

CELEBRATING CITY **WOMEN**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE CITY

RESEARCH PAPER

VIRGINIA ROUNDING

November 2019



Cover images

Left: "Moll Cut-Purse" Mary Frith (c1584-1659)

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Right: Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

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01

INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING OVERVIEW OF SOURCES AND BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The Records of London's Livery Companies Online (ROLLCO) at londonroll.org provides records of Apprentices and Freeman in the City of London Livery Companies between 1400 and 1900. Currently the database includes information about apprenticeship bindings and freedom admissions for the following 11 Livery Companies: Bowyers, Clothworkers, Drapers, Founders, Girdlers, Goldsmiths, Mercers, Musicians, Salters, Stationers and Tallow Chandlers.

If, for instance, one does a search for 'Freeman' and 'Female' (for 'New Freeman' as Event Type) of the Musicians' Company, one gets a return of 19 results, as follows:

- 1750** Rachel Yerbury, milliner in Cornhill
- 1759** Esther Beard, hair merchant in Holborn
- 1777** Sarah Craven (by Patrimony)
- 1779** Mary Bigger, linen draper, Leadenhall Street (by Redemption)
- 1783** Sarah West, pawnbroker, 168 Aldersgate Street (by Patrimony)
- 1784** Mary Mitton
- 1785** Susanna Flint, milliner, Fenchurch Street (by Patrimony)
- 1790** Elizabeth Gregory
- 1798** Abigail Wilmot, victualler, Lambeth Hill (by Redemption)
- 1804** Elizabeth Roberts, haberdasher, 25 Sun Street (by Patrimony)
- 1806** Mary Macre – witness (widow)
- 1806** Penelope Steel, chartseller, Union Row, Minories (by Redemption)
- 1809** Ann Nicholls – Master, widow, witness (husband: Joseph Nicholls)
- 1811** Elizabeth Roberts – Master, widow
- 1813** Sarah Fothergill – Master
- 1816** Ann Kind (by Patrimony)
- 1819** Mary Breakspear, victualler, Cooper's Arms, Old Fish Street (by Patrimony)
- 1834** Lillah Townsend, 22 Laurence Pountney Lane (by Redemption)
- 1834** Ruth Hogg – witness, widow

Those women listed as 'Master' or 'Widow' were generally sponsoring a Freeman by servitude. So, for instance, Sarah Fothergill, Master, witnessed William Henry Mullens, a pawnbroker at Mr Windsor's, White Chapel, Middlesex, becoming a Freeman by Servitude, for £2 8s, on 7 July 1813.¹ (Mr Windsor was indeed a pawnbroker in Whitechapel, as testified in the Old Bailey trial of Mary Biggs for theft: grand larceny on 13 January 1796.)

Some quick research into individuals and the witnesses of their freedoms can turn up information such as Penelope Steel's grandfather being Scudamore Winde, a judge of the Supreme Court of Jamaica, whose daughter Mary Winde married a barrister called David Steel. Penelope's brother was Sir Scudamore Winde Steel, an army officer in the East India Company.

Lillah Townsend became a Freeman by Redemption, as the widow of Francis Townsend of Doctor's Commons, on 4 March 1834.

1 https://www.londonroll.org/event/?company=mus&event_id=MSEW153

If one searches under 'Apprenticeship' for Event Type, again using the Musicians' Company as an example, one turns up 154 instances of women. To give just a few examples:

- **Margaret Holt** – Master and Widow, took on Grace Taylor as an apprentice on 24 June 1740. Grace came from the Isle of Wight. Also took on Mary Taylor, from Aldgate, on 5 January 1733, Mary Cole on 31 December 1735, and Esther Swynfen on 24 March 1739. Also took on Susanna Mulcaster on 23 June 1748, and Jane Burney on 1 February 1750. Also took on Elizabeth Summers as an apprentice on 20 September 1752.
- **Mary Holt** – Master, took on Rachel Barry, from Essex, as an apprentice on 2 April 1731, and Sarah Smith on 7 June 1732, and Mary Biggs on 14 March 1733. Also took on Ann Bailey on 16 December 1740, and Mary Price on 8 August 1744.
- **Hannah Braithwaite** was taken on as an apprentice by George Laidler on 17 February 1741,
- **Rebecca Apps** – Master, took on her nephew(?) John Apps, whose father Robert was a butcher, as an apprentice on 1 May 1744.
- **Ann Beckwith** – Master, took on John Howard as apprentice on 7 February 1746.
- **Elizabeth Napleton** – taken on as an apprentice by Mr Emm Scott on 16 October 1751.
- **Esther Beard** – listed as becoming a Freeman in 1759, was taken on as an apprentice by George Laidler on 16 October 1751. Her father, Andrew Hester Beard, was a hair merchant of Holborn. (It seems likely that George Laidler was also a hair merchant, who went bankrupt in the 1770s.)
- **Jane Wanyear** – Master, took on Richard Smart as an apprentice on 24 September 1754.
- **Mary Peacock** – Master, took on Ann Towill as an apprentice on 5 July 1756.
- **Mary Blechynden** – Master, took on Elizabeth Smith as apprentice on 10 September 1756.
- **Jane Braithwaite** – Master, took on her son(?) George Braithwaite as apprentice on 6 February 1759.
- **Mary Kistoll** – Master, took on Mary Mecham as apprentice on 10 September 1759.
- **Ann Flight** – Master, took on Rebecca Pickering as apprentice on 6 November 1759.
- **Rebecca Chillingworth** – taken on as apprentice by Emm Scott on 10 September 1760.
- **Jane Delafons** – Master, took on Thomas Claxton as apprentice on 2 December 1760.
- **Jane Boydell** – Master, took on Ingham Combes as apprentice on 1 February 1761; also took on John Dod on 3 March 1761, and John Hancock on same day; and William Wright on 1 February 1761.
- **Rachel Yerbury** – listed as a new Freeman in 1750, was a Master by 24 January 1764, when she took on Elizabeth Greathead as an apprentice.
- **Jane Cheyney** – Master, took on James Quin, the son of a labourer from Shire Lane near Temple Bar, as an apprentice on 16 November 1778; also took on Richard Baxter, from Haggerston, on 2 May 1780; also took on John Sexton, son of Cornelius Sexton (a schoolmaster of Silver Street, Golden Square) on 18 April 1780; also took on William Godfrey, son a of a miller from Enfield, on 8 April 1780; also took on George White, son of Abraham White (a carman from Marylebone) on 9 March 1781; also took on Thomas Hayes, the son of a victualler from Tetbury in Gloucestershire, on 17 October 1782.

■ **Emma Coudun** – the daughter of a fruiterer from St Mary Axe, taken on as an apprentice by John Freeman, for a bond of 7 years, on 25 April 1822, the bond value of £20 being paid half by the Merchant Taylors' Company and half by the parish of St Andrew Undershaft.

What these records do not tell us is what trade or craft the individuals were Masters of, or were being apprenticed into. They did not necessarily have anything to do with the Company of which they were made free.

One could of course go through all 11 Companies participating in ROLLCO, drawing out lists of names and trying to piece details together, where possible. Lists of names are all very well, but the question is then what one does with them, and a considerable amount of work has been undertaken by several scholars in recent years to interrogate the available lists and archives to build up a picture of different groups of women in the City (though there remains a massive amount of raw material still to be worked on).

The LMA has itself drawn attention to certain of its records which contain historical information on women, such as:

The freedom records of the City of London Corporation held at London Metropolitan Archives (COL/CHD/FR) contain over one hundred [...] documents from the last twenty years of the seventeenth century [which] record the young women who had completed a seven year apprenticeship in a trade and had then taken up the freedom of their Company and the City, licensing them to do business in the City of London.²

Another archive of the Chamberlain of London (COL/CA/05/01) contains the petitions brought by women who wanted to run shops, but who had not entered the Freedom, despite having been apprenticed.³

In the records of the Mayor's Court (CLA/024/02) we can see some of the specialised occupations that mistresses of female apprentices ascribed to themselves: starcher and cutter out of linen; physic herb woman; wood-shavings hat maker; flax dresser; merchant; fruiterer; stocking mender.⁴

Anne Sutton points out the importance of wills for carrying out research into women, and she has herself used the Register of Wills at the LMA in compiling details of fifteenth-century silkwomen:

In practical terms the essential source required to uncover the women themselves is their wills, in most cases the wills of those who achieved widowhood as a husband's permission had to be given to allow a married woman to make her will. A few wills of married women survive, and a few of single women. London is well served by the survival of wills: will proved in the court of Husting from 1258, in the court of the Commissary of London from 1374 and in the Archdeacon's court only 1393–1415.⁵

Other records held at the LMA or Guildhall Library and from which information about women before 1950 may be gleaned include the Journals of the Court of Common Council, the Repertories of the Court of Aldermen, the Archdeacons' Register, the Registry of the Bishop of London, the Commissary Court Registers, the Consistory Court

2 <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/the-collections/Pages/apprentices-and-mistresses.aspx>

3 <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/the-collections/Pages/apprentices-and-mistresses.aspx>

4 <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/the-collections/Pages/apprentices-and-mistresses.aspx>

5 Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.3.

Examination Book, the Recognizance Rolls, the Calendar of Patent Rolls, parish registers for individual City churches, Livery Company records, and so on. This is by no means an exhaustive list (and see Bibliography for further details).

In terms of the dissemination and manipulation of such material (and of that held in other repositories, such as individual Livery Company archives), much work of collection, organisation and codifying has been undertaken in recent decades. Some of the fruits of those labours have been produced in traditional printed form, such as the mammoth series produced by Cliff Webb for the Society of Genealogists of *London livery companies apprenticeship registers* (see Bibliography for full details). In 2003 Dr Lisa Jefferson, a medieval French scholar, published an edition of the *Wardens' accounts and court minute books of the Goldsmiths' Mistery of London, 1334–1446*, transcribing and translating the text and also providing an index of the names of around 4,000 London goldsmiths, their apprentices, servants and family members. Some hard-copy material relates specifically to women, such as that held by the Mercers' Company Archive Department, comprising statistics and notes, drawn up by a former staff member, relating to female apprentices, masters of apprentices and Company members up to and including 1797. These statistics and notes are made available to Company members when requested and may be provided to academic researchers on request.

A large amount of material is now also available in online format, accessible to the interested amateur or family historian and the scholar alike. A number of Livery Companies' apprenticeship and freedom registers are online via findmypast.co.uk, for instance, though this resource is more suitable for looking up individual names than for doing research on a particular demographic, being designed to address the needs of family historians looking to trace their forebears who came from all over the country to be apprenticed in London. In fact, the current interest in family history seems to have infiltrated Livery Companies, the Fishmongers' Company, for instance, reporting that they are 'at the outset of a large-scale membership project, taking current members and working backwards through the Company's archives to build up almost "family tree" type research papers, but this is very much at the formative stage at present and thus has yet to bear any fruit.'⁶ The fruit such projects may eventually bear is likely to include information on the involvement of women, even if only in relation to men (i.e. as wives, widows, daughters and sisters of Liverymen).

Another very interesting online resource, hosted by the Digital Humanities Institute, is *London Lives 1690 to 1800 – Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis* (at www.londonlives.org) which makes available a fully searchable digital edition of 240,000 manuscripts from 8 archives and 15 datasets, giving access to 3.35 million names, with a particular focus on plebeian Londoners. In relation to criminal justice, this resource includes the already digitised Old Bailey Proceedings (<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>) – which can of course also be investigated separately in its own right – and has supplemented this with coroners' inquests, lists of prisoners held in Newgate prison, and biographies of executed criminals written by the chaplain of Newgate. In addition, the records of Bridewell are included, the house of correction where those accused of petty crimes were punished. In terms of recognition of women in the City, such datasets may be of limited value, though they may certainly help in identification and may occasionally turn up some interesting characters or connections. More relevant information may be found in the records of two City parishes which have also been comprehensively digitised for the *London Lives* project, St Botolph Aldgate and

⁶ Email from Peter Capon, Head of Collection, The Fishmongers' Company.

St Dionis Backchurch, and in the Carpenters' Company court and committee minute books included to illustrate the charitable assistance provided to the poor by Livery Companies and their associated charities. *London Lives* includes a number of biographies that have been compiled from the sources, such as those of Mary Bell, an illegitimate girl born in 1774 and brought up by the parish (of St Botolph Aldgate) where she spent several years of her childhood in the workhouse,⁷ and of Sarah Parker (fl. 1748–69), sextoness of St Dionis Backchurch and also at times in receipt of poor relief from the parish.⁸ But most of those recorded here are 'the indigent, the poor, the desperately unfortunate and the ignorant', including women who were branded, transported or executed, for crimes ranging from thievery and prostitution to infanticide and other forms of murder (often driven to it by circumstance). So these are largely women as victims.

There is certainly no shortage of interesting avenues to pursue online, but caution – or self-control (it's so easy to go clicking from one link to the next, as the hours fly by) – does need to be exercised. Researching a database such as the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground list provided by Find A Grave (<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/658393/bunhill-fields-burial-ground>) may be fascinating in itself but ultimately unsatisfactory – or overly time-consuming – for identifying significant City women. In conjunction with using the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, for instance (another invaluable online subscription-based resource at <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>) one can work out family relations – such as that Theodosia Bayes, who died on 22 September 1769 and was married in the Mercers' Hall Chapel on 13 August 1747, was the daughter-in-law of Joshua Bayes, a well-known non-conformist minister who preached an acclaimed sermon at Salters' Hall in 1735 – but that doesn't really get us anywhere nearer recognising women's roles in the City.

So again the question must be: what is one to do with all this information? In order to go beyond extracting lists of women's names and dates, the first requirement is to be aware of the work that has already been undertaken in recognising the part played by women in the City of London over the centuries. That requirement is partly fulfilled by the extensive Bibliography of secondary literature (books and articles) provided at the end of this research paper.

Pre-eminent among scholars of the medieval period in London has been Professor Caroline Barron, 'whose studies on London women underlie anything written on them', as another prolific scholar, Anne Sutton, has put it.⁹ Barron's 1989 article on 'The "Golden Age" of Women in Medieval London' has been particularly influential for subsequent work on the role and status of medieval City women. As encapsulated by Stephanie Hovland,

In this, and in subsequent work on London widows, [Barron] emphasized the growing opportunities for economic and personal independence available to women in medieval London, particularly in the century or so following the Black Death of 1348–9. She drew attention to the legal position of women in the capital: the custom of London permitted married women to act 'sole' as independent craftswomen and businesswomen, and expected them to take control and continue their deceased husbands' businesses ... Consequently, with the onset of demographic decline the range of opportunities and prospects open to women increased, so that women had 'access to work on terms more nearly equal with men', and were found at work 'in every kind of trade and craft'.¹⁰

⁷ <https://www.londonlives.org/static/BellMaryBorn1774.jsp>

⁸ <https://www.londonlives.org/static/ParkerSarahSextoness1754.jsp>

⁹ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, Acknowledgements.

¹⁰ Stephanie R. Hovland, 'Girls as Apprentices in Later Medieval London', p.179.

Stephanie Hovland's own 2008 paper on girls as apprentices looks at the custom of the apprenticeship of girls in later medieval London and at evidence of how the system worked for them, as well as exploring some of the differences between the apprenticeship of girls and boys.¹¹

The question of the importance, or even the existence, of so-called 'femme sole' status has been a subject of interest to historians for several decades: 'What appeared to be an unusual opportunity for married women to have their own economic lives and acquire legal agency was described by early feminist historians like Mary Bateson, Annie Abram, and Alice Clark, who opened up research into the experiences of working women in London and some of the other towns.'¹² The debate up to the early years of this century is summarised by Marjorie K. McIntosh in her 2005 article 'The Benefits and Drawbacks of *Femme Sole* status in England, 1300–1630', which also gives a helpfully clear explanation of the status. McIntosh gives details of a variety of women who appeared in equity court petitions, in particular. She also provides an appendix, setting out the use by women of the Mayor's and Sheriffs' courts between 1298 and 1611 and listing the extant sources for these cases.

For his study of 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', Peter Earle uses the records of the Consistory Court of the bishop of London, the Commissary Court, and the Court of Arches (the latter records being in Lambeth Palace Library).

Lena Cowen Orlin, using the notebooks of Thomas Harridance, parish clerk, between 1583 and 1600, notes the existence in the parish of St Botolph without Aldgate of several professions carried out by women, in addition to their being midwives, carers and 'landladies': 'five female tipplers, three seamsters, two fishwives, two teachers of children, one victualler, one silkweaver, one glover, one laundry woman, and one broker. Some of these women diversified. The seamster Jaccamyne Blackwell, for example, nursed the daughter of a laboring man, John Cotton; the child, Elizabeth, died at the age of twelve weeks. Michael George died in the care of broker Amy Hills. He, "being sick, did lie at physic" at her house.'¹³

Anne Sutton's 2016 *Wives and Widows of Medieval London* brings together a number of articles published between 1994 and 2013. She deals in particular with women working in the mercery trade – the silkwomen, the names and addresses of many of whom can be found in Keene and Harding's *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire*, available at *British History Online* (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-gazetteer-pre-fire>) and which gives detailed property histories for five parishes in the Cheapside area, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, including accounts of the parish churches and information about the people and buildings associated with the properties. Much of Sutton's work in this book is also based on the archives of the Mercers' Company and on a card index of mercers, initially compiled by the late Jean Imray, Archivist to the Mercers' Company from 1961 to 1981. Her article 'The Women of the Mercery: Wives, Widows and Maidens' is based on the information from 227 mercer wills, from 1400 to 1499, proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and the wills of the Commissary Court of London.¹⁴ In the following article, 'Two Dozen and More Silkwomen of Fifteenth-century London', she uses that information to record systematically all London's silkwomen who were daughters or wives of London mercers between 1400 and 1499.

11 Ibid., p.180.

12 Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'The Benefits and Drawbacks of *Femme Sole* status in England, 1300–1630', p.410.

13 Lena Cowin Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', p.240.

14 Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.69.

Sutton's article "'Serious Money': The Benefits of Marriage" concentrates 'on the marital successes of London aldermen between 1400 and 1499 and how often the date of a marriage can be directly tied to a promotion'.¹⁵ To do this, she draws on research published by Sylvia Thrupp (a biographical list of London aldermen)¹⁶ and A.B. Beaven (on their dates of office),¹⁷ and by consulting all surviving wills. 'The forty-two who certainly married widows at some date underlie this study, with special attention to the sixteen whose first wife was a widow – to see if and how marriage helped them up the civic hierarchy.'¹⁸ Sutton also looks in detail at the lives of a number of women: Alice Claver, Alice Domenyk-Markby-Shipley-Portaleyn, Agnes Don-Bretton, Joan Haynes-Westwood-Dunton-Kent and Lady Joan Bradbury, as well as providing many shorter biographies in the chapter 'Two Dozen and More Silkwomen of Fifteenth-Century London'. As she comments herself, 'This collection includes many individual biographies (none from the gentry or nobility), of which the details can be picked over and used by other historians.'¹⁹ Additionally, there are very useful bibliographies both in this book and in Caroline Barron's *Medieval London Widows*.

Particularly significant in recent years has been the work of Dr Amy L. Erickson, in terms both of the publications she has produced and the exhibitions she has staged or contributed to – *Women, Work and the City of London*, in the Guildhall Library from September 2018 to January 2019²⁰ and, most recently, from 21 September to 18 October 2019 in Cheapside, *City Women in the 18th Century*, the information from which continues to be very usefully available online at <http://citywomen.hist.cam.ac.uk/>.

