

women's  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



# Studying Herstories

## WHN Student Conference

### 8th March 2021

Please join us for this exciting one-day **online** event featuring presentations from BA, MA and PhD students!

The WHN seeks to support and nurture all students of women's history, and this inaugural conference aims to celebrate the original and fresh perspectives they bring to the study of women's history.

#### SCHEDULE

9:20 am: Welcome

9:30 am-1:00 pm: Sessions

1:45 pm-2:45 pm: Keynote

3:00 pm-6:30 pm: Sessions

6:30 pm-7:00 pm: Reception

#### Keynote Speaker

**Dr Lucy Delap**

Reader in Modern British and Gender  
History at the University of Cambridge



Thanks to the sponsorship of



WEST MIDLANDS  
**HISTORY**  
PEOPLE OF IDEAS, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

For the full list of speakers, sessions, and registration details  
please go to

<https://womenshistorynetwork.org/>

# Contents:

Culture, Media, Representations. 1-2

Reading, Writing and Literary Practices. 3-4

Knowledge and Professionalism. 5-6

Dr Lucy Delap - Keynote Speech. 7-8

Gendered State Structures and Women's responses to them. 9-10

Activism. 11-12

Elites, Intellectuals and Transnational networks. 13 - 14

# Culture, Media, Representations

Chaired by Anna Muggeridge

(9:30 - 10:30)

**Anna Clark, University of Oxford (PhD student): Exemplary Women:**

**Portraits of Female Patrons and the Early Modern University**

**Contact: [anna.clark@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anna.clark@sjc.ox.ac.uk)**

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a broad range of female involvement in the considerable expansion of Oxford and Cambridge, England's two early modern universities. Whereas in previous centuries, women's role in university patronage had extended little beyond royal sponsorship, the female benefactors of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries represented a variety of social groups. Despite continued college statutes excluding women from academic spaces, their involvement was often commemorated through portraits, some of which have been on continuous display in the centuries since their acquisition.

The long-term presence of these portraits in the male-dominated institutions of the early modern university prompts investigation into their function as a commemorative medium. Through consideration of these portraits as sites of negotiation between the fashioning of personal and corporate identities, we can understand the significance particularly of images of women as part of the visual culture of historically homosocial academic institutions.

**Nora Baker, University of Oxford (PhD student): Huguenot Women's Writing and Self-Representation**

**Contact: [nora.baker@jesus.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nora.baker@jesus.ox.ac.uk)**

Following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, thousands of Protestants left France in order to freely practise their religion elsewhere. It was common for these French Protestant refugees to write accounts of their experiences of persecution after they had safely settled abroad, and women were no exception to this trend. Indeed, the surviving memoirs of female Huguenot authors constitute valuable examples of non-elite women's writing at a time when relatively few were literate. This paper will look at accounts written by three Protestant women who were imprisoned in France before making it to Geneva: Blanche Gamond, Jeanne Terrasson, and Marie Molinier. It will argue that these women made use of particular literary tropes and imagery in order to influence their standing in the refugee community. By emphasizing their virtue and Biblical knowledge, women could earn respect and sometimes financial reward from the wider Huguenot society in exile.

**Esther Bennet, University of Newcastle (BA student): “A Harlot’s Progress”: Examining Perceptions of Prostitutes through Printed Literature and Visual Satire in Eighteenth-century England**  
**Contact: E.Bennett3@newcastle.ac.uk**

Sex and prostitution are central to the imagining of eighteenth-century England. Through debate and discourse from the period we can see what others thought of prostitutes, but not what the lives of these women, and sometimes men, were actually like. By using media such as printed satire and art we can glean a better understanding of their lives through outward perceptions. Hogarth’s *A Harlot’s Progress* (1732) has a very sympathetic outlook on the life of the prostitute in his art. Thirty years later in Harris’ *List of Covent Garden Ladies* this perception has completely changed into one of admiration. These perception changes can be seen throughout the eighteenth-century due to changing opinions and morals in the period. One thing that remains constant, however, is the popularity of ‘whore biographies’ which detail the lives of real or fictional women showing the prevalence of prostitution in English society and culture.

