

# Missing Pages

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## Honouring History's Hidden Women

Ancestry remembers  
25 inspiring women.

[ancestry.co.uk](https://ancestry.co.uk)

Over my many years of digging through archives, I've often been frustrated by an all too predictable gap in historical records. While history has largely documented the lives and actions of men, the experiences and accomplishments of women are sidelined – if they are featured at all.

This isn't just a problem of the past. When Ancestry commissioned new research recently, I was shocked to see how deeply this imbalance still affects us. Today, over half of us (57%) admit we are more confident naming male historical figures than female ones. Worryingly, our review of KS3 history textbooks showed that four in five named historical figures are men, sending the wrong message to the next generation about which types of people matter when it comes to remembering our past.

In light of these findings, we asked ourselves an important question. When the sheer volume of recorded history is so heavily weighted in favour of men, how do we begin to balance the books?

First, we must actively research, uncover, and celebrate the stories that have been lost. To help us do this, I am incredibly proud to say we have partnered with historian Dr. Amy Boyington to develop a new test designed to challenge how women are represented in history. See overleaf for more information from Amy on "The Parity Principle" and how it works.

Alongside this, we are also working with Historic England to highlight just a few of the remarkable women whose achievements have been overlooked for too long, all of which you can read in this newspaper listed in alphabetical order. These women, all found in the 1921 Census of England and Wales, are just a fraction of the incredible stories just waiting to be discovered.

To that end, I also want to invite you to become the historian of your own family. The history books may have forgotten our female ancestors, but I promise you, their stories are not lost. They are still out there, waiting in census records, on passenger lists, in archived newspaper clippings, and in the memories passed down through your family. (Interestingly, in my experience as a genealogist I've found it is often the women in families who keep these memories alive, taking photos, collating keepsakes and passing on stories to the next generation.)

At Ancestry, we have all the tools you need to uncover the 'missing pages' of your own family tree. We owe it to the women of the past, and to the generations of the future, to find these stories and share them. I can't wait to see what you discover!

– Dr Jennifer Doyle,  
Historian and Expert Genealogist, Ancestry

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



– Dr Jennifer Doyle



## 64%

of people believe the omission of women's accomplishments has directly influenced attitudes to modern gender roles

## 81%

of historical figures named in KS3 history textbooks are men

## 79%

of teachers agree that a simple, standardised framework would be helpful to ensure they cover diverse perspectives in their lessons.

## 57%

of the public admit they are more confident naming male historical figures than female ones



– Dr Amy Boyington



– Anna Whitehouse

# Anna Whitehouse

# Dr Amy Boyington

When Ancestry shared their recent research with me, it confirmed a stark reality I encounter all too often in my own work: women are systematically sidelined from our historical narratives. Rectifying this erasure is an uphill battle when the very textbooks, curricula, and resources we rely on continue to propagate a deeply uneven view of the past.

Partnering with Ancestry, we knew we had to tackle this head-on. A history without women isn't just incomplete – it's half a story. We wanted to do more than just raise the bar for how we assess representation today; we wanted to build a practical framework that would empower the historians, teachers, and the wider public to rewrite the status quo.

We took direct inspiration from the famous Bechdel Test – created by American cartoonist Alison Bechdel – the simple, legendary tool used to analyse female representation in film and fiction. Our goal was to create an equally elegant, actionable test for educators, researchers, and the wider public. We wanted to build something anyone could use to interrogate a piece of history and ensure women are not just token additions, but are represented with real agency, depth, and context.

This is how 'The Parity Principle' was born. It challenges us to look closer at the history we consume and ask: Are women centered in this narrative? Are their lived experiences, their struggles, and their everyday realities treated with the same historical weight as the actions of men? Or are they merely included as footnotes, romantic interests, and symbolic sidebars?

With 79% of teachers stating they would support a standardised framework to help them teach more diverse perspectives, the need is undeniable. The Parity Principle is designed to be exactly that – a practical, immediate tool to bridge the gap in our classrooms and beyond.

I encourage everyone to keep The Parity Principle in mind next time you read a history book, watch a documentary, or listen to a podcast. And if you are an educator, a writer, or a fellow historian, I urge you to adopt this framework in your daily work.

Together, we can ensure the legacy of women is properly, permanently woven into the fabric of our shared history.

– Amy

“It is astounding that the women who shaped our world are still being relegated to the footnotes of history. I experienced this erasure firsthand when researching my paternal grandmother on Ancestry. Seeing her life reduced to the occupation of ‘wife of’ on her death certificate was a turning point. But finding her census returns and marriage records gave me the tangible evidence I needed to make her story real and sparked

entirely new conversations with the women in my family. It is time we unearth the incredible women from our shared history, starting with our own ancestors, to give them the recognition they so rightly deserve and show our children the true, equal picture of who shaped the world we live in today.”

