

COURTAULD INSTITUTE

The Third Annual Mark Girouard Symposium

Untold Tales: Women Pioneers in British and Irish Architectural History

Friday 13 Nov 2026, 17:30–20:00

Saturday 14 Nov 2026, 10:15–19:30

Organised by Dr Kyle Leyden, Lecturer in Early Modern Architecture and Visual Culture, the Courtauld; Dr Manolo Guerici, Reader in Architecture, University of Kent and Prof. Elizabeth McKellar, President, SAHGB. Supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and The Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

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This third symposium in memory of Mark Girouard looks at women's contributions to architectural history in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

There have been a growing number of studies of female architects over the past twenty years but almost no accounts of female architectural historians. One exception is Dana Arnold's edited collection *Women and Architectural History: The Monstrous Regiment Then and Now* (2025) which involved women operating from the 1970s onwards. This symposium looks back further to earlier generations involved in the writing and promotion of architectural history in a wide range of spheres from the early twentieth century onwards. Papers will cover women working as academics, curators, journalists, photographers and in heritage and conservation. They will consider the opportunities and restrictions that women encountered, the impact they made, and the ways in which women's participation in the subject area shifted over time.

Programme

Friday 13 November

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| 17.30–18.00 | Registration |
| 18.00–18.15 | Welcome and Introduction
Elizabeth McKellar |
| | Session 1: Publishers and Broadcasters
Chair: Kyle Leyden |
| 18.20–18.40 | <i>Constructing Childhood Memory: Puffin Books, Folklore, and the Visual History of the Built Environment</i>
Medha Dube, Birmingham City University |
| 18.40–19.00 | <i>Ursula Clark: Architectural Photographer and Historian</i>
David Barber, Independent Scholar |
| 19.00–19.20 | <i>Photography and the Sack of Bath: The work of Lesley Green-Armytage</i>
Tanya Southcott, University of Brighton |
| 19.20–19.40 | <i>The Producers: Women Championing Architecture and its History on the Radio</i>
Emilie Oleron Evans, Queen Mary University of London |
| 19.40 – 20.00 | Discussion |

Saturday 14 November

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| 10.15–10.45 | Registration & Coffee |
| | Session 2: Historians
Chair: Elizabeth McKellar |
| 10.50–11.10 | <i>‘Opening the eyes of the public to beauty in unexpected places’:
Katharine Ada Esdaile (1881–1950)</i>
Caroline Stanford, Landmark Trust |
| 11.10–11.30 | <i>Un-writing and Re-writing London: Women architectural historians of the mid-twentieth century</i>
Dana Arnold, Sainsbury Institute, University of East Anglia |

11.30 – 12.00	<i>'I paint, write, take photographs and travel' – Gender and Landscape History in 20th century Britain</i> Luca Csepely-Knorr, University of Liverpool
12.00–12.20	<i>Helen Rosenau, Susanne Lang and the dissemination of ikonologie in the writing of architectural history in Britain</i> Matthew Critchley, ETH Zürich
12.20–12.45	Discussion/Q&A
12.45–14.00	Lunch Session 2: Curators Chair: Manolo Guerçi
14.00–14.20	<i>Dorothy Stroud (1910-97), Inspectress and first Assistant Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum</i> Sue Palmer, Sir John Soane's Museum
14.20–14.40	<i>Elizabeth Aslin: A Decorative Arts Pioneer</i> Richard W. Hayes, Independent Scholar
14.40–15.00	<i>From archival neglect to public rediscovery: Margaret Richardson's role in reviving Lutyens</i> Vicky Richardson, Curator and Writer
15.00–15.20	Discussion/Q&A
15.20–16.00	Tea Break Session 3: Journalists & Conservationists: Chair Blanche Girouard
16.00–16.20	<i>The Vanishing Editor: Monica Pidgeon and the Problem of Editorial Agency</i> Frida Grahn, London South Bank University
16.20–16.40	<i>"Is there perhaps more to architecture than you think?": Diana Rowntree as Guardian columnist</i> Louise Campbell, University of Warwick
16.40–17.00	<i>'Women who did the dirty work': Sadie Speight as chronicler of British Modernism</i> Natcha Ruamsanitwong, Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain

17.00 – 17.20

Billa Harrod and the Norfolk Churches Trust

Joshua Mardell, Royal College of Art

17.20–17.45

Discussion/Q&A

17.45–19.30

Drinks Reception

Abstracts

Publishers & Broadcasters

***Constructing Childhood Memory: Puffin Books, Folklore, and the Visual History of the Built Environment*, Medha Dube, Birmingham City University**

Long before a child ever steps inside a museum or opens a standard academic textbook, their understanding of the historic environment is quietly shaped by the stories they read. The bedtime tales of grand castles, hidden panelled doors, and timber-framed cottages build a vivid, subconscious blueprint of the architectural world within a young mind. In mid-twentieth-century Britain, this imaginative mapping became a powerful tool for social change. While the architectural history of the post-war reconstruction era is typically written through the actions of male-dominated town planning committees, municipal councils, and modernist practices, this paper uncovers a vital, overlooked counter-narrative. It examines the pioneering editorial career of Eleanor Graham, the founding force behind Puffin Story Books. Through her strategic curation of affordable, mass-produced paperbacks during the 1940s and 1950s, Graham acted as a radical architectural educator who trained a generation of young citizens to read, value, and fight for the preservation of their historic built heritage.

