Social History in Museums

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SHCG

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Special issue: The Centenary of the Representation of the People Act (1918) in Museums.

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Guest Editor's Foreword

Tuesday 6 February 2018 saw an important day of celebrations marking the centenary of an act that granted votes for some women. The Prime Minster Theresa May marked the anniversary by speaking in Manchester, the birthplace of Emmeline Pankhurst and of the Women's Social and Political Union. In the evening, May officially launched the UK Parliament's 'Vote 100' year-long series of events at a reception in Westminster Hall. This was a fitting end to the day as it was the place where the first women's suffrage petition was presented to John Stuart Mill in 1866. The Prime Minister was joined by seventeen-year old Jordhi Nullatamby, Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP) for Thurrock, who gave an insightful speech, part of which I quote here:

> "Every year we take over the House of Commons Chamber and debate the most important issues for young people across the UK. When we sit on those famed green benches we paint a more colourful, vibrant and diverse picture than when the House of Commons itself sits. Over half of MYPs are women, versus only one third of MPs. Thirty seven percent of our MYPs are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, versus only seven percent of MPs. It is my hope that one day in the near future I will vote in a general election that returns a House of Commons as diverse as our Youth Parliament….
>
> Let this year of celebrations inspire us to carry on campaigning, and carry on fighting for a better and more equal world for the women who follow us, just as those suffrage campaigners of 1918 fought to create a better world for us today."

This special edition reflects the spirit of Jordhi's words especially as 2018 is going to be a year of celebrations up and down the country, commemorating those who fought to get the vote for women, but it will also be about continuing the campaign for equality for women into the future. The articles are from institutions around the country and each one uses the suffrage anniversary to explore their collections in a way that is inclusive of the diverse audiences that they serve.

I hope you enjoy reading these interesting and informative articles as much as I did.

Gillian Murphy
Curator for Equality, Rights and Citizenship,

LSE Library

Guest Introduction: The Representation of the People Act and the Pankhurst Centre

Dr Helen Pankhurst

This year marks 100 years since the Representation of the People Act which gave some women and all men over the age of 21 the right to vote. My own family history is intimately tied up with the battle for women's political voice. My great-grandmother, Emmeline Pankhurst, is perhaps the most well-known member of the family: frustrated with the slow-pace of the legal campaign for the vote for women, it was Emmeline who launched the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) from the parlour of her house at Number 62 Nelson Street in Manchester in 1903. The WSPU moved from being the voice of an organisation frustrated with the lack of progress to one willing to advocate radical action; launching a campaign of civil disobedience and property destruction, the WSPU's motto was 'deeds not words'. The 'suffragettes', as this group were known, operated alongside (and sometimes in open hostilities with) the suffragists – the law-abiding groups seeking change through constitutional means. How far the enfranchisement of some women in 1918 was the result of suffragettes willing to use all methods, including that of militancy, and how much it was down to the legal and constitutional workings of law-abiding women's groups is open to debate, but it is clear that the suffragettes spoke to women's willingness to act and generated media attention that drew attention to the campaign for the vote.

It is through the public lens that the Pankhurst family is often seen, but Emmeline's family and home were a hugely significant part of her life. Insufficient attention has been given to the fact that Emmeline's mother came from the Isle of Man, where women had gained the right to vote in 1881 – the first self-governing country to do so. The influence of her husband Richard Pankhurst – a radical thinker if ever there was one – has also been under-appreciated. Emmeline also had much support from her siblings, particularly Mary Clarke who died after being force-fed whilst on hunger-strike in prison in 1910. Much better known is the fact that Emmeline campaigned with her daughters and worked particularly closely with her oldest daughter Christabel. Christabel had graduated with a law degree but, as women were not allowed to practice law, put her education and skills to good use as strategist-in-chief of the movement. Emmeline's youngest sister Adela is also part of the story, serving her mother and the movement faithfully, initially remaining in the North when the rest of the family moved to London, but issued a one-way ticket to Australia by her mother as family tensions grew. Sylvia Pankhurst, my grandmother, was Emmeline's middle daughter and was also very much part of the suffragette story, though she too disagreed with her mother and older sister over which women should gain the right to vote. Sylvia, a socialist, worked tirelessly on a campaign for working women's rights in the East End of London; she also campaigned against the First World War, and for Ethiopian liberation against Mussolini.

The house in which the suffragette movement began is now known as the Pankhurst Centre and serves as a small museum and a busy women's community centre. For me, the Pankhurst Centre not only provides a physical location to these familial remembrances, but a continuation of the mission of women's action for women started by my great-grandmother in 1903. I hope the Pankhurst Centre continues to thrive and expand their role promoting women's voices and providing support and inspiration to the women of today. There is still a major underrepresentation of women in history and it is heartening to see so many fantastic events planned this year to celebrate the

activities of the suffrage campaign. The Pankhurst Centre has just launched its Some Women project which will be documenting and collecting Manchester's centenary events, and encouraging connection between the history of the suffragettes and contemporary activism. The project's title draws attention to the fact that success in 1918 was only partial, and encourages critical reflection on where we are now, in order to inspire change for the future.

Helen Pankhurst kindly provided this introduction in a voluntary capacity. SHCG made a donation to the Pankhurst Centre, a free-entry museum and women's community centre in Manchester where the Suffragette movement was formed.

Find out more

@helenpankhurst
http://somewomen.uk/

Voice and Vote: Women's Place in Parliament

Mari Takayanagi and Melanie Unwin

Mari Takayanagi (Parliamentary Archives) and Melanie Unwin (Parliamentary Art Collection) consider the significance of celebrating women's history in the centre of patriarchal power, and describe their plans as co-curators for 'Voice and Vote,' a large public exhibition in Westminster Hall in summer 2018.

The Representation of the People Act 1918 gave the Parliamentary vote to virtually all men and to the first women. This year therefore marks one of the most important centenaries in the democratic history of the UK and Ireland. The Houses of Parliament is integral to this story: as the actual and symbolic manifestation of state power and governance over the rights and status of women, it has always been a site for suffrage activism. It is therefore particularly appropriate for Parliament to be marking such an anniversary.

As heritage professionals from the Parliamentary Archives and the Parliamentary Art Collection, we are leading a project to mark this and other 2018 anniversaries with a major public onsite exhibition. This article explains the context of women's history in Parliament, and describes the concept for our exhibition, 'Voice and Vote: Women's Place in Parliament.'

Background: Women's history in Parliament

The Houses of Parliament is a very masculine building. Its Gothic architecture, its debating chambers, committee rooms, tea rooms and galleries were designed 150 years ago for an era where women were present but usually invisible. The Victorian decorative scheme, wall paintings and statuary, reflects centuries of patriarchal power and the achievements of men. The historical experience of women in the building is not apparent to the thousands of people - Members of Parliament, staff and the public - who walk through today.

For more than a decade, Parliament has been working to address this issue through its heritage collections. In particular, the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art and the Lord Speaker's Advisory Panel on Works of Art have been working to improve the representation of women in the Parliamentary art collection for many years. One new area of collecting is suffrage memorabilia related to Parliament, of which perhaps the most notable acquisition is a Women's Social and Political Union prisoner's medal awarded to Emmeline Pankhurst following her imprisonment for inciting a 'rush' on Parliament in 1908, acquired in 2007. This is on display in a small permanent exhibition on 'Parliament and Votes for Women' in the Admissions Order Office corridor, en route to the House of Commons visitors' gallery, first installed in 2008 and revised and refreshed in 2012. Most importantly, Mary Branson was appointed artist-in-residence to women's suffrage in 2014. 'New Dawn', her large piece of contemporary conceptual art celebrating women's suffrage in Parliament, was installed above the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall on the 150th anniversary of the first mass women's suffrage petition in June 2016.

The Parliamentary Archives has similarly been working to discover and promote the role of women in its collections - some 4 million documents of the House of Commons and House of Lords, dating back more than 500 years. In 2008 the Archives curated

'A Changing House', an exhibition in the Royal Gallery, House of Lords, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Life Peerages Act 1958 which allowed women to sit in the House of Lords for the first time. In 2011, items from the Parliamentary Archives and the Women's Library at London Metropolitan University (now at the London School of Economics) were inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World UK Register in a joint inscription, 'Documentary Heritage of the UK Women's Suffrage Movement.' The items were subsequently displayed together in Parliament for International Women's Day in 2012. Centenaries of suffragette action in Parliament between 1906 and 1914, recorded in police reports held in the Archives, were regularly marked by events such as in-house and web-based displays, talks and tours.

All of this activity has helped bring the history of women in Parliament to a wider audience, including Members of Parliament, Peers, staff of both Houses and the general public visiting the building. Key to the success of much of this work was partnership working between archivists, curators, other heritage professionals and creative practitioners, inside and outside Parliament. The use of anniversaries and political milestones had also proved successful, and as the in-house experts on women's history, we became increasingly aware of the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 as the most important Parliamentary anniversary on the horizon.

The 'Vote 100' project

In 2014 we received approval for a business case to mark the anniversary with a large public exhibition in Westminster Hall during summer 2018. We named the project 'Vote 100', and established a presence as @UKVote100 on Twitter, Facebook, and a Wordpress blog https://ukvote100.org/ . Since then, 'Vote 100' has achieved wide currency outside Parliament, used by unrelated 2018 projects across the country with '#Vote100' perhaps the most popular suffrage centenary hashtag on Twitter.

In relation to the UK Parliament, 'Vote 100' is the name for Parliament's programme of events celebrating a number of anniversaries important to the House of Commons and House of Lords throughout 2018:

- Representation of the People Act 1918 (100 years) - All men over 21 and some women over 30 granted the vote for the first time.
- Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918 (100 years) - Gave women over 21 the right to stand for election as an MP.
- General Election 14 December 1918 (100 years) - The first women (and all men over 21) vote in a Parliamentary election for the first time and Constance Markievicz elected as the first woman MP.
- Equal Franchise Act 1928 (90 years) - Gave women the vote on the same terms as men.
- Life Peerages Act 1958 (60 years) – Enabled people to be appointed members of the House of Lords for life, including women for the first time.

Led by Parliament's Outreach & Engagement team, the 'Vote 100' programme consists of a range of events and activities throughout 2018. These include 'Your Story, Our History' videos featuring Acts of Parliament particularly affecting women; 'Equaliteas', a celebration of democratic equality with tea parties across the country in

June-July; and UK Parliament Week in November.

The centrepiece of Parliament's 'Vote 100' programme will be our exhibition, now named 'Voice and Vote: Women's Place in Parliament'. Funded by the Speaker's Art Fund (a charity within Parliament) and the House of Lords, and supported by the House of Commons, the exhibition will be open to the public in Westminster Hall, 27 June - 6 October 2018. It will cover the campaign for votes for women and the representation of women in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, using rare and previously unseen historic objects, pictures and archives from the Parliamentary collections and elsewhere. Together with immersive and interactive technologies, the exhibition will tell the story of women in Parliament, the campaigning, the protests and the achievements. It will also examine where we are today and how you can make change happen.

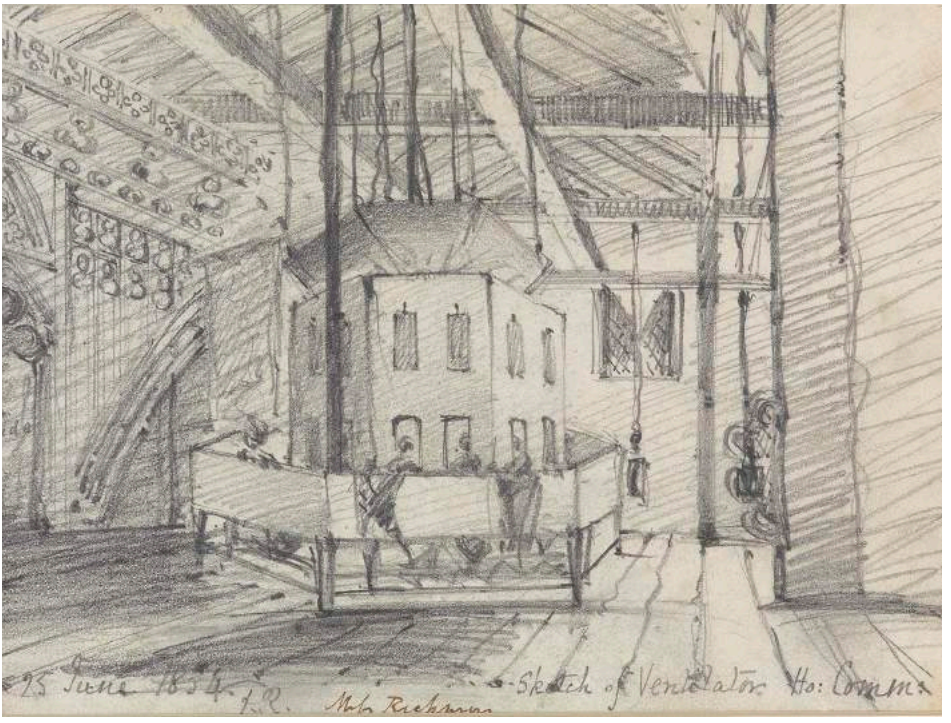
'Voice and Vote' exhibition concept

As the joint project managers and co-curators for 'Voice and Vote', our concept is to use the multiple anniversaries to tell the full story of Parliament, women and the vote, in four immersive spaces. The first three spaces will re-create historic areas used by women in the building; the 'Ventilator', the 'Cage', and the 'Tomb'. The fourth space will be an interactive modern area to bring the story up to date.

