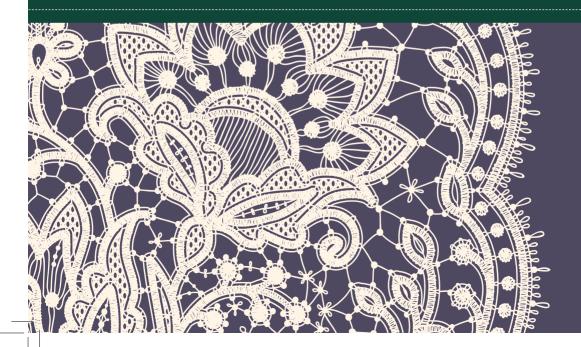


Shoulder to Shoulder

Nottinghamshire women make their mark



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WOMEN MAKE THEIR MARK

Nottinghamshire Lieutenancy celebrates Vote 100

Text by Kate Lewis Hood MSc.

Female Firsts compiled by David S Stewart OBE D.Litt.h.c. DL

As part of the legacy of this work, an online version will be hosted by the Nottingham Women's History Group.

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INTRODUCTION

100 years ago, things were changing dramatically for women in Britain. On 6 February 1918, the Representation of the People Act was passed, meaning that some women (aged thirty or over and holding a certain amount of property) could vote. On 21 November of the same year, the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act gave women over 21 the right to stand for election as a Member of Parliament (MP). However, it was another ten years before women finally achieved equal voting rights with men on 2 July 1928.

Before and since these events in the early 20th century, women in Nottinghamshire have been fighting for women's rights to participate in democracy and to bring about changes on issues that matter to them. This booklet will show that votes for women is just one (albeit very important) part of a far longer and still ongoing history of women striving for gender equality.

The booklet focuses on three key areas of women's action in Nottinghamshire: democracy, work, and liberation. Drawing attention to important figures and events in the campaign for women's suffrage, which resulted in the vote 100 years ago, it also forwards to the 21st century, highlighting the efforts of Nottinghamshire women over 200 years.

This is far from a complete history. However, it is hoped that by presenting some key examples of women's individual and collective action in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire from across the past two centuries, awareness of women's achievements will be raised and their legacies of pressing for gender equality will be continued.

This booklet aims to open up more discussion about women's action in Nottinghamshire, especially the stories of women that might have been missed. Readers are invited to share their knowledge and experience of Nottinghamshire women's achievements with the Nottingham Women's History Group.



WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY

Some women got the vote on 6 February 1918 and voted for the first time on 14 December that year. Ten years later in 1928, all women aged 21 and over were finally able to vote.

However, women's fight for political rights and reforms didn't start and end with the two Representation of the People Acts. As will be seen, the struggle went on long before, and has continued long afterwards.





19[™] CENTURY: WOMEN AND CHARTISM

The Chartist movement in the mid-nineteenth century called for political reform and a more democratic voting system (although votes for women were not yet on the agenda). Women were important to the Chartist movement in Nottingham; on 20 October 1838, the Nottingham Review reported the founding of the Nottingham Female Political Union (NFPU), which was formed to support the chartist cause.

On 5 November 1838 Mary Ann Abbott (the leader of NFPU and the Chartist Chapel Sunday School) led a parade of 4000 people at a Chartist meeting in Nottingham, and on 8 December the Chartist newspaper The Northern Star printed a letter from Mary Savage, Secretary of NFPU, to the 'Patriotic Women of England', calling on them to fight against the inequality and lack of rights experienced by the working classes. She writes: 'You sisters, the patriotic Women of England in these transactions are the most fit and proper persons to deal the blow and most effectually so.'1

The work of the NFPU is an important example showing that women of all classes were involved in organising and protesting around issues of politics and democracy, even before the mainstream women's suffrage campaign. It also suggests the influence and involvement of Nottingham in national movements pushing for change.

19[™] AND 20[™] CENTURY: WOMEN AND SUFFRAGE

The campaign for women's suffrage in Nottinghamshire was longstanding and varied. In 1866, the first mass petition for women's suffrage was presented at Parliament. 1521 women from across the UK signed, including 50 women from Nottingham. (Further information on these 50 women, researched by David S Stewart are to be found on the Nottingham Women's History Group website nottinghamwomenshistory.org.uk).

In 1871, the Nottingham Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was formed, with Miss Elizabeth Sunter, the Headmistress of the Girls Department of People's College as Secretary. The Committee were as follows:

President: Rev R A Armstrong

Vice Presidents: Rev J Matherson, Mr T B Smith

Mrs Burtt Miss Thornton

Mr Rigg Mrs Rawle

Mrs Goddard Rev C H Wilkins

Miss Ada Smith Mr Renwick

Mr Mawson Rev C L Witham

Secretary: Miss Sunter

In the 1880s a group of liberals supported by some town councillors and business people — generally Unitarians, Quakers, Methodists, and Congregationalists — formed the Nottingham branch of the National Women's Suffrage society and held regular meetings, with Ann Cowen as Secretary. The Mansfield branch was founded in 1893, with Mrs Emily Manners as Secretary and Miss Louisa Wright as President.

During the 1880s and 1890s a few women in Nottinghamshire became members of School Boards and with support from the Bishops of Nottingham and Southwell, members of Poor Law Boards. However, the move to universal suffrage was slow and extremely frustrating. Members of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), led by Millicent Fawcett, were committed to change through parliamentary and constitutional means and were known as Suffragists. As politicians continually failed to deliver, others such as Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903, with the slogan 'Deeds Not Words'. These militant women became known as Suffragettes. A Nottingham branch of the WPSU was founded in 1908.2

Nottinghamshire played host to a wide range of campaigners from both organisations. These included Helena Taylor, Lydia Becker, Eleanor Rathbone, Edward Carpenter, Millicent Fawcett, Emmeline Pankhurst, Dora Russell, and Princess Sophia Duleep Singh. Women from Nottinghamshire were active in demonstrations locally and nationally.

Amongst the suffragettes, the most well known is Helen Kirkpatrick Watts (1881-1972), daughter of the Vicar of Lenton. On 24 February 1909. she attended the WPSU Women's Parliament in Westminster, and marched to Parliament, where she was arrested and sentenced to a month's imprisonment in Holloway prison. Helen was arrested and imprisoned several more times in 1909 and 1910. Outside of prison, she gave talks in Nottingham and beyond on women's history, the inequalities of women's work, and men's attitudes towards women, amongst other topics. In the 1980s, a suitcase of Helen's papers was found near the docks in Bristol, with no explanation as to how it got there. You can see photocopies of these papers including letters to and from Helen while she was in prison, press cuttings, and scripts of her public talks - in the Nottinghamshire Archives.3

Locally, suffragettes made attacks on pillar boxes, disrupted in churches and set fire to the Park Tennis Pavilion, but no one was harmed. One of the most potentially dangerous moments in the movement's history occurred in Nottingham. On 24 June 1914, the suffragette Eileen Casey was found and arrested for carrying explosives in Nottingham Market Square.

King George V was visiting a Nottingham lace factory that day.

During the First World War, the NUWSS and the WPSU called for action to be suspended so that they could focus on the war effort. This in combination with women's increased visibility and experience in a range of jobs — in factories, hospitals, offices, farms, public transport and many other settings — contributed to a transition in women's social position and increased public support for the suffrage cause. On 6 February 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed, allowing women over 30 who met a property qualification to vote.

The Representation of the People Act was followed by the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act on 21 November 1918, which allowed women to stand for Parliament, Viola Rosa Markham was the first women to stand in Nottinghamshire in 1918 for the Division of Mansfield. She was unsuccessful. The first female MP in Nottinghamshire was Florence Paton (Labour), who was elected MP for Rushcliffe in 1945. The first female Councillors on Nottingham City Council were Caroline Harper and Helena Dowson, elected in 1920. Kathleen Langley Kayser became the first female County Councillor in Nottinghamshire in 1930. The first female Mayor in the county was Ethel Wainwright, who became Mayor for Mansfield in 1929. You can see many more 'firsts' from page 20 in this booklet.