Traditional histories credit academic institutions and elite conservation groups with creating Britain's preservation movement. In contrast, this study explores how Graham democratised architectural history through popular print media, making complex structural concepts accessible to a broad public audience. In landmark illustrated titles such as *Village and Town* by S.R. Badmin and *The Building of London* by Margaret and Alexander Potter, she commissioned detailed architectural cross-sections, structural timber framing breakdowns, and clear urban elevations. Rather than acting as mere creative illustrations, these drawings served as active lessons in structural literacy. They explicitly demonstrated how local building materials, from Cotswold stone to regional brickwork, dictated the physical identity of British communities. Further publications, including *The Story of the Village* and *The Half-Timbered Village* series, introduced complex concepts of vernacular masonry, historic timber joinery, and communal layout planning to a working-class audience that had traditionally been shut out from architectural connoisseurship. Crucially, this research looks at how Graham's editorial approach used existing childhood memories of traditional folklore and fantasy to anchor these physical lessons. By intentionally connecting real, structurally accurate British buildings to the familiar landscapes found in classic tales like Peter Pan and regional myths from England, Scotland, and Wales, she transformed childhood imagination into a civic conservation tool. Before a child ever encountered these historic structures in person, they had already navigated their spatial layout on the page. Drawing on archival publishing records and mid-century print culture, this paper positions Eleanor Graham as a foundational pioneer in British architectural historiography. Ultimately, it demonstrates that her democratic approach to visual education shifted architectural appreciation into the domestic sphere, establishing a public spatial literacy that directly supported the mid-century civic conservation movement.

Medha Dube is an architectural conservation professional and researcher with experience in heritage research and community-based initiatives across the UK and India. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation of the Historic Environment from Birmingham City University and a Master's degree in Architectural Conservation from the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, India. She is a RIBA Affiliate and a Supporting Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). Her research interests include architectural historiography, vernacular and visual heritage, hydro-social landscapes, and democratic approaches to conservation. She has published fifteen research papers on architecture, heritage and cultural landscapes, and has presented her work at national and international academic and professional forums

***Ursula Clark: Architectural Photographer and Historian*, Dr. David Barber, Independent Scholar**

In July 1962, Ursula Clark was appointed Photographic Editor of Oriel Press, a new publishing company based in Newcastle upon Tyne. She was 22 years old. Oriel was founded by Bruce Allsopp, then a Senior Lecturer in Architectural History at King's College, Durham University (later Newcastle University) and Chairman of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. During the 1960s and 1970s, Allsopp and Clark collaborated on a series of Oriel guides and other publications that celebrated the historic and modern architecture of the UK and Europe. For these popular and influential books, Ursula contributed most of the photographs and was responsible for their layout in pocket and medium-sized formats that required precision and flair. Though in some cases she received a co-author credit, her role was largely described as that of 'photographic editor.' It was only in Allsopp and Clark's final project together, *English Architecture* (Oriel Press/Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1979), that Ursula was listed as "an architectural historian in her own right."

Today, Ursula's photographic contribution is captured in around 20,000 negatives that form the largest collection by a woman photographer in the care of Historic England. However, her wider role in the story of architectural history was little known until last year when I published original research undertaken to mark the 25th anniversary of her death at the age of 60. In this paper titled 'Ursula Clark: Architectural Photographer and Historian,' I will present a fuller and more rounded picture of the contribution she made to shaping architectural history in Britain. My paper will also highlight other women who worked alongside Ursula at Oriel Press and helped successfully realise the company's vision of putting the facts of architecture into social and historical perspective.

Dr. David Barber is an independent photo historian and Secretary of the Royal Photographic Society Historical Group. He writes and lectures about his research projects and his weekly Pressphotoman blog - <https://www.pressphotoman.com> - has a growing worldwide audience. A former award-winning journalist, his doctoral thesis, *Another Dimension: Stereoscopic Photography and the Press, c. 1896-1911*, was funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council and awarded (without corrections) by Durham University in 2021.

Photography and the Sack of Bath: The work of Lesley Green-Armytage, Tanya Southcott, University of Brighton

This paper explores the work of Lesley Green-Armytage, a Bathonian and amateur photographer whose documentation of the systematic destruction of Bath's Georgian architecture during the 1960s and 1970s proved pivotal for conservation planning and its histories. Although the English Heritage movement had been active for over a century, enthusiasm for what historian Peter Borsay calls the "resurgent past" flourished in Bath following several years of unprecedented economic development and post-war reconstruction. As a volunteer member of the Bath Preservation Trust (BPT), Green-Armytage participated in the campaign to save the city's buildings and streetscapes by photographing the speed and scale of urban transformation and the wholesale demolition of its vernacular structures. Her archive of over 1600 35mm slides taken from the 1960s to 1980s is now held by the Museum of Bath Architecture and many of her images have been digitised as part of the "Bath in Time" picture library with the support of the Bath Public Library.

The significance of Green-Armytage's contributions to architectural history is best understood through her photography. First published in Adam Fergusson's 1973 polemic *The Sack of Bath: A record and an indictment*, her images provided compelling visual evidence of "the erosion of the historic city's character," and helped to harness public imagination around campaigns to save threatened city centres. Fergusson's passionate lament for the loss of working-class and artisanal buildings in Bath not only exposed the scale of architectural destruction, but it also brought national attention to Britain's "class-system in heritage." The book signalled a turning point in British conservation history, inspiring revisions to legislation for the preservation of historic buildings and quickly became the go-to reference for heritage battles nationally and internationally. Through Green-Armytage's work and other featured photographers, the book also reaffirmed the importance of photographic imagery as evidence and advocacy in relation to architectural histories and criticism.

Today, Green-Armytage's images continue to inform present-day debates about preservation and redevelopment. As the UK's only World Heritage city and home to an unsurpassed collection of stately Georgian architecture, responsible conservation remains one of Bath's key priorities. Green-Armytage's collection together with the archives of Peter Coard, including the series *Vanishing Bath* (produced with Ruth E. Coard) and the *Bath Building Record* (cofounded by the Coards in 1963), comprise the most comprehensive documentation of the immense changes to Bath's historic buildings and streetscapes during the postwar period. While the over 7000 images, drawings and objects included in this collection were assembled by volunteers to document buildings "threatened and destroyed," they also continue to act as enduring visual and material interventions in a discourse of progress and modernization that has shaped so many twentieth- and twenty-first-century cities. Green-Armytage's role as a longstanding volunteer member of the BPT is thus also a critical aspect of her contribution because it reflects the importance of citizen awareness and activism in shaping histories of architecture.

