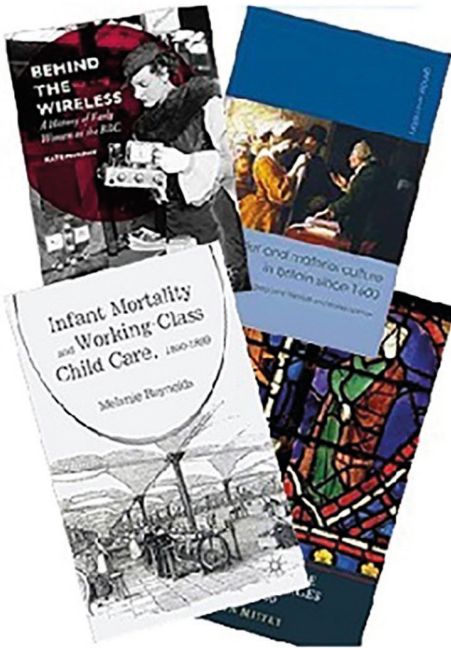


# Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY



women's  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



University of  
**Portsmouth**

**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's History Network Conference, 2018**

**CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT AND FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS**

University of Portsmouth, UK

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August–Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018

## **THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**



**This conference is being held to commemorate the centenary of the granting of the parliamentary vote in Britain to certain categories of women aged 30 and over on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1918.**

We invite established scholars, postgraduate researchers, independent scholars, museum curators, local history groups and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines researching women's suffrage in Britain or elsewhere in the world, to contribute to the conference.

Proposals of no more than 200-300 words for individual proposals or panels should be submitted with a short biography to [june.purvis@port.ac.uk](mailto:june.purvis@port.ac.uk) by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.



Welcome to the Autumn 2017 edition of *Women's History*, the journal of the Women's History Network. This issue follows the WHN's successful 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, held this year at the University of Birmingham. Here, alongside two thought-provoking keynotes from Professor Mary Vincent and Professor Joanna De Groot, together with a breadth of stimulating panel papers, we heard about the network's wide range of initiatives in the promotion of women's history this year – both inside and outside of the academy. This issue of the journal continues the same theme. Such is the depth and quality of writing about women's history at the moment that we decided to dedicate almost the whole of the issue to book reviews, showcasing the extensive range of publications, research and scholarship in the field. This, together with our coverage of the network's Community History Prize-winning projects, demonstrates that women's history is thriving and in a very dynamic state. Full details can be found in the prize report.

We open, though, with an article in which Albert Gallon explores the ways in which Elizabeth Martin Knight, an early modern elite woman, sought to resist the restrictions imposed upon female inheritance to exert a measure of financial independence. As one of a growing number of women to do so, she employed negotiation and management skills in demonstrating autonomy to thrive in what the author describes as a 'man's world'. Knight has, Gallon believes, 'tended to be written out of the family history' in favour of its connection with Jane Austen, reminding us of the ways in which the historical record can be shaped by numerous influences.

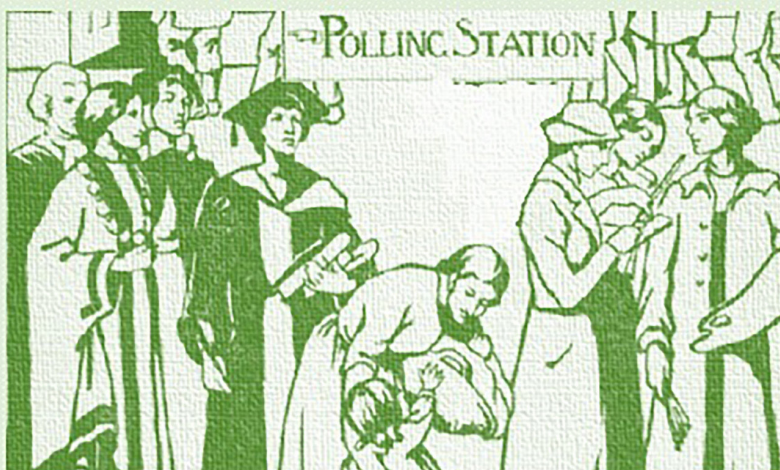
With this issue we bid farewell to Rachel Rich, who has done a magnificent job as our Peer Reviews editor for the past four years. We thank her and wish her well. In Rachel's place we welcome Pippa Virdee to the team.

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Next year promises to be an exciting and eventful one for women's history. The WHN conference, this journal and many other events will mark the centenary anniversary of 1918: the year in which the franchise was granted to some women over thirty years of age and they voted for the first time, and in which women stood for election to the House of Commons for the first time. We look forward to celebrating with you.

Editorial team: Jane Berney, Rosi Carr, Sue Hawkins, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin, Rachel Rich and Pippa Virdee.



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### *Women's History*, Autumn 2018

1918 saw the extension of the franchise under the Representation of the People Act, legislation which enabled women to stand for election to the House of Commons, and marked the first General Election in which women voted.

The Autumn 2018 issue of *Women's History* will mark this centenary with a special themed edition.

The editors invite proposals for articles which may be research articles (6,000 – 8,000 words) on any subject related to the theme. We also welcome proposals for shorter articles (c. 3,000 words) on any aspect of the 2018 centenary celebrations.

Please send proposals (c. 200 words) to:  
[editor@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:editor@womenshistorynetwork.org)

# Thriving in a man's world: Elizabeth Martin Knight (c.1670-1737) of Chawton and West Dean

Albert Gallon

*Independent Scholar*

## Introduction

As the owner of two reasonably sized estates Elizabeth Martin Knight was an unusual figure in early eighteenth-century Hampshire and Sussex. Through an examination of her life and experiences, this paper examines the system of inheritance in elite families and the restrictions that were placed on women owning property in the early eighteenth century. These were due to the widespread use of the strict settlement together with the common-law doctrine of coverture. It shows that Elizabeth Knight was one of a growing number of women who sought to resist these restrictions and exert their financial independence and it describes why, as a woman and more particularly as a married woman, she was able to inherit and retain ownership and subsequently dispose of her estates. The paper also provides an insight into her ability to manage her estates which she did, not only as a single woman and a widow, but also as a married woman whose two husbands spent significant parts of each year in London. Her management skills are illustrated using the example of her deployment of servants across two separate locations and her methods of remunerating the expertise and flexibility of these servants.

It was not uncommon for English and Welsh women to own estates at this time, but it was certainly in smaller numbers than in earlier generations. The claims of estate ownership by the heiress-at-law had been significantly reduced in favour of collateral males as a result of the growth in the use of the strict settlement, which had largely replaced the common-law rules of inheritance by the late seventeenth century.

Elizabeth Knight's inheritance was not affected by the strict settlement as she inherited the Chawton estate through the will of her brother Christopher.<sup>1</sup> She probably did not have any expectation of doing so as Christopher was one of two elder brothers from whom the male-family line could have been extended, but both died childless. Two years after her inheritance Elizabeth married for the first time and, as a single woman not tied by an earlier settlement, was able to specify her own terms. The marriage settlement, to which her husband agreed, allowed Elizabeth to retain the right to retain and dispose of her estate. There was a very different reaction some years later when she sought to repeat the arrangement in the settlement of her second marriage. Her new husband protested and Elizabeth was forced into a compromise, although she again retained the right to settle and dispose of her estates and the chosen beneficiary of her will, Thomas Brodnax May (later Knight), subsequently inherited her Hampshire and Sussex estates together with property in London and Surrey.

The principal sources used in this paper – letters, account books, copies of wills, and estate papers – are contained in the Knight of Chawton family archive, held at the Hampshire Record Office, with a small amount of primary source material drawn from the WISTON archive, held at the West Sussex Record Office. These sources provided the major contribution

to Elizabeth Knight's biography and family background, with additional material being drawn from various secondary sources, including the four volumes from the Victoria County History series.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth's experiences will be contextualised with a number of books and articles examining the general and particular impact of the strict settlement and the doctrine of the law of coverture on women in elite families.

## Inheritance and a first marriage

Elizabeth Knight was born in c.1670, the third child and only daughter of Michael Martin (d.1681) and Frances Lewkenor (d.1676). A landowner in his own right, Michael Martin was also steward to John Jordan, lord of the manor of Ensham (now Eynsham) and Newland in Oxfordshire,<sup>3</sup> and Elizabeth's inheritance of the Hampshire estate at Chawton derived from him. Michael Martin was heir at law to Sir Richard Knight (d.1679) of Chawton, the last direct member of the Knight family line.<sup>4</sup> When Sir Richard died in 1679 Michael Martin devised the Chawton estate to his eldest son Richard Martin and his heirs, with the proviso that they changed their name to Knight. Richard Martin Knight died of smallpox in 1687 and, as he was without issue, the estate passed to his younger brother Christopher in accordance with his father's will.<sup>5</sup> When Christopher also died childless in 1702 the estate passed, by his will, to his sister Elizabeth, then in her early thirties. Under the provisions of her father's and brother's wills, she changed her name to Knight, and became a female landowner in the male-dominated world of landownership.<sup>6</sup>

For two years following her inheritance, Elizabeth managed her estate as a single woman. In 1704, she married her first cousin, Sir William Woodward (c.1668-1721) of Fosters, Egham in Surrey. Their respective mothers, Frances and Elizabeth, were the daughters of Sir Christopher Lewkenor (d.1681) and Mary May (d.1642). Sir Christopher, Recorder of Chichester, Member of Parliament for Midhurst and then for Chichester, owned property in Hampshire and Sussex. Sir William Woodward's father's family, by contrast, were minor gentry, originally from Shropshire who, by the late-seventeenth century, owned the capital messuage of Fosters at Egham and Thorpe in Surrey together with properties in and around London. Sir William Woodward had been educated at the Inner Temple and at Christ Church College, Oxford, and, as an aspiring Member of Parliament, had been active in the Midhurst Constituency for some time before finally obtaining the seat at the 1713 election. He held the seat until his death in 1721 but was described variously as a Tory and as a 'whimsical Whig'. He was not regarded as a particularly active MP.<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth, however, was not affected by the marriage, as no arrangements had been made for her to marry prior to her inheritance. In contrast to the terms of what became known as 'strict settlement', which had developed under English common law during the Civil War, she was free to determine the terms of her marriage settlement and, therefore, the





*Elizabeth Knight*

future of her estate. The original aim of strict settlement was to offer a form of protection against possible threats to estates from fines and forfeitures, but as the century progressed the emphasis changed to the long-term preservation of the family's estate and identity. This enabled property owners to be more specific in determining who would and who would not succeed them. Unlike the traditional system of primogeniture (where the whole estate passed initially to the eldest son), the strict settlement had the potential to exclude heiresses-at-law, daughters, and other female relatives from inheritance. Its purpose has been described as 'limiting in advance the heiress-at-law and sending the estate as little reduced as possible to the collateral male', thus preserving the family name and identity with their estate.<sup>8</sup> The settlement became acceptable to the law courts and was eventually regarded as a binding legal contract that could only be broken by a private act of Parliament.

The basic mechanism of the strict settlement provided for the settled estate, a specified part of the overall family estate, descending in each generation to the eldest surviving son. The interest of the father and his eldest son in the settled estate was then limited to that of life tenants. Beyond their lifetimes the estate was entailed on the eldest son of the following generation, the father's grandson. He was known as the tenant in tail. This arrangement would normally be repeated on each occasion that the eldest son of the family married or came of age, although the tenant in tail could, with his father's permission, break the entail and discontinue the process. He then became the owner, rather than the tenant, of the family estate. This happened on occasions, but the majority of families sought to preserve their legacy and used the strict settlement as a means of ensuring the male succession. The settlement had a secondary function in that it prevented an irresponsible son or grandson frittering away the settled estate as this was

specifically reserved for the purpose of raising jointures for wives, dowries for daughters and portions for younger sons. As life tenants, father and son could not sell or dispose of any part of the settled estate. There were also restrictions on mortgaging the estate.<sup>9</sup>

Not all marriages produced children but the male bias prevailed. If there was no surviving son in the family, the strict settlement, or a will, could be framed to enable the family inheritance to pass to relatives, usually male relatives, in order of the seniority of their descent. If the absence or early death of sons resulted in the end of the male line of the family, then the family inheritance could pass to wives, daughters, and other more distant female relatives. When there was more than one daughter in the family the estate was shared between them. Despite the restrictions on female inheritance under the terms of strict settlement, women were nevertheless able to inherit landownership and, as in the case of Elizabeth Knight, could also inherit estates by means of a will. As such, estates were owned and managed by women throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries although, as noted above, in rather smaller numbers than before the introduction of the strict settlement.

As a single woman not tied to any previous settlements, Elizabeth was able to determine the marriage settlement. Sir William Woodward also changed his name to Knight and the settlement followed the standard arrangements for succession by any children. In contrast to standard marriage settlements, Elizabeth used a Trust. This gave her husband full access to estate income out of which he paid her an agreed annual payment. Importantly, the right to settle and dispose of the estate in the event of there being no children from the marriage remained with Elizabeth.<sup>10</sup> The settlement enabled Elizabeth to avoid a number of the implications of the common-law doctrine of coverture.

## Coverture

Under the terms of coverture, women were expected to transfer their legal rights and obligations to their husbands when they married. They did not, therefore, have the legal capacity to hold their own property or contract on their own behalf. Such rights and obligations were incorporated into those of their husbands.<sup>11</sup> Amy Louise Erickson has described Coverture as an economic exchange. 'The bride's portion was exchanged for maintenance during marriage, for the groom's responsibility for her contracts (since without property she could not contract), and for a guarantee of subsistence in her widowhood in the form of dower or jointure.' It was an exchange that positively favoured the groom. His bride had no legal remedy if he subsequently failed to meet to meet any of his obligations, and he could sue for breach of contract if her portion, or part of her portion, was not paid. Wives were deemed to be completely dependent upon their husbands irrespective of what they had brought to the marriage in terms of a portion or land jointure.<sup>12</sup>

In practice, the husband took possession of his wife's moveable goods, her money, livestock, and could sell these possessions, including clothes and personal effects, or make bequests of them in his will without her permission. Although the husband did not own his wife's real property – her lands – and could not dispose of it without her permission, he took control over it and could take the profits from this during her lifetime. When the wife died, the property passed to her heirs if

she had not written a will. It is important to note, however, that she could not write a will without her husband's agreement.<sup>13</sup>

Women in the early modern period were well aware of the common-law doctrine of coverture and of the implications for the financial contribution they brought to their marriage.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, there was 'an abundance of economic and legal advice available to those contemplating marriage'.<sup>15</sup> Being able to take advantage of their marriage settlements, break their husbands' monopoly and exercise control over household resources and retain possession over goods they had contributed to the family and household was dependent upon their education, social background and experience.<sup>16</sup> Whilst there are differences of opinion about actual numbers, there is positive evidence of women making use of legal as well as less formal means to resist male domination in matters of settlement.<sup>17</sup> A variety of pre-nuptial agreements and arrangements were deployed by all levels of society,<sup>18</sup> with the principal intention of providing 'the means for parents to protect their daughters, and women to protect themselves and their children'.<sup>19</sup> Such settlements were in direct conflict with the strict settlement, whose principal purpose was the entailment of the male line.

It is generally considered that the larger portion of women who made specific settlements to protect their property already had experience of the legal disadvantages of being a wife, either directly or through the observation of relatives or neighbours. The settlements were particularly attractive to women from aristocratic and gentry families because of their wealth and the risks associated with widowhood, especially since many were much younger than their husbands and the problem of their portion, especially their land, being devolved automatically to the eldest son, which could place their fortunes and other children at risk.<sup>20</sup>

In similarity to Elizabeth Martin Knight's marriage settlement, wealthier families also made use of more formal and legally-binding Trusts, to evade the laws of coverture and ensure that their daughters' rights and property were protected when they married. Property could be separated by such settlements for the exclusive use of daughters or conveyed to Trustees who would administer the property on their daughters' behalf. It was the courts of equity, rather than the common law, which protected wives in these arrangements by ruling that husbands could not dispose of a wife's property as they wished.<sup>21</sup> In allowing for the creation of such Trusts, the courts of equity were recognising 'the separate existence of the wife, inventing a process by which, through the medium of Trustees, a separate property could be secured to the wife free from the control of her husband.' It was an arrangement that sought to protect wives and children from the loss of financial support through the actions of profligate husbands.<sup>22</sup>

Unmarried women and widows who had inherited property were not affected by coverture. The common law treated unmarried women and widows as legal individuals in their own right. They were able to determine their own marriage settlement, enter contracts and had the right to make their own wills.<sup>23</sup> If they did marry and their parents or guardians had not made arrangements for a marriage settlement, they could continue to resist the common-law doctrine of coverture and retain ownership of their property. Agreement from their husband, however, was necessary and this was by no means easy, given the patriarchal norms of the time. It was, nevertheless, a task that was enthusiastically embraced by Elizabeth Knight. Her inheritance of the Chawton

estate in 1702 occurred before her first marriage to Sir William Woodward Knight, making her free to determine her own settlement. However, although Sir William was compliant in this, her second husband was decidedly less so.

