Women's Suffrage Societies and the Gendering of Power – the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) as pioneers of women-led organisations

Lin Lovell

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of the West of England, Bristol for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, University of the West of England, Bristol

November 2021

Abstract

This thesis challenges the continued application by historians of the terms 'militant' to the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and 'constitutional' to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The continued link of the WSPU with militancy, and a focus on modes of campaigning and styles of agitation, fails to address the complexity of suffrage history. By focusing on the structures and systems of organisation utilised by both societies, this study highlights instead the similarities of the two organisations as opposed to their differences. It focuses on a distinctive new approach, offering an analysis of the previously neglected organisational methods used by both the WSPU and NUWSS, concentrating in particular on how both societies were essentially female-led and managed. In doing so, this thesis proposes a new analytical framework for understanding how both suffrage societies created and ran two very successful organisations. The organisational structures and systems employed by both the WSPU and NUWSS were often a reinterpretation of male management methods and facilitated the administration of membership, recruitment, people, events, publicity, propaganda, marketing, executive decisions, and governed processes and procedures. By offering a focus on the organisational strategies of the NUWSS and WSPU as women-led political organisations and employers, this thesis highlights how the societies both utilised and transgressed the separate spheres ideology.

Alongside an examination of the national movement, a case study of the south west region details how the WSPU developed new groups nationwide, networked, developed alliances with influential local people, and used local knowledge to recruit women from all sectors of society. This case study offers a detailed analysis of local organisations, and explores how this regional work contributed to the nationally successful organisational approaches and methods of the WSPU and NUWSS.

Acknowledgements

I made it this far because:

Laura Harrison and Harriet Bradley were patient, extremely supportive, and steered me through the many ups and downs that went with my journey.

I particularly would like to thank my son Andy who was anxious that I would submit and consequently nudged and prodded me towards completion.

Helen Frisby provided much needed support, brilliant listening skills and patience.

Riley my wonderful dog, who by his continuous presence at my side, especially during lockdown, kept me committed and rational during such a difficult time.

Contents

List of tables and illustrations

Abbreviations

AFL	Actresses Franchise League
EFF	Election Fighting Fund
NUWSS	The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
WSPU	The Women's Social and Political Union
WFL	The Women's Freedom League

Introduction

This study provides an account of two suffrage movements. The National Union of Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was a Victorian women's suffrage movement. It was headed by an executive committee with little power and funds. It was not until 1907 that the NUWSS adopted a new constitution and continued with its aim to obtain the Parliamentary vote, as was, or may be granted to men. The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded in 1903, like the NUWSS upheld this claim and saw the franchise as key to the breaking down of the sex barrier. Both societies have been extensively researched and addressed by historians since the 1950s.[1] The early years of both societies are well documented and will not be the focus of this work. This thesis takes 1905 as its start, the date when the WSPU moved to London, and the lead up to when the NUWSS restructured becoming a stronger and more centralised society.

This study provides an account of how women, by actively campaigning for enfranchisement, sought to redefine female roles and political life. In the previous century the Corn Laws and Chartism questioned how women were regarded and treated. The NUWSS and the WSPU after 1905 redefined and pioneered strategies and systems that contributed to a new analysis of gender roles. These were an important in the pressure for citizenship leading to a change to women's roles in society. They designed, created, and shaped structures and systems.

The project undertaken here requires a modification of the division of the suffrage movements into two distinct wings; the NUWSS as 'constitutional' and the WSPU as 'militant'. This thesis will provide a reassessment of these terms as applied to the two

[1] Until recently, the majority of historical writing about the NUWSS has been limited but Ray Strachey in *Millicent Garrett National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914* **(**New York: Garland, 1982) provided the first view of the formation of the NUWSS from 1860s. Other interpretations have been provided by Brian Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries: Portraits of British Feminists Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1987**)**; David Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women: The Life of Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1991); Ray Strachey, *The Cause. A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (Virago Reprint 1979, first published 1928), and Leslie Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914* **(**New York: Garland, 1982). Historians have written extensively about the Pankhursts and the WSPU since the first derogatory chapter by George Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (Serif, England 1997), with notable examples including: David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts* (London: Macmillan, 1967); Martin Pugh, *The March of Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage* (Oxford: Press, 2000). The WSPU have been subject to a range of positive and negative perspectives including Christabel Pankhurst *Unshackled: The story of how we won the Vote* (London: Hutchinson, 1959); June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst A Biography* (London: Routledge, 2002); Les Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty* (London: Heinemann, 1984); Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1986); Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*: *Citizenship and Resistance in Britain 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); C. Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain of the Campaign 1866-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979). See also June Purvis, Sandra Stanley Holton, eds., *Votes for Women* (London: Routledge, 2000) and Antonia Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes* (London: Michael Joseph, 1973).

suffrage societies. The division fails to account for the role of political allegiances, power and leadership, and an extensive review of what is meant by the term militancy is needed. This builds upon the reviews and reinterpretations of the role of militancy in recent years by a small number of historians.[2]

Historical work also suggests a lack of research into women-led organisations. Emmeline Pankhurst was adamant the WSPU was to be an all-women society, while the NUWSS admitted men but the key decision makers were women. Research into the suffrage organisations as two women-led societies is a much-neglected area of study. The gender balance has not been fully addressed, and yet is an important consideration. This thesis builds upon the current literature to argue that by using a gender and power analysis we can add a wider understanding of the operation of the NUWSS and WSPU. The intersection of gender and power reveals how the decision makers of the NUWSS and WSPU were strategists, using matriarchal systems, and helps to explain why they were successful as organisations. The intersection identifies the difference between matriarchal and patriarchal power in order to foreground the way the NUWSS and WSPU successfully ran all-women organisations. This thesis will ask how they planned and achieved activities, such as the massive demonstrations carried out by both pressure groups. They successfully disrupted the hustings at by-elections, raising the awareness of women's need for enfranchisement. Women in the NUWSS and the WSPU took to the streets in large numbers and in Edwardian times this was shocking and new, and therefore gained a significant cultural meaning.

This work concludes with a case study of the launch of the WSPU in the South West region. Regional studies of both societies have generally been an overlooked area of research. Bristol, a radical city, already had a strong NUWSS foothold throughout the region. Women of the city welcomed the WSPU and quickly aided growth across Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and South Wales. Annie Kenney as senior organiser, appointed by headquarters, enlisted the aid and support of women throughout the region. This was crucial and enabled its fast growth, reaching as far as Penzance in the first year. The network set up by the women, who became organisers or offered their assistance, was an important factor in this growth. A case study of the WSPU provides an important insight into the role of planning, activities and recruitment in the regions, and addresses how through networking the WSPU spread rapidly throughout the area and had an impact on the transformation and politicisation of

[2] Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*: *Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 30 and Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*.

women. Local women were involved in national and local demonstrations and made a significant addition to suffrage history.

Suffrage history

Suffrage histories produced from the 1950s, by both male and female historians, have generally concentrated on the activities of the WSPU. Feminist historians had a greater interest in a society that was perceived as carrying out militant activities, and an emphasis on the militancy of the WSPU has, as a consequence, obscured the achievements gained by the NUWSS.[3] This imbalance has distorted the contribution of the NUWSS to the suffrage movement. It also inhibits an opportunity to examine the similarities between the two organisations, and the extent to which they worked together or supported one another's aims. Using an example of the opening of shops, it can be demonstrated how the NUWSS and WSPU successfully adopted, utilised, and reformulated the systems used by the large London stores in the West End. John Mercer's work on the opening of suffrage shops suggests that the emergence of shops arose from the profitable nature of the WSPU's campaign and the general expansion in retailing. The expansion of large department stores did provide a catalyst for suffrage shops, but his interpretation fails to identify how adapting male systems of marketing enabled the success of the shops. However, he does also identify that many of the shops drew in women who may not have ventured into a branch office and created an environment attractive to everyone.[4]

There is little work published on the NUWSS and greater attention has been paid to the role of the WSPU in pressuring for change. Much reliance has been placed on the study by Ray Strachey who, as part of the executive of the NUWSS, provided a seminal work.[5] The early years of the NUWSS up to 1914 has been covered by Leslie Parker Hume.[6] Earlier writing by women who joined and worked within the NUWSS post-1860s is very brief but available, and meetings held across the country have been documented.[7] In 1982 an important and detailed work was published that explored the NUWSS from its early years up to the First

[3] Antonia Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes* (London: Michel Joseph, 1973).
[4] John Mercer, **'**Shopping for Suffrage: the campaign shops of the Women's Social and Political Union', *Women's History Review* 18:2 (2009): 283-290.
[5] Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (Virago Reprint 1979, first published 1928).
[6] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.*
[7] Three published books on the early years of the women's suffrage movement in Bristol are held in the Bristol reference library and it also has some copies of circulars and committee meeting minutes. Often the participants are named. Bristol Central Library, S. J. Tanner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement began in Bristol* (1918); Mrs. AM Beddoe, *The Early Years of the Suffrage Movement* (1911); Bertha Mason, *The Story of the Woman's Suffrage Movement* (1912). A number of executive minutes often handwritten and not always well kept are held in the Women's Library.

World War.[8] A few focused publications on the NUWSS have been published, and some work has been included in general suffrage histories.[9] Millicent Fawcett did not provide an autobiography and only one detailed biography has been published.[10] Since the 1990s there have been a few historians who have identified that the focus on the militancy of the WSPU needs to be revisited.[11] However, the provision of studies of the WSPU is well documented providing a wealth of material. Some of these offer rather negative views.[12] Numerous books, journal articles, leaflets, biographies, autobiographies and pamphlets all deliver a variety of perspectives, and include both popular histories and academic work. Books that provide pictorial evidence also give a further insight into the world of the suffragette.[13] Some earlier male historians in general provide rather patriarchal and damaging interpretations. There were several varieties of these histories that have been identified as offering a 'sardonic masculinist' perspective; a view that mocked the women's political movement and undertook the demeaning ridicule of the militant wing of the suffrage movement.[14] In addition, the leadership of the WSPU all wrote autobiographies, most written many years after the WSPU had been disbanded. There is an abundance of material by women who were active members of the WSPU, and many relate to their prison experience.

Published material that relates in particular to my study generally fall into distinct areas, such as the lack of clarity and nature of what is identified as militant activity. There is little discussion of the crossover between what is regarded as constitutional and militant endeavour. It is important to differentiate between the type and nature of work that is perceived as militant activity and needs to be related to both NUWSS and WSPU. Local events are rarely contemplated and may reveal different perceptions of how local activists see their involvement. There are many books and articles that are valuable, especially those that identify the activity that took place. These works in their analysis often reveal that the activity identified as militant was in fact constitutional. For example, there was an early event when Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney asked questions at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester of a group of liberal leaders including Sir Edward Grey. This event, where

[8] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies*.
[9] Les Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty: Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1900-1918* (London, Heinemann, 1984) and Constance Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).
[10] Rubinstein *A Different World for Women*.
[11] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 30 and Myall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 7.
[12] June Purvis '"A Pair of…Infernal Queens" A Reassessment of the Dominant Representations of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, First Wave Feminists in Edwardian Britain', *Women's History Review*, 5:2 (1996), 259-280.
[13] Diane Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures* (London: Museum of London, 2000).
[14] Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History' in *Votes for Woman, e*d. June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (London: Routledge, 2000), 13-33.

together they unfurled a banner, is often recounted as the first militant activity, but it seems that it was more a constitutional act. It seems that any protest that was carried out by a member of the Pankhurst family has been defined as militant. There is much more clarity around definitions of militancy after 1912 when a small minority of suffragettes carried out destruction of property.[15] Pugh's *The March of Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1865-1914* has been much criticised, including in a review published in the journal *Women's History Review* in 2002[16]. This review criticised Pugh for suggesting that his work provided a new look at the twentieth century militant suffrage movement by demonstrating that there were antecedents in nineteenth century radicalism. These antecedents had already been previously explored by Sandra Stanley Holton in *Suffrage Days* (1996)[17]. Pugh makes a further apparent new suggestion; that there was a blurring between militancy and non-militancy at a local level.[18] However, even this assertion was not new as in her work on diaries written by Mary and Emily Blathwayt in 1908 and 1909, June Hannam cites this blurring, noting activities that were non-militant such as running the WSPU shops in Bristol and Bath[19].

In his work Pugh concentrates on militancy and even devotes a chapter to the anatomy of militancy in order to put the campaign into a clearer perspective. This raised the hope that militancy would be further defined and would support my investigation into the continued separation between constitutional and militant. However, he did identify that in the late 1860s suffragists who mounted public platforms were militant and that militant activity changed over time from heckling of 1903 to arson attacks of 1913.[20] However, the tactics used by both societies were subtle and are not solely attributable to the WSPU. Unfortunately, his continued exploration into the Pankhurst family's activities adds little to the definition of militancy and therefore is a contribution to the continued use of terms militant and constitutional.

The pictorial impact used during mega marches was developed by both societies, by utilising and evolving the success of trade union banners. The 1890s was a decade of 'banner mania' and many were produced as part of Union pageantry. Women banner makers in the

---

[15] Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 240. Antonia Fraser, *The Militant Suffragettes* (London: Michael Joseph, 1973), 183; Martin Pugh, *The March of Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage,1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 201; Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 108.
[16] Hilda Kean, 'Book Review', Women's History Review. 2002 Vol 11.2, 315-318.
[17] Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Day. Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement (London: Routledge, 1996).*
[18] Pugh, *The March of Women*, 171.
[19] Hannam, 'Suffragettes are Splendid for Any Work'. The Blathwayt Diaries as a Source for Suffrage History' in *The Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History,* ed. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan, and Laura Ugolini (London: Leicester University Press, London 2000), 53.
[20] Pugh, *The March of Women,* 188.

suffrage movements, for the first time, could exploit women's conventional association with embroidery. The suffrage societies understood the importance of banners to raise awareness. Women produced banners that were smaller and tended to be emblematic rather than pictorial.[21] Union banners used devices and symbols such as clasped hands, reflecting the union's aspirations whereas suffrage banners tended to be regional, occupational and historical. They took the successful elements of male activities and events, reworking them to suit their own needs. Women in the WSPU and NUWSS understood that it was not necessary to develop new ideas but utilise the best already accessible. Lisa Tickner provides a key text that gives vital insight into both the mega marches and demonstrations, and the use of visual material such as banners. She also considers the formation of marches, control systems used, leadership, participants and how women joined the demonstrations from across the nation.[22]

My research has revealed that studies into the growth of suffrage societies across the regions of Britain have been seriously neglected. Investigating the few published histories reveal important information and facts on provincial activities.[23] A local investigation reveals a large number of events, different occasions and endeavours that were significant and important. It uncovers the support, involvement, political education and the raising of the consciousness of women in their region.[24] June Hannam provides an excellent insight into how women in the regions were involved in campaign work and developed a political identity. It was the local branches that provided the focus for feminist development.[25] Krista Cowman provides a focus on the role of organisers who were employed across different areas of the country and gives an insight into regional activities.[26]

Chapter six of this thesis draws upon these approaches, and demonstrates the value of a regional study. As suggested, until recently the focus of literature on the suffrage movement has tended to be London-centered. This chapter in the thesis will shed new light on the suffrage movement. Local identity often provided the key site for suffrage activity. It is also important because it helps modify or challenge existing interpretations based on broad

---

[21] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women, Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988).
[22] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women, Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988).
[23] June Hannam, '"I Had Not Been to London": Women's Suffrage, a view from the regions' in *Votes for Women,* ed. June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (London: Routledge, 2000); Krista Cowman *Women of the Right Spirit: Paid Organisers of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) 1904-18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and Catharine Bradley, *A History of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cornwall* (Cornwall: Hypatia Trust, 2000).
[24] Hannam, 'Suffragettes are Splendid for any Work'.
[25] Hannam 'I had not been to London': Women's suffrage, a view from the regions'.
[26] Cowman *Women of the Right Spirit.*

generalisations. The local branch was often the focus for political development. The senior organiser hired local organisers, who aided the planning of local events and networked throughout the region. Although women followed the directives from headquarters, they also took an active role in initiating developments. Many women in the regions belonged to both societies and because they understood local conditions frequently set up their own systems. Existing friendship links and prominent families supported and aided the rapid growth of the WSPU. My study reveals that although militancy was present in the regions, women generally made their own decisions about militant activity. Historians need to use caution when making generalisations about the nature of militancy.

Sources and methodology

This thesis is concerned with understanding how the NUWSS and WSPU operated as women-led organisations, and a survey of the existing literature revealed that previous interpretations have been rather too simplistic. My work stresses the importance of removing the emphasis on constitutional versus militant, and concentrating on the successes of the NUWSS and WSPU as organisations. My initial question was: how did they do it? A deeper analysis of the wealth of literature identifying demonstrations, planning, and organisational structures and systems revealed that both societies utilised male systems of propaganda, marketing, and procedures and systems. Using the distinction made by organisational theorists between pluralists and unitarist organizations, a new perspective was applied to the organisational successes. This analysis provides an original contribution to the understanding of how the societies have been portrayed and provides a new perception of both the NUWSS and the WSPU. This new interpretation revealed that more similarities were apparent than differences. Both women-led organisations operated in very similar ways. The distinction between unitarist and pluralist went some way to dissipate the previous dominant views of militant versus constitutionalist, and autocratic versus democratic terms of reference for the NUWSS and WSPU, revealing that these concepts were an aid to understanding successful suffrage organisations as political systems. This realisation led to an extension in my analysis. The gendering and re-gendering of power show how strategies used to secure patriarchal power were appropriated and redesigned to assert women's powerfulness. This revealed that the success of the NUWSS and WSPU was underpinned by their ability to utilise and improve marketing and propaganda skills, and to organize marches, working within cost constraints, and utilising women's skills to produce banners that were attractive, symbolic and at a much lower cost. A detailed consideration of the role of shops used as an example enabled me to extend and further my research examining the gendered appropriations of techniques and strategies used by men to gain

power.

Primary sources

The primary sources I have utilised for my analysis of the NUWSS generally related to their planning and decision-making. The wealth of material in *Votes for Women* became my main source for the exploration into the WSPU opening up the South West region. The suffrage press was an important source of evidence for my research and I had a considerable quantity of material from the WSPU in *Votes for Women*. The reference library in Bristol holds six bound volumes of the paper and provided the bulk of material for chapter six. The Women's Library was shut for three months whilst it moved to the London School of Economics so I therefore became reliant on the editions of the papers held by the newspaper library. Fortunately, I had almost completed my research and gained a wealth of executive minutes, letters, correspondence, leaflets, pamphlets for my research into the NUWSS.[27]

Suffrage Press

Suffrage periodicals played a crucial role communicating with women and the societies. They were published weekly at the affordable price of one penny, keeping women abreast of current suffrage news, local and regional activities and events. For both the NUWSS and the WSPU publishing their own papers was essential and there was an argument that as a pressure group periodicals were a useful tactic and a strategic use of resources. The WSPU publication *Votes for Women* was part of a conscious campaign to educate and politicise women. They provided a vital source of news for their readers. Suffrage periodicals played an increasingly strategic role in how rival organisations communicated and managed their differences in terms of their membership and the wider public. They also reveal a great deal about the internal dynamics of the society. Engaged with a wide readership, the papers drew on established and traditional use of print media to articulate and circulate ideas in the form of weekly periodicals.

The NUWSS saw the role of their newspaper, *Common Cause,* as having an important function to enable them to distinguish and separate the society from the mounting criticism of WSPU militancy. It was formed in 1909 and it highlighted and gave space to social reform. Like the WSPU and *Votes for Women,* the NUWSS were conscious that the

[27] The Women's Library was previously situated in The London Metropolitan University, South East London and at that time contained a mass of material in paper and microfiche related to the NUWSS.

newspaper provided information to a wide readership. The well organised anti-suffrage movement gave the NUWSS no choice but to enter the media fray.

Votes for Women was vital and a very important source for my research into the organization of the WSPU, particularly when it came to setting up societies across the west country. It was useful for my study as it highlighted WSPU activities including a week-by-week account of events across the many regions in the country. For my exploration it provided vital information on the suffragette's activities, where they met, who was speaking, and also gave an insight into their progress around the region. Upcoming local events were published in the paper, and it regularly highlighted the involvement of local women. Chapter six highlights how a small number of women living in the south west were given prominence in *Votes for Women.* This was an important function as women in the regions could share the local successes and this could aid recruitment. The promotion of the leadership and policies was almost evangelical. One of the limitations of the newspaper is its sole focus on the WSPU - other suffrage groups are not mentioned. Its popular style meant that at times it was very lightweight. As a source of suffrage history, it provides a valuable understanding into the Union but it is important to remember that *Votes for Wome*n was a propaganda tool and as such, an awareness of the perspective must be considered. However, the WSPU left little published information so *Votes for Women* is an invaluable source. The only other key source of how the WSPU functioned was the autobiographies left by the leadership.

Autobiographies

Emmeline Pankhurst's memoir *My Own Story*, was written in 1914.[28] It is written as a retrospective view of her role as a leader of the WSPU and therefore it is possible that writing from memory may have distorted her writing. She often gave clear opinions on her thoughts and activities, was often honest and to the point. She admits to being autocratic and makes no apologies for this part of her character. This may have led to later historians repeating this observation rather than analysing what actually took place. Her daughter Christabel Pankhurst also left an autobiography *The Story of How We Won the Vote* published in 1959.[29] Like all autobiographies it was retrospective. The title gives a hint that it was a story of an energetic speaker who over time adopted a confrontational approach if the vote was to be won. It was important that public awareness was raised. Christabel Pankhurst left a dense political history and gives detail into how parliament continuously

[28] Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914).
[29] Christabel Pankhurst, *The Story of How We Won the Vote* (London: Hutchinson, 1959).

dodged and avoided debates on the subject of votes for women. Her autobiography is an important book that gives an insight, at times in minute detail, into the activities she led, including the recruitment and importance of volunteers.

Sylvia Pankhurst, another daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, published *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst* in 1936.[30] In 1906, Sylvia Pankhurst started to work full-time for the WSPU with her sister Christabel and their mother. She produced a short view of her mother's life including her early political life and portrays her mother as a resolute dictator. Sylvia Pankhurst also applied her artistic talents on behalf of the WSPU, devising its logo and various leaflets, banners, and posters as well as the decoration of its meeting halls. In contrast to Emmeline and Christabel, Sylvia retained an affiliation with the labour movement and concentrated her activity on local campaigning.[31] Pankhurst also contributed articles to the WSPU's newspaper, *Votes for Wom*en. As stated, her mother, Emmeline Pankhurst, described herself as autocratic and Sylvia Pankhurst reinforced this view. Again, this may point towards how early male historians portrayed the Pankhursts in their books.

Annie Kenney wrote *The Memories of a Militant* in 1924.[32] She depicted herself as Christabel Pankhurst's right-hand woman. She starts with her early life as a mill girl in Lancashire and her image in this role is repeated throughout her time with the WSPU. Her years in the WSPU are portrayed through the militant activities she undertook, including arrests and imprisonment. In 1907 Annie Kenney was appointed WSPU organiser at a salary of £2 a week, in the West of England. She was based in Bristol and returned to London in 1911. She spent four years in the West Country and travelled widely throughout the region. Unfortunately, her memoir is focused on her militant activity, imprisonment and travels to Europe, all portrayed in detail, with only four pages devoted to her time in Bristol and the west. For my study, the lack of detail relating to her very successfully setting up societies across for the WSPU was a setback. It would be useful and helpful if there was more detail about her visits including the local women, the contacts with local and influential families. She does however, thank the Blathwayts for their hospitality support and friendship.

In examining these source materials, one key question has been posed: how did they do it? The material utilised for this study has enabled an understanding of how the societies

[30] Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst. The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1936).
[31] Pankhurst *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst.*
[32] Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: Edward Arnold, 1924).

constructed structures and systems that enabled them to carry out well planned and well executed events, and large and small demonstrations. This research addresses how the NUWSS and WSPU seized market opportunities, raised awareness, and communicated to politicians, the public, and the nation.

Summary

This thesis argues that it is no longer beneficial to use the portrayal of the two suffrage societies as one being constitutional and the other militant. My analysis suggests that the NUWSS and WSPU should be acknowledged and understood as two women-led, successful and similar societies, whose achievements should not be measured solely through their events and outcomes. From 1906 both the NUWSS and WSPU were highly visible suffrage movements and successful business enterprises.

Chapter One will provide an overview of Edwardian society in order to contextualise the emergence of suffrage societies. Suffrage was part of a continuance of the pressure for reform from earlier societies such as the Chartists. The suffrage organisations were part of a phase of pressure to make changes to how women were treated and regarded, and the pressure for the vote was part of this campaign for change. There had been claims for full emancipation through women's suffrage societies since the 1860s. This thesis concentrates on how both women-led societies emerged as very successful business organisations and will bring forward their role as a vehicle for social change.

Chapter Two provides a new analysis of the continued categorisation of the societies as constitutional (NUWSS) and militant (WSPU). It will examine and challenge this perspective used uncritically by historians. A focus on process and strategy will be addressed in Chapter Three. This will provide an alternative to the previous separation between militancy and constitutionalism and look at the similarities and achievements of both organisations. Both were female-led, and the WSPU was set up as a totally female organisation. Pluralist and unitarist perspectives will briefly be used as an analytical tool.

Chapter Four will explore the intersection between gender and power and will foreground the way the WSPU and NUWSS utilised and appropriated male methods of retailing and the importance of branding. They utilised these so they could successfully run their own shops. They also understood the shopping experience and how they could employ this knowledge to recruit, inform and provide a safe meeting place for women. Chapter Five focuses on raising awareness through mass demonstrations, planning, and utilising promotional

methods and materials. These will be used to explore the appropriation of male methods to realign gender and power when the societies planned and created very successful outcomes.

Chapter Six will identify that in the South West, the role of organisers was an important function of both societies. They did have autonomy when planning and decision making for their region. Women individually used their own understanding of the forms of resistance they would undertake. The activities of women in both societies in the West Country show that the leadership did not manipulate their followers like puppets. Women chose from a range of activities and were not obliged to be involved in the destruction of property. The problem seems to be that the diversity of activities and the definition of militancy have become lost in the dominant narrative established in the 1950s and 1960s.

In conclusion, this thesis will foreground the structures, systems and strategies employed by both the NUWSS and the WSPU. Two all-women societies successfully utilised male working practices applying them effectively, efficiently and competently, to become very successful business enterprises. Any previous historical discussion has separated their structures and systems through the leadership. The NUWSS is portrayed as democratic because of their use of a committee structure and the WSPU as autocratic because of their lack of structure, using charismatic leadership. This work provides a new interpretation that identifies their similarities in the way that they planned, employed and calculated strategic procedures. Examples were provided by the planning and processes undertaken to successfully demonstrate their cause, through mega demonstrations in London. The opening of shops also provided an example of taking systems and adapting them to their requirements.

This work challenges the continued division into constitutional (NUWSS) and militant (WSPU) and although a few historians have disputed this separation, my work has tried to address this imbalance.[33] The contribution of the regions has been addressed. Not all suffrage activities were London centred and this work provides an opportunity to explore suffrage activity in the South West in region.

[33] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 30 and Myall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 7.

CHAPTER ONE - IN THE BEGINNING

Introduction

Political movements do not descend on society. They are usually reactions to the social and political environments that are already present. The suffrage movement did not emerge from nowhere, but was a development by women and their views of citizenship. Any account or reappraisal of suffrage history embarks on a complicated legacy and, although no longer marginalised, the date when women's demands became significant and linked to broader issues complicates the history of feminist activity. The 1832 Reform Act involved both men and women campaigning together. By the 1850s and the 1860s women's voices were becoming identifiable and distinct and the 1867 Reform Act was a defining moment for the British suffrage movement.[34] Women began to campaign for reform during the nineteenth century not because they saw themselves as feminists but because the circumstances in their own lives forced them to protest. Some of the legal patriarchy was whittled away and this was evidenced in education and work.[35]

The early years of the NUWSS from the 1860s are very well documented, as are the events in Manchester leading to the formation of the WSPU, and will therefore not be addressed in any detail in this work.[36] However, the ideological heritage and the political context that underpinned the formation of the NUWSS and the WSPU are considered. The issue of franchise for women was part of the emerging pressure for change and recognition of the issues as they applied to women. Women attempted to redefine their roles in society and in political life and questioned their economic dependency on marriage for the middle classes and on wage labour for the working classes. They were using sexual solidarity to pressure for a female value system.

[34] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 11.
[35] Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1973), 45.
[36] The early years of the NUWSS have been covered by Leslie Parker Hume. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.* Until recently, the majority of historical writing on the NUWSS has been limited. Ray Strachey in *Millicent Garrett Fawcett* provided the first view of the formation of the NUWSS from 1860s. Other interpretations have been provided, for example by Harrison in *Prudent Revolutionaries*. Historians have written extensively about the Pankhursts and the WSPU since the first derogatory chapter by Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England.*

The development of feminist thought prior to suffrage activity is examined in this chapter as part of the changes taking place in society at that time. In addition, I will also offer a new interpretation of the two suffrage movements, challenging the paradigm that focuses on the contrast between them. The NUWSS is generally portrayed as constitutional and the WSPU as militant.[37] Two key arguments will therefore be addressed throughout this chapter. Firstly, the two unions should be considered as pioneering examples of women-headed organisations and secondly, the suffrage movements should be seen as having implications beyond just securing the vote. They should be viewed as part of a broader feminist challenge to the patriarchal structures and ideologies that consigned men and women to separate spheres.

This study concentrates on how two suffrage movements, the NUWSS and WSPU, contributed to social change. It will take a new approach into how both societies functioned as political organisations and employers. It will argue that through their very visible activities, they exhibited expertise in their planning, and formulated systems that enabled them to carry out their fight for changing women's lives. This work will add to the understanding of two very successful societies, who were employers, trained their staff, and gave the women who were part of the Unions new expertise. The first assembly of the WSPU resolved that the Union would be independent, non-party and non-class in its foundations and Emmeline Pankhurst declared in 1903 '…we must do the work ourselves. We must have an independent women's movement'.[38] An all-women's society was born. Historians have generally recorded this fact but very few have explored how all-woman organisations operated.[39] Both the NUWSS and the WSPU were successful in a variety of administrative structures, planning and carrying out large demonstrations, growing and founding societies across the country. The NUWSS was generally a women-led society; men were welcome, but devising structures of committees and decision-making was carried out by women. By 1906 the NUWSS began to take a more controlling role when organising

[37] Historians largely identify that there were two suffrage societies; the constitutional (NUWSS) and militant (WSPU). Sylvia Pankhurst in 1936 very briefly noted that there was another suffrage society in *Pankhurst*, *The life of Emmeline Pankhurst*. Ray Strachey in 1928 wrote a short history of the women's movement and identifies the beginning of the militant movement. She very clearly treats the two societies as separate movements. The members of the NUWSS, which could include men, were identified as Suffragists and the WSPU as Suffragettes. Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement.* In the early 1980s, Garner starts his work by identifying there were distinct suffrage movements and deals with them in two separate chapters. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty.* In Antonia Raeburn's *The Militant Suffragettes* the NUWSS is dealt with in a few pages. Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes.* Holton addresses the problem of the clear distinction of the militant and constitutional societies. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy.* By the year 2000 the edited collection *Votes for Women* has a number of chapters devoted to different aspects of the militant suffrage movement. The role of the NUWSS is briefly addressed. Purvis and Holton, eds., *Votes for Women.*

[38] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 44.

[39] Krista Cowman provided the first investigation into how official organisers built and sustained the national campaign carried out by the WSPU. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*.

work in the constituencies and devoted its energies towards propagandising. It can be seen as having gained a new vitality after the formation of the WSPU.

This chapter builds on previous accounts of the formation of both the NUWSS and the WSPU but will focus on the period between 1906 and 1914. This work in this chapter, and in Chapters Two and Three, will challenge the constitutional and militant divide adopted by many historians referred to in this chapter. This in no way rejects previous accounts of the *formation* of the NUWSS and the WSPU, but raises concerns about the division of the suffrage movements into the two wings of 'constitutional' and 'militant'. This section explores how historical convention has been interpreted.

In the decades since the 1960s it became a truism to say that in terms of conventional scholarship women have been 'hidden from history'.[40] It is only recently in historical research that women have been recovered and are 'becoming visible'. It is possible to argue that the activities of British women's suffragists are the exception that proves the rule.[41] The most notable were the Pankhurst family who were well publicised at the time and have gained an almost mythical standing in today's society. They and their campaigners have been recorded in numerous memoirs and biographies and have been the subject of a large share of the attention paid to women's history of the period.

Since the 1960s historians have concentrated disproportionate attention on the suffragists of the WSPU. The early years of making women's history more visible drew attention towards the 'militant' activities of the WSPU to the neglect of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). In some cases, the union makes a brief appearance and in others it is almost invisible. In a broad and sweeping view of the Edwardians in a popular history by Roy Hattersley published in 2006 he devotes one short paragraph to the role of Millicent Fawcett and the National Union is not mentioned. He spends some time discussing the close relationships between Christabel Pankhurst, Eva Gore-Booth and Esther Roper and discusses whether they had a lesbian relationship, but concludes that their friendship should not be judged against the standards of modern Britain. Hattersley determines that their

[40] Sheila Rowbotham questions the working-class/middle-class dichotomy that informed the masculinist approach without recognizing that there was sexual solidarity among women of different classes. Rowbotham*, Hidden from History,* 45.

[41] Suffragists is the term applied to the NUWSS and was used by both the executive and the membership. The Suffragettes was the term used to describe the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), a derogatory term coined by the *Daily Mail* as a term of abuse and taken up by the *Daily Mirror* because it made the women seem young and irrepressible. It was then adopted by the society

relationship was not physical but highly emotional.[42] His focus on lesbian relationships within the WSPU leadership sets a standard of enquiry followed by male authors.[43]

In 1977 Jill Craigie, a documentary maker, married to Michael Foot, wrote in the *Observer* with the headline on the cover of the *Observer Magazine* of 16 January 1977 – 'Mrs Pankhurst wasn't just a pretty face – the truth about the suffragettes'.[44] This certainly has a charge to it, but the headline for the article itself is an even starker reduction of Craigie's argument. It reads: 'Men against women' and argues that the movement has been much maligned and misunderstood by male historians.

The militant activities such as window smashing in London's most fashionable streets and committing arson quickly became the most notorious and most written about suffrage activity. The contemporary emphasis on the WSPU and the activities of the Pankhursts has distorted our understanding of the suffrage movement and in particular it has disguised the contributions of the NUWSS and the Women's Freedom League (WFL).[45] Although this viewpoint at first glance seems simplistic, the number of scholarly books and articles written after the vote was won did concentrate on the efforts and activities of the WSPU.[46]

My work requires historians to attempt a modification of the existing historical convention that emphasises a division of the suffrage movement into two distinct wings, the 'militants' of the WSPU and the lesser-known 'constitutionalists', most of whom were part of the NUWSS. The differences between these two organisations are generally centred on the question of the use of violence and tactics. The critical issue is the mode of campaigning and their styles of agitation. If the term 'militant' is to be applied to a willingness to resort to extreme forms of violence then very few suffragists were involved in violence. Few women who supported and belonged to WSPU were prepared to resort to extreme forms of violence and therefore few 'militants' were 'militant'. In addition, violence only occurred after 1912. Militancy was the issue of political strategy and I will address this in detail in later chapters. Once the dimension of militants/constitutional is acknowledged and interpreted, the

---

[42] Roy Hattersley, *The Edwardians: Biography of the Edwardian Age* (London: Abacus, 2006), 206-207, 215.
[43] The theme is taken up in 1997 by George Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* and the theme is still present in 2008. Sexual relationships are also alluded to in *The Pankhursts: A History of One Radical Family*. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England,* 128. Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts: A History of One Radical Family* (London: Vintage Books, 2001), 95.
[44] *Observer* in *Observer Magazine* of 16 January 1977.
[45] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* vii.
[46] Midge Mackenzie, *Shoulder to Shoulder* (New York: Vantage, 1988); Fran Abrams, *Freedom's Cause: The Lives of the Suffragettes* (London: Profile Books, 2002); Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*; Pugh, *The March of the Women;* Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit* and Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002).

analytical imprecision of both terms becomes even more evident.[47] The current historical interpretation relies on an uncritical application of the terminology. Once suffragists take to the street or indicate socialist affiliations it can be assumed that 'constitutionalists' are behaving in a militant manner. This is further complicated by the fact that many women belonged to both groups. It is therefore difficult to apply either the term 'militant' or constitutional' in any consistent way. This ambiguity is a discourse not previously discussed and will be analysed in depth in Chapter Three.

This thesis challenges the militant/constitutional division through a close examination of the organisational structures of the two societies. My discussion points towards the need to understand the wider social context under which both organisations developed, addressing social change and how the emerging ideologies were formed. The expansion of feminist thought was in part a response to patriarchy and a desire to bring about change. The suffrage movement was part of the fight against gender inequality.

This chapter is not a list of events but an attempt to identify the development of the ideology and feminist thought during the early years of women's struggle. It broadens the appreciation of how and why the two main suffrage societies were successful in their understanding of the oppression of women in Edwardian society, and sought to raise an awareness of a common cause. The arguments of the enlightenment and development of different social movements, the role of religion during the late Victorian and early Edwardian society and the emerging discourses between women and some men is discussed. Early feminists sought to target and understand the subordination and misrepresentation of women.

This chapter will address the epochal social phenomenon and look back at the different strands of feminist theorising and activism. When exploring social change, the development of feminist thought conveys the contribution made by the many facets that developed over time. This will be a story about the extensive contours and overall meaning of feminist thought. The following explores a partial history of the development of feminist theory. This is not a comprehensive perspective partly because it is not possible to include everything and because the rich heritage of feminist thought is still being uncovered. It will be investigated through the themes of identifying some of the early developments and activists, the emerging ideology and early issues being contended, a definition of the term feminism

[47] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 30.

and changes that have occurred over time. It is also important to briefly to address the role of patriarchy in the formation of feminist ideology.

Developing feminist ideas

As part of the development of change taking place in society during the late Victorian and Edwardian times the term feminism was not generally used or classified although an emerging ideology was forming. However, a discussion of the development of the definition of feminisms will be addressed and identified.

