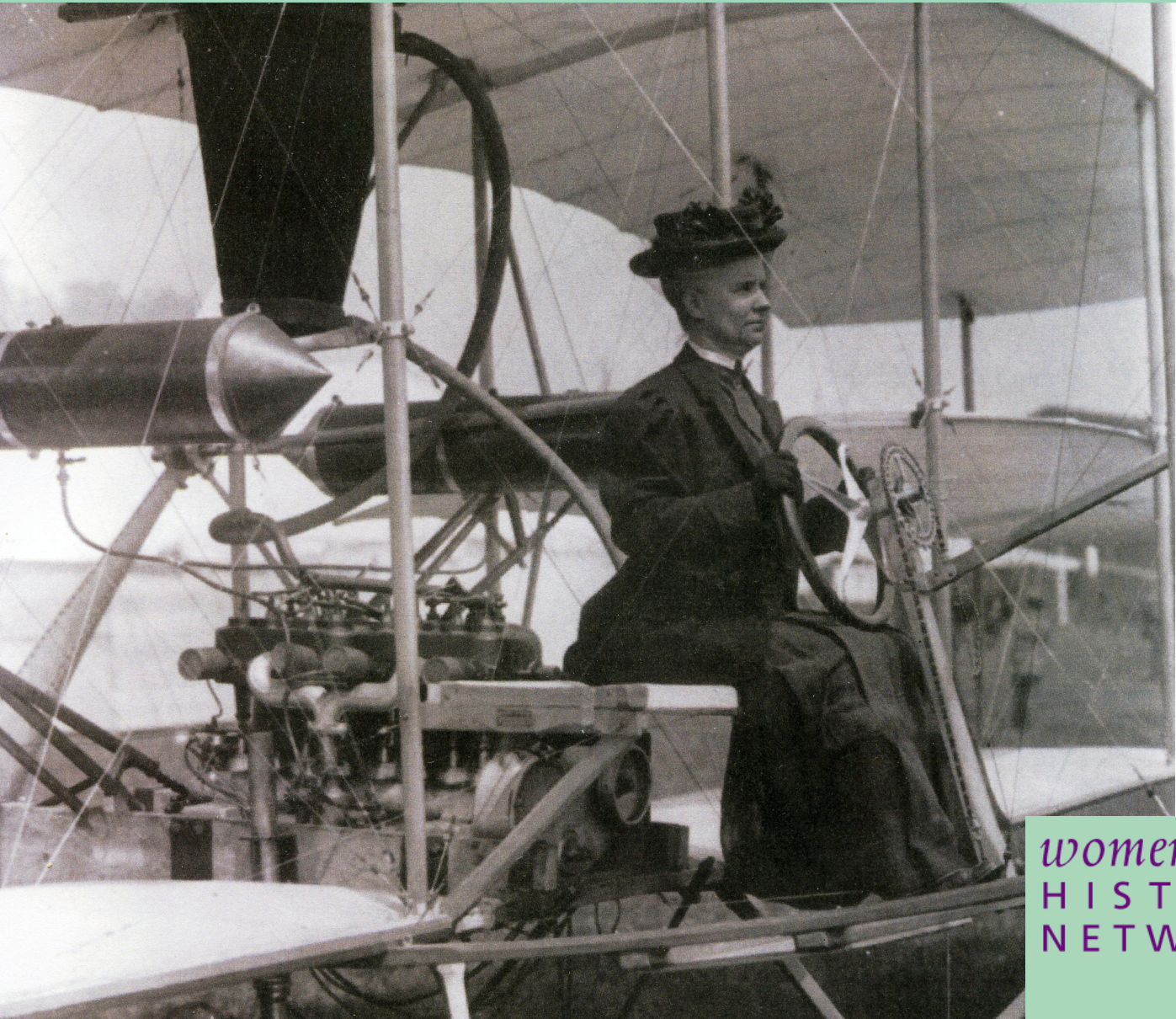


# Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network



women's  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



## Spring 2016

### Articles by

*Charlotte-Rose Millar, Ruth Cohen,  
Janet Smith, Amanda Jane Jones,  
Lawrence M. Kaplan*

### Plus

*Five book reviews  
Getting to know each  
other*

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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)

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Welcome to the spring issue of *Women's History*. In contrast to the close focus of our very successful recent special issues, this edition offers a selection of articles that range widely across time periods and subject matter, inviting interesting connections, comparisons and contrasts to be made. Common themes include the intersections between public, private and biographical realms. Women's own testimony, expressed in sources ranging from seventeenth-century trial depositions to early twentieth-century working class mothers' letters, forms the evidence upon which several of the articles are based and thus constitutes another point of connection.

Charlotte-Rose Millar uses witchcraft confessions to explore seventeenth-century attitudes towards marriage, love and sexual morality and, specifically, the continuity and change between pre- and post-Reformation marriage rituals and practices. In doing so, Millar challenges the notion of loveless early-modern marriage and raises interesting questions about the motivations and interior lives of individual women accused of witchcraft. The boundaries between public and private worlds also lie at the heart of Ruth Cohen's exploration of the Women's Co-operative Guild's contribution to the reform of infant care principles, policy and practice in the early twentieth century. Cohen demonstrates that, by focussing on mothers' needs as well as those of infants and, particularly, mothers' own definition of those needs (as outlined in their letters), the Guild was able to bring influence to bear upon public policy. We remain in the twentieth century for Amanda Jones's study of the psychological and physical effects of separation anxiety amongst Second World War evacuees as reflected in middle-brow women's fiction of the period. Thus, the boundaries between inner and public worlds are again brought into focus, as Jones highlights the connection between the effects of total war and the growing professional understandings of the resulting so-called 'war inside' individuals. Janet Smith takes a biographical approach to exploring the complexities of nineteenth-century Irish politics and the tensions created by an individual's involvement in potentially conflicting strands of political activism. Helen Taylor, an ardent women's suffragist, is shown to have played a prominent role in the Ladies Land League and thus, Smith argues, this case constitutes a challenge to any assessment of British Victorian feminism as exclusively imperialist. Finally, in our 'Reclaiming Women's Lives' series, the life and career of Lillian Todd, the first woman to design and build an airplane reflects similar tensions. In marking Todd's place in the historical record to celebrate 'Women in Aviation' week (commencing 7<sup>th</sup> March) Lawrence Kaplan highlights the challenges for a socially conservative, self-proclaimed 'non-suffragette' who made a name for herself in a male-dominated world. Despite conforming to dominant gendered ideas about woman's place not being in the machine shop, nor in the cockpit, the self-taught Todd was nevertheless determined to show 'what a woman can do'.

We hope that you will enjoy all the articles. This issue of *Women's History* includes regular features such as book reviews and 'Getting to know each other'. Both the 'Membership Announcements' and the 'Committee News' columns contain important notices, so please do have a look at those. The Annual Conference this year will spotlight women's material cultures and environments and our hosts at Leeds Trinity University promise a warm welcome. See the Call for Papers opposite.

With this issue we reluctantly bid farewell and express warmest thanks to Kate Murphy who has led the editorial team with energy and inspiration for the past year. She will be sorely missed. We are delighted, though, that Catherine Lee is stepping into Kate's shoes. Kate and Catherine have worked together during the past few months, to ensure a smooth transition. We also wish a warm welcome to Naomi Pullin, the newest member of the editorial team.

*Women's History* is the journal of the Women's History Network and is your space as network members. We welcome comments from members about how we can improve and develop the journal and are always eager to receive articles on any aspect of women's history together with suggestions and proposals for special themed issues.

Editorial team: Jane Berney, Lucy Bland, Rosalind Carr, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin and Rachel Rich.

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Cover: E. Lilian Todd poses at the controls of her recently completed airplane, 1909.

Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-15081.

# Rebecca West's Demonic Marriage: Exploring Emotions, Ritual and Women's Agency in Seventeenth-Century England<sup>1</sup>

Charlotte-Rose Millar

*University of Melbourne*

The 1640s in England were a time of significant political, social and religious upheaval. The chaos caused by the civil wars manifested in previously unpredicted ways. Witchcraft was one of the many phenomena that flourished during this time, both in its representation in print and in the number of trials, prosecutions and executions. In this paper, I will examine one of the strangest phenomena to appear during the 1640s, namely, the belief that witches could marry the Devil. There are very few examples of this belief and all of them can be traced to the trials overseen by Matthew Hopkins in East Anglia. Despite their rarity, these incidents are deeply valuable as a way of understanding how emotion was constructed between witches and devils. They allow us insights not just into the concerns of magistrates and pamphleteers but also into the mind of the accused witch herself. These narratives highlight the confusion between pre- and post-Reformation attitudes towards marriage rituals in a decade divided by religious sectarianism. This paper will study the confessions of three women who claimed to marry the Devil. In doing so it will explore the different rituals and power dynamics that surrounded these events and attempt to speculate on the accused witch's motivations for entering into this liaison. I argue that these rituals served a very specific purpose for the women who described them, namely, to legitimise their sexual relationships with the Devil through marriage. Through describing the Devil as their husband and not just their lover, these women were attempting to place their sexual desire and activity within the acceptable framework of marriage and, also, improve their own social status. This paper explores how conflicting beliefs about marriage rites were drawn upon in witchcraft confessions and translated by ordinary women into the language of the diabolical. In doing so, it sheds light on changing attitudes towards marriage rituals, how ordinary women understood these rituals and how these women chose to explain their sexual liaisons in light of contemporary attitudes towards sex and marriage.

Very little is known about the man who is often deemed responsible for the witch-hunts of the 1640s. Matthew Hopkins, self-styled Witch Finder General, seems to have been the son of a godly minister.<sup>2</sup> According to Hopkins, his interest in witchcraft began in 1644 when he became worried about six or eight witches living in his village of Manningtree in Essex.<sup>3</sup> Hopkins' concern led to the arrests of thirty-six women for witchcraft, nineteen of whom were executed. One of these accused witches, Rebecca West, admitted that she had married the Devil. This case will be looked at in further detail below but it is worth noting that Rebecca became the primary witness for the prosecution and, as a result, was the only one of the thirty-six accused who was acquitted and released.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately this was not the end of the witch-hunt; in East Anglia between 1645 and 1647 approximately 250 people were tried for witchcraft and 100 were executed.<sup>5</sup> James Sharpe has estimated that between 1542 and 1736 slightly fewer than 500 witches were executed in England and 1000 were tried.<sup>6</sup> Clearly,

the East Anglian witch-hunt was unusual for its high number of trials and executions. Although Hopkins was not personally behind all the trials, he is often viewed as the catalyst for them. However, as Sharpe has pointed out, the sheer scale of this witch hunt would not have been possible without the right social conditions which, with the advent of civil war, were present in England in the 1640s.

The East Anglian trials are often viewed as atypical of English witchcraft. This view is beginning to change with historians such as Sharpe and Darren Oldridge arguing that many of the witchcraft beliefs of the 1640s were present throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>7</sup> Amongst the many witchcraft beliefs that characterised the early modern English experience is the concept that witches engaged in sexual activity with devils. This is not the focus of this paper but it is important to note that this belief was circulating in England and did not begin in (and was not limited to) the 1640s.<sup>8</sup> As well as claiming that they married the Devil, the three women in this paper also drew on the much wider belief that witches slept with devils.

## Demonic Marriages: How They Were Constructed

This paper focuses on three witches who all confessed that they married the Devil: Rebecca West, Ellen Driver and Thomazine Ratcliffe. All three confessions come from 1645 and Rebecca West's was the only one to appear in print. The others are taken from depositions. Although this is a small sample, it seems that the concept that witches could marry the Devil was circulating within English witchcraft belief. When describing the tenets of the diabolical pact John Gaule, a Church of England clergyman, included the belief that witches married the Devil. Although Gaule did not dismiss the reality of witchcraft, he was scathing in his description of the many different beliefs that circulated in popular culture. At the end of a long list of what Gaule describes as 'manifold Impossibilities, & absurdities [and] manifold superstitions'<sup>9</sup> he notes:

Oft times, [the Devil] marries [witches] ere they part either to himselfe, or their Familiar, or to one another and that by the Book of Common prayer (as a pretender to witchfinding lately told me in the Audience of many).<sup>10</sup>

Keith Thomas has argued that the pretender Gaule mentions is Matthew Hopkins. Given Gaule's date of writing and Hopkins' self-imposed title, Witch Finder General, Thomas' conclusion seems likely. Although Gaule does not believe the rhetoric of demonic marriage, labelling it as part of the 'tale or legend' associated with the demonic pact, he has included it specifically to demonstrate the types of credulous beliefs circulating in England. According to Gaule, the Devil officiates these demonic ceremonies and either marries the witches to himself, to their familiars or to each other.<sup>11</sup> Gaule's treatise



was published in 1646 in Huntingtonshire (a county affected by the trials) almost certainly as a reaction to the extremely violent and pervasive trials instigated by Matthew Hopkins in the South-East counties. Gaule's inclusion of the belief that witches 'oft times' married the Devil is not wholly surprising when we remember that single women were viewed as far more likely to succumb to the Devil in the shape of a man than their married contemporaries.<sup>12</sup> Gaule's inclusion of this belief, combined with popular ideas about the tendency for single women to be more easily seduced by the Devil, suggests that it may have been more far-reaching than the three surviving confessions would suggest.

All three confessions contain many points of similarity and are immensely useful in understanding how witches constructed their relationship with the Devil both in their own minds and for their interrogators. They also allow insights into how individual women understood contemporary attitudes towards marriage, love and sex. Rather than simply claiming that the Devil married them in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, as Gaule's treatise claims is common, Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine draw on a rich range of pre- and post-Reformation marriage rituals and influences. In 1645 Rebecca West's confession was published. Rebecca, a spinster, began by describing her first meeting with the Devil, when he appeared to her 'in the likenesse of a proper young man, who desired of her, that he might have the same familiaritie with her, that others that appeared unto her before had had'.<sup>13</sup> The implication that Rebecca frequently engaged in fornication is quite clear here. Rebecca slept with the Devil 'who lay with her as a man' so that he would agree to help her take revenge on those who had wronged her.<sup>14</sup> Uniquely among English witchcraft pamphlets, Rebecca did not only sleep with the Devil; she also married him. Although we are not told what shape the Devil took during his marriage to Rebecca (he has, throughout the pamphlet, appeared as a man, a kitten and a dog), we are presumably meant to assume that he is in the form of the 'proper young man' that Rebecca originally slept with. This assumption is reinforced by the original indictment which states that Rebecca entertained three evils spirits, one 'in the likeness of a young man called "her husband."' <sup>15</sup> According to the pamphlet:

...the Devil appeared to her the said Rebecca, as she was going to bed, and told her, he would marry her, and that shee could not deny him; she said he kissed her, but was as cold as clay, and married her that night, in this manner; He tooke her by the hand and lead her about the Chamber and promised to be her loving husband till death, and to avenge her of her enemies; And that then shee promised him to be his obedient wife till death, and to deny God and Christ.<sup>16</sup>

There are two other examples of similar experiences that are recorded in depositions from 1645. After three days and two nights of sleep deprivation accused witch Ellen Driver, also apparently unmarried, confessed that she had two imps that sucked her. This fairly standard confession is followed by the below declaration:

the devil appeared to her like a man & that she was married to him in one [unclear] parishes and that he lived with her 3 years and that she



Wellcome Library, London. Matthew Hopkins, Witchfinder general, with two supposed witches calling out the names of their demons, some of which are represented by animals. Etching, 1792, after an earlier woodcut.

had 2 children by him in that time wch weare changlings...she sd further that it was 60 years since the divell wooed her to marry him and it was the next time of his comeinge before agreed to him after she wer married he had the carnall use of her but was cold, and injoynd her before marrage to denie god and Christ and she sd that she did not know that any of his neybour did ever see him, she further sd that beeing in bed wth him she felt of his feet and they weare cloven, and he lived wth her 2 years and then he died as she thought, and that it was her pride was the cause that made her consent to him.<sup>17</sup>

One final deposition, also from 1645, records the confession of Thomazine Ratcliffe of Shelley, a widow. Thomazine confessed that about twenty years past, soon after her husband's decease:

there came out in the likeness of a man, into bed with her, which spoke with a hollow, shrill voice, and told her, he would be a loving husband to her, if she would consent to him which she did.<sup>18</sup>

After Thomazine agreed to marry the Devil, he promised that 'he would revenge her of all her enemies, and that she should never miss anything'.<sup>19</sup> Sadly, for Thomazine, we are told that the Devil proved to be a liar.<sup>20</sup>

One might argue that the similar nature of these three accounts suggests that we are actually hearing Hopkins' voice rather than those of the accused. There is almost definitely some truth to this, particularly as we know that Ellen Driver was sleep deprived before she confessed. This coercive questioning would have made Ellen highly suggestible. However, it is taking away too much agency from ordinary women to suggest that they had no input in their confessions. As Marion Gibson's work on English witchcraft pamphlets has demonstrated, pamphlet narratives included a flurry of different influences. The witch, the magistrate, the clerk, the pamphleteer; all contributed to the final story.<sup>21</sup> In the case of confessions, Lyndal Roper has argued that witchcraft trials were one context which allowed women to 'speak' and develop their own narratives.<sup>22</sup> According to Roper, witches:

used elements of their culture to create narratives which made sense of their lives: of their unbearable hatreds, agonies, jealousies. These came from the Devil, an explanation which did not rob women of agency – for they listened to the Devil's voice.<sup>23</sup>

Witchcraft confessions were, in some cases, a way for women to express themselves and a genre in which they translated their own life experience into the 'language of the diabolic.'<sup>24</sup> All three of the above confessions demonstrate this process: all of them show how these women thought about the diabolical and, also, how they understood contemporary attitudes towards marriage, love and sex. These three witches were almost definitely influenced by their interrogators; but they should still be viewed as active participants in constructing their own diabolical narratives.

It is worth speculating on whether or not these stories were only constructed at the point of confession or whether these three women were confessing to a story that they had believed for some time. This is, of course, impossible to say for sure. However, it seems likely that these women may have based their narratives on real experiences of men whom they or people they knew married in the manners described. Their experiences may have then been reinvented in diabolical language when under pressure to confess to a liaison with the Devil. The second part of this paper looks at how these women used their stories to legitimise their sexual desire for and relationship with the Devil. If we view these confessions as stories built upon real experiences (be they first- or second-hand) which were then translated into diabolical narratives, we see that Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine were able to simultaneously legitimise their experiences both to themselves and to their interrogators.

Although all three confessions differ there are remarkable similarities. Both Rebecca and Thomazine stated that the Devil was 'cold'. It is slightly unclear whether or not the Devil's body was cold or whether the witches are specifically referring to the Devil's cold semen, a common trope in European trials. C.L. Ewen has noted that nine witches from the 1645 trials reported the 'cold nature' of the Devil and suggests that in these examples we see the influence of Continental ideas mediated through Matthew Hopkins.<sup>25</sup> There are a number of other similarities between the three confessions. Both Rebecca and Ellen admit to marrying the Devil the second time he appeared to them; only Thomazine marries him on his first appearance. Both Rebecca and Ellen deny God and Christ during their

marriage ceremonies; Thomazine does this implicitly through consenting to the Devil. All three witches describe the Devil as appearing in the likeness of a man (although this is implied rather than explicit in Rebecca's confession). In all three cases it is the Devil who initiates the marriage but all of the witches provide some explanation for their decision to marry. Rebecca and Thomazine are promised a loving husband who will avenge them on their enemies. Ellen claims that the Devil 'wooed' her to marry him, suggesting a desire for love, but also states that it was her pride that made her consent. This point, which hints at the importance of marriage as a factor in social status, will be explored later in this article.

Rebecca's confession provides the most detail on the ceremony itself. The demonic wedding mimics a traditional ceremony but also represents a melding of both pre- and post-Reformation marriage practices. Rebecca claims that the Devil offers her his kiss after he proposes. The pre-Reformation Sarum Missal specified that during the marriage ceremony 'the bridegroom shall receive the pax from the priest and convey it to the bride, kissing her'.<sup>26</sup> Although in the post-Reformation era there was no 'official kissing in church...customs of this sort were hard to obliterate' and many bridegrooms continued to kiss their brides.<sup>27</sup> In Rebecca's ceremony, the Devil kisses her as part of the marriage ritual, demonstrating the continuance of pre-Reformation practices. However, the Devil is 'as cold as clay' when he kisses Rebecca, thus failing to properly emulate the role of a human husband. The kiss is not mentioned in Ellen or Thomazine's confessions. In what is perhaps a further imitation of traditional ritual, Rebecca recounts that the Devil 'tooke her by the hand and lead her about the Chamber'. In both pre- and post-Reformation vows, the couple held hands during the ceremony.<sup>28</sup> Although in post-Reformation ritual, church weddings took place wholly inside the church, when following the pre-Reformation Sarum Missal, the marriage ceremony began on the church porch and, after the bridegroom gave the ring to the bride, the ceremony continued inside.<sup>29</sup> The tradition of moving around throughout the church during the marriage ceremony is perhaps what is being drawn upon in Rebecca's description of the Devil leading her around the chamber.

It would be a mistake, in spite of the descriptions of Church marriages above, to think that there was only one "type" of marriage both before and after the Reformation. As Richard Adair has reminded us 'there was a spectrum of irregular unions in this period, ranging from consensual relationships at one end to fully sanctioned church marriage at the other'.<sup>30</sup> These different types of marriages were not always strictly differentiated and the boundaries between them were often 'blurred'.<sup>31</sup> As well as official church marriages, clandestine marriages also existed although, as David Cressy reminds us, the 'vast majority of couples in early modern England acknowledged the importance of religious ritual in establishing conjugal unions, and accepted the role of the clergy in the solemnization of holy matrimony'.<sup>32</sup> Some couples did not marry at all and cohabited without this expectation.<sup>33</sup> Others engaged in clandestine marriages. Despite their irregularities (they may have taken place outside a church or during a forbidden season of the year) these were binding marriages under canon law.<sup>34</sup> A third type of marriage ceremony, spousals, are best described as private affairs in which there was no official to conduct the ceremony and there were either very few or no witnesses present. The ritual



consisted of two people promising either that they would be married or that they were married (*de futuro* or *de presenti*). Village communities often viewed these agreements as legitimate marriages.<sup>35</sup> Sexual intercourse or gift giving could cement these arrangements, particularly in the case of *de futuro* arrangements.<sup>36</sup> Although these types of unions seem to have been accepted pre-Reformation, seventeenth-century ecclesiastical authorities became increasingly hostile towards any marriage ceremony that did not take place in a church.<sup>37</sup> Despite this official position, both spousals and clandestine marriages continued post-Reformation and appear to have been influential in Rebecca and Thomazine's constructions of their demonic ceremonies.<sup>38</sup>

Rebecca's marriage vows depict many varied influences. Some elements of the ceremony appear to stem from the pre-Reformation Sarum Missal, whereas others have clearly been influenced by post-Reformation ritual. The way in which the Devil kissed Rebecca and then led her around the chamber appears to draw on pre-Reformation practices. However, in her marriage vows, Rebecca's promise of obedience drew directly on post-Reformation vows in which the woman swore the previously unused vow 'to obey'.<sup>39</sup> This vow of obedience was understood as a woman's way of demonstrating her love for her husband, as 'for women, loving behaviour was synonymous with obedience'.<sup>40</sup> The Devil also swears to love Rebecca, promising to be a 'loving husband till death'.<sup>41</sup> Here, the description of the Devil's promises draws on post-Reformation vows in which both parties vow 'to love and to cherish [each other], till death'.<sup>42</sup> Thomazine's demonic lover also draws on this convention and promises to be a 'loving husband to her' if she consents to him which she does. These vows were not merely declarations of love but, as Katie Barclay has argued, highlighted the types of behaviour that both husband and wife used to demonstrate their love. The early modern connection between love and authority differs considerably from modern conceptions of love and marriage. In the seventeenth century, 'an affectionate but hierarchical relationship was the dominant ideal'.<sup>43</sup> This does not mean that early modern marriages were loveless; simply that they were based on a conception of love that differs from what is now the norm. Whereas women showed their love through obedience, men were expected to demonstrate their love by providing for and protecting their wives.<sup>44</sup> As a result of these gendered expectations, 'love reinforced male authority and female subordination'.<sup>45</sup> In the case of Rebecca's demonic marriage ceremony, both Rebecca and her male Devil are enacting Rebecca's understanding of the gendered hierarchy of marriage in their expressions of love and obedience.

The Devil's promise to 'avenge' both Rebecca and Thomazine of their enemies is a typical agreement between a witch and Devil; it often forms the precursor to forming the demonic pact. However, read in the context of a marriage, it can be viewed as part of the demonic husband's promise to protect his wife. Through promising to be a loving husband and to revenge both witches of their enemies, the Devil is performing the role of a protective and loving husband in early modern society. Through their marriages to the Devil Rebecca and Thomazine have entered into a gendered relationship in which they have promised to obey and love their husbands; their demonic husband has taken on the role of protector through his promises of love and the removal of their enemies.

