Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter 2006. This year we had two graduation ceremonies, one in the traditional July slot, and an earlier ceremony in March. Once again we were lucky enough to have Haleh’s Afshar lovely house in which to celebrate. Congratulations to the students of the MA cohort 2004-5 and our Doctoral students as well.

We are very happy to welcome Professor Gabriele Griffin into our team at the Centre. Gabriele brings a wealth of expertise in the discipline of Women’s Studies; her particular interests are women’s cultural production, contemporary women’s theatre, feminist methodology, diaspora and postcoloniality, and lesbian writing. Gabriele is a co-editor of the *Feminist Theory Journal* and a board member of *Irish Feminist Studies*. She is the coordinator of an EU-funded research project on ‘Integrated Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities’ (2004-7), and a partner in the Marie Curie Early Researcher Training Network ‘Gendergraduates’. We also welcome Gabriele’s new and existing PhD students to the Centre and hope they enjoy York and its environs!

Watch this space for next year’s Conference details! The plan is to hold two conferences from 3rd - 5th July 2007 as a 3-day event; first the postgraduate ‘Gender 2007’ conference followed by ‘Thinking, Collaborating and Networking across cultures: the West and East Asia’. There will be the chance to relax and socialize with a disco on the final night. Research students and staff will be involved in the planning and organisation of these events; so if you’re interested keep checking the Centre’s website ([www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/)) for more information over the next few months.

Stevi Jackson

It’s not all work, work, work at the Centre! Well it is!

*Master's students enjoying a break from 'autophotography', one of the optional creative pedagogies used at the Centre. The students are Kate, Mina, Anna, Jyothi, Rosey, Ando and Tomoe.*
Alumni News

Tamsin Glover-Emerson (nee Glover) (2004) married Paul Emerson on 16th March 2006 and is now working in Leeds as a Civil Servant in the Home Office on Asylum Casework where, as she writes: I have the opportunity to help the daily lives of disadvantaged and destitute asylum seekers through shelter and financial support. I often think about my time at CWS and remember it fondly.


Grace wrote recently:
Her names are Helga (meaning successful, prosperous, hearty) Nangsinyuy (meaning God amends) Kinyuy (meaning God knows) Suifon (the Fon or the chief has said it). Suifon is her surname, Helga is her Christian name. She will be a year old on 7th November 2006. She can stand on her own, she plays al ot, laughs, wriggles her feet when she hears ringtone music from my mobile phone and can dance. She sleeps well, eats well and loves watching Teletubbies, Barnie and friends. She likes to make noises and will clap her hands. She likes her independence and sometimes likes to have her way. She has 7 teeth at the moment. She is a lovely little angel. We are so proud of her. We thank God.

Helen Graham (2004) was recently awarded the Women's Library fellowship, and is also now working at the Open University developing an oral history and archive project (plus exhibition) with adults with learning disabilities who attend day centres.

Jieyu Liu (2004) has moved to University of Glasgow from University of Sussex to take up a post as Lecturer in Sociology concentrating on Gender, Work, China’s social transformations and life history research. Jieyu’s book Gender and Work in Urban China will be published by Routledge in January 2007 (see Papers and Publications section).

Nathalie Me-Nsoppe Mongue (2004) is studying International Agricultural Development at Michigan State University. Nathalie married a Cameroonian from her tribe and has been living in Nevada but has now moved to East Lansing to attend Michigan State University. Nathalie writes: Charles and I got married in Cameroon. We went to Cameroon for the traditional ceremony as well as the civil marriage. We live in Reno, Nevada. Charles is graduating with a PhD in Inorganic Chemistry. He hopes to get a job in Michigan. It is extremely hot in Nevada (more than it is in Cameroon).

