

CAROLINE HARRIET HASLETT

The Women Who Made Britain

Caroline Harriet Haslett - Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Born - 1895 in Worth (near Crawley) Died - 1957 in Bungay

Caroline was an English electrical engineer, an electricity industry administrator and a champion of women's rights.

Brief outline of her life

Caroline was the eldest daughter of Robert, a railway signal fitter and activist for the co-operative movement, and Caroline Sarah.

She attended school in Haywards Heath (near Brighton) and after leaving she undertook a business secretarial course in London where she joined the Suffragette movement.

She then took up employment with the Cochran Boiler company as a clerk. There she joined the Women's Social and Political Union.

During WW1 Caroline transferred to engineering workshops where she acquired basic engineering knowledge. Training took place in London and Dumfriesshire. She developed a keen interest in engineering and electricity and its possibilities to enhance people's lives, especially women.

From this basic training she became a pioneer for women in the electrical and professional world.

Time Line

1919 – Secretary of the Women's Engineering Society and first Editor of 'The Woman Engineer' magazine.

1920 – Helped to found Atlanta Ltd and engineering firm for women

1924 – Co –founded and became the first Director of the Electrical Association for Women

1924- 1956 – She edited 'The Electrical Age Journal'

1924 – She spoke at a special conference at Wembley opened by the Duchess of York and chaired by Lady Astor

1930 – She became the sole woman delegate to the World Power Conference in Berlin

1932 – She was appointed as chair to the National Safety First Association which extended its activities to home safety. e.g. of her work – new plug and socket standard, her report recommended the ring circuit system which would also become standard.

1936 – She became Vice President of the International Federation for Britain and Professional Women

Over the next twenty years her political activities were relentless and the list of her achievements is endless.

Caroline was obviously well connected both in business circles and political circles. This undoubtedly helped her cause; but her determination to fight for women was one of her greatest achievements.

She wanted women to be able to pursue their own ambitions outside the home.

In the 1920s, few houses had electric lights or heating and certainly not electrical appliances. These were beyond the reach of anyone without money and status.

Caroline wanted to free all women from domestic drudgery, which she helped to do.

'Way is being made by electricity for a higher order of women – women set free from drudgery, who have time for reflection; for self-respect. We are coming to an age when the spiritual and higher state of life will have freer development, and this is only possible when women are liberated from soul-destroying drudgery ... I want [every woman] to have leisure to acquaint herself more profoundly with the topics of the day.'

— Caroline Haslet

In her will Caroline Harriet Haslett requested that her body be cremated by electricity. This was agreed to and carried out at the City of London Crematorium.

Her awards and accolades are many. Very well deserved I feel.

I would like to put forward my motion that Caroline Harriet Haslett was the leading professional of her day and that she is worthy of our votes as one of the women who made Britain great.

Some of Caroline's Publications:

The Electrical Handbook for Women (1934)

Teach Yourself Household Electricity (1939)

Munitions Girl – A Handbook for the Women of the Industrial Army (1942)

Problems Have No Sex (1949)