The role of sex in these demonic marriages also appears

to have been influenced by both pre- and post-Reformation ideas about marriage. Rebecca confesses that she slept with the Devil before she married him. Thomazine's confession differs and suggests that she and the Devil agreed to marry and then cemented this arrangement by consummating their union. Thomazine says that the Devil told her that 'he would be a loving husband to her, if she would consent to him which she did'. It is unclear whether the Devil is asking Thomazine to consent to marriage, sex or both. However, given that this conversation takes place in Thomazine's bed, it seems likely that we are meant to understand that the Devil and Thomazine engaged in sexual intercourse after they agreed to get married. This private agreement is reminiscent of a betrothal or a spousal and is clearly understood by both parties to be a valid, legal marriage. It could also have been inspired by the existence of conditional marriage contracts in which two people promise to marry each other if certain conditions are met.<sup>46</sup> As numerous historians have demonstrated, it 'is clear that some people thought that after the betrothal the couple could sexually consummate the match'.<sup>47</sup> This was even official church doctrine until the twelfth century.<sup>48</sup> For Thomazine, by agreeing to marry the Devil and then engaging in sexual activity with him, her marriage is now valid.

Thomazine's marriage to the Devil took place without witnesses, without a church and without any type of official. She and the Devil exchanged promises and then cemented these promises through sexual intercourse. This confession highlights the continuation of medieval marriage rituals. However, much like Rebecca's ceremony which betrays varying influences, Thomazine also draws on vows to be loving and, implicitly, obedient. Although Thomazine does not, like Rebecca, swear to obey, she does consent to the Devil as a necessary condition of and forerunner to their marriage. Like Rebecca, Thomazine is expressing her love and obedience simultaneously as a response to the Devil's promise to be loving and avenge her of her enemies. Both women appear to understand marriage as a partnership in which women promise to love and obey their husbands in return for love and protection. Their descriptions of wedding ceremonies highlight the varied nature of marriage rituals still circulating in England well into the early modern period.

Both Rebecca West and Ellen Driver were asked to deny God and Christ as part of their wedding ceremonies. Thomazine Ratcliffe does this implicitly by consenting to the Devil but does not vocalise it in the same way as the other accused. The presence of the Devil in these marriage ceremonies obviously demonstrates their anti-religious nature, but the witches' denial of God and Christ confirms these marriages as inverted and anti-Christian. Both before and after the Reformation, religion played a strong role in many marriage ceremonies. In the mid-twelfth century, Peter the Lombard defined marriage as a sacrament. By emphasising the sacred nature of the act, Peter positioned marriage as an act which signified the union of Christ with his Church.<sup>49</sup> Robert of Courson later added to this by claiming that marriage signified the sacred coupling between divinity and humanity in the Virgin's womb.<sup>50</sup> Before this time mutual consent was all that was necessary to marry: no witnesses, no parental consent, no ceremony, no priest, and no church.<sup>51</sup> This earlier understanding of marriage was extremely influential and both before and after the Reformation many couples still married without involving a church or a priest. Marriage remained a sacrament in England until the Religious

Settlement of 1559. Despite the loss of its sacramental status, seventeenth-century ecclesiastical authorities still stressed the religious nature of marriage and emphasised the importance of church weddings. All couples were supposed to marry in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer (although we know that not all did) and there was a push from churchmen to emphasise the religious elements of marriage.<sup>52</sup> For most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, marriage was viewed as 'an holy ordinance of God' and, 'from moderate puritans to high ceremonialists, the general view held that marriage belonged to God and should be celebrated with solemnity in his church'.<sup>53</sup> It is against this understanding of marriage that Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine all agreed to marry the Devil. Although they were influenced in their understanding of marriage rituals by both pre- and post-Reformation practices, they inverted the religious nature of the ceremony. Not only did these three women marry outside the church and without a priest, they muttered anti-Christian vows and, instead of being married in the name of God, turned away from God and Christ as part of their wedding ceremony. As wives of the Devil, Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine performed the ultimate anti-Christian act.

### **Demonic Marriages: Love, Pride and Legitimising Desire**

There appear to have been a number of factors which influenced the decision to, firstly, enter into a demonic marriage and, secondly, to confess to it. As noted above, it is possible that Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine's confessions were based on human relationships that were then translated into diabolical language when interrogated. There are then two different things to consider when trying to understand these demonic marriages. Firstly, why Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine agreed to enter into marriage (whether real, imagined, human or demonic) and, secondly, why they chose to confess to marrying the Devil. In their confessions, all three women articulate their desire for love from their husbands, and their own expectations of love. Wedding vows represent a commitment about the future – and it seems clear that the accused expected and desired their marriages to be loving. This desire seems a powerful motivator in choosing to marry. In Ellen's case, her pride and desire for social standing also seems a prominent concern. As for why these women confessed to their demonic marriages, it seems likely that this was done out of pride and a desire to neutralise their sexual encounters by channelling them into the acceptable framework of marriage.

One of the key ways in which confessions of demonic marriages differ from those of demonic pacts is the exchange of promises to be loving. In a typical pact, a witch promises the Devil her soul and blood and is rewarded by the power to avenge her enemies. In the confessions of Rebecca and Thomazine the Devil promises revenge, as he would do as part of a demonic pact. The desire for love appears to be the primary difference between these two arrangements and is a strong motivator for entering into demonic marriages. Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson have warned us of the dangers of projecting modern expectations of love in marriage onto a seventeenth-century context.<sup>54</sup> Unlike in our modern world in which romance and sexual compatibility are considered essential to a happy marriage, early modern women were not always free to pursue these goals. This did not mean, however,

that these concerns were not prominent in their minds. Love was still a key aspect of many early modern marriages and, as Mendelson and Crawford have argued, many women expected their marriages to be a 'loving partnership'.<sup>55</sup> David Cressy has also stressed the presence of love in early modern marriages and suggests that 'rather than being surprised to find people falling in love or continuing in love, as some historians of early modern England have indicated, we should, perhaps, be surprised that anyone should think they did not'.<sup>56</sup> Numerous other historians have concluded similarly and have comprehensively rejected the view posited by Lawrence Stone and Edward Shorter that early modern marriages were loveless.<sup>57</sup> Evidence for the lower classes is scant and much of what remains comes from court records which inevitably highlight the darker side of married life. Despite this, there is evidence that poor women expected to be loved and, for some, succeeded in attaining mutually affectionate relationships.<sup>58</sup>

Although it is very difficult, if not impossible, to know whether or not love was the main motivator in the above three confessions, it is possible to speculate on how these demonic partnerships were perceived by the participants. The previous discussion of love and authority in marriage suggests that in Rebecca and Thomazine's relationships, the Devil is performing the role of a loving husband through his marriage vows and his promises of protection. Thomazine may have been particularly susceptible to promises of love given that her husband had recently died. Rebecca and Thomazine appear to reciprocate this love through their promises (both explicit and implicit) of obedience. Rebecca and Thomazine then appear to enjoy a stereotypical relationship with the Devil: in exchange for their souls he injures and kills neighbours and cattle that the accused witch dislikes. The fact that witch and Devil are married seems to cement this partnership and to add an extra dimension to it. Although Ellen does not explicitly talk about love, she does say that the Devil 'wooed' her to marry him, suggesting that the Devil professed his love for Ellen. Love, and the desire for love, definitely appears to have been a factor in these women's decision to enter into a demonic marriage. In terms of why they confessed, however, it seems more plausible that Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine were attempting to legitimise their demonic partnerships both to themselves and to their interrogators.

In her confession, Ellen Driver declares that it was her pride that made her marry the Devil. I suggest that this reference highlights why Ellen, Rebecca and Thomazine may have confessed to demonic marriages. Firstly, in claiming that their sexual activity took place within marriage, all three women could be attempting to legitimise their sexual activities. Secondly, given the lower social status of unmarried women, Ellen's pride in marrying the Devil may hint at her desire to marry and thus obtain a higher social status.

To understand why Ellen, Thomazine and Rebecca may have felt the need to legitimise their sexual encounters, it is necessary to briefly examine early modern English views on sexual morality.<sup>59</sup> Although we know that many women in early modern England engaged in sex outside of marriage, the act of fornication was still viewed as illicit. Early church fathers, such as St. Augustine and Clement of Alexandria, stressed the importance of marriage as the only acceptable outlet for sexual activity. Augustine's belief that sex was an act that should only be performed within marriage for the procreation of children became the dominant Catholic orthodoxy for



the succeeding 1500 years.<sup>60</sup> Even after the Protestant Reformation, sex 'retained its taint' and remained associated with sin, particularly when performed outside of marriage.<sup>61</sup> In seventeenth-century England, sex could be "sanctified" by the reformed Church if it was performed at the appropriate time of the month and within marriage.<sup>62</sup> Puritan authors in England also stressed that sex should be 'marital, private, tempered, neither frivolous nor spontaneous'.<sup>63</sup> In England in the 1640s sex outside marriage was still very much taboo. In claiming that they were married to the Devil (and were not just his lover), Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine may have been trying to legitimise their sexual desire and activity with the Devil. Instead of admitting to fornication, these women attempted to neutralise their sexual encounters by placing them within the acceptable framework of marriage. In Ellen's case, she confesses that she had two children by the Devil, her husband, thus demonstrating her adherence to expectations of the role of sex within marriage.

As well as reflecting popular attitudes towards marriage and sexuality morality, Rebecca, Ellen and Thomazine's confessions also highlight their understanding of the different social statuses afforded to married and unmarried women. As Crawford and Mendelson have demonstrated, from adulthood 'women's lives diverged at each social level depending on their marital status'.<sup>64</sup> In Protestant England, marriage was an honourable estate. From the 1530s, Protestants began to argue that celibacy was no longer a special virtue. For Protestant reformers, 'marriage was instituted by God, and marriage and child-bearing were women's appointed purposes'.<sup>65</sup> For this reason, Crawford has argued that unmarried women were regarded by Protestants with 'disfavour'.<sup>66</sup> Marriage represented stability, household order and security and was frequently represented in literature as a life-stage that was 'at once desirable, necessary and inevitable'.<sup>67</sup> Despite the glorification of marriage, the sixteenth and seventeenth century saw a rise in the number of women who remained single. Ten per cent of the 1566 birth cohort never married and by 1641 this figure had reached a high of twenty-two per cent.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, neither the pamphlet nor the original depositions provide much demographic information on Rebecca, Ellen or Thomazine. Brian Levack has convincingly argued that 'we can be fairly certain that the great majority of those prosecuted [for witchcraft] came from the lower levels of society'.<sup>69</sup> Financial factors were key in many women's inability to marry and, as Judith M. Spicksley reminds us, may have been the single most important impediment.<sup>70</sup> For many women in the lower orders of society, marriage was out of reach as was the privileged social position that came with it. If we return to Rebecca's confession, we see that she describes the Devil as a 'proper young man', thus suggesting that she saw him as a good prospect. The Devil also tells Rebecca that he will avenge her of her enemies and do anything she desires. Thomazine's demonic husband also offers to avenge her on her enemies and promises her that 'she should never miss any thing'. For both of these women, marriage represents stability, status and protection and it is these beliefs that they have drawn upon in their confessions. The increasing lack of marital opportunity in the 1640s would have affected all three of these women. Notwithstanding their demonic marriages, Rebecca and Ellen were spinsters and Thomazine was a widow. In telling stories of demonic marriage, these three women appear to be highlighting their desire to marry, their desire for love

and their desire to obtain a higher social status.

Rebecca West, Ellen Driver and Thomazine Ratcliffe all appeared to view their demonic marriages as genuine, legitimate partnerships, despite the fact that they did not take place in a church or in the presence of witnesses or officials. We cannot know whether their confessions were wholly imagined or based on real marriages to human men whom these women reinvented as the Devil. What is clear, though, is that all three women drew on experience, either first or second hand, of marriage rituals and attitudes to love and sexual morality in constructing their diabolical narratives. These confessions demonstrate the confusion about different types of marriage rituals still circulating in the mid 1640s and the proliferation of different types of ceremonies. The confessions also demonstrate the construction of love, obedience and protection between accused witches and their devils. They allow us a tantalising glimpse into ordinary women's attitudes to sexual morality, love, and marriage in early modern England. Although the confessions were mediated through interrogators and, in Rebecca's case, pamphleteers, they demonstrate how ordinary women translated their understanding of societal expectations into the language of the diabolical.

## Notes

1. I am grateful to Katie Barclay for her comments on an earlier version of this paper and to the anonymous reviewer for their helpful suggestions.
2. John Sterne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witches containing these severall particulars: that there are witches called bad Witches, and Witches untruely called good or white Witches, and what manner of people they be, and how they may been knowne with many particulars thereunto tending. Together with the confessions of many of those executed since May 1645, in the severall Counties hereafter mentioned. As also some objections answered*, (London: Printed by William Wilson, 1648), 61.
3. Matthew Hopkins, *The Discovery of Witches in Answer to severall Queries, lately delived to the Judges of Assize for the County of Norfolk. And now published by Matthew Hopkins, Witch-finder. For the Benefit of the whole Kingdom*, (London: Printed by R. Royston, 1647), 2.
4. James Sharpe, "Matthew Hopkins", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
5. The trials took place in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and in the East Midlands. Sharpe, "Matthew Hopkins", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
6. James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550-1750*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), 125.
7. Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England*, (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 136 and James Sharpe, "The Devil in East Anglia: The Matthew Hopkins Trials Reconsidered" in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, eds. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 249.
8. My own research has demonstrated that fifty per cent of seventeenth-century witchcraft pamphlets portrayed witches as sexual beings who engaged in penetrative and non-penetrative sexual acts with devils. See Charlotte-Rose Millar, "Sleeping with Devils: The Sexual Witch in Seventeenth Century England" in *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*, ed. Marcus Harnes and Victoria Bladen

(Ashgate, 2015). Many historians have argued that the sexualised elements of English witchcraft were atypical or only appeared in the 1640s (see, for example, Alan Macfarlane, "Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex" in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Witchcraft in England*, ed. Brian Levack (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc, 1992), 10; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 568; and Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England*, (London; New York: Longman, 1998), 125.

9. John Gaule, *Select Cases of Conscience touching Witches and Witchcrafts*, (London: Printed by W. Wilson for Richard Clutterbuck, 1646), 65.

10. Gaule, *Select Cases of Conscience*, 63-64.

11. The familiar is a devil in animal form. However, man-like devils can also be referred to as familiar spirits. Pamphlet narratives generally did not distinguish between 'the Devil' and 'a devil' or a familiar spirit. Sometimes the familiar spirit is referred to as 'the Devil', 'the devil', 'a devil' or one of many 'devils'. Other names include 'imps', 'sprites' or 'spirits'. In the confessions of Rebecca West, Ellen Driver, and Thomazine Ratcliffe, the Devil is described as both 'the Devil' and as a familiar spirit. Both of these names demonstrate the demonic nature of the creature. Although this may seem confusing, it is not possible to separate these terms and in pamphlets and trial records these terms are interchangeable or, in the words of Darren Oldridge, 'blurred'; *The Devil in Early Modern England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 138.

12. Levack, *The Witch-hunt*, 156.

13. Anon., *A True and Exact Relation of the several Informations, Examinations, and Confessions of the late Witches, arraigned and executed in the County of Essex. Who were arraigned and condemned at the late Sessions, holden at Chelmsford before the Right Honourable Robert, Earle of Warwicke and severall of his Majesties Justices of Peace, the 29 of July, 1645. Wherein the severall murders, and devilish Witchcrafts, committed on the bodies of men, women, and children, and divers cattell, are fully discovered. Published y Authority*, (London: Printed by M.S. for Henry Overton, and Benj. Allen, 1645), 11.

14. Anon., *A True and Exact Relation*, 12.

15. C. L. Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes held for the Home Circuit A.D. 1559-1736*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1929), 224.

16. Anon., *A True and Exact Relation*, 14-15.

17. Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 27402, fos. 104-121 in Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, 303.

18. Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonism*, 295.

19. Ibid., 295.

20. Ibid., 295.

21. Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1999).

22. Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 20.

23. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, 20.

24. Ibid., 20.

25. Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonism*, 52.

26. Frederick Evan Warren (tr.), *The Sarum Missal in English, Part Two*, (London: Alexander Moring Ltd., 1911), 158 in David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 338.

27. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 341.

28. Ibid., 339.

29. Ibid., 336-338.

30. Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 140.

31. Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 140.

32. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 316.

33. Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 140.

34. Ibid., 140.

35. Ibid., 142-144 and Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840*, (Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 299.

36. Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 144.

37. Ibid., 145. During the Interregnum secular rather than ecclesiastical marriage was temporarily reinstated. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*, 310.

38. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*, 300.

39. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 340.

40. Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 103.

41. Anon., *A true and exact relation of the several informations*, 15.

42. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 340

43. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 132.

44. Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power*, 103.

45. Ibid., 103.

46. Eric Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 20.

47. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*, 300. See also Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 146-148.

48. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*, (New York: Viking, 2005), 106.

49. John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France around 1200*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 63.

50. Ibid.

51. Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, 18.

52. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 294-295.

53. Ibid., 295. During the Interregnum marriage was secularized by the Act of 1653.

54. Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 131.

55. Ibid., 132.

56. Cressy, *Birth, Death and Marriage*, 261.

57. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) and Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975). For those who have stressed the existence of love in early-modern marriages see: James Sharpe, "Plebeian Marriage in Stuart England: Some Evidence from Popular Literature" in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 36, (1986): 69-90; E.P. Thompson, "Happy Families" in *New Society*, (8 September 1977): 499-501; Martin Ingram, "Spousals Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Court c.1350-1640, in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.) *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981); Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*.

58. Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 133.



59. For a more detailed explanation of attitudes towards sex in early modern England, see Millar, "Sleeping with Devils: The Sexual Witch in Seventeenth Century England."
60. Hawkes, *Sex and Pleasure*, 56
61. Phillips and Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality*, 38.
62. James Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 77.
63. Hawkes, *Sex and Pleasure*, 98.
64. Crawford and Mendelson, *Women in Early Modern England*, 125
65. Patrica Crawford, *Women and Religion in England* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 39.
66. Crawford, *Women and Religion in England*, 47.
67. Judith M. Spicksley, "To Be or Not to Be Married: Single

- Women, Money-lending, and the Question of Choice in Late Tudor and Stuart England" in Laurel Amtower and Dorothea Kehler (eds.) *The Single Woman in Medieval and Early Modern England: Her Life and Representation*, (Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 67.
68. Judith M. Spicksley, "To Be or Not to Be Married: Single Women, Money-lending, and the Question of Choice in Late Tudor and Stuart England", 66.
69. Levack, *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2006), 157.
70. Judith M. Spicksley, "To Be or Not To Be Married" in *The Single Women in Medieval and Early Modern England: Her Life and Representation*, edited by Laurel Amtower and Dorothea Kehler, (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 70-71.

## 'Mothers First': the Women's Co-operative Guild's campaign for maternity care, 1906–18<sup>1</sup>

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In 1914, the *Manchester Guardian* described the Women's Co-operative Guild as 'perhaps the most remarkable women's organization in the world'.<sup>2</sup> By this point in time, it is generally acknowledged to have become a unique body of women with its own 'distinctive working-class feminism'.<sup>3</sup>

This article examines the Guild's contribution to public debate and policy on infant welfare between 1906 and 1918, during which time it became a leading advocate for the interests of mothers. It explores how — increasingly and most unusually — this drew on mothers' own definitions of the support they wanted and how it should be provided. As a result, the Guild not only demanded a range of maternity services, but also challenged attitudes among infant welfare workers in recommending that maternity care be municipally run so that it could, potentially at least, be accountable to working-class women. After introducing the Guild, the article discusses how it initially took up the cause of infant welfare from 1906. I argue that although they accepted the framework of the mainstream infant welfare movement at this time, Guildswomen's experience and ethos led them to focus on the needs of mothers. This is illustrated by a discussion of a Guild-originated school for mothers in Bolton.

In the 1910s, the Guild moved on to make specific demands for state provision: firstly for a national insurance maternity payment and then for maternity care. I outline its development of a worked-out scheme for the national care of maternity, highlighting the significance both of Guildswomen's evidence about their own experiences and of discussions within the organization. I explore how the 'mothers first' approach was articulated, both in the Guild's national campaigning for maternity care and in its grass roots local campaigning. During the First World War, this enabled the Guild and its allies to influence opinion and policy on infant welfare. The article draws on the Guild's Annual Reports, other Guild publications, and the *Co-operative News*' 'Women's Corner'.

### The Women's Co-operative Guild<sup>4</sup>

Established in 1883, by 1906 the Guild had over 22,000 members in 424 branches attached to local co-operative societies across England and Wales.<sup>5</sup> It was rapidly gaining recognition as a major organization of working women (in this period, this term was used in a general sense, to mean women of the working-class, rather than women who worked only for pay; I use it in this sense in the rest of this article). While there were some middle class members, most were married women from better-off sections of the working-class, the majority of whom did not undertake regular paid work.

Stimulated by its dynamic middle-class General Secretary Margaret Llewelyn Davies, from the 1890s onward the Guild gradually began to campaign on social and political issues affecting working women. Key to its success in this was its democratic structure and the system of education and action that Davies developed. An annually elected Central Committee, with elected committees also at branch, district and sectional (regional) levels ran the Guild. 'Woman's Corner' in the weekly *Co-operative News* provided a vital channel for members to express their views, for news and discussion, and for the Central Committee to communicate with the grass roots.

The Guild provided a setting in which education was integrally linked both with empowerment and with social action. Each year, the Central Committee selected a number of issues for priority campaigning and papers were produced for information and debate at branch, district and sectional levels. The final arbiter of policy was a three day annual Congress. The Central Committee regularly provided information and campaigning suggestions and requests to branches, which were encouraged to take action locally and to supply evidence and information for national work. The Central Committee publicized the Guild's demands nationally, often in alliance with others including women's trade unions and suffrage groups.

While some branches preferred to concentrate on social activities and domestic topics, the Guild's campaigning attracted members in their droves, particularly in industrial areas.<sup>6</sup> It produced a raft of impressive working-class activists; providing them with crucial experience and training which many went on to use elsewhere in suffrage, political or trade union organizations. Like the co-operative movement, the Guild was a broad church. In the early years of the twentieth century, varied opinions were increasingly reflected in lively debates at meetings and congresses — and, admittedly on rare occasions — resolutions proposed by the leadership could be voted down.

What did the Guild campaign about? Much of its work was carried out within the co-operative movement, for example campaigning against selling sweated goods, for a minimum wage for female employees, and advocating measures to make co-operation more accessible to poor people. It also took up wider issues, whether to do with women's employment, housing conditions or, increasingly, women's public role. It supported Guildswomen to stand as Poor Law Guardians and from 1904 allied itself to the women's suffrage movement. In its determination to advocate in the interests of its members, married working women, the Guild was not afraid to take up sensitive issues. From 1910 onwards, its controversial campaign for liberalizing the divorce law was to provoke outright conflict with the overwhelmingly male, socially conservative, co-operative leadership.<sup>7</sup>

## The Guild and infant welfare

The Guild's concern from 1906 onwards about infant welfare was in line with its earlier work on matters such as housing and public health, which directly impinged on working-class home life. It was paralleled by later campaigns on welfare issues, such as school medical inspection. Of recent years, the Guild had been working to bring the advantages of co-operation to the poorest neighbourhoods; so the infant welfare concentration on poor mothers was to some extent a natural progression.<sup>8</sup>

When the Guild turned to infant welfare, it was against the backdrop of an energetic and well-publicized movement which, following concern about the poor health of Boer War recruits, responded to subsequent public alarm at the falling birth rate and the high level of infant mortality in poor areas.<sup>9</sup> The movement mainly focused on improving babies' health and welfare through changing their mothers' behaviour: organizing both voluntary and paid workers to educate and instruct them in baby care. Spearheaded by eminent public health doctors, and building on traditions of sanitary inspection and philanthropic home visiting, this was the main approach to reducing infant mortality; although some municipalities did set up depots attempting to provide sterile milk.

The movement expanded steadily from the early 1890s onward, and generated great enthusiasm. Both voluntary bodies and municipal public health authorities funded and organized increasing numbers of visitors to poor mothers' homes. Thus by 1914, with municipal involvement on the increase, there were salaried health visitors in 195 areas.<sup>10</sup> Infant welfare centres also developed, particularly from the mid-1900s, mainly provided by voluntary organizations. These operated regular local clinic sessions where mothers could

bring their babies to be weighed and inspected, and could receive advice, often from volunteer workers (it should be noted that the clinics did not provide any medical treatment).