Yvette Taylor (2004) continues in her post as Lecturer in Sociology at University of Newcastle teaching her own course ‘Class: Continuations and Transformations.’ She will have a book published next year Classed Outsiders. Working Class Lesbian Life (see Papers and Publications section). Yvette received a British Academy small grant for a project entitled 'What would the parents say? Lesbian and gay parents, social and educational capitals' and is also the organiser of the ongoing 'Our working-class lives: a new researchers seminar series' hosted by Newcastle University. www.ncl.ac.uk/niassh/workingclasslives/index.htm

Ana Porroche Escudero (2006) has travelled south to Brighton to the University of Sussex to start her PhD 'Listening to Spanish Women: Political Ethnographic Narratives of Breast Cancer' in Anthropology and Development Studies. Her research is designed to explore the experiences and subjectivities of Spanish women diagnosed with breast cancer as well as understanding the meaning that these women attribute to their illness.
Polly Cassidy (2005) completed her MA dissertation on Hannah Cullwick ‘Thy own drudge’ Re/covering the occupations of Hannah Cullwick and now seems to be strangely haunted by it, as she writes:
I am living at Toynbee Hall as a residential volunteer, which is a scheme going back to the university settlement movement of the 1880s. You live in and volunteer a few hours a week. I'm trying to get an oral history project going to do podcasts of interviews with local people. I also might be looking into the history of Bishop Creighton House, a women's settlement in Hammersmith. Jobwise I am a researcher/administrator/hands on deck for a charity called the Sorrell Foundation. I helped to write the exhibition we recently put up showing the results of a programme where design students did projects with groups of schoolchildren acting as clients.
A weird thing is that I keep ending up in places connected to my MA thesis - my office is opposite where Hannah Cullwick married, Munby had connections to Toynbee Hall, and my new office will be next to where they used to live.

Georgia Gaden (2005) is now living in Canada where she was awarded a scholarship for a PhD program in Culture and Society. Georgia writes: I'm TA'ing a course called ‘General Studies: Heritage 1 - Perspective’, which is basically a history of Western thought course, from ancient times until the French Revolution. It is hugely interesting! It’s a little overwhelming to be in such a big faculty after the coziness of the CWS in York (I do miss you all a lot!) but I am really enjoying my courses and I'm starting to feel as though I'm making some connections with my classmates. Please send a big hello and hugs to all who might remember me.

Melanie Maddison (2002) writes:
I have recently self-published the follow-up to last year's Colouring Outside The Lines publication. The second issue of this zine interviews 13 contemporary female artists from across the world in order to highlight the wealth and variety of art being created by women, and to help promote the notion that each and every one of us has the potential to be a creator, to be an artist, and to share our ideas creatively; we can *all* be the experts in and of our own creativities.

Interviewed in issue 2 of Colouring Outside The Lines are: Vanessa Davis, Yoko Kikuchi, Cristy Road, Jean Smith, Colleen Coover, Marion Peck, Nicole Steen, Sarah Dyer, Simone Lia, Alison Bechdel, Penny Van Horn, Renee French and Sarah Utter, alongside artwork by female artists from Sweden, UK, France, USA, China, Italy, Hong Kong, Japan and Belgium. You can find out more information about Colouring Outside The Lines at: www.myspace.com/colouringoutsidethelines

Also, myself and Colouring Outside The Lines will be involved with Ladyfest Leeds (April 2007), see www.myspace.com/ladyfestleeds for more information on the arts festival and how to get involved.

Takako Naito (2004) is now working for the economic research centre in a team researching for countermeasures to the falling birth rate in Japan. The Institute is commissioned by the Japanese government, the Ministry of Economy, Trade. Takako is researching Work and Life Balance and Challenge fund in UK. She is in regular contact with Hikara Wada (2004) and Echo (Wenjing) Deng (2004).

Hikari Wada (2004) contacted us from Japan to let us know about ‘The Yokoyama Fumino Prize’ which was established by the University of Atomi (for the best women’s thesis) to honour Fumino Yokoyama (1998) after she died last year. Hikari translated the article into
English and if anybody would like to have a copy please contact the Centre.

Congratulations to Anna Liddle (2006) for getting the job of her dreams working for CND in Bradford.

Julie Hirst (2003) has a monograph published by Ashgate, *Jane Leade: Biography of a Seventeenth-Century Mystic* and also some articles (see Publications and Papers). Julie is currently teaching two courses for the Open University and the History Department at York have invited her to teach there next year. Julie is supplementing the part-time teaching by working part-time as an administrator at York. She has just completed a contract in the Equal Opportunities Office and is now a Personal Assistant to the Director of Human Resources.

Sylvia Karastathi (visiting student 2002) who started in the Centre as a visiting student and then transferred to an English MA in 2003/4 is now studying for her PhD (painting and the visual in the work of contemporary women novelists) at University of Cambridge after a year of teaching English as a foreign language in Greece.

