

Report to the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals re the Curran Fellowship Funding Awarded in 2017

I set out in my application for Curran Fellowship funding in 2017 the importance of research work on the *British Workwoman* (1863 – 1913?) Christian temperance magazine. My PhD research proposal focuses on the significance of gender in both the production and representation in the magazine, as well as that of its analogous counterpart the *British Workman* (1855-1921). Whilst the *British Workman* has been the subject of some scholarly attention the *British Workwoman* has been overlooked and attracted limited academic focus, despite its popularity and longevity of publication.

My research into the production history of the *British Workwoman* magazine had been hampered by the difficulties of accessing original copies of the periodical. When the magazine was first established production details including names of the publishers, printers, and magazine sellers, were located on the bottom of the back page of the magazine and clearly visible when bound into volumes as collections of the magazines usually are. From the 1870s however these details were moved to the spine edge of the magazine. Often this information is still visible despite being bound into a volume, an example is shown in figure 1 below. The British Library in London holds the largest collection of original copies of the *British Workwoman*. However, the collection is incomplete. The missing sections of the magazine fall between 1876 and 1887 (issues 292 - 339). There are collections of microfiche copies of the magazine available in London, for example the Women's Library at the London School of Economics hold almost an entire set. However, the copying process used has consistently failed to capture the production information held on the spine edge. To complete my account of the production history of the magazine I therefore required to access original copies of the magazine for this missing period.

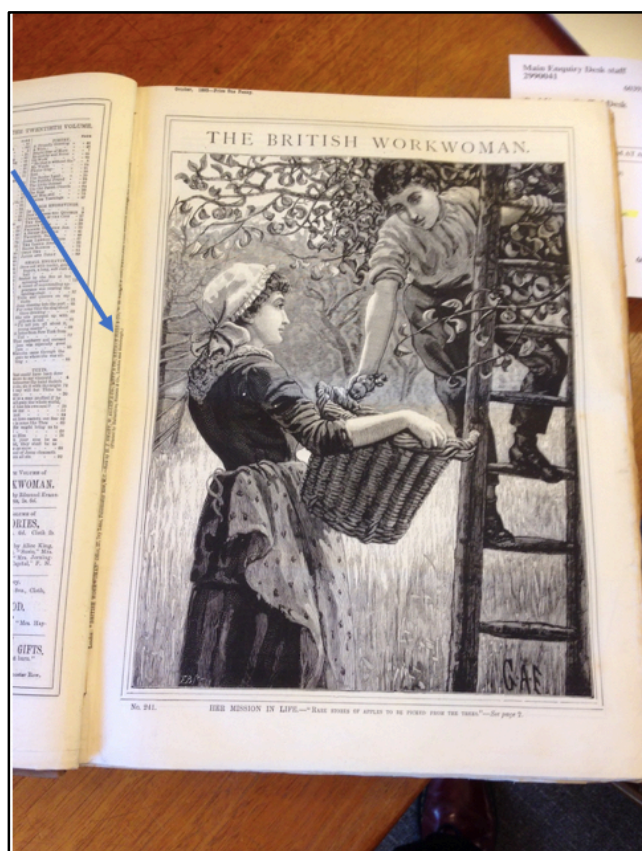


Figure 1: Front page of the *British Workwoman* no. 241, October 1883. The arrow points to the production details just visible on the edge of the magazine's spine.

The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University hold some of the original copies of the magazine for the period required. The National Library of Scotland has a collection which includes the period August 1877 to October 1878 (numbers 167-183). The Bodleian library holds the missing sections for the period January 1883 to December 1889 (numbers 232 -291).

I visited the libraries during the Summer of 2017. Both libraries' collections are bound in volumes, so consequently there was no guarantee that they would necessarily reveal the information I needed. However, I am pleased to report that a significant number of magazines in both collections disclose the information required. In respect of the National Library of Scotland, nine full or partial sets of production information were revealed. In respect of the Bodleian Library collection, 34 full or partial sets of production information are visible.

This additional data adds significantly to the construction of a full historical account of the production history of the magazine. It provides further details on the range of publishers involved over the decades of the *British Workwoman's* production. Importantly the information extracted from the magazines provides new evidence on the date that the National Temperance League (NTL) - an organisation set up to promote total abstinence of alcohol- was directly involved with the magazine. Earlier research suggested that the NTL was linked with the *British Workwoman* from May 1892. However, original copies of the magazine held at the Bodleian library confirm that the NTL worked with the *British Workwoman* almost a decade earlier, in May 1883. In addition, further data on the change of printers for the magazine has also come to light through this specific research. The designated printers from 1871 were Savill, Edwards & Co. Existing research information suggested that the switch to the printing company Ballantyne, Hanson & Co. may have taken place circa 1892. Original copies of the magazine from the National Library of Scotland, however, confirm that the printers changed in 1878.

The additional data gained from accessing copies of the *British Workwoman* at the National Library of Scotland and the Bodleian Library, made possible through the Curran Fellowship funding, has significantly augmented my research material and has added further impetus to my research project.

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