



Cambridge & County  
Folk Museum

**fm**

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

# Cambridge Women & Work

## From ladies of discussion to women of action

Talks, exhibitions,  
performances, a walking tour  
and a lavish afternoon tea...

**May to July 2012**

Bookings 01223 355159  
[www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk)

## Welcome

Cambridge Folk Museum is delighted to be hosting **Cambridge Women and Work**, a series of centenary events celebrating the work of the Cambridge Branch of the National Union of Women Workers and the women whose energy and dedication brought it about. These women's aims were of the highest – they were interested in bettering everyday social and domestic conditions for women and families, in moving women into spheres of local and civic power, and in creating 'a voice' for themselves and the generations of women who would follow them.

The Museum, with its fascinating collection of artefacts of local social and domestic life, makes a perfect venue for this unusual line-up of talks and events, and we hope you'll come along and join us...

*Tamsin Wimhurst, Cambridge Folk Museum*

A couple of years ago four women had what turned out to be a lucky meeting in the Six Bells pub. Our discussion sewed the first thread for a celebration to mark the centenary of the inaugural meeting of the CBNUWW.

We saw their 1912 meeting as a milestone on women's journey to taking an active role in resolving the social welfare and civic issues of the day. We were intrigued by the fabric of these women's lives: what motivated them to leave their comfortable domestic routine and enter the public arena? How were they received? What were their struggles and achievements?

We hope to share our discoveries with you in this 'gathering of the threads' to celebrate the lives of these inspirational women.

*Sue Ifould, Freudian Slips*

With thanks to all the participants who have given so generously of their time in support of this project and the Folk Museum. Many thanks to the Cambridgeshire Collection for use of their photographs on pages 11 and 13. Printed by Esson Print

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## What's On And When

### **Finding Their Voices**

Wednesday 9th May • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 4

### **Gathering the Threads, by The Freudian Slips**

Sat 19th May and Sunday 20th May • 7.30pm • Anglia Ruskin  
Drama Centre • Drama performance 5

### **Masters' Wives in Discussion**

Wednesday 23rd May • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 6

### **Sex, Sin and Sympathy**

Thursday 31st May • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 7

### **Ellen Wilkinson, MP and Reformer**

Friday 8th June • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 8

### **The NUWW's Work Concerning Domestic Servants**

Thursday 14th June • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 9

### **'Better is Wisdom Than Weapons of War'**

Thursday 21st June • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 10

### **Women, Work, Trade Unions and War in Cambridge**

Wednesday 27th June • 7pm • Folk Museum • Talk 11

### **From Historical Page to Stage**

Thursday 5th July • 7pm • Castle End Mission • Talk & dance 12

### **Women Who Transformed Cambridge**

9th May to 31st July • Folk Museum • Exhibition 13

### **From Tea Parties to Tea Rooms**

Sunday 1st July • 3-5pm • Folk Museum • Tea & talk 13

### **Gathering Threads, by Camlris**

May • Cambridge Buddhist Centre • Photography exhibition 14

### **Walking with Women**

May to July • Self-guided walking tour 15

### **Women and Work from 1912 to 2012**

Monday 7th May • 8-10pm • Cambridge 105FM • Radio show 15

7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

£5 (£4 FRIENDS) INCLUDING A GLASS OF WINE

## Finding Their Voices

*From Cambridge ladies to women workers*

### Tamsin Wimhurst

We see their names commemorated in Cambridge streets and buildings - Rackham Close, Keynes Road, Ida Darwin hospital - but who were these women so honoured and what did they achieve? Living in the city during a time of enormous social change, they initiated a programme of social and political



reforms which had a profound impact on its civic, political and economic life. This talk explores their achievements and looks at how, in a pre-welfare world, a largely upper middle class, well-educated and socially aware group of 'Cambridge ladies' became proud to redefine themselves as 'women workers'.

### Let me introduce you to...

Various speakers give short profiles of Clara Rackham, Catharine Tillyard and other inspirational Cambridge women.

