



A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's, 1886-2011

Laura Schwartz

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Neither a cosy anecdotal inside story, nor a straightforward account of women's struggle to enter the university, this history of St Hugh's College, Oxford looks both upstairs and downstairs, at dons and undergraduates but also at domestic staff. What did it mean for the would-be school teacher, the flapper on the motorcycle, the depression era grammar-school girl, and the student revolutionary of the 1970s to re-invent themselves as educated women? Who remained excluded from this emancipated identity? What were the tensions between old and new generations of dons and undergraduates? And what of the first Principal's notorious belief in time-travel?

In this innovative study, Schwartz explores the relationship between personal and collective identity in one of the first higher educational establishments run by and for women, during a period in which women's role both in society and university education changed beyond recognition. Based on new and original research, *A Serious Endeavour* offers a fresh and sometimes disquieting perspective on the history of gender and education in twentieth-century Britain, opening up new ways of thinking about the development of women's higher education.

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