

AT: Welcome to the Infinite Women podcast. I'm your host, Allison Tyra. And today I'm joined by Lucy Haigh, a PhD student in history at the University of Sheffield, to tell us about Alexandra of Denmark. So first, can you introduce us to her place in British history?

LH: So Alexandra of Denmark was the queen consort of King Edward VII from 1901 to 1910. And that meant that she was the Princess of Wales from her marriage to Edward in 1863 until the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. It was the longest time that any woman had ever held that title, which is really interesting to look at because of her lengthy career in the British royal family. And because she held the title of Princess of Wales for so long, she was really able to craft a quite nuanced public identity for herself and she really developed into her role as well, which is really interesting to see. And actually, one of the issues that I've faced when researching Alexandra is the lack of primary sources available about her. So upon her death, she requested that all her letters and diaries, anything that she had written during her lifetime were to be destroyed. And this is something that Edward did as well upon his death. So I can't really blame them for doing this because they probably thought that a century later, some historian would want to go rummaging through what they had written and analysing it. And that would be true. But it's made my research that little bit more difficult. So because of this, I've turned to Alexandra's image as a way of finding out about her life and analysing her. So her image, especially in the newspapers, which is what I'm looking at specifically, is a really incredibly useful way to analyse her and find out more about her life.

AT: It is worth noting that Victoria's diaries were extensively edited by men before they were publicly made available. And so I wouldn't be surprised if part of that was seeing what can be done to your writings supposedly in your name after you have passed. That would make me leery, certainly.

LH: I definitely think that's a factor, especially having seen the death of Queen Victoria and living through that time of the death of a monarch, I think that really would have influenced both her and Edward's decision to have their correspondence destroyed after their death to try and maintain the image that they created for themselves in the British institution and to the public to try and stop, like you said, this editing taking place to try and change their narratives.

AT: I'm seeing a lot of parallels to a previous episode that I did about the rise of the Hanoverians to the English throne in the first place. So if you want to know more about image crafting, and particularly in the context of being a Princess of Wales, definitely go listen to that episode as well after you listen to this one, because we've still got a lot more to say about Alexandra, obviously. And so in that vein, are there any biographical details you'd like to share to give us a sense of her as a person leading up to her marriage?

LH: Yes, so Alexandra grew up in the Danish royal court. And at the time, the Danish royal family, it was quite a relatively small royal family, especially in comparison to the British royal family and the kind of pomp that we see surrounding the British royal family. And it's really pointed out in Alexandra's biographies that her and her sister, Dagmar, actually made their own clothes and their own dresses and that they became quite skilled seamstresses in this respect, which is really interesting because it foreshadows the future of both of them becoming quite fashionable women. Dagmar goes on to marry the Tsar of Russia, and she becomes Empress of Russia for quite a while, at the same time that Alexandra becomes Princess of Wales. And they both have this identity of being extremely fashionable women and in their adult lives, they were seen photographed wearing similar clothes. So they held that really tight knit family sentiment throughout their adult life. I think they had always been on the more low-key side of royalty. It definitely wasn't a case where they had grand carriages, escorting them places. They would regularly stroll through the streets of Denmark, and people would wave to them. They were a [Listen to Amy-Jane Humpries on the Hanoverians](#) or [read the transcript](#). very casual royal family, which is really interesting, because then when

Alexandra married Edward, you see this almost a shock in a way, in terms of how Alexandra was now meant to conduct herself in public and have all of her photographs taken and things like this. There was more severity, I guess, associated with her role, even though she was a princess before, this was an entirely different ball game that she was playing. And we see a stark difference between her childhood and her upbringing, where she wasn't really educated about politics, she wasn't really interested in languages or philosophy or things like that, in comparison to Edward, who had the best education at the time. So through their childhood, you see a really stark difference in how the two different monarchies operated.

