

DEEDS NOT WORDS

STUDENT PACK

Votes For Women



Image: Anthony Robling



York Civic Trust

explore

Libraries and Archives

A York Civic
Trust/Explore
York Libraries
and Archives
education
pack

A tragic accident?



Copyright: Mirrorpix

Look very closely at the photograph above

What sporting event do you think is taking place?

What do you think has happened?

Who do you think is lying on the ground?

How would you feel if you were in the crowd watching?

Can you guess in which year this photo was taken?

Emily's story

The photo was taken in 1913 at a big race meeting called The Derby. A well dressed, well educated woman called Emily Wilding Davison ran in front of King George V's horse. She did this because she was part of a group of mostly women called Suffragettes and her aim was to draw attention to what they were fighting for: Votes For Women. Some people say she deliberately meant to kill herself so she would become a martyr,. Others say that she only wanted to attach a scarf emblazoned with the words "Votes For Women" on to the horse. The fact that she had a return rail ticket in her pocket and arrangements for later that day may support this

*Emily Wilding
Davison
Image:
Wikipedia*



A martyr is someone who feels so strongly about an important issue that they are prepared to die for their beliefs.

Look carefully at the photograph of Emily Davison.

How would you describe the clothes she is wearing?

What sort of woman do you think she was?

Why do you think she would want to attach a scarf to the King's horse?

Whatever the truth, Emily was trampled by the horse and died of a fractured skull and internal injuries four days later. With this act, she ensured neither her name, nor the cause she believed in, (that all women should have the right to vote), would ever be forgotten.

Name this building

Here is a building that Emily Davison knew very well. She knew it so well, she once locked herself in a broom cupboard inside it! (You will find out why later!)

BUT what has this building got to do with Emily throwing herself at the King's horse?



Do you know the name of this building?

What makes this building look important?

Has anyone in your class been there?

What are the men and women who work there called?

Who decides which men and women work there?

What is their job?

Name that face!



Do you
know who
these people
are?

What
are their
jobs?

How did
they get
them?

What
influence do
they have in
the governing
of our
country?

When can I vote?



How old
do I have
to be to
vote?

Can
I vote
if I am
male?

Can
I vote
if I am
female?

Whether you are a girl or a boy, when you reach the age of eighteen, you will all be able to have a say in how the country is run by voting in a General Election for which political party you would like to be in power. This is considered to be a basic human right in most countries. But if you had lived over one hundred years ago and you were female, this would not have been the case. Women were not considered equal to men, did not have the same opportunities and often had to let their husbands make decisions on their behalf. Women have not always been allowed to vote and this is the reason Emily Davidson threw herself in the path of the King's racehorse.

What do women think about?

Look at the image below, published in 1906.

What do you think it is suggesting about women?

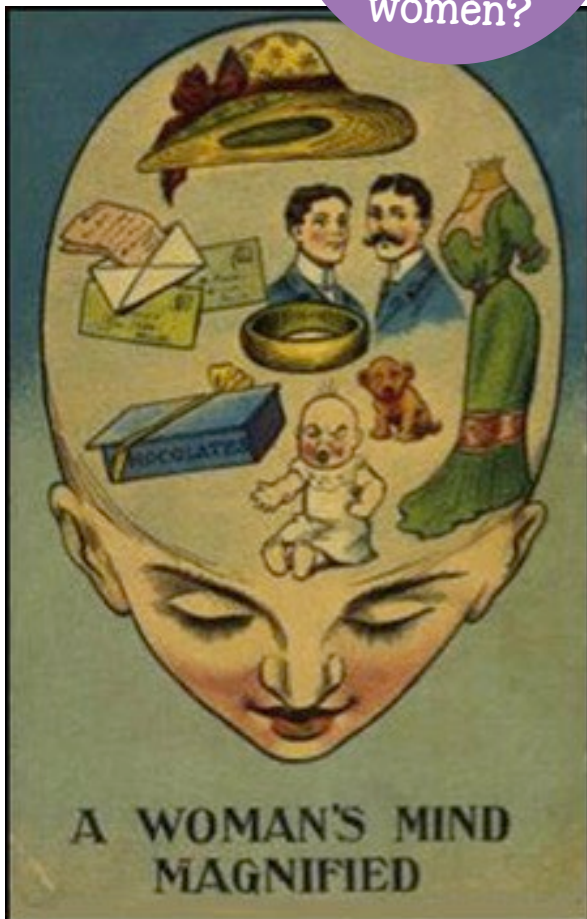


Image: Spartacus educational

Read through the following statements. Tick those you agree with. Put a cross next to the ones you disagree with.

I'm a woman. I don't need to vote because:

- ☐ My husband will make the important decisions for me.
- ☐ I'm too emotional to understand anything about politics.
- ☐ My place in the world is to look after my husband and my children and keep the home tidy.
- ☐ I am inferior to men.
- ☐ I am not capable of understanding politics.
- ☐ My brain isn't clever enough to make important decisions.
- ☐ Women are the weaker sex
- ☐ If I don't get married. I won't be important enough to have a voice in society

Emily Wilding Davison and many, many women did not agree with any of these statements!

Women were not equal to men

Why were women not allowed to vote?

In the nineteenth century, women took no part in politics. They could not become an MP and they were not allowed to vote. It was assumed that women did not need to vote because their husbands would look after anything to do with politics. It was assumed that a woman's place was to look after children and take care of the home. Most men had been given the vote by 1884, but women were thought to be inferior to men and not capable of understanding politics or making important decisions. Even some women agreed that this was the case and that if you were female, you were "the weaker sex"

When did things begin to change?

