

Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network



women's
HISTORY
NETWORK



Spring 2015

Katherine Holden
on *Leonore Davidoff:*
A tribute and personal reflection

Kerry Higgins
on *Infanticide and the influence of print culture in nineteenth-century England*

Sylvia Griffin
on *Dowry linen and the intimate outsider: visual arts as a bridge to matrilineage*

Carol Coles
on *the use of online resources in the search for the women doctors of the Serbian Relief Fund*

Plus
Ten book reviews
Getting to know each other
Committee news

Volume 2 Issue 1

Issn 1476-6760

www.womenshistorynetwork.org



Women's History Network Annual Conference, 2015

Female agency, activism and organisation

4-6th September 2015, University of Kent (Canterbury)

**Keynote speakers: Professor Mary Evans; Professor Pamela Cox;
Professor Clare Midgley**

We invite established scholars, postgraduate researchers, museum curators and media practitioners from a wide range of disciplines working in any geographical context and period to contribute to a dynamic discussion about female agency, activism and organisation. We welcome papers that speak to one of these themes as well as those which connect across all three. The conference theme, inspired by the 2015 centenary of the Women's Institute, is to be interpreted broadly.

For the full Call for Papers, see
<https://womenshistorykent.wordpress.com/>

Abstracts of c400 words to be submitted to
womenshistorynetwork@kent.ac.uk

Closing date: 10 April 2015

Conference organised by Anne Logan, Emily Manktelow, Juliette Pattinson, Kate Bradley and Catherine Lee

Welcome to the spring issue, which is full of interesting women: from Sylvia Griffin, who was inspired to create art from her mother's dowry linens, to nineteenth-century child murderers and doctors who travelled from Britain to Serbia during the First World War. We begin, though, by paying tribute to Leonore Davidoff, who died in 2014. Kath Holden, who worked closely with Leonore for many years, and has been a member of the WHN from the very start, has written a moving tribute to a woman who has touched and influenced so many of us. It seems fitting to have a tribute to Leonore in an issue covering such wide-ranging themes in women's history, since her work was always part of setting new agendas, and giving new generations of scholars the confidence to believe that what mattered to them also mattered to history.

Leonore Davidoff was a supervisor and mentor to me (Rachel Rich) during my MA and PhD studies at the University of Essex in the 1990s. Inspired by a lecture she gave on Victorian women's bodies, I chose to research the history of eating habits and disorders. Before agreeing to my project, Leonore warned me that whatever you learn through research you can never un-know. She asked me to consider whether I wanted to take on knowledge which would bring pain. These words introduced me to the way in which learning about past wrongs and past oppression opens up your eyes to present ones. She was right, of course, but I am so glad I did, and that I got to benefit from her support and mentoring. She was a real inspiration, and even if newer generations of women historians won't have the benefit of meeting her directly, her influence in locating women's contribution to business and family life, and in making us all realise that 'insignificant' things like housework and corsets are part of the politics of the past, mean that her influence goes on.

Our research articles for this issue are diverse in method and theme. Sylvia Griffin explores the significance of dowry linens, especially for migrant Jewish Hungarian women in twentieth-century Australia. From the history of the practice and its connections to matrilineage, Sylvia moves to introduce her own contemporary artistic work and her evolving relationship with her mother's linens. Kerry Higgins reflects on the links between our contemporary reactions to women who commit infanticide and how these women were portrayed in nineteenth-century texts, from broadsheets to literature. Finally, Carol Coles has brought together the stories of several women working for the Serbian Relief Fund in 1915, with her thoughts on how digitisation has opened up women's history within, but most importantly, beyond, the academy. Although very different, each of our authors reflects on how we might use texts, broadly defined, in women's history: whether linens, literature or digital documents.

This issue we sadly say goodbye to Anne Logan as our book reviews editor. Anne has done a fantastic job over the past few years in dealing with the volumes of books which come in for review. Jane Berney will be taking over this role and encourages readers to let her know if there are books they would like to review (see our list in this issue). Fortunately, Anne is not leaving us completely just yet, and will be the lead editor on our forthcoming special issue on 'New Perspectives on Women and the Great War.'

As always, this magazine is your space as Women's History Network members, and we welcome suggestions for how it could be improved or extended. Finally, we welcome articles, both long and short, that help us to explore women's history.

Editorial Team: Katie Barclay, Jane Berney, Lucy Bland, Catherine Lee, Anne Logan, Kate Murphy, Rachel Rich, and Emma Robertson.

Contents

Leonore Davidoff: A tribute and personal reflection	4
Dowry linen and the intimate outsider: visual arts as a bridge to matrilineage	6
'Oh mothers, did you ever hear, of such barbarity': infanticide and the influence of print culture in nineteenth-century England	14
The use of online resources in the search for the women doctors of the Serbian Relief Fund.....	20
Book Reviews.....	24
Getting to Know Each Other	34
Committee News	34



Cover: Wellcome Library, London
The father reads by candlelight. The mother holds a handkerchief. One of the daughters, overcome with emotion, holds her handkerchief to her eyes.
Early 19th century.
Printed: circa 1810

Leonore Davidoff: A tribute and personal reflection

Katherine Holden

University of the West of England

I feel honoured to have been asked to write a tribute to Leonore Davidoff who died at the age of 82 on 19 October 2014 after a long illness. Leonore was an internationally recognised pioneering scholar, founding editor of the journal *Gender and History*, and her loss has been mourned by friends and colleagues all over the world. Obituaries in the press and messages on a blog set up at the University of Essex (where she worked for most of her professional life) all testify to her extraordinarily powerful and long-lasting influence on gender history and on the many former students and scholars whose lives and careers she touched. I was fortunate to be one of those students. In addition to outlining the significance of Leonore's career and personal achievements, this piece will highlight the encouragement she offered mature women scholars like me to find new avenues of research and achieve our full potential, and will celebrate her ability, rare among historians, truly to work collaboratively.

Born into a New York Jewish immigrant family of doctors, Leonore came to England in the early 1950s to study for an MA at the LSE where she met and married the renowned sociologist David Lockwood. It was a close life-long partnership which lasted nearly 60 years. After writing an unpublished dissertation on married women's work at a time when few other scholars were interested in such subjects, Leonore herself worked part-time in London and Cambridge and brought up their three sons. She found it hard to fit in with the traditional role of faculty wife and often felt marginalised, but did receive support from like-minded scholars at Lucy Cavendish College for mature women in Cambridge.

Leonore returned to academic research after David got a job at the University of Essex in the late 1960s, publishing her monograph *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season* in 1973. Responding to the burgeoning women's movement and a

new interest in women's history, she also devised and taught a course on gender divisions in society on the new social history MA at Essex. The course proved very popular, running for at least twenty years, and by 1986 she was putting into practice her belief in working collaboratively, showcasing some of her students' research in a volume of essays, *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work*, which she co-edited with Belinda Westover. This kind of support and encouragement offered to women researchers became a continuous thread running throughout Leonore's life, including the part she played in the foundation of the Women's Research and Resources Centre that later became the Feminist Library and her role as judge for the Vera Douie Fellowship, set up through the Women's Library to support mature women scholars who were not in full-time academic employment.

In her many books and scholarly articles, Leonore's insights into gender divisions in history, based on meticulous and in-depth research, have changed the face of nineteenth-century social and economic history. Her best known work *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (1987) was co-authored with another former student, the now equally distinguished and influential historian Catherine Hall. Their book challenged existing histories of industrialisation, demonstrating how the lives and business dealings of middle-class entrepreneurial men in Birmingham and East Anglia could not be comprehended without also investigating women's contribution to the enterprise. The authors' arguments (sometimes misunderstood) provoked much debate and discussion and *Family Fortunes* has since become a classic social history text.

It was not only men and women of the middle and upper classes who interested Leonore. For her, the servants, whose hard physical and emotional labour enabled their employer's



Leonore Davidoff (centre-right), with (left to right) Janet Fink, Kath Holden and Megan Doolittle. Photo from personal collection of Kath Holden.

families and enterprises to thrive, were of equal importance. This aspect of Leonore's work was the focus of several essays in her 1995 collection *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender & Class* (1995). It was also particularly influential in my own research into singleness, helping me to understand the significance of single women's service relationships within and outside families.

I came to Essex as a graduate student in 1991. Having heard Leonore give the opening lecture at the founding meeting of the Women's History Network earlier that year, I was determined to study with her. We remained in touch for over twenty years, co-authoring another book with two of her other doctoral students, Janet Fink and Megan Doolittle. *The Family Story: Blood Contract and Intimacy: 1830-1960* (1999) contained case studies from each author's area of expertise. It discussed theoretical perspectives on the history of the family and critiqued existing scholarship, examining the concept of family from the viewpoint of those positioned outside the core mother/father/child triad. We dedicated our book to 'the spirit of creative friendship' and our collaboration proved so fruitful that after its publication the four of us continued to meet three or four times a year. Naming ourselves the 'Blood Contract and Intimacy' group (BCI), we read each other's work, offered mutual support for our individual publishing projects and shared our own family stories. Our last BCI meeting was in February 2014 when Leonore's health was beginning to fail.

Leonore's unfailing positive regard and astute critical comments became an essential backdrop to my academic career and are now sorely missed. Equally important for me was her modesty and willingness to offer her work and ideas for scrutiny by colleagues and students. She saw the editorial board of *Gender and History* as a collective and was determined to preserve equality between herself and her co-authors. Re-reading a letter she wrote to me in December 1995 during the planning process of *The Family Story* (while I was still her student), I was struck by just how important co-operative work was for her. After I had sent her my ideas for the book, she wrote back: 'And many thanks for stating your contribution to the book – I have a tendency to be too bossy and take on too much; not let other people play their part (perhaps being 'mother' for too long.....?) so please feel free to keep me in line!'

This was in fact far from the truth. While in some ways she was our academic 'mother', she never bossed us, rather encouraging us to criticise and comment on her ideas and writing and not to be too much in awe of her intellectual stature. I learned that having so many ideas and so great a depth of knowledge had its own problems. She was a fantastic story teller but one of our group tasks in the many drafts we read of her final wonderful work on the history of sibling relationships was to help her reduce the number of cases and tighten the focus. She knew so much but (like many of us) found it hard to know what to leave out.

Thicker Than Water: Siblings and Their Relations 1780-1920 (2012) explored the vital importance of siblings in the success of middle-class professional networks and business enterprises. It took more than twenty years to complete and finishing it took a toll on her health. Sadly its impact on the field of history can only be fully appreciated after her death. Her determination to bring gender into the mainstream of historical scholarship will not be forgotten soon, nor will her role as a kind compassionate and inspirational friend and mentor to so many women and women's historians.

Membership Announcements

You can now manage your WHN membership, update your details, pay your subscription, add your research interests/books and make a donation by logging into the Members' Area at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Do you pay your subscription by standing order? If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2015 rates. Don't forget, we have different rates to reflect different personal circumstances, so it is worth checking that you are paying the correct rate for you. Details of the 2014 rates for all categories of members can be found on the inside back cover of the magazine or by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Has your email address changed? If we don't have your current details, you may not receive the monthly e-newsletter, included in your membership fee. If you have changed email addresses since joining, or recently acquired a new email address, please update your details by logging into your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing the membership secretary.

All information (or queries) about membership, or changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging in to your account at womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing membership@womenshistorynetwork.org OR by mail to Ms Felicity Cawley, Postgrad Research Student, Economic & Social History, Lilybank House, University of Glasgow, G12 8RT.

Dowry linen and the intimate outsider: visual arts as a bridge to matrilineage

Sylvia Griffin

University of Sydney

Textiles are produced by situated and active social beings. As products of our material culture, textiles reflect cultural identity, social values, group organization, social status, gender relations, and artistic creativity.¹

This paper is a development of my interest in dowry linen, both for its connections to my family history and for its significance to my current visual arts practice. It is informed by several traditions of dowry textiles and needlework. It involves an examination of household rituals within the broader realm of material culture. This paper is also motivated by the desire to examine the implications – particularly the emotional implications – of household rituals, how they relate to their European origins and the significance of familial relationships to memory, ritual and identity. I am particularly interested in what it means when these objects are transformed by the passage of time, and shifts in place and context, as in my case. Furthermore, this paper will address the implications of transforming an essentially private custom/ tradition into the public domain via artistic interpretation.

This investigation into the ability of familial objects to convey emotional resonances is motivated by the personal experience of being a first-generation Australian raised by Jewish Hungarian parents born in early twentieth-century Europe. In making the decision to leave their European homeland as Holocaust survivors, and compelled to choose between significant items to take with them, my mother's dowry linen accompanied my family on their migration to Australia. This raises questions for me regarding the role these objects played in my mother's new life: did they enact a symbolic attachment to her family and homeland? Did they affirm her identity within her new surroundings? As a first-generation Australian how did this affect my perception of my parents' ability to cope in a foreign environment? And what constitutes my own attachment to my mother's linen?

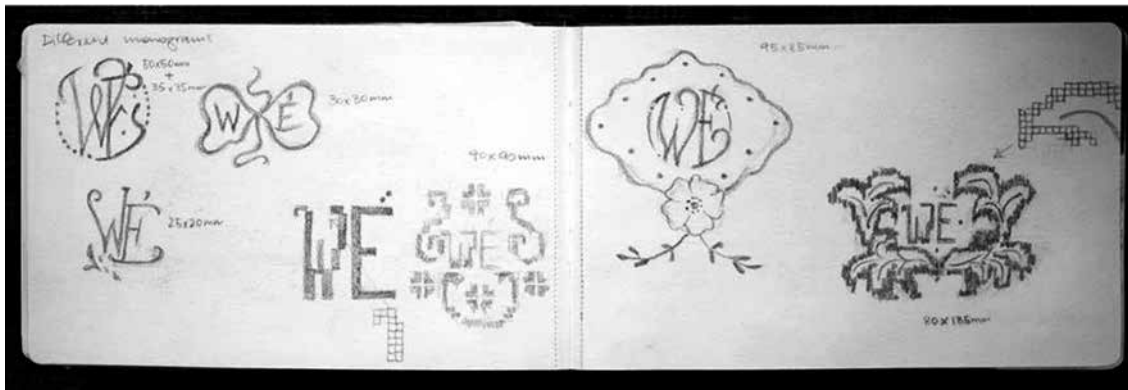


*Original pillowcase from Eva Weiss, 50 x 62cms.
Image author's own.*

It is not my intention with this paper to give a detailed history or social analysis of the multifarious practices and rituals involving dowry. In applying and melding elements of social history, trauma studies and autobiography, my objective is to contextualise this research within the framework of my own creative practice. As a practicing visual artist, my work has increasingly explored the complex relationship between art and trauma, examining the universal notions of memory and collective grief from a personal perspective. My aim here is to gain an understanding of the role of dowry textiles and an insight into some of the societal expectations, practices and meanings ascribed to dowry linen in Europe historically and up to the time when my mother was a young woman in the 1930s. Equipped with this information, my intent is to then establish the emotional significance this collection of textiles had for my mother, particularly within the context of diasporic homemaking, and how this connects with me emotionally and familiarly and how it translates artistically.

My mother died twenty-eight years ago and I now possess a sizable quantity of her dowry linen. My questions about this linen and research relating to it are constrained by several gaps in knowledge. With the passing of more than a quarter of a century as well as lost opportunities to glean anecdotal background information, some historical and personal knowledge inevitably remains unknown, either through death, neglect or the inability to articulate traumatic memories. As Holocaust survivors my parents, like many victims of significant cultural trauma, were to some degree silenced by their traumatic history and experiences. Migrating across the world to a foreign country where they did not even speak the language would, I imagine, further compound their feelings of 'otherness'. This pattern is consistent with much of the research and literature in the field by various trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Marianne Hirsch, Brett Ashley Kaplan and Anne Whitehead to name but a few.² The passing on of these often unarticulated emotions to subsequent generations is commonly referred to as postmemory or described as second-generational trauma. Elsewhere in my paper I discuss the idea that postmemory could be regarded as another familial ritual, whereby sublimated emotions exert tenuous power relations within the family unit.³ These silences may run so deep that they censor stories of how family life was conducted, how belongings were acquired and many other aspects of domestic life and the home.

What remains are the stories that are passed down to us and the material evidence left behind. This material evidence may take many forms: family photographs, letters, family recipes, clothes and textiles. In the absence of a human voice these objects may often 'speak' in its place. I have chosen to focus on my mother's dowry linen as it was an integral part of our family life and informed my earliest childhood memories. What these memories, gaps in knowledge and silences reveal in themselves may yield interesting information, supplemented by my research. I have used this information to inform my art practice. My aim is to challenge the viewer, both with the



Dowry linen monograms for Eva Weiss, sketchbook drawings, 13 x 40cms, 2013. Image author's own.

diversity of my materials and in the emotions they convey, to elicit new meanings and to explore how these items connect me to my mother and matrilineage.

I begin with an outline of the history of dowry linen, inheritance patterns and the role of textiles in European society with the aim of contextualising my mother's own textile endowment. This history will necessarily also encompass gender relations, power structures and issues around the formation of identity and home. I will then address and contrast diasporic female cultural traditions contemporaneous to those of my mother. Finally, I detail my artistic response to the often problematic combination of ritual, family and identity.

History and context

The creation of textiles, including those intended for dowry, has been practised for millennia, covering all social classes worldwide. Historian Susan Frye notes in her book *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* that traditionally women exchanged stories through weaving or embroidering cloth. She observes that from medieval to eighteenth-century England, thousands of women created designs and narratives in cloth. She asserts that women's embroidered work, and to a less obvious extent 'the knots and patterns of sewing, weaving, and knitting', placed these women's lives within the narratives of 'fertility and continuity'.⁴

This production of needlework could clearly be used as a means of exerting patriarchal order and control over women. Frye quotes Spanish humanist and philosopher Juan Luis Vives writing in *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* (1529). Here Vives declares the practice of needlework to be an 'appropriate activity of women' of all classes, being carried out in safe domestic confines, conforming to his supposition of domestic security.⁵ Art historian Roszika Parker discerns a paradox between the way embroidery and needlework generally served to indoctrinate femininity and passivity into women whilst covertly offering them a means to negotiate this very femininity by using stitches to create meanings of their own.⁶

Through the centuries, the value and meaning attached to the production of women's needlework extended to ensuring the health and wellbeing of household members and the contribution to the household 'store'. In many European societies, the production of dowry linen often fell to girls and young women who would toil diligently for years to accumulate items for their trousseau which would, upon marriage, furnish a future home. This household store, in turn, demonstrated social rank and household sufficiency.⁷

Furthermore, these textiles played a crucial role in

the lives of women with regard to marriage, inheritance and property law with further ramifications both economically and socially. A common example of this is to be found in anthropologist Annette Weiner's study of English inheritance practices which clearly favoured the patriline. Men customarily inherited 'real' property (land and/or house/s), and women only the use of land until death when it reverted to a male heir. Under this practice, textiles and dowry linen along with cupboards, chests and various other household items, regarded as 'personalty' or 'moveables', most commonly formed part of the core property that a woman was entitled to. Daughters only received land if there was no personalty to inherit – or, if the land was of significantly less value.⁸ This patriarchal apportioning of 'real' property, or the privileging of male heirs, effectively worked towards securing male wealth. Historian Laurel T. Ulrich points out that in such a system women themselves could be seen as movables, 'changing their names and presumably their identities as they moved (between) male-headed households'.⁹

The term 'identity' is employed by Frye to denote 'an ever-becoming sense of stable "self" that individual subjects attempted to generate through their relations to space, time and discourse'.¹⁰ Frye notes that through this expression, even in the most modest or domestic everyday action, identity is aligned with agency. She proposes that it was through verbal and visual texts and objects that early modern woman asserted and explored her identity.¹¹

This understanding of female identity leads me to consider the means by which early modern woman asserted and preserved her identity within a heavily gender-biased system. The personalty or moveables she was entitled to were some of the few things a woman had the power to retain, control and determine the fate of within the confines of marriage and inheritance, and thereby assert her identity. Within this context, my mother's dowry linen could be considered as personalty or moveables – although her beautiful, clearly embroidered initials on each piece affirmed lineage and independent identity as she entered into married life.

