

Sheffield Hallam University

"The lady who dared" – an examination of the 1914 Dronfield school strike

WHITFIELD, Paul Leon

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/28657/>

A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Please visit <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/28657/> and <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html> for further details about copyright and re-use permissions.

“The Lady Who Dared” – An Examination of the 1914 Dronfield School Strike

Paul Leon Whitfield

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Master of History by Research

January 2021

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the thesis is 30,125

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name | Paul Leon Whitfield |
| Date | January 2021 |
| Award | Master of History by Research |
| Faculty | College of Social Sciences and Arts |
| Director of Studies | Professor Alison Twells |

Abstract

This study explores the events of the Dronfield school strike of 1914. In doing so it considers the personal experiences of those centrally involved and the impact of events on them. The core aim of the study is to consider how much the Dronfield events were initiated and driven by the reformist actions of one woman, headteacher of Dronfield Elementary School Girls' Department Sarah Outram; how much they were the expression of conflicting social forces prevailing in the early years of the twentieth century; and how much the specific circumstances prevailing in the town of Dronfield created the atmosphere in which the school strike could occur. This study examines a wide range of primary source material relating to the Dronfield school strike. Some of the primary sources, such as the file of the Board of Education investigation, have been considered by earlier historical studies, but this study examines sources not explored before. These include the widespread newspaper coverage, and documents about the pre-existing conflict between the Dronfield school managers and the Derbyshire Education Committee, which formed a backdrop to the strike events. The study places the Dronfield event in the wider context of the social movements of the early 20th century, including the struggle for women's suffrage and debates around feminism, sex education, social purity and eugenics. It then focusses on the particular circumstances in Dronfield and examines how events were shaped by the actions, motives and beliefs of people within the town. The study shows how tensions around social issues existed across the country, but only in Dronfield did they combine with local circumstances to provoke and sustain the unique phenomenon of the Dronfield school strike. In doing so the study presents an example of the impact wider social movements could have on everyday life at a local level.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported me in the research and writing of this thesis. I am very grateful to my Supervisors, Professor Alison Twells and Dr Nicole Robertson, for their support, encouragement, guidance and patience in enabling me to complete this project.

Thanks to all at Sheffield Hallam University who helped me to believe I could undertake this MA by Research, particularly Professor Niels Petersson and Dr Ana Maria Sanchez-Arce, and the wonderfully supportive Humanities Research students who were part of the 2018-19 Research Methods group.

Thanks to those who helped with the early stages of my research, particularly the staff at Derbyshire Record Office and the Old Dronfield Society (notably Ann Brown and Kate Ollerenshaw).

I may never have come across the Dronfield school strike without the HLF funded project at Stonelow Junior School. I will always be grateful to them and that piece of work. Particular thanks go to Liz Williamson for her hard work and positive response to Sarah Outram's story.

A final thanks to all my friends and family who have supported me through this process, and to Gertie, who has read the drafts, asked searching questions, kept me focussed when required and helped me wrestle this thesis to completion. I couldn't have done it without you.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Aims | 4 |
| Historiography | 4 |
| Methodology | 13 |
| | |
| Chapter 1 Sarah Elizabeth Outram – “The Lady Who Dared” | 17 |
| The Outram Family | 17 |
| Political Affiliations and Social Activism? | 20 |
| Suffrage | 20 |
| Social Purity | 25 |
| Sarah Outram and the School Managers | 27 |
| Sarah Outram in Her Own Words | 32 |
| The Impact on Her Pupils | 39 |
| After 1914 | 40 |
| Conclusion | 43 |
| | |
| Chapter 2 “Radical Ideas” - Wider Social Forces in 1914 | 44 |
| Feminism and Women Teachers | 44 |
| Suffragism and The Women’s Freedom League | 48 |
| Social Purity and Social Hygiene | 51 |
| Sex Education | 56 |
| Eugenics | 64 |
| Conclusion | 67 |
| | |
| Chapter 3 “Yo nivver saw such a place as Dronfield.” – The Local Context | 69 |
| School Strikes in pre-First World War England | 69 |
| Dronfield “It’s a Very Funny Place” | 72 |

| | |
|--|----|
| “Dronfield Versus the World” - Public Reaction to the Dronfield Controversy | 73 |
| Building Dispute – “a veritable death trap” | 75 |
| Local Opposition to Sarah Outram and her Teaching - “Most Disgusting and Abominable” | 79 |
| The Managers | 79 |
| Jacob Bradwell | 81 |
| William Jackson | 85 |
| The Protesting Parents | 87 |
| End of the Affair – “We want her shifting.” | 93 |
| Conclusion | 98 |
| | |
| Conclusion | 99 |
| | |
| Appendix 1 – the stories | |
| Appendix 2 – statements from the schoolgirls | |
| Appendix 3 – pictures and photographs | |
| Bibliography | |

Introduction

“Dronfield ordinarily so placid and urbane was strenuously and hurriedly engaged on Tuesday night in making history,” declared the front page of *The Derbyshire Courier* on February 7th 1914.¹ In the following months Dronfield became the centre of a national furore over the teaching of sex education.²

In 1914, the Dronfield Council School was divided into a boys’ and a girls’ section, teaching children up to a maximum age of 13.³ Sarah Outram was headteacher of the girls’ section and responsible for teaching Standards 6 and 7, the oldest girls in the school. The teaching of Scripture was a requirement and in late 1913 she covered the birth of John the Baptist from the Gospel of Luke. Her pupils asked questions about the language used and the issues raised around birth and motherhood. Miss Outram answered them. She also read the class two stories.⁴ One explained how God used eggs and seeds to ensure the continuation of life, the other was a morality tale employing electricity as a metaphor for human sexual attraction. Outraged parental complaints ensued, leading to the school managers asking Derbyshire County Education Committee to support them in demanding Miss Outram’s resignation.

Miss Outram promised not to undertake such teaching again and that was enough for the Committee, but not for the school managers or the objecting parents. At this point the affair

¹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

² Research for this dissertation has found over 100 newspaper articles, reports and references to the Dronfield affair.

³ In this period most children left elementary education at 11 or 12.

The Education Act 1918 raised the school leaving age to 14; <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1914-39/>

⁴ See Appendix 1 for story transcripts.

went public. Press coverage began, at first local but very quickly national too.⁵ The determination to oust Sarah Outram intensified but the Education Committee continued to support her. The school managers arranged a public meeting on February 3rd at Dronfield Town Hall. The meeting was heavily attended and overwhelmingly hostile to Sarah Outram and her teaching.⁶ It was decided that a petition would be gathered and sent to Dronfield's MP WE Harvey; an appeal would be made to the National Board of Education to intercede on behalf of the school managers against Derbyshire Education Committee; and objecting parents would keep their children away from school until Sarah Outram was forced out.

The Board of Education responded by opening an investigation.⁷ The petition gained 1220 signatures,⁸ the school managers did appeal to Dronfield's MP and most of the girls in Miss Outram's class were kept away from school.⁹ Press coverage continued and many letters were written to newspapers discussing the issues raised. Derbyshire Education Committee maintained their support for Sarah Outram. A second public meeting took place on April 22nd, less well attended than the February meeting, but with little change of sentiment.¹⁰ Those who had taken a hard line against Sarah Outram continued to do so, but they failed to garner additional support. MP Mr Harvey declined to become directly involved and told the school

⁵ First report *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 15 January 1914, p.8; first national newspaper report *The Daily Mirror*, 2 February 1914, front page.

⁶ *The Derbyshire Courier* 7 February 1914, front page and p.9 – very full coverage of the meeting.

⁷ National Archives ED 50-185.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *The Derbyshire Times*, 7 February 1914, p.12, reported "only eleven out of Miss Outram's thirty-six pupils now attend school"; *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 6 February 1914, p.9 reported it as ten girls "out of 32 who are now allowed by their parents to attend school".

¹⁰ The fullest account is from *The Derbyshire Courier*, 28 April 1914, front page. The meeting is also reported in *The Evening Despatch*, 23 April 1914, p.3; *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 23 April 1914, p.8; *The Sheffield Independent*, 23 April 1914, p.5; *The Manchester Guardian*, 24 April 1914, p.5; *The Nottingham Daily Express*, 24 April 1914, p.2; *The Derbyshire Times*, 25 April 1914, p.8.

managers that it was a matter for the Board of Education. The petition had little, if any, impact. The Board of Education decided that it was not a matter for them for two reasons. First, teacher employment was a local issue so Miss Outram's status was for Derbyshire Education Committee to decide; second, the teaching of Scripture was under the authority of individual schools and as Miss Outram's 'sex education' took place during Scripture lessons it was not the responsibility of the National Board. That, as far as they were concerned, was the end of their involvement in the matter.¹¹

On the June 22nd 1914 eleven parents appeared before magistrates, summonsed for keeping their children away from school. The case was adjourned until July.¹² The last newspaper article mentioning the case was published on July 25th 1914 reporting on the final court action.¹³ No parents appeared and the School Attendance Officer reported that all children were either back at school or had left compulsory education. Dronfield's moment in the national spotlight was over. Sarah Outram continued in her post.

I first encountered the 1914 Dronfield School Strike story in 2016 when working with Stonelow Junior School on a Heritage Lottery Fund project exploring the First World War history of Dronfield. We wanted to find interesting stories from the period and searched 'Dronfield' between the years 1914 to 1918 in British Newspaper Archives. Dominating the results were references to Miss Outram and the scandal around Dronfield Elementary School. The events fell outside the period covered by the Stonelow project but they sparked

¹¹ National Board of Education letters and documents - National Archives ED 50-185.

¹² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 27 June 1914, p.9.

¹³ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 25 July 1914, p.5.

my curiosity and I determined to find out more when I could. This desire became stronger when I spoke to friends from Dronfield about the school strike of 1914.¹⁴ None knew that their town had been at the centre of national attention. I wanted to research the story and discover more about Sarah Outram and the events sparked by her teaching, and then find ways of sharing what I had discovered with the people of Dronfield. This Masters by Research study is part of that process.

Aims

This study will explore the events of the Dronfield school strike of 1914. In doing so it will consider the personal experiences of those centrally involved and the impact of events on them. The core aim of the study is to consider how much the Dronfield events were initiated and driven by the reformist actions of one woman, headteacher of Dronfield Elementary School Girls' Department Sarah Outram; how much they were the expression of conflicting social forces prevailing in the early years of the twentieth century; and how much the specific circumstances prevailing in the town of Dronfield created the atmosphere in which the school strike could occur.

Historiography

This dissertation will examine what Lesley Hall describes as “the ferment of radical ideas before 1914”¹⁵ and how they formed the background for the Dronfield affair. These themes

¹⁴ I taught at secondary schools in Dronfield and have also run creative projects in the town.

¹⁵ Lesley Hall ‘Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain’ *Gender & History*, Vol.16 No.1 (2004), pp. 36–56. pp. 50-51.

include the role of women teachers and the impact of feminist ideas; aspects of the struggle for women's suffrage, particularly through the Women's Freedom League (WFL); ideas of social purity and social hygiene; thinking and practice around sex education; and the impact of eugenics. There is a well-established body of historical research into these ideas. I discuss key studies more fully in individual chapters but will here provide a brief overview and introduction to important themes.

The experiences of a female teacher, Sarah Outram, are central to this study. In the early years of the 20th century, teaching was one of few areas offering women professional opportunities and the chance of financial independence. Gerry Holloway argues that from the mid-19th century onwards teaching had offered a possible profession for intelligent girls from working class backgrounds.¹⁶ By 1914 women made up 74.5% of elementary teachers.¹⁷ Alison Oram examines the attractions of teaching to ambitious young women, offering as it did status and independence.¹⁸ She also explores the tensions between the professionalism of the role and the traditional expectations around marriage and motherhood placed on women by pre-First World War society, tensions which were to impact upon Sarah Outram during her career and throughout the school strike controversy. Oram examines women teachers' struggle for equality within the teaching profession and the "immense conflict and antagonism" this provoked with men.¹⁹ She argues that women teachers were central to creating and sustaining feminist ideas within the teaching

¹⁶ Gerry Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain Since 1840*, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), p.40.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.122.

¹⁸ Alison Oram *Women Teachers and Feminist Politics* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996)

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.129.

profession and in the wider women's movement,²⁰ placing them at the centre of political debates around gender and equality.

The work of Hilda Kean is also important in placing Sarah Outram in the wider context of women teachers and their contributions to political movements of the period. Kean's *Deeds Not Words* explores the lives and careers of four women teachers heavily involved in the suffragette movement.²¹ All four women were near contemporaries of Sarah Outram. Kean emphasises how closely their political and personal lives were enmeshed and how their politics defined their identity. This study asks if that was true of Sarah Outram, or whether she defined herself and lived her life according to different criteria. One of Kean's subjects is Theodora Bonwick, whose work around sex education is considered in more detail in chapter 2 and who provides a useful comparison to Sarah Outram's practice and consequent experiences.²² Kean's work on Bonwick provides an illuminating insight into one of the few other examples of sex education taking place before the First World War.

One of the most significant social movements of the early 20th century was the struggle for women's suffrage. The controversy around suffrage issues contributed to the environment in which the Dronfield school strikes occurred. Women's experiences of the suffrage movement have been widely studied.²³ Whilst the Women's Social and Political Union

²⁰ Ibid, p.220.

²¹ Hilda Kean *Deeds not Words: The Lives of Suffragette Teachers* (Pluto Press, London, 1990). The four teachers are Theodora Bonwick, Agnes Dawson, Ethel Froud and Emily Phipps.

²² See chapter 2, pp.61-63.

²³ Examples consulted include - Sandra Stanley Holton *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Routledge, London, 1996); Sandra Stanley Holton *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900 – 18* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987); Maroula Joanou and Jane Purvis (Ed) *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998); Susan K Kent *Sex and Suffrage in Britain* (Routledge, London, 1986); Mark Pugh *The*

(known as 'the Suffragettes') is the best remembered of the campaigning organisations, the movement was not homogenous and there were strongly held differences of opinion in how best to fight for women's suffrage. The group most relevant to this study, and the one to which Sarah Outram appears to have had the closest affiliation, is the Women's Freedom League (WFL). The WFL was formed in 1907 when its members broke away from the WSPU because of disagreements with the increasingly autocratic leadership of the WSPU and their implementation of tactics that included violent action. The WFL wanted a more democratic organisational structure with elected leadership and advocated non-violent civil disobedience to achieve suffrage for women. The work of Claire Eustance in examining the practices of the WFL has been particularly useful in contextualising Sarah Outram's beliefs.²⁴

The campaigns for, and controversy around, women's suffrage reached their peak in the months preceding the Dronfield school strike events. 1913 was the year in which the highest number of acts of violent direct action were carried out by suffragette women, supporters of the WSPU. Examples included the bomb attack on a house being built for then Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George, and the death of Emily Davison, killed when she stepped in front of the King's horse during the Epsom Derby.²⁵ This study will consider how far concerns about suffrage campaigning were a contributor to the creation of an environment in which the Dronfield events could take place.

Pankhursts: the History of One Radical Family (Vintage, London, 2008); June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton *Votes for Women* (Routledge, London, 2000); Fern Riddell *Death in Ten Minutes: Kitty Marion: Activist, Arsonist, Suffragette* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2018); David Rubinstein *A Different World for Women: The Life of Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (Ohio State University Press, Ohio, 1991)

²⁴ Claire Eustance, 'Meanings of Militancy: the ideas and practice of political resistance in the Women's Freedom League, 1907 – 14.' Chapter 3 in Maroula Joanou and Jane Purvis (Ed) *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998).

²⁵ Fern Riddell *Death in Ten Minutes: Kitty Marion: Activist, Arsonist, Suffragette* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2018) pp.154; 200-203.

The controversy around the Dronfield school strike was informed by, and is an example of, the contemporary debates around sexual morality. Moral initiatives such as the Social Purity movement grew out of the opposition to the Contagious Diseases Act of the 1860s. These Acts criminalised women suspected of prostitution and provoked outrage amongst early feminists and campaigners for women's rights. Social Purity was a loose term encompassing a wide range of opinions,²⁶ but however diverse the Social Purity movement was, at its core was the belief that women should take control of their social, sexual, and moral well-being by enacting the highest standards of purity in their behaviour around sex and relationships.²⁷ This study will consider how much the Social Purity movement, and its later evolution into sexual hygiene (a more medicalised approach²⁸) was a causal factor in the Dronfield events.

The work of Mort, Weeks, Hall and Bland has been particularly useful in exploring the moral trends relevant to this study. Mort's *Dangerous Sexualities* investigates links between ideas about sex, morality and health spanning the period from 1830 through until the early twentieth century. In *Sex, Politics and Society* Weeks analyses the complex changes in sexual

²⁶ Lesley Hall 'Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain' *Gender and History*, Vol 16 No1 April, (2004) pp 36-56, p.50.

²⁷ Lucy Bland *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* Penguin Books, London, 1995); Raewyn Connell *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Polity Press, 1987); Hera Cook *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex and Contraception 1800 – 1970* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004); D. Gorham *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. (ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>, 2012); Frank Mort *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 2000); Jeffrey Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (Longman Group Ltd, London, 1981); Danielle Egan and Gail Hawkes 'Producing the Prurient through the Pedagogy of Purity: Childhood Sexuality and the Social Purity Movement' *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol. 20 No. 4, (2007), pp 443 – 461; Mairead Enright 'The Victorian Social Purity Movement; a Noble Pursuit or 'Morality Crusade'?' *University of Birmingham blog* (2018); Lesley Hall 'Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain' *Gender and History*, Vol 16 No1 April, (2004) pp 36-56.

²⁸ Frank Mort *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 2000), pp.136-141.

life and sexual morality in Britain from 1800 onwards.²⁹ Hall's article 'Hauling Down the Double Standard' explores the "complicated relationship" between moral campaigns and scientific research in the years preceding the Dronfield affair.³⁰ In *Banishing the Beast* Bland provides a thorough and detailed consideration of feminist morality between 1880 and the First World War.³¹ All four scholars elucidate the central themes of this study, as outlined above.

In the early 20th century, debate around sexual morality inevitably led to discussion about sex education. There was disagreement about who should receive it, who should deliver it, how it should be delivered and even if it should happen at all. This study, combining primary research with consideration of the work of scholars such as Mort and Bland, examines what was taking place in terms of sex education delivery when Sarah Outram's teaching provoked such controversy. Bland is largely dismissive of early 20th century sex education, arguing there was little of it and what there was mostly focussed on the dangers of disease and unwanted pregnancy. This study will consider how Sarah Outram's work fits this analysis.

Bland, Weeks and Mort proved useful in contextualising the idea of 'eugenics', a term widely used in the contemporary newspaper coverage of the Dronfield school strike. The term was coined by Francis Galton in 1883, based on his studies of Darwinism, heredity and genetics. Galton proposed that ideas of selective breeding could be applied to human beings, encouraging the passing on of 'desirable' characteristics and discouraging

²⁹ Jeffrey Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (Longman Group Ltd, London, 1981).

³⁰ Hall 'Hauling Down the Double Standard', p.37.

³¹ Lucy Bland *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* (Penguin Books, London, 1995).

‘undesirable’ ones. In the early years of the 20th century the idea was a popular one.

Chapter 2 explores its relevance for the Dronfield events.³²

Weeks gives insights into the emergence of a strong working-class culture with “firm moral standards of its own”.³³ This study will consider how this was manifested in the Dronfield affair. Weeks maps out how legislation in the years preceding 1914 increased the involvement of the State in the care and management of children and how this “undermined the pure doctrine of paternal rights”.³⁴ This study considers how much this challenge to parental authority was a causal factor in the Dronfield events.

Two historians have looked in detail at the Dronfield School Strike of 1914 and used the evidence from it in their exploration of wider social attitudes around sex, sexuality and sex / health education prevailing in early 20th century England. Frank Mort places the Dronfield events in the context of his wider consideration of “medico-moral politics”, exemplifying the move from the punishment based approach of social purity to the more preventative, medically based approach of social hygiene in the years before the First World War.³⁵

According to Mort, Sarah Outram’s practice encapsulates this new approach. He sees the teaching she gives as heavily influenced by social hygiene, whilst her attitudes and beliefs owe much to social purity. For Mort, Miss Outram is “very much a bearer of the new social hygiene alliance”.³⁶ These observations raise interesting questions for this study, which will examine the primary source materials to ask how far Sarah Outram was a deliberate

³² Chapter 2, pp.64-68.

³³ Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.76.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.127.

³⁵ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, pp.121-128.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.144.

“bearer” and how much that mantle was forced unwillingly upon her, and whether the public debate around her teaching was a positive choice by her to promote her ideas and beliefs, or if the wider publicity resulted not so much from “speaking out” as being ‘caught out’.

Mort also considers the Dronfield affair within the history of the development of sex education, stating that Dronfield “typified the competing forces and the class and gender conflicts which surfaced in early sex education campaigns.”³⁷ He attests that public debate around sex education was growing in the period leading up to 1914. Chapter 2 examines those debates in more detail. Mort suggests the Dronfield affair was not “an isolated incident”,³⁸ but how specific were the events in Dronfield? Did other communities erupt in protest at sex education? Were there similarly motivated school strikes elsewhere? If not, why did the Dronfield community react the way it did? This study will address these questions.

In her article ‘Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education in Edwardian England’³⁹ Hera Cook examines the emotional response of the protesting mothers in Dronfield to Sarah Outram’s teaching. She sees this as deeply embedded in their “shame and guilt”⁴⁰ concerning sex, sexuality and the physical process of motherhood. She seeks to explain why

³⁷ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.125.

³⁸ Ibid, p.128.

³⁹ Hera Cook, ‘Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education in Edwardian England’. *The Historical Journal* 55, 2; (2012), pp. 475-495.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.483.

sex education aroused such a profound reaction in Dronfield's mothers.⁴¹ She is thorough and insightful in her examination of ideas around sexual reticence and disgust in mothers at this point in the early 20th century and uses the Dronfield case as evidence for her arguments, supporting this with wider source material from oral histories and letters.⁴² Her argument about the motivations of the protesting mothers is persuasive, including her wider references to psychoanalytic theory and neuroscience. This analysis implies, however, that their "intense distress" may well have been the primary motivation for the school strike. This study will test that assumption and explore whether the drivers of the Dronfield school strike were in fact more multi-faceted, and that the undeniable discomfort of some Dronfield mothers about what was taught was used as ammunition by those driving the dispute, rather than being the primary motivating factor for the dispute taking place.

Both Mort and Cook give an overview of events based principally on primary source material from the Board of Education investigation file.⁴³ Cook refers to one other *Derbyshire Times* article⁴⁴ and Mort mentions, in a limited way, the fact that the affair received newspaper coverage, his sources the cuttings held in the Board of Education file.⁴⁵ As mentioned in 'Methodology' below, this study draws on a significantly wider range of primary source material.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.475.

⁴² Cook draws widely on P. Thompson and T. Lummis *Family Life and work experience before 1918, 1870-1973*, 7th edn, (Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive, May 2009), SN: 2000 and M. Llewelyn Davies, *Maternity: letters from working women collected by the Women's Cooperative Guild* (London, 1915) (1978).

⁴³ The National Archives ED 50-185.

⁴⁴ *The Derbyshire Times*, 27 June 1914.

⁴⁵ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.127. The National Archives ED 50-185.