1 The Ventilator

In the late 18th century, women were banned from the public galleries in the House of Commons. In the early 19th century, they found their way up into the attic above the House of Commons chamber and started watching debates through a ventilator in the ceiling. The Ventilator was an octagonal structure, with holes in it for eight women to stick their heads through and peer down at the House of Commons below. Although very uncomfortable, with poor views and foul smells, the Ventilator was used by many politically engaged women including Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer, and Hannah More, the anti-slavery campaigner, as well as the wives, daughters, mothers and sisters of the MPs down below. It was an all-female space, invisible but present in the very heart of Parliament. The Ventilator was destroyed in a great fire in 1834 which burned down the Houses of Parliament.

The Ventilator section of 'Voice and Vote' will include a ventilator structure. Visitors can peer through holes and get a view of the House of Commons below, and listen to some debates of the period. Other aspects explored in this area will include Mary Wollstonecraft and the early arguments for women's political equality; and the Great Reform Act 1832 which gave the vote to some men but formally excluded women from voting for the first time by defining a voter as a 'male person'.



Sketch of a ventilator in the Ladies Gallery Attic in St Stephens, 1834. Pencil drawing by Frances Rickman 1834. Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA 26

2 The Cage

The Cage was the nickname for the Ladies' Gallery which was built after 1834 to allow women to view House of Commons debates. Its inclusion in the design of the New Palace of Westminster marked formal recognition that women should be allowed to view the Commons at work. Its windows were screened by brass grilles which restricted women's view. This was done so women could see out (with some difficulty) but men could not see women watching them, in case it distracted them and created a harem effect. Suffragists and suffragettes spent many hours up in the Cage: Millicent Fawcett, the great suffragist leader, called it a 'grand place for getting headaches'. The sound was poor and the room was stuffy and smelly. Women complained from the start, asking for the grilles to be removed, to no avail. The grilles became both a physical and metaphorical symbol of women's exclusion from Parliament, and suffragettes even chained themselves to the grille in a protest in 1908. The Cage was destroyed in Second World War bombing which destroyed the House of Commons chamber. But the grilles were removed from its windows, and women were allowed to sit in the main public gallery with the men, before that, in summer 1917 once it was clear some women would soon have the vote.

The Cage section of 'Voice and Vote' will include a reconstruction of the Ladies' Gallery. Visitors can peer through imitation grilles at a representation of the House of Commons behind and listen to some debates of the period. Other aspects explored in this area will include the first mass women's suffrage petition in 1866, aspects of the suffrage campaign to the passage of the Representation of the People Act 1918.

Archives Furniss drawing of Cage. Credit: 'A corner in the Ladies Gallery', c.1888. Drawing by Harry Furniss. Parliamentary Archives, HC/LB/1/112/248

3 The Tomb

The first woman MP elected in 1918, Constance Markievicz, didn't take her seat at Westminster as a member of Sinn Fein. But in 1919 Nancy Astor was elected and took her seat, and became the first woman to use 'The Tomb', as the Lady Members' Room was nicknamed by another early woman MP, Ellen Wilkinson. The Tomb was poorly furnished, with uncomfortable chairs, one coat hook, no bath and a quarter mile walk to the nearest women's toilet. Conservative, Liberal and Labour women MPs were all expected to share the same room; if there were more women wanting to use it than desks, they sat on the floor, or in a corridor, and did their constituency casework and had meetings from there. Although male MPs didn't have their own offices in this period, they had access to all the bars, smoking rooms and clubs inside and outside

Parliament, which women were either formally or informally excluded from.

The Tomb section of 'Voice and Vote' will include a reconstruction of an inter-war Lady Members' Room. Visitors can interact with items from Parliament's historic furnishings collection, read letters, pick up a telephone and listen to a speech of an early woman MP. Other aspects explored in this area will include equal franchise in 1928 and the admission of women to the House of Lords as life peers in 1958, and hereditary peers in 1963.

4 The Chamber

The final part of the exhibition will explore the experience and work of women MPs and members of the House of Lords since 1963. Women have now occupied the highest Parliamentary positions, elected by their peers; Speaker of the House of Commons and Lord Speaker. Visitors can sit on green and red benching, listen to oral history recordings, read a wall of names of all 489 women MPs ever elected. The exhibition will end with a call to action, encouraging visitors to vote or register to vote, sign or start a petition, give evidence to a select committee, and so on.

The idea of using immersive spaces is to engage people, particularly young women who are less likely to vote, with the history in order to encourage them to think about how it makes them feel, consider their rights and how recently they were won, and hopefully make them more likely to vote in future. We are not trying to tell the entire national history of suffrage, but instead use Parliamentary spaces to ground the story in Parliament. It is very much not 'a suffragette exhibition' - the militant stories will be told within the 'Cage' section, but as one part of a bigger story.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, the exhibition has reached detailed design stage. Challenges include communicating with ever-changing stakeholders in our political environment; engaging our target audience of young non-voters via digital engagement and collaborative partnerships; and delivering on aspirations, as we now expect to be the biggest public exhibition on women and the vote in London during 2018. We always knew that 2018 would be a big year, but the level of public and media interest on 6 February 1918, the centenary of the passage of the Representation of the People Act, exceeded even our expectations. Although still work in progress, a huge amount of work has been done, and many outputs already successfully delivered onsite and online which have served to raise awareness and build audiences for 'Voice and Vote' in summer 2018.

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Melanie Unwin, 'The 1908 Pankhurst Medal: Remembering the Campaign for Votes for Women in Parliament', Parliamentary History, 27(3), October 2008

Find out more

‘Ventilator, Cage and Tomb’, TedX talk by Mari Takayanagi, via https://parliamentandwomen.wordpress.com/

‘New Dawn’, Parliament’s women’s suffrage artwork by Mary Branson: www.parliament.uk/newdawn

Parliament’s Vote 100 activities: www.parliament.uk/vote100

First in the Fight: The story of the People's History Museum's Manchester suffragette banner

Helen Antrobus and Jenny Mabbott

Jenny Mabbott, Head of Collections & Engagement, and Helen Antrobus, Programme and Events Officer, at the People's History Museum, tell us the story behind the Manchester suffragette banner and its interpretation.

At the end of August 2017, an incredibly rare suffragette banner was acquired by the People's History Museum (PHM) in Manchester. The embroidered purple, white and green velvet banner commemorates the work of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and the Manchester Women's Social and Political Union, leading with the words 'First in the Fight' under the headline of 'Manchester'.

Jenny Mabbott, Head of Collections & Engagement at PHM will share the story of how the banner was acquired and Helen Antrobus, PHM's Programme & Events Officer, will put the banner into historical context and discuss how it will be displayed and interpreted at the museum in 2018 as it marks the centenary of the Representation of the People Act (6 February 1918) when all men and some women obtained the right to vote.

PHM's Helen Antrobus and Adam Jaffer, Collections Officer, with the Manchester suffragette banner

Acquiring the banner – Jenny Mabbott

The journey to acquiring the First in the Fight banner began in June 2017 with a simple listing on saleroom.com for a '1903 Manchester suffragette banner'. The banner was due to be auctioned at Gary Don auctioneers in Leeds the following week. A phone call to the auctioneers provided minimal additional information, only that it had been in a Leeds charity shop for the last ten years. If authentic, we knew that the banner must have been made in 1908 or later, as the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) didn't adopt the colour scheme of purple, white and green, symbolising dignity, purity and hope respectively, until this date. At this stage the only reference we had found to the banner was an image from an unidentified event in the 1930s or 1940s which led to the question of whether it was produced for a later theatre production or commemorative event.

Usually PHM would have been unable to consider bidding at an auction for such an item; indeed, the museum had previously lost out on an 1832 Reform Act banner due to lack of a purchase fund. This had spurred on my PHM predecessors, Louise Sutherland and Chris Burgess, to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Collecting Cultures programme in conjunction with the Working Class Movement Library (WCML) in Salford. The HLF bid was successful with £95,000 awarded to PHM and WCML for a five year project, beginning in 2014, entitled 'Voting for Change' to acquire material related to movements and campaigns for the franchise, from the build-up to the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, 1819 to the lowering of the voting age in 1969. The funds were to be split between acquisitions and associated public engagement activities. Louise and Chris both commented that this banner was exactly the type of item they were dreaming would come up when writing the bid!

In advance of the auction I consulted with several specialists including suffragette historian and dealer Elizabeth Crawford and former PHM director Nick Mansfield. From these conversations the best estimate for its value was £3-5,000. However the last suffragette banner to be sold on the open market was over 30 years ago, and therefore it was impossible to predict. On the day of the auction, former PHM Conservator and banner specialist Vivian Lochhead and I went to view the banner. On arrival the auction house staff informed us that the charity shop believed the banner had belonged to a lady called Edna White who had moved to Leeds from Manchester in the 1930s. The charity shop, we later discovered, was a very small charity called HOPE (Halton Moor and Osmandthorpe Project for the Elders). The banner which had been stored folded inwards had miraculously escaped light damage!

PHM's conservator Kloe Rumsey with the Manchester suffragette banner

Further examination of the style and condition of the banner enabled us to authenticate the banner. Vivian discovered the maker's label 'Thomas Brown and Sons, Manchester' in the banner sleeve (the section at the top for the pole). Thomas Brown was a well-known ecclesiastical banner maker in Manchester. The auction house swiftly added the significant maker's name to the otherwise sparse auction listing.

Following the examination of the banner I took advice from Chris, Elizabeth, Nick and the HLF grant advisor. By now the best estimate for the value of the banner was £10-12,000. The HLF grant advisor said we could go 10% above the valuation so I entered the auction with an upper limit of £13,000. I believe there were around 14 bidders from across the world; in the room, on the phone and online. At the end it was down to PHM and one other bidder in the room. The banner eventually sold to the other bidder for a hammer price of £13,600 plus fees of 21%. At this point I assumed the purchaser was a collector or a dealer buying to order. I left my contact details with the auction house and asked that the buyer contact me. It turned out he was a dealer and he agreed to sell the banner to PHM for £20,000 (including VAT), this meant a cost of £16,667 as PHM can reclaim VAT.

We began the process of raising the additional funds to purchase the banner with a successful application to the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund for £8,168 and a crowd-funding campaign, to obtain the local funds needed as match funding to access the grant. The crowd-funding campaign raised £5,000 within a

week; £1634 went directly to the purchase of the object with the remainder towards its conservation by PHM's in-house conservators, and future care. Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures provided the remaining £6865.

PHM finally acquired the banner at the end of August 2017, generating lots of media coverage including a feature in print and online in The Guardian. It was this article that prompted a descendant of the banner's previous owner to contact the museum. She revealed that the banner had ended up in the charity shop following the death of a family member. She also revealed that Edna White was not the banner's previous owner; it was in fact Elizabeth Ellen Chatterton. We are currently researching and fully authenticating all the details of the banner's history and will share more when this has been completed.

In September 2017 we were invited to record a feature for the BBC's The One Show about Emmeline Pankhurst, featuring the banner. A couple of days before the broadcast, we received a request from the show's producers to bring the banner to their London studio for a live feature with Hillary Clinton! As I stood in the studio watching Hillary Clinton admire the banner, I couldn't help reflect on what an amazing journey this banner had been on.

The banner went on to be the centrepiece of BBC Breakfast's live coverage from PHM on the 6 February 2018, the centenary of the Representation of the People Act.

Helen Antrobus – The banner in context

The First in the Fight banner is steeped in women's history. It has played a big part of one family's history and has spent most of its life in the possession of a woman who hasn't left a paper trail of her involvement with the Women's Social and Political Union. It would be expected that the banner would have been amongst the possessions of one of the bigger names of the union such as one of the Pankhursts, Annie Kenney, or Hannah Mitchell. From this we can only surmise that Elizabeth Chatterton had some close connection to the banner itself, either to its usage or to its creation.

However, there is no mention of Elizabeth when the banner is first unfurled in Stevenson Square in 1908. The event itself is documented in the Manchester *Guardian* on June 22 1908:

> The new purple velvet banner…was unrolled on Saturday afternoon at a little ceremony in Stevenson Square, Manchester…round its edges in horizontal letters were the words "Women's Social and Political Union", and in big vertical letters occupying the centre of the banner, were the words: - First in the Fight. Founded by Mrs Pankhurst, 1903.

