

WOMEN REFLECTING ON WOMEN:

ARE WE THERE YET?

A heritage partnership project between
Skipko and 13 communities in Leeds
funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Edited by Arthur Stafford and Cath Brooke

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42 Barkston House
Croydon Street
Leeds
LS11 9RT
Telephone: 0113 234 5355
www.skippko.org.uk
@skippko

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Edited by Arthur Stafford and Cath Brooke

Artwork created by Skippko artists Emma Baim, Annie Beech,
Matthew Bellwood, Anne Crowther, Rozi Fuller, Penny Lewis,
Van Nong, Sally Storr, Nicki Taylor and project participants

Photography by Nicki Taylor

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Foreword

This is the third version of a foreword I have written for a much-delayed publication marking the culmination of an amazing project; the first version was in January 2020 and the second in April 2020. The reason for the delay was, of course, the pandemic. Since we completed the participatory elements of the project, and met in celebration in February 2020, much has changed and, sadly, some of us have passed away.

In the following pages and chapters lie the results of the endeavour of 13 individual community groups from across Leeds working to a collective ambition: what can we find out about the lives of working class women at the end of the 19th/early 20th Centuries and how do we respond to that knowledge?

It took us three years to secure the funding to initiate this large, community-rooted project and it is entirely likely that in a post-virus, socially distanced world, Women Reflecting On Women will be the last project of this scope and widespread community engagement that Skippko (or indeed any other arts organisation) will undertake for at least a couple of years.

The following 66 pages reflect the astonishingly intensive work undertaken by all the project's participants (in excess of 230) and the commitment they invested in the project in spite of often difficult individual lives: as ever, I am humbled by their energy, creativity and generosity of spirit.

This is not an academic text. It presents the work people have undertaken over the course of nine months and tells their stories, in their words. Participants developed new skills in researching local history, reflected on what had been unearthed and then contrasted with the histories of their own families. These stories are from people largely ignored by history and, they celebrate family and local history frequently absent from the collective (and recorded) history of this City.

It is an enormous privilege to introduce this publication and to, once again, pay testament to the creativity, resilience and sheer determination of people from communities across the City of Leeds.

Arthur Stafford
April 2021





Inspiring Women Grandparents Support Group

The suffragettes were militant groups united by their belief that women deserved the right to vote. They gathered together, sometimes in secret, sharing their ideals for a better, brighter and more positive future for women.

Fast forward 112 years to South Leeds, take away the militant aspect of suffrage and you have our Grandparents' Support Group.

The group meets weekly at Tenant's Hall in Middleton. Like so many of last century's inspirational women of Leeds, these grandparents get together to provide each other with an incredible source of comfort and encouragement. Struggling with the harsh realities of raising young children as kinship carers, often without any support from the authorities, this group has become a lifeline for many of its members.

It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to join them fortnightly and to gain an insight into just how remarkable each and every one of these individuals is.



We had a lot of fun exploring personal icons through the ages, using collage to create vibrant works of art commemorating dates of personal significance. After some persuasion, the group relented and allowed us to call them 'inspirational icons' in their own right.

That's when we moved on and began creating a decorative chest of drawers. The contents and the adornment of each drawer was designed to represent a member of the group or a woman who had inspired them through the years.

It's time to let the rest of this chapter do the talking for us. So, flip the pages and catch a glimpse of our fabulous group at work, play and therapeutic natter.



Paula

The founder of the Grandparents' Support Group, Paula remains unaware of how much the other members appreciate and value her. In fact, one of the participants selected Paula as her inspiration. That really speaks volumes.

She enjoyed delving into her own family history in the library sessions, exploring her origins and her ancestry. She came into her own when dressing her miniature self and making trees for our final installation.

Paula has certainly had fun putting Matthew in his place, particularly when he dared to suggest using glue dots in place of a glue gun in one session. However, it was all done in great spirits and with a twinkle in her eye.



Sue B

Living with chronic illness means that life is full of challenges for Sue. She has enjoyed the therapeutic nature of our sessions, happily immersing herself in whatever creative task we set. For Sue, being a kinship carer seems to be instinctive. She often spoke of her own mother having inspired her immensely.

The contents of one of her drawers is 200 hand-cut paper hearts – each representing one of the many children fostered by her mother over the years.

A Mother's Love

A mother's love is something that no one can explain,
It is made of deep devotion and of sacrifice and pain,
It is endless and unselfish and enduring come what may,
For nothing can destroy it or take that love away...
It is patient and forgiving when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters even though the heart is breaking...
It believes beyond believing when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty of the rarest brightest gems...
It is far beyond defining, it defies all explanation,
And it still remains a secret like the mysteries of creation...
A many splendored miracle man cannot understand,
And another wondrous evidence of God's tender guiding hand.

- Helen Steiner Rice



Sue, Yvonne, Nicola, Sam

"Realising how strong the women in my family are"



"Amazing how events change lives and peoples influence and passion makes a difference."



A Lupus Butterfly

You see me fly around as if nothing is wrong
 You see my beautiful colourful wings so gracefully flap back and forth
 What you don't see is the pain that is retching through my body
 What you don't see is the river of tears that hide behind
 I am the lonely among you
 A sheltered life that is wrapped around in this cocoon of mine
 Just to be invisible from your reality
 So as my life goes on
 You will only see the reflections of me flying around as if nothing is wrong
 I am a beautiful Lupus Butterfly

"Families are like branches on a tree. We grow in different directions yet our roots remain as one."

Lesley

Between the 1980s and 90s I changed the way pubs and clubs treated their clientele. All the pubs/clubs in Leeds had male bouncers on the doors. Even though men and women used these places, I saw male bouncers approaching ladies who had got into arguments and fights. They were manhandled and touched in inappropriate ways. Seeing this, I felt that women were violated, and I felt I had to change something so this didn't continue. I was speaking to a landlord of a pub in Leeds and I voiced my concern. He said I was right as there had been many a complaint from women who was manhandled, and sexually assaulted by these men who was called Bouncers. I started to work voluntary in this pub. It changed a lot in the way what women had wanted. In the early 1990's, a law came out in force in Leeds that all bouncers/door supervisors had to be registered with the local police and council. You had to have a licence to work on the doors. I was approached to register by the police and council. I applied. I was the first female in Leeds to be registered to work on the doors of the pubs and clubs of Leeds. Because I was the first female, it got round that all the pubs/clubs needed female door staff, as some men handled the women wrong. More and more females came forward to do the door supervisors licence. I'm proud to say that I changed the way for women to work in a so-called



man's job. To do this now in 2019 there are thousands of women that have followed in my footsteps. It's not just a man's world, but women can do the job as well. I'm so proud to have inspired women of this world to follow suit.

It was a man's world. I got loads of abuse – people saying I was doing a man's job. I've got a newspaper clipping from the Yorkshire Evening Post. They did a write up of me – it was part of a series about women doing men's jobs. I was in the Big Issue as well. I did a telephone interview but because I wasn't available for a photo, they used a model.



I used to get a lot of sexual harassment when I worked on the doors – especially being gay and all that. They used to ask if I was missing anything or say 'I'd love to go with two women', I used to say 'Yeah, so would I!'

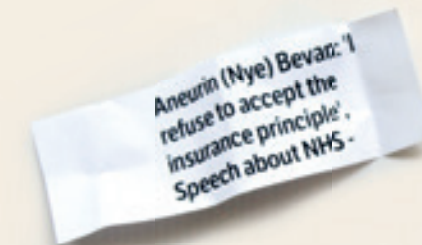
Jenny

I am a Kinship Carer for our grandson and I attend a group, Grandparents Support Group in Middleton. We have engaged with Skippko and their project 'Women Reflecting on Women: are we there yet?'

As part of this, I researched health care in the time of the Suffragettes. I came across 'Babies Welcome' that was set up for mothers who were pregnant and children up to one year. It was felt that mothers did not have the knowledge to do what was right for themselves and their children. It offered support, teaching, finance, food and clothes.

That made me think about our group and the reason it was set up four years ago.

We are looking after our grandchildren who for various reasons are unable to live with their birth parents.



So have things changed much since the early 1900s? The parents of our children were not able to put their children first or have the knowledge to give them the best start in life. Unlike the mothers all those years ago, the mothers of the children that we take care of, struggled to realise that they needed help when it was offered to them.

Is there another way to ensure we reduce the number of kinship carers required – could we teach mothers earlier about the needs of children?



Abbey House Visit & Dennison Sisters

We visited the lovely Abbey House Museum and the ladies were enchanted by the quaintness of the replica Leeds cobbles hidden inside. They were particularly taken with the Apothecary Shop, all having a keen interest in health and wellbeing.

When we ventured upstairs and were able to have a closer look at all the archived materials, the group were fascinated with the shortages of women working within the Health Service over the years. They were also struck by the recurrence of certain headlines and ideas. The phrase "Woman in a man's world" caught Lesley's eye in particular.

In amongst all those treasures, were the diaries of three Leeds girls, the Dennison sisters. These were certainly three women who were carving out a path for themselves in a very male-dominated world.



Woman in a man's world

'I'm accepted—and I've lost none of my femininity' and captures how women

Given loans, pens, old vacuums—and a very strict. That's my working world at Knap's big, grey city dock being built in Belfast.

As one of Belfast's few women engineers, I work with right or left hand in my section of the site, making certain that what they build returns exactly to the plan in the drawing office. It's a job sometimes made easier, often made more difficult, by the fact that I'm a woman working in a man's world. I've always been interested in the sciences, an inheritance, I suppose, from my father who made physics and chemistry near Tassan, however, as I went to Birmingham University to study engineering. They accepted me with open arms, delighted to find a woman who wanted to be an engineer, and the 50 men on my course didn't seem to mind either!

During my second summer vacation I did some consulting for Wimpey's, the construction engineers, and when I left I received from William Blackie of Belfast degree. I applied to them for a job. They had never before taken on a woman engineer, but they accepted me solely on my merits, offered me the same salary as they would a man, and gave me the opportunity to qualify as a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. This meant that I must spend at least a year doing practical work on a site, and a year in the drawing office. So that's how I came to be working on the site in Belfast. I admit I was nervous when I arrived. I remembered a girl I knew who was refused a job as an engineer as a site because the men wouldn't work with her. I wasn't half scared to death. In all the months I've worked in Belfast I've never had to hear any open hostility from the men, though one foreman doubted as to whether we'd get on. It's never that women dream!

It wasn't easy at first, of course, because the men wouldn't have been I know what I was talking about, and when I saw them checking one of my instructions with another male engineer, it worried me. But I found that attitude unimprovable. Far from making allowances for me because I'm a woman I think the men made less. If I did make a mistake, they teased the daylight out of me; they didn't seem to feel they could take me at all seriously. Now they know I do know my job they treat me as normal, excepting that, but I'm not allowed to rest on my laurels. In a job like mine there are advantages to being a woman. I don't have to do any heavy manual work, lifting and carrying instruments and so on.

PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED

Women are often put off engineering because of the masculine atmosphere, but the job doesn't mean you have to lose your feminine personality. When I get home I change into a pretty dress and spend evenings dancing, dancing or visiting. People are always surprised when they learn what I work at, and I want to get definite. But now I just treat it as a job. I enjoy and find it and I've found to be extremely liberating about it.

