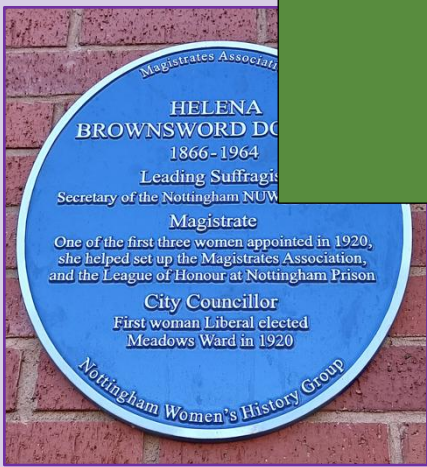




NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S HISTORY GROUP
NEWSLETTER ISSUE 18
SPRING/SUMMER 2025



Chair's Welcome Spring/Summer 2025

Easter has been and gone, Spring has arrived properly at last, and now it's time for the NWHG newsletter! Nottingham Women's History Group has been busy through the winter with lots of talks at lots of different venues. Karen Winyard gave her brilliant talk about Mary Bailey's short but remarkable life not once but twice, and it was very well received both by NWHG members at the ICC in November, and by the audience at the University of Nottingham in February.

In January Nicola Webb told us the story of Mary Anne Sharpe's roller coaster rise from nursery maid to lady of the house, and in March Neil Walker told us about Laura Knight's career and explained where we could find the spot that had previously been Laura Knight's lost cave studio. Recently, we collaborated with the Marsh Forum at Nottingham Central Library to highlight the lives of some of the Nottingham women who played vital roles in WW2.

In February we were delighted to be at the event celebrating the installation of the statue *Standing in this Place*, and also the unveiling of the plaque to Nan Green in Beeston, part of Beeston's Lady Plaques campaign to commemorate more women. In January, they had unveiled a plaque to Eleanor Littlewood and NWHG was there to witness that too. There is more about these events later in the newsletter.



Standing in This Place,
Photo courtesy of Siân Trafford

For International Women's Day we collaborated with Nottingham Trent University (on 7th March) and Nottingham Central Library (on 8th March), with a display of some of the amazing women in *Nottingham Herstory* which, we're delighted to announce, has been so popular that it has now been reprinted in a 2nd edition! It has also been popular as a talk for several groups, as well as old favourites like Florence Boot and Nottingham Women Artists.

On Thursday 3rd April we were lucky enough to be treated to a visit to Nottingham Museums Service storehouse. Human History Curator Ann Inscker was a great guide who had pulled out some lovely items for us. Among the highlights were photographs relating to women in the lace industry; wonderful images of women used in Players' cigarette advertising; and medieval roof spandrels used to decorate the arched entrance to Nottingham Children's Hospital which was instigated by Millicent Hine, daughter of the architect T C Hine.



Medieval Spandrels from the Nottingham Museums Collection. Photo courtesy of Siân Trafford

There was also a simply enormous lace making machine and a huge wooden "washing machine" to clean the lace after it had come off the machines, because it would have been very grubby from the graphite used for lubrication.

We were also delighted to see the acrobatic monkey from the Gordon Scott shoe shop window display! It was a fantastic visit, enhanced by Ann's passion and knowledge, and we shall definitely run another trip in the future.

Some of us managed to catch the play *Spitfire Girls* at Derby. It told the story about the women of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) who flew planes between the factories, maintenance depots and air fields during the war. These women were incredibly courageous and skilled at their job and it's great to see their bravery and contribution being acknowledged.

<https://www.tiltedwigproductions.com/spitfire-girls2025>

And now, International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln has recently unveiled 10 silhouettes honouring wartime service women, including the ATA – we even found a new Nottingham woman to add to our database! We'll be checking this out in the next few weeks and will let you know what we think.

<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/visit/women-in-war-exhibition/>

Next, we're looking forward to the Mikron Theatre production *Hush Hush* at Nottingham Central Library on 31st May which will tell the story about the people who worked at Bletchley Park – see Dates for your Diary for a link, and for news of lots more women-focussed events coming up.

As ever, huge thanks for your support – it just wouldn't be the same if you didn't turn out for our walks, talks and visits. See you all again soon.

Siân Trafford

Dates for Your Diary

31st March to 13th July 2025: National Justice Museum – *Asking For It*. A photographic exhibition by Jayne Jackson which challenges the persistent culture of victim-blaming in cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Free to visit.