The banner was displayed at the 1908 Hyde Park rally. On its unfurling at Stevenson Square, a Rona Robinson and Mary Gawthorpe laid out the plans and objectives for the Hyde Park rally – so we can assume that the banner was purpose made to be raised at that march. It was unravelled a month later at a rally in Heaton Park, Manchester, this time on the hustings with Emmeline Pankhurst as she addressed the crowds. At both meetings, we can trace the banner's presence through mentions in newspaper reports, and the significant focus on the 'First in the Fight' message it held.

This was the Manchester WSPU's intention. The banner - a symbol of Manchester's early commitment to the campaign for women's suffrage, and particularly to

Emmeline Pankhurst's founding on the Women's Social and Political Union – was created two years after the WSPU moved its headquarters to London, and stepped up its campaign right under the nose of the Houses of Parliament. In London, the Pankhursts and their followers were in prime condition to cause havoc for the government, as well as being in prime location for the attentions of the national newspapers. The Hyde Park rally, which would be the banner's first outing since its unfurling, was the biggest demonstration of the WSPU so far, with an estimated 500,000 strong crowd. There, in front of comrades from all across the nation, the Manchester WSPU reminded their sisters that they were indeed the first in the fight, that Manchester was the place where this incredible movement had begun, and they were determined not to fall behind.

In a letter to the Manchester *Guardian*, in retaliation to correspondence from irritated residents at the use of parks being used for public rallies, Manchester suffragette Mabel Capper summarised this feeling of Manchester's radical and political ties:

> We recognise that as the constitutional body of suffragists we can appeal to many, both men and women, in Manchester who are always to the front in the fight for any of the present-day reforms. Manchester is a political centre of such importance that we naturally turn to it for help.

This aptly summarises the feeling in Manchester and its links to the campaign for women's suffrage, demonstrating the strong reputation Manchester had garnered, and would continue to promote, throughout the women's suffrage movement.

The role of the object here, then, represents more than just one side of a campaign. It becomes less about the organisation and more about the women of the city, linking not only to the foundation of the WSPU, but to Manchester's tireless history of producing and promoting radical and political women. From Mary Fildes, the president of the Manchester Women's Reformist Society who stood on the hustings at Peterloo, to the Manchester female chartists, right up to the first suffragists such as Lydia Becker and Selina Cooper, the banner represents all these women, despite bearing only the name of Mrs Pankhurst.

Here, then, are the complexities of interpreting this incredible object. From first glance, the banner has this simple yet effective message – First in the Fight, Mrs Pankhurst, 1903. Marking the foundation of the WSPU with the words First in the Fight implies that before them, nothing had happened. However, Manchester was the first city to form a Society for Women's Suffrage, later going on to form the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage. Even at the height of the WSPU's militancy and infamy, members of the NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies) consistently outnumbered the WSPU. They were much more established, much more favoured by the Liberals and the ILP members, who were strong in numbers in Manchester – indeed, the ILP was where Emmeline Pankhurst herself became involved in the struggle for women's suffrage.

Other parts of the women's suffrage collection at People's History Museum also tell the other side of the story, with archived documents and images dating back to the late 1800s, and to the very early 1900s, when women such as Eva Gore-Booth and Esther Roper were fighting for the female trade unionists, who, despite making up nearly 60% of the textiles industry, had no representation in Parliament. Putting the banner into this broader narrative, its message becomes more challenging, particularly for audiences.

The complexities continue. The WSPU were clear about their campaign for the vote – on the same terms as men who could currently vote. Before the 1918 Representation of the People Act, men who still didn't have a property qualification could not vote, and the WSPU championed women winning the vote on the same terms as men. Organisations such as the Women's Freedom League, and to a certain extent the NUWSS, believed in universal suffrage; many of these women would continue to fight for universal suffrage, and for full enfranchisement for women, until the second Representation of the People Act in 1928, when all women aged 21 and over were given the vote – finally on the same terms as men.

Loyal and prominent members of the WSPU would have been excluded from voting, if they had won the vote on the same terms as men. Pankhurst's autocratic behaviour, which led to the expulsion of several high profile WSPU members including Emmeline Pethwick-Lawrence and her own daughter, Sylvia Pankhurst, can also contribute to the dimming of the WSPU's spotlight as the saviours of women's suffrage. Her later leanings towards imperialism also create a rather problematic heroine for us to celebrate today.

How can we, as a museum dedicated towards ideas worth fighting for, progressive movements and campaigning, display an object that, whilst an intrinsic part of an incredible movement, also represents a campaign that often excluded working class women?

As social history curators, saving the banner from a private collector and bringing the banner back to Manchester was an incredible achievement, and making it the centrepiece of our 2018 exhibition Represent! Voices 100 Years On. Represent! will tell the story of 1918 and the campaign for women's suffrage, but will also explore the voices of 2018, and the communities who still feel underrepresented, alone, and voiceless.

It was during one of our steering groups around the exhibition, that the problematic nature of the banner came up. There was a feeling that the banner represented one side of a story, glorified Emmeline Pankhurst and ignored the vast amount of narratives of the other radical women whose tireless campaigning won the vote. We had said from the beginning that our exhibition would not be 'Suffragette', but a broader and more diverse interpretation of the centenary, and we had to honour that.

It is difficult to write about an exhibition before it has been on display – even more so when it is only in its early stages of development. The banner will be part of it, of course, but how it will be interpreted is key to making sure we get the right message across. Rather than have one label, explaining what the banner is and the part it played in the fight for the vote, we plan to display the banner alongside as many different voices and responses as possible: from historians, desperate to widen visitors' view of the campaign for the vote, to communities members engaging with the banner for the first time. These responses to the banner will share not only the history it tells, but the stories it doesn't tell, the people it doesn't represent, and the people who feel it perfectly reflects their own story.

The First in the Fight banner embodies the idea of social history. It has become an asset to PHM's collection, but we must not be complacent and let the message embroidered on the the banner be the only message it carries. We need to employ best interpretation to show the banner's true struggle – 100 years of voices, families, communities, women, men struggling for representation.

Leonora Cohen Suffragette collection: Breaking out of the display case

Kitty Ross and Nicola Pullan

Kitty Ross, Curator of Leeds and Social History, and Nicola Pullan, Assistant Curator of Leeds and Social History, of Leeds Museums and Galleries outline the life of the relatively unknown Leeds suffragette Leonora Cohen and how her collection has been used to reach out to different audiences.

Leeds Museums and Galleries is lucky to hold a significant collection donated by the Leeds suffragette Leonora Cohen. Highlights include a dramatic fancy-dress outfit (complete with prison warder doll) worn to the Arts Club Ball in 1914 and the iron bar with which she smashed a Tower of London display case in 1913.

The museum acquired the archive after a pioneering Suffrage exhibition in 1966, which Leonora had been heavily involved with, and has been used and displayed in many ways since. Her story is prominent in the Leeds Story gallery at Leeds City Museum and will also feature in the 2018 exhibition "A Woman's Place?" at Abbey House Museum.

Suffragette display at Abbey House Museum 1998, photographed by Norman Taylor, Leach Studios

Leonora Cohen died in 1976 (aged 103) and was a complex character. Despite being gaoled several times, she later served as a justice of the peace and was a lifelong vegetarian. We acquired an additional gift of books and correspondence in 2007 which reveal her fascination with astrology, phrenology, Eastern mysticism and Co-Masonry among other things. As a result she also featured in other recent exhibitions, *"Crime and Punishment" (2016)* and "Fate and Fickle Fortune" (2013).

The collection is heavily used by researchers and is one of the most popular subjects for museum talks, adult study days and community engagement. We have also been promoting the collection as a resource for educating young people about the struggle for voting reform as part of the Citizenship agenda, through Parliament Week events, the Northern History Forum and the Women's History Network. 2018 will no doubt raise her profile even higher.

Leonora's story

Leonora Cohen, like many other women up and down the country, took a very active but often little known role in the Votes for Women campaign in the early twentieth century. At Leeds, we are very lucky to have some of the material from her personal archive which can help us understand her role and ensure her memory is preserved. Many other women, sadly, left little behind for us to appreciate the roles they played. Whilst our collections are no means complete, they do at least give us a flavour of some of her actions, which can be used alongside newspaper reports, other documents and research, and hours of oral testimony that she gave to historian Sir Brian Harrison in the 1970s that is now held in the Women's Library collection at the London School of Economics.

For those who have not come across Leonora Cohen before, she was an instrumental figure in the Leeds branch of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and was imprisoned several times, both in Holloway and Armley. Her most famous act was throwing an iron bar through a case containing The Order of Merits in the Tower of London. She had been due to take part in Mrs Pankhurst's window breaking campaign as one of her 'bodyguards' but decided against it, as she felt uncomfortable targeting private property. "I did not want to let Mrs Pankhurst down so I said I would do something else. I didn't know what, but something dramatic." (Liddington, 2006)

Leonora Cohen at the Tower of London, drawing by Jacky Fleming for Abbey House Museum exhibition, ©Jacky Fleming 2017

The women who had broken the windows were all found guilty at trial, whilst Cohen argued that her charge was inappropriate. She had been charged with causing criminal damage over £5, based on estimates to repair the case provided as a witness statement. Henry, her husband, had a keen interest in the law and professional connections in the jewellery and shop fitting industries, so the two of them managed to secure further estimates to suggest the damage could be fixed for under £5, and made the argument that the case should have been tried in a lower court to reflect the level of crime she was accused of. As part of her defence she claimed "this court has no jurisdiction over my case whatever. I will prove to you through my witness that I have a case to prove that this court has no jurisdiction over me." (Harrison, 8SUF/B/019) The jury were unable to make a decision so eventually the case was thrown out of court as the judge conceded her point in law. As a publicity stunt it was very effective and generated headlines such as "Outrage at the Tower".

Her actions in Leeds received less national coverage. Mrs Cohen took part in an attempt to disrupt Asquith who was visiting Leeds in October 1908. She had originally intended to try and meet him on arrival at Leeds railway station, only to discover he had passed through earlier than she had expected. As she still wanted to make a protest, she decided to throw a brick through the window at the Labour Exchange in Leeds. She left bricks wrapped with messages ready for use in a nearby coal hole, but these were found by a local detective who had come across her before. When she threw the brick she was immediately arrested with a visiting London suffragette, Kathleen Jarvis. When giving her details she identified herself as 'Woman A', to which the constable responded by providing her full name and address for his report. She was put on remand and went on hunger strike for eight days. Due to childhood tuberculosis and damage to her neck she was never force–fed like some of the women, but her time in prison still took a great toll on her health.

In later years Cohen went back to being a law-abiding citizen. She had struggled with her conscience, being a pacifist, and had not taken easily to becoming militant. 'When I had to do any militancy I nearly died with fright because I hated anything that was, well, anything whatever to do with confrontation or disturbance of any sort… However I steeled myself to do what I have done.' (Harrison, 8SUF/B/018). She was not alone, as membership in the Leeds branch of the WSPU undoubtedly suffered during periods of militancy, with it being a step too far for many. There were disagreements, even within the movement, about how to achieve the vote, and why the vote was itself important. 'Some women saw the vote as both a means (to challenge sexual inequalities and promote women's rights) and an end (as an ennobling and obliging badge of citizenship); others tended to place more emphasis on the vote as either a mean or an end in itself.' (Roberts, 2009)

When the campaign was put on hold in 1914, Leonora threw herself into supporting the war effort and worked in munitions. She was not cut out for this work and after negotiating on behalf of striking workers, she ended up establishing a branch of the General and Municipal Workers Union for women munition workers. She had to fight to get them recognised by the local Trades Council. After the war she applied to join the local Women's Police but was refused due to her WSPU activities, and had previously been turned down as a Welfare Officer for similar reasons. In recognition of her trade union work and support for a range of other causes she was awarded an OBE in 1928. The Trades Council also nominated her for a role as magistrate, which she then carried out for 30 years, and as Chairman of the Bench for around 22 years. All this, despite the fact, as she liked to point out, she was technically out on licence from Armley Gaol and had never been officially discharged. She sat on the Licensing

committee, oversaw tribunals in the Second World War and continued to work well past retirement age.

Exhibitions and displays

There is a delicious irony in the fact that museums can now celebrate within their walls the life of one whose most famous act was to damage a display case. As a result of the incident at the Tower, many London art galleries and museums closed for some time as a precaution. However Leonora herself said "I didn't fancy [attacking] art galleries of course. My father had been an artist" (Harrison, 8SUF/B/018)

In 1966, however, Leonora decided to donate her collection to a museum and to display the offending weapon under glass:

> An iron grate piece and an empty diet sheet from Armley Gaol are two things which remind Mrs Leonora Cohen of her days as a leading suffragette. These items, and the rest of a large collection, have been given by Mrs Cohen to the Abbey House Museum, Kirkstall, Leeds, where they were on show for the first time yesterday in a new permanent exhibition on the suffragette movement. (Yorkshire Post, 1966)

A teachers' guide to Abbey House in 1974 describes the suffragette displays, which were part of the Folk Galleries and were displayed alongside "a representative collection of everyday articles used in the home or at work in connections with cooking, laundering, lighting, heating etc." (Hird Buckle, 1974). In the museum's own guidebook from the late 1970s the Suffragette collection is mentioned more in the context of the costume displays.