Guildswomen's interest in infant welfare was demonstrated by the positive reaction Davies received when she first introduced the topic in papers to the 1906 and 1907 Guild Congresses.<sup>11</sup> Arguing that British co-operators should emulate others in Europe by using their trading profits to provide health services, she highlighted examples of co-operatively run 'baby dispensaries', sometimes entitled 'schools for mothers'. These were similar in some ways to the British infant welfare centres, which were claimed in some places to have substantially reduced infant mortality. In Congress discussions, the suggestion of baby dispensaries proved popular and there was unanimous agreement to recommend that branches try to set these up. As one leading Guildswoman put it, 'why could not co-operators be pioneers in this way, helping to lessen the infant mortality in the country, showing the municipalities what ought to be done?'<sup>12</sup> The call to help reduce infant mortality clearly evoked an enthusiastic response.

In autumn 1906, interest was fanned when a Guild delegation to Belgian co-operators visited a school for mothers in Ghent, run by a charismatic socialist doctor. The school's provision of baby weighing, advice and instruction was similar to that in Britain, but this was accompanied by a range of other services including provision of cheap, pure milk, together with some medical treatment. Significantly, the volunteers who carried out home visits were women who had used the clinic themselves — whereas in Britain, neither volunteers nor paid visitors normally came from poor backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> The delegation was greatly impressed, and the Guild publicized the Ghent school as a practical example for branches to follow.

The Guild's traditions and ethos meant that it came at infant welfare work from an unusual angle. Thus, although the proposed Guild dispensaries/schools for mothers were specifically aimed at the poor — Davies suggested linking them with special 'People's' co-operative stores in poor neighbourhoods — poor mothers were not criticized. Davies presented the education offered in a non-judgmental way: 'Co-operative educational work is out of reach of those living in poor neighbourhoods ... It would ... be an act of fairness to begin any work of this kind among those to whom it would be of the greatest value'<sup>14</sup>. For co-operators, education was associated above all with empowerment, and valued as an aspect of both self-help and of the co-operative movement's egalitarian, collective traditions. The Guildswomen who responded so enthusiastically will have viewed it in this way, which was very different from the instructional and supervisory approach that characterised much infant welfare work.

## The Bolton school for mothers

Despite interest within the Guild, organising a local school for mothers from scratch with no pre-existing funding, premises, medical staff or system for recruiting attenders was in practice a daunting undertaking. It is not surprising that only the Bolton and Exeter branches appear to have managed it. Bolton's records have survived, however, and they illustrate how Guildswomen, collaborating with both voluntary and municipal provision, developed a school for mothers which while run on mainstream lines emphasised mothers' needs.<sup>15</sup>





*Bolton Branch Women's Co-operative Guild, 1907 Committee  
(Sarah Reddish, middle row, centre)  
By kind permission of the National Co-operative Archive*

Sarah Reddish was the moving spirit in the Bolton school.<sup>16</sup> A pioneering socialist, co-operator and suffrage activist, she had worked in Bolton's cotton mills from the age of eleven to her mid-thirties when she moved on to paid work for women's organizations, including, at one point, the Guild. By the mid-1900s she had become a key figure in local socialist politics and in other aspects of public life. Now in her fifties and unmarried, she was well connected with women in public service in Bolton. Reddish's interest in infant welfare work stemmed from her enthusiastic response to the Ghent school when she visited it as part of the 1906 delegation.

As President of Bolton's large Guild branch, Reddish initiated the idea that it should set up its own school for mothers, in line with the Congress resolutions. Initially, the school was planned as a Guild and Co-operative venture. When approached for funding, however, the Bolton Co-operative Society, although agreeing that the clinic could take place on its premises, could only provide very limited financial help. Reddish also tried to obtain support from the municipal authorities but with little initial success: while the Medical Office of Health was sympathetic, the councillor chairing the municipal Sanitary Committee was not. He refused to release a doctor to staff the school but, undaunted, Reddish found a female volunteer. Sixty Guildswomen volunteered to help at

the sessions, while the branch organized tea and biscuits for the mothers 'to show friendliness and good feeling'.<sup>17</sup> The clinic opened its first weekly sessions in November 1908.

The Guild soon had to seek funding from local charities and wealthy individuals. This proved to be readily forthcoming, no doubt partly due to Reddish's existing networks but also reflecting the widespread interest in infant welfare work. While Reddish remained secretary, the committee running the school broadened so that it was no longer only a Guild initiative. There were soon links with organizations like the Guild of Help and the Mothers' Union. Wealthy and influential supporters were attracted, and speakers at the annual public meetings included local notables such as the Medical Officer of Health and the Mayoress — even, thanks to the personal contacts of a supporter, the President of the Royal College of Physicians. Reddish fostered close links with local health visitors from early on and was successful in obtaining grants from the local authority's Sanitary Committee and the National Board of Education (the latter for classes in baby care).

The school for mothers proved popular, and opened new clinics in different parts of Bolton as fast as money permitted. Growth was boosted after 1914, when central government began to match local authority funding for such services; and formal co-operation between the school and the municipal maternity committee was established from 1917/18.<sup>18</sup> Illustrating the close partnership that resulted, by 1919 four municipally run clinics came under the school's umbrella. Including these, the school now consisted of seven clinics, with over 1,500 women attending. All were in poor areas, and between twenty-six and sixty mothers attended each session.<sup>19</sup> In line with the Guild's current campaign demands, for the first time pregnant women were now invited. Reddish remained secretary of the organizing committee until forced by illness to retire in 1921 and the school's survival right up to 1953 was a measure of its success.<sup>20</sup>

As in other British schools for mothers, the main services offered at Bolton were individual consultations with the doctor and advice and instruction from her or volunteer helpers. Initially, routine home visits had not been planned,<sup>21</sup> but this changed fairly quickly; as numbers of municipal health visitors in Bolton expanded, the school collaborated closely with them.<sup>22</sup>

It was its general approach and ethos which distinguished Bolton from other schools for mothers. Less than a month after the school opened, minutes record that it had arranged free milk for a sick baby, and had decided to set up a 'help fund' for future cases.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, providing free milk for nursing mothers who needed it, and for bottle fed babies, became a major priority. As the school expanded, fundraising for this was difficult and there was great concern when at one point the service had to be reduced. The school would have liked to provide hot dinners, but never had sufficient funds, though in 1912 it reported that it was able to refer especially needy mothers to a local organization which had started providing them at very low cost.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, although it could not provide medical treatment, in exceptional cases the school found a way to help, either digging into its own resources, or via its links with the Guild of Help.<sup>25</sup>

Reddish's approach is reflected in her reports to the school's annual public meetings, which brought together a wide range of individuals and organizations and were covered in some detail in the local press. Here, she repeatedly stressed the impact of poverty.<sup>26</sup> In 1912, reporting that 140 of the 581

mothers who attended the centres over the previous year had received free milk, she stressed that 'to make the work effective milk should be given not by reason of charity but because so many were so circumstanced that they languished for want of nourishment'.<sup>27</sup> She regularly highlighted the direct effects of deprivation on babies' health, for instance: 'in every case where there was lack of nourishment we found it due to poverty and that due to low wages and unemployment'.<sup>28</sup> Unlike some other speakers at the meetings, she was emphasizing mothers' needs rather than their deficiencies.

Reddish's reports reflect none of the patronizing approach to mothers which comes through even in otherwise sympathetic accounts of similar work elsewhere. Rather than judging them as 'pitiably ignorant and superstitious', or criticizing those who 'have got into careless or slipshod ways', she presented women in a positive light and as capable of making their own judgements: 'the mothers have been quite willing to try this, and finding the baby thrived, they have adhered to it'.<sup>29</sup> On various occasions, she emphasized how much the mothers appreciated the advice they received.

The better-known St. Pancras School for Mothers, also influenced by Ghent, was set up in 1907 and on some points provides a parallel to Bolton.<sup>30</sup> Run by a charity working in co-operation with the Medical Officer of Health, and with a string of wealthy supporters, it went further than many similar services in providing needy mothers with cheap or free milk and hot dinners, in addition to the standard education and advice. However, preventing potential abuse was a priority: women could only receive free dinners once their circumstances had been investigated by the Charity Organization Society.<sup>31</sup> Contrastingly, there was little or no mention of this issue in Bolton, despite its large-scale provision of free milk. It was not for nearly four years that it joined a local Mutual Registry of Assistance, which appears to have linked up local organizations' records to prevent double payments. After a few months, Reddish reported with satisfaction that the results showed 'our help in milk giving has not been in any way abused'.<sup>32</sup>

## Mothers to the fore: lobbying on the National Insurance Act

After the Guild's initial enthusiasm of 1906 and 1907, infant welfare took something of a back seat for several years. This may have been because setting up a school for mothers was beyond the reach of most branches. But this was also a time when other major campaigns preoccupied many Guild activists, on such issues as women's suffrage, divorce law reform and the minimum wage for co-operative women employees. During this period, the climate of public policy was shifting towards the beginnings of an acceptance of state welfare provision. Since it came into power in 1906, the Liberal government had introduced legislation on a range of issues, including old age pensions, school medical inspection and treatment, and free school meals for needy children. Then, in 1911, another proposed reform brought new opportunities to advocate for mothers.

Lloyd George's National Insurance Bill of that year proposed contributory health insurance for workers but it was estimated that only 10% of married women would qualify to join it.<sup>33</sup> Davies, on behalf of the Guild, proposed inclusion of both low paid women workers and non-earning women

and demanded introduction of a substantial maternity grant as part of the scheme. Suggesting that the husband's insurance contribution in reality came also from the wife, she argued — along lines that had been discussed in the Guild before — 'By her work as mother and housewife, the woman contributes equally with the man to the upkeep of the home, and the family income in reality as much hers as the man's'.<sup>34</sup> The Guild took a leading part in lobbying Lloyd George, alongside women's trade union and labour groups, which was partially successful. In the event, the Act included a small maternity grant in the insurance scheme.

This campaign had brought pregnant women and new mothers to the top of the Guild's agenda, and when the Act came into force, it rapidly gathered evidence of how little national insurance helped them, and how poorly it was administered.<sup>35</sup> Then, in 1913, the opportunity came for amendment and the Guild lobbied successfully for the maternity payment, where made on the basis of a husband's contributions, to be the property of the wife.<sup>36</sup> This insistence on married women's rights was highly controversial: the Guild stood isolated from its previous allies, and Labour MPs spoke and voted against it. But it had widespread support from Guildswomen: over a few weeks in June/July 1914, before it came up for debate, 300 branches answered the call to write to their MPs about it.<sup>37</sup>

The Guild's lobbying on national insurance confirms its feminist commitment to married women's independent income and its appreciation of maternity needs. Davies had already suggested to Guildswomen, during the discussions about the Bill, that the state should provide free medical care to low income women having babies.<sup>38</sup> It was a natural development for her to take the initiative in late 1913, researching needs for maternity care and devising a comprehensive national scheme.

## Drawing up a national scheme for maternity care

Davies worked closely on this with Margaret Bondfield, a socialist and trade union activist — later Britain's first woman cabinet minister — who was then employed part time to work on Guild campaigns.<sup>39</sup> The two women consulted experts, including government officials, public health doctors, midwives and sanitary inspectors. But Davies also sought the views and experience of mothers themselves. At some point during the winter and spring of 1913/14, she asked around 600 current or past Guild officials to write to her 'privately' about their own maternity experience, including how many pregnancies, miscarriages, and infant deaths they had experienced.<sup>40</sup>

The decision to gather this information was in itself a crucial one. It signified a commitment — most unusual for the time — to taking into account mothers' own views and experiences, rather than relying solely on medical experts, health visitors and philanthropic workers. Davies had done something similar in 1910, when arguing for legal reform at the Royal Commission on Divorce. Reflecting the ethos of the Guild, she had based her evidence on a consultation with Guild officials and gathered a large number of letters from them about their experiences, which she read out to the Commission to great effect.<sup>41</sup>

The letters she now received on maternity were harrowing. Nearly one in four of the 386 Guildswomen who





ELEVEN CHILDREN BORN, ALL LIVING. FATHER A FISH-HAWKER.  
This family is not connected with the Women's Co-operative Guild.  
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Medical Officer of Health for Liverpool.)

To face p. 58.

'Eleven children born, all living. Father a fish-hawker'  
Photograph from first edition of *Maternity: Letters from Working Women* (1915) edited by Margaret Llewelyn Davies

© The British Library Board, (W25/9927)

replied had lost at least one child before its first birthday and there were high rates of miscarriage and stillbirth. Writer after writer told of ill-health and fatigue, often exacerbated by frequent pregnancies and the impact of poverty:<sup>42</sup>

For fifteen years I was in a very poor state of health owing to continual pregnancy... I have had four children and ten miscarriages, three before the first child, each of them between three and four months (letter 35).

Women became seriously ill because of inadequate or non-existent medical care. Some had to take on casual work even when heavily pregnant, if only to scrape together a little money to pay for an unskilled midwife. They often could not follow medical advice to rest and eat well because money was short and they had no help with heavy housework and child care. Some women were so malnourished that they could not breast feed, even though they wanted to: when there was not enough money to feed a family, the mother came last:

A woman with little wage has to go without a great deal at those times [i.e. around birth], as we must give our husbands sufficient food or we should have them home and not able to work (letter 2).

While the letters exposed the sufferings of women in the co-operative movement, they were better off than many: the poorest mothers will have been even harder hit. Davies wrote that the maternity letters provided some of the most useful information which she gathered when preparing the maternity scheme.<sup>43</sup> Initially, she and Margaret Bondfield had concentrated mainly on extending and improving existing services, such as administration of maternity benefit, health visiting and infant welfare centres. By contrast, the final version of the scheme bore the imprint both of the maternity letters and of other Guild discussions.<sup>44</sup> To take mothers' views and experiences directly into account when framing policy proposals was indeed ground-breaking.

The Guild scheme tackled head-on the impact of poverty, insanitary housing and inadequate medical care. It proposed new, increased, cash benefits for women having babies; no longer dependent on insurance contributions, these would be administered by municipal authorities rather than through the national insurance scheme. These authorities would be responsible for overseeing (though not necessarily directly providing) a range of services for mothers and babies, drawing in part on the integrated provisions which Guildswomen had seen in Ghent. Central to these would be 'maternity and infant centres': the title significant in emphasizing mothers' needs as well as babies'. The centres would serve expectant as well as nursing mothers, along with children from birth to starting school, and would provide minor medical treatment as well as advice. They would be linked with well-trained, well-paid health visitors and midwives. The proposals drew on the maternity letters to call for home helps, maternity homes, and designated maternity beds in hospitals. Where medically recommended, mothers should receive free dinners, and in some cases free milk. And there should be municipal milk depots — already provided in some places — because the milk generally on sale was expensive and often polluted.

A crucial demand was for working women themselves to take part in overseeing the services. Municipal public health committees should set up maternity sub-committees largely composed of their representatives. In suggesting that those who receive services should have a part to play in controlling them, the Guild was far ahead of its time.

## Who has the control?

Writing to the *Manchester Guardian* in the summer of 1914, Davies drew on the maternity letters to make very different arguments from those she had advanced in 1906 and 1907. She began by criticizing a recent conference on infant mortality, on the grounds that:

... the women most concerned took no part. If

they had, it might have been brought out that at the root of the whole question was the mother's health and wellbeing.

In seeking how to save infant life, the first thing of all to consider is the daily life of working women. It has to be remembered that the whole of the housework and the care of children and husband falls on the mother who, too, is often obliged to add wage-earning to her unpaid work in the home. Carrying her unborn child, she stands for hours at her washtub, reaches to hang up clothes, carries heavy weights, nurses husband and child when ill, baths and carries her other children, goes out to char or wash or sits at home sewing to provide for midwife or doctor, goes without food she ought to have, and all the time is worn with anxiety as to how to make ends meet.

Advocating the municipal maternity centres proposed by the Guild, she now argued against calling them 'schools for mothers', on the grounds that mothers needed above all financial support and medical advice and treatment.<sup>45</sup>

The issue of health and welfare workers' approach to individual mothers also came to the fore. In a 1914 paper outlining the maternity scheme for Guild conferences, Bondfield opposed what she called the current 'invasion of the home' by a series of officials with overlapping functions, presenting instead the Guild proposal of a single 'Woman Health Officer' trained as health visitor, sanitary inspector and midwife. She argued against 'inspection and check visiting', suggesting instead a partnership, in which access to supportive advice would be every mother's right.<sup>46</sup>

Early Guild discussions of the scheme revealed a disjunction between welcoming the increased state help proposed and resenting the investigation and supervision which often accompanied such help. There were rumblings of discontent about compulsory notification of births to the authorities, which the scheme supported as essential for health visiting to be effective.<sup>47</sup> Some negative reaction to health visiting also emerged: one speaker suggested that women 'would welcome advice given by fully qualified visitors, but would resent interference on the part of anyone not so qualified', while another reported that women objected to being cross-examined.<sup>48</sup>

On a different point, a few speakers reflected a current of opinion in the co-operative and labour movements which opposed state welfare provision in principle, on the basis that if wages were higher, working-class families could pay for private services themselves. In the words of one Guildswoman, the scheme 'would ...mean class legislation, and would likely lead to the making of soft jobs for middle class folk at the expense of the workers'.<sup>49</sup>

Unequal relationships between professionals and mothers were highlighted in national campaigning. Thus in a 1914 talk to Medical Officers of Health, Davies spoke of the need for a 'partnership of the individual woman with the State and science' and warned that working women, despite their 'remarkable public spirit', would resent invasion of their privacy and freedom.<sup>50</sup> Later, she reiterated that working women must be involved in shaping the service provided to avoid 'scientific, eugenic and official views of the work over-riding individual

and family rights. Any attempt to impose compulsion on the mothers in work of this intimate character would only hinder progress'.<sup>51</sup>

Both Davies and Bondfield suggested that the eventual aim should be for maternity services to be directly run by municipalities, rather than voluntary bodies. While acknowledging the valuable work done by these organizations, Bondfield said that Guildswomen wanted municipal services for all mothers, 'available ... as a right and not as a charity'.<sup>52</sup> Davies concurred, advocating that 'the mothers of the country shall find themselves as free to use a Municipal Maternity Centre as they are to use a Council School or a Public Library'.<sup>53</sup>

Other Guildswomen also highlighted problems with voluntary-controlled infant welfare work. In 1917, a Central Committee memorandum to Lord Rhondda, then President of the Local Government Board, emphasized that administration 'must not be associated with the Poor Law or inquisitorial methods'. It argued that:

The presence of working women on Maternity Committees will prevent the work being too officialized, check the adoption of inquisitorial methods, of narrow religious views, and of too exclusively scientific claims.<sup>54</sup>

A Guild deputation to Lord Rhondda included several women with experience of municipal sub-committees responsible for maternity services.<sup>55</sup> Mrs Taylor from South Wales argued that middle-class committee members had usually come from charitable bodies, bringing with them:

... inquisitorial methods that to the honest working woman are abominable ... We do not want charity in any shape or form.

... At one house where a health visitor called, the mother left her in the passage. The reason was, I dare say, that the mother's kitchen after getting all the little children away to school, was not just as nice and tidy as she would have liked to see it to invite a visitor into. Now, if this was reported to a committee of middle-class ladies they would not understand, and might say the woman was dirty or untidy, or improvident, meaning it not exactly unkindly, but simply because they do not understand.<sup>56</sup>

Mrs Lawton from Stoke-on-Trent criticised the practice of investigating personal details of applicants, as was carried out at the St Pancras school for mothers (see above). In her experience, what she called 'decent class working women' refused to apply because of this, and even the poorest mothers were very reluctant to do so.

## The impact of the maternity campaign

The Guild began to promote the maternity scheme in summer 1914, working with like-minded organizations, particularly the Women's Labour League, which had recently set up a pioneering mother and baby clinic and shared the Guild's approach.<sup>57</sup> There were some immediate successes. The most important of these came in July — just weeks before war broke out — when Government minister Herbert Samuel, President of the Local Government Board, issued a ground-breaking circular, which promised municipal authorities



central government grants to match any money they spent on maternity services. This listed services that echoed many of the Guild's proposals.<sup>58</sup>

The wartime environment proved to be fruitful for the maternity campaign. It led to an increasing acceptance of state social intervention, and, with fears about Britain's ability to produce healthy fighting men, infant welfare work, seen as a form of war work, expanded considerably.<sup>59</sup> Stimulated by the same fears, the media and policymakers began to glorify motherhood; although motivated by a desire to increase the birth rate and reduce infant mortality, rather than to support mothers.<sup>60</sup>

Very early in the war, the Guild got the backing of a range of women's and labour organizations, including the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (which provided an office and a temporary organizer), the Independent Labour Party and the Workers' War Emergency Committee. There was also, evidently, a current of support among professionals working on infant welfare. Thus, in October 1914, a broad based deputation to Herbert Samuel, organised by the Guild, the Women's Labour League and the Railway Women's Guild, included representatives of doctors, local councillors and sanitary inspectors. Unusually, mothers also took part: as Davies later recounted, 'a lot of mothers and babies invaded Whitehall to tell Mr H. Samuel what they wanted'.<sup>61</sup>

In 1915, the national campaign received two major fillips. Firstly, a further LGB circular reinforced that of the previous year and backed the Guild's suggestion of local maternity committees on which working women could be co-opted.<sup>62</sup> Then, in the autumn, a collection of the maternity letters edited by Davies was published.<sup>63</sup> *Maternity: letters from working women* proved to be a sensation. Two editions sold out within months, with approving reviews ranging from *The Times* and the *British Medical Journal* to the socialist *Labour Leader*.<sup>64</sup> This was a coup for the campaign, bringing women's stories, in their own words, into the public debate.

The approach to infant welfare was definitely changing. In July 1917, at the inaugural meeting of a highly publicized, establishment backed national 'baby week', Lord Rhondda declared a list of priorities which might have come from the Guild and its allies: 'cleaner and healthier homes, proper food and care for expectant and nursing mothers, more maternity centres, more health visitors, and more skilled attention for mother and children'.<sup>65</sup> Then, in 1918, many of the Guild's suggested services were incorporated into a Maternity and Child Welfare Act. In a major step forward, this also laid down that where an authority provided maternity services, it was obliged to set up a specialist subcommittee to run them, which must contain at least two women. However, and crucially, the Act was permissive only: municipal authorities were still not legally obliged to provide maternity services. As before, the battle for services still had to be won area by area.

As early as spring 1915, seventy-one Guild branches were already campaigning in alliance with other local organizations.<sup>66</sup> Maternity care was made a priority for the Guild, and efforts were regularly publicized in 'Women's Corner' with headlines such as 'The future welfare of the race. Splendid and successful maternity campaigns at Willesden and Blackpool' and 'Saving the children at Middlesbrough'.<sup>67</sup> In co-ordinated support, a special fund was set up and leading Guildswomen spoke at conferences and meetings around the country. In January 1916, an article in 'Women's Corner'

provided concrete ammunition for local campaigners in the form of a fully costed plan for a municipally-run maternity centre.<sup>68</sup> With competing priorities, and the financial constraints of wartime, the odds were stacked against these local campaigns. Even so, by spring 1917, fifty municipalities had established maternity sub-committees: a crucial first step.

A campaign in Coventry, documented by Lodge, illustrates how the Guild took the lead locally, and the alliances and conflicts which could ensue.<sup>69</sup> After the local Guild branch took the initial step of calling a public meeting, a Care of Maternity Committee was set up in late 1914, bringing together working-class groups like the Guild and the Women's Labour League, feminists like the local women's suffrage society and middle-class philanthropists. However, this proved to be a fragile alliance. There was a split over the issue of municipal provision as a result of which local philanthropists, insisting on a service which would be charitably provided and controlled, soon broke away to form a separate committee which opened a school for mothers in 1915. Not to be outdone, the Care of Maternity Committee, strongly influenced by the Guild, established its own maternity clinic in the same year. However, it stressed that this was a temporary measure, and continued to campaign for a municipally run clinic. Backed by other women's organizations, by 1917 the committee had convinced the municipality to take over the clinic it had started. When a municipal maternity committee was set up the following year, three of the four women co-opted onto it came from the Guild.

## Conclusion

The Guild's demand for a system of comprehensive, state run maternity services may have been ahead of its time, but nevertheless this campaign achieved a great deal. Skilfully tapping into the contemporary public concern about infant welfare, the Guild and its allies put mothers' needs — as they themselves expressed them — on the map and kept them there. More specifically, their worked-out proposals in the maternity scheme provided an immediate focus around which to build a broad based campaign. Along with the Guild's effective alliances with a range of other organizations and its ability to co-ordinate action by branches at local level, this enabled the campaign to make a difference to national policy and, though to a lesser extent, to influence local government.