<https://www.nationaljusticemuseum.org.uk/museum/events/asking-for-it>

6th, 7th & 8th May, Bonington Theatre, Arnold: *War Paint – Women at War*. Film documenting women war artists including Dame Laura Knight, Dame Rachel Whiteread and Maggi Hambling.

<https://www.boningtontheatre.co.uk/whatson-event/war-paint-women-at-war-12a/>

Saturday 17th May, Mansfield Library: *Hands on Heritage* event with local history organisations celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE day, but with added virtual reality experiences and dives into the Archives. NWHG will be there in suitable outfits! Free event

<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/whats-on/events/hands-on-heritage-day-2025/>

Thursday 29th May: Mikron Theatre play *Hush Hush*, about workers at Bletchley Park. Venue: Poppy and Pint, West Bridgford. This play can also be seen on Saturday 31st May, Venue: Nottingham Central Library

<https://mikron.org.uk/tour-dates/list/page/2/>

10th April to 21st September 2025: *Country Lives: Exploring the English countryside from 1800*, at Lakeside's Weston Gallery. Exploring the romantic ideals and the realities of rural life. We were pleased to see it features some of our favourite women, including Mary Howitt, Evelyn Gibbs and Connie Mae Ford. Free event

<https://www.lakesidearts.org.uk/exhibition/country-lives-exploring-the-english-countryside-from-1800/>

Sunday 8th June 2025: NWHG Women's Suffrage walk, meet at the Arboretum Bandstand at 2 pm, £5 donation.

Saturday 21st June: Nottingham Archives, 10 – 12, FONA meeting with talk by NWHG on Women Artists- free if you are a member or guests £3

Sunday 29th June 2025: NWHG Ladies, Lace and Lawbreakers walk with Mo Cooper, meet at Broadway Cinema at 2 pm, £5 donation.

There will also be some other summer walks so keep watching your email and NWHG Facebook for details.

Welcome to the Committee



Diana Meale

Hello, I joined the NWHG committee in December 2021. I am a passionate supporter of the work of NWHG giving recognition to the creativity and determination of women who lived in the County.

I worked and trained as an economist taking positions in private sector consultancy, a university, a trade union and local government. My last full time paid job was as Director of Regeneration at the East Midlands Development Agency.

Subsequently I was elected as a Nottinghamshire County Councillor for 8 years, representing the Division where I live, in Mansfield.

Over the years I have undertaken several voluntary positions and I am currently a Trustee of the Nottinghamshire Community Foundation, the Mansfield Building Society Charitable Trust, and INSPIRE Culture. I especially support local theatres and the Nottinghamshire Mining Museum in Mansfield in telling stories about extraordinary 'ordinary' women.

And Welcome



Linzi Kemp

Hello there I am Linzi, newest committee member of Nottingham Women's History Group. I begin by outing myself as a non-native Nottingham, having 'only' lived here for 12 years. I have during that time learned a great deal about the city, its past history and current situation. For years I have been interested in elements of the modern as it relates to history, particularly 'art deco' architecture, jazz, literature and theatre. Nottingham being a city to indulge those interests to the full.

During my career as an academician, I researched and taught in areas of Organizational Behaviour, Leadership, and Women & Organizations. I taught graduate and undergraduate students and trained personnel for Executive Education. My research focused on women in employment and leadership in the United Arab Emirates. I co-created and taught a 'Women in Leadership' course, believed to be the first of its kind in the Arab Gulf states. Co-organised a Think-tank on Women in Organizations (MENA), and led, and co-created the virtual 'Centre for Women in Leadership', which showcases women's achievements in the Middle East <https://www.wiluae.com/>. Also in UAE, I taught business at a government sponsored college and was Professional Development Coordinator.

NWHG INTERVIEW WITH RACHEL CARTER

With the installation of the much-anticipated statue *Standing in This Place* in February, we asked its creator, Rachel Carter, for an interview — and she said ‘Yes’!



Standing in this Place, in Nottingham’s Green Heart
Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard

We asked Rachel where her interest in art came from; had she always been aware that she wanted to be an artist?

She replied that she had always enjoyed making things, ‘tinkering’ at home, helping her grandmother to cook and even helping her father with his motorbike. Then she got a Jones hand operated sewing machine and started making lavender bags, borders for handkerchiefs and other items which were gifted to family members. Later on, at school, she chose Woodwork and Metalwork GCSE but was discouraged from following through because she would be the only girl in the class! Disheartened but not beaten, she chose another route to making – cookery: a ‘Hotel and Catering’ course, but she found it unsatisfying and felt it wasn’t really for her so, when her daughter started school, she began an A/S Level Fine Art.

