



**TRAILBLAZERS:**  
World War One's Inspirational Women

## Introduction

A trailblazer is someone who goes ahead to find a way through unexplored territory leaving markers behind which others can follow. They are innovators, the first to do something. During the First World War many women were trailblazers. Even today their inspirational stories can show us the way.

The First World War was a time of political and social change for women. Before the war began, women were already protesting for the right to vote in political elections, this is known as the women's suffrage movement. There were two main forms of women's suffrage in the UK: the suffragists and the suffragettes.

In 1897 separate women's suffrage societies joined together to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) which was led by Millicent Fawcett. Suffragists believed that women could prove they should have the right to vote by being responsible citizens.

The suffragettes broke away from the suffragist movement and formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) under Emmeline Pankhurst. They believed it was necessary to use illegal means to force a change in the law.

When the war started, campaigners for women's rights set aside their protests and supported the war effort. Millions of men left Britain to fight overseas. Women took on more public responsibilities. Although thousands of women had worked before 1914, women took on new roles such as conductors on public transport, labourers and office workers.

Women's war work included munition and weapon manufacturing, nursing and serving in the armed services in non-combat roles. They took on many support roles such as driving lorries, mechanical work and finding out information about the enemy. British women were not allowed to fight in the war, but a few fought for foreign armies, or even disguised themselves as men and served as soldiers.

The First World War gave women a chance to show their abilities in a wide range of public tasks and began to break down prejudice. Many historians believe that women's activism and contributions to the war, as well as public sympathy for the sacrifices made by the millions of serving soldiers, helped bring about the Representation of the People Act in 1918.

### Key categories



Arts & Culture



Activism



Science



Industry



Military

### Definitions

#### Suffrage:

The right to vote in political elections

#### Munition:

Military weapons, bullets, and equipment

#### Prejudice:

Dislike or hostility without good reason

#### Activism:

The use of campaigning to bring about social or political change

#### Representation of the People Act, 1918:

Granted the vote to women over 30 (with a certain amount of property) and all men over the age of 21

Image: Female workers in a Lancashire oil and cake factory having tea, September 1918. By George P. Lewis © IWMM (Q 28259)





**Additional Resources  
and Acknowledgements**

## Additional Resources

There are lots of resources teachers and students can use to discover more about the achievements of women during the First World War.

### Websites

**1914-1918-online.**  
International Encyclopedia  
of the First World War  
[www.1914-1918-online.net](http://www.1914-1918-online.net)

**The British Library**  
[www.bl.uk/world-war-one](http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one)  
[www.bl.uk/britishlibrary/~media/bl/global/world-war-one/teachers/pdf/teachers-civilians-women-gender.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/britishlibrary/~/media/bl/global/world-war-one/teachers/pdf/teachers-civilians-women-gender.pdf)

**The British Newspaper Archive**  
[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

**British Red Cross**  
[www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War](http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War)

**Imperial War Museum**  
[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

**National Army Museum**  
[www.nam.ac.uk/explore/stepping-line](http://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/stepping-line)

**The National Archives**  
[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document\\_packs/women.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document_packs/women.htm)

**Spartacus Educational**  
[www.spartacus-educational.com](http://www.spartacus-educational.com)

**The Women's Library**  
[www.lse.ac.uk/library/collections/collection-highlights/the-womens-library](http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collections/collection-highlights/the-womens-library)

**Imperial War Museum**  
[www.1914.org/womenswork100](http://www.1914.org/womenswork100)

### Books

Adie, K. 2013. *Fighting on The Home Front, The Legacy of Women in World War One*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Anand, A. 2015. *Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary*. London: Bloomsbury.

Grayzel, S.R. 2013. *Women and the First World War*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge.

Roper, M. 2010. *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in The Great War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

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Image: Female munitions workers guide howitzer shells at the National Shell Filling Factory in Chilwell, Nottinghamshire, 1917.  
© IWM (Q 30040)





Lesson plan ideas

# Lesson plan ideas

Some of these lesson ideas will require computer research. You may want to set the research as a homework task. For homework frameworks email [trailblazers@big-ideas.org](mailto:trailblazers@big-ideas.org).

- Hand all 20 cards out to your students. Ask them to organise themselves into groups based on the different colours of the cards. Give them five minutes to discuss what links all the women in these cards together. Let them report back their ideas, then tell them they are linked by industry.

- In small groups draw around one person on a large piece of paper. Ask the question 'what makes women inspirational?' Write on different parts of the drawing, for example, 'they are passionate' could be written on the heart.

- Assign each of your students one of the Trailblazers of World War One. Ask them to read the card and find out more about them. Why are they inspirational? What impact did their achievements have on their community? Ask them to choose a woman who inspires them today. Set your students the challenge of writing a one minute presentation based on the Trailblazer card they have been given, and a contemporary inspirational woman they have chosen. In pairs, the students present their research. Once finished, they join with another pair and each present their partner's Trailblazers. This is to emphasise the importance of listening, as well as speaking, to being a Trailblazer.

- Explore what it means to be a citizen, locally, nationally and globally. Students can use paper and Post-it notes to display their ideas. Ask them to think about what positive qualities a good citizen has. They could start by exploring how their two inspirational women are good citizens, and then think about their own impact on their local community.

- Invite your students to create a collage of their research into their two inspirational women, the qualities of citizenship they represent, and how they think young people today can be Trailblazers. These can be exhibited around the school. Leave Post-it notes so passing students can add their own thoughts.

- Organise an assembly for students to share their research, presentations, collages and activities. This could be in your school, or better still, presenting to students in a local primary school.

- Ask the class to nominate a Trailblazer Ambassador, a student who leads on gender equality and opportunities for young women in the school.

Image: Doctor and nurse treating a wounded soldier. Wellcome Collection. CC BY

[www.big-ideas.org](http://www.big-ideas.org) | [#Trailblazers](https://twitter.com/Trailblazers) | [trailblazers@big-ideas.org](mailto:trailblazers@big-ideas.org)





Tops tips for creating an assembly

# Assembly Plan

Plan an inspirational assembly to share your research about Trailblazers of the First World War and today.

Here are some top tips for how to present your research and ideas, but you can always ask for more ideas from your classmates and teachers.

- Write down what you are going to say beforehand. Always make sure you introduce what you are going to be talking about, and have clear notes that you can look at if you forget anything.
- Think about what images you might want – do you want to make a slideshow with images of your inspirational women?
- Be confident and clear when you speak – make sure you project your voice, especially if you are speaking in a big room. Practice with your teacher before to make sure they can hear you.
- Think about how you could make the assembly even more creative. Can you show examples of your collages? Could you read poems, sing a song, or perform freeze frames? Can you find some archive films of women from the First World War, or examples of work by your inspirational women of today?
- Think about how you can make the assembly engaging. Can you ask pupils to vote for the most inspirational Trailblazer you present? Can you ask the assembly audience about the women they are inspired by today? Which women today are Trailblazers?
- How can you show everyone the different ways to be a positive citizen? You could give them examples of activities you and your class are already involved in and have some pictures of possible activities.
- Finish your assembly by asking whether there are Trailblazers in the school today who would like to be a Trailblazer of tomorrow, and how they can do this.

Who are you going to invite to the assembly or presentation? This is a great opportunity to share these inspirational stories with your local community.

Could you invite local community leaders, such as a Scout or Guide leader, a local police officer, member of the military, university lecturer, or a youth leader? You could speak to your teacher about organising some coffee and tea for them.