Another historian who has deployed archival records in a very enlightening way is Jessica Collins, the Senior Archivist of the Clothworkers' Company, who, in her 2013 article 'Jane Holt, Milliner, and Other Women in Business: Apprentices, Freewomen and Mistresses in The Clothworkers' Company, 1606–1800', used the newly digitised Registers of Apprentices and Freedom Admissions of the Clothworkers to provide a comprehensive survey of female membership in that Company in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

By analysing who these apprentices, Freewomen and mistresses were and what they did, [the article] aims to shed new light on women's work in this period. It shows that apprenticeship was used by girls of middling and genteel social status to enter the textile trades and although few went on to take up their Freedom of the Company, the Clothworkers' records show an increasing level of female membership over time. Freewomen required membership in order to operate businesses within the City – although patrimony may also have been used to gain access to Company alms – and most mistresses operated through the Company as the wives or widows of Freemen, demonstrating that marriage was no bar to economic activity.²¹

Other significant contributions to scholarship in this area have been made by Judith Bennett (on women brewers), Doreen Evenden (on seventeenth-century midwives), Philippa Glanville and Jennifer Faulds Goldsborough (on women silversmiths), Laura Gowing (on apprenticeship, and women and social space) and Barbara Hanawalt (on the legal and economic position of medieval women) – among many others.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.118.

¹⁶ See Sylvia Thrupp (1948), *The merchant class of medieval London: [1300–1500]*.

¹⁷ See A.B. Beaven (1908, 1913), *The Aldermen of London*, 2 vols.

¹⁸ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.119.

¹⁹ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.1.

²⁰ See <https://guildhalllibrarynewsletter.wordpress.com/2018/09/14/women-work-and-the-city-of-london/>

²¹ Jessica Collins, 'Jane Holt, Milliner, and Other Women in Business: Apprentices, Freewomen and Mistresses in The Clothworkers' Company, 1606–1800', p.72.

This research paper can only be the sketchiest of introductions to what it must be clear by now is a vast subject. I have also held to the brief not to go beyond 1950 – while obviously enormous strides have been made in the visibility of women in the City since then. But that women were far more visible, and active, in (at least some) earlier centuries than may previously have been supposed is clear even from the cursory glance I have been able to cast on them in this paper. What is also clear, however, is that following the 'golden age' identified by Caroline Barron, there was a decline in the visibility of women in the City and this lasted well into the second half of the twentieth century. As Barron herself recognised,

women in the period – say 1300 to 1500 – when they exercised economic 'clout' in London, failed to seize for themselves a public or political role [...] They are not to be found in wardmotes nor holding any ward office; they had a role in city companies but not a governing role; they played an important part in parish fraternities but never served as masters or wardens [...]

In some senses women lost ground in the sixteenth century in the City of London which has still to be recovered.²²

22 Caroline Barron, 'The "Golden Age" of Women in Medieval London', p.374.

02

SIGNIFICANT GROUPS OF WOMEN

■ BELL FOUNDERS

Johanna Hill and Johanna Sturdy ran bell-founding workshops in the extramural parish of St Botolph Aldgate in the middle years of the fifteenth century.²³ 'The twenty or so surviving bells, marked with the distinctive signs of Johanna Hill and Johanna Sturdy bear witness, both visually and aurally, to the entrepreneurial skill and managerial ability of artisan widows in fifteenth-century London.'²⁴

■ BENEFACTRESSES AND PHILANTHROPISTS

See individual entries on Lady Joan Bradbury, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Elizabeth, Lady Campden, Judith Levy, Lady Jane Mico and Alice Owen.

■ EDUCATIONISTS

See individual entries on Dame Dorothy Brock, Rosamond Davenport Hill, Ruth Homan, Caroline Edith Rigg and Ethel Strudwick.

The three women listed as employed by the City of London Corporation in 1879 all worked at the Freeman's Orphan School, as Senior Mistress, Junior Mistress and Matron. In 1886, in addition to four women employed at the Freeman's School, there was now the Lady Superintendent at the Guildhall School of Music (Frederica Smith). By 1908, the City of London School for Girls having been in existence for 14 years, the list of women employees had grown considerably, the list for the School comprising the Head Mistress (Alice Eliza Blaggrave), nine Assistant Mistresses, a Science Mistress, a French Mistress, a Drawing Mistress, a caretaker (jointly with her husband), a housemaid, two charwomen and a secretary.²⁵

■ INVESTORS

See individual entries on Johanna Cock, Mary Edwards, Lady Joan Laxton, Hester Pinney and Elizabeth Wilford.

■ JOURNALISTS

See individual entries on Margaret Allen, Margery Fish and Charlotte Forman.

■ 'LANDLADIES' (FOR WANT OF A BETTER WORD)

Some of the women who provided lodgings, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in an overcrowded City can be traced in notebooks kept between 1583 and 1600 by Thomas Harridance, clerk of the parish of St Botolph Aldgate. 'Here, the phenomenon of London lodgings appears as a revenue stream, especially for women, both as a second career for city wives of standing and as a subsistence-level income for poor widows, singlewomen, and the more marginal.'²⁶ A more distinguished lodging

23 Caroline Barron, 'Johanna Hill and Johanna Sturdy, Bell Founders', p.385.

24 Ibid. pp.394–5.

25 Information provided by Elizabeth Scudder of LMA.

26 Lena Cowin Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', pp.236–7.

establishment, in the nineteenth century, was that of 35-year-old Cassandra Wilby at 44 Watling Street, the insurance policy valuing the premises at £1,150.²⁷

■ MEMBERS OF PARISH FRATERNITIES

Nearly all the guild ordinances which have survived specify sisters as well as brothers, except, perhaps, one. Women joined the fraternities on equal terms with men, not solely as wives. The membership lists of the Holy Trinity fraternity in the church of St Botolph Aldersgate, for instance, reveal the presence of many single women: 18 entered the fraternity between 1377 and 1415. In the Bede roll of the fraternity of St Nicholas (the parish clerks guild) those to be prayed for are listed in five categories: clerks, priests, secular brothers, secular sisters, and dead brothers and sisters.²⁸

■ MERCHANTS

See individual entries on Hester Pinney and Elizabeth Wilford.

■ MILLINERS

See individual entry on Eleanor Mosley.

Amy Erickson has identified the addresses of 45 milliners trading in the City in the first half of the eighteenth century. They were based everywhere from Old Bailey, Newgate Street, Little Britain, along Paternoster Row and Cheapside, through to Cornhill and Lombard Street. Erickson points out that they were particularly located in the principal market streets, those populated by wealthy merchants.²⁹

■ NURSES, MIDWIVES AND OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

See individual entries on Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Ethel Gordon Fenwick, Winifred Hector, Dame Kathleen Raven and Elizabeth Whipp.

Dame Joan Astley, who had been nurse to the infant Henry VI, lived in a tenement above the Smithfield Gate in 1456, with a small garden.³⁰

In the parish of St Botolph Aldgate, the wives of silkweaver Charles Bird, chandler Daniel Hooke, and tailor John Pamen attended childbirth as did a substantial group of widows: Margaret Baldwin, Elizabeth Carreck, Mary Catmore, Mistress Cheston, Ellin Craven, Jone Grafton, Ann Hilles, Ellin Marshall, Mistress Martins, Joan More, Mistress Ponder, Mistress Pryce, Awdrie Tomson, Mistress Twyforde, and Mistress Woodcocke.³¹ These names were recorded by clerk Thomas Harridance, but names of midwives are not always so easy to identify, as is explained by Doreen Evenden:

Although records of the parish such as vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts contain valuable information about midwives in their professional role, they seldom give the midwife's name; she was, quite simply, 'the midwife'. Married women rarely appeared on tithe or tax rolls under their own names; fortunately, we have identified the names of many men who were married to midwives. Because midwifery was not organized into a craft guild or company and midwives never became citizens and freemen of the City, few midwives designated themselves by occupation for purposes of a census or for taxation.³²

27 Alison C. Kay, 'A Little Enterprise of her Own', p.49.

28 Caroline Barron, 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London', p.150.

29 A.L. Erickson, 'Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies 1700—1750', p.158.

30 Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.163.

31 Lena Cowin Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', pp.239–40.

32 Doreen Evenden-Nagy, *Seventeenth-century London midwives: their training, licensing and social profile*, p.25.

Nevertheless, their names can often be traced from their applications (to the bishop) for licences and the testimonials provided in support, so that we know, for instance, of Elizabeth Dowke who was licensed in 1661, having already practised midwifery for 20 years, and her deputy, Frances Stannard, who had 10 years' experience and applied for her own licence later that year.³³ Elizabeth had lived for 40 years in the parish of St Bartholomew the Great with 'good credit and reputation among her neighbourhood'.³⁴

■ POSTAL WORKERS AND TELEGRAPHISTS

See individual entries for Florence Feek (suffragette) and Violette Szabo.

■ PROPERTY OWNERS

Such as Lady Wood, who in the early seventeenth century owned a great house along Fleet Ditch, including a garden, and she collected rental income from 17 tenants whose shops pressed against the boundary walls.³⁵ Also Dame Margaret Alley, from whom the Tallow Chandlers' Company bought the site for their Hall in Dowgate Hill in 1476, she being the owner of several properties there.

■ RELIGIOUS (NUNS)

The wills enrolled in the Husting court reveal at least thirty instances of the daughters, or nieces, of London citizens entering religious houses. The most popular houses were those around London, Halliwell, Clerkenwell, the house of Minoresses, St Helen's Bishopsgate, Kilburn, Stratford, Barking and Syon.³⁶

■ SEXTONESSES

The post of sexton was the only parish office open to women, and women could vote in the election for the post held at the parish vestry. There appears to have been a strong tradition of electing women to this role in the parishes of the City in particular.³⁷ The role would generally involve dealing with the maintenance of the church building and graveyard, grave digging, bell tolling and ringing and sometime organ blowing. It was a relatively well-paid position; hence the elections were generally contested. City sextonesses included: Sarah Parker (St Dionis Backchurch, 1754–62)³⁸ and who had been preceded in the post by at least four other women (as can be seen from the minutes of the Parish Vestries of St Dionis Backchurch³⁹); Elizabeth Curtis and Ann Elizabeth Poupard, who served as sextonesses at St Botolph Aldgate for a period of 30 years between them, as is evident from miscellaneous parish account books, digitised at London Lives.⁴⁰

The parish of St Bartholomew the Great also employed a sextoness for many years, Miss Charlotte Hart, and the extent of her wealth at her death clearly took the vestry by surprise, as recorded by E.A. Webb:

In October 1891, the death of the sextoness, Miss Charlotte Hart, was reported to the vestry, by whom she had been appointed in October 1852. After the church was reopened in 1868, it had been kept open daily, and it was the duty of the sextoness to show the church to visitors. After Rector Abbiss's death her health began to fail, and in 1888 she applied to the churchwardens for a pension and, being to all

³³ Ibid., p.121.

³⁴ Ibid., pp.144–5.

³⁵ Lena Cowin Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', pp.220–3.

³⁶ Caroline Barron, 'The "Golden Age" of Women in Medieval London', p.381(n).

³⁷ See <https://www.londonlives.org/static/ParkerSarahSextoness1754.jsp>

³⁸ <https://www.londonlives.org/static/ParkerSarahSextoness1754.jsp>

³⁹ See <https://www.londonlives.org/static/StDionisBackchurch.jsp#toc11>

⁴⁰ See <https://www.londonlives.org/static/StBotolphAldgate.jsp>

appearance reduced to a state of great poverty, a pension was granted to her. She died on the 30th April. On the day of the funeral a will was produced, leaving a sum of £2,900 invested in Consols (as well as plate, pictures, and other things). Of this sum (the proceeds of gratuities given her by visitors) she bequeathed to the rector and churchwardens for the time being the sum of £600, to be expended as they might think fit in permanently beautifying or altering the church at their entire discretion, but she suggested a pulpit, if one had not already been erected. She further left £100, the interest of which was to be distributed in coals for the poor; £25 for a small tablet or other memento of herself in the church where she had officiated as sextoness for nearly forty years; and £100, the interest of which was to be expended towards keeping in repair the tablet of her grandparents in the church, and of her mother, sister, brother and others in the churchyard. When the restoration of the north transept was finished, a bronze tablet was erected in accordance with the will, and placed on the new west wall, being close to the site of 9½ Cloth Fair, the house where the sextoness had lived. The tablet to her grandparents, the Wheelers, was removed from the south aisle to the same wall. The £600, less the legacy duty, was entrusted to the Restoration Committee and was expended by them in part on the new pulpit and in part on the restoration of the transept.⁴¹

■ SHOPKEEPERS

See individual entry for Sarah Sergeant.

There were feather-shops, clothing establishments and apothecaries' shops. There were thread-sellers like one Ann Hamlett of Cripplegate within, and dealers in peltry like the 'conneyskin woman of Budge-Row.' There were shops for the sale of wigs, and hosiers' shops. The widow who dwelt 'at the hether end of Powles Churchyard,' just under the shadow of 'my Lord Byshopp of London's gate,' evidently dealt in a superior article of 'worsted stockings' since a certain Mr. John Willoughby was so anxious to send to her for goods.⁴²

■ SILKWOMEN

This was the name commonly given to the female mercer, silk throwster, spinner, corse or ribbon weaver from about 1300. Mercers dealt particularly in luxury goods and, with the Italian merchants of London, they were the men from whom the silkwomen bought their supplies. They handled both the raw silk, which the throwsters converted into yarn, and the already thrown Italian silk thread, which the silkwomen wove into ribbons, laces and corses (particularly elaborate silk ribbons).⁴³

Examples of such women, and of the information we have about them and where it comes from, are given in Anne Sutton's chapter 'The Shop-Floor of the London Mercery Trade'.⁴⁴ 'The Mercery stretched east along Cheapside from St Mary le Bow to opposite the frontage of the present Mercers' Hall and back as far as the east-west line of St Pancras Lane; it included and was divided by Soper Lane (Shopkeepers' Lane) now under Queen Street. It was a mass of small shops, selling stations and covered markets called selds, of which one of the best known as the Crown, owned by the Mercers' Company from 1411.'⁴⁵

41 E.A. Webb, 'Rectors and their times: Borradaile Savory (1887-1906),' *The Records of St. Bartholomew's Priory and St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield: Volume 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921. 413-435. *British History Online*. Web. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/st-barts-records/vol2/pp413-435>.

42 Ella Caroline Lapham, 'The Industrial Status of Women in Elizabethan England', p.593.

43 Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.102.

44 *Ibid.*, pp.48-9.

45 *Ibid.*, p.88.

The role of the silkwoman had become less viable by the end of the fifteenth century: 'The decline of the mercer's silkwoman-wife and the working mercer coincided with the increasing control of the mercery retail shop by the Mercers' Company which in 1478 barred men with less than a £100 from opening a shop [...] It also coincided with the demise of the smaller trading units in the Mercery along Soper Lane and in the selds, ideal outlets for the single woman and smaller mercery households.'⁴⁶

■ SILVERSMITHS

See individual entry for Hester Bateman.

In luxury trades such as silver and goldsmithing there is evidence of an expansion of female activity in the eighteenth century, at least in comparison with the early seventeenth century. For England and Ireland the number of women in the Goldsmiths' Company and the Sun Insurance records rose between 1650 and about 1770, then fell off into the nineteenth century. Philippa Glanville and Jennifer Goldsborough find that the expansion of the silver industry from the late seventeenth century meant the family members of a master silversmith tended to be especially recruited to do the more routine jobs of engraving and polishing. They record well over 300 women in the British Isles who registered their mark or became apprentices to silversmiths between the late seventeenth century and the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁷

■ SPORTSWOMEN

See individual entries for Violet Piercy and Elizabeth Stokes.

■ WOMEN IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

See individual entries on Ann Alexander (banker and bill broker), Charlotte Matthews (banker), Hester Pinney (lace trader, creditor and financial dealer), Mary Harris Smith (chartered accountant), Dorothy Spiers (actuary)

■ WOMEN IN PUBLISHING

See individual entries on Elizabeth Calvert (bookseller), Elizabeth Caslon (typesetter), Elinor James (publisher/printer), Elizabeth Mallet (publisher/printer), Dorcas Martin (bookseller) and Mary Say (publisher/printer).

Like their male counterparts, the majority of the women working in the publishing industry and connected to the Stationers' Company were clustered around the recognised centres of the London book trade, with 17 working either in or very close to St Paul's Churchyard.⁴⁸

Among the London publishers and printers of the period from 1553 to 1640 are the names of more than seventy women. They were widows who had received the business with a husband's estate. [...] Among the thirteen who were both printers and publishers, Elizabeth All-de carried on her business from 1628 until her death twelve years later; and Joan Broome, whose work was cut short by her death in 1601, was for ten years the head of the printing and publishing house at the sign of the "Great Bible at the Great North Door of Paul's Church".⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.68.

⁴⁷ Pamela Sharpe, 'Gender in the Economy', p.298.

⁴⁸ Helen Smith, '"Print[ing] your royal father off"', p.168.

⁴⁹ Ella Caroline Lapham, 'The Industrial Status of Women in Elizabethan England', p.589.

■ WRITERS, ARTISTS, ACTRESSES AND MUSICIANS

See individual entries for Alicia Amherst, Mrs Beeton, Hester Biddle, Dorothea Henrietta Boulger (Theo Gift), Agnes Bulmer, Catherine da Costa, Margaret Gillies, Harriet Grote, Laura Honey and Elizabeth Stirling, organist at St Andrew Undershaft.

03

LIVERY COMPANY MEMBERSHIP

While it is clear that women did not become fully fledged Liverymen of any Company until well into the twentieth century, many women were free of a Company, and indeed had to be so to trade in the City. Many women also served their time as apprentices, and/or were themselves masters of apprentices. The apprenticeship system is described with particular clarity by Stephanie Hovland:

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, London developed a 'custom' of apprenticeship, a web of rules and regulations that governed apprenticeship within the city. An apprentice must be indentured to a citizen, who practised a recognized craft or trade within the city. A minimum term of seven years service was set and the indentures had to be enrolled at Guildhall, for a fee, in 'papers' or registers under the ward of the master's residence. Apprentices had to be presented to the mayor and aldermen, or in practice to the city chamberlain, on both entry and issue to their apprenticeships and the freedom of the city was open to those who completed their terms of service and training, on payment of another fee to the city coffers. Apprentices whose master died or ceased trading for some other reason should continue to be trained, in the first instance by his widow, or by another 'suitable' member of his or her craft.⁵⁰

It is worth giving some details here of the historical arrangements made by several Companies in regard to women Freemen and apprentices, and of any knowledge they have recently acquired about their female membership.