Fortunately, at Nottingham College she met with more encouragement than at school and, after completing A level she was encouraged to take a Foundation course where her tutor told her she was a sculptor and that the Applied Arts route

would suit her better than Fine Arts. By now she had a second daughter but she also had the encouragement of her whole family and she flourished in the company of the diverse course members.

Rachel: ‘I never thought about being an artist, just a maker’.

Her course had included Professional Practice modules to study artists, landscape designers and sculptors whose work was placed in the landscape so, after graduation, Rachel applied for, and won, the commission to create the gateway sculpture for Heanor, Wing and Wheels, which represents the textile side of the town’s industry. This direct link to the locality set the pattern for future commissions. However, winning the commission had not been straightforward because applicants needed experience. It was the usual dilemma: no commissions without experience, but no experience without winning a commission. As a result, for her next commission for Derby University, in collaboration with Laura Ellen Bacon, she created an artwork of two halves: one permanent, and one designed to be reworked by future students to give them the experience that was required – an early example of Rachel’s inclusivity for all.

We asked Rachel how she came up with the idea for *Standing in This Place*, and she told us it all started in lockdown. She had been curious about why, unlike other family members, she had red hair and freckles, so she started researching her family’s ancestry. This led her to join the Legacy Makers, working remotely at first as a volunteer, researching the names and dates on simple burial slabs at Darley Abbey. Having discovered that her own ancestors were cotton spinners, lace makers and framework knitters, she met with the Legacy Makers when lockdown ended and was fascinated by the realisation that all those occupations were dependent on the import of cotton picked by enslaved workers. She had the link she needed – not just to a single location this time, but a Transatlantic connection.

We were curious to know how Rachel went about planning her sculptures, and she told us her process starts with sketches, but it also involves intense research. For Pilgrim Woman* she obtained a passage on a working freight ship to America to experience what it would be like to leave everything behind and have no contact with friends or family because she had been struck by Dr Anna Scott emphasizing that many of those on the voyages were young families, not the grizzled wise old men usually pictured in books. During the voyage Rachel read an authentic diary of a pilgrim voyage written by William Bradford and, once landed, she had a two-day residency at Harvard University where she was able to see First Nation Wampanoag artefacts and textiles. She then had a two-week residency in Provincetown, Cape Cod, where her weaving workshop attracted 600 people, having initially been told that it wouldn't appeal to anyone.

For Standing in This Place, she felt very strongly that the completed artwork should incorporate 'multiples' because of the duality of the subject matter. Her first idea was a field full of small sculptures but she felt that was unoriginal. She then considered woven spheres with two distinct halves, similar to her work at the University of Nottingham, but she finally decided on a figurative piece to follow the recently completed Pilgrim Woman.

However, Rachel's work is truly collaborative and inclusive, and creative workshops have always been part of her approach. When people couldn't come together for creative workshops during lockdown, she created kits that could be posted out, and made videos so that people could see how to use them. Textiles produced in the community were used in both the Pilgrim Woman and the Standing in This Place sculptures and are at the heart of the work. This allows whole communities to feel they have a stake in the work and to take ownership of it.

Standing in This Place, of course, also includes poetry, embroidery and appliqué, oral histories and more. It has engaged so many people in so

many different formats and its installation was justifiably celebrated by a large crowd.

And, of course, Rachel is already working on her next project in collaboration with Mansfield Mining Museum to produce a sculpture commemorating the men who died in Nottinghamshire's mines. Click the link to find out more:

<https://www.nottsminingmuseum.org.uk/shining-a-light-museum-in-the-park-very-good-news-to-report/>

*Pilgrim Woman statues can be seen at Doncaster, Gainsborough and Boston.
Siân Trafford

Celebration Day!



Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard

It was typically wintry weather that welcomed the two women featured in *Standing in this Place*, a white mill worker/lace maker and a black enslaved woman, to their new home in Nottingham's Green Heart on the 9th February. It made you think of all the thousands of women who must have arrived in Nottingham over the centuries shivering in the cold, yet with hope in their hearts.

But if the weather was cold, the welcome the statue received from the crowd was wholeheartedly warm. We had African drummers.



Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard

Performances from the Greenwood Clog dancers



Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard



Photo courtesy of Linzi Kemp

and from Nottingham's Community choir to celebrate the unveiling of Rachel Carter's stunning statue with its powerful message of community, inclusivity and heritage. The Greenwood Clog dancers, who are based in Nottingham, were a perfect complement to the occasion. They keep the tradition of clog dancing alive but choreograph their dances to suit their members ages and abilities so that the tradition continues to evolve.

And of course, NWHG were there to mark this important event.

Karen Winyard



From left to right: Miriam Jackson, Siân Trafford, Karen Winyard & Rowena Edlin-White.
Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard.

Lady Plaques of Beeston

A few years ago, Beeston Civic Society undertook a plaque project and installed some 35 plaques around Beeston and Chilwell. However, none of these plaques celebrated women. And so, the Beeston Lady Plaques project was born with Tamar Feast leading on addressing this gap. On 12th January the first plaque to a woman was unveiled. It celebrated Eleanor Littlewood, a trailblazing local politician, who in 1920 became an Urban District Councillor and went on to be the *first* woman to chair the District Council.

Eleanor was born at The Willows on Dovecote Lane, a large Victorian house which sadly was demolished in 1978. Her father, Francis Usher Waite (of Waite, Coebould & Faulkner who founded Beeston Brewery), died circa 1888 when Eleanor was a young child. Her mother, Charlotte née Gent, remarried to Dr James Butler, a local doctor and Trustee of Beeston Land Society. It was at this point Eleanor moved to live at Manor Lodge, 1 Middle Street.

Eleanor married Arthur Burkin Littlewood in 1899 and inherited Manor Lodge when her mother died in 1912. She set up the Beeston Welfare Association when she realised that Beeston didn't have one. Additionally, she set up the Infant Welfare Centre in her own home, later moving it to Dovecote Lane premises.

After WW1 in 1920 she was elected a Beeston Urban District Councillor – the first woman Conservative councillor and only the second woman of any party. She founded Beeston Women's Conservative Association, and was Vice President of the broader Beeston Conservative Association. She was Vice Chancellor of East Midlands Labour Advisory Committee, the first woman to Chair the Housing Committee at a time when the first council houses were being built. Eleanor was also the first female Chair of the Fire Brigade Committee and the first female Chair of the Ambulance Committee, as well as being Chair of Beeston Nursing Association. She was the first female Overseer in the County and perhaps in

the Country. She dedicated her entire career to local public service and in 1937 was awarded an MBE for her political and public service. She died at Manor Lodge aged 83 in 1962.

The plaque celebrating Eleanor's work and achievements was unusual in that it was a red plaque as it also celebrated Beeston Civic Society's 50th Anniversary Year.



Photos of plaques courtesy of Miriam Jackson

Later, on 9th February the second plaque was unveiled on Surrey Cottage, Glebe Street, birthplace of Nan Green née Farrow; a lifelong humanitarian and political activist.



Nan was the third of five children. Her father, Edward Farrow, was a General Manager at Raleigh Cycle Co., a promotion that enabled him to send Nan to West End school, a

private village school, where Nan was once severely reprimanded for playing with boys from the local Board school in Beeston Square. The family's fortunes suffered a downturn after WW1 when her mother suffered a stroke and her father lost his job in 1916 and had a breakdown. The family moved from Nottingham, first to Birmingham and subsequently to Manchester.

In 1928 Nan met George Green, a 24-year-old cellist with whom she fell in love and they married on 9th November 1929, and soon Nan became pregnant having her daughter Frances in February 1931 and her son in 1932. The family moved to London and began to take an interest in politics, briefly joining the Independent

Labour Party (ILP) before transferring to the Communist Party – her father was appalled.

Both Nan and George embraced communism giving out leaflets, attending meetings, speaking on soap boxes and being clear that the choice was peace and democracy or fascism and war.

When the Spanish Civil war broke out in July 1936, George volunteered early in 1937 with Nan's full support and went out to Spain. Nan followed in September 1937 and worked as a medical administrator at the 'English' hospital at Huete moving to Valdeganga, where she helped organise the convalescent home and then on to the Ebro. Her commitment continued even after her husband was killed in September 1938 at the Ebro.

After the war Nan was responsible for taking Spanish Republican children seeking safety by boat to Mexico. She was a leading figure in the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief and became the secretary of the International Brigade Association from 1943-1950. During and after WW2 she was active in humanitarian and left-wing causes, among them the World Peace Movement. She visited and wrote about the women's prison in Madrid and survived to see Franco's death and the end of the dictatorship in Spain.