Campaigns for women's SUFFRAGE began in 1866 and a politician called John Stuart Mill organized a vote in the Houses of Parliament for the MPs (all men!) to decide whether or not to give women the vote. The vote was defeated by 194 to 73.

Suffrage: a short way of describing the right of an adult to vote



Mrs Fawcett thinks only some women should vote

The next important step happened in 1897 when a woman called Millicent Fawcett started the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Can you remember what "suffrage" means? The women who joined this group were known as "suffragists" and they wanted the vote not for all women, but only for those who were educated and owned a property



Copyright: Topical Press Agency

They believed that if they were polite and law abiding men would see that they were responsible enough to take part in politics and they would be given what they wanted – the right to vote for who governed them.

Find ten words to describe how Mrs Fawcett looks.

What can you see in the picture?

Look carefully at what is written on the poster. What do you notice about the words used?

Give Women Votes!

Not all suffragists thought that just talking and signing petitions was enough. Some thought they needed to take more action. One particular woman called Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst believed that the vote should be for everyone, not just rich, educated ladies and she believed the only way to get it was to be more active.



Copyright: Mrs Pankhurst Museum of London

She started her own organization called the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU for short) who became known as suffragettes. Their motto was "Deeds not Words". She believed the campaign was about more than just getting the vote. It was about making society realize that women were equal to men and should be treated in the same way. Suffragettes wore green, white and violet, to represent what they wanted: **Give Women Votes.**

Most of the interest in women's SUFFRAGE had been in the big cities, but this changed when Mrs Pankhurst spoke at public meetings in York in April 1911 and October 1912. Afterwards, there was a big rise in membership.

Of course there was no social media or local radio to advertise important speakers and so suffragettes spread the word about public meetings by chalking on pavements. One local resident wrote to The Press to complain.

This is what he said:

“On Saturday morning about eight o’clock, I saw two women chalking something on the pavement. My curiosity led me to look and to my surprise, I found it was an advertisement that Mrs Pankhurst was to speak in York. Now, Mr Editor, why should the women be allowed to advertise in this way and deface the pavement? If a poor tradesman or a theatrical company or a small newsboy, or, in fact, anyone else did this, the police would very soon be on their track but these suffragettes seem allowed any liberty they like to take with public property. It is a very great eyesore and I find the city is covered with these chalkings.”

Activities:

Imagine you are a member of the crowd and you have just heard Mrs Pankhurst speak.

Go home and write your diary about your experiences of the day. You may agree with what she is saying, or you may disagree. Perhaps she has changed your mind about Votes for Women!

In your entry, think about what you have seen, what you have heard, how you felt. What did your parents say about you going to the meeting?

Write the speech that Mrs Pankhurst gave about why women should be given the vote.

Remember to include all the persuasive techniques you know.

What's the difference?

Fill in the bubbles to show the similarities and differences between **SUFFRAGETTES** and **SUFFRAGISTS**



Fill in the missing words below.

W

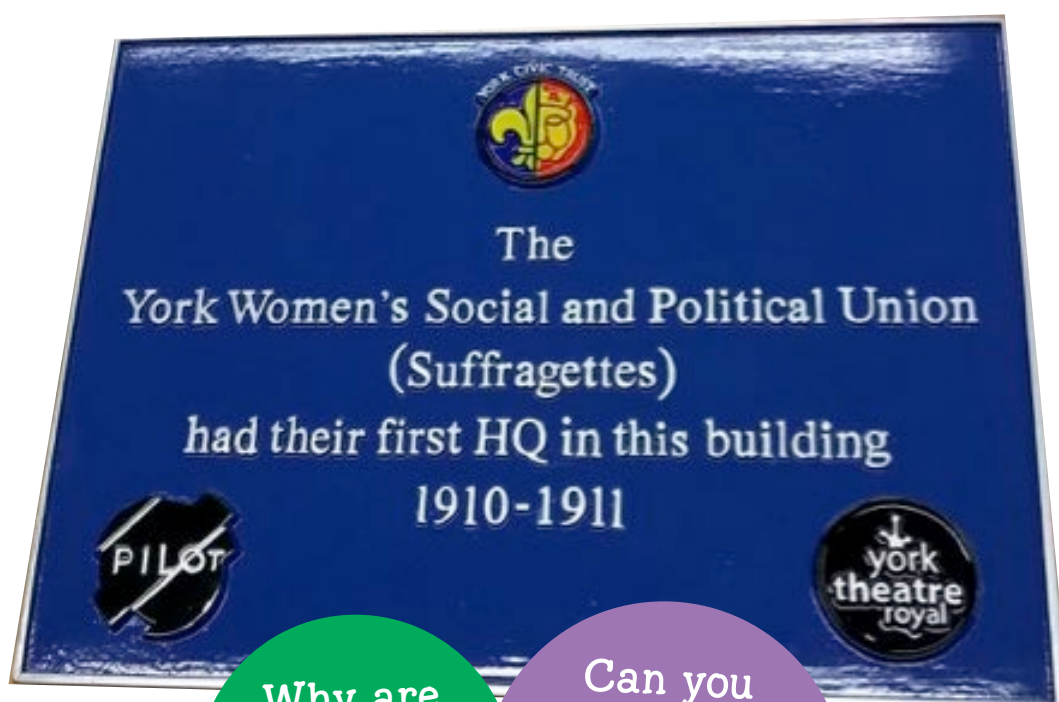
S

P

U

York's WSPU office

Most towns had a WSPU office to organize rallies. In York, it was located firstly in Coney Street at number 35, the building that used to be Curry's and P.C. World and later in Coppergate. Here is the Blue Plaque which will be attached to the outside of the building. Look out for it next time you are in Coney Street.



