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WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Professional Women: the public, the private and the political



2019 marks the centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act in Britain, which opened all 'civil professions or vocations', including the civil service and legal profession, to women. It was a significant landmark – but neither a beginning or an end – to the history of professional women.

This conference will explore not only the significance of the 1919 Act, but also the 'professional woman' in all periods, nations and forms. She is found far beyond 'the professions', in fields ranging from agriculture to industry, from education to the arts. She has worked with or without official sanction and recognition, in widely varying conditions, for typically unequal wages. She has created her own professional niches, from domestic trades to feminist organisations – or forced her way into traditionally male domains. Her professional life has been influenced by sex and gender, but also by class, ethnicity and race, sexuality, disability, age, nationality and family situation.

We look forward to welcoming established scholars, postgraduate researchers, independent scholars, museum curators, archivists, local history groups and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines researching professional women in Britain and elsewhere in the world, to this conference to be hosted at

LSE Library, the home of the Women's Library

on

6-7 September 2019

Proposals of no more than 200-300 words for individual papers or panels should be submitted with a short biography to Gillian Murphy (G.E.Murphy@lse.ac.uk) by 15 February 2019.

With this issue we mark the 1918 women's history milestones in both celebratory and reflective mood. As a leading organisation for the promotion and encouragement of the study of women's history, it is appropriate that our network's own journal should commemorate this year's key centenaries with a special double issue. We are therefore pleased to offer our readers what we hope will be a stimulating collection of articles, reviews and reflections that highlight not only the historical significance of the 1918 landmarks but also their present and future legacies. As we considered how *Women's History* might best recognise the centenary of the year that saw the passage of the Representation of the People Act (enfranchising some women for the first time), the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act (enabling women aged over twenty-one to stand for election to Parliament for the first time), together with the first general election at which some women cast a vote, several themes emerged.

Firstly, we were reminded that it is part of our network's fundamental ethos that women's history is lodged not only within the academy but also beyond its walls. Our membership comprises, in addition to academic historians and researchers, independent scholars, students, school teachers, librarians, archivists, museum and heritage professionals, together with many other individuals of all backgrounds and occupations. Indeed, the Women's History Network extends a welcome to all those who share a professional, organisational, community or personal interest in the history of women. As the reports (later in the issue) of this year's Book, Community and School Prize-winning entries so clearly demonstrate, women's history continues to inspire and attract scholarly, community and popular interest at all levels. In this special year, therefore, we believe it particularly important that, in addition to its important role in supporting academic scholarship, this commemorative issue of the journal should be inclusive, reflecting the diversity of our membership. It thus records and celebrates the many and varied ways in which the centenaries have been – and continue to be – marked this year, both in academia and beyond. It has been notable that 1918 has been celebrated widely, by women and men in all walks of life. This has been seen in the wealth of suffrage-themed academic conferences such as (to name only two) the WHN's own annual conference 'The campaign for women's suffrage: national and international perspectives' (held in Portsmouth and reported later in this issue) and the 'How far have we come?' conference held at London South Bank University in the summer. The centenary year has additionally witnessed a plethora of public commemorations such as theatrical productions, readings, exhibitions, publications and mass participation events. The 'Processions' event, held on 10 June in four British cities, demonstrated clearly that interest in the broader legacy of 1918 is not restricted to historians of women but applies to all women and is celebrated by all – including artists, crafts workers, community and heritage workers, as well as the general public. We believe that, in reporting this diversity of commemorative activity – which has attracted extensive support – this issue of *Women's History* reflects the academy's 'impact' and 'knowledge transfer' agenda. In keeping with this spirit of inclusivity, then, we are pleased that this issue includes items written by – among others – museum, archive and heritage professionals, an undergraduate and artists, as well as by academic historians.

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The second unifying theme is that of local and regional perspectives. Historians have long argued that the story of the women's suffrage movement was a complex and diverse one, not restricted simply to familiar (and sometimes oversimplified) narratives of metropolitan leaders, national events and schisms. Just as suffrage activism had strong regional and provincial dimensions, so it is notable that local communities have embraced the 1918 celebrations with interest and great enthusiasm. The ability to claim connection with individual family or community members involved in suffrage activism appears, as Emma Cochrane observes in her report of the 'Women's Voices' march in Hastings, to have brought history alive for the participants in local commemorative celebrations. Likewise, Janet Douglas, in her review of 'The vote before the



Front Cover:
Composite of
Journal images

vote' exhibition in Leeds, notes how the exhibition highlighted the significant contribution to the long campaign for equal citizenship made by little-known Leeds women activists. Surrey History Centre's 'March of the women' heritage project, similarly, has uncovered from the county archives the role played by Surrey-based suffrage activists. In turn, the project has benefited the local community by creating teaching resources that help outline the local dimension of the national struggle, thus assuring that the story of women's fight for the vote will be told to future generations.

It is not surprising, perhaps, that our article authors have chosen to take biographical approaches to the commemoration of suffrage activism. Questions related to individual agency have long been at the heart of debates about historical causation and nowhere has this been more evident than in the history of women.¹ Furthermore, biographical approaches allow women's suffrage activism to be contextualised by their subjects' wider lives, networks and activities, both professional and private, bringing interesting and insightful intersections into view. Often, these situate suffrage activism in a broader framework of engagement with feminist campaigns, allowing a more complex and nuanced understanding of the relationship between the strands of women's quests for political, personal and professional equality. Anne Logan explores the personal and family influences on the parallel strands of Gertrude Eaton's career, demonstrating that the nature of her 'ladylike' education informed both her musical career and her penal reform work. In particular, Logan demonstrates that Eaton's activism exemplifies the relationship between the women's suffrage campaign and broader questions of women's citizenship. In a similar vein, Alexandra Hughes-Johnson argues that Rose Lamartine Yates's suffrage militancy informed her later involvement in local politics and social questions. Christopher Wiley demonstrates that Ethel Smyth's activism for suffrage equality grew out of her quest for recognition in a male-dominated profession. The biographical approach neatly aligns with the local and regional lenses additionally used by each of the authors. Local history both provides the opportunity to test generalisations and assumptions based on the bigger, national picture and allows for close-level investigation. Thus, the centenary celebrations have provided the opportunity to reclaim less-well known and 'unexpectedly important' (in Logan's words) women activists from relative obscurity as well as highlighting the lesser-known facets of the lives of better-known names.

Finally, we were struck by the ways in which the centenary commemorations have provided the opportunity to consider the resonances of the achievements of 1918 in twenty-first century women's lives. As Professor Sarah Childs argued at the 'How far have we come?' conference in the summer, the centenary requires 'more than just celebrations, parties and parades'. Advancing this theme of contemporary resonance and relevance, the organisers of this conference explain that their key aim was to reflect on the ways in which the achievement of political citizenship one hundred years ago has had wider ramifications in all areas of contemporary women's lives and spheres of activity. It was striking, too, that many of our authors concluded their reports of celebratory events with a glance to the future – so that the commemoration of past attainments is not an end in itself but becomes a potential inspiration for the activists of today and tomorrow. The commemorative march

in Hastings was coordinated by a local organisation that works to raise awareness of the contemporary problems still facing women and girls – such as domestic violence and the sexualisation of young women. Notably, too, the production of 'Votes for Women' – a rarely-performed suffrage play at the New Vic Theatre, Stoke on Trent reviewed by Vine Pemberton Joss – formed part of the theatre's 'Empowerment' season. It was mounted at a 'time when women all over the world have found the courage to make their voices heard on the subject of a continuing imbalance of power'.² It was equally notable that women MPs from all parties, speaking in the House in the Women's Suffrage Centenary debate on 6 February, were united in their assertion that the centenary was a time not merely to look back but also to look forward. In the words of the Member for Glasgow Central: 'We reflect today on how far we have come, yet we also reflect on how far we have to travel'.³ Thus, we are reminded that, for many suffragists, the vote was an important goal not purely in terms of principle (vitaly important though that was) but also for the crucial opportunity it offered to enact legislation that would ameliorate the lives of women and children.

With this issue we bid a thankful farewell to Jane Berney, who steps down having done sterling work on the editorial board as Books Reviews Editor and, before that, on the Steering Committee. We bid David Geiringer and Katharina Rowald both a warm welcome to the team. If you are enthused and inspired by this special themed issue, please do consider *Women's History* as a publication vehicle for your conference and workshop outputs.

Editorial team:

Rosi Carr, David Geiringer, Sue Hawkins, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin, Katharina Rowald, Zoë Thomas

Notes

1. See, for example, Donald M. Macraill and Avram Taylor, *Social Theory and Social History* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Alexandra Shepard and Garthine Walker, eds, *Gender and Change: Agency, Chronology and Periodisation* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
2. New Vic Theatre Stoke on Trent, *News Release*, 7 Feb. 2018.
3. *Hansard*, 6 Feb. 2018, Volume 635, Column 1370.

The Life of Gertrude Eaton (1864–1940): musician, tax resistor and penal reformer

Anne Logan

University of Kent

It is no exaggeration to say that without [the zeal of Gertrude Eaton] the recognition of Penal Reform as one of the subjects accepted by the League of Nations as suitable for international co-operation would never have been achieved.¹

Introduction

Women's History has a proud history of publishing articles 'reclaiming women's lives' and it is entirely appropriate – in the year of the centenary of the granting of the parliamentary vote to some women – that the lives of lesser known, yet unexpectedly important, suffrage activists should receive attention.² Gertrude Eaton (1864–1940) is a case in point. As Elizabeth A. O'Donnell pointed out in this journal last year, the cohort of mainly single, middle-class women born in the 1860s and 1870s (to which Eaton belonged) are often marginalised in historical accounts, despite their deep and transformative work for social and political reform.³ Arguably, this was also the most significant generation that participated in the – ultimately successful – suffrage agitation of the pre-First World War years. Eaton's life is considered here as an example, not only of an important and innovative campaigner for votes for the women of the United Kingdom, but also as someone who – as the quotation above alludes to – was capable of exerting successful pressure for change in the transnational political arena.

Nevertheless, the process of 'reclaiming' a life is not an easy one. In the case of Eaton, she remains a somewhat obscure figure. She left no personal papers and, at the time of writing, the short Wikipedia entry on her is inaccurate even on basic details such as the dates of her birth and death. The prevalence of historical databases designed for family historians now provides a lot more information at the touch of a keyboard than was available hitherto to historians researching individual life histories. However, these sources are both inherently problematic and formulaic. They can provide some important, factual information on research subjects: birth dates and places, addresses, occupations etc., but they can also mislead, or even encourage interest in the minutiae of lives, rather than the more significant, historical themes generated by the lives under scrutiny. Importantly, they can shed no light on the personality of the subject. The words of the individuals under consideration, and/or those of their acquaintance, are especially important in helping the researcher produce a rounded portrait. In Eaton's case, even the basic records of officialdom are relatively sparse: she deliberately evaded one census and is absent (probably abroad) from another two. However, she features prominently in the minutes of some of the many committees that she served on: notably, the Women's Tax Resistance League (WTRL) between 1911 and 1918 and the Howard League for Penal Reform (HLPR) from c.1927 to 1935. In addition, there are a few letters to and from Eaton in connection with her work for the Society of Women Musicians (SWM) held at the Royal College of Music. Taking these sources

together, it has been possible to construct a partial portrait of one of the less well-known – yet surprisingly significant – female political activists of the early twentieth century.

Early Life

Gertrude Eaton was born in 1864 in Swansea, the fifth daughter of a 'gentleman', Robert Eaton of Bryn-y-mor and his wife, Helen.⁴ The Eaton clan was evidently an important, high-status local family: the street of comfortable Swansea residences, Eaton Crescent, where the Conservative politician Michael Heseltine lived as a child, is named after them. Bryn-y-mor itself was an imposing residence built by an ancestor in the eighteenth century. Robert Eaton was a county magistrate and had business interests ranging from property to banking. Helen Eaton's father, John Henry Bolton, was a solicitor with offices in Lincoln's Inn. At the time of the 1871 census, the Eaton family was staying at a manor house in Chew Magna, Somerset, along with eleven servants and a governess. Gertrude had four older sisters: Helen, Mary, Edith, and Annie; one younger sister, Kate, and a younger brother, Charles Edward. There was also an older brother, named Robert after his father, but he was at school at Brighton College in 1871.

Official records therefore suggest an affluent family, able to afford a larger-than-average quota of servants. Gertrude was likely to have been educated entirely at home by governesses while her brothers went away to school: a completely conventional arrangement for her time and social class. Gertrude and other family members were baptised as infants in the Church of England although she may have had Quaker antecedents.⁵ However, life was not without its difficulties: in 1872 her father died at the age of fifty-five, leaving his wife with eight children, six of whom were under thirteen. Although the family was financially secure, this cannot have been an easy period. Gertrude's older brother became an engineer and, like his father before him, married a solicitor's daughter and settled in Swansea. Gertrude's younger brother served in the army and died in South Africa during the Boer War.⁶ Interestingly, the majority of Gertrude's sisters remained unmarried, as she did herself. Their mother died in Bath, Somerset in 1898, whereupon Robert Eaton's wealth was divided evenly between his children. Edith Eaton's estate was worth nearly £6000 when she died in 1938 (the equivalent of over £388,000 in 2018) so it is reasonable to assume that Gertrude had similar wealth.⁷

I have not found any record of Gertrude Eaton between 1871 and 1894. Her later professional activity in music suggests strongly that her early education must have contained musical instruction, and it is highly probable that she spent some time in continental Europe, perhaps studying music in Italy or even Germany.⁸ According to Gordon Rose, she 'lived a good deal of her early life in Italy, and spoke Italian'.⁹ Her lobbying work for penal reform at Geneva in the 1920s and 1930s undoubtedly benefitted from her grasp of European languages and of the culture of international gatherings, and this knowledge is

likely to have been acquired in early life as part of a ladylike education.

In 1894, at the age of thirty, Eaton enrolled as a mature student at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London. She studied singing and piano playing there for the next three years.¹⁰ Scattered newspaper notices of the period show her performing at concerts in London and in the area around Bath, where some of her relatives still lived. Some of these performances may have been professional or semi-professional; others were given for good causes. Eaton also became a teacher of music, taking private singing pupils and passing on her musical education to others. However, in the 1901 census she is recorded as 'living on own means': payment for teaching may have been welcome, but it was still perhaps not very ladylike to declare an occupation at that moment in time. In 1901 she was living at 2, Bedford Terrace, Kensington, relatively near the RCM. She later moved to nearby Gloucester Walk in Kensington, where she remained for many years, although she lived in Surrey towards the end of her life. In 1911, *The Vote* described Eaton as 'a lady very well-known in the musical world'.¹¹ The reasons for this reported fame – whether she was known primarily as a performer and/or teacher, and/or for her work for a musicians' magazine – are not, however, made at all clear.¹² Alternatively, her prominence may have been due more to her suffrage work (see below).

The Society of Women Musicians

In 1897, a women's club named the Women's Institute was founded in London by Mrs Nora Wynford Philipps (not to be confused with the later National Federation of Women's Institutes). In the early 1900s, the Institute had a membership of over 800 and was located at 92, Victoria Street, London, alongside several other feminist societies.¹³ Eaton was a member of the club, which – among many other activities –

had its own musical committee. The club may even have been her introduction to women's political organisations. In 1911, by which time Eaton was already heavily involved in suffrage and prison reform work, she became a founder member of the SWM, which was established in an inaugural meeting held at the Women's Institute. The idea for a society was ascribed in several newspaper accounts principally to Eaton herself and to her friend, the violinist and composer Marion Scott (1877–1953). Scott's period of study at the RCM overlapped with Eaton's and she was also a member of the Women's Institute musical committee.¹⁴ A third founder was Katherine Eggar (1874–1961), a pianist and composer, while the singer and composer, Liza Lehmann (1862–1918) was elected as the society's first president. Eaton's initial role in the SWM was as treasurer, although at later periods she was to hold other roles, such as president (1916–17) and secretary (c. 1920).¹⁵ At the Society's inaugural meeting she gave an address on the objects of the Women's Institute, which continued to provide the physical base of the new Society for several years.¹⁶ According to *Votes for Women*, the formal association with the Institute was a valuable one because of its 'charming rooms' which were made available to the women musicians.¹⁷ Eaton herself was inspired by feminist ideals: however, the SWM as a whole made efforts to play down any association with the women's suffrage movement. Members included the best-known woman composer of the era, the suffragette and close friend of Mrs Pankhurst, Ethel Smyth, but the leadership generally preferred to concentrate on promoting members' compositions and organising conferences, competitions and concerts rather than suffrage-related activities. The support of male musicians, who could become associate members, was sought, another reason perhaps why feminist ideas were only to be found on the margins of the society's work.¹⁸

However Eaton's own commitment to a feminist project emerges from the extant correspondence. In 1917, she wrote



*Inaugural meeting
of the SWM.
Originally
published in the
Daily Graphic,
held by the Royal
College of Music.
Photographed by
the author*

as SCM President to Sir Hubert Parry requesting that female candidates be considered for the governing body of the RCM. The reply she received was not encouraging: Parry claimed that vacancies rarely occurred and that when they did there were already many names (clearly he meant men) to be considered.¹⁹ A few years later when Eaton was SWM secretary she wrote to Katherine Eggar about the exclusion of women from membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society as well as from governing bodies of musical organisations. She told Eggar that she was urging Kathleen Schlesinger, then the president of the SWM – who had ‘in no way supported the feminist movement up to now’ to raise the issue.²⁰ Eaton was worried that she herself would not have been a credible spokeswoman for the Society: ‘I think it would come with much more weight from you,’ she wrote to Schlesinger, ‘I think I am too much connected with the suffrage movement.’²¹ Perhaps, if Eaton had had things her way, the SWM would have been a more overtly feminist organisation. Yet she felt that even the most obviously feminist of the women musicians could not necessarily be counted on. ‘Those who have already made their name, like our friend Dr Ethel Smyth, will not trouble to help others’, she complained to Eggar.²²

Suffrage work

Although it is highly likely that she harboured suffrage sympathies before that time, the earliest mention of Eaton’s active suffragism dates from 1910. Initially her suffrage affiliation was to the non-militant National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Conservative and Unionist Women’s Franchise Association (CUWFA).²³ Set up in 1908, the CUWFA provided a pro-suffrage outlet for Conservative-supporting women who were uncomfortable with the perceived dominance of Liberals in the NUWSS on the one hand, and the increased militancy of the so-called ‘suffragettes’ on the other. Moreover, Conservatives were also becoming fearful of the growing popularity of adult suffrage, which they believed would hand electoral advantage to their political opponents. Conservative suffragists sought to pressure the party’s MPs to support a limited franchise for women and thereby head off the threat of adult suffrage. A still further concern was the growing activity of anti-suffrage organisations, in which Conservative politicians played an increasingly prominent role: Conservative suffragists were worried that their party was becoming over-identified with opposition to votes for women.²⁴ Following the formation of CUWFA in London late in 1908, local branches were established in areas with high concentrations of Conservative suffragists, including Kensington.²⁵ Eaton and her older sister Edith both joined the CUWFA’s Kensington branch.²⁶ Her membership perhaps infers something about her political views at the time as well as her class identification.

In early 1910, Gertrude Eaton was reported to be giving lessons in public speaking to local suffragists at her home.²⁷ It was certainly not uncommon for singing teachers to also give lessons in elocution: clearly she was making use of her expertise for the cause. Later that year she took part in ‘a country crusade’ in Wendover, near Aylesbury on behalf of the CUWFA.²⁸ Eaton chaired meetings and presided over a literature stall at Aylesbury market. These were all fairly routine and respectable forms of suffrage campaigning. Yet by the following year, Gertrude had decided that a more militant

strategy was needed. In April 1911 she deliberately boycotted the census in open defiance of the law.²⁹ In contrast, her pro-suffrage, Conservative sister, Edith filled in her census form as head of household in Ladbroke Grove, only about a mile away from Gertrude’s home.³⁰ It seems likely that Gertrude was becoming progressively more militant in her furtherance of the suffrage cause. This supposition is supported by a letter to the *Common Cause* (the paper of the NUWSS) in which Gertrude Eaton expanded upon her views. In response to a letter from Clementina Black deprecating the new strategy of refusing to pay taxes until women had a vote, Eaton wrote ‘many of us have felt for the past year or more ... that new methods were needed to bring new life into [the constitutional suffrage movement]’. This new life, she felt, would come from a policy of so-called ‘passive resistance’.³¹ Eaton was signalling here her support for an innovative, new pro-suffrage group: the Women’s Tax Resistance League. This organisation was to provide the principle focus of her suffragist activity.

Tax Resistance

Despite the ever-expanding historiography of the British women’s suffrage movement, the WTRL remains somewhat under-researched. Such as it is, existing research focuses mainly on the links to the Women’s Freedom League (WFL), given that many of those present at the WTRL’s formation in October 1909 were leading WFL figures.³² Yet the policy of tax resistance clearly also appealed to some members of the NUWSS, potentially including more conservative-minded women such as Eaton. The Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George had recently proposed a budget which aimed to raise taxes for the well-off while rubbing salt into the wounds of wealthier, educated women who were fully aware of the meaning of ‘no taxation without representation’. Refusal to pay taxes was undoubtedly rebellious and had legal consequences, but it had a strong – almost respectable – historical pedigree, stretching back to John Hampden’s refusal to pay ship money to King Charles I in the 1630s. Much more recently, many non-conformist Liberal Party members (including some NUWSS supporters) had refused to pay a portion of local taxation. This, they argued, was supporting Church schools under the 1902 Education Act. Eaton cited both these precedents in her letter to the *Common Cause*. However, her refusal to pay taxes should not be interpreted as merely anti-government – although the Liberal administration was not regarded as friendly by many suffrage activists – since Eaton also mentioned ‘the crying need for a change in the economic condition of women’. This phrase suggests support for feminist campaigns to improve the lives of working women. Moreover, she argued that:

In condemning tax resistance, Miss Black seems to forget that women are *outside the law* classed with imbeciles and paupers, yet have to contribute to the salaries of cabinet ministers, police etc., having no voice in how their money is spent and powerless to obtain redress under the existing laws ...³³

By the time this letter was published, Eaton had already withheld payment of taxes. In August 1911, *The Vote* reported upon the sale of her household silver (which had been distrained) at the Messrs Whitely saleroom. In keeping with their established tactics, the WTRL turned the sale into a protest meeting.



Gertrude Eaton
by kind permission
(c) Museum of London

Eaton herself 'said a few dignified words of protest in the auction room, and Mrs Cobden Sanderson explained to a large crowd of bidders' the reasons for Eaton's refusal to pay tax.³⁴ For publicity purposes, Eaton was photographed with a full set of her silver cutlery.

In years to come Eaton was to make many speeches at similar sales of other women's distrained goods. She also participated in the bidding for and purchasing of resisters' goods so that they could

be returned to them. For example, in early 1914, Eaton bought jewellery which belonged to Princess Sophia Duleep Singh for £17 which was only a fraction of its value, which she promptly returned to its owner.³⁵ On another occasion she purchased a gold watch, the property of Mrs Cecil Chapman of the New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage.³⁶

By the autumn of 1911, Eaton was on the committee of the WTRL and she remained centrally involved until the League was disbanded. One of her first duties was to assist in the organisation of a fund-raising dinner held to honour the memory of John Hampden where she personally hosted a table with eighteen guests for whom the dessert was entitled 'bombe tax resistance'. Hampden was a potent symbol for the WTRL: the supporter Mary Sargent Florence designed a logo for the League with the image of a ship to evoke his protest nearly three hundred years earlier.

In 1912, a statue of Hampden was erected in Aylesbury (near his birthplace in the county of Buckinghamshire) and was unveiled by Lord Rothschild. The local paper reported:

After the ceremony a party of suffragettes [sic] came forward from the George Hotel, and Miss Gertrude Eaton and Miss Clemence Housman laid wreaths at the base of the statue. One was a large wreath of white flowers, on which in black letters were the words 'from women tax resisters', and it was tied with black ribbon on which were printed the words 'to John Hampden'. Within the circle of the flowers was a ship in full sail ... made of brown beech leaves and flowers.³⁷

This account suggests the innovation which Eaton and the WTRL brought to suffrage campaigning and the visual impact they sought to achieve in order to breathe 'new life' into the constitutional suffrage movement. Altogether, seventeen WTRL members attended the statue unveiling where they distributed 2000 leaflets and 200 copies of a book about Hampden.³⁸

Among the taxes which the WTRL sought to boycott was the new National Insurance stamp which the Liberal government introduced in the 1911 Act to fund a limited scheme of health benefits. Controversially, all employees – including domestic servants – were covered by the scheme. As

Auchterlonie points out, Conservative women had legitimate objections to the Act, since low-paid women (such as servants) paid a flat-rate contribution for health insurance, yet were entitled only to a lower rate of benefit than men.³⁹ Gertrude Eaton refused to pay for her servant. However, an unnamed person paid the stamp while she was ill. Eaton thereafter issued a public statement that it had been paid 'without her consent or knowledge'.⁴⁰ One can only speculate as to the identity of the mysterious payer – perhaps it was one of her sisters. Eaton also organised a public debate on the insurance bill held at Caxton Hall on 19 January 1914 on the motion that 'this meeting declares that the Insurance Act is undemocratic in character and unjust in operation, and that its hardships press most heavily on women'.⁴¹ Eaton was, it seems, implacably opposed to new government impositions on women, especially since they were accompanied by complete inaction regarding women's suffrage. Moreover, the imposition was on low-paid domestic servants as well as upon their mistresses.

Eaton's suffrage activity from 1911 onwards seems to have been almost exclusively within the WTRL. I have found no evidence of any continuing links with the CUWFA although her sister Edith was on its council in 1913. Grassroots suffrage activists were often quite fluid in their affiliation and the suffragette/suffragist divide was not as absolute as is sometimes imagined – indeed, it was frequently crossed.⁴² Yet, in 1913, attitudes of Conservative suffragists towards defiance of the law were starting to harden, mainly as a reaction to the suffragette arson campaign. WTRL minutes report that both Countess Selborne and the Duchess of Bedford repelled advances from the League on grounds of its association with 'militancy'.⁴³ Evidence cited above suggests that Eaton had been moving in a more militant, less conservative direction since 1910 and in November 1913 she took part in a WFL demonstration in Downing Street. An uninvited deputation of Nina Boyle, Eunice Murray, Emily Juson Kerr and Gertrude Eaton drove to number ten 'in a taxi-cab flying the colours of the League'. They delivered to the Prime Minister a resolution passed by participants at a meeting at Caxton Hall on the



Women's Tax Resistance League Badge
Museum of London Collections,
photographed by the author

treatment of 'suffragists in prison' and the government's failure to grant them political status, which had been afforded to men such as James Larkin, the Irish republican trade union leader.⁴⁴ While the other three women were arrested in Downing Street, Eaton was not. Instead, she became the main witness for the defence when the others were charged at Bow Street Police Court with obstruction. I do not know whether Eaton was a member of the WFL, but she clearly worked closely with its members in the WTRL and on this occasion was in the company of some of its leading lights. Annie Cobden Sanderson, also of the WFL, was certainly a close ally of Eaton's, both in the WTRL and the Penal Reform League (PRL).⁴⁵ As Morley and Stanley assert, an important method of reconstructing feminist lives is by examining women's networks and locating the individual within her social and intellectual contexts.⁴⁶

In the autumn of 1914 after the outbreak of war, the WTRL, along with many other suffrage organisations, ceased active campaigning. The League's only employee, Margaret Kinton Parkes was discharged with a testimonial and Eaton organised a collection for her. The League's offices were given up and Eaton conducted whatever secretarial work was required from her home in Kensington. The next meeting was held in March 1916, in Eaton's drawing room, to discuss a forthcoming deputation to the Prime Minister by suffrage societies. It was agreed that Eaton would represent the WTRL and would be the League's honorary secretary 'pro tem'.⁴⁷ As such, she joined the Consultative Committee of Constitutional Suffrage Societies, the official lobby group which worked on the suffrage issue throughout the discussions of the Speakers' Conference in 1916–17 and during parliamentary debates on the Representation of the People Bill.⁴⁸ In July 1918, the WTRL committee met for the final time, again at Eaton's home to wind up the organisation now that a 'partial victory' in the suffrage struggle had been won.⁴⁹ Eaton's suffrage work was at last done and the tax resistance strategy, which she had championed, arguably had contributed to the pressure which – at last – had influenced parliament to introduce votes for some women.