Edited by Margaret Offens
Designed by Dennis Wicks
Written by Dennis Wicks, Iris Burton, Wendy Jones, Daphne Morrison
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Just at work directing men on the Belfast site

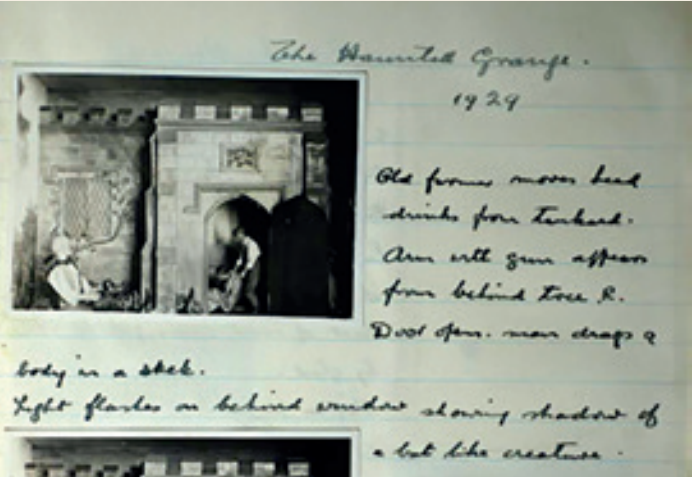
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Women's progress in the professions

1928	1933	1939
44 Solicitors (shown in brackets)	1,200 Doctors (shown in brackets)	1,074 University Graduates
619 Solicitors	10,000 Doctors	10,000 University Graduates
1968 (over 100,000)	1969	1966

PART SEVEN: THE KEYS TO YOUR PERSONALITY



Images courtesy of Abbey House Museum

Hailing from Roundhay, their father established and ran a successful business creating Penny Slot Machines. His daughters, Florence, Alice and Eveline, began by assisting him on his creations. When they started having their own ideas, John encouraged their contributions. When John died in 1924, his daughters took hold of the business.

Middle sister, Alice had worked previously as a dress-maker, and brought these skills to their models by inspiring and creating the costumes. She was also the driving force behind switching from clockwork to electricity, showing a flair for engineering.

Eveline, the baby of the family, was the artistic visionary of the pack. She had won a scholarship as an art student and put this to use creating the models from wood and clay.

Florence, the eldest, had a natural flair for business. She was the one who kept the books in order and negotiated the deals the girls went on to make.

Not only were our ladies impressed by the acumen, drive and ambition these local lasses showed, but they were also charmed by the beautiful slot machines on display in the museum. And so, our plan to create a (non-operational) machine of our own was hatched.



The Rally

To bring together the various themes and stories we had researched, we decided to create a miniature version of a suffrage rally. This was based on an actual event which took place in Leeds. There were two major rallies in 1908; one in February, on Hunslet Moor and one in July on Woodhouse Moor, both with Mary Gawthorpe as one of the prime movers. There was a further rally in 1913, on Woodhouse Moor, at which Leonora Cohen was in attendance. Historian Jill Liddington describes the rally in Hunslet in her book “Rebel Girls”:

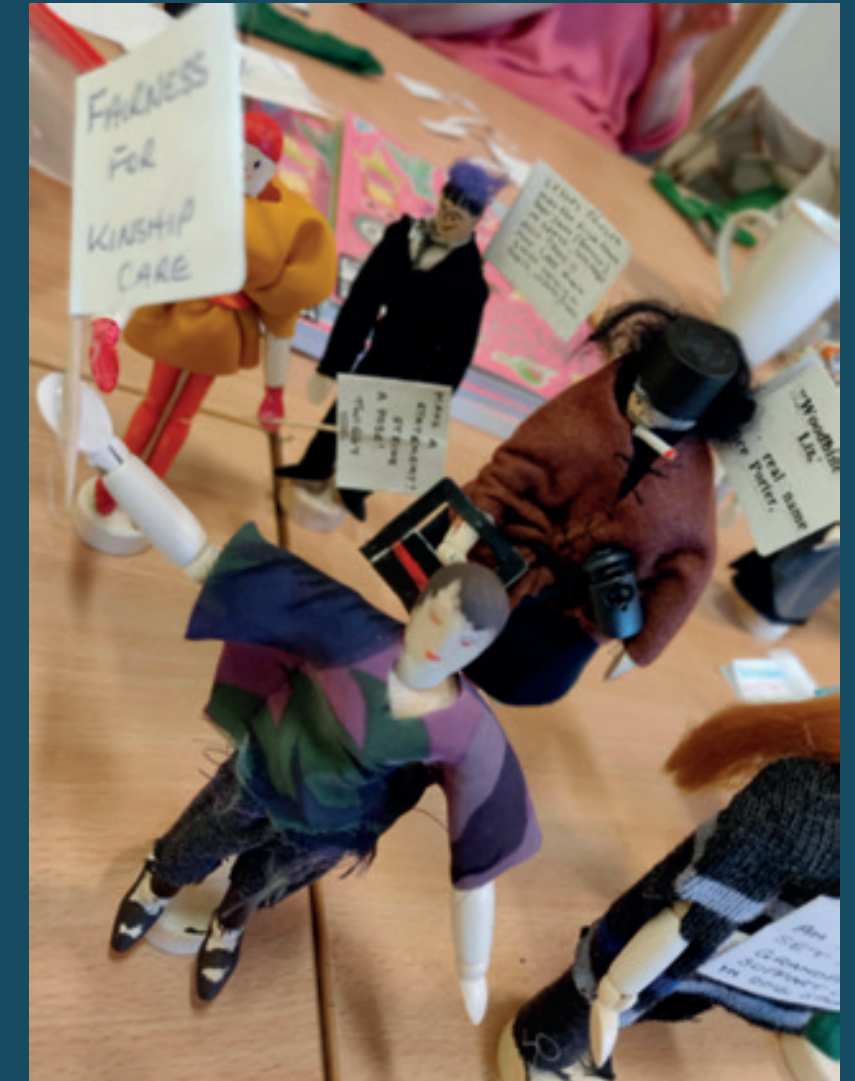
“... on 11 February 1908, Leeds suffragettes took part in the WSPU’s third Women’s Parliament. Along with Lavena Saltonstall, Ann Older and Ellen Brooke from the Honley area, three Leeds suffragettes were arrested – including Mary Titterington again, and her daughter Amy, now aged about twenty-one and working as a milliner. As it was Mary’s second time in court, she was given forty shillings or two months; the others were sentenced either to be bound over to keep the peace for a year, or six weeks in prison. They, of course, chose the latter, and were dispatched to Holloway in special vans.

At the same time, a by-election campaign in Liberal-held South Leeds was gathering pace. This drew the WSPU into the city: not only Mary Gawthorpe but also Emmeline and Adela Pankhurst. Mary’s anti-liberal electioneering was emphatic: If you vote for the Government, you will plump for [i.e. support] the imprisonment of women, and if you vote against Mr Middlebrook [Liberal] you will give the Government the biggest slap it has had yet.”

The campaign culminated in a torchlight procession led by a band, with a rally on Hunslet Moor. Speakers included Emmeline and Adela, Jennie Baines and Nellie Martel, plus Elizabeth Pinnance and Ellen Brooke from Huddersfield. In her autobiography Mrs Pankhurst evoked how “The throngs of Mill Women kept up the chorus in Broad Yorkshire: “Shall us win? Shall us have the vote? We shall!” The Hunslet Moor Rally was indeed fairly boisterous by-election fare; of the heckling, the Yorkshire Post noted laconically, “At all the platforms there were interruptions, but the suffragettes managed to say a great deal in the three-quarters of an hour they were able to stick to their wagons.”

Rebel Girls: How votes for women changed Edwardian lives, By Jill Liddington, Virago, 2006

Our miniature recreation includes figures representing the campaigners of the time, along with other women from the last 100 years. The women we chose include members of the Grandparents Support Group, along with others who we felt were iconic, inspiring and deserving of recognition. They may not have been around in 1908, but we felt that if they had been, they would have been there with the suffragettes, braving the hecklers and raising their voices in the fight for equal rights.





What makes ordinary people inspirational... Caring Together Group

The Caring Together Group are based in the Little London and Woodhouse areas of Leeds.

The Woodhouse Community Centre has a room named after Doreen Tinker. Why? Who was Doreen Tinker? This inspired the group to focus on commemorating the often unsung, forgotten and inspirational women of Leeds, such as:

- Doreen Tinker
- Gertrude Paul
- Julia Bingham
- Vesta Victoria
- Beryl Burton

We started with suffragette Mary Gawthorpe who was born in Woodhouse. Some of the group researched maps from 1911 to present day, charting where group members have lived and how the area (and street names) have radically changed. Another line of enquiry was related to the importance of soap-making to the area and we discovered the origins of the phrase 'soap opera' which is explored in the following pages along with information relating to the inspirational women.

The group experimented with the animation technique of pixilation and created an animated soap opera in the style of the silent movies that Mary Gawthorpe may have watched at the Electric Picture House near her birthplace. The group created animated portraits of themselves and the key figures from their research

and projected these on to two plaster busts as part of the exhibition.

A trip to Abbey House Museum provided inspiration for the animated 'soap opera' with a story line of: *Mary is interrupted from her life of housework by a time-traveller who invites her to visit the Caring Together group. She has so much fun she eats all their biscuits. Her rebellious spirit is kindled and she returns to her own time, where she commands her vacuum cleaner to work by itself.* The film, 'Caring Soap' is featured in the exhibition and can be viewed at www.youtube.com - search for skipkko.



Mary on Mary Gawthorpe (1881 - 1973)

Mary Eleanor Gawthorpe born 12th Jan 1881. Died 12th March 1973. Suffragette socialist, trade unionist and editor. She was described by Rebecca West as a “merry militant saint”.

Father, John Gawthorpe, leather worker. Mother, Annie Eliza (Mountain) Gawthorpe. Mary had four siblings, a baby and eldest sister died within a year of each other. Mary became a socialist active in the National Union of Teachers.

She won a scholarship to a secondary school but couldn't afford the fees; instead she became a pupil teacher instructing younger children during the day before receiving her own lessons in the evening. She moved to Hunslet taking her mother and younger brother to leave her abusive father.

She joined the Independent Labour Party and, in 1906 becoming secretary of the newly formed Women's Labour league. She left teaching to become a full time paid organiser at the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union).

Mary spoke at national events including a rally in Hyde Park in 1908 attended by 200,000 people. She was imprisoned on several occasions for her political activities and, was badly beaten (suffering serious internal injuries) whilst heckling Winston Churchill in 1909.

Mary emigrated to New York in 1916. She was active in the American suffrage movement and later in the trade union movement becoming an official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of American Union. She wrote a book of her early efforts in her autobiography “Up Hill To Holloway” (1962).



Pat and Karen on Doreen Tinker MBE

People often ask ‘Why is there a Doreen Tinker Room in Woodhouse Community Centre?’

Doreen was an outstanding Woodhouse community activist for the second half of the 20th century. She was



briefly famous in January 1999 for refusing to go to Buckingham Palace to collect the MBE she had been awarded. Instead, she insisted the Lord Lieutenant John Lyles came to Leeds to hand over the medal in the Town Hall, in the presence of her community.

Doreen was born in Woodhouse in 1931, where her parents were famous for keeping open house. So it was a gift to the neighbourhood in 1951 when she married Ken Tinker, the local milkman who knew every lonely old person, every new mother, every underlit street and treacherous pothole in the area. The Servia Road Dairy became the place where future activists discussed the shape of the new Woodhouse emerging from the demolition rubble.



Ken's milk cart provided a furniture removal service; he loaned tools to folks who had gardens to cultivate for the first time. When Doreen and her sister had babies in the early fifties they joined with other new mothers to maximise care provision. Soon Woodhouse Primary had a P.T.A., and later, when Doreen's kitchen overflowed with youngsters, she set up youth clubs. The Director of Housing began to attend the monthly meetings of the Tenants' Association.

Her family have affectionate memories of Doreen, wreathed in ciggy smoke in her kitchen, plotting and planning. By 1982 the council provided funds for a proper Advice Centre at Charing Cross. She was the house keeping supervisor at Notre Dame School. But as her own kids grew up, she had enough energy to teach youngsters dress making and cake baking and qualify as a benefits adviser.

She got her chance to wear the MBE medal in 2001 when the Queen came to a reception in Leeds and she was introduced as Chair of the by then Leeds-wide Tenant Involvement Committee. Doreen was where she belonged: in her neighbourhood.

The mountain came to Mohammed.