Nan died in 1984 and in 2005 her memoir was published, *A Chronicle of Small Beer. The Memoirs of Nan Green*. Nan also features in Paul Preston's book, *Doves of War – Four women of Spain* and in *Tomorrow Perhaps the Future* by Sarah Watling. It was a delight to see and meet her grandchildren at the plaque ceremony as well as members of the International Brigades.

Miriam Jackson



Image courtesy of the Green family collection and Beeston Civic Society.

Dorothy Whipple's Writing Life

On Saturday 5th April I attended the beautiful Bromley House Library for 'Dorothy Whipple's Writing Life', as presented by Dr Cynthia Johnston, *Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London*. It was a fascinating and insightful presentation.

I was fortunate to have booked early for this event as it was sold out and I soon appreciated why. Dr Johnston is currently writing a biography of this famous novelist and was extremely well versed in Ms Whipple's life, having studied evidence from the archives. Many of Dorothy Whipple's notebooks are to be found at Blackburn Central Library, in the town where she was born (1893) and raised.

Dorothy Whipple's Nottingham heritage arises because most of her novels were written whilst she lived in the city, at 35 Ebers Road (where a blue plaque was placed in September 2020, with a little help from NWHG). Dorothy had moved to Nottingham in 1924.



Blue plaque at 35 Ebers Road.
Photo courtesy of Sián Trafford

Some of you are no doubt very familiar with Ms Whipple's novels, e.g., *High Wages*, which I read recently and thoroughly enjoyed for its wit. I nodded in agreement when Dr Johnston mentioned that there had been something of a Dorothy Whipple revival because of the beautiful reprints through 'Persephone Books'.

One of the presenter's interesting premises was that Dorothy Whipple wanted to become an author from a very, very young age, and was published at age twelve in *The Blackburn Weekly Telegraph*. I also learned that Dorothy Whipple was a great scholar, coming first in English Literature and Language, and may have been prevented from studying at university by the conservatism of her family.

Bromley House Library, which is known to have a fondness for Dorothy Whipple, also hosted a Dorothy Whipple exhibition and a screening of the film of her 1934 novel, *They Knew Mr Knight*. Of course, NWHG shares this fondness for all things Dorothy Whipple and we will continue to keep you up to date on any similar events in the future.

Professor Linzi J Kemp

And on the subject of Dorothy Whipple

Out of the blue I got an email from Bromley House Library saying a book had been sent to the library for NWHG. I was intrigued and so went in to see what it was. And it was a G K Chesterton book *The Man who was Thursday* – I was further confused as to why someone should send this to the group! But there was a lovely note from an Ann Rooney who had bought the book in Hay on Wye and, on finding a Dorothy Sandra Whipple name plate in the book, had googled her and found out all about her from our website and so thought we might like to have a book that had been hers. If indeed it was her as I can't find a reference to her middle name being Sandra.

But Many Thanks Ann!

Miriam Jackson

“Not a bit like other people”
ELIZABETH GLAISTER,
Southwell author
1840 – 1892

Elizabeth Glaister was born in Beckley, East Sussex, daughter of the Revd William Glaister and his wife Elizabeth Burrill, whose father was Rector of Broughton Sulney aka Upper Broughton, in Nottinghamshire. William Glaister held the living of Beckley from 1837. When he died in 1861, his widow and daughter moved back to the Midlands, to live in Southwell where his son – another William – was a curate.

Elizabeth began writing in her thirties, producing five novels, the first being *The Markhams of Ollerton: a Tale of the Civil War 1642-1647*, published in 1873. The story draws on local history and legend, taking place during the occupation of the Minster by Cromwell’s soldiers. Katherine Bertie (née Markham), whose husband is fighting on the Royalist side at Newark, hides in the parvise, the little room above Southwell Minster’s North Porch, where she gives birth to a child. She remains hidden for ten weeks, cared for by her servant Mary Kelsterne and her aunt, Mrs Bernard, who is housekeeper at the Bishop’s Palace. The two women slip in and out unnoticed, with food and other necessities for Katherine until the siege if Newark is relieved and Captain Bertie released.



Southwell Minster. Photo courtesy of Karen Winyard

The author was evidently familiar with every nook and cranny of the Minster and at times the novel reads rather like a guide book, so it is hardly surprising that Glaister wrote the first visitor’s guide to the Minster and the text for Southwell in Cassell’s Cathedral series.