The Centre was very happy to be able to award the Susan Anderson Award for Outstanding work in Women’s History this year to two very deserving students, Polly Cassidy (CWS) and Grainne Goodwin (History). This award is made in memory of Susan Anderson who was a student in the History department 1994-1997 and the Centre (1994 - 1997). Polly and Grainne names have been engraved on the plaque in the Centre foyer.

**Palgrave/Women’s Studies Prize**
This award is made possible by the generosity of the publisher Palgrave Macmillan, who each year offer a book award to the student that the Board of Examiners deem to have produced exceptional work. The prize this year went to two students, I-Hsin (Anna) Chen and Heather Auld. All the award winners chose a selection of books from the extensive Palgrave/Macmillan catalogue.

Fiona Green (1989) contacted the Centre recently after meeting Julie Palmer (4th yr) at the E. A. S. S. T.* (European Association for the Study of Science and Technology) conference in Switzerland. Fiona is presently the Coordinator of the Women's and Gender Studies Program and Director of the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, where she has been teaching since her graduation from York University. Fiona is currently investigating the influence of feminist mothering on adult children of self-identified feminist mothers. This intergenerational and longitudinal study began 10 years ago with Fiona's PhD research into the conjoining of feminism and mothering from the perspective of feminist mothers. Her current research expands this investigation by taking into account the perspectives of adult children of the original participants.

Recent publications include:
‘Developing a Feminist Motherline: Reflections on a decade of feminist parenting,’ *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 2006 8 (1/2) pp7-20
‘From Clitoridectomies to 'designer vaginas': The medical construction of heteronormative female bodies and sexuality through female genital cutting’ *Sexualities, Evolution and Gender* 2005 7 (2) pp153-187
‘What’s Love Got To Do With It?: A personal reflection on the role of maternal love in feminist teaching’ *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 2003 5 (2) pp47-56

* The conference was held at the University of Lausanne entitled ‘Reviewing Humanness: Bodies, Technologies and Spaces’.
Postgraduate News

Congratulations go to:

Alison Neilson (2005), who has been awarded a PhD for her thesis ‘The Dis/appearance of the Older Woman’.

Heidi Henrickson (2005), who has been awarded a PhD for her thesis ‘Feminisms & Femininities: Gendered Processes of Women-Only Groups’.

Laura J McDonald (2006), who had her viva for her thesis ‘Islamic Feminism: Ideas and experiences of convert women in Britain’ in June and was awarded a PhD.

Laura E MacDonald (2006), who had her viva for her thesis ‘Women’s Work in the Scottish Highlands c.1720 – 1820: a Case study of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire’ on 20th September and was awarded her MPhil.

Zhara Tizro (2006), who had her viva on 4th December for her thesis and was awarded a PhD.

CWS News

The Centre is very pleased to announce the arrival of new and continuing MPhil/PhD students. This year three MA students have stayed to start their MPhil/PhD studies: Rosey Hill, Petra Nordqvist and Corinna Tomrley. Petra was awarded an ESRC quota grant and Corinna is now starting on her +3 of her 1 + 3 ESRC award.

We are also very pleased to announce that Liz Sourbut, who completed her MA here in 1994, has won a coveted Wellcome Trust award for her PhD studies.

CWS has seen some of its students travelling the world in pursuit of knowledge and research! Jody Mellor and Kate Maclean were both awarded ESRC travelling bursaries and their reports are included below. Maz Hardey has also been awarded an ESRC travelling bursary and is now in Australia researching and will surely write a report on her return.

Jody Mellor writes:

The ESRC Overseas Institutional Visit

This summer I was given an opportunity to spend three months in the US as part of the ESRC’s ’overseas institutional visit’. All my expenses were paid, and on my return my award was extended by 3 months, on full pay. This funding is designed for ESRC funded students in years 1-3 of the PhD, and further information can be found on www.esrc.ac.uk.