– Anna, Founder of Mother Pukka

## The Parity Principle

Where possible, an account or portrayal of a period or event should feature the same number of named women as men:

- A) within the main thrust of the historical narrative
- B) discussed on their own terms, rather than in their relation to others (e.g. as a spouse or a victim)
- C) providing insight into their own notable achievements and/or the general life experience of women at the time

To find out more about The Parity Principle and how to apply it, please visit [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)



# 01 Aethel Tollemache

We may not be familiar with Aethel Tollemache's name today, but through her incredible dedication to social progress, she made sure it was heard loud and clear during her lifetime.

In 1907, while attending a Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) meeting in Bristol, Tollemache witnessed speeches from leading voices in the women's suffrage movement: Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Annie Kenney. It was this event that would spark a lifelong commitment to political and social activism.

Joining the WSPU marked the start of her defiance – direct action would follow. This included the joining of the 1911 census boycott and a principled protest against taxation without representation – no vote, no tax.

More militant activism saw her engage in window smashing and mail tampering, the latter involving the pouring of tar into post boxes. Activities such as these would result in several arrests and even imprisonment, with Tollemache going on hunger strike while incarcerated in Holloway Prison.

A woman of strongly held principles and convictions, Tollemache did not limit her activism to the suffrage movement. She was also a dedicated advocate for animal welfare, maintaining a strict vegetarian diet and firmly opposing practices like vivisection.

*Tollemache, Aethel*  
Bow St. 28/11/11  
" 29/1/13



# 02

## Alison Settle

When Alison Settle took her first tentative steps on Fleet Street, little did she know she would carve a path for generations of aspiring female writers to follow.

In 1910, when there were very few women working in journalism, Alison Settle defied the era's expectations.

**Working as a prolific contributor to newspapers and magazines, she grew her name, eventually earning the role of editor at British Vogue.**

Overseeing the publication from 1926 to 1935, Settle's impact was significant, growing its readership and its revenue.

Under her stewardship, the title would go beyond its reputation for haute couture, sharing guidance with readers on how to dress well on a budget. It also explored avenues entirely outside the world of fashion, commissioning pieces from influential literary women like Virginia Woolf, Edith Sitwell, and Vita Sackville-West.

In 1944, Settle broke barriers by travelling to mainland Europe to work as a war correspondent, a role that continues to be male dominated today.

Despite all her success and influence, Settle made a point of supporting other women throughout her life. As well as a staunch supporter for women's rights, she was a founder of The Women's Press Club and regularly mentored women looking to break into journalism.

In 1961, Alison Settle was awarded an OBE for her services to fashion journalism.

# 03 Dr. Annie Wainwright Hyatt

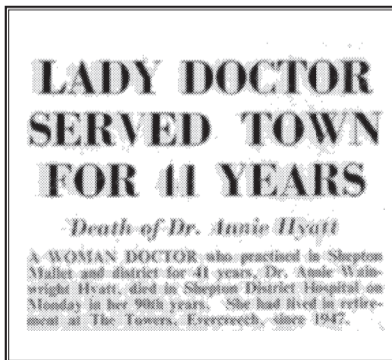
**She may have been one of the first women to qualify as a doctor in Britain,**

but Dr. Annie Wainwright Hyatt saw her role as more than just a medical practitioner. She wanted to reform a system that legally and socially prioritised the health of men over women and children.

In 1875, legislation was passed that permitted women to be licensed as medical professionals. By 1911, 495 female doctors had qualified to practice, and Dr. Annie Wainwright Hyatt was among them.

During her career she would hold numerous crucial roles, acting as medical officer for her local hospital, workhouse, and over 30 schools, as well as deputy medical officer for the whole of Somerset. Her presence and authority in these positions would create a template for other women keen to pursue leadership roles, or a career in medicine, in an era when female professionals were a rarity.

However, Dr. Hyatt's most significant contribution to history was her relentless advocacy for public health and social welfare, particularly for women and children. In the face of strong opposition from her male counterparts, she campaigned tirelessly to extend the free medical treatment that was being proposed in Parliament for men to also include women and children; legislative changes she would eventually see realised with the birth of the NHS.



# 04 Catherine Black

Few modern careers match the variety and significance of Catherine Black's. A nurse from Ireland, her dedicated service saw her care for patients across the entire spectrum of society, from the trenches of World War I to the throne in Buckingham Palace.

Qualifying from The London Hospital in 1905, Black would later join the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service at the outbreak of World War I. It was here she confronted the harrowing reality of shell

shock, meeting a misunderstood trauma with both dedication and compassion.

Later in her career, Black would secure a close and trusted position within the British monarchy. In 1928, she was appointed as the private nurse to King George V following a severe illness and remained in his service until his death in 1936. Known as 'the King's Nurse,' she was given her own chambers in Buckingham Palace.