## A further inheritance and widowhood

In 1707, Elizabeth and Sir William were bequeathed the manor of West Dean in Sussex and the manor of Steventon in Hampshire respectively for their sole use. The West Dean estate that Elizabeth inherited had passed down from Richard Lewkenor, through Sir Christopher Lewkenor, to his great-grandson, John Lewkenor, who died without issue on 19 February 1707.<sup>24</sup> The Steventon estate inherited by Sir William had been bequeathed to John Lewkenor by his mother, Anne Mynne, wife of Sir John Lewkenor, who died in 1704.<sup>25</sup> John Lewkenor, who was Member of Parliament for Midhurst in 1661 and then from 1681 to 1705, had married but died without issue.<sup>26</sup> He was a second cousin once removed to Elizabeth and Sir William, and had described them in his will as 'the surviving grandchildren of Sir Christopher Lewkenor and his next heirs'.<sup>27</sup> Given that the legal emphasis of estate ownership was heavily biased towards men, it is interesting that John Lewkenor chose to divide his estate in this way and include Elizabeth in his inheritance.

Elizabeth's marriage to Sir William Woodward Knight lasted for seventeen years. He died on 26 October 1721 and, aside from a bequest of £20 to his father, then still alive, for mourning, he left his estate, which included the manor of Steventon, to his wife Elizabeth.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Elizabeth did not experience any of the problems and uncertainties encountered by widows who were left dependent upon a dower: she owned all of her former husband's property, together with her own estates at Chawton and West Dean.

Elizabeth remained a widow until her second marriage, to Sir Bulstrode Peachey in 1725 and, as a widow, she again became solely responsible for the management of her estates. In practice, she had taken on much of this responsibility during her marriage to Sir William as he had spent a considerable part of the year away in London attending to business affairs and parliamentary duties and she would do so again throughout the years of her second marriage. Such absences were not unusual for seventeenth and eighteenth-century men. Jane Whittle has referred to time spent at the Inns of Court providing gentlemen with a basic legal knowledge useful to the management of estates. She has also noted that such absences afforded women other advantages. Spending time at home during adolescence and young adulthood provided them with the opportunity to observe first hand, how farms and estates were run, and girls in elite families were taught to keep accounts and manage households and family estates. The extent to which this practice continued when they married depended upon their husbands.<sup>29</sup> Sir Hamon Le Strange of Hunstanton Hall in Norfolk, for example, was entirely content with his wife, Lady Alice, taking on such management responsibilities. His primary activities were 'pleasure and leisure', while Lady Alice's role was primarily one of work: 'organising the provisioning and maintenance of the household and directing the work of others'.<sup>30</sup> While the household economy rested on Alice's ability to manage the family estate, the family's reputation and standing within the wider community rested on Sir Hamon. This type of marital arrangement was typical of ambitious



gentry families at this time, continuing until the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

## Managing her estates

Elizabeth was clearly comfortable with her management responsibilities as a single woman, married woman and widow, and she happily played the part of the lady of the manor. She was rather grand and fashionably dressed and spent part of each year in London, where she rented a house staffed by her own servants, and enjoyed some of the entertainments of the season. More particularly, as the Knight family archive demonstrates, she was very business-like in her approach to managing her estates and highly protective of her property rights.<sup>32</sup> An early indication of the latter is contained in a letter written to her steward in December 1703, just over a year after she inherited the Chawton estate. She had become aware that 'Mr. Calthrop', a neighbouring landowner, 'had sent orders to farmer Pryer to take care of the wind fallen wood, which I am assured that it all belongs to me'. She instructed her steward that 'I would have you go immediately to Chawton cut it out and carry of ye ground that belongs to farmer Pryer's farm, and if he aposes it let it be at his perrill, and if Mr. Calthrop pleases to come to me I hope we may decide the controversy, for I think I have very good authority for what I transact in the affair'.<sup>33</sup> As Elizabeth Knight was in London at the time, resolution of the dispute over the fallen wood rested entirely with her steward. He, rather than Elizabeth, would have to prevent the farmer from carrying the wood away, and then arrange for it to be carried off the farmer's ground. The tone of the letter, nevertheless, provides an indication of the resistance her second husband would face when he sought to wrest all of the income of her estate from her following their marriage.

An interesting example of Elizabeth's management of her estates is provided by her deployment of her servants and her methods of remunerating them. She employed a total of thirty-two servants across the Chawton and West Dean estates and their work and responsibilities were divided and arranged to best suit the two estates. The servants had to be flexible and able to take on other work to accommodate changes in requirements together with variations in workload. Some of the servants, including the butler, under-butler and brewer, coachman, footman, and various female servants, were required to move with her between properties. The steward, who was responsible for both the Chawton and West Dean estates, also divided his time between the two, and there were other servants, including the gamekeepers, woodmen, and gardeners, together with some house servants whose duties were restricted to one particular property.<sup>34</sup> In common with other estates in Hampshire and Sussex, Elizabeth's estates included a significant proportion of land that was let to tenant farmers. This was an important source of income, but her estates also contained another significant source of income from extensive woods and gardens. These were managed and maintained by a group of ten of her own servants dedicated to this work.<sup>35</sup>

The wages she paid to her servants emphasised her flexible approach to the work. Her steward, for example, was not required to undertake the range of work expected at other estates, and his wages reflected this. Land stewards were generally regarded as being at the top of the servant hierarchy, and also the highest paid. Although this would be the case at

Chawton under Elizabeth Knight's successor, Thomas Brodnax May Knight (his steward was being paid £100 a year in the 1750s), this was not so at Chawton and West Dean during the 1720s and 1730s. In 1726 Elizabeth Knight's steward was paid £20, and although this had increased to £25 by 1736, it was significantly below the wages paid at other estates in the eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> This is illustrated in the wide-ranging analysis of servant's wages during this period conducted by J. Jean Hecht, which indicated that the earnings of land stewards varied between £30 and £700, although examples at the higher end of this scale were very clearly limited.<sup>37</sup>

Senior gardeners and woodmen, on the other hand, were regarded as responsible positions at Chawton and West Dean, and the incumbents attracted high wages. The gardener, appointed in August 1723, was to be paid £26 (but had to find his own washing) 'until the gardens are put in order'.<sup>38</sup> They must have been 'put in order' by 1726, as his wages during that year were down to £15. Four woodmen, in this same year, earned £78 2s. 0d. between them, and the situation was much the same ten years later, in 1736, when the highest paid gardener at West Dean received £17. At Chawton, the highest paid gardener received £26, with board, and the highest paid woodmen were paid £20 and £17.<sup>39</sup> Across the county at Hursley Park, the wealthy Sir William Heathcote had employed a gardener during the early years of his ownership of the Hursley Park estate and paid him £9 per annum, but a gardener is not included in the lists of servants employed in subsequent years. This suggests that the gardens at Hursley Park were not regarded as such a significant investment by Sir William Heathcote as those at Chawton and West Dean.<sup>40</sup>

In common with other estates in Hampshire and Sussex a hierarchy existed within the servants employed by Elizabeth Knight with a clear distinction made between the various skills of servants. Servants had specific roles and titles, but they would assume other roles on a temporary basis at busy times. When additional duties were performed on a regular basis they became a permanent requirement of the servant's duties, and this was reflected in their wages. The game-keeping duties at West Dean, for example, were not a full-time requirement, and in 1726 the gamekeeper was additionally required to undertake the duties of a woodman. Ten years later the duties of gamekeeper were combined with that of brewer. This stood in contrast to the more usual practice of brewing being the responsibility of the butler, which was the case at Elizabeth Knight's London house.

In all three instances, the additional duties were clearly identified in the designations of the particular servants.<sup>41</sup> Experience and satisfactory performance was also recognised. Two young maid servants, Jean Goding and Sarah Young, employed by Elizabeth Knight in 1733, were paid £4 per annum at the time of their engagement, but were soon earning £5. Their work had obviously been found to be satisfactory. More experienced maid servants were earning £6 at the time.<sup>42</sup> Richard Barbere provides a further example. He was engaged by Elizabeth Knight in April 1736 to look after the horses with wages of £4 per annum and by March of the following year his wages had been increased to £7 per annum. He was also provided with a livery and frock, but had 'to find his own washing'.<sup>43</sup> Time spent in London could also attract additional financial reward. When Mary Davis moved to Elizabeth's household in the capital for the first time, she received a small increase in her wages over and above her board wages of '6s.

Od. per week whilst I am in the country and no other allowance but coles'.<sup>44</sup>

Elizabeth Knight, who always employed a cook rather than a cook maid, was paying her cook £9 a year in 1726, and £10 during the following year. However, when she employed a male cook, Bartholomew Richards, in 1729 his wages were £30, the amount also agreed with Thomas Hardikin, who joined her service on 8 April 1734.<sup>45</sup> Male cooks were almost always paid more than female cooks,<sup>46</sup> and it has been suggested that 'in wealthier households male cooks were preferred to female'.<sup>47</sup> The reasons for the seemingly high standard of cooking required by Elizabeth Knight which began in 1729 are not clear, but they may have been connected with her second marriage, and the more demanding culinary requirements of her new husband, Sir Bulstrode Peachey. This is hinted in the account books after his death in 1736, when a female cook was once again employed by Elizabeth Knight and paid only £5.<sup>48</sup>

## **A second marriage and the return of the question of financial accountability**

As already noted, the employment of male cooks and the payment of much higher wages were, probably, one of a number of changes that occurred as a result of Elizabeth's second marriage, but there was one issue that Elizabeth sought not to change: that of the financial accountability and future of her estates. She had married Sir Bulstrode Peachey (c.1681-1735) on 8 June 1725,<sup>49</sup> four years after the death of her first husband. Sir Bulstrode was the fifth son of Sir William Peachey, a London merchant, who had inherited the Newgrove estate, near Petworth in Sussex, through his wife, Mary Hall. As a fifth son, Sir Bulstrode did not inherit the family estate, which was inherited by his elder brother, Sir Henry Peachey (c.1671-1737). Sir Bulstrode nevertheless had sufficient funds to allow him to purchase a number of burgages in Midhurst from the 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Montagu, the Roman Catholic lord of the manor. This enabled him to return unopposed as the Member of Parliament for Midhurst from 1722 to 1735.<sup>50</sup>

The marriage settlement proposed by Elizabeth made provision for the manors of West Dean in Sussex, Steventon in Hampshire, and the properties at Egham in Surrey and in London and Southwark, to be placed in Trust and for Sir Bulstrode to receive the rents, worth an estimated £2,000 per annum, for his lifetime. Beyond this, Elizabeth would receive the rents for her life, followed by any issue with Sir Bulstrode and, in default, to their rightful heirs. Provision was also to be made for the Chawton estate in Hampshire to be placed in Trust and for Elizabeth to receive the rents, worth an estimated £1,000 per annum. This estate was to be for her sole use and disposal. The settlement noted that 'Notwithstanding her coverture Sir Bulstrode shall not intermeddle or have anything to do' with this particular estate.<sup>51</sup> As part of the settlement, Sir Bulstrode was further required to pay Elizabeth the sum of £5,000, which included £1,000 for her kinswoman, Mrs. Lloyd, to clear their respective debts and, finally, he was to add the name of Knight to his own.<sup>52</sup>

Sir Bulstrode was not happy with the settlement. His expectation, in line with the common-law doctrine of coverture, was control of the income from Elizabeth's entire estate. It is unlikely that his discontent stemmed from financial concerns as his will, proved on 11 February 1736,<sup>53</sup> indicates that he was wealthy, with the ability to bequeath in excess of £12,000

together with various properties, to family, friends, servants and acquaintances, and to the poor in Chawton and Midhurst. What would have been more important was the affront to his honour and manhood which would result from sharing the estate income with his wife. As a number of historians have shown, there were a variety of ways in which male members of the elite demonstrated their honour and manhood.<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Foyster has claimed that 'it was by control over the women within the household that all men could most clearly show their superiority of reason and strength'.<sup>55</sup> Questioning 'a man's ability to govern his own household was the most effective way to damage his honour'.<sup>56</sup> If he failed to exert control in his household, how could he exert power outside of it? Sir Bulstrode may have feared that he would not be able to show that he had such control, placing him in danger of being the subject of gossip and viewed by his friends and colleagues in Parliament as a 'kept man', a husband whose wife was an independent landowner. He was soon pressing for a revised settlement.

Elizabeth, however, refused to compromise and their respective lawyers became involved as the dispute escalated. She was, by this time, a mature lady in her early fifties who had emerged from her first marriage in a sound financial position. In contrast to many widows at this time, Elizabeth had not suffered from the mismanagement of her estate by her first husband or by the alteration and devaluation of any of their settlements,<sup>57</sup> and she was not prepared to put her position and achievements at risk in her second marriage. She had enjoyed owning her own property and making her own decisions for well over twenty years and she wished to continue in this manner and to be able to protect her property and her rights. It was not uncommon for widows remarrying to negotiate their own settlement, as Amy Erickson has noted. They had had first-hand experience of the benefits of such settlements in protecting their own property from a husband who might otherwise seek to squander it, and they might also wish to ensure that they retained the right to make their own will.<sup>58</sup> The risk of losing these rights is the primary reason as to why wealthy widows were the least likely of all widows to remarry.<sup>59</sup> In a letter addressed to 'Sir', presumably her lawyer William Guidot, she complained at 'being pressed to alter my settlements which I have maturely considered on and weighed it in every way'. She had 'considered all of the consequences which may attend it', and was 'fully resolved to suffer death' rather than submit to it, 'having made so noble a settlement.' Her concern was that her husband would persuade 'Sir' to support him rather than herself.<sup>60</sup>

Elizabeth was one of a growing number of married women in the eighteenth century who attempted to resist the restrictions imposed upon female inheritance and financial independence. They used the jurisdictions of equity, ecclesiastical law, and customary law to challenge the common law's effects on married women. As already noted, in some instances they ignored the strictures of coverture altogether and sought means to circumvent them through separate property arrangements. Amy Froide has described the increasing involvement of women as investors, using their own funds, including pin money, to buy real estate, secure loans, and to invest in stocks and securities. Interestingly, when this usage was challenged, the courts upheld 'a wife's right over savings or other proceeds, such as her pin money'.<sup>61</sup> The 'emergence of all of these new forms of legal property',





*Sir Bulstrode Peachey Knight*

Froide suggests, 'coincided with and perhaps encouraged women's investments in stocks and securities, themselves new forms of financial property.' She provides a number of examples of married women investing on their own, including the exceptional case of Lady Grisell Baillie who was entrusted with the entire administration of the family finances, including paying her husband pocket money.<sup>62</sup>

The other extreme and more usual male interpretation of financial responsibilities is illustrated by the experience of Elizabeth Freke (c.1642-1714). She discovered that predetermined property arrangements were far from sufficient protection against a husband determined to appropriate his wife's financial assets. Elizabeth was from a Norfolk gentry family and during the course of her marriage, her husband, Percy Freke, repeatedly sold lands and took money from her that had been gifted by her father. Some of the property had been sold to enable Freke to speculate on real estate and, on at least one occasion, he did so with the approval of Elizabeth's father. The speculative transactions usually turned into losses, and after years of unhappiness with a spendthrift and uninspiring husband, Elizabeth refused to comply with his demands and chose to rely instead upon her legal right to her property at West Bilney, where she went to live. When Percy Freke died, he left Elizabeth all of his estates, but also left her with a variety of legal battles against tenants and his executor.<sup>63</sup>

Sir Bulstrode Peachey's attitude towards estate ownership and the role of women resembles that of Percy Freke. He questioned the arrangements relating to Elizabeth's Chawton estate and was unhappy that she would receive the annual income and that the estate would be for her sole use and disposal. Unless this was changed, he threatened, he would withdraw his agreement to pay off the £5,000 debts of Elizabeth and her kinswoman, and he would refuse to change

his name to Knight. Elizabeth's lawyers advised that the Court of Equity might not support her claim on these two matters as there was a lack of proof of her agreement with Sir Bulstrode, and they also warned that she might lose if the dispute about the marriage settlement went to court.<sup>64</sup>

The possibility of obtaining a revised settlement was considered but was ultimately disregarded in favour of an informal arrangement. Sir Bulstrode would receive the rents from all of Elizabeth's estates on condition that he paid her £400 per year and that he would contribute to the repair work at these estates. The arrangement, Elizabeth claimed, 'was accepted for the sake of peace as apprehending that if she insisted to have the whole of such rents it would have occasioned a breach between them.'<sup>65</sup> She did not want that to happen. The arrangement applied only during the lifetime of Sir Bulstrode, and she, of course, retained the right to dispose of her estates if she survived Sir Bulstrode, and they would descend to her heirs if she predeceased him.<sup>66</sup>

It has been suggested that 'Husbands and wives depended heavily on each other, no matter what their social status' and although Elizabeth did not achieve her original aims, the arrangement made between them appears to have been successful.<sup>67</sup> Sir Bulstrode kept his side of the bargain, although he later complained that it was a poor bargain as 'he had laid out considerable sums of money in repairs and improvements that Mrs. Knight will benefit from'.<sup>68</sup> They stayed together until he died on 14 January 1736. In his will, Sir Bulstrode specified that Elizabeth be paid £3,000 covenanted, as part of the marriage settlement, if she survived him. He bequeathed her his house (with the appurtenances) in Soane Street in the Parish of St. Anne's, Westminster, all his plate and jewels, and a capital dwelling house at West Dean in Sussex, with the gardens, stables and outhouses. The will also confirmed the return of all household goods and furniture at Chawton House bequeathed 'to my dear wife for her own proper use'. Sir Bulstrode also bequeathed £2,000 to Anne Lloyd 'who now lives with my wife', and £20 to Susanna Edwards who also lives with my wife'.<sup>69</sup>

Having outlived him, the parts of her estates which had been placed in Trust for the benefit of Sir Bulstrode during his lifetime were returned to Elizabeth. She made her own will, published with a codicil on 8 April 1737, which specified that her estates should pass to a distant relative, Thomas Brodnax May of Godmersham in Kent. Her wishes were enacted following her death in 1737 and Thomas, who also had to add the name of Knight, duly inherited the Chawton, West Dean and Steventon estates, together with Elizabeth's property in London and Surrey.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

Mary More had written an essay in the 1670s, 'The Woman's Right', in which she cautioned her teenage daughter that 'the laws of our country give a man after marriage a greater power of their estate than the wife unless the wife take care beforehand to prevent it (which I advise thee to doe)'.<sup>71</sup> This paper has shown that Elizabeth Martin Knight was well aware of the care she needed to take to avoid her two husbands having the greater power over her estate and sought to frame her two marriage settlements to ensure that this would be the case. Her first husband accepted the terms set out in her proposed marriage settlement, but her second

husband declined and she was forced to compromise. She did not, however, surrender ownership or right to settle her estates and she ensured that she had a guaranteed income from her second husband, and that he paid for all repair work on her estates, an arrangement he later regretted as it proved more expensive than he had envisaged. The paper has also shown that Elizabeth Knight was more than capable of managing her estates and that she was one of a growing number of married women in eighteenth century England and Wales who, as noted by Amy Froide, successfully sought to resist the restrictions imposed upon female inheritance and financial independence. She had thrived in a man's world.