It is important to address the development and increase of feminist thought in the nineteenth century in order to identify and address the rich complexity of its expansion. Part of the difficulty is that the date cannot be isolated from other events taking place in society. The increase of feminist thought and ideas was both fluid, fragmentary and by its nature is interconnected with developments in wider society. Although there is no definitive date there have been many proposals for the start of a feminist perspective. However, Ray Strachey, a key figure in the suffrage campaign, gave a clear date for the beginning of suffrage movement, which for her is 1792.[48] For her this signifies the date of an organised women's movement and the date when feminism came into being. Strachey's work was published in 1928 and by this time the term feminism was used by feminists. Her evidence is the work of Mary Wollstonecraft and the pioneering women in the Chartist movement. She cites the stirring of feminism when women Chartists were encouraged to help through bazaars and social functions and this was when the first rousing of feminism came through individual women awakening to their own exclusion from meaningful activities.[49] At this time any discussion of policy was outside their sphere and public speaking was unheard of for them. Others such as Constance Rover propose 1866 as the date when women's suffrage was formed.[50] She presents evidence that articles and discussions on women's suffrage became too numerous to mention and points to a petition signed by 1,409 women as the event which marked the commencement of a continuous campaign for women's suffrage.

English feminism had many components and, given a sense of resentment against the obvious inequality of their vote-less condition, a claim for equality through the vote was logical. The feminism of the suffrage movement has been ill defined and beset with problems because it is difficult to identify a single manifesto of feminist ideas. Within

[48] Strachey, *The Cause,*12.
[49] Strachey, *The Cause*, 32.
[50] Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain*, 5.

suffrage movements there was a continuing debate around their concerns and issues including a definition of the oppression of women.

The many fragments that make up women's history make it difficult to separate the various components used to develop a view of what is feminism. Research into the growth of organised women's movements has pointed to separate women's involvement in various social movements but does not really clarify whether they used the term feminism to describe their own beliefs. [51] This has to an extent blurred the boundaries between the usage of the term feminism and when it came into common phraseology.

In my view women in later Victorian and Edwardian England were busy fighting the issues that were attached to their contemporary society and were not looking for a term to describe their emerging ideologies. Women in suffrage movements declared they were seeking to reduce gender inequality but may not have formally used the term feminist. However, it is important to arrive at some understanding of the term and to address the dynamism and explore the history of feminist development. Without an understanding of the term it will not be possible to address the many issues that the suffrage movement undertook.

Feminism and feminist thought developed over time and addressed different issues as they affected women. Suffrage movements did not materialise all at once but were part of fragmentary pressure for women's emancipation. The women's suffrage movement grew out of the changing relationship between men and women in the second half of the nineteenth century. As Barbara Caine points out in her study of Victorian feminists, the nature of this relationship was much discussed by feminist women of the time and that there were similarities that were derived from the social and political context that they shared. The apparent demographic imbalance, the problems faced by single women needing to support themselves, the moral consequences of patriarchal marriages, the inequalities of marriage laws, and the sexual double standard were all topics of extensive discussion before a women's movement emerged. Caine points out that this was part of the framework in which Victorian feminism developed.[52] For working class women, whilst some may have found a new economic independence, as 'factory girls', this was lost on marriage when a husband became legally entitled to his wife's earnings. Meanwhile, the increased separation of the worlds of home, paid employment and the strengthening of the idea of a male breadwinner, helped to consolidate the 'separate spheres' ideology.

---

[51] Strachey, *The Cause*, 22. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 30. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* vii.
[52] Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22.

Ray Strachey's history of the women's movement was written in 1928, and is a retrospective view of the working life of the middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century. She accuses ordinary women at the start of the twentieth century of not recognising the grievous handicaps they were living under and ignoring their 'rights', preferring to adjust themselves to their family surroundings. The 'rights' she describes were related to the opening and growth of many professions to women. She identifies that in the thirty years up to 1891 the establishment of the Society for the Promotion of Employment of Women saw great changes were taking place and work for women was increasing but she does imply that in the early years young women were docile and accepted low rates of pay.[53]

Strachey stressed how men and some women were united in feeling that ambition and independence were unfeminine attributes and that obedience, humility and unselfishness were what was really required.[54] It was generally regarded by society in general, that women were the guardians of the domestic sphere was identified as a way to keep women out of public life. The burden was not equal across the classes, but in general, a new household ideology encouraged women to adopt the role of weak and helpless creatures.[55] Historians are concerned there was a contradiction at the heart of this and suggest that all parties in the suffrage movement were clear that the enfranchisement of women would transform political life. They point to how suffragists portrayed themselves as radical, and were concerned with gender specific attributes of citizenship.[56]

Some writers identify and discuss the women's movement and use the term feminism but do not define the term.[57] Other feminist historians suggest that it is difficult to write the history of feminism when the term 'feminism' was not coined until the end of the nineteenth century.[58] A prominent American feminist, Nancy Cott, argues that the term feminism should not be applied to those who lived or worked before it was commonly used.[59] A leading member of the suffragists Ray Strachey uses the term throughout her portrayal of the NUWSS written in 1928.[60] Historians such as Olive Banks have accepted that a close definition is not possible.[61] For women in suffrage movements there is no real clarity as

[53] Strachey, *The Cause*, 225.
[54] Strachey, *The Cause*, 79.
[55] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* vii.
[56] Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 29.
[57] Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain*, 35.
[58] Barbara Caine, 'Feminist biography and feminist history', *Women's History Review* 3:2 (1994): 4.
[59] Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).
[60] Strachey, *The Cause,* 12.
[61] Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement* (Oxford: Martin Robertson & Co, 1981), 3.

some rejected the term or in most cases did not apply the term to their individual views. Women leaders such as Millicent Fawcett, Josephine Butler, Emily Davies and Frances Power Cobbe, who were very prominent in the nineteenth century women's movement, did not use the term.[62] The focus on suffrage has to an extent distorted how feminism is viewed as a whole and two key distinct periods of feminist activism has emerged. First wave feminism from the 1860s to 1920, followed by a second wave in the 1960s and 70s. It was during the latter period there was a significant change in our understanding of the nature of feminism and as the study of feminism has developed and expanded there has evolved an awareness of the complexities of feminist activities and the diversity of approach and political commitment varied.[63]

In the nineteenth century gender politics contained a wide range of political positions and contained many different aspects, including evangelical feminism, socialist feminism, materialist feminism, radical and liberal feminism. To an extent there is an argument for regarding British Suffragism as an emancipationist form of feminism because it exhibited a *'women centred consciousness'*.[64] It is possible therefore to propose the idea that there is no single source for using the term feminism. The way in which feminism is defined depends on the way the definer understands the past, existing and future relationships between men and women, and an understanding of the nature of feminism itself. It is important to remember how many times feminists *were disappointed* during their campaigns.

Women who were active in political movements during the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century had a variety of motivations. For socialist women this varied from concerns with children and education, poverty, and women in the workplace; and these women drew the link between socialism and women's emancipation. Socialists were concerned with class and the needs of the male worker and the goal of working-class women was for full adult suffrage. Socialist women challenged the sex inequality and argued that women's emancipation was a key part of constructing a new society.

The political and social context, within which the suffrage movement pressured for change, should be identified not as a single-issue campaign, but a wider assault on male power and stereotypical sex roles. The very fact of women organising themselves and acting together was an explicit attack on the cherished notions of the 'fair sex'. The campaign for the repeal of The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 (CD Acts) showed solidarity

[62] Caine, *Victorian Feminists*.
[63] Hannam *Feminism. (*Pearson Education, London, 2007), 8.
[64] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 18.

between women from different backgrounds.[65] The common oppression under the law created rhetoric and middle- and upper-class women were forced to claim their respectability through sexual purity. The ideals for women were innocence, chastity and purity.

Chartism

The role of women in the Chartist movement is a precursor to the later suffrage activities undertaken by women in the WSPU and NUWSS. Chartism is briefly discussed here, drawing on the work of Dorothy Thompson, in order to show how these past activities of women helped the development of the suffrage moment.[66] It is unlikely that the early suffrage movements in the 1860s emerged without women being radicalised through their involvement in other social movements. In order to identify how the suffrage movements facilitated changes taking place in society the Chartist movement must be considered as part of the movement towards social change and is worth considering as a precursor to women's understanding of their role in Edwardian society and is both complex and interesting.

Women in the Chartist movement between 1838 and 1843 were important as they helped to form the community base of the organisation. A few women were occasionally among Chartists charged with public order offences and jeered at the constables when they were arrested and behaved with indifference to the treatment they received from the authorities.[67] Prominent women Chartists gave lectures and published letters in their local newspapers. As with the suffrage movement, newspapers often dismissed the words of women Chartists and they were described in the national press as she-orators. The *Nottingham Mercury* in 1839 writing after the demonstrations in support of a national holiday spoke of 'these harpies, whose expressions on every occasion, whose oaths and blasphemy, groans and yells, really made us blush for the feminine sex of England'.[68]

Evidence shows that in the early years of the movement women were involved in opposition to the Poor Law, passed resolutions on poverty, and participated in demonstrations and social organisations. There were a few pamphlets supporting women's rights and the right

[65] Judith Walkowitz examined the system of medical and police regulation of prostitution, a system first established in 1864 and abolished in 1886, to control the spread of venereal disease among enlisted men. Walkowitz, in her book *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). In *City of Dreadful Delight*, Walkowitz maps out how compelling representations of sexual danger, including W.T. Stead's expose of child prostitution and the tabloid reporting of Jack the Ripper, circulated in late-Victorian London. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[66] D Thompson *The Chartists. Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1924), 122.
[67] Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1984), 121.
[68] *Nottingham Mercury,* 16 May 1839.

of women to vote was based on the same principles of the right of working men. Women in the 1840s were highly concerned with education for themselves and their children. They organised Chartist schools their purpose was to install the principles of Chartism in their children. Like the suffrage movement the Chartists shared a sense of a feeling of exclusion from the political system. Chartists first appeared in 1838 and it became a large and widespread movement.[69]

When the People's Charter was first drafted a clause was included that advocated the extension of the franchise to women that was removed because some men believed that it was too radical and might hold back the suffrage of men.[70] There was a general fear of women entering what was seen as a man's world. However, through the influence of Chartist women in the 1830s there was emerging pressure for female emancipation.[71]

Elizabeth Neeson signed a petition and made a point that was repeated across the country:

> To those who may be, or may appear to be surprised, that females should be daring enough to interfere with politics; to them we simply say, that as it is a female that assumes to rule this nation in defiance of the universal rights of man and woman, we assert in accordance with the rights of all, and acknowledging the sovereignty of the people our rights as free women (or women determined to be free) to rule ourselves.[72]

Women seldom spoke on public platforms but in the 1840s a few women who were members of Chartist families appeared as speakers. Susanna Inge was a woman activist who became an important figure in the movement. Mary Ann Walker was another speaker, who received criticism from men who argued that women were happy in their domestic role.[73] However, women were important to Chartism because they carried out a considerable amount of organising Most radicals accepted a general commitment to the inclusion of women in suffrage.[74] Petitions were widely used by Chartist women, who also conducted open-air rallies in order to raise awareness. Up to 20% who signed the petitions were women.[75]

---

[69] Their activities were centered on the extension of male suffrage after the Reform Act of 1832. Chartism was a movement that involved 126 communities; families and women were actively involved. Although many chartists believed in votes for women, it was never part of the Chartist programme.
[70] Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (Virago, London, 1928), 31.
[71] Strachey *The Cause*, 30.
[72] Elizabeth Neeson quoted in Thompson, *The Chartists*, 120.
[73] *Northern Star,* 8 July 1843.
[74] Thompson, *The Chartists,* 149.
[75] Thompson, *The Chartists*, 132.

Chartist women wrote constantly and were regularly seen attempting to inform the general public, they sent many letters to the press, just as women in the early suffrage movement did in the 1860s. The press however, depicted some of the leading radical women in a format that reoccurs in negative images of suffragettes. Mary Ann Walker is depicted in *Punch* magazine in 1842 as a scrawny harridan. In many respects the women Chartists carried out activities and employed methods of raising the awareness of their cause, that were forerunners to the later suffrage movements. The similarities are very evident, as the Chartist movement was very visual in public places and in the press, both national and local. The press identified the numbers joining the movement and often praised women's arguments and stated that it was the duty of women to carry out the great work of regeneration.

There is a continuity of what woman were actively pursuing. It seems that in some circumstances Chartist women set up separate organisations and during this activity there was a general commitment to the inclusion of women in the franchise and calls for the improvement of women's education.[76] Although there was a generally held doctrine of the equality of women's rights, there was also a general concern that when women married they merged their political rights with those of their husband.[77] Some women writing in the 1850s claimed that women had particular qualities that undermined the prevailing notion of separate spheres for men and women.[78] These women rejected separate spheres ideology and advocated female moral superiority but the presence of women in the Chartist movement shows that women and men worked together and created a community spirit.

Separate spheres debate

As stated at the start of this chapter the suffrage movement was the result of a long-term development by women and their views of citizenship. The demand for the vote was not just about equal political representation. The vote meant different things to different people; it was a tree whose branches were hung with an array of expectations, grievances and causes. Also, the early arguments had contradictions that were visible within feminist thought but there was a marked degree of ideological homogeneity among suffrage supporters within otherwise varying class and party-political outlooks. It was commonly believed that women were a distinct species to men, and one with skills, attributes and forms

[76] Thompson, *The Chartists*, 151.
[77] Thompson, *The Chartists,* 150.
[78] Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996), 12.

of knowledge that were particular to the pursuit of social reform. Fawcett took the stance that women with increasing independence and strength would only serve to strengthen their true womanliness and could take this to become efficient and competent political campaigners.[79] Sex difference was biologically determined and as such women were a distinct sub-species. It was therefore argued that female enfranchisement was essential to the creation of a more caring state.[80]

Votes for women was an integral and essential part of the argument that women's rights should be extended and put pressure on the late Victorian patriarchal system. Women did not seek the vote solely to gain citizenship rights, but also as a means to gain the political power necessary to transform gender structures.[81] There was a drive for social change identifying the need for an alteration of the marriage law, the role of working women and work, the position of the family, and working conditions and pay. As Garner has argued, 'sex and class guided the questions being asked at the time. During late Victorian and Edwardian times, a society evolved where economic roles defined women'.[82] As capitalism grew women's role in production was devalued and the sexual division of labour developed. Production became more and more separated from the home and female communities and networks were an important part of the women's suffrage movement. These networks built a social movement founded on the belief of a specifically female value system.[83] The increased separation of the world of home and paid employment and the strengthening of the idea of the male breadwinner helped to consolidate the 'separate spheres' ideology.[84]

During the 1860s a strand of liberalism related to equality of the sexes was emerging. In 1869 John Stuart Mill claimed equality should come from reform and pointed out that many women managed property, paid taxes, often from their own earnings and fought with the slogan borrowed from the American colonials: 'No taxation without representation'.[85] A prevailing view developed that women should celebrate their womanliness, and Frances Power Cobbe, a member of the executive council of the London National Society for Women's Suffrage and writer of editorial columns for London newspapers on suffrage and property rights for women, argued that women's natural purity and vocation for motherhood was important and it should be considered that womanly virtues were lacking in government

[79] Womanliness for Millicent Fawcett encompassed decorum, propriety … pity gentleness, purity and compassion Caine, *Victorian Feminists,* 255.
[80] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 13.
[77] Harold Smith, *The British women's suffrage campaign 1866-1928* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 1996).
[82] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 7.
[83] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 20.
[84] Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory: An introduction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 43.
[85] Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain*, 5.

and the state.[86] For her, the vote was needed to combat male brutality toward their wives and women needed to enter the public sphere in order to sanitise the moral sewer. Sexual continence by men could only be delivered through votes for women. Millicent Fawcett urged suffragists not to give up their womanliness, their love of children and their care for the sick.[87] Women suffragists frequently argued that because women mothered they were more caring, more nurturing and because of their reproductive role would have a higher regard for the sanctity of human life. Suffragists argued that enfranchisement of women would lead to a purer political life.[88]

> The motherhood of women, either actual or potential, is one of the great acts of everyday life, which we must never lose sight of. To women as mothers is given the charge of the home and the care of children. Women are, therefore, by nature as well as by occupation and training, more accustomed than men to concentrate their minds on the home and domestic side of things.[89]

A variety of industries besides the textile trade were often referred to as 'sweated' trades. In general working women in these trades, where conditions and pay were oppressive, provided a major pool of support for Suffragism.[90] The position of working women was crucial to the growth of Suffragism. Women who received payment for their work were growing in number and were not restricted to the industrial north and their numbers grew from four and half million in 1901 to five million by 1914.[91]

Annie Kenney speaking in 1906 at a conference of women in Germany encapsulated the separation of roles in working class life:

> I grew up in the midst of women and girls in the works, and I saw the hard lives of the women and children about me. I noticed a great difference made in the treatment of men and women in the factory, differences in conditions, differences in wages and differences in status. I realised that this difference was not in the factory alone but in the home. I saw men, women, boys and girls, all working hard during the day in the same hot, stifling factories. Then when work was over I noticed that it was the mothers who hurried home, who fetched the children that had been out to nurse, prepared the tea for the husband, did the cleaning, baking, washing, sewing and nursing. I noticed that when the husband came home, his days' work was over; he took tea and then went to join his friends in the club or in the public house, or on the cricket or football

[86] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* 112.
[87] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Women's Suffrage: A Short History of a Great Movement* (London: Ebron Classics, 1887).
[88] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 18.
[89] Part of an address by Millicent Fawcett delivered at Toynbee Hall quoted in Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, 221.
[90] Sweated trades are those where workers are employed for long hours, at low pay and in poor working condition e.g. garment making.
[91] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 6.

> field, and I used to ask myself why this was so. Why was the mother the drudge of the family, and not the father's companion and equal?[92]

Some women began to articulate how they felt and saw the world around them.[93] Not all middle-class women were leisured or wealthy. Many had to work for a living and teaching was an opportunity to earn a living as an independent person.[94] The compassion for the plight of these women showed itself in the demand for education, to provide opportunities of employment for gentlewomen. It is possible that the support given to these women stamped the movement with a middle-class image that became prevalent in the early analysis of the NUWSS.[95]

The economic system of capitalism had a significant effect on the position of women. An argument was put forward that middle-class women ought to have the vote in order to protect their mental and spiritual health and that working-class women needed the vote for protection. There is a contradiction in this view. Were women the possessors of talents needing scope to release these, or was a woman so weak she needed additional means of protection?[96] An element that was new that was related to rates of pay and applied to many types of work although not as quickly in industry and women were often used because they were cheaper. An official of the post office put it clearly in 1871 when he said: 'We get a better class of women for the same pay'. He added that women often leave on marriage at a time when they would be increasing their pay. There was a general feeling amongst the middle classes their economic situation was inferior to a working girl who had paid employment, and thus greater freedom and independence. It is difficult to agree with this, as middle-class women could enjoy occupations such as teachers, and often had better opportunities because of their education and status. However, a surplus of women over men prevented women from fulfilling their 'natural' careers of marriage and motherhood.[97] Upper class women had a social position and status to protect her.[98] Whilst their view of working-class women was although they were exploited they did have a measure of independence as a result of their work. The assumption that women were too fine for the rough work of politics contrasted with the harsh work carried out in factories.

---

[92] Sylvia E. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement, 1905-1910* (London: Sturgis and Walton Company, 1911).
[93] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* 3.
[94] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 12.
[95] Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain,* 15.
[96] Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain,* 15.
[97] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* 5.
[98] Ray Strachey identifies that women's work was in a bad situation in 1857 when middle class women were shut out from employment in an enormous number of ways from earning a living. Ray Strachey, *The Cause,* 229.

Sexual subjection of women often fostered a sense of sexual solidarity. Women whatever their economic position, might join in a membership of a sex class since all women were victims of an exploitive organisation of sexuality in favour of male interests. Suffragists sought unity by arguing for a commitment from both the suffrage and labour movements, leading to a conception of political democracy that took account of each form of inequality. Feminists did make formal protests about equal pay and in 1872 launched an attempt to persuade the London County Council to adopt equal scales of pay but they totally failed, an average difference of 30% remained.[99] The Trade Union Movement in its early years concentrated its efforts with industrial problems. When the NUWSS became committed to raising an Election Fighting Fund (EFF) in mid-1913, to support Labour, the movement asked its supporters to recognise that the middle-class women often received treatment that was as unjust as that of working-class men by virtue of their lack of property. It also asked the middle-class Liberal women to acknowledge that social justice required independent representation of working-class interest in parliament such as equal franchise laws.[100]

In the 1860s another major factor was the inequality of the legal system and how it affected women. The law surrounding husbands and wives was particularly unjust. Throughout the nineteenth century the gaining of the vote was seen as a legal protection against avaricious, cruel husbands so that women might have the right to keep their own property and money.[101] The wife suffered in many respects including the guardianship of children, intestacy, tax, divorce and maintenance. The areas of concern centred on property rights, marital rights, custody of children and divorce. Changes to the divorce law in 1867 benefitted men and nineteenth century feminists argued that a double standard existed. The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 provided a stepping stone to the future.

The Consolidation of the Suffrage Movement

I have argued that the suffrage movement did not suddenly emerge but was developed by women over a fifty-year period.[102] How they viewed citizenship and feminism made a significant contribution to the reformation of gender structures. The upsurge of women's consciousness and the demand for the vote united women from different social backgrounds in the struggle to achieve it. The mass appeal of the suffrage movement was truly

[99] Strachey, *The Cause,* 229.
[100] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 81.
[101] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* 4.
[102] Fifty years can only be an approximate period of time. During this period of formation and development, it was not without internal debates and struggles that concerned strategies and tactics.

representative of the inspiration of middle-class women and the campaign spread into working class movements such as the Independent Labour Party.

Suffragists used networks to pass on specific female values and created solidarity through their realisation of sexual subjection. Women joining suffrage movements emerged stronger or as with women doctors were aware that they should be highly organised. Medical women forced their way through bitter opposition and from the very first they demanded the same scale of payment and succeeded in holding their own on equal terms. They were motivated by the conviction they were needed as doctors rather than the practice and study of medicine.[103]

Feminism at the end of the nineteenth century was involved in a series of contradictions between the different definitions of feminism, and the diverse origins of the sometimes-opposing concepts of femininity. There was an opposition between women's rights and women's duty, the similarities between man and woman, a woman's need for independence, and her need for protection. Campaigns in the evangelical tradition showed a concern for the weak. The sympathy for the victim was inspired not by their class but by their sex. These circumstances of what feminists saw as special wrongs of the female slave, demanded female suffrage as a way of protecting themselves and also their weaker sisters. It is precisely why suffrage was so important to the feminists. This acceptance of the impossibility of a close classification and the diversity of the various possible approaches to a definition has led to the problems of whether it should be a broad or narrow version. Broad versions fail to convey the contradictions of feminist thought whereas narrow definitions of organised political movements may exclude a wealth of feminist knowledge. The way in which feminism is defined depends on the way the definer understands the past, and existing and future relationships between men and women.

The Political Apprenticeship of Millicent Fawcett (NUWSS) and Emmeline Pankhurst (WSPU)

To conclude this discussion, I look at the careers of two of the leaders of the movement showing how they built on skills from broader politics to inform the suffrage societies.

[103] Strachey, *The Cause,* 229.

Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett were both leaders of large suffrage organisations that operated nationwide. They are an interesting study because their leadership is part of the pressure for change in society. Their politically formative years; married to politically active men to whom they gave active support, enabled them to understand how to lead movements that welcomed the need for social change. As leaders they were able to guide and gain support for a number of changes needed in Edwardian society.

Pankhurst and Fawcett were both successful leaders who at different times have been regarded in both a negative and positive light. An understanding of the political apprenticeship they both served may enable a better understanding of how they successfully led two large organisations. Both the NUWSS and the WSPU were accomplished societies using the strategic fit of marketing and market opportunities, and were capable of implementing the strategies needed to raise the awareness of their cause.

Leadership is an important consideration when examining any organisation but the significant factor here is that the NUWSS and WSPU were women-led organisations with a woman as the figurehead. This chapter will now contemplate the extent to which the political apprenticeships served by both women informed the stance they took as leaders, an approach that has not been previously examined or compared. An understanding of the political apprenticeship they both served may enable a better understanding of their leadership. In addition, it may help to dissipate the concentration or comparisons of Millicent Fawcett as a democratic leader and Emmeline Pankhurst as an autocratic firebrand.[104] The extent of their early involvement may improve our understanding of why two groups emerged rather than a simple expansion and strengthening of the existing group the NUWSS.

Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst shared objectives and strategy in the fight for the vote for women, but diverged on tactics. Both of these leaders had a wide-ranging apprenticeship in politics. They both came from families who were involved in the fight for broader social change in Victorian society. Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett both had an introduction to political activity from their early years and married politically active men, who shared their views of the role of women in society and who supported them in their political journey. Motherhood was an integral part of their marriages, they were widowed and this provided a catalyst for their devotion to the cause of women's suffrage. Millicent's husband died in the mid-1880s, and according to Strachey, by the summer of

[104] June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) and Votes for Women' in *Votes for Women,* ed. Purvis and Holton, 109-134.

1885 she had regained her fighting spirit. Fawcett worked to get her husband's work done: suffrage was still to be won and 'to do the things which it comforted her to be concerned with… she watched everything that had a bearing on the women's cause'.[105] Richard Pankhurst died in 1898; and Christabel recalled '…the double burden of family care which Emmeline was now bearing, matured her for the fight she was later to make for women's cause'.[106]

Fawcett's involvement in public life, for whatever the cause, gained weight from her status as wife and widow of a minister. Strachey attributed the 'tradition of political expertise' in the British suffrage movement largely to Fawcett's experience of the inner ring of parliamentary activity.[107] Christabel Pankhurst notes that her mother's career began with her marriage: 'this admitted her to a share in the political activities of her husband and so exercised and developed her own innate powers'.[108] 'By 1903 she had an impressive training in public affairs.'[109] Her previous political experience, her conspicuous and considerable dedication and her enormous vitality were all harnessed to rejuvenate and revitalise the movement.[110]

At the early age of fourteen, Emmeline Pankhurst attended her first suffrage meeting. She accompanied her mother to hear Lydia Becker, who was the secretary of the Manchester society for women's suffrage. Despite the fact that women had many claims for change to their role in society, June Purvis has argued that it was the vote that both Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Garret Fawcett believed would generally benefit all women.[111]

Millicent Garrett was nineteen in 1867 when she married the rising young radical Henry Fawcett. Although blind Henry Fawcett became the Postmaster-General in Gladstone's second government. He gave his wife encouragement in the middle-class virtues of independence, self-improvement and self-discipline. In those early years Millicent used her husband's experience to give her political awareness. She acted as her husband's secretary and, therefore, needed to read all the material required of a blind member of parliament. At the age of twenty she attended the first committee meeting of the London National Society for Women's Suffrage. John Stuart Mill was amongst her interesting friends. At dinner parties she listened to, and spent evenings with some of the best thinkers

[105] Strachey, *Millicent Garrett Fawcett*, 87.
[106] Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 38.
[107] Strachey, *Millicent Garr Garrett Fawcett*, 292.
[108] Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 25.
[109] Strachey, *The Cause,* 229.
[110] Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 71.
[111] June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: a biography* (London: Routledge, 2002), 285.

and talkers of the time, like Mill, who were sympathetic to women's suffrage. In 1884 her husband died and it was after this time she began to develop her political activity towards women's suffrage.[112]

Fawcett gave her first short public speech on the need for women's franchise in 1868. In Ray Strachey's biography, published in 1931, Strachey noted that Fawcett gave the impression of being clear, logical, self-possessed, ladylike, and she looked charming and modest.[113] She made her next speech in 1870 in her husband's constituency.[114] During this time Fawcett and Pankhurst moved in the same circles and both were members of women's suffrage societies. Individuals within these movements were not always in agreement and the passage of support for women's emancipation was not smooth and on one occasion Emmeline Pankhurst's husband slighted Lydia Becker over the issue of married women's franchise.[115]

Emmeline's family also supported the franchise for women. Richard Pankhurst, whom Emmeline married in 1879, was a practicing lawyer and was regarded in Manchester as a political extremist in support of the growing labour movement.[116] In the autumn of her marriage, agitation for reform was in full swing, and campaigners were pressing for married women to enjoy the same rights as single women. Emmeline's marriage to Richard enabled her to develop her political powers towards the cases that she was already interested in. By March 1880 she was listed as a member of the executive committee of the Manchester Society for Women's suffrage.[117]

Emmeline and Richard became closely associated with the Women's Franchise League and were part of a radical-liberal society. This is where Emmeline began her political apprenticeship. The league was looking to eradicate women's civil disabilities and it was during this time that both Emmeline and Richard became friendly with radical liberals such as Jacob and Ursula Bright. Emmeline learned a range of skills relating to public speaking and committee procedures, radical agitation, and promotion whilst she represented the Women's Franchise League.[118] During the early years of pressure for social reform the group were agitating for full and equal justice for women with men. For a short time in the

[112] Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women*, 64.
[113] Strachey, *Millicent Garrett Fawcett*, 100.
[114] Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women,* 85.
[115] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 285.
[116] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 587.
[117] Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 37.
[118] The Women's Franchise League, formed in 1889, have left few records. The WFL was founded by three women who were old acquaintances with the Pankhursts. The WFL was established to fight for the right of married women to vote at parish meetings.

1890s she was its unpaid honorary secretary.[119] Emmeline Pankhurst was elected on to the Provisional Executive Committee.[120] At meetings she regularly proposed and seconded resolutions and occasionally acted as chair. Although encouraged by her husband Dr Richard Pankhurst, she declared herself incapable of public speaking and 'even to utter', as Christabel noted; 'I second the resolution was a tremendous ordeal to her'.[121] However, she was learning a range of skills related to committee procedures, radical agitation and promotion and how to represent the League's policy.

Emmeline's work with the Manchester Society and the Women's Franchise League was not her only political outlet because she and Richard were being drawn into socialist politics, especially through their close friendship with Keir Hardie: the way socialist politics were developing their campaigns would prove to be invaluable in suffrage demonstrations. She saw, and was involved in, publicity activities such as brass bands, welcome breakfasts and other important aspects such as the ceremonial pageantry of massive banners declaring allegiance to a cause and their geographical heritages.[122]

Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst were similar in the loose attachment of party, with Fawcett moving from centre to left and Pankhurst moving from far left to far right. In the 1880s both were unable to compromise.

Conclusion

The contribution to social change by suffrage activity is the focus of this study. The suffrage movements were part of a wide-ranging trend towards a new and changing society. Women in the 1860s began campaigning for enfranchisement and there was an active attempt by the suffrage movement to redefine female roles in society and to redefine political life. The unequal relationship between the sexes was part of the pressure for change in the emerging suffrage societies. The campaign of votes for women saw the relationship with the labour movement, the middle and working classes, feminism, and party politics undergo change.

Campaigning for women's enfranchisement involved women undertaking political activity and the symbolism attached to the vote required women to examine their role in society.

---

[119] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 287

[120] Whilst Emmeline Pankhurst and her family made a temporary move to London, she co-founded her first suffrage organization, the WFL and developed the politics that would later characterise the WSPU. Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst,* 38.

[121] Sylvia Pankhurst, *The life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 29.

[122] Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 37.

Women were working together to understand the factors that limited their involvement in society and believed that gaining the franchise and other rights related to equality would lead towards change. The development of feminist thought cannot be comprehensively identified because a rich inheritance is still being uncovered but this chapter has sought to identify the emerging ideology, and the role of key activists in the movements.

This study, in placing the suffrage movement as a vehicle for social change, has argued that its emergence was part of a continuity of the pressure for full citizenship from the 1830s. Chartism was a popular movement in mid Victorian England that raised awareness of the need for the revision of society. Women had an active participation in the movement and can be viewed as part of the radical tradition of appealing to the claim for universal rights. The Reform Bill Act of 1832 had enlarged the electorate by about 50 per cent because of the inclusion of the £10 male householder and proved that change was possible.[123] However, the call for universal manhood suffrage or 'one man, one vote' was still resisted by Parliament and the second Reform Act, passed in 1867, was still based around property.[124]

Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst were both apprentices to political power. They both learned a range of skills through their political apprenticeship in a variety of pressure groups in England. They learned how there was a connection between the problems and concerns of their daily lives and the broader social and political issues of their society. It is difficult to underestimate the potential of well managed and well organised women's movements and both the NUWSS and the WSPU illustrate the extent to which they played a significant role in revising party politics as subsequent chapters will show.

The chapter also points to a failure of historians to ask, rather than 'what did they do', '*how* did they do it'? Both the NUWSS and the WSPU were fully functioning and efficient organisations. They planned, managed, and organised local and mega demonstrations. They recruited and trained their workforce. But few historians have examined the functioning of all-women organisations. Women and the leadership of both societies proved their management and organisational skills and the concentration by historians on the tactics used by both societies has obscured how successful they were as business organisations. This will be explored in the following chapters.

[123] Thompson, *The Chartists*, 11.
[124] Thompson, *The Chartists*, 11.

CHAPTER TWO – SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Introduction

This chapter will challenge the prevailing view that the NUWSS was a 'constitutional' society and the WSPU was a 'militant' organisation. This view of the two societies has been rarely questioned by historians and has largely becomes the accepted viewpoint. In 2003 Laura Mayhall noted that there was a fluidity between both societies, especially in the early Edwardian days, a point also argued by Sandra Holton in 1986, and yet the 'constitutional' versus 'militant' opposition still holds sway.[125] In the majority of work on women's suffrage the focus is on this opposition, and yet evidence shows that many women belonged to more than one suffrage organisation and would also make choices about any militant activity they may undertake.[126] This chapter proposes a rethink of the currently held division of the two main suffrage movements into constitutional (NUWSS) and militant (WSPU). It also provides a new perspective of the suffrage movements, and suggests a modification of current suffrage history that has been largely centred on the different tactics employed by both societies. The focus on militant activity by the WSPU needs to be redirected, allowing an understanding of the extent to which this has distorted and obscured the complexity and crosscurrents within both societies. This chapter will firstly give a brief overview of how militancy has been the main focus of much of suffrage history, and then will consider a modification of the role of militancy within the WSPU.[127]

The new and radical way that the WSPU assaulted the male public arena exacerbated the sexual divisions upon which Edwardian society was based. The NUWSS had sought to press for legal reforms that specifically affected women and children, while the WSPU were insisting that it was their prerogative to enter the public male world and that women should be able to participate as equal citizens. Both the WSPU and NUWSS were stigmatised and members suffered various forms of abuse and violence.[128] Selling *Votes for Women* on the

---

[125] Mayhall. T*he Militant Suffrage Movement,* p. 7, and Holton, *Feminism and Democracy.*

[126] Cornwall is an example of a county that had overlapping membership. The activities undertaken were initiated by visiting organisers such as Annie Kenney who travelled from Bristol. Due to the sparse population, and limited large urban areas, it was more difficult to organise events. This was partially overcome by organising specific campaigns such as election activity. By 1909 both the NUWSS and the WSPU were campaigning in Cornwall. By 1910 women were participating in national demonstrations. See chapter six for a more detailed discussion of suffrage activities in the south west.

[127] The 'militancy' of the militant women's suffrage movement has been discussed in many books and articles. There have been recent biographies of the Pankhurst's by Martin Pugh, June Purvis and Paula Bartley. Pugh, *The March of the Women;* Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A biography.* As far back as 1973 Antonia Raeburn's *Militant Suffragettes* published her perspective, and with many subsequent articles every aspect of militant activity appears to have been examined. Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragette.*

[128] June Purvis, '"Deeds not Words": The Daily Lives of Militant Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain', *Women's Studies International Forum,* 18:2 (1995), 138.

streets a suffragette had to stand in the gutter or run the risk of being charged with obstruction of a public pavement and be arrested by the police.[129] In 1911, the *Suffragette* reported on the case of Margaret Forbes-Robertson, a paper seller charged with 'wilfully causing an obstruction in Tottenham Court Road' when selling suffragette newspapers. Women, often aged over seventy, had to run the gauntlet of organised gangs of police in plain clothes who attacked them and some of these assaults were of a sexual nature. Women were in no doubt that they would suffer at the hands of men. It was part of what the suffragettes saw as a conspiracy of silence and convention was such that there was little public outcry over the treatment that women suffered at the hands of men and men in authority.[130] In 1909 one correspondent to the *Berwick Advertiser* attempted to draw the attention of readers to the treatment faced by suffragettes, arguing that:

> One of two so-called gentlemen acting as stewards … hustled them to the door with quite unnecessary violence. One, indeed, so far forgot manliness, to say nothing of the courtesy which one expects men to show ladies, that he thrust a handkerchief to the mouth of one of them.[131]

Very few reported on the treatment of suffragettes in public places, but newspapers did report regularly on women's prison experience. Their commitment to the cause was to suffer physical and verbal abuse, indignities and insults.[132]

It is also important to acknowledge the cultural significance of the suffrage movement. It was a catalyst for other tensions of class, work and sex. Both the NUWSS and WSPU from 1906 were highly visible suffrage movements and very successful business enterprises, with their headquarters in London. The important analysis of how these two women-led societies operated has not previously been considered. Between 1906 and 1914 both societies constructed structures and systems that enabled them to carry out well-planned, well - executed large and small demonstrations. In addition, they very successfully recruited women on a massive scale. They built up societies nationwide that were financially viable.[133] Chapter Six will provide a model that will portray, analyse and explore how the WSPU, as a newly formed organisation, grew significantly across the south west of England. It will be argued that success was because of their understanding of administration, and employing a female workforce. The suffrage societies empowered their employees to take on new roles and responsibilities. Many women stepped out of their expected gender roles

---

[129] *The Suffragette,* 25 July 1912.
[130] 'Statement of the suffragettes at Berwick', *The Berwick Advertiser,* 22 October 1909.
[131] *Derby Daily Telegraph,* 27 June 1912.
[132] Purvis, 'Deeds not Words', 138.
[133] See appendix one.

and Chapter Five further addresses the important question: 'how did they do it?' Their ability to set up and manage complex administrative structures and the resulting accomplishments should not be ignored. Both societies contributed extensively to social change, by both encouraging women to become involved as members, but also as part of a large workforce that was trained, and more importantly, valued.

