



# SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY

## WOMEN'S CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 52  
September 2018



**Examining photos at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary lunch**

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Dear Members and Friends

I hope you enjoyed the events of the past year which included a special lunch to mark the Club's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the garden party where for once it didn't rain! Now that our long hot summer is over it's time to look ahead to what's in store for the autumn and winter, starting as usual with the Coffee Morning where you get a chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. It's also a good opportunity to renew your membership. It would be appreciated if you can bring a cheque for £18 already made out to SUWC.

Having paid your subscription, the progress of Women's suffrage, a visit to a local stately home decorated for Christmas, and a talk and tour of drawings by Leonardo de Vinci are some of the events we've lined up for you, plus our AGM in October.

Please remember to book your place for all events using the forms supplied with the Newsletter.

*Alison Allen-Booth*

## RECENT EVENTS

### **17<sup>th</sup> January: Visit to St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield**

I had heard that St Marie's Cathedral was very interesting - and full of angels! In fact 200 of them were everywhere possible, from the pillar of angels climbing to heaven to those solemnly depicting Mary's virtues on the front of the original 1853 altar.

Almost hidden away, the building reflects the difficulties Catholics have had over the centuries. When their churches were finally allowed to be built, they were on discreet sites. The original and secret Catholic church, the Lord's House, was on the top floor of a house belonging to the agent of the Duke of Norfolk, roughly where the shop Next in Fargate is now. In the 1840s the incumbent Father Pratt decided that there was a real need for a larger church and so the present Cathedral was built in the garden and former graveyard of the Lord's House. It was designed in the fashionable neo-Gothic style, complete with a peal of bells in the tower, unusual for a Catholic church.

Guided by Kevin Exell, we were shown the treasures of the building, the shrines, the statues, the chapels, the windows, the beautiful wall tiles and the newly-restored organ.

Stories about notable figures made the past come alive. Father Pratt organised the building of the church with local architect Matthew Hadfield, the noted architect Augustus Pugin, and the Duke of Norfolk. Pratt died before the building's completion in 1850, and was buried at St Bede's in Rotherham. Knowing that Pratt's desire had always been to be entombed in his new church, the master stonemason disinterred the body at dead of night and kept it in his own yard until Pratt could be buried at St Marie's the following day.

During the Second World War the precious East window was stored in a disused mine shaft at Nunnery Colliery belonging to the Duke of Norfolk. After the war it was discovered that the mine shaft had been flooded, destroying crucial drawings and rotting the protective crates. A direct bomb hit destroyed other drawings and those at St Marie's

could not be found. It took six months for the windows to be replaced from memory.

Leaving, we took away impressions of a beautiful building, lovingly preserved and restored with care. *Ann James*

### **13<sup>th</sup> February: Talk by Professor Allison James – “My Textiles Journey – searching for a new voice”**

There was a good gathering of SUWC members and their guests, despite the uncertainty about the snow. Amanda Wade introduced Professor Allison James, an ex-colleague from Social Sciences. Allison feels she is still trying to find her way in textiles. She has had a long journey from early childhood interests in rag dolls and embroidery, through to teenage dress making and then to university where she specialized in knitting. Then, from the 1980s to 2007 she felt she needed a break from anything creative, apart from curtain making and Ehrman Tapestryes. (Some of us – I mean me - began to feel quite inferior at that stage, because I thought Ehrman Tapestryes were creative!)



Around 2010, Allison took a City and Guilds Course in embroidery, which re kindled her interest. She took a 2 year diploma including felt making, patchwork and quilting. When she retired she felt she had acquired many skills, but was not sure what to do with them. She was fascinated by colours and textures and decided to combine techniques such as patchwork and hand embroidery and so began to create amazing landscapes. Allison had chosen ‘Landscape’ as a topic for her City and Guilds diploma, with her inspiration developing from the countryside around her home near Flouch and so she concentrated on ‘Tracks and Trails’.