Methodology

By undertaking a detailed study of the Dronfield school strike this dissertation will seek to gain insights into how some of the significant social issues of the early twentieth century affected one woman and her community, and how this particular event illustrates the impact of those issues on everyday life at a local level.

This study examines a wide range of contemporary primary source material, drawing on a broader range than any previous historical study of the Dronfield school strike events.

Principal sources are the files held in the National Archives,⁴⁶ the Dronfield school logbooks⁴⁷ and managers' minutes,⁴⁸ newspaper articles, reports and letters.⁴⁹ Other sources searched include Parliamentary records and National Union of Teachers conference reports, but nothing of relevance was found in either. The earliest source materials directly covering the events date from January 1914 and the final newspaper story is dated July 25th 1914.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ The Board of Education investigation file - National Archives ED50-185. The Dronfield School building dispute file – National Archives ED21-2992.

⁴⁷ Dronfield Council Elementary School Logbook 1900 – 1923 Derbyshire Record Office D276-2-2.

⁴⁸ Dronfield Council Elementary School Managers' Minutes 1910 – 1922 Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

⁴⁹ 121 local, regional and national reports, articles and letters directly concerned with the school strike controversy sourced through British Newspaper Archive and other online archives such as the Guardian and Daily Mail.

⁵⁰ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 15 January 1914, p.8, first newspaper report; *The Derbyshire Courier* 25 July 1914, final newspaper report. Transcript of first special managers' meeting from January 14th 1914 National Archives ED50-185.

June Purvis identifies three main categories of primary sources.⁵¹ This study makes extensive use of two of them: “official texts”⁵² which in this study includes managers’ minutes, school logbook, official letters and memos; and “published commentary and reporting” predominantly newspapers.⁵³ Unfortunately, material from the third category “personal texts” (such as private letters and diaries) does not exist for the Dronfield school strike.⁵⁴ There are letters, but they are to newspapers and as such are intended to be publicly read.

To build as comprehensive a view as possible of the local and national public response to the Dronfield school strike this study is based on a wide search for contemporary newspaper references. Purvis suggests that newspapers can be “a useful source not just of information, but also of social attitudes...”⁵⁵ and Denise Bates argues that newspapers “may often be the best source of evidence available.”⁵⁶ Both point out the importance of analysing material objectively and maintaining an awareness of potential bias or “editorial control”.⁵⁷ Bates describes the ready accessibility of digitised historical newspaper materials as “perhaps the most exciting source of the twenty-first century”⁵⁸ but adds that “a researcher who combines newspapers with all the other available sources is likely to produce the most rounded work”⁵⁹ which is precisely what this study aims to do.

⁵¹ June Purvis, *Using Primary Sources When Researching Women's History from a Feminist Perspective*, *Women's History Review*, 1:2, 273-306; (1992), p.275.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Purvis, ‘Using Primary Sources’, p.287.

⁵⁶ Denise Bates *Historical Research Using British Newspapers*, (Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley, 2016), p.42.

⁵⁷ Purvis ‘Using Primary Sources’, p.288.

⁵⁸ Bates, *Historical Research*, p.126.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

This study has an individual woman, Sarah Outram, at its core. Purvis talks about the different emphases of “women’s history” and “feminist history” but says that both “have the task of making women visible”.⁶⁰ That is very much the aim here, particularly with reference to Sarah and her agency during the school strike events. As Purvis writes about feminist history, this study hopes to examine “women as actors in their own right.”⁶¹

This piece of work is a detailed examination of a particular local event, and as such some might define it as a ‘case study’. There is extensive scholarship around case studies and their place in explaining and exemplifying wider trends, particularly in the social sciences. Byrne and Ragin suggest that “case-based methods are a way of making social science useful”⁶² but they also caution about focussing too closely on individual cases in isolation and losing sight of wider trends and patterns. To counter that concern, the approach to this study has been underpinned by an awareness of the importance of placing the local and particular in its broader context. As the historiography above shows, this study is not simply a detailed examination of a local event. It also places that event in its contemporary social context and acts as a powerful example of how wider social movements impact on individual lives.

Abrams and Brown suggest in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* that “uncovering the everyday” can deliver new insights and it is possible to “demonstrate how the extraordinary affected the ordinary.”⁶³ This study seeks to achieve those aims.

⁶⁰ Purvis, ‘Using Primary Sources’, p.273.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² D. Byrne and C.C. Ragin *The SAGE Handbook of Case-Based Methods* London: (SAGE Publications Ltd, London, 2009), p.9.

⁶³ Lynn Abrams (ed) and Callum G. Brown (ed) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2010), p.xi.

Chapter 1 will look at the background, actions and motivations of Sarah Outram and examine her views and experiences in detail. It will consider how much she was a radical pioneer and how much a victim of circumstances. It will explore the conflicts between her, the school managers, parents and members of the Dronfield community.

Chapter 2 will give an overview of some of the major social and political forces playing out in pre-First World War England that formed the backdrop to the Dronfield school strike events. The early 20th century was a time of energetic social change, including the struggle for women's suffrage.⁶⁴ Debates around feminism, social purity and eugenics were widespread and often heated. Chapter 2 will examine these and their impact on the Dronfield events.

Chapter 3 will consider the local context in Dronfield in 1914 and how much specific circumstances created the environment for, and sustained the continuation of, the school strike.

⁶⁴ See 'Historiography' above.

Chapter 1 –

Sarah Elizabeth Outram – “The Lady Who Dared”¹

This chapter focuses on Sarah Outram, headteacher at the centre of the Dronfield school strike scandal of 1914, and asks who was she, what led her to undertake the controversial teaching that provoked national controversy, and what does her experience tell us about life for women teachers in the early years of the twentieth century?

The Outram Family

It is possible to trace Sarah Outram’s family background and life prior to the 1914 events through census records. She was born in Dronfield in 1869. Her parents were Samuel and Emma Outram and the 1871 census shows she was the youngest of four siblings.² Her father described his occupation as “miller and farmer”, suggesting the family were on the cusp of upper-working / lower-middle class status.³ By the 1881 census Sarah had gained a younger sister and the family had moved around the corner from Mill Lane to Chesterfield Road.⁴ Samuel was now a “grocer” and it appears that business was doing well.⁵ The family had acquired a domestic servant. Her father recorded his place of birth as Dronfield and as a grocer in the town he would have been a well-known local figure. Sarah’s birth, family roots,

¹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 10 February 1914, front page.

² ‘Samuel Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire: 1871 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG10*; Piece: 3623; Folio: 73; Page: 1; GSU roll: 841847. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ ‘Samuel Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire: 1881 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG11*; Piece: 3444; Folio: 96; Page: 39; GSU roll: 1341824. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019.

⁵ *Ibid.*

upbringing and early education were firmly attached to Dronfield, and this helps to explain her later determination, during the difficult circumstances of 1914, to remain in post and stay in the town.

In 1881, twelve-year old Sarah was recorded as a “scholar”.⁶ Many families of this period, particularly working-class families, would have expected girls to have left school at this age to contribute to domestic life or find work and contribute to the family income. Sarah’s family had higher aspirations and supported Sarah in her academic ambitions. Teaching was one of few professional options for a young woman from Sarah Outram’s social position. As Alison Oram writes “Elementary school teaching had long been regarded as an avenue for social mobility for intelligent working class and, increasingly, for lower- middle-class girls.”⁷ Oram suggests that “committing oneself to a teaching career was one of the few certain ways of obtaining an extended secondary education and subsidised professional training for a working-class or lower-middle-class girl.”⁸

Despite her professional aspirations, for most of her life Sarah remained close to her family roots. Her one move away from Dronfield was to teach in Sedbergh.⁹ By 1900 she had returned to Dronfield. The Dronfield Elementary School logbook listed her as a member of staff in January 1900 and as headmistress in 1902.¹⁰ The 1901 census shows her living with

⁶ ‘Samuel Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1881 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG11*; Piece: *3444*; Folio: *96*; Page: *39*; GSU roll: *1341824*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019.

⁷ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.8.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.35.

⁹ ‘Sarah Outram’. *Census return for Sedbergh, Yorkshire:1891 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG12*; Piece: *3489*; Folio: *38*; Page: *10*; GSU roll: *6098599*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019.

¹⁰ Dronfield Elementary School logbook. Derbyshire Record Office D2762-2-2.

her parents and she is recorded as a “Certificated School Teacher”.¹¹ Both Sarah’s parents were deceased by 1905. Samuel died in 1902.¹² The school logbook mentions Sarah being called home because of her mother’s illness in October 1905¹³ and she had died by the end of the year.¹⁴ In 1911 Sarah was living in her own house on Chesterfield Road in Dronfield, employing a live-in domestic servant.¹⁵

By 1911 Sarah Outram had established herself as an educated professional woman with high status in Dronfield, partly derived from her family background and her father’s position, but most significantly earned in her own right from her position as headmistress of the girls’ section of the Elementary school. She was not unambiguously respected, however. As a childless, unmarried woman she did not conform to the strongly held social norms of the period. Oram writes “Women must marry, or be judged to have failed in a crucial aspect of their life course and gender identity.”¹⁶ In the eyes of many Dronfield residents Sarah Outram would always have to battle “the powerful social stigma of spinsterhood.”¹⁷

There was a significant current of mistrust, particularly from married women and mothers in Dronfield, that surfaced during the school strike events but was likely already present before the controversy of 1914. Some of this was directed at Sarah’s role – an unmarried, professional woman in a position of influence and responsibility – rather than toward her

¹¹ ‘Sarah Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1901 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG13*; Piece: *3261*; Folio: *5*; Page: *1*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019.

¹² *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 24 May 1902, p.5.

¹³ Dronfield Elementary School logbook. Derbyshire Record Office D2762-2-2.

¹⁴ England and Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, Deaths Registered in Oct, Nov, Dec 1905; p.226.

¹⁵ ‘Sarah Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG14*; Piece: *21166*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 30th September 2019.

¹⁶ Oram *Women Teachers*, p.47.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.55.

personally. Her suffrage and social purity sympathies may have made many of her pupils' parents uncomfortable. Jeffrey Weeks argues that there was a rising level of disquiet in working-class communities about what they saw as middle-class ideas like social hygiene and sex education being imposed upon them and he suggests there was "a general distrust of middle-class interest in sexuality and the whole export of the moral apparatus to the working class."¹⁸ In addition there appears to have been a level of mistrust and animosity towards Sarah as an individual. This is evidenced by the complaints from parents about her and her conduct recorded in the Managers' Minutes between 1900 and 1914.¹⁹

Political Affiliations and Social Activism

Suffrage

Sarah Outram was a woman of principle and held firm beliefs which she was not afraid to articulate, or indeed implement in her professional capacity. It is possible to infer her position on social issues of the time partly from her actions during 1914 and partly from material from other sources, but the evidence for her direct involvement in, or membership of, political groups or organisations is limited. She was supportive of women's suffrage. There are two references to her in *The Vote*, the newspaper of the Women's Freedom League (WFL). The WFL campaigned for women's suffrage but rejected the violent methods of the WSPU Suffragettes.²⁰ *The Vote* in June 1914 recorded that "Miss Outram (N.E. Derbyshire)" made a donation of 10 shillings to a By-election campaign. The entry refers to

¹⁸ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.68.

¹⁹ See below. Dronfield Elementary School Managers' Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

²⁰ See Chapter 2 pp.49-52 for more about the WFL.

donations made between October 1907 and December 1913, indicating Sarah's active support for the WFL before the events of 1914.²¹

In 1911 Sarah Outram filled in the 'Infirmity' section of her census form with the word "unenfranchised".²² This small act of rebellion was in sympathy with the 'Census Strike' initiated and organised by the WFL, another indication that this was where her suffrage loyalties lay. Oram suggests that "Women teachers enthusiastically supported the WFL's militant strategies such as resisting taxation and the census."²³ More overt action, such as spending the night away from the property or spoiling the census return, seems to have been too radical for Sarah, however strong her underlying sympathies. Kean points out that such actions might bring fines or imprisonment.²⁴ Risking these punishments, the social disgrace associated with them and the fact that they might have imperilled her position as headmistress would likely have made such extreme action unpalatable for Sarah, although Kean suggests it was widely supported by other women teachers.²⁵

The WFL expressed its support for Sarah Outram during the 1914 school strike controversy. In *The Vote* on February 13th 1914, under the sub-title "The Danger of Ignorance", it stated "Attention has been called to the case of Miss Outram, a woman teacher in a Derbyshire village who dared to forearm her elder girls before leaving school by forewarning them of the facts of life. Her boldness aroused so great an outcry among some of the parents that

²¹ *The Vote*, 12 June 1914, p.127.

²² 'Sarah Outram'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21166. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 30th September 2019.

²³ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.121.

²⁴ Kean, *Deeds not Words*, p.25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

her resignation was demanded.”²⁶ The article went on to report that the “Sheffield Branch has passed a resolution supporting Miss Outram.”²⁷

This evidence suggests Sarah Outram was a suffragist but not a suffragette and supported the more peaceful methods of the WFL in achieving women’s suffrage. In 1911, however, she did talk to her pupils about suffragettes and their treatment by the authorities, expressing sympathy with suffragettes and criticism of the police and tactics such as force feeding. Oram writes that “anger felt by suffragette teachers also increased as a consequence of government actions, including the betrayal of suffrage bills and the force feeding of suffragettes.”²⁸ It would appear Sarah felt this too. Her comments led to complaints against her from the Payne family.²⁹ The 1911 census shows that police Inspector George Payne was resident in Dronfield and had three daughters attending elementary school.³⁰ Sarah (13) and Caroline (11) were the two most likely to have been in Miss Outram’s class. The letters of complaint from the Payne family do not survive, but the minutes of the manager’s meetings refer to them and Inspector Payne’s concerns about “the treatment of his daughter” by Miss Outram.³¹ The minutes declare “that Miss Outram be requested to withdraw her remarks about the Inspector’s daughter that she was the rudest girl she had had in the school for 15 years.”³² The minutes next report receiving a letter from Miss Outram “declining to withdraw her description of Inspector Payne’s

²⁶ *The Vote*, 13 February 1914, p.258.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Oram, *Women Teachers*, page 123.

²⁹ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

³⁰ ‘George Payne’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG14*; Piece: *21167*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019.

³¹ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

³² *Ibid.*

daughter.” Sarah Outram seemed more willing to concede to the managers over their disapproval of her ‘suffrage teaching’ than she was to accept their lack of support over the lack of respect that Inspector Payne’s daughter had shown her. The final reference to the Payne complaint states that “Miss Outram undertook to avoid controversial subjects in future and not to insist on an apology from the girl.”³³ This was an assurance Sarah Outram, principled as she was, found it impossible to adhere to in future years and one which the school managers would seize upon to discredit her during the 1914 disputes.

This conflict between Miss Outram and the managers evidences her sympathy for suffragette aims, even if she could not actively support all their methods. The school managers were quick to bring up this earlier disagreement when they met about the 1914 complaints. At their meeting on January 14th, after they had considered the initial complaint and were discussing amongst themselves how to proceed, Mr Barker said “Was she not asked to apologise for that suffragette business, and she absolutely refused...”³⁴ School manager Barker also referred to these events at the first public meeting about the controversy in January 1914. *The Derbyshire Courier* reported “As to the suffragette question, he was responsible for getting that in the newspapers. Everybody had a right to their opinion, but Miss Outram had been teaching something in their Council Schools which was not on the agenda. She had been giving the sixth and seventh standard girls Instruction in suffrage work - she was a suffragette herself.”³⁵ The school managers saw Sarah Outram as a suffragette. While her sympathies and links were with the WFL, the conservative-minded, establishment-supporting school managers may not have recognised any

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, p.9.

distinction between the organisations campaigning for women's suffrage. Barker's comments also showed that Miss Outram did not take her chastisement from the managers without argument. She believed that issues around suffrage were part of on-going current political events and it was her role as a teacher to discuss those events with her pupils. This shows that Sarah Outram was strong-minded and prepared to argue her case, even if, in the end, her desire to retain her professional position and influence with her pupils outweighed her preparedness to risk losing her job over points of principle. During 1914 those objecting to Miss Outram and her teaching repeatedly suggested she was a radical suffragette, but these appear to be efforts to discredit her in the eyes of the conservatively minded, Dronfield public and facilitate her removal from her teaching post rather than accurate representations of her character and beliefs.

On June 22nd 1914 the remaining 11 parents who continued to keep their children away from school appeared in court and their solicitor, Mr Neal, raised the historical suffragette teaching complaints dating back to 1911. *The Derbyshire Courier* reported the proceedings under the by-line "Suffragette Doctrines Taught".³⁶ Raising accusations about Miss Outram's 'suffragette teaching' appears to be a last-ditch attempt by the hard-core group holding out for Miss Outram's removal to discredit her, showing their desire to win the battle and oust her using whatever means they could. At this point, for the objectors and school managers, the issue was not fundamentally about the rights and wrongs of 'sex teaching' (if indeed it ever was), it was about exercising their power and influence over Miss Outram and the running of the school.

³⁶ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 27 June 1914, p.9.

Social Purity

Ideas around social purity and how it was part of early twentieth century discourse are explored more fully in chapter 2.³⁷ The focus here is on Sarah Outram's relationship with the movement and how that directly affected her teaching.

Research for this study has found no evidence that Sarah Outram belonged to or had formal links with any social purity or social hygiene organisations. She appears to have strong views on appropriate moral behaviour, however. Two of her pupils, Jeanette Ward and Elizabeth Street, reported the following in their sworn statement included in the Board of Education investigation file, that "Miss Outram also told us that on one occasion when she was returning home by the drunken train (i.e. the last train at night) she saw some men and women in the same carriage doing something very dreadful, but she would not say what it was."³⁸ Whatever act of intimacy her fellow passengers were involved in, Sarah Outram viewed it as "very dreadful". Whether Sarah was most outraged by the act itself or its occurrence in a public place was not made clear.

The two stories Sarah Outram used in the controversial teaching of her children came from a social purity publication, *The Purity Advocate*, published in Philadelphia USA.³⁹ One of the stories was a cautionary tale warning a young man, Jack, against falling into bad company and being led into morally questionable behaviour. "I saw him with that Jones girl... She is a new girl in town, very pretty, but terribly bold. I'm sure she's not nice. I do wish Jack

³⁷ Chapter 2 pp.51-56.

³⁸ Sworn statements by girls from National Archives ED 50-185. Copies of statements in Appendix 2.

³⁹ National Archives ED 50-185. See Appendix 1 for copies of the stories.

wouldn't go with her."⁴⁰ The fact Sarah Outram had access to this material indicates a knowledge of and connection to aspects of the social purity movement. She described the story as "beautiful" on more than one occasion, indicating her approval of its moral message.

Social hygiene initiatives led to a notable and controversial experiment in sex education in Chicago in 1913, led by Superintendent of Schools Ella Flagg Young.⁴¹ There is no evidence for a direct link between events in Dronfield and Chicago but their proximity in time suggests that Sarah Outram was at least aware of the Chicago experiment. *The Daily Mirror* linked the Dronfield controversy with what happened in Chicago. "Almost an exactly similar case has just occurred in America and has aroused tremendous interest throughout the continent.... A terrific controversy followed, and she had to resign. Then she came into favour again and was re-elected. But the discussion still continues."⁴² The Chicago events were covered by British newspapers in 1913 and 1914, particularly the suffrage press, and it is perfectly conceivable that Sarah Outram, with her interest in these issues, would have been aware of what was happening in America.⁴³ Even if she felt that Dronfield was a long way from Chicago, she might have understood herself as part of a wider movement and that

⁴⁰ See Appendix 1 Story 2.

⁴¹ JM Blount, 'Ella Flagg Young and the Gender Politics of Democracy and Education' *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol16(4), (Oct 2017), pp.409-423; Robin E Jensen, 'Using Science to Argue for Sexual Education in US Public Schools: Dr Ella Flagg young and the 1913 "Chicago Experiment".' *Science Communication*, Vol 29(2), (Dec 2007), pp.217-241.

⁴² *The Daily Mirror*, 2 February 1914, p.3.

⁴³ Examples of suffrage press coverage include *The Common Cause* 17 September 1913, p.5; *International Woman Suffrage News*, 15 July 1913, p.7; *The Vote*, 19 December 1913, pp.8 and 9; *The Suffragette*, 27 February 1914, p.15.

may have given her confidence in answering her pupils' questions and reading them the two stories.

Sarah Outram and the School Managers

In addition to the disagreements between Sarah Outram as Headmistress and the school managers outlined above, there were other conflicts between her and the managers well before the controversy of 1914. Peter Gordon's work⁴⁴ suggests she would not have been alone in experiencing tensions with her managers, pointing out that such difficulties are a repeated theme in late Victorian literature.⁴⁵

The managers received parental complaints about teaching in the Girl's Department and the treatment of the children there. Mrs Ward complained in 1910 but the minutes do not include a description of how the managers dealt with that parental intervention.⁴⁶ In 1911 Mr Glassly "made a complaint as to the treatment of his daughter by Miss Outram." The matter was discussed at two managers' meetings, the first decided to investigate further before, at the second meeting, "the managers consider that the child was mistaken in what she states Miss Outram said to her."⁴⁷ On that occasion, they backed Miss Outram.

In December 1911 Mr Walter Gilbert wrote to the managers about his daughter Nora with the managers responding to say they "deprecate any harsh treatment to the children on the

⁴⁴ Peter Gordon, 'Some Sources for the History of the School Manager, 1800-1902.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, (1973), pp.327-334; p329.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Gordon explicitly mentions George Eliot's 'Middlemarch' (1871-2), Charles Dickens' 'Hard Times' (1854), Thomas Hardy's 'Jude the Obscure' (1895) and Flora Thompson's 'Lark Rise to Candleford' (1939-1943).

⁴⁶ Dronfield Elementary School Managers' Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

part of the Teacher and desire that particular attention and care be exercised by the Teachers in respect of backward children.”⁴⁸ The managers backed the parent, Mr Gilbert, in his complaint, rather than supporting the teachers. Even if Miss Outram was not explicitly censured, she was responsible for the teaching in the Girl’s Department and therefore the managers are implicitly critical of her. In 1913 there was another complaint from the Ward family. Miss Outram is not named (a teacher called Miss Simpson is specifically mentioned) and the managers “exonerate Miss Simpson from all blame in this matter”, but it does appear that the Ward family had a record of unhappiness with the school.⁴⁹ It is worth noting that Nora Gilbert and Jeanette Ward were two of the girls removed from the school during 1914 and both made sworn statements about Miss Outram’s teaching.⁵⁰ It would appear that the 1914 controversy offered some disgruntled parents with long-held grievances the opportunity to try and settle old scores.

Sarah Outram’s own management style appears to have led to tensions within the school. The evidence comes primarily from the managers’ minutes and it is important to acknowledge that the managers do seem to have a growing antipathy towards her during her tenure as headteacher. Nevertheless, the incidents recorded contribute to a picture of Sarah Outram, her personality and her approach to her work. In September 1911 the managers expressed concerns over Miss Outram’s management of her staff, demanding that “Miss Outram be required to give an explanation of her conduct in dealing with the last 2 assistant teachers.”⁵¹ In October of the same year the minutes recorded “that when Miss

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Sworn statements of the girls from National Archives ED 50-185. See Appendix 2.

⁵¹ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes D329-UEA-2 and 3.