In the early days, Guildswomen had been enthusiastic about setting up schools for mothers themselves. However, the success of the Bolton school had been built on Sarah Reddish's exceptional skills, experience and local connections, which enabled it to fit into the patchwork of local voluntary and municipal services while retaining, to some degree at least, a distinctive Guild approach. Other branches were evidently unable to follow Bolton's example, but in any case, times changed. By 1914, when the main maternity campaign took off, state involvement in welfare was much more on the public agenda. In this climate, and influenced by the maternity letters which uncovered Guildswomen's experiences, the Guild now demanded a range of maternity services for all, not only the poorest.

The Guild put 'mothers first' in several different ways. Not only did it, from the beginning, insist on mothers' welfare as a key concern alongside that of their babies, but from 1914, it insisted that their own views and experiences must be taken into account when developing policy and services. With

mothers themselves involved in campaigning, it increasingly demanded equal partnership between mothers and health workers. Even more radically for the times, it also proposed that mothers' representatives take part in overseeing services, and that, in the long run, services had to be municipally run if they were to be accountable to those who used them.

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## Notes

1. Dorothy Sheepshanks, 'Women's Corner', *Co-operative News* (WC), 6 Nov.1915. This article draws on my research for a biography of Margaret Llewelyn Davies.
2. *Manchester Guardian*, 24 Jun. 1914.
3. Gill Scott, 'The Women's Co-operative Guild and Suffrage', in Myriam Boussabha-Bravard ed., *Suffrage outside Suffragism: Women's Vote in Britain, 1880-1914* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137.
4. For studies of the Guild see Barbara Blaszak, *The Matriarchs of England's Co-operative Movement: a study in Gender Politics and Female Leadership, 1883-1921* (London, Greenwood Press, 2000); G.D.H. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation* (Manchester, Co-operative Union, 1944), 215-226; Jean Gaffin and David Thoms, *Caring and Sharing, The Centenary History of the Co-operative Women's Guild* (Manchester, Co-operative Union, 1983); Gillian Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women, the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War*, (London, UCL Press, 1998).
5. Bishopsgate Institute (hereafter BI), WCG/1, Women's Co-operative Guild (hereafter WCG) *Annual Report*, 1905-6.
6. Membership grew from 1640 in 1890 to 12,809 in 1900 and 25,897 in 1910. Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women*, xii.
7. See Gill Scott, 'Working Out Their Own Salvation: Women's Autonomy and Divorce Law Reform in the Co-operative Movement, 1910-20', in *New Views of Co-operation*, ed. Stephen Yeo (London, Routledge, 1988), 128-153; Gill Scott, 'A "Trade Union for Married Women": The Women's Co-operative Guild, 1914-1920', in *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-45*, ed. Sybil Oldfield (London, Taylor and Francis, 1994), 8-28.
8. For the Guild's campaign to extend co-operation to poor areas, see BI, WCG/1 *Annual Reports 1901-6*.
9. See e.g. Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal*, 5 (Spring 1978), 9-66; Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and other Young Children: a History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in Britain, 1880-1914* (London: Tavistock, 1987), 164-5 and 216-8; Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 195-221; Lara Marks, *Metropolitan Maternity: Maternal and Infant Welfare Services in early Twentieth Century London, 1870-1939* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1994); Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
10. Lara Marks, *Metropolitan Maternity*, 171.
11. London School of Economics Archives (henceforward LSEA) Special Pamphlets HD2/299, *The Cooperative Store Abroad*, WCG, 1906; R/288, *Health departments in connection*

*with Co-operative Societies*, WCG, 1907.

12. BI WCG/1, *WCG Annual Report 1907-8*; WC, 20 Jun.1907.
13. *The Waste of Infant Life...*, WCG pamphlet, May 1907, personal communication from Chrys Salt.
14. LSEA Pamphlets R/288, *Health Departments in connection with Co-operative Societies*, 1907.
15. This section draws on Minute Books, Annual Reports and press cuttings in Bolton Archives, FW5, Bolton *Mother and Child Welfare Association (formerly Bolton School for Mothers) Archives 1908-53* (henceforward Bolton FW5). See also Mary Mullen, 'Saving Infant Life in Bolton: Women Co-operators to the Rescue', *North West Labour History*, 2010, 13-17.
16. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us, the Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*, (London, Virago, 1978), 291; Bolton Archives, Bernadette Flinders, *Sarah Reddish: a pioneering woman worker* (unpublished) and Bolton FW5, press cutting *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 24 Feb. 1908.
17. Bolton FW5, *Minute Book* 3 Oct. 1908.
18. Bolton FW5, *Bolton News*, 22 Feb. 1918.
19. Bolton FW5, *Bolton School for Mothers with Municipal Clinics 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 5.
20. Mullen, 'Saving Infant Life', 13 and 16.
21. WC, 8 Jan. 1910.
22. See e.g. Bolton FW5, *Minute Book*, 12 Jan.1911.
23. Bolton FW5, *Minute Book*, 12 Oct. 1908.
24. Bolton FW5, *Minute Book*, 1 Mar.1912.
25. Mullen, 'Saving Infant Life', 15.
26. This approach was not always shared by guest speakers: Bolton FW5, 21 Jan.1913.
27. Bolton FW5, *Bolton Journal*, 22 Nov. 1912.
28. Bolton FW5, *Bolton Evening News*, 24 Nov. 1911.
29. Unnamed infant welfare worker quoted in Ross *Love and Toil*, 204; Evelyn M Bunting, Dora E L Bunting, Annie E L Barnes and Blanche Gardiner, *A school for mothers*, (London, Horace Marshall, 1907), 51; WC, 8 Jan. 1910.
30. Alys Russell, a friend of Davies, had joined the delegation to Ghent and published an influential article, 'The Ghent School for Mothers', *The Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1906. She went on to be centrally involved in setting up the St Pancras School.
31. Bunting et al, *A school for mothers*, 14-15, 35.
32. *Minutes* 7 Sep. 1912, 7 Mar. 1913.
33. Jane Lewis 'Models of Equality for Women: the Case of State Support for Children in Twentieth-Century Britain, in *Maternity and Gender Policies, Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s*, eds Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (London, Routledge,1991), 77.
34. Letter to *The Times*, 24 Jun. 1911.
35. See Jackie Gulland, 'Extraordinary Housework: Women and Claims for Sickness Benefit in the Early Twentieth Century', *Women's History Magazine* 71, Spring 2013, 23-30.
36. Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women*, 111-17; Pat Thane, 'Visions of Gender in the Making of the British Welfare State: the case of Women in the British Labour party and Social Policy, 1906-1945', in *Maternity and Gender Policies*, 93-118.
37. BI, *WCG Annual Report 1913-1914*.
38. WC, 15 Apr. 1911.
39. As secretary of the Guild's Citizenship Sub-Committee, Bondfield helped to organise and co-ordinate its campaigning between August 1912 and January 1915. Hull History Centre, DCW/1/5, *WCG Central Committee Minutes*, 22 Aug. 1912 and 4



Jan. 1915.

40. While there is no record of when Davies invited the letters, many had arrived by May 1914. WC 2 May 1914, BI WCG/1, *WCG Annual Report 1913/14*. A selection of the letters, edited by Davies, was published as *Maternity: Letters from Working Women* (London: G Bell and Sons, 1915). It was republished by Virago in 1978, and again in 2012 under the title *No-one but a Woman Knows*.

41. Gill Scott, 'Working Out their own Salvation: Women's Autonomy and Divorce Law reform in the Co-operative Movement, 1910-1920' in Stephen Yeo ed., *New Views of Co-operation* (London, Routledge, 1988), 128-153. The Guild published some of this evidence as *Working Women and Divorce*, WCG, (David Nutt 1911).

42. Margaret Llewelyn Davies ed., *Maternity, Letters from Working Women* (London, Virago, 1978).

43. BI, *WCG Annual Report 1914-15*.

44. See Margaret Bondfield speech to Guild Guides course, WC, 25 Oct. 1913. The final scheme is reproduced in Llewelyn Davies ed, *Maternity*, 209 – 212.

45. *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Jul. 1914.

46. LSEA Pamphlets R/D/175, Margaret Bondfield, *The National Care of Maternity*, March 1914.

47. WC, 16 May 1914.

48. WC, 11 Apr. 1914.

49. WC, 9 May and 6 Jun. 1914. Gurney *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996), 185-6; Susan Pedersen, *Family Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-45*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 51.

50. Reproduced in *Public Health*, Jun. 1914.

51. BI WCG/4/3, WCG Miscellaneous Papers, *Memorandum on the National Care of Maternity*, 1917.

52. Margaret Bondfield, LSEA Pamphlets R/D/175, *The National Care of Maternity*, 1914.

53. Llewelyn Davies ed., *Maternity*, xxix.

54. BI WCG/4/3, *Memorandum*, 1917.

55. As explained in the next section, from 1915 the Local Government Board encouraged municipalities to set these up.

56. BI WCG/4/3, *Memorandum*, 1917.

57. Pat Thane, 'Visions of Gender', 101.

58. Llewelyn Davies ed., *Maternity*, 196-7.

59. See Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (Harlow, Longmans, 1996), 127.

60. Claire A Culleton, *Working Class Culture, Women, and Britain, 1914-21* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000), 148-151; Jane Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939*, (London, Croom Helm, 1980) 35.

61. WC, 24 Oct. 1914; LSE Coll. Misc. 268, vol. 1, 41, *Peaceful Campaigns*, 7.

62. Llewelyn Davies ed., *Maternity*, 205-6.

63. See note 40.

64. WC, 11 Sept 1915; BI WCG/1, *WCG Annual Report*, 1915-16.

65. *The Times*, 3 Jul. 1917.

66. BI WCG/1, *WCG Annual Report*, 1914-15.

67. WC, 2 Feb. and 20 Mar. 1915.

68. WC, 1 Jan. 1916.

69. Marjorie Lodge, 'Aspects of Infant Welfare in Coventry 1900-40', in *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: The Experience of Coventry*, ed. Bill Lancaster and Tony Mason, (Coventry, Cryfield Press, 1986), 81-96. Thanks to Cathy Hunt for this reference.

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## Helen Taylor's anti-imperialist feminism: Ireland and the Land League question

Janet Smith

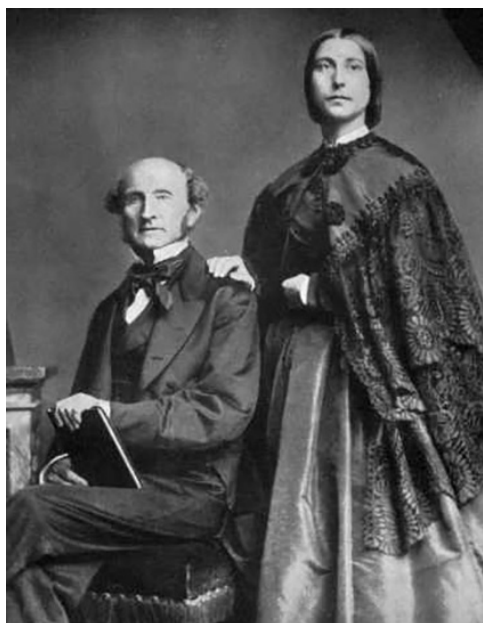
*Independent Scholar*

In March 1881 the British women's suffragist, Priscilla McLaren wrote to Helen Taylor to warn her that many in the movement were unhappy with her involvement in the Irish Land War. Priscilla wrote a sympathetic letter regretting that the movement could not tolerate all strands of opinion and warning: 'I hear now and then darker surmises of how much you and some others will retard our suffrage movement by signing yourselves up with the Land League question.'<sup>1</sup> McLaren's letter was evidencing the gulf between Helen's anti-imperial feminism and the Protestant philanthropic feminism of many within the British suffragist movement, who based their claim for equality in terms of support for British imperialism and the supremacy of the Anglo Saxon race. Antoinette Burton claims in her seminal work *Burdens of History* that British Victorian feminists, *per se*, were imperialistic in outlook.<sup>2</sup> Helen is proof that other, non-imperial, feminisms existed.

In contrast to those in the suffrage movement who were appalled at her involvement in Irish politics, Helen worked tirelessly on behalf of the Land League, whose leaders saw their cause as part of the fight against British rule. The British

women's movement looked on with horror at Helen's physical and intellectual involvement in Irish politics and feared that she would undermine the campaign for women's suffrage through her actions. Indeed, there were those who pointed to women's involvement in the Irish Land War as proof of their inherent unsuitability to have the vote. The writer F.M. Holmes, whose popular contemporary biographies extolled the successes and virtues of the British Empire under such titles as *Four Heroes of India*, was one of those who made such a link. He wrote 'If the political action of the Ladies' League is to be, in any sense, a sample of what we shall get when female suffrage opens the door of political warfare to ladies, may Heaven long delay the fearful period.'<sup>3</sup> This was just the sort of bad publicity the suffrage movement feared.

Helen Taylor was born in 1831, the daughter of the women's rights campaigner Harriet Taylor. Taylor left Helen's father after meeting John Stuart Mill and they were married after her husband died. Following the death of her mother in 1851, Helen worked with her stepfather to promote women's suffrage. In 1866 Mill presented a petition to Parliament on the



John Stuart Mill and Helen Taylor  
Public domain: n.d.

movement's behalf and they set up the London National Society for Women's Suffrage. They argued with some fellow suffragists over the naming of the organisation and the running of the campaign. There had been tensions in the London National Society for Women's Suffrage between liberal and conservative members. Conservatives such as Emily Davies and Frances Power Cobbe had wanted to exclude married women from their suffrage demands against the wishes of the Liberals, who included John Stuart Mill, Helen Taylor and Clementia Taylor. Mill and Taylor, therefore, found it easier to work with the Liberals of the Manchester Suffrage Society, though conflict with Lydia Becker, who led the northern group, resulted in the latter severing relations with London.<sup>4</sup> Helen and her stepfather had called for a women-only committee, which had caused further division.<sup>5</sup> Barbara Bodichon had declared that such a committee would set back women's suffrage for twenty years and stood firm against the idea pointing out that Helen was in the minority in this demand.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Helen was not universally liked within the suffrage movement even before her political involvement in the Irish cause. After Mill's death in 1873, she took on a more public role. She was elected to the London School Board in 1876 and by the time of her involvement in the Irish Land War, was a leading land reform campaigner in England, calling for nationalisation of the land. She was also a founder member of the Democratic Federation, which would become the first Marxist political party in Great Britain under its new name of the Social Democratic Federation. Thus the frictions between Helen and the mainstream British Suffrage movement lay, not solely in her difficult personality, which has been the focus of historians, but more in the nature and direction her feminism took, a feminism informed by her socialism and international, anti-imperialistic outlook.

## The Ladies' Land League

The Land League, founded in 1879, had been formed by the Irish nationalist, Michael Davitt, to rid Ireland of the

abuses of English landlords who inflicted high rents on the Irish tenant farmers. Its aim was to win what became known as the three 'F's'; fair rents, fixity of tenure and free sale. Some land leaguers like Davitt and Taylor went further and called for all land to be nationalised. The League organised a rent strike and physically opposed the ensuing evictions of peasants from their homes and land and this was the start of what became known as the Land War. The British government passed Coercion Acts in 1881, which enabled land leaguers to be arrested and held without trial. Davitt, however, had foreseen this would happen and had created an Irish Ladies' Land League to carry on the work of supporting the rent strike and opposing evictions. Helen joined this organisation as a committee member at the inaugural meeting of its London branch in February 1881.<sup>7</sup> This action set her firmly against Gladstone and the British Liberal government since the Irish Ladies' Land League would not confine itself to charitable work but encouraged its women members to be politically active and take the place of the imprisoned men at meetings and at evictions of peasants for non-payment of rent.

Helen had already been involved in protests against the Coercion Acts. In February 1881, she presided over a public meeting at Bermondsey, which was attended by the Irish nationalist MPs T. P. O'Connor and John O'Connor Power. This was one of more than twenty such meetings held that month in the capital organised by the Anti-Coercion Association.<sup>8</sup> Helen was one of the Vice Presidents of this organisation, which in November 1880 had sent an address to Gladstone and Forster, the Chief Secretary of Ireland. This declared that 'It is the duty of English and Scotch radicals to help the struggling people of Ireland, because the present terrible and critical position of that country is mainly due to the action of Englishmen and Scotchmen in the past'.<sup>9</sup>

The address declared its support for the Land League and maintained that agrarian crime was caused by 'the terrible distress of the last few years, and in the use of that distress by the landlords to exercise their powers without mercy'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Helen's involvement in the Irish land question arose out of her radical liberal mindset, which believed democracy to be under threat by British policy in Ireland and which saw land ownership as immoral. It was also informed by her 1880s socialism, which demanded the nationalisation of all land, since Helen was an executive member of both the newly formed Land Nationalisation Society and of Henry Hyndman's Democratic Federation. Founded in June 1881, the Democratic Federation included a demand for Home Rule for Ireland in its constitution and supported the Irish Land League's campaign for land reform. Here Helen departed from the views of her stepfather who, whilst calling for land ownership to be subject to government intervention, favoured peasant private ownership.

So why was the Ladies' Land League incompatible with the mainstream British women's suffrage movement? Margaret Ward has examined the imperial feminism of the British suffragist movement through an exploration of accounts of the Land War in the *English Woman's Review*.<sup>11</sup> The *Review* ignored the political agency and feminist potential of the Ladies' Land League in administering Land League funds, speaking at meetings and opposing evictions, and devoted its accounts of the Land War to praising plucky Anglo-Irish women landlords who stood up against Land League intimidation and, thereby, maintained the Anglo-Irish dominance of social and political



life in Ireland. These 'courageous ladies' who were upholding British law were denied the vote, the periodical lamented, whilst male lawless Irish tenants had obtained it.<sup>12</sup> Whilst Helen and Irish women were physically erecting huts to house evicted tenants, the *Review* focussed on relief efforts for 'Irish Ladies in distress' who found themselves in financial trouble due to Irish tenants withholding rent.<sup>13</sup>

Many of the leading female activists in the Ladies' Land League were both feminists and passionate Irish nationalists. Anna Parnell, President of the Ladies' Land League, was the sister of Charles Stewart Parnell. She was fiercely anti-British and anti-imperialistic. She coined the term 'the famine queen' for Queen Victoria and wrote anti-imperial poetry against the British Empire,<sup>14</sup> mocking its supposed civilising qualities:

Oppression foul – starvation –  
We'll do our best to spread  
Till each remotest nation  
Messiah's name shall dread.<sup>15</sup>

Katherine Tynan, the poet and fellow Ladies' Land Leaguer in the Dublin Head Office, wrote that Anna 'had the heart of a revolutionary.'<sup>16</sup> Andrew Kettle, Secretary of the Land League paid tribute to her nationalism in his memoirs:

I found she had a better knowledge of the lights and shades of Irish peasant life, of the real economic conditions of the country, and of the social and political forces which had to be acted upon to work out the freedom of Ireland than any person, man or woman I have ever met... Anna Parnell would have worked the Land League revolution to a much better conclusion than her great brother.<sup>17</sup>

Helen's involvement with the League also brought her into contact with the anti-imperialism of Irish America for Anna Parnell had worked closely with Clan na Gael, the financial backers of the physical force Fenians when she had lived in America. She and her sister Fanny had raised funds for the nationalist cause with this organisation whilst living in America.<sup>18</sup> Helen was also in contact with Patrick and Ellen Ford through her friendship with the political and economic philosopher, Henry George. George was the world's most renowned land reformer who called for a single tax on land, which he believed would lead to the end of private land ownership. Patrick Ford had sent him to Ireland to cover the land war for the *Irish World*, an Irish American nationalist newspaper. Ford was the editor of this anti-British paper, which was banned from sale in Britain and Ireland during the Land War. Helen was in contact with the Fords through the intermediary of Henry George, who refers in his correspondence to letters that they have received from her.<sup>19</sup> She tried to arrange to have the *Irish World* published in London though this was unsuccessful due to it being proscribed.

Helen's activism was driving her further and further away from the philanthropic feminism of Victorian Britain.<sup>20</sup> The future of the British Empire was at stake in the struggle that was taking place in Ireland. Helen, by throwing her lot in with Anna Parnell and her backers in America, Clan na Gael, had, in the opinion of mainstream British feminism, chosen the wrong side. There would have been no doubt in Helen's mind that she was joining a fight for national self-determination by her actions in joining the Ladies' Land League. Katharine

Tynan recalled how her nationalist father was disdainful of the Land League but supported it as a means of achieving Home Rule.<sup>21</sup> 'The Land League in those days was the expression of the Nationalist spirit in Ireland. I think a good many of us felt the uninspiringness of it but there it was.'<sup>22</sup> People, she continued, 'looked beyond the Land League to that for which Mr Parnell had taken off his hat.'<sup>23</sup> Anna Parnell linked the Land War to the struggle for Home Rule. She wrote in her account of the Land War that the male leaders of the Land League were 'a government de facto' and that had they not accepted terms with Gladstone in 1882 'now there might be only one government in Ireland and that one not English.'<sup>24</sup> Many of the women working in the Dublin Head Office were, like Katherine Tynan, from politically active nationalist families. In contrast, the majority of the women land leaguers in rural Ireland were focussed on defending their own homesteads rather than on the nationalist struggle. These leading women included the future Senator in the Irish Free State, Jennie Wyse Power, in whose house the Proclamation of the Irish Republic would be signed in 1916. These were the women with whom Helen was now mixing, to the dismay of the suffragists back home. The 'darker surmises' Priscilla McLaren warned Helen about was sheer British understatement. Many within the British suffrage movement must have felt that Helen had really gone too far this time in her support for the land leaguers against Gladstone's Liberal Government. When Helen, the stepdaughter of the revered leading radical John Stuart Mill, joined with Anna Parnell she was making an open stand against the Liberal Government that she felt was, in its treatment of Ireland, a threat to democratic values. Anna Parnell became such a well-known and hated figure in newspaper reports on the unrest in Ireland that her effigy was burnt on Bonfire Night by the villagers of Eltham, near London, as Katherine O'Shea witnessed who lived there.<sup>25</sup> Eltham was chosen as the place to burn an effigy of Anna since her brother Charles Stewart Parnell was a frequent visitor. It was an open secret that he was Mrs O'Shea's lover.

Many of the leading women land leaguers were also feminists. Anna had railed against the position of women in society in the American publication, the *Celtic Monthly*, in which she had published articles on the Home Rule debates in the House of Commons. These she had had to witness from the Ladies' Gallery or 'cage' as she called it, which screened the watching women from the view of members below by means of a metal grill. There is a sense of outrage in her writing at the position of women in British society. She likened the viewing gallery to the 'imprisonment and seclusion of women' and compared it unfavourably to the situation of women in America where they could sit freely among the male visitors in the American House of Representatives.<sup>26</sup> Jennie Wyse Powell later joined the Dublin Women's Suffrage movement and defended women's rights in the Irish Free State. The Irish novelist Hannah Lynch was Secretary of the London branch of the Ladies' Land League on which Helen served as a committee member.<sup>27</sup> She wrote of 'Ireland -- the very wretchedest land on earth for women, the one spot on the globe where no provision is made for her.'<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, these women were outside the British mainstream pro-Empire feminism, which saw demands for an Irish Parliament as a threat to the integrity and strength of the British Empire. Some feminists, like Mrs Fawcett and her daughter Philippa, would later leave the Liberal Party and join

the Liberal Unionists when the Liberals adopted the policy of Home Rule for Ireland after 1885. Helen, in contrast, regularly spoke in favour of Home Rule in the years before Gladstone's conversion to it, which split the Liberal Party.

Branches of the Ladies' Land League were formed throughout Britain, Ireland and the United States. In June 1881, Helen crossed to Ireland as part of a delegation of the Democratic Federation with the intention of attending a Land League meeting in Dublin and visiting the scene of evictions.<sup>29</sup> The socialist and fellow campaigner, F.W. Soutter, remembered Helen as 'the first Englishwoman who volunteered to visit Ireland during those dark and troublesome days when the Land League agitation was at its height.'<sup>30</sup> Back home in early July, she attended the Southwark Branch of the Ladies' Land League and thanks were expressed to her for her work in supporting the Irish.<sup>31</sup> Newspaper reports show her to have spoken at meetings up and down the country that summer, sharing platforms with Anna Parnell and supporting the fight of the Irish peasants for land. In October, the government declared the Land League an illegal organisation. Its leaders, including Anna's brother Charles, together with many ordinary male members, were imprisoned. The Ladies were now left to run the Land War on their own, only to find that the men's organisation had had little or no administration and the campaign had been badly run. The press reported that detectives from Scotland Yard were believed to be watching prominent land leaguers and the following months would see Helen's political activism increase in the cause of Ireland at the risk of her personal freedom.