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33. HRO, 39M89/E/B613/7, Letter from Elizabeth Knight to her steward, Mr. Heath, at Chawton, 9 Dec. 1703.
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39. HRO, 39M89/E/B587/19 and 28, Lists of servants employed by Elizabeth Knight, together with their wages, at Chawton, West Dean, and London, 1726 and 1736.

40. HRO, 63M84/313/1 and 2, Salaries and wages of servants for the years 1724, 1732, and 1745.

41. HRO, 39M89/E/B587/19 and 28, Lists of servants employed by Elizabeth Knight, together with their wages, 1726 and 1736.

42. HRO, 39M89/E/B587/24, Notebook of Elizabeth Knight, listing when particular servants were employed and how much they were paid, 4 Jun and 10 Jul 1733.

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## Book Reviews

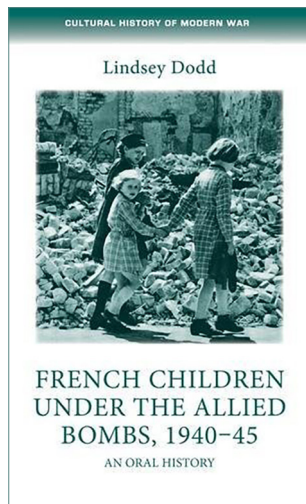
**Lindsey Dodd, *French Children under the Allied Bombs, 1940-1945: An Oral History***

**Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.**

**£75.00, ISBN 978-0-7190-9704-1 (Hardback), pp. x + 256**

**Reviewed by Harry Mace**

*University of Cambridge*



The collective memory of the Second World War conjures up *un goût amer* (a bitter taste) in France, as one of the most contentious periods of twentieth-century French historiography. In her recent monograph, Lindsey Dodd unearths an alternative paradigm, through which to consider the forgotten memories of the Occupation era. This book situates its original case-study of the allied bombing of wartime France, against the wider context of the Armistice in 1940 and the ensuing Resistance

versus Collaboration dichotomy that has dominated academic scholarship and popular memory. For decades, these preoccupations have precipitated the aerial bombardment of France as a black hole in the collective French memory of the war. It emerges that five times more people were killed by bombing campaigns than were shot for acts of resistance (p. 2). The latter has centred as the greatest *lieu de mémoire* of national remembrance. Examining the linguistic and rhetorical representations of bombing, this monograph recovers the realities of total war in France. This meticulously studied oral history, drawing upon regional and national archives, achieves its objective to 'loosen the historiographical ties', which have hitherto dominated the vast canon of literature on occupied France.

Much has been written on the complexities of civilian participation in, or resistance to, Marshall Pétain's National Revolution. Unlike other studies, however, Dodd focuses on the impact of 'total war' upon children's lives, which brought 'aggression' and 'violence' to the forefront, and whose experiences and memories have been overlooked (p. 4). The author positions herself alongside Henry Rousso and Pierre Nora's concepts of memory, but goes further to explore the impact of bombing upon remembering. The conceptual issues of childhood memories and being a child sheds light onto the French academy's uneasy relationship with oral history methodology, and respective drawbacks that have, perhaps, prevented similar autobiographical footprints. Rather than being organised into regions, given that air bombardment transcended towns, the monograph is well-structured into three sections that offer comparative analyses, 'from the macro to micro' across chronologies

(p. 20). Throughout these sections, Dodd reconstructs the expectations, experiences and explanations of allied bombardment in different regions. This is a fruitful approach,

given the differences both politically and militarily – from Normandie to Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, for instance. This deals with the complexities of regional differences throughout the war, and faces the fluidity of national identities in this period; to write about 'Frenchness' as a heterogeneous phenomenon. This needs further unpicking. Although Dodd refers to each region as having a different 'representativity', the author focuses on three northern towns above the demarcation line (p. 11). Consideration of a southern zone town would have drawn interesting parallels, or even differences, to the status of the 'sinistrés' (bombed out refugees) that Dodd examines in some detail.

These 'shared experiences' had detrimental 'marks on survivors', a sense of 'trauma' for French wartime children, and the nation more generally (p. 212). Dodd's concept of 'hierarchies of victimhood' quantifies French wartime suffering in perspective with other societal groups, as one interviewee stressed: 'Haunts me, it haunts me' (p. 205). The suppression of trauma, defined as a stressor and response to wartime experiences, was paradoxically narrated merely by two interviewees, which Dodd argues was a product of 'the moral and psychological reconstruction of a nation' (p. 44). Given the (re)masculinisation of the Liberation, negating the humiliation of wartime occupation, it would have been interesting if Dodd explored whether these took on distinct gendered forms. In her concluding chapter, she asserts that female interviewees more readily admitted to 'women's trauma', weakness and anxiety than male narratives (p. 216). Personal agency became synonymous with survival; which arguably fostered this suppression across male testimonies. These potential gendered intersubjectivities, throughout the interviews, provide one example of masculine post-war suppression that deserves further scholarly attention. The author's only in-depth examination of this theme is whether children may have been influenced by constructions of femininities and masculinities, to explain bombing and the occupation (p. 192). This was alluded to across testimonies that defined destruction, distress and protection as both gendered and gendering experiences for boys and girls. For instance, no girls intervened with bombsite work, while boys' perceived 'man power' facilitated a sense of 'duty' and 'service' to the community; especially in bearing coffins. In contrast, both sexes were deployed as first aiders, given the need for 'compassion' and 'friendship' in post-bomb recovery (pp. 131-57). This proved an overlooked strand of constructed wartime identities that Dodd suggests were created by evacuation, collective experiences of bombing and French migration (p. 136). These gendered roles ascribed to children require further scrutiny.

This monograph offers a welcome reappraisal of French wartime experiences on the home front. For those interested in oral history, memory, gender, and children during total war, this excellent contribution facilitates dialogue about gendered suppressions of trauma, and national memories of the dark years in France.

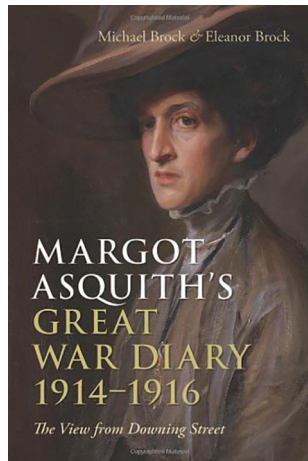


**Michael Brock and Eleanor Brock (eds), *Margot Asquith's Great War Diary 1914-1916: The View from Downing Street***

**Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. £30, ISBN 978-0-19-822977-3 (hardback), pp. cxlvii + 417**

**Reviewed by Anne Logan**

*University of Kent*



Brought out (presumably) to mark the centenary of the First World War, this edition of Margot Asquith's war diary is evidently the product of many years' scholarship, being the successor to the editors' volume of letters between H. H. Asquith and Venetia Stanley which first appeared thirty years ago.

This is a lavish edition of the diary of the wife of Britain's first prime minister during the First World War period. The events the book covers are well-

known to political historians of the period: the outbreak of war in August 1914; the crises of Spring 1915 which led to the creation of a coalition government in May; the gradual slide towards conscription; the removal of Asquith from office in December 1916. Michael Brock contributes a lengthy introduction, which initially introduces the reader to Margot (née Tennant), the intelligent, but poorly-educated daughter of a successful Scottish businessman, before outlining the post-home rule crisis political situation, describing the Asquith marriage and analysing the events before and during the War. There are copious, scholarly footnotes and a short epilogue dealing with events after the selected diary passages. The remainder of the book contains several appendices including a timeline of events and, most helpfully, brief biographical notes on the main family and political figures mentioned in the diary. The bibliography alone covers nearly twenty pages and the index is also very thorough. The scholarship in this edition is therefore of the highest standard.

Readers of this journal might wish to know what the value is of this volume for gender historians. While the Brocks focus mainly upon what they justifiably regard as Margot's misreading of events, her comments on leading personalities, the damage she may have done to her husband by her extravagance in wartime, and the (arguably) all-too-vocal expression of her opinions, there is much more to reflect on in her text. One thing that struck me was the complete absence of any mention of the women's suffrage issue, apart from an oblique comment about the 'convictions' of one Liberal minister's wife (p.184), which the editors suggest is a reference to suffragism. This silence may simply be the result of editorial selection: it is impossible to say without recourse to the manuscript and there are, of course, ellipses in the printed text. Or perhaps it is because the Prime Minister's wife had no real need of a vote: she had *influence*. It is the impression of Margot Asquith as a political animal that remains, the term "hostess" failing to convey her full power. As Brock points out in the Introduction, Margot Tennant came of age at a time when 'serious discussion in a gathering which included women

had become socially acceptable' (p.xxxiii) and in her youth she was a member of a mixed-gender, elite, discussion group of friends nicknamed "the Souls". Her war diary contains many reports of dinner conversations and even describes occasions when her lobbying – according to her own account – clearly went beyond what one might expect from a loyal, political wife. For example, in June 1916 when Asquith decided to make Lloyd George Secretary of State to War, Margot wrote to Lord Lansdowne and General Sir William Robertson in an attempt to get them to raise objections to the appointment. One would worry if the current Prime Minister's wife behaved in such a way, yet a century ago a few women like Margot were in an, albeit covert, position to exert potentially decisive agency in politics.

Ultimately, however, this was a power exercised only through men, who contrary to the stereotype, loved to gossip and confide. Revealingly, Margot regarded marriage as women's main role in life: 'girls who don't marry before they are 30 make a cardinal error in life', she wrote regarding the likely engagement of her stepdaughter, Violet, to Maurice Bonham-Carter, although she had herself been over thirty when she wed (p.129). Being a political wife was to Margot a role which required style and a propensity to give lavish hospitality. Margaret Lloyd George, Margot noted, was 'a little woman, inferiorly dressed and with no distinction of appearance' who 'neither entertains or is entertained' and was 'not ambitious'. Nevertheless, she was a 'most observant, humorous, clever, kind little woman; very true and highly discreet' (p.120), mainly because she agreed with Margot on this occasion.

Perhaps partly because of the editors' selections, there are far more observations about leading male personalities than of the women in the published diary: we repeatedly read Margot's impressions of "Winston" and "LI G". However, *The View from Downing Street* is a candid perspective which tells the reader much about the diarist, her husband, and their life at number 10.

**Anna Sparham (ed), *Soldiers & Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Broom; with contributions by Margaret Denny, Diane Atkinson and Hilary Roberts***

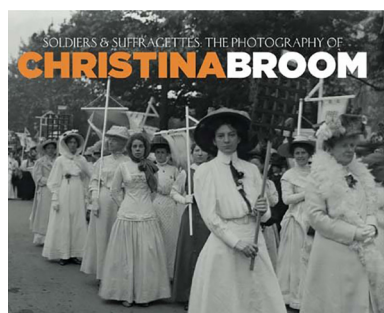
**London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015. £20.00, ISBN 978-1-7813-0038-1 (paperback), pp. 234**

**Reviewed by Sarah Guest**

*Independent Scholar*

Standing next to her camera and tripod Christina Broom (1862 – 1939) cuts a diminutive yet determined figure as she exhibits her photographic work at the *Women's War Exhibition* in 1916. By then Christina Broom had defined a career for herself as one of the first women press photographers and the photographs she took reflect the immense social, political and technological changes visible across Edwardian London. They also capture enduring images of Britain's pageantry, monarchy as well as everyday visits to the park and seaside donkey rides.

Broom, a self-taught photographer, carved a professional path for herself as a freelance photographer in order to support her disabled husband and their daughter Winifred. From their Fulham home and using the cellar as a darkroom Broom and her daughter capitalised on the popularity of picture postcards.



Broom travelled around London photographing busy London street scenes, sporting events such as the Oxford and Cambridge boat race and the marches and public meetings of the Suffragettes. Winifred was responsible for

printing the photographs as postcards, sometimes one thousand in a single night. In 1904 a chance encounter whilst photographing local views around Chelsea led to an invitation to photograph the Scots Guards at the Chelsea Barracks. Broom's professional relationship with the Household Division would continue until her death in 1939. A recommendation to the King provided Broom with access to the Royal Mews and household, an opportunity which, given her gender and lack of social connections, was unparalleled for the time. It was an extraordinary career, yet one which, until now, has remained largely forgotten. *Soldiers & Suffragettes – The Photography of Christina Broom* was published to accompany an exhibition of Broom's photographic oeuvre at the Museum of London in 2015 and skilfully returns her work to public attention.

The book is structured thematically with four sections: London streetscapes, the Suffragette campaign, scenes of soldiering life and images of national commemoration and pageantry. Each section opens with a contextual essay. These examine the London photographs in the context of the commercial and gendered frameworks within which Broom was operating. Essays by Diane Atkinson and Hilary Roberts explore the suffragette and army photographs in relation to her negotiation of professional life and of representing war on the home front. The meticulous research of each of the contributors draws also on correspondence between Broom and her clients and on an unpublished memoir of Winifred, who in donating her mother's photographic plate glass negatives to museums and libraries, helped to protect her legacy. Many of the three hundred negatives held in the museum are beautifully reproduced and arranged in each thematic section. Photographs of quiet London streets and the Royal household are juxtaposed with images of the bustling city, new battleships, the Suffragette marches in Hyde Park and soldiers leaving for the front. The images all position Broom as a photographer recording times of extraordinary change. Yet there is a clear sense throughout that it is people rather than "scenes" which Broom deemed most worthy of capturing on camera and this is poignantly demonstrated by her photographs of soldiers. Her images capture moments of intimacy, of relaxed smiles at football matches and family farewells at the station. Broom's skill with a camera extends beyond the technical: she was able to engage with her subjects, regardless of gender or social class and command their attention and respect.

There is a clear sense throughout this book that Broom identified herself as a professional photographer rather than as a woman working in a male dominated milieu (p. 88). Nonetheless, many of her photographs position her in visible open spaces, showing her mastery of the camera in palaces, army barracks and on board navy ships. She has access to areas that most women of the time did not, reinforcing a sense of her exceptionality. The suffragette photographs reflect their self-determination, resourcefulness and independence –

qualities which resonated with her own experiences. At the time her suffragette photographs were taken, Broom was also capturing enduring symbols of the Establishment; the Royal Family and the British Army. There is

a clear sense in her photography that, whilst suffragette images were indeed commercially rewarding, professional success required careful negotiation of gender norms and an ability to harmonise different facets of her identity through her photographic work, of not "rocking the boat". As Diane Atkinson notes, the photographs stop short of recording the more militant activities of the movement (p. 51).

