



Remarkable Women: Making a Difference in Education

An Exhibition Celebrating International
Women's Day and Women's History Month

7-26 March 2025, Southlands College Chapel



Welcome

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this new exhibition at Southlands College, *Remarkable Women: Making a Difference in Education*. The pictures which make up the show are all on loan from the walls and the archives of Southlands and its sister colleges at the University of Roehampton. We are lucky to be the inheritors of four rich institutional histories, brought together through the founding of our university, shaping our present and our future – and this exhibition will give you a flavour of that identity.

The women in this exhibition are remarkable for (at least) three reasons.

Individually, they have made remarkable contributions to education, shaping the lives of students and helping influence wider society in important ways. They are remarkable because – together – their work led to the foundation of this remarkable institution – our special, unique university here at Roehampton. They are also remarkable precisely because they are women. Which other universities have you visited where portraits of women leaders on the walls of its most important rooms vastly outnumber those of the men? I'd hazard a guess there have been very few – perhaps none.

Roehampton celebrates having been one of the first higher education institutions in the country to educate women. Our exhibition duly recognises the achievements of some of those important women who make up our community of alumnae. We talk – and think – less often, though, about the women who educated those women. What remarkable people they must have been. This exhibition helps illuminate some of their stories, too, and allows us to shine a new light on them and their significance to education and for our institutions.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

*Dr Christopher Stephens
Head of Southlands College and CEO of the Southlands Methodist Trust*





Remarkable Women of
Whitelands College
Founded 1841



Angela Burdett-Coutts
by Peter Paul Skeolan
albumen carte-de-visite, 1868
NPG x17021
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Angela Burdett-Coutts (1814–1906) *Whitelands College patron c1854–1872*

Inheriting a vast fortune from her banker grandfather, Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts, later 1st Baroness Burdett, spent the majority of her wealth on myriad works of philanthropy. Influential and much respected and admired by her contemporaries, she was the close friend and confidante of numerous eminent Victorians, amongst whom were the Duke of Wellington, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, William Ewart Gladstone, David Livingstone, Henry Irving and Queen Victoria. She pioneered model housing, established a home for 'fallen women', supported the work of the NSPCC and the RSPCA and, as a devout Anglican, founded churches and church schools.

She took a keen interest in education, promoting especially the development of technical education for boys and domestic science for girls. James Kay-Shuttleworth, as Permanent Secretary to the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, personally introduced her to Whitelands in the early 1850s, which led to a 20-year association with the college. She took such a close interest in it that, according to some accounts, she effectively came to function as its principal alongside the chaplain, Rev. Harry Baber. She visited the college frequently, attended lectures by each member of staff and examined every detail of the domestic arrangements. In addition, in 1854 she introduced a system of prize-giving for needlework and domestic economy which she called 'Prizes for Common Things', and gave generous prizes to the successful students right up to 1872.



Angela Burdett-Coutts,
Baroness Burdett-Coutts
by Francis Henry Hart, for Elliott
& Fry albumen print, 1882
NPG P1700(16d)
© National Portrait Gallery London



Miss Lilian Barker CBE, Chief Lady Superintendent Woolwich Arsenal
Image: IWM (WWC D8-4-158)

Dame Lilian Barker (1874–1955) *Whitelands College student 1894–1896*

Lilian Barker's pioneering work in the fields of education, prison reform and anti-poverty campaigning left a lasting legacy for the welfare of women and girls, and she remains one of Whitelands College's most famous and extraordinary alumna. From an early age she was instinctively drawn to teaching, working often with the most challenging children, whilst constantly pioneering new ideas and championing the downtrodden and impoverished in her neighbourhood.

In 1894, she was accepted for the two-year teacher training course at Whitelands College. There, despite frequently defying convention, she was nevertheless a brilliant and popular student. She then continued her teaching and social activities, as well as caring for her ailing mother, and in 1913 she was appointed principal of a new experimental evening institute for women, aimed at improving the lives and prospects of the poorer inhabitants in the Edgware Road area. She became increasingly a champion of 'down and out' and 'fallen' girls and women, both collectively and through extraordinarily generous efforts of time and energy to help and support them individually – a practice she would maintain throughout her life. In 1916 came her biggest challenge yet, as she took charge of the 30,000 women employed on wartime munitions work at the Woolwich Arsenal.

In recognition of her efforts, in 1918 she was one of the first women to receive a CBE. Whitelands College celebrated this achievement noting: *'Her present position of power and trust at Woolwich Arsenal is not the result of any influence but that of her own worth and personality. For years before the war her work in schools and institutes was only a part of her social activities. She made the cause of East End working women and girls her own, and to hear her speak at public meetings... was an abject lesson in the convincing power of a strong personality combined with absolute sincerity, kindness, and common sense.'*

After the war she continued her struggle for women and girls' rights as she embarked on a new career as governor of the sole borstal for girls, at Aylesbury, transforming the place beyond recognition, reforming rehabilitation and aftercare, and creating indelible, lifelong bonds with many inmates and colleagues.

As a result of her success and tireless efforts she was invited to become the first female prison commissioner in 1955 and became heavily involved in particular with Holloway prison. Her work arguably provided the basis for the modern, more humanitarian correctional system.

She was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1944, a year after her retirement at the age of 69. After her death of a heart attack in 1955, many tributes were paid to her 'marvellous and brilliant work by the London newspapers including the Times', whose obituary ended 'Her epitaph comes from her own lips: *'I have laughed more people into being good than if I had preached for hours.'*

Lilian met her partner Florence Francis when both were young women teaching at Sunday School. They lived openly together from 1914, sharing their home, often with numerous dogs, family members and guests, for 40 years until Lilian's death.



Clara Luard
WC/AR/4/1/LUARD

Miss Clara Luard (1866–1952), MA (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxon) *Whitelands College Principal 1907–1918*

Clara Georgina Luard read Modern History at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and went on to teach at Bedford Girls' High School before becoming headmistress of the junior department at Queen's College, Harley Street from 1895 to 1907. Queen's College was founded in 1848 and was the first school to provide a formal academic education for girls.

Clara went on to become principal of Whitelands College from 1907 to 1918, succeeding to the role after the 30-year stint of the Rev. John Pincher Faunthorpe. She was the first officially appointed female principal. She quickly made many improvements to the spartan living conditions of both the students and governesses and encouraged a lessening of the authoritarian Victorian discipline. A contemporary would later remark: 'those who knew her in those early days have deep admiration for her courage and patience in the face of great difficulties'. She changed the emphasis for first year students to a sound academic education in a limited range of subjects, and for second year students to an equally rigorous professional training in theory and practice of teaching. This became the national pattern. She was also a pioneer in the struggle to break down the notional barrier between higher education colleges and universities.

Defending higher education for girls against accusations that it was bad for their health and neglectful of their softer side, Clara wrote in the magazine 'Brown Owl' that she knew girls who had achieved high standings in classics, mathematics and philosophy and who were still able to enter a room or hand a cup of tea with ease and grace.

'Hers was an influence that can never be measured.... She was always serene and undisturbed – in fact she must have lived on a higher plane than most of us, but yet she came to know us all personally' [member of 1914 cohort].



