



(Now Futures for Women)

Newsletter

Spring 2013

Dear Friends of SPTW,

Our Strategy Group has been considering future developments and funding for the Society. It has recognised that our name SPTW is not easily remembered and recommended that we should find a shorter title. After considerable discussion the Trustees have chosen a new operating name which has been well received. We are to be known now as:

'Futures for Women'
The work of SPTW

This means that we keep our history and have an easier name for those who are not familiar with the Society. We hope you approve.

February's fund raising literary lunch at which our new patron, Victoria Glendinning spoke was a very happy and successful occasion. 110 people attended the event on a beautiful spring day. We raised a considerable amount of money. We also raised our profile, made new friends and new members. We are very grateful to Victoria for her erudite and sparkling contribution. You can read more about the event on later pages.

We are fortunate to have a very distinguished speaker at this year's AGM, Rosemary Feenan, of James Lang La Salle. This will be held on Wednesday 12th June. We hope you will come to hear her.

We continue to receive requests from excellent candidates. You will find some of their stories in this Newsletter. The more money we have the more women we can help. Please, please continue to give generously to help women to a brighter future.

With best wishes to you all,

Elspeth Richards

AGM 2013

Wednesday 12th June at
The Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS)
Queen Mary University of London
67-69 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3JB

Room 2.2

12.00 noon AGM

12.30pm Light refreshments

1.00pm Speaker, Rosemary Feenan

Our distinguished speaker is Director of the Global Research Team at
Jones Lang LaSalle
a worldwide organisation supplying commercial real estate services.

For catering and security please let the Secretary know if you are coming
sec.sptw@btinternet.com

The AGM is an ideal time to pay your subscriptions of £30 per annum



Victoria Glendinning held diners spellbound at the Literary Lunch

Literary Lunch

Sunday 17th February 2013 at Mill on the Brue, Bruton

A review by one of our guests

Victoria Glendinning, internationally renowned biographer and novelist, was the speaker. Victoria, whose most recent biography *Raffles and the Golden Opportunity* was published in October, is a Patron of the Society.

Rosie Parr introduced the Society to the audience, telling us that most of its loans now go towards post-graduate qualifications. About 20 women a year are able to benefit, with £1,000 or £2,000 being the usual amount of the loan. She was followed by Anna Watts, a young woman with a first-class degree in languages. Anna spoke about how difficult it was to find work even with her degree, and how much she was helped by the loan for her post-graduate research into Latin American literature. She now has a good job at Heinemann, the publisher. Jo Murray, the Vice-Chair and an airline pilot, told how she benefited from a Society loan. Jo has been a Society Trustee for 18 years.

The Chair, Elspeth Richards, introduced Victoria, who gave a characteristically sparkling, witty talk on 'Women and a Few Men'. She told us of her great-aunt, Winnie Seebohm, the subject of her first book, *A Suppressed Cry* – a moving account of a beautiful and intelligent girl who died at only 22 without being able to fulfil her considerable potential. In the late Victorian era, unmarried middle-class women with a need or desire to earn their living had the greatest difficulty in getting an education and leading a worthwhile existence. They had to be 'secret agents of their own futures', said Victoria, if they were to get anywhere, struggling against parental and societal disapproval. Such were the kind of problems that inspired the founding of the Society.

Victoria had never set out to be a writer; had never thought to herself, 'this is what I am going to do'. But she sent her manuscript to seven publishers, all of whom turned it down. An eighth said yes – perseverance paid off!

She wrote articles, too, and eventually the highly-regarded women's magazine *Nova* of the 1960s took her first piece. She vividly remembers the feeling of walking on air when she saw the magazine on the newsstands with her name in it.

She described how the writing of biographies requires an entirely different approach from that of writing novels. Biographies almost by definition undergo the scrutiny of academics, who are ready to catch you out; whereas novels are, in her delicious phrase, 'licensed lying'.

At first, she told us, she wrote mostly on women, because she felt she couldn't know men from the inside. But later she came tentatively to the thought that very few people are 100% masculine or 100% feminine, most people falling

somewhere along a continuum, with elements of both in their makeup. However, Rebecca West told her that all women become men after the age of 50.

Her first male subject was the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope, and she was dismayed to discover that three academics were writing his biography at the same time. But, encouraged by a friend, she carried on, and hers won a prize. She became more at ease with the idea of writing about men, and her later subjects include Jonathan Swift, Leonard Woolf, and now Stamford Raffles. She gave us a résumé of the career of Singapore's founder, who came from an unremarkable background and worked his way up to dazzling prominence.

All her women subjects lived at 'an uncomfortable angle to life': Elizabeth Bowen, Edith Sitwell, Rebecca West, and Vita Sackville-West. And her great-aunt Winnie wanted 'not so much knowledge as thought and grasp'. Victoria concluded her talk by saying that there is no such thing as the definitive biography, and that her recurring nightmare is to see all these extraordinary women waiting for her at the gates of heaven, shouting 'You got it wrong!'

Somehow, I doubt that, after listening to this wonderfully entertaining and informative half-hour.

Elisabeth Balfour

Editor, The Dove – Bruton and District Parish Magazine



Thank You.....

To all who contributed toward the success of the Literary Lunch

- The Directors of Mill on the Brue for free use of The Longhouse
- Those who came and supported on the day
- Those who could not come but sent donations
- Those who gave raffle prizes
- Bailey Hill Bookshop, Castle Cary, for their generous support
- Local Trustee Rosie Parr for help organising the occasion
- Jo Murray Vice-Chair and Karen Goldie-Morrison, Trustee, for help on the day and many others.