By the beginning of November, Helen was back in Ireland at a meeting of the Ladies' Land League in Dublin called to form a new society, 'The Political Prisoners' Aid Society'. This organisation would raise funds for the imprisoned male land leaguers and their families and Helen was elected as President.<sup>32</sup> During her acceptance speech, Helen linked the Irish struggle for land with that of past fights in Italy and France against tyranny and went so far as to claim that the British government was the most tyrannical in the world save that of Turkey.<sup>33</sup>

Every Englishman or Englishwoman who had the smallest respect for constitutional liberty which had hitherto distinguished the history of England ... was morally bound to give the strongest protest against the iniquities which were now disgracing England in Ireland.<sup>34</sup>

During this November visit to Ireland, Helen was physically involved in the land league work, erecting huts and attending evictions. Anna Parnell was to recall this when she shared a platform with her during Helen's attempt to seek election as the first woman M.P in 1885:

She was grateful to Miss Taylor for the action she took in the dark days of the Forster regime in Ireland. On Lord Granard's estate, where numbers of evictions were carried out, she assisted with her own hands to put up Land League huts ... She would earnestly recommend the Irish electors to vote for Miss Taylor as she had given time, energy and money to the cause of Ireland.<sup>35</sup>

Jennie Wyse Power recalled in a newspaper article in

1909 how Helen had attended evictions in Carlow with her in November 1881 and risked arrest for inciting the tenants to pay no rent. She related how Helen had physically helped put up huts to shelter the evicted families and how police had detained them in their lodgings during a search for missing guns, effectively being under house arrest for a number of hours until the weapons were recovered.<sup>36</sup>

Back in late 1881, as rumours spread that the Ladies' Land League was also to become a proscribed organisation, the ladies made plans in the eventuality of their arrest and imprisonment. Henry George wrote to Patrick Ford, the editor of *The Irish World*, on 10 November 1881:

Miss Helen Taylor came to Dublin last week to propose that she should take charge, letting Miss Parnell go to Holyhead and direct from there. Her idea was that as soon as the Government found that the Ladies' League was really doing effective work in keeping up the spirit of the people they would swoop down on the women too, and that it would hurt the Government more to arrest her (an English woman) in Ireland than it would to arrest an Irish woman, and would hurt them much more to arrest Miss Parnell in England than it would to arrest her in Ireland. Miss Parnell's objection was that she could not be spared.<sup>37</sup>

When Helen made this request, it was no mere empty promise. She would have understood that there was a strong possibility of being imprisoned. The following months would see regular arrests of women Land Leaguers at evictions who, to their indignation, were arrested under an old statute of Edward III against unaccompanied women rather than as political prisoners as the men were. The *English Woman's Review* in its January 1882 edition reported these arrests, but showed no sympathy for the cause for which these women were being imprisoned. The *Review* demanded that these 'irresponsible women' should be severely dealt with. Their sympathy was reserved for a brave Anglo-Irish lady in Cork who had defended herself against intimidation from the land leaguers 'and yet this brave old lady is denied the vote which "Rory of the Hills" [a Land League agitator] is competent to exercise'.<sup>38</sup>

At a meeting of the Democratic Federation called to protest at the arrests, the press reported Helen as having called Gladstone a 'dastardly recreant' who had forsaken the true policy of liberalism for 'personal ambition and jealousy'.<sup>39</sup> Helen wrote to the editor of *The Echo* unrepentant but claiming she had not called Gladstone a 'dastardly recreant...but I did call him a dastard and a recreant and believe that half of England would echo those words if polled'.<sup>40</sup> This personal attack on Gladstone led to Helen being soundly attacked in the press, one report hoping that it would result in her losing her seat in the next School Board Election.<sup>41</sup>

## Ending of the Land War

On 24 December 1881, the Ladies' Land League was declared an illegal organisation and Anna sent a letter to the press that in the event of her imprisonment league correspondence should be sent to the care of Helen in London. Helen, back in England, continued to speak frequently at



meetings of the British branches of the Ladies' Land League. The Irish nationalist newspapers, *The Nation* and *United Ireland* followed these events closely. The branches were often named after prominent supporters of the movement; the *Mrs Delia Parnell Branch* was named after Anna and Charles Stewart Parnell's mother and two branches, North London and Hulme in Manchester, were entitled the *Helen Taylor Branch*.<sup>42</sup> During 1882, the Ladies' Land League battled on, supporting tenants, prisoners and their families, building land league huts, administering and raising funds, and clandestinely overseeing the printing and distribution of the banned Land League newspaper, *United Ireland*. The Ladies' Land League, however, was coming to the end of its existence. In April 1882 Charles Stewart Parnell was released from prison and accepted the 1881 Land Act, paving the way for a tenant proprietary and the end of the Land League, though not the land nationalisation which was the goal of Michael Davitt and Helen Taylor.

Charles Stewart Parnell disliked the women's organisation and its revolutionary ways, for he remained a constitutionalist and accused them of being profligate with Land League funds. He was also concerned with the increase in lawlessness, which occurred during their overseeing of the Land War. In her account of the Land War Anna Parnell criticised the men in the Land League whom she accused of going through the motions of an all-out rent strike. The women had been more ardent in adhering to the strike whereas the men, she claimed, had been going through the motions. Anna accused the men of having had no administration and of paying lip service to the ideals of the land league. She concluded that: 'People with aims so radically different and incompatible as the Land League and the Ladies' Land League had no business in the same boat.'<sup>43</sup>

Parnell's capitulation was known in America as 'the sale of the Land League' and Anna Parnell was so incensed at the end of the Land War which would, she believed, had it continued, have ended British rule in Ireland, that she never spoke to her brother again. She maintained, as did the Irish-American backers of the Land League, Clan na Gael, that he had sold out in making peace with the British at the very point when the British had lost control in Ireland.

Helen's views are not recorded but, like her close colleagues, she would certainly have felt angry and betrayed by Parnell's ending of the Land War and the winding up of the Land League. Helen continued, throughout the remainder of her life, to work for land nationalisation and she would have opposed Charles Stewart Parnell's acceptance of an arrangement that left the landless many still without land. Henry George, who remained Helen's close friend and land reform colleague for the rest of his life, wrote to Patrick Ford that 'Parnell seems to me to have thrown away the greatest opportunity any Irishman ever had. It is the birth right for the mess of potage.'<sup>44</sup>

It is from George that we get the best insight into how the ladies in the League's head office felt when the campaign was called off. George wrote to Ford that, on the evening of the release of Parnell from prison, the Ladies 'instead of rejoicing were like mourners at a wake,' knowing it was the end of the campaign and their involvement.<sup>45</sup> George also wrote to Helen, informing her of the despair at the headquarters of the Ladies' Land League in October 1882:

Anna Parnell is well but has not been to the Land League since her illness. Miss Lynch has gone to

Spain. A few of the Ladies remain doing some work for the Mansion House Committee, but the glory has departed. The women feel really bitter towards the Parliamentary men.<sup>46</sup>

He continued that the Ladies had given the men 'a very frantic piece of their minds' and that Virginia Lynch had threatened to throw one of them, Arthur O'Gorman, out of the window. Ethel Leach, Helen's close friend and a School Board member in Great Yarmouth, wrote to Helen at the time of the divorce scandal, which engulfed Parnell's political career in 1890. He was cited as being Mrs O'Shea's lover in the divorce petition brought by her husband. Ethel had been a fellow Land League supporter and the letter sheds light on their motivation in joining the League. They were clearly working for both land reform and Home Rule in their support of the Land League during the Land War 1879–82.

For my part I cannot see how the matter [*i.e. the divorce scandal*] need affect the question of Home Rule at all. I was not working for Mr Parnell but the cause of the Irish people and if he and all his parl (*sic*) party disgrace themselves the need for justice to Ireland will remain...You and Miss Parnell and I would have known better than to trust him [*i.e. Gladstone*] or any of the wire pullers, he ought to have been compelled to define the principles of his bill long ago, surely he will have to do so now, and thus there may be a silver lining to this cloud.<sup>47</sup>

The Irish in Britain remained grateful to Helen for her advocacy of the Irish cause. The predominantly Irish electorate in Southwark elected her as top of the poll in the London School Board elections of 1882 despite an official Liberal Party campaign to unseat her. Anna Parnell paid tribute to Helen as 'the only English person I have ever met who looked on the Irish question entirely from the Irish point of view.'<sup>48</sup> This was a stance that many of her fellow British suffragists could neither forgive nor forget.

## Notes

1. London School of Economics (hereafter L.S.E), Mill-Taylor Collection, file 13, no. 234, Priscilla McLaren to Helen Taylor, 15 Mar. 1881.
2. Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994).
3. F.M. Holmes, *History of the Irish Land League, Impartially Reviewed* (London, pamphlet, 1881), 122.
4. Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Women and the Vote', in *Women's History: Britain 1850–1944*, ed. June Purvis (London, Routledge, 1995), 281.
5. The Women's Library @ L.S.E, Autograph Letters, 7/bmc/bc, Helen Taylor to Barbara Bodichon, 10 June 1866.
6. L.S.E Mill-Taylor Collection, file 12, no. 54, Barbara Bodichon to Helen Taylor, undated.
7. *The Nation*, 26 Feb. 1881.
8. *The Times*, 2 Feb. 1881; 5 Feb. 1881.
9. *The Times*, 13 Nov. 1880.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Margaret Ward, 'Gendering the Union: Imperial Feminism and the Ladies' Land League', *Women's History Review*, 10/1

- (2001), 71 – 92.
12. *English Woman's Review*, 15 Jan. 1881, 16.
  13. *English Woman's Review*, 14 Jan. 1882, 27.
  14. Beverley Schneller, ed., *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism: Contexts and Texts* (Dublin, Bethesda, 2005), 244. Anna objected in the press to the visit of Queen Victoria to Ireland in 1900 using the term.
  15. Jane McL Côté, *Fanny and Anna Parnell: Ireland's Patriot Sisters* (London, Macmillan, 1991), 34 quoting from Anna Parnell, *Tales Old and New*.
  16. Katherine Tynan, *Twenty-five years: Reminiscences* (London, J Murray, 1913), 55.
  17. A. J. Kettle & L.J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: being the memoirs of Andrew J Kettle* (Dublin, Fallon, 1958), 48.
  18. Côté, *Fanny and Anna Parnell*.
  19. New York Public Library, (hereafter NYPL), Henry George General Correspondence, Henry George to Patrick Ford 23 Sept. 1882.
  20. J. P. Rodechko, *Patrick Ford and the Search for America: A Case Study of Irish American Journalism* (New York, Arno Press, 1967), 190.
  21. Tynan, *Twenty-five years: Reminiscences*, 72.
  22. *Ibid.*, 81.
  23. *Ibid.*
  24. Anna Parnell, *The Tale of a Great Sham* ed. Dana Hearne (Dublin, Arlen House, 1986), 57.
  25. Katherine O'Shea, *Charles Stewart Parnell: His Love Story and Political Life, vol. 1* (London, 1914), 56.
  26. *Celtic Monthly*, May 1880, reprinted in Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism: Contexts and Texts*, 118.
  27. *The Nation*, 26 Feb. 1881
  28. Hannah Lynch, *Autobiography of a Child* (London, William Blackwood & Sons, 1889), 217.
  29. *Irish Times*, 24 June 1881.
  30. F.W. Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer* (London, T.F. Unwin Ltd, 1924), 40.
  31. *The Nation*, 7 July 1881.
  32. Jenny Wyse Power, 'My Recollections of Anna Parnell', *Dublin Metropolitan Magazine*, Spring 1935, 15.
  33. *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Nov. 1881.
  34. *Irish Times*, 5 Nov. 1881.
  35. *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Nov. 1885.
  36. *Sinn Fein Weekly*, 16 Oct. 1909.
  37. Henry George, Jr., *The Life of Henry George* (New York, Doubleday, 1930), 361.
  38. *English Woman's Review* 14 Jan. 1882, p. 27
  39. *Birmingham Daily Post*, 17 Oct 1881.
  40. L.S.E. Mill Taylor Collection, file 18, no. 17, draft letter, no date.
  41. *Birmingham Post*, 17 Oct 1881.
  42. *The Nation and United Ireland*, Jan – Aug 1882.
  43. *Ibid.*, 96.
  44. Henry George, Jr., *The Life of Henry George*, 377
  45. *Ibid.*, 371.
  46. L.S.E., Mill Taylor Collection, file 17, no. 81, Henry George to Anna Parnell, 1 Oct 1882.
  47. *Ibid.*, file 18, no 49, Ethel Leach to Helen Taylor, 6 Dec 1890.
  48. *Ibid.*, file 18, no.82, Anna Parnell to Helen Taylor, 5 Nov 1885.

## The Sad Strangeness of Separation: Enuresis and Separation Anxiety in Wartime Women's Fiction

Amanda Jane Jones

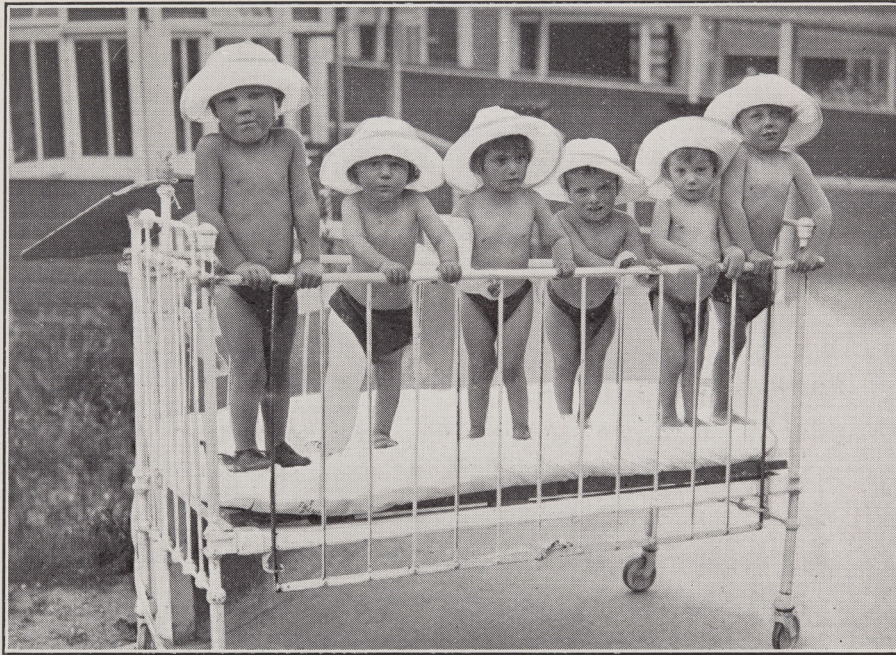
Anglia Ruskin University.

In the years of the Second World War and the decades either side of it, there was an extensive debate around anxiety and the effect of war on the child, to which British child psychoanalysis made a central contribution. The ideas and practices of child analysts at the time were focused on the unconscious and on the mother-child relationship, while it also emphasized a link between the war that was going on outside with 'an emotional "war inside" individuals', as Michal Shapira writes in *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain* (2013).<sup>1</sup> 'Every human being ... draws emotional sustenance and strength from those few people who constitute his home' observe Richard Padley and Margaret Cole, who edited the *Evacuation Survey: A Report to the Fabian Society* (1940) and 'love and friendship are as vital to man, especially the child, as bread and coal'.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is the first to unite references to the history of enuresis and wartime psychoanalysis with women's fiction of the 1940s.<sup>3</sup> I consider one of the effects of the Second World War on children, namely separation anxiety, and a physical symptom with which it has been associated; that of enuresis

or bedwetting. The focus of this paper is dual: I refer, first, to medical and psychoanalytical reports and theories of the period and second, I make a close critical reading of specific literary texts by three women writers of the 1940s. This paper traces the influence of psychoanalysis and the reference to enuresis, separation and anxiety in three works of wartime women's fiction. Separation and more crucially, the breaking up of families, generated a good deal of anxiety in both the children observed and those observing or writing about them. Enuresis was frequently a consequence of separation, the undoing of family ties and a symptom of anxiety. The splitting-up of families and being apart from one's children was considered by many parents to be worse than the threat of bombs, evidenced by the numbers who failed to send their children away or recalled them home from the country. Of the 765,000 unaccompanied children billeted in England and Wales at the outbreak of war, more than 340,000 had returned home by the following January.<sup>4</sup>





United We Stand.

*Children in the sun,  
1937  
Wellcome Library,  
London*

## Historical setting

Amongst the commentators writing about the evacuation of children (from cities in anticipation of aerial bombardment) 'top of the list', according to Shapira, was enuresis.<sup>5</sup> 'No other aspect of the social results of evacuation received so much publicity' as enuresis, nor lent itself so easily to 'exaggeration and misunderstanding', as Richard Titmuss writes in *Problems of Social Policy* (1950).<sup>6</sup>

The British Medical Journal includes references to 'nocturnal incontinence' as early as 1871. J. B. Bradbury, a physician at Addenbrooke's Hospital, relates a variety of treatments from hydrate of chloral to belladonna. Even then, in some cases a 'hereditary' cause is suggested.<sup>7</sup> A few years later, in 1906, Percy G. Lewis, writing in 'Causes and Treatment of Enuresis', remarks that 'hardly any two' opinions on the cause of enuresis 'are in agreement'.<sup>8</sup> He identifies different causes for the condition, including a 'fault' in the digestive system, a 'debility of the nervous system' and an underlying medical 'want of tone'. The 'retrogression to ... the infantile condition' results in a 'habit of enuresis' that is slow to cure. Treatments vary from a tonic (either chemical, such as phosphate of iron or physical such as a 'change of air') to dietary alterations or more alarmingly, application of electricity or 'blistering of the penis'.<sup>9</sup> In 1945 Lady Allen of Hurtwood published a paper, entitled *Whose Children?* in which she set out a variety of the serious shortcomings of the social care system in its dealings with children. One of the former inhabitants of a care home observed how a boy of seven was made to 'stand all day in the main lobby on a cold winter day' only partly dressed 'as a punishment for accidental incontinence'.<sup>10</sup> In the same work she also relates how 'it was a common thing' for boys to be 'dressed in girls' knickers' or in a 'girl's tunic' and made to 'walk down the room in front of other children' in an effort to shame him out of enuresis.

The psychological origin of many cases of enuresis during the war is also anticipated in psychoanalysis and child

guidance of the 1930s. Although psychoanalysis began as a purportedly scientific study of the interactions of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind, a considerable proportion of psychoanalytic theories were based around child analysis. Some psychoanalysts concentrated on the wider dissemination of ideas through works of child guidance, as Graham Richards points out in 'Britain on the Couch: The Popularization of Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918-1940' (2000). These 'popular texts produced by psychoanalysts and their sympathizers'<sup>11</sup> included *On the Bringing Up of Children by Five Psycho-Analysts* (1936) edited by John Rickman. Amongst the papers therein, Susan Isaacs' 'Habit' emphasizes the 'necessity for regular routine' and the role of 'feelings and wishes and fears and fantasies' in generating good (or bad) habits with regard to feeding, sleeping and excretion.<sup>12</sup> In the same volume, Melanie Klein's 'Weaning' associates the baby's earliest gratification (in the form of feeding) with the attainment of feelings of guilt and the desire to make reparation.<sup>13</sup>

My first writer, Elizabeth Taylor, writes with her keen eye on the social life of 1940s England and she is also skilled and subversive in her observations about 1940s childhood, as this paper will show. The primary texts for Taylor are *At Mrs Lippincote's* (1945), 'Plenty Good Fiesta' (1954) and 'Mothers', a short story written in 1944. 'Mothers' was reprinted in *The Persephone Quarterly* for Autumn 2001 (no. 11) and is striking in the delicacy and tenderness of Taylor's writing and the keenly observed emotional understanding between the mother and the child. The enuretic child in Taylor's fiction is contrasted with a second work, Noel Streatfeild's *Saplings* (1945) and the child, Tuesday Wiltshire. Tuesday is four at the start of the war (and of the novel) and her disintegrating home life leads to enuresis. The third text is Ruth Adam's *Murder in the Home Guard* (1942) where Betty, an evacuee, suffers at the hands of the middle classes.

In reading Taylor's wartime fiction I was struck by the echoes of something profound and unspoken which I found in other works of women's fiction of the period and with child

psychoanalysis. This resonance is both radical and unusual, reflecting different responses and concerns around the child and the separation from mothers and homes brought by the war. Taylor, Streatfeild and Adam were skeptical about psychoanalysis, but their writing anticipates later psychoanalytic theories and has sympathy with what child analysts were discovering at the time.

In *A Very Great Profession: The Women's Novel 1914-1939* (1983) Nicola Beauman claims that Taylor was 'one of the great writers about childhood' who observes the 'steadfast dailiness of ... life'.<sup>14</sup> In her biography of Taylor she shows us that while Taylor seems – at first glance – to behave according to the stereotype of a middle class housewife as she follows her RAF husband to different postings during the war, there is much more to her than one might first assume, and which is revealed in her imaginative, far-sighted subtle and subversive fiction.<sup>15</sup> Taylor's life does not appear to include any knowledge or experience of analysis.

Julia Davenant's relationship with her son, Oliver, is mutually delightful yet there is also a web of underlying anxieties tying mother to child, linked to broader maternal anxieties about war and being an adequate mother. Julia and Oliver are bound together by mutual fascination: 'every time his mother opened her mouth she said something which interested him'.<sup>16</sup> They are united in an unspoken mistrust of Eleanor, Roddy's cousin (who lives with them) and mild lack of respect for Roddy, Oliver's father and Julia's husband. Oliver is sent to hospital after a game goes wrong and he, like Harry in 'Mothers', is visited by his young and anxious mother. In a proportion of the children separated from their mothers, anxiety and distress lead to enuresis. Both Oliver and Harry are indignant to find a rubber sheet on their hospital bed. In 'Mothers' Harry is accused of wetting his bed.

'One of the nurses said I'd wet my bed. "Oh, you dirty little boy" she said to me. And I hadn't done any such thing.'

'Oh, darling. So what did you say?'

'I said "Go on! You! Liar! Rat!" To myself.'

She bit her lip' (Taylor 11).

The mother contains her distress at the treatment meted out by the nurse. Oliver finds himself in hospital after a fall from a tree and his 'pettish' disgust at the presence of a rubber sheet on his hospital bed disguises his terror of having 'his bowels opened'. Both boys are subject to 'the whims, the caprices, the red tape, the irresponsibility, the vicious sadism' of wartime children's hospitals.<sup>17</sup>

The psychoanalyst Anna Freud (youngest daughter of Sigmund Freud and strongly influenced by the work of her father) worked with her friend and colleague Dorothy Burlingham caring for and observing young children at their residential war nursery. They suggested (in agreement with the work of Susan Isaacs, Melanie Klein<sup>18</sup> and others) that when children were separated from their mothers during the evacuation scheme at the start of the Second World War in September 1939, they often experienced severe anxiety caused by this separation. One symptom was enuresis. In *Young Children in War-Time in a Residential War Nursery* (1942) Freud and Burlingham state 'a small child will normally have a setback in his habits when he changes hands. ... when the break in attachments is as sudden and complete as it has been under the influence of evacuation, even older children may

revert to wetting the bed and dirtying themselves'.<sup>19</sup> There was a great deal of concern at the numbers of enuretic evacuees, many analysts criticising the decision to separate children (some under 5) from their mothers for an indefinite period: John Bowlby, Emmanuel Miller and Donald Winnicott wrote to the British Medical Journal, saying '[t]he evacuation of small children between the ages of 2 and 5 introduces major psychological problems'.<sup>20</sup>

As Anna Freud explains: enuresis 'often disappears ... when the child has succeeded in forming adequate new relationships' and Taylor herself had some experience of this cause and effect when, during the Spanish Civil War, she fostered a young Spanish boy who suffered from nervous enuresis and who was teased in the camp to which he had been evacuated.<sup>21</sup> Taylor brought him to her home and the problem, according to the version she gives in 'Plenty Good Fiesta', was soon resolved.