Miss Clara Luard 1947, William Dring R.A.



Miss Winifred Mercier MA CBE
1874–1934
Principal Whitelands College 1918–1934
Artist: Oswald Birley RA, 1938
Commissioned after her death



Winifred Mercier, from *Whitelands College Annual* 1934

Miss Winifred Mercier (1878–1934), MA, OBE *Whitelands College Principal 1918–34*

Winifred Mercier was an educationist, believing in education irrespective of class and gender. Greatly respected for her intellect and passion, she was not afraid to engage in public policy debates and ask questions of the government of the day. A first-wave feminist, she encouraged her contemporaries to consider society as it was and as it could be, and to deliberate on the role and function of education in building the social world.

She trained originally as a teacher at Maria Grey Training College but went on to Somerville College, Oxford in 1904 and the First Class Honours School of Modern History, after which she soon became Resident Director of Studies at Girton College, Cambridge. It was from this position that she was persuaded in 1915 to become vice principal and head of the women's side of the newly opened City of Leeds Training College. There, her resignation over the principle of academic and professional freedom for training colleges, brought her much unwelcome publicity. She continued to teach in Leeds and Manchester for two years before she became the principal of Whitelands College in 1918.

Amongst many changes wrought at Whitelands during her long tenure, the move to a larger site in Putney was achieved. Believing passionately that nothing was too good for the nation's future teachers, she successfully convinced the Church of England that it should commission the architect of Liverpool Cathedral, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, to design the new Whitelands, working closely with him to ensure that her educational philosophy could influence and control the design of the building.

As a recognition of both the College and of Winifred Mercier personally, Queen Mary officially opened the new college buildings in June 1931. In 1932 Winifred was made an OBE. By this time she was terminally ill and she died of cancer in 1934. In her last letter to Whitelands students she wrote: '*... I believe that we must learn that the most urgent of all things is the improvement of human relationships, one man with another, one nation with another, one race with another. To appreciate another person's point of view, to realise that "all sorts make a world"*'.



Amy Ida King at Whitelands College,
May Day 1928
WC/PP/SPEN



Ida King, in costume for 'The Old
Curiosity Shop', 1938

Miss Amy Ida King (1881–1968) (Girton College, Cambs) *Whitelands College lecturer 1921–1941*

Amy Ida Louisa King, Ida, as she called herself, was a lecturer in English at Whitelands College from 1921 until retiring in 1941. She was born in Trinidad in 1881, the daughter of James Howard King, a planter, and in 1900 she travelled to England to prepare for university entrance. In 1903, aged 22, she was awarded a place at Girton College, Cambridge to study Medieval and Modern Languages – likely the first Black woman, or one of the first, to study at Cambridge.

After graduating, Ida started her career in teaching. She taught English and French but also produced plays and pageants in schools and local communities in Yorkshire, Staffordshire and London.

In 1921 she joined Whitelands College as lecturer in English and English Literature. The 1922 Whitelands Annual noted 'Miss King teaches voice production and takes a great interest in the dramatic work'. The domestic bursar at the time meanwhile recorded in her memoirs: *'She has the most beautifully modulated speaking voice ... Her brilliant brain is, I'm afraid, probably beyond my powers to attain – though she has touched me, as well as our girls, indeed everyone in her orbit, with her determination to widen our knowledge of literature and philosophy.'*

Inevitably her arrival at Whitelands provoked comment about her race and background. One student noted that 'some of the students were prejudiced and disliked Miss King but I found her most stimulating and unusual.' In fact, Ida became a very popular member of staff and the Annuals are full of anecdotes about 'Miss King' and her productions. Meanwhile, as a teacher of teachers, Ida was rigorous, professional and passionate. She was always busy; whilst at Whitelands she continued to run drama with groups in poorer parts of London. After her retirement she became a part-time lecturer at Homerton College, Cambridge (1941–42) and during the war gave lectures to teachers for the London County Council. She published several text books and wrote a book of plays for children. After Ida died in October 1968 aged 88, the Annual overflowed with tributes, including: *'Miss King is dead. Her beautiful voice, her vibrant personality, her generous heart and her brilliant brain are lost to us forever, but we who knew her will never forget the debt which we and Whitelands owe to her.'*



Miss Dorothy Counsell
Principal, Whitelands College
1950, R.G. Brundrit R.A.

Miss Dorothy Counsell (1887–1978), MA *Whitelands College lecturer 1922–1934, Principal 1934–1951*

Dorothy Counsell, an Oxford graduate in Natural Sciences with a specialism in botany, was appointed to the teaching staff of Whitelands College in 1922 as lecturer in Science. As well as being an inspiring teacher she took a lively interest in all aspects of college life from the daily chapel services to the many drama productions, concerts and festivals.

Following the death of Winifred Mercier, Miss Counsell was appointed Acting Principal, and then College Principal in 1935. This was the first – and only – time the college appointed its principal from existing staff. On the appointment, Whitelands became her life. Her 17 years at the helm formed a period of Herculean effort in the face of enormous change. During the difficult years of wartime-exile in Cambridge, Halifax and Durham, and the subsequent re-establishment of Whitelands in Putney, her strong leadership was remarkably successful, and the college was ready to play its part in the new developments in higher education.

She was the principal who formed a bridge between the Whitelands of the Chelsea days and the freer and more spacious era of life in Putney. While a determined fighter for the college and for education standards, the generations of students and staff under her remembered her warmth of personality, and her enduring interest in them throughout their lives. She never forgot a name, and she was *'so natural, her smile and laugh were spontaneous. Her easy greeting of "Sit ye down" when one entered her study, was heartwarming'*.

The University of London made an inspection of the college in 1951, and was satisfied with the Whitelands way of doing things, speaking highly of the college's achievements. There was no doubt that Whitelands was now secure academically, spiritually, financially and physically, and it was on this note of high success that Dorothy felt able to retire. Her interest in the college and its members, endured until her death in 1978.



Dorothy Counsell c1930



Mrs E.M. Williams M.A.,
Principal of Whitelands, 1952–58
William Dring, 1962.



Elizabeth Williams, from *Whitelands
College Annual* 1952

Mrs Elizabeth Williams (1895–1986), MA, CBE *Whitelands College Principal 1952–1958*

Elizabeth Williams (née Larby, formerly Emily May) was a noted British mathematician and educationist.

She studied for a teacher's diploma at London University where she came under the influence of leading educationists John Adams (1857–1934) and Percy Nunn (1870–1944). In 1916, aged 21, she was subsequently appointed senior mathematics mistress at Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Girls' School, New Cross. In 1922, marriage resulted in her establishing her own 'little school'. This attracted the attention of Nunn which, in turn, led to her appointment in 1931 as lecturer in education at King's College, London. In 1935 she moved to Goldsmiths' College and then, following the end of the Second World War and the ensuing rapid expansion of teacher training, she became in 1946, principal of the new City of Leicester College, and in 1951 of Whitelands College.