My mother's monogrammed linen invites comparison with Ulrich's case study of Hannah Barnard's cupboard. This cupboard, an example of an English Hadley chest dating from the 1680s to 1730s, was unusual for the manner in which the (female) owner's name was emblazoned on the front of the chest.¹² While most Hadley chests were marked with initials or partial names, Hannah Barnard's cupboard featured her full name in highly decorative bold letters. Whilst serendipitously recalling her grandmother's name and thus reinforcing familial alliance, it also served to mark the cupboard as being less portable, less exchangeable. Thus it became an inalienable

possession, aligning it with female lineage.¹³ In her concept of 'keeping while giving', Annette Weiner refers to gifts that are inscribed with the giver's identity in some way. Such an exchange of material objects as gifts carries 'symbolic value that verifies relatedness, knowledge, and links between the past and the present'. Quoting Weiner, Ulrich argues for the importance of cultivating and maintaining associations across generations.¹⁴

Quilts in the American tradition have frequently been discussed as prime examples of domestic material artefacts that are retained by family and commonly passed down in matrilineage. Similarly, dowry textiles can be considered as 'inalienable wealth'; both dowry linen and quilts are positioned as among the special objects and family mementos which often commemorate important events. While it has been said that quilts 'bridge the transition between childhood and adult life', dowry linen similarly enacts a transition for a young woman preparing to leave her family for married life. The intergenerational exchange of each of these goods ensures that familial links are also passed on.¹⁵

The social role of material objects and the flow of meanings and obligations between maker, giver, custodian and recipient are illustrated in a case study by historian Amanda Vickery. Her subject, Englishwoman Elizabeth Shackleton (1726-81), formed strong and demonstrable attachments to her domestic material possessions. With the aid of rare and detailed surviving accounts, Vickery demonstrates the important role these items played as both personal possessions and as a form of currency in household relationships. She refers to Shackleton imbuing her things with a personal life which began once they were acquired and entered the household. In describing Shackleton's role in supervising and carefully monitoring what went where, what was to be stored, repaired, repurposed or gifted to staff, Vickery illustrates how housekeeping provided Elizabeth Shackleton with an esteemed role and a gratifying means of comparison with other women.¹⁶

Another more recent example of dowry linen as a social indicator is evidenced in Effstratia Antoniou Katahan's thesis *Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman: My Mother's Dowry Textiles*.¹⁷ This study details the cultural rituals of early to mid-twentieth-century rural Greek women who, from childhood, produced dowry linen and textiles in preparation for family life. A ritual of gift exchange also involved the bride-to-be preparing textiles as gifts for the groom's family, and the groom's mother in turn providing her son with textiles for the bride's family. Katahan makes reference to a 1991 study of the women of Kutch, India who spent the majority of their spare time embroidering dowry textiles for their daughters. Young girls actively participated in this culture from an early age, producing, accumulating and distributing dowry to female relatives. Katahan quotes Vickie C. Elson who suggests that these practices 'give proof to the girl of her value to her family' and provide her with the wherewithal to live up to future marital expectations.¹⁸

Katahan likens the values of this Kutch study to those in rural Greece. The size and quality of a Greek woman's dowry traditionally demonstrated the bride's worth, while conjointly acting as a vehicle to reflect the reputation and the prestige of the bride's family. Katahan further links the quality of, and dedication to, the production of dowry linen not only to a woman's standing amid her community and other Greek women but to the calibre of suitor she could potentially

attract.¹⁹

Perhaps one of the less commonly observed aspects of needlework and dowry preparation historically is that, rather than oppressing women's identities, in many instances this work helped to forge them. Frye observes that embroidery as a form of 'women's textualities' was deployed by women from 1540 to 1700 to express themselves and in turn redefine the feminine.²⁰ These 'textualities' offered a view of the creators' identities within the context of intellectual, familial, religious and historical traditions, even as they redefined themselves via those traditions.²¹ Indeed, as Jane Schneider and Annette Weiner observe in *Cloth and Human Experience*, the extraordinary range and inherent possibilities of cloth give 'an almost limitless potential for communication'.²²

In many of the references and case studies referred to above, dowry linen was produced by either the family of the intended recipient, by the recipient or a combination of both. The following section of this paper will look specifically at my mother's dowry linen – an example of linen produced on commission outside the family. I intend to establish whether the dynamics of identity, intimacy and agency equally apply to commissioned dowry linen, or whether they change according to the place of production. I also wish to consider the emotional implications of my mother's own linen not only for her but for me as the bearer of her memory.

My mother's dowry linen

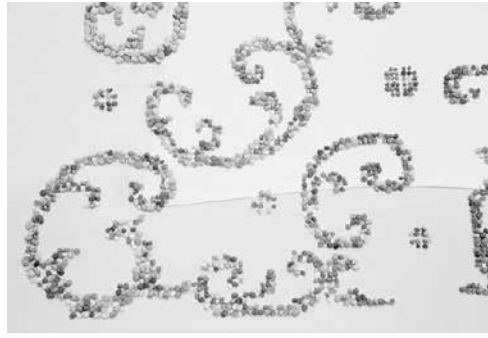
Studying the material object offers ways in which to perceive connections between ourselves and the people of the past, as well as to access the contexts that produced the object, contexts that the object continues to recall.²³

I have very little information on the background to my own family's dowry linen – including its production, the value placed upon it by my mother, her mother and her grandmother or other household members. Where other writers on cultural processes and rituals draw on personal accounts and documented evidence, I am primarily working with large gaps in knowledge and background history. Very little appears to have been written on Hungarian marriage customs, and even less on ones involving Jewish marriages.²⁴ I do know that my mother and her sisters all received dowry linen and that it was not produced by any family member or household staff. I have anecdotal information from my stepmother to indicate that upon a young girl reaching the age of approximately fourteen years, her mother would arrange the procurement and production of dowry linen. The women of the family (mothers and perhaps aunts and grandmothers) would discuss details such as projected household needs, quantities, fabrics, colours, and styles and sizes of monograms and initials. The work would then be consigned to an outside source to complete.²⁵

Choices made in the production of the linen such as colour and quality of fabric further distinguish a family's dowry linen. In the absence of other information, I can compare my stepmother's linen, made entirely of pink cotton – ordered from Switzerland – with my mother's which is mostly cream, with a few pale yellow pieces.²⁶ The distinctive monograms on my mother's dowry linen constitute the clearest and most personal indication of her ownership of these objects, and her identity. These monograms, all featuring my mother's family



Hand in Hand installation shot (folded pillowcase at lower right), 2013. Image author's own.



Hand in Hand (detail), 2013. Image by Marty Lochmann.



Hand in Hand (installation view), 200 x 248cms, 2013. Image by Marty Lochmann.

name, suggest a naming ritual linking her family of origin to her future married life in much the same way as the lettering on Hannah Barnard's cupboard, discussed earlier. This is also analogous to what Susan Frye describes as the memorialisation of a transition in life.

Discussing a 1557 painting, *Alice Barnham and her Sons Martin and Steven* (artist unknown), Frye comments on the appearance of a first-person text in the painting denoting the subject's changed status to wife and mother. This inscription reads: 'I was borne the 30 September / On a Sunday 1523. Tornid / fro that I was unto that / ye se A. Dni 1557'. Frye paraphrases the latter part as: 'Turned from what I was into what you see in this picture in 1557', which emphasises personal change, particularly in the first person use of 'I'. Frye suggests that the painting is directed to the subject's own family in the desire to memorialise the transition and preserve and recall her former state.²⁷ I see my mother's monogrammed dowry linen as performing the same function.

My mother's monograms not only mark her linen as inalienable possessions, but also serve to strengthen family ties.²⁸ As Ulrich notes, while it was not strictly necessary to mark one's objects, the marking of them, like the naming of children, secured connections. It also strengthened the chances of this inalienable wealth staying within the family to be passed down in matrilineage.²⁹

My mother, born Eva Weiss, was the youngest of four children in an upper-middle-class Hungarian Jewish family living in urban Budapest. Her monogram 'WE' (Weiss Eva) adorns almost every piece of her dowry linen in the form of either separate or intertwined initials, decorated or undecorated, in open work or other more conventional forms of embroidery. My family research unexpectedly located several variations in the spelling of her family name, including Weis and Weisz. I have adopted the spelling 'Weiss' – as it appears on my birth certificate – for my creative work and for this paper.

I am intrigued and simultaneously frustrated by the gaps of knowledge within my own family history. I regard my mother's dowry linen as the primary material evidence of her European life and as a link to family members I never knew. Theorist Marianne Hirsch is one person who has done significant work in this area. Describing the materiality of charred photographic images from an exhibition, she argues that they exceed their representational attributes in favour of testimonial and social value. She comments on their capacity to become documents of everyday life, 'bearing witness to acts of embodied communal exchange in which they played a significant material role'.³⁰ They also can allude to the qualities

of familial and communal lives. Similarly, I am approaching my mother's dowry linen as testimonial objects for my work.

I am concurrently mindful of the pitfalls in making assumptions based on my own emotional attachment to my mother's dowry linen. I am aware of the possibility that my mother may not have shared the values I have attached to them. This was made clear to me in a conversation with my stepmother. Where I expected her to be attached to her dowry linen as a precious link to her mother and former family life, she claimed to place no value on it at all. In fact she never used this linen in her transnational homes, instead keeping it neatly folded away in a cupboard.³¹ A traumatic past, particularly one such as my stepmother endured, involving imprisonment, catastrophic loss of family and possessions, displacement and migration, manifests in unforeseen ways. By contrast, my mother used all her dowry linen. I can attest to this as I have strong and emotionally resonant memories of household rituals involving this linen enacted between the three generations of women in my childhood home.

The gaps in my family history such as the variations in the spelling of my mother's maiden name, present potentially rich artistic possibilities. They offer an opportunity to express absence, mortality and longing – as well as the temporal peculiarities of memory – through creative practice, and to question and challenge both the artist and the viewer. Additionally, I venture to propose that the performative aspects of an artistic practice (such as attention to detail and repetitive actions) are a sympathetic counterpoint to the embodied rituals in the making and use of dowry linen. Sociologist Paul Connerton alludes to such practices with his references to conveying and sustaining recollected knowledge and images from the past by ritual-like performances.³² He argues that commemorative ceremonies 'prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative; performativity cannot be thought without a concept of habit; and habit cannot be thought without a notion of bodily automatism'.³³

In *How Societies Remember*, Connerton links these performative aspects with habit, describing an embodied process in which our hands and body gain a kind of knowledge and a remembering. He uses the example of a typist who, through practice, acquires a conditioned reflex, coming to know where each key on the typewriter is in the same way that he or she knows where one of their limbs are.³⁴ Creatively, within this context, the line between ritual and habit can blur; for example, in the making of an artwork repeated actions may become meditative, or recall other cultural or religious practices for the artist/maker. In this way, the process may

become more closely aligned to ritual rather than mere habit.

Indeed, the embodied attachment one may feel for objects reappears in Katahan's description of the bond some rural Greek women had with the dowry textiles they produced, citing the case of one woman who felt that her professionally embroidered wedding chemise was not really 'hers'.³⁵ She kept it wrapped separately to avoid it touching the chemises she had embroidered herself that were packed in the same trunk.³⁶ While my mother may not have physically invested the same time and labour in the production of her own dowry linen, I suspect that she still formed a significant attachment with its links to family, home and memory.

Material objects with close connections to the past or to former homes also possess potential to be emotional triggers. Hirsch refers to objects as triggers for our own emotional projections, drawing on Aleida Assman who writes of the 'return journey' or the reunification with something left behind as having the effect of a reconnection of severed parts (as in the classical Greek legal concept of the *symbolon*).³⁷ If this happens, the object may 'release latent, repressed, or dissociated memories – memories that, metaphorically speaking, remained behind, concealed within the object. Objects and places, therefore, Assmann argues, can function as triggers of remembrance that connect us, bodily and thus also emotionally, with the object world we inhabit'.³⁸

From dowry to homemaking

As one of three sisters each exploring their different perspectives of growing up with immigrant parents, psychotherapist Binnie Klein challenges the commonly accepted concept of home as a place. She instead considers the sense of safety often ascribed to a place as pertaining to 'a collection of objects, feelings, bodies'. She describes certain objects as being catalysts or memory triggers to reassuring times past, both physically recalling loved ones and to memories of the past. In this way, she suggests that 'home' becomes a 'floating anchor' rather than place.³⁹

The notion of objects as emotional triggers interests me in considering the emotional links of dowry linen to family, home and tradition, particularly with regard to my mother's emigration. The choice to include her bulky dowry linen in the allowable luggage when leaving her homeland is evidence of the personal value my mother ascribed to these items. I also believe that this linen would have been a means of naturalising a new and at times bewildering environment by bringing the familiar from her 'old' world into the 'new'. Referring to the significance of diasporic objects as emotional signifiers in Italian migration, Ilaria Vanni uses the term 'home' and its opposite 'unhomely' to denote the emplacement and enactment of multiple geographies. She uses 'unhomely' as a translation from the Italian 'spaesati' which, while literally translating as 'without a village' or 'without a country', also alludes to the loss of familiar things and surroundings, 'being or feeling lost, having lost one's bearings, being displaced, being confused, being out of place'.⁴⁰

Vanni's reflections on the Italian diaspora and the importance of personal objects can be applied to the broader migrant experience and the relevance of objects such as dowry linen. Relevant too are Vanni's references to anthropologist and historian Ernesto De Martino who theorised that the loss of familiar things, such as practices, words, habits led to

a loss of the 'common lifeworld'.⁴¹ The symbolic attachments to this 'common lifeworld' after leaving a homeland can be materialised through the diasporic practices of homemaking. Geographers Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling see homemaking practices as a means to manifest material and imagined transnational geographies of home on a domestic scale. They propose that transnational homes can be viewed as performative spaces in that both personal and cultural connections to previous or imagined homes can be embodied, enacted and reimagined within a new space.⁴² As an example of this need to feel 'at home', Blunt and Dowling refer to Moroccan women bringing those objects which represented 'home' to them into their 'other home' in Italy. Through these objects or commodities, the women affirm their Muslim and Moroccan identities contextually alongside ones which display what they have become.⁴³

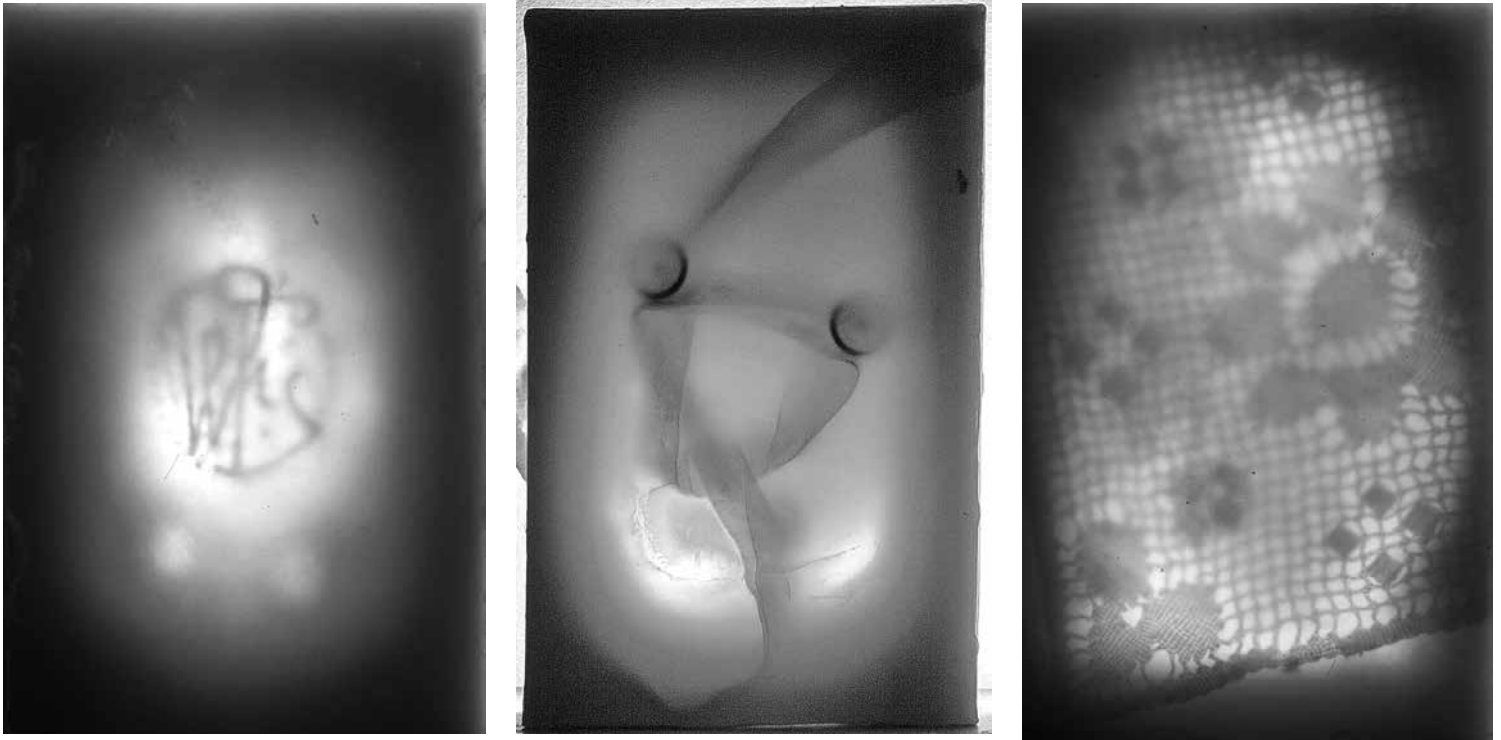
For the second generation, these transcultural objects can provide a link to another more mysterious home. As Katahan comments, her mother's dowry linen became the means by which she was transported to another time and place which she [Katahan] would otherwise be denied the opportunity to know or experience directly. She remarks on the ability of the textiles, when considered alongside her mother's stories, to assist her in experiencing her mother as a youth and young adult.⁴⁴ While I did not have the opportunity to experience such stories, the linen represents a haptic link to early family life resonant with feelings of security and warmth. I have many early childhood memories of drifting to sleep with the raised stitching from a monogram under the skin of my fingers.

Hand in hand

Katahan acknowledges that, similarly to me, being a first-generation child of European parentage, the physical distance between the old country and new can be used as an analogy to measure the cultural differences between herself and her mother. She comments on the difficulty of being a product of two cultural worlds and considers that her understanding of her mother's dowry linen has served as a cultural bridge between these worlds.⁴⁵

As a practicing artist, I am particularly aware of the ability of art to offer a means of consolation and emotional resolution. To this end, I have regarded my mother's dowry linen as a cultural bridge to the past. I am also mindful of the difficult emotions associated with these two cultural worlds. Just as my stepmother kept her dowry linen close to her but packed away untouched, so did my mother's dowry linen remain with me, untouched for twenty-five years.⁴⁶

Earlier research which had led me into the discourse on postmemory redirected my focus to my family history and moved me to address my feelings of loss through a re-examination of family material in my possession. The fact that my mother lived through the trauma of the Holocaust during the Second World War adds deeper meaning to her linen for me. Had she simply left Hungary of her own volition to seek a new life in Australia, her dowry textiles would undoubtedly still carry resonances of her past European life and arouse my interest. But the overlay of a traumatic past involving persecution, personal hardship and loss of close family members adds a layer of meaning and vulnerability not easily articulated. For me, this difficult history is carried in my



Keepsakes (details), 13 x 9 x 3cms each, 2012. Images author's own.

mother's dowry linen.