21ST CENTURY: WOMEN AND REPRESENTATION

It was not until 2010 that a woman MP was elected in Nottingham City, when Lillian Greenwood (Labour) was elected for Nottingham South. The first female MP in Newark was Fiona Jones (Labour) in 1997, and in 2010 Gloria de Piero (Labour) and Anna Soubry (Conservative) became MPs for Ashfield and Broxtowe respectively. Councillor Merlita Bryan became the first black female Sheriff of Nottingham in 2012 and Lord Mayor of Nottingham in 2013. In 2018. Heather Peto made the final shortlist to be the Labour candidate for Rushcliffe, shortly after Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) confirmed that transgender women could access all-women shortlists. Although she wasn't chosen as the candidate, Peto has gone on to roles as Women's Officer for Nottingham South and LGBT Labour Trans Officer for the Constituency Labour Party.

These women offer important role models 100 years after women became able to stand as MPs. Nevertheless, as many feminists have pointed out, positive role models and women in positions of power must be complemented by progressive policies and a shift in societal attitudes to issues affecting women, from work to housing, childcare, sexuality, and culture.

As one example, the fight for women to feel able and supported to vote didn't end in 1928. For survivors of domestic abuse (the majority of whom are women), voting can be too risky because of the public nature of the electoral register. However, Nottingham organisations have been integral to enabling survivors of domestic abuse to vote safely without fear that their identities and details will be revealed. Joining a Women's Aid petition, Notts SVS Services (formerly Nottingham Rape

Crisis) campaigned on this issue and met with the Electoral Commission. As a result of this work, in September 2016 the government announced changes that make it easier for people to register to vote anonymously. Such changes are crucial for enabling all members of society to participate equally in democracy, one of the key motives for the women's suffrage movement.



WOMEN AND WORK

Work has long been a fundamental aspect of conversations around gender inequality, and remains so in 2018. Key issues include how women's labour is paid (or not paid), managing work alongside other responsibilities, and challenging discrimination and harassment at work.

In addition, a focus on work also acknowledges the importance of working class women who have often been forgotten in histories of the women's suffrage movement.

In Nottinghamshire, women of all classes have participated in bringing about change and providing vital support in relation to a wide range of issues, from demanding fairer working conditions, to building skills and networks in times of crisis.





Women have played an important – but often underestimated – role in Nottingham's industrial history, including in the trades the city is most famous for, such as lace making, framework knitting, and bicycle production.

For example, in the lace industry, many women were involved in jobs such as mending, threading, and winding, and often worked longer hours than the men employed in the same industry.

There was also a high demand for women's labour in Nottingham. For example, in 1861 there were about 7000 more women than men living in Nottingham because their work was so important for local industries. This is often left out in images of industrial Britain as a world of men and machines.

In the second half of the 19th century, Nottingham women workers – including hosiery workers, lace workers, and cigar workers - formed trade unions. However, female workers generally didn't unionise as much as their male counterparts. Some historians have argued that, given the extent of female labour in certain key industries, this relative lack of unionisation made it difficult for powerful, inclusive labour movements to develop. In addition, because women were usually paid less than men, employers used women's labour to undermine male wages, and this contributed to some male resistance to women working in industry.5 However, others have argued that women made up an integral part of the industrial working class in Nottingham, and at times of male unemployment a vital social and economic force.6



20TH CENTURY: WOMEN IN ACTION

Women continued to be important contributors to Midlands industries after the 19th century. During the First and Second World Wars. women took on many of the roles that men had held before the war as well as new roles. For example, women were an essential part of the workforce at major munitions factories at King's Meadow and Chilwell. In 1918, 25 of the 'canary girls' - named because of the colour the chemicals stained their skin - died in an explosion at the Chilwell factory.7 Aside from this tragedy, women gained significant recognition in society during this time owing to their important contributions to the war effort. In 1919, the Sex Disgualification (Removal) Act was passed, stating that people could not be disqualified from public life and professions on account of their sex or marital status. This was augmented by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and subsequent Equality Acts.

Throughout the twentieth century, women have also been actively involved in fighting against inequality in the workplace. In 1972 when a group of Pakistani workers in Lenton went on strike for better working conditions, it was their wives and other Asian workers, along with friends and community activists who led on the solidarity committee, which led to union recognition. Several other strikes in the years following protested against racism in the hosiery industry and the treatment of Asian women workers in particular.⁸

In the miners' strike of 1984-85, women across the country were vital to the survival of striking mining communities. The strike was very controversial in Nottingham and led to a split in the Nottingham branch of the National Union of Mineworkers and bitter divides between friends, colleagues, and communities. Nevertheless, women held and developed important roles as events played out.

Nottinghamshire Women's Support Group (known as 'Central Group') was established at a meeting between Julie Wilkinson, Ida Hackett, Ernie Daglish and Andy Miller in Mansfield Community Arts Centre in April 1984. The group toured local mining communities giving advice and support. They also distributed food and clothing.

The strike was significant for women in particular because of the ways it enabled them to go beyond their own villages and communities, and to grow in skills and confidence, especially around public speaking and campaigning. Nottinghamshire women travelled around the country fundraising and campaigning for the cause, and after the strike was crushed in 1985 many of them went on to use the knowledge and experience they had gained for further activism.

The strike was also important for working class communities more generally because it enabled them to gain awareness of wider societal inequalities. Sometimes for the first time, miners and their families gained greater understanding of the struggles of women, people of colour, and other marginalised communities.⁹

21ST CENTURY: GENDER PAY GAP AND TIMESUP

Women's issues at work are far from resolved. In 1968, a group of women sewing machinists at the Ford factory in Dagenham went out on strike because of unequal pay, laying the ground for the Equal Pay Act 1970. In 1974/75. women in Nottingham set up a Working Women's Charter Action Committee to publicise the demands made in the 1974 Working Women's Charter and campaign around the inadequacies of the Equal Pay Act. 10

In 2018, women are still fighting against a gender pay gap. All organisations with more than 250 employees were required to report on their gender pay gap by 4 April 2018. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), in 2017 78% of companies paid men more than women, and there was a median gender pay gap across full-time and part-time workers of 18.4%.¹¹

Another workplace issue that women are campaigning for in 2018 is TimesUp, which calls for an end to sexual harassment at work and beyond. A TimesUp Notts network of working women has been created to tackle this issue using a grass roots approach. The network meets regularly and is developing a resource pack offering quidance for companies in supporting their employees and challenging sexual harassment. Almost 100 years after the Sex Disgualification (Removal) Act. it appears that there is still much to do to ensure that women are treated equally at work.







WOMEN AND LIBERATION

Promoting and protecting women's rights and liberation doesn't stop with the vote. Over the last 200 years, women have been fighting to improve conditions for all women, including those who may have lacked access to the wealth, education, and other privileges often associated with the largely white, middle class women's suffrage movement.

Particularly from the mid-twentieth century onwards, Nottingham has become a diverse city, home to people from many different communities and backgrounds, and this is reflected in the ongoing range of work to push for gender equality and for women's rights to thrive in the lives they choose.





19[™] CENTURY: CAMPAIGNING AND PROTESTING

In the late 1830s, women appeared to be primarily concerned with opposition to the New Poor Law legislation. In 1838, the Female Political Union in Nottingham mounted a subscription to support Susan Robinson, an elderly and infirm woman from Nuthall who had been sent to do stone-breaking work by the Poor Law authorities. They said she was being treated as a female slave and called on the subscribers to prevent her being sent to the Poor Law Bastille. 12

The Dowson family are well remembered in Nottingham history for their involvement in the women's suffrage movement, but family members were also key to other campaigns. Alice Dowson (1844-1927) became honorary secretary of the Nottingham Women's Suffrage Society in 1894, but before this she fought for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts passed in the 1860s. These laws allowed police officers to arrest women suspected of being sex workers and force them to be checked for venereal disease. Alice's mother introduced Alice to the issue in 1870, and by 1878 Alice was organising repeal campaign meetings in her house. The Acts were finally repealed in 1886. 13

20[™] CENTURY: NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP AND THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

Nottingham Women's Liberation Group was formed in the 1970s, in the spirit of second-wave feminism. Soon after, in 1971, Nottingham Women's Centre was founded as a space for women to meet, discuss, and organise, and was one of the first centres of its kind.

