

✓ AL/d
20-10-72
ms

AL/1375

3 Elm Tree Court,
N.W.8.

14th October, 1972

Dear Librarian,

Thank you very much indeed for so promptly sending me a collection of reviews of Christopher Sykes' book about Lady Astor. They really are very poor as Mary Stocks is pointing out, omitting in almost every case all the work she did and the interest she took in women's organisations and the demand for the vote. I must say I liked what Harold Nicholson wrote, quoted by Haley - "Tiresome as she is there is something in her, a flame somewhere". There was indeed a flame and it lighted a good deal.

I ^{am} ~~will~~ send these reviews back to you in a few days.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Courtney

Plus funds asked a parson

- 1) letter to Secretary
- 2) Cheque to Hon. Treas

Lady Astor 18-10-72

From Lady Stocks and others

Sir, Christopher Sykes's biography of Lady Astor has been written and reviewed by a generation which cannot remember the spectacular impact she made during her first years in Parliament on the women's organizations that were still fighting for feminist reforms, including an equal franchise. The result is that the few survivors who do remember those early years feel that the story of them should be told before we are all dead.

After our initial disappointment that our first woman MP should be there by virtue of her husband's position, we lived and learned. We did not have to wait long. Within weeks the feminist organizations were at her feet. She was as fierce a feminist as any of them. She cared for the things they cared for and cared as much. She had a reckless moral courage. And she was so different from anything they had known: so refreshing; so gay; and so beautiful. Among the events of the feminist year were her great receptions at 4 St James's Square, where delegates from feminist organizations all over the country came up to London for their annual conference and were invited to meet leading politicians and politicians were invited to meet them.

Christopher Sykes's book is well documented, but it does not tell the whole story. I therefore hope that you will allow two nonagenarians and an octogenarian this opportunity to remind younger generations of women of what a few of us can still remember as Nancy Astor's finest hour.

Yours, etc,

MARY STOCKS,

KATHLEEN D. COURTNEY,

MARGERY CORBETT ASHBY,

House of Lords.

(with)
AL/1375