Alongside a discussion of militancy, this chapter also provides a new interpretation of the way the two suffrage societies successfully seized market opportunities to put a very observable pressure on the political system. The NUWSS and WSPU raised national awareness, and attempted to educate the public on why women should be citizens with a right to vote. For Emmeline Pankhurst it was vital that the WSPU was a woman-only society.[134] Current historical interpretation relies heavily on the NUWSS and the WSPU functioning as two separate societies. This thesis instead highlights the core similarities; both societies ran extremely successful business enterprises, revealing they understood how to raise awareness, communicate their cause, and apply marketing techniques.

Militancy

1912 was a year Annie Kenney recalled: 'extreme militancy had broken out'.[135] This chapter will firstly consider the use of the term 'militancy'. Christabel Pankhurst acknowledged that a gathering of the unemployed in 1905 made her resolve to use militancy, and together with Annie Kenney she carried out the first militant act that could also be acknowledged as constitutional. They attended a talk given by Government Ministers at Manchester Trade Hall. This chapter will also consider whether the 'argument of stone'[136], was planned and will consider whether the 'argument of stone', was planned as a reaction to the failure of the conciliation bill or other political events and whether it requires a modification of our understanding of the role of militancy within the WSPU. Emmeline Pankhurst threw down her battle stance identifying that stone throwing was a time-honoured political weapon.[137] Stone-throwing or arson was the image of the WSPU and their activities were supported by and encouraged by Emmeline Pankhurst as a deliberate act and the WSPU and activities[138]

[134] This decision is discussed later in the chapter - when Pankhurst invites the small group of women to join her and proposes a women activity.
[135] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 172.
[136] The 'argument of stone' refers to the use of stone-throwing as a tactic. Suffragettes were issued with striped denim Dorothy bag containing stones wrapped in brown paper that was tied with string and attached round the waist under their skirts. At a signal stones could be reached through a placket pocket. Antonia Raeburn *The Militant Suffragettes,* 104.
[137] Pankhurst, *The life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 104.
[138] Actual numbers of suffragettes involved in violence are difficult to identify, although the official numbers of arrested women during 1912-1913 was 367 and 169 between 1913-1914. Pugh notes that there seems to be no records of how many women were arrested more than once. Pugh, *The March of Women,* 201.

One of the questions this chapter addresses is how planned were these activities undertaken by the suffragettes?

There is a failure in much of the existing literature to address the differentiation that existed with the WSPU. It was a loose coalition of women, whose opinion and actions differed. There was a small inner core of militants whose commitment to votes for women was different to the vast bulk of WSPU members. The majority never adopted militant tactics that could lead to them being arrested and imprisoned. Many women joined the WSPU and restricted their political lives to attending meetings and walking in processions. Both the militant and non-militant feminists ran the risk of being labelled 'wild women' and the wearing of their colours was a visible display of their membership of an 'unladylike' organisation.[139] Purvis coined anew expression to identify women who were not militant and terms them as 'WSPU feminists'[140]

Throughout this period WSPU activities were a mixture of constitutional and militant methods, and it is the militant activities that have been best remembered and reported.[141] A speech in February 1912 by Mr Hobhouse of Bristol was perceived by the WSPU as an incitement to militancy. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence identified this speech as a 'sensational challenge to women by a responsible Minister of the Crown, that had a decisive effect on the future course of the women's suffrage movement'.[142] Women acted according to their views and commitment to the suffrage cause, as with the case of Lilian Ball, a witness at the trial of Emmeline Pankhurst, Frederick Pethick Lawrence and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence in 1912. Ball was a member of the Balham branch of the WSPU, and had agreed to participate in 'fighting policy' for the cause, though she was only prepared to engage in activities that may result in a short prison sentence: 'I said a short sentence—not more than seven days, because I could not remain longer away from home'.[143]

There is clear evidence of planning. Details of damage to property taking place, the timing of activities, and streets to be assaulted were precise and so well planned that there was a hiding place allocated for the women to store their stones and any missiles they had left. Some women left diary accounts of their role. Charlotte (Charlie) Marsh recorded gathering

[139] Purvis, 'Deeds not Words', 150.
[140] Purvis, 'Deeds not Words', 150.
[141] Emmeline Pankhurst in 1912 identified that the law barring women from voting was a judicial decision. Her argument is part of a long-neglected aspect of the Edwardian suffrage campaigning. Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 79.
[142] Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 197-8.
[143] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* 14 May 1912, trial of Emmeline Pankhurst, Frederick Pethick Lawrence and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence (t19120514-54).

pebbles on the beach at Southsea, and with her pockets full of great big stones she travelled to London and was allocated a spot at the top of Villiers Street. She notes on her way to the Strand using her hammer 'as though I was playing hockey … I did at least nine windows'.[144] By October 1912 Emmeline Pankhurst called on suffragettes to join her in a new militancy, but was making it clear that how women expressed their militancy was 'each in their own way'.[145] The *Suffragette* in 1913 published a list of serious attacks on property during that year.[146]

Militancy has been equated with window breaking, arson and hunger striking carried out by the members of the WSPU.[147] This is still at the forefront of current historical interpretation despite the intervention by Holton and Mayhall. Holton and Mayhall both questioned the continued differentiation between 'constitutional' and 'militant'. Holton raised her concern in 1986 and questions the historical convention of the division of the suffrage movement into two distinct wings. She expressed apprehension that the similarity of lobbying and the use of major demonstrations by the two societies has not been examined, and argued that the activities of the societies were both constitutional and militant in Edwardian times, further noting that the perspective that the NUWSS and WSPU were in symbiosis and supported one another has largely been lost. She proposes that the WSPU became identified as militant because they adopted an aggressive stance towards the Liberal party, using heckling and harassment, which was a significant political strategy. The differences between WSPU and the NUWSS have been centered on their modes of campaigning and styles of agitation.

Between 1986 and the publication of Mayhall's work in 2003, there has been an uncritical application of the terms constitutional and militant in the literature, and this rigid distinction has relied primarily on the evidence from small groups of former suffragettes of the WSPU. It was these minority accounts which then came to dominate subsequent discussions of the suffrage movement. Much of the Edwardian discussion of militancy tends to concentrate on the activities of the WSPU and interpret the use of spectacle as an example of performance activism and visible politics. Women wanted to represent themselves politically and the militant campaign was part of a radical tradition, and an attempt reconfigure citizenship

[144] Charlotte (Charlie) Marsh cited in Joyce Marlow, ed., *Votes for Women: The Virago Book of Suffragettes* (London: Virago, 2000).
[145] Raeburn *The Militant Suffragette,* 183.
[146] *The Suffragette* recorded a total of 98 attacks with some records showing attacks on the same day but in different areas and cities, so this total is therefore approximate. The months of April and May recorded the highest figure of sixteen. During April attacks were across the country, in places such as Potters Bar, the grounds of Dudley castle, Tunbridge Wells Cricket Pavilion, and a bomb exploded at the County Council Offices in Newcastle.
[147] Pugh, *The March of Women*.

through an interrogation of the law. One site of protest was the courtroom and suffragettes attempted to separate the law's morality from its basis as state power. The present historical interpretation rests largely on an uncritical interpretation of the British suffrage movement and does not mirror its complexity. As Mayhall argues, the distinction between constitutional and militancy is difficult to apply consistently and can obscure the similarities between the two societies.

'Militant' and 'constitutional' can certainly be used as a crude measure; the terms were used by both the NUWSS, the WSPU and other suffrage organisations including the anti-suffrage movement.[148] However, they remain unsatisfactory for nuanced historical interpretations, as they fail to describe the movement as a whole. Suffrage activity, such as passive resistance, was undertaken by large numbers of women. A rigid enunciation of the distinction between 'militant' and 'constitutional' was made by Ray Strachey in 1928 who established the NUWSS as constitutional and positioned the WSPU in opposition to demonstrate how constitutional tactics were responsible for parliamentary victories.[149] However, there is no convincing evidence of any complete divide and the creation of the narrative of militancy has obscured, and to an extent devalued, the role of the NUWSS in the pressure for social change in Victorian and Edwardian society.

In May 1912 militancy was on trial and the courtroom provided a dramatic suffrage triumph for the WSPU. The leaders were on trial at the Old Bailey for conspiracy to incite violence – which gave them an opportunity to defend themselves in front of a jury. The government charged Frederick Pethick Lawrence, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Emmeline Pankhurst and Christabel Pankhurst with conspiring to organise mass-window-breaking protests, and they were indicted on fifty-four counts.

The defendants took every opportunity to make their case through the use of great drama, humour and historical precedent. The sparring between prosecution and defence was portrayed as amusing and entertaining. Emmeline Pankhurst's opening speech was recorded as a piece of eloquent pleading, delivered with charm of manner and full of literary grace, fit, indeed, to stand beside similar appeals in famous political cases. 'I have come to the conclusion,' said Mrs Pankhurst, 'that if I had broken a pane of glass with other women when younger than my daughter, women would have had the vote long ago. Since we cannot get our freedom by women's ways, then I am going out to throw my stone with the

[148] Millicent Fawcett readily used the term militant and refers to a 'militant outrage' in October 1906. By 1909 she had clarified her position in the *Common Cause* 29 July 1907, as not approving of militant tactics but also did not approve of the treatment given to women prisoners, Pugh, *The March of Women,*182.
[149] Strachey, *The Cause,* 313.

rest of you.' She asked that the whole of her speech should be read. This was done. Witness reports were then read. Christabel Pankhurst said, 'they all felt the deepest gratitude to those magnificent women who had so nobly responded to the call on Tuesday night. Their heroism was all the greater because of the memory they retained of "Black Friday", and also because the great bulk of those women took a new departure in militancy which meant still more stringency and more violence from the police'.[150] Christabel Pankhurst concluded, in words that rang solemnly and with a warning note, 'Let them beware how they incite us to do worse.' Frederick Pethick Lawrence said, 'Tuesday's demonstration was a great victory, because it had shown the world that the members of the movement were determined, and was also the triumph of the indomitable spirit of the women themselves. His wife sent this message from Holloway Gaol—Be ready.'[151]

Evidence of conspiring to cause mass window breaking was given by shopkeepers, a number of the police gave witness statements related to WSPU activities, and a personal statement from Richard Melhuish of Melhuish, Limited, tool merchants, Fetter Lane was given. Melhuish noted that 'on February 22 or 23, a lady called and asked for some hammers similar to a pattern hammer which she brought; she was supplied with three dozen at about 1s. each; she took them away with her. (Witness identified a number of the hammers, presently proved, as being part of the lot sold by him)'.[152]

The trial transcript demonstrates that the police held a constant watch over the activities carried out by the WSPU, both in their headquarters and at meetings they held:

> Police constable SURMAN 124 B. I attended a meeting of the W.S.P.U. at the Albert Hall on November 16. Mr Pethick Lawrence presided, and other speakers were Miss Pankhurst, Miss Vida Goldstein, and Miss Annie Kenney …

He was cross-examined by E. Pankhurst and she stated: 'This meeting was a very large one; about 9,000 people attended, every seat being paid for; the audience consisted of very well-to-do ladies and gentlemen; they were very enthusiastic, and there was only one dissentient to the resolution at the finish'.

> Police-constable THOMAS WHITBREAD, 38 HR. I was in Parliament Street on November 21 about 7.55 p.m., when I saw Sarah Bennett throw a stone at No. 35, a shop of the Aerated Bread Company.[153]

---

[150] Black Friday was named so because of what the women suffered when Emmeline Pankhurst led a deputation of three hundred women to Parliament after the dissolution of the Conciliation Bill. Women were arrested, and forcibly restrained by the police. 'Our women were knocked about, tripped up, their arms and fingers twisted, their bodies doubled under and then forcibly thrown, if indeed they did not drop stunned to the ground'. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 165.
[151] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* 14 May 1912, (t19120514-54).
[152] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* 14 May 1912, (t19120514-54).
[153] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* 14 May 1912, (t19120514-54).

Inspector Hawkins said that on a visit to Lincoln's Inn House he found a satchel on the windowsill. In the satchel were eight bottles of bonnet, a whisky based drink, each holding about half a pint, and one of which he produced before the court. This was used as evidence of planning to carry out window breaking.

All national and local newspapers carried detailed reports of the trial, and every day, crowds gathered outside the court to watch the drama unfold. The press reported in detail on the procedures, and their reports carefully followed the Old Bailey proceedings. Every newspaper drew attention to the 'militancy' undertaken by the WSPU, and made much of their confrontation with the power of the state. The major dailies published verbatim reports and meticulously used photographs of the three main defendants.[154] This coverage gave the WSPU a national audience and provided extensive coverage. The newspaper reports allowed readers to make their own decisions on the merits of the suffrage case and were events of high drama which brought the public into the courtroom. This very public forum showed that the WSPU was a large organisation and represented women across the nation. It was able to portray itself as a mass, successful, well-run organisation that represented the political aspirations of many women across the country.

It was noted by a correspondent from the *Manchester Guardian* that the array of documents seized from the WSPU headquarters were a tribute to women's economy, foresight and genius for organisation.[155] *The Times* throughout May 1912 gave verbatim reports similar to those contained in both national and local newspapers. However, they also reported a detailed account of the finances of the WSPU and discussed whether the state should attack their funds. The paper reported in detail the role of search warrants used at WSPU headquarters and warrants held by the special branch of New Scotland Yard. *The Times* did not express any view of the proceedings and kept to a detailed daily report.

The combination of massive publicity from all newspapers and the continuing public appetite for drama fed the public imagination and was thrilling because women were portraying strength and commitment to their cause. This suggests that the publicity given, and the persistence of the small number of militant activists, has distorted and produced an inaccurate and misleading analysis of the use of militant activity. Second-wave feminists in the 1960s concentrated on the WSPU and very few even considered the NUWSS as a

[154] *Daily Telegraph, Manchester Guardian, Daily Mirror, Daily Chronicle, Western Daily Press,* and *The Times* are just a few examples of newspapers which covered the trial and associated militant activities.
[155] Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*.

viable suffrage movement.[156] The attention given to damage to property that occurred in 1912 was distorting and may have led to a skewed analysis that resulted in the division into 'constitutionalists' and the 'm*ilitants'* – which then became an accepted division between the two main suffrage societies.

Sandra Holton has argued that the mode of campaigning in the early twentieth century, with women taking the issue of the vote to the streets, was in itself a militant activity. Pugh confirms that in the 1860s suffragists who mounted platforms, the first to do so, were in his opinion, the militants.[157] As Ray Strachey identifies, when militancy was first carried out by the WSPU there was nothing un-constitutional about their activities and they confined themselves to asking unwelcome questions at liberal meetings and marching in small bands to Westminster.[158] It wasn't until the adoption of the tactics used later by the WSPU that the NUWSS clarified that they were strictly law-abiding and non-violent.

The suffrage movement was dynamic, complex and, as Mayhall rightly points out, the heart of militant protest was primarily about the deployment of women's bodies in public spaces.[159] Mayhall further argues that an examination of suffrage militancy must start as early as the 1880s and that groups at varying points in time moved from dialogue to confrontation.[160] However, despite the contributions of Holton and Mayhall the idea of the distinction between the militant WSPU and constitutional NUWSS continues to be made.

This study will move away from the continued division between constitutional and militant tactics, and focus on the similarity between the structures and systems used by both societies. This concentrates on how they set up and ran very successful organisations both in London and across the nation. Current historical studies focus on the differences between the management systems of the two societies, and this has been used to underpin the division. However, closer inspection detects similarities in their processes and procedures. They utilised best practice from activities undertaken by each society. For example, the mega marches in London followed a formula set by the' mud march', the first large-scale demonstration carried out by the NUWSS.

---

[151] *The Times,* 15 May 1912, 79.
[157] Pugh *The March of Women,* 19.
[158] Strachey, *Millicent Garrett Fawcett,* 311.
[159] Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 8.
[160] Suffragists, Irish and Indian nationalists had repeated and unsuccessful attempts for inclusion in the political nation. Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 20.

Structures and systems

In 1903 a small group of women assembled in the Manchester home of Emmeline Pankhurst. Emmeline Pankhurst already decided that in order to gain the franchise for women they must be politically free, she stated: 'we must do the work ourselves. We must have an independent women's movement'.[161] The WSPU was an all-women organisation and this included employees and volunteers.[162]

The suffragettes insisted on a unity of theory and practice, focusing on the enfranchisement of women but they also looked to improve the social position of women in society. As explained by Emmeline Pankhurst they were willing to break laws in order to gain the right to make laws.[163] Although the daily lives of militants were different from the large number of non-militants, the membership understood the importance of sisterhood and female solidarity that they believed a woman-only society could foster. Their message and emphasis that women share certain commonalities, irrespective of any social or political differences, was part of the impetus for social change taking place in Edwardian society.

The WSPU grew rapidly from its early inception in 1903. The society moved from Manchester to London setting up headquarters in St Clement's Inn. Strategically the WSPU needed to make its headquarters in London to be near Parliament and the national daily newspapers. The move to London enabled them to establish themselves as a society with clear aims, and to consolidate and grow the WSPU across the nation. Within two years they had established a large network of societies.

The NUWSS as an established society changed its structure in 1906, and was no longer an umbrella organisation. The NUWSS operated from headquarters in London with an active central core determining policies and trying new tactics. They employed a significant number of women and attention was paid to recruitment and selection. Training was an important function and women gained new skills that could enhance their future role in society. Women were employed as organisers, by both societies, and performed an important contribution to the growth of their societies. They were often involved in raising awareness and in the recruitment of working-class women to the suffrage cause. This thesis

[161] Pankhurst, *The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 43.
[162] Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Frederick Pethick Lawrence jointly edited *Votes for Women.* Frederick Pethick Lawrence gave his support to his wife joining the WSPU.
[163] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 475.

shows how the role of organisers underpinned the growth of two well managed and very successful, organisations. Chapter Six will narrate how the arrival of Annie Kenney, as an organiser in Bristol, was the catalyst for incredible and rapid growth across the South West of England and South Wales.

Networking

The growth of the NUWSS and WSPU was accomplished by significant factors such as networking, and these factors are of key importance when understanding the growth of both movements after 1907. The cornerstone of both societies was their solidarity and this was achieved by staying in touch and communicating with the membership. In a man-made world, women needed to utilise all the available communication systems. The suffrage societies had clear and active networks to communicate and share aspects of growth and continuity. Chapter Six elaborates in a locally-focused case study how they communicated through networks, and set up societies locally and nationwide. This was vital to the growth of both societies. It was important that as many women as possible should be converted to the cause. The role of *Votes for Women* was central to suffragette conversion and was often identified as part of the process of political awareness. Many suffragettes called themselves converts and the narratives they produced revolved around the cause of Suffragism and their new lives. A variety of suffrage autobiographies were published in *Votes for Women* and these were designed to convert the readership.[164]

Lady Constance Lytton's work represents a key suffragette conversion, and was widely reported. She became a figurehead when she disguised herself as a working-class woman in order to expose the hypocrisy of a system that treated women from the working classes more harshly than 'elite' prisoners. The conversion stories in *Votes for Women* were typical of middle-class women. Many working women reported that they were suffragettes from the time they first noticed that life was harder for their mothers than for their fathers.[165] Annie Kenney reports that her decision to join the militant branch of the movement was a critical point in her life: 'I knew I should lose all my past life'.[166] First-hand experience that acknowledged the difficulties of working women served as its own conversion narrative. For

[164] Although *Votes for Women* was conceived as a periodical that reported on issues of suffrage, as a propaganda organ it was also meant to convert its readers. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence's weekly editorials used Christian imagery and promoted the idea that the women's movement was a 'new moral ideal'. Kabi Hartman, '"What made me a suffragette": the new woman and the new (?) conversion narrative', *Women's History Review,* 12:1 (2003), 36.
[165] Annie Kenney claimed in her biography that she was always a suffragette. Annie Kenney *Memories of a Militant,* 36.
[166] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 36.

many it was a quasi-religious experience and a turning point in their lives and their shared experience of protesting, being arrested and going to prison produced a spiritual narrative for women from all classes. Prison provided a chance for the suffragette to re-dedicate herself to the cause by suffering for it. This has left a legacy of a metaphor of women as pilgrims, warriors, converts and martyr-saviours.[167]

Votes for Women (WSPU) and the *Common Cause* (NUWSS) were both excellent networking vehicles and were inspirational and informative. Both newspapers sought to convert new members to the cause and encourage those already converted. The papers published news of the activities of the leadership, connecting women across geographic lines and thus aided the societies in forming a collective identity. Both publications were a source of news for their readership and as a voice for the social movement produced their own assessments and debates. Women needed to show a united sisterhood and this was underpinned by the publication of both newspapers.

The solidarity and feelings of comradeship united all women and was a strength of the movements. Non-militants could endure the repeated physical maulings whilst engaging in peaceful protests, and gained a spiritual sustenance. Millicent Fawcett wrote to several newspapers asking them not to denounce flag waving women, who risked rough handling, and argued that the demonstrations proved that women were in earnest in their demand for the vote.[168] They believed that by giving their physical selves they would win a necessary spiritual victory. Despite a differentiation among WSPU members, what was reiterated time and time again was their feeling of sisterhood. The bonds between all women, irrespective of any social and political differences, was pervasive in WSPU rhetoric and helped forge a sense of collectivity among WSPU members.[169] Although suffragettes were from poor and rich backgrounds, married and single, it was the feeling of comradeship and sisterhood that gave them a bond of fellowship. Because of their unity towards the cause within the suffrage movement social distinction was of little importance to the WSPU women engaged with each other not only about strategies or tactics but also on models of citizenship.[170]

The welcome presence of volunteers at headquarters and in the regions aided the creation of sisterhood and shared women-only camaraderie. The office and administrative systems were set up with clear rules for organisational control. The policies and procedures were set

[167] Hartman, 'What made me a suffragette', 47.
[168] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 37.
[169] Purvis, 'Deeds not Words', 144.
[170] Mayhall, 'Creating the "Suffrage Spirit"', 6.

to grow its finance and raise large sums of money both in London and in the provinces. The London offices were the front line and coordinated national events, staffed the WSPU offices, prepared its propaganda, and produced its newspaper. Teresa Billington Craig, one of the earliest organisers, set up WSPU branches in Scotland and had previously been an organiser for the Independent Labour Party (ILP)[171]. On her return to London, she found a smoothly organised and well-managed new machine. Headquarters controlled and organised a smoothly-operated organisation with a new approach from the previously haphazard filing system; expansion had brought efficiency.[172]

Clement's Inn - WSPU Headquarters

In order to establish how the WSPU became an efficient organisation it is important to investigate how the society conducted its affairs and established its structures and systems. The move by the WSPU from Manchester as far as Christabel Pankhurst was concerned was crucial, and she drove through her mother's objections about their inability to afford the move.[173] Christabel Pankhurst argued that as Parliament was in London 'our fight must be there too'.[174] In the autumn of 1906, the WSPU were installed in Clement's Inn and started with just two rooms but expanded quickly onto other floors.[175] The WSPU needed to make its presence felt in London and the headquarters sited on The Strand were imposing. 'The Inn was at once a rallying-ground for women of all grades and classes, their pent desire for self-expression surging to this movement as a long-needed outlet'.[176]

Christabel Pankhurst identified the building as a stronghold and close to Fleet Street. This was highly convenient to an organisation who were very aware of how the press could be a handy tool, and who, as Christabel Pankhurst stated 'were forever interested in the militant movement'.[177] Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence liked the press and enjoyed 'even exaggerated and distorted reports … who told the world this much – that we wanted the vote and were resolved to get it'.[178] The WSPU needed an identifiable base, an operation that could send out propaganda and could be contacted without difficulty. In addition, Clement's Inn also offered protection to the volunteers and workforce. However, the building failed to offer protection from the police. In March 1913,

[171] In 1907 Teresa Billington Craig drew up a constitution to be ratified by the WSPU's annual meeting. Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst felt that a democratic society was inappropriate for the WSPU's form
[172] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 93.
[173] Although the WSPU relocated its base in London, Emmeline Pankhurst was concerned that she must fulfil her official place in Manchester and constantly returned by train. Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 61.
[174] Pankhurst, *Unshackled:* 63.
[175] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 38.
[176] Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 62.
[177] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 70.
[178] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 70.

on one of many occasions they raided the offices, police, armed with a warrant for Christabel Pankhurst and the Pethick Lawrences on a charge of incitement, searched the building and removed a vast quantity of papers.[179]

Clement's Inn was the centre of raising awareness of both the organisation and their cause. In order to achieve this very important function they created a general entrance. This was the focus of distributing handbills, pamphlets, ribbons and badges. It acted as a meeting place and the WSPU, aware of the value of providing a welcoming entrance, utilised this space to sell material and employ propaganda. Once in London, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence joined as honorary treasurer. She was aware of the need to plan and coordinate the headquarters' role. 'Mrs Pethick Lawrence's powers of organisation were remarkable. She imagined fine projects and knew how to execute them'.[180] The WSPU needed to be transparent and have accountability for all their activities. Christabel Pankhurst later wrote:

> Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence was a devoted social worker and with her husband, Frederick Pethick Lawrence, threw themselves unreservedly into the Suffragette movement; she was ardent, eloquent and magnetic, she was a great organiser, with tremendous drive and resource. They bought to the Union money and a considerable social circle.[181]

Purple, white and green representing justice, purity and hope was chosen by Emmeline Pethick Lawrence to represent the WSPU and was soon on sale and used on a variety of goods including, sashes. Propaganda such as this was heavily marketed by the WSPU.[182] This symbolic use became known as 'the colours' and were widely used in clothing.[183] Christabel Pankhurst further recalled: 'Mrs. Pethick Lawrence's powers of organisation were remarkable. Her husband gave his sympathy and support to her decision to join the WSPU - and stood by her from the beginning'.[184] The WSPU like any complex organisation had an administrative structure at both national and local level. Women's roles were varied; they were organisers, typists, secretaries, newspaper sellers and sales assistants in the WSPU shops. Treasurers and organisers earned £2 a week. Organisers could be based in London whilst others served as district organisers and some led an itinerant life working around the

[179] March 1913 was the first in a succession of police raids designed to produce evidence of criminal intent by the leadership of the WSPU. During these raids, office staff were arrested and warrants were issued that allowed mail pending an examination by the police. Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts: The History of one Radical Family* (London: Vintage, 2008), 207.
[180] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 63.
[181] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 63.
[182] Antonia Raeburn *The Militant Suffragettes.* (Michael Joseph, 197.
[183] Atkinson *The Suffragettes in Pictures.* (museum of London, 1996), 61.
[184] Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 63.

country. For some working-class organisers, the salary was of vital importance.[185] A small number of women worked for out-of-pocket expenses and were regarded as employees and as such were accountable for their actions. These women were often from privileged backgrounds and some had families who wholly supported their militant activities.[186]

The WSPU formed as a woman-only society and this applied to the membership, employees and volunteers. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence understood that the campaign for the vote should be organised and executed by women, and they had the necessary initiative, drive, courage and enthusiasm. She was also aware that despite the exuberance of its growth, the campaign needed planning on the business side. The WSPU relied heavily on an army of volunteers and this could significantly reduce costs. Extensive propaganda drew new recruits and many offered their services voluntarily.[187] Emmeline Pethick Lawrence in February 1909 published an appeal in *Votes for Women* explaining that current staffing levels were unable to meet the enormous growth of the movement. Her call for voluntary organisers recognised that many young Edwardian girls had lives filled with domestic tasks but lacked intellectual fulfilment.[188]

The WSPU was an efficient and well-managed organisation, and the configuration of the offices was carefully planned and productivity was at the heart of headquarters' concern. The development of the organisation involved having departments with different responsibilities.[189] The success of a well-managed organisation is evident in the emerging structure and identifying responsibilities undertaken by employees and volunteers. The system employed by the WSPU echoes large male-dominated organisations, but given what they were trying to achieve and the need to control an army of women, this is not surprising. Chapters Four and Five probe the relationship between gender and power. These chapters show how the productive and interpretative use of male systems of management enabled and supported their success as organisations.

---

[185] This is supported in the biographies of working-class women in the WSPU. For example, Hannah Mitchell recalled that her family of four was struggling to support themselves on thirty shillings a week, so she welcomed the £2 salary. Lady Constance Lytton also claimed a WSPU wage. She was from a wealthy family, and stepping outside the bounds prescribed by her social circle made her vulnerable. Hannah Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel*, ed. Geoffrey Mitchell (London: Faber, 1968) and Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 20.

[186] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 23.

[187] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes,* 36.

[188] *Votes for Women,* 7th February 1909.

[189] Advertising and book keeping occupied one department, with the important task of packing and dispatching the weekly editions of Votes forWomen. The treasury department was involved in fund raising and their ambition was to fill the 'war chest' with money to fight the campaign. Other supporting departments included a ticket office, an information bureau that collated copies of all newspapers, and a duplicating office, which had the task of producing hundreds of handbills using Roneo-duplicating machines. Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures,* 50.

With the expansion to new premises a new general manager, Harriett Roberta Kerr, was appointed and she became the public face for new arrivals to headquarters. She also supervised the numerous voluntary workers.[190] Several other organisers were recruited and bought to headquarters because of their specific skills as typists or in the case of Mrs Sparboro, domestic skills. Sparboro was taken on to take care of staff and the 'domestic side' of office work. According to members, her relentless provision of tea made it a pleasant place to work.[191]

Descriptions of the offices reveal pride in the modern space with well- equipped and up-to-the-minute innovations such as an electric clock in every room. This could be a way of controlling staff but there was also a need to direct activities, keeping to strict time was part of the ethos of the society. Women enjoyed being at the nerve centre.[192] The telephone was a new and recent device. Clement's Inn had both external and internal telephone lines, and a switchboard that employed several workers. It was situated in the reception area and drew much admiration. This was surpassed when they relocated to Lincoln's Inn in September 1912 with its electric lifts; this was a modern building chosen for its size – which was proof of the triumphal progress of the union.[193]

Emmeline Pethick Lawrence instituted a number of control mechanisms that enabled the efficient running of a large and growing society. Minute books were instigated and a treasurer was appointed in order to have transparency and accountability. This was an important factor when police raids happened regularly. The rules at Headquarters restricted a woman's ability to act spontaneously but in an organisation that perceived itself as an army there was no room for individualism.[194] Although military titles were utilised they were more evident at large demonstrations. In her account of the society Christabel Pankhurst imagined the organisation of the WSPU as being led in much the same way as the Salvation Army under General Booth.[195]

---

[190] Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures,* 50.
[191] The employment of a tea lady to look after the workforce shows that a female-led organisation that constantly expected high levels of performance - with offices that had electric clocks, and time monitored centrally to preventing wasted time - could also be aware of the need for the welfare of their workforce. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 99.
[192] Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures,* 46.
[193] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 96.
[194] During the coup that took place in 1907 when seventy members broke away from the WSPU and formed The Women's Freedom League (WFL), Emmeline Pankhurst declared 'the WSPU is simply a suffrage army in the field, and no one is obliged to remain in it'. Consequently, by 1908 the use of military terminology, regalia and uniforms permeated the suffragette movement. Pugh, *The Pankhursts: A history of One Radical Family*, 180.
[195] Pankhurst, *Unshackled*.

Mrs Saunders was appointed as a financial secretary and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence was concerned that all money was accounted for. Her rules decreed that if the petty cash was out, the missing amount was made up from the pocket of the worker concerned. A strict official system was set up, with a small treasury team. From 1906 Frederick Pethick Lawrence took on the role of honorary secretary and was entirely responsible for running the office, organising a literature department called the Women's Press.[196] The WSPU did not stand still and employed women with the right skills, like Alice Knight, to set up and take over a new enterprise that created and designed penny pamphlets, badges, postcards and books on the suffrage movement. In addition, a general office manager was also appointed.[197] The London office was the front-line of preparing for spectacular demonstrations and the organisers at headquarters planned and coordinated national events and prepared propaganda.

Women working at local levels were also an important part of the administrative structure. They were also paid £2 a week. The first paid workers were Annie Kenney and Teresa Billington-Craig. By 1906 this number had grown to six.[198] By 1907 eleven women were officially employed and this rose to somewhere between thirty and forty by February 1908. Of these fourteen were described as 'outside staff', whilst the remaining organisers worked from headquarters. It was important to make the right match of organiser for branch or district and Emmeline Pankhurst often advised new organisers and told them what to expect, for her personal charisma was a vital quality of a good organiser.[199]

NUWSS new headquarters

The NUWSS moved to new headquarters in 1907 from number 25 to larger premises at number 58 Victoria Street. A number of circular letters identified that there was a need to raise funds, informing societies of the move to new premises, and invitation to fund-raising events were issued extensively.[200] As many as thirteen could be held in one month.[201] Evidence of the success of the collection was not recorded but the move to new premises in 1907 enabled the National Union to grow substantially. The new structure, use of committees to control different strategies, tactics and systems, and the engagement of additional staff, enabled the society to control all aspects of administration in a central core.

---

[196] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes,* 77.
[197] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes,* 39.
[198] These six were Hannah Mitchell, Mary Gawthorpe, Helen Fraser, Minnie Baldock, Nellie Martel and Flora Drummond. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 24.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Women's Library, LSWA/A, Boxes FL 338 and FL 338/1. Administration papers
[201] Women's Library, LSWA/A, Box 338.Administration papers

Annual reports recorded that between 1906 and 1914 the NUWSS made considerable gains in membership. Affiliated societies and financial resources grew from 16 in 1903, to 70 in 1909 and 305 by 1911.[202] The number of societies grew from 5,836 to 13,429 in 1911. The organisation was re-structured in 1910 and established all its affiliated societies within a given area. Each area was headed by a committee with one representative from each society and one representative from the NUWSS executive. They coordinated their activities with a twice-yearly conference.[203]

The spread and growth of the NUWSS required the engagement of full-time staff to carry out the activities embarked upon after 1909. These included public speaking, the selling of newspapers, and giving out handbills and leaflets advertising the next meeting. Maude Royden recalled that carrying a sandwich board was a really vile job and she was often attacked by 'rowdies'.[204] Secretaries were worked off their feet arranging meetings, enrolling new members and supplying information.[205] Evidence of the meeting arranged during October 1911 shows the sheer volume of organising carried out by the centre. A total of 199 meetings were held and arranged by staff and this included a large meeting held at the Albert Hall in 1912.[206] The region's information on aspects related to planning was collected by headquarters. This shows that there was a formal requirement for organisers to take notes of their activities. They were required to report to headquarters, a way of standardising procedures and systems.[207] In 1909 paid organisers were required to keep divisional books to record party organisations, and keep note of local conditions, especially employment. Regional societies could employ their own organisers and no longer needed to get permission from the centre.[208] The substantial growth of the organisation came with the understanding that the control of recruiting and employing organisers was no longer necessary and some act included permission to hire assistant organisers. Twelve would be assigned to the federations free of charge. Their salaries would be between 10/- and £1 per week for six months and would cost £1200. The organisers were trained and whilst in training would be assigned cities were relinquished to the regions.

---

[202] Strachey, *The Cause*, 309.
[203] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies*, 33
[204] Maud Royden was a leading member of the NUWSS. In 1911 she wrote, *Votes and Wages: How Women's Suffrage will improve the Economic Position of Women* (London: Garner, 1984) Her papers are housed in the Women's Library.
[205] Strachey, *The Cause,* 309.
[206] Women's Library, LSWA/A, Boxes FL 338 and FL 338/1.
[207] Women's Library, 2LSW/B, Box FL 370.
[208] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies*. 33.

The executive committee meetings show the wide variety of decisions the different sub committees made. This in to an already qualified organiser. A sample of every leaflet was sent to each organiser and Miss Courtney, an organiser in headquarters, posted new rules and identified that their holidays were at fixed times, though there is no identification of the actual allocation of holiday periods.[209]

Quarterly council meetings held from 1906 to 1913 discussed fund raising, new membership and advice on working up demonstrations locally, all carefully recorded in the minutes.[210] Between 1912 and 1913 sub committees were extended to include the press, members, organisational issues and literature. Sub-committees were formed to deal with special events such as the Pilgrimage.[211] Additionally, a new special committee was assembled in 1912 to deal with the Election Fighting Fund (EFF).[212]

In addition, they held an annual Council in different cities from 1909. The minutes of these meetings show that each council took a wide variety of decisions. The council meeting in Brighton in January 1909 discussed the role of militancy and would seek to convert those in favour of militancy.[213] Accounts were submitted annually and generally covered a six-month period. They were detailed and included salaries, postage, stationery, legal advice, advertising and bank charges. Members at these meetings often made decisions about how demonstrations should be organised. They identified that Thomas Cook, the travel company, were willing to run excursions from Leeds, Dewsbury and Huddersfield and produced plans for forthcoming events. Circulars were produced asking the 'good worker', 'Dear X (Space to fill in name),' for their help to 'support Miss Ray Strachey who is working terribly hard'. Many letters were exchanged between societies and Keswick received a programme of events and advice on hotels offering reduction in rates whilst meetings were being held. The NUWSS, post 1909, managed many activities centrally but were in constant contact with local societies.[214] Fundraising was a welcome activity and Millicent Fawcett

[209] Women's Library, 2LSW/E, Box FLO 83. Admin papers.
[210] Women's Library, Box 2StrCHWYnwa/a.
[211] Women's Library, 2LSW/E, Box 291.
[212] The Election Fighting Fund (EFF) was different as it was formed to raise money for the specific objective of supporting parliamentary candidates who were standing in the interests of the Labour Party in a constituency where the National Union thought it advisable to oppose the liberal candidate.
[213] Women's Library, 2NWS/B/1//0, Box 291, Annual Meeting Brighton and Hove, 2 Jan 1908.
[214] The catalogue at the women's library contains many items that show how the NUWSS managed the organisation. The evidence use has been taken from: Women's Library, 2NWS/B/1//0, Annual Meeting Brighton and Hove, 2 Jan 1908, 2NWS/1/1/11, Cardiff 1909, 2NWS/B/1/1/14a, A Provisional Meeting 8 October 1910, 2NWS/B/1/1/04, 29 January 1908, Manchester, statement of accounts May 1 to June 30 1907. Council meetings were held in Bristol 1910, 2/NWS/1/1/14, Edinburgh, 2NWS/B/1/2/02.

often received 'a continual stream of gifts ranging from small sums to very large ones'. Sums between £100 and £500 were frequent and were given to the cause.[215]

A July 1909 meeting at Headquarters identified how many delegates were sent by each society and, for example, Bristol sent two. Agendas were circulated in advance and a programme of events was attached. At each event a detailed account was attached to the circulars, of how to gain access, entry and tickets. Information was supplied by the NUWSS secretaries who also gave details of the reduction given by local hotels to attendees. The surviving accounts for 1 May do not identify if these particular accounts were related to an event. In most of the minutes of both annual and quarterly council meetings costs were identified. For this two-month period in 1909 the expenditure seems to be high and 'salaries are £381 3s 6d'. Precisely who the salaries are for is not identified, though the amount for postage is reported as '£69 19s 4d'. The NUWSS did not at this time have a vehicle like *Votes for Women* to get written information to its membership and therefore the postal system was their main communication method.[216]

The differing political strategies of the NUWSS and the WSPU were in some way determined by their internal organisation. However, both the NUWSS and WSPU had systems for reporting back to headquarters.[217] The WSPU's strategy and the NUWSS approach involved differences in the way the societies were managed but both were very successful organisations, running prosperous enterprises whilst furthering the cause of women in Edwardian society.