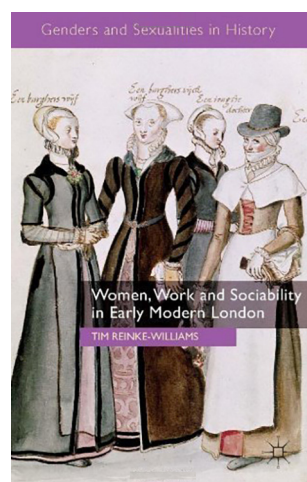
In 1966 Winifred noted in a letter to the Museum of London that 'naturally the Museums are not interested in our lives – but are glad of the negatives' (p. 3). This book not only succeeds in introducing new generations to their work but indeed captures the determination, independence and resourcefulness of Christina and Winifred and their lives behind the camera.



### **Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London*,**

**Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. £60, 978-1-137-37209-3 (hardback), pp. 225.**

**Reviewed by Julie Chamberlain**  
*Independent scholar*



"Good" women in the London of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the focus of this monograph by Tim Reinke-Williams in Palgrave Macmillan's *Gender and Sexualities in History* series. He writes that in the past thirty years 'far more attention has been paid to scolds and witches than to honest women' (p. 1). This study aims to rectify that by looking at how women of the middling sort and labouring poor could 'acquire credit and

gain honest reputations through their work and sociability' (p. 1). Credit is a word which reoccurs, and sometimes means financial trust, but more often a public acknowledgment that the woman was good, moral, and doing the right thing, and he argues women strove to gain that credit.

There is a lot packed into the 164 pages, plus extensive notes and bibliography, which grew out of part of his PhD thesis at the University of Warwick. Reinke-Williams has mined deeply into Bridewell hospital court books, vestry minutes, other court records, plus pamphlets, conduct and advice books, songs, plays and letters. Pepys is also quoted.

The book looks at how women's good reputation, or credit, is achieved not just through sexual morality but through how they conducted themselves in their lives. The first chapter,



'Motherhood', examines the importance of giving birth in bringing women into new types of connections with friends and family, and a new sense of self-worth and assertiveness in dealing with husbands and other people. Continuing to support a child once grown was also important.

Housewifery was 'one of the criteria used most frequently by early modern women and men to determine female credit and respectability' (p. 45). This included being loving, dutiful and obedient wives, although 'in certain circumstances wives were entitled to be outspoken to ensure their spouses conformed to the patriarchal ideal of the sober and hardworking husband' (p. 50), an interesting look at how women contributed to maintaining the status quo. The chapter on 'Domestic Management' looks at the importance of a woman being mistress of her own home in terms of controlling servants, and policing their sexual activities. It also considers the role of female servants who often felt great loyalty to a good mistress.

In 'Retailing' Reinke-Williams investigates how despite efforts from 1540–1640 to cut back on their jobs, women worked selling goods on the streets, wanting a reputation as respectable tradespeople. Women also represented about 10 per cent of publicans before the civil war, similar to the rest of the country, and female publicans, and wives of male publicans, were seen positively if they exercised authority. The chapter on 'Sociability' discusses ideas of good neighbourliness, company and civility. Neighbourliness, and women's links to the community they live in, and within their faith groups, is understandable, but the word 'company' could mean many things. 'Keeping company' could mean with a prostitute or having an affair, or could just be affectionate relationships; one man and a married woman were up before Bridewell governors in 1576 for enjoying 'meate and other cheare' together. Women's role in pub-going is interesting; groups would go after churchings or christenings, though could be viewed with suspicion. But it was generally normal for women to drink together or meet men in a pub. A tale from 1627 tells of two women meeting in a pub for one to repay the other some money she owed, then they drank to each other and ate a pig together.

Reinke-Williams's style is to make his point and then back it up with lots of examples from sources; at times it feels like too many, but when they are like the one above, they are all worthwhile.

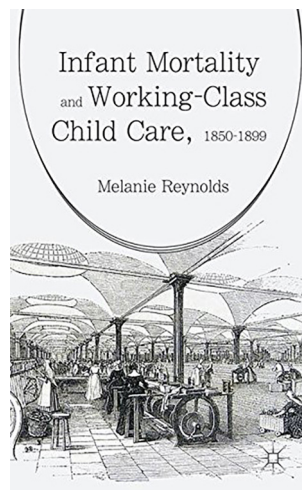
Although the book and all its examples focus on London women, many findings would also apply to urban women in general. Reinke-Williams also refers to some general sources, such as Gervase Markham's 1637 book which advises on housewifery, and admits that some parts, such as knowing what herbs to sow and when, would apply more to the rural housewife. It is an interesting read and informative for anyone wanting to know more about the efforts of middling and labouring women to live a respectable life in a city not often noted for its good behaviour.

## Melanie Reynolds, *Infant Mortality and Working-Class Child Care, 1850-1899*

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. £63.00, ISBN 978-1-137-36903-1 (hardback), pp. IX + 251

Reviewed by Emma Milne

University of Essex



Irresponsible, uncaring and ignorant working-class women were responsible for the high rate of infant mortality in the north of England during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is the long-standing perception that Melanie Reynolds challenges in *Infant Mortality and Working-Class Child Care, 1850-1899*. In a retelling of working-class women's history 'where mothers fought and won battles to enhance, rather than diminish, their offspring's chances of survival' (p. 2), Reynolds

systematically and convincingly debunks the widely held belief that women in the urban and industrial north neither cared for, nor were concerned about the welfare of their infants.

Using a variety of sources, from Parliamentary papers, factory inspection reports, newspapers, census records and some of the small number of collections detailing the experiences of working-class women's lives, Reynolds demonstrates that mothers and those employed to care for children strived to maintain infant's health and wellbeing. Each chapter of the book focuses on a different aspect of care for working-class infants. In the first two chapters, Reynolds demonstrates that while working-class, waged mothers may have challenged middle-class sensibilities of motherhood and domesticity, they did not place employment above their children, as contemporary commentators suggested. Instead of separating themselves from their child, working women exercised their "rights" to take their nursing infants with them to work. Such practice occurred in agriculture, metal and salt work, and in factories. Within the confines of the textile factory, Reynolds argues that it was not uncommon to see a basket lying at the feet of a working mother. Such proximity allowed a woman to feed her child throughout the day, thus reducing the infant mortality rate as a child consumed breastmilk rather than substances known to cause diarrheal sickness, which often proved to be fatal. Furthermore, women actively took steps to ensure that their place of employment offered the safest and most hygienic environment for their child. This behaviour was, Reynolds argues, supported by factory owners and overseers, who knew that if the needs of working mothers were not met, then these valuable employees would go elsewhere. Such an argument provides further critique of the perception that working-class women simply accepted the changing nature of employment brought by the industrial revolution. The second half of the book offers a similar critique of the negative perceptions of workhouse nurses and women employed as day-carers and baby-minders. Reynolds concludes that the views of Victorian, middle-class commentators and numerous contemporary historians are

incorrect; high infant mortality rates were not due to the failings of working-class women. Rather, the 'well-meaning but misguided medical establishment and penny-pinched factory owners' (pp. 162-3) should appropriate the blame.

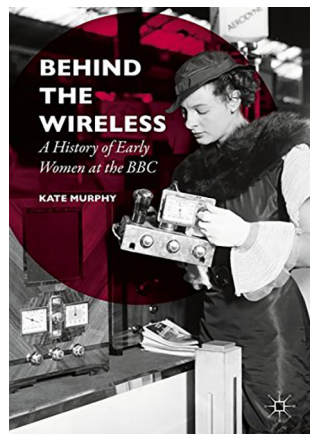
The appeal of this monograph lies in its intelligent analysis and compelling arguments. Through detailed examination of records, Reynolds demonstrates how contemporary perceptions of working-class Victorian women in the industrial north have been shaped by the prevailing adherence to the ideal of the "angel in the house". The view that working-class women chose waged work over family fails to consider the reality that employment assisted the family economy and so helped secure the survival of infants. Furthermore, Reynolds demonstrates how the lingering perception that a working mother is a bad mother has seeped into many of the historical narratives of the lives of nineteenth century women. Working mothers did successfully combine paid employment with child care. High rates of infant mortality occurred despite attempts by mothers and those employed to care for infants, rather than because of the actions of these women. Reynolds's study is a poignant reminder that our understanding of the past is shaped by our contemporary beliefs. In demonstrating this, the experiences of northern, industrial and urban working mothers are reclaimed.

**Kate Murphy, *Behind The Wireless: A history of early women at the BBC*,**

**London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, £19.99, ISBN 978-1-137-49172-5 (paperback), pp xiii + 295**

**Reviewed by Nina Baker**

*Women's Engineering Society*



This book is a detailed history of both women as a group and some fascinating individual women who worked at the BBC from its establishment in 1922 up to just before the Second World War. The reader is led through the very earliest stages of setting up what would very quickly turn from a group of enthusiasts camping out in someone else's building – the early days in Savoy Place – to a huge and constantly growing organisation in its own

purpose-built Broadcasting House. As the history unfolds, sometimes at breakneck pace, we are introduced to the areas of work which came to be seen as 'women-only' departments as well as those where small numbers of elite women created extraordinary careers in wholly new fields of work.

We meet many individuals through interviews and archival materials; from the working class cleaning ladies to the women who became top secretaries and even directors, such as Hilda Matheson, the first Director of Talks. We also learn about the more lowly weekly-wage paid women in the clerical, domestic and reprographic work. For all women at the BBC there seems to have been a strong awareness of being in at the start of something very important and all work there was seen as high status. There was a very high standard of

work attire expected and worn by all levels of women, many of whom were happy to take a lower pay level than they might have got elsewhere, although in general the BBC was seen as setting exemplary pay and conditions, being one of the first to introduce paid maternity leave, albeit for the higher status 'valued' professional grades.

Having herself worked at the BBC for many years, as a producer for *Woman's Hour*, this book is an obvious labour of love by the author but no hagiography. We learn of some real injustices and the introduction and removal of the notorious "Marriage bar" as well as of personal disagreements between women and between women and men working at the BBC. Dr Murphy is now a history academic and this book has been converted from her PhD thesis, as is evident in the lavish footnoting. However, the style is easy to read and the lay reader can easily ignore the footnotes and get on with the fascinating anecdotes of individual women and BBC ways of working.

I am personally slightly disappointed that the book is limited to the pre-war period, since I know that women did move into the previously all-male work in the technical fields during the war but I realise that Murphy had to put a limit somewhere. I hope someone else may fill in the later gap eventually. This book would be of interest to gender and workplace historians and I can recommend it to *Woman's Hour* listeners and anyone with an interest in how big organisations develop from scratch.

**Hannah Greig, Jane Hamlett and Leonie Hannan (eds), *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600***

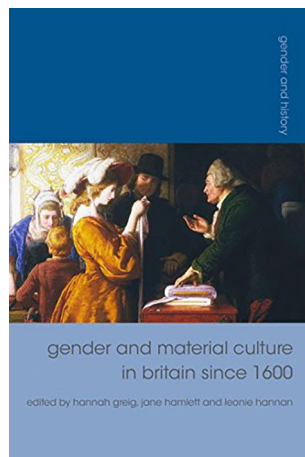
**London: Palgrave, 2015. £22.99, ISBN 978-1-137-34064-1 (Paperback), pp.165**

**Susan Cohen, *The Midwife***

**London: Bloomsbury Shire Publications, 2016. £7.19, ISBN 9780747815075 (Paperback), pp. 64**

**Reviewed by Emma O'Toole**

*PhD Candidate, National College of Art & Design, Dublin*



Both of these publications deal with gender and material culture, one specifically, the other more generally, but both provide an insight into what objects and material environments can inform us about history and the conditions of the past.

The objects people made, purchased and used have received well-deserved attention in recent years. *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600* advances the

historiography of material culture by illuminating unexplored areas of the relationship between gender and objects. The editors entice the reader with a well-composed collection of eight essays covering diverse topics and subjects from a range of contributors working on early modern and modern



British history. The essays focus on specific objects or material environments, such as an eighteenth-century jug, a pair of late nineteenth-century calico drawers, a sixteenth-century guild, or the interior of a nineteenth-century barbershop. The introductory essays successfully bind these contributions together, tracking the trajectory of gender and material culture studies to date, while at the same time highlighting areas of scholarly neglect to readers.

Recent scholarship reminds us that material cultures do not divide easily into things associated with men and things associated with women, an insight affirmed in this publication as well. As the authors argue: 'people might make or use things in unexpected ways that sit uneasily alongside historians' expectations about the performance of gendered roles and behaviour in the past' (p. 154). Matt Houlbrook, for instance, explores the powerful significance of a powder puff in the policing of homosexuality in twentieth-century London. Helen Smith examines the materiality of guilds, and unexpectedly reveals a variety of women otherwise hidden from the guilds' histories. Susan Vincent demonstrates how hair care was an everyday practice that played an important role in constructing male identities in the eighteenth century, while Karen Harvey's close reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ceramic jugs reveals a story of changing ideas about masculinity and craft.

A strength of the collection is the way in which the essays complement one another by reinforcing the importance of placing objects at the centre of their analysis. Many of the essays consider context in terms of the relationship between objects and the body or objects and spaces. Jessica Clark, for instance, analyses both material culture and space to understand customers' experiences in Victorian barbershops. Leonie Hannan's interest in the materiality of letter writing, leads her to a study of how the material and spatial experience of letter writing helped shape the meaning of correspondence and influenced personal relationships. Vivienne Richmond's search for the maker of an ordinary pair of women's calico drawers took her not only to the needlewoman who made them, but to a closer reading about propriety, respectability, and individual identity in the nineteenth century. Stella Moss, on the other hand, uses visual evidence to discuss the objects and goods that formed the material fabric of the interwar public house and their varying social codes.

One of the central objectives of this volume was to consider 'what does material culture tell us about gendered identities and how does gender reveal the meaning of space and things?' (p. 2). To attempt a collection that embraces such an array of different topics and approaches is challenging. Yet, this has been achieved in a well-structured publication that will serve as a core text opening new gateways and asking new questions on the history of gender and material culture for the current generation of scholars.

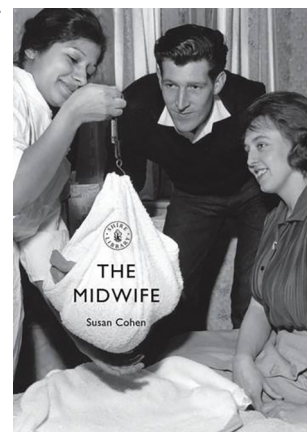
Similar themes of gender and materiality are examined in Susan Cohen's engaging publication, *The Midwife*. This concise study examines how the role of the midwife has shifted over the last 150 years, from a traditionally unregulated female practice to a recognised profession in Britain. Using testimonials of midwives, artefacts and photographs sourced from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Cohen conveys the increasing medicalisation of childbirth and the countervailing trend for giving birth at home. She does this through examining how the establishment of institutions,

such as the Royal College of Midwives in 1881, the Central Midwives Board in 1902 and the National Health Service in 1948, increasingly regulated the practice of midwifery.

While much has been written about the professionalisation of midwifery and the milestone of the 1902 Midwives Act, the individual testimonies used by Cohen offer an important glimpse of the introduction of training and supervision for midwives. The function of the Midwives Act was to approve training programmes, define rules of practice and introduce supervision for midwives. However, as Cohen highlights, new training and legislation did not eliminate traditional midwifery practices. In the first chapters, Cohen explores how in the early twentieth century *bona fide* midwives continued to use their shopping baskets to carry basic midwifery equipment and persisted in wearing unhygienic garments (p. 16). We also learn that during the First World War, many women opted to use an untrained midwife 'who sometimes enlisted a child to help' (p. 19). While the revised Midwives Act of 1936 enabled midwives to administer air and gas, some midwives were reluctant to use it, believing the 'best form of pain relief came from knowing the midwife' (p. 25).

Despite the increasing professionalisation of childbirth and the availability of institutional care for mothers, home deliveries remained popular until the 1960s in Britain. First-hand accounts vividly recount the grim reality of working conditions for midwives – rural places of work presented the midwife with huge communication problems, while tenement houses often lacked indoor toilets and running hot water. Cohen argues that most midwives learnt the 'art of improvisation' when delivering home births (p. 46). There are rich descriptions of how a chest of drawers was utilised as a work surface, brown paper acted as a protective bedcover and a sterilised biscuit tin held dressings and pads. Cohen concludes that the midwife's role changed even more as the move away from home births gained momentum in the 1960s. The increasing medicalisation and intervention in NHS maternity care has for some midwives affected the autonomy of the midwife's role.

*The Midwife* would interest readers across the fields of the history of gender, the history of medicine, and those with a general interest in social history. Its strengths lie in the midwives' first-hand accounts, which provide a fascinating and personal snapshot of the social and medical advances in midwifery over the course of the twentieth century.

