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**A Surfeit of Socks? The impact of the First World War on women correspondents to daily newspapers**

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## **A Surfeit of Socks? The impact of the First World War on women correspondents to daily newspapers**

### **Abstract**

Using as a starting point Vera Brittain's description of middle-class ladies attempting to 'provincialise' the war, this article investigates the reaction of provincial middle- and upper-class women to the war effort, 1914-18. The article uses evidence taken from women's letters printed in two Aberdeen daily newspapers during the war and discusses the voluntary fundraising with which these women were involved: for example, for the troops at the front, prisoners of war, hospitals, ambulances and disabled servicemen. Such fundraising could be in the form of monetary donations; knitting and sewing - in particular the ubiquitous socks; or some more local variation of war work - in the case of Aberdeenshire, the gathering and cleaning of sphagnum moss. Evidence taken from the Aberdeen newspapers agrees with Brittain that such women did see their fundraising in terms of local or provincial ties, and there was an emphasis, in particular in the early years of the war, on Aberdeen or Aberdeenshire women 'doing their bit'. However, it also argues that such a provincialised approach was necessary in the face of an almost total absence of a centralised approach to such war work and that, by the end of 1915, the government had started to realise that a voluntary and localised approach to the war was not enough. The women's voluntary work began to be organised by centralising authorities - despite protests from some quarters.

## **A Surfeit of Socks? The impact of the First World War on women correspondents to daily newspapers**

When writing of the events of late summer 1914 in *Testament of Youth*, the young Vera Brittain described the preparations for war in the little town of Buxton:

‘Few of humanity’s characteristics are more disconcerting than its ability to reduce world events to its own level, wherever this may happen to lie. By the end of August, when Liege and Namur had fallen, and the misfortunes of the British Army were extending into the Retreat from Mons, the ladies of the Buxton elite had already set to work to provincialise the War.’<sup>1</sup>

Brittain continued with some humorous comments on these ladies’ attempts to teach each other bandaging and basic first aid. This condescending and belittling attitude towards the activities of middle-class, middle-aged ladies determined to ‘do their bit’ is characteristic not only of Brittain but of many of the commentators and historians who have followed her. Again and again in histories of the home front during the First World War we read:

‘one very widespread female response to the outbreak of war was the knitting of ‘comforts’ for the troops: socks, waistcoats, helmets, scarves, mitts and bodybelts. It was said that many men in the trenches used these unwanted and often unsuitable items for cleaning their rifles and wiping their cups and plates’<sup>2</sup>

In recent years much has been written about the role of women in wartime, but this material has tended to focus on the younger and more active section of the population, who worked in munitions factories, nursed at various fronts or visibly took over men’s jobs, whether as bus conductresses or in the Land Army.<sup>3</sup> There has been little consideration of the role of the type of woman that Brittain dismissively refers to as the ladies of a small-town elite. Possibly this is because of a perceived lack of material evidence for their activities during wartime. However, the

letters columns of provincial daily newspapers offer an abundance of relevant material for such a study.

This article is based on such material and shows how the predominant subject matter for ladies' letters during the war years was that of voluntary fundraising for the many charities and associations connected with the war. Such charities were often suggested to the women through personal or local ties - family members at the front; local regiments or Scottish connections. As we shall see, these women perceived their war work in localised or provincialised terms, and were led by the local elite, in both the city and the surrounding countryside. Whilst this approach did eventually lead to inequalities in provision for the men at the front, the hospitals and the prisoners of war, this voluntary approach was at first the only one which existed - and such an approach was part of the government's own approach to the war until late 1915. After this time, and with the growing power of Lloyd George, the government and local authorities began to impose a more centralised and less personalised approach to the voluntary organisations. While this approach was at first resented by many of the charitable ladies affected, as can be seen in their letters to the newspapers, it was necessary in order to provide a more uniform approach to the provision of comforts and necessary medical items to the ever-increasing number of men and women in need.

This article is based on a study of two such newspapers, *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* and *The Aberdeen Free Press*. The *Journal*, established in 1748, is one of the oldest daily newspapers in Europe, while its rival, the *Free Press*, was first published in 1853. The two newspapers merged to form the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* in 1922. Even today, this newspaper is regarded as representing a well-defined geographical area, recognised in cultural, social and political terms - and such was definitely the case at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This makes the two newspapers ideal for an investigation of Scottish provincial attitudes to the war.

Between the outbreak of war in August 1914 and the end of 1918 the *Daily Journal* printed 388 letters from women in its letters columns while the *Free Press* printed another 352. There are therefore over 700 letters forming a body of evidence concerning the wartime activities, worries and campaigns of a group of women mostly based in Aberdeen and the surrounding county. Despite the fact that 'there was a war on', there is little evidence of editorial gatekeeping or censorship in the letters columns of either the *Press* or *Journal* during this period. The correspondence pages contain no mention of any type of editorial choice; letters continue to be printed as soon as received - or when there is space. Occasional editorial comments apologise for a particular letter's non-appearance through lack of space and promise to print it the following day. The policy appears to have been one of full publication of all letters, as long as accompanied by a name and address.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in September 1914, in response to a correspondent criticising the newspaper for publishing a particular letter the day before, the editor of the *Free Press* wrote: 'We do not consider it desirable to suppress opinions expressed by a correspondent merely because these run counter to the prevalent and almost universal feeling of the country.'<sup>5</sup> The main impact of the war on the letters columns appears to have been a lack of space caused by paper and news rationing. Caroline Dakers in *The Countryside at War* describes how, while in the first few weeks of war newspapers attempted to give full details of the progress of war, publishing interviews with soldiers on leave and letters from the front, the imposition of censorship meant that 'instead of being packed with war news, many local newspapers shrank to less than their pre-war size'.<sup>6</sup> During 1917 and 1918 the Aberdeen newspapers shrank visibly, sometimes to just four or five pages, and this obviously affected the amount of space available for letters. On 24 January 1918 a note appeared in the Letters column requesting 'Will correspondents kindly limit letters to the Editor to 300 words or under?'. However, there seems to have been little response to this request on the part of correspondents, most of whom continued to write long letters if they felt their case required detailed explanation.