The familiarity of, and memories triggered by, these dowry textiles parallel what Hirsch has identified as an object's capacity to convey a 'souvenir' relationship to the past. Hirsch writes: 'souvenirs authenticate the past; they trigger memories and connect them indexically to a particular place and time. They can also help to recall shared experiences'.⁴⁷ The semiotic concept of the index provided the ideal philosophical framework from which to consider these materials.⁴⁸ Indexically, my mother's linen could be seen as both a trace and material proof of her former existence. This can be witnessed both in her monogram, also a marker of her identity, and in the stains remaining from years of usage and storage and even in the crease marks where this linen had been ironed and folded. Traces such as these, while acting as reminders, also offer the capacity to connect existentially to another person in another time.

Elsewhere, Hirsch refers to a passage in Jewish author Lily Brett's book *Too Many Men* where the semi-autobiographical daughter character brings her grandmother's tea service back to her home in New York promising to reconnect 'some of the disparate parts of her life, to find continuity with a severed past – not to bring it into the present'.⁴⁹ In a similar vein, my predominant response to my family's dowry linen, photographs and other objects was the need to honour and protect precious memories and connect to my mother's European past. As a contemporary artist, I desire to express often difficult and emotive themes in a non-didactic, abstract manner. This particularly applies to much of my current work which refers to my family's Holocaust experience. Highly mediated art, or didactic, representational work, as art theorist Janet Wolff has cautioned, performs the 'making sense' for the viewer in lieu of actively engaging them.⁵⁰ Like many artists, I see my role as one to provoke, challenge and engage the viewer.

The first artwork I created utilising my family linen was *Keepsakes* (2012). This installation consisted of six pairs of wax blocks placed on six timber shelves, each lit from behind. Wax

was employed for its resonances of degradability and references to sealing and preserving. The dowry textiles used in *Keepsakes* included two monograms – one from a pillowcase and one from a damask napkin, a fabric button band, and a lacy doily. The monograms were set into the wax and the wax was then carved to enable illumination of the buried embroidered text. The button band – a fabric strip used to secure the openings of pillowcases or doona covers was loosely tied in a knot to resemble an umbilical cord. Lastly, the doily was utilised twice – embedded in a wax block and pressed into the surface of another block leaving a raised imprint. This imprint acted as an indexical void recalling the absent object.

Since 2013, my work has focused increasingly on written forms of inscription and the relevance of names in memorialisation. This entailed further investigation into my mother's monograms. In my desire to contribute a new voice in working with dowry textiles, I chose to utilise stone as a less predictable material option. Stone appealed for several reasons: it is hard wearing and long lasting; it has a traditional use in memorialisation and most importantly for me is its association with the Jewish tradition of leaving a stone or pebble on a person's grave. This ritual of paying respect to the dead and marking a visitor's presence seemed particularly relevant to my ambitions. This act engages us in a ritual which simultaneously provides a physical means of expressing our emotions as well as our spiritual needs.

Traditional methods such as chiseling and engraving various forms of stone were trialed then discarded after experimentation in favour of individual quartz stones. In transcribing my mother's monogram from a pillowcase using one quartz stone for each open-work stitch, the monogram became almost exactly four times the size of the original textile. Despite this change in scale and materiality, the work maintained a connection to the original by retaining a delicate filigree-like quality. A stop-motion video was also created capturing the natural light from a window of my studio raking across the surface of the work. This video suggested



*Monogram in stone, 40 x 40cms approx., 2013.
Image author's own.*

temporality in both the material impermanence of the work as well as in the passing of time.

The rationale behind the next piece, *Hand in Hand*, was to create a major work as part of a conference with the theme 'Space, Place and Country'.⁵¹ In referencing my mother's dowry, I sought to pay homage to my parents, their former world and the dislocation they experienced. I was keen to examine the concept of transnational homemaking and the role that familiar objects play in acclimatising to a new environment. I also wanted to explore through visual means what happens when a ritual within the home is transported to foreign environs.

The inspiration for the work was a small pillowcase measuring approximately 50 x 62cms. The cotton fabric, originally pale yellow in colour, bears my mother's maiden name initials – 'WE' – in open work embroidery. It was installed in the gallery over several days onto a timber support draped with an off-white damask tablecloth from my mother's dowry over the top of one of my own bed sheets. These layers carried the vestiges of everyday life such as coffee, wax and bloodstains. I embraced these indexical markers of domesticity as an integral part of the work. Translating and transferring the embroidered pattern onto the draped support required a process which I likened to a careful 'reading' of the textile. Thus, the entire installation period was spent with folded pillowcase in hand, counting each stitch row by row, gathering the required number of stones and placing them in a corresponding grid-like pattern. The long and painstaking process often brought to mind the process of needlework and was so inherently performative that I filmed several hours of this installation process.

At times contemplative, at other times challenging, the physicality of the process – loss of feeling in the fingertips lasting several days, the challenge of kneeling for hours at a time hunched over the work, and lapses in concentration leading to errors in the 'reading' of pattern – paralleled, I imagined, those experienced by the needleworkers of the original pieces. I often found myself needing to relinquish my sense of control as the need for compromises arose, such as running out of a particular sized stone, necessitating adjusting the 'reading' of the textile and thus my expectations. This too was consistent with the original textile's history: close observation of what initially appeared to be near-perfect symmetry in the

embroidery actually revealed several imperfections. Whether these deviations discovered in the original were simply mistakes or shortcuts taken by the embroiderer, I can never be certain, but it did assist me in reconciling the difficulties I experienced in my own piece.

Temporal signs such as the deterioration and heavy staining of the original dowry fabric disappeared in this new incarnation, revealing only the marks on the damask support. The title of the work, *Hand in Hand*, intimates female labour and embodied experience in the work process, as well as contiguity of past and present. The ritualistic handling of each stone recalls and connects handwork, domesticity and mourning rituals. The concentration and time necessitated in realising *Hand in Hand*, as perhaps with dowry embroidery, is a simultaneously contemplative and cathartic experience allowing me to share a story in a similar manner to that shared by my mother's dowry linen.

In reinterpreting the form and function of the original dowry textile as a work of art, several other major differences can be observed. Firstly, the scale and materials used challenge the delicacy of the embroidered cotton, translating it into a weighty, grounded object. This carries a further contradiction with the realisation that each stone sits unattached on the base, vulnerable and unstable. Furthermore, if embroidered stitches can be considered miniature in form, as I perceive they can be, then Hirsch's theory linking miniaturisation to confinement and power should also be noted. Susan Stewart is cited for her view that the miniature is a 'metaphor for the interior space and time of the bourgeois subject', while the gigantic is a metaphor for 'the abstract authority of the state and the collective, public life' in her work *On Longing*.⁵² *Hand in Hand* presents a challenge to this proposition by bringing the personal and the feminine into the public arena whilst maintaining an intimate connection to the delicate original.

Conclusion

The artwork *Hand in Hand* provided me with a means of linking together my various areas of research inspired by my mother's dowry linen. My intention was to represent loss and absence whilst contextualising the meaning I had ascribed to this linen within the discourses of dowry rituals, matrilineage and homemaking. I also aspired to bring contemporary relevance to an ancient custom which I consider maintains emotional resonance and relevance.

Laurel T. Ulrich, Susan Frye, Higgs and Radosh and Annette Weiner introduced me to the intricacies of practices around material culture, family and inheritance. While Blunt and Dowling, Bordo, Klein and Silverman provided insight into notions of home and displacement, others such as Effstratia A. Katahan and Ilaria Vanni demonstrated contemporary examples through illuminating case studies. The common strand evident in much of this literature was the often tenuous place of women in male-dominated societies and the role that textiles and other domestic items played in countering this, often covertly, and usually with lasting results in the form of material evidence to be passed down in matrilineage.

This research has not only informed and assisted my understanding of my own family history, but has also deepened my understanding of the broader implications of dowry, homemaking and a particularly female tradition. Although underpinned by this perspective, the physical process of

installing *Hand in Hand* brought new and unexpected emotional aspects to the fore. For example, at times physical discomfort and problems with materials generated feelings of anger and resentment; while the gesture of laying out the stones surprised me with the ritualistic feel and tenderness inherent in the action. Ulrich's references to the utilisation of material goods to 'create a world of meanings and ultimately transmit (her) history' resonated strongly for me, while remarks on material goods being 'crucial props in unobserved, intimate rituals' brought to mind the ancient and comforting Jewish custom of laying a stone on a grave.⁵³

On embarking on this project my intention was to pay homage to my mother, our shared Jewish history, her survival and the trauma endured during the war and subsequent relocation in difficult circumstances. My mother's dowry linen not only provided me with a haptic link to her European life that I felt an intimate outsider to, but it came to represent our common lineage. In the practice of visual art I found a strong and poignant means of expressing my own sorrow and loss for not only my family history but for the relationship I had with my mother. To me this is a powerful and important role that art can play – by referencing a custom and rendering it in physically and materially diverse ways, the viewer is invited to reflect on the nature of ritualistic processes, while the artist is challenged to create, communicate and respond to the interconnected aspects of these rituals and offer a fresh means of engaging emotionally. The combination of all these factors has enriched my artistic practice, assisting me in expressing the embodied processes inherent in needlework and the rituals of homemaking in an artistic mode.

Notes

1. Effstratia Antoniou Katahan, 'Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman: My Mother's Dowry Textiles' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Alberta (Canada), 1997), 1.
2. Caruth Cathy, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1995); Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2012); Marianne Hirsch, 'Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14/1 (2001), 5-37; Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (Urbana, University of Illinois, 2007); Anne Whitehead, *Memory (The New Critical Idiom)*, ed. John Drakakis (London, Routledge, 2010).
3. 'Postmemory' is the term coined by theorist Marianne Hirsch and now integrated into trauma discourse to describe the effects of a second generation's experience of their parents' trauma.
4. Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 14. See also Chapter 3 in Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London, The Women's Press, 1984) in which Parker outlines the historical complexities between the Church, women, morality and embroidery.
5. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 6.
6. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 11-13.
7. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 13-14.
8. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard: Female Property and Identity in Eighteenth-Century New

England', in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute (Williamsburg, Virginia, The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 252-5.

9. *Ibid.*
10. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 11.
11. *Ibid.*, 9, 11.
12. Ulrich, 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard', 244-5.
13. *Ibid.*, 255.
14. Ulrich, 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard', 263-4.
15. Elizabeth Higgs and Polly F. Radosh, 'Quilts: Moral Economics and Matrilineages', *Journal of Family History*, 38/55 (2013), 66.
16. Amanda Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods: A Lancaster Consumer and Her Possessions, 1751-81', in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, Routledge, 1993), 278-84.
17. Katahan, 'Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman'.
18. *Ibid.*, 57.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Frye uses the term 'women's textualities' to encompass writing, painting and embroidery in this period 1540-1700.
21. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, xv.
22. Annette Weiner and Jane Schneider, *Cloth and Human Experience* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 1.
23. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 29.
24. David Sabean, Simon Teuscher and Jon Mathieu (eds), *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300-1900)* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2007), Tamás Faragó, 'Seasonality of Marriages in Hungary from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Family History*, 19/4 (1994), 333-50, and others while referencing Hungarian marriage customs and practices were of little relevance to this paper.
25. My step-mother, Eva Laszlo, is the same age and from the same Hungarian social class as my mother.
26. According to my step-mother, her mother and aunt selected a pink cotton for her dowry linen which was ordered from Switzerland. The seamstress who completed the items was a friend (or distant relative) of the family.
27. Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 15-23.
28. As with Hannah Barnard's cupboard, marked possessions regarded as 'inalienable' are those which may still come to be given away or sold but retain a link to the giver or original owner.
29. Ulrich, 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard', 263-4.
30. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 240.
31. The term 'transnational home/s' is used in this paper to denote the migration and resettlement across national borders of migrants – particularly the dispossessed and displaced as described by Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling in their book *Home* (London, Routledge, 2006).
32. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4.
33. *Ibid.*, 5.
34. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 94-5.
35. Katahan cites this case via L. Welters 1988.
36. Katahan, 'Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman', 59.
37. The *symbolon*, a symbolic object, was broken in half on the drawing up of a legal contract. Each party was given one half and on bringing the two halves together again at a later date, the contract could be ratified.

38. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 204-7.
39. Susan Bordo, Binnie Klein, and Marilyn K. Silverman, 'Missing Kitchens', in *Places through the Body*, ed. Heidi J. Nast and Steve Pile (London, Routledge, 2004), 72-80.
40. Ilaria Vanni, 'Oggetti Spaesati, Unhomely Belongings: Objects, Migrations and Cultural Apocalypses', *Cultural Studies Review*, 19/2 (2013), 150-1.
41. Vanni, 'Oggetti Spaesati', 153-4.
42. Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 212-3, 48.
43. *Ibid.*, 199-205.
44. Katahan, 'Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman', ii-iii.
45. *Ibid.*, 33.
46. Higgs and Radosh quote Schneider and Weiner in *Cloth and Human Experience* who refer to this as 'hoarding and storage' in the context of 'treasure to be saved rather than for capital or for display'. Higgs and Radosh, 'Quilts', 65.
47. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 186.
48. The index is one of the triumvirate of signs, alongside the icon and the symbol, developed by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. While the icon resembles or imitates its object (for example, a portrait or diagram), and the symbol has an independent connection to its denoted object (such as words, names or mnemonics), the index maintains an existential relationship to its object, a 'having-been-thereness' of that which is signified (such as the smoke of a fire).
49. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 251.
50. Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2008), 60-1.
51. This exhibition was part of the Graduate School Conference 'Critical Thinking: Research + Art + Culture', at Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University, 11-27 Sep. 2013.
52. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 195.
53. Ulrich, 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard', 269-71.

'Oh mothers, did you ever hear, of such barbarity': infanticide and the influence of print culture in nineteenth-century England

Kerry Higgins

Oxford Brookes University

The prosecution of Mick and Mairead Philpott for killing six of their children generated thousands of reports in the English press in 2013.¹ Headlines repeatedly characterised Mick as a 'disgusting' monster. Interestingly, despite seemingly being equally culpable, his wife was less vilified; indeed at times, her actions appeared to be almost insignificant within public representations.² Given this media frenzy, some historical perspective on the representation of women convicted of child murder within the press can be enlightening. Throughout the nineteenth century, half of all infanticides reported in the Registrar General's reports for England and Wales occurred in London (see table 1). This was not missed by England's media, with broadsides, newspapers, magazines and novels reporting and analysing, often for long periods of time and in depth, the implications of the tiny corpses found in the depths of the city.³ The following article focuses on how different types of nineteenth-century literature portrayed women convicted of infanticide and how it influenced public opinion around those convicted of this crime.

During the nineteenth century, criminal women were situated against carefully constructed models of femininity that emphasised the importance of sexual chastity and the naturalness of motherhood. Women who did not conform to these ideals were often represented as 'fallen women', a stereotype that was the subject of a mass literature and which located women's criminal and 'immoral' activity as fundamentally more problematic than men's. Nineteenth-century authors Henry Mayhew and John Binny noted: 'the gentler sex, as a whole, are superior in virtue to the sterner sex; but when woman falls, she seems to possess a capacity almost beyond man, for running into all that is evil'.⁴ This period also saw continuing emphasis on the importance of the family, with both governing bodies and churches regarding home

and particularly mothers as the seat of moral values: 'there is domestic purity and moral life and example in a good home, and individual defilement and moral ruin in a bad one'.⁵ Henry Mayhew, in his journalism, summed up much of the opinion towards criminal women expressed during the early Victorian era, arguing that female criminals are the 'rudest moral features in connection with a being whom we are apt to regard as the most graceful and gentle forms of humanity'.⁶ Women who committed infanticide, 'the deliberate killing of an infant by violence or wilful neglect', were therefore particularly problematic, committing a violent crime but also challenging normative understandings of motherhood and undermining the role of the home as the nursery of the nation.⁷

Infanticide in nineteenth-century England was the most common type of murder ascribed to women and is a subject to which many historians have dedicated themselves.⁸ Higginbotham highlights that by mid-1860: '80% of all coroners' reports of murder in England and Wales involved infants, most of which were assumed to be illegitimate'.⁹ The full scale of infanticide cases, however, is hard to prove from figures collected at the time. Recorded figures for infanticide show that 76 children under one year old were victims of infanticide in England and Wales between 1838 and 1840, which generated 34 per cent of all murders in the period.¹⁰ This figure may be far lower than the true number of cases, given that statistics were generated solely from 'obvious' cases of infanticide such as stabbing and smothering, that not all cases were proven as child-murder, and that not all victims' bodies were found.¹¹

The very definition of infanticide had changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the 1803 repeal of a 1624 statute. The earlier statute had presumed an unmarried mother guilty of infanticide if found to be concealing the

Charge/Age of Victim	Newborn	One day to Eleven Months	Over One Year	Total
Murder	31 (73.8%)	10 (23.8%)	1 (2.4%)	42
Attempted Murder	1 (16.7%)	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	6
Manslaughter	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	10
Concealment of birth	74 (100%)			74

Table 1: Women tried for Murder and Age of Victims 1839-1906

Source: Ann R. Higginbotham, "Sin of the Age": Infanticide and Illegitimacy in Victorian London', *Victorian Studies*, 32/3 (1989), 325.

birth of a dead child; unmarried women had to actively prove innocence rather than the state prove guilt.¹² The 1803 repeal placed the onus on the prosecutors and required the jury to find evidence of murder, rather than simple concealment. At the same time, the lesser crime of concealment, which carried a smaller sentence of two years imprisonment, was created. Juries were much more willing to convict women of concealment than murder and this may have reduced the number of murders reported within the official statistics. Whilst the full statistical picture may never be known, commentators nonetheless showed considerable anxiety over what they believed to be an epidemic in infanticide. In 1844, London MP Thomas Wakley declared that 'child-murder was going onto a frightful, to an enormous, a perfectly incredible extent'.¹³

Given both the real numbers of infanticide prosecutions and the growing anxiety around this form of crime, it is perhaps not surprising that early nineteenth-century English print culture reported so intensely on the subject. It was also a period during which the newspaper industry was continuing to expand with the rise in untaxed newspapers and the growth in the size of individual papers and their markets, especially in the provinces and amongst lower socio-economic groups.¹⁴ Jennifer Thorn argues that the press seized on infanticide cases as they provided an ongoing source of material that fed into contemporary social anxieties. Thorn goes on to note that, 'Child-murder, taken as the province of journalism, medicine, law, and literature, contributed crucially to their self-definition'.¹⁵ In this sense, representations of women who committed infanticide were central not only to understandings of femininity and womanhood, but also to the development of newspaper journalism, and to the broader conceptualisation of the flawed nature of contemporary society.¹⁶

