



Patricia (Trish) Marcia Crawford
(1941–2009)

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Australia lost one of its most innovative and engaging scholars when Trish Crawford, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Western Australia, died on 28 April 2009. Over the previous weeks and months Trish's email reports on her illness had brought together a large network of friends and colleagues from Australia and overseas. As the cancer that had first been diagnosed in 2001 began to take a stronger hold on her body in her last months, Trish continued with the way she had led her professional and personal life, keeping in touch with friends, sharing her passions and concerns, reporting on what many would consider a very private realm, and engaging others through her writing and scholarship. Scholarship remained at the centre of her life right to the end. Some weeks before her death she was thrilled to have been able to finish her book, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580–1800*, and was excitedly discussing the alternatives for a cover design. The book is to be published by Oxford University Press in 2010, the last of a series of studies that represent Trish's pioneering and innovative contributions to feminist history and the history of early modern England.

Books had been close to Trish's heart from her childhood. She spoke of the bliss she felt when given a pile of ten books as a child, the joy of being able to choose from the pile what to read and reread, and how that joy was always recaptured when staggering out of the UWA library with an armful of books. That was one of Trish's childhood memories from holiday trips to Melbourne, before the family permanently moved to Melbourne from Sydney in 1948 after her ship's captain father, Jim, had switched to work on land as a marine surveyor. Trish was born in Sydney and loved the city as a child, returning there regularly on holidays from Melbourne, to visit aunts and a grandmother she loved dearly for the stories she would tell while lying in bed. Trish attended a number of primary schools and, then at the age of twelve, was sent to Methodist Ladies College, Elsternwick, transferring to MLC Hawthorn to complete her Matriculation year. During this time she was active in the Girl Guides, and she

also read and studied. She felt her life was on hold until she finished school and could go to university.

At the University of Melbourne, where she began in 1958, Trish discovered her passion for history. Her combined BA (Hons) degree was in English and History; but in the final year she realised her primary engagement and empathy lay with history. She began her research career in the field of early modern British History, writing a BA (Hons) thesis supervised by Don Kennedy and completing his honours class on the Civil War as the sole student. Trish was always grateful for Don's teaching, and also for the support and guidance from George Yule, later Professor of Church History at Aberdeen. These were very happy years, during which she read voraciously in history and literature, and especially works from the period of the Tudors and Stuarts. These years also brought an early awareness of class, as she reflected on herself as a 'very suburban student' who travelled into the university by tram; and she felt the early stirrings of a feminist consciousness, as she noted that women tutors taught the pass students while it was men who always taught honours.

At a student history conference in Healesville in 1959 Trish met Ian Crawford. It was just a few weeks before Ian's departure to undertake a Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeology in London. They corresponded by post for the next two years, with the odd phone call. Soon after Ian's return to Melbourne, Trish and Ian married in March 1962. They then moved to Perth, where Ian had a position in Aboriginal studies at the Western Australian Museum. Trish had been awarded a Commonwealth Postgraduate Scholarship and enrolled in an MA at the University of Western Australia. From 1964 she was also tutoring part-time and in 1965 began on her PhD. During the first of many visits to England that year, Trish decided to focus on the political career of Denzil Holles. She was immensely grateful for the support of Gerald Aylmer of York, and also for Valerie Pearl of University College, London, who effectively became her supervisor.

The later '60s and early '70s were difficult years. Trish felt isolated at UWA and was coming up against the intense difficulties facing women, and especially married women, in attempting to make a career in a university system blind to issues of gender. And her brother, Peter, who suffered from cystic fibrosis, had died at eighteen, just a few months before her trip to England. But after another trip to England in 1968–69, Ian returned to Perth with his doctorate and Trish with her research virtually completed. By 1971 she had successfully completed the thesis and was awarded the doctorate in 1972. In the same year she was also appointed to a half-time Lectureship in History at UWA.

By this time Trish was also a mother. Ian and Trish had adopted Rupert in 1970. As well as bringing them both immense joy, a baby also helped bring Trish into contact with other mothers and their families in Perth, as well as with the ideas and critique of a growing feminist movement. These ideas would slowly work their way

into her feminist consciousness and practice over the next decade and make a significant impact on her scholarly work.

A Nuffield Fellowship in 1974 allowed Trish and the family to travel to the UK for a year, an opportunity she later described as 'one of the best things'. She felt that she and her work were finally being taken seriously. The Fellowship represented the first of many public acknowledgements over the coming years of her pioneering and creative work as a historian of early modern England, of her innovative teaching and supervision, as well as her broader contribution to her university and history profession. She was promoted to professor in 1995, elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in Britain in 1981, a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1993, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2003.