It appears that key items from the collection were on permanent display at Abbey House from the 1970s until it closed for refurbishment in 1998. Since 2008 there has been a case dedicated to the suffragettes as part of the Leeds Story gallery at Leeds City Museum including key items such as the iron bar and the prison warder doll. The dress however is currently off display to conserve it from the ravages of excess light and exposure over the years.

Some of the remaining items will feature in the 2018 Abbey House exhibition "A Woman's Place?" and to help illustrate Leonora's story the artist Jacky Fleming has imagined the moment at which Leonora threw her bar in the Tower. We have been fortunate to work with Jacky Fleming to illustrate the exhibition, and have also commissioned another local artist, Katch Skinner, to create a portrait of another prominent Leeds campaigner for women's suffrage, Mary Gawthorpe. Mary Gawthorpe's archive has ended up in the United States, which means that she usually gets neglected in Leeds museum displays although she has a higher international profile.

A list of the suffragette material that was housed at Abbey House Museum in 1967 includes the medal inscribed "For Valour November 27th 1913" presented to Leonora Cohen by the WSPU, plus the badge presented to honour her for imprisonment. Neither of these items are currently in the collection so it appears that Leonora either retained ownership or kept borrowing them back, and in 2007 the medal appeared on Antiques Roadshow. Despite the presenters suggesting that the medal should be offered to Leeds Museums we heard nothing more about it and its current whereabouts are unknown.

As a result of the programme, however, we were contacted by a lady who had known Mrs Cohen when she retired to Wales aged 93 and offered a further collection of photographs, books and correspondence, which have widened our understanding of Leonora's character and philosophy. They illuminate her interest in alternative ways of thought such as theosophy and numerology. They also include some lovely photographs of Leonora's triumphant return visit to the Tower of London in 1966.

REMEMBERING the days of the suffragettes are Mrs. Leonora Cohen and Miss Grace Rowe at a votes-for-women exhibition which opened at Abbey House Museum, Leeds, yesterday. (A Yorkshire Post picture.)

Leonora Cohen and Grace Rowe at the opening of the Suffragette display at Abbey House Museum in 1966, courtesy of Yorkshire Post Newspapers Ltd.

Although on most occasions the objects have been used to tell the story of women's suffrage, the collection has also found its way into more unexpected displays. Leonora's lifelong vegetarianism meant that she featured in the 2011 exhibition "Taste" (about food). A small newspaper cutting even revealed a link to Mok the Gorilla, the pride of the Leeds natural science collections. Writing when Mok was still alive and living at London Zoo, Leonora's letter laments the fact that he was being fed an unnatural carnivorous diet, which later caused his premature death (although he lives on as a museum specimen in Leeds). Astrological and phrenology charts that Leonora had commissioned for herself and her family took pride of place in the 2013 exhibition "Fate and Fickle Fortune".

Using the collection for education and outreach

Leonora's archive has proved a great resource for education and outreach. As the 'Votes for Women' campaigns were such an important landmark in twentieth century politics and are still relevant today, there is a broad audience ready to learn more. However, many of the people we have engaged with over the last few years had little awareness of Cohen herself, having only heard the more dominant stories of women

like the Pankhursts and Emily Wilding Davison. This has proved a great opportunity to broaden thinking around the campaigns, and to encourage people to think more deeply about local figures, both famous and obscure, who took part. In the words of Liddington: 'the campaign for the vote was much wider than Emily Wilding Davison's martyr's death at Derby race-course and so much broader than the leadership of Emmeline Pankhurst which inspired such suffragette daring and bravery.' (Liddington, 2006). Every locality will have their own suffragette stories to tell, and in Leeds we are lucky enough to have a starting point within our own collections.

The subject also opens up the opportunity to discuss wider political issues around voting reform to encourage people to take an interest in how democracy works in the UK, and how important it is to contribute. At a time when voter turnout is dwindling, it feels important to support discussions around citizenship and what this means on a basic level. In interview, Leonora herself talks about how her interest in Parliamentary democracy began at an early age, as her mother was widowed without a vote. Her mother had explained how one day Leonora's brothers would grow up to vote but that she never would. 'This seemed to me to be very unjust and made me very observant in election times… This was my early grounding into that sort of thing.' (Harrison, 8SUF/B/018).

Our educational work has taken in audiences from primary school age right up to adult learners and CPD opportunities for local teachers. Each age group and audience type has undoubtedly required a different approach, but the underlying message remains the same – regular citizens who see injustice in society can work together to change things for the better. Working with younger audiences has raised questions about how best to approach certain aspects, as some of the actions undertaken by the women were legally dubious to say the least. This has meant careful consideration of how to explain some of the behaviours, and an explanation of the unique circumstances felt by the women. Firstly, by not being able to vote they did not have a role in agreeing to the law of the land and so did not always feel bound by it. Secondly, that after around a century of peaceful campaigning getting nowhere, they felt that more drastic action was necessary. Finally we argue that each woman acted according to her own conscience, but for the vast majority that meant not endangering the life of anyone but themselves and not causing harm to individuals.

The youngest group we have worked with were participating in Leeds Children's University, based at Leeds Trinity University, as part of Parliament Week in November 2016. The children, aged 7-14, were spending a day at the University learning about Parliament and meeting their local MP. To set the scene we were able to meet the children as they arrived and had an opportunity to show them some items from Leonora's archive, explain the Votes for Women campaign and give them a couple of activities to think about. The children asked a whole range of questions, with some not really understanding why women wanted to vote at all. To try and make them think differently they were asked if they had younger brothers – and whether they thought their younger brothers should be able to have a say but not them. This quickly changed a few opinions.

As well as working with the children themselves, we have undertaken work with teachers to provide CPD for both the history curriculum alongside Britishness and citizenship agendas within schools. We ran a successful event for the Northern History Forum that helped teachers look at the subject of 'Votes for Women' as means to explore evaluation of sources, newspaper bias and also to encourage them to hunt for local stories in wider histories that they could share with their pupils.

We also regularly receive interest from a variety of HE students and other researchers wanting to access the collection. We have had several journalism students wanting to make short films about Leonora and her work, particularly inspired by the release of the film Suffragette (2015), and have also been contacted by independent researchers and university academics alike. Jill Liddington, author of *Rebel Girls*, arguably the most comprehensive book on northern suffragettes, used the collection for her research.

Despite the work we have done with teachers, schools, children's groups and researchers, the most enthusiastic audience for Leonora Cohen's story has undoubtedly been adult learners. We have given talks to local history groups, U3A groups, Women's Institutes, Townswomen's Guilds, the local Women's Graduate Association, and have spoken to hundreds of people in the last few years. Many of those in attendance had never heard of Leonora before, and so her archive has really helped us to keep her story, and that of local involvement in the 'Votes for Women' campaigns alive. It also allows us to make reference to other local figures such as WSPU North organiser Mary Gawthorpe, a copy of whose papers have recently arrived in the Leeds Local and Family History Library, or local suffragists including Isabella Ford. These women are not particularly represented in our own collections, but add another dimension to the story of local activity at the time.

We also offer a study day inviting people to come in and learn about Leonora Cohen and get a close look at some of her archive. We have run the study day around half a dozen times, with a maximum of 12 participants per session to ensure we can supervise the archive appropriately, whilst giving people a chance to see original documents without the barrier of a glass case. In the morning we talk about Leonora, her life and her role in the campaigns before the group then head for lunch. In the afternoon everyone comes back for the object handling session. We are running it again in 2018 as part of our 'A Woman's Place?' exhibition programming. Although the outline of each session is the same, they all turn out differently, reflecting the interests of those who are attending. People join us with a variety of experience or background knowledge about the votes for women campaign, ranging from those who only have a very basic awareness to those who have either had relatives who were involved or people who have spent years researching the topic. This means there are always a wide range of opinions and observations that open up different questions and avenues to explore. Most attendees, however, agree that the real highlight of the day is the opportunity to see and read the original documents and to have a chance to delve directly into such a personal collection.

All in all, Leeds Museums is proud to house such a remarkable and inspirational collection and aim to preserve it, interpret it and make it available to visitors now and for generations to come.

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Suffragette display at Abbey House Museum 1998, photographed by Norman Taylor, Leach Studios

Dead Women Can't Vote – How Hackney Museum and the East End Women's Museum are creating a community curated exhibition exploring women-led activism and social change post 1918

Rebecca Odell

Rebecca Odell, Museum Officer at Hackney Museum in London, describes how Hackney Museum and the East End Women's Museum collaborated with community groups to curate an exhibition telling the stories of 'hidden' women who have made a difference in Hackney in the last 100 years.

This paper explores some of the work undertaken so far to collaboratively curate an exhibition, due to open in February 2018.

In July 2015 when a proposed women's history museum on Cable Street in Shadwell, east London, was revealed to be a Jack the Ripper themed tourist attraction there was an outcry from the local community and beyond. The East End Women's Museum project was launched as a form of creative protest against the Ripper Museum and quickly attracted a huge amount of interest and support. An initial call out for volunteers to help 'make the missing museum' - focused on the lives of women in east London and not just their deaths - resulted in international press coverage and over 300 offers of help.

The overwhelming public response to the creation of the East End Women's Museum highlighted a local need to see more women's stories represented in museums. The versions of history a museum chooses to tell through its exhibitions sends strong messages to audiences about what we, as a society, value. Despite the best intentions of those creating heritage interpretation to share the experiences and achievements of women, outside of living memory these can be significantly more challenging and time consuming to research. Studies such as Thrasher (2012) have demonstrated how individual women, even when widely influential and celebrated during their lifetime, have been increasingly written out of the historical record over time as the focus shifted to the contributions of their often lesser-known male contemporaries. If museums value the contributions of women, they need to commit the additional time and resources required to actively seek and research women's history to redress the balance. Failure to do so will simply perpetuate the bias and gender ideologies often held by earlier writers of historical narratives.

Hackney Museum is a local authority run museum with a national and international reputation for engaging local communities in every strand of the museum's work. They work collaboratively with residents and organisations to explore Hackney's rich history and the diversity of its people.

When the East End Women's Museum and Hackney Museum met in Summer 2016 to discuss potential partnerships, it was decided we would develop an exhibition marking the centenary of the Representation of the People Act (1918), when some women gained the right to vote in Parliamentary elections. Major anniversaries provide good opportunities to explore and reflect on different aspects of local history. However, this decision came shortly after Hackney Museum had run a programme of temporary exhibitions marking the centenary of the First World War. This meant

we entered the project aware of the challenges that can arise with centenary or anniversary events.

Firstly, with these major national commemorative programmes we face the significant risk of audience fatigue with the subject matter. This is particularly true for small museums based in London or other cities where there is competition from better known museums with greater resources running similar programmes at the same time.

Further complications can arise when working in rapidly-changing diverse and multi-cultural areas. Hackney celebrates a long and rich history of immigration, with more than 88 languages spoken in the borough, and many of our current residents have moved here during their lifetime. With the First World War centenary programme it was challenging to help visitors see their own stories and experiences represented in local narratives about the war, as the community living in the area 100 years ago was dramatically different to the one here today. There were similar concerns about how local audiences would relate to stories of suffrage. Non-European heritage women remain largely outside the historiography of British suffragettes, leading to a perception that this was a 'white woman's movement' (Mirza 2015). Initial conversations with the public also revealed perceptions of suffrage activists as being from affluent or privileged backgrounds.

Therefore, we started with the initial exhibition brief that we would broaden the scope from the campaign for equal voting rights, to looking at the many ways Hackney women have changed society. Hackney Museum also requested that it feature some stories from after 1918, so that it might be more representative of the contributions made by women from the current communities now living in the borough.

By opening up key decision-making processes to members of the community, we reached the decision to use the centenary as a starting point to explore what happened beyond the vote. By exploring social change both outside as well as within democratic politics, we have been able to uncover hidden stories of women from a wide variety of backgrounds who changed society often despite numerous challenges.

Community-led curation

Hackney Museum's exhibitions policy is to work collaboratively with community groups and people on heritage projects. It encourages individuals to become partners in decision making and implementation of the exhibition process. This is part of ongoing experimentation in community-engaged practice, building on participation in the Our Museum scheme (Bienkowski 2016). This means working towards organisational change that places active collaboration with the community in key decisions at the heart of all of their work. For the East End Women's Museum, the partnership during the early stages of their project to establish a museum provided an opportunity to explore and embed best practice community participation in their approach from the very beginning.

For Hackney Museum, partnering with the East End Women's Museum represented a unique opportunity to benefit from a large network of enthusiastic supporters to an extent not usually accessible to small local authority museums. The sheer amount of goodwill and number of individuals eager to be involved enabled experimentation with new approaches to community curation of exhibitions. Both museums approached the exhibition with an open-minded and risk-friendly attitude, giving ourselves a long lead time to allow for failure.