Writing murder for the lower classes: broadsides

Infanticide was a topic covered by most genres of the press. Broadside ballads – ephemeral one- and two-page sheets containing news, ballads, poems and stories – stand out for their explicit moralising and sensationalism. Miriam Jones suggests that 'they policed normative values, largely through dramatizations of transgression and punishment'.¹⁷ Murders and executions were, according to the National Library of Scotland, 'the biggest and most popular of subjects' covered by broadsides. Accounts of murder generated a lot of coverage,

including of the crime itself, the arrest, the trial, the execution and the aftermath.¹⁸ Broadsides almost exclusively portrayed infanticide as an evil and immoral act, but also one that should be pitied.¹⁹ They characterised the mother convicted of infanticide as a murderess: an evil, ugly and barbarous female who went against all moral standards of womanhood. *The Esher Tragedy* describes a woman found guilty of murdering six of her children as a 'demon fierce and wild', 'wretched' and 'miserable'.²⁰ Another broadside detailing the crimes of Emma Pitt, a 'sad and wicked, cruel wretch' noted: 'This Emma Pitt was a schoolmistress/ Her child she killed we see,/ Oh mothers, did you ever hear./ Of such barbarity'.²¹

Broadsides were not the only reading materials available to the lower classes. The growth in cheap papers refusing to pay the stamp tax, 'penny dreadfuls', group subscriptions to mainstream papers, and access to the press by servants in wealthier households, employees within the printing industry, and through reading rooms and working men's clubs increasingly provided the lower classes with a broad range of material.²² In this context, it should not be assumed that the representations of child-murderesses in broadsides were amateurish or unsophisticated. Their continued popularity in a growing market reflected publishers' understanding of their audience's needs and their engagement with the 'conflicting and highly mediated concerns of labouring-class readers', among which crime was often central.²³

The gruesome and destructive characteristics attributed to these women can be explained by the style of broadsides, which were designed both to provide 'pleasures of gory detail and thrilling suspense' to its readers and more importantly to defend moral values.²⁴ Broadsides were a form of entertainment, dramatising all types of crime committed by men and women but, like much of the nineteenth-century press, they justified their voyeuristic engagement with such crimes in terms of promoting wider morality.²⁵ As one broadside printer claimed: 'far too often has duty tortured our feelings, in recording such abominable cases. To endeavour to amend the heart, and deter others from crime'.²⁶ Whilst the criminal confessions found within ballads and other ephemera were often fictional, they almost always concluded with an 'appeal for forgiveness', advising the readers to 'live upright lives'.²⁷

Broadside ballads, explicitly engaging with the lower-class reader, may have been under more pressure than other genres to explicitly justify their existence in terms of promoting morality.²⁸ Because the lower classes were deemed incapable of making correct moral choices on their own, the British

government attempted to control what literature was read with repressive acts such as the Corresponding Societies Act of 1799 and the Royal Proclamation of 1792, mostly directed at political and seditious material but with some concern for obscene publications.²⁹ Therefore, despite a flourishing in cheap literature, enforced moral guidance was still a feature of these genres. Judith Knelman highlights how broadsides were used to warn 'frivolous young women, [that] irreverence is ... linked with immorality'.³⁰ Knelman uses an example from 1880, in which a woman awaiting execution for infanticide dismisses the chaplain stating 'you can do me no good; I had much rather you kept your preaching for another'; she states that she would rather have 'a fiddler and die merry' than a parson.³¹ At the scaffold, she allegedly kicked off her shoes and danced until she dropped. This broadside portrays the woman as beyond help, immoral and not of sound mind. Her turning away from God was intended to convey to nineteenth-century audiences that she was particularly destructive and impious, condemning her not only to death but to eternal damnation.

Overall, the sensational and strict moralising of infanticide within nineteenth-century broadsides left little space to sympathise with the female murderess who committed such crimes. This may have reflected broader legal and social restrictions upon what was appropriate to express in such genres, but it may have also reflected a conservatism within the lower classes themselves, who provided a large part of the market for these papers. In turn, such representations may have influenced public opinion amongst this social group towards these women. Yet when we turn to newspapers, it is apparent that alternative understandings of the female murderess did exist.

Infanticide and the middle classes: newspapers

Whilst, as we have seen, the market for the early nineteenth-century newspaper could range across all social groups, there is no doubt that the growing middle classes constituted a substantial proportion of the newspaper market. This was particularly true after the reduction of the newspaper tax from four pence to one in 1835, which was followed by an increase in the circulation of English newspapers from 39,000,000 to 122,000,000 by 1854.³² Reflecting a growing population, rising literacy and an increased interest in current affairs amongst the middle classes, newspapers became ever more influential and were central in shaping public opinion amongst their readers.

Following on from a much older rhetorical tradition for news reporting, newspapers were generally less sensational than ballads, using 'factual' and unembellished language.³³ The reporting of the trials of both Ellen Trollope and Fanny Young for infanticide provided considerable details of the women's background and the events leading up to and after the murder. *The Times* actively informed readers that the convicted women were both unmarried, teenage servants. It was noted that Ellen gave birth to her illegitimate child in her room where she was discovered by fellow servants who found the child's body hidden in a chest.³⁴ Fanny was reported to have fallen ill after delivering a baby in her room; when a doctor was summoned a suspicious servant tidied her room and found the body of the child wrapped in a parcel.³⁵ There was little moral commentary on the implications or meanings of these events.

However, whilst reporting in a factual manner,

newspapers, often depending on political party preference, could show either a sense of sympathy or horror towards the murderess, commentary that was often located alongside reporting of the punishment women received. The Ellis and Waters case, where two sisters were tried for infanticide, and one was sentenced to death and the other to prison, provoked a range of responses in the press. *The Times* believed that the verdict 'fulfilled its appointed office of being a terror to evil-doers,' but the *Daily Telegraph* took the view that infanticide was not murder and that 'she ought not to have been hanged'.³⁶ *The Times* embodied the view of the wealthy classes and tended towards representing the lower classes as degraded, whilst the *Daily Telegraph* was aimed at the rising middle class with a strong liberal party allegiance.³⁷

Other papers, particularly outside London, often had a moral tone similar to that of the broadsides, warning young unmarried women of the dangers of bearing illegitimate children. When reporting on the hanging of Hanna Halley for infanticide in 1822, *The Derby Mercury* reported:

This unfortunate woman's transgression ought to operate as a moral warning against the first deviations from the path of rectitude... When lead to the indulgence of an illicit passion, had she been told that it would issue in the dreadful crime of murder, she would have started from the prophetic warning with indescribable horror.³⁸

However, despite some disagreements, newspapers definitely concluded that women who committed infanticide were not monsters, as indicated in the broadside press, and murderous women were often shown in a sympathetic light despite the severity of their crimes.

In the case of Mary Lockham, a nineteen-year-old servant who was tried for murdering her child by stuffing a cloth into its mouth, *The Herald and County Advertiser*, York, reported that her employer testified that she was 'kind and affectionate' to the children and was 'always civil and obliging'.³⁹ Other accounts 'render her a pathetic figure', to the point that readers would have felt sympathy for her.⁴⁰ Even serial murderesses such as Rebecca Smith were seen sympathetically in the press. Although Smith admitted to several murders and was found guilty of infanticide using rat poison, a number of newspapers were keen to remind readers that she went to church regularly and was an industrious, honest and simple woman. That this might have hinted at an underbelly of hypocrisy was made explicit by the *Globe*, who stated that whilst she was 'praying and thanking God for her own preservation ... she was the annual and deliberate destroyer of her own offspring'.⁴¹ Yet, even here, the perpetrator was shown more as a victim of poverty than as a monster.

According to the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Smith was so well behaved it was thought 'she was totally incapable of the unnatural crime of which she was convicted' and the newspaper urged members of her community to feel compassion for her.⁴² The same article portrayed Smith as an unfortunate person who had to feel 'calamity, sorrow, and bitterness of heart' unknown to ordinary people 'who pass easily through the world, unassailed by great temptations and unsullied by great crimes'.⁴³ The social anxiety this case provoked was noted in the press, where onlookers at Smith's trial were so fascinated by how such an inoffensive woman could do such a thing, that the judge yelled at the spectators

for their 'barbarous curiosity'.⁴⁴

Another way newspapers could shift the discourse about infanticide was by highlighting the shame women felt for bearing an illegitimate child as a cause of their crime. The English press suggested that the actions of each individual case were not caused by evil doings, but rather were in response to shame, poverty, lower wages for women, lack of childcare and poor social services, leading young unmarried women to fear bearing an illegitimate child.⁴⁵ During her trial for infanticide, Alex Sargents was described by the *Times* as declaring, 'I was not in my right mind when I did it, I was so frightened'.⁴⁶ The same paper quoted Justice Coleridge at Oxford Assizes stating 'no one could tell how many lives of innocent children were sacrificed by the hard-heartedness of mothers, in endeavouring to hide their shame', placing it alongside a report of child-murder by two women in York Assizes.⁴⁷ A similar trend was found in magazines. *Magdalen's Friend* stated that 'the infant at her breast was her stigma, her burden, her curse', and *Seeking and Saving* affirmed 'there are only two courses before the unfortunate mother, either to kill her child or support it by sin'.⁴⁸

Further blame was placed on the men who deserted these women, with newspapers stating that the 'laws operate so severely against' women who were convicted of infanticide and that 'the finger of scorn is for ever to be pointed at the deluded victim of a man' instead of the man who led her astray.⁴⁹ An example of sympathy derived from blaming the male counterpart can be seen in the reaction of onlookers who watched as Rachel Bradley was hanged for infanticide in Lancaster (1827). Before the case, newspapers had been rife with reports of her arrest.⁵⁰ She was reported to have murdered her child in response to death threats from her father and persuasion from her lover that he would marry her if she committed the deed. *The Star* stated that the execution was crowded, most likely by those who had read newspaper articles on the case prior to Bradley's hanging. They 'cried wild for mercy' and 'shrieked' when she died.⁵¹

The novelisation of child murder

As well as factual reports, infanticide became a popular topic within fiction and particularly novels.⁵² Leading fiction writers of the period combined the sensationalism of the broadsides with the more sympathetic view found in newspapers, often concluding that the woman convicted of infanticide was as much victim as killer. In *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) portrayed Effie, the murderess, with a sympathy 'characteristic for the romanticism of his days'.⁵³ Effie is portrayed by Scott as attractive with her 'luxuriant locks' and 'lovely' appearance, which when seen by the courts 'called forth a universal murmur of compassion and sympathy'.⁵⁴ Like many other infanticide tales, Effie is spared by royal pardon, marries an aristocrat and becomes a popular member of the courts. George Eliot (pen name of Mary Ann Evans) and Frances Milton Trollope, in their novels *Adam Bede* (1859) and *Jessie Philips* (1843) respectively, presented the mother and the infant as victims and, like many other authors, drew heavily on real testimonies from newspaper accounts of contemporary child-murder cases.

Adam Bede follows the story of Hetty Sorrel, based on the actual case of Margaret Voce as described to the writer by her aunt in 1802.⁵⁵ Both Eliot and Trollope identify their

murderesses as victims of their shame; both murderesses contemplate suicide to avoid social disgrace.⁵⁶ Instead of blaming the woman for her deed, the writers censured her male counterpart: 'it's his doing ... if there's been any crime, it's at his door, not at hers'.⁵⁷ They also critique the broader social conditions that led to the case. Trollope's more sensational novel represented an attack on the new Poor Law's notorious 'Bastardy Clause', which made unmarried mothers solely financially responsible for their illegitimate children.⁵⁸ The character Frederick Dalton, son of the local squire, feels free to seduce Jessie Philips because this new regulation will protect him from the consequences of his act: 'it is just one of my little bits of good luck that this blessed law should be passed precisely when it was likely to be most beneficial to me'.⁵⁹

What stands out, because both novels are so heavily based on real trials, is the lenient attitude towards women who murder their own child. Overall, novels, like newspapers, show sympathy towards women convicted of infanticide, locating them as victims of men and society. Widely read by a predominantly middle-class audience, but also the social elites and some of the lower classes, novels were well placed to shape public policy around the treatment of unmarried mothers. It can be argued that social novels, alongside the sympathetic views of the press and even the moralistic tones of lower-class broadsides, were part of an important push during the nineteenth century to reform aid for young and unmarried mothers. Although the New Poor Law was not repealed until 1948, when it was replaced with the National Assistance Act, the nineteenth century saw the creation of multiple hospitals and centres put in place to protect both child and unmarried mother from infanticide.⁶⁰ The printed word pushed for reform, by inspiring their readers and therefore pressuring the British Government.

Conclusions: infanticide, the press and public opinion

Representations of infanticide varied between and within the sources analysed but the prevailing sense that the women concerned were as much victims as they were perpetrators suggests that the state's handling was out-of-step with public opinion. Broadsides, both sensational and moralistic, described women convicted of child-murder as inhuman and monstrous, whilst urging readers to stay away from the temptations that led to such downfall and to lead moral lives.⁶¹ Novels, magazines and newspapers remained moralistic in tone, but they also recreated infanticidal women as figures that deserved sympathy, often placing blame on social and economic pressures, on feelings of shame and on the men that deserted them. The newly emerging middle-class reader, alongside the already established middling and elite reader, were educated to feel sympathy for those who committed such crimes. It is likely, given the significance of print culture during the period, that many readers would have been moved to sympathise with the fictional characters found in novels and the real women described in newspapers. Consequently, these books and articles can be directly connected to the reforming movements of the period (specifically those asking for increase in governmental aid for unmarried mothers and illegitimate children), through creating a compassionate image of these women, particularly for the middle and upper classes who had the power to implement change at a legislative level. To return

to the Philpott case, it is interesting to see that the sympathetic attitude towards women who were convicted of murdering their child is still apparent in the twenty-first century. Unlike her husband, Mairead Philpott was not characterised as a monster by the English press. She received just seventeen years imprisonment in comparison to her husband's life sentence.⁶²

Notes

1. Vikram Dodd, 'Mick and Mairead Philpott Convicted of Killing Six Children in Twisted Plot That Went Wrong', *Guardian Online*, 3 Apr. 2013, [<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/apr/02/derby-house-fire-evil-philpotts>, accessed 20 Apr. 2013].
2. Natalie Evans, 'Mick Philpott Placed on Hit List by Gypsies who want Him Tortured with Boiling Sugar Water in Prison', *Mirror*, 14 Apr. 2013, [<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/mick-philpott-placed-hit-list-1831626>, accessed 6 May 2013]; Deborah Orr, 'Mick Philpott: If Welfare is to Blame, so is the Army, Prison, Feminism, TV etc', *Guardian*, 6 Apr. 2013, [<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/05/mick-philpott-welfare-to-blame>, accessed 6 May 2013].
3. Ann R. Higginbotham, "'Sin of the Age": Infanticide and Illegitimacy in Victorian London', *Victorian Studies*, 32/3 (1989), 320.
4. Henry Mayhew and John Binney, 'Female Prisoners Generally', in *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life* (London, Griffin, Bohn, and Company, Stationer's Hall Court, 1862), 467.
5. D. Gibb, 'The Relative Increase of Wages, Drunkenness and Crime', *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences 1874*, (1875), 334
6. H. Mayhew and J. Binney, 'The Correctional Prisons of London', in *The Criminal Prisons of London*, 464; 'Woman Convicts', *The English Man's Review*, 4 (Oct. 1887), 73; 'The Decrease of Crime', *The Englishwoman's Review* (Feb., 1890), 61-63; C.E.B. Russell, 'Some Aspects of Female Criminality and its Treatment', *The English Woman* (Jan. 1912), 35-7; S. Amos, 'The Prison Treatment of Women', *Contemporary Review*, (Jun. 1898), 803; M. E. Owen, 'Criminal Women', *Cornhill Magazine*, 14 (1866), 155.
7. R. Sauer, 'Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Population Studies*, 32/1 (1978), 81.
8. George A. Behlmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England 1870-1908* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1982); Lionel Rose, *Massacre of the Innocents: Infanticide in Great Britain, 1800-1939* (London, Routledge, 1986).
9. Higginbotham, 'Sin of the Age', 321.
10. *The Lancet* (Oct. 1863), 426.
11. Sauer, 'Infanticide and Abortion', 81.
12. 'Infanticide in the Early Modern Period: The 1624 Statute', *New Histories Online Magazine* [<http://newhistories.group.shef.ac.uk/wordpress/wordpress/?p=3320>, accessed 24 Dec. 2013].
13. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Series Three*, 76 (1844), 430-31.
14. Jennifer Thorn, 'Introduction', in *Writing British Infanticide: Child-Murder, Gender, and Print, 1722-1859*, ed. Jennifer Thorn (New Jersey, Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp, 2003), 18.
15. *Ibid.*, 19.
16. K. D. Watson, 'Religion, Community and the Infanticidal Mother: Evidence from 1840s rural Wiltshire', *Family and Community History*, 11 (2008), 116-133 and Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982).
17. Miriam Jones, 'Fractured Narratives of Infanticide in the Crime and Execution Broadside in Britain, 1780-1850', in Thorn, *Writing British Infanticide*, 118.
18. 'Background', *National Library of Scotland: Word on the Street*, [<http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/background.html>, accessed 24 Dec. 2013].
19. Examples of this can be seen in a variety of broadsides in Ellen L. O'Brien, *Crime in Verse: The Poetics of Murder in the Victorian Era* (Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 2008).
20. *Ibid.*, 72.
21. *Ibid.*, 73, and Charles Hindley, *Curiosities of Street Literature* (London, Reeves and Turner, 1871), 219.
22. Katie Barclay, David Lemmings, and Claire Walker, *Governing Emotions: the Affective Family, the Press and the Law in Early Modern Britain* (Forthcoming).
23. Jones, 'Fractured Narratives', 119.
24. *Ibid.*, 125.
25. Barclay et al, *Governing Emotions*.
26. Andrew Knapp, William Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar: Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters Who Have Been Convicted of Outrages on the Laws of England Since the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century with Occasional Anecdotes and Observations, Speeches, Confessions, and Last Exclamations of Sufferers* (London, J. Robins and Co., 1825), 486.
27. 'Background', *National Library of Scotland*.
28. R. K. Webb, 'The Realisation of the Problem 1790-1820', *The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848* (New York, Augustus M. Kelley, 1955), 36.
29. Richard D. Altick, 'The Time of Crisis 1791-1800', *The English Common Reader* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2nd ed. 1998), 67.
30. Judith Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind: The Murderess and the English Press* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998), 149.
31. *British Library*, (1880), c.20, vol. 2, 342; Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind*, 149-50.
32. Brian Lake, *British Newspapers: A History and Guide* (California, Sheppard Press, 1984), 213.
33. David Randall, 'Epistolary Rhetoric, the Newspaper and the Public Sphere', *Past and Present*, 198 (2008), 3-32.
34. *The Times*, 25 Jul. 1894, 4; 30 Jul. 1894, 4; 6 Aug. 1894, 2; 13 Sep. 1894, 9; 14 Sep. 1894, 10.
35. *The Times*, 30 Nov. 1863, 11.
36. Rose, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 101.
37. Bob Franklin, *Pulling Newspapers Apart: Analysing Print Journalism* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 292.
38. *Derby Mercury*, 27 Mar. 1827, 3; *The Observer* and the *London Courier* also carried this story.
39. *York Herald and County Advertiser*, 21 Mar. 1810, 2.
40. Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind*, 146.
41. *The Globe*, 18 Aug. 1849, 6.
42. *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 23 Aug. 1849, 3; *Daily News*, 25 Aug. 1849, 7; *Standard*, 25 Aug. 1849, 3; *Bath Chronicle*, 30 Aug. 1849, 4.
43. *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 5 Jul. 1849, 4.
44. *Daily News*, 13 Aug. 1849, 6.
45. Higginbotham, 'Sin of the Age', 337.
46. *The Times*, 15 Sep. 1906, 2; 27 Oct. 1906, 4.

