

Women's History S C O T L A N D

Review of 2009-10

The past year has seemed quieter than usual, largely owing to the fact that we temporarily abandoned our normal conference pattern of an annual conference in the autumn and a postgraduate workshop in the spring (owing to the joint conference with the Irish Women's Historians in Dublin in April 2009). But, as the following update shows, much has been happening in the background and we are busy making plans for the 2010 autumn conference.

It is great to report that we have more than 100 members, our finances are healthy, and the Steering Committee continues to work hard on a range of projects, all of which aim to promote dialogue between the wide range of people who have an interest in women's and gender history in Scotland. The website is our noticeboard and our face to the world and it is invaluable as a means of communication (thanks to Rosi for her hard work maintaining the site). Likewise, we hope the monthly Newsletter serves its purpose of communicating not just WHS activities but a range of events, conferences etc of interest to our membership (thank you to Juliette for compiling this essential resource).

Past

Our 2009 PG Workshop took place in September at Napier University on the theme of 'The Past is Myself: Women's Life Narratives and Women's History'. Organised by Linda Fleming, Amy Murphy and Yvonne McFadden, the event was kicked off by Trev Broughton (York University), whose expertise lies in the field of life writing and autobiography, who spoke about Mrs Margaret Oliphant and her life of writing in a range of genres from fiction to biography. The rest of the programme featured a range of excellent papers ranging from studies of women and genealogy, oral history, domestic fiction, women's lives within the family and in politics and women's self construction in dairies, all of which prompted discussion and reflection.

The 2010 Annual Conference will be held in October at UHI Dornoch - see details below.

Gude Cause

WHS was proud and excited to be involved in the Gude Cause procession, marking the 100 year anniversary of the women's suffrage procession in Edinburgh in 1909. On a bright, cold morning in October a number of us gathered around the specially commissioned WHS banner and marched with thousands of others through the capital. Photographs of the event can be seen on our website. The banner survives to be used at future events and Gude Cause has stimulated a number of spin off activities including an archive of photos, documents, etc. relating to the Gude Cause events which will be placed in the NLS and a publication of a 100 year timeline compiled by Lesley Orr and Esther Breitenbach.

Current and on-going projects

Members of the Steering Committee are involved in a series of projects, all of which seek to engender a dialogue between women's and gender history research and public understanding and enthusiasm for the subject.

Memorials to Scottish Women This is a project involving WHS, Glasgow Women's Library and Girlguiding Scotland. The aim is to compile a database and website of Scottish women's memorials, building upon the information compiled from the *Biographical Dictionary* in order to engage Scottish guides in the gathering and recording process. The intended end result will be a list of memorials to women around the country, to be available online. We are extremely pleased to report that £8800 has been raised in funds for the project; £5800 from the Lottery fund Awards for All, and £1000 from each of three charitable trusts. Work on the project is underway and we will continue to update members on its progress.

Documentary History of Women in 19th Century Scotland Esther Breitenbach, Linda Fleming, Karly Kehoe and Lesley Orr are the editorial team responsible for compiling this important text contracted to Edinburgh University Press. A collection of primary sources accompanied by explanatory essays, this book will be a welcome and important addition to the published material on Scottish women's history.

Future

2010 Annual Conference: 15-16 October 2010, University of the Highlands and Islands, Dornoch.

'Women in/on the land (scape): gender, space and environment in women's and gender history'

We had a terrific response to the call for papers and are currently putting together the programme and registration information. It has long been one of our aims to take the annual conference out of the central belt and to engage with issues concerning women in rural areas and the Highlands in particular. Stana Nenadic will be giving the Sue Innes memorial lecture in the stunning surroundings of Dornoch Cathedral, there will be opportunities for walking tours focused on the women of the area, as well as a reception and of course stimulating papers.

If you are a member of WHS you will be receiving full information by email shortly. And details will be posted on the website.

2011 Postgraduate Workshop

This event is traditionally organised by postgraduates affiliated to WHS and is an opportunity for researchers to present their material in a supportively critical environment. We will be updating you with details later this year.

General issues

The Steering Committee of WHS meets several times a year in order to review ongoing issues (membership, finances, publicity, etc) and to plan ahead.

Membership of the Steering Committee is currently drawn from across Scotland, and includes two international officers (In Denmark and Canada) and includes academics (early career and established), postgraduates and independent researchers. This is a combination that seems to work well and that we will endeavour to maintain. There

are opportunities for WHS members to join the Steering Committee at our AGM. Information about WHS and our activities is provided on our website www.womenshistoryscotland.org.uk and details of WHS activities and other gender and women's history related events are circulated via our e-Newsletter which is also posted on the website.

If you have any suggestions or proposals for us please contact me or one of the Steering Committee members, or you can send us a message via the website.

WHS is nothing without those who give up their time to work hard in the cause of women's and gender history. I would like to thank everyone on the Steering Committee and those from amongst the wider membership who have contributed to our work over the past year.

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