

CHILTERNS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

Celebrating the work, skills and crafts of Chilterns women



Image courtesy of The Evening Standard syndication department

CONFERENCE GUIDE

Weds 8th March Missenden Abbey 9am-6pm

Key note speaker - Panel discussions - Craft demos
Book and craft shop - Networking - Exhibitions - Guided walks



CHILTERN'S WOMEN

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, SKILLS & WORK

From the woodlands of the Chilterns AONB

Welcome to our conference

The Chilterns International Women's Day Conference, organised by the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme celebrates the women who excelled in some of the traditional crafts, skills and work found in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Record books tell us that the development of a modern local economy was driven by the men of the High Wycombe furniture trade, agricultural merchants and landowning farmers. The lives and critical importance of contributions made by the working women in this area has often been overlooked.

Thank you for joining us in the stunning surrounds of Missenden Abbey, a former medieval abbey with a history of over 800 years to explore the work of the women past, present and future living in and around the woodlands and grass meadows of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

From weavers and sculptors, to historians and policy makers, we're excited to have a host of experts presenting and demonstrating as part of our one day conference on International Women's Day today.

A note from the Chiltern Conservation Board's Chief Executive, Elaine King:

"Chilterns women have shaped our cultural, industrial, and environmental heritage for hundreds of years. Sadly, their skills and craftsmanship were often overlooked, so it's wonderful to come together now and celebrate the stories of these women through history.

I'm especially looking forward to hearing how women will shape the Chilterns into the future by championing and caring for the nature, heritage and communities of this special landscape."



Jill nee Miles wearing a tambour beaded hat made by her Aunt Doris nee Beaumont, on her wedding day in 1965. Image courtesy of Stuart King

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

Chalk, Cherries & Chairs is an ambitious five-year scheme which connects local people and communities of the Central Chilterns to the area's natural environment and cultural heritage. Ours is a precious, ever changing landscape with a fascinating history. Our

18 interweaving projects are designed to promote opportunities for all to explore, protect and celebrate the features of the Chilterns landscape, providing small grants to encourage community initiatives and offering volunteering and learning opportunities across our three themes of nature, people and history.

We aim to develop and secure closer partnership working between communities of interest and local authorities in order to improve local land management, raise community awareness of what makes the Chilterns so special, diversify and increase the number of people receiving the benefits of access to the countryside and provide learning and skills development opportunities for the dedicated volunteers participating in work to restore or conserve our natural environment and record or celebrate our history.

Chalk, Cherries & Chairs is a project of the Chilterns Conservation Board delivered in partnership with Amersham Museum, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire New University, Chiltern Rangers, Chiltern Society and the National Trust, principally funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the HS2 Community Environment Fund.

Learn more about our projects below and become a Chilterns Champion by volunteering with us:

www.chilternsaonb.org/chalkcherrieschairs/get-involved



Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes

The Chilterns, regarded in popular imagination as a beautiful landscape of beechwoods, chalk escarpments and picturesque villages, was for more than two centuries a unique industrial landscape. The woods and villages were alive with furniture-making, wood-ware, straw-plaiting, lace-making and tambour-beading (the technique of applying beading and sequins for the fashion industry).

We already know quite a lot about work in these rural trades and the artefacts that were produced but we know much less about what life was like for those involved. Our volunteer researchers are finding out how the people – especially the women and children – who made their living in these woodland and home-based industries went about their daily lives.

How can you get involved?

Volunteer with Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes to research the lives of the men, women and children who worked in rural and domestic industries in the villages and woods of the Central Chilterns – chairmaking, lacemaking, plaiting straw (for hats), and tambour beading (for fashion). Gain experience and training in:

- Family history research
- Archive research
- Recording oral histories
- Guided walks
- Social media
- Information-sharing and interpretation

If you are interested in taking part or finding out more please get in touch with the project leader: helena.chance@bnu.ac.uk or call **01494 522141 (extension 4105)**

