 19th Century* (London, 2010).
16. Scherb, *Ich stehe in der Sonne*.
17. *Ibid*., p.33
18. Gill, *Oma, Mu and Me,* 37.
19. *Ibid*., 38.
20. *Ibid*., 39.
21. *Ibid*., 40.
22. *Ibid*., 31.
23. *Ibid*., 43.
24. *Ibid*. p. 47.
25. *Ibid*. p.71.
26. This section relies heavily on Scherb, *Ich stehe in der Sonne.*
27. Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman,* 25; Scherb, *Ich stehe in der Sonne,* 58-9.
28. *Ibid*. 61-2.
29. *Ibid*., 76.
30. *Ibid*. p.69.
31. *Ibid*., 74
32. *Ibid*., 95.
33. *Ibid*., 130.
34. *Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (GWK): Chancengleichheit in Wissenschaft und Forschung, Heft 10.*

Olga Ernst: Australian Fairytale Pioneer

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> 'AUSTRALIA! Hast thou no enchanted castles within thy vast domain?'[1]
> Atha Westbury

With only imported fairy/folk tales available to Australian children in the late nineteenth century, a handful of authors took up Atha Westbury's challenge to create an authentic Australian fantasy. While traditional magical creatures formed the basis of their stories, it was common to find current national and local events included. These fairylands mirrored the cultural beliefs of the era unconsciously commenting on gender, race and power. Common themes of identity, alienation in a strange world and relationship with place were explored under a layer of fantasy. Maurice Saxby suggests that, as a way to document social change, children's literature is a 'fertile ground for researchers'.[2]

Today, Australian children's literature reflects the cultural diversity of contemporary society, but in Westbury's era, English literary traditions shaped the production and content of most children's books. Little research has been undertaken on writers from minority groups, who, nurtured with their own cultural literature, offered a different perspective on social mores. Theirs was a different voice for children to hear.

Olga Dorothea Agnes Ernst, the Australian-born daughter of a naturalised German emigrant, wrote her first book, *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle,* in 1904. Ernst, who was sixteen, had just graduated from pupil-teacher school. Her book, beautifully illustrated with fine line drawings by Dorothy Ashley, was one of the first Australian fairytales to be published in Australia by a young woman. *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* was part of a new development in children's literature that leaned towards the creation of an Australian bush fantasy genre. Ernst transposed fairy folk emanating from the rich German literature of her childhood and wove them into magical stories set in the Australian bush. In her fairy stories old-world creatures such as river nixies, witches and wizards mingle with authentic Australian bunyips. Mermaids swim in the Yarra River, winding through Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria, while giants stomp through the Victorian Alps seemingly unfazed by the change of environment from lush verdant green to the harsh greeny-yellows of the bush.

While the Australian publishing industry was in its infancy, most books read by young Australian readers came from England.[3] Even books written in Australia were published overseas, and British fiction continued to overpower what was being produced in the colonies into the 1890s.[4] Numerous British- and Australian-born women wrote diaries, novels and travel books for the overseas market with a growing audience, and a small group of Australian writers realised the importance of setting narrative firmly in distinctly recognisable localities for Australian children.[5] The Australian bush fantasy genre developed from a desire to bring the comfortable and familiar into the new and distinctly non-European landscape. Both emigrants and the Australian-born children of emigrants yearned for a unique Australian identity.[6] Experimentation with the blending of old and new by authors such as Ernst created a pathway for later writers such as May Gibbs to invent magically original beings like Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, two delightful gumnut babies whose adventures continue to delight children today.[7] Painstaking research has enabled the works of early Australian children's authors to be catalogued and reviewed. However, what has been written about Ernst is limited to an occasional paragraph or a couple of lines.[8]

Quite by chance

I discovered Ernst when I was researching early Australian children's literature. One autumn day, as the leaves changed colour in the crisp mountain air, I stood in the photocopy room at Mount Dandenong Primary School armed with a list of names of early Australian writers bemoaning the difficulty in finding resources. Helen Dixon, our elderly Christian Religious Education teacher, peered at my page and commented delightedly, 'My mother wrote that book.' Later, Helen proudly showed me her own copy of *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* and newspaper clippings. These conversations formed the basis of an assignment submitted towards a Bachelor of Education course. Although I finished my degree, a sense that Ernst had been excluded, as have many of our early women writers, from a rightful place on the Australian children's literature timeline lingered.

The unexpected opportunity to access Ernst's personal papers has enabled a more thorough exploration of her contribution to children's literature through her intersecting careers of teaching and writing. Research in the initial stages has been based on interviews with family members Helen Dixon and Margaret Ford, research at the Australian and Melbourne Lutheran Archives and microfiche investigation at State Libraries at Melbourne and Adelaide. Meetings with local historians in the country towns in which Ernst lived and taught have also been fruitful. The oral recollection by Lila Neilson, in the *Orbost High School Centenary Edition*, illuminates Ernst's passion

Olga Dorothea Agnes Ernst

for education and perhaps reflects on her understanding of the impact of poverty on education: 'I remember Miss H and Miss Ernst, who bought us all a copy of "McInnes History of the World" when she needed shoes.'[9]

The discovery of materials related to Ernst in many instances has been remarkable: Brighton Historical Society's only copies of the *Brighton Times* cover the years she was most active in the Junior Red Cross; a box containing over one hundred items relating to her second and third books was discovered in her son-in-law's office; and at Croydon Primary School, the only references and reports kept of any pupil or teacher are those of Ernst. Some of her sister Elsa's letters are archived in the Schlesinger Library, Harvard University. My initial research centres on her writing during the time she was a pupil-teacher, her representations of the natural landscape as a medium for fairyland, and the influence of her teaching and German backgrounds on her writing.

A fairytale pioneer

Olga Dorothea Agnes Ernst was born into the rich cultural world of the Melbourne German Lutheran community in 1888. Her father Julius Theodor Ernst, a former chemist in the Reserve Prussian Army, married Johanna Olga Straubel three years after he arrived in the colony of Victoria, meeting at one of the many social events held by the German community.

At the time of Ernst's birth there were a number of secular newspapers and journals published in the German language and it was possible to shop in the central business district of Melbourne speaking only in German. About two per cent of the population at that time in Melbourne was German and, like Ernst, the Australian-born descendants of these German emigrants saw themselves as Australian first, though they still continued to align with Germany culturally.[10] Many of those who arrived in the colony were highly educated and, although some had emigrated from Germany to escape persecution intending to return, many came searching for gold, to participate in International Exhibitions or to follow family members in 'chain' migration. It could be argued that the cultural wealth contributed by their achievements in science, art and exploration in the colony of Victoria was considerable. As explorers, artists, writers, poets and men of science, they laid the foundations for many of Melbourne's institutions: the Observatory, the Botanical Gardens, the Zoological Gardens, and the Royal Society of Victoria. Several of these men were personal friends of Bernhard Straubel, Ernst's grandfather, including Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Victoria's first Government Botanist, Hermann Püttmann, writer and publisher, and Consul Wilhelm Alexander Brahe.

Ernst, despite her gender and age, was not afraid to use these connections, sending her manuscript to Herr Püttmann who published it. Von Mueller, who encouraged many amateur female botanists to correspond with him called Johanna Straubel (Ernst's mother) his 'little botanist', so it is hardly surprising that Ernst's knowledge of botany is accurate and extensive.[11]

Ernst's descendants recall with pride being part of a long lineage of educators and authors that can be traced from the 1800s to the present. Her German ancestors were pastors and teachers, the '*literati*', the educated bourgeoisie of Germany. Marianne Heyne, her great-grandmother, was brought up in the cultured world of stepmother Charlotte Greeve, mingling with artists, writers and men of science. After her husband Carl Heyne died, Marianne was given permission to begin the first school for highly cultured ladies in Friedrichstadt.[12] Marianne also wrote a shipboard diary as she journeyed from Hamburg to Hobson's Bay[13] at the age of sixty-five.[14] Marianne's son, Ernst (E.B) Heyne, teacher and botanist wrote and published many of the first Australian books for gardeners.[15]

Ernst's earliest memory was of large bottles of coloured liquid in her father's chemist shop in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy and of 'seeing the sky touch the ground' at Royal Park, an area of approximately 170 hectares reserved as parkland near the city centre, about 3.5 kilometres from her home.[16] This was the first time Ernst had seen a horizon. She was five years old and her awe became an oft-recounted 'family story'. Ernst had grown up surrounded by buildings and perhaps her fascination with the open spaces of the bush began here. Unfortunately this idyllic life was to cease when her father died suddenly and tragically after the financial crisis of 1893. Before her marriage Johanna Ernst had taught for several years but on her return to the Victorian Department of Education she was relegated to the lowest salary class. Her request

to be sent to the inner suburbs of Melbourne where she had family support was ignored and she was sent to Wandiligong, a small Alpine town, three hundred and thirty three kilometres from Melbourne.

