

# *Women's History* **MAGAZINE**



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*Nancy G. Rosoff and  
Stephanie Spencer on  
Teenage Fiction, 1910-  
1960*

*Anne Logan on  
Community Worker  
Amelia Scott*

*Marie-Clare Balaam and  
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*women's*  
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## Women's History Network

19th Annual Conference 2010

University of Warwick, 10 - 12 September 2010



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# Editorial

This spring edition marks the return of the third issue of the *Women's History Magazine*. We are delighted to be back with this issue, and hopefully marking the coming of Spring with some vibrant articles. With a twentieth-century flavour, the *Magazine* kicks off with teenage fiction, that genre of fond memory. In a persuasive double-act, Stephanie Spencer and Nancy Rossoff reach across the Atlantic to compare the two related but distinct genres of the school or college story and the career novel. Their interest is in the complex interplay of the essential and the constructed in shaping femininity in these books consumed by generations of British and American girls. This article reflects the early stages of their larger joint research project, which uses transnational readings of fiction aimed at the twelve to sixteen age group to explore the grey area between the assumed and the constructed features of the teenage girl in Britain and America between 1910 and 1960. While this is a serious project that addresses important questions, revisiting these stories cannot fail to bring a smile.

Far less amusing is Marie-Clare Balaam and Barbara Crowther's analysis of the reception of a landmark article, published in 1933, 'An Investigation of the Menopause in One Thousand Women'. This produced results of the first large-scale survey of menopause by women doctors who treated it as a natural feature of female life. Yet, as the authors ably pinpoint, despite its prestigious publication in *The Lancet* and the significance of the research, the report was virtually ignored by the medical profession.

Anne Logan tackles some of the negative images of the 'lady bountiful' in her study of Amelia Scott, an active member of her community, vigorous in pursuing a range of philanthropic and 'voluntary' activities in Tunbridge Wells. But this article is not a simple act of reclamation; in the process, Anne raises issues about sources, memory and legacy, biography and our understanding of this character, the 'lady bountiful'.

Taking yet a different approach to Britain in the first half of the twentieth century, Elidh Macrae examines the national fitness campaign of 1937, comparing movements in England and Scotland, and identifying the problems faced by campaigners. She points out explicitly that there were 'political, financial and discursive obstacles, which hindered the success of the Campaign'.

To mark Women's History Month, the Women's History Network is launching a blog, which we hope all of you join, add to and enjoy. Details were in the last Newsletter, and let's hope this is just the beginning. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary also remind us that paying membership fees by standing order is very helpful to the Network, so please consider converting to this method if you haven't already. And if you do so – please check that your subscription fee is still correct and up to date. Details are on the back cover of the *Magazine*.

The Annual Conference this year visits the University of Warwick, a great venue for the conference. The theme is *Women's Lives in Historical Perspective* and is predicated on the idea that selfhood is performed.

The conference will explore the diverse representations of women's identities in the past and consider how these were articulated. The organizers have brought together an impressive group of plenary speakers: Penny Summerfield, well-known for her work in oral history and on women's wartime lives; Sidonie Smith, author of seminal articles on life narratives; Shirin Rai, Professor of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick; and Paula Byrne, internationally renowned writer and author of a biography of an eighteenth-century Mary Robinson, 'Perdita'. It promises, as always, to be a stimulating and enjoyable occasion. Registration is now open.

Editorial Team: Sue Hawkins, Ann Kettle, Jane Potter, Debbi Simonton

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Cover: Sleeve cover from *Air Hostess Ann* by Pamela Hawken



# **'To Be Unfailingly Courteous': Teenage Fiction and Transnational Ideologies of Femininity, 1910-1960**

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For historians of women and gender, the debates around the construction of female identity as purely social have become increasingly problematic and our task now is to tease out the more complex relationship between essential and constructed characteristics of femininity.<sup>1</sup> This article introduces our larger project which uses transnational readings of fiction aimed at the 12-16 age group to explore the grey area between the assumed, thus 'natural', and the constructed, and therefore taught, features of the teenage girl in Britain and America between 1910 and 1960.<sup>2</sup> By reading across such a wide time period and within the two related but distinct genres of the school or college story and the career novel it becomes possible first to identify similar preoccupations with assumed innate female interests like fashion and food, and then to highlight the ways that these apparently natural characteristics were taught to the next generation of girls through the medium of popular fiction. These attributes became markers of a gendered courtesy that was an important element of the transition from girlhood to adulthood. Thus, a close reading of these sources allows us to explore the sophisticated interplay of essentialism and social construction.

The emergence of the teenager in 1950s Britain has been seen as one in a long series of imported cultural phenomena from the United States.<sup>3</sup> In fashion, music and fiction, trends began in North America and then appeared fairly rapidly among young people across the Atlantic. Adolescent gendered identity seems to have been inextricably linked to what was bought, read, heard, eaten and worn, yet it is unlikely that the flow was only one-way and quite possible that some cultural practices of girlhood or young womanhood could have travelled from Britain to North America.

Girls' stories set in schools developed in Britain in the late nineteenth century, then migrated to American shores soon after; the main American characters sometimes went on to college.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the career novel originated in the United States in the 1930s, continued through the war, and truly blossomed in the postwar years, coinciding with the emergence of the teenager as a discreet category.<sup>5</sup> British publishers, especially The Bodley Head and Chatto & Windus, identified the potential popularity of this genre in the early 1950s.<sup>6</sup> These novels provided career advice for girls thinking about their school leaving choices. Although American and British fictions for teenage girls reflect their geographic settings, the stories share key themes that we can identify and analyse. We *could* produce a study of the subject solely in its British or American context, but the common themes that cross the Atlantic in both directions demonstrate the impact of

this genre as a means of informal education. This article begins to address the implicit ideologies of transnational femininity found in teenage fictions.

Historians and literary critics have analysed the school story from a variety of perspectives. Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig traced more than one hundred years of fiction written for girls, pointing to the nature of the characters depicted and the various locations in which these tales unfolded. Rosemary Auchmuty focused on the independent nature of fictional schoolgirls and the adult lives of key characters in schoolgirl fiction, and Penny Tinkler has set the British girls' story papers against the background of social, cultural and political change. In her work, Sally Mitchell traced the emergence of girlhood and the cultural identities that surrounded it in the Victorian era, as did Lynne Vallone and Claire Nelson. Ju Gosling located the ongoing appeal of the schoolgirl stories in the comfort of their predictability, evoked through stock characters and familiar plots. Both Sherrie Inness and Shirley Marchalonis examined literary representations of American college women, focusing on what fiction can tell us about their experiences. They also considered how the construction of an idealized world both informed and reassured readers about the relatively novel idea of higher education for women.<sup>7</sup> Few similar analyses of the career novels exist.<sup>8</sup> These works on print sources aimed at female teenage readers have clearly established the emergence of a girls' culture in both Britain and the United States respectively. However, previous studies have not assessed transnational similarities and differences in these novels. Moreover, they have not focused on the complex question of how essential and constructed aspects of girlhood intertwine in these genres that carried immense appeal to their readers and functioned as an important means of informal education.

Diane Fuss began her exploration of the "risk" of essence' by noting that the apparently entrenched binary between essentialists and constructionists has created a deadlock. Fuss argued that essentialism necessarily underpins constructionist arguments; thus, we could not debate the constructed attributes of 'men' and 'women' without having some sense of a universal understanding of what is generally understood by those terms.<sup>9</sup> In this paper we have been informed by Fuss in order to interrogate the representation of femininity in writing for teenage girls in the pre-World War Two American Marjorie Dean and Grace Harlowe novels and the post-war British career novels.<sup>10</sup>

Despite a geographical and chronological separation, the heroines of these books displayed strikingly similar qualities of determination and a finely

honed sense of justice. They also demonstrated familiar female preoccupations with fashion and food. On one hand, these works can be classed as little more than prescriptive, formulaic novels or simply light reading. However, a closer examination reveals them to have been important conduits for middle-class cultural production with particularly intriguing elements that cross national borders despite divergent political and social contexts. These novels offered specific gendered lessons to their readers, including the importance of civility, the need for appropriate appearance, the centrality of courtesy and the virtue of generosity.

The much parodied genre of teenage fiction initially appears to be rooted in its time period; even the most brief contextualisation confirms that British novels of the post war period were as much a part of their cultural context as Grace and Marjorie were products of their time and location in early twentieth-century America. At the same time, once alert to the possibilities of both constructed and essential notions of femininity, the historian can consider these two apparently disparate selections of writing in order to identify transnational and transhistorical characteristics of universal girlhood *and* the way in which these are taught to the next generation.

## Historical context

Widespread social and economic change marked the first quarter of the twentieth century in the United States. The transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society sparked the growth of cities, populated by those moving from rural areas as well as by immigrants from Europe and Asia. The vast concentration of people in cities created major challenges, such as poverty and sanitation. Progressive reformers used twinned practices of investigation and legislation to expose and remedy the evils of industrialized America.

A more structured workday, as well as reforms in hours and conditions of work and mass production, led to more leisure time across all economic classes. New pastimes developed, including golf and tennis for the wealthy, and spectator sports such as baseball and football. For the middle class, shopping changed, as department stores emerged, offering the fruits of mass production. Those who lived at a distance from cities could still partake in opportunities for consumption via mail order catalogues.

For women, an ideology of domesticity that embraced courtesy continued to dominate popular belief. Some challenges to this ideal arose through increasing numbers of women continuing their education in colleges and through the presence of more and more women in public life.<sup>11</sup> Feminists cleverly blended expectations about women's roles with arguments for suffrage under the rubric of municipal housekeeping, arguing that women would clean up corrupt or ineffective governments just as they kept their own homes tidy.<sup>12</sup>

Post-war Britain is usually presented as a time when traditional social patterns were re-established; when the provisions of the new welfare state rested on assumptions of a non-working, stay-at-home wife married



to breadwinning husband till death did them part. At some point it was likely that all girls would have had some form of domestic science education no matter what sort of secondary school they attended. Informal education, such as popular girls' fiction, also taught them about 'being a woman'.

The combined circumstances of a more highly educated, more employable, young workforce, together with a growing availability of consumer goods increased the significance of the newly emergent 'teenager' to the recovering British economy.<sup>13</sup> For a decade at least, it appeared on the surface that young men and women were content to follow traditional patterns of marriage and child rearing despite growing opportunities for women in the workplace and, at the beginning of the 1960s, the advent of the contraceptive pill.

If we remove the thin veneer of nostalgia from the popular memory of the 1950s, we see a very different story: concern over lack of housing; threats of nuclear war; national service; Suez; the Cold War; austerity; and angry young men. The underlying problems were, in the media at least, overlaid by a reinvention of tradition in the 'New Elizabethan Age' that was to a large extent dependent on the perceptions of traditional gender roles.

## An overview of our sources

As more and more American children enrolled in school, publishers provided series books to a growing audience.<sup>14</sup> In the 1910s, many of these books offered stories about girls' experiences in school and college. These series books, through their recurring characters and formulaic plots, offered ideals of appearance and

action, showing readers what was right and proper. They provided guidance of how to belong to a civil society, albeit one of schoolgirls. Within these books, food and clothing served as symbols of civility. The sense of democracy that permeated these books reflected some of the social, political and economic changes and challenges facing the nation as a whole.

The schoolgirls and college women who populated the pages of American juvenile fiction in the early twentieth century would have been recognisable to readers of British school stories and annuals. True, they played basketball rather than hockey or lacrosse, but they also lived in a world in which adults played minor supporting roles. The central characters in these stories got into a wide variety of scrapes and enjoyed spreads rather than midnight feasts. The abiding trait that characters from both sides of the Atlantic shared was a fervent belief in fair play, on and off the field.

Matthew Hilton highlighted the significant part that women played in the politicisation of consumption in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1950s, he argued, affluent consumption was 'equated with normalcy', the middle-class housewife was expected to play her part in the monitoring of quality in household goods and to 'buy wisely ... buy well.'<sup>15</sup> In 1948, John Newsom's *Education of Girls* had also noted the part played by girls in maintaining an aesthetically pleasing environment.<sup>16</sup>

Through the pages of women's magazines, women were encouraged to see themselves as arbiters of taste and, while their husbands might be seen as the main breadwinner, the spending of the household income was the woman's responsibility. This concern that 'taste' was reflected by the clothes and food purchased by young women on the brink of womanhood was repeated in the pages of the novels. In order to be accepted onto training courses or be successful in their career, the girls had to be seen to be following the parameters of good taste and middle-class behaviours as advised by older and wiser women who served as maternal mentors.<sup>17</sup>

Within this social and cultural context, the authors of British career novels were faced with a difficult conundrum – how to promote various career options for girls without upsetting the expected return to traditional gender roles. The novels also had to appeal to girls from a wide range of social backgrounds, as increasingly all girls were expected to take up employment after school and before marriage. Published by The Bodley Head and Chatto & Windus, the genre flourished between 1954 (*Air Hostess Ann*, *June Grey Fashion Student*) to the early 1960s (*Anne in Electronics*, *Margaret Becomes a Doctor*). Some fifty novels chronicled the lives of young women training to be nurses, library assistants, journalists, continuity girls and travel agents and acted as conduits of information on a career. They also gave their heroines a taste of independence within a conventional framework, but confirmed their ultimate domestic role through a successful romance. These novels provided instruction to their audience of teenage girls about how to engage their natural desires for performing their essential femininity in terms of the consumer goods of food and fashion. Readers of these books were being prepared for roles in

the workplace that middle-class mothers might have only have experienced as part of a brief necessity between 1939 and 1945.

In Britain and the United States, sociability proved fundamental to achieving the democratic ideal. And those traditionally, apparently natural, female interests – fashion and food – served as symbols of civility. Detailed descriptions of dress reminded readers of the heroines' social status; however, outward conformity could not disguise the girls' ability to take on responsibilities not previously associated with young women. Meals and spreads provided opportunities for inclusion, a chance for key characters to widen their circle, and thus their influence, and bring others to their way of thinking. Food signified the comforts of home and the hegemony of the domestic ideal.

## Fashion

Clothing provided one of the few markers of class in the American tales. Fashion was a shorthand indicator of one's place, and those who did not fit in were spurned by the snobbish element in the stories. Yet to the goodhearted heroines and their chums, character mattered as much as appearance.

Grace Harlowe and Marjorie Dean represented the ideal young woman. Each series followed them through four years of high school, four years of college, and into their postgraduate years. The central characters endured challenging times, dealing with other characters who were selfish, unkind, false and uncharitable. The plots followed similar formulas, not surprisingly, as the series were written by the same author, Josephine Chase, under two different pseudonyms.<sup>18</sup>

Readers learned about the conflict between Grace Harlowe and Miriam Nesbit in the first pages of the first book. Grace represented all that was good – she was kind, fearless, generous and a skilled basketball player. Although very bright and also quite talented at basketball, Miriam had no tolerance for those she considered not worthy of her. Anne's clothing instantly marked her as different and, in Miriam's judgment, not fit company. "If Miss Pierson doesn't know already that she's the shabbiest girl in the school, it's high time she found it out. I have a suspicion her mother takes in washing or something," remarked Miriam.<sup>19</sup> Grace immediately took Anne under her wing and invited her to a class tea on Saturday, after following her home to her 'forlorn' cottage. As she headed home after issuing the invitation, Grace reminded Anne "I'm counting on you to pour the lemonade. The other girls are going to help with the sandwiches and ice cream".<sup>20</sup> This social event provided Anne entrance into the society of high school girls that would otherwise have been closed to her.

Anne gained acceptance in Grace's circle, which admired Anne's intellect and her pluck. She challenged Miriam for intellectual supremacy in their year, which solidified Miriam's enmity toward Anne. To top it all, Miriam's older brother David devoted considerable attention to Anne. A benefactor in town hired Anne as a secretary, which provided her family with much needed

income and Anne with spending money. At the annual Thanksgiving Day football game, Anne wore her new 'neat brown suit and broad-brimmed hat'. David noticed how a new outfit transformed Anne: "What a new dress and hat can do for one small, insignificant little person is quite wonderful sometimes".<sup>21</sup> At the group's Christmas party, another exchange between Anne and David revealed the impact of clothing on the young woman's life:

'Are you happy, Anne, in your beautiful pink dress?' asked David, regarding her with open admiration.

'How can I help being happy?' she replied. 'This is the first pretty dress that I have ever had, and I never went to a party before either.'<sup>22</sup>

The dress, clearly linked to the social event for which it was worn, gave Anne the confidence to move in this new circle of friends. Her new clothing reflected her acceptance and assimilation into a group of girls.

The fashion advice offered in the pages of the American school and college novels anticipated the guidance provided in a column that appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, which would have been read by schoolgirls and their mothers. In July 1928, a new page appeared, called 'The Sub Deb'. It offered advice about planning parties and the latest fashion news from Paris. The column in December 1928 remarkably echoed the discussion of clothing in *Grace Harlowe's Plebe Year at High School*. 'What girl does not know that the Christmas holidays will bring a round of dances and parties to which she will want to wear her prettiest frocks – and of course the newer and more up to date they are the better.' The author described two dresses, both of which were shown in a sketch that accompanied the piece. 'The dainty evening frock on the left is made of finely plaited pink crêpe de chine. ... The frock on the right is of pale pink marquisette over a foundation of pink satin crêpe.'<sup>23</sup>

In 1950s Britain, the relatively new career of air hostess, signified by the recognisably stylish uniform, was promoted as a glamorous way to see the world.<sup>24</sup> However, Pamela Hawken was at great pains in *Air Hostess Ann* to emphasise that the job also entailed hard work. At her interview Ann reflected on the excitement but also on the necessarily short career of a young stewardess:

of course, I want to do it because of the glamour as well – foreign lands, seeing hibiscus in bloom when there's frost and fog in England, meeting famous people, getting to know the world – and myself. I don't just want to stand behind a counter all the years between school and getting married, if I get married. I want to do things and see things first.<sup>25</sup>

Inevitably by the end of the book, there was more than a hint of romance in the air with pilot Alan.

The heroines of the career stories were usually solidly middle class, although their fellow trainees came from a variety of social backgrounds.<sup>26</sup> They were instructed in what we might think of as 'natural' female

characteristics. The air hostess trainees were taught 'how to make the most of their looks' by a few days at a Bond Street Beauty salon; 'we help you with your skin and any other beauty troubles'.<sup>27</sup>

Ann was surprised to learn that beauty treatment would be part of her training. Was this the reason airgirls had a reputation for attractiveness? She became acutely aware of her own amateurishly powdered nose, and home-shampooed hair.<sup>28</sup>

Within the role of hostess there was room for adventure as well as for demonstrating natural feminine traits, and while Ann looked after troublesome children and tended to a sick passenger, she also kept her cool in a crisis when the plane landed without its under carriage. In a section entitled 'Women with exciting jobs', *The Girls' World* noted that the 'slim young air hostess has become the modern symbol of romantic womanhood'. Following on, the author described experiences strikingly similar to those of *Air Hostess Ann*. 'Sharing the still-existent risks of the air with pilot and navigator, coping with such emergencies as an air birth, and rather more frequently, like her sea sisters, with sickness, with nervous passengers ... she thoroughly deserves her pre-eminence.'<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the central hardworking and diligent young protagonist, each novel usually included a stock character – an over-sophisticated, world-wise young woman who was usually trumped by our more 'natural' heroine.

[Ann] noticed a tall, largely built girl sitting there. She was strikingly good looking with gleaming golden hair under a provocative black hat and everything about her, from her gracefully crossed silken legs to the way she held her long emerald-green cigarette holder, expressed confidence and self-assurance.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, this Cover Girl look disguised an unhappy individual whose difficult life was made easier by the intervention of Ann and her more down-to-earth friends. Pamela Hawken listed the qualities that 'British World Airways' looked for in their trainees: 'tact, resourcefulness, an air of confidence and calmness ... the ability to be firm and yet pleasant, to be unfailingly courteous, always serene, never giving a hasty, bad-tempered reply, or appearing flustered or nervous'.<sup>31</sup> The *Girls' World* piece provided the qualities needed by potential applicants to the airlines:

Good education, poise, intelligence, ability to act in an emergency and to avoid over-emphasising the glamour of the job – these are the qualities looked for, coupled with such practical qualifications as languages, sick nursing, and the ability to prepare and serve the dainty meals for which the Airlines are famous.<sup>32</sup>

These same characteristics also might have been listed in a definition of femininity or offered as advice to a young bride to be in the pages of increasingly popular women's

magazines.

The dilemma of the dual role of worker and wife was central to much of the career literature for young women in the 1950s. Eleanor Brockett's reflection at the end of that decade on choosing a career highlighted the need for girls to consider how those choices would affect their eventual expected role of wife and mother. It is therefore hardly surprising that advice about specific careers emphasised the generic qualities that they enhanced, including 'a sincere interest and liking for other human beings, the ability to inspire trust and confidence, meticulous accuracy and personal integrity which are essentially feminine and should be well developed in the married woman who is also a mother'.<sup>33</sup>

Eleanor Brockett suggested that teaching was 'the ideal profession for a woman'<sup>34</sup> and the teaching career novels followed the pattern for emphasising the necessity of dressing appropriately *and* looking feminine in the process:

Meg was ready first, because she spent so little time on her appearance ...

'Come on, do! You aren't going to a ball! Clothes and all that are a waste of time.'

'They're not, you know,' Judith emerged from the bedroom. 'I never feel right with myself unless I look my best, and I think it's a teacher's duty to look as nice as possible. After all, they're going to be looked at all day, and there's example and all that.'<sup>35</sup>

Judith reflected that good grooming was 'a mark of self respect' and as such we might conclude that readers were encouraged to think of fashion as a mark of character rather than a frivolous optional extra.

## Food

In these stories, food provided important ties to domestic ideals and served as a marker of momentous events. Marjorie Dean returned to her college as a postgraduate to oversee the construction of a dormitory for students who were not well off financially. On Marjorie's return to campus, two of her fellow postgraduates collected her and whisked her off for a meal at the Ivy tearoom. The friends celebrated the start of their project with a fine repast: "Consomme [sic], chicken a la king, potato straws, cucumber salad and whatever your sweet tooth demands for dessert".<sup>36</sup> Over this meal, they began to lay their plans for the construction of the dormitory. Later that afternoon, they arrived at their house on campus, to be greeted by the manager with a fresh pitcher of 'tutti-frutti nectar' and a 'three-layer cream cake'. The group decided to mark their return with a spread that night. Vera exclaimed "I'm in favor of a spread instead of dinner".<sup>37</sup> Despite the fact that much of the day's activity had consisted of eating, the young women happily tucked into the spread. As the author explained, 'Though none of them were actually hungry, a spread was a spread on any occasion and therefore not to be passed by'.<sup>38</sup> These young women used the camaraderie engendered by eating as the springboard

to action as they planned their dormitory project.

The election of one of their prodigies as sophomore class president provided the occasion for another celebration, this one fuelled by the arrival of another friend's baggage from California. 'Ronny's trunks had furnished a treat of Mexican sweets, tempting and varied. There were all sorts of candied tropical fruits, strange toothsome nut pastes and a golden delicious sweet called *dulce*. There were even candied sweet potatoes.'<sup>39</sup> Food led to conviviality and the inclusion of a large group of girls in these ten o'clock feasts supported the democratic impulses of Marjorie and her friends.

