

Women's Committee of the Economic History society: Minutes of the first meeting held 30.7.88 at the Institute of Historical Research, London.

Present: Maxine Berg (in the Chair) University of Warwick
Maria Davies, Cambridge Group
Pat Ayres, University of Liverpool
Mary Morgan, LSE
Pat Hudson, University of Liverpool
Pat Thane, Goldsmiths College
Amanda Vickery, Institute of Historical Research
Anne Digby, Institute of Economics and Statistics, Oxford
Sheila Blackburn, UMIST
Janet Hunter, LSE

Apologies and offers of assistance/ participation were received from:

Stana Nanedic
Lorna Weatherill
Simon Katzenellenbogen
Tony Wrigley
Mary Rose
Amy Erkkson
Bob Morris
Val Burton

1. Pat Hudson was nominated as secretary of The Committee.

2. Reasons for founding the Women's Committee and its aims were outlined by Maxine Berg. She summarised the arguments listed in the initial proposal document (attached) stressing in particular the fact that the early years of the society had seen a greater participation of women and a related close association with university extension studies, with WEA and with adult education more generally. The formation of the Committee reflected a strong desire to resurrect this tradition and to broaden the basis of support for the Society beyond the narrow confines of the established university profession.

3. Various means of implementing the policy of making the society more attractive, relevant and encouraging for women members were discussed. One proposal which emerged was to hold a one day workshop to act as a focus and meeting point for women researching and/or interested in aspects of economic and social history but not necessarily members of the Society. It was decided to hold such a workshop around the theme of Economic History and Women's History. The subject was chosen as one most likely to draw in a wide group of women and others interested in the broad field of economic and social history and in women's participation in research. It was proposed to hold the workshop at the Institute of Historical Research Local History Room on a Saturday in February 1989. Amanda Vickery and Pat Thane agreed to investigate the booking of the room, arrangements, about catering etc. and Mary Morgan agreed to handle registration. The programme for the workshop was discussed and several speakers were suggested. There was a strong feeling that considerable time should be devoted to round-table and general discussion about the problems of women, especially those outside of the established University system, undertaking research in economic and social history: funding, advice etc. It was also agreed to include one or more specific research papers/research reports in the workshop. Maxine Berg and Anne Digby agreed to finalise the programme invite speakers and to report back to the Committee on this at its next meeting.

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Pat Hudson agreed to arrange for the insertion of a notice about the workshop in the November issue of the Review.

4. It was agreed to compile a register of women historians. This would act as a point of contact and provide valuable information about research and other activities going on in the hidden part of the profession. Janet Hunter offered to take overall charge of the Register which would initially be based on membership lists of the Society, and existing but out-of-date registers. It was also planned to use lists of history and economic history teachers in colleges and schools (to ensure as wide a catchment as possible). In order for the Register to provide brief information on research Mary Morgan agreed to design a short questionnaire to be discussed at the next meeting. This would be along the lines of that done by the American Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. It was seen as most important to include and publicise the work being done in polytechnics, extra-mural departments of Universities, by research students and assistants both full and part time, by short contract staff and by local history societies and by WEA groups.

5. To publicise the work of the Women's Committee it was decided to place notices in several journals and to send handbills to a wide range of Institutions and groups. Pat Ayres volunteered to place notices with various journals and Maxine Berg agreed to design and to distribute a handbill.

6. The issue was raised of refereeing for the Economic History Review. Several American and British journals have recently been discussing the importance of double-blind refereeing of articles to avoid discrimination. It was decided that the Secretary should write to The Editor of the Review to enquire whether women are represented on the refereeing panel in numbers commensurate with their involvement in research in the subject. It was understood that the Review already practised anonymous refereeing.

7. The date for the next meeting of the Committee was fixed for 9th December 1988 at 2pm at The Institute of Historical Research.