The community at Wandiligong supported the young widow with produce and kindness as existing on first year teacher's wage with three young children was hard. Sometimes, Helen Dixon, Ernst's daughter, recalled 'there was just one egg for dinner between four of them'.[17] Ernst writes in her *Familie-Die* indignantly, 'So she began again at 80 pound per annum, not less than half the old-age pension and with three youngsters to keep.'[18]

As Melbourne did not have a secondary school until 1905, Ernst went to South Australia to live with her older cousins, Ida and Laura Heyne, both teachers at the Advanced School for Girls, in order to complete her education. The Advanced School was one of the first girls-only schools to inspire and prepare girls for a serious academic education.[19] Ernst obtained her pupil teachership and returned to Melbourne. She later attended Melbourne Teachers College and completed Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees while teaching. The Heyne women achieved considerable academic success, in an era where there were few women graduates, providing strong role models for Ernst. Although there is no reliable evidence to suggest this, as managers of the Lutheran Bookshop in Adelaide, they may have encouraged Ernst to publish her stories.[20]

Returning to Melbourne, Ernst embarked on her new career as a pupil teacher at Croydon State School (SS) No. 2900 in 1905. Having a monitor with such literary skills would have been a bonus for Croydon SS, which already had a reputation for being one of the foremost schools in Victoria. The Education Department School Inspector Reports give us a picture of her teaching prowess, as well as a reflection of the attitude of male inspectors to women. Women needed to be fair, gentle and industrious, and were often considered poor disciplinarians. Inspector Gamble comments in his report in March 1906 that she has a 'fair natured aptitude for teaching', adding for reasons unknown she 'may become useful to the school'. By November 1906, Ernst is reported as being 'earnest and docile'.[21]

Ernst loved to listen to stories and writes, 'you must just imagine a young brown-eyed twelve year old, sewing on presstuds or buttons or making button holes and listening intently to the old *Familier Planderei* which my mother had heard from their own mother Agnes Straubel'.[22] In addition to developing a love of storytelling engendered by those evening chats, Ernst was sent Grimm's fairytales by her paternal aunts teaching in Hamburg.[23] Creating fairytales was common during this period and as books were often used to provide lessons in history, geography, botany and zoology it is not hard to imagine Ernst being influenced by the books she read. The publisher's note in *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* says, 'These are written in the hope that they will ... win approval of those to whom a loving study of tree and flower, bird and insect, and the association of familiar elements of old world fairy-lore with Australian surroundings.'

At the turn of the century, writing was considered an acceptable way for women to earn money. Helping support her family was cited by Ernst as the reason she published the book. A handwritten note scribbled by Ernst, on the front cover page of the Dixon family copy of the book, next to a newspaper review explains, 'I gave the money (3 guineas) as a gift to my mother, as I had written these stories to help her a little by earning some money to help her in supporting our family.' The catalyst for Ernst's book may have been a combination of all three: an intrinsic need to tell stories, the extrinsic need to teach and financial need.

Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle was one of approximately ten books written between 1870 and 1904 with the intention of creating an Australian fairyland for Australian children.[24] Gumsucker's fairies live in the rundown flower garden of a cottage near the Ballaraat goldfields, while J.R.Lockeyeare's Mr. Bunyip is a kind-hearted chap giving some social and historical pointers to an eager Mary Somerville who has strayed from the path in a 'Red Riding Hood-like' ramble.[25] Charles Marson invents a rather cruel fairy world of goblins and hill trolls and underground caves, while Jessie May Whitfield takes traditional motifs and vaguely disguises characters to place them into the Australian bush.[26] No longer climbing beanstalks, the giants who live in the bush 'walk up the Black Spur on terraces of treeferns as if they were so many mushrooms beneath their feet'.[27] There is a good deal of evidence that the public was delighted with representations of fairies and elves in recognisable Australian settings. Critics noticed and applauded the distinctive Australian flavour. When Whitfield's book, *Spirit of the Bushfire,* was reprinted with some new stories in 1916, a reviewer in *The Argus* wrote,

> She introduced the local fairytale and she found in the Australian environment an atmosphere where elves, hobgoblins, and animals endowed with speech could feel as acceptable to Australian children as did their prototypes in the pages of Grimm and Hans Andersen. There is no being in the whole world so conservative as the average urchin, and that he was willing to divide his allegiance between his former idols and Miss Whitfeld's stories is a striking testimony to the appeal of the latter.[28]

Reviews at the time of publication of *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle*, twelve years earlier, reveal that Ernst's motive in entwining the old and new was recognised, and one reviewer observed that her stories are a 'strange intermingling of the fairy lore which is the heritage of older countries'.[29]

Evidence from contemporary newspaper advertising and critical reviews indicate that *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* was sold in three states: Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales. Ernst used her family connections in this fragmented publishing environment to sell her book.[30] Herr Püttmann was a family acquaintance and printer, E.S.Wigg, a supplier to her cousins' Lutheran Bookshop in Adelaide. However, despite these efforts to

sell the book widely, eighteen months later it was on the 'throw out' table in Cole's Book Arcade. Edward William Cole, who had established a bookstall in Melbourne in 1865 selling new and secondhand books, also bought remainders and sold them cheaply.[31] Cole's had obviously secured a bargain because *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* was advertised in *The Argus* for sale at Mullen's and Cole's for the price of 1/6, a saving of one shilling on the original price of 2/6.[32]

Ernst was not without critics amongst her peers. As it was unusual for a girl to publish at such a young age one critic suspected 'friendly and sympathetic revision by some older hand'. But Ernst scribbled indignantly on the cover of her personal copy of the book, 'No! the MSS (manuscript) was sent to Mr. H. Püttman of McCarron, Bird & Co without my mother's knowledge.'[33]

To balance this criticism there are many contemporary references to Ernst's works that indicate *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle* was well received. A reviewer from *The Argus* (Melbourne) commented,

> From Messrs McCarron and Bird publishers, a dainty little volume of fairy tales has been forwarded to us. The preface says that they are tales told by a child for younger children. The fancies in them are fresh and original, and the young authoress Miss Olga Ernst shows considerable promise. While retaining the old-world form of fairy-tale telling she has grafted in clever and delicate fancies. This is specially the case in the first story, 'The Origin of the Wattle,' 'The Unselfish Mermaid,' and 'What the Jackass Said.' ... The volume is prettily got up, is entitled, 'Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle,' and will make an attractive present for children.[34]

And *The Register* noted:

> This neat and comely Australian book for children is creditable to all concerned for its production ... On the cover it appears slightly fanciful, but ornate and attractive ...
>
> Apart from the fact here and there a childlike expression has crept into the text, it justifies the hope of the publishers.[35]

More recent commentaries on her writing ability and contribution to literature vary. Brenda Niall investigated perceptions of Australian life in children's books and was dismissive of many of the early attempts to create magic in the Australian bush setting. She sees these early fantasies as quite clumsy.[36] Atha Westbury in *Australian Fairytales* is accused of using 'imported literary machinery with local labels', while Niall argues that placing airy Sunradia on a eucalyptus blossom couch is a jarring synthesis of old traditional figures strategically placed to look as they belong in a new world.[37]

An entirely different perspective is presented by Jan Kociumbus. In 1901, Federation, or the joining of the six separate British self-governing colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia into the Commonwealth of Australia, heralded the dawning of nationalistic pride, creating an impetus for writers to nationalise fairy creatures and place them in the bush setting.

Kociumbus names Ernst as one woman to undertake this challenge successfully.[38] Ernst is visionary, seeing the need to link old-world and new bush environment as well as instruct about nature, though she stays within acceptable topic boundaries. Writers such as Louise Atkinson wrote newspaper columns with themes thought acceptable for women readers: amateur botany and excursions, and for a local, rather than British audience.[39] These themes are found in Ernst's fairytales. There is a clear explanation of botany and geology, as well as the attempt to share her fondness for, and pride in, Australia.

Ernst's teaching background is obvious as her fairytales often have a didactic element, providing lessons in natural science and geology for the reader. Many books of this time sought to instruct and teach but Ernst's descriptions of the natural environment move her tales from lecture to enchantment. 'The Fire Elves' begins, 'Among the dry grass and leaves on the great grey mountains of ... the Australian Alps' and draws the reader into the horror of the bushfire as each fire elf 'caught up and hugged the withered leaves and kissed and hugged them until they too became red and glowing'. 'The Origin of the Wattle' seeks, not only as its name suggests, to explain how a doomed race of fairies is transformed into wattle trees but to instruct on the phenomenon of Lake Eyre filling infrequently.[40] 'Once on a time, so scientists tell us, the country around Lake Eyre in the State of South Australia was fruitful and productive' begins her story. Zoological information was often combined with wit in these early tales and a fine example is found in 'What the Jackass Said.' The Jackass (kookaburra) banters with his wife,

> 'What do you think the Sun told me this morning about the fantail-flycatcher? His family weren't always birds', he says. 'No! I suppose not,' said his wife, 'they were eggs once. Ha! Ha! Ha!'[41]

Instruction by Ernst was not always of a scientific nature and often there were moral undertones or religious imagery. In 'Where Do the Pins Go', the sewing pins have to work to deserve rest before they can be assured of a place in pin heaven, while the child who lost them before they can be used is severely admonished. All actions impact on others is the reflection at the end of this tale.[42]

Closer examination shows there are always hints of Ernst's experiences in the texts. It is significant that childhood influences and her everyday life featured strongly in her stories. Helen Dixon fondly remembers the vase featured in the tale 'The Fairy of the Vase' sitting on her mother's mantelpiece,[43] while in 'Adiantina and the Giants' the maidenhair fern (*Adiantum*) that Adiantina is transformed into is a plant that has been a family favourite for generations.[44]

Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle illustrates

Ernst's twin passions of teaching and writing as she deftly combines fact with fiction. With a strong moral thread running through each story, she aims for the reader to be wiser at the end. Correct and useful botanical and geological information is dispensed with instructional zeal. Though the book uses traditional fairytale structure, when coupled with ideas gleaned from Ernst's city and country experiences, the result is an earnest attempt at Australianising the genre.