Originally housed just off Pelham Street, the Women's Centre moved to Angel Row in 1972, Shakespeare Street in 1978, and its current site on Chaucer Street in 1986. The Women's Centre shares this building with two domestic and sexual violence organisations, Women's Aid Integrated Services (WAIS) and Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services (Notts SVS Services).

During the 1970s, the Women's Liberation Group published Women Now, a feminist magazine. The Women's Centre library is now an important archive for second-wave feminist publications, and also houses an impressive collection of fiction and nonfiction books by and about women.

As well as providing a women-only space in the city and offering a range of services including courses and counselling, Nottingham Women's Centre plays a strategic role in campaigns such as TimesUp (calling for an end to sexual harassment) and Safer for Women (calling for misogyny to be treated as a hate crime).

21ST CENTURY: WOMEN'S CAMPAIGNING

In 2014, Martha Jephcott co-founded a grassroots project called Hollaback Nottingham, which aimed to challenge misogynistic street harassment by collecting stories and testimonials and supporting women to report instances of harassment to local police.

Using data collected by Hollaback, Jephcott worked with Melanie Jeffs from Nottingham Women's Centre and Nottinghamshire

Police Chief Constable Sue Fish and in 2016

Nottinghamshire Police became the first force in the UK to categorise misogyny as a form of hate crime.

Nottinghamshire Police started their pilot project in 2016, and this became Nottinghamshire Police Policy in 2017. This has since spread more widely; South Yorkshire included misogyny in its hate crime policy in 2017, and in March 2018 the Labour MP for Great Grimsby Melanie Onn brought misogyny as a hate crime for debate in the House of Commons. In June 2018, the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University released a Misogyny Hate Crime Evaluation Report. Over 87% of people surveyed thought that the policy change was a good idea, and the report recommends that the policy be rolled out nationally.¹⁴

Nottingham has also led on other issues affecting women. For example, influenced by the Mojatu Foundation's campaign to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in September 2016 Nottingham became the first city in the UK to take a zero tolerance position on FGM.

Also in 2016, Caroline Kerr from Nottingham started Bras Not Bombs, a charity to collect underwear to send to women in refugee camps around the world. This is a good example of how simple ideas and actions carried out by women who just want to make a change can have a large impact. It also demonstrates some of the possibilities of the internet and social media in connecting people nationally and even globally to campaign on issues of inequality at the current time. Nevertheless, it's important not to forget the tireless work and still-relevant strategies of earlier campaigners, holding meetings, writing letters, and distributing print materials to speak out about issues that mattered to them.



WOMEN EVERY DAY

In addition to more visible public changes, a whole host of work goes on across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire every day, both to support a wide range of women and to strive for gender equality.

In 2006, Faith Gakanje founded the African Women Empowerment Forum social enterprise running programmes and courses for asylum seeking and refugee women and running national campaigns such as Reunite Me with My Children.

In 2007, asylum seeking and refugee women set up the Women's Group at Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum. Out of this group emerged the Women's Culture Exchange and Global Sistaz United, who now provide activities and services for isolated women in Nottingham and hold renowned International Women's Day celebrations. 15

Nottinghamshire women are also working to bring about change by influencing others. In 2016 Nottingham Muslim Women's Network led a pilot initiative called Men Leading for Change, which developed training for Muslim men and male community leaders to raise awareness about domestic violence and abuse.

Other important organisations supporting and empowering women in Nottingham include: Blue Mountain Women, a community of women primarily of African and African-Caribbean heritage, with a particular focus on women's health; Kairos, Nottingham's Lesbian Immigration Support Group; An Nisa Network, which aims to empower Muslim women, and POW, which supports the rights of sex workers. There are many others!

In this centenary year of significant changes for and by women, it is important to acknowledge the vital contributions women have made and continue to make to our history. By learning from these women, it is hoped that others will be inspired to continue their legacies, to identify issues of inequality that remain in society today, and to challenge and transform these inequalities for a future beyond the vote.





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FEMALE FIRSTS OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

In the compiling of this list, great care has been taken to establish the accuracy of the information. Further research will undoubtedly add additional names and indeed may find earlier dates. It is hoped that this stimulates further research and debate.

With many thanks to all those who contributed names and suggestions. A version of the list will be available on the Nottingham Women's History Group website: nottinghamwomenshitory.org.uk





PUBLIC OFFICE

PARI IAMENTARY OFFICE

Although women over 30 who met certain property qualifications gained the vote in February 1918, it was not until November 1918 that the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act was passed enabling women to stand for Parliament.

First Female to stand for election to Parliament in Nottinghamshire

December 1918 Mansfield Division (not elected) – Violet Rosa Markham CH (1872-1959)

Passionate about education she served on the Chesterfield School Board and Education Authority 1899-1934. During World War 1 was a member of the Executive of the National Relief Fund. Was made a Companion of Honour in 1917. Mayor of Chesterfield in 1927. Was the grand daughter of Sir Joseph Paxton who designed the Crystal Palace. She had originally been anti-suffrage!! Mansfield Division had been her brother's former seat.

First Female MP in Nottinghamshire

1945 – Mrs Florence Paton (1891-1976) née Widdowson (Lab Rushcliffe 1945-50)

She had first stood as Miss Florence Widdowson for Rushcliffe in the election of 1929. She became the first woman to join the Speaker's Panel to chair committees. On 31st May 1948 she became the first woman to preside over the whole of the House of Commons, but did not sit in the Speaker's Chair.

First Female MP for Nottingham

2010 - Lilian Greenwood (Lab Nottingham South)

First Female MP for Broxtowe

2010 - Anna Soubry Conservative

First Female MP for Ashfield

2010 - Gloria de Piero La

First Female MP for Newark

1997 - Fiona Jones La

LIFUTENANCY

First Female Deputy Lieutenants of Nottinghamshire

1993 – Mrs Jenny Farr MBE JP DL and Mrs Marcia Abel Smith DL

In 1999 Jenny Farr became Vice Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, holding the post until 2008.



COUNCILLORS

Under the Local Government Act (1894) women ratepayers, including married women who owned property distinct from their husbands, became eligible to vote and stand for Parish Councils and Rural and Urban District Councils. This was extended to County and election in County, Borough and Town Councils Elections in 1907. However it appears to be 1920 before the first woman councillors were elected in Nottinghamshire.

First Female to stand for Nottingham City Council

1919 – Mrs Bridgid Jane Burke-Bloor née BurkeDied 1946. Originally from Aberdeen she was president of the Nottingham Branch of the Women's Labour League. She was not elected.

First Female Councillors on Nottingham City Council

1920 – Caroline Harper and Helena Dowson
Caroline Margaret Harper, nee Lennox (1867-1937)
was the wife of Dr Henry Harper of Regent Street.
Helena Dowson (1866-1964) was the daughter of
Anderson Brownsword, who as Sheriff and Mayor
of Nottingham had supported the female suffrage
cause. She married William Enfield Dowson and her
mother in law was Alice Dowson.

First Female Councillor – Mansfield Town Council 1920 – Mrs Ethel Wainwright OBE (1878-1959) She had joined the committee of the Mansfield Women's Suffrage Society in 1910. Ethel Wainwright held some other firsts in Mansfield. In 1927 its first female Chairman of the Education Committee. In 1928 she was the first female Alderman, 1929 first female Mayor, and became Lady Freeman in 1947. She held the role of Mayor once more in 1946. She was on the Board of Guardians and became a County Councillor in 1937.