There are many advantages of going abroad for a period, especially considering that in Europe, British-born (and American-born) scholars are considered culturally and linguistically insular! Because my interests are the intersections between class, race/ethnicity and faith, I decided to go to the US for my institutional visit. In the UK class analysis has in the main been led by feminist social scientists. The advantage of class analyses stemming from a feminist perspective is that the class-gender intersection is at the core. However, race, faith and ethnicity do not occupy a significant place in this revival of class in the UK. Due to varying migration patterns, geographical location and historical formation of the US and UK, American researchers theorise class alongside race almost as a matter of course. This has provided American researchers with all the necessary tools in which to analyse class, taking account of classed experiences of both whites and minorities. Compared to, for example, many areas of London, where 100+ languages are spoken, the majority of migrants in the US are Spanish-speaking, meaning that even in a host-society, Spanish-speaking migrants do not speak a minority language. In Manhattan I lived in an almost totally Spanish speaking area (Washington Heights, just above Harlem, on the upper-west side). The migrants here are mainly from Mexico and the Dominican Republic, and are first and second generation and work in low paid, temporary jobs. However, on Long Island, the largest minority group is the Italian community, who settled in the US in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (and are now 4th or 5th generation). The Italians were economic migrants from poor rural areas of Southern Italy. When they first arrived they were subject to racism and unemployment, but have now in the main experienced class-race mobility. Despite the fact that only a minority of the younger generation have travelled to Italy and the Italian dialects (Sicilian, Sardinian, Pugliese) have died out, this community has an incredibly strong Italian identity and many
young people study Italian language and culture at university.

I was able to time my visit to the US with a week-long seminar on how to teach class to students, and also with the conference at SUNY Stony Brook, *How Class Works*. As one of only a few international people I was considered a novelty, especially in Ohio, and the Americans were intrigued by my accent (which they thought was posh!). I was struck by how different US and British culture are; I felt more of an alien in America than I have ever done in other non-English speaking countries. My visit to the US wasn't all work however! I made many friends and lived and travelled around New York City, Washington, D.C., and Youngstown, Ohio. My favourite place was Manhattan, where I saw the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building and Brooklyn Bridge. I now have the 'travel bug' and will go to California for New Year... I can't wait!

**Kate Maclean** recently returned after 7 months in Bolivia, where she was carrying out field work for her PhD looking at Aymaran women's use of credit in terms of social inclusion and access to citizenship rights in rural areas. Collaborating with the microfinance organisation CRECER, she stayed in the beautiful fruit producing valley of Luribay, where she enthusiastically participated in the credit groups, political meetings, markets and fiestas which took place there.

She also held focus groups and individual interviews. Along the way, she learnt more Aymara than she ever thought she would, acquired several godchildren, is godmother of a football team (Peña Colorada, currently top of the Luribay League), learnt to chop onions and tomatoes without a chopping board, as well as divert irrigation ditches, make cheese and spin yarn, and is quite adept at butchering guinea pigs.

She made good friends with many Luribayeños who not only participated in her research but also made her feel amazingly welcome.

She’s currently somewhat daunted by but thoroughly enjoying the task of turning her experiences in Bolivia into a thesis. Main points of interest include the differences of ethnicity, class and religion in Luribay, and the affect these differences have on a gender analysis, and the way women negotiate between the demands of a market focussed development trajectory, the cooperative nature of work in the communities, family responsibilities and their reproductive tasks.
Two of our new PhD students attended the two week summer school NOISE, held this summer in Utrecht.

Liz Sourbut writes:
Each year, the Noise summer school brings together women’s studies students and researchers from across Europe for an intensive fortnight of lectures, workshops and socialising, all conducted in English. This year the event was hosted by the women’s studies department of Utrecht University in the Netherlands. It’s a lovely city and the weather was hot and sunny for the entire fortnight, so during my small amount of spare time I went wandering around the streets and alongside the canals, dodging cyclists and sampling the fare at various open-air cafés and bars.

The academic content is aimed mainly at MA students and starting PhDs. This year the first week focused on gender and technology, with much emphasis on Donna Haraway’s ‘Cyborg Manifesto’ and a screening of the film ‘Alien: Resurrection’. In the second week we moved onto women’s history, which was approached through individual memories of participants’ ‘foremothers’ – grandmothers, significant friends or mentors, any woman who was adult 50 years ago and who inspired us in some way.