**TAM SIN WIMHURST** is the Education Officer of Cambridge Folk Museum. She wrote her MA thesis on the CBNUWW.

**Booking** 01223 355159 or [www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk)

7.30PM

ANGLIA RUSKIN DRAMA CENTRE, COVENT GARDEN

£6 (£4 CONCESSIONS)

## Gathering the Threads

### The Freudian Slips

Following on from last year's sell-out performance 'Stitching up Cambridge', The Freudian Slips are back with another compelling production.

At the crossing of the pathways at the centre of Parker's Piece stands a post with four lamps also known as Reality Checkpoint. This is the intriguing setting for the performance of 'Gathering the Threads'. Discover how our lives today have been touched by the experiences and actions of the pioneering Cambridge women of 1912, as characters spanning 100 years tell their stories.



The Freudian Slips follow the threads of these women's lives through story, music and dance, and invite you to join them. As the character of Eglantyne West says:

'Trust me... this is only the beginning. I suggest that you hold on to your chairs, suspend disbelief, engage your feminine... feminist side, and enjoy the journey.'

**THE FREUDIAN SLIPS** evolved out of a women's cabaret group called Women in the Spotlight. Our aim is to encourage women's creativity by staging a range of performance events, often writing and devising our own pieces. We are open to all women and welcome new members.

**Booking** 01223 355159 or [www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk)

Saturday 19th May & Sunday 20th May

Events/Performance

7 PM

FOLK MUSEUM

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## Masters' Wives in Discussion

With Caro Wilson, Sibella Laing and Susan Bowring,  
hosted by Tamsin Wimhurst



1892 quilt made by Masters' wives

There is a small group in Cambridge sometimes called The Spice, short for the cumbersome phrase 'Heads of Houses' Spouses'. This evening three of those spouses, Sibella Laing from Corpus Christi College, Susan Bowring from Selwyn College and Caro Wilson from Emmanuel College, talk about their roles and the changes brought about in their lives when their spouses took a new job.

## Buy a Commemorative Mug

Potter and historian Marie Thompson wrote her MA thesis on the inaugural meeting of the CBNUWW, and she has created this delightful earthenware mug to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the event. Available £8 each from Cambridge Folk Museum shop.



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7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

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## Sex, Sin and Sympathy

*Rescuing women and reforming men in 19th-century Cambridge*

**Susan Woodall and Philip Howell**

Why was Cambridge called a 'vortex of dissipation' and a city 'wholly given to fornication'? How and why did women here attempt to rescue prostitutes and reform the University?

By the late 19th century, Cambridge University was under attack for conniving in a culture of prostitution, its students (and some of its Fellows) accused of sexually exploiting



women of the city. Prostitutes were 'tolerated' by the University, at the same time as its proctors retained powers to detain and inspect women suspected of being streetwalkers. During the 19th-century period of reform, many women in Cambridge were active in trying to rescue such 'fallen' women from a life of vice. In so doing they challenged the masculine ethos of the University and paved the way for social and political reform.

**SUSAN WOODALL** is an associate lecturer with the Open University, currently researching the Cambridge Female Refuge.

**PHILIP HOWELL** is a Fellow and senior lecturer at Cambridge University. He is currently researching the historical geography of the regulation of prostitution in Britain and its colonies.

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Talks  
Thursday 31st May

7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

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## Ellen Wilkinson, MP and Reformer

**Mary Joannou**

Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was a prodigious political activist, journalist and writer who always remained close to the working class women she grew up with in Manchester. She became the first woman Labour MP and was Minister of Education in the Labour government of 1945. She is perhaps best remembered as the MP for Jarrow, leading the famous Jarrow march of the unemployed to London in 1936.

This talk focuses on Ellen Wilkinson's work in the miners' strike and lock-out of 1926, when she was at the centre of a massive humanitarian campaign to distribute clothes, food, milk, shoes and medicines to



families in the coal fields. Her novel *Clash* (1929), set at the time of the strike, contains fictionalised accounts of the strike and of her relationships with working women in the northern mining communities.

**MARY JOANNOU** is Professor of Literary History and Women's Writing at Anglia Ruskin University. Her research interests include the women's suffrage movement and the 1930s.



7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

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## The NUWW's Work Concerning Domestic Servants

Lucy Delap

The Cambridge branch of the NUWW brought together suffragists, moralists and municipal activists. Its members were convinced that women could pursue public service and simultaneously sustain harmonious marriages and homes. They rarely reflected that this was only possible through the work of the domestic servants who ran their middle and upper class homes, or that these workers formed part of the 'underprivileged' whose lives the NUWW aimed to improve.