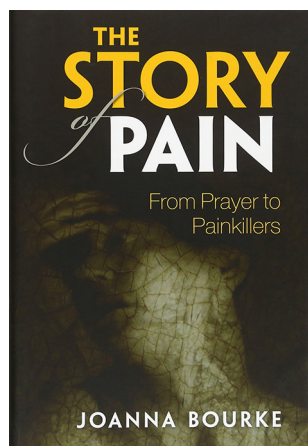


**Joanna Bourke, *The Story of Pain: From Prayer to Painkillers***

**Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. £20, ISBN 978-0-19-968942-2 (hardback), pp. xii + 396.**

**Reviewed by Katherine Rawling**

*University of Warwick*



What is pain? What does it mean to be a “person-in-pain”? Do people feel pain in the same ways across time and place? In this ambitious and thought-provoking book, Joanna Bourke seeks to answer these questions. Drawing on rich and varied examples from literary, medico-scientific, religious and life writing sources, Bourke examines the concept and “reality” of pain in Britain and North America from the 1760s to the present day. From the outset,

she is firm in her belief that pain is an ‘event’ rather than an “it”, and how people have “done” pain is deeply enmeshed in, not only social, cultural, political and linguistic structures, but in what it means to be human. According to Bourke, pain is public, shared, productive, creative and highly complex. By attempting to communicate their suffering, people-in-pain employ new and imaginative languages, create communities with others in pain or those witnessing it, learn how to “do” pain according to social and cultural conventions, and “feel” their pain in relation to the context in which they experience it. Moreover, by exploring the clinician’s relationship with pain, Bourke creates a narrative in which sufferer and witness are given equal consideration; this is a story of practitioners as well as patients.

This is not a *history* of either pain itself, or of the methods used to cope with or alleviate it. In this sense then, it is not a history of medicine, though, certainly, it will be useful to historians of medicine, as well as social and cultural historians. Rather, Bourke’s emphasis on a “story” and her relatable, engaging, and clear style should make the book accessible to a much wider audience. The prose is packed full of examples and detail. This can disorientate at times, such as when the evidence skips from a patient’s testimony in 1963 back to a medical textbook in 1913 before returning to ‘today’ (pp. 138–9). In addition, it is frustrating that the images scattered throughout the text are never referred to or analysed. That said, the mass of examples is impressive and makes for a lively read.

To reflect her intention to write a “story”, the argument is structured thematically rather than chronologically and each chapter deals with the entire period of study. There is, however, an overarching sense of change over time, which can be attributed to broader shifts such as that from humoral to biomedical theories of medicine, or to the decline in religious influence in favour of secularism. The argument is arranged into an introduction and eight chapters each addressing a different aspect of pain. The first theme, ‘Estrangement’, deals with the alienation of the sufferer from their own bodies and those around them. ‘Metaphor’ is a fascinating discussion of the

changing and highly gendered figurative and linguistic patterns used to communicate pain events. In ‘Religion’ the association of suffering with sin and ultimate redemption is explained. We then see a clear decline in the influence of Christian models for understanding and coping with pain, as the priest is replaced by the doctor. In exploring the relationship between pain and diagnosis (Chapter 5), Bourke considers pain from the point of view of the physician and asks just how valuable were patients’ own descriptions of their pain to those treating them? In an highly engaging discussion, Bourke explains the changing relationship of pain to diagnosis, as narrative and patient subjectivity were pitted against “objective science”. Chapter 6, ‘Gesture’, demonstrates that pain is not simply communicated through language, but by bodily comportment too. Pain is silent as well as noisy, and quite how the body-in-pain moves is historically contingent and contextually specific, thus, at certain times, boys and girls might learn different pain gestures from infancy. The chapters addressing ‘Sentience’ (Chapter 7), ‘Sympathy’ (Chapter 8) and ‘Pain relief’ (Chapter 9) explain that pain was neither democratic nor universally felt; certain groups of people (arranged according to gender, age, ethnicity, social class, occupation and so on) were thought to feel pain in different ways and therefore required various degrees of sympathy and concern. This translated directly into clinical treatment and palliative care; when labouring women from ethnic minorities were denied epidurals or injured soldiers instructed to ‘not make a fuss’, they were experiencing their pain events according to perceived notions of how they both felt pain (some groups were thought to have higher pain tolerances) and on how they should conduct themselves properly when in pain.

Bourke always has one eye on the category of gender. The longer section on the perceptions of women’s pain, distilled down to the question ‘were women the weaker sex or the more stoical one’ (p. 206) will be of particular interest to historians of gender, but there is much throughout the work to interest readers of *Women’s History*. This book reveals the complexity and often contradictory nature of pain as, not simply an unpleasant feeling, but an event and an experience, one which is culturally and socially produced and governed by rules and conventions. Bourke tells this story with much empathy and sensitivity alongside her characteristic analytical sharpness.

**Eleanor Fitzsimons, *Wilde’s Women: How Oscar Wilde was Shaped by the Women He Knew***

**London and New York: Duckworth Overlook,**

**2015. £20.00 ISBN 9-780715-649367 (hardback),**

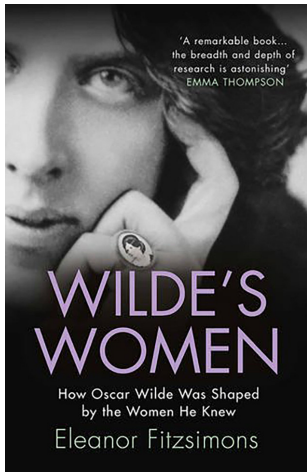
**pp. xi + 372**

**Reviewed by Alison T. McCall**

*University of Dundee*

The premise of this book is that ‘We can tell a lot about Oscar and any man perhaps, by examining the women he befriended.’ (p. 6). Perhaps the converse is also true – we can tell a lot about the women who chose to befriend Wilde. This book shows that Wilde enjoyed the friendship of a wide range of women: actresses, writers, society beauties, aristocracy and royalty, artists, feminists. Many of the women included in this book actively sought out Wilde, rather than being befriended by him. Several women remained loyal friends after his fall





from grace and imprisonment, at a point at which the decision was theirs, rather than his.

Within this book there is a complete biography of Wilde's mother, Jane, a notable literary figure in her own right. Chapters Two 'The Precocious Miss Elgee' and Three 'Taming Speranza' detail her life prior to her marriage to Sir William Wilde and the early years of her marriage. Further references to her career, widowhood and old age are found throughout the

book. During his early career, Wilde benefitted from meeting people at his mother's literary salons and indeed his position as "Speranza's son" gave him cachet and helped his progress immeasurably.

Wilde had one sister and two older half-sisters. It is possible he grew up unaware of the half-sisters, but he was devoted to his younger sister. All three died tragically; his sister Isola died following a fever aged nine in 1867, his half-sisters Mary and Emily died aged twenty-two and twenty-four as a result of an accident in 1871. A lock of Isola's hair was one of the few possessions he retained until his death; her loss when he was at the formative age of twelve caused life-long sorrow.

Attracted to beautiful women; Wilde's first love was Florence Balcombe who ultimately married Bram Stoker. He then courted several other women before marrying Constance Lloyd. Constance's life story is well covered within this book. The details of her interest in rational dress, a topic on which she wrote and lectured, emphasises that she was not simply "the wife of Oscar Wilde", although he shared her views on rational dress. Constance and Oscar enjoyed their early married life and life with their two sons. A desire to protect their sons led to a formal separation when Wilde was imprisoned but when Lady Jane Wilde died, Constance, despite her own ill health, travelled from Italy to London to break the news to her husband in gaol. Given his sexual rejection of Constance, and the many hurts his lifestyle caused, her ongoing devotion suggests the strength of their relationship.

As a playwright and as editor of *The Women's World* Wilde interacted with women professionally. He admired many actresses and maintained close friendships with several, including Lillie Langtry, Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt. When Wilde toured America in 1881, he brought with him letters of introduction from and to women. This book name-checks the numerous women who had fleeting contact with Wilde: society hostesses in America, who hosted dinner parties in his honour as he passed through their towns and cities on his tour of America, and women he met in Britain and Ireland. This provides a useful indication of the reach of female social networks and the interconnectedness of women on both sides of the Atlantic.

Women also put Wilde into their books. He was the inspiration for Francis Chalonier in Rhoda Broughton's *Second Thoughts*, Claude Davenant in Julia C. Fletcher's *Mirage*, Philip Wynard in Violet Hunt's semi-autobiographical *Their Lives*, and Vivian Dermott in Henrietta Stannard's *A Seaside Flirt*.

The epilogue is a brief biography of Wilde's niece, Dorothy (Dolly) (1895-1941) whose life was inextricably bound

with her uncle's fame, even though she was born whilst he was in prison, and never met him.

This book includes a useful bibliography, is meticulously referenced and carefully indexed. The twenty one photographs included are well chosen to enhance the text.

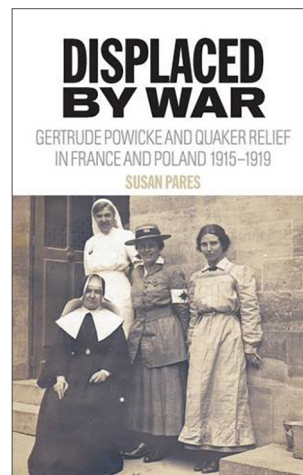
**Susan Pares, *Displaced By War: Gertrude Powicke and Quaker Relief in France and Poland 1915-1919***

**London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2015.**

**£14.99, 978-1-903427-92-7 (paperback), pp.256**

**Reviewed by Elizabeth O'Donnell**

*Independent scholar*



The centenary of the First World War has given rise to a deluge of publications, both reappraising familiar themes and illuminating previously neglected aspects of the conflict. This account of the wartime humanitarian work of Gertrude Powicke (1887-1919), the only woman listed on Manchester University's war memorial, falls within the latter category. Written by Gertrude's great-niece, with full access to family papers (including Gertrude's six diaries and the ninety letters she

sent during her four and a half years of active duty), this is no mundane family memoir, but rather a meticulously researched study of the work of the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee (FWVRC) in France and Poland. As such, it makes a significant (and timely) contribution to our understanding of the development of aid provision for civilian victims of war. Great War images of shell craters, mud and ruined buildings are ubiquitous but little has been written about civilians displaced by battles on both the Western and Eastern fronts, whose need for assistance lasted until well after the armistice.

Like many women who volunteered for this work, Gertrude, the daughter of a Congregationalist minister, was motivated by a strong sense of moral duty. As an active supporter of women's suffrage, who had become a teacher (at Manchester Girls' High School) after graduating in modern languages from Manchester University, she was also a young woman whose drive for greater responsibility and wider career opportunities was made possible by the national emergency. She prepared seriously for overseas service: taking a nursing course, learning to drive and to maintain a motor vehicle and acquiring typing skills, hoping for a driving and/or interpreter position. Instead, she found herself organising a workshop providing sewing work for female refugees in Bar-le-Duc, a town in northeast France, which was periodically swamped by waves of refugees from the adjacent war zone as well as being an important military staging post. She remained in Bar (her work expanding to embrace, for instance, a canteen for soldiers at the railway station and a hostel for visiting relatives of wounded soldiers) until the summer of 1919. Through Gertrude's own writing and the formal reports of the FWVRC,

set within the wider framework of the war's progress, a detailed picture emerges of the operation of the Quaker humanitarian body and the individuals who carried out its tasks.

The sheer devastation, suffering and overpowering weariness caused by the conflict is most powerfully conveyed in the last two chapters (of eight), concerning Gertrude's removal to Poland to assist in the anti-typhus campaign in the second half of 1919. Even though the outcome is known – tragically, she contracted the disease and died the day after her thirty-second birthday in December 1919 – the account of her last few weeks is intensely moving, especially the description of the tour she undertook (the only woman member of a small investigatory team) of Eastern Galicia, on the Polish-Ukrainian border, an area which had been incessantly fought over during the war, with territory still disputed until 1921. Little wonder that the author decided to include a lengthy extract from one of Gertrude's exceptionally lucid letters in the additional material at the end of the book. There are also some useful biographical sketches of her principal associates, a comprehensive bibliography, and, throughout the text, more than fifty black and white illustrations, many of Gertrude herself at work.

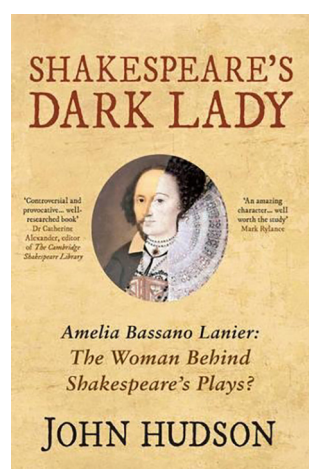
It does not seem fanciful to suggest that had this diminutive (only five feet tall with size three shoes) but determined young woman survived the war, she could have brought her considerable expertise in humanitarian work to bear within the burgeoning internationalist movements of the inter-war period. Overall, I found this work to be a skilful and highly readable integration of one person's life with the broader context of the period, deservedly bringing Gertrude Powicke to the attention of readers beyond her family circle.

### **John Hudson, *Shakespeare's Dark Lady Amelia Bassano Lanier: The Woman Behind Shakespeare's Plays?***

**Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2014. £20.00, 978-1-4456-2160-9 (hardback), pp. 288**

**Reviewed by Sarah Gee**

*Independent researcher and arts practitioner*



John Hudson and his editors have used a question mark in the title of this challenging book. Quoting Dr. Catherine Alexander, editor of *The Cambridge Shakespeare Library*, the slipcover claims it to be 'controversial and provocative' while also showing significant scholarship – surely enough to intrigue someone with an interest in gender studies and the historical place of women in society? It certainly makes engrossing reading, whether one

accepts the arguments it contains or remains sceptical.

The basis of Hudson's thesis is that someone (such as the historical figure, William Shakespeare) with rural antecedents and for whom there is little incontrovertible evidence of an extended educational upbringing – or of access to noble

society and pastimes such as hawking and hunting – is an unlikely candidate for the authorship of the Shakespearean canon. Moreover, it is claimed that the substantial material relating to European Jewish history and culture (including, but not exclusively the character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*) suggests the author to be someone with a significant, probably personally related, understanding of these matters. The candidate is unlikely, it is claimed, to have been a literary hack writing to performance deadlines in the bustle of London's Elizabethan and Jacobean theatrical world. Hudson identifies Amelia Bassano Lanier as a more likely proposition for this role, offering numerous features of her life to support his argument, including the likelihood of Portuguese Jewish roots for her family.

Lanier is certainly of interest in gender studies and women's history. She is described as a 'proto-feminist' (Kari Boyd McBride, Associate Professor, Women's Studies, University of Arizona), and as she is among the first English women to publish under her own name, in her case a single book of verse, she certainly has a striking literary presence.

Hudson's argument may be persuasive, but this is a field in which contention, claim and counter-claim thrive. While willing to suspend judgment in order to consider the arguments – I am no conspiracy theorist when it comes to my understanding of Shakespeare – Hudson's forceful and exclusive stance is at times alienating. By saying, for example: 'few people are well equipped to enter the conversation because of the specific skills it requires' (p. 19), the implication is that the reader is unable to judge the argument unless totally saturated in Shakespeare studies of a certain, precisely defined nature – quite a challenge for the generalist reviewer!

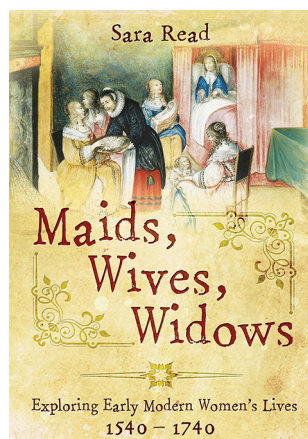
Nevertheless, for a reader with an interest in (rather than a research-based knowledge of) the historicity of Shakespeare, the writer of some of the most exquisite words in the English language and the conjurer of wonderful metaphor, the exploration of the potential for someone other than a 'Gentleman of Stratford upon Avon' to have written the plays and sonnets is intriguing. For the potential writer to be a forerunner of feminism is inevitably an attractive concept.

For this reader, however, Hudson takes the argument too far. The clever and upwardly mobile son of a rural glove-maker is asserted to have insufficient life experience to write about the intricacies of court life, hunting, the classics and other noble literary interests. Arguably, then, a clever woman, embedded at court with the highest in the land, with all her education and experience, has insufficient experience of life on Elizabethan or Jacobean streets to convincingly conjure up rude mechanicals or to capture interactions between foot soldiers on the battle field.

Maybe that question mark is as telling as I thought when I first noted it. The thesis is engaging but its cogency is weakened by Hudson's determination to dismiss other academic research in this minefield area of study. Research is more persuasive when it respects and builds on the work of others rather than attacking it. That said, the book fizzles with enterprise and scholarship, and I have gained from reading it, not least in being encouraged to stand back from my assumptions about Shakespeare and ponder who indeed could have had the wealth of knowledge, experience, learning, facility with language and ideas to write even half of 'his' *oeuvre*?