Role of Organisers in the WSPU

Krista Cowman identified that the work of organisers has been neglected in the portrayal of the WSPU and their contribution to the continued growth of the society. She argues that they appear as shadowy figures in historical accounts.[218] What is very clear is that organisers were the main link between an area and the WSPU and were the official face of the organisation. Cowman's book is the first investigation into the roles of organisers in the WSPU and how they built the union and were often unrelenting campaigners between 1904

[215] Strachey, *The cause,* 309.
[216] Women's Library, 2LSW/E, Box 2nwa/a.
[217] Women's Library, Box SLSW/A, no FL370.
[218] Krista Cowman *"Mrs. Brown is* a *Man and a Brother!", Women in Merseyside's Political Organisation 1890-1920* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), 94.

and 1918. Organisers were a diverse group of women from a wide variety of class backgrounds. Many were based in London but several were deployed throughout Britain.[219]

Organisers were central to the growth of both the NUWSS and the WSPU and the systems that were formed provided a continuity of procedures. The strict application of record keeping by the organisers, and the recruitment and training of women in their region was essential to both societies and aided their continued accomplishment and growth. Organisers for the WSPU had many roles including carrying out interviews with the press, announcing meetings, selling *Votes for Women*, distributing handbills, addressing meetings, writing to local MPs, organising by-election campaigns, and raising money to cover the cost of their own campaigns - sending the balance to the central treasury.

Organisers were sent into the provinces from London. It is unclear whether regions had any choice in the appointment of the senior organisers but the organiser was able to appoint other organisers once they were satisfied they were properly trained. Cowman asserts that this recruitment from headquarters ensured that the will of the Pankhursts' was consistently imposed.[220] In fact, evidence would suggest that organisers had a great deal of autonomy and made decisions in relation to how, where and when they conducted activities in their region. They also had the freedom to recruit and train other organisers.[221]

All organisers were encouraged to attend 'at homes'. They were required to build campaigns in the local area, set up new branches and hire halls making a careful choice of venues for large demonstrations, hiring the local police to keep order. Organisers employed by the WSPU had a multitude of responsible roles.[222] It was essential and vital that they planned their own very busy and often high-profile roles. Also, they trained and organised those who supported and assisted them in their work. One important part of their role as organisers was to build the WSPU by helping to raise the public awareness, and to be efficient and cost aware when hiring venues, or organising the construction and distribution of handbills. They were also encouraged to be a constant thorn in the side of the local Liberal MPs.

---

[219] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 12.
[220] Cowman *"Mrs. Brown is* a *Man and a Brother!"*.
[221] *Votes for Women* was published weekly and has clear and detailed accounts of the activities being carried across the country; and it is unlikely that these all came from headquarters. It would be reasonable to assume that these were forwarded to headquarters along with the monthly reports all senior organisers were required to complete.
[222] Annie Kenney was the district organiser for the South West from 1906 to 1911 and Chapter Five identifies her many roles and responsibilities.

During by-elections the organisers were required to organise house-to-house canvassing. Detailed reports of where organisers were placed and wherever they were active was published in *Votes for Women* every week.[223] The reports from local organisers show that an estimated 140 women worked as organisers in the regions.[224] By 1908 almost every social class was represented amongst the ranks of the WSPU organisers. Mill girls and pupil teachers were to be found side by side with titled ladies, and colonel's wives at headquarters and in the district offices and on itinerant campaigns. Working for an organisation that cut across class lines inspired many organisers working with women who had the same motivation.[225]

WSPU organisers were expected to take on the duty of public speaking; this role often caused anxiety due to the hostility they endured and disgust for their treatment. Olive Bartels recounted how at 'one … rowdy meeting they were throwing things … I got … a mass of horse, cow dung in my face. I always remember that, the horror … the smell and the taste'.[226] The WSPU devised a programme to overcome apprehension and engaged Rose Leo, suffragist sympathiser, to deliver a series of classes for members in March 1910. The members learned a variety of skills, including handling hecklers, and how not to lose their tempers in order to always get the best of the joke and to join in the laughter, even if the joke was against them. The policy was to be quick witted and good with repartee.[227]

Once recruited and trained many became itinerate workers during election campaigns and countless local volunteers were recruited. When the organiser arrived in advance of elections, local volunteers could help with local knowledge and what was needed to be done. The training of volunteers is difficult to identify and those who left diaries often failed to mention their training. Evidence suggests that organisers had a probationary period and that a new worker would be in London for about a month.[228]

District organisers such as Annie Kenney were deployed for longer periods and were a permanent feature of the political landscape; they were the face of the Union. Although they did not devise national policy they held the authority to interpret and mould its implementation and were expected to be innovative in adapting directives to local conditions.

---

[223] It is possible to find the names of all the organisers in the regions. Details of their weekly activities were published in *Votes for Women.*
[224] Krista Cowman points out that these figures fail to take account of activists at headquarters. Despite her efforts it has only been possible to retrieve some biographical data. Cowman provides a biographical appendix and many of the organisers are only listed by name and region. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 211-236.
[225] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 20.
[226] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 32.
[227] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 32.
[228] *Votes for Women* (Volumes 1-6).

Cowman has argued that they carried the responsibility for the success of the Union and were immensely necessary to the success of the WSPU's campaign. Without their efforts it would be difficult to achieve coherence of campaigns.[229]

Paid organisers were forbidden to become directly involved in militancy.[230] Their status as employees was the issue – as critics could accuse the WSPU of paying women to commit violent acts rather than concentrating on their true passion for the cause of votes for women. Organisers were recruited because of their passion for the cause and they were expected to encourage and inspire women to carry out militant acts without being able to demonstrate their willingness to make personal sacrifice.

Role of organisers in the NUWSS

The role of organisers in the NUWSS has not been previously explored and it was still a small organisation in 1907. By 1914 it had built itself into a formidable fighting machine. As with the WSPU, organisers were both the face of the society and were essential to its growth across the nation. Each individual organiser was responsible for reporting the meetings they held and how many new members had been recruited. One of fifteen reports in for May, July and September 1913 by Miss Deverell records the number of open-air meetings she held in the London area.[231] The secretaries of each society received very clear instructions, entitled 'Practical Hints for Local Secretaries' which included instructions for house to house canvassing. The instructions noted that the report must arrive at 58 Victoria Street before the last Friday in the month.[232]

In 1909 during an annual council meeting of the NUWSS in Brighton the council were asked to consider dividing the country into territorial districts and supply them with organisers on the understanding that each district contribute to the expenses of its organiser. So, although districts were being enabled to organise they must be able to bear costs.[233] Organisers were required to keep their own accounts and were given forms to facilitate keeping their accounts and had permission to employ a temp during by-election times. For example, one organiser, Miss Gardner, was employed for three months and was paid 30/- per week and travel expenses.[234]

[229] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 32.
[230] Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 155.
[231] Women's Library, LSWA/A, Box FL 370.
[232] Women's Library, SLSW/E//0/1, Box 338.
[233] Women's Library, 2NWS/C, Box 3.
[234] Women's Library, SLSW/E//0/1, Box 338.

During the period 1908 to 1909 the NUWSS campaigned and took part in twenty-six by-elections, and as with the WSPU they used this opportunity to gain new recruits. The policy of participating in by-elections meant they needed to recruit staff and volunteers to meet this need and by 1908 six organisers were in place, rising to ten in 1909.[235] Organisers during by-elections had a slightly different role. They were required to compile information about the constituency they were working in. This information was put into divisional books located in the constituency, so the speakers could work on a by-election at a moment's notice, without having to ask questions about the party organisation.[236] Ray Strachey proudly announced that the growth was so fast that 'secretaries were worked off their feet, arranging meetings, enrolling new members and supplying information' and that 'although the numbers of salaried workers is small there was a plenty supply of eager volunteers'.[237]

A wide variety of decisions were taken by different sub committees between March 1912 and July 1913, including an awareness that organisers were becoming vital to the success and growth of the union. These organisers were trained and would be assigned to a qualified organiser. Organisers received samples of every leaflet published and new rules were agreed that their holidays were fixed but the length of time was not identified.[238]

Conclusion

In the period after the formation of the WSPU in 1903, the NUWSS and WSPU were in symbiosis and efforts were made to strengthen and consolidate the work of each other's societies. Their political strategies differed, but in the provinces and in cities such as Manchester, Edinburgh and Leicester a number of joint demonstrations were held.[239] The application of the binary 'militant' and 'constitutionalist' has blurred the analysis of the women's suffrage movement, and extreme acts of violence were carried out by only a small number of women after 1912. There was encouragement by Emmeline Pankhurst for window breaking in the West End but the majority of women made their own choices. The concern is that the national publicity from newspapers that accompanied the property destruction has directed attention towards this activity and has diverted attention away from other significant activities carried out by the suffrage movement. It might also be that the interpretation of 'militant' is that extremism was part of the mode of campaigning, but this explanation is imprecise, as women were taking to the streets in the Edwardian era and

[235] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies*, 41.
[236] Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,* 41.
[237] Strachey The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain (Virgo, London 1978 – first published by G Bell and Sons 1928) P.309.
[238] Women's Library, F2LSW/E, Box FLO 83.
[239] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 38.

such actions were outside the accepted norms of society at that time. It seems both the NUWSS and WSPU carried out militant activities and by dividing these two movements there has been a failure to recognise that militancy was multi-stranded, and that violence and resistance should not define suffrage activism.

The binary approach is further complicated by the fact that many women belonged to both societies, and Chapter Six gives examples of how women moved between the two societies as their allegiances changed in response to activities undertaken by both societies. Local studies are revealing that caution should be observed when making generalisations about the nature of militancy.[240] The role of organisers in the regions importantly underpinned the growth of both societies. They had very clear guidelines for activities they carried out in their regions and this added to the success of the organisations.

The headquarters of the NUWSS and WSPU provided the vital functions necessary to any large, growing and successful organisation. They organised, planned, had clear guidelines, protocols and informed the workers and the membership of their activities in a timely manner. The buildings they occupied made clear statements to the membership, the public and the government. The image they portrayed was of strength of purpose, while for some it was a refuge, a place where women were valued and trained. Headquarters provided the links between the regions, provided mechanisms to encourage networking, appointed organisers who carried out dynamic and vibrant support for their organisations. Without their energetic work, their ability to plan and organise in the regions both the NUWSS and the WSPU may have developed at a slower pace.

Both the NUWSS and the WSPU had clear structures and systems that enabled them to grow and sustain large nationwide organisations. They were both significant employers and trained their workforce. Planning and control underpinned their activities and large demonstrations could take five to six months of planning engaging a large number of women at headquarters and in the regions. As employers they had recruitment procedures, financial control was paramount and all women involved were made very aware of systems and processes.

[240] A detailed discussion of suffrage activities in the South West is central to Chapter Six and most importantly shows how women locally became involved and politicised. For many it was their first experience of political activity. Emily and Mary Blathwayt of Batheaston were members of both the Bath Women's Suffrage Society and the WSPU. Women's allegiances to particular groups were not fixed, and they moved between organisations as political strategies and tactics changed. Emily Blathwayt resigned from the WSPU in 1909 because of violence towards individuals. See chapter six.

Organisers whether they were working in a region or travelling around the country were vital to the success of both societies and were often the 'face' of the Union. They provided continuity, were energetic, committed to the cause, able to work with and interpret Headquarters guidelines. Organisers planned a multitude of activities as they developed the region they were responsible for. They were constantly harassing their local MP, organised small and large demonstrations in the regions, raised awareness, recruited large numbers of women and were often responsible for the politicisation and conversion of women. Many Edwardian women emerged from the Victorian home towards a new understanding of the role of women in society and their role as citizens.

CHAPTER THREE – END NOT MEANS.

Introduction

This chapter pinpoints a number of difficulties that have emerged during the course of this study. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the continued labelling of the NUWSS and the WSPU as either 'constitutional' or ''militant' is not really viable. The evidence discussed in chapter two has suggested that this naive' division has distorted the analysis of the two very successful societies. Following the discussion of the limitations of the 'militant' and 'constitutional' labels in the previous chapter, it is important to now provide a new perspective and a new analysis of the two suffrage societies. After 1906 when both societies were based in London, they were significant employers of women. This analysis will examine the NUWSS and WSPU as both political membership organisations and as employers leading to a modification of current suffrage history that has thus far been mainly centred on the different tactics employed by both societies.

This chapter starts from the position that it is necessary to present a different analysis, one that explains how two female-led organisations were managed, by offering an analysis of the systems and processes utilised by both groups. The leadership styles of both organisations vary. From its inception in the 1860s the NUWSS managed by a committee structure. Militant tactics were attributed to the autocratic leadership of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and this is still the concentration on the different leadership styles; the NUWSS being perceived as democratic and the WSPU as autocratic, which has masked some of the similarities in the structures and systems they both employed.

As noted in the previous chapter, 'militant' and 'constitutional' can be used as a crude measure, as these terms were used by the organisations, but remain unsatisfactory. Many historians have focused on events and outcomes whereas I am focusing on process and strategy. I am therefore foregrounding both organisations in different ways. This will facilitate an analysis that provides an alternative to the previous separation between constitutional and militant that has typically been applied to the WSPU and NUWSS. Given the gender balance of the organisations, which were either all female, or saw all key decisions made by women, a focus on strategy and process is an important and much neglected area of suffrage history. This work will offer a unique interpretation of how the societies can be understood. In doing so I will consider definitions of pluralist and unitary

organisations, and suggest how each term can be applied to both societies.[241] The NUWSS and the WSPU were both successful organisations that used different forms of management and organisation. The term unitary will be applied to the NUWSS and pluralist to the WSPU. By investigating each society's management activities, it is possible to provide a new interpretation of these successful suffrage organisations as political systems and employers. The management activities of both societies will be addressed separately but any overlap will be identified.

A new analysis of the NUWSS and the WSPU as successful business organisations

Organisations like the NUWSS and the WSPU were political systems and had interests, conflicts and power structures. 'They can be understood as mini states where the relationship between individual and society is paralleled by the relationship between individual and organisation'.[242] Joan Wallach Scott argued:

> To ignore politics in the recovery of the female subject is to accept the reality of public/private distinctions and the separate or distinctive qualities of women's character and experience. It misses the chance not only to challenge the accuracy of binary distinctions between man and women in the past and present, but to expose the political nature of history written in those terms.[243]

This chapter aims to provide a new analysis of the NUWSS and WSPU, offering a unique interpretation of how the societies can be portrayed and understood. In doing so, I will apply and provide a definition of the term's pluralist and unitary, and suggest how each term of reference can be applied to both societies.[244]

From 1905 both societies had clear control mechanisms. They were different and have been identified as the NUWSS being democratic and the WSPU as autocratic.[245] The frames of reference of unitary and pluralist are used as a typology within organisational studies.[246] These frames of reference can be used as analytical tools and each lead to different procedures used by each administration. Each frame of reference leads to a different approach by management. When terms like autocracy and democracy are used to

[241] The pluralist and unitarist categories can be used as an analytical tool and can be identified as organisational ideologies.
[242] Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997), 34.
[243] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 3.
[244] The model provided in this work is an aid to the determination of the character of the societies. The model of interests, conflict and power developed in this chapter provides a practical and systematic means of understanding the relationship between politics and organisation and the role of power in determining political outcomes.
[245] Strachey, *The Cause,* 287.
[246] Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 205.

describe the nature of organisations this is implicitly drawing parallels between organisations and political systems.[247] Unravelling the detailed politics of the organisation, the term unitary will be applied to the NUWSS and pluralist to the WSPU. By investigating each society's management activities, it is possible to provide a new interpretation of successful suffrage organisations as political systems.

Definition of the terms and application used to understand/analyse organisations

	Unitary	Pluralist
Interests	Emphasis on common objectives. The organisation is viewed as united under the umbrella of common goals and striving toward the achievement in the manner of a well-integrated team.	Emphasis on the diversity of individual and group interests. The organisation is regarded as a loose coalition that has a passing interest in the formal goals of the organisation.
Conflict	Regards conflict as a rare and a transient phenomenon that can be removed through appropriate managerial action. Where it does arise, it is usually attributed to the activities of deviants and troublemakers.	Regards conflict as an inherent and ineradicable characteristic of organisational affairs and stresses its potentially positive or functional aspects.
Power	Largely ignores the role of power in organisational life. Concepts such as authority, leadership and control tend to be a preferred means of describing the managerial prerogative of guiding the organisation towards the achievement of common interests.	Regards power as a crucial variable. Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are alleviated and resolved. The organisation is viewed as a plurality of power holders drawing their power from a plurality of sources.

Table one. Definitions taken from Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (London: Sage, 1997).

Morgan notes these three frames of reference, which as an analytical tool can be used for exploring the NUWSS and WSPU, unitary, pluralist, and radical. In examining the management structures and systems of the NUWSS and WSPU, I have focused primarily on the unitary and pluralist frames of reference. The third frame of reference, 'radical', is difficult to employ because of its reliance on a view that radical organisations are battlegrounds with class interests, and that power is distributed through class divisions, something which has been accredited to Victorian trade unions.[248] However, feminism as a set of beliefs could be perceived as radical.

[247] Morgan, *Images of Organization,* 202.
[248] *British Trade Unions and Popular Political Economy, 1860–1880*, 30, no. 4 (December 1987): 811-840.

The NUWSS in the early years did not support political parties but were 'political spaces' that debated and formulated political ideas, and communicated these both within and to those outside. The NUWSS were a group set up to produce policies. They gained support from a number of activists and drew the attention of their contemporaries through debate, meetings and press articles. In 1906 the NUWSS was still a loose federation without strong leadership. In January 1907 a new constitution was adopted that provided for elected officers, an executive committee and a quarterly policy making council. The first executive committee's major role was preparing for the coming general election. Preparation was carried out both centrally and across the regions. The WSPU as a pluralist society identified an emphasis on the diversity of individual and group interests. A pluralist organisation is regarded as a loose coalition that has a passing interest in the formal goals of the organisation.[249] It may be so because of the lack of a formal constitution, with the day-to-day activities in the branches having considerable autonomy. In general, the two wings of the suffrage movement were distinguished by their internal organisation and frequently used different styles of campaigning. The underlying strategies of the two wings remained constant and as both societies developed new policies, their modes of campaigning were developed.[250]

The NUWSS as a Unitary Organisation

From 1866 suffrage societies were formed to press for votes for women. In the early years of the movement, the NUWSS was pluralist, a loose coalition that had a passing interest in the formal goals of the organization. The development of the Union had problems. As the organisation grouped and regrouped it was '…some years before the new constitution really functioned smoothly, the dangers of divided councils and separate parliamentary action was greatly reduced'.[251] As the NUWSS grew and developed committees and increasingly used clear structures and systems it became a unitarist organisation.

Unitary characteristics are most often found in organisations that have developed a cohesive culture based on the respect of the manager's right to manage. This is where managers employ the idea of working together to achieve the organisation's aims. The NUWSS had survived in a variety of structures since the 1860s and had been subject to splits and schisms up to 1906.[252] Despite these differences, the NUWSS became a powerful political

[249] Morgan, *Images of Organization,* 202.
[250] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 4.
[251] Strachey, *The Cause,* 287.
[252] Between 1871 and 1888 the suffrage movement underwent two major splits. The first arose over the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Disease Act (CD Acts). Millicent Fawcett was concerned that public

force and placed women's suffrage on the agenda of political parties. At this time, it ceased to be an umbrella organisation and now had an active central core that worked in the manner of a well-integrated team. This new explanation of the NUWSS as a unitarist organisation helps to broaden our understanding of the day-to-day life of the society. Applying the terms of reference of a unitarist political system may help to dispel the focus on the NUWSS as a weak organisation, because they were using decision making through executive committee methods.

The new emerging centralisation of the structure of the NUWSS from 1906 shows an acknowledgement that planning was the focus of their activities, and Millicent Fawcett was occupied with the internal development of her organisation. The earlier constitution of 1897 was re-cast in 1906 on the basis of internal democracy and that policy was decided at Council Meetings of the representatives of the self-governing societies.[253] By 1907 Millicent Fawcett was the acknowledged leader of the NUWSS, 'the largest suffragist organisation' and she was 'beginning to be treated with the veneration which was to be so marked a feature of her later years'.[254] The preparation for the coming general election was under Millicent Fawcett's leadership. Ray Strachey noted that 'as the local societies multiplied they became increasingly democratic in their internal organisation, so that their development was formed by their own council meetings and their constituent societies took a real and highly expert share in the direction of the movement'.[255] As the network of societies spread and membership increased, the efficiency of the organisation improved; it planned and organised so that the expansion was well managed.[256]

---

support for repealing the Acts would discredit the suffrage movement and she refused to be associated with the campaign. The London Society was divided and Millicent Fawcett retained control. A minority including Millicent Fawcett broke away. The two societies now confusingly became the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage (CCNSWS) and Central National Society (CNS). The divided council pursued their separate ways and this led to an allocation of territories. The split ended in 1877 and the united society became the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage (CCNSWS). Political disagreements and personal hostilities continued to plague the suffrage movement and sap its strength as they failed to agree on the question of neutrality from political parties. The growth of women's political party organisations contributed to the split in the NSWS in 1888. For the next eight years divided counsels affected the suffrage movement. During the period between the Reform Bill of 1867 and the 1880s women's suffrage bills were consistently rejected in the commons. By the turn of the century a suffrage majority in Parliament was being created. For example, in 1897 Faithful Begg's Bill was debated and achieved a comfortable majority. The successes in Parliament improved the morale of the suffragists and this encouraged them to put aside their differences, work together and conduct aside campaign across the country. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,* 32.

[252] David Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women: The Life of Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 155.

[253] Between 1907 and 1914 both Annual and Quarterly meetings were held in different regional centres and were geographically wide-ranging. Women's Library, 2LSW/1A, Box 297. The number of delegates that each society sent to the Council was determined by the size of the society. For example, societies with membership of 20 to 50 were allotted one delegate, 50 to 100 allotted two delegates and an additional delegate for every fifty members beyond one hundred. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,* 32.

[254] David Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women: The Life of Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 155.

[255] Strachey, *The Cause,* 309.

[256] Strachey, *The Cause,* 309.

Terms of reference – NUWSS - Interests

> *Interests: Emphasis on common objectives. The organisation is viewed as united under the umbrella of common goals and striving toward the achievement in the manner of a well-integrated team.*

The NUWSS can be viewed as a discernible unitarist society. Using the evidence of minutes of meetings from the headquarters, correspondence, and executive and sub-committee minutes, it is possible to identify actions and activities that identify common interests and objectives.

The executive in 1907 was the result of a new constitution that had been formulated to strengthen the organisational structure of the Union. At the same time the newly formed executive committee was responsible to the council of representatives and their interests were secured. The new structure required that any changes in policy should be approved by the council and should facilitate communication and cooperation between member societies. This emphasis suggests that not only did the NUWSS have common objectives, but also recognised that unity of purpose was a key focus, and worked towards achieving this outcome. A special meeting of the executive committee identified that the Union at this time consisted of thirty-one societies and each society was independent in its local actions; but that the affairs of the Union were to be managed and its policy guided by a general council working through the executive committee.[257] The NUWSS became increasingly complex, extensive and powerful as it improved the scale and intensity of its parliamentary work. This was repeated in the growth and expansion of the local societies.[258] Early minutes in 1909 show that the committee structure was made up of a number of sub committees. Some were permanent, such as the by-election committee made up of eight members, the organising committee, made up of twelve members, and a finance sub-committee. Decisions were taken centrally through a variety of sub-committees. One example of the need to show uniformity is seen in the preparation of printed material. Instructions made it clear that the printing of stock leaflets should be in one standard text and there was a recognition of the importance of continuity.[259] This structure enabled the NUWSS to work towards clear objectives using the expertise of individual women helping to provide continuity. This was an acknowledgment of the need for a well-integrated team. All local secretaries received the same instructions. When a by-election was about to be held this

[257] Women's Library, 2LSW/1A, Box FLO 83.
[258] In 1909 the NUWSS had 70 affiliated societies with 13,161 members, in 1914 180 affiliated societies with 53,000 members. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberation,* 11.
[259] Women's Library, 2LSW/E1, Box FLO 83.

was publicised and women used standard leaflets, flyers, brochures, pamphlets and handbills.[260]

Between 1907 and 1914 both annual and quarterly meetings were held in different regional centres. These were geographically wide-ranging and included Edinburgh, Bristol, Exeter and Chelsea.[261] The decision to hold annual and quarterly assemblies was a crucial resolution. It enabled the NUWSS to raise awareness of women in the regions and gave the provinces the opportunity to be involved in the affairs of the society. It further enabled them to adopt a commonality of commitment, which would promote harmony. Unity is shown through the formalization of their timetable of meetings: this clear mandate meant that the regions were able to plan their attendance and is a further indication of their desire to be united towards a common goal.[262] Millicent Fawcett features in the reception committees, organisations sub-committee, finance sub-committee, but there is no evidence that as the leader of the NUWSS she assumed chairmanship of any of these committees. Her decision not to chair all committees suggests that team amalgamation was a vital function under her leadership.[263]

Reporting was central to the activities of the NUWSS and reports were to be submitted before the last Friday in the month, to 58 Victoria Street. Reports should identify progress made in terms of new members, old-friends revisited and the number of visitors working. This system points towards the need for careful planning and recording that could be used by electoral workers, and women who supported work in the region and the centre. Again, this provided continuity, and integration was deemed to be vital to their success at such activities. The address used identifies that these instructions were made after the move to new headquarters post 1906.[264]

Terms of reference – NUWSS – Conflict

> *Conflict: Regards conflict as a rare and transient phenomenon that can be removed through appropriate managerial action. Where it does arise, it is usually attributed to the activities of deviants and troublemakers.*

[260] Women's Library, 2LSW/E1, Box FLO 83.
[261] Women's Library, 2LSW/E1, Box 297.
[262] It was decided that the dates of the meetings of the executive committee should be the first and third Thursday of the month.
[263] Women's Library, 2LSW E1, Box 291.
[264] Women's Library, 2LSWE1, Box FL 388/1.

There is, inevitably, evidence of conflict between the centre and the regions. The NUWSS had attempted to support a non-party approach that over time had been difficult to maintain.[265] The political policies were not static and the issues of allegiance remained an almost constant source of discord and debate. However, there was also a growing division that had a disruptive effect when it became clear that rank and file in the regions did not share the leadership's view of militancy.[266]

There seems to be a consensus that the NUWSS was a unitarist organisation and it was Millicent Fawcett's personality and leadership provided cohesion. In doing so, she promoted a culture based on the respect of the manager's right to manage. It is unlikely that minutes of committees would record all points of disagreements but do record decisions taken. Conflict can be identified on many occasions as small disagreements. For example, minutes record that at the annual council in Brighton in January 1906, the National Union members proposed that the total number of members be published. However, the minutes record that branch secretaries proposed an alternative. This was possibly because the numbers underwent constant change. It was more efficient to prepare a list of branches and committees that can be added to the annual report along with the addresses of secretaries.[267] Seemingly a small disagreement but it does portray that there was input from the membership and that branch secretaries were involved in the decision-making.

There are many examples of appropriate managerial action when considering conflict within the NUWSS. Although the issues often seem very small, what is clear is decisions taken offered a solution to the problems being identified in the regions. An executive committee meeting in February 1908 agreed that forms should be compiled to aid the keeping of accounts. Additionally, a circular letter was composed to send to all societies instructing them to arrange as many meetings as possible before the by-election. Other decisions deal with employing additional organisers who would receive a salary of 30/- per week for three months.[268] It may not be that these issues represented a conflict, but they do identify that they debated solutions to problems.

---

[265] In 1888 a split occurred over the affiliation of local branches to the Women's Liberal Federation. Women Liberals dominated the NUWSS and although it claimed to be non-partisan, its policies were often interpreted in favour of the Liberal Party.

[266] Millicent Fawcett hesitated to protest publicly against the development of militant activity. Late in 1909 the executive considered publicity to disassociate the organisation from militancy. A statement was issued to the press dissociating the NUWSS with the action taken by the WSPU members in Bermondsey in 1909. Some members pointed out that they were also members of the WSPU. The growing division had a disruptive effect in some branches and dissent was generally focused on election policy. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 36.

[267] Women's Library, Box 2LSW, Box FL 291 labelled correspondence with NUWSS branches from Fleet to Banbury.

[268] Women's Library, 2LWS Box FL388.

The Election Fighting Fund (EFF) in 1912, was a labour-suffrage alliance, raising funds to support candidates at by-elections. Despite the EFF becoming the official line, some members found it impossible to accept the new policy; four members of the Executive Committee formed an inner circle to oppose it. Millicent Fawcett was furious accusing them of endangering the Union.[269] Eleanor Rathbone of the Liverpool Society led an opposition. Her support was tactical. Her concern was that the Labour Party may withdraw support for Irish home rule. Catherine Marshall, a member of the executive committee, assured the membership the fund was to be kept quite separate from other National Union funds. A special council voted in support of the new policy, and it was decided the EFF committee was to administer the funds. The support within the Union was strengthened. In order to offset opposition from the membership, the Union released a press statement that the special council had voted in support of the new policy.

Terms of reference – NUWSS – Power

> *Power: Largely ignores the role of power in organisational life. Concepts such as authority, leadership and control tend to be preferred means of describing the managerial prerogative of guiding the organisation towards the achievement of common interests.*

Earlier changes to the constitution of the NUWSS - with delegates elected to the executive, along with the growth of resources available - put the society in an increasingly powerful position. The executive recommended policies and oversaw their operation. London headquarters became more powerful, giving rise to tensions between headquarters and the new local societies.[270] Divisional councils were a federation of societies in one area.[271] It was stated that for administrative purposes twelve divisions should be called divisional councils or county federations. The executive committee proposal hoped this would improve the coordination of branch activities. The resultant federations were invested with the power to run election campaigns in their area.[272]

Minutes of meetings from July 1907 show that the executive dealt with a multitude of issues raised by the regions. By this time there were thirty-one societies. A special executive

[269] Such was the concern over the EFF that four members resigned in including Eleanor Rathbone and Margaret Corbett Ashby as detailed in the Women's Library, Executive Committee Minutes, 5 March 1914. They resigned in May 1914, Women's Library, Executive Committee Minutes, 7 May 1914. 2LSW/D FL388 – Various Meetings – 1907-1911, 1912-1913, 1916 Queens Hall Meetings March 1911.
[270] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 41.
[271] Women's Library, 2LWS, Box FL 291.
[272] The federations formed by 1912 were the Eastern Counties; Kentish; Manchester and district; Midlands East; Midlands West; North and East Riding; the Northern; North-Western; Oxford, Beds and Bucks; South Wales; Surry, Sussex and Herts; West Riding; West of England, West Leicester; West Cheshire; North Wales and Scotland. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 40.

committee on 19 July 1907 laid down that each society was independent in its local action but the affairs of the union were managed and its policies guided by the general council through an executive committee. The minutes at this time show it was made clear to the regions that control was from the centre and that this order was to keep continuity in the regions. The NUWSS by the use of committees and sub committees was using its authority and control to keep the regions, women, and possible new members involved and informed.

The 1909 annual council meeting proved to be very important as many decisions were made or considered. At this assembly a discussion considered changing the structure of the society. The central committee proposed the change. In addition, there was an awareness of the need for control of cost implications and who should be liable for expenditure. The committee asked the council to consider dividing the country into different territorial districts. Each district would be supplied with organisers. It was made clear that each district would contribute towards the expenses of their organiser.[273] Evidence in the minutes suggests that the central council appointed the organisers. The committee gave permission for regional societies to be formed but before this was approved the regions had to submit their ability to raise funds.

Summary

In January 1907 the new constitution gave the NUWSS the opportunity to re-structure the society and break away from the divisions that had plagued it from the 1860s. The new umbrella organisation using managerial action worked towards continuity in all aspects of its activities both centrally and regionally. Conflict had riven the activities of the NUWSS in its early years. The use of the committee structure enabled the society to take appropriate action when required. Headquarters used its authority as the management team to guide the organisation.

WSPU as a Pluralist Organisation

The role of management within the WSPU has been a dominant narrative about the leadership of the Union, and a focus on the use of power by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. It is important that the different evaluations and interpretations made since the late 1960s are discussed

[273] Women's Library, 2LWS, Box FL 291.

An analysis of the WSPU as a pluralist organisation may act in some way to dispel the emphasis on the autocratic nature of the society. An autocratic organisation is defined as absolute government where an individual or small group who control critical resources holds power.[274] In order to assess pluralist characteristics it is important to research the literature that has grown substantially since the late 1960s; especially since the 1970s when the WSPU leadership has been presented in a largely hostile light. Both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst have been depicted as dangerous subversive autocrats and Emmeline Pankhurst has often been portrayed in a negative manner, in a familiar and repeated story of a misguided and weak leader, weak because she deferred to Christabel. Both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were described as opportunists who were seeking to rise above their middle-class background in Manchester, as despots and 'infernal queens' who 'dictated every move and swayed every heart, of a growing army of intoxicated women'.[275]

An influential book, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, adopted a sardonic disenchanted style and portrayed suffragettes as deviant women, marginal, and even a dangerous aberration. Sandra Holton has described Dangerfield's tone as one of demeaning ridicule.[276]

Rather than criticising these claims David Mitchell's 1967 group biography of the Pankhurst women continues on the path set by Dangerfield. In the 1970s Mitchell also wrote the first biography of Christabel Pankhurst. He identifies Christabel as high minded, absorbed, demanding and the biography has his perspective in the book's title *Queen Christabel*. Mitchell portrays Christabel as a strong-minded young woman with a dictatorial manner and a quite ruthless of domination with a profound belief that all politicians were insincere. In 1908-9 Christabel was at the height of her fame and appeared on tens of thousands of postcards issued by the WSPU and was in fact the first great non-royal.[277] These works may have helped to reinforce the image of an autocratic leader who commanded others to do as she instructed, and this has been a dominant narrative of the WSPU leadership.[278] In the 1970s and 1980s Christabel Pankhurst was further described as a 'messianic despot' and as a 'subversive firebrand'.[279]

---

[274] Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 156.
[275], *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, 155.
[276] Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', 23.
[277] David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: Macdonald and Jane's London, 1977), 4
[278] David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: Macdonald and Jane's London, 1977), 50.
[279] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst* and Purvis, 'Votes for Women', 109.

It has also been suggested that the suffrage histories identified a 'militant' school from the three accounts of the WSPU campaign published by Emmeline, Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst between 1911 and 1930s.[280] The socialist feminist accounts of the 1970s and 1980s not unexpectedly follow Sylvia Pankhurst's line. Sandra Holton contends that all three accounts established a 'plot' around which future accounts were drawn and this became categories of suffragists being 'radical or conservative, militant or non-militant, populist or elitist'.[281] The biographies were both individual and a collective story and Sylvia Pankhurst in particular writes of the struggle as part of a great reform movement with the 'great' women leaders of the WSPU; her mother Emmeline with a magnetic personality and Christabel Pankhurst a daring political genius and originator of 'militant' tactics. Sylvia Pankhurst's highly personal account that highlighted discord and division, and a rather bitter picture of her mother, along with Christabel Pankhurst's narrative, have together become the prevailing chronicle through which much of suffrage history in Britain has been written.[282] The automatic acceptance of Sylvia Pankhurst's perspective attracted attention, as the WSPU was perceived as not a 'valid form of political organisation' since it did not follow the model common to left-wing activists. Emmeline Pankhurst is portrayed as moving away from her socialist roots.[283]

Christabel Pankhurst declared that she had democratic principles and she instinctively felt that the WSPU should not be based on class distinctions. She identifies that as a leader, in some circumstances, she gave way to a junior, who had not been in the movement for long, and who was still at the chalking stage.[284] She wrote in *Unshackled:* 'but true equality reigned with us between women of every class. All belonged to the aristocracy of the Suffragettes'.[285] This is a retrospective view written in the late 1930s and published in 1959, forty-five years after the WSPU disbanded. A number of questions arise, firstly is Christabel Pankhurst responding to the criticisms of the WSPU, of her position, and of the leadership of an autocratic organisation in order to dispel these myths?[286] The later historical association

[280] Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffrage Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* and Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 55.
[281] Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', 27.
[282] June Purvis and Maureen Wright, 'Writing Suffrage History: The contending autobiographical narratives of the Pankhursts', *Women's History Review*, 14: 3-4, (2003), 74.
[283] June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biographical Interpretation', *Women's History Review*, 12:1 (2003), 74.
[284] Chalking was a vital method of communication. Suffragettes chalked the pavements giving the dates, place and time prior to meetings in their local area and this was practised extensively across the country. It was cheap, would be seen by many people, and could be organised quickly.
[285] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 82.
[286] By 1907 the WSPU was very popular and had seventy branches. An annual conference was arranged that would see the members agree to the constitution agreed the previous year. Concerns were voiced by the leadership over how the union could remain on a representational basis and a month before the conference Emmeline Pankhurst dramatically tore up the constitution and declared she was going to reorganise the union. She would control the union and be responsible for the whole organisation. At this stage Mrs Despard, Mrs How Martyn, and Teresa Billington Craig broke away from the WSPU. Raeburn *The Militant Suffragettes*, 39.

of the WSPU as an autocratic organisation may in part stem from the 1907 declaration by Emmeline Pankhurst, who in *My Own Story* presents herself as a determined and impassioned leader with strong convictions. As the leader she does not gloss over the autocratic nature of her organization. Emmeline Pankhurst declared that the organisation could be seen as autocratic and clearly states that:

> Autocratic? Quite so. But, you may object, a suffrage organisation ought to be democratic. Well, the members of the WSPU do not agree with you… The WSPU is not hampered by a complexity of rules. We have no constitution and by-laws; nothing to be amended or tinkered with or quarrelled over at an annual meeting. In fact, we have no annual meeting, no business sessions, no elections of officers.[287]

Careful reading of this declaration shows that the emphasis could be that Emmeline Pankhurst saw common goals under the umbrella of striving towards their achievement of gaining the vote. In a pluralist organisation management action without being hide-bound by complex rules would work towards the achievement of common interests. Secondly, Annie Kenney in her biography identifies the need for strong leadership and identifies that as the committee grew larger 'Christabel found it a stumbling block to her swift brain and that she swept away all opposition as any general on a battlefield would do'.[288] Annie Kenney offers an additional comment about control: they 'were like Nuns in a convent'.[289] Thirdly, Christabel Pankhurst may have been trying to give a reinterpretation of her role in the movement as the first historical interpretations of the WSPU emerged in 1935.

