

# British Women Writers 1914-1945

*Professional Work and Friendship*

Catherine Clay



## BRITISH WOMEN WRITERS 1914-1945

Catherine Clay's persuasively argued and rigorously documented study examines women's friendships during the period between the two world wars. Building on extensive new archival research, the book's organizing principle is a series of literary-historical case studies that explore the practices, meanings and effects of friendship within a network of British women writers, who were all loosely connected to the feminist weekly periodical *Time and Tide*. Clay considers the letters and diaries, as well as fiction, poetry, autobiographies and journalistic writings, of authors such as Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Storm Jameson, Naomi Mitchison, and Stella Benson, to examine women's friendships in relation to two key contexts: the rise of the professional woman writer under the shadow of literary modernism and historic shifts in the cultural recognition of lesbianism crystallized by *The Well of Loneliness* trial in 1928. While Clay's study presents substantial evidence to support the crucial role close and enduring friendships played in women's professional achievements, it also boldly addresses the limitations and denials of these relationships. Producing 'biographies of friendship' untold in existing author studies, her book also challenges dominant accounts of women's friendships and advances new ways for thinking about women's friendship in contemporary debates.

*This book is dedicated to all my friends, past and present*

# British Women Writers 1914-1945

Professional Work and Friendship

CATHERINE CLAY

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Every effort has been made to track down the copyright holders for the unpublished material presented by this book, though in the case of Lady Margaret Rhondda and Laura Hutton I have been unable to establish the existence of surviving relatives or literary executors. Likewise, Stella Benson's appointed literary executor, her niece Georgina Berkeley, is now deceased, but I am grateful to her nephew, Riou Benson, for information and materials he has shared with me about his aunt. With respect to the other subjects of this book, permission has kindly been given as follows. Unpublished Vera Brittain material is quoted by permission of Mark Bostridge and Rebecca Williams, her literary executors. Unpublished Winifred Holtby material is quoted by permission of the Winifred

Holtby estate. Selections from Storm Jameson's unpublished letters are quoted with the permission of Christopher Storm-Clark, her literary executor. Selections from Naomi Mitchison's unpublished letters are quoted with the permission of Lois Godfrey Mitchison, her daughter and literary executor. Permission to reprint extracts from the diaries of Elizabeth Robins is granted by the Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association, the Backsettown Trustees. Permission to quote extracts from Stella Benson's unpublished diaries is given by the Syndicates of Cambridge University Library which holds the copyright for this material.

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# List of Abbreviations

## Individuals

ER	Elizabeth Robins
LH	Laura Hutton
LMR	Lady Margaret Rhondda
NM	Naomi Mitchison
SB	Stella Benson
SJ	Storm Jameson
VB	Vera Brittain
WH	Winifred Holtby

## Archive Collections

BL	British Library, Manuscript Collections
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Manuscript Collections Division
NYU	Elizabeth Robins Papers, Fales Library, New York University
VBA	Vera Brittain Archives, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
WHC	Winifred Holtby Collection, Kingston upon Hull Local Studies Library

## Introduction

# Biographies of Friendship

On 16 June 1932, at the Dorchester Hotel on Park Lane, London, a number of British women writers and readers gathered for a Reception given by *Time and Tide*, the feminist weekly newspaper founded by Lady Margaret Rhondda in 1920. According to a report printed in *The Times* the next day, among those who had accepted invitations to be present were: Phyllis Bentley, Stella Benson, Vera Brittain, Professor Winifred Cullis, E.M. Delafield, Susan Ertz, Eleanor Farjeon, Cicely Hamilton, Winifred Holtby, Sylvia Lynd, Rose Macaulay, Naomi Mitchison, Edith Shackleton, Rebecca West and Ellen Wilkinson.<sup>1</sup> Many of the names listed here were authors of novels, well-received and enjoyed in their day, but largely forgotten since. All contributed to *Time and Tide* as writers of such features as articles, reviews, letters, short-fiction and poems. Years later, Naomi Mitchison described *Time and Tide* as ‘the first avowedly feminist literary journal with any class, in some ways ahead of its time’, which in the early 1930s was ‘in full flood, with a number of good authors writing for it’.<sup>2</sup> The reception given by *Time and Tide* in 1932 celebrates this achievement, and marks the emergence of a public association of women writers at an historic moment of professional opportunity for a new generation of middle-class women.