Penal Reform

Gertrude Eaton's early work for penal reform was concurrent with – and almost certainly inspired by – her suffrage activism. As Margery Fry, who came to know her well from 1918 onwards, recalled 'cruelty and injustice never ceased ... to rouse [Eaton] to hot indignation' and the revelation of the disgusting conditions of women's prisons by suffragettes initially motivated her to campaign for improvements.⁵⁰ The Penal Reform League was founded in 1907 as a direct result of the first prison sentences served by suffrage protestors, in particular that of Annie Cobden-Sanderson (who later helped found the WTRL).⁵¹ I have not found evidence regarding exactly when Eaton joined the PRL but she was a member of its Executive Committee by 1910–11. In its article on her tax resistance, *The Vote* claimed she was the 'honorary secretary of the Prison Reform Committee [sic]', but this is inaccurate: the secretary was a former journalist called Arthur St John.⁵² Nevertheless, according to Fry, no member 'was more eager, or more faithful to the cause, than Gertrude Eaton'.⁵³

The PRL remained close to the suffrage movement in the years 1910–18. Although it did not campaign exclusively on conditions in women's prisons, it was very vocal in its critique of the Liberal government's policies towards suffragette

prisoners, notably force-feeding of hunger strikers and the so-called 'Cat and Mouse Act'.⁵⁴ It also began to build alliances with a range of women's organisations (not all of which would be regarded as unambiguously feminist) including the Girls' Friendly Society and the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW).⁵⁵ Eaton may well have played a part in the latter development and it is worth noting that her sister, Edith, was a leading activist in the NUWW (later the National Council of Women – NCW).⁵⁶

When Margery Fry took over the running of the PRL from St John in early 1919 and arranged its merger soon after with the Howard Association, Eaton was one of several executive members who remained centrally involved. While she was still engaged with other organisations and campaigns, Fry's claim that 'for many years prisoners took a first place among the objects of [Eaton's] zeal' is broadly correct.⁵⁷ Howard League minutes (dating from 1927) show the depth of her involvement: she visited prisons at home and abroad and reported on them, chaired sub-committees, and repeatedly represented the HLPR in talks to community groups, churches and other organisations. In short, Eaton was a dedicated and dogged worker for penal reform. Through her work for the HLPR, Eaton was asserting 'a woman's right to be politically engaged'.⁵⁸

However, arguably her greatest achievement was in the international arena, work which received some recognition in the history of the penal reform movement by Gordon Rose.⁵⁹ In 1926 the HLPR decided to launch a campaign for an international charter of minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners and Eaton took charge of it. Her first step was to obtain the support of the congress of the Federation of League of Nations Societies, the representative body for pro-League of Nations groups in member countries. In 1927 she went to Berlin for the congress and duly obtained its backing for an international standard in prison conditions. Thereafter Eaton travelled to Geneva annually to attend the League of Nations Assembly and lobby for prison reform to be included on the agenda. Back home, she lobbied Lord Robert Cecil, president of the British League of Nations Union. Cecil later recalled Eaton's visits, 'ostensibly to ask his advice, but really to tell him what to do in Geneva'.⁶⁰ Eaton also secured a great deal of publicity for the HLPR campaign as well as the support of some MPs and the NCW. By January 1930, the League of Nations Council had at last added the subject of penal administration to its agenda and four years later, the proposed charter of minimum standards was formally recommended to member nations.⁶¹ Of course, in the context of the disintegration of the international authority of the League of Nations and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe, these victories were merely symbolic. Nevertheless, they provided the groundwork for the United Nations' standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners adopted in 1955.

Sadly, Eaton did not live to see this great victory. After the 1935 trip to Geneva, she became too ill to continue with the work and Margery Fry took over the annual lobby for the next three years. Together these two women must take much of the credit for placing prison conditions on the international agenda, and ultimately for improvements in at least some penal regimes and for some prisoners.

Conclusion

Gertrude Eaton died on 8 March 1940. While it is difficult to construct any accurate impression of a person from the kind of sources – such as press reports and pressure group minutes – which have formed the basis of this article, in this case one is left with the impression of someone who was especially determined and tenacious in pursuit of any cause about which she felt strongly. She also performed a great deal of unsung, routine administrative work on a myriad of committees, most of which are not even mentioned in this brief survey of her life. Importantly, Eaton was a lobbyist who thought deeply about the most suitable tactics to adopt in a campaign. She knew when to take the lead (as she did in her tax resistance), when to urge others to step forward (as in the SWM) and when to work co-operatively (as in the Howard League international campaign). Margery Fry, herself a consummate campaigner, summed up Eaton's lobbying style:

Year after year her well-known, stately figure appeared at Geneva, and there was little she did not know about the art of running to earth elusive delegates or uninterested officials and persuading, one might also say coercing, them into furthering her cause.⁶²

Many questions remain and some are probably not answerable. I am particularly intrigued by Eaton's relationship with her sisters, three of whom lived together only about a mile away from Gertrude herself. It is beneficial to see Eaton's political life as situated in overlapping networks of suffrage, music and penal reform. She had friends and acquaintances from a range of backgrounds and political persuasions, and as Morley and Stanley show in their study of Emily Wilding Davison, there is much value in researching the comrades of any woman who was active in the suffrage struggle.⁶³ It is possible that she moved away from her family's conservatism via the working relationships she formed with liberals and socialists such as Margery Fry, but equally she may have continued to combine an essentially conservative political outlook with feminism and her enthusiasm for human rights. Two things are certain: Gertrude Eaton put a lot of energy into her campaigning for any cause with which she identified and she achieved remarkable results.

Notes

1. Margery Fry, 'In Memoriam: Gertrude Eaton', *Howard Journal* V/4, (1940), 230.
2. A recent example is Lawrence M. Kaplan, 'E. Lilian Todd: Aviation Pioneer', *Women's History* 2/4 (2016), 29–34.
3. Elizabeth A. O'Donnell, 'Doing Good Work Quietly: The Life and Work of Teresa Merz (1879–1958) of Newcastle upon Tyne', *Women's History* 2/7 (2017), 4–12.
4. The following biographical information on Gertrude Eaton and her relatives derives from databases available on the *Find My Past* website.
5. Gordon Rose claims that she was born into a Quaker family, but baptism records shed doubt on that. Gordon Rose, *The Struggle for Penal Reform* (London, Stevens, 1961), 315.
6. Registers, AngloBoerWar.com [<https://www.angloboerwar.com/forum/17-memorials-and-monuments/3204-city-of-swanease-boer-war-memorial> accessed 12 Jun. 2018].
7. *Bath Chronicle*, 21 May 1938.
8. Her sister Edith also lived for 'a spell abroad', according to

- the *Bath Chronicle*, 19 Mar. 1938.
9. Rose, *Struggle for Penal Reform*, 315.
 10. Email to the author from Michael Mullen, archivist at the Royal College of Music.
 11. *The Vote*, 6 Aug. 1911.
 12. Eaton was editor of the RCM magazine and honorary secretary of its old students' association. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 Dec. 1911.
 13. Women's Library @ LSE catalogue [<https://twl-calm.library.lse.ac.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Persons&id=NA1145&pos=1> accessed 10 Jun. 2018].
 14. *Christian Science Monitor* (New York), 7 Jun. 1919.
 15. *Daily Mirror*, 3 Apr. 1914, mentions her as treasurer.
 16. *Musical Standard*, 22 Jul. 1911.
 17. *Votes for Women*, 7 Jul. 1911.
 18. Laura Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013).
 19. Royal College of Music Manuscript (hereafter RCM MS) 11134B.
 20. RCM MS 10883.
 21. RCM MS 10882.
 22. RCM MS 10883.
 23. Gertrude Eaton is listed as a subscriber to NUWSS funds.
 24. Mitzi Auchterlonie, *Conservative Suffragists: The Women's Vote and the Tory Party* (London, Tauris Academic, 2007), 90–3.
 25. *Ibid.*, Appendix III.
 26. *Common Cause*, 2 Jun. 1910.
 27. *Ibid.*, 1 Feb. 1910.
 28. *Ibid.*, 25 Aug. 1910.
 29. Jill Liddington, *Vanishing for the Vote: Suffrage, Citizenship and the Battle for the Census* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014), 266.
 30. Two other Eaton sisters, Annie and Kate, were recorded at the same address as Edith. All three sisters were living on their own means.
 31. *Common Cause*, 29 Jun. 1911.
 32. Liddington, *Vanishing for the Vote*, 66–7.
 33. *Common Cause*, 29 Jun. 1911. Emphasis in the original.
 34. *The Vote*, 5 Aug. 1911.
 35. *Surrey Advertiser*, 28 Jan. 1914; Anita Anand, *Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary* (London, Bloomsbury, 2015), 291–2.
 36. *Votes for Women*, 13 Dec. 1912.
 37. *Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 29 Jun. 1912.
 38. Women's Library (hereafter WL) 2/WTR/1/1, minute dated 4 Jul. 1912.
 39. Auchterlonie, *Conservative Suffragists*, 121–2.
 40. *Votes for Women*, 26 Jun. 1914.
 41. *Votes for Women*, 16 Jan. 1914.
 42. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini, *A Suffrage Reader* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 2000), 8.
 43. WL 2WTR/1, minutes of 27 Mar. 1914.
 44. *Manchester Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1913.
 45. See section below.
 46. Ann Morley with Liz Stanley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison* (London, Women's Press, 1988), 68.
 47. WL 2WTR/1/3, testimonial for Mrs Kineton Parkes; 2WTR/1, minutes 30 Mar. 1916.
 48. *Ibid.*, 17 Feb. 1917. See also *Common Cause*, 9 Feb. 1917 for public statement of the Consultative Committee, signed by Eaton on behalf of the WTRL.

49. *The Vote*, 19 Jul. 1918.
50. Fry, 'In Memoriam'.
51. Anne Logan, 'The Penal Reform League and its Feminist Roots', *Howard League for Penal Reform ECAN Bulletin*, 28 (2016), 6–11. Available at <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ECAN-Bulletin-Issue-28-February-2016.pdf> [accessed 19 Jun. 2018].
52. *The Vote*, 5 Aug. 1911. For St John's background and ideals, see Gordon Rose, 'Some influences on English Penal Reform', *Sociological Review*, 3/1, (1955), 25–46.
53. Fry, 'In Memoriam'.
54. Warwick University Modern Records Centre (WUMRC) MSS16C/6/P/6, PRL Annual Report, 1913.
55. Anne Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice: a Historical Perspective* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2008), 14.
56. According to *Common Cause*, 22 Jun. 1917, Edith Eaton represented the NUWW in a deputation to the local government minister, Lord Rhondda. She was a long-time editor of the NCW newspaper and served as vice-president of the National Council of Women in 1933.
57. Fry, 'In Memoriam'. Eaton seems to have become less involved in the SWM from the early 1920s onwards.
58. Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice*, 165.
59. Rose, *Struggle for Penal Reform*, Appendix IV. For a recent account of the campaign, see Anne Logan, *The Politics of Penal Reform: Margery Fry and the Howard League* (London, Routledge, 2018).
60. *Manchester Guardian*, 5 January 1936. Cecil may well have known Eaton from the CUWFA.
61. Logan, *Politics of Penal Reform*, 124.
62. Fry, 'In Memoriam'.
63. Morley and Stanley, *Emily Wilding Davison*, 69.

Ethel Smyth, Suffrage and Surrey: From Frimley Green to Hook Heath, Woking

Christopher Wiley

University of Surrey

On 2 May 1913, Emmeline Pankhurst – having recently been released from prison under the so-called 'Cat and Mouse' Act (Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill Health Act) – took refuge in Hook Heath in Surrey, at a house called Coign, belonging to Ethel Smyth. Three years previously, Smyth, when at the height of her success as a musical composer (she was the first, and for well over a century the only, female composer to have a work presented at New York's Metropolitan Opera), had promised service to the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Accordingly, her home had often been a site of suffragette activity. On this occasion, the police had followed Pankhurst all the way to Coign and surrounded the house, keeping watch in case she attempted to escape.¹ Pankhurst had to remain indoors and forbade Smyth from any contact with the officers, Smyth having suggested offering them umbrellas to shelter from the rain. Hiding in the bushes, their location was routinely given away by Smyth's affectionate dog. Over three weeks later on 26 May, Pankhurst, desperate for an end to being cooped up at Coign and frustrated that she was unable to engage with the suffragette movement, attempted to leave in order to make an appearance at the WSPU meeting at the London Pavilion that day. She sent for a car, but upon emerging from Smyth's house, she found herself to be, in her own words, 'in a weak state, much weaker than I had imagined ... I exhausted the last remnant of my strength and sank fainting in the arms of my friends'.² She was promptly arrested and was taken by the police to Bow Street police station.³ A famous photograph shows Pankhurst being rearrested by two detectives outside Coign; the house stands as an emblem of the convergence of Smyth's local presence and her national activism.

This article contributes to a greater understanding of Smyth and her music through the dual lenses of local history and women's history. It explores the intersections between her regional activity in the Frimley and Woking areas, her musical career, and her service to the suffragette campaign. By contextualising Smyth's inter/national activity, it illustrates

some of the ways in which the national women's suffrage movement was highly dependent on rural locations.

Dame Ethel Smyth (1858–1944), musician, author, keen sportsperson, and onetime leading suffragette, tends to be remembered by history primarily for her contribution to the profession of music composition. Yet, arguably, Smyth's most important contribution to history lay neither in music nor in literature, but in politics. Here she channelled the militancy and determination to succeed in a fiercely patriarchal environment that she had shown throughout her compositional career, foreshadowing the refusal to capitulate to circumstances beyond her control that was subsequently to lead her to develop a parallel career as a writer. Having attained success as an artist within a strikingly male-dominated field, she was to turn her attention to the national campaign for equality of the sexes, paving the way for her later literary activity as a polemicist, notably in her essay collection *Female Pipings in Eden* (1933) in which her feminist voice is most overtly expressed.

Smyth's musical achievements are remarkable, given that there was no tradition of women composers during her day. Her output includes six operas, produced in Continental Europe as well as in England and the USA, together with other large-scale works. These include her *Serenade in D* (1890), *Overture to Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra'* (1890), *Mass in D* (1891), *Concerto for Violin, Horn, and Orchestra* (1927), and her oratorio *The Prison* (1929–30), in addition to sundry vocal, chamber, and solo keyboard pieces. This work-list, and the performances Smyth's music received internationally during her lifetime, constitute an impressive output given that she was active at a time during which Britain did not nurture composers of the first rank (it had gained an unflattering reputation on the Continent as the 'Land ohne Musik'). This led Smyth to relocate to Germany to train in music composition at the Leipzig Conservatorium in 1877 and to remain there for over a decade before returning to her native country.

Operating within a fiercely male-dominated



*Pankhurst being arrested at Smyth's house
May 1913
Museum of London*

profession, Smyth faced significant prejudice on grounds of gender, which had lasting effects on the reception of her works. In his capacity as music critic, George Bernard Shaw repeatedly discussed Smyth's pieces in gendered terms. He famously remarked of a performance in 1892 that 'When E.M. Smyth's heroically brassy overture to [Shakespeare's] Antony and Cleopatra was finished, and the composer called to the platform, it was observed with stupefaction that all that tremendous noise had been made by a lady',⁴ and wrote to Smyth following the 1924 revival of her *Mass in D* that 'It was your music that cured me for ever of the old delusion that women could not do man's work in art and all other things'.⁵ J.A. Fuller Maitland's evaluation of Smyth's *Mass in D* in Grove's Dictionary, the standard English-language reference work in the discipline of music, was that 'The most striking thing about it was the entire absence of the qualities that are usually associated with feminine productions; throughout it was virile, masterly in construction and workmanship'.⁶ This appraisal was reproduced near-verbatim in subsequent editions and hence retained currency for some fifty years. Even in the case of her earliest mature works such as her *Violin Sonata* (1887), Smyth retrospectively recalled finding that 'the critics unanimously said it was devoid of feminine charm and therefore unworthy [of] a woman – the good old remark I was so often to hear again'.⁷ Elsewhere, she related Brahms's belief that her 'so-called Smyth manuscripts' were obviously the work of a male composer, remarking that 'I fancy nothing would have induced him to believe that women might, could, would, or should ever be taken seriously'.⁸

In her later years, Smyth experienced hearing problems sufficiently severe to have compromised her ability to sustain her career as composer, musician, and conductor. Rather

than admit defeat, with inimitable resilience she instead turned her attentions increasingly to developing a secondary career as a writer, publishing a total of ten books in the last twenty-five years of her life. Several offer an unbroken series of chronological memoirs;⁹ others represent essay collections comprising a judicious mix of autobiographical episodes, biographical sketches, and polemics on the music profession and the status of women within it.¹⁰ Thus Smyth continued to raise awareness of her music, as well as of the obstacles she had encountered as a female composer, not through writing new music but by using her literary works to discuss her experiences of the closed coterie of the elite musical patriarchy to whom she referred variously by names such as the Machine, the Inner Circle, the Group, and the Elders.

Smyth's Surrey residences

Smyth's Surrey connections both influenced her music and provided the local dimension to her suffrage activism. Her earliest years were spent at Sidcup Place, Sidcup, then part of Kent but now part of Greater London. Thereafter, excepting her relocation to Germany for twelve years from 1877 onwards, her life may be entirely accounted for in the three properties in which she resided in the county of Surrey: Frimhurst followed by One Oak, both in the area now known as Surrey Heath; and Coign in Hook Heath, near Woking.

Frimhurst, Frimley Green

In 1867, Smyth's family moved from Sidcup to Frimhurst, Frimley Green, a house set in several acres of farmland. The relocation was prompted by the circumstances of Smyth's father John H. Smyth, a British military officer who had served much of his career in India. In her earliest published book of memoirs, *Impressions that Remained* (1919), Smyth described Frimley as 'originally a few straggling cottages on the verge of a big stretch of heather-land', prior to the establishment of the garrison at Aldershot; at their end, she recalled that it remained little more than 'a few houses grouped about a village green'.¹¹ The military connection was crucial to Smyth's formative musical training, since her first formal tutor, Alexander Ewing, composer of the hymn 'Jerusalem the Golden', had been stationed in Aldershot as a member of the Army Service Corps. Initially, Smyth's family rented Frimhurst, before buying it upon her father's discharge from the British army with a generous pension in 1872. He subsequently enlarged the grounds, purchasing land from the Basingstoke Canal Navigation company in 1874, and developed an interest in farming thereafter, keeping cows, chickens, and more horses as well as growing crops.¹² Smyth described him as somebody who 'threw himself into count[r]y work, with an energy and thoroughness which has remained a tradition in that part of Surrey'.¹³

Smyth's first biographer, Christopher St John, was of the opinion that she held Sidcup Place to be the 'more attractive' of her two childhood homes and the one that she liked better.¹⁴ Nonetheless, it was Frimhurst that received more extensive discussion in her autobiographical writing, even if she considered it to be a 'commonplace but very comfortable house' as against her 'poetical' memory of Sidcup.¹⁵ She described Frimhurst's distinctive entrance where the railway passes under the canal, the site where she had recklessly

thrown stones at passing trains as a child until complaints from the South-Western Railway company prompted her father to refer the matter to the police, who drew his attention to the young perpetrator.

Upon her move to Continental Europe, Frimhurst remained Smyth's permanent base. She would return periodically, in accordance with the agreement made with her father, who had understandably been extremely reluctant to allow his daughter to move to Germany to train. He capitulated only following a campaign of domestic disobedience on Smyth's part designed to 'make life at home so intolerable that they would have to let me go for their own sakes'.¹⁶ She was subsequently to make explicit the parallel between this period in her childhood and the militant deeds of the suffragettes, writing that she 'quite deliberately adopted the methods used years afterwards in political warfare by other women, who, having plumbed the depths of masculine prejudice, came to see this was the only road to victory'.¹⁷ Returning there as an adult, Smyth found the everyday distractions of family life at Frimhurst uncondusive to her work as a composer, concluding that 'unless my musician's soul was to be lost I must go back to Germany ... I now knew, after giving it a long patient trial, that to live an artist's life at Frimhurst was an impossibility'.¹⁸ Nonetheless, it was during this time that Smyth made influential friends in the local area who were to provide invaluable support for her musical career on the national stage, including Empress Eugénie, the exiled widow of Napoleon III of France, who resided at Farnborough Hill, a large house in neighbouring Farnborough. Through the Empress, whom Smyth described as 'the most wonderful friend to me and mine', the composer came to the attention of Queen Victoria on the Balmoral estate in October 1891.¹⁹ She performed for her extracts from her Mass in D at the piano, 'after the manner of composers, which means singing the chorus as well as the solo parts, and trumpeting forth orchestral effects as best you can'.²⁰ The Empress facilitated the première of Smyth's Mass as well as her first opera, *Fantasio* (1892–4), for which she identified an interested theatre as well as offering to fund the production. Smyth also maintained cordial relations with another of England's most illustrious composers of the period, Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan renown), with whom she had much in common. Sullivan's family had lived in the neighbouring town of Camberley during his childhood, since his father was bandmaster at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, although they had moved out of the area shortly before Smyth was born. Smyth made Sullivan's acquaintance only in 1890, when both were adults. They enjoyed reminiscing about their respective childhoods in the area, as well as exchanging views on one another's compositions. Indeed, Sullivan appears to have been one of the few professional musicians from whom Smyth graciously accepted constructive criticism, and he evidently admired her work, writing that 'I hope you are beginning a brilliant and dignified musical career'.²¹

One Oak, Frimley

Frimhurst was sold following the death in 1894 of Smyth's father. Her mother had died three years previously, all of her five sisters were married and her surviving brother had entered the service of the British army. Like his father before him, was stationed in India. Determining to find a

house to live on her own, Smyth chose to remain in the area, partly owing to the strong connections she had made there such as her burgeoning friendship with the Empress Eugénie. Later that same year, she and her dog Marco moved to One Oak in Frimley, a sixteenth-century cottage, located on the Portsmouth Road. Smyth discussed One Oak several times in her memoirs: firstly in an autobiographical essay in *Streaks of Life* (1921), then briefly in the epilogue to *As Time Went On...* (1936) – the second instalment of her chronological memoirs – and finally, in the opening chapter of its successor, *What Happened Next* (1940). While she described the property as 'an ideal eight-roomed cottage in our old neighbourhood, surrounded by fields and woods', evidently much renovation had been in order.²² Smyth reported that 'The last occupants of the two living rooms [at the front] had been a pony and a donkey' and that 'the installation of conveniences not insisted on by four-footed tenants' was sorely needed.²³ She related how the drinking water came from a well, and that the standards of cleanliness and the 'practically non-existent' sanitation left much to be desired.²⁴ After two years' work transforming her house, with friends pitching in to help, it became to Smyth 'the dwelling one had dreamed of but never expected to find'.²⁵ Not knowing its real name, she christened it 'One Oak', because 'there was one special oak-tree standing up on a mound just in front of the house ... regardless of the fact that there were other obscure oak-trees all along the fifty yards or so of frontage'.²⁶

During Smyth's residence, One Oak was host to such celebrated figures of the day as Emmeline Pankhurst and George Bernard Shaw, as well as Thomas Beecham, the conductor and impresario, a staunch musical ally of Smyth's, whom she was later to immortalise in a biographical sketch in her book *Beecham and Pharaoh* (1935).²⁷ Plans for the blue plaque that now commemorates the building's famous former resident may be traced back to 1969 (one to Sir Arthur Sullivan was planned to be erected at the same time).²⁸ It was some years later before it finally appeared, however, and the dates it displays (1895–1908) are not quite correct since Smyth was still living there in 1910 at the time of her earliest suffragette activity.

Coign, Hook Heath, Woking

The year 1910 saw Smyth's pledge to the 'Votes for Women' campaign and also her move away from Frimley to settle in Hook Heath, near Woking, where she remained until her death in 1944. The lease at One Oak was due to expire and Smyth's landlady had informed her that, since she intended to modernise and extend the property, the quarterly rent would be increasing (unless she was prepared to pay for the renovations herself).²⁹ Funds to purchase and develop a plot of land had been donated to Smyth by the reclusive American heiress, Mary Dodge, an important patron who provided her with an annual stipend and financially underwrote performances of a number of her works. These included the English stage première of her latest opera, *The Wreckers*, at His Majesty's Theatre in 1909. Smyth's unpublished memoir, *A Fresh Start*, relates that while discussing the question of whether to stay at One Oak, Dodge had suggested to her that 'I ought to have a house of my own ... near enough to London to suit me, and close to a good golf course'.³⁰ For this reason, Smyth's new house, which 'owing to its place on the map' was already called 'Coign', was built on Hook Heath Road adjacent to Woking Golf Club.³¹ As

a passionate sportswoman throughout her life, Smyth had been elected as a member two years prior to her move. She referred to the location as 'a derelict corner of Hook Health, too small for the requirements of rich businessmen who build humble-looking yet sumptuous villas round about suburban golf links'.³² Sylvia Pankhurst was to describe the house as 'a pleasant, modern cottage, built to [Smyth's] own fancy'.³³ Smyth herself retailed that she 'drew little plans of the rooms, each carefully fitted with spaces for doors and windows to suit my hundred pounds' worth of furniture'.³⁴ Smyth's memoirs express her frustration at the architect, Arthur Messer, for having had the house built parallel to the road rather than at an angle to it as she had specifically requested. She feared that the field to the south would one day be developed and that she would consequently lose the sunlight. Subsequent years revealed that her fears were not unfounded.³⁵

Smyth, Surrey, and Emmeline Pankhurst

As has been seen, Coign frequently played host to suffragettes, not least Emmeline Pankhurst herself, during Smyth's period of service to the movement. How had Smyth risen to such prominence within the WSPU that the fate of its charismatic leader lay at her doorstep in 1913? The chain of events had been set in motion three years earlier, when Lady Constance Lytton – who was to court scandal by adopting the persona of the lowly seamstress 'Jane Warton' and thereby drawing attention to the treatment received by working-class suffragettes in prison – specifically targeted high-profile, card-carrying women in a bid to recruit them to the women's suffrage cause.³⁶ Smyth, having recently received the first of her honorary doctorates and being an 'old acquaintance' of Lytton's, was naturally on her list.³⁷ Smyth's initial reaction had been not to involve herself in politics – she even wrote a letter, never sent, in response to Lytton politely turning her down on the grounds that any such activism on her part would inevitably be at the expense of her music. By her own retrospective admission, she 'knew little and cared less about the Suffrage'.³⁸ Indeed, she had left England two years earlier to distance herself from the 'Votes for Women' campaign.³⁹ However, following discussion with the Austrian novelist Hermann Bahr, during which he expressed surprise that she had not yet joined the suffragettes, her stance changed. She consented to attend a WSPU meeting with Lady Muriel de la Warr, a friend whom she had known in her childhood when they played in the same cricket team, and who had found her the plot of land on which Coign was built.⁴⁰ Neither Smyth nor Pankhurst received the other warmly on first impression, but Smyth's stance softened once Pankhurst commenced her powerful speech. Less than a fortnight later, in a letter dated 15 September 1910, Smyth wrote to Pankhurst, offering her services to the suffragette cause, and she became, in her words, 'swept into the hottest heart of the fight for the Vote'.⁴¹ As she wrote over fifteen years after the fact, in *A Final Burning of Boats* (1928):

In the autumn of 1911 [*recte*: 1910] I realised for the first time what 'Votes for Women' meant, and it seemed to me that all self-respecting women ... were called upon to take action. Nothing is less compatible with musical creation than politics of any kind, and the particularly devastating effect of a struggle such as the militants were

engaged in ... needs no stressing. There was only one thing to be done; it would spell ruin to the painfully sown little musical crop, but other women were giving life itself. . . . I determined to devote two years of my life to the Cause, and afterwards return to my own job.⁴²

Thereafter, Smyth and Pankhurst developed an especially close friendship, the exact nature of which has never been definitively established. The possibility that it was a lesbian relationship has been repeatedly suggested, although the evidence is circumstantial.⁴³ All the same, the emergence of what Smyth herself described as 'the deepest and closest of friendships' with the person she somewhat presumptuously addressed as her 'darling Em' caused eyebrows to raise sufficiently that Pankhurst's daughters Christabel and Sylvia viewed her with some suspicion.⁴⁴ Sylvia's biography of her mother described her as 'entirely subjugated by Mrs. Pankhurst, panting with joy and excitement when she could manage to inveigle her idol to her cottage near Woking'.⁴⁵ Owing partly to the strength of her relationship with Emmeline Pankhurst and partly to the fervent enthusiasm with which Smyth typically embraced new ventures, her previous ambivalence to the suffragette movement dramatically gave way as she rose to become a leading figure in the campaign. She wore the trademark colours of violet, white, and green incongruously as part of her everyday attire, and headed up processions including the Musicians' section of the great Suffrage procession in 1911.⁴⁶ She wrote articles for women's suffrage and mainstream publications,⁴⁷ and addressed rallies such as the WSPU meeting at the Pavilion in March 1912, where she shared the stage with a number of key figures in the movement. Smyth's activities had local as well as inter/national ramifications; for instance, she chaired a speech delivered by Pankhurst in Woking on the evening of 2 October 1911 and attempted to ghost-write one of the many articles that had been solicited from her by newspapers in the USA and elsewhere.⁴⁸

Pankhurst became a frequent visitor to Coign. It was on the heath outside the house – on what is now probably Woking Golf Club's thirteenth fairway – that Smyth attempted to teach her to throw stones to hit their target.⁴⁹ This was in preparation for the orchestrated window-smashing campaign that famously took place across the West End of London on 4 March 1912 in protest against Prime Minister H.H. Asquith's continued prevarication over granting women the vote. Smyth retrospectively recalled that (unlike her) 'Mrs Pankhurst was not a cricketer' and exhibited little skill in aiming and throwing objects.⁵⁰ Elsewhere she told the story about how, during Pankhurst's practice session with her, 'the first stone flew backwards out of her hand, narrowly missing my dog'.⁵¹ Participating in the co-ordinated campaign herself, Smyth elected to target the private Berkeley Square home of the anti-Suffragist colonial secretary, Lewis Harcourt, having taken exception to a remark he had made to the extent that if all women were as pretty and wise as his own wife then he would grant them the vote with immediacy. Smyth was arrested that evening, along with scores of other suffragettes, and served a gaol sentence in Holloway Prison, London, where she was accommodated in the cell adjacent to Pankhurst. Here she described herself, strangely, as being 'really very happy'.⁵² The cell doors were often left unlocked, enabling the suffragettes to entertain one another. This allowed Smyth – prisoner

number 15534, sentenced to two months,⁵³ of which she served approximately half of that time before being released – to take afternoon tea with Pankhurst.