Despite the success of *Fairytales from the Land of the Wattle*, intriguingly Ernst changed genre in her two further books, choosing to write philosophical essays with a strong mythological base in *The Magic Shadow Show*[45] and poems set to music that explain the origin of the mountains of the Dandenong Ranges in *Songs of the Dandenongs.*[46] She wrote a number of articles for newspapers,[47] entered story and song writing competitions and edited a number of catalogues of aboriginal legends to complement the artworks of local potter William Ricketts.[48]

Unfortunately, her sporadic output and her choice to write short stories, essays and poems at a time when the reading public perceived authors of these genres as minor writers was not conducive to the establishment of a readership.[49] Her versatility in being able to switch between fairytale, philosophy, song and, later, article-writing meant that she did not benefit from a consistent audience eager for more of the same type of book at regular intervals, as did other Australian writers like Ethel Turner who produced the classic *Seven Little Australians* (1894).[50]

It is disappointing that many early Australian women writers, whether they sold well or not, have been consigned to a footnote in our history for a plethora of reasons. Without serious scholarship we lose the opportunity to place them within the Australian literary timeline so that a balanced appraisal of our children's literature can be completed. Ernst gives us a clue as to how she sees herself in 'The Tragedy of Little Natures' as she finishes her essay with an aside to the reader, 'However, let us be thankful for the sake of quiet people like myself, that all are not "great souls".' [51]

Despite her self-effacing comment, Olga Dorothea Agnes Ernst is a great soul. Her legacy to children's literature and women's history is that she imagined an Australian fairyland and in doing so created a stepping-stone for other Australian writers to morph traditional fairies into Australian magical beings. She enabled children to feel the excitement of finding fairies down a familiar bush track rather than in a cultured English garden or down a cobbled street.

Notes

1. Atha Westbury, *Australian Fairy Tales* (London: Ward, Lock, 1897), 21.
2. Maurice Saxby, 'Researching Australian children's literature', in *The Australian Library Journal,* Vol. 53, No.1 (February 2004).
3. Robin Pope, 'Captivating Narratives: Reeling in the Nineteenth Century Child Reader', *The Latrobe Journal*, *60*, (Spring 1997), 135-147.
4. Rosemary Wighton, *Early Australian Children's Literature* (Melbourne: 1963); John Foster, Ern Ennis and Maureen Nimon, *Bush, City, Cyberspace: The Development of Australian Children's Literature into the Twenty-first Century* (Wagga Wagga: 1995), 25.
5. Ann Standish, *Australia through Women's Eyes* (North Melbourne: 2008), 1-3.
6. Shirley Walker, 'Perceptions of Australia, 1855-1915', *Australian Literary Studies,* v.13, no.4, (October 1988), 157-173.
7. May Gibbs, *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie: Their Adventures Wonderful* (Sydney: 1918).
8. See for example, H.M. Saxby, *A History of Australian Children's Literature 1841-1941* (Sydney: 1969), 57; Marcie Muir, *A Bibliography of Australian Children's Books* (London: 1970), 281; Brenda Niall and Frances O'Neill, *Australia through the Looking-Glass: Children's Fiction 1830-1980* (Carlton, Vic., Australia: 1987),189-203; Stella Lees and Pam Macintyre, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature* (Melbourne: 1993), 148; H.M. Saxby, *Offered to Children: a History of Australian Children's literature 1841-1941* (Sydney: 1998), 469.
9. Marian Brunt and Heather Macalister, eds., *Orbost High 2744 School Centenary—A Souvenir Record of Some Aspects of a Century 1886-1986* (Orbost High School, 1986), 40.
10. Leslie Bodi and Stephen Jeffries, *The German Connection: Sesquicentenary Essays on German-Victorian Crosscurrents, 1835-1985* (Clayton, Vic., Australia: 1985)
11. Standish, *Australia through Women's Eyes*, 109.
12. *Concession Permit for Marianne Heyne to Begin a School, Dresden 27 Juni 1828* (Family papers, Margaret Ford, 2009)
13. Boats would safely anchor in Hobson's Bay (Port Phillip Bay) and unload into rowboats, lighters and steamers to transfer goods and people up the Yarra River to the city of Melbourne. A reef of rocks at the mouth of the Yarra River prevented large ships from entering the river.
14. Lutheran Archives, Adelaide, MS Shipboard Diary: Hamburg to Hobson's Bay*,* Marianne Heyne, n. pl., 1854. Translated M. Prenzier, 2009.
15. E.B.Heyne arrived in Melbourne, Australia. In 1854 he was employed as Chief Plantsman in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Moving interstate to South Australia he established a nursery, still in family hands today. His books include: *The Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Garden* (1871), which was enlarged as *The Amateur Gardener* (1881).
16. Interview with Helen Dixon, Mount Dandenong, February 2009.
17. *Ibid*., April 2009.
18. Olga Waller, Familier-Planderei, (n. pl., 1946), 1-22 (copy of handwritten original, Margaret Ford).
19. Alison MacKinnon, 'The Advanced School for Girls (1879-1908): a Case Study in the History of Women's Education', *Women and Labour Conference*, Papers, no.2, 1980), 619-629.
20. There is evidence that the publisher E.S.Wigg, who was the agent for Ernst's book in Adelaide, was the only publisher who sold to the Heyne Bookshop.

21. Public Records Office, Victoria (hereafter known as PROV) PRO VPRS 13719 (1879,1915). *Teacher Record Books 1863-1959*. Teaching Record 15493.
22. Waller, Familier-Planderei, 2.
23. A collection of German origin fairytales first published in 1812 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, known today as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*.
24. It may be fair to suggest that there were more books published than have been rescued and archived in our state and national libraries but the nature of the publishing industry at the time may mean that some with small print runs or localised distribution have disappeared entirely. In many cases there is only one copy of the book in existence.
25. Sarah Anne Charlotte Roland used the pseudonym Gumsucker. The term 'gumsucker' was a colloquialism for a resident of the colony of Victoria. Gumsucker, *Rosalie's Reward or, The Fairy Treasure* (Ballarat, Vic., Australia: 1870). J. R. Lockeyear, *'Mr. Bunyip', or,* Mary Somerville's *Ramble: an Australian Story for Children* (Melbourne: 1871).
26. Charles L. Marson, *Faery Stories* (Adelaide: Petherick, 1891).
27. Jessie May Whitfield, *The Spirit of the Bushfire and Other Australian Fairytales* (Sydney: 1898).
28. Lee and Co, 'The Australian Fairytale', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (1 April, 1916), 8.
29. 'Not Half Bad', in *Chemist and Druggist* (unknown, 1 December 1904), clipping pasted in Ernst's copy of *Fairytales of the Land of the Wattle.*
30. 'Publications Received', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, Fairfax, 15 October 1904), 5. Retrieved from **nla.gov.au/nla.news-article14627814**
31. Marcie Muir, 'The Growth of Australian Children's Book Publishing 1890-1940'. Paper presented at the Se*cond History of the Book in Australia (HOBA) Conference*, (Sydney, 1996).
32. 'New Books and Publications', *The Argus* (Melbourne, 25 September, 1906), 3. Retrieved from **newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/9655544**
33. 'Not Half Bad'.
34. Book Review, *The Argus* (Melbourne), 4 October 1904, 4. Retrieved from **newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/10343571**.
35. *The Register* (Adelaide), 22 October 1904, 9.
36. Niall and O'Neill, *Australia through the Looking-Glass,* 191.
37. *Ibid*.
38. Jan Kociumbas, *Australian Childhood: A History* (St Leonards: 1997), 97.
39. Standish, *Australia through Women's Eyes*, 90-94.
40. Lake Eyre fills or nearly fills about four times a century.
41. Olga Ernst, *The Magic Shadow Show* (Melbourne: 1913), 57-59.
42. *Ibid*., 61-66.
43. It belonged to Helen's grandmother. It may have been a wedding present. Unfortunately, Helen doesn't know what happened to it and assumes it must have been broken.
44. Ernst, *Magic Shadow Show*, 81-88.
45. *Ibid*.
46. O. D.A. Waller and J.M Fraser, *Songs from the Dandenongs: Mountain Nursery Rhymes Set to Music for the Young of All Ages* (Melbourne, 1939). **nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn166241**
47. O.Weller (*sic*), 'Nursery Rhymes of the Dandenongs', Literary Section, *The Age* (Melbourne, 16 April 1938), 3.
48. William Ricketts and O.D.A. Walker (*sic*), *Exhibition of Clay Sculptures on Australian Aboriginal Folklore* (Brighton, Vic., Australia: 1950).
49. H. McClave, *Women Writers of the Short Story: a Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: 1980).
50. Brenda Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs: The World of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce* (Melbourne: 1979)
51. Ernst, *Magic Shadow Show*, 19.

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Carol Adams Prize Winning Essay

How far would you agree that the significance of the WSPU's contribution to the achievement of women's political rights has been exaggerated?