By this time, she was nationally known and respected as a mathematics educator and a teacher-trainer. She was a secretary of the Mathematical Association and a member or chair of several important committees which published influential reports. In 1965 she became the first married woman to be president of the association. Meanwhile, on the National Advisory Council for the Training and Supply of Teachers, she fought for the extension of the teacher-training course. After official retirement, her work took on an international aspect. Until her late eighties she visited many countries in Africa, South-East Asia, the Americas, and Australasia, organizing workshops and giving lectures. Her writings included what became the standard reference book for maths teacher training.

Elizabeth's career is of particular interest since it belonged to the transition from the Victorian era to modern practice; she was, for example, the first married woman to hold a number of important educational posts.

Her obituary by Geoffrey Howson records: *'Few if any could have contributed to mathematics education for so long a period. But it was not only its duration which distinguished Elizabeth Williams' work. Its range, in terms of the levels, areas and geographical regions in which she was active, was truly remarkable.'*



Molly Saunders c1951

Miss Marian (Molly) Saunders (1909–2008), MA *Whitelands College Principal 1958–1970*

Molly Saunders had a distinguished career as a school teacher, head teacher, and overseas educational administrator, before becoming principal at Whitelands.

She won a scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge, where she read geography in 1927–30. After graduating she held grammar school teaching posts before becoming headmistress at Guildford Grammar School for Girls, from 1944–49. She worked for the Overseas Civil Service from 1949 and was principal at a training college in Nigeria in 1951–53, and assistant director for education in Uganda in 1953–58.

Returning to the UK in 1958, she was appointed as Whitelands College Principal and, over the ensuing 12 years, presided over a period of great change. Having inherited an all-female institution of around 300 students, by 1970 the college had tripled in size, and been co-educational since 1966. Teaching training course duration had changed from two to three years, and the Bachelor of Education degree and a PGCE programme for graduates had been introduced. She steered the college with consummate skill through the many challenges brought by the liberating agenda of the 1960s.

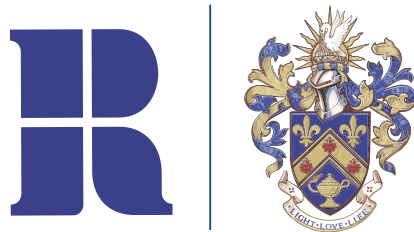
In retirement Molly maintained a keen interest in Whitelands, as well as relationships with many of her students and colleagues, by whom she was held in high esteem.

She died only a few weeks before her 99th birthday, and left the residue of her estate to Whitelands, exemplifying her enduring interest and loyalty to the college and education.



Miss Molly Saunders MA
Principal, Whitelands College
1958–1970
1970, Douglas Wood





Remarkable Women of
Southlands College
Founded 1872



Artist and publication unknown
Published by John Willey, 73 Fleet Street,
London E.C 1863

Susanna Wesley (1669–1742)

Susanna Wesley, a determined, well-educated women of conscience, is often hailed as 'the mother of Methodism' because it was her sons, John and Charles, who founded the Methodist movement.

Susanna does, however, deserve recognition in her own right for her contributions as a writer, theologian and teacher. She led Christian meetings, wrote letters, scriptural commentaries, and meditations, and put much effort into the education of all her many children, dedicating as much time to her daughters as to her sons. Her belief in educating women, which was unusual at the time, is evident in her essay, 'Educating My Family' which she wrote in 1732.



Miss Mary Atkinson Williams, MA *Southlands College Principal 1914–1918*

Southlands College Student	1892–1894
Southlands College Tutor	1896–1909
Southlands College Principal	1914–1918

It seems appropriate that the first woman Principal, of Southlands College should have been a former student and tutor at the College.

She had, in addition to her other responsibilities, to inspire the students with confidence during the air raids which followed and did this so successfully that the College kept up the full number of students throughout the war. Twenty-five aircraft raids and zeppelin attacks sent students and staff running to the cellars under the original house. Many of the Southlands students had brothers, friends and relations serving in the war, and Miss Atkinson Williams arranged for a "Roll of Honour" to be placed in the library. She took pride in the good control that her bereaved students had over their feelings, saying that "they behaved with Christian fortitude."

Of the Great War, Miss Williams wrote,

"All were determined to carry on in spite of increasing difficulties and worked loyally for their country."



Miss Christine E. Brunyate, MA

Southlands College Principal 1918–1931

In thirteen years as Southlands Principal, Miss Brunyate oversaw the move of the College, in 1927, from Battersea to the Burlington Hotel in Dover and a return to the splendid new premises in Wimbledon, in 1931. Packing and moving the entire College twice in three years!

Miss Brunyate wrote: *"It is surprising with what ease we have been able to turn a hotel into a college"*
(The Southlander 1927)

Miss Brunyate was primarily an academic, though also a notable administrator, and under her guidance Southlands made great academic progress. It was during her principalship that the tradition of taking degrees by the able third year students really matured and flourished – a practice almost unheard of in training colleges in the 1920s.

The new Southlands at Wimbledon was largely a memorial to her unfailing energy and devotion.



Miss Florence M. Wood, MA

Southlands College Principal 1931–1949

Miss Wood was a qualified pilot. In her inaugural speech Miss Wood said flying had given her a view of the college from above, for she had specially flown over to see Southlands from that point-of-view. She then deftly turned a fact of flying into a parable, "Most would think that dealing with mighty elements required force; but actually, the engine was controlled by light touches." The point was obvious.

Miss Woods first task, as Principal, was to establish the college at its new home in Wimbledon.

"The development of the College is not yet complete, and more building and extensions are necessary for us to carry out a great programme of education. The work for the moment must be one of consolidation and improvement of our work with the facilities at our disposal. We look forward to the future with hope and faith that further developments will come in due time."

Miss F. M. Wood in the Principal's Report in the Report of the Wesleyan Committee of Education, 1932.

Miss Wood led student groups travelling throughout Europe. In July of 1932, she arranged a visit to Germany. At Heidelberg they explored the castle and reported that they watched *"the Nazis who are the followers of Herr Hitler; they had a huge youth meeting in the Castle grounds."* The students commented; *"Even the children are enthusiastic politicians in Germany."*

In 1940, Miss wood was faced with the onerous challenge of evacuating the college to Weston-super-Mare. Despite the disruption the students were very happy in their temporary home; many attributing this to the calm leadership of Miss Wood. The staggered return of the college to Wimbledon was equally daunting and equally well managed.



Miss Margaret Alice Gibbs, OBE
*Southlands College staff 1938–1970,
 Vice-Principal 1949–1970*

Miss Gibbs joined the staff in 1938, became Head of the Education Department, and retired in 1970. She served under three Principals with her unflagging energy, never-failing interest in students and a unique capacity for administration. The College took pride in the national recognition of her services to education by the award of the OBE to her by the Queen in 1969.



Miss Florence W. Addison, MBE
Southlands College Alumna 1945–1947

Thought to be the first Ghanaian Student at Southlands Florence's Testimonial confirms that she was an excellent student, "She has been a little older than most of the English students and has come out as a leader amongst them." It was also an honour to be elected one of the College Curators, these were the chief student officers of the college. Miss Woods' prediction, that Florence would go a long way, turned out to be correct.