This talk explores the conditions under which domestic servants worked in the early 20th century, at the height of the NUWW's work. Changing domestic technologies, class rituals and female aspirations will be set alongside the NUWW vision of the home and women's citizenship.

**LUCY DELAP** is a Fellow and Director of Studies at Cambridge University. Her research focuses on the history of feminism, the home and domestic service. *Knowing Their Place: domestic service in twentieth century Britain*, was published in 2011.

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Talks  
Thursday 14th June

7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

£5 (£4 FRIENDS) INCLUDING A GLASS OF WINE

## 'Better is Wisdom Than Weapons of War'

*The women's suffrage movement in Cambridge*

**Sue Slack**

An exploration of Cambridge Women's Suffrage Society from its early days in 1884 to the gaining of the vote in 1918 and beyond. Using photographs, newspapers and other contemporary sources, the talk outlines the development of the Society through its meetings and marches, including the riotous events when Emmeline Pankhurst came to speak in Cambridge, and the criminal damage perpetrated by the small band of local suffragettes during their militant phase. It is peppered with portraits of the indomitable lady members of the Society who fought for the vote and then went on to do great things for local and national welfare and education.



Newnham College banner

**SUE SLACK** is a Local Studies Assistant at the Cambridgeshire Collection, and has a major interest in women's history. She has published a pictorial history of the city entitled *Cambridge*.

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7PM

FOLK MUSEUM

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## Women, Work, Trade Unions and War in Cambridge

Deborah Thom



Women's work in Cambridge during the early years of the 20th century was limited or varied depending on education and social class. How far was 1912 a golden period for women with new opportunities opening up and did war improve their chances? Trade unions began to flourish after 1912, leading to the bedders' strike just after the war, when working women seemed to be gaining new confidence and challenging authority.

This talk looks at suffrage and social reform organisations like the National Union of Women Workers during the war years. It shows how many different ways there were to be a woman activist or feminist and calls into question some of the ideas about the war as a time of improvement for all women.

**DEBORAH THOM** teaches social and gender history at Robinson College, Cambridge University. She has written about the history of feminism and women's work in the First World War in *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*.

**Booking** 01223 355159 or [www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk)

Wednesday 27th June

Talks

7 PM

CASTLE END MISSION

£5 (£4 FRIENDS)

## From Historical Page to Stage

*The dramatic life and times of Doris Elizabeth Adams 1903-1985  
With a gypsy dance demonstration*

**Jean Rees-Lyons and Sarah Baylis**

How can you create a drama from the everyday historical records of an ordinary person's life? Can you transform archive into action? That was the challenge posed to playwright Jean Rees-Lyons. As part of an HLF project, she has created a drama around the life of Doris



Doris Elizabeth Adams and her uncle,  
courtesy The Littleport Society

Elizabeth Adams of Littleport, a spinster and only daughter of a Wesleyan Methodist minister who, after early academic promise at university, spent most of her life working in her father's ironmonger's shop and mysteriously ended up a recluse.

What happened? Why and how did this enigmatic woman create a gypsy dance for her Sunday school Bible class (demonstrated at the talk)? Using community archives, accounts of real events and the personal testimonies of those who remember her still, Doris Elizabeth's story has been dramatised in an act of contemporary memory-making.

**JEAN REES-LYONS** is a playwright involved in Littleport's HLF-funded Family Adams Project ([www.familyadamsproject.org.uk](http://www.familyadamsproject.org.uk)).

**SARAH BAYLIS** is a local historian who has worked on several oral history projects in East Anglia.

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FOLK MUSEUM EXHIBITION

NORMAL MUSEUM CHARGES APPLY

## Women Who Transformed Cambridge

*Facing the challenge of social change*



Victorian and Edwardian social reformers – the females of the species anyway – were often characterised as upper-middle-class do-gooders who had little real understanding of the social and economic deprivation suffered by the people they professed to help. But is this assessment based in any truth? This exhibition explores the lives, backgrounds and achievements of some of the Cambridge women who had a transformative effect on the social fabric of people's lives during the early 20th century. Including Mayor Florence Ada Keynes, Maud Darwin and policing, Eglantyne Jebb and the charity movement, and Clara Rackham and housing.