One immediate impact of the war on the letters columns was that more women correspondents than ever allowed their names and addresses to be printed at the end of their letters. Previous work on the newspapers between 1900 and 1914 has shown a growing trend throughout this period of women choosing to reveal their identity rather than hiding behind a nom de plume or initials, and the war seems to have accelerated this phenomenon.<sup>7</sup> As an example, between the outbreak of war in August 1914 and the end of that first year, 44 women gave full details of their name and some indication of an address in the *Daily Journal*, compared to 8 who chose not to. That is, 85% of female correspondents clearly identified themselves in their letters to the more conservative daily newspaper. In comparison, of the 21 women letter-writers to the *Journal* in 1914 before the outbreak of war, only 13 chose to identify themselves, or 62%. Again, before the outbreak of war in August, 62% of women letter-writers to the *Free Press* fully identified themselves (8 out of 13), while after the outbreak of war this figure rose to 84% (49 out of 58). This trend, of over two-thirds of women letter-writers fully identifying themselves, continued in both newspapers throughout the first three years of the war, and then began to drop from 1917. In 1917 only 62% of women letter-writers to the newspapers were happy to have their names and addresses printed, and in 1918 this figured dropped to 40% - below pre-war levels. Why was this?

Of course, there is a purely practical explanation behind the need for identification in the earlier years of the war. Whereas the vast majority of letters published before the war were *reactive*, commenting on other letters in the newspapers or other parts of the editorial, and therefore it was not necessary for the women writers to reveal their identities if they did not want to, most of the letters published in the newspapers during the first years of the war were *proactive*. Writers asking for donations, whether of money, time or the ubiquitous socks, needed to give their names and addresses so that people would know where to send their contributions. In the last years of the war, letters grew less proactive as war work settled into an established routine. Instead, there were a growing numbers of letters commenting on or complaining about the organisation of some aspect of the war. Many of these letter-writers chose to hide behind nom de plumes. For example, in 1918 the *Free Press* received letters from 'Countrywoman' regarding the arrangement of war-time cookery demonstrations; 'Housewife' on the short opening hours of butchers' shops; 'Country Lass' and 'Munitionette' defending dances in wartime'; 'A Mother' on the treatment of prisoners of war in Germany and 'Gamekeeper's Wife' on the low wartime wages paid to estate workers.<sup>8</sup>

Female letter-writers in the last year of the war were thus proportionally less willing to identify themselves and more likely to be complaining about some aspect of wartime organisation, in contrast to the writers of the first three years of the war, who were more likely to be proactively seeking aid with war work that they were organising. Since these organising women needed to give their names, and in most cases their addresses, we are thus able to identify the status of most of them. It is no surprise to discover that the majority of the women who were confident enough either in themselves or in the importance of their subject-matter to write to the newspapers can be identified as middle or upper class. Many of the correspondents resident in Aberdeen wrote from addresses based in the West End of the city, such as Mrs Maria Ogilvie Gordon, wife of a physician and Vice-President of the Aberdeen branch of the National Union of Women Workers,



who lived at 1 Rubislaw Terrace, or Miss Davidson, honorary secretary of the Women Patrols' Committee, who lived in Rubislaw Den South. By the beginning of the war, such West End addresses formed a tightly knit grouping of the city elite.<sup>9</sup> A further middle-class group was clustered around the university, such as Elena Miller, wife of a professor at the university and daughter of Mr Dimitroff, Bulgarian Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who was involved in fundraising for the Scottish Women's Hospital.

### **Fundraising ladies**

There is also a large group of letters from women of the gentry and aristocratic families in the surrounding countryside. Indeed, the First World War is often seen as the last flowering of the ideal of such ladies leading the way in charitable good works. Lady Stewart and the two Misses Stewart, wife and daughters of Sir David Stewart of Banchory House, wrote frequently with appeals for donations for Lord Roberts' fund for Indian troops, for which Miss Julia Stewart and her sister bravely sold flowers in the streets of Banchory. The redoubtable Ishbel, Lady Aberdeen, wrote majestically from wherever her husband's career had taken her in support of the Aberdeenshire Red Cross War Fund, while Lady Forbes of Castle Forbes assured readers of the able administration of the Aberdeen Prince of Wales Fund. Two of the most frequent female correspondents to both newspapers during the war years were Lady Sempill, of Fintray House, and Lady Lumsden, of Murdan, who attempted to use their family connections and influence to raise money for a variety of causes.

Lady Sempill was without doubt an indefatigable fundraiser. In January 1915 she was pleased to announce the success of her campaign to raise money to send motor ambulances to the front in France. She had managed to raise £1,321, enough to purchase and equip four ambulances, to be known as 'Aberdeenshire' numbers one to four. In May of that year she turned her attention to raising money for an 'Aberdeenshire' bed in Queen Mary's Convalescent Hospital for amputees, and in September launched an appeal to provide a launch - to be called the 'Aberdeenshire'

Launch - to transport wounded men from the beaches at the Dardanelles to the hospital ships. Possibly because of her position as wife of the one of the foremost landowners in Aberdeenshire, who was also a war hero wounded at the battle of Loos in September 1915, and possibly because of her own complete conviction that where she led others would follow, Lady Sempill's fundraising tended to be successful. Neither was her war-work restricted to fundraising. In March 1917 she passed on to readers the instruction she had already given to churchgoers in the village of Echt to 'knit during the sermon'<sup>10</sup> and, also in that year, reported on her efforts to encourage her tenants' moss gathering and cleaning:

It may interest your readers to hear that I started a two-hour Saturday afternoon class here (of course attending regularly personally) last September gathering moss whenever weather permits and drying it in a laundry loft in cricket nets. So popular was this meeting, resulting in one bag weekly cleaned moss, that I started an evening class, 7 to 9 (we have about 60 workers), where all classes meet with the greatest regularity, the result being fully two cleaned sacks weekly. Several workers, including children, are so keen that they attend both classes... It is merely a matter of getting someone to take the trouble to start the movement, and he or she will be as ably supported as I have been. An occasional tea party, marks for attendance, and home work brought in, with little prizes, all help to stimulate interest.... All parishes will work if they are organised and led.<sup>11</sup>

Sphagnum moss gathering was an important part of women's war work in Aberdeenshire. The moss, which was found to be usefully absorbent, was gathered, dried and used to make hospital dressings. There are several descriptions of the collection of sphagnum moss in Aberdeenshire to be found in autobiographies from this time, such as Amy Stewart Fraser's description in *In*

*Memory Long*:

There was a great demand for sphagnum moss which had been found to be an excellent absorbent when placed on wounds. Country folk everywhere gathered it and sent it to centres for processing. My mother and I gathered great quantities at the Milton when it was golden green and moist, spread it on the barn floor and picked it clean of twigs and leaves, then packed it in sacks and sent it to Ballater where it was prepared for dressings in hospitals. When gathering we used liberal applications of oil of citronella in a vain attempt to protect our faces, hands and arms from the ferocious midges, but invariably a plague of the detestable insects drove us home.<sup>12</sup>

The abstract from her letter above shows that Lady Sempill considered it just as much part of her duties as a member of the upper-class elite to organise and lead the women of the locality in such war work as the male members of her family would have seen it their duty to organise and lead their men on the battlefield. The fact that Lady Sempill was so successful in her endeavours points to the fact that such a role was also seen as appropriate by those she proposed to lead - both the villagers knitting and cleaning moss at her bidding and the middle-classes and gentry subscribing to her funds.

