

# Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network

## SPECIAL ISSUE ON 'TEACHING WOMEN'S AND GENDER HISTORY'



## Autumn 2015

### Articles by

*Lucinda Matthews-Jones,  
Joanne Begiato, Jennifer Davey,  
Amanda Markwell, Maggie Andrews,  
Andrea Thomson, Bridget Lockyer,  
Abigail Tazzyman, Tim Reinke-Williams,  
Hannah Cobb*

### Plus

*Eight book reviews  
Getting to know each  
other  
Conference reports  
Prizewinners*

women's  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



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# *25<sup>th</sup> Women's History Network Annual Conference, 2016*

## **Women's Material Cultures/ Women's Material Environments**

*16-18 September 2016, at Leeds Trinity University (Leeds)*

### **Conference Announcement and Call for Papers**

We invite established scholars, postgraduate researchers, independent scholars, museum curators and media practitioners from a wide range of disciplines working on any place or period to contribute to a dynamic discussion about women's material cultures and environments.

We encourage those working in archaeology, museum studies, geography, history of science, technology and medicine, art history, environmental history and all forms of history for any period, focused on women, to send in proposals for themed 90 minute panels, individual 20 minute papers, 90 minute round tables/discussions, and posters.

Museums and curators, both in the public and the voluntary sector, are encouraged to get involved by offering object-handling sessions, small exhibitions/displays/posters, as well as panels, roundtables or individual papers.

### **Proposals**

Panel proposals (90 minute) should include a session title, a named organiser as contact (who will be responsible for communicating with the remaining panel members), a session abstract of no more than 200-300 words and up to three 20-minute paper abstracts of 200-300 words. If the panel organiser is also proposed as a Chair and not speaking, please provide a short biography.

Roundtable/workshop/object-handling session proposals (90 minute) should include a themed title, a named organiser as contact (who will be responsible for communicating with the remaining panel members), a session abstract of 500 words and brief biographies of all panellists.

Individual 20-minute paper proposals should be no more than 200-300 words long and include a short biography.

Poster proposals should be no more than 200-300 words long and include a short biography.

Authors/panel organisers will be notified regarding acceptance of their contribution after all submissions have been reviewed.

Conference organised by Karen Sayer, Di Drummond, Maureen Meikle and Lauren Padgett. Please send proposals, and any enquiries, to [K.Sayer@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:K.Sayer@leedstrinity.ac.uk) by 17:00 Monday 1 February 2016.

Venue: Leeds Trinity University, Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS18 5HD.

For information about our location and directions by bus, rail, air and road, please see: [www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/about-us/location](http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/about-us/location)



Welcome to the Autumn 2015 issue of *Women's History*. This is a special issue on 'Teaching Women's and Gender History', an apt topic as we return from Canterbury and the buzz of this year's Women's History Network Conference where the value of women's history is presumed and accepted. The guest editor is Lucinda Matthews-Jones who contacted us with the idea for the special issue after organising a successful workshop on the topic at an event sponsored by the British Academy at Bradford University.

Lucinda Matthews-Jones, an early-career researcher, has gathered together a range of viewpoints and personal experiences from academics and students alike both in the classroom and the broader community. Bridget Lockyer and Abigail Tazzyman, for instance, have written about their AHRC funded project 'Teaching Women's History' which involved working with Year 12 students and teachers at three schools in York, appraising how women's history could be better integrated within the school curriculum. The experience of teaching and learning women's history in a university environment is considered in a number of articles. Jennifer Davey questions why it is still so marginalised both as a topic within broader modules and as a bespoke course. For this she draws on the views of her students, which form the core of a further article in which students, from a number of UK universities, recount their experiences of being taught women's and gender history. Here the importance of addressing masculinity is also raised which in turn provides the premise for Joanne Begiato's article on teaching the history of masculinity.

Tim Reinke-Williams charts the inclusion, or lack of inclusion, of references to gender (both in terms of men and women) within textbooks on early modern history over the past ten years while Hannah Cobb, an archaeologist, explores how she challenges sexism and interweaves feminism into her teaching both within the classroom and on excavations. Also away from the classroom, Andrea Thomson has been part of a team which has taken an AHRC funded research project on working-class marriage in Scotland into public venues across the country, bringing women's and gender history to places as diverse as Aberdeen, Blairgowrie and Portree. This new accessibility is a far cry from the state of women's history thirty years ago, when Maggie Andrews attended her first History Workshop Conference although, as she points out, the need to remain radical and subversive is still vital. And this is very much the stance taken by Lucinda Matthews-Jones in her thought-provoking introduction which includes a call for a more inclusive approach to gender history that embraces transgender in all its forms.

As well as articles on teaching women's and gender history, this Autumn issue of the journal contains a number of reports from the WHN Conference, held at the University of Kent over the weekend of 4-6 September, which had as its theme female agency, activism and organisation. The winners of this year's WHN Book Prize and Community History Prize are also included and, of course, there are regular features such as book reviews, and 'Getting to Know Each Other'.

*Women's History* is the Journal of the Women's History Network and we always welcome comments from members on how we can improve and expand. We are also keen to receive articles on any aspect of women's history as well as suggestions for further special issues. We hope you enjoy the issue.

Editorial team: Kate Murphy, Jane Berney, Lucy Bland, Rachel Rich, Catherine Lee, Rosalind Carr

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# Teaching Women's and Gender History: Introducing Our Past, Present and Future<sup>1</sup>

Lucinda Matthews-Jones

Lucinda Matthews-Jones is Senior Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University where she teaches nineteenth-century gender and urban history modules. Her research explores the roles of domesticity, gender and class in the British university settlement movement. She is currently working on a monograph provisionally entitled *Settling: Class, Gender and Domesticity in the University Settlement Movement, 1884-1920* and has articles published in *Journal of Victorian Culture* and *Cultural and Social History*. She also published a chapter in Sean Brady and John Arnold's edited collection *What is Masculinity*.

When I was an undergraduate at the University of Manchester, my favourite modules were in gender history. In my second year I took a nineteenth and twentieth-century women's history survey module with Matthew McCormack. A year later I turned my attention to the eighteenth century by taking Hannah Barker's special subject on gender history, together with a politics module on twentieth-century feminism. There was something about these modules that connected with me more easily than other topics. I'm sure that part of this can be explained by the way in which these modules dealt with lived and everyday experiences that I could relate to my own life experience and to those of the women and men in my family. I was captivated. Gender history made history real to me. I loved the personal stories that came with these modules.

Fast forward ten years and I am a lecturer who now teaches the gender history components of the History degree programme at Liverpool John Moores University. Teaching gender can be tricky. It can be a struggle to sell this topic to students used to more traditional varieties of history. Once inside the classroom, I often find that the students who have opted to study gender are disproportionately female, reinforcing the very gender divides we hope to dismantle. Out of all the modules I teach, my second-year gender history option module is the one that I think about most. I was recently pleased to have the chance to put this module under the microscope at the British Academy-sponsored conference 'Is Gender still Relevant?' at the University of Bradford. This conference encouraged delegates to explore gender through their research and teaching and to offer fresh insight into the relationship which higher education has with gender and sexism.<sup>2</sup> The teaching panel which I put together for this conference invited speakers to reflect on their experiences of teaching women's and gender history.

Building on the conversations begun at the conference, this special issue considers how gender is taught in British universities. Its aims are twofold. Firstly, it considers how we might best introduce students to gender history in our modules (and throughout their degrees). Secondly, it reflects on how students engage with this area and what our experiences have been of teaching women's and gender history modules. Some papers in this special issue were initially given at Bradford. These include the articles by Maggie Andrews, Tim Reinke-Williams and Hannah Cobb.<sup>3</sup> Joanne Begiato (Bailey) and

Jennifer Davey have kindly joined the debate and I am also really pleased to include several student reflections by Natalie Hanley-Smith, Rebecca Lazarides, Amanda Markwell, James Owens and Lucy Wade as well as a piece by Rosemary Elliot and Alexandra Sheppard on gender history in postgraduate studies.

Whereas the initial Bradford panel was concerned solely with the role of women's and gender history in universities, this special issue expands our understanding of teaching gender and women's history by including two additional pieces on teaching provisions in Further Education and in the public history realm. Brigit Lockyer and Abigail Tazzyman consider how we might overcome the absence of women's history in our current school curriculum. As many of our contributors note, the lack of provision of women's and gender history at school makes it difficult for students to invest in these modules once at university. Lockyer and Tazzyman show how they sought to overcome this problem in their AHRC-funded project 'Teaching Women's History'. Meanwhile, Andrea Thomson's contribution notes that the public history agenda has enabled a more flexible teaching and learning experience. Her research assistant work on the AHRC-funded project 'A History of Working-Class Marriage, 1855-1976' has enabled her to take the classroom to the community, placing greater emphasis on the interaction between audience and researchers.<sup>4</sup>

Women's and gender history continues to have a place in our university degree programmes. The recently revised QAA subject benchmark for History explicitly mentions women's and gender history.<sup>5</sup> But the study of women in the past has not always sat comfortably in university departments. The field of women's history only emerged in the 1960s. In the 1970s a number of women's studies courses were offered in extramural departments. Throughout this period, women's studies and history courses were closely linked to the women's liberation movement.<sup>6</sup> In March 1970 the first British Women's Liberation Conference took place at Ruskin College (Oxford) and was run by female scholars attached to the History Workshop Movement. However, the subsequent closure of a number of women's studies programmes means, according to Lisa Downing, that 'gender, sexuality and feminist studies are [now] widely taught under the auspices of more traditional degree programmes' such as History.<sup>7</sup> Women's history modules grew alongside women's studies. By the 1980s and 1990s, gender was emerging as a defined teaching category which enabled the exploration of the contours of gender and the recovery of women's place in society. This was especially the case after the publication of Joan W. Scott's highly influential article 'Gender: A Useful category of Historical Analysis', which argued that men and women's roles are culturally not biologically determined.<sup>8</sup> There was a similar, though somewhat later, trend toward understanding men as gendered subjects, an attempt to understand what it was like to be a man in the past. While there has been some unease surrounding the growth of men's history and the history of masculinity, its introduction into the field has meant that women's and gender history is now part of a vibrant research landscape.

This has recently been matched by a growing queer and trans\* community that is questioning the idea that there are only two gender identities. Rather, new classifications are emerging to illustrate the variety of gendered identities in present day society, including pangender, tri-gender and genderqueer. Unsurprisingly, this is being matched by an emerging and exciting area of historical research. I would argue, then, that we need to fully incorporate trans\* and queer histories into our women's and gender history modules. In 2004, Elizabeth Reis declared that 'Transgender is out of the closet, and it should be in the classroom as well'.<sup>9</sup> Eleven years after Reis's proclamation, have we been quick enough to incorporate trans\* history into our modules? There are three reasons why I think we should do more on this front. Firstly, women's and gender history modules have enabled students to question the idea that one's gender identity is tied exclusively to biological sex. They have shown that differences between men and women's lives are not a product of natural differences but related to cultural and social expectations of what it means to be a woman or a man. Similarly, since the 1990s, those working in trans\* studies have shown that for some, gender is constructed and not exclusively tied to a person's biological sex. Michel J. Boucher notes that a discussion of trans\* issues and experiences enables us to move beyond 'dominant discourses [that] naturalize what can be understood as culturally produced linear links between sex (the biological features used to define one as male, female, or intersex at birth), gender (social expectations and roles of male and female people, and one's internal understanding of oneself as a man, woman or other category), and sexuality (straight, gay, bisexual)'.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, there has been a growing acknowledgement of trans\* identity in mainstream culture, which has included the work of Laverne Cox – an actress famous for her role in *Orange is the New Black* – in raising the profile of the transgender community and the recent coming out of Caitlyn Jenner. In Britain, the Museum of Liverpool hosted an exhibition on April Ashley. It therefore seems right to think more about how students engage with this trans\* history, especially as many trans\* activists have a strong desire to reclaim and recover their histories much like the LGB community thirty years ago. This leads to my third point. Apart from questioning the cultural assumptions behind the 'naturalness' and 'realness' of our gender identities, it also becomes a radical act to teach trans\* history. As Stephen Whittle notes: 'teaching about trans issues in this politicized context allows our students to understand that trans identities challenge the core beliefs of some of society's most powerful groups, and highlight the extent to which those groups wish to dominate the thinking of us all'.<sup>11</sup> But how is this to be done? According to Boucher, trans\* studies can be developed within an intersectional framework that discusses gender, race, class and sexuality.<sup>12</sup> Women's and gender history modules already work within these parameters. Offering trans\* histories will provide an additional inclusivity to these modules. While I recognise that trans\* is a relevantly modern expression, I agree with Reis when she states that 'gender-bending practices...are timeless'.<sup>13</sup> This might include introducing students to cross-dressing, female husbands, and the intersexed in a transgendered, queer framework.

Given this flourishing of research in gender history, it is not surprising that despite some difficulties, women's and gender history remains firmly on the university curriculum.

But, as an early-career researcher, I have always been struck by how difficult it is to sell this topic to students used to more traditional accounts of history. How do we make women's and gender history visible to the typical undergraduate? I'm not alone in reflecting on the challenges and difficulties of teaching gender classes or modules. Twitter and social media is repeatedly alight with conversations that note the demographic make-up of these modules, the small class size, or the uninterested students. Lecturers appear on the face of it to be more self-reflective, or dare I say it, more anxious, about these issues, than they ever have been. These concerns were brought home to me a few years ago when my nineteenth-century gender history module was cancelled because not enough students had signed up to do it. This is the problem for women's and gender modules. Despite the fact that many scholars remain committed to this approach, students generally opt into our modules and because they are relatively unfamiliar with (or possibly openly hostile to) the field, enticing them remains problematic. Even when women's and gender history modules do recruit enough students to run, female students normally outnumber male students. Attendance at the token women's and/or gender lecture on other more general modules can be markedly lower than at other lectures. (Trans\* histories are all but overlooked).

One aim of the articles collected together here is to take a wide view of these problems. Among these is the fact that our teaching is done within a climate of 'unconscious gender bias' which can negatively impact both female students and staff. Hannah Cobb's piece, for instance, encourages us to think more about the gender dynamics of our classroom. Female students are generally reluctant to speak in class because of the cultural assumption that girls should not be opinionated or argumentative. We need to think about how we encourage our female students to participate more fully in our seminars and lectures. Meanwhile, the National Union of Students has criticized universities for their lack of policies directed towards tackling sexual and homophobic harassment that emerges from lad culture.<sup>14</sup> But student lad culture is only one aspect of masculine culture on university campuses. The recent Royal Historical Society report on 'Gender Equality and Historians in Higher Education' noted that universities were predicated on 'macho working patterns and cultures'.<sup>15</sup> According to Selina Todd, UK universities are 'highly sexist'. Women are more likely to dominate junior positions while 80% of professors are male.<sup>16</sup> Recent studies have shown that female lecturers are judged more harshly by their students. In one American study, Benjamin Schmidt found by analyzing *ratemyprofessor.com* that female and male lecturers are rated differently despite shared similar traits or characteristics.<sup>17</sup> The effect has been to create a teaching and learning environment where women are marginalized.

Outside the hallowed walls of the university, perhaps the most serious barrier to the thriving of women's and gender history in the UK is the continued failure to take women's and gender history seriously in the construction and development of the national curriculum. The marginalization of gender has meant that students rarely move beyond 'Great Men' (and to some extent 'Great Women') in History at school. Katherine Edwards, a history teacher for 12 years, observed that Michael Gove's revised national curriculum 'failed to promote gender equality'. The Key Stage 2 syllabus only mentioned two Tudor queens, while under the heading of 'The Changing Role of

Women' Key Stage 3 pupils were introduced to 'five token women' (Queen Victoria, Annie Besant, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole). She concluded that 'If the history we study reflects what matters to us as a society, then this curriculum sends a stark message: history is essentially about celebrating the 'achievements' of white Protestant male elites.'<sup>18</sup> It also means that students are rarely invited to move beyond the economic, political or military spheres to consider how the personal is historical. The preoccupation with making history a national story overlooks the complexity of our gendered past by assuming that our Island stories only happen in the public sphere. As a historian of nineteenth-century Britain, I am continually perplexed by the domination of the suffragettes on curricula because, on the one hand, this preoccupation denies the idea that women were involved in the political sphere before their fight for the vote and, on the other hand, de-values the importance of the domestic sphere and other realms of women's history. As Sue Johnson notes, 'Learning the history of women changes irrevocably one's view of the past. 'History' can never be the same again. Traditional approaches to history must be adjusted and augmented to include the female as well as the male.'<sup>19</sup> Personal and private histories must find their place in our school curricula because the stories they engulf are also national and political.

There are, however, manifest barriers to this kind of history in popular understandings of the past. Despite some evidence that TV history is moving in the right direction, the majority of presenters and programmes continue to paint history as a male pursuit and story. Few would go as far as David Starkey to publicly bemoan 'feminised history' but his views serve to belittle histories that focus on the women and the women that write them. In 2009, when publicizing his documentary *Henry VIII: The Mind of a Tyrant*, he criticized the current preoccupation with Henry VIII's wives and marriages. This 'feminised history' was written by female scholars and directed at a female audience, Starkey argued. His documentary sought to reclaim Henry from the clutches of those historians that seek to suggest that women were 'power players'. He concludes: "If you are to do a proper history of Europe before the last five minutes, it is a history of white males because they were the power players, and to pretend anything else is to falsify."<sup>20</sup> According to June Purvis, Starkey creates 'a sexist notion of public history' that renders the history of women as 'soap operatic'.<sup>21</sup>

Starkey's criticism of 'feminised history' reveals an interesting paradox in the study of history. Men are men, but they are rarely gendered. The history of masculinity has of course attempted to do precisely this. Some women's historians are concerned that a study of men perpetuates 'malestream' history. While such problems deserve debate, I do wonder if forcing students to reflect more fully on how men are gendered beings will encourage them to see the gendered implications of what and how they study. Embedding gender (both men and women) in our lectures would remind students that our past is not tied to Great Men and their genderless achievements. Similarly, it would certainly be helpful to move beyond the men vs women narrative in order to acknowledge that gendered experiences are multiple and divided by class, race, ethnicity and religion. If we are to fully recognize that there are multiple gender experiences then we also need to make sure that trans\* histories do not become exceptions within our survey course and women's and gender modules. Indeed,

what makes me passionate about gendering the nineteenth-century past in my teaching is the opportunities it affords for recognizing and engaging with other social identities. Being a good gender historian for me means recognizing the rich tapestry of societies in the past.

To re-address the gender imbalance of our university degree programmes we also need to consider how we structure and compile our reading lists. In this issue, Reinke-Williams asks us to think more about how we write the history of masculinity into our textbooks, a point also reinforced by Toby Beauchamp and Benjamin D'Harlingue who argue that our textbooks, supplemental materials, and teaching strategies overlook transgendered bodies. This inadvertently suggests that gender is a stable category that is solely structured around cismen and ciswomen.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the use of the Starkey example above does not just highlight how women in history are perceived but illustrates how female scholars are understood. Rachel Herrmann, Sara Damiano, and Glenda Goodman in their engaging podcast on 'Gender History and Female Academics' argue that we need to show students we value the female voice on our syllabi by asking students to read female authored primary and secondary sources. At the moment, as Damiano notes, the gender pronouns used by our students reveal how the academic voice is naturally masculinized.<sup>23</sup> Women have lost their public voice.<sup>24</sup> Together with Cobb's piece, they also consider how this impacts on our female students and their general reluctance to talk in a classroom setting.

I am mindful not to push the doom and gloom too far. Personal experience has taught me that students who engage with women's and gender history are enthusiastic and engaged learners. I've been impressed with the imaginative dissertations that I have supervised over the last couple of years on gender and women's history in modern Britain. One of my best teaching experiences involved students reading and then creating a Facebook account for the Victorian Isabella Robinson's divorce trial.<sup>25</sup> Indeed the recent pedagogical trend to understand students as active learners works for our type of history for two reasons. Firstly, as Maggie Andrew points out, women's history is about recovering women from the past and the recent public history movement has demonstrated the importance and significance of people's history. Secondly, our continuing investment in a people's history has meant archives and universities have developed a range of digital resources that we can incorporate into our gender modules because they place personal stories and experiences at the heart of this narrative.

My final suggestion would be, however, that despite the manifest successes, which teaching women's and gender history brings, we may have lost sight of the original politics of the field. Women's and gender history came from radical beginnings. And yet women's and gender history modules, in my experience, often shy away from the explicit politics of feminism. It is interesting that out of all my teaching, I am more reflective about the political potential of my gender module. Last year, when I started my gender history module by asking how many students would describe themselves as a feminist, of a class of 38 only 2 raised their hands. But we should not overstate this downward trend in feminist identification. When I was an undergraduate few of my peers would have labelled themselves feminist either. Perhaps we need to consider more fully what equality campaigns and discourses students are responding to. Could it be that the language of everyday

sexism resonates better with our students? However, I agree with Susan Pedersen who has noted, with specific reference to American modules in women's, feminist and gender history, that we 'need to bring politics back in'. But how is this to be done? Pedersen argues that we should think more about our students and be more aware that their political positions might diverge from ours.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps this is where social media can offer us a third space. Facebook and Twitter might enable us to share articles on present day feminist and gender issues without making the classroom an overtly feminist space. Students can opt in or out of this aspect of the module. But by providing students with a space in which to interact in their own time on present day issues we can show how women's and gender history overlaps with our own lives.

This special issue suggests that we are at an important juncture in women's and gender history and that the time is now right to reflect more fully on our present experiences of teaching these topics. These are some of the things that I believe we need to consider more fully:

- How can we convince school curriculum designers that people as gendered beings matter? Students should be introduced to women's and gender history before they start university.
- We need to convince students, staff and universities to take the historical study of gender more seriously. We can't simply offer token lectures on women and people who transgress or disrupt gender categories. Rather, we need to get people to think more about how we populate our university curricula with gender-related subject matter.
- We need to make students active learners in women's and gender history. What are the best ways to achieve this?
- We need to make sure that our gender history modules do not privilege a white, protestant story of Great Cisgender Men and Women.
- We need to consider more fully the contours of gender to include trans\*, agender, intersex, and other identities from a historical context.
- We also need to consider the relationship gender identities have with class, religion, ethnicity and sexuality.
- We need to convince students that, though political in origin, design and for some of us in intent, studying women's and gender history is not asking them to transform their political beliefs or reject their religious or ethnic identities. Nor is it a programme of male-bashing.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the pieces in this special issue. Don't forget that you can join in the conversation too. Short posts that reflect on teaching women's and gender history are welcome for the Women's History Network blog. You can also share ideas through Twitter.

## Notes

1. I am grateful to Diana Maltz, Emma Vickers and Helen Glew for their comments to this piece. Samantha Caslin and Catherine Baker offered useful observations on Twitter.
2. A conference website can be found here: <https://genderpastpresent.wordpress.com/>. All presentations were

recorded and can be found on this site.