First Female Councillor of East Bridgford Parish Council

1925 - Mrs Charlotte Ethel Cartwright

First Female Councillor - Retford Town Council
1926 - Mrs Ellen Gentle Howell
Born 1872 Ellen Gentle Huckle in Luton.
When she was elected in 1926 she was
serving as Mayoress of Retford.

First Female County Councillor of Nottinghamshire County Council

1930 – Mrs Kathleen Langley Kayser née Price (1892-1975) of Eaton Hall, returned for the Tuxford Division.

First Female Councillor on Worksop Borough Council

1931 – Mrs Eileen B LongbottomShe was the first Mayoress of Worksop in 1931.

First Female Councillor on Newark Town Council 1935 – Kate Amelia Quibell (1884-1975) First Female Councillor of Basford Rural District Council

1940 - Mrs Hannah Flintoff

First Female Councillors of Broxtowe Borough Council

1973 – June Allwood, Katherine Archer, Dorothy Ashton, Christine Bellamy, Gertrude Bellamy, Margaret Coe, Joan Hemstock, Margaret Oreton, Anne West, Florence Wilson

First Female Councillor Normanton-on-the-Wolds

1974 - Kay Cutts MBE

First Female Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Councillor of Nottinghamshire County Council

1989 - Eunice Campbell

Eunice joined the Congress of Europe in 2004 and in 2016 became the first Caribbean woman to be elected First Vice President of the Congress of Regions.

First Female BAME Councillor of Nottingham County Council

1996 - Eunice Campbell

MAYORS, SHERIFFS AND CHAIRS

NOTTINGHAM

First Female Lord Mayor 1968/9 – Ald Mrs Winifred J Case

First Black Female Lord Mayor of Nottingham 2013 – Councillor Merlita Bryan

First Female Sheriff

1931/32 - Councillor Caroline M Harper

First Black Female Sheriff of Nottingham 2012 – Councillor Merlita Bryan

First Female Mayoress of Nottingham

1928 - Mrs Elsie Huntsman

It was in this year that the title changed from Mayor to Lord Mayor of Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

First Female Mayor – Mansfield Town Council 1929 – Councillor Mrs Ethel Wainwright OBE The second female Mayor, Mrs Mary Ellen Marriott claimed she was the first Mansfield born woman to hold the office.

First Female Chairman of Beeston Urban District Council

1925 - Councillor Mrs Eleanor Littlewood MBE

First Female Chairman of Eastwood Urban District Council

1934 - Councillor Mrs Edith Mary Butler

First Female Chairman of Kirkby in Ashfield

District Council

1934 - Councillor Mrs Ada Jeffries

She had been councillor since 1928.

First Female Chairman of Sutton in Ashfield Urhan District Council

1944 - Councillor Mrs C Moore

She had been first woman on the Council.

First Female Chair of Southwell Urban District Council

1950- Miss Doris Mary Dowse

She was also the first woman to be elected to the council in 1946.

First Female Vice-Chairman of Carlton Urban Council

1950 - Mrs Gladys Cator

First Female Mayor of Retford

1951 - Mrs M E Williamson JP

She was Chair of Governors at Retford High School for Girls. In 1961 she became the first woman Alderman on Retford Town Council.

First Female Mayor of Newark

1957 – Councillor Kate Amelia Quibell (1884-1975)

First Female Chairman of Basford Rural District Council

1960 - Councillor Mrs Jessie Hill MBE

The Council included the parishes surrounding the City of Nottingham.

First Female Chairman of Hucknall Urban District Council

1961 - Mrs Phyllis R Watson

First Female Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council

1968-1974 - Mrs Anne Yates CBE

First Female Mayor of Rushcliffe Borough Council

1975 - Councillor Mrs Joyce M E Dixon

First Female Mayor of Broxtowe Borough Council

1977 - Councillor Katherine Archer

First Female Mayor of Gedling Borough Council 1978 – Councillor Linda M Darnell

First Female Chairman of Bassetlaw District Council

1980 - Councillor Sally Jackson

First Female Mayor of Bingham 1986 – Councillor Geraldine Harvey

First Female Chairman of Newark and Sherwood District Council

1995 - Councillor Doreen Westmoreland

First Female First Female elected Executive Mayor of Mansfield

2015 - Kate Allsop

First Mayoress of Mansfield

1891 - Mrs Elizabeth Hibbert

Née Johnson, died 1931. Mansfield had been incorporated in 1891 and Elizabeth's husband Mr George Hudson Hibbert became Mayor.

First Female Nottinghamshire County Council Children's Officer under the Children's Act 1948 – Mrs Rosalie Spence



First Female Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council

2008 - Jane Todd OBE DL

SCHOOL BOARDS AND BOARDS OF GUARDIANS

In 1870 any woman, with or without house or husband, could be a candidate for election to a School Board, but only single women ratepayers could vote for her!

First Female elected to Nottingham School Board 1883 – Mrs Ann Cowen

Whilst she was eligible to stand she was unable to vote as being married her husband was the rate payer. Her unmarried sisters had more rights!

First Female elected as Poor Law Guardians for Nottingham

1892 – Miss Sarah Guilford, Miss Anne Hine, Mrs Elizabeth Allen, Mrs Louisa Hazzledine

First Female Chairman of Nottingham Board of Guardians

1925 - Mrs Caroline Harper

First Female Poor Law Guardians in Mansfield 1893 – Miss Henrietta Maria Hollins and Miss Dorothy Blythe

First Female Poor Law Guardian in Southwell 1895 – Lady Laura Ridding

Wife of George Ridding, Bishop of Southwell. First Female Poor Law Guardian in Newark

1908 – Miss Jane Anne Cubley

First Female Poor Law Guardian on the Basford Board of Guardians

First Female Poor Law Guardian n the Basford Board of Guardians

1921 – Mrs Sarah Barker Merrick (1869-1933)

First Female relieving officer Nottingham Poor Law Board

1910 – Reba Helen Holloway (1878-1940) She had been appointed Infant Life Visitor in 1908 and in 1910, the Local Government Board gave exceptional permission for her to be Boarding Out Officer as well as relieving officer. From 1929 she was relieving officer for the Nottingham Public Assistance Committee, retiring in 1938.

The Mental Deficiency Act 1913 was the first legislation which categorically made provision for there to be at least two women members of the new Mental Deficiency Committees. As neither Nottingham nor Nottinghamshire had councillors at this time, the first women were drawn from the Poor Law Boards or co-opted Education Committee members.

In Nottingham the first two women members appointed in 1914 were **Caroline Harper** and **Mary Corner**, Poor Law Guardians.

In Nottinghamshire the first two women members appointed in 1915 were **Sarah Ada Strawson** and **Alice Mary Becher**, both co-opted members of the Notts. Education Committee.



CIVIL SERVICE

First Female Inspector of Children Boarded Out Beyond the Union

1885 – Miss Marianne Mason (1845-1932) of Morton Hall, Nottinghamshire.

She was the second women to be appointed as a Government Inspector, the first being Mrs Nassau Senior. Miss Mason was an inspector for twenty five years, retiring in 1910.

First Nottingham born female civil servant to have entered the administrative grade of the Civil Service by examination

1925 – Dame Alix Meynell (1903-1999)
Born Alix Kilroy, she was grand daughter of Mrs
Alice Dowson who was Secretary of the Nottingham
Suffrage Society in 1894. Her aunts, Hilda and
Helena Dowson, were both Secretaries of the Society.

First Female Director General of MI5 1992-1996 – Dame Stella Rimington She was a pupil at Nottingham High School for Girls.

