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Barbara N. Wiesinger on
Women’s Armed Resistance in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945

Sheila Selway on
A Postmodernist Life History

Nina Baker on
Early Women Engineering Graduates in Scotland

Folake Onayemi on
Representation of Women Leadership in Ancient Greek and Modern Yoruba

Jacqueline Mulhallen on
Sylvia Pankhurst’s Paintings

Plus
Six book reviews
Call for Reviewers
Committee News
Invited keynote speakers include
Vera Baird, QC, MP
Olwen Hufton (Oxford)
Linda Kerber (University of Iowa)
Malavika Karlekar (University of Delhi)

Themes include:
• Gender and institutional politics
• Women’s movements and identity politics
• Negotiation of power and authority within the family
• Community and neighbourhood empowerment
• Politics of the workplace
• Gender and cultural production

For general enquiries, please contact Aurelia Annat:
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Registration is now open, please visit
www.history.ox.ac.uk/conferences/whn/index
to download the registration form. Note after 1 July
there will be a premium added to the registration fee
We are 60! Well, sort of. This summer edition marks the sixtieth edition of the *Women's History Magazine* (together with its predecessor the *Women's History Notebooks*). Throughout our history, we have always strived to publish a range of articles from the academic to the human interest; to move forward women's history while continuing the process of recovery. We have introduced new voices to the scholarship and welcomed independent scholars. Articles aimed at sharing little known histories as well as revising established discourses; they have used traditional and non-traditional modes of expressing our understandings of the past. This issue operates on many of these levels.

Barbara Weisinger draws on published documents of the resistance movement, its war-time press and memories of women veterans to explore the experiences and memories of Yugoslav women partisans and civilian resisters of World War II. Her interest lies in the relations between constructions of gender, violence and war as well as in twentieth century Yugoslav history. Thus, she concentrates on the societal norms, political attitudes and historical developments which interacted to include women, albeit on a limited scale, in the Yugoslav National Liberation Army (NLA).

Returning to life histories, in ‘Lucie’s Story’, Sheila Selway describes the journey she undertook to find a way to understand and communicate one life story. Situating her process in postmodernist ideology of challenging the ‘given’, of contesting everything in our world, she is concerned with writing life history research, which has been generated from an oral history encounter, in different ways, where no one way is regarded as the ‘right’ way. She argues that the use of imagination in research provides both expanding intellectual and emotional dimensions.

Nina Baker addresses the lacunae in our knowledge about early women engineering graduates, specifically focusing on Scotland’s older universities. In marked contrast to the celebration of early women medical pioneers, the apparent silence about women in engineering led her to address two questions: when and who were the first women to study and graduate in engineering from the Scottish Universities and what career paths did these pioneers take? With an array of statistical comparators and illuminating case studies, she shows how such women paved the way for today’s aspiring female engineers.

Folake Onayemi draws our attention to the presentation of women in a position of leadership in the *Assembly Women* of Aristophanes and compares it with a modern Yoruba Drama titled *Lágídígba* (2001) written by Yemi Adegunju. In both plays, women rebel against male authority and set up a gynaikokratia. Although not all universal concepts can be successfully transported from one cultural milieu to another, these two dramas are united in their view that women at the echelon of power are abnormal and that they should be kept in their place.

We also assist in the reclamation of lost artwork by Sylvia Pankhurst. Jacqueline Mulhallen tells how she accidentally found these paintings, on ‘Women Workers of England’, printed in *The London Magazine* (1908), and of her campaign to bring them to public notice. The book reviews continue the international flavour and reflect the range and vitality of women’s history, with books on science, crime, education, personal correspondence, illness and local history.

The Annual Conference this year visits Oxford, which is bound to be a draw. The theme is *Women, Gender and Political Spaces: Historical Perspectives* to be held at St. Hilda’s College, Oxford, 11-13 September 2009. Keynote speakers are Vera Baird, QC, MP, Dame Olwen Hufton (Oxford), Professor Linda Kerber (University of Iowa) and Professor Malavika Karlekar (University of Delhi), so it promises to be a stimulating and enjoyable occasion. Registration is open now and should be completed by 1 July 2009 (or face a surcharge). Details of papers will be available shortly, so check the website, and don’t forget to register.

This issue also welcomes a new member to the editorial team, Sue Hawkins, who is also a member of the WHN Steering Committee. You can find her biography and a picture (!) on the Women’s History Network Website, which in its revised format will keep you up to date on the Network as well as a wide range of issues related to women’s history.

Editorial Team: Sue Hawkins, Gerry Holloway, Jane Potter, Debbi Simonton

Contents

Women partisans – a contradiction in terms? Attitudes and policies on women’s armed resistance in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945.......................... 4

Lucie’s Story: A Postmodernist Approach to Presenting Life History .................................................. 11

Early Women Engineering Graduates from Scottish Universities ......................................................... 21

The Representation of Women’s Leadership in Ancient Greek and Modern Yoruba .......................... 30

Sylvia Pankhurst’s Paintings: A Missing Link......... 35

Book Reviews .............................................................. 39

Committee News ........................................................... 45

Cover:

Detail of painting by Sylvia Pankhurst; used by permission of Richard Pankhurst.

*Editorial*
Women partisans – a contradiction in terms? Attitudes and policies on women’s armed resistance in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945
Barbara N. Wiesinger
Independent scholar, Belgrade/Birmingham/Vienna

My exploration of the experiences and memories of Yugoslav women partisans and civilian resisters of World War II is linked to a more general interest in the relations between constructions of gender, violence and war as well as in twentieth century Yugoslav history. This article concentrates on the societal norms, political attitudes and historical developments which interacted to include women, albeit on a limited scale, in the Yugoslav National Liberation Army (NLA). The analysis draws on published documents of the resistance movement, its war-time press and memories of women veterans.

Resistance, civil war and revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945

Between 1941 and 1945, the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement (NLM) fought a war of liberation against Axis occupation and native collaboration. It also contended for political power against ethno-political factions such as the Croatian fascist Ustaša movement or the Serbian monarchist Četnici. With the NLM, which claimed to be a broad alliance of patriotic forces, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) had initiated one of the most impressive resistance movements in occupied Europe. That its eventual victory was at least partly due to the concerted war effort of the allies does not reduce its importance. Tito’s partisans, as members of the armed resistance were commonly known, undoubtedly created a lot of unrest in an area that National Socialist Germany and its allies had hoped to ‘pacify’ and exploit as they pleased when they invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941. During the war, the CPY broadened its membership base, created mass organizations and built alternative institutions. This enabled the party to establish a socialist dictatorship in 1944/45 which was to last until Yugoslavia’s bloody collapse in the early 1990s.

Commemorating World War II in socialist Yugoslavia

During the socialist period, the National Liberation War (NLW) — a term originally coined by the CPY to highlight the anti-occupation thrust of the resistance in order to recruit as many activists as possible — lived on in party propaganda, public rituals, and media of commemoration. The partisan myth, which emphasized the achievements of the NLM while downplaying the cruelties of the civil war, especially those committed by the partisans, served to legitimize and stabilize the Titoist regime.

Even though the NLM had boasted a significant number of women activists in civilian as well as in armed resistance — official figures speak of 100,000 women partisans and two million civilian resisters — their contribution to the partisans’ victory was never accorded much attention in later appraisals of the NLW. It has been argued that the lack of interest in women’s history characteristic of male-dominated societies was the reason for this omission. But neglecting women’s real war experiences also served concrete political aims. By glossing over the less glorious aspects of women’s engagement in the NLW, such as their widespread discrimination and exploitation, both propagandistic and more serious historical accounts could depict the CPY and the resistance movement as champions of gender equality. The Yugoslav authorities hoped that such progressive, if invented, credentials would ensure them women’s continuing loyalty and support. Furthermore, the fact that thousands of women had actually fought alongside men was hard to conceptualize in terms of the traditional war narrative which defined warfare as exclusively men’s business. Since coherent strategies of including women and their experiences into this narrative were not successfully developed by the party’s propaganda apparatus, the easiest solution was simply not to mention women partisans, especially fighters, too often. Thus, women’s armed resistance remained a blind spot of Yugoslav contemporary history.

The following paragraphs explain how and why the partisan leadership eventually decided to directly recruit women into the NLA and discuss women’s functions, activities and status in the partisan army. In the process, it will become clear that official post-war interpretations of women’s participation in the NLW as an indicator of their enthusiastic response to ‘emancipatory’ communist politics and characterized by their absolute equality with men were attempts at inventing a ‘progressive’ tradition for the CPY rather than depictions of historical reality.

Women in civilian resistance

The CPY originally discouraged women from joining the partisans, as a 1941 letter by the Serbian party leadership shows: ‘It would be wrong to withdraw all female comrades, especially those who are not compromised, from the towns and send them into the forest. Every woman who is not threatened with arrest ... should remain in town.’ Instead, it called upon women activists to attend medical courses, hide and feed party members, collect aid for their families and organize medical supplies and food for the growing partisan army. Accordingly, Novi Sad-based resistance activist Kristina Šepšei hid ‘comrades’ in her parents’ house, while sisters Radoslavka Stojković and Sofija Skandarski received training in first aid to act
Women in the National Liberation Army

Although the official figure of 100,000 women in the partisan forces is almost certainly exaggerated, a significant minority of Yugoslav women did participate in armed resistance. Female representation in NLA units climbed as high as 15 percent. These women’s commitment was interpreted by the CPY (and in later historical literature) as an expression of their patriotism, love of freedom and desire for emancipation. It was also portrayed as ‘justifying’ women’s suffrage and equality before the law in socialist Yugoslavia.

Women in the medical corps

The partisans’ growing need for doctors and nurses partly explains why the NLM leadership eventually decided to employ women in the armed forces. From the early days of the uprising, women doctors and nurses had been recruited from among party members, sympathizers and persecuted Jews. Altogether, 173 women doctors and an estimated 10,000 trained nurses volunteered for service in the NLA. They were assisted by thousands of other women who, after joining the resistance, attended rudimentary nursing courses organized by several NLA hospitals. The medical corps’ work took place at or near the front: nurses carried wounded soldiers from the battlefield, provided emergency treatment and cared for them in the units or in partisan hospitals. Even the latter were far from secure places: secret/hidden partisan hospitals were always at risk of being discovered while mobile hospitals had to relocate in accordance with military developments and represented easy targets for enemy attacks. Quite understandably, women doctors and nurses took up arms when the need arose to defend themselves and their patients. Demonstrating that they were willing and able to fight, they paved the way for the recruitment of women for combat roles.

While the partisan movement’s propaganda (as well as later memoirs and historical evaluations) idealized women’s role as doctors and nurses in the war, in reality they were frequently ill-treated and discriminated against: During breaks the medical corps is talked about with deprecating smiles, during battles and when the wounded stream in, it is talked about as a boring burden. A general inclination on the part of the command to either pressurize the medical personnel into joining the fighting units, ... treat them like cowards or call them ‘hinterlanders’, ‘gravediggers’ and even more scandalous names, can be felt. ... With a few exceptions, physicians are disparaged to the level of ‘bandagers’.

Sometimes they were given their rations only after the fighters had eaten. Because of inadequate clothing and footwear, nurses ran a high risk of getting ill or being wounded. Lack of basic instruments and medical supplies made their work even more difficult. Nurses were also rarely promoted. As a result, many of them lost their original enthusiasm or tried to change to other positions. In a brochure of September 1943, the High Command of the NLA criticized the fact that women in the medical corps were habitually treated like servants, expected to do menial work and did not enjoy adequate rest. References to nurses as ‘material’ or even ‘weak material’ in army documents also indicate that their status was rather low. Repeated attempts to improve this apparently did not bring about substantial change until, towards the end of the war, women doctors and nurses serving at the front were increasingly relocated to hospitals in the rear and substituted by male personnel.

Although the medical corps had proven indispensable for the partisan effort it was not given the credit it deserved either during or after the war. Still, an idealized image of the partisan nurse became a central element of the partisan myth. In an attempt to draw women into the medical corps, the CPY’s propaganda machinery had begun this idealization already during the war. A quotation from the magazine Zora (Dawn), the official organ of the Serbian Antifascist Women’s Front (AFŽ), can illustrate this:

In the army, [nurses] become leaders of the battalion’s or brigade’s medical corps. They are entrusted with caring for and protecting the lives of hundreds of our best fighters. They render first aid to wounded soldiers and carry them on their backs from the battlefield. The fighters love the nurses, their sisters, and are grateful for their self-sacrifice and courage.

Stereotypical references to the selflessness and
equality is one of the greatest and most beautiful achievements of our peoples’ just and holy war.’

But even if we defined women’s equality in wartime Yugoslavia as meaning only their ‘equal rights and opportunities to participate in the National Liberation Movement and the Organs of the Peoples’ Power’, very few women, if any, actually attained it.

Despite the factors which facilitated the enlistment of women fighters, it remained a controversial issue among resistance activists and even more so among the general population. Veteran Dobrila Debeljak-Kukoč remembered: ‘It was no problem [for us] to take up arms. The question was rather whether men would take us seriously with guns in our hands’, and even the party organ *Proleter* (The Proletarian) in 1942 had criticized the view held by many male party members that women should not participate in combat, let alone be promoted to commanding positions.

The sources reveal numerous women who were pressurized by comrades and superiors to work as nurses instead of becoming fighters. National Hero Danica Milosavljević, for example, had to serve in the medical corps before she was ‘granted’ a weapon and the ‘right to fight’ following an intervention by Tito.

Bosnian partisan Duja Marić-Vujanović remembered that her comrades reacted with mistrust and resentment when upon joining the NLA she declared that she wanted to be a fighter.

Regionally different recruiting policies also show that opinions on women fighters were divided. Women fought in Slovenian and Serbian partisan units from the beginning of the uprising. The Serbian party leadership explicitly supported this: ‘Female comrades can be of great use in the units — not only in other functions, but, if need be, also with a weapon in their hands.’ In Croatia and Montenegro, on the other hand, women originally served almost exclusively as nurses, and the Croatian Communist Party instructed army leaders to mobilize women fighters only in October 1942. (There is no reliable data for Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia.)

The official position was made explicit by Tito as leader of the CPY and the NLA in a letter of February 1942: ‘Since ever more women demand to join the [partisan] units, we have decided to accept them ... not only as nurses, but also as fighters. It would be a real disgrace for us to make it impossible for women to fight with a weapon in hand for national liberation.’ Especially the AFŽ promoted women’s participation in the armed struggle, stating that ‘[i]t is continuously necessary to engage women together with men in armed actions and sabotage against the occupants.’ Later directives with similar contents, however, prove that their realization made only limited

Women in the combat troops

Recruitment of women for the combat troops was facilitated by practical and ideological considerations. Obviously, the more partisans there were, the better was their chance of overcoming their manifold enemies. In this vein, the movement’s press cited the words of a woman partisan: ‘It is necessary that women as well as men join the partisan ranks because the more we are, the sooner will we liberate our people from the occupier and his servants.’ Also, the CPY leadership believed that women could gain equality by adopting traditional male roles. Proving that they were able warriors would presumably strengthen their claim for political rights and improve their status in society. Thus, the communist-led women’s organization AFŽ declared in its founding resolution: ‘Actively participating in the struggle for the liberation of their people, women at the same time obtain full equality with man [sic]. This courage of nurses abound in memoirs and historiography from the socialist period. In a collection of biographies of women National Heroes, veteran Albina Mali-Hočevar is described as follows: ‘The nurse Albina always paid more attention to the wounded than to herself. ... She knew neither fear nor exhaustion while ... there were wounded [partisans] to be taken care of.’

Such idealizations of partisan nurses disguised not only the reality of their lives and work during the war, but also silenced the fact that women had taken over other roles in the NLA as well. Propaganda, memoirs and historiography collaborated in painting a picture of women in war that enforced the partisan myth and dominant gender stereotypes, and a systematic, fact-based study of women in the NLA’s medical corps which could have questioned these interpretations was never written.

Women fighters of the XII Brigade (wartime photograph by unknown author, n. d.)

Barbara N. Wiesinger
progress. While the war lasted, army commanders who ‘had forgotten’ to mobilize women due to their conviction that ‘women were not able to be fighters’ had to be called to order by the party leadership.

Conflicts about women’s ‘right to fight’ could not be resolved simply by decree. While the CPY had changed its ideas on women’s role in the resistance movement due to pragmatic considerations and women’s insistence on becoming fighters, wide segments of the movement and the population still regarded women warriors with suspicion. An article from the AFŽ magazine Primorka (Woman from the Adriatic Coast) which quotes a woman partisan implicitly admits this:

Many comrades said that [armed] actions are not for women because they would only create panic. This, however, did not unnerve me, but strengthened my desire and determination to fight with a gun in my hand against the occupier. I proved wrong those who doubted that women can be as good warriors as men.

All available evidence indicates that Yugoslav women’s access to combat roles was limited in many respects. As a mass phenomenon, it lasted only about two and a half years, since towards the end of 1944, after the partisans had liberated large parts of the country and started conscripting recruits there, considerable numbers of women were transferred from the combat troops to the medical corps or deployed to organize political work in the rear. Furthermore, only three women held commanding military positions although theoretically all partisans had equal chances of promotion, and very few stayed in the army after the war ended. The propaganda claim that recruiting women for the combat troops was the practical acknowledgement of their equality notwithstanding, women’s presence as fighters in the NLA seems to have been dominantly interpreted as an expedient in a desperate situation, and many women partisans probably shared this opinion.

The gender of armed resistance

Why is it that women partisans met with such resistance when it was only reasonable for the NLA leadership to recruit as many partisans as possible? To answer this question, we need to consider conceptions of male and female gender roles dominant in Yugoslav society at the time. Women fighters were disapproved of because warfare was widely regarded as an exclusively male occupation. Also, weapons functioned as powerful symbolic markers of masculinity in traditional Yugoslav societies, and this connotation was still understood in the middle of the twentieth century (it even is so today).