Similarly, in the British career novels, food and its preparation indicated certain standards to be met and emulated. The characters met over meals, which offered entrée into the idealized world of work. Air Hostess Ann was surrounded by older women who looked after her. Her landlady provided hot meals and her mother wrote 'Are you getting proper meals or shall I send you some tins and cakes?'<sup>40</sup> There were long passages in detail about preparing the food on the airline; 'The girls were encouraged to make the food look as attractive as possible.' Alison 'drew meat and fish containers out of the oven racks and looked at their hot, appetising contents with a sense of achievement'.<sup>41</sup>

The stock characters in the career books were similar to those found in the boarding school stories. In *Air Hostess Ann*, it was Celia Clements who was the unpopular, standoffish, mean member of the trainee class. Always neat and aloof, she finally got her comeuppance when asked to demonstrate the model kitchen of the new Rapier aeroplane. Her nerves got the better of her, she mumbled, dropped things and took too much time to prepare the food. After Celia's public humiliation of being replaced as demonstrator, Ann found her weeping in the toilet. The link between outward appearance and inward control was made explicit:

Ann sat down on the narrow bench beside the dishevelled, weeping girl. Celia needed help. ... Her hair was hanging in wisps, and her usually immaculate skirt and tunic were creased and bunched up. ... Had it all been a pose, a form of defence against her own uncertainty, against her own sense of failure and knowledge that she was unpopular?<sup>42</sup>

Ann of course, being the heroine, took the dislikeable Celia back to her cosy digs where from scenes of domesticity, including tea and cucumber sandwiches, she re-emerged as a likeable and dependable colleague. Food could also play a role in establishing and undermining domestic harmony. Janet Carr [Journalist] explained to her disapproving father that she wanted to work on a magazine – this would enable her to learn more than she would by merely reading magazines, which her father had suggested.

'You see, Daddy, I'd sooner do the smallest job on a magazine than something really grand anywhere else.'

Mr. Carr helped himself to a piece of toast,



battered it savagely, took a single bite, then left the remainder uneaten as he got to his feet. 'It defeats me,' he said crossly as he left the room, 'why you're so obstinate. In my young days a girl was brought up to do what her father told her. You're spoilt, that's what you are, spoilt!'

'Now look what you've done,' said Mrs. Carr, forgetting her resolution not to upset her daughter, 'sent your father away without his last slice of toast, and wasted all that butter too.'<sup>43</sup>

Janet's behaviour upset the family's domestic tranquillity and the uneaten toast with its precious butter showed that Janet cared more about her job than the implications of the disrupted meal to family life.

The career books carefully detailed the girls' healthy appetites and the menus for various meals to show that work did not impinge on the domestic structure of the day. Barbara, student almoner, made friends with Jennifer. 'They liked each other and had formed the habit of lunching together.' Readers learned that being at work all day did not mean not eating properly. "[It's] a very brown sort of menu, but completely satisfying. There's a brown vegetable soup, some brown stewed steak or roast beef, and a very brown treacle pudding. ... I must say they do us well here for one and ten a go, coffee thrown in".<sup>44</sup> Meals provided an opportunity to review the day's work in a domestic setting and proved central to sociability at work and at home.

Domesticity provided the opportunity to impart information against a background of food and fashion. In the opening scene of *Clare in Television*, Clare's cousin Karen comes in from work and explains to her about the world of working in television. Clare was still performing the domestic role prior to finding her feet in her new career:



She'd been lying in the steamy water dreaming, wondering what job she could possibly do in television. ... 'Clare do hurry. What are we having?' Karen called again back in the kitchen after taking off her coat. ... 'Chops, and the potatoes are on, and the salad's in the larder – and so're the chops,' she added, zipping herself into a blue housecoat and running a comb through thick, honey coloured curls.<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusion

This article reflects our initial analysis as we begin a more extensive exploration of the way that gendered expectations played out across varied contexts of social and economic change within these fictions written for teenage girls. Characteristics displayed by the heroines may be analysed in light of the interplay between essentialist and socially constructed perceptions of femininity. The stories are set within different social and cultural backgrounds across nearly fifty years, yet the notion of a gendered courtesy underpinned the narratives. The authors evoked similar interests in food and fashion as important facets of their heroines' lives. This article highlights just two of the possible sites for teasing out the complex relationship between essentialist and socially constructed ideals of femininity that transnational readings of apparently prescriptive formulaic novels can offer to historians of women and gender.

## Notes

1. Carrie Paechter, 'Reconceptualising the gendered body: learning and constructing masculinities and femininities in school', *Gender and Education* 18:2 (2006), 121-135.
2. The authors would like to acknowledge the debt they owe to the Women's History Network for facilitating the growth of this project. The current work has grown out of discussions begun as a result of papers given at WHN conferences and the educative process that we recognize as a result of reading each other's sources.
3. Jon Savage, *Teenage, The Creation of Youth Culture* (London, Chatto & Windus, 2007).
4. Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're a brick, Angela!* (London, Gollancz, 1976), 11-124; Sherrie A. Inness, *Intimate Communities: Representations and Transformation in Women's College Fiction, 1895-1910* (Bowling Green, OH, Popular Press, 1995), 187; Shirley Marchalonis, *College Girls: A Century in Fiction* (New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1995), 2.
5. Between 1930 and 1939, fifteen novels by nine authors appeared in the United States featuring such careers as journalism, modeling and home economics.
6. Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the late 1950s* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 105 and n3, 223.
7. Cadogan and Craig, *You're a brick, Angela!*; Rosemary Auchmuty, *A World of Girls: The Appeal of the Girls' School Story* (London, The Women's Press, 1992) and *A World of Women: Growing up in the Girls' School Story*

- (London, The Women's Press, 1999); Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing up in England, 1920-1950* (London, Taylor and Francis, 1995); Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girl's Culture in England, 1890-1915* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1995); Claire Nelson and Lynne Vallone, eds, *The Girls' Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915* (Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press, 1994); Ju Gosling, 'The Significance of the Girls' School Stories', in *Virtual World of Girls*, 1998, [www.ju90.co.uk/sig.htm](http://www.ju90.co.uk/sig.htm) and 'Girls' School Stories,' *HerStoria*, February (2009), 40-47; Sherrie A. Inness, *Intimate Communities*; Shirley Marchalonis, *College Girls: A Century in Fiction*.
8. In *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the late 1950s*, Spencer includes an analysis of British career novels as a source of information and the advice they offered for girls on the point of leaving school.
9. Diane Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: feminism, nature and difference* (London, Routledge, 1989).
10. For example, consider the popularity of *Air Hostess Ann* – first published by The Bodley Head in 1952, then by Transworld in 1955, Brockhampton in 1968 and 1971; in Finnish she became *Ann, lentoemanta: romaani* in 1955 and 1962, in Swedish *Flygavardinnan* in 1954; and in German *Ann fliegt in die Welt*, in 1953; see [worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org).
11. For a broad discussion of women's experiences in this era, see Karen Manners Smith, 'New Paths to Power 1890-1920', in *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, ed. Nancy F. Cott (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), 352 - 412.
12. For example, Jane Addams, 'Why Women Should Vote', *Ladies' Home Journal* (January 1910), 21-22.
13. Savage, *Teenage* (London, Chatto & Windus, 2007).
14. Between 1910 and 1920, the number of students enrolled in secondary schools leapt from 985,000 to 2,200,000. 'Kindergarten, Elementary, and Secondary Schools and Enrollment: 1870 to 1970' (Series H 412-432), U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Part 1 (Washington, DC, Bureau of the Census, 1975), 368.
15. Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth Century Britain* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 181.
16. John Newsom, *The Education of Girls* (London, SCM Press, 1948).
17. The relationship between consumption and the formation of identity has most recently been discussed by Helga Dittmar in *Consumer Culture, Identity and Well-Being* (Hove and New York, Psychology Press, 2008). Her work focuses on current cultures of consumerism but is relevant to the analysis of fictions discussed here as she highlights the socially symbolic function of possessions and, especially for adolescents, the significance of peer-group ties with aspects of emergent identity were also gendered.
18. See 'Youths' Author Dies at 46,' *New York Times* (11 Feb. 1931), 22.
19. Jessie Graham Flower, *Grace Harlowe's Plebe Year at High School* (Philadelphia, Henry Altamus Company, 1910), 8.
20. *Ibid.*, 13-14.
21. *Ibid.*, 99.
22. *Ibid.*, 172.
23. Marguerite Aspinall, 'From Paris to the Sub Deb – The Sub Deb: A Page for Girls', *Ladies' Home Journal* (December 1928), 110. Nearly twenty years later, *Life* magazine featured a photograph of a Sub Deb Club in Indianapolis; the caption noted that the boys in the picture were members of a club that was 'a sort of Sub Deb auxiliary', *Life* (2 April 1945), 87.
24. Career books were at pains to explain the hard work involved in the job of air hostess yet there was a clear sense that girls were initially drawn to the career as a glamour occupation; see Kathleen M. Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007). Jean Heal noted 'Every month 328 girls apply to BOAC alone and five get finally taken on, so the first thing to realise if you have a romantic idea in your head about being one of the air girls of the future, looking wonderful in a striking uniform ... is that this is not an original idea. A few plain facts may help you sort out the romance from the reality.' Jean Heal, *Jean Heal's Book of Careers for Girls* (London, The Bodley Head, 1955), 35. The reference to Airlines in *A Career for Your Daughter* concluded that an Air Stewardess was an 'interesting and well paid career' but that the work was also tiring both mentally and physically. *A Career for Your Daughter: 40 practical suggestions for parents* (Homes and Gardens, Country Life, London, 1959)
25. Pamela Hawken, *Air Hostess Ann* (London: The Bodley Head, 1952), 12.
26. The Gardener family were what is known in Manchester as 'comfortably off' although they hadn't always been. Mr Gardener had started work as an invoice clerk.
27. *Air Hostess Ann*, 13.
28. *Ibid.*, 14.
29. 'Women with exciting jobs', *The Girls' World* (London and Glasgow, Blackie, 1960), 510.
30. *Air Hostess Ann*, 15.
31. *Ibid.*, 39.
32. 'Women with exciting jobs', 510.
33. Eleanor Brockett, *Choosing a Career* (London, Staples Press, 1959), 154.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Mabel Esther Allen, *Judith Teaches* (London, The Bodley Head, 1957), 56-57.
36. Pauline Lester, *Marjorie Dean Post-Graduate* (New York, A.L. Burt Company, 1925), 61.
37. *Ibid.*, 81-82.
38. *Ibid.*, 118.
39. *Ibid.*, 183.
40. *Air Hostess Ann*, 26.
41. *Ibid.*, 55.
42. *Ibid.*, 162.
43. Josephine Kamm, *Janet Carr: Journalist* (London, The Bodley Head, 1953), 22-23.
44. Josephine Kamm, *Student Almoner* (London, The Bodley Head, 1955), 30.
45. Pamela Hawken, *Clare in Television* (London, The Bodley Head, 1955), 7.

# **‘Lady Bountiful’ or Community activist?**

## **Amelia Scott (1860–1952)**

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Her Name Lives on at Pembury Hospital

A well-known public worker, Miss Amelia Scott, of 4, Lansdowne Road, Tunbridge Wells, died on Tuesday, aged ninety-two.

Miss Scott was a poor law guardian and in recognition of her work for the Pembury Institution a ward in the Pembury Hospital has been named after her. Miss Scott also helped to form the Tunbridge Wells branch of the National Council of Women in 1895.<sup>1</sup>

With this brief tribute, the *Kent and Sussex Courier* marked the passing of a woman whose activities forty years previously had been featured in the local press on a weekly basis. Amelia Scott not only served on the Board of Guardians, she was also a local councillor, suffrage activist and committed churchwoman. During her lifetime, she promoted an impressive range of community projects in her hometown, from a hostel for working women to social housing. She participated in the cultural and political transformation by which the Poor Law gave way to the Welfare State. Yet, to some observers, she might simply appear to be a ‘Lady Bountiful’, an upper middle-class resident of a comfortable town who had a private income and devoted her time to ‘good works’.

Discussions about women, philanthropy and social work have been taking place continually in social, women’s and gender history for nearly thirty years since the publication of Frank Prochaska’s *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*. Prochaska linked women’s involvement in philanthropy to contemporary notions of ‘women’s mission’, a product of the important part that Christianity played in women’s lives and education.<sup>2</sup> Since 1980, there have been many studies of the subject, some alluding to notions of charitable work as ‘women’s sphere’, or a ‘borderland’ space in which women were able to fashion ‘careers’ and develop professional practices. Others suggested that a middle-class woman who undertook home visiting can be conceptualised as a philanthropic flâneuse, colonising urban space in the course of her work as she might do while shopping.<sup>3</sup> While some historians have explored the connections between social work and social reform or the ambiguous relationship between female social and political activism, others have emphasised what they see as the essentially conservative nature of philanthropy/social work, especially in relation to its underscoring of class and gender norms and its reliance upon voluntarism rather than state action for the delivery of services.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the radical edge of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism has been blunted by conceptual analysis of its ‘maternal’

variant and by interpretations that understate the feminist politics of all but the most radical of women.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite all this scholarship, it seems that some of the largely negative clichés concerning the ‘Lady Bountiful’ persist in popular and even academic discourse.<sup>6</sup> This is especially true in relation to comfortably-off women who appeared to be meddling in the lives of poor, seemingly for their own amusement or benefit and in order to fill otherwise empty hours, before returning to their own comfortable, servant-run homes. While recognising that female reformers may have had a ‘passionate, full time commitment’ to their work, Anthony Platt nevertheless argued that ‘philanthropic work filled a void in their own lives’.<sup>7</sup> Recently women historians have proposed a more nuanced account, for example, Moira Martin, in her account of single women’s philanthropic activity in Bristol between 1880 and 1914. For the women in Martin’s study, she concludes, the single life was an ‘empowering ideal ... of service and influence’.<sup>8</sup> Ellen Ross has accurately observed that there is tremendous diversity among the female ‘slum travelers’ of 1860-1929.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the motivation of philanthropic women still appears to be popularly imagined in terms of their lack of alternative activities, their religious education and vague notions of ‘mission’, with the occasional addition of class guilt or even a search for sexual frisson.

Eileen Yeo has offered an alternative interpretation by teasing out the method by which ‘scientific philanthropy’ became ‘social work’, in effect the process of ‘professionalisation’.<sup>10</sup> Fairly rapidly in the twentieth century, the paid university-educated social worker replaced, or at least came to work alongside, the untrained volunteer. But volunteers also could be surprisingly professional in their approach, at least in the sense that they self-educated and spent considerable amounts of time at work.<sup>11</sup> In the work of early twentieth-century social activists, the conceptual boundaries between professional and volunteer seem to almost dissolve. Recognising this feature can not only shape our understanding of past practices, but also has contemporary relevance as the government looks to so-called ‘third sector’ agencies – which often blend the work of volunteers with paid staff – to carry forward social policies, programmes and initiatives.

Clearly one way for historians to further the debate over philanthropic/social work is through case studies on individuals involved, and the biographical turn in social history and women’s history has facilitated this approach.<sup>12</sup> Of course, we are utterly reliant on the extant sources, many of which are not as useful or as complete as we would like them to be, especially where individuals’ perceptions and motivations are concerned. This case study on Amelia Scott has made manifest

several methodological and epistemological dilemmas. For example, it has prompted reflection upon the nature of historical evidence and the process of (re)constructing a life, which lies at the centre of a biographical project. A project such as this, on a figure whose impact was mainly confined to her local area and the traces of which are largely obliterated, raises questions concerning the public role of history and the nature of historical memory, both public and private. Amelia Scott lived all her life in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and died, nearly sixty years ago, aged 91. Her work surely had impact upon the town and its residents, yet her death was only briefly reported by the local press in less than seventy words. Now she is all but forgotten and the workhouse-turned-hospital with which she was associated is being replaced by a 'state of the art' seven-storey hospital.<sup>13</sup> The past few years have therefore seemed to be an appropriate moment for the resurrection of her memory. However, this is not just a local history project. Although Amelia Scott's activism was mainly centred on her hometown, she participated in national policy networks as well, not only through the National Council of Women, but also through membership of other organisations and through correspondence with well-known individuals. A biography of Amelia Scott – or even some recognition of her significance – is therefore not the only end-product of this research. In addition, a fuller historical understanding of identity and individual agency, within the shifting currents of voluntary work, political activism and welfare reform in the early twentieth century, can perhaps be achieved.

The remainder of this article describes briefly the research path that led to this study and discusses the 'evidence', the raw material examined for this project. It then attempts to outline a brief narrative of Amelia Scott's life focusing mainly on her many public roles and campaigns before discussing her own reflections on changing social policies, and finally suggesting some tentative conclusions and raising some further questions.

## Research path and sources

My curiosity was first aroused by a passing remark of Patricia Hollis' in *Ladies Elect*, her account of women in local government, that there had been an active women's movement in Tunbridge Wells during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup> This caused me consternation: with its well-known image of staid conservatism, Tunbridge Wells seemed to be an unlikely setting for feminist politics. However, a study of the local press supported Hollis' supposition. The town and surrounding area did have an active women's movement both before and after the partial achievement of women's suffrage in 1918, with a range of – apparently thriving – local organisations including a Women's Suffrage Society, a Women's Citizens Association and a branch of the National Council of Women (NCW – formerly the National Union of Women Workers). In all these organizations, the name 'Miss Scott' featured prominently and not merely in 'honorary' roles, but holding business offices such as treasurer, proposing resolutions, making speeches and

writing to the press. It soon became clear from reports that she also served as a Guardian of the Tunbridge Poor Law Union and in 1919 was elected to the council of the Royal Borough of Tunbridge Wells as a Women's Citizens Association candidate on an explicitly feminist manifesto.<sup>15</sup> Coincidentally, in the course of a separate research project on the national Public Service and Magistrates' Committee of the NCW, I discovered that Amelia Scott was the committee's secretary. By extending newspaper searches backwards to the 'suffrage era' before 1914 and forwards into the 1920s, I uncovered further evidence of her activities and continuing campaigns for women's suffrage and a women's lodging house in the pre-war era and for women police, a maternity home, a municipal library, museum and art gallery post-war. Most strikingly, in 1920 she was awarded the Order of the Golden Palm by the King of Belgium for her help to Belgian refugees during the Great War.<sup>16</sup>

This article therefore is partly based on evidence from local newspapers supplemented by the records of the Poor Law Union and the national NCW committee, which she served for seventeen years. In some cases, the newspaper evidence gave insights into her views and political standpoint: strongly feminist, and – despite apparent concentration on gendered issues such as lodging for women and a maternity home – not primarily a 'maternal feminist'. Her energy, commitment to social reform, her feminism and her religious faith were all evident. The problem was whether there was sufficient evidence for a meaningful piece of writing. Was she in any way representative of her generation, her gender or class? Crucially, how did she perceive her role in the emerging welfare politics of the early twentieth century? As someone who operated mostly on a local level, how did she react to the growth of state welfare schemes, especially in view of the fact that she lived long enough to see the construction of the Welfare State in the 1940s. However copious in quantity, scattered newspaper references were not going to answer the many questions that they prompted.

Then in 2004, I became aware that a relative of hers had recently donated Amelia Scott's papers to the Women's Library. I spoke to the donor on the telephone. She was delighted that I was interested in the papers, which she had stored in her garage for some years since the death of her mother. The collection includes a typescript of a book inspired by Amelia Scott's work as a Poor Law Guardian, entitled *The Passing of a Great Dread*; some published work, notably *Women of Sacred History* published in 1898; other writings and speech transcriptions; material connected to her many campaigns and activities and those of the Tunbridge Wells NCW branch of which she was founder and long-term secretary; some photographs, memorabilia and a large amount of letters. This archive has enabled me to construct a much fuller biographical account than would have been possible with the newspaper articles alone.



## Amelia Scott's life and work

Amelia Scott's papers reveal little about her early life but some basic details can be gleaned from the 'snapshots' in census returns. She was born in Surrey in 1860, but by the following year, the family had moved to Southborough, on the outskirts of the rapidly developing town of Tunbridge Wells. Her father, Syms Scott, was described on the census return of 1861 as an accountant, and the family was reasonably prosperous, employing at that time three servants, a housemaid, nursemaid and cook. Amelia Scott had several older siblings and her younger sister, Louisa, was born in Southborough. By the time of the 1871 census, her father had died and the two younger sisters and their mother were living at another address in Tunbridge Wells, now with only one servant. The older siblings were not recorded at that address on this occasion. Ten years later Amelia Scott was staying with her aunt at her grandmother's house back in Southborough, the three of them being attended to by a cook and three maids.

From the census material, we can conclude that Amelia Scott probably spent many of her early years living in an exclusively feminine environment and that the ties of family played an important part in her life. Her background was comfortably middle class – her aunt and grandmother were described as 'living on own means' – although the family was not exactly wealthy. Her grandmother was the widow of a clergyman and there is clear evidence in her papers of Amelia Scott's own religious belief and commitment as she continued to be a practicing Anglican. It is interesting to compare her background with similar women discussed by Ellen Ross, who found that many of her subjects – ladies who visited the London poor – were daughters of Anglican clergy. As Ross points out, average clergymen's incomes were on the low side for gentlemen, yet they nevertheless belonged to 'genteel classes'.<sup>17</sup>

After her grandmother's death, Amelia and Louisa Scott set up home together in Tunbridge Wells. The sisters, neither of whom ever married, stayed together until their deaths: the younger woman died, at the age of ninety, only ten days after her elder sister.<sup>18</sup> Sadly, there is less evidence specifically concerning Louisa, who also remained unmarried. It is, however, clear that she participated in many of her older sister's activities and fully shared her life, a not uncommon situation for never-married, female siblings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is quite possible that Louisa Scott performed more of the domestic functions in the household, allowing her sister to devote more time to public activities. However, the younger woman also featured on several of the committees that her elder sister was involved in. Interestingly, a souvenir album, tied with ribbon made in the colours of the Belgian flag, donated by Belgian refugees in 1916, was dedicated to 'Mesdemoiselles Scott'. Nevertheless uncertainty over Louisa Scott's involvement and the ways in which the sisters shared, or divided, their public and private roles highlights the way in which archive and census evidence often raises more questions than it answers.



*Figure 1: Album presented to 'Mesdemoiselles Scott' by Belgian refugees in Tunbridge Wells, 1916*

The Scott sisters were comfortably off for their times, but not especially wealthy. In later life, they continued to live in respectable residences in the Tunbridge Wells area and were looked after by a single servant.<sup>19</sup> They each inherited one-sixth of their father's estate and do not appear to have had to earn a living at any stage.<sup>20</sup> Some of Amelia Scott's reflections on materialism are revealed in a handwritten note from 1906. Musing on 'St. Francis's Ideal of a simple life – can it be lived only by a few?' she wrote:

May we not catch the spirit of St Francis today? ... Would not absolute sincerity in religion, in temporal things, in relationship with the world and our fellow men ... bring about a simpler life – a life free and unfettered, a life of perfect joy? Would not everything be much simpler if there were *no* pretensions? [*Emphasis in original*]. Why must one with a limited income [act] as if she were as rich as her wealthy friends? Must her clothes be as numerous and as fine? Would the very rich care so much for display if no-one aped them or vied with them?<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps these reflections, as much on class and femininity in Edwardian times as on 'the simple life', were prompted by the prospect of the Annual Conference of the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW, later NCW) that was to be held in Tunbridge Wells later that year. Many grand and titled ladies were expected to attend and Amelia Scott – working on behalf of the local grandees who held honorary offices in the local NUWW branch – was involved in a great deal of preparation. Moreover, her hometown was already a fashionable place for shopping and the conference was likely to be an occasion when there would be pressure to wear smart attire. It seems very likely that she was the one with the 'limited income' who could not afford to rival the finery of wealthier ladies.