We were worked hard, with lectures in the morning and workshop sessions in smaller tutor groups each afternoon. Each group also had to prepare two presentations to be made in the plenaries, which proved to be very time-consuming for our perfectionist PhD group. As a result, there was never quite enough time to get everything done and eat lunch, but that added to the intensity of the experience. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet women from something like 20 different countries. Some of them may prove to be useful contacts for my research and I began several friendships that I hope will last for years to come.

If anyone’s interested in attending next year’s Noise, it will be here in the UK, at Lancaster University.

And Christine Vogt-William writes:
The Noise Summer School fortnight proved to be quite a new and intense experience for me. It was highly motivating to encounter women who were engaged in different aspects of gender studies. There were basically two groups – the European MA and PhD scholars and the American BA scholars from Antioch. Interestingly enough there were a handful of young men among the Antioch scholars engaged in gender research as well – a circumstance I found extremely satisfactory. The groups provided a multicultural set-up which made for highly interesting exchanges in the frameworks of the lectures given in the morning with ensuing Q&A sessions as well as the afternoon plenary sessions. Here the MA groups shone especially with their astute observations and assessments of the material dealt with in the lectures and the readers.

The end-of-the-week plenaries, or the ‘Grand Finales’ as they were affectionately dubbed, demanded lightning-strike creativity and finesse in the applications of the theories and issues discussed – a circumstance that tested the artistic and academic powers of us PhD groups to the utmost. But we rose to the challenge, even if we lost a little sleep over the assignments (especially the one dealing with our foremothers). Time was always of the essence and we ‘oldies’ proved we had not quite lost our groove when it came to improvisation, creativity, teamwork and burning the midnight oil in order to make an impact as well as contribute to the very diverse discussions and brainstorming sessions which served to combine the crash-courses in gender theory, methodology and peer support and the hundred other little drops of water that went into making the ocean of NOISE a truly crashing experience for us, in more ways than one.

I cannot quite end without paying my respects to the ladies I had the privilege of meeting, getting to know and sharing digs with, weathering certain boot-camp-like conditions while discussing gender issues, theoretical approaches, sharing tears, hysterics and laughter about our projects – in short kudos to the women who made my experience of NOISE 2006 a truly unforgettable one. I recommend NOISE to broaden one’s cultural and academic horizons. It won’t kill you, it’ll definitely toughen you up and keep you wide awake.
**Race for Life**

**Meghan Reid** (PhD 3rd year) writes:

On 28 June 2006, I participated in the Race for Life event at York Knavesmire, along with CWS students Lizzie Guinness, Rosey Hill, and Cirihn Malpocher, and between us we raised over £1000 for Cancer Research UK. Race for Life is the UK’s biggest women-only fundraising event, and during the past year, 750,000 women participated in races around the country. This was my first Race for Life, and the experience of fundraising and running in the event was fantastic. I teamed up with some friends from the Sociology department, Danae McLeod and Emily Lavely, and together we ran in honour of my friend Gillian Bloodworth, who is currently fighting cancer, and in honour of Emily’s mother, Becky, who is a cancer survivor.

Despite a downpour during our warm-up, the race day went very well. RFL provided us with ‘back signs’ upon which we could dedicate our race, and I was certainly brought to tears several times reading these moving messages. One woman we ran alongside through the five kilometres had written ‘I race for life for my right boob, who I miss terribly,’ and another young woman had written that she ran so ‘everyone could get the all-clear,’ just as she had just been told she was five years cancer-free. Seeing so many women (and their supporters cheering us on) united in such a great cause was so inspirational, and it has certainly encouraged me to participate again next year. On behalf of Lizzie, Rosey, Cirihn, and myself, we would like to thank everyone from CWS for their support!

**Activism on Campus**

Over the last year, a number of CWS students have been elected onto the Student Union Women’s Committee. The Committee is keen to promote women’s issues on campus and as such are undertaking a number of campaigns and new ways of reaching students. One way in which we are reaching out to students is through the publication of our zine ‘Matrix Reloaded.’ We’ve called it ‘Matrix Reloaded’ not because we love Keanu Reeves but, because there used to be a feminist newspaper on campus entitled ‘Matrix’ so we are ‘reloading’ it for 2006! Our first issue included articles on ‘Women We Love!,’ ‘How to repair a puncture,’ first person stories including ‘I had an abortion’, reviews and much more. The current issue takes the theme ‘Love Your Body’ to coincide with the Women’s Committee campaign for the term of the same name.