Thus, women fighters were deemed to be blatantly transgressing the boundaries of their prescribed gender role. The restrictions they faced in the NLA can be interpreted as attempts to control such perceived violations of the traditional gender hierarchy. Another ‘containment strategy’, which was employed in wartime propaganda as well as in later interpretations of women’s participation in the National Liberation War, was to attribute traditionally ‘female’ qualities such as selflessness, compassion and helpfulness not only to nurses, but also to women fighters in compensation for their ‘male’ activities on the battlefield. In order to emphasize their ‘femininity’, women fighters were also frequently portrayed as attractive young women or mothers.

If becoming a fighter entailed suspicion or even open disapproval, why then did women choose this role? Motivations were manifold. Among the most important were fear of victimization, the wish to be able to defend oneself against the ever-present terror, hatred for the occupiers and collaborators and a desire for revenge.

Veteran Stana Nidžović-Džakula, for example, recounted that she decided to join the partisans after having barely survived an Ustaša massacre in her native village. Even though her comrades pressurized her to take over the role of nurse in the unit, she insisted on becoming a fighter:

I made up my mind then. ... seeing this [the victimized civilians of her village] and a range of other things, I made up my mind and joined the unit. As luck would have it — this is not a joke, this is the truth — I was the unit’s first woman-fighter. ... However, they wanted me to become a nurse, because

Barbara N. Wiesinger
As already mentioned, weapons — essential attributes of the warrior — were widely considered to be a male prerogative. Ensuingly, women often had to struggle in order to get or keep them. Veteran Radojka Katić told me the following anecdote:

... when I went up into the Dinara mountains, I didn’t part with my gun. There were men who didn’t have guns. ... And now the commander comes to me and says: ‘Well, you know, comrade Radojka, you might give up this gun. You see Vasa doesn’t have a gun, you could give it to Vasa.’ I say: ‘No way. I joined the partisans with this gun, I won’t part with it, you know.’ — ‘Well, you know, I could command you to give it up.’ I say: ‘No, you can’t. Certainly not. Not even Vicko could do that.’ Krstulović, he was the commander of the zone. ... ‘Oh, don’t act like that, comrade, well, you know, after all you’re a woman! ... What do you want with a gun?’ I say: ‘My dear Boško, God may give you health, the gun is mine and I won’t give it to you.’

When the commander tried to disarm her one night while she was standing guard, Radojka Katić, mistaking him for an enemy soldier, nearly shot him dead. Through proving her prowess as a partisan, she gained the respect of her comrades, but was furthermore regarded as a non-woman.

When comparing the status of nurses and fighters in the NLA, women partisans inevitably came to the conclusion that the latter enjoyed higher status, which was another reason for aspiring to this role. Also, participation in armed combat was perceived as the ultimate proof of a partisan’s loyalty to the cause and the most worthy form of resistance:

To this day I am sad that I never experienced a battle, but we also understood that clothes had to be sewn and homes and schools organized for the children of active fighters and the orphans of the fallen. ... In the liberated territories, work on the fields had to be continued — after all, even partisans did not live off the air. Then there was the Red Aid. ... All that was done by women — important things! Our heads understood that — but to participate in battle, to shoot, that was somehow more important.

Since their personal ambition to become fighters coincided with the NLA’s need for partisans, an impressive number of women were able to take over a combat role. It seems that the majority of them were not so much inspired by the CPY’s hazy promise of gender equality, but decided to join the NLA because of their patriotism, their political convictions or, most importantly, their desire to defend their lives in this brutal war which was characterized by massive anti-civilian violence. Some also did not have a choice, but were forcibly recruited or became partisans in the hope of escaping persecution.

Therefore, women’s armed resistance in Yugoslavia during World War II should not be interpreted as an act of emancipation, nor should war in general be idealized...
as ‘a liberating environment which automatically attacks established hierarchies and democratizes participation’. What should be acknowledged and remembered, however, is the fact that whatever their individual motivations, thousands of Yugoslav women courageously fought against fascist occupation and collaboration and thereby contributed to the eventual defeat of National Socialism.

Notes

1. ‘Yugoslav’ refers to all citizens of the former Yugoslavia regardless of ethnic origin or religious denomination.


5. In mid-1941, the CPY and affiliated organizations had 42,000 members. By 1945, CPY membership had risen to 140,000, a figure which did not include the hundreds of thousands enrolled in the League of Communist Youth (SKOJ), the United League of Antifascist Youth (USAOJ), and the Antifascist Women’s Front (AFŽ). In mid-1941, the CPY and affiliated organizations had 42,000 members. By 1945, CPY membership had risen to 140,000, a figure which did not include the hundreds of thousands enrolled in the League of Communist Youth (SKOJ), the United League of Antifascist Youth (USAOJ), and the Antifascist Women’s Front (AFŽ).


15. See Barbara Jancar-Webster, Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945 (Denver, Arden Press, 1990), 88; Mitra Mitrović, Ratno putovanje (Belgrade, Nolit, 1963), 26-56.


19. Wiesinger, Partisaninnen, 32, 39f.


22. See also Wiesinger, Partisaninnen, chapter 4.


31. Physician Roza Papo became the first woman general of the later Yugoslav People’s Army, Gavrilović, Žene-lekari, 129.
32. ‘Spremamo se’, in Zora, 1 (1945) 1, 16.
33. Drago Zdunić, Heroine Jugoslavije (Zagreb, Naša djeca, 1980), w/o pagination.
34. Taken from Dušanka Kovačević et al. ed., Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije (Belgrade, Svežnanje, 1972), 145. (No source given.)
37. Definition used by Sklevicky, Konji, 28.
44. Desanka Stojić, Prva ženska partizanska četa (Karlovac, Republička konferencija SSRN Hrvatske, 1987), 14; Lydia Sklevicky, Konji, 38f; Jovan Bojović, et al., Žene Crne Gore u revolucionarnom pokretu 1918-1945 (Titograd, Istoriski institut, 1969), 127; 153-5.
47. AFŽ, ‘Rezolucija sa prve zemaljske konferencije AFŽ’, in Žena danas, 6 (1943) 31, 15f; Žene učvršćuju svoju (Cologne, 45, 190, 251, 263-5, 286, 289, Zagreb, Naša djeca, 1972), 145. (No source given.)
49. See Direktivno pismo OK KPZ za Srem, 9. 5. 1943, in ZDPNOR, series 1, vol. 11, doc. 95, 306; Osvrt štaba 3. operativne zone Hrvatske, 2. 12. 1942, in ZDPNOR, series 1, vol. 6, doc. 54, 209.
52. All three women commanders — Milka Kerin, Milka Kljajić and Danica Milosavljević — were later declared National Heroes. See Institut za savremenu istoriju, Narodni heroji Jugoslavije, 376f, 385f, 547f. On the exclusion of women from leading positions, see also Jancar-Webster, Women & Revolution, 90 and 93f.
53. Wiesinger, Freiheit, 194-6; on similar views current during the 1990s, see Ivan Čolović, Politika simbola. Ogledi o političkoj antropologiji (Belgrade, xx. vek, 2000), 63-74.
55. Taken from Jancar-Webster, Women & Revolution, w/o pagination. (Source: Collection of the former Museum of the Revolution of the Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.)
56. For a more detailed discussion see Wiesinger, Freiheit, 204-8 and 256-61.
62. Quoted after Kopketzky, Die andere Front, 80.
63. Jancar-Webster, Women & Revolution, 186.
Presenting life history can be a marvellous journey of discovery. The journey I embarked upon in presenting Lucie’s story encompassed meticulous preparation, false starts, changed plans, alternative routes, forays into uncharted territory, all amid emotional highs and lows, both of an academic and a personal nature. This article traces part of my journey and is concerned with methodology of writing life history research, which has been generated from an oral history encounter, in different ways, where no one way is regarded as the ‘right’ way. This chimes with postmodernist ideology of challenging the ‘given’, of questioning, of contesting everything in our world; of problematizing what Roland Barthes refers to as ‘what goes without saying’ in ourselves, in society, in history, and in our culture.¹

Postmodernism as the starting point for my journey

Postmodernism suggests that no one method, theory or genre has a privileged status in the dissemination of knowledge. The core of postmodernism, according to Laurel Richardson, is the doubt of there being a universal ‘right’ form of authoritative knowledge; she maintains that whilst not automatically rejecting conventional methods of knowing and telling, postmodernism opens them up to inquiry, along with the new methods it encourages and introduces.² Acknowledging multiple approaches of ‘knowing’ and ‘telling’, postmodernism also acknowledges the limitations of the ‘knower’; therefore, Richardson states, ‘a postmodernist position does allow us to know “something” without claiming to know everything.’³ This mirrors the knowledge gathered by means of oral history, which is partial, selective, fragmentary, often contradictory, and reliant on the dynamics of the interaction between the participants and the specific time and place of the telling. The knowledge produced is therefore of necessity localised, situated and subjective, both in the knowing and telling of the researched, and the understanding and re-telling of the researcher. We can only know and understand things using the discourses available to us at any given time, and as these are constantly changing, so too are our subjectivities and perspectives.

The non-privileging, open-minded but questioning ideology of postmodernism opens up the field and invites us as researchers to regard the presentation of all knowledge as something where it is all to play for. Postmodernism acknowledges limitations whilst encouraging reflexivity; most importantly, it frees us to embark on a journey of discovery.

The aims of my exploration with textual form are two-fold; firstly to support the postmodernist thesis that there should be no privileging of one genre over another in communicating knowledge, and secondly, to produce texts that are engaging and encourage an active and connected reading. The meaning of qualitative research, as pointed out by Richardson, is embedded within the text, and as such needs to be read intently, rather than just skimmed through. In order for texts to be more vital, more engaging, she suggests that the dynamic, creative process of writing, in and of itself, is a way of ‘knowing’, and as such should be regarded as ‘a method of discovery and analysis’.⁴

Postmodernism embraces the notion of multi-layered, alternative realities, of shifting perceptions, subjective readings and of different ways of knowing. Within this context I have presented Lucie’s story in a mixed genre format; using narrative analysis, exploring the poetics of language, writing fiction based on fact, and presenting a play using researcher-improvised dialogue. In this way, my intention has been to generate modes of knowing that engage active reading, imaginative participation and emotional engagement with the data, in order to facilitate enhanced, nuanced understandings of one human life.

In support of creative techniques

Using a range of creative techniques allows information to be imparted by opening up the subjective world of others on two levels, by stimulating the imagination of both the researcher and the reader. The intense immersion in the material that I experienced as the writer of the creative representations, allowed for a depth and clarity of understanding that aided my own interpretation and analysis as a researcher. My aim was to dig deep, to get under the surface of Lucie’s narrative, in order to construct my own subjective interpretations and to draw conclusions.

Traditionally, in order to aid ‘validity’ within qualitative research, the concept of triangulation is used. Richardson proposes that rather than a triangle, a more appropriate image for postmodernist mixed-genre text is the constantly changing, reflecting, and refracting crystal.⁵ The narrative analysis reflects my subjective interpretations at a specific time, while the poetic representations present knowledge refracted through the subjectivities of both Lucie and me. The fictionalised writing and the drama represent multiple perspectives, highlighting the subjectivities involved and reflecting the crystallization process, taking into account the differences in how people experience, interpret and recount their lives. During the course of this textual journey of discovery, I have endeavoured to use these creative strategies as modes of transport to explore the universalities and the particular, the similarities and the
differences, within the realm of human experience.

The use of these strategies also enhances more effective communication of the knowledge to the reader by making the experience more interesting, encouraging imagination, and facilitating interpretation, allowing for a deeper understanding and comprehension of the ‘other’, and of our shared conception of the human condition. Words generate meanings and the genres within which they are presented come with cultural assumptions, thereby providing guidelines for how we are to approach them, and how we are expected to deal with them; therefore we as readers implicitly know the level of interpretation required of us.

Contextualising the oral history encounter

My qualitative data was generated from a series of six interviews I conducted with Lucie Gimpelson between June and September 2005. Born in Vienna into a Jewish family in 1917, Lucie was forced to leave once the Nazis assimilated Austria into the Third Reich in March 1938. Lucie came to Britain as a refugee where she married and had a child. Widowed as a result of the war, she became a teacher and settled on the South Coast until her death in April 2007.

Initially I had planned to conduct one or two in-depth interviews with Lucie; however, I found after the first interview that significant gaps in her narrative needed to be filled, and that I needed clarification on many aspects. I was also always hoping to gather richer descriptions from Lucie, and so the oral history encounter eventually resulted in six interviews being conducted. I believe Lucie was always happy for me to come back and interview her, and indeed on one occasion requested that I interview her again, was genuinely interested and enthusiastic about the project, and was delighted to receive copies of the resulting tapes and transcripts. She was aware right from the beginning of my intention to present aspects of her life history using creative techniques, and was thoroughly supportive of this.

I was anticipating expansive, evocative, lyrical testimony, as I had secretly wanted Lucie to provide me with cinematic revelations of the times and places she had lived through; snapshots of one life lived out against a vast backdrop of important world events. However this was not the way this pragmatic, down-to-earth woman either viewed her life or articulated it; whilst acknowledging the traumatic events of her life, and their significance, she in no way dramatised them. In fact, during the course of our interviews, Lucie remained remarkably contained. Valerie Raleigh Yow points out that research into how people cope with traumatic memory suggests that, to reduce present anxiety, sometimes people remember themselves as having been safer than they really were at the time of the event, and that in order to minimise the impact of negative events people may downplay the distress caused. Naomi Rosh White reflects that we as researchers/listeners are confronted ‘not with the question of whether information is being withheld, but with the problem of how one might convey experiences and feelings for which words cannot be found.’7 Certainly, my experience with Lucie indicates her natural style was to minimise all negative aspects of her life; she stated the facts as she remembered them, in a pared-down, almost sparse way, with controlled emotion, and without embellishment.8

Lucie was the mother of my daughter’s drama teacher, and we had known each other socially for about ten years by the time of our interviews in 2005. When I first approached Lucie and told her of my planned project she was both delighted and amazed, and I think welcomed the opportunity for her life to be documented. In her late eighties, Lucie was physically rather frail, particularly as four months prior to our first interview she had undergone surgery to have her leg amputated. Often during the course of our interviews, we would be interrupted by the arrival of Lucie’s two carers, which necessitated a break in the narrative. The presence of Lucie’s daughter, either in the room, or just outside, on all but one of the occasions, I feel, also had an impact on what was said and how it was said. I know that it certainly heightened my awareness of my ‘performance’ in my role as ‘interviewer’. Miriam Zukas writes of her method of constructing what she terms ‘quasi-friendship’ for the purpose of the interview, in order to encourage an intimate and confiding atmosphere to elicit information, but without any reciprocity on her part.9 Conversely, there was always a two-way exchange of information between Lucie and me; both before and after the interviews we engaged in ‘off-tape chatter’ where personal details were exchanged, and where, in a relaxed manner, Lucie disclosed some important pieces of information that often aided my contextualisation of her taped narrative.10 However, as soon as the tape recorder was turned on I sensed that she automatically adopted the role of the ‘interviewee’ and answered my questions in what she thought of as an appropriate way.

I knew that Lucie had lived through some of the momentous times of the twentieth century, and I had hoped for compelling stories, as well as poignant memories and rich descriptions that I could somehow seductively weave into an academic, but at the same time highly engaging, account of one life. Dale E. Treleven declares ‘mutual respect, rapport, and trust are essential if substantive, meaningful information is to emerge’ and these factors, I would suggest, were in evidence within the relationship between Lucie and me.11 However I did find in many instances that although Lucie wanted to help me and be as forthcoming as possible, whether from reasons of poor memory or impaired hearing, a language barrier, the role she adopted for the interview situation, or her natural sparse, staccato style of delivery, she tended not to elaborate on details.

Therefore, Lucie often gave either one word, or very brief answers to my questions, and during the interview situation rarely communicated through conversational narratives, nor readily shared self-interpretations of her experiences. She did however confirm on more than one occasion that she was happy to talk to me about her life, and I believe did enjoy the company, but I was always concerned about not over-tiring her, and not upsetting her by probing too deeply into certain areas of her history and
her feelings. Of course, I did probe further into particular aspects of Lucie’s testimony, for example her persistent denial of personal experience of sexual discrimination, or racial discrimination, other than in Nazi-controlled Vienna. However this resolutely positive perspective could very well be linked to the fact that Lucie tended to habitually downplay the negative, and highlight the positive, perhaps as a developed coping mechanism, or due to her natural inclination. During the course of Lucie’s testimony, I could often see the painful resurfacing of memories, and my reaction mirrored those of Yow, whose reluctance to cause additional pain caused her not to pursue a particular line of questioning.17 Although aware of Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack’s understanding of the role of the oral historian to ‘learn to listen in stereo’ so that in addition to the dominant discourse ‘the weaker signal of thoughts and feelings’ can also be documented, I nevertheless also subscribe wholeheartedly to their caveat that ‘the researcher must always remain attentive to the moral dimension of interviewing and aware that she is there to follow the narrator’s lead, to honour her integrity and privacy, not to intrude into areas that the narrator has chosen to hold back’.18

Some thoughts and actions on sharing authority

The principal of sharing authority with the subjects of our research is one that has occupied the thoughts and directed the actions of many oral historians, largely in response to Michael Frisch’s notion of a ‘shared authority’.14 Although his principle has been embraced and extended, Frisch later explains that his original intention was to suggest authority is implicitly shared in oral history by definition, in the dialogic and collaborative relationship of the interaction.15 Tempted to name it ‘a shared authority’ he maintains the concept represented by the hyphen is crucial, raising as it does important issues surrounding authorship, power and interpretative authority.16

Lucie certainly shared in the authority at the time of the telling, by narrating her own story in her own words, and by being co-producer/co-author, in addition to having joint responsibility for the resulting testimony. After each interview, I gave Lucie copies of the tapes and transcriptions to comment on and to keep. She was very engaged and interested in the project, clearly listened intently to the tapes, duly noting any amendments she wished to make, or spellings that needed correcting, which she went over with me at our next meeting, a time when she also often critiqued her own performance. I had offered to show Lucie my creative representations of aspects of her life history, although at the time I was not aware of the precise form they would take, and she was delighted at the prospect. I was even hoping to interview Lucie at a later date to record her reactions to them, however, Lucie sadly died before I had created them, and so I did not have the chance to share them with her.