Why are
blue plaques
used in
York?

Can you
think of any
others you
may have
seen?

The organizer for York and Doncaster was a woman called Violet Key Jones who lived in Fulford. She took up office in 1910 and it was her job to organize volunteers to run the office, to hold jumble sales and tea parties to raise funds and to sell copies of their newspaper. Today, you might see a man or a woman selling "The Big Issue" in Coney Street or near the market to raise public awareness of homelessness. If you had walked through York over a hundred years ago, you may have seen a volunteer selling copies of "The Suffragette" to raise awareness of the unequal way women were treated.



The Word spreads



Image: Anthony Robling

This is what a suffragette meeting in York may have looked like.

Perhaps they are plotting what they can do to draw public attention to their cause. Here is a list of some of the illegal actions suffragettes took:

- They set post boxes on fire, or poured acid into them. (In York suffragettes set mail boxes on fire at Castle Mills Bridge, in Wigginton Road , in Parliament Street and in Balmoral Terrace
- They disrupted public political meetings by shouting and waving banners
- They broke shop windows
- They smashed works of art in galleries

Annie is arrested!

A very well known Suffragette in York was Annie Seymour Pearson, known to her friends as Nance. She lived in Heworth in York at number 14 Heworth Green in a large terraced house. She was forty years old, married with four children and she had a very comfortable, quiet, respectable life with a cook and a maid.

Both she and her husband believed in the suffragette cause and in 1913, she joined a protest at the House of Commons in London where women went to talk to the Chancellor about their wages and conditions.

A reporter on York Station heard the women say they weren't coming back until they got the vote and he said: "You're going to be away a long time then".

Along with 30 others, she was arrested for obstructing the police, went to court and was fined 40 shillings (about £3.50) or three weeks in prison. She chose prison.



Annie is summoned to appear in Court

Here is the Police Summons that Annie received when she was arrested. She kept it in her scrapbook.

New No. 607.
Old No. 114.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Division. *A*
Station. *Cannon Row* (Mrs. A. Seymour Pearson)

Take Notice, that you *Mrs. A. Seymour Pearson*
are bound in the sum of *Two* Pounds to
appear at the *Bow Street* Police Court, situated at
Bow Street at *ten*
o'clock *a* M., on the *29th* day of *January*
191*3*, to answer the charge of *Obstructing police*
"What a fib". neither Mrs. Huntington
or I obstructed the Police A. Seymour Pearson

and unless you then appear there, further proceedings will be taken.

Dated this *28th* day of *January*
One Thousand Nine Hundred and *Thirteen*
J. Sneyd
Officer on Duty.

* Being found drunk in a public street, or being guilty, while drunk, of disorderly behaviour in a street or whatever the charge may be.

50000-9-10. 60000 16 11. M.P. 81b.

How many people have written on this form?

Who do you think they are?

Annie sends a postcard to her husband to let him know where she is

This is the front of the post card she sent:

Why do you think she let her husband know what had happened to her by sending a postcard?

Where do you think she got the card from?

Who do you think the woman in the picture might be?

Does it seem a strange choice of picture to send?

There are some letters in the bottom right hand corner. What are they and what do they stand for?



Image: Annie Pearson's scrapbook, courtesy of Camellia PLC

This is what Annie wrote to her husband.

The message says:

I shall be in Holloway till a week Tuesday . It is now 5p.m. and we are going to our lockups! by motor car soon.



Image: Annie Pearson's scrapbook, courtesy of Camellia PLC

Where do you think she was when she wrote this?

She says she is going to her "lockup" – what do you think this is?

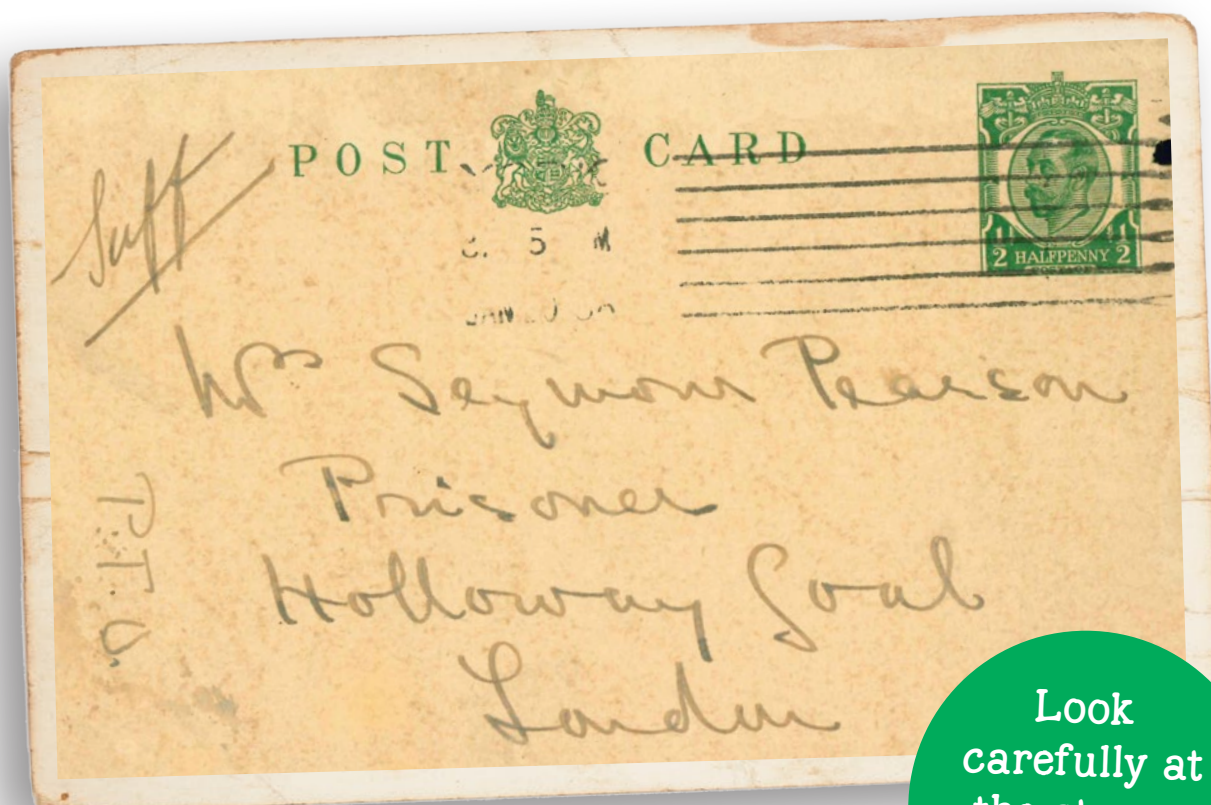
She puts an exclamation mark after the word "lock-up". What does this suggest to you about how she may have been feeling?