Outram required in future to reprimand her Assistant Teachers it must be done in private and not before the children and if there be any resignations for similar reasons in her Department serious notice will be taken of the matter.”⁵² At face value, this suggests that Miss Outram, at the very least, lacked tact in handling her (female) staff. It may be that she set high standards that her teaching staff were sometimes unable to meet. In a school logbook entry for January 1903 Miss Outram recorded problems with a Miss Tomlinson who “...walked out of school without permission this morning about 9.45 and remained away... I had reprimanded her because I had found, on scanning the Arithmetic exercise-books of the scholars for which I hold her responsible, that she had taught fractions by a method I had strictly forbidden as being uneducational.”⁵³ Later logbook entries show Miss Tomlinson was repeatedly absent before finally leaving the school. We do not have Miss Tomlinson’s side of the story, but in the light of the managers’ comments above it is possible she might have felt driven out by Miss Outram.

The school managers certainly appear to have been looking for opportunities to criticise Sarah Outram, but it is possible her management style may have been somewhat oppressive and left her open to attack. The school managers were not always supportive of her management methods, as well as sometimes siding with parents against her. They also appear to have been capable of some petty interventions in Miss Outram’s day to day running of the school. In May 1912 the minutes record the managers “requesting an explanation of her reason for the removal of the cupboard in her school as the Managers considered its present position was the most suitable and convenient position in which it

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Dronfield Elementary School logbook. Derbyshire Record Office ED 50-185.

could be placed.”⁵⁴ From what we know of Miss Outram, it is no surprise that she would not concede authority over the cupboard. The June 1912 minutes mention it again “Letter from Miss Outram with her reasons for removal of the cupboard in her department when it was resolved on the motion of Mr. Lowcock seconded by Mrs Grocock that the cupboard be removed, but Miss Outram should consult with the Managers before making serious alterations.”⁵⁵ Miss Outram won the cupboard battle, but the managers made sure they had the last word. A less than harmonious working environment!

There were also tensions between the school and the wider community over the issues of over-crowding in the Girl’s Department. Girls were forced to stay longer in the Infants than they should because of lack of space in the Girl’s school building. Concerns were raised about the suitability of the environment for the girls and for their safety, particularly in the event of fire.⁵⁶ These were not matters directly under Miss Outram’s control, although she was at least partly responsible for managing admissions from Infants to the Girl’s Department, but it was inevitable that parents would see her, in her role as Headmistress, as the visible face of an institution that was not serving its community as well as it should. The overcrowding issues led to strains in the relationship between Miss Outram and the Headmistress of the Infants’ section of the school. The managers’ minutes refer to these in August 1913, saying “the managers are of the opinion that the present attitude of the female Head Teachers towards each other was regrettable and that the friction was undesirable.”⁵⁷ The moving of children backwards and forwards between Infants and Girls’

⁵⁴ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See chapter 3 pp.75-78.

⁵⁷ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

Departments might well have contributed to the “friction”, and that, it could be argued, was a result of the managers’ failure to get to grips with the overcrowding issue in the Girls’ Department. Whoever was ultimately responsible, however, it was another example for the Dronfield school managers of the difficulty working with Miss Outram.

The cumulative effect of the years of tension and disagreement can be seen in the managers comments to each other at their meeting of Wednesday January 14th 1914. Mr Lowcock is recorded as saying “I have more faith in what Mr Bradwell says than in what Miss Outram says.” He then added “But we have so often had Miss Outram before us, but she takes no notice.” Dr Barber continued “I think we have had some evidence before of her having been severe with certain children.”⁵⁸

At their second meeting about the affair later in the month Mr Lowcock said that “[w]e have had her up here many times; she has always promised to do better, but she gets worse.” Mr Barker supported him “That is the reason why I moved the resolution, because we have had her before so frequently and she has ignored the Committee and everybody else.”⁵⁹

WJ Hands was Inspector of Schools for the Board of Education with responsibility for Dronfield. His comments recorded in the Board’s file suggest he tried to adopt a balanced and fair-minded approach to the controversy, but his sympathies clearly lay with Sarah Outram rather than the Dronfield school managers. He gave his assessment of her in a

⁵⁸ Transcript of managers’ meeting January 14th 1914. National Archives ED 50-185.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

handwritten note stating “[s]he is certainly rather fond of her own way and I believe there have been frequent disputes between her and the Managers. She is not tactful and is wanting in judgement. Nonetheless, she does good work in her school and always appears to have at heart the best interests of the girls.”⁶⁰

Sarah Outram in her Own Words

Sarah Outram’s response to the turbulent reaction to her teaching in 1914 was, for the most part, to keep as low a profile as possible. She did not appear at either of the public meetings to defend herself in person. She was not called to give evidence at the court cases of the parents summonsed because of their children’s prolonged school non-attendance. It was not usual practice for headteachers to attend such proceedings and this followed in the Dronfield school strike cases. She did not herself write any letters to the press, despite the wide-ranging debate that went on with the very frequent mention of her name and reference to her character and behaviour. She was also, according to reports in newspapers, offered speaking engagements and writing opportunities, all of which she turned down.⁶¹ All the evidence suggests Sarah Outram’s priority was to hunker down and weather the storm, to endure the criticism and attacks and emerge on the other side with her position as headmistress secure and her teaching career intact. She does not seem to be motivated by any desire to use the opportunity to cash in on her notoriety or to proselytise beliefs around sex education or teaching reform.

⁶⁰ Handwritten note dated February 8th 1914. National Archives ED 50-185.

⁶¹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 14 March 1914, front page.

Despite shunning the public spotlight, examples of Sarah's words have survived and we are able, from the records held in the National Archive and the newspaper coverage, to piece together some of her thoughts, opinions and reactions to the events of 1914. At the first special managers' meeting she gave, in her own words and in some detail, her version of events.⁶² She argued that her teaching had arisen as "a part of their scripture programme provided by the County" in an organic and unforced way.⁶³ She distanced herself from any accusation that it was a planned or systematic attempt to introduce sex education into the school curriculum in any organised form. She argued the importance of answering her pupils' questions, saying "if you once repulse a child in one subject she will not ask another."⁶⁴ This statement is central to Miss Outram's defence of her actions. She believed it was imperative to preserve trust and confidence in the relationship between teacher and pupil. In her opinion, failure to respond in an appropriate way to the children's questions would have negatively impacted that relationship.

Sarah Outram was also insistent that she asked the girls, in the first instance, to talk to their mothers about the issues raised by the scriptures and to report to them everything that was being said in the classroom. "At first I told them to ask their mother: she is the proper person to tell you,"⁶⁵ she said, adding later "...being anxious to keep on friendly relations with my girls – and I am on friendly relations with them – and they are not afraid to tell their mothers."⁶⁶ This was a major point of contention between Sarah Outram and her critics. Her opponents frequently accused her of going behind parents' backs, of attempting to drive a

⁶² Transcript of managers' meeting January 14th 1914. National Archives ED 50-185.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

wedge between parents and children and of encouraging children to keep the teaching secret from their parents. Jacob Bradwell, for example, repeated this accusation several times during the first managers' meeting, returning to it even after it had been denied by Miss Outram.⁶⁷ Mr Lowcock challenged her about where her authority to teach these subjects came from and she acknowledged that she did not consult anyone directly for permission, not the school managers nor the religious inspectors of the school. She presumably felt she had authority as headmistress of the school. She also argued that the teaching arose naturally from the reading of the scriptures "I was not authorised. It was brought in through the scripture."⁶⁸

Sarah Outram was aware that her teaching was potentially controversial. She took care to establish the ages of the children who were present, presumably to argue that it had only been delivered in what we might now call an 'age-appropriate' environment. She stated that "the majority are 12 years old, 4 are 11, but they will all be 12 before March".⁶⁹ She said that there was "an effort in the country to bring the teaching of eugenics into elementary schools, and in some elementary schools it has been tried. The teachers as a body are resisting this."⁷⁰ Her own opinion, however, seemed to be in support of 'eugenics' teaching. She also felt she was acting in sympathy with what the girls she was teaching wanted and needed and was filling the void left by their parents' unwillingness or inability to talk about such matters. We know from the 1911 suffragette teaching controversy and from her willingness to stand up to the school managers when she felt she was in the right that

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Miss Outram was not one to shy away from potentially contentious matters. She may have begun the sex education teaching pragmatically and in response to circumstances, rather than as a calculatedly defiant act of principle, but clearly felt she was correct to take the action she did.

She finished her defence by saying that “I tell them to tell their mothers anything I say and if anything is objected to I am quite willing to stop it. In accordance with the effort to introduce this teaching into elementary schools I read to the girls 2 articles – they are very little stories – that is the teaching they got from me.”⁷¹ Here she stated quite clearly that she was willing to stop the teaching and not repeat it if there were objections (without, of course, conceding that there was anything wrong with what she had taught). It is revealing that Miss Outram’s argument in defence of her actions to the managers seemed to centre around how innocuous the teaching was (“they are very little stories”), how careful she was to handle things thoughtfully and how much she cared for the girls in her charge, rather than an impassioned, academic or intellectual argument about the importance or value of sex education. Sex education did not, based on her own words on the subject, seem to be an issue about which she felt so strongly she would deliberately risk her career.

Sarah did not attend the public meetings held in Dronfield or the court cases later in the affair to which the objecting parents were summonsed. In late January Sarah told *The Derbyshire Times* “She had not intended to make any public statement, but was quite satisfied that her character had been cleared.”⁷² Despite this stated intent, she did talk to

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *The Derbyshire Times*, 24 January 1914, p.7.

several newspapers. Research for this study has found four newspaper articles that either interview Sarah Outram or quote her at length. All four come from January or early February 1914.⁷³ These articles appear to be her only public defence of her actions and are useful in giving greater insight into her thinking around the teaching she gave, her motivation in delivering it and her response to the public reaction.

Sarah justified her teaching by emphasising how harmless and, in many ways, unremarkable it was. She did express support for more education on birth and motherhood for girls in schools in principle and said that “if the children are old enough to be taught the desirability of babies being fed with their mother’s milk, the teacher ought to be allowed to teach a little more. This is desirable in the interests of the children”⁷⁴ but also denied that she had actively delivered such teaching “in spite of that being my opinion I have not given such teaching in my school.”⁷⁵

She said her classroom was “as pure as any home in Dronfield”⁷⁶ alluding to the links between sex education and the social purity movement and including a subtle tilt at the perceived hypocrisy of the parents complaining about her. Sarah stated that the teaching she gave “was a small and natural extension of what was already included in Home Management and Scripture lessons”⁷⁷ and that “the girls asked questions.”⁷⁸ It was these questions, she consistently asserted, that led to the teaching that had proved so

⁷³ Ibid; *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16; *The Sheffield Daily Independent* 5 February 1914, p.4; *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 7 February 1914, p.12.

⁷⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *The Derbyshire Times*, 24 January 1914, p.7.

⁷⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

controversial. Sarah acknowledged that she was aware that some people might object, but that she felt the importance of answering the girls' questions overrode any such concerns. She said that "I was careful, because of the possibility of adverse criticism, but their questions made me wonder whether I ought not to answer them."⁷⁹ She stressed the strength of her relationship with her pupils and how she was merely responding to what they asked and stated that pupils "of twelve and thirteen years of age will ask questions when they have a sympathetic teacher, and my girls and I are very friendly. I do not look upon myself as their teacher, but rather as their elder sister."⁸⁰ This is an interesting and possibly rose-tinted slant on her relationship with her pupils, given the evidence from the managers' minutes about her attitude towards some of the girls⁸¹ and Inspector WJ Hands comment that she was "somewhat hard and unsympathetic in her dealings with the girls".⁸² Did Miss Outram sincerely believe that the girls saw her as an "elder sister" or was she attempting to project a sympathetic image?

Sarah refuted the repeatedly made charge that she had deliberately excluded parents and introduced contentious teaching in secret and said that "I referred them to their mothers, as my idea is that this is a matter on which children should have instructions."⁸³ This was a clear assertion, in her own words, that she did have a philosophical belief in the importance of sex education for children, but also that it would be most appropriate if it came from parents.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Dronfield Elementary School Managers' Minutes. Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

⁸² Handwritten note from Hands. National Archives ED 50-185.

⁸³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16.

Her response to the girls, she said, was to use “two little pamphlets from an American publishing firm containing two stories so beautiful I thought I would read them.”⁸⁴ She stressed that she “read them without comment”⁸⁵ and emphasised again, as she had in the managers’ meeting in January, how harmless she felt the stories were, stating that “They told, in a suitable way for children, about the reproduction of plant and birds and human beings. It was not sexual teaching or eugenics.”⁸⁶ She also claimed that “I have never taught sex”⁸⁷ without defining precisely what she meant by ‘sex’. It would appear accurate to say that in her teaching there was never any mention of the act of sex between men and women, or the biological process of conception. This is supported by the evidence given in the sworn statements of the girls from her class.⁸⁸ Their accounts may be somewhat confused, but at no point do any of them mention any reference to sex or the process of conception.

Sarah’s own words, quoted in *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, illustrate her determination and resilience. ““Who can be downhearted with so many friends at all points of the compass,” she declared with pride, yesterday, bringing down her fist on a huge pile of congratulatory letters. “Many of those say, “Bravo!” and “Don't give in.” And I shan't give in. If the friends only knew me they would know that the one person in the business who will not turn and runaway is myself.””⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 5 February 1914, p.4.

⁸⁸ Sworn statements of the girls from National Archives ED 50-185. See Appendix 2.

⁸⁹ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 5 February 1914, p.4.

Her attitude is perhaps best summed up by the correspondent from *The Manchester Guardian* who wrote “She did not want anybody to think that she had taught the children anything they ought not to know, because she had not.”⁹⁰

The Impact on Her Pupils

Sarah Outram believed she was right to provide her pupils with information about pregnancy, birth and motherhood, but what impact did the teaching have on the girls themselves? The furore that followed Miss Outram’s teaching engulfed the girls in her class in an experience for which they were entirely unprepared. Used to the anonymity of early 20th century small-town life they suddenly found themselves the subject of stories in the local and national press. At a time when having your photograph taken was not a commonplace occurrence they saw theirs and their families’ images on the front page of national newspapers.⁹¹ It must have been an overwhelming experience for them, at once exciting and traumatic. There was an impact on their education too, some of them losing months of time at school in their final period of compulsory education. Unfortunately, we do not have any of what Purvis describes as “personal texts”⁹² from the girls. No diary entries or private letters survive to give us an understanding of their reactions. We do, however, have the sworn statements eight of the girls made (or perhaps more accurately, were compelled to make) for the Board of Education investigation.⁹³ These give us some insight into what they learnt about birth and motherhood from Miss Outram, although, as

⁹⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16.

⁹¹ *The Daily Mirror*, 2 February 1914, front page.

⁹² Purvis, ‘Using Primary Sources’, p.275.

⁹³ Statements in National Archives ED50-185 and Appendix 2.

The Manchester Guardian put it “[i]t is also advisable to accept with a good deal of reserve the statements of children invited to make complaints against their teacher.”⁹⁴

The picture is mixed. Most of the girls seem to have grasped the fundamentals about a baby growing in a mother’s body for nine months, although some are confused about the details “there is an egg forms in our inside and when we grow to motherhood the egg bursts, and then we have a baby”⁹⁵ and whilst several refer to an “egg”⁹⁶ others use “germ”.⁹⁷ There was even more confusion around circumcision - “Miss Outram also said that a child was circumcised by a Doctor who nicked the baby’s bladder”.⁹⁸ On the evidence of the statements, Sarah Outram’s success in accurately informing her pupils was at best partial.

After 1914

Sarah Outram continued in her post as headmistress following the end of the school strike. She remained devoted to the children and dedicated to her work, but her relationship with the school managers did not improve, to the point where they even seemed reluctant to pay her properly. The managers’ minutes for May 1916 recorded that a letter was received from the Director for Education asking why a pay increase for Miss Outram had not been requested earlier.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1914, p.16.

⁹⁵ Statements in National Archives ED50-185 and Appendix 2 - Beatrice Bradwell.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Winnifred Milnes.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, Doris Harrison.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, Winnifred Milnes.

⁹⁹ Dronfield Elementary School Managers’ Minutes Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

The managers finally achieved their long-held aim of ousting Miss Outram from her position in 1922. After a poor inspection report they refused to support her and demanded changes to the running of the school that she refused to accept. She finally resigned and left the school on the 31st October. On her last day she wrote several pages of impassioned defence of her career in the school logbook.¹⁰⁰ She clearly resented her treatment and said “I cease to act as head-teacher of this Department today because it is impossible for one with Self-respect and Sensitiveness of spirit to continue to do so.... And the most cruel part is that this same “Bad Report” effectually prevents my entry into another school and thus ends my professional career long before the Pension age”.¹⁰¹

If the Dronfield school managers thought they had removed Sarah Outram from public life and influence in the local area they were mistaken. She had navigated the tensions with them since the early stages of her career in Dronfield; she had survived their outright, undisguised hostility and rabble-rousing during the 1914 school strike; she had continued in post for another six years despite their opposition; now she felt deeply wounded and personally aggrieved by their use of the “Bad Report” to finally oust her. After all the years of struggle it would have been understandable if Sarah had turned her back on the town of Dronfield and looked for somewhere else to belong, but it did not seem to be in her character ever to back down or admit defeat.

In 1923 she was the first woman ever to be elected to Dronfield Urban District Council.¹⁰²

This was a notable achievement as women councillors were rare in this period. The WFL in

¹⁰⁰ Dronfield Elementary School logbook pp. 225-230 Derbyshire Record Office D2762-2-2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *The Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 31 March 1923, p.6.

The Vote in April 1927 (four years after Miss Outram's election) listed women councillors on Urban District Councils (including Miss Outram in Dronfield) pointing out "Since there are over 700 Urban District Councils, it will be seen that there are very many without women".¹⁰³

Sarah Outram wrote a letter of thanks to her electors in March 1923 in which she said "May I thank the 260 voters of the town of Dronfield who have elected me as their first woman representative on the Urban District Council and who, by so doing, have shown their disagreement with my having been given six months' notice of dismissal after 30 years of faithful service, during which I always had as my chief consideration the past and future welfare of my pupils."¹⁰⁴ The letter reads as a clear message of defiance to the school managers and her other detractors. She continued to be re-elected and to serve actively until at least 1939, when she was 70 years old. Her election and re-elections indicate a level of popular support in the town despite vitriolic campaigning against her during the 1914 controversy.

Sarah Elizabeth Outram died on March 17th 1950, aged 82. Her death notice briefly mentioned she was "formerly headmistress of Dronfield Girls School and ex-member of Dronfield Urban District Council".¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *The Vote*, 15 April 1927, p.117. 171 councils are listed as having at least one woman councillor.

¹⁰⁴ *The Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 31 March 1923, p.6.

¹⁰⁵ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 22 March 1950, p.2.

Conclusion

It seems reasonable to conclude that Sarah Outram held beliefs and opinions that would have been considered by many, and perhaps by a majority in the largely socially conservative town of Dronfield, as radical. It is also clear that the most important element of her life was her position as a teacher and her ability to work with the girls under her charge. She was well aware of the attitudes of the Dronfield school managers, and of many of the parents and other community members in the town. It appears that she tried to implement her beliefs in her professional capacity as much as she felt she reasonably could, but foremost in her priorities was her determination to maintain her position and not jeopardise her ability to remain as headteacher and work with her pupils. Kean, when examining the lives of suffragette teachers, argues that there was “no division between their personal lives and their political work... Their suffrage politics and their profession determined their whole identity.”¹⁰⁶ For Sarah Outram, her professional life did indeed define her, but it was her devotion to the town of Dronfield and its children that played a more central role in her thinking than her political beliefs.

¹⁰⁶ Kean *'Deeds Not Words'* p.4.

Chapter 2 –

“Radical Ideas”¹ Wider Social Forces in 1914

This chapter will examine more fully the radical ideas and themes mentioned in the introduction² that created the tapestry of conflicting social forces that formed the background for the Dronfield affair of 1914.³

Feminism and Women Teachers

Oram describes three fundamental beliefs underpinning social thought at the time of the Dronfield affair. The first was that women should marry, the second, that the family should be organized around a male breadwinner and a housewife, and third that authority was associated with masculinity.⁴ In the years preceding the First World War many women increasingly challenged these assumptions. At the forefront of this struggle were women teachers, existing as they did in a role of professionalism, responsibility and influence, yet still constrained by the attitudes of a patriarchal society and the mistrust of many male colleagues. The experiences of Sarah Outram give a practical example of a woman struggling to navigate these turbulent waters, attempting to live her own personal and professional life with as much free agency as possible, give her female pupils the best preparation for the life ahead of them as she could, whilst facing hostility and misogyny from her school managers and some of the wider Dronfield community. These were challenges shared by

¹ Hall ‘Hauling Down the Double Standard’, pp. 50-51.

² See Introduction, pp 4-5.

³ Hall ‘Hauling Down the Double Standard’, pp. 50-51.

⁴ Oram *Women Teachers*, pp.45-46.

many women teachers of the period, and the tension between the increasing professional assertiveness of women teachers and the attitudes of those in authority around them was one of the drivers creating the environment in which an event like the Dronfield school strike of 1914 could occur.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries becoming a teacher was an attractive goal for an intelligent young woman like Sarah Outram. It was one of the few occupations with professional status open to women, particularly for those from an upper-working or lower-middle class background like Sarah.⁵ The Board of Education *Annual Report* of 1911-12 observed that elementary school teachers had “almost entirely been recruited from the less well-to-do classes”.⁶ As Oram explains, teaching offered “masculine privileges of professionalism” such as money, training and the chance to provide a public service, whilst at the same time, because of its focus on nurturing children, it was “eminently respectable and feminine work for women”.⁷ Kean agrees that female teachers “were highly regarded within their local communities.”⁸

These enhanced social opportunities did not come without a price. Teaching gave women a visible, high status position within the communities they served but, as Kean states, a teacher’s “public status entailed a public scrutiny of her job and life ‘outside’ the classroom.”⁹ This is certainly evidenced by Sarah’s experiences in Dronfield. Parental

⁵ Holloway, *Women and Work*, p.40.

⁶ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.31.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.14.

⁸ Kean, *‘Deeds Not Words’*, p.9.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.10.

complaints about her teaching and conduct were a repeated occurrence in the years preceding the Dronfield school strike, and the publicity around the event itself thrust her into a position where she was the centre of scrutiny locally and nationally.¹⁰ Women teachers were also expected to set an example to the girls they taught, particularly those in less affluent communities. As Oram explains “the trained teacher was to present a cultural role model to working-class pupils”¹¹ particularly in encouraging girls’ positive understanding of “homecraft and mothercraft”.¹² A single-woman like Sarah Outram, however, might also be an example of independence of thought, professional ambition and questioning of the patriarchal status quo – not the kind of role model wider society intended for growing girls at all. Oram sums up the tensions that existed for women teachers - “A major contradictory dynamic existed between the ideas of femininity on the one hand and teacher professionalism on the other.”¹³

Women teachers were also compelled to make choices about their personal lives. Officially they were not allowed to both marry and continue in their teaching post. As Holloway explains “women’s right to work after marriage was problematic and was resolved in patriarchal terms by a marriage bar in most of the professions, although in practice this marriage bar was not totally inflexible.”¹⁴ Oram gives a figure of around 10-12% of women elementary school teachers being married in the period before the early 1920s, suggesting that most women teachers chose their professional status over marriage and valued the

¹⁰ See Chapter 1.