Despite this being a truly collaborative endeavour at the time of the information gathering, from the very beginning of this project I did have concerns regarding authorship, power and authority. There were worrisome, fleeting, but persistent, questions that fluttered about at the back of my mind concerning ethical questions of whose story it is, of respect, of appropriateness, of validity. In addition, I also worried in view of the tragic and distressing nature of some aspects of Lucie’s life that to fictionalise them would be insensitive. In practice life story research, as Ken Plummer has observed ‘always means you are playing with another person’s life’ adding ‘so you had better be careful.’17 As oral historians, any level of analysis we apply, or presentation we put forward, is a mediation of the knowledge gathered in its original form. After much soul-searching, I decided that as long as I remained true to Lucie’s testimony, and used it with sensitivity and as a framework, then my creative representations would have validity. Andrew Sparkes makes the distinction between ethnographic fiction as writing from a position of ‘I’ve been there’ and the creative fiction position of ‘I know something but I have not been there.’18 As an oral historian collecting the life history of Lucie I have not been ‘there’ in her past but I have been ‘there’ at the time of the telling; I have been a co-producer of the performance of the life told, and as such can claim to know ‘something’. The oral history testimony was produced through the unique and specific interaction between Lucie and me; it is co-constructed and we share joint responsibility, which leads me to recognise that I do legitimately have a stake in it, and can even claim to partially ‘own’ it.

I have endeavoured throughout this project to ensure that Lucie is evident by remaining as faithful as possible to her words, delivery, and what I perceive to be her intended meaning, thereby retaining the essence of the woman she was. I have used only Lucie’s own words in the poetic representations, and wherever possible within the fictionalisations and the play, but they are filtered through my interpretation, and of course will be subjected to another level of interpretation once read.

After the death of Lucie, I felt the only course open to me was to share my creative representations with Lucie’s daughter, who was involved in the project from the beginning in a supportive capacity. This I have done and have been most gratified by her response; she assures me that her mother would be delighted with them, and honoured that her life has been commemorated in such a way. Lucie’s daughter found the play in particular immensely moving, as she had accompanied her mother on her return to Vienna, and felt it accurately captured and articulated the experience. She also informed me she believed that I had really ‘got under the skin’ of Lucie, and understood the person she had been; a sentiment echoed by Lucie’s best friend, who also has copies of the representations, as do Lucie’s remaining relatives in London.

My initial methodology

Originally, I had wanted to present Lucie’s life history chronologically, but to weave poetry, fiction and narrative analysis throughout. However, for scholarly and structural reasons I decided to identify key stages in Lucie’s life and subject each of them to a different genre, thereby allowing
me to incorporate literary reviews and reflective essays on each chapter. Therefore the chapters are structured around the following areas; her childhood and teenage years, the time after the Nazis arrived in Vienna and Lucie’s subsequent journey to Britain, her early days in a new country, her marriage and the birth of her daughter, and finally the time when Lucie returned to Vienna, fifty years after being forced to leave. The next stage in the preparation involved deciding which phase potentially held the most fruitful and appropriate material applicable to a particular genre; for example the testimony relating to the time when the Nazis arrived in Vienna immediately suggested itself, both in the form in which it is recounted by Lucie, and the actual content of the material, as providing apt illustrations for presentation within a poetic format. However for reasons of pragmatism I did have to be selective in my choice of material, and therefore found that I had to leave out various aspects that I would have otherwise chosen to include, for example the story of the dressmaker in Vienna who risked her own safety to bring food to Lucie and her mother, or the time when the house in Birmingham where Lucie was living was bombed.

Prior to using writing as a method of discovery I conceptualized the data, that is the recorded oral testimony and the written transcriptions, as material, a form that is composed of different strands and threads, textures and colours; a form that is pliable, yielding, flexible, sensuous, and easy to work with. Thinking of the data in these terms allowed me to fashion it into different forms with differing visual and emotional impact, and persuades the reader/audience to approach the material not only with predisposed cultural assumptions, but hopefully with interest, thereby leading to a more engaged reception. Taking the metaphor a stage further I imagined stitching and fashioning these differently sized, coloured and textured shapes of material together, until they become what Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln term ‘a complex, quilt-like bricolage’ in order to present ‘a sequence of representations connecting the part to the whole.’ To enhance the visual quilt-like appearance of the material I also used a range of different fonts.

A brief methodology for narrative analysis, fiction based on fact, and life history as drama

As there is not space here to explore and display in depth all the genres involved I have decided to concentrate on the poetic form. However before I do that I will briefly comment on how I used narrative analysis, created fiction based on fact, and presented oral history as drama. The use of narrative as a mode of analysis, both in theory and in practical application, is part of what Mary Chamberlain calls ‘the move away from the observable and measurable into the symbolic and the semiotic,’ a move that emerged ‘as part and parcel of the post-structural and post-modern intellectual climate.’ Chamberlain highlights the pioneering work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who calls for engagement with the imaginative universe, where human acts and activities are regarded as signs. In this way, he argues, culture would become a context within which thick, visceral descriptions could be produced in order to aid interpretation. We use narrative to generate meanings from experiences and events and it therefore occupies a central position in how we comprehend ourselves, others and the world we live in.

After intense immersion in the material surrounding Lucie’s early years, I noted emerging themes, the prominent use of a key word, and the employment of literary devices. However, I felt that the overwhelming aspect upon which to concentrate in order to aid my analysis was the significant relationships that impacted on Lucie’s childhood world. An important motif running throughout Lucie’s entire life is the one that concerns female relationships, in particular the mother/daughter bond. Therefore, to enhance understanding I believe Lucie’s relationships with her mother, her grandmother, her disabled sister and her best friend are all central. By studying these relationships that Lucie herself gave such prominence to, and the precise way in which she spoke about them, gives rise to an interpretive framework within which nuanced meanings can be formulated.

Lucie was not a spinner of tales; she was not a natural storyteller. After my initial realisation of this I resolved to turn what I originally perceived as a negative into a positive and ‘tell’ stories about the life of a woman who did not tell stories. Using a literary form allows exploration of the interior world of thought and feeling. As Robert A. Manners states ‘There is only one way to get into “the other’s head”. That is to imagine yourself there.’ My fictionalised writings are based on facts, as remembered and perceived by Lucie, by using extracts from our interviews as the starting point for my imagination.

Towards the end of our first interview, Lucie identified what were for her the most important aspects of her life, getting out of Nazi-controlled Vienna, her marriage and the birth of her child. This information provided both the stimuli and the basis for my fictionalised writing. Using these aspects, together with other details told to me by Lucie elsewhere within her testimony, and additional details subsequently relayed to me by Lucie’s daughter, I constructed a story that covers the time when Lucie and her mother, Fanny, first arrived in Britain. It is told from three different perspectives: those of Fanny, Lucie and Mrs. Herbert, the lady who Lucie worked for. It is also told using three different fictional modes; a third person account, the epistolary form and the use of diary entries. In this way, my intention is to explore levels of understanding that can be gleaned from presenting material in different fictional narrative modes.

With an omnipresent narrator, the third person account allows access to interiority, whilst being ‘outside’ the story. I had quite a strong sense of the person Fanny was from Lucie’s testimony, and I imagined how I would feel in the same circumstances. An educated, cultured woman who had had a banking career before her marriage, Fanny had been uprooted from her home, her history and her identity, and found herself in alien, even hostile, territory, unable to speak the language and expected to work as a domestic servant.

Using the epistolary form enabled me to highlight
the importance to Lucie of her continuing relationship with her best friend Katie, and of her optimistic personality; one that helped her to cope with leaving her old, comfortable life in Vienna behind and to assimilate so well into Britain. When writing the fictionalised letters I did sometimes use the actual, or a close approximation of, the words used by Lucie within her testimony. Mrs. Herbert’s fictional diary allows matters to be viewed from the other side of the refugee situation; she displayed trust and altruistic feelings concerning the helping of fellow Jews, and I know from Lucie’s testimony that their relationship developed into lasting affection, which continued until Mrs. Herbert’s death. This is in stark contrast to the relationship between Fanny and the people who she was originally allocated to work for, whom, although also being Jewish, did not appear to empathise with Fanny’s position at all. Using a range of narrative modes to ‘tell’ and expand Lucie’s story allows insights and access to subjective interiorities, displaying differing attitudes and strategies of how individuals cope personally with the challenges they face.

The second extract I used concerns Lucie meeting her husband to be, and their tragically short time together. On my first visit, Lucie had proudly shown me a photograph of herself and her husband, taken shortly before he had been killed, when a German U-boat torpedoed the ship he was travelling in. Poignantly enclosed within the same frame are two small photographs of a young girl, their daughter, taken some time later. (See Fig. 1)23 Marianne Hirsch, drawing on the work of Roland Barthes, highlights how for him the constitutive core of photography is the capacity to make implicit the relationship between love and loss, presence and absence, life and death.24 All these aspects are present in what I think of as the summer-garden and winter-garden photographs; they are also a striking testimony to familial belonging, to creating continuity and a sense of connection, to constructing family identity and memory. By using the framed photograph as an aid to understanding a life reminds us that it is not only the spoken testimony within the oral history encounter that is revealing, but so too are possessions and surroundings. This treasured triptych provided the stimulus for my writing this part of Lucie’s story as a first person monologue.

To present life history as a monologue is to tell a story from a single point of view, which indeed mirrors oral history methodology whereby the interviewee tells her story from her perspective. The delivery of the monologue is fictionalised, but the details are faithful to Lucie’s testimony, and I occasionally used Lucie’s actual words. I start by setting the scene, not only in order to aid the reader’s imagination but also to mirror the real circumstances and setting of the oral history interviews. By giving precise descriptions, the scene is set within the reader’s imagination and this demand on the imagination is extended as the reader has to picture the unfolding narrative, along with the characters contained within it. When contemplating presenting a portion of Lucie’s life history as a monologue I recollected Alan Bennett’s collection of monologues, Talking Heads recorded for BBC television in 1987. His speakers are alone, but talking to a camera. My intention was to try to create the same kind of delivery and reception of the material, without the visual dimension provided by a camera, the aim being for the reader to provide her own visual dimension. Bennett suggests that watching a monologue is a ‘stripped-down version of a short story’ and that the style of its telling is ‘necessarily austere’.25 The impression I wanted to create is one in which Lucie is speaking directly to the reader in a natural way; therefore the tone and meaning has to be conveyed without the usual battery of literary expressions and adverbs normally employed by a short story writer, and indeed this pared down methodology chimes with Lucie’s own style of delivery.

Shakespeare famously wrote:

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.26

There is a performative element in every facet of life, a symbiotic relationship between performance and how we conduct our daily lives. We continually role-play, to ourselves and to others, and these self-designated roles constantly change depending on either who we are interacting with, the emotions we want to mask, the impression we want to create, or to enable us to achieve a desired goal. All human life is performance-based, underpinning our entire social structure as well as helping us to construct our sense of ‘self’ and ‘other’.

During the course of our interviews, Lucie attached great importance to the time when she went back to Vienna, after having received an invitation to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of her Matriculation. I felt that dramatizing this event would be an effective way in which to explore multiple perspectives, memories and viewpoints, and to heighten awareness of our commonality, as well as our differences. It enabled me to use theatrical conventions in order for the characters to ‘speak’, both for themselves and to the audience, and therefore to facilitate exposure of their thoughts and feelings. In this way, more of what Richard Bauman calls the ‘totality of human experience’ is explored, as not only the outer lives, but the inner lives of the characters are held up to scrutiny.27 Using descriptions of an event within a life history narrative as a platform from which to create a script, and imagining it in my mind’s eye as a physical performance, allowed me to use drama to explore the dynamics of a social encounter. It enabled me to highlight how people perform, the masks they assume and to expose the tensions that often exist between what we say and do and what we really think. An awareness of this element of duality is indeed present within Lucie’s narrative, and where possible when the character ‘Lucie’ is speaking within the play I used her actual, or a close approximation of her words. Some of the characters are based on real people who attended the reunion in 1985, having been members of the class of 1935, whilst others I imagined, in order to illustrate differing sensibilities, backgrounds, complexities and ambiguities, and the complex ways in which people deal with the past in the present.

Drama is an effective medium through which to examine the self and society; it is also effective in bringing Sheila Selway

15
oral testimony to ‘life’. Based on Lucie’s narrative, the play is not a faithful reproduction of the somewhat slippery concept of ‘reality’, but rather represents a ‘new reading’. It captures an elaborated version of ‘life in action’, opening up possibilities of what might have happened, and allows for new ways of knowing. By engendering interest, and perhaps an emotional connection between the reader and the characters within the drama, my hope is to encourage an imaginative, engaged participation.

The poetic form: methodology

Presenting data derived from oral testimony in poetic form has been attempted by a relatively small number of academics, either for the sole purpose of assisting analysis, or for additional benefits of reader/audience engagement to aid a wider interpretation.\textsuperscript{28} As well as highlighting poetic qualities and conveying nuanced meanings, all agree that placing spoken data into poetic form goes some way in addressing issues of authorship and authority.

Poetry and oral history are intrinsically linked; the way people express themselves is often closer to poetry than it is to prose. We talk with stops and starts, often in short sentences, often lyrically or with passion and feeling, with repetition or with emphasis on certain words, and changes in tone, pitch and volume. By fashioning narrative gathered from oral history interviews into poetic form places it within a context that it is naturally suited to, one in which the meaning and impact of the spoken word is fully revealed and even heightened.

Poetry is a way of exploring and illuminating vast chunks of human experience and emotion in a contained fashion. It takes a subjective reality and turns it into an objective, universal truth. It allows people to make connections. Although Lucie did not speak in an expansive way, did not use metaphor to describe her life experiences, and sometimes spoke quite rapidly, and abruptly, in a very distinctive mid-European accent, her naturally occurring poetics of language, her contained and concentrated delivery, and the content of her immensely powerful testimony, all lend themselves to poetic representation. Presenting Lucie’s testimony in poetic form foregrounds its storytelling aspects, emphasises her thoughts and feelings, and heightens the awareness of the reader.

In presenting the poetic representations here, it is not my concern to analyse how my presence and input affected the testimony, but rather to aid nuanced understanding by encouraging active and imaginative reader participation. I therefore excluded my questions in order to visually enhance the poetic form, and to allow Lucie’s words to have full impact. Although I omitted some parts of the testimony, I have not added words, or rearranged the order in which they were spoken, as my intention is for Lucie to ‘speak’ for herself. The words in parentheses are asides, and highlight how Lucie unconsciously used this device to impart additional information, and to weave the listener/reader into her narrative. I have used naturally occurring pauses within Lucie’s narrative, which are mirrored by both her spoken testimony and by the punctuation within the transcripts. Although I worked initially and primarily from the written transcripts, I then went back and listened to the tapes carefully and painstakingly, making several changes where necessary, in order to satisfy myself that the final representations are faithful to Lucie’s testimony.

The stanzas are informed by a subtle change in subject. Where there are pauses I used them, however in a very few instances in order to heighten the impact, I extended the pause or included a pause where there was not one. A comma represents a pause, a dash a longer pause, and the white space between the stanzas provides a visual indication of aural silence. This silence allows a moment for reflection; as Eva Hoffman astutely comments, ‘the silence that comes after words is the fullness from which the truth of our perceptions can crystallize.’\textsuperscript{29}

The poetic representations

We knew what would happen though, we knew what happened in Germany at the time.

So when it came to Austria we knew, we thought at first it couldn’t happen in Austria because everybody was very nice and gentle (and as I said) interested more in music and things like that- and a lot of mixed marriages as well.

So we said it couldn’t happen in Austria, but it did.

(Well you felt terrible.)

First we thought it couldn’t last- I think to the last minute that it couldn’t last but then they burnt all the synagogues and everything and then we realised we would have to get out.

We were lucky that we got out in time! because afterwards- I have two cousins- distant cousins- twin girls- and their parents couldn’t get out any more.

They died in a concentration camp.\textsuperscript{30}

There was one girl she was very, very- what shall I say- Germanic!

(I always felt if it wouldn’t be so sad it would be amusing.)
Engaging in presenting poetic representations from interview transcriptions proved to be the most problematic for me in terms of making editorial decisions. In retrospect I think this was due to my wish to present Lucie’s words as directly as possible, with the minimum of mediation and refraction involved. While the words for me ‘leapt off the page’, naturally forming themselves into stanzas, my dilemmas centred largely around the extent to which I should remain steadfastly faithful to Lucie’s delivery, and the extent to which I should employ poetic devices in order to produce more ‘artful’ representations. After many re-writes I am satisfied that the final drafts represent a true collaboration, and in this echo the oral history encounter, as they are entirely Lucie’s words, are faithful in spirit to her delivery, but are representative of my subjective selection and visual arrangement of them.

Conclusion

Using writing as a method of discovery, as a way of understanding the world beyond our own experience, I have challenged the ‘given’; I have used a range of different genres, from traditional narrative analysis to the more experimental, in terms of presenting oral history testimony; from life story data to aesthetic representations, via the use of imagination.

Imagination provides a pathway from the outside in. All we have are our imaginations to step into the shoes of the ‘other’. The use of imagination in research provides both expanding intellectual and emotional dimensions. The more creative we become as researchers, the more we engage our audience; we therefore have less control over the outcomes, as our creativity becomes the analytical tool by which audience interpretations are formed.

