\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter



**Golding Centre for Women’s History Theology and Spirituality**

 **Volume 13 No 2 November 2013**

**Spirituality**

 **Volume 12 No1 April 2012**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[The Golding Centre is situated within the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy and is named to honour the women Annie and Belle Golding and their married sister Kate Dwyer, women of the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose activism was underpinned by wide reading and in-depth research. Writing and public speaking were integral to their efforts to promote political and social reform. All were committed Catholics.]

  **Editorial**

 **Restructuring at ACU and the Golding Centre**

Restructuring is a term that is now very familiar to Australians and can carry messages of liberation and opportunity or be perceived as a euphemism for loss of one kind or another. Actually restructuring is inherent in human society and operates at all stages of life. It has been experienced by the co-founders of the Golding Centre since they commenced as a team in October 2000 working on the Project for the Establishment of a Centre for Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality at the Australian Catholic University. This project was undertaken in response to the Australian Bishops 1990s research project on the ‘Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia’ published as *Woman and Man – One in Christ Jesus* in April 1999.

At the invitation of Vice-Chancellor Peter Sheehan and under the direction of the then Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Wolfgang Grichting, the co-founders carried out soundings of relevant staff within ACU to determine if the establishment of such a Centre would be welcomed. The response was unanimously positive. Professor Grichting was pleased. He was very supportive of the project and, being due to retire soon, was anxious to set the Project on its way before he left. .

In October 2000 each of the three co-founders moved into one of the key ACU campuses: Melbourne (Patrick), Strathfield (Mt St Marys’s) and Brisbane (McAuley) Campus and soon established contact people on the other campuses. The Research Project was placed within the Institute for the Advancement of Research under the authority of the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor John Coll, The fledgling project thrived in this environment as Professor Coll gave the team every opportunity to develop its potential. By 2003 with the recommendation of Professor Coll the Project was considered sufficiently developed to be given “centre” status as the Golding Centre for Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality.

When Professor Greg Craven succeeded Professor Sheehan as Vice-Chancellor in 2008, in the light of the development of ACU over the previous 10 years, he initiated discussion concerning the establishment of a Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. The disciplines of theology and philosophy had formerly constituted a sub-faculty within the all-embracing Faculty of Arts and Sciences. This proposed restructuring was essentially to promote the central role of theology and philosophy at ACU since these two disciplines constitute the defining elements of a Catholic University. Professor Craven took soundings in the wider Catholic community to gauge support for this restructuring and established a committee representing key stakeholders to thoroughly investigate the matter. It became apparent that it was generally considered a logical, and indeed necessary move, if the University was to develop as a university truly in the Catholic tradition. The Faculty of Theology and Philosophy was formally established in July 2009..

At this time, too, there was an ever increasing awareness throughout the University that there had to be a greater accent upon research within ACU generally if it was to be recognised as a university which made a genuine scholarly contribution to Australian and indeed international scholarly life. In response to this need Professor Craven initiated discussion which led to all Research Centres being moved into an appropriate faculty. This resulted in the Golding Centre (GC) being located within the School of Theology within the newly formed Faculty of Theology and Philosophy.

While the GC had enjoyed being associated with the Institute for the Advancement of Research and having the protection of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), the co-founders were aware that this was a positive move. The primary purpose of the Golding Centre was to advance the participation of women in the Australian Catholic Church and in society generally, firstly through the recovery of their history through ongoing research; secondly to integrate the fruits of this research into mainstream (men’s) history to provide a more realistic history for the informing of social and political policies as well as spiritualties and theologies.

Moreover history as a discipline is *sui generis;* it is the meeting place of the disciplines. It underpins theology and philosophy which are at the heart of a Catholic university. As the GC has discovered over the last thirteen years, it has links across the university. Yet, both before and after moving officially into the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, the GC found that its primary closest natural links were with the staff associated with theology and philosophy.

Having adjusted to this restructuring the Centres at ACU are now involved in new major restructuring to promote the research profile of ACU. This is the movement of the Centres in each faculty into a major Faculty Research Institute to encourage and facilitate major interdisciplinary research while not discouraging small group and individual research. What we can be sure of is that, in the light of ACU’s strong accent on community outreach, the **Friends of the Golding Centre** will remain possibly with a minor name adjustment. We live in interesting and challenging times!

