Electrifying Women Training Session: Blogging, Presenting and Research

Research

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Down the ‘Fractal Rabbit Hole’ - Online sources for hidden histories

Dr Nina Baker. Engineering historian.
Yvonne Cooper (1895-1972)

Nothing in The Woman Engineer!
Yvonne Margaret Dyson Cooper, BSc, MIERE (2 October 1895 – 14 February 1972)

Timeline

1895  Born 2nd October. Father Arthur Dyson Cooper (29 April 1856), mother Mary Henrietta Cecilia Fulcher (16 May 1860), younger sister Irene and younger brother Geoffrey. Baptised 26 Oct 1895 Sutton, Christ Church, Surrey, England. [In 1891 her father had been living with his brother in Croydon, all apparently on independent means]

1901  Census: Living with parents and sister; and 3 servants at 66 Eaton Road, Sutton, Christ Church, Surrey. Her father is living on private means.

1901  Brother Geoffrey born. Father’s profession given as solicitor or barrister.

1914  Probably went to North London Collegiate School (as that is where her sister went).

1917  Graduated Cooper, Yvonne M. D. B.Sc., Royal Holloway College.

1927  First woman elected to the Institute of Electronic and Radio Engineers (IERE).

1939  1st register - French teacher in Bournemouth, living with parents and 2 servants at 2 Foxholes Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth. Her father is living on private means.

1944  Father died at 2 Foxholes Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth. Probate £22k.

1944  Honorary fellow IERE.

1944  Broadcast her pupils’ letters on BBC radio, to France. Member of the Association of Friends of the French Volunteers (A.F.V.). She is teacher at Horsham High School.

1948/49  Laid wreaths on behalf of Le Souvenir Francais.

1951  Published Aids to practical hygiene for nurses (Nurse’s Aids series). At some point before this was published she gained a BSc somewhere.

1972  14 February died, living at 6 Ken Road, Southbourne Bournemouth. Probate £24k.
Preparing for this talk (in mid-December)

More Googling – ‘attack’ from new directions:

- Name permutations, initials, salutation
- Name AND attributes, places, dates
- Relatives
Clues as to her nursing and French connections

One of her schools (ie not the one I previously assumed)
What we still don’t know:

- Whether her french language skills involved her with the resistance
- Her school records
- How she qualified to be the first woman elected to IERE
- Did her family connection with a French health centre lead to nursing experience?

Where might we go next to fill in the [potentially] engineering period of her life?
Miss M. Nott: In The Woman Engineer, volume 1, but not mentioned again.

The Secretary of our Manchester Branch, Miss G. L. Entwisle, has recently been admitted as the first lady Associate Member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. It is encouraging to know that there are now nine lady members who have been admitted to various grades of membership in the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

Another of our Manchester members, Miss M. Nott, is the first lady to get the A.M.C.T. (i.e. Associateship of the Manchester College of Technology) in Engineering.

From Manchester Univ archives

Not a great deal, I'm afraid. I can confirm Madeline Nott did study for the Associateship in Electrical Engineering, completing in 1919 (so she probably started in 1918). I can't see any evidence she was a day release apprentice but she might have been (most apprentices came from British Westinghouse/Metrovic or the railway companies).

Madeline Nott – information in the 1st 24 hours:

Winifred Bedson [Hockey Captain]
Hockey
Descriptions of practices. Some of the first team are Dorothy Fox, Madeline Nott, Margaret Hogg, Elsie Lee, Sybil Bailey, Winifred Bedson, Dora Barber, Kate Will.

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masculine power and authority. During this period, Madeline Nott, Morag MacDonald and Charlotte Long worked as professional engineers in the Motor, Transformer and Mechanical departments respectively. It could be argued that

Some Recent Appointments
Details given of the appointments held by the following: Hilda Johnstone, Barbara Abenn, Mary Allon [sk], Gladys Dowhurst, Georgina Dubbin, Florence Giler, Gertrude Enwoode, Philippa Estelle, Barbara Hamalard, Lucy Higginbottom, Kathleen Laid, Mary McKen, Madeline Nott, Noni Rowan, Eileen Rowan, Elsie Shaw, Elsie Taylor, Greta Thowls, Joan Wright, Mary Dunk.

Married Alfred Mansley
And that, dear readers, is as far as I have got with my best online efforts!

