

# Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network

Special Issue: Women's Education in the Long Eighteenth Century



**Spring 2018**

**Articles by**

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**Plus**

*Six book reviews  
Getting to know each  
other  
Committee News*

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Women's  
HISTORY  
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University of  
**Portsmouth**

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

University of Portsmouth, UK

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

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



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

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

Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of *Women's History*, the journal of the Women's History Network. In this, our first issue of what promises to be an auspicious and celebratory year, we turn our attention to the education of women in the long eighteenth century. We would like to thank our guest editors Elizabeth Ford and Brianna Robertson-Kirkland for suggesting this theme and for producing such a fascinating collection of articles – we hope that you will enjoy them. If this special issue has inspired you and you would be interested in making a proposal for a similar themed edition, we would be delighted to discuss your ideas with you.

Editorial team: Jane Berney, Rosi Carr, Sue Hawkins, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin and Zoe Thomas

## Women and Education in the Long Eighteenth Century

### Brianna Robertson-Kirkland and Elizabeth Ford

*University of Glasgow*

While sitting in a coffee shop discussing commonalities in our research on seemingly unrelated aspects of eighteenth-century music, we realised that education, specifically women's education, covered a diverse range of topics including art, dance, domestic sciences, literature, music, sewing. The terrain, though an exhilarating exploration, is unwieldy in its complexities, demanding an interdisciplinary approach. We knew we couldn't possibly be alone in being interested in the inherently interdisciplinary nature of women's education in the eighteenth century. The idea for Women and Education in the Long Eighteenth Century workshop was soon born.

This event, which took place 8 September 2016 at Glasgow Women's Library, attracted a varied range of papers that only scratched the surface of this multifaceted topic. With significant transformations in religion, economics, liberty and social conventions, the long eighteenth century was indeed an age of Revolution, where women's education came under scrutiny. Questions debated at the time included just how educated did a woman need to be, and what manner of education was appropriate; was a basic, domestic education enough or was it necessary to acquire 'the ornaments'; and who should be delivering this education? These were just a few of the common, overarching themes discussed in each paper, as well as being further teased out during the final roundtable, validating the notion that this area was not only of significant interest but also afforded further possibilities of expanding into new areas of research.

The articles in this issue represent some of the main themes discussed throughout the day, not only on women's education in the long eighteenth century, but also women's involvement in education. The idea of education as an ornament to enhance a woman's social standing, the purpose of education, education for the lower classes, schools and private education, and the involvement of mothers in their daughters' education all feature prominently in these articles. Penelope Cave's article, 'Musical Mothers & the Mother Church: Lessons

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from the Jerningham Letters' addresses the role of music in the broader context of education, especially at a convent school, a theme that is continued by Isobel Stark in 'The Viscountess, the Scientific Philanthropist and the School of Industry'. Nel Whiting further questions the purpose of education in her analysis of David Allan's portrait of the Hunter Blair family, 'I like school every day longer I stay: Educating the Hunter Blair girls'. Conduct books, especially those of John Fordyce and John Essex, are significant in Whiting's article, as well as those of Brianna Robertson-Kirkland and Elizabeth Ford, both of which focus on music education. Katrina Faulds's article, 'Dance and dance music at girls' boarding schools in England at the turn of the nineteenth century' focuses the interdisciplinary nature of music and dance especially in schools.

Women's education was regarded as somewhat subversive, but also very necessary and this special issue allows us to further highlight its complexity. It was by its nature interdisciplinary, and only by understanding that can we attempt to comprehend the subject.



Front Cover:  
*'Young Girl Reading'*  
c. 1769  
Jean Honoré Fragonard

National Gallery of Art,  
Washington DC  
Gift of Mrs. Mellon  
Bruce in memory of her  
father, Andrew W. Mellon

# Music lessons for girls in eighteenth-century Scotland

Elizabeth Ford

*University of Glasgow*

Daughters of the aristocracy in eighteenth-century Scotland were musical, so the two daughters of Lady Grisell Baillie were not remarkable for having had music lessons. What is remarkable is the detail that their mother kept of the financial expenditures on their lessons, and that Rachel had flute lessons, which was somewhat unusual for young ladies in the eighteenth century. Using the daughters of Lady Grisell Baillie as examples, this article seeks to explore wind instrument lessons for girls in early eighteenth-century Scotland.

Wind instrument playing among women was uncommon in the eighteenth century. A perception has grown up around its infrequency that it was considered unseemly, but there is little actual evidence that this was the case. Conduct book writers devoted much space to the study of music and wind instruments are simply not mentioned. Roger North advised ladies to play the harpsichord rather than the lute simply because it was better for their posture. He claimed to have thoughts for and against other instruments, but was planning to write about them in more detail elsewhere. Charles Allen wrote that, while music was:

... not the most useful, is certainly one of the most genteel qualifications, which a young lady can possess... As most young ladies are taught to play on the harpsichord, the spinet, and guitar, I expect you will learn to perform on all these instruments, especially on the first, which has a greater variety of notes, and a larger compass than either of the other two. But still I would have you to apply your chief attention to vocal music, because, in its perfection, it is of a far more excellent nature than that which is merely instrumental; the merit of the latter being always determined by its approach to the former<sup>1</sup>

Of the thirty-two works of educational literature published prior to 1810 surveyed for this study, wind instruments are mentioned only once, strongly suggesting that most women not study them. My criteria for selection was whether or not the author wrote about music in education, what other aspects of education were included, the date of publication, and intended audience. Some are for married ladies, some for young mothers, some for parents, some for adolescent girls, and some are for men offering guidance on how to best manage their wives. The cut-off date of 1810 shows the change in attitude towards women wind instrument players in the nineteenth century. So far as I know, no study exists on the success rates of conduct literature. Only John Essex makes the reasons against the flute explicit:

The Harpsichord, Spinet, Lute and Base Violin, are Instruments most agreeable to the Ladies; There are some others that really are unbecoming to the Fair Sex; as the Flute, Violin, and Hautboy; the last of which is too Manlike, and would look indecent in a Woman's Mouth; and the Flute is

very improper, as taking away too much of the Juices, which are otherwise more necessary employ'd, to promote the Appetite, and assist Digestion.

The idea of an ugly distortion of the face has roots in classical myth, and it was re-emphasised in the nineteenth century to encourage ladies to study instruments other than the flute, such as the harp. The myth depicts an assortment of goddesses playing music, Minerva's instrument of choice being the flute. The others laughed at her, and she was not sure if the cause was her playing or something else. She happened to see her reflection in some water, and saw how the instrument distorted her lips, and immediately put it aside.

The primary objection to women and winds was the distortion of the face, with the story of Minerva used for justification for girls to avoid studying the flute, well into the nineteenth century. *The Girl's Own Paper* argued that while girls in Germany learned woodwind and brass instruments, 'whether it would be decorous [was] rather doubtful.' In an article published in 1887, Frederick Crowset wrote that 'distended cheeks and swollen lips are not marks of beauty ... the flute and other wind-instruments are unlike to come into fashion,' even though Greek women had played flute. By 1892, women were playing flute and clarinet at a concert at the Royal Academy of Music, when an audience member wrote to *The Magazine of Music* expressing his distaste. The response to his letter in the magazine noted that women in antiquity had played flute, but it was best avoided because 'lovely woman inevitably ceases to be lovely when she tackles a wind instrument.' These objections should be seen as reflections of nineteenth-century men's focus on femininity, and contemporary musicians' continued perception of these views as truths relevant to all of the past. These nineteenth-century voices are significantly louder than the lone eighteenth-century explicit prohibition, and are therefore easier to hear when considering earlier notions of decency.

Edward Topham, writing from Edinburgh in 1774, observed that 'Many of them (ladies) play on the harpsichord and the guittar, and some have music in their voices: though they rather prefer to hear others perform than play themselves'. What Topham reported may have been generally true by that point in the century, but earlier in the eighteenth century the stricture against women playing the flute (in Scotland, at least) was not as firmly in place. The poem 'Edina's Glory', printed in 1723, suggests that it was quite common for the ladies of Edinburgh to study the flute:

'Till now when was Edina's daughters known  
To have their Fame to foreign Climates blown:  
To fead a Billet doux and breath a Flute,  
Make pastry Pyramids and Candy fruit,  
Ombre a common Ball, Tea Table Chat,  
Was all the Education which they got.



*'The Sense of Hearing' by  
Philippe Mercier (1744-47)*

*Yale Center for British Art,  
Paul Mellon Collection*

By 1727, it was common for Scottish women to play the transverse flute, at least according to the writing of James Freebairn. He says that fathers hired the best and most expensive music and dancing masters, usually Italian and French respectively, for their daughters, and provides a list of ladies who were able to move listeners' souls to ecstasy by their playing of the harpsichord or transverse flute:

Fathers also full of generosity do not spare any expense for the perfecting of all the exercises suitable to their sex, such as music and dance, also we see arriving here every day the best Italian music masters, and the most famous dancing masters that France can boast to teach, attracted by the advantages that their great appointments give them. And who has not had their ears tickled and their soul ravished in listening to My Lady Weird, Miss Maitland, Mill Pringle, Miss Erskine, Miss Campbell, Mrs Hamilton, or Miss Dalzell play the harpsichord or the transverse flute.

Other ladies studied other traditionally masculine instruments: Lady Sophia Hope and Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock both played violin.

A practical, rather than aesthetic, consideration for why ladies traditionally did not study solo instruments such as flute or violin is that those instruments usually required accompaniment, meant to be provided by the lady. John Cranmer believes that the piano sonata played by a lady, accompanied by a gentleman on flute, was a socially accepted way for unmarried people to interact. A keyboard instrument, or learning to sing and accompany oneself, made a lady self-

sufficient musically and therefore able to entertain herself, as well as provide entertainment or accompany as needed. Helen Goodwill's study of music in Scottish country houses shows that a great deal more money was spent on music lessons for girls, possibly as a means of providing them with a way to occupy their time. Women's lives were monotonous, and music lessons and chances to play music with and for friends provided social outlets. Goodwill challenges the assumption that musical ability was at all important in determining a girl's marriage prospects.

Frequent and abundant lessons should be taken to mean that the girls were talented or proficient: proficiency was discouraged by conduct book authors as leading to vanity, and Goodwill observes that families tended to spend more on cultural or artistic pursuits other than music. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676-1755), a composer and 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet of Penicuik, wrote that he 'understood pictures better than became my Purse, and as to Musick, I rather performed better, particularly on the Harpsecord, than became a Gentleman.' James Cleland greatly disparaged the study of music among gentlemen, saying:

Delight not also to bee in your owne person a plaier upon instruments, especiallie upon such as commonlie men get their living with: because you maie emploie your time better then so; and for the most part wee see that those who are most given to plaie upon them are fantasticke and ful of humors, accounting more sometimes to the tuning of their Lute, then of the entertaining and plesant companie of their friends. I maie add that oftentimes the holding of the lute hath hurt the breast, and made manie crooked bodies, as also

that playing upon instruments doth disgrace more a noble man then it can grace and honor him in good company, for hee shoulde rather take his pastime of others, then make pastime unto them.

John Clephane advised his niece Elizabeth Rose in 1758 that 'Reading and writing and playing on the spinet is all very well ... The two first deserve great application. The spinet, too has its merit ... methinks music is well as an amusement, but not as a study.'

Lady Grisell Baillie (1665-1746) is one of the more remarkable characters in Scottish history. Her father, Sir Patrick Home, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Marchmont, was on the run following the Rye House Plot in 1683, and for a time hid in the family's vault at Polwarth church, where Grisell smuggled him food each night. She was the only one of his many children he trusted with his whereabouts before the family escaped to Holland. Grisell's father entrusted her with the task of smuggling letters in and out of his friend Robert Baillie of Jerviswood's prison cell in Edinburgh in 1676, which is where she most likely first met and fell in love with his son George, whom she married in 1692. Her account books from her marriage are detailed records of household management in early eighteenth-century Scotland, especially regarding servants, travel, and the education of her two daughters, Rachel (1696-1773) and Grisell (1692-1759).

Both of Lady Grisell's daughters had music lessons: Rachel, later Lady Binning, on flute, spinet, and virginal. Her older sister Grisell, later Lady Murray of Stanhope, studied thorough bass, bass viol, singing, and harpsichord. The household book shows payments to Crumbden, Kemberg, Sainte-Colome, Steall, and McGibbon for various lessons as well as a purchase of a flute for Rachel from Mr Crumbin (possibly one and the same as Crumbden) in November of 1702. Helen Goodwill writes that the flute lessons were given by a Mr McGibbon, a relative of the violinist and composer William McGibbon (1690-1756).

Flute playing was in the family. While in exile in Utrecht, Lady Binning's grandfather Lord Patrick Hume, wrote that '[i]f I were among them, I would help their mirth by a tune on the flute, which I am learning of, and pretty good at'. No records of payments for music for Lady Binning after her 1717 marriage to Charles Binning, the Earl of Haddington's son, survive, though the music library at Mellerstain contained a copy of William McGibbon's 1745 *Six Sonatas for Two German Flutes and Bass*, as well as duets by J. Real, the 1726 edition of William Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*, which included a part for German flute, and music for violins which would be playable on flute, in addition to a great deal of Italian vocal music. This span of repertoire is unremarkable for a genteel, musically literate family of the early eighteenth century. Most contemporary Scottish music collections had an emphasis on Italian music, and that the daughters of the family played flute and sang obviously influences the family's music library. The music for flute was published after Rachel's marriage, and is specifically for German flute or would be better suited for that instrument than the recorder, suggesting both that she did not give up music on her marriage and that she played transverse flute.

Lady Binning's sister Grisell, Lady Murray, did continue her musical study after her marriage. She left her husband and returned to her parents' home and financial support; several of the entries in her mother's accounts are on Lady Murray's

behalf while she was travelling with her parents in Italy after her marriage, studying music. The editor of her mother's household book wrote that she was well known in Edinburgh and in London for her singing of Scottish airs and ballads, sometimes able to 'draw tears from the eyes of her audience'; her mother wrote ballads prior to her marriage, perhaps young Grisell continued the family tradition and sang her mother's work. A portrait of Lady Murray from the 1730s by Maria Verelst shows her with an open volume of music. The companion portrait of her sister does not.

Whether Rachel and her sister Grisell Baillie learned music as a main component of their general education or as a way to amuse themselves and others cannot be determined from the surviving records. Nor can the unusual nature of Rachel's flute lessons; many other girls may have studied flute, but their families may not have kept as detailed records as her mother. What is remarkable is that Lady Grisell Baillie had her daughters educated in more than the usual feminine music regimen of singing and keyboard skills and allowed them to learn solo instruments. This seems to have paid off after the dissolution of the younger Grisell's marriage when she was able to devote her time to the further study of music.

## Notes

1. Sadly, he never got around to it: *Roger North on Music: being a selection from his essays written during the years c.1695-1728*, transcribed from the manuscripts and edited by J. Wilson (London, Novello, 1959), 16.
2. Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady; or, a course of Female Education in a Series of Letters, From a Mother to her Daughter* (London, J. Newberry, 1760). Reprinted in Pam Morris, ed., *Conduct Literature for Women 1720-1770*, 6 volumes (London, Pickering & Chatto, 2004), vol. 6, 31.
3. Works such as the following are numerous: Theophilus Dorrington, *The Excellent Woman, Part 1*, 1692; Eugenius Theodidactus, *Advice to a Daughter*, 1658; George Savile Lord Halifax, *The Lady's New-Year's Gift: Or, Advice to a Daughter*, 1700; Mary Astell, *Reflections upon Marriage*, 1706; Richard Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, 1677; William Darrell, *The Gentleman Instructed*, 1755; Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewomans Companion*, 1675; George Hickes, trans. from François Fénelon, *Instructions for the Education of a Daughter*, 1708, all reprinted in William St Clair and Irmgard Maassen, eds, *Conduct Literature for Women 1640-1710*, 6 volumes (London, Pickering & Chatto, 2002); *Woman Triumphant: Or, the Excellency of the Female Sex*, 1721; John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct: or, Rules for Education*, 1722; George Lyttelton, *Advice to a Lady*, 1733; *Advice to the Fair: an Epistolary Essay*, 1738; *A Letter to a Lady. In Praise of Female Learning*, 1739; Alexander Monro, *The Professor's Daughter. An Essay on Female Conduct*, 1739-45; *The Lady's Preceptor. Or, a Letter to a Young Lady of Distinction upon Politeness*, 1743; David Fordyce, *Dialogues concerning Education*, 1745; *The Art of Governing a Wife; with Rules for Bachelors*, 1747; *The Young Gentleman and Lady Instructed*, 1747; *A Letter to a Lady, Concerning the Education of Female Youth*, 1749; Thomas Marriott, *Female Conduct: being an Essay on the Art of Pleasing*, 1759; Sarah Pennington, *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1761; Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady: or, A Course of Female Education*, 1760, all reprinted in Morris, ed., *Conduct Literature for Women 1720-1770*. Mrs

H. Cartwright, *Letters on Female Education, addressed to a Married Lady*, 1777; John Moir, *Female Tuition; or, An Address to Mothers, on the Education of Daughters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1786; John Bennett, *Letters to a Young Lady, on a variety of Useful and Interesting Subjects calculated to improve the heart, to form the manners, and enlighten the understanding*, 1789; *Discourses on Different Subjects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1791; Miss S. Hatfield, *Letters on the Importance of the Female Sex: with Observations on their Manners, and on Education*, 1803; Lucy Aikin, *Epistles on Women, Exemplifying their Character and Condition in various Ages and Nations*, 1810; Thomas Broadhurst, *Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind and the Conduct of Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1810, all reprinted in Pam Morris, ed., *Conduct Literature for Women 1770–1830*, 6 volumes (London, Pickering & Chatto, 2005).

4. John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct*, (London, 1722), 84–85.

5. The reviewer of W. N. James's *A Word or Two on the Flute* (Edinburgh and London, 1826) wrote, in response to James's section on women and the flute in antiquity, that 'there are some curious points, and not the least of which is the account of the female flutists. We will not pretend to determine how far the example of Lamia, to whom a temple was raised for the services she rendered the state, might allure the ladies of this age to attempt the instrument, for this celebrated beauty was probably led to study its powers merely because such things as harps and piano fortes had not been invented. Indeed it can hardly be recommended or expected that the professors [possessors] of fair faces and soft swelling lips should consent to puff out the one or conceal the other by the use of the flute, while such a display of all the charms of grace and beauty wait upon the use of the harp. Minerva herself is related (page 37) after Hyginus to have abandoned the flute in disgust, from finding herself ridiculed by Juno and Venus, and by examining herself to discover the cause in a fountain, which shewed the distortion of her countenance.' *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* VIII/XXIX, 1826, 53–64, 54.

6. W. N. James provides an account of this story and the various ancient writers who also tell it. W. N. James, *A Word or Two on the Flute* (Edinburgh, Smith and Co., 1826), 36–39; Powell, 3.

7. The flute in ancient Greece was also associated with Bacchanals, though the instrument was actually the more obviously sexually suggestive aulos, rather than the transverse flute. Gillett, 194–195, notes.

8. 'How to Take Care of a Violin,' *The Girl's Own Paper*, February, 1887, 332–2. Quoted in Gillett, 193.

9. Frederick L. Crowset, 'Music as a Livelihood,' *The Lady's World*, 1887, 174–175. Quoted in Gillett, 194.

10. The author of the letter argued that women should be legally banned from playing wind instruments. The Magazine had the good taste to disagree with him, if only because the author of the response believed that women would eventually give up any activity that sacrificed beauty. *The Magazine of Music*, September 1892, 180. Quoted in Gillett, 194.

11. For an exploration of contemporary musicians' over-reliance on the nineteenth century, see Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007).

12. Amanda Vickery blames historians for not having minds open enough to consider the fairly wide bounds of propriety. On this and the topic of women's declining options from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, see Amanda Vickery, *The*

*Gentleman's Daughter* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999), 2–12.

13. Edward Topham, Letter of 30 December 1774 in *Letters from Edinburgh*, vol. 1. (London, J. Dodsley, 1776), 113–114.

14. *Edina's Glory, or the Fair Assembly, a poem in defense of musick, wit and gallantry, as it prevails 'mongst the polite in their weekly sessions, holden at the metropolis of Scotland*. By a Scottish gentleman. Printed and sold by Alexander Davidson, 1723.

15. James Freebairn was one of many Scottish writers who published his books in the more fashionable French. Stephen W. Brown, 'Making a Scottish market for French books,' *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Volume 2: Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707–1800*, ed. Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 215.

16. My translation; original French text: 'Les Peres aussie pleins de bonte, n'epargnent aucune depense, pour les perfectionner eu tous les exercices convenables a leur sexe, comme la musique et la danse, aussie nous voyons arrive ici, tous les jours, les plus habiles maîtres Italiens pour la musique, et les plus celebreres maîtres de danse dont la france se peut vanter, pour enseigner, attirez par le profit qui leur reveient des grands appointments qu'on leur donne. Et qui n'avroit pas les oreilles chatouillees et l'ame ravie, d'entendre My Lady Weird, Mademoiselle Maitland, Mlle Pringle, Mlle Erskine, Mlle Campbell, M [Mme?] Hamilton, ou Mlle Dalzell jouer du clavesin ou de la flute a traverse ...' Regrettably Freebairn does not specifically mention which of these ladies played flute. James Freebairn, *L'Eloge d'Ecosse et des dames ecossoises* (Edinburgh, 1727), 42

17. George S. Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String: A history of Scottish dance music* (London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1971), 44; Helen Goodwill, *The Musical Involvement of the Landed Classes in Eastern Scotland, 1685–1760*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2000), 45, 54.

18. John Cranmer, *Concert Life and the Musical Trade in Edinburgh, c.1780 – c.1830* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1991), 182.

19. In London, a female singer's appearance was considered part of what she had to offer to a performance. The most fashionable ladies' instruments – the harp, guitar, keyboard instruments, and glass armonica – were designed for solitary playing. Women who played traditionally masculine instruments such as the flute or violin were subject to censure from the press for usurping male roles of leadership and dominance. Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 86–87.

20. As Goodwill points out, men's priorities were more likely a girl's dowry and her ability to manage a household and produce an heir. In her study of nine families, the girls received music instruction in six of the families while boys received music lessons in only three. Goodwill, 148–149.

21. Goodwill, 77–79.

22. *Memoirs of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, ed. John Gray, Scottish History Society, 36.

23. James Cleland, *The Institution of a Young Nobleman* (Oxford, 1607), 229–230.

24. Cosmo Innes, *Sketches of Early Scotch History and Social Progress* (Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), 474.