Commenting further on her involvement with *Time and Tide*, Mitchison recalls:

Lady Rhondda was always tremendously encouraging and gave gorgeous parties. I remember driving back from one of them, cautiously since there had been a fair consumption of alcohol, but feeling splendid, as though the whole world was opening up and everything would work out, not only for myself, but for women in general.<sup>3</sup>

Mitchison’s memory brings to consciousness a pivotal moment of post-franchise optimism in the history of women’s writing and feminism in Britain between the two world wars. In 1928 political equality had been extended to all women and, prior to this, ‘a spate of legislative activity affecting women’ had taken place, including the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act (1919), which opened the professions to women.<sup>4</sup> In the context of this new professional opportunity for (middle-class) women, Mitchison’s memory also provides a powerful evocation of the collective pleasures enjoyed by women working together in this period. Another contributor of the journal, Cicely Hamilton, stated in her autobiography that, ‘*Time and Tide* [...] has meant more than a literary interest [...] it has given me friends’.<sup>5</sup> Hamilton was herself a friend known to Lady Rhondda from the Suffrage movement and, an early director of the paper, played an important role in

establishing *Time and Tide* during its early years. Her words may be called upon to stand in for scores of women whose work for *Time and Tide* contributed to its success, and whose own careers were advanced and enlivened by the friendship connections it generated. As one recent commentator has observed, such women belonged to 'a friendship network of which this paper was both cause and effect'.<sup>6</sup>

*British Women Writers 1914-1945: Professional Work and Friendship* is primarily concerned with the lives and writings of Stella Benson, Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Storm Jameson, Naomi Mitchison (who were all at some point connected to *Time and Tide*) and of Lady Rhondda, the journal's founder and editor from 1926. Lady Rhondda inherited her title and her wealth and made *Time and Tide* her life's work, sustaining it financially also through her own subsidy.<sup>7</sup> Benson, Brittain, Holtby, Jameson and Mitchison all made writing their profession and, with the exception of Benson who spent most of her writing career in China, during the period of this study were for the most part based in London. It is, then, professional writing that chiefly defines the 'work' that is a key element of this study. Apart from Lady Rhondda (who regularly contributed signed and unsigned articles to *Time and Tide*) all these writers were authors of novels, but were prolific also in other genres. Benson, Brittain, Holtby and Mitchison all published poetry. Benson also published articles (in journals and two single-authored book collections) on her travels in America, China, India and Japan. Both Brittain and Holtby established high reputations for themselves as journalists, Jameson and Mitchison as essayists and critics. All were active in such political movements as feminism and socialism and wrote on these subjects.<sup>8</sup> All these writers were also known to each other through friendship links and it is the nature of these relationships that constitutes the second key element of this study. Specifically, what form did these friendships take, what were their meanings, and what was their significance?

These questions are explored through a series of case-studies producing 'biographies of friendship' between Brittain and Holtby, Holtby and Lady Rhondda, Brittain and Jameson, and Benson with Mitchison, Holtby and also Laura Hutton (a professional doctor, not writer, see below). My primary objects of study are a range of unpublished materials, notably letters and diaries, supplemented (where relevant) by such published writings as fiction, poetry and autobiography/memoir. The methodology of the book is chiefly one that relies on close textual analysis of this material which, in the case of the unpublished writings, is presented here for the first time. Of the published writings, much of the material I discuss is out of print, and there is certainly a recuperative dimension to this study which aims to make 'forgotten' lives and writings newly visible.<sup>9</sup> This book does not, however, provide literary criticism in the traditional sense (although the fiction and poetry of Benson, Mitchison and Holtby will form a subject of analysis in Chapter Six). Readers will be directed to such critical literature as exists in the bibliography and notes, but otherwise this book privileges a range of public and private writings produced in association with literary production, and is concerned with the professional work and friendship these texts represent.