Could you invite a local primary school class, or a class from another year group in your school? It could inspire them to take part in the project!

Image: World War One: women working in a factory. Wellcome Collection. CC BY





Top tips for researching

# Top tips for researching

Here are some top tips for how to research inspirational women from the First World War. You can use many of the tips to research your inspirational women of today too.

- Decide who you are going to research. You can find out more about the Trailblazers on the cards in this pack by contacting local archives or by searching online for local Trailblazers in your area. There were many women making incredible achievements during the First World War.
- Start by looking for photographs of them using the internet or books. This helps you to picture the person you are researching. Always check that the photographs are genuine, your teacher can help you with this.
- Research some basic facts about their lives – where did they live? What was their job? What were some major moments in their life? Some useful websites are listed on the 'Additional Resources' card.
- Find quotations or speeches by the person you are researching and read them to find out more about the person. How do you think they would have said these things? Were they calm, passionate, or angry? Try practising how you would say them.
- Don't overlook the small things you discover along the way. Look at material objects that belonged to a person, they can tell you a lot about their values and the time in which they lived.
- Look at museum collections, either in person or online. Many museums have online collections so visit their website and search for a relevant object. Try different wording when searching as this will yield various results.
- Look for documentaries to watch about women of the First World War, and suggest you watch them as a class.
- Don't just research the individuals in this Trailblazers collection. There were many more women who made amazing contributions during the First World War.

Look for information about inspirational women today – these might have connections to your First World War Trailblazer, or be someone completely different. You could even have a teacher help you contact them.

Think of creative ways you can share your research with your community. You could present to another class or school, send information to a local newspaper or make a poster.

Have the Trailblazers of World War One inspired you to be a Trailblazer of the future? Write about how you will inspire others and share it with your class.

Image: Mount Stuart Royal Naval Hospital, deputy matron & staff WWI'. Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY





# Annie Kenney

1879 – 1953 | Mill Worker and Activist



# Annie Kenney

Annie Kenney was raised among a family of travelling cotton spinners. She worked in a cotton mill from the age of 10. This was dangerous work, and she lost a finger in an accident. Kenney did not have much opportunity to get an education, but her mother encouraged her to learn from everyone around her.

During the fifteen years she worked at the mill, Kenney organised a branch of a trade union, taught people at the mill about politics and philosophy and encouraged them to learn how to read.

Kenney became interested in the suffrage movement after seeing a lecture by Christabel Pankhurst and Teresa Billington-Greig, two leading suffragettes at the time.

Kenney and her younger sisters joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). The WSPU fought for women's suffrage by holding protests, which were sometimes violent.

Kenney gained national attention in 1905 when she disrupted a meeting in Manchester, confronting Winston Churchill (a Member of Parliament and future Prime Minister of Britain) about women's right to vote. She was arrested, and after she was released, Kenney continued to participate in WSPU protests.

When war broke out in 1914, the WSPU agreed with the British government to stop its protests for suffrage in exchange for the release of all suffragist prisoners from prison. The WSPU sent Kenney to countries including the United States and Australia to try and convince them to participate more heavily in the war.

These were not causes Kenney supported very much. When she returned to England, she focused on promoting labourers and trade unions instead.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

### Location

Saddleworth,  
Greater Manchester

Annie Kenney was a Trailblazer because she was determined to be as educated as she could be, and campaigned tirelessly for women to have the vote.

### Definitions

#### Trade union:

An association of workers in a specific trade or profession, formed to protect their rights

#### Suffrage movement:

The fight for the right to vote in political elections

#### Suffragette:

A woman fighting for the right to vote through organised protests

Image: Portrait of Annie Kenney by Bain News Service. This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID gg Bain.02661.





## Women Footballers

Munitions Workers and Sports Stars



# Women Footballers

During the First World War, many men were fighting overseas. This meant that more women worked in factories and in other industrial roles normally reserved for men. These women would play football during their breaks from work, and these matches quickly became popular. By 1916 official matches were being played by organised women's teams.

Women's football matches attracted big crowds of spectators. Special association trophies were developed for new teams and a new generation of football stars was born.

Amongst the most successful were:

- **Bella Raey** of the Blyth Spartans Ladies F.C. who scored 133 goals in one season
- Two of the Dick, Kerr's Ladies F.C. team – the captain **Grace Sibbert** and **Lily Parr**, a prodigy who joined the team aged 14 and scored 43 goals in her first season.

Most formal women's football matches were played to raise money for charity. In 1917, Dick, Kerr's Ladies F.C. played a Christmas Day game against Arundel Courthard Foundry, raising £600 for the hospital at Moor Park. This was a very large amount of money at the time.

The best attended match was on Boxing Day in 1920. 53,000 people at Goodison Park watched Dick, Kerr's Ladies beat St Helen's Ladies 4-0, one of the biggest crowds ever recorded for British women's football.

The women's teams remained popular until men returned from the war, the munitions factories closed, and male teams reformed. Once men's football started again, many women's teams faced closure.

In 1921, the Football Association banned women's teams from playing on any of its member grounds. This ban would remain in place for the next fifty years.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

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### Location

Across the UK

Women footballers were Trailblazers because their determination and skill led the way for women's football today.

### Did you know?

Dick, Kerr's Ladies F.C. achieved international fame by beating the French 2-0 in the first ever international women's football match in 1920.

In 2002, 24 years after her death, Lily Parr was the first woman to be inducted into the Football Hall of Fame at the National Football Museum in Preston.

### Definitions

#### Prodigy:

A young person with exceptional qualities or abilities

#### Munitions:

Military weapons, ammunition, equipment, and stores

Image: Dick, Kerr's unbeaten Ladies International Football Team 1921-1922 by Gail Newsham.  
Image available from: donmouth.co.uk





**Evelyn Miles**

1867 – 1947 | Police Officer



## Evelyn Miles

In 1917, Evelyn Miles became the first woman to be employed by Birmingham City Police.

Between 1914 -1916, 700 male police officers left the city to serve in the First World War. At the time, many people believed that maintaining order and enforcing the law was beyond the capabilities of a woman. Before the First World War, no women were employed in the police force across Britain.

Miles thought differently, and wrote to the Chief Constable of Birmingham City Police requesting consideration for the role of Assistant Matron.

Her role as Assistant Matron required her to look after female prisoners and ensure they were being treated fairly by the judicial system. Her main duties included managing cases involving women and children, rude language and shoplifting.

Miles helped to keep law and order in Birmingham. Her work made the city a safer place for people to live in during the war. On 1 July 1918 she was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and put in charge of a unit.

Despite their important work, female officers were still subject to patronising attitudes, and were seen more as 'moral guardians' of working class women than officers with official rights and responsibilities.

She worked for the Birmingham City Police until she retired aged 72.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

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**Location**  
Birmingham,  
West Midlands

Evelyn Miles was a Trailblazer because she paved the way for women to join the police force in Birmingham, and changed people's perceptions of women police officers through her hard work and persistence.

### Did you know?

You can find out more about her story here: [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02b2gf4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02b2gf4)

### Questions

Can you find out more about the role of women police officers during the First World War?

When did other women become police officers across the country?

### Definitions

#### Judicial:

Relating to the legal system and to judgements made in a court of law

Image: Evelyn Miles. Courtesy of West Midlands Police Museum.





**Vera Brittain**

1893 – 1970 | Author and Nurse



## TRAILBLAZERS:

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# Vera Brittain

Vera Brittain was born to a family of paper-mill owners in Newcastle-under-Lyme. As an undergraduate at the University of Oxford, influential teachers interested her in women's suffrage.