**Sara Read, *Maids, Wives, Widows: Exploring Early Modern Women's Lives 1540-1740*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015. £19.99, 078 1 47382 340 2 (hardback), pp. xi + 192**  
**Reviewed by Anne Thompson**  
*Independent Scholar*



In this survey of the lives of early modern women, Sara Read tackles an impressive range of topics over a considerable timeframe. She addresses both the public and the private with chapters on women's role in politics, work and religion alongside those exploring dress, personal care, pregnancy and childcare. In so short a book, this is an ambitious undertaking and one that could only be attempted within the genre of popular history. This is very much an

introductory work aimed at a wide, non-specialist audience. Readers more familiar with the period and subject matter could be frustrated by the absence of references and the lack of historiographical context and discussion. However, the anecdotally rich approach, with material drawn from letters, commonplace books, medical treatises and literary works, makes for entertaining reading. This is especially so when the focus is directed at the more intimate aspects of women's lived experience, areas which routinely receive so little coverage but which arouse considerable curiosity. Who could fail to be fascinated by analyses of difficulties with conception (pp. 89-90), advice on achieving weight loss (pp. 48-9), the use of 'puppidog water' – more gruesome than simple urine – as a beauty treatment (p. 72) or the woman who supposedly gave birth to rabbits (p.156)? The book's extensive collection of illustrations, which ranges over sixteen pages, provides a fascinating visual accompaniment to the text.

The section devoted to women and reproduction focuses on the author's research specialisation and draws on her previous publications; as a result, it is the most structurally and historically satisfying. Individual stories are placed within a wider context and less reliance is placed on the experience of those at the top of the social scale. Various chapters address how women coped with menstruation, pregnancy, the birth process and breastfeeding. By balancing historical detail, medical advice and contemporary accounts, Read succeeds in painting an effective and vivid picture of these fundamental aspects of women's lives.

Other chapters, however, feel less substantial with too many topics attempted in too few words. Read's heavy reliance on literary sources skews the account in favour of women from the upper levels of society and from the seventeenth century, which is rather at odds with the book's title. Furthermore, the very restricted list of secondary works contained in the bibliography misses the opportunity to guide readers to the articles and books of acknowledged specialists. The detail of the lives of ordinary early modern women remains hard to reconstruct as the mundane rarely made its way into the archive and those lower down the social scale lacked the

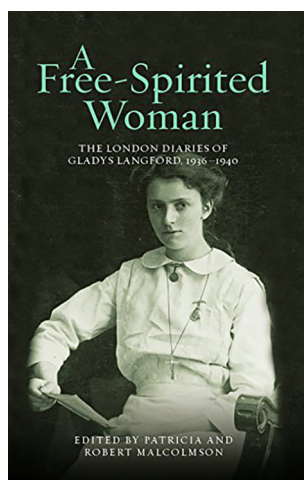
means to record their own experiences. Uncovering the stories of such women requires the painstaking interrogation of a wide range of archival material to prevent the eye-catching and aberrant from stealing the scene. The section on Catholicism (pp. 131-3), for example, focuses on the activities of Anne Vaux at the expense of the more complex story of the women who negotiated their own adherence to conservative religious belief and practice within communities throughout England.

Sara Read has produced, however, a very accessible account, which provides a useful entry into the lives and experiences of women during the early modern period. In doing so, she helps to widen the field and offers a welcome diversion from the ubiquitous accounts of life at the royal court.

**Patricia & Robert Malcolmson (eds), *A Free-Spirited Woman: the London Diaries of Gladys Langford, 1936-1940***

**Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2014 (London Record Society 50) £25 ISBN 978-0-900952-55-5 (hardback), pp.xxv + pp.176 + appendices pp. 177-186**

**Reviewed by Linda Davies**  
*Independent Scholar*



Gladys Hilda Mears was born on 17 April 1890. She was married on 28 July 1913 at the age of twenty-three to George William Langford. He left her in September 1914 and the marriage was annulled in November 1918. She died on 24 July 1972 aged eighty-two. This book covers her pre-war diaries when she was aged between forty-six and fifty, living in rented rooms in Highbury and working as a schoolteacher in a boys' school in Hoxton. In her leisure time Gladys regularly attended

West End theatres, cinemas and concerts, and read extensively. She aspired to be a writer or critic and used her diaries to express her opinions on films, current plays and new books. The editors have meticulously followed up all these references with detailed footnotes, and the book will be of interest to students of popular culture and London entertainment between the wars. The index and Appendix B have evidently been arranged with this in mind. For general readers, however, the very long footnotes can distract from the narrative and some of the biographical information in the introduction to Chapter Four might have been more usefully presented nearer the beginning. Otherwise, this is a scholarly and fascinating book.

The title, *A Free-Spirited Woman*, is perhaps misleading. Although Gladys was living independently, had an independent mind and a lively writing style and was free with her views about others, her spirit becomes increasingly downcast and despairing. The threat of war hung over her and the diaries give a strong sense of what it was like to be in London in the years leading up to the Second World War. They convey the

psychological effects of the threat of war on the population, especially Londoners and those who had lived through the First World War.

From February 1939 Gladys wrote for the Mass Observation social research project. This begins with her detailed responses to monthly questionnaire 'directives' (Chapter Five, pp. 103-114) and then a daily journal from late August 1939. The editors have skillfully dovetailed her Mass Observation contributions with entries from her personal diaries and Chapter Six intertwines both from 24 August to 22 September 1939. Chapter Seven adds a third sequence, a Dream Diary requested by Mass Observation, covering 23 September to 28 October 1939. These entries reveal quite disturbing nightmares.

One area of interest is her attitude to sex, and how sexual codes of conduct changed during her own lifetime. Being single was problematic for a woman in the 1930s and Gladys' diaries reflect her conflicting views of her unmarried status. As a woman born in the Victorian era, she lacked information about contraception and this is the reason she offers for the brevity of her marriage, observing that 'I'm not frigid but I didn't know anything about birth control and I didn't want a child – and that's why my marriage was marred.' (p. 53).

Her diaries reveal that she had many male friends and acquaintances, whose intellectual conversation she appreciated, and also a former lover with whom she still occasionally had sex. She is happy to record in this in her diary but as he was by this time married to someone else she uses a pseudonym for him (Leonard). Her diary entries often include her musings on the various men of her acquaintance and, although sometimes she states that she is glad that she was unmarried, at other times she wishes one of her current acquaintance would propose (for both sex and stability). Yet when a friend, Charles Gaye, invited her back to his home for tea one afternoon, she writes that in the old days this would have been tantamount to a declaration. Her doctor suggests her mental health issues might not have arisen if she had had 'a more normal marriage'; a reflection of how single women were frequently considered to be problematic.

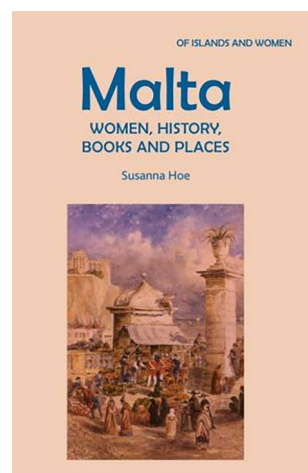
Homosexuality was another problematic area but Gladys seems to have accepted homosexuality – both in relation to her male acquaintances and to her niece, who had a close co-habiting female friend. Gladys accepted without comment the fact that the two loved each other. Gladys seemed more shocked to see a woman applying her make-up in public.

In conclusion, the diaries are of general interest both to students of London history and women's history.

## **Susanna Hoe, *Malta, Women, History, Books and Places***

**Oxford: The Women's History Press, Holo Books, 2015. £19.99, ISBN 978-0-9572-1535-1 (paperback), pp. xiv + 451**

**Reviewed by Jane Berney**  
*Independent Researcher*



This book is the fourth in Hoe's series of books on women and islands: *Of Islands and Women*. Part travel guide and part history, it is a curious mix of genres that is probably most useful to either someone visiting Malta for the first time or someone seeking an introduction to the history of Malta.

The first sixteen chapters, and by far the greater part of the book, is a brisk journey through Maltese history from

5200BC to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the granting of the vote to women. Hoe's aim is both to rescue Maltese women from history but also Maltese history from the Knights Templar and the Second World War. In this Hoe has partially succeeded but there are still many gaps. In part this is because Hoe, as she readily admits, has relied solely on secondary sources written in English: we are left guessing as to what the primary sources and non-English secondary sources may reveal.

Hoe has an enthusiastic and very personal approach to history. She notes that her concern is with 'real people' (p. 25) by which she means 'ordinary' people rather than the rich and powerful. Finding such people in the historical record can be a challenge so Hoe is not averse to using her imagination. For example, she bemoans the lack of ordinary women in medieval records but surmises that 'with the proliferation of villages with the word for garden in their name, women may have been involved in agriculture, tending flocks and beehives.' (p. 43).

Most chapters are full of entertaining stories about women who have succeeded in outwitting men or taking control of their lives. Many of these women, however, are women who were not born in Malta but visited it for a variety of reasons and timescales. These included missionaries, wives of traders and prostitutes but also women from the many countries that at one time or another sought to control Malta. In the early nineteenth century, it was English aristocratic women who came to Malta. One such was Lady Hester Stanhope – described by Hoe as a 'well-known traveller and eccentric' (p.156) – and while her escapades and those of others are amusing they do not add to our knowledge of Maltese women and do not fit in with Hoe's desire to rescue 'ordinary' women from obscurity.

The final seven chapters are suggested itineraries around Malta and Goza to enable the reader to find traces of the women featured in the earlier chapters. To my mind this is the most successful and original part of the book. Anyone visiting Malta with a general interest in women's history would be well served by a reading of this book before and during their visit. Anyone with a desire for a more in-depth study of the history of Maltese women needs to look elsewhere.



**Heath Hardage Lee, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of The Lost Cause***

**Lincoln, NE: Potomac Press, 2014. US\$29.95, 978-1-61234-637-3 (hardcover), pp. xiii + 214**

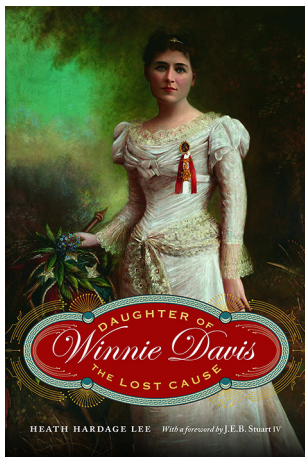
**Kate Cote Gillin, *Shrill Hurrahs: Women, Gender, and Racial Violence in South Carolina, 1865-1900***

**Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2013. US\$39.95, 978-1-61117-294-1 (hardcover), pp. x + 170**

**Blain Roberts, *Pageants, Parlors, and Pretty Women: Race and Beauty in the Twentieth-Century South***

**Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. US\$39.95, 978-1-4696-1420-3 (hardcover), pp. xiv + 363**

**Reviewed by Robin Joyce**  
*Independent Scholar*



Each of these three books reflects not only the powerful influence of Southern mores encapsulated in 'the Southern Belle', but also the profound embedding of those values arising from the South's loss of the American Civil War. Together, they cover the American Civil War from early 1865 and its aftermath to the Civil Rights era. At their heart is the legacy of the ideas legitimised by the South, as part of the quest for an identity as an escape from a devastating

military defeat. Women's roles and racial conflict are at the core of each of the books, ending with Blain Roberts' study of beauty pageants and parlours well after the initial conflict ended. Heath Hardage Lee has written a version of the aftermath of the American Civil War in which Davis' biography is central, while expanding to enhance further understanding of the war. Kate Cote Gillin takes a broader approach in her particularly thoughtful study of the politics of gender and racial violence in the south after the Civil War. Each of the books is a worthy read as a stand-alone work. However, together they accomplish a valuable trio of approaches, accessibility and style, which provide effective explanations of the feelings and motivations that impact on contemporary Southern women and black Americans.

Although the birth of Varina (Winnie) Davis – in June 1846 – is at the centre, her life is not the whole of the ideas and events covered in Lee's work. The foreword compels the reader to look further than a biography of a Southern daughter, linking Winnie's birth with the death of the General J. E. B. Stuart, a young and revered commander of the Northern Virginian cavalry. As much a representative of the post-war era as Stuart was of its battles, Winnie grows up with the full mantle of expectations of Southern womanhood upon her.

Southern archetypes about race and gender embellish these expectations, to the detriment of Winnie and her right to a life independent of the South's past and her parentage. Lee describes her as being 'a wistful, nervous heroine such as one might find described in the novels of Kate Chopin (*The Awakening*) or Charlotte Perkins Gilman (*The Yellow Wallpaper*) 'fitting the cultural mold of the times' (p. 67). The stricken South demanded 'a goddess or an angel, someone otherworldly who was above banal domestic occupations' (p. 80). Winnie's novels, written in the 1890s, demonstrate the conflict over women's attempts to gain independence, the impact of the war on their aims and her own experiences as a victim.

The later years of the senior Davis family and last years of the war are also described, including another part of the puzzle associated with the way in which women were perceived. Lee describes the way in which the Northern papers controlled images of Southern devastation using gender as a weapon of denigration: graphically described in female images in the capture of Jefferson F. Davis in May 1865 (pp. 24-6). In this image, together with the way in which Winnie was viewed by her admirers, Lee presents the complexities of demands upon women by both North and South. In the South, if women were Daughters of the Confederacy or associated with 'the cause' they represented the antidote to the loss of the war. If they deviated from this image in behaviour, class or race they could be treated with violence. The North's use of women's attributes such as clothing or demeanour as a method of denigration is a further example of the complexity of women's position. Lee's story of one woman's role as a daughter of the lost cause raises through her some of the issues that are the basis of Gillin's and Roberts' work.

Gillin's book is the most complex of the three and begins with the most appalling image of the impact on a woman who deviates from a role as a daughter of the lost cause. In 1871, the Klan's treatment of a white woman who helped three black men was well beyond that meted out to the men. Together with the overtly sexual nature of the attack, this example establishes the impact on women of the 'undeclared racial war' (p. 1) which is the theme of this book. This war impacted on the relationships between black and white women, as often their perceived interests were in conflict. White women who believed the myth that black women were willing participants in their domestic slavery in tasks undertaken for women were disillusioned. 'They assumed they knew them well' (p. 25) but the women freed from slavery were keen to adopt their freedom and claim wages for their work and the status to which they were entitled. Gillin questions the myths about Southern white women and suggests that 'few women were the demure, fainting victims of an oppressive northern regime and its black allies, as they would later claim. Most championed the interests of their race and class with vigor' (p. 26).

Violence was not only inflicted by men against women. Black and white women struggled to deal with their own challenges arising from the end of slavery. The salient point



***Shrill Hurrahs***

**Women, Gender, and Racial Violence  
in South Carolina, 1865-1900**

**Kate Côté Gillin**



made here is that where one group of people has control over another violence is a likely consequence, as Gillin observes, 'dramatic exchanges [between women] were emblematic of the battle to determine the future of land and labor and of the war over gender and the power of womanhood' (p. 29). Beyond the domestic challenges they encountered, women became involved in politics and 'White women were a constant and accepted presence at Democratic functions throughout the state

... [entering] the traditional male arena of political meetings, rallies, demonstrations, and even coercion' (p. 94). However, their image recalled the past: 'white women brought their sense of presentation and decoration ... women and girls became living representations of the cause for which they were fighting' (p. 95). While Gillin establishes the continuation of women as the embodiment of virtue during and after the American Civil War her reflections on lynching also establish the role of violence, not only as male but female. It was 'the final stage in the white man's campaign to completely expel blacks from the world of southern manhood and restore ... gender roles' (p. 130) and 'black and white women best distorted the antebellum roles by adopting lynching as their own crusade' (p. 130); 'violence became a universal and interracial tool' (p. 131).

Gillin concludes with one of her underlying themes, the appeal of vigilantism as one consequence of ungendered acceptance of violence as a response to racial tension in South Carolina. Vigilantes reacted immediately to slaves winning their freedom and their claims to economic recompense for their labour. Secondly, vigilante action centred around blacks' claims to electoral independence demonstrated by their voting Republican. Lastly, where black parents sought education for their children vigilante violence was enacted against them, the schools and teachers. Her claim that where 'men and women changed the nature of violence, and violence changed the nature of men and women' is challenging but Gillin makes a compelling argument.

Blain Roberts reaches back to the Civil War to explain modern ideas of beauty in the South. In her lively description and explanation Roberts demonstrates how the manifest influence of racism intensified in responses to the war impacts on understandings of feminine beauty. Her study also shows how, while continuing to impact on twentieth century ideals, racist reflections on beauty have had to adapt to the modern love of sunbathing and tanning. White as beauty was a universal imposition on all Southern women. Advertisements for whitening products 'absolutely monopolized the women's sections of southern rural periodicals, playing on an undercurrent of perceived insecurity among rural women' (p. 40). Diverging from the demand that women should beautify themselves was the idea that 'the use of beauty products [was] a sign of an unforgiveable artifice rooted in female rebellion' (p. 17). Blain's work constantly raises conflicting images and understandings of the way in which beauty is imposed on women, but also about the way in which they respond, giving

the work a wonderful complexity. The reader is constantly kept alert to new ideas and possibilities about the meanings associated with women and their ideas of ideal beauty.

