

# BFWG news



British Federation of Women Graduates

FREE TO MEMBERS

Autumn 2013 No 1314-1

## Keynote Speaker at the AGM and Conference 2013

Professor Christopher Budd, our main speaker this year, is a Professor of Applied Mathematics at the University of Bath and at the Royal Institution. He took his first degree at Cambridge then he went to Oxford as a Fellow of St. John's College for his DPhil. He has had a most distinguished career with many published research papers to his credit and has won a large number of prizes for his work.

His speech was instructive, varied and often amusing, sprinkled as it was with personal anecdotes which kept the audience thoroughly entertained. He began by quoting some of the common misconceptions about and descriptions of mathematicians - "evil soulless geeks" for instance - and then stressed how creative maths really is. He claimed that it can foretell the future and is at the heart of art and music.



Photo Courtesy: Barbara Jackson

The topic was the relevance and centrality of mathematics in our daily lives and to illustrate it he began by showing a portrait and asking us to identify the mathematician depicted. It was the man he called his 'hero', the great mathematician, Maxwell, who developed Faraday's work and went on to discover radio waves which are crucial to so many of the appliances we are now taking for granted in our daily lives. From there he moved on to Page and Brin, the inventors of Google, then dealt briefly with internet security, banking and communication and medical scanners. These were all developed thanks to mathematical discoveries. He ended the impressive but necessarily selective list with Florence Nightingale who was a noted statistician as well as a nurse and who introduced the use of medical statistics following from her work in the Crimea. The range and variety of mathematical discoveries and their applications is huge but one of the most obvious, of course, is the invention of the

computer and the resulting easy access to worldwide information, the latter a spin-off from space science. Despite this, Professor Budd stressed the continuing need for hard copy, for books and libraries. He then went on to explain how computers work and used audience participation to demonstrate how the use of binary numbers can help identify someone who is lying. This was followed by brief explanations and complex diagrams of how Google works and how iPods compress information.

He left us in no doubt that much of the future will be strongly influenced by mathematical discoveries and said he is much encouraged by the numbers of young people studying the subject, among whom the number of female students is rapidly increasing because girls are now out-performing boys at A Level Maths.

It is always a pleasure to hear someone who is really enthusiastic about a subject and Professor Budd communicated his excitement about maths in a way that was accessible even to non-mathematicians. We are profoundly grateful to him.

Joan Wheatley, Norfolk & Norwich

## IFUW Triennial Conference in Istanbul August 2013

Over 420 participants from 61 countries attended the Kadir Has University, Istanbul for the 31st Triennial Conference with the 92nd and 93rd IFUW Councils. 13 members of the British Federation of Women Graduates attended with Cynthia Burek supported by Jenny Morley representing BFWG at the 92nd Council and Cynthia Burek with Patrice Wellesley-Cole at the 93rd IFUW Council. Voting delegates were: Professor Cynthia Burek (who held the one country vote for the two councils), Jenny Morley and Christel Moor. Alternate voting delegates were Sheila Youngs, Patrice Wellesley-Cole, and Sue Ouvry. (More on page 4)



BFWG delegates at the Fellowship Bosphorus cruise-Jenny Morley, Cynthia Burek, Sue Ouvry, Patrice Welleley-Cole, Christel Moor, Griselda Kenyon, Elizabeth Poskitt, Julia Bannister, Ann Temple, Margaret Tait, Sheila Youngs, Jennie Landsberg (Photo Courtesy: John Cubitt)

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**BFWG**  
promotes women's opportunities in  
education and public life;  
works as part of an international  
organisation to improve the lives of  
women and girls;  
fosters local, national and  
international friendship.

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## From the Editor's Desk

Dear Members,

Welcome aboard to the new academic year  
of BFWG!

We have seen a very lively and eventful  
year followed by the most awaited IFUW  
Triennial Conference. Members have been  
busy with meetings, AGMs and Conferences  
including those who went to Istanbul.

In this edition, we report on National AGM  
at Denman including reports, keynote and  
dinner speeches. Cynthia gives a detailed  
account of the IFUW Conference with  
lovely pictures of BFWG delegates. We look  
forward to the Westminster Seminar, Sybil  
Campbell Annual Lecture and many more  
meetings and local get togethers. Look for  
the details and updates on BFWG website. Please keep the dates for your diary and  
make your presence felt to these events as together we 'Perfect' the 'Art of Friendship'.  
Although, I have not been able to be at many meetings and events, I would endeavour  
to partake in upcoming activities. The 2013 AGM Minutes are now available on the BFWG  
website under the 'BFWG Official Documents' and can be accessed by logging in to the  
members' only area.