BOWYERS

Nine of the Bowyer apprentices were women. They were admitted between 1685 and 1746:

- 36 Beesley Margaret d John, Hose Grange, Lei, gent, to Richard Elliot 30 Nov 1688
- 104 Crosby, Gandy alias, Rebecca d Chriskenhams, Ipswich, Sfk, blacksmith to Richard Elliot 9 Aug 1687
- 171 Gilberne Catherine d Isaac Lewis, St Peter le Poer, Lnd to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 11 Nov 1742
- 173 Gilberne Susanna Maria d Isaac Lewis, St Peter le Poer, Lnd to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 29 Apr 1746
- 259 Keyes Martha d John, Stratford le Bow, Mdx, clerk to Richard Elliott 15 Nov 1685
- 274 Lidgould Marian d John, Harmondsworth, Mdx, vicar to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 24 May 1744
- 405 Speak Grace d Edward, St Katherine Cree, clothworker to Nathaniel Belchamber 17 Jul 1746
- 436 Tull Sarah d Robert, St Saviour Southwark, Sry, stable keeper to Richard Elliott 16 Jul 1696
- 475 Wilkinson Ann d James, Lnd, cook to Richard Elliott 2 May 1693⁵¹

⁵⁰ Stephanie R. Hovland, 'Girls as Apprentices in Later Medieval London', pp.180-1.

⁵¹ From a 2010 paper compiled by Simon Leach, Chairman of the Muniments Committee, Bowyers' Company.

Eleven of the apprentices were apprenticed to women:

- 132 Eaton William s John, Barnet, Hrt, yeoman to Mary Turner, widow 6 Apr 1756
- 145 Fary William s Anthony, Newport Pagnell, Bkm, baker to Ann widow of Thomas Clifton 17 Jul 1719 turned over John Wilford, cit and tallow chandler 11 Jan 1722/3
- 170 Gibson John s James, Christ Church, Lnd, watchmaker to Edmund Barber 17 Mar 1747/8 turned over to his mother Mary Gibson 23 Jun 1751
- 171 Gilberne Catherine d Isaac Lewis, St Peter le Poer, Lnd to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 11 Nov 1742
- 172 Gilberne Isaac William s Isaac Lewis, St Peter le Poer, Lnd to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 31 Mar 1744
- 173 Gilberne Susanna Maria d Isaac Lewis, St Peter le Poer, Lnd to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 29 Apr 1746
- 219 Herbert Richard s Richard, cit. and bowyer to his mother Ann Herbert, widow 10 Jul 1697
- 274 Lidgould Marian d John, Harmondsworth, Mdx, vicar to Catherine widow of Isaac Lewis Gilberne 24 May 1744
- 295 Mason Elliston s William, Town Mailing, Ken, surgeon to Mary widow of Charles Blackstone
- 24 Feb 1729/30 turned over to Enos Milward 24 May 1736
- 335 Pennard William s James, cit. and tyler & bricklayer to Edith widow of Lawrence Wright 9 May 1688
- 437 Turner Edward s Edward, cit. and bowyer to Mary Turner 21 Feb 1759
Mary Turner, Ann Clifton, Catherine Gilberne, Mary Blackstone and Edith Wright were described as widows. Ann Herbert, who was also a widow, and Mary Gibson were both mothers of their apprentices and Catherine Gilberne was mother of three of her four apprentices, one son and two daughters.⁵²

■ CARPENTERS

The Carpenters' Company's 'Boke of Ordinances' of 1333 specifies both 'brothers' and 'sisters' as part of the fraternity. Although not necessarily sworn Freemen, widows, wives and other female relatives of carpenters were important in a family business environment, and would have been considered 'sisters' of the fraternity. The only ordinance that does not mention sisters is in relation to carpentry work. Women were certainly involved with the practical aspects of the business such as timber dealing, and in the sixteenth century can be found buying directly from importers at the waterside.

An important role of widows in particular within the Company was to provide evidence that apprentices had completed their apprenticeships after the death of their husbands, such as the testimony of Elizabeth Brittain in 1570. This continued into the 18th century and on at least one occasion a widow became a Freeman, such as Mary Angell, in 1755 who took on the business of her husband Joseph on his death. In 1755 John Angell (very likely her son) was bound to her as an apprentice and in 1763 William Angell, Joseph's son and apprentice was made a Freeman on the 'Testimony of his Mother the Widow'.

By the 17th century women increasingly appear in the Company's records in their own right as they were both apprenticed through the Company and joined the Freedom.

⁵² Ibid.

Between 1654 and 1694 21 women were bound apprentices at the Hall to members of the Company. These members, however, were not carpenters – they (or their wives) followed trades or crafts that used women workers, such as milliners, sempsters and a 'childs-coat-seller'.

By the latter part of the 18th century numbers of women freemen and apprentices declined as the Company attempted to bring more working carpenters into its ranks.

By the late nineteenth century women are increasingly found joining the Company through family links, becoming freemen by patrimony, with the first women joining the Livery in 2004.

The first Honorary Liveryman (1954) was Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, which came about through the connection with the nearby Dutch Church.⁵³

■ DISTILLERS

There were quite a lot of women distillers, and many were given licence to practise the art, even though they did not have the full rights accorded to Freemen.

■ FARRIERS

The first reference to Ladies being admitted as Freeman was on 2nd August 1762 when Mrs Hester Mills was made free of the Company and paid 13s 4d. Mrs Hester Mills kept the New Castle Coffee House at St Mary Hill, where the meeting was held.⁵⁴

■ GARDENERS

'In line with City protocol, in the seventeenth century, executors held ownership of the assets of dead Freemen but a widow could continue to run their late husband's business and were deemed free of the City to do so, being called Free Sisters. Our Quarterage books of the time show listings of them. None seems to have played any significant role in the City.

'We became dormant in the nineteenth century and were reborn in 1891. An early act in 1896 was to grant honorary Freedom to the Hon Alicia Amherst, later Lady Cecil, for her book *The History of Gardening in England*. She wrote *London Gardens* in 1902, putting on the title page "Citizen and Gardener". She became chairman of the Chelsea Physic Garden, which she rescued from dereliction. She inaugurated the Fairchild Lecture, given under the Will of Thomas Fairchild, the breeder of the first artificial hybrid, and persuaded the Company to take over the responsibility from 1911. This has been our Guild Service ever since.

'In June 1974 the Company broke with tradition and became the first Company to decide to admit women to the Livery. In October 1974, Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, became the first Lady Liveryman of the Company and of the City. In 1975, Lady Donaldson became one of a number of early Lady Liverymen.'⁵⁵

■ GIRDLEERS

In the period before 1350, it has been possible to identify by name a total of eighty-nine men and one woman who can be positively identified as following the trade of a girdler. A small number of these have been identified by a craft specific surname of *le Ceynturer*, *Centurario* or *le Gyrdeler* but most are described as a girdler, *zonarius*

53 Julie Tancell, Archivist, Carpenters' Company.

54 Leslie Prince, *The farrier and his craft*, p.199.

55 Email from David Gollin, Senior Past Master, Gardeners' Company.

or *cincturarius*. Many have been found in the city's own records, particularly in the *Letter Books*, *Early Mayor's Court Rolls* and *Plea and Memoranda Rolls* of the mayor and aldermen but also from the valuable collection of wills enrolled in the court of Husting and from the subsidy rolls of 1292 and 1319 as well as other sources.⁵⁶ The lone female girdler is of particular note. Her name was Alice Walkeleyen and in 1332, she was bequeathed for her life, a tenement in Aldersgate Street by John de Gloucestre, rector of Hardington, near Hounslow. His will describes her as 'Alice Walkeleyen, girdler' with no reference to a husband, living or deceased and it has not been possible to identify any male girdler named Walkeleyen.⁵⁷

■ GUNMAKERS

'Widows took up their defunct husband's businesses. Good examples are: Mary Brooke, widow of Robert who continued his Ordnance contracts. He was Master in 1679. Mary, widow of Joseph Stace/Stacy, he was Master in 1675 and Elizabeth, widow of Roger Stace/Stacy.'⁵⁸

■ HABERDASHERS

From the mid-17th century girls were being apprenticed in the Haberdashers' Company in significant numbers. In the five-year period 1675-1680 a total of 42 were apprenticed, 3.8 per cent of the total; in 27 cases they were apprenticed to male members of the Company, though we cannot be sure whether these were shared businesses of husbands and wives; in 15 cases they were apprenticed to women, who in each case were strikingly described as 'Citizens and Haberdashers'.⁵⁹

'The first Lady Liveryman was Baroness Burdett-Coutts in 1880 (she joined other Livery Companies too) . After that, women were not allowed into the Livery again until 1999. We had the first Lady Master in the Great Twelve Companies with Deborah Knight in 2012.'⁶⁰

■ IRONMONGERS

'Ironmongers' Company members' widows and daughters, being active in their husbands' and fathers' trades, were also members of the Ironmongers' Company until 1831, when the last woman was admitted as the trade connection was ceasing by this time. It took another 173 years before women were again admitted in 2004, after the Court approved the admission of women on 2 October 2003.

'I think the last woman admitted before 2004 was Elizabeth Ballard, admitted on 29 April 1831.'⁶¹

■ LEATHERSELLERS

'Freemen

Women have been admitted to the Freedom – by servitude, patrimony and redemption – since the earliest days of the Company. The first we know by name was Elizabeth

56 *Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London: Letter Books A-F*, ed. by Reginald R. Sharpe (London, 1894-1904). *Calendar of Early Mayor's Court Rolls 1298-1307. Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London 1323-1364*, ed. by A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1926). Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls. Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting London 1258-1688*, ed. by Reginald R. Sharpe, 2 vols (London, 1889).

57 *Husting Wills*, I, 382. Information supplied by Murray Whiteside, Clerk, Girdlers' Company.

58 Email from Derek Stimpson, Honorary Archivist, Gunmakers' Company.

59 Ian Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company*, Chapter 7.

60 Email from David Bartle, Company Archivist, Haberdashers' Company.

61 Email from Justine Taylor, Archivist, Ironmongers' Company.

Cockeram, made Free in 1489. Our Freedom registers survive from 1630 on, but we know that, before then, many women had apprentices bound to them (and so, must have been Free themselves). At least nine women Leathersellers, for instance, were taking on apprentices in the years 1612-29.

'In the 1600s and 1700s, at least 47 women were made Free – 20 of these after serving an apprenticeship, 18 by patrimony and 9 by redemption. These are modest numbers and women must always have been in a minority, but they were there. Perhaps in practice there were more Free women than our records suggest, since for example the National Archives have a Will of 1764 for an Ann Eaves, spinster, 'Citizen and Leatherseller', yet she does not appear in our own lists.

'All had changed by 1800. Only two women were made Free in the 1800s (both by patrimony) and then there was a complete, long gap from 1881 until 1952. Not a single woman was made Free in these 71 years. Four women were made Free between 1952 and 1961 – all by patrimony and three of these from the same family, the Hill family. Then there was another long fallow period until 1998, when Marion Perry was admitted. Since 2002 things have greatly changed and the latest (2019–20) Livery list shows 13 out of 50 Freemen, and 24 out of 178 Liverymen (including retired Liverymen) are female.

'Apprentices

The last girl apprenticed to a Leatherseller was Elizabeth Hallam in 1795. But before then girls were quite often apprenticed. We know the details of at least 131 girls apprenticed in the 1600s and 1700s, and there must have been many more in the earlier period before our records start. After 1630 the period when girl apprentices were most common seems to have been the reign of Charles II.

'Livery

Livery lists only start in 1706. A few women's names appear in these early lists, for example in 1708 the list includes three women: Martha Callow, Mary Portress and Elizabeth Hickman – all widows of Liverymen. No definite record of women being formally admitted to the Livery, before 2004, has yet been found. As mentioned, we now have 24 women on the Livery, all admitted in the last 15 years. In fact we have just passed the 15th anniversary of the first of these to be admitted to the Livery, Biz Womersley, admitted on 6 October 2004. Clare Lennon made history by becoming the first lady to serve as a Warden, and again more recently when she became the first lady to go on the Court.

'Interestingly, our early records show that women were definitely on the Livery back in the 1400s. A woman named Janet Nightingale appears frequently in the 1480s as being 'of the clothing' (Livery), and she took on various apprentices (boys and girls) in this period. Elizabeth Marshall, Katherine Skirwith, Emma Dolphinby and Agnes Lindsay are some of the other 15th-century women Leathersellers (mostly widows) recorded as paying quarterage, taking apprentices and being 'of the clothing'. In 1608 we have clear evidence of a woman, Elizabeth Deane, a widow, being actively engaged in the leather trade as a trunkmaker, with two boy apprentices already and applying to take on a third. Rebecca Chamlett, another widow, appears to have been on the Livery in 1641.

'Dr Amy Erickson has done an in-depth study of our records for the years 1700-1750. She identified 139 women who were 'active' in our Company in that period, defining 'active' as being apprenticed, taking an apprentice, taking the Freedom or paying quarterage. Her research showed that many of these were in fact not working in the leather trade itself but in other trades, such as millinery, but they needed to be in a Livery Company of some kind to trade in the City. Her research also suggests that a good many married women were working too, but are 'invisible' in the records since all business transactions

involving married women had to be conducted through the name of their husbands. No doubt further research will reveal more about this fascinating subject area.

'Admitting women to the Livery was discussed, and rejected, in 1918 and again in 1956. Finally it was approved in 2002, with the first actual admission in 2004. But no original decision to exclude women seems ever to have been made. This probably came about gradually, due to changes in social attitudes – by the 1800s and early 1900s a respectable woman's place was considered the home. The earlier times when women had taken a more active role in London's trade, commerce and public life were conveniently forgotten.'⁶²

■ MERCERS

Alice Bridenell was admitted to the freedom in [the] Mercers' company on payment of 20 shillings, because her great-grandfather had been a mercer. But this seems to be a somewhat exceptional case.⁶³ Alice was the earliest recorded female member of the Company, being admitted in 1428.

'No women were admitted to the Company between 1797 and 2002, and no woman became Master Mercer until 2014.

'The symbol of the Mercers' Company is a woman. She is known as the 'Mercer Maiden' and has appeared on the Company's seal since 1425. She has been on the Company's coat of arms for centuries (though not formally granted until 1911) and has been used as a property mark for several hundreds of years.'⁶⁴

■ NEEDLEMAKERS

'Forty-four women's names are listed in the Company's records between 1594 and 1950 – either as freemen, widows of apprentices or by patrimony, and 2 as honorary freemen. Many were in various jobs: milliner, haberdasher, tobacconist, grocer, shopkeeper, dealer in glass and earthenware, victualler. It was 1935 when 2 women were made honorary freemen after 60 years of service.'⁶⁵

Of the 1503 apprentices recorded in 1673 only 34 are female. The first female apprentice being Susan Saunders, daughter of John, a grocer of Bristol indentured to John Thomason on 8 January 1673. Two entries of interest are for Amy Harryman, daughter of Thomas a scrivener of Lynn Norfolk, and Thomasine Alston, daughter of William a gentleman in Bedfordshire. Both were indentured to John Pheasant and his wife Francis to make linen and sempstress work, one of the few instances of specific conditions being applied to an apprenticeship.⁶⁶

We have never been restricted exclusively to members actually engaged in the Art and Mystery of Needlemaking and there has been a wide variety of trades which have been free of the Company. Equally, although not acceptable in the Court and ostensibly restricted in the original Bylaws, there have been women among apprentices and Freemen of the Company. For example, in April 1763 Sarah Ament was bound apprentice to Robert Timewell who accepted her without payment. Similarly in December 1774 a male apprentice was bound for seven years to Mary Sargeant, Citizen and needlemaker.⁶⁷

62 Email from Jerome Farrell, Archivist, Leathersellers' Company.

63 Caroline Barron, 'The Golden Age of Women in Medieval London', p.370.

64 Email from Kate Higgins, Assistant Archivist, Mercers' Company.

65 Email from Angie Lewis, Honorary Archivist, Needlemakers' Company.

66 David John de Courcy Henshaw, (2006), *The Worshipful Company of Needlemakers 1656–2006: A Commemoration of 350 Years*, p.16.

67 Ibid., p.20.

The first woman Liveryman was in 1982 – Veronica Mary Stokes, who was an archivist for Coutts bank and also for the Company.

■ PAVIORS

'The Company accepted women members who were widows and who ran their late husbands' businesses. They were not spared responsibility on the grounds of their sex: in 1613 widow Esther Goodwin was fined for work negligently done by her servant.'⁶⁸

■ SADDLERS

'The surviving records of the Saddler's Company and other records occasionally include the names of freewomen but generally little in the way of further detail. We know from wills that women usually became recognised as saddlers in their own right by inheriting property and goods from their husbands. This could also mean shouldering the responsibility of completing the terms of apprenticeship agreements. In 1485, Roger Hykson left 40 shillings and 30 shillings to his two apprentices, Thomas Kyn and John Brygges respectively and bid them 'to be of good beryng toward my wyf during the terme of ther apprenticehode'. In 1538, Alice Danby, widow of saddler Matthew Danby, who died in 1535, was admitted to the Company. She was a woman of some substance, with an apprentice, John Lovykyn, and a servant. In the same year the Good Wife Cooper entered the Company in the same way, as a result of being widowed. There is evidence from another will of a woman becoming a saddler in her own right. In 1589, Susan Ashle was apprenticed to John Scholey, though it is not clear the type of work she carried out. The records of the Royal Household show that women were often employed to decorate and embroider saddles. There is no subsequent record confirming that Susan Ashle, on completing her apprenticeship, was admitted to the freedom of the Company. It was not until much later, in 1923, following the loss of so many young men in the First World War, that the Company decided that daughters as well as sons should be able to apply for admission to the freedom of the Company by Patrimony.'⁶⁹

■ SCRIVENERS

'The first record of a woman being admitted to the Scriveners was in 1665 when Elizabeth Billingsley was apprenticed to James Windus, Master in 1669. Windus also apprenticed Lucy Sanderson and Margaret Alsop in 1677, and Sarah Dutton was admitted by patrimony in 1675.'⁷⁰

■ SPECTACLE MAKERS

'The first official female Freeman of the Spectacle Makers' Company was Lucretia Clarke, daughter of Spectacle Maker John Clarke, and admitted via patrimony on 30 March 1699. She was followed by Esther Burbridge who was apprenticed to her father and became free in January 1721. The earliest minutes, however, dating from 1666, show women paying quarterage, taking on apprentices and fulfilling all the expectations of Freeman of the Company.

'The Company's grant of Livery only came in October 1809. The first Lady Liveryman was Dame Laura Rebecca Marshall (wife of the then Master, former Alderman and Lord Mayor Sir Horace Brookes Marshall) in September 1919. The first female Liveryman by right

68 Email from John Freestone, Clerk, Pavors' Company, quoting an Honorary Archivist.

69 Email from Sue Hurley, Archivist, Saddlers' Company.

70 Email from Giles Cole, Clerk, Scriveners' Company.

after achieving the Company's professional qualifications was Elizabeth Maud Weston, clothed on 1 December 1921.

'We love the story of Frances Troulan, who passed the very first qualifying examination for opticians in November 1898. Following her success, women were barred from taking the examination on the grounds that having many women in the profession might drive down wages (comments were along the lines that there were thousands of girls, e.g. daughters of officers, civil servants and others, who would be glad to enter so respectable and scientific an industry for only a nominal wage). The rules changed back again in 1901. When the first examination in sight-testing was introduced in June 1904 and one of the first to pass it was Frances Troulan. We have her certificate in the office to inspire us!'⁷¹

■ TALLOW CHANDLERS

'Although the first Lady Liveryman was not admitted until recently, the Company has had Lady Freeman and women Apprentices since the mid-1600s.

'A little-known woman is Hester Dare, who became the acting Beadle of the Company on the death of her husband, who had previously been the Beadle, in 1800. She remained in this position for around 11 years, though was never officially appointed.