This has been, as far as possible, a collaborative endeavour; the knowledge produced is highly subjective as it is dependent on what Lucie remembered in response to my questions, what knowledge she chose to share with me, and my selection and presentation of that knowledge. As researchers the final product open to public scrutiny is as much about us as it is about the people we research; although this is Lucie’s life history I am very much present within the text. The final presentation of the material has been fundamentally shaped and informed by my subjectivities, perspectives, interpretations, reactions, emotions, character and personal history. There are multiple voices within the text; the voice of Lucie, my academic voice, my personal voice and the voices from my imagination. In many ways Lucie was my ‘other’; different generation, different nationality, different religion, different background. However, I found that during the course of this project Lucie had ‘moved into my psychic interior’; I ‘knew’ her life history almost better than my own, and had ‘lived’ her life in my imagination for over two years.

Although I allowed the content to naturally suggest the form in which it was presented within my exploration, at no point did the form dictate or change the content. While I used Lucie’s own words in all four methods of ‘knowing’, the level of researcher input and interpretation differ, as does the level of audience interpretation required. While
My personal metaphorical use of the notion of regarding theory as a quilt, of visualising the data collected as different pieces of fabric to be stitched and fashioned, enabled me in practice to see, feel, think and respond to it in different ways. The metaphor is particularly apt as I worked on each piece of material separately, each piece works individually, but all enhance understanding and work together to produce a composite whole.

My journey of exploration could have taken many forms; for example, an extract from the transcript could have been subjected to differing presentations using different genres, or I could have written a poem of Lucie’s entire life, using her words, or alternatively I could have taken an extract, presented it in poetic form, and then written a researcher-generated poem. Another interesting option would have been to plot the trajectory of the spoken word (from the oral history interview) to the written word (the transcription) through imagination to a further textual medium (a script) to the performance of the play (back to the spoken word). The possibilities for potentially fruitful alternatives from one source are extensive.

While Lucie, within her taped narrative, was neither intentionally concealing, nor intimately revealing, she did genuinely want to help me and told me as best she could of her memories. However, she also tended to habitually understate or to minimise her experiences and her reactions to them, both those in the past and in day-to-day life at the time of the telling. While Penny Summerfield identifies narratives within her research as either belonging to the heroic or the stoic type, Lucie’s narrative does not fit either definition. Lucie never valorised or eulogised any aspect of her life, but neither did she adopt an attitude of scepticism or resignation, rather I would suggest she accepted the changing parameters of her life and made the very best of what was available to her. While not given to articulating reflectively, this remarkable woman allowed me access and insights into her amazing life, for which I am immensely grateful.

Adopting Paul Thompson’s metaphoric suggestion that ‘the individual life is the actual vehicle of historical experience’, I have used Lucie’s life history as the vehicle on my journey of discovery.

Figure 1: Home on leave from Ireland, August 1942

the more conventional narrative analysis indicates a high level of researcher interpretation, made explicit for the audience, the poetic representations demand active audience participation in order to formulate meanings. Meanings are filtered and generated through the voices of my imagination within the knowledge disseminated by means of the fiction and drama genres. Therefore, what I ‘know’ and pass on for audience interpretation is highly subjective but entirely appropriate within a postmodernist context. The stories I have chosen to tell about Lucie’s life are not the only stories to be told, neither are they the final word but merely subjective representations told at a specific time and for a specific reason, and selected for a specific purpose.

All genres allow us to ‘know’ things and to facilitate understanding. Provided we use creativity, imagination and have an active engagement with the material, there is no limit to new and different ways of knowing.
life history, it is what we, as oral historians, ‘do’ in our 
research. In this way, aspects and versions of one life 
are told against an historical backdrop, highlighting both 
the dramatic and subtle ways in which that life has been 
impacted upon as the individual travels through space and 
time. I, too, have travelled, exploring new ways of ‘knowing’ 
through this experiment with textual form. I hope I have 

demonstrated that as researchers we need not confine 
ourselves to convention, that we can push the boundaries, 
and embark upon our own exciting and liberating journey 
of discovery.

Notes

1. Cited by Linda Hutcheon in A Poetics of Postmodernism: 
2. Laurel Richardson, ‘Writing: A Method of Inquiry’, in 
Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, eds. 
Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand 
3. Ibid., 348.
4. Ibid., 345-6.
5. Ibid., 357-8
for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2nd edition, 
(Walnut Creek, Altamira Press, 2005), 46.
8. During the course of this project my research did encompass the narratives of Holocaust survivors, with particular reference to R. Ruth Linden, Making Stories, Making Selves: Feminist Reflections on the Holocaust, (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1993), however as this paper is primarily an exploration of textual forms, a discussion of this aspect of my work had to be curtailed, in deference to the main focus.
11. Ibid., 611.
16. Frisch, A Shared Authority, xx-xxi.
18. This distinction was articulated in his keynote address. Andrew Sparkes, ‘Representing Lived Experience: Making Principled Decisions’ at The Story of Research Conference held at Sussex University on 30 May 2007.
21. Ibid.
22. Robert A. Manners, Foreword: ‘Hermeneutics and the Anthropology of Fiction’ in John O. Stewart, Drinkers, Drummers and Decent Folk, (State University of New York, 1989), xvii.
23. Photograph reproduced here by kind permission of Lucie Gimpelson’s daughter.
26. William Bennett, As You Like It, Act 2, Scene 7.
30. Interview 21 June 2005
31. Interview 28 June 2005
32. Interview 21 June 2005
33. Interview 28 June 2005
34. Interview 28 June 2005
35. The term ‘psychic interior’ is borrowed from Laurel Richardson who had a similar experience with the subject of her research; see Richardson, ‘The Consequences of Poetic Representation’, 133.
Early Women Engineering Graduates from Scottish Universities

Nina Baker
University of Strathclyde

Published histories of women’s admission to UK universities mainly consider the Oxbridge colleges and women’s fight to obtain medical qualifications. As Lindy Moore pointed out in 1991, there are few published sources about women at the Scottish universities and Judith Harford provides a similarly rare example of an account of the process towards higher education for women in Ireland. This absence has not changed, particularly in regard to the early women engineers, although The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From Earliest Times to 2004 has rectified the record a little. It is thought that the world’s first female engineering graduate was Alice Perry, with first class honours in civil engineering from University College, Galway, Ireland, in 1906. The purpose of this paper is to uncover the histories of women who chose engineering at the older Scottish universities. Although all the universities have publications celebrating their histories, only one makes any mention of women taking engineering courses. In marked contrast to the celebration of early women medical pioneers, the apparent silence about women in engineering led to the following questions, which this paper aims to address: when and who were the first women to study and graduate in engineering from the Scottish Universities and what career paths did these pioneers take?

All engineering faculties are experiencing falling student recruitment and claim to seek a more diverse entry. It is hoped that this survey of women’s historical participation in engineering at Scottish universities will be of intrinsic interest to historians, gender studies specialists and engineers. It could be said to be a feminist history, in that it aims to make women’s experiences visible and looks at how the sexual division of labour in engineering affected, and was affected by, those experiences. It will also provide material of use to faculties wishing to normalise the position of women in engineering by demonstrating the considerable background that exists.

Catherine Cronin and Angela Roger theorise the progressive under-representation of women in engineering in higher education (HE) as an inverted 3-stage pyramid: Access (taking maths and science at school), Participation (taking engineering courses at university) and Progression (following careers in engineering). They point to the persistence of women’s under-representation, with a slow rise to about 14 per cent during the 1970s and 80s, levelling or decreasing thereafter. The many schemes to encourage more women into science, engineering and technology (SET) seem only to have maintained the status quo. The reasons for this are wide-ranging and deeply embedded in SET and HE cultures, requiring substantial effort to alter. Adrian Dragolescu and Victor Yakovenko’s theory of ‘econophysics’ suggests that a closed physical system (e.g. energy) can be analogous with aspects of sociology, such as economics (e.g. wealth distribution) or gender (e.g. equality of opportunity). These theories suggest that a few can benefit, sometimes excessively, but systemic change to benefit a whole disadvantaged group, requires enormous energy input (i.e. political will). Gerda Siann and Margaret Callaghan agree that little is changing and that women are pragmatic consumers of the university ‘product’, choosing low-risk courses that lead straightforwardly to rewarding careers.

This paper follows Cronin and Roger’s pyramid, chronologically. The early history is of access to appropriate preparation and entry to university, followed by a long process of women slowly choosing to participate in engineering at university, and culminating in the possibility of progression to an engineering career for more than the occasional individual. Since information on the women’s lives and choices is not currently available, for example from diaries, family or friends’ recollections, I have refrained from reflecting on why individuals’ lives took one turn or another.

Women’s desire to be better educated was initially supported only as far as it equipped them to be better mothers or servants. Women of the lower classes had always had to work, with 36 per cent of women working in 1841 falling to 28 per cent in 1911. However, it became increasingly clear that women were ill-equipped for the new work introduced by the industrial revolution. Their ignorance did not even allow them to carry out traditional domestic tasks adequately, both types of work often requiring some literacy and numeracy not previously necessary. The church established Scotland’s first public school system, in the seventeenth century, to teach boys and girls basic literacy and, increasingly, to give practical training for the roles that gender expectations of the time required.

The advent of serious academic schooling for girls encouraged more middle-class families to consider that their daughters might be as academically able as their sons. Additionally, in the twentieth century, war and migration resulted in a gender imbalance, such that many women of all classes could have no expectation of marrying and needed to be prepared to support themselves in adult life. In 1911, about 500,000 women were not reliant on a male provider. Middle-class women were particularly vulnerable if there was no man to provide for them, as ‘appropriate’ paid employment was limited to posts as governesses, companions or (by lowering their sights) ladies’ maids. These limited and badly paid options revealed how ill-prepared girls were, and training for governesses launched the first efforts to provide further education for women.

Oberlin College, Ohio, USA, opened its doors to women in 1833, but it would be another half a century...
The Enabling Act 1876 allowed universities to grant degrees to women and the University of London soon did so, but the Scottish universities were deeply conservative and resisted for a long time. The University of Edinburgh’s ‘Local examinations’ (university entrance exams in several required subjects) were opened to girls in 1865, providing a structured goal in a range of subjects for their secondary education for the first time. Between 1867 and 1877, associations to promote the education of ladies were set up in the Scottish university cities. They were supported by reformist male professors from the universities and delivered rigorous, certificated lecture series. Science subjects were popular and Professor Kelland, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Professor of applied mathematics (heat, fluids etc) strove for reform so that his lectures to the Edinburgh Ladies’ Educational Association could be replaced by full university courses for women.

However, many people in Scotland continued to believe women to be too biologically weak to withstand the demands of university study, despite the earlier English examples. It would require the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889 to force the issue but even so, the Scottish universities did not admit women until 1892. The cost of a university education would need to be balanced against the opportunities for the student to be less of a drain on the family budget thereafter. For women, the most likely paying career was infant-school teaching, and the majority of the first women to study at the Scottish Universities took the general arts degree to equip them for this.

The four ‘ancient’ universities are very old indeed and for centuries taught mainly the classics and theology. All degrees were general, with science included as a part of the general arts degree. In the 1890s, the reforms that admitted women also changed the degree structure and specialized Honours degrees became available, with matching specialist faculties (Table 1). Science Faculties taught both pure and applied sciences, including engineering, until the establishment of separate Faculties of Engineering.

From 1867 to 1892, some of the various associations which promoted women’s education delivered rigorous lecture courses, taught by reformist university professors, with non-university certification based on the same exams as male undergraduates. Science subjects were popular and Professor Kelland lectured on applied mathematics, heat, and fluids, to the Edinburgh Ladies’ Educational Association. John Anderson, whose Institution became the University of Strathclyde, encouraged women to attend his demonstrations of natural philosophy in Glasgow. Professor Hope gave extramural chemistry courses in Edinburgh, regularly attracting audiences of 300 women. Although English had consistently high numbers (Table 2), there was a substantial female audience for engineering subjects, as taught to male undergraduates.

When the universities first admitted women, none officially excluded women from engineering degrees. Scientifically-inclined women seem mostly to have chosen medicine, probably because it offered a clear route to a paid profession. Others took chemistry or natural philosophy, leading to the option of laboratory work. This may have been seen as a more sheltered, genteel environment for a woman than the grubby realities of the shipyard or ironworks that awaited the engineer. Hence, although women were studying subjects related to engineering from the start, this paper will show that very few of the first women to attend Scottish universities took the further step to stand out from the norms of the time and actually take an engineering degree.
Method

The literature, relating to the history of women’s access to secondary and higher education in Scotland and the UK, and the development of engineering in universities, was searched, to clarify the chronology of the provision of engineering degrees and the entry of women to the Scottish universities. Until the late 1960s, university calendars published lists of graduates and class prize-winners, which were searched for names of women graduating in engineering. The engineering faculties and archives departments of each university were asked for information, but in no case had any data been collected about women engineers, although most had information about women medical students. In all cases, the Data Protection Act was invoked to prevent access to any information about women not proven to be dead. A general request for information was also put out on the networks for women in science and engineering. Where names were obtained, biographies of individual women were researched as far as possible, via newspapers, university obituaries and other historical sources. In the case study of Dorothy Rowntree, her grandson provided much of the biographical information, and permission to use her graduation photo. Former colleagues of Dorothy Buchanan were asked for memories of her working life. Statistical data on overall numbers of women taking engineering courses today were sought via the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the Scottish Executive and the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science Engineering and Technology.

Records from the Universities

Percentages of women taking engineering courses were very variable from the end of the First World War up to 1965 (Figure 1), when the new ‘redbrick’ universities, such as Strathclyde, Heriot Watt, etc. were established. Aberdeen, Edinburgh, St Andrews/Dundee and Glasgow all had tiny numbers of female students during this period, with only Edinburgh’s increasing in the 1960s. Neither Aberdeen nor St Andrews/Dundee were major centres for science and engineering when women were first admitted. Engineering intakes at all the universities were small at that time.¹⁷

Although there are infrequent records of individual women graduating in the period from 1940 to 1970, it was not until the 1970s that there was a regular female intake. Data protection rules mean that we know little of recent detailed statistics, let alone the individuals. Equal opportunities legislation of the 1970s, and an increasing societal awareness of feminism, opened up the options girls were willing to consider on leaving school. Some employers were willing to give women a chance perhaps because it portrayed the organisation as progressive. For the first time, the effort of obtaining an engineering degree could bring the possibility of a job for a woman, and enterprising girls took up this still challenging opportunity. From a base of fewer than 2 per cent, most faculties were taking in about 10 per cent female students in most years, now up to about 14 per cent (Figure 2), with Scotland broadly following the UK trend.

Each of the four ancient universities will be considered in detail, with some information about their relationships with the neighbouring technical colleges and the chronology of women’s attendance. I have elected not to present the data for all universities combined, since breaking them down by university allows more consideration of individuals and the differing characters of the universities’ systems. The numbers are after all small, and barely qualify as statistics for analysis.

The University of Glasgow was established in 1451 and provided general degrees, until the reforms of the late nineteenth century. A BSc degree was introduced in 1872 and a Faculty of Science opened in 1893, offering BSc Engineering degrees shortly afterwards. Engineering degrees awarded by the University of Glasgow were partly taught at the Royal Technical College (RTC, now University of Strathclyde). The latter also taught short technical courses, such as telegraphy and sanitary engineering, which attracted some female students and may be the reason for the higher percentage of female RTC students between the wars (Figure 1).

Women were admitted to the university from 1892 and the first woman to gain a BSc was Miss Ruth Pirret

Nina Baker

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¹⁷ Nina Baker

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Figure 1 Women students as per cent of total undergraduate students attending engineering, applied chemistry, mining, metallurgy, architecture etc 1919-1965

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23
in 1895. The first woman to graduate in an engineering subject did so in the very male-dominated field of Naval Architecture in 1926 (see Dorothy Rowntree's story below). Although other women had studied engineering subjects at earlier dates, the course and faculty regulations at the University of Glasgow meant that engineering degrees were included in the science lists (BSc) until the Faculty of Engineering was established (1925). Hence, early graduation records do not always reveal who had studied engineering. The Faculty of Engineering celebrated its Jubilee in 1973 by publishing its history, but with no mention of any female engineering students.

By 1977, at the time of the ‘second wave’ of feminism and introduction of concepts of equality of opportunity, about 2 per cent of the engineering intake was female (20 of 920). This level had, therefore, barely increased on the continuously low level evident from 1919 onwards for Glasgow (Figure 1), whereas by this point, Edinburgh had substantially higher percentages. Unfortunately, comparable figures for female intake after RTC became

Aberdeen’s first women started in 1894, graduating in 1898. Numbers of women enrolling at Aberdeen were low in the early years but the percentage was comparable with the other Scottish Universities by 1908. As elsewhere, most of the first women students took arts subjects. The first woman to gain a science degree was Miss Bain in 1901, (BSc Chemistry). From 1892 to 1908, there were few women in the science courses but 25 per cent of the total by 1913. Initially, natural philosophy was popular with women science students but was later displaced by zoology. In 1907, the university appointed the first woman science examiner, but women were not promoted to tenured posts until World War II and no women professors in any faculty until 1964. Christina Geddes seems to have been the first woman to graduate in engineering (1947), and other women studied engineering courses in the 1950s, but did not graduate.

The Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology (RGIT, now Robert Gordon's University, RGU) delivered engineering courses for Aberdeen University, and women were studying engineering subjects there from 1898. It was not until after it had become a higher education institute in 1965 that first woman graduated (probably Cathy Bulmer in about 1969) with a degree in engineering. The intake of female engineering undergraduates, never large, was 6 per cent, and 12 per cent postgraduates in 2003.

