

## Cambridge wives: influential women in Victorian Cambridge

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**Start date** 19 February 2016**End date** 21 February 2016**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge**Tutor** Dr Ann Kennedy Smith and  
Carolyn Ferguson**Course code** 1516NRX100**Director of Programmes**

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this  
course, please contact**Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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## Tutor biography

Dr Ann Kennedy Smith has taught courses on nineteenth century literature and art at the Institute since 2006. She is currently researching the lives of Cambridge's pioneering wives and women students, and is contributing articles on Caroline Jebb and her circle to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (forthcoming). Her proposal for a biography of the group was shortlisted for the Biographers' Club Tony Lothian Prize 2015. Her book *Painted Poetry: The Language of Colour in Baudelaire's Art Criticism* was published by Peter Lang in 2011, and her chapter 'Tennyson's French reception' will appear in *The Reception of Alfred Lord Tennyson in Europe* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

Carolyn Ferguson's first career was in scientific research and she has worked for various research organisations and published papers in leading journals. In recent years she has developed an interest in antique textiles and their relationship to the social history of the 19th centuries; two interests which have been brought together in papers published in *Quilt Studies*. As a result of research on the Masters' Wives coverlet, owned by the Museum of Cambridge, Carolyn has examined the lives of Cambridge women in the 1890s. She recently collaborated with Ann Kennedy Smith on a paper entitled 'The Cambridge wives Lives: Rewriting the Victorian Marriage' for the Writing Lives Together conference held at the University of Leicester.

Guest lecturer Tamsin Wimhurst is director of the David Parr House in Cambridge. She worked for many years at the Museum of Cambridge which gave her a passion for the history of Cambridge and its people. Her research is across a wide variety of subjects such as uncovering women's history through the study of laundry work in the city or understanding the history of the town and gown relationship. She regularly interprets her findings to the public through lectures and curating exhibitions.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 *The married generation*

*We look at the life of Caroline Jebb and discuss what being one of the first university wives meant. We will introduce the Masters' Wives coverlet of 1892 to give a introduction to Victorian Society.*

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 *Intellectual partnerships?*

*We compare the respective marriages of Mary and Alfred Marshall and Eleanor and Henry Sidgwick, and consider the beginnings of women's education at Cambridge.*

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 *The rise of the new woman*

*In this session we consider suffrage and anti-suffrage in Cambridge and examine the work and views of Louise Creighton and Kathleen Lyttelton. We will also look the influences of art in the Suffrage campaign and in particular the Cambridge Alumni Suffrage banner.*

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 *Becoming a Darwin*

*A closer look at Charles Darwin's daughters-in-law, Ida, Maud and Ellen, who lived close to one another in Cambridge's 'Darwin colony'. Did marrying into this famous family bring its own problems?*

18:00 – 18:30 Free

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30                      Broadening the mind  
*We will be entertained by the fascinating women of the Ladies Dining Society, with an light-hearted and at times surprising look at travel, fashion, food and conversation during this period.*

21:30                                  Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### **Sunday**

07:30                                  Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30                      Finding their voice: the development, importance and influence of local networks for women 1886 – 1930. *A guest lecture by Tamsin Wimhurst.*

10:30                                  Coffee

11:00 – 12:30                      *This session discusses how the women continued to work and have influence in the twentieth century, with a special focus on the women biographers including Charlotte Linda Morgan and Adela Adams.*

12:45                                  Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

1. To develop students' knowledge of Cambridge University life through its first women students and wives 1870-1914.
2. To gain new insights into the important issues of the day through the lives of academic wives.
3. To develop a greater understanding of Victorian women's changing roles and influence in society, education, social work and writing, both fiction and biography.

### Content:

The course will consider 'the married generation' as described by John Maynard Keynes. Cambridge had been an all male university since medieval times, but by the mid-nineteenth century the rulebook was being rewritten. From the 1860s onwards colleges began to relax their celibacy rules, and Fellows were allowed to marry. The new brides arrived at the same time at Cambridge's first women students, and the two groups are closely connected. The 'Cambridge wives' formed a new society and became pioneers in their own right in education, mental health care and the suffrage movement.

The course will focus on the lives of the twelve women who were members of a remarkable group, the Ladies' Dining Society 1890-1914. Their achievements show how the Victorian idea of a wife as 'angel in the house' was very different from the reality, and how together these women changed the university, the town and wider British society.

### Presentation of the course:

The sessions will include short lectures, whole group discussions and small-group exercises, and will be illustrated with slides, photographs, letters, diaries and memoirs from the time. We will also look at the 'Masters' wives signature quilt' (in the collection of the Museum of Cambridge), a rare chance to see this historically significant and beautiful work.

### Outcomes:

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. Develop a greater understanding of life for women in Cambridge in the period 1870-1914 and their achievements within a predominantly male environment.
2. Demonstrate awareness of the Cambridge wives' contributions to wider issues such as suffrage, education and charity work.
3. Realise the importance of contemporary artefacts and assess their importance for research.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
Gwen Raverat	<i>Period Piece: The Cambridge Childhood of Darwin's Granddaughter</i>	Faber and Faber (1952)
Margaret Keynes	<i>A House by the River</i>	Heffers Printers Limited, Cambridge (1984)
Frances Spalding	<i>Gwen Raverat: Friends, Family and Affections</i>	Pimlico (2004)
Rita McWilliams-Tullberg	<i>Women at Cambridge: a men's university, though of a mixed type</i>	Victor Gollancz Ltd. (1975)
Nicholas Chrimes	<i>Cambridge: Treasure Island in the Fens</i>	Hobsaerie Publications (2009)
	<i>Sketches From Cambridge by A. Don</i>	Macmillan (1865)
Stephen, Leslie Marshall, Mary Paley	<i>What I remember</i>	Cambridge University Press (1947)

## Website addresses

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 12 February 2016