Whilst Emmeline Pankhurst offered no apology for an autocratic organisational structure she is similarly clear that a democratic structure would necessitate a cumbersome bureaucracy with endless committees, regular elections and meetings with resolutions from the membership that would slow down the quick response that she thought was necessary for a fighting organisation. However, Sylvia Pankhurst consistently claimed that her mother was only a nominal ruler, and that Christabel Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence directed the main work and policy. Emmeline Pankhurst was still portrayed as an autocrat and dictator. It was her confidence in Christabel Pankhurst's day-to-day control, which

[287] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 70.
[288] This declaration predates the split in the Union in 1907 when Emmeline Pankhurst cancelled an annual meeting and tore up the proposed constitution. Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 74.
[289] Annie Kenney said they were strictly supervised and it was an unwritten rule that there should be no concerts, no theatres and no smoking; work and sleep was to prepare them for more work. Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 110.

allowed Emmeline to be constantly travelling around the country, speaking in meetings for the WSPU by-election policy.[290]

The ousting of the Pethick Lawrences in 1912 does reveal that Emmeline Pankhurst could be ruthless to those who disagreed with her views. The Pethick Lawrences in the summer of 1906 agreed to finance the organisation and arranged new headquarters at St Clement's Inn in London. In 1912 and the resumption of militancy the Pethick Lawrences judged they had largely got the public on their side but the advantage was being thrown away by the extreme forms of militancy. The leadership rejected this interpretation.[291] Frederick Pethick Lawrence had in the past defended suffragists in court and spent much of his fortune on the WSPU. Emmeline Pankhurst saw the Pethick Lawrences as becoming a liability to the Union, because the Government could strip them of their fortune. This would create sympathy amongst their suffrage supporters putting pressure on the WSPU to curb militancy and may require a policy change.[292]

Ray Strachey celebrated the efficiency of the NUWSS, which from 1906 grew as the society spread across the nation, but was highly critical of the WSPU at this time. She argued that the use of sensationalism was damaging to the movement, and noted that the WSPU brushed aside the niceties of procedure, not caring whom they shocked and antagonized: 'the whole atmosphere of their work was thus aggressive and headlong … The Women's Social and Political Union adopted, therefore, a purely autocratic system and entrusted all decisions to the leaders'.[293]

Both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were committed to a charismatic style of leadership, but they were not totally autocratic.[294] Their power was through their personal charisma, which they effectively used to gather an inner circle of loyal personal supporters. In addition, a different view of both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst could present them as heroic figures and as a symbol of the movement. Any portrayal of the rank-and-file as puppets meekly following the orders of a dictator is not possible to sustain. The WSPU comprised of a large number of groupings of women across the country, who had their own ideas and acted using tactics they identified as suited to their own understanding of the situation, both nationally and regionally. This is supported by regional studies and reveals a

[290] Emmeline no longer had a home in Manchester and her employment was dependent upon the £200 a year she earned as a star speaker. With no settled home she stayed in hotels, rented rooms or stayed with friends. Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst: a biographical interpretation', 259.
[291] Chapter two provides a discussion of the trial p.45
[292] Pugh, *The March of the Women,* 257.
[293] Strachey, *The Cause,* 310.
[294] Charismatic authority arises when people respect the special qualities of the individual.

complicated picture of provincial branches that were democratically run and enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy.[295]

Terms of reference – WSPU – Interests

> *Interests: Emphasis on the diversity of individual and group interests. The organisation is regarded as a loose coalition that has a passing interest in the formal goals of the organisation.*

The WSPU drew its initial strength from its ILP affiliations and the founding members were active in socialist politics as well as the women's suffrage campaign. These origins to an extent determined a diversity of individual and group interests within the Union. Although Christabel Pankhurst increasingly sought to disassociate the WSPU from Labour politics, there is some evidence that provincial branches often continued to work closely with their local ILP branches despite the policy change.[296] It might be that a small number of individuals within the leadership moved away from the ILP but did not necessarily take the majority of their socialist members with them, and many continued their dual work for socialism and suffrage. The membership did not blindly follow Emmeline and Christabel Pankhursts' move towards the right and many in the WSPU were increasingly at home among socialists.[297]

The WSPU branches enjoyed considerable autonomy in the day-to-day organisation of local suffrage activity and as such were willing and involved in the fight for the vote. In general, the regions and branches would know the formal goals of the organisation, gained from *Votes for Women* but headquarters did not publish a strategic plan. Both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst felt that a democratic organisation was totally unsuitable for the WSPU's kind of campaigning. However, London headquarters' central requirement was the provision of large audiences when the leadership moved around the country and contributed to major demonstrations in the capital. Events that had national significance, such as by-elections or visits by leading Liberals, were directed from London. Organisers were appointed by headquarters and were responsible for large areas, moving between the various branches in their area. Support from diverse interests can be identified in the large audiences at demonstrations. The WSPU worked towards keeping their membership happy and contributing to the cause of votes for women. Meetings were held at the Albert Hall three times a year and 200 lesser weekly meetings held in the regions roused intense

[295] See chapter six of this thesis for a detailed analysis of the WSPU in the south west of England.
[296] Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', 27.
[297] Krista Cowman, '"Incipient Toryism"? The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party 1903-14', *History Workshop Journal*, 53 (2002), 134.

enthusiasm. It is questionable that a strategy that relied on and participated in Parliamentary lobbying and using pressure group tactics was understood by all individuals when their day-to-day activities in local societies were generally self-directed.

The interests of their supporters were often determined by friendship networks and by pre-existing class and party-political affiliation; moreover, women often worked with both the NUWSS and WSPU simultaneously offering moral and material support. They frequently attended meetings of both societies and many women in the NUWSS were in sympathy with WSPU activities. Frequent joint membership indicated that the membership was following interests of their own and new strategies, new modes of campaigning and policy were the points at which individuals made decisions regarding their allegiance to either society.[298]

Terms of reference – WSPU – Conflict

> *Conflict: Regards conflict as an inherent and ineradicable characteristic of organisational affairs and stresses its potentially positive or functional aspect.*

Internal dissention within the WSPU was reflected in discussions on the question of the organisation, modes of campaigning, and political strategy of the Union. The WSPU's political strategy was not static. The WSPU headquarters in London was more than a central set of offices. It was where national campaigns were organised and like most large political organisations, it experienced tension between the local and national leadership. Branch members could feel overlooked and at times the women working at headquarters became frustrated when their attempts to establish cohesion failed. What is most striking and points towards a pluralist workplace is that the all of the work carried out at headquarters was carried out by women who, according to Krista Cowman, 'consistently sought a more feminised way of doing things'.[299] Pluralism emphasises the diversity of individual and group interests and an all-women society had an all-female workforce. Headquarters 'had large groups of paid women workers, organisers and clerical support staff Suffragettes discovered that working there offered them a collegiality missing from other forms of work available to women before the First World War'.[300]

Emmeline Pankhurst frequently explained that the WSPU was purely a volunteer army and made it clear that they were not obliged to follow decisions made by its leaders.[301] Members

[298] Glasgow suffragists had hopes that by the summer of 1908 the two wings of the suffrage movement would merge. Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', 27.
[299] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 100.
[300] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 102.
[301] Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 699.

were also aware they were not expected to be passive followers and were encouraged to take an active approach. There were regional variations. 'Our organisers' wrote Christabel Pankhurst, 'found our leadership perfectly compatible with their own freedom to develop their activities.'[302] However, relationships between organisers and their employers did not always run smoothly. The qualities organisers bought to the society made their input successful, for these were women with strong personalities and this could make them difficult employees. They were often in conflict with the national leadership.[303] Militancy was one source and also there were publicized splits in 1907, when disgruntled organisers were dissatisfied with WSPU policy and grouped around dissenters. [304] These situations were managed in order to minimise the effect of disagreements on the rank and file membership, but this could inevitably have an effect on the overall campaign.

Dissent was part of the life of a district organiser and they could become embroiled with the irritated and discontented. District organisers could rely on the support of their employers, as could women who were subject to a whispering campaign. Christabel Pankhurst warned members who were unpleasant towards organisers and left them in no doubt as to her position on rank and file members who behaved badly towards WSPU officials: 'the fact is that their attitude towards organisers is wrong and a false one, and we are determined to protect organisers from unfair and unreasonable criticism'. Christabel Pankhurst also commented that such difficulties did arise every now and then but she also identified that there was 'calm after the storm'.[305] Christabel's action and understanding suggests that, rather than an autocratic posture, she was responding to and dealing with conflict as an inevitable outcome of a large organisation employing large numbers of staff. The issue of political policy and the interpretation of the British suffrage movement do not adequately mirror its complexity and variety of cross currents. Within the movement there was conflict of loyalty and discord.[306]

Terms of reference – WSPU – Power

> *Power: Regards power as crucial variable. Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are alleviated and resolved. The organisation is viewed as a plurality of power holders drawing their power from a plurality of sources*.[307]

---

[302] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 83.
[303] There were two highly publicised splits in 1907 and 1912 when disgruntled members grouped around dissenting organisers. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 147.
[304] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 148.
[305] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 148.
[306] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 33.
[307] There are three frames of reference but as an analytical tool for exploring the NUWSS and WSPU the third frame of reference, 'radical', is difficult to use because of its reliance on a view that radical organisations are

'It is widely accepted that the WSPU was an autocratic society, which was considerably less democratic that its rival'.[308] From 1906 policies were decided by an un-elected Central Committee with Sylvia Pankhurst as secretary and Annie Kenney as a paid organiser. This central committee was assisted by a sub-committee which consisted of family and friends. Members did not participate in decision-making and were informed of decisions at the weekly 'at home' meetings. The leadership controlled their own publications, appointments to paid positions, and of course the finances of the organisation making it difficult for members to oppose them. Finally, although the London-based WSPU was undoubtedly undemocratic, this may not have been the case for the provincial branches and their regional offices. In 1907, the first of a number of shattering shifts splits in the WSPU took place. These occurred not because the leader had an autocratic or even vindictive disposition – she did not – but because of her organisational methods.[309] There seems to be a dichotomy where power is held by a few at headquarters but the regions had considerable autonomy.

As Morgan's *Images of Organisation* has suggested, formal authority is a form of legitimate power and the power to rule rests with different stakeholders who are formally represented in the decision-making process.[310] Military discipline and use of militaristic language could be identified as the use of power to respond to conflict both within and outside the society. The use of military hierarchical terms makes it clear what structures and systems are present in the organization. As Pankhurst herself wrote: 'those who cannot follow the general must drop out of the ranks.'[311] With the lack of a formal constitution the leadership could quickly respond or anticipate changing conditions. 'The WSPU was now disciplined like an army; unquestioning obedience was demanded. All were required to sign a pledge not to support the candidate of any political party until women have the vote'.[312] The compliance seems to stem from signing a pledge, but there is little evidence that the military terms used as part of the structure of large demonstrations were used within the organisation. The hierarchy at headquarters seemed be expressed through the occupation of rooms and was a highly organised central office.[313] The behaviour of the WSPU's leaders furthered its presentation as the Union's real power centre to employees and members alike.

---

battleground with class interests and that power is distributed through class divisions. Morgan, *Images of Organization,* 202.

[308] Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes,* 40.

[309] The split in 1907, when the leadership was challenged because of Emmeline Pankhurst's perceived ever growing autocracy, has been well documented by historians. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty;* Pugh, *The Pankhursts: The History of One Radical Family;* Holton, *Feminism and Democracy;* Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*.

[310] Morgan, *Images of Organization,* 202.

[311] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 697.

[312] Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 71.

[313] Purvis, 'Deeds not Words', 138.

Headquarters came to be seen as the rather sinister centre of the WSPU's power, although its origins were quite innocent. Like all political organisations, the WSPU had to operate from an address.[314]

The key term seems to be 'fighting organisation'. An army in the field must respond quickly and should not be hampered by complex rules. The WSPU had adopted illegal activities and needed to act quickly in order to avoid arrest and imprisonment. Evidence points towards the military ranks and terms being used to plan, structure and organise the mega demonstrations that took place in London. The use of the terms was not to deploy power but more to aid the participants at all levels in the demonstrations. Each woman knew her place in the assembled march.[315]

Summary

The WSPU had the central focus of attaining votes for women and as such included both individuals and groups who joined the Union to make change. The leadership understood that conflict in large organisations was present and the WSPU worked towards containing dissent, and in doing so gained the reputation of being an autocratic society. The leadership understood the role of power and used the influence of their political interests to pressure for change. However, the regions did have some autonomy but it might be that working at a distance gave the view of headquarters as a daunting place, which very few would visit.

Conclusion

Although the relationships between these organisational approaches are not perfect, using these terms of reference present a clear distinction between the two societies. However, it is also possible to identify an overlap between the management activities of both societies. As Holton argued in 1986, 'in the early years of the WSPU after the move to London in 1906 and the NUWSS post 1906, the two approaches of suffrage campaigning were not mutually exclusive or odds with one another'.[316] It has already been identified in the previous chapter that the application of "militant' and 'constitutional' is open to criticism, and that a new approach may help to bring a different perspective. The standard approach links suffrage to

[314] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit,* 102.
[315] The terms marshals, chief marshals, group captains, banner marshals, chief stewards, recruiting sergeants were deployed by both the WSPU and the NUWSS in the planning and preparation of large demonstrations. *Votes for Women,* 28 May 1908.
[316] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* 30.

the tactics used by both societies and therefore the NUWSS are perceived to play a more passive role. However, if we consider this within its context, the NUWSS took women out of the home and led them to enter the public realm, and during Edwardian times this could be perceived as a 'militant' action. When measuring interests there is an overlap when using unitary terms of reference, as there is an emphasis on the achievement of common objectives. It can be argued that the WSPU as with the NUWSS were trying to achieve the same common objective of gaining the vote for women.

On the surface because the NUWSS used the committee structure, historians have identified them as a well-integrated team and this fits well with a unitary perspective. However, if we try to apply the pluralist term of reference for interests to the WSPU, there are some shortcomings, and the Union cannot be fully perceived as a loose coalition. Headquarters set standards and women pledged themselves to working towards the enfranchisement of women. Both societies had similarities and it is possible to suggest that the NUWSS and WSPU can both be understood as unitary organisations with common interests in terms of the characterisation of both societies. The terms of reference for both unitary and pluralist interests seem to apply for both groups, as there is emphasis on both the diversity of individual and group interests and the need for common objectives. Both organisations can be viewed as united under the umbrella of common goals and striving toward the achievement of gaining votes for women.

Both unitary and pluralist perspectives when analysing conflict and power are more straightforwardly identified and distinguish the two societies. The key is how the societies were managed, and more importantly why were they so successful. The application and interpretation of the two terms of reference leads us away from the 'militant' versus 'constitutional' and towards an understanding of how two successfully women-led organisations achieved and managed very successful societies.

It is difficult not to recognise both societies' achievements in raising awareness of both the general public and women-led organisations. There seems to be a dichotomy where power is held by a few at headquarters but the regions had considerable autonomy. The WSPU displayed elements of both unitary and pluralist organizations. It was unified by its interests, but conforms more to the pluralist model in terms of open conflict and more diffused power. Whilst exploring pluralist and unitarist perspectives, it becomes clear that there were similarities between the groups, but the analysis carried out still leads into two separate evaluations. As this work has constantly questioned the division into constitutional and militant, this analysis still focuses on difference. Importantly what does emerge are more

similarities than differences. Using the typology of pluralism and unitarist has highlighted the similarities and consequently this needs to be addressed.

It is important to consider that post-1906 both organisations grew rapidly and in the case of the WSPU set up a number of new societies across the country. In addition, it is important to identify that both societies had women at the centre of the organisation. Evidence suggests that when they developed post-1906, only a small number of women would have experienced a management role, yet both the NUWSS and the WSPU were able to respond quickly and efficiently to changing circumstances. Both societies took a women-centred approach to their organisations by employing women, attracting willing volunteers, and utilising and valuing the skills these women brought to the union. Both the organisations had a clear mandate to gain the vote for women and to question women's role in society. Women proved their strength in fund-raising, propaganda, organisation and publicity stunts. Both societies had a total commitment to the 'cause' and through hard work they shocked Edwardian society into reappraising women in society more broadly, and they were increasingly seen as brave and fearless. The examination of the NUWSS and the WSPU using a pluralist and unitarist analysis does not provide a full alternative to the enduring popularity of the constitutional versus militant terms, or the description of the leadership as constitutional versus autocratic. However, this analysis does highlight the similarities between the societies – both having clear structures and systems, well-planned activities, employment schedules and methods, which underpinned their success as suffrage organisations.

The following chapter uses the shops opened by both the WSPU and the NUWSS as an example of successful businesses opened and operated by both organisations. In doing so it will the highlight differences between matriarchal and patriarchal (terms/systems/power) in order to foreground the way, the NUWSS and WSPU successfully ran all-women organisations, and in doing so transgressed the separate spheres ideology.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE MARKETING OF A MESSAGE

Introduction

This chapter continues with my reinterpretation of the suffrage movements as examples of successful women's business organisations. How did this impact on political strategising? This section addresses a fundamental issue, the question of political strategy and the intersection between gender and power. It will briefly look at the differences between matriarchal and patriarchal terms, systems and power, in order to foreground the way, the NUWSS and WSPU successfully ran all-women organisations. An important and much neglected area of study of suffrage history is examining the gender balance of organisations that were either women-led or where the key decision makers were women. The NUWSS and the WSPU transgressed the separate spheres ideology. I will argue that the WSPU was formed and was sustained as a women-only society and, while the NUWSS allowed men to join, it was essentially female-led.[317] Both had similar patterns of development, beliefs, regimes and values. They had a shared sense of identity and many of their rituals and patterns of interaction were similar. As employers they had similar rates of pay, training and development. This chapter will use the example of the development of shops by the WSPU to show how women used ideas drawn from male organisations.

This and the following chapter will concentrate on the relationship between the intersection of power and gender in the context of the early twentieth century. This chapter will give a new interpretation of bazaars and shops as a way of captivating and using the inspiration of women. It will consider how the societies understood the opening and placement of shops throughout the country. This is one sign of how women-led suffrage societies successfully entered the retail market. The chapter will unravel the relationship between the suffrage movements that effectively drew upon the techniques of capitalist retail organisations that were managed by a male dominated industry. The suffrage organisations understood and utilised the marketing techniques being adopted by this growth sector in Edwardian society.

[317] Men had roles in the executive committees from the 1870s when they were a quarter of the executive. In 1888 a provisional committee was formed to reconstruct the Central Committee and a smaller proportion of men involved with Mr TW Russell MP were present. In 1897 a Parliamentary Committee was formed from all the countrywide societies and the only male member in attendance was Rev. S. A. Steinthal. By 1900 the amalgamation of two societies, Central and Eastern, and Central and Western, occurred and a new executive was formed and no men were present. The Women's Library, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, Appendix 2-5

Bazaars and Women's Exhibitions

Both the NUWSS and the WSPU used bazars as sources of income, publicity and recruitment. Bazaars were made up of a variety of stalls selling and exhibiting a variety of goods on sale, and gave the impression of gaiety and colour. They brought women to work together, were often themed and held at significant dates in the year such as Christmas.

Bazaars were also held in the regions and February of 1909 in Penzance a hall with a capacity of 600 was hired. *Votes for Wome*n named the organisers but the takings are not included. In 1909 Bristol held a Christmas Bazaar and meetings were held to discuss plans for advertising. The Christmas bazar in 1911 was held at the Portman Rooms in Baker Street and the WSPU held the bazaar in December for five days. The theme was the eighteenth century and the stallholders wore costume. The stalls also had a theme such as a Welsh stall or jewellery and glass from Birmingham.[318]

The use of bazaars was a very shrewd and ingenious use of the skills that women were assumed to enjoy, that is of home making skills. Although superficially a bazaar seemed to be like a village fete, selling cakes, meringues, embroidered blouses and tea gowns, it was in fact a fund-raising and raising awareness exercise. Many of the fifty stalls would be familiar to Edwardian women, selling farm produce, confectionery and exquisite millinery. The exhibition also drew women in as visitors by offering palmistry and local delicacies.

The WSPU treasurer Emmeline Pethick Lawrence was initially hostile to the concept of bazaars because she felt that they were only acceptable if women had never conceived any other way of raising awareness and fundraising on a continuous basis. She saw the one-off bazaar as having limited opportunity. It was the success of the Women's Exhibition in 1909, an event that was cleverly planned and was open to both sexes and charged 2/6d on the first day and 1/5d thereafter, which changed her opinion. The Women's Exhibition was held at the Princes' Skating Rink in Knightsbridge from May 9th to 25th, 1909. Emmeline Pankhurst wrote the introduction to the brochure for the event. She made it clear what the fund would support and that it would be used to set women free to make their own salvation both political, social and industrial.[319] Planning for the Exhibition started in the New Year and Sylvia Pankhurst embarked on an ambitious scheme designing murals to cover every wall of the exhibition hall. The exhibition was advertised by a suffragette's drum and fife

[318] *Votes for Women* 16 November 1911.90
[319] Atkinson, *Suffragettes in Purple, White and Green,* 93.

band, marching from the Kingsway to Knightsbridge, and wearing smart military uniforms in the colours.[320]

Opportunities to promote the WSPU at the event were prominent, and four stalls sold suffrage 'uniform' goods. New ways of informing the public were used. Everyone was handed a ballot sheet and was asked to vote in a mock polling booth on an issue of the day. It was the experience of entering a polling booth that was the focus, demonstrating that no harm would come to people making their vote. In addition, erecting a polling booth and inviting both men and women to experience the act of voting was another cunning way to get the point about female suffrage across.[321]

Most shocking of all to the public was a mock prison cell allocated to suffragettes who were second division prisoners. This highlighted the difference between the handling of male political prisoners who were housed in relatively luxurious cells and received 'first division' treatment, and female suffrage prisoners. These women were treated brutally, as common criminals, and were stripped and forced to wear prison uniforms, kept in solitary confinement and had to scrub floors daily and perform other menial tasks; making mail bags or filling pillows with cotton fibre.[322] The use of a prison cell at the Women's Exhibition is an example of how the WSPU used innovative and ingenious ways of informing the public of the barbarity of male doctors and women warders whilst suffragettes were in prison.

Both the WSPU and NUWSS understood how to utilise the power of women-centred activities and pushed the boundaries beyond mere bazaars, extending the opportunity to raise awareness, recruit and engage with the population. The NUWSS were constantly aware of the need for publicity, and they posted advice to all societies for raising funds. They recommended donations, plant sales, rummage sales, pet shows, Christmas trees and plum pudding sales. They advised members to save 1d a week and bring one new member a month. In addition, they also recommended that a better organisation of hospitality would save costs.[323]

[320] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 96.
[321] Anna Sebva, 'Stella', *Sunday Telegraph Magazine,* 26 April 2009, 1-4.
[322] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes,* 30.
[323] Women's Library, 2nwa/a. Box FL338.

Shops

Large department stores in 1907 were essentially masculine designed, managed and marketed. Their success was dependent on a clear hierarchy. They were designed to be rational, strategic, competitive, pragmatic and functional, with vision from the top down. Their promotion of technical expertise, logic, and instruction made them active and often ruthless.[324] Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.[325] In comparison, matriarchy is essentially feminine, utilises networks and clear lines of communication, and is creative. It emphasises mutuality, nurturing and encourages respect, emotional intuition and collaboration.[326] This chapter will show how these attributes were utilised by the WSPU and 'the shop' as a model of inclusion welcoming women into a different world. Both the NUWSS and WSPU cultivated traditional female stereotypes. Suffrage networked organisations created a major political shift towards what have been identified as female styles of management, where there was a drive towards building consensus.

The WSPU showed understanding in their initial years of the need to raise awareness, and used marketing as a tool. Whilst not able to copy the extravagant displays in the large London stores, they utilised the '4Ps' of promotion in window displays employed by the large department stores, and imitated this to attract attention and welcome women into their shop. 'Marketing Mix' is the set of controllable variables that an organisation can use to influence the buyer's response. The controllable variables in this context refer to the '4Ps': product, price, place (distribution), and promotion.[327] The successful methods they copied included themed window dressing, designed counter spaces, use of tills that showed the customer their expenditure and wrapping the goods women bought, often in the colours. They utilised the colours in displays and the external paintwork was constantly renewed. This helped the creation of very successful WSPU enterprises. The WSPU brilliantly orchestrated a modern and controversial campaign that used the language of visual imagery that was very successful in the large stores. They used the colours to drape counter spaces, and displayed clothes on dummies enabling the customer to visualise their purchases. This was successfully used in areas of the shop selling suffragette goods.

[324] Patriarchy has been defined as 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women'. Sylvia Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 20.
[325] Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy,* 20.
[326] Morgan, *Images of Organisation,* 192.
[327] Philip Kotler, *Principles of Marketing: A Global Perspective* (London: Pearson Education, 2010), 1.

The large stores occupied prominent places in Knightsbridge in London. The WSPU took advantage of location by placing their operations in the right place to attract consumers and to continue to entice and appeal to women. This was also the case with provincial shops. In April 1909 the West of England WSPU moved to larger premises in Bristol. The large stores prominent in the West End had made the WSPU aware of the importance of geographical placement, and they opened a shop in 1909 and committee rooms at 33 Queen's Road, opposite the Art Gallery and a short walk from Bristol University.[328] The initial outlay for shops was very expensive and in July the Bristol branch asked ten people to pay one shilling to clear the rent. The shop and committee rooms opened on July 30th 1908 and was located on a main street in a good part of town with two front windows.[329] By August the shop was 'doing well'. This was the only comment made in *Votes for Women* in August 1908, but it is clear that the shop kept a book of names and addresses of those interested in joining the society, and it was used as a meeting place for literature sellers. The shop, unlike the majority of male-led retail establishments, had an agenda beyond sales; recruiting women to the WSPU. This involved bringing women together to carry out tasks and aid the propaganda campaign in order to grow the society in the West of England. In September 1908 there was a report on the shop's finances and it identified that a sum of £11. 5s 7ds was raised by income from the shop to meet its expenses. Women also collected an additional £4.12s from the sale of collection cards.[330] By September the Union prepared new signage and painted the shop in the colours. Mary Blathwayt was one supporter who 'cut out suffrage announcements from *Votes for Women* to put in shop windows'. Branch members were expected to staff local shops on a voluntary basis and Mary Blathwayt did extra shifts in Bath when members failed to turn up for their promised hours. She also recorded the petty abuse received by shop workers, for example three girls shouted horrid things through the letterbox.[331] In June 1909 the WSPU opened a second shop in Bristol South, at 76 Bedminster Parade, a working-class area and most importantly opposite the Will's Tobacco factory.[332] Again, they utilised the way male-led large stores developed and used marketing strategies. The WSPU cleverly extracted the marketing methods used by

[328] Lucienne Boyce, *The Bristol Suffragettes* (Bristol: Silverwood Books, 2003), 24.
[329] *Votes for Women*, Volume 1, November 1907, 21.
[330] Collection cards were a wide variety of cards depicting themes such as banners, pictures of the leadership, copies of leaflets used at demonstrations, and small editions of pamphlets created as cards. *Votes for Women,* Volume 1, August and September 1908.
[331] Cowman, *Mrs. Brown is a Man and a Brother,* 85.
[332] June Hannam, '"An Enlarged Sphere of Usefulness": The Bristol's Women's Movement c.1860-1914' in *The Making of Modern Bristol*, eds. Madge Dresser and Philip Ollerenshaw (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1996), 202.
[333] The range of Women's Press merchandise came to include Boadicea brooches, various tri-colour brooches, motor scarves, handkerchiefs, hat pins, leather purse bags, regalia, ribbon badges, ribbon belts with 'haunted house' buckles, sashes, ties, 'Votes for Women' ribbons, board games, tea, soap, playing cards, stationery, cigarettes, postcard albums, blotters note books, tea sets and Christmas cards. Rooms were devoted to packaging items and packets of tea were prettily packaged. John Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage: the campaign shops of the Women's Social and Political Union', *Women's History Review* 12, no. 2 (2009): 293-309.

the male led department stores. This enabled them to employ the patriarchal understanding of the importance of shop placement, understanding that large stores were not accidently in the West End of London, or situated on busy thoroughfares.

The WSPU's flagship store opened at 156 Charing Cross Road in London in May 1910, and cemented the place of shops within the campaign. It was the most famous and lavish of their shops. By this time WSPU were engaged in substantial commercial-propagandist activities and were selling the campaign newspaper, posters, postcards and a wide range of votes-for-women themed goods such as sashes, badges and pins. The retail shops were built on the knowledge gained from the earlier use of bazaars that had offered an opportunity to feature some suffragette themed goods. The wide use of the purple, white and green colours demonstrated the appreciation for commercial opportunities and assisted the sale of badges, ribbon, regalia, stationery, books, pamphlets, literature and the sale of *Votes for Women.*[333] Branding strategies had been used previously by radical movements. The Trade Union movement used colours, banners, leaflets, posters, and it is entirely possible that the WSPU imitated the successful elements of their propaganda campaigns. I argue that the WSPU not only utilised these techniques, but also developed branding to a new level. The use of a uniform, colours and conformity of dress enabled the women to become a recognisable army - a new and bold propaganda tool.

This chapter and the following chapter identify and discuss how the WSPU and later the NUWSS raised awareness of their cause using and developing all the marketing methods available.[334] Evidence suggests that the WSPU was the first political organisation to market and merchandise its campaign. Importantly the WSPU at the beginning of the twentieth century very cleverly devised and developed a method of raising awareness, of manipulating visual images to draw attention to the cause that was not previously equalled.[335]

The WSPU shops offered and sold a wide range of adornment badges and ribbons, and a range of merchandise that included handbags, chains, notebooks, postcard albums, chocolate, soap, cigarettes and tea sets. Both societies entered into lavish campaigns

[333] The range of Women's Press merchandise came to include Boadicea brooches, various tri-colour brooches, motor scarves, handkerchiefs, hat pins, leather purse bags, regalia, ribbon badges, ribbon belts with 'haunted house' buckles, sashes, ties, 'Votes for Women' ribbons, board games, tea, soap, playing cards, stationery, cigarettes, postcard albums, blotters note books, tea sets and Christmas cards. Rooms were devoted to packaging items and packets of tea were prettily packaged. John Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage: the campaign shops of the Women's Social and Political Union', *Women's History Review* 12, no. 2 (2009): 293-309.
[334] The themed products were either commissioned by the WSPU or were bulk bought and re-sold to their membership. Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage', 293-309.
[335] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 79-83.

involving mega demonstrations, by-election activity, and communication using a wide variety of promotional methods. The following chapter will discuss how both societies planned and carried out mega demonstrations in London. In June 1908 the WSPU held one of many large demonstrations, and had 80 women speakers in Hyde Park, with special trains to bring women to London. The shops sold excursion tickets and the ease of access was important. They expected a quarter of a million women marching through the streets of London. Shops were extensively used to inform local women and recruit women for by-election activity and this was very successfully used in the mid-Devon by-election in January 1908. They managed attentive audiences, and press extracts published in *Votes for Women* reported that Emmeline Pankhurst reduced the majority of the Liberal candidate.[336] The shops were an important feature of the WSPU armoury as they promoted and advertised upcoming marches, publishing details, venues, times and meeting places, they sold sashes and badges, all of which encouraged recruitment to get women involved in the demonstrations.[337] As women-only organisations it is clear they understood how male-led organisations used different methods of communicating and the suffrage movement successfully developed and utilised the methods to aid their own propaganda campaign.

The suffrage shop provided a bridge between public activism and low-profile branch work. The shop served as a meeting place, a recruitment centre, a distributor of information and a retailer of propaganda. Through the use of recognisable premises, the WSPU sought to induct and attract women through what was a feature of everyday life; and as a shopper, women ventured into political activity. The campaign shop provided a convivial space whilst at the same time it became a consumption centre and was campaigner occupied. The opening of retail outlets marked the increase in the commercialisation of the women's suffrage movement especially the WSPU who successfully incorporated the merchandising of literature and commoditised the movement. It was also effective when using the women's role as consumers to induct them into the movement and extended the opportunities for public engagement through a scheme of politicised consumption.[338]

The NUWSS and WSPU questioned the ideology of separate spheres as they identified that public life should not be the sole domain of men, and women should not be identified only with domesticity. Whilst the anti-suffragists drew heavily on the Victorian ideology of separate spheres, looking towards an ideal harmonious social order to be maintained, suffragists constructed arguments that identified a common subordination of women

[336] *Votes for Women*, Volume I, February 1908, 61.
[337] *Votes for Women*, Volume 1, April 1908, 125, and May 1908, 196, 126-186.
[338] Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage', 293-309.

symbolised by their shared exclusion from the vote. They also vigorously challenged the representation of suffragettes as the masculine woman, the unsexed woman, the hysteric, the shrew, and developed a typology of their own, characterised their opposition and pointed discreetly to the masculine investment in prostitution.[339] The fascination with types had important implications for suffrage politics, suffrage imagery and how they utilised patriarchal methods to construct their propaganda. [340] Suffragists in the early years of the NUWSS were depicted as 'women with a demeanour, who invariably seems to wear elastic–sided boots and to carry a big 'gampy' umbrella'. There was a build-up of visions of a typology of modern femininity. The depiction of womanliness was the lynchpin of middle-class ideology. The emergence of stereotypes that depicted suffragettes as hysterical viragos or spinsters was widely used in anti-suffrage propaganda.[341] The suffragette face was depicted in the *Daily Mirror* thirteen times as 'The Suffragette Face: New Type as Evolved by Militancy', and the photographs taken on Derby Day on 25th May 1914 of scruffy screaming women was widely used by anti-suffrage movement.[342]

The WSPU challenged the idea of separate spheres ideology by developing their own subversive version by creating a single-sex organisation. Women were united in political organisations with other women, and this unity would provide them with their own form of the male-dominated, profit centred organisations that only welcomed women in segregated areas such as the teashop or through the provision of women-only powder rooms. Was it deliberate, or fortunate happenstance, that the WSPU utilised aspects of masculine and feminine spheres as required? This chapter will illustrate that it was more than likely a mixture of both but with an emphasis on a totally woman-centred meeting place.

Edwardian society was undergoing cultural change and large stores contributed to opening up for some women the world of spending time away from the home. Shopping had become a new excursion. Women from all classes were leaving the home and entering a novel world, the new experience of shopping in large stores. These male dominated organisations provided 'ladies' rest rooms, fashion items, and tearooms, providing a space where women could gather. Whilst tearooms seemed to be women-centred, it might be that this provision within a women-centred space meant that it was possible to use clever marketing to attract

[339] Women challenged the division between masculine and feminine domains and both the NUWSS and WSPU were constantly engaged in resistance by breaking the boundaries of Edwardian society. One boundary they challenged was the accepted form of large-scale shops. These m[339] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 170.
[340] Mercer, Shopping for Suffrage', 293-309.
[341] Suffragists in the early years of the NUWSS were depicted as 'women with a demeanor, who invariably seem to wear elastic–sided boots and to carry a big "gampy" umbrella … which she uses to brandish ferociously… or to brandish to any unfortunate member of the opposite sex.' *Votes for Women,* June 1907.
[342] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 171.

and sell to a 'captured' woman who could easily be sold merchandise. The female consumer did the majority of shopping and attracting women to a space designed specifically for them meant they could be a subject of manipulation, exploitation and objectification. The attractiveness of tearooms where women could meet away from the home in comparative safety may have provided a stimulus for the WSPU to consider how they could attract women to their society.

One element that clearly linked the NUWSS and WSPU, which, as the previous chapter demonstrated, were united on ends but not means, was the use of a new kind of political spectacle and the production of an iconography of their own. Pictorial leaflets, cartoons, posters, and postcards were used on a scale unprecedented by any Victorian pressure group.[343] The production and use of posters was central to both organisations' campaigns. They agitated by symbol and visible display, and shops were an important part of this.