Trish's early research and publications explored the politics of the Long Parliament and the decade of Civil War culminating in the execution of Charles I. Her scholarly article, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', that appeared in the *Journal of British Studies* in 1977 and had developed from her BA (Hons) thesis, considered some of the fundamental grounds for the extraordinary trial and execution of a king; while her first book, *Denzil Holles 1598–1680*, was an outgrowth of her doctoral research and traced a political career caught up in those momentous events. It was published in 1979 and was awarded the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize.

From the 1980s Trish's intellectual focus shifted, as she explored various aspects of popular radicalism, social history and especially women's history. An early indication of the shift was her celebrated 1981 Past and Present article, 'Attitudes to menstruation in seventeenth-century England'; and in subsequent decades her intellectual curiosity and scholarship ranged widely, covering topics such as pregnancy, needlework, printed advertisements, dreams, child care, maternity, conscience, sexual knowledge and identity, friendship, property, citizenship, children and siblings, families and paternity.

Running through all her writing was Trish's abiding concern for the experiences of English women of the early modern period, the types of evidence we might use to illuminate their everyday lives, beliefs and emotions, and how attention to gender forces us to reformulate our understanding of society. And over the last two decades came the books that brought together her research in broader syntheses: her innovative *Women and Religion in England 1500–1720*, in 1993; the comprehensive and highly praised study written with Sara Mendelson, *Women in Early Modern England*, in 1998; *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England*, a fascinating document collection co-edited with Laura Gowing, that testified to Trish's belief in the power of sources to illuminate the everyday lives of women. Trish's analysis of the role of gender in structuring political and religious understanding and discourse also led in recent years to the exploration of paternity – as in a key essay in her 2004 collection, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England*, an essay on fathering poor families explored in her forthcoming book, or in her account of the genealogy of the

democratic citizen in the 2001 study co-written with Philippa Maddern, *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories*.

For Trish there was always a strong relationship between the past and the present, and most especially between women's pasts and her own experiences as a woman within the Australian present. That stood out in the engagement and humanity of the historian I first encountered at a conference in 1975. It marked the questions she posed in her teaching and her legendary reputation as the most generous of supervisors, her concern for mentoring her students and female colleagues, her development of subjects on Women's History and Gender Theory, her commitment with others at UWA to establish a Women's Studies major, her involvement in the university politics of the UWA's Status of Women Group and the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee. Her own experience and political engagement led in 1988 to the publication (together with Myrna Tonkinson) of *The Missing Chapters: Women Staff at the University of Western Australia, 1963–1987*, an account of the sex discrimination underlying the university's policy in refusing to appoint married women to full-time permanent positions, a policy ignored in a recent history of the university.

Another important book that reflected Trish's involvement with contemporary politics and community was *Contested Country: A History of the Northcliffe Area, Western Australia*, which she wrote with Ian Crawford and published in 2003. The book won the Community and Regional History Prize in the NSW Premier's History Awards for 2005. Trish's eyes had been opened to the Australian countryside and its indigenous population when she moved to Western Australia in 1962. She had accompanied Ian on a number of his archaeological expeditions to the Kimberley, including a three-month field trip in 1963 to record cave paintings, and this stimulated a love for the landscape and its flora and impressed upon her the influence of environment on identity. In 1978 Ian and Trish bought a hundred-acre block in the south-west of the state, close to the town of Northcliffe. It was Trish's love for this area and her involvement in the struggle over the future of its breathtaking karri forests that prompted her to join with Ian in writing a history of its environment and Aboriginal population, its European settlement, the conflicts over land use, and the recent battles over its forests. This region and its landscape also featured in many of the vibrant watercolours that she painted in recent years, after potting had become physically too arduous.

As the number of Trish's co-written books suggest, collaboration with others was central to her scholarly practice, just as productive engagement was central to her professional life. That was recognised by the University of Western Australia, when they awarded her the Chancellor's Medal in 2007, and once again after her death, when they named a grassy area outside the lecture theatres of the Arts Building the Patricia Crawford Court. It was also recognised by the outpouring of tributes by the numerous emailers she had brought together as the cancer gradually overcame her, and by those who gathered at her funeral in Perth on 5 May 2009 and also at a

memorial at the Institute of Historical Research in London on 6 July 2009. Trish will certainly be missed by friends and colleagues, and especially by her family – Ian, Rupert and his partner Mandy, and her grandsons Michael and Xavier.

Charles Zika