It was not Smyth's only brush with the authorities. She had previously participated in the boycott of the 1911 Census, organised by the Women's Freedom League (WFL) and supported by the WSPU, writing 'No vote no census' on the schedule she submitted. In the wake of the aforementioned window-smashing campaign, she was summoned as a witness for the defence at Emmeline Pankhurst's trial, testifying that she had not been incited to violence.⁵⁴ She was arrested again in July 1912, following an aborted arson attack (an important milestone for the movement, in that it was the earliest attempt at a serious crime of this nature) on Harcourt's country retreat, Nuneham House, in Oxfordshire. The two perpetrators had been discovered prior to carrying out the act, but only one of the pair had been caught. A card containing the text of Smyth's 'The March of the Women' was recovered at the scene and a witness recalled a name that sounded like 'Smyth' being mentioned. Since she had targeted Harcourt's London residence just a few months previously, the police presumed Smyth to have been the perpetrator and brought her to Oxford for questioning. This caused her to miss the day's business meetings and not to return to Woking until the small hours despite having an alibi, the charge against her eventually being dismissed only on the grounds of 'failure to identify'.⁵⁵ She was to complain vociferously in the press afterwards about the 'feble-minded guesswork' and general incompetence of the police.⁵⁶ Her arrest made international headlines, having been reported in the *New York Times*.⁵⁷ Sylvia Pankhurst retold the story in *The Suffragette Movement*, without directly naming the culprit, Norah Smyth, her close ally and a key member of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes, who was a distant relative of Ethel's.⁵⁸

Smyth's roots in Woking and the surrounding area brought her into contact with other key figures of women's suffrage, both at the time and subsequently. She described her long-standing friend, the Empress Eugénie, as an 'ardent suffragist ... utterly bowled over' by Pankhurst.⁵⁹ Mary Dodge was similarly sympathetic to the cause and provided Pankhurst with a car after learning of Smyth's having joined the WSPU.⁶⁰ Smyth regarded locally based non-militant Lady Betty Balfour as 'my neighbour and great friend',⁶¹ and she was sufficiently well-acquainted with both her and Constance Lytton as to sit for their brother, the artist Neville Lytton, for the famous 1936 portrait of her now held by the Royal College of Music. In 1923, Smyth was to befriend the garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, who had created large banners for the local branches of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in nearby Godalming and Guildford (the former is still on display in the town's museum). Virginia Woolf, with whom Smyth developed a strong friendship in the 1930s, was another who had supported women's suffrage, albeit working behind the scenes.⁶²

Notwithstanding Smyth's belief that the pursuit of political activism would necessitate sacrificing her art, she continued to bring her works before the public during her suffragette years. Emmeline, Christabel, and Sylvia Pankhurst were all present at a concert of her music given at the Queen's Hall by the London Symphony Orchestra and Crystal Palace Choir on 29 June 1911, conducted by the composer.⁶³ Some negative press comments on this event prompted a published defence by Emily Wilding Davison, the suffragette best known

for having died tragically two years later following a collision with King George V's horse at the Epsom Derby.⁶⁴ Moreover, while Smyth claimed that 'an atmosphere of fierce political warfare is not one in which the Muses can be successfully wooed', she nonetheless continued to write music during this period.⁶⁵ As Elizabeth Wood has discussed, her politics are reflected in her contemporaneous suffrage works, which include *Hey Nonny No* (1910), the three *Songs of Sunrise* (1910), the final movement of her String Quartet (1912–13), her songs 'On the Road' and 'Possession' from *Three Songs* (1913), and *The Boatswain's Mate* (1913–14).⁶⁶ Rachel Lumsden has explored the personal and political significance of 'Possession' through analytically investigating its relationship to Smyth's wider musical and literary output, whilst my own forthcoming study of *The Boatswain's Mate* re-evaluates the opera's complex relationship to feminism via various lines of enquiry.⁶⁷ In some instances, the resonances of Smyth's suffrage activity were apparent in the works' dedications, including 'Possession', dedicated to E.P. (Emmeline Pankhurst), and 'On the Road', dedicated to Pankhurst's daughter Christabel. In others, it was made manifest in the synopses and song texts, such as the first two *Songs of Sunrise*, 'Laggard Dawn' and '1910', the former obliquely concerning the plight of the suffragettes and the latter an operetta-style re-enactment of the events of so-called Black Friday (18 November) of the titular year.

But it was the last of the *Songs of Sunrise*, 'The March of the Women', based on an Abruzzi folk melody, that reflected Smyth's newfound political stance more than any other. Its rousing call-to-arms text had been added to Smyth's music by suffragette Cicely Hamilton, co-author (together with Smyth's biographer Christopher St John) of the play *How the Vote was Won*.⁶⁸ John Masefield, G.K. Chesterton, and John Galsworthy had all previously been approached by Smyth and declined the task.⁶⁹ Formally presented to Pankhurst at a WSPU meeting in January 1911 and reciprocally leading to its composer's being ceremoniously presented with a conductor's baton with a gold band at the Royal Albert Hall two months later, the piece soon became adopted as the suffragette anthem, all members being required to commit it to memory. It was this tune that the suffragettes sung loudly at rallies and on demonstrations, as well as to bolster morale during arrests, imprisonment and periods of hunger striking. On one occasion, Smyth ran past the porter into Prime Minister Asquith's residence at No. 10 Downing Street, up the stairs and into the drawing-room, banging out the tune on the piano while the Cabinet was in session.⁷⁰ On another, Pankhurst wrote to Smyth to say that 'during sleepless nights I sang the "March [of the Women]" and "Laggard Dawn" in such a queer cracked voice' to console herself.⁷¹ The ideological position embodied by 'The March of the Women' spilled over into other works as well. It is quoted in 'On the Road', most notably at the end of the song, and in the Overture to *The Boatswain's Mate*, where it appears alongside '1910', most unconventionally in that the movement therefore has no direct musical relationship to the remainder of the opera. Wood has suggested that Smyth, who wrote the libretto of *The Boatswain's Mate* as well as the music, may have even modelled its strong-minded, independent heroine, Mrs Waters, on Pankhurst herself.⁷²

Smyth conducted all manner of performances of 'The March of the Women', at occasions ranging from private WSPU meetings, to concerts, to satirical plays such as Laurence Housman's *Alice in Ganderland*,⁷³ to large-scale suffrage

demonstrations. She famously attempted to co-ordinate an act of singing during her time in Holloway Prison, her arm thrust between the bars of her cell window, frantically using her toothbrush as a makeshift baton in a bid to keep the suffragettes exercising in the yard below in time with one another, as Thomas Beecham observed during a visit to the composer.⁷⁴ Indeed, Smyth's last public act of service to the suffragettes came on 6 March 1930, when, wearing her usual doctoral robes, she conducted the Metropolitan Police Band and Chorus in front of a crowd of thousands in a performance of 'The March of the Women' at the unveiling of the memorial statue of Emmeline Pankhurst at Victoria Tower Gardens, London, overlooked by the Houses of Parliament. A few years later, she was to publish an extensive biographical sketch in *Female Pipings in Eden* of her dear friend, with whom she had fallen out most abruptly in 1921 over some strong criticisms she had expressed of Christabel in their correspondence, never to reconcile.⁷⁵

'Ethel, Duchess of Woking'

We have it on the authority of Vera Brittain, the writer and pacifist, that Smyth once expressed 'on a public platform that the title she would have preferred to any other was "Ethel, Duchess of Woking"'.⁷⁶ Smyth played an important role at the forefront of the cultural and sporting life of the local area. The latter, in turn, reciprocally influenced her work. By her own testimony, she took inspiration from Woking and Hook Heath in her art, writing of her operas that 'my object is to set life to music as I myself have seen and overheard it, in trains, in buses, in my own village, [and] on my own golf course'.⁷⁷ Smyth's interest in golf was kindled in her childhood and, as her biographer St John noted, 'grew more inordinate' in the period following the death in 1908 of Henry Brewster,⁷⁸ Smyth's long-standing friend (she categorically stated that 'we were

not lovers'⁷⁹) and the librettist for her first three operas. It is surely no coincidence that this was also the year in which she was elected to membership of Woking Golf Club.⁸⁰ Some years later, she appeared on a group photo of Woking Ladies' Golf Club, taken on 9 May 1928.⁸¹ Vera Brittain related that Smyth considered the Woking golf course to be 'her individual kingdom';⁸² Such was her love of the sport that, at her request, her ashes were scattered on woodland in its vicinity.

Around 1913, golf clubs had become a specific target nationally of attacks from the suffragettes, who had set fire to buildings and destroyed parts of the greens. Woking Golf Club was sufficiently fearful of damage to its property that one of its members, Mrs H.L. Strachan, took it upon herself directly to telephone Emmeline Pankhurst, with whom she was friends.⁸³ She subsequently reported that during 'earnest' conversation, Pankhurst had told her that 'Woking [Golf Club] has owed its immunity to several prominent Suffragettes being on the list of members & at the head of them D^r Ethel Smyth – !!! [sic] ... & I gather from [Pankhurst] that the Destroying Angel has passed over us'.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the Ladies' Committee offered money towards the protection of the golf course and any damage that might be caused, and as a deterrent, the suffragettes who were members of the club were held personally accountable and threatened with expulsion were it ever to be attacked.⁸⁵ In the event, no such incident ever took place.⁸⁶

Smyth's local activities were not restricted to sport.

Reporting on her death, the *Woking News & Mail* noted that 'she was a familiar figure in the town, and those associated with the musical life of the district will especially regret the passing of one who did much, by her brilliant attainments and influential patronage, to bring good music within the reach of local people'.⁸⁷ She was a long-standing patron of Woking Musical Society, being particularly active in the 1920s, when she conducted the choir and orchestra.⁸⁸ Friends and residents in Woking contributed to a fund to offset the considerable costs of her participation in a concert featuring her music in Berlin in December 1928, at which she became the first woman to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.⁸⁹ She was also one of the six signatories of the letter from Woking Musical Society proposing a presentation fund for Patrick H. White, the founder and honorary conductor of the Society, following his retirement.⁹⁰

Fellow Woking-based musician Adelina de Lara (1872–1961) the world-renowned concert pianist, composer, recording artist, teacher, writer, broadcaster, and pupil of Clara Schumann, counted Smyth among her 'closest friends'.⁹¹ At a more modest stage in de Lara's career, Smyth had written to the local papers by way of promoting her publicly, describing her piano-playing as possessing

a bigness, a simplicity, a mastery, an utterly musical reading ... The blessed respect for her art ... reveals itself at every turn ... the fine rich touch, ... the beauty, the ease, the smoothness, the command of style.⁹²

Smyth's active promotion of a junior contemporary was especially significant given that her published writings were in general remarkably reticent on the whole issue of female composers other than herself.⁹³ She and de Lara had briefly been members of the Society of Women Musicians (SWM) shortly after it was founded in 1911, during Smyth's period in the service of the suffragette movement. Having heard her play on multiple occasions over the years, Smyth wrote again to the papers to urge the public to support a benefit concert for de Lara in 1940.⁹⁴ De Lara's career trajectory, indeed, mirrored Smyth's in that she similarly turned to autobiography later in life, publishing *Finale* – which includes a chapter partly on Smyth – in 1955, one year after retiring from performing professionally in public at the age of 82.⁹⁵ De Lara was reciprocally to promote Smyth's output, performing works including her Violin Sonata in the local area, for instance at a concert in Woking organised by Betty Balfour.⁹⁶ She co-organised an orchestral concert in 1936 that included Smyth's works, believed to have been the last time that Smyth, then approaching her eighties and profoundly deaf, conducted publicly in Woking.⁹⁷

Posthumous Commemorations

When Smyth died on 8 May 1944, Adelina de Lara was again at the forefront of the senior composer's remembrances in their shared town of residence. For the *Woking News & Mail* she wrote an 'Appreciation' of Smyth, her 'valued friend and patron', of whom she generously said that 'everyone knows she was the greatest woman musician in the world, an erudite authoress and profound scholar'.⁹⁸ She organised a memorial concert to her in Woking, featuring acclaimed musicians including herself and the composer Roger Quilter.⁹⁹ In Frimley, Smyth's brother Robert (Bob) Smyth was the instigator in 1946

of a tablet to be inscribed 'In memory of ETHEL SMYTH. D.B.E., Mus.Doc., 1858–1944' to be mounted in the parish church of St Peter's, Frimley, where her parents and her brother John are buried.¹⁰⁰ It was opposite the pulpit, on the south wall, that the tablet was erected, where it remains adjacent to one to her father. Slightly further afield, a memorial service was held for Smyth at the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, City of Westminster, London on 5 June 1944, at which the first movement of her String Quartet and the soprano solo of the 'Benedictus' from her Mass in D were performed.¹⁰¹

Smyth's service to the suffragette movement, although comparatively brief, has created a lasting impact that has kept her memory alive in mainstream historical narratives to the extent that it has recently nurtured substantial interest in her music as well. While the significant challenge she posed throughout her career to the stranglehold of the (musical) patriarchy may have contributed negatively to the reception of her works in her own day, ironically it may be this same resistance to inequality of the sexes on Smyth's part, in a different context, that has led to a proliferation of performances of her music in the current centenary year. For it is only through considering her compositional output alongside the sociocultural obstacles that inhibited her progress at every turn, as well as the remarkable strategies by which she sought to overcome them, that her inspirational achievements as a path-breaking female artist may fully be appreciated.

Notes

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22. Smyth, 'A Fresh Start and Two Portraits', *Streaks of Life*, 69–92, at 69.
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24. Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 6–7.
25. Smyth, *As Time Went On...*, 284.
26. Smyth, 'A Fresh Start and Two Portraits', 69.
27. Smyth, 'Thomas Beecham (Fantasia in B# major)', *Beecham and Pharaoh*, 1–75.
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‘Here indeed one can say this life has been lived abundantly’: The life and political career of Rose Lamartine Yates

Alexandra Hughes-Johnson

University of Oxford

In the autumn of 1954, following the death of Rose Lamartine Yates, the South London press was filled with tributes to a ‘famous feminist’ and ‘Wimbledon suffragette.’¹ Since then, sixty-four years after her death, Rose Lamartine Yates – a woman who was the backbone of the Wimbledon WSPU, founder of the war-time suffrage organisation The Suffragettes of the WSPU, London County Councillor between 1919 and 1922 and one of the ‘prime movers’ behind the formation of the Women’s Record House – is a woman who has remained predominantly in the shadows of history.²

The centenary of women’s suffrage, however, has meant that interest in the women’s suffrage movement and its legacy has reached the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. Local suffrage pioneers are being recognised and celebrated to a remarkable degree. On 8 March 2018, as part of a programme to identify and commemorate ordinary local people who made extraordinary contributions in their local areas, The Suffrage Pioneers Project identified Rose as one of their one hundred Suffrage Pioneers. In Wimbledon, The John Innes Society and The Wimbledon Society have led commemorative tributes to her. The Wimbledon Society featured Rose and her ‘Holloway Brooch’ in an exhibition at Wimbledon Museum. The John Innes Society staged a suffragette garden party in the grounds of her former home, Dorset Hall, and planted a rosebush in her honour. Furthermore, in October and November 2018, Rose Lamartine Yates will take centre stage in *The Rebellious Women of Wimbledon*, a theatre production that focuses on her and on the local suffrage campaign in Wimbledon.³ Nevertheless, much of the focus prior to, and during, the centenary has remained on her pre-war suffrage activism and connections to the elusive Emily Wilding Davison.⁴ Accordingly, this article seeks to build on the initial work of Elizabeth Crawford, Gail Cameron, Gillian Hawtin, Ann Morley and Liz Stanley to construct a detailed and complex picture of Rose’s life and political career, demonstrating that her activism, influence and legacy extended far beyond her pre-war work for women’s suffrage.⁵

Through the analysis of Rose Lamartine Yates’s personal papers, in tandem with a range of regional, national and suffrage publications, this article will critically examine her life, legacy and political career. The article will take a biographical approach that uses Rose’s life as a lens through which to analyse critically the contemporary society in which she lived and the forces that shaped her decisions and life choices. By using individual lives and stories to re-examine particular societies, institutions and social and cultural movements, Barbra Caine suggests that biography can occupy a more ‘central ground’ by shedding new light onto different historical periods and ‘bring[ing] individuals and groups who had previously been ignored into the framework of historical analysis.’⁶ Likewise, Sandra Holton argues that ‘personal history’ and the analysis of the daily lives of a set of individuals or a ‘reduction in focus to a single community, family or individual’ can result in the construction of ‘fresh narratives of the suffrage movement.’⁷

Accordingly, this article not only seeks to make a significant contribution to our understanding of Rose’s suffrage activism prior to 1918, but also her roles and achievements as a London County Councilor and suffrage memorialiser. By exploring the connections between her suffrage campaigning and post-war activities, the article will consider Pat Thane’s suggestion that the possession of the vote gave many women ‘a feeling of legitimacy in public life, of their right to promote causes important to them.’⁸

Rose Lamartine Yates’ journey into suffrage

Rose Emma Janau was born of French parentage on 23 February 1875 at 33 Dalrymple Road, Lambeth, London, the youngest of three children.⁹ Both her parents, Elphege Bertoni Victor (b.1847), a teacher of foreign languages, and Marie Pauline (b.1841) were born in France but later became naturalised British subjects. Rose received a wide-ranging and comprehensive education – one that would have rivalled any man’s during the Victorian era. She was schooled at Clapham and Truro High Schools and travelled to Kassel and the Sorbonne to study at the University of Paris.¹⁰

In October 1896, Rose entered Royal Holloway College to study Modern Languages and Philology and resided there for three years. Unfortunately she did not write very much at all about her adolescent years, nor her time spent at Royal Holloway. In fact, the only archival document that addresses these periods is a speech written in 1908, entitled ‘How I became a suffragist.’¹¹ This is a particularly insightful document because in it, Rose details how different experiences and observations in her life shaped her as a woman and as a political activist. She reveals that it was only in adult life that she became aware of any injustices that women suffered. During her early life she stated that ‘it never occurred to me that [women] [were] considered by the world as less than [men].’¹² She suggested that it was her mother that bred into her the ‘instinct that [a] trained and competent woman was no different from [a] trained and competent man.’¹³ However, Rose suggested that it was not just her mother who showed her that women could more than compare with men. Her fellow Royal Holloway students, whom she described as having ‘more than average talent and capacity’, were also responsible for forming this notion. She stated that ‘it was my good fortune in school and college life to mingle with women who could compare, or more than compare with their masculine colleagues.’¹⁴

There was a break in her college education as she left the institution before her final year, due to health problems.¹⁵ This ‘breakdown’ (as Rose’s close friend and WSPU drum major, Mary Leigh described it in her short, unpublished biography) was described as an attack on Rose’s sight and spine.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Rose was determined not be defeated by this illness and proceeded, just one year later, to pass the Oxford Final Honours Examination (then the highest examination that was open to women at Oxford University).¹⁷ However, although



Rose Lamartine Yates
(pictured bottom left) with
friends in her study at Royal
Holloway.
By kind permission, Royal
Holloway, University of
London

women were allowed to sit the examination, they were not awarded their degree. It was not until 1920 that Oxford allowed women to receive any form of degree.¹⁸

In 1898, with the full approval of her parents, Rose began a courtship with solicitor and family friend, Thomas Lamartine Yates. The couple married in 1900 in Stoke d'Abernon in Surrey. During the first years of their marriage, they were both 'passionate cyclists' who toured throughout Europe with the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC).¹⁹ Rose became a leading figure within the reform party, becoming the first female member to be elected to the CTC's council in 1907. It was during this time, when Rose stood for election to the CTC's council, that she made the statement that she 'was not a suffragette'.²⁰ However, as this statement was made prior to her election to the club's national council, it would seem that Rose was attempting to reassure her fellow members, (who were predominantly male), that she was committed to her role on the national council. Nevertheless, just a year later, Rose wrote that although it was 'an honest statement' it was at the same time 'untrue'.²¹ She stated that 'looking into the matter seriously I find I have never been anything else, therefore, I never really became a suffragist, I was born one and the tale I have to tell is rather how I became to realise I was and must remain one at whatever the personal cost'.²²

Daily life and militancy within the Wimbledon WSPU

Rose joined the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU soon after its foundation in January 1909 and immediately became a member of the Wimbledon WSPU committee. However, it was February 1909 that was said, by Mary Leigh, to be the date on which 'a new life was to open out for Rose,' for on the 22nd of that month (the eve of Rose's birthday) she attended a public meeting held in Wimbledon where Christabel Pankhurst was the chief speaker.²³ During the meeting Rose felt a 'definite call'

and on the way home from the meeting she asked her husband 'if he could give her the birthday present she so urgently desired ... a month in Holloway gaol for the cause'.²⁴ Tom agreed and when they arrived home, together they worded the telegram that offered Rose to the WSPU for the next deputation.

On 24 February 1909 Rose attended a deputation, led by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, from Caxton Hall to the House of Commons, in order to present a petition under the Bill of Rights to the Prime Minister.²⁵ When she attempted to deliver the petition Rose was seized by police officers, arrested and charged with 'obstructing the police in the execution of their duty'.²⁶ She was held at Cannon Row police station for three hours until she was released on bail. The following morning Rose's 'mock trial' took place at Bow Street Court.²⁷ Rose described it in this way because she argued that 'the charge was in fact the verdict'.²⁸ From the dock, Rose spoke about the deputation, arguing that it was her 'constitutional right' to take part and that it was the police that obstructed the suffragettes from entering the House of Commons rather than the other way around.²⁹ Rose felt so passionately about this constitutional right that she stated that if the courts saw this as a crime, she was willing to bear any punishment that they believed she deserved.³⁰ Rose felt, more than anything, that she must stand by what she believed in, regardless of whether the court's judgement was that it was a criminal and not a constitutional act.³¹ The way in which Rose used the courtroom as a platform to legitimise her actions and ultimately her claim to citizenship exemplifies what Laura Mayhall describes as a new strategy implemented by the WSPU in 1908. She argues that they 'utilised the courtrooms to great advantage' and even draws on Rose's trial as an example of how WSPU militants employed the courtroom as a place for 'urging magistrates to refrain from enforcing unfair laws'.³²

Despite her husband acting for her defence, Rose was sentenced to one-month's imprisonment in the second division of Holloway Gaol, in default of being 'bound over to keep the

peace'. Her son Paul was just eight months old at the time of her imprisonment and the satirical magazine, *Punch*, printed a set of verses criticising her for leaving him. Rose defended her decision to leave Paul, not just in her court hearing and in her witty reply to 'Mr Punch,' but also in various speeches that she gave on her prison experience. She stated that he was left in the care of her husband, a nurse and 'the gardener's capable wife'.³³

Initially the prospect of imprisonment did not seem to concern Rose. In fact, when entering the Black Maria (the police van that transported prisoners to gaol), she recalled how 'a calmness filled my soul as I waited, expecting I know not what.'³⁴ This description is a stark contrast to many other suffragette recollections of the prospect of imprisonment and notions of the unknown. For instance, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence tells a common tale of the fear and anxiety she faced before she entered Holloway. She recalled how she was not prepared for the 'extreme revulsion' that possessed her at the prospect of being locked up in one of six cages on either side of the prison van. 'I shut my eyes and prayed that I might not lose self-control.'³⁵ Likewise, Mary Richardson described the 'coffin-like compartments' of the Black Maria and recalled that after the last cell door was closed in the prison van, she felt 'indescribably lonely ... the numbness in my limbs was nothing to the numbness in my mind.'³⁶

Nevertheless, the daily routine at Holloway eventually took its toll upon Rose. She recalled how she suffered 'intense fatigue' and that the time spent alone in her cell caused her to 'question whether the cause of womanhood was worth this mental and physical suffering.'³⁷ Rose likened twenty-three hours alone in her cell with 'mental chloroform being administered without any physical numbness to balance it ... the stagnation, the isolation, the system of depression, the intense insanity of the routine would unhinge the mind were there not a set purpose and will, to carry one through the ordeal.'³⁸ This constant internal reminder that the sacrifice was for a greater cause helped her preserve her mental health and complete her prison sentence. When Rose returned to Wimbledon, her house had been decorated in the colours of the WSPU to mark the occasion and, at the end of April, she was awarded the new illuminated addresses (given to all WSPU members who had served at least one week's imprisonment) and a Holloway Brooch.³⁹

On her return from prison Rose continued as an active member of the Wimbledon WSPU and, by the end of 1909, she had replaced Margaret Grant as the branch's Organising Secretary. When Rose took on this position in the local Union, she essentially became an unpaid, full-time worker for the WSPU. In her capacity as Honorary Organising Secretary she arranged the local meetings, oversaw the management of the local WSPU shop, enrolled new members, addressed local meetings at 3pm every Wednesday and Sunday, organised local suffragette bazaars and garden fetes and contributed weekly reports to the local, national and suffrage press. Rose not only became the face of the Wimbledon suffrage campaign, she was also the driving force behind the local movement and was the key to its success.⁴⁰ Between 1909 and 1911 alone, Rose, along with other Wimbledon volunteers, increased the branch's turnover by over 1000%, from £23 to £328.

Under Rose's leadership, the local WSPU campaign in Wimbledon was energetic, flamboyant and unapologetically visible. This became particularly apparent in 1913 when Rose

most famously defended women's right to free speech on Wimbledon Common. In March of that year, following the arrest of five men on Wimbledon Common for attempting to rush the suffragette speaker's platform, the head of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Henry, proclaimed that suffragette meetings could no longer be held in public spaces because they were unable to prevent public disorder.⁴¹ Rose and the Wimbledon WSPU ignored this attempt to stop public meetings, declaring that 'suffragette meetings on the Common would continue.'⁴² She argued that 'the suffragette meetings on Wimbledon Common have been constitutionally conducted for four years and are still so conducted – any temporary disorder being entirely created by a [small] section of the audience and not by the speakers or the character of the speeches.'⁴³ Unsurprisingly, then, the Wimbledon WSPU declared that the prohibition did not apply to them and declared 'free speech vindicated.'⁴⁴ The government's attempt to restrict the suffragettes' right to free speech was not only challenged in Wimbledon but also in Hyde Park. The *Suffragette* praised the Wimbledon WSPU, in particular Rose, for defying the government's orders and addressing the Wimbledon crowd of around eight to ten thousand people, declaring the meetings a resounding success.⁴⁵ The main accomplishment that came from the continuance of these public meetings, particularly the meetings on Wimbledon Common, was the personal sense of achievement that the suffragettes felt from addressing thousands of people in order to maintain their right to a voice.

For Rose, maintaining the right to free speech was more important than any other type of militant activism. In fact, in a letter written to Edith How-Martyn in 1928, she claimed that her fight to maintain free speech in Wimbledon was 'my most valuable contribution to the campaign.'⁴⁶ Initially this statement appears surprising in the light of Rose's imprisonment, attendance at deputations and maintenance of a strong and prosperous militant campaign in Wimbledon. These, it might be argued, were her greatest contribution to the militant movement. Yet, on further consideration, her statement is not surprising. The holding of public meetings on Wimbledon Common every Wednesday and Sunday, at 3pm, was, after all, the Wimbledon WSPU's most prominent militant tactic; it was a sign of strength for the local movement. Furthermore, Rose's assertion that maintaining the right for free speech was her defining militant act illustrates that militancy, its meaning and impact is relative. It is relative to the individual, the time and the place.

This notion that militancy was essentially a chameleon concept extends beyond this article's focus on Rose and helps us to further understand the complexity of militancy at a local level. Although a small number of Wimbledon women engaged in militant actions such as stone throwing, window smashing and attacks involving arson, these more provocative militant strategies were committed in response to the government's actions and the treatment of women in incidents such as Black Friday. Furthermore, these extreme militant tactics coexisted with a range of other militant strategies. These included the resistance and evasion of the 1911 census, the sale of newspapers, the holding of suffragette fayres and bazaars and the fight for free speech on Wimbledon Common. Ultimately, for Rose and many other Wimbledon activists, militancy ebbed and flowed. It was not a simple, progressively escalating phenomenon that became more provocative approaching 1914.

