



Anne Constance Smedley Armfield (1875 - 1941)

Constance Smedley

Founder

International Association of Lyceum Clubs

Service of Commemoration

20 May 2017

St Lawrence's Church, West Wycombe

Welcome

**Marion Jones AALC
Immediate Past President**

Constance Smedley

An internationalist, a feminist and suffragist, an illustrator and stage designer, a journalist, novelist, playwright and creator of pageants, a lifelong campaigner for the poor and for the arts, and for the right of poor people to have access to art.

Born 20 June 1876 in Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands

Educated Birmingham School of Art

March 1903 first election notices to appoint the Lyceum Club's Provisional Committee were issued

20 June 1904 new London Lyceum Clubhouse in Piccadilly for Women Artists and Writers

Initial membership of 1,000

Married 1909 to the artist Maxwell Armfield

1911 Constance Smedley and her husband put on the extraordinary "Pageant of Progress" or "Pageant of the People" with a cast of 1,300 amateur performers, eight stage-managers, and sundry horses, ponies, and flocks of sheep

1915 - 1922 the couple lived and worked in the United States.

Died 9 March, 1941 in West Wycombe.

Lyceum Clubs are in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.



*Birmingham in the early 1900s:
Birthplace of Constance Smedley*

Birmingham School of Art



London Lyceum Club-house in Piccadilly

Maxwell Armfield



Portrait of Constance by her Husband



London Club 'At Home'



Sister Suffragette

Constance Smedley Singers



(Words and music by Richard M Sherman and Robert B Sherman)

We're clearly soldiers in petticoats
Dauntless crusaders for women's votes
Though we adore men individually
We agree that as a group they're rather stupid!
Cast off the shackles of yesterday!

**Shoulder to shoulder into the fray!
Our daughters' daughters will adore us
And they'll sing in grateful chorus
Well done Sister Suffragette!**

From Kensington to Billingsgate one hears the restless cries!
From every corner of the land Womankind arise
Political equality and equal rights with men!
Take heart! for Mrs Pankhurst has been clapped in irons
again!

No more the meek and mild subservients we!
We're fighting for our rights, militantly! Spoken (Never
you fear!)
So cast off the shackles of yesterday!

**Shoulder to shoulder into the fray!
Our daughters' daughters will adore us
And they'll sing in grateful chorus
Well done! Well done, Well done Sister Suffragette!**



Poem

Tribute to Constance Smedley

(translated and read by President Lyceum Club International de Suisse-
Janet Bluemli, IALC Vice-President Muriel Hannant and President Interna-
tional Lyceum-Clubs in Deutschland Marianne Ziegler)

We may liken the church with its towering steeple
To the towering intellect of those very rare people
Who, soaring above the rest of us, leave wealth beyond measure,
Behind them on earth, for us to treasure.

Our founder was one who dreamed a concept so splendid,
Who bequeathed us a legacy which has since been extended
To more countries and cities across the earth,
It would be hard to measure her absolute worth.

We value the welcome from clubs far and wide,
Their warmth is special and does provide
A place of refuge, and a temporary home
For Lyceum travellers who love to roam.

Lyceum meetings are places of learning
Because members possess a particular yearning,
To gain more knowledge of the world about
For learning is lifeblood, there is no doubt.

Since Lyceum was founded, members in succession
Have been scaling the heights in their own profession,
Leaving landmarks and footprints for all to see
And contributing much to our own history.

Above all, we value the friendships we find
When meeting others of similar mind;
Friendships once made are ones that hold true
And may well last our whole life through.

Written by Bev Morris, Lyceum Brisbane Club Inc., Australia, May 2017

IALC President

Ingrid von Rosen

Play Reading 'The Amazing, Preposterous Constance

Smedley by Frank Hatt

Cotswold Players

with an introduction by Patrick Howell and featuring actors Megan Strachan (Constance), Christina Heward-Mills (sister Di) and Tim Howard (their father).



Associations' Reflections

Australia, Finland, France, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands

Closing

At the Graveside

IALC President

Ingrid von Rosen and

IALC Vice-

President Muriel Hannant





Life Long Learning



Social Activities

Arts and Music



Science

St Lawrence's Churchyard: burial place of Constance Smedley



15 High Street, West Wycombe where Constance died