The first experiment was to hold a 'community forum'; an open event taking place over a year in advance of the exhibition at which interested individuals came to share their ideas, opinions and stories they wanted to see included.

Around 20 people attended this first event which turned out to be very useful as an initial sounding board to get outside perspectives and knowledge. An ice-breaker 'brainstorming' activity amongst participants became a valuable resource of local knowledge, identifying a number of women and groups connected with Hackney which staff were not previously aware of. As a result, we were able to target our research, and some of the people first identified at the forum have become a part of the final exhibition content.

The main contribution of the forum was clear guidance on the feel and purpose of the exhibition. It needed to be empowering; visitors should leave feeling that they too are able to change society, regardless of their background or disadvantages. This had implications on what stories they wanted to see in the exhibition. In order to be empowering, it was not enough to report on the efforts or actions of women. These needed to be clearly linked to an identifiable impact or a change they had achieved.

This meant excluding many potential stories. A chance search for 'Hoxton' on Google's archive of historic newspapers (news.google.com/newspapers) produced a passing mention of a banned women's boxing match in 1926. Following this lead by searching local newspapers held at Hackney Archives led to the discovery of the inspiring and largely forgotten story of 'London's first and principal woman boxer' Annie Newton. Though the East End Women's Museum has since found Newton's story to be powerful at engaging and capturing the imagination of young women today, it did not fit the criteria of the exhibition. Though she was undoubtedly a pioneer, her impact was arguably limited as it would be another 70 years before women's boxing became officially sanctioned in Britain.

Another important function of this early forum event was generating interest that helped us recruit volunteers for this project. We advertised two primary roles; advisory panel members and researchers. The public enthusiasm generated by the East End Women's Museum saw a far greater number of applications than Hackney Museum had when recruiting for similar roles previously.

Building on Hackney Museum's existing model of an advisory panel used for the First World War centenary programme, these volunteers (recruited on the basis of ability to represent and access targeted audiences) would meet monthly to guide the structure, direction and narrative of the exhibition.

The second role was more experimental, to explore the extent to which content for an exhibition could be researched by external volunteers working off site, using the collections at Hackney Archives to research stories as directed by the advisory panel. This involved trying out online software such as Google Drive where tasks could be assigned, documents could be worked on collaboratively and research could be shared.

We faced unforeseen challenges with these volunteer schemes. Shortly after recruiting the volunteers, unexpected staff changes in the heritage team within Hackney Council pushed back project timelines by a couple of months. This made it hard to maintain enthusiasm and momentum; as a result there was a drop off in the number of participants. We also found that despite advertising and recruiting for two distinct roles, advisory panel members wanted to undertake research, and researchers wanted more say in the structure and direction of the exhibition. In the

end we merged the volunteers into one panel. Although individual volunteers did make some important research contributions, ultimately we feel this project never fully developed a coherent model that saw off-site volunteers carrying out core research that features in the exhibition content.

The advisory panel, however, proved a stronger approach. Its main contribution was developing a mission statement for the exhibition. The panel made it clear that they wanted it to focus on women-led activism over the past 100 years. Their definition of 'activism' included many different approaches to securing social, political, or economic change, from petitions and protests to arts, journalism, and industrial action. They wanted the exhibition to be an opportunity to discover and celebrate hidden histories of women's activism, particularly those that sought to change society in spite of facing challenges such as discrimination or economic disadvantage. This gave the museum staff a brief by which they could develop the exhibition content, reporting back monthly to the group to ensure the content was addressing their aims.

The mission statement also repeated the sentiment of the original forum, in that 'It is hoped that by telling these stories we can empower visitors to feel like they too can change society'. Over the time period the panel met, several major developments occurred that saw the community of Hackney feeling increasingly alienated from popular political movements. An overwhelming 78% voted to stay in the European Union, and the borough's communities have been used in documentaries to represent 'remain' voters. The area is also described as being 'anti-Trump', with Hackney North and Stoke Newington forming the second highest number of signatories in the country for the petition calling to revoke his invitation for a state visit. It is interesting given this context, the continued importance given to the need to make visitors feel like change is achievable. The panel also decided that the exhibition should be structured not by chronology or cause, but by the different methods through which women achieved social change, including political involvement, campaigns, unions, direct action, arts, and service provision outside the state. It is almost as if the panel wanted the exhibition to provide historical examples as a toolkit for the community to learn how they could respond to the contemporary political situation.

Finding 'Hidden' Women's Stories in the Historic Record

A clear challenge we had been given by both the forum and the advisory panel was to find 'hidden stories' instead of using just the already well-known historical figures. Internally, the absence of a Wikipedia article, even though a woman or group met its criteria, became a useful measure of a 'hidden story'.

What ended up being our greatest resource in many ways was the long lead time before the exhibition when we knew we would be exploring women and social change. This meant that chance encounters of small references when conducting research for projects could be followed up, leading to many of our most compelling discoveries. While researching local theatres in history journals, a very brief reference was found to a pioneering undercover journalist named Olive Christian Malvery. Despite being a bestselling celebrity whose investigations into the working conditions of women and children in London led to the founding of charitable missions, her impact has been largely forgotten locally. Furthermore, born in what is now Pakistan with Anglo-Indian heritage, Malvery helps demonstrate the contribution of Asian migrant women in Edwardian society.

Similarly, staff stumbled across a loose newspaper cutting in an archive box when researching another exhibition about the beginnings of a small local group that

became the National Cancer Campaign. Searching their archives exposed the story of how a few local women successfully campaigned for cervical screening to be made available on the National Health Service, something that is now estimated to save over 1,800 lives each year.

Another benefit of the long lead in time was leaving us open to interesting opportunities for creative contemporary collecting. During the early conversations about a potential exhibition, local resident Nicola Thorp made national news when she petitioned the government to change workplace laws, following her dismissal from a job for wearing shoes without a high heel. Thorp kindly agreed to donate the controversial flat shoes to the Hackney Museum, where they have inspired interesting debate about the role of women in society today.

More targeted research came from searching for keywords in museum and archives catalogues. This process has led to the rediscovery of amazing and inspiring material already existing in our archives collections. A quick search for 'women' in the archives catalogue produced the intriguing result 'Petition from the residents of the Borough of Haggerston asking for the Parliamentary franchise for women'. Not only was this a wonderful document of women petitioning for their right to vote in Parliamentary elections in the early years of the 20th century, but closer inspection revealed something especially interesting. A significant proportion of the women's names had X's next to them, some annotated with 'Her Mark'. What this appears to be is evidence of women denied an education to the extent they cannot sign their names, yet they were still engaging in the movement to have their views represented in parliament. Prior to this project none of the existing archive staff were aware that they had the document within the collections. Since then, we have had it examined by conservators and we are working towards conserving it in time for the centenary.

However, relying on searching for terms such as 'women' risked only discovering campaigns and groups focussed on contributions made in what is often disdainfully termed 'women's issues', when we know women were active in a whole range of concerns. One approach to overcome this was to allow ourselves to become

increasingly guided by photographs. Images of campaigns where large numbers of women were present was usually a good sign that it merited further investigation. Additionally, images accompanying newspaper articles can also help improve understanding about women's roles in various actions. For example, an article from September 1982 about how Hackney Council workers went on strike in support of health workers, describes the unanimous vote for the strike in the manual workers' meeting. Despite pre-existing notions people may have of who a 'manual worker' is, the photo of the meeting shows a large room overwhelmingly filled with women.

Once names of organisations or individuals have been identified, recent outputs from major digitisation projects have been an invaluable resource. One example is exploring the role of women in various police race relations campaigns that have taken place in the borough. Hackney Museum has often told these stories in a variety of contexts, and they have again become relevant as the community struggles with the recent death of a young man, Rashan Charles, while in police custody. From images we could see that women were prominently involved in these campaigns, but we lacked further information about their exact roles and contributions. Though Hackney Museum had material related to the Trevor Monerville case in their collection, it was only after being able to search digital copies of Spare Rib online via the British Library that we become aware that his aunt, Annette Monerville, led the campaign demanding a public inquiry. We were also able to learn this way of the mainly black women who in July 1985 formed the Clapton Park Action Group to campaign against the police targeting young black men in the Clapton Park Estate.

The network of individuals and organisations that the East End Women's Museum has built up over the last two years has been a vital resource throughout the project. One of its strongest relationships was with the contemporary campaign group East End Sisters Uncut who use direct action and community outreach to oppose cuts to UK government services for domestic abuse survivors, and who agreed to loan us some items for the exhibition. We found it particularly interesting the way that Sisters Uncut have made use of the legacy of the suffragettes in their campaigning. In 2015 they staged a dramatic 'die-in' on the red carpet at the premiere of the film Suffragette, chanting the slogan 'Dead Women Can't Vote'. By being able to include the voices of these groups, we can approach the centenary in a far more critical way, raising important questions about the issues affecting women that having the vote for a century have not resolved.

Legacy of the Project

The primary outcome of the project will be an exhibition at Hackney Museum (6 February – 19 May 2018). However, there is a clear documentation and research legacy, with new additions to the collections of Hackney Museum, and a greater understanding and accessibility of a wide range of women's experiences and stories, which have already been used by the East End Women's Museum in its work with schools and communities.

Furthermore, while the exhibition is on display it will be used to work with hard to reach and vulnerable groups. For example, in Spring 2018, Hackney Museum will be developing an exhibition with the service users of Bump Buddies, a befriending scheme to help 'at risk' pregnant women. During this time we will be using the women's exhibition to help them think about the possibilities for their own displays. It is hoped that by seeing many of the difficult and often taboo issues we know these women experience explored within a museum, this will make them feel more able to use this space to discuss some of the other challenges they face during this period of

change in their lives.

The project has also had implications for how Hackney Museum works with the community on events. In particular, they recently successfully replicated the community forum model for an upcoming exhibition exploring Black British Music in Hackney.

The partnership has been valuable for the East End Women's Museum too in the very early stages of their project by having access to Hackney Museum's resources, facilities, and collection but especially their experience and expertise as a modern, community-focused local history museum. The collaboration has allowed the East End Women's Museum to pilot community curation practices and reflect on what has worked well and where there have been challenges as they develop their own approach. Additionally, the partnership with Hackney Museum has also provided an opportunity for East End Women's Museum to meet and connect with different community groups and activists working in the borough who have an existing relationship with Hackney Museum, such as domestic abuse service Sistah Space and LGBTQI+ group Project Indigo.

The project has strengthened community engagement practices for both museums, and will amplify the voices of Hackney's women activists past and present in the suffrage centenary year.

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The March of Women: Glasgow Women's Library's living and breathing archive out on the streets

Donna Moore

Donna Moore, Adult Literacy and Numeracy Development Worker at Glasgow Women's Library, recounts how its collections were used in a collaborative public arts project to celebrate Scottish women. This two-year project had wide community engagement.

Introduction

Glasgow Women's Library's (GWL) March of Women (2015) was a participatory, public art project in partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), which utilised the Library's archive to bring together women from all backgrounds and from all over Scotland, through a dramatic celebration of local history and social space, recognising and celebrating outstanding women in Scotland. It involved over a hundred women performing a re-enactment of Cicely Hamilton's suffragette play, *A Pageant of Great Women*, and being joined by other women to process to Glasgow Green – a place which was the site of suffrage meetings and demonstrations.

Sarah Amy Fishlock for Glasgow Women's Library

Glasgow Women's Library's collections are a unique resource, providing vital evidence of women's achievements, culture and lives. During a two year project working with women throughout Glasgow and across the whole of Scotland, GWL used this archive – which includes the collection donated to GWL by Cicely Hamilton's biographer, Liz Whitelaw - to give a voice to forgotten heroines of the past, culminating in a performance event and a procession that reflected the suffragette processions of the early 20th century. One of the aims of the project was to bring back the lost art

form of the suffragette pageant, together with a celebration of some of the Scottish women in our archive – in books, on our Heritage Walks, in museum items - and bring them to life in a way which was, and continues to be, accessible to everyone.

> I, Marion Gilchrist, am an ophthalmologist. I was the first woman to obtain a medical degree in Scotland. I campaigned energetically throughout my life for equality for women in work and education.
>
> Marion Gilchrist – Learned Woman

A Pageant of Great Women

The militant suffragettes were expert in both the dramatic and the subversive. Drama and cultural pursuits were part of their wide-ranging arsenal in the battle for women to achieve the vote. Supporters used all the skills and resources available to them to great effect. Actors and playwrights were instrumental in bringing suffrage messages to people across the land. The Actresses' Franchise League, formed in 1908, had over a thousand members (Holledge, 1981). They toured plays written by suffragette playwrights, spoke at public meetings and coached other women in public speaking. Suffrage plays were performed at meetings throughout the country, and proved a popular means of both bringing in a crowd and memorably conveying the suffrage message.