In addition to Rose's commitment as Wimbledon WSPU's Organising Secretary, she also opened up her Wimbledon home, Dorset Hall, to suffrage activists who needed to recuperate from their exhausting schedules. The most notable suffragettes to have stayed there are Emily Wilding Davison, Mary Leigh and Mary Gawthorpe. The latter stayed with the Lamartine Yates family for six months from October 1910 whilst recuperating from what Mary Gawthorpe described as 'overstrain and injury received in the votes for women campaign'.⁴⁷ Letters written by Mary to various WSPU members reveal that from October 1910, she was carrying out a 'bed-side effort' from the comfort of Dorset Hall in Wimbledon. Although Mary was 'grievously disappoint[ed]' not to be able to manage 'the vitally important Autumn campaign' that she had organised in Manchester, she managed the financial aspect of the campaign from Dorset Hall, leaving Georgina Brakenbury and a number of 'local workers', to conduct the political campaign in Lancashire.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, it wasn't just suffragettes that Rose and Tom welcomed into their home. In 1913 Rose was the 'first guard of honour' to Emily Wilding Davison's coffin, and the family opened up their house to Emily's brother, Captain Davison, during the inquest and the funeral. Their generosity to the Davison family is apparent in a letter that the Captain wrote to Tom, thanking the family for their kindness and support with the funeral and inquest (Tom was the solicitor who represented the Davison family at the inquest). After Emily's funeral Rose took nearly a year off from the Wimbledon WSPU due to a 'severe illness'.⁴⁹ After several attempts to recover from her illness in 'the fray', she was 'ordered aboard for rest'.⁵⁰ During this time the Wimbledon WSPU was organised by the Union's second in command, Edith Begbie. The support network that surrounded Rose in Wimbledon becomes evident at this point in 1913 as WSPU members, along with other branch speakers, attended the WSPU meetings in place of Rose. For instance, on 4 October Mrs Dacre Fox addressed a meeting on Wimbledon Common. Miss Nutall (Wimbledon WSPU chairman) also spoke on 1 November and explained to the crowds why Rose had been absent from the meetings. The *WBN* reported that the meeting 'passed a resolution of sympathy with Mrs Lamartine Yates in her illness'.⁵¹ Accordingly, these helpful interventions ensured the continuance of a successful local campaign.

Suffrage activism during wartime

By the summer of 1914, Rose had returned as Organising Secretary of the Wimbledon WSPU and soon afterwards, the first world war was declared. WSPU members were informed of the 'temporary suspension of militant activity until the conflict was over'.⁵² The Pankhurst leadership argued that to secure 'votes for women', they needed a 'national victory' since 'what would be the good of a vote without a country to vote in'.⁵³ However, Rose and the Wimbledon WSPU disagreed with this decision. In their local 1914 Annual Report, they recorded that 'the subject of women's enfranchisement was still a concern for many local women' and because of this, the branch chose to 'keep in touch with the only subject which unites all suffragists' by holding weekly meetings, readings and discussions at 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoons. This was open to 'members and their friends'.⁵⁴ This continuance of suffragette activity by the Wimbledon WSPU into 1915 is highly significant as they were the only local branch known to have defied instruction

in this way.⁵⁵ Not only did they continue their meetings but, in September 1914, Rose had 'tried to minimise the suffering brought upon women and children in the locality by reason of the war' by persuading the WSPU committee to transform the bottom floor of their WSPU shop into a cost-price restaurant.

It was noted in the local newspaper, the *Wimbledon Boro' News* that many homes had lost their wage earner by the call to arms and that many more would be 'affected indirectly by the loss of employment consequent upon the dislocation of trade'.⁵⁶ Local suffragettes were, therefore, 'anxious to extend a helping hand'. Rose encouraged local firms to donate necessary kitchen equipment and recruited volunteers to peel 'hundredweights of potatoes and carrots', to prepare and cook the soups and serve 'simple lunches'.⁵⁷ Each meal was priced at ½ d (2 farthings or a half penny) on presentation of a War Distress ticket. Meals were served twice daily from 12–2 p.m. and again from 6–8 p.m., enabling those without time or means to obtain a hot meal for two farthings. This service in both Wimbledon and neighbouring Merton was maintained throughout the war, with the Wimbledon kitchen reportedly selling over 40,000 meals in just one year.⁵⁸

The Suffragettes of the WSPU

With the cost price restaurant a success, Rose turned her attention to what she felt was 'the most pressing issue at this time'.⁵⁹ In 1915, this was still women's suffrage. She felt that, despite the changes in the country's circumstances, sustaining suffrage propaganda work should remain a priority.⁶⁰ Rose and many other women such as Mary Leigh, Dorothy Evans and Annie Cobden Sanderson were united in their disapproval of the WSPU leadership's decision to no longer use the WSPU's name and platform to campaign for women's suffrage. Accordingly, on 22 October 1915, a meeting took place at Caxton Hall, Westminster, that objected to the way in which the Pankhursts had ceased campaigning for enfranchisement 'in favour of other purposes outside the scope of the Union'.⁶¹ At the protest meeting, a resolution was passed that stated that 'this meeting of members and recent members of the WSPU reaffirms the unshaken faith in the women's movement and its belief that only by the attainment of the aims for which the women of the WSPU have striven and suffered can the uplifting of the human race be achieved'. Moreover, these aims could be attained only 'by continuing to realise the unity of women across the world based on their political helplessness and common sufferings, and by faithfully safeguarding the interests of women at the present critical time in their economic and social history'.⁶² The resolution suggests that despite the monumental change in the political context, the vote (for many women) remained their most important demand.

Consequently, on the 5 December 1915, at a 'General Conference' held at St George's Hall, Bloomsbury, Rose Lamartine Yates and a temporary executive of women: Mrs Cobden Sanderson, Mrs McLeod, Mrs Schutze, Miss Tim, Mrs Mary Leigh, Mrs Best and Miss Zoe Procter, Miss F Haughton, Mrs F.E. Smith and Mrs Metge, decided 'to act together as the Suffragettes of the WSPU'.⁶³ They proceeded to devote themselves to suffrage work and acted 'untidily as a group of the WSPU for suffrage only'. The Suffragettes of the WSPU (SWSPU) resumed 'the highly important social and political work of the WSPU'. Meetings of the SWSPU took place at least once a week, in either Hyde Park or High Holborn, throughout 1916 and 1917

and the SWSPU newsletter, the *Suffragette Newssheet* (SNS) was sold on the streets on London. The SWSPU also contributed to the wartime campaign for women's enfranchisement by signing circular letters to Parliament and taking part in collective deputations to Parliament with organisations such as the East London Federation of Suffragettes, the United Suffragists and the Women's Freedom league.

During the time of the Speaker's Parliamentary Conference, established to report on Electoral reform, Rose Lamartine Yates spoke at various mass meetings held in support of women's suffrage and represented the SWSPU in 'a private conference of societies working towards women's suffrage.'⁶⁴ In December 1917, Rose and other members of the SWSPU also attended a picket at the House of Commons, 'every Wednesday and Thursday during the sittings of the Conference on Electoral Reform.'⁶⁵

The SWSPU's newsletter also featured an inspiring front-page article by Rose in December 1917 entitled 'Have No Fear.' In the article she appealed to men and women alike, stating that 'women have never failed him in his need, why fear her in politics ... let him have the courage to resist no longer women's full enfranchisement ... have courage yourselves to call women to your councils ... have no fear.'⁶⁶ This notion of having no fear was replaced with 'hope' in January 1917, when the Report of the Speaker's Conference recommended a form of women's suffrage. Although the recommendation was a considerable compromise for many suffrage societies, it was one that women such as Rose and suffrage societies like the SWSPU were willing to accept, as it would enfranchise millions of women. In the February edition of the SNS, the SWSPU labelled the recommendation as 'The Women's Victory.'⁶⁷

London County Councillor

With the Representation of the People Bill receiving Royal Assent on the 6 February 1918, Rose's focus altered. With the support of the National Federation of Women Teachers (NFWT), she stood as a candidate for North Lambeth in the forthcoming London County Council elections. The NFWT offered to pay the majority of her expenses as they felt that she would use her experience of suffrage campaigning and 'champion the Women's Cause in the LCC.'⁶⁸ North Lambeth was the chosen constituency because it was a two-member constituency where the Liberals had agreed to field only one candidate whom Rose, as an independent, would oppose.

Rose's election address was 'brief and practical: in education; smaller classes with every child to receive an equal chance, better paid teachers—"equal pay for equal work", restoration of the halfpenny fare on trams for children and mother's work made easier.' Her campaign poster also asked the public to 'vote for a woman this time who understands children and the difficulties of housewives ... give one of your two votes to Mrs Lamartine Yates.'⁶⁹ It was not only the NFWT that supported Rose in the contest. The Women's Freedom League (WFL) also ran a ferocious campaign in *The Vote*. Although the WFL promoted all women candidates in the upcoming municipal elections they stated that they were 'concentrating their efforts forwarding the Candidates of Mrs How Martyn for the Middlesex County Council and of Mrs Lamartine Yates for the North Lambeth Division of the London County Council.'⁷⁰ Advertisements in *The Vote* read 'workers urgently wanted every day and night until and including March

6th.'⁷¹ Women were not just needed for canvassing and speaking but asked to 'act as postmen' delivering election addresses and polling cards by hand.⁷² The campaign extended over ten days with three indoor and outdoor meetings every night. Venues included Bedford College, York Gate and Regent's Park.⁷³ On polling day, Thursday 6 March 1919, it seemed that this two-pronged campaign from the NUWT and the WFL was successful with Rose securing one of the two seats in the constituency alongside the progressive candidate – Owen Jacobseen. She was one of six women elected and the only independent candidate to secure a seat on the new council.

Although women had an established tradition of being involved in municipal politics, the extension to the franchise in February 1918 seemed to open up new possibilities for some. For Rose and many other suffrage activists, the campaign for women's suffrage was not embarked upon for the achievement of the vote alone but for what the opportunities that the vote could offer to women, whether that be equal pay, having a political voice or improving mothers' and workers' rights. Rose's election to the London County Council provided a platform on which she, as a practical woman and mother, could use her voice, legitimacy and influence to help improve the lives of women and children in North Lambeth by shaping the local political agenda and ensuring that local women and children were a priority.⁷⁴ She not only worked tirelessly to improve the living conditions of North Lambeth residents, suggesting and implementing house plans that would benefit housewives and working women, she also 'persistently supported every effort to improve the tram service and reduce the fares' notably securing the half penny fare for children in her constituency.⁷⁵ Moreover, her work for equal treatment of women in wages was tireless, with the NUWT recognising her 'splendid work' in the Council chamber. On the question of equal pay, the NUWT stated that Rose's work 'cannot be overestimated' and that 'the calls on her energies have, at times, been almost beyond the pale of human endurance.'⁷⁶ In addition, Rose used her position and influence to stand up for the better treatment of children and poor families in Lambeth. In 1920 she secured an LCC grant and with the help of the NUWT raised over £300, which enabled a minor alment children's centre to be opened in North Lambeth. This clinic was opened in 1921 and named The Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic. By 1931, the minor alment centre had treated more than 23,000 patients.⁷⁷ The Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic remained an integral part of North Lambeth's health care system up until 1958, when it was closed and offered to the National Health Service. Although Rose only served on the LCC until 1922, she remained as the Honorary Treasurer of the clinic until 1934.

The Women's Record Room

At the time when Rose retired from her role as Honorary Treasurer of the clinic, she was in the process of moving to a flat in Putney Hill. Her husband Tom had died from Liver Cancer in May 1929 and her son Paul, after graduating from Cambridge University, had moved briefly to Germany. At this point in her life, 'very slowly and reluctantly', Rose reached the conclusion that the family home, Dorset Hall, had to be sold.⁷⁸ Although she 'toyed with several plans for Dorset Hall' such as a museum, and a public park, she finally succumbed and sold the property to the Merton and Morden District Council.⁷⁹

It was during the process of moving that Rose had to

consider what to do with the large volume of suffrage material that she had accumulated over years. Throughout her time in the WSPU, she had kept and collected a great deal of material pertaining to the suffragette campaign in Wimbledon. This included Wimbledon Annual Reports, photographs, correspondence, badges, banners and pamphlets. It appears that these artefacts were so important to her that she could not bear to part with them. Yet at the same time, she knew that she did not have the space in which to store them. It was then (in the mid-1930s) that she 'conceived the idea of creating a permanent home' for this suffrage material.⁸⁰

It was at this point that Rose approached the Suffragette Fellowship, an organisation which had been housing relics and memoirs of the militant movement in the houses of their members since their formation in 1926. Elizabeth Crawford suggests that the fellowship's suffrage material was kept for some time at Geraldine Lennox's house and then by Mary Phillips until a Record Room was opened in around 1937 at the Minerva Club on Brunswick Square, London.⁸¹ The material was moved in 1939 when Rose managed to secure a house in Westminster that would enable her and the Fellowship to 'make a complete history of the women's fight for emancipation'.⁸²

The 1938 *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter* informs us that Rose 'consented to act as the Honorary Treasurer of the Women's Record House.' The Women's Record House was located at 6 Great Smith Street, Westminster and was opened by Rose in May 1939. It housed a vast range of suffragette material from banners to postcards. Each room had its own theme: 'the early beginnings of the movement, the militant phase, prison records, souvenirs and reminiscences'.⁸³ However, the Record House was not just used as a repository for relics, it also opened for weekly meetings of the Fellowship. Among the speakers were Teresa Billington-Greig who spoke on 'More Women in Parliament' and Dr Joyce Mitchell on 'Social Credit'.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the existence of the Women's Record House was short-lived, as it had to close in September 1939 'on account of the war'.⁸⁵ The premises were vacated and 'suffrage records were distributed to places of safety'.⁸⁶ The records that Rose contributed to the collection were taken back to her house for safekeeping and it appears that she never returned them to the Fellowship as there is very little that relates to her, or the Wimbledon WSPU, within The Suffragette Fellowship Collection today.

After the establishment of the Record House in 1939 it does not seem that Rose was ever again active in public life. She played no role in the re-opening of the Women's Record House in 1947 and instead, settled in her Putney flat and according to her son, Paul Yates, 'delighted in her grandchildren' – whom she adored.⁸⁷ In 1951, she bought her son a house in Sevenoaks and 'visited frequently'.⁸⁸ Just three years later, after a brief illness, she died of colon cancer at the age of 79. She was buried next to her beloved husband, Tom, in the family's plot in St Matthew Avenue, Brookwood Cemetery.⁸⁹ At her funeral service the following tribute was read:

Let us be truly thankful to God for the life that has closed. Hers was devoted with passionate energy to helping people and causes. She was every inch a fighter. She fought injustice, fought for the advancement of her sex, fought for the welfare of children and for the rights of those she befriended; no matter what the cost to her

person.

With her gifts of speech and the dynamic of her personality she could make the crowd hers. Fear she knew, but she so mastered it that the world saw only unflinching courage in all her battles. Fiercely burned within her a divine determination to do good.

What an example to others was her spirit of selfless devotion to the many tasks she took on. How high and unswerving the principles of personal conduct and of thought which she set. There could be no compromises with the mediocre, no countenancing wrong.

Yet with all she sought and gave affection in large measure. So many people loved her, though many of them already passed away. So many valued her genuine interest in their problems and the practical solutions she achieved. So many enjoyed the brilliance of her conversation, ranging with wit and understanding of all manner of things. And to the end, despite infirmity, she cared most for the comfort and well-being of others and least for herself.

Here indeed once can say: this life has been lived abundantly.⁹⁰

This tribute to Rose, her life and achievements, not only captures so accurately her character but also her lifelong determination to fight for what she felt was just and right. By taking Rose Lamartine Yates as its focus, this article has shown how a local suffrage campaign could bring women to the forefront of popular politics, in this case, introducing Rose to the public political arena for the first time in her life. Moreover, a brief critical analysis of her activism within the Wimbledon WSPU has illustrated that for many women militancy, its meaning and impact, were relative to the individual, the time and the place, with Rose identifying her fight to maintain free speech in Wimbledon as her defining militant act. The article also highlights the extent and complexity of women's responses to war, building on the arguments of historians such as Angela Smith, who have suggested that 'there was a great deal of suffrage activity emanating from various suffrage societies during this time'.⁹¹ The research shows that although some women within the WSPU may have embraced their leaders' form of patriotism, Rose and the Wimbledon WSPU defied convention and continued suffrage activism during the First World War. Furthermore, many suffrage activists refused to support the war and formed small wartime suffrage organisations, like the Suffragettes of the WSPU, in order for suffrage campaign work to continue.

Even though the fight for enfranchisement was an extraordinarily important part of Rose's life and political career – a part that she clearly looked back on with pride and delight – this article has demonstrated that, alone, the campaign for the vote did not define her. Rose exemplifies the wider body of women who extended their significance far beyond their work for women's suffrage by applying their suffrage campaigning experience to political life in the inter-war period. Municipal politics offered Rose, as a newly enfranchised woman, an accessible method of gaining political power and influence. Her role as Honorary Treasurer of the Women's Record House

during the interwar years illustrates her contribution to the preservation of suffragette records and the construction of a suffragette history.

Notes

1. The Women's Library at LSE (hereafter WL), 7RLY, Papers of Rose Lamartine Yates 1909–1986, newspaper cuttings, n.d.
2. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement, A Reference Guide, 1866–1928* (London, Routledge, 2001), 763–764.
3. Beth Flintoff 'The Rebellious Women of Wimbledon' [www.attictheatrecompany.com/whatson/rebellious-women-wimbledon/, accessed 31 Jul. 2018].
4. Liz Stanley and Ann Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison* (London, Women's Press, 1988).
5. In addition to the above see: Gail Cameron, 'Rose Lamartine Yates 1875–1954', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, OUP, 2004), [www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/63902, accessed 20 Aug. 2017]; Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 763–764; Gillian Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women* (London, Derbyshire, SunRay Publishers, 1994).
6. Barbara Caine, *Biography and History*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.
7. Sandra Holton, 'Challenging Masculinism: Personal History and Microhistory in Feminist Studies of the Women's Suffrage Movement', *Women's History Review*, 20/5 (2011), 834–836.
8. Pat Thane, 'Women and Political Participation in England, 1918–1970', in *Women and Citizenship in Britain in the 20th Century: What Difference Did the Vote Make?*, ed. Esther Breitenbach and Pat Thane, (London, Bloomsbury, 2010), 18–19.
9. Cameron, 'Rose Lamartine Yates (1875–1954)', *ODNB*.
10. A.J.R., eds, *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* (London, Stanley Paul & Co, 1913).
11. WL, 7RLY, Papers of Rose Lamartine Yates. Rose Lamartine Yates, 'How I Became a Suffragist'.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections, Royal Holloway University Entrance Book: entry for Janau, Rose Emma.
16. WL MLB/E, Papers of Mary Leigh. Mary Leigh, *Biography of Rose Lamartine Yates*, n.d.
17. A.J.R., eds, *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who*.
18. Claire Jones, 'Women's access to higher education: An overview (1860–1948)', *Herstoria*, 21 Jul. 2012, [www.herstoria.com, accessed 12 Jan. 2014].
19. Cameron, 'Rose Lamartine Yates (1875–1954)', *ODNB*.
20. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 763.
21. Lamartine Yates, 'How I Became a Suffragist'.
22. Ibid.
23. Mary Leigh, *Biography of Rose Lamartine Yates*.
24. WL 7RLY, Papers of Rose Lamartine Yates 1909–1986, Rose Lamartine Yates, 'A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith'.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. *Votes for Women*, 'At Bow Street, Mrs Lamartine Yates', 5 Mar. 1909.
31. Ibid.
32. Laura Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain 1860–1930* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), 76–77.
33. Leigh, *Biography of Rose Lamartine Yates*.
34. Lamartine Yates, 'A Month in the Common Gaol'.
35. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, (London, Victor Gollancz, 1938), 169.
36. Mary Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, (London, George Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953), 14–15.
37. Lamartine Yates, 'A Month in the Common Gaol'.
38. Ibid.
39. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 763.
40. Itinerant organisers are paid organisers who travelled throughout the country to organise for the WSPU. Unlike district organisers, they did not have a fixed area. For more information on WSPU organisers see: Krista Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit, Paid Organisers of the Women's Social and Political Union 1904–18* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007).
41. Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 114.
42. *Wimbledon Boro' News* (hereafter *WBN*), 'Suffragette Meeting on the Common: Letter to the Editor', 19 Mar. 1913.
43. Ibid.
44. *WBN*, 'Suffragette on the Common: Free Speech Vindicated', 26 Apr. 1913.
45. *Suffragette*, 'Fight for Free Speech', 25 Apr. 1913.
46. Museum of London Library, Suffragette Fellowship Collection. Group C Vol 3 (21) 57.113/12, Rose Lamartine Yates to Edith How-Martyn, 1923.
47. Mary Gawthorpe Fund Letter, Dora Marsden Collection, Box 2, Folders 1–2; Source quoted in L. Meredith, 'Mary Gawthorpe's post-WSPU career', 2011.
48. Leeds Central Library, Papers of Mary Gawthorpe, Series III, 1881–1990. Microfilm Box 6, Reel 15, Mary Gawthorpe to WSPU Members.
49. Leigh, *Biography of Rose Lamartine Yates*.
50. Ibid.
51. *WBN*, 'Suffragette Meeting at Queens Hall', 15 Nov. 1913.
52. June Purvis, 'The Pankhursts and the Great War', in *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914–1919*, ed. Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 143.
53. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won The Vote* (London, Hutchinson, 1959), 288. Quoted in June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst and the Aftermath of Suffrage', in *The Aftermath of Suffrage, Women, Gender and Politics in Britain, 1918–1945*, ed. Julie V Gottlieb and Richard Toye (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19, 288.
54. *WBN*, 'Wimbledon WSPU Annual Meeting', 13 Mar. 1915, 6.
55. The Wimbledon WSPU closed their accounts in September 1916 and donated the remaining account balance of ten pounds to Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Suffrage Federation.
56. *WBN*, 'Suffragettes to Relieve Local Distress', 19 Sep. 1914, 1.
57. John Innes Society, Rose Lamartine Yates Papers. Paul Lamartine Yates, Unpublished Autobiography.
58. Ibid.

59. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'Retrospective', Dec. 1915.
60. Ibid.
61. *The Vote*, 'A Protest Meeting', 5 Nov. 1915, 807.
62. Ibid.
63. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'Retrospective', Dec. 1915.
64. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'Our Message to the Speaker', Nov. 1916.
65. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'Picketing the House', Dec. 1916.
66. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'Have no Fear', Dec. 1916.
67. *Suffragette News Sheet*, 'The Women's Victory', Feb. 1917.
68. Institute of Education, London Unit Annual Reports. UWT/F/73/24, *Twelfth Annual Report of London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers 1918*.
69. Paul Lamartine Yates, Autobiography.
70. *The Vote*, 'Women Wanted on the London County Council and on the County Council throughout the United Kingdom', 28 Feb. 1919.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. *The Vote*, 'Meetings to Promote Candidature of Women for the March Election', 14 Feb. 1919.
74. For the notion of 'legitimacy in public life' see Thane, 'Women and Political Participation in England.'
75. Institute of Education, London Unit Annual Reports. UWT/F/73/24, *Third Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers 1920*.
76. Ibid.
77. Institute of Education, London Unit Annual Reports. UWT/F/73/24, *Fifteenth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1931-32*.
78. Paul Lamartine Yates, Autobiography.
79. Dorset Hall is now owned by Merton Priory Housing and has been split up in retirement flats for the elderly.
80. Paul Lamartine Yates, Autobiography.
81. Geraldine Lennox was a former WSPU member and sub-editor of *Suffragette*. She was also a custodian of The Suffragette Fellowship. Mary Phillips was a WSPU member and paid organiser for the WSPU from 1908-1913. Mary was also a member of the ELFS and is credited for naming their newspaper *The Workers' Dreadnought*. Like Geraldine Lennox, she was also a custodian of the Suffragette Fellowship artefacts. For more biographical information see: Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 341, 546.
82. Rose Lamartine Yates, 'The Miracle', *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*, 1938.
83. Paul Lamartine Yates, Autobiography.
84. *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*, '1938 Meetings', 1938.
85. *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*, 'Women's Record House', 1939-40.
86. Ibid.
87. Paul Lamartine Yates, Autobiography.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Angela Smith, *Suffrage Discourse in Britain During the First World War* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2005), 2; Jo Vellocott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote, The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism During the First World War*, (London, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2007); Nicolleta Gullace, 'The Blood of Our Sons': *Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship*

During the Great War, (London, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2002); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace, The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993); Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959*, (London, Macmillan, 1992).

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

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1918-2018: 100 Years of the women's vote in Britain: How far have we come?

Caitríona Beaumont, Clara Eroukhmanoff, Shaminder Takhar and the Gender and Sexualities Research Group

London South Bank University

On Saturday 16 June 2018, London South Bank University hosted a one-day conference to mark the centenary of the partial enfranchisement of women in Britain and Ireland. In contrast to many of the events taking place around the country, our conference had a contemporary rather than historical focus. This was to reflect on how winning political citizenship in 1918 has affected women's lives in the following key areas: work, politics and activism, criminal justice, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), migration and agency, and academia. The conference was organised around these six themes.

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive Officer of The Fawcett Society, opened the conference with a keynote address entitled: 'Courage calls: it's #Ourtimenow: why 2018 is a tipping point for gender equality'. She noted the importance of commemorating the suffrage movement but reminded us that more needs to be done to achieve the goal of greater gender equality in contemporary society. Smethers believes the key issues to be the gender pay gap, the pension/savings gap, the continued under-representation of women in parliament and the need for more flexible working practices. She also emphasised the different experiences of Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic (BAME) women and the additional discrimination that these women experience on a daily basis. Some positive changes have, however, taken place in recent years with an increased awareness of the gender pay gap and growing intolerance of sexual discrimination and sexual harassment within wider society. The legacy of the suffrage movement, then, is the belief that activism can make change happen and that we must all continue to campaign actively for gender equality.



Sam Smethers, Chief Executive of the Fawcett Society, speaking at the '1918-2018: 100 Years of the women's vote in Britain: How far have we come?' conference.

In the first of two parallel sessions, the Women and Justice Panel brought together three speakers. Baljit Ubhey, Director of Prosecution Policy and Inclusion at the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), opened with an extremely candid account of the challenges facing the CPS in dealing with violent crime against women and girls. She described such

offences (including domestic violence, rape, stalking, so-called 'honour-based' violence) as 'perhaps the most shamed human rights issues' and a 'major obstacle to equality'. There has been some progress: for example, the number of convictions rose in the ten-year period to 2016/17. Nevertheless, there is more to do to improve victims' experiences of the Criminal Justice System. Baljit concluded her paper with a comment on the importance of the conference not only as a time to reflect on – and celebrate – the progress that has been achieved, but also as an opportunity to re-double efforts to press for true equality.

Yasmin Rehman, feminist, human rights activist and researcher, highlighted the experiences of BAME women and the additional difficulties they face in accessing justice. Her paper 'Roadblocks to Justice' talked about parallel legal systems in the context of cuts to legal aid and policies of multi-faithism as well as the complexities linked to immigration status. Yasmin shared with the delegates numerous examples from her own personal experiences. Her account represented a poignant, powerful and insightful illustration of the challenges facing BAME women in accessing justice in the UK.

With a shift of focus to teaching, Dr Chris Magill, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at LSBU, considered the personal and political dimensions of teaching gender, together with the challenges this poses to students and lecturers. In a paper entitled 'Reflections on Teaching Gender in Criminology', Chris showed how a specific module, *Gender, Crime and Justice*, is designed to challenge students' assumptions in relation to gender. Chris concluded that the inclusion of Higher Education modules that apply gender considerations to social issues indicates very real progress. She emphasised the importance of continuing to ensure that 'teaching gender' has its rightful place on degrees – both undergraduate and postgraduate – in the future.

The Women in Academia panel continued the academic focus. Professor Heather Savigny (De Montfort University) and Dr Nicholas Allen (Royal Holloway) considered 'Cultural Sexism in UK Academia', reporting on the results of a practitioner survey of members of the Political Studies Association. They showed that gender operates in a discriminatory way against women in British universities with regard to getting permanent jobs, to promotion, and in obtaining the same salary as their male colleagues. Continuing this theme, Asiya Islam (University of Cambridge), in her paper 'The Myth of the Academic Genius', drew on her experience in Equality and Diversity (E&D) to challenge the E&D agenda as a 'neoliberal tool' to recruit more 'clients' (that is, students). In doing so, she deconstructed the myth of the (white male) academic genius as one that sustains key inequalities at university.

Dr Deborah Gabriel (Bournemouth University / Black British Academics) likewise rejected, to some extent, the E&D agenda. In her paper 'Women of Colour and (In)Equality Inside the Ivory Tower: How Far Have We Come and How Far Have We To Go?', she advanced an alternative agenda for social justice. As founder and director of the Black British Academics,

and drawing on critical race pedagogy, Deborah discussed innovative ways of thinking about inclusion that go beyond fulfilling quotas, such as listening to stories of discrimination in academia. She has initiated critical workshops with management staff at the University of Bournemouth and she writes poems of her experience of whiteness and privilege inside the Ivory Tower.