3. Their presentations can be found here: <https://genderpastpresent.wordpress.com/is-gender-relevant-conference-videos/>.
4. For a discussion of public history see Hilda Keane and Paul Martin eds, *The Public History Reader* (London, Routledge, 2014).
5. 'Subject Benchmark Statement: History', *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards* (Dec. 2014), [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2874#.VcCQvPmELQg](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2874#.VcCQvPmELQg) [accessed 4 Aug. 2015].
6. Elizabeth Bird, 'Women's studies and the Women's Movement in Britain: Origins and Evolution, 1970-2000', *Women's History Review*, 12/2 (2003), 266.
7. Lisa Downing, 'Identity Crisis for Women's Studies', *Time Higher Education*, 20 Jun. 2013, <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/identity-crisis-for-womens-studies/2004832.article> [accessed 4 Aug. 2015].
8. Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91/5 (1986), 1053-1075.
9. Elizabeth Reis, 'Teaching Transgender History, Identity, and Politics', *Radical History Review*, 44 (2004), 166.
10. Michel J. Boucher, 'Teaching "Trans Issues": An Intersectional and Systems-Based Approach', *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, 125 (2011), 68.
11. Stephen Whittle, 'Foreword' in Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle eds, *The Transgender Studies Reader*, (London, Routledge, 2006), pp.xiii-xiv.
12. Boucher, 'Teaching "Trans Issues"', 66-7.
13. Reis, 'Teaching Transgender History', 168.
14. Tom Batchelor, 'Universities are failing to tackle sexist and homophobic 'lad culture' says NUS', *The Independent*, 27 Jul. 2015.
15. 'Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education', A Report by the Royal Historical Society, Jan. 2015, 6.
16. Selina Todd, 'The Academics Tackling Everyday Sexism in University Life', *The Guardian*, 24 Feb. 2015, [www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/24/sexism-women-in-university-academics-feminism](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/24/sexism-women-in-university-academics-feminism) [accessed 4 Aug. 2015].
17. Benjamin Schmidt, 'Gender Language in Teaching Review', [benschmidt.org/profGender/#](http://benschmidt.org/profGender/#) [accessed 4 Aug. 2015].
18. Katherine Edwards, 'Gove's history curriculum needs to do more to teach equality', *The Guardian*, 29 Apr. 2013, [www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/apr/29/gove-history-curriculum-more-equality](http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/apr/29/gove-history-curriculum-more-equality) [accessed 4 Aug. 2015].
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## Moustaches, Mollies, and Muscularity: Teaching the History of Masculinity

Joanne Begiato

Joanne Begiato (Bailey) is a Professor in History at Oxford Brookes University. She specialises in the history of the family, household, marriage, and gender. Her publications include *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England 1660-1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003) and *Parenting in England 1760-1830: Emotions, Identity and Generation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012). She is currently working on two book projects: *Sex and the Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* with her co-author Professor William Gibson, and *Manly Matters in England 1756-1856* which uses material culture, materiality, and emotions to examine the concept of being manly and its impact on society, culture, and men.

Shell-shock, sailors' tears, boxing, beards, rugby, and working-men's muscled arms; what do they have in common? I use them all to teach the history of masculinity to undergraduate history students because they act as doorways into the embodied, emotional, and material aspects of masculine identities and constructions. In this short article, I discuss my experiences of delivering this module, its objectives, satisfactions, and challenges. It includes the comments of recent students who reflected on taking the module.

'Making Men: Masculinities in England 1700-1918' is a Level 6 module which I created in 2011 and has run three times since. Oxford Brookes students perceive it to be an unusual topic. Phil Duhamel explained: 'Personally I would say that I was drawn to the masculinity module because of the novelty of it'. Although less familiar to undergraduates, the history of masculinities is well established, so building a comprehensive reading list is fairly easy and of course lots of historical scholarship is suitable for investigating men's behaviour and activities, particularly that on war, empire, labour, and sport. However, in teaching I consistently find the lack of introductory works or text books on the history of masculinity, as opposed to its sociology, for students new to the issues somewhat restrictive. For this reason it is easier to run the module for final years who have more developed resource-finding skills since the material they need is often distributed across diverse books and articles to a degree far more fragmentary than usual. I also address this by spending more time identifying key works to read for each topic, though

supplying a lot of specific references risks de-incentivising students from searching out different sources. At the same time, students who are confident to explore widely and across boundaries into the history of art and literature produce interestingly individualised coursework.

Over the module's iterations, I have refined my objectives. I had three main aims when constructing the module's contents and delivery. Firstly, my primary aim was to span a long chronology so that students encounter a broad spectrum of sources that show the shifts in gender constructions and identities over time, and, crucially, bridge conventional periodisation. This remains one of the module's strengths and seems to work; according to Lizzie Clarkson: 'Throughout I gained a picture of how much has changed with the different notions of what society has constructed it means to be 'a man' or the opposite.'

Secondly, as Lizzie Clarkson's comment suggests, I wanted to help students who typically do not have theoretical or conceptual foundations in gender scholarship to understand that masculinity is socially and culturally constructed. In some senses this was quite difficult given the module's sole focus on masculinity. I fear I become repetitive by outlining the key frameworks like hegemonic masculinity, alterity, and the crisis of masculinity and 'applying' them across the content. Rather than overwhelm students with gender theory, I use themes to help students think about masculinity as mutable because for the most part they arrive certain that gender history is a separate category of historical study, not a tool of analysis which can be used to analyse everything, and that gender means women. Hannah Cooper, for instance, commented: 'When hearing that a History module is based on gender, I automatically assume that it will be about women's lives and experiences. It was therefore refreshing to take the module Making Men which focused exclusively on masculinities'. And for Lizzie Clarkson: 'Overall I thoroughly enjoyed the "Making Men" module. It gave me an insight into gender history from a different approach as it focused upon masculinity; the opposite approach of my assumption of gender history focusing on females.' However, I worry that I skew and undermine the module's potential for exploring gender by reacting to this assumption by excluding women and femininities from the lectures and assignment questions. Perhaps I retain enough



consideration of gender as relational too since Phil Duhamel reflected on his experiences of the module content: 'Mostly gender history seems to refer to female history, so to be able to explore how men identified themselves, of course involving contrast and comparison with women, was enjoyable.'

My third objective was to enable students to revisit, ideally destabilise, their existing historical knowledge in which men are often central though still surprisingly universalised and de-personalised and mainly differentiated from each other by class and race, rather than sex and gender. Using gender to inspire new perspectives on history, I have discovered, is far easier to do by challenging assumptions about men and masculinities through the lens of bodies, emotions and objects. Thus, I teach through themes including bodies, violence, war, domesticity, empire, work, sex, and damaged men in order to help students use masculinity to analyse differently areas that they might already be familiar with. In this way I hope to encourage them to think more critically about any event or issue by engaging very explicitly with its gender aspects. This helps students begin to recover 'great men' from the spotlight of their public lives and consider the cultural factors that made up their sense of selves. Indeed one of the innovations students find enjoyable is to think about men's subjectivities and interior lives. Phil Duhamel says: 'Whilst history as a field seems to be heavily skewed towards a male perspective, it does seem to be largely their actions and large scale issues rather than how they saw themselves. Being able to focus on the more personal issues which affected these men was something which I certainly appreciated!' Likewise, Lizzie Clarkson said she enjoyed: 'the strong focus upon individual families and stories through the use of primary sources to illustrate the attitudes and lived experiences'.

With each theme, I've found that the students respond much more enthusiastically if I get them to work closely on a specific aspect of masculinity that challenges their assumptions about men's behaviour and the expectations placed upon them today and in the past. I teach the module when 'Movember' is underway, for example, so I use beards and men's hair to get students to consider how ideas about manliness can change over time. We start with hipsters first to pick apart what this lifestyle represents in terms of being a man and we then trace how beards could construct a man as virile or valorous in one era, adventurous and rugged in another, but uncivilised or frighteningly radical in yet others. As Lizzie Clarkson says: 'We studied aspects that I would not have previously considered in relation to masculinity, such as the role of the male hair in representing masculinity throughout history and the connotations with the current re-emergence of facial hair in 2015.' I also use eighteenth-century men's wigs, pigtails, and hair to analyse their patriotic, political, and phallic associations encouraging students to expose the associations between national and masculine identity, a relationship that is too often unseen or essentialised. Similarly, we think about emotional regimes and how and men were allowed, even encouraged to cry, for example, without diminishing their masculinity, or were required to show anger only in the appropriate locations and times.

One of the most successful sessions for stimulating discussion is that on men whose bodies were damaged in some way, by illness, accident, or war. Early on I introduce the class to the importance of men's bodies to their identities. So we look at changing styles of bodily aesthetic from the slender

muscled eighteenth-century gentleman, to the more muscular, robust bodily style of the late Georgian boxer or sailor, through to the 'strongman' body-builder of muscular Christianity in the later Victorian era. Although this was a set of ideals, I think it helps the students get to grips with how masculinity was not simply an abstract identity or achieved status, but was something felt in the body and 'self'. Hannah Cooper reflected: 'Whilst it is well known amongst History students that men were expected to be the breadwinners of their families, it was extremely interesting to explore what happened when a man could not physically achieve this and the effect this had on his personal identity'. So, by the time we explore damaged bodies it becomes tragically clear how men's bodies needed to be whole, capable, and functioning in order for them to acquire and sustain manliness. Shellshock makes this especially apparent to the students, who are shaken when I show them the films made at The Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley near Southampton or at Seale Hayne Hospital in Devon about victims suffering war neuroses. In these films of nearly a century old they see moving (in both senses of the word) images of men's shattered bodies and minds. The films materialise the loss of masculine subjectivity when men's bodies let them down and prevented them from carrying out their 'functions' in society: working, protecting, and procreating. Phil Duhamel observes: 'Being able to examine how broken men were seen and how they saw themselves was a personal highlight. Whether through work accidents or war injuries - both physical and mental - the effects on the identities of the men were fascinating to examine'. Thus innovatively for many students, is that the module demonstrates the vulnerability of individual men as much as the power of collective masculinity.

Exposing the constructed nature of gender identities can still be contentious on occasions. Thus I deliberately teach the history of masculinity without an explicit feminist stance in order to offer the class a 'safer' environment in which to discuss these potentially divisive issues without people taking unnecessarily defensive positions. Each topic is designed to break down or question the artificial binary dichotomies and hierarchies of femininity/masculinity, male domination/female subordination, and heterosexuality/homosexuality. One way to really achieve this is to show them that many men failed to attain the upper reaches of hierarchies, but were themselves subordinate. Thus, for instance, students enjoy learning about early eighteenth-century mollies in European metropolises; men who dressed as women and met in rooms set aside in taverns or molly houses to have sex with each other. Mollies developed a homosexual subculture since they adopted particular rituals and vocabularies relating to their same-sex activities. When students compare representations of mollies with ideals of masculinity in the same era, they are able to see in action that masculine hierarchies worked against men as well as in their favour.

I've changed the delivery of the module across its three years. Partly because I want students to engage with shifts in styles of manliness, I increasingly use video clips during lectures. Often these are documentaries, humorous parodies, or adaptations of historical literature which I hope inspire the students to think how a society reads the past differently according to its present. It is easier to convey the allure of the redcoat, for example, by showing a regiment marching in *Barry Lyndon*, or Sergeant Troy's seduction of Bathsheba in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The students thought the Terence Stamp/

Julie Christie film version was hilarious in all its excruciatingly long drawn out glory on Maiden Castle with Troy pretending to gallop on an imaginary horse around Bathsheba and brandishing his phallic sword. The class consciously viewed a nineteenth-century trope of masculinity mediated through the eyes of the 1960s with twenty-first-century eyes and expectations. Similarly, by watching the imperial adventure boys' stories spoofed in a *Ripping Yarns* episode from the 1970s students can witness how ideals of manliness can go from aspirational to ridiculous in only a couple of generations and to think why this might be. Interestingly, Rudyard Kipling's *If* never fails to stir both female and male students and it is fascinating to get them to unpick why; revealing if nothing else how powerful manly ideals are when fuelled by and fuelling patriotism.

In the module's first two runs of seminars, I provided different weekly primary sources and asked students to work in groups to answer questions about what they reveal about masculinity. Inevitably, this got tedious and it was difficult to get historicised, contextualised answers to the materials with quite similar questions eliciting similar responses week after week. In the third run, therefore, I consulted with fellow #twitterstorians about more stimulating ways to deliver seminars and put several of their suggestions into practice. I don't honestly know yet if the approaches facilitated greater understanding, but they did encourage students to tackle the sources in different ways that were more likely to offer a picture of changing gender constructions rather than continuity. For instance, I asked the class to draw a storyboard documentary pitch for a history programme on the marvellous story of Fanny and Stella: two young men who dressed as women and sold sex to elite male lovers, and were put on trial in 1870 for masquerading in public in female dress, and then for conspiracy to commit sodomy. In some ways, this helped the students think about public and private with masculine sexual identities, but also the theatricality and performative nature of masculinities. I also enjoyed the results of students' writing a 'contemporary' 1860s newspaper review of Ford Madox Brown's painting 'Work', though perhaps primarily because it prompted me to pay more attention to the meaning of working-men's muscularity in my own research on manliness! Perhaps the most successful session was getting the students to each select their own source for the theme of military masculinities. Each brought something about soldiers, sailors, marines, or militia and talked to me and each other in groups about what it represented with regards to masculinity. We covered everything from same-sex activity in the navy, to women in uniform, to a certificate titled 'Maxims of His Majesty King George V' given to one student's great-grandfather's during his naval service in the early twentieth century. Its final maxim caused a lot of interest: 'If I am called upon to suffer, let it be like a well-bred beast that goes away to suffer in silence' and stimulated intersectional thinking.

The same student had also posted a photograph of this document on the (closed) Facebook group for the module. This was a feature I introduced the third time the module ran, as a way to keep in touch with the students who do not find email a particularly engaging way to communicate, to encourage ongoing conversation, and to post interesting online stories, events, and sources. Given that aspects of masculinity are consistently in the headlines, we shared stories from the humorous (hipsters wearing Christmas baubles in their

beards) to the serious (male mental health problems, high suicide rates, men's sperm quality in relation to birth defects). Using the Facebook group was tremendously rewarding and I'll run one with every Level 5 and 6 module. Perhaps there were fewer exchanges about masculinity than I'd hoped, since students don't necessarily like to risk saying something 'wrong', but there were some polite exchanges of information and thoughts about masculinities. The students were most active in posting the fascinating material they found while doing research. This was also a useful way for me to informally see what topics students really found interesting. For example, one male student answered a question on boxing and posted Joyce Carol Oates' quotation: 'Boxing is a celebration of the lost religion of masculinity all the more trenchant for its being lost' with the comment: 'This has been a surprisingly fun essay to write'.

One thing I still have not succeeded in improving over the three iterations of the module is its gender imbalance in recruitment. Far more female students sign up than male. Out of an average of 40-50 students per run, three-quarters were women. On the other hand, I am still rather pleased with this ratio, because when I have tried to run more general gender modules in the past I have had far less success in recruiting male students. Substituting 'masculinity' for gender in the title has aided this, though on reflection I realise I still need a 'sexier' title, so will revisit this next time it runs. Perhaps what is particularly rewarding in teaching this history of masculinity module is that when the students are enthused and confident they can write very imaginative coursework. Indeed, overall, students' results for the module are often a little higher than average, with a very good crop of firsts. It is as if by engaging the students' own sense of selves, they can produce very nuanced and thoughtful work.

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# **‘What is history? History is women following behind with the bucket’: Some reflections on teaching and learning women’s history.**

**Jennifer Davey with Emma Blackburne, Emily Hilder, Katherine Reynolds, Emily Souders and Sophie Wilson<sup>1</sup>**

Jennifer Davey is a Lecturer in Modern British History at the University of East Anglia. Her teaching and research focus on the histories of politics, diplomacy and women in Victorian Britain.

This article started life as a snatched conversation around my department’s photocopier. One of my colleagues asked me how we could get more male students interested in women’s history. It is a question I often get asked. I convene two popular women’s history modules, which do not recruit high numbers of male students. It is a pattern that is repeated elsewhere in the department: the one other explicitly women’s history module also struggles to recruit male students and anecdotal evidence suggests male engagement in seminars which have an explicit focus on gender and/or women (the two are often synonymous) is low. I think the question is an important one and with this in mind I asked my students what they thought. The conversations that ensued were thoughtful, considered and wide-ranging. We covered, among other things, the impact of ‘lad culture’ on campus, the debates within and around contemporary feminism, and curriculum design (who knew it was perfectly possible to teach a module on the Enlightenment without reference to women, as subjects, participants, victims or beneficiaries?) It was these conversations that have formed the basis of this article, and I have had help from some members of my third-year special subject (their names appear as co-authors).

First, some background (and some disclaimers): I am a lecturer in modern British history at the University of East Anglia (UEA), a post which I have held for three years. It is my first permanent academic post, and I was very lucky to be appointed just after I had finished my PhD. All of this is to say: I am very new to the ‘profession’, and I am sure this will be reflected in what follows. I am also very lucky to be working in a department which encourages new colleagues to convene new modules, and allows modules to run, within reason, regardless of recruitment (this is beginning to change, as a result from pressures elsewhere). Perhaps I have had freedoms that other colleagues working in other institutions have not.

My teaching is rooted in my research interests, and if pushed I would say I teach women’s history, not gender history (although, of course, gender is an important, and embedded, component of what I do). Since my appointment, I have designed two new undergraduate modules. The first is a second year module ‘From the Duchess of Devonshire to Nancy Astor: Women, Power and Politics’ and the second, is a third year special subject ‘We are not amused: The life and times of Queen Victoria’. The department has had a strong tradition of teaching the political and diplomatic history of modern Britain, and I have tried to reorient the syllabus to incorporate more women’s history. I also provide two lectures on ‘women’ for our first year survey courses: one on nineteenth-century suffrage movements and one on twentieth-century feminism.

In preparing to write this article, I asked my third-year students to reflect on some questions, which in turn informed the conversations I then had with them throughout the year about the purpose and place of women’s history. These questions were quite broad: why did you take women’s history modules? Why do you think learning about women’s history is important? Do you think women’s history should be taught as distinct modules? Is/was learning women’s history a feminist act? What follows is an account of these students’ answers, my thoughts, and the observations that others have passed onto me. For some, I suspect what follows is not new. But, while repetitious, might it not be useful for these problems to be continually identified, discussed and challenged?

One of the most striking features of my students’ responses was their frustration at the lack of women’s history taught as part of the GCSE or A Level curriculum. None of them could remember being explicitly taught any women’s history. Many of them noted that their history lessons at school had ‘barely touched upon women’, following what they viewed as ‘very male-centric topics’. Here, the curriculum design for Revolutionary Russia and Nazi Germany seemed to be particular bugbears. Some noted that they had not really ‘noticed the absence of women in...history lessons at school’ until they came to university, but looking back felt women only occasionally made an appearance, and then only ‘as a sort of sideshow (such as Kinder, Küche, Kirche, Women’s Land Army and flapper girls)’. That women were somehow marginal to the history of modern Europe was a pervasive motif. They all had a sense that the politics, economics and diplomacy that had so marked the past was male and important, while the women were there as an addition. This feeling is, of course, centuries old. As Virginia Woolf noted, ‘This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing-room’.<sup>2</sup>

For some of my students, it was not just that lack of representation of women in the school curriculum, but the way it was treated that caused resentment. One of my students, who went to a ‘self-proclaimed liberal and progressive school’ was told by her history teacher that she must not ‘become one of those women who is obsessed with women!’ In one form or another, many of my students felt their experiences of the GCSE and A Level curriculum enforced the idea that women’s history was either insignificant or an irritating (and sometimes amusing) sideshow.

It was these frustrations that led most of my students to actively seek out women’s history once they got to university. For some this was done out of ‘curiosity’ and a desire to study something new, others felt like it was an individual act of ‘feminism’. Despite these impulses, there was a sense there was no easy path to pursuing women’s history at degree level. Often ‘women’ as subjects, participants, and actors in the past had to be explored in coursework not the classroom. There was wide-

spread annoyance that in some modules there would be one week dedicated to women/gender. This design, regardless of intentions, can have the appearance of a tick-box exercise, and could leave some students with the feeling that it was the only seminar that addressed women as well as men. In part, this is, of course, the result of too little time and too much content. But, I do think there is a tension between the key events a course might cover and 'other' topics. Women as 'other' is a powerful trope and has a symbolism that spreads beyond the confines of a module curriculum. Arguing for more space for women also feels like a transgressive act – the sense that somehow women's history is taking away time that has been designated as 'male'. For my female students, the space that women's history has carved out as its own was a significant one. Many of them say to me that it is in these seminars that they first began to find confidence in contributing to seminar discussion. Yet, they felt that male engagement for these seminars was, at best, low.

There was a sense that the 'one-week-on-women' approach suggested to male students that women's history did not affect either past male experience or how men understand the past. Others went further with this idea, arguing that confining the discussion of women to one week had the unfortunate implication that 'women were affected by historical events but did not cause them themselves'. This was a common feeling among my second year students in particular. They loved the lectures on women's history because those members of faculty who spoke put women back into history. They also observed that women got more space on medieval and early modern modules, and wondered if this was perhaps something to do with the differing amounts of surviving source material.

Here, there was one moment that seemed to crystallise the tensions in teaching women's history at UEA. Every year, on a first year module about twentieth-century Europe, I give a lecture on 'Feminisms'. Every year, I have had the same reaction – most students love it. It is widely praised and I hear reports of strong student engagement in the seminars. I say this not to boast, but because there is another side, which I find difficult. There is always a concentration of students who don't like the lecture, who complain and moan. It is the only lecture I give where I am aware there is some reluctance to engage. My students think this has much to do with the specific campus and wider social context in which this lecture takes place. While some sections of our student population are quite comfortable with contemporary feminism (the debates it provokes and the questions it raises), others are more uncomfortable. These feelings are often articulated in or around conversations about the student feminist society. UEA has a vibrant Feminist Society which pursues campaigns which can provoke lively, and sometimes polarized, debate (it is my understanding that the campaign to ban Robin Thicke's *Blurred Lines* has left particularly deep scars.) For some, feminists are thought to be 'hairy, angry, man-hating, sex-hating women – as if those are bad things'.<sup>3</sup> But, I think some of these perceptions bleed into the classroom and colour how students respond to women's history.

For me, the link between feminism and teaching women's history is self-evident. Giving women a space in the historical narrative, listening to their voices, and trying to understand their experiences is a feminist act. Some of my students also saw this connection: 'individually I sought to reinstate the narrative of women in subjects where I could

not understand why their voices were not heard'. Others pointed out that the lack of women's history on the national curriculum made choosing to do women's history feel like an act of feminism. While the relationship between feminism and women's history might be self-evident to some (and I suspect for a large number of readers), some of my students felt the connection was more conflicted. They wondered where the teaching of women's history as separate topics/modules fitted into the wider objectives of the feminist movement, not least that men and women should be equal. Why, some wondered, was it so hard to consider men and women together?

The feminist nature of my teaching goes a little a further than exploring past female experience. My female students tell me it is important to them that me and my female colleagues are in post – that there are female 'experts' in the department, and that it is ok as one of them put it to me 'to like nail varnish, football and nineteenth-century politics'. What then do I make of these conversations? Certainly, there are some challenges. I am not sure how I get more male students interested in women's history (if anyone reading this has ideas and wants to share them, please do email me!) But, I do think it is important that I try. It should not be possible for students to graduate with a History degree without spending some time considering female experience in the past. It is a battle but one worth fighting. My privilege also manifests itself in another way. I have a permanent job and institutional support. Those of us in post have a responsibility to ensure that modules are not just protected because they are popular but because they are necessary. It is easy to forget with all the pressures that come with contemporary life, that education can be a radical instrument. To my mind, teaching women's history is a moral responsibility and, however difficult, we must work to make sure that the significance of our teaching, like our research, is made clear to all.

## Notes

1. I would also like to thank all the students who took 'From the Duchess of Devonshire to Nancy Astor: Women, Power and Politics' and 'We are not amused: The Life and Times of Queen Victoria' this year.
2. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 56.
3. Roxane Gay, Confessions of a Bad Feminist, TED talk, Jun. 2015. [https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane\\_gay\\_confessions\\_of\\_a\\_bad\\_feminist?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane_gay_confessions_of_a_bad_feminist?language=en)



# Student Experiences of being taught Women's and Gender History: Gendering our Historical Past

Amanda Markwell

Amanda Markwell returned to full-time education as a mature student in her mid-thirties. She recently secured First Class Honours in History from University Campus Suffolk (UCS). She was drawn to this degree course partly because of its gender history modules. Her interest in gender history stems from growing up as a lesbian, with gender history as sometimes the only way to uncover lives hidden from mainstream history.

