

"A Possibility of a Lady Competitor": Helen Preece and the 1912 Olympic Modern Pentathlon

By Tom Lough, Kevin Witherspoon, and Kyser Lough



Framed photographs of Helen Preece, Queen Alexandra, and the five-pound note first prize. Engraved text clockwise from lower left: "Her Majesty Queen Alexandra commanded Helen Preece aged 14 to the Royal Box. Her Majesty said, "You have ridden very well and I have much pleasure in handing you your first prize. 1st Prize Polo Pony Show March 1910. The Royal Agricultural Hall. Her Majesty at the Hunters' Show, March 1910. Islington, 11 March 1910. This bank note is the one handed to Helen Preece by Her Majesty, the Queen."

Source: The family of Helen Preece Chipchase Lewis.

On 7 July 1912, the *Louisville Herald* published a story with the headline, "Girl to Enter Olympic Games", in which a teenaged English girl named Helen Preece detailed her modern pentathlon training and her intention to compete in the Olympic Games in Stockholm. She wanted to "be absolutely fit for the Pentathlon" but she admitted she was worried that "I shall be the only woman competitor in this particular contest; it may make me nervous."

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Paddington</u>										
Registrar's Sub-District <u>Saint John</u>										
1895. BIRTHS in the Sub-District of <u>Saint John</u> in the County of <u>London</u>										
No.	When and Where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth.
448	Eleventh November 1895 21 Craven Road	Dorothy Helen	girl	Ambrose Duncan Preece	Edith Preece formerly Clay	Jobmaster	A.D. Preece Father 21 Craven Road	Eleventh December 1895	M.P. Branstone Registrar	

The modern pentathlon competition in Stockholm started that same day; however, Preece was not there. In fact, Olympic organisers had refused her entry. The erroneous headline and story point to the uncertainties of publishing and the press in the early 20th century, and also to a national and international fascination with the prospect of a woman participating in an event rooted in male-dominated events such as riding, shooting, and fencing. Helen Preece did not compete in Stockholm and thus did *not* break both age and gender barriers that precluded her participation in the event. Yet, Preece did submit an entry form for the event, she did train for several months under the expectation that she would compete, and she did attract the attention of the international media for this Olympic foray. In the aftermath of her failed Olympic venture, Preece lived a long and prosperous life, where she continued to challenge gender norms in a variety of ways. Until now, historians have largely overlooked Preece and her life story. This article sheds new light on the life and legacy of this would-be Olympic pioneer through the benefits of previously undiscovered documents and articles, Preece's unpublished memoir, and interviews and material shared by members of her family.²

The early years

Dorothy Helen Preece was born on 11 November 1895, the first child of Ambrose Ernest Duncan Preece and Edith Clay Preece of 21 Craven Road (Fig. 2, site A), a two-storey row house in the Paddington district of London. Her parents owned and operated the "largest and best ventilated" riding school (Fig. 2, site B) in London and both were skilful riders.³ Part of her father's work was as a jobmaster, supplying horses, carriages, and drivers

for hire. He had taken over his father's livery business and managed a series of stables with horse taxis all over London.⁴

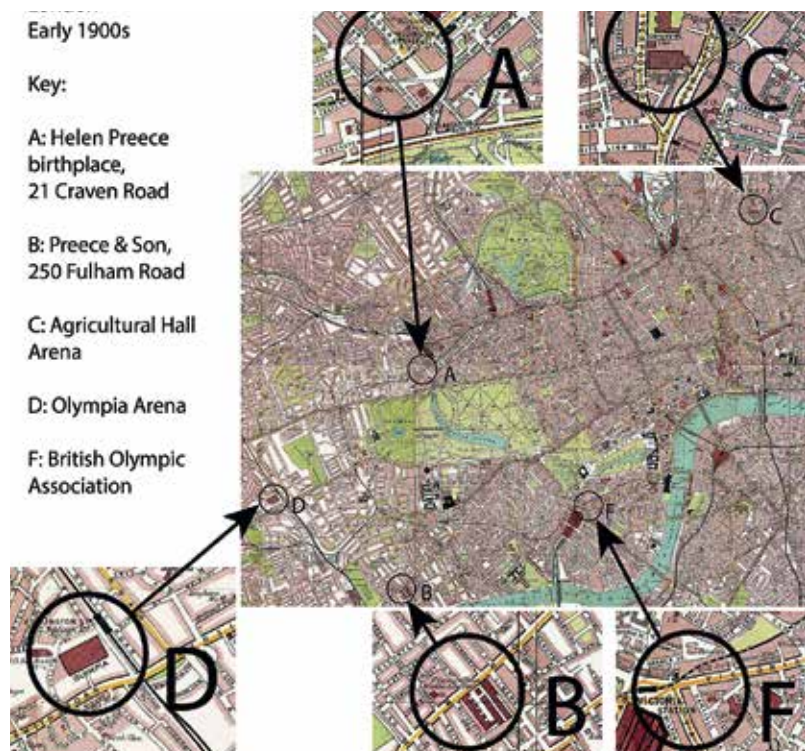
Sometime between 1898 and 1901, the family moved to a large country home in Kingsbury, a suburb about six miles northwest of London, with acreage, stables, and barns. Preece's father started her riding lessons when she was three and encouraged her in "one sport after another, anything [she] became old enough to try."⁵ She called herself her "Dad's Girl" in those days. By the time she was six, Preece could ride and jump sidesaddle. She began winning blue ribbons competing against other children in horse shows and cross-country rides with jumps. Later, her father taught her to ride astride (cross-saddle), as well.⁶ As a teenager, Helen was a student at the Corran Collegiate School in Watford, Hertfordshire, north of London, where she was active in gymnastics and lacrosse.⁷ Her father frequently took her out of school for horse show competitions.⁸