In 1958 Miss Addison was the only woman in Ghana's Delegation to the 13th session of the UN general Assembly. Florence Addison was the Rapporteur for the Draft International Covenants on Human Rights, Report of the Third Committee.

Florence Addison (centre)
 at the 13th session of the UN General
 Assembly
 Photo credit: UN Photo/MB

In the Queen's Birthday Honours 1960, Florence Wilson Addison was one of only 6 Ghanaian civilians to be awarded an MBE. As Senior Education Officer for the Ghanaian Government, her award was for services to education.



Vera Schaufeld with
Dr Christopher Stephens
Southlands College 2019

Vera Helga Schaufeld (née Löwyova), MBE *Southlands College Alumna 1948–1950*

Vera Schaufeld graduated from Southlands College in 1950 where she received a certificate in Education. She was born in 1930 in Prague and at the age of nine had to flee to England due to the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. She was one of the 10,000 children transported out of Europe by the Kindertransport.

But Vera's life story is not one dominated by oppression. Indeed, hers is an impressive and successful life in which the experience of suffering and loneliness stirred a drive for ensuring a better life for others.

Whilst studying at Southlands College she became the college representative to the National Union of Students and trained as an English teacher. After becoming a teacher, she spent time in Israel and met her husband Avram, who had survived Auschwitz. They made their home in London and Vera returned to teaching.

In 1972, Vera took the decision to join the Language Service in Brent to teach recently arrived Asian immigrants English; a role that resonated with Vera, who had arrived in England as a child not speaking English. Vera's responsibilities grew rapidly as Brent became home to many of the Ugandan Asians that were expelled by Idi Amin – the then President of Uganda.

Alongside her teaching and advisory work, Vera has been heavily involved in Holocaust education. She helped in the establishment of the Holocaust Centre and Museum and, with her experience as a teacher, was particularly dedicated to the Centre's educational work.

In 2019 Vera received an MBE for services to Holocaust Education and was awarded an Honorary Degree by the University of Roehampton.



Miss Johnson 1949

Miss Myra S. Johnson, BA *Southlands College Principal 1949–1965*

"I trust we may have great vision and wisdom in our task of laying the very best foundations for the College of the future. The opportunity is great indeed!" Miss M. S. Johnson in the Southlands Students' Society Newssheet, 1959.

As 8th Principal, Miss Johnson retired in 1965 after a period of expansion unparalleled in Southlands' history. The College was becoming one of the largest in London. She had succeeded in transforming the post-war campus with its shabby, inadequate premises into the attractive environment for study which it became, with imaginatively conceived new buildings.

Miss Johnson will always be associated with the growth of the larger College, but she made it clear that *"students matter more than buildings."*

Miss Johnson's aim was to send into the teaching profession students who were more than just teachers in a modern world full of problems. She said; *"Teachers must keep bigger than their job; they should be people who think keenly about the problems of the day, who are in touch with reality and who are themselves interesting and attractive personalities."*



Miss M. Pauline Callard, B.Com

Principal of Southlands College 1965–1977

Miss Callard held important roles for the war effort: economist and statistician at the National Savings Committee, Assistant Principal in the Office of the Minister of Reconstruction and Assistant Procurement Processing Officer of the UN Relief and Reconstruction Administration.

Appointed Principal in 1949 Pauline led Southlands through a period of significant change. Government policies increasingly made small teacher training colleges untenable, and so it was that, with her guidance, Southlands joined with three other colleges to form, in 1975, the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education.

Pauline's chief academic interests were self-described as "*juvenile delinquency and crime; sociological analysis*". Her research looked into factors associated with crime amongst young people, as well as more broadly into the lives of young people.



Douglas Milbank, as Pauline Callard's Deputy and successor, had been asked by his colleagues to deliver the main speech on her retirement. He likened the recent history of the College to an Odyssey, with Pauline as the Southlands Ulysses, '*Distinguished for courage, for knowledge of navigation, for eloquence and for skill as a negotiator*'. She had steered the College between the Scylla of the polytechnics and the Charybdis of extinction, outwitted the one-eyed Cyclops of the D.E.S., refused to let colleagues' slumber in the Land of the Lotus-Eaters, and taken restraining measures when they were lured by the siren voices of Goldsmiths' and Chelsea. The analogy fortunately broke down with the end of the voyage when the ship was destroyed by Zeus with a flash of lightning, all being drowned with the exception of Ulysses. That had not been their own fate: that was why they were there to express their gratitude.

Artist: Lenare
Date: 1976



Artist: Bill Knight
Date: 2020

Professor Marilyn Holness, OBE *Southlands College 2002–2006*

Marilyn is truly a 'woman of Roehampton', having trained at Whitelands College in the mid-eighties, she began her career as a secondary school teacher, moving to Roehampton University in the nineties as a teacher educator based in Froebel College, where she became the Head of the Department of Education and later the Deputy Director when it became a School.

Appointed Deputy Principal of Southlands College in 2002, Marilyn blended her academic and pastoral passions into delivering empathic student support to enhance student experience, creating a sense of community and belonging for both staff and students to meet the needs of the whole person.

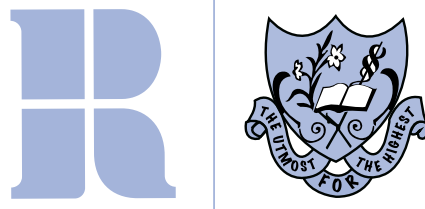
In response to increased financial hardship from tuition fees, Marilyn collaborated with students to reduce the impact of student debt and the Higher Education Act 2004. She created a pastoral curriculum focused on money management, leading to the Money Doctors programme. This initiative was adopted by the FSA as part of the National Financial Capability Strategy, influencing policy and funding across the Department of Education and Treasury. It secured five years of funding, was implemented in over 120 UK universities, and impacted over 250,000 students.

In 2009, Marilyn received an OBE for her contributions to Teacher Education, a distinction awarded to only ten individuals in this field. In 2020, her portrait was featured in the Phenomenal Women's exhibition at London Southbank, which showcased all 40 UK Black women professors. At that time, out of 22,000 UK professors, fewer than 1% were black.

Currently she is Roehampton University's first Dean of Students, a cross-university portfolio focused on driving improvements in student success outcomes, she is Professor of Education, Engagement and Practice and has recently become the Head of Digby Stuart College.







Remarkable Women of
Digby Stuart College
Founded 1874



Mother Mabel Digby RSCJ
Original image held in the Society of
the Sacred Heart, England and Wales
Province Archives.



Mabel Digby RSCJ (1835–1911)

Superior at Roehampton 1872–1894

Opened Wandsworth Teacher

Training College 1874

Fifth Superior General 1895–1911

While the Superior at Roehampton of the English Vicariate of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Mabel Digby laid many foundations for the education for Catholic girls and women in England.

It was only during Mabel's early years that Catholic education was reestablished in England, following the return of the Catholic hierarchy since the banishment of the Reformation. It was with this backdrop that Mabel worked tirelessly to establish a primary school for the poor which later became the Sacred Heart Primary in Roehampton, a convent school initially in Roehampton before moving to Woldingham and in 1874 she accessed government funds and negotiated with Bishops to open one of the first Catholic women's teacher training colleges in the country. The college was given a six-month temporary home in Roehampton before moving to "The Orchards" in West Hill, Wandsworth with 21 students. This college was the beginning of what would become known as Digby Stuart College.