Black would eventually come to chronicle her experiences, including her time in the Palace, and service during World War I, in her autobiography titled "King's Nurse, Beggar's Nurse".

In recognition of her dedicated service, Catherine Black received the honour of Member of the Victorian Order (Fourth Class) in 1938.



# 05 Daphne Steele

Today, our health system couldn't function were it not for the dedication, care and expertise of medical professionals born overseas. Daphne Steele was one of the very first to bring hers to the newly established National Health Service (NHS).

Born in what was then British Guiana, Steele was one of thousands of Commonwealth citizens who answered the call to help staff the NHS following its formation.

In 1964, she made history with her appointment to the position of matron at St Winifred's Hospital for Mothers and Babies in Ilkley, West Yorkshire, the first person of colour to hold such a senior nursing post in the NHS. The news attracted national and international media attention, with papers from America to Trinidad reporting her achievement.

Retiring in 1987, Steele's career is testament to the immense contribution of the Windrush generation to British society, paving the way for future generations of Black and minority ethnic nurses to pursue leadership positions in our health services.

In recognition of her historic achievement, a Historic England blue plaque was unveiled in her honour in Ilkley, Yorkshire in 2024.



# 06 Dr Dahlia Whitbourne

*big reasons  
to be proud*

Not content with breaking professional barriers in just one country, Dr Dahlia Whitbourne would go on to do so across three continents.

Born in Jamaica, her academic brilliance earned her the prestigious Jamaica Scholarship in 1920, making her

**the first woman to use the award to pursue a medical career.**

This path led her to London, where she trained at the London School of Medicine for Women and the School of Tropical Medicine.

Dr Whitbourne spent her early career in Lagos where she served as a 'Lady Medical Officer', becoming the first Black woman to practise medicine in Nigeria. During this time, she played a central role in founding a vital infant welfare programme providing essential support to local families.

Returning to Jamaica in 1931, Dr Whitbourne was one of the country's first female doctors, spending twenty-six years as the Schools Medical Officer for Kingston and St Andrew. Responsible for the health of more than 25,000 children, she led successful initiatives to tackle malnutrition and oversaw the complete eradication of pink eye in the region.

In 1986, Dr Whitbourne was awarded the Order of Distinction for her lifelong commitment to public health.



# 07



# Doris Brabham Hatt

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From her art to her activism, Doris Brabham Hatt lived a life that boldly defied the conventions of her time.

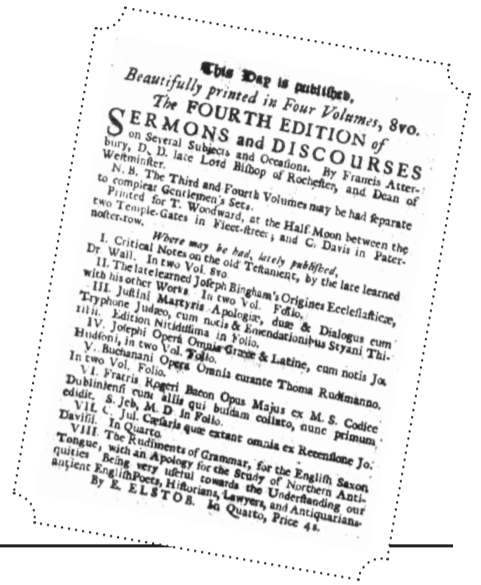
five-decade career.

and joined the Communist Party in the 1930s in response to the rise of fascism.

Studying at the Bath School of Art, Goldsmiths College, and the Royal College of Art, Hatt found inspiration in revolutionary movements like cubism, and the work of artists such as Cézanne and Picasso. She would go on to develop a distinctive style of her own as a British Modernist painter and printmaker, exhibiting work throughout a

Beyond her art, Hatt was a dedicated socialist and feminist, her political consciousness ignited by World War I when she witnessed widespread poverty as well as the plight of returning soldiers. She later became involved in the women's suffrage movement

Following her death, a relative would attempt to conceal Hatt's feminism and the fact she was a lesbian by destroying her personal records. Fortunately, her partner Margery Mack Smith was able to salvage several crates of her work and writings ensuring Hatt's memory was preserved.



# 08

# Elizabeth Elstob

Cited as England's first female historian, Elizabeth Elstob made it her mission to ensure history and education were more accessible for women.

Elstob consistently used her work to advocate for women in other ways too.

Elstob's life provides a unique insight into the significant societal and financial barriers faced by women in the 18th century, barriers that even someone as intellectually accomplished as her struggled to overcome.

Specialising in linguistics, in 1715 she published *The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue*, the first grammar of Old English to be written in modern English rather than Latin.