Like many, I believe that studying the past helps us to understand the present world and for me studying gender history is possibly one of the best ways to do this. After all, history is about people, and concepts of gender and sexuality intersect into all aspects of people's lives; sometimes without them even knowing! Studying gender has in many ways opened up the world for me. I have always been interested in women's history, but before university I had never really thought about the idea of constructed identities. Using gender as a lens through which to view the world has helped me to understand my place in it in deeper ways. It has given me an understanding of how people have used constructions of masculinity and femininity to move through the world and its societies, in ways that either kept them safe or as is more likely, made them targets. This has, for me, been one of the many joys of studying this subject at university.

Although the UCS degree course offers two specific gender modules, the teaching of gender history is sprinkled throughout many of the other modules on offer. It appears that over the last twenty years or so, gender has been perceived as revolutionary to the study of many forms of history. However, I suspect this view depends on who was teaching. I imagine many would not be surprised that the modules with the most gender history on offer on my course were taught by a woman and a gay man. The fact that gender history was recognised in non-specific modules was amazing for someone like me, as a budding gender historian. There is perhaps an idea that acknowledging the gendered aspects of other modules results in a brave new world of acceptance and challenging thinking. However this would not be borne out by my recent experiences.

Some of my cohort showed a lack of interest whenever gender arose. Indeed, some had real problems with understanding what a study of gender can add to our historical knowledge. This occasionally led to a lack of in-depth discussions that would have added to my experience and perhaps opened up the subject for others. This was not in any way due to the quality of the lecturing. My feeling was that having certain frames of reference and life experience resulted in some dismissing the relevance gender has. I think what was most disappointing about this was that those younger than me were not necessarily prepared to change their viewpoint or personal politics or even being open to having these things challenged. Many of my peers spent three years being taught history with somewhat of a gender twist. Sadly some still appear to view gender history just as a feminist subject that has no relevance to them. To be able to study gender history has been an incredible experience for me. Perhaps the challenge

for gender history is in questioning the ideals and widening the perspectives of those who, unlike me, have no prior interest in a subject that not only informs us about people who have lived before us but also about the times we currently live in.

## Student Views

### The Importance of Masculinity: Lucie Wade

Lucie Wade has recently completed her BA in History at Leeds Beckett University, for which she was awarded the Dean's Award for Outstanding Achievement in her degree. Lucie begins her MA in Social History in September, continuing her studies at Leeds Beckett. During her final year of study, Lucie explored the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and chose to focus especially on the links between masculinity and morality in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. In her MA studies, Lucie hopes to further her understanding of masculinity and morality, and is planning to focus especially on perceptions of masculinity and their effects on male beauty during the First World War.

When I reflected on my experiences of being taught gender history during my undergraduate degree, there was one module in particular which I found particularly informative. Titled 'Real Men? British Masculinities, 1850-1950', this third year module was my first experience of being taught something which focused exclusively on gender history. While the impact of gender, especially femininity, had often been discussed and referred to throughout my degree, this module explicitly engaged with masculinity as a concept, which was something entirely new for me. Despite the module's title, women were also considered. While the module had an explicit focus on masculinity during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, femininity was discussed regularly. Discussing masculinity and femininity alongside each other in this way gave me a greater understanding of gender history as a discipline and has encouraged me to focus more on gender history in my postgraduate studies.

My favourite thing about this module was that it challenged most of my preconceptions that I had initially held about masculinity, considering the concept of masculinity to be something rigid and unchangeable. Before taking this module, I had no idea what the concept of hegemonic masculinity or femininity was. I didn't know that there could be countertypes to masculinity and femininity and I had no idea that masculinity and femininity were themselves very fluid and changeable things. Not only did this module allow me to consider how masculinity had changed over the hundred year period studied, but also *why* it changed. This was something that I had never even considered before; the idea that societal changes and disturbances could impact on popular perceptions of both masculinity and femininity.

One of my assignments for this module was a 2500 word essay. I chose to write an essay on the male body and its relationship to masculinity. I discovered that different

body shapes came in and out of fashion from large, muscle-bound physiques to lean, toned, athletic figures. I read what was essentially a Victorian diet manual, demonstrating the importance of the physical body to a person's masculinity. I researched dire warnings against masturbation in young boys and girls, noting how mental strength was as important as physical strength in determining personal morality. I found out which sports were both masculine and morally sound, and realised that 'Scouting for boys', the manual provided to young scouts at the beginning of the movement, was essentially a guide on how to conform to the hegemonic masculinity of the day. It was one of my favourite assignments of my undergraduate degree. Even if I did get some funny looks in the library when searching terms such as 'autoeroticism' and 'consequences of masturbation'!

Prior to studying this module, whenever I thought of gender history as a discipline, I immediately thought of femininity. This module changed how I thought about gender history in general, and made me realise that, while the history of women is a big part of gender history, so is the history of men, and that the two should be considered in tandem with each other. As I mentioned earlier, this module has encouraged me to explore gender in my postgraduate studies, where I plan to research the relationships between masculinity, femininity and morality.

### **Embedding Gender: Natalie Hanley-Smith**

Natalie Hanley-Smith is a MA History student at the University of Northampton, where she also undertook her BA degree. She has a keen interest in gender and eighteenth-century history: her undergraduate dissertation examined how publications satirising the Worsley sex scandal were used to represent gender ideals and deviance, and her MA thesis investigates gender relations in two *ménages à trois*.

My experiences of being taught gender history have been very positive, as the subject has been taught enthusiastically by lecturers, several of whom identify themselves as historians of gender, women and/or masculinity. As it is a research field that many of the lecturers in the department are active in I have had the opportunity to see how historians of gender work in practice. I was also able to attend a conference on masculinity held at the university. Meeting and talking to visiting historians of gender and masculinity, and being able to hear papers about their recent and on-going research, and their discussions of any problems they were facing, was very encouraging and motivational for someone like me who aspires to have a career in this field.

I took several gender history modules as an undergraduate, but this year there were no modules running in the MA that focused specifically on gender. Despite this gender was discussed frequently. As postgraduate students we have seen how fundamental gender history is to social, political and cultural history. All of the three taught modules included a week where we looked at the main topic - be that consumption and the country house, the history of medicine, or the landed gentry of the nineteenth century - through the lens of gender history; made all the more exciting by the use of a variety of different sources and approaches. Often the approach has been cultural, and we have examined gender ideal stereotypes as they were represented in satirical prints, contemporary

ballads, and conduct and household management books, whilst considering how male and female audiences might read them differently. We have also examined ego documents to see how ideals shaped how men and women interacted with each other and constructed their own gender identities. We were also challenged to think of methods that would help us gain access to gender histories that were traditionally considered to be invisible. For example thinking about how to study the roles that women took in medical care and whether their experiences as patients might be different from those of men, considering their growing exclusion from the developing medical profession and their invisibility in the contemporary legal system.

The one area that has not been expanded on from the BA or covered in much depth in class is gender theory, or how gender history connects to the more interdisciplinary gender studies, which perhaps calls into question whether I have been taught to analyse gender on any more of an advanced level as a postgraduate than I was as an undergraduate. Despite this, I feel I have been well-equipped with the practical skills to do gender history. I have always been encouraged to consider the multiple interpretations of primary sources, and research and discussions about my own thesis have taught me that gender history is not a stagnant or simple narrative of subordinate females and dominant males.

### **Historicizing 'everyday sexism': Rebecca Lazarides**

Rebecca Lazarides is an English Literature and Modern History graduate. She graduated in 2014 from the University of Westminster and is due to start an MA in Medical History at the University of Warwick this September. Keen to pursue a PhD, her research interests include exploring the experience of imprisoned women with psychiatric disorders in the post-war era.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to explore gender history throughout my degree programme. However, my experience is best explored through the specially designed module, 'Women and the Women's Movement 1918-1970'. This was an incredibly rich module that explored the restructuring of society over 52 years. My experience was overwhelmingly positive; I had an outstanding lecturer and fascinating course content. One of the fundamental reasons I engaged so deeply with this module was because, in many ways, it transcended learning about history. From exploring how women claimed the right to control their lives through the vote, marriage laws and birth control, I began to reflect on my own experience as a woman in the twenty-first century. I was a university student in a cosmopolitan city. I read books written by intelligent and witty women, had access to contraception and was promised that I would be able to juggle full-time work and motherhood simultaneously, surely I had it all?

However, from examining the equal pay act, the marriage bar and the evolution of British society, I was forced to reconsider my belief of 'having it all'. Ultimately, women continue to be paid less, are still subject to unfair employment practices and sleepwalk into conformity through sexist media and advertising. Through praising twentieth century change, yet grimacing at contemporary continuities, studying gender history was pivotal in my development as a young woman; I

adopted the vigour and will to challenge everyday sexism. In contrast to some of my other modules, it became clear that my journey into women's history could not end once the module had finished.

Additionally, this module illustrated the gender imbalance of those engaging with women's history; our class was overwhelmingly female and at one point was dismissed by a male peer as "that feminist module". Although this remark was not necessarily meant to be derogatory, the combination of this and the absence of men in our class emphasised how a large proportion are disengaged from both women's history and feminism. Contrary to criticisms of the field, studying women's history is not about issuing blame, dividing the sexes or undermining the experience of men. The study is about exploring history through a gendered perspective, appreciating women's experiences and recognising both male and female efforts to secure an equal society.

As 'Women and the Women's Movement 1918-1970' taught me, historical writing can be used as a very powerful tool to initiate reflection; therefore, through increased research into gender history, we can raise some very important questions regarding women's place in contemporary British society. It is for this reason that I very much look forward to beginning my career as a gender historian!

### **Pushing History's Borders: James Owens**

James Owens is a twenty-four year old former student of Liverpool John Moores University who studied a History undergraduate course, taking a module in gender history in his second year. He went on to frame his third year module choices and dissertation topic around gender history and specifically the ideas of gender in Victorian England.

I was immediately drawn to taking Lucie's [Lucinda Matthews-Jones] nineteenth-century gender history module in my second year because it seemed like an entirely new and innovative topic to study. The chance to examine and understand the rapidly evolving place of gender and sexual identity not only seemed to me to be a challenging one, but also one that was worthy of further investigation. The ideas and concepts of this module went on to assist me in choosing the third-year module 'Victorian Cities' and ultimately framed my dissertation, which focused on shifting gender roles and male homosexual experiences in the Victorian city.

My experience of being taught gender history significantly helped broaden the scope of topics that were offered in the history degree. It provided a fascinating alternative to topics such as the World Wars and the Russian Revolution, which I already had some familiarity with. Namely, I wanted to experience a side of history which helped understand people's experiences, whether through the brand new spaces of the city or through the distinct gender roles of the home. This is not to suggest that this alienated the other topics that I studied. Rather I was able to tie together many of the aspects taught in my gender history module to other topics. Studying gender history also provided me with the ability to understand voices of history which have largely been ignored or incorrectly portrayed by traditional historical ideas. The ability to delve into important social constructs, highlighting the day to day interactions and ideas that framed the population (instead of specific dates and events) was always an incredibly enticing

aspect of history for me, and studying gender history allowed me to understand this and form views and opinions based on personal memories and experiences. There were, however, some difficulties and limitations. Most visibly would be the lack of historiography (notably on men's gendered experiences) and primary sources available. The beliefs and values of the period that I studied did not exactly encourage open and obvious proclamations of gender and sexual ideas. Having said that, it was the opportunity to further delve and develop some of the interesting sources that were written privately that created more exciting and varied sources in comparison to the ones provided by textbooks alone.

On a more personal level, I believe that the opportunity I was given as a male student to study gender history was extremely welcoming and one which should be actively encouraged. When I began my studies on the course I believed that I had a strong level of knowledge on certain aspects of gender history, namely the women's rights movement and traditional feminism. However, by studying gender history, with a focus on the nineteenth century, I was able to gain an insight into a period of history, and gender identities, which have been largely ignored. Moreover, as a gay man, this period was particularly interesting and attractive to me because it allowed me to understand the creation of a homosexual identity that has historically been aligned with deviancy. Further to this, as a male student who had largely been taught the history of great men and their public decision making, it was refreshing to be able to encounter a whole different type of history, which allowed for a more varied perspective and internal reflection in my own work and outlook on how I could study history.

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# Gender, feminist and women's history by 'any other name': the need to keep alive the radical traditions of Women's History

Maggie Andrews

Maggie Andrews is Professor of Cultural History at the University of Worcester. Her research and publications focus on war, remembrance, domesticity and feminism in twentieth-century Britain. Her most recent publications include *The Home Front: Images, Myths and Forgotten Experiences*, edited with Janis Lomas, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014) and *Femininity and Feminism: A Reader on Women and the Media since the 1900s*, jointly edited with Dr Sallie McNamara (Oxford: Routledge 2014). She has thirty years' experience of teaching, research, and management, in higher, further and adult education and a strong record of public engagement with archives, museums, the BBC and community groups.

In the late 1980s, as a postgraduate student, albeit one who had four children, I attended a History Workshop Conference. It was another era when conferences had a wonderfully ad hoc amateurism about them. Information was scrawled in marker pen on computer paper notices and stuck up with sellotape or blutack. It was before university conferences became a revenue stream. As I waited in a queue that wound up the stairs to where the lunch was being served I listened to a debate between the two women ahead of me. They were in the hallowed and seemingly unattainable position of having permanent jobs and discussing with some angst how to find places and spaces for women's history in their teaching. Thirty years later, the study of History in universities is a broader, looser hold-all for a diversity of approaches, skills, topics and analytical and methodological tools. Still, I rarely teach modules or courses which overtly refer to gender or women's history by name in their titles, and struggle to engage students with the obligatory week on 'gender' as part of wider introductions to methods, approaches or skills.

I do, however, have much more success in introducing gender more surreptitiously in modules on 'The Home Front in Britain', 'TV History' or 'Fantasy, Desire and Sexuality 1939-1989'. Indeed for many of us now working in social and cultural history, the inclusion of gender, feminist and women's history is intrinsic to what we teach and the vast majority of dissertations and undergraduate assessments I mark are what I would term women's or gender history.<sup>1</sup> Many students seem to find gender history provides a relevant, even necessary set of questions or approaches for interrogating the past along with issues such as class, sexuality, race and ethnicity. Similarly the general public flocks to consume popular women's history through, for example, Philippa Gregory novels, film biopics such as *Testament of Youth* (2015) and exhibitions and museum displays centred on the experiences of women in the past. Does this indicate that gender has become such a fundamental analytical tool for historians that it has entered the mainstream and there is no longer any need to fuss over it? Has the university become a hotbed of young feminists? I suspect not... it is all more contradictory and more complicated and I think worthy of some exploration.

The appeal of gender, feminist and women's history when called by 'any other name' I suspect is a consequence of

a number of overlapping factors. One being, perhaps, that it provides spaces in which the power and oppression, which so many continue to experience in the twenty-first century, can be openly discussed and interrogated. Such spaces are nurtured by those approaches to teaching that are the legacies of the origins of Women's History beyond the academy.<sup>2</sup> In popular history and in teaching there is also a 'hidden curriculum', the term used by P.W. Jackson to suggest that teachers in schools impart not merely knowledge but also values and attitudes.<sup>3</sup> This hidden curriculum builds a set of assumptions and expectations which students respond to and engage with because they perceive it to be the way towards educational success. Initial analysis around the concept assumed that its function was to support hierarchical and reactionary values.<sup>4</sup> Yet there is scope for a more radical hidden curriculum. Feminists teach assuming that gender is a significant analytical tool, that women are an important focus in history framed by their own feminist research. This may be what students respond to and indeed feel at home with.

I believe that as teachers we should seek to influence not merely student's practice of history but also develop in them a critical approach to all values, knowledge and truth claims they will encounter in later life. History, as Alan Booth argues, is a subject with scope, 'a particularly effective vehicle for the engagement with self and otherness that is at the core of higher education'. Good teaching, he goes on to argue, relies upon passion and purpose.<sup>5</sup> Arguably this passion should be demonstrated in formal teaching but it should also be revealed in our research and publications, public engagement work and the opportunities that students can gain from, for example, Women's History Network conferences being organized on their campuses. Passion, however, does not necessarily sit easily with the ideas of historians as rational, objective, and tolerant. David Knowles argues that: 'the historian is not a judge, still less a hanging judge'. He goes on to state: 'The task of history is not to adjudicate the crimes of the past, but to understand and make sense of them'.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps it is by inviting them to judge, to consider the morality of the past and by association the present, we can really engage students.

For those who teach gender, women's and feminist history, history is always too political and too important for neutrality. As those who set up the History Workshop movement showed us, studying history is significant because narratives of the past can be used to justify actions and inactions in the present. Selective narratives of the past legitimate 'common sense' assumptions about how society should be organized in the present. The past can be used to legitimate the exercise of power in a number of areas, particularly gender. How often is a woolly, inaccurate nostalgic version of the past used to justify as 'natural' women's roles in contemporary society? But the past can also be used to challenge and dislodge what appears to be natural in the present. Indeed the origins of women's history in Britain, which lie beyond the academy, eschewed ideas of neutrality and objectivity and were very much part of the later twentieth-century women's movement.

The traditions of women's history in Britain can be



traced to Workers Education Association classes that ran with crèches, day schools and adult education courses, which took place in community centres in the 1980s and 1990s. Here studying history was not merely about an attempt to make sense of the past but rather about making sense of, interrogating and challenging the present. The purpose of many early women's history courses was education in the widest sense: empowerment, self-fulfilment, personal development and enjoyment. The courses were about the student as much as the subject or the content. The radical aims of teaching women's history also shaped the teaching strategies employed to engage those who had been alienated by previous learning experiences. Tutors mentored, nurtured and supported, the focus was on discussion, disclosure and guiding.

This was not a teaching environment in which tutors 'strutted their stuff' but where hierarchies were flipped and all assumptions questioned. The identification of such practices in contemporary teaching may also explain the adoption of gender, feminist or women's history by some contemporary students who also need to be nurtured. Arguably all need a safe environment to be able to scrutinize and disrupt traditional hierarchies of knowledge and navigate a way through multiple, conflicting and troubling narratives of the past. Mentoring and nurturing learners, as opposed to teaching them or imparting knowledge, cannot be restricted to formal learning times in lecture, seminar and workshops. Education does not stop with the timetabled sessions, for it is often the informal learning of numerous electronic and face-to-face interactions, which stimulate deeper learning. This time consuming caring along with numerous administrative roles, quality procedures, mundane and routine tasks make up the housekeeping of the contemporary workplace. It is often gendered and low status but like housework in the home it is absolutely key for vulnerable young adults to develop and should receive more recognition.

In recent years, the increasing number of archival resources that are readily accessible, often online, have facilitated a more student-centred approach to teaching history. Assessments can be organized to encourage students to undertake their own research using digitalized local newspapers, online collections of memories and posters, films, oral histories and family letters and diaries. Primary sources lie at the heart of turning students into researchers, giving them a voice, developing their self-esteem. But arguably there are limits for those teaching women's, gender and feminist history. As Cassandra West's interview with an American feminist academic explained in sisterly fashion:

her major goal is to help students find their own voice. 'I like to see my students as co-thinkers. I like to empower my students to think of themselves as thinkers and contributors, as opposed to vessels that are waiting for me to pour out knowledge into them'.<sup>7</sup>

There are, however, limits on the voices that many teaching in the radical traditions of women's history are prepared for our students to find; I know that I do not wish to be a co-thinker with a fascist or a racist. Hence the hidden curriculum may become perhaps less hidden as particular student voices are actively encouraged. Whilst students are not vessels for knowledge to be poured into, certain views should be determinedly challenged; tutors do cajole and dissuade, try to

move students in particular directions as they are 'grappling with analysis and argument'.<sup>8</sup> Personally I encourage students towards questions framed by particular, moral perspectives, to make judgments others might see as political. Without making judgments and considering morality, much history slips into a voyeuristic form of black tourism.

Personal sources and individual histories lie at the heart of encouraging students to engage in making moral judgments. The personalizing of the past in academic and popular histories makes gender come alive; encouraging students to explore and interrogate how an individual's experiences relate to structures of power. In formal and informal spaces of learning there is scope to stimulate questions about how class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion or the specificity of location shape individuals' lives. How and to what extent can an individual exert agency, how do they reject, negotiate or make meanings out of the structural factors which govern their lives. It is gender, feminist and women's histories' ability to put into the spotlight the complex interplay between individual actions and structural forces which I suspect chimes with both students' consciousness and that of the general public who consume women's history as a leisure pursuit, a pastime. Such resonances relate to a particular historical moment in the narratives of individual student's lives and narratives of a nation. Contemporary students are increasingly forced to question how much control they have over their future and to what extent forces beyond or within their control frame their lives. This becomes a more pressing issue, when graduation and the job market loom close. Let down by the Liberal Democrats' promise to abolish tuition fees, contemporary students have passed through a target driven education system and are liable to graduate with a high level of debt in an era of youth unemployment. A politically engaged women's and gender history can speak to young students who may feel distanced from, even antagonized by, contemporary politics.

My contribution to the discussion about teaching women's history on the stairs at the History Workshop Conference, nearly thirty years ago, was that writing, researching and teaching women's, feminist and gender history was a radical act, an act of subversion, of challenge and disruption to the status quo, which needed to remain subversive. In an era when women's experience is so very often on the sharp end of austerity politics, growing social divisions and deprivation, I want to suggest that perhaps we should remember our radical roots. Gender, feminist and women's history must continue to be used to challenge the status quo. Indeed when this is done, I would suggest, students begin to engage and enthuse over gender, women's and feminist history.

## Notes

1. Gender, Women's and Feminist History are different in their emphasis and approach but within the limited space of this article I am not going to explore in detail. For further engagement with the debate for example S. Morgan, *The Feminist History Reader*. (London, Routledge, 2006).
2. 'In conversation with the women's liberation movement: intergenerational histories of Second Wave Feminism', British Library, 12 Oct. 2013 *History Workshop Journal*, 77/1 (2014), 339-42.
3. P. W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms*. (New York, Teachers

- College Press, 1990); E. Margolis, *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education* (London, Routledge, 2001).
4. *ibid.*
  5. A. Booth, *History Teaching at its Best* (Ripplround Publishing, 2014), 55.
  6. P. Morgan, 'Morality and Slavery' *European Review*, 14/3

(2006), 393-9.

7. C. West, 'Fierce Feminists', *Diverse*. (2014) June 19.
8. P. Stearns, *Meaning over Memory: Recasting the Teaching of History and Culture* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

## Learning from Public Engagement: A History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland, 1855-1976

Andrea Thomson

Andrea Thomson is a Research Assistant on the 'History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland, 1855-1976' project and is based in Economic and Social History, at Glasgow University. Her research interests include gender history, oral history, gender relations and domestic abuse in nineteenth and twentieth-century Scotland. She and colleagues also working on the 'History of Working-Class Marriage' project have recently undertaken a series of highly successful public engagement events across Scotland, which she discusses here.

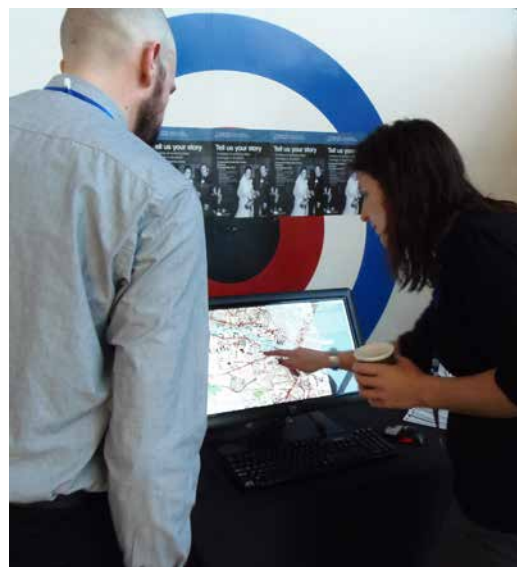
*A History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland, 1855-1976* is a major four-year research project, based at the University of Glasgow and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which explores the history of working-class courtship, marriage and marriage breakdown in Scotland during the period from the civil registration of Scots' marriages in 1855 to the introduction of no-fault divorce legislation in 1976. As part of this work, we have been committed to working with the public and sharing our research findings as widely as possible outside of academia. This both widens public participation and the diversity of the population represented in our research and makes history accessible to interested audiences beyond the academy. This is particularly pertinent within the context of gender history, and its roots in women's history, as a discipline

which aims to be inclusive and empowering to those often beyond established public discourses.