**Clare Church, University of Aberystwyth (PhD student): The Wartime Chanteuse: Investigating the Women Who Sang for the French Resistance, 1940-1944**  
**Contact: clc34@aber.ac.uk**

It is frequently stated that the Second World War was fought as much with the mass media as it was with conventional weapons. Though women were often the faces and voices of wartime mass media—especially as it pertained to Allied music and radio—their prominence in the ongoing historical narrative is nominal. This paper seeks to redress the disparity by shining a light on the most celebrated female musicians of the French Resistance: Anna Marly, Germaine Sablon, and Josephine Baker. It will examine their contributions from 1940-1944 to both the French Resistance and the Allied entertainment industry. In so doing, this paper will reflect upon broader issues regarding the exclusion of women from French Resistance—and more generally Second World War—narratives. Moreover, this paper will comment on the capacity of music to unite in wartime, and indeed the foundational role of women to this endeavour.

**Abigail Murphy, University of Gloucester (Masters student): The Control of ‘Immoral’ Women in Gloucestershire 1942-1946**  
**Contact: abimurphy@connect.glos.ac.uk**

This paper examines public responses to British women who fraternised with American troops in Gloucestershire. As in many parts of the UK, Gloucestershire saw thousands of American troops, both black and white stationed in and around its districts. Many local women had relationships with American soldiers, which aggravated some members of the public and the local authorities, especially if the soldier was black. Young working-class girls and women were particularly singled out for their immoral behaviour towards the US troops; therefore, this paper also demonstrates how a woman’s social class influenced public responses and the methods put in place to influence their actions. By using oral history accounts, contemporary local newspaper reports and letters along with Home Intelligence and Mass Observation reports, I will show that women who fraternised with the troops were presented in the media as sexual predators and how this influenced the public’s reaction to the situation.

# Reading, Writing and Literary Practices

Chaired by Lyndsey Jenkins

(10:45 - 11:45)

**Hannah Westwick, University of Oxford (Masters student): Inhabiting the imaginary: exploring the relationship between utopian fiction and women's possessions, England c.1660-1800**

**Contact: hannah.westwick@keble.ox.ac.uk**

This paper will trace a symbiotic relationship between descriptions of objects in women authored utopian literature and their emergence as women's possessions in England c.1650-1800. The primary source base of this paper complicates the previously assumed narrative that women in this time were passive recipients of the goods available to them and had limited influence on the market of goods coming from the East. My paper will make an interjection into this assumption through demonstrating that women authors such as Margaret Cavendish and Sarah Scott actively influenced, through their works, ways of imaging and understanding real life objects in relation to their described utopias. This argument is based from an understanding of chinoiserie as necessarily utopian due to its design, artistic inspiration and usage. In this paper I would provide quotes from the texts alongside pictures of surviving items and discussions of these material goods in women's letters and diaries.

**Amy Solomons, University of Liverpool (PhD student): 'When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library': Women's Management and Use of Private Libraries, 1680-1830**

**Contact: A.J.Solomons@liverpool.ac.uk**

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* stages the country house library as a space of performative sociability. Miss Bingley's insistence that she would be miserable without an excellent library is used as part of her attempts to gain Mr Darcy's attention and links women's reading and use of libraries to their social standing and respectability. This paper seeks to answer three main questions: what, how, and where were women supposed to read in the long eighteenth century. While private libraries have often been analysed through the lens of male readers, few studies have explored how private libraries were used by the family. As an introduction to my research, this presentation focuses on women's experiences of reading in the long eighteenth century to analyse the interrelationship between women's reading practices, reading material and reading spaces.

**Rowan Cookson, University of Cambridge (Masters student): Love, labour and hierarchy: Anglo-American women's friendships 1750-1800**  
**Contact: rc721@cam.ac.uk**

Women in Anglo-America valued their female friendships. Women relied on their friends' support and advice and literate women spent significant amounts of time writing to friends. Despite this, since the 1970s, little scholarship has generalised about early American women's friendships. I studied almost 200 letters and found that the secondary literature's rosy view of female friendship had not appreciated the significant effort involved. Indeed, women's friendship can be helpfully conceived of as involving work in terms of emotional expression and reading, writing and sending letters; labour which created communities. Moreover, while the secondary literature paid little attention to race and class, white wealthy women's friendships perpetuated these structural inequalities. This case-study therefore demonstrates the need for a nuanced understanding of female relationships in early America and beyond, to understand privileged women's labour and communities and the consequences for less privileged women.