In 1895, Mother Mabel Digby became the fifth Superior General to the Society of the Sacred Heart. It was during this time, in France, that the anti-clerical government in power forbade religious to teach in French schools forcing the many Society houses in France to close. From a temporary motherhouse in Ixelles, Belgium, Mabel Digby set about relocating the 2,500 sisters from France to communities around the globe, where they set up many new schools.

'It is necessary for the mind to be founded on truth, just as the soul is established in prayer.' – Mabel Digby, RSCJ



Mother Janet Stuart RSCJ
Original image held in the Society of
the Sacred Heart, England and Wales
Province Archives.

Janet Erskine Stuart RSCJ (1857–1914)

Superior of the Province 1894–1911

*Relocated teacher training college to St
Charles Square in Kensington 1905*

Sixth Superior General 1911–1914

Upon entering the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1882, Janet's contribution to education quickly escalated. She was soon mistress of novices and in 1894 she followed Mabel as the next Superior in Roehampton. It was during this time that she oversaw the growing educational needs of the Society with new schools and communities starting in Leamington, Paignton, Gosforth, Fenham, and Malta. There was also a huge amount of growth in the teacher training college. To accommodate the now 99 students enrolled at the college, she acquired a new larger property in St Charles' Square, North Kensington for them.

In 1911, Mother Janet Stuart followed in the footsteps of her mentor and religious sister, Mabel Digby, to become the sixth Superior General where she continued to support the Society setting up schools and communities globally. Janet Stuart was known for her intellect and being a prolific writer. From sending encouraging letters to those teaching in Sacred Heart schools to the authorship of several books including the classic 'Education of Catholic Girls' which is still in print and regarded as having much to say to education today.

"Aim at the very highest and the best, but understand that to get this is a life's work, not the work of a day, so never let failure cast down or disappoint you. But always begin again with great courage and confidence". – Janet Stuart RSCJ



Mother Mary Richardson
Original image held in the Society of
the Sacred Heart, England and Wales
Province Archives.

Mary Richardson RSCJ (1903–1983)

Principal of Digby Stuart College 1948–1968

As principal of the newly named Digby Stuart College, Mother Mary Richardson was by all accounts much admired, she oversaw extensive building work from the remains of the old house which took two direct bomb hits during the Second World War. From the rubble, usable accommodation and teaching spaces swiftly appeared.

Mary was a writer and educator. Along with having many books published including *Heaven on Thursday: The Life of St Madeleine Sophie Barat* (1948); *Caterina's Kittens* (1972) and *The Snail Who Climbed Mount Fuji* (1970). She also wrote radio plays for children for the BBC. After stepping down as principal, she undertook education research in London and worked at the Westminster Religious Education Centre.

She was also astute enough to say to Sr Dorothy Bell, *'that she could see a time when the college would eventually be educating young people not just to become teachers but to join other professions such as social work and psychology.'*



Ann Camp
by Alan Ginman

Ann Camp (1924–2019)

Calligraphy Lecturer, Digby Stuart College 1965–1990

Teaching was Ann's passion and through the medium of calligraphy she impacted and inspired students to look, analyse, study and think for themselves.

In the 1940s Ann attended the Royal College of Art where calligraphy was part of the curriculum. However, by the mid 1950s this was no longer the case and by the 1970s there was little calligraphy education on offer. In response to the decline of institutions offering courses in calligraphy nationally, Ann committed to filling the gap by developing several courses at Digby Stuart College, including a Certificate in Calligraphy & Bookbinding, Diploma in Calligraphy, and Advanced Diploma in Calligraphy. Her programmes were dedicated to the serious study of calligraphy and many of her students, like herself, became fellows of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators, which at the time was acknowledged worldwide to be the highest professional attainment. Many of the world's leading calligraphers, letterers and letter designers would be educated through the courses that Ann developed, and many would become teachers within the department for the following 30 years.

In describing her year at Digby Stuart, one student said: *"... I thought I would get a good grounding in the foundations of hand lettering. What I was completely unprepared for was a course in enlightenment, by which I mean the fundamentals of what makes a meaningful life as reflected in choices one makes..."* [Wendy Cook].



Pat Pinsent
Taken from Pat's Memorial booklet
Artist unknown

Pat Pinsent (1933–2023)

Principal Lecturer in English Literature 1967–1998

Pat enjoyed a long career as a lecturer at the University of Roehampton, teaching within the departments of Education and English. She was instrumental in setting up the Children's Literature MA programme in the early 1990s and established the hugely popular Distance Learning module, which continues to attract postgraduate students from across the globe.

After retirement she maintained a strong connection with Digby Stuart College serving on the alumni committee and was a regular donor to hardship bursaries and scholarships. She continued her relationship as a Senior Research Fellow in Children's Literature at the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature.

Pat was a founding member of the Catholic Women's Network and held a commitment to inclusivity that was central to her faith. As well as being a long-time active member of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), a non-profit organization committed to bringing books and children together.



Sr Dorothy Bell RSCJ OBE
Image credit: University of Roehampton

Dorothy Bell RSCJ OBE (1924–2019)

Principal of Digby Stuart College

1968–1989

Sr Dorothy, was both the product of a Sacred Heart education, as a pupil at the convent school in Roehampton, and a committed Sacred Heart educator. She is fondly remembered as being approachable and welcoming by her students, as well as being known to be at ease amongst church and government officials alike. This included playing host to Pope John Paul II when he visited the college in 1982.

In the 1970s savage cuts were made to teacher-training places across the country. Sr Dorothy, along with the principals of three neighbouring colleges, envisioned a way to save their colleges by becoming the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (RIHE), the first federal scheme of reorganization. With 3,000 students, Roehampton was responsible for training a third of all teachers in London and more than any other institution in England.

After retirement Sr Dorothy's commitment to education continued with her becoming the chair of the Sixth Form College Employers Forum, chair of governors at several Catholic schools and colleges, and a member of the Westminster Diocesan Education Commission.

Sr Dorothy was awarded the OBE for outstanding contribution to education in 1999.



Baroness Crawley
© House of Lords / photography by
Roger Harris

Christine Crawley, Baroness Crawley

Alumna of Digby Stuart College

1968–1971

Christine Crawley was trained as a teacher at Digby Stuart College. After graduating she started her career teaching 11 – 15-year-olds and became a youth theatre leader. In the late 1970s she worked in local government before becoming a member of the European Parliament. While in the European Parliament she chaired the Women's Rights Committee and helped bring in the Maternity Leave Directive which now forms the basis of UK maternity leave laws. In 1998 she entered the House of Lords as Baroness Crawley of Edgbaston in the County of West Midlands.

She has been the spokesperson on education policy and Chair of the Women's National Commission, amongst many other roles.