Through a series of project-related events and presentations held in a variety of public venues, including libraries, exhibitions, museums, town halls and community centres, we have met many Scots whose involvement in the further development of our work on the history of marriage has been critical. At the same time, we have learned much about the importance of our underpinning approach and methodology in taking forward public-based learning and teaching activities as gender historians. At its best, public engagement becomes a dynamic exchange of knowledge, information and historical understanding.

### Our Project

The *History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland, 1855-1976* project interrogates the popular understanding that the family has been a stable unit organised around a core nuclear or extended unit from the middle of the nineteenth century until after the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Within this narrative, multiple family forms are viewed as a recent development which can be attributed to the increase in divorce, remarriage, co-habitation and single parenthood since the late 1970s. Much related contemporary discussion has lacked sufficient,



*Our project-related events and presentations have been held in a variety of public venues across Scotland, including Glasgow Science Centre during the city's Explorathon event last September*



*Our visual display materials prompted many memories and much discussion with visitors at Aberdeen Maritime Museum and the Burns Monument Centre, Kilmarnock*

or indeed any, historical context or perspective.<sup>2</sup> The project looks at the historical structure and form of the working-class family in Scotland to consider the nature of pre-marital love and courtship, the relationship between husbands and wives and contemporary causes, consequences and patterns of marriage breakdown.

The range of source material drawn upon in this research is diverse, including census material, Poor Law and valuation records, love songs, ballads, Valentines, correspondence, lonely hearts adverts, popular press and magazines, and oral histories. We are especially keen to engage with individuals and communities throughout Scotland, to hear experiences and memories of marriage and family, and ideas about what themes should be central to a history of marriage in Scotland. By introducing our research aims and findings to a range of public audiences, we are establishing a two-way learning process. The importance of such links was underlined by the level of positive interest we received following an initial nationwide invitation to contribute photographs, letters and other related ephemera to the project.

### **Tell Us Your Story: Public History and the Learning Experience**

Under the banner of *Tell Us Your Story*, during August and September 2014, my project colleagues and I visited communities and locations across Scotland, including Blairgowrie (Perthshire), Kilmarnock (Ayrshire), Aberdeen, Portree (Isle of Skye), Dumfries, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The *Tell Us Your Story* 'headline' was both illustrative and catchy; at the same time it reflected our intention that every event should ideally constitute a learning experience not only for the attendees at each venue but also for ourselves. All the chosen locations focussed on the broader project's archival research, which featured in detail on our project website, including in the form of searchable databases and interactive census maps. The presentation of our historical data in these formats proved one of the most popular features of our website, with the use

of such IT design acting to maximise levels of visitor site-engagement and inspire interest in the surrounding contextual information and historical commentary provided.

Our census-based work illustrated that different Scottish regions often had distinct patterns of marriage and family form. Similarly, archival material illuminated local marriage traditions and regional patterns of mobility and employment. We also found that single parents and step-families were common in the earlier period, against a background of high levels of mortality, as well as migration and marital discord.

Our summer 2014 'pop-up' events drew on this archival research, oral history testimony and visual display in presenting our initial research findings in the form of 'mini-exhibitions'. Each event was carefully adapted to the particular venue chosen to feature the related history of the surrounding local and regional area. We found that where they had relevance to the surrounding region, illustrative case studies were of particular interest and provided a neat demonstration of just how historically revealing official sources such as local parish records can be. For example, in seeking parish relief in 1921, Mary Ann and Malcolm came to the attention of the parish in Govan (adjacent to Glasgow), a key geographical area of interest to our project. Malcolm was no longer able to work due to a spine injury caused by a tree falling on him when he was felling it. The couple had married in 1911, but Malcolm admitted to the parish that his marriage to Mary was bigamous: he stated that first wife Annie was still alive and that she too had since remarried although they had not divorced.<sup>3</sup> As we presented such 'stories', people who visited our events were encouraged to share their own family histories in ways that a standard oral history interview might not have elicited, or would not necessarily have been contained in official records.

Our public engagement events last summer allowed us to share ideas and discuss (as well as challenge) predominant historical discourses with people and groups outside the typical academic setting. We sought to engage individuals from across a range of demographically and geographically diverse Scots communities, including those situated in rural and urban



areas and both island and mainland locations. Interactive presentations were given at each event, again focusing on the local area and with many of those present welcoming the opportunity to share their own historical knowledge, memories and observations in an informal context. As well as introducing the key themes of the project, the various types of source material we use and some of our initial findings were explored. Our events had earlier been advertised through the use of strategically located project-branded posters, wide distribution of similarly project-focussed leaflets and via contact with a range of local history groups, as well as by way of local press and radio coverage.

Our use of visual display materials, in particular, proved a potent prompt for extended discussion and served to underline the significance of the 'family archive' of photographs, letters and other ephemera, both as a means of exploring and consolidating a sense of personal identity and as historical source material.

Visitors, who frequently attended in family or, more commonly, friendship groups, clearly felt encouraged by those items on display to discuss, for instance, their own wedding days. Our material acted as a prompt for them to reflect on what they themselves had worn, how they had felt and which particular reception guests and images took prominence in their own personal family albums. The display and discussion (during each presentation) of selected excerpts of anonymised oral history testimony, drawn from earlier project interviews, acted to create an interactive space that stimulated recollection. This seemed to make visitors more comfortable in sharing their own personal experience of courtship, love and marriage. For example, we used the words of Daphne, born in 1929; who recalled going out with her future husband in the 1940s:

... He was home on leave [from the navy], I know that. I think he says to me, *Would you like to go for a walk?* ... Then it was, *Would you like to go to the pictures?* You know what I mean. Cause I remember, we used to go all, way along [named] Road was the [named] Cinema. And you'd to queue in the pictures. Cause there was no television in those days, you'd to queue for the pictures. So if you were standing there with a serviceman, they used to come and take you out [of] the queue and take you in. You didn't have to wait in the queue. Mmm-hmm. Yes. Uh-huh, I remember that. And, oh, I was all so proud, with this sailor, you know ... He wasn't a Jack-Tar sailor, he was a, as you can see [from my wedding photo], he was a [pause], Petty Officer.

Our public history events breathed new life into our understanding of how intimate relationships and emotions were daily experienced, and transmitted a sense of value to visitors' own experiences. This permitted the transformation of our events into reciprocal learning spaces, where we were able not only to share our findings with the public, but where we as historical researchers also learned a huge amount. We would leave each event reinvigorated by attendees' enthusiasm and their willingness to engage with the project research, keen to immediately chat through suggestions relating to future directions for project research and our subsequent analysis. Our historical perspective was challenged and broadened,

particularly in relation to the inclusion of the vast and historically important Scottish diaspora, whilst informal interactions gave valuable clues as to the assumptions people might make about us personally.

The public engagement events themselves often became sites of extended discussion – not to mention considerable laughter – where friends responded at length to each other's photographs (having brought these along on the day) and stories, thus exploring their collective memory of key figures, events and patterns in their shared history. Over the course of our summer 2014 programme of public activities, the significance of regional difference, which had already become apparent during our preceding census and archival research, was reinforced: local courtship traditions, levels of community involvement and expectations of marriage are among key areas of note in this regard.

A couple of examples illustrate the value of our public engagement activities particularly well. Our visit to the Perthshire town of Blairgowrie revealed something of the personal lived experience of diversity in local family forms, working and social lives, which the census had suggested. This was reflected in the accounts that we heard there:

... I was the youngest of the nine children ... So my mother never really worked because her mother died when she was fifteen and she was just, eh, well, a housekeeper, with her father [after that] . . . [So] seven of my brothers and sisters were all born at [named] Street, Blairgowrie. Now I think there was probably only about a maximum of two bedrooms . . . And seemingly granddad had his own room – So, yes, that's what I was told: he had his own room so it must have been a crush. And I know my oldest brother, for one, actually had to sleep up in the attic space, because, while he studied – They were a highly intelligent family, so, em, my oldest two brothers went to [named] University. . . But they believed in educating boys, but not girls so much ... (Mrs M, b.1944)

Another woman in Blairgowrie recalled with obvious affection the efforts of her eldest sister in helping to secure her own access to more grown-up forms of local leisure as a young woman during the 1940s:

Even when I was a teenager, I remember my sister would be up – My oldest sister, she was in the army and, em, she came home on leave, and she was going to this dance. I didn't get to the dancing, you see, Father didn't think that they were just the done thing, Saturday night dances for me, you see. So, em, my sister said it, eh, *Would it be alright if [she] comes to the dance with me?* And he says, *As long as you have her home by twelve o'clock [laughs]!* (Mrs S, b.1937)

The wealth of material gleaned during these events was matched by our later oral history interviews. Visitors to each of our venues were invited to consider participating in a subsequent oral history interview as part of the project, an invitation readily taken up by many. Like the events themselves, these interviews gave those who participated the opportunity to recount and explore their own experiences of courtship, marriage and marriage breakdown in a supportive and affirming context.



## Learning from our Project

A perspective worthy of consideration in the course of this work, which we did not fully anticipate beforehand, relates to the practical and methodological aspects of practising public history. The ways in which public responses to our events differed, qualitatively and quantitatively, in smaller and larger, generally more urban Scottish communities quickly emerged as worthy of further exploration. The instances of group dynamics outlined above, wherein our events saw us interacting with existing friendship groups, merit equally detailed consideration. As historians of gender, we are keen to consider the overall gender balance of our event attendees and also their related levels of engagement and participation. Like many of the contributions in the first part of this collection, we are aware of the existing imbalance in recovering gendered experiences of courtship and marriage. Women appeared in the main more 'forthcoming' than men. The extent to which this reflects wider patterns of gender expectations, relations and behaviour with regard to the closely linked phenomena of courtship, love and marriage is just one potential avenue of analysis. As a side note, this also raises interesting questions about the gendered development of history. How might we make men more comfortable in revealing their personal, everyday experiences of courtship, marriage and family when high-profile historians like David Starkey suggest that women's history compares to a 'soap opera'?

Following on from our public engagement events last year, we are currently at the stage of reflecting on the oral history testimony and other material we have gathered in the course of the project. Whilst our initial set of public events and associated coverage was very successful in attracting some groups, we are conscious that we were less successful in reaching others, a point that we now seek to address and, as far as possible, remedy. To take the teaching of gender history beyond its traditional confines does not simply mean to locate it outside of the university, college or school setting but also to ensure the widest possible public access and local awareness, including in those areas that are all too often overlooked (for example, ostensibly because of geography). As a key component of the upcoming next phase of our public engagement activities, we will present our research findings and explore these reflectively with those who have already shared their thoughts and memories, re-visiting several of those locations we visited across Scotland last year. We also plan, as part of this next phase of public events, to reach out to those groups with whom we have not yet been able to make contact through public engagement activities, including those in BME communities, lone parents, and divorced or separated spouses (conscious of course that these are by no means mutually exclusive groups).

This reflects our commitment as gender historians to an understanding of public history as a process in which participation is made fully accessible, with particular consideration given to the inclusion of those groups and individuals who have previously been underrepresented in the historical record, and through which the sense of a project community is established. Central to this process are ongoing open lines of communication. To this end, all of those who express an interest in this work are able to 'opt in' to being kept informed of upcoming and future project-related interactive events, reports and publications. We also view our frequently

updated website and social media profile as a vital means of disseminating our work, as it develops, to an audience beyond academia and its traditional collaborators.

In accordance with our wider perspective on public history, the project researchers also continue to initiate and further develop existing links with related practitioners, including those based at *Glasgow Women's Library*, as well as working with *Scottish Women's Aid* and *Learning and Teaching Scotland*. We envisage that our findings will continue to inform public debate and policy discussion where the issues of parenting, marriage breakdown and domestic abuse (among other prominent concerns), remain under close scrutiny, and also that we will contribute significantly to the expansion of publically accessible library resources on marriage and marriage breakdown throughout Scotland.

With gender history having aimed since its very inception as a discipline to act in ways that are empowering and inclusive, we have taken forward our public engagement activities very much in this vein. By teaching and learning gender history in the public setting, with an emphasis on wide participation and on-going collaboration, those of us working on the *History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland, 1855-1976* project have become better equipped with regard to challenging, and thereafter destabilising and dismantling, older historical narratives. As our understanding of marriage and family in nineteenth and twentieth-century Scotland duly evolves, this work will also contribute to the creation of future resources to be utilised by academics, practitioners and all other interested parties, including those who seek to undertake related public history activities in the future.

## Notes

1. *A History of Working-Class Marriage, 1855-1976*, Project Website: 'The Project', [workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/](http://workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/)
2. Please see recent *History of Working-Class Marriage* blog posts, including, for example, 'Child Sexual Exploitation: An Historical Perspective', 27 Mar. 2015, 'Marriage, Family and Childhood Experience', 6 Nov. 2014, [workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/blog/](http://workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/blog/)
3. Glasgow Regional Archive, D-HEW, 17/230-17/338999:Govan Parish Combination, Applications for Relief, 1921, all parties' surnames removed in accordance with current Data Protection legislation

# **‘Teaching Women’s History’: Women’s History in the School Curriculum**

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Engaging with women’s history can be a transformative experience, offering students a way to understand women’s past experiences and reflect on their position today. Yet history education, across all levels, is often patchy when it comes to teaching the history of women, with the tendency to focus on one or two well-known, and usually elite, female historical figures. At school, we are often given brief accounts of the lives of a handful of women, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Florence Nightingale, for example, before returning to what is perceived to be the main event, a history which is inevitably male-focused in content. At university, there is often the stand-alone lecture and seminar on women within a module, or the obligatory ‘women question’ on the exam. The inclusion of women’s history in this way enforces tokenism and separation from the overarching historical narrative being presented. This extends way beyond undergraduate level, and in turn, those that research women’s experiences tend to be relegated to the margins of academia.

‘Teaching Women’s History’ was a 2014 Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project designed and carried out by Bridget Lockyer and Abigail Tazzyman, then PhD students at the University of York. The idea for the project came about during our time teaching first-year history undergraduates. Through conversations with our colleagues and discussions with our students, we reflected on some of the challenges of studying, teaching and researching women’s history. Our students’ encounters with women’s history had been similar to our own, and many felt frustrated with the way women lives and experiences had been portrayed. We started to think about whether women’s history could be perceived and taught differently. The reason why the ‘women lecture’ or the ‘women question’ exists is due to the work of countless historians who, since the 1970s, have been raising the profile of women’s history and inserting their experiences into the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Yet the dominant narrative that history concerns men and the consequences of men’s actions is so entrenched in the history curriculum that attempting the integration of women and women’s actions remains remarkably difficult. When we ask ‘what about the women?’ (or indeed other ‘minority’ groups) it can be regarded as a distraction, an awkward attempt at political correctness. If we did not have the sometimes clumsily placed lectures, seminars, lessons or questions on women there is a real danger that we would begin

to discount and fracture their experiences entirely. Our goal was to explore how women’s history could be moved from the periphery toward the centre, without reducing its coverage or undoing any of the significant gains already made.

First encounters with history usually take place at school, so we decided to start here, investigating how much women’s history is taught within secondary schools, how it is valued by students and teachers and whether any changes could be made. In 2013, this topic had particular relevance because of proposed changes to the history curriculum and the debates that surrounded them. The curriculum of Michael Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education, drafted and redrafted multiple times, had been accused of being too ‘old school’, Anglo-centric and celebrating the imperialist exploits of dead white men.<sup>2</sup> There had been particular furore over the exclusion of Mary Seacole, one of the only ethnic minority women to feature on the previous syllabus. The curriculum was watered down, and when it was rolled out in September 2014, was not as conservative as first proposed. The most significant change was the shift from a focus on developing pupils’ historical skills to them obtaining a fuller, more coherent historical knowledge. Previously, the curriculum advocated teaching history through central themes such as ‘power’ and ‘diversity’, whereas the new curriculum directs teachers to take a more obvious chronological approach. One of the key aims outlined in the new curriculum was for pupils to ‘know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world’.<sup>3</sup> Notably, women did not seem to be any better represented in the new curriculum than in its predecessor.

Our project had a further significance due to the 2013 campaign to have women represented on British banknotes, after it was announced that Elizabeth Fry’s image on the five pound note would be replaced by Churchill’s.<sup>4</sup> The campaign was successful and Jane Austen will be depicted on the £10 banknote in 2017. Yet the debate this campaign sparked and the subsequent barrage of online misogyny those campaigning received was telling. It led us to ask why it was important to have the achievements of women represented on our currency, what did it mean for women today and our place in history, and why was it so heavily contested?

## **School workshops**

The first stage of the Teaching Women’s History project involved delivering a series of workshops on aspects of women’s history to Year 12 students (ages 16 and 17, Key Stage 5) from three York schools: Huntington, Fulford and Bootham.<sup>5</sup> The series was made up of five sessions as an optional part of the students’ Personal Development Programme, delivered by ourselves and seven postgraduate student facilitators who developed workshops based on their own research specialisms.

The first session introduced the project and was focused on gauging the students' current knowledge of women's history, their experiences of being taught this history at school and their views on its role and importance. This was done through surveys, group discussion and analysis of the materials produced by the students during the workshop. Overall, their knowledge was largely in line with what we expected. The students obviously had some understanding of women's history, but this was focused around key individuals who were often presented as the exceptions. Most of the students recognised that women were less represented than men. Yet the reasons they gave for why this was the case were interesting and particularly thought-provoking for us as a team. This response from one of the students was fairly typical: 'It's not that people are purposely leaving women out, it's because big political events and stuff generally didn't have much to do with women because they weren't so important at that time'. This clearly highlights one of the key barriers to teaching and learning women's history. The students felt that, although it was true that women were less represented on the curriculum, this was not deliberate. For them, women in the past contributed little to society. Compared to men, they had not taken part in or even been present during big, 'world-changing' events, and this was because they lacked the opportunities to do so. The exclusion of women on the curriculum now was just a consequence of them being prevented from doing anything worthy of note in the past. From the student's perspective, we could not learn about a history which never existed in the first place.

On the whole there was an implication from the students that the curriculum emerged organically, merely reflecting the 'truth' about women's position and roles in the past. Just as Terry Haydn and Richard Harris found in their research, history was seen as a body of knowledge to be learnt rather than a form of knowledge crafted for a purpose.<sup>6</sup> There were also judgments on what counted as noteworthy and which parts of history warranted being taught in school. There was a general agreement that war, politics and science were the most significant. These were the things that had shaped society, and the students wanted to learn history that better enabled them to understand contemporary Britain. They felt that they should not be 'forced' to learn about women's history, when, as they argued, their contribution to the making of Britain, and the world, was so limited. Students' disengagement and dismissal of women's history was based on their perception of its irrelevance.

The subsequent workshops focused on specific themes and periods of history and were delivered by members of the project team on their areas of expertise. These sessions were designed to highlight the diversity of women's experience and roles in the past. The first specialist subject workshop was taught by Elizabeth Biggs and Jessica Knowles and focused on the lives of late medieval women. Representations of medieval women in popular culture such as the 2013 BBC TV series *The White Queen* and the 1968 film *Lion in Winter*, were compared to students' own ideas of what medieval women were like.<sup>7</sup> Starting with elite women, the witchcraft trial of Eleanor Cobham, the Duchess of Gloucester, named as the instigator in a treason plot against the Henry VI, was examined to demonstrate the political power medieval women could wield. Next, the range of jobs medieval women held was discussed which diverged from students' assumptions that women prior to the twentieth century were to be found only in the domestic

sphere. The element of the workshop students found most interesting was the life and relationships of Agnes Huntington, the main figure in a long running court case nicknamed the 'Romeo and Juliet of Stonegate'.<sup>8</sup> Agnes, a York woman, had married her first husband in the doorway of a house but later ended this marriage due to her husband's family's dislike of her. She later remarried, exchanging the vows stood in the window of her house with her groom in the garden below. Agnes's second husband proved to be violent and she left him to escape domestic abuse. Agnes's life and behaviour, demonstrated that women could have some choice in who they married, whether they stayed in that marriage and that there was the possibility for women to have agency and control over their own lives. It showed to the students that some women engaged with the legal system. In contrast to their preconceptions, this session illustrated that medieval women were not completely oppressed by a patriarchal society but could hold power, had diverse experiences and lives and were active participants in society. It also prompted students to raise the question why, when sources on the lives of medieval women do exist, such as court documents and wills, they are taught so little, if anything, about them?

The second specialist workshop, taught by Sibyl Adams and Gabriela Leddy, focused on two distinct periods of history, the sixteenth and seventeenth-century English witchcraft trials and British Muslim women and migration in the twentieth century. While these two topics may seem unconnected at first they worked together to show how stereotypes and misrepresentations are formed and their impact on women's lives. The students were given a series of pamphlets recording witchcraft trials. One document, depicting the confessions of accused witches in court, was from 1566 and is the earliest known English witchcraft pamphlet.<sup>9</sup> Using the pamphlets as a source, students identified that those accused of witchcraft were usually poor, older women who often led unconventional lives on the margins of society. This raised questions of whether witchcraft was a means of social control, for those women who did not fit the norm.

In the second half of this session the historical focus shifted into the twentieth century as pupils engaged with Muslim women's experiences of migration to Britain. The students were offered a history of Muslims in Britain, and the different reasons why Muslims have migrated to Britain over the last three hundred years. The session's key aim was to investigate how gender impacted on experiences of migration. To do this, the students read three narrative extracts, two contemporary, fictional pieces by Fadia Faqir and Leila Aboulela and one piece of travel writing by Atiya Fyzee from the Edwardian period.<sup>10</sup> After reflecting on these pieces pupils were then asked to create a storyboard on Muslim women's migration experience and were given some photos of migrants taken at a Bradford studio in the 1950s and 1960s for inspiration.<sup>11</sup> This task provoked poignant discussion, especially given recent representations of Muslim women in the media and popular culture.

Georgian women were the focus of the third specialist workshop, taught by Ruth Mather and Jessica Haldeman. Following an introduction to the Georgian period, the first task of this workshop asked students to discuss what they knew about Georgian Women. The students were shown a clip from the 2005 film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and were invited to comment on the way that Mrs Bennett and



*A group of students working on their storyboards.*

*Photo credit: Bridget Lockyer/  
Abigail Tazzyman*

her daughters are portrayed.<sup>12</sup> In the particular clip used, the students reported that women seemed frivolous, marriage-obsessed, and dependent on men. Next they looked at advice literature to assess what was expected of the 'ideal' Georgian woman.<sup>13</sup> Students had to guess whether the excerpts provided were from eighteenth-century didactic literature or a twenty-first-century blog on femininity.<sup>14</sup> This task helped them to understand the ideals of femininity in the Georgian period and went some way to eliminate the notion that gendered and sexist expectations are a thing of the past which women today are free from.

The second half of this session broke down the ideal image of Georgian womanhood and exposed the students to the realities of women's lives in this period. Four key areas, home life, education, religion and politics, were focused on and the social and legal restraints women faced in this period were weighed against the multiplicity of roles women undertook. Contrary to their expectations, students learnt of the considerable power women could hold within the home and employment and the participation of women of different social statuses in politics and religion. The facilitators used examples such as Mary Fletcher, Selina Countess of Huntingdon and Elizabeth Fry to illustrate the significant contribution and influence women had within religious revival and reform in this period. The view that women were not involved in politics until the suffrage movement was challenged. We discussed the political activities of elite individuals such as Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire, and the campaigns and protests which middle-class and working-class women were part of, such as the abolition of slavery campaign and the movement for parliamentary reform which culminated in the Peterloo Massacre. The volume and diversity of ways Georgian women broke the stereotype, whether this was through cross dressing or same-sex relationships, initiated a critical debate between students on why they were so unaware of women's activities in this era and how this ignorance had shaped their understanding of women's contribution to the history of Britain.