AT: And so how much of this austerity, frugality was a choice as opposed to, they just weren't allocated a lot of money, because, spoiler, her dad did become the king of Denmark, but he wasn't always meant to be the king of Denmark. I'll let you explain.

LH: Yes, of course. So I think in terms of the first part of that, it was a little bit of both. The Danish royal family didn't have a lot of money to begin with, and that had always been the case. On the world stage, they weren't taken that seriously, they weren't a major player in terms of European politics. But at the same time, I think there was part of them that enjoyed that because it enabled them to have a closer actual relationship with the Danish people, and the Danish people really, really liked them. Moving on to the next point of the succession crisis that happened, which in turn made Alexandra's father the king of Denmark. So there was a succession crisis in 1847, as the current king, King Frederick VII, didn't have any children. And actually, the first person in line to the throne, or the person closest, was in fact Alexandra's mother, Louise of Hesse-Kassel. But because of Salic law that was prevalent in Denmark at the time, she was unable to take the throne. So Salic law prevented Louise, Alexandra's mother, from taking the throne because Salic law prevented the accession of women into a monarchy. So she was not able to become queen of Denmark through her own right. But at the time of this succession crisis, Louise had already married Christian, and he was very popular with the Danish people. He had served in the Danish army, so he became a really good choice for the position of king of Denmark. So Louise actually renounced her rights to the throne in favor of her husband, and that was how the succession crisis was solved with Christian, Alexandra's father, becoming king of Denmark.

AT: It's really weird to me that you're saying that Denmark wasn't considered that important on an international political level because, as you've mentioned, one sister becomes the queen of Great Britain and the other one becomes the empress of Russia, and that doesn't sound like a country that's relatively inconsequential.

LH: No, of course, and then on top of that we've got Alexandra's other brother who becomes king of the Hellenes, which is Greece, and I say other brother because her older brother inherits the throne to Denmark. So we've got one sibling on the Danish throne, one on the British, one on the Russian, and then one on the Greek as well. And it is a really interesting point that you bring up, and I know that in Alexandra's case, her beauty played a large part in her becoming princess of Wales. She and her sister, Dagmar, who became the empress of Russia, they were both seen as some of the most beautiful royal women in Europe at the time, and I can't speak for much of Dagmar but for Alexandra, because she, as an individual, wasn't too interested in politics. At the time there was a lot of tension between Prussia and Denmark, and if we look at Queen Victoria's other children, her eldest daughter, Princess Victoria, married the crown prince of Prussia, and she became the crown princess of Prussia and eventually the empress for a short while, so Albert and Victoria really wanted to strengthen ties between England and Britain, should I say, and Germany or Prussia, so the fact that we've got a Danish princess coming into this, it shows...

AT: It's more that she was pretty than she was politically important?

LH: Yes, yes, I think so.

AT: But even for all her prettiness and her lack of interest in politics, which I can actually see that being an appealing trait in a queen consort, the way that she ended up married to Edward, as I understand it, is she wasn't the first choice, but Victoria and Albert basically just rejected everyone else?

LH: Pretty much. So yes, she wasn't the first choice, she was actually at the bottom of the list as a potential bride for Edward. So Victoria and Albert preferred for Edward to marry either a German or a Prussian princess to maintain the ties between England and Germany, particularly as we think of Edward's older sister who became the Crown Princess of Prussia. That was a really influential factor to consider when looking for a match for Edward. So there were a host of German women who were selected to be a potential bride for Edward. All of them, other than Alexandra, were either German or Prussian princesses.

AT: So a relatively neutral nationality seems like it was actually a benefit.