25. Barbara C. Murison, 'Baillie, Lady Grisell (1665–

1746)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004) [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1061, accessed 11 Feb 2013]

26. *The household book of Lady Grisell Baillie, 1692–1733*, edited with notes and introduction by Robert Scott-Moncrieff, Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable for the Scottish Historical Society, 1911, xlvi, 14–18.

27. Helen Goodwill provides a very useful chart of the music teachers employed by Lady Grisell Baillie, their subjects and their prices. Helen Goodwill, *The Musical Involvement of the Landed Classes in Eastern Scotland, 1685–1760* (Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 2000), 113.

28. There is some confusion over the identity of William McGibbon's father. He was either an oboist, Malcolm, who died in 1722 in Edinburgh, or a violinist, Duncan, from Glasgow. William McGibbon was born in Glasgow and played violin, which makes Duncan a slightly stronger candidate for his father. Malcolm, possibly William's uncle, is likely the identity of the Mr McGibbon in question, due to geographic location and instrument choice. Oboe and flute were frequently played by the same person. David Johnson, 'McGibbon, William', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 11 February 2013, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17326.

29. Goodwill identifies this Mr McGibbon as Williams's father. It was more likely William McGibbon's uncle. Goodwill, 117; David Johnson, unpublished notes on McGibbon.

30. Letter, 1686, from Sir Patrick Hume to his family in Lady Murray of Stanhope, *Memoirs of the Lives and Characters of the Right Honourable George Baillie of Jerviswood, and of Lady Grisell Baillie* (Edinburgh, J. Pillans, 1824), 129. This flute could also have been either the recorder or the transverse flute. The transverse flute was the latest fad in the late seventeenth century, though the Netherlands produced many well-known recorder players.

31. Only two copies of the first part exist in library collections, and are labeled 'traverso primo'. See Elizabeth Ford, 'Sources

for the Chamber Music of William McGibbon,' eSharp/Sound Thought special issue, May 2014

www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\_333619\_en.pdf

32. Goodwill, 172.

33. Flute, when used in the eighteenth century could mean one of two instruments, the recorder or the transverse (or German) flute.

34. Grisell pleaded with her father to allow her to marry Alexander Murray, the son of Sir David Murray of Stanhope, Baronet. Her father should have trusted his judgment; Murray almost immediately proved to be unbalanced at best. The problems began during the ball following their wedding, when the groom decided his bride was in love with his best friend, and ordered the friend out of the house. An unspecified event the next morning caused true alarm, and Sir George Baillie began to look into the legal separation process almost immediately. Grisell wanted to remain with her husband and did so until he read a newspaper article about the murder of an unfaithful wife by her husband in a threatening manner. Soon after that, he became violent. Luckily they resided with her parents, who immediately became involved. The Decree of Separation was passed on 5 March 1714. By the time Alexander's father died, he had spent most of his inheritance. He and his wife never met again, though when her portrait was being painted in London he would visit the studio and stare at it, alarming the artist, who did not know who he was. Appendix V to Lady Murray of Stanhope, *Memoirs*, 146–162.

35. Entries of various dates after her separation from her husband in 1714 in her mother's records show she was travelling with her family, who had gone to Naples for the sake of her brother-in-law, Lord Binning's, health. Many of the entries are for music copying and singing lessons.

36. Lady Grisell's ballad 'Werena my heart licht I wad dee' was included in Allan Ramsay's *The Tea Table Miscellany*, 1724. Dorothy McMillan, ed. *The Scotswoman at Home and Abroad*, Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1999, 1.



#### CALL FOR PAPERS

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

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

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

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# Dance and dance music at girls' boarding schools in England at the turn of the nineteenth century

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Genteel amateur music-making and dance shared a common heritage in cultural ideology at the turn of the nineteenth century. Both were regarded as 'elegant accomplishments', a term filled with angst for those who considered them as promoting vanity over morality, display over modesty, and frivolousness at the expense of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The Reverend John Bennett railed against both disciplines in an attack on the quality of boarding school education for girls, claiming, 'when they are of age to discriminate, and lay in a stock of ideas, we send them to a boarding-school to learn what? Musick, dancing, accomplishments, dissipation and intrigue – every thing but solid knowledge – every thing but humility – every thing but piety – every thing but virtue?'<sup>2</sup> However, if not entirely indispensable, music and dance tuition were considered necessary in the education of young ladies whose families possessed sufficient rank or wealth to do so.<sup>3</sup> Both disciplines were associated with the construction of feminine identity, acting as tools that developed and perpetuated visual and aural expressions of gentility.

Music and dance lessons at boarding schools for girls were often given by visiting masters and mistresses. The daughters of Erasmus Darwin established a boarding school in Derbyshire, and drew upon neighbouring localities for music and dancing masters, charging £1 1s for each per quarter. In Darwin's publication for the venture, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education, in Boarding-Schools* (1797), he treated music and dance together, arguing for masters who were not only well qualified, but who could also 'teach with good temper and genteel behaviour'.<sup>4</sup> Dancing masters required a working musical knowledge, often accompanying their classes on the *pochette* (a small unfretted fiddle) or employing an assistant to do so. Many additionally advertised their ability to give lessons in music, and were actively involved in organising concerts and balls (including providing musicians) and publishing dance music.<sup>5</sup> One prominent example of this multidisciplinary skill in the earlier eighteenth century was Stephen Philpot, a dancing master who published a treatise on violin playing and who was employed as Musician in Ordinary to the king.<sup>6</sup> Despite this intimate relationship between music and dance, little attention has been paid to intersections between them in the education of girls from the genteel classes. This article provides a preliminary exploration of the dance repertoire that was taught in boarding schools and how this related to girls' concurrent musical education.

## Role of dance in boarding schools

The memoirs and correspondence of women who were either pupils at boarding schools or who visited such establishments at the turn of the nineteenth century provide a uniform picture of dancing lessons, and emphasise the role that dance played in personal and institutional display. Sophie von la Roche (1730-1807) visited a school in Queen's Square, London, in 1786 run by the Stephenson sisters, where the

dancing lesson provided the nexus for outside contact and a visual appraisal of the pupils.<sup>7</sup> After being ushered into an amphitheatre, she observed girls 'ranging from six to sixteen years of age' being 'exercised six couples at a time for minuets, and the same number for folk-dancing'.<sup>8</sup> At Belvedere House in Bath in the late 1790s, Susan Mein (1783-1866) had dancing lessons once a week; a Miss Fleming 'taught the Minuetts [sic], and figure dances' while Mademoiselle Le Mercier 'had the teaching of positions and steps'. As at Queen's Square, dance provided an opportunity for female family members and friends to observe the girls perform.<sup>9</sup> Johanna Schopenhauer (1766-1838), when visiting London in the early nineteenth century, critically observed the emphasis placed on the exhibition of skills by young ladies during end-of-term festivities, the epitome of which was a ball.<sup>10</sup> No doubt there were financial incentives for schoolmistresses to present their pupils in the best possible light, dance being an apt instrument for eliciting parental approval.

The development of graceful deportment was a key component of dance education and the repertoire for this purpose leaned largely, although not exclusively, on the minuet.<sup>11</sup> Attending school in Chichester, Eliza Florance's (1793-1869) father insisted she learn with a dancing master throughout her school life to 'instruct the limbs how to move and the body how to comport itself'. Eliza recounted how visitors observed

the graceful movements of the pupils in the *Minuet de la Cour*, and the "Garland Dance," which was considered a wonderful display of graceful action: twelve damsels with garlands performed various evolutions prescribed by the master. This dance was greatly admired by the visitors and the girls liked the twisting and twining, and the picturesque attitudes it evolved.<sup>12</sup>

Susan Mein vividly recollected preparations for a public ball held in Bath for the pupils of Belvedere House. Knowing she 'was to dance a Minuet that night, standing up with seven others of my own size, in one set', she remembered practising with her companions on the terrace, 'curtseying and sliding about, frocks held out, and going through all the movements as gracefully and as slowly as our shivering limbs would allow us, so anxious were we to "do credit to Bath"'. The ball was opened by one of the dancing mistresses and parlour boarders performing the *minuet de la cour*, followed by 'cotillions, figure dances of different kinds and Minuets, every now and then'.<sup>13</sup> Both the minuet and *minuet de la cour* placed heavy demands on performers, and pupils learning the dances must have been sorely tested. *The Lady's Magazine* of 1785 was blunt in its assessment of the latter, claiming, 'the contours of the whole must be consistent with the graces ... there is no medium in this dance, it must be danced with elegance and ease, or not attempted'.<sup>14</sup>

While the ideal of such education was to produce graceful bodies, the reality could be quite different. Louisa Potter (c.1800–?) described the frustration and despondency of her French dancing teacher at her London school:

Oh! his earnest endeavours to make us graceful;  
his despair in our elbows; his hopelessness in  
our backs; and his glare of indignation at our  
mistakes! But what could we do? English girls  
are not French girls, who are born dancers'.<sup>15</sup>

Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855) took delight in thwarting her French dancing-master at Hans Place, London, declaring, 'It was his duty to scold me into something like grace, a task which he found impossible. It was my pleasure to make him look like a fool, which was the easiest thing in the world.' She described an end-of-term spectacle that combined Hannah More's pastoral drama, *The Search After Happiness*, with songs and ballet. Mary was assigned the prologue, a role that required her to perform a curtsy. Her dancing-master, reportedly 'shocked to death' at this news, set about trying unsuccessfully to teach Mary how to perform a semi-circular curtsy. His plan was ultimately scuppered by the elocution master, who insisted on three separate bobs.<sup>16</sup> Behind his failure lurks some disquietude about class and national pride. Due to the revolutionary wars in France, many dancing masters were French émigrés, creating the uncomfortable situation whereby English girls were reliant on French skill to develop grace.<sup>17</sup>

The employment of dancing masters associated with the stage raises questions about the degree to which theatrical dance infiltrated schools. Social dance was vigorously detached from any semblance to theatrical dance, with many authors objecting to the size and athleticism of motions employed by professional dancers as contrary to decorum.<sup>18</sup> That cross-over between the two genres occurred in practice is suggested by intermittent recurrence to the topic in dance manuals and conduct literature. *The Mirror of the Graces* (1811) complained bitterly about the impropriety of young ladies imitating the attitudes of theatrical performance and incorporating ballet dances into their repertoire, while J.L. Chirol suggested that parents wanted their children to 'vie in agility, address, dancing, playing, and singing, with the female performers at the Opera' in a chapter enunciating the 'Evils of Boarding-School Education'.<sup>19</sup> Louisa Potter's dancing teacher, who was ballet master at the opera, was just one of several who had links to boarding schools.<sup>20</sup> Tangible information about precise choreography of staged dances appears elusive; Mary Russell Mitford's school reportedly staged a ballet of sorts in which the girls 'attired as sylphs or shepherdesses' were 'to skip or glide through the mazy movements' of the choreography, accompanied by the dancing master's *pochette*.<sup>21</sup> However, such exposure to theatrical works perhaps also served other purposes. An education in graceful movement, combined with the performance of theatrical works, surely contributed to the development of an aesthetic vocabulary that enabled critical assessment of performance. Although not inclined towards dancing, Mitford was still able to comment on the dancing of Auguste Armand Vestris (1795-1825) in later years, declaring, 'The "poetry of motion" is exemplified in every movement, and his Apollo-like form excels any idea I had ever formed of manly grace'.<sup>22</sup> For Mary Darby Robinson (1756/1758?-1800), however, the situation was more urgent – due to pressing financial difficulties, her tuition with a ballet master may have assisted

her preparation for her future occupation on the stage.<sup>23</sup>

The repertoire of dances taught at girls' boarding schools, beyond those specifically associated with grace, indicate the diversity of the curriculum and potentially provide links to music education. Susan Mein identified a number of dances she learned at school, including allemandes and cotillions, as well as Scotch steps, and she was familiar with the country dance Sir Roger de Coverley and the Boulanger.<sup>24</sup> Johanna Schopenhauer observed a school ball in Southwark which reveals the distinction made between formalised dancing for exhibition and dancing that elicited youthful vigour: 'After the display dances, which proved a little long and boring, a few English and Scottish country dances followed. Now happily free from constraint, the children jumped around in a lively fashion and a few young cousins and brothers were even allowed a turn on the floor with them'.<sup>25</sup> A perusal of advertisements placed by dancing masters who taught at boarding schools confirms the range of repertoire, which additionally included further named minuets and hornpipes.<sup>26</sup> Such dances also formed a compendium of music that pupils would have been familiar with, a palette of sound that supported the physical act of dancing. Whether consciously or otherwise, dance music surely contributed in some degree to music education as well as dance education.

## Dance music at school

Despite the co-dependent relationship between music and dance, and clear associations with female musical practice, dance music itself was held in relatively low regard. The preface in *A Companion to the Reticule*, a publication containing Scottish dance tunes, specifically gendered the performance of dance music as feminine:

It cannot have escaped observation at convivial family parties, that young Ladies have been often found so deficient in the execution of Dancing Music, that, out of a dozen, there are seldom above two or three qualified to give their companions a Reel on the Piano Forte, (to which this Collection is especially adapted,) by way of interlude to the musical or other entertainments of a winters [sic] evening.<sup>27</sup>

Such deficiency in execution may be related to the derision cast on the quality of dance music as pedagogical material. *The Young Lady's Book* (1829) advised that 'flimsy extracts from operas, ballets, &c.' should be eschewed, while blame was laid at the fingertips of the inexperienced governess, 'who, with little ear, knowledge of time, or experience in teaching, suffers her pupil to practise waltzes, dances, and other little tunes; satisfied of the progress made, if the notes be expeditiously read and played'.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, although fulfilling an unquestionable social need, dance music was perceived in some quarters as an educational and social nuisance.

It is nevertheless clear that women and girls from gentry and aristocratic families consumed and performed dance music, a skill that was surely derived from their education in both music and dance. The diaries of Sophia Baker (1781-1858) provide tantalising glimpses into the domestic performance of dance. Across several years, Baker chronicled dancing to the accompaniment of the organ or piano, which frequently took place early in the New Year, possibly during celebrations for

Twelfth Night. In January 1797, she wrote that 'all Clitherows came to tea play'd on y<sup>e</sup>. Piano danc'd to the Organ', while in April she described an evening gathering at which 'all play'd at Commerce afterwards danced – dear Miss Strachey playing'. In December 1800 she noted, 'we danced till ½ past 12 all playing by turns on y<sup>e</sup>. Piano'.<sup>29</sup> Jane Austen (1775-1817) described a similar evening of dancing in a letter to her sister Cassandra in 1796. Dining at Goodnestone Park in Kent, home to the Bridges family, Austen detailed how the company 'danced two Country Dances & the Boulangeries' in which 'Eliz:<sup>th</sup> played one Country dance, Lady Bridges the other, and Miss Finch played the Boulangeries'. Austen later pointedly referred to the need to practise country dances, 'that we may have some amusement for our nephews and neices [sic], when we have the pleasure of their company'.<sup>30</sup>

In the absence of significant detail in published memoirs pertaining to musical repertoire learned in boarding schools, an examination of domestic music collections can enhance our understanding of how dance and music education were linked. Elizabeth Bridges (1773-1808) attended the Stephenson school in Queen's Square and was likely one of the Bridges sisters who Sophie von la Roche observed and met during the dance class.<sup>31</sup> Some of Bridges's music has survived and forms part of the Austen family collection due to her marriage to Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight, in 1791. A volume of music labelled "CEMBALO" contains sonatas by Ernst Eichner (1740-1777) and Johann Schobert (c.1735-1767), and a concertante by Ignace Pleyel (1757-1831), all of which include minuet movements. These publications bear Bridges's handwritten signature and the music in general is similar in style to collections of dance minuets from the 1780s, despite the Eichner and Schobert being earlier works.<sup>32</sup> Given that von la Roche saw minuets performed as part of the dance class, it is reasonable to assume that Bridges was well acquainted with both the choreography and musical style of the genre. Her performance of a country dance when Austen dined at Goodnestone Park, five years after Bridges's marriage, can also be connected to her schooling. The "folk-dancing" that von la Roche observed probably comprised country dances; given the common use of the *pochette* to accompany dance classes, it is conceivable that dancing masters simultaneously taught some elements of music (consciously or otherwise) while they were teaching their pupils to dance.<sup>33</sup> Even if Bridges didn't learn country dances as part of her music lessons, she was surely familiar with the required tempo and repeat structures.

Further indications of dance repertoire and links to dance music publications can be gleaned from Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) and Elizabeth Sykes (1777-1853), who both attended a school run by Ellin Devis (1746-1820) in London in the late eighteenth century. Little evidence is available regarding the dances taught at the school; however, a somewhat sentimental account in Edgeworth's memoir provides a glimpse of what she experienced:

She delighted to remember the pleasure she felt in the perfect time in which her companions executed a favourite dance of that day, Slingsby's Allemand. She remembered her sense of gratified admiration at the graceful movements of a circle of the taller girls, hand in hand, raising their arms for the little children to dance under them, and many years afterwards recognised the beautiful air when played for her.<sup>34</sup>

*Slingsby's Allemand* appears in a collection of cotillions and country dances published by Thompson around 1780. Despite the appellation, the work is clearly identifiable as a country dance and has theatrical origins, the tune appearing in a compilation of allemandes danced by Simon Slingsby (d.1811) and Gertrude Radicati (d.1772?) at the King's Theatre.<sup>35</sup> Notwithstanding the dance's previous performance history, it was current in terms of publication when Edgeworth attended Devis's school, suggesting the latter kept her pupils engaged with the most fashionable dances. The extract from Edgeworth's memoir also points to the role that dance music played in stimulating emotional memory.

In the absence of further information, the music collection of Elizabeth Sykes shows how dance music can provide a tool for understanding potential dance repertoire taught at Ellin Devis's school. Sykes attended the school between at least 1793 and 1796, leaving her home at Sledmere House in Yorkshire to move to London. A large proportion of her music remains at Tatton Park in Cheshire, her marital home, with much of it dating from the time of her schooling.<sup>36</sup> Amongst these compositions are a number of English country dances arranged either as rondos or interpolated into sonata movements. These include *The Royal Quick Step*, *The Countess of Sutherland's Reel* and *The Fife Hunt*, most of which contain fingerings suggestive of use, and all of which appeared throughout the 1790s in published collections of country dances.<sup>37</sup> It is highly likely that Sykes was familiar with these dances, given the enduring appeal of the genre; she may have learned both the dances and their derivative compositions during her lessons at school. As *Slingsby's Allemand* was still being advertised in 1796, it may also have remained in her school dance repertoire.<sup>38</sup> But her music collection also pushes the boundaries of what is considered to be dance music, widening the scope for potential repertoire. The song 'Bonny Charley' by James Hook (1746-1827) was performed at Vauxhall Gardens in the early 1790s. While it appears in Sykes's collection with guitar and keyboard accompaniment, it was also published as a country dance in 1800. The Yorkshire composer Matthew Camidge (bap. 1764-1844) used the melody 'What a Beau my Granny was' in an accompanied sonata also owned by Sykes, and it was included in contemporary tune books and country dance collections.<sup>39</sup> This sense of adaptability brings a more nuanced perspective to how dance music is defined.

Indeed, such flexibility of genre has important implications for how audiences in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England thought about music and dance. The *minuet de la cour* continued to defy precise categorisation. Originally composed by André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741-1813) for his ballet héroïque, *Céphale et Procris* (1773), the melody appears in instrumental form before a vocal reprise.<sup>40</sup> This duality continued to exist when the dance co-existed on the stage and in the boarding school. While Thomas Wilson included it as one of several minuets in his *A Companion to the Ballroom*, which he indicated were 'more particularly adapted to school teaching', it had already been incorporated into a sonata movement, set to a song and published as a solo piece for keyboard.<sup>41</sup> As such, there was little barrier between vocal and instrumental music, and dance. This process worked both ways: dance music could be assimilated into song or conventional instrumental forms, while existing compositions could be turned into dances. Therefore, the pool of potential repertoire was considerably widened. Wilson comprehensively

outlined the figural and musical requirements for constructing country dances, suggesting that dancers had the flexibility to adapt their steps to a wide range of compositions.<sup>42</sup> Providing the correct number of bars and repeats were employed, and the music was in the appropriate metre, the choice of repertoire was hypothetically limitless. Given that good dancing masters would have understood these requirements, it is not a large step to suggest that they may have used a broad brush in utilising musical material for their dance classes at school.

## Conclusion

Music and dance education in girls' boarding schools was often concurrent, raising questions about how the two disciplines interacted. As some dancing masters actively provided musical tuition, there was potential for crossover to occur, particularly in less wealthy establishments. While a particular emphasis was placed on the development of grace through dances such as the minuet, dance repertoire also encompassed country dances, allemandes and cotillions. Domestic music collections can provide a link to dance repertoire when written accounts of actual musical material are scarce. Minuets and country dances in particular were utilised in instrumental and vocal genres, blurring the boundary between dance and music. This flexibility of genre is important in understanding how music and dance were conceived – dance in music existed not just through music with overt dance connections, but also in music with no obvious dance connections at all. This considerably broadened the scope of repertoire that girls learned and understood as relating to dance, and offers practical possibilities in comprehending how music may have been applied during dance lessons at school.