For example, in 1709 she published an edition of the *An English-Saxon Homily*, using its preface to make the case for women's education.

Today, not only is Elstob considered one of our first female historians, but one of Britain's first feminists too.

Old English to be written in modern English rather than Latin.

Unfortunately, her work as a historian would come to an end with the death of her brother and financial benefactor, William.

# 09

# Elsie Daking

In the early 1900s world of auctioneering, Elsie Daking cultivated a reputation for confidently conducting sales in an environment traditionally resistant to women.

As one of the earliest women to gain recognition as a professional auctioneer, Daking would specialise in the sale of livestock in Peterborough where she lived, a thriving hub for farming communities at the time.

And while she wasn't the first to oversee auctions in the UK, she played a role in helping to normalise the idea of women pursuing auctioneering as a career, her visibility and success marking a shift toward broader acceptance across the industry.

MICHAELMAS EXAMINATION, 1922.

FINAL. 235 235

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Wheeler, Elsie May.



# 10

# Elsie May Wheeler

The first female barrister to actively practise in England, Elsie 'May' Wheeler raised the bar for women aspiring to break into the male-dominated British legal profession.

1920, she had taken her place as a student barrister in the Middle Temple.

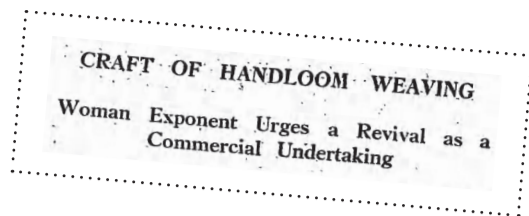
Operating on the South East Circuit at a time when many women were still denied the vote, she overcame significant societal prejudice to forge a formidable career.

Following her studies at Girton College, Cambridge, Wheeler seized an opportunity created by the landmark 1919 Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act which permitted women to become civil servants and lawyers for the first time. By January

Wheeler was formally called to the Bar in November 1922. Although she was the second woman ever to achieve this milestone, she was the first to step into the courtroom as her predecessor opted for a life in academia instead.

After bringing her expertise to the Home Office in 1939, she eventually retired to her cherished childhood home on The Quay in St Ives, Cambridgeshire, leaving behind a monumental legacy for the generations of women who would follow in her footsteps.

# 11



## Ethel Mary Mairet

Sometimes referred to as the mother of modern handweaving, Ethel Mary Mairet is one of the most significant figures in the modern craft revival of the twentieth century.

Following her marriage in 1902, Mairet travelled with her husband to Sri Lanka, known then as Ceylon. There, she undertook a detailed study of traditional weaving and vegetable dyeing techniques, meticulously documenting the local crafts.

This experience would form the foundation of her life's work, igniting a passion for reviving these almost-extinct skills in Britain.

Upon her return, she continued her research, eventually establishing a workshop in Ditchling which became an internationally renowned center for textile experimentation and education. She also published several seminal books, including *A Book on Vegetable Dyes* (1916) and *Hand-weaving Today: Traditions and Changes* (1939).

In 1937, Ethel became the first woman to be awarded the prestigious title of Royal Designer for Industry (RDI).

# 12



## Evelyn Cheesman

An accomplished naturalist and explorer, Evelyn Cheesman was someone who refused to let adversity stand in the way of her aspirations.

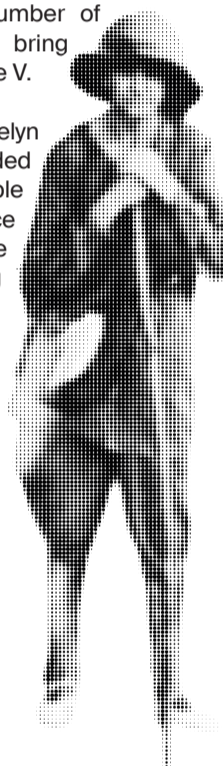
An early example of her infatigable perseverance is found in her reaction to rejection by the Royal Veterinary College, which did not accept women students at the time. Studying entomology instead, the branch of zoology that focuses on insects, she would go on to become the first female curator at London Zoo.

Throughout her career, Cheesman travelled around the globe to conduct research, including eight solo expeditions to the South Pacific. During this time she made many important discoveries, collecting over 70,000 mainly insect and plant specimens, many of which now reside in the Natural History Museum in London.

Beyond her pioneering scientific work, Cheesman was also known for establishing positive relationships with the indigenous people that she encountered on her travels. In the New Hebrides she was on such good terms with a tribe of cannibals that she was presented with a number of diplomatic gifts to bring home for King George V.

Around the time Evelyn Cheesman was awarded an OBE for her incredible contributions to science and exploration, she was quoted as saying (about explorers):

"We drop down, or get run over, but we never retire."