**Feature**  **Essay**

 **Mary Wollstonecraft**

 **a significant and often misunderstood foremother**

 Famous for her seminal publication *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

 she stated that she ‘could not yield to the barrenness of atheism’ and prayed: ‘Gracious Creator ….have you created such a being as woman, who can trace your wisdom in Your works, …. for no better purpose than to be subject to man?

Born in 1759, Mary Wollstonecraft was the eldest daughter of Edward Wollstonecraft, an unsuccessful English gentleman farmer, who was a poor manager and frequently a tyrannical husband and father. His wife, Elizabeth Dixson, was in ill-health and submissive. One of the benefits of the family’s precarious economic circumstances was that Mary was not subject to the limited shallow education of the middle class of the times.

Mary had a passionate nature and readily formed strong friendships. Indeed she said of herself: ‘I think that I love most people best when they are in adversity for pity is one of my prevailing passions.’ Through her association with scholarly men, as a consequence of her friendship with their families, Mary educated herself to the stage where she was able to achieve some independence by establishing a school and later taking a position as a governess. .

Her school was situated in Newington Green, a suburb of London where she was befriended by a Dissenting religious community. The most eminent citizen of Newington was Dr Richard Price, a famous philosopher, economist, Presbyterian clergyman and political progressive, who knew and corresponded with such leading thinkers of his day as Joseph Priestly, Benjamin Franklin, Turgot and Pitt.

After her forays into the educational field had failed, Mary earned her living through writing, working as a journalist for the publisher Joseph Johnson. This included translating and writing reviews for Johnson’s journal, *The Analytical Review*. She became strongly socially and politically aware.

Richard Price had a profound effect upon Mary, and indeed it was an occasional address delivered by Price in 1789 that sparked the great political debate in England which produced Edmund Burke’s anti-revolutionary, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Mary responded with her pro-revolutionary *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* published in 1790. Her famous *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* had its roots in her response to Burke, as well as in the publications of the eminent contemporary historian Catharine Macauley and also in Mary’s own work in the field of education. This revolutionary publication quickly went into a second edition and was translated into French and German.

In fact this classic has never been out of print despite the ebb and flow of the women’s movement over the centuries. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, however, is not an easy read and, somewhat like significant Papal encyclicals of the past, it is rarely read carefully in its entirety but rather quoted selectively from the comments of others, who read it to support a particular perspective. At the time of publication it inspired both outrage and admiration.

Mary, along with her liberal associates, followed the Revolution in France with considerable interest and initially expressed high hopes for it. In fact she went to France to observe it at close quarters for *The Analytical Review*. She reported:

From my first impressions on arriving in revolutionary France I could but say: I would that out of the chaos of vices, follies, prejudices and virtues crudely jumbled together, I saw the fair form of liberty slowly rising and virtue expanding her wings. But, if the aristocracy of birth is levelled with the ground only to make room for riches, I am afraid that the morals of people will not be much improved, nor the government rendered less dishonest.

Like the modern foreign correspondent, Mary placed herself close to the action:

I could not but be shocked by the excesses of the Revolution as the moderates lost control. One day I passed the Place de la Revolution where pools of blood from the guillotine were still fresh on the pavement. Not being able to contain my revulsion I spoke out on the spot to the alarm of passers-by, who knew only too well that protest was fatal … I decided that progress, unfortunately, was frequently accompanied by some destruction and I hoped for virtue to triumph.

After her return from France in1794 Johnson published her manuscript *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution*. In this she concluded: ‘Out of this chaotic mass, a fairer government is rising. Things must have time to find their level.’ Though she stated: ‘While the ideals of “liberty, Equality and Fraternity” appealed to me I could not yield to the barrenness of atheism.’

Mary followed closely developments in the new French government. She was particularly interested in the new system of national education advocated in 1791 by M. Talleyrand-Perigord, the former Bishop of Autun and a member of the Constituent Assembly. She was appalled to find that, even in revolutionary France, equality of educational opportunities applied only to boys. It was this that had finally fired her to write *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and dedicate it to M. Talleyrand-Perigor. She hoped that this would enlarge his horizons and influence him to extend greater public educational opportunities to girls in France and possibly influence other countries.