'Another woman, Mrs Brenda Poole, ran the Hall with her husband (the Beadle), and conducted all the catering for events during the Second World War – despite the obvious adverse conditions.'⁷²

■ TYLERS AND BRICKLAYERS

'What I can tell you with a degree of certainty is that, in the late 17th and 18th centuries, there were at least two instances in which the Court Minutes showed that the wives of their liverymen husbands were admitted to the Livery following the deaths of their husbands who were, at the times in question, master to apprentices. It was recorded, if my memory is accurate, that they would be removed from the Livery once the apprentices had been discharged at the ends of their apprenticeships or if some other liveryman came forward to take on said apprentices.'⁷³

■ UPHOLDERS

'Karin Walton's paper 'The Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London', 1973, shows Freedom admissions 1698–1803 and gives the following details. Sarah Abel (P) 1748, Elizabeth Chapman (S) 1747, Elizabeth Dawson (P) 1758 (daughter of Thomas Dawson), Sarah Halford (P) 1734/5, Katharine Harris 1708/09, Mary Harris 1721/22, Katherine Hubbeck 1712, Jane Lancaster (P) 1748 (daughter of Benjamin Lancaster), Elizabeth Saunders 1712, Sarah Watson (P) 1775 (daughter of Thos. Sutton; widow of Burr Street, Aldgate), Catherine Wood (P) 1725, and Armini Snoxell (A) – but the gender of this last name is unclear. P=Patrimony, S=Servitude, A=Act of Common Council 1750. Where no mode of admission is shown my assumption is that they were probably admitted as widows of Freeman.'⁷⁴

71 Email from Helen Perkins, Clerk, Spectacle Makers' Company.

72 Email from Lizzie De Santos, Archivist, Tallow Chandlers' Company.

73 Email from David Cole-Adams, Archivist and Past Master, Tylers and Bricklayers' Company.

74 Email from John Houston, former Honorary Archivist, Upholders' Company.

■ WHEELWRIGHTS

'Women were admitted to the Freedom of the Company from the beginning in 1670 and continued to mid-nineteenth century. Very few women are mentioned at all (from 1766 to date, the records from 1670 to 1766 having been destroyed in the War) and usually when they had taken over the business of wheelwrighting on the death of their husband; a few were admitted as apprentices and some by patrimony.

'a) Alison and Christine Fox daughters of Sir Henry Murray Fox (Lord Mayor 1974-75) were granted Freedom and then Clothed in June 1976. First ladies since mid-nineteenth century to be granted Freedom.

'b) First and only Lady Master so far was Clare Chisholm in 2014.⁷⁵

■ WOOLMEN

Following the Great War, in 1925 daughters of liverymen became eligible to be apprentices. The Woolmen were quick to appoint their first woman apprentice and Ann Boggis-Rolfe was apprenticed to her father, the Master Elect, in January that year. She became a Freeman of the Company in 1932 at the end of her seven years servitude. The Woolmen had been admitting women to the Freedom of the Company since at least May 1700 when Elizabeth Smart was admitted, followed by half a dozen more women.⁷⁶

The full list of women mentioned in the Woolmen's Freedom Book is:

Mary Brooks, daughter of Edward Brooks, admitted Freeman 1671
 Elizabeth Smart, daughter of George Smart, admitted Freeman by patrimony and testimony of Richard Smart, Citizen and Weaver 1700
 Elizabeth Mason, spinster, admitted Freeman by redemption by order of Court of Aldermen 1713
 Sarah Taylor: William Taylor, son of Sarah Taylor, apprentice to Richard Baker, Woolman, admitted Freeman by service 1734
 Susanna Dinsdale: Joseph Dinsdale, son of Susanna Dinsdale, apprentice to Walter Coleman, Woolman, admitted Freeman by service 1737
 Elizabeth Tilley: John Tilley, son of Elizabeth Tilley widow, apprentice to Benjamin Sankey, Woolman, deceased, admitted Freeman by service 1746
 Sarah Allen: Samuel Allen, son of Sarah Allen Widow, apprentice to George Spencer, Woolman, admitted Freeman by service 1747
 Anna Bagshaw, coatsealer and milliner, admitted into the Freedom of Company of Woolmen by redemption 1752
 Margaret Armitstead, shoe maker, daughter of William Armitstead, admitted into Freedom of the Company by patrimony 1755
 Elizabeth Coulthurst, perfumer, admitted into the freedom of the Company of Woolmen by redemption 1755
 Elizabeth Dimsdale: William Dimsdale, son of Elizabeth Dimsdale, Widow, admitted Freeman by servitude 1758
 Anne Campbell admitted Freeman by redemption March 1810
 Alice Jebb admitted Freeman by redemption May 1810
 Elizabeth Irwin admitted Freeman by redemption May 1823

⁷⁵ Email from Graham Westwell, Assistant Archivist and Past Master Wheelwright.

⁷⁶ Bill Clark, *A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen*

Ann Boggis-Rolfe, daughter of Douglass Horace Boggis-Rolfe (Master 1925), admitted Freeman by servitude 1932 (also the first woman apprentice 1925)

Rosemary Laura Petronilla Hart, admitted Freeman by servitude 1946 (daughter of Howard Percy Hart and sister of John Percy Hart; and uncle of Barry Hughes Jefferson, Master 1992).⁷⁷

'In 1820 the Company took the unusual step of appointing a woman, Mary Head, as Beadle, her husband who had held this job having died suddenly, leaving her and her young son totally unprovided for.'⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Information provided by Bill Clark, Past Master, Woolmen's Company.

⁷⁸ Information provided by Bill Clark, Past Master, Woolmen's Company, quoting Gordon Huelin.

04

A SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL WOMEN

■ ANN ALEXANDER [NÉE BARBER] (1774/5–1861)

Banker and bill broker. While working in the City in a Quaker milliner's establishment, she met William Alexander, a bank clerk, and they were married in 1801 (in Doncaster). In 1810 William started a business as a bill broker, founding the firm of Alexander & Co, with premises at 33 Lombard Street. He died in 1819, following a fall from a coach. Ann took over as principal of the bill-broking firm, at a time when such employment for a woman was entirely unknown. The name of the firm was changed to A.M. Alexander and she took all the profits. Her son George William Alexander, who built up the firm to greatness, was admitted into partnership in 1823 when he came of age, and from 1824 the firm traded as A & G.W. Alexander. Ann remained the senior partner but over time her influence waned as that of her son increased.⁷⁹

■ HANNAH ALLEN [NÉE HOWSE; OTHER MARRIED NAME CHAPMAN] (FL. 1632–64)

Bookseller. Probably the daughter of Robert Howes, bookseller and bookbinder, and his wife, Anne, who baptised a daughter, Anne, on 26 December 1619 in St Botolph, Aldgate, London. She married the bookseller Benjamin Allen (d. 1646) on 2 April 1632 at St Katharine by the Tower and a son, Benjamin, was baptised on 9 August 1635 at St Olave, Hart Street. After her first marriage Hannah lived and worked at The Crown in Pope's Head Alley, an area known for its radical bookshops. It was not until after Benjamin's death in May 1646 that Hannah's role in the business became prominent. Left £150 in Benjamin's will, and with two children to support, she inherited a business already established as sympathetic to Baptist, Independent, and millenarian publishing. She kept on Benjamin's apprentice of three years, Livewell Chapman (1643–65), bound John Allen in 1646, and took a third apprentice, John Garfield, in 1647. Chapman was freed as a stationer in November 1650 and by 12 September of the following year he and Hannah were married. A son, Livewell, was baptised on 2 June 1652 and a daughter, Patience, on 6 December 1653, both at St Mary Abchurch. After her second marriage Hannah's name disappears from imprints and from Stationers' Company records, except for the freeing of apprentices in 1654 and 1655, but it is likely that she still played an important role. If Hannah can be identified as the 'widow Hannah Chapman' listed in the Stationers' Company poor book from 1678 to 1705, then she lived in poverty to a great age.⁸⁰

■ MARGARET ALLEN [NÉE SUTTON] (1933–2015)

Journalist. Educated at the London School of Economics, she was appointed by Margot Naylor, one of only two women financial journalists in the City, as a statistician on a weekly financial magazine, the *Investors' Chronicle*. Naylor offered Allen the job at £500 a year (which, she discovered, was £100 less than was offered to young men). 'Allen's instinctive feminism led her to publicize the extent of sexual discrimination in business and society. At the *Investors' Chronicle*, for example, she telephoned half a dozen insurance companies to inquire whether they took mortgage applications from working women. All said yes. Next, she visited their offices to make formal mortgage applications. All said no.' She worked briefly and unhappily on *The Economist*, where she felt clubbable men made fun of her Lancashire accent (she had been born near Ashton-under-Lyne).

⁷⁹ Gordon Fletcher in *Oxford DNB*.

⁸⁰ Maureen Bell, *Oxford DNB*.

She then worked for the *Evening Standard*, returned briefly to the *Investors' Chronicle* as features editor and then joined *The Times* as deputy editor of the *Times Review of Industry and Technology*. As a member of the Equal Opportunities Commission, she appeared as a witness in a case brought by women journalists in 1958 after an unsuccessful demonstration protesting their exclusion from the counter at *El Vino*, the Fleet Street wine bar. She left *The Times* (where she had been promoted to features editor) after the Murdoch takeover in 1981.⁸¹

■ **ALICIA AMHERST** [MARRIED NAME: ALICIA MARGARET CECIL, LADY ROCKLEY] (1865–1941)

Writer and garden historian. She received the Freedom of both the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and of the City of London after the publication in 1895 of her book *A History of Gardening in England*. This book 'provided a starting point for all later British garden historians'.⁸²

■ **ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON** (1836–1917)

Physician.

EGA was determined to become a doctor but could not practise without a medical licence. She attended courses of lectures privately but was turned down by all the licensing bodies until she approached the Society of Apothecaries. The Apothecaries Act of 1815 said that the licence was open to all 'persons', little thinking that a woman would apply. In September 1865 she presented herself for examination and passed with flying colours, thinking that the examination was easy. So she obtained the legal ability to practise, the first woman doctor in England, by holding the LSA (Licence of the Society of Apothecaries).

The Society was appalled that they had licensed a woman doctor and retreated from repeating the exercise by refusing to accept as valid certificates that had been awarded at private courses. This effectively excluded women, who were not fully accepted until 1888.⁸³

■ **ISABEL BALLY-OTES-FROWYCK** (D.1464)

Twice Lady Mayoress, silkwoman with a career of over 50 years from about 1410 to her death in 1464. She first appears in the records as supplying the Mercers' Company with silk fringe in 1415–16; in 1417 she was left a widow by John Bally, mercer. She had her own shop by this time in Soper Lane abutting Cheapside and they lived on Poultry. She had three children by Bally and soon remarried to the mercer William Otes, who died three years later in 1420. She then married Henry Frowyck, a younger man but probably a business partner of Otes, for the two men apparently shared some apprentices. Frowyck has a very successful career and was twice Mayor of London (1435–36 and 1444–45). Isabel was still running her business when he died.⁸⁴

■ **ALICE BARNHAM** [NÉE BRADBRIDGE] (1523–1604)

Silkwoman and benefactor. Born in Chichester, daughter of a successful mercer. She is now known for having commissioned one of the earliest family portraits in England, dated 1557, in which she appears alongside her two eldest sons (now held in the Berger

⁸¹ Stephen Fay in *Oxford DNB*.

⁸² Jason Tones in *Oxford DNB*.

⁸³ Email from John Ford, Archivist, Society of Apothecaries.

⁸⁴ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.91.

Collection at the Denver Art Museum). Her husband was Francis Barnham (1515/16–76), Draper and Alderman. The family's house on St Clement's Lane, Eastcheap, featured a stone gate and its own garden. Francis Barnham was Master Draper in 1569–70 and 1571–2. He was also a Common Councilman, and a governor of the Bridewell and St Thomas's Hospital, and was then Alderman first of Farringdon Without and then of Tower. He was Sheriff in 1570–71 (i.e. between his two stints as Master Draper). As a merchant Francis Barnham was prohibited from keeping a shop, and the retail branch of the family's business was evidently headed by his wife. Alice Barnham sold fancy fringes and points to the Drapers' Company in the early 1560s, and seems to have had the status of a professional silkwoman, continuing to work and to have apprentices after Francis's death. She was one of the last of the London silkwomen. In her will Alice left an assortment of charitable bequests, including £5 each to the poorest prisoners at several London gaols, £10 to children at Christ's Hospital, £4 to purchase food for inmates of Bedlam, £20 to impoverished students of divinity at Oxford and Cambridge universities, £120 for young merchants in Chichester, and sums of between £5 and £10 to poor persons in London, Hampshire and Sussex. Barnham Street in Southwark is named for Francis's bequest to Christ's Hospital, but in his edition of the *Survey of London* of 1617 Anthony Munday singled out Alice instead, praising her as one of 43 'citizens' wives deserving memory for example to posterity'.⁸⁵

■ **HESTER BATEMAN** [NÉE NEDEN, NEEDHAM] (C. 1708–1794)

Silversmith. Baptised on 7 October 1708 at St Michael-le-Querne, Paternoster Row. She was living in the parish of St Botolph Aldersgate at the time of her marriage on 20 May 1732 to John Bateman (1704–60), wiredrawer and gold chain maker, of St Bartholomew the Less, with whom she had five children. It is reasonable to assume that Hester Bateman may have been involved with the business for some time before her husband died of consumption in 1760. In his will Bateman left his tools to his wife, which suggests that he expected her to continue the business. Although by then in her early fifties Hester Bateman began building on the established business with the help of her workmen and apprentices, and her sons Jonathan and Peter, who were both apprenticed to their sister Letitia's husband, Richard Clarke. She gradually expanded the range and quantity of goods to supply a largely middle-class market using the latest, most cost-efficient manufacturing processes. The firm's deliberate use of new ideas and technology allowed it to compete with the cheap silver and Sheffield plate from Birmingham and Sheffield. Hester Bateman must be credited with the energy and foresight to pursue this strategy which enabled her to turn a small family business into one of the most successful medium-sized manufactories of its day. At the time of her death on 16 September 1794, she was living in the parish of St Andrew, Holborn. She was buried at St Luke's, Old Street, on 26 September.⁸⁶

■ **ISABELLA MARY BEETON** [NÉE MAYSON] (1836–65)

Writer on household management and journalist. Born on 14 March 1836 at Milk Street, the eldest of an enormous family of 21 children, she was mainly brought up by her grandmother in Epsom. On 10 July 1856, at St Martin's, Epsom, Isabella married Samuel Orchart Beeton (1831–1877), the son of Samuel Powell Beeton, an innkeeper at Milk Street, London. They had four sons, the first of whom died in infancy (1857) and the second aged three (1864). Samuel Beeton had already begun to make a name for himself as a publisher and editor. His early involvement in the English edition of Harriet

⁸⁵ Lena Cowen Orlin in *Oxford DNB*.

⁸⁶ Ann Eatwell in *Oxford DNB*.

Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had helped to finance a series of innovative publications. The most important of these for Mrs Beeton was the *English Woman's Domestic Magazine*, a twopenny monthly launched in 1852, which pioneered the middle-class woman's magazine and for which she wrote on domestic matters, her work eventually culminating in *Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1859–61), which in its various editions made 'Mrs Beeton' a household name.⁸⁷

■ HESTER BIDDLE (1629/30–97)

Quaker minister and writer. Married to Thomas Biddle, a cordwainer, before 1655. Until 1666 they lived in the Old Exchange (Royal Exchange), but after the Great Fire they moved south of the river to Bermondsey. Hester became a Quaker in 1654, and thereafter became an active minister and writer. Hester's public criticism of clergy, mayors and magistrates led her into trouble with the authorities, including being put on trial for preaching and being confined for a time to the Bridewell. She died in the parish of St Sepulchre at the age of 67.⁸⁸

■ DOROTHY HENRIETTA BOULGER [NÉE HAVERS] (1847–1923)

Novelist (under pseudonym of Theo Giff). From the early 1870s she wrote stories for various publications, including *Cassell's Magazine*, based in La Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill.⁸⁹ On 22 April 1879 she married the eminent botanist George Simonds Boulger (1853–1922), professor of botany and zoology at the City of London College.

Boulger's work is characterized by a quiet determination to speak up for women, especially for working women, as 'more worthy of respect than those who simply sit and enjoy themselves' (*Dishonoured*, 1890, 2.41). One short story, 'Written to Death' (*A Garden of Girls*, 1880), features a woman who writes art criticism; 'Left Outside' (*Wrecked at the Outset*, 1894), is a gloomy story of a nursery governess betrayed by class and national difference when briefly befriended by an American girl in London, and the other tales in this volume exhibit a sympathetic understanding of the anonymity often experienced by women working in the city.⁹⁰

■ LADY JOAN BRADBURY (C.1450–1530)

'Lady' Joan Bradbury was the widow of Lord Mayor Thomas Bradbury, who died in office in 1510. In accordance with his wishes she began to purchase land in modern-day Covent Garden to form an endowment, which she then left to the Mercers' Company in her will. During the Reformation the land was reduced to 10 acres (from the original 149 acres) which was then seized by the Crown in the reign of Edward VI. The Company paid a fine to get it back and it became corporate property, most of which still belongs to the Company today.⁹¹

Wife, widow, sister and matriarch are all words defining a woman solely in her relationship to other persons, and they are all entirely appropriate to Joan Bradbury. She spent most of her life carrying out the wishes of two husbands and a brother, and providing for her children. Only as the wealthy widow of a lord mayor of London and a potential benefactress was she personally able to command attention from a livery company.⁹²

⁸⁷ Oxford DNB.

⁸⁸ Elaine Hobby & Catie Gill, Oxford DNB.

⁸⁹ See <https://web.archive.org/web/20090211130011/http://www.booksandwriters.co.uk/writer/C/cassell-co-ltd.asp>

⁹⁰ Kate Flint, Oxford DNB.

⁹¹ Email from Kate Higgins, Assistant Archivist, Mercers' Company.

⁹² Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p298.

Joan's last illness took place at her London house during the winter of 1530. She had to attend her Dr Richard Bartlett, 'famous for his medical knowledge and great experience', a past president of the College of Physicians and a future physician to Henry VIII and his daughter, Princess Mary. She died about the end of March, and was buried at the side of Thomas Bradbury in the Lady Chapel of St Stephen Coleman Street.⁹³

■ DAME (MADELINE) DOROTHY BROCK (1886–1969)

Headmistress. In January 1918, just turned thirty-one (and the youngest of fifty applicants), Dorothy Brock became headmistress of the Mary Datchelor, an endowed girls' grammar school in Camberwell, supported and managed by the Clothworkers' Company. Here she was content to stay, declining attractive invitations to move elsewhere, until she retired in 1950. She made the school famous: for its scholarly attainments, achieved in part by unconventional teaching methods; for the variety of careers it opened to its pupils, in industry, commerce, and social service, as well as more traditional occupations such as nursing, and particularly for its all-pervasive music.⁹⁴ Dorothy Brock received the Freedom of the City of London in 1936.

■ AGNES BULMER [NÉE COLLINSON] (1775–1836)

Writer and poet. Born in Lombard Street on 31 August 1775, the third daughter of Edward Collinson (d. 1809) and his wife, Elizabeth, née Ball, of Lombard Street, London. She was a bright girl who left school at fourteen, but continued to study throughout her lifetime. Deeply religious, she was an active member of the Church of England, as well as participating in Methodist society. She was the recipient of a letter from John Wesley (28 March 1788), and was admitted into the City Road society in December 1793. Also in 1793, she married Joseph Bulmer of London, who died in 1822 after a protracted illness. Agnes Bulmer's publications include: *Memoirs of Mrs Elizabeth Mortimer* (1836), *Scripture Histories* (3 vols., 1837–8), and a long poem entitled *Messiah's Kingdom*, in twelve books, published in 1833.⁹⁵

■ ELIZABETH CALVERT (D.1675?)