She addresses her husband as Seymour Pearson Esq. Find out what "Esq" stands for.

Can you find the date on the postcard?

Annie's friend, Violet, (also a suffragette) wrote to her in prison

Whilst Annie was in prison, her friend Violet Key Jones, another suffragette who lived in Doncaster, writes to her with news of Annie's children.



Look carefully at the stamp. Whose face is this?

What do you think "suff" may be short for?

What do you notice about the address? (Can you spot a spelling mistake?)

Violet writes...

The message says:

Thursday

Good luck to you – I have just been to your house – Francis was at the Jackmans. Elsa and Roland playing with the governess – they looked very happy and well, Roland's cold much better.

V Key Jones

Why do you think Violet sent news of Annie's children to her?

Imagine you are one of the children named in the postcard, Francis, Roland or Elsa. How do you think they would feel about what has happened to their mother?

What is a governess?

What does that tell you about the Seymour Pearson family?

In the end, Annie was only kept in jail for two days, because her husband, Arthur, got on the train to London and paid her fine to get her released.

Activity:

Write the conversation that took place on the train ride back to York between Annie and Arthur.

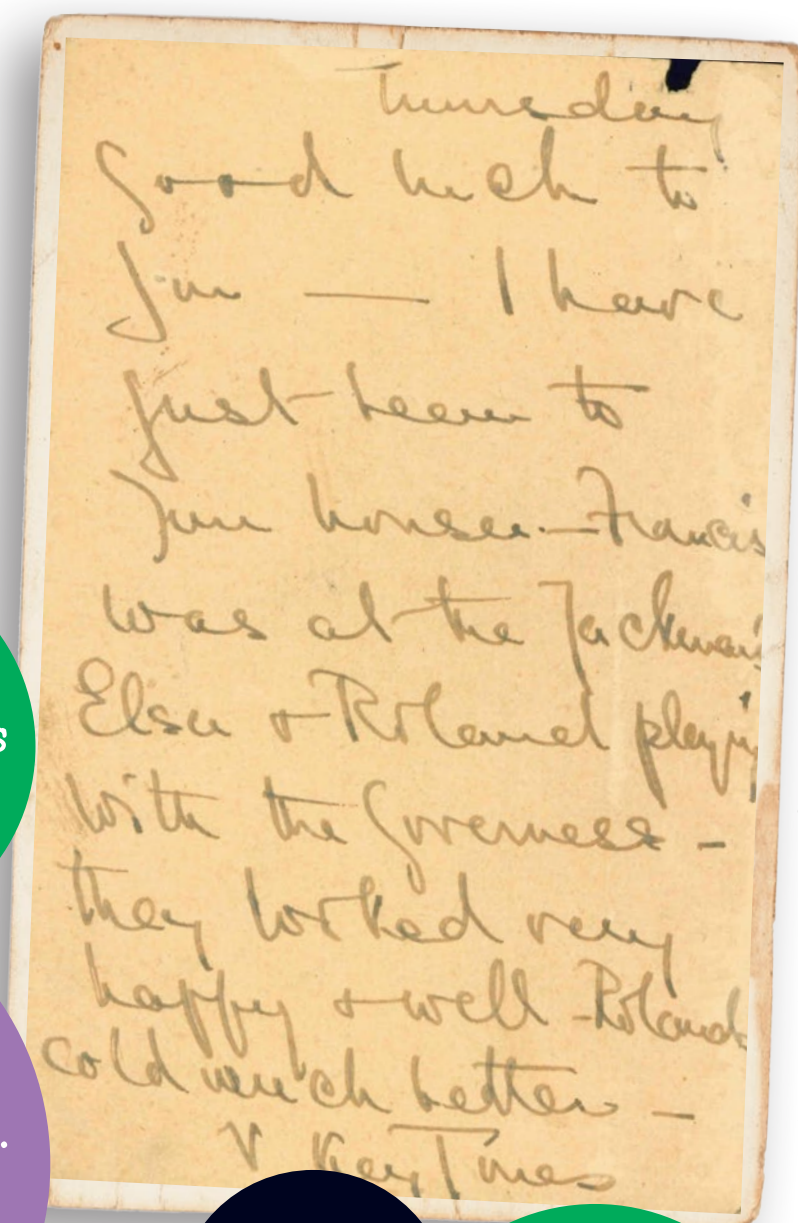


Image: Annie Pearson's scrapbook, courtesy of Camilla PLC

Annie gets a prison brooch

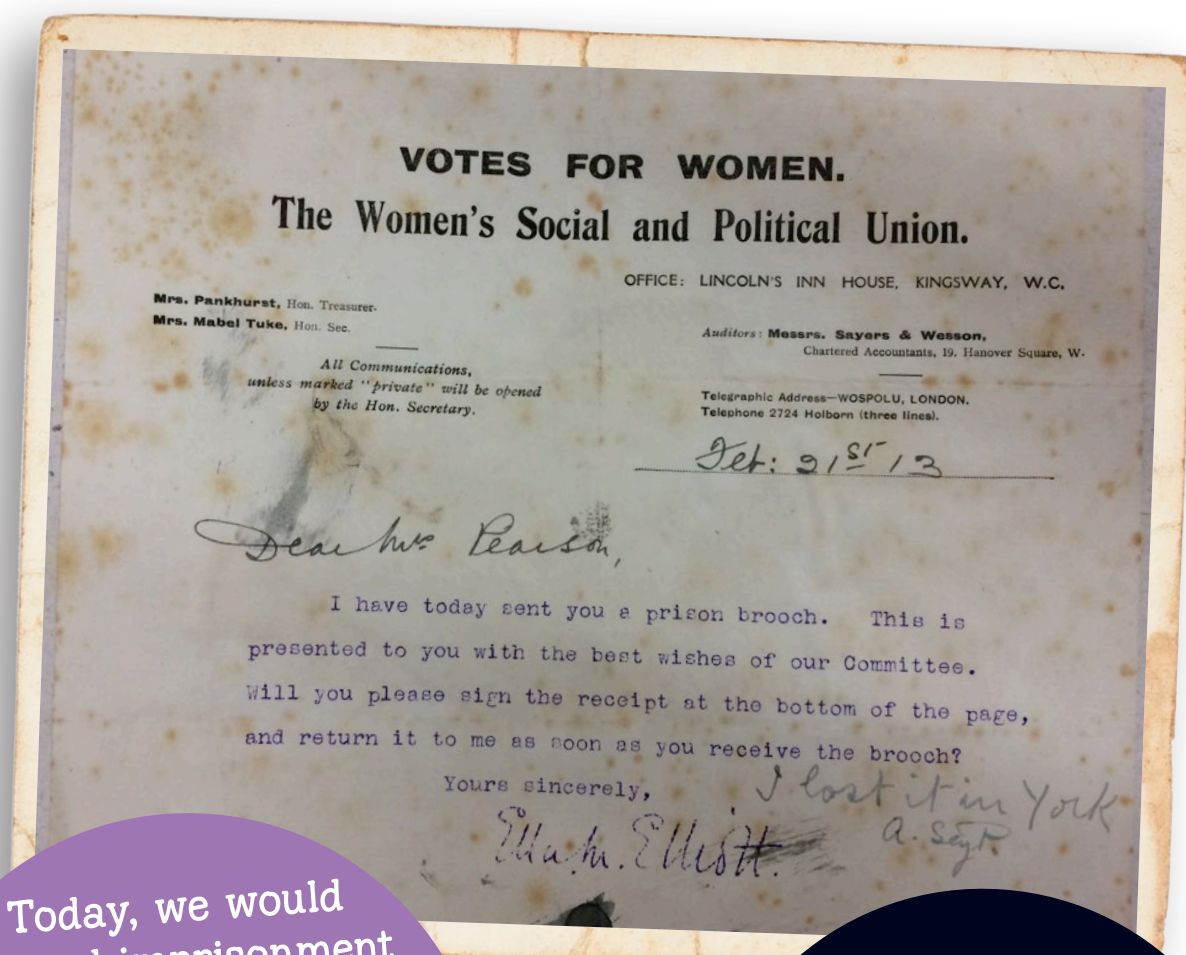


Image: Annie Pearson's scrapbook, courtesy of Camellia PLC

Today, we would regard imprisonment as something to be ashamed of. Why would suffragettes wear a brooch so that everyone could see they had served a prison sentence?

Why do you think suffragettes who had served prison sentences were sent a brooch?

Annie has written on the letter at a later date "I lost it in York". How do you think she would feel when she lost her brooch? Give your reasons.

The prison brooch was designed by Sylvia Pankhurst, daughter of Emmeline, the lady who spoke in York and first inspired Annie to join the suffragette movement.

The brooch featured the portcullis symbol of The House of Commons, hanging chains and a broad arrow, symbol of a convict. (Look at the picture on Annie's postcard and you can see the broad arrow).



Copyright: The Museum of London

A journalist from the local paper, The Yorkshire Herald, interviewed Annie and an account of her time in Holloway Prison was printed in the paper on February 7th, 1913.