I am pleased to inform you that I have been elected to be the new *IFUW Young Members' Newsletter Editor* for the next triennium (2013-2016) at the IFUW Triennial Conference in Istanbul. I will be editing and designing the Newsletter published biannually.

As you see in this picture, I am now a mum of a lovely girl born on 21st of June. We  
have named her as 'Vedaanshi' which means 'part of the sacred knowledge - Vedas'. She  
cooperated well to let me do this issue and to reach to you all. *Life doesn't get more  
real than having a newborn at home.* Thank you for all your love and blessings!

Sudha Srivastava, Editor



(Photo Courtesy: Rupam Srivastava)

## As E M Foster said: "Only connect!" - E-networks Update

As mentioned at the AGM, we have gained  
over a hundred members since last summer  
but have lost at least that many members  
not simply because of age and sickness but  
because many Independents, especially  
students, simply drift away. As approximately  
21 per cent of our membership comprises  
Independent members, it is essential we  
set up connections between them and  
other members, whether Independent or LA  
Members. We want every member to feel  
part of a vibrant group in whatever way  
suits her.

We now have several topics listed which  
members want to see as the basis for their

e-networks: health and medical ethics;  
Higher Education (following on from the  
BFWG Symposium of 2011); international  
development; trafficking and gender  
violence; history of BFUW/BFWG; dance,  
theatre and art, particularly that of South  
America; computer programming, websites  
and skills; public affairs; tourism and young  
members have been mentioned.

Let me know if you have some other ideas  
for a network or if you want to join one  
mentioned above at [rhaigh@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:rhaigh@bfgw.org.uk);  
I hope to start getting people connected in  
the next month or so.

Rory Haigh (VP)

## Young Academics' Network- Early Career Researchers

If you are currently working on or recently  
completed a postgraduate degree and are  
looking to get more involved in the BFWG,  
we hope you will consider joining the newly  
established 'Early Career Researchers'  
network. This network will put you in touch  
with other women facing similar challenges  
to you as they establish or build research  
careers and will provide a forum for

discussing related issues. You do not have to  
be planning a career in academia in order to  
join. To express your interest, please write  
to Jennifer Allen at [office@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:office@bfgw.org.uk) with  
the subject line 'Early Career Researchers'.  
When you write, please include your name,  
current institution, current course (if  
applicable), and subject/discipline.

Jennifer Allen

# President's Diary

Dear Members,

I hoped for a time of rest and recuperation during the summer months but instead I have had a very busy and interesting time on your behalf.

In May, I attended the Sybil Campbell Collection Annual Seminar at the University of Winchester hearing a fascinating account of 'The Life and Work of Ivy Davidson' from Prof. Felix Driver. The same week there was a Special Executive Meeting, open to all members and advertised on the website, where the minutes can also be found.

In June, the International Meeting at HQ took place in preparation for the IFUW Triennial Conference in Istanbul during August. This IR meeting helped to shape the BFWG delegates' reactions to important IFUW policy matters and resolutions. We were fortunate that the Convenor of the IFUW Resolutions Committee, Margaret Tait, was present to guide us through the twelve resolutions which she had been helping to shape in the preceding months. The candidates for office were considered as were Proposal 1 and 2 for the future development of IFUW. (See Prof. Cynthia Burek's report)

In early July, I was called to a meeting by the GEO (Government Equalities Office) with the Minister, Jo Swinson at the Dept. for Business, Innovations and Skills (BIS) concerning the imminent review of CEDAW. Our own AGM at Denman College followed; blessed once more with lovely weather we were delighted by our Keynote and Dinner Guest Speakers. Thanks go to Gabrielle Suff for all her hard work in arranging these, to Christel Moor for acting as Conference Treasurer and the other Vice Presidents for their unfailing support as always. The Resolution concerning Conflict of Interest was admitted onto the Agenda: a vote was necessary as it was not notified in time to be published in the Business Agenda in News. The difficulties of holding simultaneous roles for both IFUW and BFWG were evidenced by statements from our Immediate Past President, Marianne Haslegrave, who was also International President in her last year, and from Prof. Cynthia Burek, who this year was BFWG CIR and also Convenor of International Fellowships Committee. Some expressed the view that we should not attempt to control personal choice. This resolution passed, as did those to confirm our revised Constitutional Documents. Thanks go to Nest Overend, her husband Malcolm, Jean Macdonald, Gill Ramsay and Marianne Haslegrave for their tireless work on this over the past three years.