Conference map



Craft demonstrations

Straw plaiting with Veronica Main MBE
www.hatplait.co.uk
Instagram @hat.plait

Lace Making with Alex Adkins

Chair Caning with Celia James

Tambour Beading with Stuart King
www.stuartking.co.uk

Chair Matting/Rushing with Mollie McMillen of Field Farm Project & McMillen Art
www.fieldfarmproject.com
www.mcmillenart.co.uk
@fieldfarmproject
@mcmillenart

Book and craft shop stalls

Book shop containing books from our speakers and panelists, the Chilterns Stories collection and more

Ceramics by Jane White
www.janewhiteceramics.com
Instagram @janewhiteceramics

Knots and Embers
www.knotsandembers.co.uk
fb.com/knotsandembers
Instagram @knotsandembers

Textiles by Majeda Clarke
www.majedaclarke.com
Instagram majeda_clarke

Conference programme

Wednesday 8th March 2023

9:30 am- 10:30 am

Guided Walk (optional, when booked with your day conference ticket)

10-11 am

Conference registration and tea, coffee & pastries

11-11:30am

- Welcome by our conference Chair – Judith Green
- Keynote address - Elaine King, Chief Executive of the Chilterns Conservation Board

11:30-12:55am

Panel discussion: 'Women and the natural environment'

- In their Own Words 3 minute video
- Panel Chair: Estelle Bailey, CEO of Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Mary Tebje from Chilterns Tourism on the role of women in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Dr Geeta Ludhra from Brunel University on 'Women of Colour in the Chilterns: Space Invaders vs Safe Space Creators'
- Claire de Carle from Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust on Maud Grieve and medicinal herb production in WWI
- Q&A

12:55-1pm

In their Own Words video / song video playing out into lunch

1-2:30pm

Buffet lunch and a chance to network with delegates and speakers, as well as look at the craft demonstrations, 'Invisible Women' exhibition & shop

2:30-4pm

Panel discussion: 'Women, arts & crafts'

- In their Own Words 3 minute video
- Panel Chair: Dr Helena Chance, leader of the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes project, Buckinghamshire New University on Traditional Chilterns Crafts
- Hattie Speed, Designer-Maker & Craft Communicator on the therapeutic nature of Craft
- Majeda Clarke from the British Craft Council on 'My Grandmother's Sari: How to Sustain a Career in Crafts'
- Jane White from Jane White Ceramics
- Q&A

4 – 4:30 pm

Photographs in the Garden and afternoon refreshments
Cheese & wine samples from local suppliers -Harrow & Hope and The Marlow Cheese Co

4:30 – 5:45 pm

Panel discussion: 'Women and work'

- In their Own Words 3 minute video
- Panel Chair: Eliza Alqassar, Historic and Built Environment Manager at Buckinghamshire Council
- Dr Lesley Hoskins, Research Associate from Woodlanders Lives and Landscapes: 'Girls, young women and work in the Chilterns 1850-1914'
- Jane Clare Jones, feminist philosopher, writer and teacher
- Ann Henderson former Assistant Secretary STUC, women's movement and labour movement campaigner
- Q&A

5:45 - 6pm

Closing speech

7pm onwards

Formal Dinner and Social (optional, when booked with your day conference ticket)
Overnight stay & breakfast (optional, when booked with your day conference ticket)

Thursday 9th March 2023

10am- 1pm: Guided Walk (optional, to be booked with your day conference ticket)

Things to note

- Please ensure you have registered your car numberplate at reception, otherwise you may be fined.
- Wifi is available - this is open access - please choose 'Missenden Abbey Guest'
- Lunch and afternoon refreshments will be served in the garden room
- Please feel free to visit the beautiful gardens and grounds
- Don't forget to visit the demonstrators, shop stalls and our 'Invisible Women' exhibition

Please note that timings and programme are subject to change

Speaker biographies



Conference Chair: Judith Green
Co-founder of Woman's Place UK
www.womansplaceuk.org

Judith Green is a co-founder of Woman's Place UK, works in women's health and is a former user of single-sex services for female survivors of childhood sexual abuse.