Bernadette Porter RSCJ CBE
 Jeffrey Spedding
 commissioned, 2004
 oil on canvas
 © the artist.
 Image credit: University of Roehampton

Bernadette Porter RSCJ CBE

Student of Digby Stuart College 1970–1973

Lecturer in Education (PGCE) 1982-1989

Principal of Digby Stuart College 1989–1999

Rector and Chief Executive of

Roehampton 1999 – 2004

Vice Chancellor of Roehampton

University 2004

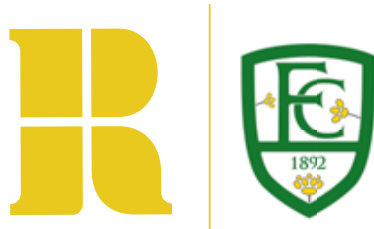
Sister Dr Bernadette Porter RSCJ (Bernie) has the unique honour of having held the title of Roehampton student and Vice-Chancellor. Bernie began her Roehampton journey as a student at Digby Stuart College in the early 1970s. After completing her PhD at King's College, she returned to join the teaching staff of the newly formed Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (RIHE).

She recalls: "I loved my student days at Roehampton. It was such a friendly and happy environment. When I got the chance to come back to teach on the Secondary PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education) course, I did not hesitate for a moment. I wanted to continue the individual care and encouragement for each student that I had experienced there."

Bernie was appointed Principal of Digby Stuart College and Pro-Rector of the Roehampton Institute before becoming Rector and Chief Executive of Roehampton. She led Roehampton on an ambitious five-year journey to becoming an independent University in the summer of 2004. At this point, Bernie became Roehampton's first Vice-Chancellor – at the time, one of very few female Vice-Chancellors in the UK. On leaving the University, she was appointed as Treasurer General of the Society of the Sacred Heart in Rome.

She was made a CBE in the Queen's Honours in 2005 and awarded Fellow of the University in 2006.





Remarkable Women of
Froebel College
Founded 1892



Emilie Michaelis, FEI Principal
by James Jebusa Shannon, 1899



Emilie Michaelis with dog, c1900
FACS/15/4/2/1

Emilie Louise Michaelis (1834–1904) *Froebel Educational Institute Principal, 1892–1901*

Emilie Louise Michaelis (1834–1904) was a German-born educator who played a pivotal role in introducing and establishing Friedrich Froebel's kindergarten system in England. Serving as the first Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI) from 1892 to 1901, Michaelis's tenure was marked by significant contributions that laid the foundation for early childhood education in the UK. She was a founding member of the Froebel Society in London in 1874 and served as its president from 1897 to 1900.

Before her association with the FEI, Michaelis was instrumental in promoting Froebelian principles. In 1875, she co-founded one of England's first kindergartens in Croydon, London. Here, she also trained teachers using Froebel principles.

Under her leadership, the FEI implemented a comprehensive curriculum that integrated Froebel's educational philosophies, emphasising the importance of play, creativity, and the holistic development of children. Michaelis was a strong advocate for hands-on learning and ensured that the Institute provided both a fee-paying demonstration school and a free kindergarten. This dual approach not only catered to diverse socio-economic groups but also served as a practical training ground for aspiring teachers, allowing them to engage directly with children from varied backgrounds. Her hands-on approach to teaching has also meant that she has paid little attention to the curriculum, leaving students to complain just a week before the final exam. To the complaints she famously replied: *"I am making teachers, not examination puppets"*.

Beyond administrative duties, Michaelis was dedicated to the dissemination of Froebel's ideas through translation and publication. She translated and edited several of Froebel's works, making them accessible to an English-speaking audience. Notably, she co-edited "Froebel's Letters on the Kindergarten" and translated his "Autobiography," providing valuable insights into his educational philosophies.

Emilie Michaelis's tenure at the Froebel Educational Institute was characterised by a steadfast commitment to educational reform, the professional development of teachers, and the promotion of inclusive, play-based learning environments for young children.



Rosalie Lulham, 1930s
FACS/15/4/4/1



Miss Lulham (left) during Queen Mary's
visit at FEI in 1922
FACS/15/5/3

Rosalie Lulham (1871–1934), B.Sc. *Froebel Educational Institute Lecturer, 1896–1934 Vice-Principal, 1932–1934*

Rosalie Blanche Jermaine Lulham was a distinguished British naturalist and educator whose tenure at the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI) significantly advanced the integration of natural history into early childhood education. Educated at South Hampstead High School and Bedford College, London, she earned a B.Sc. degree before joining the FEI in 1896.

Lulham took the initiative to establish and lead the nature study department. Her innovative teaching methods had a profound impact on the students' learning experiences. By integrating nature study into the core curriculum, she ensured that future educators were well-equipped to incorporate natural history into their teaching practices. Her efforts not only enriched the academic environment at FEI but also aligned with the Froebelian philosophy of holistic education, which advocates for the harmonious development of children through interaction with nature.

In 1932, Rosalie Lulham became FEI Vice Principal. She was described in this role by Miss Jebb, the FEI Principal in the following way: *"And it was impossible to talk over any matter with her and not to have the issue at once clarified and widened by her fair-mindedness and large heartedness."*

Lulham was known to be an inspiring and much-loved teacher who wished her students had more time to *"stand and stare"*, and who said *"I should like to be in the midst of students, indoors and out-of-doors, not lecturing but learning with them and answering their questions"* when asked what she would like to do after retirement.

She was known for her strong sense of social justice; an example and testament of which is the establishment of the Braille Circle within the FEI's Michaelis Guild. Here she mobilised former FEI students to transcribe books into Braille in support of schools for blind children, writing Braille letters and providing further support in goods, visits and fostering personal relations. During World War I, parcels of Braille books were also sent to St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers and Sailors, men who had lost their sight in the war.

Lulham, authored *"An Introduction to Zoology through Nature Study"* (1913), a seminal work that provided practical guidance for educators to introduce zoological concepts to young learners. She maintained correspondence with prominent zoologists, such as J.G. Dollman of the Natural History Museum, reflecting her active engagement with the broader scientific community.

Her passion for natural history and education left an indelible mark on the FEI, inspiring generations of educators to value and incorporate nature study into early childhood education.



Esther Ella Lawrence, FEI Principal
by Gerald Festus Kelly, 1930



Miss Lawrence (left) with Miss Jebb
(middle) during the opening of the
Lawrence Building in 1937
FACS/15/4/1/2

Esther Ella Lawrence (1862–1944) *Froebel Educational Institute Principal, 1901–1932*

Esther Ella Lawrence served as the Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI) from 1901 to 1932, playing a pivotal role in shaping early childhood education in the United Kingdom. Her 31-year tenure makes her the longest serving principal in all four colleges' history.

Born in New York, Lawrence moved to London during her childhood and pursued her education at South Hampstead High School and briefly at Bedford College. She trained at the Froebel Society's Tavistock Place Training College, graduating in 1883, starting a life-long career with Froebel education.

Before her principalship, Lawrence gained valuable experience by leading a preparatory department at Chiswick High School and later collaborating with Emilie Michaelis at the Froebel Educational Institute. She also spent four years in Naples, contributing to a Froebel kindergarten, before returning to the FEI in 1899. Upon Michaelis's retirement in 1901, Lawrence assumed the role of Principal.