Maureen on Julia Bingham (Maureen's grandmother) (1881-1953)

Julia Bingham was born at 231 Woodhouse Street and was the eldest daughter of a cloth salesman; she was a performer of humorous songs described by the Leeds Mercury as “well known in Leeds bohemian circles”!

Music played a big part in the Bingham family, all connected to St Augustine's Church, Wrangthorn where Julia's father sang in the church choir together with her brother, Edwin, who was also organist for many years.

At some point in Julia's early years it is thought she contracted an illness which left her profoundly deaf.

Julia's two loves were music and ballroom dancing, her favourite song being the 'Veleta' for which she won many competitions – even though she was stone deaf! The Veleta was written by Leeds based composer Arthur Morris; which is why it is used as the sound track for our soap opera. Julia felt the rhythm of the music and in addition to her love of dance, she would attend many classical music concerts, chaperoned by her brother.

Julia's mother and father died within a month of each other in 1900, aged 43 and 46 respectively.

Julia married in 1910 at Emmanuel Church, Woodhouse Lane now part of the University of Leeds, going on to bear two sons and a daughter.

Sadly, she had a hard and neglected marriage resulting in her husband leaving home but Julia was a strong woman and her life was enriched by her children. She danced no more and tragically collapsed in the street in 1953 when out walking with her 14 year old granddaughter. No mobile phones to the rescue in those days but there were always people walking in their daily lives and would rush to her aid. Julia Bingham died a short time later in Leeds General Infirmary aged 71.



Alistair on Vesta Victoria (1873 - 1951)

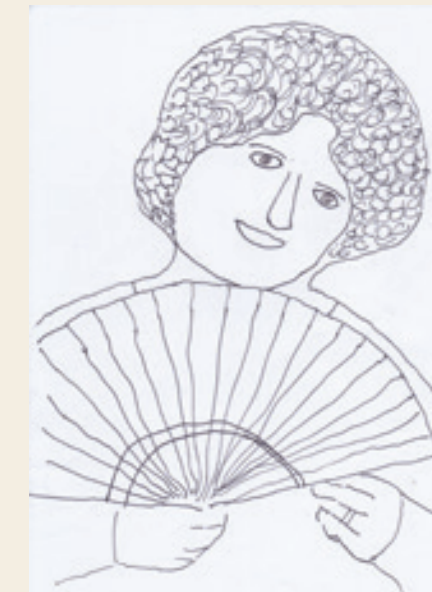
Born Victoria Lawrence on 26 November 1873 at 8 Ebenezer Place, Bramley. The streets in the locality were obliterated under re-development programmes and, by 1969, No 8 Ebenezer place becomes a singular brick-built detached house of decent size amid brick and older stone back-to-backs and through-terraces.

In a family of music-hall artistes, “Baby Victoria” was introduced to the stage in her infancy and in 1883, at age nine, she made her London debut titled “Miss Victoria”.

Vesta Victoria's talents as a solo music hall singer and comedienne were soon recognised throughout society – Walter Sickert's painting “Vesta Victoria at the Old Bedford” (circa 1890) can now be seen in the V&A Museum – and songwriters composed pieces especially for her. Indeed, compositions such as “Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me A Bow-Wow” by Joseph Tarbrar in 1892 and “Waiting at the Church” by Fred W Leigh and Henry E Pether in 1906 are still widely known today and Vesta Victoria's extensive repertoire of performances proved immense hits over more than three decades touring the music hall circuits of Britain and America, until her retirement after the First World War.

Despite typically adopting a Cockney persona in her comic routines, her publicity photographs tend to project images of style and sophistication. Noted in

New York as “one of the most highly paid vaudeville stars”, she acquired a substantial property portfolio, yet returned to the stage occasionally after the mid 1920's at venues including Leeds City Varieties, the 1932 Royal Variety Performance, and to play cameos in a number of largely-forgotten British Films. For some time she lived on a houseboat near Hampton Court. Dying from breast cancer aged 77, Vesta Victoria was cremated at Golder's Green Crematorium in 1951.



Vivienne & Felina on Gertrude Maretta Paul (1934 - 1992)

One of the founding members of the Leeds West Indian Carnival and the first black head teacher in Leeds. She also founded the Leeds International Women's Group, the Afro Asian Organisation and the United Caribbean Association.

She was born in St Kitts and came to England in 1956 where she went to teach at Cowper Street School in Chapeltown. 20 years after arriving in England she was appointed as head teacher of Elmhurst Middle School. She has since become recognised as one of the most influential women in the city's history.



Myrna and Dot on Beryl Burton (1937 - 1996)

In 1960 she refused to sign a contract with Raleigh Bicycle Company, keeping her name as an amateur cyclist, with no financial backing or professional training throughout her career. Beryl Burton was made an MBE in 1964 and an OBE in 1968. She won stage 19 of the Tour de France in 1968.

18 facts about Beryl:

1. She won more than 90 races and seven world titles.
2. She set a women's world record for a 12 hour time trial in 1967 which has not been beaten at 277.25 miles.
3. As she passed her fellow male racer Mike McNamara she offered him a liquorice allsorts!
4. Beryl & her daughter both set records for a British 10-mile ride on a tandem bicycle which took 26 minutes and 25 seconds.
5. She won Bidlake Memorial prize three times.
6. In 2009 she was inducted into the British Cycling Hall of Fame.
7. Beryl used to work on a rhubarb farm even when racing which was run by cyclist Nim Carline, she worked her shifts every day during winter.
8. She has won over 72 national individual time trials.
9. Maxine Peake wrote and starred in 'Beryl: a love story on 2 wheels!' also a radio play on her life with contributions from her husband Charlie throughout.

10. She believed due to her family history she had unusually powerful heart and lungs.
11. At her cycling club race she came 9th.
12. Her autobiography, 'Personal Best', was released in 1986. It was re-released after the 2008 Olympics off the back of a huge amount of interest in cycling.
13. When she was 11 years old she had chorea and rheumatic fever and was in hospital for nine months.
14. She won her first national medal in 1957 silver in 100 mile individual time trial championship.
15. Beryl and her daughter didn't even shake hands when her daughter won her in the 1976 national road race championship race.
16. She met Charlie at 17 working in a tailoring factory in Leeds.
17. Beryl suffered from heart arrhythmia as a child and was told not to exercise.
18. She died aged 58 of heart failure while cycling.

A memorial garden was made in her honour in her home town of Morley.



Mary and Myrna on Soap Opera

Mary & Myrna began research by looking into adverts from 1919 and discovered that cartoon stories in newspapers had been sponsored by soap companies which is where the name ‘soap opera’ came from.

So that inspired the group to make their own soap opera; continuing research at Abbey House Museum gave them the opportunity to look at early 1900’s housewives gadgets such as the mangle and early vacuum cleaner.

This in turn led to reminiscences of house work in former years, such as:

- “Mum would do all the housework and use the carpet sweeper but the old heavy Hoover vac had to be brought out by Dad once a week and he would clean the carpets. I recall my dad having to empty the cloth bag of the Hoover dust and it would go everywhere and it would need cleaning again.”
- “Mam would wind the mangle while I put the clothes through the rollers. When we got an electric mangle we were POSH, but we had to be careful because it was very easy to get your fingers trapped but not easy to get them out.”



“How to make a bed (from the Caribbean)

- We used to get the empty flour bags, wash them and sew them leaving a “placket” in the middle using a hand Singer sewing machine.
- We would cut the grass (2 kinds) one long, thin/short, curly. The grass would be put out to dry and turned over frequently. You would sift through and remove hard bits, mix to get a better texture.
- We would stuff the bed with the grass: 7 bags are required to make a 4’6” bed. Stitch 4 together. Other 3 would be stitched on top. From time to time (approx. 3 or 4 times a year) you would empty the grass and wash the casing and refill with fresh grass.”



Political Placards: getting the word out!

The group wanted to create large placards reflecting political messages from the suffragette movement. Skippko arranged for the group to be part of a workshop facilitated by Leeds design house, Split, using the world-record holding People Powered Letter Press. The Press was built by JKN Oil Tools in Barnsley and holds the Guinness World record for being the largest printing press of its kind.

The press is operated on a not-for-profit basis by Split to “amplify local voices and words”.

The group spent the best part of a week reflecting on the political messages of the suffragettes to create their own, 21st Century call to action.



Blue plaques

The group created their own 'blue plaques' inspired by thinking through what makes people inspirational to them and memories of housework in times gone by.



DOT MONAGHAN
'Never too old to learn'

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

As a child I remember that I would clean our own sash windows by sitting on the outside sill with my feet inside using brown paper and vinegar



KAREN TOBIN
'Ordinary Person'

Life's been a struggle but finally she's comfortable in her own skin, not afraid of making a mistake and more than ready for Happiness



JACK STEAD

I was born in 1927 in the sight of Leeds Town clock.
I am a proud Loiner and Yorkshireman.

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

Remembers window tappers waking him up



ALISTAIR SIMPSON

'A lifelong student'

My mother, as a dedicated Liberal, was a local election candidate in the 60s and 70s, and I recall helping deliver campaign leaflets across Pudsey North ward.

Although unsuccessful in electoral politics she remained an active promoter of humanitarianism and internationalism.



FELINA HUGHES
'Community Champion'
'Each one teach one'

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

I remember our weekly trip to the laundry room on Meanwood Road using a Silver Cross pram loaded with the family washing. It was hot and soapy and smelled fresh and clean!!



VIVIENNE STUART

Seamstress, Assistant Nurse, Spot-welder

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

I used to make my own hats from bamboo and wild rush strips.



PRISCILLA STOREY

'Creative'

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

As a child I remember sitting outside in the sun and watching my grandmother sorting beans, and once nearly finished I would go over and mix them up. I would then help her sort them again



MARY PERKINS
'Caring Passionate Person'
Who loves sharing her life with others.
Lots of laughs, tears and love and no regrets

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

I remember washing using the dolly tub and hand wringer. We would soak the whites and if stained we used the rubbing board.



MAUREEN KERSHAW
'All things theatrical'

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

Dad would get dust everywhere when emptying the Hoover cloth bag - we'd have to clean again.



LISA ARGYLE
'enjoys learning and sharing'

HOUSEWORK MEMORIES

First job of the morning was to empty the ashes and re-bank the fire.



PAT TEMPEST
'Writer . Gardener'

Not from Leeds.
Born in the Midlands,
moved to the Isle of Man,
then lived on Merseyside,
now happy for twenty years in Leeds



MYRNA RUTTLEDGE
'Wants equality and fairness for all'

I believe in fairness and enjoy being part of others growth.
I loved being a school governor and being Woodhouse Brownies Brown Owl in the 70s and 80s,
and more recently being part of Caring Together.



Following in the footsteps of Mary Gawthorpe Kushy Dil (Happy Hearts) Group

Kushy Dil are a talented and supportive group of younger women who meet at the Building Blocks Centre in Beeston, Leeds. Kushy Dil are supported by Health for All.

Skipko artists Annie and Anne received a warm welcome to their regular weekly meet-up and soon discovered that they bubbled with friendly chatter, laughter and food!

We began our sessions with Kushy Dil exploring the local area through textile based activities. The group were interested to discover that Suffragette Mary Gawthorpe had links to the Beeston area and schools. Further historical research at library sessions found evidence of other key women in Beeston at the time of the Suffrage movement who had also supported the learning and wellbeing of children in Beeston, something close to the groups heart.

Week by week, stories emerged from the group about their own lives; their families moving to Leeds from Bangladesh; growing up in Beeston; roles within families and their own children. We felt privileged to be offered a glimpse into the lives of the group members.

The trip to Abbey House Museum also evoked memories of 'back home' and a yearning for a simpler life – many agreed that technology had made aspects of their lives

simpler yet somehow had led to them being busier Mums with many more roles to juggle. It also emerged, during the trip, that the first Queen of the Leeds Children's Day was from Beeston and that Kushy Dils very own support worker Thahmina, was once the carnival queen of Beeston Carnival; happy memories!