Tanya Southcott is a lecturer at the University of Brighton where she teaches architecture criticism and research at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Tanya was a practicing architect, architectural critic, and heritage consultant in Canada for several years before returning to university to complete her PhD at McGill University. Her award-winning doctoral research focuses on the work of women photographers, arguing for a subtractive approach to architectural history by looking to sites of destruction (rather than construction) as opportunities to engage a gendered city. Tanya currently sits on the Steering Committee for the Architectural Humanities Research Association (www.ahra-architecture.org) where she is also a member of the Lobbying Working Group and co-leads the Architectural and Spatial Histories strand of the Centre for Design History at the University of Brighton. Through these initiatives, she uses her research, advocacy and teaching experience to promote the importance of humanities in architectural education and in the wider profession.

The Producers: Women Championing Architecture and its History on the Radio, Emilie Oleron Evans, Queen Mary University of London

In 1958, the *Architects' Journal* included two women – BBC producers Prudence Smith (1923-1999) and Leonie Cohn (1917-2009) – in its traditional 'Men of the Year' list, praising them for 'continuing to recognize that architecture is as good a talking-point as any other art'. Though neither was a trained architectural historian, they were known as influential advocates of the topics of architecture and planning, in particular through the radio show *Prospect*, created by Smith on the Third Programme in the early 1950s and co-produced with Cohn. Such was their reach in the network of architectural experts invited to talk about the field on the television or on the radio, that Reyner Banham noted in a letter to the *Architects' Journal* in 1961 that the vast majority of the scholars of architectural history who had turned to also be competent popularisers had been 'tried out by either Leonie Cohn or Prudence Smith on behalf of the Third Programme'. The trajectories of these two women producers were pioneering on many counts, not least because they created for themselves a professional identity which, despite the gender-based structural inequalities they had to navigate, was not that of a subaltern. Their role was emphatically not to passively receive and transmit expert knowledge, but to shape intellectual and academic content that would meet audiences' expectations and promote cultural conversations around the built environment. If we follow Shundana Yusaf when she writes that 'architectural programming formed the most effective vehicle for realizing British radio as a veritable cathedral of a unifying national culture', we might also consider Cohn's and Smith's production work on a range of radio talks as a case study illuminating the following hypothesis that opens up new lines of enquiry in the role of women within British culture: women's contribution to the field of architectural history is to be found beyond the remit of official cultural and academic discourses, in the way they used their professional activities to foster visual literacy and to prompt large audiences to reflect on the place occupied by architecture, past and present, in society.

Dr Émilie Oléron Evans is an art historian and translator based at Queen Mary University of London. Her research focuses on the respective and combined roles of gender dynamics and of translation in the conceptualisation and institutional evolution of history of art, architecture and design as disciplines. She wrote on the reception and legacy of, among others, Nikolaus Pevsner, Linda Nochlin and Carol Duncan. Together with Dr Hans C. Hoenes (Aberdeen), she is co-investigator on the project 'Women and History of Art in the Making, Britain, 1945-1974', which proposes new approaches for documenting and interpreting the archival traces of women's professional agency in the spaces shaping visual literacy.

Historians

'Opening the eyes of the public to beauty in unexpected places': Katharine Ada Esdaile (1881–1950), Dr Caroline Stanford, Landmark Trust

Katharine Ada Esdaile (1881–1950) was a pioneering English art historian and campaigner for building preservation. She singlehandedly resurrected the study of post-medieval British sculpture, rescuing sculptors and craftsmen from obscurity and setting new standards in meticulous fieldwork. Born into an intellectual family, Esdaile read Classics at Oxford, first fixing her interest on classical sculpture and coinage. In 1907, she married Arundell Esdaile, later Secretary of the British Museum, with whom she lived in West Hoathly in West Sussex and had three children. This comfortable milieu made her well connected with others of her background and mindset; her endeavours were consistently collaborative.

After World War I, Esdaile began her life-long study of post-medieval sculpture in England. Her method in itself was ground-breaking, a decade or more before

Pevsner started his own obsessive cataloguing. Criss-crossing the country by train, to continue on her bicycle while carrying a collapsible ladder and cumbersome photographic equipment, Esdaile took more than 3,500 photographs of hitherto disregarded funerary monuments. She championed native sculptors and artisans like Nicholas Stone and Epiphanius Evesham, challenging the prevailing tendency to ascribe outstanding works to better known European artists. In 1927 she published *English Monumental Sculpture since the Renaissance* and in 1928 *The Life and Works of Louis François Roubiliac*, having become especially intrigued by his work. Both still stand as valuable reference works.

In the early 1930s, Esdaile transcribed the notebooks of 18th-century antiquarian George Vertue, perhaps the core source for 18th-century art history and whose eclectic interests and exhaustive notes were perhaps similar to her own. She also deserves a place alongside the likes of Pevsner, Betjeman and Summerson as a vigorous campaigner for mid-century architectural recording and preservation. She was an active member of the SPAB and founding member of the Georgian Group, and an avid letter writer to *The Times*. Her typewritten survey of church monuments, brasses and stained glass was used by the National Buildings Record to assess recording priorities during the Second World War, guiding Summerson in his record photography of bombed buildings. Esdaile served as the only woman on the committee charged with preserving such items.