As explained above, in the same year as the Exhibition in 1909, WSPU shops began to be opened. In late 1908 and early 1909 the Plymouth and Torquay Union began planning the opening of a retail outlet but it was the end of March 1909 before a shop opened in Torquay. The trend quickly spread. Regional branches were encouraged to stir up local interest and often opened temporary shops such as the one in Bexhill-on-Sea.[344] Permanent shops were established in Aberdeen, Bath, Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Clacton-on-Sea, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hastings, Ipswich, Leicester, Newcastle, Newport, Nottingham, Chelsea, Hampstead, Hendon and Golders Green, Kensington, Kingston-on-Thames, Paddington and Streatham Sheffield and Torquay. In the London area shops were opened in quick succession, and later in 1913 shops were established in Bethnal Green, Bow, Limehouse and Poplar.[345]

For activists the WSPU shops provided a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere and potentially enabled campaigners greater confidence to organise, and to control gatherings away from a potentially hostile public. They extended women's opportunity to be publicly engaged and offered a place where women could become politically aware. Additionally, the shops were used to engage women in a predominantly female political campaign. The WSPU focused on directing the consumer towards a suffrage movement. Women had the opportunity of becoming involved in public excursions, demonstrations and decision-making. The WSPU also offered the opportunity for subversion and it was an emancipatory act, releasing women

[343] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 10.
[344] Mercer, *Shopping for Suffrage,* 293-309.
[345] Mercer, *Shopping for Suffrage,* 293-309.

from their domestic world with visits to shops, tea rooms and women's clubs, and gave them limited liberation. The shops offered women the possibility of entering the public arena within the prescribed norms of behaviours for Edwardian notions of femininity.

As outlined above, shops were opened across the country by the WSPU, and the NUWSS later followed with their range of shops. These shops were managed significantly differently, but as with WSPU they were women-focused and provided an important meeting place. The NUWSS shops were often initially opened as committee rooms and were converted into shops at the time of by-elections. In 1911 both societies welcomed women into their shops to avoid the census.[346] As part of her campaign for universal suffrage, Emmeline Pankhurst called on women to boycott the census to protest against the Liberal Government's reluctance to give women the vote. She urged passive protest whereby women who were at home on census night should refuse to complete the return (and risk a £5 fine or a month's imprisonment) or they should avoid the census altogether by making sure they were out of the house.

The NUWSS rented three London premises in 1908 for the upcoming election. The windows were enhanced with the promise of a stirring spectacle, which enabled the society to whet the appetite of both national and local newspapers. Richly embroidered banners and decorated posters were used for three weeks preceding the general election and three or four meetings were held every day. The window displays and the meetings advertised both the cause in general and the forthcoming demonstration due to take place on 13 June 1908 in particular.[347] This points to a different usage that was less about a massive propaganda campaign, as with the WSPU shops, and more about targeting forthcoming events held by the NUWSS.[348] The shops were used to hold meetings, and store posters and leaflets before big processions and marches. Procession maps were distributed and displayed. The Trade Union movement very successfully used banners, which were often richly embroidered. [349] Both the NUWSS and WSPU were aware of the successful use of banners by the movement, and flagrantly copied, reinterpreted and very cleverly used themes according to the message being given to the onlookers of the procession or march.

---

[346] Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage', 293-309.
[347] The demonstration by the NUWSS on 13 June 1908 was held to surpass the 'mud march' and was a precedent for constitutional change. It pointed to the public procession as a political lever.
[348] Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures*, 48.
[349] Tickner *The Spectacle of Women,* 49.
[349] Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures*, 48.
[349] Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures*, 48.
[349] Tickner *The Spectacle of Women p.60*

The WSPU, whilst using shops to sell goods and merchandise, were also very aware that the shop should provide a safe place. With the establishment of suffrage campaign shops, it became acceptable for women to congregate in the WSPU's retail outlets. The commercial retailing drew women into new campaign spaces of the suffrage shop and new spaces for campaign agitation, while recognising the value of commercial trading. The provincial shops engaged a new audience and utilised the female consumers in their own region far away from headquarters. The tearoom was perhaps an impetus for campaign shops and it could be argued that suffrage women understood how shops were managed, and that its central function was not profit but the utilisation of space in an entirely new way; it was almost a sanctuary. A place for women to explore ideas, meet other likeminded women in an all-female environment, who were becoming politically involved and a place where activism was encouraged. Men had always had places of sanctuary, such as a gentlemen's club, or a range of private social clubs. Men from all classes had a variety of clubs such as the Athenaeum for men of science, literature and art. Working Men's Clubs could be found in most parts of the country and many displayed their industrial allegiance such as those of the Gasfitters, Railwaymen or Miners; others showed a political allegiance.

Utilising 'the tea shop' as a model of inclusion welcoming women into a different world provided the impetus for the WSPU and a recognition of the value of a presence on the high street. Mercer sees suffrage shops as part of the increasing commercialisation of the women's suffrage movement.[350] I would argue against this viewpoint as it assumes that the WSPU were only concerned with profit. There was a constant need to both raise funds and evangelise the cause, and the society always needed to raise funds for the 'war chest', but the shops were not solely about profit. Significantly for women, the shops provided an important sanctuary, a place of safety and to share ideas, rooms for meetings, and to purchase books, pamphlets and suffragette apparel.

The success of the department stores selling a wide range of goods in the colours for sale to suffragettes awakened the WSPU to the possibilities of raising funds in a way that was women-centred.[351] Profit-making interests responded quickly to the suffragette colour scheme and major stores such as Peter Robinson appropriated these commercial opportunities. Liberty's also made or stocked tricolour clothes and accessories.[352] Many

[350] Mercer, 'Shopping for Suffrage', 293-309.
[351] *Votes for Women*, May 1910.
[352] *Votes for Women*, December 1909.

large department stores ran continuous and large advertisements in *Votes for Women*. The WSPU from the early years was always aware that the society needed to be continuously in the news and raising awareness. The contribution from the shops to the wider suffrage campaign was important, and they also provided new semi-public campaign spaces, which were central to the needs of the WSPU in attracting, engaging and recruiting new members.

Visual Images, uniformity, the 'Colours'

The WSPU during its eight years of political campaigning shook up Edwardian society and orchestrated a crusade that kept alive women's issues. Using its organisational abilities, the WSPU generated a thoroughly modern campaign that set it apart from any movement that went before. It unashamedly used visual images and uniformity, and the colours of purple, white and green were used to the maximum propagandist advantage. Popular fashion for the suffragettes suggested that members should wear full uniform and this would distinguish them at a glance.[353] By 1909 suffragettes were given explicit instructions to wear 'the uniform'.[354] The WSPU was tightly organised and Christabel Pankhurst saw women being led in the same way as the Salvation Army.[355] As Christabel Pankhurst noted:

> The WSPU was now disciplined like an army, and unquestioned obedience was demanded.[356]

It is possible that the practice of a very distinctive uniform, worn by organisations like the Salvation Army, was a model for the WSPU. They understood how the colours would give women pride in belonging whilst making a political statement. Christabel Pankhurst urged women to make a special effort to wear the uniform and identified what it consisted of, even down to how the sash should be worn on special occasions.[357]

It seems that a new cocktail of fashion and politics emerged as a powerful new and novel mixture. Women were encouraged to wear the colours at all times.[358] Colours had been used before by the Trade Unions, but the emergence of the tri-colours was a fashion and political statement, an identification of belonging to a movement that had not been encouraged on this scale before. Emmeline Pethwick Lawrence argued that if every

[353] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 19.
[354] Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 82.
[355] Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 82.
[356] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 83.
[357] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green*, 23.
[358] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green*, 23.

individual woman in the union wore the colours it would become the reigning fashion.[359] The WSPU leadership identified their movement with colours. It was more than just the wearing; it was how and where they were worn that made a statement both to the women and those watching parades, demonstrations and by-election protests. The range of suffragette products in large stores was massive and therefore it was not just an army of women following their leaders' instructions, the colours became a fashion statement. A walk down Bond Street or in purchasing any edition of *Votes for Women* people would be struck by the fact that almost every window displayed the colours, and the WSPU newspaper carried half page adverts placed by large stores and smaller entrepreneurs. *Votes for Women* carried a directory of where to shop.[360]

The WSPU informed the membership of the merits of combining fashion, consumerism and politics as they were helping cause. Evidence suggests sales rose around major rallies or processions.[361] The WSPU selection of clothing in their shops was limited to white muslin blouses but they concentrated on selling novelties, badges and scarves, as well as coffee, tea, soap and games. The shops used Christmas as a key selling point, and stocked up with Christmas cards, calendars and crackers, cakes iced in the colours, jewellery and sometimes suffragette dolls in prison uniform and board games. Special board games were devised, such as Panko, in and Out of Holloway Goal, and The Game of the Suffragette.[362] They did not engage in joint business ventures with any of the stores and this is further evidence that they did not identify themselves as merely a commercial venture. Although they sold goods produced by manufacturers and contained aspects of mainstream stores that were purely commercial, the suffrage shops had the dual purpose of making money by commercial endeavours and political activism. Linking with the stores or producers of suffrage merchandise may have produced a possible and profitable venture. Having said this the strength of manufacturers' and retailers' response to the colour scheme aided the recruitment into the movement. The WSPU shops were in general very small outlets and because they lacked the facilities of women's changing rooms were unable to sell the range of clothing items sold in large department stores.

Purple, white and green became so successful for the WSPU that the NUWSS adopted red, white and green. Other organisations such as the Actresses Franchise League and the Women's Freedom League also adopted their own colours. As Diane Atkinson has noted, in

[359] Tickner *The Spectacle of Women, 90.*
[360] The outlets listed included boot makers, cycle makers, dealers in antiques, drapers and hosiers, dressmakers, dryers and dry cleaners, florists, furnishers, hairdressers, and health foods. Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 18.
[361] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 21.
[362] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 24.

December 1909 the Kensington WSPU produced a humorous advertisement alluding to stone throwing at windows: 'Militant Jam with Stones' or a 'Stoneless Variety, the stones extracted for other purposes' was advertised.[363] By 1909 businesses identified suffragettes as important customers and stocked and sold items such as tri-colour kid shoes, or bedroom slippers with dyed velvet and quilted satin. Tri-colour underwear was stocked in the lingerie department of Derry and Toms and there were battery-operated brooches, which flashed 'Votes for Women'.[364] The WSPU had thirty-six branches in the London area by the end of 1911 of which ten had shops. There were another eighty-six branches with seventeen shops in the rest of the country. Atkinson has calculated that by 1914 there were eighteen shops in the London area from Chelsea, the East End, and the suburbs both north and south of London.[365]

The life of a shop assistant in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century was one of hard graft. One woman working at Selfridges in 1909, aged 15, claimed it was 'the lowest form of animal life'. During busy periods, employees were expected to be ready to receive customers in the shop from 8am until 10pm when the shop closed, often not getting home until after midnight after restocking the shop for the following day's trading. In the best establishments, employees were expected to visit the hairdressers every morning and wait in line for their hair to be perfectly curled before they were deemed fit to greet customers.[366]

Margaret Bondfield, who was one of the first Labour MPs, started her working life as a shop worker. She recounts her experience and how she pressured for change and provides an excellent example of the life of a shop worker in a London store.[367] Most shop assistants at that time were employed under the 'living in' system where workers had to live in accommodation provided by their employers, for which rent and board was deducted from their pay. They had no personal freedom or privacy and the food was often of very poor quality. During her employment in London Margaret Bondfield was forced to work sixty-five hours a week for around £40 per year and her bed and board was deducted. She was a member of the National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks and she began writing reports for them. In 1906 she was asked to undertake a full-scale investigation into conditions of service and this would eventually lead to changes in the law

[363] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green*, 23.
[364] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green,* 21.
[365] Atkinson, *The Purple White and Green*, 23.
[366] Fran Abrams, *Freedom's Cause: The Lives of the Suffragettes* (London: Profile Books, 2003), 221.
[367] Margaret Bondfield was one of the first Labour MPs. She was born in 1873 and moved to London from Brighton when she was twenty-one. Abrams, *Freedom's Cause,* 216-223.

to curb the 'living in system'.[368] Bondfield campaigned not as a feminist but as a socialist and her view was that while two thirds of men did not have the vote it would be iniquitous to fight for votes for women on the same terms as men. In 1906 she became involved in a newly formed Adult Suffrage Society and later became president. She believed suffrage was the quickest way to achieve real sex equality.[369]

Suffragism reshaped public space and in doing so symbols and pageantry became ritualised. The suffrage societies shaped their environment showing their potential power. The NUWSS and WSPU both constructed communities and created their own culture that countered the mainstream public sphere where power and consent was male. 'Inside' suffrage societies women activists were consulted, heard and treated as equals. These can be seen as new ideas, and new ways of working. Women challenged the divisions and radically transformed the claims for citizenship.

The growth of the WSPU had involved an increase in the numbers of public meetings and lecturers to forward the suffrage cause, and the stores were often used for more informal and relaxed meetings which could be held in the evening when trading had ceased. Many regional unions reported the success of weekly meetings to discuss the cause in a calm atmosphere and offered the opportunity to organise and control gatherings of potentially hostile crowds. The shops also provided the opportunity to raise the profile of the day-to-day work the society was undertaking and the shops' position on the high street aided the recruitment of staff, volunteers and active campaigners. It also afforded an opportunity to hold meetings, raise funds and sell propaganda without fully entering the public arena.

Conclusion

The intersection of both power and gender in the beginning of the twentieth century became focused when women began to transgress the boundaries between masculine and feminine spheres. The WSPU and the NUWSS successfully utilised techniques drawn from male systems of power to structure effectively systems that enabled them to promote their organisations. Both the NUWSS and WSPU cultivated and broke traditional female stereotypes. Suffrage networked organisations created a major political shift towards what have been identified female styles of management, where there was a drive towards building

[368] In 1906 Margaret Bondfield joined a newly formed Adult Suffrage Society and was particularly active in support of full adult suffrage, opposing the main suffrage societies who saw it as a deliberate attempt to frustrate their efforts to break the gender barrier. Abrams, *Freedom's Cause,* 216-223.
[369] Abrams, *Freedom's Cause,* 225.

consensus. In doing so they provided different and important new ways of working and a new understanding of extending women's opportunities to become politically engaged.

Shops were an important evolution in the ability to engage women and enabled the WSPU to focus on using the power of its members and involve women in decision-making. In doing so the shopping experience allowed women to leave their domestic world, visit tearooms, and browse in the WSPU shop, giving them limited liberation. The shops enabled women to enter the public arena. The difference between patriarchal and matriarchal systems of power was and is a wide chasm still to be overcome but the WSPU and the NUWSS, as all-women organisations, cleverly used the fragments that would enable them to subvert male systems and utilise them for successful business enterprises. Using shops as an enterprise that appealed to women, the WSPU were able to bring and welcome women into the organisation whilst making them politically aware and involved.

The template provided by the west end stores and tearooms that welcomed women in may have provided the incentive to provide safe places for women to meet. The commercialisation and merchandising of the purple, white and green on a large scale, accompanied by the regular advertisement of products in *Votes for Women*, saw the WSPU mix fashion and politics in a novel way. The WSPU encouraged the colours as a uniform and it may be that as an army of women enjoyed the recognition of belonging. The WSPU recognised that by combining fashion, consumerism and politics they were helping the cause. They pioneered the use of a new kind of political spectacle and the production of an iconography of their own. Pictorial leaflets, cartoons, posters and postcards were used on a scale unprecedented by any Victorian pressure group.[370] Both societies agitated by symbol, visible display, and the use of shops to distribute this material was an important part of this agitation.

[370] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 10.

CHAPTER FIVE – THE POWER OF PROCESSIONS

Introduction

Processions of thousands of women could not be ignored. Massive crowds came out to see the amazing spectacle of two miles of women of every class, every profession and calling coming together for the cause. Both the NUWSS and WSPU were very aware they needed visual images, both large and small, to attract other women to become members, raise their profile and stay in the minds of politicians, the press and the public. It was important that they continuously show the strength of their support for gaining the vote. The labour movement had given examples of how oppressed groups could use and invent their own symbolic traditions, drawing attention to their cause with May Day demonstrations, marching with banners and bands.[371] Both the NUWSS and WSPU emulated the trade unions with their use of bands, leafleting, banners, uniforms, colour, postcards and chalking.[372] A procession was the embodiment of their political commitment, and the Pankhursts in particular were well versed in the strategies of large public meetings. The demonstrations carried out by the NUWSS and the WSPU between 1907 and 1913 developed a new kind of political spectacle and dramatised the cause of votes for women with the use of costume, narrative, embroidery, performance and developing skills of public entertainment.

The large demonstrations carried out by both the NUWSS and the WSPU relied heavily on an array of pennants, banners, garlands and badges.[373] The banners achieved a number of things, the depiction of 'women's history', and a sense of shared identity as well as a political significance. Banners served as a rallying point for a march and women were formed around pre-determined points so that the march could proceed smoothly and quickly. For the onlookers it provided a gloss and enabled a development of meaning and identity to the groupings of women. Banners emphasised the broad base of suffrage support and the diversity of women's achievements and benefit that the women's vote would bring to society at large. They were an essential part of the spectacle of suffrage demonstrations. Banners were also portable, decorative and they made good window dressing. They were used to decorate large halls such as the Albert Hall and were almost like regimental colours and could speak for constituencies. Often, they represented a group within the WSPU such as

[371] Some were made by union members or sign-writers, but unions which could afford to do so turned to the firm of George Tutill who started making banners in 1837 and developed the technique of oil painted, double-sided silk banners which dominated designs for one and a half centuries. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 10.
[372] Chalking involved using the chalk as an easy method of informing the local population of upcoming events. The WSPU organised teams of women who used pavements and wall spaces to inform the local population of upcoming events. Chalking was used extensively by the WSPU to give dates, times and places of meetings and marches.
[373] Tickner *A Spectacle of Women* p.60

the Artists Suffrage League whose banners were in the shape of artist's palettes with ribbons in the colours and votes for women across the palette.[374] The NUWSS parade of Trades and Professions depicted on their banners their occupations such as nurses and wore their uniform. The banners had other uses and made good window dressing for committee rooms, convenient backdrops to public meetings, decked out halls across the country and could take the place of honour like battle trophies and were often admired for their design and workmanship.

Historians have largely concentrated on militant activity by the WSPU and have generally ignored the impact made by both the NUWSS and WSPU taking to the streets. In this way they encouraged women to add to the pressure of the need for change in society. The suffrage societies' contribution to social change was promoted by their nationwide activities and actions, and as two female-led organisations they successfully kept their cause at the forefront of Edwardian society. The aim of this chapter is to examine a number of the suffrage marches carried out in London by the NUWSS and WSPU between 1907 and 1913, and to focus again on the important question: 'how did they do it'? The purpose is to demonstrate and emphasise how the suffragists and suffragettes carried out successful marches and mammoth demonstrations. Suffrage demonstrations were the next step from organising a petition and were a way of embodying political commitment: a large demonstration helped women underline this. This 'taking' to the streets, as men had done, could be a powerful instrument in winning the public sympathy to their cause. In total there were seven mega demonstrations and this chapter will examine four:

9 February 1907. NUWSS: Mud March.
21 June 1908. WSPU: Women's Sunday.
17 June 1911. WSPU and NUWSS (joint procession): Women's Coronation Procession.
June and July 1913. NUWSS: The Pilgrimage across the nation culminating in Hyde Park.

A brief overview of the remaining key demonstrations is included to show the vision of both societies and their ability to create different themes to address inequalities as they affected women:

27 April 1909. NUWSS: Pageant of trades and professions.
18 June 1909. WSPU: Prison to Citizenship
14 June 1913. Emily Wilding's funeral took place and the accompanying procession was a demonstration of grief.

[374] Tickner *Spectacle of Women,* 101 and 117.

This chapter follows an earlier discussion of the role of gender and power, which was explored in chapter four in relation to the development of nationwide suffrage shops. All the seven marches are of interest, but the four under detailed investigation here have been identified in order to focus on the relationship between gender and power. This section examines marches undertaken by both the NUWSS and WSPU. It will argue that an analysis based on gender and power supports the interpretation of mega demonstrations. The NUWSS and WSPU recognised how earlier male-led protest movements, such as the trade union movement, used the power of visual metaphors. Trade Unions made extensive use of banners and this chapter will examine how both the NUWSS and WSPU created imaginative, themed and identifiable mottos imitating the devices produced by traditionally male-led organisations. It will bring to the discussion an examination of how these procedures and techniques were interpreted and developed to plan, construct, organise, publicise, promote, and raise awareness of the suffrage cause, and in how doing so they transformed life for many women.

This examination of how the marches were managed will illustrate how male systems were exploited in order to plan, and set up organisational structures and systems. My research has shown that these four marches in particular used similar planning as it made sense to optimise the good practice they had previously undertaken. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on the planning undertaken by both societies and will identify similarities and differences in their processes and systems. The NUWSS Pilgrimage in 1913 is then also included as it was an entirely new approach to suffrage activity. The design of different themes of all the marches is also considered, as this displayed how the NUWSS and WSPU were very aware that they could gain public interest by using visual leitmotifs that articulated women's subordinate role in society. They very importantly understood that the message needed to reach different sectors of the population and accordingly changed the focus of each march.

Major Suffrage Processions			
Society	**Title**	**Date**	**Notes**
NUWSS	'Mud March'	7 February 1907	Hyde Park to Exeter Hall. 40 women's organisations took part
WSPU	Women's Sunday	21 June 1908	Hyde Park. 30.000 women – 7 processions – twenty platforms
NUWSS	Pageant of trades and professions	27 April 1909	Women as workers. 1000 women 90 different occupations – began at dusk – 5 divisions
WSPU	Prison to Citizenship	18 June 1909	Embankment – 617 women with badges, medals and broad arrows
NUWSS & WSPU	Coronation Procession	17 June 1911	Embankment – 40,000 women from 28 suffrage organisations
WSPU	Emily Wilding's funeral	14 June 1913.	Women dressed in different colours – crimson for sacrifice, purple for loyalty, white for purity
NUWSS	Pilgrimage	June and July 1913	Arrived in London for demonstration 24 July 1913 Eight routes across the country, held open air meetings, hired halls, collected funds, distributed leaflets

Previous suffrage historians have discussed the marches in some detail. Tickner, Dicenzo, Atkinson, and Miranda Garrett and Zoe Thomas all provide extensive material in their work.[375] Tickner provided a comprehensive interpretation of the marches undertaken by the NUWSS and the WSPU and Atkinson concentrated on pictorial evidence, concentrating on the WSPU. The recent book *Suffrage and the Arts* published in 2019 and edited by Garrett and Thomas provides a new interpretation of the role of art in suffrage demonstrations. This chapter will utilise these studies to show that both societies could take good practice and use it to further their cause. It is important to show what underpinned these awe-inspiring events. This chapter builds upon discussion of the role of marketing and branding in chapter four, essential when analysing the success of two all-women societies. It approaches these extraordinary events by examining how the NUWSS and WSPU planned, organised, scheduled and employed strategies used by traditionally male managed marches and demonstrations in order to amaze and inspire the nation.

This chapter will also draw extensively on *Votes for Wo*men, the WSPU newspaper. This was a very important vehicle for informing women, the society and the public in general. It contains communications and information about current and future activities and provides an aid to the WSPU's role in the suffrage movement. It is possible to identify many of the planning methods they used, which were subsequently applied to all their marches. The

[375] Maria Dicenzo, *Feminist Media History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures*; Miranda Garrett and Zoe Thomas, eds., *Suffrage and the Arts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020) and Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*.

NUWSS left a number of organisational documents that are housed in the Women's Library, including extensive executive minutes and instructions to local and regional secretaries, though the records are unfortunately incomplete. What is clear is that both societies understood the need to continuously raise interest by pinpointing different issues as they applied to women in Edwardian society. National and regional newspapers also reflect how these mega demonstrations were received and understood.

The following section will discuss the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) Mud March 1907, the first large open-air demonstration, and also Women's Sunday organised by the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1908. This, the largest demonstration, was conceived when the WSPU accepted the challenge made by the Government, to show numbers of supporters, by bringing hundreds of thousands of women members to London.[376] The Women's Coronation Procession in 1911 was designed to be the largest most spectacular procession, producing a pageant that questioned the exclusion of the WSPU from the official Coronation Procession. The NUWSS Pilgrimage in 1913 had the aim to carry out a nationwide campaign starting from seventeen large cities representing one for each federation.[377]

This chapter will introduce how both the NUWSS and WSPU used traditional male systems of planning and control to carry out their many successful enterprises, including marches and large-scale demonstrations. In addition, it will address how the suffrage societies re-interpreted and applied many symbols of male pageantry to get their message and cause across to the nation. After the successes of the Mud March and Women's Sunday the two societies used similar methodology. The NUWSS Pilgrimage was a new venture that acknowledged that the suffrage movement needed to reach women in small towns and cities throughout the country. The NUWSS also wanted to repudiate the view that all suffrage societies used militant methods.

[376] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 91.
[377] The NUWSS experienced tremendous growth and restructured its organisation in 1910. It established federations composed of its affiliated societies within a given area. Each federation was headed by a committee with one representative from each society in its area and one representative from the executive. It was designed to strengthen the ties between each society in an area and enable them to coordinate their activities. Hume, *The NUWSS 1897-1914,* 95.

9 February 1907 – NUWSS - Mud March

At precisely two pm on 9th February 1907, 3000 women assembled at the Band Stand in Hyde Park to march to Exeter Hall, led by Lady Frances Balfour, Millicent Fawcett and Doctor Edith Pechey-Phipson. All subsequent marches held by both the NUWSS and WSPU always started at the exact time advertised. The women marched with brass bands, their long skirts trailing on the ground and despite the weather it was described as a gay procession, with a broad social mix. *The Tribune* commented that not one class alone was represented. 'There were brilliant women of the London world, Girton and Newnham were represented, as well as literary and professional women by the hundred, along with women doctors, artists and women from the industrial north who left their factories to take part in the march'.[378] It required women to step outside the drawing room onto the street and challenged the view of their traditional role as focused on the home [379] This first large-scale demonstration held by the NUWSS in London was designed to coincide with the opening of the next session of Parliament. Subsequently the demonstration became known as 'The Mud March' because it was held on a wet and dreary afternoon. It was the first of the open-air processions and women from forty organisations participated. It had considerable impact because of the novelty of the spectacle and due to the fact that it was raining and very muddy.

The women took part through a great deal of quiet conviction. The *Daily Graphic* insisted that both men and women had the right to march in orderly procession through the streets.[380] The *Manchester Guardian* also joined in with comments on the march and observed that it was not the status implied by cars and carriages, or the banners, or the mix of women from the professions and different classes that was important, but the whole spectacle of thousands of women who would not naturally court the public gaze. The march challenged the conventional view of the role of both middle-class and working-class women. The demonstrations were a signal to the government and the public that women were no longer willing to sit on the side-lines, but would give voice to their cause.[381]

Visibility, used by the trade union movement and other protest groups, was the key to raising the profile of the NUWSS. They were aware that the use of mass marches helped make them distinctive. In addition, the influence of the successful demonstrations carried out

[378] *Tribune,* 11 February 1909.
[379] *Manchester Guardian,* 11 February 1907.
[380] Reported in *Black and White,* 16 February 1907.
[381] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 91.

across the country by the WSPU revitalised, compelled and stimulated the NUWSS towards a more active and visual approach to raising awareness of their cause to the populace. What linked the NUWSS and the WSPU, who were both agitating for the vote, was the use of a new political spectacle. They acquired object lessons from other societies in how to use signs, symbols, emblems, pictures, processions and many other audible and visual displays.

Tickner provides a comprehensive study of the spectacle and visual images of the suffrage campaign. She identifies the important function of banners, posters, postcards and the orchestration of an unprecedented suffrage campaign. This chapter identifies that in particular the Mud March provided a blueprint for future large demonstrations. From this first massive demonstration by women, lessons were learned; about how to plan the order of processions, the most effective instructions given to marchers, route planning, speakers and hiring the police and gaining permission for the marches. Both the NUWSS and WSPU were able to develop strategy and planning for large events. They used this knowledge to run a very successful march by 3000 women in poor weather conditions through the streets of London.

There are precedents for the suffrage banners and they are often compared with the trade union banners of the 1890s.[382] The trade union banners were usually expensive and women had designed and embroidered many of the striking Chartist emblems. George Tuthill manufactured banners and built a worldwide monopoly of very expensive allegorical banners painted with woven surrounds. Suffrage banners, on the other hand, were generally either embroidered or appliqued. Embroidery and applique were traditionally seen as women's skills, and is a good example of a feminine take on a male political tool. In the early years of the campaign money was also part of the problem. In 1890 an 11-foot banner with poles and carrying harness cost £55. The silk and velvet emblematic banners produced by the ASL for the NUWSS cost between fifteen shillings and two pounds.[383]

The role of planning was central to the success of the processions, and the marches often linked to an event in society or themes that identified women's role in society. An executive special meeting by the NUWSS in January 1907 considered and accepted the final proposal for the march. The major decisions for the Mud March were made centrally and followed the formula used by other large organisations at that time.[384] My research has shown that in the

[382] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 91.
[383] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 91.
[384] Women's Library, 2LWS/D Box FL 388

early years it was normal practice for the minutes of the meeting to be handwritten and recorded. A month before the Mud March, minutes were marked confidential and only the executive attended the meeting. Unfortunately, the names of the executives attending were not recorded on the minutes, but it is clear that major decisions were made by the executive centrally.[385] In the year before the Mud March circular letters were the format used to inform the membership of upcoming events. The use of the postal service was their main means of communication, as it was fast, reliable and the method used by most organisations at that time. On 26 April 1906, Edith Palliser, a member of executive, also used circular letters to editors of newspapers informing them of the upcoming march.[386] This was an awareness of the value of newspapers and it can be assumed that they had learned from chartist organisations who kept local and national papers informed of their activities. The WSPU were also very aware of value of newspapers.

A blueprint for the organisation of suffrage marches was part of the executive planning carried out by the NUWSS. They knew precisely how many people could attend at any venue.[387] The executive of the Mud March scheduled mass bands and arranged for red and white rosettes to decorate carriages and cars.[388] At this early stage they used their understanding of how to adopt the symbolism used by the trade union movement and of the 'colours' subsequently the WSPU in May 1908 adopted a brand image. They needed visual images, both large and small, to attract other women to become members, raise their profile, and stay in the minds of politicians, the press and the public if they were going to change the minds of the powerful male lobby of the Liberal Party, and in particular Asquith, the Prime Minister.

The purpose of the NUWSS marches, much like the Trade Union, Chartist and Labour Movement processions before them, was to show the range and number of groups and individuals pressuring for change. What linked the NUWSS and the WSPU was the use of a new political spectacle, and they both used campaigning by symbol. The NUWSS were willing to change if previous tactics seemed tired or over-used. As part of their raising awareness they were conscious of the need to revitalise and energise their campaigns. The Mud March was the NUWSS's first attempt to carry out a large-scale demonstration. As a large and growing society, they used their knowledge and expertise for a large number of activities. They very successfully exploited and absorbed processes used by large

[385] Women's Library, 2LWS/D Box FL388.
[386] Women's Library, 2LWS/D Box FL388/1.
[387] For example, Exeter Hall, London could hold up to 2,500 people. LSE Library.
[388] Women's Library, 2LWS/D box FL388/1.

traditionally male-led organisations, and successfully developed marketing techniques to attract new membership, keep the existing membership informed, and keep the Union in the wider public mind.

The NUWSS used excursion trains to bring women to London. This was a massive planning event as large numbers of women travelled to the capital. An important task for the NUWSS was getting women in the right place in the march. For this and subsequent marches they used army terminology to identify the roles of the women organising, assisting and constructing a very orderly procession. The 'Mud March was rather modest and uncertain in relation to the later marches, but it established the precedent of large-scale procession, carefully ordered and publicised. Ray Strachey, a participant, argued that for most women there was something very dreadful in walking in a procession. Many felt like martyrs and dreaded ridicule and public shame, but they walked and nothing happened.[389] This set the stage for later marches.

Woman's Sunday – WSPU – 21 June 1908

In May 1908 the Stranger Bill, named after the MP for Kensington North, was the women's enfranchisement bill, that had reached its second reading, but failed to go further.[390] At this point Lord Gladstone declared that if women wished to gain a victory for women's suffrage they must learn the lesson gained by men when they carried out their protests. He stated that male protestors had quickly learned that and admitted that women should use the influence of the multitudes to influence the government[391] holding meetings in large halls did not raise public awareness. He stressed that power belonged to the masses.

Emmeline Pankhurst responded to Gladstone with these words:

> The Women's Social and Political Union determined to answer to this challenge. If assembling in great masses was all that was necessary to convince the government that woman suffrage had passed the academic stage and now demanded political action, we thought we could undertake to satisfy the most sceptical member of the cabinet. We knew we could organise a demonstration that would out-rival any of the great demonstrations held by men.[392]

[389] Ray Strachey, *The Cause,* 306.
[390] *HC Deb 28 February 1908 vol 185 cc212.* WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL. Order for Second Reading. 'MR. STRANGER (Kensington, N.) In moving that this Bill be now read a second time said: This Bill is similar to the one introduced last session by my hon. friend the Member for North St. Pancras, which was considered during the whole of one sitting'.
[391] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 1247.
[392] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 1247.

Emmeline Pankhurst in setting out the challenge acknowledged that the structures and systems used by earlier male-led and organised demonstrations were to be copied, but the result was to be bigger and better. The plan was to offer the greatest franchise demonstration in all history. This scheme had been devised to prove that the women's movement had overwhelming support.

Christabel Pankhurst later expressed her pleasure:

> Our Women's Day arrived. Our seven processions converged upon Hyde Park, bands playing, purple white and green banners flying. The multitude in Hyde Park was past numbering. Women on twenty platforms. Women claimed political liberty. Mr and Mrs Pethick Lawrence laid plans of the largest kind and boldness equal to the need, and that greatest of all suffrage demonstrations magnificently crowned their effort.[393]

Staff at Clement's Inn started planning four months before the demonstration. As part of the planning liaison was set up with the local authorities to remove the railings in Hyde Park to prevent a recurrence of the 1886 franchise rioting.[394] The office at Clement's Inn was supervised by Mrs Duke, known as Tansy, who was honorary secretary on the WSPU committee. In order to plan for such a large event, she hired fifteen office staff and a further fifteen were employed as outside organisers.[395] The staff planned routes, constructing the division and order of the march, identifying the roles of marshals, captains, constructing planning instructions, engaging bands and liaising with the railway companies for train excursions. In the days and weeks prior to the event volunteers were organised into small armies. They carried out vital tasks such as chalking, distributing handbills, demonstrating and carrying sandwich boards through the streets. They used a new approach to informing future events and had a quarter of a million mock train tickets printed. These were used to market the event and promote future ticket sales.[396] They also copied tools used by previous protest groups and WSPU canvassers went to factories, shops, hospitals, and restaurants calling on working women to join them.[397] Volunteers also went out every evening on illuminated and decorated cycles to distribute handbills and programmes in the

---

[393] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 95.
[394] In 1866 a meeting was held at Hyde Park on 23 July 1866 by the Reform League. The meeting was declared illegal, and a Police Notice was issued, but the Reform League resolved to attempt to enter the Park. When the procession reached Marble Arch they were confronted by a line of policemen and the park's gates were chained. 1600 constables, on foot and mounted, guarded Marble Arch alone. While arguing with the police, John Bedford of the Reform League noticed that the railings would stand no pressure and began to sway them backwards and forwards. He was soon helped by the masses and the railings fell in what was to become known as the "Hyde Park Railings Affair". The people flooded into Hyde Park despite the efforts of the police to restrain them. Richard James, *Political London: A Capital History* (London: Historical, 2007).
[395] *Votes for Women*, March 1908, 78.
[396] *Votes for Women,* 11 June 1908, 234.
[397] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 5.

suburbs. Every morning they rose early to chalk pavements and distribute the mock tickets.[398]

On 30 April 1908 *Votes for Women* told their readership that preparations were well under way for the Women's Sunday March and they expected a quarter of a million to attend.[399] The article also outlined some important details about the starting points of the seven processions. These arrangements identified that this was not going to be a small event and the advertising was larger than anything previously used to advertise a protest event. An enormous wall poster was produced to go on hoardings across the country to advertise the upcoming event. It measured 13 by 10 feet and it featured life sized photographic portraits of the women who would chair the platforms in Hyde Park, a new form of advertising a protest. Using this success, the WSPU negotiated and scheduled excursions with the train companies on a much larger scale, enabling them to bring many more women from the provinces.

The NUWSS had previously organised special excursion trains for the Mud March. This is one example of how both societies developed and shared best practice. The achievement of commissioning train services was so successful that it became a model, used repeatedly for all major demonstrations in London. Using this format, the WSPU negotiated and scheduled excursions with the train companies on a much larger scale, enabling them to bring many more women from the provinces. This was the first time the WSPU negotiated with the railway companies for the hire and preparation of thirty special excursion trains with special fares, and they arranged departure points from seventy railway stations across the country. These were published in *Votes for Women*. Societies were asked to communicate numbers, as parties of ten would get reduced fares. It was a very well organised and resourceful way of getting large numbers of women into the capital. This substantial undertaking of bringing women to London had not been attempted on this scale before, by any procession.[400]

As an army of women, the WSPU adopted male vocabulary, and they displayed and used army officer ranks and the use of military terminology. All the WSPU London demonstrations had a figurehead, Mrs Drummond, who led all the parades. Mrs Drummond was presented with the accessories of a military uniform designed for her as a field marshal of all the manoeuvres. She referred as General and wore a peaked cap with the General title

[398] Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 1247.
[399] *Votes for Women,* 30 April 1908.
[400] *Votes for Women,* 20 April 1908, 125.

on the front and an epaulette and sash also lettered General.[401] This was a title that remained with her throughout the movement.[402] Any army relies on detailed plans with a clear hierarchy of people to complete tasks. The 'army' of the WSPU were supplied with a clear division of labour. Women who were staffing the event were organised into classified gradings with clear tasks and responsibilities. Chief marshals, marshals and group marshals were given different responsibilities, charged with the arrangements for railways stations, heading a procession, or observing the order for the line of the march. As with all large organisations a reliance on detailed plans supplied to managers and supervisors was central to the success of their operational activities. The exact order of the march was given to each officer and the schedule shows seven group marshals in charge of processions, with thirty group captains in charge of sections and bands leading the section. There were forty banner marshals and captains had complete charge of all banners.[403] Marshals were distinguished by silken and gilded regalia stamped with 'votes for women'. Women from the provinces carried standards they had embroidered. The WSPU hired male 'minders' in order to keep the march peaceful for those watching as it was to be a joyful event. The police were reported as being cooperative and friendly.[404] The use of waggons as a raised platform for speakers had been adopted by many previous protest organisations. The WSPU formed twenty waggons in a great circle, a pantechnicon in the middle as an information centre.