## Notes

1. John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London, W. Strahan, T. Cadell and W. Creech, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1774), 48. For pertinent scholarly literature on accomplishments relating to music and dance, see: Ann Bermingham, 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 16/2 (1993), 3-20; Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education through Twelve Centuries* (London, Oxford University Press, 1929), 461-9; Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (New York, Rodopi, 2008), 63-109; Richard Leppert, *Music and Image* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 28-66, 71-81; and Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1993), 67-70.
2. John Bennett, *Strictures on Female Education; Chiefly as it Relates to the Culture of the Heart* (London, Printed for the author, 1787), 44-5.
3. On questions of rank and the teaching of 'accomplishments' at schools, see Christina de Bellaigue, *Educating Women: Schooling and Identity in England and France, 1800-1867* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), 138, 140, 172-6. For examples of music and dance in the curriculum, see Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2008), 247, 249-50, 254-6 and Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History* (London, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1965), 145.
4. Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education, in Boarding Schools* (Derby, J. Johnson, 1797), 13, 127-8. On music and dance as extra subjects and the provision of masters, see John Caffyn, *Sussex Schools in the 18th Century: Schooling Provision, Schoolteachers and Scholars* (Lewes, Sussex Record Society, 1998), 40-1, 44, 59, 72, 87-8, 91-2, 129, 143-6 and Audrée-Isabelle Tardif, 'A Cultural History of Social Dance among the Upper Ranks in Eighteenth-Century England' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002), 46.
5. On the *pochette*, see Mary Remnant, 'Kit', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, [[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15075](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15075), accessed 25 May 2017]. On the musical skills and activities of dancing masters, see John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, Routledge, 1997, 2013), 436, 438-9, 444, 448; Trevor Fawcett, 'Provincial Dancing Masters', *Norfolk Archaeology: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk*, 35 (1973), 136-7; Barbara Peel, *Dancing and Social Assemblies in York in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Guildford, National Resource Centre for Dance, 1986), 26-7, 43-4; Roz Southey, *Music-Making in North-East England During the Eighteenth Century* (Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2006), 71; and Tardif, 'Cultural History of Social Dance', 20-2.
6. See Caffyn, *Sussex Schools*, 161-2 and Judith Cobau, 'Stephen Philpot, A Gentleman Dancing Master', *Dance Chronicle*, 10/3 (1987), 269-89.
7. Marie Sophie von la Roche, *Sophie in London, 1786, Being the Diary of Sophie V. La Roche. A Translation of the Portion Referring to England of 'Tagebuch Einer Reise Durch Holland und England'*, trans. Clare Williams (London, Jonathan Cape, 1933), 246.
8. *ibid.*, 247. See also Leppert, *Music and Image*, 80. In the original German text, 'folk-dancing' is rendered as 'Landtänzen'.
9. Francis Paget Hett, ed, *The Memoirs of Susan Sibbald (1783-1812)* (London, John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1926), 44-5 and 58.
10. Ruth Michaelis-Jena and Willy Merson, eds, *A Lady Travels: Journeys in England and Scotland from the Diaries of Johanna Schopenhauer. Translated from the German* (London, Routledge, 1988), 196.
11. See Tardif, 'Cultural History of Social Dance', 84, 87-8.
12. Franklin Fox, ed, *Memoir of Mrs Eliza Fox. To which Extracts are added from the Journals and Letters of her Husband, the late W.J. Fox* (London, N. Trübner & Co., 1869), 10.
13. Hett, *Memoirs of Susan Sibbald*, 60, 62. Johanna Schopenhauer also commented on the performance of the minuet by groups of girls; see Michaelis-Jena and Merson, *A Lady Travels*, 197.
14. 'A New Treatise on the Art of Dancing', *The Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, appropriated solely to their Use and Amusement*, CXLIX (June 1785), 311, partially quoted in Tilden Russell and Dominique Bourassa, *The Menuet de la Cour*, *Terpsichore Tanzhistorische Studien 4* (Hildesheim, Zürich and New York, Georg Olms Verlag, 2007), 8 and Tardif, 'Cultural History of Social Dance', 91.
15. Louisa Potter, *Lancashire Memories* (London, Macmillan and Co., 1879), 170-1.
16. Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, ed, *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford*,

*Related in a Selection from her Letters to her Friends*, 3 volumes, vol 1 (London, Richard Bentley, 2<sup>nd</sup> and revised ed. 1870), 242-4.

17. See Leppert, *Music and Image*, 75-8, 82-8 and Tardif, 'Cultural History of Social Dance', 221-32. On émigrés teaching at boarding schools, see Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School*, 345 and Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 139.

18. See Elizabeth Appleton, *Private Education; or a Practical Plan for the Studies of Young Ladies. With an Address to Parents, Private Governesses, and Young Ladies* (London, Henry Colburn, 1815), 233 and *The Young Lady's Book: A Manual of Elegant Recreations, Exercises, and Pursuits* (London, Vizetelly, Branston, and Co., 1829), 395-6. For a brief overview of theatrical performance in schools, see Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School*, 348-50.

19. *The Mirror of the Graces; or, the English Lady's Costume* (London, B. Crosby and Co., 1811), 151-2, 178-80 and J.L. Chirol, *An Enquiry into the Best System of Female Education; or, Boarding School and Home Education Attentively Considered* (London, T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), 127-9.

20. Potter, *Lancashire Memories*, 170. Other examples include Charles Mathews and Dominique Bourdin see Caffyn, *Sussex Schools*, 185; and Katrina Faulds, "'Invitation pour la Danse": Social Dance, Dance Music and Feminine Identity in the English Country House c. 1770-1860' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2015), 272 and *Morning Post*, 14 Nov. 1820.

21. L'Estrange, *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, 13.

22. *ibid.* 84. For details of the performance see William C. Smith, *The Italian Opera and Contemporary Ballet in London 1780-1820: A Record of Performances and Players, with Reports from the Journals of the Time* (London, Society for Theatre Research, 1955), 101 and *Morning Chronicle*, 2 June 1809, 1 (Mr Kelly's benefit).

23. Mary Robinson, *Memoirs of the late Mrs. Robinson, Written by Herself*, 2 volumes, vol 1 (London, Richard Phillips, 1803), 47. Mary reported dancing a minuet with the actor, David Garrick; see page 55.

24. Hett, *Memoirs of Susan Sibbald*, 37, 90, 248-9.

25. Michaelis-Jena and Merson, *A Lady Travels*, 197.

26. See Caffyn, *Sussex Schools*, 61, 72-3.

27. 'A Companion to the Reticule Arranged for the Piano Forte' [<https://www.vwml.org/record/Reticule/3962/pi>, accessed 26 May 2017].

28. *The Young Lady's Book*, 368 and 387.

29. See entries for 16 January and 26 April 1797 (Add Mss 7465); and 3 December 1800 (Add Mss 7468), located at West Sussex Record Office and Archives.

30. See letters to Cassandra Austen, 5 September 1796 and 28 December 1808 in Deirdre Le Faye, ed. *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2011), 8 and 168.

31. See Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2004), 70 and von la Roche, *Sophie in London*, 92 and 248.

32. *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano with Accompaniments for a violin and bass ad libitum* Op. 3 (Eichner); *Trois Sinfonies pour le Clavecin avec l'accompagnement d'un violon & deux cornes de chasses ad libitum* Op. 9 (Schobert); and *Pleyel's celebrated Concertante, as performed with the greatest applause, at the Pantheon and Hanover Square Concerts, adapted for the harpsichord or piano-forte, with an accompaniment for a violin* [B. 111]. The music books are available online at <https://archive.org/details/austenfamilymusicbooks> [CHWJA/19/6].

On Elizabeth's music collection, see Samantha Carrasco, 'The Austen Family Music Books and Hampshire Music Culture, 1770-1820' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2013), 42-4 and Kathryn L. Libin, 'Daily Practice, Musical Accomplishment, and the Example of Jane Austen', in *Jane Austen and the Arts: Elegance, Propriety, and Harmony*, ed. Natasha Duquette and Elisabeth Lenckos (Bethlehem, Lehigh University Press, 2014), 10-12.

33. See Hett, *Memoirs of Susan Sibbald*, 44, and L'Estrange, *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, 13, for mention of musical accompaniment by a *pochette*/fiddle while dancing.

34. Frances Anne Beaufort Edgeworth, *A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, with a Selection from her Letters*, vol 1 (London, Joseph Masters and Son, 1867), 9. Maria was a pupil at Ellin Devis's school in the early 1780s.

35. *Thompsons Complete Collection of Country Dances and Cotillons, for the Harpsichord*, [British Library shelfmark a.223.i]; however, the designated page is missing. The dance can be found in The Anne Geddes Gilchrist Collection manuscript book [AGG/2/150/56A] at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library [<https://www.vwml.org/record/AGG/2/150/56A>, accessed 27 May 2017]. The music to *Slingsby's Allemand* appears on page 3 of *The Allemands Danced at the King's Theatre in the Hay Market by M. Slingsby and Sig<sup>ra</sup>. Radicate* [sic], composed by Guiseppe Agus and published in 1768 [British Library shelfmark a.26.a.(1.) or b.57.a.(1.)]. Dance in the theatre at the turn of the nineteenth century encompassed not only ballets, but also divertissements in entr'actes and the performance of dances within plays and operas. See Erin J. Smith, 'Dance and the Georgian Theatre', in *The Oxford Handbook of The Georgian Theatre 1737-1832*, ed. Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014), 321-32 and Smith, 'Transitional Performances: Eighteenth-Century London Theater and the Emergence of Professional Dance', in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage*, ed. Daniel J. Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2007), 106-18 for a discussion of intersections between theatrical and social dance, and the place of dance within theatrical entertainment.

36. On Elizabeth's music collection and her education at Ellin Devis's school, see Jeanice Brooks, 'Musical Monuments for the Country House: Music, Collection, and Display at Tatton Park', *Music & Letters*, 91/4 (2010), 513-35 and Penelope Cave, 'Piano Lessons in the English Country House, 1785-1845' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2013), 109-11.

37. *The Countess of Sutherland, a Scotch Reel. Arranged as a Rondo* [MR 2-5-11]; *Three Sonatas for the Piano-Forte ... in which are introduced The Fife Hunt a Scotch Reel, and the National Air of Rule Britannia; as Rondos, with an Accompaniment for a Violin or Flute* Op. 25 [MR 2-5-29]; and *The Royal Quick Step. A Favorite Country Dance Arranged as a Rondo for the Piano Forte* [MR 2-5-29], all by Jan Ladislav Dussek. For their inclusion in country dance publications, see *Preston's Twenty four Country Dances for the Year 1797 ...* published by Preston & Son, p. 141 [British Library shelfmark a.252.(6.)]; *Twenty Four new Country Dances for the Year 1796 ...* published by T. Skillern, p. 7 [British Library shelfmark a.9.i.(5.)]; and *Twelve Country Dances. With their Bases for the Year 1794 ...* published by Thomas Cahusac, p.9 [British Library shelfmark a.248.(9.)] respectively.

38. See Caffyn, *Sussex Schools*, 72.

39. *BONNY CHARLEY A favorite Scotch Song Sung at ... Set to Music by M<sup>r</sup>. Hook*, published by Longman and Broderip [MR 2-5-22] and Sonata III from *Three Sonatas (With Favorite Airs) for the Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for a Violin & Violoncello* Op. 5 by Matthew Camidge, published by Preston & Son [MR 2-5-41]. For 'Bonny Charley' as a country dance, see *Preston's Twenty four Country Dances for the Year 1800 ...* published by Thomas Preston, p. 171 [<https://www.vwml.org/browse/browse-collections-dance-tune-books/browse-prestons1800>, accessed 28 May 2017]. For 'What a Beau my Granny was' see *A Selection of Scotch, English, Irish and Foreign Airs. Adapted for the Fife, Violin, or German Flute*, vol. 4, published by J. McFadyen, p. 6 and *Dale's Selection of the most favorite Country Dances Reels &c. With their Proper Figures, for the Harp, Harpsichord & Violin ...* published by Joseph Dale, ca. 1800, p. 17 [[imslp.org](https://www.vwml.org/browse/browse-collections-dance-tune-books/browse-prestons1800), accessed 28 May 2017].

40. Russell and Bourassa, *The Menuet de la Cour*, 5.

41. Thomas Wilson, *A Companion to the Ball Room, Containing a Choice Collection of the most Original and Admired Country Dances, Reels, Hornpipes, Waltzes, and, Quadrills* [sic] ... (London, D Mackay, ca. 1820), 162. For the musical derivatives, see No. 1 *A Favorite Sonata for the Harpsichord with the Minuet de la Cour, with variations* by Charles Evans (1775?) [British Library shelfmark g.205.(1.)]; 'Delia's Appeal to the Libertine' by Adam Smith (1780?) [British Library shelfmark G.313.(247.)]; and *The Celebrated Minuet de la Cour* (WM 1806) [British Library shelfmark g.272.p.(27.)]. Further works are listed in Russell and Bourassa, *The Menuet de la Cour*, 173-4.

42. Thomas Wilson, *The Complete System of English Country Dancing, Containing All the Figures Ever Used in English Country*

*Dancing, with a Variety of New Figures, and New Reels ...* (London, Sherwood, Neeley and Jones, 1820), 176-232, 270, 280-303.

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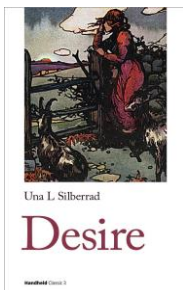
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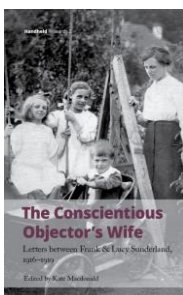
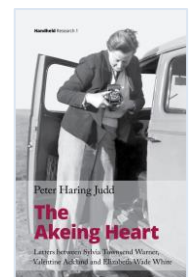
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# Musical mothers and the Mother Church: Lessons from the Jerningham letters

Penelope Cave

*Independent scholar*

## Introduction

The diarist, Parson Woodforde, described Lady Frances Jerningham (1748-1825) as 'a fine Woman but high and mighty'.<sup>1</sup> Given the moniker, 'Her Catholic Majesty', she was descended through the maternal line from King Charles II. Her husband, Sir William Jerningham 6<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1736-1809), also had royal connections through his maternal grandfather, Comptroller of the Household to James II/VII and III/VIII at Saint-Germain and owned the country estate of Costessey Hall in Norfolk.<sup>2</sup> Their interest in music manifested in a subscription to Charles Burney's *General History of Music* in 1776, a dedication of songs to Lady Jerningham, a commissioned performance of the comic opera, *La Duenna*, in 1785 and ensuring their children were musically literate.<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I shall explore the influence of mothers, music and religion on the education of children, referring to the correspondence of the Jerningham family for previously unexplored case studies. Comparison with other families will lend context.

Lady Jerningham's ancestry, education and marriage fitted her to confidently make her views known, to comment, or intervene in the lives of those around her. If Parson Woodforde and others found her imperious, the bedrock of her Christian principles and genuine love for her family is, nevertheless, evident in her correspondence. In order for her children to be as well versed in their faith, as fluent in languages, and as cultured in the arts as she was herself, attention to their education was required. By 1784, her two elder sons were established students at the college of Jouilly, and she painfully parted from Edward, her youngest; lastly, at the end of that year, her eldest child and only daughter, Charlotte, left and a lifelong correspondence

ensued. Like the author of *The Polite Lady* (1760), she had endeavoured to set a good example but, once her daughter was settled at boarding school, what she could no longer perform in person, she would supply by letters.<sup>4</sup> Before I demonstrate the particular interest Lady Jerningham had in her daughter's continuing education, it might be helpful to set it in the context of primary musical pedagogy, and Roman Catholic strictures.

## Musical Education in the Home

In aristocratic families, rudiments of music were usually taught at home by the governess; theory or 'the science of music' was absorbed, and instruction books worked. Between 1780 and 1795, there were over forty such pedagogic manuals written and published for learning a keyboard instrument, in addition to those for other instruments and vocal training. Like the nursery nurse, the governess often played a maternal role in nurturing and education, 'As the sculptor of a young woman's behaviour and taste, the potential influence a governess wielded was vast.'<sup>5</sup> In relinquishing this responsibility to a substitute, it is not surprising that mothers so frequently sought advice. In a refined example of 'the servant problem', Lady Stanley (1771-1863) sent the following response to her daughter-in-law about hiring a governess,

It does seem wonderful that good or even tolerable governesses should be so scarce & that their expectations should be so exorbitant ... I am much afraid you will not get *all* you require under £100 – but certainly my own opinion is that so very few governesses are capable



Inscription on the façade of the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Rome: 'Most Holy Lateran Church, of all the churches in the city and the world, the mother and head'

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of *teaching every thing* that I should prefer an humbler *professor* at £80 & spend the remaining 20 in Masters. They are sufficiently grounded in German to be able to go on with the language – Musick is the only thing a governess ought to know enough of to keep them up well in their practicing...<sup>6</sup>

Both Lady Stanley and Lady Jerningham stressed the importance of music within the schedule of lessons, but although it had a particular role in the finishing of a young girl, the ultimate aim was broader, as was iterated in the instructive letters to a young governess,

We have to form the Christian gentlewoman; the probable mistress and mother of a family; the sensible companion and wife...the kind, the courteous member of polished society... for the person who has most influence over the child just emerging into womanhood, will probably be instrumental in fixing, unalterably, her tastes, opinions, and character; nay, perhaps her destiny.<sup>7</sup>

The Countess Leven and Melville's daughters benefitted from the guidance of Elizabeth Appleton (c.1790-1849), who dedicated *Private Education* to her employer in 1815. A 'mere' governess and writer of conduct literature cannot be expected to be at the cutting edge of the latest methods for teaching music, but it is likely that Appleton was putting into print the accepted practice of the previous thirty years. Her approach was comprehensive, but Appleton's sixth chapter of thirty-two pages was entirely devoted to music, which she explained 'in female studies simply means the theory, and performance upon the piano forte, (of late years) upon the pedal harp; and, finally, the culture of melody in the voice'.<sup>8</sup>

Appleton's advice remains intelligent, realistic and practical to this day. She suggested that early impressions mattered, starting with just five minutes music for the beginner, 'introduced with a smile to the little eager girl, and gently, familiarly, cheerfully talked over and explained ...'.<sup>9</sup> Whilst Appleton believed that instrumental lessons need not begin before the age of eight, their progress in the rudiments would depend on the skills of their initial teachers before visiting masters were employed for singing and instrumental tuition. Appleton hinted that the governess accepted the majority of the responsibility, and the male teacher preferred the laborious groundwork to be already prepared, although, 'Thorough bass with composition', she advised, should be taught by the 'Master who finishes the scholar'.<sup>10</sup>

The comments of an unrelated pupil and her mother may widen the perspective. Mary Mordaunt (1812-1851), was the elder daughter of Sir Charles Mordaunt, 8<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1771-1823), and became the first wife of Sir Thomas Acland, 11<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1809-1898), whose liberal Anglican father of the same name, had fought in Parliament for Catholic emancipation. From February to May 1823, Mary Mordaunt, aged eleven, wrote down directions for good general behaviour, numbered daily questions for meditation, and then listed her faults.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after this, her newly widowed mother wrote, 'I began to attend my girls' music & perspective. The book of Genesis before breakfast & the Odyssey with Mary'.<sup>12</sup> In what reads as a bad week for both the child and her governess, Mary wrote, 'I was very illtempered about my music', and 'I cried about my

music and was very rude and naughty.' Such comments, whilst expressing frustration at the difficulties, and guilt at her lack of application, were also a confession that led, perhaps, towards improving her attitude and accepting a regime of daily practice that was evident in the later diaries. It is a genuine example of the association of Christian self-discipline, obedience, self-examination and repentance, whatever the style of churchmanship, intersecting with the discipline of music.

## Roman Catholic Education

Until laws were relaxed at the end of the century, convent schools in England were forbidden; consequently, many Roman Catholic families of the British aristocracy sent their children abroad for an education that would combine the usual subjects with Christian teaching, and include observance of Roman Catholic principles. Although some students were convinced by monastic life at school and consequently joined religious orders, this was not the prime object of English families in procuring a good education abroad. After the French Revolution, huge numbers of Catholics were forced to flee to Britain.<sup>13</sup> Their presence in England gradually changed attitudes to Catholicism and its allied education, ultimately resulting in parliamentary bills that led to full Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

Learning a second language was an additional benefit of schooling in France or Belgium; several generations of the Jerningham family were educated abroad, and corresponded in French. Lady Jerningham had been taught by the Blue Nuns at Faubourg Saint Antoine; and the thirteen-year-old Charlotte was placed with the French-speaking Ursulines in Paris, from 1784-1787. Charlotte's cousin, Henriette-Lucie, the daughter of Lady Jerningham's brother, Arthur Dillon and his half-French wife, lived in Paris where she, too, was to be educated. In 1786, Lady Jerningham wrote, 'My Brother wishes for the Blue Nuns, his wife for the Ursulines, and the Girl for Abbaye aux Bois. I recommended the first that she might learn to speak English'.<sup>14</sup> Lucie was already highly educated, having had harpsichord lessons from the age of seven, played the violin, and voraciously read the *Encyclopédists*; she attended the Abbaye aux Bois where 'all the ladies entrusted with the education of the scholars belonged to the highest nobility. The pupils bore the noblest names in the kingdom, and their education combined the most practical and homely domestic duties, with instructions best suited to mould them for polished and courtly society'.<sup>15</sup>

The education at the Abbaye aux Bois was to serve Lucie Dillon well, as her memoirs prove.<sup>16</sup> Music, dancing and painting were taught with the greatest care, and professors chosen from beyond the abbey. Aged sixteen, she became the Marquise de la Tour du Pin, and exercised her accomplishments and *politesse* by regularly visiting the court of Marie Antoinette. She later had need to speak English, and lived to bear and lose children, whom she educated herself, although she hired an Italian singer to teach her most musical daughter, Cécile, whilst they were in Brussels.<sup>17</sup>

Before Lucie attended the Abbaye aux Bois, the Polish niece of the Bishop of Wilna, the Princesse Massalska, later de Ligne, noted the daily timetable for children aged from seven to ten, during the 1770s,

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: to get up



in summer at seven o'clock, in winter at half-past seven. To be at eight in the stalls of the schoolroom, ready... to learn the Catéchisme de Montpellier<sup>18</sup>, and repeat it. At nine o'clock, breakfast; and half-past nine, Mass; at ten, reading till eleven. From eleven till half-past eleven, a music lesson. At half-past eleven till twelve, drawing lesson. From twelve to one, a lesson in geography and history. At one o'clock, dinner and recreation till three. At three o'clock, lessons in writing and arithmetic till four. At four o'clock, dancing lesson till five. Collation and recreation till six; from six to seven, the harp or harpsichord. At seven, supper. At half-past nine, the dormitory.<sup>19</sup>

On alternate days, they had no visiting masters but were superintended by the ladies of the Abbey, and on Sundays there was a gospel reading, morning Mass, and afternoon Vespers. She recalled, 'I danced very well; I knew how to sol-fa; I played the harpsichord a little and the harp a little'.<sup>20</sup> She also described a typical evening concert in the school, where she played the harp and sang for the nuns.<sup>21</sup>

Further insights of such an education can be gleaned from literature. Colin Haydon's investigation into anti-Catholicism as portrayed in fiction suggests that the 'convent novels', in contrast to gothic literature, were written partly to warn against the practice of sending Protestant girls to be educated in convents where they might convert. He gives evidence that their plots bear striking similarities to the real-life cases which were recorded in diplomatic correspondence.<sup>22</sup>

Lady Jerningham's letters reveal her maternal concern and involvement in her children's musical education. Within six months of Charlotte entering the convent in Paris, her mother recommended she learn the lessons of Nicolai and Bach, 'which are very pretty'.<sup>23</sup> She also suggested Charlotte take up the harp at the end of the summer, 'for it is such a Charming Instrument, that I Regret very much not having Learnt to play upon it myself'.<sup>24</sup> Lady Jerningham's letter was written in 1785 when the instrument enjoyed considerable royal favour. Both Madame de Victoire (1733-99), the fourth daughter of Louis XV, and Marie-Antoinette were exponents of the harp, adding cachet to its considerable popularity in late eighteenth-century Paris and further afield.<sup>25</sup> In the summer of 1785, Lady Jerningham insisted that Charlotte begin harp lessons immediately:

I am glad there is a good Master for it: as it is a very graceful Instrument when properly held, and it Requires proper Instruction at first, for to get the Habit of doing so... I am resolved you shall learn, for no expence shall be spared, to do my Little Girl's talents justice.<sup>26</sup>

The expense of her education was about two hundred pounds a year, but time for extras had to be negotiated, and Lady Jerningham directed lesson adjustments to accommodate Charlotte's harp and harpsichord lessons in addition to those for singing. The harp was widely utilised; in a letter from Charlotte to her brother Edward on the Feast of Assumption, she wrote,

...we have recreation for three days, our School room is ornamented with flowers, relics, & all

lighted up, we have a very fine alter at one end. This is for a *Salve* that is: hymns, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, which we sing in parts accompanied by the Harp.<sup>27</sup>

French gloss and the possibility of social ascendancy might also be acquired after such an education. In 1780, Jane Austen's musical cousin, Eliza (1761-1813), aged sixteen, was taken to Paris by her newly widowed mother, Philadelphia Hancock, to finish her education. Within a couple of years, Eliza married and became Comtesse de Feuillide. In communicating elite French social life to another English cousin, Eliza wrote, 'I have here both an harpsichord and a harp (The latter is at present the fashionable instrument)'.<sup>28</sup> In a further letter, she described how traditional worship in Passion Week had become a fashionable entertainment, writing, 'Devotion has given place to Vanity, Every Body now goes to Longchamps [the monastery] not to say their prayers but to shew their fine Cloaths & fine Equipages'.<sup>29</sup>

A good education, natural wit, and a childhood proficiency in music also aided the writer educationalist, and harpist, Madame de Genlis (1746-1830) to gain her own position within French society, as governess to the family of the Duke of Chartres, as well as teaching her own children. The publication, in 1782, of her courtesy book in four volumes, 'combining orthodox principles with Rousseau's new methods of education', plus a translation of her *Sacred Dramas* in 1785, were particularly welcomed in England, which she visited in 1791, and proudly described the harp-playing of her daughter, Adélaïde, as 'prodigious for her age'.<sup>30</sup> Like so many during the Revolution, she was later forced to flee Paris, but she continued to earn her living from teaching voice, piano and harp in Northern Europe, and writing pedagogical works, including an innovative harp-method.<sup>31</sup>

The emotional cost of sending children abroad was considerable and their return was keenly awaited. In November 1786, Lady Jerningham wrote to Charlotte anticipating her homecoming, satisfied, 'in having parted from her, by the talents and accomplishments it has been the means of her acquiring'.<sup>32</sup> She had given Charlotte a religious education and one promoted by conduct writers such as the anonymous author of *The Polite Lady*, who advised that musicianship need not be to the standard of a professional. Rather, it was the 'business of a young lady ... to acquire such a competent knowledge of all the polite accomplishments, as to be able, upon occasion, to perform decently herself, and to judge with discernment of the performances of others'.<sup>33</sup> Charlotte was equipped to contribute and evaluate artistic merit.