Esdaile's life's work culminated in *English Church Monuments 1510 – 1840* (1946). An intentionally popular book, this nevertheless cemented her campaign to establish post-medieval British sculpture as a serious discipline. Her unfulfilled ambition to publish a dictionary of British sculptors directly inspired her friend Rupert Gunnis, and therefore those who curate today's online version, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors 1660 – 1951*. Esdaile published 10 books and over 300 articles in her astonishingly rich and prolific career. Although some of her interpretations have since been corrected, she continues to be widely cited, and her painstaking field documentation and snapping up of hitherto unconsidered trifles and connections still underpin numerous fields of related scholarship, making her a worthy subject for reinstatement in the canon.

Dr Caroline Stanford, FSA, has been in-house Historian at the Landmark Trust since 2001, researching their buildings and feeding into their restorations as a participating member of the design teams. She has a specialism in Coade stone and its equivalents in the long 18th century on which she recently completed her doctoral thesis. She encountered Katherine Esdaile's work in the course of that research.

***Un-writing and Re-writing London: Women architectural historians of the mid-twentieth century*, Dana Arnold, Professor of Art and Cultural Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute, University of East Anglia**

The architectural history of London in the long eighteenth century has been defined by canonical studies privileging the male author genius, which appeared in the 1940s and 1950s. The biographical emphasis of these narratives endorses the notion of a city made by men either as architects or patrons, and for men as consumers of a new metropolitan environment. Notably, moreover, many of these studies were written by men, including Sir John Summerson and Sir Howard Colvin both of whom enjoy his own place in the pantheon of British Architectural History.

Recently I have been thinking about the contribution made by women historians who were also working in the middle years of the twentieth century to our understanding of the urban development of eighteenth and early nineteenth century London. The legacy of, for example, Hermione Hobhouse, Ann Saunders, Alison Kelly and the social historian M. Dorothy George reveals alternative narratives about London that move us away not only from the canonical histories of great men patrons and architects but also the unquestioned authority and assumptions of the authorial voice.

My starting point is that an awareness of the implications of the master narratives of the discipline is essential and enables us to expand the discourses around London in the long eighteenth century. Taking the feminist recognition of the more collective and holistic approach that women can adopt in a range of contexts as my frame, I explore how women operated as historians, archivists and editors during this crucial period in the evolution of the architectural history of London. I focus equally on their contribution to the archive as well as the ways in which they brought this material into the public domain. I argue that a more collective and holistic approach to how the intricacies of the evidence intertwine with the processes of research and writing reveals a range of actors in the production of the architecture and the architectural history of London. In this way, we see how the vital contribution of these women disassembles established historical orthodoxies to reveal the city's architectural, social and cultural complexity. Moving forward, we can adopt these narrative strategies in the re-writing of London as a city made for and consumed by a diverse range of publics.

Professor Dana Arnold FSA is Professor of Art and Cultural Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute, University of East Anglia. She is an internationally renowned authority in the field of Architectural History and Theory whose work has been published in over 25 languages. Her research focuses on feminist and decolonising alternatives to canonical architectural histories and includes *Women and Architectural History: The Monstrous Regiment Then and Now* (2024) awarded a Judges' Commendation Colvin Prize SAHGB 2025, *Architecture and Ekphrasis* (2020), and *The Spaces of the Hospital* (2014). She is a member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Advisory Board; Chair of the Programme Board of Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science; and Deputy Chair, Research Diversity Advisory Panel and a Member of Main Panel D for the Research Excellence Framework 2029. Her new book *The Public Consumption of Architecture* will be published by Routledge.

'I paint, write, take photographs and travel' – Gender and Landscape History in 20th century Britain

Professor Luca Csepely-Knorr, University of Liverpool

In an article showcasing her visit to Government House and Bermuda Garden Club in May 1956, Fellow of the British Institute of Landscape Architects and well-established author, Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart (1876 – 1966) described her career in the following words: "If I had been a man I should have been an architect. But I am a woman, so I paint, write, take photographs and travel". Villiers-Stuart's reflection encapsulates the gendered constraints that shaped many women's professional lives in the first half of the twentieth century. Excluded from prestigious opportunities in disciplines such as architecture, women forged alternative careers through writing, publishing and photography as a way to participate in

the world of design. Villiers-Stuart's work exemplifies this alternative mode of professional practice, especially her books 'Gardens of the Great Mughals' (1913) and 'Spanish Gardens, Their History, Types and Features' (1929). So too does her numerous articles in periodicals such as *Country Life*, *Garden & Landscape* and the *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*. She was one of the most published authors in the emerging field of garden and landscape history. While her work – especially on India – is still regarded as a key source for landscape history, she was recently described as 'once-famous garden writer [...] now little known among today's garden historians and designers'. Drawing on the publications of Constance Villiers-Stuart alongside that of E. F. Lewcock, Hilda Reid and Nan Fairbrother, this paper examines how women writers helped establish landscape history as a field of knowledge in twentieth-century Britain. Through their accounts of gardens and designed landscapes in Britain and overseas, they participated in the circulation of design ideas and aesthetics across imperial and international networks. Reading these texts today offers an opportunity to reconsider both the colonial foundations of landscape historiography and the overlooked role of women in its development. By analysing their publications as sites of professional and historical knowledge production, the paper will demonstrate how these writers expanded the geographical and intellectual horizons of garden and landscape history, helping to define how landscape architecture understood its past and imagined its future.

Luca Csepely-Knorr is Chair in Architecture at the Liverpool School of Architecture. She is a chartered landscape architect and art and architectural historian. Luca leads the Landscape | Gender | Environment Research Collective and is co-convenor of the European Architectural History Network's Women and Gender in Landscape, Architecture and Urban Design Interest Group with Professor Svava Riesto. Her research is focusing on the transnational histories of landscape and environmental history with a special focus on women's contribution to shaping disciplinary agendas and the evolving social and ecological discourses of the 20th century.