We were soon preparing for the trip to Istanbul for IFUW. The expense of the conference meant that Frank and I had to make this our only summer break. We went a day early so we could visit Troy, which Frank had studied for a treatise on Schliemann. You see me peering from the 'new' Wooden Horse! My son Ben was also in Istanbul, at a conference of international chemists so was able to accompany us. I then had three days of business: first with Cynthia to Council, then the major discussions of which future development plan to follow for IFUW. Daniele Castle, the recently appointed Executive Director gave a spirited defence of her Proposal 1 and this was voted in by the

requisite two thirds majority. The office remains in Geneva, sponsorship funding will be sought and the Conference will become a professionally run event with invitees from outside IFUW present. The General Assembly (as the voting delegates will be

called) will remain in existence between triennial meetings and be available for e-voting if needed. Catherine Bell (South Africa) was elected President (some of us remember her mother in this role) and there was election by acclaim of the Vice Presidents, among them our own Margaret Tait who is going to be a very busy person as the new development plans unfold. Our congratulations go to her: we wish her well for the term of her office. She is no longer able to Chair the Finance Committee and the Executive have agreed, via an e-mail vote, that Barbara Jackson be appointed Acting Chairperson until there is an opportunity to elect a new Chairperson next July.

My Theme Day study was 'Violence' and particularly fascinating was the visit to the Courts of Justice where we saw a Women's Rights Centre for safe use by women who have suffered violence. This was set up by the Istanbul Bar Association: several young women lawyers acted as hosts as did Prof. Nazan Moruglu, the Turkish Association President who was founding Chairman of the centre and the first Gender Law Expert in Turkey. We were delighted when, on the last day of the Conference, she was made the first Awardee of the newly -founded Chitra Ghosh Prize. Chitra, the first President of IFUW from India, was there to present this '**As a thank you to IFUW for making my life Richer, Brighter and Happier.**' Many of us can say the same. I attended my first in 1986 in New Zealand (when I was eligible for the parallel Young Member Meetings) and now have friends all over the world. I was honoured to be included this time in an invitation to the Dutch Embassy by friends in the Dutch Association.

Considering other positive aspects, we are so happy to note the excellent initiative by Jennifer Allen who is setting up an Early Career Researchers Network for young members who are emerging Academicians. These forward-looking developments are what matter: dwelling on past issues is negative.

I wish you all a fruitful and interesting BFWG year ahead, charged with a positive outlook that will attract these vital young members with their welcome new ideas helping to rekindle 'the art of friendship'.



(Photo Courtesy: Frank Morley)

Jenny Morley, President 2011-2014



## IFUW Triennial Conference in Istanbul August 2013

### Women's role in achieving sustainable future: Education, Urbanisation, Violence and Human rights

At the IFUW Triennial Meeting important discussions and decisions were made as to:

- the future of IFUW
- new elected and appointed officers
- new member countries of IFUW
- 15 new resolutions passed (3 domestic ones)
- 34 different workshops and seminars under 7 different themes and a mock trial

### The future of IFUW

Proposal 1 was accepted so we are staying in Geneva for the time being and we will see what happens. There were presentations and much discussion and the decision was reached anonymously by a secret ballot.

### New set of elected and appointed officers

Catherine Bell from South Africa is our new President. We have a new treasurer Elsbeth Von Navarini from Switzerland and 4 new Vice Presidents including our own Margaret Tait, Jenny Strauss from Australia, Susan Russell from Canada and Ayden Birerdinc from Turkey. We have new conveners for committees as Margaret Tait, Cynthia Burek, Marian Ennis and Hazel Bowen completed their terms of office on Resolutions, Fellowship, Hegg Hoffat (all appointed) and Membership (elected) respectively. New appointments are: Kathy Mumford from Australia (Membership), Anne Asserson from Norway (Fellowship), and Rae Duff from New Zealand (Status of Women). Marian Ennis (Hegg Hoffat) agreed to serve a further year until a new appointed officer is found.