47. Rose, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 29.
48. 'The Prevalence of Infanticide', *Magdalen's Friend*, 2 (1861), 34; 'Home Compassion', *Seeking and Saving*, 2 (1882), 73.
49. 'Broadside on Arrest of Ann and Mary Brinkworth for the Murder of Ann's Infant', *British Library* (1880), c.20, 1, 147.
50. 'Rachel Bradley's Downfall', *The Bodleian Libraries: Broadside Ballads Online*, [<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/5014>, accessed 29 Apr. 2013].
51. *The Star*, 28 Mar. 1827, 4; *Lancaster Gazette*, 31 Mar. 1827, 2; *The Star*, 14 Apr. 1828, 3.
52. Frances Trollope, *Jessie Phillips* (London, Henry Colburn Publisher, 1844), George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1859), Elizabeth Gaskell, *Ruth* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1853), Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (London, Tinsley Brothers, 1862), Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1861)
53. Pieter Spierenburg, *A History of Murder: Personal Violence in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, Policy Press, 2008), 143.
54. Sir Walter Scott, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, ed. Claire

- Lamont (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982), 357.
55. Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind*, 146
56. Higginbotham, 'Sin of the Age', 332.
57. George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 368.
58. 'The New Poor Law', *Workhouse: The Story of an Institution*, [<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/newpoorlaw.shtml>, accessed 05 May 2013]; Higginbotham, 'Sin of the Age', 332.
59. Frances Trollope, *Jessie Phillips: A Tale of the Present Day* (London, Lightning Source, 2012).
60. 'What did People Think of the New Poor Law', *National Archives Online*, [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/lesson08.htm>, accessed 5 May 2013].
61. O'Brien, *Crime in Verse*, 72.
62. Cheryl Hague, 'I Hate Philpott- He's Dead to Me Now, Says Killer's Son', *Derby Telegraph Online*, 12 Apr. 2013, [<http://www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/hate-Philpott-s-dead-says-killer-s-son/story-18685785-detail/story.html#axzz2SQ3slXiO>, accessed 5 May 2013].

BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

I always enjoy the book reviews in *Women's History* so I am delighted to be the new book reviews editor. My thanks to Anne Logan for her sterling work as my predecessor.

The following titles are available for review, so if you like to review any of the titles listed below, please email me, Jane Berney at bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org. You don't have to be an expert to review, if you have a general interest and knowledge of the relevant historical period or territory then that will count for a lot. The ability to summarise a work and write interestingly about it is the most important thing. Any suggestions for books to review are also welcome—just email me as above.

Heath Hardage Lee, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause* (Potomac Books, University of Nebraska Press) [Winnie was daughter of the Confederate president Jefferson Davis]

Patricia and Robert Malcolmson (eds) *A Free-spirited Woman: the London Diaries of Gladys Langford 1936-40* (Boydell and Brewer) [Gladys was a London school-teacher and observer of London life]

H. L. Meakin, *The Painted Closet of Lady Anne Bacon Drury* (Ashgate) [Lady Drury (1572-1624 was a relative of Sir Francis Bacon]

Elizabeth Norton, *Elfrida: the First Crowned Queen of England* (Amberley)

Bernard O'Connor, *Churchill's Angels* (Amberley)

Ruth Skrine, *Growing into Medicine: The Life and Loves of a Psychosexual Doctor* (Book Guild Publishing) [an autobiography]

Hester Vaizey, *Born in the GDR: Living in the Shadow of the Wall* (Oxford)

Valentine Yarnspinner, *Nottingham Rising: the Great Cheese Riot of 1766 and the 1831 Reform Riots* (Loaf on a Stick Press)

The following titles are still available from the lists published in earlier issues of the Magazine. This is the last call for these titles.

Jad Adams, *Women and the Vote: a World History* (Oxford)

P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *The British Witch: The Biography* (Amberley)

Kate Côté Gillin, *Shrill Hurrahs: Women, Gender and Racial Violence in South Carolina, 1865-1900* (University of South Carolina Press)

David Loades, *Jane Seymour* (Amberley)

John Hudson, *Shakespeare's Dark Lady* (Amberley)

Blain Roberts, *Pageants, Parlors, and Pretty Women: Race and Beauty in the Twentieth Century South* (University of North Carolina Press)

Nancy Rosenberger, *Dilemmas of Adulthood: Japanese Women and the Nuance of Long-term Resistance* (University of Hawaii Press) [Based on oral interviews, hence on recent period.]

Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: the Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front* (University of North Carolina Press)

Christina Laffin, *Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women: Politics, Personality and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu* (University of Hawaii Press)

Nina Reid-Marony, *The Reverend Jennie Johnson and African Canadian History, 1868-1967* (University of Rochester Press)

Sue Tate, *Pauline Body: Pop Artist and Woman* (Wolverhampton Art Gallery)

The use of online resources in the search for the women doctors of the Serbian Relief Fund: Unit No 3

Carol Coles

Independent Scholar

‘They saw things that generations of their sisters at home live and die without the slightest knowledge of’.¹ This is how the American relief worker, Paul Fortier Jones, described the experience of the women medical staff – both doctors and nurses – during the 1915 retreat across Serbia, which took place in the onslaught of the German advance. The Balkans was a region of Europe regarded as unstable and exotic: minarets, mountain villages and peasants in traditional costume, set against a backdrop of local wars – the most recent of which had finished in 1913. The purpose of this article is to consider the women doctors who volunteered to work in this unit during 1915, as a case study into the use of online sources to research women’s lives and experiences in the absence of written sources such as books and letters.

The expansion of online resources during the last twenty years, including the digitisation of historic documents, has made it easier for researchers outside of academia or remote from repositories to undertake research. Using these resources, it is possible to trace the careers of the doctors of the Serbian Relief Fund (SRF) Unit No 3 both before and after the First World War. The biographical information that can be gathered using genealogy online resources provides a basis for further research into the lives of individual women or groups such as the doctors of the Serbian Relief Fund Unit No 3. Information on women doctor’s careers during the early years of the twentieth century is sparse and in some instances references contained in digitised material was only located by doing a crude internet search, such as entering the individual name into the search engine with a qualifying criteria of ‘Serbia’.

The Serbian Relief Fund Unit No 3 was commanded by Mrs St Clair Stobbart, who had become involved in providing voluntary medical aid to Serbia during the Balkan Wars. Mrs Stobbart’s Unit consisted initially of a hospital in Kragujevatz. During the summer of 1915 a series of dispensaries situated in outlying rural areas were established to provide medical care to the local population. The work of the hospital and dispensaries was concerned not just with treating injured soldiers but with dealing with the widespread typhus epidemic. However when Germany entered the conflict against Serbia in support of the Austro-Hungarians, and Bulgaria entered the fray, the Unit’s personnel was caught up in the retreating Serbian army and took part in the horrific march across the Kosovan plains and over the mountains of Montenegro and Albania, in the cold and snow of December, to reach safety on the Adriatic coast.

Mrs Stobbart wrote her own account of events in Serbia in *The Flaming Sword of Serbia*.² This is one of the principal books produced by a participant in the events of 1915 – the other being Paul Fortier-Jones’ book on the retreat, *With Serbia into Exile*.³ Although not about Serbia, an account of hospital life in Malta during 1916-17 is provided by Vera Brittain in *Testament of Youth*.⁴ The hospitals in Malta treated casualties from the campaigns that took place in southern Europe.

The Serbian campaigns were regarded as a sideshow to the main events in France and Flanders; as such they have not

been the subject of many books and articles. Among the few studies which do exist, Monica Krippener’s book *The Quality of Mercy – Women at War Serbia 1915-1918* discusses not just the SRF but also other medical units who operated in the country during this period.⁵ Claire Hirschfield’s article, ‘In Search of Mrs Ryder: British Women in Serbia: During the Great War’, deals with not just the SRF and Scottish Women’s Hospitals (SWH) but the transport unit based at Ostrovo in Northern Greece, run by Katherine Harley.⁶ Hirschfield contends that Evelyn Waugh may have heard about the exploits of British women in Serbia during the First World War when he was based in Yugoslavia in 1944, which he used as inspiration for Charles Ryder’s dead mother in the short story ‘Ryder by Gaslight’.⁷ An example of the experiences of a woman doctor is provided by an article on Dr Dorothy Maude in *Medical History* in which Marianne Fedunkiw described her career working with a medical unit in Serbia in 1915 and with Serbian soldiers in exile.⁸

A number of books have been published which contain an overview of medical services at home and abroad during the First World War. Ian Whitehead in his book *Doctors in the Great War* has a chapter on medical women, part of which summarises the attitude of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) to the employment of women doctors.⁹ The Medical Women’s Federation was established in 1917 to provide a united voice in response to official attitudes to women medics. The voluntary organisations considered in his book are the Women’s Hospital Corps (WHC) and the Scottish Women’s Hospitals; there is no mention made of the Serbian Relief Fund. Leah Leneman, in her article ‘Medical Women’, considers the experience of women doctors before, during and after the First World War.¹⁰ In this article she highlights the limited career opportunities offered to women doctors before and after the war in contrast to their roles as surgeons during the conflict. Compilation books such *Women in the War Zone* edited by Anne Powell include extracts from Mrs Stobbart’s book and the letters of Mabel Dreamer (an orderly at the hospital in Kragujevatz).¹¹

In the personal accounts and literature discussed above, a number of women doctors are mentioned in connection with the Serbian Relief Fund and the retreat. However none of the accounts include a definitive list of the medical staff who served with Serbian Relief Fund Unit No 3. This was compiled from Foreign Office lists of medical personnel who had returned from Serbia to Britain by early 1916, ordered from the National Archives via their online catalogue.¹² There were fourteen women doctors who worked for all or part of 1915 with Unit No 3. The Serbian Relief Fund’s hospital in Kragujevatz was commanded by Dr Mabel Eliza May and alongside her was her sister Dr Kate King May Atkinson. The other doctors were Beatrice Coxon, Helen Hanson (she only had leave from her post with the London County Council (LCC) for six months and returned to England in September, so not taking part in the retreat), Edith Maude Marsden, Catherine Payne and Isobel Tate (who caught typhoid and was invalided home before the retreat). The dispensary doctors were Harriet

Cockburn, Helena Adelaide Hall, Gertrude Duncan Maclaren, Ada Johanna Macmillan, Anna Lillian Muncaster, Martha Jane Moody Stewart and Mary Muriel Griffin Iles.

Detailed online catalogues for archive collections were not just a finding aid but entries contained sufficient detail to give an indication of an event or individual. An example of this was found in Foreign Office documents which record enquiries made by A. M. Iles (sister of Mary Iles) as to her whereabouts in Serbia as the situation deteriorated late in 1915.¹³

By using the census returns available on pay-to-view sites such as 'Ancestry' and 'Find My Past', it was possible to identify biographical information such as age and background for the majority of the doctors.¹⁴ Eight of the fourteen doctors with Unit No 3 were English, three were Scottish (although Ada Macmillan had been born in South Africa), two Irish and one Canadian (Harriet Cockburn). Harriet Cockburn was not located in either census or birth indexes for Great Britain. It was only by putting her name into an internet search engine that a record for her was retrieved, from a website commemorating Canadians' service during the First World War.¹⁵

In the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, for a girl to train to be a doctor she would have needed to come from a family who had the resources to finance her education, with an outlook which did not consider it inappropriate for women to have a profession. The professions of thirteen out of fourteen of the fathers of the doctors have been identified.¹⁶ These include Archdeacon (Iles), schoolmaster (May and Atkinson), customs officer (Muncaster), solicitor (Maclaren), Justice of the Peace (Stewart), and ship owner (Cockburn). Census returns showed that most of the households had live-in servants and were located in comfortable middle-class areas: for example, the families of the three Scottish doctors (Maclaren, Macmillan and Muncaster) were all resident in the Newington/Morningside area of Edinburgh. Despite Beatrice Coxon's father being described in the 1891 Census as a farmer, the family had a governess and two live-in servants. Census returns for Canada available on Ancestry.ca were the source for comparable information for Harriet Cockburn.¹⁷

Women doctors prior to 1914 had limited career opportunities upon graduation. Hospital posts were usually restricted to working with women and children. Some women doctors found medical posts in asylums, which were considered lower in status to positions in voluntary hospitals. This pattern is borne out by the pre-war posts held by the Unit No 3 doctors.

The principal sources of information on the pre- and post-war careers of the doctors were the medical directories available on Ancestry.co.uk. Medical registers list the doctor's address but this may be residential, so not giving any indication of the professional post held. Fortunately, the inclusion of a doctor's qualifications and place of study in the medical directories provides valuable additional information on career development and possible links between women forged during their time as students.

Three of the women who served with Unit No 3 held posts with the School Medical Service prior to the war. The 1908 Education (Administrative Provisions) Act had created a requirement for Local Authorities to provide medical inspection of all children entering elementary school. Helen Hanson, Isobel Tate and Helena Hall all worked in the School Medical Service.

Beatrice Coxon and Catherine Payne held house surgeon

posts in infirmaries at Alnwick and Oldham respectively. In 1910, Edith Marsden had been the first woman appointed to the resident staff at St Mary's Hospital Manchester, which specialised in women and children. Mabel May was resident medical officer to Rochdale Maternity and Infants Hospital.

Anna Muncaster and Harriet Cockburn both held posts in asylums. Kate King May Atkinson had been a remedial gymnastics teacher prior to and while she was training to be a doctor. She and Martha Moody Stewart only qualified to be doctors in 1914.

A number of professional journals have digitised archives: for example, the *British Medical Journal*. These are an important source of information for examination results, professional appointments and obituaries. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) archive of the *British Journal of Nursing* is a valuable source of information on women doctors' war service, as its articles are not just concerned with nurses but with the units in which they worked throughout the conflict.¹⁸

Using the RCN archive it was possible to trace the post-Serbia war work of a number of the doctors with Unit No 3. After the retreat from Serbia, Gertrude Maclaren and Ada Macmillan remained with the Serbian Relief Fund, working at their hospital in Corfu.¹⁹ This 200-bed hospital was where the wounded from the retreating Serbian army were sent along with other injured soldiers from the on-going conflict in the Balkans.

In 1916, Drs Atkinson, Coxon, May and Hall went to Russia, to work with women and children refugees under the auspices of the NUWSS. Hospitals were set up in Petrograd (St Petersburg) and in Galicia.²⁰ The medical staff in Galicia, which included Helena Hall, was caught up in the onset of the Revolution; they were reported missing but eventually reached safety in Kiev.

It is not just specialist, professional journals which can be used; national and local newspapers carried stories about the Serbian retreat as it unfolded in late 1915. An example of a newspaper vignette is from early 1916 when *The New York Herald* reported on Harriet Cockburn's return from Serbia accompanied by a sixteen-year-old Serbian boy soldier who she planned to sponsor to be trained as an engineer.²¹

The doctors, nurses and support staff who returned to Britain early in 1916 after the retreat enjoyed a brief period of fame during which several of them wrote about their experiences in Serbia. One of the most detailed accounts was that of Gertrude Maclaren, which has been included, along with those of nurses at Kragujevatz, in a commemorative booklet produced by St George's School Edinburgh to mark the experiences of former girls during the conflict.²² The availability of this digitised commemorative booklet for a school is a valuable local source, which Kate Adie drew on in her recent book on women in the First World War.²³

The forthcoming commemoration of the centenary of World War One has already resulted in the creation of a number of specialist websites, one of which focuses on RAMC personnel. The RAMC realised, in 1916, that they did not have sufficient medical personnel and reluctantly asked for women doctors to serve in some of their hospitals. In most cases the women doctors did not get an honorary commission and were poorly paid compared to their male counterparts. Helen Hanson (who was made a Captain) served in Malta and Salonika. Martha Moody Stewart, Beatrice Coxon (having returned from Russia), Mary Iles and Isobel Tate all served in

Malta. It was there that the latter died suddenly on 28 January 1917 and was buried with full military honours.²⁴

Medal cards available on the National Archives website can provide support to information on war service however they are not comprehensive as women had to apply for their British medals.²⁵ There are medal cards for seven of the Unit No 3 doctors. There was no consistency in the description of the woman's role on the medal card. Helen Hanson, for example, is described as a doctor but Gertrude Maclaren as a driver with the Serbian Relief Fund. The medal cards record British awards so do not include any foreign commendations such as the Serbian Order of St Sava, which was received by many medical staff working in the Balkans.

Post-war, the opportunities for all women doctors quickly reverted to their position in 1914. As the chief executive of the London Hospital Medical College remarked, 'There is a growing surplus of women doctors.'²⁶ A search of the 1923 *Medical Directory* revealed entries for only half of the twelve British doctors who served with Unit No 3. In all but one of these entries, a residential address is shown, the exception being Helen Hanson who is listed under the Public Health Department for the LCC.

Other digitised documents such as Post Office directories, out-of-copyright books and newspapers helped in tracing the Unit No 3 doctors' post-war work. Gertrude Maclaren gained a public health qualification and worked as a medical officer for Maternity and Child Welfare in Lincolnshire.²⁷ She died in 1957 aged sixty-eight. Edith Marsden had married Percy Tindal-Robertson in 1916. Louisa Martindale in her book *The Woman Doctor and her Future* listed the staff who worked at the South London Hospital for Women, in Clapham, of whom Edith was one.²⁸ This was a hospital staffed by women, where Edith specialised in anaesthetics although she also ran a gynaecology clinic.

The majority of the doctors who served with Unit No 3 undertook their medical training in northern England, Ireland or Scotland. The University of Manchester's online medical archive contains brief biographical summaries for the sisters Kate King May Atkinson and Mabel May. After the war, both worked in the maternity and child welfare department of Manchester's Public Health Service. Kate King May Atkinson, who at the time of her service in Serbia was the only one of the doctors to be married, later became a GP in Fallowfield.²⁹ She died in 1933. In the interwar years Mabel May became one of the leading members of the Society for the Promotion of Birth Control in Manchester and worked with the Labour Party in Rusholme. She died in 1958. A novel by Freda Lightfoot, called *Favourite Child*, is loosely based on her life.³⁰

Leneman found a death notice for Catherine Payne in the *Magazine of the London Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women*. She had died in March 1918 of a 'wasting disease'.³¹ This death of a woman doctor who had served in the conflict was widely reported in local newspapers such as the *Birmingham Daily Post*, a digitised resource that was not available in the 1990s.³²

Helen Hanson had gone with the RAMC to the Black Sea before returning to her post with the LCC. Helena Hall also returned to her public health post in Walthamstow. Both of these women died in 1926, the former in a car accident.³³ From newspaper articles and a Coxon family online discussion list it was possible to establish that Beatrice Coxon worked in Bristol as a GP in the 1930s³⁴ and was also involved with

antenatal clinics and a mothers' school in the city.³⁵ However it was easier to find formal notices of her revision to the name of Coxon following her divorce in 1928 (in such publications as *The London Gazette*), than of her medical career.³⁶

Genealogy websites hold a range of datasets that contain supporting information for tracing the lives of the Unit No 3 doctors, such as voter and passenger lists. Passenger lists to and from Britain were useful as a number of the doctors worked either before or after the war overseas, principally in India or Africa. Helen Hanson had worked in India for three years as a medical missionary, returning to Britain in 1909 because of her health.³⁷ In the 1901 census, Mary Iles was recorded as house surgeon at the Connaught Hospital in Walthamstow, which primarily treated women and children. However by 1907 she was working at St Johns Hospital in Bombay. The only reference to Ada Macmillan, prior to the First World War, is of her working with an American missionary society in 1913 in India.³⁸ That three of the Unit No 3 women doctors worked for some part of their pre-war career in India reflects the importance of service and empire in society. In addition, a post outside of Britain enabled the women to enhance their professional skills and experience.