RELIGION

First Female Quaker in Nottinghamshire 1647 – Elizabeth Horton First Female Chairman of the Chapel Council of High Pavement Unitarian Church

1904 - Miss Hannah Guilford

First Female Unitarian minister to preach in Nottingham

1904 – Rev Gertrude von Petzold (1876-1952)
On 17th October 1904 she presided at High
Pavement Chapel. Born in Germany as a Lutheran.
As a Unitarian she was a friend of Rev J. M. Lloyd
Thomas, former minister at High Pavement Church.
She was repatriated to Germany on 30th July 1915.
She became a Quaker.

First Female Ordained Priest in Southwell Diocese 1994 – Rev Renee Winifred Bridger née Bosworth (1945-2003)

12 women were ordained on the 29th May 1994 in alphabetical order. On 31st May and 1st June a further 31 women were ordained. Renee's sudden death to cancer in 2003 inspired "23 Days: A story of Love, Death and God", written by her husband, Francis in 2005.

First Female Dean of Southwell Minster 2016 – Very Revd Nicola Sullivan

First Female Rabbi in Nottingham 1996 – Amanda Goldby

First Black Female to be ordained as a parish priest in the Church of England

1994 - Rev Cannon Eve Pitts

Grew up in Nottingham, having arrived from Jamaica at the age of six. She is a member of the General Synod of the Church of England.

First Female Social Responsibility Office for Diocese of Southwell

1982 - Christine Russell (1942-2008)

She was the first woman in the Church of England to hold the post. She was later CEO of Macedon and then Framework.

ACADEMIA

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

First Female President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Nottingham

2017 - Professor Shearer West

First Female Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Nottingham

2013 - Professor Karen Cox

She was Professor of Cancer and Palliative Care. In 2017 was appointed Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Kent.

First Female Lecturers at University College Nottingham

1881 – Madame Marie Lionnet (1832-1895) and **Fraulein Clara Ries**

Madame Lionnet was born in Paris and held diplomas from the City of Paris and The Sorbonne. Her husband and father were killed in battles around Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. Prior to her post at the University she had taught at Nottingham High School for Girls and at the Boys High School. She remained at University College Nottingham until her death in 1895. She had lost her life savings in the Liberator Society Failure in 1893.

First Female Professor at the University of Nottingham

1967 – Professor Monica Partridge (1915-2008) She had read French at University College, Nottingham, but had become interested in Russian during World War II and had studied with Professor Simon Boyanus, a former actor and founder of schools of phonetics at Moscow and Leningrad. She then worked for Boyanus at his school in London and undertook postgraduate study and served as an assistant lecturer at UCL.

First Female to be appointed Professor of Orthopaedics in the UK

2010 - Professor Brigette Scammell

She is Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon in foot and ankle surgery at Nottingham City Hospital, Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust.

First Female Student at University College to graduate with an External Degree – Bsc – from the University of London 1886 – Elizabeth Louise Catherine Appel (1860-1912)

Generally known by her second name of Louise, she was born in Clerkenwell to a German goldsmith, Charles Appel. She went on to study medicine, practising in London. She was a friend of Annie Besant, embracing Theosophy. She died in Madras, India in 1912.

First Female student to matriculate towards a London University degree

In 1883 was Edith Mary Chadbourne (1865-1954) but she did not graduate until 1888. She became Head Mistress of Sidcup High School for Girls. In the same year Marianne Vickers (1858-1925) graduated with a BSc with Honours in Physics. She also studied at Bedford College, London. She became Head Mistress of Gateshead High School for Girls in 1895. Both Edith and Marianne were born in Nottingham. (We have taken the dates of graduation from the University of London records.)

First Female elected President of the University College Nottingham Student Union

1940 - Miss Winifred M Faulding

First Female elected President of the University of Nottingham Student Union

1954 - Daphne Priestley OBE JP DL

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Nottingham Trent University, established in 1992 can trace its earliest roots to the Nottingham Government School of Design, later School of Art, founded in 1843. We know that the first Government classes for women were established in 1846, although private female students had attended classes before this.

First Female art teacher to be employed at the School

1862 – Miss Hannah Burrows (born 1836 Mansfield) Hannah Burrows was employed whilst also a teacher at St Marygate School, Nottingham. She married Richard Thurlow in 1866.

First Female students who exhibited at the School

1849 – Miss Lewis, Miss Pye, Miss Furley, Miss Chaddick, Miss Braithwaite and Mrs Enfield.

Mrs William Enfield was an accomplished artist. Born Anne Needham, she was aunt of Alice Dowson, the Nottingham suffragist, and sister in law of Richard Enfield, the main instigator of Nottingham University College. Her sister, Lucy, was married to Richard Martineau, the cousin of Harriet Martineau.



First Female to be awarded a medal 1862 – Myra Weldon

First Female student to awarded a Bronze Medal

1868 - Maria Truman

First Female student to be awarded a Gold Medal in 1881 national exams

Miss Octavia Rose Harriet Liberty (1858-1949) She was active in Evening Clubs for girls in the City. Her brother, Sir Arthur Lazenby Liberty founded Libertys.

First Female Professor and Dean of Graduate Studies

1989 Professor Sandra Harris (1939-2015)
An American, Professor Harris had taught at
Nottingham College of Education, became Principal
lecturer and Head of the Department of Literature
and Languages at Trent Polytechnic, Professor
and Dean at Nottingham Polytechnic in 1989 and
continued as Professor and Dean at Nottingham
Trent University in 1992. Retired in 2005.

First Female First County Rural Domestic Economy Instructress and Warden at South Hill House, Brackenhurst

1953 - Miss Margaret I Roberts

At Brackenhurst College first courses for women began in 1953.

First Female Dean of The School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at Nottingham Trent University

2006 - Professor Jenny Saint OBE DL

First Black Female Professor at Nottingham Trent University

1999 - Prof Cecile Wright

FURTHER EDUCATION

First Female Principal of Waverley College 1951 – Miss Bessie Wright MBE National Champion of Nursery Nurse Training.

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

First Nottingham Cook to Harriet Martineau the political economist

1865 – Mary Ann P Matthews from Ruddington.



JUDICIARY

First Female Magistrates in Nottingham 1920 – Mrs Caroline Harper, Mrs Helena Dowson and Mrs Mary Ball

First Female Magistrate in Nottinghamshire 1920 – Duchess of Portland (1863-1954) Born Winifred Dallas-Yorke

First Female Magistrate of the County Bench in Mansfield

1921 - Mrs Emily Manners

First Female Magistrates of the Borough Bench in Mansfield

1924 – Mrs Ethel Wainwright and Mrs Charlotte Houfton

First Female Jewish Magistrate in Nottingham 1924 – Mrs Caroline Weinberg (1869-1941) She was also the first female Governor at the Nottingham Boys High School.

First Female Magistrate on the Retford Borough Bench

1933 - Miss Grace M Bradshaw

She was also appointed to the Retford County Bench in 1934. She was Chairman of Governors of the County High School for Girls, Retford and secretary of the Retford Ladies Health Association.

First Female Magistrate on Newark County Bench

1921 - Mrs Mary E Handford

First Female Magistrate from Sutton in Ashfield 1939 – Mrs Amy Beswick Beeley

First Asian Female Magistrate in Nottingham 1972 – Mrs Tripta Chandra JP

First Female High Sheriff 1990 – Mrs Marcia Abel Smith DL

First Female Jurors in Nottingham 2nd November 1920 – Emily Faulkner, Agnes Steadman, Millicent Hooley, Julia Griffiths, Louisa Hinders and Drusilla Searle

Whilst legislation in 1825 had standardised the property qualification for jurors, courts, which only had jurisdiction over a single town did not have to observe these property qualifications and by 1920 there were 10 such towns, Nottingham being one of them. This meant that when women became eligible to be jurors in 1920, Nottingham had much greater freedom in the choice of women and for the first four assize trials in November 1920 there were six women on each jury. The Lord Chancellor's Office moved quickly to extend the property qualification to these assizes in December 1920, which greatly discriminated against women.