Birth registration of Dorothy Helen Preece in Volume 01. A Page 69 of the Paddington District Birth Register for December 1895.

Source: United Kingdom HM Passport Office General Register Office.

Annotated map of 1900s London.

Source: C.J. Prints, www.oldtowns.co.uk, used with permission.



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West London
Early 1900s
Key:
E: Richmond Horse
Show Arena



Annotated map of
1900s West London.

Source: C.J. Prints, www.
oldtowns.co.uk, used with
permission.

From 1909 through early 1912, Preece's equestrian life cycled annually through many horse shows, including three major seasonal shows in the London area. The Polo and Riding Pony Society Show was held each March at the Royal Agricultural Hall (Fig. 2, site C) in Islington. A few months later, the world-famous Olympia Horse Show took place in the Olympia Arena (Fig. 2, site D) in Kensington. A month or so later, the Royal Horse Show was held in an outdoor venue (Fig. 3, site E) at Old Deer Park on the west side of London.

Even though she did not win all her contests, Preece quickly became known for an exciting style of riding that brought the crowd to its feet. Typical newspaper articles included descriptions such as "She rode her horse with a soft, easy hand ... coupled with a perfect balance of body,"⁹ and "Dashing into the arena like a bullet [from a gun], the dashing Briton, with her hair tossing rebelliously ... made straight for the first hurdle with the speed of one racing before a prairie fire. The spectators were scarcely able to follow her with their eyes, so swift was her rise and fall over the fences. After she had

completed the circuit, she was given the most stirring ovation of any one thus far during the exhibition."¹⁰

At the 1909 Islington show, Preece, at 13 years old, won a jumping competition on a polo pony owned by Robert Sievier, producing the earliest newspaper report of her prowess and marking the beginning of her rise to the top rankings of female riders in England.¹¹

At the 1910 Islington show, she rode her own horse, Queenie, sidesaddle to such an exciting win in a jumping class that HRH Queen Alexandra asked her to come to the royal box so that she could award the prize of a five-pound note herself. Preece's family framed the note along with photographs of her, Queenie, and the queen. This framed piece became a treasured family heirloom that has been passed down through the generations to her grandchildren. This also became a notable and newsworthy moment to accompany articles about Preece in later years.¹²

At the Olympia show later that year, she took third place in a hunter class against both boys and girls up to 16 years old, all of whom rode astride. She was the only sidesaddle rider. Preece was described as "a tall girl without a hat, but with a wealth of ... hair which she wore down her back over a black habit", and who rode on horses owned by George Chipchase, among others.¹³ Chipchase was the horse business manager for Judge William Moore, a prominent Boston multimillionaire, and both were well-known internationally for their stables of world-class horses. Chipchase took an interest in Preece's talent and arranged for her to ride and jump his horses frequently.¹⁴

At the 1910 Royal Horse Show near Richmond Park, Preece was photographed in an iconic moment, clearing a stone wall five feet high while riding sidesaddle on Queenie, hair flying and reins loose. She won the championship, and the photograph "was in all the papers."¹⁵

Her riding carried her abroad to a November 1911 appearance at the National Horse Show in Madison Square Garden, New York City, where she won several classes, including those with both men and women competitors.¹⁶ In the wake of these victories, she was described in the press as the best female rider in the world. Her notoriety soared after an interesting encounter with the New York Mounted Police while exercising one of her horses in Central Park. Thinking she was in distress, the police rode to her rescue, but instead she mischievously led them on a merry chase. At the



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Helen Preece in New York, November 1911.

Source: George Grantham Bain Collection, US Library of Congress.

Far left: Helen Preece sidesaddle on Queenie clearing a stone wall five feet high.

Source: *The London Graphic*, 25 June 1910.

end, she pulled up and disclosed to the surprised officers who she really was.¹⁷ As she celebrated her sixteenth birthday, Helen Preece was a champion-calibre rider with a growing international reputation. The prospect of competing in the ultimate international sporting event, the Olympics, loomed.