Bookseller. The wife of Giles Calvert (bap. 1615, d. 1663) and sister-in-law of the Quaker Martha Simmonds. The Calverts' shop at the Black Spread Eagle at the west end of St Paul's Churchyard was a major source of radical and Quaker publications during the periods of the civil war and Commonwealth. After the Restoration Elizabeth Calvert carried on the trade in republican, nonconformist and oppositional literature, taking a central role in arranging the printing and distribution of radical pamphlets. Despite repeated imprisonments, deaths, consequent debts, and the destruction of her shop in the Great Fire of 1666, Calvert persisted in her trade, continuing to publish both openly and surreptitiously. In February 1674 she bound the last of her four apprentices, on 19 October she made her will, and she died probably in early 1675, her will being proved on 5 February 1675.⁹⁶

■ ELIZABETH, LADY CAMPDEN [NÉE MAY] (D. C.1642)

Benefactress. On her death, Lady Campden bequeathed £3,100 to the Mercers' Company for the purchase of two church livings in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire or the Bishopric

⁹³ Ibid., p.329.

⁹⁴ Janet Sondheimer, *Oxford DNB*.

⁹⁵ Rebecca Mills, *Oxford DNB*.

⁹⁶ Maureen Bell, *Oxford DNB*.

of Durham. She also gave £1,000 to be lent to eight young men, free of the Company, with the aim of helping establish them in business following apprenticeship. This charity is known as 'Lady Campden's Legacy for Loans' and is administered by the Company to this day. Today the charity gives loans or grants to persons over the age of 18 years, with a preference for Freemen of the Company who require financial assistance to prepare for, or establish themselves in, their chosen profession, trade or calling.⁹⁷

Elizabeth's husband was Baptist Hicks, first Viscount Campden (1551?–1629), mercer and moneylender, who was brought up in, and inherited, his father's flourishing mercers' business at the White Bear in Cheapside. He became one of the most important individual lenders to the early Stuart kings. Elizabeth, whose father was a Merchant Taylor, married Baptist in 1574. He was created a baronet in 1620, served as MP for Tavistock during the 1620s, and was raised to the peerage as Baron Hicks of Ilmington, Warwickshire, and Viscount Campden of Campden, Gloucestershire on 5 May 1628.⁹⁸

■ ELIZABETH CASLON [NÉE CARTLICH] (1730–95)

Typesetter. Born in Foster Lane on 31 May 1730, the daughter of William Cartlich, refiner, of Foster Lane, and his wife, Elizabeth. She was baptised on 4 June at St John Zachary. On 25 June 1751 she married William Caslon (1720–1778), typesetter, of Chiswell Street; they had two sons. When her husband died intestate, on 17 August 1778, Elizabeth and her sons each inherited one third share of the typesetting business, which she continued, trading as Elizabeth Caslon & Sons. She was a talented businesswoman, having assisted her husband during his lifetime in the management of the foundry. In 1785 the firm produced an extensive type specimen book on 64 leaves, dedicated to George III. Elizabeth was an active member of the Society of Typesetters, which she helped to establish in 1793. She died in London on 24 October 1795 from the effects of a paralytic stroke. The management of the Chiswell Street foundry was taken over by her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Caslon.⁹⁹

■ DAME AGATHA MARY CLARISSA CHRISTIE [NÉE MILLER] (1890–1976)

'As part of the War Effort, Agatha Christie worked as a nurse and then in the dispensary of the Red Cross Hospital at Torquay. She was instructed in pharmacy which included the safe and unsafe dose of drugs and the use of poisons. In 1917 she attended Apothecaries' Hall to be examined as an Apothecaries' Assistant which qualified her to work in a pharmacy under the direction of a doctor or pharmacist. Passing this examination validated her pharmaceutical knowledge which she later put to good use.'¹⁰⁰

■ ALICE CLAVER

One of the most successful silkwomen of later fifteenth-century London, who must have taught many apprentices in her 33 years of widowhood. As silkwoman to the Yorkist kings and their courtiers, she is one of the rare silkwomen whose goods can be glimpsed in the great wardrobe accounts of the kings of England, giving us some idea of the scope and quality of her trade. She supplied work to decorate Edward IV's books and the mantle laces for the coronation robes of Richard III and Queen Anne, among other items. Her mercer husband, Richard Claver, died in November 1456 and her only son, Richard, died early in his career as a mercer. She never remarried and left her business to her favourite apprentice, Katherine Champion, who married a mercer in her turn, Thomas Miles.

⁹⁷ Email from Joanne Higgins, Assistant Archivist, Mercers' Company.

⁹⁸ Robert Ashton, *Oxford DNB*.

⁹⁹ Ian Maxted in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁰⁰ John Ford, Archivist, Society of Apothecaries.

Miles was still living in Alice's great house on Cateaton Street (now Gresham Street) in 1500. Alice had paid over £8 a year rent to the Mercers for this house, a sure sign of the success of her business.¹⁰¹

[Alice's] life is particularly conspicuous for its revelation of female networks of apprenticeship and employment as well as friendship and support, independent of, and existing alongside, the more visible business networks of their male relatives. She was extremely close to Beatrice Fyler, a fellow silkwoman – between them they must have been acquainted with every silkwoman in the city – and Alice did Beatrice the final service of acting as one of her executors [...] Alice channelled considerable affection and energy into her network of female friends, her large household of apprentices, trained silkwomen or 'servants' waiting to get married and set up their own households and workshops, and what appears to have been a long line of children taken in for charity and prepared for apprenticeship and adult life. Underpinning all her activities were Alice's talents for her craft and for business which attracted the patronage of three kings and a queen of England.¹⁰²

■ MONICA MARY GEIKIE COBB (1891–1946)

Barrister. Born in Winchester, the third child and only daughter of the Revd William Frederick Cobb, Rector of St Ethelburga, Bishopsgate, from 1900 until 1941, William became known for his support for marriage reform and other liberal causes; he allowed divorced people to remarry in his church, and spoke at the funeral of Emmeline Pankhurst in 1928. Monica became a student at University College, London, gaining the London University degrees of BA in philosophy in 1914, and LLB in 1921. The legal profession being opened to women by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act (1919), which came into force on 23 December 1919, Monica became the second woman to join the Middle Temple (after Helena Normanton), on 2 January 1920. She kept the required 12 dining terms in its hall and in October 1921 passed her bar final examinations in the second class. On 17 November 1922 Monica Cobb was called to the bar at the Middle Temple, alongside Helena Normanton, Ethel Bright Ashford, Beatrice Davy, and five other women.¹⁰³ She was pupil to Theobald Mathew of 4 Paper Buildings.

■ JOHANNA COCK (D. 1762)

Stockbroker. A widow, and one of the biggest 'jobbers' in Bank of England stock but, like many, she was made bankrupt after the South Sea Bubble in 1720. She died in Camberwell, at the age of 86.¹⁰⁴

■ CATHERINE [RACHEL] DE COSTA [NÉE MENDES] (1679–1756)

Miniature painter. Born in London in 1679, the eldest daughter of Dr Fernando (Moses) Mendes (1647–1724) and his wife, Isabel (Rachel) Henriques (d. 1691), daughter of Diego Rodrigues Marques. Fernando Mendes was physician to Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, and shared a household with his brother-in-law and cousin, Alvaro da Costa, at Budge Row in the City of London and at Highgate House (later called Cromwell House), where the children of both families were brought up as Jews. Catherine married Alvaro's eldest son, Anthony Moses da Costa, in Bevis Marks synagogue on 13 August 1698. Like his father he was a prosperous merchant. The couple lived in Winchester Street, off London Wall, and in the house on Highgate Hill. Catherine learned miniature

101 Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, pp.97–8.

102 *Ibid.*, p.115.

103 Caroline Derry, *Oxford DNB*.

104 Email from Jerome Farrell, Archivist, Leathersellers' Company.

painting from Bernard Lens the younger (1682–1740) and was one of the earliest artists to paint in watercolours on ivory. Most of her known paintings are miniatures of her family and friends. She died on 11 December 1756 in London and was buried in the Portuguese Jews, new cemetery, Mile End. She bequeathed her miniatures to her son, Abraham, for life, to be divided after his death between the families of her four daughters. Some of these are in the Amsterdam Jewish Historical Museum. Catherine da Costa was a well-trained and accomplished amateur miniaturist and the earliest known English-born Jewish artist.¹⁰⁵

■ **ANGELA GEORGINA BURDETT-COUTTS** [BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS]
(1814–1906)

Philanthropist. Born on 21 April 1814 at 80 Piccadilly, London, the youngest of the six children of Sir Francis Burdett (1770–1844), politician, and his wife, Sophia (*d.* 1844), the youngest daughter of Thomas Coutts (1735–1822), banker, and his first wife, Susannah Starkie (*d.* 1815). The fame that Burdett-Coutts had achieved as a philanthropist was acknowledged when, on 19 June 1871, she was raised to the peerage in her own right as Baroness Burdett-Coutts of Highgate and Brookfield, Middlesex. Public recognition of her work in London came with the award of the Freedom of the City on 18 July 1872, the first woman to be awarded the Honorary Freedom. Several of the Livery Companies paid her a similar tribute: the Turners (1872), the Clothworkers (1873), the Haberdashers (1880) and the Coachmakers (1894).¹⁰⁶

■ **MARGARET DANE** (D. 1579)

Margaret, the daughter of a wealthy mercer named Edmund Kempe of Olantigh near Wye in Kent, married William Dane on 12 May 1542; they had one son who died young. William Dane bequeathed £10 to the [Ironmongers'] Company to hold a dinner at his funeral and was buried at St Margaret Moses in Bread Street; he also left £50 to found a school in Bishop's Stortford. On her husband's death, Margaret Dane took over his linen business with its Ironmongers' apprentices. It supplied linen to the royal household and in her will of 16 May 1579 she bequeathed a £200 gold necklace to Elizabeth I and a £100 gold chain to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the queen's favourite. Margaret Dane also made a number of charitable bequests, including £2,000 to the Ironmongers' Company for £100 each to be lent to twenty young Ironmongers (preferably linen drapers) for three-year periods with sufficient security for its repayment. From the £100 received as interest, Mrs Dane directed that the Company should make annual distributions to various good causes: £10 each to Christ's Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital and St Thomas's Hospital in Southwark; £10 annually to twenty "poor maids, at their marriages"; £5 each to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge for two "poor scholars" with certain conditions; £10 in bread and beef to be distributed annually amongst the prisoners "in Newgate, Ludgate, the two Comptery, the Queen's Bench, the Marshalsea, the White Lion in Southwark, and the Convict House in Westminster"; £5 towards the school to be established at Bishop's Stortford (or to its poor if the school was not founded); 12,000 faggots to be distributed "at Christmas and Hallowtide" for the poorest people of the City of London; and finally, funds for an annual dinner to be held at Ironmongers' Hall in her memory. There is a portrait of her at Ironmongers' Hall.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Edgar Samuel, *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁰⁶ Edna Healey, *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁰⁷ Email from Justine Taylor, Archivist, Ironmongers' Company, quoting from *One Hundred Treasures of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers*, ed. by Robert Stedall & Justine Taylor.

■ **MARY EDWARDS** (1705?–43)

Art patron (and investor). The only child of Francis Edwards (d. 1729), of Welham Grove, Leicestershire, Ketton, Rutland, and Soho Square, London, and his wife, Anna Margaretha Vernatti (d. in or after 1743). Both her parents were wealthy. Francis Edwards owned property in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Middlesex, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Kent, and in the City of London. When Francis Edwards died in 1729 (intestate), his widow renounced all claims to his estate in favour of Mary, who thus became his sole heir. At the age of about 23, Mary Edwards was reputedly the richest woman in England, with a fortune of between £50,000 and £60,000. Two years later she fell briefly in love with Lord Anne Hamilton (b. 1709), an ensign in the 2nd regiment of guards and a younger son of the fourth duke of Hamilton. Later evidence shows that Mary Edwards never claimed to be a married woman and never styled herself Hamilton. Mary Edwards lived openly with Lord Anne Hamilton for two or three years. Her break with the spendthrift Lord Anne was precipitated by finding that he had appropriated £1,200 of her Bank of England stock and £500 of her India stock. She was a patron to William Hogarth.¹⁰⁸

■ **FLORENCE FEEK** (1876–1940)

Worked as a Clerk in the Post Office Money Order Department at St Martin le Grand. She was arrested as a suffragette on 31 March 1909, along with other members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), when they tried to gain access to the House of Commons to meet with Prime Minister Asquith, and she was imprisoned for a month (which used up her annual leave). She retired from the Post Office at the age of 60, after having been employed there for more than 40 years. She died in an air raid in Plaistow.¹⁰⁹

■ **ETHEL GORDON FENWICK** [NÉE MANSON] (1857–1947)

Founder of the International Council of Nurses and leader of the campaign for state registration of nurses in Britain, she was born Ethel Gordon Manson on 26 January 1857 at Spynie House near Elgin, Moray, the third child of David Davidson Manson, physician and farmer, and his wife, Harriette. From an early age Manson showed a strong will and sense of purpose and decided that she would be a nurse. She started her training at the age of 21 at the Children's Hospital, Nottingham, and went on for a further year at the Royal Infirmary, Manchester. She was then offered the position of sister at the London Hospital. She proved herself to be a capable manager and two years later, at the age of 23, was appointed matron of St Bartholomew's Hospital. It was a time of rapid advances in medical knowledge, and nursing was undergoing many changes as it strove to keep pace with the expanding role of the hospital. Manson accepted the challenge of her new job with enthusiasm and spent six happy years at St Bartholomew's, achieving many improvements in nursing practice and in the nurses' working conditions. In 1887, having decided that she wished to have a family, she resigned her position to marry Dr Bedford Fenwick (1855–1939), a successful London physician. Following her marriage, Ethel Gordon Fenwick was in a position to devote her time and energy to the cause which became her passion, the professional development of nurses, and it is for her achievements in this field that, as Mrs Bedford Fenwick, she is best known.¹¹⁰

■ **MARGERIE FISH** [NÉE TOWNSHEND] (1892–1969)

Gardener and author. Born at 16 Eastbank, Stamford Hill, London, on 5 August 1892, the second of the four daughters of Ernest Townshend, City of London commercial traveller

¹⁰⁸ Judy Egerton, *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.postalmuseum.org/blog/suffragette-florence-feek/>

¹¹⁰ Susan McGann, *Oxford DNB*.

in tea, and his wife, Florence Harriet, née Buttfeld. Margery had a 20-year career in Fleet Street. After working for the advertising director of Associated Newspapers, she accompanied Lord Northcliffe as his personal assistant on the Northcliffe British war mission to the United States in 1916, for which she was appointed MBE. She then worked as secretary for six *Daily Mail* editors, including Thomas Marlowe and finally Walter Fish, a widower, whom she married on 2 March 1933, three years after he retired from the newspaper. Despite the long hours required in newspaper offices she found time to write freelance articles for the women's pages of the *Daily Mail*, *Evening News*, and some provincial newspapers, as well as reviewing books.¹¹¹

■ BEATRICE FITZANDREW-FYLER (D.1479)

Had a substantial business from the 1430s to 1479. Her authority and status as a silkwoman were such that her husband permitted her to make her own will. She was the daughter and co-heiress of a London draper and married Thomas Fyler, mercer. They had seven children, of whom at least two died before Beatrice and all but one daughter before Thomas. This daughter, Joan, who married two mercers, Thomas Rawson and then John Marshall, had probably learnt the craft from her mother; she served as an executor of her mother with the aid of the silkwoman Alice Claver and her own eldest brother, Edward.¹¹²

■ CHARLOTTE FORMAN (1715–1787)

Journalist and translator, writing under the pseudonym 'Probus', buried at St Bride's Fleet Street. She was born on 23 October 1715, perhaps in England, one of five children of Charles Forman, an Irish Jacobite and pamphleteer, and his wife, Mary. Though she was virtually unknown in her lifetime, her career as a newspaper journalist has significance 'because of the light it sheds on the history of journalism and because she was one of the few women of the period who wrote successfully about subjects conventionally considered masculine. She is not known to have published anything under her own name and she almost certainly published some works anonymously that cannot now be attributed to her.'¹¹³ Forman was the author of a long series of topical political essays that first appeared in the *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* between 1756 and 1760. The *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* was printed by Charles Say in Newgate Street. Her series continued in 1760 in the *Public Ledger, or, Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence*, which was printed for the publisher W. Bristow at the register office 'next the Great Toy-Shop in St Paul's Churchyard'.¹¹⁴ Both these newspapers were designed to appeal to London merchants, traders and shopkeepers. Despite the popularity of her articles, and her work as a translator (also for newspapers), she was often afflicted by desperate poverty and spent some time in the Marshalsea prison as a debtor. She died on 23 December 1787.

■ ELIZABETH FRY [NÉE GURNEY] (1780–1845)

Penal reformer and philanthropist. Born on 21 May 1780 at Magdalen Street, Norwich, the fourth of twelve children, seven daughters and five sons, of John Gurney, a merchant and banker, and Catherine Bell. Her parents were both descendants of old Quaker families. On 19 August 1800 Elizabeth Gurney married Joseph Fry (1777–1861), a young man from a family of orthodox and wealthy Quakers. The Fry business dealt in colonial wares; in 1808 Joseph started a bank as well. Between 1801 and 1816 the couple had

¹¹¹ Catherine Horwood, *Oxford DNB*.

¹¹² Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.93.

¹¹³ Susan Staves in *Oxford DNB*.