At the same period, another novelist was writing about enuresis in her fiction. Noel Streatfeild's *Saplings* (1945) presents devastating consequences following from a family's wartime separation. In a novel quite different from her famous *Ballet Shoes* and written for adults, Tuesday Wiltshire is four at the outbreak of war and with her middle-class family on holiday.<sup>22</sup> The tragedy of *Saplings* is, as Gill Plain remarks in *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar, and 'Peace'* (2013), how adults 'persistently do the wrong thing for the right reasons' and 'part of the pain' of the novel 'is the sheer quantity of good intentions gone astray'.<sup>23</sup> Tuesday is 'aware that Nan and Miss Glover and the servants at home were afraid of something' and 'because they were afraid Tuesday was afraid'.<sup>24</sup> The source of her enlightenment is the fact that 'people spoke in front of her' because 'she was four and people underrated her intelligence'. The children are sent away and separated, their governess leaves to join the Services, and Tuesday's world begins to fall apart. Some months later, the children's nanny reveals to Tuesday's father that she has become enuretic. Alex Wiltshire is sympathetic: 'It was called enuresis. There had been a lot of talk about it at the time of the general evacuation. He had an idea it was a job for a doctor ... It wants a child specialist'.<sup>25</sup> Nannie is furtive and distressed. It is a 'disgrace' and a 'trouble' she has never had before, her tears 'blind' her and, she explains, Tuesday feels 'as ashamed about it as she was'. Streatfeild's fiction has already been seen to converge with the findings of psychoanalytic theory and here too, her fictional version of wartime childhood coincides with the findings of analysts. As the above quotation from *Saplings* suggests, the problem of bedwetting became a 'minor epidemic' with the general evacuation. Although some evidence suggests that a proportion of the enuretic evacuees brought the problem with them, a large number of cases began with displaced and separated families. Tuesday's problems begin as her family is split up at the beginning of the war, and 'the world outside the nursery seemed a frightening place. Tuesday had subconsciously decided to remain a baby'.<sup>26</sup> The 'subconscious habits' were 'formed to link her to her babyhood'. Her nervous anxiety centres on what I term displacement, being total separation from home and her siblings, and the fractured home life to which she has to accustom herself. Streatfeild emphasizes the 'subconscious' nature of Tuesday's emotions and her reactions. The general 'unhappiness' of the Wiltshire 'family home' makes Tuesday unable to cope with life outside the nursery; when her governess leaves, she loses control of her bladder.<sup>27</sup> Her



relationship with her mother is unsatisfactory and her siblings are sent away separately to school, clearly representing a significant 'break' in her 'attachments' as Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud observe in *Young Children in War-Time in a Residential War Nursery*.<sup>28</sup>

Even Tuesday's older sister, Laurel, is aware of the enuresis and its impact on her sister: 'Nannie thought I didn't know but of course I did. ... it's a terrible disgrace'. Laurel sees the enuresis as a 'shame'. The former governess warns, as her (now dead) father had done, that 'she ought to go to a doctor. It's an illness, not a naughtiness'.<sup>29</sup> Susan Isaacs, in the *Cambridge Evacuation Survey*, points out that most cases 'clear up fairly quickly' with 'sympathetic, practical handling' and warns 'when it is unwisely treated it can be very persistent'.<sup>30</sup> And Streatfeild suggests, through Laurel, that a solution may have been found as 'soon after we came home, it didn't happen any more'. Thus, the return of Tuesday's siblings corresponds with a return of nocturnal continence. Tuesday's lack of a stable home life has driven her to regress into babyhood but when she is surrounded once more by her siblings, the foundations of her security are restored.

The history of enuresis is extensive, as I showed in my introduction, and medical opinion was divided. The condition is, in the 1930s, 'a routine question in Child Guidance Clinics' according to Robina S. Addis in 'A Statistical Study of Nocturnal Enuresis' (1935).<sup>31</sup> In the 1930s 'bed-wetting is a common and troublesome problem which faces many' but 'no cure seems specific'. Describing child guidance clinics held in 1932, Addis finds that '[b]ed-wetting is so much a routine question in Child Guidance Clinics' that all patients are certain to be asked about it. Addis reports a study of 1,705 cases referred to six Child Guidance Clinics revealing that 'almost one in every five' of the studied cases had enuresis, whether or not the referral was on this account. In the late 1930s, Isaacs and Klein use psychoanalysis to challenge 'the common view' to which Isaacs referred in 'Habit', namely that 'there should be regular habituation to a vessel at specific times from the very earliest days'.<sup>32</sup> In *Saplings*, Nannie 'had never had any trouble that way from Tuesday, even as a baby'. The practice to which Streatfeild alludes illustrates the alternative view at the period (and earlier) popularized by Frederick Truby King, namely that a baby should be accustomed to using a pot from the first week of life. His theory also demanded that physical contact be kept at a minimum, with the baby left for long periods to cry unattended and alone. Truby King's adopted daughter, Mary Truby King, sets out the 'strict' system of her father in *Mothercraft*, requiring 'four-hourly' feeds (each of no more than ten minutes in length) from birth with no night feeds at all, and the intervening hours are spent alone in his pram or in his cot.<sup>33</sup> Klein's 'Weaning' contrasts sharply to King's advice, as she counsels 'it is better not to stick rigidly to rules' if they do not suit the child and mother, and the baby 'will take pleasure' from the mother's presence and her contentment, as 'reciprocal happiness will lead to a full emotional understanding between mother and child'.<sup>34</sup> Isaacs's view, in 'Habit', is that the concept of using a suppository to encourage 'conscious control' of the rectum is 'biological and psychological nonsense'.<sup>35</sup> Even where a semblance of control is achieved at an early stage, often 'there comes a change' when the baby reaches ten to fourteen months of age. Loss of control over his bodily functions may give rise to feelings of shame in the mother, but Isaacs warns 'that by laying too much stress' on the child's 'difficulties' the

child's problems are made worse, while 'if the mother's attitude is patient and encouraging' the problems are soon overcome.

So the analysts agree that early bladder control is likely to be lost when the child reaches a year or so, and again when there is an event or break in attachment that the child unconsciously feels to be significant. Freud and Burlingham warn that 'when the break in attachments is as sudden and as complete as it has been under the influence of evacuation' then 'even older children may revert to wetting and dirtying themselves'. The dramatic influence of 'a breakdown of the mother-child relationship' is expressed by an involuntary 'breakdown in habit training'.<sup>36</sup> In many cases this is what the general evacuation scheme represented for children as they were separated from home and family. As John Bowlby observed in *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, published by the World Health Organization in 1952, children between the ages of five and sixteen 'are not yet emotionally self-supporting'. Bowlby argues that for an emotionally insecure child, whose relationship with his mother is unfulfilling, separation may give rise to a belief that 'he has been sent away for naughtiness' that 'leads to anxiety and hatred'.<sup>37</sup>

The evacuee in my last novel did not 'suffer the agonies from the suspicion that her parents' did not want her because she was 'not in the least like the psycho-analyst's child' but rather she 'knew' herself to be unwanted, a 'bother' and a hindrance. However, when she is sent away to the country, she is 'numb with silent fear'.<sup>38</sup> A stream of failed billets later, and Betty is 'tense with anticipation whenever anyone looked at her hair' (she has nits) and her conclusion is that 'the kind ladies were the very worst feature of this new world'. Another feature was that 'she woke up with the bed swimming wet'. Adam remarks that 'it was definitely cause and effect, but it was not in her power to remove the cause'.<sup>39</sup> The enuresis is accompanied by dreams that 'she was trying to walk up a slippery hill' and 'that she had no pants on'. Still more failed billets left Betty 'oppressed' and 'quite jumpy'.<sup>40</sup> Betty is deprived of water and, like the little boys in *Whose Children?* found sucking their fingers 'having dipped them into the lavatory pan', Betty suffers the 'torture of evening thirst'.<sup>41</sup> Betty's 'helpless, formless fear' of 'what new miseries' lay ahead for her illustrates how deep and desperate her plight had become.<sup>42</sup>

The horrors of Betty's evacuation are vividly portrayed. Adam is unstinting in her criticism of the middle classes and of the unsympathetic mechanisms of war and evacuation that deprived Betty of her home, her family and the small possessions that were 'part of her personality'. After her escape, caught up in a gas raid drill and rescued by a sergeant, Betty 'like Lazarus returning from the grave accepted life afresh and put the past behind her'. The 'puny fumbings' of the unwanted and unwelcomed enuretic child rouse not 'pathetic wistfulness' in the sergeant's wife but instead she made a 'hasty calculation' about 'bedding and blankets and ration-books'.<sup>43</sup>

The evidence of enuresis in the Second World War is, as I have shown in this paper, widespread and extensive. It was a condition familiar to many housewives, to writers and the medical and child guidance professions. The separation of children from home and family was clearly one contributory factor in the 'Niagra' produced 'all over English and Scottish country beds'. Susan Isaacs, a Kleinian psychoanalyst by training, writing in her *Cambridge Evacuation Survey*, rails at the 'amazing ignorance' on the subject observed 'throughout the whole community'.<sup>44</sup> Like Adam, Streatfeild and Taylor, the

psychoanalyst gravely pities 'the small victim of the trouble' in a period of great disruption and 'threatening danger'.<sup>45</sup> The writing of middlebrow women, sometimes grounded in first-hand experience and at other times based on observation and secondhand knowledge, indicates a sensitivity to these children's suffering. The selected novels illustrate a disturbing discourse about enuresis common to writers, psychoanalysts and the medical profession in the period of the Second World War and the years either side.

## Notes

1. Michal Shapira, *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War and the Making of the democratic Self in Postwar Britain*. Cambridge: CUP. 2013. 1.
2. *Evacuation Survey: A Report to the Fabian Society*. Edited Richard Padley and Margaret Cole. London: George Routledge & Sons. 1940. 186.
3. An earlier form of this paper was presented at the Elizabeth Taylor Centenary Conference at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, June 2012. I refer also to enuresis in my unpublished PhD thesis, 'The Wartime Child in Women's Fiction and Psychoanalysis 1930-1960' Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge.
4. Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*. London: HMSO 1950. Appendix 9, 562.
5. Michal Shapira, *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain*. Cambridge: CUP (2013). 1.
6. Ibid. 121.
7. See J.B. Bradbury, 'Clinical Remarks on the Treatment of Nocturnal Enuresis and an Allied Affection'. *The British Medical Journal*, (BMJ) April 8, 1871. 363.
8. Percy G. Lewis 'Causes and Treatment of Enuresis'. *BMJ* April 21 1906. 903-5.
9. Ibid., 904-5.
10. Lady Allen of Hurtwood. *Whose Children?* London: The Favil Press. 7
11. Graham Richards. 'Britain on the Couch: The Popularization of Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918-1940' *Science in Context*, Volume 13, Issue 2 June 2000. 183-230.
12. Susan Isaacs, 'Habit', *On the Bringing Up of Children by Five Psycho-Analysts* ed. John Rickman. London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner & Co Ltd. 1936. 124-5.
13. As Klein was to develop further in *Love, Guilt and Reparation* 1937.
14. Beauman, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-39*. London: Persephone Books, (1983) 2008. 7.
15. Nicola Beauman, *The Other Elizabeth Taylor*. London: Persephone Books 2009.
16. Ibid, 19.
17. Taylor, Elizabeth. *At Mrs Lippincote's*. London: Virago Modern Classics. (1945) 2008. 143 and 149.
18. In 'Weaning' Klein says the role of the mother is 'vitaly important' to the child, adding that 'it is a great asset ... if the mother not only feeds but nurses her baby as well'. See Melanie Klein, *'Love, Guilt and Reparation' and Other Works 1921-1945*. London. Hogarth Press – Vintage- 1998. 298 and 300.
19. Burlingham, Dorothy and Anna Freud. *Young Children in War-Time in a Residential War Nursery*. (*Young Children*) London: George Allen & Unwin. 1942. 70
20. Bowlby, John, Emmanuel Miller 'The Evacuation of Small Children'. *The British Medical Journal*, December 16 1939. 1202-3.
21. Burlingham and Freud, *Young Children* 70
22. Streatfeild, Noel. *Saplings* London: Collins. (1945)
23. Plain, Gill. *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. 56.
24. Streatfeild, Noel. *Saplings*. 6
25. Ibid, 101.
26. Ibid, 146.
27. Ibid, 146
28. Burlingham and Freud, *Young Children*. 70.
29. Ibid, 190.
30. Isaacs, *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey*. Ed. Isaacs, Susan. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1941. 47 and 48.
31. Robina Addis, 'A Statistical Study of Nocturnal Enuresis'. *The British Medical Journal*. (1935) Vol 10. 169-178.
32. Isaacs, 'Habit' 129
33. Mary Truby King, *Mothercraft*. London: Simpkin, Marshall Limited, (1934)1939. 4.
34. Klein, 'Weaning' *The Writings of Melanie Klein 1921 – 1945: Love, Guilt and Reparation and other Works* London: Vintage 1998. 290-306.
35. Isaacs, 'Habit' 132.
36. A simple online search of peer-reviewed journals found over 200 articles referring to psychoanalysis published before 1959, with over 110 originating between 1940 and 1951. This search was carried out on November 6 2012.
37. Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health*
38. Adam, Ruth. *Murder in the Home Guard*. London: Chapman and Hall. 207 and 214.
39. Ibid 226.
40. Ibid 227 and 233.
41. Allen, *Whose Children?* 8 and Adam, *Murder in the Home Guard* 233.
42. Adam *Murder in the Home Guard* 236.
43. Ibid 247 and 249.
44. Isaacs, *Evacuation Survey* 47 and 8.
45. Ibid, 1.



## E. Lilian Todd: Aviation Pioneer

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**E**(mma) Lilian Todd was an early twentieth century contemporary of the Wright brothers who holds the distinction of being the first woman in history to design and build an airplane. As a young girl growing up in Washington D. C., she developed a passionate interest in mechanical objects that stayed with her into adulthood. Like many young women of her day, she pursued a business career and, by the early 1890s, was a successful typist and stenographer in New York City. Yet, her mechanical interests led her down a different path from contemporaries when she determined that she could help solve some of the problems of powered flight in 1906. She soon proved herself a talented, determined and confident visionary. Over the course of the next four years, she designed and built several aircraft models that she exhibited on behalf of the newly established Aero Club of America. She also spearheaded the establishment of the Junior Aero Club of the United States to promote aviation among boys. She finally completed a working prototype airplane in 1910, which marked her place as a pioneer in aviation history.

Lilian Todd was born on 10 June 1865, in Washington D. C., and was raised by her mother, a seamstress and her older sister.<sup>1</sup> Lilian received a good public school education, but one thing that set Lilian apart from other girls her age was her interest in mechanical objects. She was more interested in how mechanical objects worked than playing with dolls. She attributed this interest to inheriting inventive traits from her grandfather, who was one of the nation's earliest patent holders.<sup>2</sup> Lilian's mother nurtured her interests in tinkering with mechanical objects. Although she ruined her mother's good scissors one time by cutting wire and dismantled the family clock, which her mother then had to pay someone to reassemble, her mother not only overlooked these mishaps, but encouraged her and would buy her tools and materials to satisfy her inventive curiosity.<sup>3</sup> Later, when she got older and became interested in typewriters, she became adept at repairing them. There was nothing she enjoyed more than taking one apart and putting it together again to fix a problem.<sup>4</sup>

Lilian trained to work in an office after graduating from high school. She taught herself typewriting and got her first job at the United States Patent Office in Washington D. C., where she worked for two years. Her initial work was connected with telephone patent infringement cases. 'This', she recalled, 'was a delightful occupation. My subconscious mind was building the instruments according to various specifications, while my fingers travelled over the typewriter keys'.<sup>5</sup> She then worked in the executive office of the governor of Pennsylvania, before moving to New York City in December 1886. There, she learned stenography and took a position as a stenographer and typist at the Hammond Typewriter Company and then Peck, Stow and Wilcox Company, a tool and machinery manufacturer. By 1889, she had enough experience and confidence in her abilities to open her own office, the Tower Copying Company. She studied law as a pastime, enrolling on New York University's first woman's law class. She also read a wide variety of scientific articles and books to satisfy her mechanical interests.<sup>6</sup> Following in her grandfather's footsteps, she shared a patent

for a typewriter copy-holder in 1896.<sup>7</sup>

Typing took its toll on her by the late 1890s and she had to give up her business when her hands became afflicted with neuritis, a nerve disorder. She subsequently became the secretary to the director-general of the Women's National War Relief Association in 1898, during the Spanish-American War.<sup>8</sup> It is not clear what she did following her work with the Women's National War Relief Association. She later claimed that the work was so demanding that it was not until 1903 that she had enough leisure time again to devote to her passion for mechanical objects.<sup>9</sup>

She first developed an interest in aviation during a trip to England and France in 1900, where she saw several balloons. In England, she saw a dirigible balloon at Ranelagh Gardens, near London, made by the Spencer brothers, who were pioneering aeronauts. In France, she saw a captive balloon at the Paris Exposition.<sup>10</sup>

In 1903 she began making mechanical toys, which brought her additional income and she began experimenting on a number of different household inventions and airship models, powered by rubber bands and springs. 'This speedily gave way to a serious study of lighter-than-air machines', she recalled, which led her to designing more sophisticated models with small motors.<sup>11</sup> In 1904, she stopped work on her models and left New York to become the secretary to the president of the board of lady managers at the St. Louis World's Fair. There she saw two dirigible balloons which, she noted, 'was sufficient to fire my mind with a desire to conquer the air'.<sup>12</sup>

She did not return to New York for two years and was too busy to work on her aviation models during that time. She explained: 'I had no time to accomplish anything until 1906, when someone showed me a sketch of a proposed aeroplane, or heavier-than-air machine, in a Paris newspaper and I immediately set to work to evolve a plan which I considered much superior to the pictured design'.<sup>13</sup> The aircraft that inspired her was that of Alberto Santos-Dumont, a pioneering Brazilian aviator living in France. After the Wright brothers successfully tested their first heavier than air flying machine in December 1903, they were the only persons to fly in a powered airplane until Santos-Dumont flew his in November 1906. When Lilian Todd saw the sketch of his airplane in January 1906, she was unimpressed and thought that she could do a better job designing one and she soon began studying every work on aviation that she could find.

In 1905, a group of aviation enthusiasts established the Aero Club of America, patterned after a French organization, to promote aviation in America.<sup>14</sup> It is unclear when Lilian Todd became involved with club members, but in the fall of 1906 they invited her to exhibit an airplane model and dirigible balloon model at their upcoming second annual exhibition in New York City in early December and at their upcoming spring 1907 Jamestown Exposition exhibit in Virginia. Without much time to prepare, she hastily readied a scale model airplane in three weeks and also submitted one of her finished dirigible balloon models to the December exhibition.<sup>15</sup>

In late November 1906, as she prepared for the

upcoming exhibition, she had her first major press interview. In a *New York Tribune* article entitled, 'A Woman's Airship,' she discussed her long-standing interest in making mechanical devices and her interest in aviation, pointing out that she never had any formal instruction in the use of tools.<sup>16</sup> Her views about women in aviation and the future of aviation would change over time. When she gave the interview, there was no discussion about the prospects of other women entering the aviation development field. Airplane development was still in its infancy and there were as yet no other women doing what she was doing. She was asked about the potential future of airplanes for transportation, but she did not have much faith in their practicality and considered them inherently unsafe. Instead, she regarded current aviation development more as an interesting field of experimentation.<sup>17</sup> It is unclear when she first considered developing an airplane for transportation; it may have been during the exhibition. She later explained that one of her initial goals was to design an airplane that could transport several people great distances at a very low cost.<sup>18</sup> She was well aware her scale model airplane had a number of shortcomings and would not fly, but she believed her concepts were sound and that an improved design would fly. Others agreed with her and the press quickly credited her as the only woman aircraft designer in the world.<sup>19</sup>

Her models were a big hit at the exhibition and she received encouragement from several prominent Aero Club members. The concept for this and her later airplane models came from the study of various birds. This model, her first, of box-like construction, was reportedly inspired by a crow.<sup>20</sup> Her airplane model attracted more attention than any other exhibit at the three-day show, particularly from multi-millionaire Andrew Carnegie, who spent several hours every day of the show going over it. He too believed in her invention and reportedly offered to underwrite the costs of building a full-scale prototype for a flight test, but there is no evidence that he provided her any subsequent funding.<sup>21</sup> Continuing her research into aeronautics, she refined and redesigned her airplane model to more closely resemble a bird's angular shape. She displayed the model at various exhibits, including the 1907 Jamestown Exposition exhibit.<sup>22</sup>

While working on her experiments in model-making, she had the foresight to recognize that the youth of her day would play a prominent role in the future of aviation. Knowing that the French had established a boys' club in Paris to promote aviation, she believed a similar club should be organized in the United States. In February 1908, she wrote the Aero Club of America asking them to sponsor the establishment of a Junior Aero Club similar to that in Paris. The Aero Club agreed to her proposition and she soon became the club's first president and chief advisor, assisted by an advisory board of Aero Club members. Over time, however, her commitment began consuming too much of her time and she subsequently relinquished her role as club organizer in 1909 so she could devote more time to her pioneering aviation work.<sup>23</sup>

In February 1908, as she was organizing the Junior Aero Club, she invited several newsmen to her apartment, which was cramped with models, to see her latest model airplane. The perfected design was the seventh she had worked on over the previous two years. At the time, the U. S. Army was in the process of soliciting bids for its first military airplane. She explained that her model conformed to the army's solicitation requirements and even though she did not intend to enter

the army competition, she announced that she would have a full-scale model of her airplane by the summer of 1909. She expected to fly in her airplane the day it was tested and then hoped to sell it to the government.<sup>24</sup>

Sometime in 1908, as her models became larger and more complex, she moved her workshop out of her apartment to more suitable accommodations in Staten Island, New York. In Staten Island, she produced a new and larger airplane model with further refinements and innovations.<sup>25</sup> Her first opportunity to publicly exhibit her new airplane model came at the Morris Park racetrack in the Bronx where the Aeronautic Society of New York, an offshoot of the Aero Club, held its first aviation show on 3 November 1908. Ten thousand spectators were on hand to watch the aviation events and see her as the only female exhibitor.<sup>26</sup>

Although women were barred from joining the Aero Club of America, she held the distinction of being the only woman member of the Aeronautic Society of New York when it was organized in July 1908. Her membership, however, had certain drawbacks, and on at least one occasion, in February 1909, she was barred from attending a meeting because women were not allowed in the 'male only' part of the clubhouse.<sup>27</sup> In November 1908, she was involved in the first of several plans to organize a women's aero club, as a growing number of women were getting involved in aviation. She liked the idea of a club where she could qualify to become a pilot, but she didn't like the idea of following someone else's agenda. Although nothing came of organizing the club at that time (one was organized in 1912), she explained: 'I won't agree to become a member of a woman's aeronautic club unless I boss the machine. I can't be steered by any other woman'.<sup>28</sup>

When she confidently told newsmen in February 1908 that she intended to have a full-scale prototype airplane in the summer of 1909, she may already have had a financial backer. She had known Mrs. Russell Sage, the multi-millionaire philanthropist, for several years. When she worked at the Women's National War Relief Association, she did some secretarial work for Mrs. Sage, who had been a member of the organization's executive committee. Now, Mrs. Sage, after seeing one of her airplane models, encouraged her to build a full-scale prototype and offered to finance the project.<sup>29</sup> With Mrs. Sage's backing, she contracted with the Wittemann aircraft company in Staten Island to build her prototype airplane, which she completely redesigned. Her new design was a tri-plane, inspired by her study of an albatross at New York City's Museum of Natural History.<sup>30</sup> The Wittemann Company completed the airplane in the spring of 1909, based on models and drawings she provided. She did not oversee any of the actual work itself, explaining: 'I don't think it is a woman's place to go into a machine shop and work with men, but I make all my models and all the drawings'.<sup>31</sup> She expected to have her first flight test in June and pilot the airplane herself; however, she did not yet have the strength to operate the controls.<sup>32</sup>

In late May 1909, she participated in the West Hudson Aero Club's week-long aeronautical carnival at North Arlington, New Jersey, where she publicly exhibited her airplane for the first time and also helped oversee a Junior Aero Club kite flying contest. It is unclear whether she intended to try and enter a competitive flying event or only a non-flying contest for best airplane design and construction. One press account, entitled, 'Woman to Enter Aeroplane Race,' indicated that her airplane was ready to fly.<sup>33</sup> Her airplane, however, did not fly during the





*E. Lilian Todd poses at the controls of her recently completed airplane, 1909.*

*Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-15081.*

carnival, and to her dismay, she did not win the best airplane design and construction prize.<sup>34</sup> A series of technical and design problems continued to delay the airplane's flight test. Although she had hoped for a flight test soon after the airplane was completed, it was not until the first week of September 1909 that she reportedly invited a select group of experts to witness her airplane's first test flight in a guarded location near the Wittemann aircraft factory. She closed the event to the public in case the test was a failure and planned to exhibit the airplane the following week at the Interborough Fair at Dongan Hills, Staten Island, if the test was successful.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, she had to abort the test because she did not have a suitable airstrip. She wanted the flight test conducted on Southfield Boulevard, a 100-foot wide public highway near the aircraft factory, and requested permission from the New York City authorities, but they were still considering her request in early September, which they eventually denied.<sup>36</sup> In the meantime, she took her airplane to the Interborough Fair and kept it out of sight in a big tent. She planned to test the airplane at the fair, most likely on a large racetrack, but technical and design problems stood in the way.<sup>37</sup> When it became clear in late September that she could not test her airplane on Southfield Boulevard, she arranged to move it to the New York Aeronautic Society's aviation field at Hempstead Plains, Long Island. There, in a large tent, skilled mechanics worked to complete the final preparations for the

flight test. The airplane received additional modifications that led to further delays and design changes, which eventually would take more than a year to complete. At that time, since she did not yet have the strength to operate her airplane, she planned on having a young mechanic, a member of the Junior Aero Club who had worked on the airplane, be its pilot. Unfortunately, the death of her most trusted mechanic, who was killed in an auto accident in late September, presented an additional setback.<sup>38</sup> When she realized that her airplane would not be ready before the end of the flying season in late November, she decided to dismantle it early and store it for the winter.<sup>39</sup>