The final session's aim was to recap what we had learnt and to try and challenge some of the views expressed in the first session on the importance of women's history. To begin this session the students were asked to produce a poster of

what they had learnt over the course of the workshops. These posters revealed their engagement with the workshops, and highlighted the variety of things women had done and could do, the diversity of their experiences and the breadth of sources available. After this initial task, we re-examined the prevailing view from the first workshop: the general absence of women's history in the curriculum was not deliberate, but merely a reflection of women's minor role in history. Implicit in the initial consensus from students, that women had not contributed much to history because of the legal, political and educational restrictions they faced, was the assumption that all men had had the rights and power to engage in 'important' events. In order to address this assumption we gave them a quick quiz about the rights and status of men and women in Britain, focusing on access to education, enfranchisement and property ownership. This task was designed to tackle the perception that the lives and experiences of most women and most men were fundamentally different and demonstrated that, certainly in legal and economic terms; most men were also excluded from the political and social spheres until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The students appeared to respond well to this, recognising that women and men are not homogenous groups and that when we talk about 'important' figures in history; we are usually talking about a small group of very elite men.

The final activities of this workshop focused on collecting students' feedback. We asked them whether the project changed their minds about women's roles in history. The feedback from these questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive, with most of the students stating that the project had changed their minds about women's history. Below are some examples of their responses:

- Women's role was much larger than I thought.
- I thought they played a more passive role, they had more rights than I originally thought.
- I thought women were passive victims throughout history so seeing they did play



an active role was encouraging.

- I have become aware that women played a more political role than I thought.
- I found out a lot more about women that they are not explicitly recognised for in the curriculum.
- I thought before this that the reason women weren't really talked about was because nothing was really recorded about them because it was mainly men doing the recording, but having seen this and see how much has actually been recorded about women I find it quite surprising that we don't learn more about them.

We also asked them how women's history could be better integrated into the curriculum. The students had some diverse opinions but there was a general agreement that women's history should not be bolted on, and should instead be part of the mainstream, for example:

- More focus on individuals in Science and English etc. because you usually only hear about men
- It should be put in equally alongside men, it shouldn't be separate.
- Less focus on individuals, if you do that it kind of highlights the fact that they're women. You should do their effect on events where it's appropriate.
- If you're teaching about it just because they're women, you are reinforcing the separation from male history which isn't what you want to do, you want to integrate it together.
- You should focus on women throughout the whole of history not just specific things like the suffragettes.

It was clear that while the students still felt it was useful to learn about 'important' historical events, they were also interested and open to learning about the more ordinary aspects of people's lives. The final remark of one student was that she had 'learnt loads more about the daily lives of women throughout history'. We think this was the real strength of the workshops, which succeeded in showing both the bizarre and mundane, emphasising both the diversity of women's experiences as well as the commonalities.

We asked students to write short blog posts reflecting on their experiences of taking part in the project. This post was written by Katherine Holmes, then a Year 12 student at Huntington School:

The women's history project during our Personal Development Programme every week has been absolutely brilliant in opening our eyes to such a significant (but mainly unspoken) part of our country's (and the world's) history. Our perceptions on the role of women in history is primarily based on stereotypes and uneducated

inferences that women have been merely passive witnesses in the building of our current society, and it was only men who really made any impact. A lot of us aim to excuse this by relying on the idea that women had limited opportunity. However, the project has taught us that although this is partly true, women did a lot more than we first assumed. These false assumptions can be argued to be a result of how women are represented on the curriculum, with us knowing lots about influential kings, prime ministers, archbishops, male scientists and authors etc. but little about not only influential women as individuals (e.g. Mary Seacole, Marie Curie etc.), but of the gender as a whole. We were extremely surprised to learn of the Georgian political protesters, as the only thing we are taught about the role of women in politics is the movement of women's suffrage in the early 1900s, and even then this topic is separated and highlighted as an exception and is only about their fight for equality, not the influence they have had throughout history and how they helped shape society into what it is today.

We were very pleased to get this feedback from students, demonstrating the positive impact of the project. We also recognised that a five week course was not going to change everybody's minds, and it was clear that a minority of students were still ambivalent towards women's history. A short intervention like ours will never be enough to erode the marginal status of women's history, which is why we believe that it needs to be embedded into the whole curriculum.

It was always important to ensure that students' views were heard and brought to a wider audience and one way we did this was through social media. This included the blog, which featured workshops summaries, profiles on historical women and blog posts from students. It also included facilitators' reflections on developing and teaching the workshops, why they had taken part in the project in the first place and what they had learnt. For them, the project had been an opportunity to share their research with a new audience and they came away with fresh perspectives on their work, encouraged by the students' enthusiasm.<sup>15</sup> The blog was also great space to record our own experiences of organising and taking part in the project and showcase what we had achieved so far. We have a Twitter account ([@moving\\_b](#)), which we use to promote our project and regularly tweet about other women's history projects, research and teaching resources. This has been a really useful way of connecting with teachers, academics, museums and archives and disseminating our work further afield.

## Speaking to teachers

The second stage of the project involved interviewing history teachers from two of the schools we worked with (Huntington and Fulford). We approached these interviews delicately; we wanted to make it clear that we were not there to criticise what or how they taught, nor were we trying to tell teachers what to do. Our goal was to open up a dialogue about the way women's history is taught, and to keep these

conversations going. We began by asking teachers what they thought about women's history. They, somewhat inevitably given who was asking them, said that it was important and that there should be a greater focus on women's history within the curriculum. Yet this did seem to be a topic that many teachers were genuinely passionate about and those we spoke to were keen to talk about some of problems they faced integrating women's history into the curriculum.

The teachers discussed where and how women's history featured on the set curriculum. As a specific topic, women's history was largely absent in Key Stage 3, where history as a subject is compulsory, although in Year 9 students often studied the women's suffrage movement and the role of women during the First and Second World Wars. At GCSE, students were required to complete a substantial project on the changing nature of women's role in the twentieth century. At A-Level, women's history was once again missing from the curriculum. One teacher explained why this was, arguing that the focus on the political history of twentieth-century Britain and Europe meant that women's history was necessarily put on the backburner: 'I've just done the revision booklet for A-level, and it's just a booklet full of men. All the faces on the front are men, apart from Emmeline Pankhurst; she's the only woman, because it's 1906 to 1951, which is all male dominated'.

When discussing some of the challenges of including women's history, a different teacher commented on the difficult task of covering a large period of history within a limited amount of teaching time:

I suppose the very nature of squeezing in a 1000 years of history, in 2 lessons a week for 3 years, you inevitably cut it down and just by the availability of the material some of it tends to be quite male dominated, and can result in some projects being 90% white men if you're not careful.

Another teacher agreed:

I think we do as much as we can crowbar in really. Because the unfortunate fact is that men have been the people in charge for the last... millennia, so if you're learning about political

history the men are in charge...but whenever we can we try to cover the women's side of it

These responses from teachers highlighted some of the inherent problems in the curriculum and the way that many perceive women's history. The idea that teachers have to 'crowbar' in women's history was definitely something that our students had picked up on, and seemed to have caused them to be more ambivalent towards it. Similarly, the notion that when examining a certain type of history, such as political history, or a certain time period, women can be de facto excluded, is concerning. The suggestion here is that we can only study the history of those 'in charge'. Another issue with the curriculum as it stands is that it encourages students to think that only women in the very modern era (1900s onwards) have had any social, political or personal agency. By focusing on how transformative the twentieth century was for women, there is an implication that women had very few opportunities to 'make history' before. Presenting a narrative of women's progress in this way can be damaging, and does injustice to women's experiences and contributions outside of this period. It also gives credence to the view that equality between women and men has now been achieved.

In the interviews we asked the teachers whether or not the new curriculum meant that women's history would become more prominent. As we conducted these interviews in April 2014, just as history departments were beginning to think about the changes they were going to make, many said it was too early to tell. There was, however, some diversity in the teachers' opinions on how the new curriculum would affect the teaching of women's history. One teacher argued that the renewed focus on students' chronological knowledge rather than skills-learning gave teachers and students more space to explore a greater spread of history, including women's history. Another said the freedom given to schools within the new curriculum allowed teachers to shape what was taught, so women's history could get more coverage. In contrast, a third teacher argued that the shift from the thematic approach to a chronological one meant that women's history and other forms of history from below would come across as even more tokenistic to students. They noted that the thematic approach allowed teachers to discuss women's history in a more naturalistic way, through themes like 'protest' and



*The Teaching Women's History website where we have collated a range of resources to aid the teaching of women's history in schools.*

work', which was more effective. We were left with the distinct impression that it would largely be up to individual teachers and departments to choose the direction they would take, and if they chose, to use the new curriculum to integrate women's history more effectively. As one teacher said, 'there's nothing in the new curriculum which requires you to cover women's history, so you could choose not to'.

We were aware that the history teachers we spoke to were from two very good schools, and obviously recognise that the inclusion of women's history may not be a top priority at schools which face more challenges. The new curriculum does have its faults, and there is a real danger that the freedom it purports to offer might persuade teachers, already under pressure and without any additional resources, to stick to the status quo. Yet we found that history teachers were open to change, willing to engage with new topics and new angles and on the constant look out for new material. We hope that the flexibility of the new curriculum can be harnessed for good, and used to integrate women's history more effectively.

Following feedback from pupils, teachers and the City of York Council we decided that the most productive output of our project would be to create a website, [teachingwomenshistory.com](http://teachingwomenshistory.com), offering teaching resources and lesson packs on women's history. The website includes downloadable lesson plans and an extensive collection of links to further resources, useful websites and archives. Its purpose is to be an aid to teachers who want to include more women's history in their lessons, especially given the shortage of resources that many schools face. The website has been well-received by history teachers, many of whom have given us feedback at the events we have organised in conjunction as part the project. Teachers particularly liked the availability of lesson plans that they could adapt and use and the inclusion of primary sources. The website also contains some key recommendations for teaching women's history based on the findings of this project.

## Conclusion

The aim of 'Teaching Women's History' was to open up a discussion about how women's history is taught and perceived in schools and elsewhere. Women's history is not completely absent from the curriculum, but it remains on the margins and the way it is communicated is often problematic. Changing students' perceptions of women's history does not require another radical overhaul of the curriculum. Instead, small but significant changes can be made to the way women's history is presented in the classroom. We want to encourage teachers to teach women's history, not as something separate, but as something ordinary. We were able to start to change students' minds once it was presented differently and once they had access to more knowledge and resources, which is what our website helps to address. This project has demonstrated that at all levels of history teaching, we need to rethink what history we value and challenge what continues to be thought of and represented as significant. We need to fully embody women within the narrative.

## Notes

1. Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds its Past* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979); Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976);

Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against it* (London, Pluto Press, 1973).

2. Anna Claeys, 'Gove's Proposed History Curriculum Forgets That We Live in 2013, Not the 1950s', *Huffington Post*, 21 Feb. 2013 [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/anna-claeys/michael-gove-history-curriculum\_b\_2723655.html, accessed 27 May 2015]; Kevin Rawlinson, 'Don't Consign Mary Seacole to History, Michael Gove is Urged', *Independent*, 4 Jan. 2013 [www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/dont-consign-mary-seacole-to-history-michael-gove-is-urged-8439160.html [accessed 27 May 2015]; Katherine Edwards, 'Gove's History Curriculum Needs to do More to Teach Equality', *Guardian*, 29 Apr. 2013 [www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/apr/29/gove-history-curriculum-more-equality [accessed 27 May 2015].

3. Department of Education, *History Programmes of Study: Key Stage 3* (London, Department of Education, Sept. 2013), 3.

4. Zoe Williams, 'It's Boudicca v Bank of England in the Battle of the Banknotes', *Guardian*, 5 July 2013 [www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2013/jul/05/boudicca-bank-of-england-banknotes [accessed 28 May 2015].

5. Huntington and Fulford Schools are co-educational comprehensive secondary schools for pupils aged 11-18 and Bootham School is a co-educational independent school for pupils aged 5-18.

6. Terry Haydn and Richard Harris, 'Pupil Perspectives On The Purposes And Benefits Of Studying History In High School: A View From The UK', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 42/2 (2010), 241-261.

7. *The White Queen* (BBC, 2013); *The Lion in Winter* (Avco Embassy Pictures, 1968).

8. Frederik Pedersen, '"Romeo and Juliet of Stonegate": A Medieval Marriage in Crisis', *University of York Borthwick Paper*, 87 (1995).

9. John Philips, *The Examination and Confession of Certain Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex* (London, Willyam Powell, 1566). quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A09586.0001.001?p age=viewtextnote;rgn=full+text [accessed 29 May 2014].

10. Faqir, Fadia *My Name is Salma*, (London, Doubleday, 2007); Leila Aboulela, *Minaret: A Novel* (London, Bloomsbury, 2006); Sunil Sharma and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, eds, *Atiya's Journeys: A Muslim Woman from Colonial Bombay to Edwardian Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010).

11. Belle Vue Studio Photo Collection, *Bradford Museums and Galleries* [photos.bradfordmuseums.org/bradford-collections?WINID=1432903127800 [accessed 29 May 2015].

12. *Pride and Prejudice*, (Universal Pictures, 2005).

13. Jeremy Collier, *Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects, Vol 3* (London, 1705); Samuel Richardson, *Letters from Particular Friends, On the Most Important Occasions* (London, 1741).

14. Nina Pundarick-Dossin, '10 Steps to Becoming a Feminine Woman', *The Proper Lady*, 12 Jan 2013 [www.theproperlady.com/2013/01/10-steps-to-becoming-feminine-woman.html [accessed 29 March 2015].

15. Reflective pieces from all our facilitators can be found on our website [teachingwomenshistory.com](http://teachingwomenshistory.com).

# Gender in Undergraduate Textbooks on Early Modern History: Problems and Potential Solutions

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Historians first became interested in gender as an analytical concept in the 1980s, and historians working on early modern history were particularly keen to engage with this new trend.<sup>1</sup> Thirty years later it is commonplace to find university History departments offering modules such as 'The Family, Sex and Society in Early Modern England' at the University of Newcastle; 'Gender, Culture and Society, Britain 1689-1837' at the University of Sheffield; or 'Women and Gender in Early Modern England' at King's College London.<sup>2</sup> Yet depending on the university in question, such modules are for the most part optional, and tend to be offered to second and third year undergraduates, or on taught masters' programmes. Undergraduate students in the UK entering a History degree programme are unlikely to be offered the opportunity, let alone be forced to take a module devoted to gender history, but instead are exposed to the concept via introductory survey modules, covering a century or more of history at national, continental or world level, or via modules designed to provide them with an introduction to skills, sources or approaches to history. By definition such modules cover topics in minimal detail, but most would include at least, but probably not much more than one week on how gender shaped the lives of historical subjects, or why it is a useful category of historical analysis.

For the most part, my experience of first year teaching has been to teach survey modules on early modern European history, covering the period from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, often alongside other faculty members and sometimes with postgraduate and early career teaching assistants. Such modules have focused on different parts of Europe at different key moments, or have been thematic and comparative, covering social, economic, cultural, political and religious history. At this level reading is closely directed and the use of textbooks commonplace. During the last fifteen years three such works on early modern Europe have been produced, all of which have flaws for those seeking to introduce students to the study of gender. The first, *Early Modern Europe: an Oxford History*, edited by Euan Cameron and published in 2001, has no specific chapter on gender. The index contains a reference to 'gender, work division by', totalling less than two pages in which the reader is informed that labouring men in sixteenth-century Europe sowed, reaped and threshed grain, 'fetched wood ... made and repaired tools and farming

implements, mended shoes and wove' whilst women 'were largely responsible for childcare' and housewifery, as well as taking goods to market and working in the fields at harvest time, concluding with the important point that the labour of at least two adults was needed to keep a household functioning.<sup>3</sup> 'Women' as a topic gets twelve entries, spread over eighteen pages, of which sixteen focus on women's social and economic roles, one on women and religion, and one on the (lack of) impact on women of Napoleonic political reform.<sup>4</sup> In addition 'Women' as a category of historical analysis is subdivided into 'in the Enlightenment' (focusing on the reforms of Catherine II of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria); 'female piety' (three pages, one of which is an image of the abbess of Port-Royal, the rest of which discusses the impact of the Reformation on familial and gender relations, as well as the nature of women's piety); 'female religious orders' (two pages, one of which overlaps with the former sub-category); 'status in craft guilds' (two pages, discussing the role of women and men in urban manufacturing, as well as the fraternal nature of the guild system); and 'in witch hunts' (less than a page, devoted to debunking the simplistic equation of witch-hunting with women-hating).<sup>5</sup> There is no equivalent entry for 'men', nor an entry for 'masculinity'.

The second, *Early Modern Europe 1450-1789* by Merry Wiesner-Hanks, first published in 2006 and updated in 2013, also lacks a specific chapter on gender, but there are five references spread over six pages to 'gender, ideas about' which touch on the relationship between social rank, race and gender, humoral theory, sexuality and witchcraft.<sup>6</sup> The topic is also subdivided by period: 'Enlightenment', which warrants four pages, as well as 'Reformation' and 'Renaissance', which have a page each.<sup>7</sup> In addition there are twenty-six references spread over thirty one pages to 'gender differences', subdivided by theme: four pages on 'in the arts' (discussing musicians and painters); three pages on 'in education' (discussing the humanist curriculum, the impact of the Reformation, and literacy rates); two pages on 'in families' (discussing widowhood and reform of marriage practices by Peter I of Russia); seven pages on 'in law' (discussing citizenship, payment of rents and taxes, the body politic, inheritance customs, property ownership, the franchise, witchcraft, and the legality of interracial marriage); eight pages on 'in religion' (on Jewish and Islamic rituals, Catholic education and missionary initiatives, and gender issues in spiritualist and pietist groups), and seven pages on 'in work' (examining agricultural labour, mining, textile production and proto-industrialisation).<sup>8</sup> 'Women' as a category is not indexed, but 'Masculinity' has an entry, directing the reader to four pages offering discussions of how 'guilds created norms of masculinity'; the rites of passage which boys went through to enter adult manhood; the subcultures of journeymen; and the metaphor of the body politic.<sup>9</sup>

Finally *The European World 1500-1800* edited by Beat Kümin, first published in 2009 and updated in 2014, has an eleven page chapter on 'Gender and Family', divided into



subsections on 'Gender', 'Gender and education', 'Work', 'The public sphere', 'The family', and 'Continuity and change'.<sup>10</sup> 'Gender' is referenced in the index, and disregarding those entries which simply direct the reader to the 'Gender and family' chapter, is mentioned on thirty-one pages. The reader who follows up these references would learn that 'gender studies have readjusted perspectives towards a fuller recognition of the contribution and experience of both sexes' as well as being informed about the role of women as scientific researchers, patrons of scientists, and matrons of scientific households, and about women's engagement with popular culture.<sup>11</sup> 'Gender' as an indexed category is also subdivided into 'divorce'; 'marriage'; 'public sphere'; 'work' (all of which simply lead the reader back to the 'Gender and Family' chapter); 'education and' (which discusses the impact of the Enlightenment on women); 'men' (which discusses the post-Tridentine religious orders and men's political agency); and 'women' (which discusses women's engagement with urban politics, prostitution and sexual deviancy, women who married men in disreputable trades, nuns, female artists and artistic patrons, gendered literacy rates and women's involvement in print culture, women as witches and rioters, women's involvement in salon culture and the French Revolution, and the perpetuation of the sexual double standard).<sup>12</sup> Having tracked down all this material the enthusiastic reader might follow the directions to entries on 'family', 'guilds', 'patriarchy', 'sexuality', and 'witchcraft', and if she or he looked up 'Women' would be redirected to 'Gender'. There is no entry on 'Masculinity'.

Relying primarily on an index is, of course, not a fool-proof method of obtaining everything that is relevant on a specific topic from a book, but turning to the back pages for guidance is certainly a useful way of getting directly to material which authors regard as related to a specific subject.<sup>13</sup> Using this methodology to analyse the extent to which students being introduced to early modern history would learn about ideas and practices of gender yields results which show both progress in the last twenty years. That gender barely features at all in the collection edited by Cameron is striking, whilst the discussion of women is confined mainly to the chapters on social and economic history, with some scattered references to women and religion, but barely anything on women and intellectual or political history. The book by Wiesner-Hanks is better in that it touches on a wider range of issues beyond the socio-economic and religious, with significant material on how gender shaped and was shaped by ideas about race, medicine, the body, and non-Christian religious beliefs. The references to gender and the law are particularly welcome, but gender and politics still remains absent (despite the fact that some of the material on law and the body is inherently political). The collection edited by Kümin is in some ways offers the best starting point for the student aspiring to learn about early modern gender history since there is a self-contained chapter on the subject which makes some attempt to think about gender and politics through its discussion of the public sphere, a topic also returned to in discussions of urban politics and rioting, as well as the Enlightenment and French Revolution.

Yet this survey or surveys suggests that there remains room for improvement in how gender is integrated into first year undergraduate teaching. First of these is the issue of gender and politics. Essentially absent from the textbook published at the turn of the millennium, there are more references to the topic in the revised editions of the works published since 2010,

but politics continues to figure less prominently than matters relating to socio-economic and cultural history. Recently Anna Becker bemoaned the lack of attention paid to gender by historians of early modern political thought in the 2015 Balkan-Skinner lecture, and as the medievalist and feminist historian Judith Bennett has noted, the inability of historians of women and gender to engage and challenge the grand political narratives of European history remains a problem.<sup>14</sup> Bennett ran into difficulties when faced with the challenge of updating a textbook on medieval Europe since the publishers would not allow her to offer an alternative narrative, yet wanted more social, and especially women's history to be included. Her solution, which Bennett was only partly happy with, was to 'add women and stir', increasing the number of queens, empresses and duchesses into the traditional narrative, including nuns as well as monks in the discussion of the religious orders, and editing the text to ensure the language was gender-neutral.<sup>15</sup>

It is not merely the absence of sustained discussion of gender and politics which is striking in recent textbooks, but also the almost complete absence of explicit engagement with one of the most dynamic subfields of gender history, namely the scholarship on masculinity. Yet integrating these findings into textbooks histories involves more than merely 'adding men and stirring'; history already has plenty of men, but prior to the 1990s few historians thought about them as gendered subjects, and it appears that undergraduate students are not being encouraged to think of men, as well as women, as being 'carriers' of gender.<sup>16</sup> The situation is no better if attention shifts to textbooks purporting to be about gender, many of which also lack sustained analysis of masculinity: *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* by Merry Wiesner-Hanks, the third edition of which was published in 2008, lists 'masculinity' in the index, but draws the attention of the reader to a mere four entries spread over nine pages in a book of over three hundred pages, although it is interesting to note that the longest discussion of the topic occurs in the chapter on 'Gender and Power'.<sup>17</sup> 'Masculinity' is also indexed in the recent *Ashgate Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* edited by Allyson Poska, Jane Councman, and Katherine A McIver, and the topic is subdivided into 'and anxiety', 'definition', 'and dress', 'and duelling', 'early modern', 'and marriage', 'medieval', 'and old age', 'and patriarchy; and 'research', but the reader is directed to a mere seven pages on which these issues are discussed.<sup>18</sup> As a whole the collection focuses primarily on women's mentalities and experiences, rather than discussing differences, similarities and relations between the sexes, and thus the authors missed an opportunity to introduce students to the latest findings on the history of masculinity.