Among the many fine pieces she had on display, my favourite was a piece based on Fingals Cave, an amazing piece of art. She has continually refined her techniques and is hoping to exhibit and take commissions - perhaps having joint exhibitions with her husband who has a keen interest in photography.

We were all enthralled by Allison's talk and her wonderful exhibits though I think many of us felt a little inferior by the complexity of her work.

*Carol Walsh*

### **8<sup>th</sup> March: Theatre Visit – “This House” at West Yorkshire Playhouse**

A minority government trying to hang onto power and Parliament rife with political manoeuvring. No, not the current post Brexit vote situation but the 1970s and the story of how the Labour party struggled to survive for five years while continually under siege from resignations, defections and deaths. James Graham's play brilliantly reflects those turbulent times by focussing on the Whips offices of the two main parties – the “engine rooms” of Parliament where the daily machinations of politics are played out. Deals are done with minority parties, rebels are bullied, and when the time honoured convention of pairing absentee members breaks down, ministers are flown in by the RAF, and sick and dying MP's are dragged in.

Although the manipulating Whips are very much the central characters, it's a terrific ensemble performance from a cast of nineteen taking a variety of roles of many of the prominent politicians of the time – including John Stonehouse, Airey Neave, Alan Clark – and Michael Heseltine with the infamous Mace incident. The very effective set with the face of Big Ben looming over it, mainly features the two Whips' offices but also doubles as the Commons chamber. Jeremy Herrin's production keeps the action moving along at a fast and furious pace – a pace which is accentuated by music from a live band. The tension builds all the way through the play, which ends as in 1979 as the Conservatives win the General Election and Margaret

Thatcher makes her “Where there is discord...” victory speech on the steps of Downing Street.

So four decades on how much has changed in our political world and is our Parliamentary system fit for purpose? With a minority government in office, wheeler dealing is once more to the fore and the major parties are dependent on the loyalty of backbenchers. As former Lib Dem leader and former Sheffield MP Sir Nick Clegg says in the programme, the play illustrates one of the most enduring dilemmas of politics – the balance between principle and practice, idealism and reality.

*Alison Allen-Booth*

### **12th March: Spring Lunch and 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

This year's Spring Lunch, held at the Hallamshire Golf Club, provided a good venue for us to meet and learn about the early days of SUWC. It was the 80th anniversary of the club and we enjoyed hearing the reminiscences of some of our long-standing members. Originally founded in 1938, the Club was called The Ladies Tea Club. During a time when most women gave up work when they had children and life was very different for the wives of academics, the Club provided support socially, intellectually and practically.

Erica Ebling, who joined in the 1950s enjoyed the walking group. Both Erica and Inge Joseph remembered the formalities of the Ladies Tea Club - one was expected to wear a hat and gloves and be aware of the hierarchy among the university staff.

In 1966 the new Vice Chancellor Hugh Robson was from Australia. He came with his wife, two daughters and an 18 month old son. His wife became involved with the Women's Club and would hold tea parties at the Vice Chancellor's Lodge with the children.

When Angela Titman joined the club in the 60s, she felt she should buy a new hat and dress for the tea parties. Angela remembered setting up a Fashion Show with the help of Mary Teale, who was a fashion designer. Many members made their own clothes at that time and showed their dresses. Later a local dress shop invited the Club to hold

a fashion show for them: they could choose a dress to display, which they were then allowed to buy at a discount.

Kate Turner came to Sheffield from California in 1964 and liked it so much she stayed. She rejoined the group in 1995 and remembered Jo Steiner, who as chair was a real initiator and organiser. Kate stayed on the committee for 10 years, helping to arrange talks and visits and became responsible for the SUWC newsletter. With the use of new technology, she developed this into a booklet which is now produced twice a year.

Many other long-standing members recalled the early days of the club. Sheena Ritchie, who was unable to attend the lunch, noted the different attitudes which applied when she first joined. She remembered when her husband Hamish was a Senior Lecturer being told by the VC's wife, "Come. I'll introduce you to some people at your level."

There were numerous photographs on display and it was fascinating for new members to hear anecdotes about the past and the various events and activities.