¹¹⁴ British Library, Burney Collection, Gale Document Number: Z2001234738.

ten children; an eleventh child was born in 1822. They first lived at St Mildred's Court in London, but in 1809 moved to Plashet House in East Ham. Despite her busy family life, Elizabeth Fry undertook work in the community and in 1811 she was acknowledged as a Quaker minister. Early in 1813 she visited the women's side of Newgate prison, where she saw several hundred female prisoners with their children, packed in a few crowded and poorly supervised rooms. She became a pioneer in her attempts to improve the situation of female prisoners. When she returned to Newgate in about December 1816, her first innovation was the establishment of a little school for the prisoners' children. After discussions with the prisoners and meetings with the prison authorities, Fry and her female collaborators introduced a system of classification of the prisoners, prison dress, constant supervision by a matron and monitors (chosen from among the prisoners), religious and elementary education, and paid employment. The result was a remarkable transformation in the conduct especially of convicted prisoners (although the removal of alcohol and playing cards was not universally welcomed). The work gained a more permanent basis in April 1817 with the creation of the Ladies' Association for the Reformation of the Female Prisoners in Newgate, extended in 1821 into the British Ladies' Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners.¹¹⁵

■ MARGARET GILLIES (1803–87)

Painter. Born on 7 August 1803 in Throgmorton Street and baptised on 6 February 1804 at St Benet Fink, Threadneedle Street, the fourth of the five children of William Gillies, corn merchant, and his wife, Charlotte Hester Bonnor, daughter of the Gloucestershire engraver and topographical artist Thomas Bonnor. After the death of their mother in 1811 and as a result of their father's precarious position as a corn merchant in London, the Gillies children were brought up by relatives in Scotland. About 1819, having refused an offer of marriage, Margaret and her elder sister Mary Gillies returned to their father's house in London, both determined to earn a living as painter and writer respectively. Margaret's sitters—many of whom were writers, intellectuals, and social reformers—included Harriet Martineau, Jeremy Bentham, Leigh Hunt, Charles Dickens and William Wordsworth.¹¹⁶

■ ANNE GRIFFIN (B. 1595)

Publisher, printer and stationer. Anne Griffin was to become one of the most active widow stationers of the early modern period. In 1621 the death of her husband, Edward Griffin, left her with a printing house near the King's Head at the Little Old Bailey, and debts of £800. She forged a partnership with John Haviland, and the two formed a larger syndicate with Robert Young and Miles Flesher to continue the Eliot's Court Press. Griffin's finances appear to have improved, but were never secure. Nineteen extant editions identify her as their printer, and she entered a total of fifty-five items in the Stationers' Registers after 1621. The date of her death is unknown.¹¹⁷

■ HARRIET GROTE [NÉE LEWIN] (1792–1878)

Woman of letters. Born on 1 July 1792 at Ridgeway, near Southampton, Hampshire, the fifth of twelve children of Thomas Lewin, retired employee of the East India Company, and Mary Hale. She had four sisters and seven brothers. Harriet Lewin's interests changed dramatically during her courtship by George Grote (1794–1871), the radical politician and historian of Greece. He was obliged to work in his father's bank, but he

¹¹⁵ Francisca de Haan, *Oxford DNB*.

¹¹⁶ Charlotte Yeldham, *Oxford DNB*.

¹¹⁷ Helen Smith, *Oxford DNB*.

was dedicated to scholarship and had strong opinions about politics. Expecting his future wife to share his interests and eager to set her on the right path, he guided her through classic texts of political economy and philosophy. She was an apt student and adopted his opinions about utilitarian ethics, radical politics of the Benthamite variety, Malthusianism, political economy, and atheism, and the direction of her thinking was set for the remainder of her life. After being acquainted for five years and engaged for two, Harriet Lewin and George Grote eloped and married on 5 March 1820, since Grote's father refused to agree to a date for their marriage. Initially they lived in Stoke Newington, with another dwelling at the bank in Threadneedle Street. There was one child, a son, born prematurely in 1820, who survived for only a week. Now Harriet was introduced to Grote's circle of radical and intellectual friends, notably Jeremy Bentham, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill and Joseph Parkes, and their influence moved her further towards political radicalism. In 1832 Grote was elected to parliament for the City of London, and became the leading spokesman for the philosophic radicals, a parliamentary faction advocating constitutional reforms, especially a greatly extended suffrage, frequent parliaments, and a secret ballot. Harriet's active involvement in politics came to an end after Grote's refusal to seek re-election in 1841.¹¹⁸

■ ELIZABETH HANBURY [NÉE SANDERSON] (1793–1901)

Philanthropist and centenarian. Born in Leadenhall Street on 9 June 1793, the younger daughter of John Sanderson, a tea merchant, and his second wife, Margaret, née Shillitoe. Possibly because of the early loss of their mother in 1795, Elizabeth and her sister Mary were soon actively engaged in the life of the Quaker circle in which they were raised, working in the anti-slavery movement and visiting Newgate prison with Elizabeth Fry. Elizabeth Sanderson was especially concerned with improving the conditions of women sentenced to transportation, and also campaigned against capital punishment for minor offences. On 21 November 1826 she married Cornelius Hanbury (1796–1869), a chemist of Plough Court, Lombard Street, who was a partner with his first wife's father, William Allen, in the pharmaceutical firm of Allen, Hanburys, and Barry. Cornelius and Elizabeth Hanbury continued as active members of the Society of Friends, and Elizabeth was acknowledged as a minister in 1833. Their home was at Stoke Newington, though they often spent some winter months in their other London house at Plough Court. Elizabeth retained her sight until her 105th year, and up to her death could hear with the aid of an ear-trumpet. She died at Dynevor House, Richmond, on 31 October 1901, aged 108 years, 4 months, and 3 weeks, and was buried in the Quaker burial-ground at Wellington on 5 November.¹¹⁹

■ WINIFRED EMILY HECTOR (1909–2002)

Nurse and educator, Hector began as a probationer at St Bartholomew's Hospital in 1933. Apart from a year at King's College of Household and Social Science and a short period at Manchester Royal Infirmary, she lived in its environs all her life. Hector's teaching career at Barts heralded some exciting changes in the way nurses were taught, there and elsewhere. She was shocked to learn that she was to teach about the male urinary tract without pictures or diagrams, and advocated a more progressive approach. She acquired much useful equipment for the school of nursing, which she moved from its dour underground home to more salubrious surroundings within the hospital. She also introduced lectures on psychiatric illness, which had not figured previously in the syllabus. Hector was the author of several important textbooks for nurses.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Hamburger, *Oxford DNB*.

¹¹⁹ Timothy C.F. Stunt, *Oxford DNB*.

In 1956 she published her first book, *Modern Gynaecology with Obstetrics for Nurses* (with John Hawkins). This was followed in 1960 by *Modern Nursing: Theory and Practice*, and in 1967 by *A Textbook of Medicine for Nurses* (with G. Hamilton Fairley). She also wrote extensively for the *Nursing Times* and the *British Medical Journal*. She was awarded an MPhil for her work on the controversial nurse Ethel Gordon Manson (Mrs Bedford Fenwick), and later an honorary DSc, both from City University. She retained her love for botany throughout her life, was a successful amateur naturalist, an avid cricket fan, and a great traveller, and was fascinated by the Anglo-Saxon language and especially by *Beowulf*. Among her admirers was the poet Sir John Betjeman, who frequently visited Barts to talk to elderly patients.¹²⁰ A long-term resident of Crescent House on the Golden Lane Estate, Miss Hector (as she was still universally known) died on 14 September 2002 at the Royal London Hospital.

■ ROSAMOND DAVENPORT HILL (1825–1902)

Social reformer and educational administrator. Born in Chelsea on 4 August 1825, the eldest of the three daughters of Matthew Davenport Hill and Margaret Bucknall. Her father was the first Recorder of Birmingham, and one of her uncles was Sir Rowland Hill. The most public period of Rosamond's life began in 1879. The Education Act of 1870 had created a network of locally elected school boards, with the significant innovation of women being able to serve on them. When Rosamond Davenport Hill was elected in December 1879 as a Progressive member of the London school board for the City of London she became one of a handful of pioneer women school board members. She served until 1897. As a school board member Rosamond was noted for her activities in relation to industrial schools and also for her advocacy of the introduction of what would become known as domestic science courses for girls.¹²¹

■ RUTH HOMAN [NÉE WATERLOW] (1850–1938)

Educationist and women's welfare campaigner. Born on 8 August 1850 at 5 Gloucester Terrace, Hoxton Old Town, London, the eldest daughter of the three sons and five daughters of Sir Sydney Hedley Waterlow (1822–1906), stationer and MP, and his first wife, Anna Maria, the younger daughter of William Hickson, London merchant and manufacturer. Ruth spent her childhood at Waterlow Park; little else is known of her early life. On 7 May 1873 she married Francis Wilkes Homan, the son of Ebenezer Homan of Wormwood Street. Left a widow in 1880, with one daughter, she accompanied her father, sister Hilda, and brother Paul on a tour of Canada and the United States in 1881. Widely travelled, she had by 1896 been round the world three times. Ruth Homan's candidature for the London school board in 1891 was practically her first experience of public work. She first became a school manager in Chelsea in 1887, then, to extend her knowledge of cookery, health, and hygiene, followed the course of artisan and scullery cooking classes at South Kensington School of Cookery, going on to serve as a probationer at St Bartholomew's Hospital, of which her father was treasurer. Ruth Homan gave all her spare time to the work of the board. She continued to run a boot and clothing help society in the schools, and used her position as a member of the committee of the London School Dinners Association to supply free school meals to needy East End children during the winter months. She was also vice-president of the Pupil-Teachers Association and member of a Club for Working Girls in the City.¹²²

¹²⁰ Jane Brooks, *Oxford DNB*.

¹²¹ Deborah Sara Gorham in *Oxford DNB*.

¹²² Jane Martin in *Oxford DNB*.

■ LAURA MARTHA HONEY [NÉE YOUNG] (1816?–43)

Actress. Said to have been born on 6 December 1816, the daughter of Mrs Young, an actress at Sadler's Wells. In 1837 she undertook the management of the City of London Theatre (in Norton Folgate, 35/36 Bishopsgate),¹²³ where she played Tom Tug in *The Waterman*, Myrtilla in Planché's *Riquet with the Tuft*, and in *The Spirit of the Rhine* by Morris Barnett. In her last season she performed at the Haymarket and in the provinces, and returned to the City of London. 'She was a pleasing and graceful actress, particularly in breeches roles, and a delightful ballad singer, but her performances were practically confined to the lightest class of entertainment.'¹²⁴

■ ELINOR [ELEANOR] JAMES [NÉE BANCKES] (1644/5–1719)

Printer and polemicist. At the age of 17, she married Thomas James (c.1640–1709/10), a journeyman printer, in the parish of St Olave, Silver Street. Elinor James continued printing after she was widowed, declaring about 1715, 'I have been in the element of Printing above forty years' (James, *Mrs James's Advice to All Printers*). Between 1681 and 1716 she wrote, printed, and distributed more than 90 broadsides and pamphlets addressing political, religious and commercial concerns. She typically entitled her papers *Mrs. James's Advice*, *Mrs. James's Vindication*, and so on, and printed her name in huge letters at the top of her texts. The papers are addressed to six monarchs, the houses of Lords and Commons, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, and others, and they comment on national events such as the revolution of 1688, the Act of Union, and the Jacobite risings of 1715. She also advised City of London leaders on issues ranging from mayoral elections to the enforcement of City by-laws and commented on trade issues such as the management of the East India and South Sea companies and the economic disadvantages of a free press. In her own time James was satirized as 'London City Godmother' (see, for instance, *A Catalogue of Books to be Sold by Auction at the City-Godmother's in Mincing-Lane*, n.d. [1702]). As the title of her paper *Mrs Elinor James's Speech to the Citizens of London at Guild-Hall* (1705) suggests, James combined print petitioning with oral activism. Her papers allude to her public political activities at sites such as Guildhall, Whitehall and Westminster, and her claims are often supported by external evidence. In November 1687 she disrupted a meeting at Grocers' Hall where a nonconformist minister was preaching before the Lord Mayor, and caused such a disturbance that Robert Spencer, earl of Sunderland, recorded the incident in a letter to a fellow peer. In 1710 James served as the executor of her husband's will and chose to donate his extraordinary personal library of some 3,000 books to Sion College. She also donated portraits of Charles I, Charles II, her husband and herself. James died some time before 13 July 1719 and was buried on 19 July, probably in St Dunstan-in-the-East.¹²⁵ James was among the most prolific and politically active women writers of the later Stuart period. A middle-class tradeswoman with a printing press in her own home, her works chronicling the national events of a tumultuous period are a unique resource for the recovery of popular female involvement in early modern political culture.¹²⁵

■ ELLEN LANGWITH (D. 1481)

Silkwoman. Ellen was already a successful craftswoman while she was married to her first husband, Philip Waltham, a Cutler like his father Richard before him. The Waltham family had lived in the parish of St Martin Ludgate since the fourteenth century. Her second husband was a Taylor, and Ellen was a benefactress to both Companies. From

¹²³ See <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/CityOfLondonTheatre.htm>

¹²⁴ Joseph Knight in *Oxford DNB*.

¹²⁵ Paula McDowell in *Oxford DNB*.

1473 onwards until her death she was always invited to the Cutlers' cony feast, the main winter feast of the company. This event was attended by liverymen and their wives, and by special guests of the company, such as the master of Whittington College, near Cutlers' Hall, together with various city officials. That Ellen Langwith was included among the important guests of the company is significant. It would seem from the wording of the Cutlers' accounts that Ellen and her maid attended the feast in Cutlers' Hall until 1475 but from 1476 onwards a 'cony and a hen' were sent home to Ellen who may, by this time, have been too infirm to attend the feast at the hall. The last dinner was sent to her in the winter of 1480–81, at about the time she drew up her will, from which it is clear that her personal loyalties (albeit not her property which went exclusively to the Taylors, doubtless in deference to the wishes of her second husband) were equally divided between the Cutlers and the Taylors. She asked that of the twelve poor men who were to hold the tapers around her body at her funeral service, two were to be cutlers and two were to be tailors. Moreover she wanted two brethren of each craft to accompany her body from her house to the parish church of St Mary Abchurch where she was to be buried in the chapel of St John the Baptist with her late (second) husband.¹²⁶

■ LADY JOAN LAXTON (D. 1576)

'When Elizabeth [I], in a certain contingency, called for a loan of some £8000 from the London merchants, the Lady Joan Laxton advanced £1100 at the rate offered, 12 per cent per annum. She was several times a creditor of the Crown.'¹²⁷ Joan was the widow of Sir William Laxton, a Liveryman of the Grocers' Company and Lord Mayor in 1544–45, who conducted one of the examinations of Anne Askew (martyred for her Protestant faith in Smithfield in 1546). Before her marriage to Laxton, Joan, the daughter and heir of William Kirkeby, gentleman, of London, had been married to Henry Luddington (d.1531), citizen and grocer of London. Sir William died in 1556 and Joan survived him for 20 years, as 'one of the wealthiest inhabitants of London, a substantial purchaser of real estate, and a powerful matriarch'.¹²⁸

■ JUDITH LEVY (1706–1803)

Benefactor. Born in London, the second of the six children of Moses Hart (1675–1756), merchant and broker, and his wife, Prudence Heilbuth. Levy's father, the leading figure in the German Jewish community in Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century, was one of the 12 authorized 'Jew brokers' on the Royal Exchange. In 1727 she married a cousin, Elias Levy (1702–1750), a diamond merchant and army contractor. They lived first in Bishopsgate, and then in a large mansion in Wellclose Square, an area favoured by wealthy City merchants. As was common in Jewish mercantile families at the time, she took an active part in the family business. When her husband died in 1750, and then her father in 1756, she was left a very wealthy woman, with an annual income of about £6,000. Two of their children, Benjamin and Isabella, survived infancy, but the former died at age twenty-two, leaving his sister heir to a great fortune. Through the intervention of the duchess of Northumberland, a noted matchmaker with a reputation for procuring wealthy brides for well-born younger sons, Isabella married Lockhart Gordon, third son of the earl of Aboyne, in an Anglican ceremony in 1753. However, she did not enjoy her good fortune for long, dying within a year, possibly in childbirth. In the wake of her daughter's tragic death, Levy abandoned her mansion in Wellclose Square and moved to the West End, to a house in Albemarle Street. Her most notable charitable act was a gift of £4,000 in 1787 to the Ashkenazi synagogue in Duke's Place in

¹²⁶ Caroline Barron and Matthew Davies, 'Ellen Langwith: Silkwoman of London'.

¹²⁷ Ella Caroline Lapham, 'The Industrial Status of Women in Elizabethan England', p.592.

¹²⁸ J.D. Alsop in *Oxford DNB*.

the City (later known as the Great Synagogue) to reconstruct and enlarge the building to accommodate its growing membership. Although no longer an observant Jew, Levy felt bound to the congregation by strong family ties. (Her father-in-law had been one of its founders and her father one of its chief supporters, having contributed £2,000 to erect its first permanent building.) She died on 18 January 1803 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Mile End Road.¹²⁹

■ ELIZABETH MALLET (FL. 1672–1706)

Printer and bookseller. The wife of David Mallet, printer, of St Martin Ludgate, whom she had married by 1672. Details of her birth and parentage have not been ascertained. On the death, intestate, of her husband on 3 April 1683 she administered his estate and took their son, also named David, as her apprentice on 7 May 1683. At her premises in Black Horse Alley, near Fleet Bridge, she operated two printing presses in 1685. David was made a freeman of the Stationers' Company, by patrimony, on 29 January 1686 but before that date Elizabeth had printed a number of items for him, notably the proceedings of the commissioners of the peace held in the Old Bailey, as well as various items on her own behalf, registering a series of accounts of malefactors and similar popular and lurid items with the Stationers' Company in the period 1683–85. When David set up on his own to embark on a short and undistinguished career in 1686 her activity as a printer slackened. About 1693, with her son's career ended, Elizabeth Mallet resumed work as a publisher of sensational tracts. She also produced serial publications, including *The New State of Europe*, the first number of which was dated 20 September 1701, but her main claim to fame was that her name appeared in the imprint of issue no. 1 of Britain's first daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, on 11 March 1702. The first issue of this two-column newspaper was published from her premises next door to the King's Arms tavern at Fleet Bridge and contained no home news, the content being derived from foreign gazettes. After ten issues publication was taken over by Samuel Buckley, who assured the title's continuing success. There are further imprints recorded for Elizabeth Mallet in 1703 but she probably died not long afterwards, as she granted her estate to Lancelot Head of Stepney on 22 June 1706.¹³⁰

■ LADY DORCAS MARTIN [NÉE ECCLESTON] (1536/7–99)

Translator and bookseller. Probably the daughter of John Eccleston, grocer, of Cheapside and Tottenham, who may have moved to London from Lancashire, and his wife, Margery. She married, probably after 1552, Sir Richard Martin (1533/4–1617), master of the mint and twice Lord Mayor, and they had five sons and one daughter. Dorcas appears to have been an active participant in a radical puritan circle. Her translations include prayers, psalm verses and a catechism in which a mother questions her child.¹³¹ Richard Martin was a goldsmith by trade, and worked as a goldsmith and banker in London between 1558 and 1617, running a shop at the sign of the Harp in Cheapside as well as working at a shop in Lombard Street between 1586 and 1599. From the 1570s onwards, the Martins had a house in Cheapside as well as a residence in Tottenham.¹³²

Dorcas Martin led a rich and interesting life: as a member of the radical religious community, she acted in daring ways to promote religious reform; as a prominent, godly 'matron', she was publicly praised for her zeal, knowledge, and generosity; as a Londoner familiar with members of the French church, she chose to translate

¹²⁹ Todd M. Endelman in *Oxford DNB*.

¹³⁰ Ian Maxted in *Oxford DNB*.

¹³¹ Elaine V. Beilin, *Oxford DNB*.