# 13

## Harriet Shaw Weaver

Without Harriet Shaw Weaver, one of the 20th century's most important and influential writers might never have found their audience.

Weaver would pursue many interests throughout her life. She first worked as a social worker, before becoming a magazine editor and a publisher. She was also engaged in political activism, joining the women's suffrage movement.

However, it is through her patronage of James Joyce that she really made her mark.

An early admirer of the author's work, she serialised his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the magazine she edited at the time. When Joyce struggled to find anyone willing to publish the work as a book, she established the Egoist Press at her own expense in order to do so.

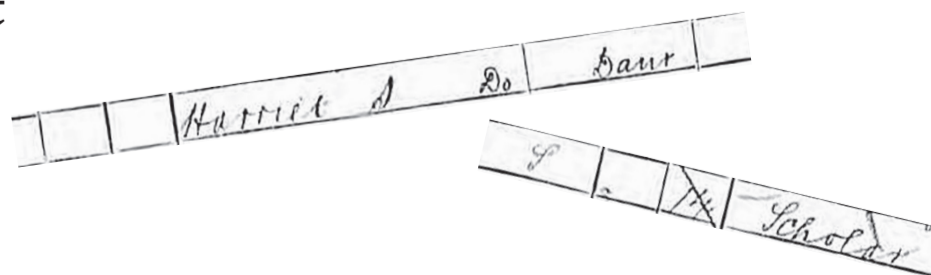
Her ongoing financial support was crucial for Joyce and his family, allowing him the freedom to write his masterpiece, *Ulysses*, which she also began serialising until

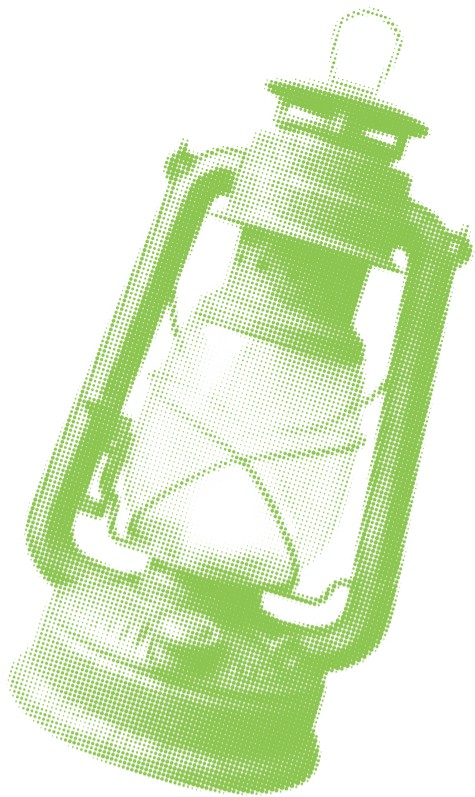
controversy relating to its subject matter forced her to stop. This support would continue until just before the author's death in 1941.

Weaver's work to secure Joyce's legacy did not end there. She would go on to act as his literary executor, helping to compile his letters, as well as donating her own valuable correspondence with him to the British Museum.



*Missing Pages*





# 14

## Janet Isabel Mary Ornsby

A trailblazer in early twentieth-century industry, Janet 'Janetta' Ornsby paved the way for women in British engineering.

Born in Dalkeith in 1871, Ornsby's husband served as the senior manager or 'Viewer' for the local colliery, but when his health began to fail, she found herself stepping directly

**into the heart of the region's mining operations.**

In an era when women were largely excluded from heavy industry, she stepped up to take on his duties. This saw her frequently manage industrial affairs in his absence,

confidently addressing both the local coalminers and the colliery owners to ensure the mine continued to run smoothly.

This hands-on experience in a fiercely male-dominated environment was channeled into her political activism. A dedicated suffragette, she became a role model for the breaking down of professional barriers, advocating for more women to take up roles in technical and engineering sectors.

Her lasting legacy was cemented in 1919 when she became one of just seven original signatories on the founding documents of the Women's Engineering Society (WES). The following year, she was elected to its inaugural council, securing her place as an architect of women's progress in the field.

# 15

## Judy Fryd

Mainstream education in the UK today is more inclusive than ever before, particularly when it comes to supporting people with learning disabilities. We have Judy Fryd to thank for that.

Beginning her career as a secretary and trade union activist,

**Fryd was a passionate advocate for both women's employment and workers' rights.**

However, it was through her pioneering work campaigning for greater access to education that she would make her name.

This began when Fryd's eldest daughter, Felicity, was denied access to mainstream

education due to developmental delays. Frustrated by a lack of support, and believing in her daughter's potential to learn and achieve, she began educating Felicity at home, eventually teaching her to read, write and count.

