



VAHS NEW RESEARCHERS WORKSHOP REPORT



GENDERING THE HISTORY OF CHARITY AND VOLUNTARY EFFORT

University of Huddersfield, 9 March 2012

Workshop organisers: Dr Eve Colpus and Tosh Warwick
VAHS New Researchers Chair: Dr George Campbell Gosling

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

10am	Coffee and registration
10.30am	Introductions Dr Kate Bradley (University of Kent), <i>Historiography: Gender and Charity</i>
11am	Charitable institutions and gender Stephanie Codd, (North Lindsey College), <i>Friendly Societies in Scunthorpe 1890-1910</i> Anne Hughes (University of Southampton), <i>The West Central Jewish Girls' Club and the Jewish Lads' Brigade: Gender and Religion in Jewish Youth Clubs 1886-1914</i> Claudia Soares (University of Manchester), <i>Ideologies of mothering and fathering: institutional constructions of the family in the Waifs and Strays Society, 1881-1914</i>
12.30pm	Lunch
1.15pm	Voluntary action, gender and identity-formation Marian Flint, (Birkbeck, University of London) <i>Genteel Poverty: Charities for the Middle Classes, Class Identity and Gender in Victorian England</i> Sarah Young (University of Manchester), <i>The Arsenal of 'Lady Guerillas of Philanthropy': Discursive Hierarchies in the Writings of Josephine Butler, Frances Cobbe, and Ellice Hopkins, 1857-1879</i> Mark Crosher (University of Manchester), <i>Memories of the Mission: The Survival of Old Concepts of Poverty in Contemporary Accounts of Charity</i> Angela Grainger (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK), <i>Women, Breast Cancer, and Voluntary Action, 1963-1997</i>
3pm	Coffee break
3.15pm	Gender, family and race: international contexts Deanne van Tol (Queen's University, Canada), <i>'Does your wife like Africans?' Voluntary Action and Welfare Imperialism in British East Africa, 1920-60</i> Andrea Pass (University of Oxford), <i>Just a family affair? British women missionaries in India, c.1920-1950</i> Marie-Luise Ermisch, (McGill University, Canada), <i>Developing the Child: Britain, International Development and Children</i> Rose Holmes (University of Sussex), <i>'Rebels with a cause': The Work of Quaker Women with Refugees from Fascism 1933-39</i>
5pm	Roundtable: Gendering the history of charity and voluntary effort Led by Dr Daniel Weinbren and Dr Julie-Marie Strange

ORGANISERS' REPORT

Summary

This workshop developed the model of previous VAHS New Researchers Workshops, and kept closely to the format used at the University of Manchester (May 2011). 23 delegates attended and there were 11 academic papers. We had planned for four established academics to participate, but in the event three did, as one was unable to attend due to illness. The day was structured around three panels, to which everyone attended, with an Introduction session and a Roundtable discussion to conclude. It was chaired by Professor Barry Doyle, Head of History, English, Languages and Media, at the University of Huddersfield. We very much appreciated Professor Doyle's participation, and the support and backing that he provided from Huddersfield.

It is worth noting that although our Call For Papers explicitly encouraged papers working across all time periods and contexts, all papers focused upon the 'modern period', i.e. the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and upon Britain and the 'British world'. Positively, this made for a focused conversation across the day, and also looked forward to the forthcoming transnational conference to be held at Oxford Brookes University in March 2012. However, it is worth thinking about how future conferences might encourage historians working on periods other than the modern and on geographical contexts other than Britain and the British world to apply. Might we need to make contacts with other groups in order to successfully tap into the vibrant work on charity going on in different spheres? (It should be noted that one of the people we had hoped would be a Roundtable speaker works on early modern Italy; unfortunately she was unable to attend).

Funding

The workshop was funded by an Economic History Society grant (£636.25) and a grant from the University of Huddersfield (£452), for which Tosh successfully applied. Our total budget was £1088.25. The additional money secured by Tosh enabled us to cover more expenses than previous workshops. We used the total budget to cover the costs of catering and refreshments and travel and accommodation expenses, where applied for (see below on advice about covering expenses).

Call For Papers and abstracts

As well as disseminating the CFP via VAHS publicity, we also contacted a number of societies and groups to ask if they would circulate the CFP to their mailing list. The organisations we contacted were: Economic History Society Women, History Lab, IHR, Royal Historical Society, Women's History Network, Urban History Group, Northern History and the North American Journal of Welsh Studies. The event was also publicised internally at Huddersfield and Oxford and also through Tosh's social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook, the latter including the University of Manchester's 'Picnic Wednesdays' group of historians, 3 members of which attended the workshop).