## Charlotte as Mother and teacher

Ultimately, Charlotte's accomplishments enabled her to educate her own children. She married Sir Richard Bedingfeld (1767-1829) of Oxburgh Hall in 1795, and eight children followed in quick succession. Charlotte was admired for teaching them herself, although she felt her own artistic growth was hampered by this demand on her time and energy. She wrote to Mary Matilda Betham after the birth of her fourth child, rejoicing that her confinement had given her the time for reading and intellectual enjoyment. She complained 'I blunt my mind by sewing and teaching, which I think it my duty to practice, but in Sickness, I indulge in my natural propensities,

and become happy in an Ideal World and forgetting the one I live in.<sup>34</sup> The influence of the widely-circulated opinions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) on gender and education have been distilled by Letzter and Adelson as Rousseau's approval of educated women's place as moral teachers. However, he 'strongly discouraged them from acquiring any skills that might take them outside the home because "their life... does not permit them to choose to devote themselves to any talent at the price of their duties."<sup>35</sup> Charlotte seems to have reserved the frustrations of motherhood to share with Betham, wishing, perhaps, to align herself with her friend's artistic inner life that she felt was denied her, and envious of the creative freedom from which she may have assumed Betham benefitted. In 1806, by which time she had given birth to four girls and three boys, she wrote '...from breakfast till one I teach my children'.<sup>36</sup> The intense friendship with Betham, in which Charlotte felt free to discuss her artistic aspirations with a like mind, survived their different situations and, in 1814, she lamented, 'I lead a regular monotonous Life that is very good for me though I own, a Sigh will come some-times when I see My painting Box covered with Dust and my harp Strings dried in their case'.<sup>37</sup>

Whatever the personal cost, Charlotte chose to assume the governance of her children; both boys and girls inherited the family aptitude for music, and she had pride in the outcome. At the age of sixteen, Charlotte's fourth daughter was called upon to extend her keyboard skills, reporting problems with an organ cipher, from her convent in Amiens:

I am made organist I like it very well; but I must tell you that the organ is not one of the best: for some times it makes a loud noise like a great trumpet; which continues for a few minutes, it began today during Mass whilst I was playing, so I made an ending and left off.<sup>38</sup>

She later entered a convent in Bruges as a pensioner, renamed Sister Mary Agnes, where she continued to play both organ and piano.

## Conclusion

Christian moral principles and musical education were evidently important elements in the upbringing of the British elite, but many Roman Catholic mothers educated their daughters, sometimes only to surrender them to the mother-church. Whilst music fed the soul, and furthered suitability for a religious life, its prevalence in the Jerningham correspondence is coupled with their love for each other. The letters of Lady Jerningham and her daughter Charlotte, Lady Bedingfeld, demonstrate a confident, practical approach to the Christian education of their children. Whether sending them to convent schools where, whilst sharing many qualities with English boarding schools, the nuns were considered more highly educated and better for languages, or educating their children at home, their sacrifice, loving concern, and faithful involvement was evident, and effective in the lives of their children.

## Notes

1. James Woodforde, ed. John Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson, 1758-1802* (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 1999),

7 Nov. 1783, 147. Lady Jerningham's mother, Lady Charlotte Lee, was a great-granddaughter of Charles II and Barbara Villiers.

2. Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689-1718*, with contributions by Edward Gregg, Howard Erskine-Hill and Geoffrey Scott (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004).

3. Most of the correspondence is held at the University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections: Letter from Lady Jerningham to Charlotte, JER/28, (17 [Apr] 1785). Baron Johann Friedrich Hugo von Dalberg, *English Songs with pf accompaniment* dedicated to Lady Jerningham, S.H. 12/7/1796.

4. *The Polite Lady, a course of Female Education in a series of Letters from a mother to her daughter* (London, J. Newbery, 1760). Letter 1.

5. Eliza Cook, "Governesses," *Eliza Cook's Journal* 1, no. 20 (London, John Owen Clarke, 15 September, 1849), 305. With thanks to Katrina Lee Faulds, "'Invitation Pour La Danse": Social Dance, Dance Music and Feminine Identity in the English Country House C.1770-1860' (PhD E-thesis, University of Southampton, 2015), 277.

6. This letter was written from Alderley Park, 25 March 1843, see Nancy Mitford, ed., *The Ladies of Alderley. Being the Letters between Maria Josepha, Lady Stanley of Alderley, And ... Henrietta Maria Stanley During the Years 1841-1850*. (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1967), 50.

7. Susan F Ridout, *Letters to a Young Governess: On the Principles of Education, and Other Subjects Connected with Her Duties* (London, Edmund Fry, 1840), part II, 4-5.

8. Elizabeth Appleton, *Private Education; or, a Practical Plan for the Studies of Young Ladies, Etc* (London, Henry Colburn, 1815), 135.

9. Appleton, *Private Education*, 137. The belief in combining sensory ideas and reflection is expanded in Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (1690), which had reached its 22<sup>nd</sup> edition by Appleton's 1815 publication.

10. *Ibid.* 159-160.

11. Mary Mordaunt's notebook, Devon Record Office, DRO1148m/21(iv), 18.

12. Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Mordaunts: An Eighteenth-Century Family* (London, Heinemann, 1965), 282.

13. Helena Scott has deduced that by 1792 there were 3,000 emigrée French priests, nearly doubled by 1801. Helena Scott, 'Note on French Catholics in London after 1789', Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick, eds., *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity* (London, Institute of Historical Research [u.a.], 2013), 91.

14. Letter from Lady Jerningham, from Cossey, to Charlotte, JER/37, 2 January 1786.

15. Lucien Perey, ed., trans. Laura Ensor, *Memoirs of the Princesse de Ligne*, 2 vols. (London, Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen, 1887). <https://www.scribd.com/document/36225441/Memoirs-of-the-Princesse-de-Ligne-Volume-I>

16. Henriette-Lucy de La Tour du Pin-Gouvernet Marquise, trans. Felice Harcourt, *Memoirs of Madame de La Tour Du Pin* (London, The Harville Press, 1999). Marquise de La Tour du Pin-Gouvernet, (also known as Lucie Also, Caroline Moorehead, *Dancing to the Precipice: Lucie de La Tour Du Pin and the French Revolution* (London, Vintage, 2010).

17. *Ibid. Memoirs*, 408.
18. A Jansenist catechism used at the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*.
19. Lucien Perey, ed., Laura Ensor trans., *Memoirs of the Princesse de Ligne* (London, Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen, 1887), 26-7. The nine-year old Princess Helene Massalska began writing at the convent (with an 'incorrect and careless style'), and continued until, at fourteen, her writing had become, 'remarkable for its elegance'.
20. *Ibid*, 76. She actually danced 'remarkably well', see p. 64.
21. *Ibid*, 145.
22. Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England, c.1714-80: a political and social study* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993), 4.
23. Johann Christian Bach (1735-82), composer and music master to Queen Charlotte, who had converted to Catholicism in Italy, and Valentino Nicolai (fl 1775-?1798) published in both London and Paris in the 1780s; Burney said his Sonata in C op.3 no.1 was, 'for many years taught in every school in the kingdom', and praised his piano duets.
24. Letter from Lady Jerningham to Charlotte, JER/24, 15 March 1785.
25. Cousineau (father and son), became the royal Luthiers-in-Ordinary, and Sébastien Erard's established business had not yet transferred to the safety of London in 1792. There are portraits of both Madame de Victoire and Marie-Antoinette with their harps.
26. Letter from Lady Jerningham to Charlotte, JER/31, 22 August 1785.
27. Letter from Charlotte Jerningham to Edward Jerningham, JER/50, 15 August [1786].
28. Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen's "Outlandish Cousin: the Life and Letters of Eliza de Feuillide* (London, British Library, 2002), 49.
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30. Magdi Wahba, 'Madame de Genlis in England' in *Comparative Literature*, 13/3 (1961), 223-4. This work was entitled Adelaide and Theodore. Bonnie Arden Robb, *Félicité de Genlis: Motherhood in the Margins* (Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2008), 131-2
31. Hans J. Zingel. "Genlis, Stéphanie-Félicité, Countess of." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, www.oxfordmusiconline.com, accessed 21 May 2017. Her 1802 harp method, published on her return to Paris, was entitled, *Nouvelle méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la harpe*. dedicated to her talented pupil and adopted son, Casimir.
32. Letter from Lady Jerningham to Charlotte, JER/51, Nov. 1786.
33. *The Polite Lady*, 32-33.
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35. Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou de l'éducation*, 1762, (Paris, Garnier Flammarion, 1966), 478. Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001), 44.
36. Letter from Charlotte Lady Bedingfeld, at Cossey, to

- Matilda Betham, March 1806. Betham, *A House of Letters*, 95.
37. From Lady Bedingfeld in Bath, 18 September 1814. *Ibid*, 142.
38. Letter from Charlotte Bedingfeld, in Amiens, to her mother, Charlotte Lady Bedingfeld, JER/1116, 4 October 1818.

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# The Viscountess, the Scientific Philanthropist and the School of Industry

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‘With respect to the School Establishment it may be too expensive. I therefore have no right to be continued – I am sure I have no pretension to ask it.’<sup>1</sup> So wrote Mary Mee, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscountess Palmerston (1755-1805) to her son, Lord Palmerston, the future prime minister, in May 1804, seven months before her death from what was most likely cancer. The school in question was one she had established in Romsey, Hampshire, near the family’s country seat of Broadlands. The foundation of the school, alongside the opening of a soup kitchen, in the winter of 1799-1800 marked a step change in Mee’s philanthropic activities, as it was when she started to implement many of the ideas of her friend Count Rumford (1753-1814), a prominent exponent of scientific philanthropy. The school was very much a personal project for Mee: she wrote the rules, handpicked the lady visitors, chose the governess and spent a good proportion of her quarterly allowance on it.<sup>2</sup> This paper examines her use of charitable education as a tool for both enhancing her social and symbolic capital as benefactor, and as an act of symbolic violence, policing the behaviour of the lower orders. It will compare her school with other schools for the poor and set it in the context of Georgian particular charity and the development of scientific philanthropy.

## Georgian Charity

The 1700s saw massive growth in the numbers of charities. Charity was not a private affair; published subscription lists were used as adverts for the beneficence of the donors. Would-be donors could be shamed into subscribing in order not to be conspicuous by their absence.<sup>3</sup> The rise of associative charities allowed subscribers to network, borrow social cachet from other subscribers and patrons, and bask in reflected glory regardless of how much they individually gave.<sup>4</sup> Contemporaries were well aware of the self-interested motives of some donors: as early as the 1720s critics railed against the insincerity of public shows of charity, claiming ‘pride and vanity have built more hospitals than all virtues together’.<sup>5</sup> In Bourdieusian terms, charity in Georgian England can be seen as bolstering the donor’s social and symbolic capital.

Women were not immune to the social benefits of charitable associations; single women, in particular, may have used active involvement in charity as a means to offset prejudice against their marital position or as an escape from boredom.<sup>6</sup> Many were motivated by the perceived feminine virtues of compassion and tenderness and felt their contributions, both financial and physical, were a virtuous duty.<sup>7</sup> Some women, such as Countess Spencer (1737-1814), a close acquaintance of the Palmerstons, or Lady Arbella Denny (1707-1792) in Ireland, became known as experts in charitable causes.<sup>8</sup> The activities of Queens Charlotte and Caroline were important in the acceptance of female philanthropy leading to the declaration that ‘Charity is the calling of a lady; the case of the poor is her profession, [her vocation was] instructing the poor, as the grand means of saving the nation’.<sup>9</sup>

There had been a shift of emphasis over the course of the century from a concern solely to ease the conditions of the poor, to a desire also to improve the morals of society, to ‘police’ the recipients of that charity.<sup>10</sup> This motivation chimes with Bourdieu’s analysis of charity as an act of symbolic violence: the imposition of culture in such a way that it is experienced as legitimate by all involved. Misrecognition is key to the operation of symbolic violence and its ability to perpetrate cultural norms; the perpetrator misrecognises the violence they are inflicting as benevolence and the victim sees their treatment as an inferior, as the natural order of things. As an expression of symbolic (soft) power, symbolic violence impels the recipient of any gift to attempt to reciprocate in kind, usually through behaviour. Thus, the poor could be and were complicit in the production of behaviours which ‘reinscribed’ their subservient position.<sup>11</sup>

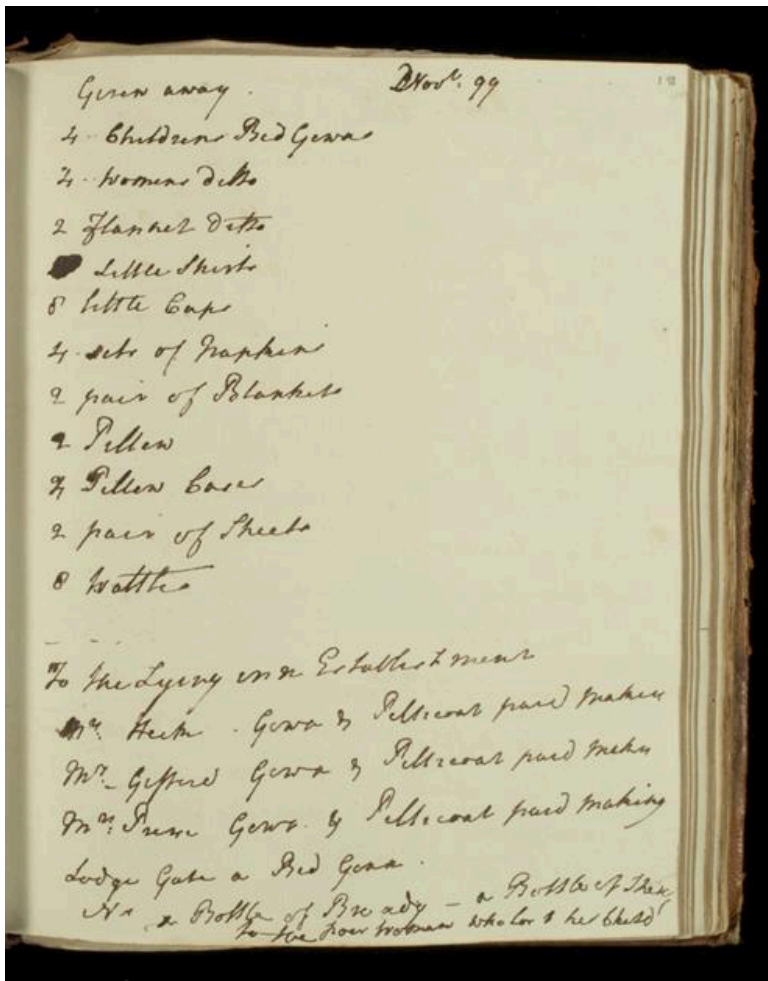
The practice of charity could give twofold benefits to the donor: first to increase the donor’s social and symbolic capital, and second to maintain the structure of society and the donor’s position of power within that society. This paper will examine whether Mee was aware of these aspects of charity and if she used her power to ensure that her dependent clients behaved as she wanted or to bolster her own standing.

## Family Background

Since the biography of her husband in the 1950s, there has been no serious consideration of Mee.<sup>12</sup> She has been written out of the historical record as anything other than an adjunct to the males in her family, but when she does appear she is frequently misrepresented and characterised as a social butterfly, a clinging mother and friend, pleasant but little more, and unsure of herself and her place in society. She is rarely credited with any influence on any members of her family, although Brown gives her more importance than most of her elder son’s biographers.<sup>13</sup>

Mee’s social position was more precarious than it might at first seem. As the daughter and sister of a merchant, who was not even a great heiress, Mee lacked both social and symbolic capital compared to peeresses who were themselves relatives of peers. She was twenty-eight in 1783 when she became the second wife of Henry Temple, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Palmerston, whom she had first met several years earlier through her uncle by marriage, William Godschall, a distant cousin of Palmerston’s mother. The Palmerstons were not a wealthy family in comparison with other aristocrats; their annual income was at most £19,000 during their marriage, which could not overcome what some saw as the disadvantage that their title was relatively new, and in the Irish, not British, peerage.<sup>14</sup>

Although her mother-in-law and step-grandmother-in-law were also of the mercantile class, by the 1780s Mee was an exception in marrying into a title.<sup>15</sup> The cult of domesticity and the increasing disdain for arranged, mercenary marriages left women who had jumped several nice distinctions of rank at



Viscountess Palmerston's notebook

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the mercy of gossips and prone to backhanded compliments, such as that from Mrs Sheridan, who noted Mee was 'a pleasing, unaffected woman ... tho' she did squeeze thro' the city gates into a Viscountess'.<sup>16</sup>

The Palmerstons were a happy and affectionate couple with a wide social circle and well-connected to the centre of Whig society, yet not central to it. As a mother to a young family of five, and a vivacious hostess whose home was 'an enchanted castle ... [of] ... amusements and splendid hospitality', in her early married life, Mee behaved as a typical landowner's wife in her charitable obligations: clothing the poor, visiting the sick, lending birthing linens, sponsoring families, and acting as a local patroness.<sup>17</sup> As her four surviving children grew, she gradually became more organised in her activities, keeping records of her doings and donations (see photograph), but it was not until 1799, when her youngest child was ten, that there was a significant change with the foundation of the kitchen and the school.<sup>18</sup> This coincided with the period when Count Rumford was living in London and frequently visited the Palmerstons.