If you are in CWS, you’ll find copies of the most recent edition in the Common Room, if there are none there - ask **Lizzie (Guinness)** and she’ll get you one! We are always keen to get more people involved in the zine - so if you have any submissions for the ‘zine (essays, fiction, poetry, art, reviews, listings, rants...) or if you were involved in the original ‘Matrix’ then please get in touch with us at yorkmatrixreloaded@hotmail.co.uk. If any of the current students of CWS want to get involved with the Women’s Committee, contact womens@yusu.org or alternatively chat with Lizzie, Meghan, Cirihn or Rosey.
Fundraising CAMFED Auction
On 13 May 2006 Janet Peukert and Jessica Murray hosted a fundraising event at Bishopthorpe Palace in aid of CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education). The evening consisted of a cheese and wine gathering with entertainment provided by a jazz band led by Marco Visconti-Prasca. This was followed by an art auction with Elly Fiorentini from BBC radio as compere.

About 100 pieces of work, which were donated by artists from as far afield as Malawi, Greece and America, were auctioned. The evening raised £5000 which CAMFED will use to support girls in rural areas of Africa to complete their primary and secondary education. The University of York’s Graduate Training Unit covered the costs of the evening as Janet and Jessica organised the event as part of the GTU’s Charity Stretch programme. For more information on CAMFED go to the website www.camfed.org/html/story40.html

European Women’s and Gender Studies in Practice
CWS has long been involved in the Athena network, which brings together over 100 Women’s and Gender Studies programmes, institutes documentation centres across Europe. In the latest phase (2003-06) one of the largest groups was Travelling Concepts in Feminist Pedagogy, lead by Clare Hemmings (2000).

This subgroup of over twenty-six women from fourteen European countries investigated two linked ideas: a) which feminist concepts are central in current educational contexts and why, and how do these concepts transform across different disciplinary, cultural and national European boundaries, and b) how do feminist teachers pass on knowledge of particular concepts through educational practice?

The group wanted to disseminate their work in innovative ways, and to this end they worked with Ann Kaloski and Hilary Doran (2000) of Raw Nerve Books (the small press housed at CWS) to produce a web site and a short book series.

The web site is interactive and includes short comment pieces embedded in wiki pages that encourage and enable visitors to join in online discussion about European feminism. Each of the four booklets is written by a different group of academics from the subgroup. Using varied collaborative methods the authors highlight the tensions, pleasures and responsibilities of developing an effective and radical feminist pedagogy that attempts to be truly European. Check out the website on: www.travellingconcepts.net Find out more on: www.rawnervebooks.co.uk/travellingconcepts.html

Congratulations to Anna Piela (2nd year PhD) and her fiancé Bart who married on 11th February this year in Krakow, Poland.
This year we welcome to the Centre 1st year PhD student **Zhang Xie** who has had an interesting experience working in Chinese TV before coming to York to study.

Zhang writes:
My research topic is ‘Traditional Cultural influence on Highly Educated Women in Modern China’. The topic was inspired by my experience of working on the women’s talk show in China in 2004 and 2005.

![Zhang in action on her talk show!](image)

Being involved in the production of such an interesting show was great fun and provided me with valuable knowledge and experience in interview techniques and setting.

Our talk shows focused on highly educated women in urban area, between the ages of 25 to 35. We try to explore their inner conflict, show new understanding of life in present China and discuss value judgements during daily life.

Subjects covered include such topics as: Our Favourite Man, Our Body, Never Be Old, Lost, Househusband, How many heartbreaks could we bear in one life?, Mens’ Lies, Do you know the demands of Children?, Falling in love with your Boss!, Love letters, China Beauty Map, Testimony, Shanghai Man, Special Women, When you are in Trouble, Super Dating.

If you are interested in this talk show, please contact me by email: colleenxie@yahoo.com

**Professor Haleh Afshar** (Politics)
Haleh was the leading academic adviser on designing and developing the proposal for the funding application by the Women’s National Commission to the Home Office for a ‘Listening to Muslims Women’ project. Having organised workshops and focus groups across England the group has now produced a report entitled ‘She Who Disputes Muslim Women Demand Equality.’ The report is to be published in autumn 2006.