LH: A neutral nationality would have done, and I'm not quite sure why women were only kind of scouted from that part of Europe, which is really, really interesting to think about, because that would have benefited Britain heavily. Especially if we think of Alexandra's Danish nationality, at the time there was increasing tensions between Denmark and Prussia over the disputed territory of Schleswig-Holstein. It's a very confusing dispute to wrap your head around. It took me a while into my PhD to understand the importance of this location, but essentially both countries laid claim to this land and because of England's ties to Prussia through Edward's older sister, again the Crown Princess of Prussia, a Danish Princess of Wales was really not the preferred match. And eventually, in the early years of Alexandra's marriage to Edward, this tension escalated into a military conflict, and that provided some tension within the British royal family, because Alexandra was supportive of her maternal family of Denmark, whereas the Crown Princess Victoria, of course, was now loyal to her marital home of Prussia.

AT: But then when the Crown Princess of Prussia did meet Alexandra, she became the approving sister.

LH: Of course, yes. So Victoria, the Crown Princess, she played a massive role in selecting Edward's bride, and it was actually her initiative that she decided to meet Alexandra as one of the women who could potentially be her sister-in-law, which is interesting because, again, Alexandra was at the bottom of the list for Edward. But after Victoria, again, the Crown Princess, met Alexandra, she knew that this would be a really good match for her brother. The other candidates for Edward didn't seem to be compatible with each other, but Victoria saw Alexandra and spoke to her, thought she was brilliant. And like we've touched on a little bit, the fact that Alexandra wasn't too interested in politics really played in her favor for this.

AT: Like a lot of royal marriages, it started off good and then stuff happened within the marriage.

LH: So much stuff happened within the marriage, yes. At first, the way that the marriage was advertised to the public was that this was a genuine love match between two very lucky, very privileged young people. However, as time went on, and very quickly, very soon into their marriage, Edward began having affairs. Some of these were very public affairs as well. One of them resulted in a divorce trial where Edward had to appear in court. That was heavily reported on. Alexandra actually went with him to this court hearing where he denied ever knowing the woman and then he was found innocent of all charges. But there are so many well documented cases of his affairs, which mirrors the story of Diana, Princess of Wales and Prince Charles. It was very much a similar situation where the prince was having public affairs on his wife who, both Alexandra and Diana were seen as the most beautiful, the most fashionable and the loveliest women of their time. So there was some irritation that Edward faced from the British public, especially when people thought that he's going to be the

next king and this isn't the behaviour of the King of England. This isn't what we're looking for. So towards the later years, he had to really work to gain favour of the British public, which he did. He did really successfully and after his death, he was mourned quite heavily because people did change their minds about him. But it took a lot of work for him because Alexandra was so loved by the people. So speaking of Edward's death, even on his deathbed, Alexandra invited in his long-time mistress, I think of 10 years, Alice Keppel, to say her goodbyes and Alice Keppel became quite dramatic in this scene of saying goodbye to Edward, which after the fact, she denied and she played it down, but people knew that she was extremely upset. She'd been his mistress for around 10 years at this point. It was apparently known that she was the only person who could really soothe the king's nerves and soothe his mood. So she played a large role, but again, Alexandra tolerated this, unfortunately.

AT: As mentioned, she was Princess of Wales for many, many years and when she finally did become queen consort, it was for less than a decade, but Princess of Wales is obviously still a highly visible role. So is there much distinction between how she presented herself and was perceived as Princess of Wales versus when she was queen?

LH: There is quite a large difference between how she, even in terms of how she dressed as Princess of Wales compared to as queen consort. There has been quite a bit of research done on this by Kate Strasdin, she's fantastic and I use her research all the time. But after becoming queen consort, visually you see Alexandra going all out and wearing the most beautiful glittering gowns, all of the royal jewels that she adorned. She really became the visual centre of any room that she walked in, which as Princess of Wales was the case, but on a lesser degree. Because Queen Victoria was the queen, she was the most important person and I think the role of Queen Victoria shaped how Alexandra acted as Princess of Wales so much. Alexandra would have to ask Victoria if she could go home to Denmark to see her family, sometimes this was denied. However once we see the death of Queen Victoria and Alexandra move into this role of queen consort, you can really tell from how she dressed that she wanted to be seen as the premier woman in the realm, the most important, and yeah we can see that through the changes in her style over the years.

