

Archives *for* London | conference 2011

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Learning in London: Abstracts of Presentations

Saturday 29 October 2011, UCL

Jane Martin, Politics and Policy-making in London Education: mapping generations of activism (Keynote Address)

For 120 years Inner London was England's largest education authority. What began as the London School Board in 1870 would prove to be a site for contestation over the nature and scope of state education. Its successor, the London County Council dominated London's politics for the term of its existence and merits examination as Britain's second most important institution of representative democracy and the place where electorally, women were notably successful. Jane will profile two women active in the period from 1890 to 1960: Mary Bridges Adams (b. 1855) and Helen Bentwich (b. 1892). The paper excavates the hitherto largely hidden history of the female contribution to the making of a progressive and radical tradition in London education, in terms of campaigning to improve the quality and the quantity of what was on offer for the vast majority of city children.

Remi Harris and Sarah Garrod, The Origins and Legacy of the George Padmore Institute Supplementary Schools

An exploration of the archives relating to the George Padmore Supplementary School, one of the first Black Supplementary Schools in London. The first half of the talk, given by Sarah Garrod, Project Archivist, will focus on the foundation of the George Padmore Supplementary School within the context of the Black Supplementary School Movement. The second half of the talk, given by Remi Harris, a former student and volunteer teacher, will be an account of the revival of the school in the 1980s and 1990s, demonstrating how it had a new relevance for the next generation of black children.

Alice Mackay, Education for a new social order: Kingsley Hall, Bow

This presentation will be an introduction to the work of Muriel and Doris Lester and their work at the two Kingsley Halls and Children's Houses in Bromley-by-Bow and Dagenham. It will include an introduction to the Muriel Lester Collection and how it was brought together with an overview of the contents of the collection. Alice will explore evidence of the Lesters' educational ideas and activities at Kingsley Hall in the Muriel Lester Collection, particularly Doris Lester's papers and will use images from the collection and sound clips from the HLF project's oral history interviews with people who are themselves part of Kingsley Hall's history and give testimony of the results of the Lesters' educational practice.

Dr Brian Bowers, Aspects of Electrical Engineering Education in London

This talk will look at four engineers and the different ways in which they gained an education in 19th century London: Charles Wheatstone, 1802-1875, professor of experimental philosophy at King's College London and inventor of the first practical electrical telegraph; REB Crompton, 1845-1940, a mechanical engineer who found he had a need for the new electric lighting and gradually turned himself into an electrical engineer; J Ambrose Fleming, 1849-1945, the first professor of electrical engineering, remembered primarily for his invention in 1904 of the thermionic valve, the invention that made radio practical; Alexander Trotter, 1857-1947, a boy whose education began by attending Christmas Lectures at the Royal Institution, and became one of the central figures in electrical engineering.

Anne Barrett, UCL: a Non-conformist University

This talk will delve into the history of non-conformity in London, beginning with the perceived need for a non-conformist University in London. Anne will then outline the development of UCL with reference to its main protagonists as well as providing some background to London education in the period and concluding with some parallels with the Constituent Colleges of Imperial College and staff.

Elizabeth Wells, School Archives: A Neglected Resource?

A discussion about what materials can usually be found in the archives of public schools and what they can tell us about the development of education. Elizabeth will then discuss how these materials can be used for education within schools with a brief outline of her work at Westminster. Finally Elizabeth will talk about why she feels school archives have been neglected and how this issue can be solved.