The modern pentathlon

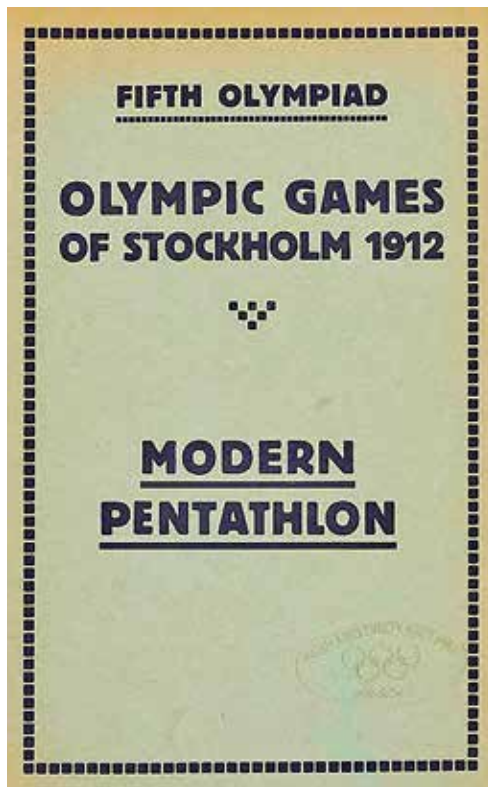
That Preece petitioned to compete in the modern pentathlon, rather than a pure riding event that might have been better suited to her expertise, can be attributed both to the rules and restrictions in the riding events, and to the fact that the modern pentathlon was making its debut in Stockholm. In fact, the novelty of the modern pentathlon contributed to uncertainty both as to the nature of the various events, and – more important for our discussion – to whether a woman might be allowed to compete.

Developed personally by Baron Pierre de Coubertin to challenge a versatile all-around athlete, the modern pentathlon included the sports of horseback riding over jumps, epee fencing, pistol shooting, swimming, and cross-country running.¹⁸ One of the earliest known public notices in England about modern pentathlon appeared in an article in the 17 February 1911 issue of *Sporting Life*. It clearly described fencing, swimming, riding, and shooting; however, it described running as “Steeplechase. Foot Race. 3000 metres.”¹⁹

Some of the subsequent articles abbreviated the descriptions. For example, an article in the 4 March 1911 edition of *The Field* announced the modern pentathlon as a new addition to the 1912 Olympic programme. Calling it the “genesis of [a] new and wonderful series of competitions ... [for] ‘the complete frontiersman’”, the article included swimming, steeplechasing, shooting, riding, and fencing as the five events. The steeplechasing was a bit ambiguous; without the “foot race” reference, it could be interpreted both as a running race and a horse race.²⁰

Other articles did little to clarify the specifics of the event.²¹ A September article in the *London Daily News* contained the description of shooting, swimming, fencing, riding, and “cross-country”, which left the event open to even more misunderstanding, as will be shown shortly.²² Adding to the confusion was a January 1912 article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* announcing that the pentathlon consisted of only “shooting, swimming, fencing, and riding”.²³

Based on these and other early articles describing the new event, it is difficult to discern when Preece might have heard about it, and what she and her family actually understood about the nature of the various disciplines. Articles in the papers repeated the errors, evidence of the absence of fact-checking and accuracy of some journalism in that era. With no clarity regarding age and gender restrictions, however, the door was open for Preece to feel qualified.



Cover of the Modern Pentathlon Rule Book, Olympic Games of Stockholm 1912.

Source: International Olympic Committee Archive.

Right: 1912 modern pentathlon shooting target, from the 1912 Modern Pentathlon Rule Book.

Source: Swedish Olympic Committee, Fifth Olympiad Olympic Games of Stockholm, Sweden, 1912 Modern Pentathlon Programme, Rules, and General Regulations, Page 11.



Olympic Hopes and Dreams

Little is known about Preece's knowledge of or experience with the Olympic Games prior to 1912; however, the fact that the 1908 Games were held in London suggests that she was aware of them. Based on her memoir and other sources, it appears that she did not attend those Olympics. As a 13-year-old consumed with her ascendant riding career, she would probably have had little interest in the equestrian offerings at the 1908 Olympics, which included only three polo matches.

And yet, in early 1912 Preece began training in the modern pentathlon. How and why this came about is uncertain. Her father could have seized upon the idea to prop up his declining horse business.²⁴

While an article in the 12 March 1912 *London Standard* announced riding as an event in the upcoming Olympic Games in Stockholm, it stated, "These competitions are strictly confined to gentlemen riders."²⁵ But the article continued: "The Olympic games also include a new competition named the modern pentathlon, composed of five events: – Pistol shooting at 25 mètres; swimming, 30 [sic] mètres; fencing, épée; riding over a course of about 5000 mètres, with obstacles; cross-country race, about 4000 mètres. Each competitor must take part in every event."²⁶

No gender limitation was mentioned, perhaps giving Preece the opening he was seeking, that his daughter could ride in the Olympics by competing in the modern pentathlon. To do so, of course, she would have to train in the other events, but with several months to go

before the Games she might be able to pull it off. Based on the published material available to that point, the ambiguity in the parameters of the new event and the qualifying process could have led Preece to think that his daughter might be allowed to compete.