Natalie Drew
Harrogate Grammar School

Achieving the right to vote was undoubtedly an epochal moment for British women; the ongoing political struggle was finally resolved, the fundamental aim achieved and the last intolerable grievance to be addressed, determined. The significance of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) within the movement cannot be denied; their tactics of violence were a contrast to the peaceful persuasion of the National Unions of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Whether they are significant as a single entity, or in addition to the political movement as a whole, they have, without doubt, remained the face of the women's suffrage movement. As Janet Copeland states 'whoever thinks of the women's suffrage movement thinks of the suffragettes'.[1] Interpretations of the significance of the WSPU have however changed considerably; revisionist historian Martin Pugh claims that 'by 1912 WSPU was in decline, becoming isolated politically and from the rest of the movement'[2], ultimately denying the significance of the WSPU. However, in contrast, new feminist historian Paula Bartley emphasises the achievements of all those involved in the suffrage campaigns, portraying the struggle to vote as part of a broader struggle in which conventional views about the role of women were challenged and overturned, and new feminised approaches to politics were developed. This study will examine the significance of the WSPU, focusing on a variety of contrasting views, with an ultimate aim of putting the campaign into a truer perspective to ascertain whether its significance has been exaggerated.

In considering the true significance of the WSPU, it is necessary to first examine the significance of the Pankhursts, especially the role of Emmeline. Emmeline Pankhurst is considered by many to be the quintessential symbol of the suffragette movement, 'there has been no other woman like Emmeline Pankhurst' reminisced Rebecca West in 1933.[3] Emmeline Pankhurst founded the WSPU as a women-only organisation and under her leadership the spectacular and heroic deeds of the, Daily Mail-termed 'suffragettes', grabbed the public's imagination. The popularisation of such a version of events was captured by Midge Mackenzie's BBC television series, *Shoulder to Shoulder*, watched by millions in 1974. Some twenty-five years later, Emmeline Pankhurst topped the polls amongst *Observer* and *Daily Mirror* readers as the woman of the twentieth century.[4]

However, despite her hold on the popular imagination today, during Emmeline's lifetime she was both loved and reviled by her contemporaries and until recently the majority of historians have presented her in a negative manner, as a result of her demanding and confrontational personality. It appears unanticipated that, at the time, she was depicted as a menace, as portrayed in the cartoon 'The Shrieking Sister'.[5] This interpretation was echoed in *The Suffragette Movement*, written by Emmeline Pankhurst's daughter, Sylvia, in 1931. Sylvia's representation of her mother is as a traitor to the socialist cause, a leader who deliberately encouraged wealthy Conservative women to join the WSPU and who failed to mobilise the working classes and address their economic, social and political needs.[6] This representation of Emmeline Pankhurst was greatly influential at the time and became the accepted account, especially after George Dangerfield adopted this script in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* of 1935. Dangerfield belittled the suffragette movement, labelling it as a 'brutal comedy' and a 'puppet show' where the strings were pulled by Emmeline and Christabel. Both women were seen as opportunists, and as 'infernal queens' who 'dictated every move, and swayed every heart, of a growing army of intoxicated women'.[7] Socialist feminist accounts, written in the 1970s and 1980s, although they do not contain the derisory and sexist language of Dangerfield, nevertheless, usually follow Sylvia Pankhurst's influential interpretation. Thus, for social feminist Sheila Rowbotham, 'Emmeline and Christabel did not think in terms of building a mass organisation or of mobilising women workers to strike, but of making ever more dramatic gestures.'[8]

More recently, the publication of three new biographies where Emmeline figures prominently: Martin Pugh's *The Pankhursts*, and accounts of her life offered by new feminists June Purvis and Paula Bartley, present a contemporary view of the WSPU leader. Indeed, revisionist Pugh presents the familiar story told by Sylvia; thus, Emmeline Pankhurst is portrayed as a misguided and weak leader. However, Pugh is not as disparaging towards Emmeline as Rowbotham and Dangerfield are, and does acknowledge that 'their bravado (Pankhursts) in proposing to succeed where so many better connected and more experienced suffragists had for thirty-six years failed was remarkable'.[9] A recent interpretation of Emmeline Pankhurst is that of new feminists Bartley and Purvis, who offer a positive image of her, as they recognise and support ideas regarding the strengths, perspectives and roles of women. Bartley places great emphasis on the significance of Emmeline: 'Emmeline was an inspirational leader with a keen political instinct for what would work', arguing Emmeline's charisma, personal courage and talent for responding to events quickly, meant

that she was ideal for leadership in this type of struggle.[10] It is clear that although Emmeline Pankhurst has often been depicted negatively, across time, this portrayal of her has developed, and recent new feminist accounts allow for a more positive image to be accepted. Without doubt, for some, Emmeline Pankhurst is the emblem of the suffragette movement and as Paula Bartley argues, a 'courageous and beautiful heroine who overcame the restrictions and prejudices of Edwardian society to herald a new dawn of female equality.'[11]

The role of the WSPU as a movement must also be acknowledged and considered when ascertaining their true significance. The significance of the WSPU cannot be denied; ultimately, militancy attracted publicity as the members were encouraged to 'conduct the biggest publicity campaign ever known and make it more colourful and more commanding of attention than anything had ever seen before'.[12] The defining moment of the militant campaign occurred on 13 October 1905 when Emmeline's daughter Christabel Pankhurst and fellow WSPU member Annie Kenney interrupted a Liberal election meeting. The two women unveiled a banner proclaiming 'Votes for Women' and asked the gathering 'Will the Liberal Government give votes to women?'[13] These measures, while they were far more peaceful than those which define the later years of the organisation, were considered radical at the time and the result, as planned, was a mass of publicity. Although much of the publicity was hostile, feminist Ray Strachey observes how it urged hundreds of people who had never thought about women's suffrage before to consider it and, though the vast amount of them deplored what had been done, this did not make the result any less important. A wonderful new weapon, the weapon of publicity and advertisement, was put in the hands of the Women's Social and Political Union, and the leaders at once saw its value.[14] The integrated and sophisticated nature of the WSPU propaganda campaign was without doubt one of the major elements of the WSPU's movement; the interaction between these two central campaign strands – militancy and propaganda, is arguably where the origins of the campaign's significance lies.

However, as Dr Harold Smith maintains, 'the WSPU's role in enfranchising women is controversial. Although non-historians often assume it was chiefly, if not solely, responsible for obtaining women's suffrage, historians are much more sceptical about its contribution'.[15] Militant tactics provided a backlash against the suffrage campaign and polarised opinion as militancy became the issue and diverted attention away from women's suffrage. Liddington and Norris's revisionist approach echoes this as they claim that militancy carried within itself 'the seeds of its own destruction; each act had to be more militant than the previous one in order to hold public attention; and, while violence attracted public interest, it also forfeited mass support from women who preferred to join the constitutional, democratic NUWSS'.[16]

In view of negative portrayals of the WSPU, it can be argued that the significance of the WSPU's role has been exaggerated; it was, in reality, an autocratic regime, which abandoned the Labour Party and became an elite, predominantly middle-class organisation. The regime of the WSPU is often criticised on the basis of its tyrannical, non democratic structure. This was a criticism made by Ray Strachey in 1928, 'the WSPU adopted a purely autocratic system and entrusted all decisions to their leaders … the others obeyed and enjoyed the surrender of their judgements and the sensation of marching as an army under discipline'.[17] However, more recently attempts have been made by Bartley and Purvis to counter argue this criticism; Paula Bartley points out that there is much evidence of greater democracy in WSPU branches outside London and June Purvis asserts that Emmeline never apologised for setting up an autocratic structure, because, as far as she was concerned, it was the most effective structure to achieve the organisations goals.

In conclusion, looking back over the 150 years of women's suffrage, the significance of the WSPU in the achievement of the political rights is indisputable; their militancy resulted in change, affecting both membership and views, and their campaign certainly has a particular resonance today. Emmeline Pankhurst, as a figurehead, was unique in her willingness to do whatever was necessary to accomplish her goals, and her leadership inspired and resonated through generations of women to follow. The militancy and propaganda methods of the WSPU stressed the importance of publicity within the suffrage movement; as a result, the whole country knew of the horrors that were being inflicted on the suffragettes in London, where the effort was centralised, and 'public opinion was undoubtedly beginning to assert itself on the side of the women'.[18] The WSPU irrefutably ensured that suffrage became a national issue, as by the end of February 1909, WSPU had tripled its income in comparison with the previous year, and support grew even more between 1910 and 1912. Further, the growth in support of the WSPU was accompanied by a significant growth in support of the NUWSS, as Pugh argues 'from 1909 onwards, militancy appears to have had an important effect on the membership of the NUWSS which rose from 12,000 to over 50,000'.[19] This shows that no matter the opinion of the militant methods, they certainly had the effect of rousing the whole country to a passionate and most controversial discussion of every aspect of all the equality demands and of women's status in the community.

However, it is extremely complex to determine whether the enfranchisement of women was ultimately a response to the militancy of the WSPU and to what extent, if any, their significance has been exaggerated. June Purvis and Maroula Joannou state that the picture of the women's suffrage movement which emerges from their studies 'is hardly recognisable as the picture with which historians were familiar twenty years ago',[20] which is true when comparing the contemporary significance presented with the historical derogatory terms aimed at the campaign, from the newspapers and influential writers at the time. This statement, when considered with Christabel Pankhurst's claim that 'no men, even the best of men, ever view the Suffrage question from quite the same standpoint as women themselves', in 1913, without a doubt highlights the ever changing and contrasting views of the WSPU and the difficulty of a discernible conclusion

when studying the true significance.[21] However, recent analogies made by academic Christopher Bearman ultimately offer confirmation of new the feminist historians' standpoint. Although Bearman presents the WSPU in an extremely negative manner, as he compares the militant suffragette movement to modern Islamic terrorists, arguing 'terrorists do not perceive themselves as aggressors; they invariably claim to be acting defensively in response to wrongs done to them. The suffragettes are a case in point ...'.[22] Undoubtedly, Bearman's analogy depicts the resonating significance of the WSPU. Although historians' views across time are often inconsistent with each other, Bearman confirms that, to some extent, the conclusions are the same; whether negative or positive, the WSPU were indisputably extremely significant in achieving women's political rights.