However, while such a role came comparatively easily to the aristocratic Lady Sempill, Lady Lumsden, widow of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Lumsden of Belhelvie Lodge, appears to have bitten off more than she could chew. Possibly this is a result of her loss of status on the death of her husband, necessitating her removal to a house on the Deeside Road, many miles from her former home in the northern village of Belhelvie. In contrast to Lady Sempill, in her forties, Lady Lumsden was an elderly widow (she died in 1919) whose letters have a querulous rather than commanding character. Certainly, during the Boer War, Lady Lumsden's Penny All Round Tobacco Fund had been a resounding success (according to Lady Lumsden any way). However, when she tried to resurrect this and other forms of fundraising for the war effort in 1915 and 1916, she had to report less success:

7 August 1915, 'I am so sorry to find there has been no response to my appeal to get a complete motor ambulance to bring up cot cases when the trains arrive... from the Dardanelles to Oldmill [the local military hospital]'

19 July 1916, 'I am sorry no more school children have collected even pennies for this [the French hospital at Arc en Barrois]'

29 December 1916, 'I am sorry to have to tell you that I still require £20 to complete the Aberdeenshire Bed in the Arc en Barrois Hospital'.

It seems evident that, even though the Edwardian age had passed, the power of Aberdeenshire's landed aristocracy and their innate belief in their right and duty to lead meant that, as money

became tighter as the war moved into a third and then a fourth year, donations could still be found to support the fundraising of a Lady Sempill, if not a Lady Lumsden.

Another reason for the success of the grander ladies in this kind of fundraising is hinted at in the letters they sent to the newspapers. Every letter asking for donations of whatever sort ended with an assurance that all donations would be personally acknowledged by Lady Sempill, or Princess Louise or Countess Roberts, or whoever. One can imagine the attraction of sending one's carefully knitted socks or balaclava to the cause with the most prestigious president in order to receive a personally signed thank-you letter. In fact, when reading all these promises of personal acknowledgements, one begins to wonder how some of the poorer ladies of lower status ever managed to afford to run their collections, with the continual expense of postage and packing. In her letter to the *Free Press* of July 1915, Julia Stewart thanked all who had contributed to her collections for Lord Roberts' Fund for the Indian Troops: 'Specially I wish to thank those who, doubtless out of consideration for myself, refrained from attaching their names and addresses to huge parcels of knitting, and thereby prevented my acknowledging the sacrifice of all their unselfish labours otherwise than now; also to those who thoughtfully repacked their sweets in tins, thereby saving endless extra trouble.'<sup>13</sup> In fact, in February of that year, Julia Stewart had attempted to close this fund 'as I have found the enormous amount of correspondence, combined with the packing and dispatching of the garments almost more than I could overtake'<sup>14</sup>. At the time she reported that she had packed and dispatched 705 pairs of socks; 208 cummerbunds and belts; 113 knitted pugarees, caps and helmets; 60 blankets; 53 shirts and three quilts, plus handkerchiefs, soap, tobacco and sweets. A letter later that month indicated that the fund would remain open until further notice due to pleas for more socks from the commander of the Indian Expeditionary Force in France.<sup>15</sup> Julia Stewart closed the fund on 14 July 1915, having by then sent out 1002 pairs of cuffs, mitts and gloves; 1674 pairs of socks; 633 mufflers and numerous other knitted comforts, but was forced to re-open it again the following July, this time to send comforts to Indian prisoners of war. Similar lists and amounts of knitted comforts occur

frequently in the letters pages of both newspapers, and one does begin to feel that the soldiers at the front were being buried in a deluge of knitted socks. However, each lady starts her appeal by saying she is collecting in response to a particular appeal for more comforts, especially socks, and it must be remembered that there were no washing facilities in the trenches. A man would wear a pair of socks until they simply rotted away and would then require a new pair. Hence the enormous amounts of socks being sent to the front *were* needed, and appeals to continue to knit recur frequently throughout the war. What is particularly noteworthy about the collections of Miss *Julia Stewart* is that, at the same time that she was amassing, packing and posting thousands of woollen goods, *Mabel Stewart* of the same address - presumably her sister or mother - was also making a collection. On 27 October 1915 Mabel was pleased to announce that her collection for the Gordon Highlanders had been a great success and that she had so far dispatched 86 parcels of Oxo, Bovril, cafe au lait, cocoa, refreshlets, alodine, health salts, shirts, mufflers, 'and particularly socks'.<sup>16</sup> One presumes that Banchory House was a large establishment.

### **A provincialised approach**

In addition to feeling an obligation to take the lead in fundraising for the war effort, Lady Sempill and Lady Lumsden had something else in common - which can be linked to Vera Brittain's accusation that such ladies' immediate reaction to the war was to 'provincialise' it. Throughout women's correspondence to the Aberdeen newspapers during the war there is evidence of a desire - or perhaps a need - to localise or appropriate the war. Both Lady Sempill and Lady Lumsden raised money for 'Aberdeenshire' beds, ambulances and launches. Throughout the war, charitable ladies' letters were full of urges that Aberdeen or Scotland or Scottish women show how well *they* can respond to the war effort. Mary Duff, sending warm jackets and mufflers to the 1<sup>st</sup> Gurkha Rifles, assured readers 'with each parcel we enclose a paper stating that the work is the gift of Scotch women'<sup>17</sup>; while Elena Miller made a direct 'appeal to the Aberdeen public' and 'the generosity of Aberdonians' on behalf of the Scottish Women's Hospitals<sup>18</sup>. Both of these

letters appeared in the early days of the war. By 1917, Aberdeenshire had contributed many Aberdeenshire ambulances, launches and beds to the front, including a 'Bon Accord' motor ambulance - Bon Accord is the city's motto - which was sent to a hospital in France run by the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry.