The Palmerstons first met Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, in June 1793 while they were on a continental tour with their children and instantly struck up a friendship.<sup>19</sup> Mee and Rumford enjoyed a long correspondence from this date onwards. He wrote lengthy letters, often describing his experiments at the poor houses in Munich or military doings on the continent, mixed with gossip about mutual friends. She, in turn, passed on news from and about Rumford to her husband, her uncle Godschall, and other friends.<sup>20</sup>

## The Scientific Philanthropist

Rumford was an American-born British subject, knighted by George III and created a count of the Holy Roman Empire by the Elector of Bavaria for whom he worked in the 1780s and 1790s, reorganising both the army and poor relief. He was interested in 'the applications of science to the common purposes of life'.<sup>21</sup> Between 1799 and 1802 he lived in London, and while there greatly influenced the work of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor (SBCP) and founded the Royal Institution, with which the Palmerstons were also closely involved.<sup>22</sup> During this period, Rumford personally influenced Mee's move into more practical, institutional charity. This was something she recognised three years later in a letter to her eldest son, stating that she was 'obliged to Count R for having put me in a way to do some good in a place which, too extensive for particular charity, I must do some on a large scale'.<sup>23</sup>

Rumford's philanthropic investigations were driven by a wish to be as efficient and effective as possible; charity should be based on scientific rather than moral assumptions.<sup>24</sup> His approach became known as scientific philanthropy. Like John Locke and Adam Smith before him, he believed that the poor should be employed and not simply given relief; poverty need not perpetuate moral failing.<sup>25</sup> He advocated for voluntary charity, run on a settlement-wide basis by a committee made up of the highest ranks of society, while those from the middle ranks should carry out the administration. Government should only be involved to recommend good schemes and ensure the laws are compatible to the practice of any given charitable

scheme. This approach found favour in England where there was considerable dissatisfaction with state organised Poor Law relief and a widespread belief that 'charity voluntarily administered by reasonable citizens would be more effective than relief from the parish poor rates'.<sup>26</sup>

Rumford's writing on philanthropy was imbued with the concept of policing society; maintaining an ordered society for the benefit of all and the moral requirement on the higher ranks to instruct those beneath them. So widespread was this idea of policing that Mee might not even have been aware of it as a motivation. Her uncle Godschall had written a pamphlet on the topic in 1787, but the Viscountess herself expressed her motivations in terms of doing something useful; that the utility of her charity could benefit both the recipients and the wider society.<sup>27</sup>

## Schools of Industry

Rumford was a loud advocate of schools of industry, having set up several in Bavaria to train the children of the poor in employable skills. In Britain, schools of industry could trace their history to the 1720s when the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) championed the infamous school in Artleborough. More a sweatshop than a school, it ran for fifteen hours a day with a short break for lunch, covered its costs, and made as much as £500-£600 annual profit for the town coffers. In the 1790s, the SBCP supported schools of industry, singling out various schools as exemplars, including the boys' and girls' schools at Boldre in the New Forest, founded by William Gilpin in 1791 using his publishing profits.<sup>28</sup> Had Pitt's Poor Law reform of 1795 succeeded, every parish would have had to set up a school of industry with attendance compulsory for the children of those on poor relief. Unlike the charter schools in Ireland, which were heavily supported by the Linen Board of Ireland, there was no governmental encouragement to tie in schools of industry with trade bodies.<sup>29</sup> Instead the provision was piecemeal, and usually only flourished under an enthusiastic patron, although even that did not guarantee success. An 1803 government survey of children receiving parish poor relief found that only eleven percent of children were in schools of industry.<sup>30</sup>

Lady Palmerston's school of industry was the only weekday girls' charity school in Romsey. There was a long established charity school for boys at the Abbey and several dame schools catering for both boys and girls.<sup>31</sup> As there was no competition for pupils between the school of industry and another charitable institution, there was none of the social stratification wherein older charity schools were for the 'first degree among the Lower Orders' and the new schools for the 'bad and dull' children who could be trained up to work in manufactories or as common servants.<sup>32</sup> The girls in Mee's school came from a variety of backgrounds; some had no father's occupation listed, some were the daughters of labourers, gardeners, bricklayers and washerwomen while others were the daughters of more skilled workers such as shoemakers, butchers, carpenters, or tailors. It was also non-denominational; non-conformists were as welcome as Anglicans and no attempt was made to convert the non-conformists to the established church.<sup>33</sup> Despite being the only girls' charity school in Romsey, not all girls were admitted; only those who could demonstrate that they would be likely to make use of the education offered were accepted.<sup>34</sup>

## The Curriculum

There was consensus on the need for girls to be educated to be fit wives and that education, regardless of its depth, should differ based on rank. Lady Palmerston definitely preferred a well-educated girl. She praised Lady Carnegie as 'the most sensible woman' she had ever met because of the quality of the education she gave her daughters and was aghast at the lack of education in Neapolitan noblewomen.<sup>35</sup> Her own daughters observed astrological events and scientific experiments, puzzled over maths problems for enjoyment, knew several foreign languages and studied drawing.<sup>36</sup> The school for industry was never going to produce well-educated girls compared to those of the middle- or upper-classes; Mee was not a radical. After having read Mary Wollstonecraft, she declared to her husband that he would find her 'very tenacious of [her] rights and privileges', but she was not about to overturn the 'natural' order of things.<sup>37</sup> She followed the conventional wisdom that girls of different social ranks should be taught differently; as the Hampshire Chronicle report of her school stated its aim was to turn out 'excellent servants'.<sup>38</sup>

Mee's school followed a curriculum that emphasised the practical but also allowed some time for the academic. Initially, the school took girls aged four to fourteen. Skills taught included spinning, knitting, all aspects of dressmaking and housekeeping; exact tasks were age dependent.<sup>39</sup> The school took in needlework at half the local going rate and the girls were paid for any work they did, directly addressing the opportunity cost of educating a child. They were also taught reading, spelling, and their catechism or a non-conformist equivalent.

Writing, or rather penmanship, does not appear on the curriculum, in common with many charity schools. At Gilpin's schools it was an added extra.<sup>40</sup> Mee may not have paid it much heed as her own penmanship was somewhat lacking.<sup>41</sup> Her correspondence, however, shows her to be aware of the conditions many of the recipients of her charity lived in and requiring payment for extra tuition may not have sat easy with a woman who cautioned her teenage son that 'threepence in a shilling is an object to a poor Person'.<sup>42</sup>

## The Rules

Mee was very practical in how the school should be run and drew up the rules of the school herself. Holidays were fixed at the discretion of the governess, to be 'most advantageous to the parents, and to the children, at the different seasons of the year'.<sup>43</sup> She recognised that the provision of free childcare enabled parents to be more economically active; of recounting to parents her desire to open an infant school in 1803, taking boys and girls as young as two, she wrote 'they all seemed delighted with the plan ... of getting rid of their children which will allow them to go out'.<sup>44</sup> This very pragmatism in ensuring that attending school did not adversely affect the household economics meant that the school did not suffer from the absenteeism that frequently occurred in other charity schools.<sup>45</sup> Another force was also at work, namely soft power: her very recognition of the realities of seasonal work in a rural economy, and the need for all able members of a household to be available to maximise the financial benefit, put the recipients of her charity in her debt, which could be repaid by ensuring their children's regular school attendance.

Mee also used the school to consolidate her family's soft power with local middling-rank families. She appointed Mrs. Latham, Seward, J. Latham, Tarver, and Comley, to act as visitors; the women and Mee took turns to make weekly visits to the school to ensure it was running well.<sup>46</sup> In this, she was following Rumford's philosophy of settlement-wide charity, patronised by the elite and run by the middling ranks, however her letters reveal that Mee found it difficult to be a hands-off patroness. In addition to the weekly visits, Mee required the governess to write her regular reports when she was away from Broadlands.<sup>47</sup>

It was common for aristocrats to sponsor schools on their estates, appearing at prize days and annual dinners doling out beneficence, but Mee's personal interest in her school in Romsey, in particular her close knowledge of the girls, was atypical.<sup>48</sup> She remained interested in the girls once they left her school and listed the leavers and their destinations every year in her books, noting if they had 'got into good places turning out well'.<sup>49</sup> In 1802, she rented the house next to the school to provide a workroom for those who had not gone on to other employment, to ensure that 'her girls' didn't fall prey to that 'degenerating evil, idleness'.<sup>50</sup> Whether she recognised this action as policing or not, it is a classic example of the upper ranks attempting to control the behaviour of those socially below them.

Mee does not seem to have shared the widely held view that the poor 'can scarcely be taken too soon from the idle and dissolute'.<sup>51</sup> The need to remove the children of the poor from the baleful influence of their parents was another tenet widely held by those who sought to police society. Unlike at Gilpin's schools, Mee did not require her girls to spend most of their Sundays apart from their families.<sup>52</sup> Weekly attendance at church or chapel was, however, compulsory; girls had to meet at the School to walk to worship together, accompanied by a teacher. Mee was not evangelical but she was sincere in her faith and the requirement for charity school pupils to attend a religious service on Sundays was a well-established tradition. Nevertheless, the effect of her regulation on the manner of their church attendance was to place loyalty to the school above loyalty to their families, and make a weekly public demonstration of their status as recipients of her benevolence. It was, in Bourdieusian terms, an example of inflicting symbolic violence upon those below her in order to maintain social norms.

Her pupils were also visibly set apart by their clothing. Every New Year they were given clothes.<sup>53</sup> She does not appear to have insisted that parents undertake not to sell off or swap the clothes, or return them once the girl left, unlike other charity schools, thus the sartorial distinction was maintained post-schooling.<sup>54</sup>

While at the school, pupils were subject to a detailed list of rewards and punishments. Tickets were issued for both good and bad behaviour.<sup>55</sup> The use of rewards alongside punishments was a development in educational theory in the eighteenth century. Gilpin had famously introduced rewards at Cheam to encourage good behaviour and studiousness.<sup>56</sup> The rewards in Mee's school were often practical; money and clothes were items that would be useful to a poor family.<sup>57</sup> The academic was not entirely forgotten, with books given out to enthusiastic readers, but books were relatively cheap; penny tracts for children were well within the reach of many labouring families.<sup>58</sup> Mee pre-empted the SBCP's advice that

'that kind of merit which might offer to *every scholar* the ground of competition – viz *regularity of attendance, cleanliness of person, habitual diligence and orderly behaviour*' be rewarded.<sup>59</sup> She wrote in her rules that each girl was expected to be clean and tidy and 'as neat as the circumstances of her situation will admit of'; although outwardly liberal and understanding of circumstances, her rules also embody the Bourdieusian concept of symbolic violence: behaviour and appearance were congratulated more so than academic endeavour.

Some rewards were less tangible, and the annual school dinner was the highlight of the school year. In 1804, 136 girls and the staff dined, waited on by the Mee's family and friends embodying the spirit of beneficence. It was a ritual that the Mee particularly enjoyed: 'I never saw a gayer Ball & the pleasure arising from seeing so many happy is reflected back doubly upon those who enter it. They danced until 9 o'clock then had warm milk or water and a piece of cake.'<sup>60</sup> Another intangible reward was an invitation to Broadlands. In January 1803 when the schoolgirls came to the house to receive their New Year prizes, Mee wrote to her son that 'this morning had my school here and am quite ruined in presents'.<sup>61</sup> She frequently made mock complaints to him about the good behaviour of her schoolgirls costing her a fortune. He replied in the same tone with a modest suggestion that she should 'introduce some sly little discordant Pippin among them, and make the young ladies misbehave their prizes away in forfeits'.<sup>62</sup>

Forfeits, in the form of monetary fines from earnings, and not corporal chastisement, were the main form of punishment in the school. Girls would also be made to wear a headband to with the legend 'for misbehaviour' for the rest of the school day. Continued bad behaviour would result in exclusion from the annual dinner. Mee believed that the punishments were 'not very severe [and] more likely to produce a good effect from those commonly made'.<sup>63</sup> It is clear from her writing that, unlike evangelicals such as Sarah Trimmer, Mee did not believe that poor children were inherently wicked nor that poverty was a moral failing. Her approach chimed with the Lockean ideas that children were innocent tabula rasa to be carefully taught. As her uncle Godschall wrote in his pamphlet on policing society, 'children should first be taught what is right before they are corrected for doing what is wrong'.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

This article opened with a quote from Mee on her expectations for the school after her death. She did not leave a legacy for it, which is not surprising, as charitable legacies had fallen out of fashion by the late eighteenth century. Nor were they seen as a rational method to support philanthropy.<sup>65</sup> Before her final illness made her more pessimistic, Mee had written that 'my hopes carry me to think when I no longer exist this school will live and flourish'.<sup>66</sup> Despite the sometimes-precarious finances of the Palmerstons, her family both supported it financially and in social capital throughout the nineteenth century. It continued as a school within a school after being amalgamated into the Girls National School in the 1850s, and awarded prizes funded by Lord Palmerston until his death in 1865. Afterwards the specialist needlework class, with material supplied by the family at Broadlands, was known as Lady Palmerston's and continued into the twentieth century.<sup>67</sup>

Mee was not an evangelical philanthropist; if anything she was a rationalist, spurred to action by the thought that she

could improve the conditions of the poor rather than benefit her own or others' souls. She was not a 'great' philanthropist, but she did spend a significant amount of her own annual allowance on her charity; from her own relatively modest income of £100 per quarter she spent over £66 in August 1799, at the same time as her family's finances were under pressure.<sup>68</sup> Many aristocrats did far less.

Although Mee recognised her activities were at a larger scale than her previous work, she still kept her charity restricted to Romsey. She did not seek to extend her influence to nearby Winchester where her husband was one of the two Members of Parliament, as that was under the patronage of Lady Mildmay, wife of the other. Nor does she not appear to have been eager to set herself up as a female expert like the Countess Spencer – there are relatively few newspaper reports on her activities.<sup>69</sup> Mee does not seem to have used her charity work to bolster her own social and symbolic status amongst her social peers.

Her belief in the utility and practicality of her work led her to focus on the local, and it is there that she exercised her symbolic and social capital. She used existing networks within the middling ranks to help her run the school. She did not challenge existing norms; like her husband who preferred to buy his seat in Parliament, she turned a blind eye to the 'Old Corruption', even if that corruption was the school governess's daughter winning a top prize every year she was at school.<sup>70</sup> Although sincere in her wish to help those below her, Mee did nothing to change or alter the social structures surrounding those she helped. It could be argued that Mee simply did not have sufficient social and symbolic capital to challenge the establishment but nowhere in her writings does she intimate the slightest desire to do so.

Mee was not a radical. She saw her charity work as a duty incumbent upon her due to her own status; her self-awareness of her motivations appears to be that of 'benefactress', and she does not knowingly seem to have set out to maintain a strict social order. Her school was not as repressive as many and she had a compassionate, liberal view of children. Yet not recognising the true impact of one's actions is a key element in Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence; misrecognition does not negate the fact that her school was not socially progressive and worked as an instrument of cultural reproduction.

## Notes

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18. Dartmouth College, Rauner Special Collections Library, Rumford 493528, Count Rumford to Lady Palmerston, 26 Nov. 1799.
19. Soton BR 11/19/12, Lady Palmerston to Benjamin Mee, 2 Jul. 1793.
20. Soton BR 11/22/1 Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 9 Dec. 1794.
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- the Royal Institution and Mee was one of the book holders for ladies' subscriptions. *Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, 1 Aug. 1799; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19-21 Mar. 1800.
23. Soton BR 21/7/8 Lady Palmerston to Henry Temple, 24 Feb. 1802.
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30. M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1938), 90, 156, 157-8.
31. Mee sponsored children to attend several of these schools. Soton BR 18/2/1, pp. 125, 152 & 191.
32. Sarah Trimmer, *Reflections Upon the Education of Children in Charity Schools; with the Outlines of a Plan of Appropriate Instruction for the Children of the Poor; Submitted to the Consideration of the Patrons of Schools of Every Denomination, Supported by Charity. By Mrs. Trimmer*. (London, T. Longman; and J. and F. Rivington, 1792), 11.
33. Mee was not loud in her religiosity. One of the few times she expressed her religious views in her letters, was to decry the seemingly methodistical turn her illegitimate stepson, Campbell, had taken in his preaching; Lloyd, *Agents*, 108. Soton BR 21/9/7 Lady Palmerston to Henry Temple, 25 Feb. 1803.
34. Soton BR 18/2/1, pp. 133-136, list of girls and parental occupations; p. 115. Jan. 1803, Lady Palmerston lists girls seeking admittance and notes one was 'not approved by Mrs Rout'.
35. Soton BR 21/9/1 Lady Palmerston to Henry Temple, 2 Jan. 1803; Connell, p. 275.
36. Soton BR 24/4/5 Henry Temple to Frances Temple, 11 Feb. 1804.
37. Soton BR 11/18/5 Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 13 May 1791.
38. *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 Jan. 1802.
39. Soton BR 18/5/5/109-12 Lady Palmerston to Emma Godfrey, [?Jan] 1803.
40. Templeman, 197.
41. Her eldest son frequently teased Mee about her writing and would complain to his siblings about it. Soton BR 24/2/6 Letter from Henry Temple to Frances Temple, 1 Mar. 1801.
42. Soton BR 21/8/3 Lady Palmerston to Henry Temple, 1 [?Feb.] 1802.
43. Soton BR 19/17/1 Rules for the School of Industry, 1801.
44. Soton BR 21/9/6 Lady Palmerston to Henry Temple 13 Feb. 1803; Soton BR 18/5/5/105-8 Lady Palmerston to Emma Godfrey, [?5] Jan. 1803.
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47. Soton BR 19/11 Ann Rout to Lady Palmerston, 27 May 1803.
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49. Soton BR 18/2/1, pp. 51, 111, 129, 177-8 & 241.
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52. William D Templeman, *The Life and Work of William Gilpin* (Urbana, University of Illinois, 1939), 195.
53. The December 1803 bill for these came to £27.3.0, Soton BR 18/6/1 Receipt from Sharp & Newell, 1804.
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57. For example see Soton BR 18/2/1, 131.
58. Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles, "'Love to Learn Your Book": Children's Experiences of Text in the Eighteenth Century', *History of Education*, 33 (2004), 337-52 (344); Mitzi Myers, 'Hannah More's Tracts for the Times: Social Fiction and Female Ideology', in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Scholfield and Ceclia Macheski (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1986), 264-85 (266).
59. *Reports of the SCBP*, 3:240 as quoted in Andrew, *Police*, 171, n. 25. Italics original.
60. Soton BR 18/2/1, pp. 197-200.
61. Soton BR 21/9/1.
62. Soton BR 21/9/3 Henry Temple to Lady Palmerston, 17<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1801.
63. Soton BR 21/7/8.
64. Godschall *Police*, 6.
65. Andrew, *Philanthropy*, 46.
66. Soton BR 21/9/2 Letter to Harry Temple, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1803.
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68. BR 18/2/1, 34.
69. Stark, *Charitable Donations*, appendix 1.
70. Soton BR 18/2/1 pp 91, 97, 105, 162 & 236.

# 'I like school much better every day longer I stay': Educating the Hunter Blair girls

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## Introduction

Defined in Johnson's dictionary as the 'formation of manners in youth; the manner of breeding youth; nurture', education was seen as a process of socialisation or lessons for life.<sup>1</sup> The aim was to develop a 'holistic' child by, as Joanne Bailey has argued, 'nurturing life-skills and transmitting appropriate behavioural qualities'.<sup>2</sup> This 'holistic approach to instruction' saw a suite of formal and informal instructive initiatives delivered along gendered lines with the aim of developing 'independence' in boys and 'improvement' in girls.<sup>3</sup> As Hannah More, author of *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1779), said the primary aim of girls' education was to make them 'good daughters, good wives, good mistresses, good members of society, good Christians'.<sup>4</sup> The lessons girls learned were rooted in ideas of familial and social accord, as well as a kind of female gentility that was ultimately rooted in their marriageability.

The notion of 'exemplary parents' was central to the didactic process, with 'example and instruction ... inseparable'.<sup>5</sup> This article will argue that this process of emulative learning occurred not just by observing parents but also by regarding painted versions of socially sanctioned appropriate behaviour. Portraits are a deposit of, a vehicle for, and an active agent in circulating of society's values and hence life lessons; girls, this article will argue, learned from them as well as from other more obviously didactic means.

Many girls were educated at home; however, as Katharine Glover has shown, the elite habit of educating sons in London was increasingly extended to Scottish girls in the late eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The Hunter Blair girls, Ann (born 1771) and Clementina (born 1779) were among those girls who received their lessons for life at home and later at school in London. Comprised of a close reading of a family portrait produced by the Scottish artist David Allan (1744-1796) in 1785, and using family letters and other documentary sources, this article elaborates upon a kind of female education that was informed by complimentary practices in school and beyond.<sup>7</sup> The first section will consider how Allan's portrait contributed to, and formed part of, the life lesson the girls experienced at home. In doing so, Michael Baxandall's concept of 'the period eye' is utilised; he posited that at different times and places, certain features of knowledge attuned viewers to aspects of images which are not easily identified today, but which the historian, with the help of other primary sources, can retrieve.<sup>8</sup> Recovering this meaning can enable a more nuanced reading of the image but also highlights the image's position as a concrete deposit of cultural production. The method of image critique deployed may be considered the visual equivalent of textuality, that is considering 'the ways arguments are structured and presented as well as what is literally said'.<sup>9</sup> It is what Judith Butler has called 'a feminist genealogy', an excavation of meanings from historically and culturally situated acts.<sup>10</sup> The

second section will consider the formal and informal aspects of the Hunter Blair girls' education in London, drawing on family correspondence. While these different strands of their holistic education are considered separately, it will be argued that the exemplary nature of home life, including its visual representation in the family portrait, and formal and informal education in London formed a consonant whole.

## 'to encourage their Successors': Painted lessons

Allan's portrait shows banker, landowner and politician James Hunter Blair, his wife Jean and nine of their children at their Ayrshire estate.<sup>11</sup> There is a strong rhythmic dynamic, a layering of undulating lines; the wave, which leads the roving eye from one character to another, is echoed in the cadences of the landscape and, in a more muted way, in incidental details. From left to right, the eye is drawn from the eldest son John up through Ann to Jean, reaching the crest of the wave, James. The wave then descends to Clementina, who is holding a baby sibling, and whose quiet stillness as she stares out of the frame forces the viewer to pause the eye's roving journey over the characters. The eye then moves back up to the boy holding a whip, then over the pair pulling the carriage, down to the two little children. This arc is repeated in the line of the prominent hill in the background and that on which sits the family house. The ribbons fluttering on Ann's dress, the line of the boy's whip, and James's tricorne hat reinforce the rhythm of the picture. This rhythm creates a sense of visual harmony, which, in turn, implies family concord.

Significantly, this harmony is patriarchal: James is positioned at the apex of the wave and leads his wife, who is leaning against him. His expansive gesture, directing her gaze towards their children, asserts his authority over them all. This arrangement coheres with Gerard De Laraisse's definition of 'a Good family', which comprised 'a prudent and respected Father; a careful and good-natured mother; obedient children'.<sup>12</sup> That this quote is taken from an art manual indicates how deeply implicated art was in contemporary rhetoric about family life. Portraiture played a key role in the presentation of notions of domestic conduct; a girl could learn her lessons from the portraits on her wall as well as from other more obvious sources of instruction, including parental example, conduct manuals and sermons.

This pictorial presentation of accord is not accidental; family harmony was understood as both a necessary precondition to and exemplar for a girl's education. As John Dwyer has shown, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers placed great emphasis on education in a domestic setting, with the active involvement of parents seen as the best way of stimulating appropriate moral feelings.<sup>13</sup> With the family as a seat of learning, family harmony was both a backdrop to and role model for a girl's education. Harmony displayed in a family



*'The Family of Sir James Hunter Blair, 1st Baronet (1741–1787)' by David Allan  
Watercolour, 33x58.8 cm, Brooke Russell Astor Bequest, 2013, Metropolitan Museum of Art (US)  
The oil painting from this watercolour sketch is in a private collection and on loan to the National Gallery of Scotland,  
Edinburgh*

portrait then is more than conventional gloss; it operates to convey social meaning.