With her detailed examination of beauty parlours Roberts continues to raise diverse ways of considering women and their relationship to images of beauty and enhancement. She addresses the conflict between ideology and the economic issues associated with black women's embrace of beauty parlours as a business or employment. Her claim: 'I am careful to balance the insights of feminism with the demands of my evidence' (p. 9) is also an important factor in her work, in which she argues that contemporary concerns about female subordination through beauty practices may not hold true for all circumstances and times. In the south, in the interwar years, they were seen as 'instruments of female liberation' (p. 9) by conservatives. Beauty contests are also given a different perspective when Roberts claims that celebrations of black southern women through this medium 'were more than a demand for recognition ... [they] were designed to do 'the race proud' (pp. 149-150). The gauntlets she throws down makes the book an invigorating read.

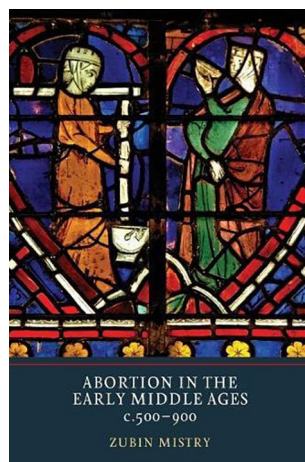
Each of the books has a useful bibliography and index. Lee's bibliography, while concise, includes some primary sources, which are evidence of the period of over twenty years in which she worked with private collections and their owners and interviewed relatives of the Davis family. Harding's rich bibliography provides the opportunity to further engage with her complex study. Roberts' bibliography provides evidence of the wide range of contrasting ideas that provide this book with its impact.

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

**Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2015. £60.00, ISBN 978-1-903153-57-4 (hardback), pp. xiv + 342.**

**Reviewed by Emma Milne**

*University of Essex*



How was abortion constructed as a social, religious and political problem by individuals and communities, and the ecclesiastic and secular authorities in the Early Middle Ages? This is the focus of Zubin Mistry's monograph, *Abortion in the Early Middle Ages c.500-900*. The text provides an analysis of doctrine across time and space in Europe, from Visigoth Spain, Merovingian Gaul, early Ireland, Anglo-Saxon England to the Carolingian empire,

demonstrating the slow movement of church tradition. There was no unified moral, religious or political thought on abortion, but rather it was a topic that was actively debated along with related concerns such as sexuality, contraception and gender. As Mistry argues, 'The Early Middle Ages was not a historical courier which delivered a sealed moral doctrine from Augustine



to Gratian' (p. 55). Mistry reminds us that when abortion was being spoken of by churchmen and rulers they may have drawn on the past, but they were speaking in the present tense.

The text offers a detailed analysis of key texts from the period including conventional sources such as canon law, penitential literature and law-codes. But it also examines other sources, such as biblical commentaries, theological treatises, texts regarding political controversy and polemical letters. In analysing such texts, Mistry argues that the book presents a narrative of the stories of abortion that communities told themselves, demonstrating what abortion signified. Due to the nature of the period and the sources available, this book offers a study of political, moral, legal and religious doctrine of abortion, rather than the practice of abortion during the period. Mistry is forthright in acknowledging that the experiences of women are discussed not only by male-authored texts, but by specific men – notably clerks and monks. Furthermore, most of the stories of the period are hidden, as are the accounts of 'ordinary people' and what they thought about abortion and about churchmen's ideas on abortion (p. 299).

Mistry demonstrates the extent to which perspectives on abortion fed into the complex social, cultural and political agendas of the period, for example in sixth-century Gaul abortion was integrated within attempts to define Christian communities, whereas in Visigoth Spain the rhetoric on abortion represented a convergence between church and state.

The success of Mistry's work is that it demonstrates the array of perspectives – the analysis of the vast number of sources presented provides an indication of the complex mosaic of differing perspectives that existed around the topic, not just across the vast time period and location, but within specific periods and jurisdictions. A difficulty of this book is that it presupposes an understanding of the period and the religious and political developments in Europe at this time. Consequently, it is not immediately accessible to those who are specifically interested in a history of abortion and who may well be unfamiliar with the early middle ages period. Nevertheless, Mistry's comprehensive writing style and the structure of the book facilitates understanding and offers an interesting insight into perspectives on abortion during the period. This book will be of great interest to those who are interested in the political and cultural history of the church and state during this period. It will also be of interest to those who are concerned with historic representations of abortion.

### **Mike Rendell, *In Bed with the Georgians: Sex, Scandal and Satire***

**Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2016. £14.99, ISBN**

**978-1- 47383-774-4 (paperback), pp. x + 164**

**Reviewed by Gillian Williamson**

*Independent Scholar*

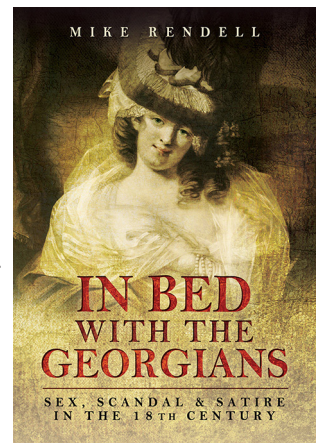
Sex sells. And the blurb on the back cover of *In Bed with the Georgians* promises a series of sensational tabloid-style stories: 'THE POLITICIAN AND THE CALL-GIRL', for example. As a broad introduction to the social and cultural history of sex in the eighteenth century this book is, like the activities it chronicles, a nicely-illustrated romp. It trots smartly through most of the well-known figures of the period: the bigamous Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Bristol in her almost

invisible Iphigeneia costume (p.123), James Boswell's shop-doorway knee-tremblers with streetwalkers (pp.138-43) and the Duke of York's mistress, Mary Anne Clarke, trading in army commissions and whispering the names of her clients desirous of promotion into the ear of her royal lover (p.92). A few are surprisingly missing, however. What about the quack James Graham and his magnetic Celestial Bed? Or the cross-dressing French diplomat the Chevalier D'Éon? The literary style is also tabloid-esque. This is a book in which stories 'have legs' (p. 83) and tarts have hearts (back cover). Women are 'curvaceous' (p. 33) or 'a bit of a goer' (p. 99). Men fancy women 'something rotten' (p. 55) and have 'their wicked way' with them (p. 33).

As this implies, for the academic reader, this book has serious flaws. There are no footnotes, so it is impossible to follow up any interesting points, and the bibliography is vestigial and confuses primary and secondary sources. It is often hard to tell whether Rendell is using the lens of secondary material or has gone back to the sources. In any case all sources are treated at face value with little attempt to consider who was writing and for what audience or purpose. Were there really 62,500 prostitutes in London alone (p. ix), or was this an exaggeration made to fit an agenda? Without footnotes, it is impossible to check. Many of the scandals Rendell repeats were scandals precisely because of their context. They were consciously deployed for political ends, as Anna Clark points out in *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, 2004). Their subjects came from the upper ranks of society and were aimed at a reading public which by the eighteenth century included rising numbers of the middling sort who were increasingly conscious and outraged by the gap between their moral values and those of their social superiors. Yet we hear only in passing (pp. 5-6) of their active part in this story, of the campaigns at the century's beginning and end for reformation of manners, or of the impact of the Evangelical movement.

Rendell does, however, nod towards the role of gender in distributing social power (p. 117). For the eighteenth-century sources on sex were written and/or mediated by men in a culture that did not acknowledge an equal legal status for women. It was a culture that readily interpreted rape as seduction – an interpretation so pervasive that it lingers on today.

If this interplay between gender, sex and power is what interests you, then you would be better off reading Faramarz Dhaboiwala's *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (London, 2012). But you could still take *In Bed with the Georgians* as your holiday reading.



## BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

The following titles are available for review, so if you like to review any of the titles listed below, please email me, Jane Berney, at [bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.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 (within the word limit!) and write interestingly about it is the most important thing. Any suggestions for books to review are also welcome – just email me as above.

Peter Hore, *Lindell's List. Saving British and American Women at Ravensbruck* (The History Press)

Harry Stone, *That Monstrous Regiment. The Birth of Women's Political Emancipation* (Mereo Books)

Carol Dyhouse, *Heartthrobs. A History of Women and Desire* (OUP)

Anna Spurgeon, *Women and Children in the Factory. A Life of Adelaide Anderson 1863 -1936* (Aspect design)

Tim Clarke, *The Countess. The Scandalous Life of Frances Villiers, Countess of Jersey* (Amberley)

Nick Holland, *In Search of Anne Bronte* (The History Press)

Deb Vanasse, *Wealth Woman. Kate Carmack and the Klondike Race for Gold* (University of Alaska Press)

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

Miriam E. David, *A Feminist Manifesto for Education* (Polity Books)

Erika Gasser, *Vexed with Devils. Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York University Press)

Wendy L. Rouse, *Her Own Hero. The Origins of the Women's Self-Defense Movement* (New York University Press)

Don Chapman, *Wearing the Trousers. Fashion, Freedom and the Rise of the Modern Woman* (Amberley Publishing)

Christine E. Hallett, *Nurses of Passchendaele. Caring for the Wounded of the Ypres Campaigns 1914-1918* (Pen and Sword Books)

Patrick Wheeler, *Ribbons among the Rajahs. A History of British Women in India before the Raj* (Pen and Sword Books)

Ann Wee, *A Tiger Remembers. The Way We Were in Singapore* (Ridge Books, Singapore)

Clare Mulley, *The Women who flew for Hitler. The true story of Hitler's Valkyries* (Macmillan)

Maki Kimura, *Unfolding the 'Comfort Women' Debates. Modernity, Violence, Women's Voices* (Palgrave Macmillan)

Jacinta Prunty, *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reforming Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853 – 1973* (Columba Press)

Brian Titley, *Into Silence and Servitude. How American Girls became Nuns, 1945 – 1965* (McGill – Queen's University Press)

Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year. The Greatest Consciousness – Raising Event in History* (Oxford University Press)

Sue Peabody, *Madeleine's Children: Family, Freedom, Secrets and Lies in France's Indian Ocean Colonies* (Oxford University Press)

Robert Lopresti, *When Women Didn't Count* (Praeger Publishing) – a study of women in US official statistics

### The Women's History Network Small Grant

WHN is offering a grant of £1,000 to facilitate a conference on women's history

The grant is open to teaching or research staff in universities or other institutions of higher education in the UK or staff in FE Colleges, Museums or Heritage Sites in collaboration with any one such institution

For full details on eligibility criteria, how to apply, and deadline see:

[Womenshistorynetwork.org](http://Womenshistorynetwork.org)



## WHN Community History Prize 2017

There were twenty-two entries for the WHN Community History Prize, nine of which were shortlisted for final consideration by the Panel. The field was wide this year, entries being submitted by organisations from France and Northern Ireland for the first time. Scotland England and Wales were well represented, and we received another excellent entry from Glasgow Women's Library, the fourth in as many years.

After much deliberation and coffee, the Panel elected once again to divide the prize between two winners this year:

### **Tyne & Wear Museums, Newcastle upon Tyne: *Tiny Sparks at Discovery Museum***

**THE PROJECT:** Tiny Sparks, a museum session for two-four year old children, promotes gender equality and raises aspirations in young children. The sessions introduce inspirational women in history such as Helen Sharman and Ada Lovelace. Children engage in object handling and fun activities relating to the S.T.E.M. 'occupations' of each historic figure.

**JUDGE'S COMMENTS:** The judges were unanimous in applauding Tyne & Wear Museums for finding such a creative way of engaging such young children and their carers with women's history and encouraging them to make their own discoveries in future. The activity offers a superb introduction to gender equality, science history and women's history.

They were also impressed that this was a project sustained and supported over many weeks, making a real difference in the way that children and young people view the world. It did not require a large budget or several members of staff, and is a wonderful example of a museum team thinking outside the box. It's great to see the activity is now part of the museum service's regular learning programme. Well done!



*Sarah Cotton (right) from the Discovery Museum, Newcastle, collecting the WHN Community History Prize (joint first place) from Caitlin Kirkman of History Press, the prize sponsor. The museum's 'Tiny Sparks' project, an object handling and fun session for 2-4 year old children, promotes gender equality*

### **Monmouthshire Museums Service, Wales: *Monmouthshire Women Making Change***

**THE PROJECT:** The exhibition 'Monmouthshire Women Making Change' explores the contribution women have made to Suffrage, the war effort, agriculture, the Peace Movement and how they have improved women's lives, locally and globally. It was a collaborative exhibition curated by an intergenerational group of volunteers, made up of a graduate, two university students and a member of the community, working with community organisations. A Welsh Baccalaureate resource and day school is running alongside.

**JUDGE'S COMMENTS:** The judges were unanimous in praising the achievements of all concerned - to achieve so many partnerships and engagements on a small budget is truly impressive.

The museum has shown excellent practice in involving the community in shaping and interpreting exhibitions using previously unseen collections. The icing on the cake has been provided by the enthusiastic way in which community groups of all ages and cultures have worked together to bring their own material to illuminate the women's histories brought to light.

The panel was truly uplifted to see a small rural museum working so creatively and are delighted to offer it joint first prize.



*Rachel Rogers (left), Monmouthshire Museums Manager, and Karina Gass, project volunteer, celebrating their WHN Community History Prize win (joint first place) for 'Monmouthshire Women Making Change'. The exhibition explores women's contributions to suffrage, the war effort, agriculture and the peace movement.*

Two more projects were highly commended: Footprints Women's Centre, Belfast for *Through Our Eyes: A Photographic Study of the Changing Face of West Belfast* and Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester for *The Women's Peace Crusade 1917-1918: Crusading Women in Manchester and East Lancashire*.

The History Press has confirmed sponsorship of the Community History Prize for 2018 - see panel for details.



Footprints Women's Centre, Belfast, Highly Commended for 'Through Our Eyes: A photographic study of the changing face of West Belfast'



'The Women's Peace Crusade 1917-1918: Crusading women in Manchester and East Lancashire', a project between Manchester Metropolitan University and Clapham Film Unit, Manchester. (Highly Commended). The film resulting from the project can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/pKRUdeNJA8>

**Conferences, Calls for Papers, Events, Prizes, News, Notices, Publishing Opportunities ...**  
All of the above can be found in the WHN electronic **Newsletter**

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

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

To advertise in the WHN *Newsletter*, please email its editor, Gillian Murphy, at:

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

To download current and back issues visit the Newsletter pages at [www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/news/newsletters/](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/news/newsletters/)

WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK

♀

COMMUNITY HISTORY PRIZE 2018




# CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY



Do you know of a recent exhibition, web resource, event, film, play, publication or project which has been researched by and about women in a community setting?

Sponsored by

The History Press

Winners receive

- £500 prize
- National recognition

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
**31 May 2018**

Groups can nominate themselves or someone else. For information about making your application email Prof Maggie Andrews [maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk](mailto:maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk)



# WHN AGM Report 2017

The AGM was held at the Annual Conference of the WHN at the University of Birmingham. The Chair, June Purvis, announced that the Network has had another successful year and is in a healthy financial state, which has been aided by the decision to move over to the electronic distribution of the journal. She did, however, note that we must continue to promote the network and find ways to increase membership. This year, the Steering Committee has been able to increase the value and number of grants awarded and has invested in filming the conference to enhance the profile of WHN on social media.

## Steering Committee membership changes

Thanks are offered to those whose terms of office have come to an end and will therefore be stepping down: Rachel Rich (Journal), Alana Harris (Charity Representative) and Aurelia Annat (Treasurer). Thanks also to June Hannam, who will be stepping down as Chair of the Book Prize panel and to Claire Jones, our web administrator. Five new candidates have been elected to join the Steering Committee: Beth Jenkins, Sian Edwards, Sumita Mukherjee, Pippa Virdee and Zoë Thomas.

## Finances

The Treasurer, Aurelia Annat, reported that our finances continue to remain strong. This has enabled us to increase our investment in new initiatives, including increasing the Small Grant Scheme for Teaching and Research Staff to £1000 and the introduction of a new Small Grant Scheme for a Postgraduate Conference (see winners below). In addition, £250 was allocated to support a community engagement initiative: 'LACE' (Local Arts-in-the-Community Engagement) and a further one-off £500 was allocated for the creation of a film to record the 2018 conference. The new system of mixed distribution and differentiated subscription rates means that there has been a sharp reduction in the cost of producing the journal by almost £1,500, which will enable us to sustain the growth of the network's activities.

The provisional budget for 2017/18 is £13,500. The budget reflects the intention of reducing the excessive reserve in our current account and it is anticipated that we will have excess funds again in 2018/19, which, it is hoped, will facilitate the continuation of the new initiatives we have instituted.

## Winners of Small Grants

*The Small Grants £1,000 Postgraduate Award:* Stormm Buxton-Hill, on behalf of the Postgraduate Committee at the University of Hull, to facilitate a conference on 'Women's Negotiations of Space, 1500-1900'.

*The Small Grants £1,000 Staff Award:* Megan Leyland, of English Heritage, in conjunction with the Department of History at the University of Leicester to facilitate a conference on 'Telling Her Story: Women's History, Heritage and the Built Environment'.