After the war had ended, several of the women doctors chose to pursue their careers outside of Britain, principally in Africa. Anna Muncaster worked in South Africa, becoming the first woman doctor to be employed by the South African Mental Health service. She died aged forty-four in 1930, her health undermined by her war experiences. Mary Iles had left Malta for India in 1917. There are no entries for her in the post-war medical registers however a reference can be found (through a search on Google books) to her working as a medical missionary in the 1920s. This work appears to have taken place in conjunction with the Universities Mission to Central Africa – a missionary society set up by the Anglican Church.³⁹ Inward-bound passenger list entries record her arrival in London from Beria in Mozambique in November 1930. She died in 1947, aged seventy-three, in Surrey. Martha Moody Stewart married Dr Clement Webb in Hackney in 1919 and they moved to South Africa. She died aged eighty-two in Johannesburg.

According to the 1921 Canadian census, Harriet Cockburn was living with her family in Toronto. Her occupation is given as Inspector but there is no further explanation of the nature of her role. She died in 1948. Ada Macmillan died in 1941 aged sixty-five; apart from entries in the London voters' lists during the 1920s, nothing could be established about her career.

The expansion of digitised resources provides many opportunities to researchers both within and outside of academia. The digitisation of out-of-copyright books on websites such as the Internet archive [<http://www.archive.org>], has made available titles which might otherwise be difficult and/or expensive to obtain. The digitisation of key professional journals enables keyword searching to quickly identify relevant articles – such as appointments or obituaries – within a journal series. The doctors of Unit No 3 did not have the national renown of Elsie Inglis or Mrs Stobbart so articles and principally obituaries are to be located in local newspapers. The ability to search across a number of titles for any reference to an individual or event rather than having to guess which newspaper might be relevant is crucial: for example, the report of the death of Kate King May Atkinson in

The Evening Telegraph – Dundee on 27 June 1933.⁴⁰ However the process of making local newspapers available online is a work in progress and titles are not yet available for all areas of the country. The same issue of incomplete coverage occurs with Post Office and street directories.

The facility in most search engines to have an article or section of a book translated can extend the range of literature which can be considered. As mentioned, paragraphs which mentioned Mary Iles, in a book on medicine in Africa, were identified using Google books. However this type of search resulted in a small section of the book being available and it was difficult to establish the context for the extract.

Genealogy resources are primarily available via pay-to-view websites. Census and birth, marriage and death records are vital to building a picture of an individual's life and background. However as family historians are aware, errors can occur in transcriptions, names can be spelt in multiple ways and people were not always truthful concerning their age.

In respect to the First World War, the next four years are likely to see an outpouring of original material and research. This is an exciting if daunting prospect. A great deal of the new research and material published online as part of commemoration will come from outside of traditional organisations such as universities and archives. Local community studies such as those cited in Kate Tiller's book *Remembrance and Community: War Memorials and Local History* will enhance understanding of the diversity of the wartime experiences of individuals and communities.⁴¹ The majority of local groups or individuals will publish online because of the ease of updating, linking to other resources and the sharing of research. It is probable that most, if not the majority of the individuals engaged in these micro-studies will not be employed in archives, museums or universities but will have become involved in their project due to a fascination with history or personal links to an individual or place. Overarching all of this will be national initiatives such as the Imperial War Museum's 'Lives of the First World War', which aims to bring together material held in museums, libraries and by individuals for the men and women throughout the Commonwealth who served in the forces or on the home front.

The plethora of information available online results in a key issue being the identification of relevant and well-researched material. There are no definite listings, unlike a library or archives catalogue. Access to an alerting service such as Athens would highlight journal articles and books, but would not include websites, datasets and blogs and of course most researchers outside of academia will not have access to alerting services. Subscription to the e-newsletters produced by genealogy websites and national archives are useful for identifying new datasets but are not comprehensive. Books aimed principally at family historians, such as Mary Ingram's *Tracing your Servicewomen Ancestors*, provide some keys to understanding records relating to medical women, but new datasets have been made available since its publication.⁴² In many instances the only way in which to attempt to locate a resource or document is to put keywords or names into a search engine.

In conclusion, the rapid and continual expansion of digitised online resources facilitates research into the lives of forgotten women. Use of these resources enables the reconstruction of the outline of an individual woman's life. This can then form the basis of more detailed research in, for

instance, archives or libraries, whether in person or by the engagement of a researcher. The women doctors of Unit No 3 are one such example of this process. The 1915 campaign in Serbia was short-lived but the women who served in the hospitals there were on the front line in an unfamiliar and very different country to their own. After the war, their achievements and experiences were forgotten; it is to be hoped that their stories are not overlooked during the forthcoming centenary commemorations.

Notes

1. Paul Fortier Jones, *With Serbia into exile* (New York, The Century Co, 1916), 207.
2. Mrs St Clair Stobart, *The Flaming Sword of Serbia* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).
3. Jones, *With Serbia into exile*.
4. Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (n.p.: Fontana, 1978 [1933]).
5. Monica Krippener, *The Quality of Mercy – Women at War Serbia 1915-1918* (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1980).
6. Claire Hirschfield, 'In Search of Mrs Ryder: British Women in Serbia During the Great War', *East European Quarterly*, XX/4, (Jan. 1987), 387-407.
7. Evelyn Waugh, 'Ryder by Gaslight', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 Mar. 1982, 255-8.
8. Marianne P. Fedunkiw, 'Women Physicians serving in Serbia 1915-1917: The story of Dorothea Maude', *History of Medicine*, 4/1 (2007), 53-7.
9. Ian M. Whitehead, *Doctors in the Great War* (Barnsley, Leo Cooper, Pen & Sword Books, 1999).
10. Leah Leneman, 'Medical Women at War 1914-1918', *Medical History*, 38 (1994), 160-177; Leah Leneman, *In the Service of Life* (Edinburgh, Mercat Press, 1994).
11. Anne Powell, ed., *Women in the War Zone* (Stroud, The History Press, 2009).
12. The National Archives, Kew, UK (TNA), FO 383/125, Enquiries and concerns about British Hospital Units in the Balkans including: Members of Serbian Relief Units sent to Serbia, 1916.
13. TNA, FO 383/125, Balkans: Prisoners, 1916, [<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C2617368>, accessed Jul. 2014].
14. 'Ancestry', [<http://www.ancestry.co.uk>]; 'Find My Past', [<http://www.findmypast.co.uk>].
15. 'Canadian Great War Project', [<http://www.canadiangreatwarproject.com>, accessed Oct. 2013].
16. Helena Hall's parentage is unidentified at the time of writing.
17. 'Ancestry' (Canada), [<http://www.ancestry.ca>].
18. *British Journal of Nursing*, [available online <http://www.rcn.org.uk/archives> accessed Jan. 2015]
19. *British Journal of Nursing*, 29 Jul. 1916, 92.
20. *British Journal of Nursing*, 12 Feb. 1916, 136.
21. *New York Herald*, 19 Jan. 1916, 10, [<http://fultonhistory.com>, accessed November 2013].
22. 'St George's School for Girls in the Second World War', [http://www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk/system/files/PDF_stgeorges_WW1.pdf, accessed August 2013].
23. Kate Adie, *Fighting on the Home Front: The Legacy of Women in World War 1* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2013).
24. 'Commonwealth War Graves Commission', [<http://www>.

cwgc.org/debt_of_honour.asp, accessed Jan. 2015].

25. TNA, British Army Medal Index Cards, [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/medal-index-cards-ww1.htm, accessed Jan. 2015].

26. Quoted in *Time and Tide*, 10 Mar. 1922. Reprinted in Dale Spender, *Time and Tide Wait for No Man* (London, Pandora, 1984).

27. *Kelly's Post Office Directory for Lincolnshire*, 1930, [http://www.ancestry.co.uk accessed Jun. 2014].

28. Louisa Martindale, *The Woman doctor and her future* (London, Mills & Boon, 1922), [http://archive.org/stream/womandoctorherfuture, accessed Dec. 2013].

29. University of Manchester, Medical Collection, [http://archives.ac.uk/data/gb133-MMC/2a-Manchester, accessed Nov. 2013].

30. Clare Debenham, 'Grassroots feminism: a study of the campaign of the Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics, 1924-1938' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010).

31. *Ibid.*, 175.

32. *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4 Mar. 1918, 4, [http://www.findmypast.co.uk, accessed May 2014].

33. 'A tribute to some women and men who served in armed conflicts', [http://camc.wordpress.com, accessed Oct. 2013].

34. Coxon-L archives, [http://www.archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com, accessed Dec. 2013].

35. *Western Daily Press*, 24 Oct. 1931, 5 and 31 May 1938, 8, [http://www.findmypast.co.uk, accessed May 2014].

36. *The London Gazette*, 14 Dec. 1928, 8299 [http://www.thegazette.co.uk, accessed Jul. 2014].

37. 'Lady Doctors of the Malta Garrison' [http://www.maltaramc.com/ladydoc/h/hansonhb.html, accessed Nov. 2013].

38. 'Fifty-Second Annual Report of The Woman's Union Missionary Society of America', New York, 1913, [http://images.library.yale.edu/divinitycontent/dayrep/Woman's%20Union%20Missionary%20Society%20of%20America%20for%20Heathen%20Lands%201913%20v52.pdf, accessed Nov. 2013].

39. Walter Bruchhausen, *Medizin zwischen den Welten* (Bonn, Bonn University Press, 2006), [http://books.google.co.uk/books, accessed January 2014].

40. *The Evening Telegraph - Dundee*, 27 Jun. 1933, 9, [http://www.findmypast.co.uk, accessed Jul. 2014].

41. Kate Tiller, *Remembrance and Community: War Memorials and Local History* (Ashbourne, British Association for Local History, 2013).

42. Mary Ingram, *Tracing Your Service Women Ancestors* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2012).

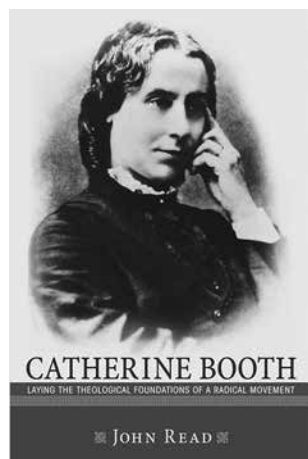
Book Reviews

John Read, *Catherine Booth, Laying the Theological Foundations of a Radical Movement* Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2013.

£17.50, ISBN 978-0-7188-9320-0 (paperback), pp.234

Reviewed by Ruth E. Richardson

Independent Scholar



Catherine Booth 'was the most extraordinary woman of the nineteenth century' according to Roy Hattersley (p.211). Using meticulous detail, John Read, currently ecumenical Salvation Army officer for the UK and Ireland, evidences Catherine's contribution to the thinking and structure that underpins The Salvation Army. This is not a typical biography but an investigation of a lady recognised in her own male-dominated time as a pre-eminent evangelist and revivalist.

Catherine Mumford (1829-1890) married William Booth in 1855. Her Methodist upbringing was not straightforward. Three of her four siblings died young and her father succumbed to drink. Catherine, a serious girl, had scoliosis, a debilitating curvature of the spine, and incipient tuberculosis. Her mother, evidently an important early influence, taught Catherine to read by the age of five. By twelve years old she had read the

Bible right through eight times and at seventeen, 'on 15 June 1846, Catherine joyfully told her mother she was "saved"' (p.8), a date she herself viewed as fundamental to her.

The Introduction summarises Catherine's significance and life. Her funeral was attended by 38-40,000 people! She had contributed to changing the accepted mores of her day. An evangelist when women did not speak usually in public, she was 'a subtle dialectician' using 'logic' to persuade (p.1). 'A powerful advocate of social reform' (p.2), she allied with Josephine Butler and W.T. Stead against 'state regulated vice', mobilising The Salvation Army against sex trafficking and in support of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act. Catherine's advocacy brought these issues to public attention and, as trafficking and under-age sex remain pertinent today, her contribution should be widely applauded. William Booth published *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, spearheading The Salvation Army's massive programme of 'innovative social action', within days of her death: she was a primary influence on his book.

Read argues that Catherine was 'an effective campaigner for the rights of women'. She demonstrated that women could preach the Gospel of Christ, drawing large crowds, but also speaking to small groups. She considered women to be spiritually and intellectually equal with men and she 'was recognized as the co-founder, with her husband William, of The Salvation Army' (p.2), which under her influence became conciliar not autocratic in structure (p.176).

Read's chapters are headed: Salvation, The Pursuit of Holiness, Doctrine of Holiness, The Church, Ministry, The Sacraments, and the evidence discussed in each is admirably summarised in his Conclusion. Every point is substantiated by footnotes. There is an in-depth Bibliography and useful Index.

He plots Catherine's and William's experiences using their letters, and her surviving journal, other writings and articles. Catherine was very widely read. She 'wrote notes and made comments on all the sermons and lectures that appeared at all worthy of the trouble' (p.12).

Eventually, both Catherine's and William's doctrinal outlook made agreement with other Christian denominations difficult. Their authority was always the Bible. Their spiritual journey took them via branches of Methodism, to marriage in a Congregational Church, with which Catherine remained in sympathy (p.128). Of their eight children, two became Salvation Army Generals. Several helped spread the movement to Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand and India. Catherine's grand-daughter, Catherine Bramwell-Booth, born 1883, would become well-known on television.

Catherine's public life depended on her thoughtful exploration of religious truth. Many of her views, such as on Atonement, have never previously been fully discussed. Read describes all possible influences, concluding that the most enduring was John Wesley. He notes that for Catherine 'holiness is a perfection of intention' (p.86). Despite her husband's reticence, she saw the sacraments as 'only intended as outward signs of a spiritual reality' (p.180), which led to The Salvation Army's ultimate position as a non-sacramental movement within the Church.

Catherine and William Booth became part of what is now termed the Second Evangelical Awakening. Both saw their task as ministering to those who did not know Christ. That such ministry was also practically based brought many converts, not only from the poor and destitute but also from the better-off who wished to help their fellows. None of this went unopposed as they were seen as upsetting the natural order of society. There were riots, questions in parliament, opposition from established clergy, magistrates, and publicans who stood to lose custom if drinkers abstained.

This book is not an easy read but is certainly worth pursuing. It 'sheds new light on the theology of a seminal but neglected figure in the mid to late nineteenth century Holiness Movement' (p.211). Catherine Booth's immense influence has helped form our social views today.

Angela V. John, *Turning the Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda*

Cardigan: Parthian, 2013, 2014. £14.99, ISBN

978-1-909844-72-8 (paperback), pp.645

Reviewed by Lucy Bland

Anglia Ruskin University

This is a long but highly readable biography of an unjustifiably neglected feminist: Lady Rhondda, formerly Margaret Haig Thomas. Lady Rhondda, or Margaret, as Angela John refers to her, led a remarkable busy life, hugely committed first and foremost to feminist causes, but also, and perhaps surprisingly, to the world of business, where she excelled. She was born in 1882 into privilege: privileged both financially (her father was a very wealthy Welsh industrialist) and in terms of having progressive parents who believed in women's equality. Margaret was especially close to her father, a Liberal MP, known as D.A. (the initials of his first names) and as his only (legitimate) child, Margaret, he insisted, should inherit his

property, his title and his right to sit in the House of Lords.

In 1908, Margaret ill-advisedly married Humphrey Mackworth. Her autobiography, published a number of years after their 1923 divorce, suggests he was dull but undemanding, wishing only to 'be left in peace to potter about the kennels'. To his credit, he supported his wife's involvement in suffrage politics, even her militancy, for she became secretary of Newport's Women's Social and Political Union, and was briefly

imprisoned in 1913, after breaking the windows of D.H. Evans department store. On Margaret's return from demonstrations in London, he would be loyally waiting at the train station at three in the morning with hot soup.

Despite being married, at this time it was her father who was the centre of Margaret's life. From all accounts D.A. and Margaret adored each other. During the First World War, they travelled together to the U.S.A. on business (he involved her in all his business affairs). They came home on the ill-fated *Lusitania*, which was torpedoed in May 1915 and sank. Over a thousand died, but 764 survived, including Margaret and her father. D.A. did not survive for long though, dying before the end of the war. He might have consulted her on all business matters, but she was to receive a shock: he had not informed her of the existence of his two other children, born to Evelyn Salusbury, one of his secretaries. Dutifully taking on the responsibilities of her father, Margaret paid for the education of her newly discovered half-siblings and protected her mother from all knowledge of the children's and mistress's existence. She also inherited all D.A.'s business concerns. She sat on the board of thirty-one companies and chaired seven. In 1926 she was elected as president of the Institute of Directors, the first (and to date only) female to hold the post. But her inherited investments were soon to become less profitable: coal, her father's main business interest, went into decline, in the face of alternative sources of power and cheaper coal from abroad.

In 1920, Margaret set up the weekly feminist magazine *Time and Tide*. She poured money into the project, edited it, wrote for it and hired some excellent writers, such as Rebecca West and Winifred Holtby. The periodical thrived. It serialised E.M. Delafield's 'Diary of a Provincial Lady', printed two excerpts from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, and by the 1940s its circulation had reached 40,000 weekly copies. Margaret was an outstanding editor but Vera Brittain accused her of working her friend Winifred Holtby far too hard. In the 1920s, Margaret lived with Helen Archdale, who worked for *Time and Tide*, but the relationship ended acrimoniously. For the last twenty-five years of her life (she died in 1958), Margaret lived with Theodora Bosanquet, who had been Henry James's secretary. John does not speculate as to whether it is appropriate to call Margaret and Bosanquet's relationship 'lesbian', but it is clear that it was loving, committed and happy. Despite working hard, Margaret found time for long trips abroad. In 1933, she and Bosanquet took an extended Mediterranean cruise; they did not travel light for they had with them nineteen boxes of luggage and four dozen books.



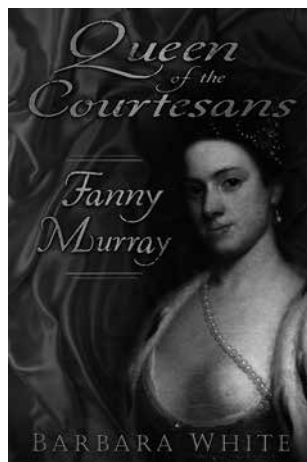
Margaret might have been on a few long holidays but most of the time she appears to have worked ceaselessly. One example is her setting up of the Six Point Group a year after founding *Time and Tide*. The group was dedicated to campaigning on a number of issues still of concern, such as rights of unmarried mothers, equal pay, guardianship of children and extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as men. Margaret chaired the group and identified as an 'old feminist', in contrast to the 'new feminists' who stressed the different needs of women rather than simply equality. Margaret had her critics. For example, H.G. Wells in his novel *Brynchild* (1937) portrays a weekly women's magazine called *Wear and Tear* run by a disagreeable Lady Roundabout. But Margaret also had the capacity for deep friendship. One such friendship was with the Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson, despite the fact that by the 1940s Margaret had moved politically to the right. When Margaret died, she left little money, having used most of it up for her feminist projects, or given it generously to others. This impeccably researched and wonderfully rich book gives us a clear sense of the life and times of a remarkable feminist. How good that she now has such an excellent champion in Angela John.

