



Clara Rackham (straw hat and tie) next to Millicent Fawcett in Hyde Park, 1913, leading the law-abiding campaign for votes for women (courtesy of the Women's Library at the LSE)

Introduction for Capturing Cambridge

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The piece on Clara Rackham which I was invited to write for Capturing Cambridge is based on research into her personal papers by kind permission of the Tabor Family in north Essex. Her letters, diaries, journals, and other writings underpinned my own recent biography of a remarkable feminist and public intellectual whose name came to be associated with the idea of tireless public service, enlightened local government and many of the reforms that were to change the face of early twentieth-century Cambridge.

Clara Rackham was, for example, a leading suffragist, pioneering magistrate, long-serving councillor, Poor Law Guardian, and active member of the peace, Co-operative and adult

education movements in the city and a supporter of the League of Nations from its inception.

She also served as a Royal Commissioner on Unemployment Insurance, reported to parliament on child protection and child sexual abuse, was recognized nationally as an expert on rural and urban poverty, and as an authority on municipal housing, factory legislation, education for women and girls, penal reform, social security and workers' rights.

As the particulars of her life are not widely known, I have included a chronology and a brief note on Harris Rackham without whose consistently good-humoured and understanding presence one rather special home in Cambridge cannot be properly understood.

In Memoriam Clara Rackham

Although she insisted that she wanted nothing to be named after her during her lifetime the following streets and artefacts were erected or named in Clara Rackham's memory after her death

Blue Plaque, 9 Park Terrace, Cambridge, CB1 1JH.

Rackham Close, Cambridge, CB4 3HX

The Rackham Building, Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, CB1 1PT (demolished)

The Clara Rackham Room, Alex Wood Hall, Norfolk Terrace, Cambridge CB1 2LD.

The Clara Rackham Room, Milton Road Library, Ascham Rd, Cambridge CB4 2BD.

The Clara Rackham Vase, Cambridge Lawn Tennis Club, Stacey Lane, Wilberforce Road, Cambridge, CB3, OE3.

Clara Rackham Street, Cambridge, CB1 3FL.