Brittain wanted to take an active role in the war and felt left behind when her only brother, Edward, fiancé Roland Leighton, and their male friends enlisted. She left university mid-way through her studies in 1915 to join the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) as a nurse, treating wounded soldiers. In 1917 she applied to be sent to France. She hoped she would be able to find her brother there. When she arrived in France she treated German prisoners for gas injuries.

Brittain's first-hand experience of the war was not unique but her ability to put this experience into words was exceptional. She wrote about the war in a series of powerful memoirs. Her very personal and detailed accounts echoed the experience of millions. Her experiences led her to become a pacifist and to take part in anti-war campaigns.

Drawing on her experience as a nurse, she described the terrible wounds soldiers suffered and the reality of death. Vera lost many of the important people in her life, including her fiancé, her brother and two of her closest friends. Drawing on her experience as a young woman, she described the pain of loss and the impact of grief.

Brittain published her best-known work, *Testament of Youth*, in 1933. Every copy sold the day it was published. *Testament of Youth* explores the female experience of war and describes how it had an impact on the rest of her life. It was a very popular book at the time and remains widely-read today.

### Location

Buxton, Derbyshire  
Macclesfield, Cheshire

Vera Brittain was a Trailblazer because her book *Testament of Youth* remains a very important book today, exploring the grief people felt from losing loved ones during the war.

### Definitions

#### Suffrage:

The right to vote  
in political elections

#### Memoir:

A historical account or  
biography written from  
personal knowledge

#### Pacifist:

Someone who believes  
that war and violence  
cannot be justified

Image: Vera Brittain in VAD uniform. © Literary Executors for the Vera Brittain Estate, 1970 and The Vera Brittain Fonds, McMaster University Library, via First World War Poetry Digital Archive, accessed 11 January 2018.





## May Wedderburn Cannan

1893 – 1973 | Poet, Intelligence Officer and Nurse



## TRAILBLAZERS:

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# May Wedderburn Cannan

May Wedderburn Cannan was a nurse, but she is best remembered for her poetry. She was the daughter of the Dean of Trinity College, and her father introduced her to poetry when she was very young.

Cannan trained with the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), providing nursing and other care to wounded soldiers. She expected to work in a hospital during the war, but ended up volunteering in a railway canteen for a month in Rouen, a city in France.

This experience inspired one of her most famous poems, *Rouen*. She wanted to stay working in Rouen for longer, but didn't have the money to support herself. She returned to England to her father at a printing house which, amongst other things, printed propaganda for the British government.

In August of 1918 Cannan went to Paris to work as a secretary at the Bureau of Central Intelligence, which was part of MI5, where she took on office work.

Her fiancé Major Bevil Quiller-Couch survived the First World War but died in the influenza pandemic (also known as Spanish flu) in February 1919. Cannan dedicated her second poetry volume *The Splendid Days* (1919) to her fiancé. She kept hope that those who died in the war died for good reason.

### Location

Oxford, Oxfordshire

### Did you know?

Cannan had her first poem published in *The Scotsman* at the age of 15.

### Definitions

#### Railway canteen:

A small restaurant at a railway station to feed travellers and workers

#### Propaganda:

Exaggerated or twisted information used to convince people of a particular point of view

#### Bureau of Central Intelligence:

A security agency run by the British government that collects information to keep the British public safe

#### Spanish flu:

A deadly influenza pandemic between 1918 and 1920. More than 50 million people died in the influenza pandemic. More people died of the flu than in the war.

Image: May and fellow VADs in Oxford. Photo courtesy of Crescy Cannan. Available from: [maywedderburncannan.wordpress.com](http://maywedderburncannan.wordpress.com)





**Lena Ashwell**

1872 – 1957 | Actor and Director



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### Lena Ashwell

Lena Ashwell was one of the leading actors of her day. During the First World War, Ashwell organised shows and events to entertain and raise money for soldiers on active service.

Ashwell was born in England but grew up in Canada. At first Ashwell wanted to be a singer, but she realised that she was a more talented actor. She first performed in 1891, and began to build a reputation as a great actor. Later, Ashwell worked in theatre management and opened her own theatre known as the Kingsway in 1907. At the Kingsway she put on feminist plays and promoted talented young actors. She joined forces with other female actors to establish the Actresses' Franchise League (AFL) in 1908, which was an organisation that used theatre as a way to fight for women's rights.

They toured their productions around the country and connected with local suffragists who could promote women's suffrage to audiences at AFL productions, selling suffragist literature and organising talks. When the war began in 1914, Ashwell worked with the AFL to promote touring theatrical entertainments to military camps across Britain. Ashwell wanted theatre to be available to everyone, even during war. She believed theatre and entertainment was a great comfort to people in a time of crisis.

Ashwell organised, theatrical and musical entertainment for troops serving in France, Malta and Egypt. Ashwell's productions successful in lifting the spirits of the troops.

After the war Ashwell returned to England and continued to sponsor touring plays and support new theatrical talent.

**Location**  
London

Lena Ashwell was a Trailblazer because she was a pioneer for women's theatre, promoting women's suffrage through performance and supporting the war effort.

#### Did you know?

Ashwell and her performers donated all the money they made to charities and managed to raise over £100,000 to help fund performances for the troops.

#### Definitions

##### **Feminist:**

Someone that supports feminism, which is the belief that women and men should have equal rights

##### **Suffragist:**

A person campaigning for new groups of people, including women, to get the right to vote in elections

Image: Lena Ashwell portrait by Alexander Bassano. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



**Dorothy Lawrence**

1887 – 1964 | War Correspondent





# Dorothy Lawrence

Dorothy Lawrence wanted to be a journalist. At the time of the First World War, female journalists were very rare. Lawrence was determined to be successful in this career.

When the war started in 1914, Lawrence applied for jobs writing about the war at many major papers, but she was rejected from them all. She was told the job was too dangerous for a woman to do. She did not let this rejection stop her.

In 1915 Lawrence travelled to France by herself to seek work as a journalist. She attempted to volunteer to join the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) but was rejected. When she arrived in France, Lawrence was arrested two miles from the front line because she had no credentials. On her release, Lawrence went to Paris where a chance meeting with two British soldiers took an unexpected turn. These soldiers helped her make an army uniform and gave her tips on how to pretend to be a male soldier.

Lawrence forged identity papers and headed for the Front pretending to be Private Denis Smith of the 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment. Lawrence convinced people she was a man with the help of her soldier friends. She served in the trenches for two weeks, staying each night in an abandoned cottage. The conditions became unbearable for her and after two weeks Lawrence turned herself in to the officer in charge.

She was initially kept as a prisoner of war. Although Lawrence was cleared of the charges, she was initially forbidden from writing about how she had deceived the authorities to serve in the trenches.

Lawrence published her account of her experiences on the front line in 1919, which received good reviews but did not achieve the widespread success she was hoping for.

### Location

Hendon, Middlesex

Dorothy Lawrence was a Trailblazer because she was determined to be a wartime journalist, despite everyone telling her she couldn't.

### Did you know?

Dorothy Lawrence's male costume included a shirt stuffed with cotton and a close-cropped haircut. She ran a razor over her cheeks to look like she had stubble.