The University of Edinburgh is the only Scottish university to celebrate its earliest women engineering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flora Weir Black</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Scientific civil servant, Building Research Station, 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myra Frances Copland</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Computer programmer, DH Propellers/Hawker Siddeley Dynamics, 1952-64, Computing manager, CI Data Centre 1964, FBCS 1968,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Johnston</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>BBC technical staff 1941-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Somerville Scrimgeour</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Mary Macpherson</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Electronics R and D assistant, Hayes 1945-6, technical sub-editor, London 1946-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Carnegie Geddes</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>First female engineering graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Munro Griffith</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Research engineer at Marconi Wireless Telegraphy Company, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Black (or Neville)</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Laboratory assistant, Natural Rubber Products Association 1970-73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Early women engineering students, University of Aberdeen

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**Figure 2 Full-time Undergraduate Level Engineering/Technology Students: women as per cent of total 1966-2001, comparing Scotland and Britain**

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This mentions Miss Georgeson (first female engineering graduate, 1919) and Miss Smith but does not record any women engineering academics. Many women graduated with degrees in natural philosophy (see Figure 3) but very few did engineering in the early years. The first woman to graduate in electrical engineering is thought to have been Margaret Fraser (BSc 1973), who also became Edinburgh’s first female PhD in electrical engineering (1983).27 Opportunities to train at a technical or practical level were abundant during the war periods and the burgeoning electronics and IT industries offered some opportunities for the mathematically inclined girl to train at a technical college. However degree-qualified women in this subject were a rarity until this period, despite the early example of H. Ayrton’s membership of the IEE in 1899. Early engineers in any field at that time were often qualified in general BScs or in natural philosophy (physics) or maths, often still a BA degree then.

The School of Arts of Edinburgh was established in 1821, to provide knowledge and skills for ordinary working people. Although this institution did not become a university for nearly another century, it was noticeable that women were admitted to some of its training courses from 1869, many years ahead of other Scottish institutions. It ultimately became Heriot-Watt University in 1966, and continues to focus on vocational courses, particularly engineering. Heriot-Watt delivered engineering courses for degrees awarded by the University of Edinburgh.

The University of St Andrews is the oldest university in Scotland (established 1413). The University of Dundee was originally a college of the University of St Andrews, from 1881 until 1967.30 In Dundee, the Dundee Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Pirret</td>
<td>1898 BSc</td>
<td>First female BSc having</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>attended University of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glasgow courses taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>at Queen Margaret College.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Galbraith</td>
<td>BSc 1922*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamina Hood</td>
<td>BSc 1923*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet F Armour</td>
<td>BSc 1923*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsie M Hutton</td>
<td>BSc 1924*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret F Mursell</td>
<td>BSc 1924*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna M L Alcock</td>
<td>BSc 1924*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Smith</td>
<td>BSc 1924*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Allan</td>
<td>BSc 1924*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Rowntree</td>
<td>BSc Naval Architecture 1926</td>
<td>First woman engineering graduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda C Higgins</td>
<td>BSc 1926*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Parker</td>
<td>BSc applied chemistry 1927*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isobel D Arthur</td>
<td>BSc Agriculture 1928*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isobel Charlotte Campbell</td>
<td>BSc Applied chemistry 1928*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna Grais</td>
<td>BSc Electrical engineering 1937</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley Scott Souter</td>
<td>BSc Hons 1, Electrical Engineering 1940</td>
<td>First woman honours graduate in engineering. Patent holder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Richardson</td>
<td>BSc Engineering 1964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Charlotte Cameron</td>
<td>BSc aero engineering Hons 1964</td>
<td>First woman aero graduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winifred Gladys Ewen Scott</td>
<td>BSc Engineering Hons 2, Aeronautics 1964</td>
<td>Class prize: aeronautics 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Some early women engineering students from the University of Glasgow.22

* They graduated BSc, but these women had taken engineering classes, such as: Engineering drawing, engineering 1, Engineering fieldwork, natural philosophy for engineers, electrical engineering, or heat engineering. It is not known if any became working engineers.

students in a publication.26 This mentions Miss Georgeson (first female engineering graduate, 1919) and Miss Smith but does not record any women engineering academics. Many women graduated with degrees in natural philosophy (see Figure 3) but very few did engineering in the early years. The first woman to graduate in electrical engineering is thought to have been Margaret Fraser (BSc 1973), who also became Edinburgh’s first female PhD in electrical engineering (1983).27 Opportunities to train at a technical or practical level were abundant during the war periods and the burgeoning electronics and IT industries offered some opportunities for the mathematically inclined girl to train at a technical college. However degree-qualified women in this subject were a rarity until this period, despite the early example of H. Ayrton’s membership of the IEE in 1899. Early engineers in any field at that time were often qualified in general BScs or in natural philosophy (physics) or maths, often still a BA degree then.

The School of Arts of Edinburgh was established in 1821, to provide knowledge and skills for ordinary working people. Although this institution did not become a university for nearly another century, it was noticeable that women were admitted to some of its training courses from 1869, many years ahead of other Scottish institutions. It ultimately became Heriot-Watt University in 1966, and continues to focus on vocational courses, particularly engineering. Heriot-Watt delivered engineering courses for degrees awarded by the University of Edinburgh.

The University of St Andrews is the oldest university in Scotland (established 1413). The University of Dundee was originally a college of the University of St Andrews, from 1881 until 1967.30 In Dundee, the Dundee Institute
of Technology (DIT)) delivered some of practical aspects of the applied sciences and engineering courses. The first women students were admitted to DIT in 1914 (60 out of 932 students). The first woman to obtain an engineering degree was Sheila McLeod Weir, who gained a BSc Engineering in 1951, and Sally Davis was the first woman to get an honours degree in engineering (1964). Numbers of women taking engineering courses remained at a very low level until 1980 (Figure 4).

Some Case Histories

Pioneering women were taking engineering classes at the Scottish universities and colleges from the beginning of the twentieth century, although the date of first graduation varies. For completeness, it should be noted that Elizabeth Smith seems to have been the earliest female engineering student at the University of Edinburgh. She passed most of the engineering courses during 1911-13, but did not graduate. From 1916 to 1921, she ran her British Resorcin Manufacturing Co. Ltd., with two male and one female director, none of whom had technical expertise, later becoming an officer in the WRAF. The following are some selected case histories, chosen to demonstrate the barriers facing women in engineering and their achievements.

Elizabeth Helen MacLeod Georgeson (b. 1895)

Elizabeth Georgeson started studying engineering at the University of Edinburgh in 1916. Interestingly, she was twenty-one when she started her studies, i.e. the age of majority when she could make her own decisions about her future. It may also be significant that she did this at the height of World War I, when many women of all social classes were taking on new roles, often in engineering fields previously barred to them. Elizabeth studied chemistry, maths, introductory engineering and natural philosophy (first year); technical maths II, junior engineering labs and junior engineering drawing (second year); and heat engineering, junior engineering fieldwork, applied maths, senior engineering labs, senior engineering fieldwork, geology and senior engineering drawing (final year). She graduated with BSc in engineering in July 1919 and also gained a 1st class certificate of merit in mechanical engineering and 2nd class certificates in junior engineering labs and engineering fieldwork. It has not been possible to find a record of what Elizabeth did after graduation. She

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elizabeth Jane Smith</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>Studied 1911-13 but did not graduate, see case history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Georgeson</td>
<td>BSc engineering 1919</td>
<td>First engineering graduate. See case history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Lumsden</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Studied Introductory engineering in 1919-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elibet Barclay Lindsay Minnie</td>
<td>BSc mechanical engineering and MA 1921</td>
<td>2nd class certificate of merit in mechanical engineering. Probably second engineering graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Donaldson Buchanan Fleming</td>
<td>BSc Civil engineering 1923</td>
<td>See case history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Isolen Fergusson</td>
<td>BSc Civil engineering</td>
<td>See case history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Watkins</td>
<td>BSc Electrical engineering 1941</td>
<td>1941 BSc Electrical Eng. Assistant technical adviser, Johnson and Phillips Ltd., 1947 Lecturer SE London Tech Coll., 1959 Senior Lecturer Northampton Coll. of advanced Tech, now City Univ. WES President.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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seems to have been the first female engineering graduate from any Scottish university.

**Dorothy Donaldson Buchanan (Fleming), 1899-1985**

Dorothy was raised in Dumfriesshire, where the many works of the great engineer Thomas Telford inspired her to become a civil engineer, even though all her male relatives were doctors or clergy. She gained a BSc in Engineering from the University of Edinburgh in 1923. Professor Beare recommended her to contractors, S. Pearson and Sons, but they would not take her until she had some experience. Dorothy worked in the design office of Sir Ralph Freeman’s engineering consultancy, at £4 a week — the same as the ‘boys’ — on ‘running out weights of members, panels, girders, etc.’ for the Sydney Harbour Bridge. With this experience, Dorothy was taken on by Pearsons in 1926 and worked on site at the Belfast Waterworks Scheme in the Mourne Valley. Site work was apparently not a problem, with workers accepting her as an engineer. She worked for Dorman Long’s drawing office, on the George V Bridge (Newcastle) and London’s Lambeth Bridge. Dorothy became the Institution of Civil Engineers’ first female corporate member (1927), which she regarded as a highlight of her life. In 1930, she left to marry, feeling that she could not combine family and professional roles well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Katherine Arrowsmith</td>
<td>1974 BSc Eng Ord,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Davis</td>
<td>1964 BSc Electrical engineering Hons 2,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genevieve Greville</td>
<td>1972 BSc Electrical engineering Hons 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inga Hersteinsdottir</td>
<td>1971 BSc Civil Engineering Hons 2,</td>
<td>1976 MSc “Experimental and theoretical behaviour of a bifurcated slab bridge model”, Univ. Dundee. She went on to work in fire safety engineering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muriel J. Killin</td>
<td>1976 BSc Civ Eng Hons 2.1.</td>
<td>She was from Monifieth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila McLeod Weir</td>
<td>1951 BSc Engineering ord</td>
<td>She seems to have been the first female engineering graduate from Univ. Dundee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Constance Whitmell</td>
<td>1959 BSc Engineering ord,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Blane Yetman</td>
<td>1973 BSc Eng ord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Early female engineering graduates, University of Dundee

![Figure 4 Women as percentage of all students of engineering and applied science, University of Dundee, 1954-86](image)
Buchanan was probably the first female engineering graduate from a Scottish university to follow a career directly related to her degree. Even though her career was curtailed by her own choice, she nevertheless attained professional recognition. Given the prevailing automatic marriage bar for women in almost all paid employment, and the employment difficulties of the Depression, it is likely that she would have found it difficult to continue. Victoria Drummond, the Scottish marine engineer, was Buchanan’s near contemporary and experienced enormous difficulties in obtaining work at this time, because most employers preferred to take any man rather than the best qualified of women. In later years Buchanan took up rock climbing and painting and she died in 1985.

**Dorothy Rowntree (Joly) 1903-1988**

Dorothy was the first engineering graduate from the University of Glasgow and almost certainly the first woman to qualify as a Naval Architect. Her father was a marine surveyor for Lloyds Register of Shipping. She studied at the University of Glasgow and the Royal Technical College (now the University of Strathclyde), Glasgow, 1922-26. She took maths, chemistry, natural philosophy and physics lab in her first year; maths, naval architecture, maths for engineers class IV 2nd course and practical drawing in her second year; senior engineering lab, natural philosophy higher B, naval architecture and engineering IV in her third year; and naval architecture junior and senior classes and drawing in her fourth year. She gained her BSc Engineering in Naval Architecture in 1926. She may have taken the degree to work with her father, but in fact, there is no record of her having done so, or even having been a student member of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects.

In 1928, she became the personal assistant to President Professor Bayard Dodge at the American University in Beirut. There, Dorothy met and married Norman Joly, who ran a banking/insurance/shipping company in Haifa. They raised their family in Palestine/Israel and the Lebanon until after the Second World War, returning to the UK in old age. Although she seemingly made little use of her qualification, perhaps her time as a student naval architect taught her how to get along in hostile environments. It cannot have been easy to be the only and first woman in one of the most male-dominated of departments. After Dorothy’s achievement, it would be the 1960s before the department had another female undergraduate, and has never had a female member of the lecturing staff.

**Mary Isolen Fergusson OBE (1914-1997)**

Mary Fergusson’s interest in engineering was encouraged at school and by her father. She graduated BSc Hons in Civil Engineering from the University of Edinburgh in 1936, and remained living in Edinburgh for the rest of her working life. In 1936, she started as an unpaid indentured trainee, with the Scottish firm of civil engineers, Blyth and Blyth. She showed exceptional promise and after her first year, she was paid thirty shillings a week (£1.50). She worked with the senior partner on important infrastructure projects, such as bridges in the Highlands and Islands. In 1948, Mary became the first female senior partner in a UK civil engineering firm. Known for her relentless energy, she worked on projects such as the Markinch paper mills and River Leven water purification scheme. She became the first female Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineering (1957). On retiring in 1978, she continued with some consultancy work, using the income to endow a university bursary fund for young engineers. Mary was active in the Women’s Engineering Society and the Edinburgh Soroptimists, and was given an OBE in 1979. Further, she was awarded an honorary doctorate of science at Heriot-Watt University in 1985 for her work in encouraging women to take up engineering careers. She never married but was active in the Scout movement for thirty-five years. Fergusson was probably the first woman in Scotland to make a full career as an engineer.

**Discussion**

Although it is apparent that women wanted to study all the sciences, including engineering, at the time of the various campaigns for women’s entry into higher education, this appears not to have translated into women choosing those subjects when the universities’ doors opened to them. The evidence suggests that economic necessity was an important reason for such choices—medical or arts degrees were straightforward routes to respectable paid employment for women. Social pressures were also important, as the drive to return women to the home, after both world wars, made it less likely that even a highly qualified woman would get a professional engineering post.

Scotland is rightly proud that women were successful pioneers in gaining medical qualifications at its universities. Why have the efforts of early women engineering graduates apparently drained away into the sands and not resulted in equal numbers? It is worth considering what happens in other countries and whether government interventions make a difference to women’s choices. There are countries where affirmative action (USA) has enabled step changes, and others where assumptions of high status for engineering (Germany) encourage women to strive for it. Yet others have such strong social expectations of academic high achievers that women automatically go into engineering if they have done well at school (Syria, Malaysia), resulting in at least 50 per cent female intakes in engineering.

Are faculties themselves unwelcoming to women students in any way? Currently there are very few female academics in engineering faculties. Heriot Watt is the only Scottish University to have edged into double figures for women academic staff, with twelve. Many departments...
have none and have never had any. Published histories of the universities and their engineering departments do not mention women, even when this research demonstrates they were there. If departments do not have pictures of former female graduates on their walls and if faculties do not employ many or even any women academics, what impression does this create for students? That women in engineering are still to be considered special, unusual, pioneering rarities, daring tomboys, etc. rather than just another choice of career, normal, perhaps a casual choice even, as it would be for many male entrants.

Conclusions

Women have been, and continue to be, in a severe minority in engineering. To claim that the opportunity exists and is merely not being taken up is to ignore questions of institutional bias across the whole sphere of educational and societal expectations and in the various sectors of the engineering industry. Faculties should examine their student intakes and academic staffing and question why there is such an unequal gender balance.

Not every young woman who has done well in maths and science at school is necessarily willing to be yet another pioneer or to be labelled as unusual in choosing engineering at university. Why should they have to? By now, 110 years after women gained the right to enter the Scottish universities, 86 years after the first woman engineering graduate and a whole generation after the women’s rights movement of the 1970s, such a choice should be normal in every sense. By now, girls’ excellent school results in maths and science should be translating into equality across all the pure and applied sciences. By now, engineering should be taking in approaching equal numbers of women and men students.

Demonstrably, able women engineers have always managed to find a way to an engineering education, but it has often been a battle to go on to a rewarding career. Rowntree abandoned the battle. Buchanan and Ferguson struggled to show that they could do the job, even though they were as qualified as the male graduates who obtained positions easily. Smith took a route being followed by few today, by setting up her own company. The apparent invisibility of the career of Georgeson may even, as it would be for many male entrants.

Notes


12. 1841 Decennial Census

13. 1911 Decennial Census


17. L. Moore, Bajanellas and Semilinas.

18. University Grants Committee returns from Universities and University Colleges in receipt of treasury grant (HMSO 1919-1965).


20. J. Coutts, A history of the University of Glasgow 1451-
Aristophanes, the fifth century Athenian comedy writer, is famous for bawdy, vulgar, obscene, rib-cracking plays. These are the hallmarks of Greek Old Comedy. But Aristophanes is also famous for his presentation of Athenian women in a position of power in his dramas. Three of his eleven extant plays bear this as a theme. They are the Lysistrata (411 B.C.), Women at the Festival (411 B.C.) and Assembly Women (392/1 B.C.).

This paper looks at the representations of women in positions of leadership in The Assembly Women of Aristophanes and compares it with a modern Yoruba Drama titled Lágídígba (2001) written by Yemi Adegunju. In both plays women rebel against male authority and they set up a gynaikokratia. Although not all universal concepts can be successfully transported from one cultural milieu to another, these two dramas are united in their submission about women at the apex of power: that the notion is abnormal and that women should be kept in their place. However Aristophanes uses humour in unmasking gender and social inequalities; exposing simultaneously the ills and articulating an awareness of them. But in Adegunju’s case, we see the employment of creative writing in expressing resentment against women not only for contesting male hegemony but also for being able to take care of themselves without men.

To varying extents in any society, gender acts as a powerful organiser of life at social, psychological and symbolic levels; in some African societies the woman is born into the culture of male supremacy as exhibited in the preference for a male child. Both Classical and African societies are patriarchal and in them women are socialised into a culture of subordination.

The Representation of Women’s Leadership in Ancient Greek and Modern Yoruba

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Aristophanes, the fifth century Athenian comedy writer, is famous for bawdy, vulgar, obscene, rib-cracking plays. These are the hallmarks of Greek Old Comedy. But Aristophanes is also famous for his presentation of Athenian women in a position of power in his dramas. Three of his eleven extant plays bear this as a theme. They are the Lysistrata (411 B.C.), Women at the Festival (411 B.C.) and Assembly Women (392/1 B.C.).