The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry - or FANY as they tended to be known - had been established in 1907 as a voluntary force of 'adventurous upper-class ladies who could afford to provide their own mounts'<sup>19</sup> and would act as a link between front-line fighting troops and field hospitals. The FANY set up soup kitchens, field hospitals and troop canteens during the war. The directrice of one hospital, Mrs Gracie McDougall, wrote frequently to the Aberdeen newspapers stressing her hospital's links with the city: 'I myself... am from Aberdeen. My four-stretcher ambulance was made by an Aberdeen firm and for three months driven by an Aberdeen man, and when in January he left to take a commission in an English regiment, an Aberdeen lady came out to act as chauffeur in his place. This lady, Miss Thompson... has just been decorated with the Order of Leopold for bravery in the trenches.'<sup>20</sup> Mrs McDougall was also not above fomenting civic rivalry in her quest for money for her hospital. During a few days' leave from the front in 1917 she wrote to the *Daily Journal*: 'I want to go back with £300 so that we can face the spring and summer without worrying as to ways and means. Thanks to the generosity of friends in Newcastle, almost £100 has been raised in a week, and I hope Aberdeen will help me with the remainder'.<sup>21</sup> Such blatant appeals to local pride and a spirit of local one-up-man-ship pervade many of these letters. It was easier to raise donations by urging prospective donors to focus on the reputation of the city, or 'their' boys at the front or a particular group with local connections than to ask for aid for the more amorphous 'war effort' or 'the front'. It was easier to conceive of the war in such localised, familiar terms.

This might also be done by mentioning family connections. Many ladies were drawn into fundraising for a particular battalion by letters from family members on the staff. Constance

Malcolm, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm, commanding the London Scottish, appealed for comforts for the troops while on active service,<sup>22</sup> while Mary Duff was encouraged by her nephew, Captain B O Duff, in her collections for his regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Gurkha Rifles. Again, we see the application of the principle of 'noblesse oblige' - the family connections of serving officers were expected to co-ordinate collections of money and comforts for the men in their care. However, such an approach might lead to some battalions missing out because of poorly connected officers, while others enjoyed an over-abundance of comfort, as a letter from Flora Uniacke, wife of Colonel Uniacke commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Gordon Highlanders, makes clear:

In view of the confusion which must arise through my special appeal for gifts for the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gordon Highlanders appearing in the same issue of the paper with Mrs Gordon Duff's announcement that she had forwarded to it a sufficient supply for the present, and still had a good reserve store, I wish to say that the error arose through my never having been informed that this lady was making any collection for the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion - and my being requested by a very good authority to take charge of the forwarding of their comforts. As I now learn, however, that Mrs Gordon Duff has undertaken this work, I shall, of course, leave it in her hands. I may, however, say that her statement that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions Gordon Highlanders have had insufficient care is totally incorrect as, since the beginning of the war, when I publicly appealed for gifts, I have sent out to each battalion over 1000 pairs of socks, some hundreds of scarves, belts, shirts, helmets and endless small comforts.<sup>23</sup>

In Scotland, such familial connections might also include appeals to the clan, although this was a romanticised notion even at this time. Both the clan Macrae and the clan Menzies appealed for donations to send comforts to clan members at the front, although the subsequent appeal by the clan Macrae for a clan ambulance 'which would be a most useful contribution towards the welfare and comfort of our fellow-clansmen who have the misfortune to be wounded on the field of battle'<sup>24</sup> suggests a certain naivety about the organisation of the battlefield. Presumably the envisaged ambulance would be able to 'home in' on wounded clansmen while barring its doors to any casualties of inferior birth.

Another example of this piecemeal, personalised approach was the 'named' hospital beds and ambulances. This was not a particularly Aberdeenshire or even Scottish phenomenon, and letters came from women all over the country aimed at raising money to support a bed or an ambulance in one of the many hospitals, either at the front or at home. The first example to occur in either of the Aberdeenshire newspapers came on 11 December 1914 and is typical of the genre:

*A 'Margarets' Ambulance*

With the approval of the Red Cross Committee I write to request the 'Margarets' in Scotland to provide a motor ambulance for use at the front to be named in honour of Saint Margaret, Queen of Scots. Subscriptions, sent to Mrs A Stuart at the address below, will be acknowledged privately and from time to time in the press.  
Margaret Stuart, Lochrin House, Craiglockhart Terrace, Edinburgh<sup>25</sup>

This particular letter does make some appeal to readers' patriotism by emphasising a Scottish saint, but, as usual, the name chosen for the ambulance is also the first name of the lady organising the collection. An ambulance was an ambitious project - requiring a collection of around £400. The majority of these letters concentrated on raising money to support a bed in a hospital for either a year or six months. The going rate appears to have been £25 for six months and £50 for a year. There was rarely any acknowledgement of the fact that the war could last for more than another year.

During the period of the war, the two newspapers received letters appealing for beds in the following names: Mary; Helen; Elizabeth; Alice and Alison; Jessie and Janet; Florence and Flora; Stuart or Stewart (as a surname or first name); and Ruth and Patricia. It was evidently realised that bearers of less common names needed to work together to achieve their goal. There were also appeals for ambulances for the names Margaret, Laura, Elizabeth and Clementine and Cecilia. Most of these appeals were based in Scotland and appealed to 'Scottish Margarets or Marys, etc' but some, such as Lady Clementine Waring, of Coldstream<sup>26</sup> or Mrs Elizabeth Ford of Wimbledon Common<sup>27</sup> came from further afield. Mrs Ford makes reference in her letter to a 'named ambulance fleet' which had been suggested by a Lady Bushman, although it seems



probable that Lady Bushman was using an idea that had already been used elsewhere in the country - the letter regarding the Margaret ambulance predates this one by several months. While Lady Sempill had apparently found it remarkably easy to collect over £1,000 for four 'Aberdeenshire' ambulances, other ladies - again perhaps without her aristocratic standing or forceful personality - found it much more difficult. The first indication of a problem comes in August 1915 with a further letter on the collection for the 'Margaret' ambulance. Margaret Stuart has to report: 'I regret that the response to that appeal has not been sufficient to defray the cost of such an ambulance. After consideration I have resolved to hand the sum collected - £256 15s 2d - to the Edinburgh Branch of the British Red Cross Society, who have undertaken to supply an ambulance, to be named 'St Margaret of Scotland' for the use of the wounded soldiers at home.'<sup>28</sup> At least Margaret Stuart managed to raise a comparatively respectable sum and was able to convince the Red Cross to supply the rest of the money needed to achieve her goal of a named 'St Margaret' ambulance. As the war continued, other women organising such named ambulance collections found it ever more difficult to follow suit. Mrs Ford acknowledged as much in her initial letter asking for funds of an Elizabeth ambulance by ending the letter, 'If I do not receive the £400 necessary I will give the money to Lord Rothschild's fund for 'running' expenses of other ambulances'.<sup>29</sup>