AT: Something that's easy to miss if you're not going too in depth about her life is that she actually had not one but two disabilities.

LH: Yes and this is a very important factor that I'm looking at in my research and I think it's incredibly interesting in that the history of disability in the 19th century and before and after that needs so much more historical attention, absolutely. So Alexandra was partially deaf throughout her life and it got progressively worse as well. This was something that was known to the royal family upon her marriage to Edward but at the time it wasn't that bad and but people still wanted to hide it in case anyone would question her ability to produce an heir, it raised questions surrounding that.

AT: So it wasn't just whether she could produce an heir but whether she could produce an heir who was not also deaf.

LH: Yes of course. It raised some concern but because Alexandra herself was able to overcome this deafness by lip reading, people began to slowly ignore it and then it only progressively got worse in the later stages of her life, which, she died in 1925 so she was in her 80s at that point, so that's to be expected at that age. But the other disability that Alexandra had was actually a limp that she acquired through pregnancy. So she gave birth to six children within the span of eight years so her body was almost in a constant state of pregnancy and then recovery for much of the first decade of her marriage really. And it was her third pregnancy in 1867 where she suffered a bout of rheumatism and resulted in a permanent limp. Alexandra's limp was something that she

herself wanted to hide. She maneuvered slightly differently to try and hide her limp when walking and her dresses were actually altered in a really clever and really specific way to minimize the appearance of her limp as she walked. But despite her efforts to hide her limp, it actually became a fashionable phenomenon during 19th century society, which is incredibly shocking I think, especially if we do look at the existing research done on disabilities in the 19th century and how people with disabilities were ostracized from society, ostracized from their families, were unable to work, were unsupported. So it's really interesting to think that during this time when people with disabilities were treated so poorly Alexandra actually made a disability fashionable, which is so strange. And there's evidence of this in the newspapers, some articles write about what was formerly known as the Alexandra limp. This was the title given to Alexandra's disability. Some articles write about how women imitating the limp is disgusting and abhorrent, whereas other articles counter this and say that actually this is a way to support the Princess of Wales through her disability and there's also evidence of a shoemaker in Edinburgh who made shoes of different heel heights to imitate the Alexandra limp. And there's adverts of this in newspapers that we can see now and to me this is just absolutely ridiculous for people to be imitating a disability. And Alexandra didn't want this. She tried to hide it as best as she could but it was the people who wanted to be seen as fashionable because Alexandra was a fashionable woman but it's really interesting to see that her limp also played a part in this and her fashionability made people want to imitate her disability which is insane if we think about it.

AT: It raises that question of when imitation is not the sincerest form of flattery is when the person in question does not want this. If she's actively trying to hide it, if she feels very self-conscious about it, then I could see how even if the people who are doing it don't mean it maliciously, to me I feel like that would feel like mockery.

LH: 100 percent. That's how, when I was first researching this and you look at these artifacts like her garments and the fact that she tried to walk differently to hide her limp and people were still able to pick up on it. I think it is a form of mockery. There's no two ways about it even though these people wanted to be seen as fashionable there's something not quite right and maybe a little bit sinister about imitating someone's disability because they're fashionable and they're cool and that yeah it's not correct.

AT; I think it comes down to are you emphasizing a trait about her that is explicitly associated with her, but is that a trait that she *wants* to emphasize or is it a trait that she wants to de-emphasize? And that's really what it comes down to for me. If it was something that she wasn't self-conscious about, she wasn't actively trying to hide, if she was comfortable in it then that would be a different vibe, I think.

LH: Absolutely and I would love to know what Alexandra thought of this. At the start of the episode I mentioned that so much of Alexandra's correspondence was destroyed upon her death and part of me wonders if she ever wrote or said something at the time about her limp becoming a fashionable trend. I would really like to have known what she thought of that. I can infer from the fact that she tried to hide it that this would not have pleased her. This was not something that she was looking to achieve. But if she ever did write anything about it. I would really love to have read that.