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To varying extents in any society, gender acts as a powerful organiser of life at social, psychological and symbolic levels; in some African societies the woman is born into the culture of male supremacy as exhibited in the preference for a male child. Both Classical and African societies are patriarchal and in them women are socialised into a culture of subordination.
But women in these societies engage in collective actions which enable them to demand more humane treatment and to aspire to positions of leadership. These struggles—or their imaginations—are often expressed in the different genres of literature, especially drama. And so, in Aristophanes’ *The Assembly Women*, the women cite their thrifty management of the household, which is far less corrupt and more generous than the actions of men in the assembly, as a qualification that should enable them to rule their city. Also in Adegunju’s *Lágídígba*, women cite men’s acts of injustice towards them as a basis for establishing their own city.

### Aristophanes: *The Assembly Women*

In this play, the women of Athens are depicted as seizing the political and social initiative under the guidance of a powerful female character, Praxagora. The theme of the play is women taking over the running of the city from which they were in reality excluded. Women in *The Assembly Women* decide on mass action to form their own *gynaikokratia* or ‘Women-ocracy’ because the men have been found to be incompetent in running the Athenian democracy.

As a result of the conspiracy of women led by Praxagora, she and her fellow conspirators, disguised as men, crowd the assembly and carry by a large majority a motion transferring control of the affairs of state from men to women. Praxagora, having been appointed head of the new government, returns to her husband, who has been put to great inconvenience by her having borrowed his clothes. She explains the new social system that is to be introduced: community of property, community of women and children; a fair share in sexual relations for old and ugly, men and women alike, to be secured by legislation.

Then Praxagora goes off to the *agora* to arrange for the reception of all private property and administer the drawing of lots for dinner. A law-abiding citizen hastens to hand in his property; a sceptic wants to see what will come of this new system. The sexual consequences become immediately apparent. A young man arrives to find his girl, which may sometimes be as long as two years. She then turns to her brother-in-law but she is the only one who

### Adegunju: *Lágídígba*

*Lágídígba* is a contemporary Yoruba drama in the home video format. The theme of the play is the failure of women to achieve a state of utopia without men. As in *The Assembly Women*, *Lágídígba* is centred on a strong female character - Jadesola - who convinces other aggrieved female characters to join her in setting up a female city. Each of these women has criticisms of her patriarchal society based on its injustice towards women. It is the women’s understandings of repression and oppression which are the propelling factor in their bid to convince men that they can be productive independently and that they possess the resilience and dynamic drive to succeed even in a man’s world or in a world without men.

In the case of the leader, Jadesola, she has been cast into the evil forest due to an allegation of adultery. She accuses men of injustice in this instance because the patriarchal norms of her society dictate that a man can have as many women as he wants but the woman can have only one man. She alleges that she suffers constant sex starvation from her husband in varying periods which may sometimes be as long as two years. She then turns to her brother-in-law but she is the only one who is punished when they are caught. This injustice makes

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Folake Onayemi

31
her seek revenge, and supernatural powers, to enable her to establish and rule her city. She succeeds in her endeavours and she establishes Lágídígba - a city of women - with all the paraphernalia of a city ruled by men. The only difference is that it is a taboo for a man to enter the city; and for any woman of the city to give birth to a baby boy becomes an unforgivable sin.

Although Jadesola’s city of women is successful and prosperous, it does not exist for long. One factor in its demise is her excessive and unreasonable intolerance of the male. When young girls are considered ripe to bear children, a ritualistic coming of age ceremony is performed for them and they are sent out to mingle with men of other cities and get pregnant. However if on their return any one of them gives birth to a male, she is cast off from the city with her son. This generates resentment in the women and there is a particularly heart-breaking scene in which one such girl is cast out of the city, despite her intensive pleading. As she leaves, she places a curse on the city. As the disenchantment with their city increases in the hearts of these women, so also their urge for contact with the male population increases. Jadesola’s excesses have only to to increase a little for them to become the last straw that breaks the camel’s back. When Jadesola orders her palace guards to rake the market of commodities and food stuffs so that she can entertain a visitor with all types of luxury, the women become angry, especially their very rich leader, Oloye Parakoyi. Here Adegunju may be making a criticism of the system of kingship in traditional Yoruba setting wherein the king depends entirely on the city for provision for his livelihood; this is often demonstrated in the act of Ojájíje - literally ‘eating the market’ as seen in the action of Jadesola’s guards.

In the battle that ensues Jadesola is killed. This presents another flaw in the play. The death of Jadesola portends the notion that destruction comes upon a woman who seeks a leadership position. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the agency of the final destruction of the city of Lágídígba is another woman. This character claims to have been sent by Olodumare, the Supreme God, to put an end to the city as its establishment contravenes the norms of the established world of Olodumare. In employing Olodumare as the authority that abolishes Lágídígba, the playwright is putting an official stamp of spiritual authority on the eradication of women’s aspiration to leadership. Adegunju can be excused on the grounds that the traditional Yoruba norm does not give the exclusive leadership of a town to women as a strain of Orin Ijálá (Yoruba hunters’ traditional songs) portends:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Obódíran, obó ó joyé} \\
\text{Njó obó joyé, îlu bájé}
\end{align*}
\]

The virgina becomes generations, but the virgina does not rule
The day the virgina rules, the city is destroyed.

The word Obó (virginal) is here a metonym for women, however Yoruba mythology demonstrates that Olodumare, the Supreme God, approves of a space for women’s participation in leadership. One of such myths that enshrines this notion is that of the creation of the world. The efforts of sixteen male deities who descend to earth to establish a human society fail because Osun, the only female member of the group, was ignored; until Osun was given due recognition the male deities could not make any headway in their mission. Badejo citing Òdù Ìlátá relates:

The Irunmole went back to Olodumare. They reported everything, and Olodumare asked about Osun. They said that they did not invite her because she was a woman. Olodumare said they should go back and beg Osun for forgiveness. So all the Irunmole returned (to the earth) and they apologised and offered sacrifice to Osun. And Osun said that she wanted all the initiations, all the rituals they performed for men by which they kept women behind.

Women’s leadership in the Assembly Women and Lágídígba

The main themes of the Assembly Women and Lágídígba are the reversal of gender roles and women coming into a position of leadership. In the Aristophanes play the women succeed, but they fail in the modern Yoruba drama. This does not indicate however that one representation is ‘truer’ than the other to the cause of women empowerment: Aristophanes’ play derives a great deal of humour from the incongruity of “women on top” chiefly because the chance of it becoming a reality was then happily remote for the Athenian audience. The very notion of female mass action and overt female power was as fanciful and farcical as a cloud cuckoo land in the sky. However, the situation of women in Athens was not unchanging. Pericles, the Athenian statesman who dominated Athenian politics from 463 B.C., created a political atmosphere of imperialism. Blundell, commenting on the effects of Periclean reforms on the lives of women in Athens, points out that the situation of women in the political arena must have improved somewhat:

After the introduction of Pericles’ citizenship law, there would also have been a considerable difference in the way in which Athenian women, as distinct from alien women, were viewed by men. Athenian women became important as channels through which political as well as economic rights were transmitted to the next generation of citizens.

It is possible that equality of opportunity for women was an idea which was under general discussion in intellectual circles at this time. However another way in which sexual boundaries are crossed in this play can be interpreted as in part deriving from the traditional religious framework for the performance of Athenian drama. Blundell puts it thus:

Rituals in which men and women imitated each other in their dress and behaviour
are known to have been a feature of a number of religious festivals, and they were also present in some of the initiation rites associated either with the onset of puberty or with marriage. The explanation which is usually offered for these practices is that they represented a temporary assumption of an ‘otherness’ which social convention required one to banish from one’s ordinary life, and that the ritualised putting aside of this inverse role helped to reinforce the unambiguous nature of one’s subsequent sexual identity.¹³

Lágídígba itself is not to be seen as proclaiming a positive vision of women. Instead of focusing on the women’s yearning for a society in which they can assert their innate resourcefulness by rejecting the fetters of tradition and any aspect of socialisation that puts them at a disadvantage, the play demonstrates that assertion of the female in a position of power and leadership is asking for a female utopia.

Aristophanes can be forgiven his jesting that women leadership is unachievable considering the period of his play and society. This is the fifth century B.C. in Athens. But for a contemporary play in the twenty-first century to portray women’s quest for leadership as being unreasonable because of mythical stereotyping of women as being incapable of leadership, is problematic. In keeping with the prejudiced belief that a woman in a leadership position will become full of herself and misbehave, Jadesola, the ruler of Lagidigba becomes typically excessive in exerting her authority.

It is obvious that the writer sets out to produce a model of female failure in leadership from the beginning. On the video cassette package, introducing the play to the public, is the following:

What do we call this: rebellion or revolt. Women in search of justice against men’s persistent claim to superiority, founded a town where there is no man. They intend to give birth to children (female only) and do all that man thought was there (sic) own monopoly. This is tantamount to another tower of Babel. Will it stand or rumble. LAGIDIGBA is the dept (sic) of women’s search for equality with men.¹⁴

It is clear from the above that women’s struggle for leadership is seen as a rebellion and it is not expected to succeed. According to this view, women’s motives for seeking a leadership position are to bind together to use their gender for selfish ends. The motif runs through every action and pronouncement of the women. Even the refrain song of the women portrays this:

We women are the salt of life
Are we not the ones who gave birth to men
before they became lord over us?
We will not accept to become slaves
unto the children whose pregnancy we bore.
We shall establish our own city,

A situation of compromise between the females seeking justice and the male oppressors would, arguably, be a more realistic portrayal.

This is the type of balance achieved by Fagunwa in his Yoruba novel Ìrèké Onibudó, in which he creates two cities: one is Ìlú Awon Okùnrin (The City of Men) and the other is Ìlú Awon Obinrin (The City of Women). In each of the cities, the population is entirely of one gender and Fagunwa enumerates the different characteristics of each of these cities, highlightig the merits and demerits of each of their societies. In concluding The City of Men he says: ‘But when I observed all that they do in this city, I came to realise that if women are absent in the world, the earth would not have been a very enjoyable place’.¹⁵

Fagunwa does not limit his conclusion to this. He also examines The City of Women and balances his portrayal of the two cities in the following words:

When I examined all of them and compared them with what I saw in the City of Men, I was now able to see that the Creator’s wisdom is incomparable in creating men and women on earth. The men are like the skeleton or the bones and the women are the flesh. Without the bones, the body can do nothing, likewise without the flesh, the body can do nothing.¹⁶

This concept of the need for a balance of powers and of leadership between the male and the female for an enjoyable and peaceful co-existence is also beautifully dramatised in Bibire.¹⁷ Here the protagonist, who is also a prince, advocates a dignified treatment of women by men and the creation of a leadership space for them (something that he exemplifies in his relationship with his wife). It is this sharing of leadership that the Yoruba advocates in saying: ‘When a man sees a snake, and a woman kills it, the most important thing is that the snake should not escape’. ‘Snake’ here portends danger. This shows that even traditional Yoruba settings have inherent provision for female leadership. The only snag is that there is fear that if this is allowed, it will jeopardise men’s privileged positions. And this is why such sayings as that of the ljala song earlier cited, about the negativity of female leadership, are generated.

Conclusion

The plays examined here have shown that understanding leadership as a presumed entitlement of one gender, and the subsequent hoarding of power, often prove disastrous to human existence. Although it can be said that what Aristophanes portrays in his play was far from the reality in Athens, it is time that naive representations and inventions of women in drama be reconsidered. A more sophisticated analysis would consider whether a woman who seeks a leadership position does indeed seek self-negation, or need to act like a man. A woman’s conception of freedom need not be portrayed as based on the erosion of her feminine attributes.

Home video has become a prominent form
of entertainment and instruction in Nigeria, and it is unfortunate that it is failing to offer an alternative to age-old stereotypical assumptions, or stimulating debate and an evolution of consensual values. Women’s struggle for leadership can no longer be portrayed as women saying that men are the enemies, for struggles to allow assertion of the innate resourcefulness of women cannot be separated from that of men. It is this call for a joint male-female empowerment of the woman that Oduyoye articulates when she asks:

Why are people afraid that if women perform brilliantly that reflects poorly on men? Why should men alone carry the burden of humanizing the human race? Why should men carry single-handed the burden of creating human culture? ... why is the public appearance of a woman of wisdom and skill be such an anathema?"18

Oduyoye asserts that women, like men, have the ability to save their community from calamity as well as to contribute to the enhancement of life for all in the community.19 And even the Greek Aristophanes implies, albeit unwillingly, in The Assembly Women that the realisation of this potential in women is desirable and possible. As a last point of consideration, Adegunju’s play confirms that gender inequity and inequality continue to impinge upon girls’ and women’s ability to realize their rights and become full citizens and equal partners in the development of their communities, despite notable gains for women globally in the last few decades. Even in developed societies this fate persists:

I realized that a woman’s position in life was decided from birth. Today within the ‘liberated’ woman this same fate, however transformed and disguised, persists even when it is not admitted. And by that I mean the specific roles she must play – behaviour and activities that are imposed on her, and others that forbidden.20

There is the need to examine and evaluate the different mechanisms of exclusion that consign groups within a society, especially women, to the status of lesser citizens. In the case of Nigeria in this particular instance, it is the home video industry that does so. But then this mechanism also has the potential to be employed more positively in exposing and challenging gender discriminatory structures, policies, programmes, institutions, and practices. The home video industry in Nigeria has the potential to be an instrument of social change, helping to ensure that stereotypical gender roles do not remain frozen and promoting the concept of shared family responsibilities and the full participation of women in decision-making.

Notes

1. The Greek title for this play is Ecclesiazusae and it has been variously translated as Women at the Assembly, Assembly Women and Women in the Assembly.
2. The full Yoruba title of this play is Lágídígba (Ìlu’ Bìrin) meaning Lágídígba – the City of Women. Lágídígba is a set of beads associated with virginity.
3. Ancient Greek democracy (demokratia, ‘rule of people’, i.e. of the demos) in the sense of government was achieved by the majority vote of all male citizens from which females were excluded.
4. No Greek state ever enfranchised women. In Athens, they could not attend or vote at meetings and assemblies, sit on juries, or serve as council members, magistrates or generals. Their exclusion from the political arena extended even to public speech.
6. This refers to the fact that upper class women in Athens spent most of their times indoors and so were habitually pale.
9. The Ifa Corpus: these are the oracular verses used for divination by the Yoruba babalawo (medicine man) or Ifa (Priest).
11. De Marre, 37.
13. Ibid., 176.
14. These are the exact words as they appear on the video package. They are most probably typographical errors; ‘There’ should read ‘their’ and ‘dept.’ should read ‘depth’.
16. Ibid., 86.
19. Ibid., 4.
In 1991, I bought a copy of *The London Magazine* (1908), advertised as having an 'illustrated' article, 'Women Workers of England' by Sylvia Pankhurst. The magazine is rare, but its significance lies chiefly in the illustrations to this article. The article describes the work, pay and conditions of women fitters and machinists in the bootmaking trade, chain and nailmakers in the Black Country and cotton mill and pit brow workers. I had expected to see line drawings similar to those of prisoners that accompanied articles in *Votes for Women*. To my surprise, I found seven reproductions of paintings from the series Sylvia made when she toured the midlands and north of England and Scotland, painting and writing on the conditions of working women. The location of six of them is unknown.

I am not an art historian, so I should explain why I recognised these paintings. My interest in Sylvia Pankhurst’s art began in 1986, when I was a writer and performer with the small-scale theatre company, *Lynx Theatre and Poetry*. The well-known director, Simone Vause, suggested that I perform a one-woman play about a suffragette. I chose Sylvia for two reasons. The first was that I was aware of the importance of recovering women’s history, and Sylvia was also a significant part of the local history of East London where I lived. She had set up the Women’s Hall and later a nursery, The Mothers’ Arms, in a pub formerly The Gunmakers’ Arms in nearby Old Ford Road. I intended the play to tour schools in East London and to encourage young women to fight for a better future. If conditions had changed since Sylvia’s day, many women still worked long hours for very low pay; there were several sweat shops in the area. The second reason was that, after seeing the paintings reproduced in Richard Pankhurst’s *Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader*, I identified with her conflict between art and politics and understood what she sacrificed in giving up her art.

*Lynx Theatre and Poetry* thought that accompanying the play, *Sylvia*, with slides from contemporary photographs would make it more vivid for young people more accustomed to television. The combination of slides with performance was new and, as *Sylvia* was accompanied by almost continuous slides, it was considered particularly audacious. The students were completely in tune with this style, however.

Dr. Pankhurst generously allowed William Alderson of *Lynx Theatre and Poetry* to photograph the paintings he owned, so that the quality of the slides was high. When arranging the 1982 exhibition of his mother’s paintings, Dr. Pankhurst had discovered another collection in the possession of the grand-daughter of Ernest O’Brien, the landlord of a hall which Sylvia had rented, perhaps the Women’s Hall. Clearly, he was sympathetic politically to Sylvia, because, when she did not have the money, she gave him a painting in lieu of rent, in the time-honoured fashion of artists. He kept them until he died in the 1950s, when his granddaughter begged her

**Figure 1: The Nailmaker**

*Jacqueline Mulhallen*
grandmother not to throw them out because she loved them so much. Virtually all these were photographed and included in the slides that accompanied Sylvia, which subsequently became a useful archive for researchers interested in Sylvia Pankhurst. As William and I had seen all but one or two extant paintings, we were among the few people in 1991, who would have known the significance of The London Magazine reproductions. Sylvia toured England and Ireland from 1987-1992 and was revived in 1997. Well over 100 school and university student groups saw it, including the Royal College of Art and Middlesex Polytechnic (as it then was). It brought Sylvia Pankhurst's art to a new generation of women, then schoolgirls, who were enthusiastic about both her art and politics. One school group, who had already started on their year project, immediately discarded it for one about Sylvia. After a 1991 public performance, a young Asian woman told me that, after seeing Sylvia at her East London school four years earlier, she had completely changed her career plans and was now at art college. In the public performances, adult audiences found the quality of the paintings a revelation. Because of Sylvia's length of time in repertoire, I was continually looking for material to update it and, in doing so, found The London Magazine.

