

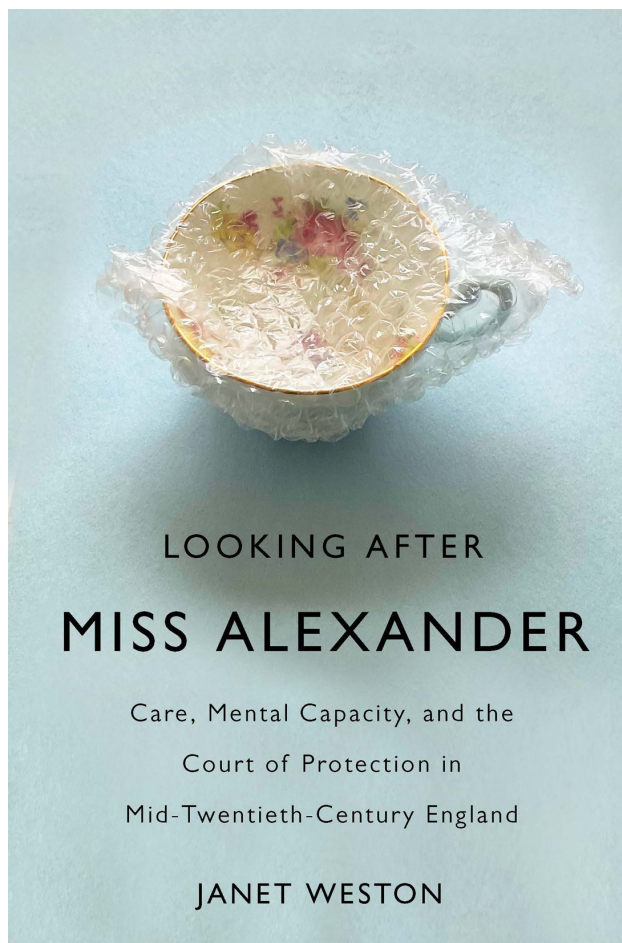
# Looking After Miss Alexander

Care, Mental Capacity, and the Court of Protection in Mid-Twentieth-Century England

Janet Weston

*One woman's encounter with the mental capacity law of England and Wales.*

*"This book is intellectually rigorous but also vivid and compelling, offering a fresh and original approach to the histories of the law, welfare, and mental health." Kate Bradley, University of Kent and author of **Lawyers for the Poor: Legal Advice, Voluntary Action and Citizenship in England, 1890-1990.***



In July 1939, at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, fifty-nine-year-old Beatrice Alexander was found incapable of managing her own property and affairs. Although Alexander and those living with her insisted that she was perfectly well, the official solicitor took control of her home and money, evicted her "friends," and hired a live-in companion to watch over her. Alexander remained legally incapable for the next thirty years.

In the mid-twentieth century, Alexander was one of about thirty thousand people in England and Wales who were, at any time, legally "incapable" and under the auspices of what is now the Court of Protection. Focusing on the period between the 1920s and the 1960s, *Looking After Miss Alexander* explains the workings of the court, using Alexander's unusual case to consider the complexities of this aspect of mental health law. Drawing on Court of Protection archives – some of which were made publicly available for the first time in 2019 – and micro-historical methods, Janet Weston also highlights the role of chance, subjectivity, and uncertainty in shaping how events unfolded then, and the stories we tell about those events today.

An engaging and accessible history of mental capacity law, *Looking After Miss Alexander* examines ideas of citizenship and welfare, gender and vulnerability, care and control, and the role of the state. It also offers reflections on historical research and writing itself.

**Janet Weston** is assistant professor at the Centre for History in Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

To receive a 30% discount on this book, please order from Marston as below, quoting promotional code: MQF2

**6x9 • 192pp • 5 photos • January 2023**  
**ISBN 9780228014683 • Paper • £26.99 £18.89**  
**ISBN 9780228014676 • Cloth • £99.00 £69.30**

## ORDER INFORMATION

- Marston Book Services, [direct.orders@marston.co.uk](mailto:direct.orders@marston.co.uk), +44 (0) 1235 465577
- Course Adoption: request an examination copy online at [mqup.ca](http://mqup.ca) or email [marketinguk.mqup@mcgill.ca](mailto:marketinguk.mqup@mcgill.ca)

**History of Medicine • British History**