¹¹ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.18.

¹² *Ibid*, p.19.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.46.

¹⁴ Holloway, *Women and Work*, p.55.

personal independence and professional opportunities offered by their position as teachers.¹⁵ It is important to recognise that during this period marriage and motherhood were regarded as the ultimate fulfillment of a woman's role in society. As Oram states "women *must* marry, or be judged to have failed in a crucial aspect of their life course and gender identity."¹⁶ In Edwardian Britain concerns were raised about the effects of remaining unmarried on a woman's wellbeing, including "lack of fulfillment, repression, frustration, even mental illness."¹⁷ Opponents of Sarah Outram during the Dronfield school strike, particularly some of the aggrieved mothers, attacked her over her unmarried status and used it to question her right to hold opinions over relationships and motherhood.¹⁸

Kean asserts that women teachers saw their role as one through which they could improve the life chances of the girls they taught and that this was a political act as well as an educational one.¹⁹ Oram remarks on the "intensity of women teachers' concern with equality issues and their sustaining of political activity at a high level over a very long period of time."²⁰ Inevitably this led to many women teachers becoming active campaigners in the suffrage movement. Kean argues that feminist teachers "saw the decision to become a constitutional suffragist or a militant suffragette as an important stage in their lives."²¹ Involvement with these issues brought women teachers into conflict with more traditional, conservative and patriarchal points of view. This is evident in the Dronfield affair, where

¹⁵ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.26.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.47.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.48.

¹⁸ See Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Kean, *'Deeds Not Words'*, p.47.

²⁰ Alison Oram, *Women Teachers*, pp.46 -47.

²¹ Kean, *'Deeds Not Words'*, p.22.

Sarah Outram's suffrage sympathies are used in attempts to discredit her in criticism that is often aggressively misogynistic in tone.

Even within their professional organisations, women teachers faced fierce opposition from male colleagues. Suffrage issues were repeatedly raised at National Union of Teachers (NUT) conferences but consistently rejected. In 1911 Isabel Cleghorn²² attempted to raise the question of women's suffrage, only to be subjected to half an hour of insults and angry protests.²³ Both Kean and Oram remark on the hostility shown by male NUT members towards women around the suffrage question.²⁴ Male anxiety and consequent hostility permeated well beyond an organisation like the NUT and was prevalent in wider society. It was something that Sarah Outram had to contend with throughout her career in Dronfield, coming to a head in the events surrounding the controversy in 1914.

Suffragism and the Women's Freedom League

In the introduction I explain the background to the early 20th century suffrage campaigns, and that 1913 saw a peak in acts of violent direct action.²⁵ Whilst the cause of women's suffrage had much support, such acts, in a small, conservatively minded town like Dronfield, would have provoked unease, disapproval and even fear across class and social divides.

²² Isabel Cleghorn was the first female president of the NUT.

²³ Oram, *Women Teachers*; p.1.

²⁴ Ibid, p.124 and Kean, *'Deeds Not Words'*, p.41.

²⁵ See Introduction, pp.6-9.

Sarah Outram was a supporter of women's suffrage whose sympathies lay with the Women's Freedom League (WFL).²⁶ Eustance explains that in 1912 WFL delegates decided on a clear definition of WFL policy as "militancy without violence."²⁷ It is important to recognise that the WFL regarded itself as a militant organisation with members willing to break the law to achieve their aims, but they wanted to do this without the use of violence. Eustance states that "the purpose of members' actions was to demonstrate a widespread refusal to be governed by the instruments of male authority until women were granted equality. Until women were enfranchised they were 'outlaws' and therefore justified in breaking laws instigated by men."²⁸ This law-breaking behaviour was more achievable for some WFL supporters than for others. Specific circumstances for each individual determined their ability to take action. Kean gives examples of teachers involved in suffragette activities for whom "arrest for political activities in the cause of feminism did not bring an automatic end to a teaching career",²⁹ but concerns about consequences would have curtailed many women suffrage supporters from risking overt militant action. Sarah Outram appears to be an example of this careful, considered approach to active protest. She had good cause to exercise caution. Given the Dronfield school managers' response to her engagement with her pupils over suffrage issues, the parental complaints and the use of her suffrage sympathies to attack her reputation in court,³⁰ it is impossible to imagine that Sarah Outram's career could have survived any arrest for illegal action. She therefore needed to tread a careful line, implementing her principles where she could, without pushing too far and fatally jeopardising her career and position of influence. She was not alone in this.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Eustance, 'Meanings of Militancy', p.59.

²⁸ Ibid, p.52.

²⁹ Kean, 'Deeds Not Words', p.13.

³⁰ *The Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, 22 June 1914, p.5.

Eustance explains that “it was also clear that some members had found it difficult to reconcile calls for militancy by WFL leaders with their own circumstances”.³¹ Only a very small minority of WFL members, despite their strength of feeling and commitment to the cause of women’s suffrage, put themselves in a position where they were in direct conflict with the law:- “... in 1908 twenty-nine WFL members were imprisoned - compared with a membership in the thousands spread across over fifty WFL branches.”³²

One example of WFL action was the 1911 Census strike. Eustance explains that the idea was initiated by Laurence Housman of the Men's League for Women’s Suffrage,³³ enthusiastically taken up by the WFL and then endorsed by the WSPU. Chapter 1 explained how Miss Outram took a small part in this process by writing “unenfranchised’ in the ‘Infirmity’ column of her census return.³⁴ It may appear a small gesture but it was an unusual act of law-breaking civil disobedience within the Dronfield community and a contribution to a campaign which had national impact, described by Edith How Martyn in *The Vote* as ‘the most effective protest yet made by women against government without consent’.³⁵

Eustance further indicates that education for women around family life and reproductive issues was debated at the 1913 WFL conference and that there was a “suggestion to initiate a campaign to assist working women to limit the size of their families - until women were

³¹ Eustance, ‘Meanings of Militancy’, p.53.

³² Ibid, p.54.

³³ Ibid, p.58.

³⁴ ‘Sarah Outram’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21166. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 30th September 2019.

³⁵ Eustance, ‘Meanings of Militancy’, p.58.

enfranchised.”³⁶ There is no evidence that Sarah Outram ever attended such events but she may well have been aware, through publications such as *The Vote*, that ideas in sympathy with her own were being discussed. She might well have felt empowered as a result, only a few months before the teaching that placed her at the centre of controversy over related issues.

Within a year the WFL would be supporting Miss Outram over the Dronfield affair. In February 1914, *The Vote* reported that “[a]ttention has been called to the case of Miss Outram, a woman teacher in a Derbyshire village who dared to forearm her elder girls before leaving school by forewarning them of the facts of life.”³⁷ The article was highly critical of protesting parents, asking “How many of those irate men and women, we ask, were willing to fulfil their parental responsibilities and undertake the task which the woman teacher so bravely and carefully carried out...?”³⁸ The WFL approval for Miss Outram’s actions was unambiguous, but whilst their Sheffield branch passed a resolution supporting her at no point do they claim her as a formal member of the organisation.³⁹

Social Purity and Social Hygiene

The ideas of the Social Purity movement, and its successor social hygiene, provided the moral backdrop for the events of the Dronfield school strike.⁴⁰ They informed Sarah Outram’s thinking, were present in the wider responses and public and press reactions to

³⁶ Ibid, p.61.

³⁷ *The Vote*, 13 February 1913, p.258.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See Introduction, p.8.

the events, and they helped to create the atmosphere in which the people opposing Miss Outram and her teaching formed their ideas and opinions.

Purity campaigners believed the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s exhibited a 'double-standard' in attitudes towards male and female sexual and moral behaviour. It might be men paying for the services of female prostitutes, but it was the prostitutes and not the men who were to be punished. This angered many social reformers who, as Mairead Enright says, "opposed apportioning all blame for prostitution upon the women in question."⁴¹ The 'contagious diseases' the Acts were intended to curb were sexually transmitted infections. The campaign against the Acts gave feminist campaigners a focus for their attention. Bland points out that feminists "were not, of course, alone in being concerned about VD, but they were the first to speak openly and loudly on the subject and to place the blame squarely on men."⁴² As she continues, the "feminist focus on VD became a way of 'speaking out' about sexual immorality and the double moral standard."⁴³

The Social Purity movement was influenced by ideas of Christian morality, as well as emerging trends in medical and scientific thought. Hall characterises the social purity movement as "an umbrella which included a number of different parties and attitudes"⁴⁴ whilst Egan and Hawkes suggest "purity campaigners produced a highly ambivalent

⁴¹ Mairead Enright, 'The Victorian Social Purity Movement; a Noble Pursuit or "Morality Crusade"?' University of Birmingham blog, (2018), <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/legalherstory/2018/03/20/the-victorian-social-purity-movement-a-noble-pursuit-or-morality-crusade/> Accessed on 23/05/2020.

⁴² Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.243.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.244.

⁴⁴ Hall, 'Hauling Down the Double Standard', p.50.

narrative on sexuality.”⁴⁵ All campaigners, however, aspired to women implementing high standards of purity in their behaviour around sex and relationships. For some activists this meant educating women, for some it meant persuading them, for others institutional change was required, whilst others advocated punishment and enforced restrictions.

Mort argues that the rise of the social hygiene movement in the years preceding the First World War marked a shift away from punishment towards prevention, a more medically based approach.⁴⁶ In practice there was a great deal of overlap between social purity and social hygiene, with the terms sometimes used interchangeably. The Dronfield affair encapsulates this intersection. Sarah Outram’s sharing of knowledge with her pupils was intended to be preventative and prepare them for the future (in line with social hygiene), whilst being underpinned by some of the principles of social purity.⁴⁷ When *The Daily Record* reported the Dronfield events and related them to activities in Glasgow it referred to what occurred as the teaching of “sex hygiene”,⁴⁸ placing it within a medicalised context and comparing Miss Outram’s teaching to the activities of some women doctors in Glasgow.

If social purity had high aspirations for women’s moral behaviour, it was equally, if not more, exacting on men. Weeks asserts that the “principle behind feminist social purity was that men should adopt the high (traditional) moral standards of women.”⁴⁹ The most extreme critics of male behaviour were highly condemnatory, even advocating that women

⁴⁵ R. Danielle Egan and Gail Hawkes, ‘Producing the Prurient through the Pedagogy of Purity: Childhood Sexuality and the Social Purity Movement’ *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol. 20 No. 4 (2007), pp. 443 – 461, p.447.

⁴⁶ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.119.

⁴⁷ See Introduction, pp.1-3 and Chapter 2 pp.40-41 for more detail about what Sarah Outram taught.

⁴⁸ *The Daily Record and Mail*, 4 February 1914, p.6.

⁴⁹ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.163.

avoid marriage altogether. Alison Oram suggests that spinsterhood “was thus seen by some as a political strategy.”⁵⁰ She refers to Christabel Pankhurst’s *“The Great Scourge and How To End It”* where Pankhurst says that there “ can be no meeting between the spiritually developed woman of this new day and men who in thought and conduct in regards to sex matters are their inferiors.”⁵¹ Bland points out that some women went even further - Frances Swiney (writer and women’s rights activist) suggested that man was “life’s destroyer”.”⁵² But there was a wide range of views within the Social Purity movement and Bland further suggests that some feminists disagreed with Pankhurst and “disliked the tone of ‘sex antagonism’ and the implication that all men were bad and all women good.”⁵³ The wide public debate of feminist ideas through social purity, combined with the rise in suffragist campaigning, reached towns like Dronfield and would have contributed to an atmosphere in which men with more traditionalist views may have felt threatened. This perception of an assault on traditional male patriarchy might have helped fuel the often aggressively misogynistic criticisms of Sarah Outram and her teaching.

Education was always an important tool for those promoting social purity and, later, social hygiene. As early as 1878 Dr Elizabeth Blackwell, through her ‘Counsel to Parents on the Moral Education of Children in Relation to Sex’, was encouraging the education and supervision of mothers, with educational efforts aimed at girls as well as boys.⁵⁴ Blackwell wanted the young mind trained in “early purity”.⁵⁵ Hilda Kean identifies two “broad

⁵⁰ Oram, *Women Teachers*, p.195.

⁵¹ Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge and How To End It* (E Pankhurst, London, 1913)

⁵² Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.246; from Frances Swiney, *The Bar of Isis* (The Open Road Publishing, London, 1907), p.19.

⁵³ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.247.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.140.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

currents” within the social hygiene movement by the 1910s, one legislative and aimed at regulating male social behaviour (through organisations such as the National Vigilance Association), the other educational, involving groups like the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and The National Council for Public Morals.⁵⁶ She suggests female teachers were more supportive of educational than legislative campaigns.⁵⁷ There is no evidence that Sarah Outram was a member of any of the social purity or social hygiene reforming groups that emerged during this period, but there is plenty to suggest she was sympathetic to the broad aims and philosophy of the movement.⁵⁸ The first of *The Purity Advocate* stories fits into the educational approach described by Hall as “the ‘birds and bees’ rhetoric”.⁵⁹ As Hall argues, “The enlightenment of children with clean, ‘natural’ information about sex was one of the main planks in the social purity platform.”⁶⁰

The idea of childhood innocence was central to much of the thinking around social purity. It was a much discussed, complex, and contradictory notion. Egan and Hawkes point out that innocence was seen simultaneously as “a quality of childhood as well as a virtue that must be taught.”⁶¹ Much of the discussion within Dronfield and beyond during the school strike concerned the boundaries between childhood innocence and ignorance and how much the giving of information about human reproduction might inform and forearm, and how far it might corrupt those it was intended to protect. A letter to *The Manchester Guardian* from

⁵⁶ Kean, *Deeds Not Words*, p.56.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.57.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 1, pp.25-27.

⁵⁹ Hall, ‘Hauling Down the Double Standard’, p.41.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ Egan and Hawkes, ‘Producing the Prurient’, p.447.

Spencer Elliott of the Manchester Diocesan Mission is an excellent example.⁶² He suggested Sarah Outram's approach deserved "the utmost sympathy" and stated "In countless cases evil results are averted by the protection of religious teaching. But where girls are unwarned and uninstructed they fall an easy prey. On the other hand, where a girl has learned evil knowledge through corrupt sources she becomes a fearful source of corruption to others."⁶³ For Elliott, innocence and purity are qualities that must be actively protected otherwise moral and sexual 'corruption' awaits. One potential way of providing such protection was through information and education.

Sex Education

From the late 19th century on there was a drive from some campaigners to actively promote more honest and open communication with young people about sex. Many felt innocence alone was not enough to protect young women from the social and moral corruptions that social purists saw potentially lurking. Some level of informed knowledge was also desirable. Bland suggests that, after the 1880s, "The equation between sexual innocence and purity was also being challenged."⁶⁴ She quotes Gertrude Hemery, writing in 1894, as saying, "Purity! There can be no purity where there is no knowledge... Those women who face the world bravely every day, seeing its dark as well as its bright side... and passing through all unscathed – these are the pure women... the others are mere ignoramuses."⁶⁵ Cook observes that the intent to implement the educational impulses of some sexual purity

⁶² *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 February 1914, letter from Rev. Spencer Elliott, Manchester Diocesan Missioner.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.139.

⁶⁵ Gertrude Hemery 'The Revolt of the Daughters – an answer by one of them' *Westminster Review*, vol. 141 (1894), pp. 679-81, p.680.

advocates in practice “would keep young people pure by arming them against abusers”⁶⁶ and that this movement gained traction, particularly amongst more affluent strata of Edwardian society.⁶⁷ Egan and Hawkes further state that “purity reformers wanted to move beyond what they saw as regressive sexual ignorance and focus on pragmatic correctives such as sexual training”⁶⁸ and that “campaigners worked to secure national redemption and normalize sexual behavior through moral education programs.”⁶⁹

There were, therefore, feminist and social reform campaigners who wanted some form of sex education. But what, in practical terms, was actually happening in terms of education around sex and relationships in the years preceding the First World War? How much was taking place, what form was it taking, who was delivering it and in what settings was it being undertaken? What was the environment and atmosphere that prevailed when Sarah Outram’s teaching hit the national headlines?

It is possible to find examples of the tentative and cautious attempts to introduce sex education to a largely sceptical, and sometimes, as with the objecting parents in Dronfield, actively hostile wider society. Experiments were taking place and efforts to modify moral attitudes were undertaken, but Bland suggests “what little there was of it, focussed almost exclusively on the dangers of sex, namely venereal disease and pregnancy outside marriage.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Cook, ‘Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education’, p.490.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Egan and Hawkes, ‘Producing the Prurient’, p.446.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.447.

⁷⁰ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.306.

Early contributors to the field often felt a metaphorical approach was necessary. In 1895 Ellis Ethelmer made a ground-breaking contribution with the sex education booklets *Baby Buds* and *Human Flower*. Ethelmer was a pseudonym, either for feminist campaigner Elizabeth Wolstoneholme Elmy or her husband Benjamin (and, of course, the married couple may well have collaborated). Bland declares the booklets “were revolutionary in presenting (rather elliptical) information on sex and the body for the child and adolescent of both sexes to read for themselves.”⁷¹ Barbara Gates describes *Baby Buds* as “a birds-and-bees primer for small children in which a mother explains sexual reproduction to a child.”⁷² This is similar in style and content to *The Purity Advocate* stories used by Sarah Outram in Dronfield in 1914.⁷³ In *Human Flower*, published in 1895, Ethelmer dealt with sex in a much more open and straightforward way,⁷⁴ far more directly than a teacher like Sarah Outram could contemplate attempting with her pupils, even nearly twenty years later.

Even among those supporting sex education in its broadest sense, there was no consensus over what material should be taught and how explicit it should be. Educationalists were often cautious. Canon Lyttleton, in the 1912 edition of his work on the subject, wrote that he found himself “entering on almost untrodden ground which craves the most wary walking.”⁷⁵ In particular when approaching the subject with girls, Mort argues that thinkers of the time felt decidedly ambivalent, suggesting that although “sex teaching was designed to give girls some knowledge for their own protection, there was ambiguity over precisely

⁷¹ Ibid, p.142.

⁷² Barbara T Gates, *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1999), p.131.

⁷³ See Appendix 1 for stories.

⁷⁴ Gates, *Kindred Nature*, p.132.

⁷⁵ Rev. The Hon E. Lyttleton, *Training of the Young in Laws of Sex* (Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1912), p.2. Lyttleton was Headmaster of Eton.

how much information should be supplied. Educationalists hoped to preserve a delicate balance between innocence and self-knowledge among girls.”⁷⁶

Ethelmer’s work came from a feminist campaigning background. In contrast Canon Lyttleton was Headmaster of Eton. Both writers, however, were immersed in the thinking of the Social Purity movement. Lyttleton wrote that sex was “a subject which in itself is full of nobleness, purity and health.”⁷⁷ Lyttleton’s work was recommended to Sarah Outram by Edward Carpenter⁷⁸ in a letter to her in which he wrote that Lyttleton “urges strongly that education in such matters should be begun at an early age (between 8 and 11). This is interesting, especially in view of the conservative character of Eton.”⁷⁹ Lyttleton’s work was aimed at a middle-class readership, the type of household that might aspire to send their boys to a school like Eton. He focuses most of his attention on boys and has much more practical advice for teaching them, conceding that he lacks the experience to argue more strongly the case for sex education for girls. He does say, however, that “the good of positive instruction, as an enlightenment to the mind and a powerful help towards a wise and reverent view of nature, is a good which parents have no reason for withholding from their daughters any more than from their sons.”⁸⁰

Ethelmer and Lyttleton shared the belief that the best place for sexual instruction to take place was in the home. As Bland says, “Ethelmer was first and foremost encouraging sex

⁷⁶ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.150.

⁷⁷ Lyttleton, *Training of the Young*, p.ix.

⁷⁸ Edward Carpenter was a writer and social campaigner who lived in nearby Millthorpe. Sheila Rowbotham *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (Verso, London, 2008).

⁷⁹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 14 March 1914, front page.

⁸⁰ Lyttleton, *Training of the Young*, p.64.

instruction to be undertaken by the mother, with the manuals to aid her.”⁸¹ Lyttleton also believed responsibility lay principally with mothers, although he saw a role for fathers too, particularly in setting their sons a high moral example. At no point does he mention a role for schools or teachers, despite being a headmaster himself. He believed a positive home influence was the best defence against immoral behaviour and stated, “as far as my experience has gone of boys who have been well equipped with wholesome teaching at home, they are not to be corrupted by others.”⁸² For both Lyttleton and Ethelmer, as for many others in this period, sex education belonged firmly in the domestic realm.

By the time of the Dronfield affair it is possible to find examples of medical and educational practitioners attempting to go further than Ethelmer and Lyttleton and introduce sex education in settings outside the home, including schools. These are, however, rare. *The Daily Record and Mail*, in February 1914, reported on female doctors delivering “sex hygiene” education in Glasgow, stating that it had been “taught in Glasgow schools for some years, and while in certain quarters it is looked upon as a most important part of the curriculum, there are equally influential people with decidedly antagonistic views on the matter.”⁸³ This reflected the controversy and lack of consensus around the subject. In Glasgow, the “sex hygiene” teaching referred to was delivered not by teachers but by women doctors in “supplementary classes”, and to girls in secondary education, older than the elementary school pupils in Sarah Outram’s class at Dronfield.⁸⁴ The paper reported on a meeting of the Scottish Medical Women’s Association where “sex hygiene” was discussed.

⁸¹ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.142.

⁸² Lyttleton, *Training of the Young*, p.9.

⁸³ *The Daily Record and Mail*, 4 February 1914, p.6.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Even those who advocated sex education felt it was “a difficult subject to teach at the present time.”⁸⁵ There was no consensus even among the members of the Scottish Medical Woman’s Association. Dr Gilchrist was strongly opposed to sex teaching in schools and is quoted as saying it should not be taught in such settings, especially “not in public ones. It is not possible to do it. It is entirely a subject for individual tuition.”⁸⁶ She was very wary about talking about sex at all with young girls, stating that “the modern young girl knows too much for her age.”⁸⁷ Other contributors, including Dr Mabel Jones, held opposing views and argued based on their practical experience of implementing the supplementary classes, which had been largely positive and delivered without complaints. The absence of parental resistance, compared to that experienced by Sarah Outram, may have been due to the differences in context. In Glasgow, the teaching did not take place in school and the girls were older. Perhaps the fact that it was delivered by doctors gave the work a status impossible for Sarah Outram to emulate.