### Definitions

#### Front line:

The military line, or part of an army, which is closest to the enemy army

#### Credentials:

Qualifications, achievements or identification used to prove who a person is and what they are capable of doing

#### Western Front:

The main area of war during the First World War, located in Belgium, France and Western Germany

Image: Lawrence in 1915, secretly posed as a soldier of the BEF. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.png



**Edith Cavell**

1865 – 1915 | Nurse and Resistance Worker



## Edith Cavell

Edith Cavell was a famous medical reformer and nursing teacher before the war. Cavell trained as a nurse in London and Belgium. She opened a nursing school in Brussels and trained nurses at three hospitals in Belgium.

Cavell was in England when the war started in 1914. Although the war started in Belgium when the German army invaded, Cavell decided to return to Brussels to continue her work as a nurse and teacher. When Cavell arrived in Brussels it was already controlled (often called 'occupied') by the German army.

She was now working behind enemy lines. Cavell still treated every patient that required care – German, British, Belgian. She made no distinction even if they were on opposite sides of the war.

German officials suspected that Cavell was acting as a spy, and passing information about the Germans back to the British army. Cavell was not a spy but, along with around twenty other people living in occupied Belgium, she was helping British, French and Belgian soldiers and civilians to escape from Brussels into Holland. This meant they would not be taken as prisoners of war by the Germans. Around two hundred soldiers escaped using this underground network of safe houses.

Cavell and one other member of the network were arrested, tried and sentenced to death for treason in 1915. This decision made the British very angry. They argued with the German army that she should be released or sent to prison, like some of the other women involved in the network.

The British Army shared Cavell's story in Britain in films, posters and even on stamps to make the German army look aggressive and to encourage British people to support the war.

British politicians' pleas had no effect. Edith Cavell confessed to having helped British and Allied soldiers and was executed at dawn on 12 October 1915.

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### Location

Swardeston, Norfolk

Edith Cavell was a Trailblazer because of her courage, helping people escape the dangers of war, and paying the ultimate price – with her life.

### Definitions

#### Reformer:

A person who makes changes to something in order to improve it for people

#### Enemy lines:

An area controlled by the enemy army

#### Civilian:

A regular person who is not in the army

#### Treason:

The crime of betraying one's country

#### Execution:

Punishment for a crime by death

Image: Portrait of nurse Edith Cavell as she sits in a garden her two dogs.  
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 **Dorothea Feilding**

1889 – 1935 | Ambulance Driver



## TRAILBLAZERS:

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# Dorothie Feilding

Dorothie Feilding, a daughter of the 9th Earl of Denbigh, was born into a wealthy family and lived a comfortable life before the First World War. When war broke out, she decided to serve with the Munro Ambulance Corps in Belgium, driving wounded soldiers to hospitals. Three of her sisters also volunteered as nurses and ambulance drivers. Two of her brothers died serving in the war.

Feilding was responsible for driving one of the earliest motor ambulances, which replaced the earlier ambulances that were pulled by horses. As the war progressed, the driving conditions became increasingly difficult. Feilding focused on rescuing wounded soldiers from areas where fighting was happening. This was very dangerous work, and often placed her directly in the line of fire.

In wartime, outstanding individuals in the armed forces can be awarded medals for their service. Feilding was very brave when she rescued wounded soldiers from the battlefield. As a result, she was awarded many medals including the Military Medal for Bravery (UK), the Order of Leopold II (Belgium) and the Croix de Guerre (Bronze Star; France). The Military Medal for Bravery was awarded to 115,600 recipients during the First World War, but very few were women. Dorothie Feilding was the first woman to ever be awarded this medal.

Feilding was a favourite among patients, journalists and visitors. She was devoted, kind and honest when talking about her experiences about the war. In 1917, she left the Western Front to marry Captain Charles Moore of the Irish Guards. Not long after she was married, she returned to London and continued to work as an ambulance driver there, driving wounded soldiers to hospitals all over the city.

### Location

Monks Kirby,  
Warwickshire

Dorothie Feilding was a Trailblazer because of her exceptional bravery in the face of danger.

### Did you know?

You can see the announcement of Dorothie Feilding being awarded her medal:

[www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29731/supplement/8653](http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29731/supplement/8653)

### Definitions

#### Corps:

A branch of an army given the task of a particular kind of work

#### Military Medal for Bravery:

An award given to people who served in the British Army and other services, for bravery in battles that took place on land

Image: Lady Dorothie Feilding, MM. By The War Illustrated. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



 **Mabel St. Clair Stobart**

1862 – 1954 | Suffragist and Writer

... CAMP RADLETT 1911





## Mabel St. Clair Stobart

Mabel St. Clair Stobart was a suffragist. She thought the war would be an important opportunity to show that women deserved the vote. She joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, an all-women organisation that taught shooting, horseback riding and combat medicine.

In 1912 she founded her own organisation called the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy, which was a group of women trained to provide emergency medical aid on battlefields. Just before the First World War started, Stobart founded the Women's National Service League, which prepared women to support the British Army in the war.

Stobart then went to Brussels in Belgium to establish a hospital with the Belgian Red Cross. When she arrived she found the city had been taken over (also known as 'occupied') by the German army. She was arrested by the German army and accused of being a spy, but she convinced them to let her go. She then founded a hospital in Cherbourg, Belgium.

In 1915 she went to Serbia to help build medical facilities. She became involved in the Great Serbian Retreat of 1915 – when the German army attacked armies in the east. The Serbian army was not prepared and had to retreat. Stobart led an 81 day trek during the retreat.

For her bravery and skill she was awarded the Serbian Order of the White Eagle, the highest honour in Serbia for someone who is not in the military. When the retreat ended, Stobart went home where she spent the rest of the war as a philanthropist, writer and public speaker.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

### Location

Studland Bay, Dorset

Mabel St. Clair Stobart was a Trailblazer because of her repeated bravery to support the war efforts.

### Did you know?

Like many who witnessed the First World War, Stobart became interested in Spiritualism, which is the belief that the spirits of the dead can make contact with the living world.

### Definitions

#### Suffragist:

A person campaigning for new groups of people, including women, to get the right to vote in elections