### New Resolutions

12 resolutions were submitted and seconded by NFAs and 5 were internal resolutions (concerning dues, location of next conference and reappointing of the auditors). In summary, dues were kept at the same level, the place and location of the 32nd Conference was not decided as we had to wait to see which proposal was passed. The board will choose the location. The auditors were reappointed. Luckily, our resolution 7 on the future of education for women in Afghanistan and Pakistan passed without opposition. We now have to select one or two resolutions to work on in our individual local groups and associations. Full details will be on the IFUW website ([www.ifuw.org](http://www.ifuw.org)).

### Council business and plenary sessions

The council meetings and plenary sessions were lively discussions with much debate on the new proposals for the future of IFUW. However British participation was in evidence with our two past presidents Elizabeth Poskitt and Griselda Kenyon making pertinent points and drawing on their experience. Elizabeth was also asked to chair the session presenting the 2 proposals as Marianne and other board members did not want to be seen as having conflict of interest. Margaret Tait gave the Resolutions report while Cynthia Burek gave the Fellowship report and presentation to the Conference and Council as both were conveners of their committees. Jenny Morley presented

SF430.00\* to the IFUW Fellowship fund as a mark of appreciation and recognition for the 6 years that Cynthia had spent convening the Fellowship committee. The conference appreciated this gesture. Cynthia's presentation is to be loaded onto the IFUW website so do have a look at it. (\*This was the money in addition to the £100 Amazon book prize donated to the Fellowship raffle, raised at the Denman College AGM 'Bring and Buy' and 'Raffle' in July). A legacy of £20000 from Ruth Bowden was left to IFUW and has been put into the Fellowship fund too.

Our UN representatives gave interesting reports on their work in Paris, Geneva, New York and Vienna. In Geneva, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) featured highly, in Paris (UNESCO) Education for Sustainable Development and Environment and Ethics were two committees discussed and in Vienna work on the following committees was highlighted Status of Women, Aging, Peace, and Sustainable Development, Narcotics and Drugs and Crime Prevention. Much work has been done on the post-2015 renewal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which featured highly in several of the key speaker's talks. We, through IFUW, are very lucky to have consultative status with the UN and this remains one of the important factors for people joining the organisation.

Marianne Haslegrave as the outgoing president was given a standing ovation at her last presiding meeting and Catherine Bell pinned on the past President's badge of office. Well done Marianne for all your hard work over the past Triennium from BFWG.



*At Council-Marianne with old board and new Secretary General Danielle on right (Photo Courtesy: Cynthia Burek)*

### Keynote speakers included

Ms Şafak Pavey, an inspiring Turkish diplomat in the main opposition Republican People's party was the first ever elected disabled woman in the Turkish Parliament representing Istanbul. In 2012 she received the US Dept of State and International Women of Courage award. Her life has often been threatened.

Ms Idil Biret, a Turkish concert pianist gave us an hour long recital from Chopin to Beethoven. She received a standing ovation. Sanıye Gülsel Corat, the Director of the Division for Gender Equality at UNESCO gave an inspiring talk on Gender equality and education

*Continued on next page*

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- pathways to sustainable development. She said that each century has its equality issues - slavery, race etc., - this 21st century must be the one for gender equality and women. In 2011, 800m adult women were illiterate. We have a long way to go! One piece of good news - UN General Assembly in December 2012 passed a resolution to halt female genital mutilation within one generation.

Ms Bahija Alvan Aliyeva, winner of the Conchita Poncini Jimenez Human Rights Fellowship was a programme analyst on gender at the UN Population Fund in Azerbaijan.

Dr Sima Samar, Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. As a lawyer she too has had threats made against her life.

Our Hostess President Prof. Nazan Moroğlu from Turkey, a gender law specialist, was awarded a new Prize set up by former Indian IFUW president Dr. Chitra Ghosh, for her outstanding work in quality teacher training and peace internationally. She is for example a visiting Fellow at Kingston University and General Director for the Eurasian Centre for Schools of Quality. She runs a legal literacy project for over 6000 women every year. This £1000 award will be given every 3 years at the conference to a distinguished woman.