For many women arriving in London this was possibly the first time they had left their city, town or village. Clear considerate planning showed an awareness of the possible nervousness, excitement and vulnerability of women arriving in London. The use of army titles would both serve as a rallying point and terms understood by women arriving at main line stations in London. They were greeted by thirty station marshals who were in charge of three captains. [405] The women's place in the procession was predetermined. Fifty station chief stewards and stewards worked in the station, with the responsibility to greet every woman from the provinces and hand them to marshals who took them outside the station. There were 500 recruiting sergeants who were tasked with getting names and addresses of those who wished to join the society. Stewards had to wear rosettes in the colours and provided a point of contact for many women. With such a large army it was also important

[401] 'General' Flora Drummond, an organiser and senior figure in the WSPU was a horse woman, and rode at the head of processions with an officer's cap and epaulettes. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini, eds., *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000) 112
[402] *Votes for Women,* 28 May 1908, 195.
[403] *Votes for Women,* 14 May 1908 164
[404] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 59.
[405] *Votes for Women* 14 May 1908

that between 2000 and 3000 standard bearers were identified and checked and given their place in the procession.[406]

Headquarters asked the societies that 500 banners be made. The makers would be supplied with material including poles and carrying straps, with everything complete except for the lettering for which they were allowed 8s 6d. Uniformity was always important to the WSPU and the poles had to be six feet in height. Individual societies designed and constructed their own banners and could include a short motto.[407] Women from Cardiff, Gloucester, and banner bearers were reported in *Votes for Women* as being good humoured, wearing the colours. *Votes for Women* reported that Miss Beard and Miss Florence, organisers from the Torquay society, had a standard presented and worked by the Paignton society. It read 'Torquay and Paignton' showing male and female figures in classic dress and balance scales representing justice and by the side it stated 'justice and equality' [408] Regional banners were important to societies as they showed pride in their role and their part in the Union. They were an essential part of the spectacle but also displayed their argument and informed the onlookers of why the women were on the street and why they gathered together.

This was an event without precedent. At three o clock a bugle on the 'conning tower' n Hyde Park, signalled the beginning of speeches. The parading women followed the suggestion in *Votes for Women* and wore white dresses with their purple, white and green votes for women sashes.[409] They were a novel sight, and took their courage from the many onlookers and rose to the occasion. The wearing of white was symbolic of the purity that was encouraged by the leadership of that the procession. This was encouraged at later marches. At five pm a bugle call signalled and the resolution was put forward simultaneously from every platform calling for the government to give women the vote. The procession promoting votes for women was deemed to be a great success, daringly conceived, splendidly stage-managed and successfully carried out. The July edition of *Votes for Women* reported that there were many happy faces, good humoured crowds, and most of the demonstrators were wearing the colours.[410]

---

[406] *Votes for Women,* 28 May 1908, 196.
[407] The WSPU Ilford banner in green, silver, white and green had the motto: *Votes for Women, WSPU Ilford Votes for Women, thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just*. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 260.
[408] *Votes for Women,* 21 June 1908, 268-9.
[409] *Votes for Women,* 18 June 1908, 270.
[410] *Votes for Women,* 2 July 1908, 277.

NUWSS and WSPU – Coronation Procession – 17th June 1911

Clarity was important and both societies used the terminology recognisable to both suffragists and suffragettes to achieve another well-ordered procession in 1911. The objective of this pageant was to question women's exclusion from the Coronation procession of George V and the values on which it was based.[411] In March 1911 Mabel Tuke wrote to the NUWSS inviting their cooperation for a great procession marching through the streets of London on June 17 1911. The WSPU would organise the procession and invited all suffrage societies to swell the ranks, bring variety and beauty by introducing different schemes of decoration. This proposal split the NUWSS and the executive was initially divided, but by April the two dissenters decided to cooperate. The executive minutes of June 1911 show that the NUWSS recognised the need to show their strength and make their presence felt.[412] This section will use the minutes and correspondence from the executive of the NUWSS to show the ways the society participated and were involved in the march. Ray Strachey and Edith Palliser were the main contact points with the WSPU. The NUWSS procession had its own secretary, Geraldine Cooke, who gave very clear instructions for marshals and captains.

This joint procession was the most spectacular, most triumphant, harmonious, and representative of the demonstrations in the suffrage campaigns. This march was the culmination of months of preparation. It was planned for forty thousand women from at least twenty-eight suffrage organisations, marching five abreast, a gala procession with floats, music and historical costumes that was seven miles long. Together the WSPU and the NUWSS produced a pageant that rivalled the official Coronation procession.[413]

On the morning of the demonstration Millicent Fawcett published a lengthy account of the preparations for the day and the plan of the march was published in the *Common Cause*. It was made clear to the marchers what good behaviour was expected. Of the two groups instructions from the WSPU were much more controlling and gave a sense of authority in the directions. Women were reminded that they were not there to gaze or stare into the distance, they must focus and concentrate on the march and the cause. Participants were told to wear white, were warned not to trail gowns and asked to keep eyes looking forward like a soldier in the ranks. This built on the normal practice of how the rank and file of the

[411] King George V's coronation took place on 6 May 1910.
[412] Women's Library, Box 2LSW/D and Box FL 297/5.
[413] The design, symbols, planning, structures of the procession followed the preceding WSPU mega demonstrations in London. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 122.

army were charged with dress codes. The NUWSS contrasted this strict army interpretation, and encouraged their participants to wear white and to 'focus on their womanliness'. They were reminded they were taking an active part not simply being a spectacle.[414]

Cooke's role in the NUWSS was like that of secretaries in most societies at that time, typing instructions to societies and as part of her role she forwarded instructions regarding the special trains planned for the event. The NUWSS's use of special and excursion trains was separate from those planned by the WSPU who sent out their own instructions to marshals. The NUWSS gave instructions that headquarters had sole responsibility for appointing marshals who conducted women to their point of assembly. The marshals were tasked with assuring that women walked on the left-hand side of the road and wore their badge on their left arm. This was a critical point of identifying them as part of the NUWSS. Each marshal should have a list of banners that would be retained at headquarters with messenger boys taking them to the right place and giving instructions for banners and poles. This would mean that delegates could go straight to their section and banners would arrive by 2.00 pm. Also, Cooke gave clear instructions to the marshals for the fitting of poles and slings. The last instructions for federal marshals was to put the societies in alphabetical order. Large organisations used every opportunity to raise public awareness and as postcard collection was at its height during this period Cooke set up deals with a company offering to take photos of the march and turn them into postcards.[415]

As part of the important planning of getting societies to London, Cooke as secretary was tasked with contacting local societies to ask if they wanted to cooperate in the use of special trains. She gave clear instructions to each society. It must produce its own banner and they should appoint stewards responsible for each contingent. She asked for the approximate number attending as soon as possible. She was also concerned with and contacted societies to find if the provinces needed help with expenses. All correspondence was identical and informed societies that handbills would come from headquarters. Evidence shows that the orders were often as large as 5,000.[416]

The WSPU who were planning the event retained control of the numbers of the WSPU who would attend and left other societies to get their membership to the event. Male-managed organisations are watchful of their competition and are continuously aware of their rivals' activities. Although this was a joint activity, it was the WSPU who were regulating events,

[414] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 121.
[415] Women's Library, Box 2LSW/D, Box FL 297/5.
[416] Women's Library, Box 2LSW/D, Box FL 297/5.

and they were vigilant of the activities of other societies. By doing so they retained control. The WSPU like many male-managed enterprises skilfully controlled the end product. Other suffrage societies were there by invitation and it was important their activities could be observed.

At the end of the procession both suffragists and suffragettes met for a large rally in the Albert Hall. Emmeline Pankhurst proclaimed:

> We have proved we can combine, we have proved we can put aside all personal beliefs and all personal objects for a common end, we have proved that we have great powers of organisation; we have proved that women have great artistic capacity.[417]

The procession used a wide variety of methods to display the many skills women brought to the march. This included massive floats that used flags, symbolism with spears, flower garlands, women wearing historical costumes, and a pageant of the empire displaying the flags of every nation. The theatricality was miles of pageantry including national costumes and music from different nations.

Pilgrimage June and July 1913

The Pilgrimage of 1913 was a new undertaking for the NUWSS. The objective was to provide striking evidence of the growth of law-abiding men and women across the country who demanded enfranchisement. It was part of the wider tradition of social protest movements where the participants took their protest nationwide and into towns and villages. The NUWSS used the custom and practice of attracting the attention of people in their local areas, copying the marches such as those carried out by the chartists, trade union movement and the hunger marches of 1905. Often these marches involved groups of men and women walking from areas with high unemployment, to London where they would protest outside parliament. Sometimes they would march instead to the offices of regional authorities in cities closer to home. Protesters would try to make the point that lack of work meant they were unable to buy sufficient food to avoid hunger for themselves and their families.

The NUWSS newspaper published detailed accounts of its 'pilgrims' progress every week and the correspondents were quick to draw a suffrage lesson from the social, geographic

[417] *Votes for Women,* 23 June 1911.

and historical diversity of the routes.[418] The pilgrimage was conceived as a way of reaching many more women by travelling through all areas of England and Wales. The NUWSS were aware that mega demonstrations such as the Coronation procession two years earlier may have exhausted public attention. The proposal for the women's pilgrimage was put to the NUWSS executive in April 1913. The campaign would start with marches from seventeen large cities (one from each federation) and there would be eight main routes across the country.[419] The pilgrimage was an appeal to reason rather than spectacle. The aim was to provide evidence that men and women throughout the country had insistently demanded the franchising of women without delay. It was also an opportunity to raise funds to increase the efficiency of the work of the NUWSS. It was important that the women invoked became part of a giant advertisement. The Pilgrimage was distinct because it would contact people in towns and villages all over the country and not just those who travelled to London for the large demonstrations. It was a chance to make their voice heard by those who had not listened before and to make their voice heard.[420] A further aim was to get recognition for the NUWSS as a non-violent society unlike the reputation of the WSPU for violence and the pilgrimage was intended as an act of devotion to the cause.

The first pilgrims began their journey on 18 June, often with bands and banners. Most women travelled on foot although some rode horses or bicycles. The NUWSS held innumerable meetings, gathered petitions, and sold the *Common Cause* and other literature and accessories.[421] The women found accommodation from fellow suffragist and in small hostels or boarding houses along the route, at their own expense.

The NUWSS pilgrimage took place during July 1913 and provided a new form of planning. It was less flamboyant and its objective was to draw attention to the difference between the two societies. The NUWSS realised that it was important to secure large numbers and that meant that the participants needed to be easily identifiable. Another important objective was to draw attention of the society to local populations and get women involved. In order to make the Pilgrims identifiable, a uniform was devised which was significantly different to the WSPU. Hats were to be decorated with a raffia cockade in red, white and green. Instruction was given to societies that no militant colours should be displayed. All participants should wear a special hat badge and have a uniform haversack, both supplied by headquarters at cost price. Swan and Edgar a large department store who sold a very wide range of goods

[418] Some areas were noted for traditions of suffrage or trade union activities, or for the exploitation of women in local industries, or for the fame of some women aristocrats. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 127.
[419] The eight routes were; Great North Road, Watling Street, the Portsmouth Road, Brighton Road, West Country, the Fen Country and the Kentish Pilgrims Way. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 141.
[420] *The Common Cause*, 13 June 1913.

and fashion items. They were very quick to advertise clothes especially 'for the Pilgrimage. Serviceable Attire at Moderate Prices. Hats Trimmed NU Colours (6/11d). Tailormade Walking Skirt (21/9d)' were just two items in advertisement by Swan and Edgar.[422]

Pilgrims could purchase a song printed on cards available at four a penny. This information was sent to all societies, federations, secretaries and organisers. Postcards were issued with the collector's name and address and explaining who contributed to the pilgrimage. Women were to follow a planned route; most women would join the pilgrimage for a few days at a time. The structure of this campaign was entirely different because large numbers of women would be involved but not all at the same time or in the same place. It would give the NUWSS ample opportunity for holding meetings, collecting funds and distributing leaflets. Women had the opportunity to speak to smaller groups and on a more intimate basis. The NUWSS wanted to be recognised as the constitutional wing of the movement and command greater support than the WSPU. They wanted to get across the message that the great majority of women who supported the cause for the vote did not want violence.

The suffragists expected hostility, ridicule and abuse but not enough to detract from the conclusion that the Pilgrimage was generally a success.[423] The NUWSS reached new constituencies not through the use of the popular press but by walking across the country, speaking to people in towns and villages and any open spaces available to them. They held hundreds of meetings, distributed half a million leaflets and tens of thousands came to listen and watch.[424]

It was peaceful and the spectacle of banners that were present in previous marches was lacking but it was noisy. The four processions marched through the park entrances to Hyde Park Corner and broke into open ground. Although short on pomp and circumstance they used the sound of drums to wind their way through 50,000 spectators to listen to as many as ninety speakers.[425] Millicent Fawcett moved a resolution that the three objectives of the Pilgrimage had been achieved and had provided an opportunity for a great mass of suffragists to dedicate themselves to serving their cause. The Pilgrimage had demonstrated the power of the constitutional movement by visiting people in their own streets and homes.

[422] Box 2LSW/D/2/1 291 – Pilgrimage from Cornwall to London Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 142.
[423] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 144.
[424] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 145.
[425] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 19.

Millicent Fawcett in her speech was echoing the success of the Chartists movement who raised awareness in villages and towns of the need for franchise, by visiting people in their own streets and homes.

Conclusion

The link between gender and power clarifies that the success of demonstrations was for both societies based on their ability to take male ideas, improve, and set up blueprints for future marches. They successfully copied, interpreted and improved on previous protests. The large demonstrations carried out by both the NUWSS and the WSPU relied heavily on an array of pennants, banners, garlands and badges. Banners served as a rallying point for a march and women were formed around pre-determined points so that the march could proceed smoothly and quickly. For the onlookers it provided a gloss and enabled a development of meaning and identity to the groupings of women. Banners emphasised the broad base of suffrage support and the diversity of women's achievements and benefit that the women's vote would bring to society at large. Banners were also portable, decorative and they made good window dressing. They were used to decorate large halls such as the Albert Hall and were almost like regimental colours and could speak for constituencies.

Both the NUWSS and the WSPU borrowed comprehensively from the Trade Union movement, and all their marches and demonstration had a very extensive use of banners. The difference was in size. Both the NUWSS and the WSPU societies could not afford the very expensive banners professionally made for the Trade Union movement. Both societies used the needlework skills of the women membership to produce beautiful but cheaper banners. Trade union members often wore sashes showing the lodge to which they belonged. The WSPU used sashes in purple, green and white that depicted their allegiance to their cause. They also constructed pennants, a much smaller triangular flag. These were easy to make and could by using large numbers of women to make a spectacle. Sylvia Pankhurst was involved in producing both placards and artwork for the WSPU. The NUWSS used suffrage ateliers to produce leaflets, artwork, and posters. Emmeline Pankhurst decreed that the WSPU was an army of women so the society used military terms and regalia to aid their visibility and help to structure and plan events.

The clever use of both the WSPU and NUWSS taking and applying military terms, enabled both societies to manage all aspects of their activities and to provide understanding for all women taking part in different activities. Using these terms when planning was a central function of designing routes and placing societies in exact places on the march. The

NUWSS as the older organisation had gained an understanding of how good planning led to successful outcomes. Also, the Pankhursts' earlier involvement with the labour movement gave the leadership an insight into how to raise awareness of a movement using a variety of methods and used other male organisations as a template.

The first demonstration was the Mud March by the NUWSS. Edwardian women taking to the streets marching through London was a spectacle that astounded both the public and the newspapers. This success led to larger and more spectacular marches, by both societies, involving many more women from all sectors of society and the country. The participants also proved that suffragists and suffragettes were not the skinny harridans they had been depicted in the national press. Most importantly using the business models used by male led organisations they proved their ability to strategise, plan, communicate, raise awareness, use propaganda, market their organisation and their cause. In the years between 1906 and 1914 they made an enormous contribution to social change and the role of women in society.

Both the WSPU and the NUWSS were pressurising the government to award the vote to women and raised awareness through large set pieces in London. These copied and utilised the methods used by the trade union and chartist movements. Each march adopted a different theme. The largest and last planned procession was a joint activity. They used similar methods to raise their visibility and this included recognition of each society through adopting colours. Both used similar recruitment methods and carried their protests to the streets. In Edwardian times women only marches were new, radical and could be regarded as a militant activity. The difference between the two organisations is generally identified by the methods they used to protest. The WSPU were willing to attack property and occasionally use violence towards politicians. The NUWSS protested using less forceful methods.

CHAPTER SIX - HOW THE WEST WAS WON

Introduction

This chapter is presented as a case study identifying how the WSPU speedily created branches throughout the West Country and south Wales. The WSPU came to Bristol in the spring of 1907 and set up in the city as a base for its activities across the region. It will consider how the organisation was able to spread rapidly throughout the region and how the WSPU politicised women in the south west of England. It will include discussion of the role of local campaigners who concentrated on grass roots activism, away from formal parliamentary politics. Local studies can shed new light on the broader suffrage movement. Women in the South West were recruited locally, trained as local organisers and contributed to the speedy growth of the Union. This chapter will establish how women were conscripted into the society, and will consider their involvement in by-elections, local events, large and small demonstrations, and shops.

Previous chapters have addressed the role of gendered use of to explain how the suffrage organisations drew upon male systems of control in their planning and marketing, as well as in recruitment into the society. In the regions it was important to recruit new members and the WSPU utilised some methods carried out by the armed forces. They made use of large posters and handed out leaflets. The methods of recruitment into the Union were set by Emmeline Pankhurst and followed strict guidelines, identified as a partial copy of army conscription. She made it clear that:

> There is a little formality about joining the Union. Any woman could become a member by paying a shilling, but at the same time she was required to sign a declaration of loyal adherence to our policy and a pledge not to work for any political party until the women's vote was won. This is still our inflexible custom.[426]

As an all-female society, the WSPU used networking to get and stay in touch with women. They were willing to use and understand how 'old boys' 'schmoosing enabled them to get in touch with people who had contacts in the region or locality. They also interacted with non-conformist families such as the Brights, Priestman, Blathwayts and the Clarkes.[427]

---

[426] Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 663.

[427] The Bright family had extensive connections throughout the West Country. John and Jacob Bright were MPs and Margaret Bright Lucas was part of an extensive feminist network that included links to women's suffrage movement in the United States. Her sister-in-law Ursula Bright was on the executive of Manchester Women's Suffrage Society. The Priestman-Bright circle founded a number of suffrage societies. Alice Clark was part of the shoe making company in Somerset. Between Alice and her great aunts, the Priestman sisters, there was both love and friendship on which was built a Radical-Liberal current. The Blathwayt family resided in Eagle House, Bath, they had extensive connections with other landowning families in the region and belonged to suffrage organisations. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini, eds., *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000) 30, 167, 57-79

Clement's Inn in London was the centre of operations and where plans were turned into direct action. Significantly, the day-to-day activities of the campaign for women's emancipation were coordinated on the premises. The huge set piece demonstrations like Women's Sunday, the processions of 1910 and 1911 and deputations to the House of Commons were all planned there. These were the major ventures but other activities, including the notice of meetings, were formulated, and propaganda material was written, designed and despatched to rouse women in the suburbs and the regions.

The majority of the histories of the suffrage movement have tended to be London centred. These studies concentrated on the aims of the WSPU and the development of militancy. Recently, attention has increasingly been drawn to the importance of exploring local studies. Examining the suffrage movement at a local level can both modify or challenge existing interpretations.[428] The majority of active campaign work took place in the regions and this work aided the development of women's political identity. This chapter will identify the extent to which local studies can shed new light on the suffrage movement, and highlight the interconnections between organisational methods in the region and at headquarters, by focusing on the South West region.

Why the WSPU came to the West Country

The NUWSS had been active in Bristol and the West Country since the mid-1860s.[429] However, it was overtaken by a new wave of suffrage activity and the city was increasingly targeted by the WSPU because Augustine Birrell was Secretary for Ireland and a local Bristol MP.[430] He has been portrayed as pompous and after the heckling he encountered in Bristol he was recorded as saying that it was regrettable that anyone would seek to interrupt a Minister of the Crown, when he was endeavouring to make a grave statement that he declared to be of public urgency.[431] Birrell had been injured when Emmeline Pankhurst led

[428] June Hannam and Karen Hunt provide an interpretation of the complex composition of many socialist groups and Bristol women's roles are examined in detail. Paula Bartley's work cites the number of provincial branches and she notes that these branches enjoyed considerable autonomy. Krista Cowman provides an exploration of the activities carried out by the Merseyside suffragettes and moves away from a narrative that is concerned with presenting them as political organisations. June Hannam, '"I had not been to London": Women's Suffrage a view from the regions' in *Votes for Women*, eds. June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 226; Karen Hunt, *Socialist Women: Britain 1880s to 1930s* (London: Routledge, 2001); Paula Bartley, *Votes for Women;* Cowman, *Mrs. Brown is a Man and a Brother*. See also Eustance et al., *A Suffrage Reader.*

[429] The first society was formed in Bristol in January 1868 and by 1871 they were carrying out speaking tours in Somerset and Devon. Ellen Malos, *Bristol's Other History* (Bristol: Bristol Broadsides, 1983), 98.

[430] Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes,* 97. He was in office as Secretary of State of Ireland from 1907-1917 and an MP for Bristol North from 1906 to 1913.

[431] Pugh, *The March of the Women.*

an attack breaking the window on a taxi when he was travelling with Asquith.[432] Bristol became a city of significance especially as two of the city's MPs were government ministers, and Birrell was a prominent anti-suffragist. The WSPU had a policy of opposing any government that refused to grant the vote to women. With its radical tradition, Bristol became an important focus for the WSPU national campaign of involvement in general elections.[433] During May 1909 the WSPU were active in Birrell's constituency of Fishponds in Bristol.[434] They secured committee rooms for the campaign against him. The WSPU held many busy and active campaigns across the city. Annie Kenney, the WSPU organiser, was aware of the importance of open-air meetings, providing the Union with the opportunity to draw interest to their cause.[435]

The WSPU came to the provinces and sought to expand its messages and activities, to both educate women and politicise them. The West Country presented a very different setting to cosmopolitan London. It was a large area providing a mix of rural space, industry, tourism, industrial production, fishing, and was a blend of large urban areas such as Bristol, and varied rural landscapes. The South West had a number of large conurbations such as Exeter, Taunton and Plymouth and tourist areas such as Weston-Super-Mare, as well as smaller Cornish seaside towns. There was a large non-conformist heritage in Bristol, Somerset and Cornwall.[436]

In the initial period of the formation of the WSPU in the West Country, the Union worked with the NUWSS. Often women were members of both societies at various times. They made choices according to their understanding of what was taking place in the suffrage movement. Local studies can reveal continuing connections between the suffrage groups, and numerous instances can be found where women were members of more than one group. For example, Lilias Ashworth Hallett of Bath was the daughter of Henry Ashworth, a free trader and Quaker, and a member of the Priestman family. She was at the forefront in suffrage societies from the late 1860s and recorded early speaking tours organised by the Bristol society in 1871 in the West Country. She had a long association with the NUWSS and with the leadership of the Bath Women's Suffrage Society.[437] Lilias Ashworth Hallett was also sympathetic to the WSPU. She wore a 'Votes for Women' badge, maintained her

[432] Melanie Phillips, *The Ascent of Woma*n (London: Abacus, 2003).
[433] Ellen Malos, *Bristol Women in Action: The Right to Vote and the Need to Earn a Living* (Bristol: Bristol's Other History/Bristol Broadsides, 1983).
[434] Fishponds is a small working-class area in East Bristol.
[435] *Votes for Women,* 26 June 1909.
[436] The Bright family were a long-established temperance and non-conformist family with connections in Bristol and Cornwall. In Cornwall the Quaker Fox family were acquainted with members of the Bright family and other Quaker families. Katherine Bradley, *A History of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cornwall 1870-1914* (Cornwall: The Hypatia Trust, 2000), 11.
[437] Malos, *Bristol Women in Action,* 101.

close relationship with the Blathwayt family and attended the first Women's Parliament in London in 1907.[438] There is no evidence that she joined the WSPU.

Women's allegiances to a particular group were not fixed and they often joined both suffrage societies or moved between organisations as political strategies changed. Friendship ties and local activity were part of the pattern of choices women made. Allegiances to national societies and friendships between women often made it difficult for them to leave their local group. Although the WSPU came to Bristol to oppose the Liberal MPs and the growth of local suffrage was important, it is important to stress that the choices made by women were complex, changed over time and they were affected by the socio-economic structure of the West Country and Bristol in particular. Many also took a great deal of pleasure in the opportunity to engage in women-centred politics and challenge existing political traditions.

Members of the different suffrage groups attended each other's public meetings and there were occasions when they met socially. June Hannam has argued that Lilias Ashworth Hallett and Agnes Beddoe sympathised with the WSPU and gave the society financial support, although they were associated with the NUWSS. Lilias Ashworth Hallett was a founding member of the NUWSS and was a well-known speaker for the society. Hallett attended a welcome breakfast for released prisoners in 1908 and chaired meetings at Eagle House, Batheaston in May 1908.[439] As Lucienne Boyce has established, there were other local women with a long tradition of involvement in the women's suffrage movement, who gave support to Annie Kenney when she arrived in Bristol. These included Agnes Beddoe, Clara Codd and Mary Blathwayt who joined the WSPU in July 1906.[440]

The WSPU appointed Annie Kenney as chief organiser of activities in Bristol and the South West. Kenney was a former mill girl who had the experience of setting up the WSPU office in London. She used her previous experience to speak to towns and cities across the region. She worked up meetings among factory women for Emmeline Pankhurst in Oldham, Leeds, and Manchester: 'I found myself …on a temporary platform; addressing the crowds …this was my first public speech'.[441]

Kenney raised awareness and rapidly set up WSPU societies across the West Country.[442] She did not achieve all this alone and she conscripted many able women committed to the

[438] Ed June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton *Votes for Women*, 238.
[439] June Hannam, '"Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work": The Blathwayt Diaries as a Source for Suffrage History' in *Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* ed Claire Eustace, Joan Ryan, Laura Ugoline.
[440] Boyce, *The Bristol Suffragettes,*19.
[441] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 30.
[442] From 1907 to 1911 the WSPU had a presence in Exeter, Plymouth and Newton Abbott. Cheltenham and Gloucester were the first in 1907 and by 1909 they had societies in Weston Super Mare, Torquay, Falmouth and

cause, who empowered Kenney to go into areas not previously considered. Local WSPU activity was not restricted to large demonstrations but were often focused around very localised meetings using knowledge of the area. Importantly, the WSPU had a perfect communication vehicle that enabled them to reach countless women throughout the region: *Votes for Women*, a weekly newspaper at an affordable price that could be exchanged between women and would inform, recruit and encourage suffragette activity in their area.[443] The newspaper carried an increasingly strategic role and fed into a growing desire for knowledge. The publication sought to understand what women were striving for and the paper provided the means by which the leaders could convey their ideas to the public.[444]

Votes for Women was an important source of news for its readership and through this the WSPU informed their readers of current events and information. They could rely on their own printing press, giving them some independence. The structure of the newspaper furnished readers with vital information that could seem to be rather every day, such as where to buy WSPU rosettes and ribbons. It included where and how to purchase tickets for different events, provided advice on what a suffragette should wear to important events, constantly stressing the need for uniformity. *Votes for Women* published a week by week, region by region list of itemised events, with dates and times clearly identified. The newspaper tried to reach (and educate) readerships and to supply basic political literacy. Because of its week-by-week detailed approach to its regional activities, events, by-elections, and leadership activities it is possible to identify key women in the South West, cataloguing their activities, where they spread the cause and how they opened up new societies.[445]

The following table is one example of the programme of events, published weekly in *Votes for Women* and is evidence that planning for future events and informing the readership was an important function of Annie Kenney's work. Each programme of events was published well in advance and identifies the dates and places of visits, and the suffragettes involved as speakers.[446] The following table is an excellent example of the planning that was published in *Votes for Women*. The detail shows how busy the suffragettes; especially Annie Kenney were, and on some days, individuals were at more than one venue, at a distance of at least

---

Penzance. The latest additions in 1911 were Devises and Trowbridge. *Votes or Women*. published between 1907 and 1911.

[443] The first issue of *Votes for Women* was published in October 1907 and was a weekly bulletin at the cost of 3d.

[444] Dicenzo, *Feminist Media History*, 56.

[445] *Votes for Women* was initially sold as a monthly supplement, and in October 1909 it sold more than 30,000 copies, gaining a national Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 58.
reputation. The price was lowered from 3d to 1d and it was then published weekly. Editorial staff were increased, and extracts frequently appeared in the national press.

[446] *Votes for Women,* 14 July 1908.

four miles apart in a short space of time. In Edwardian Britain Sunday was a day of rest and that included no suffrage activity.

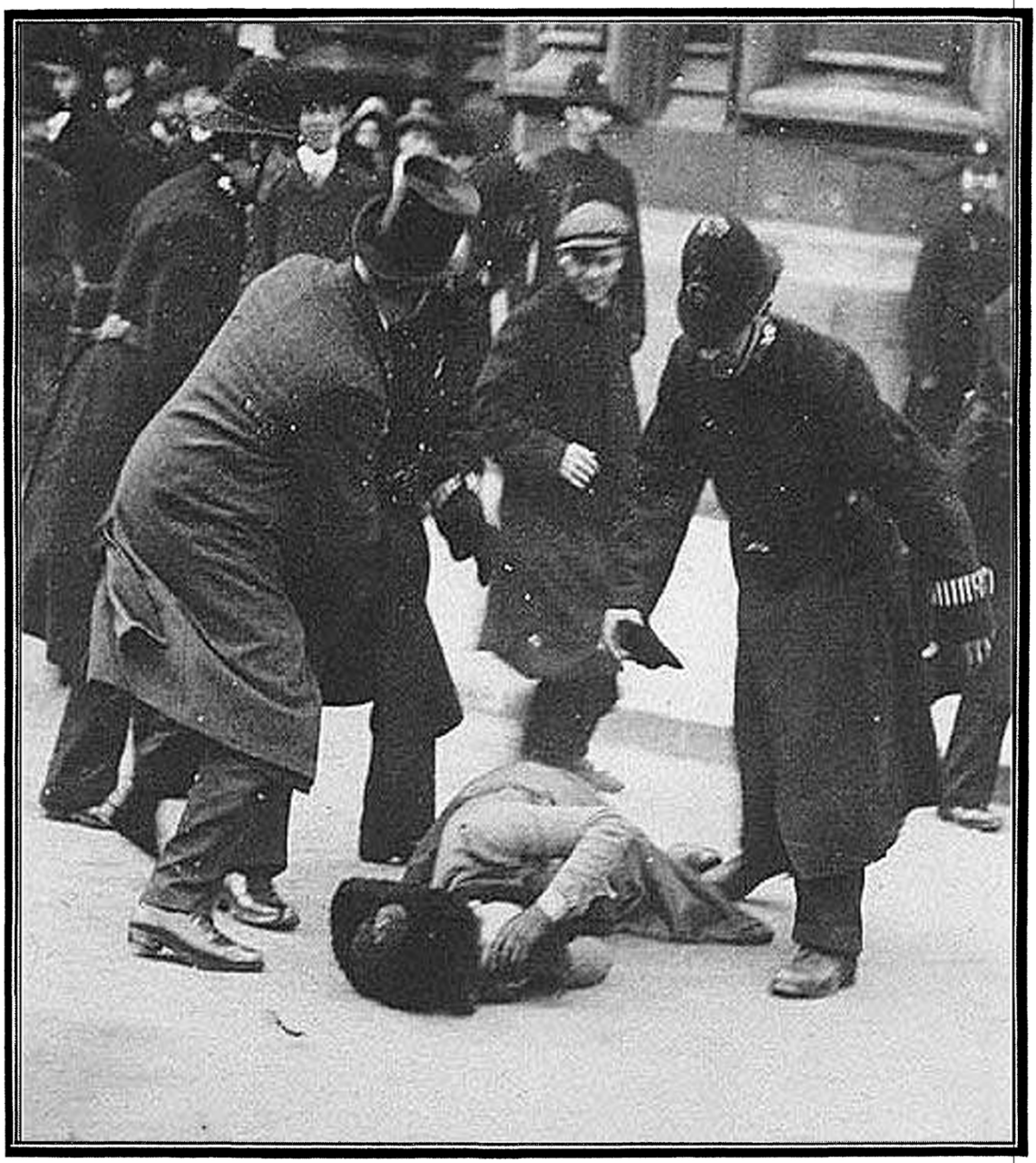
Dates (20 August – 5 September 1908)	**Times and Places across Bristol**	**Suffragettes attending**
Thursday 13 August	7.30 The Downs	Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson, Millicent Brown, Clara Codd, Miss Higgins
Friday 14 August	7.30 Broad Quay	Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson, Clara Codd, Millicent Brown, Miss Higgins
Friday 14 August	8.00-9.30	Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson, Clara Codd
Saturday 15 August	Eagle House, Batheaston, garden party	Annie Kenney, Dorothy Pethick, Mary Blathwayt Adela Pankhurst
Monday 17 August	4-6.30 'At Home' Hannah Moore Centre	Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson, Clara Codd, Millicent Brown, Miss Higgins
Tuesday 18 August	12.30-1.30 Factory Gates	Annie Kenney, Dorothy Pethick
Wednesday 19 August	7.30 St Georges Park 3.30 Blackboy Hill	Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson
Thursday 20 August	7.30 Blackboy Hill	Annie Kenney, Dorothy Pethick, Clara Codd
Friday 21 August	2.30 Broad Quay 7.30 'At Home' Hannah Moore Centre	Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson, Clara Codd Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson
Saturday 22 August	3.30-7.30 Weston Super Mare sands	Annie Kenney, Dorothy Pethic, Millicent Brown
Monday 24 August	4.00-6.30 'At Home' Hannah Moore Centre	Annie Kenney, Lilian Williamson, Clara Codd
Tuesday 25 August	12.30-1.30 Factory Gates	Annie Kenney, Mary Blathwayt
Wednesday 26 August	7.30 Eastville Park	Annie Kenney, Mary Blathwayt
Thursday 27 August	Blackboy Hill	Annie Kenney, Dorothy Pethick, Clara Codd
Friday 28 August	8.00-9.30 'At Home' Hannah Moore Centre 7.30 Broad Quay	Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson
Saturday 29 September	7.30 Yatton	Annie Kenney, Lillian Williamson, Clara Codd, Mary Blathwayt

The Daily Mirror

THE MORNING JOURNAL WITH THE SECOND LARGEST NET SALE

No. 2,205. Registered at the G. P. O. as a Newspaper. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1910 One Halfpenny.

VIOLENT SCENES AT WESTMINSTER, WHERE MANY SUFFRAGETTES WERE ARRESTED WHILE TRYING TO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.



While forcibly endeavouring yesterday to enter the Houses of Parliament, great numbers of suffragettes used more frantic methods than ever before. Above is illustrated one of yesterday's incidents. A woman has fallen down while struggling, and she is in a fainting condition. The photograph shows how far women will go for the vote.

In November 1910 Suffragettes attempted to enter The House of Commons and were met with violence by the police and the *Daily Mirro*r depicted the scene. *Daily Mirro*r 15 November 1910.

The newspaper sought to intervene in the wider discussion of the cause. Its style of presentation relied heavily on shocking headlines and photographs. The WSPU saw the paper as offering an accurate account of their activities, helping to amplify the failure of the mainstream press. As Maria DiCenzo notes the importance of suffrage newspapers has often been taken for granted or overlooked by suffrage historians.[447] Their value as a source of the culture of the organisation, the people involved, regional activities, financial returns and the detail of what was happening behind the scenes, is an important part of the story of the WSPU.

Votes for Women as an aid to interpreting the formation of the WSPU in the West Country is a valuable source and becomes even more important because it gives an insight into the movement and the culture of the WSPU. It was also an excellent propaganda tool. Its bold forceful style attracted women and for those women who were considering joining the union it was a vital source of information. It was distributed through newsagents such as WH Smith and this made the newspaper readily available and placed it alongside the mainstream press it sought to challenge. But as a source of evidence for historians *Votes for Women* also produces a number of problems. Its primary aim was to force the government to legislate for women's suffrage and this produced a distinct propaganda that carries with it negative associations of manipulations and untruthfulness. The WSPU was the first twentieth century suffrage society to publish its own newspaper and this may be why the newspaper copied the practice of the male-driven sensational popular press.

Annie Kenney comes to the West Country

The role of Annie Kenney as chief organiser for the West Country has largely been ignored and she herself made little note of her time in Bristol.[448] Although in her memoir, she does recount a very busy time when she first arrived in Bristol in 1907:

> The life of a WSPU organiser was one of constant hard work … I was expected to hold meetings quite alone to canvass and to hold small 'at homes'. I had to raise the money, book the halls, draw up and distribute handbills, cut the bread, make the tea and pray that a few people could turn up. When all was ready I opened the doors and waited for the audience, whether it consisted of one or many. I had to deliver the speech, make appeals for members, take names of sympathisers and finally take up a collection. If I were lucky during those first few days I would get two names. My salary was £2 a week and I had to pay everything out of the £2 – rooms, food, and clothes. Petty cash was given out at a £1 a time … I had to keep an eye on the local press, that no Cabinet Minister's visits should be overlooked. I was supposed to meet him at the

[447] DiCenzo, 'Gutter Politics: Women newsies and suffrage press', *Women's History Review*, 12 .2006.78.
[448] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant,* 123.