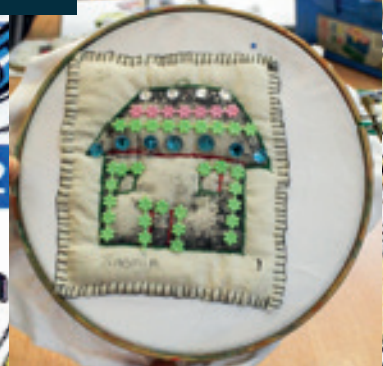
A fascination for old maps, houses and street signs in the local area inspired the artwork, with some group members being prolific embroiderers and skilled seamstresses the sessions were a hive of activity! Many talents emerged through our creative work and it was lovely to see the group supporting one another and sharing their skills freely.

Our mannequin, affectionately known as Mary, became a regular attendee at the sessions and the artwork created quickly became centred around her. A textile map of Beeston whizzed-up on the sewing machine to create her a skirt. Printed textile street signs and exquisitely adorned houses sit proudly as pockets on her apron, complete with hidden snippets of stories on silk hankies, all contribute to the rich artworks created by these talented women.



Our Beeston...

We discovered Mary Gawthorpe lived in Beeston



I was born in Bangladesh. I came to England in 1987 to join my dad who came to work. I have 4 sisters and 2 brothers. I came to Beeston in 1987. I am married and have 2 children.

Dad worked in coal mine, he brought us to the UK. We settled in Bradford then came to Beeston because we had more friends and family in Leeds.

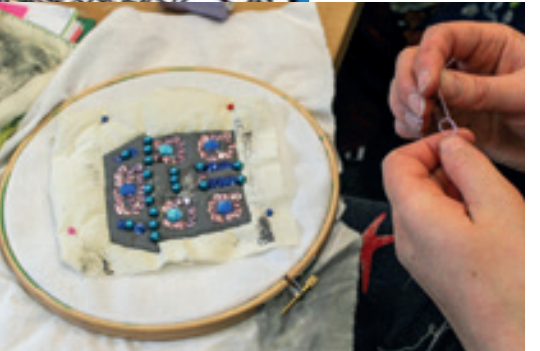
I emigrated from Bangladesh aged 4 to England and moved into my first home in Leeds, Beeston.



I lived in Birmingham and get married and moved to my husband's parents in Beeston. I live in 2 house in Beeston.



My dad came to UK in the late 1950s Married my mum in Bangladesh in 1979. Me, mum, dad and two more siblings came to UK in 1982.



MARY GAWTHORPE

Discovering Mary Gawthorpe lived in Beeston and her connection to St Luke's primary

ST LUKES SCHOOL 1894



10th July 1964. View of rear of red brick terraced housing with kitchens in the air. Numbers are, from left to right, 6, 4 and 2 Back South Mount Terrace. (Number 6 window) These houses front onto Beeston Road and the photograph is taken from the road.



2004. View of Beeston Hill, St Luke's C of E Primary School on Beeston Road, surrounded by tall trees. This building replaced the old St. Luke's School on the corner of St. Luke's Grove and Back Mount Terrace, demolished in the 1970s.

At the age of 13, Mary became a pupil teacher in a Church of England school. Mary worked during the day and studied in the evening and weekends. She qualified as a teacher just before her 21 birthday.

Mary's mum was very keen for her to have the education to become a teacher - something she had wanted to do.

Mary's baptism record - Feb 27th 1881

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Beeston in the County of Leicestershire in the year One thousand eight hundred and 1881

When Baptized	Child's Christian Name	Parents	Minister
Feb 11	Leonard	John & Sarah	Phillips
Feb 13	James	George & Jane	Buchan
Feb 18	Thomas	John & Jane	East

Mary Gawthorpe, the third of the five children of John Gawthorpe Mountain, was born at 5 Melville Street, on 12th January 1881. But her family was extremely poor so from the age of ten had to work wanted to be a teacher and was determined to make sure her daughter was educated.

At the age of thirteen Mary became a pupil teacher in the local CE wanted her daughter to go to college but family finances meant that Mary worked during the day and studied in the evening and at the school teacher just before her twenty-first birthday.

Feb 27	Mary	John & Anne	Beeston	5	St. Luke's	L.H. Rand
Feb 27	George	William & Mary	West	6	Beeston	L.H. Rand
Mar 2	John	John & Mary	Turner	10	Beeston	L.H. Rand
Mar 12	Alfred	Thomas & Ann	Beeston	18	Beeston	L.H. Rand
Mar 24	Ann	Thomas & Ann	Beeston	18	Beeston	L.H. Rand

Below: The old St Luke's School at Beeston Hill (the school moved to Beeston Hill from its original site opposite the church in Holbeck)



ST. LUKE'S SCHOOLS, BEESTON HILL. (INSET VIEW SHOWING SCHOOL HOUSE).

"Mum always stayed at home (having kids - up to 10!!) Dad shopped, took us to school and worked in the factory on night shifts"

Men had English language. Women didn't have the confidence to go out of the house as they couldn't speak English.

Mary Gawthorpe's mum was very keen for Mary to have the education to become a teacher - something she had wanted to do.

Today mums now focus a lot more on aspirations and supporting their kids to do well. Because we can do more, we do more.. we have it harder now as we do everything!

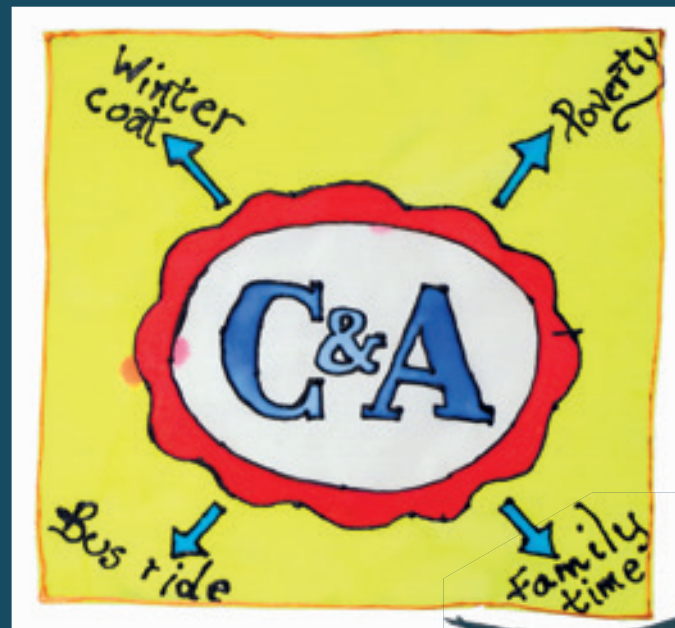
TO THE HONOUR & GLORY OF GOD
THIS STONE WAS LAID BY THE SCHOLARS
OF ST LUKES CHURCH SCHOOL BEESTON HILL

NOV 3RD 1894

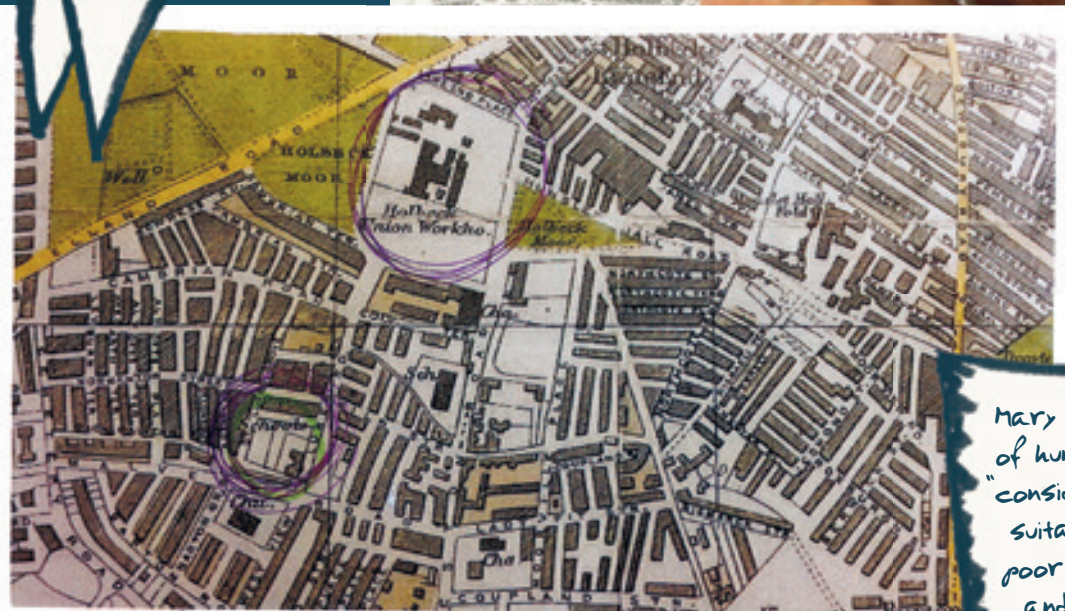
"I am very excited to find out that Mary Gawthorpe taught at my children's school - St Luke's C of E Primary School"

Discovering there used to be a workhouse in Beeston

We found a map of Beeston in the 1920s on the wall of Abbey House Museum - it shows the Holbeck Union Workhouse & original location of St Luke's school nearby.



We all got C & A vouchers, we all got them to get a new winter coat!



Beeston 1920s

Mary Gawthorpe spoke on behalf of hungry children at a meeting to "consider the propriety of providing suitable food and clothing for poor children of the unemployed and needy during the winter".



"Another working class woman from Beeston was Mary Woodcock. She was the moving force behind the establishment of children's homes in Leeds. She was elected the 'Poor Law Guardian' responsible for overseeing the Workhouse. Children were often abandoned, especially by men whose wives had died (often in childbirth). Rather than see them grow up in the workhouse, Mary established 'scattered homes' where they could live in small groups with foster parents. Crucially this meant they didn't have to wear the workhouse uniform and could go to the local school with other children, free from the stigma of poverty.

In around 1910, the Holbeck Guardians opened the first of the union's children's scattered homes at 62 Malvern Terrace, Beeston Hill. By 1912, homes had also been opened at 5 South Mount Street, Beeston Hill and at 6 Granville Terrace, Holbeck."

South Leeds Life - 4 Nov 18
'The Vote before the vote'.



Remains of the Workhouse entrance behind current St. Luke's School
9 October 2019



The old Workhouse boundary wall still standing around St Luke's School

Looking at Suffragette clothing and our clothes as Muslim women



The suffragettes took care to "appeal to the eye" – particularly when in full glare of media attention on parade or demonstrating. In 1908, one of their newspapers, *Votes for Women*, declared: "The suffragette of today is dainty and precise in her dress." Five years later, sellers of the Suffragette were requested to "dress themselves in their smartest clothes".

Original Suffragette Cockade
Museum of London

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The Suffragettes' colour scheme, devised in 1908 by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, co-editor of *Votes for Women*, was an early triumph for fashion branding. Suffragettes wore purple for loyalty and dignity, white for purity, and green for hope. Members were encouraged to wear the colours "as a duty and a privilege".

The suffragettes' colour scheme, devised in 1908 by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, co-editor of *Votes for Women*, was an early triumph for fashion branding. Suffragettes wore purple for loyalty and dignity, white for purity, and green for hope. Members were encouraged to wear the colours "as a duty and a privilege". Selfridges and Liberty sold tricolour-striped ribbon for hats, belts, rosettes and badges, as well as coloured garments, underwear, handbags, shoes, slippers and toilet soap.



Sylvia Pankhurst trained at the Royal College of Art, and designed much of the visual identity – branding, really – of the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union).



'They wore hats to cover heads and full length dresses.'

Our Clothing

In conversation with ...



The women were very adamant that it is their choice to wear hijab.

Since 7/7 and 9/11 more women have chosen to wear the hijab – to express who they are through their clothing, to show solidarity – it is their choice as Muslim women.

Before the atrocities they felt more accepted and part of society than since and this has made more women feel that they want to show who they are through what they wear.

