

Appendix: Biographies of WILPF leaders

Janet Julia Fullarton Strong née Denniston (1844–1919)

Janet (Jessie) Julia Fullarton Denniston was born in Greenock, Scotland. She married Dr Charles Strong in 1872 and moved with him to Melbourne. According to Strong's biographer, she was:

intelligent, well read and a decided personality. She was an excellent musician and a better German scholar than Charles Strong. She shared his interests and gave him unfailing support in all his undertakings.¹

Together they had eight children; five sons and three daughters. When Charles Strong founded the Australian Church in Melbourne in 1885 she was a pivotal part of its practical philanthropic mission. She had a great interest in helping women and children, volunteering her time to become the leader of many of the societies associated with the church's programs for social improvement, and other women groups concerned with social reform. Janet Strong was a founding member of the National Council of Women Victoria in 1902 and remained an executive member until 1915. That year she helped to found the Sisterhood of International Peace (the Sisterhood) through the Australian Church. Media reports show her work was respected and recognised. She was 'public spirited and unselfish', though she remained humble and 'cannot be induced to speak of her work'.² Active and supportive of the peace movement during World War I, she became

1 Colin Robert Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church* (Melbourne: Abacada Press on behalf of the Charles Strong Memorial Trust, 1971).

2 'Mrs Charles Strong', *Weekly Times*, 18 April 1914, 9.

ill in 1919 and died at her home in Armadale, Melbourne.³ Her husband Charles then put his energies into pacifist activity through the Australian Church until his death in 1942.

Eleanor May Moore (1875–1949)

Eleanor Moore was born on 10 March 1875 in Lancefield, a rural town north of Melbourne. She was one of seven children.⁴ In the 1880s, the Moore family moved to the wealthy suburb of Toorak in Melbourne, living at 40 Evelina Road, where Eleanor continued to reside until her death in 1949. Moore went to local primary schools and won a scholarship to attend the Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC).⁵ Her family were members of the Australian Church congregation from its foundation in 1885 and were 'liberal religious thinkers'.⁶ In the mid-1890s, Moore took a secretarial course and trained as a stenographer. Staying in the family home all her adult life, the unmarried Moore contributed to the family budget, but was never dependent on work to survive. This gave her the opportunity to pursue her love of literature. It also gave her the energy and security to commit her volunteer labour to the Sisterhood and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). From the founding in 1915, Evelina Road became the mailing address through which all major correspondence with the Australian section of WILPF flowed. Moore remained active and involved in politics until her death in October 1949. In the last year of her life, she wrote her memoir containing her recollections of the peace movement in her time. Tributes to Moore after her death detailed her extended commitment to peace. One eulogy published in the *War Resisters International* journal, an organisation with which WILPF worked closely, detailed how through international communication close relationships were formed, despite geographical distance and an inability to meet in person:

Eleanor M. Moore died on 1st October, 1949, at the age of seventy-four. She was the first contact the W. R. I. had with Australia, acting as correspondent for the Women's International League (Melbourne). Although I had never met her, I felt that it made very little difference—I knew her. She was one with whom

3 'Death of Mrs. Charles Strong', *The Age*, 25 April 1919.

4 Malcolm Saunders, *Quiet Dissenter: The Life and Thought of an Australian Pacifist: Eleanor May Moore 1875–1949* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, 1993), 21.

5 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne: The First Century, 1875–1975* (Burwood: Presbyterian Ladies' College, 1975).

6 Saunders, *Quiet Dissenter*, 42.

I often used to consult and her response was always prompt and reliable ... The death of Eleanor Moore will not only be a loss to our friends in Australia but to an even larger number in many other parts of the world, who did not actually know her.⁷

Mabel Drummond née Gardner (1877–1968)