**Camilla Prince, Manchester Metropolitan University (PhD student): 'A Fly on the Wheel' or a 'Guardian Angel?' Ella D'Arcy's role as assistant editor of The Yellow Book**  
**Contact: caliceprince@gmail.com**

Much has been written about the influential fin de siècle literary periodical *The Yellow Book* (1894-97), and the role its male editor and publisher - Henry Harland and John Lane, played in its creation. Yet, the significant role played by its female assistant editor Ella D'Arcy remains overlooked. This paper will explore how Ella D'Arcy influenced and shaped the *Yellow Book* through her commissioning and editorial work, as well as through her short stories which were featured in the magazine. Her correspondence with Harland and Lane sheds light on the unique challenges and contradictions of being a female editor during this period which often required women to downplay their influence even as they wielded it. This tension, and D'Arcy's desire for greater autonomy ultimately led to her dismissal from the periodical. Nevertheless, the three year period of her assistant editorship provides a fascinating glimpse into the role of women editors in the 1890s.

**Phoebe Gill, University of Birmingham (PhD student): Embodied Experiences of Sex in Letter-Writing to Marie Stopes, 1918-1939**  
**Contact: phoebegill98@gmail.com**

This paper considers how ordinary people articulated their embodied experiences of sex in the British world through letter-writing to Marie Stopes in the early-twentieth century. Drawing primarily on women's letters found in the Wellcome Archive's Stopes collection, it asks how painful and pleasurable sexual experiences were explored and conveyed on paper. Throughout, how sex and bodies were understood through discourses of normativity, gender, class, and age in particular will be analysed. Critiquing what it meant for ordinary people to grapple with the sexual in their everyday lives, this paper draws on Stopes's personal correspondence and her published marital advice texts, *Married Love* (1918) and *Wise Parenthood* (1919), to contextualise these experiences. This analysis foregrounds women's experiences of heterosexual sexual desire and sex, focusing on how letter-writing became part of sexual education, experience, and self-fashioning in inter-war Britain and the British world.

# Knowledge and Professionalism

Chaired by Dr. Nancy Highcock

(12:00 - 13:00)

**Amie Bolissian, University of Reading (PhD student): 'Useful' Old Women: The dual patient/carer role of infirm ageing women in early modern England**

**Contact: amie.bolissian@pgr.reading.ac.uk**

Infectious epidemics, such as plague, smallpox and other fevers, were a regular occurrence in early modern England, and according to medical theory, 'old folks' were in a unique category. The 'aged' were seen as among the least likely to catch infectious fevers but if they did then, as with COVID-19, they were also believed to be the most likely to die from them. What did this mean for those understood to be 'old', to be both in less danger and more danger? Without a doubt older people expressed feelings of fear and distress during epidemic outbreaks and most ageing writers, in this highly religious period, beseeched their god to keep their families protected. Nevertheless, I have found far fewer expressions of personal anxiety about contagious disease in older people's diaries and letters. Rather, the overwhelming preoccupation for older people, women or men, was the day-to-day management of their existing, chronic ailments. My paper will explore the hitherto neglected experiences of ageing patients during epidemic times, and how fear of infection, however strong, did not supersede the daily responsibility of monitoring and providing self-care for their longstanding, often debilitating, complaints.

**Rachel Feldberg, University of York (PhD student): Winifred**

**Constable's Clinical Eye, 1768-1774**

**Contact: raef500@york.ac.uk**

For six years at a pivotal moment in the late 1760s Winifred Constable, a wealthy Catholic from East Yorkshire, kept a daily record of her brother William's debilitating gout. After trialling various remedies, the siblings travelled to Liege to experience a new cure delivered by the mysterious Dr Le Fevre. Winifred's observations, which enumerated William's symptoms, remedies and outcomes, reveal the clinical eye of a woman with an unusual education and suggest an understanding of contemporary medical case narratives. Over time, the siblings' search for a cure and her process of observation underpinned Winifred's growing agency and shaped a sense of self-fashioning and femininity legitimised as an expression of love and duty by her Catholicism. Winifred's empirical experience also engendered doubts about the competence of the doctors treating her brother and forced her to question the veracity of medical knowledge, as Galenic traditions of medicine were confronted with new understandings.