AT: Just to go back to the hearing loss, I wonder how much of that reputation that she had for not being involved in politics, very much being involved in the social, head of state, leaning into that social icon of the people side of things rather than the international politics, not just because she was actually connected to all of these other countries at very intimate and high levels of government and wanting to avoid any drama around that. But I do wonder how much of that was also because of her hearing loss and knowing that in conversations it would be difficult for her to process what was going on, particularly if there's multiple people and knowing that accommodations would not be made for her in important discussions. And it just became a matter of, she's not even going to try to get involved because of that disability.

LH: I think that's a really interesting way to look at it. And there's definitely evidence and stories of Alexandra being in social situations, so if you think of stately dinners or balls, events like that, where she as well as lip reading, which helped her to a certain extent, she took social cues from everyone around her such as laughing when everyone else would be laughing or looking inquisitive when everyone else was looking inquisitive, imitating the body language of that around her. But like you said, in matters of politics and government, how can you use that? How far can that get you in conversations surrounding serious matters of state? It's not going to be something that you can rely on because you need to clearly hear what other people are saying and then clearly respond to it. So I think that that in her private life would have been a reason not to become engaged with politics because I think to a certain degree she would have been at least interested in politics. We've already spoken about her father and then her brother being the king of Denmark and then her sister Empress of Russia her other brother king of the Hellenes. So I think she was definitely interested in international affairs and international politics but again, like you said, the degree of which she could have been involved in that because of her deafness is something that that we can kind of contest as well.

AT: I think it also speaks to the fact that people do not consider accommodations for disability to be reasonable or certainly not the default, obviously definitely not at this time, and I would say too many people also just don't consider accessibility today. But I'm thinking in the sense of if this was a language barrier in terms of, she needed a translator, I can't imagine that they would not have provided her with a translator if it was just she doesn't speak English. And so the fact that, I don't know when British Sign Language came about, I don't know exactly what all the options would have been at this time but that idea that she is, at least on paper, one of the most powerful women in the country and it doesn't occur to anyone to facilitate her communication.

LH: No that's a really good point to mention and it's certainly true that if she had spoken a different language and didn't understand English, then she would have had a translator with her at the time as would any diplomat or any other head of state that was in a meeting and the meeting was taking place in a language that they didn't know, then of course they would have had provisions in place for them to participate in these meetings. But again I think it speaks volumes about how people with disabilities were treated at the time. And the history of British Sign Language is really interesting. There is some evidence that Alexandra actually taught Queen Victoria how to fingerspell. I need to look into that more closely and really critique these sources. But you mentioned of course British Sign Language and this is actually something that one of my fellow PhD students is researching at the moment and I know from her that at the time there were multiple different alphabets in Britain at the time, which is really interesting. So it wasn't until later on that it became kind of standardized but it definitely would have caused I think many struggles in Alexandra's life not only in terms of her involvement in politics but maybe communicating with her husband or her children, trying to hear what they're saying as well.

AT: Now in terms of the impact that she did have, one of the things that you've looked at is how she contributed toward a cosmopolitan identity for the British royal family. What does that mean?

LH: That means that although the British royal family was meant to be British, they were kind of European. And we've got Victoria, who of course was of German descent, as well as her husband and therefore their children were of German descent. And then we've got Alexandra the Princess of Wales who was Danish. So in the mid to late 19th century, this was something that people found exciting. This is something that people enjoyed. And when Alexandra came over to England in 1863 to marry Edward, this was a celebrated fact about her that she was Danish. The Danish although not seen as an extensive or a very fabulous royal family, the newspapers celebrated that she came from a line of Vikings and they celebrated that she came from a country with the strongest sailors in the world. So this was a really celebrated fact about Alexandra. And then a couple years later her sister becomes the Empress of Russia - again, brilliant. People loved this, it showed how cosmopolitan and connected the British royal family was, which was hugely celebrated. So in 1908 whilst