Here is the headline and a couple of paragraphs from that report, which is in the Archives in York Explore

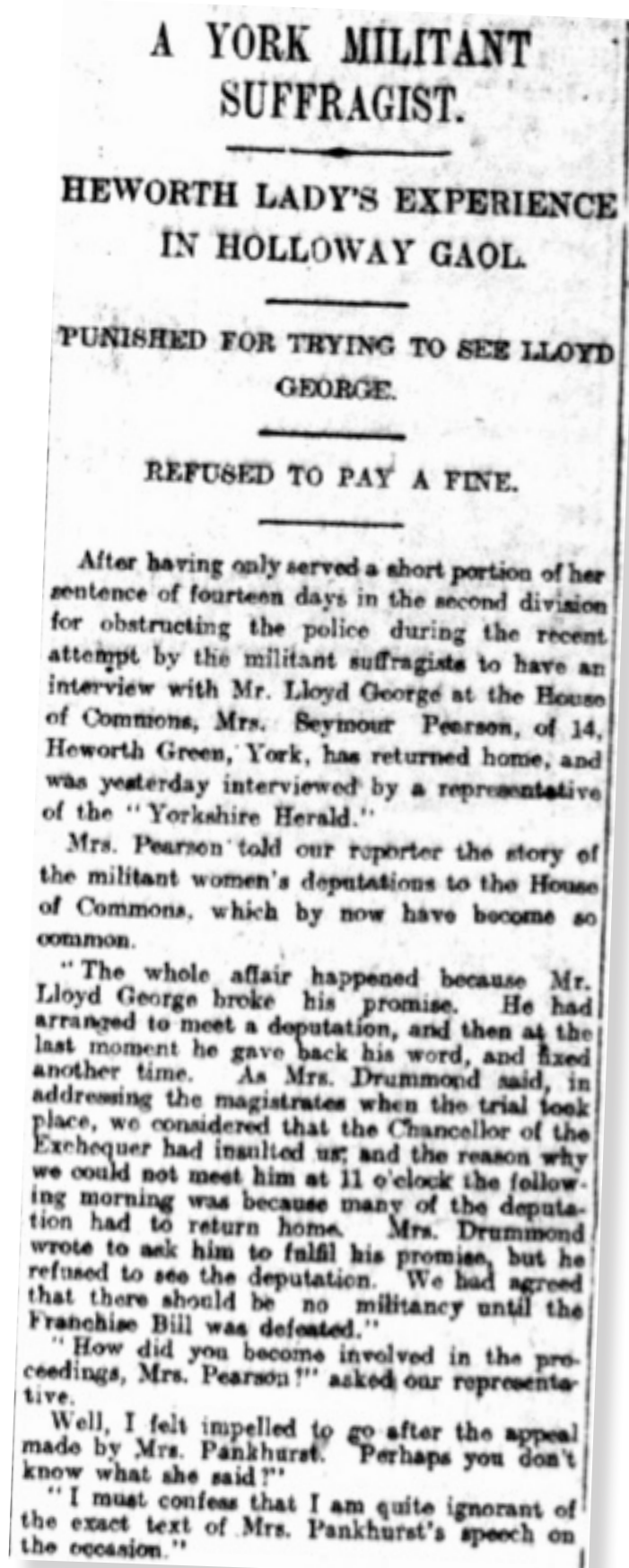


Image: York Explore

This is what the extract says:

The Yorkshire Herald February 7, 1913.

**A YORK MILITANT SUFFRAGIST
HEWORTH LADY'S EXPERIENCE IN HOLLOWAY GAOL
PUNISHED FOR TRYING TO SEE LLOYD GEORGE
REFUSED TO PAY A FINE.**

After having served only a short portion of her sentence of fourteen days in the second division for obstructing the police during the recent attempt by the militant suffragists to have an interview with Mr Lloyd George at the House of Commons, Mrs Seymour Pearson, of 14, Heworth Green, York, has returned home and was yesterday interviewed by a representative of the "Yorkshire Herald".

Mrs Pearson told our reporter the story of the militant women's deputations to the House of Commons, which by now has become so common.

"The whole affair happened because Mr. Lloyd George broke his promise. He had arranged to meet a deputation, and then at the last moment he gave back his word, and fixed another time. As Mrs Drummond said, in addressing the magistrates when the trial took place, we considered that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had insulted us, and the reason why we could not meet him at 11 o'clock the following morning was because many of the deputation had to return home. Mrs Drummond wrote to ask him to fulfill his promise, but he refused to see the deputation. We had agreed that there should be no militancy until the Franchise Bill was defeated."

"How did you become involved in the proceedings, Mrs Pearson?" asked our representative.

"Well I felt impelled to go after the appeal made by Mrs Pankhurst. Perhaps you don't know what she said?"

"I must confess that I am quite ignorant of the exact text of Mrs Pankhurst's speech on the occasion."

See if you can find at least five ways in which the report looks and sounds different from newspaper articles of today.

Here is an edited version of the complete article:

After having served only a short portion of her sentence of fourteen days in the second division for obstructing the police during a recent attempt by the militant suffragists to have an interview with Mr Lloyd George at the House of Commons, Mrs Seymour Pearson of 14, Heworth Green, York has returned home, and was yesterday interviewed by a representative of the "Yorkshire Herald".

Mrs Pearson told our reporter the story of the militant women's deputation to the House of Commons, which by now have become so common.

"How did you become involved in the proceedings Mrs Pearson" asked our representative

"Well I felt compelled to go after the speech by Mrs Pankhurst...this is what she said...

'I say to you women, who are the mothers of girls, if there is nothing else in the world that you may want the vote for you want it so that you may have legislation to protect your daughters, to force men who can only be made to respect women by force, to respect them, to value them, to recognize their importance, just as they recognize their own'."

Annie goes on to describe the conditions in Holloway prison...

"They (the prison guards) will come to you and say "Would you like a novel to read?" You see they are allowed two books – one a novel and one an educational book.....I was lucky as I laid claim to a second novel that had been left by another prisoner, and I did that without the matron knowing."

"What about the food Mrs Pearson?"