The overall findings of this survey of textbooks on early modern history, and on women and gender in early modern Europe are twofold. Firstly, there is a vital need for such works to emphasise the political agency of women at all levels of society, and of how gender shaped political ideas, policies and trajectories between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Secondly, the recent but rapidly developing historiography on masculinity needs to be integrated more fully into surveys of early modern gender, which too often provide rich studies of women's lives and ideas about women, but which offer insufficient coverage of men as gendered subjects and citizens. Sustained engagement with politics remains one of the major gaps in the history of masculinity in early modern England, particularly for the decades between 1660 and 1689, but if

historians of politics start to consider the men they study as carriers of gender, then future textbooks on early modern Europe will not merely have a few indexed entries on gender, but will be works in which gender as a category of historical analysis explains the social, economic, cultural and political relevance of the period as a whole.

## Notes

1. J. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1053-75 is regarded as a major catalyst, but for early modern England see S. Amussen, 'Gender, family and the social order, 1560-1725' and D. Underdown, 'The taming of the scold: the enforcement of patriarchal authority in early modern England', both in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson eds, *Order and disorder in early modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985).
2. According to the respective websites, these modules were being offered to students in the 2015-16 academic year: [www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/modules/module/HIS2123](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/modules/module/HIS2123) [www.shaf.ac.uk/history/current\\_students/undergraduate/modules/hst246](http://www.shaf.ac.uk/history/current_students/undergraduate/modules/hst246); [www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/history/modules/level6/6AAH3009-10.aspx](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/history/modules/level6/6AAH3009-10.aspx) [accessed 14 July 2015].
3. A. Rowlands, 'The condition of life for the masses' in E. Cameron ed., *Early Modern Europe: an Oxford History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), 36-37.
4. Rowlands, 'The condition of life', 34, 37-40, 44, 45, 55, 59; E. Cameron, 'The power of the Word: Renaissance and Reformation', 84; R. A. Houston, 'Colonies, enterprises, and wealth: the economies of Europe and the wider world in the seventeenth century', 146; J. C. Riley, 'A widening market in consumer goods', 235-37, 258, 261-62; T. C. W. Blanning, 'Epilogue: the old order transformed 1789-1815', 364, all in Cameron ed. *Early Modern Europe*.
5. N. Hampson, 'The Enlightenment', 292; R. Briggs, 'Embattled faiths: religion and natural philosophy in the seventeenth century', 83, 185-87; Rowlands, 'The condition of life', 57-8; Riley, 'A widening market', 250.
6. M. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe 1450-1789*, second edition (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), 30, 55, 62-3, 434, 523.
7. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 370, 386, 387-88 (Enlightenment); 179 (Reformation); 148 (Renaissance).
8. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 150, 158, 402, 403 (arts); 37, 130-1 (education); 72, 432 (families); 122, 207, 281, 284, 383, 437, 522 (law); 41, 189-91, 425-27, 441 (religion); 208, 211, 217, 461, 470, 471, 477 (work).
9. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 44, 60, 226, 281.
10. B. Capp, 'Gender and family' in B. Kümin (ed.), *The European World 1500-1800: an introduction to early modern history*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2014), 37-47.
11. B. Kümin, 'Introduction', 6; C. Stein, 'The Scientific Revolution', 205-06, all in Kümin ed. *The European World*.
12. C. Jones, 'Enlightenment', 244; H. Butters, 'Europe in 1800', 347-48 (education); A. Gerritsen, K. Gould and P. Marshall, 'The Long Reformation: Catholic', 127; S. Hindle and B. Kümin, 'Centre and periphery', 298 (men); P. Roberts, 'Urban society', 62; P. Roberts, 'Marginals and deviants', 70, 72-3; Gerritsen, Gould and Marshall, 'The Long Reformation: Catholic', 127; L. Mola, 'Arts and society', 183-5; M. Knights and A. McShane, 'From pen to print – a revolution in communications?', 195,

197; P. Roberts, 'Witchcraft and magic', 216, 220-1; B. Capp, 'Popular culture(s)', 229-30, 232; Jones, 'Enlightenment', 241; Butters, 'Europe in 1800', 344-5 (women).

13. Keyword searching of e-books might produce different results, but until a comparison is made between hard copy indices and digital text mining, it remains unproven whether the latter would yield more material.

14. Becker's lecture, entitled 'Gender in the History of Early Modern Political Thought' and delivered on 2 Jun. 2015 in Cambridge, is available online at [www.crash.cam.ac.uk/gallery/video/anna-becker-gender-in-the-history-of-early-modern-political-thought](http://www.crash.cam.ac.uk/gallery/video/anna-becker-gender-in-the-history-of-early-modern-political-thought) [accessed 14 Jul. 2015].

15. J. M. Bennett, *History matters: patriarchy and the challenge of feminism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), 129-37.

16. The phrase was first used in J. Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity? Reflections on nineteenth-century Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, 38 (1994), 180.

17. M. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and gender in early modern Europe*, third edition (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 13, 199, 291-95, 322-23.

18. M. Wiesner-Hanks, 'Protestant movements', 136, 139; A. M. Poska, 'Upending patriarchy: rethinking marriage and family in early modern Europe', 201-2; K. Crawford, 'Permanent impermanence: continuity and rupture in early modern sexuality studies', 265-6; L. Botelho, 'Old women in early modern Europe: age as an analytical category', 311, all in Allyson Poska, Jane Councman, and Katherine A McIver eds. *Ashgate Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013).

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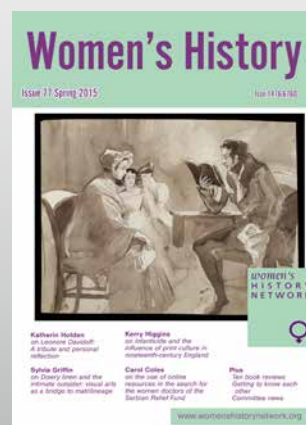
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# Gendering the Teaching Experience: the Personal, Political, and Pedagogical in the University Classroom.

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Hannah Cobb is a Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Manchester. Her research focuses on two areas: interpretive approaches to contemporary archaeological practice, and the Mesolithic and Neolithic of western Scotland. Gender is central to both strands of her research. In the former, questions of pedagogy, training, gender equality and diversity are a main focus in Hannah's research. In the latter her work examines the intersection between material culture, landscape and identity, including gender identities. Hannah is also the founder and Chair of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Equality and Diversity special interest group, and founder of the *everyDIGsexism* project. Hannah is one of the editors of *Reconsidering Archaeological Fieldwork* (Springer, 2012), and has also worked for the Higher Education Academy where she researched the role of fieldwork in the undergraduate degree and graduate employability.

## Introduction

It is a wet, windy day on our training excavation. The team comprises twenty students from the Universities of Manchester and Leicester. I am the excavation director, and I co-direct the project with a male colleague. Our gender should not matter, but it does. Today I am training a team of students in a trench separated from the rest of the site by the brow of a hill [Figure 1 and 2]. The students and I work side by side all morning, trowelling back a floor surface comprised of years of iron working deposits, revealing an older cobbled surface beneath. The archaeology is complex. The interfaces between the different deposits are blurred and the perpetual rain doesn't help. But, all in all, it's going really well; we are moving at a good pace, the morale in the group is high, and I feel I am doing a good job teaching the students both in archaeological techniques and in the various other issues that we discuss as we work. This is a good morning on site!

Just before lunch break my co-director comes over to our trench to ask me a question about the work he is directing over the hill. When he arrives by our trench a student I have been working alongside all morning stops trowelling, opens his hand to reveal a selection of finds and asks my co-director, "what are these? Are they pottery?" This is an innocent question on the face of it, except that underlying this question is an inherent sexism. At this point I should stress that there is little differentiation between my male co-director and I. We are equals; we are both lecturers, we are both experienced field archaeologists, we have both been running the project together, equally, for ten years, and given that it is the third week of the excavation, these facts have been made very clear to the students. There is only one notable difference between us; our gender. It is very clear, then, that the student has been waiting for *the man* to come along to confirm his finds. And so it is with some indignation that I make the point to the student that he could equally have asked me to identify the finds, and I do, and they are pottery.

What, you may wonder, does all this have to do with teaching gender? A relatively small act of inherent sexism by one student on a chilly archaeological site in the back of beyond seems quite remote from the way that we teach gender in the classroom. Except, I would suggest, it should not be.

## Teaching gender in the classroom

Let's return to the warmth of the lecture theatre for a moment to consider how we teach gender in a more traditional campus-based setting. The main ways we do this are twofold. Firstly we teach the historical trajectory and development of gender studies and/or the feminist critique within our disciplines, and, secondly, we teach about our specific periods of interest and consider gender/feminism/identity within them. Sometimes the focus of a course may not explicitly be on gender but rather the body, or identity, and in this case gender is, necessarily, a recurrent facet in the course.

A point that was raised time and again at the '*Is Gender Still Relevant?*' conference at the University of Bradford in September 2014, was that these gender specific courses are often self-selecting. Those who are already interested in these issues sign up to them. We are teaching and preaching to the converted. Where there is a "gender lecture" within a broader suite of subjects we often have to work hard to show the relevance of gender to our subject. For example, in the autumn of 2014, in my own lecture on gender within the broader first year course *The History of Archaeology* at the University of Manchester, I asked a class of approximately fifty students at the start of the lecture the question 'Is gender relevant to archaeology?' Eighty eight per cent felt it was relevant, twelve per cent felt it was not. I also asked the same cohort if they considered themselves feminists, of which forty one per cent answered yes. At the end of the lecture I asked the same questions, and was thrilled to see that one hundred per cent could see that gender was relevant to archaeology, and seventy per cent considered themselves feminists.

But rather than punching the air in celebration, I found myself troubled by these responses. Of course I was not out to behave like some kind of evangelist, converting the student masses to feminism, but it seems hard to understand how, on the one hand, my lecture had made it clear that gender is relevant to the subject the students were studying, but on the other, nearly a third of students in the class did not feel that a personal belief in *gender equality* was important. This and the 'preaching to the converted' argument of specific gender courses suggests that radical change is needed if we want our teaching of gender to reach, and to impact, on a broader student audience.

Many people have been asked to rebrand their gender course to increase recruitment by giving it a title that was 'more dynamic'. For some this meant making the course less gender specific. For others it meant playing on sex and gender stereotypes that the course would then go on to deconstruct. However to achieve radical change in our teaching I would like



Figures 1 and 2 : University of Manchester and Leicester students working in Trench 12 on the Ardnamurchan Transitions Project, (West coast of Scotland), Summer 2015

(Fig 1 Source: Dan Addisson. Fig 2 Source: Charlotte Tooze).

to suggest that just teaching gender on specific courses or in specific lectures is not enough. We need to acknowledge that we do gender and feminist studies a disservice if we uncouple gender dynamics from the lived, political contexts in which they are and have been experienced. Therefore I would like to propose that we need to do two things. Firstly we need to teach gender *everywhere*, that is to say we need to teach gender even when we're not teaching gender and secondly we need not to just teach gender, but also to be feminists in our teaching. In the rest of this article I want to explore what I mean by both of these statements.

## Teaching gender when we're not teaching gender

It is unsurprising that gender, and gender equality, ultimately seems irrelevant to many students when it is singled out from its (contemporary) socio-political context. It is nothing new to point out (*sensu* Judith Butler) that as I walk down the street, buy a coffee, get on the bus, come to work, lecture to students, write emails, do research and go home again, that I perform specific forms of gender identity and the people (and material things) I interact with in turn affect and are affected by such performances. These performances are all part of the broader assemblages of modern life, and thus gender is inseparably bound into concepts of work and life, to questions of public and private, into the hierarchies of the workplace, and of society, politics, and economics. If one were to perform a "flipped classroom" exercise, asking students to explore the many ways in which gender identity is performed in one day in their lives, they would undoubtedly be able demonstrate the rich and complicated performances of gender in the modern West. Asking them to apply the same principles to their studies, enables students to recognise the interwoven gender dynamics throughout any subject they are being taught. It is therefore crucial that we make relevant the issues of gender to *all* students, not just the self-selected enthusiasts who might attend a stand-alone gender course.

To provide a personal example, my area of expertise

in Archaeology at the University of Manchester means that I mainly lecture on archaeological field practice. I teach how archaeological practice has changed over time and how to prepare for excavation, how to excavate, and how to process what is dug. I teach about the impacts of planning legislation and the relationship between archaeology, the development process and government. I introduce students to issues surrounding metal detecting, to community archaeology and to concepts of heritage. I summarise global differences in archaeology. None of these particularly sound like subjects connected with gender, and yet they all are. For instance, to tell the story of how archaeological practice has changed and developed is to tell the story of how, and why, specific voices have been prioritised over others.<sup>1</sup>

In another example, to teach about the relationship between archaeology and the development process means exploring how archaeological units tender for jobs, which in turn means considering how those units make choices to be financially competitive. Would they, for instance, cut costs by not having portaloos for their workers? I ask students to consider the ramifications of this on men and women on site. Elsewhere we examine the profile of the profession and explore why there are so few women in the profession after the age of forty, and why female archaeologists repeatedly end up doing, what Joan Gero termed as, 'archaeological housekeeping'. We explore the impacts of this on how archaeology is conducted, how narratives about the past are constructed and who narratives of "objective" archaeological practice really serve. We visit museums that present archaeology to the public where we scrutinise *which* archaeologists are actually being presented to the public (almost always men). In short, I teach gender all the time without teaching a course that "teaches gender". Furthermore, because gender is examined as part of the broader issues within archaeological practice, it can never be removed and presented as something de-politicised.

## Being feminist in our teaching

Repositioning the teaching of gender from specific



courses to those that reassemble the subject within its political context is important but, I argue, cannot be undertaken in isolation. What must underwrite this act is a commitment to being feminist in our teaching. This is easily said, but what does it mean in practice? In the 1990s at the University of Berkley, USA, a group of archaeologists employed a suite of feminist principles in their lecturing which led to some innovative teaching practice. This included experimenting with various modes of non-traditional archaeological authorship, foregrounding students in the writing process to highlight non-normative voices in the creation of archaeological narratives. This took place through student-led seminars combined with the then novel resource of the internet to enable graduate students to engage in digitally-based non-linear narrative formats.<sup>2</sup> Two decades later and these techniques have become common pedagogic tools throughout academia; the use of wikis, student-led seminars and flipped classrooms all give students an autonomy in knowledge production, which has been shown to significantly enhance their learning experience. But it does more than this; it enables a democratization of voice that is founded on a principle of gender equality.

Indeed feminist teaching can be considered under the wider umbrella of critical pedagogy, which similarly rejects the universality of knowledge and seeks to empower learners by challenging 'naturalised' or dominant modes of knowledge. To do so it emphasises the importance of allowing multiple voices to contribute to the learning process and, therefore, renders students as active in their learning. This teaching approach contrasts to more traditional 'banking' pedagogic models, in which only the lecturer is active and the student remains a passive repository for knowledge. The power of a critical pedagogy approach is that it not only enhances the learning experience but promotes progressive social change by very explicitly calling out the inequalities of sexism (amongst other things) within the learning process.

## The assemblage of teaching and learning

This brings me back to the narrative with which I started; my experience in the field this summer with a student whose own unquestioned sexism led him to privilege my male co-director's opinion over my own. It could be argued that this student brought his own set of prejudices to the excavation, and the excavation is nothing to do with the classroom.

However, as I have argued elsewhere, the excavation is everything to do with the classroom.<sup>3</sup> For archaeologists the excavation is a space for learning as much as the classroom and, crucially, learning in different locations informs learning elsewhere (learning in the classroom informs learning in the field and vice versa). Indeed because excavations provide a very different, physical and embodied learning process, the lessons, points and issues raised in the classroom are often amplified and made more explicit in the field. They are also more public. If, in the confines of the campus, a student were to double check a female lecturer's teaching by knocking on the door of a male colleague and asking a question, who, beside the student, would know? Fieldwork, in contrast, is a public forum where troubling assumptions about gender and their connection with power, politics and knowledge production are made most explicit. For this reason it is important to acknowledge that the field is not just a place where students learn about how to use a trowel or how to record a context – the broader political

context of doing archaeology and being an archaeologist is also there to be learned about too. The anecdote with which I began this article is one that then proved fertile ground for teaching; both in calling out the student's own sexist assumptions and highlighting how gendered inequalities are perpetuated in our practice. It also provided an opportunity for discussion, and in such discursive learning, in offering up productive means to combat such sexism. In this example my arguments coalesce; a small moment of sexism on site leads to both teaching gender and to feminist teaching practice, which in turn challenges future inequalities.

## Personal, political, pedagogic

Exploring the hashtag #everyDIGsexism (inspired by the Every Day Sexism project) on Twitter shows that my experience that summer was not an isolated incident. Posts from commercial archaeology, and from academics and students alike, illustrate how endemic sexism remains in our practice. It shows why teaching gender in a Higher Education setting remains so important. Yet teaching gender in the historical disciplines has the potential to be a reductive process if we do not change up our methods. In short, to teach gender in a critical and integrated manner, to be feminist in our teaching, we need to recognise that the arenas for teaching and learning extend beyond the classroom – from museums, social media, and archaeological sites; to the dialogue between students outside of the classroom itself. All are places where understandings of gender, both past and present, are negotiated, and the learning process is in itself a dialogue too. The key to engaging wider student audiences in learning about gender, then, is to recognise that the personal is political *and* pedagogic. Therefore, if we free our teaching of gender from the binds of gender specific courses alone, the processes of teaching and learning have the potential to be powerfully transformative.

## Notes

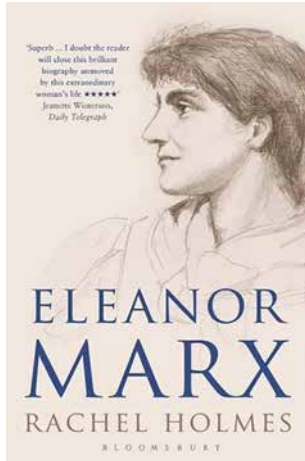
1. See the marvellous current work being done by the TrowelBlazers who are celebrating the work of women archaeologists, palaeontologists and geologists on their website: [trowelblazers.com/](http://trowelblazers.com/) [accessed 24 Aug. 2015].
2. For more detail and references see Hannah Cobb and Karina Croucher, 'Assembling archaeological pedagogy: a theoretical framework for valuing pedagogy in archaeological interpretation and practice', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 21:2 (2014), 197-216.
3. Cobb and Croucher, 'Assembling archaeological pedagogy'.

## Book Reviews

**Rachel Holmes, *Eleanor Marx, A Life*,  
London, Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury,  
2014, £25, ISBN-978-0-7475-8384-4 (hardback),  
pp. xvi + 508**

**Reviewed by Rosemary Seton**

*School of Oriental and African Studies*



At times one feels, while reading Rachel Holmes' new biography of Eleanor Marx, overwhelmed by the sheer scale of Marx's activities, particularly her involvement in the burgeoning socialist and trade union movements of the 1880s and 1890s. She was a founding member of the Socialist Democratic Federation and later of the Socialist League, a forceful presence in the international socialist movement, a key figure in the formation of British trade unions and an effective and energetic campaigner during strikes. She also worked hard to advance the cause of women workers within the trade union movement. For Marx was a woman with a strong sense of mission and driven, Holmes says, to put into practice the ideas of social democracy and equality she had learnt at her father's knee.

But this was no narrow political warrior. In her highly readable book which deftly weaves between her subject's private and public lives, Holmes conveys her subject's extraordinarily active life in all its richness and complexity. Marx had originally wanted to become an actress and retained a passion for literature, particularly drama, throughout her life. She and Clara Collet founded a Shakespeare reading club (the Dogberry) in 1877; in 1886 she completed a translation of *Madame Bovary*, the first in the English language, and that same year staged and acted in a pioneering performance of *A Doll's House* at her London home. Significantly, Eleanor took the role of Nora Helmer. Not without co-incidence 'The Woman Question: from a Socialist Point of View', an article co-written by Marx and her partner, Edward Aveling, appeared a few months later in the *Westminster Review*. Holmes devotes a key chapter of her book to 'The Woman Question', expanding on its significance both for Eleanor's personal life and on her political thinking. Women, Marx and Aveling argued, should form 'a united feminist front, challenging across class divisions the divide and rule that regulates production and reproductions'.

The first twenty-nine years of Eleanor's life had been spent in a home where, although loved, she struggled to establish her identity in the glare of her father's fame and forceful character. For much of the time she dutifully fulfilled the traditional role of the unmarried daughter, acting as her father's amanuensis, helping to care for her parents and her nephew. In 1883 following her parents' deaths, she was finally free to strike out on her own. She formed important new friendships; with the secularist and free thinker, Edward Aveling, with whom she set up house in 1884; with Olive

Schreiner, the South African writer; and Schreiner's sometime lover, Havelock Ellis, who thought Marx 'a vigorous and radiant personality', but commented on her body odour after a day's rambling (p. 218). George Bernard Shaw was another close friend who shared her passion for the stage and her socialist and feminist causes. Yet Marx felt increasingly lonely and unloved as her relationship with Aveling, under stress from his philandering and financial irresponsibility, unravelled. Nor did it help that most of her friends disliked and distrusted him. Her loneliness increased in 1895 when Friedrich Engels, her father's closest collaborator and long-time family friend and supporter, died revealing on his deathbed a Marx family secret which at first she refused to believe. That Holmes withholds this information until the moment Eleanor discovers it adds to the drama of her narrative. Poor neglected Freddy Demuth, whom Eleanor had always supposed to be Engel's son, was instead the son of Karl Marx and 'Lenchen', the family's faithful housekeeper and thus Eleanor's half-brother. Holmes depicts Freddy as her closest if not only friend at the time, when betrayed by yet another discovery, Aveling's marriage to an actress, she took her fateful dose of prussic acid.

Whether Eleanor Marx, as Holmes claims, changed the world is debatable. That she effectively challenged its economic, political and gender imbalance is undeniable. What comes across strongly in this biography is Marx's successful role as a socialist-feminist pioneer. The tragedy in her private life was that she was unable to defend herself against an abusive and duplicitous male partner. Perhaps, as Holmes observes, Jenny Marx and Lenchen, "both utterly devoted to her father" (p.217) were unhelpful role models. But if Eleanor Marx lacked a champion in her lifetime she has won one in Rachel Holmes who, in order to bring out this new biography, fought against the view that such a book would be 'unfashionable' and 'abstruse'. *Eleanor Marx, a Life* has in fact been warmly received and, one trusts, will be widely read.

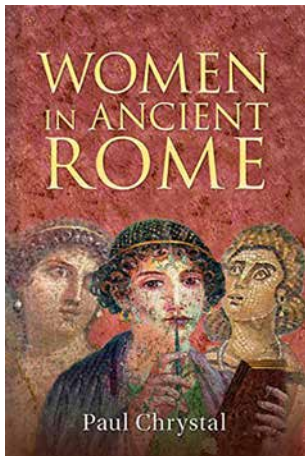
**Paul Chrystal, *Women in Ancient Rome*,  
Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing,  
2014. £9.99, ISBN- 978-1- 4456-4376-2  
(paperback), pp. 288**

**Reviewed by Linda McGuire**

*Independent Researcher*

Although the title of Paul Chrystal's book does not give much away, it does suggest even before opening the cover that this book's target reader is the non-specialist. Its aim, as outlined on page seven, is to 'provide an accessible yet rigorous survey of the subject for the burgeoning lay market.' Indeed *Women in Ancient Rome* is a collection of anecdotes, stories, sayings, tombstone epitaphs and snippets of poetry laboriously culled from extensive reading of a wide range of ancient sources. This detail has been organised into eight different chapters that include the ideal woman, marriage, public life, education, magic, religion, medicine and sexuality.

One of the strengths of *Women in Ancient Rome* is Chrystal's enthusiasm for the topic that has led to considerable background reading. The proliferation of scholarship over



recent years has resulted in a high level of specialisation in this academic field. The bibliography contains a selection of important writers from this vast pool of research. The broad range of themes provides some sense how women lived in both Republican and Imperial Rome. And there are a few nice touches here. Chapter Four on education rightly stresses women as readers and even composers of the written word, something often forgotten. Also Chrystal occasionally gives

modern examples to put the ancient ones into perspective (p. 174).