¹³² Micheline White, 'A Biographical Sketch of Dorcas Martin', p.779.

a French work; as the publisher of a catechism, she was offered as a model for mothers and thanked for assisting her country; and as the wife of an ambitious man, she rose to become Lady Martin and an inhabitant of 'Goldsmithes Row'.¹³³

■ CHARLOTTE MATTHEWS [NÉE MARLAR] (BAP. 1759, D. 1802)

Businesswoman. Baptised Charlotta Marlar on 23 March 1759 at the church of All Hallows-the-Great, the second of the six children of John Marlar, merchant and banker, and his wife, Ann. She married William Matthews (d. 1792), merchant, on 1 August 1776 at Monken Hadley, Middlesex. During their marriage, which was childless, they lived at 6 Green Lettice Lane in the City of London, and at Croydon Lodge, near Croydon, Surrey. Although it is not known how or where Charlotte was educated she was literate at the time of her marriage, during which she appears to have received the training that enabled her to run her husband's business successfully after his death. In the ten years of her widowhood she brought her experience of business to the enterprise that she now controlled. She worked long hours, attending business meetings, which necessitated her walking between venues in the City, as well as spending much time in her counting house, supervising her two male clerks, who had also worked for her husband, and making up the books. She rationalised William Matthews' many commercial interests, retaining only those that she considered essential. She disposed of his London house and, in 1795, moved to 13 London Street, Fenchurch Street, which remained her town home and office until her death. In these premises, she concentrated on insurance, banking, and bill discounting. She was elected a member of Lloyds of London, by virtue of being William Matthews' widow. She transacted business with many major London banking and merchant houses, moved her funds between several bank accounts, and was the part owner of a ship, the *Sally*, which traded to the Levant. She provided the Birmingham partnership of Boulton and Watt with regular and reliable credit to facilitate the production and sale of the numerous and very different items made on their Birmingham premises, from buttons to steam engines, from coins to silver tableware. The moneys she advanced were unsecured, and were dependent on a relationship of mutual trust. She also used her contacts in the City of London to answer Boulton and Watts' enquiries about the financial soundness of potential customers, and to report how the money markets were moving and popular reaction to contemporary events. She was well known as their agent, active in the pursuit of their interests in London, and solicited for introductions by people who wanted to do business with them. She negotiated on their behalf with officials of the government and of the East India Company to ensure that contracts were executed and payments made to the partners.¹³⁴

■ LADY JANE MICO [NÉE ROBINSON] (C.1634–1670)

Benefactress. The elder of the two daughters of William Robinson of Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, and his wife, Elizabeth Burrell. She married Samuel Mico, a member of the Mercers' Company, at an unknown date. Samuel died during his year as Master in 1666, and his widow bequeathed money to the Company in order to found almshouses. The Company administers Lady Mico's Almshouses in Stepney to this day.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibid., p.792.

¹³⁴ Christine Wiskin in *Oxford DNB*.

¹³⁵ Email from Kate Higgins, Assistant Archivist, Mercers' Company.

■ ELEANOR MOSLEY (1700– AFTER 1748)

In 1717, Eleanor Mosley, eldest daughter of a York apothecary, was apprenticed to a London clockmaker and his wife 'who useth the trade and business of a milliner'. A clockmaker was highly skilled and earned a decent income in the early eighteenth century, but his wife also followed her own business, which was so successful that she had three female apprentices in the house at any one time, each serving a seven-year term. Milliners in the eighteenth century were the most exclusive dressmakers, selling both ready-made and bespoke clothing and accessories. Many milliners dealt wholesale - to the country and the colonies - as well as retail. Most milliners in the seventeenth century were men, but by the eighteenth century they were primarily women.

Eleanor Mosley's mistress took her apprentices in millinery through her husband's gild because as a married woman she had no right to movable property, including gild membership. Mosley took the freedom of the city as a member of the Clockmakers' Company and traded as a milliner in Gracechurch Street until in her late 40s she married. Her subsequent history is untraceable, since we do not know the name of her husband.

There are three reasons to think of millinery as an elite trade: the apprenticeship premiums and set-up costs were high; apprentices' fathers were clergy, gentry and high-status trades like apothecaries; and their location. The map shows the street location of 45 milliners whose addresses can be traced in the records of eight different Companies, and shows them clustered down Cheapside, the most expensive shopping street in London throughout the early modern period. The milliners never had their own company, so they are found scattered throughout the other companies.¹³⁶

■ FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE (1820–1910)

The second woman to be awarded the Honorary Freedom of the City, in 1908.

■ ALICE OWEN [NÉE WILKES] (1547–1613)

Philanthropist. Third child of Thomas Wilkes, a rich landowner of Islington. In 1570 she married Henry Robinson (d. 1585), a member of the Brewers' Company, with whom she had six sons and five daughters. Her second husband was William Elkin (1523–1593), an Alderman of the City of London, with whom she had one daughter. Thomas Owen (d. 1598), a judge of the court of common pleas, became her third husband in 1594 or 1595. Alice Owen was left sizeable sums of money in her husbands' wills. In her lifetime she made benefactions to a number of institutions, including £100 to Oxford University and £60 to Christ's Hospital. The most significant of her charitable activities were focused on the foundation of her almshouses for ten poor women, and her free school for thirty boys from Islington and Clerkenwell. In addition to her charitable bequests Alice Owen's will made generous provision for her daughters, godchildren and grandchildren. Her servants were given money and her 'worse' clothes. There were also new benefactions including £8 to poor prisoners, £20 for a stock of coals and wood for the poor of the parish of St Michael Bassishaw, and £60 for 60 poor women. She died on 26 November 1613 and was buried in St Mary's, Islington. After its uncertain financial start Alice Owen's foundation became profitable. A substantial rebuilding of both the school and the almshouses was carried out in 1841 on a new site in Owen Street, Islington. This was

¹³⁶ <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/the-collections/Pages/women-and-freedom.aspx>

rapidly followed by a review of the school in 1865 under the Taunton commission which investigated endowed grammar schools. A scheme was finally approved in 1878 which allowed for the demolition of the almshouses and their replacement by pensions for the occupants, the construction of a new boys' school, and the opening of a school for girls. Between 1971 and 1976 the move to the present site in Potters Bar was completed, the two schools having amalgamated as Dame Alice Owen's School¹³⁷ in 1973.¹³⁸

■ DAME THOMASINE PERCYVALE (D.1512)

The earliest firm evidence for Thomasine's life as a Londoner is as the wife, first of Henry Galle (d.1466) and secondly of Thomas Barnaby (d.1467), both tailors and both parishioners of the church of St Dunstan in the West in Fleet Street. Her second husband died within a year of her first (possibly both falling victim to the 'sweating sickness' or another plague-like disease), and Thomasine was the sole beneficiary of the residue of both their estates, leaving her a relatively young, if increasingly wealthy, widow. Thomasine's third husband was John Percyvale, another tailor and a future Alderman (of Vintry ward in 1485 and then of Langbourn in 1496) and Lord Mayor.

Percyvale was the first tailor to hold the office of mayor, and so in many ways represented the civic ambitions of the craft which culminated in 1503 in the obtaining of a charter from Henry VII, which allowed them to call themselves Merchant Tailors and to acquire new powers which were perceived as threatening to the rights and established privileges of the other companies. John Percyvale died in 1503, after having acquired considerable wealth through his dealings as a general merchant whilst continuing to run a tailoring business.

Thomasine's business activities, previously hidden by the activities of her husbands, can be seen for the first time during her final widowhood. From her will, which mentions a number of apprentices, it is clear that she was capable of training tailors in her own right, using skills that in all probability she had learned informally from her husbands.¹³⁹

■ ALICE PICOT-BRIDNELL (D.1437)

Comparatively unusual in that she called herself silkwoman in will. She had no surviving child from her marriage and bitterly regretted it, for she came of a long line of mercers descended from Nicholas Picot, mercer and chamberlain (1300–04), who had died in 1312. As the last of her line, she persuaded the Mercers to admit her to the company as the descendant of so many mercers – all set out in the record of her admission in 1427–28 – and established a chantry for her ancestors in St Peter Cornhill, the parish church of her illustrious ancestor, the chamberlain, in her will of 1437.¹⁴⁰

■ VIOLET PIERCY (B. 1889?)

Athlete. Frequently in the public eye between 1926 and 1938 as the first British female marathon runner, her achievements have been cited in numerous works of record, but her identity has never been definitively established. All the available evidence, however, indicates a strong probability that she was Violet Stewart Louisa Piercy, who was born at 15 Clarendon Road, Croydon, Surrey, on 24 December 1889, the daughter of George Piercy, a property owner who died shortly after her birth, and his third wife, Louisa Sophia, née Beadle. On 30 March 1935 she performed a stunt that was reported

¹³⁷ See <https://damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk/>

¹³⁸ Caroline M.K. Bowden in *Oxford DNB*.

¹³⁹ Matthew Davies, 'Dame Thomasine Percyvale, "The Maid of Week" (d.1512)', in *Medieval London Widows 1300–1500*, ed. by Caroline Barron and Anne Sutton.

¹⁴⁰ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, pp.90–1.

internationally, running five and a quarter miles from the Whittington Stone at Highgate to the Monument in the City and up the 311 steps in 43 minutes 2 seconds. 'I did it to prove that a woman's stamina can be just as remarkable as a man's,' she told the *South London Press* (2 April 1935).¹⁴¹

■ LILIAN PINK (1890–1986)

Miss Ella Lillian May Pink was an Australian woman who qualified in optometry in London in 1915 and practised optometry in Australia from 1917 until September 1953. Miss Pink obtained Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers by examination in 1915, and subsequently took up the Freedom of the City.¹⁴²

■ HESTER PINNEY (1658–1740)

Lace trader, creditor and financial dealer. Born on 3 July 1658 at Broadwindsor, Dorset, the eighth of the ten children of the Presbyterian minister and well-known preacher John Pinney and his wife, Jane, née French. When he was ejected from his ministry, John Pinney began, with his wife and daughters, to involve himself in the lace trade. Hester joined her sister Rachel Pinney (1652–1743) in London in 1682. The sisters lived together in the Seven Stars in the inner walk of the Royal Exchange, where they had a lace shop. The first outstanding evidence of Hester's business acumen came in 1685, when her younger brother Azariah was sentenced to hang after participating in Monmouth's rebellion. Hester bought her brother's freedom but had to send him abroad. Her bribe of £65 to George Penne, one of the chief agents for arranging to transport the rebels, effected the commutation of his sentence to transportation. The bribe money had been raised from lace sales to Ireland, where John Pinney now had a congregation. Azariah was sent to the Caribbean island of Nevis, where he established the basis of the Pinney family's plantation fortunes, first by factoring in lace and returning cargoes of sugar. Hester not only sold lace but also repaired and laundered it, and with her sister-in-law Mary, Azariah's wife, she arranged the apprenticeship of girls in lace making in London. She soon became the banker to country relatives, and by the late 1680s her lace profits financed sizeable mortgages which she lent out, at the same time as providing smaller credits and cash advances. Despite several proposals, Hester spurned all advances of marriage. She sometimes lived in taverns, despite family fears for her reputation. She also held business meetings in public houses. She had no personal interest in finery or adornment, and lived very simply and frugally with the minimum of personal possessions and little concern for furnishings or decoration. About the time of her father's death in 1705 Hester turned away from lace trading to more speculative financial dealing. First she made safe investments in government stock, but share dealing had developed within her locale, at the exchange, and by the 1690s it had spilled out into nearby coffee houses, which she seems to have had no qualms about entering. She had an excellent memory for financial transactions and was a pragmatic decision maker. She was also persistent and willing to chase up very small debts even ten or fifteen years after money had been lent. She was appointed paid secretary to George Booth, the lawyer who had overseen credit transactions for both Hester and her brother Nathaniel, some time in the mid-1710s. She had been romantically connected with Booth since her early years in London and became his mistress after his marriage to Lucy Robartes in 1693. By the early 1720s she was dealing with all Booth's stocks and shares and acting as his representative for all his financial dealings. Clear proof of her financial skills came with the South Sea Bubble in 1720, when the fortune she made contrasted with the great losses of Nathaniel

¹⁴¹ Peter Lovesey in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁴² See <https://museum.aco.org.au/archive/3532-framed-copy-of-part-of-the-certificate-of-admission-to-the-freedom-of-the-city-of-london-for-miss-ella-lillian-may-pink>

Pinney. Her yearly income was estimated at £1,100 in 1720. In 1724 she moved into George Booth's house, and when he died two years later she inherited the manor of Monken Hadley, a wealthy parish twelve miles to the north of London, and also property in West Ham and Houndsditch. By the 1730s her fortune was substantial. She died on 19 February 1740 at Bromley Street, Holborn, a wealthy woman, and was buried in Monken Hadley church.¹⁴³

■ DAME KATHLEEN ANNIE RAVEN (1910–99)

Nurse. Born on 9 November 1910 at Mountain View, Coniston, Lancashire, the only daughter of Frederick William Raven, director of a slate quarry, and his wife, Annie Williams Mason. She grew up with three brothers in a Plymouth Brethren household. Kathleen was educated privately and at Ulverston grammar school. Nursing was not her original choice as a career, but she was influenced by her eldest brother, Ronald William Raven (1904–1991), who studied medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, and later became a distinguished surgeon. Kathleen followed him by training at Bart's, as a nurse and midwife. During the Second World War Kathleen, a young ward sister, remained at Bart's as one of the skeleton staff after most of the patients had been evacuated. In 'London, 1940', an article published in the *History of Nursing Society Journal* in 1990, she recalled standing on the hospital roof on 29 December 1940 and watching the city in flames, while St Paul's Cathedral stood as a beacon of hope. In 1949 Kathleen left Bart's, where she was an assistant matron, to become matron at the General Infirmary at Leeds. She knew of her very apt nickname, 'the Pocket Battleship', and was both amused and rather proud of it. She was appointed DBE in 1968 and was chief nursing officer for fourteen years, being responsible for some of the most important changes and developments in nursing. She received the freedom of the City of London in 1986.¹⁴⁴

■ KATHERINE REYNKYN-RICH (D.1469)

A silkwoman, the sister, wife and mother of mercers. The sister of John Reynkin, mercer, and the wife and widow of Richard Rich, who died in 1464, at the age of about 70, with a considerable estate to bequeath; Katherine herself died in 1469. Two sons were mercers, and their four daughters married wealthy Aldermen and lawyers of London. Despite the wealth of her household, Katherine was still running her silkwoman's business at her husband's death. Under Richard's will, she received £500, household goods, jewels and clothes, as well as her own goods and tools in her shop, and their dwelling house in St Lawrence Lane, with its adjacent shops and tenements leased from Elsing Spital and a tenement in Ironmonger Lane leased from St Paul's. The terms of her will suggest she had a workforce of about four women living with her; she was also managing male apprentices and had at least four male servants.¹⁴⁵

■ CAROLINE EDITH RIGG (1852–1929)

Headmistress. Eldest of three children, she was born on 26 August 1852 in Guernsey, where her father, Dr James Harrison Rigg (1821–1909), was Wesleyan minister. Her mother, Caroline was a daughter of John Smith, alderman of Worcester. Caroline was educated at private schools until her father moved to London in 1867, when she attended the City of London College for Ladies in Finsbury Circus. This was modelled on Queen's College, Harley Street, and, as that drew on the staff of King's College, so this City 'branch' utilized the staff of the City of London Boys' School.

¹⁴³ Pamela Sharpe, *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁴⁴ Sheila Quinn in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁴⁵ Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, pp. 65–6.

From 1873 Caroline Rigg was head of a board school in Hammersmith, until in 1877 she was appointed headmistress of the new Mary Datchelor Girls' School. This was the first time an obsolete City parochial charity was used for girls' education, the endowment in the parish of St Andrew Undershaft having increased dramatically by the sale of a coffee house in Threadneedle Street, and the charity commissioners having appointed parochial trustees to administer the funds for a girls' school. Camberwell in south London, with a growing middle-class population, was selected as the location, and land and buildings acquired in Grove Lane. Of this enterprise Miss Rigg was appointed headmistress at the age of 25. In 1894–95 the parochial trustees were replaced as governors of Mary Datchelor by the Clothworkers' Company.¹⁴⁶

■ **MARY SAY** [NÉE BEMISTER; OTHER MARRIED NAME VINT] (1739/40–1832)

Printer and newspaper publisher. On her marriage to the London printer and newspaper publisher Charles Green Say (1721?–1775) at St George's, Botolph Lane, on 9 November 1769 she was described as a spinster of St Botolph Lane in the City of London. On her husband's death in July 1775 she took over the printing of his three newspaper titles at his printing office in 10 and 11 Ave Maria Lane and continued to conduct them with success, at times playing a considerable editorial role in the production of *The Gazetteer*. Ten years later, in 1785, John Pendred listed her as still printing the daily morning newspaper *The Gazetteer*, the *General Evening Post*, published on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and *The Craftsman, or, Say's Weekly Journal*, published on Saturdays. Say was in trouble with the authorities on a number of occasions, being indicted for a libel on the constitution in July 1778 and fined £50 on 25 April the following year. On 4 July 1781 she was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined £50 for a libel on the Russian ambassador, and on 8 February 1788 the House of Commons voted to prosecute her for libel following disparaging remarks about Pitt the younger with reference to the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey. On 11 November 1787 Say married Edward Vint, calico printer, of Crayford, at St Martin Ludgate but retained the name Mary Say as printer of *The Gazetteer* until March 1790. She established a new title in 1796, *The Selector, or, Say's Sunday Reporter*, which continued publication until at least 1808. She played an active role in the printing industry, being the only woman among the master printers who signed the compositors' scale of wages in 1785, registering her press with the authorities under the Seditious Societies Act on 25 August 1799, and binding six apprentices through the Stationers' Company; three further apprentices were turned over to her between 1776 and 1793. She was a tough businesswoman, successfully conducting a conflict with the proprietors of *The Gazetteer* in the 1790s and engaging in a lengthy lawsuit with the former proprietors after *The Gazetteer* was taken over by the *Morning Post* in 1797. She appears to have retired about 1810; she died in Dartford on 9 February 1832 in her ninety-third year, having been widowed for a second time.¹⁴⁷

■ **LADY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH SCHREIBER** [NÉE BERTIE; OTHER MARRIED NAME GUEST] (1812–95)

Translator, businesswoman and collector. Born at Uffington House, Lincolnshire, on 19 May 1812, the eldest child of Albemarle Bertie, ninth earl of Lindsey, former army general and Tory MP for Stamford, and his second wife, Charlotte Susanna Elizabeth, née Layard. On 29 July 1833 at the age of 21, Lady Charlotte married a wealthy 48-year-old Welsh widower, (Josiah) John Guest (1785–1852). Merthyr's first MP (a Whig), he ran the Dowlais Iron Company. Having disliked her stepfather and life at home, Lady Charlotte gladly

¹⁴⁶ Margaret Bryant in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁴⁷ Ian Maxted in *Oxford DNB*.

moved to Dowlais House in the midst of the works. The firm, started by John Guest's grandfather, flourished, becoming the largest ironworks in the world, employing over 7,000 workers. Lady Charlotte interested herself in the business, translating into English and publishing a French pamphlet on the use of hot blast. She accompanied her husband on business trips, discussed technical matters with leading scientists such as Charles Babbage, helped write company letters and keep the company's books, and had her own room in the company's London office, at 42 Lothbury. The Guests had ten children in thirteen years, five boys and five girls. At the same time Lady Charlotte furthered her interest in languages by studying, and translating from, Middle Welsh, another unusual step for an ironmaster's wife. As sole active trustee, after her husband's death in 1852, Lady Charlotte ran the gigantic works for several years. On 10 April 1855 she remarried, thus terminating her position at the ironworks. Charles Schreiber (1826–1884) of Melton, Suffolk, was 14 years her junior, and employed as a tutor to prepare the Guests' eldest son for Cambridge. A classics scholar who had won 15 prizes at Cambridge, he became Tory MP for Cheltenham in the mid-1860s and was elected for Poole in 1880. Lady Charlotte, however, retained her Whig sympathies. The Schreibers had no children and spent much of their married life on the continent as passionate collectors and connoisseurs of china, scouring Europe for bargains. Their collection of eighteenth-century English china, reckoned to be among the finest in the world, is housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, some of it displayed in the Schreiber Room. In December 1891 Lady Charlotte became the first woman to receive the honorary freedom of the Worshipful Company of Fanmakers. She died, aged 83, on 15 January 1895.¹⁴⁸

■ SARAH SERGEANT (1675–1726)

Shopkeeper. Sarah's grandfather, Joseph Sergeant, the son of a draper, was apprenticed as a plumber in 1656. He was admitted to the freedom of the Plumbers' Company in April 1664, and by 1674 he had become, and was paying quarterage as, a shopkeeper. Sarah was the third of three children, her mother also being called Sarah. By 1692 Joseph had his plumber's workshop at 16 Frying Pan Alley, in the parish of St Giles', Cripplegate. At his death in 1697, Joseph left £20 to his son Thomas, £5 to his married daughter Mary, and the significant sum of £40 to his daughter Sarah. His apprentice Thomas Watson was turned over to his widow Sarah on 29 December 1698, Sarah paying quarterage to the Plumbers' Company as a shopkeeper's widow. The two Sarahs continued to live in Frying Pan Alley for the rest of their lives, and took on a number of other apprentices (officially apprenticed to Sarah the widow, but probably effectively working for Sarah the daughter). The elder Sarah died in 1723 and was buried at St Giles', Cripplegate. After the death of her mother, the younger Sarah acquired the freedom of the Plumbers' Company by patrimony (on 20 September 1724), thereby becoming the first woman to have been admitted to the freedom of the Company since records began in 1621. Just over a year later she paid the standard 40s to be admitted by the Company as a shopkeeper. Sarah the younger died on 10th December 1726, and was of sufficient wealth to be able to leave several bequests, including £20 to her 'servant' (officially her mother's apprentice) John Urmeston.¹⁴⁹

■ MARY HARRIS SMITH (1844–1934)

Accountant. Born at 7 Mildmay Place, Kingsland, London, on 27 November 1844, the third daughter of Henry Smith, clerk to a navy agent and banker, and his wife, Susanna, née May. Her interest in accounting developed when she assisted her father with

¹⁴⁸ Angela V. John in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁴⁹ From a paper compiled by Past Steward John Carnaby and Past Master Peter Brunner of the Worshipful Company of Plumbers.

bookkeeping work that he brought home. At the age of 16 she studied mathematics with a master of King's College School and revealed considerable ability. She was one of the early attendees of the bookkeeping classes established by the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW) in 1860. She was then employed as an accountant to a mercantile firm in the City for nine years and was subsequently appointed accountant to the Royal School of Art Needlework. Her competence resulted in requests from other organisations to audit their accounts.