Keynote speaker: Elaine King
Chief Executive of the Chilterns Conservation Board
www.chilternsaonb.org
[@DrElaineKing](https://twitter.com/DrElaineKing)

Elaine has lived in the Chilterns for the past 25 years and joined the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) as its Chief Executive at in July 2019, having previously served as a Board member appointed by the Defra Secretary of State.

Trained as a scientist, Elaine has a degree in Applied Biology from Brunel University and a PhD on bovine tuberculosis in badgers and cattle. Her career in environmental leadership began through her role as Chief Executive at the Badger Trust.

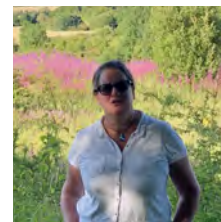
Elaine is also a Trustee of Butterfly Conservation and Lindengate. She is also an advisor to the Foundation for Common Land's project Our Upland Commons.

Panel members: 'Women and the natural environment'



Panel Chair: Estelle Bailey
CEO of Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
bbowt.org.uk
[@BBOWT](https://twitter.com/BBOWT)

Estelle is Chief Executive of the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and a well-established leader in the wider Wildlife Trusts movement. She works at the highest levels with Local Authorities, MP's, major landowners, and the Oxford Colleges to drive environmental principles and nature into the heart of decision making. She is passionate about connecting people to nature to ensure the delivery of BBOWT's mission of More Nature Everywhere for Everyone to bring about Nature's Recovery.



Mary Tebje
from Chilterns Tourism & Tebje Associates
Instagram [@ChilternHills](https://www.instagram.com/ChilternHills)
marytebje.substack.com/

Collaborating and working towards a common goal is the only way to success, whilst making a positive statement in a crowded, very noisy travel & tourism marketplace. You won't find a 'something for everyone' approach from me. What you will find is attention to detail, as consumers look for deeper, more meaningful experiences, that are more than just skin deep. I have techniques and tools that will make your tourism business stand out and be somewhere desirable and accessible for customers to spend time and money. If this is your philosophy, we will get on well!



Dr Geeta Ludhra
from Brunel University
Twitter [@educatinggeeta](https://twitter.com/educatinggeeta)
www.brunel.ac.uk/people/geeta-ludhra

Geeta is a Lecturer in Education at Brunel University where she currently works part-time. During her non-University days, she has caring responsibilities, engages in nature-related engagement and conservation work, and runs an intergenerational South Asian women's writing group called 'educating geeta'. Geeta leads a community social enterprise called Dadima's CIC, where she organises free educational nature events and countryside walks, aimed at changing the narrative of countryside spaces to be more inclusive of people of colour. As a British South Asian feminist, Geeta is interested in how women who have historically been missing in these spaces, feel a sense of 'belonging' in the countryside.



Claire de Carle
from Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust
bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/

Claire de Carle MA is a garden historian, with a keen interest in horticulture, art and social history. Claire is the chair and a trustee of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Trust's Research & Recording project in 2013 which has produced reports on around 100 locally important historic gardens. She enjoys researching and writing about little known historic landscape gardens and more recently she has set up two other projects: Artists and their Gardens and Public Parks in Buckinghamshire. She lectures to local groups about Buckinghamshire gardens and Maud Grieve, the herbalist who was the subject of her MA dissertation.

Panel members: 'Women, arts & crafts'



Panel Chair: Dr Helena Chance
leader of the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes project,
Buckinghamshire New University
fb.com/woodlanderslives
[@WoodlandersL](https://twitter.com/WoodlandersL)
www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlanders

Helena is Associate Professor of Design Studies at Buckinghamshire New University in High Wycombe where she has taught design history for many years. Her research focussed on the social landscapes of industry, from those of eighteenth-century industrial villages, to office pleasure gardens today. Helena is now retired from teaching and leading the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes social history project, part of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership. She is working with a team of volunteers to connect Chilterns' people more closely to their cultural heritage. She feels very lucky to be working with so many excellent researchers.