### The Fun time

Members of BFWG went on organised tours and also to the Opening evening, a Turkish evening, the Fellowship dinner - a cruise on the Bosphorus and lastly a memorable Gala evening in Asia where it took us over 3 hours to get to our destination because Arsenal was playing Fenerbahce, an Istanbul team! Doesn't football get in everywhere! Cynthia's last duty as Convener of the Fellowship committee was to give out the raffle prizes at the Gala dinner which, along with donations, raised over \$2500. Cynthia had great fun dealing with 5 different currencies - Turkish Lire, US\$, A\$, €, CHF. The following photos are a selection of members enjoying themselves.

### Four key statements/thoughts from the conference

- Azerbaijan - Abortion is used as the main form of contraception
- 31m girls not in primary school but in Sub-Saharan Africa there is a 1.7 million teacher shortage
- Sameness is not the same as equality
- Tradition is the main barrier to gender equality and education

Lasting memories- The hospitality and multicultural nature of the Turkish people and the Istanbul traffic!

Professor Cynthia Burek (CIR)

## Research Presentation Day

Once again we had a fascinating day of presentations by doctoral students at the annual RPD in Mandeville Courtyard. The splendid thing about these events is that BFWG headquarters is busy with young people (mostly women but some male supporters also come) as we get students in the audience as well as giving the presentations. Over lunch, there is active networking both between members and students and between the students themselves.

It is always a problem choosing which of the abstracts submitted should be presented. The selectors aim to get a range of subjects from a range of higher education institutions so, inevitably, some excellent abstracts have to be rejected. This year, any one of the presentations could have been awarded the prize given for effective communication of the student's topic to an intelligent-but-not-necessarily-knowledgeable-in-the-field audience. Topics presented included higher education, primary health, genetics, the law on manslaughter, the American Dust Bowl, women and hunting in pre-history, the role of lettuce in Ancient Egypt. However the prize (three judges including one from the student audience) went to Emma Robinson for her presentation on *The Trouble with War: George Orwell and Emergency Legislation, 1939 - 1941*. I suspect most of the audience would have questioned beforehand whether there was anything new to know about George Orwell. Emma, in her presentation of Orwell's attitude to civil liberties during WWII, convinced us that there was and gave some interesting speculations on why Orwell adopted these views at that time.

The RPDs offer some of us - the older members - a chance to show BFWG off to the young and to demonstrate our support for 'up and coming' academic women. Make next year's event a date for your diary please.

Elizabeth Poskitt, Liverpool

## BFWG Scholarship (Academic Award) Winners 2013

Award Holder	Institute	Awarded	Title of Research
Kate Saunders	Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford	Johnstone & Florence Stoney Studentship £6000	<i>Borderline personality disorder and bipolar affective disorder</i>
Rachel Joyce	Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London	Eila Campbell Scholarship £5000	<i>Terror and trauma: the place of the Tamil minority in post-war Sri Lanka</i>
Naomi Walker	Department of Infectious Disease and Immunity, Division of Medicine, Imperial, London	Ruth Bowden Scholarship £5000	<i>Defining mechanisms of tissue destruction in TB and TB immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (TB-IRIS)</i>
Emma Login	Institute of Archaeology & Antiquity, University of Birmingham	Beryl Mavis Green Scholarship £4000	<i>A comparative study of war memorial processes from 1860 until the present in the UK, France and the USA</i>
Emma Lochery	Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford	Kathleen Hall Fellowship £4000	<i>Business and state-making in Somaliland's utility sector: a case study of the water and electricity sectors</i>
Eva Barkauskaite	Paterson Institute for Cancer Research, University of Manchester	Second Ruth Bowden Scholarship £2000	<i>Structural and biochemical characterisation of poly(ADP-ribose) glycohydrolase (PARG)</i>
Charlotte Bond	School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham	Mary Bradburn Scholarship £2000	<i>Beam shapes and mirror surfaces, precision interferometry for advanced gravitational wave detectors</i>
Anne-Marie Haughey	Department of Bioengineering, University of Strathclyde	Margaret KB Day Scholarship £2000	<i>An integrated and high-throughput diagnostic platform for assessing the risk of cardiovascular disease</i>
Larissa Dos Santos Romualdo Suzuki	Department of Computer Science, UCL	MH Joseph Prize £1000	<i>The design and realisation of middleware frameworks for urban data management</i>

# AGM Workshops

## Future membership = one woman, one vote (participation by members)

Twenty three delegates attended the workshop. Catherine Pinion gave the background to the workshop, namely that by focusing on the voting system, especially at AGMs, each delegate could feel more involved. With an increasing number of Independents, and falling number of LAs, there is a need within the next few years to find members to take on roles within the Federation - at local, regional, national and international levels. In short, how do we get members to participate more at officer level, to be more involved?