In addition, and as in previous workshops, we contacted people directly who we thought might be interested in submitting papers (people we knew, who friends had suggested and who we had found via online searches e.g. academia.edu). This generated a good result: 5/11 abstracts we received were from people we had emailed directly.

Venue, catering and local arrangements

The event was held in the W2/09, West Building, University of Huddersfield Queensgate Campus. The room is used primarily as a lecture room within the department, with a capacity of c.30. Tea, coffee and food (with vegetarian options) were provided by the internal university catering service, whilst wine was purchased externally for the Roundtable discussion and post conference gathering.

Structuring the day/ the programme

Following the successful formats of previous workshops, we began the day with an introductory paper on Historiography, delivered by one of the established academics (Dr. Kate Bradley). This worked well in setting up some of the themes and methodological issues that were taken up during the day in three thematic panels. We had one panel of three papers and two of four papers. We did recognise at the time that this was a crowded programme, but we took the decision that it was positive to accept all papers that had been proposed. However, following feedback we note that some delegates would have preferred panels to include a maximum of three speakers.

As in previous workshops, we elected to have a Roundtable discussion to end the day, led by the established academics we had invited. We asked delegates to write down questions throughout the day that they wanted to be raised in the Roundtable. These were passed to the academics leading the discussion to read out. Before this, each academic (Dr. Daniel Weinbren, Dr. Kate Bradley and Dr. Julie Marie-Strange) gave a short reflection on the day and the themes and issues raised. The discussion that followed was focused and drew in several delegates. However, it became clear that the academics themselves had different views on how a roundtable should be structured. It might be worth discussing this issue in advance with invited academics, so that they are clear about their roles.

Before the Roundtable began we served wine and soft drinks, and this proved to be a convivial way to end the day. The Roundtable then moved into an informal drinks reception for delegates who were able to stay.

Delegates' expenses

We hoped to go some way to covering speakers' costs (travel and accommodation). In the event, we were able to cover the total costs of everyone who applied (8 speakers). We should note that we prioritised covering the costs of academics (although no academics requested their costs to be covered) and the costs incurred by the organisers.

It is vital not to overstate what expenses can be covered. We made it clear that funds were available on application towards to cost of travel and accommodation. Costs will be reimbursed retrospectively.

For future conferences, we would suggest that the subject of travel costs should be one of the first issues that is thought about. While we appreciate that final figures cannot be ascertained at this early stage, it is a good idea to find out roughly what sorts of travel costs people will incur when they are first contacted. It is also a good idea to raise the issue of expenses with keynote and roundtable participants when they are contacted initially – asking them roughly how much their travel costs would be, and whether or not they have access to a research grant that they might be prepared to use to cover some of these costs.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Participants were asked to anonymously fill in a sheet with the question below. The following is a representative summary of their answers.

How did you hear about this workshop? The most common answer was the IHR website. Others heard via the VAHS website/twitter, while others heard about the event word of mouth, including via their supervisor or one of the organisers.

How closely does the workshop's theme fit with your own research? There was a range here of those conducting research closely related, those who had to "stretch it a little bit", and those who are working on voluntary organisations and planning to work on gender.

What were you hoping for from the event? There was a mix of those who wanted to discuss\hear about research and have feedback on their own, and those who wanted "inspiration" or "ideas of how to approach the gender Q".

Were you satisfied with the practical arrangements? All responses were positive. When it was more than a "yes" there were positive comments about the "great venue", the "fab" catering and the ability to open the window when it was stuffy. One responded that they were "surprised and grateful for the funding".

What did you feel was the most useful part of the day? Most comments were along the lines that the whole day or the presentations were most useful. More specific comments pointed to the panel discussions, the Q&A and Dr Bradley's opening paper – "I found the historiography session a really good introduction."

What improvements could be made to the format? This was a pretty clear message – it was good but there is one improvement people wanted. Half of people said there were no improvements they could think of. The other half all said exactly the same thing: too many papers. Everyone who mentioned this suggested limiting panels to 3 papers. "There is a lot of info to take in!" Something we should bear in mind, however, given the purpose of the New Researcher workshops, was that one person commented: "Few less speakers (I think 3 per panel is a good number) although I do like the fact that everyone was accepted."

In addition to the anonymous feedback, one academic suggested it would be helpful to include abstracts in the workshop pack.

Please give a mark out of ten for the workshop overall. Average mark: 8.4. Nobody gave a mark below 8. One person gave a mark of 10. There was one person who declined to answer any of the questions, putting a line through them all and simply writing: "it was awesome!"