The *London Standard* article concluded with a sentence that the full details of all competitions were available from the British Olympic Association (BOA). Perhaps Ambrose went to the BOA office for clarification. Someone did. On 21 March 1912 the BOA was motivated by someone (perhaps Mr. Preece?) to send a query to the Swedish Olympic Committee (SOC) asking about the civilian-eligible riding events: "Are ladies eligible to compete in prize riding and jumping[?]"²⁷

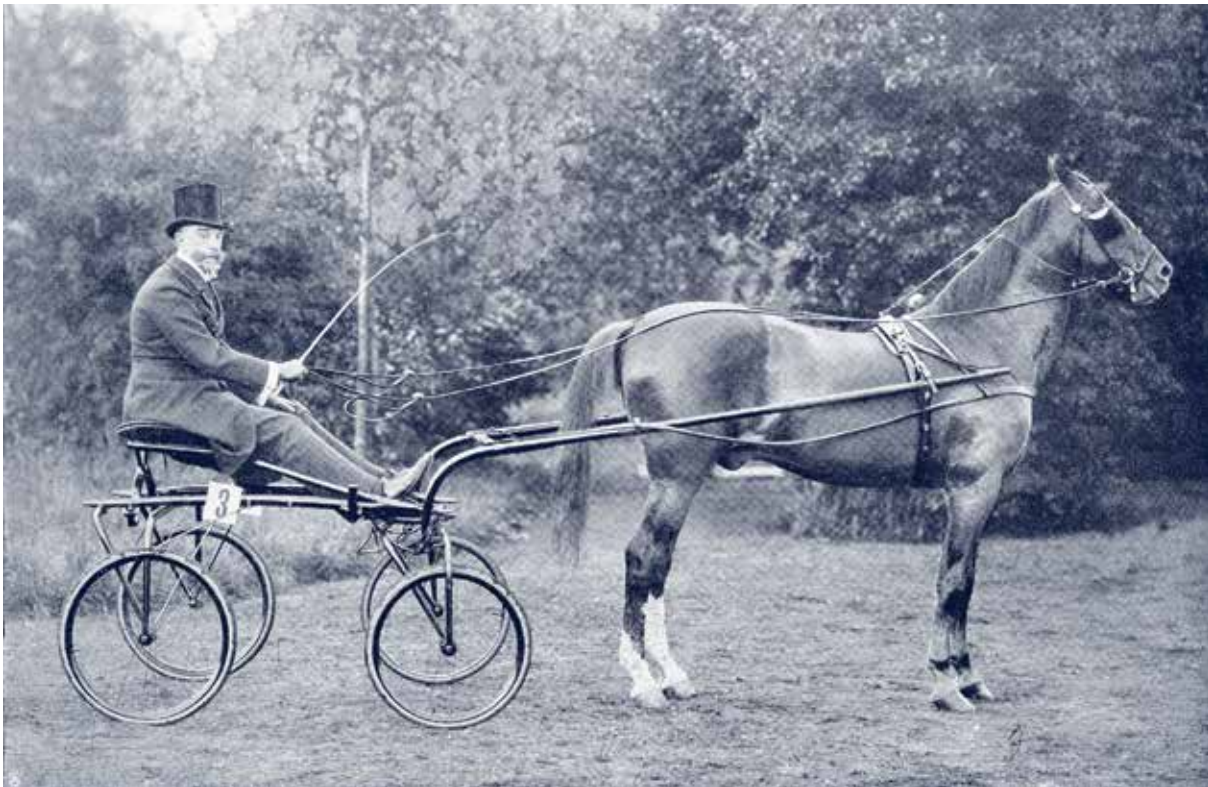
The 22 March SOC reply stated, "Horse Riding Competitions only open to gentlemen riders[.]"²⁸ While it is possible, even likely, that Preece's father had initiated this query to determine if she could compete in the civilian riding events in spite of the published regulation, that question was no longer in doubt. However, if he had obtained a copy of the Modern Pentathlon Rule Book from the BOA, he would have found that the "gentlemen only" rule does NOT appear.²⁹

In her memoir, Preece states, "Somehow through Dad's friends, they started to get me into a class for the Olympic Games."³⁰ This supports the likelihood that the initiative for the idea came from her father and his friends. Her use of the word, "class", suggests an initial horse show mindset, since horse shows are segmented into "classes" of competition.

Her memoir continues, "It was an event for women in four parts. You had to swim two miles, ride three miles over jumps, fence, and shoot a revolver at a black iron target stuck up in the ground shaped like a man wearing a top hat."³¹ While there were certainly some discrepancies in her event description (e.g., the event was not expressly for women, and it was certainly not in four parts), her descriptions of the individual athletic contests do resemble those of the modern pentathlon and may reflect her father's interpretation of the earlier newspaper article. Elements of her incomplete and inconsistent description can be found in the newspaper articles published about her in the next few months, suggesting that she or her father were the primary source of information for the reporters.