They do not feel oppressed – it is other people judging them who see them as oppressed because they wear this clothing (hijab and burka)

"As women we feel targeted because of what we are wearing.. they think we are oppressed by our husbands, they think we are controlled by men and that we don't have our own voice."

"The hijab is always portrayed in the media as a black garment, never pink or red. Black makes it sinister."

"We don't want conflict, we are peaceful people."



"Our clothing keeps us covered, being modest."

"Hijab colours - red = traditional for marriage, but this is changing now, there's more choice and different colours for brides. White = when we die. Neutrals = haj (men)."



"We are happy and proud to have a group identity through our clothes as Muslim women"
"There has been a significant rise in women wearing the hijab and Burka since the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks – to show solidarity"
The Suffragettes were requested to dress themselves in their smartest clothes and were encouraged to wear the colours white, green and purple "as duty and a privilege"

"I feel more targeted after the terrorist attacks."

"The 'letterbox' - that made me angry."

"Rosa Parks paved the way to our freedom."

'What's in your pocket?' Our skirt and sash with pockets...



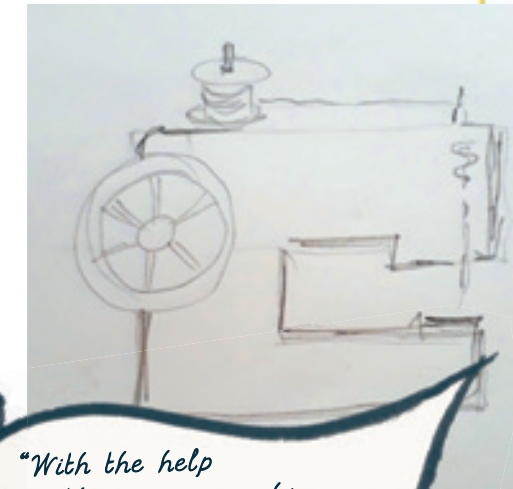
Times article describes a life-sized dummy with pockets "all over a brilliant red skirt". Attendees at the women suffrage bazaar would pay to pick the lady's pockets for a grab bag, with the proceeds going to benefit women's voting rights organisations. Women voters weren't alone in understanding the connection between pocket power and political power.



"We had new clothes made for Eid, by the sewing machine lady of Beeston."

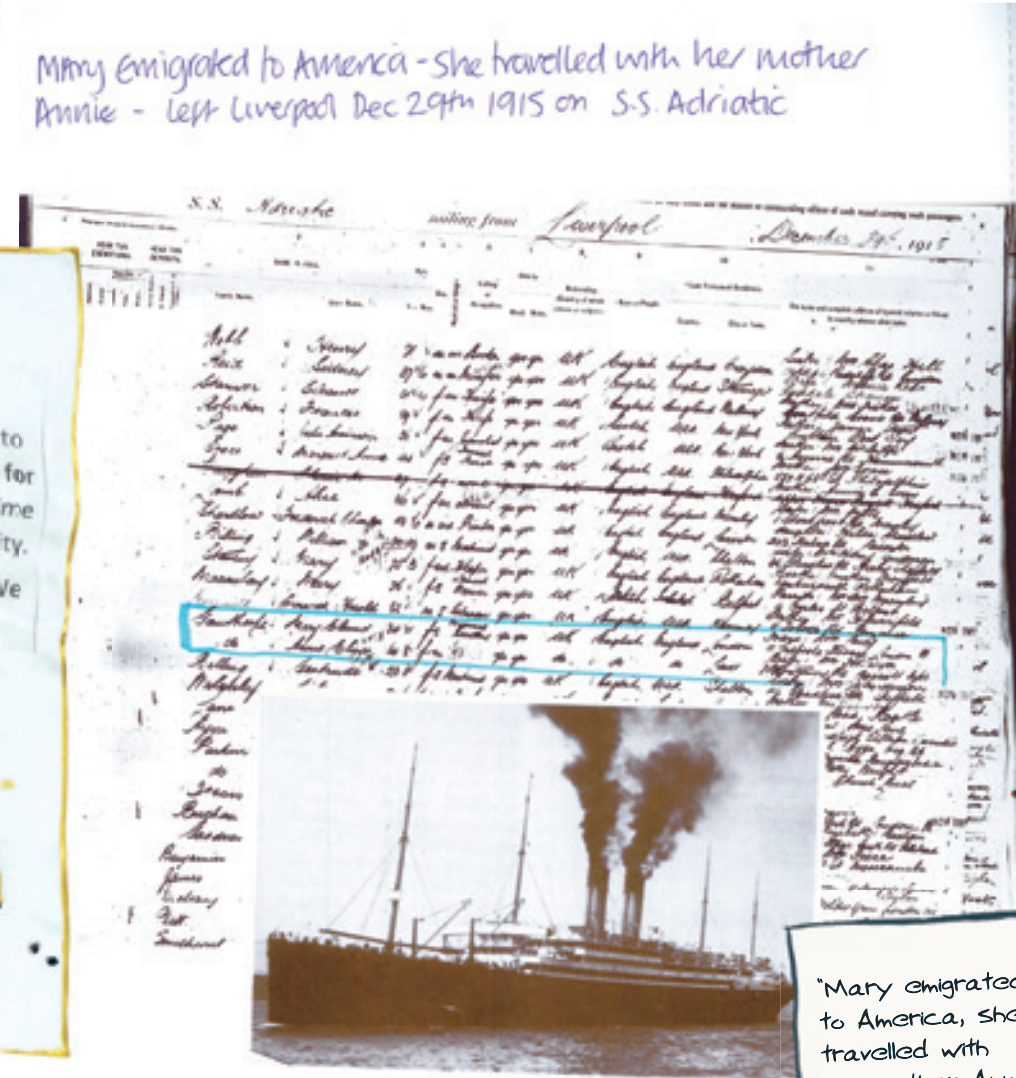
Asha Neighbourhood Project

Asha first opened in 1985 to help Bangladeshi women to engage with their community. Asha provides a service for the women and their families to enjoy during school time and holidays. Now Asha is open to the whole community. "We all learned to sew, Monday after school, 4-6pm. We did it for sewing skills but as a social thing too" at Asha



"With the help of the sewing machine the mother provided the family with new outfits for Whit Sunday."

"Mary Gawthorpe's mum sewed, washed, cooked and mended for a family of 5. The home in its narrow street was one of hundreds of its kind... there was one living room and 2 upstairs bedrooms. The most important articles of furniture were the horse-hair sofa and the sewing machine."



On July 21st Mary married John Sanders

Mary Gawthorpe's health gradually recovered and in 1956 she emigrated to the United States. She soon became active in the National Women's Suffrage Party in New York City. After American women won the vote, Mary became involved in the trade union movement and in 1920 became a full-time official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union.

On 19th July 1921 Mary married John Sanders and became an American citizen. As Sandra Stanley Holton has pointed out: "Throughout her life she retained her single name. She made a brief return to Britain in 1933, and was also in contact with the Suffragette Fellowship in those years. Little is known of her life after this date, though some of her surviving correspondence from the 1950s and 1960s shows that she remained keenly interested in political issues, and was still in touch with movements in Britain, including the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament."

In 1962 Mary Gawthorpe published *Up Hill to Holloway*, the story of her life up to her release from prison in November 1906. She died at her home in Long Island on 12th March 1973.

"Mary emigrated to America, she travelled with her mother Annie, leaving Liverpool on 29 Dec 1915 on the SS Adriatic"



Moor Allerton Elderly Care (MAE Care) Group

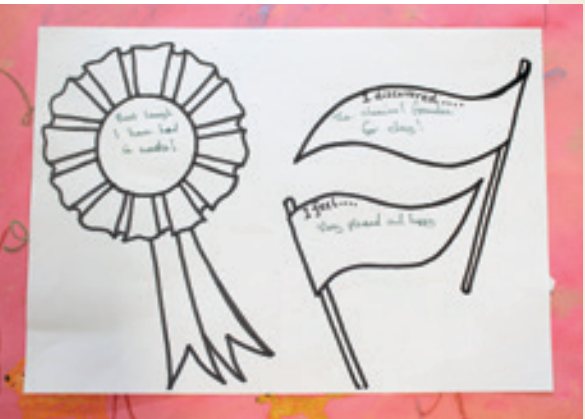
The MAE Care group met at their space in Moor Allerton. A friendly, chatty group, who enjoy sharing memories and stories. We began by thinking about famous inspirational women and suffragettes, but this swiftly turned to stories about mothers, relatives and personal narratives. Some common links were found such as women working hard but still not having the right to a mortgage or company pension scheme, or even buying furniture on Hire Purchase in their own name. There were also industrial overlaps such as working at Brays, other engineering companies, tailoring and war related work.

After a trip to Abbey House Museum things really started to come together. Many local and historic women were discussed, how they overcame hardship and difficulties, but survived and strived to achieve more settled and comfortable lives for their families. Great changes had been seen, and the work, achievements and influence of ordinary women were evident and powerful.



Throughout the story telling, the group experimented working with a range of different art mediums to help visualise the stories, finally creating anonymous 3D faces in felt as a base to explore their ideas. They printed photographs and words onto fabric, embellishing with needle felting and embroidery before attaching to the felt.

The results can be seen with these large, powerful textile-based rosettes and framed collages, illustrating the very personal stories of some extraordinary women.



Doreen on Rose (Doreen's mother) Rose Appleyard 24.9.1926 to 18.12.2013

Rose (née Maskill) (my mother) was born on 24th Sept 1926. She was the youngest of 11 children and lived at 47 Tower Street Harrogate.

Rose was a poorly child having had pneumonia at a young age. She had to leave school at the age of 14 and work in the munitions factory at Knaresborough making parachute ropes for the war effort.

After the war Rose married John Ernest Appleyard – known as Ernie. They built their own bungalow on the outskirts of Knaresborough. Rose and Ernie had four children and seven grandchildren. Mum was very proud of her family, especially all the great grandchildren.

I was the 2nd eldest and considered myself very lucky to be able to stay on at school 'till I was 16. I took 8 CSE exams and this was the first year they were introduced in my school.

I was then able to get a job at the Ministry of Defence, RAF Department in Harrogate.

Another first came when I was able to vote in 1969 at the age of 18. I had learnt about the Suffragettes at school and have voted in the elections ever since.

I came to Leeds when I got married to Barrie in 1972. We lived in a terrace house in Headingley with an outside toilet – very cold in winter!! The first house we chose together cost £6,250 but the bank would not take my salary into account for the mortgage. This was a good thing as it allowed me to take time off work and bring up my children. I also remember going to buy a three piece suite and the shop would not sell it to me until my husband came with me. This would not happen today.

My daughter, Nicola, was the first person in the family to go to university. She studied bio-chemistry.

A lot of things have changed over my lifetime but I feel not always for the best.



Michelle Thinking about a trip she took to Greenham Common to visit the protest in 1984.

From handwritten notes (transcribed as accurately as possible).

30.9.84 8.40pm

Just returned from the trip to Greenham Common. In a bus full of middle-class women, mostly with middle-class accents. My kind of middle-class, hard-working lower professionals, white collar workers, etc. The coach is insulated against outside noise and there's the steady hum of the engine and the constant chatter of voices, gentle, sweet, voices, pleasant talking of personal things or what I do with my children, where we went last year. We have the occasional story, I was arrested. Somebody who has camped at Greenham, one of our bus load, was taken for questioning today and was due to be charged. There was a whip round to help pay her fare home as she had to be left behind.

It's a new feeling of freedom from that house. I'm able to move around the country on my own, without consulting others. Leaving domestic problems behind.



Life on a scattered gypsy encampment really. No wonder women take to it. Free from domestic worries, life takes on new dimensions. All these women are very capable. The woman today who was arrested is from Bradford. She and 4 others have just taken part in the Ilkley festival putting on an exhibition of their lives.

Not a lot of spirit among our crowd. Few of us joined in the singing started up by another group. We didn't know the songs but the first one was simply repeated.