In 1887 Mary Harris Smith decided to set up her own accounting firm in Westminster. This venture into the masculine world of public accounting practice was a radical step. The prospects for a woman practitioner were such that on her letterheads, business cards and audit reports Miss Mary Harris Smith identified herself as 'M. Harris Smith, Accountant and Auditor'. By contrast, when advertising her services in women's periodicals, she emphasised her status as a 'lady accountant', building a successful practice as an accountant for women and being heavily involved in a professional and personal capacity with organisations devoted to the advancement of women. These included the Parliamentary Committee for Women's Suffrage, the Society for the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians, the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, the National Union of Women Workers, the Gentlewoman's Employment Club, and the Soroptimist Club.

It was the experience of the First World War, when numerous women entered accounting firms as substitute labour, as well as the Representation of the People Act 1918 and the Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act 1919, that altered the position of the accountancy bodies on the admission of women. In early 1919 the SAA [Society of [Incorporated] Accountants and Auditors], to which Mary Harris Smith had first applied in 1887, altered its memorandum of association to admit women. She renewed her application for membership only to discover that the society now had limited power to admit persons who had not passed its examinations. However, in November 1919 she was admitted as an honorary member in recognition of her status as the first female practising accountant. The rules of the ICAEW [Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales] did permit admission without examination, and in May 1920, at the age of seventy-five, Mary Harris Smith became a fellow of the institute and the first woman chartered accountant.

When she was finally admitted to the ICAEW, Harris Smith was lauded for having successfully challenged a male professional monopoly. Although she was often portrayed as a persistent and lone campaigner, her efforts to enter the accountancy profession were motivated not only by personal ambition but also by the wider aim of securing the admission of women to the accountancy profession on equal terms with men. She was a constitutional suffragist, whose campaign drew on the support of the women's organizations she audited, and leading liberal feminists such as Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Emily Davies, supportive MPs, as well as friends in the City of London.

Following her admission to two of the major accountancy bodies Mary Harris Smith, FCA and honorary incorporated accountant, continued to service her clientele at 20 Bucklersbury, London.¹⁵⁰

■ ESTHER SLEEPE (1725–62)

Born in London, the last of 17 children, only five of whom survived to adulthood. Esther learned fanmaking along with two of her sisters, from their mother, who traded from at least 1720 to 1773. Esther was not apprenticed but took the Freedom of the City by patrimony in her father's Company, that of the Musicians. She and her sisters had their trade cards printed c.1747, all three of them being located in Cheapside.

The shop was located on the ground floor, the living quarters above, and perhaps a workshop on the top floor for light, where young women would paint, decorate, and mount the fans, made of silk or kidskin. If each of the Sleepe fan shops did not have its own workshop, then they probably at least coordinated the manufacture of fans. They would have hired journeywomen who lived out, as well as apprentices who lived with their mistress. At age 24, Esther married the then obscure apprentice Charles Burney and she would give birth to nine children including the novelist Frances Burney. Esther continued trading as a fanmaker after her marriage, as illustrated by her second trade card in her married name, with a new address.¹⁵¹

■ DOROTHY BEATRICE SPIERS [NÉE DAVIS] (1897–1977)

Actuary. Born on 25 May 1897 at 34 Downs Park Road, Hackney, the second of three daughters of Samuel Davis, schoolmaster and later head of the Jewish Free School, and his wife, Sarah, née Samuel. She was educated at the London county council Wilton Road School and the City of London Girls' School; in 1915 she entered Newnham College, Cambridge, where she graduated BA in mathematics in 1918 and MA in 1923. While employed by the Guardian Assurance Company from 1918 to 1931 Davis was allowed, in 1918, to attend the lectures for the examinations held by the Institute of Actuaries. In 1919 a resolution was passed by the Institute's governing body, admitting women to the fellowship on the same conditions as men; Davis was the first woman to be admitted a fellow of the Institute, in 1923. On 25 October 1931 she married Henry Michael Spiers, an industrial chemist, with whom she had two sons. Between 1931 and 1954 she returned to the Guardian Assurance for short periods; between 1932 and 1938 she worked on the continuous mortality investigation for the Institute of Actuaries, and from 1943 to 1946 with the Eagle Star Insurance Company. Spiers had wide-ranging interests and in retirement she devoted much time and energy to the League of Jewish Women, serving on the council and as national treasurer, where her common sense and mathematical ability were much appreciated. She made small bequests to the Jewish Welfare Board and to the Jewish Blind Society. Having been predeceased by her husband Dorothy Spiers died at the Central Middlesex Hospital, Park Royal, on 2 September 1977.¹⁵²

■ ELIZABETH STIRLING (1819–95)

Organist and composer. Born on 26 February 1819 in Greenwich, almost certainly the child of that name baptised at St Alfege, Greenwich, on 20 March 1819, the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Sterling. Nothing is known about her education beyond the fact that she studied organ and piano with William Henry Holmes and W.B. Wilson, and harmony with George A. Macfarren and J.A. Hamilton. She gave her first public performance on the organ of St Katharine's Church, Regent's Park, at the age of seventeen, dazzling her audience with her playing of five of Bach's pedal preludes and fugues, and three of his pedal trios. One of the first to perform Bach's pedal fugues

151 <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/the-collections/Pages/women-and-freedom.aspx>

152 Anita McConnell in *Oxford DNB*.

in London, she went on to give recitals in many London churches, and played at the International Exhibition of 1862. In 1839 she was appointed organist of All Saints, Poplar. After nearly 20 years in Poplar, Elizabeth Stirling was appointed organist of St Andrew Undershaft, Leadenhall Street, where she met the much younger Frederick Albert Bridge (b. 1841), choirmaster and solo bass at St Andrew Undershaft. They were married on 16 May 1863 at St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney. She remained at St Andrew Undershaft until 1880, her husband by then being choirmaster of St Martin-in-the-Fields; he later became choirmaster of St John's, Lewisham. Elizabeth Stirling composed a variety of organ and chamber music, and in 1856 submitted a setting of Psalm 130, for five voices and orchestra, for the BMus at Oxford University, which was accepted, 'but being a lady she could not, of course, be awarded the degree' (*The Times*, 15 April 1895). Her best known compositions were her *Six Pedal Fugues*, five of which were based on English psalm tunes, including 'Tallis's Canon' and the 'Old 100th', and one on a German chorale. She also wrote many partsongs. Elizabeth Stirling died on 26 March 1895 at 55 Dalston Lane.¹⁵³

■ ELIZABETH STOKES (FL. 1723–33)

Pugilist and prize-fighter. Probably a Londoner by birth; no early details of her life are known, but she was billed 'of the famous City of London' and termed the 'City Championess' (*Weekly Journal*, 1 Oct 1726). A notable early leader in female stage combat for financial gain, she was one of the rare examples of a fighter of either sex who during the first half of the eighteenth century featured in confrontations using weapons (such as the back-sword and quarterstaff) as well as fists. Stokes may well have been the Elizabeth Wilkinson of Clerkenwell who fought a lengthy contest with Hannah Hyfield of Newgate Market in June 1722 in which both protagonists held a half-crown in each hand, the loser being the first to drop her money. The encounter, for 3 guineas, occurred at the Bear Garden, Hockley in the Hole, near Clerkenwell Green. In the summer of 1723 the City Championess was advertised to meet, in boxing battles, the similarly named Joanna Heyfield of Newgate Market (possibly the same person) on two occasions (the first was prevented by inclement weather and the second she won), and also a Billingsgate fish-woman, Martha Jones. She was, commented the *London Journal* soon afterwards, by now equal to any of her sex with her fists (as well as apparently with her tongue), and had gained the admiration of the mob attracted to such entertainments.¹⁵⁴

■ ETHEL STRUDWICK (1880–1954)

Headmistress. Born on 3 April 1880 at 14 Edith Villas, Fulham, the only child of John Melhuish Strudwick (1849–1937), artist, and his wife, Harriet Reed. Her father was one of the Pre-Raphaelites, and Ethel as a child met several of the group. In 1913 Strudwick was appointed headmistress of the City of London School for Girls in succession to Alice Blagrove. Almost immediately she was plunged into the problems of running a school in wartime. Her pupils were encouraged to make garments for the troops, work on the land, and raise money for the Red Cross. After the war she created a physics laboratory and introduced social work by the school in south London. Under her influence many of her pupils secured important posts in the new career opportunities beginning to open up for women. In 1927 Ethel Strudwick was appointed high mistress of St Paul's Girls' School in Brook Green, out of 46 candidates. From 1931 to 1933 she was president of the Association of Headmistresses and in 1937 she became the first president of the British

¹⁵³ Anne Pimlott Baker in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁵⁴ Tony Gee in *Oxford DNB*.

Federation of Business and Professional Women. She was a governor of four educational institutions and became, in 1948, a member of the council of the Girls' Public Day School Trust. She was appointed OBE in 1936 (in Edward VIII's only honours list) and advanced to CBE in 1948. She died at her home in Mortlake, Surrey, on 15 August 1954. A memorial service was held in St Paul's Cathedral.¹⁵⁵

■ VIOLETTE SZABO (1921–45)

Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent shot by Nazi officers in 1945, worked as a telegraphist at the Central Telegraph Office between November 1940 and February 1941 before joining the SOE.¹⁵⁶

■ ELIZABETH WHIPP [NÉE WORSUP] (D. 1646)

Midwife. Elizabeth first appears in the historical record on 3 August 1600, when she married Robert Whipp[p] at St Benet Fink. She appears to have resided within short walking distance of this parish for the rest of her life, having her children in nearby Aldermanbury, a small and relatively wealthy parish, before moving to the parish of Bishopsgate Within. The couple had 12 children in the next 15 years. Nine daughters and three sons were baptized at St Mary the Virgin, in Aldermanbury, between 26 July 1601 and 25 July 1617. At least two of these children died in infancy, and at the time of Elizabeth Whipp's death only one son, George, and three daughters were living. Whipp was widowed in 1628 and was granted the administration of her husband Robert's will. In 1635 she was assessed to be liable for 13 shillings for repairs to the parish church, indicating that she was comfortably off. She had received her licence to practise midwifery at St Ethelburga in 1622, and was the only midwife listed in the St Ethelburga visitations for 1637. On 20 July 1645, when she knew she was weak, Whipp made out her will in which she stated that she was still sound in mind and memory, and named as her executor her unmarried daughter, Hester, who also inherited the bulk of the estate including a bequest of £200. Whipp left legacies amounting to over £520, a considerable sum, including money for new cloaks for the funeral to her son and two sons-in-law, and funeral gowns for her three daughters.¹⁵⁷

■ ELIZABETH WILFORD [NEE GALE] (D. 1559)

Merchant. Probably born in the parish of St George, Botolph Lane, the only surviving child of Thomas Gale, a freeman of the Haberdashers' Company, and his wife, Elizabeth, the daughter of William Wilkinson, of the parish of St Dionis Backchurch. Thomas Gale was active in Iberian commerce, and possessed connections to the prominent London merchants William Locke and Sir George Barnes. On or around 1 September 1529 she married Nicholas Wilford (d. 1551), a freeman of the Merchant Taylors' Company, the fifth son of James Wilford, a merchant taylor, sheriff, and alderman of London, and was identified in her marriage indentures as the principal beneficiary of her father's substantial estate. Her husband began his career as a merchant in Bilboa, Spain, in the 1520s, became a substantial English cloth exporter, served as auditor of the City of London (1545–47), represented London in the 1542 parliament, and became a governor of St Bartholomew's Hospital. Following her marriage Elizabeth resided first in the parish of St Bartholomew the Less and later, after her mother's death, in her parents' tenement and shops in Botolph Lane. She and her husband were also parishioners and property holders of Wandsworth, Surrey. They had four sons and seven daughters. The eldest son,

¹⁵⁵ Gerald M.D. Howat in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.postalmuseum.org/discover/collections/women/#>

¹⁵⁷ Sara Read in *Oxford DNB*.

Thomas, a freeman of the Merchant Taylors' Company, was a Common Councilman (1561–99) and Chamberlain of the City (1591–1603).

Elizabeth Wilford was active as a cloth exporter in her widowhood following her husband's death in the London outbreak of the sweating sickness of 1551. She was one of only two women to appear among the 201 founding members of the Muscovy or Russia Company in 1555, and the only one to invest in her own right, without a spouse. She was buried beside her husband in the parish church of St George, Botolph Lane.¹⁵⁸

■ ELLEN WRYGHT (D.1604)

Ellen took in multiple lodgers at her house (an outbuilding known as a 'garden house' on properties owned by the Earl of Oxford) in the parish of St Botolph Aldgate, near Hogg Lane and the bars marking the boundary with Whitechapel, in the 1590s.¹⁵⁹ Many people also stayed with Ellen (who was widowed in 1593) when they were in need of nursing care, or for the birth of their illegitimate offspring.¹⁶⁰ The parish clerk Thomas Harridance records a total of eight such births taking place in her house, in addition to one for which she was made to perform public penance in 1599. The people who came to be nursed at Ellen's house came from all over the City:

There was John Honsdalle, sixteen-year-old servant to a haberdasher of Lombard Street, who died in September 1595 of an ague. Roger Brisco, twenty-year-old servant to a West Smithfield alebrewer, died of the plague in July 1597. Twenty-five-year-old bachelor Humphrey Page was a prosperous citizen and haberdasher who lived on St. Swithins Lane but who, "being sick, in hope to recover his health by changing the air, was lodged at the house of Ellen Wryght"; he died in July 1599. John Akerhead, a twentyfive- year-old tapster, stayed with Wryght while seeking to be cured of the French pox (de morbo gallico) by a surgeon named Foster, but he died in February 1600.¹⁶¹

■ MARGARET WYATT (D. 1632)

The wealthy widow of Richard Wyatt, Margaret was the first recorded female donor to the Worshipful Company of Carpenters. On her death she left £40 for coats and a Bible for the almsmen at the Company's almshouses in Godalming, founded by her husband.¹⁶²

158 J.D. Alsop in *Oxford DNB*.

159 Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', p.237.

160 *Ibid.*, p.241.

161 *Ibid.*

162 Julie Tancell, Archivist, Carpenters' Company.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

As will be clear from all the above, there are numerous avenues that could be pursued to improve the visibility of women in the City in previous centuries. There is an endless supply of research to be done, and the results could be both monographs and compilations. There is certainly scope for a collection of essays on different topics, or individuals, perhaps in combination with a conference.

A subject identified by Anne Sutton, for instance, is the role of the Lady Mayoress, and a book of that title is an idea that might be worth pursuing. What is striking from the medieval period is how many Aldermen gained the finances necessary to be elected to that role – and beyond it to the Mayoralty – through their wives, particularly if they could ensnare a rich widow (or two).¹⁶³ So a book on the history of the Lady Mayoress could move from those early days of women 'bankrolling' their mayoral husbands, through to the reinvention of the role by women used to playing an active part in City life and beyond in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (including looking at the role reversal when the Lord Mayor is the woman in the partnership).

I have also noticed how enthusiastic the clerks and archivists of a considerable number of Livery Companies have been to share the fruits of their historical research with me. Maybe there is scope, in these days of 'Pan Livery' initiatives, to bring some of this work together in a more structured and rigorous way, to be able to present a wide-ranging survey of women in the Livery from its inception to the present day. This could also lend itself to an exhibition.

The recent exhibition in Cheapside, based on women's trade cards and devised by Dr Amy Erickson, garnered much interest and demonstrated the potential in using areas of the City in this way. An area worth exploring for a similar exhibition could be the former Mercery – opposite Mercers' Hall and extending towards the river, where there used to be numerous small shops and stalls run by women.

¹⁶³ See Anne Sutton, *Wives and Widows of Medieval London*, p.133.

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The simplest way to approach the wealth of material available at the LMA is via the research guides available online, particularly the following:

- 2 - Parish Registers
- 3 - Nonconformist Records at LMA
- 4 - Poor Law Records in London and elsewhere
- 5 - Cemetery Records
- 6 - Wills for London
- 7 - Marriage Licence Records
- 9 - Land Tax Assessments for London and Middlesex
- 10 - Electoral Registers at LMA
- 13 - The Court of Common Council
- 14 - City Freedom Archives
- 16 - Searching for Members or those apprenticed to members of City of London Livery Companies
- 17 - Membership Records of the Merchant Taylors Company
- 34 - Hospital Records
- 36 - History of Nursing
- 37 - Tracing medical practitioners
- 40 - Sessions records for the City of London and Southwark
- 41 - Coroners records for London and Middlesex
- 48 - Fire Insurance records
- 53 - Records of the Stock Exchange London
- 54 - The Russia Company
- 55 - Records of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- 58 - St Pauls Cathedral Archives at LMA
- 59 - Prison Records
- 62 - The Directories of London and the Home Counties
- 66 - Imprisoned Debtors
- 67 - County of London Sessions
- 68 - Civic courts

Additionally, for Livery Company records see COL/CP/02.

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I NOTES