Collecting £25 or £50 for a named bed appeared to be an easier task, although even then some appeals needed to be repeated before this sum was achieved. On 28 March 1916, Lady Russell (Ruth) and Mrs Patricia Mackenzie of Edinburgh had to repeat their appeal for £50 for a Ruth and Patricia bed at the Red Cross Hospital at Rouen, originally made on 16 March 1916. At the same time, Mrs Alice Wemyss Methuen and Miss Alison D McCulloch, both of Bellevue Crescent, Edinburgh, made a last appeal for the £7 5s still outstanding to continue to endow an Alice and Alison Bed at the same hospital. They had successfully endowed the bed the previous year in the first flush of enthusiasm for the war, but found it much harder going to raise the necessary £50 for

a second year, despite being able to quote from a postcard sent to them from the bed itself which reinforced the Scottish and patriotic nature of their appeal:

‘Dear Friends - Just a PC to you which I have much pleasure in writing. I ---, 2<sup>nd</sup> Seaforth Highlanders, happen to be in your bed, which is very comfortable, and I think it very kind of you to have helped the Scottish section of the Red Cross, so much. I being Scotch am glad that Scotland has such people as form the staff of this hospital, for they tend us like fathers and mothers, and you never get us grumbling. I belong to ---, and wish you good luck. With my best wishes.’<sup>30</sup>

Appeals for named beds seem to have been a popular fundraising goal for the women of the middle-class elite of Edinburgh. One of the most indefatigable ladies involved in such activities was Miss Lucy Soutar of Golspie Tower, Greenbank Crescent, Edinburgh. Her first essay into this area was in the company of her niece, Miss Frances Jean Simpson, of Golspie (Sutherland). Unlike the other ladies of Edinburgh, however, they did not fundraise for named beds. Instead, they specialised in commemorating anniversaries and birthdays. In July 1915 they encouraged those who had a birthday in January to send money towards a ‘January Birthday Bed’.<sup>31</sup> Again, their fundraising was not plain sailing, and they had to repeat their request in September when they had only received £27 6d from ‘96 boys and girls who have January birthdays’.<sup>32</sup> This repeated appeal was apparently a success since by October 1915 Miss Soutar was appealing for a ‘December Bed of Memories’, although her niece was not involved in this appeal and Miss Soutar had down-graded her ambitions to £25 to maintain a bed in the Scottish Women’s Hospital at Troyes for six months. Miss Soutar remained a loyal supporter of the Scottish Women’s Hospitals wherever they were established throughout the war, and her fundraising skills appear to have improved with practice. By November 1915, not only had she raised the £25 necessary for the bed at Troyes, but was able to carry a balance of £3 over to a new appeal for a December bed for the new Scottish Women’s Hospital in Serbia.<sup>33</sup> By January 1916 she could report the achievement of £75 for the beds in France and Serbia and launched another appeal to equip a ‘Bed o’ My Lady Nicotine’ in the new Scottish Women’s Hospital in Corsica, which was opening

to care for Serbian soldiers and refugees. Men and women were encouraged to curtail their 'smokes' in order to subscribe small sums for this bed. Miss Soutar continued to raise money for each of her beds on an annual basis throughout the war, although her niece only joined in her efforts for the January bed.

The Scottish Women's Hospitals were of course established by Dr Elsie Inglis, one of the founders of the Scottish Women's Suffrage Federation before the war.<sup>34</sup> At the outbreak of war, Inglis immediately offered to head up a women's ambulance unit at the front and was infamously advised by the War Office 'My good lady, go home and sit still'. Having refused to take this advice, Dr Inglis offered her services to the French and later the Serbs, who were pleased to accept. The first Scottish Women's Hospital was established by 1915 at Royaumont in France and was followed by the end of the war by 13 other medical units serving in France, Serbia, Corsica, Salonika, Romania, Russia and Malta. Not only was Inglis herself a native of Edinburgh, but the Scottish Women's Hospital Committee was also based in Edinburgh under the direction of Miss S E S Mair, President of the Edinburgh branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The Hospitals could therefore call upon the support of women who had been supporters of the NUWSS before the war and also focus its fundraising activities around a specifically Scottish cause. Of all the fundraising undertaken by correspondents to the two Aberdeenshire newspapers, the cause of the Scottish Women's Hospitals was the most frequently mentioned recipient. The *Free Press* carried 24 letters appealing for funds for the Scottish Women's Hospitals during the war years, compared to 14 fundraising for the British Red Cross hospitals and 4 for the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. Whilst the letters for the Red Cross and the FANY were mainly written in 1915 and 1916, the last being 20 September 1916, letters asking for support for a wide range of Scottish Women's Hospitals continued until 31 August 1918. This included a letter from Mrs A Douglas Walker of Edinburgh appealing for help in setting up a 'May' bed in the new Elsie Inglis Memorial Hospital for Serbs suffering from tuberculosis being

established in the Haute Savoie, Elsie Inglis having died in November 1917 on her return from Russia. The *Daily Journal* carried a similar spread of letters for the Scottish Women's Hospitals (17) compared to two for the FANY and four for the Red Cross hospitals. Around 50% of these letters were duplicates of the ones published in the *Free Press*. Further analysis of the letters published in the *Free Press* shows a heavy bias towards Edinburgh origin. 20 out of 24 letters were written in Edinburgh, and the four from outside the capital were all written in the first year of the war. This might suggest that the cause became inextricably linked with Edinburgh or the NUWSS leadership based there. The Scottish Women's Hospitals, whilst attracting geographically diverse support at the beginning of the war, soon became an Edinburgh-dominated enterprise, although it was still seen as worthwhile for letters requesting support to be sent to newspapers outside the capital. Men and women of Scotland were willing to contribute to the funds of the Scottish Women's Hospital throughout the war, but the organisation of such fundraising became associated with Edinburgh while provincial ladies focused on their own particular local war work, which for example in Aberdeen focused on the gathering, cleaning and utilisation of sphagnum moss.