During our lunch break, we were able to view items from the LSBU archive, curated by archivist Ruth McLeod, featuring the experiences and activism of female staff and students over the years. After lunch, a brilliant performance by Dr Naomi Paxton of #vote100 entertained us with her account of 'Suffragette Jiu Jitsu' and suffrage songs played on her customised suffrage ukulele. Still chuckling we moved on to the next two panels: Women and Work and Women, Migration and Agency. In the first, Dr Helen Glew (University of Westminster) highlighted how, in the years immediately following 1918, women continued to campaign for gender equality. Her paper 'Side by Side with the claim for the vote: the significance and legacy of the suffrage campaigns for women's rights in the workplace, 1918-1946' considered the campaigns to end the inter-war public service marriage bar and the demand for equal pay. Helen demonstrated brilliantly how, despite the achievement of political citizenship for women in 1918 and the vote on equal terms with men in 1928, the fight for gender equality in the workplace continued. As Sam Smethers had indicated earlier, the gender pay gap remains a key campaign issue.

Shifting the focus from public to private sphere, Dr Caitríona Beaumont (LSBU) challenged the familiar stereotype of the submissive 1950s 'perfect wife and 'happy housewife' in her paper 'Housewives and Citizenship: What did having the vote mean to women working in the home in 1950s and 1960s Britain?'. Caitríona illustrated how housewives' associations such as the Mothers' Union, Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds utilised the rhetoric of political and citizenship rights to demand greater equality for their members. As a result, these traditional women's organisations were able to mount successful campaigns during the 1950s and 1960s to secure women's rights such as adequate pensions, payment of family allowances to mothers and the removal of turnstiles to ensure easier access to public conveniences.

Our attention was turned to the more contemporary experiences of BAME women in the workplace by Barbara Lindsay MBE (Advisor on Career Development, Race, Equality and Diversity). Barbara provided us with vivid first hand examples of the discrimination experienced by BAME women at work in a paper called 'Issues/Challenges faced by Black Women in the workplace'. She suggested that some possible solutions to this on-going problem included flexible working arrangements, monitoring of talent pipelines and ensuring that BAME women are encouraged and supported to take up leadership roles within their organisations.

The experiences of BAME women were also the focus of the Women, Migration and Agency panel. The papers all highlighted the lack of representation of minority women in feminist movements and the need for an intersectional approach when exploring topics such as migration, gender and agency. Dr Elaine Bauer (LSBU) spoke about her ethnographic and sociological research on Jamaican families in the UK in a paper entitled: 'She's always the person with a very global vision: The Gender Dynamics of Migration, Narratives Interpretation

and the Case for Jamaican Transnational Families'. Professor Ann Phoenix (UCL) followed with a paper on the very topical issue 'Destabilising historical homes: Women, migration and the "Windrush generation"'. In this, she argued that the Windrush scandal finally opened up an important discussion about reparations. Dr Suzanne Scafe (LSBU) completed the panel highlighting her significant body of work on Black British Feminism with her paper 'Black British Feminisms and the archival turn'.

The final two panels focussed on Women in the future of STEM and Women in Politics and Activism. The Women in STEM panel speakers shared research on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI). In her paper, 'Can Artefacts be Feminists?' Professor Kathleen Richardson (De Montfort University) highlighted the dangers of sex robots (machines in the form of women or children for use as sex objects). As humanoid robots become more widespread it is necessary to develop an engaged ethical response to the development of these new technologies. The Campaign Against Sex Robots, which Kathleen heads, highlights that these kinds of robots are potentially harmful and will reproduce already existing inequalities in society. Dr Safia Barikzai's (LSBU) work promotes STEM in schools via her funded project InventEURs, a European project (Erasmus+). InventEURs fosters social inclusion and equity in underprivileged schools (with particular emphasis on newly arrived migrant children) through highly innovative and engaging connected learning experiences. In her paper 'Inspiring the next generation through Playful Coding and Digital Story telling' Safia explained how she uses playful coding and Lego Robots to make STEM accessible to young children. In the final paper, Dr Gabriela Gallegos Garrido (LSBU/LSBIC) took the audience on a journey of what being an engineer is like and the challenges women face in male dominated fields of engineering and science.

Finally, in the panel Women in Politics and Activism, Professor Sarah Childs (Birkbeck, UoL) argued persuasively that, in the centenary of the first women's suffrage, we need more than just celebrations, parties and parades. Her paper 'If we can't have quotas can we at least have Section 106?' called for the immediate commencement of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires parties to provide systematic data on their selections for parliamentary candidates on an on-going basis. The proposal has the potential to transform the behaviour of political parties, which, in anticipation of criticism from the public, tend to select more women prior to general elections. Sarah is sceptical of the explanation offered as to why this law has not come into effect, which is that it is too onerous on small parties. She challenges the government to act before the end of the year and suggests that, if no action is forthcoming, this would constitute an act of resistance on the part of the State.

Gita Saghal (Secular Space) provided an historical perspective in a paper called 'Feminists who challenged empire and built a new world: the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. Her account of the founding of the UN, the UN Charter and the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights showed that women from Latin America, India and Pakistan were responsible for language on sex equality and the right to sex in marriage. Indian women also fought for the rights of colonial subjects. They were part of anti-racist coalitions alongside the Pan African movement and the American black organisation, the NACP, to embed rights for all peoples to



Delegates at the '1918-2018: 100 Years of the women's vote in Britain: How far have we come?' conference

non-discrimination on grounds of race. Sahgal's grandmother, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, later the first woman President of the UN, brought the case of discrimination against Indian South Africans to the UN laying the foundation of the principle that human rights outweigh national sovereignty. In the final paper of this panel, Dr Shaminder Takhar (LSBU) focussed on her research relating to 'Political activism, minority ethnic women and the challenge of electoral politics'. The aim of the paper was to explore what can be done, both at individual and at institutional level to attract more minority ethnic women into local politics. As part of this work Shaminder was invited to be part of the Local Government Commission (Fawcett Society and LGiU) and heard many women give evidence about their experiences of local government. The evidence collected demonstrates an urgent need for change. Key findings reveal that local councils do not reflect the diversity of our society and that minority ethnic and disabled women experience multiple discrimination. All three papers on this panel and the discussion that took place afterwards clearly demonstrated that, despite the winning of political citizenship for women in 1918, much more remains to be done to ensure equality of experience for women within our political systems.

The day ended with a plenary roundtable where our guest panellists Professor Sarah Childs (Birkbeck, UoL), Professor Shan Wareing (LSBU), Professor Louise Ryan (University of Sheffield) and Gita Sahgal (Secular Space) reflected on the question 'how far have we come?' A number of key themes emerged, perfectly summing up the main thoughts, issues and debates that had taken place over the course of the conference. These included the pervasive ignorance about the ongoing negative impacts of gender discrimination and the importance of taking an intersectional approach to gender equality debates so that issues of class, ethnicity, sexuality, identity and disability are not overlooked. Other recurrent themes were the realisation that the personal continues to be political and the importance of the international dimension of gender equality issues. Here questions of gender equality come primarily from the domestic sphere and from where one is located (or 'translocated' as Suzanne Scafe discussed in her presentation). Usually this location starts with the family and the geographical setting – whether it is the London boroughs, the various cities, villages, counties and so forth. These personal testimonies and stories are deeply political and international. We must consider how questions about gender, migration and populations crossing borders can be asked without speaking about the personal borders and frontiers that we have crossed and are crossing every day.

The final recurring theme emerging from the conference was one of solidarity. The conference had examined the shifting experiences of women in various professions and communities but what we are talking about is more than just individual stories. Gender equality is beyond the individual. Moreover, some women may be in a position of power but simultaneously live in a patriarchal and racist society, internalising or mimicking patriarchal modes of behaviour and organisation. Now the conversation must be shifted to the structural and institutional challenge of achieving gender equality and the need to destabilise those hegemonic and racist masculinities. To this end, practices of solidarity and collective agency (as Shaminder Takhar termed it in her paper) are crucial in personal lives, in the work place, when travelling, in everyday interactions. With this call to arms, we ended the day with a wine reception. Here we continued our conversations in the knowledge that the suffrage movement provides the inspiration we need to practice solidarity and collective agency in the on-going campaign for gender equality and social justice. As a research group we had wanted to ensure that our event would appeal to academics, students, activists and the general public interested in spending the day discussing how political citizenship matters to women. We were keen to provide a friendly informal environment for those curious to find out more about gender equality issues over the past one hundred years. We were delighted that our event was successful in achieving this objective and the short film we made to capture the day reflects how much everyone who attended enjoyed the conference and the wide-ranging discussions that took place around issues of gender, equality, race, diversity and activism.

Link to conference film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=JHBKCZ18HQg

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The march of the women: Surrey's road to the vote

Rosie Everitt and Holly Parsons

Surrey Heritage

'The march of the women: Surrey's road to the vote' is a project – supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and based at Surrey History Centre – to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918. It has a number of key aims: to celebrate Surrey's role in the long campaign for women's suffrage, to explore the contributions of local women and men on both sides of the fierce debate, to bring the suffrage story to new audiences and to better preserve and make accessible our collections relating to the suffrage movement.

Some Surrey events are already well known: suffragette Emily Wilding Davison's fatal injuries were sustained after stepping out onto the racecourse at the 1913 Epsom Derby. The house being built for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George that was bombed by suffragettes was located at Walton-on-the-Hill. However, there are many more local stories to be found in the archives. Surrey History Centre's collections include the records of local campaigners and organisations reflecting a range of viewpoints on the question of women's suffrage. These include the papers of suffragist Dorothy Hunter of Haslemere who was the daughter of Sir Robert Hunter (co-founder of the National Trust) and an accomplished girl-orator. She spoke at meetings and rallies around the country in support of women's suffrage and free trade on behalf of the Liberal Party.¹ Hunter's papers contain correspondence with Millicent Fawcett in which the two discuss contemporary questions such as the notion of universal adult suffrage as well as Hunter's success as a public speaker for the cause.

Organisations such as the Reigate, Redhill and District Society for Women's Suffrage (affiliated to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies – NUWSS) are also represented in the collections. This organisation's

scrapbook offers insight into meetings and into the international activities of branch President, Helena Auerbach.² The scrapbook contains reports of suffrage meetings in France, Germany and South Africa where Auerbach was a key speaker. One such report, dated 27 January 1912, notes: 'Referring to the growth of the cause all over the world, the Chairman [Auerbach] said she thought the South Pole was the only resting place for the opponents to Women's Suffrage, but now a Norwegian had discovered the South Pole, and as they all knew, the Queen of Norway was a Suffragette.'

The research papers of Lewis Orchard relate to suffragette, composer and former Frimley and later Woking resident Dame Ethel Smyth. Smyth's career has, thanks to the papers, attracted growing interest (see Christopher Wiley's article in this issue).³ Surrey was also home to prominent male women's suffrage supporters including Thomas, 2nd Baron Farrer of Abinger. Both he and his wife, Evangeline, were active supporters of women's suffrage and rights, together with associated movements. Lord Farrer's papers include an extensive series of bound letter books including correspondence with notable members of the NUWSS and its supporters, such as Millicent Fawcett, Sandra Bray, Josephine Butler, and the Crosfields.⁴

On the other side of the debate, we hold the papers of Bertha Marion Broadwood of Capel who belonged to the family of piano manufacturing firm, John Broadwood and Sons.⁵ Broadwood was a philanthropist who took an active interest in politics and community matters and set up the Cottage Benefit Nursing Association in 1883. She was also a committee member for the Dorking Branch of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League and in her notes expresses disapproval of 'female faddists' who 'kick and scream and chain themselves to railings'.⁶ Her papers include anti-



*Rosie with students
from Winston
Churchill School*



*NUWSS march through
Haslemere, 1912.
Courtesy of Haslemere
Educational Museum*

suffrage publicity material such as a handbill for a meeting of the Dorking branch of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage at Holmwood on 23 January 1912. She was asked to take part in debates at local meetings for women's suffrage organisations several times but declined.

Our project, by employing a dedicated archivist, will enhance our existing catalogue descriptions for these collections, making them more readily accessible to the public and researchers alike. It also seeks to bring Surrey's local stories to new audiences and to provide a legacy for the next generation. In the first phase of the project, we ran a series of school workshops in which students from three Surrey secondary schools, aged between twelve and fourteen, worked with local playwright, Grant Watson. They produced a radio play podcast about the suffrage movement in Surrey, taking inspiration from our collections. The first workshop was held at Surrey History Centre with a behind-the-scenes tour of the archive strong rooms and conservation studio, together with a first-hand look at our collections connected to women's suffrage in the public search room. Further sessions over the following weeks followed, to develop the students' character ideas, which informed the writing of the radio-play. The play took the form of six short scenes set in Surrey – some based on real events and personalities – and covered a range of issues. The students then performed the piece at a recording studio in Woking; the final edit was fittingly launched at Epsom racecourse on 9 May, in honour of Emily Wilding Davison. The completed radio play, in the form of a podcast, is the core of a free online learning resource. This will be available to local schools and students to supplement teaching, by providing a local dimension to the national struggle. It can be used across curriculum disciplines including history, drama and social sciences.

For many of the students, this was their first experience of using an archive and similarly their first opportunity to learn about the career of an archivist or

conservator. Raising awareness of the heritage sector in a younger audience will enable them to be mindful of the benefits and opportunities archives offer as they continue their studies. Feedback from teachers and students suggested that these creative and immersive sessions reaped valuable rewards, with one teacher commenting that 'students since have shown much more of an interest in the Suffragettes and their plight. Also, some students (especially boys), have really shown how they are interested in History whereas previously they were quite shy in lessons. Many commented that they were surprised how they learned as they were having fun'.

Volunteer input to the project has been vital and covers a number of archival and research-based tasks. To help us complete the monumental task of recording Surrey's role in the women's suffrage movement, a number of volunteers have been indexing contemporary newspapers for references to local places and people. This has been an important way to extract the names of long-forgotten individuals involved in the suffrage campaign within their local groups and community given the poor survival rate of original records of Surrey's suffrage organisations.

While volunteers have been discovering new names, others have been researching known campaigners and events. These include Marion Wallace Dunlop – the first suffragette to go on hunger strike in prison – who lived in Peaslake, Surrey. Additionally, we hold the police file relating to the bombing of David Lloyd George's newly built and still empty summer home in Walton-on-the-Hill by suffragettes in 1913. At the end of the project, our volunteers will also contribute to the improved archival packaging of some of our suffrage collections to help preserve them for future generations.

As well as re-examining our own records, we are auditing the suffrage collections of five project partner museums for the first time. The partners include Chertsey Museum, which holds a pair of embroidered suffragette

stockings (c.1908-1910) as part of its Olive Matthews textile collection. Bourne Hall Museum, Ewell, which has a large collection on Emily Wilding Davison due to its proximity to Epsom Racecourse, is another partner. Bourne Hall also holds other material such as an invitation to a garden meeting held by the League for Opposing Women Suffrage, c.1911, which is the only anti-suffrage item represented within the partner museums' collections.

Most of the items held by our museum partners relate to the suffragist – rather than suffragette – cause, including Watts Gallery Artists' Village, which has the diaries of the artist and suffragist Mary Watts (wife of the artist G F Watts) from the 1890s. Although these pre-date her life within the movement, they show her early thoughts on the role of women in society – that led her to join the campaign. At Godalming Museum there is a banner worked by the famous garden designer, Gertude Jekyll, for the local suffragist group. Haslemere Educational Museum holds a glass plate negative showing a march through the town in 1913 displaying a NUWSS banner, believed to be part of the Women's Pilgrimage of that year.

Details of the objects held by our museum partners will be collated alongside information from Surrey History Centre's detailed archive catalogues, together with research and newspaper indexes by our volunteers, to create an online resource on our website. The end result, we hope, will be an accessible one-stop-shop for information about women's suffrage in Surrey, available to researchers and interested parties across the globe. We aim to have the website launched towards the end of the project, but for those who cannot wait that long, we are releasing regular blogs throughout the year of what we have achieved so far, including research completed, or other projects that we have been working with.

We have also been representing the project through outreach events in and around the county. In February we had a stand at Surrey History Centre's LGBT History Month evening featuring Ethel Smyth, and in April we presented at the Surrey Local History Committee Annual Symposium. We have since attended and presented at conferences held by Royal Holloway University of London and the University of Surrey on subjects relating to women's suffrage.

As well as attending events run by other organisations, we have held our own free events enabled by the HLF project funding. In March, we hosted Jane Robinson's superb talk and book signing as part of her promotional tour for her new work *Hearts and Minds*. In May, we hosted a morning of talks on Surrey, Suffrage and the Arts: Past and Present, with Dr Lucy Ella Rose of the University of Surrey speaking about Mary Watts. Contemporary artist Mary Branson shared her inspiration behind the 'New Dawn' window at the Houses of Parliament.

Our project events have not, however, been for adults only. Family-friendly activities, including a May half-term arts and crafts event entitled 'Super Suffrage Votes for All' were well supported. This featured suffrage-themed board games, children's books, dressing up, rosette colouring and the opportunity to post a vote on whether they would have been a suffragist or suffragette. Activities for adults and young learners were combined for our stand at Woking's

'Party in the Park' event in July, with project boards aimed at an adult audience and craft activities for the younger ones.

The project is continuing in its research and outreach, including a community family event in Guildford, project talks to local branches of the Women's Institute, Soroptimists International, and local history groups; attending the recent Women's History Network conference hosted by University of Portsmouth and the forthcoming University of Kent Community Research Workshop in December. The project's final public event at Surrey History Centre will be on the 24 November 2018. This community-focused day will involve talks on local research, stands from associated organisations, book signings and a theatrical dramatisation of the suffrage movement in one area of Surrey.

We anticipate that the online resources resulting from the project will form a lasting legacy to enable people of all ages – not only in Surrey but worldwide – to discover more about the county's local suffrage movement in celebration of this centenary year and beyond.

To follow the project as it progresses and find out more about the discoveries being made, please follow our blog at: <https://www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/category/march-of-the-women/> and dedicated Twitter page at: <https://twitter.com/MarchoftheWomen>. To access the online resources, please visit: www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk.

Notes

1. Surrey History Centre (hereafter SHC), 1260: Letters and papers of Miss Dorothy Hunter of Haslemere (1881-1977), Sir Robert Hunter (1844-1913) and other members of the Hunter family.
2. SHC, 3266: Reigate, Redhill and District Society for Women's Suffrage, affiliated to National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies: scrapbook compiled by Helena Auerbach, President.
3. SHC, 9180: Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), composer, writer and suffragette, of Frimley and Woking: exhibition material and collected research papers.
4. SHC, 2572: Thomas Henry, 1st Baron Farrer of Abinger (1819-1899), Thomas Cecil, 2nd Baron (1859-1940) and his second wife, Evangeline: letters and papers.
5. SHC, 2185/BMB: Bertha Marion Broadwood (1846-1935): correspondence and papers.
6. SHC, 2185/BMB/7/1/28: Bertha Marion Broadwood (1846-1935): correspondence and papers; political papers; Women's organisations including the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage.

The Vote Before the Vote: exhibition at Leeds Library, May 2018

Janet Douglas

Independent Scholar

The Vote Before the Vote may seem a puzzling title: surely everybody knows that women gained the vote in 1918? This exhibition at Leeds Library earlier in the year, curated by Vine Pemberton Joss, showed that the events of 1918 were the culmination of a much longer struggle stretching back to the 1830s. It also explained that, from 1869 onwards, some women did have the right to vote in some elections. Besides framing the 1918 legislation in this important historical context – so much of it unknown to the general public – the exhibition eschewed the metropolitan focus of much of the general commentary we have encountered this year. Instead, it catalogued the achievements of some pioneering women in Leeds whose names will be largely unfamiliar even to those who live in the city. They deserve this rescue from anonymity.

The exhibition demonstrated the legal and other barriers that confronted women and went on to chart the various milestones in women's hard-fought campaigns to overcome them. The struggle for the right to vote in parliamentary elections formed only a small part of this longer story of women's quest to take their place in the public sphere. In 1866 for example, over one hundred Leeds women, predominately from the working classes, signed the suffrage petition that John Stuart Mill presented to the House

of Commons on 7 June 1866. The petition had no immediate result but, after the 1867 Franchise Act had once again denied women a parliamentary vote, thirty Leeds women attempted to have their names entered onto the electoral register. When the case of Mary Howell, a Quaker widow, was heard in court, the revising magistrate dismissed the case as 'frivolous' and fined her ten shillings. Addressing the court after the verdict, Mary indignantly objected to the use of the term 'frivolous'.¹

As a project of historical recovery, *The Vote Before the Vote* reminded us of the significant role of local government in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first victory in women's long haul to be admitted to the citadels of local power came in 1869 when the Municipal Franchise Act granted women ratepayers the vote in local elections. Three years later this advance was partially reversed when the courts ruled that the vote be confined to single or widowed women. School Boards, established in 1870, not only gave single women and widows voting rights but provided for all women, irrespective of marital status, to stand as candidates. Although the three Leeds women who contested the first elections were unsuccessful, in 1873 Catherine Buckton was elected to the Board. She remained its only woman member until her retirement in 1882. A year later, Louisa Carbutt became the first woman member of the Board of Guardians. This slow growth of direct female involvement became a rush following the Local Government Act of 1894. This represented, as the exhibition noted, a watershed development: ratepayers of either sex, men and married women, could vote in local elections, run for office as Poor Law Guardians and become members of the newly created Parish Councils.

Interspersed with information about these constitutional changes were vignettes of Leeds women who participated in the movement for women's rights. Catherine Buckton and Louisa Carbutt have already been mentioned: also spotlighted were Constance Holland, Alice Cliff Scatcherd, Isabella Ford and Mary Gawthorpe. The latter two are probably better known in Leeds – they have been commemorated with blue plaques. Alice Cliff Scatcherd was active both locally and nationally: in the Leeds Ladies Educational Association, the first Leeds Suffrage Society and the Women's Trade Union League. She was one of the founders the Women's Franchise League and of Leeds Women's Liberal Association as well as being a member of the Executive Committee of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage. She also engaged in what today we might call 'symbolic politics', refusing to say 'obey' at her wedding and never wearing wedding ring.

In keeping with the British proclivity for gradualism, the Representation of the People Act was, for curator Vine Pemberton Joss, another step on the long road to women's emancipation. In the process of validating her position, she has unearthed some fascinating information, which hopefully will inspire the women of the city today and provide role models for the activists of tomorrow.

Notes

- 1.. *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 19 Sep. 1868, 5.



Isabella Ford scrapbook
By kind permission of Lorraine Milton

Celebrating the centenary of women's voices

Emma Cochrane

The Open University

On 23 June 2018, a colourful and exuberant procession of women, men and children paraded along the seafront from Warrior Square Gardens, St. Leonards, to St. Mary's in the Castle, Hastings. It was accompanied by celebratory singing, laughter, calls for equality and an array of colourful banners. This march – and the performances, talks and refreshments that followed – was the culmination of many months of planning. The aim was to highlight and to celebrate the passing of the Representation of the People Act one hundred years previously, together with the very active part played by the local community in the determined struggle for women's suffrage. It was encouraging and gratifying to note the interest of passers-by: from friends and family to busy shoppers, tooting cars and even buses and (perhaps slightly surprised) tourists, all keen to acknowledge the significance of both the march and of the events which had culminated in some women gaining the vote. The local press both advertised the event in advance and then reported on it, illustrated by a splendid collection of photographs. This raises the important question of how such acts of remembrance can be both the product of local as well as national achievement. They can also help develop a deeper historical understanding of the issues involved, the role played by community activists and the imprint these can leave on contemporary communities.

Women's Voice, the non-profit organisation which, for over ten years, has been working to empower all women living in the Hastings area, planned the Women's March and celebration over several months. Notably, it employed many of the techniques adopted by women fighting for the vote over one hundred years earlier. Women with key skills were identified and they – through personal contacts, local outreach sessions,

word-of mouth and flyers – encouraged others to become involved. They contributed to making banners, participated in hat and badge making, joined the hundred-strong choir and helped with posters, publicity and refreshments. A key aim was to draw in many women of all ages from across the local community, thereby emphasising the relevance of female suffrage for each one of us. Accordingly, a decision was made to design the leading Women's Day banner in the shape of the Holloway portcullis badge, comprising many small rectangles of purple cloth, each embroidered by a different woman or man, with the name of a female relative or close friend who had been alive in the past one hundred years. With the green, white and purple arrow of the imprisoned suffragettes in the centre, the final banner was not only very beautiful but also made the onlooker powerfully aware of the impact of a shared cause and the unity this can promote. Many of those who participated in the march had researched the clothing traditionally associated with the suffragettes, with wonderfully decorative hats, white high-necked blouses, sashes and long skirts. Others found more contemporary ways to celebrate through their clothing, but all women, men and children, wore or carried something green, white or purple in solidarity.

Indeed, it was, perhaps, this sense of unity, solidarity and pride within the participants on the day and in the local community that helped create a connection with the campaigners of one hundred years ago. From parading the banners to joining the jubilant singing, led by a wonderfully informative and enthusiastic conductor, all those present were made aware not only of the historical events but also of their relevance today. Songs included those sung by the original campaigners, together with more contemporary examples



*'Women's Voices' march,
Hastings*

such as 'Nana was a Suffragette' from the 2013 BBC comedy, 'Up the Women'. The singing concluded with 'The Pankhurst Anthem' (2018), composed by Lucy Pankhurst, which features text by Helen Pankhurst, the granddaughter of Sylvia Pankhurst. Personal anecdotes and memories accentuated the impact of the celebrations: from the determined but exhausted choir member who fainted while an informative speech was made, to the marchers and singers who discovered relatives who themselves had been suffragettes. One gentleman marched in memory of his mother who had been arrested for her suffragette activity and for his father who had been arrested in protest at his wife's arrest. A young girl joined her mother to sew a name for the banner and then was able to go into her primary school and explain the suffrage campaign to her classmates. Even the shared tea breaks during choir rehearsals and welcoming refreshments after the march helped to enhance the link with past campaigning.

Yet, as Ann Kramer, author of *Turbulent Spinsters* (2018), the history of the women's suffrage movement in Hastings and St Leonards, explained to all those gathered at St Mary's, the local community and even the press had not always been supportive of the activities of the campaigners. Key local figures such as Barbara Bodichon, influential in the early suffrage movement, Isabella Darent Harrison and Muriel Matters who, having chained herself to the grille in the Ladies Gallery, effectively became the first woman to speak in the House of Commons, are remembered for their inspirational campaigning and the support they gathered in the Hastings area. However, the Women's Anti-Suffrage League was also active locally. The MP for the area was not in favour of extending the franchise to women and while suffragist tactics such as tax resistance and boycotting the census drew criticism, the arson attack on Levetleigh, the house of the local Conservative MP, produced an aggressive and even violent response from some groups within the community.¹

Thus, whilst the determined and prolonged struggle for women's votes has been extremely well researched and documented on a national level, it is through events such as the Hastings and St. Leonards Women's March that the significance of this campaign within our own communities becomes apparent. The Blue Plaque denoting the house where Barbara Bodichon was born and the 2017 change of name of the council offices to Muriel Matters house, become more understandable and more celebratory, for example. From the perspective of a history undergraduate, this event provided useful information, including additional sources, a deeper understanding of the role of the local press over time and an appreciation of the social context within which campaigning took place. The relevance of the extension of the vote to include property-owning single women becomes more apparent in a town in which a significant proportion of boarding houses and lodgings were run by single businesswomen. Furthermore, the presence of men at the event this summer, including those joining the procession with the TUC banner, was a tangible reminder of the contribution of male campaigners in the marches, in writing letters to the *Hastings Observer* and in political lobbying one hundred years ago. However, in addition to factual information, the Women's March gave an insight into the feelings and sentiments such campaigning engendered. Some women carried their glorious hats and costumes to Warrior Square in June, quietly greeting others who appeared to share the same destination. However, after the celebrations

were concluded, wonderfully costumed women left St. Mary's proudly and anecdotal reports suggest, throughout the evening, musical events, cafes and even supermarkets were frequented by the modern day suffragettes. Perhaps such shared events help to re-kindle some of the energy and determination with which past campaigners were imbued.

Consequently, the Hastings and St. Leonards Women's March of 2018 can be seen not only as an opportunity to celebrate past success but also to explore the impact of female suffrage and the empowerment of women within the local community today. Many of those marching and singing had discovered more about their own personal family history through their contributions to the choir and the banners. Such stories are relevant and important at an individual level and from a much wider perspective, demonstrating the extent of the campaigning and the lengths to which women and some men were prepared to go – often over a prolonged period – in order to obtain the vote. This event brought people together to remember a historical event, yet in so doing it emphasised the relevance of the issues of equality and respect today. At a time when there appears to be a focus on societal polarisation and division, the voices of women in 2018, recalling the words of campaigners one hundred years ago, promoted unity and defiant harmony.

Notes

1. Ann Kramer, *Turbulent Spinsters: Women's Fight for the Vote in Hastings and St Leonards*, (Hastings, Circaidy Gregory Press, 2018).

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Processions

Ruth Howard

Artist

On Sunday 10 June 2018, an estimated 100,000 women and girls gathered to celebrate one hundred years of women's suffrage with a mass participation artwork entitled *Processions*. The idea was to mark this historic moment in women's history with a living portrait of twenty-first century women in four British cities: London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Kinetika – a lively arts organisation based in Thurrock, Essex – took part in the London event and I was one of the two artists who designed and 'batiked' the silk banner that would represent Dartford (Kent) – my home town. The brief was to highlight inspirational women from our town's past and present.