**Kirsty Peacock, University of Oxford (Masters student): Céline Renooz  
and Discourses of Female Scientific Expertise and Hysteria in Late Nineteenth Century France  
Contact: kirsty.peacock@wolfson.ox.ac.uk**

The historiography of women in science in late nineteenth century France has largely centred around discussions of ‘hysteria’ and ‘expertise’. My research considers how these seemingly disparate discourses intersected through the case study of scientific writer Céline Renooz (1840-1928). After abandoning the economic security of her marriage in 1875, Renooz undertook a ‘scientific vocation’, constructing a wide-ranging matriarchal science that drew upon elements of evolutionary science, anthropology, epistemology and anticlericalism. One of her most important interventions in the Parisian scientific scene, I argue, was her involvement in the *Revue Scientifique des Femmes*, a short-lived journal that highlighted the contributions of women scientists. Nonetheless, Renooz was marginalised during her lifetime and by subsequent historiography, with language of ‘madness’ being integral to the attempts made to discredit her. These factors combined render Renooz a fruitful lens through which the cultural impact of Jean-Martin Charcot’s popularised ‘hysteria’ practices can be considered.

**Lucy Brownson, University of Sheffield (PhD student): These Women’s Work:  
Interrogating women’s archival labour at Chatsworth, c. 1870s-1910  
Contact: lkbrownson1@sheffield.ac.uk**

The country house is not the most obvious site for uncovering feminist histories. My research site, Chatsworth House, is a case-in-point: home to the Cavendish family for 450 years, Chatsworth’s illustrious history pivots around patrimony, primogeniture, and the Dukes of Devonshire. At the heart of this history, however, lies an archive that tells a markedly different but long-forgotten story: one which sees women working together, building intellectual networks and infrastructures to preserve and facilitate access to the documentary traces of all those who have lived and worked on the estate. This 10-minute paper explores women’s efforts to establish and professionalise archival practices at Chatsworth in the early- and mid-twentieth century, and it asks why their important contributions have so often been overlooked. Framing these women’s work in relation to other forms of gendered labour, I argue that examining how women have shaped the country house archive enables us to recover their lives and agency in an otherwise overwhelmingly patriarchal historical landscape.

**Rachel Alexandra Chua, University College London (PhD student): 'Pioneers and Professions:  
Chinese Female Medical Professionals in the Late Qing and Early Republican Periods'  
Contact: rachel.chua.19@ucl.ac.uk**

The prism of professionals and their professional associations has provided scholarship with an entry point to interrogate the complex social dynamics that existed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century China. Much of this work, however, has been focused on men. Informed by sociological approaches and paying due attention to the cultural and social contexts of late Qing and early Republican China, this paper analyses the historical circumstances, training programmes, and educational processes surrounding women doctors in the medical profession in Fujian 福建 at the turn of the twentieth century. It scrutinises the process of this emergence and suggests that intimate female-dominated communities and networks in the early stages of women’s involvement in the medical profession were critical in cultivating the conditions for the engagement of women in later professional associations, and in the profession more generally.

Dr. Lucy Delap  
Keynote Speech  
(13:45 - 14:45)



Contact: [imd11@cam.ac.uk](mailto:imd11@cam.ac.uk)

I am a historian of modern Britain, working on gender history, the history of feminism, print culture, labour history, disability and religion. I studied at Cambridge University, and taught at King's College London before returning to Cambridge in 2015. I am currently working on late twentieth century masculinities, learning disability, and feminist enterprise. My most recent book, *Feminisms: a global history*, was published in Autumn 2020 by Penguin and Chicago University Press. I am co-investigator for a Leverhulme-funded project on the history of Virago and Spare Rib, which runs until 2021. With colleagues Adrian Bingham and Louise Jackson, I was awarded the Royal Historical Society Public History Prize for public debate and policy in 2018.

### **‘She has plenty of go in him’: intersections of gender and disability in twentieth century Britain**

What happens when historians research the lives of people with intellectual disabilities as low paid workers rather than patients? When we turn away from sources produced by the medical establishment and look to vernacular and workplace records? This paper examines the experiences of British workers, employers and public institutions in relation to intellectual disabilities. By looking at labour markets, gender becomes prominent, with male and female workers having very different experiences of negotiating impairment, workplaces, quotas, state supervision and making a living. What did breadwinning mean for disabled workers who struggled to personify adult male qualities? And how did women’s often informal and low paid work intersect with their experiences of impairment?