Mabel Drummond was a founding member of the Sisterhood and remained closely associated with WILPF throughout most of her life. Born Mabel Gardner in 1877, she completed her education at PLC in East Melbourne, where she excelled in English and gained skills in public speaking. In 1899 she married Robert Charles Goodyear and moved to Queensland, where she gave birth to Guy and Cecily. Robert died in 1903, leaving her widowed at 25 with small children, at which point she moved back to Melbourne to be with her family. She gained employment as a secretary for a merchant on Flinders Lane.⁸ During this time, she taught herself to speak Esperanto, and developed her interest in the ‘universal’ nature of the language. In June 1914 she married her second husband, William Drummond. Mabel and William, like Eleanor Moore and Vida Goldstein, were members of the Australian Church congregation and were recruited to pacifism by Dr Charles Strong.⁹ William also shared her passion for Esperanto and both were members of the Melbourne Esperanto Club. She travelled with her husband to the Esperanto World Congress held in Nuremberg in 1923.¹⁰ Drummond initially became one of the corresponding secretaries and the Esperanto secretary of the Sisterhood in 1915. She was to hold many positions with the organisation, including general secretary from 1917 to 1928, vice-president in 1929, and president in 1930–1932 and again in 1938–1939.¹¹ From the outset, she and Moore became close friends and supported each other in the administration of the WILPF. Drummond was integral to the organisation of WILPF in Melbourne and all of her time was volunteered. She administered the Peace Scholarship that WILPF sponsored between the war and was active in all WILPF’s domestic advocacy. In 1955 she recorded her attendance at the 40th anniversary of the league held at Ormond College

7 HRB, *The War Resister*, no. 56 (Winter 1949). Reel 54, WILPF International Papers 1915–1978, Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corp. of America, c 1983, accessed at the National Library of Australia (NLA).

8 Janet Morice, *Six-Bob-a-Day Tourist* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1985), 20.

9 Morice, *Six-Bob-a-Day Tourist*, 45. See also Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church*.

10 Eleanor M Moore, *The Quest for Peace, As I Have Known It in Australia* (Melbourne, 1948), 66.

11 Moore, *The Quest for Peace*, 174.

at Melbourne University.¹² Drummond remained a committed member of WILPF and was made an honorary permanent member in 1967. She died in 1968 aged 91.

Doris Blackburn née Horden (1889–1970)

Doris Horden was born at Hawthorn in Melbourne and educated at Hesse College, Camberwell, a progressive school where she was encouraged to think about politics. She joined the Women's Political Association (WPA) led by Vida Goldstein and became the campaign manager for Goldstein's run for the senate in 1913.¹³ There she met Maurice Blackburn, who she married in 1914, and together they were active in many progressive organisations. Maurice encouraged her involvement in the labour movement.¹⁴ They had four children and alongside being a mother she focused her political energy on WILPF, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the free kindergarten movement, and other groups focused on maternal and child health needs. By World War II Doris Blackburn moved away from WILPF as she did not agree with the group's increasingly isolated position within the peace movement and instead joined the International Peace Campaign and the Movement Against War and Fascism (MAW&F). She was a member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) but resigned in 1938 after a political clash. She was supported in 1946 by a breakaway group from the ALP and won the federal seat of Bourke, which Maurice had held until his defeat at the 1943 election, the year before his death. Her victory made her the second woman to enter the House of Representatives. As one of the few female federal politicians, and as an independent, she was isolated on the crossbench. Nonetheless, she was a vocal politician with a coherent message that focused on the needs of women and children. She only served one term, as a redistribution changed her seat, and after her period in office she returned her political energies to leading WILPF into the 1950s. She also helped found the Aborigines Advancement League.¹⁵ She died in 1970.

12 Mabel Drummond, entry in personal diary, 28th April 1955. Diary transcribed by Janet Morice, access courtesy of WILPF 2014.

13 Carolyn Rasmussen, 'Blackburn, Doris Amelia (1889–1970)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB), National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/blackburn-doris-amelia-9517/text16755, published first in hardcopy 1993, accessed online 17 October 2022.

14 Carolyn Rasmussen, *The Blackburns: Private Lives, Public Ambitions* (South Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2019).

15 Richard Broome, *Fighting Hard: The Victorian Aborigines Advancement League* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2015).