After further discussion, workshop members were divided into three groups and given three areas to discuss - (a) Are Regions necessary? (b) Election of officers at local and national levels (c) How do we get the Independents more involved?

## RESULTS

It would be true to say that the problems were easier to identify than the solutions. Overall, delegates felt that there needed to be something to attract members to participate. It is quite daunting to attend the national conference and AGM when one knows no-one (or even only one of two people) and CAN BE A VERY NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE. The format of the weekend is too business - orientated and there should be more attractive elements in the programme (e.g. talks, visits).

Although, I did say that I was not discussing recruitment, many of the responses from the discussion groups could also apply to that problem. Herewith is a list of comments:-

1. Local contact is the most important element for drawing people in.

2. Better publicity for all events - also the appointment of a PRESS OFFICER could raise the profile of the Federation, someone to bombard the media incessantly.
3. Younger people are more interested in international affairs.
4. More events should be organised within the Regions. (On balance, Regions were thought to play a useful role and COULD link people together more).
5. The Day Schools, such as at Canterbury and Newcastle have been very successful - more of these would attract greater participation
6. Support for career development (especially with academics)
7. Embrace new technology. However, consider how effective it really is just now - there is reluctance amongst current members to use it. Also, it is only one form of communication.
8. Discussion opportunities on specific topics - not enough time DURING an AGM - AGMs should be shorter and sharper dealing with the past year's activities, financial statement and elections. Specific topics could be the subject of separate discussion periods. The AGM per se should be free to members.
9. ONE WOMAN, ONE VOTE - with proxy votes for those unable to attend - generally agreed this was a good idea and would encourage more people to participate in decision-making.
10. Put independent members in touch with one another (NB their agreement would be needed for this).

Overall, it was agreed that involving members in greater PARTICIPATION and election to posts within the Federation is an on-going challenge!

*Catherine Pinion, Huddersfield*

## Report on Workshop by Prof. Chris Budd: Mathematical Outreach Projects with Schools

As Prof. Budd had to leave promptly to make his connections for a flight to Melbourne in the evening, this was more a presentation to inform us of all the work being done at Bath University, where he is Professor of Mathematics, to make the study and teaching of Maths in England more appealing and effective. He did encourage us to ask questions as he went along, and several alert members did so!

Using good graphics and many bullet points, he outlined the various schemes now in place. He made it clear that there is widespread concern that we need to ensure good i.e. imaginative and "useful", Maths teaching to bring us more students studying for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) degrees in the future. Bath University has many such schemes; they concentrate on 20 final year students who go out into schools to give them the experience and train to be effective Maths communicators, using the great creative resources at their disposal in the University. Local schools can also attend work-days set up by the University.

His points were easy to grasp, but I felt more could have been done to engage his audience in contributing more actively. It was a very good show-case for the exciting work being developed by Bath University and copied at other universities, as well as inspiring other schemes by the Royal Institution (a National Maths Master class) and the Undergraduate and Student Ambassadors Schemes. As I said, he was limited for time.

*Hazel Harrison, Norfolk and Norwich*



*(Photo Courtesy: Gill Andrews)*

## Leeds Association celebrates 40 years of friendship with the Bishop Monkton Women's Institute

A chance contact between the Leeds Association and the Bishop Monkton Women's Institute led to a relationship which has endured for over forty years. Meeting alternately in Leeds and Bishop Monkton in North Yorkshire each year the groups have enjoyed each other's fellowship and, in the past, delicious teas. Representatives of the two groups met for lunch in July.

*Gillian Roche, Leeds Association*

# Somerville's Principal speaks at the Conference Dinner

The Federation was delighted to welcome Dr Alice Prochaska MA, DPhil, FRHistS, Principal of Somerville College Oxford, and her husband Frank who came as distinguished guests to the conference dinner on Saturday 6th July. Before proposing a toast to the BFWG, Dr Prochaska spoke of the history of Somerville College and revealed to us some of the changes over the 134 years since its foundation.