Letters addressed to the editor during the first year of the war did not entirely concentrate on charitable fundraising. Another topic of immediate importance to correspondents was the encouragement of young men to enlist. At no time during the war years did any correspondent published in the two newspapers write an anti-war letter. The overwhelming tone during the war was one of encouragement of young men to 'do their bit' and join the armed forces, although in later years there was plenty of discussion of young men who were perceived not to be 'doing their bit'. Despite the numbers pouring into the armed services, the country as a whole was alive with a need to encourage recruitment, and many ladies handed white feathers to acquaintances (and total strangers) who were perceived to be 'slackers'. It was in the first 12 months of the war that the

most enthusiastic and encouraging letters from women correspondents were published. A good example of this type of letter comes from the *Daily Journal* of 4 September 1914:

With your permission I would like to speak a few words to our young men who have not yet enlisted in either of our forces.  
Young men, the honour and liberty of our nation is at stake; what are you doing to avert this great calamity?  
Everywhere about us we see young men, some working as usual, but the majority lounging about, or enjoying themselves on a cricket or football pitch. Is that a way to help your country?  
I was in Aberdeen lately and saw recruits being drilled, while all around were young men watching, never thinking they, too, ought to have been there swelling the ranks.... One word also to our women. Especially among young women we hear this remark - 'We can't let all our men go. What is the use of them all going?' Well, my fellow-country-women, my verdict is, no able-bodied young man who can go at all is worth the name of a man if he does not go, and these women who hold them back are unworthy of the name of women.  
True, it is hard to part, but then when they come marching home victorious we will have men to honour and be proud of and if, indeed, some do not return to us, we know they have done their duty and died an honourable death.  
Bella, W Cults<sup>35</sup>

The woman who was preventing 'her' man enlisting was a frequent image in such letters. She was usually assumed to be a mother and, as Susan Zeiger points out, was the negative side to the image of the 'patriotic' mother. The patriotic mother sacrificed her sons willingly to the army, but the unpatriotic mother was 'selfish' and overly - probably unhealthy - attached to her children.<sup>36</sup> Such a mother was described in a letter to the *Free Press* by 'One Who Has Given Each of Her Sons':

Again, I regret to say, there have been mothers so utterly selfish that they have put their trifling individual interests in the balance against a nation's. They said - 'My boy cannot join; it would interfere with his studies or his ambitions in life'.  
Another mother, of puny, disloyal soul, has said - 'My boy could not join because he could not get a commission.' We thank God that many a man and youth of good name and fame has joined the ranks, sometimes, perhaps, feeling his incapacity or inexperience for leadership, knowing nothing of that snobbery which is ashamed to serve.<sup>37</sup>

although this letter-writer also attacked young women who consorted with 'slackers'. For the most part, however, the mothers depicted in the letters to the Aberdeen newspapers were of the 'patriotic' sort, who encouraged their sons to enlist, supplied them with comforts, worried about

them when they were prisoners of war, and proudly mourned them when they died. As has already been noted, fewer and fewer female correspondents felt the need to use nom de plumes, particularly during the first three years of the war. However, the most popular nom de plume in use during the war years was that of 'A Mother'. Between August 1914 and November 1918, the *Free Press* published letters from five correspondents signing themselves 'A Mother', plus the following variations: 'Mater Familias', two 'Mater's, 'A Patriotic Mother', 'A Worried Mother', 'One Who Has Given Each of Her Sons', 'A Mother of Soldiers', 'A Prisoner's Mother', and 'A Mother in Israel'. In addition, the *Daily Journal* published letters from four 'Soldier's Mother's, 'Mater', 'Lad's Mother', 'A Worried Mother', 'Widowed Mother of An Only Son Lying Ill in France', 'A Prisoner's Mother', 'A Gordon Prisoner's Mother', 'A Mother' and 'An Indignant Mother'. The 'patriotic mother' was a well-known and admired image in British and American iconography during the war, and it seems that those women who did not wish to reveal their identity to the newspapers' readers used their motherhood as a useful mask. Their motherhood also bestowed on them the right to question or complain about some aspect of the army or government's policies which affected themselves or their sons. It legitimised their concerns and gave them a status without which they may not have had the courage to write to the newspapers. For example, in December 1915 'A Patriotic Mother' attacked the government for allowing soldiers access to alcohol in their camps:

Since the outbreak of the war, mothers have sent their sons from sheltered homes to fight for freedom and righteousness. They give them up to Government guidance. The hard training undergone by them proves to be beneficial. But there is another side. The temptation of drink is never absent from the men. Women are patriotic, and are unwilling to complain. They realise to some extent how difficult is the task our country has to face. They are asked to exercise thrift. Are they to sacrifice their comforts as well as their sons? They send them to fight the Germans, not drink and devilry. What do we find going on just now? Everywhere the drink traffic is restricted except in soldiers' camps.<sup>38</sup>

The patriotic mother, who was sacrificing her sons for the greater good, was a role which enabled women to question official policy throughout the war without being accused of unpatriotism or mischief-making.

### **A more centralised approach**

Apart from the success of large national organisations such as the Red Cross and the Scottish Women's Hospitals, the immediate response of Aberdeenshire women to the outbreak of war was, as Vera Brittain suggested, largely a provincialised one. Fundraising and other forms of war work were organised by the provincial elite of Aberdeen and its county and construed in terms of local battalions or regiments; family connections; and Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire or Scottish ties. By the end of 1915, however, there was a recognition - at government level if nowhere else - that, however well meant or patronised, an approach to the provision of ambulances, hospital beds, comforts and even socks based on family and local ties was essentially piecemeal and no way to run a war. Battalions at the front were receiving differing amounts of comforts (a term which covered everything from socks and shirts to writing paper, pencils, chocolate, Christmas puddings and soap); hospitals were dependent on the whims of small groups of workers for their supply of moss dressings; and prisoners of war received or did not receive food and clothing depending on the efficiency of their regiment's support group. The recognition of the need for more governmental intervention grew from the end of 1915 throughout 1916, and can be seen as part of the growing influence of Lloyd George, Minister of Munitions, at the expense of Asquith, the then Prime Minister, until the replacement of Asquith by Lloyd George in December 1916. Lloyd George is seen by posterity as the more dynamic war leader, more able to conceive of government intervention into people's lives - he was after all the pre-war Chancellor who had introduced the idea of pensions and some form of health insurance. However, we must beware a too-simplistic view of the leadership style of the two men: both were leading the same Houses of Parliament after all.