During this time, Fryd also wrote to other families around the country experiencing a similar struggle with their children. The connections she made would eventually lead to her founding the organisation that would later become



Mencap, a national movement dedicated to equality, education, and support for people with learning disabilities.

Fryd's continued efforts helped to improve public understanding and drive wider educational reform, such as the Education Act 1970 giving all children a legal entitlement to education.

Judy Fryd was appointed MBE in 1967 and CBE in 1996.

# 16

## Kathleen Garnham

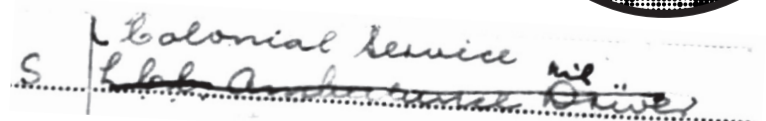
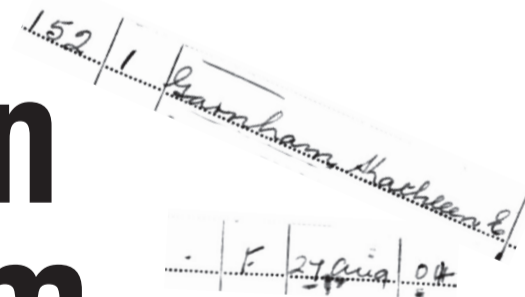
Not only was Kathleen Garnham a world-beating amateur golfer, she went on to hit a metaphorical hole in one while working in military intelligence during World War II.

Named golfer of the year in 1931 by her peers, Garnham's exceptional talent resulted in her taking her game to international challengers. In 1933, during a successful tour of the United States, she won the Florida State Championship and the Sedgfield Medal Tournament.

Returning to Europe, she saw success in the 1937 French Open and the 1939 women's championship in Belgium.

It was shortly after this that war would break out, a period in which Garnham served in the photo interpretation unit of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). It was during this time she was credited with identifying the German missile factories at Peenemunde that developed the V-1 and V-2 rockets.

Later in the war, raids of these sites would result in production of the rockets being moved underground, impacting testing and production capacity.



# 17 Lise Meitner

The history of science has a checkered past when it comes to recognising the achievements of its female practitioners. Instrumental in the discovery of nuclear fission, physicist Lise Meitner is one of the most significant to have been overlooked.

Born in 1878, Meitner consistently broke barriers in a male-dominated field.

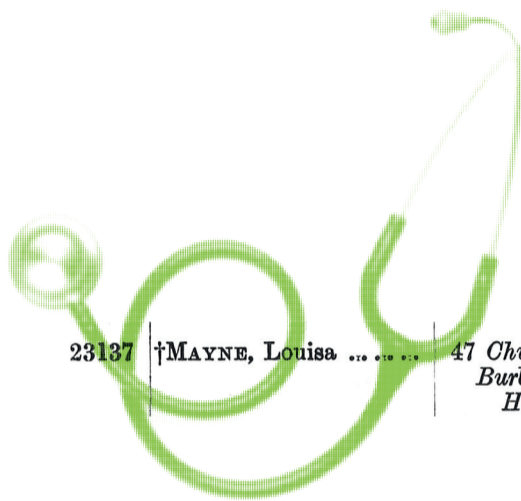
**Only the second woman to earn a doctorate in physics from the University of Vienna in 1906, she went on to make history as the first to become a full professor of physics in Germany.**

Unfortunately, the rise of the Nazi regime brought her time in the country to a close. Stripped of her positions due to the anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws, she was forced to flee, eventually settling in Sweden.

Collaborating with her nephew Otto Robert Frisch, it was during this period of exile she played a key role in the splitting of the atom. This saw her map the underlying physics by analysing complex data from an experiment by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann.

Despite her contribution to this world-changing breakthrough, her achievements were overlooked by the scientific community. The 1944 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was controversially awarded solely to Hahn, an omission that remains one of the most glaring injustices in the history of science.

Meitner spent the final years of her life in Cambridge, England, where she moved to be near her nephew, Otto.



# 18

# Louisa Mayne

23137 †MAYNE, Louisa ... 47 Church Street, Burbage, Hinckley 1906, Feb. 22

**Formally qualified through the Central Midwives Board in 1906, she worked tirelessly alongside local doctors throughout her career, across the East Midlands.**

Dedicated to the health and wellbeing of her community, Louisa Mayne was the first professionally trained midwife to serve the village of Burbage and its surrounding rural areas.

This was a role that demanded extraordinary dedication and physical stamina. Travelling on a simple pushbike through dark winter nights, she covered a vast rural network across the county. In one famously dramatic incident, she even halted a local demolition crew from tearing down a toll house at the bottom of Cock Hill so she could safely deliver a child inside.