Moving from the construction to the narrative content of the portrait, more lessons for life can be identified. A rumbustious group of boys are pulling a cart, with one, on the far left of the picture, having fallen down with his exertions. They are urged on by another who runs arms aloft, calling encouragement. The dog, running amongst them with ears back and tail up, reflects the boys' excited exuberance. Within all this fraternal turmoil, eight-year-old Clementina's role in the game is to be pulled in the carriage. She exhibits none of her brothers' energy and freedom of movement. Rather she is shown, nursing her baby sibling, learning the role of motherhood, described by James Fordyce as 'a sphere of activity which you all hope to fill, and for which you ought to qualify yourselves as much as possible'.<sup>14</sup> At eight years old, Clementina is certainly depicted beginning her qualification early. In this, she is not alone; it was a pictorial commonplace at this time to show portraits of girls nursing siblings, dolls or animals, therefore depicting play in imitation of the adult world.<sup>15</sup> According to Rousseau, in one of his self-fulfilling circular arguments, the 'doll is the girl's special plaything; this shows her instinctive bent towards her life's work' and such play should be encouraged.<sup>16</sup> Portraiture, a medium as prescriptive as it is descriptive, both promotes and reflects this notion. Portraits thus formed part of the discursive network through which girls learned their role in life.

On the left of the picture, Ann is coaxing John to join in the family game. Fourteen at the time of the portrait, she wears an elegant, low cut green dress, which displays all her feminine potential. In showing concern for John and encouraging his

involvement in the family fun, she is enacting the attribute of concern for others, which would be key to her future success as a woman; the creation of familial concord was understood as a key task of womanhood. This was, according to John Gregory, due to women's 'superior delicacy', which particularly fitted them for 'the practice of those duties where the heart is chiefly concerned'.<sup>17</sup> This would not always be easily attained, and in order to create a calm domestic setting, women might need to

put on a face of serenity and cheerfulness when your hearts are torn with anguish, or sinking in despair.<sup>18</sup>

Women were thus encouraged to compose their features and wear a mask in daily conduct. Just as the sitters in a portrait usually appear to their best effect, so a woman must always strive to present herself as calm and composed in real life. The need to behave well was expected from early childhood; writing to his wife in 1773 when Ann was only two years old, James said 'I hope Miss Ann continues to behave with propriety at the company at Culzean'.<sup>19</sup>

This regulated behaviour pattern was encapsulated in the contemporaneous notion of 'politeness', which Lawrence Klein characterises as 'the art of pleasing, in company and conversation' at an individual level and in social processes which sought reciprocity in social interaction and social improvement through wider social engagement.<sup>20</sup> Klein is among several scholars who have related politeness to gendered expectations and conduct, observing that '[p]oliteness was important in the definition of women because of their association with form, taste and conversation'.<sup>21</sup> Politeness provided a space for women's voices to be heard

which, while it did not offer equity between the sexes, provided opportunities for women to exert influence. Ann is shown in the portrait exerting this gentle, feminine influence over her brother. It is a lesson for her later life as a wife, modelled from observing her mother, conduct literature and from her painted self.

The type of nuptial union Ann would have expected to enter was a companionate marriage. This is a conjugal relationship in which 'both parties accepted marriage as a hierarchy of power that was nonetheless based on love'.<sup>22</sup> Within this framework, love in no way reduced a wife's obligation for obedience, it in fact necessitated it, though an expectation of intimacy could introduce a 'democratic potential' into a marriage.<sup>23</sup> A companionate marriage was one where the gendered virtues of men and women fused in a productive union. It was a partnership where both parties accepted marriage as a hierarchy of power with a wife's central obligation to obey her husband, but also one where intimacy enabled a negotiation of that power and the potential for democracy. Arm in arm, with the benevolent patriarch James leading his wife on their walk and directing her attention to their children with his expansive gesture, the couple embody the companionate marriage.

The private masculine virtues of civility, nobility and generosity expected of a man in a companionate marriage were increasingly hailed as the underpinning of public responsibility. The worthy husband was conflated with the commendable public man, or as Kate Retford argues, 'the companionate marriage was a model for private behaviour, but also for public concern'.<sup>24</sup> Due to the association of marriage with good social order, the painted celebration of harmonious unions could be conjoined with, or used as a vehicle to commemorate, other key moments in the life-stage. James Hunter Blair commissioned this portrait of himself at the time he was Provost of Edinburgh, coinciding with his contentious plans to build the South Bridge that were accepted by the Council. He is not shown in chains of office, nor with building works behind him; rather he is shown strolling arm in arm with his wife, surrounded by their frolicking children. Portraiture thus provided a way of displaying and idealising this conflation between public and private virtues. All these were lessons the Hunter Blair girls needed to learn to be successful women.

Portraits had – and were understood to have – a moral, didactic and aspirational quality to them. They exhibited a behaviourally ideal version of a person and presented a standard to which the individual and subsequent generations should aspire. As Gerard De Lareisse argued:

[i]n Noblemen indeed 'tis a very commendable Custom [having one's portrait painted]; because being descended from great Families the Lustre of these ought to shine, to encourage their Successors to keep up their Glory, and to prevent sullyng it by unworthy Actions."<sup>25</sup>

His words highlight how a noble person, contemplating a family portrait, would look to her ancestors and be moved to undertake good works and would, in turn, inspire future generations of the family. Ann and Clementina could learn to be good women from their own portraits and from those of their forebearers. Their descendants would, in turn, learn from them.

## 'distinguished in the various branches of her education': Lessons on London

To continue, develop and polish the girls' education, the Hunter Blair family chose to send Ann, and later Clementina, to London. Katharine Glover has demonstrated that a girl's London education was often seen as an investment as it was hoped to provide a girl with polish and procure her a good matrimonial match.<sup>26</sup> This was significant because while there was an expectation that mutual affection would form part of the marriage contract, financial, familial, and dynastic concerns remained important to nuptial decision making. The Hunter Blairs chose to bestow a significant amount on the girls' London education. Writing to a relative in 1791, 17-year-old John, head of the family following his father's death in 1787, stated:

My mother had been thinking of a plan of sending my sister Clementina up to London, to a boarding school there... & as my sister's own funds are not very considerable, I am proposing to contribute a sum of between £100 & £150 towards her education in that place.<sup>27</sup>

This highlights not just the substantial amount of money that was spent on the girls' education but also how much it was a family concern with brother, mother, and more distant relatives involved in the discussions. This is perhaps unsurprising; in addition to genuine affection, a well-educated and therefore marriageable young woman played a significant role in maintaining and enhancing a dynasty through her nuptial connections. If she married well, the status of her family was enhanced or solidified as a result of the new conjugal connections. It was, then, a matter worth investing money, thought, and effort.

Within the discourse of politeness and the companionate marriage came expectations that women would achieve a suitable level of learning; as Rousseau argues 'it is not fitting that a man of education should choose a wife who has none'.<sup>28</sup> However, too much scholarship was considered potentially detrimental; Sir William Hamilton counselled a niece about to enter society to 'keep your knowledge of Latin a dead secret, a lady's being learned is commonly looked on as a fault'.<sup>29</sup> In this advice he mirrors the words of John Gregory who directed young women to keep any learning they have 'a profound secret, especially from men, who generally look with jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts'.<sup>30</sup> Unsurprisingly then the curriculum a girl followed generally had a focus on accomplishment rather than deep learning. Writing to her mother from London in 1791, Clementina outlined the key areas of the syllabus she was following:

I take the opportunity of dining at Lady Blantyre's to write you a few lines to tell you all about School. The Masters are all changed since my sister was there except two or three. I like the Music much better and hope to make great progress in it as the master i have is an excessive good one and pays a great deal of attention to us. He is changed since my sister was there and it is now M<sup>r</sup> Dance. The dancing I am very fond of as I always was and M<sup>r</sup> Oliver gives me great credit and says I am much improved. As to French I assure you I

found it a little difficult at first to speak but now I am accustomed to it I find it quite easy... I can assure I like school much better every day longer I stay.<sup>31</sup>

Clementina was studying music, dancing and French under masters who had largely changed from the time that Ann attended the school several years earlier. Learning the French language is obviously something that was new to her but there is continuity as well and change in her study programme: family correspondence shows that the Hunter Blair children attended dance classes at a local school in Ayrshire, long before Clementina went to London. In this way, Clementina's education can be understood as consistent with the London experience building on and adding polish to what had gone before.

Clementina's reporting of her progress in her studies is significant; the Hunter Blair girls' curriculum expanded as they developed competence in the subjects they were studying. Ann began to learn singing, for example, only after she progressed in other areas, as her father reported to her mother '[b]eing advanced in the present objects of her education I have ordered that she may begin singing without delay'.<sup>32</sup>

The Hunter Blair girls' education was designed to ensure complementarity and make them soothing companions to future husbands. As Hannah More argued a 'lady studies ... to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be useful to others'.<sup>33</sup> It is perhaps not surprising then that music formed an important element of their education. As outlined above this took place in formal lessons at school but it also happened through more informal means. Writing to Jean in 1783, James recorded:

I was at a ball last night at Mrs Herries's where Annie performed indeed mightily well. She also play'd on the harpsichord, the piano forte & sang; every Lady allowed she plays with great taste... all her masters say she is distinguished in the various branches of her education. I take her to see Mrs Siddons on Tuesday, the famous tragedian.<sup>34</sup>

As James suggests here, Ann's education was understood as a process that included a round of socialising. This included trips to the theatre to see the famous actress Sarah Siddons, and attending balls at friends' houses where Ann displayed her learning by performing to the company. It was an initiation into polite sociability, significant, as previously outlined, because Ann was being educated to be an accomplished wife. Her education, and that of her sister, thus comprised formal and informal learning in London which complimented and built on those lessons for life begun at home and within the family, including the painted version of that family.

## Conclusion

This article has highlighted the importance of girls' education – at home and in London – for the Hunter Blair family. It was a concern on which the family spent time, money and effort and was discussed regularly in correspondence. The article has also shown that this education was geared towards the girls' social success, which meant marriageability; she needed to be polite and accomplished. She learned propriety,

moral rectitude and social accomplishment within her family, from well-directed reading, in social settings and at school in London. The article has also highlighted that portraits are a deposit of, a vehicle for, and active agent in circulating life lessons. As such, the Hunter Blair girls, like others of their class, learned from their family portraits as well as at school and from other more obviously didactic means such as texts.

## Notes

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3. Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 74.
4. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Educations (With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune), Volume 2*. (London, T. Cadell, Jnr & W. Davies), 2.
5. Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 78.
6. Katharine Glover, "'Polite London Children': educating the daughters of the Scottish elite in mid-eighteenth century London" in Stana Nenadic (ed.), *Scots in London in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisberg, Bruckner University Press, 2010).
7. For biographical information about Allan see T. Crouther-Gordon, *David Allan of Alloa 1744-1795: The Scottish Hogarth* (Alva, Robert Cunningham & Sons Ltd, 1951). Basil Skinner, *The Indefatigable Mr Allan: The Perceptive and Varied Work of David Allan 1744-1796. Scotland's First Genre Painter* (Edinburgh, Scottish Arts Council, 1973). G.R. Gordon, *Scottish scenes and Scottish stories: the later work of David Allan* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1990).
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10. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), 8.
11. John Booker, 'Blair, Sir James Hunter, first baronet (1741-1787)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2565, accessed 7 April 2017].
12. Gerard De Lairese, *The Art of Painting in All Its Branches*. Translated by Frederick Fritsch. (London, 1738), 143.
13. John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 2003), 81. For an overview of the debate on home or school learning see Michele Cohen, 'Gender and the Public/Private Debate on Education in the Long Eighteenth Century' in Richard Aldrich (Ed) *Public or Private Education? Lessons From History* (London & Portland, Woburn Press, 2004).
14. James Fordyce, 'Sermon 4', in *Sermons to young women: by James Fordyce, D.D. The eighth edition, corrected and greatly enlarged* (Dublin, 1796), 95.
15. Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993), 194.
16. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (Middlesex: Echo Library, 2007), 311.
17. John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters. By the*

*Late Dr Gregory of Edinburgh. A New Edition* (London, 1781), 10. First published in 1774, the book was written after the death of his wife in 1761. Archival records show that John Gregory was personally acquainted with the Hunter Blair family.

18. *ibid*, 11.

19. Ayrshire Archives [AA], Hunter Blair Papers [HBP], Bundle 51/14 James Hunter Blair to Jean Hunter Blair, 21 September 1773.

20. Laurence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal* 45/4 (2002), 869-898, 874.

21. *ibid*, 881.

22. Ingrid Tague, 'Love, Honor, and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourses of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol 40, No 1 (Jan 2001) 105.

23. Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650–1850* (Manchester & New York, Manchester University Press, 2011), 32.

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25. Gerard De Lairese, *The Art of Painting*, 346.

26. Katharine Glover, "Polite London Children"

27. Ayrshire Archives [AA], Hunter Blair Papers [HBP], Bundle D, John Hunter Blair to Thomas Kennedy, 25 March 1791.

28. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, 349.

29. Quoted in Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, Penguin, 2001), 322.

30. John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy*, 31-32.

31. Ayrshire Archives [AA], Hunter Blair Papers [HBP], Bundle 93, Clementina Hunter Blair to Jean Hunter Blair, 11 December 1791.

32. Ayrshire Archives [AA], Hunter Blair Papers [HBP], Bundle 51/49, James Hunter Blair to Jean Hunter Blair, 23 January 1783.

33. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female*, 2.

34. Ayrshire Archives [AA], Hunter Blair Papers [HBP], Bundle 58/51, James Hunter Blair to Jean Hunter Blair, 18 March 1783.

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## Music-making: a fundamental or a vain accomplishment?

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In the 1805 conduct book *Evenings at Home*, a mother explains to her daughter the reason she cannot attend music lessons is that: 'all things are not equally necessary to everyone but some that are very fit for one are scarcely proper at all for others.'<sup>1</sup> Music education was not fundamental, and yet it belonged to the 'ornamental accomplishments'; areas of education considered 'highly proper' for a girl to cultivate.<sup>2</sup> A young woman and her family could be harshly judged by her peers if she was known to be musically educated but did not support music-making activities appropriately.

Then again, music education was expensive. It required the hiring of a master, or paying a higher fee for music tuition at boarding schools, hiring or purchasing an instrument, buying books, and manuscript paper. Presumably, families of meagre disposable income simply could not afford such an expense. However, social pressures, further emphasised by upper-class parents who 'opted for a daughter's musical education often without regard to apparent ability or interest, and despite warnings of potential financial waste', created a dichotomy:<sup>3</sup> Their choice was either to cultivate a daughter's musical education in the hopes of keeping up appearances or maintain the family bank account but sacrifice the potential for social elevation.

Georgian novels such as those written by Jane Austen<sup>4</sup> and Sarah Elizabeth Real-Villa Gooch included detailed discussions of concerts, theatres, dancing and even domestic music-making.<sup>5</sup> This combined with the growing numbers of published education manuals specifically designed to teach the ornamental subjects, and affirm the link between music education and a young woman's social worth. The growing apprehension concerning finances, social expectations

and a girls' education, particularly in the ornamental accomplishments, was therefore not just an issue of expense but social image, an idea that is key in understanding the advice provided by various conduct books of the period. This article will highlight these financial and social concerns voiced in various educational literatures which include conduct books and novels. This will provide a much more nuanced picture surrounding the expectations of educating young women in music, class status and the difference between music and the other ornamental accomplishments.

### Music and talent: 'the most agreeable art of pleasing ... rendered tasteless and insipid'

To educate or not to educate? The dichotomy was an underlying question concerning female education throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Middle and upper class girls considered intellectually inferior were also the primary care-giver and educator of their young children once they became wives and mothers. The domestic virtues consisting of sewing, embroidery, spinning and housewifery were essential skills to ensure the efficient running of a household.<sup>6</sup> The ornamental accomplishments (dancing, drawing, languages and music) were adornments to a woman's basic education, and were useful for securing a lucrative marriage particularly for keen social climbers. A musical woman could both entertain and fill the idle hours of her day practicing her instrument in addition to the advantage of teaching basic musical instruction to her children. However, a balance had to be maintained. She could be skilled but not too skilled for a learned woman was considered unfeminine.<sup>7</sup>

Cultivating musical skill may have been useful in the matrimonial market but it could also be a costly gamble in terms of both time and money. Music education required a dedicated number of practice hours in addition to the cost. Even dedication did not guarantee natural aptitude. John Burton, who produced the positively received 1793 essay *Lectures on Female Education*, which were principally published for use in female boarding schools, noted that music was 'considered one of the most agreeable arts of pleasing practiced by the fair sex' but without a 'mind and an ear for harmony' it rendered the art 'tasteless and insipid'.<sup>8</sup> To Burton, music was an art to which a person either had an inherent ability or did not. While he noted that those who had the time to devote to practice were more likely to excel, musical ability was directly linked to talent rather than the time dedicated to learning.

*The Lounger's Common-Place Book* from 1799 written by Jeremiah Whitaker Newman even more harshly stated:

If the majority of our young women of scanty expectations, would not fix their eyes so steadily as for the most part they do, on the more elevated and wealthy classes of society, whom they vainly and ruinously attempt to imitate; if in their views, their education, their habits, their dress, and their manners, they could happily prevailed on to attend more to domestic duty, and less so to trifling amusement, and ornamental accomplishment; if they could be convinced that to make a pudding or a shirt, or even their own gowns, is a species of knowledge rather more useful than dancing a minuet, talking bad French, or spoiling a piano forte.<sup>9</sup>

Newman was clearly aiming his advice at a specific class of woman who could only imitate her polite society peers, but did not have the financial stability or the time to join them. He was critical of the avid social climber who could only superficially foster skills in the ornamental accomplishments, which ultimately distracted from cultivating necessary domestic duties.

Availability of time was a primary consideration and discussions continued to appear in nineteenth-century novels. In the 1836 novel, *Ellen, the Teacher*, the protagonist Ellen tells her student Maria that she will not allow her to pursue the study of music since she could not 'give it the time necessary for proficiency, without losing those things which are more essential'.<sup>10</sup> The whole novel centres on practical advice for teaching young women. In this scene, Maria's natural aptitude for music is never tested but her lack of ability in fundamental subjects such as needlework, deemed a much more important skill for a young woman of her station, denies her a musical education. This idea is repeated in the conversation between a mother and her daughter from *Evenings at home*. The mother makes it very clear that some women would have the time to learn music, drawing and even languages but her child should focus her attention on needlework, domestic accounts and history, with some extra time devoted to reading.<sup>11</sup>

However, while music education equipped a young woman with abilities to understand, read and play music it also allowed her to speak the musical language, further developing her conversation at social events. Opera houses and assembly rooms were the home of music and culture, but were also important venues of social interaction. Several diarists

during the period including Gooch and Richard Edgcumbe made this clear.<sup>12</sup> The social significance of these venues is further highlighted in popular Georgian novels that used the assembly room or opera house as significant centres for social interaction.<sup>13</sup> Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is just one such example: Catherine attends at various events at the Assembly Rooms in Bath. In conversation with Mr Tilney, he enquires if she attended the theatre, the play and the concert, to which Catherine happily replies she attended each on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday respectfully.<sup>14</sup> Austen's writing was likely inspired by her visits to the Assembly Rooms when she was resident in Bath from 1801-1805, and the conversation between her characters implied a social expectation to be in attendance at most events.<sup>15</sup>

While Austen drew inspiration from her surroundings and experience, some Georgian novelists would have their characters discuss real professional performers thereby providing a more tangible social commentary. In the 1794 novel, *A Visit for a Week*, written by Lucy Peacock (fl. 1785-1816), two characters gossiped about the musically talented Maria Wilmot, who is scrutinised when she does not subscribe to a concert given by Gertrud Mara (1749-1833). The well-known, real-life opera singer performed regularly in the London theatres, concert halls and at the Assembly Rooms in Bath. Her popularity was at its peak in the mid-1790s with most of her performances including benefit and subscription concerts attracting much public support.<sup>16</sup> The dialogue between Charlotte and Miss Shirley at first chastises Wilmot for not parting with money, but Charlotte quickly moves on to question Wilmot's musical abilities:

I declare I would not have let myself down so, had it been the last five guineas I had in the world; and what makes it worse, it seems to pretend to be fond of music, and, they say she plays fondly on the harp; not that I believe everything of this sort that I hear.<sup>17</sup>

Charlotte automatically assumes that Wilmot should support Mara since she was one of the most popular and fashionable sopranos of the day. Wilmot's lack of subscription may have been nothing more than a personal dislike of Mara's performances, but her non-conformity results in a questioning of her musical abilities and critical judgement. Peacock's narrative is a pointed social commentary on expectations of appropriate behaviour particularly of a young woman who was known to be musically trained. Her musical ability and judgement could be suspected if her interaction and discussion of music did not align with fashion.<sup>18</sup>

### **Society, fashion, judgement and the impact on music education**

The expectation that amateur musicians would publically discuss, perform and, more often than not, conform to accepted fashions had a direct impact on the music education of the day. While conforming to fashion, symptomatic of the period, suggests a lack of critical judgement, it required an awareness of the ever-changing fashion movements, and an ability to comment and engage and this did not just relate to the performances of others. It required an ability to reflect critically on one's own musical skill particularly when it came to performance. This was a serious topic of discussion for

Hannah More who stated:

Music, dancing, and languages, gratify those who teach them, by perceptible and almost immediate effects; and when there happens to be no imbecility in the pupil, nor deficiency in the master, every superficial observer can, in some measure, judge of the progress. The effects of most of these accomplishments address themselves to the senses; and there are more who can see and hear, than there are who can judge and reflect.<sup>19</sup>

Certain music treatises encouraged a development of critical awareness, promoting an ability to judge one's own musical aptitude. Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810), who after retiring as the leading man at The King's Theatre, capitalised on the Georgian fascination with musical entertainment and domestic music-making, becoming a prominent music master in Bath where he taught several amateur vocalists. In his treatise *Twelve Solfeggi or Exercises for the Voice* (1808) he endorsed self-reflection and recognition of musical ability stating:

The Singers who have acquired the greatest celebrity in the profession, are those who properly appreciated their own talent, who knew the extent of their own abilities and sought not to soar beyond them, adopting a method suited to the powers of their voice, and never attempting a passage which they could not execute with the greatest neatness and in the most correct and finished style.<sup>20</sup>

There is evidence that one of his amateur students, Elizabeth Saville (c.1811), thought critically about her vocal abilities, even to the point of questioning the sincerity of the praise offered by her audience:<sup>21</sup>

Yes it is over the trying evening is over; and more happily than I could hope, or expect. I am all gratitude to my audience for their indulgence. O! my dearest father, did I once think the time could ever come when I should dare to stand up with the presumption of attempting to entertain three hundred strangers with my poor voice? [W]ith so little science to guide me, and with small reliance, except on my ear, to protect me from absurd and ridiculous errors? ... My hand, indeed, trembled so, that Miss Cantelo kindly rose and helped me to hold my song; but my voice did not falter very much ... I performed better than I myself expected, yet most well do I know that I could not deserve those indulgent testimonies of satisfaction from my audience. They were twice repeated on the close of my strain; and when the concert was over, several elegant ladies, whose names I do not know, came and spoke to me with so much kindness in their eyes!<sup>22</sup>

In this letter, which was written to her father after she gave a performance at the Bath Assembly Rooms, it is difficult to know by what standard Saville was judging her performance. Despite noting a positive outcome from the experience, she

maintains a sense of modesty by pointing out her deficiencies. Saville's reserved attitude is not the only example.