#### Combat medicine:

The act of providing first aid on the battlefield

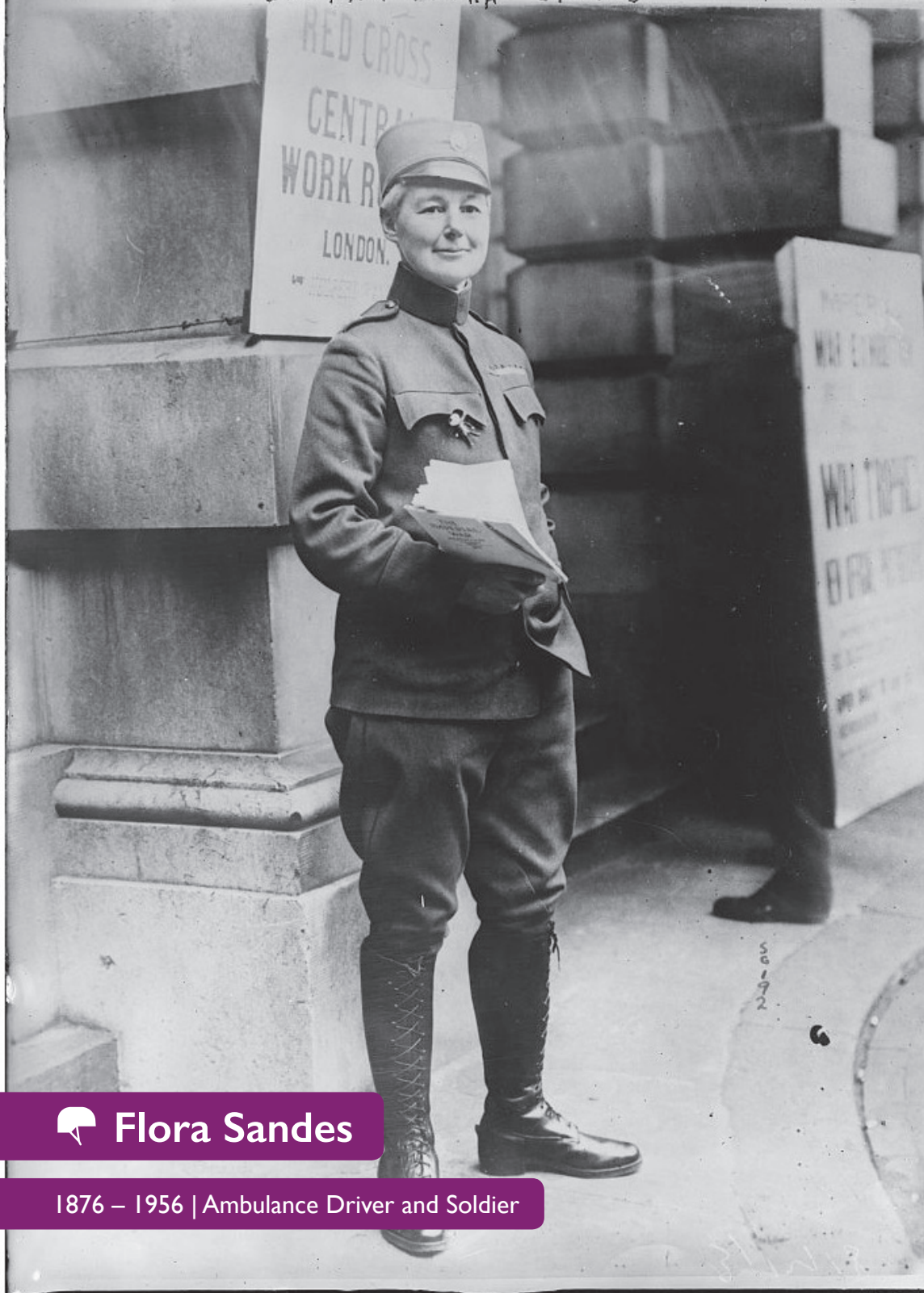
#### Philanthropist:

A person who tries to help others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes

Image: Group of the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps in Camp at Radlett in 1912, previous to their service in Bulgaria. Mabel St. Clair Stobart is fourth from left, centre row. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

SGT MAJ. FLORA SANDES

4495-3



**Flora Sandes**

1876 – 1956 | Ambulance Driver and Soldier



## Flora Sandes

A young wealthy woman in Britain, Flora Sandes did not do what was expected of her. Even before the war Sandes was active in supporting the military. She trained with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, an all-women organisation that taught shooting, horseback riding and combat medicine. She also trained with the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy, which was a group of women trained to provide emergency medical aid on battlefields.

When war broke out, Sandes wanted to contribute. She applied to be a volunteer nurse but was rejected because she did not have enough medical training. Instead, Sandes joined a St. John Ambulance unit and travelled to Serbia. When she arrived, Sandes began working with the First Reserve Hospital. She helped Serbian medics to treat over 1,000 Serbian soldiers.

While working with the Serbian Red Cross, Sandes was involved in the Great Retreat of 1915. The German army had attacked the east of Serbia with great force. The Serbian army was not prepared and they had to retreat. During the retreat, Sandes was separated from her unit. Because she could not continue her previous work as a nurse, Sandes asked to join the Serbian Army and was signed up as a corporal.

In 1916, Sandes was seriously injured in combat. To recognise her courage she was awarded Serbia's highest military honour for a non-commissioned officer, the Karadorde's Star. Throughout the rest of the war, Sandes continued to help the war effort by running a hospital and raising funds for Serbian relief.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

### Location

Nether Poppleton,  
North Yorkshire

Flora Sandes was a Trailblazer because she was one of the first British women to fight during the First World War.

### Did you know?

Flora Sandes wrote her first memoir *An English Woman-Sergeant in the Serbian Army* in 1916. She donated the funds raised by the memoir to the support of Serbian soldiers and prisoners.

### Definitions

#### First Reserve Hospital:

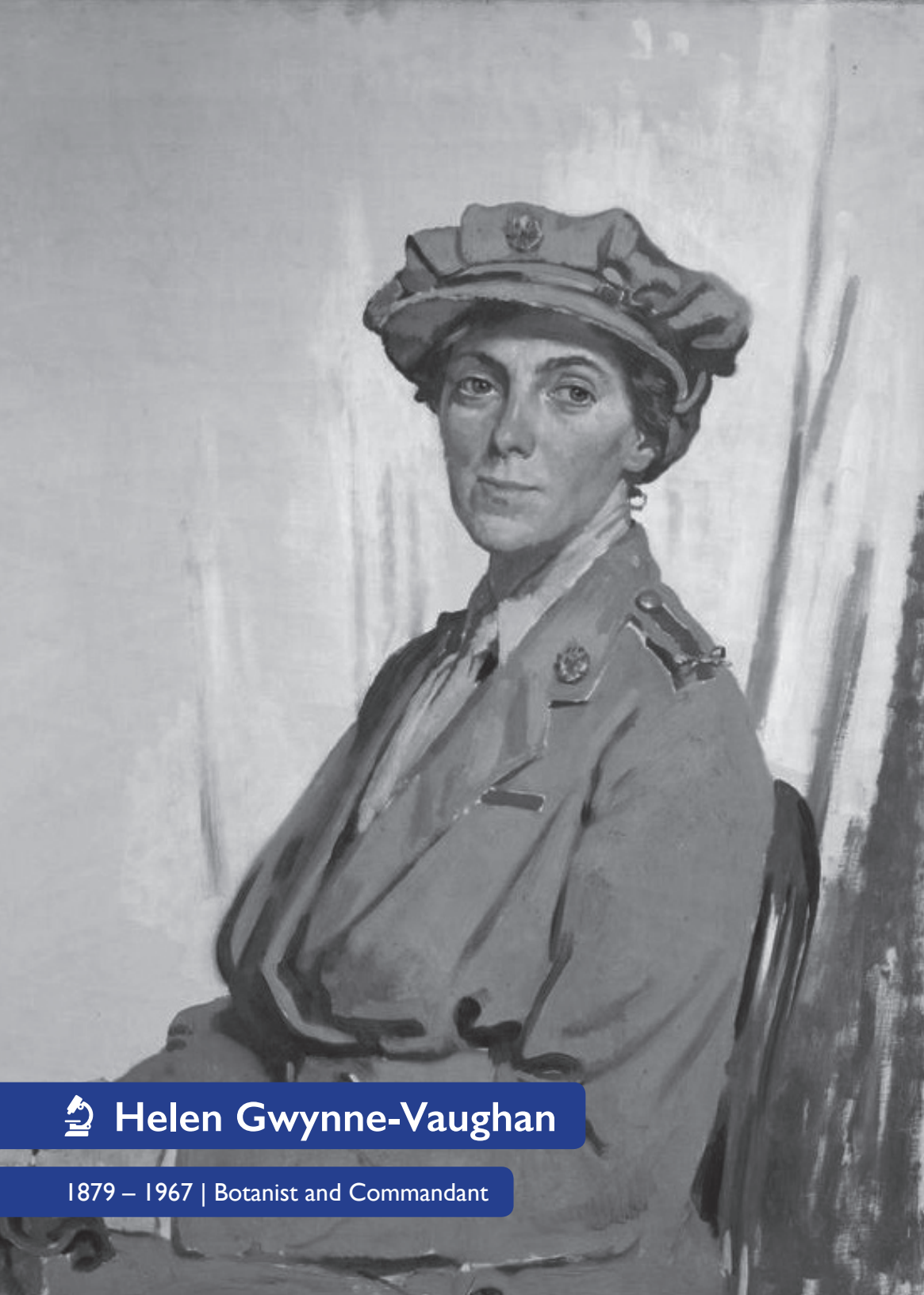
A military hospital in Kragujevac, Serbia

#### Non-commissioned officer:

Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are 'the backbone' of the Army. They are the senior soldiers, leaders who ensure orders are carried out effectively and efficiently

Image: Sergeant Major Flora Sandes. By the Library of Congress. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.