Though her standard fee for a confinement and twelve days of visiting was two guineas, she frequently went unpaid, continuing to care for local mothers out of a profound sense of duty. Through her unwavering compassion and medical expertise, Nurse Mayne left an enduring mark on the lives of countless families across the East Midlands.

# 19 Louise Lydia Isabelle Hatfield

A behind-the-scenes force in the militant suffrage movement, Louise 'Louie' Hatfield was indispensable in the fight for women's enfranchisement.

Born in Shepton Mallet in 1883, her conventional life as a young milliner was radically transformed upon meeting the prominent working-class suffragette Annie Kenney.

Becoming Kenney's confidante, housekeeper, and fierce protector, Louie would eventually adopt the role of 'fixer' for the Women's Social and Political Union in London.

This saw her bravely organise underground safe houses for activists under the threat of arrest. She also threw herself into direct action, participating in the militant window-smashing campaign of 1912.

Her defiance led to a brutal four-month sentence in Holloway Prison, where she endured the horrific torture of force-feeding whilst on a hunger strike.

Though she never truly recovered from the trauma of her imprisonment, dying tragically young in her early 30s in 1917, her heroism was deeply revered by her fellow campaigners.

By keeping the movement running when the stakes were at their highest,

**Louise Hatfield made a vital, if hidden, contribution to the ultimate triumph of women's suffrage.**

*Local*

*Missing Pages*

# 20

## Lucia Marion Foster Welch

*Lucia Marion Braham*



To break new ground in politics is a remarkable achievement. For Lucia Foster Welch to achieve the succession of political "firsts" she did, at a time when women were still fighting for the vote, is nothing short of extraordinary.

of the Port, her mayoral role would make her the nation's first woman to hold that honour too. She also became the UK's first female sheriff in 1926.

**A trailblazer for women in politics, there were many firsts in the life of Lucia Foster Welch.**



Much of Welch's political outlook was informed by her support for women's suffrage. While she was a member of the peaceful National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), she had sympathy for the aims of the more militant Suffragettes and once hosted Emmeline Pankhurst at her home.

In a period when opposition to women in office was common, she became Southampton's first female councillor, alderman, and eventually mayor. Granting her the historic title of Admiral

Throughout her distinguished career in public office, she was a dedicated advocate for public health, serving as chairman of the civic health committee.

# 21

## Dame Mary Cartwright

Names like Edward Lorenz and Benoit Mandelbrot are often the first to be mentioned when discussing the pioneers of chaos theory. However, it was the work of a number of groundbreaking scientists who came before them, such as Dame Mary Cartwright, that helped lay the foundations for many of the discoveries that would follow.

One of just five female students taking mathematics at St Hugh's College, Oxford, Cartwright was the first to achieve a first-class honours degree in the subject there. Her subsequent research would transform understanding of the non-linear differential equations and dynamical systems that underpin the concept of mathematical chaos. This in turn provided the mathematical basis for more widely known theories including the Butterfly Effect.



Throughout her career, Cartwright broke barriers for women in mathematics and academia, becoming the first woman elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1947, the first female President of the London Mathematical Society between 1961 and 1963, and the first woman awarded the Sylvester Medal in 1964.

Honoured with a damehood by Queen Elizabeth II in 1969, Dame Mary Cartwright is one of Britain's most distinguished mathematicians, whose research reshaped modern mathematical theory and opened new paths for women in science.



# 22

## Nellie Halstead

Celebrated as one of Britain's earliest female Olympic pioneers, Nellie Halstead was a phenomenal athletic talent who helped establish women's competitive sport on the global stage.

achieving remarkable success across a variety of distances.

Born in Radcliffe in 1910, she emerged as a dominant force during the crucial early development of women's athletics in the UK. Renowned for her explosive speed and versatility,

At the peak of her career, she was widely lauded by the press and her peers as one of the country's greatest living sportswomen. During this time she would win an Olympic bronze medal and a Commonwealth Gold, securing her rightful place amongst the international sporting elite.

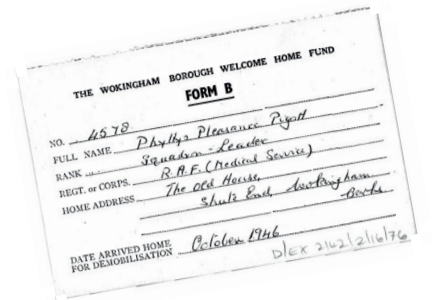
**she quickly became a national sprint champion,**

By consistently breaking records and challenging the physical expectations placed upon women in the early twentieth century, Nellie Halstead blazed a trail for future generations of female athletes, leaving behind a vital legacy in the history of British sport.