Jane White, Jane White Ceramics
www.janewhiteceramics.com

My hand-built burnished ceramics explore the beauty of the form, whilst referencing the natural world, and the enduring qualities of ancient pots in national collections across the world. My work is fired in a large open pit on our farm in the



Hattie Speed
Designer-Maker and Craft Communicator on the therapeutic nature of Craft.
this-girl-makes.com
[@thisgirlmakes / @hat_speed](https://twitter.com/hat_speed)

Hattie Speed (they/them) is an award-winning designer-maker and creator of the multi-disciplinary project This Girl Makes. They graduated from Rycotewood Furniture Centre (Oxford) in 2018 with a first class honours degree in Furniture Design and Make, and has since worked for Ercol Furniture, Oxford University Hospitals (NHS) and Rycotewood Furniture. Their interests are education and outreach, as well as the healing and therapeutic qualities of craft. They recently finished a six-week artist residency at Ebor Studio (Greater Manchester) exploring the stages of grief through performance and furniture making.



Majeda Clarke
from the British Craft Council
[@majeda_clarke](https://twitter.com/majeda_clarke)
www.majedaclarke.com

Majeda Clarke is an award winning artist with a multidisciplinary approach to design. A Cockpit Arts Awardee, she has received the British Muslim Award for Creativity and won the New Designers One Year In Award. Published in The Wall St. Journal and The Sunday Times amongst others, her practice has a wide international following. Majeda's work has been selected as a Liberty 'Future Collectible' and Design Nation's 20 icons at 20 to celebrate its 20 years. Collaborations include commissions for the centenary of the Edwardian explorer, Isobel Wylie Hutchison, blankets for Fortnum and Mason and public engagement art for the UNHCR. With a keen interest in the future of craft as a discipline and promoting diverse access, Majeda is a mentor and Trustee at The Crafts Council. The multilayered landscape of both Britain and her birth country, Bangladesh, are reflected in her bold, geometric weaves.

Panel members: 'Women and work'



Panel Chair: Eliza Alqassar

Historic and Built Environment Manager at Buckinghamshire Council

Eliza Alqassar (nee Gore) studied archaeology at the University of Exeter and completed a Masters in Field Archaeology at the University of York. She worked for York Archaeological Trust as a digger and Community Archaeologist before lecturing in Archaeology at the University of Winchester. From there she joined the Historic Environment Team at Cambridgeshire County Council before becoming the Archaeology Officer at Buckinghamshire County Council. She held this post for ten years. Recently she spent two years as an Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments with Historic England SE team, which she did alongside her role in Buckinghamshire. She is now the Historic and Built Environment Manager, overseeing the Heritage and Archaeology teams.



Dr Lesley Hoskins

Research Associate from Woodlanders Lives and Landscapes

[fb.com/woodlanderslives](https://www.facebook.com/woodlanderslives)

[@WoodlandersL](https://www.instagram.com/WoodlandersL)

www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlanders

Lesley Hoskins has a background in design history and historical geography. She is especially interested in trying to understand how people lived their everyday domestic lives in the 19th- and early-20th-centuries. She has looked at houses, pets, prisons, gardens, and domestic possessions and, for the past three and a half years, as Research Associate for Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes, has been working with volunteer researchers to help them find out more about the lives of people who worked in the rural and domestic industries of the Chilterns.



Jane Clare Jones

Feminist philosopher, writer and teacher

feminist-thought.org

theradicalnotion.org

[@janeclarejones](https://www.instagram.com/janeclarejones)

Jane Clare Jones is a feminist philosopher, writer and teacher who writes at the intersection of feminism, politics and culture for both popular and academic audiences. She is the founder of The Centre for Feminist Thought, an online school providing courses in second-wave feminism, and the editor of the feminist journal *The Radical Notion*.



Ann Henderson

Former Assistant Secretary STUC, women's movement and labour movement campaigner

[@AnnDHenderson](https://www.instagram.com/AnnDHenderson)

Ann is currently employed as a part time parliamentary researcher in the Scottish Parliament. Ann worked in the rail industry in Glasgow in the 1980s and 90s, in community work, at the Scottish TUC 2007-2017, and in various roles in the Scottish Parliament. Ann served as Rector at University of Edinburgh 2018-21, and has a number of other interests, including currently chairing the Board of the Children's Parliament in Scotland, and bringing trade union and community interests onto the board of the Edinburgh International Festival. Ann has had a lifelong interest in women's history and continues to enjoy uncovering more information in this important area.