Haleh has also recently given her inaugural lecture (to a packed audience) on ‘Feminisms, Islam and human rights: some illustrations from Iran.’ The Centre presented Haleh with a bouquet of flowers to thank her hugely for her contribution to the Centre for Women’s Studies.

On the home front her daughter Molly decided to disregard her mother advice never to marry. Living by her conviction that if feminism is about anything it is about respecting choices Haleh joined in enthusiastically and great fun was had by all.

![Haleh and daughter, Molly](image)
Transferable skills at CWS
The Centre’s doctoral students once again enjoyed a few hours being creative at the ceramic Rainbow café discussing the transferable skills timetable for the year. With input from the students (new and existing) and advice from Dr Karen Clegg at the Graduate Training Unit, all skilfully facilitated by Dr Ann Kaloski, a new schedule of transferable skills training was prepared, enabling PhD students to take advantage of the ‘Roberts’ money available for this purpose. The timetable is available for viewing on www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/gsp/transferableskillstimetable%2006-07.htm

As usual there were many happy smiling faces and much impressive creativity.

York International Arts Festival
Once again the city of York hosted the International York Lesbian Arts Festival (YLAF). The event aims to promote lesbian art and artists (including literature and writers) to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and queer women, and welcomes all women, and men to many events. For the weekend of 26-29th October York is buzzing with art, writing, singing, dancing, film, fun, and discussion. For four day we were enthralled by writers such as Jackie Kay, Ali Smith and Val McDermid, entertainers like Sandi Toksvig and Sue Perkins and DJs such as the gender-bending Club Wotever. Members of CWS helped to organise the event: Ann Kaloski was chair of the YLAF board until recently, many students volunteered for the weekend, and Celia Kitzinger and her partner Sue Wilkinson gave an impassioned and thoughtful presentation about their campaign for Britain to recognise their Canadian marriage. Most of the festival was held at York Racecourse, but on Sunday 29th we held an outdoor concert in the centre of York, and entertained festival goers, shoppers and tourists alike. www.ylaf.org.uk
In Canada, as in Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain (as well as the US state of Massachusetts), marriage is legally available to any two people regardless of gender and sexuality. On 26 August 2003, at a civil ceremony in a flower-decked conservatory in Vancouver, Canada a marriage commissioner declared: "upon the authority vested in me by the Province of British Columbia, I now declare you wife and wife".

As a lesbian couple who had been together already for 13 years, our decision to marry was both an affirmation of our love and our commitment to each other and a symbol of full social equality. Especially for me since I first came out as lesbian as a teenager more than thirty years ago, when homosexuality was still treated as a psychiatric illness, and prejudice and discrimination against lesbians and gay men was taken for granted, this marked a huge advance in social justice: I never expected to have the opportunity to marry someone I loved. Our marriage also provided a practical, one-step solution to many of the problems of sustaining a relationship across international boundaries (immigration, health-care provision, wills, power of attorney, and so on), as I was still living and working in England while Sue was in Canada.

For the first two years of our marriage, our relationship - fully accepted as a valid marriage in Canada - had no legal recognition at all in our home country. This was unlike the marriage of any heterosexual couple married overseas, which would automatically have been recognized as a marriage in Britain. Then, in December 2005, with the implementation of the new Civil Partnership Act (CPA), our marriage was automatically - without our consent, and against our wishes - converted by the state into a civil partnership. The CPA says that same-sex couples who legally marry in countries where it is possible for them to do so "are to be treated as having formed a civil partnership" (CPA, para. 215).

The creation of civil partnership is an enormously important step forward in terms of affording to same-sex couples a whole host of rights and benefits. But CP is a different institution from marriage - a separate institution for same-sex couples only, while marriage is reserved for different-sex couples only. This maintains a symbolic separation of lesbians and gay men from 'normal' society, sending out the inescapable message that our relationships are not worthy of recognition through marriage. This discrimination is demeaning and unjust. Separate is not equal.

Our case is fundamentally about equality. We simply want to be treated the same way as any heterosexual couple who marries abroad - to have our valid Canadian marriage recognised as a marriage in our home country.