Barbara White, *Queen of the Courtesans: Fanny Murray*

Stroud: The History Press, 2014. £20.00, 978-0-7509-6869-3 (hardback), pp.255

Catherine Lee

The Open University



Fanny Murray, born Frances Rudman, was one of the most celebrated courtesans of her age. Mistress in turn to the Hon. John Spencer (brother of the Duke of Marlborough), Richard 'Beau' Nash, John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, and Sir Richard Atkins, 6th Baronet of Clapham, she moved in some of the most well-connected, though not respectable, circles of the time.

Born into poverty in 1729 and already having been seduced and abandoned

by Spencer by the age of 14, Murray lived with Nash in the fashionable playground of Bath prior to moving to London some time in 1744. Described as 'Bath's most valuable export to London's sex trade' (p.62), Murray survived the brothels of the Old Bailey and Covent Garden to embark upon a remarkable climb to fame and notoriety, during which she 'enthralled a nation for almost a decade' (p.141). By 1746, she had entered into a relationship with Atkins that was to last for some eight years and which apparently prompted unfounded rumours of a clandestine marriage. This did not, however, prevent her name being linked with a number of men from the other end of the social scale, such as swindler Captain Plaistow and highwayman, James MacLaine, who was executed in 1750. She was cited in the divorce case of Lucy and Edward Strode, with whom it appears that she was involved whilst under the protection of Clapham. As her star faded, Murray married

the actor David Ross and lived a quieter life thanks to a small pension paid by Lord Spencer, the son of her original seducer. She died in 1788 at the age of 49.

At the height of her fame, Murray's sexual attraction, extravagance and beauty were remarked in contemporary texts as diverse as ladies' magazines, printed odes and jest books. Widely-circulated visual representations such as mass-produced prints and watch papers ensured that her face was as well-known as her name. In a widely-ranging discussion, White paints a vivid portrait of the various backdrops to Murray's life, for example Bath's 1730s social scene, 'suffused with sexuality' (p.37), and Sir Francis Dashwood's 'scandalous secret gentlemen's club' (p.141) housed at Medmenham Abbey in Buckinghamshire. Well-known literary and political figures of the day such as Boswell, Horace Walpole, Henry Fielding and John Wilkes feature in these anecdotes, as do colourful characters such as Jack Harris, the 'pimp-general of all England' and Murray's contemporaries Kitty Fisher and Mary Robinson.

The book is exhaustively researched, both from surviving primary sources and a range of secondary histories. Whether this has enabled White entirely to succeed in her quest to 'disentangle the real Murray from the apocryphal anecdotes and myth-making stories' (p.15) that grew up around her is less convincing. White has knowingly set herself a challenge given the paucity and unreliability of many of the surviving sources. The previous biography, *Memoirs of the Celebrated Miss Fanny M - - -*, was published anonymously in two volumes in 1759 and contained 'fictional scenes and flights of fancy' (p.17); it was described by a contemporary reviewer as 'little more than mere invention' (p.16). White argues, however, that it was largely accurate in its 'loose framework' of Murray's life and for certain episodes it remains the main or only source. Nevertheless she is forced to hedge many bets with 'Even if this was a fiction...' (p.95) and use of 'might have', 'could have', 'probably' and so on. Perhaps the pursuit of 'verisimilitude' (p.18) and of Murray's 'real character' is misplaced given these methodological problems; Murray's own voice is recorded only in a handful of letters written to the Spencer family. What the sources such as *Memoirs* do provide, however, is a fascinating demonstration of the construction of narratives about fame and notoriety at this time and of the ways in which eighteenth-century courtesans 'meticulously stage-managed their own extravagant lives in order to attract maximum publicity' (p.126) in an emerging consumer-driven celebrity culture. There was perhaps also more to be said about the gender politics and economics of prostitution at this time.

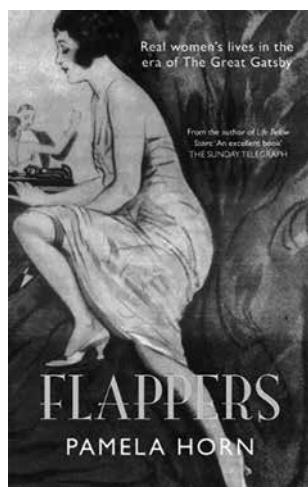
This is, indeed, as the jacket description promises, an 'illuminating contribution to [...] the popular appreciation of a complex and intriguing period of British history'. As a record of the times, if not necessarily the life, of Fanny Murray it is a compelling read.

Pamela Horn, *Flappers*

Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013. £9.99, ISBN 978-1-84868-1402-1 (paperback), pp.256

Reviewed by Kate Murphy

Bournemouth University



The 1920s is a period that continues to fascinate, with millions glued to TV series such as *Downton Abbey* and films like *The Artist* and *The Great Gatsby* having huge box office success. It is timely, therefore, that Pamela Horn's engaging book *Women in the 1920s*, originally published as a photograph-filled hardback in 1995, should be reissued as a paperback, under the new title *Flappers*. The book is particularly welcome because, although the ensuing nineteen years have witnessed a wide range of fresh

scholarship on the 1920s, nothing, in terms of women's lives, has embraced the decade as a whole.

The book is framed by references to the key social and political issues that affected women in the twenties: the transition from war to peace; the extension of citizenship through the vote; the increased opportunities for careers; the growing cult of motherhood and domesticity; the renewed feminist and political activism; the expanding choice of leisure activities. It was an era dominated by social class and this is apparent in every section of the book – the experience of 'coming out' for a debutante in the Home Counties would have been unfathomable to a young textile worker in the Yorkshire mills. For all the frivolity of the flapper, there is no escaping the sheer hard toil and drudgery that was the lot of most women; yes there was electricity, domestic appliances, contraception, but this was largely the domain of the better-off. Not to say that middle- and upper-class women always had gilded lives. Horn is adept at portraying the sterility of society marriages and the frustration and monotony that was the lot of many middle-class women forced to give up stimulating careers to become suburban housewives; as she makes clear in her chapter on professionalism, marriage bars were rife.

As you might imagine from an author who has written widely about servants and rural life, this is a strong feature of the book and some of the most evocative passages are those that describe the gruelling daily existence of cottage wives: getting water from the local pump, relying on oil lamps and candles for light, riding donkeys into the local town to pick up goods. Although the hardships that faced women are a prime focus, there was much to celebrate, in particular new pastimes that were accessible to all social classes such as dancing, the cinema, the wireless and women's magazines, of which there was a proliferation in this period.

The book draws on a plethora of sources. As well as being rich in details garnered from secondary sources, Horn also makes good use of reminiscences, letters and oral history transcripts to bring her stories to life and although the illustrations are necessarily smaller and so less impactful than in the original edition, they add markedly to the text. There is no doubt that if this book had been written afresh

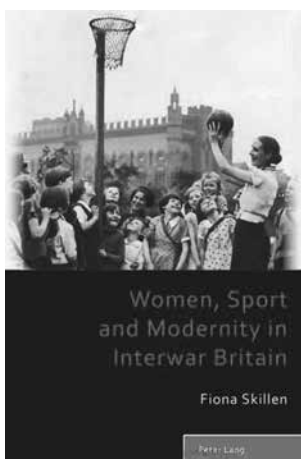
today it would have drawn on the more recent works of Selina Todd, Carole Dyhouse, Virginia Nicholson, Alison Oram, Lucy Bland and Alison Light, to name but a few. However, as a good overview of the period, and a good read, it is a very positive development to have this once again in print.

Fiona Skillen, *Women, Sport and Modernity in Interwar Britain*

Bern: Peter Lang, 2013. £43.00, ISBN 978-3-0343-0275-3 (paperback), pp.270

Reviewed by Victoria Dawson

International Centre for Sports History and Culture, De Montfort University



There is still much work to be done on the history of women's access to and participation in sport and sports culture, and whilst this is a growing area the field still relies on Jennifer Hargreaves' *Sporting Females*, which this year celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Fiona Skillen's latest contribution to the field, *Women, Sport and Modernity in Interwar Britain*, focusses on women's participation in sport on the pitch and analyses the growing

opportunities for women at a time when advances made by women in other areas, such as the workplace, were often illusory. Each chapter examines a specific 'site' of participation, including schools, the workplace and municipal facilities, to examine how women experienced sport, be it formal participation through clubs and sports organisations or informally by non-affiliated means.

Geography, class, age, income and marital status are all factors to be considered when discussing women's cultural participation in any capacity, and Skillen covers these in varying degrees throughout. Chapter one is concerned with physical education in schools and its development over the period. It looks at policy changes surrounding girls' participation and argues that the inclusion of a programme of physical education for girls legitimised female participation in sport. Chapter two considers women's participation beyond an educational setting. It focuses on three sports, tennis, hockey and golf, examining membership of the formal organisations associated with them in order to measure participation. Chapter three looks at the provision of sports facilities, such as those funded by local councils. Chapter four examines the workplace as a site of participation and considers the impact of workplace facilities on the local community. Chapter five studies sport in relation to wider contemporary discourses about the modern woman. It examines advertising and cartoons to demonstrate how sport became linked with the idea of increased independence for women and the promotion of an ideal femininity, arguing that advertisers increasingly used sporting images to sell products to the magazine's predominantly middle-class readership.

Women, Sport and Modernity seeks to offer 'a detailed exploration of the growth of women's participation in sport

in interwar Britain' (p.16). By 'drawing on case studies from across the central belt of Scotland' (p.2) the book focuses on Scottish experiences to the detriment of the rest of Britain and the United Kingdom. A quick scan of the index demonstrates this, with Wales and Northern Ireland not featuring at all, whilst England has sixteen entries to Scotland's thirty-two. While the case studies do allow some exploration of how women negotiated their access to and participation in sport, some voices from beyond this narrow geography would have allowed for greater comparative study. Would voices of women in Yorkshire or Cumbria have told similar stories of playing tennis or golf, and would the women of Ceredigion or Norfolk have differing experiences to those in Cornwall? The lack of geographically comparative material means the text fails to adequately make the case that these central-Scottish women fully represent the women of Britain as a whole.

One other particular point of chagrin is a fault not of Skillen, but of the publisher. Skillen's table of the seven most frequently featured sports/activities in *Tatler* on p.220 is unclear at best as it is hard to distinguish between the shades of grey that indicate the sports. Wider bars would have allowed for quicker and greater distinction of those sports quantified, as would larger boxes in the key, and there is ample space on the page to have made these improvements possible.

Too frequently general histories ignore sport as a cultural construct worthy of analysis, but it is a common inadequacy of sports histories that they fail to give due consideration to the wider, contextual history of the periods in which these sports are situated. Skillen's book could have done more to situate the place of sport in a wider context. Throughout the 1920s, women were often using sport to raise money during strikes and for good causes, but the text generally looks at women's participation in sport as being for its own sake, or for personal social reasons. Skillen has begun to show the value of in-depth research and the use of case studies in the study of women and sport, and does add depth to the existing literature which is largely broad in scope. Oral history interviews can help to tell the tale of the place of sport in the everyday lives of women and provide a useful complement to traditional archival research. Overall, Fiona Skillen's monograph is a welcome addition to the literature on the history of women and sport.

Anne Mac Lellan, *Dorothy Stopford Price – Rebel Doctor*

Co. Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2014. ISBN 0716532378 (paperback), pp.xi + 268

Reviewed by Sarah Guest

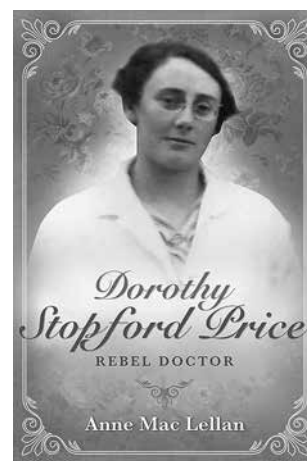
Independent Scholar

Anne Mac Lellan offers a detailed account of the life of the doctor Dorothy Stopford Price (1890-1954) whose paediatric research and promotion of the BCG vaccine during the 1930s and 1940s helped to eradicate the tuberculosis epidemic in Ireland.

Dorothy Stopford Price led a remarkable life: born into an Anglo-Irish Protestant family in Dublin she was amongst the first generation of women in Ireland to qualify as doctors. During her studies at Trinity College Dublin she witnessed the turbulence of the Easter Rising in 1916, events which appear to have radicalised Dorothy, motivating her support for Sinn Féin and leading her to join Cumann na mBan, the Irish nationalist

organisation for women. Indeed, during her early years practising medicine in County Cork she regularly treated injured members of the IRA and provided them with a safe house during the War of Independence. Her strong-willed and radical outlook in political terms was mirrored in her medical career. Stopford Price began practising medicine during the First World War, the Spanish Flu epidemic, and the struggle for Independence. Her return to Dublin where she specialised in paediatric care at St Ultan's Hospital exemplified the significant role which she and a small network of other women doctors played in the modernisation of medicine in Ireland.

The book is structured chronologically, divided into two parts; 'The Stopford Years' includes four chapters on her family background and childhood and assess her university studies and her first medical post in County Cork in the context of the challenges facing women in their pursuit of a career in medicine. Chapters also examine the impact of the Easter Rising as a watershed for Stopford Price which motivated her support for Irish independence. The second part, 'The Stopford Price Years', includes five chapters on her career following marriage to Liam Price. Mac Lellan examines her paediatric career at St Ultan's Hospital where her work brought her into daily contact with the medical and social problems associated with poverty; malnutrition, pneumonia and tuberculosis contributed to a mortality rate of 70 per 1000 in Dublin during the 1920s (p.119). Further chapters focus on the international networks she joined during the 1930s in her efforts to develop a vaccination programme in Ireland against tuberculosis. Mac Lellan demonstrates that it was not to Britain that she turned but rather to the latest scientific developments in Europe. Research visits to Norway, Austria and Sweden introduced Stopford Price to the use of a skin test for tuberculosis which she then sought to promote in Ireland. She developed professional collaborations and lasting personal friendships with eminent paediatricians and experts in the field of tuberculosis, in particular the Swedish physician Arvid Wallgren and German Jewish doctor Walter Pagel. Further visits introduced her to the BCG vaccine and the implementation of a mass vaccination programme became the focus of her efforts upon her return to Ireland. Mac Lellan constructs her professional journey as one which was defined by the support of her husband Liam Price and her medical colleagues and friends, but also by controversy and conflict both on account of her gender and her Protestant background. The outbreak of the Second World War, opposition from within the Irish medical community, and strong objections from John Charles McQuaid, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin all presented obstacles to her pursuit of a national vaccination programme. The creation of the first BCG Unit in 1948 was credited not to Stopford Price but to Dr Noel Browne. His appointment of Stopford Price to the Chair of the National Consultative Council on Tuberculosis ensured that she retained a key role in directing the campaign against tuberculosis. Mac Lellan thus addresses the professional frustration Stopford Price experienced but does so in relation



to wider contemporary debates amongst practitioners on how the disease should be confronted.

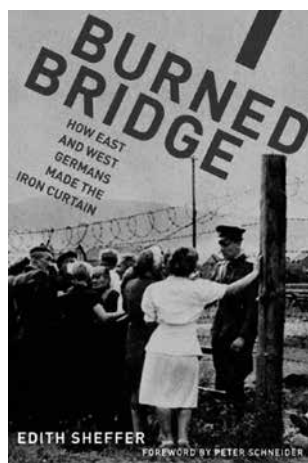
Mac Lellan's meticulous research draws on private letters and papers written by Stopford Price and held in the Trinity College Archives and Bodleian Library along with detailed analysis of secondary source material. The work provides the first comprehensive study of the life and work of Dorothy Stopford Price. The great strength of the work is that it locates her turbulent professional life and her campaigns in the context of highly complex issues relating to religious and national identity in the Irish Republic. This is a detailed and highly readable account of a woman whose professional contribution to public health in Ireland merits greater scholarly attention. In its careful examination of her rebellious life and her difficult negotiation of questions of gender and national identity it is hoped that this work will make a significant contribution to the history of medicine in twentieth-century Ireland.

Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-931461-4 (paperback), pp.xvii + 357

Reviewed by Sue Jones

Independent Scholar



Reading *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans made the Iron Curtain* while the Scottish referendum debate reached its climax, the issue of how geo-political and cultural identity is forged was particularly pertinent. One of Edith Sheffer's primary goals is to demonstrate how borders shape identities and, more unexpectedly, how identities shape borders. One might also ask whether the process of responding to key questions helps shape as well as

reflect identity?

Sheffer's approach to the development of the Iron Curtain is largely at the level of micro-history. By taking an area in semi-rural south eastern Germany which was divided by the competing Allies in the aftermath of the Second World War, she has been able to analyse in fascinating detail both the impact of Cold War politics and the local interactions which helped to make the Iron Curtain a reality and formed two distinct identities. The Burned Bridge of the title was on a medieval stretch of road which connected two towns, Neustadt bei Coburg to the West and Sonneberg to the East, just five kilometres apart. Although Neustadt was in Bavaria and Sonneberg in Thuringia, the two were culturally and economically bound together, primarily by the interlocking of their toy making industry. Interaction between inhabitants was regular and unimpeded until 1945 and they were perceived as one community, albeit with separate civic administrative machinery.

What Sheffer pursues is the nature of the evolution of the East-West division from an unfenced 'green border' from

1945 to 1952, through the East's closure and fencing of the border from 1952 to 1961, to the more complex militarised border of 1961 to 1989. Oral interviews, personal papers and a survey of 500 residents have enabled richly detailed anecdotes and opinions from this small border area to be combined with archival and newspaper research.

Too many interesting ideas emerge to be covered within this relatively short review. Sheffer wishes to challenge the idea that it was the East who imposed the border by showing that, in this area, the Americans quickly erected barriers as a form of control to protect against disorder and crime infiltrating from the Soviet-administered side. This idea of keeping out people from the other side, rather than the perception that the East always acted to prevent emigration from its sphere of influence, was one which continued beyond the early years into the 1950s and 60s with each returning the 'riff-raff' from the other side (p.154). Indeed the emphasis by both sides on removal of the other's 'asocials' has startling echoes of Nazi terminology (p.68), although each saw the development of their own distinctive society as redemption from the Third Reich. However, the border constructed as 'excluding others' both created and reinforced separate identities.

Inevitably, the second section of the book, on the period 1952-61, views events largely from the East's perspective but it is interesting that Sheffer notes on more than one occasion how Neustadt in the West manipulated the existence of the border for economic gain. This was either through smuggling goods from Sonneberg at advantageous rates or by lobbying the government for state remuneration for perceived disadvantages caused by constraints on trade, power supplies and transport. Also, while Sonneberg concentrated on positive public images of their town, Neustadt postcards in the 1960s featured the barbed wire fences and dwelt on the horrors of the border (pp.214-5). In this way, according to Sheffer, the border became further embedded in the psyche of the West and helped to make it more stable.

The way in which local participation in the border contributed to its stability, even when it was physically porous, is one of Sheffer's key arguments. This was especially true of the East where Sonnebergers could be part of border brigades maintaining its infrastructure or of Border Security Activity Groups who watched over community life. However, Neustadt also attempted to capitalise on 'border tourism', building on negative concepts of the division for pecuniary advantage of its citizens who could sell goods and services to tourists – for example the Mountain Mill Border Tavern whose 'sunny terrace' overlooked the Zone (pp.218-9). This was also participation, but of a different kind.