I had first become involved with silk banner-making when I was introduced to Kinetika the previous year. The first project I worked on was a celebration of seventy years of Indian independence. Artists designed and painted a six-metre high silk banner representing our local history, focusing on the silk trading routes to and from India. Our banner formed part of a set of ten (one each to represent the boroughs along the Thames) and the project provided an excellent opportunity for artists to be part of a rare international arts residency. We employed a batik style of painting using wax as a resist with natural dyes and hand-made silk from India. When complete these ten English towns were twinned with ten towns in India along the River Hooghley, a tributary of the Ganges. In those places Indian artists had also been active in producing their own silk banners. When all the banners were complete the artists involved assembled in Calcutta to visit each of the participating boroughs with the aim of developing cultural and

community links. This was an eye-opening and an inspirational experience.

For the *Processions* event, five Thames-side boroughs – Southend, Gravesend, Thurrock, Dartford, Barking and Dagenham – were asked to make banners representing notable women from their area. Each of the five was headed 'Women of the Estuary'. The women featured on the Dartford banner were chosen through a careful and independent selection process. They included Madam Martina Bergman-Osterberg (1849-1915), a proponent of women's physical education and founder of the first all-woman Physical Education College (located in Dartford). An early supporter of women's suffrage in Sweden and of women's emancipation organisations, Bergman-Osterberg believed in women's social, economic and spiritual freedom. We chose to illustrate her life by portraying the game of Netball (which she introduced to Great Britain) alongside her portrait. From the town's more recent history we also featured Councillor Patsy Thurlow, twice Mayor of Dartford. Councillor Thurlow has devoted most of her life to arts and culture in our local area. She successfully fought for a skate park to be built and is instrumental in mounting the Dartford Festival, a huge free annual event. These achievements have been so successful that it was a natural choice to celebrate them by featuring some skateboarders and a marquee alongside her facial image.

The other two nominees successfully featured were Anne Graves and Ruth Howard. Both are full time volunteers at 'what if.?', a community based arts organisation that inspires others to paint and uses art as a therapy. The two were



Batiked silk banners representing the Thames estuary towns at 'Processions' London, June 2018

portrayed with the easels and art works to represent the 'what if...?' gallery. Each of these four Dartford inspirational women was named around the edges of the flag. Other nominees, who did not make the final selection, included Andrea Arnold, actress and director, who was born in Dartford and Anne Swithinbank, the accomplished horticulturist, writer and broadcaster who attended Dartford Grammar School for Girls.

Making the 1.5m x 1.2m silk is a lengthy process. It starts with drawing the chosen images, then tracing and mapping. Secondly wax is applied to form the lighter or white areas before we use natural vegetable dyes for the images. After a process of wax removal and steaming the fabric the silk is ready to sew into a banner and attach to poles.

On Sunday 10 June – a bright sunny day in Central London – we assembled at Green Park and were each allocated either a white, green or violet coloured scarf. The mass filtered into three channels of walking groups – this was described as being like toothpaste with three colours merging together. There was a great feeling of unity as the women assembled with friendly laughter and shared stories of their town's flag. As we started the walk near Marble Arch, passers-by cheered and car horns tooted to show support. As we spied each television camera crew a huge roar would erupt and, with whistles blowing, we waved at the cameras. We learned a lot from the women around us about the stories and characters that were featured on their art work, making it a very interesting afternoon. It was

noticeable that there was an unusually high number of women photographers, camera crew and interviewers en route. Men took a bit of a back seat for a change, which was nice. Our group was stopped in Trafalgar Square to be interviewed for the BBC by Lauren Laverne. Our artistic Director Ali Pretty, surrounded by the five flags, explained the process we had used to produce them, though there wasn't enough air-time for her to explain and describe each element of the flags fully.

The walk, which was organised to celebrate one hundred years of some women being given the vote, did not have a primarily political motive. However, topical women's rights issues were highlighted by some groups in their banners and flags and in the chanting that accompanied the march. Of course there was no trouble or protest from on-lookers, except one man who stole a violet coloured scarf and, even though he was chased down the road with a tiny five-foot-nothing woman hanging on to his coat tail, would not give it back!

The entire collection of banners from the participants in all four processions – those from London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh – will undertake a year-long tour of the United Kingdom from September 2018 until August 2019. They will be displayed in various locations across the country, both to demonstrate artistic skills and to commemorate the achievements of the past. It is to be hoped that the displays will also help change attitudes and, perhaps, to inspire women and girls to achieve more and aim higher in the future.

Votes for women

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, 6-24 March 2018

Vine Pemberton Joss

As the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act was commemorated this year, I waited hopefully for revivals of some original suffrage plays. Some years previously I had attended a staged reading of selected excerpts at the National Theatre – which included *Votes for Women*. It was a revelation how relevant these plays are – period pieces with modern resonances. It seemed I was to be disappointed until I heard about the 'empowerment' season at the New Vic. This included (timed to coincide with International Women's Day) a revival of one of the forgotten gems of suffrage drama, *Votes for Women*. Written and performed during the white heat of the Edwardian campaign, the play is a fascinating glimpse into the preoccupations and concerns of those who were unaware how the story would unfold.

First produced at The Royal Court in 1907 under Harley Granville Barker and much acclaimed at the time, the play was last performed in 1914. Its author, American actor-manager, Elizabeth Robins, was a champion of the 'New Drama', which tackled topical and unpleasant subjects (corruption, sexually transmitted disease, abortion) in a realistic manner. Seeking good roles for herself, she pawned her jewellery, leased a theatre and was the first Hedda Gabler on the UK stage (1891). Thereafter she was inextricably linked to New Woman feminism. An ardent suffragette and friend of the Pankhursts, she nevertheless disapproved of the increasing use of violence. Instead, she offered her literary talents, serving as the first President of the Women Writers' Suffrage League. Robins

divided 25 percent of her royalties from *Votes for Women* between the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the Women's Social and Political Union.

The New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme was founded in 1962 by Stephen Joseph, one of a group of post-war directors seeking to re-invigorate British theatre. A pioneer of theatre-in-the-round, Joseph established a summer season company in Scarborough while seeking a more permanent base. This was eventually found in a disused cinema in Stoke-on-Trent. Under its first director, Peter Cheeseman, the Victoria Theatre gained an international reputation for productions rooted in the experiences of the local community. By 1983, however, a new building was needed and a successful appeal launched. Three years later, the re-christened New Vic moved into one of Europe's earliest purpose-built theatres-in-the-round. What strikes the first time visitor is the affection in which the theatre is held by the community it serves. Almost everyone I spoke to was keen to tell me how often they went to the theatre, how inclusive it is, about the 'community cast' involved in the eight or so productions each year (over twenty local people appear in the public meeting scene in *Votes for Women*). This enthusiasm may explain the comparative youth of the predominantly female audience. On the mid-week night I attended, there were several groups in their mid/late teens, not obviously a school party, plus three families with younger teenagers.

Director Theresa Heskins wisely chose to adapt the



Danielle Henry
as Annie Kenney
with cast and
Community
Company.
'Votes for Women',
New Vic Theatre
photograph by
Mark Douet

script and clarify the historical political landscape for a modern audience. Her revisions serve to highlight ongoing concerns about women in public life, for example the gendered imbalance of power and double standards of sexual behaviour. Robins originally described her work as 'a dramatic tract in three acts'.¹ A small exhibition in the foyer loaned by the family of suffragette Thirza Cove displaying postcards, photographs and sketches of her Holloway prison cell attracted a lot of interest during the interval.

The play captures an important moment of transition when the campaign for the vote shifted into direct action. Heskins provided historical context with a prologue dramatising the 1906 protest in the House of Commons when MPs talked out Keir Hardie's women's suffrage motion. A circle of increasingly restive women appear above the auditorium, listening to recorded filibustering. Heskins went back to *Hansard* and quoted from the debate: 'I am too fond of women to drag them into the political arena' and 'the public duties of citizenship should be on man and man alone'.² The women begin to protest, first quietly in disbelief then shouting in anger. The police move in and they are forcibly removed, calling out for 'Deeds not words.' A programme note tells us that *Hansard* makes no mention of this 'shouting out in Parliament' nor was the Commons archive able to find a record.

The setting gives way to an idyllic Edwardian garden during a political house party. The Conservatives' recent crushing general election defeat provides the background to discussion of the suffragettes' behaviour. Robins was close friends with Lady Florence Bell, wife of a Liberal MP, and step-mother to Gertrude Bell, who founded the Anti-Suffrage League in 1908. She was careful to show all shades of opinion: from the amused contempt of the male politicians and the anti-suffrage arguments of Mrs Heriot through Mrs Freddy's long-standing suffrage allegiance to Vida Levering's defence of direct action. Vida, flirtatiously witty and undeterred in the face of prejudice, was played with wry humour by Polly Lister. Vida is working with her hostess, Lady John Wynnstay, on a

philanthropic project to build hostels for destitute women. She is introduced to Lady John's niece, the unworldly heiress, Jean Dunbarton, newly engaged to prospective Cabinet member Geoffrey Stonor. Jean is shocked by the stories Vida tells about the lives of poor and homeless women and persuades Stonor to take her to a suffragette rally. As the act ends, it becomes clear through the creaky melodramatic device of a dropped handkerchief that Stonor and Vida share a past.

Heskins wisely chose to make radical cuts in the Trafalgar Square rally scene, hailed in 1907 as 'the finest stage crowd scene seen for years'.³ The movement of the crowd and the energy of the speakers contrast sharply with the leisurely if necessary scene setting in the previous act. Robins based this act on her own suffrage awakening when she went to Trafalgar Square and 'first heard women talking politics in public'.⁴ Vida's transition from awkward novice into assured public speaker was vividly captured. The conversion narrative was foregrounded as the naïve Jean and her aunt were inspired by speeches.

For a modern audience, Heskins turned the fictional speakers into real-life activists: Annie Kenney and, predictably, Christabel Pankhurst. However, in re-writing Robins' polemic, Heskins inserted words from Christabel's later speeches, allowing this 1907 Christabel too much fore-knowledge; references to future self-sacrifice, arson and even force-feeding jarred. Hannah Edwards captured Christabel's reported skill and charisma as an orator, exchanging repartee with a lively, frequently hostile audience. The scene might have benefited from a bigger crowd and a greater sense of place – the base of Nelson's Column perhaps instead of a plain platform?

The production was at its strongest at its most political. The plot device of the woman-with-a-past coming face to face with her seducer who is now in a position of power was melodramatic and creaky in 1907, however much Robins sought to subvert it. The shades of Wilde (*A Woman of No Importance*), Pinero (*The Second Mrs Tanqueray*) and Shaw (*Mrs Warren's Profession*) were all present. Vida has put her past behind

her, thanks to a convenient legacy which gives her economic independence. She forgives herself for the past through her work for other women. The reconciliation narrative shows Vida rejecting Stonor's reluctant offer of marriage as compensation for her earlier seduction and abortion. Instead they negotiate his political future serving the suffrage cause. His cynical conversion because 'women are much more conservative than men ... especially the women the property qualification would bring in' is sadly prescient of what was finally granted in 1918.⁵

Good use was made of the in-the-round performance space. In a uniformly good ensemble cast, it is unfair to single out individual performers but Lowri Izzard was a luminous Jean, Anna Kirke made a suitably acid Mrs Heriot and Polly Lister gave genuine warmth and feeling with just the right amount of anger to the clichés. The whole was rounded off by an all-cast rendition of the new *Pankhurst Anthem*, commissioned

by the BBC from Helen and Lucy Pankhurst, using words from Emmeline Pankhurst's speeches. Its references to 'a sisterhood of sacrifices' were a melancholy reminder that the fight for the vote lasted another eleven years and that true equality between the sexes still remains elusive.

Notes

- 1.. Jean Chothia, *The New Woman and Other Emancipated Woman Plays* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), 135.
- 2.. Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 4th series, vol. 155, 30 March to 25 April 1906, 1582-1587.
- 3.. *The Sketch*, quoted in Angela V. John, *Elizabeth Robins: Staging A Life* (Stroud, Tempus, 2007), 205.
- 4.. Elizabeth Robins, *Way Stations* (New York, 1913), 40.
- 5.. Jean Chothia, *The New Woman*, 189.

A Fresh Start and Two (More) Portraits: Theatrical Shows on the Life and Work of Ethel Smyth for 2018

Christopher Wiley

University of Surrey

Two contrasting initiatives are being brought to the stage this year to mark the involvement in the suffrage movement of Dame Ethel Smyth (1858–1944), composer, author, and suffragette. Both find their unique place within the wider lineage of literary representations of Smyth, hence my appropriation of a formulation originally used by her in *Streaks of Life*, 'A Fresh Start and Two Portraits', for the title of this review.¹ The first project, *Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle*, is a nationally touring professional solo production for actor-singer Lucy Stevens accompanied by Elizabeth Marcus at the piano. The other, *Ethel Smyth: A Furious Longing – The Story of Woking's Composer*, is a more locally-focussed amateur venture developed by Woking Community Play Association, to be performed by an ensemble cast in the town in which Smyth was resident for the last several decades of her life.

Between her larger-than-life personality and her fascinating biography, Smyth yields much real-life material with which to inspire and enrich works of art. *Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle*, touring England in 2018 and 2019, is equally at home in a variety of venues, in no small measure due to its two artists' responsiveness to different types of spaces and their seemingly limitless capacity to captivate audiences. Its titular phrase is drawn from Smyth's reflection on her unconventional relationship with Henry Brewster, that 'From the first, Harry and I were prepared ... firmly to grasp the nettle, but not to flourish it unnecessarily in people's faces', coupled to a remark she once made in her diary concerning 'a great article I mean to write when I have time: "Grasping the Nettle", that is, showing up the anti-woman thing'.² Correspondingly, the first half centres on the period of *The Wreckers* (1902–4), Smyth's most ambitious and large-scale opera (for which she collaborated with Brewster as librettist) as well as her crowning achievement in the genre, and the second on her involvement with the suffragette movement.

In an ingenious workaround to the restrictions inherent in a one-woman show, the script of *Grasp the Nettle*

has been artfully compiled from Smyth's words and music almost exclusively, complemented by testimonials from others who knew her (whose words are given voice during the performance via mocked-up audio recordings). Opening with Smyth's powerful statement that 'There is no sex in art'³ (which itself resonates with her later claim made in her most stridently feminist text, *Female Pipings in Eden*, that 'Art is bi-sexual, the female element implicit with the male'⁴), it is judiciously bookended by Smyth's Mass in D (1891), from the solemn initial strains of its 'Kyrie' to the work's glorious closing 'Amen'. The carefully crafted show incorporates many wonderfully subtle touches: for example, Smyth's visionary proclamation that 'I want women to turn their minds to big and difficult jobs; not just to go on hugging the shore, afraid to put out to sea' is accompanied by an excerpt from her 'On the Cliffs of Cornwall', the Prelude to Act 2 of *The Wreckers*.⁵ Mention of Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, the wife of Smyth's Leipzig-based composition teacher thought to have been her first serious (albeit unrequited) lesbian love interest, prompts Marcus's playing of the opening of Smyth's piano piece 'Aus der Jugendzeit!!' (c.1878–80), a musical character-sketch of the object of her affections.

Grasp the Nettle benefits considerably from the multi-talented Stevens's dual background as actress and singer, thoroughly embodying the character of Smyth and bringing her to life through her commanding vocal presence, as well as breathing life into words that – even in the most familiar of the passages culled from Smyth's writings – do not have quite the same effect on the page as the stage. Stevens delights audiences through her performances of extracts from Smyth's vocal music as interludes to her monologue, providing some effective and engaging contrasts. Remarkably versatile as a vocalist, Stevens follows Smyth's reported practice of singing all the roles from bass to soprano when introducing her music, and *Grasp the Nettle* thereby doubles as a compelling education in some of Smyth's most major works.

Given its nature as a theatricalised show, the balance between words and music in *Grasp the Nettle* is stacked significantly in favour of the former. Marcus is gifted with the rare ability to enter seamlessly as pianist, underscoring Stevens's narration in the manner of a melodrama such that the speech remains squarely in the foreground. Even when Smyth's music is heard, then, often this takes the form of Marcus's performing excerpted piano arrangements to provide atmospheric accompaniment to Stevens's narrative. Perhaps inevitably, Smyth works of the period around the 1910s tend to dominate, and 'The March of the Women' itself is possibly a little over-used, with half a dozen instances towards the start of Act 2, partly in consequence of Smyth's having herself quoted the melody in the song 'On the Road' and in the Overture to *The Boatswain's Mate*. That said, its main presentation is pleasingly unexpected, lyrical and plaintive rather than defiantly militant, reflecting its use to comfort and console suffragettes during the dark hours of imprisonment and hunger striking and not merely to rouse the crowds and promote solidarity during rallies and demonstrations.

Doubtless I was not alone in longing to hear more from the two musicians, given both the expressiveness they consistently brought to their fresh interpretations of Smyth's works, and since many of the musical offerings in *Grasp the Nettle* comprise extracts rather than complete pieces. Indeed, its billing at Oxfordshire's annual Festival of English Music as a 'morning concert' courted the danger that audience members might have expected a more conventional, unstaged recital offering unabridged pieces, as well as selling it short by overlooking its immense value as theatre. It was nevertheless very positively received by the sizeable audience on that occasion, with multiple curtain calls – although not as many as Smyth herself received (thirteen) at the Leipzig premiere of *The Wreckers* in 1906!⁶

Ethel Smyth: A Furious Longing – The Story of Woking's Composer is the brainchild of Woking Community Play Association (WCPA), a non-auditioning group for all ages whose mission is to 'tell stories of Woking that bring people together to make drama'.⁷ Founded in 1990, it is perhaps unsurprising that Smyth, as one of Woking's most famous former residents, has previously appeared as a secondary character in its inaugural stage production, Ann Jellicoe's *Changing Places* (1992).⁸ The phrase 'a furious longing' was used several times by Smyth in her memoirs, for instance, in conveying her profound desire to return to the friends she had made in Leipzig, having gone back to her English family home for the summer in 1878.⁹ The central premise of WCPA's play is that a high-school student, Gyana, is given a homework assignment to research Ethel Smyth, not somebody with whom she was previously familiar. Online, she comes across various resources on Smyth at the fictional video-sharing site 'Ourtube' (a thinly-veiled reference to YouTube), which are enacted onstage by the cast while being freely commented upon by Gyana herself. Through this means, Smyth's life story is revealed to the audience chronologically.

Over two years in the planning, and having been unsuccessful in raising sufficient funds to commission a professional scriptwriter, WCPA took the bold decision to write the entirety of *A Furious Longing* in-house, dividing the labour between five authors with strong ties to the Association.¹⁰ It is one of the script's strengths that Smyth's life is retold through multiple, occasionally conflicting, authorial

voices, eschewing a sense of uniformity. Significant artistic licence has been creatively exercised in developing the script; fresh interpretations are provided for some of the best-known episodes in Smyth's life story. She is introduced to Pankhurst at a private meeting between the two of them, rather than by hearing Pankhurst speak publicly at a suffragette meeting; and she arranges in advance to conduct the suffragettes with her toothbrush in the famous anecdote from her days in Holloway prison, having been alerted that Thomas Beecham has arrived to visit her. And, although the play proceeds chronologically, it strangely reverts to 1923 for its final scene, ending twenty-one years before Smyth's death and antedating some of her greatest work, which runs the risk of leading to some confusion on the part of audience members.

A Furious Longing has been in rehearsal since the start of June, and will be performed in the Autumn 2018 in the Kemp Room at the H.G. Wells Centre, Woking. It will be intriguing to see the strategies by which director Tracey Adkins navigates its multi-faceted script to yield a cohesive interpretation for the stage, as well as those by which the actors realise its characters and respond to the complexities of a play incorporating so much content and so many minor roles. Notwithstanding the challenges inherent in the theatrical presentation of a biographical play, I am optimistic that this production will meet with much success in Smyth's home town, and that it will confirm that Smyth continues to be of great interest both to local amateur communities as well as to national professional projects.

Notes

- 1.. Ethel Smyth, 'A Fresh Start and Two Portraits', *Streaks of Life* (London, Longmans, 1921, 2nd ed. 1924), 69–92.
- 2.. Ethel Smyth, *What Happened Next* (London, Longmans, 1940), 23; Ethel Smyth, Diary, 19 October 1922, quoted in Christopher St John [Christabel Marshall], *Ethel Smyth: A Biography* (London, Longmans, 1959), 181.
- 3.. Ethel Smyth, 'An Open Secret', *Streaks of Life*, 231–46, at 242.
- 4.. Ethel Smyth, 'Female Pippings in Eden', *Female Pippings in Eden* ([London], Peter Davies, 1933, 2nd ed. 1934), 3–56, at 47.
- 5.. Letter from Ethel Smyth to Henry Brewster, [1902], quoted in Smyth, *What Happened Next*, 210.
- 6.. Christopher Wiley, Foreword to Ethel Smyth, *The Wreckers* (Retrospect Opera ROO04, 2018; re-release of 1994 Conifer Classics recording), Liner notes, [4–7, at 5].
- 7.. Woking Community Play Association, [wokingcpa.com/about/, accessed 18 Aug. 2018].
- 8.. See also *Changing Woking, 1900–1929* (Old Woking, Woking Community Play Association Research Group, 1992), 44–5, 62.
- 9.. Ethel Smyth, *Impressions that Remained: Memoirs*, 2 volumes (London, Longmans, 1919), Vol. 1, 254.
- 10.. Natasha Moore, Anna Molesworth, Jo Parker, Keith Scott, and Christopher Wiley, *Ethel Smyth: A Furious Longing – The Story of Woking's Composer* (unpubl. MS., 2018).

Suffragette Emily Wilding Davison – a figure to meet in Epsom

Christine Charlesworth

Artist

On 5 February 2018, I received an enquiry email from Sarah Dewing, chair of the Emily Davison Memorial Project (EDMP) in Epsom. She explained project's aims and, from this enquiry, the journey towards creating Emily began. It was decided that a seated, approachable, life-size figure would be the best way to portray Davison – who was internationally famous yet is not commemorated locally. We thought that she could be depicted on a bench with space for members of the public to sit beside her. Sarah asked me to produce details for the sculpture, as funds still had to be raised. Before the end of February, I supplied full costings for artwork, bronze casting, delivery and setting on site. I also found a supplier for a pale granite bench that would set off the bronze sculpture well.

By March I was already doing research. I wanted to know so much more about Emily than the few web photographs told me. I needed to find out more about her as a person through the historical record. Sarah put me in contact with historians Dr Alana Harris, who is an Epsom resident, and Professor June Purvis, both members of EDMP who have great knowledge of the Suffragette movement and costumes. I was recommended books to read and found *Emily Wilding Davison: a Suffragette's Family Album* by Maureen Howes extremely useful. I discovered that she had two University degrees, a good sense of humour and was a popular, kind, articulate person. She was also passionate about the rights of women. I felt that it would be appropriate to depict her restful but attentive, holding a pamphlet or book, in animated conversation with whoever decided to sit beside her. I was also sent photographs of Emily that were not available on the web, which helped to see her face and figure from different angles. In particular, the last photograph taken of Emily, showing her looking tall, slim and

confident, wearing a fitted short jacket was exactly the image I wanted to portray in the sculpture.

On 4 April Philippa Bilton, a relative of Emily Wilding Davison, visited Epsom to pose for photographs in period costume. I directed Philippa to adopt the pose I had in mind and photographed her from all angles. Paul Taylor of 'What's on in My Town' (and deputy chair of EDMP) also took photographs for publicity. That evening I attended the EDMP meeting in Epsom, to meet the committee members for the first time and show the photographs to illustrate my ideas of how the finished statue might look. Before moving further forward, planning permission had to be approved by Epsom and Ewell Council and also Surrey County Council. A detailed sketch and measurements of the proposed sculpture and bench were submitted. After several months, approval has now been given and the position of the sculpture has been agreed on the planned re-designed Market Square. This area will be ready to receive the sculpture in early June 2019, when unveiling is planned.

EDMP decided it would be helpful to have a maquette (small version) of the proposed sculpture. This would enable the residents of Epsom, supporters of women's history and potential sponsors to see how the finished sculpture will look. Available as a limited edition 'collectors' piece', it will also help with fundraising for the main sculpture.

Working on the maquette has allowed me time, creatively, to 'get to know' Emily and the elements I want to emphasise in my portrayal of her. I needed a model of similar build to Emily and therefore contacted Epsom Players, who recommended Sarah Jane Pullen for a photo session at Epsom Playhouse. First I photographed her in position wearing corsets, then period clothes, to ensure that all measurements and posture were correct for that era.

The Maquette is now complete and will be displayed in Epsom town centre. Emily sits on her bench, deep in conversation. Beside her are some of her favourite books, together with the mortar board which she always wore when marching with the Suffragettes.

For further information, please visit the project website: emilydavisonproject.org



Maquette of proposed Emily Wilding Davison memorial statue created by Christine Charlesworth



by kind permission of
Helen Marshall

The Face of Suffrage

Helen Marshall

Artist

This winter, Birmingham New Street station will host a giant art installation to commemorate 100 years of votes for women. *The Face of Suffrage* – a floor-based, 200-metre square visual portrait of women in the 21st century – will mark this historic moment. It will consist of more than 3,500 historical images (from the Women's Library at the London School of Economics) of women involved in the Suffrage movement, together with thousands of photographs of members of the public from across the West Midlands and beyond. In marking the close of the centenary year with a bold visual statement that points to the future as well as celebrating past achievements, the aim is to educate and inspire.

The project will mark the end of the 1918 centenary year by harnessing photography – a particularly important medium

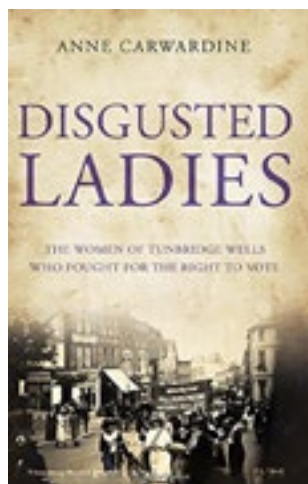
for female self-representation. The project aims to make women more visible. This will be in contrast to their invisibility throughout art history, both as subjects of portraiture and as artists in their own right. This work is about breaking down the barriers between professional and amateur photography and amongst people. The artwork will be on display between Thursday 15 November and Friday 14 December – the day which marks the 100th anniversary of women voting for the first time. An exhibition accompanying the artwork will be at Birmingham Hippodrome from 16 October 2018 – 31 January 2019.

To find out more about the project please visit www.thepeoplespicture.com/thefaceofsuffrage

This project is supported by Arts Council England, GRAIN Photography Hub, Network Rail, CrossCountry, LSE Women's Library, Birmingham City University and Birmingham Hippodrome.

Book Reviews

**Anne Carwardine, *Disgusted Ladies: The Women of Tunbridge Wells who fought for the Right to Vote* Leicester: Matador, 2018. £12.99, ISBN 978-178803-288-9 (paperback), pp. 302
Reviewed by Caroline Auckland**



Anne Carwardine's book concerns people, place and politics involved in the 'Votes for Women' campaign. It explores, chronologically, the history of selected Tunbridge Wells campaigners against a backdrop of national events, commencing in 1866 and concluding with first opportunity for women to vote on 14 December 1918.

Carwardine introduces Tunbridge Wells as the book's main theme, with the suffragette colours of purple, green and white highlighted in the

foreword. The local focus is aligned with the national claim that female protestors who wanted the vote were being treated as criminals rather than political prisoners. Olive Walton, whose militant activities take her from Tunbridge Wells – via London's Oxford Street and the 'hammer attacks' of 1912 to Holloway and Aylesbury Prisons where hunger-striking led to force-feeding – is the first 'Disgusted Lady'. The inclusion of Olive at this point in the narrative sets the framework for the rest of Carwardine's 'Ladies' as each woman moves from Tunbridge Wells to London to interact with key national suffragist and suffragette figures. Carwardine proposes to explore the lives of some of the local campaigners, their experiences of being a woman at that time and to consider the motivations, effects and reactions to their campaigning methods. She pays homage to the joint exhibition created by the University of Kent and Tunbridge Wells Museum entitled 'Inspiring Women: Hidden Histories from West Kent' as her original source of inspiration.

Successfully achieving her first aim, Carwardine presents a collection of strong, determined women, drawing attention to their local and national activities with key figures such as Sylvia Pankhurst, Annie Kenney, Muriel Matters, Lady Frances Belfour and Millicent Garret Fawcett. The focus on local women such as Louisa Twining of the tea family, whose wealth enabled her to live as an independent woman and become a Poor Law Guardian at Tonbridge Union Workhouse in 1893, is well researched and informative. Another Poor Law Guardian, philanthropist Amelia Scott is introduced: Scott was instrumental in bringing the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW) and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) to Tunbridge Wells in the form of local branches. Her work also brought the NUWW National Conference to Tunbridge Wells in 1906. Another highlight is the relationship between Tunbridge Wells' Violet Tillard and Muriel Matters, whom she joins in the House of Commons where Matters chains herself to the grille. Violet lowers a banner to the speaker and throws leaflets, leading to a term

in Holloway prison. Examples of local opponents of women's suffrage such as Margaret Backhouse, (National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage) and Gwladys Solomon, balances the research.