Anna Fellowes Vroland née White (1902–1978)

Anna White was born at Ascot Vale in Melbourne in 1902. She was educated at the Methodist Ladies' College (MLC) in Kew and became a schoolteacher.¹⁶ She taught at private and state schools around Melbourne, including in 1954 the MLC where she was a student, and later in 1961 she became the headmistress of Woodstock Girls School in Albury, New South Wales. Her teaching methods were experimental, and many viewed them as unorthodox. She became the secretary of WILPF in 1950 until 1957 and was very active in the New Education Fellowship. She encouraged WILPF to become involved in the Aboriginal rights movement, recognising the different needs of urban and rural communities and raising those concerns in international networks and forums. However, her conspicuous membership of WILPF led to her dismissal from Woodstock College after the school board decided that her political commitments indicated communist sympathies.¹⁷ Anna married her husband Anton Vroland in 1947 at the Australian Church in Melbourne, where he was the secretary. He too was a teacher interested in new pedagogical methods, and he worked closely with Indigenous communities around Victoria. They were both very interested in human rights, education and social improvement. Anton died in 1957, after which Anna withdrew from active political engagement, jaded about the possibility of progressive reform. She remained involved with the wider WILPF network, but frequently worked alone.¹⁸ She died in 1978 at Box Hill.

Stella Cornelius née Cohen (1919–2010)

Stella Cohen was born in Sydney in 1919. Her father, Isador Cohen, had fled Russia to live in Australia and worked as a draper and tailor. She had to leave school at 14, helping her father as a pattern maker and designer.¹⁹ She met Max Cornelius, a Jewish German refugee who arrived in Australia in 1938 and enlisted in the Australian army, and they married in Sydney

16 Sitarani Kerin and Andrew Spaul, 'Vroland, Anna Fellowes (1902–1978)', ADB, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/vroland-anna-fellowes-12108/text21371, published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 17 October 2022.

17 Jodi Kok, 'An "Ordinary Great Woman": Anna Vroland', 31 March 2021, State Library of Victoria Blog, accessed 18 October 2022, blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/family-matters/an-ordinary-great-woman-anna-vroland/.

18 Sitarani Kerin, *An Attitude of Respect: Anna Vroland and Aboriginal Rights, 1947–1957* (Clayton, Vic: Monash University, 1999).

19 Stella Cornelius, 'Peace Worker and Businesswoman' in *The Matriarchs*, ed. Susan Mitchell (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1987), 126.

in 1943.²⁰ They had one daughter, Helena, born in 1944. Max was a furrier and together they established Cornelius Furs. Stella was heavily involved in the business, making a point of employing women and giving them flexible working conditions. She was often the only woman buyer at international auctions. Stella remained interested in history and literature and read widely, developing a passion for peace and world affairs and initiating a Peace and Conflict Resolution Program for the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA). By 1978 they had sold their business when Max died suddenly. Stella then put all her energies into peace activities. She became the vice-president of WILPF Australia and in 1985 she established a National Consultative Committee on Peace and Disarmament. She also established the Australian Media Peace Awards through the UNAA. In 1986 she was appointed by the Australian Government as the director of the International Year of Peace. She was awarded the Order of Australia in 1987. Cornelius campaigned for the Centre for Conflict Resolution at Macquarie University in 1988, where she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters. In 2003 she was appointed to a National Committee on Human Rights Education.

Evelyn Rothfield née Dell (1910–2006)

Evelyn Dell was born in England, raised in a Jewish family. She married her husband Norman Rothfield in 1934 and together they migrated to Australia in 1939. They had three children. Evelyn and Norman were inspired to work for peace after living through World War II and being concerned for family in Europe. They were active in the Melbourne Jewish community; Evelyn became president of the Melbourne branch of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1946. She joined the UNAA and participated in the Model Parliament of Women. Evelyn also worked as a journalist reporting on the UN for Australian newspapers, often focusing on women's contributions, and she later became a travel consultant and travelled widely. When Rothfield was president of the Australian section, Hephzibah Menuhin was president of the UK branch and the two worked closely together on these issues. Menuhin, from a Jewish family and sister to violinist Yehudi Menuhin, was a musician and human rights advocate. Rothfield and Menuhin met when Menuhin lived in Australia after her