In 1909 playwright and actor Cicely Hamilton wrote the script for *A Pageant of Great Women*. In the play a court case is staged in which the character of Woman goes up against Prejudice to claim the right of women to have the vote. As her evidence, the character Woman brings on a cavalcade of women – Learned Women, Artists, Saintly Women, Heroic Women, Rulers and Warriors – ranks of remarkable women, each of whom announce their presence and their contribution to history and the world: Caroline Herschel, German astronomer and discoverer of comets; champion of the oppressed, Queen Zenobia of Syria; hero of the French Revolution, Charlotte Corday (Hamilton, 1909). Prejudice, needless to say, is not convinced and demands more and more proof. The character of Justice eventually decides that…well, justice will be done and women will be given the vote.

The play was staged all over Britain. The Actresses' Franchise League provided the three main actors and the costumes and a director was also on hand. Local suffrage societies provided the great women from history, with the extreme popularity of Joan of Arc causing some unpleasantness (Holledge, 1981).

> I am Maud Sulter - artist, poet, historian, feminist and Teacher, born in Glasgow of Scots - Ghanaian parentage. My work is concerned with questions of identity and how the past shapes the present and future. I was part of the Black Art Movement in the 1980s. "Our blackness, a bond, before speech or encounter." But where am I represented?
>
> Maud Sulter – Artist

Making The Play Relevant

The restaging of an arguably arcane, fairly inaccessible early 20th century play in the locale of one of the most deprived areas in Scotland, and, indeed, in Europe in the early 21st century, opened up questions of the validity of an unadapted restaging. GWL, whose aims are to encourage the widest participation, wanted to ensure that it was not anachronistic and that it was relevant, interesting and accessible to diverse

audiences. This was demonstrably the case, with sustained interest shown by the wide range of participants and the levels of engagement with the production, the linked collections at GWL and with a film produced of the event that has been shown in multiple locations, as will be discussed later.

Professor Katherine Cockin of the University of Hull was active in instigating a restaging of *A Pageant of Great Women* in Hull in 2011 and Dr Anna Birch, a theatre and artistic director based at Glasgow's Royal Conservatoire, had been invited to direct the performance. This was the first restaging of the play in the 21st century and Dr Birch was keen to develop this further and work with an organisation such as GWL to bring the play to a wider audience and encourage public participation. Professor Cockin also supported the subsequent adapted performance, March of Women, in Glasgow.

The aims of the partners involved in a new, adapted staging were to enable deeper widespread engagement, make a film, learn about the scope of performance, illuminate our collections for participants, and recover heroines hidden from history. A shared aim was to bring Cicely Hamilton's play up to date and make it relevant to women in Scotland today. This was also an opportunity for women, many of whom were remote from collections and research to delve into GWL's archives to discover the hidden histories of women. Throughout the process our Collections and Learning teams were able to showcase relevant materials including suffragette plays and memorabilia. In the run up to the project, we held sessions called Drama Queens where we invited participants to discover and read some of the wide variety of plays in our collection, including an absolutely hilarious evening where we read Caryl Churchill's Top Girls (about a woman who hosts a dinner party for famous women from history). GWL had recently relocated to its first permanent premises and this was also an ideal opportunity to convey an inclusive message about our collections and programmes.

Suffragette Rosette making workshop. Credit: Glasgow Women's Library

We supported participants to research a Scottish women from history, 'claim' her, write lines for her to say and perform as her in the final play; to fashion their own suffragette sash and rosette; make a banner and march to Glasgow Green dressed in white, wearing their sashes and rosettes. Women could choose to do whichever element or elements they felt comfortable with. Many women engaged with the whole process and we ended up with sixty-six women with speaking roles, plus a further sixty-one who had either made sashes for the historic woman of their choice, or who wore one of the sashes representing the original women from the play. The involvement of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland meant that participants benefited from learning around aesthetics and performance, rehearsing and choreography. The incorporation of trained actors and workshops on voice and projection was a very valuable experience.

One of GWL's aims is to make our collections meaningful to everyone who comes through our doors and to make it easy for all library users to participate in everything we do. My role at GWL is as Adult Literacy and Numeracy Development Worker and I wanted to make the project something which was accessible to everyone. Literacy learners and others who had special access requirements were supported to participate in all aspects of the project. The performance was signed. In addition, one of the GWL literacy learners, for example - a local woman - immersed herself in the whole project: she made her first sash, read her first play, wrote her own lines and performed in her first play. She subsequently reprised her role as Agnes Hardie – pacifist, politician and powerful speaker on the conditions of the working classes – at the high-profile launch of the new premises of GWL where she spoke her lines in front of a large crowd including Scotland's First Minister and other prominent attendees.

> I am Jane Haining, and I found my life's work in the mission fields of Hungary during the Second World War, protecting and loving Jewish, orphaned girls. If these children needed me during the days of sunshine, how much more did they need me in those days of darkness? I was one of only three Scottish women to be killed in the Nazi concentration camps.
>
> Jane Haining – Saintly Women

Women's History Out On The Streets

We held craft workshops to make suffragette rosettes where we talked about the suffragettes, about the colours they used and why they used them, and about the items in our collection. We had handling sessions for our suffragette archive items: jewellery, postcards, pottery and other memorabilia which brought women's suffrage history to life. We talked about voting today and this spun off into a political literacies group called Speak Up For Women. This was particularly relevant at a time when Scotland was holding its Independence Referendum. The group included women who had never voted before and looked at the mechanics of voting, issues in the Referendum and the impact of politics on the lives of women. The group developed their own Womanifesto of issues which were important to them and created an easy read leaflet on how to register and how to vote which they then handed to people in the local community.

On the day the play was performed – March 7th, 2015 – on the eve of International Women's Day - we asked people to arrive in white. Women from all over Scotland dressed up in the traditional white suffragette outfit and those who had been involved as participants donned their sashes. A group from Aberdeen even had special white dresses made for the occasion. Women who hadn't been able to participate in any of

the workshops but who turned up in white on the day were given one of the sashes for the original 50 women in the play, stood on stage supporting the women who were speaking and joined us in the procession. The workshops ensured that ethnically diverse women were amongst the expanded array of heroines.

Sarah Amy Fishlock for Glasgow Women's Library

The play was the culmination of over a year's planning and collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The performance element was staged at GWL. Over a hundred women in white – some non-speaking – participated on the day. The women who spoke - all sixty-six of them - had written their own lines. Hearing the stories of all those women together was very powerful and inspiring. And then we all marched through the streets of Bridgeton carrying banners, to collect on Glasgow Green where some of the women performed a choreographed suffragette tableau.

> And I, Victoria Drummond, were my deeds unworthy of a man? I was apprenticed at the Caledon Ship Works, in Dundee, and started my career at sea as an assistant engineer in 1922, rising to become the UK's first female chief engineer. I was awarded the MBE for my war service.
>
> Victoria Drummond - Heroic Woman.

Glasgow Women's Library's Feminist Praxis

Griselda Pollock states:

> Archives matter. What is included shapes forever what we think we were and hence what we might become. The absence of women's histories in world archives has defined a vision of the human on the pattern of a privileged masculinity. Humanity's self-definition requires a challenge to that vision. (Pollock, 2007, p.12)

Pollock notes that archives are selective, that they represent only what each culture considers important and worthy of remembrance. As such, they are skewed. Privilege and power have the upper hand and issues of class, race, gender and sexuality mean that vast numbers of people are, essentially, cut out of history.

And, as Eichhorn (2013, p.3) observes, women's archives are 'where academic and activist work frequently converge. Indeed, the creation of archives has become integral to how knowledge [is] produced and legitimized and how feminist activists, artists, and scholars make their voices audible.'

Eichhorn further states that archives are where knowledge production begins (2013, p. 3). March of Women demonstrates GWL's feminist social praxis view that the archive is not just a passive depository of historical artefacts but is a living, breathing resource that can be used and enjoyed by everyone. Texts and archive items at GWL are made meaningful: they are used, reinterpreted and take on a whole new life of their own. Working with the archive is a conversation between history, present and future. Throughout history, women and their stories have been marginalised and sidelined and GWL aims to support women – including those women who have, traditionally, been removed from arts and culture - to creatively rework the past and improve the future by bringing those stories to life.

> Here's royal Mary to give the lie to him... I became Queen of Scotland at 6 days old, and Queen of France at 16. I was tall, beautiful, shrewd and vivacious. I married whom I wanted, refused sovereignty to my second husband, and died in the midst of dramatic tragedy.
>
> Mary Queen of Scots – Ruler

The Legacy

Speaking about the original version of *A Pageant of Great Women*, Cockin states: 'Great women of the early twentieth century combined to find out about great women of the past and many of the names in the play have again become forgotten.' (Cockin, 2014). The GWL/RCS restaging demonstrates the circularity of recovery and reinstalling of women in the canon as women of the early 21st century combined to find out about great women of their own country's past and reclaim those forgotten names.

As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett proposes, the 21st-century museum is a "theater, a memory palace, a stage for the enactment of other times and places, a space of transport, fantasy, dreams" (1998, p.139) and, as collaborators, museums and theatre are a perfect fit.

March of Women built on and expanded other examples of collaborations between museums and theatre. Bennett (2012) states that, while theatre has traditionally been seen as the antonym for what is found in museum (p.3), both provide entertainment and education and share much common ground in cultural production and community engagement and "play a role in creating and enacting place-based identity" (p.3). The Gude Cause project in 2009 developed a network of women's organisations to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh Women's Suffrage Procession in 1909. Over a hundred organisations were involved, making banners and researching influential Scottish suffragettes, culminating in a re-enactment of the 1909 procession. Similarly, York Theatre Royal/Pilot Theatre's Everything is Possible used community theatre to explore the contemporary relevance of the suffragettes (Brennan, 2017).

Where GWL is unique, however, is that it goes beyond the traditional reach of both museums and theatre. At GWL, communities (both geographical and communities of practice) use GWL's materials as a springboard for wider learning engagement. Levels of ownership in GWL's collection are high and sustained with projects building on each other and on our collections. We are renowned for our success in community engagement with diverse audiences and this sets us apart from more traditional museums. Our collections tell the stories of how women have shaped their own lives and those of their broader communities – and how ultimately they have changed hearts, minds and laws. And we want people who are not historians, academics or museum professionals to tell those stories. We want ordinary women reflected on our bookshelves and in our display cases; we want many different voices telling stories and we want to connect inspiring women from the past with the next generations.

The March of Women project worked well for a number of reasons. Firstly, it brought together in an innovative way a diverse range of participants. Women who had been poorly served by education in the past worked alongside those who were passionate and knowledgeable about history. GWL's role was vital here in bridging the gap between a more academic institution and participants who have traditionally been seen as 'hard to reach', but who we prefer to refer to as 'easy to ignore'. In addition, it facilitated an experimental and inventive skills exchange. Women who might not have been confident as historians but who were confident seamstresses or brave performers recognised the importance of, and were able to share, their own knowledge and skills. The March of Women project has lasting and sustained significance. An excited and enthralled audience enjoyed an atmospheric performance of the re-written *Pageant of Great Women* on an overcast March day within a Carnegie Library built just four years before the play was written, at Bridgeton in the heart of Glasgow's historic East End. The whole process - the workshops, the women, the performance, the procession and the tableau – was documented by a professional film-maker and the film, March! has been screened in Paisley, Aberdeen, London and the Houses of Parliament. It has been sent to Spain and taken to America. Every participant got a free copy and copies are sold to raise funds for GWL. The trailer can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwH_fA5e64I&feature=youtu.be

The innovative hybridity of practice – literacy learning, research, writing, choreography, performance, costuming, academically-led seminars such as that by Katherine Cockin – and the multiple collaborative relationships resulting in a combination of museological, heritage and history aspects, extended the project beyond the traditional museum re-enactment. In its performance of knowledge, March of Women reflects the original intention of Pageant, to quote Cockin: "combining the political and the aesthetic, provocatively engaging in history-making and rousing local communities to connect with it." It enabled a reengagement with the past and opened up relevant new avenues for creativity and learning for a wide contemporary audience.

There is evident value in restaging and revisiting this wonderful, valuable and inspiring play. March of Women continues as March On: cohorts of women have performed short iterations of the play at the Govan Fair and the Kelvingrove Bandstand in Glasgow; others participated in Forward: Remembering The Women's Peace Crusaders – a project involving an exhibition, performance and new work by photographer Amy Fishlock to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the first Women's Peace Crusade in July 1916 in which women marched from George Square to Glasgow Green. And women who participated in the March of Women regularly ask

us when they will get the opportunity to don their white clothes and suffragette sashes for another performance! We will, indeed, March On.

> Look on me, Ethel Moorhead - militant Suffragette, smasher of windows, wrecker of police cells, who once threw an egg at Winston Churchill. I contracted pneumonia when being force fed in Perth Prison. But I would gladly have suffered more for the noble cause.
>
> Ethel Moorhead - Warrior

Sarah Amy Fishlock for Glasgow Women's Library

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"Any More Picketing and I'll Leave": Reflections on Researching Women's Protest and Politics in the Daily Herald Archive at the National Science and Media Museum

Kirsty Fife

Kirsty Fife, Curator of Library and Archives at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, describes how she used the arrangement of the picture library of the Daily Herald Archive to curate an exhibition on women's rights and activism.