With the support of the national human rights organization, Liberty, we argued in court that the failure to recognise the validity of our marriage constitutes a breach of our rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. The judge agreed that we are treated differently from a heterosexual couple, and he agreed that this constitutes discrimination. But he said that this discrimination is justified in order to protect the traditional definition of marriage as between a man and a woman, primarily to produce children. Marriage, he said, is: ... an age-old institution, valued and valuable, respectable and respected, as a means not only of encouraging monogamy but also the procreation of children and their development and nurture in a family unit ... in which both maternal and paternal influences are available in respect of their nurture and upbringing. Denying our marriage does nothing to protect heterosexual marriage. It upholds discrimination and inequality. The judgment does not reflect the diversity of marriage and family life in Britain today. It will not stand the test of time. The struggle for equal rights will continue. We look forward to the day when there is full equality under the law for same-sex and different-sex couples. The Court ordered us to pay £25,000 of the government's costs. We are not funded by any group or organization. Donations (payable to 'Equal Marriage Rights') may be sent to: Equal Marriage Rights, Box 486, Clifford House, 7-9 Clifford Street, York, YO1 9RA, England. For international donations, please contact me on cck1@york.ac.uk. Further information about our case is available on our website <www.equalmarriagerights.org>
Papers and Publications

Trev Broughton (English) and Helen Rogers (1995) have published a book *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* which also includes a chapter by Liz Buettner (History).

The cover picture, by Frederick Daniel Hardy, is in York City Art Gallery. The book is published by Palgrave/Macmillan.


Further information on Rozena Maart and her book can be found at these two pages;  

Julie Hirst (2003) has had book published by Ashgate, *Jane Leade; Biography of a Seventeenth-Century Mystic*.

Events

Ladyfest Leeds is a festival celebrating and promoting equality and creativity, taking place in April 2007, for the people of Leeds and Yorkshire as well as visitors from around the world. Ladyfest aims to bring together the energy, ideas and experience of individuals, voluntary and community organisations, colleges and universities, and the statutory sector. There have been 95 Ladyfests around the world since 2000, the most recent one being held in Newcastle in September (www.ladyfestnewcastle.co.uk) Ladyfests are non-profit, feminist events organised mainly by women and are a platform for the talents of female artists and performers. The events have been focused mainly on encouraging the talent of women and girls, but are open to everyone. With Leeds Ladyfest we want to extend this festival to include people of all genders and sexualities at every level of organising and staging the events. We also intend our planners, performers and artists to represent the diverse population of Leeds in terms of age, ethnicity, ability and social class. We want Ladyfest and its related events and meetings to be an accessible, comfortable space for everyone who wants to contribute. We plan to put on a number of concerts, hold art exhibitions, show films and plays and run workshops.

Ladyfest Leeds has a DIY ethos: all the organisers are volunteers and any profits made will all go to charity. The theme of the festival will be empowerment and self-representation through art and music. A number of past and present students from CWS are involved in the organisation of the festival and we are relishing the opportunity of putting our feminist ideas into action and making a positive event that celebrates women, particularly their creativity. We are always welcome to new people getting involved and taking part - every little bit helps. So, if you fancy helping with the organisation, performing, displaying your art work and/or running a workshop, please get in contact with us via myspace.com/ladyfestleeds or ladyfestleeds@riseup.net

Our website www.ladyfestleeds.co.uk is currently under construction but add it to your favourites and we look forward to seeing you in April!

Contemporary Women’s Writing Postgraduate Network

The Contemporary Women’s Writing Postgraduate Network was established after the highly successful inaugural conference of the Contemporary Women’s Writing Network (http://www.cwwn.org.uk/) in April 2006. We now have a Steering Group consisting of PhD students from all over the UK and we are planning a postgraduate conference for summer 2007 (we will have our own web page at http://www.cwwn.org.uk/ in due course so keep checking!) If you’re interested in becoming involved in our lively network then please contact Karen Coulter here at the Centre for Women’s Studies: kdc102@york.ac.uk We look forward to hearing from you!

CWS Seminars
Wednesdays 1.15 – 3.15pm
V/X/331

29 November
Rachel Fensham
Research Professor of Dance Studies, University of Surrey
Complicity and Cosmopolis: Women in Mainstream Culture

6 December
Maria-Sabina Alexandru
Research Fellow, University of East Anglia
Women’s Literature in Post-Communist Europe

13 December
Kate Maclean
PhD Student, University of York
Cooperation and competition: Women’s use of microcredit in Luribay, Bolivia