At the same time, this book suffers from an over-reliance on ancient works read literally without always taking into account their value as source material. For example, Porcia's suicide on hearing of the death of her husband, Marcus Junius Brutus, is presented as an example of female loyalty and fortitude (p.33). Whether this even happened is thrown into doubt by a letter from Cicero to Brutus in which Cicero consoles Brutus on the death of his wife (*Letters to Brutus* I.9). Is this story about female courage or rather male expectations of their wives? It becomes even more confusing as several footnotes appear to be wrongly numbered. The information corresponding to footnotes 80 and 81 in the text is actually found in footnote 79.

Care also needs to be taken when interpreting the ancient biographer Plutarch, often cited in the book. Chrystal notes that according to Plutarch the wife of Cicero, Terentia, was more active in politics than in domestic affairs (p.37). What is not said is that Plutarch was less interested in offering a character portrayal of Terentia than in trying to imply that Cicero is weak by depicting his wife as strong.

Inaccuracies in detail, such as those mentioned above, are not only found in the footnotes. An inscription attributed to Turia (p.23), for example, is dated to the second century BC and a few sentences later it is linked to the proscriptions of 46 BC. On a more minor note, modern terms are employed that can cause misunderstanding when applied to the ancient world without clarification. For instance, middle-class (p.9) does not quite correspond to the Roman system of orders where your place in society is determined by whether you were noble (senatorial / equestrian) or non-noble (plebeian). Other examples include gangsters (p.69), bluestockings (p.85), sin (p.90) and witch (p.105, 127).

Paul Chrystal has collected together a plethora of colourful and often arcane details about Roman women in what appears to be a labour of love. Those looking for an academic introduction to this challenging field will benefit more from consulting Suzanne Dixon's *Reading Roman Women* (2001) or Sarah B Pomeroy's 1976 classic *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*. For those who seek a less academic approach, *Women in Ancient Rome* is, nonetheless, an enjoyable introduction to the field.

**Christine von Oertzen, translated by Kate Sturge, *Science, Gender and Internationalism. Women's Academic Networks, 1917-1955***

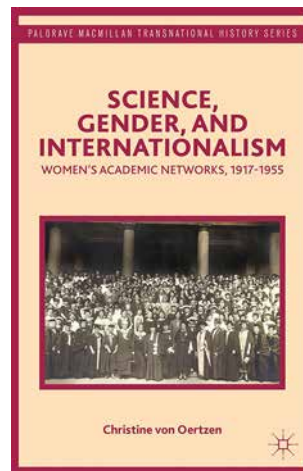
**New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. £60. ISBN 9781137438881 (hardcover), pp. xii + 325**

**Reviewed by Susan Cohen**

*Honorary Fellow*

*Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations*

*University of Southampton*



Christine von Oertzen's ambitious and eminently readable study of the foundation, rise and activities of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) up until 1955, is a recent and valuable addition to Palgrave Macmillan's transnational history series. The book was first published in German in 2012, and given the significant links with Britain and the United States of America, the English translation is most welcome.

The main subject of the book is the IFUW, a truly transnational network founded in 1919 in the aftermath of the First World War, specifically to assist academic women. In the introduction (Chapter One), Von Oertzen, a research scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, outlines her chronological approach which addresses different aspects of the network and the way in which it connected with the German member association.

Chapter Two contextualises the founding of the IFUW, following the lead up to the United States' entry into the first world war in April 1917, which triggered 'a wide spread hostility to everything German throughout US society'. (p.15.) Von Oertzen explains how the American women's Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) and Committee on International Relations were established, and highlights the significance of the British Educational Mission's visit to New York in October 1918. The goal of the mission, which included two women, Professor Caroline Spurgeon and her colleague, Rose Sedgwick, was to draft guidelines on intensifying exchange between American and British students, with the IFUW emerging as the very tangible outcome as far as female academics were concerned. The third chapter deals with the IFUW's agenda and policies during the 1920s and the emphasis placed upon creating three international guesthouses and establishing scholarship programmes for women scholars. Chapters Four and Five deal with the political challenges faced by German women academics and the existence and limited survival of their national federation, which aligned itself with the Nazi party in 1933. Chapter Six is at the heart of the book, for it recounts the nature and extent of assistance given to academic refugee women, notably by the British Federation of University Women (BFUW) before and during the Second World War. No one, in 1919, could have envisaged how important the networks, the halls of residence, especially Crosby Hall in



London, and the established scholarships would be to the academic women from Eastern Europe, many of whom were Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.

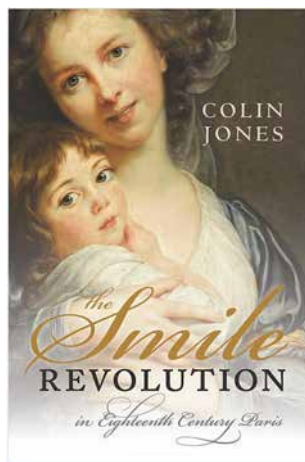
The intimate portraits of several science graduates add a very poignant dimension to the book, for they demonstrate the challenges faced not only by the women whose lives were uprooted, but also by their academic colleagues who assisted them. Von Oertzen uses this material with great sensitivity, detailing the breadth and depth of the lifeline extended to international members and sometimes their families. In fact these stories are just the tip of an iceberg, for it is only since mid-2014, with the transference of the entire Women's Library, London to the London School of Economics, that the archives of the BFUW, and specifically the individual case files created by the refugee committee, have been made available to researchers. This material is a treasure trove for historians, for apart from their place within the context of the IFUW, it provides an insight into individual human suffering precipitated by the Nazi regime, and demonstrates how adversity spurred a humanitarian response from a group of relative strangers whose only connection was an academic organisation.

Chapter Seven takes a longer term view, looking at the impact of exile on a few select refugee women both in the USA and Great Britain, whilst the final chapter addresses the post-war period and the political challenges faced as the German federation, sought to re-establish itself and rebuild its networks. The first IFUW conference to be held on German soil took place in 1968, by which time the Cold War had brought the era of internationalism to an end.

**Colin Jones, *The Smile Revolution in Eighteenth Century Paris*,**

**Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. £22.99, ISBN-9780-1987-1581-8 (hardback), pp. 183.**

**Reviewed by Teresa Barnard**  
*Independent scholar and writer*



Seventeenth-century Paris was not a good place to have a toothache. Surgeons and physicians had no interest in dentistry and sufferers were at the mercy of strong-armed blacksmiths or barbers to perform extractions. The sufferers could also seek out the troupes of itinerant Italian actors who combined theatricals with skilful tooth-pulling, sometimes extracting a tooth with one hand whilst firing a gun with the other, or removing the tooth with the

tip of a sword whilst riding a horse. Dentistry was less spectacular and a little more sophisticated in the eighteenth century, although Parisian dentists set up their luxurious surgeries on an upper floor so that passers-by could not hear the screams of patients. With discoloured or missing teeth as the norm, a perfect, white-toothed smile was a rarity. Historian Colin Jones's fascinating illustrated study is more wide-ranging

than the history of dentistry, however, as it demonstrates the notion of the smile as a cultural product. He examines his subject through the lens of art, literature and science. Do not expect a focus on women's history, or formal notes and a bibliography in this book, but rather an exploration of the implications of the smile to the culture and society of eighteenth-century Paris. Jones traces the history of the significance of smiling and how such issues as politics, court protocol, and the changing intellectual climate were reflected in a public and private gesture that moved in and out of style with surprising regularity throughout the era.

Jones begins his study with a visual image - the charming 1787 self-portrait of a smiling Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun with her daughter - explaining how the painting created a scandal as the artist's smile reveals her teeth. Jones explores how this portrayal was considered so shocking as to mock civilised conventions. In contrast, his examination of an earlier portrait of Louis XIV by Hyacinthe Rigaud indicates the hollow cheeks and tightly-closed, wrinkled lips of a monarch without teeth. Fortunately, Louis's inheritance from preceding aristocratic protocol included a grave, unsmiling face, as laughter and other displays of facial contortion were strongly disapproved of and subjects were keen to follow the royal example. Nowadays, of course, the display of a perfect white-toothed smile has a different cultural currency from the eighteenth-century laugh that showed a lack of breeding or emotional disorder. On Louis's death, there was a brief interlude of Regency smiles and laughter, but when Louis XV came of age, solemnity and dignity through facial expression were duly restored. The faces of the portraiture of this period, particularly of female subjects, tend to be expressionless and where teeth are visible, the subject is most usually displaying overt emotion, or is of the lower classes, or is even insane.

The suppressed emotions behind impassive faces ultimately needed an outlet. French theatre provided such, with popular tragedies from writers like Antoine Houdart de La Motte, who was able to provide the audience with the means of expression through tears. Perhaps the most important literary movement in this respect was the cult of sensibility. Samuel Richardson and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's epistolary novels deal with the human condition and, particularly, the outward manifestations of interiority. Tears are an expression of inner benevolence, and although a villain's smile might be mocking or deceptive, a heroine's is always sweet and sincere, revealing her compassionate nature. Smiles, mouths and teeth took on an importance that touched the reader. Similarly, artists like Vigée Le Brun began to convey animated expressions and as dentists' techniques - and the quality of dentures - advanced, older conventions were overturned and smiling came back into style.

There is much to stimulate ideas, especially when Jones draws our attention to the French Revolution and how circumstances unleashed an outpouring of emotion when, following the destruction of the *ancien regime*, the peoples' smiles mingled with their tears of joy (*ris et pleures*); a new emblem for radical change. Smiling was short-lived, though, when for example in June 1789 the National Assembly set a sombre new tone by declaring that laughter was outlawed during its debates. As the aggressive laughter of sarcasm and satire took the place of the gentle smile of sensibility, smiling now became a sign of counter-revolution. The bravest counter-revolutionaries, women as well as men, managed to smile on

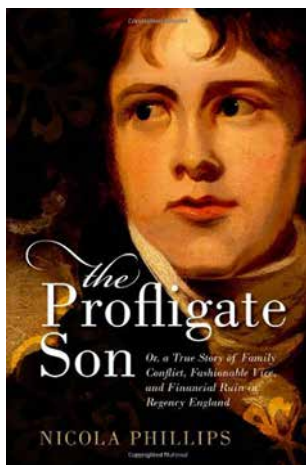


the scaffold and the 'execution smile' became an unsettling symbolic indicator of resistance. Jones's persuasive argument here is that the smile of this era was the weapon of the weak, an icon that had switched political allegiance. This final perspective of the revolutionary smile is the most significant contribution of the book and should offer the opportunity for further research.

**Nicola Phillips, *The Profligate Son, Or, a True Story of Family Conflict, Fashionable Vice, and Financial Ruin in Regency England*,**

**Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. £20.00, ISBN 978-0-19-968753-4 (hardback), pp. vii-332**

**Reviewed by Charlotte Garside, PhD Candidate, The University of Hull**



*The Profligate Son* follows the short life of William Jackson (1791-1828), a young man in Regency England who becomes entangled with crime and debauchery in his adolescent attempts to maintain the fashionable, London lifestyle enjoyed by so many of his peers. William's father recorded what he came to recognise as his son's inevitable descent into irrevocable degeneracy and tragedy. This rich source material provides the basis for Phillips'

work, creating a detailed and engaging narrative. The chapters chronologically document Jackson's fall from respectability, resulting in a meticulous case study that holds significance within multiple historiographies, including regency culture, gendered sociability and morality, the construction of masculinity, as well as conflict within and the social role of the family.

William had numerous stints in formal education, his experience of which resonates with the work of Anthony Fletcher on the education of young men, which he argues prioritised social connections and peer approved codes of masculinity above all else. All of William's attempts, however, ended in some form of scandal. For example, on one occasion he and two friends escaped the watchful eye of educators and parents to spend a night in London which began with 'two pots of ale, a pint of sherry, and a quart of port wine' and led to a heady night, culminating in the company of a Miss Clifford and another woman 'summoned to aid their indulgence' (pp. 51-52). This escapade resulted in William's immediate expulsion from the tutelage of the Reverend Owen.

Despite William's plausible claims of succumbing to peer pressure, and proclamations of repentance, it became increasingly evident that William was thoroughly uninterested in a moral lifestyle. Over the years Mr Jackson employed various methods to try to rein in his son's increasingly dangerous behaviour, however, William continually threw chances for family resolution away in favour of profligacy. Eventually, young William moved beyond the sins of a commonplace Regency debtor, to a life of fraud and felony in ever more desperate attempts to maintain the lifestyle to which he believed himself

entitled. This led to his arrest, and a disgraceful fall from any form of polite society, culminating in his transportation to Australia as a criminal.

What does this case study of the Jackson family tell us more specifically about regency manhood? Through the exploration of the tormented father-son relationship experienced between the Jacksons, we gain insight into tensions between the generations, as explored in the work of Alexandra Shepard. Conflicting senses of appropriate masculinity were compounded by a mutual lack of understanding. An older generation, who valued moral respectability and fiscal responsibility, clashed noisily with a younger generation of pleasure seekers, who sought a polite veneer to hide a thriving underground world of licentiousness.

The in-depth exploration of the male experience reveals the pressure of social expectation, on both father and son. Both men felt the pressures of Regency ideals in terms of family and sociability. Both aimed for the life of the gentleman, but in very different ways, Mr Jackson valuing the social value of prescribed morality, young William chasing the exuberance of 'fashionable vice'.

Following the folly of William we also gain insight into the significance of 'credit' in daily life, being the social assessment of a person's moral and financial integrity, as articulated in the work of historians such as Elizabeth Foyster and Craig Muldrew. Phillips considers the role of 'credit' in the construction of masculinity, alongside the new found wealth and status of the Jackson family, and the culture that William was operating within; one of consumption and greater social mobility.

Furthermore, we see how parents tried to instil their values in their children and the methods employed in parenting wilful, adolescent offspring, as Jackson attempts to regulate William's behaviour. This brings the significance of this work straight into our own present, drawing parallels between consumer societies of Regency and modern-day England, as 'parents still seek ways to curb the consumption of, and help with the social pressures faced by, their profligate offspring' (p. 278).

Nicola Phillips brings the academic exploration of masculinity, sociability, and familial experience to life through the use of the Jacksons as an extended case study, providing comprehensive insight, and subsequently essential reading for anyone interested in, cultural, social, and family life in Regency England. Ultimately, the appeal of Phillips' work lies in the relatable nature of her research and writing, creating a work that is as absorbing as it is informative.

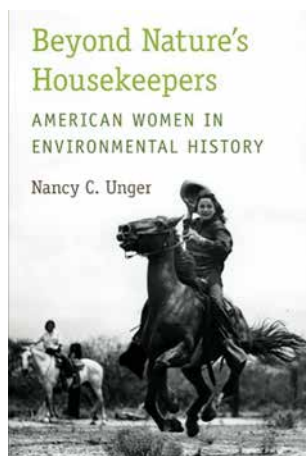
**Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History***

**Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. £16.52, ISBN 978-0-19-973507-5 (paperback), pp. 319**

**Reviewed by Katie Barclay**

*University of Adelaide*

The field of environmental history is flourishing, moving from earlier works that charted changing land use over time to the complex ways that landscape and environment shape human experience, and even interrogating the utility of the human-non-human distinction in our interpretive modes. *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers* contributes to this



wider discussion by putting women back into American environmental history, and highlighting the ways that our understanding of the relationship between humans and the environment must take account of gender. It is a wide-ranging survey that ranges from Pre-Columbian times to the present day.

The book is broadly chronological, beginning with a chapter that covers a broad sweep of history from early

archaeological evidence of America's first people up to and including the colonial period. From there we move from Revolution to Civil War, stopping for a specific case study on the Frontier, before arriving at the twentieth century, which is the focus of the last five substantive chapters. Every chapter includes a true diversity of women, as Unger attempts to highlight the range of experiences that women had in every period and the ways that gender intersected with race, class and sexuality. Partly for evidentiary reasons, some groups – notably white, middle-class women – are more easily accessible and feature more regularly than others; we are also much more likely to hear their voices in the letters, diaries and political writings that are drawn on throughout. Yet, Unger is innovative in her attempts to redress this, looking at archaeological evidence, sensitive readings of the 'other' in the writings of colonisers and other elite groups, and, where it survives, the words of black, native American, Asian, and working-class women in both rural and urban settings. In this sense, this is a very ambitious project and, whilst there are some tensions in balancing these competing stories, it is clearly built on an impressive array of sources and wider reading.

The earlier chapters primarily focus on how different groups used land and other environmental resources to live and make homes, focusing on hunting, fishing and farming practices, as well as the ways that these activities were gendered. As time goes on, the ways that environmental uses were monetised becomes a key concern, as does the impact of domesticity and the ways this shaped women's understanding of their place in the world. As Unger notes, such discourses of appropriate femininity located women, through the homes that they made, as the authors of 'civilisation', tying their home-making practices (whether inside the home or in the garden or field) into wider power relationships. How such discourses, and particularly the increasing investment in women as non-productive, shaped their experiences of colonisation and working the land is brought out in a chapter on the Frontier, which so many women found challenging and uncomfortable. This section relies heavily on an earlier body of work on early America and women's work, but usefully reinterprets it to drive home the environmental contexts and implications of such discussions. It would have been useful to see this analysis taken further to demonstrate how this changes our understanding of either women's or environmental history.

The final chapters are in some respects more cohesive, focusing on women's environmental activism, defined broadly, and locating it in the wider contexts that drove these women to be politically active. Here we find women participating in

everything from gardening clubs to public radio for rural women to political lobbying to prevent the horrific diseases caused by industrial pollution. These women range from the politically conservative to members of the second wave feminist movement, including those involved in alternative living movements. Here we find women's active articulation of their relationship with the environment, where femininity and particularly its associations with nature and motherhood were used to justify women as protectors of the earth or the people in it. Taking us up to the present, Unger also points to more recent resistance to ideas of women's 'special' role as nurturers of the environment and looks at more inclusive models of modern activism. Whereas the women of the first part of the book seemed trapped by their discursive relationship with the world around them, these later women were actively defining it, creating a compelling narrative of women's experiences.

Overall, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers* provides a useful survey of the ways that environmental history and women's history can come together. Between the early discussions of women's labour and land use, to discussions of how constructions of gender have been informed by the association between femininity and nature, to women's role in environmental movements, Unger provides a number of different directions for readers to follow up or to emulate in different contexts. In this sense, it opens up the field of women in environmental history and asks us to participate in its further cultivation.

Christine E. Hallett, *Veiled Warriors: Allied Nurses of the First World War*,

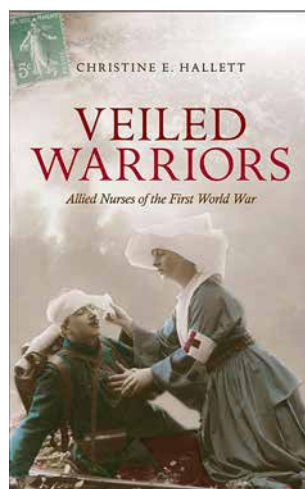
**Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. £20, ISBN 978—0-1987-0369-3 (hardback), pp. xxiii + 359**

Anon, *Diary of a Nursing Sister*,

**Stroud: Amberley, 2014. £7.99, ISBN 978-1-4456-4197-3 (paperback), pp. 189**

**Reviewed by Anne Logan**

*University of Kent*



The centenary of the First World War has been accompanied by something of a bombardment by publishers of their readers with books about aspects of the war's history. The two books under consideration here are both concerned with the work of nurses who had to cope with the horror of caring for large numbers of men wounded in combat.

Christine E Hallett's *Veiled Warriors* is certainly a timely publication which tackles head-on some

of the myths concerning First World War nurses which are now being re-circulated via television and cinematic representations timed to coincide with the war's centenary. As Hallett contends, the iconic image of the romantic, upper-class, courageous, young, beautiful and – crucially – amateur

nurse has come to dominate and distort public perceptions of wartime nursing. Instead, as Hallett stresses, many of the women who cared for the sick and wounded were highly trained professionals whose campaign for official recognition of their profession in their home countries was spurred on by their wartime role. Hallett further contends that, although there was undoubtedly friction between the professional sisters and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurses who assisted them, contemporary sources such as letters and diaries demonstrate that the trained nurses and VADs often worked extremely well together.

Hallett's work is in fact largely based upon nurses' own accounts, in the form of letters, diaries, subsequent oral testimonies, scrap albums and other ephemera, and published accounts in journals such as the *British Journal of Nursing* and *Nursing Times*. Hallett has researched nurses' testimonies in archives in Australia, New Zealand and North America as well as in the UK. Despite the use of the term 'allied' in the title, there is only limited discussion in the book of French nursing and virtually nothing about other allies such as Russia. The book therefore overwhelmingly concerns the English-speaking combatant nations and this reader at times could not help pondering what the situation was on the German side of the lines, and whether there were similarities to the situations described in the book. However, I realised that this was outside the scope of this particular work, and it is none the worse for its focus on Anglophone sources.

The use of nurses' testimonies gives Hallett's account of their work a special quality of vividness. But *Veiled Warriors* also takes care to explain to the reader how wartime nursing was shaped by the particular strategies adopted at different times and in different places during the military campaign. Emergency nursing is necessarily a reactive process, and Hallett shows the ways in which military medicine quickly adapted to the specific demands created by trench warfare and the complicated logistics of getting wounded men from the battlefield to places of treatment including casualty clearing stations, hospital trains, barges, ships, base hospitals and convalescent homes. The book is structured chronologically and geographically, so the reader is taken through the initial months of the war in 1914 when medical improvisation was necessarily much to the fore, followed by the consolidation and streamlining (as much as was possible in a changing military context) on the Western front, then nursing on the Serbian and Russian fronts and in the Eastern Mediterranean (including the Gallipoli campaign) before returning again to the Western front in the final chapters. The nurses' accounts bring to life the medical challenges (such as cleaning and keeping free of infection wounds incurred from shrapnel in muddy farm fields) as well as the privations and even dangers that the nurses themselves faced. The reader learns, for example, that a hospital on the Greek island of Lemnos was so ill-equipped that nurses cut up their own underwear to make bandages for the wounded of Gallipoli. Nurses also lost their lives in the war, including ten who drowned in the sinking of the SS *Marquette* in 1915. Hallett also reminds the reader that not all the men whose lives were in danger were wounded: there were many cases of trench foot, pneumonia, and towards the end of the war, influenza, for nurses to care for.

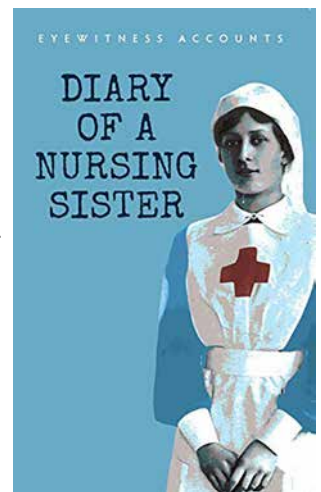
One of the many first-hand nurses' testimonies that are used to such good effect by Hallett is the *Diary of a Nursing Sister* by 'Anon', which has recently been republished

by Amberley Books in their 'Eyewitness Accounts' series. Originally published in 1915 in Edinburgh by William Blackwood and Sons, this diary covers the first ten months of the war when its author was posted to France, spending much of the time tending the wounded on a hospital train that moved back and forth between the front on the France/Belgium border and towns such as Boulogne, Rouen and Le Havre. This diary is mostly concerned with the author's day-to-day work,

although sometimes the tales that the men have told her of their experiences in the field of battle are recounted. It perhaps allows the modern reader a small insight into the mentality of a woman who was obviously a highly trained and experienced individual as well as a patriot: it is clear that this is not her first experience of military nursing, as she refers several times to conditions in the South African War. I was particularly struck by the impact of military assaults on the author's work, as there were clearly periods when she had very few casualties to deal with as well as times when the hospital train personnel were overwhelmed by the numbers of wounded, dead and dying. As Hallett stresses in her book, not all patients were wounded in battle, 'Anon' mentions many with infectious diseases and even – in passing – describes a couple of cases where the patient was simply mad (early reportage of shell shock, perhaps).