*Local Arts & Community Engagement Bursary 2017 (LACE Bursary):* The bursary was awarded to three members of staff from Birmingham Museums Trust and two from Craigavon Museums Service, Co. Armagh to subsidise their attendance at the Annual Conference. The two staff members from Craigavon were unable to take up their bursary. The Birmingham Museums Trust staff spoke at the conference about how community heritage engagement is at the heart of a shift in the museum collections' research techniques.

## Membership report

The Membership Secretary reported that we have 390 members listed. It was noted that the amount of Gift Aid donations by WHN members was at 110 and that there are twenty 'unconfirmed' members who have not supplied a home address in their declaration. The move away from cheque payments is going well.

Members are reminded of the importance of completing a Gift Aid form to ensure optimum income for the network. Members are also reminded to check that they are paying the appropriate level of subscription.

## Social Media, blog and publicity

The blog has broadened its scope beyond coverage of purely academic content since last year and has given prominence to special causes such as LGBT month in February, Women's History Month in March and Black History Month in October. Book reviews can now be published on the blog if a writer requests a review. Articles from other sources (especially 'The Conversation'), posts from WHN readers and abstracts from the WHN Conference have provided stimulating source material. It was noted that we can do more to make a greater link between the blog and WHN social media activities.

Over the past year, WHN publicity materials have been sent to events relating to the Network, such as the Nottingham Women's History Group and the Medical Women's Centenary Conference. WHN also had a table at the 'Feminism Late' Conference held at the new Army Museum in Chelsea in June, which enabled the network to reach beyond the history community and into broader feminist networks. Should members wish to have some of these publicity materials, they are invited to email Stephanie Spencer. Suggestions for images to use on the next batch of publicity materials (due to be replenished during 2017/18) would also be welcome.

## Journal

*Women's History* has had another successful year and continues to attract interest, especially for Special Issues. In the past year, we have published two themed editions, most recently 'Documents in Women's History'. Spring 2018 will see the publication of 'Education in the Long Eighteenth Century' and, in Autumn 2018, we intend to publish a Special Issue to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act. The

editorial team continues to welcome submission of articles and suggestions for special themes issues.

We will shortly be seeing a change-over in editorial board members: Rachel Rich will be leaving the board and Naomi Pullin will be moving from her role as 'Committee Liaison Editor' to 'Deputy Editor'. There will shortly be new vacancies on the editorial board for non-Steering Committee positions and members are invited to make contact if they are interested.

## Newsletter

The newsletter continues to attract much interest. The number of subscribers has increased from 1,315 in September 2016 to 1,495 in August 2017. Submissions of news for the newsletter fluctuate and further content from the regional networks would be welcome. Members are invited to submit items of news that may be of interest to our readers.

## Next meeting of the Steering Committee and other matters

The next meeting will be held at 11.30am on 4 November 2017, room N301 (Pollard Room) IHR Senate House, London. All members are welcome.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual WHN Conference is to be held at the University of Portsmouth on 31 August-1 September 2018 on the theme of 'The Campaign for Women's Suffrage: National and International Perspectives'.

Thanks were also offered to the 2017 Conference Organisers: Laura Beers, Zoë Thomas and Lucia Puricelli.

## Women's History Back issues

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

£5.00 inc postage (Digital/UK print version)

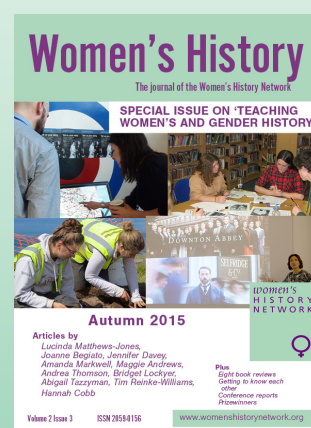
£6.50 inc postage (Overseas print version)

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

[www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/)

Order and pay online or email

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



## Women and the Wider World: Annual Conference Reports 2017

### Bursary-holder's report

Few conferences are as relaxed, friendly and fiercely intellectual as those organised by the Women's History Network, and this year's instalment – at the University of Birmingham – was no exception. Across two days filled with inspiring papers and stimulating discussions, historians of all ages and a range of institutions came together to advance the field of women's history.

Choosing between panels in each session was difficult, but the range of topics was wide. On the first day, some of the highlights included an excellent panel on 'Feminism and Visual Spectacle'. Papers by Mary Knighton and Anna König explored the role of Joan of Arc iconography and imagery in suffragette activism, linking it with the Pussyhat protests of 2017. Knighton showed that Joan of Arc appealed across all lines: progressives liked the strong woman imagery while right-wingers approved of her role as a national myth. König started her paper in the same era, drawing a line from beautifully crafted but fairly low-on-message suffragette banners to today's craftivism in which individuals sell carefully worked, angry messages – by women for women – on Etsy. She also pointed out that the act

of 'making' can function as an anti-capitalist protest, inspiring at least one would-be dressmaker in the audience to dust off their dormant sewing skills.

In the panel on 'British Women and the Gendered Nature of Humanitarian Development', Rhian Keyse explored the racialised and gendered thinking in interwar women's activism, which saw women in the metropole attempt to 'help' colonial women by speaking for them, creating a 'sisterhood' in which British women saw themselves as superior. This continued in many ways after the Second World War, as shown by Anna Bocking-Welsh's work on the Women's Institute. Charlotte Riley, meanwhile, outlined how the British Labour Party modelled its foreign policy on humanitarianism and the subsequent issues this caused. She also argued that the foreign activism of Barbara Castle has largely been forgotten. Other excellent panels on day two included 'Married Life and Widowhood' in which Stormm Buxton-Hill, Eliza Riedi and Helen Grew all showed that the assumption of women's dependency on their husbands has been both pervasive and often incorrect.

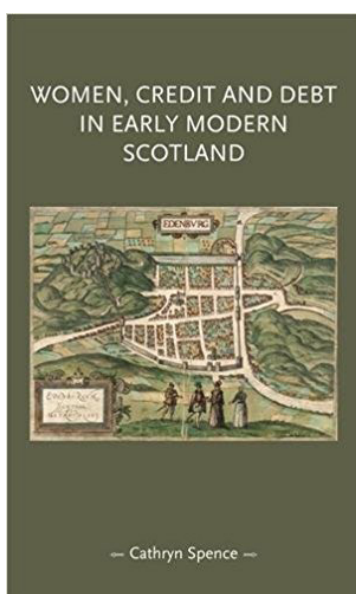


## WHN Book Prize 2017

There were five entrants for the for the WHN Book Prize this year, all scholarly books which had very different strengths and were indicative of the range of research being undertaken in women's history and a tribute to vibrancy of the area at present.

The winner was: Cathryn Spence, *Women, Credit and Debt in Early Modern Scotland* (Manchester University Press).

The book provided a meticulously researched and convincingly argument of women's involvement in economic activity in early modern Scotland. Regrettably the winner was unable to attend the presentation this year as she is now working abroad.



**£500 prize**  
for a first book in English  
in women's or gender  
history published in 2017



Entrants must be a member of the Women's History Network (UK) and normally resident in the UK. Current members of the WHN Steering Committee are not eligible.

The book must be written in an accessible style.

Deadline for entries is 31 March 2018.

For further information please contact Maggie Andrews: [maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk](mailto:maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk)

Across the two days, many comments were made about the friendly and encouraging atmosphere at the conference. For many, if not most, of the participants, WHN conferences are a rare and refreshing opportunity to talk about their work without having to justify the use of women's experiences as a research method. It is also generous in awarding bursaries to help delegates without institutional support. The conference is clearly dominated by women – I counted more women called Anna (four) than men (two, although I might have missed a few) – and it has an informality across age and status that is rare and inspiring. It remains, however, and like much of British academia, very white despite topics spanning the world being presented. This is something panel organisers might want to think about for next year.

There were plenty of familiar faces among the participants, but also a host of newcomers who have not always defined themselves as 'women's historians'. Mary Vincent, for example, commenced her keynote by saying just that, calling herself a 'Gender Historian' who works on men and masculinity. But,

she stressed, gender is by definition relational – there are no men without women, and vice versa. Vincent's keynote focused on the gendered ways in which Franco's rule in Spain was legitimised, ensuring its survival into the 1960s and 1970s. Using a box of photographs discovered in her mother-in-law's home a few years ago, she painted a lasting image of the role of family life in legitimising family and regime hierarchies.

The second keynote speaker, Joanna de Groot, started her presentation by paying tribute to WHN's important intervention in historical practice. Challenging perceptions of female agency and otherness, de Groot then showed images from nineteenth-century Iran that prove that the lack of women in urban spaces is a historiographical creation that must be challenged. Evoking Anna König's paper from the day before, de Groot also spoke about women's creative contribution to culture, and how the carpet boom in the nineteenth century changed the areas women could inhabit and their relationship to the space around them.

A packed programme and intensive two days meant that some panels were missed and others somewhat poorly attended. One solution could be to add another day to conference (though that would be costly – both for WHN and delegates); another to record and post sessions from next year's conference in at the University of Portsmouth online, which would also give access to those unable to make it in person. Either way, the Portsmouth conference – which focuses on women's suffrage – will be another one not to miss.

## Emma Lundin

*Queen Mary University of London*

### PhD student's report

The University of Birmingham hosted the 2017 WHN conference, entitled 'Women and the Wider World'. For those delegates who arrived early enough on Thursday night, a heritage walking tour of campus was provided. For those arriving at the University Station a little later, a slow stroll to the accommodation offered a sample of the picturesque campus. The undulating lakeside parklands peppered with joggers, dog walkers and children releasing boats onto the lake seemed to belong to some idyllic bygone time, leaving the swarming city far behind. The following day, a crisp morning walk (or a coach ride for those who wished) was rewarded with a welcoming reception, and as the day began to warm, the conference commenced in earnest.

Well sign-posted locations within close proximity to one another left delegates with only one challenge: to choose from the plethora of tantalising panels. The 'wider world' was certainly explored in the range of papers, where almost all of the inhabited continents were represented. An invitingly broad theme also encouraged investigation of women's history through a diverse and interesting range of media, including art, crafts, music, radio and magazines. Such presentations spanned from Michaela Jones's discussion of the artist

Christiana Herringham at the start of the twentieth century, to Anna Kønig's timely paper on the 'pussyhats' worn during the 2017 protests.

Despite these disparate places and times, key themes emerged. Discussions did not only focus on women's presence in the wider world, but their interconnectedness, networks and friendships. We learnt from Penny Tinkler that the interwar magazine *Miss Modern* encouraged friendships, whilst those discussing women Quakers expressed the importance of networks to help fight injustice. Indeed, whilst the battle for women's rights permeated many of the discussions, perhaps more prevalent was women's fight for social justice for all. The themes ranged far beyond politicking too, as Adam McKie offered a view of women and citizenship through the history of women's cricket.

These expansive themes were aptly drawn together by the first of the plenary lectures, provided by Professor Mary Vincent from the University of Sheffield, in her talk entitled 'Being/Doing: Embodiment and Identity in Franco's Spain'. Discussions of family life illuminated our understanding of how Franco's regime was constructed, and how it endured. This, Mary argued, was embedded in its reflection of the power structures of family life, which represented a microcosm of wider society. Moreover, through the visual expressions of family life within the regime, seen through photos belonging to Mary's mother-in-law, the realities of reconciling 'who we are', with 'what we do', came in to sharp focus. In her concluding comments, Mary powerfully reflected on the fluidity of women's identities evident in this year's papers, to highlight what it is like to live in a 'sex body'.

The first day of presentations was followed by a wine reception, during which time the room thronged with conversation, laughter and the clinking of glasses. It was also an occasion to congratulate the well-deserved winners of this year's WHN Community History Prize, and the WHN Book Prize.



WHN Annual Conference, 2017.

Zoe Thomas (left), Laura Beers (centre), conference organisers, with June Purvis, WHN Convenor.



The second and final day of the conference again provided topics various enough to pique anyone's interests, the panels covering areas as assorted as antislavery and slave ownership, and the experiences of women dealing with various stages of their lifecycle. Following lunch, delegates were treated to the second and final of the plenary lectures, given by Professor Joanna De Groot, Senior Lecturer at the University of York, in her paper entitled 'Not So Exotic? Women, Space, and Labour in Nineteenth Century Iran'. The audience was captivated throughout by the pictures of life in nineteenth-century Iran (made all the more effective by the large double screens at the front of the lecture theatre) as the engaging lecture sought to dispel the 'oriental fantasies' of Iranian women's lives. Joanna showed that space is ambiguous, cautioning us against accepting preconceived notions of the boundaries that constitute the domestic. The photographs highlighted Joanna's argument that although men and women often occupied space differently, women were at least present. This theme of mobility encapsulated many of the talks at the conference.

Two further sets of panels followed Joanna's keynote speech, including the second of two roundtable sessions, giving people an opportunity to discuss and share ideas and thoughts. One of the last papers, given by Johanna Luthman, took us back to the court of Elizabeth I, perhaps the earliest period discussed at the conference. Such extensive interests, spanning from 1565 to 2017, showed how women have interacted with the wider world for centuries. Examples of women moving through space – whether through migration, pilgrimage, to travel for pleasure, or to escape unhappy marriages – empowered them to shape and transform their identities.

Many delegates throughout the conference expressed the feeling that they had learnt much, and relished hearing more. For my part, as a first time attendee I felt welcomed into this supportive, encouraging and friendly network, with the opportunity to forge connections invaluable for any researcher's future. I already look forward to next year's conference at the University of Portsmouth, entitled 'the Campaign for Women's Suffrage: National and International Perspectives'. If this year's conference is anything to go by, it should be a resounding success.

### **Stormm Buxton-Hill**

*PhD Candidate, University of Hull*

## **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)

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)

Do you pay your subscription by standing order? If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2017 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 2017 rates for all categories of members can be found on the back cover of the magazine or by logging into your account at [www.womenshistorynetwork.org](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org).

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

All information (or queries) about membership, or changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging into 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.

## **The Women's History Network Post-Graduate Small Grant**

WHN is offering a grant of £1,000 to facilitate a one-day conference on women's history

The grant is open to full time or part time postgraduates in universities or other institutions of higher education in the UK

For full details on eligibility criteria, how to apply, and deadline see:

[Womenshistorynetwork.org](http://Womenshistorynetwork.org)

## Getting to Know Each Other



### **Name**

Sumita Mukherjee

### **Position**

Senior Lecturer in History, University of Bristol

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

Since 2015

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

I was always drawn to women writers from a young age, but was not really exposed to women's history until I was a postgraduate. It was only then that I realised that I had not really been taught any women's history as an undergraduate (or before). I still feel that I'm continually learning about ways in which to approach women's history, but I love teaching women's history (as well as reading it). I worked with some brilliant women's historians at the

University of Glasgow when I was a lecturer there for two years, and it is their inspiration that has ensured that my enthusiasm for women's history will only continue to grow.

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

My main interests lie in the effects of travel and migration on the Indian subcontinent and on Britain. I'm interested in how travel affects one's sense of self, but also the wider consequences migration has had on Indian society and politics, during the time of the British Empire. In addition, I'm interested in the effects migration from various parts of the empire has had on British society too, and the ways in which communities and families develop in diaspora.

I'm also particularly interested in the development of women's rights in India during the interwar period. I continue to be intrigued by the question of what the best method of social reform actually is. I'm just completing a project that brings all these interests together, which looks at the travel of Indian suffrage campaigners in the interwar period. I've been looking at the ways in which Indian women interacted with suffrage campaigners around the world, the dynamics of these female networks, and the effects this had on the women's movement back in India.

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

I don't have many heroines as I realise that everyone (in history or otherwise) also has flaws so we probably shouldn't put them up on to a pedestal! I'm also really inspired by some of the lesser known women I often come across in the archives, on whom information is so fragmentary. However, I find Sarojini Naidu a fascinating figure. She was born in Hyderabad, in South India, and was a well renowned Cambridge-educated poet. She then became a fiery politician, an ally of Gandhi, a vocal suffrage campaigner, who travelled around the world, all while bringing up five children and dealing with frequent illness. She wasn't always the most likeable person, but she was committed and an inspiration to many women around her.



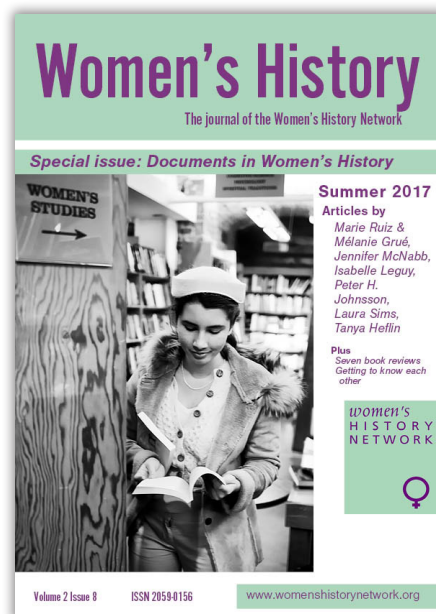
# Publishing in *Women's History*

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

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

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

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



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*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 33 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
Retired Life Membership (includes journal hardcopy)	£175

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