Novelist Sarah Grand's inclusion in this book is both necessary and interesting, merited by her political role as president of the local Branch of the NUWSS. Discussion of Grand's novels – with their contentious subject matter relating to contagious diseases – supports Carwardine's proposal that women found other ways to engage with issues which affected them and to protest against and discuss the roles society forced them into. Fiction gave Grand a useful medium through which to explore women's issues of modernity and the concept of the 'New Woman'.

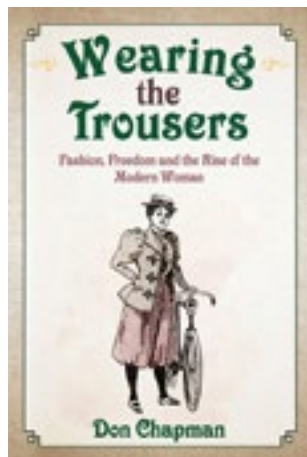
The inclusion of place provides a geographical context that is useful for the local historian. With an engaging text, the reader is taken on a virtual tour around the town including the Nevill Cricket Pavilion, which was destroyed by fire (1913). This unsubstantiated suffragette attack on a bastion of male sport remains a key event in local suffrage history reporting which Carwardine has also located in the *London Standard*. Tunbridge Wells Opera House, used for an NUWW National Annual Conference chaired by Millicent Garret Fawcett, was also where Olive Walton and Emily Wilding Davison would hide in 1913 to disturb the Liberal Party Conference to demand 'Votes for Women'. The Pantiles, home of the WSPU, and 18 Crescent Road, the branch office of the NUWSS, are other notable buildings.

Structurally, the twenty-six chapters are intersected between a useful abbreviation list with brief historical detail and a postscript detailing the future lives of the key Tunbridge Wells women. Enriched with a chart of local and national events, Carwardine's investigation demonstrates how local activity all over the country led to many different groups descending on London to take part in the main demonstrations and protests. Her study informs understanding of the 'Votes for Women' debate in the provinces, with her focus on the importance of Tunbridge Wells to the national debate.

The selected bibliography is testament to Carwardine's extensive research. It includes documents from the Women's Library together with unpublished diaries and autobiographies from the Museum of London archives. Women such as Music Hall actress Kitty Marion – whose description of protestors' experiences is covered – fulfils the author's aims as outlined in the foreword.

As this book is written in an accessible style, I would recommend it to students of local social history and academic researchers as well as a wider audience. Whilst its focus is Tunbridge Wells women, the town's proximity to London and infrastructure of railways ensures that the local story becomes heavily linked with the national picture. It offers an insight into both the suffrage movement and the lives of women within the book's time frame. Carwardine has made a solid contribution to the study of women's social history in a style which is both accessible, informative and well researched. In fact, it is a joy to read.

Don Chapman, *Wearing the Trousers: Fashion, Freedom and the Rise of the Modern Woman*
Stroud: Amberley, 2017. £16.99, ISBN 9-781445-669502 (paperback) pp. 336
Reviewed by Rowena Edlin-White
Independent Scholar & Author



The publication of *Wearing the Trousers* is very timely as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first (partial) vote for women: it serves as an important reminder that women – and men – were publicly exploring women's rights and choices for at least two decades before Votes for Women got under way.

The book explores the rational dress movement in Britain, which emerged in the 1850s, a time when most women's clothing was unhealthy (tightly-

laced corsets compressing internal organs and restricting breathing); insanitary (hems dragging along dirty pavements) and downright dangerous (layers of petticoats and crinolines catching fire or getting caught in carriage wheels). Surely a preference for clothing which offered freedom of movement and improved health and safety could not be a particularly contentious issue? As Don Chapman reveals, it caused as much derision and public outrage as anything the suffragettes would do fifty years later.

Amelia Bloomer, an American, began the campaign 1851 and her name would become forever synonymous with the garments she promoted – full-length baggy trousers secured at the ankle – and those who wore them. For years to come the term 'Bloomer' or 'Bloomerite' would be applied to women who stepped out of line and pursued feminist reform of all kinds.

Mrs Bloomer never actually visited Britain but, from the start, she had an enthusiastic advocate in Caroline Dexter (1819-84), the daughter of a Nottingham watchmaker. Dexter, in September 1851, had the temerity to appear in the vicinity of Crystal Palace wearing 'pink-striped pantaloons' (p. 28) prior to giving a public lecture, which had to be cancelled due to an unruly audience. This was prophetic of the kind of treatment meted out to suffragist speakers in later years. Nothing fazed, Dexter went on to lecture and demonstrate rational dress around the country for several years before leaving for Australia in 1854. Chapman has uncovered much that was previously unknown about her life and work before emigration, which makes fascinating reading.

Another woman brought vividly to life is Lady Florence Harberton (1843-1911), whose interest in rational dress led to what Chapman calls the 'second campaign' (p. 118) to persuade women to adopt the bloomer costume for greater safety and comfort. This was particularly the case whilst cycling, playing sport and taking exercise, all of which were becoming popular for women. At this juncture, the difference between bloomers and knickers (that is, knickerbockers, as worn by sporty gentlemen), enters the debate. In 1881, Lady Florence founded

The Rational Dress Society.

Thirty years after the first bloomers were seen, the subject remained contentious. As well as heated debate about what was socially and morally acceptable for a woman to wear, in-fighting amongst the proponents of rational dress, and the reluctance of many women to make themselves conspicuous by ignoring the fashions of the times, retarded real change for many years.

Rational dress was not just about freedom of movement, either; Lady Harberton also supported The National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association (founded 1875). Such was Victorian convention, even amongst the poor, that not only a widow but her entire family, servants and relations were expected to wear the correct degree of mourning attire, often to their impoverishment. This custom, of course, affected women far more than men, who could get away with wearing a black armband.

Gradually, dress reform and associated issues such as women's education, health, and self-determination in other fields fed into the women's suffrage movement and Chapman's narrative extends briefly into the First World War and the first vote for British women in 1918. The author has researched his subject intimately and tenaciously and the text is densely referenced, but this need not impede the general reader; some forty pages of notes are supplied for those who require them, as well as a helpful bibliography arranged by subject and a good index. The book also has sixteen pages of contemporary drawings, cartoons and photographs.

I found this book absorbing, informative and entertaining and believe it to be a valuable addition to nineteenth-century Women's Studies, particularly in the areas of fashion, health and the public emergence of women as campaigners and organisers.

Anne Spurgeon, *Women and Children in the Factory: A life of Adelaide Anderson (1863-1936)*
Worcestershire: Aspect Design, 2016. £14.99,
ISBN 978-1-908832-93-1 (paperback), pp. 437
Reviewed by Michele Riley
Saint Joseph's College at Maine



This extraordinary book examines the life and career of Adelaide Anderson. Her achievements in industrial reform were pivotal in improving the lives of British women and children during the industrial age. The book intertwines her illustrious career with her family history. In many labour reform books, we are not permitted to explore the intimate details of the major actors within the movement. In this book, the

private insight provides the reader with a better understanding of her role as a civil servant, her decision-making process, and demure personality. Pertinent topics addressed within the book include: the advancement of women in civil service jobs, continued resistance from women suffrage leaders on

protective rules, the new role of the state to intervene on improving work conditions, and the attempt to improve workers' health and safety on an international level. The book progresses in an historical sequence from her life starting with her family history, through her college years, career, and retirement.

In the first section, the reader is provided with insights about Anderson's decision to pursue a civil service career and how her family relationships affected this decision. Education, family, and a sense of duty were priorities for the Anderson family and helped shape her sense of social obligation and built her strong resilient nature. At Girton College, she was an academically strong student, studying moral sciences. She did not engage, however, in the social activities at Girton. The reader has a glimpse of her demure and quiet personality during this early section of the book. This quiet demeanor continued throughout her professional career. Additionally, during this early section, we see her main drive for vocation as a duty, rather than simply paid employment: a trait inherited from her grandfather, Alexander Anderson.

Following her college tenure, Anderson lectured at several venues including the Women's Co-operative Guild: the interactions at these guild meetings initiated her life-long journey in labour activism. Shortly afterwards, she began working at the Women's Employment Commission. In 1893, the Home Secretary, Herbert Asquith, created appointments for two new female inspectors within the Factory Inspectorate. After the unprecedented announcement, Anderson began the process of applying for a lady inspectorate position. It was during this early part of her career that we see the Anderson family face two challenges. First, her father, Alexander Gavin Anderson, was forced to retire and died shortly thereafter from an illness in 1892, which put the family under financial strain. Secondly, her younger sister began showing signs of mental illness. During the Victorian period, the loss of a husband, financial instability, and mental illness were all social stigmas that put quite a strain on the family.

Most of the book explores Anderson's years working as a factory inspector. During her early tenure, she was busy inspecting factories, writing up extensive reports, and making industrial safety and sanitation recommendations for women and children under the age of eighteen. In 1897, for example, women were suffering from lead poisoning, caused by the white lead works process that was taking place in London and North East of England. Upon recommendation, special rules were implemented that prohibited women from working in areas with exposure to this threat. Quite often, when special rules pertaining specifically to women were executed under the state, there was opposition from suffrage leaders. The suffragists argued that women did not require protection, but rather an equal footing with men in the workforce. Moreover, continued regulations based on safety would eventually force women out of their jobs, create a public opinion that women were helpless, and that middle-class ideological luxuries were being forced onto working-class women. Anderson and her fellow lady inspectors, however, maintained that women's health and safety were their primary duty and a priority of the inspectorate.

Eventually, Anderson's persistence and cooperative nature earned her the position of Principal Lady Inspector. During her tenure, she and her fellow lady inspectors continued to combat lead and mercury poisoning, industrial

accidents, and ventilation issues. Along with many challenges, there were victories for her team. For example, she enabled stronger regulations on women working in the industrial laundries in the West London District. In 1908, the Factory Act of 1895 was extended to include institutional laundries under the authority of the Factory Department. During the First World War, the lady inspectors were kept busy with the influx of women working to support the war effort. By 1920, the political landscape had changed and a specific role for women inspectors was abolished. The reorganisation left Anderson out of a civil service position and she was forced to retire.

In her post inspectorate days, Adelaide travelled frequently to address the safety and welfare of children in China and Egypt. During this period, we see her visiting her family on several occasions to provide support and reconnect. In the end, she accomplished many triumphs in both her professional career and her personal life.

The book is based on extensive research using primary sources such as letters, memoirs, and reports. The combination of industrial reform and personal details give this book an insightful and refreshing view of labour history.

Catherine Clay, *'Time and Tide': The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine*

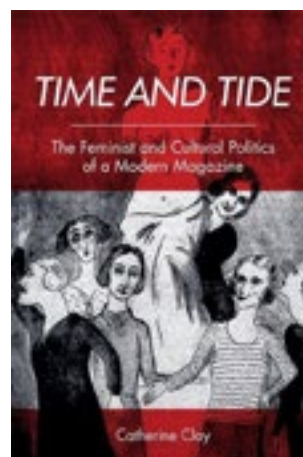
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

£80, ISBN 978-1-4744-1818-8 (hardback), pp.

xiii+306

Reviewed by Angela V. John

Swansea University



In May 1927, Lady Rhondda, founder, funder and (from 1926) editor of *Time and Tide*, declared that 'the day of the weeklies is at hand.' She also made clear her ambitions for her weekly paper's pre-eminence within this golden age. Catherine Clay's engrossing study examines the paper from its inception in 1920, showing how it stood out from the start with its pioneer all-female board and 'unapologetic feminism'.

Divided into three parts, the book covers the years 1920 to 1939. Clay's approach is broadly linear – a wise decision permitting an exploration of changing circumstances and pressures – but she also puts different facets of the paper under the microscope, her close reading enabling us to discern its mechanics and explore its composition and strategic thinking.

Part 1 examines 1920-1928. Clay stresses how *Time and Tide* differed from women's newspapers, appealing especially to the professional woman voter. She dissects its feature 'The Weekly Crowd', a witty pseudonymous digest of the week's news in verse, written by the socialist and pacifist writer and poet, Eleanor Farjeon. Here, as elsewhere in her book, Clay shows how the paper encompassed a wide range of opinion, providing space for Farjeon's radicalism even when it didn't match the editor's views. She also considers the paper's early

relationship to modernism. She shows how it mediated culture via book, music, theatre and film reviews (it was one of the first intellectual weeklies to engage seriously with film).

Part 11 covers 1928-1935 when it consolidated its base yet broadened its appeal, reinventing itself as a journal committed to the arts and public affairs. Clay stresses that, despite needing to reshape itself to suit changing times, markets and media, *Time and Tide's* feminism was not eschewed once women over twenty-one had the vote. Expedience may have dictated that it shift its emphasis as well as its home – literally moving from Fleet Street to Bloomsbury – but, as Clay argues, for Rhondda and her board, feminist principles remained central to their project in a paper that believed in appealing to the thinking woman and man.

Lady Rhondda once declared that 'Publicity is Power'. Clay analyses the significance of the paper's use and development of its masthead, of advertisements (their subject-matter within the paper and promotion inside other journals), engagement of an art critic (Gwen Raverat was the first) and, unlike other intellectual weeklies, its attention to witty graphic art. It became, Clay claims, 'the most visually appealing product on the weekly review market'. Her book illustrates – literally and liberally – how this worked.

Clay explores the increased use of male writers in broadening its appeal without relinquishing control. Contributors such as Bernard Shaw helped. Writers like Wyndham Lewis (viewed equivocally by many associated with *Time and Tide*) also featured in this independent, non-party political paper. Whilst cross-gender collaboration was perceived as necessary for its expansion, intra-gender collaboration remained paramount and was evident through, for example, the huge contribution made by Winifred Holtby.

Clay considers how the paper successfully negotiated the tightrope of promoting both 'middlebrow' and 'highbrow' writers (though says surprisingly little about the financial challenges that the paper repeatedly faced). E. M. Delafield's perennially popular *The Diary of a Provincial Lady* first saw the light of day in serial form in *Tide and Tide* during 1929 and 1930. Concurrently there was an increased attention to highbrow literature and, from 1934, monthly double numbers with substantial literary sections.

The tendency towards the highbrow was especially evident in the choice of Lady Rhondda's partner Theodora Bosanquet as literary editor from 1935. Part 11 examines 1935-1939. Clay considers the paper's increasingly international thrust, as it once more kept abreast of its time. She shows how regular contributors such as Edward Thompson (father of the historian E.P. Thompson) valued its commitment to freedom of expression.

Clay maintains her conviction that, despite outward appearances such as the decline in female contributors, the paper did not abandon its feminist commitment. She argues that its equalitarian feminism could still be discerned beneath the surface. The letter page, for example, showed its appeal for the thinking man *and* woman. She also suggests that Bosanquet's commitment to spiritualism demonstrates the paper's continued feminist engagement with literature and the arts. However, although Bosanquet's automatic scripts may tell us something about her personal feminist beliefs and thought processes, it is more difficult to show that they impacted on her published reviews.

A Coda briefly explains the long-term fate of *Time and Tide*. When it folded in 1979 only its name linked it to the major force it had once been. At first sight it seems disappointing that Clay doesn't engage with the paper beyond 1939. After all, it had almost twenty more years of Lady Rhondda's editorship ahead and reinvented itself again in this era. However, Clay is a feminist cultural critic and her forte lies in a skilful dissection of the paper when it was a feminist and cultural phenomenon. Hopefully the last decades of *Time and Tide* will be the subject of a new study, ideally by somebody versed in international politics and gender to reflect the paper's tone. Clay has done her bit and done it well.

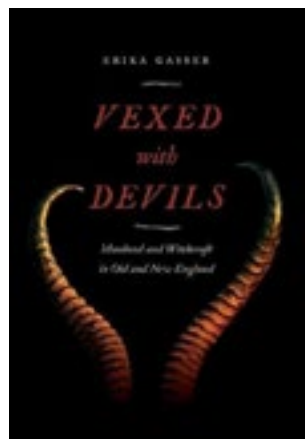
Erika Gasser, *Vexed with Devils: Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England*

New York: NYU Press, 2017. £29.99, ISBN

978-1-4798-3149-1(hardback), pp. 272

Reviewed by Karen Jones

Independent scholar



Vexed with Devils is a cultural history of witchcraft-possession in England and New England from c.1564-1700. It centres on the role of men and patriarchal power, and is based on published accounts of possession cases and the polemical publications arising from them. Emphasising transatlantic links and continuity over time, Gasser argues that possession cases depended on similar cultural scripts on both

sides of the Atlantic, and that 'manhood was a crucial factor in the articulation of judgment upon both the women and men who were implicated' (pp.3-4).

In these cases, victims – mostly children and adolescents – had convulsive fits and other symptoms: sometimes speaking in strange voices, having apparitions, arguing with devils they claimed had possessed them, showing aversion to prayer or vomiting inedible objects. Typically, they would blame a local suspected witch, and apparently recover when in that person's presence. Some contemporaries believed these to be real diabolical possession; others, sometimes for political or theological reasons, did not. The contacts between New England Puritans and English nonconformists meant that the 'cultural conversation' about possession was shared. Published accounts of cases in both places were widely read, and the similarity of English and American possession performances indicates that many 'demoniacs' were familiar with them.

Gasser bases her argument partly on the rare cases where a suspected male witch was accused of causing possession by demons. She analyses the narratives featuring John Samuel, hanged as a witch along with his wife and daughter, in the 'Witches of Warboys' case (1589-93), and the Puritan minister George Burroughs, executed at Salem in 1692. The Warboys narrative emphasises Samuel's gendered failings as a man: both his deficiencies, as in failing to control his household, and his

excesses – he publicly beat his wife and was ill-mannered and surly to his superiors. However, he was ultimately unmanned because the father of the ‘possessed’ children was of higher status than he was. George Burroughs came to be seen as the ringleader of the witches of Salem. This involved his identity being reversed from minister to witch, a more spectacular reversal than was needed for Samuel. Like Samuel, though, he was represented as being both excessive and deficient in his manhood, having abused the prerogatives of patriarchal authority by failing to care for his dependents and being boastful and self-important. While minister at Salem, he was unable to support his own household. Furthermore, he lacked substantial support from ‘an honourable manly community’ (p.115) who might have spoken up for him. All this, combined with the victims’ claims that spectres had appeared to them accusing him of wife-murder among other crimes, led to his conviction.

Gasser’s other sources are the writings of men who argued about possession cases, or rather how to interpret these phenomena. The Church of England battled over possession on two fronts, rejecting the Catholic rite of exorcism and disputing Puritan claims to dispossess the afflicted by prayer and fasting. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the main Anglican spokesman was Samuel Harsnett, chaplain to Bishop Bancroft. His chief target was the Puritan minister John Darrell, who claimed to have cured several demoniacs. Harsnett and Darrell and their supporters waged what Gasser describes as ‘gendered contests’ (p. 70), in which both sides attempted to establish their manly credit at their opponents’ expense. This depended on having support from other men of good standing and being known for independence, piety and due deference to authority. Another strategy was to attribute to their enemies a lack of reason and excess of passion – such as might be expected from women and youths. Harsnett’s superior social position, and the support he had from the higher echelons of Anglicanism, enabled him to describe Darrell and his adherents as ‘tinkers’ and ‘peddlers’ (p. 71). This implied that they were of too humble status to be credible, and had seduced their gullible followers away from obedience to their betters. In America a century later, a similar pamphlet war was conducted between the Puritan divine Cotton Mather – who believed in demonic possession and the efficacy of prayer and fasting to cure it – and the sceptic Robert Calef and their respective supporters. Gasser demonstrates that the protagonists in this war of words used very similar strategies to those of Harsnett and Darrell, invoking ‘components of honourable manhood to justify their claims to patriarchal authority’ (p.144).

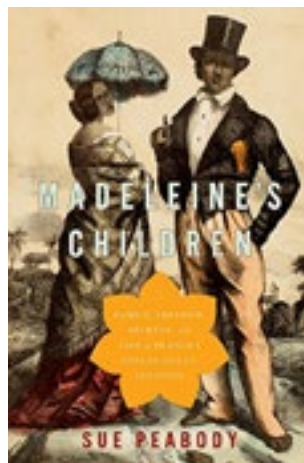
This book examines aspects of the early modern witch craze from an unusual angle, although some of its conclusions, notably that early modern divines and their critics used gendered language, are hardly surprising. I found the parts dealing with the transatlantic links and similarities most interesting. However, surely a serious academic work like this needs a bibliography?

Sue Peabody, *Madeleine’s Children: Family, Freedom and Lies in France’s Indian Ocean Colonies*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. US\$35, ISBN 978-0-19-023388-4 (hardback), pp. xiv+321

Reviewed by Barbara Bush

Sheffield Hallam University



Madeleine, the inspiration for Peabody’s study, was enslaved as a girl in a French trading enclave in India in the 1760s and bought by a French woman. She was subsequently sold on in Paris to the Routiers, French owners of a plantation in the French colony of Reunion Island, known as Isle de Bourbon before the revolution. Madeleine was a domestic servant in the same family for the rest of her life and, in enslavement, had three children: Maurice, who died a

slave, Constance, who was freed as an infant, and Furcy. Both Constance and Furcy were possibly fathered by Madeleine’s male owner. It is Furcy through whom the ambivalence of French laws relating to slavery and freedom is explored. In popular culture Furcy is remembered as a folk hero who, after 1817, struggled against the odds to free himself. By now he belonged to the Routiers’ son-in-law, Joseph Lory, a wealthy plantation owner in Mauritius (Isle de France under French rule). After 1814, Mauritius became a British possession as spoils of war. His case thus involved engagement with both French and British laws relating to slavery and centered on whether his mother had been freed when she was taken to Paris. The French ‘free soil’ principle – from the mid sixteenth century – established that any slave setting foot in France achieved freedom. Furcy’s case also drew on whether Indians could be enslaved.

Madeleine died in 1812 and Furcy eventually achieved freedom in fact (*libre de fait*) as the abolitionist movement in Britain and its colonies gained strength. In 1827, the British Government established a two-year Commission on Eastern Enquiry to review all aspects of colonial rule, including slavery, in all Indian Ocean colonies from the Cape to Ceylon. Joseph Lory’s nephew, Edouard Lory, Furcy’s new owner, could not prove title of ownership and thus he became a free man in Mauritius. Subsequently he became a successful patissier and confectioner in the capital, Port Louis. Free under British rule but not in Reunion, Furcy persisted with his claims under French law and was eventually freed under the ‘free soil’ ruling in 1843, a freedom celebrated in anti-slavery circles in England and France. Yet, as Peabody observes, although Furcy became a symbol of resistance, his efforts to free himself were personal rather than political (p. 198), reflected perhaps in the fact that in freedom he employed his own slaves.

Peabody thus combines a family saga, and insight into the gendered intimacies of relations between slaves and owners, with the history of the Indian Ocean colonies during turbulent years of the French revolution. She skilfully interweaves micro

biographical history with global developments in slavery and colonialism in an age of uncertainty and deep changes. Her study is grounded in extensive archival research in Britain and France. These archives revealed 'the vast slippage between evidence and historical truth [as] so many things have happened that were never recorded on paper [and] so many written records bend the truth for posterity' (p. vii). The contemporary debates around slavery, argues Peabody, reveal 'the gulf between law and the lived experiences of individuals in slavery and freedom' and the 'chasm between law and justice' (p. 1). The master class, she argues, used slave laws to their own ends – hence Furcy's long struggle to gain freedom and the fact that Madeleine was not told of her own manumission under France's 'free soil' principle until many years afterwards. Madeleine was thus exploited sexually by her master, as domestic servant and wet-nurse in the service of her mistress, and legally as a racialised and gendered subject.

Peabody is a leading scholar of slavery in the French empire. In many ways the book is a tour de force of truffle hunting research and is clearly a labour of love. My only reservation is that Peabody is perhaps a little too close to her subject matter which makes for dense reading at times. A bibliography would also have helped locate her study more firmly in the existing historiography. These minor quibbles do not detract from the high quality of this illuminating study. Through excavating the lives of Madeleine and her children, Peabody also makes a significant and original contribution to our understanding of the slave trade and slavery in the Indian Ocean that is less well known than the history of transatlantic slavery. Additionally, her study has a strong focus on women, both enslaved and as slave owners. I would certainly recommend *Madeleine's Children* to scholars of the history of the Indian Ocean and historians with an interest in global developments in slavery and abolition, including gender aspects, in the penultimate years of slavery.

Karissa Haugeberg, *Women against Abortion: Inside the Largest Moral Reform Movement of the Twentieth Century*

Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2017. £19.99, ISBN 978-0-252-08246-7 (paperback), pp. viii + 220

Reviewed by Emma Milne

Middlesex University

Women Against Abortion traces the history of the women in the American anti-abortion movement through an exploration of the actions and writings of those 'who shaped the trajectory of the largest moral reform movement of the late twentieth century' (p. 1). Karissa Haugeberg outlines the rise of the movement in the 1960s as legal, legislative and popular support for decriminalisation of abortion began to pose significant challenges to the laws at the time. She then traces the activities of key women activists to present day, outlining the establishment of crisis pregnancy centres, the invention and promotion of 'post abortion syndrome', the connections between the Catholic church and the movement, and the use of lethal violence by members. Haugeberg illustrates the interaction between different elements of the abortion debate, such as between local grassroots organisations and

larger national campaigns. Similarly, she actively highlights the connection between the activities of women on the ground to wider social debates of politics and religion – for example, outlining the Christian defence of violence as a tactic for anti-abortion campaigners.

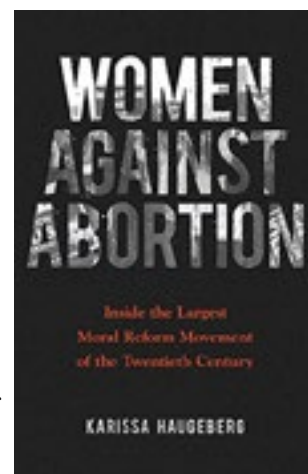
Haugeberg approaches the study of the anti-abortion campaign from a new perspective, capturing the experience of American women over a forty-year period. As such, the book reveals aspects of the nature

of the movement that have been obscured by other studies that have focused on women in particular cities, in particular organisations, or over a short period of time. For example, one perception of the anti-abortion movement is that it began in the 1960s as a peaceful movement, becoming violent over time. Haugeberg identifies in her study that, if we examine the careers of key individuals within the movement, tracing their membership in grassroots and conventional organisations, it becomes clear that there is no unified approach in terms of 'intimidating and lethal strategies' (p. 8), as violent extremism fell out of favour among some while was embraced by others.

One of the achievements of the book is the connection drawn between women's sexuality, reproductive rights and abortion. Haugeberg highlights that access to abortion has not been seen as a positive step and liberation for all women. For some women – older women, women who followed the Catholic prohibitions against birth control and for some who could not attend college, the feminist movement and reform of access to birth control and abortion challenged the social order. For these women, motherhood was what mattered most. Modern developments that meant motherhood was an option – contraception and abortion – challenged their ideas around sex, work and personal fulfilment that often hinged on their perception of the family.

This is a well-written and very well researched history of a fierce, intimidating and, at times, dismissed element of American politics. The book is comprehensive and engaging, connecting personal belief to wider political engagement. Furthermore, it is a balanced account, outlining the beliefs of the women activists, whilst also offering a critique of their illegal and deceitful behaviour. Examples of the latter include members lying to women who engage with crisis pregnancy centres about the gestational age of their foetus to lead them to believe they could not access a legal abortion. Similarly, when analysing the use of violence by activists, Haugeberg engages with both the motivations of the women who used violence, while also acknowledging the destruction and harm of their actions. For example, quoting Dr George Tiller who received numerous death threats and attempts on his life before he became the ninth American murdered by anti-abortion extremists – 'two weeks before he was killed, a colleague asked him, "Why are you still doing this George? You certainly don't need to. Why don't you just retire, enjoy life?" Tiller replied, "I can't, I can't leave these women. There's no one else for them"' (p. 140).

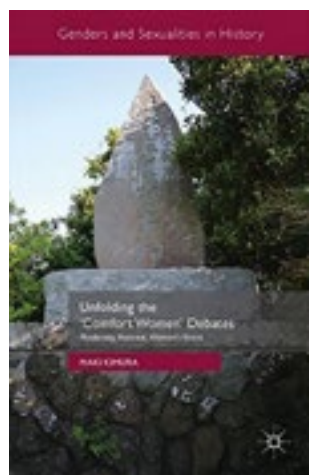
This book would not only be of interest to those focused



on the history of the politics of abortion in America, but also to those interested in women's engagement with politics, and the implication of activism and politics on women's rights. As Haugeberg notes, one of the consequences of the anti-abortion movement has been the class-based, two-tiered system of abortion access now in operation in the United States. State-level restrictions have had a disproportionate effect on poor women's ability to access abortion, particularly in states that require a mandatory waiting period between the initial consultation and the time when the abortion is performed.