Returning to her life history, there is very little evidence of Amelia Scott's initial education or of the first thirty or so years of her life, although she probably participated in conventional Church of England-associated philanthropic activities of the era, such as running mothers' meetings and teaching Sunday school classes.<sup>22</sup> Her public work appears to have really begun around the mid 1890s. In 1931, she recalled attending a conference of 'women workers' whilst staying with a friend near Bristol in 1894.<sup>23</sup> This seems to have been, in retrospect at least, an epiphany: 'In those days in Tunbridge Wells we lived in our own small, self-satisfied circles, both in religion, politics and class ... . At Bristol I walked into a wholly different atmosphere, and it was an atmosphere where I *would* be.'<sup>24</sup> Inspired by this conference of the National Union of Women Workers, Amelia Scott subsequently formed a branch in Tunbridge Wells, holding the initial meeting in her own home and serving as its secretary for the next thirty-five years. Soon after – encouraged by the local NUWW president Louisa Twining, who despite being ostensibly retired had joined the local Board of Guardians – Amelia Scott also became a Poor Law Guardian, holding office for over thirty years. Together with five other NUWW branch members, in the 1890s she received training from the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in London and quickly established a local COS branch of which she was joint secretary.<sup>25</sup>

It seems, therefore, that around her mid-30s, Amelia Scott had truly found a vocation as a social worker. In common with some other socially-active spinsters of her generation, she only seems to have found her true role in mid-life.<sup>26</sup> Over the next four decades or so, she was continually involved, not only in practical social work and administration, but also in associated political campaigns. Her initiatives included the establishment c.1900 of the 'Leisure Hour Club for Young Women in Business' which she served as Honorary Secretary; the opening in Tunbridge Wells of the Crown hostel for women and children in 1913; and, perhaps most spectacularly, the foundation and management of a soldiers' laundry during the First World War that was said to have washed the clothing of nearly 168,000 men and mended over half a million garments.<sup>27</sup> Post-war projects included the establishment in 1925 of the Tunbridge Wells and District Nursing Home 'as a thank offering for Peace after the last war, with the desire to preserve the life of mother and child', and a campaign by the Tunbridge Wells Council of Service for the construction of social housing for the elderly.<sup>28</sup> These were all in addition to her more obviously political and/or feminist campaigns: for suffrage, for her own election to the council and Board of Guardians, for the appointment of women police and against the state regulation of prostitution. She was an avowed supporter of women's suffrage from 1905, and in 1913 took part in the NUWSS 'pilgrimage' to London of the newly formed Kentish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, giving speeches en route. Her leaflet bag, emblazoned in the NUWSS colours of red and green, is now kept with her papers at the Women's Library.

To all of this activity Amelia Scott seems to have



Figure 2: Leaflet bag from 1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage

brought a range of skills: as organiser, committee member, worker, fund-raiser, propagandist, tactician, politician and public speaker. But she seems to have taken part in the routine tasks – mending soldiers' clothing and, in her old age, knitting for the Seamen's Mission – as well as in the more public aspects.<sup>29</sup> As a Poor Law Guardian she not only regularly inspected the workhouse premises, as her mentor Louisa Twining had urged, but also visited people for whom the Tunbridge Union was responsible including those who had been sent elsewhere, for example to the County Asylum at Maidstone. Significantly, she did not confine herself to acceptably 'feminine' tasks on the Board of Guardians: she was on the Union's Finance Committee as well as the Children's Committee, the House Committee and the Mental Deficiency Committee. Her career as a Guardian continued until 1930, when the Board's functions were transferred to the Kent County Council's Public Assistance Committee.<sup>30</sup>

So far, I have concentrated on local activities, but the evidence indicates that Amelia Scott was also a part of much wider, national political and policy networks. Foremost among these groupings was the NUWW/NCW, the very organisation that appears to have made such a deep impression on her at Bristol in 1894. She regularly participated, giving papers at the Annual Conferences, contributing articles to its publications and serving on the national executive. Moreover, as already mentioned, she was responsible for the organisation of one of the most momentous NUWW conferences, held in October 1906, the very week of the first arrests of suffragettes in the House of Commons.<sup>31</sup> She corresponded with many of the leading figures of the NUWW, including Louise Creighton, the founding president and wife of Mandel Creighton, onetime Bishop of London, and worked closely with later NCW presidents, notably Florence Keynes.<sup>32</sup> Her papers also point to involvement in the Women's Local Government Society, the COS, guardians' associations, a range of non-militant suffrage societies, and, intriguingly, the Christian Social Union, of which, again, she was for a time the Tunbridge Wells branch secretary: her

correspondence contains letters from the Reverend Percy Dearmer, Christian Socialist and editor of the *English Hymnal*. Her high-profile correspondents also included Beatrice Webb, Eleanor Rathbone, Millicent Fawcett and Clementine Churchill, who was briefly a colleague on the Board of Guardians. The author Sarah Grand, who lived in Tunbridge Wells and was the local NUWSS president, was another prominent contact. She was not, incidentally, above a bit of name-dropping, as a letter from Clementine Churchill reveals. Clearly, Amelia Scott had mentioned her friendship with Florence Keynes in a letter to the Prime Minister's wife.<sup>33</sup>

Amelia Scott's networks were of great significance in relation to the transmission of political ideas and policy initiatives, connecting her local work to changing national and international discourses of social action. For example, as proposer, founder member and first secretary of the NUWW/NCW Public Service (later Public Service and Magistrates') Committee from 1913 she was responsible for gathering evidence on issues of concern from branches throughout the country and constructing consequent plans of action.<sup>34</sup> One of the first policy initiatives of the Committee concerned the inadequacy of lodging houses – the only form of housing available to single people on low incomes. The evidence gathered nationally was used to support the local campaign for a women's hostel in Tunbridge Wells. A similar pattern can be discerned in other campaigns. Amelia Scott clearly kept abreast of all the latest initiatives in local government and the voluntary sector and was eager to try them out in pursuit of better welfare for the disadvantaged people, particularly, but not exclusively, women, children and the elderly, in her hometown. By so doing, she moved beyond the role of simple social worker or do-gooder into the realms of innovation and activism. As Jane Lewis points out, the tradition of tackling social problems at a local level, which was still evident in the early twentieth century, enabled activist women to exercise pronounced influence over policy.<sup>35</sup>

## From Poor Law to National Health Service – Amelia Scott's reflections

One of the most important areas of social policy change to occur in Amelia Scott's lifetime was the gradual abolition of the Poor Law and its replacement by the universal social services recommended in the Beveridge Report of 1942. While it is now recognised that the transformation of services was not as complete as may be supposed, as a Poor Law Guardian of long standing, Amelia Scott was aware of the many changes that had taken place in her lifetime, as the Tonbridge Union workhouse was gradually and incrementally converted into Pembury Hospital. Her role as a Guardian was a key part of her public career, and it provided points of reference for her personal reflections upon the many changes in social policy that had taken place during her lifetime. Although at least part of it dates from the early 1920s, it is likely that most of her book, *The Passing of a Great Dread*, was written or at least thoroughly revised after her retirement

from her many offices and public duties in the early 1930s. Rejected by Hodder and Stoughton in 1947, whose editor rather meanly claimed that it 'falls below the standard of general literature' and 'lacks the literary touch',<sup>36</sup> the work eventually appeared in instalments in *Social Work – the British Quarterly Journal*, published by the Family Welfare Association (formerly the COS) in 1951, the year before her death. The 'Great Dread' of the title I assume to be the harsh, deterrent Poor Law of the nineteenth century and there is little doubt that the author was celebrating its passing, while simultaneously recalling the many changes that had been made in welfare along the way, and, but only by inference, the part that she had played in them.

The Tonbridge Union workhouse – later Pembury Hospital, near Tunbridge Wells – is thinly disguised as the 'Sourten' institution in the book draft.<sup>37</sup> The chapters are in epistle form, being letters written to a colleague in a neighbouring Poor Law Union. The first chapter focuses on yet another of Amelia Scott's campaigns: the provision of a new mortuary at the hospital – complete with a room furnished for grieving relatives to use – in place of the old earthen-floored shed. Despite her obvious commitment to this change, her own role in its achievement is absent from the narrative. The second section – written many years before – is a rather romanticised account of the life of an itinerant tramp, 'Elspeth Murdoch', and the lessons she was able to teach a female Guardian 'trained in all the lore of a London Charity Organisation Society office'. The Guardian is probably a self-portrait, although Amelia Scott used the third person and novelised the recollection.

Elspeth Murdoch was a sore puzzle to the COS Guardian. None of her stock phrases fitted the case. One after another of her theories broke down in the presence of this strange personality ... Kindly interest or advice seemed unwanted. No gifts were desired. Do what she could she could not prevent uncomfortable misgivings that it was *she* and not Elspeth who was 'undeserving'.<sup>38</sup>

Elspeth Murdoch's tale prompts some interesting questions, not least who is the true subject – Elspeth or 'the COS Guardian'?

The remainder of the chapters are on the whole less emotive and personal than this one, suggesting that they may have been written at different times or for different reasons. Chapter – or rather Letter – Three focuses on the 'Ins and Outs', families who spent the winter in the workhouse and the summer working in the fields of rural Kent and Sussex. Amelia Scott was clear about the economic causes of this pattern, which by the time of publication she regarded as consigned to history: 'lack of employment, seasonal employment, low standard of wages, coupled with increasing rents'.<sup>39</sup> Letter Four details the many small, but significant, changes made to improve the lives of the elderly and infirm workhouse inmates, traditionally the work of lady visitors and Guardians, while Letter Five focuses on the youngest clients for whom scattered homes were opened after 'years of struggle', a significant phrase that reminds us that campaign aims

were rarely accomplished swiftly or easily. Letter Six deals with the Infirmary, Seven with the maternity ward and Eight, entitled 'the Phthisical Ward' [sic], with the gradual improvements made in the care of tubercular patients. All the chapters contain vignette portraits of Poor Law 'clients' who were probably known personally to the author.

In general, the *Passing of the Great Dread* is very positive about the many changes that had taken place in social policy administration over the years of Amelia Scott's experience. Her authorial voice brings to mind her religious conviction and the way in which her faith seems to have underpinned her activism.

The whole world, through their actions, is beginning to see that 'God's perpetual providence' is carrying out the work of men's salvation, and that things which were cast down, are being raised up, and that things which have been old are made new, and that all things are returning to perfection through HIM from whom they took their origin even our LORD JESUS CHRIST.<sup>40</sup>

Here, as elsewhere in her writing, Amelia drew on her religious faith to give meaning to her social work and to her commitment to reform.

Although not an autobiographical work in the accepted sense, *The Passing of the Great Dread* tells its reader a great deal about Amelia Scott. The 'COS Guardian' of the second chapter cannot have fooled any reader into believing that the book was not autobiographical. Despite her deliberate subjugation of self in this account of the changes she witnessed as a Guardian, she clearly drew satisfaction as well as a sense of moral and religious purpose from her many activities. She maintained her interest in Pembury Hospital to the end and sent Christmas flowers to one of the wards only weeks before her death. However, while she was proud that the hospital was now part of the National Health Service, she felt that even when control had merely been transferred to the county that the 'local touch' had been lost and the service's administration was more remote from the people who needed them.<sup>41</sup> Her general faith in progress was thus tempered by some regret for the beneficial aspects of the old regime that she felt had been lost.

Hilda Kean has suggested that women of Amelia Scott's generation 'constructed their own identities through public activities'.<sup>42</sup> To an extent Amelia Scott seems to have used *The Passing of the Great Dread* to construct her identity in direct relationship with the development of the Welfare State and the great changes in social services, which she had both witnessed and helped to create. Her writing demonstrated her faith in progress and belief that political and social action – at local as well as national level – could bring tangible results.

## Conclusion

Amelia Scott's life course – even her own identity – witnessed a transition, not so much from 'Lady Bountiful' to 'scientific philanthropist' as from conventional, late-

Victorian church-woman to social activist. All around her there was a parallel transformation from Poor Law to Welfare State, a process in which, it is now widely acknowledged, women and men of the voluntary sector and in local government played a vital part. She did not see her work as a conservative reinforcement of existing values but as a progressive force, albeit steeped in 'traditional' virtues of religious duty and altruism. She moved forward – or sometimes sideways – from issue to issue and campaign to campaign, but not before there had been some fruition. The completion and continuation of projects appears to have been very important to her and this thoroughness is an indication of her professionalism: she did not lack an attention to detail. She was paradoxically both a modern, independent woman of the twentieth century and a Victorian spinster who lived with a sister and a servant, and wrote devotedly to her godchildren. Her public persona was as a committed and energetic reformer, a motivator and networker par excellence. In her own lifetime, her contribution was often recognised locally, not least by the Belgian refugees who in 1916 presented her and her sister with a beautiful, hand-illustrated commemorative album, surely more a sign of genuine appreciation than of mere deference.

Any precise motivation for her varied activities can only be a matter for supposition. Amelia Scott undoubtedly had a religious faith and upbringing, but the evidence suggests she was in her thirties before that translated – after her 'conversion' to women's social activism in 1894 – into a commitment to social and political action.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, although religious belief may have continued to play a part, she seems also to have embraced politics, specifically a feminist ideology, exemplified by her election to the council in 1919 on a women citizens' manifesto. Moreover, *The Passing of the Great Dread* demonstrates her understanding that it was not just the workhouse infirmary that had undergone a transformation. 'The COS Guardian' had also had to reassess her earlier views and ideas. Therefore the factors that motivated her entry into the public arena in the 1890s may not have been the same as the ones that kept her there thirty years later. Amelia and Louisa Scott had long lives, ones in which politics and social policy underwent some major changes. While their willingness to work for the community remained constant, the causes altered and so may have their motivation. For example, the establishment of the soldiers' laundry during the First World War seems to have resulted largely from a patriotic impulse and the desire of so many women to 'do their bit', as well as a direct request from the commanding officer.

It is no doubt significant that – in common with many other middle-class female social activists of their generation – the Scott sisters never married, therefore the recent observations of Martin on the public activities of single women in the late-nineteenth century are apposite.<sup>44</sup> Local social activism gave middle-class women empowerment, personal satisfaction and an arena in which to wield influence at a time when they were largely excluded from the national political scene. But none of these factors can explain the sheer determination



and dogged dedication to so many different organizations, projects and committees evidenced by Amelia Scott and women like her. Therefore it is probable also that their activities in some ways amounted to a career, collectively providing them with the satisfaction and sense of purpose of a profession. While middle-class female volunteers neither expected nor received any payment for their work, they were often prepared to devote large amounts of time to their causes and to undergo appropriate training, as Amelia Scott did with the COS. They also participated in national associational networks, such as the NUWW/NCW, which promoted the sharing of good practice and an awareness of current policy trends as well as providing a focus for lobbying activities. Altruism and the urge to make a difference to social conditions must have played a part in this.

Some conclusions can therefore be reached, but many questions remain. Some arise from the fact that this account, like so many biographies of 'significant' individuals, is focused on Amelia Scott's public work, which she only began in her mid-thirties. What was her early life like? What part did her sister/companion play? Were there other women like her in other towns? Why, in contrast with earlier periods, was there apparently so little recognition of her life and work by the time she died, apart from the not insignificant tribute of naming a hospital ward after her? In answer to the final question, it is possible that, despite the modernity of her views on social policy, she seemed to the townspeople of Tunbridge Wells to be a rather old-fashioned figure by the 1950s, an elderly relic of the long-departed Poor Law system in the era of the National Health Service, perhaps even a 'Lady Bountiful' from a bygone age. How she envisioned herself – with all her wealth of experience and memory of past social conditions – can only be imagined. Apart from some of her letters and the semi-autobiographical *The Passing of the Great Dread*, Amelia left little evidence of how she made sense of her life and work. It is therefore left to the researcher not only to construct a life story but also to reflect on the motivation that led Amelia and Louisa Scott – and so many other women like them – to dedicate so much of their lives to social, political and community work.

The example of the Scott sisters and those of many other women like them suggests that philanthropy/social work in the early twentieth century provided an opportunity for both single and married women to prove their self-worth, achieve publicly-recognised goals, and realise personal aspirations at a time when established professional routes were either completely or partially closed to them. At the same time, they were able to suppress selfishness through altruistic action: as Stefan Collini argues, altruism lay at the heart of moral virtue from the Victorian period through to the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>45</sup> Similar normative aspects are again being recognized as a factor in motivating social service today: as Paul Hoggett, *et al.* point out, the public service ethic 'is often something deeply rooted, typically part of the very identity that such [social work] professionals have'.<sup>46</sup> Social activism of the kind undertaken by Amelia Scott and others like her therefore cannot be interpreted purely in terms of self-interest or even self-worth, but as a much

more complex phenomenon.

## Notes

1. *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 28 March 1952.
2. Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), 1, 3.
3. The 'flâneuse' in the late nineteenth-century city is discussed in Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000), 6-7. On women's work, including philanthropy, see Ellen Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, Routledge, 1999). For women's role mediating between 'public' and 'private' spheres, see Anne Clendinning, *Demons of Domesticity: A History of Women and the English Gas Industry, 1889-1939* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004).
4. Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1981).
5. Seth Koven and Sonia Michel, *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London, Routledge, 1993).
6. A recent example of the use of the term is Judith Rumgay, 'Another Look at Lady Bountiful: Reform, Gender and Organisations' in Frances Heidensohn ed., *Gender and Justice: New Concepts and Approaches* (Cullumpton, Willan, 2006).
7. A. M. Platt, *The Child Savers* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1969), 83, 77.
8. Moira Martin, 'Single Women and Philanthropy: a Case Study of Women's Associational Life in Bristol, 1880-1914', *Women's History Review*, 17, 3 (2008), 395-417.
9. Ellen Ross, *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007), 1-3.
10. Eileen Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London, Rivers Oram Press, 1996), 247-8.
11. Anne Logan, 'Professionalism and the Impact of England's First Women Justices', *Historical Journal*, 49, 3 (2006), 833-50.
12. A recent example is Linda Mahood's *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876-1928* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2009).
13. 'Pembury PFI Hospital construction one year on', 12 April 2009, [www.thisiskent.co.uk/news/Pembury-PFI-hospital-construction-year/article-887486-detail/article.html](http://www.thisiskent.co.uk/news/Pembury-PFI-hospital-construction-year/article-887486-detail/article.html), viewed 9 October 2009.
14. Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1864-1914* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987).
15. *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 8 August 1919, 4 November 1919.
16. *Ibid.*, 29 October 1920.
17. Ross, *Slum Travelers*, 4.

18. Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone (CKS) CH94/6, *NCW Royal Tunbridge Wells and District Branch: The First Seventy Five Years 1895-1970*.

19. Personal communication.

20. Women's Library (WL) 7/ASC/6/3.

21. WL 7/ASC/1/2, 'St. Francis's Ideal of a Simple Life', 11 March 1906.

22. It is likely that she attended University Extension lectures in Tunbridge Wells at a later stage. Her papers include a printed copy of a conference speech by Amelia Scott, entitled 'Moral Teaching in Sunday Schools'. WL 7/ASC/1/2.

23. Moira Martin has accurately described the NUWW as 'an umbrella organisation' for 'women who were actively involved in social work'. According to Martin, the Bristol conference was held in 1892. Martin, 'Single Women and Philanthropy', 409.

24. WL 7/ASC/2/1/2, pamphlet on 'The History of the NCW in Tunbridge Wells for the last 35 years' (1931).

25. *Ibid.*

26. There is a similarity here with Eglantyne Jebb. See Linda Mahood, 'Remembering, Representing and Writing a Rebel Daughter', *Women's History Review*, 17, 1 (2008), 1-20.

27. For the girls' club, see WL 7/ASC/2/3/1-2; for the hostel, see *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 27 July 1913; for the laundry, see especially WL 7/ASC/2/1/2, pamphlet on 'Some War Work in Tunbridge Wells May 1915 – April 1918'. Louisa Scott took charge of the room, which mended the soldiers' clothing.

28. WL 7/ASC/3/1/1-2.

29. CKS CH94/6.

30. CKS G/TO/A/M/46, minutes of Tonbridge Union Guardians' Committees.

31. *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 23 October 1906. This was the conference at which the journalist, Evelyn Sharp, made a firm commitment to women's suffrage. See Angela V. John, *Evelyn Sharp: Rebel Woman, 1869-1955* (Manchester University Press, 2009), 52-3.

32. For the work of Florence Keynes and the Public Service and Magistrates' Committee, see Anne Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice: a Historical Perspective* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 25-30.

33. WL 7/ASC/7/1/1.

34. London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) ACC/3613/1/77, minutes of the NCW Public Service and Magistrates' Committee 1913-1935. Miss Scott retired as secretary in 1927.

35. Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1991), 304.

36. WL 7/ASC/7/1/2.

37. It is designated as Pembury in the published version.

38. WL 7/ASC/1/1/1, *The Passing of a Great Dread* typescript, 21.

39. *Ibid.*, 26.

40. *Ibid.*, 97.

41. *Ibid.*, 101-2.

42. Hilda Keen, 'Some Problems of Constructing and Reconstructing a Suffragette's Life: Mary Richardson, suffragette, socialist and fascist', *Women's History*

*Review*, 7, 4 (1998), 475-93.

43. Hilda Keen pointed out that suffrage feminists often used the motif of the religious-type conversion in their autobiographical accounts. Hilda Keen, 'Some Problems', 476.

44. Moira Martin, 'Single Women and Philanthropy'.

45. Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991).

46. Paul Hoggett, Phoebe Beedell, Luis Jimenez, Marj Mayo and Chris Miller, 'Identity, Life History and Commitment to Welfare', *Journal of Social Policy*, 35, 4 (2006), 689-704. For the importance of normativity in sociology, see also Andrew Sayer, 'Class, Moral Worth and Recognition', *Sociology*, 39, 5 (2005), 947-963.

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# Menopause Exposed: Women Surveying Women

Marie-Clare Balaam and Barbara Crowther

*Independent Researchers*

At the time of its publication in *The Lancet* in 1933, a report entitled 'An Investigation of the Menopause in One Thousand Women'<sup>1</sup> caused little comment. Retrospectively, however, in the context of the changing ideas of menopause throughout the last century, it deserves re-appraisal not just for its findings but also for its approach. The survey that preceded the 1933 report and the report itself are the subjects of this article. While these demonstrated many of the central definitional issues and paradoxes explored in earlier medical discussions of menopause, they challenged the dominant thinking and approaches to the subject. They approached menopause as a natural, rather than a pathological, occurrence. They presented the experience of going through the process of menopause as a subject inherently worthy of academic interest, and crucially allowed women themselves to help shape the definition of menopause. This brought the knowledge of ordinary women into the realm of medical knowledge and in this, the study differed from most earlier and indeed much other contemporaneous work on the menopause. It also, whilst working within the dominant bio-medical model, acknowledged the social context in which women's mid-life experiences could be understood.

The article 'An Investigation of the Menopause in One Thousand Women' was the publication of the results of a survey, started five years earlier in 1926, collecting evidence from a large cohort of post-menopausal women. Its stated purpose was to improve doctors' understanding of the clinical aspects of menopause and to 'further our knowledge with regard to the prevention and treatment of any disabilities that may exist'.<sup>2</sup> This was the first time such a large scale survey of women's experience of the menopause had been collected and accorded the considerable importance of publication in such a prestigious medical journal; and while this represented a valuable advance, the article is still part of the ongoing medicalisation of menopause, albeit with a different and less strictly clinical focus, which continued throughout the rest of the century and beyond.

Significantly, the report was compiled by an organisation of women doctors, the Medical Women's Federation (MWF), whose history, aims, activities and composition are discussed briefly below.<sup>3</sup> The prestige of publication in *The Lancet* would seem to suggest that it was seen as a significant piece of work within the contemporary medical community. However, a consideration of later work on the menopause, including work published soon after in journals like *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), suggests that its findings and approaches, some of which questioned more traditional ideas of menopause as pathological, were not taken up by others working in the same field. Over the next ten years, the report was not mentioned in the key medical journals; the only reference was a citation in an article in 1936.<sup>4</sup>

The report provides us with a remarkable snapshot of contemporary understanding of menopause. It alerts us, in its language and its processes as much as in its findings, to the tenacity of some myths and beliefs lingering from Victorian times as well as shifts in thoughts and behaviour. Similarly, continuities between attitudes in the 1930s and today, as well as evidence of some changes, are evident in the report. As a survey by women about women, it continues to have a singular significance, different to previous work done on menopause, not only because it represented, to some extent, an early prototype of feminist research, but also because it sought to challenge the idea that women were disabled by menopause.