Helen Rosenau, Susanne Lang and the dissemination of ikonologie in the writing of architectural history in Britain, Matthew Critchley, ETH Zürich

In Britain the answer to the question: What is an iconology of architecture? Normally begins with Rudolf Wittkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949) and Richard Krautheimer's *Introduction to an Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture* (1942). Both were products of the first ten years of the Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, and both were cited by Giulio Carlo Argan as exemplary of how iconological methods, developed for the study of painting, could be applied to architecture. But the historiographic dominance of Wittkower's *Architectural Principles* has long obscured the crucial contributions made by women émigré scholars to the dissemination of these methods in Britain, particularly those of Helen Rosenau (1900-1984) and Susanne Lang (1907-1995). Using archival materials this paper will reconstruct Rosenau and Lang's scholarship and the difficult contingencies under which they worked.

Lang and Rosenau were both women writing within a community that was overwhelmingly male, both were German-speaking Jewish exiles in an unfamiliar country, and both obtained stable university positions far later than their scholarly achievements were duly owed. That Rosenau has been obscured is particularly inexplicable. As Griselda Pollock has argued, Rosenau's *Woman in Art: from Type to Personality*, written in 1944, was the first art history to analyse gender as a socially constructed category – five years before Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). In the contribution to an iconology of architecture, Rosenau who completed her (first)doctorate on Cologne Cathedral under the supervision of Erwin Panofsky, arguably had a better pedigree in that method than Wittkower (before arriving in England, Wittkower's work still largely consisted of a Wölfflinian stylistic parsing). Rosenau would make continental methods accessible to a wide audience in books such as *Vision of the Temple* (1979) and *Woman in Art* as well as her work on 18th century French architecture. Archives show that Rosenau also lectured at architectural schools, including the Bartlett at UCL and the Architectural Association. Perhaps more crucially, the work of Rosenau and Lang comprised a consistent contribution, more numerous than Wittkower's or Colin Rowe's, to the transmission of continental historical practices into British architectural periodicals. In articles for *The Architectural Review* and the *RIBA Journal*, they regularly introduced new forms of scholarship to Britain. A British architect may have had *Architectural Principles* on their bookshelf but it was on their desk that émigré scholarship was regularly represented in Rosenau and Lang's writing for these journals.

Matthew Critchley is a lecturer and post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zürich. Since 2023 he has also been the academic editor of the Institute's journal *gta papers*. His first issue of the journal on the politics embedded in the writing of architectural history (*gta papers 10 political histories*) was published in 2025. His second issue on specific macroeconomic policies and their impact on architecture (*gta papers 11 macroeconomics*) will be published in November this year (2026). He completed his doctorate titled *A Question of Method: Anthony Blunt and the Practice of Architectural History in Britain (1934-1974)* in 2023 under the supervision of Maarten Delbeke and Anthony Vidler. Previous to that, he worked as an architect for offices in London and Basel, including Herzog & de Meuron. He has published in the *AA Files*, *OASE*, *gta papers*, *Architectural Theory Review* and the *Quaderni della Bibliotheca Hertziana*.

Curators

Dorothy Stroud (1910-97), Inspectress and first Assistant Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum, Sue Palmer, Sir John Soane's Museum

This paper will present an overview of the career of Dorothy Stroud (1910-97), pioneering garden and architectural historian and Inspectress and first Assistant Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum for thirty-nine years. Bought up by her mother in straitened circumstances, Dorothy nevertheless had a good secondary education. As, however, for so many bright women of her generation, there was no question of her going on to further education – she needed to earn her living, and indeed, until her death in 1947, to support her mother. Having received a brief secretarial training, in 1930 she joined the staff of *Country Life*, first in the Book Department and then in the Editorial Office, as Secretary to the Architectural Editor, Christopher Hussey. Through him she became attracted to the history of architecture and landscape gardening and was encouraged to begin her first forays into writing, with short articles and book reviews.

In 1941, she volunteered her services to the newly-formed National Buildings Record, working as deputy to John Summerson, responsible for recording notable buildings in outer London. When in 1945 Summerson was appointed to succeed Arthur Bolton as Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum, he invited Dorothy to join him as Inspectress, a role created by Sir John Soane when founding his Museum. The history and significance of this role will be briefly explained, before giving an overview of the extraordinary working partnership between Summerson and Dorothy which lasted from 1946 to their retirement in 1984.

Dorothy saw it as her duty to make the job work for Sir John by protecting him from all the routine work of visitors and housekeeping. She typed all the Museum correspondence on one typewriter (her own) and did as much of the necessary maintenance as possible herself, repairing the stair carpet, reupholstering furniture and on one occasion even climbing into the sarcophagus to scrub it with a mild solution of Tide, as recommended by the British Museum. And until the appointment of a Library Assistant in 1971, she dealt with all requests to study material in the collection, notoriously intimidating generations of students of all ages.

Despite long hours at the Museum, Dorothy also produced no less than seven books, on Capability Brown, Henry Holland, Humphry Repton, George Dance and Sir John Soane, tackling subjects that had hardly been written about before in depth, and particularly pioneering in the case of the book on Brown; landscape history being a discipline very much in its infancy at the time. She also found time to serve on the Committee of SPAB, the Council of the Georgian Group, the Historic Buildings Council, the Garden History Society and the Soane Monuments Trust. The recipient of a number of honours in her lifetime, including an MBE and Honorary Fellowship of the RIBA, I think the one that might have delighted her most, and of which she never knew, was that on 2 September 2000 her ashes were deposited next to the memorial of Capability Brown at Croome Park, under a memorial stone which reads: 'Here lie the ashes of DOROTHY STROUD 1910-1997 architectural and garden historian whose writings revealed anew the life and work of CAPABILITY BROWN'.

Sue Palmer has been Archivist to Sir John Soane's Museum since 1989. She is the author of *At Home with the Soanes. Upstairs, Downstairs in 19th century London*, and of a number of articles about Soane's life and work and on garden and local history.