## Helen Gwynne-Vaughan

1879 – 1967 | Botanist and Commandant



## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Helen Gwynne-Vaughan

Helen Gwynne-Vaughan was a botanist and mycologist (someone who studies fungi) who had lots of responsibility during the First World War. Gwynne-Vaughan studied at Royal Holloway College under renowned botanist Margaret Jane Benson. By 1909, Gwynne-Vaughan had become a very well-respected academic.

The First World War required the largest army Britain had ever had. More died than in any earlier war. As a result, officials in the War Office identified jobs in the armed services which they thought could be carried out by women instead of men.

This was the first time women were allowed to do these jobs. From 1917, women replaced male soldiers in offices, canteens, transport roles, stores and army bases.

As the war progressed, Gwynne-Vaughan's friend – suffragette and surgeon Dr Louisa Garrett Anderson – appointed her as Chief Controller of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in France. The WAAC grew to involve over 52,000 women from Britain during the war. Gwynne-Vaughan eventually directed the overseas sections of the WAAC. She directly commanded 10,000 women and became the first woman ever appointed a CBE in 1918.

After her involvement in the WAAC, Gwynne-Vaughan accepted an appointment as Commandant of the newly-formed Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) in 1918. Her successes in leading the WRAF saw her receive an even higher honour in 1919: a DBE.

By the end of the war, Gwynne-Vaughan was very well known due to her position in the Army. She returned to Britain to her career as a successful academic, but during the Second World War she served in the Army once again.

**Location**  
London

### Did you know?

In 1918 the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act gave women over 21 the right to stand for election as MPs.

Gwynne-Vaughan stood as a political candidate in Camberwell North (London) from 1922-1924, though she was not elected to Parliament.

### Definitions

#### Botanist:

An expert in the scientific study of plants

#### CBE / DBE:

CBE stands for Commander/ Dame of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. This is a very special award that recognises a person's contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organisations, and public service

Image: A half-length portrait of Dame Helen in full uniform, 1918.  
By William Orpen © IWM  
(Art.IWM ART 3048)





**Elsie Inglis**

1864 – 1917 | Suffragist and Doctor





## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Elsie Inglis

Dr Elsie Inglis was a social and medical reformer, and one of the most highly qualified female doctors of her time.

Inglis was Scottish and born in India. Before the First World War, she trained in Scotland as a physician and surgeon. She operated a hospital for women and children known as The Hospice. An advocate for women's rights, Inglis was secretary of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies until 1914.

When war broke out, Inglis founded the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service. This provided women nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers and cooks to the battlefields during the First World War.

At the start of the war, the British government refused Inglis's offer to work as an army doctor because she was a woman. Determined to help, Inglis joined the French war effort and was stationed in Serbia where she managed a hospital.

Her work was much admired, and she was the first woman to be awarded the Serbian Order of the White Eagle (First Class).

Inglis was captured briefly by the enemy in 1915. After she was freed, she returned to active service and began plans to found new units of the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service in Russia.

Inglis returned to England when she realised she had cancer. She died on the day she arrived in England. Her body was returned to Edinburgh, and her funeral was attended by leading political figures and royalty.

Inglis remains an inspiration to many people to this day. Her achievements and life were celebrated nationally on the centenary of her death on the 26 November 2017.

### Location

Edinburgh, Scotland

Elsie Inglis was a Trailblazer because through her tireless work she helped to save many lives during the war.

### Did you know?

The Elsie Inglis Memorial Hospital operated in Edinburgh until 1988, and a new memorial was unveiled in 2017 at the Edinburgh Central Library.

### Definitions

#### Reformer:

A person who makes changes to something in order to improve it

#### Serbian Order of the White Eagle:

An award for peace or wartime services for Serbia

#### Centenary:

The 100th anniversary of when an event took place

Image: Elsie Inglis by Balfour, Lady Francis. CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



## Marjory Stephenson

1885 – 1948 | Biochemist and Commandant



## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Marjory Stephenson

Marjory Stephenson was an influential biochemist and microbiologist. She was the first-ever woman elected to be a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1945.

Stephenson contributed to the war effort as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Commandant, helping to feed and look after wounded soldiers. In this role she worked all over Europe and received praise for her achievements.

Stephenson had an interest in science from a young age, studying Natural Sciences at Newnham College, University of Cambridge. This included classes in chemistry, physiology (the study of the way a living organism works) and zoology (the study of animals).

Family funds were not available for her to study medicine, so Stephenson became a teacher. In 1910 she took up a post as a domestic science teacher at King's College for Women.

She briefly joined a laboratory at University College London with a focus on nutrition (the study of the food individuals need to be healthy). However, this work was interrupted when the First World War started.

When war was declared, Stephenson joined the VAD. She put her knowledge of nutrition and chemistry to use by running field kitchens in France throughout 1914 and 1915. A field kitchen is where food for soldiers in the battlefield is prepared. There were many field kitchens providing food for soldiers during World War One.

In 1916, she travelled by herself to the Eastern Front to establish new VAD kitchens in Salonika in Greece (now known as Thessaloniki) and served there until 1918. The conditions in Salonika were often difficult.

By the end of her wartime service, Stephenson was a Commandant with a team of cooks. Stephenson was awarded an MBE and an Associate Royal Red Cross in December 1918 as recognition of her wartime work.

### Location

Cambridge,  
Cambridgeshire

Marjory Stephenson was a Trailblazer because she was a pioneering female scientist working in a male-dominated industry.

### Questions

Can you discover more about Stephenson's time in Salonika? What would her experience have been like?

### Definitions

#### Biochemist:

Someone who studies how chemicals work in living things

#### Microbiologist:

Someone who studies very tiny organisms

#### Fellow of the Royal Society:

An award given to scientists who make exceptional contributions to research about the natural world, maths, science, medicine and engineering

Image: Nursing sisters from a British Hospital speaking to a Cretan Gendarme, in Salonika, January, 1917. By Ariel Varges © IWM (Q 32716) IWM Non-Commercial Licence.





 **Sophia Duleep Singh**

1876 – 1948 | Activist and Nurse



## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Sophia Duleep Singh

Sophia Duleep Singh was the daughter of the last Maharaja of the Sikh Kingdom who was exiled to Britain in 1854. Duleep Singh became an orphan at the age of 11. Luckily for her, she had special privileges given to her by her godmother, Queen Victoria.

In the years leading up to the First World War, Singh rejected the wealthy English society she lived in and took a series of trips to India. At the time, Britain ruled over India. While in India, Duleep Singh discovered the unfairness of British rule.