A number of studies looking at the development of modern attitudes to menopause identify the 1960s and the commercial development of HRT as the period in which menopause became an issue of mainstream medical attention.<sup>5</sup> While that era certainly saw wider public awareness of menopause as a medically defined syndrome, other writers have suggested that the modern medicalisation of menopause occurred much earlier than this, in the first two decades of the twentieth century when endocrinology developed as a medical specialisation.<sup>6</sup> However, there is evidence that the increased medical interest in menopause in these decades was in fact part of a longer process. While endocrinology may have changed the physiological explanation for the cessation of the menses, the broader idea of menopause as a subject of medical discussion and intervention was well established by this time. Research into menopause in turn-of-the-century medical journals suggests menopause was already being medicalised, part of a growing interest in women's health, 'the woman question' and the growth of gynaecology.<sup>7</sup>

By the 1920s and 1930s discussions of menopause retained some traditional ideas of what menopause was and its implication for midlife women. Menopause was conceptualised as a dysfunction of the menstrual cycle, the cessation of menstruation as a cause of potentially serious physical and mental ill health in women, and links were made between women's reproductive and mental states. However, developments within medicine had begun to change some of the ways in which menopause was approached. Looking at work on menopause published in a number of medical publications, primarily *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*, in the years between 1920 and 1950, it is possible to identify similarities both in the nature of the investigations and in their content.

A number of these articles focus on traditional areas of concern for those looking at menopause: the age at which women experienced menopause, its relation to the age of menarche and the impact of marriage and childbearing to women's experiences of menopause.<sup>8</sup> Even more common, is the consideration of menopause

in terms of the pathology of the female body. Whether the menopause is described as 'natural' or 'artificial', the later being induced either by surgery or radiation, the main focus of these articles is the discussion of the range of pathological conditions facing women at this time. The articles, while mentioning milder symptoms like flushing, focus primarily on more extreme conditions including breast cancer, arthritis, menorrhagia, psychotic and neurotic breakdown and insanity, all of which are attributed to pathological changes taking place at the menopause.<sup>9</sup> Reflecting the developments in the field of endocrinology there are some discussions of the role of hormones, or 'internal secretions', in women's experience of menopause and of their potential role in treating associated symptoms.<sup>10</sup> Other writers consider more traditional approaches to the treatment including gynaecological surgery, still referred to by some as 'castration', whilst others discuss the efficacy and use of the application of X-rays and radium in various forms to places inside and on women's bodies.<sup>11</sup>

Until the publication of the MWF report in 1933, the clinical understanding of menopause had been compiled by doctors from the presenting symptoms of their patients, women, or their families, disturbed enough by these symptoms to turn to their doctor. There was little consideration given to the idea that some women may suffer no ill health at menopause or acknowledgement that the cases chosen may be unusual. The choice of 'subjects' and the focus and content of the articles alongside a failure to discuss any type of 'normal' menopause, all reinforced the idea of menopause as a pathological condition.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the samples used in these clinical investigations were small, usually between ten and thirty. The MWF report gave the medical profession access to the menopausal experiences of large numbers of women, predominantly women who were not from clinical settings, i.e. not patients. Furthermore, these many different experiences were collected and interpreted by women.

It is helpful to locate the survey within this historical continuum, since the report sought to develop new knowledge, and to embrace a different methodology and rationale while it continued to work with older ideas about the nature of menopause and its effects on women. It carried the traces of conventional beliefs about menopause seen in other contemporary studies, for example, its concerns with the relationship between the age of menarche and of menopause, as well as prefiguring future ones, relating to how far menopause should be seen as an incapacitating condition that could effect women's working lives. The purpose and composition of the MWF, to the extent to which it can be seen as both radical and conventional, gave its work on menopause a particular resonance in the continuum of knowledge.

Women had been entering the modern medical profession officially since the last decades of the nineteenth century when medical schools gradually began to allow women to study. However, by the first decades of the twentieth century, despite some progress particularly during World War One, women still faced huge challenges in entering and progressing within the medical

profession.<sup>13</sup> The MWF grew from the perceived need of a number of women doctors for a national body to promote and protect the interests of women doctors in a profession, which continued to be organised and dominated by men.<sup>14</sup> It was formally established in 1917, registering as a limited company and publishing its articles of association. In its first published newsletter its stated rationale was 'to safeguard and promote the professional interests of medical women' and 'to enable them to speak as a body and so to extend a greater influence on public policy, in regard to those matters, such as health administration, in which they are directly concerned'.<sup>15</sup> Acknowledging their minority status within the profession and their marginalisation in its power structures, the Federation helped medical women to increase their power and voice through collective action. In addition, it supported work in areas of medicine and socio-medical issues which were of particular concern to them, such as venereal disease, prostitution, maternal welfare, sex education, menstruation and menopause. Its concern with such issues, and the desire to influence public policy linked it to the principles and activities of the contemporary women's movement, as well as reflecting the limited access women had to the more prestigious areas of hospital medicine.<sup>16</sup>

In 1926, the Western and South Wales Association, one of the local organisations, which formed part of the MWF, suggested forming a sub-committee on menopause. This sub-committee, according to its letterhead, comprised nine women: two Misses, five Doctors, one Professor and one Lady, with the letters M.D. after her name.<sup>17</sup> The terms of reference for the committee's work were, as outlined in the MWF newsletter for 1926, firstly 'to investigate the incidence and nature of the symptoms definitely attributable to the menopause and to consider the question of prophylaxis and the treatment of such symptoms', and secondly 'to make a report with the objective of correcting any prevalent misconceptions about the inability suffered by women during the menopause resulting in the loss of employment'.<sup>18</sup>

These aims, thoroughly compatible with the principles of the MWF, reflected both clinical and socio-economic areas of concern. They also highlighted the hybrid meaning of menopause itself. The first aim focused on the clinical aspects of menopause, constructing it through the presentation of signs and symptoms and the subsequent treatment or prevention of these physiological occurrences. The second objective treated menopause as a socio-cultural phenomenon, going beyond the purely clinical to include other discursive constructions and potentially discriminatory practices.<sup>19</sup>

Explaining their project in a letter to participating 'medical women', the Menopause Sub-Committee of the MWF outlined their purpose as 'to ascertain facts with regard to the incidence of symptoms definitely attributable to the Menopause, and to further our knowledge with regard to the prevention and treatment of any disabilities that may exist'.<sup>20</sup> They wanted primarily to get data from what they called 'women in normal health ... in whom the menopause occurred five, or more, years ago'.<sup>21</sup> The women who were the subjects of the MWF survey



were selected, as far as possible, by other routes than that they had sought medical help for conditions likely to be associated with the climacteric or menopause. This indicated an attempt to gain a wider knowledge of women's experience of menopause, rather than a narrow view based on those cases in which women experienced ill health at mid life severe enough to present to a doctor.

The survey sought to discover how widespread certain symptoms were among their informants, and how far certain select social and biological factors impacted on the incidence and severity of these symptoms. Data relating to 'symptoms directly attributable to the menopause', were collected, and studied against the marital status, number of pregnancies and previous health of the informants, and their self-recollected menstrual histories. Interestingly though data were collected on the social class of the women informants and its relationship to menopausal symptoms showing that the compilers recognised a potentially significant variable, this was not followed up or commented on in the report.<sup>22</sup>

The MWF was faced with the challenge of finding a good variety of informants and reliable information. One of their approaches was to send a letter to women doctors, with a request for the findings of any special study of menopause they themselves might have done and two different questionnaires. The first of these forms, Form A, was for the women doctors to distribute to 'any friends and relatives whom you could trust to fill it in correctly' which of course, in the light of the class make-up of doctors, would stack the deck towards middle-class informants.<sup>23</sup> Form B was for doctors to complete, to provide 'details which can be supplied by medical practitioners only.'<sup>24</sup> Sensing the problem both of skewing the survey by class and by the medical context of knowledge, these details should be 'in reference to as many women as possible, in all sorts and conditions of life, *not necessarily from your patients*'. [original emphasis]

The rest of the informants – and they ultimately numbered 1,220, ranging between twenty-nine and ninety-one years of age – were referred to in the body of the report as 'of various social status', with different work backgrounds.<sup>25</sup> These included women 'leading an ordinary home life, women engaged in or retired from the various professions, intellectual and manual occupations and domestic work'. They were drawn from women residing in urban, industrial and rural areas of England and Scotland.<sup>26</sup> Two particular places for finding informants were referred to: 'public assistance institutions' and 'business houses', both places in which groups of women could be easily accessed based on criteria other than health. While the report explained the choice of public assistance institutions, it said little about their choice of what the report terms 'business houses' or how they gained access to these institutions.

The report noted that knowing which women to approach in some settings was challenging. The survey explained that one of the difficulties in collecting data for the investigation from other than patients, had been the uncertainty of heads of departments in business houses as to which of the women employed should be questioned,

since in so many over fifty years of age, 'no signs of having passed "the change of life"' had been detected. The survey also noted a related difficulty in identifying women of all classes who might be experiencing menopause. Going against commonly held ideas that menopause was clearly identifiable in women's appearance or demeanour, they explained how many women 'in daily contact with others, had revealed no menopausal disturbance, such as irritability of temper, commonly thought to be inseparable from this phase of a woman's life'.<sup>27</sup> However, while the compilers acknowledge that irritability of temper was commonly assumed by many to be a telling index of the menopausal state, they did not include it as a symptom on the checklist they presented to the informants. This absence was not explained, leaving us to wonder whether their experience suggested it was not a significant symptom, or if there were other reasons for its omission. If this were generally perceived to be a particularly common symptom of menopause, it could have been a useful exercise to test it out on the informants.

There were many problems with the methodology of the survey, and thus the soundness of its findings, some of which the compilers recognised themselves. Explicit in the report was their own concern about the reliability of data from sources other than doctors' patients. Apart from implicit class prejudice alluded to earlier, there was the question of memory. They admitted that for many of the women, the vast majority over fifty-five, a large amount of time had elapsed between the phenomena they were commenting on and the moment of the survey. This, they felt, undermined the accuracy of their data – an inference that was probably correct. Certain details, like the date of their first period and the early experiences of menstruation, were clearly remembered by women of all ages, while other details, significantly their age when periods ceased, were not: 'Several were unable to state their exact age at the last period, even if only five years previously.'<sup>28</sup> This is not perhaps surprising in that if women do not know which period is their last until several months – even years – have elapsed, the date will not be fixed in their minds in the same way. Indeed, the report remarks that the high incidence of women claiming fifty as the age of their menopause was probably due to a tendency to use 'round figures' or perhaps a perception that fifty was the 'right' age for menopause. The report also mentioned the difficulties they experienced in women self-reporting on their previous health – a question that was asked in order to try to relate previous health to the type of menopausal symptoms women experienced. They noted that 'in many cases the histories were indefinite and the value of the statements regarding past illnesses difficult to assess.' Thus in their analysis of the material they classified the results in terms, that they themselves admitted were crude, of good, fair and bad.<sup>29</sup>

There are also from our modern perspective some problems associated with the terms used by the survey. Firstly, there is constant slippage around the term menopause itself – then, as today. Although the survey identifies a range of bio-medical symptoms associated with the loss of fertility, there is no clear demarcation

between some of these symptoms and ones associated merely with ageing, for example, rheumatic pain which can affect both sexes. Menopause takes place, after all, at a period of life, middle age, when other signs of ageing appear, such as deterioration of eyesight and hearing and flexibility of joints, and no keys are given to distinguishing those 'symptoms definitely attributable to the Menopause'.

Secondly, and connected with this, is the problematic term 'normal'. It is used in the survey in respect both of menstruation and menopause to indicate the opposite of dysmenorrhea and severe symptoms. However, the figures relating to such 'normal' experiences of these two physiological phases show them not to be normal at all. In every case – for married and single women, for menstruation and menopause – the 'normal' response rate is lower than the 'severe' figure, sometimes considerably so, which undermines the normal/severe dichotomy and challenges the normativity of the normal.

Another methodological issue is the relationship between the use of the closed choice questionnaire, which of course limits the range of possibilities in potential answers, and the more open-formatted questionnaire. In Form A, women were asked about their experiences in an open-ended and relatively non-clinical way, 'Had you any trouble which in your opinion was due to the Change of life? If so what was its nature?'<sup>30</sup> This allowed them an opportunity to express their experiences in their own terms. Form B, for the medical women themselves to fill in, in contrast, offered a list of symptoms for them to confirm, which would limit and to some degree prescribe the conditions reported, asking them to confirm or deny a range of symptoms which can be assumed to have been derived primarily from previous ideas about what happened to women at menopause.<sup>31</sup>

The results of the survey were organised under the following headings:

1. The proportion of women free from menopausal symptoms;
2. The frequency of [named] symptoms;
3. Incapacity due to the menopause;<sup>32</sup>
4. Age of onset and cessation of the menses;
5. The effect on the prevalence of symptoms and age at the menopause of:
  - Age of onset of the catamenia<sup>33</sup>
  - Miscarriage and childbearing
  - Menstrual history
  - Previous health;<sup>34</sup>
6. Comparison of points above in married and unmarried women.

These headings reflect long-held concerns about women at menopause, in terms of age of menarche and its relationship to menopause, impact of menstrual history and a concern with the impact of marital status on all the results ascertained. This final category is less an individual category and more a variable applied to all the findings listed in numbers one to five. The concern with marital status reflects perhaps an attempt to connect menopausal symptoms with sexual activity, assuming that marriage

implies regular sexual activity with one other person. Concomitant with that the term *unmarried* assumes – often erroneously no doubt – sexual inexperience and absence of pregnancies. In the report's findings, pregnancy and childbirth are discussed within the 'married' category and the notable areas of difference between the figures for the married and unmarried are interpreted as pointing to factors connected with bringing up and running a family rather than as simple biology and sexual history. Thus, *married* stands for motherhood too.

The first three categories described above seek to identify the incidence and severity of ill health experienced by women at menopause and, very significantly in light of common and earlier medical assumptions, a possible lack of ill-health. The interesting finding here is that the menopause *was not* perceived or remembered as the severe 'disturbance of health' that most folk knowledge and earlier medical knowledge assumed it to be. Close to 16 per cent of the informants reported themselves 'free from all menopausal symptoms,' a figure that rose to just over 20 per cent when flushing was the only symptom. Moreover, nearly 90 per cent of the women 'carried on their usual occupation without any interruption'.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the report noted: 'In view of the general impression acquired from the literature on the subject, it was somewhat surprising to find that 900 out of 1000 unselected women stated that they had carried on their daily routine without a single interruption due to menopausal symptoms.'<sup>36</sup> This opinion reinforced the accounts mentioned earlier of women within 'business houses' who struggled to identify women they felt were facing the menopause, once again questioning the idea that menopause was very evident on the body and in the demeanour of the middle aged woman.<sup>37</sup>

Here, again, we are faced with a terminological question: how far did the informants see the menopause itself as a contributory factor to their sense of general health during the crucial years, and how far can menopause be dissociated from other aspects of ageing, and the social, domestic and personal issues associated with the mid-life years? Clearly, the contemporary opinions provided by the 'literature on the subject' were based on ideas of the *disabling* effects of the menopause, part of the dysfunctional model that dominated earlier medical studies.

The variables between the data for married and unmarried women are interesting, not so much for the biological differences, but for the possible psycho-sociological readings we can make of the responses. For example, in terms of symptoms altogether, the single women seemed considerably less affected than married women, but in terms of incapacity for work the figures were much the same.<sup>38</sup> Married women, a large proportion of whom may well not have taken a paid job, had no choice, presumably, than to carry on regardless with their domestic responsibilities in the home. Regarding individual symptoms, both married and unmarried cohorts were most affected by *flushing*, then by *headaches* and *giddiness*. But after this, married women were almost twice as likely to be bothered by *obesity* than single

women were; single women, with no husband and children observing them, and bodies un-stretched by childbearing, were more disturbed by *nervous instability*, their mental and emotional state, than by their fattening figures, but only slightly more than their married counterparts.

Although some differences were found between the overall figures for married and unmarried women, the significance of these differences was, on the whole, minimal. This raises the question of why the comparison was written into the structure of the survey, what findings were expected and what they hoped to be able to claim as a result of the findings. The conclusion of the report made scant mention of differences between married and single women, and no reference to it as being an important distinction in this context.

Other findings related to what were traditional areas of interest regarding menopause and the health of mid-life women, the age at which women experienced menopause and factors that might affect this, primarily the relationship between the age of the onset and cessation of menstruation. Consideration was also given to the impact of childbirth on age of menopause. The report concluded that 'there was little or no correlation between the age of onset of menstruation and the age of last period,' and that childbearing had no impact on age of menopause.<sup>39</sup> There was also a range of factors relating to women's experience of ill health at the menopause. Here the findings considered age at final period, number of miscarriages, number of pregnancies and previous health. Previous ill health 'was a factor of no marked importance in influencing the onset or severity of menopausal symptoms.' There was no significant relationship found between the number of miscarriages on menopausal symptoms, and childbirth only became a significant factor for those women who had ten or more pregnancies.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, the report considered another common area of interest, the relationship between menstrual and menopausal symptoms. The question was posed 'Is a woman who suffered from dysmenorrhoea more likely to suffer from symptoms during the menopause than a woman in whom menstruation was normal?' The conclusion drawn was that 'there was some evidence that normal menstruation tended to be followed by a normal menopause and a history of dysmenorrhoea by more marked menopausal symptoms'.<sup>41</sup> Here, as in other areas of the survey, the use of the term 'normal' remains relatively undefined and therefore problematic. If normal means most frequently occurring, according to this survey 'normal' menopause means women suffer some discomfort to varying degrees but that this discomfort still allows 90 per cent of them to continue their daily lives.

The Medical Women's Federation report stands in a strategic historical position with regard to the development of menopausal discourse in medicine. It was written as endocrinology was offering new ways of looking at and interpreting menopause and the ill health some women experience at this time. It was written at a time in which ideas about women's social, economic and political position in British society were changing. Ideas about women's reproductive biology, health and ill health

were, as always, significant factors in the ways in which women were able to negotiate and position themselves within the wider social, economic and political context. For example, the idea of menopause as potentially disabling for women clearly has implications for issues related to mid-life women's competence and suitability in the public and professional sphere.

The social meanings of menopause are complex and dependent on a range of bio-medical, social and cultural factors. The way in which menopause is discussed and written about, the symptoms and behaviours included in its scope, the connotations of the term, and the consequent treatment, social and medical, of those women involved are all part of its 'meaning'. As Jacqueline Zita argues 'Language is used to negotiate and interpret women's subjective menopausal experience'; here it is the existence of the survey itself that sets the agenda for describing and potentially 'treating' the experiences.<sup>42</sup> It is not language alone, but the soliciting, validating and publishing of the women's experiences that allows new interpretation and negotiation to be conducted.

Herein lies the significance of the Medical Women's Federation survey; the subject of the report was women, and women's knowledge about themselves and their bodies. Traditionally the construction of knowledge of menopause had been the work of male physicians exploring the pathologies of the female body. Here, though, was a report, offering statistics designed to find out more about women's experience of mid-life to help in the treatment of menopausal conditions, based on information gathered by women doctors from healthy women. This new approach offered by the survey in seeking the views and experiences of women who were not under medical treatment at this time allows the medical profession to see that that significant numbers of women experienced no or few symptoms at menopause. It clearly demonstrated, in a way that challenged dominant contemporary ideas, that most women were not so severely incapacitated by menopause that it prevented them doing their daily activities. The report was also significant in the way in which it allowed the women involved to become more active participants in the research process rather than the objects of male clinical observation and investigation. While the survey left some areas frustratingly vague and underdeveloped, particularly those relating to social class, it did try to see beyond the purely clinical focus of menopause by looking at environmental, social and economic issues relating to women's mid life experience.

This survey allowed medical professionals access to the experiences of large numbers of mid-life women, significantly more than in other contemporaneous or earlier studies. It was considered important enough to be published in a journal as eminent as *The Lancet*, yet the report and its findings are not mentioned by contemporaneous and subsequent articles. Articles published in *The Lancet* and the *BMJ* over the next decade and a half made only one brief reference to the findings of the survey.<sup>43</sup> Many of the articles continued to focus on more traditional and narrowly clinical aspects of menopause, ignoring the more social and environmental

approach the MWF survey sought to include within its brief.

We interpret the neglect of the findings of this survey, and of the survey itself in later medical research, as likely to be related to the relatively marginal status of women in the medical profession and within medical research. Their research may be deemed less important than male research. Indeed this feeds into the ways in which menopausal and postmenopausal women were marginalised within the medical professional and society at large at a time when there was more interest in the health of women of childbearing age than in the health of women whose childbearing years were over.

## Notes

1. Medical Women's Federation, 'An Investigation of Menopause in One Thousand Women', *The Lancet*, 221, 5707 (14/01/1933), 106-108.
2. Contemporary Medical Archives Centre (hereafter CMAC) SA/MWF/B.4/6/1 Box 18: Menopause Subcommittee of the Medical Women's Federation, letter 1, April 1927 and Questionnaire Forms A and B.
3. For more on the Medical Women's Federation see Lesley Hall, '80 Years of the Medical Women's Federation', *Medical Women*, 16, 2 (Summer 1997), 6-9, and Kaarin Michaelson, 'Union is Strength: The Medical Politics of Professionalism, 1917-1930', in *Women and Work Culture: Britain c.1850-1950*, eds, Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005), 161-176.
4. Editorial, *Clinical Excerpts: A Medical Journal Devoted to Therapeutics*, 10, 189 (1936), 189-191.
5. These include the works of Judith Posner, 'It's All in Your Head: Feminist and Medical Models of Menopause, Strange Bedfellows', *Sex Roles* 5, 2 (1979), 179-190; K. I. Macpherson, 'Menopause as Disease: The Social Construction of a Metaphor', *Advances in Nursing Science*, 3, 2 (1981), 95-113; Linda Mittness, 'Historical Changes in Public Information about Menopause', *Urban Anthropology*, 12, 2 (1983), 161-179.
6. These include the works of S. E. Bell, 'The Medicalisation of Menopause', in *The Meanings of Menopause, Historical, Medical and Clinical Perspectives*, ed. Ruth Formanek (Hillside, New Jersey, Analytic Press, 1990), 43-62; Margaret Lock, *Encounters With Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993).
7. J.W. Barbre, 'Menoboomers and Moral Guardians: An Exploration of the Cultural Construction of Menopause', in *The Politics of Women's Bodies, Sexuality, Appearance and Behaviour*, ed. R. Weitz (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), 25-45; M. Lock, *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993); Marie-Claire Balaam, 'Representations of Menopausal Women in Turn of the Century British Medical Journals', *Women's History Network Notebook*, 7, 1 (Winter, 2000) and unpublished research. Louise Foxcroft's recent book *Hot Flushes and Cold Science: A History of Modern Menopause* (London, Granta, 2009) provides a wider

overview of medical views of menopause and menopausal women since the eighteenth century.