When the flying season resumed in the spring of 1910, she arranged to get space in a newly built hangar to continue working on her airplane. On 20 June 1910, a journalist visiting the Hempstead Plains airfield found her with a hammer in hand, dressed in a well-fitted black skirt and white linen blouse, working on her airplane. At that time, she stated that she no longer planned to test fly her airplane, but was confident that someday she would be its pilot. She intimated that she might enter her airplane in the *New York World* newspaper's recently announced \$30,000 contest to fly from New York to St. Louis. She also indicated that she expected her airplane to be ready soon, once she received a new Curtis airplane engine.<sup>40</sup> This is because one of the biggest problems she had was finding a suitable engine and when it became clear that the automobile engine she was using was unsuitable, she selected a Curtis engine as a replacement, although this too subsequently proved unsuitable. As the cost of a custom-made aircraft was prohibitive she ended up examining several engines, finally settling on a modified Rinek aircraft engine. In early September 1910, she installed a new engine with hopes of finally conducting the flight test, but technical difficulties arose again. This meant she missed an opportunity to have her aircraft participate in the first international aviation meet ever held in the United States at Belmont Park, Long Island, in late October. She was particularly annoyed that no one would lend her an engine for the event and were generally unhelpful to her because she was a woman.<sup>41</sup>

As the flying season began drawing to a close at the Hempstead Plains airfield, someone made a decision on 7 November 1910, to try to test fly the airplane before it was going to be dismantled for winter storage two days later. The decision must have been hastily made because Lilian Todd was not present. After more than a year-and-a-half of delays, one of the aviators on hand, French pilot Didier Masson, successfully conducted the aircraft's first flight test. A good-sized crowd was on hand to witness the event. A strong wind was blowing at the time, and rather than risk a possible accident to himself and the aircraft, he took off and kept close to the ground at an altitude of about 20 feet. The flight test was brief. He flew around the airfield twice and then returned to his starting place, where he received an enthusiastic reception from the crowd.<sup>42</sup> Despite the crowd's interest, the event was not widely publicized and went relatively unnoticed in the press. For example, the following day, a short article on page five of the *New York Herald* reported the event. Later in the month, Lilian Todd told a reporter that there had been several more successful flight tests, but her claims may have been exaggerated. There was no press coverage of these flight tests. The following month, *Aeronautics* magazine reported that there had been two successful flight tests of her airplane and

noted that it 'flew very well' both times, but added that, 'the controls were not balanced, and caused too much exertion in their operation'.<sup>43</sup> Lilian Todd's claims that there had been several successful flight tests may have been in reference to one or more flights attempted by Bessica M. Raiche prior to the aircraft being dismantled and put in winter storage. She was a pioneering aviator at Hempstead Plains, married to an aircraft manufacturer, who also had designed her own airplane. One of a handful of women aviators at the time, she tried to fly Lilian Todd's aircraft, but may have found the controls too difficult to operate and reportedly rose only a few feet off the ground on one or two occasions.<sup>44</sup>

Lilian Todd was proud of the attention she had received over the years in the press and, until November 1910, looked forward to piloting her aircraft, hoping someday to fulfil a dream of flying over the Grand Canyon.<sup>45</sup> In her earlier June interview, she defended women aviators, noting: 'Why should men monopolize the field of aerial navigation? For my part I see nothing extraordinary in a woman's flying. Women drive autos; why not aeroplanes? ... I am not a suffragette, but if a man can fly, woman can.'<sup>46</sup> But she changed her views considerably about women in aviation after the November flight tests. It is not clear what caused the change, but she became opposed to women flying in any capacity. Recent safety concerns, coupled with her social conservative views, may have influenced her change of view. The previous year, when Mrs. Julian P. Thomas, a pioneering balloonist, was asked if she planned on flying in an airplane, she replied, 'I regard it as entirely too dangerous.'<sup>47</sup> Nearly thirty aviators died in airplane accidents in 1910. Bessica Raiche's narrow escape from an air crash during her first flight in September and a near crash in October may have opened Lilian Todd's eyes more to the inherent dangers of women flying, as these mishaps followed the well publicized near fatal air crash of a notable French female aviator, Elise De Laroche, in July. Furthermore, Raiche offended Lilian Todd's social sensibilities by the way she dressed. After Raiche's September accident, which she blamed on her skirts blowing about in a high wind, she adopted men's trousers for piloting her airplane.<sup>48</sup> In 1910, trousers were considered socially unacceptable for women to wear publicly and women who wore them brought undue attention to themselves and risked public ridicule, and in some cases, arrest. Furthermore, earlier that year, Wilbur Wright, of the Wright brothers, had publicly voiced his opposition to women aviators who sought too much public attention. A social conservative, he believed: '...it is still conspicuous for a woman to fly. Most of the women who now operate aeroplanes do so for the sake of notoriety they obtain that way. Therefore I do not approve of it. Women should not make themselves conspicuous.'<sup>49</sup> In November, Lilian Todd, also socially conservative, clearly agreed with Wright and expressed similar views when she complained to a journalist:

An aeroplane is no place for a woman, either as a passenger or a driver. To see women riding in aeroplanes wearing trousers and bloomers makes me feel ashamed of myself. Such things are too conspicuous. A woman's place is on the ground ... Women may build and perfect machines of this kind, but let them leave it to the men to operate – and incidentally risk their necks.<sup>50</sup>

After the flight tests of her aircraft, Lilian Todd

announced that she planned on taking her airplane south for more flight tests and that she also was working on a new, improved biplane design, which resembled a bird more than any other aircraft. Not long after, however, she abruptly discontinued her work in aviation and in January 1911 went to work as Mrs. Sage's personal secretary.<sup>51</sup> It is unclear why she gave up her dream to continue her pioneering aviation work. There can be little doubt that her decision was made as a result of consultations with her benefactor, Mrs. Sage. In January 1912, she and Mrs. Sage decided that something had to be done with her airplane. They came up with a civic-minded solution to donate it to the New York State National Guard, along with an additional offer from Mrs. Sage of \$650 to cover the airplane's operating expenses. At the time, the U.S. Army had a few airplanes and there were none yet in the National Guard. Although the New York National Guard were enthusiastic about receiving the airplane and cash donation, there is no indication the airplane ever ended up with them and no record of its final disposition.<sup>52</sup> Lilian Todd worked for Mrs. Sage until the latter's death in November 1918. She then moved to California in 1919, where she lived peacefully until her death on 26 September 1937.<sup>53</sup>

In retrospect, Lilian Todd was a visionary, talented, determined, independent and confident woman. Unlike other women in the early days of powered airplane flight, she was not an aviator. She is best remembered for her pioneering aviation achievements during the years 1906 to 1910 when she earned the distinction of being the first female aircraft designer in the world and one of the founders of the Junior Aero Club of the United States. A contemporary of the Wright brothers, with no more than a high school education, she developed a passion for helping solve the riddles of early powered flight and promoting aviation among boys. Her longstanding interest in mechanics, her talent for model-making, her inventive mind and her drive and determination gave her the attributes to design airplanes. Her fortuitous relations with a multi-millionaire patron then made it possible for her to obtain funding to build a working prototype airplane that marked her place as a pioneer in aviation history.

## Notes

1. For Lilian's birth date see Standard Certificate of Death No. 9636, State of California, Department of Public Health, September 27, 1937. See *1870 United States Federal Census*, 13 Aug. 1870, 301, [search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=7163] for listing Mary Todd, 37 years of age, whose occupation was a vest maker and her daughter Cora, who was 16 years of age. For Lilian attending public school, see, 'Public School Recommendations', *Washington Evening Star*, 7 June 1873, 4. Her sister Cora left the household when she married. See 'Condensed Locals', *Washington Evening Star*, 12 Apr. 1877, 4. It is unclear what happened to her father. He may have been killed during the American Civil War.
2. 'Young Woman Builds Aeroplane to Fly an Hour for U. S. Prize', *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 Feb. 1908, 7; 'Miss Todd Aeronaut', *Washington Evening Star*, 6 Dec. 1906, 17; 'Only Woman Aeroplane Inventor Tells of Plans', *Washington Post*, 1 Nov. 1908: Magazine Section, 4.
3. Lilian Todd, 'How I built My Aeroplane', *Woman's Home Companion*, Nov. 1909, 11.
4. 'How I built My Aeroplane', 'A Woman Inventor Who Plans



And Expects To Fly', *New York Times*, 28 Nov.1909: Magazine Section, 11.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.; 'Typewriting Department', *Shorthand Review*, June 1889, 15-16; *The Trow City Directory Co.'s Copartnership and Corporation Directory of New York City*, March 1890 (New York: Trow City Directory Company, 1890), 301; 'Young Woman Builds Aeroplane to Fly an Hour for U. S. Prize'.

7. Lilian Todd shared the patent, No. 553292, with George W. Parker. See *Annual Report for the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1896* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 274.

8. 'Young Woman Builds Aeroplane to Fly an Hour for U. S. Prize'; 'How I built My Aeroplane'.

9. 'How I built My Aeroplane'.

10. Ibid.

11. 'How I built My Aeroplane'. According to 'Typewriting Department', *Shorthand Review*, she lived in the Woodlawn section of the Bronx in 1889. She subsequently moved to 146 West 16th Street in Manhattan, according to *The New York City Directory, 1891-1892*, 1371. According to 'How I built My Aeroplane', in 1903, she lived at 131 West 23rd Street.

12. 'How I built My Aeroplane'. See also 'Miss Todd Aeronaut'.

13. 'How I built My Aeroplane'. See also 'Miss Todd Aeronaut'.

14. The first Aero Club of America was briefly established from July to August 1902, in New York City, reportedly with Alexander Graham Bell as its president, to help sponsor a visit of aeronaut Alberto Santos-Dumont to New York. The second Aero Club of America, an offshoot of the Automobile Club of America, was established in October 1905, with its headquarters in New York City. See 'M. Santo Will Soar', *Boston Journal*, 23 Jul. 1902, 1; 'Aero Club Invites Foreign Balloonists', *New York Times*, 24 Oct. 1905, 11.

15. 'All Kinds of Airships for Jamestown Exhibition', *Trenton Evening Times*, 18 Nov.1906, 10; 'Miss Todd Aeronaut'.

16. 'A Woman's Airship', *New York Tribune*, 25 Nov.1906, 4.

17. Ibid.

18. 'How I built My Aeroplane'.

19. 'Miss Todd Aeronaut'; 'Woman's Flying Machine Takes Carnegie's Time', *New York Evening World*, 4 Dec. 1906, 6.

20. 'Thinks She Can Fly', *Washington Post*, 16 Dec. 1906: E, 11; 'Woman's Flying Machine Takes Carnegie's Time'. See photograph of the model airplane in 'Bright Woman Solves Problem of Flying through the Air', *Washington Times*, 9 Sept. 1906, 15. For a brief description of the model, see 'Air Ship Built by New York Woman', *Duluth News-Tribune*, 8 Mar.1908, 6.

21. Ibid.

22. 'Woman Has Airship', *Washington Post*, 5 Feb. 1908, 9; 'Young Woman Builds Aeroplane to Fly an Hour for U. S. Prize'.

23. The *New York Tribune* mistakenly cited the year as 1907 not 1908 and late February instead of early February. For Lilian Todd's letter to the Aero Club. See 'Boys Are Taking to Aviation Like Ducks to Water', *New York Tribune*, 16 Jan. 1910, 8; 'Balloon Flying For Young People', *New York Times*, 10 Feb. 1908, 7; 'Junior Aeronauts of Fly Kites', *New York Times*, 21 Feb. 1908, 8; 'She Builds Aeroplanes', *New York Tribune*, November 20, 1910, 4; Kate V. Saint Maur, 'Miss Lilian Todd', *Pearson's Magazine*, January 1911, 112-113.

24. 'Woman Has Airship', *Washington Post*, 5 Feb. 1908, 9; 'Woman Designs Airship', *Times-Picayune*, 6 Feb. 1908, 7; 'Woman Builds a Big Airship', *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Feb. 1908: 2, 4; 'Only Woman Aeroplane Inventor Tells of Plans'.

25. Ibid.

26. The only documentation of Lilian Todd attending the Morris Park aviation show is a photograph. See 'Miss Todd & Airplane' photograph, Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-74118, [1906?]. For the Aeronautic Society of New York utilizing Morris Park, see 'Man-Bird Falls and Breaks Ankle', *New York Times*, 4 Nov. 1908, 9; 'Rival For the Wrights', *Trenton Evening News*, 27 Jun.1909, 1.

27. 'Aerial Craft in Warfare', *New York Sun*, 10 Feb. 1909, 2.

28. 'Only Woman Aeroplane Inventor Tells of Plans'.

29. For Mrs. Sage's connection to the Women's National War Relief Association, see 'Woman's War Work', *Riverside Daily Press*, 25 Jun. 1898, 5; *Women's National War Relief Association Report, March 1898, to January, 1899* (New York, 1899), vii-viii; 'Mrs. Russell Sage at Flying Field', *New York Sun*, July 28, 1910, 1. According to the *Ogden Evening Standard*, the airplane cost \$5,000; see 'Mrs. Russell Sage Aids Signal Corps', *Ogden Evening Standard*, 26 Jan. 1912, 6. Lilian Todd told a *New York Sun* journalist that she spent \$7,000 on engines for her plane; see 'Aero Mrs. Sage Financed', *New York Sun*, November 10, 1910, 5.

30. J. Suche, 'At the Mineola Field', *Aeronautics*, December 1910, 197; 'How I built My Aeroplane'.

31. 'She Builds Aeroplanes'.

32. 'How I built My Aeroplane'.

33. 'Woman to Enter Aeroplane Race', *Boston Journal*, 26 May 1909, 1. For Lilian Todd participating in the carnival and overseeing the kite flying contest, see 'Carnival of the Air on Today', *Jersey City Evening Journal*, 25 May 1909, 9; 'America's Biggest Airship to Soar New York's Skyscrapers', *New York Herald*, 28 May 1909, 3.

34. The winner of the best airplane design and construction is cited in 'Jersey's Aero Carnival', *Aeronautics*, July 1909, 20.

35. 'Miss Todd is to Fly', *Ogden Standard*, 3 Sept. 1909, 1; 'Woman Will Fly in New Aeroplane', *Geneva Daily Times*, 16 Sept. 1909, 3; 'Woman Makes Aeroplane', *Charleston Evening Post*, 2 Sept. 1909, 1.

36. Lilian Todd wanted to test her airplane on Southfield Boulevard. Although her request for permission to the New York City authorities was considered in August, she received the rejection in late September. See Letter, Louis L. Tribus to Miss E. L. Todd, 20 Sept.1909, [earlyaviators.com/etodd2.htm](http://earlyaviators.com/etodd2.htm)

37. 'Woman Expects to Fly in Aeroplane', *Cincinnati Post*, 3 Sept. 1909, 8; 'Hudson Celebration On', *New York Sun*, 5 Sept. 1909, 5; 'Miss Todd May Fly Today', *New York Sun*, 6 Sept. 1909, 3; 'Aviator Refuses to Aviate', *New York Call*, 7 Sept. 1909, 8.

38. 'Flying Machines in the Big Garden', *New York Times*, 26 Sept. 1909: 4, 1; 'Two Killed in Auto After Balloon Hunt', *New York Times*, 30 Sept. 1909, 1; 'The First Woman-Made Aeroplane', 'Miss Todd's Airship Delayed', *New York Press*, 15 Oct. 1909, 7; 'A Woman Inventor Who Plans And Expects To Fly'.

39. 'Affairs at Mineola', *Daily Long Island Farmer*, 9 Nov.1909, 1.

40. 'Affairs at Mineola', *Daily Long Island Farmer*, 13 May 1910, 1; 'Woman Aviator Builds Aeroplane of Own to Race for Big Prizes', *Syracuse Journal*, 21 Jun. 1910: Magazine Section, 1; '30,000 to Fly From New York to St. Louis', *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 Jun. 1910, 1. According to 'Woman Has Airship', Lilian Todd initially planned on using a Curtis engine before contracting with the Wittemann Airplane Company.

41. 'A Woman Inventor Who Plans And Expects To Fly', 'Miss E. L. Todd Sees in Flight Biplane She Built Herself', *New York Herald*, November 8, 1910, 5; 'Miss Todd to Try to Fly', *New York Sun*, September 13, 1910, 1. 'At the Mineola Field', 'She Builds

Aeroplanes'.

42. The flying season ended at the Hempstead Plains airfield on 20 Nov. 1910, according to 'Bird Men Have Ceased Flying at Garden City,' *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 Nov. 1910, 10. Of two New York City newspapers that reported on the test flight, the *New York Herald* and the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the latter had more detailed and accurate coverage of the event. See 'Her Biplane a Success,' *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 Nov. 1910, 3; 'Miss E. L. Todd Sees in Flight Biplane She Built Herself'.

43. The *New York Herald* mistakenly claimed that Lilian Todd witnessed the test flight, but the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, correctly reported that she was not present. See 'Miss E. L. Todd Sees in Flight Biplane She Built Herself,' 'Her Biplane a Success,' 'Aero Mrs. Sage Financed,' 'At the Mineola Field,' 'She Builds Aeroplanes'.

44. 'Aero Mrs. Sage Financed,' 'Shall Man Have Air Highways to Himself? No Indeed!' *New York Tribune*, 8 Jan. 1911, 2, 3; 'Dr. Bessica Raiche, Early Flier, Dead,' *New York Times*, 12 Apr. 1932, 24.

45. 'Only Woman Aeroplane Inventor Tells of Plans'.

46. 'Woman Aviator Builds Aeroplane of Own to Race for Big Prizes,' *Syracuse Journal*, 21 Jun. 1910: Magazine Section, 1.

47. 'Mrs. Julian P. Thomas, Pioneer 'Aeronautess,' Praises Balloon Sport,' *New York Evening World*, 22 Feb. 1909, 3.

48. 'Aviator Moisant Hurlled to Death from Aeroplane,' *New York Evening World*, 31 Dec. 1910, 1; 'Woman in Aeroplane

Wreck at Mineola, L. I.,' *Watertown Daily Times*, 16 Sept. 1909, 1; 'Mrs. Raiche in Flight,' *Washington Evening Star*, 25 Sept. 1910, 3; 'Woman Aviator in Tumble,' *The Citizen* (Honesdale, PA), 14 Oct. 1910, 5; 'Woman Aviator Fatally Hurt,' *Washington Times*, 8 Jul. 1910, 1; 'No Skirts for Woman Aviator,' *Riverside Morning Enterprise*, 27 Sept. 1910, 2.

49. 'Women and Aeroplanes Cranky,' *Idaho Statesman*, 29 May 1910, 3.

50. 'She Builds Aeroplanes,' 'Miss Todd, Builder of Aeroplane, Says Women Should Never Fly,' *Trenton Evening Times*, 15 Nov. 1910, 10; 'Miss E. Lillian Todd.'

51. 'Woman Builds a Biplane,' For Lilian Todd returning to work for Mrs. Sage, see Ruth Crocker, 'The Educational Philanthropy of Mrs. Russell Sage,' in *Women and Philanthropy in Education*, Andrea Walton, ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 272.

52. 'Aeroplane for Guardsmen,' *New York Sun*, 26 Jan. 1912, 1; *The Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of New York for the Year 1912* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1913) contains no reference to Lilian Todd's airplane.

53. *Thurston's Residence and Business Directory of Pasadena* (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1924), 575; Standard Certificate of Death No. 9636, State of California; 'Spare Parts from Here, There and Everywhere,' (Dearborn, Michigan) CHIRP, August 1936, No. 20. [earlyaviators.com/etodd2.htm](http://earlyaviators.com/etodd2.htm).

## Book Reviews

**Argha Banerjee, *Women's Poetry and the First World War (1914-1918)*,**

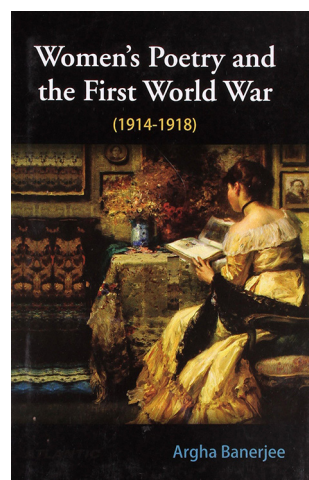
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This review is written "backwards" and in some ways that is how this detailed and well researched text should be read as the appendixes are of particular interest and value. Appendix 1, for example, provides an analysis of the war poetry of Margaret Postgate (1893-1980), Jessie Pope (1868-1941), Carola Oman (1897-1978), May Sinclair (1863-1946), May Cannan (1893-1973) and Charlotte Mew (1869-1928). Some of these women have not been previously recognised as

"war poets" while others are established within the "literary canon" but have yet to receive the depth of discussion afforded here. Each woman is approached as an individual, her experiences forming part of the discussion but the focus is on the poetry and the context in which it was produced. The private backgrounds of these women, which often provided

the social and political context for many of their poems, is given in Appendix 2. Thus it is a "gateway" into the topic for the non-literary specialist, whilst at the same time it can also be a reference source for a number of academic disciplines.

The accessibility of the book is epitomized by its introduction; "First World War, Critical & Historical Contexts and the Tradition of Women's War Poetry; A Vindication". This provides the general reader with an overview and signposts the rest of the text for those readers already familiar with the topic. There is a strong feminist tone which seeks to ensure that the women's voice in poetry in the First World War is also heard.

In Chapter 1 - "Loss, Mourning and Women's Poetry: The Complex Nature of Grief" of note is the discussion of the 'dutiful daughters' (p.85) - the Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses (V.A.Ds) and how the British Red Cross and in particular Dame Katherine Furse (1875- 1952) head of the Voluntary Aid Detachment sought to project a maternal but also nun-like image of V.A.D's nurses onto both the general public and the women themselves who were recruited from the middle or upper classes of British society. This was shown not only in the recruiting poster designed by Alonzo Earl Foringer but also the poetic verse given to each nurse written by Katherine Furse;

And only the masters shall praise us, and only  
the Master shall blame.

And no one shall work for money, and no one  
shall work for fame,

But each for joy of working, and each in his  
separate star,

Shall draw the thing as he sees it for the God of  
things as they are. (p.86)



Chapter 2 – “O dam the shibboleth/ Of sex!: Poetry, Politics and Propaganda” considers the British Suffrage movement and its fostering of women’s confidence in culture created by women (music, art and poetry) within the space of political activism is debated, together with the differences in women’s class and their defined roles in pre-1914 British society. This was of course to be radically changed over the course of the First World War and was a feature in many poems, as was pacifism; however it must be remembered that the wider Suffrage movement was shattered by the outbreak of the war and many activist women never regained their sense of belonging in the wider cultural or political world.

Chapter 3 “Great War, Female Work Experience and Testimonies” considers the voice of working-class women. This makes for an interesting contrast with the concerns of middle and upper-class women as expressed in poems such as *Sing a Song of War-Time* by Nina Macdonald;

Mummie does the house-work,  
Can’t get any maid,  
Gone to make munitions,  
‘Cause they’re better paid. (p.178)

In Chapter 4 “Of Myths and Folklore; An Alternative Poetic Discourse of the Great War” great stress is placed on the desire of H.D., Iris Tree and Edith Sitwell to create a narrative of the war as women poets for women readers. They sought to break the social, political and cultural patriarchy of the time, which makes it difficult for a modern reader to grasp fully the radical nature of their writing today. More familiar themes and metaphors are explored in Chapter 5 “Landscape, Birds, and Flowers: Nature and Collective Poetic Response to the First World War.” These are directly contrasted with male poets.

This text is an excellent introduction to poetry written by women of their experiences and reflections on the First World War at home and overseas, which should encourage readers to research individual named authors, their poetry and other writings, aided by a full bibliography (with dated internet sources) and index.

**Laura Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century***

**Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, Surrey, 2013. £60 (website £54), ISBN 9781409439455 (hardback), pp. 1+229**

**Reviewed by Cheryl Law**  
*Independent Scholar*

The explosion in research and subsequent publications on many aspects of women’s history over the past 20 years has been a joy to those of us who can remember when only a handful of such books was available. One of the sectors that still seem to be under-explored is that of women in music, and most particularly, feminist musicology, which is why Laura Seddon’s book is such a welcome addition to the cannon.