Under Lawrence's leadership, the FEI underwent significant transformations. She extended the teacher training program to a comprehensive three-year course, a change quickly being acknowledged and recognised by the Teachers Registration Council.

With her financial help, the FEI purchased and relocated the College to Grove House in Roehampton in 1921 and established it as a residential institution, making it a destination for Queen Mary's visit the following year. This move not only provided a conducive learning environment but also reinforced the Institute's commitment to immersive educational experiences.

Lawrence was a dedicated advocate for accessible early childhood education. In 1908, she inspired alumni to establish the Michaelis Free Kindergarten in Notting Hill, a deprived area of London. This institution offered essential services, including regular meals and hygiene practices, to children from impoverished backgrounds. The success of this initiative led to the founding of the Somers Town Nursery School in 1910, further extending support to underprivileged communities.

Throughout her tenure, Lawrence remained dedicated to the Froebelian philosophy, emphasising the importance of play and holistic development in early education. It was during her tenure that the FEI has developed to one of the most sought-after teaching institutes for young women to study for a teacher's certificate. Her arduous efforts in promoting Froebelian education are recognised in the major Report of the Committee of the Board of Education, Infant and Nursery School (1933), also known as The Hadow Report.

Lawrence was described as humble and quiet, and not confident speaking in public outside of the familiar walls of FEI. Her life was very much intertwined with the FEI, being testament to her deep dedication to Froebel education and the Institute. Her efforts have left an enduring impact on early childhood education practices in the UK.



Elinor Goldschmied, c1950
Copyright: Emma Bailey
(née Goldschmied)



Elinor Goldschmied, c1970
FACS/9/4/7

Elinor Goldschmied (1910–2009)

Froebel Educational Institute Alumna, 1929–1932

Elinor Goldschmied was a pioneering British educationalist whose innovative approaches had profound impact on early years policy in both the UK and internationally. Her main professional innovations included the Treasure Basket, Heuristic Play and the Key Person Approach.

After training at the FEI and obtaining her Froebel Teacher Certificate in 1932, Goldschmied worked at Dartington Hall Junior School, a progressive institution emphasising experiential learning. In 1937, she earned a scholarship to the London School of Economics, where she qualified as a psychiatric social worker. During World War II, she managed a home for evacuated and refugee children in Bradford, implementing structured routines and consistent adult support, which led to improved behaviour among the children.

In 1946, Goldschmied moved to Italy, where she was appalled by the lack of human contact and play opportunities in orphanages. Collaborating with Elda Mazzocchi Scarzella at the Villaggio della Madre e del Fanciullo in Milan, she reformed childcare practices, emphasising the importance of human relationships and sensory-rich environments. It was during this period that she developed the Treasure Basket; a collection of natural and household objects designed to stimulate infants' senses and encourage independent exploration.

Upon returning to England in 1955, Goldschmied continued her work in early childhood development. She introduced the concept of Heuristic Play, which involves providing toddlers with everyday objects to explore, fostering problem-solving skills and cognitive development. Additionally, she advocated for the Key Person Approach, ensuring that each child in a nursery setting forms a secure attachment with a specific caregiver, thereby promoting emotional security and well-being, a concept which was later endorsed by and embedded in the concept of UK's Early Years Foundation Stage.

Goldschmied's influential work includes co-authoring "People Under Three: Young Children in Daycare" with Sonia Jackson, a seminal book that offers guidance on caring for young children in group settings. Her methodologies have become integral to early years practice, emphasising the significance of nurturing environments, and the necessity of stable, responsive relationships for healthy child development.

Goldschmied's legacy has been described in being commitment to respecting under-threes as people with their own pre-occupations, thoughts and feelings, manifested in her book "People under three." She was described as "*a very small woman with a huge personality*" and a person who was not judgemental and accepting of others. Observing her own young son playing, she once enthused "*Oh! What a lovely mess!*", genuinely admiring his achievement.



Eglantyne Mary Jebb, FEI Principal
by Henry Marvell Carr RA, 1950



Miss Jebb on Froebel lake in
"Miss Lulham", the boat
FACS/15/4/2/3

Eglantyne Mary Jebb (1889–1978), MA, CBE *Froebel Educational Institute Principal, 1932–1955*

Eglantyne Mary Jebb served as the Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI) from 1932 to 1955, a period marked by significant challenges and transformations in education. Assuming leadership during the Great Depression, Jebb was instrumental in advancing the Institute's educational practices and expanding its influence.

One of Jebb's notable achievements was the enhancement of the teacher training syllabus. She ensured that students engaged directly with schools and children from the start, providing practical experience alongside theoretical learning. This approach not only enriched the students' educational journey but also reinforced the Froebelian philosophy of learning through direct interaction and experience.

During her tenure, the economic constraints of the era led many FEI graduates to seek employment in private schools, as implementing Froebelian methods in state schools with large class sizes was challenging. Recognising this disparity, Jebb advocated vigorously for the integration of Froebel-trained teachers into the state education system. She believed that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, deserved access to the benefits of Froebelian education and its emphasis on holistic development and child-centred learning.

Under Jebb's leadership, the FEI navigated the complexities of World War II. The Institute was evacuated to Knebworth and Offley Place in Hertfordshire, ensuring the continuity of teacher training during tumultuous times. Post-war, Jebb oversaw the relocation of the demonstration school to new premises at Ibstock Place in Roehampton, reaffirming the Institute's commitment to providing exemplary educational environments for children and FEI students alike.

Jebb's tenure also saw infrastructural expansions, including major extensions to FEI premises, providing enhanced teaching facilities and residential blocks and fostering a conducive environment for learning and teaching.

Throughout her 23 years as Principal, Eglantyne Mary Jebb remained a steadfast advocate for Froebelian principles. Her dedication to integrating these methods into broader educational contexts and her resilience in the face of economic and wartime challenges significantly shaped the direction and reputation of the Froebel Educational Institute. She navigated the Institute through the tumultuous post-war times, the beginnings of national efforts to reshaping teacher training provision and the inauguration of the Institute of Education (IoE). Through her effort FEI students were able to get a Teacher Certificate from the IoE and the FEI, whilst maintaining the three-year course. After becoming a member of the Council of the Institute of Education, she lobbied for the introduction of three-year teacher courses for all colleges. Her contributions to education were rewarded by being awarded the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1950. Often confused with her cousin and namesake, Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of the Save the Children Fund, the FEI Principal only committed herself to the Fund after her cousin's death.



Molly Brearley reading with children, 1960s
FACS/15/4/2/4



Molly Brearley, FEI Principal
by William Charles Evans, c1965

Molly Root Brearley (1905–1994), CBE *Froebel Educational Institute Principal, 1955–1970*

In her role as Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI), Molly Brearley played a crucial role in modernising teacher education. During her 15 year tenure, she guided the Institute through pivotal years of national expansion, ensuring the FEI maintained its standing in an increasingly dynamic and challenging landscape for independent teacher training colleges. One of Brearley's key achievements in this effort was the introduction of diploma and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) courses at FEI.

Her leadership focused on improving the quality of teacher training, fostering research in early childhood education, and promoting a holistic approach to learning. Like her predecessors, Lawrence and Jebb before her, her work illustrates a life-long commitment to the education of young children.