Exhibition  
9th May to 31st July

FOLK MUSEUM, 3-5PM, SUNDAY 1ST JULY

£18, BOOKING IN ADVANCE ONLY

## From Tea Parties to Tea Rooms

Talk by Tamsin Wimhurst and Susan Miller; tea from Miss Sue Flay

To celebrate women's cultural influence on tea, Miss Sue Flay of the secludedteaparty.com has created a delicious afternoon tea to enjoy alongside the talk.

**Booking** 01223 355159 or [www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk)

## Gathering Threads



'Machine' by Dragana Lazici

CamIris is the Cambridge Women's Photography Group and its Gathering Threads exhibition celebrates the 100th anniversary of the CBNUWW, the Suffrage Society and early feminist groups. Some members have been inspired by the development of the early women's movement which saw the first wave of feminism, followed by the second wave in the 1960s and 1970s. They have focused on the common threads that link them to those times through their own life experiences, through the experiences of women they know well or the inspirational lives of women around the world. Meanwhile, others have interpreted the theme to include any work they care about as women photographers – literally 'gathering the threads' of their work.

An array of photographic media is used, including digital and traditional photographs, inkjet prints on sustainably sourced handmade paper, and video.

**CAMIRIS** meets regularly and provides support for women interested in photography. Since forming in 1994, the group has organised two successful conferences at Wysing Arts and published limited edition books. It also holds workshops and exhibitions.

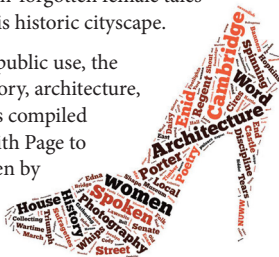
FREE BOOKLET, AVAILABLE FROM THE FOLK MUSEUM

## Walking with Women

*Unlocking female stories from Cambridge's past*

Is most people's experience of Cambridge 'an array of old white men staring down at you from oak-panelled walls', as one critic memorably put it? No longer... A new self-guided walking tour of the centre aims to show the city through an entirely female perspective by focusing on the role local women have played in making Cambridge what it is today. From the squalid cages of Regent Street's infamous Spinning House to astrophysicist Jocelyn Bell's stolen star-mapping, the tour provides a punchy, easy-to-digest guide of the often-forgotten female tales and tragedies locked within this historic cityscape.

Designed as a booklet for free public use, the self-guided tour combines history, architecture, poetry and photography. It was compiled by Shape East in association with Page to Performance poetry, and written by a dedicated team of local and (mainly) female historians, poets and enthusiasts.



Self-guided walking tour  
May to July

8–10 PM, MONDAY 7TH MAY

REBEL ARTS WOMEN'S RADIO (RAWR)

CAMBRIDGE 105FM

## Women and Work from 1912 to 2012

What were the achievements of the National Union of Women Workers and how are women represented in the workplace today? Interviews, discussion and music. Listen live or online at [www.mixcloud.com/RebelArtsRadio/](http://www.mixcloud.com/RebelArtsRadio/)

## How to Book

Numbers are limited, so to avoid disappointment we strongly recommend booking events in advance. This can be done on the Folk Museum website [www.folkmuseum.org.uk](http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk); by sending an email to [info@folkmuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@folkmuseum.org.uk); or by phoning the Museum on 01223 355159.

In each case we will need the title of the event you are booking, the number of seats you require, and a contact name and telephone number. We ask for payment at the time of booking.

Please note: you will not be sent a ticket: instead your name and booking details will be added to a list. When arriving at the event, you will be asked to confirm your name and the number of seats booked.

We require a minimum of 48 hours' notice in the event of cancellation.

## Venues

### Folk Museum

2/3 Castle Street  
Cambridge CB3 0AQ

### Castle End Mission

St Peter's Street  
Pound Hill Corner  
Cambridge CB3 0BD

### Anglia Ruskin Drama Centre

Covent Garden  
Cambridge CB1 2HR

### Cambridge Buddhist Centre

38 Newmarket Road  
Cambridge CB5 8DT



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