Tributes were paid to past members Rhiannon Clayton and Jo Steiner, previous chairpersons who sadly are no longer with us. Sheena was also a former chairperson who has contributed so much to the Club and her collection of photographs was a pleasure to see.

The lunch and service was very good and we all enjoyed hearing about the origins of the club. As our current chairperson, Rosemary Hannon said, the memories of the older members reminded us how much the lives of women has changed since the early days of the club.

*Finola Marks*

### **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April: Talk by Tim Birkhead – Fantastic Facts about Birds' Eggs**

Prof Birkhead has worked at the University since 1976 and has a special interest in Guillemots and the sex lives of birds. He has recently had the privilege of working with David Attenborough on a TV programme about eggs.

Prof Birkhead started his talk by telling us about 'climbers' who were local agricultural workers who collected guillemot eggs on Bempton

cliffs at the beginning of the 20th Century. Thousands of eggs were collected and sold to gentlemen collectors who showed them to their friends. These eggs came in fabulous shapes and colours. Oologist George Lupton had a fine collection now at the Natural History Museum at Tring.

Aided by excellent illustrations and samples of guillemot eggs we learnt how eggs are made, incubated and hatched. The ovum is a single cell with yolk, the amount varying according to how soon the egg hatches. A blue tit takes 5 days, an albatross 2 months. Eggs are fertilised by more than one sperm, the extra sperm provide extra calcium. The female bird also eats snail shells to provide extra calcium. It takes 18 hours to put the shell on over the membrane which determines the shape of the egg. The colour, patterning, shape and number varies between species. Eggs laid by the guillemot are 12% of the body weight which is equivalent to a 15lb human baby!

Birds incubate their eggs, keeping them warm with a brood patch on the lower abdomen, where the blood flow can be adjusted according to the outside temperature. Extra blood in the goldcrest's legs can brood 10 eggs by turning and tumbling them. Parents can talk to their offspring before hatching and find their own nests on cliffs. Eggs turn in the oviduct before being laid. Small birds need care and time to develop whereas larger birds with larger eggs, such as the brush turkey hatch and fly away.

In answer to questions Prof Birkhead said he is currently working on a paper about the unique shape of guillemot eggs. The colouration is controlled by 2 pigments, red and green, produced in glands only present at shell making time. All eggs from one bird are the same pattern and this can be inherited by their offspring.

This was a fascinating talk, crammed with amazing facts and I'm sure we all learnt a lot. In conclusion he revealed that his sample eggs were 3D printed nylon and painted to look very realistic!

*Chris Roe*

## **22<sup>nd</sup> May: Talk by Angela McShane – Snuff Boxes**

Angela McShane gave us a fascinating talk about the history of snuff boxes and the social excitement in the mid-eighteenth century when the boxes would be produced, admired and envied. They were fashion items and the talk gave us an interesting glimpse into former times and the pleasure in the new – still with us today. It's interesting to think that the noxious substances in tobacco and its by-product snuff, made of dried crushed leaves, should become highly fashionable. Imagine the excitement of smoking leaves brought from America by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1586 and now two centuries later gentlemen would be showing off their sturdy snuff boxes made of copper, silver, gold, horn and.... tortoiseshell, of all things. The ladies also would have gained credence when they showed off their beautiful engraved boxes made from precious metals and often given as love tokens; they were carried in their fashionable loose pockets hanging from the waistbands.

It's interesting to think that tobacco and snuff, so popular in the past should now be something to avoid at all costs. They would not know the dangers then. Who cares when one can be the centre of attention of one's friends or even a potential lover?

*Kate Turner*

## **7th June: Garden Party at the home of Hilary and Bob Page**

After last year's disappointment with the weather, we were blessed with a lovely, sunny afternoon for our tea party in the Page's beautiful garden. Around fifty

members and guests came to sit and enjoy tea and a selection of delicious cakes provided by the committee, and of course to have the chance to chat to old friends. Many were happy to relax on



the shady terrace above the display of delphiniums and lupins. Others enjoyed a stroll around the spacious gardens, looking at the interesting trees and plants including a Japanese wisteria.