20 Malcolm Brown, 'Cornelius, Stella (1919–2010)', *Obituaries Australia*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/cornelius-stella-16826/text28721, accessed 18 October 2022.

marriage to Lindsay Nicholas.²¹ Evelyn first attended an international WILPF meeting in 1970, became the WILPF Australia president in 1975, and was elected to the international executive in 1980, becoming international vice-president in 1980–83.²² In 1974 Evelyn and Norman began publishing a journal called *Paths to Peace*. In 1998 both Evelyn and Norman were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for promoting peace and human rights.²³

Margaret Holmes née Read (1909–2009)

Margaret Read was born in Wahroonga on Sydney's North Shore on 24 January 1909. Both her father and uncle enlisted in 1914 and, as the family wished to remain close when leave was granted, Margaret, her mother and siblings moved to England, returning to Australia in August 1915. Educated at Abbotsleigh private girls school, she then went to the University of Sydney where she lived at the Women's College from 1927 to 1931. She began studying medicine in 1929, one of only seven women in the cohort of 100 students, and met her husband, Thomas Holmes. Her years at university helped broaden her experience and her politics from the conservative and privileged upbringing she had been raised in, and Margaret was a member of the Students' Representative Council in 1930.²⁴ Moving to Mosman in Sydney, she and her husband had six children. Despite limited time for political activity, she was a subscriber to the Left Book Club, and to *The Peacemaker*, where she learnt about WILPF.²⁵ In 1959, with her children more independent, she planned a solo journey to Europe where she attended the WILPF triennial congress in Stockholm.²⁶ Holmes also set up the WILPF Sydney branch in 1960. This well-respected, community-minded woman from a wealthy family on the North Shore was

21 Rothfield wrote a tribute after Menuhin's death in 1981 in *Pax et Libertas* 46, no. 1 (March 1981).

22 Evelyn Rothfield, *The Future Is Past* (self-published: Copy available at the State Library of Victoria, 1992), 59.

23 Steve Brook, "'Peacenik' who Never Gave up Ideals', obituary for Norman Rothfield, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 2010, accessed 19 October 2022, www.smh.com.au/national/peacenik-who-never-gave-up-ideals-20100611-y3p2.html.

24 Information about Holmes' early life from Michelle Cavanagh, *Margaret Holmes: The Life and Times of an Australian Peace Campaigner* (Sydney: New Holland, 2006).

25 Cavanagh, *Margaret Holmes*.

26 Siobhan McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts: Australian Women and the Vietnam War* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1993), 203.

an enigma to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the government, who were intrigued by her decision to become part of the radical peace movement. She died aged 100 in October 2009.²⁷

Irene Greenwood née Driver (1898–1992)

Irene Adelaide Driver was born in Albany, Western Australia, in December 1898, the eldest of five children.²⁸ Her mother, Mary Anne Driver, was a committed women's rights advocate and president of the WCTU, founded in WA in 1892. She attended the Perth Modern School on a scholarship.²⁹ Irene completed a year at the University of Western Australia, before briefly entering the public service where she met her husband, Albert Greenwood. They married in 1920 and had two children.³⁰ During the 1920s Greenwood began radio broadcasting with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) and wrote radio scripts on 'women in the international news' every week. In 1930 she and her husband moved to Sydney where she met activist Jessie Street, whom Greenwood came to see as a 'mother figure'.³¹ Her friendship with Street and others such as Ruby Rich and Linda Littlejohn at this time revolutionised her thinking. Not content with merely asking for reform, Street and Littlejohn encouraged Greenwood to think about the political system as a whole and the need for systemic reform.³² Greenwood and her family moved back to WA in 1935. She returned to broadcasting, hosting a daily session called *Woman to Woman*, where she interviewed important guests, gave book reviews and promoted women's organisations and achievements.³³ She also broadcast 'travel adventure' stories, fictions that focused on female protagonists and demonstrated her worldly interests.³⁴

27 Michelle Cavanagh, 'Powerful Voice for Peace and Freedom—Margaret Holmes, 1909–2009', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 2009, accessed 17 October 2022, www.smh.com.au/comment/obituaries/powerful-voice-for-peace-and-freedom-20091002-ggg6.html; Michelle Cavanagh, 'Margaret Holmes Obituary', *The Guardian*, 26 November 2009, accessed 17 October 2022, sec. 'Australia News', www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/25/margaret-holmes-obituary.

