Professor Ruth Watts

Emeritus Professor of History of Education

School of Education

Contact details

Email r.e.watts@bham.ac.uk (mailto:r.e.watts@bham.ac.uk)

School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT, United Kingdom

About

Ruth Watts is Emeritus Professor of History of Education at the University of Birmingham. Her research interests are in the history of education and gender and she has published much on these, her first book being Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860 (Longman, 1997) and her latest being *Women in Science: A Social and Cultural History* (Routledge, 2007). She is on the Board of Editors of History of Education. She is ex-President of the British History of Education Society, co-convenor of the Standing Working Group on Gender in the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) and is involved in various networks in women's history.

Qualifications

- PhD in History of Education University of Leicester 1987
- MA (with distinction) in History of Education University of Leicester 1980
- Diploma in Education (external) University of London 1977
- PGCE University of London 1965
- BA (Hons) University of London 1964

Biography

Ruth Watts gained a BA (Hons) in History from the University of London in 1964, staying on to take a PGCE the following year. After six years as a secondary school teacher of history in two schools, she gave up paid work for many years while bringing up a family. During those years, apart from examining for the Oxford Board, she gained an external Diploma in Education in 1977, an MA with distinction and then a PhD at the University of Leicester . Both degrees were in history of education with a particular interest in women's education. This interest in gender and women's history increasingly became the focal point of her research in education.

Three years back in teaching in the period when GCSE, TVEI and the National Curriculum were introduced qualified Watts to apply for a post as PGCE history tutor at the University of Birmingham School of Education since she had been deeply involved in all these. She enjoyed being history tutor from 1989 to 2004, seeing the subject through two successful Ofsted inspections. During those years she published articles and a co-edited book on the teaching of history, was a founder member of the Standing Conference of History Teacher Educators in the UK (subsequently HTEN) and its secretary for ten years. She was also external examiner in PGCE history, education and research degrees (history education, history of education, women's history) at a number of universities.

The larger part of Watts's publications, conference papers and review and research activities, however, have been in gender and women's history of education (see below). She has served on the editorial board of three history of education journals. From 1999-2004 she was part of a European funded group setting up an international website on the teaching of history of education and childhood at Master's level. In July 2006 she was visiting lecturer at the University of Hamburg as part of a Socrates Exchange.

From September 1997 to July 2003 Watts was on the executive committee of the International Standing Conference of History of Education (ISCHE) and has been a regular contributor at its conferences since 1994. A member of the reconstituted gender group at ISCHE from 1994, she was twice part of the group representing ISCHE at the quinquennial International Congress of Historical Sciences (Montreal, 1995 and Oslo, 2000). In 2010 she was given the honour of life membership of ISCHE, the first woman to receive this.

After being a committee member for many years, from January 2002 to January 2005, Watts was President of the History of Education Society, the first ever woman elected to the post. In 2009 she was given the honour of being made a life member of the Society. In 2010 she won the Anne Bloomfield triennial book prize.

Watts has been an active member of the Women's History Network conferences since its inception in 1991 and involved in various other women's history networks. She is a member of and has been Chair of the Martineau Society since 2009.

Teaching

Teaches on the MA in West Midlands History in School of History and Cultures

Postgraduate supervision

Watts supervises MA students in the School of History and Cultures in the following areas:

- Women's and gender history
- History of Education
- Unitarian and Quaker history
- Heritage and museum history 18th-20th centuries

If you are interesting in studying any of these subject areas please contact Malcolm Dick +44 (0) 121 415 8253

Research

Her research interests are in women's and gender history and in history of education, including studying women educationalists and women in science. In the last three years I have done much work on professional women in Birmingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and on women writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Other activities

Watts has been a governor of five schools and of Burton upon Trent Further Education College of which she was Chair for four years. From 1989-1991 she was an elected councillor for East Staffordshire District Council.

Publications

Publications 2010-2013

Refereed journals

Watts, Ruth (2013) Universities, medical education and women: Birmingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *History of Education* 42, no. 3, 306-19. **DOI: 10.1080/0046760X.2013.796779 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2013.796779)**

Watts, Ruth (2012) Society, education and the state: Gender perspectives on an old debate, *Paedagogica Historica*, 49, no.1, 17-33 **DOI: 10.1080/00309230.2012.745886 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2012.745886)**

Watts, Ruth (2011) Harriet Martineau and the Unitarian tradition in education, *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no.5 637-651. **DOI: 10.1080/03054985.2011.621682 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2011.621682)**

Watts, Ruth (2010) The history of women's education in national and cultural context 1750-1960', *Gender and History*, 22, no. 1, 194-200 **DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01586.x (http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01586.x)**

Watts, Ruth (2010) Collecting women's lives in 'National' history: opportunities and challenges in writing for the ODNB, *Women's History Review*, 19, no.1,109-24 **DOI: 10.1080/09612020903444700 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612020903444700)**

Edited Books and Special Editions of Refereed Journals

Watts, Ruth (2012) 'Gender and Education in History' ed. with Mineke van Essen (2012) *Paedagogica Historica* vol. 48, no. 3 (themed issue): 335-90

Contributions to edited books

Watts, Ruth (2013) 'Harriet Martineau and the Unitarian tradition in education', in Christopher Brooke and Elizabeth Frazer eds., *Ideas of Education: Philosophy and politics from Plato to Dewey* London: Routledge, pp194-208 ISBN 978-0-415-58252-0

Watts, Ruth (2010) Scientific women: their contributions to culture in England in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston, Maureen M. Meikle eds., *Women, Education and Agency*, 1600-2000 London: Routledge, pp.49-65 ISBN 978-0-415-99005-9

Published online

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)

- 'Julia Lloyd (1862-1955)' 2013: **http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/104436 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/104436)**
- 'Mary Sturge (1865-1925)', 2013: **http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56586?docPos=2 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56586?docPos=2)**

Watts, Ruth (2013) **'Unitarianism', Oxford Bibliographies Victorian Literature (http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0121.xml)** (This was a substantial , refereed, commissioned piece of work. The following two were put online by the Standing Working Group of Gender at ISCHE by were not refereed.)

'Gender at ISCHE 1994-2012' **www.ische.org (http://www.ische.org/)** (2012)

'Paedagogica Historica Gender Bibliography 1994-2012' **www.ische.org (http://www.ische.org/)** (2012)

Other Journals

'Harriet Martineau, the Unitarians and Education', The Martineau Society Newsletter, 30 (2012), 3-10
'Harriet Martineau and The Ladies Treasury', The Martineau Society Newsletter (2011)
'Rational Dissenting women and the travel of ideas', Enlightenment and Dissent Intellectual Exchanges: Women and Rational Dissent, 26 (2010), 1-27
'"Thinking women' in Jane Austen's time: women achievers in science, education and history', Jane Austen Society (Midlands) Transactions, 21 (2010), 6-24 ISBN 0968-4700

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