Sheffer's final section on post-1989 is perhaps the most thought-provoking. The idea of a 'wall in the head' which evolved from a 'wall in the ground' is not new. However, she does not see the continuing hostility and 'separateness' between Neustadt and Sonneberg as inevitable. It arose from the post-war instability and the hardening of divisions but was exacerbated by the course of reunification. In a startling metaphor, she describes how:

the long-distance romance of division culminated in the hopeful elopement of East and West Germans after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Their rocky honeymoon, however, created a new pattern of conflict that became a template

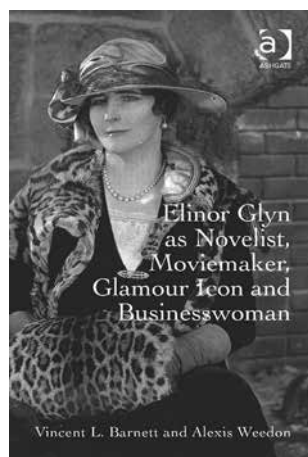
for the rest of the marriage. Disappointment and anger went beyond preexisting differences, though these feelings were often attributed to those preexisting differences. (p.250)

Perhaps she has underestimated the long-term effects of what her own work has so convincingly revealed?

Vincent L. Barnett and Alexis Weedon, *Elinor Glyn as Novelist, Movie Maker, Glamour Icon and Businesswoman*

Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. £60. ISBN 978-1-4724-2182-1 (hardback) pp. 246

Reviewed by Kate Murphy
University of Bournemouth



‘Thrilling’, ‘sensational’, ‘front page news’ were just a few of the superlatives penned by one movie commentator in 1927 as she enthused about the ‘personality’ that was Madam Elinor Glyn (p.5). And this new study of Glyn abounds with the many different personas she held during her lifetime; not just the novelist, movie maker, glamour icon and businesswoman of the book’s title, but also as social commentator, author-celebrity, advice columnist, entrepreneur...

the list goes on. Her greatest claims to fame were as a romantic novelist and film adaptor, reaching out to millions of readers and cinema-goers worldwide in more than 30 novels and 27 films. As the two authors of this doggedly researched book show, Glyn was both a publishing sensation and a Hollywood tour-de-force; an early trailblazer of cross-media collaboration and branding, a sort of JK Rowling/Gwyneth Paltrow/Victoria Beckham rolled into one, but eight decades ahead of their time.

Born in 1864, Elinor Glyn’s father was a civil engineer who died soon after her birth. Her Canadian-born mother took Elinor and her elder sister Lucille (later to be the famous couturier Lady Lucy Duff-Gordon) back to Canada where they were schooled in the ways of high-society by their grandmother. When their mother remarried in 1871, the family moved to Jersey. Marriage to Clayton Glyn, a wealthy landowner, in 1892 propelled Elinor Glyn into British aristocratic circles through the couple’s friendship with Lady Warwick. But Glyn’s relationship with her husband soon deteriorated, as he fecklessly diminished his fortunes, and she embarked on a series of love affairs, most famously with Lord Curzon. She also began to write, first as a fashion columnist and then as a novelist, her first novel *The Visits of Elizabeth* was published in 1900. Later, following her husband’s death in 1915, she felt compelled to write to salvage the remains of her estates and to provide financially for her two daughters but by then she was a household name, cemented by the publication of the notorious *Three Weeks* in 1907. Typical of Glyn’s novels, this was a sumptuous escapade in which an exotic ‘Russian’ queen

seduces a young aristocrat in a turbulent affair which lasts three weeks; following the birth of their illegitimate son, she is brutally murdered by the king, her young son eventually inheriting the throne.

Three Weeks is one of the phenomena that is painstakingly unpicked in Barnett and Weedon’s book, revealing not only how a best-selling novel spawned several plays and films but uncovering the highly complex and turbulent legal minefield that was entered into: the contracts, copyright agreements, intellectual property rights, profit distributions, royalty negotiations and so on which were the lifeblood of the film and publishing worlds in the early twentieth century. There is no question that we are in the hands of experts here (Barnett in film and finance, Weedon in publishing), the depth of research is sometimes overwhelming. Elinor Glyn was an undoubted brand and Hollywood moguls, literary agents, her various business partners, and her family all wanted a part of her. The exploration of her most famous creation *It*, first a short story and then an iconic film starring Clara Bow, is eye-opening in its depiction of the back-biting, throat-cutting world Glyn entered when she moved to Hollywood in the 1920s. The money bandied about was staggering; Glyn earned almost \$47,000 royalties from the film, while her author-celebrity persona guaranteed her a degree of control not available to other screen-writers, as stylist, location consultant, dialogue coach. There is a wealth of detail on how, either through her own devices or by selling rights, Glyn astutely turned her novels, advice columns and articles into plays and films that generated huge profits, funding her lavish lifestyle and it was poignant to learn that when she died in London in 1943 she had frittered nearly everything away.

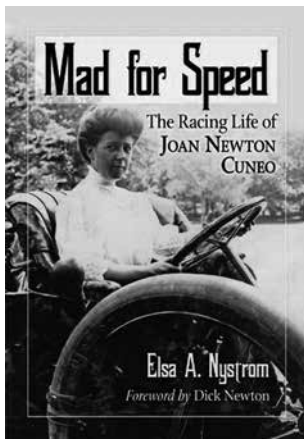
This is decidedly not a book for those who want a full biography of Glyn. The narrative thread can be hard to grasp, personal details are somewhat sparse and the wider social context is often overlooked. It is her life as a businesswoman which is foregrounded. It is also rather thin on feminist analysis. While, for example, Glyn is contrasted with a number of influential women in the early American film business, the ideologies that shaped her attitudes to sex, marriage and women’s role in society are never fully explored. This is because the book draws predominantly on film, publishing and financial sources rather than women’s history. It does, though, offer a fascinating glimpse into the frenetic, glamorous, crazy world of the 1920s and the eminent and iconic status Glyn would come to hold. As those infamous lines remind us: ‘Would you like to sin with Elinor Glyn on a tiger skin...’ certainly had a strong resonance eighty years ago.

Elsa A. Nystrom, *Mad for Speed: The Racing Life of Joan Newton Cuneo*

Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co, 2013. £32.08, ISBN 9-780786-470938 (softback), pp.xi + 217

Reviewed by Nina Baker
Independent Researcher

Nystrom has set out to uncover the ‘truth’ of Joan Newton Cuneo’s life, both in and out of auto-racing. Joan Cuneo is widely known in women’s history and auto history circles as ‘the pushy woman who got women banned from racing’ and this is the widespread ‘fact’ that Nystrom aims to clarify.



However, Nystrom also wants to help readers to see behind the public facade that makes up a lot of what we think we know about Cuneo and set her in her family, social and historical contexts.

The main text of the book is prefaced by one of the more interesting uses of the Acknowledgements, in which the author introduces us to her journey to uncover the facts for her book. This is followed by a foreword by Dick Newton, one of

Cuneo's cousins, and the author's preface elaborating on her progress to uncover the life of Joan Newton Cuneo, both of which are tributes to the unexpected connections now made possible by the internet. Both the author and Dick Newton shared with Joan a personal love of auto racing.

The early part of the book introduces the reader to family histories of the Cuneos and Newtons. This is helpful to place Joan in her context, as the Cuneos were newly rich, whereas the Newtons, by US standards, were considered to be an established, wealthy family with the social standing that status brought. The puzzle of the slight mismatch in standing between the families of Joan Newton and her husband Andrew Cuneo is considered in some detail. Although the marriage was largely happy, its ultimate undoing may have had its early roots in this puzzle. The family history also helps to place the somewhat tomboyish Joan in her social circle and its expectations of a young lady of wealth. Indeed her marriage started conventionally enough with two children arriving in quick succession. It was only after this that Joan began to see, desire and acquire the new automobile technology.

As Joan learned to drive and care for her cars, her husband employed a local ne'er-do-well, Louis Disbrow, to assist as chauffeur-mechanic. Although there seems not to have been anything unseemly in their relationship, it was nevertheless not without its difficulties over many years. Nystrom then takes us through Joan's development as a driver and racer, backed with a substantial and interesting guide to the early racing scene in the USA: the star racers, principal race tracks and how it came about that one organisation got to call all the shots in who was allowed to race. This background is crucial for us to understand how and why the American Automobile Association came to be the recognised body for authorising racing in the USA. Although this book tries to clarify how and why the AAA eventually came to ban women from competitions, it has not uncovered the thinking of the establishment figures in auto racing who brought it about. However we do get an understanding that Joan was, while perhaps not the sole cause, at least a partial contributor to the ban, which was to have such long-lasting effects. Joan's life began in privilege but her later life was by no means easy, facing divorce and a drastically reduced life style. Ultimately she was largely forgotten until recent times. If she was, in her own words 'mad for speed', in much of her life she had to learn to slow down' and indeed her obituary focussed far more on the charity work which befitted her social status, than on her flamboyant times as an auto-racer.

I was keen to read this book because of my own interest in women's connections with technology and cars in particular.

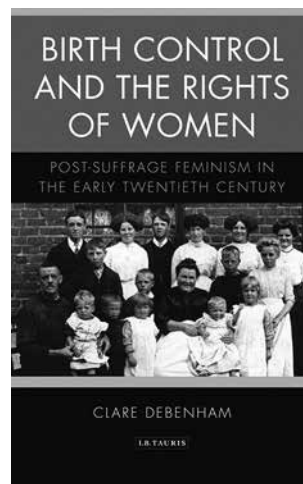
It is a detailed and learned account, with the references one would expect, but at the same time an easy and beguiling read. I learnt a lot from it about the early automobile culture. It would be a worthwhile read for those interested in the social cultures of those times in the USA, as well as anyone with an interest in the conflicting constraints and liberties of women's lives in the early twentieth century.

Clare Debenham, *Birth Control and the Rights of Women: Post-suffrage Feminism in the Early Twentieth Century*

London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014. £62.00, ISBN 978-1-78076-435-1 (hardback), pp.287

Reviewed by Alison T. McCall

University of Dundee



This book details the early years of the birth control movement within the context of the interwar women's movement. The practical aspects of disseminating information, setting up clinics and providing birth control are well covered. Whilst there is considerably more source material available on the attitudes of those who were part of the birth control movement than the attitudes of the mainly (but not exclusively) working-class women who accessed birth control through

the clinics, Debenham has used the available material effectively, to tease out the reactions of those who attended the clinics.

Debenham sets the campaign for birth control within the larger context of post-suffrage feminism, which she argues is a neglected area. She demonstrates how the women who campaigned for the vote did not return quietly to domestic concerns, but went on to tackle a diverse range of issues relating to women's rights, of which the campaign for birth control was only one. This wider context extends the interest and relevance of this book.

The birth control movement encompassed two organisations. Marie Stopes founded and dominated the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress (SCBCRP) whilst the Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics (SPBCC) placed emphasis on its grassroots membership. There was, however, mutual support between the two groups. Opposition to birth control came from some Christian and Jewish leaders and from some parts of the medical profession. Opposition varied from area to area, and in some cases the opposition helped publicise the existence of clinics.

Chapter Six 'Shifting Ideologies: Birth Controllers, Feminists, the Malthusian League and Eugenics Society' provides a fascinating insight into the interplay of attitudes to birth control and eugenics, with several leading exponents of birth control also members of the Eugenics Society. Explaining that 'It would be simplistic to see birth control controversy

in terms of dichotomies between male and female, Labour and Conservative or even in terms of competing religious membership' (p.131), Debenham explores the varying political affiliations of members of the birth control movement, and in doing so underscores the wider context of interwar feminism and the range of political and social involvement amongst post-suffrage women.

The book concludes by following the birth control movement to the point at which birth control became part of the National Health Service. There is an invaluable appendix comprising a collective biography of 137 birth control activists. Debenham regards this appendix as an important feature of the book, 'as the women are not of peripheral importance and their endeavours lie at the centre of the birth control movement' (p.15). The collective biography helps underline many of the themes of the book, in terms of the women's family backgrounds, education and connections. Moreover, it provides a starting point for any researcher wishing to investigate their own region and it should stimulate further research in this fascinating area.

There are no illustrations. Debenham has chosen not to include photographs of the women, believing that the 'staged photographs' of the time 'do not convey the spirit of the women'

Shop Online and Raise Money!

Have you heard about easyfundraising yet? It's the easiest way to help raise money for The Women's History Network! If you already shop online with retailers such as Amazon, Argos, John Lewis, iTunes, eBay or HMV, then we need you to sign up for free to raise money while you shop!

So how does it work?

You shop directly with the retailer as you would normally, but if you sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whn for free and use the links on the easyfundraising site to take you to the retailer, then a percentage of whatever you spend comes directly to us at no extra cost to you.

How much can you raise?

Spend £100 with M&S online or Amazon and you raise £2.50 for us. £100 with WH Smith puts £2.00 in our pocket and so on. There's over 2,000 retailers on their site, and some of the donations can be as much as 15% of your purchase.

Save money too!

easyfundraising is FREE to use plus you'll get access to hundreds of exclusive discounts and voucher codes, so not only will you be helping us, you'll be saving money yourself.

We've raised significant funds with easyfundraising so far but we need your help to keep donations coming in. Sign up at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whn and start making a difference ... simply by shopping.

Women's History Back issues

Back issues of *Women's History* (formerly known as *Women's History Magazine*) are available to buy in both digital and print versions for:

£5.00 inc postage (Digital/UK print version)
£6.50 inc postage (Overseas print version)

Most issues are available, from Spring 2002 to the present. Discover the contents of each issue at

www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/

Order and pay online or email
magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



(p.15). However, it is not clear why there are no reproductions of leaflets, or illustrations of the early clinics.

The index is a disappointment. At only three pages, double spaced, it is barely adequate. For example, I was particularly interested in the Aberdeen Clinic. The index gave three page references (pp.25, 61, 66) but I also found unindexed references to this clinic on pages 97, 100 and 114. A visit to Aberdeen by eugenicist Professor J. A. Thomson, on page 120 simply fell within the ambit of the index entry 'Eugenics Society 116-30'; there was no entry for 'Aberdeen' or 'Thomson, Prof J. A.'. Individual women, whose biographies appear in the collective biography, are not indexed, making it difficult to move from the biography section to follow references to them throughout the book. Given the wealth of information and detail contained within this book, a more thorough index would help unlock the riches within. On a happier note, there is a satisfyingly extensive bibliography.

This book is meticulously researched and makes absorbing reading. In addition to its comprehensive account of the birth control movement it will help to open up to research other areas of post-suffrage female activism.

WHN Book Prize

An annual £500 prize for a first book in women's or gender history

The Women's History Network (UK) Book Prize is awarded for an author's first single-authored monograph that makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style. The book must be written in English and be published in the year prior to the award being made. To be eligible for the award, the author should be a member of the Women's History Network (UK) and be normally resident in the UK. The prize will be awarded in September 2015.

Entries (books published during 2014) should be submitted via the publisher by 31 March 2015
For further information please contact June Hannam, chair of the panel of judges.

Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

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*.

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 31st May 2015. 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.

For further information and before you apply please email Ann Hughes a.l.hughes@keele.ac.uk

WHN Community History Prize sponsored by The History Press

An annual £500 prize for a Community History Project which has led to a documentary, pamphlet, book, exhibition, artefact or event completed between the 1st of January 2014 and 31st May 2015.

To be eligible for the award the project must focus on History by, about, or for Women in a local or community setting. Candidates must submit both evidence of the project in written or photographic form and a 500-1,000 word supporting statement explaining the aims and outcomes of the project.

Individuals or groups can nominate themselves or someone else by 31 May 2015; for further guidance or advice on the application process email Professor Maggie Andrews maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk

Getting to Know Each Other



Name

Alison Oram

Position

Professor in Social and Cultural History, Leeds Beckett University

How long have you been a WHN member?

Since the WHN started. I remember attending the founding conference in London that Jane Rendall and others organised.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

Realising that history could be about 'ordinary' women like my wonderful great aunt. Not that she was ordinary – she never married and worked as a 'nippy' (waitress) in London until retirement, then lived to be 100. As a student at Bristol Polytechnic (now the University of the West of England) in the mid-late 1970s, I was inspired by what must have been one of the first undergraduate women's history courses in Britain, taught by June Hannam.

What are your special interests?

Currently, I am working on the representation of queer sexuality and gender in historic houses in Britain. I have researched various aspects of lesbian and queer history, and I'm particularly interested in the histories of gender and sexuality between the 1930s and the 1970s. I'm increasingly drawn to questions about spatiality, the visual image, and humour in cultural history, some of which I explored in my book on women's cross-dressing in twentieth-century British popular culture.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

It's hard to single out a particular heroine! For the twentieth century I would certainly include Sylvia Townsend Warner, Nancy Spain, Winifred Holtby and Adelaide Dallamore (try googling her). All lived unorthodox, independent and creative lives.

Committee News

The Steering Committee met on Saturday November 8th, 2014 at Senate House, University of London. The seven new members on the committee were warmly welcomed. The treasurer, Aurelia Annat, reported that the organisation's finances were healthy. However many members are paying an incorrect subscription fee, so it was suggested that members be encouraged to pay membership via Paypal where they can also tick Gift Aid. Maggie Andrews reported back on the 2014 WHN conference: it had been a great success, although had suffered from insufficient funds for all the necessary administrative support. At the next meeting it will be decided whether in future WHN should give or lend £500 to conference organisers.

There was a long discussion about the WHN magazine, in particular the relationship between the editorial team and the Steering Committee. It has been agreed to change the title to *Women's History* as it was thought it might encourage more contributors. It will also in future feature more 'special issues', and will advertise this accordingly. Gillian Beattie-Smith reported on the schools' liaison conference that she ran in April 2014 which attracted 120 teachers and academics. Its success suggests that there is good reason to explore further initiatives with heritage organisations/museums/schools for match-funding possibilities.

Jocelyne A. Scutt reported on the WHN blog. Blogs were submitted by a wide range of contributors in 2014, including March's Women's History Month, October's Black History Month and November's LGBT History Month. The blogs are twittered and facebooked – to WHN, IAW (International Alliance of Women) and JAS' twitter and Facebook page. It was noted with sadness the recent death of Leonore Davidoff, an influential figure in the founding of the WHN. Her obituary (written by Prof Miriam Glucksmann, University of Essex) is on the WHN Blog.

Conferences, Calls for Papers, Events, Prizes, News, Notices, Publishing Opportunities ...

All of the above can be found in the WHN electronic

Newsletter

The WHN *Newsletter*, which is emailed to members monthly, enables us to keep you up-to-date with news, conferences and other events concerning women's history.

The *Newsletter* also provides a more frequent forum for publicising your events and informing members about other activities and projects.

To advertise in the WHN *Newsletter*, please email its editor, Meleisa Ono-George, at:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

To download current and back issues visit the Newsletter pages at

www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/news/newsletters/

Publishing in *Women's History*

Women's History 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.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html

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

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



Women's History Network Contacts

Steering Committee Officers:

Membership, subscriptions, Felicity Cawley:
membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to Ms Felicity Cawley, Postgrad Research Student, Economic & Social History, Lilybank House, University of Glasgow, G12 8RT

Finance, Aurelia Annat:
treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, June Purvis:
convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Team:
web@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, June Hannam:
bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, Karen Sayer:
ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Alana Harris:
charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Melesia Ono-George:
newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Blog, Jocelynn A. Scutt:
womenshistorynetwork.org/category/blog/

Web Liaison and Social Media Co-ordinator, Joanne Bailey:
liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors: Katie Barclay, Anne Logan, Emma Robertson, Kate Murphy, Lucy Bland, Rachel Rich:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For Magazine submissions, steering committee and peer review:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For book reviews: Jane Berney:
bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

To submit books for review please email the book reviews editor with details of the book to be reviewed.

For magazine back issues and queries please email:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

To join the WHN just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments and Gift-Aid declarations can all be
accessed online as well – see panel on page 5 for further details

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 *Women's History*, 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		

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration are all available at
www.womenshistorynetwork.org