Notes

1. Janet Copeland, 'Millicent Garrett Fawcett', *History Review* (March 2003), 36.
2. Martin Pugh, T*he March of the Women* (Oxford, 2000), 253.
3. June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London, Routledge, 2002).
4. *The Observer*, 29 June 1997; *Daily Mirror*, 12 October 1999.
5. Bernard Partridge,*The Shrieking Sister*. Available at: **www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918**.
6. Sylvia Pankhurst,*The Suffragette Movement: an intimate account of persons and ideals* (London, 1931).
7. George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England (*Stanford, 1997), 132, 165, 130-131, 155-156.
8. Sheila Rowbothom, *Hidden from History: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it* (London, 1973), 82.
9. Pugh, *March of the Women*, 71.
10. Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London, 2002), 41.
11. *Ibid*., 43
12. Marian Ramelson, *The Petticoat Rebellion: A Century of Struggle for Women's Rights* (London, 1967), 136.
13. Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst,* 78.
14. Ray Strachey,*The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (London, 1988), 295.
15. Harold Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928* (London, 1998), 28.
16. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One hand tied behind us: the rise of the women's suffrage movement* (London, 2000), 215.
17. Strachey, *The Cause*, 310.
18. *Ibid*., 138.
19. Pugh, *March of the Women,* 259.
20. June Purvis and Maroula Joanou, *The Women's Suffrage Movement* (Manchester, 1998), 12.
21. www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story Accessed on: 03/01/10
22. www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story Accessed on: 03/01/10

Other articles and books used

Paula Bartley, 'Emmeline Pankhurst' *History Review*, 45 (March 2003).
_____, 'Suffragettes, Class and Pit-Brow Women' *History Review*, 35, (December, 1999).
Lesley Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914*, (New York, 1982)
Harold Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928*, (London, 1998).

Carol Adams Prizewinner
Natalie Drew

I am just about to begin my degree course studying Philosophy at King's College London, after obtaining two A* Grades and an A Grade at A Level in History, English Literature and Religious Studies at Harrogate Grammar School. My winning essay is entitled 'How far would you agree that the significance of the WSPU's contribution to the achievement of women's political rights has been exaggerated?' It is only recently that I have been become increasingly interested in women's history; I am lucky to have been taught by two influential female History teachers who have a particular passion for this subject. Having my eighteenth birthday within the past few months has made me reflect upon the heroic efforts and the struggle of thousands of women who strived to achieve an electoral vote and political equality. Being able to exercise my right to vote continues to remind me of the sacrifices made and increases my awareness of the fact that no individual vote, male or female, should be taken for granted. Writing this essay has given me an insight into the importance of this aspect of female history, and although the debate examined in my essay will never have a definitive conclusion, my interest in and gratitude to the women, whether they be Suffragettes or Suffragists will remain.

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For further information please contact Professor Ann Heilmann, chair of the panel of judges. Department of English, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull HU6 7RX, UK

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Essays

- can focus on any aspect of women's history
- should be no longer than 1,500 words
- should include a bibliography
- be word processed
- the front page should include your name, the name of your school and the title of the essay

If you require any further information please contact Dr Paula Bartley at drpauladudley@hotmail.com. Essays should be sent to this email address.

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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.

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.

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must be a) a woman who has not yet had a publication in a major academic journal, b) not in a permanent academic position, and c) normally resident in the UK.

The article should be in English and of 6,000 to 8,000 words in length including footnotes. We welcome submissions from any area of women's history or gender and history.

Please send completed essays to Ann Hughes by 31 May 2011. Please also include brief biographical details (education, current job or other circumstances) and include a cover sheet with title only (not name) to facilitate anonymous judging.

Those wishing to apply for the prize should first email or write for further details to:

Ann Hughes, Department of History and Classics, University of Keele, Keele, Staffs, ST5 5BG. Email: hia21@keele.ac.uk

Book Reviews

Ruth Elizabeth Richardson, *Mistress Blanche: Queen Elizabeth I's Confidante*
Woonton, Almeley, Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 2007. £12.95, 978-1904396864 (paperback), pp. viii+184

Reviewed by Catherine Howey Stearn
Eastern Kentucky University

Although a great deal of ink has been spilled on the subject of Queen Elizabeth I, it has only been recently that historians have started to pay any attention to the women who surrounded Elizabeth at her court. Ruth Richardson's book is a well-written biography examining the life of one such female courtier, Blanche Parry, a single woman of Welsh descent from Herefordshire, who rose through the ranks of royal service to the highest position a non-royal woman could hold at court: Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber (the private rooms used by the queen). The book itself is divided up into a preface, seven chapters, and two appendices that trace her family history and her court career. Richardson forcefully and succinctly lays out her argument that Blanche Parry was a powerful and important Elizabethan courtier because of her personal and professional relationships with the queen. Richardson argues that Parry who served Elizabeth both as princess and finally as queen in Elizabeth's Privy Chamber had constant access to the queen, whose bodily needs she attended upon daily. This perpetual attendance allowed Parry to influence the queen and to act as an intermediary between the queen and her subjects. Through Parry, Elizabeth could unofficially express pleasure or displeasure with a subject just as a subject could ask Parry to support his or her cause in a law suit or pursuit of a government position. Although Parry did not participate in the traditional institutions that made political policies and major governmental decisions such as the Privy Council or Parliament, Parry's informal power was formidable.

Richardson makes a strong case with a wide variety of sources including the more traditional historical sources of government documents, letters and wills alongside less traditional sources such as portraiture, poetry and tomb monuments. The tomb monuments are quite literally central to many of the author's arguments. As Richardson explains in the book's preface, Parry left a mini-autobiography of her life on the epitaph of one of the two tomb monuments she commissioned for herself. Parry had one tomb commissioned to be built in her family lands in Bacton, Herefordshire and one in London. Both tombs are mentioned and analysed in the book, although more emphasis is placed on the one in Bacton because of the unique effigies on the tomb. Whereas the London tomb monument has a traditional effigy of Parry kneeling at prayer, the Bacton monument has Parry kneeling next to a statute of Queen Elizabeth. On both epitaphs she records her court position, but the Bacton epitaph goes into detail about how Parry understood her role at court, and Richardson cleverly utilises different lines of that epitaph as the basis of each of her book chapters. Additional strengths of the book are the inclusion of many of the unique sources utilised by Richardson such as a reproduction of a portrait of Elizabeth and her court, which Richardson convincingly argues may include a portrait of Parry.

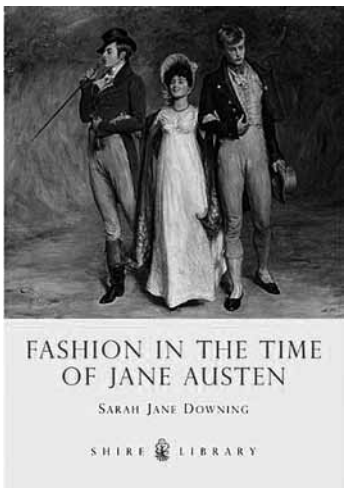
Although Richardson uses both traditional and non-traditional sources well, there are a few places where the evidence does not allow Richardson to give us detailed information about Parry, but rather a composite sketch based upon what was typical at the time. For example, when Richardson discusses Blanche's childhood, there are more details given about her relatives than about Parry, herself. Such moments do not negate the major arguments made by the author, but do not give the complete picture that book promised to provide the reader. However, this is the fault of the evidence and not the author.

Nonetheless, the book does contribute to our knowledge about this important woman at the Elizabethan court and consequently about how women, more generally, inhabited the political world of the Early Modern English court. Richardson reveals the much larger workings of the court and how other women, not just Parry, despite their exclusion from traditional and direct avenues of political power and influence were able to do so indirectly through their personal relationship to the queen. Moreover, Richardson is clearly passionate about the subject matter and has included in the book the address of the webpage, www.blancheparry.co.uk, that she has created for her continuing research on Parry. This work's major contribution is to make this important and growing field of women's and gender history of the Tudor court accessible to popular as well as scholarly audience.

Sarah Jane Downing, *Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen*
Oxford: Shire Publications, 2010. £5.99, 978-0747807674 (paperback), pp. 64

Reviewed by Isobel Muir
London

Despite its brevity, *Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen* provides an informative, well-researched insight into the fashions, and the political and social implications of dress, among the gentry class in Regency England. The book itself is clearly laid out, as each chapter forms an



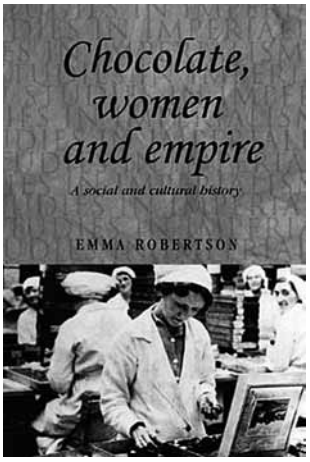
examination of an individual garment, or a wider trend. Downing adeptly weaves in characters and quotations from several of Jane Austen's novels, including *Northanger Abbey* and *Pride and Prejudice*, alongside well chosen visual sources, as a means of informing and illustrating her work. The extracts from Austen's private letters however, appear to suggest that the author herself had little more than a passing interest in clothes, and being far from wealthy, would have worn the same garments, albeit with a few minor alterations in colour and trimmings, throughout her whole life.