8. 'The Menopause Age in Finland', *The Lancet*, 199, 5153 (3/6/1922), 1110.
9. E. K. Dawson, 'The Menopausal Age and the Mammary Carcinoma', *The Lancet*, 219, 5676 (June 1932), 1251-3; 'Menopausal Arthralgia', *The Lancet*, 232, 6026 (25/2/1939), 462; T. F. Todd, 'Radiotherapy of Menopausal Menorrhagia', *The Lancet*, 232, 6006 (October 1938), 821-823; 'Oestradiol Benzoate Therapy in Depressions', *The Lancet*, 229, 5919 (6/2/1937), 320-322; D.N. Parfitt, 'Hysterectomy in Menopausal Insanity', *The Lancet*, 222, 5736 (5/8/1933), 292-293.
10. Guthrie Rankin, 'The Climacteric of Life', *BMJ*, 1 (18/01/1919), 55-58; 'The Control of Surgical Menopause', *The Lancet*, 198, 5120 (15/10/1921), 815; 'Oestradiol Benzoate Therapy in Depressions', *The Lancet*, 229, 5919 (6/2/1937), 320-322; 'Menopausal Arthralgia', *The Lancet*, 232, 6026 (25/2/1939), 462; B. C. Murless, 'The Effect of Follicular Hormone on Menopausal Flushes', *The Lancet*, 233, 6039 (27/05/1939), 1205-1206.
11. G. Fitzgibbon, 'The Menopause and its Complications', *BMJ*, 1 (21/05/1932), 924-928; D.N. Parfitt, 'Hysterectomy in Menopausal Insanity', *The Lancet*, 221, 5711 (05/8/1935), 316; 'The Treatment of Menopausal Menorrhagia', *The Lancet*, 232, 6006 (08/10/1938), 821-823; Malcolm Donaldson, 'Cervical Cancer after Artificial Menopause by Radium', *BMJ* (07/1934), 2, 38-39; M.L. Kreitmayer, 'After effects of Intrauterine Radium for the Production of Artificial Menopause: Report of an Investigation', *BMJ*, 2 (11/1930), 815-816; also Frederick Parkes Weber, 'Re: Amenorrhoea and Climacteric Disorders', CMAC/PP/FPW8/4: The Menstrual Cycle and its Disorders.
12. Whilst this is the dominant position, one author does in fact highlight the tendency for his contemporaries to see menopause as pathological; G Fitzgibbon, 'Menopause and its complications', *BMJ* (21/05/1932), 924-928.
13. The fight women faced to enter the medical profession has been well documented in a number of studies including Cynthia Blake, *The Charge of the Parasols: Women's Entry into the Medical Profession* (London, Women's Press, 1990); Anne Digby, *The Evolution of British General Practice, 1850-1948* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999); Carol Dyhouse, 'Women Students and the London Medical Schools, 1914-39: The Anatomy of a Masculine Culture', *Gender & History*, 10, 1 (April 1998), 110-132; Carol Dyhouse, 'Driving Ambitions: Women in Pursuit of a Medical Education, 1890-1939', *Women's History Review*, 2, 3 (1998) 321-343.
14. Hall, '80 Years of the Medical Women's Federation', 6-9.
15. CMAC/SA/MWF B 4/6: Medical Women's Federation Newsletter.
16. See Digby, *The Evolution of British General Practice*, and Dyhouse, 'Women Students and the British Medical Schools'.
17. It is presumed here that the 'misses' mentioned were qualified medical women specialising in surgery, who according to convention were known as Miss rather than Dr.

18. CMAC/ SA/MWFB4/6,1: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation, 5.

19. This second objective is particularly interesting because it raises questions about the ideological position of the research. Its interpretation is ambiguous. On the one hand, it could have emanated from a discussion of absenteeism among menopausal working women; on the other, it could have been a response to women's claims that employers unjustly perceived women of this age as a liability. Either way, it is clear that there was a veiled economic question behind the survey, which makes it all the more interesting that the class-variables in the data, available in the initial survey, were omitted from the published report.

20. CMAC/ SA/MWF/J.23/1: Letter to medical women from the Menopause Sub-Committee of the Medical Women's Federation.

21. *Ibid.*

22. CMAC/ SA/MWF B 4/6: Table II.

23. CMAC/ SA/MEF/J23/1.

24. CMAC/ SA/MWF/J.23/1: Letter to Medical Women from the Menopause Sub-Committee of the Medical Women's Federation.

25. The age range of the women involved is interesting starting as it does at 29, well below the usual age for menopausal symptoms. The survey does not comment on this issue, but it may be that these women either experienced early natural menopause or were experiencing 'artificial' menopause brought about by surgical intervention.

26. CMAC/ SA/MWFB4/6,1: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation.

27. *Ibid.*, 3.

28. *Ibid.*, 3.

29. *Ibid.*, 6.

30. CMAC/SA/MWF/J.23/1: Form A.

31. Symptoms reported were flushing, haemorrhage (excessive uterine loss at least once), giddiness, headache, nervous instability, pain in the breasts, rheumatic pains (including arthritis and fibrosis), changes in the thyroid gland and obesity.

32. Incapacity here means being 'obliged to lie up or absent themselves from work' on one or more occasions because of 'some disturbance of health attributed to the menopause'. CMAC/ SA/MWFB 4/6: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation, 3.

33. Catamenia is another term for menstruation.

34. In number 5, the relationship between menstrual and menopausal symptoms was sought. The informants' symptoms were graded according to normal and severe. Who did this grading and the criteria under which severity was assessed were not discussed in the survey.

35. The figure is 89.7 per cent. CMAC/ SA/MWFB 4/6: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation, 3.

36. *Ibid.*, 1.

37. *Ibid.*, 3.

38. Those who had conceived were relatively more likely to report having symptoms than those who had not; but the number of their conceptions did not seem to have a bearing on the scale of the symptoms, until a significant rise

is noted in women who had had ten or more pregnancies.

39. CMAC/ SA/MWFB 4/6: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation, 7.

40. It would seem likely that women who had over ten pregnancies (and some women in the survey had seventeen pregnancies), may have already been at higher risk from a range of ill health than those women with significantly fewer pregnancies. The survey makes no comment on these figures.

41. CMAC/ SA/MWFB 4/6: Report to the Council on the Menopause Investigation, 7.

42. Jacquelyn Zita, 'Heresy in the Female Body: The Rhetorics of Menopause', in Joan C. Callahan, *Menopause: A Midlife Passage* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993), 59-78.

43. Editorial, *Clinical Excerpts: A Medical Journal Devoted to Therapeutics*, 10, 189 (1936), 189-191.

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# **‘Scotland for Fitness’: The National Fitness Campaign and Scottish Women**

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In the years leading up to the Second World War, Britain witnessed an extraordinary rise in official concern for national fitness. This anxiety over the poor physical form of British men and women came about at a time when the competitive nature of the fascist nations in Europe highlighted the need for a reaction from Britain. The National Fitness Campaign launched in 1937 was designed as a means of exhibiting how the British democratic approach could bring about the same results as an authoritarian system with regards to building up national fitness. The aim of the Campaign was to increase the nation’s awareness of ways to get fit and keep fit and over the following decades, it instigated a series of policies and activities which raised the profile of physical fitness for women, raising participation rates and, to some extent, expanding the range of physical activities engaged in by women.

This article will examine the 1937 National Fitness Campaign and the various obstacles that stood in the way of its success in expanding the physical recreation options available to Scottish women. It will look into the particular ways in which the Fitness Campaign was shaped by contemporary views of women’s role in society, and how this restricted the direct influence on developments of physical recreation for women. The Fitness Campaign did embrace some contemporary trends in female physical recreation, such as the keep-fit movement and modern dance, but despite incorporating some fresh ideas, the Campaign still limited the opportunities available for female recreation. Contemporary medical science surrounding women’s health and public opinions of acceptable femininity certainly informed the Fitness Campaign, and I intend to provide evidence of precisely how this was deployed in practice. Subsequently, I shall look into the consequences of the timing of the Campaign itself and the effect this had on the policies and provisions that could be established for women in Scotland. Most notably, when the Campaign officially commenced, Britain was on the brink of war with an authoritarian enemy and this had repercussions for the Campaign’s overall success in Scotland. Indeed, after the war and the formation of the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation in 1945, the environment was more favourable to developments, and by the 1950s and 1960s, positive action was being taken by the SCPR in conjunction with the Scottish Education Department. Therefore, the 1937 Fitness Campaign marks out a period of realisation with regards to women’s physical recreation and these primary beginnings laid the foundations for a later time when the state could take more direct care of the health of its people. Nevertheless, despite these later developments, it will be shown here that the initial Campaign was certainly shaped and constrained by contemporary discourses and circumstances. This article will argue that there

were political, financial and discursive obstacles, which hindered the success of the Campaign and the contribution it could realistically have made in expanding the scope of opportunity for female physical recreation in Scotland.

## **The making of the Fitness Councils and background to the Campaign**

The Physical Recreation and Training Act of 1937 established National Fitness Councils for Scotland and England and was the conscious beginning of a National Fitness Campaign that ran until the outbreak of war and beyond. In practice, rather than the National Fitness Council, it was the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training (CCRPT), established by the Board of Education in 1935, which carried out the majority of developments in England.<sup>1</sup> Initially the CCRPT functioned as an intermediary body negotiating with the government to obtain grants for existing voluntary clubs and encouraging interest in fitness, without any direct interference or takeover of the clubs themselves.<sup>2</sup> After the passing of the 1937 Physical Recreation and Training Act, the primary objective of the CCRPT and the National Fitness Councils was the promotion of fitness through ‘sports propaganda’, in an aim to awaken the nation’s moral obligation to keep fit.<sup>3</sup>

However, the work of the CCRPT was still officially confined to England at this time. Phyllis Coulson was head of the organisation and with a female directing the actions of the CCRPT, women’s needs were evidently acknowledged in England. But unfortunately, in 1937, the National Fitness Council for Scotland, chaired by Sir Iain Colquhoun and fuelled by nationalist yearnings for political independence in Scotland, refused a proposal by Coulson to extend the work of the CCRPT across the border.<sup>4</sup> This somewhat restricted Scotland’s powers in the initial stage of the Campaign as the nation had to rely primarily on the Advisory Council for Scotland in order for action to be taken. Although the National Fitness Council in England still had connections with the Scottish section and most policies were largely identical between the two countries, the ministers in the Scottish Office were still determined to sustain themselves without too much interference from the south. Therefore, voluntary sports clubs in Scotland had a degree of freedom and the Advisory Council for Scotland developed its own versions of national policy and publicity.<sup>5</sup> This had implications for the separate effect of the Campaign on Scottish women. Furthermore, the Scottish Campaign generally suffered some setbacks as a result of this situation, as noted in 1944 by Muriel Webster, a staff member of the CCRPT’s summer schools:

The C.C.P.R. is doing a very good job in England and is giving a lead to the development of physical recreation. I think Scotland is falling behind in this field and could learn a lot from the C.C.P.R.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, as with the greater part of women's sporting past, the exact nature of the pre-war Fitness Campaign and the provisions it made for Scottish women has received little direct attention from historians, despite prominent trends in historical enquiry looking towards 'the female body' as a key analytical concept. As Ann Hall has noted: 'female bodies have always been central to feminism, but sporting bodies have not', a situation which Fan Hong attributes to an intellectual bias in the West which has placed physical feats as subordinate to the high culture of intellectual achievement.<sup>7</sup> In any case, the sporting history of females remains on the fringes of historical enquiry, despite Park's observation that 'modern woman's emancipation is intimately bound up with her athletic ability – and certainly with her physicality'.<sup>8</sup> The experiences of ordinary working-class and middle-class women have been largely overlooked, with male experiences and trends being accepted as standard. For instance, gender historians have recently challenged the view that the depression of the early thirties was not a hospitable environment for sport to flourish in. Rather, it has been suggested that when women were removed from their wartime employment and resigned to the domestic sphere, physical recreation provided a release and women were at the heart of a growth of consumerism and leisure. However, as Jennifer Hargreaves has argued, although women's sport certainly developed throughout the interwar period, these developments were somewhat restricted by a discursive framework of acceptable femininity, because in order to maintain an essence of femininity women could only participate in sports 'appropriate' for their gender that did not rob them of their womanliness.<sup>9</sup> For example, Lynne Robinson's study of the progress of the Women's Amateur Athletic Association tracks the great struggle of female athletes in their attempt to compete in the Olympic Games of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, Mandy Treagus has outlined the ways in which some competitive and physically demanding games, such as netball, were socially accepted as suitable games for women. Treagus has shown the ways that the rules of netball were tailored to instil desirable feminine qualities in the female players which made the game suitable for young ladies, for example the rules prohibited contact with opposition players and encouraged bodily restraint and team-work.<sup>11</sup> Fiona Skillen's study of girls' physical education in interwar Scotland has traced the far-reaching aims of the Scottish Education Department (SED) and its attempts to enhance not only the physical fitness but also the 'character' of Scotland's youth. However, Skillen also shows that the SED had trouble negotiating the supposedly incompatible aspects of fitness and femininity and thus the 1930s Scottish curriculum sits well within the boundaries of acceptable femininity, with non-competitive gymnastics dominating the curriculum and competitive games for girls being largely overlooked.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, the fundamental

obstacle to the advance of female sport during the interwar period was that females not only had to change general public opinion and the views of officials, but they were up against the 'scientifically proven' opinions of the medical community. Although medical opinions were beginning to progress in the 1930s, clearly there was a preserved concern that vigorous exercise had a damaging effect on the female form and reproductive capacity.<sup>13</sup> After the First World War, this was a primary concern, as women were expected to produce the next generation of healthy men after the losses of the war. Anything that could be linked to damage of the reproductive organs could not be condoned, and yet paradoxically some form of action had to be taken to improve the health and fitness of the female population so that they could produce healthy offspring. Evidently, these conflicting views were reflected in the form of the publicity coordinated for women in the National Fitness Campaign.

Certainly some historians have touched on the motives for and progress of the National Fitness Campaign in England, but it must be recognised that the developments in the Scottish Campaign were quite independent.<sup>14</sup> Callum Brown's examination of the Scottish Office's policies regarding sport throughout the twentieth century gives good insight into the initial strands of the Fitness Campaign and its progress over the subsequent years in Scotland. He suggests that few of the developments in sport had resulted from party politics, and thus it would be a useful exercise to outline exactly why the actions of the Council in the first National Fitness Campaign had limited direct effects. Although Brown does give an indication of the situation for Scottish females between the 1930s and early 1970s, what is lacking from the historiography is a critique of the original 1937 National Fitness Campaign in Scotland.

## The shaping of the 1937 Fitness Campaign

Throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century, the situation for women in sport was constantly changing, but fundamentally, the choices available to women in the sporting world were somewhat limited and constrained by a strict model of femininity. This had repercussions for the physical recreation options available to 'ordinary' women who may not have been inclined to participate in sport professionally or competitively, but who perhaps wished to partake in physical activities during their leisure time. The limited types of physical recreation that were promoted for women in the National Fitness Campaign of the later 1930s indicate that it was indeed shaped by contemporary ideologies regarding the role of women and this shall be discussed below. Nevertheless, the Campaign also embraced some of the current trends in physical recreation that were somewhat progressive and had been helping to advance the role of British women in sport in the years leading up to 1937. The Women's League of Health and Beauty and the Margaret Morris Movement were rising in female popularity throughout the 1930s and it is clear that these groups embodied some ideals that were forward thinking. The National Fitness Campaign integrated the most popular aspects of these

groups' ideals into its policies for women.

In the early 1930s, physical education like that of the school of Madame Osterberg was incorporated into the curriculum of elite schools, and filtered down to the state schools that could afford appropriate equipment.<sup>15</sup> In Osterberg's form of physical education, Swedish gymnastics were combined with English games with rigid movements underlined by strict codes of behaviour. Indeed, a student who was tutored by Osterberg at Anstey College of Physical Education gave an appropriate description of the nature of physical education in this era when she recalled that:

The great idea was always to look smart! We were buzzed before a gym or drill class to see that our hair was tidy, stockings without a wrinkle, everything correct; tunic girdles with the same length ends—all immaculate. This idea was carried throughout and in mass drill never a mistake was to be made, or anyone a fraction out of time.<sup>16</sup>

Those who devised the policies for female physical recreation in the National Fitness Campaign were trying to steer the focus away from an association with this traditional strict model of physical activity. It is understandable that the Fitness Campaign would embrace some innovative trends in female physical recreation that helped to detach the Campaign from the school gym hall and attract those women who may have had negative experiences in physical education and therefore rejected physical recreation in later life. Therefore, the promotion of keep-fit classes can be linked directly to the campaign's recognition of this mass movement and great popularity of these classes, which was mainly brought about by the Women's League of Health and Beauty.

### **The Women's League of Health and Beauty: 'Keep-Fit' and the beauty culture**

The League's women were conservative progressives as they aimed to dissociate the beauty culture from accusations of vanity and an abandonment of modest femininity by promoting only 'natural' beauty with a 'back to nature' campaign. Jill Julius Matthews has argued that the League members were partially successful in their attempts to bring the beauty culture into public focus to be viewed in a positive light. Thus, for Matthews, the League played a prominent part in helping to make it more acceptable for women to take a pride in their appearance and take care of their bodies.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the League had a number of aims and ideals which touched on themes of 'racial health' and peace, but fundamentally its leaders recognised a need to physically improve the lives of British women of all ages and classes: 'Any woman, old or young, married or single, cultured or uncultured, may join our League.'<sup>18</sup> They aimed to bring about 'maximum improvement in Health, Figure, Looks and Physical and Mental Stamina' amongst the women of Britain, and eventually the Empire.<sup>19</sup> The keep-fit class was the most popular aspect of the League's physical philosophy and thus it was merged into the female programme of the

fitness campaign. Since the late 1920s, keep-fit classes had been growing in popularity throughout the north of England and Scotland, and with the League's adoption of the keep-fit class method this brought about a mass female fitness movement in the late 1930s. The founder, Mary Bagot Stack, had begun by holding small classes in her London home in the 1920s, and by 1938, the League had a female membership of 170,000 spread between Britain, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong.<sup>20</sup> Prunella Stack, who became the leader of the Women's League of Health and Beauty in 1935, gave a perfect description of the League's atmosphere and the reasons for its popularity:

In class, everyone was on first name terms and everyone wore the same exercise kit, so that differences of class or background disappeared. Above all, the sessions were fun. The lively contemporary music, the enthusiastic young teachers and the presence of so many others made body training enjoyable.<sup>21</sup>

Stack was also invited to sit on the National Fitness Council for England and so clearly, those in charge of the campaign thought highly of the League's ideas. This enthusiasm for keep-fit was prevalent in Scotland too with the popularity of the Glasgow and Edinburgh Keep-Fit Movements and Scottish Country Dance classes, as noted in *The Scotsman* in August 1938:

The 'extraordinary popularity' of physical training, keep fit, country dancing, and swimming classes is referred to by Mr J.M. Mackintosh, organiser of the continuation schools of Edinburgh Corporation Education Committee, in his report for session 1937-38 ... the number attending these classes increased from 3703 last year to 5026 this year.<sup>22</sup>

It is unclear whether this was a direct result of the Fitness Campaign or whether numbers may have risen regardless of the Campaign, but in any case, we can see that something about these classes certainly appealed to women. This was noted by May Brown, the leader of the Glasgow Keep-Fit Movement, in her memories of the classes: 'I have just to see or hear the words "Glasgow keep Fit Movement" to feel a sense of warmth pervading me ... what an extraordinary number of lasting friendships was founded there.'<sup>23</sup> Evidently, the social aspect of these classes appealed to women in the 1930s, and although the fitness element was still important, the campaign's publicity for women fundamentally stressed this social factor, as this was what officials considered most important to contemporary females.

In 1938, the National Fitness Council for Scotland produced the film 'Scotland for Fitness' which provided examples of the ways in which it was possible to exercise in Scotland. In this film it is clear that women were being encouraged to join a keep-fit class to improve their social life and generally enhance their sense of well-being rather than to become strong athletes like their male counterparts. The commentary noted the objectives of the

National Fitness Council:

Our main idea is to improve the internal health of their bodies to get a general sense of well being ... I think you would be struck if you came to one of our classes by the happy atmosphere that is created by the leader, the music and the members themselves.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2: *Scotland for Fitness*, (1938), National Fitness Council for Scotland, Scottish Screen Archive Collection.

In the incorporation of keep-fit classes into their advocated suitable forms of physical recreation for women, those in charge of the National Fitness Campaign had acknowledged a novel fitness trend that appealed to thousands of women. It can be assumed that the popularity of the keep-fit classes must have been furthered by the Campaign's publicity. Therefore, the National Fitness Campaign may not have been opening a previously obstructed form of fitness for women, yet by promoting the methods of the Keep-Fit Movement and the League of Health and Beauty, the Campaign brought these groups into the public view and gave them government approval, making the beauty culture more acceptable to society.

### **The Margaret Morris Movement: innovative but restricted**

Similarly, the national fitness campaign integrated other contemporary movements into its programme for women by inviting Margaret Morris to sit on the National Fitness Council and acknowledging her theories on modern dance. In the early twentieth century, Morris developed her 'movement' system from ancient Greek poses and ballet techniques that could be shaped into a routine

according to personal expression. Morris described her form of modern dance as 'movements made by people to express any experience of life of which they have received a sufficiently important impression'.<sup>25</sup> Like the League of Health and Beauty, the Margaret Morris Movement emphasised natural movement and dancers wore clothing of the Greek flowing type. This movement system was based on natural and flowing movements, quite detached from the rigid 'physical jerks' of Osterberg's traditional form of gymnastics. Furthermore, as the National Fitness Council approved of this form of fitness for women, it can be suggested that the Campaign helped to improve the situation for females in some areas of physical recreation, such as dance.

Nevertheless, although it is clear that the Campaign was promoting some new forms of physical recreation for women, conservative ideologies prevailed and this restricted the development of other types of sport that may have challenged the femininity model. Even within the Margaret Morris Movement, it was stressed that male and female physical recreation had to take on different forms, as their bodies had to be developed in diverse ways to avoid females becoming too muscular: 'the difference between the masculine and feminine way of moving should be emphasised. For the bony structure and the muscles of the male and female body are, or should be, markedly different in their development'.<sup>26</sup> This idea was most prevalent throughout the National Fitness Campaign and although keep-fit and modern dance were promoted, it is most telling that in the 'Scotland for Fitness' film of 1938 these were practically the only types of physical recreation specifically aimed at women, as they fitted most suitably into the feminine model.

Indeed, the 1937 Fitness Campaign had sprung from a Britain that was still immersed in conservatism in both the political and social sense. The falling birth rate witnessed the emergence of the nuclear family and with many improvements in living standards, women took a new pride in their domestic role. Some women who had yearned for privacy whilst sharing communal living facilities in urban areas could move to the suburbs for a 'home of their own', and in order for these housewives to find their place in society, their domestic image was promoted.<sup>27</sup> Yet the enhancement of the domestic image perhaps had a negative impact on female sport, and consequently on the fitness campaign. There was a prevailing ideology in the 1930s that sport, like work and a career, was primarily a male domain as its competitive nature aided men in their daily working lives. Furthermore, there was a fear that men would lose any sense of their masculinity if women were admitted into their competitive sporting sphere and in any case, the female was considered too frivolous and fragile a creature for competitive games.<sup>28</sup> With this in mind, it could be suggested that the majority of women who participated in physical recreation personally wished to remain within the discursive framework of femininity and confined to their own suitably feminine sports. In any case, these contemporary ideologies appear to have been reflected in the types of exercise that were suggested to be appropriate for Scottish women in the 1937 National Fitness Campaign.

## **'Unsuitable' sports and medical opinions**

It was formally noted in a 1938 meeting of the National Fitness Council for Scotland that it would be undesirable for competitive sports to be promoted for women through the Campaign: 'It was stated by certain members that training involving competition was not suitable for women'.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, after this meeting, we can see that the majority of national fitness propaganda in Scotland failed to promote any competitive sports for females. In the film 'Scotland for Fitness', which was produced for the Glasgow Empire Exhibition in May 1938, females were only advised to partake in physical recreation such as the keep-fit classes or swimming. Although the film did not specifically state that competitive sports were unsuitable for women, only images of women swimming and taking part in keep-fit classes were explicitly encouraged.<sup>30</sup> It is notable that this aspect of the campaign may have been specific to Scotland as conversely the pamphlets of the National Fitness Council for England did suggest netball and hockey as suitable for women: 'men's team-games, so characteristic of English sport, have their counterpart for women, notably hockey and netball'.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in 1937 *The Scotsman* reviewed a handbook released to the Scottish public which outlined the forms of exercise that were to be officially assigned to males and females in the campaign, and clearly the females had a limited choice:

The book for men deals fully with gymnastics of all kinds, team ball games, national team games, general athletics, swimming, dancing, boxing, skipping, wrestling, athletic and swimming sports and boxing meetings. The 'Keep-Fit' class exercises for women and girls are restricted to those of a rhythmic nature for use with music.<sup>32</sup>

The National Fitness Council for Scotland devised 'Scotland for Fitness' and these booklets independently from England, and we can perhaps see the Scottish Council's own views trickling through in its rejection of female competitive sports. It could thus be suggested that the National Fitness Council for Scotland was slightly less progressive than that of England in aiding the situation of females and their options for physical recreation.