Elizabeth Aslin: A Decorative Arts Pioneer, Richard W. Hayes, Independent Scholar

This paper evaluates the career of Elizabeth Aslin (1923-89) and her scholarship on the decorative arts in Great Britain. Over the course of forty years, Aslin's work as a museum administrator, curator, writer and lecturer helped establish the decorative arts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as important fields of scholarly research. The daughter of Charles Herbert Aslin, an architect, and Ethel Fawcett, a teacher, Elizabeth studied at the Slade School of Art and the University of London before embarking on a career as administrator at two prominent London museums. From 1947 to 1964, she was a research assistant in the circulation department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, leaving to become part-time assistant Keeper-in-Charge of the Bethnal Green Museum, which had been founded in 1872 as a branch of the Victoria and Albert Museum, then still known as the South Kensington Museum. Aslin returned to the Victoria and Albert as the assistant director to John Pope-Hennessy between 1968 and 1974, followed by a second stint at the Bethnal Green Museum from 1974 to 1981, as the Keeper-in-Charge of what was now the Museum of Childhood. Significant achievements marked Aslin's tenure at both institutions. She was responsible for the furniture exhibited in the V&A's landmark exhibition of 1952, 'Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts', which pioneered nineteenth-century studies. At Bethnal Green, Aslin transformed the display of dolls and toys and added a section on Victorian decorative arts. According to *The Guardian*, it was through Aslin's work that 'the study of dolls and toys was put on a serious and efficient basis with proper museum principles of research and record professionally applied'. Another pivotal exhibition was 'Forty Years of Modern Design' of 1966-67, featuring the museum's twentieth-century British collection.

In tandem with these curatorial milestones, Aslin published several books on British furniture and design which remain reference works today, including *Nineteenth-Century English Furniture* (1962), *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau* (1969), *Minton, 1798-1910* (Exhibition catalogue, 1976), and *E.W. Godwin: Furniture and Interior Decoration* (1986).

This paper places Aslin in the context of Britain's museum culture in the postwar years and explores the extent to which Aslin's scholarship on British decorative arts reflects a broader internal focus on the country's history and artistic legacy after the cataclysm of two world wars and the end of empire. Aslin will also be placed in the context of women who worked as administrators and curators to clarify the role of gender in museums during the years 1950 to 1980. Lastly, to pinpoint Aslin's role as trailblazer, her writings will be examined for their impact on transforming the study of the decorative arts from an amateur or purely connoisseurial avocation to a professional historical discipline.

Richard W. Hayes is an architectural historian educated at Columbia and Yale universities whose scholarship focuses on 19th-century Britain. His publications include a chapter in the award-winning book *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, edited by Susan Weber Soros. His research has also been published in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Architectural History*, *Architectural Theory Review*, *The Journal of Architectural Education*, *Scroope: Cambridge Architecture Journal*, and *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*. In 2007 he published *The Yale Building Project: The First 40 Years*, a comprehensive history of an influential academic programme.

The recipient of numerous grants, awards and scholarships, Hayes was a Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge, a Visiting Scholar at the American Academy in Rome, and was recently elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in the category of education, research and literature.

From archival neglect to public rediscovery: Margaret Richardson's role in reviving Lutyens, Vicky Richardson, Curator and Writer

This presentation will focus on the work of architectural historian Margaret Richardson (b.1937) and assess the pivotal role she played in the revival of Sir Edwin Lutyens's architectural reputation. Richardson served as the intellectual backbone and logistical anchor of this multifaceted project: her work bridged the gap between archival neglect and public rediscovery.

Documenting the Archive at RIBA

In the early 1960s, as the Deputy Curator of RIBA Drawings collection, Richardson catalogued the vast and chaotic repository of Lutyens's archive, around 5000 drawings. During this period, she and her husband architect Anthony Richardson, visited nearly every Lutyens building. Her precise, expert work set the academic framework required to study the architect and the catalogue was published in 1973.

Driving the Hayward Gallery Exhibition

When a group of young architectural historians set out to organize the landmark 1981 Lutyens exhibition, Richardson was instrumental in transforming the ambition into a physical reality. Operating with a quiet effectiveness, she was the key organizer who kept the project afloat when institutional barriers threatened its cancellation. When the Royal Academy abruptly declined to host the retrospective, Richardson successfully negotiated a partnership with the Arts Council of Great Britain, which stepped in to provide the Hayward Gallery. As a core curator on the committee, her unique familiarity with the RIBA collection underpinned the success of the exhibition.

Editing the Catalogue

In tandem with the physical show, Richardson served as a co-editor for the accompanying catalogue, *Lutyens: The Work of the English Architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944)*. She compiled the book's exhaustive works appendix, creating an authoritative reference tool. The resulting publication stood out not merely as a temporary guide for gallery-goers, but as a permanent, rigorous work of architectural history.

Reviving a Forgotten Reputation

Richardson's work played an important role in challenging the post-war Modernist disdain for traditional craftsmanship. In the mid-20th century, Lutyens's romantic, historicist designs were dismissed by an ascendant Modernist establishment. By showcasing his work with intellectual gravity, Richardson enabled both critics and the public to acknowledge Lutyens' significance. The spectacular public turnout at the Hayward Gallery directly triggered the foundation of the Lutyens Trust in 1984, where Richardson went on to serve as a long-time Chairperson.

Richardson in Retirement

After serving as Director of Sir John Soane's Museum, Richardson retired in 2006 and alongside numerous committee and voluntary roles, started writing a new book about Lutyens, with specialised commissioned photographs by Martin Charles (1940-2012). The manuscript was abandoned when her health declined. Charles' photographs, which are held at the RIBA Photographs Collection, will be shown as part of the presentation. Today Margaret Richardson lives with Alzheimer's disease and is not able to talk about her experience or memories. Research for this paper, which is presented by her eldest daughter, will be based on her papers, published work and conversations with Anthony Richardson, former colleagues and collaborators on the exhibition, including Piers Gough.