Downing's book suggests that there were very few notable changes to the overall structure of women's attire during the period, which is perhaps a reflection of just how little freedom of choice women had in Regency England, even in making minor decisions such as the length of a hemline or the choice of a bonnet. By contrast, the book's treatment of men's dress during the period, which one often assumes to have been rather sombre, due to a distinctly narrow choice of garments and colours, is something of a revelation. No doubt many will be familiar with the daring sartorial choices made by famous London dandies like Beau Brummel, but it was amusing to read how some truly ludicrous garments, such as revealing, skin-tight breeches, were unquestioningly adopted by the upper echelons of society. It can be said therefore that disposable fashion and the discarding of garments once they have became *passé,* which we recognise as being worshipped by many within our own society today, did exist on some level in Regency England, but predominantly in the wardrobes of men, who had the privilege of abundant leisure and a readily disposable income of their own.

Reading *Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen,* I struggled to guess what audience would be most receptive to it, as I have come to understand that Shire Libraries is looking to attract the schools market. The clear style is certainly accessible to a wide readership, and the book is appealingly slight, which I have found is an important quality when enticing student readers. The specialist subject matter means that it would most likely to be used by students in order to inform the study of Jane Austen's literary works, however some Textiles or Design students may find it rather more useful, especially as it has some excellent photographs of garments from which they might gain inspiration.

I feel that some younger readers would perhaps benefit from a clearer sense of chronology throughout, in order to understand the evolutionary nature of Regency fashions, from the relaxed *style anglaise* as championed by the Revolutionary French, to the emergence of the Neo-Classical style, favoured by Empress Josephine, among others. In examining garments, such as gloves, discretely, the reader is forced to 'see-saw' back and forth throughout the Regency period, which on occasion, impedes an understanding of the larger changes that were being carried out, outside of local tailors, dressmakers' shops and milliners. Much like Jane Austen herself, the author has chosen not to focus on the enormous social upheaval that was going on throughout the Regency period, except through casual references to its impact on dress, for instance the popularity of military-style coats as inspired by the militia, who would have been a familiar sight to Austen and her contemporaries, being posted around the English countryside.

Emma Robertson, *Chocolate, Women and Empire: A Social and Cultural History*
Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009. £60.00, 978-0719077777 (hardback), pp. xiii + 249



Reviewed by Henrice Altink
University of York

In the late eighteenth century, several Quaker families set up chocolate factories. Their histories have not only largely ignored the gendered and racialised nature of the production of chocolate but also their imperial connections. This book tries to rectify this gap by examining the lives of both the women who worked in one of these factories – Rowntree in York – and Nigerian women who cultivated cocoa. It also adds gender, race and empire to existing histories of chocolate by providing a detailed analysis of adverts for Kit Kat, Aero, Black Magic and other Rowntree products. Products were targeted at particular genders and drew upon gender stereotypes. For example, in the 1930s, adverts for chocolate bars were mainly directed at women office workers, while the adverts for boxes targeted men and suggested that women cannot resist temptation. The adverts also engaged with dominant racial ideas. Television animation from the 1950s, for instance, often included black characters and presented cocoa as a civilising force.

For this reader, the chapters that deal with Rowntree's imperial connections yielded more interesting insights than those that aimed to make women visible as producers of chocolate. Robertson mentions a wide range of methods used by Rowntree to uphold the empire besides purchasing cocoa from the colonies. For instance, the company sent chocolates to soldiers in the Boer War and its magazine published stories by its Nigerian agents about their encounters abroad as well as reports about Africans who visited the factory, while women factory workers raised money for missionary projects and attended minstrel shows, which were a popular event

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hosted by the company until the 1960s.

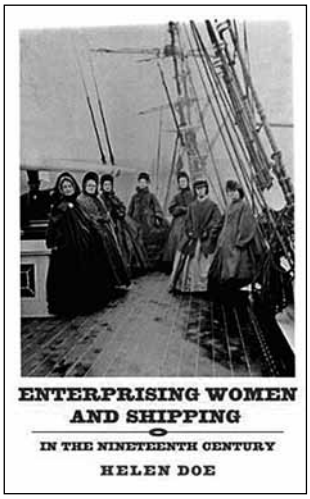
The interviews that Robertson conducted with thirteen former female employees, most of whom had started work in the 1940s and 1950s, are less concerned with women's attitudes towards the company's imperial connections than the interaction between women on the workfloor and their relation with male workers, the company and the products they made. The chapter that analyses these interviews would have benefitted from engagement with feminist scholarship on the gendered nature of work by paying close attention to the differences in wages, promotion opportunities and union membership between male and female workers. In addition, it would have been helpful if Robertson had set out the extent to which women's work at Rowntree differed from that of women in other factories. The workfloor experience narrated by the interviewees largely mirrors that of my mother, who worked in a jute factory in the 1950s, and also my own experience in a meat factory in the late 1980s. Especially problematic in the chapter on the York women is the use of interviews with one British-born Chinese, one Maltese and one Ugandan-Asian woman to draw far-reaching conclusions about the racialised nature of work at Rowntree.

The fifteen Nigerian women that Robertson interviewed did not start working in cocoa until the 1950s and most were still active as cocoa producers at the time of the interview. Robertson's analysis of the interviews illustrates that cocoa production was for most of these women one of several economic activities that they were engaged in. Although Robertson pays more attention here than in the chapter on the York women to agency and resistance, she similarly fails to fully explore the extent to which her interviewees engaged with dominant gender ideologies. She could also have made more attempts than mentioning some obvious similarities and differences to connect the histories of the York and Nigerian women.

In 1919, Rowntree along with Cadbury and Fry founded the Cocoa Manufacturers Limited, which had agencies in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa that had to supervise the purchase of cocoa from producers, arrange the transportation to the port and ensure safe shipping. Not only in the chapter setting out Rowntree's involvement in the cocoa trade but throughout the book does Robertson regularly compare Rowntree with these other chocolate companies. At times, she could have done more to explain noted differences and indicate whether chocolate firms formed an exceptional imperial space. Some of the imperial aspects that she mentions, such as visitors from the colonies and cricket clubs, were not unique to chocolate firms. And in the same way that Robertson at times stretches the imperial connection too far, she occasionally tries too hard to put non-white women into the history of chocolate production or explain their absence. But although this book struggles at times to connect the two projects – making women visible as chocolate producers and showing that a major chocolate factory was implicated in empire – it illustrates that much can be gained if women's historians explore the links between the local and the global as well as gender's intersection with multiple markers of difference.

Helen Doe, *Enterprising Women and Shipping in the Nineteenth Century*

Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009. £55, 978-1843834724 (hardback), pp. 286.



Reviewed by Dr Nina Baker
University of Strathclyde

This book is another keystone in the bridge constructed in recent years by researchers keen to lead us across the chasm to a fuller history of work than that left to us by the majority male body of work on the subject. It is now becoming obvious that women have worked in a far wider range and depth of occupations than previously thought. Doe's detailed survey of five smaller seaports of the period has unearthed a mass of information about women's involvement in owning, managing and even constructing ships in the heyday of that most masculine-seeming world of the wooden-walled sailing ship.

Thorough introductory chapters cover women's opportunities and the legal limitations in the financial and legal constraints of the time, in which some surprising loopholes seem to have allowed women to become

businesswomen. Many of Doe's exemplarly women seem to have come to their maritime involvements by inheritance and other unplanned circumstances and many have certainly made the best of things for themselves.

The five ports which Doe researched are Fowey and Exeter in the south, Whitehaven and Whitby in the north and Kings' Lynn in the east. These may have been smaller than the great national ports of London, Liverpool, Cardiff or Glasgow, but were locally important and not restricted to single trades. They were large enough to include ship building as well as ship owning and management and often fishing too, plus the many supporting trades ashore that the ships and men afloat relied upon. Doe's investigations into registers, wills and other documents has uncovered a surprising amount of personal detail about the women's lives. All ports had communities of the women left behind by fishermen for a few days or weeks or merchant seafarers or Royal Navy men for months or years, and the women soon looked to themselves and each other for support. Doe shows us how women were everywhere, doing everything available, as chandlers, ropemakers, blacksmiths even. Amazingly, and I had read this elsewhere, so was intrigued to see it crop up in Doe's research too, a number of women were famous in seaports for running very effective navigational theory schools at which ordinary seafarers could prepare for the demanding examinations to become officers. A few even became ship builders and successfully tendered in the competition to build naval ships.

The ship owners take up the majority of the book, as Doe analyses how the women became owners, usually of x/64th shares in a ship or ships, but occasionally even of whole ships. This share ownership system meant a lot of people in one area had an interest in a ship and they had to agree on its management. Since Doe found so many women holding majority shares, quite a few were also ship managers and hence must have had formidable accountancy skills and a knowledge of the international trades, and the strength of character to work with the ships' captains, who then considered themselves 'masters below god alone'. Whilst the widowed and single had more personal freedom to pursue whatever interest or occupation they could, and tended to be more active operators of their own share portfolios, even some married women flourished when the opportunity arose, buying and selling shares in their own names. Jane Slade is but one of many women involved in managing namesake ships, whose lives are cameoed in tantalising snippets throughout the book. If I have any criticism of this fabulously detailed and meticulously researched book, it is that I would have quite liked a more continuous 'story' of some of the women, rather than see them popping up here and there as illustrations of some point or other.