In view of this, the case-studies reveal friendships which were forged through passionate professional investments and were instrumental to women's writing careers in practical, emotional and 'inspirational' ways. They also provide evidence of such pleasures as talk and companionship, evenings at the theatre, and at parties, dances and clubs, visits to the country and holidays abroad. At the same time these friendships will be shown to have sustained (specifically through the circulation of written texts) the possibility of shared erotic interests and/or intense desires for intimacy that dared not be fully acknowledged or named. Key to understanding these writers' admission and denial of the 'desire' that converged with 'work' in these friendships are historic shifts in the cultural recognition of lesbianism, crystallized by *The Well of Loneliness* trial in 1928. As Laura Doan's recent work has shown, the effect of this trial was to bring lesbianism from the shadows into public visibility and to create for the first time a single and identifiable 'image' of the lesbian. In the years leading up to and including this event, Doan identifies the origins of a modern English culture.<sup>10</sup> For one subject of this study, Laura Hutton, this event provided a framework with which to identify and name her experience and identity. But analysis of the writings produced by Benson, Brittain, Holtby, Jameson, Mitchison and Lady Rhondda demonstrates that the 'fashioning of sapphism' during this period also created a complex territory for women's friendships in inter-war Britain.

In exploring the practices, meanings and effects of these friendships, this book makes a critical intervention in the representation of women's friendships in biographical literature that all too often makes the reductive attempt to claim or deny a subject's orientation to lesbianism.<sup>11</sup> In so far as this book seeks to make visible the trace of desire that insistently makes its mark on the range of public and private texts examined here, I follow the recent work of Joanne Winning who seeks 'to pluralize rather than to fix the term lesbian'. That is, this book is concerned with tracing lesbian desire in the lives and writings of women who were not necessarily lesbian, or who did not desire to identify themselves as such, but of which 'some reckoning must be made'.<sup>12</sup> This 'reckoning' must take into account the different ways in which these writers articulated, imagined and explored lesbian desire, but the ambivalence and denials surrounding sexuality in this material also prevent any simple 'celebration' of women's friendship.<sup>13</sup>

Chapter One provides a more detailed introduction to the broader contexts within which these friendships were produced and negotiated. Here I use the figure of the 'web' to plot the key authors of this study within the network associated with *Time and Tide*, and to explore the different kinds of meanings that friendship connections might generate. I then use the figure of the 'map' to locate the residences, organizational bases and social meeting grounds of this London-based network, and to survey the literary context in which these authors wrote. This chapter also introduces in more detail some critical frameworks central to this study. Included here is a brief explanation of sexual 'inversion' as constructed in medical and psychoanalytic discourses, and evidence of the familiarity of these discourses to the writers with which this book is concerned. I also consider here the

historical and conceptual significance of travel and of letter-writing for these writers' friendships.

Chapters Two to Six comprise the six case-studies presented by this book (Chapter Six examines two friendship pairings). In Chapter Two I re-visit the friendship of Brittain and Holtby, which has been 'unusually fully documented and discussed' and has been regarded as an example of women's love and achievement.<sup>14</sup> Here I survey 'the story so far' of this friendship and its representation in biographical and critical literature, and then (with reference to some unpublished correspondence of 1926) develop my own reading of this friendship. Centrally, I highlight the ways in which professional and erotic energies intersect, inform and infuse each other in this friendship, a process I describe as a 'trade in work and desire'. Importantly, paid work is perceived by Brittain and Holtby (as by many women of their generation) as both the symbol and the means of their emancipation from Victorian definitions of (middle-class) womanhood, and their 'working partnership' registers new professional opportunities of this historical moment. At the same time, their shared professional investments converge with intense desires for intimacy in a friendship which (in the light of new 'scientific' discourses around lesbianism) may be placed under censorious scrutiny. I argue that in Brittain's stated professional need of Holtby she also articulates a desire that calls forth Holtby's (more passionate) response. Further, that through Holtby's agency a separation and naming of 'work' and 'desire' enable the friendship's crucial shaping for the future.