Her other novels are: *A Constant Woman* (1878), *The Perfect Path* (1884), *Bernard and Marcia: a Story of Middle Age*, and *Two and Two: a Tale of Four* (1890). She also contributed regularly to Charlotte M. Yonge’s periodical for girls, *The Monthly Packet*.

Elizabeth was fully involved in church life and a popular speaker and organiser for the local Girls’ Friendly Society:

On the formation of the Girls’ Friendly Society, the task of organisation in the Southwell Deanery was committed to Miss Glaister. She threw her whole heart into the work, and carried it on most successfully. Few meetings were held in that neighbourhood that were considered complete without her presence, when she was always ready to address the girls or assist the associates with her sympathy and advice. She worked hard for the boarding out of pauper children, instead of confining them to the sad surroundings of the workhouse.

Grantham Journal 14th May 1892

Elizabeth was an expert on needlework, especially Ecclesiastical textiles and jointly wrote *Art Embroidery: A Treatise on the Revised Practise of Decorative Needlework* with M. S. Lockwood (1880). She embroidered some of the altar-linen for St Wulfram’s Church in Grantham where her brother, now Canon Glaister, was Vicar. Both Elizabeth and her mother were well-known in Grantham.

Elizabeth died on 10th May 1892, aged 52, having been in “delicate health” for some time. Substantial Obituaries appeared in the *Grantham Journal* (see above) and in the *Southwell Diocesan Magazine* 1892, p. 86:

To many outside the Diocese of Southwell the news of the death of Elizabeth Glaister

will bring home a sense of loss, for she was a writer who specially impressed her own personality on her readers, so that many who never saw her have yet been able to count her a friend. ... 'She was not a bit like other people,' was the remark made by many of her friends; when she spoke and when she wrote there was always a refreshing originality about her thoughts. All her friends will recall the quaintly humorous notes they have received from her, and the ever ready anecdotes which, often with laboured breath and feeble voice, she would delight to tell.

Elizabeth's mother, Elizabeth Glaister Snr., died in 1894, and her brother William in 1919. It is thought that Elizabeth, the author of *The Markhams of Ollerton*, is buried with her mother and brother in the Minster churchyard. To the best of my knowledge, no photographs have so far emerged of the author or her family.

Whilst nearly all Elizabeth's novels are extremely rare, copies of *The Markhams of Ollerton* often turn up for sale on-line, or can be borrowed from Nottingham City Libraries.

©Rowena Edlin-White

More 'forgotten' women authors may be found in Rowena's book, *Exploring Nottinghamshire Writers* (Five Leaves, 2017)

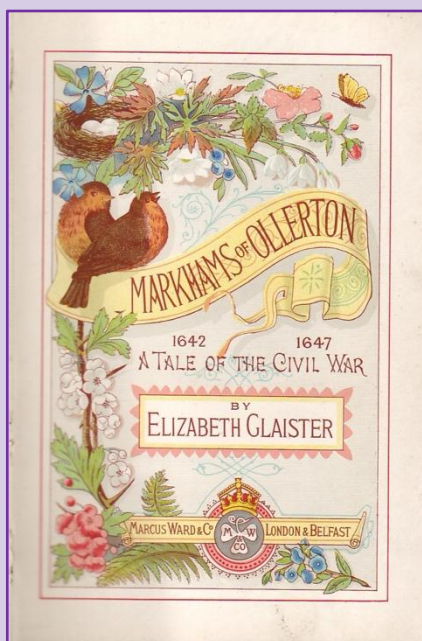


Photo courtesy of Rowena Edlin-White

For more information and updates about Nottingham Women's History Group contact us:

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<https://www.facebook.com/NottinghamWomensHistoryGroup/>

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Key to cover images from top left:

- Suffragette banner, courtesy of Siân Trafford
- NWHG banner, courtesy of Siân Trafford
- Plaque & juniper tree in the Arboretum commemorating Helen Kirkpatrick Watts, courtesy of Siân Trafford
- Caroline Dexter, Bloomerite and journalist, courtesy of Rowena Edlin-White
- Florence Paton sculpture by Hilary Cartmel, Rest Garden, Carlton Hill, courtesy of Siân Trafford
- Eileen White opening for Midlands v Australia, Trent Bridge 1951, courtesy of Rowena Edlin-White
- Plaque commemorating Women Magistrates, courtesy of Siân Trafford
- Plaque commemorating Helena Brownsword Dowson, courtesy of Siân Trafford