The National Science and Media Museum holds the Daily Herald Archive, the picture library of the socialist newspaper of the same name. Established at the start of the 1930s, the library's extensive contents begin after the royal assent of both Representation of the People and Equal Franchise Acts (1918 and 1928)[1] and finish in the early 1970s, mid-way through the second wave of feminism.[2] The photographs in the archive document many significant social, political and cultural milestones of the early and mid-20th century, including many that affected women particularly strongly – campaigns for equal pay, childcare and reproductive rights, the first generations of women in Parliament and the marches and demonstrations for women's rights that continue today.

To explore progress made (and, in many cases, not made) since the passing of the first Representation of the People Act (1918) 100 years ago, I am in the process of developing a display exploring women's politics and organising in the archive. *Revolting Women: Protest and Politics in the Daily Herald Archive* is a display curated to explore the representation of women's organising and politics in the archive that will run in January and February 2018 at the National Science and Media Museum.

This article explores the process of researching women's activism and rights in the Daily Herald Archive as part of developing the display. I explore how women are represented in the Daily Herald Archive in various contexts within the archive's large and complex structure. I ask how our understanding of the context and wider representation of women within the Daily Herald affects the way we interpret images on gallery. I will argue that understanding of the context and use of images in the archive is pivotal to interpretation of them on gallery, particularly in the context of women's rights and organising.

The Daily Herald Archive

The Daily Herald was launched in January 1911 as a strike sheet for the London printing unions, then involved in an industrial dispute, to support their pleas for improved pay and conditions. So successful was the sheet in helping the unions win their argument, that a movement began for the Herald to be adopted as the daily newspaper in support of the socialist cause. Late 1929 saw a massive drive to achieve these aims. The size of the paper was doubled from ten to twenty pages; rallies and events promoting the new Herald were held across the country; members of the Labour Party were recruited to promote the paper and a prize incentive scheme was implemented where premium cameras and free gifts were given away on purchase of the paper. These initiatives resulted in a steep increase in the Herald's circulation from 250,000 to a million. This trend continued until, in 1933, the Herald

became the world's top selling popular daily newspaper, with certified net sales of 2 million.

After the Herald's circulation dwindled throughout the 1950s, Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN\IPC) assumed ownership of the paper in 1961. The company began a massive drive to revive the ailing Herald. After an initial period of assessment, MGN\IPC decided to enliven the image of the paper in order to broaden its appeal. In September 1964 the paper was relaunched as *The Sun* with the slogan 'A Paper Born of the Age We Live In'. Despite this change of image, the paper's format remained stale and uninspiring. After an initial upsurge in circulation, sales again declined. MGN\IPC decided to cut their losses and in 1969 sold *The Sun* to Rupert Murdoch's News International, whereupon its content and message completely altered.

Following the rebrand and renaming of The Daily Herald, the picture library's archive was donated to the National Portrait Gallery by IPC Newspapers in the early 1970s. The Daily Herald Archive was transferred to the National Science and Media Museum by the National Portrait Gallery in 1983, where it has remained ever since.

Researching Women's Histories in the Daily Herald Archive

The Daily Herald Archive is kept in the stores at the National Science and Media Museum in the original order and classification system used to organise the library by workers at the Daily Herald. The concept of original order is a founding principle of archival theory. Developed by Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin in their famous *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, the authors 'believed that by so respecting the arrangement of original record-keeping systems, the all-important archival activity of elucidating the administrative context in which the records are originally created could be much facilitated.' (Cook, 1997 p. 21)

The choice to preserve the classification system of the Daily Herald workers is both a pragmatic and conceptual decision. The archive is overwhelming in size, and the resource to catalogue such a large, complex collection has always been minimal – thus the initial decision to preserve the order enables collections access staff to navigate the material relatively easily. However, preserving the existing file structure also preserves another crucial part of the archive – the administrative context within which images are created, sourced and reproduced in the newspaper itself. This context can tell us about the ways in which workers at the newspaper used, interpreted and reused photography.

At the beginning of the development of this display, I was curious what I would find in the archive about women's political organising, representation and activism. Before George Lansbury became the paper's editor in 1913, he was a supporter of the Women's Social and Political Union and had resigned as MP for Bow and Bromley in 1910 to stand as a suffrage candidate but lost. However, his editorship ended in 1922, well before the picture library was formally established. Lived experience of navigating the physical file structure of the archive has made me aware of the ways in which the original classification oppresses and, in some cases, disguises the histories of people from marginalised backgrounds. As examples, women are often classified in files relating to their husband, or defined in relation to him. People of colour, disabled people and transgender people are often categorised under terms that are outdated at best and offensive at worst. In some cases, people from these backgrounds go unnamed, referred to instead as "coloured speaker" or similar – identifiable through their otherness only. More work needs to be done to understand the way in which the

administrative context of the file structure relates to the images themselves.

Women are categorised in different places all over the Daily Herald Archive, and I did not explore all the parts of the archive in which I could expect to find their representations. Knowing that I planned to focus the display on politics, protest and organising, I choose to look in the following sections to find relevant materials:

- Workers
- Demonstrations
- Strikes
- Unions
- Politics – Labour party
- Features – women's liberation movement
- People (named files for female politicians)
- Industry

The choice to look in these sections influenced the types of events and news stories that I located. By looking in these broad categories I was also able to compare the representation of women in left-wing organising and industry to that of their male counterparts. There is also potential to explore the representation of women (and indeed, also people of colour, disabled people, LGBTIQ people and other marginalised people represented by the paper) in many other parts of archive, and this would be a rich source for further research in these areas.

To explore the ways in which women's rights and activisms are documented in the archive, I present three case studies of representations of women in the archive. These are not conclusive or extensive, but act as illustrations of the complexities that arise when interpreting the archive for museum display purposes.

'Any More Picketing and I Leave'

Photograph of seven women workers on strike at Sunpak Ltd metal manufacturers in Kennington, London on 8th September 1960. © Daily Herald Archive at the National Science and Media Museum, 1983-5236/19737

One series selected for the display, categorised under "strikes – post-war – miscellaneous", shows a group of fourteen metal factory workers on strike at Sunpak Ltd in Kennington, London. The workers, all young women, are photographed during a short strike in September 1960. The photographs and contact prints in the folder show the workers standing outside the factory and in communication with other factory staff. One series shows the girls attempting to stop a wagon carrying non-striking workers (referred to as the 'Armoured Car' by the picketers) from entering the factory's premises. The women cling onto the factory gates to prevent management opening them to allow the car and subsequent delivery vehicles through.

The exact nature of the dispute that led to the strike is not cited in the image captions. Instead the accompanying article focuses on the status of a marriage between striker Doris McGuigan and her then husband Frank. The first sentence in the article, written by Ann Butler, reads

> A husband told his wife yesterday: "Choose between me and the strike. Any more picketing and I leave. And 19-year-old Doris McGuigan said "I believe he would go – and take our baby with him. I want to stand by the girls, but I think I'll have to pack it in". (Daily Herald Archive at National Science and Media Museum, Bradford)

The focus on the state of the marriage of strikers rather than the nature of the dispute reflects the primary societal value of women at that point in time as wives, mothers and carers. It's hard to imagine this focus on marital relations being used to lead reports about men in industrial action, whose labour disputes are extensively documented elsewhere in the Daily Herald Archive. Whilst not the original intention of the article itself, this juxtaposition draws attention to the divide between the different types of work expected of women – both paid (factory work) and unpaid (housework, caring, matrimonial duties). In this context, the behaviour of the striking women is represented as doubly disruptive, both within the context of their workplace and within normative marital relationships and, more widely, patriarchal society as a whole.

'A Man Among the Militant Women'

Photograph of demonstrators at women's liberation movement march in London, 6th March 1971. © Daily Herald Archive at the National Science and Media Museum, 1983-5236/19740

Whilst the limitations of the Daily Herald Archive's scope misses out on many of the demonstrations and protests led by women in the 1970s and 1980s, a small folder categorised as "demonstrations – women – women's liberation movement" holds a series of images from a march for equal rights held by the women's liberation movement[3] on 6th March 1971. In this series of photographs, sourced by the Daily Herald from Press Association Photos and The People, women are shown marching with placards and banners with slogans including 'Free Contraception and Abortion On Demand', 'Free 24 Hour Nurseries' and 'Equal Pay Now'. Protestors swear at photographers and side eye police present at the demonstration.

A *Guardian* article documenting the march itself, originally written by Jill Tweedle and republished online as part of their archive, describes the vibrancy and diversity of the marchers;

> Long and short and thin and fat, quiet, middle-aged ladies in careful make-up, bare-faced girls with voices loud as crows, Maoists, liberals, socialists, lesbians, students, professionals, manual workers, spinsters, wives, widows, mothers. One two three four we want a bloody damn sight more. Biology isn't destiny. Equal pay now. Bed or wed, are you free to choose? I'm not just a delectable screwing machine. Capitalism breeds sexploitation. Freedom. There were even women so politically committed that the very sight of Downing Street submerged "24-hour Nurseries" with "Tories Out" and "Kill the Bill." (Tweedle, 1971: online)

The march, documented as the first formally organised by the Women's Liberation Movement, is documented in other contemporary press platforms as a significant moment in history. However, the caption on the back of the image in the Daily Herald Archive demeans the march, choosing to focus on one male member of the march and drawing attention to the lack of men in the movement.

> A Man Among The Militant Women. A bearded man among the militant women as they left Speaker's Corner, Hyde Park, to march to Trafalgar Square in demand for equal rights with men. A handful of men joined the march. It was organised by the Women's Liberation Movement which has "four paid-up male members". One of them declared this is a social issue." (Daily Herald Archive at National Science and Media Museum, Bradford)

This caption almost acts in opposition to the series of photographs, which individually highlight the extent and size of the march. The photograph which features the lone bearded man does not in any way focus on his presence or centre him as a subject – it is instead simply a photograph of marchers carrying banners and placards, one of whom happens to be a man. The way in which the Daily Herald journalists interpret the image recentres the demonstration around a man and the involvement (or lack of involvement) of men within the developing Women's Liberation Movement. Powerful and vibrant images are rewritten within the context and narrative of a newspaper seemingly hostile and unimpressed by a developing movement.

Photograph of Sheila Pickles, mill worker at Valley Mills, Apperley Bridge, Bradford.
© Daily Herald Archive at the National Science and Media Museum, 1983-5236/19743

Another section I began to explore in more detail for traces of women and activism was the ‘workers’ category in the Daily Herald Archive. This section is split down into industry and – interestingly – also contains a sub-division for women workers. This in itself is interesting, and raises questions about whether women workers were perceived as part of or separate to narratives about specific industries. The ‘workers – women’ section further subdivides into a number of sub-sub-sub-series including one titled ‘workers – women – Daily Herald ‘pretty factory girls’ which I wanted to explore.

The ‘pretty factory girls’ series seems to have been a regular feature run by the Daily Herald in the 1950s and 1960s. Daily Herald staff photographers were sent to photograph women working in factories, mills and other industrial spaces across the UK, sometimes prompted by managers and company owners directly. The photographs in this series are portraits of young women, posed in everyday industrial settings. One article from a series relating to workers at a mill in Bradford reads:

> When the Daily Herald asked to hear about pretty factory girls, one of the [Bradford] mill owners wrote “I am sure your eyes would open if you were to send a photographer to our mill.” We went – and these pictures show just three of the pretty girls we found… And the odd thing… is that they haven’t the time to spend beautifying themselves in the conventional ways. (Daily Herald Archive, National Science and Media Museum)

The objectification of the women working in industry by the Daily Herald is by no means uncommon. The classification of women by their physical features rather than their position within industries (as with their male counterparts) once again demonstrates what was the contemporary societal value of women as objects of desire and potential partners for (a presumed) male reader. The act of classification by picture library workers also speaks to the power of the workers to control how women are understood within the archive itself. Theorists including Kate Eichhorn have written about the ways in which the power of the archivist intersects with marginalisation, particularly in relation to the archiving of women's histories. In this context, she writes that

> "Archiving" was not being read as an adjective describing an active subject (women) but rather "women" was being read as an object of an action (archiving). The emphasis, in other words, appeared to be on understanding women as potential subjects rather than central agents of the archive. (Eichhorn, 2010: p. 623)

The images themselves taken without context can easily be used in displays about industry and work in the mid-20th century. However, in doing so we also remove layers of context that help us to locate and deconstruct the roles allocated to women by Daily Herald writers and editors. By understanding these images in context, we can begin to question the ways in which women are and are not present in histories of industry and labour.

Conclusion

The Daily Herald Archive is used extensively in exhibition, interpretation and display at the National Science and Media Museum. With over 3 million individual images covering the early and mid-20th century, it is possible to source at least one image to complement an exhibition on any subject matter. However, the way in which the photographs in the archive are often presented without context can leave visitors unaware of the complex relationship between journalists, ideologies photographs and publishing industries. When interpreting these individual images, I would argue that using the accompanying articles, captions and classification of images can only help us strengthen our understanding of the many uses of photography.