Alexandra was queen consort, she actually came out with a book titled *Photographs From My Camera*. And this was a photo book that was being sold for charity and Alexandra was an amateur photographer, so this made sense for her. But in this book we really see this cosmopolitan identity of the British royal family because we've got photographs of her and her relatives and the titles describe the pictures and they're like "my sister the Empress" or "my brother the King of Greece" or "my father the King of Denmark." So she really plays on this a lot throughout her life. And this photo book, it was a hit with the people. It sold out very quickly after being released. So this was something that not only was Alexandra proud of but that was celebrated with the people as well. Cut to the First World War and we see a shift in the British monarchy. We see a move away from this cosmopolitan identity more towards a British national identity because these international relationships with other heads of state created the tensions for the First World War to take place. So during and after the First World War we definitely see a shift away from this, even before the First World War when we've got the introduction of who would later become Queen Mary into the royal family. She was a member of the British aristocracy and that signified a turn in who the British monarchy were looking at for future brides and grooms in their family. They were turning inwards-looking rather than outwards-looking and the First World War just emphasized that point even further.

AT: My understanding is that the immense societal change, not just in Britain but internationally around this time, is part of why you wanted to focus your research on Alexandra specifically. So we've got Industrial Revolution. We've got colonialism starting to collapse. You've mentioned the First World War. But even though Alexandra wasn't involved in the politics, she was very much witnessing all of this and reflecting it in different ways.

LH: Absolutely. So it was one of the reasons why I wanted to look at Alexandra, because I wanted to capture a moment of great change and look at that through an individual, which is one of the reasons why I chose Alexandra. She married Edward in 1863 and then she died in 1925. So she saw so much change in Britain and internationally. In Britain, like you mentioned there was the Industrial Revolution and then in the 1870s with the formation of the Third French Republic, we've got the republican ideas settling over in Britain a little bit, which were prevalent in the 1870s. And then moving into the First World War, her relatives start to get assassinated. Her brother the King of Hellenes, the King of Greece, he gets assassinated in 1913. And then of course the Russian Revolution takes place and Tsar Nicholas was her nephew by blood and Tsarina was her niece by marriage. Her sister the Dowager Empress of Russia, she was still alive during this time and she was still in Russia but she actually managed to escape and she lived in exile in Britain for a short time. And when she landed in England and when she met Alexandra, it was quite an emotional moment between these two incredibly close sisters that one was able to save the other by housing her in Britain for a short time. And I think after then they bought a house in Denmark, so they went back to Denmark for a short while as well, which is quite sentimental when we think about it. But there was definitely a sense of or more of a state of fear I think at this time for Alexandra and her family as well.

So this was a very tumultuous time for Alexandra personally and this is another moment where I wish we had some of her diaries so we could see what she was thinking and what she was feeling during this time, especially because we've got the name change of the British royal family from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha which is German into the British Windsor during the First World War. So she visually saw the change of the British monarchy's identity during her lifetime. She started off as a Danish princess, which everyone loved, but by the end of her life, this was completely different. And then throughout her reign as Princess of Wales we see the expansion of the British Empire, mainly in India and Africa. Queen Victoria becomes the Empress of India and when Alexandra becomes Queen, she becomes the Empress of India as well. So there was so much happening in Britain and internationally during this time that I think looking at these changes through the lens of Alexandra is incredibly interesting because of her relationships and connections. Alexandra had a really close affinity to India even before becoming Queen Consort and Empress of India. She was really fond of the

country, although she was quite upset at Edward for going on a trip to India without her which she was very upset about because she really wanted to go but was not allowed. She had to stay in England, unfortunately. But this affinity for India and for the Empire is represented in Alexandra's coronation dress. There's a portrait of this, it was a beautiful golden dress that she wore and it was made in India with Indian materials and Indian inspired motifs. Some people think that it was made in India so that no one in Britain could copy her design and be influenced by what she was going to wear to the coronation and that it would be a surprise. But I think it definitely reflects how fond she was of the Empire. If we think back to her very humble beginnings and her upbringing and how relatively quiet that was. Now she was the Empress of an Empire and this was something that I don't think she could have foreseen for herself before marrying Edward. So she was really fond of this idea and Indian artisans, the fashions and the materials that came from India. So we really see this in her coronation dress and the portraits painted of it are stunning.