Her tenure also oversaw the admittance of the first male students at FEI in 1965, albeit not as residents, signalling a major departure from tradition and from being a training college for women, led by women.

Under her guidance, the FEI published "Fundamentals in the First School" (1969), a foundational text for early childhood education. Co-edited by Brearley and Raymond Bott, the book outlined six essential educational principles, including the importance of recognising individual learning styles, the cumulative nature of knowledge, and the role of cooperative learning. These ideas significantly influenced primary education in the UK.

In her role as member of the Plowden Committee's Working Party, she played a pivotal role in ensuring the inclusion of core fundamentals of Froebelian education in the guidelines for teaching nationally.

Her contributions to education were recognised in 1965, when Brearley was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Later in her career, Brearley was instrumental in establishing the Froebel Nursery and the Froebel Nursery Research Project, both of which advanced research in early childhood education. She collaborated with Dame Joyce Bishop to secure funding for the Project for the Study of Educational Failure in Underprivileged Children (1971–1972). This initiative led to the creation of the Froebel Research Nursery School in 1973, a major centre for studying child development and learning strategies.



Beryl Gilroy
By Nneka Uzoigwe (born 1990), 2022
(Commissioned after her death)

Beryl Gilroy (1924–2001)

*One of Britain's first black headteachers,
1954–1976*

Beryl Agatha Gilroy was a pioneering Guyanese educator, novelist, and psychotherapist whose multifaceted career influenced education and literature in the United Kingdom. Part of the Windrush generation, Gilroy arrived in London in 1951 with the intention to secure a teaching position.

Despite facing racial discrimination Gilroy persevered and, in 1953, secured a position with the Inner London Education Authority, becoming one of London's first Black female teachers. Her dedication and resilience led to her appointment in 1969 as one of London's first Black headteachers at Beckford Primary School in Camden. During her tenure, she championed multicultural education and worked tirelessly to create an inclusive environment for students of diverse backgrounds.

Gilroy pursued training in Froebel teaching methods and later in her career earned a Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology. She practiced as ethno-psychotherapist, focusing on the mental health needs of Black women and children. Her groundbreaking work in this field, combined with her literary and educational contributions, has left an enduring legacy.

In addition to her educational achievements, Gilroy was a prolific writer. Her memoir, "Black Teacher" (1976), offers a candid account of her experiences as a Black educator in post-war London. She also authored several children's novels, exploring different themes including the complexities of identity and migration, manifested through the "Nippers" series, among the first to depict Black British experiences for young readers.



Gilroy: independent spirit

Beryl Gilroy
With permission of University College
London Archives (LBE/11)



Chris Athey, 1990s
Copyright: Michele Goad

Chris Athey (1924–2011)

Froebel Educational Institute, Alumna and Lecturer, 1962–1980s

Director of the Froebel Early Education Project, 1973–1978

Chris Athey was a pioneering British educationalist whose extensive research profoundly influenced early childhood education, particularly through her work on Schema theory. Her career encompassed roles as a primary school teacher in both state and private sectors, and as a Principal Lecturer in Education at the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI), since 1975 known as Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (RIHE) under the leadership of Molly Brearley. There she directed the Froebel Early Education Project from 1973 to 1978, a pivotal study that examined cognitive development in young children. The project was established by Molly Brearley and Dame Joyce Bishop after securing funding from the Leverhulme Foundation to create a one-year study of *Project for the Study of Educational Failure in Underprivileged Children* in 1971 to 1972. After establishing a free nursery in the Froebel College's grounds, the Froebel Research Nursery School started to be used in 1973 as part of the Froebel Nursery Research Project.



Chris Athey during her work as
Director of the Froebel Early Education
Project, 1970s
FACS/15/10

This comprehensive study involved detailed observations of children aged two to five, aiming to identify developments in each child's thinking and describe the progression from early motor behaviours to symbolic representation. The project underscored the importance of recognising and supporting schemas in early education, demonstrating that such support enhances children's cognitive development and learning outcomes.

In 1990, Athey encapsulated her research findings in the seminal book "Extending Thought in Young Children: A Parent-Teacher Partnership." Athey emphasised the significance of collaborative efforts between parents and teachers, advocating for environments that encourage exploratory play and the natural development of children's thinking processes, leaving an enduring legacy in early childhood education.

In the 1990s, Athey became an advisor to the BBC children's productions "Teletubbies" and "In the Midnight Garden".



Tina Bruce outside Grove House,
University of Roehampton, c2020
Copyright: Jane Read

Professor Tina Bruce (born 1947), CBE
Froebel Educational Institute Alumna,
1966–1970
Lecturer at Roehampton Institute for Higher
Education, 1983–1989

Professor Tina Bruce CBE is a distinguished British educator renowned for her extensive contributions to early childhood education. Her work has been instrumental in integrating historical educational philosophies with contemporary practices, particularly through the promotion of play-based learning and the application of Froebelian principles.

Bruce's academic journey began at the Froebel Educational Institute, now part of the University of Roehampton, where she trained as a primary teacher. This foundational experience fostered her commitment to Friedrich Froebel's educational philosophies, emphasising a holistic approach to child development. She has dedicated her career to intertwining these classical theories with modern educational practices, ensuring their relevance in today's early years settings.

Throughout her career, Bruce has been a prolific author, contributing significantly to the body of literature in early childhood education. She has written or edited 29 books, with her seminal work, "Early Childhood Education," first published in 1987, introducing her 'ten principles of early childhood education.' These principles have become foundational in guiding educators toward effective, child-centred teaching methodologies.

Beyond her scholarly contributions, Bruce has played an active role in shaping early years policy and practice. She served as the coordinator of the Early Years Advisory Group to successive government childcare ministers for a decade, influencing the development and implementation of early childhood education policies in the UK. Her leadership extended to her roles as Vice-President of the British Association for Early Childhood Education and trustee of the Froebel Trust, where she continues to advocate for quality early years education.

In recognition of her outstanding services to early years education, Bruce was awarded the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2008. Her enduring commitment to integrating Froebelian principles with contemporary educational practices has left an indelible mark on the field, inspiring educators to adopt holistic, play-based approaches in early childhood settings.

Acknowledgements

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The Southlands Methodist Trust dedicated significant resources of funds and people to making this happen. Not least, this was by enabling the curatorship of Gilly King, who drove this exhibition from the beginning and oversaw every aspect of it, with care and passion.

Our four supporting curators, who have provided crucial access, information and expertise, are:

Gemma Bentley (Whitelands College)

Kornelia Cepok (Froebel College)

Marilyn Holness and Ginny Jordan-Arthur (Digby Stuart College)

Gemma, Gilly, Ginny, Kornelia and Marilyn have co-authored this exhibition catalogue.

We are grateful to Nicola Morrison for the use of the college chapel, and to Lewis Redfern and Sue Miller for a wide range of crucial support to enable the exhibition.

The exhibition owes its origin to Baroness Helena Kennedy of The Shaws, who noticed how rare it was to have portraits of women facing her, at the opening of the Roehampton Law School: a moment of inspiration which the Head of Southlands College, Christopher Stephens, has been determined to celebrate ever since.

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