*Local A 10*

# 23

## Dr. Phyllis Pleasance Pigott



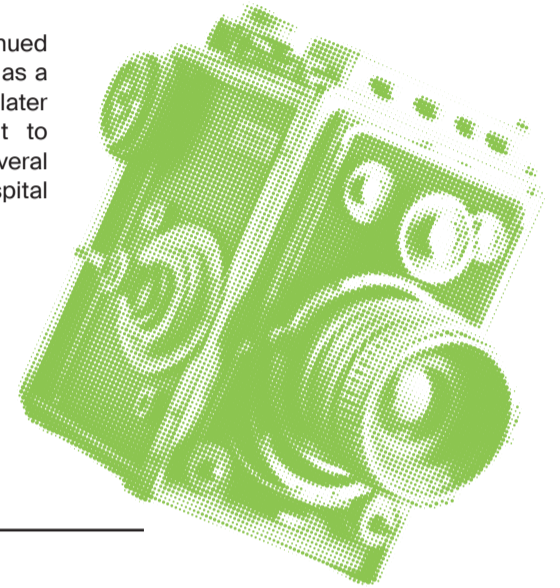
Pioneering physician. Decorated military officer. Respected civic leader. Dr. Phyllis Pigott achieved more in her one life than many of us could hope to do in three. Qualifying as a doctor in 1927, Dr. Pigott moved abroad soon after, spending six years in Egypt and Palestine.

Following her return to the UK, Dr. Pigott led medical care for Wokingham's World War II evacuees. She would later join the RAF Medical Service, where she was mentioned in dispatches and retired as a Squadron Leader. In a landmark move, the British Medical Association insisted she receive pay equal to her male colleagues.

Despite living with rheumatoid arthritis, Dr. Pigott's dedication to her community was unwavering. She died in 1981, leaving a legacy of extraordinary service in medicine, the military, and public life.

**Recognition of her work during this time would earn her the title of Officer of the Order of St John, a hospital based in Jerusalem.**

Her commitment to public service continued as a public representative. She served as a Wokingham town councillor and was later elected Mayor, the last independent to hold the office. She also chaired several local charities and served in hospital administration roles in London.



# 24

## Phyllis Nicklin

Not much is known about Phyllis Nicklin. But thanks to her passion for photography, we have an incredible insight into the times and the place that she lived.

Drawn to the everyday fabric of the city, from its terraces and tower blocks to workshops and waterways, the scenes she captured may have been considered unremarkable at the time. But today they are recognised as an invaluable contribution to the historical record.

Moreover, her ability as a photographer is also worthy of recognition, characterised by a candid, unsentimental style and a keen eye for an arresting composition.

From immigration to industrialisation, Birmingham in the 1950s and 60s was a city in the midst of a radical transformation and throughout that period,

**Phyllis Nicklin would take to the streets with her camera.**

Documenting the urban landscape of her time, such as the social housing and working conditions around Birmingham, Nicklin's collection represents an incredible legacy, providing a unique insight into past lives and the changing face of Britain's second city.

In recent years, a reappraisal of Nicklin's collection has seen it celebrated in initiatives like The Grid Project, which saw 71 photographers recreate her pictures half a century after they were originally captured.

# 25

## Vera Buxton-Knight

It's often said that conflict reveals character. This was undoubtedly true of Vera Buxton-Knight, an inspirational figure on the home front during World War II.

Her activities during this time were as varied as they were invaluable. From overseeing the care of over 800 London evacuees, to managing emergency vehicles and medical support, she gave her time and often her own resources.

of Queen Elizabeth, who visited Selsey in 1939, acknowledging the town's remarkable wartime contributions.

A trained nurse and Senior Ambulance Officer with the St John Ambulance Brigade, during the conflict, Buxton-Knight transformed her home into the emergency control hub for Selsey, a West Sussex town on the south coast.

In a boost to morale and wider preparedness, Buxton-Knight trained volunteers in first aid and civil defence, organised social events and launched the Selsey Spitfire Fund, which raised £5,000 for the RAF. Her exceptional efforts drew the attention

Buxton-Knight's courage was evident in her direct responses to air raids and aircraft crashes, including assisting the wounded crew of a downed German bomber.

Today, Vera Buxton-Knight's unwavering commitment to her community and wartime resilience is commemorated in a stained-glass window at Church Norton.

*Missing Pages*

*Buxton-Knight*

# Missing Pages

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With over 70 billion records spanning 80 countries, Ancestry can help you discover untold stories in your own family's history.

In addition to the 1921 Census of England and Wales, which features all 25 of the remarkable women covered in this newspaper, the Ancestry archives include a huge range of sources, such as the first employment records of women in the

police force and aviation licenses showing the very first female pilots. These, and many more collections, document the contribution and achievements of women throughout history.

To find out more about the incredible women in your family, visit [ancestry.co.uk](https://ancestry.co.uk) and sign up to a 14-day free trial today.

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to find out more