Several conduct books, particularly those written by women, in discussion of music education make a point of remarking on their inadequacy to teach the subject. Despite Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825) recommending that all 'young ladies of rank should have their education superintended by a ... well-bred woman' she also noted:

I could not judge of their music, their dancing; and if I pretended to correct their air, they might be tempted to smile at my own; for I myself remarkably deficient in gracefulness of person.<sup>23</sup>

Anne Murray in her 1778 conduct book *Mentoria or the young ladies instructor* was equally quick to judge her own abilities in teaching music, despite going on to write in depth about the basics of music theory, which was just as detailed as most music treatises written by prominent music masters.<sup>24</sup> Both these women felt it necessary to state their incapacities in teaching the subject; however, in doing so, they demonstrated that they had a level of musical knowledge which allowed them to assess their own aptitude. Of course, one must question if these female authors felt it necessary to add these qualifiers in order to maintain a sense of modesty. Yet, both singled out music as a subject that required a higher level of expertise to effectively teach, thereby implying that it was unavoidable to employ a music master.

This theme appeared in the 1815 novel *Zeluca*. The character Marianne is ridiculed for not having received music lessons from a master by her friend Jane who stated, 'suppose Marianne ... that you have become a proficient [in music], what would it have availed you, when you could not name a *first rate master*?<sup>25</sup> The reason for the discussion in the first place is that Marianne is downhearted when her friend, Zeluca, decides to stop giving her music lessons after an ill-placed comment from Jane. Zeluca, who had been proficient in music for many years, is keen to teach Marianne the piano, after she expresses interest to learn. Zeluca diligently provided Marianne with lessons each morning for an unspecified amount of time, until Jane observed that Marianne was equal in her performance to Zeluca. The comment, which was perhaps intended as a compliment to Zeluca's teaching, only highlighted that she had taught Marianne everything she knew. After this episode, Zeluca immediately put an end to the lessons, leaving Marianne quite distraught. The scene is a significant turning point in the relationship of these two characters whose friendship is tested by societal obligation throughout the novel. In a similar manner to most Georgian novels, the fiction intertwined with a real message: women were not only quick to judge their own skill but also the musical talent of others.<sup>26</sup>

Music masters also came under scrutiny, especially if he was thought to be flattering a student with praise instead of correcting errors. Mary Fairfax Greig Somerville (1780-1872) noted her frustrations when being taught piano:

I rose early, and played four or five hours, as usual, on the piano, and had lessons from Corri, an Italian, who taught carelessly, and did not correct a habit I had of thumping so as to break the strings ... Afterwards I got over my bad habit and played the music then in vogue: pieces by Pleyel, Clementi, Steibelt, Mozart,



and Beethoven, the last being my favourite to this day. I was sometimes accompanied on the violin by Mr. Thomson, the friend of Burns; more frequently by Stabilini; but I was always too shy to play before people, and invariably played badly when obliged to do so, which vexed me.<sup>27</sup>

Domenico Corri (1746-1825) had moved to Edinburgh with his family in 1771 to take up the position as director of the Edinburgh Music Society concerts, and marketed himself as a reputable music master, which included publishing his ambitious four volume collection *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duett* in 1779.<sup>28</sup> Though he had published *The Art of Fingering* in 1785, which specifically examined fingering technique when playing the piano, his attentions tended to be focussed on vocal performance. Furthermore, Domenico had left Edinburgh for London by 1790, though his brother, Natale (1765-1822), whose attentions were much more focussed on keyboard playing, continued to live and work in Edinburgh as a musician, including running the Corri publishing house, setting up his own professional concert series and opening The Corri's Rooms.<sup>29</sup> With this in mind, it is much more likely that Somerville was taught by Natale, whose fame and reputation, particularly as a music master of note, has not survived the test of time in the same manner as his brother. While Somerville may have criticised his teaching practice, she does not appear to have immediately dismissed him as a music master. Another music master was not so lucky. In an anecdote that appeared in the *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales* (1817) stated that the Princess dismissed her unnamed, foreign music master after a performance she gave to a large party of guests. Though her master praised her performance stating that it was 'delightful', she assessed it to be subpar. Her music master's praise was not taken as encouragement but a sign of his dishonesty and perhaps worse, a lack of critical awareness.

Instilling a sense of critical-reflection of one's own ability may have encouraged independence, where the student would one day no longer require the tuition of master to effectively sing or play, but it had the potential to place him in a precarious position where his authority was questioned. Persistently correcting a student's errors may have helped to maintain confidence in his teaching, but this could also be detrimental to the learning of the student, infusing boredom rather than a sense of achievement. This was the reason behind Anne Gunn née Young's invention of a musical game in 1801, as she sought to find a new method of teaching the elementary parts of music instruction that avoided repetitious correction.<sup>30</sup>

While it was considered more appropriate for a woman to be instructed by a professional music master than a female instructress, the end goal was that eventually she would develop enough knowledge, aptitude, and awareness of her abilities to no longer require professional music instruction. The encouragement of critical reflection was not necessarily confined to self-criticism but allowed a young woman to be conversant about music practice more generally.

### **Music education: An investment in a woman's future**

Music, more so than any other subject, posed a problem. It was a popular activity, therefore musical knowledge was useful for functioning in polite society. Naturally then, a

wealthy family who wanted their daughter to have the best education wished her to cultivate musical skill. However, instruction took time, and time cost money especially if a child progressed slowly. Maria Child in 1830 highlighted the music education problem once again, but suggested a much more practical solution. While she recognised that mothers' desired to give their daughters a wide-ranging education, she noted the issue was not the wealth of the family, nor the desire for education but rather the 'selfish use of knowledge', which was frequently used as a means of social elevation. Yet, without a desire to learn the subject, most daughters would take no 'pleasure in their employment'.<sup>31</sup> That being said, if a daughter demonstrated a specific desire to learn, this could have more significant value in her life. A keen interest would encourage continuous development and, in turn, this knowledge would allow her to teach her children. If the family found they were financially insecure, a young woman could make a profession from music teaching to gain financial stability.<sup>32</sup>

While it was rare to read such practical advice, particularly in conduct books aimed at wealthy mothers, scenarios written about affluent women who suddenly faced financial hardship were a recurrent theme. The 1823 novel *The School for Sisters* discussed the daughter of a wealthy marquis who, after fleeing France during the terror, found employment in England teaching the harp.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the lead character of Frances Burney's novel *The Wanderer* (1814) was able to mingle with polite society by teaching music to several wealthy female students all the while disguising her true identity.<sup>34</sup> These fictional accounts were based on real-life situations. Several women of note throughout the eighteenth century, including the famed soprano Anastasia Robinson (c. 1692-1755), utilised their education in the 'ornaments' to ensure financial security.<sup>35</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Conduct books and novels may have encouraged a family to critically reflect on their daughters' musical aptitude, interest and even financial circumstance before engaging her in music education. However, this advice jarred with the social expectations of the period. If a young girl demonstrated little interest to learn music, but her family insisted she attend regular lessons, her progress would most likely be slow, revealing that the motivation for her tuition was a demonstration of wealth, an attitude that reeked of social ambition rather than social stability.

However, many wealthy families felt obligated to equip their daughter with such skills to ensure a lucrative marriage. It gave her another branch of conversation allowing a woman to converse within polite society, with the potential to attract suitors. There was also a more financially driven motivation as to why a young woman demonstrating accomplishment in music was attractive to a future husband. The hiring of a master, in any of the ornamental accomplishments, was expensive and therefore, a daughter's demonstration of skill was an outward display of a family's monetary worth.

Music education may have been a vain adornment but in many cases it was fundamental to maintaining a social pretence. The ability to critically assess the abilities of oneself and others whether it be professional performers, fellow amateur peers, or a woman's own children proved useful. As a mother, though she may have wished to maintain a sense of modesty about their musical skill, her musical and critical

awareness would better equip her to effectively assess the musical interest and talent of her children before employing an expensive master. After all, maintaining disposal income required a watchful eye on the purse strings.

## Notes

1. John Aitkin & Anna Lititia Barbauld, *Evenings at home: or, The juvenile budget opened: Consisting of a variety of miscellaneous pieces, for the instruction and amusement of young persons* (London, J. Johnson, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 1805), 87.
2. Michèle Cohen noted similar attitudes regarding woman and the study of French: *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London, Routledge, 2002), 64.
3. Richard Leppert, *Music and image: domesticity, ideology and socio-cultural formation in eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 29.
4. There are frequent discussions about music in Austen's novels including *Sense and Sensibility* (London, T. Egerton, 1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (London, T. Egerton, 1813), *Mansefield Park* (London, T. Egerton, 1814).
5. Elizabeth Sarah Villa-Real Gooch, *Fancied events: or, The sorrows of Ellen* (London, George Cawthorn, 1799).
6. Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology* (London, Routledge, 2013), 45.
7. Elaine McGirr *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 125.
8. Christine Mayer noted that while Burton's *Lectures* were initially self-published the second edition was widely distributed in Britain and were translated and published in Germany in 1794. 'Female education and the cultural transfer of pedagogical knowledge in the eighteenth century' *Paedagogica Historica*, 48/4, 511-526, (Routledge, 2012), 516. John Burton, *Lectures on female education and manners* (London, J. Johnson; J. Murray; and J. Evans, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1793), 97.
9. Jeremiah Whitaker Newman, *The lounge's common-place book* (London, Kerby and Co, 1792), 303.
10. Barbara Hofland, *Ellen, the teacher: A tale for youth* (London, J. Harris and Son, Corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, 1819), 128.
11. John Aitkin & Anna Lititia Barbauld, *Evenings at home*, 89.
12. Richard Edgcumbe *Musical Reminiscences of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*, (London, W. Clarke, 1827).
13. Sarah Elizabeth Villa-Real Gooch, *The Life of Mrs Gooch*, (London, Sold by C. and G. Kearsley, 1792) & Richard Edgcumbe, *Musical reminiscences of an old amateur, chiefly respecting the Italian opera in England for fifty years, from 1773 to 1823*, (London, W. Clarke, 1827).
14. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, (London, T. Egerton, 1818), 12.
15. Penny Gray, *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.
16. Helen Berry, *The Castrato and His Wife*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 72.
17. Lucy Peacock, *The visit for a week, or, Hints on the improvement of time: containing original tales, anecdotes from natural and moral history, &c. designed for the amusement of youth* (London, Printed for Hookham and Carpenter, 1794), 229-230.
18. Noggle, James, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 174.
19. Hannah More, *Essays on various subjects, principally designed for young ladies* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1777), 127-128.
20. Venanzio Rauzzini, *Twelve solfeggi or exercises for the voice to be vocalized*, (London, Goulding, Phipps, D'Almaine & Co, 1808), ii.
21. Elizabeth Saville was possibly the daughter of the singer John Saville (1736-1803) who was in an intimate relationship with Anna Seward.
22. Anna Seward, 'Letter from Anna Seward to William Hayley, Letter Xxi, December 23, 1785', *Letters of Anna Seward: Written between the Years 1784 and 1807* (Edinburgh, Printed by George Ramsay & Company, for Archibald Constable and Company, 1785).
23. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *The works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld with a memoir by Lucy Aikin*. (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), 22.
24. Anne Murray, *Mentoria or the young ladies instructor* (1778), 185.
25. Anon, *Zeluca; or, educated and uneducated woman* (London, Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1815), 70.
26. *Ibid.* 66-67.
27. Somerville, Mary Fairfax Greig, *Memoir of Mary Fairfax Greig Somerville, in Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age, of Mary Somerville* (London, John Murray, 1873), 377.
28. Thomas Edwards, *So much neglected? An investigation and re-evaluation of Vocal Music in Edinburgh 1750-1800*, PhD thesis, (Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, 2015), 41.
29. Donald Campbell, *Edinburgh: A Cultural and Literary History*, (Edinburgh, Signal Books, 2003), 231.
30. Anne Gunn, An introduction to music : in which the elementary parts of the science, and the principles of thorough bass and modulation, as illustrated by the musical games and apparatus, are fully and familiarly explained, (Edinburgh, C. Stewart and Co. Sold by Muir, Wood, and Co. 1803) vi.
31. Maria Child, *The Mother's Book*, (Glasgow, Richard Griffin & Co & London, Thomas Tegg, 1832), 138.
32. *Ibid.* 139-140.
33. Anon, *The school for sisters; or, The lesson of experience*, (London, Longman & Co., 1823), 182-183.
34. Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or female difficulties*, (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row 1814).
35. 'Robinson, Anastasia,' *Dictionary of National Biography*. (London, Smith, Elder & Co. 1885-1900).

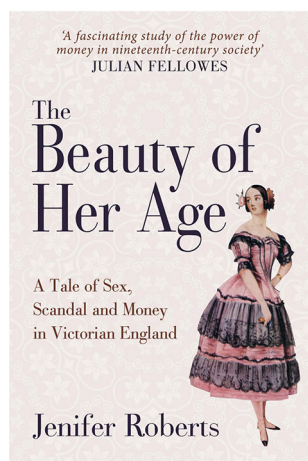
## Book Reviews

Jennifer Roberts, *The Beauty of Her Age: A Tale of Sex, Scandal and Money in Victorian England Gloucestershire*, Amberley Books, 2016. £20, ISBN 978-1-4456 5320-4 (hardback),

pp. x + 276.

Reviewed by Tracey Jones

Teesside University



*The Beauty of Her Age: A Tale of Sex, Scandal and Money in Victorian England* is an enthralling rags-to-riches story about the ballerina Yorlande Marie Louise Duvernay (Stage name – Pauline Duvernay) who was born into poverty in 1812. She married into money to become ‘the richest woman in England’ – richer than Queen Victoria herself! (p.ix). Duvernay’s story had all but ‘disappeared from history’, but Roberts has managed to bring

her to life once again through the pages of this book (p.ix).

Described as a ‘petit rat ... a little girl who wears cast off shoes’ and who ‘makes holes in the scenery to watch the performance’ Duvernay danced her way to becoming one of Queen Victoria’s favourite ballerinas (p.3). She ‘infused the dance with sexuality. She teased the men of society’ and was ‘well aware of the effect she was having on their libido’ (p.27). Furthermore, her ‘provocative gestures’ and ‘shortened skirt, that low-cut, half-open bodice’ became the ‘talk of London’ (pp.27-8). Consequently, Duvernay was pimped by her unscrupulous mother to the highest bidder and sold for sexual assignations. However, Duvernay eventually married Stephen Lyne Stephens the ‘heir to one of the largest non-aristocratic fortunes in the country’ (p.2). But with this price came stringent conditions and Duvernay danced for the last time on 19 August 1837.

Robert’s book is arranged chronologically, charting the life of this extraordinary French dancer/courtesan from her youth in the ballet to her demise as an elderly and cantankerous lonely lady. The book is well researched. Roberts draws from the Lyne Stephens and Claremont private papers, the Bedingfeld manuscripts, the National Gallery Archive, private family letters, and field trips to the various Lyne Stephens properties. It is adequately referenced with chapter notes and provides a useful index. Additionally, the book contains sixteen pages of colour prints. These images are a welcomed addition to the book and include *carte-de-visite* and paintings of Duvernay and her family, their impressive properties, the men in her life, and their final resting place.

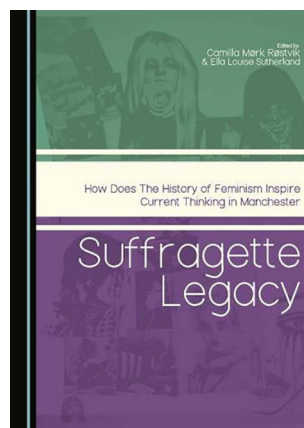
*The Beauty of Her Age* details Duvernay’s relationships, her travels and visits to art galleries and exhibitions. Interestingly, Duvernay was an avid collector of fine art and furniture. Female collecting is a much neglected subject that requires further research. Examination of the role of women

as collectors and the ways that their collections transformed domestic space is certainly an area Roberts could have considered further. I would have been interested to read about what motivated Duvernay to purchase her fine art and collect the artefacts and furniture that she did. I feel that towards the middle of the book Roberts concentrates too much on the men in Duvernay’s life and not enough on Duvernay herself. That said, it is a book that will greatly interest scholars of women’s history as it chronicles the life of a little-known nineteenth-century woman in England and France and places her firmly in the ‘centre stage’ of her own story (p.x).

Camilla Mork Rostvik and Ella Louise Sutherland (eds), *Suffragette Legacy: How Does The History of Feminism Inspire Current Thinking in Manchester Newcastle Upon Tyne*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, £41.99. 978-1-4438-8033-6 (hardback), pp.xiv + 166.

Reviewed by Fiona Snailham

University of Greenwich



*Suffragette Legacy* is a collection of essays born from a conference of the same name, an event which invited speakers and delegates to reflect upon the connections between modern-day feminists and our Suffragist foremothers and fathers. Drawing papers from a diverse group of contributors, the multiple narratives of the volume address how twenty-first century concerns about representation and protection of the physical

self; about self-expression and self-representation in the arts, schools and the media, can be linked to the fight for parliamentary representation in the early twentieth century. The opening chapter questions the temporal boundaries placed around the Suffragette movement, with Alison Ronan inviting us to consider whether the fight for female suffrage really did cease shortly after the outbreak of World War I. Using Manchester suffragists as a case study, Ronan challenges previously accepted narratives, arguing that suffragist activity continued in the North, despite the decision of Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst to cease action in order to support the war. In demonstrating connections between Northern suffragists and the peace movement, Ronan opens up a discussion of links between suffragists and other political causes, suggesting a legacy of political activism that can be traced through to the present day.

Subsequent chapters explore the continuation of suffragist activity in twenty-first century feminism, inviting us to consider the legacy of the Suffragettes in action, in terms of contemporary engagement with historic documents (through academic research, the creative arts and the education system). Important points are raised about the work that still remains: Ian Miller’s discussion of maltreatment in

Guantanamo demonstrates that we have yet to address the ethical issues raised by force-feeding, a practice described in *Votes for Women* as 'torture' and 'a return to barbarism' (p.80). The idea of women's bodies as 'sites of political struggle' (p.69) is explored further in Benjamin Halligan's contemplation of the 2011 Manchester 'slut walk'. Combining photographs and personal recollections of the event with academic analysis, the essay addresses the legacy of suffragist street protests whilst demonstrating that work remains to be done before the female body, in all its forms, can fully enter society.

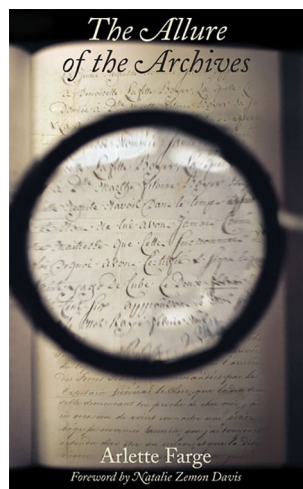
Social acceptance of the female body (both political and individual) is similarly explored through contemporary activism in art. An essay documenting the work of 'Stirred Poetry', a Manchester-based feminist poetry collective, explores ways in which the public might be encouraged to engage with the history of the Suffragettes in order to examine where feminism is today. Rebecca Audra Smith cites poetry created by members of the group, arguing that their collaborative means of creation reflect the 'shared experience and shared vision' of 'a feminist aesthetic' (p.115). Similarly, an account of a group yarnbombing project demonstrates a continuation of the suffragists' peaceful group activism as it invites us to consider the lack of public recognition of prominent women - an issue of particular relevance given recent discussions about the erection of a female statue in Parliament Square, London.

The essays in the collection are connected by their concern, implicit or explicit, with the nature of feminist archives: their formation, maintenance, accessibility and the ways in which they are used. Of particular interest in this regard is Sarah Feinstein's exploration of the history of feminist music from Suffragette songs to the feminist music movements of the 1970s and 80s, which notes the importance of music and print publications in forming collective feminist identities. Engaging with the notion of the archive itself, Feinstein asserts that archives are 'active sites for feminists to connect with their own history' (p.36) and invites us to consider the importance of institutional recognition of feminist music archives. Kellian Clink's exploration of the presentation of the fight for female suffrage in history textbooks directly engages with Feinstein's acknowledgement that 'intergenerational knowledge transfer' is one of the goals for the archives (p.39). Clink's concerns about the UK national curriculum's reductive approach to suffragism raises interesting questions as to how and why we teach feminist history.

*Suffragette Legacy* is a timely collection, raising important issues about the continued need for feminist activism at a time when we begin to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage. There is still work to be done, and this book is a reminder that the suffragettes' legacy is one with which future generations should continue to engage. In the words of the volume's editors: 'the suffragettes are dead. Long live the suffragettes!' (p.xiv)

**Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*  
New Haven and London, Yale University Press,  
2013. £23, 978-0-300-17673-5 (hardback), pp.ix  
+ 131.**

**Reviewed by Alison Wilcox**  
*University of Winchester*



Translated from the French, Arlette Farge's account of her love of archive work is both engaging and illuminating for all historians. Those who are interested in gender and women's history may be particularly interested as her chronicle of researching amongst eighteenth century Parisian judicial archives focuses upon the forgotten voices of women who came to the attention of the police and courts of the time. Farge's research into these archives has retrieved lost women's voices:

their brawls, the quarrels in which they became embroiled and as witnesses to other criminal acts. This display of female activity within the judicial archives allows us, as Farge points out, to appreciate better female and masculine roles of this time, as the women recorded in the archives do not conform to a traditional role of "fragility and compassion" (p.35), but are defiant, argumentative and are at the centre of communities and networks. The women who emerge from the archive "shatter established models" (p.42) and allow historians to consider that gender difference can be thought of in terms other than equality.

As well as demonstrating how this and potentially all archives can reveal the presence and activism of women, Farge offers lessons in how to approach documents, items and artefacts which constitute so many archives. Her advice is almost sensuous as it leads you through the steps of research from the initial opening of dusty boxes, frayed and worn folders, large books, with, at first glance, indecipherable writing, and the occasional poignant artefact, onto identifying the relevance, significance and context of the stories discovered within the boxes and folders.