"Oh the bread was horrid and the butter was like turnips. The pieces of meat were like leather. I didn't touch it. We had a pint of milk which was very good and two oranges."

"How came it that you were released so soon?" asked our representative

"Because my husband came and paid my fine.....he could not get to know whether I had been injured or anything...I did not want to come out and I told the Governor I would not pay my fine."

"Will you go (to prison) again?"

"I am a firm believer in militancy, but you see I am the one who has the responsibility of bringing my family up and I must consider them."

"I was in DX ward...We have electric light on, which is switched on at six o'clock in the morning.... At 6.45 they come along the corridors rattling the pots."

"It was bitterly cold in the cells and the pipes were not heated. I complained and succeeded in my demands for more heat. ...I said "I want a hot water bottle" and the doctor gave instructions for one to be brought. It served another purpose also, for I was enabled to use the warm water for washing myself with the following morning."

Activity:

- Write your own newspaper account of Annie's time in prison using the facts from the edited version above.
- You will need a headline and some quotations
- Or, you could tell the story as if you were a television newsreader.
- Imagine local radio had been invented in Annie's time. Role play Annie being interviewed for Radio York or Minster FM.

Annie runs a safe house

Being in jail was a horrible experience for her and after that instead of joining protests, she helped to organize the escape of wanted suffragettes and their supporters. Her house in Heworth Green became a “safe house” for wanted men and women where they could hide and be looked after while police were looking for them.

A safe house: This is a building or a house whose everyday appearance makes it look completely without suspicion. It is a secret place to hide people who are on the run, usually from the law.



Write a story which ends with the picture above of Annie looking after a suffragette

Harry's story

What do you think of when you see the words: "cat and mouse"?

What could these words have to do with suffragettes?

Look carefully at the cartoon. Describe what is happening in the picture.

Here is the story of what actually happened:

One male suffragette supporter who hid at Annie's house was Harry Johnson. He had been sentenced to one year's hard labour after he had tried to blow up a house near Doncaster. In prison, he went on hunger strike. Because the government didn't want prisoners to die of hunger (this might make them martyrs), those who refused to eat were let out of jail until they grew strong and then they were re-arrested to finish serving their turn. This was called the Cat and Mouse Act. So, when Harry was released, because he was on hunger strike and his health was in danger. He went back to live at his parents' house in Doncaster to get his strength back. Detectives were on duty outside his parents' house 24 hours a day to make sure he didn't escape so that as soon as he was well enough, they could re-arrest him.

Harry told the detectives he wanted to visit some friends in York, and as he had been well behaved, they agreed to let him. In fact, they all shared a taxi to York!

He was visiting Annie Seymour Pearson's house in Heworth. The policemen did not know that she was a suffragette sympathizer and they had to wait outside the house until he had finished his visit.

Perhaps they were a little intimidated at waiting outside such a grand house.

They waited and waited until eventually, they heard noise outside the back of the house and they went to investigate. They discovered the back door to the house was open and that Harry had given them the slip.

He had been taken out via the landing window and over the roof where he stayed until dark and then returned to Annie's house, where he was dressed as a woman and taken to another "safe house" in Acomb which belonged to a lady called Mrs Bell. He stayed there for a week before being moved to Birmingham and finally to London. The policemen began to search the neighbourhood but eventually had to give up and return to Doncaster where they received a lot of criticism.

The next day, Harry Johnson's mother arrived at Annie's house and was very angry. She accused Annie of "leading her son astray and said the suffragettes were "a load of bad women". Annie managed to calm her down and she left happier.

Story
board the
events
described
above

Write the
report the two
policemen gave
on the day's
events to their
boss.

Write the
newspaper
event describing
Harry's
escape.

Role play
the conversation
on the doorstep
between Annie
and Harry's
mother.

Can you
think of any
fiction that includes
the idea of keeping
someone safe
who may be in
danger?

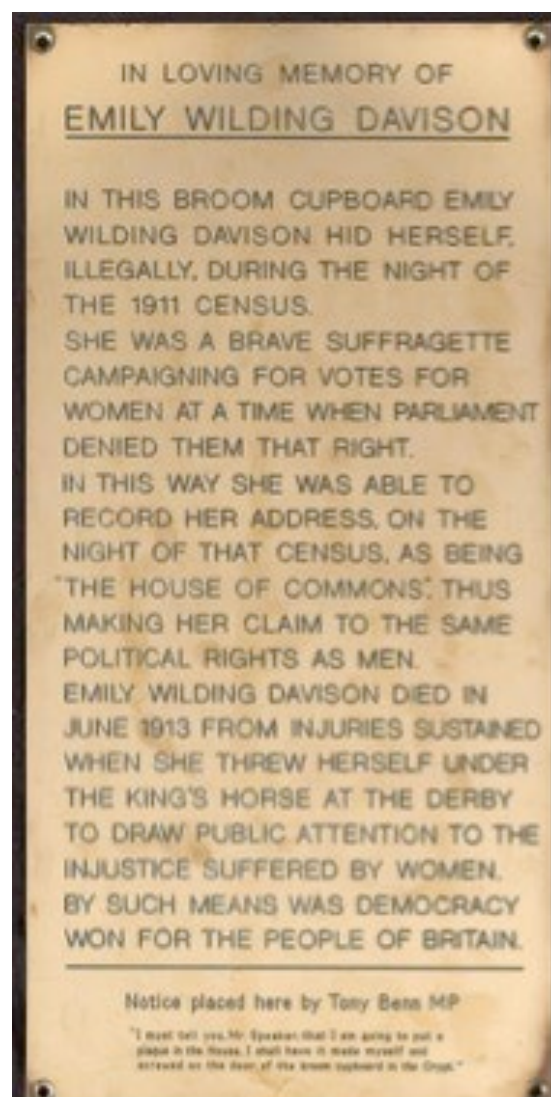
Emily hides in a broom cupboard

Many women also carried out peaceful protests. In 1911, a national census was held. A census is a compulsory survey of the adult population of a country, which has to be completed by all adults on the same date, to count the population, their address on the day of the census and the jobs that they do.. Many suffragettes refused to complete it and wrote slogans such as:

"I don't count so I won't be counted"
"No persons at this address, only women"

Emily Wilding Davies hid in a broom cupboard in the Houses of Parliament, so that on the night of the census, she could record her address as being The House of Commons.