# Gendered State Structures and Womens responses to them

Chaired by Alice Whiteoak

(15:00 - 16:00)

**Stephanie Brown, University of Cambridge (PhD student): Female Perpetrated Homicide in Late Medieval Yorkshire**  
**Contact: seb208@cam.ac.uk**

A shared observation within studies on violence, from both historians and criminologists, is that it is highly gendered; in virtually all times and places it is more characteristic of males than of females. Consequently, female violence is often overlooked, with much of the literature on crime concentrating on women as victims. Moreover, because men dominate the statistics, when talking quantitatively about crime, what we are doing is talking about men and crime. The male bias distorts the figures; the number of women is so small that if one stripped them out the overall picture would look the same. Therefore, any study of crime which does not use gender in its analysis is universalising the male experience. Using fourteenth-century coroners' rolls, this paper investigates homicide perpetrated by women. It examines prosecution narratives and the circumstances of the killing, highlighting in which ways the presentation of female violence differed from male perpetrators.

**Catherine Tully, University of Liverpool (PhD student): 'I was horrified at the very thought of murder, but it was at the thought of the murder I had seen done': Newspaper Reports As Articulations of Resistance to the Execution of Women in Britain 1868-1899**  
**Contact: Catherine.Tully@liverpool.ac.uk**

The shift from executions held in public to carceral spaces in 1868 removed the plebeian public as eye witnesses of the state's most powerful ritual of retribution. In their place were state officials and representatives of the press, elite male bodies charged with the responsibility of reporting a decent, painless and quick death had occurred. Here, the state attempted to tighten its grip on the narrative of the execution story, which could, if subverted, threaten the retention of capital punishment altogether. Newspaper accounts, however, did not always adhere to expectations of them: reports of the botched, bungles and 'secret' executions of women continued to undermine the 'humanity' of private executions claimed by the state. This paper asks, by applying the lens of 'lexitainment', or law-as-entertainment, if these accounts can be considered articulations of resistance to actual and systemic violence experienced by these women, or whether they merely perpetuated them.

**Emily Burgess, University of Portsmouth (Masters student): “The woman with diamond studded knuckle dusters’: female gangsterism in 1920s London and its neglect within historiography and criminal theory.”**

**Contact: emilyburgess848@gmail.com**

During the 1920s the English press appointed Alice Diamond, Leader of the all-female Forty Elephants Gang, as the ‘Queen of Thieves’, ‘Leader of the London Criminal Underworld’, and an ‘Amazon Among Men’. Despite her contemporary notoriety, she is hardly mentioned in the study of organised crime in Britain. This paper seeks to place Diamond back on the historical map. Diamond defied gender boundaries and challenged contemporary ideologies surrounding the ‘female offender’. Despite her significance, she has been relatively neglected in historical research in favour of the study of male gangsters. This directly correlates to the common disregard for the study of female criminality within the male dominated field of criminal history. By studying Diamond, our understanding of contemporary organised crime will expand by acknowledging the role of notorious women within the period, an area, that, until now, has been reserved for men.

**Miren Mohrenweiser, Queen’s University of Belfast (PhD student): The Gendered Nature of Women’s Prison Protest in Northern Ireland, 1975-1981**

**Contact: mmohrenweiser01@qub.ac.uk**

During the Irish Troubles (1968-1998), 32 Republican women who were imprisoned in Armagh Gaol for their involvement in paramilitary activity embarked on a series of protests for political status. Though their numbers pale in comparison to their male counterparts, the women’s position within the prison system gained them both support and criticism from an international audience. My presentation will discuss the nature of female imprisonment and the difference in experience when compared to the Maze/Long Kesh men’s prison, drawing on archival research from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Political Collection at Linen Hall Library. I will specifically explore the no-wash protest at Armagh Gaol and other forms of non-conformity and resistance by female prisoners from 1975-1981. Lastly, I will consider the prison and community response to the women’s protests and how gender is constructed and enforced both inside and outside the prison system.

