

Electrifying Women 5 Key Themes: Further Information

RESOURCEFULNESS

NEW OPPORTUNITIES



During **World War One**, a shortage of male workers meant thousands of women were called upon to work in factories, resulting in many women receiving training in highly skilled areas of engineering. For example, mechanical engineer [Verena Holmes](#), who built wooden propellers at a factory in London.

In the early 20th century, more opportunities opened up for women for a **formal education**. Many women who would go on to become successful engineers capitalised on this, such as [Margaret Partridge](#), [Beatrice Shilling](#) and [Hilda Lyon](#).

Loughborough College (now University) was an important institution for women studying engineering and admitted the first cohort of women engineers in 1919, including Verena Holmes and [Claudia Parsons](#). Learn more in this [blog](#) by Henrietta Heald and you can read an extract from Claudia Parson's autobiography [here](#).

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

The founding mission of the Women's Engineering Society (WES) was to help women overcome the various **barriers** preventing them becoming engineers. After World War One, the most devastating of these was the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act (1919). WES founder [Lady Parsons](#) spoke out against it, which you can learn more about [here](#).

When factories refused to employ women, many women decided to open **women only factories**, for example [Atalanta Ltd](#), founded in 1921, with the assistance of WES.

An off-shoot of WES, [the Electrical Association of Women](#), formed in 1924 to educate women about electricity and create jobs for women as demonstrators and teachers. Read more about it on our [blog](#).

Throughout the 19th and 20th century, women defied barriers to institutions, and through perseverance, gradually women were admitted, such as [Hertha Ayrton](#) to the Institution of Electrical Engineers in 1899.