As the afternoon came to a close, some of us were pleased to have the opportunity to buy the remaining cakes. This money was added to the collection for Hilary's charity, L'Arche Preston, a community which helps people with learning disabilities achieve their potential. We would like to thank Hilary and Bob for welcoming us.

*Angela Titman*

### **11<sup>th</sup> July: Visit to Buxton**

Members of SUWC had been invited to join Margaret Fall's group of regular travellers on a trip to Buxton to learn more of the architectural development in the town during and after the 18th century and to see for ourselves the progress being made in the transformation of the Georgian Crescent into a 5star Thermal Spa Hotel.

We left Sheffield on a bright and sunny morning in a coach filled to capacity and travelled through the Derbyshire countryside arriving in Buxton in the middle of the International Festival. We met in the University of Derby's Buxton Campus under the Devonshire Dome, which is the largest unsupported dome in Europe with a diameter of 174ft. After coffee, Margaret Fall set the scene with some historical facts (including the local settlement by the Romans, and the major development by the 5th Duke of Devonshire in the 1780s) followed by a brief explanation of the geological basis for the formation of the thermal springs and caves in the carboniferous limestone. Then we were introduced to Liz Mackenzie of the Buxton Crescent Thermal Spa and Heritage Trust, who showed us a video featuring the current Duke of Devonshire explaining that John Carr of York was commissioned by his ancestor as the architect for the building of the Crescent in 1779-89 and encouraging us to be involved in the £50 million project which, it is hoped, will be a major boost to the economy of Buxton and environs. It is planned to house visitor attractions in the Pump Room and in the cellars of the Crescent describing the history and historical significance of those buildings.

Next long standing SUWC Member, retired architect Mary Wragg, gave a fascinating talk on John Carr of York and the Buxton Crescent. She initially introduced us to a comprehensive study of his life and

works in a book written by her late husband Dr. Brian Wragg. Carr was born into a large family in Horbury near Wakefield and was a prolific self-taught architect. He set up his practice in York and received a series of important commissions including the exterior of Harewood House, Welbeck Abbey, Wentworth Woodhouse, part of Chatsworth and then Buxton Crescent. The latter is unusual in being a semicircular crescent with a ground floor colonnade and included a 76ft long assembly room plus accommodation for 200 guests and servants. The Devonshire Dome, constructed a century later, replaced the stables Carr built for the horses of guests at the Crescent and which were reputedly the 'best in Europe'. It is said that Carr's influence on the architecture of Yorkshire rivals that of Wren in London.

Rosemary Hannon gave a vote of thanks to Mary and Margaret on our behalf and we then enjoyed a simple lunch together before we dispersed for the afternoon to explore Buxton further. Some went to the Pump room and nearby St. Anne's Well complete with Well Dressings and from where they could view the renovation in progress at the Crescent, others to the Museum and Art Gallery or to indulge in a little retail therapy or simply to wander in the sunshine in the Pavilion Gardens close to the Pavilion Arts Centre and the Opera House.

Our journey home via Miller's Dale and Tideswell completed a successful outing for which we must sincerely thank Margaret, Mary and Rosemary.

*Rachel White*

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September: 10.00am-12 noon Coffee Morning. at Tapton Masonic Hall, Shore Lane**

An opportunity to meet up and exchange news after the summer and pick up some autumn reading at the book stall. Guests are very welcome to join us for a payment of £2.00 each.

The booking form for this event was in the January newsletter.



**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October: 2.00pm: AGM in the INOX Conference Suite, University of Sheffield, and Talk by Jennie Street, Managing Director of Rhubarb Farm**

Rhubarb Farm is a horticultural social enterprise, based in Langwith, on the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire border. Jennie, who is an SUWC member, will explain how people with multiple and complex problems trying to change their lives for the better, are supported by working as volunteers on the Farm. Currently supporting 90 people, the Farm has 19 staff, of whom 13 started originally as volunteers. She will give case studies and tell of remarkable journeys. The Garden Group visited the farm a few years ago and found it an inspirational place.