Lest we think that Doe's analyses are based on small samples, as can be common in researching the histories of women's work, she has uncovered a staggering total of nearly 900 female ship shareholders in just these five ports. Doe correctly concludes that a new history of middle-class women is emerging but she has also shown how working-class women too had opportunities around maritime communities and frequently made the step upwards, even if some were unlucky and lost it all at sea. Doe's concluding tribute that women, of the type and period she has so carefully researched, played a significant part in keeping Britain's ships at sea and trading successfully, is, I think, another hidden history dragged out from behind the tiny print and scrawling handwriting of ancient archives.

Although this is clearly an academic work, transposed from a thesis, and hence not a lightweight read, it will certainly be of interest to readers from the ports concerned, researchers of business, maritime or gender history and to the general reader who is interested to learn the unexpected about our country's trading heyday.

BOOKS RECEIVED

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

If you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email Jane Potter:
bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

John E. Barham, ed., *The Mother and the Maiden Aunt: Letters of Eva and Alice Greene 1909-1912* (Troubadour Publishing)

Kathryn Ferry, *The Victorian Home* (Shire Library)

Jeanette Hardage, *Mary Slessor: Everybody's Mother, The Era and Impact of a Victorian Missionary* (The Lutterworth Press)

Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2009* (Palgrave)

Susanna Hoe, *Tasmania: Women, History, Books and Places* (Holo Books/Women's History Press)

Annemarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939* (Edinburgh University Press)

Maggie Humm, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh University Press)

Victoria Kelley, *Soap and Water: Cleanliness, Dirt and the Working Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (I.B. Taurus)

Stuart L. Love, *Jesus and Marginal Women: The Gospel of Matthew in Social-Scientific Perspective* (James Clarke & Co.)

Judith Niechcial, *Lucy Faithfull: Mother to Hundreds* (Judith Niechcial)

Megan Smitley, *The Feminine Sphere: Middle-Class Women and Civic Life in Scotland, c.1870-1914* (Manchester University Press)

There are also a number of books unclaimed from previous lists:

Lynne Attwood, *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space* (Manchester University Press)

Allan T. Duffin, *History in Blue: 160 Years of Women Police, Sheriffs, Detectives, and State Troopers* (Kaplan)

Irene Gill, *Oma, Mu and Me* (Yarnells Books)

Betty Hagglund, *Tourists and Travellers: Women's Non-fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* (Channel View)

Máire Kealy, *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930* (Irish Academic Press)

Marti Kheel, *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective* (Rowman & Littlefield)

Lesley Lawson, *Out of the Shadows: The Life of Lucy, Countess of Bedford* (Continuum)

Massimo Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Mathematician of God* (Johns Hopkins)

Susan McPherson and Angela McPherson, *Mosley's Old Suffragette: A Biography of Norah Dacre Fox* (Angela McPherson & Susan McPherson)

Phyllis Demuth Movius, *A Place of Belonging: Five Founding Women of Fairbanks, Alaska* (University of Alaska Press)

Karen Offen, ed. *Globalizing Feminisms: 1789-1945* (Routledge)

Lynda Payne, *With Words and Knives: Learning and Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England* (Ashgate)

Glyn Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal* (Oxford University Press)

Duane W. Roller, *Cleopatra: A Biography* (Oxford University Press)

Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928* (Pearson Education)

Kelly S. Taylor, *The Lady Actress: Recovering the Lost Legacy of a Victorian Superstar* (Wapshott Press)

Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Make Room for Daddy: The Journey from Waiting Room to Birthing Room* (University of North Carolina Press)

Remember the WHN in your will

Do please consider leaving a gift to the Women's History Network in your will. Many people who give to charities also choose to leave something in their wills to a particular cause. Not only is this a fitting way to ensure that your commitment to the WHN continues in the longer term, legacies often constitute a very important income stream for smaller charities, passing on some excellent tax advantages not only for us, but also for you! Leaving a legacy to the WHN, for example, could save on inheritance tax, as the value of your donation, no matter how large or small, is normally deducted from the value of your estate prior to inheritance tax being worked out. There are several forms of legacies of which a Pecuniary Legacy (a fixed sum) or Residuary Legacy (part or all of your estate once all your other gifts have been deducted) are two of the most common.

If you are interested in finding out more about how to go about naming the WHN as a beneficiary of your will please contact the HM Revenue and Customs website which has some helpful basic information **www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/donors/legacies** or consult your own solicitor.

If you would like to discuss legacies, and the ways in which they could be deployed by the WHN, please contact our Charity representative, Anne Logan, email **charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org**

No matter how small, your gift will make a difference.

Getting to Know Each Other

Name: June Hannam

Position: Professor of Modern History, University of West of England, Bristol

How long have you been a WHN member?
Approximately 18 years.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?
I was a history student at university between 1966 and 1969. I became involved in the Women's Liberation Movement which raised awareness about how women were missing from history. When I had to do a dissertation as an undergraduate and as an MA student I therefore chose topics about women and then just carried on.

What are your special interests?
Socialist and labour women in Britain, and their relationship to feminist politics, from the 1880s to the 1940s
I have also been interested to explore these issues at a local level, in particular in Bristol where I have looked at the suffrage movement and at labour politics.

Who is your heroine from history and why?
Isabella Ford, 1855-1924. Isabella Ford campaigned for socialism, feminism and peace throughout her life and believed that all these issues/movements were inextricably linked. These are also my own political interests and I have been inspired by her humanism and her political insights.

Women's History Magazine is keen to carry profiles that celebrate the diversity of WHN membership. If you would like to complete a 'Getting to Know Each Other' questionnaire, or you would like to nominate someone else to, please email: magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Clare Evans Essay Prize Awarded

The Clare Evans prize, established in 1997 in memory of Clare Evans, a talented and committed scholar of women's history from Manchester University, is awarded for the best essay on women's or gender history by a woman historian at the start of her career or working outside an academic context. We had a strong entry this year, with most essays submitted potentially publishable. The subjects ranged widely from medieval Italy to American feminism and civil rights activists. Most entrants were completing or had recently completed doctoral theses, and the prize works well in encouraging early career historians of women and gender. Feedback is given to all entrants. We are very grateful to Roger Crouch, Merlin Evans and other friends and family of Clare Evans for their continuing support for the prize. The judges are Kath Holden, Karen Adler and Amanda Capern with Ann Hughes as Chair.

The winner for 2010 was Linda Jauch of Christ's College Cambridge, who was to submit her PhD on women, power and political discourse in fifteenth-century Italy within weeks of the Women's History Network conference. Her essay is '"Even though I am a woman, I want to lose like a man": Caterina Sforza and her battle for Forli. Renaissance political history reconsidered' and we were pleased to meet Linda at the reception and prize-giving at Warwick. The prize was presented by Clare's daughter Merlin.

Two further essays were highly commended: Elaine Farrell (who obtained her PhD at Queen's University, Belfast, on infanticide in Ireland in 2009) for '"The fellow said it was not harm and only tricks": The father in suspected cases of infanticide and concealment of birth in Ireland, 1850 -1900'; and Clare Russell who has recently completed a PhD in American Studies at Nottingham University for 'Uncommon activist: Rethinking Bernice Robinson, citizenship schools and women in the civil rights movement'.

Ann Hughes, Chair of the Judges for the Clare Evans Prize.

Presentation of the Clare Evans Prize at the 2010 Conference

WHN Book Prize Awarded

This prize (£500) is awarded for a WHN member's first single-authored monograph, which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in English in an accessible style. The book must be published the year prior to the award being made, and the author must normally be resident in the UK. This year's judges were Ann Heilmann (chair), Ann Kettle, Claire Midgley, Alex Shepherd and Penny Summerfield.

The eleven submissions received in 2010 made for an extremely strong field; the judges were delighted to read so much new, innovative and exciting scholarship. Most submissions were related to the nineteenth century, with one book covering an eighteenth topic and two the twentieth centuries; no books were submitted on the earlier periods this time. The prize was awarded to Claire Jones, Associate Lecturer in History at the University of Liverpool, for her book on *Femininity, Mathematics and Science 1880-1914* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), which the judges found a profoundly illuminating and thoroughly engaging cultural history of women and mathematics at the turn of the century, developed through two case studies which reflect on the opportunities and constraints experienced by women mathematicians in the pure (Grace Chisholm Young) and applied (Hertha Ayrton) branches of the discipline. Claire provides fascinating insights into the working conditions of women scientists in marriage and makes a genuinely original and weighty contribution to women's history.

Ann Heilmann, Chair of the Judges for the WHN Book Prize.

Ann Heilmann presents the Book Prize to Claire Jones at the 2010 Conference

The nineteenth annual conference of the Women's History Network:

Performing the self: women's lives in historical perspective. University of Warwick, 10-12 September 2010

Over a hundred delegates from all corners of the UK, as well as from America, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Hungary, India, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria and Turkey, met in Warwick for the nineteenth annual conference. The organisers are to be congratulated for attracting four internationally-renowned academics to give keynote lectures. Shirin Rai kick-started the conference by providing a comparative overview of parliamentary rituals in the UK, India and South Africa; Sidonie Smith spoke about the multiple performances of self in Hillary Rodham Clinton's autobiography *Living History*; Carolyn Steedman discussed the eighteenth-century domestic accounts of Frances Hamilton; and Penny Summerfield ended the conference on a high note with her reflections on diaries, letters, autobiography and oral history. Paula Byrne was the after-dinner speaker and gave an entertaining and spirited talk about Mary Robinson and Jane Austen.

