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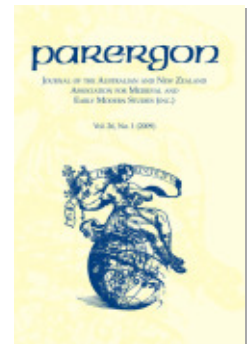
Patricia (Trish) Crawford

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## OBITUARY

### Patricia (Trish) Crawford



Patricia Crawford (31 January, 1941 – 28 April, 2009) was an internationally renowned Australian historian who wrote about many aspects of early modern England, particularly focussing on the lives and roles of women in that era. She also wrote about aspects of her own country's history with similar care and effect. Her scholarship, insight and commitment were the qualities she carried over to her careful mentoring of her own students, and the many others who came to her for advice. She was blessed to an unusual degree with a talent for establishing and maintaining friendships, both academic and personal, across several countries. Among other commemorations, her standing as scholar and friend was exemplified by international obituaries for her and by the memorial for her at the London Institute of Historical Research on 6 July.

More commonly known as Trish, Patricia Clarke was born in Sydney, but in 1948 her family moved to Melbourne. Educated at Methodist Ladies College, and Melbourne University, she graduated with a BA (Hons) in 1961. Appropriately enough, she first met Ian Crawford at a History conference in 1959; before they married in 1962, Ian had been offered a position in aboriginal studies at the Western Australian Museum, and Perth was their base thereafter. There she undertook further studies and some part-time teaching at the University of Western Australia. Her post-graduate research meant that she had to combine a great deal of time working in British libraries and

archives with part-time teaching and her family. That she did so successfully is illustrated by a memorable photograph of Trish, just awarded her PhD, in full academic dress and holding their son Rupert in her arms. A lectureship followed in 1974, (it became a permanent position from 1976 after UWA changed its policy of granting married women only temporary positions) and in 1995 she was appointed to a chair in History. Her scholarly stature was recognised in many ways, including by becoming a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Australian Academy of the Humanities and of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences.

Her doctoral studies led to the publication of her first book, *Denzil, First Lord Holles* (Royal Historical Society, 1979). That work won her the Whitfield prize. But even before that work had been published, she had broadened her focus within the politics of the Civil War period, with the still highly regarded essay 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood' *Journal of British Studies* (1977). Trish had also by then published the first of her many articles which were to establish her as a truly innovative feminist historian. The included her first discussions of early modern attitudes to pregnancy, birth and child rearing. Her 1981 *Past & Present* essay 'Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England' discussed a range of contemporary beliefs, some of them arcane, about menstruation, demonstrating how they served as further reinforcement of prevailing male attitudes to women. The very fact of a publication on that topic caused quite a stir, including within the *Past & Present* board.

Thereafter much of her work explored women's experiences across the social, religious, political and legal spectra as well as the more immediate domestic contexts. She explored the prevailing ideology of and practice within the family, including of motherhood and infant wellbeing. She wrote about the significance of women's needlework, woman's dreams and several essays on women's sexual identities and relationships. She also moved beyond the domestic sphere to explore women in the wider social context, from a brief discussion of London advertisements for female medical practitioners in the late seventeenth century to several discussions of women in the politics of mid-seventeenth-century England. She explored their roles in the turbulent middle years of the seventeenth century, which briefly endowed some women with more freedom of action, particularly in the sphere of religion. Her essay, "'The poorest she": women and citizenship in early modern England', (in *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State* ed. Michael Mendle, 2001) is an elegant and meticulous teasing out of those

rights as citizens which women could then, albeit intermittently, still exercise. The essay is a fascinating demonstration of the extent to which the social and political rights of some women could be entirely excluded from political debate, although still exercised in practice.

As well as an impressive number of important essays, Trish authored, co-authored or edited eleven books. They included, in 1984 her edited collection, *Exploring Women's Past. Essays in Social History*, in 1993 her *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720*, and in 1998 her ten-year collaboration with Sara Mendelson led to the publication of the highly regarded *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720*. That is a classic and comprehensive study, exploring across the social spectrum women's life cycles and their roles and opportunities (or lack thereof) from the very poor to aristocratic women and a queen regnant.

Despite her many months (years?) in English archives, and the many contacts with British historians that she always retained, Trish was always first and foremost an Australian. Two books which reflected her commitment to the society in which she lived were the book she co-edited and co-wrote with Philippa Maddern, *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories* (2001) and the work she wrote with Ian Crawford, *Contested Country. A History of the Northcliffe Area of Western Australia* (2003). A study of the region where they owned a property, which was a great joy to them both, that work combines the interests of both authors. Her consistently strong interest in and support for her Australian colleagues also meant that she was a regular participant at meetings of AHMEME (Australasian Historians of Medieval and Early Modern Europe) from its origins in the 1970s, and continued her active support when it merged to become ANZAMEMS (Australian and New Zealand Association of Medieval and Early Modern Studies). Her consistent involvement over so many years was formally acknowledged by her being made an honorary member of ANZAMEMS at the AGM in April 2009.

Trish's earlier work on attitudes to and experience of maternity was to be given another dimension by her final study on foundling children and the contexts of their surrender, including some fathers who varied as much in attitudes and experience as did the many mothers facing those difficult choices. Despite her intensifying health problems, she continued to maintain an active interest in the studies of others, as well as working on *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800*. That book originated, as did so much of her work, by exploration of new archives, this time those of the

London Foundling Hospital. The book, of which an expert is social history has predicted 'It's going to make a very significant impact in the field', is scheduled to be published by OUP in 2010. She maintained her standard of superb scholarship and important, innovative work to the end.

In brief, Trish Crawford was a historian who maintained an unusually impressive range of publications at an unusually high standard. Much of her work was groundbreaking and all of it beautifully written. She was also a warm and generous person, generous with her friendship to colleagues and acquaintances, with her mentoring of students, with her love of her family. The network she set up to keep in touch with so many friends as the cancer took hold was a further illustration both of her care for them, her honesty and the range of her interests. Her painting, Rupert's family, her garden and Jasper the dog were all important interests to her to the end. Her final group message, announcing that all that remained for her was palliative care, ended with the comment that at least the annual ritual with Ian of planting sweet peas had been completed. Her death is a great loss to her friends, colleagues and the academic world, but the courage with which she confronted and challenged her final illness leaves a heightened awareness of the extent of her loss. The decision of her university to establish the Trish Crawford Memorial Fund, to support an outstanding postgraduate, postdoctoral or early career researcher is indeed a fitting memorial for one whose own work was so important and who befriended and encouraged so many others.

*Judith Richards (with Philippa Maddern and Jane Long)*

A Patricia Crawford Memorial Fund has been established at The University of Western Australia. The aim of the fund is to provide support for the research of an outstanding postgraduate, postdoctoral staff member or early career researcher in history.

Donations may be sent to The Office of Development, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009, Australia, or faxed to (61) 8 6488 1063. Donations can also be made online at: <http://msc.uwa.edu.au/ood/secure?section=checkout>