4th November – Elizabeth Booth Allen, Frances Clay, Amelia Clifford, Nellie Cross, Grace Isabel Hartley, and Annie Higham

4th November – Olivia Jude, Lily Moore, Flora Oxley, Mary Ann Shipstone, Elizabeth Steele and Emily Jane Taylor

5th November – Clara Thurman, Agnes Mabel Vick, Frances, Charlotte Whitt, Catherine Wragg, Edith Wooding, Kate Mellors

First Female solicitor in Nottingham

1927 – Barbara Elizabeth Tutin (1902-1961) She was the first female to be elected to the Nottingham Incorporated Law Society in 1927. She retired in 1968. She was made an Alderman of Nottingham City in 1956. She died in 1969.

First Female barrister to appear at Nottingham Assizes

1923 – Miss Monica Mary Geike Cobb

Miss Cobb was called to the bar in 1922 and was the first woman barrister to hold a brief. She appeared in Nottingham on the 30th January 1923 when the Nottingham Journal noted "she wore a wig like the rest, her entry was practically unnoticed by the public." In 1924 Miss Cobb at the Society for the Employment of Women — "Sometimes I am addressed as "Madam", sometimes "Miss Cobb." More often I am addressed as "Sir" and I have had "My Lady" and the other day a very kind motherly old lady solved the difficulty by saying "My Dear."

First Female Solicitor to set up her own practice 1945 – Miss Norah Healey

First Female Crown Court Judge in the criminal courts in Nottingham

1989 - Her Honour Judge Elisabeth Fisher

First Female Nottinghamshire Coroner 2011 – Miss Mairin Casey

POLICE, PRISON AND PROBATION

First Female Policewoman in Nottingham

1919 – Mrs Eleanor Plumtre (1920 – Cecelia Clark, Ethel Davies)

Mrs Plumtre was only in post for a short time and the Watch Committee at first decided not to replace her. Persuaded by Dr Sarah Gray and other members of the Suffrage Society, that there should be two officers, two were appointed in 1920.

First Female Policewoman in Worksop 1950 – Eileen Hebb (1929-2018)

First Female Policewoman allowed to drive a police car in Nottinghamshire

1956 - Mary Needham

First Asian Female Police Sergeant in Nottinghamshire

2003 - Gurmit Kaur

She became the first Asian Police Inspector in Nottinghamshire in 2006.

First Female Chief Constable 2008 – Julia Hodson

First Female Governor of Her Majesty's Prison, Nottingham

2005 - Wendy Sinclair-Gieben

In 2018 she became first female to be appointed Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland.

First Female Police Court Missionary/ Probation Officer

1895 - Miss Sarah Nunn

Miss Nunn is first mentioned in 1893 as supporting in court but in 1895 is known as Police Court Missionary. After the 1907 Probation Act she became Police Court Missionary and Probation Officer. She retired in 1909 when she was succeeded by Emma Maria Riley.

The Nottingham and Notts Women's Police Court Association was founded in 1918. It gave support to women and female probation officers who could find them excluded from court proceedings by male magistrates! They campaigned for women to receive support payments from former partners.

First Female President

1918 - Lady Maud Rolleston of Watnall Hall

EDUCATION

First Head Mistress of Nottingham High School for Girls

1875 – Mrs Caroline Victoria Bolton (1840-1935)
Born in Prussia to Ogden Bolton, barrister and
Caroline Amelia Van Meugen, she was the
granddaughter of Thomas Bolton, Mayor of Liverpool.
They were Unitarians. Prior to taking on the post
in Nottingham she had run a private school in
Gower St, London with Emma Lucy Harrison. They
dissolved the partnership in 1875. She became
Headmistress the same year as she gave birth to her
daughter, Constance. She left in 1876 and became
Headmistress of Liverpool High School for Girls in
1880. She had married her cousin, Robert Henry
Bolton in 1874 and was widowed in 1877. Her
brother in law, Professor Edward Adolf Sonnenschein
wrote the classic "The Unity of the Latin Subjunctive"

First Female Inspectress of Nottingham School Board

1893 - Mrs Jane Roadknight

Had been Head Mistress of Bluebell Hill Infant School. Was seconded to support Kindergarten Education across the City and then in March 1893 is described as Instructress of Kindergarten and Needlework for the Board but by May 1893 she is described as Inspectress of Girls and Infant Departments on a salary of £180 rising to £200.

First Female teacher of pupils with learning disabilities

1893 - Miss Emily Scott Thornton

Born in Pennsylvania, she had studied at University College Nottingham. She taught the first class for learning disabled children established in a converted cloakroom at Bath Street Board School in 1893.

First Female BAME Head Teacher in Nottingham c1997 – Helen Okrafo-Smart

At Enda G Olds Primary School

First Female Junior assistant educational Psychologist, Nottingham Education Committee 1937 – Miss Doris Elizabeth (Beth) Carscallen BA Born in Alberta, Canada. She resigned in 1938.

First Female Senior Educational Psychologist for the Nottingham Education Committee

1946 – Mrs Jean Adam MA Originally from Glasgow.

First Female Educational Psychologist – Nottinghamshire County Council

1942 - Mrs Miriam Highfield

The Education Committee were concerned about evacuee children and set up the service at Burton Joyce Evacuee Hostel, noting that it would benefit other children in the County. Her husband was Senior Educational Psychologist for Nottingham.

First Female Speech Therapist – Nottingham Education Committee

1931 - Miss Constance Helen Bearn

She was employed full time from 1937. In 1938 University College Nottingham began a new course for Speech Training and phonetics with Joyce Wilkins as lecturer.

First Female Speech Therapist – Nottinghamshire Education Committee

1938 - Miss Mary Dolman

She had lectured on drama at University College, Nottingham.

First Female and first psychiatric social worker at the Nottingham Child Guidance Clinic

1938 - Mrs Frieda Hoyle

She had trained at the Maudsley and the London Child Guidance Clinic. Became second wife of Jungian analyst Michael Fordham. Papers in the Wellcome Library.

First Female and first Play Therapist appointed by Nottingham Education Committee

1942 - Miss M L Hawkey

The committee were concerned about evacuee children coping with the trauma of evacuation.

First Female Organiser for Nottinghamshire Rural Youth Clubs

1947 - Miss Ida Hope

She was a music and drama specialist.



HEALTH

First Matron of Nottingham General Hospital

1782 - Mrs Ann Richardson

She was paid £15 a year with 3 guineas for sugar and tea. Required to be of "good moral character, in good health, able to read and write, keep accounts and have a good working knowledge of household economy."

First Female medical practioner

1862 - Mdlle Esther Cavania practising in Nottingham – training questionable.

First Sister in Charge of Nottingham Children's Hospital

1869 – Miss Mary Melicent HineKnown as Sister Millicent or Sister Melicent.

First Female to practise as a doctor in Nottingham

1891 – Sarah Gray (1860-1941) Her sister, Frances Ralph Gray was High Mistress of St Paul's School, London. Sarah Gray eventually became consultant surgeon at the Nottingham Hospital for Women.

First Female Gynaecologist in Nottingham 1916 – Miss Margaret Glen-Bott

First Female President of the Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society

1921 - Miss Sarah Gray

First Female Medical Officer of Health for the Nottingham Board of Guardians

1928 – Miss Eileen Maud Clarke

She practised in the Meadows District.

First Female Medical Examiner under the Factory Acts

1940 - Dr Emily Mary Badenoch

Served the Northern District of Nottingham.

First Female to sit on the Nottingham Visitors and Almoners Sub Committee

1914 – Miss Keziah Atkin and Mrs Ethel Forman

Miss Atkin (1863-1930) worked for the Female Cigarmakers Union and was the first woman on the Nottingham Trades Council Executive.

First Female Almoner for the Nottingham Health Committee

1943 – Miss Maura Benham

She became Chief Almoner before moving to Hong Kong in 1953. She had undertaken her social work studies at the London School of Economics.