Making the commitment

Unlike the other Olympic sports, in 1912 the modern pentathlon had no national committee in Great Britain. This meant there was no organised method to select the British competitors.³² The BOA resorted to a series of newspaper invitations for applicants published in March and April, with a deadline of 1 May.³³



England-based American Walter Winans, who coached Helen Preece, is the only Olympian to win gold medals in sports and arts competitions. He won in 1908 in London in running deer and in 1912 in Stockholm in sculpture.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archive

This application deadline gave Preece only about 40 days to train, assuming she made her commitment immediately after the SOC confirmed to the BOA the "gentlemen only" rule in riding. If she wanted to ride in the 1912 Olympic Games, the modern pentathlon was her only hope.

Once Preece's commitment was obtained, her father began working with a press agent for a news campaign. This could have been motivated by a desire for publicising his horse and livery business to counter the increasing number of motorcars appearing on the London streets. In her memoir, Helen mentioned loaning her scrapbooks to a press agent "who wanted to write an article about me."³⁴

They must have worked quickly because on 27 March, an article appeared in the *London Standard* with the headline, "England's Girl Champion. Miss Preece's Olympic Task. A Marvellous [sic] Career".³⁵ Along with two paragraphs of background information, including the location of her father's business and a photograph of Preece on horseback, the article stated two Olympic intentions. The first was a curious reference to a 34-mile race on horseback with the last three miles being a steeplechase course. The second was to "win the Pentathlon", suggesting that she was training in five events.

Swimming, fencing, and shooting were described accurately in the article. However, riding was described as two events, a cross-country ride of 4,000 m and a ride over a course of 5,000 m. Running did not appear in the description.

Training regimen

With the Olympic deadline looming, Preece embarked on a vigorous training regimen. Her father rented a cottage for her near Richmond Park (in the vicinity of the annual Royal Horse Show) so that she could dedicate herself to training six days a week, with Sunday as a day of rest. After a walk and breakfast, she would ride each morning. The afternoons were focused on training in the other sports.

She took fencing lessons three times per week. At that time, the epee fencing style was for men only. Women were permitted to fence only with the foil, a lighter weapon. Most likely, she took foil lessons at a nearby fencing club.³⁶ For pistol shooting, the family called in Walter Winans, a friend from the horse world. As an Olympic gold medallist in shooting and the author of a book about revolver shooting, Winans was eminently qualified to train Preece. She travelled to Windsor by train twice each week for his lessons.³⁷ Her memoir also mentions training in swimming. It is unclear whether she trained in running; perhaps due to the uncertainty about the nature of the various events she neglected it. In any case, her days in the spring of 1912 were consumed with rigorous training in the various disciplines.³⁸

The petition

It is highly likely that on 1 May, Preece (or perhaps her father) submitted to the BOA a signed entry form for her to compete in the 1912 modern pentathlon,

newspapers were notably less sensational than other countries, mostly focusing (erroneously) on how she was the only woman competing in the Games.⁵⁴

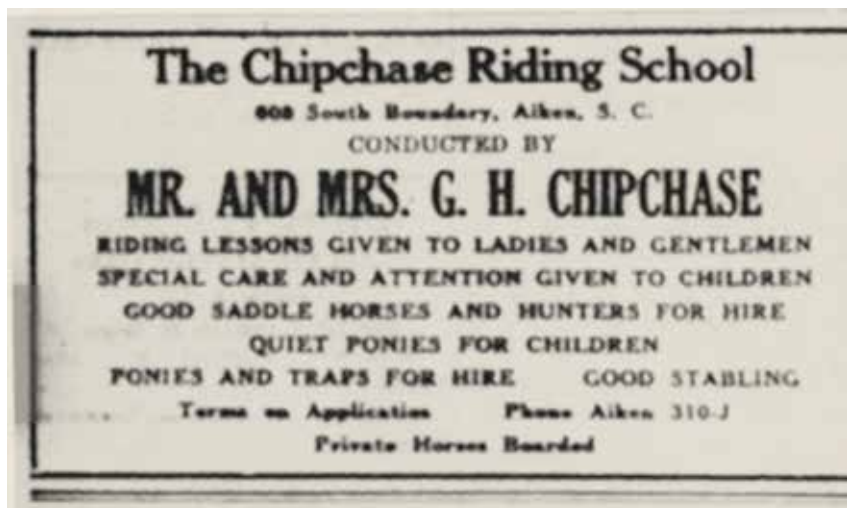
In total, Preece's Olympic story made it to at least 105 stories in 90 newspapers in Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Errors abounded, from getting the events wrong to even placing a Stockholm dateline on the story suggesting she was present and competing in the Olympic Games. Preece's pentathlon coverage in her home country expired with the denial of her entry. Elsewhere, the story seemed to catch the imagination of creative and competitive wire services that did not place a premium on accuracy.