Sylvia's sacrifice in giving up her art was depicted in the play by a shift from colour slides to black and white. This reflected her remark that the 'surrendering the study of colour and form' for the 'platform and ... street corner' had been 'a prospect too tragically grey and barren to endure'. However, at the end of the play, political success was marked by Walter Crane's The Triumph of Labour which had inspired her as artist and political activist.

Sylvia's commitment to be a political artist was made 'early in childhood' and 'remained the lasting and fervent hope of [her] youth'. She won scholarships to study at Manchester School of Art, went on to win the Proctor Travelling Scholarship for study in Venice and 'headed the list of competitors for the whole country' in a scholarship for the Royal College of Art. Nevertheless, while a student at the Royal College of Art, she raised questions about teaching, conditions and sex discrimination among students, besides being active in the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). The conflict between politics and art in her years with the WSPU was plain. It was difficult, then as now, to make a career as a freelance artist and, in her circumstances, it was even more so. However, the WSPU had been started by her mother and sister and, despite misgivings over their policies, she did not want the campaign to fail. Indeed, an incident connected to both her art and her family had led to the founding of the WSPU. She discovered, when the Independent Labour Party (ILP) employed her to decorate a hall in a building they had erected in honour of her father, that women were not allowed to join that ILP branch. Although the WSPU sometimes provided her with opportunities to create works of art, at others her work as an artist was interrupted by requests for help. In 1912, Christabel had fled to Paris, other leaders of the WSPU were in prison, a campaign of violence was in progress and suffragettes were repeatedly imprisoned and forcibly fed. When the governor of a women's prison appeared to lose interest in a project for Sylvia to decorate the prison chapel, Sylvia thought the 'renewal of militancy' might be the cause. Fearing that the WSPU might 'dwindle to a small group', she decided to give the movement all her

Figure 2: Pit brow woman
time. This decision was not only a personal loss but also a loss to society of a talented political artist.\textsuperscript{10}

For a brief period, the two strands of her life came together in the works she created on the northern tour. These show most clearly her ability as a political artist. The uniqueness of her work cannot be underestimated; these were paintings by a female artist of women depicted not as decorative or sexual objects, but as workers in trades, some of which were hard and strenuous. In some cases, such as pit brow work, women were later prohibited from them. These women were the equals of men in their work, although they were not treated or paid as such. By uniting her artistic skills with political commitment, Sylvia revealed in her paintings the political artist she had wanted to be from childhood.

Sylvia began the tour of the North when she ‘set off for Cradley Heath in the Staffordshire Black Country, to study the conditions of women employed in the making of nails and chains, whose earnings in those days ... averaged no more than 5s. per week’. Here, as she stated, she ‘went out each day to paint pictures of the women toiling at the forges in the dilapidated workshops’ and she wrote articles in the evening.\textsuperscript{11} She described the ‘hideous ... disregard of elementary decencies in housing and sanitation’, the country as ‘utterly blighted’ and the faces of the women as ‘drawn with toil’. The paintings, no less than the articles published in \textit{Votes for Women}, which she may have planned to extend into a book, were intended to show the conditions, thus also making a political statement.\textsuperscript{12}

Although her tour was interrupted for WSPU activity, she resumed it at Leicester where she was introduced by a trade unionist WSPU member to a small co-operative shoe factory. She felt it ironic that women whose task was to repeatedly machine toe caps should remark as they watched her work, ‘I should never have the patience to do it’. She was called away from her work in Wigan ‘among the pit brow girls’.\textsuperscript{13} Richard Pankhurst suggested that she returned to Staffordshire to paint in the Potteries before going on to Scarborough, where she painted the ‘Scotch fisher lassies working the east coast in the trail of the herring’.\textsuperscript{14} She then ‘went painting among the neat, quiet women farm labourers’ in the Borders and to Glasgow, where she ‘secured permission to paint’ in a cotton mill.\textsuperscript{15}

Her work was executed in gouache and watercolour, her approach factual.\textsuperscript{16} The paintings she did in the Potteries, which are extant although not reproduced in \textit{The London Magazine}, show the accuracy of her depiction when compared with contemporary photographs. In her paintings inside a factory or pottery, the colours are subdued and predominantly blue and grey, similar to Van Gogh’s style of painting workers. This was the case with the series of paintings made in the shoe factory. One of these, \textit{Inside a Boot Factory}, which shows workers at sewing machines in the factory, is the only one in existing collections reproduced in \textit{The London Magazine}.\textsuperscript{17} It is reasonable to assume that Sylvia used similar colours and materials for the other two \textit{London Magazine} reproductions of the shoe factory, one showing a pinafored young girl, hair in a pony tail, seated on a stool apparently threading a sewing machine and the other, showing an elderly bespectacled woman with a bun, working a treadle machine. Blue, grey and white also predominate in the series painted in the cotton mill, so Sylvia probably used these colours for \textit{Inside a Cotton-spinning Mill}, showing a
barefoot woman attending to a spinning machine.

The most exciting part of the discovery was to see reproductions of paintings apparently lost, particularly those of trades where no originals are known to exist. For example, although as Richard Pankhurst says, ‘unfortunately not one of her paintings of the women chain-makers has come to light’, the magazine had as its frontispiece the magnificent colour reproduction, The Chain-maker (cover). The Nailmaker (figure 1) shows another worker from the Black Country. Others illustrate pit brow women (figures 2 and 3). Since they were working outside, Sylvia may have used a greater range of colour for these paintings, as she did when painting fishing and farming workers. Although these reproductions can only give an idea of the lost paintings, we can, for the first time, see Sylvia’s portrayal of the women working in these trades.

With Richard Pankhurst’s permission, Lynx Theatre and Poetry launched a search to find the originals. Productions of Sylvia were followed by a talk with slides of the reproductions, in an attempt to locate the originals. The discovery was discussed in The Times, on Woman’s Hour and in regional newspapers when Sylvia toured. The Tower Hamlets East London Advertiser ran excellent articles with good reproductions, but sadly, no pictures came to light.

Sylvia’s career as an artist was short and few of her paintings remain. As a result, they have been undervalued. Awareness of her art has, however, increased in recent years. Her works have been included in a number of exhibitions and in 2001, some of her paintings fetched well above the predicted prices. Sylvia mentioned painting every day both in Venice and on her northern tour, and this is unlikely to be an exaggeration since she was always a hard worker. This suggests that more works existed than the few that are known about now, and the discovery of The London Magazine supports this view. If more works turn up, it will enable a better assessment of her art. The reproductions in The London Magazine are a missing link between the works known already and those as yet undiscovered. The way in which she united her political and artistic endeavours in her 1908 paintings of women workers makes it appropriate to claim Sylvia Pankhurst not only as a political figure but also as a political artist of talent.

Notes

1. Although Elizabeth Crawford refers to the magazine in her comprehensive guide to the suffrage movement, it has not been described in detail before and she gives the number of illustrations as only three. Elizabeth Crawford, The Women’s Suffrage Movement, A Reference Guide 1866-1928 (London, UCL Press, 1999), p. 518.
2. There were then few plaques to mark places connected with her, but this has now changed, thanks to the work of Rosemary Taylor and others. Rosemary Taylor, Letters of Gold: The Story of Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation of Suffragettes in Bow (London, Stepney Books, 1993).
4. Most of these paintings were reproduced and described in Richard Pankhurst, Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader (London, Paddington, 1979). They were also described in detail with some good black and white reproductions by Jackie Duckworth, ‘Sylvia Pankhurst as an Artist’ in Sylvia Pankhurst from Artist to Anti-Fascist, ed. by Ian Bullock and Richard Pankhurst (London, Macmillan, 1992).
7. Ibid., pp. 155-158, 170.
10. Ibid., pp. 382-383.
11. Ibid., p. 261.
16. Duckworth, ‘Sylvia Pankhurst as an Artist’, Plates III, IV and VI.
17. Richard Pankhurst, Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader, Plate V. The illustrations included here are published with the approval of Richard Pankhurst.

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Marie Zakrzewska was an enigmatic figure within the history of gender and nineteenth-century medical education. When so many of her female peers were resting their case to become physicians on women's innate ability to nurture and practice a more empathetic, humane style of medicine, Zakrzewska rejected any idea of unique feminine virtue. Instead she insisted on the importance of advanced training in the natural sciences to any physician's work and met with exasperation the idea that women or men were any different in their capacity for rationality. Indeed, as her biographer illustrates, Zakrzewska refused the contemporary link between masculinity and science and argued that too much compassion could cloud a physician's judgement and become an obstacle to providing the best medical care.

Marie Zakrzewska was one of the most prominent female physicians in nineteenth-century America and is remembered especially for playing a leading role in creating opportunities for women to receive a medical education. Born in Berlin in 1829, she began her medical career in Germany by training as a midwife (as her mother had before her) prior to emigrating to America, arriving in New York in 1853 with little but her sister and the express intention of qualifying as a doctor. Once there Zakrzewska won the support and friendship of Elizabeth Blackwell who succeeded in getting her enrolled at Cleveland Medical College in Ohio which was then embarking on a limited experiment with co-education. Zakrzewska graduated with a doctor of medicine degree in 1856, one of only six women who received the M.D. from the College in the 1850s. In this comprehensive and meticulously researched biography, Tuchman unravels much of the 'enigma' of Zakrzewska's life. Although using the familiar, if unimaginative, structure of a chronological narrative (the first sentence of chapter one tells us that 'Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska was born at home with the help of a midwife in 1829.' [p. 16]) Tuchman soon dismisses any assumption that her book is a competent, if predictable, 'life of'. The skilful way in which biography and analysis are interweaved, and the meticulous use of both German and American sources, allows the author to offer new insights into not only the life of Zakrzewska, but also into the development of later nineteenth-century medicine.

Another strength of this biography is the way in which the subject is situated within the politics of her time, enabling a more nuanced understanding of her singular views on women and medicine. Zakrzewska defied the conventions of her gender and class on several levels: she was active in Boston's radical German political circles, an abolitionist, a vocal advocate of women's rights, a critic of traditional marriage and an atheist. (Her radicalism did not even lessen at the end of her life when she refused any...
BOOKS RECEIVED

John Ashdown-Hill, Eleanor: The Secret Queen (History Press)
Kathleen Sparrow Cummings, New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era (University of North Carolina Press)
Eileen Faust, The Politics of Writing: Julia Kavanagh, 1824-77 (Manchester University Press)
Gerda Lerner, Living with History/Making Social Change (University of North Carolina Press)
James Lingard, Britain at War, 1939-45 (Author House)
Norah Lofts, Nethergate: A Rose for Virtue; Here Was a Man; The House at Sunset; The Town House; The House at Old Vine (History Press)
Elizabeth Longford, Eminent Victorian Women (History Press)
Sal Renshaw, The Subject of Love: Hélène Cixous and the Feminine Divine (Manchester University Press)
Christina Simmons, Making Marriage Modern: Women’s Sexuality From the Progressive Era to World War II (Oxford University Press)

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

If you would like to review any of the titles listed above, please email Jane Potter: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

There are also a number of books unclaimed from previous lists:

Julia Marciari Alexander & Catherine MacLeod, eds. Politics, Transgression and Representation in the Court of Charles II (Yale University Press)
Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan, The Private Life of Marie Antoinette (The History Press)
Margareta D’Arcy, Loose Theatre: Memoirs of a Guerilla Theatre Activist (Trafford)

religious ceremony at her funeral). Tuchman illustrates thoughtfully how these unconventional views translated into an alternative family structure. Zakrzewska lived for many years with a married couple, engaging in an especially intense friendship with the husband. The household was later joined by Julia A. Sprague who remained an intimate, live-in friend until Zakrzewska died forty years later in 1902. As Tuchman says, a ‘Boston family’ gave way after twenty years to a ‘Boston marriage’, and during almost all of this time Zakrzewska was the main breadwinner.

In the nineteenth-century it was unusual for a woman not to experience some conflict between an image of herself as feminine and the emerging model of the physician-scientist; Zakrzewska is a fascinating figure in her identification with science as a method and as a world-view which was equally compatible with male and female sensibilities. Tuchman has provided us with a biography which illuminates her subject’s choices and difference with clarity and adds another level of complexity to the scholarship on women and medicine.

Pauline M. Prior, Madness and Murder: Gender, Crime and Mental Disorder in Nineteenth-Century Ireland

Reviewed by Katherine D. Watson
Oxford Brookes University

Pauline Prior has a well established reputation as a historian of homicide, insanity and gender in Ireland, a subject to which this book makes a further valuable contribution. Drawing especially on the records of the Central Criminal Asylum at Dundrum (which opened in 1850 with space for eighty male and forty female criminal lunatics), she examines the extent to which the experience of having a mental disorder relieved the individual of responsibility for a crime, especially homicide. Murder and
Madness and Murder
Gender, Crime and criminal lunacy in the Nineteenth Century, Ireland
PAULINE M. PRIOR Foreword by Agnieszka Arbuli

Part I introduces these themes, offering much detail on the operation of the justice system in Ireland (criminal statistics, and the use of transportation, imprisonment, and execution); the growth of the asylum system; use of the insanity defence; and the management of criminal lunacy. There were two routes into Dundrum: direct from the court (as unfit to stand trial or upon conviction as ‘guilty but insane’, usually of a serious crime such as homicide); or by transfer from prison (as a rule, individuals convicted of less serious offences who later became insane and consequently unmanageable). An early acceptance of the fact that the label ‘criminal lunatic’ masked great variation in convicts’ degree of mental disorder meant that the principal criterion for admission was the seriousness of the crime (p.41). Discharge depended upon how the patient got to Dundrum in the first place (pp.75-9), with women who had killed children being among the most likely to receive a free discharge as cured.

The second, narrative-driven part of the book, examines the disposition of murder cases. Prior’s research shows that the insanity defence was used most successfully by men who killed a female relative and by women who killed a child, because often in such circumstances a ‘transitory frenzy’ linked to alcohol (men), puerperal mania or some chronic condition (women) could be offered in mitigation. Women who killed men, in contrast, had virtually no chance to escape severe punishment, and the author here suggests that this type of violent woman was clearly (and positively) categorised as ‘bad’ rather than ‘mad’ (p.165). But why, precisely, was this, and is it really a positive finding? In the few cases of family murder attributed to group insanity (folie à deux), sufferers tended to regain their mental health fairly quickly, but those carried out for gain seem to have been punished harshly regardless of the perpetrator’s gender. It is clear that the issue of gender and sentencing for violent offences merits further, closer examination. A final fascinating chapter considers the unofficial Irish policy of releasing convicts on condition of emigration – after the formal abolition of transportation in 1853.

The book relies heavily on primary sources, but the extensive use of quotation tends rather to obscure a clear sense of exactly how and why things changed over time, while tighter editing would have removed some repetition. Comparisons to England, albeit brief, are made throughout, so it is surprising that the bibliography omits the work of Hilary Marland on puerperal insanity and Joel Eigen on the insanity defence. Nonetheless, with its attention to prisoners as well as asylum inmates, and its attention to prisoners as well as asylum inmates, and

Intriguing glimpses into Irish society and culture, this book serves to emphasise how important the study of Ireland is to our growing understanding of the relationship between medicine and the law in the Anglophone world.

Notes

Gregory Durston, Victims and Viragos: Metropolitan Women, Crime and the Eighteenth-Century Justice System

Reviewed by Dierdre Palk, Independent Researcher Auxerre, France

Only in about the last ten years have historians of crime and the criminal justice system in England attempted to suggest answers to the difficult questions of the relationship between gender and law-breaking, and gender and judicial decisions, in the early modern and modern periods. Before this, crime and the law were held to be male affairs. Despite the growth of the study of women’s history and increasing interest in social history over the last thirty years, there is still a paucity of research and writing on the criminality of women and their encounter with the criminal justice system. However, some historians are now demonstrating, through painstaking quantitative and qualitative research, that the traditionally presented picture of women as law-abiding and not worth serious attention to prisoners as well as asylum inmates, and
Gregory Durston provides a synthesis of work published to date on the involvement of women in the criminal justice system in the eighteenth century. His aim is to ‘consider the experiences’ of women as victims or perpetrators of crime, or otherwise as participants in court. He has chosen ‘women’ (not ‘gender’) as his subject, since he considers that women’s experience was often very different from their male counterparts. His choice of London and Middlesex (the area covered by the Old Bailey Sessions court) in the eighteenth century provides him with a large amount of valuable material. At this time, the proportion of women prosecuted in the courts was high by historical standards, and the availability of contemporary records of cases (of serious crimes tried at the Old Bailey), which became more detailed as the century progressed, is of considerable benefit to historians of London crime. The author also makes use of short biographies of criminals awaiting execution, written by the Ordinaries of Newgate gaol, and crime reports and letters in contemporary newspapers and periodicals.

The scene is set for readers who may be new to this area of historical study or for those who wish to recapitulate the state of research. This includes description of eighteenth-century London life, particularly the lives of plebeian women; the general picture of female crime in this increasingly urban setting; the differences between London and other parts of Britain in the level of criminal activity and how the urban setting affected women’s involvement in crime, either as perpetrators or as victims. Durston, a barrister, explains London’s system of courts (including the lower courts in London – quarter sessions and summary proceedings) and policing, how the justice system and the law were used and modified in practice. The system of justice does not, however, end at this point; how many women slipped the net of the initial punishments meted out to them, how were their appeals for mercy dealt with? Was this different from men’s experiences? The author does not cover this crucial area since the work he has consulted generally does not do so either.