First Female President of Nottingham General Hospital

1932 - Lady Evelyn Maude Robinson

First Female Chairman of The General Hospital Nurses League (now Nottingham Nurses League

1948 – Miss Margaret Plucknett (1903-2003) She was Matron of the General Hospital until 1958. The first President was Miss Isabella Liddle (former Matron).

MILITARY

First Female Senior Air Traffic Controller in the RAF

1983 – Squadron Leader Brenda PalmerBrenda, who attended Holly Girt School was based at RAF Wittering.

First Female Fighter Jet Pilot in the RAF 1993 – Helen Dobbs Helen attended Worksop College.

First Female Commander of HMS Sherwood 1995 - Judith Swann QVRM DL RNR

First Female Honorary Colonel of the Nottinghamshire Army Cadet Force 2016 – Mrs Nicky Weston DL

First Female and first BAME Honorary Air Commodore Royal Auxillary Air Force 504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron 2018 - Veronica Pickering DL

OTHER OCCUPATIONS

First Female Deputy Registrars for Births and Deaths – 1890/1 Nottingham Union

Miss Florence A Pemberton – Nottingham South Division

Well known pianist and piano teacher.

First Female Deputy Registrars for Births and Deaths – Basford Union

Mrs Mary Ann Ward – Hucknall Torkard Miss Ann Smith – Carlton In 1893 she became Registrar.

First Female Inspector of Nottingham workshops in which female labour was employed under the

1892 – Miss Sarah Ann Hawksley Later Mrs Exton. Died 1907.

new Factory Acts 1891

First Female Architect in Nottingham 1941 – Miss Margaret Littlefair She was daughter of Councillor J Littlefair.

First Female Taxi Driver in Nottingham 1916 – Miss Alice Astill

A former skilled typist and experienced driver.

First Female Journalist

1918 - Miss M V McGuire

She wrote under the soubriquet MVM for The Nottingham Journal before moving to London in 1922.

First Female Nottingham City Transport bus driver to be named NCT Driver of the Year

2015 - Amanda Ogelsby

First Female Managing Director and Senior Vice President of Boots

2016 – Elizabeth Fagan

POLITICAL AND SUFFRAGE MOVEMENTS

First Female Secretary of the Nottingham Female Political Union

1838 - Mary Savage

First Female Secretary of the Nottingham Branch of the London Women's Suffrage Society

1871 - Miss Elizabeth Sunter

First Female Secretary of the Nottingham Branch of the National Women's Suffrage Society

1881 - Mrs Ann Cowen

Born Ann Guilford, she was sister of Sarah and Hannah Guilford.

First Female Secretary of the Nottingham branch of the Women's Social and Political Union WSPU

1908 – Miss Catherine May Burgis B A (1875-1930) Later became Headmistress of Clarendon Central School, Nottingham.

First Female Secretary of the Mansfield Women's Suffrage Society

1893 – Mrs Emily Manners (1857-1934)
Daughter of Robert Baringer. Technically the
Secretary for the first two meetings was Miss Louisa
Wright (1848-1916) but she quickly handed on the
role to Emily Manners becoming the first president
of the Society.

First Female Conference of the National Union of Women Workers held in Nottingham in October 1895

Lady Laura Ridding was elected a Vice President.

VOLUNTARY GROUPS

First Female chief benefactors of Nottingham General Hospital

1782 – Mrs Elizabeth Bainbridge of Woodborough Hall

Actually unmarried she gave £1,000 the largest monetary donation of any benefactor. Others were Mrs Lovet, Mrs Jane Hayford and Mrs Sherbrooke both of Oxton.

First Female Founder of the Town and County Social Guild

1875 - Henrietta Carey (1844-1920)

First Female Founder of the Nottingham Society for Organising Charity

1875 – Henrietta Carey (1844-1920)

First Female Chairman of the Nottinghamshire Federation of Women's Institutes and President of the Southwell branch

1917 – Hon Mrs Mary E Handford

Mrs Handford was daughter of Lord Belper. She was granddaughter of Bishop Otter of Chichester and great granddaughter of Jedidiah Strutt, the cotton spinner. Her husband, Dr Henry Handford was Chief Medical Officer to the County Education Committee.



First Female President of the Nottingham Women's Citizen Association

1918 - Hon Mrs Mary E Handford

First Female President of the East Bridgford branch of the Women's Institute

1917 - Mrs Margaret Mason

The first Secretary of the branch 1917 was Miss Gertrude Fox. Miss Fox lived at East Bridgford Hall and became the second County Chairman after Mrs Handford.

First Female Women's Voluntary Services

1938 – Lady Audrey Readitt-Bayley, née Turney (1883-1977)

Charged with recruitment in Nottinghamshire. Drove abulances in France and Belgium in World War 1. Very active in the County Guides.

First Female Director of WVS in Nottinghamshire 1939 – Mrs Margaret Forman

Wife of Dudley Forman.

First Female Director of WVS in Nottingham

1939 – Miss Lavinia Caroline Talbot (1882-1950) Sister of Vicar of St Mary's Nottingham, daughter of the Bishop of Winchester, and great niece of William Gladstone, the former Prime Minister.

First Female Secretary of the Nottingham Council of Social Service

1942 - Miss D M Wood

She had previously been Secretary of the Nottingham Social Service Society.

First Female member of Mansfield Rotary 2009 – Diane Carter

GUIDES

First Female leader of 1st Nottingham (YWCA) Guides, Long Row

1910 - Miss Agnes Maude Andrews

Usually known as Maude (1874-1957), she had been employed at the YWCA since about 1905 as Superintendent of the Institute.

First Female County Commissioner

1916 – Lady Sybell Pierrepont (1892-1968) Daughter of 4th Earl Manvers.

First Female County President

1916 – Winifred, Duchess of Portland (1863-1954)

SCOUTS

First Female President of Nottingham Boy Scouts Association

1940 – Mrs Elisabeth Mary Coulby, nee Crane (1871-1959)

Of the local Crane family, she was also Chairman of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Nottingham Scouts Association and Commissioner for Handicapped Scouts. She was active in support for the Walesby Camp.

First Female member of the Nottingham Imperial Order of Oddfellows

1896 - Sister Hannah Dobbs

She died aged 68 in 1928. For 32 years she had been Secretary of the Princess May Lodge 1122 and was the first sister to be admitted as a member of any Provincial Grand Lodge and the first female delegate to attend the annual delegate assembly.

ARTS AND LIBRARIES

First Female Photographer practising in Nottingham

1856 - Miss Lavinia Scales

She and her father John were from London and rented a room as a gallery at 19 Long Row.

First Female Nottingham born photographer operating from Spread Eagle Yard

1861 - Miss Ellen Averill

First Female British born Prima Ballerina at the Empire Theatre, London

1913 – Miss Phyllis Bedells (1893-1985)
Although born in Bristol she was from an old Nottingham family and returned to Nottingham to study dance under Theodore Gilmer. She made her first appearance in London in 1906, playing "First Oyster" in Alice in Wonderland. She studied with Cechetti and Pavlova. (Incidentally Madame Pavlova first appeared at the Theatre Royal in 1912) Bedells was a founder and later Vice President of the Royal

Academy of Dance. In 1979 the Phyllis Bedells Bursary was established in her honour. Other early Nottingham dancers who achieved national fame were Sylvia Kirkwhite, Iris Kirkwhite, Sissie Smith and Hilda Butsova who was principal dancer under Pavlova.

First Female in Nottingham to appear on Television 1932 – Betty Bolton (1906-2005)

Betty was a well known actress, singer and dancer who was born at Newdigate House (now World Service) She appeared on Baird's transmission from Broadcasting House on 22nd August 1932.

First Nottingham Female Dancer to appear on Paris Television

1936 - Sylvia Kirkwhite

First Female Director of Cantamus Girls Choir, Mansfield

1968 - Pamela Cook MBE

First Female Student with a disability to join the National Youth Dance Company

2016 - Beth Gardiner

Beth has been a real trailblazer, appearing at Sadlers Wells and on national tours.