After Stockholm 1912

Considering that Preece believed her age had been the disqualifying factor for her petition in 1912, did she plan to try again for the Berlin Olympics in 1916? Perhaps. The next year, in an article in the *London Evening News*, a correspondent reported on her "marvellous skill" at the Richmond Horse Show, continued that she was still active in swimming, fencing, pistol shooting, and running, and concluded, "Miss Preece is ambitious and hopes to enter for events at the Olympic Games in Berlin."⁵⁵ Although Preece did not mention this in her memoir, evidently she was motivated enough by her 1912 efforts to continue training and perhaps try again in 1916. In the same vein, historian Andy Archibald reported that sometime in 1914 Ambrose Preece approached the newly formed BOA Modern Pentathlon Council to ask if women might be allowed in future Olympic modern pentathlon competitions.⁵⁶ The council did not take any action, and everything remained the same for more than eight decades. Whatever hopes and dreams Preece and her father may have had about participation in the 1916 Olympics, the onset of war dashed them abruptly and permanently. The 1916 Olympics were never held, and in the passing years Preece's life moved away from competing at the highest levels.

By 1914, the horse taxi business had been eclipsed by motor taxis, and the British Army was preparing to confiscate show horses for the war effort against Germany. George Chipchase assisted Preece and her father in immigrating to the United States, bringing some horses with them. He helped set up her father in the Washington, DC horse business, where he became so well-known that he was selected to drive the four-horse carriage that took Woodrow Wilson to his second inauguration.⁵⁷

Preece competed in several US horse shows in the fall of 1914 and then married George Chipchase in March of the following year. With him, she had two children, made "a good life", and had "a happy family".⁵⁸ The Chipchases operated their own horse business out of



Beverly Farms in Massachusetts⁵⁹ and then eventually moved to Aiken, South Carolina, where they opened and operated the Chipchase Riding School.

Aiken was a hotbed of equestrian activity at that time, enjoying a "Gilded Age" of prosperity from the 1890s to the 1940s. The Aiken Horse Show – still an annual tradition today – drew top riders from all over the world each year, along with thousands of spectators, helping make Aiken a Southern hub of high-society culture.⁶⁰

Helen and George Chipchase, Yankees wintering in South Carolina, may not have risen to the most elite social circles in Aiken, but they were prominent enough that newspapers noted their comings and goings several times each year. From these references, we can trace the life of a vibrant, successful socialite.

While in Aiken, she adopted a busy lifestyle, including raising her two daughters as well as a boy and girl from her husband's previous marriage, growing prize-winning roses, buying and selling horses, teaching riding lessons, riding to hounds, organising moonlight horseback rides, taking tennis lessons, going on bird shoots, and singing in the church choir.⁶¹

In her memoir, she noted taking morning rides with a "Mrs. Hitchcock" in Aiken and helping her to organise fox hunts and rides. "Mrs. Hitchcock" was certainly Louise Hitchcock, the *grande dame* of Aiken equestrian society. She and her husband Thomas were inheritors of a vast 2,100 acre estate, known even today as Hitchcock Woods. The Hitchcocks organised rides and fox hunts for riders from home and abroad, among other community efforts. Preece-Chipchase, while perhaps not of the same social status as the Hitchcocks, was clearly involved in many of the same activities.⁶²

Occasionally, Preece-Chipchase was noted among "high society" references in the paper. In 1936, she was numbered among "90 Prominent People" participating in the staging of "The First Commandment," which the paper celebrated as "The Biggest Event Ever Staged in Aiken!"⁶³

One of a series of Aiken (SC) advertisements in 1924.

Source: Aiken (SC) Journal Review, 23 January 1924.

Photograph of Helen Preece Chipchase Lewis, circa 1966.

Source: Frances Schilson, great-niece.



All of these articles suggest that, after her flirtation with notoriety leading up to the 1912 Olympics, she remained a figure of note even in later years. She helped to run a business, contributed to philanthropic efforts, taught and coached many prize-winning riders (including her daughter), judged equestrian competitions, and hosted newsworthy social events.⁶⁴

On the personal front, those years may not have been as happy as they appeared to outsiders, as her time in Aiken witnessed the crumbling of two marriages. She and George Chipchase grew apart and eventually divorced. She remarried, to another horse trainer, John Leslie Smith, in December 1934, but that marriage failed a few years later.

World War II stopped the horse business. Preece disposed of her remaining livestock and moved to Virginia to take a government office job at Fort Lee. There she met Nelson Lewis, whom she married in 1942. They made a home in the Fox Hill area of Hampton, surrounded by family members. Nelson died in 1986 and Preece-Lewis followed on 2 July 1990, at the age of 94. She was buried in Hampton, Virginia.⁶⁵

Life in retrospect

The life and career of Helen Preece provide us with opportunities to reflect on the realities of gender norms and expectations in the early 20th century, and also to ponder the lost opportunities for change. Preece, raised in the comfort of a horse-centred English family, may not have fully realised the societal pressures against her at the time of her Olympic venture in 1912. In her own recounting, it was her age – not her gender – that kept her from participating in the Olympics. At times, her own naivete about the pentathlon suggests either she didn't take it as seriously as one trying to shatter a gender barrier might or that she was just going along with her father's plans.