This study has only found one example of sex education taking place in an elementary school at the same time as events unfolded in Dronfield, at Enfield Road School for Girls in Hackney. Sex education here was introduced by Theodora Bonwick, headteacher in the years preceding the First World War. She was a member of the suffragette WSPU and an active campaigner across a range of women’s issues. Bonwick was a frequent and highly skilled public speaker. Kean explains that Bonwick “became a strong advocate of sex education in schools and gained the support of parents to teach this as a class subject in her

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Enfield Road School.”⁸⁸ This is a key difference between the sex education in Hackney and what happened in Dronfield. Kean explains that “In Miss Bonwick’s school the subject only appeared in the curriculum after an explanation was given to and support obtained from parents.”⁸⁹ The principles underpinning Bonwick’s teaching were from the same social purity roots as Miss Outram’s. Kean quotes her saying in 1914 that if young people “were offered ‘true and beautifully worded knowledge’ it would protect them from being poisoned by ignorance or impurely minded persons.”⁹⁰ Outram and Bonwick may have shared beliefs, but there were fundamental differences between their approaches to sex education. Outram’s approach was reactive and opportunistic, Bonwick’s was more considered, planned and systematic – preparing the ground, gaining the agreement and cooperation of parents and campaigning widely for sex education in public forums. They were both engaged, however, in teaching practice that was highly unusual. Kean reports the findings of the London County Council in 1914, stating that “Theodora Bonwick was very atypical in her beliefs and practices. When the LCC set up its own commission of inquiry into the teaching of sex education it found only one school, Miss Bonwick’s, where sex education was taught as an ordinary class subject.”⁹¹ In March *The Woman’s Dreadnought* mentions Miss Outram’s teaching when publicising a series of lectures by Miss Bonwick, commenting that “At this time, when the attention of the public has been drawn to the subject of teaching sex hygiene in the schools by the case of Miss Outram – the teacher who tried it and aroused so much indignation among the parents – it is particularly interesting to hear the

⁸⁸ Hilda Kean, ‘Bonwick, Theodora Ellen (1876-1928), educationalist and women’s rights activist.’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008), <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093>.

⁸⁹ Kean, ‘*Deeds Not Words*’, p.60.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, from Bonwick’s evidence to the ‘Report of the Education Committee on the Teaching of Sex Hygiene’ (London County Council 1914).

⁹¹ Kean, ‘*Deeds Not Words*’, p.61.

view of this subject and experiences of one who has accomplished it successfully for two years.”⁹²

Despite Bonwick’s apparent success, the position from official bodies remained unsupportive of sex education in schools. Mort points out the opposition of the London County Council in 1914.⁹³ In February 1914 *The Daily Mail* reported on the response of the Lady Teachers’ Committee of the NUT to Miss Outram’s sex education. The Committee declared “it would not be wise or practicable to give children such information.”⁹⁴ Even most feminists remained “lukewarm” about sex education in schools prior to the First World War.⁹⁵

Letters written to the newspapers in response to the Dronfield affair reveal some level of public support for sex education in schools. Many of these saw parental instruction as the ideal but worried that too often it simply did not take place. The Rev. Spencer Elliott exemplifies this point of view, suggesting that if parents “taught their own children the teacher might be regarded as an intruder. But, as everyone knows, most parents shirk the duty entirely, and the teacher must perforce accept responsibility.”⁹⁶ Mort puts a class perspective on these views, arguing that “Most hygienists believed that under ideal conditions the parents, and especially the mother, were the proper agents of instruction.

⁹² *The Woman’s Dreadnought*, 8 March 1914, p.3 (*The Woman’s Dreadnought* was the paper set up by Sylvia Pankhurst after her expulsion from the WSPU).

⁹³ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.156.

⁹⁴ *The Daily Mail*, 5 February 1914, p.3.

⁹⁵ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.156.

⁹⁶ *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 7 February 1914, p.9. Letter from Rev. Spencer Elliott, Manchester Diocesan Missioner.

Yet given the continuing perception of working-class family life as immoral, many looked to the state to enact their demands."⁹⁷

Eugenics

One other area that had a significant influence on moral, social and political thought in the years leading up to the First World War and was frequently mentioned in the contemporary coverage of the Dronfield affair was eugenics.

One of the first newspaper stories about the Dronfield affair appeared on the front page of *The Derbyshire Courier* under the headline "Derbyshire School Sensation".⁹⁸ The sub-heading below declared "Teacher Introduces Eugenics".⁹⁹ On January 31st the same paper again referred to "the teaching of eugenics".¹⁰⁰ Throughout the months of newspaper coverage Sarah Outram's teaching is variously and interchangeably described as "sex teaching", "sex hygiene" and "eugenics". What was 'eugenics', how prevalent was its influence on early twentieth century thinking and how was the term popularly used and understood, including in the newspapers and the letters written to them?

As outlined in the introduction, the term 'eugenics' was first used by Francis Galton in 1883.¹⁰¹ Bland quotes Galton as saying eugenics was the "science of improving stock"¹⁰² and that he wrote to his associate and supporter Karl Pearson in 1906 to explain that it involved

⁹⁷ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.156.

⁹⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 January 1914, front page.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ See Introduction, p.9.

¹⁰² Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.222. From Galton's 'Hereditary Genius' (1869).

“the study of social agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally.”¹⁰³ It is necessary to understand how words like ‘racial’ were used by Galton and other proponents of eugenics. Weeks explains that those holding explicitly racist views could and did use the language of eugenics, but others “stressed that they were talking not about specific races, but about the human race.”¹⁰⁴

For the 21st century reader, the word ‘eugenics’ is heavy with negative connotations, associated as it is with Nazism, the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing and the denial of diversity rights. But eugenic ideas were also supported by figures like Marie Stopes, feminist and family planning advocate, and William Beveridge, author of the report that laid the foundations for the British welfare state and National Health Service. Not all of Miss Outram’s contemporaries would have accepted eugenic ideas, and there was discussion and controversy around them, but the term did not, at that time, carry the weight of negativity it does in popular understanding today.

Despite the term being introduced by Galton as early as 1883, eugenic ideas only became mainstream after the turn of the century, gaining, as Mort argues “legitimacy and an institutional base” by 1914.¹⁰⁵ Once its base was established, eugenic ideas became pervasive and widespread. Weeks states that “a wide spectrum of people, from far right to socialist left, worked until the 1930s and even beyond within a eugenics framework, or at

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp.222–223. Galton to Karl Pearson, 15th Nov 1906.

¹⁰⁴ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.132.

¹⁰⁵ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.134.

least with a eugenics terminology.”¹⁰⁶ Bland confirms the ubiquity of eugenic ideas, stating that “Eugenists included many politicians and intellectuals.” Her examples include prominent figures such as George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill.¹⁰⁷ Eugenic thinking appealed to the medical profession, with its advocates, according to Mort, believing it to be “useful in raising broad questions about human progress or decline and projecting a grandiose vision of health”.¹⁰⁸ Eugenics also impacted on educational ideas and practice. The Eugenics Education Society (EES) was established in 1907 to promote “moral education in schools.”¹⁰⁹ This educational context proved particularly attractive to women. Weeks observes that women “were highly represented [in the EES], constituting more than half the total membership of the society in 1913.”¹¹⁰ Bland believes that “feminist social purists saw in eugenics the potential of scientific validation and reinforcement of moral purity beliefs.”¹¹¹ As a result eugenics was an important thread in early 20th century thinking around sexual morality.¹¹²

At the time the Dronfield affair reached public awareness in 1914 eugenic ideas, and the discussions around them, were firmly embedded in social, moral and political thinking. ‘Eugenics’ was a term frequently, and often imprecisely, used in popular and everyday discourse. This is shown by the use of the word in letters and newspaper reports about the Dronfield affair,¹¹³ despite the fact that there is nothing in what Sarah Outram says or does with her pupils that overtly refers to genetics, heredity or Darwinist ‘natural selection’.

¹⁰⁶ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.131.

¹⁰⁷ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.228.

¹⁰⁸ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.136.

¹⁰⁹ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.227.

¹¹⁰ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.133.

¹¹¹ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.230.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p.222.

¹¹³ The word “eugenics” is used in 33 of the newspaper headlines or by-lines referring to the Dronfield case.

Bland suggests that eugenics was “an established Edwardian institution.”¹¹⁴ ‘Eugenics’, in popular usage, seems to have been a word that covered a wide range of subjects connected to human sexual reproduction, including the process of finding a partner and marriage.

Those involved in the Dronfield affair clearly thought the term applied to Sarah Outram’s teaching. She herself used the word in the first managers’ meeting at which she was called to account for her teaching,¹¹⁵ and at the second managers’ meeting Dr Barber commented, in relation to the teaching, “Eugenics, as I understand it, is not intended for children, it is intended for adults.”¹¹⁶ Mort goes as far as suggesting that Sarah Outram was “a committed eugenicist (involved in a local campaign to get ‘racial hygiene’ on to the syllabus of elementary schools).”¹¹⁷ Mort does not reference a source for this, but seems to deduce it from comments Miss Outram makes in the first managers’ meeting relating her teaching, and specifically the reading of the stories, to efforts made to advocate eugenics teaching in elementary schools.¹¹⁸ Research for this study has found no other evidence to suggest that Miss Outram was formally linked to any eugenicist group or ‘campaign’.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explain some of the most significant social forces at work in Britain in the period during which the Dronfield school strike took place, and to indicate how some of these directly impacted on the Dronfield affair. These broad movements affected all of British society, but apparently only in Dronfield did they coalesce to provoke the

¹¹⁴ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.228.

¹¹⁵ Minutes of the first Managers Meeting, 14th Jan 1914; National Archives ED 50-185.

¹¹⁶ Minutes of the second Managers Meeting, 27th Jan 1914; National, Archives ED 50-185.

¹¹⁷ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.124.

¹¹⁸ Minutes of the first Managers Meeting, 14th Jan 1914; National, Archives ED 50-185.

unique event that so captured the public attention in 1914. Chapter 3 will focus more closely on Dronfield and explore why events occurred as they did, where they did and when they did.

Chapter 3 -

“Yo nivver saw such a place as Dronfield”¹ - The Local Context

To contextualise the Dronfield events, chapter 3 will begin by looking at other school strike activity in pre-First World War England. The chapter will then consider the specific circumstances in Dronfield that provoked and sustained the opposition to Sarah Outram’s teaching. It will look at the relationship between the school managers and the local education committee and how attitudes in Dronfield differed to those held by people outside the town. Finally, it will examine the behaviour of some of the influential individuals who drove the protests and explore the stance taken by the protesting parents.

School Strikes in pre-First World War England

School strikes, particularly where pupils were those on strike, were not unheard of in early 20th century England, but they were far from a frequent occurrence. School strike events of 1914 are discussed below, but it is first worth mentioning the most widespread example of school strikes from the period and how they differed to the Dronfield events.

In 1911 there was a mass outbreak of school unrest. Following a summer of industrial action across the country, children in at least 62 towns and cities stayed away from school. They listed abolition of caning, a desire for less schoolwork, and longer holidays amongst their aims. These events were distinct in character from what happened in 1914 in Dronfield. The children in 1911 were inspired by the behaviour of adult workers and emulated their

¹ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 5 February 1914, p.5.

actions. The children's absence was their own decision and not initiated by parents, and indeed had little, if any, parental support.² The 1914 strike in Dronfield was driven by parents removing their children from school. In 1911 there was a contagious spread of events. The Dronfield strike, despite all the local and national attention it attracted, did not inspire other parents elsewhere to take similar action.

The Dronfield event was not the only school strike in 1914. There were three, the other two being distinctly different in character and cause. *The Daily Record and Mail* stated in February 1914 that "it is not often that there is a strike of school children in the United Kingdom"³, before reporting on events in Herefordshire and Dronfield. *The Daily Record* evidently saw such events as remarkable and newsworthy.

The Herefordshire strike was an industrial dispute over pay. Elementary school teachers went on strike, picketed schools, and ultimately resigned. In February 1914 pupils took action to support their teachers. Under the by-line "Riotous Proceedings at Ledbury"⁴, *The Western Daily Press* reported that "the children broke into an unruly throng"⁵ and occupied classrooms in support of striking teachers. Ledbury children acted in sympathy with their teachers, not in opposition to what was being taught, and their reaction appears to have

² William Baker, 'Explaining the outbreak and dynamics of the 1911 school strike wave in Britain' *Reflecting Education* <http://reflectingeducation.net> 6:1, (2010), pp.25-38; pp.35 and 36.

³ *The Daily Record and Mail*, 4 February 1914, p.6.

⁴ *The Western Daily Press*, 3 February 1914, p.10.

⁵ *Ibid.*

been spontaneous, not an organised campaign backed by parents and other community members, very unlike what happened in Dronfield.

The other significant school strike took place in the Norfolk village of Burston, beginning in April 1914 when the Elementary School teachers were sacked for their socialist sympathies. The children, with the approval of their parents, came out on strike to demand the reinstatement of the teachers. This began a strike that was to last twenty-five years and is billed on the TUC's website as "the longest strike in history".⁶ Shaun Jeffrey declares that the event "still stands as a monument to working class education and the struggle against rural tyranny".⁷ In Burston children, parents and the local community took strike action in support of their teachers and protested the actions of the wealthy local elite. Battlelines were drawn according to wealth and social class and divisions were clear. It is distinctly different to Dronfield, where the issues driving the conflict were far more complex and muddled and the opposing sides less differentiated by class and social position.

The 1911 strikes and those in Burston and Herefordshire were unlike events in Dronfield. There was nothing quite like the Dronfield affair during this period. Nowhere else, were communities taking direct action to control teachers in their local school or exercise direct influence over the content of the curriculum. The Dronfield school strike was an event apparently unique in pre-First World War England.

⁶ TUC 150 Years Burston School Strike <https://tuc150.tuc.org.uk/stories/burston-school-strike>.

⁷ Shaun Jeffrey, *The Village in Revolt: The Story of the Longest Strike in History* (Higdon Press, 2018), back cover notes.

Dronfield - "It's a very funny place."⁸

In 1914 Dronfield was an industrial town with a population of about 5,000 people. The main industries were based around the town's iron foundries and there were also several coal mines in the local area. As a result, a large proportion of the town's population were skilled working class.

There were commentators from 1914 who viewed Dronfield as a town with unique qualities and a character of its own. W.J. Hands, school inspector with responsibility for Dronfield, described it as "a very funny place".⁹ He made several contributions to the Board of Education investigation into the Dronfield events. Mort writes about Hands being "asked... to report on the affair"¹⁰ but does not explain that Hands was the HMI for the area and already knew Dronfield, the school, its managers and Sarah Outram very well. Hands may have been an agent of the Board of Education, but he seems to provide a reasonably measured view on the personalities and events in Dronfield.

Even some Dronfield insiders remarked on the town's peculiarities. *The Sheffield Independent* reported interviewing a Dronfield resident who said: "Yo nivver saw such a place as Dronfield. The fowk revel in rows and gossips"¹¹ Dronfield was not, of course, the only town in England that experienced "rows and gossips", but the correspondence to

⁸ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 5 February 1914, p.5.

⁹ Handwritten note from WJ Hands. National Archives ED 50-185.

¹⁰ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.127.

¹¹ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 5 February 1914, p.5.

newspapers around the Dronfield affair indicates that many observers at the time felt that Dronfield could be a peculiarly insular place with its own unique character.

“Dronfield Versus the World”¹² - Public Reaction to the Dronfield Controversy

The Dronfield school strike inspired many people to write letters. Some of these were published in newspapers, both local and national, and they reveal that there were a range of attitudes to the Dronfield events. They also show a discernible difference between the responses to the moral issues raised by Sarah Outram’s teachings within the town as compared to beyond it.

Bates warns against drawing conclusions from “a letter in isolation”.¹³ Research for this study has looked at nearly 70 letters related to Sarah Outram and the strike.¹⁴ Newspaper reports refer to many more sent directly to Sarah.¹⁵ Bates observes that in the 20th century “newspapers generally tried to present a balanced selection of readers’ views.”¹⁶ In that light, it is interesting that a high proportion of the published letters were sympathetic to Sarah Outram.¹⁷ *The Derbyshire Courier* reported that of the letters she received directly “only two were antagonistic to her.”¹⁸ Many of the letters critical of Sarah Outram and her teaching came from Dronfield, such as the letter supporting the actions taken against her

¹² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 18 April 1914, p.6.

¹³ Bates, *Historical Research*, p.36.

¹⁴ Research from The British Newspaper Archive, *The Guardian* archive, *The Daily Mail* and *The Times* archive.

¹⁵ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 14 March 1914, front page. Article reported Miss Outram had received over 300 letters. None of these survive in the public record.

¹⁶ Bates, *Historical Research*, p.36.

¹⁷ Only 15 of the 67 are critical of Miss Outram.

¹⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 14 March 1914, front page.

published by *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* in April from “A Dronfield Parent”.¹⁹ Support for her came from a wide geographical area, indicating the reach of the school strike story and how much it had provoked interest well beyond Dronfield. When reporting on “correspondence which has flowed in, in an unceasing stream”,²⁰ *The Derbyshire Courier* relished listing the range of locations from which Sarah Outram had received letters: “They come from all parts of England... from Dublin, from France, from Germany, from Rome, from Gibraltar, from the lumber camps of Canada and from British Columbia.”²¹ It would be an oversimplification to suggest that Sarah had no support from within Dronfield and no critics from beyond it, but the evidence from the letters suggests that the people of Dronfield were disproportionately hostile to her and her teaching. Opinions from outside Dronfield were more positive. A postcard from Farnham, for example, declared “Bravo! Miss Outram. All the thinking women of England are with you”²² and a Liverpool clergyman is reported as writing he “would to God you were in charge of my children in a similar capacity.”²³ *The Derbyshire Courier* printed two letters under the headline “Dronfield Versus the World”,²⁴ suggesting there was a perception that Dronfield and its people were out of step with wider public opinion. Divergence of opinion on moral questions did exist between different towns in this period, as Elizabeth Roberts points out in her analysis of attitudes to pre-marital sex in the north west of England.²⁵

¹⁹ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1914, p.9.

²⁰ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 14 March 1914, front page.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 18 April 1914, p.6.

²⁵ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890 – 1940* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), p.75.

The Building Dispute - “a veritable death trap”²⁶

When the dispute around Miss Outram’s teaching erupted, the Dronfield school managers were already embroiled in an acrimonious disagreement with Derbyshire Education Authority concerning the condition of the school buildings. Mort acknowledges this, but he mentions it as background rather than as a key motivating factor in the intensity and longevity of the affair.²⁷ The evidence is clear, however, that for the Dronfield school managers the two disputes were inextricably linked. School manager Mr J. Barker was unequivocal about what he saw as the connection between the two disputes:- “they were fighting the Education Authority at Derby because they wanted them to build new schools.”²⁸ Barker thought that the decision of Derbyshire to allow Sarah Outram to stay on was part of a strategy against the school managers and he suggested that she “was exonerated because the County Committee thought they could get them to resign en bloc.”²⁹ For the Dronfield school managers, the affair was never solely about sex education, but part of a power struggle with the Derbyshire authorities.

Gosden explains how the Local Education Committee system was formalised after the 1902 Education Act.³⁰ The Act was also intended to clarify the power of managers in appointing teachers, and their responsibility for school buildings and religious instruction.³¹ Peter Gordon’s work looks at school managers at the turn of the century. He regards them as poorly prepared for the role and notes that the numerous manuals written for them showed their need for

²⁶ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 September 1913, p.4.

²⁷ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.126.

²⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ P. H. Gosden, ‘The Origins of Cooptation to Membership of Local Education Committees.’ *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, (1977), pp. 258–267, p.258.

³¹ Gordon, ‘Some Sources for the History of the School Manager’, p.334.

guidance.”³² In Dronfield, even by 1914, there was clearly a lack of clarity in the perceived roles of school managers and Education Committee, and the managers felt their powers should extend further than the Derbyshire Committee would concede.

The Dronfield building dispute arose because the Girls’ school building was overcrowded and unsuitable for the number of pupils attending. This led to concerns about pupil safety. The Dronfield managers were aware of the problem from January 1911 when it was brought to their attention by the Derbyshire Director of Education.³³ The managers’ response was to instruct the Infants’ department to hold back sending pupils up to the Girls’ department, even if they were old enough to progress. This was a decision that was to lead to tensions between Miss Outram, as Head of the Girls’ Department, and the headmistress of the Infants, and between the school and disgruntled parents whose children were not being given the opportunity to progress.³⁴

In 1913 Mr Widdows, architect to the Derbyshire Education Committee, wrote to the Board of Education stating that “In the girl’s department of this school, there is considerable congestion and in a case of a panic dangerous results might ensue.”³⁵ HMI Hands agreed that “the Girl’s school is badly arranged, and would be dangerous in case of fire or panic.”³⁶ Widdows proposed the building of a new Infants’ school to relieve congestion and improve pupil safety. The Dronfield managers opposed the proposals. They appear to have been

³² Ibid, p.328.

³³ Dronfield School Managers’ Minutes Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3; *The Derbyshire Times*, 18 January 1911, p.5.

³⁴ See chapter 1, pp.30-31.

³⁵ Letter 3rd January 1913, National Archive ED 21-2992.

³⁶ Note 14th January 1913, National Archive ED 21-2992.

worried about cost, resentful of plans being imposed upon them by people they perceived as outsiders, and felt their authority was being undermined. *The Derbyshire Courier* reported on an acrimonious meeting between the Derbyshire Education Committee and the Dronfield managers in February 1913.³⁷ Derbyshire's Mr Andrews was coruscating in his criticism of the Dronfield managers, saying he had "not known such a thing take place before",³⁸ suggesting they had "neglected their duty as educationalists"³⁹ and that they were "playing pitch and toss with education".⁴⁰ The managers argued back on grounds of excessive cost. County Councillor Johnson spoke in support of the managers, perhaps reflecting an opinion the managers shared but had not overtly expressed, stating that "There would be no great deficiency: it was only in the girls' department."⁴¹

The dispute rumbled on through 1913, to the increasing exasperation of the Derbyshire Education Committee. The managers constantly voiced concerns about costs and the burden on ratepayers. In August a parent complained about his daughter being moved down from the Girls' Department to the Infants. The managers blamed Derbyshire for forcing them to move children, rather than recognising their own failure to deal with the overcrowding problem.⁴² By September county architect Widdows was losing patience. He described the Dronfield School Girls' Department as a "veritable death trap".⁴³ Matters had not improved by the end of the year and in December, shortly before the school strike scandal was about to erupt, the school buildings, in both the Girls' and Infants'

³⁷ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 11 February 1913, p.5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Dronfield School Managers' Minutes Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3, August 1913.

⁴³ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 September 1914, p.4.

Departments, remained overcrowded and unsafe, and the relationship between Derbyshire Education Committee and the Dronfield school managers was highly strained.⁴⁴

The National Board of Education finally decided in May 1914, backing Derbyshire Education Committee's plan for the building of a new Infants' school.⁴⁵ This occurred during the school strike and must have confirmed the Dronfield managers, and other local opponents of Sarah Outram and her teaching, in their believe that they were irrevocably estranged from the authorities in Derbyshire.

The building dispute contextualises the poor relationship between Derbyshire and the Dronfield school managers even before the sex education controversy began. The managers attempted to assert power and control and do not appear to have been willing to compromise or acknowledge opinions that contradicted their own. The fact that they tolerated overcrowded and potentially dangerous conditions in the Girls' department for years contributes to an impression of misogyny. Would they have allowed such detrimental circumstances to exist for so long in the Boys' department? The arguments around Miss Outram gave the managers another battleground where they could attempt to assert themselves over the Derbyshire Education Committee. In addition, the managers clearly believed that Derbyshire's failure to back them over her dismissal was a ploy to force them to resign in order that Derbyshire could push through its preferred building plans.

⁴⁴ Dronfield School Managers' Minutes Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3, December 1913.

⁴⁵ National Archive ED 21-2992, May 1914.