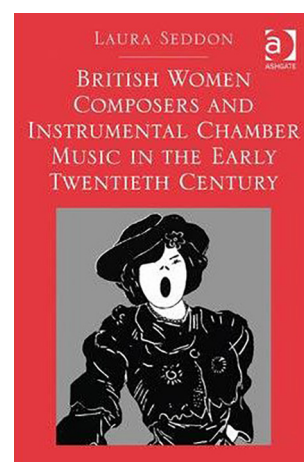
Although as Seddon explains, ‘The main purpose of this book is to uncover some neglected works and place them in the context of early twentieth-century British music’ (p.1), this book is far more inclusive than its rather circumscribed title indicates. Seddon thoroughly contextualizes her study; having

clearly delineated the framework and methodology she employs, she traces the antecedents upon whose research she builds, and where those links could be continued.

This study opens new ground by concentrating on women’s involvement with ensemble instrumental chamber music, as solo piano and vocal music has been the dominant area previously associated with women composers. The proliferation of the sonata form in the early twentieth century music of male composers and theorists and where and how this influenced women composers together with ‘the possibility of an emerging female aesthetic’ (p.2) forms a major strand. Seddon’s contribution to this developmental phase of women composers’ work analyses the need ‘to investigate and deconstruct such binary relationships within the context of early twentieth-century music’ (p.3).

Setting herself a wide and demanding brief, the first chapter addresses how women’s lives as composers were delineated and worked out through the competing demands of ‘generation, class, education, career and patronage, sexuality, marriage and motherhood, politics and war’ (p.17). Her analysis encompasses three generations of women: the first including figures such as Ethel Smyth (1858-1929) and Dora Bright (1863-1951); Marion Scott (1877-1953) and Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) with others, form the second grouping; the third examines Morfydd Owen (1891-1918) and Dorothy Howell (1898-1982). But she also traces how the latter group set the scene for the continuation of a tradition, for women such as Freda Swain (1902-1985) and Grace Williams (1906-1977), among others. The discussion relating to women composers’ sexuality is of particular interest.

How women composers seized on the growth of chamber music in the early twentieth century as a vehicle for the expansion and flexing of their musical muscles forms the core of the second chapter. Exploding out of the domestic circumscription of solo piano and singing, women composers embraced and expanded the possibilities of chamber music in the ‘scaling up’ (p.42) of their contribution to this genre of music-making. Writing for and performing in large public halls, as well as at impressive events held in the homes of wealthy women patrons, through a network of women-only chamber music societies, women composers were extending not only their involvement in a different musical genre, but also in their range of venues and audience. Amateur and professional women musicians were available to play their works, but as Seddon notes, chamber music was more modest in its requirements, so its smaller size suited the resources at women composers’ disposal, while musically still enabling them to experiment. The issue of this permeation for women and in the critical assessment of where chamber music stood, subsequently, in the hierarchy of musical composition is touched on. Whether the denigration of ‘simple’ musical forms in the 1920s and beyond with its consequent diminishing of women composers’ public profile is also touched on; leaving us with the discussion of whether ‘simple’ connotes ‘less skilful’



or, as Seddon purports, whether this is an historical construct.

One of the values of this text is in its range of interest in addressing so many aspects of women composers' operation, as in the third chapter dealing with the Society of Women Musicians (SWM). One of the most valuable lessons for women engaged in a pioneering or activist field to learn is the necessity for establishing a support network, and one of the SWM's aims, 'To afford members the benefits of co-operation' endorses such a need. How well it succeeded with its uncertain profile veering between the amateur and professional, and a fluctuating membership that denoted the conflict between the mainstream and the marginalized as well as its undoubted support for a range of activities are considerations that play well to all such organizations, both cultural and political. Additionally, as the history of such a society it is an invaluable contribution.

The fourth chapter analyses the work of Adela Maddison (1866-1929), Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) and Morfydd Owen (1891-1918) within the context of the question, 'to what extent did the chamber music of women composers of the early twentieth century conform to male ideals?' Those three women were not members of the SWM, but in the final chapter, the work of three women who did have SWM connections, Ethel Barns (1873-1948), Alice Verne-Bredt (1868-1958), and Susan Spain-Dunk (1880-1962) is examined in relation to the musical form of the phantasy and its significance as an early twentieth century genre.

The five appendices which collate compositional and biographical information relating to a significant number of women composers that Seddon amassed during the course of her research have been generously shared with the reader to provide a basis, hopefully, for future research and expansion on a neglected area of feminist scholarship.

### **Jill S. Greenlee, *The Political Consequences of Motherhood*.**

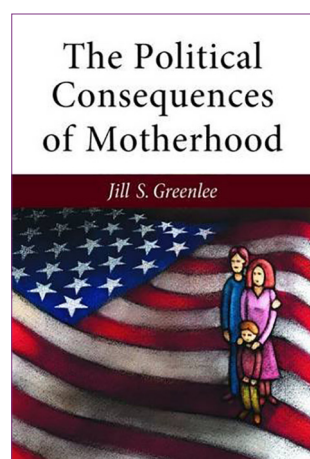
**Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2014.**

**\$65.00, 9780472119295 (hardback); \$45.00,**

**9780472120208 (e-book), pp. ix + 290**

**Reviewed by Courtney Kisat**

*Southeast Missouri State University*



In this study, Professor Jill Greenlee examines the way motherhood has been used as a vehicle in American politics, along with the way mothers themselves become politicized in ways unique to their identification as mothers. Greenlee shows that in nearly every election since 1920, candidates from all participating parties have tried to connect with female constituents by addressing such issues as family values, women's moral

superiority over men, and later, equal rights in the workplace and access to affordable childcare. Meanwhile, she argues, women undergo shifts in self-identity when they become

mothers and this often changes their interests and investment in certain political issues.

Greenlee provides a meticulous analysis of similarities and differences in Republican and Democratic Party candidates' appeals to mothers between 1920 and 2012, with stunning illustrated graphs. According to her research, elections of the 1920s were characterized by politicians' appeals to women's ability to clean up politics by their pure moral superiority, their (perceived) universal opposition to war, and their central values of family and home. These themes continued into the 1950s, but the election of 1960 included an unprecedented focus by the media upon candidate wives as the essential wife and mother, and, in the case of Jacqueline Kennedy, as trendsetter. Greenlee calls this shift a "reconstitution of appeals," as campaign managers utilized potential first ladies as the best way to get the "women vote" [51-53]. Presidential campaigns and elections since 1980 have naturally reflected social and political developments of the nation as a whole, while still incorporating issues deemed important to mothers. After 1980, Greenlee indicates that Republican candidates re-emphasized motherhood and "family values" as universal truths to which all women aspired, while Democratic nominees were more likely to incorporate language from the second wave of women's rights and address issues of social welfare, the wellbeing of children, and liberalizing policies that would increase funding to these areas. Both parties used motherhood as a vehicle to hopefully secure mothers' votes.

Greenlee's analysis is sound, but lacking is an examination of how this experience differed for women of color or of lower socioeconomic classes. One senses the mothers she studied were white, upper-middle class, and socialized to have a pre-existing interest in political issues before motherhood. Considering the extensive literature on black women's history of this time period, perhaps another chapter on this experience would be appropriate. At times, Greenlee relies heavily upon primary sources such as *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. While these are certainly important sources of historical data, Greenlee could address regional differences by expanding her research to include newspapers outside of the metropolitan East Coast. Finally, while studies of the two main political parties are important, how did the Socialists, Communists, Progressives, and other independent parties address motherhood as a political issue, and what role did class play in the politicization of mothers?

By employing a variety of methodologies, including extensive qualitative analysis of dozens of interviews with politicized mothers, Greenlee shows that the political consequences of motherhood are often changes in political perspective, but not necessarily position. Politicians historically identified certain issues they imagined were important to voting mothers, but, as Greenlee argued, these assumptions did not always resonate with their intended audience. Indeed, for all the effort invested in developing political rhetoric aimed at mothers, Greenlee could find no solid evidence that any political gains were made based on appeals to motherhood.

*The Political Consequences of Motherhood* is an important contribution to the fields of women's history and political science. We already knew politicians would say almost anything to get a vote, but Greenlee's showing of women's—especially mothers'—agency in this process is fresh and should inspire scholars of the field to expand this model to study mothers of varying racial, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.



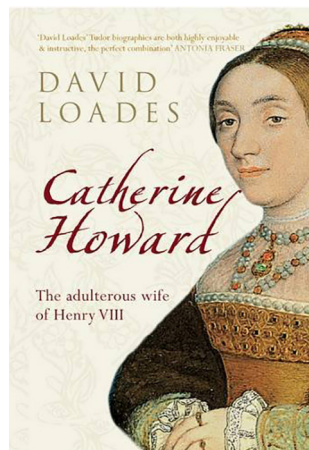
**David Loades, *Catherine Howard The Adulterous Wife of Henry VIII*,**

**Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2014. £9.99, 978**

**4456 3676 4 (paperback), pp. 221**

**Reviewed by Julie Chamberlain**

*Independent Scholar*



The eye-catching title of this book immediately sent hackles rising – surely Henry VIII's fifth wife could be defined by more than her sexual misdeeds? But as the author writes in the preface, “she was only 20 when she died and much about her childhood is obscure so a biography is inevitably largely a study of her sexuality and its consequences” (page 8). This also means there is not much original source material to go on, and what there is has been

well used before. Whereas other studies have tried to work out whether Catherine was an innocent used by her family and court, or a brazen risk-taker, in this book Loades tries to understand her in the context of the time in which she lived.

The book is however very repetitive. The ‘Introduction’ summarises Henry's marriage history, from Catherine of Aragon and her failure to provide an heir, through passion with Anne Boleyn, tragedy with the death of Jane Seymour, and the mistake of the marriage, soon annulled, with Anne of Cleves, to set the scene for the match with the young Catherine. Then the first chapter backtracks through all of this in more detail.

What little is known of Catherine's early life is described, as even her birth date is obscure, variously given as between 1518-24. Loades describes Catherine's intimate relationships with her music teacher, and two other men she allegedly entertained in her bedchamber and he unnecessarily comments “she was by that time about fourteen and no doubt eager for the experience” (page 42); a somewhat questionable comment about such a young girl.

The chapter on the ‘International Scene’ again backtracks to the Anne of Cleves marriage and its context, and that on ‘Domestic Policies’ examines Henry's favouring of the conservative Howard family alongside the downfall of Cromwell. Her life as a royal bride is described in Chapter 5, more than half way through the book, detailing the fabulous gifts and entertainments, but also duties to serve and satisfy the king and to receive petitions, a responsible role for a new teenage queen. There are some interesting snippets. Henry's first gift to Catherine was, unromantically, the goods and chattels of two murderers who had been executed.

Catherine's downfall began during the *Progress of 1541* and Loades devotes Chapter 6 to telling the little that is known. She spent time on the journey to York with Thomas Culpepper, a man she had been close to before the King proposed. Gentlewoman Jane Rochford played a key role as a go-between, and there are 10 pages re-telling all that has gone before and explaining what she was doing at the time. Chapter 7, ‘Adultery Detected’, details how the King came to be told of Catherine's relationships before their marriage, and

possibly on the Progress. Loades claims Catherine's confession letter “does not read like the work of an air-brained 20 year old” (page 144), implying someone else wrote it, but the fact that the night before her execution she borrowed the block to practice her moves, and according to an eye-witness went to her death with steadfast countenance, shows there was more to her than that.

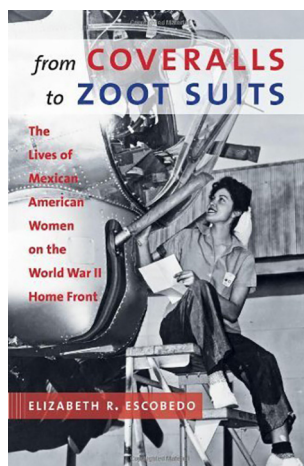
This book reveals how little factually is known about Catherine, and that we can only speculate about the reasons for her actions. The author's unnecessary derogatory comments about Catherine – such as “her career had been snuffed out by her own ridiculous behaviour” (page 164) – detract from the book's seriousness, which is a pity as the idea of examining her life within the context of the time was a good one.

**Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits. The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front*.**

**Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013. \$34.95, 978-1-4696-0205-9 (Hardback), pp. xv +229.**

**Reviewed by Barbara Hately**

*University of Sheffield*



In this history of the lives of Mexican American women during WWII, based on the Los Angeles area, Escobedo has focused not, as is more often the case, on an actual area of women's employment but on the more general social and cultural history of Mexican American women during this period. In doing so, she has given herself a task of much greater breadth and complexity as it appears to have proved difficult to separate behavioural changes either

caused or, at least, influenced by USA involvement in WWII from those which may have resulted without this involvement as a result of the women in question being second generation Americans.

In addition, there is a lack of clarity in chronology which is exacerbated by the title of the work – *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*. This suggests that one – the women's work in coveralls during WWII - led to the other, the adoption of the Zoot Suit fashion and its associated social mores. In fact, as Escobedo's extensive research demonstrates, the Zoot Suit culture already existing in African American culture, was already influencing the behaviour of young Mexican American women before the USA became involved in the war. Case files utilised from the Los Angeles Superior Court Juvenile Division relating to cases ‘between the years 1939 and 1945’ (p18) which, presumably included cases from the 1939 – late 1941 period before the USA entered the war. This impression is strengthened by the assertion that before the summer of 1942 ‘the LA populace relatively ignored Mexican American women who adorned zoot suits’ (p19). Yet others appear to have taken the opportunity to ‘wear zoot suit styles and their

draped zoot suit pants on the assembly line' (p81) suggesting that these were existing wear before the women undertook their wartime employment. Rather than a change in behaviour resulting from the involvement of these women on the WWII Home Front, the research presented suggests that these social and cultural changes appear to have been concurrent.

As already mentioned, Escobedo's research supporting this text has been extensive, incorporating archival material, manuscript collections and interviews in addition to newspaper and published works, and clearly demonstrates the immense complexity of the subject as well as raising interesting examples of publicity utilised by both the state and Mexican American women for their own ends. This is shown in the second chapter which deals with the attitude of the wartime state and media to Mexican women and, indeed, women of all ethnic minorities, engaged in defence work. Whilst the state was keen to promote 'an inclusive vision of "Americans All"' (p45), showing patriotic Mexican families such as the Cazares family working for victory in a variety of respectable ways including sons serving in the armed forces and daughters engaged in both 'producing war materials' and civilian defence, Mexican women themselves were also keen to promote an image of themselves as respectable war workers and family members rather than Zoot Suit 'outsiders'. Escobedo reports that, in the wake of the Sleepy Lagoon incident it was 'not uncommon' (p63) for young Mexican women to be represented unfavourably in the press as 'unlawful and dangerous' (p63) however, after 1941, the women themselves took an active role in refuting this image with their own press photos demonstrating 'the respectability of the Los Angeles Mexican woman' (p66). This raises the interesting topic of young women who on the one hand were rooted in traditional Mexican values but at the same time were beginning to take on more visible roles within American society. As Escobedo herself suggests in her introduction (p3), one of the questions raised is that of 'what accounted for the contradictions in [Mexican American women's] wartime experience'.

Although this book raises a number of very interesting questions and provides interesting examples of changes and contradictions in Mexican American women's roles and behaviour during WWII, as illustrated above, there is little in the way of analysis of these aspects nor of their prevalence within the Mexican American community. Whilst recognising the difficulties associated with an analysis of this type and acknowledging that, as the author suggests, 'it is important to listen to the unique stories of the Latina/o wartime generation' (p154) this book presents a largely narrative text that raises many more questions than it answers. Hopefully it will prove to be a stepping off point for further and more comparative work on the lives of women from both the Mexican American community and other ethnic minority groups during WWII.

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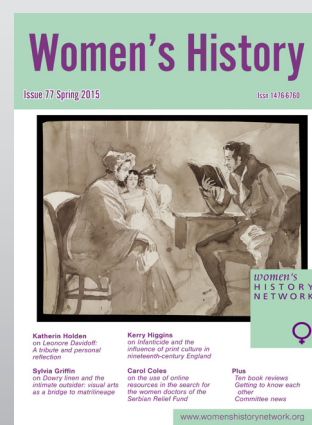
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## BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

The following titles are available for review, so if you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email me, Jane Berney, at [bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org)

You don't have to be an expert to review, if you have a general interest and knowledge of the relevant historical period or territory then that will count for a lot. The ability to summarise a work and write interestingly about it is the most important thing. Any suggestions for books to review are also welcome - just email me as above.

Kat Gupta, *Representation of the British Suffrage Movement* (Bloomsbury)

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

Anna Sparham, *Soldiers and Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Bloom* ( IB Taurus/Philip Wilson Press) - accompanies the first major retrospective of Bloom's work at The Museum of London Docklands

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

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

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

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

Susanna Hoe, *Malta. Women, History, Books and Places* (Holo Books)

Eleanor Fitzsimmons, *Wilde's Women* (Duckworth Overlook)

Revolutionary History, *Clara Zetkin. Letters and Writing* (Merlin Press) – Clara (1857-1933) was a prominent figure in the international socialist movement and then the communist party in Germany

Michelle Higgs, *Servants Stories'. Life Below Stairs in their Own words 1800-1950* (Pen and Sword)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (OUP - Oxford World's Classic series)

Lesley Poling-Kempes, *Ladies of the Canyon. A League of Extraordinary Women and their Adventures in the American Southwest* (The University of Arizona Press)

Susanna Rabow-Edling, *Married to the Empire. Three Governors' Wives in Russian America 1829-1864* (University of Alaska Press)

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

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

The following are offered for the last time:

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)

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

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)

Deborah Shamoan, *Passionate Friendship. The Aesthetics of Girls Culture in Japan* (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)

Patrick Williams, *Katherine of Aragon* (Amberley)

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

P. Friedmann, *Anne Boleyn* (Amberley)

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

## 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)

## 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)

## Remember the WHN in your Will

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

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

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

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

## Committee News

The Steering Committee met last on 14 November 2015 at the IHR, University of London. Two new members to the Committee were welcomed: Lucinda Matthews-Jones and Naomi Pullin.

### Budget and changes to magazine/journal fees

The Treasurer, Aurelia Annat, presented our budget. We have £8,866.92 in our current account. However, overall it was noted that the provisional budget for 2015/16 comes to £11,250 and our income from subscriptions for last year was only £10,739. If subscription rates remain static or fall, we may end up with a short-fall in forthcoming year. It was noted that over two years ago a decision had been made to move to an electronic distribution of the magazine/journal. The current Steering Committee had made a decision to increase the membership fee to £10 for those who wished to receive the hard copy rather than electronic copy. However, when this proposal was made at the September 2015 AGM some concerns were voiced by the membership about this increase. In light of these comments, a long discussion took place about membership charges, in particular whether they



## Getting to Know Each Other



### **Name**

Lucinda Matthews-Jones

### **Position**

Senior Lecturer in History at Liverpool John Moores University

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

Around 2 years

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

Some great teaching by Hannah Barker and Matthew McCormack! I loved my women's and gender history modules at the University of Manchester. As a Politics and Modern History undergraduate, I was also able to combine this with some wonderful feminist modules taught in Politics by Ursula Vogel. Personally, strong women in my family like my mum, sister and grannies!

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

For me, doing history is about multi-tasking with various interests. My primary interest is looking at gender, domesticity and urban philanthropy through the British university settlement movement. I'm also interested in material religion and I'm currently looking at samplers for their religious content.

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

Amy Hughes née Lewis. Having recently read letters sent during the First World War from the front to her from former members of Cardiff University Settlement's Lads' Club in Splott, I'm really struck by the affective relationships she created with these boys. For me she represents the unsung heroines who worked quietly for their local communities.

should be raised by £5 or £10. It was noted that WHN membership offers a range of benefits over and above receipt of the journal, including a reduced fee for the annual conference. The issue was decided by a vote by the Steering Committee. Option 1 was that fees stay the same, everyone gets a pdf copy of the journal but anyone who wants to opt for a hard copy pays an extra £5 (exceptions can be made for those who, for example, for health or eyesight reason, need a hard copy). 8 members of the Steering Committee voted for this. Option 2 was that fees be raised by £5 for everyone and that people could choose electronic or hard copy, as they wished. 1 member of the Steering Committee voted for this.

### **Reducing numbers of annual meetings**

It was agreed that our meetings should be reduced from four a year to three, the third meeting each year to be held at the annual conference. This was considered an efficient

use of our finances since all members of the Steering Committee can claim for their travel expenses to the conference anyway. Any other issues that arose between the three meetings could be discussed by email. The Constitution states that the Steering Committee 'shall normally hold 4 meetings each year and a minimum of 3.' It was agreed that at the next AGM the proposal should be presented to the membership that the Steering Committee 'shall normally hold 3 meetings each year.'

### **Annual Conference for 2016**

Di Drummond reported on progress with planning the 2016 Conference on 'Women's Material Cultures/ Women's Material Environments', September 2016, to be held at Leeds Trinity University. Di will liaise with Penny Tinkler, the Conference Contact person on the Steering Committee. It was emphasised that the annual conferences should break even or make a small profit.

It was suggested that 1st February 2016 could be the first deadline for call for papers for the 2016 Conference, then a second call perhaps in April or May. It was suggested that our annual conferences should be reduced to two days (Friday and Saturday) rather than the usual three-day event that included the Sunday. Sunday attendance was usually very low. Additionally, a two-day conference would lower the price to delegates. It was agreed to implement this suggestion which could always be revisited at a later date

### **Bursaries for 2016 Conference and Admin Assistance for Conference Organisers**

It was agreed that £1500 would be advanced for the 2016 Conference, a sum that might rise by £500 if finances allow, later in the year. It was also agreed that admin assistance should be supported, if finances allow, in order to take some of the pressure off annual conference organisers. Perhaps £300-500 might be advanced in future years. It was agreed we will consider this at next Steering Committee meeting for the 2016 Conference.

### **Journal**

The journal is doing well in attracting copy. Catherine Lee, who is taking over at Head Editor, emphasized that Special Issues were welcomed.

### **£500 Competition for Teaching/Research Staff to mount one-day conference**

Details of this new competition for the funding of a one-day conference will be distributed to the membership

**Date of next meeting, 12 March 2016, IHR, Room N301, Pollard Room, 11.30 am. All WHN members are welcome.**

## **Membership Announcements**

In response to rising costs the Women's History Network is making a move towards a digital distribution of 'Women's History', it has therefore been decided to increase membership fees for all members wishing to continue to receive *Women's History* in hardcopy. This decision has been outlined in a recent E-mail sent to all members and the new membership fees can be found on the back cover or on our website. If you have any questions or queries please email - [membership@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:membership@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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You can 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)

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Do you pay your subscription by standing order? If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2016 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 2016 rates for all categories of members can be found on the back cover of the magazine or by logging in to your account at [www.womenshistorynetwork.org](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org).

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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.

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All information (or queries) about membership, or changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging in to your account at [womenshistorynetwork.org](http://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.



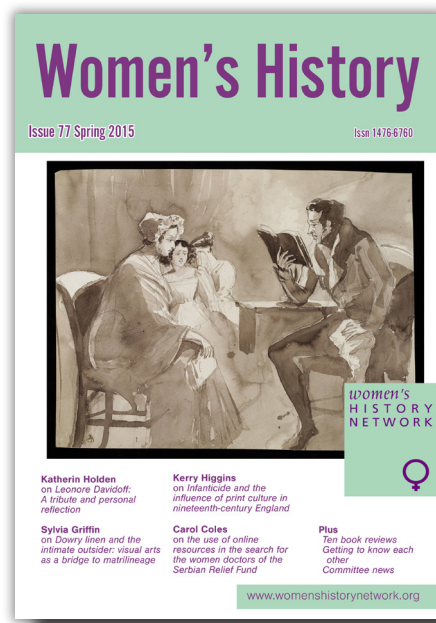
# Publishing in *Women's History*

*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)



## Women's History Network Contacts

### Steering Committee Officers:

*Membership, subscriptions, Felicity Cawley:*  
[membership@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:membership@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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

*Finance, Aurelia Annat:*  
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*Committee Convenor, June Purvis:*  
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*WHN Book Prize, Chair, June Hannam:*  
[bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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*WHN Blog, Lucinda Matthews-Jones:*  
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*Web Liaison and Social Media Co-ordinator, Robyn Joyce:*  
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### Journal Team:

*Editors: Jane Berney, Lucy Bland, Rosalind Carr, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin and Rachel Rich.*  
[editor@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:editor@womenshistorynetwork.org)

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*For book reviews: Jane Berney:*  
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*To submit books for review please email the book reviews editor with details of the book to be reviewed.*

*For journal/magazine back issues and queries please email:*  
[editor@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:editor@womenshistorynetwork.org)

*To join the WHN just go to  
[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 42 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. The journal is delivered electronically in PDF form to all members via email. UK based members, however, can elect to receive a printed hardcopy of *Women's History* for an increased membership fee.

### WHN membership

#### Annual Membership Rates *(/with journal hardcopy)*

Student or unwaged member	£15 / £20
Low income member (*under £20,000 pa)	£25 / £30
Standard member	£40 / £45
Overseas member	£40
Life Membership (includes journal hardcopy)	£350

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