Maki Kimura, *Unfolding the 'Comfort Women' Debates: Modernity, Violence, Women's Voices, Genders and Sexualities in History Series* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. £74.99, ISBN 978-1-137-39249-7 (hardback), pp. vii + 283

Reviewed by Susan Pares
Independent researcher



British readers will be familiar with the outlines of the 'comfort women' question, but their knowledge of the system and of the political, social and philosophical questions it has thrown up may be scanted. In the UK, it is probably still seen as largely an East Asian problem. Dr Kimura's book challenges us to take a wider view of this abuse and to site it within the general theme of violence against women.

From the late nineteenth century, Japan tolerated a system of licensed prostitution, arguing the need to maintain the health of the nation and especially that of the military, while accommodating men's 'natural sexual desires'. Models for such a system were available in both the domestic and colonial practices of European powers such as France and Britain. Kimura suggests that the adoption of such models was an element in Japan's passage into modernity (even though she hardly defines that term). In theory, Japanese women who entered prostitution were free to leave, and the trade was operated through brokers, although under official inspection. The country's economic, territorial and eventual military expansion into East Asia from the 1890s carried the system of licensed prostitution outside of Japan, incorporating non-Japanese women. The 'comfort women' system – a euphemism – acquired its characteristics as a form of sexual slavery during the Asia-Pacific War (1931-45), through its geographical spread throughout East and Southeast Asia – drawing in a wide ethnic diversity of women – through the scale and duration of the system, the element of coercion and the direct involvement of the Japanese military and government.

The consequences of this widespread sexual exploitation have been long lasting, not least the suffering endured by considerable numbers of women. In an atmosphere of political indifference and social stigma, acknowledgement

of the problem was slow to materialise. It was only from the 1970s that accounts began to emerge in Japan and South Korea. Discussion intensified in the 1990s, with South Korean activists mounting particularly strong attacks on the Japanese government (Korea's experience of Japanese colonisation from 1910 to 1945 compounds its resentment). In 1993, the Japanese government admitted to a measure of Japanese military involvement in the 'comfort women' system. From 1995 to 2007 it administered the Asian Women's Fund, offering compensation, which was taken up by a number of women. Since then, Japanese official reaction has been to seek to end the issue.

Dr Kimura gives the necessary facts in Part 1 of her book, but her focus is not on adding newly acquired information on the 'comfort women' system but on 'various questions and dilemmas that have been raised through the discussion surrounding' that system (p. 215). This she has achieved by, in places, applying wider philosophical concepts to these questions. Thus, the argument of 'Japanese essentialism', that is, that Japan's treatment of the 'comfort women' reflected specific Japanese cultural factors characteristic of a pre-modern state, is rebutted in the suggestion that the modernity Japan espoused contained within it a core of evil. In that context, Kimura cites Hannah Arendt's writings on the Holocaust. She discusses the difficulties of establishing historical 'truth', even doubting whether such truth can be found and distancing herself gently from feminist and leftwing activists who claim the existence of 'transparent historical "facts/truth"' (p.133). Her preference is for the written testimonies of 'comfort women' over interviews with them, aware that the interviewer's presence can upset a delicate balance. At the same time, she knows that the inconsistencies in these women's testimonies provide material for a 'revisionist' element still vocal in Japan, which seeks to discredit them. Its adherents deny Japanese government involvement in the 'comfort women' system, which, they maintain, was organised by private entrepreneurs along the lines of existing licensed prostitution, with women entering such work voluntarily. The revisionist stance mingles with nationalist feeling that the country's first duty is to honour the war dead.

Dr Kimura's final discussion is of the need to give survivors of the 'comfort women' system an appropriate form of representation. Here, she draws on the work of Holocaust Studies to examine how the voices of the survivors of trauma may be presented. Spivak's studies on subaltern agency provide her with a fruitful approach to the issue, and she employs further Althusser's theories of interpellation and subject-formation to argue that the voices of comfort-women survivors 'could not be heard until their subjectivities had been formed in accordance with dominant ideologies' (p.193). By this, she refers to the evolution of a sympathetic environment from the 1990s, stimulated by growing feminist movements within Asia and the revelation of similar acts of sexual slavery in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Dr Kimura is a Japanese academic based in the UK. Her sources comprise mainly Japanese or Western English-language works. It is a pity that, in the bibliography, the titles of Japanese books have not been translated into English, to permit non-Japanese-reading users some idea of their contents. Her handling of the Romanised forms of non-Japanese names is sometimes shaky: thus, she refers to the Chinese Qing dynasty as 'Shin' (p. 96), and veers between the two most common

romanisations of Korean in citing Korean place names (p. 94), whilst the index is seriously out of kilter here and there. These are small inconveniences, however, when set against the impressive sweep and stimulating arguments of this valuable study.

Chris Nickson, *The Tin God: A Tom Harper Mystery*
London: Severn House, 2018. £20.99, ISBN 978-0-7278-8786-3 (hardback), pp. 224

Reviewed by Suki Haider

The Open University



This is the latest in the Tom Harper mystery series, set in Leeds in the 1890s: Tom Harper has been promoted to police superintendent. Readers already familiar with the likeable detective will understand his frustration at the trying administrative duties promotion has brought. Readers new to the Tom Harper series are just as likely to enjoy this mystery. *The Tin God* convincingly weaves together police procedural history with political, social, cultural and women's history as

the story moves from Leeds to Whitby on the north Yorkshire coast. The depiction of smuggling in Whitby is secondary – the events in the life of Tom's wife, Annabelle, a first-wave feminist primarily capture our interest.

Annabelle is one of seven female candidates standing – for the first time – for election to the Poor Law Guardians in Leeds and the reader is witness to the opposition and misogynist reaction in the community. The women are derided by the local press and editorials urge voters to support the male candidates. Tory and Liberal opponents criticise the women for 'trying to rise above their natural station'. The Leeds Independent Labour Party is supportive of women's suffrage, regarding the Board of Guardians as a stepping-stone for their men with political ambition. It is the Suffrage Society and the Women's Co-operative Guild who support Annabelle and the other candidates; one of many details in *The Tin God* that is based on local historical sources. We also learn, as we follow the women's campaign trail, that the suffrage movement has influential supporters: 'The Archbishop of Canterbury, no less, thinks there should be more of us. I'll tell you what the Secretary of State for India said: "No Board of Guardians is properly constituted when it is composed entirely of men"' (p. 230).

The female candidates are confident and enthusiastic public speakers on the stigma of the poor law and the injustices experienced by women and children. It is Annabelle who provides a thoughtful comparison between the working-classes, who dread the workhouse, and those that live in comfort at the outskirts of the city. Annabelle's hustings speech is effectively used to explain why women should be elected to the local Poor Law Board: 'We know families, we know what it costs to live every day, right down to the last farthing.' She

spotted a woman nodding and smiled. 'You know exactly what I mean, don't you?' (p. 31) The women's campaigns are going well, and many in the community are persuaded by the skills and experience that they have to offer local politics.

Within days, however, the women's successful electioneering is overshadowed by a serious crime. For Tom Harper this investigation is personal. His wife, Annabelle, and the other women candidates face menacing threats from an attacker determined to stop the election of a woman to the Board of Guardians. A determination, Annabelle speculates, that is motivated by fear of women taking a public role: 'This happened because someone is scared of women. Not just as Poor Law Guardians or on School Boards. He's afraid of *women*' (p. 230). The police investigation fails to make progress. As Tom struggles to piece together fragments of folk songs left at the crime scene, one by one the female candidates are forced to decide whether they are willing to risk their lives, and the lives of their loved ones, for the sake of their feminist principles and the poor in the community.

The author has dedicated this book to women who have used their voice despite warnings to keep silent: Senator Elizabeth Warren, Jo Cox MP, Catherine Buckton and Mary Gawthorpe. Gawthorpe was a leading member of the Leeds Suffrage movement. In the Afterword, we discover that she was the first woman to hold elected office in Leeds, voted on to the School Board in 1873.

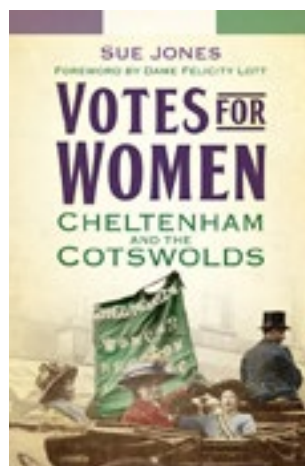
This short novel weaves together historical context that will be of interest to students of women's history, police procedure and Victorian Leeds. It will also be appreciated by readers of crime fiction.

Sue Jones, *Votes for Women: Cheltenham and the Cotswolds*

Stroud: The History Press, 2018. £14.99, ISBN 978 0 7509 8277 1 (paperback), pp. 208

Reviewed by Anne Logan

University of Kent



This volume on the women's suffrage movement in Cheltenham, Cirencester, and Stroud is one of many studies of local suffrage campaigns to appear in time for the centenary of the granting of the parliamentary vote to some women. Despite its title, the focus is almost entirely on the three towns, which is perhaps a limitation of the study.

Certainly there is great potential for an interesting story to be told about the movement

in Cheltenham, the case-study which takes up the majority of this volume. A spa town, dominated by a comfortably-off population, Cheltenham was really put on the suffrage map by the presence of two leading lights of the Women's Freedom League (WFL), Edith How Martyn and her sister, Florence How (later Mrs. Earengay). Jones gives some valuable background details about the sisters and their family, but does not really

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 David Geiringer, Book Reviews Editor, at bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

You don't have to be an expert to review, if you have a general interest and knowledge of the relevant historical period or territory then that will count for a lot. The ability to summarise a work (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)

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)

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

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

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

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

Brianna Leavitt-Alcantara, *Alone at the Altar. Single Women & Devotion in Guatemala, 1670-1870* (Stanford University Press)

Angela Giallongo, *The Historical Enigma of the Snake Woman from Antiquity to the 21st Century* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

John Thabiti Willis, *Masquerading Politics. Kinship, Gender & Ethnicity in a Yoruba Town* (Indiana University Press)

Eva Maze, *With Ballet in my Soul. Adventures of a Globetrotting Impresario* (Moonstone Press LLC)

Teresa Barnard (ed), *Anna Seward's Journal and Sermons* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

Marianne Tidcomber (ed), *The Prison Diary of Annie Cobden-Sanderson* (Libanus Press)

Emily Skidmore, *True Sex. The Lives of Trans Men at the turn of the 20th Century* (New York University Press)

Ruth Ewan, *Twenty-Nine Thousand Nights. A Communist Life. Nan Berger* (Book Works)

Vivien Newman & David A.S. Semeraro, *Regina Diana. Seductress, Singer, Spy* (Pen + Sword)

Robert Stedall, *Mary Queen of Scot's Downfall. The Life and Murder of Henry, Lord Darnley* (Pen + Sword)

Summer Strevens, *Burned at the Stake. The Life and Death of Mary Channing* (Pen + Sword)

pose the question that most interests me: why the How sisters chose the WFL as their vehicle for suffrage activism. Another factor which makes Cheltenham a valuable case study of suffrage support is the existence in Gloucestershire Archives of a book presented to the Cheltenham MP, Sir James Agg-Gardener, as a thank offering for his support of women's suffrage in parliament. Signed by nearly five hundred people, this document is undoubtedly a treasure trove, which provides a fascinating snapshot of the breadth and depth of local support for Votes for Women at a crucial moment in suffrage history. Jones correctly recognises the book's significance, but – after a brief mention in the introduction – she leaves detailed discussion of it to the end of her volume, when it might have been better to integrate it into the description of the campaign in Cheltenham. This is just one example of the somewhat incoherent structure of Jones' book.

Votes for Women: Cheltenham and the Cotswolds contains many of the tropes one has come to expect in an exploration of the suffrage movement in a given locality, such as suffragette 'outrages', the 1866 petition, the census boycott of 1911, and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) Pilgrimage in July 1913. The opening chapter examines an instance of suffragette arson near to Cheltenham, but this has little to do with the local movement, since – as was so often the case – the perpetrators had traveled from elsewhere to commit their offence. Jones then turns to some brief explanation of suffrage politics nationally – presumably to inform her local, non-specialist audience – before listing the thirty-odd signatories of the 1866 petition who lived in Stroud (there were none in Cheltenham and only one in Cirencester). Crosschecking the names in census records gives a fascinating, if fragmentary, view of the supporters of Votes for Women at

this early stage. The chapter on the census boycott rightly foregrounds the activism of the WFL but the book as a whole contains quite a lot of discussion of the Women's Social and Political Union, perhaps more than evidence of its local support warrants.

Jones argues that the NUWSS was not a particularly strong organisation in Cheltenham. Fascinatingly, she argues that the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA) was much better-supported: a fact which was perhaps not unconnected with Agg-Gardner's backing of the Conciliation Bill. The CUWFA as a suffrage organisation is far less well-known than the NUWSS and arguably should have greater recognition in suffrage history. Unfortunately, because Jones concentrates entirely on the localities she is discussing, she misses an important comparative point here concerning

different political cultures. Cheltenham's affluent population certainly seems to have inclined towards the Conservative, rather than the Liberal Party.

I certainly gleaned some useful information from this book, but overall I found its treatment of a potentially important subject a bit disappointing. Perhaps it is aimed more at a local than an academic audience: there are very few references and no bibliography. It would have been more coherent perhaps if the field had been widened to examine the suffrage movement throughout the county of Gloucestershire, or narrowed to Cheltenham only, with judicious comparisons with other spa towns. Sadly, the approach seemed to be to include everything suffrage-related which occurred in the chosen places, rather than to analyse the local movement and its political roots.

Getting to Know Each Other



Name

Alexandra Hughes-Johnson

Position

Research Co-ordinator for Women in the Humanities at Oxford University and historian of nineteenth and twentieth century Britain with a particular interest in women, gender, health and political activism.

How long have you been a WHN member?

I have been a WHN member since 2013 when I began my PhD thesis.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

As an undergraduate student at Keele University I found that I was always drawn towards modules that focused upon women's history. I remember being fascinated by a module entitled 'Issues in Women's History' and I struggled to decide whether I should

write my final essay on the campaign for social purity or the women's suffrage movement (I would have done both if I could have). As it was, I chose the women's suffrage movement and from that point onwards I was determined that my final year, special subject, would be 'Suffrage Stories'. With the encouragement, advice and expertise of my tutor, Professor Karen Hunt, I was inspired to pursue a doctoral degree, one that took a relatively unknown woman as its subject and placed her at the heart of the historical narrative.

What are your special interests?

My main area of interest is the history of the British women's suffrage movement, particularly the daily life and activism of women at a local level. My PhD was entitled *Rose Lamartine Yates and the Wimbledon WSPU: Reconfiguring Suffragette History from the Local to the National*. The life story of Wimbledon's organising secretary, Rose Lamartine Yates functioned as a lens through which the thesis critically constructed a local suffrage history of Wimbledon and I am currently working on a book proposal to turn my research into a monograph. My postdoctoral research will build on my interest in women's politics at a local level, exploring how municipal politics offered newly enfranchised women accessible political opportunities by focusing on women's election to local county councils after 1918.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

It's very difficult to identify one heroine from history because there are so many women that initially come to mind, but I think I would have to choose a woman whose passion, energy and political career inspired me every day when I was writing my PhD and that is Rose Lamartine Yates. Rose dedicated much of her life to campaigning for women's enfranchisement from 1908–1918 and later used her voice and influence as a London County Councillor to help improve the lives of women and children.

WHN Book Prize 2018

This year's WHN Book Prize winner was Briony McDonagh's *Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape 1700-1830* published by Routledge in 2017. This book provides an explicitly feminist historical geography of the eighteenth-century English rural landscape. The panel considered that: 'This was an original, path-breaking book which makes a significant contribution to women's history. It is engaging and accessible to read without losing academic rigour, based upon fluent and coherent analysis of a range of archival and secondary sources'. We hope many of you will read it and / or recommend it to local and university libraries for purchase in the near future.



WHN Book Prize 2019

WHN offers an annual £500 prize for a first book in women's or gender history.

The Women's History Network (UK) Book Prize is awarded for an author's first single-authored monograph. Entries close on 31 March 2019 (for books published during 2018).

Criteria for eligibility are as follows:

- * The book must make a significant contribution to women's history or gender history.
- * The book must be written in English and have an accessible style.
- * The book must have been published in the UK between January 1st and 31st December 2018.
- * The candidate should be a member of the Women's History Network (UK).
- * The candidate should have been resident in the UK, or affiliated to a UK Institution, for the previous three years.
- * The winner should be able to attend the WHN Annual Conference to receive their award. (The WHN will cover the cost of UK rail travel to the Conference venue at the LSE.)
- * Current members of the WHN Steering Committee are not eligible to enter the competition.

For further information please contact: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN/History Press Community History Prize 2018

This year, the panel received fifteen entries from organisations throughout the United Kingdom. Topics included women's experience in wartime (both the first and second world wars), the suffrage centenary, Caroline Norton, the women workers of the Carr's Biscuit Factory, nursing history and the Wrens of HMS Caroline. The judges met in July for their deliberations. Nine projects were shortlisted and, of these, four were highly commended by the judges. There were:

Cavendish Primary School, Manchester, for: 'Margaret Ashton, local suffragette'; Glasgow Women's Library for: 'Voices From The Belvidere: Stories of women from a First World War Fever Hospital'; Impressions Gallery / New Focus Group, Bradford for: 'No Man's Land: Young People Uncover Women's Viewpoints on the FWW' and West Dunbartonshire Women's History Group for: 'West Dunbartonshire Women in WW2'.

The £500 first prize winning entry was chosen unanimously by our judging panel. This was a considerable achievement in a year of very strong entries. The prize has been awarded to:

**The Royal College of Nursing Library and Archives Team for
'Service Scrapbooks: Nursing, Storytelling and the First World War'**

THE PROJECT:

The winners created an online exhibition showcasing the lives of nursing staff during the First World War. A team of thirty-two volunteer nurses worked with the RCN Library and Archives team to make the stories of ten First World War nurses available to a public audience for the first time. The team scanned and transcribed 976 scrapbook pages from the archives, using them to recreate these nurses' lives online. NHS staff worked with RCN Library and Archive Service's Writer in Residence, cardiac nurse and poet Molly Case, to create written responses to the digitised scrapbooks. These poems were published as an anthology for distribution to patients.



Screenshot from prize-winning 'Service Scrapbooks' website

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Everything about your project delighted our judges. We were pleased to see you working with retired and practising nurses and that they were responsible, with help and training, for the research and digitisation of the scrapbooks and albums. We enjoyed the blogs about their experience and learning – it clearly became a labour of love and this shines through in their outputs. We thought the website was excellent. Each entry is clear, easy to navigate and exceedingly useful. It is fantastic to have the original material there alongside a concise interpretation of it. As one of the judges put it, ‘A real sense of the nurses comes through’. Another said, ‘I could have spent all day looking at this!’

We were very impressed by the other ways you engaged people in this project, such as having a writer in residence and using the scrapbooks as stimulus. We thought the anthology was lovely, combining poetry written by participants today (including schoolchildren) with material from the scrapbooks. We liked the fact that some of those involved in workshop were inspired to do more family history. We also found the YouTube film extremely powerful.

RCN Project volunteers



RCN Project volunteers

We all felt that recognising the importance of these scrapbooks in your archive and then finding a way to get the material online, especially in the centenary year of the end of the First World War made you very worthy winners of the WHN community history prize. We believe that the work you have done is of national and international importance and helps address the gender imbalance in accessible primary material from the Great War. It also sheds light on the work of the nurses: their lives, their work, the type of techniques and treatments they used, the places they worked in and the people they worked with. Congratulations. This was a superb, inclusive project.

Frances Reed and Teresa Docherty accepted the prize, on behalf of the RCN team, at the WHN Annual Conference in Portsmouth on Friday 31 August. Frances said: 'The team is really thrilled by the win, which of course, also belongs to our fantastic volunteers. I want to thank them for putting in so many hours helping to create the website. It is also a homage to the lives of the dedicated, resilient women whose thoughts, feelings and memories are the subject of the exhibition.'

Community History Prize 2019

An annual £500 prize is awarded to the team behind a Community History Project by, about, or for women in a particular locale or community. This prize has been sponsored by The History Press since 2014.

We encourage submissions from projects that include a strong element of community engagement or collaboration and which communicate a sense of heritage uncovered and learning shared by participants from outside the academic or professional heritage sector.

Projects can have creative or wellbeing outcomes, as well as research outputs, but the entrants' activity must have led to the creation of something which is based on and communicates the findings of the group's historical research, such as a drama production, artwork, website, documentary, pamphlet, heritage trail, book, exhibition, artefact or event.

Criteria for eligibility

* Applications must be submitted electronically on the appropriate form, in a word format, by the submission date of 31 May 2019.

* Applications must be accompanied by the electronic submission of two jpg images showing the project activity which can be used as part of WHN/History Press publicity in print and online.

* The project must have been completed in the seventeen months prior to submission.

* A representative of the winning group is expected to attend the WHN Annual Conference (at LSE in London this year) to receive their award. (The WHN will cover the cost of UK rail travel for one person from the group to attend the Conference).

* Current members of the WHN Steering Committee are not eligible to enter the competition.

For further information please email communityhistoryprize@womenshistprnetwork.org

School History Prize 2018

The Steering Committee is delighted to announce the winner of the School History Prize for 2018. Our theme for this year was #PressforProgress and the winning entry, submitted by Oaklands School in London, was a thought-provoking project that connects the past to the present, reminding us all that the fight for individual rights goes on. The project was entitled 'Yarl's Wood Hunger Strike' and tutor Nathanael Arnott-Davies explained its aims and significance:

'As part of the importance of making feminism and women's history relevant to all types of women and people in the twenty-first century, drawing comparisons between the Suffragettes and the Hunger strikers who are still today being detained by the British Government was hugely effective. It enabled students to see the 'history' of the present, how it is contested, and how they – as young people – have the potential, even the duty, to take an active part. Students are fully aware of current struggles for women's rights in the UK as well as – through their study of previous struggles – the resonance they have with the past. The project helped students to see that "women's issues" are issues that affect all'.

The Steering Committee would like to congratulate all entrants and all students who engaged in Women's History Month 2018.



Winning display: 'Respect, Rights, Release, Now!'



School Prize winners: Tutor Nathanael Arnott-Davies with Year 7 students, Oaklands School, London

The full spirit of suffrage alive at the Women's History Network centenary conference

Tania Shew

University of Manchester

The Women's History Network conference 2018 inevitably formed a moment of reflection on the campaigners who tirelessly fought for women's political involvement, whose aims were partially achieved a century ago. It was also, of course, a moment of reflection on the suffrage historiography, which has been conducted for almost as many decades.

The large selection of panels put on by the Women's History Network meant that choosing which sessions to attend was often a difficult decision. It was not uncommon to see attendees anxiously lingering in the lobby between sessions, struggling to choose what to attend next. The result, however, was that a truly comprehensive array of suffrage campaigners, organisations and themes were explored at the conference and it was possible to glean a sense of the full range of the movement. I was excited to see the conference begin with a session on my area of specialism, suffrage and marriage. This included Agnes Burt presenting on the relationship between the Married Women's Property Acts and tax resistance, Ciara Stewart's comparative paper on Irish anti-Contagious Disease Acts campaigners Anna and Thomas Haslam and their English counterparts, together with Maureen Wright's analysis of more radical suffrage approaches to conjugal rights.

The second day featured a fascinating panel on class and suffrage. Helen Glew presented on Helena Swanwick's writings on suffrage and female employment, Laura Schwartz investigated how the activism of domestic servant suffrage campaigners was affected by their employers' politics and Karen Hunt analysed suffrage and class after the outbreak of war. A panel on religion and suffrage featured papers on Christian and Jewish activists in Britain and the Netherlands. Tsila Rådecker highlighted how the Dutch Jewish suffrage experience differed markedly from that of Anglo-American Jewish activists.

One closing panel focused on the legacy of women's



June Purvis delivers her keynote: 'Emmeline Pankhurst: the making of a militant'

suffrage in the press with Laurel Forster addressing the relationship between the first and second wave movements. She highlighted the suffrage book reviews published in *Spare Rib* and the interviews with suffragists which featured in other second wave feminist magazines. In one interview included by Forster, a suffragist had described her own youthful refusal to wear a hat as a symbol of defiance against Edwardian gendered clothing norms and compared and contrasted this with the subversions of gendered clothing she was witnessing being employed by feminists once again in the 1970s. Forster's paper concluded with a screenshot of an Emily Wilding Davison Christmas cut-out as featured on the website of *Feminist Times*, the attempted revival of *Spare Rib* in 2013. This illuminated the continuing appreciation of suffrage campaigners within the media of the most recent wave of feminism.



Elizabeth Crawford delivers her keynote: 'Millicent Garrett Fawcett: the making of a politician'



Panel 24: 'Local and regional networks'; Chair and speakers



Sumita Mukherjee delivers her keynote: 'Indian suffrage campaigners and international suffrage networks in the interwar period'

A desire to replicate the spirit of the first wave feminist movement was present at the Women's History Network conference itself and this was also one of the conference's highlights. Various attendees (including two of the keynote speakers) arrived adorned in the colours of the NUWSS or WSPU. Having the chance to see Una Dugdale's original suffrage sash up close (as worn by June Purvis) was a real treasure. On the first night we were treated to a series of songs inspired by suffrage life writings, written and performed by musician Louise Jordan. On the second day we all participated in a rendition of Ethel Smyth's *The March of Women* conducted with toothbrushes, as suffragettes were forced to do when imprisoned. As this was my first academic conference, for me the most palpable incarnation of the first wave feminist spirit was the solidarity and support I was shown by all the (predominantly female) academics in attendance. I could not have asked for a more encouraging start to my academic career.



Delegates mingle



June Purvis, outgoing WHN Chair and 2018 conference organiser, accepts delegates' thanks

WHN AGM Report 2018

The AGM of the women's History Network was held on 31 August at the WHN Annual Conference at the University of Portsmouth. The Chair, June Purvis, opened by reporting another successful year for the network, which is in a healthy financial state. She noted that this would be her final AGM as her own term of office comes to an end this year. Following the AGM, the incoming Chair, Maggie Andrews takes over. The outgoing Chair thanked those Committee Members whose terms of office have likewise come to an end for their work over the past four years: Eve Colpus, Robin Joyce and Felicity Cawley. She also thanked Claire Jones for another year's outstanding work as web administrator.

Elections to the Steering Committee

Maggie Andrews, Katharina Rowold, Lyndsey Jenkins, Kate Law, Jane O'Neill and Susan Cohen were duly elected.

Finances

The Treasurer reported that the WHN's financial position continues to be strong, with a steady increase in income. The health of the WHN finances has allowed the Steering Committee not only to maintain established activities but has also enabled the Committee to continue to promote access to women's history and the Network. The Small Grants Scheme for Teaching and Research Staff is now offered at £1000 and we now have an annual Small Grant Scheme for a Postgraduate Conference at £1000. This year, the committee initiated a Schools prize for Women's History (£100). In addition, the Committee continues to offer bursaries for conference attendance, together with the WHN book prize and other prizes. The WHN's budgetary principle is to safeguard, sustain and develop the Network. While the Committee remains cautious about staying within

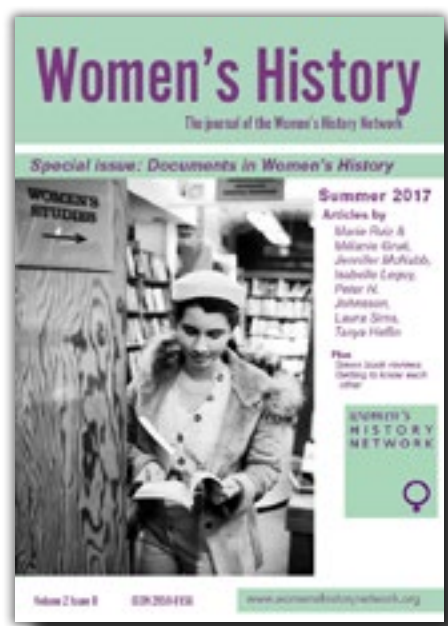
Publishing in *Women's History*

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

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

www.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



Women's History Network Contacts

Steering Committee Officers:

Chair: Maggie Andrews

convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Membership, subscriptions: Susan Cohen/Jane O'Neill

membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Finance: Sumita Mukherjee

treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

IFRWH Rep: Karen Sayer

ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Rep: Beth Jenkins

charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter: Gillian Murphy

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

Blog: Kate Law

womenshistorynetwork.org/category/blog
blog@womenshistorynetwork.org

Conference Organiser & Deputy Chair Penny Tinkler

Social Media: Sian Edwards

liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

Publicity: Stephanie Spencer

Schools Liaison: Amy Dale

Lyndsey Jenkins: Archive Secretary

Journal Team:

Editors:

Rosalind Carr, David Geiringer, Sue Hawkins, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin, Katharina Rowold, Zoe Thomas

For Journal submissions and peer review:

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For book reviews: David Geiringer:

bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

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

For journal/magazine back issues and queries please email:

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

*To join the WHN just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments and Gift-Aid declarations can all be
accessed online as well – see panel on page 26 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