Mary was also depressed by the state of contemporary womanhood in Britain in 1792. In addressing this topic, for her there was no conflict between religion and reason. She explained:

I thank my Bring who impressed my ideals upon my soul and gave me sufficient strength of mind to dare to exert my reason. Becoming dependent only on Him for the support of my virtue, I view with indignation the mistaken notions that enslave my sex…. The real source of female folly and vice have ever appeared to me to arise from narrowness of mind; and the very constitution of civil governments had put almost insuperable obstacles in the way of the cultivation of the female understanding; yet virtue can be built on no other foundation.

Mary prayed:

Gracious Creator of the whole human race, have you created such a being as woman, who can trace your wisdom in Your works, and feel that you are by Your nature exalted above her, for no better purpose than to be subject to man?

She was convinced that human happiness was tied to virtue, especially truth, which was inextricably tied to reason and religion, and argued:

Contending for the rights of women, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she is not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice,

Mary Wollstonecraft was very clear about the close relationship between private and public morality:

Public spirit must be nurtured by private virtue or it will resemble the artificial sentiment which makes women careful to preserve their reputation and men their honour. A sentiment that often exists unsupported by virtue.

It could be argued that her comment on the situation of European society as she observed it could well contribute to discussion on the contemporary situation:

The civilisation of the bulk of the people of Europe is very partial; nay, it made me question whether they have acquired any virtues in exchange for innocence. The desire of dazzling riches, the pleasure of commanding flattering sycophants, and many other low calculations of doting self-love, have all contributed to overwhelm the mass of mankind and make liberty a convenient handle for mock patriotism.

Mary Woolstonecraft was particularly critical of the women in the upper and middle-classes of her time:

Confined in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but plume themselves and stalk with mock majesty form perch to perch. It is true that they are provided with food and raiment for which they neither toil or spin, but health, liberty and virtue are given in exchange.

On the other hand in their defence she pointed out:

To laugh at them or satirise the follies of a being, who is never allowed to act freely from the light of reason, is as absurd as cruel …

And she lamented that women generally had not ‘learnt to think with the energy necessary to concentrate that abstract train of thought which produces principles.’

Although Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* remains badly in need of editing, it is studded with ‘quotable quotes’ and her letters and other works reveal a woman of strong emotions, inevitably flawed like the rest of humankind, but with a passion for learning and truth. She also expressed remarkable insight into the subject of educating children in sexual matters. It is interesting to note that Annie Golding in her 1904 essay on ‘The Evolution of Women and Their Possibilities’ stated: ‘No paper on the progress of women could be complete if the name of Mary Wollstonecraft was omitted.’

 **References:**

E.M. Sunstein, *A Different Face – The Life of Mary Wollstonecraft*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1975).

M.Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, M.Krammnick (ed), first published 1792; (London, Pelican Classic, Penguin Books, 1978.)

M.Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, S.Tomascelli (ed) (Cambridge , Cambridge University Press,1995).

Sophie McGrath

 **2014 Golding Centre Annual Colloquia**

The 12th annual colloquia day of the Golding Centre will be held on the 26 April, the first Saturday after Easter Sunday, in the new Function Room on the Strathfield Campus. Details can be found on the enclosed flier.

 **Letter From London**

The annual H-WRBI (History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland) conference, this year organised by Ayla Lepine and Kate Jordan on the theme of ‘Materialising the Spirit: Spaces, objects and art in the cultures of women religious’, was a great success. This conference was a bit of a first for H-WRBI: thematically it was very tightly focused, though as usual the time period encompassed the medieval to modern. This conference included heritage practitioners as well as the usual archivists and historians. The conference began with a special guided tour of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Catholic treasures. The penultimate panel on ‘Heritage and Preservation’ was of particular interest, and speakers included conservation archivists, a Vice Chair of the Bishop’s Conference Patrimony Committee and English Heritage. This was a good opportunity for heritage experts and historians to share their thoughts.