A famous politician, Tony Benn, put this plaque on the door of the cupboard in which she hid



In York, many women stayed away overnight from their homes so they couldn't be counted. Why do you think this was? They slept in the WSPU office in Coney Street. The numbers were later added to the census by an official.

A census is an official survey of the population of a country, carried out by the government. Every ten years since. This is to find out how many people live there and to obtain details of their ages, gender, jobs, etc.

What happened to women who broke the law?



Copyright: Museum of London

Look closely at the faces of the people in the photograph. What might they be thinking?

The man on the right of the photo seems to be in a hurry. What do you think he may be going to do?

In the picture above you can see the suffragette leader, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested

Millicent Price (nee Browne) was another very active York suffragette who frequently broke the law. She marched all over the country to campaign for women's right to vote. She wrote about her adventures in a memoir in 1935. (The original manuscript is held in York Explore archive). At one rally in Bristol, she tells how she was pelted with potatoes and tomatoes.

"I started to make a speech to the crowd but was pelted with potatoes and tomatoes which I caught when I could and put down the front of my pinafore dress, facetiously thanking (the crowd) for contributions towards our lunches".

She could have been in danger, but she chose to be facetious with the crowd to try and stop the situation becoming more serious.

Facetious means she used humour to deal with a serious issue, a bit like diffusing a bomb.

Millicent's Story

Do you remember the suffragettes who chalked on pavements to advertise their meetings? Millicent had good handwriting, because she was a teacher and so she was often given this job. This is what she wrote:

"I agreed to advertise the meeting by the novel method of chalking an announcement on the pavements...we got up early that Saturday morning and stole through the quiet streets. My facility with blackboard writing was a great asset to the bold proclamation:

Votes For Women

A meeting

In the Market Square

8 o'clock this evening"

Unfortunately, we don't have a photograph of Millicent but we can understand some important things about her character from these brief extracts from her autobiography. Like all the suffragettes, she had been a law abiding and respectable woman before the Votes For Women campaign.

What do
you think made
her prepared
to break the
law?

Find five
words that
you think
describe her
character.

Write
three questions
you would
like to ask
Millicent.

Being a suffragette was a dangerous occupation and women who broke the law for a cause they believed in were treated badly. Police officers would often throw them to the ground and assault them and sometimes they were attacked by members of the public who didn't support votes for women. Some of the women learned Jiu Jitsu, a martial art like Judo to defend themselves against policemen who were much bigger than they were. (Of course there were no police women at the time). It was a very effective method of self defence and also showed how powerful women could be.

If they were arrested, they were frequently imprisoned in horrible conditions. Many of the women went on hunger strike. And they would be force fed to stop them from dying and becoming martyrs.

Women suffered for their beliefs



Look at the picture above of a suffragette in prison being force fed.

Who can you see in the picture?

There is one man – who do you think he is?

What is the woman in white holding the jug about to do?

Find ten words to describe how you think the prisoner might feel.

Find ten words to describe how the other women in the picture might be feeling

Women do men's jobs

In 1914, the First World War broke out and suffragettes suspended their actions to support the war effort. Suffragette activity in York came to an end; there were no more demonstrations in the city and no more “mice” kept safe in Heworth. Many men went off to fight and the women who were left behind not only looked after homes and children, but they did jobs that previously had been done by men. (This reinforced that they were far from being “the weaker sex”).

If they could do the same jobs as men, then surely they should have the same rights as men. Women wanted equality.



There are many women but only one man in the picture. Why do you think this might be?

What do you think the man's job may be?

*Women working at Rowntree's factory
Image: copyright Nestle UK*

Finally, in 1918, women over the age of 30 who owned property were given the right to vote.

In 1919, Nancy Astor became the first woman to become an MP and in 1928, the equal franchise act was passed which gave women the same voting rights as men.

Below is a picture of Annie Seymour Pearson as an old lady showing her scrap book full of memories to her grandson and telling him about her adventures as a suffragette in York.



What questions do you think he would ask her?

Do you think he would find it hard to believe that she had done such things?

Is there anyone in your family or someone you know who has been part of an event which changed history?

This information pack was produced by...



York Civic Trust

explore

Libraries and Archives

Special thanks to:

The Borthwick Institute for Archives

The Camellia Collections

The Museum of London

Nestle UK

Anthony Robling

Spartacus Educational

The Theatre Royal

Did you find this information pack useful?

It is the first of a series of education packs we plan to produce for York primary schools about York's history.

We would love to have any feedback. It would help us greatly if you would not fill in the form attached and returning it to info@yorkcivictrust.co.uk

Teacher evaluation form

How did you access this workbook?

- ☐ School resource
- ☐ Downloaded from York Civic Trust Website
- ☐ Given by a colleague
- ☐ Other

How did you use this workbook?

How useful was this workbook

- ☐ No use
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Very useful

Will you use this again?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Any other comments