The Fitness Council for Scotland also stated in the 1938 meeting noted above that 'work among women, through voluntary organisations, was relatively far advanced as compared with the position among men', and thus justification was given to the Campaign's focus on promoting fitness propaganda for men over that of women.<sup>33</sup> Certainly, the women's Keep-Fit Movement was growing in popularity in the lead up to the National Fitness Campaign, and yet there was a certain neglect of promotion of alternative types of physical recreation for women by the Campaign. It is notable that the Council felt women's physical recreation to be suitably advanced by 1937, or rather there was a feeling that the limited types of sports considered appropriate for females had progressed far enough by this time. This move perhaps suggests the penetration of some of the ideals of the British Eugenics

Society into national policy, with the fear that female leisure and general female emancipation had already advanced enough and should not be encouraged or promoted given the present fertility situation.

Eugenicists were concerned with the effects of female emancipation on the race as a whole, and there was a worry that the 'positive aspects' of contemporary females, such as domesticity and maternity, might disappear in the next generation if females were allowed into previously male dominated spheres.<sup>34</sup> Yet, paradoxically, set against this was Darwinism, as the emancipated woman would undoubtedly be more intelligent in her selection of a partner and healthier within herself. So, it was in the best interests of eugenicists to promote physical recreation amongst women as there was also mounting evidence that fitter women produced healthier offspring.<sup>35</sup> But of course, there were still prevailing worries within the Eugenics Society of the effects of vigorous exercise on the female reproductive organs. In the early twentieth century, it had been thought by both male and female doctors that through female exercise 'hearts atrophied, pelvises narrowed, and breasts shrivelled while minds and muscles strained against the natural boundaries of the gender'.<sup>36</sup> By the 1930s, medical science was progressing in this area, but it is clear that many traditional ideologies were maintained and so this added another supporting strand to the discursive framework of restrictions on females in sport. If this viewpoint was accepted, then independent women who wished to partake in competitive, vigorous exercise for pleasure were seen to be fundamentally endangering the future of the human race and this could not be condoned. Similar opinions were expressed in the general medical community as noted in 1936 by Geoffrey Theobald in *The Journal of State Medicine*:

There is every indication that the Government intends to foster this movement. It therefore becomes increasingly important to have clear and definite ideas as to what is good and what is harmful. It must of course be axiomatic that nothing can be good for a girl's body, which renders her less capable of motherhood.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, although the Eugenics Society's ideas were considerably controversial and it is unclear if they necessarily reflected the views of the National Fitness Council, it is evident that these general ideas seem to have filtered through from elite circles into the fitness campaign on the ground. The types of exercise promoted for Scottish women were restricted and fitted into this acceptable framework.

## **Public opinion and the press**

This concern for the effects of female participation in vigorous exercise was not restricted to Eugenics societies or the medical community, but the cautious attitude towards women and sport prevailed amongst the general public, the press and in contemporary publications. From an anonymous book published in 1935 under the title

*Every Woman's Book of Health and Beauty*, it is evident that in the lead up to the National Fitness Campaign the ideologies expressed in publications for women were in keeping with the feminine framework as outlined above. This book noted:

The more vigorous kinds of sport, such as fast and long distance running ... should only be for really robust girls. Before you decide to join an athletic club you will, of course, have a thorough medical examination, and I would advise you also to consider the effect of your activities on your future health.<sup>38</sup>

Fundamentally, this book advised against such activities for girls, with a warning that in later years when childbearing was a priority, women who participated in vigorous exercise would encounter health problems. As noted above, by 1935, many doctors had certainly recognised that healthy women produced healthy children, yet it is clear here that in publications intended for use amongst the general public, caution was still expressed to sporting women.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, as the National Campaign was aimed at the general public it had to appeal to them under their own terms and it is evident from this book that there were still concerns regarding female participation in strenuous exercise.

The *Every Woman's Book of Health and Beauty* also suggested that the primary aim for all females who participated in exercise should be the acquisition of suitable grace and posture: 'dancing is one of the most pleasant of all recreations ... for it provides very gentle exercise ... graceful movements encourage a good carriage.'<sup>40</sup> Indeed, contemporary women who took part in any form of exercise were encouraged to retain their feminine grace and poise whilst doing so, and this idea was carried through into the Fitness Campaign and sports propaganda in the press. It was stressed to females that through participating in gentle keep-fit classes they would not develop any unwanted masculine muscles, and it was assumed that the majority of females would wish to retain their feminine grace. In reference to the 'physical culture classes', the *Every Woman's Book of Health and Beauty* noted that,

Their aim is to train the body in a joint-loosening plan and not to develop muscles as such. Few girls care to develop these muscles, but most of us would like to have the lithe, free, supple bodies that joint-loosening exercises will bring us.<sup>41</sup>

The contemporary trend was to promote exercise within the constraints of a femininity discourse and the National Fitness Campaign was following on from this.

The press also presented women's physical recreation from within the framework of femininity and we know that this type of publicity was of fundamental importance to the success of the Campaign. In a 1937 memorandum distributed to the regional committees of the National Fitness Council, it was noted that,

Health and fitness have considerable "news value" at present and this should be taken advantage of. Apart from this, however, it is of vital importance to maintain the goodwill of the local Press ... Regular liaison should be maintained with the press and they should be informed of all developments in the Region.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, it can be assumed that articles noting developments and demonstrations by clubs involved in the National Fitness Campaign expressed the views of the Council to an extent. In order for the majority of females to take up physical recreation, they had to be assured that their participation would not upset their acquired image of domestic feminine grace. A 1938 article in *The Times* regarding a Swedish gymnastics team and entitled 'Gymnastic Poise and Grace' gave a perfect example of the way in which articles in the national press were manipulated to fit into the Campaign's fitness promotion framework for women: 'the music control and rhythm required for these was exceptional, yet the girls themselves look the reverse of a "muscular" type, and proved that gymnastic work with apparatus is not necessarily body-building.'<sup>43</sup> Similarly, articles in the Scottish press show that the emphasis was taken away from the 'body-building' that was promoted for men and instead Scottish women were informed that improving their fitness would improve their beauty. In October 1937, an article in *The Scotsman* reported a speech made to the Girls' Guildry by Captain E.D. Stevenson, the secretary of the National Fitness Council for Scotland. From this excerpt, it is clear that the Council's aim was to link their promotion of female fitness to the popular contemporary beauty culture movements:

All healthy women desire to be as beautiful as they can. They want good figures, a good carriage. They know, much more strongly than men, the importance of looking and feeling well and they know that without a fit body a beautiful face is no more than a sham ... Beauty, if it is to last, must be built on a foundation of perfect health. (Applause.) Scotland needs more beautiful girls; therefore it needs healthier girls.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, it is evident that throughout the Fitness Campaign, the National Fitness Council was restricted in its actions by a strict structure of contemporary ideologies regarding females. With the return of the domestic image in the late 1920s and 1930s, new gender appropriate sports like graceful modern dance and the 'movement' and keep-fit classes could be promoted easily in the campaign. Nevertheless, despite a certain advance in these appropriate forms of physical recreation, many of the promotional films and booklets produced by the Scottish fitness campaign failed to promote other forms of sport for women, notably competitive sports such as hockey and netball. In this, the Scottish Council was somewhat lagging behind England with a prevailing conservative nature regarding female participation in previously male dominated forms of sport. So, in this initial campaign it



is evident that lingering conservative views concerning the role of women restricted the advances that could be made for them in sport. Yet, although these views certainly placed some restrictions on the types of sports that could be promoted for women through the 1937 Fitness Campaign, the overall timing of the Campaign itself further limited the developments that could be made.

### **The limits presented by the timing of the Campaign**

In the later 1930s, the British political agenda was dominated by the fascist threat, and after the physical strength of the Nazis had been witnessed first-hand by the British at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the Fitness Campaign appeared to embody a sense of urgency.<sup>45</sup> The impending war and the nature of Hitler's regime placed a number of obstacles in the way of the National Fitness Campaign, as the British people were understandably suspicious of a fitness movement that showed some resemblances to a more sinister movement elsewhere. But the British government was concerned for the fitness of the nation and aimed to raise the standard of health so that if they were faced with the prospect of war they would be physically and mentally prepared for its hardships, as noted in 1938 by H.M. Upton, the Deputy-Chairman of the National Fitness Council for Scotland,

It is not our job to train men for war, but if such a calamity ever does befall this country the result will depend to no small extent, not only on the fitness of the Army and Navy or Air Force, but on the fitness of our civilian population to endure the trials and hardships which will inevitably face them.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, to dissociate the campaign from the Hitler Youth and similar groups, it was primarily stressed that this fitness campaign was in no way a compulsory measure with militaristic undertones, but simply an attempt by the government to awaken a natural moral duty in the people to improve their own health.

Undoubtedly, this voluntary aspect had an effect on the character of the Campaign and certainly on the provisions that could realistically be supplied for women. Only limited funds could be provided and in any case, as outlined above, the male fitness situation was considered to be more urgent than the female and so immediate funds were directed to male pursuits. This may also help to further explain why only certain restricted types of physical recreation were promoted for women. The government could not allow for mistakes, which meant that the promotion of more controversial sports that may not have appealed to the majority of women was inappropriate given the urgency of the campaign. Fundamentally, 'sports propaganda' was the key to success in this movement, as the government certainly could not force the British people to improve their fitness, but had to make physical recreation attractive and appealing to the masses through appropriate publicity. As noted in a 1937 memorandum to the regional committees, this propaganda Campaign

was to be maintained over a lengthy period of time and although fitness could not be officially forced upon the British, the Council took their Campaign very seriously: 'committees are advised to maintain a steady propaganda campaign. The public must not be allowed to forget.'<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the propaganda had to be appropriate and well thought out given that it was the foundation of the Campaign itself. The 1937 Campaign was aimed to entice women who had not already taken it upon themselves to participate in some form of sport: 'the problem facing ... the Council is to interest those who are now apathetic to the idea of physical fitness and to kindle in them a desire to obtain the benefits which fitness brings.'<sup>48</sup> Rather than introducing new types of sport to those women already involved in physical recreation, the National Fitness Councils attempted to ensure a successful propaganda campaign under the circumstances by promoting the types of physical recreation that were thought to stereotypically appeal to the great majority of women.

Perhaps the government's propaganda for females was quite appropriate on account of the timing of the Campaign. However, despite the success of the propaganda, in the years leading up to the war, the government struggled to provide adequate facilities to supply for the expected rise in demand. Regional Fitness Associations were established throughout Scotland in order to coordinate the voluntary sports organisations within the area and appeal for any necessary grant-aid or essential improvements to facilities.<sup>49</sup> There were high hopes for these Fitness Associations, but in practice, the timing of the National Campaign itself appears to have been detrimental to its local success. For example, the Airdrie Fitness Association encountered a number of setbacks during its short-lived existence between its formation on 5 April 1939 and its collapse in 1940. It would appear that the onset of war altered the priorities of the Association's leaders. Despite the government's claim that the campaign 'was thought of long before rearmament, and ... would go on long after rearmament', in reality although the wider national campaign was carried on throughout and after the conflict, the structure of most of the local fitness associations could not withstand the pressure of war.<sup>50</sup> In the case of the Airdrie Fitness Association, few provisions were actually made for women before the association's collapse in 1940 and in any case, facilities for women were not given any priority. In a speech made by the ex-Provost Motherwell and reported in the *Airdrie Advertiser* on 14 January 1939, it was recognised that 'indoor recreation provision in Airdrie is sadly inadequate' and yet it was decided by the Airdrie Fitness Association that improvements to outdoor facilities were of greater importance.<sup>51</sup>

In June 1939 plans to build a running track and football pitch for the use of the general public were submitted to Airdrie Town Council by the Association: 'the Committee ... submitted a plan, showing a quarter-mile track, with a full-sized football ground inside the track'.<sup>52</sup> Yet, a running track and football pitch would supply no facilities for the types of physical recreation that had been noted as suitable for females in the National

Campaign. Indeed football remained a predominantly male competitive sport and long distance running was still considered to be unsuitable for women who wished to be mothers. Female long-distance running had been condemned for years by both men and women as shown in an article by a female doctor in the *Daily Mail* in February 1928.<sup>53</sup> In this article it was proposed that women who had trained for the 800m race in the 1928 Olympics had shown signs of 'distress' after racing, and it was emphasised that long-distance running caused 'irreversible' damage to the female reproductive organs:

In a year or two they will find that their hearts have become enlarged and instead of being fit they will become old before their time. Under these ordeals a woman is also liable to displace other organs which may lead to very serious trouble ... they think they can stand the same strain as men ... it is not possible; their bodies are not made for it.<sup>54</sup>

Many members of the medical community and much of the general public remained outraged by women who continued to take part in long-distance running or 'violent exercise', and some of these opinions prevailed until the 1950s and beyond.<sup>55</sup> With this in mind, clearly the Airdrie Fitness Association's primary plans did not provide facilities for the forms of physical recreation that were socially acceptable and considered 'safe' for females. But moreover, even these initial plans, which would have benefited the men in the area, were rejected by the Town Council on account of the war: 'owing to the outbreak of war ... the Council had decided that nothing could be done in the matter'.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the Secretary of the Association, James Kennedy, resigned from his position in January 1940, suggesting that 'it would be advisable to appoint someone who could afford to give the Committee the attention due' throughout the wartime years, and yet his resignation appears to have resulted in the subsequent collapse of the association.<sup>57</sup> Evidently, the timing of the Campaign on account of the outbreak of war had a detrimental effect on the fate of this local fitness association. Indeed, even if the establishment of indoor provisions for women had been made a priority, which in this case it had not, the timing of the Campaign led to the inevitable collapse of the Association before any real physical improvements could be made to facilities in Airdrie.

Similarly, we can see that the timing of the Campaign limited the level of official funding that could be directed towards indoor physical recreation facilities for women. Of course, the government could only provide limited financial assistance, as the British public would undoubtedly be wary of a movement that was fully shaped and sponsored by the state in the style of those in Nazi Germany. Furthermore, as early as 1937, some Council discussions showed an underlying sense that hardships, perhaps in the form of war, might be on the horizon and that money might be better spent elsewhere: 'It was for consideration whether in view of the rising prices of materials and the shortage of labour they should force the

pace to the detriment of other and perhaps more essential building schemes'.<sup>58</sup> Certainly, the funding system that was designed for the Campaign did not provide a sufficient level of grants for the improvements to facilities that were needed throughout Scotland. By late 1938, many people had realised that this system was quite unacceptable, and this was noted by Sir John C. Watson in *The Scotsman* on 21 December 1938:

Sir John added that his information was that Glasgow, with at least twice the population of Edinburgh, applied for £1,100, and they had been offered £90 he had hoped that their representation would have received a greater financial response.<sup>59</sup>

Evidently, the Scottish grant allocation system was generally insufficient and some considered it to be 'perfectly disgraceful'.<sup>60</sup> Indeed the meagre level of funding in Scotland combined with this poor system for the allocation of grants to needy communities proved particularly detrimental to the improvement of facilities for women.

## **The Village Halls Debate: funding problems and rural neglect**

As discussed above, throughout the National Fitness Campaign Scottish women were encouraged to take part in those forms of physical recreation that were considered suitable and 'safe' in accordance with contemporary discourses. Thus, the most popular forms of physical recreation for women were dance or keep-fit, and these were generally performed indoors in a village hall or community centre. In order to meet the rising female demand for indoor recreation, improvements had to be made to facilities and this was recognised by the National Fitness Council. However, the situation in Scotland was again quite different from that in England. It was decided that in the majority of cases improvements to the facilities in village halls were unnecessary and would cause problems that were not justified on account of the low levels of funding: 'such additional provision would apparently be unlikely to produce commensurate new revenue, and would necessarily enhance running costs ... they may be satisfied with simpler provision which would not raise the above problems'.<sup>61</sup> The chairman of the National Fitness Council for Scotland also commented that the public could not hope for great improvements to be made to Village Halls given the financial situation, 'Sir Iain Colquhoun has pointed out the total sum available for Scotland is so small that no large amount can be allocated to Village Halls'.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, in a conference between the National Council and the Grants Committee it was noted that villagers were most likely to be satisfied with their existing facilities, and thus in this respect rural areas were neglected in the Campaign:

They doubted whether there was sufficient demand for physical training and recreation in small villages to justify the capital and maintenance expenditure which would be

involved in providing facilities ... they thought that in villages there was more need for playing fields ... than for indoor facilities.<sup>63</sup>

Yet, it could be suggested that present indoor facilities in rural or working class areas were quite unsatisfactory and that in order to attract new people into physical recreation, facilities had to be upgraded. Certainly in order to provide for the rise in demand as a result of the sports propaganda, improvements and expansions to facilities were essential. It had been noted in a 1935 publication of the CCRPT that 'in rural areas there are few facilities for women and girls' and undoubtedly the situation had changed little since this time.<sup>64</sup> If a conscious decision had been taken so that no advances were to be made to the indoor facilities for women in these areas, then the situation for female physical recreation could hardly improve. Women were given no greater opportunity to participate in the specific types of recreation that were being pushed upon them through the Campaign. Therefore, it would appear that because of the voluntary nature of the Campaign, communities received little official financial aid to help improve their facilities and those clubs that could not provide for improvements themselves had little ability to take on more members and provide for those members with adequate facilities. Despite successfully raising the demand for physical recreation in the community, the Fitness Campaign failed to provide sufficient funds to improve provisions for women in rural or working class areas.

## Conclusion

In a number of ways, improvements to physical recreation provisions for women were certainly limited by both the timing of the National Fitness Campaign and the nature of the Campaign itself. Due to the parallel activities in Germany and the restrictions this placed on the British government's involvement in the Campaign, any possible improvements for women suffered considerably, and if the Campaign had been put into action at a different time perhaps there would have been greater initial success. Indeed, after the war, a Scottish section of the Central Council of Physical Recreation was established, and in the more favourable environments that followed over the next thirty years a number of developments were made. Through the actions of the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation the scope of opportunity for women's physical recreation in Scotland was eventually enhanced.

Nevertheless, as this article has shown, the 1937 Fitness Campaign embodied some crucial defects in reference to the improvements in provisions it could realistically make for women. Certainly, the keep-fit and dance classes maintained their popularity throughout and beyond the years of this initial campaign, but the 'keep-fit craze' had its roots in the early 1930s, and it is debatable as to whether the sustained female interest in physical recreation would have occurred with or without the existence of the 1937 Campaign. Indeed, as shown above, the timing of the Campaign placed some immediate

obstacles in the way of the real improvements that could be made for women. Primarily, the voluntary nature of the Campaign restricted the form of sports propaganda that could be advocated for women, as the Council had to remain within contemporary frameworks of feminine sport to ensure public support. This perhaps helps to further explain the necessity of the restrictions placed on women by the Council, but moreover, it underlines the point that the timing of the Campaign made it impossible for any progressive or controversial measures to be tried out. It was unrealistic to expect the Council to make any grand advances or attempt to widen the horizon of female physical recreation in this pre-war campaign, as its timing was fundamentally flawed. Moreover, the strict feminine ideal restricted the types of sports that women could partake in if they wished to remain 'ladies' and avoid 'unattractive' muscle development. Therefore although the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation made considerable improvements in the scope of opportunities for female physical recreation in the later decades of the twentieth century, it has been shown here that the initial campaign which supposedly sparked a 'fitness craze', instead provided few improvements for Scottish women and served to reinforce existing restrictive ideals of femininity regarding women and sport.

## Notes

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## Correction and Apology

### **Women and Darien: Female participation in a Scottish Attempt at Empire, c. 1696-1706, by Rosalind Carr**

The above article, published in our Winter 2009 issue, contained errors which were introduced during the production phase of the magazine. It should be noted that the Earl of Leven invested £2,000 in the Darien scheme (not £200 as stated on p.17). Also, throughout the article the author had deliberately used the term 'White women' as a reference to racial identity, capitalising the letter 'W' in the same manner that the 'B' is capitalised when using the term 'Black people' as a racial category. Unfortunately, during the editing process the capitalisation was removed. The editors would like to apologise to Rosalind Carr and to our readers for any inconvenience or confusion these errors may have caused.

## Getting to Know Each Other



**Name:** Susan Walton

**Position:** Honorary Research Associate, Centre for Victorian Studies, University of Hull

**How long have you been a WHN member?** Since 2003.

**What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?**

*As a History teacher in the 1980s and '90s, I became increasingly aware of the absence of women in mainstream History, as well as a resistance from established historians to their inclusion. The dark green paperbacks published by Virago opened my eyes to the host of forgotten women writers, travellers, thinkers omitted from standard versions of the past.*

**What are your special interests?**

*My main research area has been Victorian literature that was popular in its own time though not now viewed as part of any canon, to search for clues to the cultural assumptions and attitudes of those decades. My recent work has focused on the best-selling novels of Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) together with her magazine, *The Monthly Packet*, which she founded and edited from 1851 until the 1890s. Another topic of particular concern, which led from my work on Yonge's relationship with the medieval historian Edward A. Freeman, is how and why History was characterised when it became accepted as a university discipline in the late nineteenth century.*

**Who is your heroine from history and why?**

*If I have to choose one, it would be Josephine Butler for the extraordinary courage she displayed in taking up the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s. But my real heroines are the countless women who, in George Eliot's words, 'lived faithfully a hidden life' and whose 'unhistoric acts' gradually brought about fundamental change.*

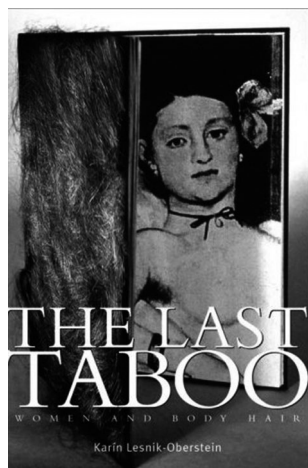
**Women's History Magazine is keen to carry profiles that celebrate the diversity of WHN membership. If you would like to complete a 'Getting to Know Each Other' questionnaire, or you would like to nominate someone else to, please email: [magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org)**

## Book Reviews

### Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, ed., *The Last Taboo: Women and Body Hair*

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006. £50.00, ISBN 0-7190-7500-9 (hardback), pp. xii + 218

Reviewed by Marjo Kaartinen  
*University of Turku*



Like most edited volumes, *The Last Taboo* offered a slight disappointment because of its nature: not all aspects can be covered (I would have liked to see a chapter on women's involuntary baldness regardless of the fact that head hair was left out of the collection), and the chapters nearly always vary in scope, in style, and in quality. *The Last Taboo* suffers from these obvious faults but these are overshadowed by several excellent articles.

The focus is on women's facial hair (eyebrows, moustaches, beards) and body hair (armpits, legs, pubic hair) tackled with tweezers, razors and a wealth of ingenious equipment and products since times unknown and, it seems, in most cultures. *The Last Taboo* goes with the feminist mainstream and argues that female body hair too is a cultural construction which scholars should explore and lay bare.

*The Last Taboo* sets out to lift body hair to a significant position in academic discussion on female bodies, which, it is argued, has paid most of its attention to the question of body weight. Karín Lesnik-Oberstein argues that whereas "fat" women are portrayed as undesirable and unattractive, but nonetheless still as female', 'hairy women ... are monstrous in being like men, or masculine' (p. 3). Most of the chapters analyse this monstrosity. It must be noted that Lesnik-Oberstein's chapter is a pseudo-introduction, and confuses the reader by its attempt to be both an introduction to the volume and the editor's manifesto. At times there is a danger that she argues in her own name the arguments that authors propose in their own chapters. It might have been wiser to include a proper introduction, and to have a separate chapter for Lesnik-Oberstein's ideas.