**Melissa Kane, University of Edinburgh ( MA Student) ‘Are you a witch or are you a fairy? Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?’ The Consequences of Belief and Superstition**

**Contact: M.A.Kane@sms.ed.ac.uk**

The 1890s, a trial from the small village of Ballyvadlea, nicknamed the ‘Tipperary Witch’ case captured public imagination, from political debates over Irish sovereignty to playground rhymes of children singing ‘are you a witch or are you a fairy? Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?’. At the heart of the case was the mysterious and traumatic death of Bridget Cleary, an independent and self-sufficient woman who had become victim to her husband’s ‘madness’. The reports and allegations surrounding the nature of her death have become a synonymous part of Irish folklore, allowing us to understand its complexities and layers, particularly within rural areas as well as its impact on those who fell victim to its stereotypes. In this presentation, these ideas of folklore and myth will be discussed and evaluated on their impact, particularly upon women through the tale of Bridget Cleary in the context of 19th century rural Ireland.

# Activism

Chaired by Dr. Alex Hughes

(16:15 - 17:15)

**Emma Dewhirst, Queen's University Belfast (PhD student): Women's Activism in Revolutionary Ireland**

**Contact: edewhirst01@qub.ac.uk**

The pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods from 1913 to 1923 have been the subject of much research, which has only increased with the current 'Decade of Centenaries.' Only recently however has the role of women and the contribution of organisations such as Cumann na mBan (Irishwomen's Council) to Irish Independence been explored within the historiography. This paper aims to encourage a more inclusive approach to the role of women in the fight for Irish independence by exploring the impact women had within and outside of the domestic space. Using the recently released records from the Irish Military Pensions Collections my research will explore the influence and power Irishwomen, as mothers, wielded in the creation of Irish republicans. In doing so, this paper will provide a more inclusive analysis in terms of its approach to gender and highlight the variation of important roles women had within the independence movement.

**Maria Georgouli Loupi, Goldsmiths University (PhD student): The personal is political: Patterns in the post-junta Greek Women's Movement**

**Contact: mar.geor\_lup@yahoo.com**

Studying women's mobilisations in Greece, one quickly notices a pattern of division in the feminist movement, cultivating in a schism between autonomous feminist groups and 'state-feminism' during the Metapolitefsi. The element that mostly separates the various formations is their relationship to organised political life and the parties of the Left. Examining material from the women's movement and the context of its creation - who did each organisation represent and which leftist party was it associated with - I explore this antagonistic relationship between the two feminisms of the 1980s. I argue it is characteristic of the Greek women's movement throughout its history, and intimately connected to the relationship of the parties of the Greek Left with the 'women's issue' after the Second World War and even after 1974.

**Frankie Chappell, London School of Economics (PhD student): “There has always been a Black women’s peace movement”: Women of Colour and Anti- War Activism**

**Contact: f.n.chappell@lse.ac.uk**

Recent scholarship has pushed back against the image of the anti-war movement as predominantly white, male and middle-class. Although work on “second wave” feminism and the anti-war movement is increasing, there is scant scholarship exploring the work of feminists of colour in anti-war activity. This presentation will explore the intersections between race, gender and class, and the overlaps between foreign and domestic concerns, in the analysis of a range of US women of colour who organised against the Vietnam War. The examples of the National Welfare Rights Organization and the Third World Women’s Alliance will show how women of colour were key players in the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as demonstrating the influence of an anti-war stance on the development of intersectional analysis in early Black feminist groups.

**Amy Joyce, University of Glasgow (BA student): ‘Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Choice’: A Study of the Women’s Movements and Pro-Choice Campaigns in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Scotland, 1970s-1980s**

**Contact: amy.joyce@icloud.com**

Abortion studies have been growing in popularity, but one neglected area has been the Maritime Provinces of Canada. Through studying this area, one can gain a better understanding of the experience of women and their communities. The study aims to compare the abortion campaigns of the 1970s and 80s between Scotland and the Maritime Provinces. Both movements are analysed in isolation before comparing the movements to identify the similarities and differences. Building on the historical ties between these regions allows one to draw conclusions and patch gaps in knowledge covered by the continued conservative culture of the Maritime Provinces. There are limited resources, however, the campaign materials from both pro-choice and pro-life campaigns are invaluable. The women’s movement in the Maritime Provinces was significantly weaker than their counterparts in Scotland which could be the reason for the continued pro-life culture. The movements adopted different tactics and focus on their campaigns but still had many similarities.