**Theatre Visit to the Lowry Theatre, Salford to see “The Habit of Art”**

Alan Bennett’s play about a meeting between the poet WH Auden and the composer Benjamin Britten, starring Matthew Kelly and David Yelland. Exploring friendship, rivalry and heartache this multi layered masterpiece examines the joy, pain and emotional cost of creativity. Closing date for applications was August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November- 2.15pm at Tupton Masonic Hall, Talk - Viewing and Reviewing the Centenary of Women's (Partial) Suffrage by Dr. Julie V. Gottlieb**

This lecture will begin with a brief overview of the history of women's suffrage, before reflecting on the ways in which the milestone of women's (partial) suffrage has been framed and has functioned to motivate and inspire in 1939, 1968 and today as we mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act. Dr. Gottlieb is a Reader in the Department of History, University of Sheffield, and she has written extensively on the history of women and politics in modern Britain. Her most recent books are 'Guilty Women', Foreign Policy and

Appeasement (2015) and Rethinking Right-Wing Women: Gender and the Conservative Party, 1880s to the Present (co-edited, 2017). She acted as historical adviser to artist Gillian Wearing on the statue of Millicent Fawcett, unveiled in Parliament Square in April 2018, and is also curating a strand on Suffrage 100 for Sheffield's Off the Shelf Festival.

### **Thursday, 6th December: Visit - Christmas at Hardwick Hall**

11.30am at Hardwick Hall café for coffee. Meet at Snaithing Lane to share lifts at 10.15am.

Join us for a festive visit to the Elizabethan country house created by Bess of Hardwick in the 1500s. This year their Christmas display has an Advent theme and we'll be touring the Hall and possibly taking part in special activities. Admission to the Hall is free for National Trust members, £13.95 for non members.

### **Monday, 21st January 2019: 2.15 Tapton Masonic Hall. Talk – Forensic Facial Reconstruction by Katherine Linehan**

Dr Katherine Linehan leads the Human Anatomy team in the Department of Biomedical Science at Sheffield University. She is a specialist in teaching cadaveric dissection at undergraduate and postgraduate level and is an expert in pedagogy. She uses a range of innovative techniques to engage students, including the development of a course teaching facial reconstruction, a technique used to assist in the identification of deceased individuals from their remains. She has also created an online version of this course; Finding Mr X based upon a real murder case that happened in Sheffield in the year 2000. Katherine will talk about the process involved in identifying an individual from their remains as well as exploring how these techniques can be used to teach the next generation of Crime Scene Investigators.



**Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019: 11.00 Millennium Gallery, Sheffield. Talk and tour of the exhibition “Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawings”**

Twelve remarkable drawings by Leonardo da Vinci drawn from the Royal Collection are being displayed at the Gallery as part of a major nationwide exhibition marking the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the artist’s death. The exhibition will include examples of all the drawing materials used by the artists and present new information about his working practice and creative process. The morning will start with a talk from one of the Gallery staff and we will then be free to tour the display at our leisure. Numbers for this event are limited so early booking is recommended. Priority will be given to members but if you want to bring a guest, please indicate on the booking form and they will be given a place if numbers permit. Entrance to the exhibition is free.

## **OUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

**Gardens Group:** We meet to share lifts at the lower end of Snaithing Lane and with six seasons of visits successfully over, we’ll be planning our 2019 programme early in the New Year. The diary will be e-mailed to you in good time to get the dates in your diary. Ideas for visits from members are very welcome

**Walking Group:** The walking group currently has 17 members who meet at the bottom of Snaithing Lane at 9.30am on the first Tuesday of the month. The walks are not strenuous and are around 4 miles long. Usually they finish at a pub or café for lunch. Tuesday of the month, at the junction of Park Avenue and Riverdale Road.

**Theatre goers group:** Twice a year in Spring and Autumn members of SUWC travel to another city to enjoy a matinee performance of an interesting or amusing play. New members are always welcome and arrangements can be made for members to travel in a group if they prefer.