Sarah Richardson and her organising team at Warwick did a superb job in organising the conference. There were nearly sixty speakers organised into twenty-four sessions, which included 'writing the self', 'the performance of multiple selves', 'the body and the self' and 'sources for researching selfhood'. Some of the papers will appear in forthcoming magazines. In addition to the wine reception and presentations of the annual book prize to Claire Jones and the Clare Evans essay prize to Linda Jaunch, there was also a performance workshop, a film-showing and discussion, archival exhibitions, a performance of Turkish music, as well as five publishers' stands and second-hand books.

In addition to the interesting programme of papers and entertainment, the award-winning conference facilities at Warwick made this a memorable occasion: large comfortable lecture theatres and session rooms with functioning AV facilities; comfy sofas for catching up with old friends and making new ones; double en-suite bedrooms of a high standard in the same building;

plentiful food, including three-course lunches and dinners, of a very good quality; and a hot drinks machine serving chocolate, cappuccino and expresso available at all times and without the usual conference queues. Warwick's organising committee has set a very high standard but I'm sure next year's conference team at the Women's Library will be up to the challenge of hosting the twentieth annual conference.

Juliette Pattinson, Editorial Committee, Women's History Magazine

Professor Penny Summerfield draws together the conference themes in the final plenary.

Bursary holder's conference report

As a PhD student, I was extremely pleased to hear earlier in the year that I had been awarded the full bursary for the 2010 WHN annual conference at Warwick University and that my paper had been accepted. However, by the time September arrived, being a newcomer to the WHN and having just come back from a three-week absence from home, I have to admit I was not really looking forward to going to the conference. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the first day of the conference was my birthday and it would be the first time in many years I would spend it away from my family and friends. Negative visions of some of the conferences I had attended in the past also kept surfacing. Dreadful accommodation, badly organised sessions, some papers taking much longer than the allotted time, unpalatable food, 'cliques' of existing members making it difficult for a newcomer to fit in, etc. were just some of the trepidations I was feeling. The conference, however, I am so very happy to say, was in complete contrast to these anxieties. It was organised in the most efficient manner, with no apparent glitches. The accommodation and catering are something Warwick should be extremely proud of and having listened to other delegates extolling their virtues, I know that this sentiment was shared by most. The papers delivered were of an excellent range and variety and most were delivered within the allotted time and raised stimulating discussions both during the sessions and at the coffee/dinner breaks. I met and chatted to some very friendly and welcoming long-standing members as well as other newcomers like me. The plenary speakers were also excellent and gave a good variety of interesting papers. Overall, I am very glad I went and I would like to congratulate and thank both the WHN and Warwick University for giving us all such an informative and pleasurable long weekend.

Kathy Fairweather, University of Derby

Bursary holder's conference report

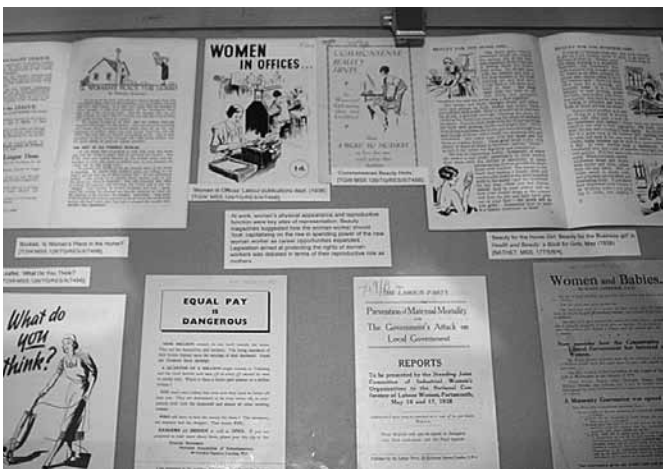
As a PhD student researching the economic role of women in Victorian ironworking towns, I was delighted to receive a bursary allowing me to attend the Women's History Network conference in Warwick, and would like to extend my thanks to the organisers.

The conference theme - 'performing the self' - led to interesting discussions in the sessions on women and work I chose to attend, with the subjectivities and selves of women in various economic classes, places and periods coming under close scrutiny. Although wide-ranging in topic, the common themes throughout were the questions raised regarding the authenticity of 'self-hood' in historical narrative, and the extent to which performance can be viewed in the subjects of history, providing food for thought for all present. It is a testament to the stimulating topics of those presenting that the discussions of papers after a hearty lunch were as spirited as those preceding it!

Aside from the fascinating papers, there were a variety of other activities. The opportunity to visit the Women's Lives in Historical Perspective exhibition at the Modern Records Centre was very welcome, as was the drinks reception on arrival! In addition to various workshops, there was a film viewing, which ended in a rousing discussion on contemporary events and the theme of 'other'. A Turkish musical performance was also very enjoyable.

The conference in its entirety indicated, as Carolyn Steedman so humorously put it, the 'selfish turn', demonstrating the need for continual research and consideration of the agency and historical lives of women. I am sure all those in attendance would like to join me in once again thanking the organisers for such an enlightening and thought-provoking weekend.

Amanda Milburn, Swansea University



Display from Women's Lives in Historical Perspective exhibition

WOMEN'S HISTORY REVIEW

Editor: June Purvis, *University of Portsmouth, UK*

Women's History Review is a major international journal which aims to provide a forum for the publication of new scholarly articles in the field of women's history. The time span covered by the journal includes the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries as well as earlier times. The journal seeks to publish contributions from a range of disciplines (for example, women's studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, literature, political science, anthropology, philosophy and media studies) that further feminist knowledge and debate about women and/or gender relations in history.

The Editors welcome a variety of approaches from people from different countries and backgrounds. In addition to main articles the journal also publishes shorter Viewpoints that are possibly based on the life experiences, ideas and views of the writer and may be more polemic in tone. A substantial Book Reviews section is normally included in each issue.

Recent special issues of ***Women's History Review*** include:

Collecting Women's Lives
Guest edited by Alex Hoare, Joyce Goodman, Andrea Jacobs and Camilla Leach

Woman in her Place: essays on women in pre-industrial society in honour of Mary Prior
Guest edited by Anne Summers and Anne Laurence

International Feminisms
Guest edited by Ann Taylor Allen, Anne Cova and June Purvis

Discounted Personal Subscription Rate for Women's History Network Members

Visit the 'News & Offers' page on www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rwhr

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Routledge
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Steering Committee Report 2009/10

This is an edited version of the speeches given by the convenor, treasurer and membership secretary at the WHN conference at Warwick.

2009/10 has been a very successful and productive year for WHN: finances have been consolidated with an emergency fund being opened in a separate bonus account; membership continues to increase, with nearly fifty new subscriptions; members have access to a continually-updated website as well as a monthly electronic newsletter providing current information on jobs, conferences and publications; a daily blog consisting of short articles was launched during Women's History Month in March and was very well received, receiving over 1800 hits a month; links with the Women's Library have been strengthened with the presence of Theresa Docherty at committee meetings; and the catalogue for the WHN archive is now online.

However, we do all need to continue to recruit new members, remind our institutions to take out an institution membership and remember to use the portal Easy Fundraising (http://easyfundraising.org/) when online shopping, having selected the WHN as our chosen charity. 2.5% of total purchases is paid to the WHN.

Steering committee membership changes

Thanks are given to those who have come to the end of their term serving on the committee: Kath Holden (Convenor), Ann Kettle, Helen Meller (Treasurer), Sue Morgan (charity representative), Jane Potter and June Purvis. A very warm welcome is extended to new members: Jane Berney, Barbara Bush (Covenor), Amanda Capern, Tanya Cheadle, June Hannam and Emma Robertson.

Next meeting of the committee: 11.30am Saturday 27 November 2010

All WHN members are invited to observe the next committee meeting which will take place at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WCIE 7HU. For further details, email convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Publishing in *Women's History Magazine*

Women's History Magazine welcomes contributions from experienced scholars and those at an earlier stage in their research careers. We aim to be inclusive and fully recognise that women's history is not only lodged in the academy. All submissions are subject to the usual peer review process.

Articles should be 3000-8000 words in length. Contributors are requested to submit articles in final form, carefully following the style guidelines available at:

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

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	£15*	Overseas minimum	£40
Low income (*under £20,000 pa)	£25*	UK Institutions	£45
High income	£40*	Institutions overseas	£55
Life Membership	£350		

** £5 reduction when paying by standing order.*

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
membership@womenshistorynetwork.org
or write to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

Finance, Dr Gráinne Goodwin:
treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Professor Barbara Bush:
convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Team:
webadmin@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Professor Ann Heilmann:
bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, Professor Krista Cowman:
ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Dr Anne Logan:
charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Dr Katie Barclay:
newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors, submissions: Dr Debbi Simonton, Dr Jane Potter, Dr Sue Hawkins, Ms Ann Kettle, Dr Juliette Pattinson:
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, Ms Ann Kettle:
advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

Steering Committee Liaison, Dr Juliette Pattinson:
liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

Peer Review, Dr Sue Hawkins
magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

For magazine back issues and queries please email:
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 Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD
Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: Women's History Network

Name : ……

Address: ……..……

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……..……..…….. 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.

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To (bank)_____

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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 _____20__, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £_____ (in words)_____.

Signature: _____