Some chapters lack a tight focus, which I believe, could be due to the lack of sources. As the volume argues, female body hair is indeed invisible in our culture, and it follows that there are few sources available. Daniela Caselli's chapter on body hair, modernity and genius

includes several very interesting cases of attitudes towards hair in wrong (female) places, but fails to form a clear whole because of her arbitrary examples, from the film *Tootsie* to Cecilia Bartoli, from Wilkie Collins' mid-nineteenth century novels to Sylvia Plath. Stephen Thomson's chapter on bearded ladies in Dadaist and Surrealist novels is extremely fascinating but at times suffers of disappearing beards: the body in general tends to steal his attention. Laura Scuriatti's chapter has a grand title which promises much (women and body hair in contemporary art and advertising) but fails to discuss such an enormous topic at large. Her chapter clearly suffers from the lack of images (only one included) in the volume. A visual article screams for images!

Three of the chapters stand out as my favourites. Sherry Velasco discusses early modern Spain and its women with beards. Her conclusion sums up the entire collection's main argument:

... the sensational and hugely popular display of women with masculine traits ... created a visual spectacle intended to shock and entertain but ultimately proved also to control non-conforming bodies. While this was achieved through both humour and fear ... these misogynistic narratives reveal the cultural anxieties inspired by the fluidity of sexual identities, and therefore the need to exploit and control bodies that reject traditional notions of femininity' (pp. 188—9).

In her excellent chapter Alice Macdonald writes on body hair in film and argues that the moving image has a special role in creating and changing feminine ideals – perhaps through film and TV there is hope of a world in which there are many kinds of feminine body ideals? Macdonald's perception is sharp and the manner of her presentation clear and accessible. Her analysis of the BBC series *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* should make anyone who has not seen the series run for the DVD.

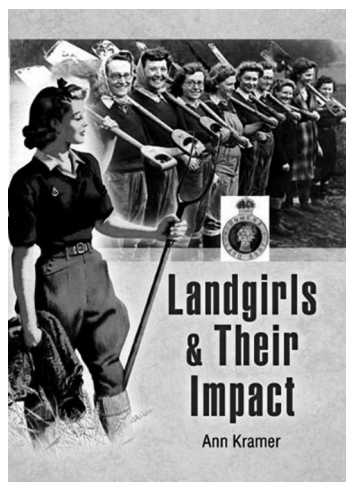
Above all, Carolyn D. Williams needs to be commended for her masterful chapter which discusses the ways in which female body hair has been present and invisible (at the same time) in English literary tradition from the seventeenth century to the present day. In a very learned manner Williams takes up examples of Ancient Greek literature as well. Moreover, her article is written in a delightful style, and is packed with thoroughly enjoyable humour.

Despite my criticism above, this is a volume which deserves wide readership, and is essential reading for everyone regardless of one's academic field or interest.



**Ann Kramer, *Land Girls and Their Impact***  
 South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books Ltd,  
 2008. £25, ISBN 184468029-0 (hardback),  
 pp.xviii-183

Reviewed by Lorna A.C. Gibson  
*University College London*



**L**and Girls and Their Impact focuses on the many roles and valuable contribution of these women during both the First and Second World Wars. The scope of the book, covering 1917 to 1950 makes for a digestible read. In addition to providing historical information about the origins of the Land Army, the means of recruitment and propaganda, its membership and women's

roles in the Land Army, Kramer also includes chapters on lesser known topics such as women employed as timber workers; prejudice from farmers and country people who viewed the Land Army with suspicion; and 'Love, Sex and Romance' which dispels the image of promiscuity as portrayed in the film *The Land Girls* (1998).

The material used throughout the book is also interesting as it predominantly comes from personal accounts and material from Sussex, where the author lives. One particularly interesting source which Kramer draws on is the Brenzett Aeronautical Museum. Interspersed throughout the book are snippets of memories from land girls which provide real-life perspectives. One example includes Miss Dorothy Chalmers who, in 1915, wrote 'Some people tell me that I shall not be able to go on with my farm work in the winter, because it will make my hands so bad. But I intend to stick to it. Our men don't stop fighting in the cold weather, and neither shall I. My only brother is in the trenches...' (p.3). In addition, Kramer includes some remarkable images which appear in the centre pages. Of particular note are images of land girls working with POWs, studio portraits of land girls in their uniforms, and a Land Army wedding in East Guildford Church where pitchforks were used to make the arch. The inclusion of these photographs, many of which are from private collections, are a real treat for the reader. Special mention is duly given to Lady Gertrude Denman throughout the book, as well as the insertion of a plate highlighting her leadership of the Women's Land Army and other women's organisations.

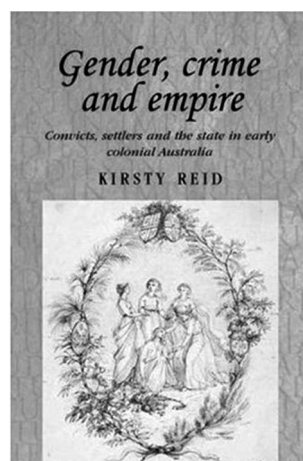
Kramer's conclusion, 'Reflections', provides a useful summary of the key themes addressed; namely the role of farming within historical writings and the experience within women's lives of being in the Land Army or Timber Corps (namely independence and a sense of empowerment). Kramer notes that 'None of the women

interviewed for this book actually described themselves as feminists, which is not surprising for that era. However, none were in any doubt that they had all taken on what was seen as a male role and fulfilled it just as well as any man could have done' (p.171). It would have been interesting if Kramer had located her research within the broader context of writings on women's history and the topic of feminism been addressed in more detail. That said, *Land Girls and Their Impact* is a well researched book which is comprehensively written and well-polished, which is sure to appeal to a wide market.

**Kirsty Reid, *Gender, crime and empire: Convicts, settlers and the state in early colonial Australia***

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. £55.00, ISBN 978-0-7190-6698-6 (hardback), pp. xii + 256

Deirdre Palk  
*Independent researcher, Auxerre, France*



**H**istorians of the early years of colonial Australia have a rare opportunity to study the effects of gender in society. 'Gender' dominated the policies of the British government from the start as it sought to cleanse its bursting prison facilities by transporting convicts to Australia. It equally defined convict life in the new colonies. We have perhaps become used to convict myths; the female convict – an abandoned, depraved polluter

of the public sphere, or the male convict – a crude and hardened criminal. More recently the myths have been dispensed with, following examination of exactly who these convicts were. No longer are the men to be seen as members of a 'criminal class', and female-centred studies argue that the women were neither 'damned whores' nor passive victims. But sexuality remains a crucial issue in the history of the British in Australia.

It is particularly welcome that Kirsty Reid's monograph, the first full-length study to focus on Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), maintains a gender analysis of the colony's history, from 1803, when some convicts were first moved there from the New South Wales mainland, to the ending of transportation in 1853. This coherent analysis is the greatest strength of the book, achieved through the author's close attention to the lives of both men and women, rather than a concentration on female experience alone. At the outset she states her central aim: 'to ask what happens to our understandings of gender and power in the convict colonies when we let class back into the account'. (p.8) Pursuing this aim, she uncovers shared male and female experiences of state control

mechanisms, which subjugated men as much as women.

The combination of class and gender culminate in 'the family', the cornerstone of colonial development. Convicts, in many cases torn from their families in Britain and Ireland, rediscovered 'family' as a tool of colonial discipline and authority. Later, the assignment system, whereby free settlers became the beneficiaries of convict labour, transformed the model of family into a site of coerced labour, class domination and conflict, marked by prescriptive ideas of sexual morality and gender roles.

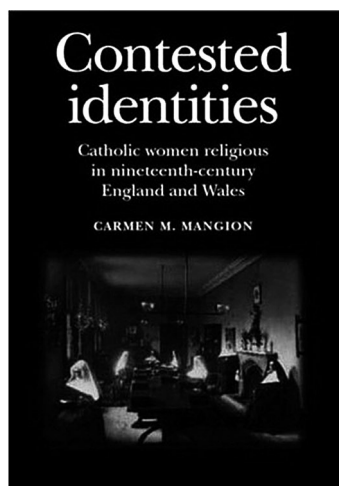
The importance of change over time is central to Reid's account. In a fully historical approach she avoids the kind of gender discourse which can efface real women and men from the account. She holds her focus on Van Diemen's Land, despite the book's title suggesting a more general 'Australian' overview. The scarcity of women (between 1803 and 1852, approximately 67,888 men and 12,116 women were transported to Van Diemen's Land, (p.1)) was the cause of an unbalanced society. At the start, convict women were the hope for the colony's future, and although the family was a place of male authority, it gave both men and women certain privileges. Later, free settlers, who felt their own family patterns were morally superior, became agents of discipline through the use of convicts as assigned labour. Reid carefully presents the highly gendered marks of this system and concludes that it transformed issues such as sex, childbirth and marriage into areas of conflict and contest between assigned servants and their employers and between convicts and the state and became increasingly central to the exercise of power.

My disappointment with an otherwise fine book is that the 'voice of the convict' is barely heard. Further, in only one paragraph is mention made of the original inhabitants of this island. The book commences with the petition of a female convict who had served her sentence and sought the governor's intervention to assist her to return to her family in Britain. Use of more evidence of this sort would have added valuably to this study. Without it, we have a history 'from above'. Source material which gives us 'history from below' is notoriously difficult to find, but if it isn't used in a book largely about convict experience, this is a serious lack, certainly if the reason for such a lack is not explained. Reid's use of contemporary archival material and printed materials, such as British Parliamentary Papers and dispatches between London and the colony's administration, is exemplary and it may be that the massive use of such sources was an attempt to demonstrate that the convict voice could not be heard against the voices of the dominant classes. It is these dominant voices that are loudly heard in the final chapters of the book, as the settlers sought self-government, demanded the abolition of transportation which caused the free community to be over-run and polluted, and as they expressed their loathing of convict sodomy – the antithesis of 'manly self-command'. The colourful narratives of colonial (sexual) disorder produced in official reports and the writings of the 'elite' of the colony were grounded in idealised notions of gender, family and domesticity. Convict views might have given a different picture.

**Carmen M. Mangion, *Contested identities: Catholic women religious in nineteenth-century England and Wales***

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008. £55, ISBN 978 0 7190 7627 5 (hardback), pp.281

Reviewed by Sue Hawkins  
*Kingston University London*



Amanda Vickery has argued that detailed studies of specific individuals and groups reveal Victorian women to be 'spirited, capable and, most importantly, diverse' (Vickery, 'From Golden Age to Separate Spheres', p. 300). In her recent work on women religious in England and Wales Carmen Mangion demonstrates the truth in this statement. Her book is built on a meticulous study of the archives of ten congregations of Catholic

women religious in the nineteenth century; material which until now had been hidden away in the cloistered world of Catholic convents. The Catholic nun was viewed by Victorian society with great suspicion. Protestant society imagined young women incarcerated as novices against their will by a tyrannical mother superior. Within the Catholic Church, the image was of pious, innocent and obedient women. Mangion uses her research to reveal a very different picture of Catholic women religious in nineteenth-century England: women who displayed a level of independence and determination quite lacking in popular myth, and an influence which extended beyond the walls of their congregation into English society. From within the congregation they developed skills in education, nursing and social welfare and exported them into the outside world, using their religious status to create a space in the public sphere. These were not women cloistered within high walls, who spent their days in silent contemplation and prayer. They were out in the community, evangelising and working at their chosen profession in equal measure. Mangion's book brings these women to life and they join a growing coterie of Victorian women from all backgrounds and occupations who have been recently 'discovered' by historians challenging the received view of Victorian womanhood.

The book is presented in three sections. The first, 'Developing Identities', charts the evolution of Catholic religious life in nineteenth-century England and in particular the dramatic growth in women's religious congregations. Mangion investigates the motivations of Catholic women who joined these congregations in increasing numbers, and the training they received which

moulded their spiritual identities. In Section Two, 'Working Identities', she examines the roles fulfilled by this growing body of women and discusses how they were able to combine evangelical activity with more secular work in society, in teaching, nursing and other forms of social welfare. According to Mangion, although their work was 'a striking and visible and dynamic factor in the growth of philanthropy in nineteenth-century England', it has been virtually ignored by historical texts (p. 111). In this section she pays particular attention to the work of Catholic women religious as teachers. It was this combination of a religious and professional identity which Mangion claims enabled Catholic women religious to gain acceptance in the public sphere, and contribute so actively to public life.

In the final section Mangion considers what she terms the 'Corporate Identity' of congregations. She discusses the importance of the family metaphor, so dominant in Victorian culture, in building a cohesive community. The writings of original founders were of great importance in determining the character of a congregation, and these were collected and reproduced in a body of work which became both family history and conduct manuals. Remembering and reminding were key tools in the building and maintenance of the networks and kinships which bound the women together in a distinct identity, separate from the outside world, but nevertheless part of it. This section also investigates the identity of the women who joined two of the congregations, making use of the extensive database of sisters Mangion has created from professions registers, necrologies and even the decennial censuses. She finds a heterogeneity of composition in congregations in terms of both social class and ethnicity, indicating that religious life was no longer the preserve of the social elite. Some congregations specifically encouraged working class women to join, by abandoning the practice of dowry payments; but Mangion has also found that within the walls of the congregation hierarchies still persisted, often determined by a woman's social class or ethnicity, despite the rhetoric of spiritual equality.

The final part of this section investigates the relationship between congregations and the male hierarchy within the Catholic Church. Within certain confines, Mangion finds that women religious were able to wield a level of authority over their own communities which belied the patriarchal nature of the Church.

This book offers a new view of Catholic women religious. It also offers new insights into the more general role and position of women in Victorian society, and their ability to take on worthwhile and important responsibilities within that society, despite the barriers intended to constrain them to the home. The methodology, based on prosopographical techniques, could (and should) be extended to other communities of women in the nineteenth-century.

**Norah Lofts, *The Town House*, Stroud:**

The History Press, 2009. £7.99, 0752448695 (paperback), pp. 349

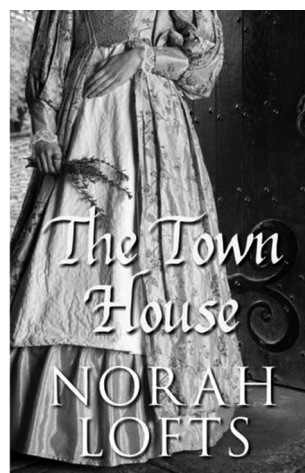
**Norah Lofts, *The House at Old Vine*, Stroud:**

The History Press, 2009. £7.99, 0752448688 (paperback), pp. 349

**Norah Lofts, *The House at Sunset*, Stroud:**

The History Press, 2009. £7.99, 0752448701 (paperback), pp. 287

Reviewed by Tracey Icteton  
Stockton-on-Tees



First published in 1959, 1961 and 1963 these novels are Lofts's 'House' trilogy, three books based around not one family but one house, tracing the lives of the inhabitants of a Suffolk dwelling from the late fourteenth century to the mid-1900s.

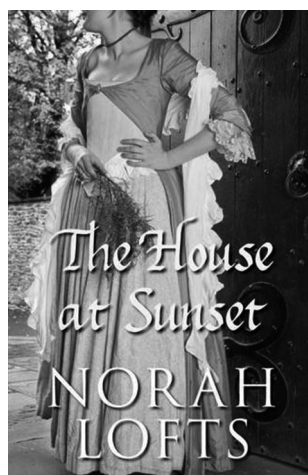
*The Town House* opens with Martin Reed, a serf and blacksmith's son, born in 1381. The course of his life, like many of his class and time,

would have revolved around serving the lord of the manor but Martin falls in love and denies his lord's will in defence of his bride-to-be, Kate. Though this eventually proves to be a fortunate development, initially they are forced to flee ending up in the walled town of Baildon. Only after enduring hardships both predictable and unforeseen does Martin Reed establish himself in the town, building the house at the centre of the trilogy, known as The Old Vine; the only constant in a world that changes radically over five hundred years.

Lofts uses multiple first person narrators to tell the tale of The Old Vine. When Martin Reed withdraws from the story less than a third of the way through the first book, the account is continued by Old Agnes, but not before a third person narrative, titled *Interval*, has filled in some of the blanks for readers. This forms the pattern of narrative structure for the trilogy. Some narrators get as few as fifteen pages while others take up fifty or more but none exceeds Martin Reed's initial narrative, establishing his crucial role in spawning the dynasty at The Old Vine. Using this technique Lofts accomplishes two things. She avoids the problem of the narrow and restrictive perspective which results from a first-person voice and she assures a familiarity with the storyteller through the close, personal account of events. Love them or loath them, admire them or despise them, it is very difficult not to feel involved emotionally with the characters who appear, tell their tales and retreat. However, this technique is not without problems. It fragments the narrative somewhat and distracts the reader with the task of calculating how each new narrator is related to Martin Reed which is difficult

to resist, at least until this becomes an impossible task. In addition, the interruption of the first person with rather more clinical and factual third person accounts does jar a little and it is possible to view Lofts's use of this to fill in the gaps as simply the easiest method. Perhaps more effective would have been the subtle weaving of information into the proceeding narratives. Nevertheless, this manner of narration does, for the most part, result in an engaging and lively way of telling the story and care has been taken to develop distinctly different voices for each narrator, some more effective than others.

Another strength of this trilogy is the richness of characters that Lofts creates. They are too many and varied to name individually but some interesting personalities are memorable. In particular is Ethelreda Benedict (*The House at Old Vine*), a young girl brought up on a Fenland island and, through some cunning manoeuvring by Lofts, brought to live at The Old Vine. Her 'primitive' superstitions and the tumultuous transformation of her way of life are a dramatic reminder that, during the long period of history Lofts covers, so many things changed and not all of them for the better. Other praiseworthy characters are: Anne Blanchefleur (*The Town House*) who cunningly rids herself of an unwanted lover; Elizabeth Kentwoode (*The House at Old Vine*), who is styled on Elizabeth I, and Jonathan Roper (*The House at Sunset*), an environmental health inspector on a quest to improve slum conditions even if the outcome for some is homelessness.



The plot has all the usual elements necessary for an entertaining read: murder and adultery, deceit and romance, against a backdrop of shifting historical periods. Without doing detailed research it is hard to say how historically accurate the novels are in their minute detail but in terms of major historical events (religious trends, wars, technological innovations) there is a great deal of accuracy, and detail seems to matter less when Lofts paints

such an interest picture of human life during the periods she covers. The novels are a thoroughly enjoyable read for anyone interested in 'human' history, particularly that of women who are often left out of 'official' stories. Ultimately this trilogy makes the point that people are all just tiny specks on the map of history, important only for what they leave behind, and, when what they leave is as solidly built as *The Old Vine*, then there is some hope of an enduring legacy.

## Elizabeth Nussbaum, *Dear Miss Baird: A Portrait of a Nineteenth-Century Family*.

London: Longstone Books, 2008. £9.99, 978-0-9554373-6-6, pp. v + 238

Reviewed by Louise Wannell



**D**ear Miss Baird offers a valuable case study into an upper-middle-class Victorian family. Elizabeth Nussbaum investigates the life of her maternal grandmother Mary Baird and her family. The book goes back as far as 1821 from the history of Mary's grandfather to the first few years of Mary's marriage to A. L. Smith and the death of her father and birth of her second child in 1882. Guided by the source material – an incredibly rich collection including

diaries, published autobiographies, pictures and stories – Nussbaum creates an account of her family's history successfully focusing on significant moments and stages of their lives.

*Dear Miss Baird* begins with the death of Gertrude Baird in 1876, the seventeen-year-old sister of Mary. Gertrude's parents, influenced by modern ideas on the education of women decided to send Gertrude, their most studious and creative daughter, away to school. Gertrude, while missing family life and finding the routine difficult, enjoyed school and was disappointed that her parents had not been forward-thinking enough to permit her to study for the Cambridge examinations. However, during her final schools days and Easter vacation she contracted common nineteenth-century illnesses: whooping cough, measles and then finally diphtheria and she died at home. Nussbaum shows how her death was a pivotal point in the Baird family life and how strong the ties of family, community and religion were.

The book then goes back in time to offer a wider contextualisation of the Baird family by investigating the life of Mary and Gertrude's parents and grandparents. While this contextualisation is valuable to the narrative and provides some great insights into social history of the nineteenth century – for example, the history of medicine, school and university life, the grand tours, industrialisation and marriage campaigns – I felt the book really finds its feet in the final two thirds when it focuses on the lives of the immediate Baird family, especially the older sisters, Mary, Gertrude and Emily (Emmie). We learn of Mary's various flirtations and courtships and the battles with her mother, Gertrude's love of learning and her romantic schoolgirl friendship and Emmie's closeness to and envy of her sisters. The account also focuses upon the various responsibilities and preoccupations of religion, travel, education and health that influenced the lives of these Victorians girls – soon to be women. This book wonderfully

captures this transition into adulthood and brings to life the culture and politics of family life.

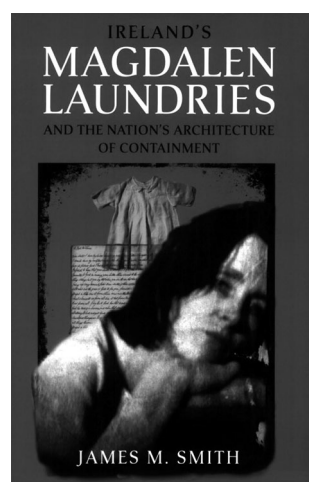
Nussbaum's analysis of the source material is very insightful. She explores the evidence in detail using the style, form and content of the texts to uncover much about the relationship between the authors and their writing. For example, Nussbaum notes that Mary's 'spiky and rapid' and Emmie's 'rounder, easy to read' (pp.107-08) handwriting reflect the differences in their personalities. She perceptively interprets the fictional writings of Gertrude to shed light on the fears and fantasies of a thirteen-year-old girl. Occasionally some more detailed questions about the sources focusing further on why the material was written, why it was preserved and how through writing family relationships were constructed and maintained could have added to an understanding of this family's life. This is certainly hinted at, for instance, Mary's diaries are not to be read by her best friend yet Mary decides to write in her journal about some clothing she bought because 'perhaps it may interest my grandchildren – if I have any!' (p. 181) therefore suggesting that her diaries were at times consciously or semi-consciously written for posterity.

We are so fortunate that this is the case. Such details have certainly been of interest to her grandchild Elizabeth Nussbaum but also through her extensive research and interpretation of the material they have become a valuable resource for others, illuminating the challenges, constraints and ambitions of middle-class Victorian women.

**James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries And the Nation's Architecture of Containment***

Manchester University Press: Manchester  
2008. £18.99, ISBN 978 0 7190 7888 0  
(paperback), pp. 275

Reviewed by Jane McDermid  
*University of Southampton*



This is an interdisciplinary examination of the ten Catholic Magdalen laundries operating in Ireland between 1922 and 1996, in which the central focus is an evaluation of contemporary (i.e., from the early 1990s) cultural representations of these institutions on stage, in film, print, exhibitions and memorials. James M. Smith insists that the Magdalen laundries were neither essentially Irish nor Catholic, but at the same time reveals

how their history shows what is distinctive to the asylums in Ireland. In discussing the pre-twentieth-century period

(the first Magdalen asylum was established in Ireland in 1767, and before the 1830s these were run by lay women, both Protestant and Catholic), Smith acknowledges the ground-breaking work of Maria Luddy, notably her *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (1995) in which she showed that prostitution and indeed immorality in general were seen as the result of imperial rule, and therefore not 'Irish'. Here, Smith argues convincingly that the twentieth-century turn to incarceration and secrecy was tied up with the establishment of an independent state which struggled to define a post-colonial, national identity.