H-WRBI has also expanded its network of volunteers. Liesbeth Corens is managing our listserv and is tweeting away about H-WRBI (email her at liesbethcorens@gmail.com if you want to join the list; or follow H-WRBI at @H\_WRBI). Melanie Carroll is managing our Facebook page– check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/H-W-R-B-I-History-of-Women-Religious-of-Britain-and-Ireland/176568259083818>. Kimm Curran and Rebecca Volk are two stalwart volunteers who have been working behind the scenes for the past several years making sure the H-WRBI website remains current and exciting. Kimm is responsible for the overall management of the website and Rebecca Volk keeps our website updated with everything that flows onto this list (book reviews, conference information, etc.).

*The English Convents in Exile, 1600-1800: Communities, Culture and Identity* (2013), edited by Caroline Bowden and James E. Kelly was published by Ashgate last month. It included essays from the 2011 H-WRBI conference which was organised along with the ‘Who Were the Nuns’ project conference. Deirdre Raftery and Elizabeth Smyth will be editing a selection of the papers from the 2012 H-WRBI conference ‘Vocation, Education and Care’ held in Dublin which will be published in 2014. There are also plans in the works for a special conference edited collection of this year’s conference papers.

And finally, Kimm Curran has volunteered to organise the next H-WRBI conference in Glasgow with the theme 'Nuns' Literacies - Medieval to Modern'; dates will be either 28-30 Aug/4-6 Sept/11-13 Sept 2014 depending on room availability. A Call for Papers will be forthcoming.

And for those who like to plan ahead, the 2015 H-WRBI conference will be organised in the summer months of 2015 in Dublin by Deirdre Raftery.

All the best,

Carmen Mangion

Birkbeck College, University of London.

Caroline Bowden

Queen Mary College, University of London.

 **Book Reviews**

 **Heather O’Connor, *The Challenge of Change: Mercy and Loreto Sisters in Ballarat 1950-1980*. Ballan, VIC: Connor Court Publishing, 2013. Pp. 360. ISBN 978 1 922168 252 (pbk)**

This excellent work, based on doctoral research, is a significant addition to the growing body of scholarly historical studies of women religious in Australia. This is, however, a study with a difference, as the author traces the contribution in Ballarat of *two* religious orders - the Sisters of Mercy (RSM) and the Loreto Sisters (IBVM) - from 1950 to 1980. The latter period has been chosen to illustrate the changing historical context within which women religious operated and adapted.

The city of Ballarat provides an example of a provincial city transformed from a manufacturing and agricultural centre to one heavily reliant on service industries – health, education and tourism – based largely on its historical and heritage values. Between 1950 and 1980 the city also experienced significant changes in its political and cultural life. As the centre of one of the four Catholic suffragan dioceses in Victoria, Ballarat exhibited all the characteristics of post Vatican II change within the Church.

The two Institutes of religious women that are the subject of this book have both been involved in education in the city since the nineteenth century. The similarities between the two congregations are more striking than their differences. Both have a history of strong leadership and an emphasis on education for their members which accelerated after Vatican II, but which stretches back to their foundresses and pioneering sisters. While both the city and the Diocese of Ballarat in the 1950s would have reflected the reality of the rest of the country (that positions of authority were held by men), the important exceptions were the women religious. The management of the large institutions which the women religious corporately owned and ran remained firmly in their hands as a visible sign of women’s leadership when it was so painfully absent in most other areas. This strength was no doubt based, in some measure, on the survival of harsh conditions faced by the sisters whose focus was country education in 19th century Australia – for example, water available only from wells, no sewerage, wood fires, poultry and dairy animals tended from 4.30am before beginning teaching for the day, to name only one of their diverse ministries.

One of the many significant features of this study seeks to explore the influence of women religious on music in Ballarat, a city known throughout Australia for the diversity and quality of its musicians, both professional and amateur. The contribution of the sisters has been central to the musical life of the community and to the religious culture of the Church in the diocese. Generations of young people have been given the opportunity to hear and perform the best of secular and church music. The sisters provided live music experience for the broader community, and produced students whose abilities were utilised in local orchestras, theatre companies and musical events. Music, more than anything else, was the interface between the convents and the city.