However, from what we see in her early years of riding (especially her Central Park adventure), it's not hard to believe that Preece was on board with challenging the system and finding a way to ride in the Olympic Games.

And while media fascination with her story suggests that a woman playing at a man's game was worthy of tabloid speculation, "there is not the least likelihood of a lady being sent."⁶⁶ While a few members of the committee considering her candidacy took it seriously enough to vote in the affirmative, the prevailing view was that such an event was no place for a woman.

At the same time, her life after 1912 demonstrated that she remained a strong, independent woman, breaking barriers in other ways. Her series of divorces and remarriages suggests a woman not confined to the conventions of the day, and perhaps one whose independent streak pushed the limits of patience and understanding in her series of husbands.

Operating in a world where the men around her were wealthy and preoccupied with their own pursuits, she created her own businesses and followed her own interests. She was business owner, coach, philanthropist, judge, event coordinator, along with being a wife, mother, and mentor to her children. While the organising interests of high-level amateur sport prevented Preece from pursuing her Olympic dreams, elsewhere in life she pushed the boundaries of accepted gender norms, becoming a figure of note outside of the Olympics.

Epilogue

If Helen Preece had lived ten years and a few months more, she could have watched a landmark event on television that surely would have moved her. On 1 October 2000 in Sydney, Australia, the women's modern pentathlon at last had its Olympic debut. Preece would have been proud that women from Great Britain captured individual gold and bronze medals. It would not have been selfish for her to claim just a bit of the credit as one of the trailblazers toward gender equality in the games.

After all, she had been the first woman down that road a long time ago. Indeed, as part of the official programme for modern pentathlon at the 2000 Olympic Games, historians Stephanie Daniels and Anita Tedder contributed a one-page article that was dedicated to the memory of Helen Preece. They described her struggle and eventual denial but used the story to give a sense of closure and a salute to the history, legacy, and courage of the women who came to compete.⁶⁷

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express appreciation to members of the Helen Preece family for their cooperation in developing this article, as well as to several colleagues, including Stephanie Daniels, Ceil Humphreys, Bill Mallon, Cindy Slater, Anita Tedder, and Steve Tipps, for their assistance. ■