Local Opposition to Sarah Outram and her Teaching - “Most Disgusting and Abominable”⁴⁶

This section will examine how the actions of the local personalities opposed to Sarah Outram and her teaching led to the Dronfield school strike and contributed to its longevity, and how their attitudes made her the target of “an unrelenting campaign of bigotry and misogyny”.⁴⁷

The Managers

Cook contends that “all those who expressed ambivalence about the protest were middle class”⁴⁸, and while she is correct in the cases of JH Harrison and Reverend Grocock,⁴⁹ the main drivers of the campaign against Sarah Outram were also firmly middle-class. The Dronfield school managers were traditional establishment figures: solicitors, businessmen and JPs.⁵⁰ All were male, except for Mrs Alice Grocock, wife of Reverend Grocock, vicar of St John the Baptist Anglican Church in Dronfield. They were united in their opposition to Sarah Outram and Derbyshire Education Committee, although there were differences in tone in how that opposition was expressed.

Most determined of Miss Outram’s critics amongst the managers was Charles Lowcock JP, owner of a sickle manufacturing business. He was instrumental in organising the second of

⁴⁶ Transcript of first Manager’s Meeting from National Archives ED 50-185.

⁴⁷ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p.125.

⁴⁸ Cook, ‘Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education’, p.477.

⁴⁹ See below, pp.91-93.

⁵⁰ Dronfield School Managers Minutes, Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3. ‘Charles Lowcock’. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21165. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019.

the managers' meetings, ensuring that parents, including "several ladies", attended.⁵¹ Lowcock believed hearing "facts"⁵² about Miss Outram's teaching from these mothers would strengthen the case against her. School manager Barker backed Lowcock and expressed a view that many of the managers seemed to share, and which explains their later determination to keep the fight going for so long. Talking of the County Committee he said "... they have condemned us... they have ignored us."⁵³ Lowcock left the parents in no doubt that the purpose of the meeting was "to see if we can in any way strengthen our hands in this case."⁵⁴ Lowcock encouraged parents to criticise Miss Outram. He tried to pin down contradictions between the parents' accounts and Sarah Outram's version of events, focussing particularly on the Gilbert family. Lowcock expressed his frustration with the Derbyshire Education Committee and how they limited the agency of the managers, stating that, "We are only Managers in name; we have practically little power. We passed a resolution asking Miss Outram to resign; that had to go to Derby and they have refused."⁵⁵ Lowcock did not trust Sarah Outram's assurances of future compliance and said, "We have had her up here many times; she has always promised to do better, but she gets worse."⁵⁶ He declared his belief that Miss Outram's teaching was "immoral" and a threat to the "sacred nature of home life".⁵⁷

Lowcock continued his attacks on Miss Outram at the public meetings. There he found a sympathetic audience for his crusading rhetoric. He declared that he "was not a fighting

⁵¹ Dronfield School Managers Minutes, Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3. Meeting held on the 22nd April 1914.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Transcript of Second Manager's Meeting, National Archives ED 50-185.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

man, but individuals, communities, and nations had sometimes to rise up and take action”.⁵⁸ He criticised Derbyshire Education Committee and the limitations imposed on Dronfield managers’ power, stating that Derbyshire “seemed to be taking what power they had.”⁵⁹ He expressed a clear view as to where he thought knowledge about birth and pregnancy belonged, saying “who could keep a secret more than the woman who had practically to perform the increase of population? She kept that subject secret to herself and God”.⁶⁰

The managers, however, were not Sarah Outram’s only critics in the Dronfield community. There were others determined to drive her from her role as headteacher.

Jacob Bradwell

Jacob Bradwell emerged as the figurehead of the parental opposition. He was publican of the Victoria Inn in Dronfield and father of Beatrice, one of the girls in Miss Outram’s class. He appeared to initiate the first complaint and was active throughout the opposition to Sarah Outram’s teaching. The press positioned him prominently, as *The Daily Mirror* front page of Monday February 2nd 1914 showed.⁶¹ Bradwell was photographed staring defiantly at the camera. The Bradwells are the only parents mentioned on the *Mirror’s* front page, making them very much the public face of the protest in this, the first national report of the affair.

⁵⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *The Daily Mirror*, 14 February 1914, front page.

In 1901 Jacob was a lamplighter in Sheffield.⁶² By 1914 he was the freehold owner and publican of the Victoria Inn, Dronfield. He had taken over the running of the inn after his father in law's death and bought the freehold in 1911.⁶³ From a relatively modest social and financial position in 1901, by 1914 Jacob Bradwell had elevated himself socially and economically to property owner and innkeeper. It is possible to see Bradwell as an example of what Weeks describes as a type of "hard-working, God-fearing, non-conformist working man and 'labour aristocrat'"⁶⁴ that had emerged since the end of the nineteenth century. From his self-righteous stance of moral certainty maintained throughout the school strike it is clear Bradwell saw himself as "the epitome of the respectable proletariat"⁶⁵ and the defender of "firm moral standards".⁶⁶

The school strike events were initiated by a letter sent in Bradwell's name to the school managers. They took the complaint very seriously. They called a special meeting on January 14th 1914 to consider the matter, summoning both Sarah Outram and Bradwell to attend. Bradwell declared Sarah Outram's teaching to be "most disgusting and abominable".⁶⁷ Her offence, for Bradwell, was to explain to girls of 11 years old that babies grew inside their mothers and were not brought to the house by a doctor or nurse. These were not facts, Bradwell felt, that girls of that age should know. He offered up other witnesses to back his

⁶² 'Jacob Bradwell'. *Census return for Sheffield, Yorkshire:1901 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG13*; Piece: *4345*; Folio: *113*; Page: *10*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019.

⁶³ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 March 1911, p.7.

⁶⁴ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.76.

⁶⁷ Transcript of first Manager's Meeting from National Archives ED 50-185.

allegations, all men.⁶⁸ He gave no specific examples of how the girls' mothers felt, only a generalised sense of their disapproval.

Bradwell accused Sarah Outram of forbidding the girls to tell their mothers about the teaching, which she strongly denied. This perceived exclusion of parents was central to Bradwell's objections and remained his strongest grievance throughout the strike. He questioned Miss Outram about why she had asked one of the girls in the class, Nora Gilbert⁶⁹, to "stand aside".⁷⁰ Bradwell seemed determined to pin Miss Outram down as knowing that parents such as Mrs Gilbert were unhappy, but carrying on with the teaching regardless, so usurping parental authority. Fear of losing control over their children, and their children's education, was a recurrent theme from Miss Outram's parental opponents. Weeks points out the increasing role of the State in family life, suggesting that compulsory education "had already undermined the pure doctrine of paternal rights, and the Poor Law Act of 1899 had given the Guardians power to remove children from unsuitable parents. Measures in the early twentieth century, many associated with the Liberal reforms after 1906, accentuated the trend."⁷¹ Patrick Joyce comments on the growing "cast of the state"⁷² and for parents like Bradwell, Sarah Outram's teaching was another step, and a step too far, in the increasing interference by professionals in family life.

⁶⁸ Mr Whitworth, Mr Kay and Mr Ward.

⁶⁹ Nora Gilbert later gave a sworn statement about the teaching and was one of the core group removed from school for an extended period.

⁷⁰ Transcript of first Manager's Meeting from National Archives ED 50-185.

⁷¹ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.127.

⁷² Patrick Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State since 1800*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013), p.319.

Bradwell was resolute and remained active in the school strike campaign until its final resolution in July 1914. He was named as calling for a public meeting about Miss Outram's teaching.⁷³ He actively contributed to the meeting when it took place at Dronfield Town Hall on February 3rd 1914.⁷⁴ He criticised the teaching and reasserted his opinion that it was inappropriate for children of that age and how it was "putting a mother in a funny position"⁷⁵ when children had information about pregnancy and childbirth. He said that "when boys started bringing such a subject up at home he thought it was time that something was done to put a stop to it."⁷⁶ Bradwell was active in extending the range of the protests to the National Board of Education and to Dronfield's Member of Parliament, and he led the motion to organise a petition protesting against her teaching.⁷⁷

Bradwell was heavily involved in the second public meeting in April 1914.⁷⁸ He was upset that his, and the other complainants', concerns had not been given the respect he felt they deserved. *The Derbyshire Courier* reported that "Mr. Jacob Bradwell claimed that they had not been treated in a right and proper manner."⁷⁹ He continued to be personally critical of Sarah Outram and what he alleged was her lack of professional competence. He suggested her poor teaching led to few girls gaining scholarships to the local grammar school and that she was too focussed on "Suffragism and this rot."⁸⁰ Misogyny, an opposition to Miss Outram's perceived political sympathies and feeling aggrieved that his opinions were not

⁷³ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 31 January 1914, front page.

⁷⁴ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 4 February 1914, p.3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 28 April 1914, front page.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

being sufficiently valued seemed to motivate Bradwell as much as any specific opposition to the “sex teaching”.

Bradwell continued to keep Beatrice away from school. She was one of the girls who submitted a sworn statement about the teaching she had received.⁸¹ Bradwell was one of eleven parents who appeared before magistrates on the June 22nd 1914, summonsed for keeping their children away from school. Bradwell’s case was adjourned for a month. By the time of the final court hearing,⁸² Beatrice Bradwell had moved to Dronfield Woodhouse for the final months of her compulsory state education, and there Jacob Bradwell’s campaign as a self-styled moral crusader ended.

William Jackson

Of all Sarah Outram’s critics, the one who best exemplified the extremes of misogyny and personal vindictiveness ranged against her was William Jackson, local mine owner and Dronfield town councillor, described in his newspaper obituary as “one of the oldest and best known personalities in the Dronfield area.”⁸³ Jackson had risen from “humble circumstances”⁸⁴ to become the owner of the Cowley mine, a small colliery near Dronfield. He cultivated the image of a no-nonsense man of action and positioned himself as principal cheerleader for the more extreme opponents of Sarah Outram. In January 1914 he wrote to *The Derbyshire Courier* defending the school managers.⁸⁵ It was in his contributions to the public meetings, however, that he was at his most flamboyantly excoriating. At the February

⁸¹ 5 March 1914 National Archives ED 50-185. See Appendix 2.

⁸² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 25 July 1914, p.4.

⁸³ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 15 May 1914, p.5.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 31 January 1914, p.6.

3rd event he heckled the conciliatory Reverend Grocock, shouting “I think it is rotten!”.⁸⁶ Later in the meeting Jackson said: “You do not want a child to know what a midwife should know, do you?”⁸⁷ He also made an accusation of financial impropriety against Sarah Outram, suggesting she had taken pennies from parents for a library scheme that was in fact free. Jackson implied that she was using her position for fraudulent financial advantage,⁸⁸ but the accusation seems to have been an invention. It was not acted upon by the school managers, who would surely have used it against Miss Outram if they could. Jackson’s suggestions illustrate the willingness of Sarah Outram’s opponents to move beyond an examination of her “sex teaching” in their efforts to discredit her.

Jackson’s patronising attitude to women pervaded his contributions to the meeting. He declared that “It was a long time since he saw so many women together there might be a “tea-drinking” or something (laughter)”.⁸⁹ He joked about Miss Outram’s status as an unmarried woman - “Hoo ought to get married, didn’t hoo! (Roars and laughter).”⁹⁰ One of the criticisms of Miss Outram frequently made by her opponents was to question her right, as someone with no experience of marriage, sexual relationships, or motherhood, to speak on those subjects. As Weeks says, in the early twentieth century “Marriage was ...the firm entrance to adult sexual life.”⁹¹ In the eyes of her detractors, Miss Outram had never made that transition.

⁸⁶ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 4 February 1914, p.3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, p.9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p.201.

Jackson responded to the Chairman of the meeting mentioning that Miss Outram had promised not to repeat the controversial teaching by remarking - "Many a lass has said she would not do it again, hasn't she? (Loud laughter)."⁹² The newspapers reported that Jackson's remarks elicited a positive response, indicating that his views were largely shared by the attendees packed into the Town Hall. He concluded by saying - "I would not send one of my children to school – no, I'd rather go to prison first!"⁹³

In many ways, Jackson fulfils the stereotype of the late-Victorian male misogynistic bigot, but it is worth noting that his comments received a great deal of support within the town, from the women and mothers opposed to Miss Outram as well as the male members of the community, and exemplify the extreme bigotry and misogyny directed at Sarah Outram.

The Protesting Parents

There is evidence of significant opposition to Sarah Outram's teaching in the Dronfield community with up to 40 parents keeping their children away from school.⁹⁴ Others attended the public meetings, some wrote to the press, many strongly supported school managers in their efforts to sack Sarah.

The second special managers' meeting recorded "about 20 fathers and mothers" as attending.⁹⁵ Cook argues that mothers and their protests were central to the Dronfield

⁹² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, p.9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *The Belper News*, 26 June 1914, p.5 - reporting the number of summonses issued by Eckington Education Committee.

⁹⁵ Meeting transcript from January 27th 1914. National Archive file ND50-185.

affair.⁹⁶ The records give the names of six women and three men and it would seem that mothers made up the majority of parents at the meeting.⁹⁷ That was certainly *The Derbyshire Courier's* angle in their report titled "Dronfield Mothers on Strike Against Eugenic Teaching. Women Raid Managers' Meeting."⁹⁸ The paper reported "the whole party who presented themselves at the Town Hall numbered between 20 and 30, mostly mothers."⁹⁹ *The Courier*, a paper whose coverage of the Dronfield events tended to be couched in terms unfavourable to Sarah Outram, seemed here to be striving to give the impression of a spontaneous eruption of maternal outrage, although it is clear some of the parents were there at manager Lowcock's invitation.¹⁰⁰ All attendees were opposed to Sarah Outram's teaching. Some were upset and emotional. Mrs Milnes, for example, is recorded as crying when she said, "They have not the same respect for their parents when they know that (Weeping)".¹⁰¹ Mrs Milnes was clearly upset by the effect she thought knowledge about birth and pregnancy would have on the relationship between parent and child, particularly on the perceived loss of "respect" by the child for their mother. Many of the parents, when asked by the managers, were unable to give details of what their children had been told. They either had not asked, or their daughters had not told them.¹⁰² Mrs Crookes claimed Miss Outram had told her class that their mothers were "too ignorant"¹⁰³ to tell them about childbirth themselves. She also called into question Miss Outram's claim that she was responding to questions from the girls, stating that her daughter "has never asked Miss

⁹⁶ Cook, 'Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education', pp.475-495.

⁹⁷ Mrs Crookes, Mrs Street, Mrs Ward, Mrs Penn, Mrs Whitworth and Mrs Milnes, Mr Williams, Mr Gilbert and Mr Oram - National Archive file ND50-185.

⁹⁸ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 31 January 1914, front page.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid and Dronfield School Managers Minutes, Derbyshire Record Office D329-UEA-2 and 3.

¹⁰¹ Meeting transcript from 27th January 27th 1914. National Archive file ND50-185.

¹⁰² Ibid - Mrs Ward - "My daughter says she will not tell me; it is not fit to tell me."

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Outram anything about the babies affair”.¹⁰⁴ Mrs Milnes had obtained more details from her daughter about the teaching. Her comments confirmed the teaching was about pregnancy and birth and that there had been no mention of conception or of sexual relationships. Even this went too far for a woman like Mrs Milnes who, as Cook suggests, embodied a deeply held working-class aspiration towards cleanliness, purity and respectability.¹⁰⁵ Mrs Milnes declared that it was “too disgusting for the children to know”. She believed Miss Outram had told the class not to “go home and tell your mothers and make a bother about it”.¹⁰⁶ Miss Outram always denied telling the girls to keep the teaching secret from their mothers.¹⁰⁷ Mrs Milnes concluded her contribution to the meeting by saying that “I think it is most abominable and shameful. I think it is time this thing was put a stop to”.¹⁰⁸ Sarah Outram had, of course, promised to stop and not to repeat the teaching in the future, but this was not enough for Mrs Milnes and those who thought like her. Anger that parental, particularly motherly, authority had been usurped by Miss Outram fuelled the outrage. One unnamed woman said mothers “were the proper persons to tell their children when they reached a proper age”.¹⁰⁹ Another mother said that Miss Outram “would not have said such a thing if she had been married.”¹¹⁰ This shows again how Sarah Outram’s status as an unmarried professional woman differentiated her from the mothers and marked her as a threat to their lifestyle and values. The mothers at the meeting were unified in their determination not to send their children to school “under any circumstances”¹¹¹ while Miss

¹⁰⁴ Meeting transcript from January 27th 1914. National Archive file ND50-185.

¹⁰⁵ Cook, ‘Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education’, p.486.

¹⁰⁶ Transcript of second special managers’ meeting 27th January 1914. National Archive file ND50-185.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Outram remained in post, suggesting that whatever assurances she gave about future teaching would not be enough. As far as these parents were concerned, there could be no compromise.

The objectors' unyielding attitude carried on into the public meetings held at the Dronfield Town Hall in February and April 1914. *The Derbyshire Courier* covered the first meeting in detail, leading with the headline "Militant Mothers at Dronfield",¹¹² emphasising the attendance of women at the event. *The Courier* might have put the presence of mothers in the foreground, but on "the platform" for the meeting there were only men, and under "others present" the list is also exclusively male. It seems that the female presence was remarked upon because it was so unusual in the context of a public meeting in Dronfield at the time, and while women might indicate their strength of feeling through their presence, they did not occupy any of the positions of status or leadership at the event. The paper described the mood: "The inhabitants had stiffened their backs to defend what they held to be their rights, both as parents and ratepayers, and they were in no mood to be mollified or talked down".¹¹³ The school managers positioned themselves as champions of the two groups mentioned, for the "parents" against the immoral and socially disruptive teaching of Miss Outram, and for the Dronfield "ratepayers" against a profligate Derbyshire County Council.

The meeting was raucous with the attendees shouting and clapping their support for contributions they approved of. Sentiment was strongly in favour of the school managers

¹¹² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

and the protesting parents, and very much against Sarah Outram and Derbyshire Education Committee. Wisely, neither Sarah nor any Derbyshire representatives were present. Most of the speakers who formally addressed the meeting were school managers (such as Lowcock) or Councillors (such as Jackson). One exception was Jacob Bradwell (see above). Other people interjected with comments. Most of these were men. *The Derbyshire Courier* mentions comments by Mrs Street and “another mother”,¹¹⁴ whilst *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* reports a question from “Mrs Robson”.¹¹⁵ Some of the shouts of support and comments from the audience came from women, but overall women’s contributions made a small proportion of what was said at the meeting, despite the impression that might have been given by *The Courier’s* “Militant Mothers at Dronfield” by-line. This was a meeting dominated by men, however much they felt they were speaking on behalf of wives, mothers and daughters. The Reverend Grocock tried to give some balance and was brave enough to say that some people “sided with Miss Outram”.¹¹⁶ He was heckled by the audience. The meeting ended with a resolution to petition their MP for his support and a determination to keep children away from school.

Some of the women at the meeting had one last contribution to make. As people were leaving the hall there was what *The Courier* described as “A Lively Epilogue”.¹¹⁷ Mr JH Harrison, one of four people at the meeting who had voted against its resolutions, was confronted by a group of women who “questioned and argued with such volubility as to occasion him a very lively quarter of an hour”.¹¹⁸ The women clearly felt very strongly, *The*

¹¹⁴ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, front page.

¹¹⁵ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 4 February 1914, p.3.

¹¹⁶ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 7 February 1914, p.9.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Courier describing their actions as “a combined attack”.¹¹⁹ The women were reluctant to allow Harrison, the Miss Outram sympathiser, an easy escape from the meeting, but the event was over and the hall closing, so the “remaining elements then slowly withdrew from the disturbed area”.¹²⁰

The second public meeting was less well attended, but full of zealous outrage.¹²¹ *The Derbyshire Courier* reported that the number of children being kept away from school had dropped from 26 to 19.¹²² Seven children had reached the age of thirteen “and are so outside the jurisdiction of the education authorities”.¹²³ Mr Hall, chairman of the meeting, claimed the previous event had been attended by “400 or 500 people”.¹²⁴ In comparison this second public meeting seems to have been attended by at most 80.¹²⁵ *The Derbyshire Courier* named 24 of the attendees, 16 men and 8 women.¹²⁶ The panel was entirely male and all the speakers named in the newspaper reports were male. Women’s voices were reported as shouting remarks, but no woman was named as a speaker. Numbers may have been down, but resentment against Miss Outram remained high. Mr Lockwood, a parent, remarked bitterly that, despite all their efforts, the objectors had not prevailed and that “Miss Outram was still reigning supreme, and they, the parents were actually sufferers”.¹²⁷ He maintained his position that Miss Outram must go, declaring that she “had lost the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Meeting held on the 22nd April 1914.

¹²² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 28 April 1914, front page

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ According to reports in several newspapers including *Evening Despatch*, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, *Sheffield Daily Independent* and *Derbyshire Times*.

¹²⁶ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 28 April 1914, front page.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

confidence of the parents, and they did not want her to teach their children".¹²⁸ This time, JH Harrison did speak in defence of Sarah Outram, attempting to do so with humour and respect to those who held opposing views, particularly "to the mothers".¹²⁹ He was unsuccessful. *The Evening Despatch* reported that "Women in the audience said "Rot"" in response to what he was saying and that "Mr Harrison was stamped down".¹³⁰ The meeting was determined to assert defiance and to continue the attacks on Miss Outram, but unity amongst the objectors appeared to be crumbling. *The Courier* reported a chaotic end to the meeting when "a heated controversy was carried on among the group in the hall until the caretaker summarily put an end to the matter by turning down the gas".¹³¹

End of the Affair – final court appearances – "We want her shifting."¹³²

Hard core opposition to Sarah Outram continued into June 1914, when the school strike issue reached the magistrates' court.¹³³ The conduct of the court case illustrated many of the tensions and preoccupations that had driven the school strike event to this point. The Derbyshire authorities seem to have taken a pragmatic approach and displayed a desire to move on, whilst the opponents of Sarah Outram took this last public opportunity to repeat their arguments against her, undermine her reputation and have a final attempt to secure her dismissal.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ *The Evening Despatch*, 23 April 1914, p.3.

¹³¹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 28 April 1914, front page.

¹³² *The Derbyshire Courier*, 27 June 1914, p.9.

¹³³ The case was reported in *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Manchester Courier*, *the Yorkshire Post*, *The Nottingham Journal*, *The Daily Citizen* (newspaper of the newly developing Labour Party), *The Daily Mirror*, *The Belper News*, *The Derbyshire Courier*.

By now the number of names sent for prosecution had been reduced to eleven.¹³⁴ Solicitor for the Education Committee, Mr Hall, said they “were only wishful to see the children attend school.”¹³⁵ The education authorities showed no desire for punitive action against striking parents and attempted to focus the proceedings on persuading them to return their children to school.¹³⁶ Early in the proceedings it was established that the Education Committee would be satisfied with the children resuming education at any school and that the parents were happy for their children to attend a school as long as Miss Outram was not teaching there. Despite this obvious opportunity for compromise, defence solicitor Arthur Neal began a relentless attack on Miss Outram.