**We are women
We are strong
We will stop the bomb**

sung to the tune of Frere Jaques.



I was arrested. Somebody who has camped at Greenham. One of our bus load was taken for questioning today and was due to be charged. There was a whip round to help pay her ~~fare~~ fare home as she had to be left behind. It's a new feeling of freedom from that house. I'm able to move around the country on my own, without consulting others. Leaving domestic problems behind. Like a scattered gypsy encampment really.

Maureen on Nora Courtney (mum)

My Mum looked after the smallholding where we lived. Before she married she was a chambermaid in the Great Northern Hotel in Leeds – it became the Wellesley. Before that she was In Service. My Dad was a lot older. 53 when they got married – she was 24. She used to say she'd 'rather be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.' But of course she was an old man's slave.

My Mum was originally from a mining family, they moved from County Durham to Doncaster in the General Strike.

My Mum used to earn half a crown. She sent two shillings home, 2p went to church, 2p on stockings, 2p saved towards underwear etc. She had a weekend off every six weeks when she used to take the money home.



We grew up on a smallholding. Mum looked after the smallholding. We didn't know what rationing was. But they used to keep the sugar for the men.



I've heard of Brays. I worked in the buying office at Hunslet Engineering company. In the Hunslet triangle.

I went to night school at the Yorkshire Ladies Secretarial College – in Woodhouse Lane. It's now part of the University.

One of my friends was one of the first female apprentices at Hunslet Engineering in 1972. They didn't think women would be any good.

My husband wasn't at all practical, although he was 'clever'. I remember being the only one in a room full of men who could change a plug. He would sit with his feet up whilst I laid the lino. I fixed the washing machine by changing the plug.

I remember going to a furniture shop and not being given credit because I was a woman.

I went to University when I retired and got a degree.



Pauline on Alice (mum) Alice Ward/Black/O'Gorman 1905 to 1982

Mum had to leave school and go part time when she was 12 years old because her mother died in childbirth with twins. The twin to Auntie Emily was stillborn.

Mum was the oldest and had to look after her three younger brothers and sister. They moved around a lot from family member to family member and had to pass means tests to avoid going into the Poorhouse.

When they moved between the family she had to borrow a hand cart to put one of her brothers on as he was a sickly child.

They went to live with Auntie Nancy who was known as 'Skinny Nancy' as she would sit down to a big meal while mum and her brothers and sister would be given meagre meals/scraps.



When she was older she got a job at Roocrofts Tic/sweet factory in Bolton as a 'Passer' checking all the sweets before they went out from the factory.

She had psoriasis and Mr Roocroft was kind to her and he paid for her to go to Manchester and get them burned off when she was 19 years old.

Her psoriasis never went away and she volunteered over the years to be a guinea pig for clinical trials and donated her body to science when she died.

Mum had to wait until all her brothers and sisters had got married before she could as she was the main carer.

Her first husband died of consumption only a couple of years after getting married and luckily her father-in-law demanded that she got the money against the wishes of other family members so she could buy herself a little cottage.

She married again and he was a union man and they travelled around with his job before eventually moving to Wakefield.

I went to catering college and moved from Bolton to work at Lyddon Hall and moved to Leeds in 1968.

I remember standing on a bridge watching thousands of striking women marching under the bridge – this may have been the 1970 Clothing Strike.

Leeds Tailoress' Strike (1889)

33 Park Square
Messrs. Arthur & Co Ltd tailoring works were based at 33 Park Square: the scene of the 1889 Tailoress' Strike. The strike began on October 22, when over 600 workers at Arthur & Co. stopped work. The workers were frustrated at a draconian system of fines and deductions, especially the charge of 1 penny in a shilling for the use of power to run the machines. Isabella Ford, the social reformer and suffragist, spoke out on behalf of the tailoresses and public collections were made to ensure the strike continued. The strike lasted six weeks, but the women were eventually forced to return to work.

'The Leeds Tailoress Strike' blog post 13 Sept 19, The Secret Library, Leeds.



Ian on the women workers of George Bray & Co. Ltd

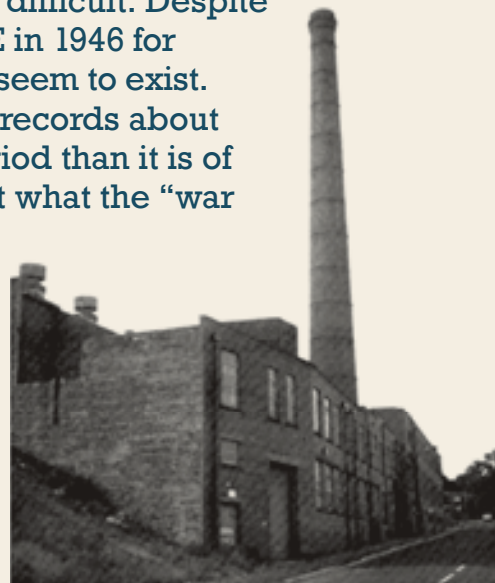
Lilian Mary Sutton – MSc AMI(Chem)E. (Associate Member of Institution of Chemical Engineers) CBE (Chief Chemist of the Laboratory Department of George Bray & Co. Ltd)

George Bray and Co. Ltd was a Leeds company that started in 1863 when George Bray invented a better type of gas burner for gas lighting. His gas burner had a ceramic tip, which unlike a metal tip would not corrode due to chemical reactions with the gas. He became a rich man and a Leeds benefactor. Bray's had a factory at Leicester Place in Little London and employed about 1400 people, many of them women and girls. Bray's became pioneers in the use of ceramics in engineering and as well as gas jets they made electrical insulators, electrical heating elements, and precision engineering components. In both world wars they made fuses and primers for artillery shells.

Miss Lilian Mary Sutton joined Bray's as a chemist in their laboratory department around 1926. Previously she had studied at Leeds University and had gained an MSc in Chemical Engineering. She must have been good at her job because after six years she was appointed Chief Chemist at Bray's and she remained in this role for at least another 14 years. Her job would have been a very responsible one and it must have been very unusual for a woman to have such a high level position at this time. The laboratory carried out research into the correct mix of clays, talcum, asbestos, and other chemicals to produce

ceramics that had the desired characteristics for the product. The lab also sample tested the finished products to make sure they were up to standard. As far as we can tell Lilian Mary Sutton never married and lived for a number of years in an apartment in Woodsley Terrace off Clarendon Road in Leeds. It may be that she never married because that would mean she would have to give up her job. From the notes of Directors' meetings we have found that she was awarded a pay increase of £50 from £450 to £500 per year in 1937. That would be about £34,000 today. While that was a very good wage, it was considerably less than men in senior positions at Bray's were paid. Finding out about Lilian has proven difficult. Despite the fact that she was awarded a CBE in 1946 for "war work" very few records of her seem to exist. It would seem it is far easier to find records about the achievements of men at this period than it is of women. So we may never know just what the "war work" was that she did or why it was so important that King George V honoured her in his birthday honours list in 1946.

(see more about Ian's mother Elsie's work at Bray's in the Research Team chapter p58)



Jean on Ellen Crowther (Mum)

She worked at Brays. I grew up in Middleton. We lived in the bottom flat. My Dad died when he was very young – I didn't know him. Mum looked after four kids with help from Grandma.

Mum also worked in the aircraft factory – Blackburns.

She also worked at Bridgecraft. They made three piece suites.

One day they flew her by plane to London to teach the other workers. We didn't know where she had gone til she got back. She was always at work. We looked after ourselves... we just walked into anyone's house.

We didn't have any facilities in our house. We used to go to the 'baths' at the end of the road – Kirkstall Road. We only had one room. It had a grand cabinet which we kept everything in. It wasn't as grand as the one in the museum (Abbey House), but other people were envious. I don't know where it came from... a hand me down?

I used to work at Buckleys on Greek Street – tailoring.



Eugenia Eugenia Krukowicz-Manojlovic



I left Poland with my family to move to Russia then on to Tehran, Karachi, Kalipur in India and then came to England from there in 1947. I worked at Joseph Watson Soap Factory – “Soapy Joes” from 1952 to 56. (I heard someone had a baby on the production line).

I developed a new way of packing the toothpaste and the company reorganised the system in all departments with great success. Six months later the chairman congratulated everybody with no mention that it was my idea! Who ever put a new idea forward got a £100 reward. I never got a penny! It was because of me they started an art exhibition. I used to crochet in my lunchtime – I couldn’t understand English very well. When someone came and gave me some money I couldn’t understand why she was giving me the work back too, didn’t they like it? She tried to explain the money was prize money.

I got married in 1953 at St Margaret’s Church, Cardigan Road. I left work to have a baby. I had four children at home.



I lived above the shop – a continental food store. My husband became ill and I ran the shop. Eventually the doctor told me to move him out of the shop, but I couldn’t get a mortgage, because I was a woman and my husband didn’t have enough income.

I went to a solicitor who offered to lend me the money because he said ‘women can’t buy houses’. This was 1968. But I insisted he fought for me and in the end he got me a mortgage.



Heather on Auntie Grace

Grace was born in Ireland in 1915. She was the third of seven children born to a Presbyterian minister. The four eldest children were girls, followed by three boys. After leaving school Grace went to Fazakerley Hospital in Liverpool to train as a nurse. When she qualified, Grace got a job as a district nurse and midwife in a small village in Northern Ireland where she cycled to visit her patients. Grace enjoyed her work and even delivered babies for mothers who she had herself delivered.

As a farmer’s wife and mother Grace led a very busy life. She had four children the youngest of whom were fraternal twins. She outlived the eldest of her sons. Grace was very good with her hands and loved baking. She was still making marmalade and delicious biscuits well into her nineties. Sewing, knitting, spinning her own sheep’s wool and embroidery were some of her many talents. I loved visiting her because she had many interesting stories to tell and had kept old newspaper cuttings of historical events such as King George VI’s coronation. She was in fairly good health and lived alone until a few months before she died aged 104. At that time she still had a younger sister of 102 and a brother aged 99.

*L to R back row:
Grace, Joey, Gertie
L to R middle row:
Jean, my father David,
my grandmother Edith
Front: Fred*

Heather

In 1972 I was offered a job in Northern Ireland in the Northern Bank, which was affiliated to the Midland Bank. I wasn’t going to be allowed to join the pension scheme because I was female, so I didn’t take up the offer. At that time Northern Ireland was not as progressive as England, although women were still not treated equally there either. I ended up working in Leeds partly for that reason and partly because of the ‘troubles’.



June on Irene Rider (mother-in-law) Irene Harris born 1911 in Rotherham

When she was three her parents separated, her father discovering her mother was having an affair. She was raised by her father travelling the country. He was employed in short term jobs – brick making, treacle factory, odd jobs, hop and potato picking – sleeping where they could, old farm buildings, disused brick kilns, under bridges. She has no education.

At the age of seven Irene contracted typhoid. With no money or fixed abode they were lucky to be befriended by Romany travellers who paid for a doctor for Irene and provided them with food and shelter. All this time her mother didn't seek her daughter.

When she was eight years old circumstances made them return to Rotherham where they stayed with her father's sister who cared for them and paid for Irene to go to school.

Having attended school for six weeks her mother found out where she was living, somebody telling her. And told the police. At the school gates the police forced her into a cart, her father, waiting for her, protesting to no avail. She was taken to Clifton Park Workhouse.



Her father tried to pay for her release but her mother flatly refused. At eight years old, now at working age, she was made a ward of court. She never saw her father again. Her mother vindictive in retaliation for being separated from her daughter.

In the workhouse all clothes were taken from her to be given a coarse striped uniform, stigmatized and heckled by local children, ignored by the community. Irene was assigned work in a bakery, if late back to the workhouse she was stripped naked, hosed down with icy cold water and beaten. Scarring she had for the rest of her life.

In 1922 Irene was released after three years in the Workhouse under the auspices of her mother, who never showed any affection and immediately sent her out to work, keeping most of her wages.