*Dr Alice Prochaska (Photo Courtesy: Barbara Jackson)*

When, in the 1870s the Association for the Education of Women sought to establish an Oxford college, the founders could not agree on religious tests for entry. This dispute was resolved by the establishment of two women's colleges: Lady Margaret Hall for Anglicans and Somerville, non-denominational, named for Mary Somerville, friend of John Stuart Mill. Since ladies then required chaperones, these new foundations were established at a 'demure distance' from the men's college. However, recent expansion of university buildings has taken a sliver of the Parks adjacent to Somerville's library thus bringing the college into the centre of student life; while men have been admitted as students since 1994. The college focuses on 'including the excluded' and encouraging in its students a career of public service.

Dr Prochaska mentioned her family's long association with Somerville College, since her grandmother studied there in 1908, later becoming a member of the National Council for Women. She then reminded us of many worthy alumnae; first among them, Cornelia Sorabji from India, who studied law and returned as a barrister to secure justice for Indian women in purdah. Dorothy L Sayers exemplifies Somerville's strong literary tradition, while the college also cared for Rose Macaulay, Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby in the difficult years after the First World War. After Somerville, Eleanor Rathbone served as an MP from 1929 to 1946. She had campaigned since her youth for family allowances (which passed into law in 1945) and during the Second World War supported refugees from Nazi Germany. Among the scientists, Dorothy Hodgkin went on to earn a Nobel Prize in 1954 (for her discovery of the structure of Vitamin B12). She made an annual visit to college during her retirement years, where her former student Janet Bourne, then Principal of the college held the famous left-wing scientist in awe. The political views of alumnae range widely: Indira Gandhi, Shirley Williams, Margaret Thatcher - yet all have lived their lives in positions of authority.

Our speaker went on to discuss current issues of concern at Somerville: that women hold only 25% of senior academic posts; that students now being faced with £9,000 fees are less likely to undertake post-graduate study. The need for college to offer

support for post-graduate study occupied the mind of Margaret Thatcher, whose legacy to her college, a Scholarship Trust, aims to 'spread the virtues of achievement against the odds'. The Trust is designed to support a new generation of students.

Dr Prochaska has returned to Somerville, appointed as Principal from 2010 after a distinguished career as an archivist and museum curator. Having gained BA and D Phil degrees in Modern History she served as a museum curator and archivist at the Public Record Office, now the National Archives, then for 8 years became Deputy Director at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London. She followed 9 years as Director of Special Collections at the British Library, before moving to the USA in 2001 to become head librarian at Yale University. Throughout her career, Dr Prochaska has taken senior roles on the academic committees of learned societies. She advised on the design of the first National Curriculum for History. Her life's work provides a fine example of Somerville's tradition of public service.

*Margaret Roake, Independent*

## Public Affairs Forum

Many members who took the time to provide us with Feedback on this year's AGM and Conference Programme expressed the wish that more time could be allotted to the discussion of a greater variety of topics, not just two or three workshops. Others regretted the lack of General Resolutions that are no longer submitted to the AGM in greater numbers as it used to be the case in previous years. There is no shortage of issues which BFWG members take a keen interest in and love to discuss. In order to stimulate this discussion and give as many members as we can to reach an opportunity of contributing their ideas, a Public Affairs Forum network has been started on the BFWG website. We are looking forward to receiving your suggestions and comments on women in education and public life, on equality of opportunities, discrimination, social and medical policies, in fact on anything that affects women. Ultimately, your ideas could develop into a theme for another conference or seminar or become the basis for a general resolution to be presented to the Government. Thank you all for your suggestions.

*Gabrielle Suff (VP-Programme)*

## Constitutional Documents Update

It gives me great pleasure to report that at the 2013 AGM in July, the Council passed the resolutions on the Constitutional Documents and therefore the process of ratifying these documents is complete. The new Articles of Association and By-laws will replace the existing Articles of Association when the paperwork satisfies the format required for despatch to Companies House with a copy to IFUW.

The Federation will then be governed by the new set of documents and members will be notified via the website and LA Secretaries.