Chapters Three and Four take as their subjects the friendships of, respectively, Holtby with Lady Rhondda, and Brittain with Jameson. Combined, these case-studies demonstrate the professional and personal significance of other friendships in the lives of Brittain and Holtby, and illustrate the wider network of which their friendship is a part. Holtby's and Lady Rhondda's friendship is examined in the context of their work for *Time and Tide*, and takes as its primary object of study some correspondence exchanged in 1933. Identifying Holtby and Lady Rhondda as quasi-co-parents of this journal, this case-study illuminates the ways in which the female (and potentially homosexual) economy of *Time and Tide*, and fantasies of lesbian eroticism, disrupts constructions of both professional work and friendship as 'romance'. Brittain's and Jameson's friendship is examined in the context of their participation in an anti-war movement that grew in Britain during the 1930s, and takes as its primary object of study a voluminous correspondence sustained for nearly ten years. Identifying here 'a passionate beckoning' by which Brittain's and Jameson's professional need of each other converged with more intimate desires, I explore the problems encountered by this friendship when their political positions and literary interests diverged.

Chapter Five introduces a new 'centre' from which to view women writers' friendships in inter-war Britain. If the friendship of Brittain and Holtby has been celebrated as an example of women's love for each other and of feminist achievement, Benson's representation in her diary of her friendship with Laura Hutton provides a cautionary and troubling tale. The cruelties of this private text

make disturbing reading, specifically in their exposure of Benson's homophobic fears of the lesbian body. Performing a critical function in relation to all the other friendships examined in this book, this case-study tracks the responses of one British writer to historical shifts taking place in public discourse relating to models for understanding lesbianism at this time. With reference to such contemporary models as 'romantic friend', 'lesbian vampire', 'woman's woman', 'Sapphist', 'masculine woman', 'sexual invert' and 'lesbian', my discussion identifies in Benson's representation of Laura an ideological struggle over the 'friend' or 'fiend' of this text. I also argue here that Benson's fascination with her subject (along with her fascination with other women represented in this text) in fact provides evidence of Benson's own ambivalent sexuality and may be seen to represent quasi-homosexual desires. Crucially, Benson's fantasies and denials of lesbian desire are produced through dominant British discourses which asserted racial and national superiority and were essential to the maintenance of both the empire and the class system.<sup>15</sup> In so far as this text reflects values that were prevalent among the British upper and middle-classes of this period, Benson's representation of the lesbian body both within and against such oppressive ideologies provides another important context for reading women's friendships between the wars.

Chapter Six takes as its subject Benson's friendships with both Mitchison and Holtby, and in its 'triadic' focus performs an important symbolic function by foregrounding again the wider network of which each friendship pairing is a part. With reference to a range of published and unpublished materials including letters, diaries, fiction and poems, these case-studies reveal that when the admiring younger novelists met Benson for the first time in 1925, Benson became for each of them an object of desire. Identifying a lesbian romance constructed in letters in response to the gifting of love poems, and fantasies of desire and friendship represented in (un)queer fictions, my discussion examines the creative ways in which these writers imagined and explored lesbian desire in writings which also produce points of contact with a Sapphic modernism represented in the work of H.D. and Virginia Woolf. The case-studies also explore the different developments of each friendship in and after 1928, the year of *The Well* trial. Here it will be found that both friendships were redefined primarily in terms of the protagonists' professional interests as writers, although it will also be seen that writing about poetry was less successful than writing about books in letters which throw further light on these writers' relationships to contemporary literary movements and cultures.

The stories told by these 'biographies of friendship' are necessarily partial, and undoubtedly interpretive problems remain in any attempt to write 'truthfully' about the quality of women's friendships in the past. Some of the dilemmas I encountered in researching and writing this book are summed up most powerfully by the status of the Brittain-Jameson correspondence, and the knowledge that Jameson looked back on this friendship with extraordinary bitterness.<sup>16</sup> The facts are that after the two women quarrelled (see Chapter Four), Jameson asked Brittain to return all her letters. Brittain complied with the request, but believing (rightly) that Jameson



would destroy them she made copies first.<sup>17</sup> Two letters exchanged in 1937 illustrate Brittain's and Jameson's different beliefs and actions concerning the kinds of archival materials on which this book depends: 'Time, in the end, reduces all private things to history, and it seems to me pure vandalism to destroy what posterity will treasure, or things which will help it arrive at the truth' (Brittain to Jameson, 24 February 1937) and 'Of me there will be nothing. I destroy everything. I want to sink without trace' (Jameson to Brittain, 25 February 1937).<sup>18</sup>