The letters columns of the two newspapers show evidence of a slow movement towards more Government intervention during 1915 and 1916 - this movement began under Asquith and increased under Lloyd George rather than indicating a complete change of policy in December 1916. Throughout this period, the Government and local authorities became aware that a piecemeal and local system of support for the war based on voluntary efforts was inefficient; however, as will be seen, their first efforts to change such a system still stressed a voluntarist approach. Lloyd George set up five new departments of state to oversee shipping, labour, food, national service and food production. AJP Taylor suggests that these new department evolved a system of 'war socialism', although still based on voluntary principles: 'Though they had almost unlimited powers by statute, they preferred to enlist the co-operation of producers and owners, who thus largely ran war socialism themselves for patriotic motives.'<sup>39</sup> Looking at the situation from the view of the farmers, Caroline Dakers takes a less positive view of the situation, which she describes as 'a new government with a strong interventionist policy and a new President of the Board of Agriculture able to enforce the cultivation of land, to guarantee minimum prices and wages and to make farmers submit to state control.'<sup>40</sup> Whichever view of the situation is the more correct, it is clear that the new Coalition government of Lloyd George signalled a move towards a more interventionist policy in the running of the home front, from the regulation of agriculture and food supply to the provision of knitted comforts for prisoners of war.

The first indicator of change for the fundraisers of Aberdeenshire comes with a series of letters concerning Mrs Niven's Prisoners of War Fund. Mrs Charles Niven, wife of the Professor of Natural Philosophy at Aberdeen University and another of the daughters of Sir David and Lady Stewart, established a fund early in the war to assist prisoners of war from local regiments. We learn from a letter dated 19 October 1916 and signed by her husband (there are references to Mrs Niven's ill-health throughout all letters concerning the fund) that the local authorities had sought to centralise such funds and therefore Mrs Niven was refused exemption from registration as an



official charity by the Magistrates. Since she did not wish to register, with all the paperwork that would entail, all donations should then have been diverted to the Prisoners of War Bureau. Despite this, Mrs Niven evidently continued to collect money and send parcels as before. Professor Niven offered the excuse that 'Subsequent donations to her for the prisoners have been refused and the donors informed that they should be sent to the Bureau; she has only accepted them in cases where the givers expressly stated that they wished her to take charge of the money'.<sup>41</sup> A few months later, Mrs Niven's daughters wrote to the *Daily Journal* to point out the foolishness of the bureaucratic attitude of the authorities which, they claimed in a somewhat dramatic manner, meant that a cheque that had just arrived that morning from America for Mrs Niven's fund would simply have to be torn up.<sup>42</sup> It is evident that Mrs Niven's fund continued to attract money away from the faceless Prisoners of War Bureau because of the personalised touch she was offering. 'A Prisoner's Mother' wrote in defence of Mrs Niven's fund in January 1917:

When anything went wrong in Germany the first thing one did was to write to Mrs Niven, and never once did she fail one. By return would come the kindly and sympathetic letter saying that she had taken the matter up and was writing about it. Only those who have appealed to her know the help and comfort she has been in many a dark hour.<sup>43</sup>

It was not only Mrs Niven's Prisoners of War Fund that fell foul of the new centralising tendency. Mrs Marian Chapman, the Convenor of the Perth and Perthshire Prisoners of War Association, also wrote to the newspapers in October 1916 in protest against the new orders. Before this time, her organisation had sent food and comforts to any prisoners of war who came from the Perthshire area, regardless of which regiment they had joined. Now, however, she had been told that her association should only supply prisoners from Perthshire battalions, despite that fact that many Perthshire men - including her own sons - had joined or been transferred into other regiments. Again, her letters stress the personalised nature of the organisation's work, which was of benefit not just to the prisoner but to his family:

As soon as a name comes through, we personally see the prisoner's relatives. His mother, or wife, is invited to attend our packing days and help. She sees the

parcel packed, she buys something to add to our contribution, she feels she is doing something to help her son or husband in the greatest trial of his life. She looks forward to these days; her most sacred feelings are satisfied; it is the joy of her present-day existence; she talks of it to her neighbours; she thinks of it in her most troubled moment; and her painful thoughts are relieved by the mental picture of her loved one opening a useful and welcome parcel from home.<sup>44</sup>

The centralisation of services for Prisoners of War continued to attract criticism throughout the war. In May 1917, two letters, from 'A Gordon Prisoners' Mother' and 'MG', whose husband had been a prisoner since the battle of Mons, complained that their son and husband had not received any bread at all through the Bureau and were starving, while privately sent parcels had been stopped because of fear that it would add to food shortages in Britain,. As 'A Gordon Prisoner's Mother' wrote bitterly: 'When the change in the parcel system was first spoken about, I wrote to the papers, but no one seemed to realise then what the change would really mean. Now it seems like putting a latch on the gate when the harm is done.'<sup>45</sup> Again, a woman who used her identity as a mother in letters to the newspapers in order to register her disapproval of some aspect of governmental policy.

Both Mrs Niven and Mrs Chapman were frustrated because the 'provincialised' and personal service they were offering local people was being forced to change by a government which needed a more efficient and focused war effort. They were not the only ones to feel this frustration. During 1916 and 1917 the newspaper columns printed other letters from the organisers of local charities and organisation who were fighting against this impersonalised centralising tendency. Under the War Office Organisation Scheme early in 1916, a national Director-General of Voluntary Organisations (DGVO) had been appointed and the County of Aberdeen War Work Association formed. A letter outlining the role of the new Association was published in the *Daily Journal* on 11 January 1916. It explained that the association had been formed because of the amount of 'overlapping' that was evident as far as voluntary organisations were concerned. Instead, a Central Depot for the whole county would be instituted for the receipt

of comforts, and, while individual organisations were encouraged to continue to meet and work for the war effort, they would now be told what to make or collect, how much was needed from them, and would have no say in where their products went. 'It will not be possible under [the scheme] to earmark goods for any particular unit; that must be left to the discretion of the Director-General.'<sup>46</sup> It must be noted, however, that much of the collecting for beds, ambulances, and so on continued under the various headings of family, name, etc, as previously. The Association was primarily concerned with co-ordinating and streamlining the provision of comforts to the troops at the front:

It cannot be too clearly understood that there is no desire to interfere with any existing work parties, but merely to gather them into the Association in a way that will increase their power by co-ordination and direction. A recognised work party need not undertake to give its whole output to the Association; it may work for the Red Cross or local units too, provided a proportion of its work goes to the Association.<sup>47</sup>

Thus the personal and localised response to the war of the women correspondents of Aberdeen daily newspapers was forced to conform to a more centralised approach in order to become more efficient. While the individual groups - the Rotherham Ladies' Needlework Guild; the university war dressings depot; the flower-sellers in Banchory - were encouraged to continue, they were no longer able to dictate to whom their work would be sent. The local response which had been adequate for the Boer War was, by 1916, proving far too inefficient for the Great War.

