

I am sorry to have left so early. There was so much to do, and so many dear ones to do it with, and for.

Heaps of love to give to my family, who must now be left behind.

And to the thousands – who called me (so they say) ‘Our Enid’. Each one, they tell me, felt that when I spoke from the platform to the crowd in the hall, or the square, the church or the union headquarters, I was speaking just to them, personally, alone.

‘Justice!’ I said to them. ‘Equality! Suffrage! Fair pay!’

Weston-super-Mare ... Bristol ... Southampton ... Rochdale ... Calderbrook ... Philadelphia ... Wherever I spoke, they swayed and clapped and hurrah-ed.

They asked, ‘Nay? Is her the painter’s daughter, the one as dances so fair, and takes to the water if there’s any swimming to be had?’

‘Aye,’ came the answer. ‘That’s the one. Our Enid.’

Our father’s studio in Bristol became a Hall of Dreams. We danced, and sang, and dreamt of a Socialist heaven, where all were fed, and schooled, and grew up to work for the community around us. Before we closed these magic meetings, we’d sing the songs of William Morris – *The Message of the March Wind* and *All for the Cause*. It was the 1880s – the winters were hard – those without work suffered, and so did their families.

What could I become but a convinced Socialist? It was luminous common sense. And a Christian Socialist, of course. Without that, I would never have met and married my Percy.

First I was a teacher, then I was a campaigner, then I was a speaker.

Speaker? Strange, that, for a woman. How dare I? I never asked that question. My family were behind me, my church was around me. I believed in them and they believed in me.

The Fabians. George Bernard Shaw flirted with me! Tut-tut. Then the ILP - the Independent Labour Party – Keir Hardie’s party. In 1898, I challenged him for the chair of that august body. He won, of course, but no matter. I continued the work.

If I told you about a 'Clarion Van', would you picture it? 'Clarion Van Number One', filled with leaflets and pamphlets and blankets and bread and apples for us speakers and for the horse that drew us? We sounded the Clarion for Socialism, up and down the land. Then came Clarion Cycling Clubs, Clarion Drama Clubs, Clarion Music Clubs. Oh, we had fun amidst the working people's political education and suffragist campaigning.

When I met dear Percy – he a mere 21, I a mature 27 – we married as soon as we could. I had schedules to maintain – another American tour; he was a mere curate, an insecure one at that – my speeches drew the crowds, brought in the money.

Then, after little Gerard was born, I went back – was it too soon? Should I have delayed ...?

I am so sorry. I am only 35 ... There is still so much to do ...

Enid Stacy, socialist and activist, 1868-1903

Alison Leonard