

Foreword

Catherine Marshall

It is a great honour to be invited to write a foreword to the *Trinity Women's Review* and to be associated with a new generation of Trinity women who want to make the world a better place. They are doing this only for women, but through recognition of the value of women's contribution they want to raise opportunities for all those whose voices have not been heard across world cultures. In this context we should all remember the words of one of Trinity's most prominent women graduates – Mary Robinson. Mary Robinson called for support for education for women in central Africa and other areas of severe deprivation in the world on the basis that by educating the women you are educating the whole community, whereas offering the same education to men, invariably meant that they would leave the community and pursue their goals elsewhere.

Was it pure coincidence that the invitation to write this came just as the university held a memorial service for one of its most formidable women, Anne Crookshank, Professor Emeritus of History of Art, who died last October? Anne Crookshank's achievements as founding Head of the History of Art Department, her contribution to the modern collection in the Ulster Museum and the early Rosc exhibitions and her seminal publications on Irish art might make us forget what it was like for her to have been a TCD student in the late 1940s.

Anne was one of the first women to win a Trinity Scholarship, but her pleasure in that achievement was marred by the fact that it was then considered improper for women to live in College, so instead of enjoying the benefits of the rooms that her scholarship entitled her to, she was exiled to the sticks at Trinity Hall, and instead of eating at Commons every day, she was given a voucher to dine in solitary splendour in the nearby Jury's hotel on Dame Street. However these discriminations were as nothing compared to the indignity of being forced out of the library at 9.30 every evening be-

fore the men exited at 10, so that no improper behaviour might take place on the way out. Action was called for; Anne and her friends decided to stage a sit-in when the curfew bell tolled. Embarrassed porters carried them bodily out of the library, over the heads of amused male students. When it became clear that they intended to continue their action every evening until this ridiculous regulation was removed, the college wisely abolished it. Anne Crookshank's subsequent academic achievements, her mentoring of students, male and female, and her ground-breaking work in the history of Irish art, finally led the University to offer her a fellowship but while graciously accepting that honour, she firmly declined to attend a celebratory commons dinner, as a mark of respect to all those woman scholars who were excluded in the past.

Nevertheless Anne Crookshank did not think herself a feminist. As a child of her age, she was often blithely unaware of gender discrimination, even herself perpetuating it and was horrified at the sexual licences that some feminists advocated since the 1960s, yet many of her actions were feminist. They remind us that there are different ways to express our feminism and her openness to those who disagreed with her makes her and women like her important role models for later generations of Trinity women.

Her battles might seem small in the bigger story of women's struggles in relation to poverty, civil and human rights, control over our own bodies and globalisation, but they are important because they remind us that inequality and exploitation never go away. They just move to new arenas. It is up to us to be vigilant and to say, actually no, we won't tolerate this discriminatory behaviour any more. The Waking the Feminists movement came out of just such a moment, when another Trinity woman graduate, Lian Bell, said, 'hold on lads, where are the women in the Abbey Theatre's 1916/2016 programme?' No one could have predicted the national and international storm of support the movement attained, least of all our patriarchal national theatre. It will never be the same again.

Things have improved at Trinity. Approximately 60 per cent of undergraduate students are now women, although it is still true that only one in every five professors is female. But, in 2015, driven by the efforts of two other Trinity women, Eileen Drew and Claire Marshall (Centre for Women in Science & Engineering Research), Trinity's commitment to gender equality was formally acknowledged when it won four Athena SWAN Awards for

advancing women's representation in higher education. This is not to say that the battle has been won or equality attained; far from it. It means that the university has identified specific areas for action and has committed to pursuing them.

So well done Aisling, Alice, Sadhbh and Gemma. The Trinity Women's Review is an important endeavour and I wish you and it every success.

Catherine Marshall

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