When I first read these words in the Vera Brittain archives I was physically jolted. My own act of reading the written traces of a life which had survived their intended obliteration by their author felt not merely uncomfortable, but an almost violent invasion of privacy. My emotional and ethical dilemma arises specifically in response to Brittain's preservation of the letters, an act that defies Jameson's wishes and ensnares me as a voyeur decades later. For, knowing that this material exists, how can I not look, and then, having looked, pretend I haven't seen? This dilemma has not lessened now that I am preparing for publication this book in which I quote from these letters. But it is with knowledge of another text that I am compelled to present this material, namely Jameson's two volume autobiography in which not a single mention of Brittain's friendship is made.<sup>19</sup> Reading this autobiography one would not be aware that the two women were acquainted, let alone shared an intimate friendship for nearly a decade, and there is a sense in which I feel a need to make this friendship visible out of fairness to Brittain. That is, my 'loyalty' to Jameson is set against my 'debts' to Brittain who, for all her attempts to control the representation of her friendships with women, has provided me, the researcher, with a vast documentation of her life, including her friendship with Jameson.

Reflecting on a biographical project of her own, Gail Hornstein asks, 'Do I owe more than to the ones who tell me everything than to those who hide?'<sup>20</sup> My ethical responsibility remains ambiguous but does, I feel, require an overall balance in the stories I tell. Though stopping short of claiming to 'arrive at the truth' of this friendship, my intent nevertheless is to explore its complexities and to recover some sense of its character, meanings and significance for the period of its duration. The importance of this task lies in the fact that a critical failure to engage with this correspondence can only compound, rather than dismantle, the constraints, fears and denials which made this friendship 'unrepresentable' in Jameson's public autobiographical account. Indeed, it is this critical and *political* imperative to generate more complex readings of women's friendship that underpins all the case-studies I present. With a view to filling the gaps of important friendships between women hidden or marginalized, distorted or erased in existing auto/biographies, I make no apology for my delineation of their more troubled and troubling aspects. In what follows, readers will not find the only stories that could be told about professional work and friendship in the lives and writings of the women who are the principal subjects of this book. But it is hoped that even in their partiality these case-studies will throw new light on the complex territory occupied by women writers' friendships in inter-war Britain.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> [Notice of *Time and Tide* Reception], *The Times*, 17 June 1932, p. 17.
- <sup>2</sup> Naomi Mitchison, *You May Well Ask: A Memoir 1920-1940*, 1979 (repr. London: Flamingo, 1986), p. 168.
- <sup>3</sup> Mitchison, *You May Well Ask*, pp. 168-169.
- <sup>4</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989), p. 134.
- <sup>5</sup> Cicely Hamilton, *Life Errant* (London: Dent & Sons, 1935), p. 207.
- <sup>6</sup> Johanna Alberti, 'The Turn of the Tide: Sexuality and Politics, 1928-31', *Women's History Review*, 3:2 (1994) 169-90 (170).
- <sup>7</sup> See Shirley Eoff's account of Lady Rhondda's role as publisher and editor of *Time and Tide* in *Viscountess Rhondda: Equalitarian Feminist* (Ohio: State University Press, 1991), pp. 117-146.
- <sup>8</sup> Having left Britain for China in 1922, Benson was less involved than the other writers of this study in the major political movements in Britain of this period. However, in the months leading up to the First World War she was actively involved in the Suffrage movement, and later in Hong Kong she joined a League of Nations committee for enquiring into the International Traffic in Women. See Joy Grant for an account of Benson's involvement in this campaign, in *Stella Benson: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 283-289.
- <sup>9</sup> That this literary history has been repeatedly rendered marginal or invisible is a troubling fact given the considerable efforts that have been made over the years in feminist literary scholarship. Nicola Beauman published her important survey of British women's fiction between the wars in 1983 (*A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-39*, London: Virago) and in the same decade Virago Press reprinted a large number of these novels. In 1984 Dale Spender published an important introduction to *Time and Tide* (London: Pandora), but this history also has once again been marginalized or forgotten.
- <sup>10</sup> Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: the Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- <sup>11</sup> References to the biographies consulted in the course of writing this book will be found in the bibliography. A notable exception to this tendency (in the biographical literature relating to the women with whom this book is concerned) is Marion Shaw, *The Clear Stream: A Life of Winifred Holtby* (London: Virago, 1999) which provides a finely nuanced account of the Brittain-Holtby friendship.
- <sup>12</sup> Joanne Winning, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Wisconsin: University Press, 2000) pp. 7 & 9.
- <sup>13</sup> In critical literature to date there have been many accounts of women's friendship which may be described as 'celebratory'. For example, Janice Raymond, *A Passion for Friends* (London: The Women's Press, 1986) and Ruth A. Symes et al., *Celebrating Women's Friendship: Past, Present Future* (York: Raw Nerve, 1999). Undoubtedly there has been a political need to valorize women's friendships given that these important social relationships have been devalued in culture. This book both acknowledges this important work, and proceeds from the need to provide more complex and critical accounts.
- <sup>14</sup> Diana Wallace, *Sisters and Rivals: The Theme of Female Rivalry in Novels by Women 1914-1939* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 117.