As a result of your efforts we raised £2,000

And

Having attended the lunch, Sally Pollitzer, acclaimed artist in paint and glass, arranged for the Society to receive a substantial donation from the JSF Pollitzer Charitable Trust. This was founded by her father and we are very grateful to Sally.

.....This made a Grand Total of £4,000 for the event



Between the courses diners enjoy the sunshine at The Longhouse

A View on Funding from a Grantee.....

One of our grantees spoke at the lunch with great passion about the plight of students today and here is an extract from what she said.....

“University education is currently undergoing enormous upheaval. With most undergraduate fees now reaching £9,000 a year, this higher level of education is becoming increasingly unattainable and the reality of going to university is now crippling, rather than liberating, for most students. Worse still, first degrees are

no longer the passport to economic and social mobility that they used to be. In order to stand a greater chance in an increasingly competitive job market, postgraduate study is often essential. Furthermore, without top quality research taking place in our academic institutions, the UK's reputation for excellence at university will soon crumble.

With huge pressure on funding bodies and research councils due to the raising of fees, support is being withdrawn for postgraduates. The number of postgraduate research students receiving funding will drop by 47% in the next year. Banks will give career development loans to fewer than half of those who applied, and that fortunate minority will then be forced to incur heavy interest rates, and this is on top of their £40,000 undergraduate debt.

This financial situation could well lead to what is essentially the privatisation of universities; something which is a contradiction in terms, a university should be a public, universal and open institution. Organisations like SPTW are absolutely vital for the future of the UK and the future of universities. Without support from charities and funding bodies, universities will become less and less diverse and will therefore fail to produce high quality research that fuels a progressive and prospering country.

Having the support of SPTW allowed me to gain a whole range of work experience whilst researching, from blog writing and university tutoring, to the work experience in publishing which gave me the first crucial step in to the job that I have now. I am fortunate enough to love my work, a privilege not many people my age have, as the priority for most is to get a job as soon as possible in order to start paying your way out of spiralling debt. As a student in the current climate, it is easy to feel that everything is against you and that there is no time for self-development or improvement. I am enormously grateful to SPTW for giving me this time to develop and for giving me the freedom to choose what I want to do."

Why Futures for Women - SPTW - continues to need your support

Osteopath, £1,000

The first couple of years following my graduation were very much learning what sort of osteopath I wanted to be and in developing confidence with patients. I worked for two osteopaths in Devon who were both very positive influences on me.

I went onto start my own practice at home in Wiltshire. A lucky break came when I happened to treat a young man who played for Swindon Town Football Club. The medical team at the club had struggled to treat his injury but I managed to rehabilitate him. Their medical team leader contacted me and asked if I would be interested in working occasionally for them, which I did not hesitate to do! My next move is to build on the success of the last couple of years to develop my practice. I am planning to develop exercise classes for the management of low back pain. With careful planning and development I hope to continue with the recent success I have experienced. Thank you for your support.

Masters in Latin American Literature £1,000

My job is as Editorial Assistant for the imprint William Heinemann, which is a literary imprint of Random House. We publish both high-end fiction and non-fiction.

As assistant to the publisher much of my time is spent organising his diary, meetings, paying authors, general admin and reading some of his submissions etc.. The rest of my job is more editorial; I co-ordinate edits between the copyeditor, the proof reader and the author as well as proofreading and marking up manuscripts myself.

I read a lot of our backlist, frontlist and submissions, research other similar titles in the market, write copy (the blurb on the back of the book), put up reviews for Amazon, talk to authors and agents about submissions or upcoming titles etc..... And it is all lots of fun!

Norland Nanny £1,000

While I was a student at Norland College we learnt all sorts of skills, not just child care, but how to cook 3 course meals and how to sew and repair. We had weekly rotations of college and outside placements in hospitals, nurseries, schools and with families.

My probationary year was spent with an Army family, caring for three small children. Now, as a qualified Norland Nanny I am working in a demanding but very rewarding job. I now nanny 7.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri for 11 month old triplets two boys and a girl. You may gasp at the thought of triplets but really it's not too bad. What I do is to set out one activity and do one thing at a time.

Whether it's changing nappies or feeding or playing or napping, they do it all together. So yes there are three of them but it's not that bad!

Unfortunately their mother died soon after giving birth so my role as nanny has been very important in making sure that they are developing in the right ways. Anyway this is where I am at the moment and I love being a nanny! It's truly a dream come true.

Thank you to you all you helped me to get here and gave me the financial support that I needed! I am truly grateful not just for helping me but for helping every one. Thank you.

SPTW TODAY

Patrons	Professor Mary Fuller Victoria Glendinning CBE FRSL Hon D Litt Lady Hawley
President	Lady Appleyard
Vice-President	Her Honour Suzanne Stewart
Chairman	Mrs E Richards
Vice Chairman	Ms J Murray
Trustees	Dr C Boulter, Mrs G Burgess, Professor J Dine Ms K Goldie-Morrison, Dr K Jardine-Brown Ms A McVittie, Mrs R Parr
Secretary	Mrs M Bennett, 168, Sandyhurst Lane, Boughton Aluph, Ashford, Kent TN25 4NX sec.sptw@btinternet.com www.sptw.org

Reg Charity No 313700



EBAY SELLING

We are now registered as a charity on Ebay and can therefore receive preferential fees and charitable donations. Please contact the Secretary who can arrange to sell your items for you.

If you would like to support SPTW please forward your donation to the address above.

CHEQUE OR STANDING ORDERS MOST WELCOME TO:

SPTW General Fund

Barclays Bank Sort Code 20-81-20

Account Number 70982032

Annual Membership of the Society is £30. Membership application forms and Gift Aid forms (UK tax payers) are available from the Secretary. Your continuing support is greatly appreciated by the many applicants to our charity.