This caused her to return to England and become a revolutionary – someone who believes that political change can be achieved through direct, and sometimes violent, action. In 1909 Duleep Singh joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

In 1910 she was part of the 'Black Friday' demonstration which involved hundreds of women protesting outside Parliament for women's suffrage. Many people who took part were assaulted, and the police faced a lot of criticism for their actions.

Duleep Singh funded suffragette groups and became a high-profile suffragette herself. She lived in Hampton Court Palace, and sold her newspaper *The Suffragette* on the street outside. She resisted paying taxes because she did not have the vote. This led to her being prosecuted several times.

After the First World War broke out, Duleep Singh joined the Red Cross and worked as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse at the Lady Hardinge Hospital near Brighton.

Duleep Singh treated many Indian patients. The Punjabi soldiers, in particular, were amazed to be treated by their princess. She also devoted her time to raising funds for Indian soldiers abroad through the soldier's welfare fund.

### Location

Elveden, Suffolk  
India

Sophia Duleep Singh was a Trailblazer because of her resilience in fighting for women's suffrage, and for her determination to help women in India have greater equality.

### Questions

Can you find out more about Duleep Singh's efforts to help the women's suffrage movements in India?

### Definitions

#### Women's suffrage:

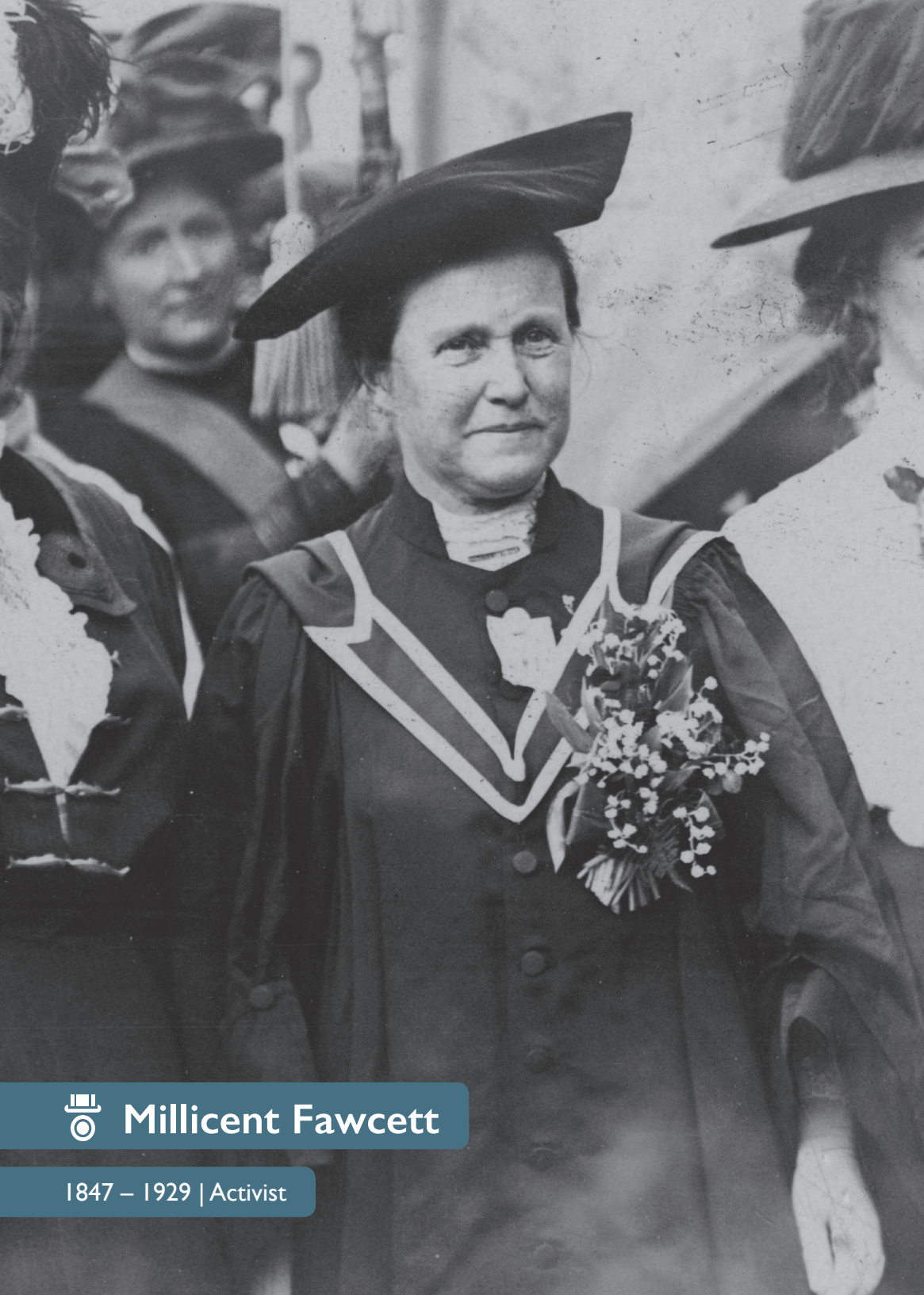
The right for women to vote in political elections

#### Soldier's welfare fund:

A collection of money to provide troops with items including waterproof shoes, warm clothes, huts to protect soldiers from the elements, chocolate and cigarettes

Image: Princess Sophia Duleep Singh selling subscriptions for *The Suffragette* newspaper outside Hampton Court in London, April 1913. Courtesy of the British Library. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.





**Millicent Fawcett**

1847 – 1929 | Activist





## Millicent Fawcett

Millicent Fawcett was a leading advocate for women's suffrage. She was passionate about the right of women to higher education. Fawcett helped to found Newnham College, a women-only college at the University of Cambridge in 1871.

Fawcett was a tireless campaigner and a long-serving president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The NUWSS became involved in vital work to support society and the war effort during the First World War.

Fawcett believed that the vote could be achieved by campaigning peacefully. In contrast to Suffragettes in the WSPU – who were prepared to participate in violent protest – Fawcett's suffragist strategy was an inspiration for many women who wanted to contribute to the women's suffrage movement, but did not want to engage in violence.

Fawcett did not get involved in recruiting service personnel to serve in the war, because she did not believe in war or violence. She and the NUWSS network did take part in lots of voluntary work during the war, which was an influential form of campaigning for women's suffrage. Many historians believe this approach played a part in the passing of the Representation of the People Act 1918.

Millicent Fawcett was a strong speaker, organiser, and leader. Her contribution was recognised when she was made Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire in 1925. Her lifelong campaign for equality is continued today through the Fawcett Society, which is a leading charity promoting women's rights and gender equality.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

**Location**  
Aldeburgh, Suffolk

Millicent Fawcett was a Trailblazer because her humanitarian work made a powerful case to the government for women's suffrage.

### Did you know?

To commemorate 100 years since the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 – which was the first Act passed in Britain giving women the vote – a statue of Millicent Fawcett will be erected in Parliament Square, London. It will be the first statue there to honour a woman.

### Definitions

#### Women's suffrage:

The right for women to vote in political elections

#### Order of the British Empire:

An award that recognises a person's contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organisations, and public service

#### Humanitarian:

A person who cares about promoting human well-being

Image: Millicent Fawcett standing at a suffrage demonstration. The image has been trimmed. By LSE Library. No restrictions, via Wikimedia Commons



## Henrietta Franklin

1866 – 1964 | Founder of Jewish League for Woman Suffrage



## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Henrietta Franklin

Henrietta Franklin, known as Netta, was the daughter of a wealthy baron, 1st Baron Swaythling. She dedicated her life to supporting education for children and encouraging Jewish women to participate in the suffrage movement.