**Haleigh Bellamy, University of Oxford (Masters student): Identities and Activism: The Development of British Lesbian Activism in the 1980s**

**Contact: haleigh.bellamy@wadham.ox.ac.uk**

Although queer history is a flourishing field today, there is still much to be done to understand the formation of queer identities and relationships within the modern activist context. The fundamental question behind my research is: ‘How did British lesbian activism change and develop over the course of the 1980s, particularly in relation to the AIDS crisis and the passage of Section 28?’ To answer this, I am exploring how queer identity, queer activism, and the emergence of a ‘lesbian-political’ identity developed in the rapidly changing political and social landscape of 1980s Britain and particularly in London. Building on my previous thesis on lesbian self-identity in the 1970s, I am further examining the ways in which government policy and local activist movements informed constructions of the self. I am relying heavily on oral history interviews, both previously recorded and conducted by myself, as well as printed sources deposited in archives.

# Elites, Intellectuals and Transnational networks

Chaired by Catia Rodrigues

(17:30 - 18:30)

**Paula Del Val Vales, University of Lincoln (PhD student): The Queen's Household in the Thirteenth Century**

**Contact: delvalvales@gmail.com**

The study of medieval kings' households has attracted the attention of historians since the first decades of the twentieth century. However, and despite the fact that queens had a separate establishment too since the twelfth century onwards, the historiography devoted to them has been rather scarce. Through their households, medieval queens had access to financial resources, networks, personnel, and lands; which could potentially enable them to pursue their own initiatives and develop their queenly agendas. Yet, this was limited by a number of factors, amongst which the personal relationship between both monarchs stands out. This presentation will outline the interest behind studying queens' households in the thirteenth century, presenting examples from three medieval kingdoms: England, Castile, and Aragon. Moreover, it will draw attention to the primary sources available and the research possibilities this topic entails, highlighting its general interest to the study of medieval women.

**Aine Poland, Queen's University Belfast (PhD student): "'Reading between the lines": Anglophone foreign women's networks in late Imperial China, 1860-1911.'**

**Contact: apoland02@qub.ac.uk**

Late Imperial China maintained an air of semi-colonialism, despite China's ardent resistance to ongoing attempts by Western powers to "[carve] the Chinese melon." There have been countless androcentric representations, academic and popular, of Western and Chinese relations during the nineteenth century – yet, there is a knowledge gap in these representations of anglophone foreign women. For example, female missionaries account for the largest mass movement of British women in the last two centuries, yet, as Terry Barringer noted in 2014, academic literature has given them less attention than their male (and their American) counterparts. In utilising social network analysis it is my hope that my research can, not only offer a transnational addition to a Eurocentric research method, but offer a platform for the shared 'herstory' of these women.

**Ellen Smith, University of Leicester (PhD student): Female perspectives from Travancore: Lucy Bach's personal correspondence and expressions of gender within and through letters**  
**Contact: ecss3@leicester.ac.uk**

This paper explores how women's understandings of nineteenth-century gender conventions and expectations were expressed through letter-writing, and whether letters helped these women to challenge such gender roles. Using the letters of a London Missionary Society missionary wife, Lucy Bach, from Travancore, India, between 1894 and 1900, I suggest that her correspondence illuminates the complex place of women, especially those who were married, in overseas mission stations. Lucy was empowered in her position as a white, educated, and middle-class woman in the racialised power dynamics of colonial society, yet also constrained by an intense culture of scrutiny and gossip in the missionary community and the monitoring of female behaviours. Her letters were a space in which Lucy could negotiate these gendered aspects of her identity, offering the historian intimate glimpses into the tensions and politics of British women's encounters with empire and their roles within the imperial project.

**Katie Tate, Queen's University Belfast (PhD student): Gender and Power: Governors' Wives in Northern Ireland 1922-1973**  
**Contact: ktate01@qub.ac.uk**

One hundred years after the establishment of Northern Ireland, the duchess of Abercorn, Lady Granville, Lady Wakehurst, Lady Erskine and Lady Grey, the five women who served as wives to the governors of Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1973, remain absent from the historical narrative. By virtue of their elevated position as governor's wife, however, several of these women made significant contributions to public life during their time in Northern Ireland and these contributions must be recognised. The duchess of Abercorn (1922-1945) in particular, was presented with many opportunities to take an active role while in Government House. This paper will focus on one of her contributions and will examine her Presidency of the Ulster Gift Fund during the Second World War, looking at the role this offered the duchess, how she exerted her influence to aid the war effort and how her actions helped mobilise women throughout Northern Ireland.