Smith sees the Magdalen laundries as part of a wider association of institutions, including reformatories and industrial schools, homes for unmarried mothers and adoption agencies. Notably with independence in 1922 and the 1937 constitution, which proclaimed motherhood as women's primary role, the Magdalen asylums shifted the emphasis from reform to punishment, from refuge to confinement. Moreover, whereas in the nineteenth century, women could enter such an asylum by choice and had the right to leave, with some staying for only a few days or weeks, and few for more than two or three years, in the twentieth century they rarely did so. Instead, they were committed by the state, the church or the family. Smith highlights this complicity in the mistreatment of potentially thousands of women. Exact numbers are not known because the religious orders have closed their archives. This also means that reasons for commitment are not always explicit, but, it is suggested, include not only 'fallen' women as in the nineteenth century, but unmarried mothers, victims of rape and incest, and those deemed either morally or mentally deficient and a problem for their families.

Smith analyses how cultural representations tend to focus on the experience of the laundries and the relationships between the religious orders and the inmates in the twentieth century, which are often taken by the public to be the whole story. These certainly show the loss not just of freedom but of individuality, family, educational and job opportunities, the physically demanding but unremunerated labour, the emphasis on perennial penance rather than potential rehabilitation. The 'concealment' of the Magdalenes from the rest of society was achieved by the collusion of the communities of which these women had been part: society turned its back on those who could not, or would not, meet the ideal of womanhood, of Mother Ireland.

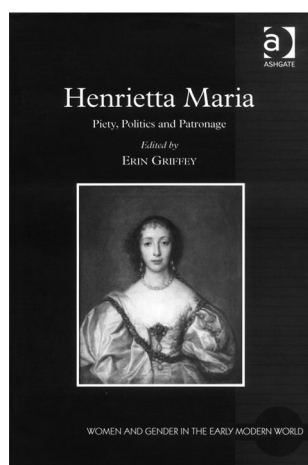
Indeed, Smith is concerned not only with uncovering the history of the Magdalen asylums, but ensuring that their story is not 'closed' by the recent cultural representations. That, he believes, would scapegoat the religious orders and allow both state and society to evade their roles in this 'architecture of containment'. Certainly, the religious orders need to accept responsibility, and the Sisters of Mercy not only apologised in 2004, but admitted how difficult it was to accept that they 'got it wrong' (p.186); but their position within Irish society also has to be understood. Well into the twentieth century, becoming a member of a religious order brought social esteem to the family and was attractive particularly to women who had few professional

alternatives. Moreover, the Church sought recruits to service the Irish both in Ireland and the diaspora: Smith describes this as part of Ireland's 'spiritual empire', with Irish orders establishing global networks (p.157). However, Smith demands public apologies, as well as redress and reparations, not just from the orders, but from the state and society. As he points out, while some victims have felt empowered by the cultural representations to break their silence, most have not, suggesting the stigma remains for them. Smith's study is a cry for action on the part of all who bear responsibility for the scandal of the Magdalen institutions in the twentieth century which both state and society, and not only the church, have to acknowledge.

**Erin Griffey ed., *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage*.**

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. £55.00, ISBN 978-0-7546-6420-8 (Hardback), pp. xii + 240

Reviewed by Elena Woodacre  
Bath Spa University



The controversial consort of Charles I, Henrietta Maria, has been an increasingly popular subject of study in recent years. Within the last decade, several new works on Henrietta Maria have been issued, particularly those with a focus on her patronage of and involvement in the Caroline theatre. In one theatre-based analysis 'Caroline Salon Culture and Female Agency: The Countess of Carlisle, Henrietta Maria,

and Public Theatre' (*Theatre Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Dec., 2000, pp. 449-464), Julie Saunders claims that Henrietta Maria's influence 'on the political and aesthetic climate of the late 1620s/1630s is only now beginning to receive the full register of attention it requires' (p. 449).

Another recent work of note which has a wider, non-theatrical focus is Michelle A. White's *Henrietta Maria and the English Civil Wars* (Ashgate, 2006). Both White and Griffey note that the scholarly opinion of Henrietta Maria and the assessment of her role in both the Caroline court and the political crises of the mid-seventeenth century have been subject to reinterpretation in recent years. The papers in Griffey's volume aim to assess Henrietta Maria's agency in the Caroline court by looking not only at previously explored areas such as her patronage of the theatre and her support of the Catholic cause in England but also by an investigation of her involvement in music and art which has often been overshadowed by her husband's well known passion for art patronage and collection.

The volume begins with a paper by Malcolm Smuts entitled 'Religion, European Politics and Henrietta Maria's

circle 1625-41', which draws on often neglected French archival sources to shed new light on Henrietta Maria's often difficult position in a fluctuating political situation. The next paper, 'The Secretary of Ladies and Feminine Friendship at the Court of Henrietta Maria' by Diana Barnes shifts focus from the wider political situation of the mid-seventeenth century to the 'Ciceronian friendship' demonstrated in the letters of the Queen's ladies (p. 48).

The next two papers turn to the popular subject of Henrietta Maria's involvement in the theatre. Karen Britland's paper 'Queen Henrietta Maria's Theatrical Patronage' focuses on the theatrical seasons of 1633-4 and 1634-5 to demonstrate her joint involvement with her husband in the reform of the theatre. Britland also suggests that Henrietta Maria's pronounced patronage of the French actor Floridor and his troop in the 1635 season indicated that she was favourable to Richelieu's suggestions that she return to a more actively pro-French political stance (p. 72). In the following paper, Sarah Poynting carries on the link between political and personal patronage in her discussion of the Queen's relationship with the playwright Walter Montague ("The Rare and Excellent Parties of Mr. Walter Montague": Henrietta Maria and her playwright').

The next four papers shift away from the theatre and discuss Henrietta Maria's role as a patron of art through different schemes of analysis. Jessica Bell ('The Virgin, Marie de Medici and Henrietta Maria') and Caroline Hibbard ("By Our Direction and for Our Use": The Queen's Patronage of Artists and Artisans seen through her Household Accounts') both argue that Henrietta Maria has been overlooked as an art patron by looking at evidence of the links to her mother's patronage and through an analysis of her financial records. However, the next paper by Gudrun Raatschen ('Van Dyck's Portraits

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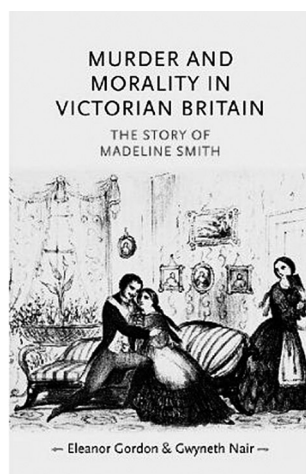
of Henrietta Maria') clearly contradicts the viewpoints of Bell and Hibbard, claiming that the Queen was 'no such collector and no connoisseur' (p. 140) and even a reluctant sitter. Raatschen also disagrees with Bell's assessment of the significance of an orange tree in Van Dyck's 'Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson' (1633), although both authors have more compatible views on the symbolism of pearls which feature prominently in many of the Queen's portraits. Griffey continues the analysis of jewellery in Henrietta Maria's portraits by looking specifically at the inclusion or absence of devotional pieces ('Devotional Jewellery in Portraits of Henrietta Maria'). Finally Jonathan P. Wainwright rounds out the volume with 'Sounds of Piety and Devotion: Music in the Queen's Chapel' which assesses the role of key composers in her chapel which he claims show 'the adventurous side of English sacred music' (p. 198).

Overall, this volume is a diverse and interesting collection of papers which all demonstrate, with the possible exception of Raatschen, that Henrietta Maria was neither a malignant influence nor 'intrinsically apolitical, under-educated and frivolous' (p. 5). By bringing together a group of historians, art historians and specialists in Literature and Music, Griffey has produced a balanced work which looks at the Queen from a number of different viewpoints and angles in order to bring fresh insights to the study of this important and interesting historical figure.

### **Eleanor Gordon & Gwyneth Nair, *Murder and Morality in Victorian Britain: The Story of Madeleine Smith***

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009. £16.99, ISBN 978 0 7190 8069 2, (paperback), pp. vii + 204

Reviewed by Ann Kettle  
*University of St Andrews*



The trial, in 1857, of 22-year old Madeleine Smith for the murder of her lover, Emile L'Anglier, became a *cause célèbre*, attracting attention world wide, and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the trial in 2007 saw a raft of new treatments of the case, mostly speculating on 'whodunnit'. It is argued in this enthralling study that the case, in particular the 250 or so letters that Madeleine wrote to L'Anglier, offers 'a window into the day-to-day

life in mid-Victorian Glasgow of a young middle-class woman who, despite her involvement in an extraordinary event, was in most other ways unexceptional and typical' (p. 5). The intention of the authors is to examine the different ways in which Madeleine's contemporaries

viewed the case in order to show what this tells us about Victorian life, morality and gender relations. In particular, they challenge the premise, based on the ideology of separate spheres, that middle-class young women of the period led highly circumscribed lives and had limited access to the public spheres of city and social life.

An initial chapter on 'Papa's house' is a fascinating account of the houses in Glasgow and the countryside rented or built by the Smith family in what was a surprisingly peripatetic, but always comfortable, existence. Madeleine's letters, in which she tried to impress her lover with her domestic skills, reveal that the material culture of the Victorian bourgeoisie was 'a strange mixture of the sumptuous and the spartan' (p. 31). A chapter on 'My own beloved darling husband' throws light on gender relations at the time by tracing the relationship between Madeleine and L'Anglier from courtship, through secret engagement, to consummation, followed by Madeleine's attempts to end the affair when a suitor more acceptable to her parents than a penniless clerk appeared.

'Too much waltzing' deals with the social life enjoyed by young women of Madeleine's class in Glasgow. She was able to walk alone around the city, had an extensive social

## **Carol Adams Prize**

*An annual £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history*

The Women's History Network will award a £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history. This award was set up in honour of the late Carol Adams (first Chief Executive of the GTC) who helped pioneer women's history in schools.

### **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 [jandpdudley@t-online.hu](mailto:jandpdudley@t-online.hu). Essays should be sent to this email address.

**Deadline:** The deadline for submission is 31 May 2010. The prize will be awarded in September 2010.



circle, travelled widely and enjoyed private entertainments such as dinners and balls and public entertainment in theatres and concert halls. 'A great many things' reveals Madeleine's shopping habits and concludes with her ill-fated purchases of arsenic in Sauchiehall Street in 1857. 'This unparalleled case' recounts the death of L'Anglier and Madeleine's subsequent trial for his murder. The way in which the press reported the trial and the verdict of 'not proven' is analysed in detail.

In what is perhaps the most interesting and significant chapter, 'Stories of Madeleine Smith', contemporary reactions to, and interpretations of, the scandalous story of Madeleine and her lover are used to suggest that 'Victorian society was far from being complacent and morally rigid' (p.154). In a similar fashion the post-Victorian versions of the story are deconstructed to show how the Victorians have been represented at different times. The authors conclude this chapter by deconstructing their own story of Madeleine to show how it has been influenced by recent developments in cultural history. In particular, how they have identified with views that question 'the continued usefulness of the separate spheres thesis as the key to understanding the gendered nature on the Victorian world' (p.171). After this, the final twenty pages that recount what

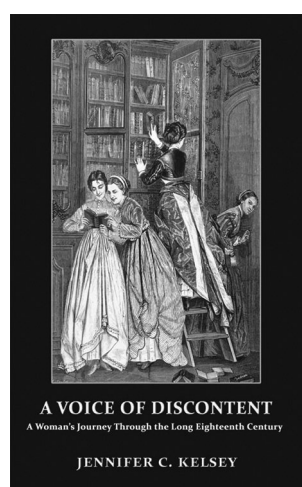
is known of the rest of Madeleine's long life – she died in 1928 – are something of an anti-climax.

This is an important book: the result of meticulous research and incorporating discussion of the latest approaches to the writing of social history, but written in an accessible style which will hold the attention of any reader with an interest in Victorian Britain or one of its most notorious murder stories.

**Jennifer C. Kelsey, *A Voice of Discontent: A Woman's Journey through the Long Eighteenth Century*.**

Leicester: Matador, 2009. £9.99, ISBN 978 1848760 363 (paperback), pp. vii + 226

Reviewed by Teresa Barnard  
*University of Derby*



Fictional literature written by women reflects the way they live their lives, illustrating their emotions and anxieties and often serving as an example or even a warning to their readers. When placed in historical context, novels supply an additional reservoir of cultural restrictions and personal frustrations. In her study, Jennifer C. Kelsey explores the lives, limitations and problems of the women of this era as she charts her own pathway of discovery through

their writings. Her subjective account considers writing women and their literary retaliation against their situation, with the 'journey' of the sub-title guided by her own 'personal interest and spontaneous whim'.

With a framework of the 'Atticus Principle' – Kelsey's interpretation of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), whereby to know a person one should 'consider things from his point of view ... climb in his skin and walk around in it' – she sets out to understand what life was like for these women by reading their literature from a contextual viewpoint. For, as she makes clear in her introduction, women who put their emotional experiences into their writings bequeath more than a legacy of understanding to us, but also help their contemporaries prepare for life. She examines the writings of women who effected radical change, also pointing out those who appear to collude with patriarchy.

What compelled women towards literary self-expression when domesticity and its time constraints frequently stood in the way? Many female writers engaged with the vibrant scene of literary and epistolary coteries although, from Kelsey's perspective, women turned to writing largely to escape the emptiness of social obligations and domestic duty. She identifies influential writers, such as Frances Burney, who give their female characters a strong, challenging voice that first expresses

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**D**o 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.

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If you would like to discuss legacies, and the ways in which they could be deployed by the WHN, please contact our Charity representative, Sue Morgan, email [charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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

and then resolves their problems. A further motivation was money and writing offered a means of support for those who needed to work to survive. Importantly, the practice of writing allowed women to protest against their enforced subservience and, according to Kelsey, novels were used as the means to convey hidden messages. As Jane West contends in *A Tale of the Times* (1799), literature was an 'offensive weapon, directed against our religion, our morals, our government'.

Education was a key factor to a woman's autonomy and Kelsey considers liberal philosophers, like Mary Wollstonecraft, who had such a forceful influence in the field, as well as novelists, like Sarah Fielding, who emphasises inequalities between boys' and girls' education. Girls tended to focus on domestic skills and polite, feminine accomplishments. Not only were they denied access to a full education, but they might also be expected to sit indoors with their embroidery and watch through the window while their brothers extended their own education through physical exercise. The content of conduct books also comes under scrutiny. Kelsey reveals literature as a means for subversion when Jane Austen satirises the conduct writers, specifically the influential clergyman James Fordyce, who published the didactic *Sermons to Young Women*. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the irrepressible Lydia deliberately interrupts a solemn reading of the *Sermons* to pass on an item of local gossip. Certainly, fiction and its representations of female education joined with the radical essayists and educationalists to make a valid contribution to educational reform. But the young women without an education lacked sophistication and were disadvantaged when it came to decision-making about their future.

This leads to one of the central themes of Kelsey's book; female economic dependency and women as marriageable commodities. If the purpose of learning feminine accomplishments was to lead a girl into the marriage marketplace, then those without worldly experience were unable to cope with the pitfalls along the path to a successful marriage. Stereotypical imagery abounds in novels of this period. Charlotte Lennox's Miss Bellenden, for example, 'has not yet the skill to bring her prey to land'. Kelsey discusses how unmarried women became 'spinsters' and then, ultimately, 'old maids', frequently despised and ridiculed in literature. However, radical representations from Mary Hays and Eliza Haywood illustrate how women had sexual feelings and that they craved independence before settling down. Kelsey also attempts to contextualise the restrictions of marriage through the legal aspects of dependency and subordination throughout the century.

Although there are few new ideas here, the many quotations from a vast range of literature serve as a useful reminder of how women voiced their discontent, how they encouraged each other to mature, advance and rebel through their writing. As Mary Robinson suggests, '...let your daughters be liberally, classically, philosophically and usefully educated; let them speak and write their opinions freely'.

## Clare Evans Prize

*An annual £500 prize for a new essay in the field of GENDER AND HISTORY*

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 2010. 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



## Getting to Know Each Other



**Name:** Lynn Abrams

**Position:** Professor of Gender History, University of Glasgow

**How long have you been a WHN member?**

*I think I joined WHN at its inception following an inspiring conference in London at which Lee Davidoff amongst others spoke. At that point I was a lecturer at Lancaster University and had recently moved into women's history (from my initial doctoral research interests in 19th century German popular culture).*

**What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?**

*I dabbled with women's history as an undergraduate but there wasn't a huge amount on offer at UEA at that time. After my doctoral research I began to investigate marriage and divorce in 19th century Germany so that was probably the impetus for my move into women's history in the 1990s. I was encouraged and supported by the Centre for Women's Studies at Lancaster and especially by colleagues Penny Summerfield and Elizabeth Roberts. The Centre then was a hotbed of interdisciplinary feminist research and a very nurturing environment; it made doing women's history seem like the most natural thing in the world - I'm not sure this would have been the case elsewhere. Since then, although my research topics have changed, the history of women has always been at the core of what I am interested in. Added to this the community of women's and gender historians in Britain and overseas has been a constant source of inspiration and comfort in equal measure. At Glasgow I now work with a very large group of gender historians within the Centre for*

*Gender History. When I arrived at Glasgow in 1995 I couldn't have imagined the vibrancy and solidity of gender history as a research and teaching field that we have now. Moreover, Women's History Scotland has gone from strength to strength in the last decade. Both these groups of like-minded historians provide constant inspiration and support and good humour.*

**What are your special interests?**

*I am a bit of a dilettante in some ways in that having researched and written on a particular research topic I like to move on. But I feel most comfortable in the 19th century though I have recently published on 20th century topics. Having recently written on the lives of women in Britain's most northern island group – a project which combined perfectly my interests in women's material experiences with a study of representation and myth and using a combination of traditional archival research methods and oral history – I have a number of irons in the fire. My enthusiasm for oral history is being pursued via a small project interviewing women of the 1950s and 60s generation on the cultural shift from moral conservatism to women's emancipation. I have a tentative project on living the modern everyday in Scotland focusing on gender and housing, and I am working with colleagues on 18th-century Scottish masculinities. So women and gender remain at the heart of my work but my interests are pretty varied.*

**Who is your heroine from history and why?**

*There certainly isn't just one though amongst the famous I guess Flora Tristan would be up there for her bloody mindedness, her independence and her sheer bravery – journeying to Peru, visiting the seedy underworld of London, surviving an attempt on her life. Closer to home though my two grandmothers lived very ordinary and yet humbly heroic lives, both living into their 90s, both from very ordinary, rural backgrounds, both bringing up families — my paternal grandmother had 9 children — in difficult circumstances. Compared to their lives, mine is a breeze.*

**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](mailto:magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org)**



# BOOKS RECEIVED

## CALL FOR REVIEWERS

If you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email Jane Potter:

[bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org)

Emilie Amt, ed. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook* (Routledge)

Teresa Barnard, *Anna Seward: A Constructed Life* (Ashgate)

Nancy Folbre, *Greed, Lust and Gender: A History of Economic Ideas* (Oxford University Press)

Maureen Daly Goggin & Beth Fowkes Tobin, eds.  
*Material Women 1750-1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles 1750-1950*  
*Women and Things 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies* (Ashgate)

Sara Gray, *The Dictionary of British Women Artists* (The Lutterworth Press)

Neil Macmaster, *Burning the Veil: The Algerian War and the 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women, 1954-62* (Manchester University Press)

Leanne McCormick, *Regulating Sexuality: Women in Nineteenth-Century Northern Ireland* (Manchester University Press)

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

Doris Weatherford, *American Women during World War II: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge)

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

Laura Auricchio, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard: Artist in the Age of Revolution* (Getty Publications)

Helen Doe, *Enterprising Women and Shipping in the Nineteenth Century* (Boydell Press)

Eileen Faust, *The Politics of Writing: Julia Kavanagh, 1824-77* (Manchester University Press)

Carrie Hamilton, *Women in ETA: The Gender Politics of Radical Basque Nationalism* (Manchester University Press)

Kelly Hart, *The Mistresses of Henry VIII* (History Press)

Margaretta Jolly, *In Love and Struggle: Letters in Contemporary Feminism* (Columbia University Press)

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

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

James Lingard, *Britain at War, 1939-45* (Author House)

Norah Lofts, *Nethergate; A Rose for Virtue; Here Was a Man* (History Press)

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

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

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

Jennifer J. Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters: Domesticity, Education and Autonomy in Modern France* (University of New Hampshire Press)

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

Christina Simmons, *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II* (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)

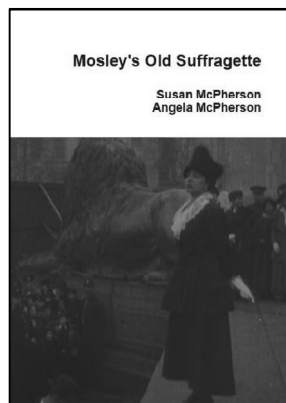
Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Make Room for Daddy: The Journey from Waiting Room to Birthing Room* (University of North Carolina Press)

## Mosley's Old Suffragette



This biography of Norah Elam (formerly Norah Dacre Fox) describes how one remarkable woman directed the flow of a series of dramatic events in recent British history. Interned in Holloway Prison during both world wars, Norah Elam's spirit for radical feminism was well suited to the revolutionary Britain of the first half of the twentieth century. Her transition from vigorous suffragette activities,

including imprisonment and force feeding, to later joining Oswald Mosley's inner circle intrigues. The authors attempt to understand how a woman who spent the first part of her life fighting for equality later turned to the dark forces of fascism, and they explore the long lasting emotional impact on their family.



ISBN 978-1-4452-7308-2

McPherson and McPherson 2010

[www.oldsuffragette.mcpherson.org.uk](http://www.oldsuffragette.mcpherson.org.uk)

# 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:

*Victorian Women in Britain and the United States: New Perspectives*

Guest edited by Jane Hamlett and Sarah Wiggins

*Women, Art and Culture: Creators and Consumers*

Guest edited by Anne Anderson

**Discounted Personal Subscription Rate for  
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## Steering Committee News

The first meeting of the Steering Committee in 2009-10 was held on 21 November 2009. Six new members were welcomed: Katie Barclay, Grainne Goodwin, Ann Heilman (Book Prize chair), Anne Logan, Juliette Pattinson, and Sarah Richardson (2010 Conference). Brief biographies (and photographs) of all the members of the Steering Committee can be found on the WHN website.

There was discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the new committee, in particular on how to ease the burden on the membership secretary. The treasurer explained the budgets for the year, which included a return to three issues a year of the *Women's History Magazine* and an increase in the money spent on the website. Membership of the Network stood at nearly 350.

Plans to celebrate Women's History Month in March 2010 were explored, including running a blog on the website. Arrangements for the 2010 conference to be held at the University of Warwick were well advanced. As the WHN was founded in London in 1991, it was suggested that the 2011 conference should ideally be held there. Other matters discussed included: developments and forthcoming events at the Women's Library; arrangements for the award of prizes and the possibility of a response from the WHN to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) consultation.

### Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

All members of the WHN are welcome to attend meetings of the Steering Committee as observers. The next meeting will be at 11.30 a.m. on Saturday 5 June at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU.

For further details please email [convener@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:convener@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](http://www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org)

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

[editor@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto: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 Helen Meller:

**treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org**

Committee Convenor, Dr Katherine Holden:

**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, Prof June Purvis:

**ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org**

Charity Representative, Dr Sue Morgan:

**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:

**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 OX30BP.

Advertising, Ms Ann Kettle:

**advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org**

For magazine back issues and all other queries please email: **admin@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](mailto:membership@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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## Gift aid declaration

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Address: .....

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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.

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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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### Banker's Order

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Account no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60—02—05), on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £ \_\_\_\_\_ (in words) \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_