The author has discussed with clarity and empathy the forces for change within the broader Australian community, including those relating to the position and status of women, accompanied by changing policies and programs of government within the Catholic education bureaucracies. These issues all impacted on decisions which women religious were to make in the 1960s and 1970s, and on their understandings of what religious life would mean for them going into the 1980s. Indeed the world in 1980 was radically different to that of the 1950s. The corporate work of both Institutes after Vatican II continued to be education, made possible by the commitment of teachers to stay within the schools, a leadership which managed the handover of new responsibilities to committed and dedicated lay teachers, and the willingness of individual sisters to work past retirement age in domestic support. However, the gradual hand-over to the laity and the consequent role of religious as employers was not achieved without great soul-searching and the benefits of administrative skill and leadership. Women religious in Ballarat demonstrated that, despite individual sisters seeking new forms of religious life and work, they could still continue to provide education for a growing number of children and tertiary students.

One of the many changes for women religious after the Second Vatican Council concerned a new process for formation. Changes to the formation programmes and novitiate life began in the 1970s and were to result in a system of formation unrecognizable in relation to that which women undertook prior to Vatican II. As the number of women entering religious life declined, convents no longer required large novitiates, nor would novice mistresses remain almost exclusively the dominant figures in the formation of young religious.

Throughout this scholarly and comprehensive account of the many significant issues concerning women religious, Dr O’Connor has demonstrated how the ‘living presence’ of both Mary Ward and Catherine McAuley, far from being purely historical figures, continues to inform and inspire their followers in the 21st century. The author, however, regards as a tragedy the fact that their talents as the public face of the church have been at best, underutilised, at worst, sidelined. Clearly, women religious have all the skills required to manage change of historic proportions. The author has demonstrated beyond doubt that were they to be asked to take on the public face of the Church, they could revolutionise the structures and the public perception of an institution to which they have remained loyal and committed.

Dr Kit Smith

[Heather O’Connor was a Golding Centre doctoral student at ACU and her thesis was rated highly by her overseas and Australian examiners. Editor.]

 **Edith Stein International Conference**

A three day conference focusing on Edith Stein was held in June this year at King’s University College , Western University, London, Canada. The theme of the conference was impressive and challenging: **Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Metaphysics and Public History – New Approaches and Applications**

The conference was hosted by the Centre for Advanced Research in European Philosophy and the International Association for the Study of the Philosophy of Edith Stein. Melissa Jolly, doctoral student from ACU (Strathfield Campus), whose doctoral thesis in process focuses on Edith Stein, attended and was lost in wonder and admiration at the number of people with an extraordinarily wide range of interests who were drawn together by their attraction to the unifying wisdom of Edith Stein.

**Keynote addresses** :

\*Angela Ales Bello (Lateran University Rome): ‘From the Neutral Human Being to Gender Difference: Phenomenological and Dual Anthropology in Edith Stein’.

\*Dr Lester Embree (Florida Atlantic University) – ‘Speculations about the Gottingen-Freiburg Gap in Phenomenology’.

**Special Event**

A novel presentation at the conference was a three hour session titled: Public History/Public Philosophy? This consisted of a reading and discussion of Arthur Giron’s play *Edith Stein*. This was led by Arthur Giron (Emeritus, Carnegie Mellon, University), Joyce Avrech Berkman (UMass Amherst) and Leonard Berkman (Smith College).

Edith Stern was a publicly self-declared feminist from an early age, Her feminist stance and relevance to contemporary society were especially addressed in the following papers:

\*Laura Beet (University of Chicago), ‘Edith Stein’s Feminism in intellectual History: Essence, Literature and Phenomenological Method’.

\*Jacib W. Torbeck (Aquinas Institute of Theology): ‘The Woman Question: Methodologcal Concerns in the Catholic Feminism of Edith Stein’.

\*Caroline McAtamney (St Augustine’s Seminary of Toronto): ‘The relevance of the Pedagogical Philosophy of Edith Stein in Contemporary Culture’.

The abstract of Angela Ales Bello’s keynote indicates how a serious study of Edith Stein’s contribution to the psychology of women and men can inform a more fruitful discussion within the Catholic community concerning the relation of women and men in the Church and, indeed, marriage:

Following Husserl’s lead, Edith Stein maintains, on one hand that phenomenology can account for the universality of the structure of the human being while giving an essential description of the ‘phenomenon’. On the other hand, she is sensitive to the claims of the feminist movement and believes it is necessary to deepen the difference between male and female by not only describing what constitutes the feminine but also what constitutes the masculine, In doing so, Stein brings something new to the philosophical discourse. Additionally, she defends a view concerning the singularity of the human person in which both male and female are present.