Franklin was one of the founders of the Parents' National Education Union – an organisation that worked for better education for children in schools and at home. She worked with suffrage organisations before the First World War. At the time, most people in Britain were Christian and there was a lot of prejudice against people who practiced other religions. Franklin wanted to make the suffrage movement more inclusive and include women from different religions.

Franklin created the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage (JLWS) in 1912. She created the JLWS with her husband and her sister, suffragist Lily Montagu, who was also an activist. The JLWS encouraged Jewish women to participate in the suffrage movement. Franklin was one of the few Jewish women to raise their profile in the women's suffrage movement. Her hard work with women's suffrage led to Franklin becoming the president of National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1916.

When the war began in 1914, Franklin focused on encouraging women to take jobs that men had left as they went to fight in the war. She also raised money to support all-women hospitals in France. Franklin grew apart from many suffragists during the war as she was a supporter of pacifism. She supported many anti-war feminist groups. Later in her career Franklin spoke publicly on pacifism, inclusion and feminism.

**Location**  
London

Henrietta Franklin was a Trailblazer because she campaigned for the women's suffrage movement to be more inclusive.

### Definitions

**Baron:**  
A member of British nobility

**Suffrage movement:**  
The fight for the right to vote in political elections

**Prejudice:**  
Dislike or hostility based on assumptions and without reason

**Suffragist:**  
Someone who fights for the right of women to vote in a political election

**Pacifism:**  
The belief that war and violence cannot be justified

**Feminism:**  
The belief that women and men should have equal rights

Image: Portrait of Henrietta Franklin by Bassano Ltd whole-plate film negative, 24 February 1936. Given by Bassano & Vandyk Studios, 1974. Photographs Collection.





## Rosa May Billinghurst

1875 – 1953 | Activist



# Rosa May Billinghurst

Rosa May Billinghurst was an important woman in the suffragist movement and campaigned for women's rights in Britain before, during and after the First World War.

As a child, Billinghurst had a disease called polio. This disease left her unable to walk so she moved around using a tricycle wheelchair. Before the war, Billinghurst was involved in social work in Greenwich workhouses.

This included helping poor women who were living on the streets of London. Like many of her contemporary female activists, Billinghurst was an active member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), run by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. Emmeline Pankhurst was a famous campaigner for women's rights.

The WSPU held many protests for women's right to vote, and they sometimes turned violent. Billinghurst participated in protests by smashing windows and destroying mailboxes. These activities caused her to be sentenced to prison multiple times between 1910 and 1914.

When war was declared in 1914, the WSPU agreed to stop their protests in exchange for the release of all suffragist prisoners. The WSPU decided to focus on campaigning for women's right to serve in the war and participate in support industries.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

**Location**  
London

Rosa May Billinghurst was a Trailblazer because she campaigned for the right to vote. Her story is even more inspiring because she didn't let her disability hold her back.

### Did you know?

Rosa May Billinghurst died in 1953. In her Will she left her body to the London School of Medicine in the hope that this would help to find treatments for women with similar illnesses.

### Definitions

#### Suffragist:

A person campaigning for new groups of people, including women, to get the right to vote in elections

#### Polio:

A disease that affects your nerves. The effect of polio can mean you lose the ability to move parts of your body

#### Will:

A legal document stating who should receive their possessions after they die

Image: Rosa May Billinghurst.  
Source (WP:NFC#4) Fair use  
via Wikimedia Commons.





**Lucy Thoumaian**

1858 – 1940 | Peace Activist and Educator





## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

# Lucy Thoumaian

Lucy Thoumaian was an Armenian activist. She spent much of her life helping survivors of war and their families. Thoumaian fought for women's rights and education reform. She also represented Armenia at the 1915 Women at the Hague conference (also known as the Women's Peace Congress).

Thoumaian was born in Switzerland and married an Armenian Christian missionary. She followed her husband to England and began working to help refugees in Britain and to change the education system.

She founded an orphanage and a school known as 'The Armenian House' in England to provide education and shelter for Armenian orphans who were fleeing war in their home country.

During the First World War Thoumaian spoke publicly about peace, women's empowerment and ending war. She published a series of pamphlets (known as broadsides) asking women to fight for peace and end racial and cultural prejudice.

Around the same time, mass killings of Armenians began in the Ottoman Empire. Although numbers are disputed, it is accepted that the government of the Ottoman Empire was responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands of Armenians between 1915 and 1916.

After the end of the First World War, Thoumaian worked with the League of Nations – a post war organisation founded in an effort to maintain world peace. The League was an early version of what is now the United Nations.

Thoumaian continued to work to help victims of the Armenian mass killings and to campaign for victims to be protected around the world.

**Location**  
Chigwell, Essex

Lucy Thoumaian was a Trailblazer because she fought for an end to racial prejudice and worked hard to help her fellow Armenians after the mass killings began.

### Did you know?

The mass killings of Armenians during the First World War is still a highly sensitive issue, with political arguments about the scale of the event and the way it is described. Estimates of the numbers killed range from 300,000 to 1.5 million. Some countries, including Germany, Canada, France and Russia, describe this event as the 'Armenian Genocide'. The UK uses different words to describe what happened. The government of Turkey strongly objects to the use of the term genocide within this context. Genocide means the deliberate killing of a large group of people from a particular nation or ethnic group.

Image: International Congress of Women in 1915. By LSE Library. No restrictions, via Wikimedia Commons.



 **Sarojini Naidu**

1879 – 1949 | Founder of Women's Indian Association



# Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu was a Bengali poet and activist sometimes called 'The Nightingale of India'. Naidu campaigned for Indian women's suffrage and Indian independence. She had a strong connection to the UK having studied at King's College London and at the University of Cambridge.

Naidu initially believed that proactive involvement of women in the war effort would advance progress for Indian independence and Indian women's suffrage. She spent time in London in 1914 helping with the ambulance corps that Mahatma Gandhi had formed.

Naidu returned to India in 1915 where she delivered lectures on womanhood and Indian independence, influencing people to support women's suffrage in India. She wrote *The Gift of India* in 1915, a poem which honours the contribution of the Indian Army in the First World War and laments the loss of so many lives.

In 1917, Naidu helped establish the Women's Indian Association. This organisation campaigned for Indian women to have the right to vote in political elections. Their petitions contributed to big legal changes, which eventually led to women having the right to vote from 1921. Equal voting rights were finally given to men and women in 1947.

After the First World War, Naidu encouraged India's youth to protest peacefully for India's independence from British colonial rule.

Her four acclaimed poetry volumes *Songs* (1895), *The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Bird of Time* (1912) and *The Broken Wing* (1917) helped spread her reputation as a talented writer throughout the war and beyond.

## TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's  
Inspirational Women

**Location**  
Hyderabad, India

Sarojini Naidu was a Trailblazer for her tireless efforts to promote women's suffrage in India.

### Did you know?

Sarojini Naidu became the first Governor of the United Provinces of India (now Uttar Pradesh) in 1947 and was President of the Indian National Congress.

### Questions

Can you find examples of Naidu's writing and read them with your class? What do they tell you about Naidu's attitudes towards the war, and the treatment of women?

### Definitions:

**Women's suffrage:**  
Women's right to vote in political elections

Image: Sarojini Naidu. 1912. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.