28 Kay Murray, *Voice for Peace: The Spirit of Social Activist Irene Greenwood 1898–1992* (Bayswater, WA: Kay Murray Productions, 2005), 1.

29 Irene Greenwood, 'Chronicle of Change', in *As a Woman: Writing Women's Lives*, ed. Jocelynnne A Scutt (Melbourne: Artemis Publishing, 1992), 109.

30 Murray, *Voice for Peace*, 20.

31 Greenwood, 'Chronicle of Change', in Scutt, *As a Woman*, 111.

32 Murray, *Voice for Peace*, 40.

33 Cora V Baldock, 'Irene Adelaide Greenwood 1992', *Australian Feminist Studies* 8, no. 17 (1 March 1993): 2, doi.org/10.1080/08164649.1993.9994672.

34 John Richardson, 'New and Strange Ways: The Radio Broadcasts of Irene Greenwood', *Continuum* 2, no. 2 (1 January 1989): 51, doi.org/10.1080/10304318909359364.

WILPF WA re-formed in 1952 with Evelyn Rowland. The branch produced the journal *Peace and Freedom* that Rowland edited until her death in 1961, when Greenwood took over. This journal became the paper for the national organisation, and Greenwood utilised the platform to communicate local and international peace issues for a decade. She became president of the WA branch from 1966 until 1969. She only travelled overseas once, in 1965, as a delegate for the WILPF triennial anniversary conference.³⁵ In 1975 Greenwood was a member of the Advisory Committee for International Women's Year.³⁶ This gave her a prominent position in developing programs in Australia focused on the UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985. That same year, for International Women's Year, the WILPF published a book called *Listen to Women for a Change: Fifty World Feminists on Equality, Development, Peace*.³⁷ Compiled by the international president of WILPF, Kay Camp, it included seven Australian women, and Greenwood was honoured to be among them. Greenwood's activities and associations made her a pivotal figure in the history of Australian feminism. In 1981 she was awarded the UNAA silver peace medal and life membership. She also had the flagship of the state ships fleet named in her honour, the MV *Irene Greenwood*.

Evelyn (Eve) Masterman (1907–2014)

Eve Masterman was born in the United Kingdom in 1907 and moved with her family to Chauncy Vale, Tasmania in 1912. She was sent to St Michael's Collegiate boarding school at a young age. In 1933 she was awarded a degree at the University of Tasmania; she became a poet and also became the first qualified librarian in the Parliamentary Library. Eve was a staunch Quaker and became involved in WILPF in 1964 to protest the Vietnam War and conscription.³⁸ She became the president of Tasmanian WILPF in 1974 and 1978, was a delegate to the WILPF international congress in 1968 and was the international vice-president four years later. Eve travelled widely and was a keen bushwalker. She was instrumental in the establishment of the International Peace Park in Berriedale, Tasmania, where she helped maintain a community garden. She became a Member of the Order of Australia in 1976, received an international award from the United Nations, and was

35 Murray, *Voice for Peace*, 150.

36 Greenwood, 'Chronicle of Change', in Scutt, *As a Woman*, 119.

37 Kay Camp, *Listen to the Women for a Change: Fifty World Feminists on Equality, Development, Peace* (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US Section, 1975), 19.

38 Linley Grant et al., *Prevailing for Peace: The History of the WILPF Tasmanian Branch 1920–2013* (North Hobart: WILPF, 2015), 7.

inducted to the Tasmanian Women's Honour Roll in 2009. Masterman lived to 106, passing away in 2014. An adjournment speech was given in the federal parliament by Senator Lisa Singh to acknowledge her life's work.³⁹ WILPF Tasmania established the Eve Masterman Peace Poetry Prize in her honour in 2014.

39 Lisa Singh, 'Adjournment', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, Tuesday 13 May 2014, 2523.

This text is taken from *Sisters in Peace: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Australia, 1915–2015*, by Kate Laing, published 2023 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.