But what I, as a historian, find in this published diary must be very different from what a reader in 1915 got from it, and the main problem with this Amberley edition is the complete lack of any editorial material which might illuminate its provenance. The book is simply republished with some added, and not always particularly relevant, photographic illustrations. It was from Hallett's bibliography that I discovered the details of *Diary of a Nursing Sister's* original publication and it is only on their press release – and nowhere in the book itself or on its cover – that Amberley mention that 'most sources attribute the diary to Kathleen Luard'. Marc Bloch famously said that a historical document is like a witness as it will only give answers if it is questioned. Amberley's 'eyewitness' edition would be much more useful to twenty-first century readers if it contained a short introduction placing the publication in context, or at the very least provided some information about the author. In the end I had to go back to Hallett's text and use her index to find out more about Luard.

Both these books are welcome and timely publications. Hallett's work is scholarly but nevertheless vivid, mainly because of the excellent use it makes of nurses' accounts. *Diary of a Nursing Sister* is not a well-written or literary diary, but it has immediacy and authenticity. However, republishing it without any editorial material to contextualise it will limit its usefulness to modern readers, not all of whom may have *Veiled Warriors* at hand to refer to.



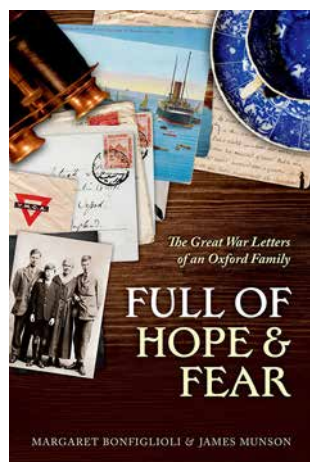


**Margaret Bonfiglioli, and James Munson (eds)**  
***Full of Hope and Fear : the Great War Letters of an Oxford Family,***

**Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, £25,  
ISBN-978-0-19-870717-2 (hardback), pp. 392**

**Maggie Andrews**

*University of Worcester*



Violet and Gilbert Slater and their three sons were living in Oxford when the First World War broke out. Theirs was a marriage based on equality and intellect; Gilbert was a socialist an educationalist and at the time Head of Ruskin College, Oxford. In 1915, he took up a five-year post as the first Professor of Indian Economics at Madras University. Until Violet joined him in 1919 the family maintained their relationships by post, creating a collection of

letters from which Bonfiglioli and Munson have produced this fascinating book.

The activities, events and media attention given to The First World War centenary have stretched and shifted its place in British cultural memory so as to now include a far greater awareness of the lives of women and children on the Home Front. There were a multiplicity of experiences of the First World War and these letters provide an example of one family's intimate experience of a war that for many just had to be endured.

The Slaters were both typical and unique; the fears and hopes they experienced were those of many people in Britain during the first major mechanised war. They were comfortably off although not wealthy; therefore Violet and her boys were sheltered from facing many of the problems that working-class families experienced coping with their men away during the conflict. Neither her husband nor her son were wounded or killed. Her son – Owen – was only in danger for a matter of months although she had to wait until September 1919 for him to be demobbed. Gilbert and Violet, however, responded to the war in different ways; he was quick to give his support to the war, writing to *The Times* and agreeing with the dominant perception of the era that it was a necessary fight against German militarism. Violet grew increasingly critical of military as opposed to diplomatic solutions to conflict; she joined the Quakers and developed contacts with those who opposed war.

Gilbert's and Violet's letters to one another are full of discussions about the war. Theirs was a marriage of politically engaged equals so this is perhaps not surprising; the letters mirrored conversations they would otherwise have had at their fireside. As parents, they both longed for the war to be over before their eldest son could be conscripted. The letters also contain snippets of evidence of Violet's efforts to care for her family at a distance – Gilbert in India is given instructions on washing woollens; Owen is encouraged not to smoke or drink when in the army in France.

What is perhaps most intriguing in this book for historians of women are the descriptions of Violet's and her

children's domestic life in wartime: details of the mundane minutiae of everyday lives which still so often remain hidden from history. Thus anxieties about Zeppelin raids are intermingled with the boys having got up at 3:30 on Christmas morning to open their stockings and Violet's determined efforts to pick as many blackberries as possible to make jam. In one letter in 1917 she explains, 'the only ripe ones were up high so I valiantly mounted the hedges regardless of scratching as if I were twelve and got nice ones. Then I went to the Food Control counter and at last got 5lbs of sugar ... It was quite a victory' (p. 57). It is such snippets that mean for anyone with an interest in the Home Front in the First World War or domesticity and families in the first half of the century, this book is well worth reading.

## **BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS**

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.com](mailto:bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.com). 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.

Zubin Mistry, *Abortion in the Early Middle Ages, c.500 - 900* (Boydell & Brewer)

Sarah F. Williams, *Damnable Practises. Witches, Dangerous Women and Music in 17th Century English Broadside Ballads* (Ashgate)

Rachel Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland, 1690 - 1745: Imitation and Innovation* (Boydell & Brewer)

Joanna Burke, *The Story of Pain. From Prayer to Painkillers* (Oxford University Press)

Sara Read, *Maids, Wives and Widows* (Pen and Sword), an exploration of the everyday lives of early modern women 1540 - 1740

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed) *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd)

Hubert Wolf, *The Nuns of Sant'Ambrogio. The True Story of a Convent Scandal* (Oxford University Press)

Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, *Women, Crime and Forgiveness in Early Modern Portugal* (Ashgate)

Tanka Szabo, *Young, Brave and Beautiful. The Missions of SOE Agent Lieutenant Violette Szabo* (The History Press)

Elizabeth Norton, *England's Queens - vol 1 From Boudica to Elizabeth of York* (Amberley)

Elizabeth Norton, *England's Queens - vol 2 From Catherine of Aragon to Elizabeth II* (Amberley)

Judith A. Tyler, *Stitching the World. Embroidered Maps and Women's Geographical Education* (Ashgate)



Yamaguchi Yoshiko and Fujiwara Sakuya, *Fragrant Orchid. the Story of My Early Life* (University of Hawaii Press)

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

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

Ji-Eun Lee, *Women Pre-scripted. Forging Modern Roles through Korean Print* ( University of Hawaii Press)

Kimberley B. Stratton with Dayna S. Kalleres (eds), *Daughters of Hecate. Women and Magic in the Ancient World* ( Oxford University Press)

Deborah Shamooin, *Passionate Friendship. The Aesthetics of Girls Culture in Japan* (University of Hawaii Press)

Tamara C. Ho, *Romancing Human Rights. Gender, Intimacy and Power between Burma and the West* ( University of Hawaii Press)

Laura Nenzi, *The Chaos and Cosmos of Kurosawa Tokiko. One Woman's Transit from Tokugawa to Meiji Japan* ( University of Hawaii Press )

Eileen Chanin and Steven Miller, *Awakening Four Lives in Art* ( Wakefield Press) - 4 Australian women who made their reputation in the arts outside of Australia in the first half of the 20th century

Patrick Williams, *Katherine of Aragon* (Amberley)

Geordan Hammond & Peter S. Forsaith (eds), *Religion, Gender and Industry. Exploring Church and Methodism in a Local Setting* (James Clarke & Co.)

Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (Yale University Press)

Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and her Circle* (Oxford University Press)

Rickie Solinger & Mie Nakachi (eds), *Reproductive States. Global Perspectives on the Invention and Implementation of Population Policy* (Oxford University Press)

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

Vivienne Newman, *We Also Served. The Forgotten Women of the First World War* (Pen and Sword)

P. Friedmann, *Anne Boleyn* ( Amberley)

David Loades, *Jane Seymour. Henry VIII's Favourite Wife* (Amberley)

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

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## WHN Book Prize 2015

It was pleasing to see that once again there was a strong field for the Women's History Book Prize this year. The winner was Simone Laqua-O'Donnell's *Women and the Counter Reformation in Early Modern Munster* (Oxford University Press) which the panel found enthralling and difficult to put down. It is a tightly organised book, based on a nuanced reading of many sources and includes some truly original insights. It is also written in an engaging style that draws in the reader, even those without knowledge of the period. It has a lovely opening page, for instance, which links to the portrait on the front of the book and has some truly original insights. Congratulations to Simone. The panel would like to thank all the authors and publishers who took part in the competition for the opportunity to read work of such high quality.



Maggie Andrews with WHN book prize winner Simone Laqua-O'Donnell

## WHN Book Prize 2016

**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 2016.

Entries (books published during 2015) should be submitted via the publisher by 31 March 2016.

For further information please contact June Hannam, chair of the panel of judges.

Email: [bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org)

## Community History Prize 2015

There were twenty-three wonderful competitors for the Community History Prize which was won by Ruth Beazley who, with some support from local libraries, undertook a project entitled *Triangle Mill Sisters*. The focus of the project was the 100 women mill workers who lived in a hostel at Triangle, near Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, between the 1920s and 1970s. The project began with a unique collection of 200 photographs of this community of women, which has formed the basis of displays, interviews and events as well as archival research which now provides a record of 'voices' of the women across fifty years of their history. There have been exhibitions in Sowerby Bridge Library telling the story of life at the hostel and work at the mill and we hope to see this fascinating project developed into a publication in the future.

Three other projects were highly commended:

1. *These Dangerous Women* (The Clapham Film Unit and the UK Section of the WILPF, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom). This project focused on the little-known story of British women who were involved in trying to stop the First World War in 1915, and who organised the International Congress of Women at The Hague. The film can be viewed on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/0a2xYvXwGiw>.

2. *Herstory* (Green Howards Museum and National Childbirth Trust). This project shared the untold stories of army wives, which can be found in the collections of the Green Howards Museum, with young mothers from the Catterick Garrison. Participants engaged in creative activities which explored how women's experiences as army wives have changed over the last 150 years. They shared their stories, experiences and reflections on army life today in a short film which can be found at <http://greenhowards.org.uk/blog/2014/herstory/>.
3. *The Great War* (Haslemere Museum and Girl Guiding Liphook District) This project involved engaging young girls with the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War through working with Haslemere Educational Museum. The girls undertook field trips and even had a sleepover in the museum as they researched and curated an exhibition. Further information can be found at <https://www.historypin.org/channels/view/51823#!photos/list/>



Maggie Andrews with  
Community History Prize winner  
Ruth Beazley for *Triangle Mill  
Sisters*.

## WHN Community History Prize 2016 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 2015 and 31st May 2016.**

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 2016; for further guidance or advice on the application process email Professor Maggie Andrews [maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk](mailto:maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk)

# Getting to Know Each Other



## **Name**

Rachel Rich

## **Position**

Senior Lecturer, Leeds Beckett University

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

Two Years

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

My mother is a feminist, so I learned to think that way from her. Women's history wasn't big where I studied for my degree, but I did learn about Joan Kelly, and how she had put the Renaissance into a new perspective by asking a simple question about how it had—or had not—changed women's lives. Later, as a postgraduate at the University of Essex, I heard the word gender for the first time, and I began to

understand that 'woman' was not a fixed identity. At Essex, I had the great good fortune of being supervised by Leonore Davidoff, who showed me how even the most seemingly mundane parts of women's lives are really political. With her guidance, I began to look at women's bodies in a new way, and eventually spent years researching eating habits and how nutritional advice can be shaped by notions of gender. Much of what I do might not look like 'women's history', but I can't think of any way of being a historian that wouldn't highlight women's experiences.

## **What are your special interests?**

My first foray into women's history was through an interest in eating disorders, which has led me to study the gendering of eating habits in nineteenth-century Europe. I found it fascinating to learn about how supposed medical knowledge about women's nutritional needs had been shaped by cultural norms. Women were judged harshly for seeming greedy or being fat, and doctors just gave that a scientific framework. My interest in women's relationship with food and cooking has led to my current research on domesticity and women's timekeeping practices. I'm especially interested in the many ways that women bridged the gap between family life, and the public sphere, through their responsibility for family meals and timetables.

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

I don't know about a heroine, though lots of women have inspired me. Although I've always been a fan of Mrs Beeton, right now I am fascinated by the Victorian cookbook writer Georgiana Hill, who enjoyed great success from the 1860s to the 1880s and then seems to have vanished from history. She was smart, worldly and a better writer than most cookbook authors in her day. I'm also loving a manuscript diary of a Parisian woman who lived in Paris in the 1870s — like so many of the women whose lives I want to study, no one knows what her name was. But she left a diary all about life in a period of war and political turmoil, through which she tried to stay calm and look after her family no matter what else was going on.

## WHN AGM Report, 2015

The AGM was held at the Annual Conference at the University of Kent. The Convener, June Purvis, announced that the WHN is in a good financial state with a buoyant membership. This enabled a contribution of £2000 towards conference bursaries. The Community History Prize attracted twenty-three strong contenders and was awarded to the *Triangle Mill Sisters*, submitted by Ruth Beazley and local libraries. The Book Prize also attracted many strong submissions and was awarded to Simone Laqua-O'Donnell for *Women and the Counter Reformation in Early Modern Munster*.

## The Journal

The Journal has been re-named *Women's History: the Journal of the Women's History Network*. The name change was made partly to encourage people to contribute to what is a REF-able journal. Katie Barclay has stepped down as chief editor after four years; Catherine Lee will replace her, with Kate Murphy acting as interim editor. The journal is thriving and has recently brought out two Special Issues, however the costs of production are steadily increasing. To meet this concern, the Committee has approved the introduction of the digitisation of the journal, to be achieved by Spring 2016. Pdf versions will be sent to those on existing subscription rates. Hard copies will still be available, but it is to be debated at the November



Committee meeting exactly what the options will be about 'opting in' for a hard copy, and whether the WHN membership fee will vary according to this choice.

### Other changes

Eleanor Payne has replaced Anna Toulson as representative of the Women's Library @ LSE to keep the Committee informed of its work. From November 2015 the Committee will meet three rather than four times in the year, to reduce costs and allow funds to be diverted to new initiatives. This decision will be revisited at the next AGM. A new £500 competition for teaching/research staff in higher education to mount a one-day regional conference is to be launched this year.

### Steering Committee Membership Changes

Kate Murphy and Jocelynne Scutt are now leaving the Committee and we have two new members - Lucinda Matthews-Jones and Naomi Pullen - both of whom were unanimously elected. Jocelynne introduced the Blog when she first joined the committee and it has proved very popular; Robin Joyce will take over as Blog co-ordinator.

### Finances

Aurelia Annat, is entering her final year as Treasurer. She reported that our finances are flourishing due to increased membership and savings on Committee meetings, with a balance of £8,030 in our current account and £10,026 in our bonus account. A Gift Aid rebate from HMRC is also due. The 2015-16 provisional budget replicates previous years with the main WHN costs being the journal, web presence and admin (costs of committee meetings).

### Next meeting of the Steering Committee and Full Minutes

The next meeting will be held at 11.30am on 14 November 2015, room 202, IHR, Senate House, London. All members are welcome.

The full minutes of the AGM and all the reports are available on the WHN website.

## Female agency, activism and organisation: WHN Annual Conference Report 2015

The Annual Conference had a suitably festive backdrop this year, as the University of Kent held its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations during our stay. The campus, which overlooks the historic cathedral city of Canterbury, was in full party mode for our visit and many conference delegates took advantage of the additional attractions on offer, such as the opportunity to take a ride in the Kent Wheel for panoramic coast-to-coast views of the city and surrounding countryside.

Once again the conference attracted a wealth of high quality papers, exploring the overlapping themes of female agency, activism and organisation from a wide range of perspectives and theoretical frameworks. Panels investigated the expression of women's agency in fields as diverse as education, textual self-representation, recourse to the law, knowledge construction, as well as in private, intimate and domestic domains. Women's activism in arenas from politics, to broadcasting, to reproductive health campaigning was explored, and female organisation was discussed in a range of philanthropic, sporting and community contexts. Women's experiences and endeavours in both world wars and in suffrage campaigns were once again popular topics in papers that intersected with all three conference themes.

It was fitting that Professor Mary Evans, who, in 1980, established the country's first MA in Women's Studies at Kent should give the first of our plenary lectures, entitled "But We've Always Been Poor": Some Reflections on Women, Poverty and Austerity'. Getting us off to a wonderfully polemical start, Mary warned us against the dangers of making facile assumptions about gender equality progress and pointed to austerity politics and gendered poverty as key sites of persistent inequality in the twenty-first century. Social relationships, she reminded us, stand vulnerable to long term disruption unless gender inequality is made central to discussions about social inequality.

Day One drew to a close with the announcement and presentation of the WHN Book and Community History prizes (reported elsewhere) over a glass of wine. The recent surge in popular interest in history, as illustrated by the wonderful community projects we heard about, was also a key theme of



*Delegates mingling*



*Professor Pamela Cox, Plenary Lecture*





Session: Agency and female activism in Southern Africa 1979-94. Barbara Bush (Chair) Matthew Graham, Kate Law, Emily Bridger



Professor Clare Midgely, Plenary Lecture

Professor Pamela Cox, the second of our plenary speakers, who noted the unprecedented appetite for public history in her talk on 'Translating Women's History for Television'. She took us on a tour of history on television, from the earliest, lecture-style broadcasts to more recent, audience-centred approaches featuring celebrity presenters and 'historical reality TV' methodologies. Described by Cox as a 'cultural revolution in communication', this shift has, she argued, both broadened the audience for television history and opened up new avenues for women's history, enabling previously hidden histories to be told. This point is illustrated by her two BBC 2 series: *Shopgirls: The True Story of Life Behind the Counter* and *Servants: The True Story of Life Below Stairs* and it was fascinating to hear about the televisual techniques and sensory tactics employed to engage the empathy of the television audience. Day Two was brought to a fitting conclusion, for a history conference, with a delicious dinner in a restaurant housed in a restored eighteenth-century wool store.

Professor Clare Midgely, our final plenary speaker, who fittingly undertook her PhD at Kent, brought the conference to a stimulating conclusion in her exploration of 'Feminism, Religion and Empire after the Transnational Turn'. Challenging previous models, such as the conceptualisation of the growth of feminism in terms of a diffusion from the West around the rest of the world, and of the relationship between religion and feminism purely as one of conflict, Clare offered what she called a 'mediatory' approach to the existing scholarship. She emphasised the need to make interconnections between national histories in tracing the transnational networks of social reformers. In emphasising the gap between dominant discourses and the lived experience, and in observing that the objectives of historical enquiry inevitably dictate sources and methods, Clare made key observations that have universal implications for all of us in our research work.

The organisers of WHN Kent 2015 extend warm thanks to all speakers, panel chairs and delegates for their contributions and for helping to make this a stimulating and memorable event.

Catherine Lee  
The Open University

## Bursary Holder's Conference Report

This year's Women's History Network Conference on the theme of Female Agency, Activism and Organisation took place at the University of Kent in Canterbury. The conference drew in researchers from Australia to Canada, and from Italy to the UK, covering topics from science and medicine to religion and education, to name just a few. In addition to the thought-provoking sessions, the highlight of each day was the Plenary Lectures. Over the course of the weekend there were three plenary lectures, all touching on very different aspects of women's history.

On Friday, Professor Mary Evans discussed woman and poverty in her lecture "'But We've Always Been Poor': Some Reflections on Women, Poverty and Austerity". Professor Evans, Centennial Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science's Gender Institute, offered a thought provoking analysis of the linkage between gender and poverty, and the effects of austerity on women. The lecture touched on how both the biographies of prominent women, and social change optimistically viewed as a continuous drive toward social progress, can obscure the numerous women that live in poverty. Key to understanding women and poverty is the social otherness articulated by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, and the insufficiently explored question of how women have been assigned the role of social other. Professor Evans stated that this otherness has its roots in women's association with nature, and that when women gain social power the nature of social power shifts. She concluded by urging feminism to include gender inequality within the discourse on social inequality, and to explore the global relationships inherent in the precariousness of women's existence.

On Saturday the spotlight turned to history and television as Professor Pam Cox from the University of Essex spoke about "Translating Women's History for Television". Professor Cox spoke about her work as an academic and her experience as a developer and presenter of two history programmes on the BBC, *Servants: The True Story of Life Below*

*Stairs and Shopgirls: The True Story of Life Behind the Counter.* After discussing the trajectory of history programming on television from the early televised lectures of A.J.P. Taylor to current more audience-engaging programming hosted by women such as Lucy Worsley, Bettany Hughes, Mary Beard and Amanda Vickery, Professor Cox related her own experience creating a history programme for the BBC. The two programmes that Professor Cox presented were developed to tie in with the popularity of historical dramas such as *Mr Selfridge* and *Downton Abbey*. The popularity of both the dramas and history-related programming shows that the public has a thirst for understanding the past. Television in turn offers unique ways in which hidden lives can be visualised. For Professor Cox, the public reach provided by the television programmes and the companion books has provided the most rewarding aspects of her participation.

To close the conference on Sunday, Professor Clare Midgley discussed “Feminism, Religion and Empire after the Transnational Turn”. Professor Midgley, from Sheffield Hallam University, presented a fascinating connection between Unitarianism and the Indian Bramho Samaj that demonstrated a connection that was both trans-Atlantic and transnational. In examining the life and work of Mary Carpenter, a British social reformer who promoted secular education for women in India, Professor Midgley showed that distorted images of history can be formed by focussing on only one arena of activism. For Carpenter, the imbalance is caused by focussing on her British writings without contrasting this with her work in India. Professor Midgley maintained that by ignoring the multi-faceted and often transnational dimensions of social movements that agency and perspective are obscured.

The best parts of the conference were the opportunity to hear about other researchers’ projects, to share our own projects, to get invaluable feedback from our colleagues, and of course to socialise. Friday’s reception where the winners of the 2015 WHN Community History Prize and the WHN Book Prize were announced, along with the conference dinner at Café du Soleil were excellent opportunities for getting to know our fellow participants. Congratulations to this year’s winners Ruth Beazley for the community history project *Triangle Mill Sisters* project on the mill workers’ hostel in Triangle near Sowerby in West Yorkshire, and the WHN Book Prize winner Dr Simone Laqua-O’Donnell for her book *Women in the Counter-Reformation in Early Modern Münster*. I am sure we are all looking forward to next year’s conference.

Kate Terkanian  
Bournemouth University

## 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](http://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 2015 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](http://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](http://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 [www.womenshistorynetwork.org](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org) OR by emailing [membership@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:membership@womenshistorynetwork.org) OR by mail to Ms Felicity Cawley, Postgrad Research Student, Economic & Social History, Lilybank House, University of Glasgow, G12 8RT.

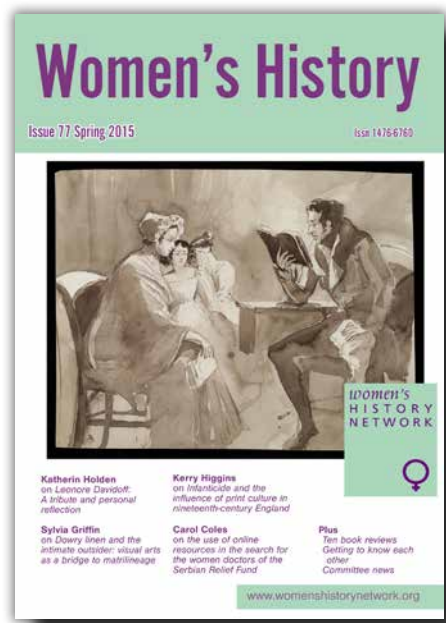
# Publishing in *Women's History*

*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](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html)

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at [editor@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:editor@womenshistorynetwork.org)



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[www.womenshistorynetwork.org](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org) and follow the instructions.  
Payments and Gift-Aid declarations can all be  
accessed online as well – see panel on page 46 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 the *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  
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