Farge offers personal experiences of tackling such challenges, some of which may be familiar to her readers. In offering such intimate recollections of her discoveries, she brings a frisson of excitement to the craft of the historian; especially the exhilaration of discovery and understanding which will be familiar and appreciated by those who have spent much of their professional life sorting through the detritus of other lives lived. The lively narrative of being an historian should also, hopefully, encourage others to explore the joys of archive research.

As interludes to the task of being an historian, Farge offers vignettes of fellow readers and researchers. She recounts how regular readers in the libraries know which desk to sit at, the petty jealousies of those who fail to obtain the best seats and how boredom with reading through volumes of large books could be alleviated by wearing shiny rings that shimmered as the pages were turned for hours upon end.

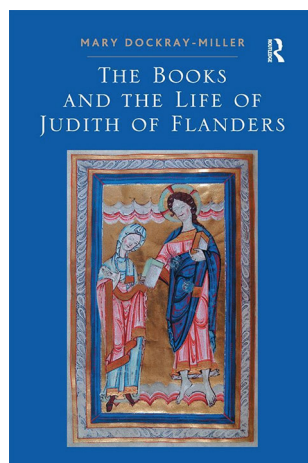
This evocative account of being a researcher is tempered by an acknowledgement that in this digital age some historians depend upon technology to conduct their research. Nevertheless, Farge asserts that archival research should continue and this stance would no doubt be supported by archivists and librarians across the world. Her account of the joy of working in archives sings with the delights and frustrations of researching in archives and libraries, yet is not accompanied by any tinge of nostalgia, making it an unsentimental and serious piece of academic literature.

This eclectic, most enjoyable mix of memoir, observation, and guide to how to research can be appreciated by readers as a narrative about discovery of the past as well as a guide as to how to be a serious, objective and discerning historian.

**Mary Dockray-Miller, *The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders***

**Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, USA,  
Ashgate Publishing Limited/Company, now  
Routledge, 2015, £62.99. 978-1-4094-6835-6  
(hardback), pp. xiii+146**

**Reviewed by Ruth E. Richardson**  
*Independent Scholar and Author*



Three Gospel books commissioned by Judith of Flanders (c.1032-1094) in England are unique as the only surviving group of manuscripts associated with a named Anglo-Saxon, male or female and their survival has been fortuitous in preserving beautiful craftsmanship. In a period where evidence for females is sparse, these books and her gifts provide welcome information about Judith herself. She was 'a patron of art, literature and the church'

(p.1) and, therefore, Mary Dockray-Miller is able to author a 'patronage biography' (p.2) of this 'middling and ambitious aristocrat' (p.2).

Maybe it was thwarted ambition that allowed Judith, in later life, to allow claims that she was a former Queen of England to go unchallenged (p.96). As the wife of Tostig Godwinson, Earl of Northumbria, she was related to the Saxon kings and she was William the Conqueror's cousin and his wife's aunt. After Tostig's death in the 1066 Battle of Stamford Bridge, Judith, in 1070, married, as his second wife, Welf, later Welf IV Duke of Bavaria. Both arranged marriages 'provided possible opportunity for increased wealth and power but not their guarantee' (p.74). Tostig had schemed with King Harald of Norway against his brother and Welf spent his life manoeuvring for lands and power. However, Judith probably viewed marriage to Welf as an improvement on life as an unendowed widow.

The introduction, *Before Northumbria*, explains Dockray-Miller's methodology and describes Judith's early life. It includes a useful family tree, although Tostig is

wrongly described as Harold's older brother. Chapter 1, *Lady of Northumbria, 1055-1065*, describes Judith's years as Tostig's wife. Despite evidence she may have born children, the only record of issue is to two sons who may have been Tostig's sons from a previous relationship. Sources quoted suggest Tostig was not popular in his earldom while Judith's character was more complex. Appendix 1, *Chapters 6 and 7 of the Vita Oswini in Modern English*, recounts the story of Judith's request for relics of St. Oswine and its consequences. The couple's visit to Rome in 1061 is discussed in detail and includes the art and architectural influences they would have seen. These are pertinent to Chapter 2, *The English Books*, which examines the Gospels, placing them in context.

In October 1065, the Northumbrian thegns successfully revolted and both Tostig and Judith went into exile in Flanders; Chapter 3, *Frontispiece Portraits and Exile* covers this period. 'Included in her [Judith's] baggage were the four manuscripts, three completed and one as yet unillustrated, as well as perhaps the porphyry altar (discussed in Chapter 1), a shrine of St. Oswald (discussed in Chapter 4), and a variety of now lost objects' (p.50). Discussion of Judith's portraits, comparing them with others, follows. Tostig, now a refugee relying on the goodwill of Judith's half-brother eventually joined Harald of Norway, but both were killed at Stamford Bridge. Another lady in Judith's position might have become a nun. Instead she completed her fourth Gospel book in order, it is suggested, to advertise herself as a 'conspicuous patron and potential marriage partner' (page 59). The twenty-six colour plates allow us to appreciate the glorious art that this involved.

Chapter 4, *Collecting Treasure as Lady of Ravensburg*, focuses on the complex political events, and context of Judith's marriage with Welf. A family tree usefully distinguishes the five relatives named Welf who included Judith's husband and son born c.1073. Her younger son, Henry, was born 1074. Judith's patronage of Weingarten Abbey, the favoured burial place for her husband's dynasty, is introduced and further explored in Chapter 5, *The Relic of the Holy Blood*. Appendix 3, *Texts relating to the Weingarten Relic of the Holy Blood in Modern English* provides the documentary evidence. Interestingly, monks at the time found it more acceptable for a relic to be donated by a male. Appendix 2, *Grants and Stipulations of Welf and Judith to Weingarten Abbey in Modern English* further supports the text.

Most Saxon ladies did not inherit land, but they could, and usually did, inherit moveable goods and these could be used, at least, to acquire status. 'Judith's primary defining characteristics were her noted piety and her extravagant patronage, although she never commanded the wealth and land to endow religious institutions at the levels of royal contemporaries.' (p.102). She probably did not donate the Holy Blood to Weingarten but her reputation was such that the monks later believed that she did. Patronage of, and donations to, the Church amply fulfilled aspiring social status in this world and the next. Perhaps Judith was genuinely pious or, more probably, her piety dovetailed nicely with her worldly concerns. Her artistic taste was impeccable.

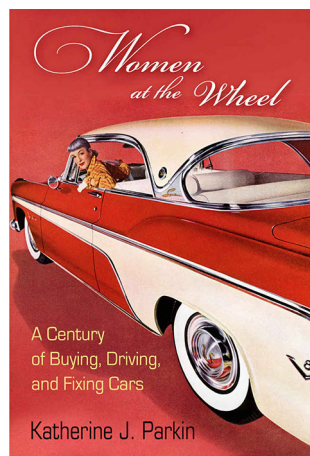
Unfortunately, this intricate book is not an easy read mainly due to the inclusion in the text of extraneous material such as the present whereabouts of the artefacts discussed. Dockray-Miller is to be commended in her careful attributions of evidence researched by other scholars, but these can obstruct understanding the text. Each chapter has full and extremely useful notes but editing the text so that description,

art discussion and political / social discussion are not so entwined would have enormously helped both the general and academic reader. Nevertheless, this interesting book is a useful addition to the genre. The expectations and social limitations that Judith experienced are of value but, perhaps more importantly, they provide a context for examining the lives of other aristocratic ladies. Through these, too, the male dominated attitudes faced by their contemporaries in other levels of society may be more clearly understood.

**Katherine J. Parkin, *Women at the Wheel: A Century of Buying, Driving, and Fixing Cars*  
University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia,  
2017. £27.99, 978-0-812-24953-8 (hardback), pp.  
272**

**Reviewed by Jo Stanley**

*Liverpool John Moores University*



Backseat drivers; nervy  
causers of crashes; idiots  
who don't even know how to  
check their own tyres, park, or  
even remember their vehicle's  
make, only the colour. Such  
stereotypes about women and  
their cars persist. Singers even  
position women *as* cars whilst  
comedian Bob Newhart set the  
discouraging tone for decades  
when he focused on a *female*  
novice's hilarious incompetence.  
No wonder the Girl Scouts  
named and tackled the

phenomenon named female 'auto phobia'. And that was in the early 2000s, not 1900s.

*Women at the Wheel* outlines such a climate in an accessible but scholarly way, with hilarious and troubling reproductions of advertisements. Entirely focused on the automobility-rich US it includes chapters on learning to drive, buying the car, driving it, caring for it, and the car and identity.

Seminal 1990s books such as Marilyn Root (1999) Elinor Nauen (1996) and Virginia Scharff (1992) celebrated early American women's access to automobility as liberatory. Parkin extends this. She gives readers the whole century-long and deeply shocking saga of an industry that hegemonically skewed automobility and blundered about mismatching women-as 'Other' with their means of transportation.

The author shows the deterioration from the very promising climate in the 1910s when lady racers gained agency through wealth and became inspiring role models. Early advertising was also far less Othering. Interwar and later wartime manufacturers tried to sell cars to women who were thought to be primarily busy mums who ferried children and shopped; home-bound wife-ettes who feared high revs and mucky engines; and husbands who worried about their charmingly helpless spouse's safety when unaccompanied by the 'Real Driver'.

The book traces the lucrative emergence of the 'Ms-Marketing' idea that if a woman had her very own car it would enable her to gain that modern freedom from 'the prison of

home'. All the better, if the vehicle had a lipstick-holder instead of a horn, offered a matching umbrella-plus-pocket, was called something feminine like the Mona Lisa, allowed automatic gear changing, and had a keyless entry system (because gals always misplace their keys). Some male designers even wore high heels and paperclipped on a set of long fingernails for empathy. Such post-1950s ploys later coincided with the feminist recognition that a car brought crucial access to mobility, motility and therefore agency. This kind of *Thelma and Louise* view was partly expressed in the 1980s bumper sticker 'Good girls go to heaven; bad girls go everywhere'.

'Caring for the car' is the most heartening chapter. Implicitly it discusses many productive fightbacks by women – which deserve even more credit than they get here. As an outcome of the 1970s women's liberation movement, people worked to give women access to both knowledge and to repair centres that were not misogynistic sites of garagespeaking lechers who thought they could rip off dim 'outsiders'. Now you could take your machine to be fixed respectfully by what were once called powder-puff mechanics, at the 'Grease and Glamour Clinic', or the lesbian-run 'Wrenchwomen Clinic'.

Manuals emerged to help women take a more confident approach to handling their machine, although some instruction books patronisingly made domestic comparisons. But Deanna Sclar deliberately did not entitle her *'Auto repair for Dummies'* (1976) 'for women'. Feminist interest in driver education's empowering value sometimes went hand in hand with canny cost-free initiatives by manufacturers, such as Chrysler's post 1971 Women on Wheels program.

Everyone who drives, not only female drivers, should read this illuminating and essential work. It is an eye-opening summary of this aspect of women's systemic exclusion from power, and of the way women *did* appropriate some agency. As someone who welcomes the new social sciences turn toward mobilities (which includes gendered mobility) I can't help feeling this book would have been even more productive if women drivers had been more contextualised within this paradigm. It deserves a nettle-grasping discussion of *why* the hyper-masculine car industry continued to 'other' women, reproducing that binary where men are associated with movement and action, and women with passivity and pinkness.

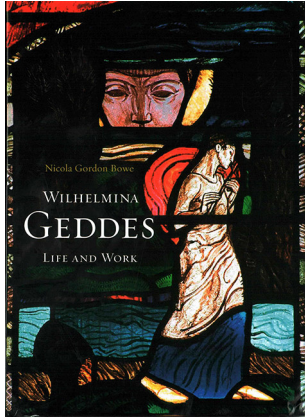
As a contribution to the barely-told wider study of women's mobility this clear book is invaluable. Hopefully, it will inspire counterparts in the UK and other countries with very different car-owning patterns. It would be useful if it triggered politically-aware studies that recognised women's differential access to mobility (based on factors such as class, location and race), and the problem that every time you make a car trip you are potentially disabling the public transportation system and thereby reducing another woman's mobility.

**Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Wilhemina Geddes Life and Work***

**Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2016. £45.00, 978-I-84682-532-3 (hardback), pp.xxi + 483.**

**Reviewed by Clare Taylor**

*The Open University, UK*



In recent years the contribution made by women artists to the Arts & Crafts Movement has begun to be analysed and celebrated. Stained glass was an important aspect of the movement, as the book's author explains offering opportunities for women to become established in workshops outside commercial firms. Step forward Wilhemina Geddes, who straddled both this movement and the Irish Cultural Revival

and who pursued the medium of stained glass from 1911 to her death in 1955. This book brings together some thirty years research into her stained glass work across the UK and further afield, including prestigious commissions in Belgium and Canada, alongside her little known designs for embroidery (worked by her sister, Ethel), watercolour and ink studies, and wood and linocuts for book illustrations, evidencing her gifts as an artist. Yet challenges – with ill health, with money (especially during the Second World War) and with maintaining her artistic integrity – also marked her life. The life and work of the title are therefore intertwined in this sparkling twelve chapter study.

It reveals Geddes as a woman of considerable personal and artistic courage, one who strove to overcome her own physical and mental ill health. Born into a then affluent Belfast family, classes in drawing and printing techniques developed her artistic skills, while holidays on the Antrim coast and in Scotland formed the basis of her visual library of the settings and monuments of the Celtic Saints. She gained further insights in ancient and western art and a taste for research through attending lectures on the classical world, and studying sculpture and glass in London and York. In 1911, she began working in stained glass, journeying first to Dublin after a watercolour and ink study caught the eye of Sarah Purser, founder of the stained glass workshop An Túr Gloine, set up on the cooperative model of the Glasshouse established in London by the Suffragist Mary Lowndes. However, in 1926 Geddes left commissions and a growing name behind her to start almost afresh at the Glasshouse. Gordon Bowe speculates that it was the quest for individual creativity which led Geddes to depart for London.

Geddes worked largely independently throughout her life, and on a monumental scale, challenging gender norms. This book argues that it was the Wheeler memorial window for St John's church, Malone Road, Belfast (1919) where her individual artistic identity emerged, in her creation of 'a glowing assemblage of loosely painted, semi-abstract Cubist form and patterned shapes' where figures wind through leafy glades towards the figure of St Brendan, recalling medieval tapestry (p.143). Her ability to combine primitivist and modern

forms to create intensely expressive figures was reflected in her reworking of female archetypes such as Jeanne D'Arc as 'stoically androgynous' (p.7). However, Gordon Bowe shows that Geddes's use of colour and form were entirely her own, characterised by a jewel-like palette and understanding of the balance needed between leading, glass painting and thick slabs to capture light. Her techniques are also revealed as both exhaustive and exhausting; this book paints a picture as vivid as the windows themselves of Geddes's tireless selection and re-cutting of glass and her painstaking application of metallic stains between firings, which often left commissioning bodies wondering if their windows would ever see the light and limited her ability to take on work. Many of her commissions were two or three light but that at St Luke's, Wallsend (1922) was five, memorably described by the Studio as 'a big thing for a woman to have done' (p.175), while the rose window at Ypres (1938), was 250' square.

Female networks also sustained Geddes throughout her life. In the early days she relied on Purser's contacts, but through the Ulster sculptor Rosamond Praeger, with whom she had her only substantial exhibition, she obtained several important Presbyterian commissions. At the Glasshouse, she also encountered a younger generation of women artists (Evie Hone was a pupil), and was in turn supported by them, notably Clare Dawson, formerly a pupil of Margaret 'Tor' Rope whom Geddes had known since Dublin days.

Why then has she been little known? Hitherto her output, scattered across churches or in store, has been hard to appreciate in its totality, a lapse this copiously illustrated book corrects. Her personal reputation was also mixed. To apprentices she was 'the gorgon', however Gordon Bowe describes her craftsmanship as 'relentlessly exacting' (p.3). This book shows how Geddes' understanding of the possibilities of stained glass was matched by her ability to synthesise artistic movements from Romanesque sculpture to Cubism. It also puts her back on the map not only of the Arts & Crafts Movement, but also of twentieth century artists working with this demanding medium, one whose final monumental work for St Peter's, Lampeter, showed a grasp of human anatomy Gordon Bowe judges unique in the art of stained glass.

Women's History was sorry to learn of the death of Nicola Gordon Bowe on 4th January 2018

## BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

John Callow, *Embracing the Darkness. A Cultural History of Witchcraft* (I.B. Tauris)

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

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

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

Naomi Clifford, *Women and the Gallows, 1797 - 1837. Unfortunate Wretches* (Pen + Sword)

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

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

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



## Committee News

The Steering Committee met last on 4 November 2017 at the IHR, University of London.

### Budget and membership

Our finances are healthy and as of 4 November there are 392 members registered. Our Current Account stands at £14,614.53 and our Savings Account at £10,032. The main source of Income is Memberships which is slightly declining: Annual income in March 2017 was £11,278 (£11,621 in March 2016) – this needs to be monitored. The main costs that we accrue are linked to the printing and distribution of the Journal. Costs have been declining as we've moved to electronic copy as well as hard copy (saved c.£1000 last year). Additional costs: committee costs – travel expenses and room hire; website; grants and bursaries, and for this year coming, publicity materials. The Provisional Budget for 2017-18 is £13,500 which is more than our income from Membership in 2016-17 (£11,2878) and leaves us in a good position with £3-4,000 in the Current Account. Additionally, the number of subscribers to the Newsletter continues to go up (in November 2017 the figure stood at 1520).

### 2017 Conference Film

Jenni Waugh very kindly made a film of the 2017 Women's History Network conference which you can watch online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Vdnn3TYGzs>

### New steering committee members wanted

The steering committee is considering potential people to join the committee when committee members leave in 2018. Biographies of potential candidates need to be circulated in July 2018 with a view to the new candidates being elected at AGM.

### Publicity surrounding events and public engagement work

The number of entrants for the Community History Prize is growing and the committee is keen to maximise on publicity surrounding events and in public engagement work more generally. We have decided to update the WHN postcards, which it is agreed are potentially a very good publicity tool and a vehicle for capturing new members. We are also hoping to hold a conference for A Level students and target their teachers, and to have dedicated space on the website for school's liaison activities, which could function as a space for queries from schools and other resources and links. We are in contact with Rebecca Sullivan (CEO of the Historical Association) who is keen to support the promotion of WHN events and initiatives with schools.

## Annual Conference for 2018

Planning is going very well for the WHN conference organised by June Purvis celebrating the suffrage centenary in Portsmouth to be held on the 31 and 1 September 2018. The first call for papers is live (the deadline is 2 February). A second call will be made with the deadline of the 2 April.

The month before this, in August 2018, the International Federation for Research in Women's History conference is being held in Vancouver on the theme: 'Transnationalisms, Transgressions, Translations'.

### Prizes

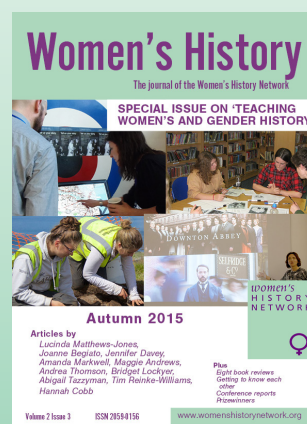
The 2018 Community History prize and the WHN book prize are now open and accepting entries. A full publicity campaign will be launched in January 2018.

## Women's History Back issues

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

£5.00 inc postage (Digital/UK print version)  
£6.50 inc postage (Overseas print version)

Most issues are available, from Spring 2002 to the present. Discover the contents of each issue at [www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/)  
Order and pay online or email [magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org](mailto:magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org)



## Getting to Know Each Other



### **Name**

Zoe Thomas

### **Position**

Lecturer in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain and the Wider World at the University of Birmingham

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

A few years, but new to the committee from September

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

I have always been fascinated by historical women's and girl's lives. My main memory of being little is frantically reading and re-reading Chalet School books, developing an obsession with the historians Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland, and trying to get family members to drive me to National Trust properties in the Lake District (where I grew up) where I asked endless questions about the women that had once lived there. At university, I quickly realised the political importance of women's history, a view which was aided by the lack of courses on the topic. My horror at how little research there had been on women in the Arts and Crafts movement directly led to my MA and my PhD.

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

I am currently writing a book on women art workers and the Arts and Crafts movement. This topic (and these women) have been my obsession for several years now. Through this, I have become increasingly fascinated by the relationship between art and politics which culminated in a co-edited collection titled *Suffrage and the Arts* which is forthcoming with Bloomsbury in 2018. My research into the professionalising strategies of women in the arts has also blossomed into an interest in the professional strategies of women across disciplines in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and I am in the process of publishing a second co-edited collection on this. Most recently, I co-wrote a piece on global and comparative feminisms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with Kathryn Gleadle for *Women's History Review*. One of my favourite things about being a historian is the endless potential for new areas of research enquiry which can quickly blossom (as shown through a recent article on women's historical pageants and through my forthcoming module at Birmingham on the history of servants.)

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

I tend to be more interested in women that have probably never been called heroines. In particular, I am inspired by the women who dedicated their lives to opening up the professions for women from the late nineteenth century onwards. Their dedication and commitment inspires me every day.

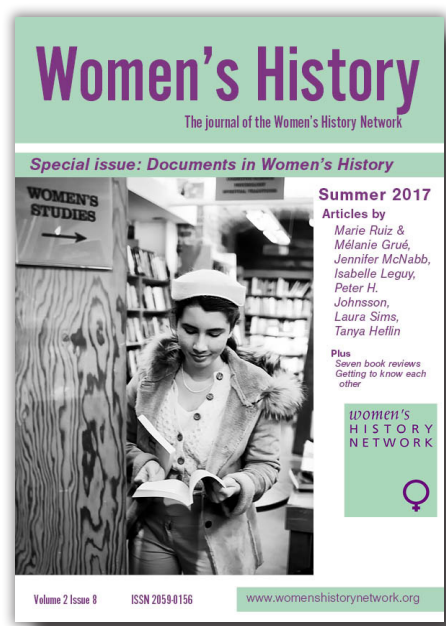
# Publishing in *Women's History*

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

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

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

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



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

For journal/magazine back issues and queries please email:  
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To join the WHN just go to  
[www.womenshistorynetwork.org](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org) and follow the instructions.  
Payments and Gift-Aid declarations can all be  
accessed online as well – see panel on page 19 for further details

## What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national charity concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

### Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

### What does the WHN do?

#### Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

#### WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the *Women's History*, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities. The journal is delivered electronically in PDF form to all members via email. UK-based members, however, can elect to receive a printed hardcopy of *Women's History* for an increased membership fee.

### WHN membership

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

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

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