First Female Librarian of Bromley House Library 1926 – Miss Adele Thurman (later Mrs Syson and then Mrs Jones)

First Female assistant librarian of Bromley House Library

1916 - Miss Ellis

First Female members of the Bromley House Committee

1906 – Miss Sarah Guilford and Miss Mary Alice Sanday (1852-1942)

First Female members of the Bromley House Charwomens subcommittee

1910 – Miss Sarah Guilford and Miss Mary Alice Sanday

First Female County Librarian of Nottinghamshire

1927 - Miss Florence Davies

Miss Davies moved to Staffordshire and then Kent, retiring in 1968. She had only ever been a County Librarian, never a deputy. She was succeeded in 1937 by Miss M F Austin who ten years later was succeeded by Miss Lorna Paulin. Miss Paulin was the first woman president of the Library Association.

First Female City Archivist of Nottingham 1949 – Miss Violet Walker

First Female Artist who studied at the Nottingham School of Art to be made a Dame 1929 – Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970)
She was also the first woman to be a full member of the Royal Academy in 1936.

First Female President of the Castlegate Literary Debating Society

1925 - Miss Chapman

First Female Adjudicator of the Nottingham One Act Play Festival

1937 - Miss Henzie Raeburn

The Festival was part of the British Drama League

First Female Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse

1990 - Pip Broughton

First Female Executive Director of Nottingham Playhouse

1990 - Ruth Mackenzie

First Female Winner of the EY Entrepreneur of the Year

2014 - Dame Rosemary Squire

Rosemary attended Nottingham High School for Girls. In 2005 she was the first democratically elected president of the Society of London Theatre (the second only female president in 100 years).

First Female Conductor of the Mansfield Male Voice Choir

1995 - Mrs Jean Holmes BEM

First Female Founders of the Nottingham Black Archive

2010 - Panya Banjoko and Laura Summers

First Female Founder and Director of Nottingham News Centre

2013 - Norma Gregory

2016 - Sandeep Mahal

First Female Director of UNESCO Nottingham City of Literature

SPORT

The Royal Sherwood Archers formed in 1832 as the Sherwood Archers.

First known Female Archers to win prizes at the cricket ground in Southwell

1833 – Mrs Louisa Wildman of Newstead Abbey, first

Mrs James Nixon, second Miss Emma Wylde, third

Mrs Wildman was also Patroness of the event.

Notts Ladies Golf Club established 1891 — originally played at Bulwell Forest, Nottingham.

The British Ladies Football Club formed in 1895 played at Trent Bridge in December 1895. The average age was 18. The first Nottingham women's match recorded – 1917 – played at Nottingham Forest between women employed in the Ministry of Munitions Inspection Department and women from another local factory.

First Female Water Polo Match 1909 – Held at Victoria Baths, Nottingham

First Nottingham Female to win an Olympic Medal

1920 – Antwerp – Constance Mabel Jeans (1899-1984)

Silver Medal in 4x 100 metre freestyle swimming relay. Also won silver in the same event in 1924, Paris. She trained at Portland Baths. Constance M. Jeans was 100 yards and 220 yards English champion. She was also the inaugural ladies long distance swimming champion in 1920.

First Female in Nottingham to win an Olympic Gold Medal in the Winter Olympics

1984 - Jane Torvill - Ice dancing



First Female in Mansfield to win an Olympic Gold Medal in Summer Olympics

2008 - Rebecca Adlington - Swimming

First Nottinghamshire Female to win Gold at the Paralympics

2012 - Sophie Wells MBE

Sophie was part of the British Equestrian team, which won Gold. She went on to achieve Gold at the Rio Paralympics in 2016.

First Female member of Nottingham Aero Club to fly solo from Tollerton aerodrome

1929 - Miss Muriel Robinson

She was a milliner who lived on the Ropewalk. She achieved notoriety in 1931 when she was before the bench for speeding in her car!!

First Female CEO of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club

2012 - Lisa Pursehouse

She was the first female CEO at a first-class cricket club.

First Female Badminton Coach in Nottinghamshire

1961 – Rita Chambers (1935-2012)

First Female boxer to represent Mansfield ABC 2010 – Shai McGhee

First Female Captain of Nottingham Rowing Club 2014 – Helen Bloor

First Female to be on England's national panel of Rugby Football Union referees

2014 - Claire Hodnett of Newark

First BAME and first British Female gymnast to win an individual all-round medal for Great Britain with bronze medal at the European Championships

2015 - Elissa (Ellie) Downie

In 2017 she became the first British female gymnast to win the all round medal at the European Championships.



HONOURS

The Order of the British Empire was instituted in 1917. The first women in Nottinghamshire to be awarded honours were:

1917 OBE

Miss Ethel Lilian Birkin

Organiser and Secretary, British Red Cross Society, Nottingham, Matron, British Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital, Nottingham

Also the Medaille de la reine Elisabeth of Belgium and the 1000th Mons Red Cross

1918 OBE

Mrs Frances Louise Kyrle-Smith, née McGrath of Bramcote Hall

Honorary Organiser, Nottingham Hospital Supply Depot

Mrs Kate Haidee Powell

Commandant, Bowden Auxiliary Hospital, Nottingham

Lady Ellen Maud Bruce

Vice President and organiser of the West Bridgford Auxillary Hospital

1918 MBE

Miss Hannah Guilford

Member of the Nottingham Education Committee; Organiser of Public Kitchens at Elementary School Cookery Centres

Mrs Dorothy Radford

Honorary Quartermaster and Registrar, Military Wards, General Auxiliary Hospital, Nottingham

Miss Kate Ellen Bourne

Commandant Voluntary Aid Detachment No 32 Nottingham

Mrs Hettie Mary Green

Hon Secretary General Service Section and organiser Notts British Red Cross and Order of St John of Jerusalem

Miss Hannah Maud Taylor Thorpe

Commandant Voluntary Aid Detachment No 42 Notts

1918 Medal of the Order of the British Empire

Miss Maggie Storey

Newark – "for high example in extinguishing a dangerous fire at an explosives factory under exceptional circumstances."

1919 CBE

Lady Charlotte Emma Maud Rolleston

Hon Secretary of Notts County Branch and Nottingham Division Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association

1919 OBE

Miss Elsie May Small

Commandant Southwell Auxillary Hospital Nottinghamshire

1919 MBE

Mrs Lizzie Garner

Commandant, Auxillary Hospital, Newark.

Mrs Florence Louisa Felicia Bourne

Sherwood Foresters Prisoners of War Care Committee

1919 Medal of the Order of The British Empire (MOBE) later known as the British Empire Medal.

These were presented to the following women by the Duke of Portland at Nottingham Exchange on 13th March 1919 in recognition of outstanding bravery at the Chilwell Explosion on 1st July 1919:

Margaret Caunce

"who although injured and burnt, remained at her post and extinguished the burning clothing of another worker."

Joan Welcome Clough (1895-1987)

"although wounded continued to work in the Red Cross Centre until all the cases had been dealt with." Father was Vicar of Wilford. Papers held in the Bodleian.

Mary McInnes

"who although suffering from shocks attended to the injured throughout the night."

Alison Evelyn McKenzie (1896-1971)

"who although suffering from shocks attended to the injured throughout the night." Daughter of Rev Frederick McKenzie, Vicar of Heckington, Lincs Married in 1938 Dr Henry Joste-Smith, as his second wife. He was the former doctor of Heckington. She died in Somerset.

Dorothy Nicolls (1882-1958)

Born in Herne Bay, Kent, daughter of Major Robert Murphy Nicolls. At the time of taking post at Chilwell she was living in Guernsey, the birthplace of her mother Amelia Dobree. Died 28th February 1958 in Cuckfield, Sussex. Appears on 55p Guernsey stamp in 2014.

Margaret Waller

"She was severely cut by falling glass but remained at work until she had to be taken to hospital."

Mrs Juliet Beatrice Watson

"for courage and devotion to duty."