Where might we look next for evidence of what she did as an engineer?
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Blogging

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@ElectrifyingWmn
#electrifyingwomen
Electrifyingwomen.org/blog
‘SHE’: performing the lives of engineering women
9th December 2019 by humer

Elizabeth Bruton

Recent Posts

‘SHE’: performing the lives of engineering women
Laura Annie Willson visits the Migrant Access Project + (with a little help from Hannah Stone)
A Model Engineer: Cherry Hill
Creative Writing: Examples from our Workshops
‘Making the internet less sexist’: the Electrifying Women Wikithon at LSE Women’s Library
AHRC project: Electrifying Women: Understanding the Long History of Women in Engineering

Public engagement work in partnership with WES, IET, Wikimedia & Science Museum:

Aims:

• To share stories of women’s collaborative participation in engineering from 19th century
• To show where more research is needed, how it can be done & how shared
• To enhance Wikipedia pages on women in engineering history through wikithons
• To develop inclusive forms of participation e.g. creative writing and drama
• To support recruitment of women to engineering through heightened historical awareness
Aims of Electrifying Women Blog

- Blog provides a means to write about the work we do and accessible way to present academic research
- Different voices/perspectives - we want more people to blog for us
- Provides record of the project that can be accessed once the project ends
The kinds of things we have already blogged about

• Specific women or themes e.g. Ira Rischowski; the founding of the Women’s Engineering Society
• Specific archival source e.g. the 1935 Register of Women Engineers (IET archives)
• Outreach events e.g. creative writing workshops and Wikithons
• Reviews e.g. theatre performance of SHE at the University of Leeds
• Output e.g. creative writing pieces from workshops

Ira Rischowski (courtesy of Ceryl Evans)
Choosing a Topic

• A personal research topic – is there an area you have already been researching that relates to history of women in STEM?
• We are always keen to have a more international perspective
• You could choose to write about records/sources through archival research
• You might want to blog about an event or presentation that you have held or plan to hold
• We are interested in reviews of anything that relates to history of women in engineering/STEM e.g. theatre productions, films, books etc
Activity

In small groups look at the style guide and example blog in the handout. Discuss the following questions:

• What makes a good blog? What makes a bad blog? What are the vital ingredients?
• Would you add anything to the style guide?
• What do people think about the blog? What is good about it?
• What can be improved? How accessible is it?
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Presenting

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https://electrifyingwomen.org/
Presenting the history of women in engineering

• Some suggestions based on our experiences of public engagement work in the ‘Electrifying Women’ project
• Mostly by invitation, but some by direct advertising of our availability
• Most for primarily female audiences with a few exceptions
Potential Audiences

• Primary school
• Secondary/ 6th form)
• Engineering undergraduates,
• Local history groups
• Professional groups
• U3A
• Engineering/industrial History
• Researchers/H.E. students
• Creative writing groups
Messages (examples)

• School - opening horizons for future careers
• Undergrads - reinforcement of identity for future careers
• Local history - inclusion of regional stories of women engineers
• Professional groups - increased awareness for inclusivity
• U3A - supportive awareness for younger family career options
• Engineering industrial History - include those women’s stories!
• Creative writing – many opportunities for imaginative reconstruction
Techniques to use (1)

Open questions to an audience:

• School: ‘which of these images is an engineer?’
• Undergrads: how long have women been doing Engineering?
• Local history: what do you know about these local women engineers?
• Professional groups: when did women join technical professions. And why?
• U3A: did you know there was a Women’s Engineering Soc? How old?
• Engineering history: why is proportion of women in UK engineering so low (12%) despite having the world’s first ever women’s engineering society?
• Creative Writing: how can we recreate women’s lost voices in engineering?
Techniques to use (II)

Points of familiarity for audience to relate to
• links to suffragette movement
• First World War opportunities
• nationally famous individuals
• local heritage – places, families, companies
• present day challenges of equitable access to employment
• comparisons of engineering with other professions e.g. law, medicine
Images to use

• Women’s Engineering Society collective photographs
• Individual women e.g. Caroline Haslett, Amy Johnson
• Individual inventions, patents e.g. of Hertha Ayrton

All to be available from our website and/or IET Archives/WES
Which of these were engineers?
Women engineers 100 years ago

Gertrude Entwisle: Mechanical engineer

Amy Johnson: Aeroplane pilot & ground engineer

Beatrice Shilling: Mechanical and electrical engineer

Verena Holmes: Mechanical engineer
Follow up activities for your audiences

Give your audiences ideas of what they can use your presentation for:

• researching
• blogging
• networking
• social media
• volunteering…?
Your activity for now

• Imagine you were presenting to one of the following audiences on women’s history in engineering and had 5 minutes available.
• How would you make your presentation – structure, images, message

Group 1) Year 7 school pupils (all girls)
Group 2) Sixth form group (mixed group)
Group 3) Local history group
Group 4) University of the Third Age
Group 5) Careers advisors?
Please keep in touch!

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