From the outset Neal attempted to make the hearing a trial of Sarah Outram, her teaching, and her character. He suggested that Miss Outram’s non-attendance was an attempt by the Education Committee to obstruct the defence, but school attendance officer Peter Thompson explained that it would have been highly unusual for a headteacher to attend such a prosecution.¹³⁷ Neal continued to focus on Miss Outram, despite her absence. He began not with questions about the content of the sex education, which was purportedly at the centre of the dispute, but focussed instead on Miss Outram’s teaching about women’s suffrage. Neal alleged Miss Outram had read to her class from militant newspapers; had denounced the police and criticised all those involved in the detention of suffragettes; and had taught about the “wickedness” of force-feeding women in prison. Neal suggested Miss Outram’s behaviour was dangerously subversive. Thompson did his best not to be drawn,

¹³⁴ *The Belper News*, 26 June 1914, p.5.

¹³⁵ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 27 June 1914, p.9.

¹³⁶ Coal Aston, Dronfield Woodhouse and Unstone schools were mentioned by the Attendance Officer as other possibilities.

¹³⁷ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 27 June 1914, p.9.

saying that, “The only objection as to her teaching was eugenic teaching.”¹³⁸ Even now, at this late stage in the affair, Sarah Outram’s detractors referred back to accusations from 1911 in their determination to discredit her.

Neal accused Sarah of writing to the “public press justifying her teaching of the sex question to little children 11 years old”.¹³⁹ He was attempting to place responsibility for the press furore around the school strike on her. Press interest in the affair was clearly initiated by the ‘leaking’ of the contents of the school manager’s first meeting about the sex education complaints, a move designed to discredit Miss Outram and help the managers’ remove her from her post. Sarah was later interviewed by newspapers, but there is no evidence that she initiated any press interest or coverage, indeed she seems to have wanted to keep as low a profile as possible throughout the affair.

When Neal moved on to Miss Outram’s ‘sex teaching’ he exaggerated the accusations against her. He asked Thompson if he knew that “without permission of any sort, she was week by week and sometimes every day in the week teaching these children things relating to the sexes?”¹⁴⁰ There is no evidence that Miss Outram was teaching controversial sex education with anything like the frequency, or in the systematic way, suggested in Neal’s question. Even in the original accusations the objections were about specific actions relating to her answering questions and the reading of the two stories. Neal was broadening the accusations to discredit Miss Outram before the magistrates. Thompson was dismissive of Neal’s suggestions, replying “If it had occurred I think I should have heard of it. I think you

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

have been misinformed, Mister Neal.”¹⁴¹ Neal, and by extension the protesting parents and school managers, appear to have been more interested in the impact of the accusations, rather than their veracity.

Neal returned to Sarah Outram’s alleged suffrage teaching. He declared that “Mrs. Pankhurst had been proclaimed as a heroine; forcible feeding had been denounced, but nothing had been said about the wickedness of arson by whomsoever it had been committed. The children had had put into their little minds defiance of the law as a principle which was taught in State schools, supported and endowed with State money”.¹⁴² Neal deliberately conflated the sex education teaching, the suggested defiance of parental wishes and the teaching of suffragism to portray Sarah as a dangerously radical threat to society and a corrupting influence on young female minds. Because of her, he suggested, the parents could be said to have a “reasonable excuse” for not sending their children to the school at which she taught. He was quite clear that the defendants wanted Miss Outram removed from her post and that they “had come to the conclusion that a change would do good.”¹⁴³

Defendant Joseph Spooner expressed the position of the remaining school strike parents when questioned. It was suggested to Spooner that there was “a persecution of the head teacher?”¹⁴⁴ Spooner bluntly replied, “Yes, we want her shifting.”¹⁴⁵ Hall asked if “she

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ *The Belper News*, 26 June 1914, p.5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

should be given another chance?"¹⁴⁶ but Spooner was not interested in forgiveness or compromise and replied "She has done wrong – why don't you shift her?"¹⁴⁷ Spooner added, perhaps voicing his perception that the professional teacher and the working man were being held to different standards, "If I did wrong, I should have to flit".¹⁴⁸

The magistrates dismissed the cases against five of the parents. They had sickness certificates, were entitled to exemptions from school or their children were already attending other schools. The other cases were adjourned for a month, the magistrates hoping arrangements would be made for the remaining children. Beatrice Bradwell was about to begin at Dronfield Woodhouse, so of the 11 cases who had been summonsed, only 5 remained to be resolved.

On July 25th 1914 *The Derbyshire Courier* reported "Dronfield Children Return to School".¹⁴⁹ The paper said:-"Apparently the last has been heard of the Dronfield eugenics "school absences" case."¹⁵⁰ At the final hearing, Attendance Officer Thompson reported to the court that he had received notification that "as all the children had now returned to school, and the instructions of the magistrates had been carried out, no evidence would be offered."¹⁵¹ Thompson asked for the summonses to be withdrawn and the magistrates agreed.

¹⁴⁶ *The Belper News*, 26 June 1914, p.5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 25 July 1914, p.4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Conclusion –

After months of controversy and acrimony, the Dronfield school strike petered out in July 1914. The strike was a unique event in early 20th century England. It was sparked by Sarah Outram's teaching and fuelled by the controversy around it, which sparked great national interest. Chapter 3 has shown that Dronfield exemplified many of the forces that existed in communities across pre-First World War Britain. There were the patriarchal, and sometimes misogynistic, attitudes that united men across class divisions; the feelings of shame and disgust towards sex and the physical process of birth expressed by middle class conservatives (like manager Lockwood) and socially aspirational working class women (like Mrs Milnes); disquiet about how far children, particularly girls, should be taught about the realities of motherhood; and tensions between the different strata of educational administration so blatantly exposed in the Dronfield school building dispute.

These forces may have existed in other places, but chapter 3 shows that it was in Dronfield that they combined in a specific and individual way to create the environment that provoked and sustained the unique phenomenon of the Dronfield school strike.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore how much the Dronfield school strike was the result of the actions of one pioneering, reformist woman and how much it was the expression of the conflicting social forces of the early twentieth century. The research has discovered that both the character and actions of Sarah Outram, and the social forces at work in 1914 contributed to the Dronfield events, but they were also provoked and sustained by specific local circumstances peculiar to Dronfield.

When I began to research the Dronfield school strike story I thought I might be helping to rediscover a forgotten feminist icon in Sarah Outram. Part of me was hoping to find in her a zealous reformer and campaigner in the Pankhurst or Fawcett mould who battled to change education for the benefit of the young women of England. The character who emerged, however, was more complex and contradictory, and in many ways more interesting and compelling as a result.

Sarah Outram was a remarkable woman - brave, tenacious, determined, steadfast – with a strong sense of professional responsibility and a determination to do what she perceived was best for the children in her care, preparing them with honesty and pragmatism for the world in which they were to take their place. She saw it as her duty to educate them about the issues facing women (such as the struggle for women's suffrage) and to make sure they were not left in disabling ignorance if their own families (mothers in particular) neglected to prepare them with information about pregnancy and motherhood, experiences that lay in the future for most of them when they became adult women. Her own thinking, and to

some extent her actions, position her in sympathy with reforming movements of the early twentieth century – women’s suffrage, social purity and social hygiene – but it would be misleading to see her as someone who pursued a systematic programme of reform. When the Dronfield scandal erupted and she found herself and her actions discussed nationally, she did not grab the opportunity presented to proselytise her views or position herself as a public campaigner. Her position as headteacher and her work in school was more important to her. She was determined to preserve her position and largely kept out of the fierce public debate surrounding her teaching. She was not like Theodora Bonwick who campaigned nationally and had a planned approach and agenda.¹⁵²

Sarah Outram was not willing to risk her career, or the position of status and influence she had carved out for herself within Dronfield, to make a stand over the principles of sex education. As early as the first meeting with the school managers¹⁵³ she promised not to repeat the teaching, without admitting that she was at fault to have undertaken it. On the few occasions we can find her on record about the affair¹⁵⁴ she never concedes she did anything wrong, but despite feeling that right was on her side she quickly conceded authority to the school managers. This apparently contradictory mixture of principle and pragmatism is one of the features that makes Sarah such an interesting character. She had made promises to the school managers before and apparently broken them but as regards her “eugenics teaching” she appears to have kept her word.

¹⁵² See chapter 2, pp.62-64.

¹⁵³ Transcript of first meeting of school managers National Archive ED50-185.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter 1 ‘Sarah Outram in her Own Words’, pp.33-40.

Sarah Outram did not set out to be a pioneering reformer or persist in fighting for reform when significant obstacles thwarted her. Rather she seems to have been a woman of principle struggling to live those ideals in a world full of challenges that compelled her to compromise. She may well exemplify the dilemmas and experiences faced by many women of the period, struggling to enact positive change in a paternalistic, hierarchical and often misogynistic environment. Most of those everyday mundane battles pass unseen, but fortuitously for us, circumstances thrust the spotlight of national publicity on Sarah Outram for a brief period enabling us to see her courage, determination and compromises.

Chapter 2 explored the social forces influencing events in Dronfield in 1914. Ideas like women's suffrage and social purity, highly influential in informing Sarah Outram's views and behaviour, contributed to an atmosphere in which traditionally minded, socially conservative men like the Dronfield school managers felt attacked and threatened. Working class elements of the Dronfield community also found the ideas behind Sarah Outram's teaching challenging. A significant portion of the Dronfield community seem to have been skilled upper-working class, aspirational towards respectability and conscious of their social status. For them, knowledge of the facts around birth and motherhood were entangled with feelings of shame, disgust and social impropriety, and as such a threat to achieving their aspirations.

Debates over sex education did provoke national controversy and disagreement, but what happened in Dronfield appears to be unique in pre-First World War England. Others, notably Theodora Bonwick, whilst facing disagreement over their methods were not subjected to the sustained assault carried out against Sarah Outram, neither were pupils removed from

their classes. The newspaper articles, reports and letters covering the period of the Dronfield school strike give an impression of public feeling toward sex education in 1914, and the level of consensus is perhaps surprising. There were extreme views expressed on both sides of the argument but overall there was general agreement that the responsibility for educating children about birth and motherhood lay with parents, with teachers providing a back-up when the home failed to give children the information they needed.¹⁵⁵ *The Daily Mirror* summed up this view in February 1914 under the headline “Mothers Who Tell Their Girls - Home First, but School if Parents Shirk Their Duty, Say Our Correspondents.”¹⁵⁶

The teaching profession seems to have had little support for formalising sex education in schools. In February 1914 *The Daily Mail* reported the NUT Lady Teacher’s Committee as saying giving children information as Miss Outram had done “would not be wise or practicable”¹⁵⁷ and in March the East Derbyshire Teachers’ Association expressed their support for Miss Outram’s difficult situation, but explicitly did not endorse “the teaching of eugenics in the elementary school”.¹⁵⁸ The Board of Education investigation into the Dronfield events shows the Board wanted to distance themselves from such a potentially divisive and controversial issue as rapidly as possible.¹⁵⁹ Citing that Scripture (the area of the curriculum in which Sarah Outram’s disputed teaching had first taken place) was a matter for individual schools, and that teacher employment was the domain of local education

¹⁵⁵ See chapter 2, pp.56-64.

¹⁵⁶ *The Daily Mirror*, 6 February 1914, p.11.

¹⁵⁷ *The Daily Mail*, 5 February 1914, p.3.

¹⁵⁸ *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 23 March 1914, p.8.

¹⁵⁹ National Archive ED50-185.

committees, they disentangled themselves from the Dronfield controversy without having to take a position on the delivery of 'sex teaching' in schools.

The initial complaints about Sarah Outram's teaching could have been dealt with and defused without any recourse to strikes or prolonged disputes. Sarah Outram, without ever apologising for her teaching, acknowledged that undertaking it without consulting parents or managers in advance had been a misjudgement and promised, in the light of the strength of opposition, not to carry it out again. If the managers had taken her at her word the matter could have been concluded at that point without any further controversy. They had their reasons, however, to make more of what had happened. They did not trust Sarah Outram, following the previous suffrage controversy and their repeated conflicts with her in preceding years. They were determined to assert their authority over her. As HMI Hands put it - "It is certain that a large section of the parents are opposed to the retention of Miss Outram, but Dronfield is a very funny place and I imagine that as Miss Outram is not popular with her managers the agitation is being kept alive in order to make the place too hot for her to remain."¹⁶⁰ When the managers' efforts to dismiss her were not supported by Derbyshire Education Committee this gave them an opportunity to extend their existing battle with Derbyshire (over the school buildings) on to another front.¹⁶¹

Throughout the dispute it seems to have been the school managers and the other protestors who fuelled and sustained press and public interest in the affair. Sarah Outram

¹⁶⁰ WJ Hands handwritten note in National Archives ED50-185.

¹⁶¹ See 'Building Dispute' section in chapter 3, pp.75-78.

was interviewed by the press¹⁶² but the evidence strongly suggests it was her opponents that initiated and sustained the press coverage. Early reporting of the affair contained detailed transcripts from the school managers' first meetings about the Outram complaints.¹⁶³ These match those held in the Board of Education investigation file and could only have been supplied to the press by an insider, perhaps even clerk to the managers Herbert Lucas himself.¹⁶⁴ When the parental protestors were summonsed to court in June 1914 Arthur Neal, the defence solicitor, appeared to be playing to a public audience, fully aware that the court events would be reported in the press.¹⁶⁵ Even at this late stage Sarah Outram's opponents wanted to publicly discredit her. Their final act of vindictiveness had limited success. They may have reinforced opinions already held by those opposed to Miss Outram, but they were unsuccessful in removing her from her post. She continued as headmistress until 1922. Sarah's opponents may then have finally succeeded in ousting her, but they do not seem to have irrevocably tarnished her name in the eyes of the Dronfield community. In 1923 she was elected to Dronfield Urban District Council, the first woman ever to be elected to the Council.¹⁶⁶

The final newspaper reference to the Dronfield "Eugenics Controversy" occurred on July 25th 1914.¹⁶⁷ Only a few days later, at the beginning of August, Britain entered war in Europe.

¹⁶² See chapter 1 'Sarah Outram in her Own Words', pp.32-39.

¹⁶³ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 17 January 1914, front page; *The Derbyshire Times*, 17 January 1914, p.7.

¹⁶⁴ National Archives ED50-185.

¹⁶⁵ The case was reported in *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Manchester Courier*, *the Yorkshire Post*, *The Nottingham Journal*, *The Daily Citizen* (newspaper of the newly developing Labour Party), *The Daily Mirror*, *The Belper News*, *The Derbyshire Courier*.

¹⁶⁶ *The Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 31 March 1914, p.6.

¹⁶⁷ *The Derbyshire Courier*, 25 July 1914, p.4. – By-line "Eugenics Controversy. Dronfield Children Return to School"

What we now call the First World War and its aftermath was to dominate every aspect of British life for years to come. As a result, little further progress was made in education around birth, motherhood and relationships immediately following the Dronfield affair. Even without the profound interruption of the war, it seems unlikely positive change would have happened immediately following the Dronfield events. The reactions to Sarah Outram's teaching suggest the existence in early 1914 of some public sympathy for introducing more sex education for girls, but without support from organisations such as the teaching unions or the Board of Education it is hard to see it taking place. Sarah Outram's teaching therefore probably had little-short term impact on the development of educational practice. We cannot know for sure, but the attacks on her professionalism, motives and character, and the concerted effort to remove her from her post, may in fact have deterred other women teachers from venturing into such potentially hazardous educational areas.

A study of the Dronfield school strike is significant as it provides us with rich insights into social movements and personal life in the early twentieth century. Through Sarah Outram's experiences we can observe the actions of a working female teacher who struggled to make positive progress and implement practical reform at a grassroots level, and clearly see the problems she faced attempting this in a male-dominated, socially conservative environment. The Dronfield story shows how wider social movements, such as the fight for women's suffrage and social purity, were enacted and impacted upon everyday life at a local level. It illustrates the tensions within the multi-layered educational administrative system at the time, and how personal ambitions and animosities could disrupt that system. Contemporary reaction to the Dronfield events showed how public opinion might be

sympathetic to an issue like sex education but legislators, decision makers and professionals (in this case the teaching profession) slow to respond.

Finally, the Dronfield school strike of 1914 is a fascinating human story full of vivid characters and compelling drama. As such it deserves to be better remembered, particularly by the Dronfield community.

Appendix 1

The stories Miss Outram read to her pupils.

Transcribed from National Archive file ED 50-185

The First Story.

How many of us have made pretty houses and churches and towers out of blocks or clothes pins or sticks? Why, all of us, haven't we? But we could not make them if we did not have the blocks or the clothes pins or the sticks, could we? No, only God can create, that is, make things out of something we cannot see.

Shall I tell you a story of how God made things in 'the beginning', a true story?

Well, once upon a time there was no world at all. Doesn't it seem strange to think about it? And everything was dark. But away back in the beginning God was there just the same. And God said, "let there be light and there was light."

Then God made this wonderful world that we live in with the high mountains, rivers, lakes and the ocean, and God made plants, the grass and the flowers and trees,

Now, how do you suppose God planned to always have plants on the earth? God said, "Let them have seed, each after its kind." So on the grass He made grass seeds to grow, and on the flowers, flower seeds, and on the trees, tree seeds, "each after its kind." He knew that by-and-by, when they were ripe, they would drop down into the ground; there they would keep soft and warm for a while, then they would grow into more plants, with seeds, so there would always be plants on the earth. "And God saw that it was good." He was glad that He had made the plants with their seeds.

Then God wanted to have fish in the waters, so He made a mother fish to lay eggs in the water and a father fish to swim about over the eggs and take care of them. God's plan was for these eggs to hatch into little fish, which would grow into big fish "they would lay eggs, these eggs would hatch into other fish and they would always be fish in the waters. "And God saw that it was good."

Then God made birds to fly in the air, like the blue birds and the robins and the sparrows. Some He made to walk about on the earth, like the chickens and turkeys; others to swim like the ducks and geese. He made mother birds to lay eggs in their nests and father birds to help take care of them. These birds were to hatch into little birds; they were to grow up and lay eggs too. These eggs were to hatch into other birds so there would always be birds and chickens and ducks on the earth. "And God saw that it was good." He was glad He had made the birds and their eggs.

Next God made the animals of the forests, lions, tigers, bears and oh! so many others, and their cattle, cows, horses, and sheep, you know, and animals for our pets like the bunny and the dog and the cat. Now how do you suppose God planned always to have animals on the earth? Every living thing was to come from a seed or an egg. We saw how it was with the plants and the seeds, and the birds and their eggs but the animals God made could not make nests and lay eggs, because they were so much larger. Such large nests and so many of them would be in the way on the earth. The eggs would get broken if the mother animal tried to keep them warm, as the mother bird does, because she is so heavy. So God did not make the mother animal to lay eggs. Instead, the eggs stayed safe inside the mother animal's body until they grew into little animals right there. Then, when they were large

enough, God brought them out and the mother took care of them until they grew big enough to take care of themselves. “And God saw that it was good.”

Perhaps some of us knew before of God’s plan for the animals. I know I know of a lovely teacher who told the boys and girls in school about God’s plan for the animals and they had a mother bunny in her cage right in the schoolroom. The children knew that the little bunnies were coming and they were so careful of the mother when they fed her with lettuce and cabbage. One morning when they went to school the little bunnies were there in the cage and they were all very happy.

But I must tell you of God’s plan for the people. “In the beginning” there were no people on earth and God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’, that is, like ourselves. So He made a man, tall and strong like father, to take care of the plants and animals. And when God saw that the man was lonely He made a beautiful woman like mother to be his wife and to help him. “And God saw that it was good” The people were the best of all that God had made, so God planned always to have people on the earth.

Shall I tell you about the very first little baby? Just think, there had never been a little baby on the earth. God knew it would be the most precious of all. He wanted it kept very safe from all harm. So He made a tiny egg, so small that it could not even be seen, and a little room, on purpose for it to grow in, right inside the mother’s body. It stayed there and grew for a long time, until it was a real baby. Then when it had grown enough God brought the baby out and the mother took him in her arms. There he was, the very first baby boy.

Nobody had ever seen a baby before, and when the mother saw his little body and his little feet and hands, and his little cunning face, she thought “why he just looks like a little man” She was very thankful and happy and she said “I have gotten a man from the Lord.” This is

part of God's wonderful plan always to have people on earth. Once each of you was a tiny egg inside of mother's body. And when father came and took mother for his wife, to live with her, and to take care of her, the little egg began to grow and grow into a real little baby. Mother knew you were there and she loved you. She carried you there near her heart a long, long time while you were growing. The food she ate made you grow too, so she was very careful to eat only good food and take nothing that might harm her little baby. You were really a part of her. The fresh air she breathed made pure blood for you, and often during the day she wondered what you would be like, whether your eyes would be blue or brown, and prayed God to make you a good child.

Then when you had grown enough and mother had carried you there nearly a year, God opened the door for you and brought you out into this world.

The second story.

"Where is Jack?" Asked Mr Rogers, as he came in at Six O'clock. "He was late last night for dinner and he's going to be late again to-night. 'I saw him with that Jones girl'" answered his sister Dorothy. She is a new girl in town, very pretty, but terribly bold. I'm sure she's not nice. I do wish Jack wouldn't go with her."

Presently the door opened and Jack came in.

"Jack", said his father, "I want to show you something" Relief and interest showed instantly in the boy's face. The dread question was not to be asked after all.

Mr Rogers led the way to his workroom in the attic. There were his carpenter's bench and his tools and his lathe, and in the corner was the dynamo that worked it. Jack had seen them all many times.

"What is it, father", he asked. Mr Rogers laid his hand upon the dynamo. "Jack, by means of this, a mysterious power becomes mine. We call it electricity, but no one knows what it is. We only know that if we treat it in the right way it will enable us to do wonderful things. It will work our mills, and light our houses and streets, and run our cars. It will enable man to do more than any other power that has been discovered. But at the same time, if you treat it in the wrong way, it will strike you dead."

"Yes, father, I know that" said Jack.

His father turned towards him with an earnestness that Jack had never seen in his face.

"There is another power, very like this in its results. There is the mysterious feeling that men have for women and women have the men. Treat that right, and it will bless your life and ennoble it, and make you ten times, yes, a hundred times, the man you could ever be without it. Nothing of earth will do so much for you if you treat it right. But, treat that feeling wrong, and it will curse you, and blast your life, and kill your immortal soul. For a moment, they looked at each other square in the eye. Then together they went downstairs in silence. In the hall below, Jack put his hand on his father's arm. "' know what you mean, father, and I will follow the right," he whispered.

Appendix 2

Sworn statements from pupils in Miss Outram's class

Transcribed from National Archive file ED 50-185

Statement of Winifred Milnes

I Winifred Milnes of Dronfield in the County of Derby do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am 12 years of age and am in Standard 6 at the Dronfield Council Girls' School. The teacher of that Standard is Miss Outram, the Head Teacher.

Sometime before Christmas during a Scripture Lesson Miss Outram told me and the other girls in Standard 6 to close our Bibles and then she read us a story out of a book describing human life. This story said that God placed an egg in the Mother's body and then God opened a door and the baby was born; Miss Outram told us that it took nine months for the baby to be born. Miss Outram has also told us that women have terms, that no woman could have a baby without having terms and that they ended when she was about fifty years of age. She also said that a man should not get married until he was 28 and a woman 25 years of age, as a woman was not strong enough to have a child before she was 25 years old.

Miss Outram also said that a child was circumcised by a Doctor who nicked the baby's bladder and that a barren woman was a woman who had not had any children.

After Miss Outram read the said story she said "Now girls, you must not go home and make mischief of what I have told you".