In conclusion, perhaps Vera Brittain was right in her accusation that a middle and upper-class elite attempted to 'provincialise' the war, but what she apparently did not understand was that this response was the necessary precursor to a more centralised organisation of the home-front's war effort, which simply did not exist in 1914. The good ladies of Buxton and Aberdeenshire stepped into a vacuum. Their voluntary efforts and provincial, localised approach to war work managed to fill this vacuum quite well at the beginning of the war, when it was expected that the voluntary approach - whether in good works or for the provision of troops - was all that was needed to win. It took two years to recognise that such a piecemeal approach was not enough. In the early days

of the war, it was not sufficient to appeal for aid for an amorphous war effort; it needed to be personalised and localised in order for it to be embraced by the organising ladies of provincial Scottish society.

One thing is obvious - the overall tone of the women correspondents is one of patriotism. Few if any questioned the need for the war or the sacrifice of so many of the country's men. While there could be criticism of the government's handling of the war effort, in particular of its move towards a more centralised organisation and away from the voluntarist principle, such criticism was couched in terms of 'patriotic motherhood', which legitimised the concerns of the woman correspondent in her own eyes and the eyes of her readership. Whilst correspondents in the last year of the war might be critical of other's 'slackness' (a favourite word) they themselves were as determined to 'do their bit' as ever. And the correspondence columns of the newspapers help these women identify such a 'bit'. Few of them were able to volunteer as nurses and there was no large-scale munitions work in the area. However, a female reader of the letters columns of the newspapers would have seen a vast array of ways in which she could be useful to the war effort - by knitting; collecting money; making her own jam; encouraging young men to enlist; or simply staying positive and patriotic. In this way, the letters columns of the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* and *Free Press* offered suitable and practical role models for her to follow during the troublesome and strange years of the First World War.

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<sup>1</sup> Brittain, Vera, *Testament of Youth*. London: Virago, 1978, p 101.

<sup>2</sup> Marwick, Arthur, *Women at War 1914-1918*, p 35. For further comments on knitters and the quality of their knitting see also Turner, E S, *Dear Old Blighty*. London: Michael Joseph, 1980, p. 31 and DeGroot, Gerard J, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War*. Harlow: Longman, 1996, p. 68. Dakers, Caroline, *The Countryside at War*. London: Constable, 1987, p. 38 quotes *Punch* being satirical on the subject of ladies' sewing of pyjamas.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Gould, Jenny, 'Women's Military Service in First World War Britain', in Higonet, M R, Jenson, J, Michel, S and Weitz, M C, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New

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Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, pp.114-125, and Robert, Krisztina, 'Gender, Class and Patriotism: Women's Paramilitary Units in First World War Britain, *The International History Review*, XIX, 1: February 1997, pp.52-65; Thom, Deborah, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*, London and New York: I B Tauris Publishers, 2000 factories, as does Braybon, Gail, *Women Workers in the First World War*. London: Croom Helm, 1981. Levine, Philippa, 'Walking the Streets in a Way no decent woman should, Women police in World War I', *Journal Of Modern History*, 1994, 66, pp. 34-78. Some recent research has looked at women in terms of their roles as wives and mothers, such as Lomas, Janis, 'Delicate Duties: Issues of Class and Respectability in Government Policy towards the Wives and Widows of British Soldiers in the Era of the Great War', *Women's History Review*, 9 (1), 2000, pp. 123-147 or Zeiger, Susan, 'She Didn't Raise Her Boy to be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War', *Feminist Studies*, 22, No. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 7-39, but there is little research on the voluntary efforts of middle-class women on the home front.

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of the lack of editorial gatekeeping in the Aberdeen newspapers of this period, see Pedersen, Sarah, 'The Appearance of Women's Politics in the Correspondence Pages of Aberdeen Newspapers, 1900-1914', *Women's History Review*, Winter 2002 (forthcoming)

<sup>5</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 5 September 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Dakers, *The Countryside at War*, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> For more on this, see Pedersen, Sarah, 'Within their Sphere? Women Correspondents to Aberdeen Daily Newspapers 1900-1914', *Northern Scotland*, 22: 2002, pp. 159-166

<sup>8</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 16 January 1918; 21 February 1918; 1 April 1918; 16 April 1918; 29 April, 1918; 1 June 1918; 20 September 1918.

<sup>9</sup> See Fraser, W Hamish and Lee, Clive H, *Aberdeen 1800-2000 A New History*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press 2000, p 380.

<sup>10</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 27 March 1917.

<sup>11</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 29 January 1917.

<sup>12</sup> Fraser, Amy Stewart, *In Memory Long*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 14 July 1915.

<sup>14</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 12 February 1915.

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- 15 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 27 February 1915.
- 16 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 27 October 1915.
- 17 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 11 November 1914.
- 18 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 10 November 1914.
- 19 Marwick, Arthur, *Women at War 1914-1918*, p. 21.
- 20 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 5 April 1915.
- 21 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 2 March 1917.
- 22 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 22 September 1914.
- 23 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 30 January 1915.
- 24 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 20 August 1915.
- 25 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 11 December 1914.
- 26 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 19 February 1915.
- 27 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 12 February 1915.
- 28 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 14 August 1915.
- 29 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 10 February 1915.
- 30 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 9 February 1915.
- 31 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 27 July 1915.
- 32 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 13 September 1915.
- 33 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 13 November 1915.
- 34 For more on Dr Elsie Inglis, see her biographers, Balfour, F, *Dr Elsie Inglis*. London, 1918 or, more recently, Leneman, Leah, *Elsie Inglis*. Edinburgh: NMS Publishing, 1998. For more on the work of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, see Crofton, Eileen C, *The Women of Royaumont: A Scottish Women's Hospital on the Western Front*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997 or Ross, Ishobel, *Little Grey Partridge First World War Diary of Ishobel Ross who served with the Scottish Women's Hospitals Unit in Serbia*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988.
- 35 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 4 September 1914.
- 36 Zeiger, Susan, 'She didn't raise her boy to be a slacker: Motherhood, Conscriptioin, and the Culture of the First World War', *Feminist Studies*, Spring 1996, 22(1), pp. 7-39.

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37 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 11 February 1916.

38 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Free Press*, 25 December 1915.

39 Taylor, AJP, *English History 1914-19145*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 114.

<sup>40</sup> Dakers, *The Countryside at War*, p. 146.

41 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 19 October 1916.

42 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 23 January 1917.

43 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 26 January 1917.

44 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal* 8 October 1916.

45 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 17 March 1917.

46 Letters to the Editor, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 11 January 1916.

47 Ibid.