Vicky Richardson FRIBA is an architectural curator and writer who holds degrees in Early Modern History and Architecture from King's College London and the University of Westminster. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and serves on the Soane Medal jury. Richardson was previously Head of Architecture and Drue Heinz Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts (2021–24), Director of Architecture, Design and Fashion at the British Council (2010–16) and Editor of *Blueprint* (2004–2010). Her portfolio includes exhibitions at the Royal Academy, commissioning the British Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale and curating the architecture section of the inaugural Guangzhou Design Triennial in 2024. Vicky recently set up the curatorial office, Pick Up Architecture, which is working on a number of international exhibitions and publications. Alongside this she is a thesis tutor at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Journalists

The Vanishing Editor: Monica Pidgeon and the Problem of Editorial Agency, Dr. Frida Grahn, London South Bank University

In a lecture at ETH Zürich on 11 February 1977, René Furer described *Architectural Design* (AD) as a journal without equal, one that had remained closer to the pulse of its time than any comparable publication for over a decade. Since the recent departure of its editor, Monica Pidgeon, he observed, the magazine was already becoming 'tamer'. That a Swiss teacher of Architecture Theory, at some remove from London, marked her exit as the end of an era signals the reach of Pidgeon's influence. This paper recovers Monica Pidgeon (1913–2009) as a maker of architectural history. Across more than three decades at AD (1941–1975), and later at the RIBA Journal (1976–1979), she helped determine which buildings, ideas, and architects entered professional memory and reached an international readership. When she died in 2009, she was called 'the grande dame of British architecture' – a stature already recognised by honours in her own lifetime. Yet despite this influence she remains little studied today, a neglect that may be linked to her name appearing only sparingly in the publications she directed. Whilst widely acknowledged, her authority was exercised person-to-person – through relationships and networks, in acts of selection, in the everyday craft of laying out a magazine, and in getting it out on time. Taking this near-invisibility as its central problem, this paper asks how architectural history can account for an editorial agency that left little attributable trace on the printed page.

From the 1940s, Pidgeon worked at AD alongside a succession of male 'technical editors', an arrangement that lent the magazine professional credibility at a moment when a woman's name was seen as a liability. She commissioned and edited what they wrote, work that by convention carries no byline. This pattern took a different form at the *RIBA Journal*, where Pidgeon was announced as new editor in 1976 and named in the imprint. After one year, however, the page was reorganised, reducing the imprint to one element among several. In December 1978 it disappeared altogether, only to reappear in November 1979, some months into her successor's editorship. The causes of this remain an open question, though the episode is hard to separate from the disadvantages then attached to being a female professional. Despite this, Pidgeon's editorial signature persists throughout the issues. It is seen in an internationalist outlook sustained across decades, in an enthusiasm for technological innovation, in recurring preoccupations with energy conservation, and in the roster of prominent contributors she published. Reading these traces together, this paper argues that Pidgeon exercised substantial historiographical authority through a mode of authorship whose effectiveness depended on self-effacement.

Drawing on the Monica Pidgeon Papers at the RIBA Collections, recorded interviews with her at the British Library, and newly conducted interviews with her former collaborators, and approaching its subject from outside the British Isles, this paper offers Pidgeon's vanishing editorship as a case study in the difficulty of writing the history of those who shaped the discipline simultaneously at the forefront and behind the scenes.

Dr. Frida Grahn is an architectural historian specialising in feminist historiography, publishing cultures, and the transnational circulation of architectural ideas. She holds a PhD from the USI Accademia di architettura, Mendrisio (2024, summa cum laude) and is an SNSF Postdoc.Mobility Fellow at London South Bank University (2026–2027). Her fellowship project, "The Editor's Voice: Monica Pidgeon and the Feminist Politics of Architectural Publishing, 1941–2009," examines Pidgeon's editorial career across *Architectural Design*, the *RIBA Journal*, and *Pidgeon Audio Visual*. Grahn is the editor of *Denise Scott Brown: In Other Eyes* (Birkhäuser, 2022) and the co-curator of *Tendenzen at 50: Portrait of an Exhibition* (gta,

“Is there perhaps more to architecture than you think?”: Diana Rowntree as Guardian columnist, Louise Campbell, University of Warwick

‘Architecture involves all of its users and consumers’ as Dana Arnold has observed. Diana Rowntree (1915-2008), *The Guardian* newspaper’s first Architectural Correspondent, wrote a column which addressed this subject for over eleven years between 1957 and 1968. Observing the surge of new housing, schools, offices and civic buildings which followed the lifting of building restrictions in 1954, Rowntree was concerned to engage a general readership with their dramatically transformed environment. The profession of architecture, and those who wrote about it, was in the 1950s and 1960s an overwhelmingly male preserve. Rowntree’s journalism makes a salutary contrast to that of Ian Nairn, with whom she overlapped at *The Architectural Review* in 1956. During the 1960s – a period when her articles appeared in *The Guardian* every two to four weeks – Nairn was publishing sporadic, splenetic attacks on contemporary architecture and planning in *The Observer* newspaper. In the book she later published under the title *Buildings Face the Future: is there perhaps more to architecture than you think?* Rowntree described the critical response to new buildings during that period as aggressively ‘boorish’. Trained at the AA in the late 1930s, she was far more knowledgeable than Nairn about the process of design and what Rowan Moore has termed its ‘causes and consequences’. But rather than taking up the cudgels in defence of modern architecture, Rowntree wrote not as insider and partisan but rather as an onlooker and witness. Concerned by what she termed the gap between the architect and the public, she used her column to bridge it. This paper will consider the journalistic strategies Rowntree used to get her readers to think about and discuss the new architecture, highlighting issues seldom addressed by contemporary critics, notably the needs and experience of the user, gender and the architectural profession, the lack of dialogue between architects and the building industry, and the potential of local groups and individuals to effect environmental change.