- 1 *Louisville (KY) Herald*, 7 July 1912, 1.
- 2 Preece was essentially unknown to modern scholars until the late 1990s, when sport historians Stephanie Daniels, Anita Tedder, Wolf Lyberg, and Bill Mallon unearthed the aforementioned newspaper article in the IOC Archives in Lausanne. Other scholars such as Ture Widlund, Ana Maria Miragaya, Ansgar Molzberger, and Sandra Heck in particular have contributed additional details to her story. This more complete assessment of Preece's life and career builds on their work, incorporating newly discovered information, artefacts, and sources.
- 3 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 May 1900, 39; *Washington (DC) Post*, 16 November 1911, 7.
- 4 Helen Preece Chipchase Lewis, "A Biography of My Earlier Life," unpublished undated signed memoir, 1. One of Helen Preece's grandchildren provided a copy to assist with this research. In her opening paragraph, Preece acknowledged that she had difficulty remembering things "in their correct order, but at least I have them down." The authors are grateful to have this record from her perspective.
- 5 Lewis, "Biography," 3.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 1–3.
- 7 <http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/places-w/watford/watford-corran-school.htm>, Accessed 23 July 2020.
- 8 Lewis, "Biography," 5.
- 9 *Washington (DC) Post*, 19 November 1911, 3.
- 10 *Brooklyn (NY) Times Union*, 22 November 1911, 4.
- 11 *London Evening Star*, 13 March 1909, 2; Lewis, "Biography," 6.
- 12 Lewis, "Biography," 5–8; *London Standard*, 12 March 1910, 7; *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 27 March 1910, 13.
- 13 *London Standard*, 10 June 1910, 9.
- 14 *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 4 December 1909, 12; *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 5 December 1909, 8; Lewis, "Biography," 8.
- 15 Lewis, "Biography," 5, 6; *Washington (DC) Post*, 17 November 1911, 5.
- 16 *New York Times*, 23 November 1911, 4; Lewis, "Biography," 8.
- 17 *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 18 November 1911, 4; *London Standard*, 16 November 1911, 10.
- 18 Frigyes Hegedüs, *Modern Pentathlon* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1968) 1, 4.
- 19 *Sporting Life*, 17 February 1911, 2.
- 20 *The Field*, 4 March 1911, 57.
- 21 *London Sportsman*, 3 July 1911, 3.
- 22 *London Daily News*, 26 September 1911, 8.
- 23 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 January 1912, 10.
- 24 Simon Nowell-Smith, *Edwardian England 1901–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 122.
- 25 *London Standard*, 15 March 1912, 10.
- 26 The swimming distance was a typographical error and should have been 300 metres. The running was ambiguously listed as a cross-country race.
- 27 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060645_00227, retrieved 14 June 2020.
- 28 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060645_00226, retrieved 14 June 2020.
- 29 Swedish Olympic Committee, *Fifth Olympiad Olympic Games of Stockholm, Sweden, 1912 Modern Pentathlon Programme, Rules, and General Regulations*, 3–8. Although the "gentlemen only" rule is missing, there are three pronominal references to Modern Pentathlon competitors as men: "... in his own country," and "... to his fitness," both on page 4 and "... leaves his horse," on page 13. These are likely indications of the "gentlemen only" mindset of those who wrote the rule book. The omission of the "gentlemen only" rule was probably a careless oversight.
- 30 Lewis, "Biography," 7.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 32 *London Observer*, 31 December 1911, 14.
- 33 *London Standard*, 15 March 1912, 10 and 29 April 1912, 16; *Army and Navy Gazette*, 13 April 1912, 15; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 April 1912, 13; *Sportsman*, 29 April 1912, 7; *London Daily News*, 30 April 1912, 8; *London Daily Herald*, 1 May 1912, 8.
- 34 Lewis, "Biography," 7.
- 35 *London Standard*, 27 March 1912, 9.
- 36 Nick Evangelista & Anita Evangelista, *The Woman Fencer* (Terre Haute, IN: Wish Publishing, 2001), 35.
- 37 Olympedia, Walter Winans, <https://www.olympedia.org/athletes/44792> accessed 14 June 2020; Walter Winans, *The Art of Revolver Shooting* (London: Putnam/Knickerbocker, 1901).
- 38 *Pearson's Weekly*, 23 May 1912, 12; Lewis, "Biography," 7.
- 39 The three entries sent forward from the BOA were Hugh Durant, Douglas Godfree, and Ralph Lililverd.
- 40 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060798_00101, retrieved 14 June 2020.
- 41 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060645_00139, retrieved 14 June 2020.
- 42 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060798_00100, retrieved 14 June 2020.
- 43 Sandra Heck, 2013, "Modern Pentathlon at the London 2012 Olympics: Between Traditional Heritage and Modern Changes for Survival," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30:7,725.
- 44 Swedish Olympic Committee archive, sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/A0060798_00096, retrieved 14 June 2020. The MPC decision was based on gender; Preece was told (or came to believe) that she was excluded due to her age. While it is outside the bounds of this study, there was one other potential snag in her Olympic candidacy. Even if organisers had been willing to overlook her gender and age, Helen's earlier equestrian activity and acceptance of monetary prizes could have prevented her from being classified as an amateur, another qualification hurdle at the time.
- 45 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 May 1912, 2.
- 46 *The Sporting Life*, 31 May 1912, 1.
- 47 Lewis, "Biography," 7.
- 48 *The Tatler*, 5 June 1912, 7; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 June 1912, 13; *London Evening News*, 27 June 1912, 3.
- 49 *Pearson's Weekly*, 23 May 1912, 12.
- 50 *Western Daily Mercury*, 6 April 1912, 10.
- 51 *London Standard*, 27 March 1912, 9.
- 52 E.g., *Victoria (BC, Canada) Province*, 17 April 1912, 11; *Sydney Globe*, 15 May 1912, 4.
- 53 E.g., *Madisonville Daily Hustler*, 26 January 1912, 5; *Pensacola News Journal*, 6 November 1912, 2.
- 54 E.g., *Buffalo Enquirer*, 21 June 1912, 5; *Cincinnati Inquirer*, 29 June 1912, 4; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 30 June 1912, 18; *Louisville (KY) Herald*, 7 July 1912, 1; *San Antonio Light*, 7 July 1912, 22; *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, 9 July 1912, 1; *Mexico (MO) Weekly Ledger*, 11 July 1912, 3.
- 55 *London Evening News*, 14 June 1913, 7.
- 56 Andy Archibald, *Modern Pentathlon, A Centenary History: 1912–2012* (London: Grosvenor House, 2012), 29–30.
- 57 Donald Read, *England, 1868–1914, The Age of Urban Democracy* (London: Longman, 1979), 418; *Syracuse (NY) Herald*, 9 August 1914, 14; *Washington (DC) Post*, 6 March 1917, 2.
- 58 Lewis, "Biography," 9, 10.
- 59 *Boston Globe*, 3 October 1914, 6; *Brooklyn (NY) Standard Union*, 9 December 1914, 12.
- 60 Jane Page Thompson, *Images of America: Aiken's Sporting Life* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016), 7.
- 61 Lewis, "Biography," 9–13.
- 62 *Ibid.*; Thompson, *Images of America*.
- 63 *Aiken Standard*, 1 May 1936, 4.
- 64 *Ibid.*; 3 November 1936, 5.
- 65 Lewis, "Biography," 15.
- 66 *The Sporting Life*, 31 May 1912, 1.
- 67 Stephanie Daniels & Anita Tedder, "Seeking General Admission," *Official Olympic Games Sport Program: Modern Pentathlon* (Sydney 2000), 40.



Headstone of Helen Preece Chipchase Lewis (1895–1990).

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