Hidden Hands

Women and Work in the Chilterns

Exhibition at Wycombe Museum

7 Mar - 10 Sep

Visit our exhibition - 'Hidden Hands: Women and work in the Chilterns'

Historically, women's paid work has often been belittled and forgotten. Our new exhibition hunts down the hidden women's work in Chilterns villages that formed a crucial part of the local economy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Discover how the luxury goods made by these highly skilled workers contrast with the harsh reality of working long and poorly paid hours from their homes.

Hear stories of straw plaiting in Buckland; caning and rushing chair seats in West Wycombe; lace making in Great Hampden; and tambour beading in Holmer Green. Come to learn more about the crafts, women's lives and their impact on the Chilterns.

The six month long exhibition will open at Wycombe Museum on 7th March, and has been curated by the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes project team in partnership with Wycombe Museum, and forms the museum's Summer Exhibition. A series of events including Discover and Make sessions, a family day, lacemaking workshop, Bodgers Pub Tour and a 'memory day' will take place alongside the exhibition.


- Exhibition opens **Tuesday 7th March**, and runs until Sunday 10th September
- At **Wycombe Museum** – see info at wycombemuseum.org.uk/visit
- Free entry, all welcome, no need to book
- A series of events will run alongside the exhibition – find out more at www.chilternsaonb.org/ChilternsWomenExhib





An exhibition exploring the hidden women's work in Chilterns villages during the 19th and 20th centuries. A look at lace making, straw plaiting, tambour beading and cane & rush chair seat making.

How you can get involved

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs exists to inspire people to learn something new, get involved and take action as Chilterns Champions. Have you been inspired to get involved?





 **'Hidden Hands: Women and work in the Chilterns'**
7th March - 10th September 2023, Exhibition at Wycombe Museum
www.chilternsaonb.org/ChilternsWomenExhib

 **Charcoal event with Wycombe Museum & Chiltern Rangers**
Date TBC - keep an eye on
www.chilternsaonb.org/chalkcherrieschairs/events

 **Chilterns Drama**
Tour of local venues & residency at Wycombe Museum of our new play, *Sour Cherry Soup* – June 2023
www.chilternsaonb.org/ChilternsDrama

Become a Chilterns Champion

A Chilterns Champion could be anyone in the Chilterns, who has become an expert in their field, champions local wildlife, gives back to their community or inspires others. There are many ways to be a Chilterns Champion. You could:

-  **Volunteer** with one of our projects or our delivery partners (Chiltern Rangers, Bucks New University, Amersham Museum, BBOWT)
-  **Share your expert knowledge** with a wider audience, perhaps through an online webinar or leaflet
-  **Champion a green space** in your town, or organise a new community garden
-  **Work with young people** to offer them new skills and opportunities

If you're interested in gaining new skills, meeting new people and generally having a great time engaging with the landscape and heritage of the Central Chilterns, then visit <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/chalkcherrieschairs/get-involved/> to register your interest, and we'll be in touch!

Our Partners



Follow us on social media:

-  @chilterns_ccc
-  Chilterns CCC
-  Chilterns CCC

Register for our newsletter

Register for the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs newsletter to be the first to hear about new events and volunteering opportunities, at www.chilternsaonb.org/chalkcherrieschairs

Want to get in touch? Email us on ccc@chilternsaonb.org



Titmore Green, image courtesy of North Hertfordshire Museum

Thank you for coming to our conference today to celebrate International Women's Day.

We hope you have been inspired by the stories of Chilterns women past, present and future - for more, please visit our new exhibition 'Hidden Hands: Women and work in the Chilterns' at Wycombe Museum, open March - September 2023.

www.chilternsaonb.org/ChilternsWomenExhib



www.chilternsaonb.org/chalkcherrieschairs