Louise Campbell is Professor Emerita of History of Art at Warwick University. She has published extensively about the work of Basil Spence and his office, about Coventry’s postwar reconstruction plans, its architecture and its cathedral, about studio architecture, and about public art in the twentieth century. Her book, *Studio Lives: architect, art and artist in twentieth-century Britain* was published by Lund Humphries in 2019. She continues to explore the relationship between artists and the design of the places in which they work by looking at the architecture and culture of postwar colleges of art in the aftermath of the Summerson Report.

‘Women who did the dirty work’: Sadie Speight as chronicler of British Modernism, Natcha Ruamsanitwong

In 1937, a periodical *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* was published. On its cover appeared the names of three co-editors: Leslie Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. There was no mention of the other two team members, Barbara Hepworth and Sadie Speight, who were, as described in Hepworth’s own memoir, ‘the two women who did the dirty work’.

This paper traces Sadie Speight’s journalistic and curatorial activities. Known to many as ‘the very attractive wife of Leslie Martin’, Speight had written and published on wide-ranging topics including architecture, interior design, and industrial design. As one of several female designers who also worked as writers, she was part of a broader trend.

This paper examines Speight’s work, from her prize-winning postgraduate projects, her collaboration with her husband on *The Flat Book* (1939) to her editorial work for *The Architectural Review*, a job that did not last very long due in large part to a growing rift between her and Pevsner. Her experiences were suggestive of issues concerning gender and working dynamics that may have shaped architectural publishing and professional networks more generally.

Throughout their careers, spanning the 1930s to the 1980s, both Speight and Martin wrote about their own work and that of others. For them, writing functioned as a natural extension of their practice. Their many publications were not only a means of documenting their careers and contributions but also of curating how they would be remembered. Alongside her independent career, and responsibilities as a mother, Speight – later Lady Martin – was also a chronicler of her husband’s work. She curated exhibitions showcasing his studio projects and played a central role in preparing his very own *Œuvre Complète*. By tracing Speight’s largely underexamined activities, including publications she edited, both publicly and behind the scenes largely underexamined activities, this paper contributes to ongoing efforts to record women’s roles in shaping architectural history.

Natcha Ruamsanitwong is an architectural historian and author of *Leslie Martin and Sadie Speight: Architects of Modern Britain* (Lund Humphries, 2026). She is the SAHGB Women’s Architectural Historian Network (WAHN) convenor and Vice-Chair of the Construction History Society. Currently, she is Lecturer in Architectural History and Theory at Staffordshire and acting Director of Studies in Architecture and Design at Queens’ College, Cambridge.

Conservation

Billa Harrod and the Norfolk Churches Trust, Joshua Mardell, Royal College of Art

In the archive of the Norfolk Churches Trust sits a brochure for the Royal Norfolk premiere of *The Go-Between* (1971) in Norwich on 8 October 1971, a fundraiser attended by the Queen Mother, coming up from nearby Sandringham. Joseph Losey's film, adapted from L. P. Hartley's novel, follows Julie Christie and Alan Bates as lovers divided by class, conducting an illicit affair in the Norfolk countryside with destructive consequences for the boy unwittingly drawn into it. It is hardly an obvious choice for a church conservation gala. Its Norfolk is a landscape charged with eroticism and class tension, not pastoral comfort. That such a film could be pressed into the service of saving medieval churches suggests something of the capaciousness with which its organiser understood place: that it mattered where it was felt.

That organiser was Wilhelmine "Billa" Harrod (1911–2005), a familiar presence in the diaries and letters of her literary milieu, friend and correspondent of John Betjeman, and Nancy Mitford's model for Fanny in *The Pursuit of Love* (1945), but a figure almost entirely absent from the historiography of conservation or architectural history. This paper – work in progress – will begin to trace Harrod's career and her path to founding the Norfolk Churches Trust. It will also propose collective biography, or prosopography, as a methodological framework for recovering such "untold tales".

Harrod's path to founding the Trust (established as the Norfolk Society Committee for Country Churches in 1970) was not sudden. In the 1930s she served as secretary of both the Norfolk branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the local Labour Party, and went on to become assistant secretary of the Georgian Group, an ideological span that complicates any straightforward reading of her as a "reactionary" conservationist. By the 1960s and 70s, the Trust was operating against a backdrop of the Pastoral Measure and shifting faculty jurisdiction, as waves of redundancy and closure threatened Norfolk's medieval churches. The Trust went on to save hundreds of them and became, in Mark Girouard's words, "a model for similar organisations all over the country" (*Friendships*, 2017, 60).

Place was central to how Harrod worked. Her personalised stationery from 1963 depicted her home, the Old Rectory at Holt, where its overgrown mock orange and snowdrops formed the setting for the annual "Snowdrop Morning" fundraisers she organised for the Trust, a form of place-based creative advocacy that, like the *Go-Between* premiere, made conservation into something sociable and felt. "Buildings are in themselves acts of worship... the symbol everyone understands," she told Betjeman.

Finally, the paper will also draw attention to contemporaries and friends of Harrod who founded comparable societies of their own: Pamela Tudor-Craig (Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust), Eleanor Murray (Georgian Group), and Gay Christiansen (Kensington Society), asking what these parallel careers might reveal about friendship, locality, and informal expertise as forms of architectural-historical practice.

Joshua Mardell is a Tutor in the School of Architecture at the Royal College of Art, specialising in the historiography of conservation activism. He is currently a Paul Mellon Centre Mid-Career Fellow, working on Billa Harrod and the gendered infrastructures of rural conservation in post-war Britain. This will form part of a forthcoming monograph, a transatlantic collective biography of conservationists Margot Gayle and Joan Maynard in the USA, and Billa Harrod and Elizabeth Young in Britain. He is a Co-Editor of the *Journal of Architecture*, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and Director of the Victorian Society in America London Summer School.