- <sup>15</sup> Gay Wachman, *Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 8.
- <sup>16</sup> This knowledge comes to me anecdotally, via Alan Bishop and Marion Shaw (who both conducted interviews with Jameson before she died) and via Jameson's grandson, Christopher Storm-Clark, her literary executor.
- <sup>17</sup> See Brittain's account of her actions in, *Wartime Chronicle: Vera Brittain's Diary 1939-1945*, ed. by Alan Bishop & Y. Aleksandra Bennett (London: Gollancz, 1989), pp. 160-161 (7 July 1942).
- <sup>18</sup> Unpublished. Vera Brittain Archives, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
- <sup>19</sup> Storm Jameson, *Journey from the North: Autobiography of Storm Jameson*, 2 vols (London: Collins & Harvill Press, 1969).
- <sup>20</sup> Gail Hornstein, 'The Ethics of Ambiguity: Feminists Writing Women's Lives', in *Women Creating Lives: Identities, Resilience, and Resistance*, ed. by Carol E. Franz and Abigail J. Stewart (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 51-68 (p. 54).

## Chapter One

# Women's Friendship in Inter-War Britain

### **Networks: Feminism, Friendship and *Time and Tide***

On 14 May 1920 the first issue of a new weekly newspaper made its first appearance before the British public. Announced by *The Times* as a 'New Paper Managed by Women', this newspaper sought to provide independent coverage of social, political, economic and cultural affairs, and to treat these issues fairly, without bias, as they related to both men and women.<sup>1</sup> Holding the existing Press to blame after the First World War for inciting prejudice against women's participation in public life, the women behind this paper sought to consolidate and advance women's freedoms and influence following their (partial) enfranchisement in 1918, and to educate women readers in their new rights and responsibilities as British citizens.

This newspaper was *Time and Tide*, the unspoken corollary of the title ('wait for no man') indicating the spirited feminist forces that lay behind its otherwise sober appearance. The founder of this all-female enterprise was Lady Margaret Rhondda, a British businesswoman who had been active in the suffrage movement and now saw an opportunity 'to change customs and influence ideas' in a period which witnessed critical changes in the lives of British women.<sup>2</sup> In collaboration with other women known to her through the suffrage movement, and joined later by women from a younger generation of post-war feminists, Lady Rhondda built *Time and Tide* into a paper of considerable stature. With an early readership of between twelve and fifteen thousand, by the 1930s *Time and Tide* was offering serious competition to the *New Statesman* as the leading weekly review in Britain, its circulation figures rising to around 40,000 in the following decade.<sup>3</sup>

*Time and Tide* points to a network of women - writers, artists, politicians and other figures in public life - whose advances in the sphere of paid, professional work reflected a transformation in the face of Britain during this period. The material and symbolic value of work for this group of women will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. Here, I want to examine the 'web' of connections that was both cause and effect of this journal. The figure of the web has proved useful to other critics interested in women's friendship networks, including sociologist Liz Stanley (whose pioneering work on female friendship and auto/biography was a significant influence during the early stages of research for this book), literary critic Bonnie Kime Scott, and art historian Deborah Cherry.<sup>4</sup> In a striking and visual way,