

This book presents a revisionist prison history which brings to the forefront the relationship between gender and policy. It examines women's prisons in England from the late 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, drawing attention to the detrimental effect the orthodox closed prison has on penal reform. The text investigates the clash between what was conceptualised as desirable prison policy and the actual implementation and implications of such a penalty on the prisoner. It challenges previous claims made about the invisibility of women prisoners in historical penal policy, and provides an original analysis of the open prison, taking HMP Askham Grange as a case study, where the history of such an initiative is explored and debated.

Susanna Menis is a Lecturer in Law at Birkbeck London University, School of Law, and an Associated Lecturer at the Open University, UK. She has worked with several organisations and charities, including the Prison Advice and Care Trust, Women in Prison and Prisoners' Families and Friends' Services. Her most recent engagement was with the Independent Monitoring Board of Prisons.