Chapters deal with selected crimes or other behaviours unacceptable to the law and society. Although he agrees that women did not commit specifically ‘female’ crime, Dr Durston has chosen activities in which women were particularly implicated. His chapters deal with murder, infanticide, thefts of various kinds, rape, domestic violence and prostitution. He sets out to consider the experience of women both as perpetrators and victims of these behaviours. Since he also intends each chapter to stand alone, there is inevitably an uneven balance in his examination of these two aspects of women’s involvement. Apart from this, the presentation of quantitative research to date, expanded by judicious use of stories from Old Bailey trial reports, works well. Because the chapters stand alone, there is no general discussion or overall conclusions about how and why women were involved in crime, nor about their treatment by the system of justice. However, the book introduces the reader to a number of the debates about female criminality, about women as victims of crime, and about how the statute law was used and modified in practice in the courts. It provides a well-presented synopsis of research thus far.

**Kirsten E. Gardner, Early Detection: Women, Cancer, and Awareness Campaigns in the Twentieth-Century United States**


Reviewed by Marjo Kaartinen

*University of Turku, Finland*

**Early Detection: Women, Cancer, and Awareness Campaigns in the Twentieth-Century United States**

_Kirsten E. Gardner_

_Cancer is a formidable foe which in popular imagination seems to kill more people than any other foes combined. Fear of cancer has probably always plagued humans, probably due to the very fact that cancer most often kills slowly and painfully. It is often a disease which causes great devastation to the sufferer’s body, and therefore it is only logical that when discussing women’s health matters, major attention is being paid to what we would call women’s cancers, breast cancer especially, but also to gynecological cancers._

Kirsten E. Gardner explores the awareness campaigns against these cancers in the twentieth century. Especially interesting in her work is that it is both a history of twentieth-century cancer in the United States, but it is also a history of women’s agency, specifically female activism in health education. Thus it is a study of politics on several fronts, and female networking. The organizations she gives most of her attention are the American Society of the Control of Cancer (from 1944 the American Cancer Society), the Amanda Sims Memorial Fund, the Women’s Field Army, The American Association of University Women, and The General Federation of Women’s Clubs.

A notable thread in her study is our ahistoricity. Gardner reads against the histories of silence, and argues: ‘As a part of … contemporary discourse, breast cancer activists, government officials, and media reporters have often alluded to a history of silence, passivity, and neglect that surrounds this disease’ (p. 2). Simply put, her book argues the contrary: the early twentieth-century was nothing but silent about cancer. We tend to think our own age as advantageous and exceptional, and because of our ignorance, we often are unaware that earlier generations might have presented similar ideas, campaigned for similar purposes, or reacted to same things (even if their motives might have been different from ours). Too easily
we call ‘traditional’ something that has been done for fifty years, and forget that the past fifty years may have been quite exceptional in the longue durée.

Gardner’s study focuses much on the accusatory gaze of American health culture. If women did not react early to any possible sign of cancer, they were to blame for their deaths. One of her sources put this directly: ‘If she does not watch for those signs, or if, after discovering them, she does not seek competent medical care until cancer has passed its early, most curable stage, she has no one to blame for the consequences but herself’ (p. 107). Similar blame has followed women all through the past century, she argues. Women were educated, were told about the early warning signs, and were thus expected to consult a physician immediately. Gardner’s feminist standpoint is relevant here: this culture of blame ignored women’s different possibilities to consult specialists (related to poverty or race for example). It is also notable that before 1946 women were not told of the consequences of these consultations at all.

Gardner is less interested in the individual experience of cancer than the wealth of educational material produced during the past century to help educate and fight cancer deaths. Hence she concentrates on health campaigns, her viewpoint of course being the overarching theme of ‘early detection’ which, she argues, was the leading idea, ‘a monolithic paradigm’ in the campaigns she studied. The life saving advantages of early detection of cancer were preached loud in the press, radio, books, films, early television, and so on. When Gardner moves to the seventies, however, she, to my slight disappointment, discusses less the mass campaigns, but concentrates on the case of the First Lady Betty Ford. It is without doubt an interesting case and would merit a large scale study on its own, but to follow the logic of the early part of the book through and to tease out the continuities and ruptures in the twentieth-century discussions and – could we say propaganda campaigns – would have been extremely interesting as well.

All in all, Early Detection is a well-written piece of high quality historical scholarship which addresses a multitude of readers. It is interesting for a reader with interest in the histories of cancers, for a feminist interested in the health campaigns, and for historians of medicine, activism, and women’s history in general.

Shirley Aucott, Women of Courage, Vision and Talent; Lives in Leicester 1780-1925
Reviewed by Lorna A.C. Gibson
University College London

Aucott states ‘The book rests somewhere between a biographical dictionary and gazetter of women’ (p.4). The unifying theme of Women of Courage, Vision and Talent is women who had some connection to the town of Leicester. Indeed, the connection of the 101 women featured in the book might appear quite tenuous; many were not born, raised, or even lived in Leicester. That said, Aucott’s selection of biographical material provides a fascinating insight into the lives of otherwise unknown women spanning 145 years. In doing so, she refers to a wealth of material which goes beyond the vicinity of Leicestershire and Rutland, to include not only oral history, but also archival material from The Cheltenham Ladies College, London School of Economics, Age Concern library, and the Royal Free Hospital London, to name but a few. Indeed, the sources referred to are a major strength of Aucott’s book; the scope and detail of research in Women of Courage, Vision and Talent reflects the author’s dedication to the topic. In the Acknowledgements section Aucott states that the book is the result of nearly twenty-five years’ research. The sheer scope of detail of this mammoth undertaking highlights that this is clearly has been a labour of love.

The Introduction provides a useful summary of women’s history to date, referring to key publications including Ray Strachey’s The Cause: A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Great Britain (1928) and Sheila Rowbotham’s Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women’s Oppression and the Fight Against it (1973) which are discussed within the context of primary source material published in Leicestershire. Aucott’s discussion of the difficulties of researching women is particularly refreshing (pp. 2-3). Whilst Aucott states in the Introduction that the inclusion of the women in the book was largely dependent on the availability of material, the reader is left wondering about the mechanism for assembling the information listed. Furthermore, perhaps some attention could have been given to those for whom little was known and were thus excluded? That aside, the book provides a plethora of information about women’s lives. Three notable examples include details of Emily Bosworth (born in 1847) who was on the founding Committee of Leicester’s Women’s Liberal Association and a Poor Law Guardian; Harriet Hartsborn (born 1859) who was Leicester’s first woman sanitary inspector; and Amelia Woodcock (born 1816) who was a nurse, but also known as the ‘Wise Woman of Wing’ because of her herbal remedies. The inclusion of photographs provides a real charm; of particular note is one linked to an entry for Annie Clephane (who was involved in a number of women’s organisations in Leicester) entitled ‘The residents of “Sunnyholme” Home for Feeble Minded Girls. Seen here on their allotment on Hinckley Road, circa 1910’.

Aucott includes useful appendices at both the beginning and end of the book, such as a timeline of important national acts and events that affected women’s lives and listings of women’s occupations in Leicester. However, the book lacks a conclusion and thus misses a valuable opportunity to draw together some of the key issues which have been addressed such as childcare, suffrage, women’s organisations, and employment – topics which resound throughout the period addressed. In addition, the local and regional variations that could
Shared Histories is an edited collection of the correspondence that flowed between a North American mother, Virginia Reynolds and her only daughter, Virginia Potter (upon marriage), who moved to England in 1935, becoming a British citizen in 1938. The letters offer a window onto the lives of two socially privileged white women and their families over nearly four decades of immense political and societal change in the US and Britain. The volume is edited by Virginia Potter’s daughter who uses the Introduction to provide biographical details which serve as useful reference points when reading the letters, ensuring that readers do not get confused by familial background. These are set within an honest contextual discussion that leaves the reader in no doubt of the values that the women held, preparing her or him for what can at times be an uncomfortable read, as neither xenophobic and racist opinions nor class snobbishness are covered up. Potter also makes effective use of footnotes within the letters themselves, mostly to give background to references to the myriad of historical events referred to on both sides of the Atlantic – although with more attention given to British history – from the Depression years, through the Second World War and into and beyond a changing post-war world that was experienced very differently by the two women.

By the end of the book, I felt that I knew mother and daughter pretty well and could sometimes predict their reactions to national and international events, which had the effect of inuring me to some extent to the constant expression of political and social views that reflected their positions of privilege. There were times, however, when the women’s remarks made it difficult to keep reading. The older woman’s racist attitudes appear embedded in her roots in America’s South, and her acceptance of segregation as the natural order is evident in letters demonstrating her continued incomprehension towards the concept of equality. Nor are her views challenged by her daughter who, from Britain, writes in 1957 of what she describes as the ‘mess’ in Little Rock, Arkansas, of ‘nine coloured children insisting on going to a white school of nearly 1000 – isn’t it ridiculous … all my Southern blood comes to the fore on these occasions’ (p. 306). Their correspondence on civil rights issues alludes to perceived ‘Yankee’ interference in Southern affairs and seems to provide evidence of political views largely unchanged since the Civil War, highlighting the importance that the book’s insights can provide to a student of this period.

At other times, we learn about the influence of social position on Virginia Potter’s attitudes towards politics in the UK. Whilst she is appalled by the Labour Party’s victory in the 1945 General Election (‘isn’t it ghastly?’ [p. 230]), her reaction to the Beveridge report indicates the incomprehension towards the concept of a welfare state that is perhaps to be expected from a woman who had been presented at court in the 1930s and who had household staff: ‘I confess I don’t understand much about it – but Nannie is tremendously interested as Sir William is marrying Mrs Mair next week, and Nannie was with the Mairs for about 12 years’ (p.154). Whilst Angela Potter refers to her mother as being ‘apolitical’, she did volunteer her car to the Tories on election day 1950 and rejoices that, although Labour won, its majority was so reduced that it would not be ‘able to get on with [its] horrible nationalisation’ (p. 274).

Clearly, as Angela Potter reminds us, the women’s writing was unguarded and their comments leave the reader in no doubt that they were products of their class and geographical upbringing. Whether we like it or not, these two women’s opinions provide invaluable social commentary on a wide range of issues. They wrote frankly of things that they could not speak to each other about because they were so often separated – the pain of separation during the War is palpable. The older woman’s isolation and deep concern for the safety of her daughter in wartime Britain is at times moving and one can see how it contributed to her desire to persuade her fellow countrymen to support the war effort long before the events at Pearl Harbour brought the US into the War.

I imagine that the decision to publish these letters was not taken lightly. Angela Potter must have been aware of the strong feelings that her grandmother’s and mother’s views might produce among readers. Whilst it is not always an easy book to read, the collection does provide a warm and intimate portrayal of the relationship between a mother and daughter. It does so from a class perspective that is both interesting and informative, giving us a unique commentary on world developments from citizens of two countries, who sometimes embraced and at other times deplored social, political and economic change.
Committee News

The Steering Committee met on 28 February. Louise Wannell resigned as membership secretary and was replaced (by unanimous vote) by Henrice Altink. The Committee offered their thanks to Louise for her sterling work as membership secretary, and to Henrice for offering to take on the role. One of Henrice’s first actions will be to email members who pay their subscriptions by standing order, asking them to check that the standing order has been revised to reflect the small rise in subscription, which came into effect last year. The annual subscription for members paying by Standing Order is now £35, a £5 reduction on the full subscription. Subscriptions support the Women’s History Magazine and the WHN website among other things, and every penny counts. We ask everyone who pays by standing order to please check the value and amend if necessary.

Web Site

The Committee has spent many hours discussing how best to utilise the funds at its disposal, and decided that one of our top priorities should be to develop the web site. As a result, a programme of developments has been devised, and will be undertaken over the course of the next twelve months. Already, several new features have been added, including a members’ publications page, where members can advertise their recent publications and members’ discount page where publishers offer discounted rates to WHN members. We are also hoping to develop an up-to-date resource of members’ books and journal publications to place on the web site. Members on the WHN list should recently have received an email from our Web Master (Claire Jones) asking anyone interested in participating in this venture to send their publications list her at whnadmin@womenshistorynetwork.org.

We have several other ideas in the pipeline, so make sure to check the web site on a regular basis for more news on these.

www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Magazine

The Editors continue to be impressed by the quality of submissions they receive, and wish to encourage members (and non-members) to submit articles for inclusion. We are also always on the look out for books to review and reviewers to review them, so if you’d like to recommend a book or volunteer to be a reviewer get in touch with our Book Reviews Editor, Jane Potter, at: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org, and see the notices in this magazine.

Newsletter

The quarterly electronic Newsletter has been well received since its introduction last year. The Newsletter Editor is due to retire in September and if there are any members who would be interested in taking over this voluntary role, the Committee would be very interested to hear from you. For further information about the role of Editor, or to express your interest in taking it on, contact newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org.

Next Steering Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be on 6 June 2009 at the Institute for Historical Research (London) at 11.30am, and the following one will be immediately prior to the conference on 11 September at St Hilda’s College. All members of the Women’s History Network are invited to attend the Steering Committee meetings as observers. For further details contact convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Conference

This year’s conference will be held at St Hilda’s, one of Oxford University constituent colleges, spectacularly set in four acres of gardens on the banks of the river Cherwell. The call for papers has elicited an extraordinary response from women’s history scholars from all over the world. In addition to the plenary lecturers already announced, speakers will include Sally Alexander, Lucy Bland, Patricia Grimshaw, Joanna de Groot, Clare Midgley, Karen Offen, Alison Oram, June Purvis and Jutta Schwarzkopf. This combination of inspiring setting and stimulating programme promises to make this year’s conference a wonderful event. The deadline for conference registration is 1 July. The website provides information on the many kinds of conference packages available. If you have a new publication which you would like us to publicise at the conference please contact Angela.Davis@warwick.ac.uk.

London History Forum

London History Forum’s most recent event took place on 14th March 2009, just after International Women’s Day, at the Women’s Library in Old Castle Street, Spitalfields. The event, which draws an audience from primary and secondary school history teachers, gets great support from the Women’s History Network, and a number of sessions addressed the theme of women’s history. Talvinder Bhullar, the teacher-editor of a new textbook on Sylvia Pankhurst, made an impassioned plea for more women’s history to be taught in schools, as part of the new curriculum for 11-14 year olds. Her points were also taken up by Flora Wilson, in a paper co-written with Jane McDermid, about the campaign for women’s votes. Secondary school teachers also heard a paper on the history of the sexual revolution, while primary school teachers — attending for the first time — discussed the ways in which children can learn by studying women’s lives during the second world war. A third WHN member, Sue Anderson-Faithful, gave a fascinating paper about teaching personal histories to the very youngest children in the school sector. All in all, an enjoyable and profitable morning! There’s more information, including some of the papers presented, on the Historical Association’s website. www.history.org.uk
Editorial roles

Would you like to be more involved with Women’s History Magazine?

The editors would like to hear from any member with the interest, time and skills to join our team. At present there is a specific need for someone who is either a new or recent member of the steering committee to act initially as liaison between the committee and the editorial team. Editors contribute to a variety of tasks which require regular input and culminate in major activity when an issue is due. Depending on the role, the work may involve:

- liaising with authors to evolve publishable articles
- editing copy
- issue planning
- ensuring quality and quantity of submissions
- managing the peer review process
- managing book reviews
- liaising with advertisers
- DTP (Adobe InDesign & Photoshop)
- Managing the printing process

Being a Women’s History Magazine editor requires commitment but can be very rewarding, especially if you enjoy working as one of a supportive team.

Please email editor@womenshistorynetwork.org with a view to arranging a telephone conversation with an existing editor who can give you more details and answer any questions.

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

All of the above now have a new home in the WHN electronic Newsletter

The WHN Newsletter, which will be emailed to members 4 times a year, will enable us to keep you better up-to-date with news, conferences and other events concerning women’s history.

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

To advertise in the WHN Newsletter, please email its editor, Jean Spence, at:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

To download current and back issues visit the Newsletter pages at www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Publishing in Women’s History Magazine

Women’s History Magazine 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, including references, in length. Contributors are requested to submit articles in final form, carefully following the style guidelines available at:

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at editor@womenshistorynetwork.org
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 Women’s History Magazine and a quarterly electronic Newsletter with their subscription. These contain articles discussing research, sources and applications of women’s history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Joining the WHN

Annual Membership Rates

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student/unwaged</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Institutions overseas</td>
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*£5 reduction when paying by standing order.

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker’s Order forms are available on the back cover.

Women’s History Network Contacts:

Steering Committee officers:

Membership, subscriptions, Dr Henrice Altink: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org
or write to WHN Membership Secretary, Dr. Henrice Altink, University of York, Department of History, Heslington, York. YO10 5DD.

Finance, bursaries, Dr Helen Meller: treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Dr Katherine Holden: convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Officer, Jessica Holloway Swift: webadmin@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Dr Kathryn Gleadle: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women’s History, Prof June Purvis: ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Dr Sue Morgan: charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Jean Spence: newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors, submissions: Dr Debbi Simonton, Dr Jane Potter, Dr Sue Hawkins: editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Book Reviews, Dr Jane Potter: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org
or send books to her at Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, Oxford Brookes University, The Buckley Building, Gipsy Lane Campus, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP.

Advertising, Dr Gerry Holloway: advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Administrator

All other queries, including back issues of magazine, please email: admin@womenshistorynetwork.org
Membership Application

I would like to join / renew my subscription to the Women’s History Network. I / enclose a cheque payable to Women’s History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker’s Order Form / for £__________(* delete as applicable)

Name: ___________________________________________________________________

Address:  __________________________________________________________________

Postcode: __________________________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________________________________________________

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity:

Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Louise Wannell, WHN Membership Secretary, c/o Jane McDermid, School of Humanities, Avenue Campus (Building 65), University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: Women’s History Network

Name : ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

…. ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Post Code: ________________________________

I am a UK taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: ________________________________________ Date ……/……/……

Notes

1. If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future:
   ➢ Please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
   ➢ You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity – it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.

2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity recovers on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).

3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity recovers, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).

4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Banker’s Order

To (bank)_____________________________________

Address_____________________________________

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Account no.:___________________________________

Pay to the account of the Women’s History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60–02–05), on __________________200_, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £________________________ (in words)___________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________________________________