*Nest Overend, Worcestershire*

## BFWG Website

- Would you like to help the Website Administrator and learn how to maintain the website? If so, please e-mail [office@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:office@bfgw.org.uk).
- Would you like to have an electronic copy of BFWG News rather than a hard copy? If so, please e-mail [news-online@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:news-online@bfgw.org.uk). By having electronic copies you will help reduce the overheads of printing and postage.
- If you have not received your username and password for accessing the members' only pages of the BFWG website, please ask for them by e-mailing [webadmin@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:webadmin@bfgw.org.uk)

Sheila Stevens (VP)

## WESTMINSTER SEMINAR 2013

### House of Lords

17th October 14:00 - 16:00

A Woman's Right to Know

#### REMINDER

Deadline for booking Seminar and Afternoon Tea is 23rd September. A list of names will have to be forwarded to the Caterers and later bookings may not be accommodated. If you have not booked already I am sure you will not want to miss this mouth-watering opportunity of seated Tea with sandwiches and cakes in the Cholmondeley Room.

Deadline for Seminar only is 30th September but last minute bookings are possible.

Visit to the Banqueting House Whitehall. The visit is confirmed for 10:30 Admission £3.60 to pay on the day. Places are still available. All further details and a booking form are in the Spring/Summer News and on the website. Please contact Gabrielle on 01792 208979 or email [office@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:office@bfgw.org.uk) if you have any queries.

## BFWG Northern Region Annual General Meeting

Saturday 29 March 2014

Hollins Hey Hotel, New Brighton, CH45 0JY

10:30 - 16:00, Cost £21.00

Please make your cheque payable to Liverpool Association of Graduate Women (LAGW) & send with (booking) slip to Mrs E C Smith, 28 Ferguson Avenue, GREASBY, Wirral, CH49 1RP  
T: 0151-678-1620, Email: [office@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:office@bfgw.org.uk)  
by Saturday 22 March 2014

## International Meeting

26th October 2013

at BFWG - HQ Meeting Room 11:00 - 16:00

The meeting will cover the Istanbul IFUW Triennial Meeting and suggest Resolutions to be worked on by BFWG. £5 cash will be collected at the meeting. Drinks will be provided, please bring your own lunch. Please notify Cynthia Burek on [c.burek@bfgw.org.uk](mailto:c.burek@bfgw.org.uk) if coming by 15 October.

## IFUW International Colloquia Project Report

The Project was a follow-up to the British Federation of Women Graduates' (BFWG) Colloquium held in May 2011 at the University of London's Senate House on Female Leadership in Higher Education. Following this successful meeting, the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) launched the IFUW International Colloquia Project giving their National Federations and Associations the opportunity to hold similar events. The Project was highlighted in the article in Times Higher Education 22nd August 2013. Here is the link: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/prospect-of-gladiatorial-fight-puts-women-off-push-for-top/2006612.article>.

A copy of the Report can also be accessed via the IFUW website with the link: [www.ifuw.org/what/activities/colloquia](http://www.ifuw.org/what/activities/colloquia). I am happy to send the Report (in one document) by email to anyone who has problems finding it on the IFUW website. The Report is a compilation of research data and findings resulting from the IFUW Project whereby one-day meetings were held in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.

Anna Frost,

IFUW International Colloquia Project Coordinator

## Sybil Campbell Annual Lecture

Dr Helen McCarthy

A Woman's Place is in the Embassy-  
The History of Women in British Diplomatic Life

Thursday 17th October 2013

University Women's Club, 2 Audley Square London W1Y 6DB

18:00 Arrival, sandwiches and drinks 18:30 Lecture  
£18, Postgraduate students £10

Please apply by 10th October, giving names of guests and enclosing SAE and cheque made payable to 'University of Winchester'; write on the back 'Attention Dr S Spencer'.  
Post to: Dr S Spencer, Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care,  
University of Winchester, West Hill, Winchester Hants. SO22 4NR  
T: 01962 827125

Anyone wishing to have dinner at the club after the lecture should book and pay directly with the club

Dr McCarthy lectures at Queen Mary College, University of London. She studied at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, spent a year as a Kennedy Scholar at Harvard, worked for the think tank Demos and then completed her doctoral studies at the Institute of Historical Research, London. She describes herself as a Historian of Modern Britain, particularly specialising in politics and diplomacy, gender, work and identity. Dr McCarthy has published many articles on women and politics between the wars and is currently working on a new book entitled: 'Women of the World: the Rise of the Female Diplomat' which is due for publication in 2014. To book places at this lecture please refer to the advertisement above.

Sue Ouvry, Winchester



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