Miss Outram also told us that all the time a child was developing the Mother's milk was coming and that artificial milk was not good enough for the baby because it had to be mixed different ways and Mother's milk was ready mixed and had everything in it.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914.

Before me,

J. R. Johnson.

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby

Statement of Elizabeth Booker

I Elizabeth Booker of Dronfield in the County of Derby do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am 13 years of age and was up to last August in standard 6 at the Dronfield Council School. The teacher of that standard is Miss Sarah Elizabeth Outram, the Head Teacher of the Girls School. For some time up to last August Miss Outram gave me and the other children in the said standard instruction as to how babies are born. Some of the girls asked Miss Outram questions, but she refused to answer saying that it would soon be passed in Parliament that all teachers would have to teach that subject and she did not want mothers on the doorstep complaining of it. A girl stayed away from school one day and we asked Miss Outram what she was away for; Miss Outram told us it was menstruation or change of life and at that

period we ought to keep our hands out of cold water. Triplets were born in Dronfield and the girls asked Miss Outram where they came from. She drew us a sketch of the womb on the Blackboard and explained how triplets and twins were formed. She said that a woman should not put her feet on to the floor until a fortnight after she had been confined. She often said when a girl stayed away from school, that if the Mother could not do her duty to the children and send them to school she ought not to have them as it was the mother's fault if she had so many children. One day she drew the outline of a naked man on the blackboard. The drawings on the blackboard could be seen by some of the other classes, as the screen dividing standard 6 from the other rooms, is a glass screen.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914.

Before me,

R.A. Barber

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby

Statement of Jeanette Ward and Elizabeth Street

We Jeanette Ward and Elizabeth Street both of Dronfield in the County of Derby do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

We are each twelve years of age and are in Standard 6 at the Dronfield Council School. The Teacher of that standard is Miss Sarah Elizabeth Outram, the Head Teacher of the Girls

School. For some time past Miss Outram has been giving us and the other girls in Standard 6 instruction as to how children are born. She has told us that babies come out of our mother's stomachs and that it takes nine months for a baby to develop; that a woman who is expecting a baby ought not to put our hands in cold water, and that she ought, if possible, to lie down every afternoon, with her legs cocked up; that if a woman is bad tempered while she's bearing a child, the child will be bad tempered when it is born, and if a woman is good-tempered the child will be good-tempered; that circumcision means to cut the foreskin so as to let the water pass through. Miss Outram also told us that on one occasion when she was returning home by the drunken train (i.e. the last train at night) she saw some men and women in the same carriage doing something very dreadful, but she would not say what it was. She also told us that a woman ought not get married under twenty five years of age because she would not be strong enough to bear a child; that whilst a woman was bearing a child, nature was forming a kind of food in her breast for the baby; and that a woman ought to suckle her child if possible.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914,

Before me,

Joseph R. Johnson.

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby.

Statement of Beatrice Bradwell

I Beatrice Ethel Bradwell of Dronfield in the County of Derby solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am 12 years of age and am in Standard 6 in the Dronfield Girls School. The teacher of that Standard was Miss Outram, the Head Mistress.

Miss Outram has told us where babies come from. One day she took a book from the top of her desk in the Scripture lesson and read that, when we are young, like me, there is an egg forms in our inside and when we grow up to motherhood the egg bursts, and we have a baby. She said she had had the book sent from America. I was only in her class two or three weeks. I cannot remember any more at present. She told us more but I have forgotten.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914.

Before me,

Joseph R. Johnson.

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby

Statement of Sarah Williams

I Sarah Elizabeth Williams of Dronfield in the County of Derbyshire do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am 12 years of age and am in Standard 6 in the Dronfield Girls School. The teacher of that Standard is Miss Outram, the Head Mistress.

Miss Outram told us that inside the Mother there was a germ and it kept growing until it was as big as an ostrich egg and it took nine months to develop. She then told us when the

baby came it was in a very thin skin and the Mother had to cut it open and the baby would come out. She said that people could tell when anyone was going to have a baby because there was a round ring round their eyes.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914.

Before me,

R.A. Barber

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby

Statement of Doris Harrison

I Doris Harrison of Dronfield in the County of Derby do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am 12 years of age and am in Standard 6 at the Dronfield Council Girls School. The Teacher of that Standard is Miss Outram the Head Mistress.

I was admitted to Miss Outram's class in November last.

Miss Outram told us about the forced feeding of Suffragettes in prison. Miss Outram said "One woman went to prison and she would not eat anything so, to open her mouth, they broke her teeth and put something down her throat".

Another time Miss Outram told us how babies were brought into the world. First of all she said God put a germ there and then it developed into a baby. When God thought the baby

was ready to come out he brought it out of the Mother. Miss Outram said that a mother who was going to have a baby should not drink wine or spirits and that she should rest a bit in the afternoon with her legs up on a couch. She also said that a girl of twelve should not dip her fingers into cold water or it might injure the intestines.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914,

Before me,

J. R. Johnson.

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby.

Statement of Norah Gilbert

I Norah Gilbert of Dronfield in the County of Derbyshire do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

I am twelve years of age and am in Standard 7 at the Dronfield Girls School. The Teacher of that Standard is Miss Outram, the Head Mistress.

Miss Outram has at various times told the Girls in Standards 6 and 7 including myself:-

That women ought not to marry until they are twenty five years of age, as they are not strong enough to bear children before that age

That babies come out of Mothers' wombs and they are there nine months before they mature

That all the time babies were growing God provided milk for them in their Mothers' breasts.

That while baby is in the womb if the Mother was bad tempered the baby would be bad tempered. Some baby boys could not pass water and the Doctor had to cut them because a membrane had grown across the place where they pass water

That a barren woman was a woman who could not bear children.

I told Miss Outram that Mother did not wish me to know any more. Miss Outram afterwards asked me whether I would rather stay in the Class or go out whilst she was giving the instruction. I stayed in.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at Dronfield in the County of Derby this fifth day of March 1914,

Before me,

J. R. Johnson.

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby.

Appendix 3

A selection of pictures and photographs.

Dronfield Council School



Postcard showing the Dronfield Council Elementary School building. The use of the term “Council Schools” dates the image as post 1903.¹

¹ ‘Dronfield Council School’, Dronfield Heritage Trust Archive, DHT-006991.jpg.

The Daily Mirror

LATEST CERTIFIED CIRCULATION MORE THAN 800,000 COPIES PER DAY.

No. 3,206.

Published at the D.P.O.,
10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1914

One Halfpenny.

SHOULD GIRLS BE TOLD? MOTHERS UP IN ARMS AGAINST A TEACHER.



Group of four girls, pupils at the school.



Mr. and Mrs. Bradwell and their little daughter.



Another group of girl pupils.



Miss Outram.

Miss Outram, the headmistress at the council school at Dronfield, has focused public attention on a question which has long divided educational experts into opposing camps. She has been explaining to some of the senior girls before they left to make a start in life, the origin of birth, and this has aroused a storm of indignation,

some of the mothers demanding her resignation. Some of the parents, including Mr. and Mrs. Bradwell, have kept their daughters away from school in consequence. A full report of the situation will be found on page 3, together with the views of experts.—(Daily Mirror photographs.)

Sarah Outram is photographed full length on the right. Centre left are Jacob Bradwell and his wife Ada, with a photograph of daughter Beatrice Bradwell centre right. Above and below are photographs of other, unnamed, girls from Sarah Outram's class.

² *The Daily Mirror*, 2 February 1914, front page.

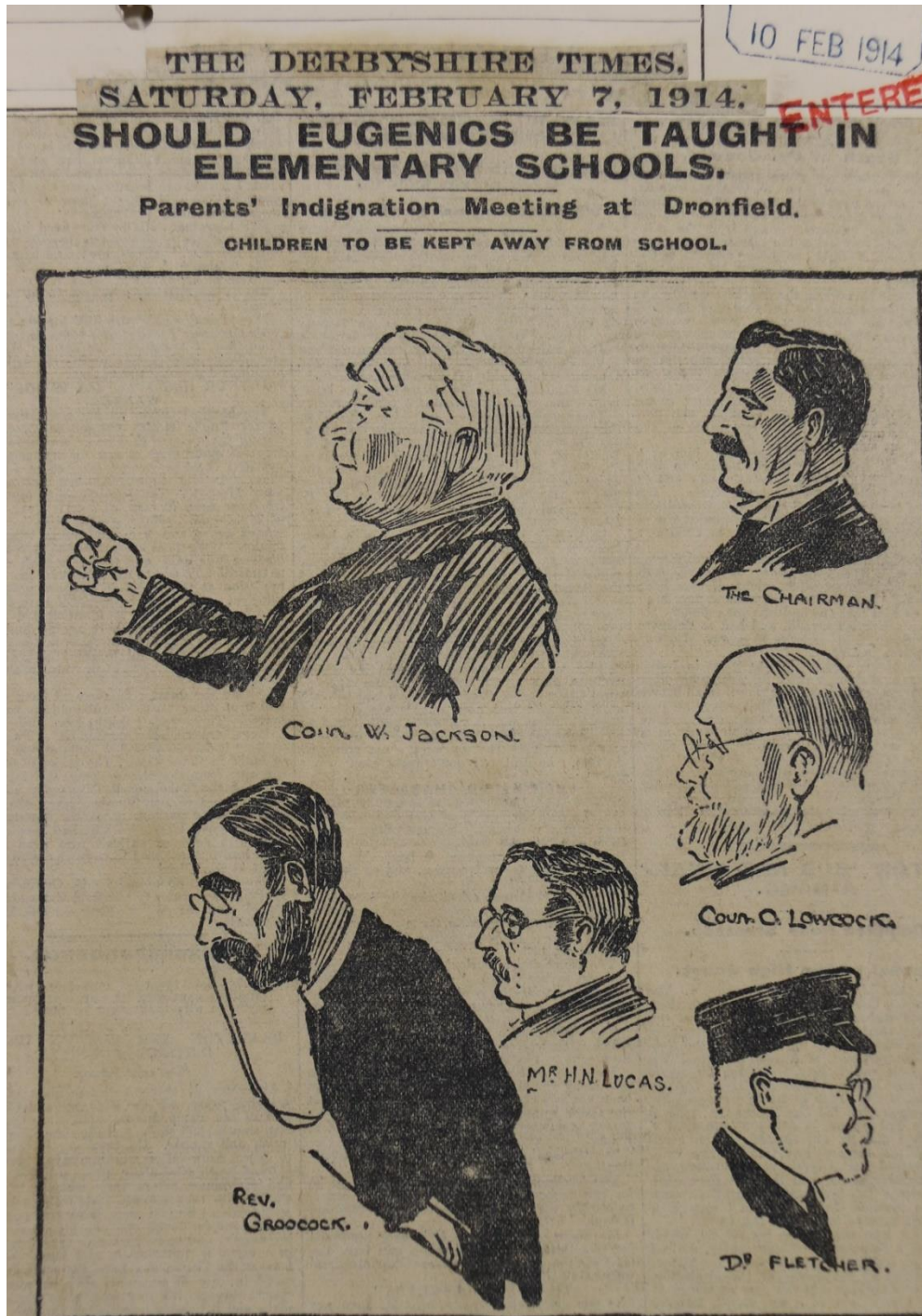
Picture from *The Weekly Dispatch*³



Picture of Sarah Outram surrounded by some of the girls from her class. None are named, but it would appear to be Beatrice Bradwell circled at the top.

³ *The Weekly Dispatch*, undated. From a cutting in the National Archive file ED 50-185, page stamped '10 Feb 1914'.

Some of the School Managers and Local Councillors at the First Public Meeting, from an illustration in *The Derbyshire Times*, 7th February 1914⁴



⁴ *The Derbyshire Times*, 7 February 1914, p.12. From a cutting in the National Archive file ED 50-185.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

National Archives

Board of Education Investigation into Dronfield School Strike ED 50-185

Dronfield School Building Dispute ED 21-2992

Derbyshire Record Office

Dronfield Council Elementary School logbook 1900 – 1922 D276-2-2

Dronfield Council Elementary School managers' minutes 1900 – 1922 D329-UEA- 2 and 3

Census records

'Samuel Outram'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire: 1871 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG10*; Piece: *3623*; Folio: *73*; Page: *1*; GSU roll: *841847*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019

'Samuel Outram'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1881 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG11*; Piece: *3444*; Folio: *96*; Page: *39*; GSU roll: *1341824*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019

'Sarah Outram'. *Census return for Sedbergh, Yorkshire:1891 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG12*; Piece: *3489*; Folio: *38*; Page: *10*; GSU roll: *6098599*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019

'Jacob Bradwell'. *Census return for Sheffield, Yorkshire:1901 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG13*; Piece: *4345*; Folio: *113*; Page: *10*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019

'Sarah Outram'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1901 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG13*; Piece: *3261*; Folio: *5*; Page: *1*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 12th March 2019

'Jacob Bradwell'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: *RG14*; Piece: *21167*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019

'Charles Lowcock'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21165. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019

'Sarah Outram'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21166. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 30th September 2019

'George Payne'. *Census return for Dronfield, Derbyshire:1911 England Census*; The National Archives; Kew, London, England, Class: RG14; Piece: 21167. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 26th March 2019

Civil registration Death Index

'Emma Outram' *England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915* [database on-line] Original data: General Register Office. *England and Wales Civil Registration Indexes*. London, England: General Register Office. © Crown copyright. Published by permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Office for National Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> 28th January 2019

Newspaper Reports and Articles

The Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald, 24 May 1902, p. 5

The Derbyshire Courier 7 March 1911, p. 7

The Derbyshire Courier 11 February 1913, p. 5

International Woman Suffrage News 15 July 1913, p. 7

The Common Cause 12 September 1913, p. 5

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph 24 September 1913, p. 4

The Vote 19 December 1913, pp. 8 and 9

The Derbyshire Courier 7 January 1914, front page

The Derbyshire Times 24 January 1914, p. 7

The Derbyshire Courier 31 January 1914, front page and p.6

The Daily Mirror 2 February 1914, front page

The Western Daily Press 3 February 1914, p. 10

The Daily Record and Mail 4 February 1914, p. 6

The Manchester Guardian 4 February 1914, p. 16

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph 4 February 1914, p. 3

The Daily Mail 5 February 1914, p. 3

The Sheffield Daily Independent 5 February 1914, p. 5
The Daily Mirror 6 February 1914, p. 11
The Sheffield Daily Independent 6 February 1914, p. 4
The Derbyshire Courier 7 February 1914, front page and p. 9
The Sheffield Daily Independent 7 February 1914, p. 12
The Yorkshire Evening Post 7 February 1914, p. 9
The Derbyshire Courier 10 February 1914, front page
The Manchester Guardian 13 February 1914
The Vote 13 February 1914, p. 258
The Daily Mirror 14 February 1914, front page
The Suffragette 27 February 1914, p. 15
The Woman's Dreadnought 8 March 1914, p. 3
The Derbyshire Courier 14 March 1914, front page
The Derbyshire Courier 18 April 1914, p. 6
The Evening Despatch 23 April 1914, p. 3
The Sheffield Daily Telegraph 23 April 1914, p. 8
The Sheffield Independent 23 April 1914, p. 5
The Manchester Guardian 24 April 1914, p. 5
The Nottingham Daily Express 24 April 1914, p. 2
The Derbyshire Times 25 April 1914, p. 8
The Derbyshire Courier 28 April 1914, front page
The Sheffield Daily Telegraph 28 April 1914, p. 9
The Vote 12 June 1914, p. 127
The Yorkshire Telegraph and Star 22 June 1914, p. 5
The Belper News 26 June 1914, p. 5
The Derbyshire Courier 27 June 1914, p. 9
The Derbyshire Courier 25 July 1914, p. 1
The Derbyshire Courier 15 May 1915, p. 5
The Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald 31 March 1923, p. 6
The Vote 15 April 1927, p. 117
(*The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 22 March 1950, p. 2

Secondary Sources

Books

Lynn Abrams (ed) and Callum G. Brown (ed) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2010)

Richard Aldrich and Peter Gordon *Dictionary of British Educationalists* (Routledge, London, 1989)

Alison Bashford (ed) and Philippa Levine (ed) (2010) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010)

Denise Bates *Historical Research Using British Newspapers*, (Pen & Sword Books, 2016)

B. Beaven *Visions of Empire* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2017)

Lucy Bland *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* Penguin Books, London, 1995)

D. Byrne and C.C. Ragin *The SAGE Handbook of Case-Based Methods* London: (SAGE Publications Ltd, London, 2009)

Carl Chinn *They Worked All Their Lives: Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880 – 1939* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988)

Raewyn Connell *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Polity Press, 1987)

Hera Cook *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex and Contraception 1800 – 1970* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004)

Susan K. Freeman *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education Before the 1960s* (University of Illinois Press, Illinois, 2008)

James B Gardner and Peter S LaPaglia *Public History: Essays from the Field* (Krieger Pub. Co., Malabar, Fla, 2004)

Barbara T Gates *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1999)

D. Gorham *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. (ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>, 2012)

Gerry Holloway *Women and Work in Britain Since 1840*, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2005)

Sandra Stanley Holton *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900 – 18* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987)

Sandra Stanley Holton *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Routledge, London, 1996)

J. Martin *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England*. (ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>, 1998)

Robin E Jensen *Dirty Words: the Rhetoric of Public Sex Education 1870-1924* (University of Illinois Press, Illinois 2010)

Shaun Jeffrey *The Village in Revolt: the Story of the Longest Strike in History* (Higdon Press, 2018)

Maroula Joanou (ed) and Jane Purvis (ed) *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester University Press, Manchester)

Patrick Joyce *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013)

Hilda Kean *Deeds not Words: The Lives of Suffragette Teachers* (Pluto Press, London, 1990)

Hilda Kean and Paul Martin *The Public History Reader* (Routledge, London, 2013)

Susan K Kent *Sex and Suffrage in Britain* (Routledge, London, 1986)

Rev. the Hon. E. Lyttleton *Training of the Young in the Laws of Sex* (Longmans, Green, and Co, London, 1912)

Frank Mort *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 2000)

Alison Oram *Women Teachers and Feminist Politics* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996)

Christabel Pankhurst *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (E. Pankhurst, London, 1913)

Alison Prentice (ed) and Marjorie R. Theobald (ed) *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991)

Mark Pugh *The Pankhursts: the History of One Radical Family* (Vintage, London, 2008)

June Purvis; Sandra Stanley Holton *Votes for Women* (Routledge, London, 2000)

Angelique Richardson *Love and Eugenics Among the Late Victorians: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003)

Fern Riddell *Death in Ten Minutes: Kitty Marion: Activist, Arsonist, Suffragette* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2018)

Elizabeth Roberts *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890 – 1940* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1984)

Sheila Rowbotham *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (Verso, London, 2008)

Sheila Rowbotham *Friends of Alice Wheeldon: The Anti-War Activist Accused of Plotting to Kill Lloyd George* (Pluto Press, London, 2015)

David Rubinstein *A Different World for Women: The Life of Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (Ohio State University Press, Ohio, 1991)

GR Searle *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976)

Richard A Solway *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain* (The University of North Carolina, London, 1990)

Gillian Sutherland *In Search of the New Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015)

Paul Thompson *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (Routledge, London, 1992)

P. Tinkler *Using photographs in social and historical research*. (SAGE Publications Ltd, London, 2014)

Jeffrey Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (Longman Group Ltd, London, 1981)

Wrigley, C. (Ed.) *A Companion to Early Twentieth-Century Britain*. (ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>, 2003)

Eileen Yeo *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998)

Articles

William Baker 'Explaining the outbreak and dynamics of the 1911 school strike wave in Britain' *Reflecting Education* <http://reflectingeducation.net> 6:1; (2010) pp. 25-38

C. Bearman 'An Army Without Discipline? Suffragette Militancy and the Budget Crisis of 1909.' *The Historical Journal*, 50(4), (2007) pp 861-889

John Benson 'Calculation, Celebrity and Scandal: The Provincial Press in Edwardian England.' *Journalism Studies* 1 Dec, Vol 10 (6), (2009) pp 837-850

JM Blount 'Ella Flagg Young and the Gender Politics of Democracy and Education' *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 1 Oct Vol16(4), (2017) pp 409-423

Hera Cook 'Emotion, Bodies, Sexuality, and Sex Education in Edwardian England'. *The Historical Journal* 55, 2 (2012) pp 475-495

Anna Davin 'Imperialism and Motherhood' *History Workshop* No5, (1978) pp 9-65

R. Danielle Egan and Gail Hawkes 'Producing the Prurient through the Pedagogy of Purity: Childhood Sexuality and the Social Purity Movement' *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol. 20 No. 4, (2007), pp 443 – 461

Mairead Enright 'The Victorian Social Purity Movement; a Noble Pursuit or 'Morality Crusade'?' *University of Birmingham blog* (2018)
<https://blog.bham.ac.uk/legalherstory/2018/03/20/the-victorian-social-purity-movement-a-noble-pursuit-or-morality-crusade/> Accessed on 23/05/2020

Daniel JR Grey 'Agonised Weeping: Representing Femininity, Emotion and Infanticide in Edwardian Newspapers.' *Media History*, 6 Aug, (2015), pp 1-13

Peter Gordon 'Some Sources for the History of the School Manager, 1800-1902.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, (1973), pp. 327–334.

P.H. Gosden 'The Origins of Cooptation to Membership of Local Education Committees.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, (1977), pp. 258–267.

Lesley Hall 'Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain' *Gender and History*, Vol 16 No1 April, (2004) pp 36-56.

Robin E Jensen 'Using Science to Argue for Sexual Education in US Public Schools: Dr Ella Flagg Young and the 1913 "Chicago Experiment".' *Science Communication*, Dec Vol 29(2), (2007), pp 217-241

Greta Jones 'Women and eugenics in Britain: The case of Mary Sharleib, Elizabeth Sloan Chesser, and Stella Browne, *Annals of Science*, 52:5, (1995) pp 481-502

Hilda Kean 'Public History and Popular Memory: Issues on the Commemoration of the British Militant Suffrage Campaign.' *Women's History Review*, Vol 14, Numbers 3&4, (2005), pp501-682

Hilda Kean 'Bonwick, Theodora Ellen (1876-1928), educationalist and women's rights activist'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008)
<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093>

Jeffrey P. Moran "'Modernism Gone Mad": Sex Education Comes to Chicago 1913.' *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 83, No. 2, Sep, (1996), pp 481-513

Alison Oram "'Men must be educated and women must do it": the National Federation (later Union) of Women Teachers and contemporary feminism 1910-1930'. *Gender and Education* Vol 19 (Nov) (2007), pp 663-667

June Purvis 'Using Primary Sources When Researching Women's History from a Feminist Perspective', *Women's History Review*, 1:2, (1992), pp 273-306

June Purvis 'Women Teachers in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain' *Twentieth century British History*, Vol 8, No2, (1997) pp 266-271

Grant Rodwell 'Dr Caleb Williams Saleeby: the Complete Eugenicist'. *History of Education*, 26:1, (1997), pp 23-40

Gregory Seigworth and Michael Gardiner 'Rethinking everyday life: And then nothing turns itself inside out'. *Cultural Studies*, 18:2-3, (2004), pp 139-159

TUC 150 Years Burston School Strike <https://tuc150.tuc.org.uk/stories/burston-school-strike>