In 1926 at the age of 15 Irene applied to go to Canada but changed her mind at the last minute. She came to Leeds the following year to marry Sidney Rider in 1939 after a long courtship.

During the war Irene was consigned to Blackburns Aircraft factory in Roundhay Road where she was taught engineering skills. Soldiers Field Roundhay Park was a makeshift runway to test the aircraft.



In 1945 Irene became pregnant with her first child, at eight months, losing it in Roundhay Road. There was no maternity leave. Three days later she was back in the factory or faced prosecution. Children were looked after by grandparents or friends.

The only evidence of Blackburns factory is a red brick wall at the back of Tesco's car park.

Irene was later to give birth to a boy in 1948 – my husband.

With limited education and understanding she was sometimes verbally aggressive but managed throughout life using her initiative and kindness – a wonderful mother-in-law.

She remained feisty to the end. In her eighties she was mugged by youths who were after her handbag. She wouldn't give it to them and was knocked to the ground. Two boys from the 'naughty boys home' saw and helped her. She broke her hip which she never fully recovered from.

She had a Marcel Wave hairstyle all her life.





Introduction to the research team

We started developing the project in 2017. One of the things we wanted to do was to create a research team; a small group of people drawn from each of the four core groups. The hope was they would have an opportunity to explore what 'heritage' is, how it has been recorded, who decides what is recorded, how to access archival materials and how to present it.

It worked!

The research group met each month at the Local & Family History department in Leeds Central Library throughout the project. Many in the group claimed at having little, or no, experience of archiving and little knowledge of 'local heritage'; a few hadn't been into a library for years.

In the early days, the team's focus was to understand a little more of the social context of working-class women here in Leeds in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With this experience, team members looked at their own lives, the lives of women in their families from previous generations and related topics of interest.

The result of these efforts is reflected in the following pages.

We were astonished at the energy and commitment invested by all members of the group. The volume of high-quality work produced by group members is incredible, as is the range of their investigations. So much material was produced that we are also printing a supplementary publication containing all the written text generated by the core groups.

As a company, we are committed to creating sustainable community hubs; keeping groups together after a project comes to an end. So, we will continue to invest in this research team after the generous funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund comes to an end. The **Skipkko Community Research Team** will support future Skipkko work by researching and bringing information and historical material to future projects; the first project enjoying this support will be 'In The Waiting Room' funded by Leeds Inspired and Arts Council England.



Kushy Dil Group Mary Eleanor Gawthorpe Timeline

Born Jan 12th 1881
5 Melville Terrace,
Woodhouse

At age of 13 she became a
pupil-teacher for four years

Assistant mistress at St Luke's
school, St Luke's Rd, Beeston – 1899
(school demolished in 1970s)

On the 1901 census Mary is living at
30 Jubilee Street in the Woodhouse
area of Leeds. She is with her parents
and brother and her occupation is
listed as school mistress

1902 – passed her first teacher
training certificate

1902 – Lived in rented house
in Beeston Hill at 6 Southmont
Terrace (aged 21)

Mary, her mother and brother moved
from Southmont
Terr, to rent a smaller
house in Fulham
Street, Beeston

After 3 years at St Luke's school
Mary transferred to Bramley. She
and her mother rented a house at
9 Warrel's Mount.

1904 – spoke out at a
committee meeting of the
Leeds Children's Relief Fund
and appointed to the fund's
central committee

1904-1905 – Mary was active
in her union, the National
Federation of Assistant
Teachers and spoke at open
air meetings in Central Leeds
and Bramley Park

13th Oct 1905 – event that
was said to have changed
Mary's direction in life –
Christabel Pankhurst and
Annie Kenney were arrested
for making a disturbance at
Manchester's Free Trade Hall

1905 – Mary becomes
involved in the
Women's Suffrage
Movement and joins
the Women's Social
and Political Union

1906 – Mary
left teaching

Oct 1906 – Mary arrested
at House of Commons, then
imprisoned because she
refused to be bound over
to keep the peace and was
sentenced to 2 months

Feb 1907 – Mary arrested
again at a House of Commons
demonstration and was 'badly
knocked about (by stewards
at the meeting) and could not
appear at court'. The case was
dismissed.

Spring 1907 – Mary organised
an open air meeting during the
Rutland by-election.
A crowd of 'noisy youths' began to
throw hard boiled sweets at the
women and undeterred by them,
in part due to her experience as a
teacher, she retorted 'Sweets to the
sweet' and continued her argument
until a 'pot egg' was thrown which
hit her on the head and knocked
her unconscious.
She was carried away but returned
the next day like a 'true suffragette'

Nov 1907 – Mary, Dora Marsden
and Rona Robinson were
violently arrested at Manchester
University for asking Lord
Morley about the imprisoned
women in Birmingham

July 1908 – 100,000 attended a
Suffragette meeting on Woodhouse
Moor, Leeds

1908 – Mary spoke at
the Hyde Park Rally in
London attended by
over 200,000 people

Jan 1910 – Mary and fellow
suffragettes Dora Marsden
and Mabel Capper were the
subject of a violent assault
while demonstrating at the
polling booths on Polling
Day in Southampton.
In Feb the suffragettes
brought charges against
3 men for assault. The
charges were dismissed
by magistrates.

Feb 1912 – Mary broke a Home
Office window in a protest at the
forced feeding of William Ball, a
supporter of the Suffragettes. She
was briefly imprisoned again.

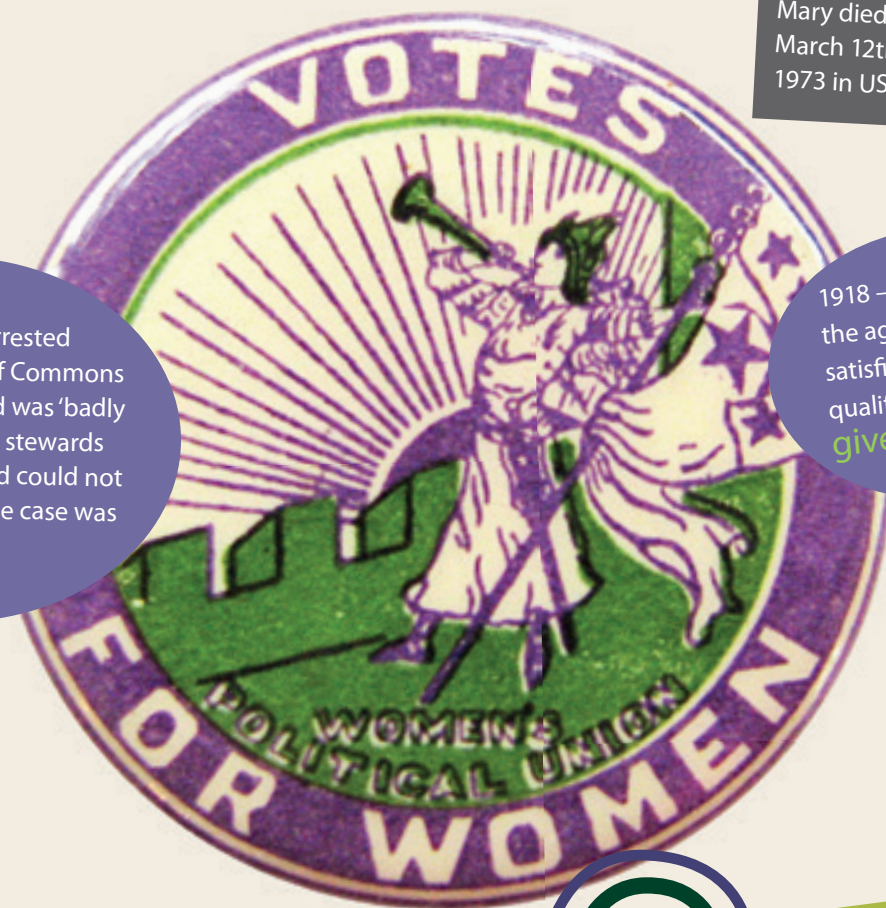
Mary and Dora Marsden were co-editors of the
radical periodical 'The Freewoman: A Weekly
Feminist Review' which discussed topics such as
women's wage work, housework, motherhood,
suffrage movement and literature. Due to poor
health and disagreements with Marsden, Mary
resigned from her duties as co-editor. Her final
publication was dated 7 March 1912.

1918 – women over
the age of 30 who
satisfied certain
qualifications **were
given the vote**

Jan 1916 – Mary
emigrates to
New York with
her brother
(departed Dec
29th 1915)

Mary died
March 12th
1973 in USA

July 2nd 1928 –
it became law
that all women
over the age of
21 could vote



Heather and Ian

The women workers of George Bray & Co. Ltd

Ian's mother, Elsie lived in Sheffield during the Second World War and after a bomb during the Blitz destroyed the factory where she worked she was directed by Ernest Bevin's Ministry of Labour to work for George Bray & Co. in Leeds. She would have been aged about 18 at the time and this would have been a great upheaval for her. She had to live in "digs" on Trentham Street and share a room with some other girls about her own age. This would have been the first time she lived away from home and living in a different city and doing a different job would have been very scary for her at first. Every Friday night she would catch a 65 bus from Leeds back home to Sheffield; a journey that often took over two hours. Then on Sunday night she would catch the bus back again to be ready for work on Monday morning. Sometimes she didn't get home at the weekend as overtime needed to be worked and whilst the extra money was welcome she missed being able to spend even a short time at home.

When Ian asked about what work she did at Bray's she always said that she tested electrical resistors that were used in radio sets in aircraft, but we suspect that she was involved in the inspection and testing of fuses used in artillery shells,



as that was similar to the work she did in Sheffield. We think Ian's mother had been a "female inspector" at Bray's. She would travel from machine to machine and gauge components as produced by the machines at regular intervals; if any defects were discovered production would be stopped until the fault was rectified. The number of fuses and primers produced by Bray's during the Second World War totalled over 13 million. No fuses or primers made by Bray's were ever rejected by the military authorities for not meeting their specifications and we think this is a remarkable feat of engineering production. We expect Ian's mother was told not to ever say what she did when she worked at Bray's – "Careless Talk Costs Lives!"

As Ian's mother had worked at Bray's we became interested in finding out more about it and particularly the women who worked there. How did their employer treat them? Did they enjoy their work? Were they treated equally with male employees? These were questions we wanted to answer.

(see more about Bray's in the MAE Care chapter p48)



Lesley

A Woman in a man's world

My inspiration came from my time in pubs as the first woman bouncer in Leeds. I came across an article about 'Woodbine Lizzie' in the library and it reminded me of my dad saying to me as a child "if you smoke you'll end up like Woodbine Lizzie". I then realised she was a real person from Leeds, and it wasn't just a saying, so I started researching Woodbine Lizzie.

She was a well-known vagabond in the 1930s and 1940s. Her story is that she was a well-respected woman, 6 kids, divorced and made herself homeless by choice, later becoming well-known for dressing as a man and hanging around outside 'The Whip Hotel' in Leeds, smoking a long pipe and drinking out of a tankard that the men had passed to her through the door – a men's only pub.

Women were not allowed in bars until the 70s and 80s and couldn't buy a drink – men had to buy the drinks!

"Tap rooms were all men only. When I was about 18, I went to the Wilson's Arms in Seacroft to try and set up a darts and dominoes team, but they wouldn't let me." Yvonne



Quotes from Leodis, Leeds Libraries, about The Whip

"George and Maud Simpson were landlord and landlady of The Whip in the 1960s. They were my uncle and aunt and walking through the bar to gain access to their living quarters was quite scary being a female in a 'men only' pub." Jennifer Blann (née Wagstaff)

"My dad, Jim Stark used to drink at this pub. I can remember being out shopping in the city centre with my mum somewhere between 1969-72 and she wanted to speak to dad. She popped her head in the pub door and all hell broke loose, as women were not allowed in. Dad was not impressed and my poor mother was so embarrassed."

Sheila



Mary and Myrna Advertising through the ages

"We looked online and through books and archives to explore the way the media portrays women. We found some striking images..."