**Forthcoming Conferences**

**Australasian Welfare History Workshop, 10-11th February 2014, Hobart**

The fifth Australasian Welfare History Workshop will be held at the University of Hobart. Proposals are invited on any aspect of welfare history. Including intersections with the histories of gender, war, race, childhood, medicine, religion, volunteering, migration and philanthropy. This workshop attracts scholars from the fields of history, politics, social work and social policy.

 Please send abstracts of 250 words to Dr Caroline Evans at Caroline.Evans@acu.edu.au by 15 December 2013.

**Gender and Sexuality in the Reformation, 9-11 April 2014, Cambridge, UK**

This conference will be held at the Westminster College, Cambridge, UK. It is the initiative of the Society for Reformation Studies. The Reformation affected not only men but also women, in particular, the Protestant rejection of the ideal of celibacy led to a new emphasis on the centrality of the family and on the roles of both the paterfamilias and materfamilias. Through the closure of the monasteries and convents, the Protestant Reformation affected the options open to women as well as men. Shifts in the understandings of the legal place of marriage brought with them changes to the legal and social status of women.

Papers of 25 minutes are invited on any aspect of gender and sexuality in relation to the Reformation. For further information contact: Dr Charlotte Methuen (charlotte.menthuen @glasgow.ac.uk); Dr Aaron Denlinger (aaron.denlinger@ gmail.com)

**Conference on Religion and Political Culture in the Early Modern World c.15000-1750 at the University of York (UK) 27-28 June 2014**

Religious and political thought have seldom been entirely separable but this was especially the case following the seismic changes that characterised the early modern period. These transformations affected the relationship of the religious and the political, blurring the boundaries between sacred and secular, public and private in ways previously inconceivable. These two sources of power met on a large scale in wars of religion or the establishment of godly governance as seen in self-regulation manuals on such topics as child-raising, managing the home, ordering of diet, and dying well. Recent work has established that religion and politics intersect with confessional identities, material culture, the spatial imagination, intellectual and patronage networks, and across manuscripts and print culture. This is the time of the Jesuits and Mary Ward, founder of the Loreto Sisters.

Proposals of 200-250 words for a 20 minute paper are invited from scholars working in the early modern period. Send proposals to Christine Knaack, Jonas van Tol and Emma Kennedy by 1 March 2014 using email address: godlygov2014@gmail.com.

**Annual Symposium of the Australian Women’s History Network , Brisbane, 9 July 2014**

This symposium is held within the 2014 Australian Historical Association annual conference (7-11 July). The theme of the encompassing AHA conference is ‘Conflict in History’, broadly interpreted, while the theme of the women’s history symposium is: ‘Paper-work: Material Culture and Women’s History’. The venue is Queensland University, Brisbane. More detail can be obtained from the website of the Australian Women’s Network as well as the AHA website.

**The British Women’s History Network Annual Conference, University of Worchester, 5-7 September, 2014**

This 23rd annual conference of the Women’s History Network (Britain) has the theme ‘Home Fronts: Gender, War and Conflict’. Offers of papers are invited which draw upon the perspectives of women and gender to discuss practical and emotional survival on the Home Front during war and conflict. A wide range of areas may be addressed including: \*Women’s’ working lives on the home front; \*Shifting relations of power around gender, ethnicity, religion or politics;\*Women’s individual or collective strategies and tactics for survival in wartime; \*The arts, leisure and entertainment during military conflict;\*Case studies illuminating the particularity of the Home Front in cities, small towns or rural areas.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent to: maggie.andrew@worc.ac.uk by 1 April 2014.

[The Australian Women’s History Network and the British Women’s History Network are members of the International Federation of Women’s History - Ed]

( This Newsletter is edited by Dr Sophie McGrath rsm. Please address all correspondence to her at the Golding Centre, Australian Catholic University, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135 ; email: sophie.mgrath@acu.edu.au)