By critically reflecting on the construction of women within the Daily Herald Archive I have raised questions about the way we use and interpret photography in interpretation and display. I began by introducing the context, archival history and administrative history of the archive, before sharing three case studies in which women are understood and presented as objects of desire, as marital trouble makers, protestors and always in relation to men (readers, husbands, bystanders and managers). The women of the Daily Herald Archive are, in unsuspecting ways, disruptive forces, existing powerfully and against commentary and classification that attempts to reintegrate them within patriarchal structures of work, relationships and spaces. Interpreting their struggle in our museums and galleries also entails interpreting the structure and context in which their images remain so poignant.

Revolting Women: Politics and Protest in the Daily Herald Archive was on display at the National Science and Media Museum between 8th January 2018 and 11th February 2018.

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[1]The Representation of the People Act (1918) granted the vote to women over the age of 30 who met a property qualification. The same Act gave the vote to all men over the age of 21. The Representation of the People Act (Equal Franchise Act) of 1928 granted equal voting rights to women and men. As a result, both men and women could vote at the age of 21.

[2]Waves of feminism refer to the development of related but different movements to support women's equality throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The first wave (roughly between the 1800s and early 1900s) was largely concerned with the right to participate in politics through voting and representation, as well as property rights and welfare rights for women. The second wave (roughly between the 1960s and 1980s) campaigned to support women at work, in relationships and families, and to improve rights relating to sexuality and reproduction amongst many other concerns. The third wave of feminism is not covered by the Daily Herald Archive but originated in the 1990s through, amongst other arenas, DIY culture and academia, where it was largely informed by postmodern and postcolonial thinking.

[3]The women's liberation movement refers to a loosely bound network of feminist and women-led thinking that developed globally in the late 1960s. In the UK, ten conferences organised by the National Women's Liberation Movement were facilitated in the 1970s as well as a number of large demonstrations.

Here are two reviews by Christine Alford and Claire Madge of the Votes for Women exhibition at the Museum of London running until 6 January 2019.

Review of Votes for Women display, Museum of London

Christine Alford

This display celebrates the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, the law that allowed the first women the right to vote. The act was the first step towards equal rights for women in the UK. Women were granted the right to vote if they were either a member, or married to a member of the local government register, or a graduate voting in a university constituency.

Medal presented to Emmeline Pankhurst in 1912, Photo Credit: Christine Alford

The display fails to mention the wider historical context of the women's vote. Helen Pankhurst (2013, cited in Hawksley: 8) explains that women's movement in the UK needs to be understood by the influences of other countries, such as New Zealand and Australia, who allowed women to vote in 1892 and 1902, respectively.

The display includes a silver necklace that was worn by Emily 'Kitty' Willoughby Marshall, a letter written by Winefride Mary Rix, and the hunger strike medal that was presented to Emmeline Pankhurst in 1912. 'Kitty' was first imprisoned in 1910 for throwing a potato at the residence of Winston Churchill. The letter was written by Winefride Mary Rix, after she was imprisoned for two months for smashing a window at the War Office in March 1912. It is displayed next to a label that was attached to a box of apples that was brought in to Holloway prison by her husband.

Label for a box of apples, presented to Winefride Mary Rix. Photo credit: Christine Alford

The display is dominated by an overpowering video on a large screen, that detracts from the small selection of objects that are on display. The video aims to bring the feminism debate into the 21st century with comment from curators, students, charity workers and the prominent business woman, Gina Miller.

Video Installation. Photo Credit: Christine Alford

The video is on a constant loop, which is distracting for visitors who want to engage with the powerful objects that are on display. The labels for the objects are not written in an accessible, easy to read, large font. The low light levels maybe necessary for the conservation of the objects, but the display could be improved by using large text labels.

The display fails to mention the significant men who supported the campaign for women's right to vote. Lucinda Hawksley (2013: 15) quotes the MP John Temple Leader, who spoke out for the rights of women, when he addressed the House of Commons on 14th December 1837:

"As it stands at present, the law is entirely in favour of the husband and oppressive to the wife."

The Museum of London has other objects that relate to the suffragette movement in other galleries. The suffragette movement highlighted the plight of women who suffered from abuse at the hands of their husband, and were assaulted by police officers.

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Exhibition Review of Votes for Women, Museum of London, (2 February 2018 – 6 January 2019) and Shades of Suffragette Militancy, Museum of London, (2 February 2018 – 25 April 2018)

Claire Madge

February 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act which gave some women, but by no means all women, the right to vote in Parliamentary elections. To commemorate this seminal moment for women's equality the Museum of London has opened two displays to complement their permanent collection which highlight the untold stories of women in the suffrage movement.

The museum holds a large collection of material relating to the militant side of the suffrage campaign. With the Votes for Women exhibition they have focussed in on their existing permanent collections to expand on the impact of the suffragette's actions on society and politics in London between 1903 and 1914.

In a slightly disjointed display there are three separate areas to visit. The permanent collection tucked away in the Modern London Gallery, a Show Space called Shades of Suffragette Militancy and a Votes for Women display.

The Show Space has a number of powerful objects, including the body belt and section of grille from the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons to which Muriel Matters chained herself in 1908. This section also highlights the use of art and design in the campaign; while the Votes for Women political banners are familiar to many, it is refreshing to see the 'Pank-a-Squith' board game and beautifully designed Anti-Suffrage Alphabet by Laurence Housman, produced to raise funds for the suffrage campaign.

The interpretation is brought to life by an audio clip from the Women's Library collection now based at the London School of Economics where Cicely Hale (1884-1981) recounts her memories of suffragette processions and public reaction to the campaign. It is easy to forget that even women marching together caused outrage at the turn of the 19th century.

The Votes for Women display is restricted to four cases highlighting individual objects. A specially-commissioned film featuring an array of modern voices including Helen Pankhurst, Emmeline's great-granddaughter, who expands on the impact of the suffragette campaign in a contemporary context. It is an effective way to consider how the past is not done and dusted but relates to us in 2018.

There is a potent juxtaposition on displaying Emily 'Kitty' Willoughby Marshall's (1871-1947) delicate silver necklace that commemorates the three terms of imprisonment she served. The femininity of the jewellery abuts the violence that led to imprisonment and the brutal treatment of many who were force fed in prison.

Perhaps most affecting is a recent acquisition, a letter from Winefride Mary Rix (1873-1966) to her 12 year old daughter, written whilst imprisoned for smashing a window at the War Office. It shows the realities faced by women who often chose to go to prison for their beliefs.

It is a shame that a larger space was not given over to a more expanded view of the suffrage movement, the Votes for Women display simply highlights how the permanent collection is crammed into an unforgotten corner. I hope, with a move to Smithfield Market currently planned for 2022, the museum will re-assess the display of such an important and emotive collection.

Exhibition Review of *Our Red Aunt* Glasgow Women's Library, (2nd February 2018 – 17th March 2018)

Gemma Elliott

Gemma Elliott reviews the exhibition Our Red Aunt at Glasgow Women's Library featuring works by Fiona Jack on the life of her father's great-aunt, the suffragette Helen Crawfurd.

In the centenary year of the Representation of the People Act many events are celebrating this advance in women's rights. However, Scottish suffrage campaigners have always been neglected in history, and on this important anniversary, Scottish areas were not eligible for many sources of funding such as the Centenary Cities grant. Thankfully, Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), currently the only accredited museum of women's history in the UK, exists to fill this gap left by academic oversight and restricted government funding. On 1st February 2018 GWL launched an exhibition of New Zealand-based artist Fiona Jack's *Our Red Aunt* featuring works based on the life of her father's great-aunt, the suffrage campaigner and socialist activist Helen Crawfurd. Glaswegian Crawfurd (1877-1954) was a Women's Social and Political Union member, an organiser of the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strikes, and stood as a Communist Party candidate in a 1921 local election.

Jack has created a series of artworks that bear the words and spirit of her relative, with ceramic items on display, each acknowledging an aspect of Crawfurd's life, work and values in glazed stoneware. This includes a tea cup referencing her time as a militant suffragette; a bottle emblazoned with 'for the last nine years I have been an active supporter of any movement that has attacked capitalism' to share her radical left-wing politics; and a jug with an image of Crawfurd and the words 'Helen Crawfurd – First Woman Councillor – Dunoon 1946' to remind us she was a trailblazer. Alongside the ceramics, in the space that was formerly the men's reading room when the GWL building in the east end of Glasgow was a public library, are a collection of fabric ribbons each containing a quote from Crawfurd's unpublished autobiography, held in the Marx Memorial Library in London. These fabric ribbons, reminiscent of the sashes worn by suffrage campaigners, feature slogans ranging from the serious – 'there can be no safety, no security, while capitalism continues' – to the ridiculous – 'for God's sake stop jazzing and get to work' – with the latter featuring in many Twitter posts celebrating the event. Upstairs in the library, Jack has also created a banner proclaiming: 'Glasgow Women's Library: made in Glasgow, nourished by Scottish Women, with links around the world' to be kept on display after the exhibition ends.

While these pieces are aesthetically and historically interesting, Jack's exhibition truly exemplifies and celebrates the inclusive and participatory elements of both suffrage movement and the GWL in the adjoining room, where a copy of Crawfurd's autobiography is on display for anyone to read and indeed to edit or footnote in a crowdsourcing of knowledge. This room also holds a 'huge bag of militancy' as Adele Patrick, GWL's Lifelong Learning and Creative Development Manager, described it: an industrial sack of stones, hand-polished by GWL volunteers, and engraved with 'in the hands of the proletariat' to be taken home by exhibition visitors. In the spirit of the militant suffragettes, one launch attendee said casually 'doesn't this make you want to go and smash some windows?' as she chose her stone. It is not surprising that GWL's exhibition of Jack's work on her great-aunt would inspire such militancy, with

the feminist space of the library the perfect venue to exhibit the ideals of a woman who strove for equality. Similarly, GWL, which is used for wide a variety of purposes ranging from choir practice to archival research, is the ideal place for Fiona Jack's intermingling of feminist art and social history.

Book Review - *Soldiers and Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Broom*

Christine Alford

Christine Alford reviews Soldiers and Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Broom *by Anna Sparham, Diane Atkinson, Hilary Roberts, and Margaret Denny.*

This volume collates research that has been done on the prints, plates and documents relating to Christina Broom at the Museum of London. The book was published to coincide with the exhibition *Soldiers and Suffragettes: The Photography of Christina Broom* at the Museum of Docklands that took place in 2015. In 1903 Christina Broom launched her career as a professional photographer with the publication of her first promotional brochure that was entitled, *Mrs Albert Brooms Interesting 'Snap Shot' Postcards*.

In the first essay, Margaret Denny draws on her research on the Gernsheim Collection at the Harry Ransom Centre. After Broom's husband, Albert Broom, had a crippling cricket accident, the couple decided to open a stationery shop in Streatham Hill. The shop was not a commercial success, but it gave Christina Broom an insight into the thriving postcard trade. Denny compares Broom's photography practise with other Edwardian women photographers, such as Alice Hughes, Kate Pragnell and Lailie Charles. Denny also explores Broom's arresting images of London, such as 'View along Embankment towards the Houses of Parliament'.

Diane Atkinson explores Broom's approach to photographing the suffragettes, which includes a photograph of the Putney and Fulham WSPU branch office in Fulham Road in 1910. The suffragette series shows women ready to march, standing tall and proud, holding elaborate banners. There are no photos in this volume that record the violent actions, that took place between 1913 and 1914, when the suffragettes smashed windows, set fire to empty properties and defaced artworks. Christina Broom had to carry cumbersome equipment, and she used a tripod, which would have made her unable to take photos of conflict situations. Atkinson notes that the family papers contain no evidence for Broom's active support for the suffragettes.

Hilary Roberts explores Broom's series of photos of the armed forces between 1904 and 1939. In 1904 Christina Broom, with the assistance of her daughter, Winnie took some photos of the Scots Guard. They decided to send the resulting photos to the Commanding Officer of the Scots Guards. Winnie's memoirs record the responses to Christina Broom's military photography, as Lord Roberts proclaims, 'Mrs Broom, you are taking good photographs which you sell amongst the men at 2d, each, with an envelope so they can enclose a letter when they write home, and their relatives see their men well fed, well shod and happy.'

Broom's military photography captures the harsh reality of war time Britain, from anxious children waiting to be sent to the country for safety, to shots of the 1st Life Guards saying goodbye to their families as they depart for the Front in 1915. Her shot of 'The Bermondsey Boys' captures the camaraderie of the Grenadier Guards, as they relax for a photo. Some of them smile, while others have stern, stoic faces. Broom's suffragette series, seems incomplete, as there are no shots of conflict, or photos of the women who suffered in prison.

Social History in Museums

Special issue: The Centenary of the Representation of the People Act (1918) in Museums. Guest edited by Dr Gillian Murphy, Curator for Equality, Rights and Citizenship, London School of Economics.

Edited by Amy Rowbottom

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