

WOMEN OF BRITAIN

VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882 – 1941) 59 years old

Virginia was a great writer, very distinctive, her own style is her own, and her work an influence on other writers.

She was an experimenter who combined narrative with forceful interruptions that the mind needs to wake itself.

Virginia was not an imitator; she was an innovator who made changes for the future and a subtle influence on what we have come to expect from modern literature.

Virginia was born in Hyde Park Gate, London in 1882 the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and his second wife, he was an editor and writer.

When he died in 1904, Virginia and her elder sister Vanessa Bell moved to Bloomsbury, first sign of emancipation and a shock to everyone they knew because they became independent and for them to rent a house as females and rent rooms to male lodgers. They became the center of the legendary Bloomsbury Group, mainly through friends calling from her younger brother Toby's Cambridge Students. Vanessa and Virginia were not allowed to go to University, much to their unhappiness. Among the visitors to Bloomsbury were Rupert Brooke, T.S. Elliot, E.M. Foster, A. Huxley, Augustus John, and Maynard Keynes, amongst many, Virginia always had an open door certain nights where she would serve cocoa and the groups would discuss current affairs.

1910 Bloomsbury became a post Victorian and Edwardian Social Revolution, Politics played a big part and Virginia who was always a feminist volunteered her services to the women's suffrage cause.

1912 Virginia married Leonard Woolf who had been one of her lodgers.

After the death of her brother Thoby, 1915 Virginia became mentally ill, so Leonard moved Virginia and himself to Richmond where they started the Hogarth Press in their front room. Virginia worked hard setting up the type.

1924 Hogarth Press printed one of Virginia's greatest books "Mrs Dalloway" where Virginia Exposed the class system in this country and the horrors of the

first world war and brought Post Traumatic Stress to our attention or as was known then as shell shock, this pushed the boundaries of Victorian and Edwardian fiction as never before.

1924 Bloomsbury beckoned them back and as the Hogarth Press was a success, they needed bigger premises 52 Tavistock Square.

1924 -1939 They moved as well to Country houses in Sussex finally settling in Monks house, Rodmell where in 1941 at the age of 59 troubled by conflict and war once again she committed suicide.

Virginia will be remembered as independent critic, gifted, a brilliant writer, and feminist, and sensitive.

I think she should be in our history of Britain's Women.

Every generation needs a great woman writer.