"Social expectations and convention."

"The female form."

"How far have we come?"

"The changing face of women in the media."



Deborah Beatrice

As part of the ‘Women Reflecting on Women’ project, I decided to look into the life of this lady, who was born in 1899 in Bramley. She became my widowed grandfather’s housekeeper in 1939/40, but I always knew her as Grandma. She was always very quiet, was never a ‘cuddly’ grandma, and she always remained a bit of a mystery to me when I was young. But in the last few years, I have been able to find out more about Beattie through listening to my dad, and from family history websites.

She was born at 5 Arkwright Street, one of a row of back-to-back terraced houses. Beatrice was the daughter of Joseph & Annie. Joseph was an engineer/fireman. In 1911, Beatrice was still at school, but went on to work in the munitions department at Greenwood & Batley during World War I.

Munitions workers played a crucial role in the First World War. They supplied the troops at the front with the armaments and equipment needed to fight. They also freed up men from the workforce to join the armed forces. Working in the factories could be unpleasant,



uncomfortable, and often dangerous. Over 200 women lost their lives through accidents, explosions or poisoning, from handling chemical explosives.

Beatrice remained unmarried throughout her life, although she had two daughters – the first in 1919, and the second in 1920. This can’t have been an easy path to choose in the early 20th century.

The 1939 Register shows Beatrice living with one of her daughters at 15 Copley Street. By then, she was working as a Cartridge Machine Feeder. The photo shows her with my grandfather on a trip to New Brighton, just before war broke out in 1939, both looking very dapper with their summer shoes. New Brighton was a holiday favourite for them, and they visited regularly after the war ended.

Although I didn’t know much about Beattie when I was younger, I feel that I have learnt more about the difficulties she faced, and I have a great respect for this incredibly hard-working woman.



Yvonne Hysteria?

One of our group members, Yvonne, spends an enormous amount of time supporting a female family member, her research was of personal interest.

"I've been looking at women's mental health treatment over the years."

Women’s mental health was put down to hysteria, believed to be to do with the uterus. The Greek word for the uterus is ‘hystera’.

Women who rebelled against Victorian domesticity risked being declared insane and committed to an asylum.

There’s been no radical changes, the word ‘hysteria’ wasn’t removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders until 1980.

We’re still dealing with the fall out of this stigma to this day.



“All your symptoms are in your imagination” – we don’t trust women to be experts on their own body.

“Hippocrates also cited an unsettled uterus as the cause of hysteria. He claimed the organ became restless as a result of an inadequate sex life, which, experts suggested, could only be improved within the bounds of marriage.” (from ‘How Women’s mental health was treated throughout history’ by Alexandra Strickler May 15, 2017)



Alistair Are we there yet?

Campaigners for Women's Suffrage

This project commemorates some of the women from Leeds who contributed vitally to the achievement in 1918 of women's right to vote in British parliamentary elections. Of those noted here, most joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903, though several left after Christabel Pankhurst led the WSPU to adopt tactics of increasing militancy and arson through the years 1910-14. By contrast, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) disavowed political violence.

Ellen Heaton (1816-1894)

Born on 8 November 1816 at 7 Briggate. Blue plaque: 6 Woodhouse Square (Swarthmore Education Centre). A patron of the arts, associated with poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti, she commissioned Pre-Raphaelite paintings now exhibited at Tate Britain. In politics, she assiduously promoted the Women's Suffrage Petition, presented to Parliament by John Stuart Mill in 1866, the first significant attempt to enfranchise women.



Isabella Ormston Ford (1855-1924)

Born on 23 May 1855 in Headingley. Blue plaque: 3 Adel Grange Close. Social reformer; suffragist; trade union advocate; and author of works concerning social issues, gender and class, including 'On the Threshold' (1895). An ILP council delegate, in 1903 she became the first woman to address the annual conference of the Labour Representation Committee (the Labour Party). Her Quaker upbringing and pacifist convictions made her prominent in opposing the First World War, in relief work in war-torn countries, and in movements such as the International Women's Congress for Peace and Freedom (Zurich, 1919).



Helen Miller Fraser (1881-1979)

Born on 14 September 1881. Having joined the WSPU in 1906, she resigned in 1908 and proceeded to serve on the executive committee of the NUWSS from 1908 until 1923. A prominent Liberal Party politician, in 1922 she became the first woman to be adopted as an official Parliamentary Candidate in Scotland, and stood again, unsuccessfully, for the Liberals in the general election of 1923. She emigrated to Sydney in 1938.

Leonora Cohen (1873-1978)

Born Leonora Throp on 15 June 1873. Blue plaque: 2 Claremont Villas, Clarendon Road. She married Henry Cohen in 1898; their long and harmonious union, despite parental ostracism, lasted until his death in 1949. From her time as a milliner she had campaigned to improve living standards for women workers. Supporting women's emancipation, she joined the WSPU in 1909 and engaged in its policy of direct action – famously smashing a display case at the Tower of London in 1913 – and more than once endured imprisonment and hunger strikes. Yet in 1914, WSPU policy switched to back the war effort. Thereafter, Leonora Cohen's untiring trade-union and community involvement began to earn public recognition. She became the first woman president of the Yorkshire Federation of Trades Councils in 1923, served as a magistrate from 1924 until the 1950s, and was awarded an OBE in 1928. To preserve women's stories of the struggle for equal rights, the Leonora Cohen Suffragette Collection was donated to the Abbey House Museum, Leeds in 1978.



Mary Eleanor Gawthorpe (1881-1973)

Born on 12 January 1881 in Woodhouse. Blue plaque: Warrel's Mount, Bramley. She left school teaching in 1906 to become a full-time organiser for the WSPU, a position she held until 1912, suffering repeated arrest and imprisonment for her political actions. In 1916 she emigrated to New York, while remaining committed to suffrage and union causes. The insightful correspondence between Mary Gawthorpe and George Bernard Shaw on the moral and political implications of suffragette arson attacks and hunger strikes, referring to the case of Mary Leigh in Dublin in 1912, can be read at the Leeds Local and Family History Library.



Theresa Garnett (1888-1966)

Born on 17 May 1888. Her participation in the WSPU culminated on 14 November 1909 in an assault on Winston Churchill at Bristol Temple Meads station. Sentenced to prison for one month, she went on hunger strike. Subsequently, however, in apparent disagreement with the WSPU's approval of arson attacks, she left the WSPU in 1910. During the First World War she served as a nursing sister at military hospitals in Britain and France.



Inspirational Women The Pop Ups

Six groups took part in the pop up Women Reflecting on Women sessions. These were Crossgates Good Neighbours, South Leeds Live at Home, Holbeck Together, BASIS Yorkshire, Carers Leeds and Better Action for Families (BAFF).

The sessions began thinking about women that have inspired us and had a positive influence and impact on our lives; mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, teachers and best friends were warmly spoken of. Everyone told of the unique qualities that made their person significant or motivational to them.

Everyone constructed a still life portrait of their own cherished woman.

The still lives are a mix of precious photos, artefacts, props, images from magazines and words. Each object was carefully thought about and chosen to symbolise a quality - an ingredient - of each woman.



Once all were in their place the still life were photographed before being dismantled, returning all their parts back to the cupboards, boxes and scrapbooks, leaving behind the photographs – the essence of these special and inspirational women captured.

Participants also created giant pieces of bunting in suffrage colours using letter press blocks. The words printed are a combination of phrases or sayings that people 'have always remembered' that have helped them along the way or given them the spur that they needed. The bunting illustrates common threads, showing the significant and valued part women play in each other's lives.



LOVE
AND
AFFECTION

Jennifer

My friend Connie lived until she was 103. She lived on her own until she died. She was a schoolteacher but didn't really like children. She was a strong minded, independent lady. She did sewing, baking and creative writing. She won a prize for her poetry – so well deserved – so eloquent with her words. She loved her garden until her dying day. In her nineties she climbed a ladder up a tree.

“What are you doing up the tree?”
“Cutting down this... branch”.



Barbara

Mum was at home during the day. She lit everyone's fires who lived in the neighbourhood and cooked pies for them too. She was the centre point of the family.



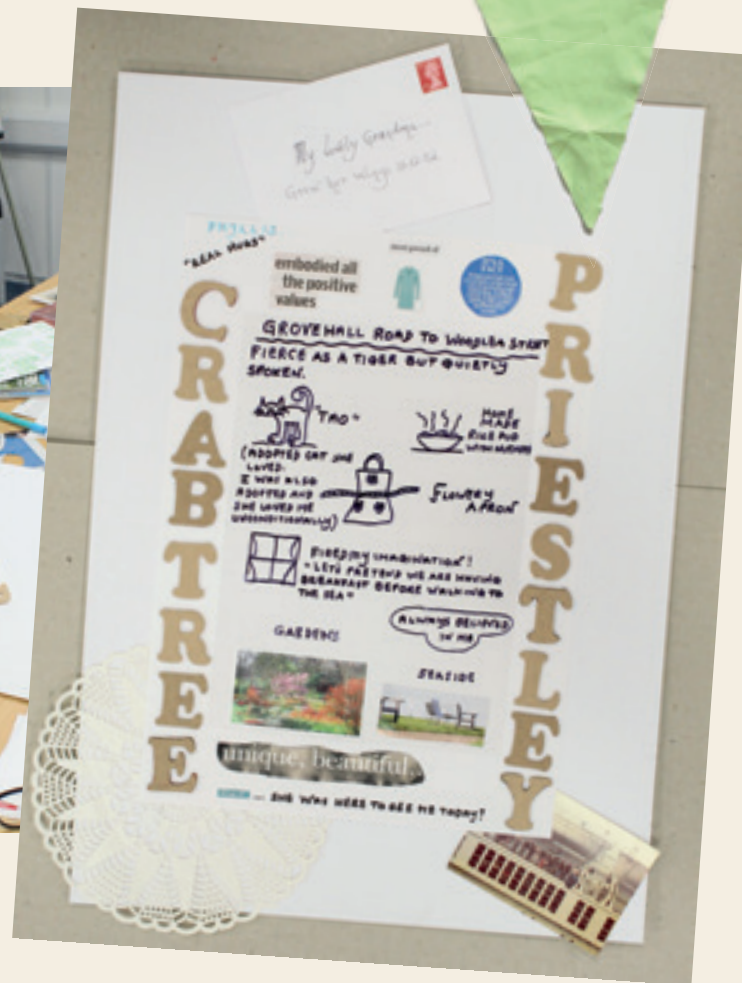
Lynn

Won the Inspire 'Inspirational contribution to the community' award 2019



Joyce

Growing up, my mother taught me self-respect, always to value myself as the person I am. To think before speaking and not to make promises I couldn't keep. To show love to all people and to realise that we are not all alike, but listen to their point of view and respect it.



Jackie's story: Nanna

Nanna ended up homeless and curled up under a bench with all her children. Dad (one of those children) ended up in an approved school for stealing food to feed the family. Nanna got three jobs at once – one of them as a nurse. She eventually managed to get them a flat at Quarry Hill Flats – the only flats to have waste disposal.

She washed everything by hand until she was 88 – died at 93. She didn't have money for books and picked up old newspapers from the streets. She taught Dad to read and write by doing crossword and puzzles from the newspapers.

She was a fighter.



Jackie

Jackie was voted most Inspirational Woman in the 2017 Morley Inspire awards. Jackie's husband died of cancer nine years ago. Jackie fought for her daughter Kelly to get a diagnosis of Autism and Epilepsy. She then fought for her to get a Special Educational Needs statement. She set up a group for children with disabilities in Morley as there was nowhere for them to go. She fought for Kelly to do Gymnastics as they weren't going to let her because of her Epilepsy. She also worked with BAFF and at Morrisons at the same time.

Jackie got her fight from her Grandma and has passed it on to her daughter.

Kelly

Kelly has won gold medals in team gymnastics. She got runner up in the 2017 Morley Young Achiever's awards.



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