AT: Now your thesis is titled *The Princess and the New Woman: Portrayals of the New Woman in Comparison with Alexandra, the Princess of Wales in the British Press, 1863 to 1925*. And regular listeners may recall the phrase New Woman, which I previously discussed with Josephine Browne in addition to an episode about Queenly Image with Ellie Woodacre. If you're wondering what to listen to next after the Rise of the Hanoverian episode, there's a lot of royal women on this podcast. But just in case folks haven't listened to those episodes, can you explain to us more about your research?

LH: It seems quite contradictory at first because Alexandra is definitely not a New Woman. The New Woman is not Alexandra. And what I'm looking at is the intersection and the interaction between the ideal feminine woman as demonstrated by Alexandra and portrayals of her in the press, compared to images of the New Woman. So these were two very different strands of femininity that existed at the same time and it's really interesting to see not only the differences but some of the similarities between them, which I will go on to explain because I realise that sounds contradictory. So we've already mentioned how Alexandra was incredibly fashionable during her time and she influenced fashion-conscious women.

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Other trends that she introduced apart from the limp were high collars and high necklines, which she did to hide a scar. If we look at photographs or portraits of upper-class women in late Victorian England, we see that they layer pearl necklaces with a high neckline on their neck and this was influenced by Alexandra. She also influenced the incredibly tight-laced corsets that we see especially in photographs where we see an extremely tiny and detailed silhouette of women's bodies which seems completely unachievable. But this was also inspired by Alexandra.

So we see this kind of ultra-feminine woman in Alexandra in contrast to the New Woman, who rebels against all of this. The New Woman wants to dress in a more androgynous and masculine way and sometimes she is caricatured to be wearing trousers. So it's interesting to draw comparisons between these two and how they kind of emphasize the other to define each other in a way. As I said, Alexandra is not a New Woman and the New Woman is not Alexandra. So it's interesting to see the differences between them. But I also mentioned that it's interesting to see how they are similar. And again this might seem contradictory, but one of the main characteristics of the New Woman is that she is educated or is striving to become educated and she's typically referred to as "the Girton girl" in newspapers and articles, Girton being the first college in England where women could receive a degree-level education and that opened in 1869. So we've already touched on the fact that Alexandra was not seen as a well-educated princess of Wales and queen consort. And she wasn't politically active, mainly because of her upbringing in Denmark. However on a visit to Ireland in 1885, she was given an honorary doctorate in music from Trinity College Dublin. And there are photographs of her in a doctoral graduation gown that was circulated in the newspapers, that were widely celebrated as well. They

were recirculated after the coronation in 1902 and into 1903. If we think of the New Woman, this is quite unusual because the New Woman was criticized for wanting to be educated and here we have images of the Princess of Wales in doctoral graduation gowns. Not graduation gowns for an undergraduate or masters, this was for a PhD. So am I suggesting that Alexandra was a New Woman because she was given a doctorate? No. Actually I think this says a lot more about class and the position that Alexandra was in with the royal family at the time, as well as politics with Ireland as well. And I think it says more about that than it does about gender. But if we are looking at images alone and side by side comparisons between Alexandra and the New Woman, it's very interesting to see caricatures of the educated New Woman who wore trousers, wore glasses, rode bicycles and then an image of the Princess of Wales in a doctoral graduation gown. So it's interesting to look at these two different ideas of femininity and how they intersect with one another throughout the period. And it's a very complex relationship.

AT: Join us next time on the Infinite Women podcast and remember well-behaved women rarely make history.