**Alexandria Dugal, University of Oxford (PhD student): Girls' Schools and Global Connections: the YWCA at the Canadian Methodist Eiwa Mission Schools in 1930s Japan**  
**Contact: alexandria.dugal@mansfield.ox.ac.uk**

Although male intellectuals play a primary role in the existing historiography of international education in Japan, this paper instead looks to women and youth as educators and students. It demonstrates the significance of Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) activities at the Canadian Methodist Tōyō Eiwa, Shizuoka Eiwa, and Yamanashi Eiwa Jogakkō girls' mission schools in Japan in a period of nationalism, thought control, and propaganda, when the Japanese state aimed to control ideas and knowledge. YWCA activities included sending letters, photographs, and English-language compositions to Canada, and attending summer retreats in Gotemba, near Mount Fuji, which included talks about life in foreign countries, and encounters with Japanese women active in peace and international work. In this way, the YWCA was a major factor in encouraging international education and connections at the schools as it fostered student interest in the international well into the late 1930s, despite the challenges present in a patriarchal war-time state.

*To join the WHN just go to  
[www.womenshistorynetwork.org/join-us/](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/join-us/) and follow the instructions.  
Donations and Gift-Aid declarations can all be  
accessed online as well*

## Why not join the Women's History Network?

The Women's History Network is a national association and charity for the promotion of women's history and the encouragement of women and men interested in women's history. Following our establishment in 1991 we have grown year by year and today we are a UK national charity with members including working historians, researchers, independent scholars, teachers, librarians, and many other individuals both within academia and beyond. Indeed, the network reaches out to welcome women and men from any background who share a passion for women's history. The WHN is controlled by its members who elect a national steering committee who manage our activities and business.

### Conference

The annual WHN conference, which is held each September, is a highlight for most of our members. It is known for being a very friendly and welcoming event, providing an exciting forum where people from the UK and beyond can meet and share research and interests. Each year well known historians are invited as plenary speakers and bursaries are offered to enable postgraduate students or those on a low income to attend.

### Prizes and Grants

The WHN offers annual community history and book prizes, grants for conferences and ECR and independent researcher fellowships.

### Networking

Of course, talking to each other is essential to the work and culture of the Women's History Network. We run a members' email list and try to provide support for members or groups who organise local conferences or other events connected to women's history that bring people together.

### Publication

WHN members receive three copies of our peer reviewed journal, Women's History, each year. The content of the journal is wide ranging from articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history, to reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions, as well as information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities. The journal is delivered electronically in PDF form to all members via email, but members, can elect to receive a printed hardcopy of Women's History for an increased membership fee.

### WHN membership

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

Student or unwaged member	£15 / £20 / £30
Low income member (*under £20,000 pa)	£25 / £30 / £40
Standard member	£40 / £45 / £55
Life Membership (includes journal hardcopy)	£350
Retired Life Membership(includes journal hardcopy)	£175

The easiest way to join the Women's History Network is online – via our website – go to  
<https://womenshistorynetwork.org/join-us/>

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

THE WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK

# SPRING/SUMMER SEMINAR SERIES 2021

WOMEN'S  
HISTORY  
NETWORK



An online series dedicated to women's and gender history

**24 March**

**Julia Laite**

The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey: One trial, six lives and the dawn of the twentieth century

**21 April**

**Rochelle Rowe**

Black Caribbean Women and Beauty

**5 May**

**Clarice Bland**

Women Gardeners and Print Culture

**19 May**

**Caroline Bressey**

Domestic Servants and the Politics of Anti-racism in the 19th Century

**2 June**

**Lindsey Earner-Byrne**

Abortion in Ireland

**16 June**

**Rachel Chua, Xuejiao Fu**

Popular Memory, Gender and Time: Women, culture and subjectivity in Late Imperial and Republican China

**30 June**

**Rebecca Mason**

Women and the law in early modern Scotland

**14 July**

**Beckie Rutherford, Sophie Wilson**

Marginalised Voices in Popular Movements

For further details and information on how to sign up please visit  
<https://womenshistorynetwork.org/category/conferences/seminars/>  
or follow us on twitter at **@WomensHistNet**