> station, follow him to his hotel, break up the meeting and see him off upon his departure'.[449]

This section will illustrate how the WSPU utilised Anne Kenney's management experience. She successfully planned and organised the setting up of Bristol and regional societies and systems. She oversaw the training of women as organisers and speakers, to get the message across about the importance of the enfranchisement of women. Annie Kenney used local knowledge to plan, timetable and publish activities taking place, and relied upon understandings of the political scene and geography of each area. She has been described by her fellow suffragettes and historians, as charismatic, full of enthusiasm, and it has been argued that she quickly won support at all levels of society, gaining the friendship and respect of a large section of the public.[450] Annie Kenney as a working-class leader of the WSPU inspired a group of followers. Many of these were middle-class women from Clifton who had independent means, such as the two James sisters, but she also inspired working class women such as Annie Martin.[451]

Initial activity by the WSPU focused on raising awareness, followed by rapidly setting up WSPU societies across the West Country. Annie had already drawn up a programme of events in and around Bristol for November 1907. As part of her role as chief organiser she submitted a monthly report to headquarters and this first one is full of positive feedback, identifying that she had addressed 800 people in the Horse Fair:

> The signs are that the town (Bristol) is already more favourably disposed to our agitation. Working from Bristol as my headquarters in the next few weeks and I will work in various West of England centres. Outdoor meetings are held every day and evening and 800 people were addressed in the Horse Fair. Everything is going well in the West of England, hitherto untouched is being reached by our movement and Bristol women have responded to every appeal to come together.[452]

Kenney did not achieve all of this alone. The women activists who assisted her illustrate that the very successful campaign drew on support from women both in the Bristol headquarters and devotees in the region. Discussion of the growth of societies across the region will identify a few women activists, their role in the society and where the branches were established. The identification of these women in no way represents all the work carried out at grass roots level in the cities, towns and villages of the South West, but their work, often in the background, was key to the establishment of the WSPU in the regions. Local knowledge enabled activities to be directed towards occasions in neighbouring societies who

---

[449] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 124.
[450] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragette*, 62 and Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work*',* 61.
[451] Hannam, *An Enlarged Sphere of Usefulness.* The making of modern Bristol: *e*d. Madge Dresser and Phillip Ollerenshaw, (Bristol: Redcliffe Press 1996), 63.
[452] *Votes for Women,* November 1907.

often developed their own ways of working. Existing friendships often marked the beginning of women's involvement in suffrage campaigning and informal local networks were an important part of bringing women into the WSPU.

Annie Kenney had the ability to awaken audiences and had impetuously declared to Christabel Pankhurst and Emmeline Pankhurst that for two pounds in her pocket she could 'rouse' London - and they took up her offer. Kenney was helped by Dora Montefiore.[453] Together they held meetings in East London on similar lines to those she held in Lancashire.[454] Her role in Bristol was to launch the WSPU, to drum up support and try to generate enthusiasm for the cause.[455] She was fortunate and as noted in her autobiography had veterans of the suffrage movement, Miss Priestman and Miss Colby, who made her work lighter and gave her encouragement. She was supported by many voluntary workers and was responsible for training speakers.[456] The Bristol society raised £800 in the first year. Antonia Raeburn has argued that speakers were delighted to be sent to the West Country because they welcomed and enjoyed Annie Kenney's personality and leadership.[457]

Annie Kenney and her helpers travelled long distances to raise awareness across the region and had positive reports of their reception and how local women became involved:

> The venues were crowded with sympathetic listeners and she [Kenney] was pleased that Miss Hughes from Paignton organised meetings every Tuesday to discuss and compare notes on what has to be done. It is clear that although Annie is a constant visitor she uses local women to organise and she is cheered that during this visit eleven new members were recruited. Amy Montague took over once they arrived in Exeter and worked up for Annie to speak. The following two weeks, along with Miss Crocker they travelled backwards and forwards between, Cheltenham, Newport, Cardiff and Gloucester.[458]

In May 1908, Annie Kenney, Miss Lamb and Amy Montague (a local organiser and public speaker) visited Exeter and Plymouth dockyard gates and the market square.[459] The WSPU addressed all sectors of society, positively recruited working class women and addressed men at their place of work, pressurising them to consider the need of the vote for women.[460] Annie Kenney returned to Plymouth on a regular basis and was in touch with different groups including teachers, doctors, nurses and shop girls and with her companions gave out

[453] After living some years in France, she came to live in London and became an executive member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) before joining the Women's Social & Political Union (WSPU). Throughout her political life she was an effective speaker, debater and writer of journal articles and pamphlets. Working Class Movement Library. 1.
[454] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 57.
[455] Abrams, *Freedom's Cause,* 52.
[456] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 124.
[457] Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes*, 62.
[458] *Votes for Women,* May 1908.
[459] *Votes for Women,* May and June 1908.
[460] *Votes for Women,* April, May and June 1908.

handbills at dinner hour meetings.[461] The first report of a meeting in Cardiff was in May 1908 and Kenney along with Nelly Crocker and Miss Keegan addressed meetings at different venues and gave eight or nine meetings organised by Miss Logan, who was the Honorary Secretary of the local union. *Votes for Women* reported that they were off to Newport next.[462]

During 1909 Annie was heavily involved with a number of undertakings and besides writing her monthly report she continued to be concerned with the advertising of events, in particular with popularising and extending the use of the colours.[463] The colours were important because the more they were used the more visible the society, and therefore the WSPU were successfully spreading the word.[464] She also trusted her fellow suffragettes to travel across areas such as Weston Super Mare, Glastonbury, Bridgewater and other smaller villages and towns in that area. The WSPU spoke at meetings in these places but they also took responsibility for hiring halls and leaflet printing.[465]

Annie Kenney's report in 1909 says that Bristol as a city was changing its attitude towards the women's movement and that many more men and women were drawn to meetings. Extra meetings on the Downs and dinner hour meetings were reported as getting support from men.[466] She also identified that 'at homes' were still very successful and that her previous plans for meetings should go ahead:

> She is impressed that factory girls who could not afford badges and sashes had cut strips of silk used in the factory and stitched them together and had written Votes for Women on them.[467]

In early September 1907 her report is very positive and she notes that work in the west of England is in full swing. In this edition of *Votes for Women* she asks for more work to be carried out in the region:

> The public are attending very successful 'at homes' and public meetings, and the shop is very successful. The future of the demonstration is dependent on keeping a book of names and addresses of those interested in adding to the body of good works being carried out and wants more 'at homes' garden parties, concerts and she hopes to repeat the splendid meeting held in Clevedon. She asks for more workers, speakers to complement her preparatory work held in different venues throughout the city. She

[461] *Votes for Women,* May 1908.
[462] *Votes for Women*, June 1908.
[463] *Votes for Women,* June 1909.
[464] *Votes for Women,* June 1909.
[465] *Votes for Women,* June 1908.
[466] *Votes for Women*, June 1908.
[467] *Votes for Women,* 8 September 1908.

> reminds the readers that there will be a big meeting at the Colston Hall on November 20th with tickets being sold at 5s, 2s 6d and 6d.[468]

Now most centres were in safe hands and working well, the organisers in these towns and cities could be trusted to work towards the success of the WSPU. It was now important to concentrate on new areas such as Radstock, Dawlish, Saltash, Chipping Sodbury and Glastonbury, all relatively small towns. The West of England *Votes for Women* report for May 1909 notes that shops had opened in Cardiff and in Bedminster opposite the Wills tobacco factory and would be handed over to Mrs Baldock. Both of these shops were located in areas of the city that were predominantly working-class, demonstrating that Annie Kenney's planning and raising awareness was never at a standstill.

Reports in *Votes for Women* discussed a plan to divide Bristol into four constituencies. These were to be divided according to Bristol parliamentary constituencies and a leader for each to be appointed. Each one would take a committee room in the heart of the constituency and be responsible for arranging for constituency meetings, finding open spaces for meetings, with three a day proposed. In addition, each constituency paid its own expenses. Kenney reports that the campaigns in the four divisions continue. This is an example of her keeping a hand on the reins whilst at the same time allowing women to take an active part in the campaign against Bristol Members of Parliament.

Suffragettes quickly became part of West Country life. Clara Codd praised Annie Kenney for the way she dealt with interrupters and stated she never lost her temper or left off good-humouredly smiling.[469] Raeburn has noted how Kenney rallied her workers by saying 'now you men'.[470] Kenney herself recounts incidents that took place during meetings at Clifton Downs, and another in Somerset where in both cases humour was used to deflect or to deflate irate men. In her autobiography Kenney notes that audiences were hard to handle.[471] She taught speakers to never lose their tempers, to always get the best of the joke, even if the audience was against them. Kenney is very proud that their training made members of the WSPU good at repartee and could make the audience laugh.[472] This shows that the WSPU were extremely aware of how women should portray themselves in difficult

---

[468] *Votes for Women,* during October 1908.
[469] Clara Codd was the eldest of ten girls. In 1907 she was asked by Aeta Lamb to become a steward of a meeting being addressed by Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney at a local WSPU event. The following year she became the honorary secretary of the newly formed Bath branch. She was arrested when she entered the House of Commons and was violently escorted away by two policemen. She was taken to Cannon Row Police Station where she found other suffragettes were detained.
[470] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 62.
[471] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 104.
[472] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 62.

situations. The assumption that the 'public' woman was an unsexed harridan ran deep in contemporary thought. Suffragettes were constantly being lampooned, portrayed in cartoons with negative images.[473]

Annie Kenney returned to London in October 1911. Before her departure from the West Country she was constantly breaking new ground, including holding eleven open air meetings in south Cornwall, identifying the women who made the meetings possible, finding new ways of attracting people to the activities of the WSPU and supporting prize giving for women who completed their maiden speeches.[474] Her reports for 1910 and 1911 continue much in the same way and format as previous West of England accounts. One aspect that can be noted is that the reports of arrests in the region were growing and that these women were being gaoled in both Bristol and Exeter prison. Annie Kenney successfully utilised all the publicity for all these women on their release.

In March 1909 Miss Pitman and Miss Allen were released from Bristol Prison and Annie Kenney successfully used this as publicity and propaganda, parading ex-prisoners in a wagonette in prison dress and this was followed by a procession, a band and carriages from Temple Meads to Henleaze. Miss Bland of Henley Grove, Bristol arranged a large garden party for prisoners that was lavishly decorated. Also, whilst organisers were in prison women were named to take over the organising. Mary Phillips, Elsie Howey and Vera Wentworth, all very active in the movement were imprisoned in Exeter for seven days after disruption at a meeting held by Lord Carrington. In August Mrs Dove Willcox was imprisoned for two concurrent sentences of ten days. On this occasion photographers were hired to record the event. In her reports she celebrates successes made through suffragettes' activities particularly that they had reduced Birrell's majority, and that Cornwall voters had turned against liberals.[475]

By March 1910 the reports from the regions were getting smaller and local meetings are no longer listed in detail. This was most likely because local branches were now so well organised that they could use their own ways of informing the local community of their activities. Organisers were now making their own reports and they were well schooled in organisational skills.[476] In the summer *Votes for Women* introduced competitions to increase circulation and Annie Kenney said that the newspaper was the lifeblood of the union.[477]

---

[473] Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women,* 35.
[474] *Votes for Women,* 2 July 1909.
[475] *Votes for Women,* January 1910.
[476] *Votes for Women,* April 1910.
[477] *Votes for Women,* June 1910.

Annie Kenney left a legacy of a strong, well-organised society in the South West of England. She had successfully taken the WSPU to all parts of the region and left behind women whom she had trained, to be well planned, efficient and able to rally other women to the cause. It was her organisational skills, her ability to plan and read what was needed in different parts of the West Country that contributed to her success. She tirelessly informed and recruited women from all classes.

The WSPU and Emily and Mary Blathwayt's role in the West Country

Emily Blathwayt and her daughter Mary of Batheaston left diaries. These diary entries will be used to examine the role played by the Blathwayts in supporting and organising WSPU activities in the south west, with supporting notes from *Votes for Women* and the important analysis provided by June Hannam.[478] Their diaries provide an insight into the role of suffragettes working for the Bristol and Bath Society.[479] Both women left comprehensive diaries but in terms of format and content they are different. Mary writes a page a day in a purpose-made diary. Emily Blathwayt wrote in a notebook; the length of her entries was not restricted and could be short or cover several pages. Emily Blathwayt records what Mary is doing and provided a chronicle of their everyday life. Mary Blathwayt tended to record facts and provides valuable information on the local suffrage movement. She records names and addresses of suffrage campaigners in Bath and Bristol, with details of meetings held, and often discusses the preparations she made beforehand and the reaction of the crowds, or noting when she chaired a meeting. Emily Blathwayt gives more personal information and writes that the crowd actually clapped after her small speech.[480] Both mother and daughter had the same interest in the suffrage campaign. They lived in overlapping worlds and there is an interconnection between the diaries.

Both women were already members of the NUWSS before the arrival of the WSPU. They began to subscribe to suffrage newspapers and carried out propaganda activities amongst their local friends.[481] In 1906 and early 1907 Mary Blathwayt was involved in putting thousands of NUWSS leaflets through letterboxes in Bath and attended meetings in the city. Emily Blathwayt had joined the NUWSS in 1906. Mary Blathwayt joined the WSPU in July

[478] Extract from Emily Blathwayt Dairies in *Wilmott Dobbie a Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset Batheaston,* 13.
[479] A booklet with family details and diary extracts can be found *BM Wilmott Dobbie a Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset,* (Batheaston: Batheaston Society, 1979). The Blathwayt diaries are kept at Dyrham House, Dyrham, near Bath. They are held by the National Trust and June Hannam was given permission to use them.
[480] June Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 55.
[481] Her closest friends were Grace and Ethel Tollemarche, a local family. Mrs. Tollemarche was a widow of a clergyman and they gave support to suffrage speakers and often shared this between the two households. Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 59.

1906.[482] In Emily's diary she records that the first contact that both Emily and Mary Blathwayt had with WSPU activities in Bristol was in November 1907 at the Victoria Rooms in Clifton. Her diary briefly notes that on 8 November she attended the Victoria Rooms accompanied by the house parlour maid Ellen Morgan, Aethel Tollemarche and Miss Johnson. Her diaries show she was an active supporter and Mary's interest in women's franchise extended towards involving a servant and a family friend. At a meeting with Mrs Pethick Lawrence in the chair and speeches by Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney in 1907, her allegiance totally swayed towards the WSPU. Both mother and daughter gave a great deal of time to the movement and after 1907 their home became one of the main centres for suffrage activity in the region.

The following April a big assembly with Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney was held at the Victoria Rooms in Bristol and Emily Blathwayt notes that her daughter was involved in the preparations for the event.[483] At the start of the Bristol meeting Mary Blathwayt took a backseat and used her time to show people to their seats. This meeting was threatened by Bristol medical students, who declared their intention to break up the meeting. In response Miss Lamb hired six professional boxers to keep order.[484] In her diary Emily Blathwayt notes that her daughter's letter shows that she did not speak for more than two minutes but the audience seem to have liked what was said.[485] This reinforces the view that Mary Blathwayt saw herself as a background support worker. The extracts taken from *Votes for Women* identify her as working vigorously for the cause, though because she was not a speaker at events her name is rarely recorded.

Mary Blathwayt's relationship with Annie Kenney was important and it was through her influence she was persuaded to take a more public role in the movement and move to Bristol. Mary Blathwayt lived with Annie Kenney and acted as caterer, cook and housekeeper.[486] Kenney had a charismatic personality and Blathwayt was impressed with her speaking abilities. She was persuaded by her to take a more public role in the Union and put the suffrage struggle as the centre of her life.[487] In April a large meeting was held in the Victoria Rooms and Mary Blathwayt was heavily involved in the preparations and spent her time at the headquarters in Bristol; her diary shows her devotion to Kenney. She washed her hair, mended her clothes and literally fetched and carried for her. Emily

[482] Extract from Emily Blathwayt Dairies in *Wilmott Dobbie a Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset Batheaston,* 13.
[483] EB Diary, 3 April 1907.
[484] EB Diary, 16 April 1907.
[485] June Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 55.
[486] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 62.
[487] Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 60.

Blathwayt notes that following the recognition of her organising skills, her daughter Mary became a general factotum and Annie Kenney had recognised her value. Kenney wrote from Crediton in Devon, on 7 May to ask Mary Blathwayt to go to Exeter the next day and then go to Shropshire for the by-election.[488] The programme of events in Exeter included a meeting with speakers Annie Kenney, Miss Lamb and Miss Montague.

After her appointment as West of England organiser, Annie Kenney spoke all over the West Country and was accompanied by Mary Blathwayt in Devon and south Wales. On the 13 May, Blathwayt helps Kenney make further plans for the west of England campaign. She compiled a list of towns and dates and these were sent to Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Pethick Lawrence.[489] Kenney relied on Blathwayt's knowledge of the West Country as her own knowledge of the towns and cities was limited, since she was originally from Lancashire. Blathwayt's organising role shows that whilst she was in different towns she spent her time selling tickets, chalking pavements and advertising meetings.[490]

June and July 1908 were very encouraging times for Mary Blathwayt and the WSPU, with meetings across south Devon that were always crowded with sympathetic listeners. The WSPU held their monster demonstration, Women's Sunday on 21 June,[491] and Mary Blathwayt carried the Bath banner.[492] In August of that year Blathwayt was busy planning and attending lively meetings in Bath and Clara Codd who had recently been released from prison was the principal speaker.[493] Blathwayt organised numerous garden parties in the grounds at Eagle House to raise money and recruit new members. A garden party on Saturday 15 July was recorded as a glorious day where 230 attended including Adela Pankhurst and Dorothy Pethick. The garden party was also attended by interested women from, Bath, Bristol, Box, Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Freshford, Bathford and Bathampton.[494]

The WSPU was never still, carrying the message to as many people in Bristol as possible. To this end the Union carried a large number of demonstrations using Durdham Downs, an

[488] *Votes for Women,* May 1907.
[489] EB Diary, 13 May 1907.
[490] EB Diary, 23 May 1907.
[491] The June edition of *Votes for Women* outlines the instructions for the West of England contingent (F) and clearly outlines where the contingent should go, who the Chief and Group Marshals were and which section number different societies would be. For example, section one had a four in hand coach, a band, mounted police and would be Weston Super Mare, Bristol, Bath and Reading.
[492] EB Diary, 29 May and 21 June 1908.
[493] EB Diary, August 1908.
[494] A report headed West of England Campaign of the 20 August written by Annie Kenney for submission to Headquarters informs them of events taking place. She gives the programme of events for mid to end of July. *Votes for Women*, 3 September 1908.

extensive area of grassland. This provided an opportunity to draw in large crowds. Whilst Annie Kenney was at a by-election she arranged for Mary Blathwayt to be involved in working up and carrying out propaganda for the demonstration on September 19. Mary Blathwayt helped set up a clear programme and it was structured so that many parts of Bristol were kept up to date with WSPU activities and events. *Votes for Women* published the schedule and each meeting could be orchestrated to get the largest audience possible and bring in new members.[495] The programme was also intended to reach women of all classes so the working classes were addressed on a Tuesday, where factories were visited to offer a weekly opportunity to hear from WSPU speakers, while on Wednesday's meetings were held at parks around Bristol, so the Union could reach many sectors of society. Every Thursday on the Downs was another opportunity to draw in large crowds. Mary Blathwayt was given a leadership role and organised the literature sellers, giving instructions for a demonstration a month later. She was involved in advertising the event one week before. This was a very important role and Blathwayt was involved in organising small traps advertising the event, chalking all week, and arranging dinner hour meetings. Annie Kenney was ensuring that everybody in Bristol and Clifton would know what they were about to do.[496]

Mary Blathwayt was delegated to complete an important role at a function in May 1908 in the Colston Hall and was tasked with making a collection from the assembled audience and collected £14.14.3. The WSPU saw the importance of literature distribution as a central function at all events, and Mary's role was to keep the literature secure and to help organise the giving out of parcels to literature sellers.[497] Evidence from her diaries show that she was relied on by Annie Kenney for extensive planning, and Kenney used Mary Blathwayt as her second in command In this role as Kenney's helper, Blathwayt records that she was involved in organising a variety of different events. This included raising petitions, ordering trolleys for speaking platforms, and paying police to attend events at the cost of 2/6d per policeman. She arranged for suffragettes to be accompanied when they went out with sandwich boards to advertise coming events.[498] Blathwayt sold the newspaper whenever the opportunity arose. In addition to these many responsibilities, she also looked after the WSPU shop at 12 Walcot Street, Bath. Mary Blathwayt records that she was involved in organising a variety of different events, and more importantly she trained and recruited women to help her achieve successful events.

---

[495] *Votes for Women,* 3 September 1908.
[496] *Votes for Women,* 23 September 1908, 333.
[497] The role of literature and using it as part of the publicity and propaganda, clarified why votes for women were so important and leaflets enabled them to repeat their message.
[498] EB Diary, 16 April 1907.

Mary Blathwayt was heavily involved in much of the planning of events in the region.[499] Another part of the planning was that at all big events Blathwayt's father took pictures. Photography was very popular and provided a record of events and had value both in terms of the publicity but also important income. Blathwayt's father also donated £10 worth of photos for an exhibition.[500]

Mary Blathwayt was clearly trusted, and stated her intention to carry on the work if Annie Kenney was imprisoned. In 1909 she records that two suffragettes, Vera Wentworth and Mary Phillips, had been arrested, were in Exeter prison and were concerned that Mary Phillips' health is in a dangerous state.[501] After their release they both went to Eagle House to recover. Mary was so incensed by their treatment that she went to 33 doctors to ask them to sign a petition to Asquith that no force-feeding should take place, but nobody signed. The activities outlined by Emily Blathwayt, her mother, and in *Votes for Women* demonstrate that her skills were both much needed and were used to aid the growth of the society. Mary Blathwayt had both a visible presence taking part in many activities and she herself recounts going out chalking and wearing sandwich boards to advertise a Colston Hall meeting.

Emily Blathwayt's diary extracts of WSPU activities end in September 1909, and this coincides with when she left the WSPU.[502] From 1909 the characteristics of the campaigns had often resorted to violent direct action. This aspect of the WSPU's campaigning had become a major source of discord within the movement from 1909 onwards. Emily Blathwayt records that many of their friends and acquaintances including Lilias Ashworth could no longer support the kind of militancy that involved wholesale destruction of property, though her friends Aethal and Grace Tollemache never wavered from their commitment to the WSPU. Emily Blathwayt remained friendly with Grace and Aethal Tollemache and met with them, taking photographs of her friends as they carried out suffrage work and turned these into postcards to be sold to make money for the WSPU.[503] Emily Blathwayt noted that militancy had been effective in helping to bring suffrage into the limelight in spite of the fact

[499] EB Diary May 1909.
[500] EB Diary June 1908.
[501] Emily Blathwayt, *Blathwayt: Diaries in Willmott Dobbie A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset, Batheaston.*
[502] The extracts of Emily's diary finish when she left the Union. Examining Mary's activities up to June 1913 when she formally left the *WSPU w*ill provide further information.
[503] Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 57.

she had resigned from the WSPU.[504] All the Blathwayts were uncomfortable with the acts of violence against people or property.[505]

After 1912 Mary Blathwayt's suffrage work took up far less of her time but she did not formally resign from the WSPU until June 1913. She continued to be involved and work for the WSPU in Bristol and Bath and helped organise weekly 'at homes'.

The census of 2 April 1911 provided an opportunity for a passive protest. Mary Blathwayt was involved in dodging the census and this appealed to the members of both the NUWSS and the WSPU. All-night ventures were organised across the country so that resisters would be away from home when the count was taken. Mrs Mantel, the organiser for the Bath WSPU, took an empty house in Lansdowne Crescent for some west of England suffrage supporters. Mary Blathwayt recorded the event in her diary and was at the house from 10'oclock at night. She took her nightdress and was given a bed to sleep in whilst other women slept on mattresses. In total there were twenty-nine women who were entertained by Grace Tollemache who played the violin with Aethel Tollemache accompanying her on the piano. They sat up until two and had breakfast at eight.[506]

Emily Blathwayt resigned in September 1909 when two of her friends attacked Asquith, for she could not tolerate personal violence. Her daughter, Mary Blathwayt, formerly resigned from the WSPU in June 1913, as she became increasingly concerned about the attacks on property.[507] Despite resigning, Emily Blathwayt remained supportive to her friends such as Annie Kenney and Mrs Pankhurst and was often scathing about NUWSS timidity.[508] She answered criticisms of militancy that the activity would put the cause back but if the respectable party did not act then they had to.[509] The reaction of the Blathwayts to changing tactics and forms of militancy was shared by many others in the WSPU. In the year 1912-1913 new memberships had declined by 34 per cent and in 1913-1914 this had increased to 42 percent. There is a suggestion of diminishing popular support as receipts from meetings and collections were also falling.[510]

---

[504] Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 58.
[505] Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 58.
[506] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, 62.
[507] Mary records her decision to leave the WSPU but gives no explanation. Emily explained that her motivations were connected to the burning of houses in the neighbourhood, which made her feel ashamed to be connected with the WSPU. She was also concerned about her daughter's image when some women from Bath went to Trowbridge to interrupt a meeting given by a Cabinet Minister disguised as market women. She feared that people seeing the newspaper would think that Mary was one of them.
[508] June Hannam, 'I Had Not Been to London': Women's suffrage – a view from the regions, 162.
[509] Extract from Emily Blathwayt Dairies in *Wilmott Dobbie a Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset Batheaston,* 13.
[510] Harold L Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign* (London and New York: Longman, 1998).

Mary Blathwayt's diaries show a complex rhythm of involvement in the campaign for the vote that changes over time. She took the most active role, her public role in 1908. October 1907 was the most intense period of suffrage activity, when she moved to Bristol to share lodging with Annie Kenney and help her work as a WSPU organiser for the region.[511] Blathwayt carried out extensive propaganda work during this time and was frequently staying up to a week at meetings with other societies. Mary returned to Batheaston in October 1909 and started to concentrate on propaganda work in Bath. She regularly helped to run the suffrage shop and prepare for public meetings to be addressed by the leaders of the WSPU. She remained closely involved with Annie Kenney until 1911 when she returned to London.

Annie Kenney's memoirs do not mention the role played by Mary Blathwayt. Her role in the WSPU is occasionally identified in *Votes for Women*, and her diary entries confirm her activities and show the extent of her work in Bristol.[512] She was very involved in the role of marshal along with other colour bearers and banner captains at large demonstrations in London.[513] It is also possible to trace some of her activities in the West Country and she was an active participant in Torquay, Paignton, Newton Abbott, Teignmouth in Devon, and also Somerset, and south Wales.[514] She frequently stayed for up to a week in other towns.[515] Annie Kenney's memoir fails to do justice to the hard work of supporting activists and only includes a few lines in regard to the hospitality provided by the Blathwayts:

> There is just one I should like to mention, that of the late Colonel Blathwayt of Eagle House. He and Mrs Blathwayt, treated me as though I were one of their own family. All my week-ends I spent under their hospitable roof. They also gave hospitality to the numerous speakers who came to the centre.[516]

Emily Blathwayt and Colonel Lindley started what was known as the Suffragette's Rest at Eagle House in Batheaston, just outside Bath. They gave Annie and other speakers hospitality and she spent her weekends at Eagle House.[517] The house had extensive grounds, and became one of the main centres of suffrage activity in the South West. In the grounds was a summerhouse that suffragettes could stay in to recuperate after hunger

[511] Emily Blathwayt, *Blathwayt: Diaries in Willmott Dobbie A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset, Batheaston.*
[512] An example of her activities in Bristol are recorded in *Votes for Women* and the part she played in the September 1908 demonstration on the downs.
[513] *Votes for Women,* June 1908.
[514] *Votes for Women*, June 1908 is one example.
[515] Her diary notes for this period are identified by June Hannam. Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work'.
[516] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 120.
[517] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*. 120.

striking and they could plant a tree to commemorate their prison sentences. At least 47 trees were reported to have been planted between April 1909 and July 1911.[518]

An understanding of the process by which women became politicised and the meaning of their political activity is important. For some women such as the Blathwayts, this was their first experience of political activity. Mary Blathwayt's introduction to suffrage politics was influenced by her own personal circumstances, including her age (27), circle of friends and family and the local context in which she lived. The political traditions in Bath as well as the personality of local leaders need to be considered. Often women's involvement was developed and built on existing friendships such as a local Bath family, the Tollemaches, who gave support to suffragists. It is also important to consider why the Blathwayts gave their support to the WSPU. The pair underwent a conversion process after they first heard Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney speak at a public meeting in Bristol in November 1907. The relationship between the WSPU and the Blathwayt's is not straightforward and the views expressed in their diaries reveals complex and varied levels of meaning.[519]

The importance of local studies is helping to modify and, in some circumstances, challenge existing interpretations because in the regions this is where the majority of suffrage activity took place. Local activists were crucially providing a focus for feminist political development. It would be reasonable to say that it would be difficult to understand how the WSPU became a mass movement without the enthusiasm and hard work undertaken by women in the regions. Women often initiated new developments at a local level and often developed their own ways of working.

Other local activity in the South West - Clara Codd, Amy Montague and Evelina Hatherfield

Clara Codd became the Honorary Secretary of the WSPU Bath branch. She was a full-time organiser working with Flora Drummond but left the society and joined the Theosophical Society. During her time with the Union she was arrested outside the House of Commons and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. Clara's contribution to the Union has been distorted by the historian Martin Pugh's assertion that there were many intimate and possibly lesbian relationships that were part of life in Eagle House. The women did share a

[518] Hannam, 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 65.
[518] Extract from Emily Blathwayt Dairies in Wilmott Dobbie *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset Batheaston,* 13.
[519] Hannam 'Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work', 65.

bed, but there is no evidence this was ever more than a friendship. Pugh seems to be reading too much into innocent attachments. Pugh states that 'the entries in the diary of a suffragette have revealed that key members of the votes for women's movement led a *promiscuous* lesbian life style'. Pugh also asserts that 'the diaries of supporter Mary Blathwayt, kept from 1908 to 1913, show how complicated sexual liaisons involving the Pankhurst family and others were at the core of the militant organisation – they created rivalries that threaten discord'.[520]

The women in the provinces were very active in the movement, and although Annie Kenney declared that the West of England was untouched and was now being reached by the WSPU, this was not in fact the case as the NUWSS had long been active in the south west region. The Exeter branch of the NUWSS had been active since 1870.[521] Annie Kenney set up the WSPU Exeter branch in 1908. The founding secretary of this branch was Amy Montague who lived in Crediton and held the position until 1913. Born in 1864, she was the daughter of a retired army officer, and married to an army officer. She was the founding secretary of Exeter 'at homes'.[522] Montague was involved in a successful meeting with Mrs Pankhurst in November 1909 and was very active in the Exeter campaign for the coming general election. It was reported that Exeter was part of the awakening of Devonshire and that the exceptionally bright and attractive committee rooms continued to gather enthusiastic crowds and that the women converted men in Exeter, who admired their pluck.[523] Work to raise awareness started in December and Montague was involved in setting up smaller meetings and creating beautifully designed posters.[524] During the Hyde Park demonstration of June 1908, Montague gave an inspiring speech, noting 'there is an absolute need for the enfranchisement of women to help realise the true aims of democracy and do away with sweated labour and other evils'.[525]

In 1908 Montague was active in campaigning at the by-election in Newton Abbot to 'keep the Liberal out', as the Liberal Government were refusing to introduce electoral reform to give women the vote. Later she led a Devon contingent to the national 'Votes for Women' demonstration in Hyde Park in June 1908 where she spoke from the same platform as Christabel Pankhurst. In 1909 Montague was immersed in a number of events in Exeter including demonstrating outside factory gates, open-air meetings and 'at homes'. She

[520] Pugh, *The March of the Women*, 252.
[521] Parker Hume. FIND TIS.
[522] *Votes for Women,* 15-23 November 1909.
[523] *Votes for Women,* 21 January 1909.
[524] *Votes for Women*, 18-20 January 1909.
[525] *Votes for Women,* June 1908, records her role in the Hyde Park demonstration in June 1908 and this was taken from her speech.

continued to speak at meetings and was involved in many events in favour of Votes for Women until the start of the First World War.

Image taken from *Votes for Women,* June 1908.

Across the South West meetings of suffragettes and their supporters both male and female, were often broken up by mobs (mainly male). Women who participated in processions and meetings could be roughly handled, verbally abused and the gathered mob used various methods for drowning out the speaker. On 30 November 1909, the WSPU held the first public meeting in Yeovil. Because of its links to non-conformists such as Helen Bright Clark it was an important Somerset town and was to become prominent in the suffrage movement in the South West.[526] It had been a Liberal seat since 1883.[527] The meeting began peacefully enough in the Town Hall but finished in uproar and near riot. Part of the plan was that the event would be ticket-only and this would deter the rough elements from the meeting that opened at 7.30pm on the Tuesday evening, but for some time a crowd had been

[526] In September the suffragettes were asked to join a procession in Bristol to celebrate the return of prisoners. It was to be as great event with a band and carriages from Temple Meads to Henleaze and Bristol Headquarters were asking if any residents from Yeovil would be welcome. This, along with the numbers waiting to get into the hall, suggests that Yeovil had supporters as well as a hooligan element.
[527] Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Society in Britain and Ireland – A Regional Survey* (London and New York, 2002), 139.

gathering in the High Street outside.[528] When the doors opened there was an 'ugly rush for admission', but the valiant efforts of the two police constables on duty at the entrance to the building managed to keep the crowd at bay, and only ticket holders were admitted.[529] The first speaker at the meeting was the Honourable Evelina Haverfield.[530] As she began to address the audience of over 100 men and women, she had to battle against the roar of the crowd outside the building and the noise of rattles and chanting from a gang of young men at the back of the hall. The local press noted that Haverfield was deeply interested and involved in the suffrage movement in Britain and participated in different suffrage groups.[531]

Battling on despite the din Evelina explained that the movement's aims were modest, all members of the WSPU sought were equal voting rights with men, they expected no privileges and wanted none. Suddenly, the meeting descended into chaos. The mob of men and youths in the High Street rushed the doors, brushing aside the two constables, and poured into the Town Hall. The newspaper report from an 'unknown source' almost implied that it was the suffragettes' fault; if they had not carried out militant activities in other parts of the country then 'these radical hotheads, not hooligans, who only wanted good-tempered fun would not have rushed the meeting'.[532] However, the *Western Gazette* graphically described what happened and had a different interpretation of how these stalwart young radicals actually behaved:

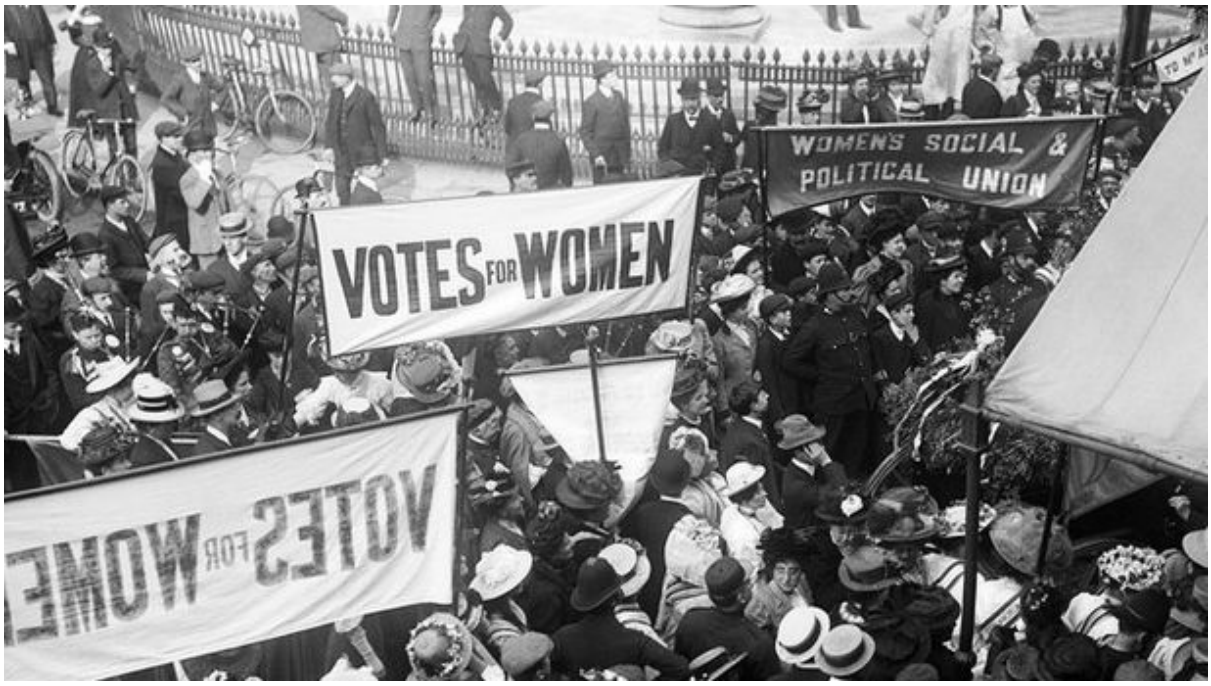
> Like wild animals the people scampered up the staircases and into the hall, which in a few moments became crowded almost to suffocation. The precincts of the Municipal Buildings, too, were also crowded and hundreds of people were unable to get in. The scene which followed almost baffles description, and a remarkable feature was that the coolest of the whole assembly were the Suffragettes themselves.[533]

At the beginning of Evelina Haverfield's fight for women's suffrage she first joined the Sherborne branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), and in 1908, after attending a rally at the Royal Albert Hall, she joined the Women's Social and

---

[528] The need for a ticket only event is evidence that the Yeovil society was prepared for what might be violent behaviour from the audience.
[529] *Western Gazette,* 30 November 1909.
[530] Evelina's birth is recorded as 'Honourable Evelina born on 9 August 1867 at Inverlochy Castle, in Scotland. She was the third child of 5 daughters. At the age of 19, she married Major Henry Wykeham Brooke Tunstall Haverfield, and the couple went to live in Dorset. She began to take an interest in politics and aligned herself with the moderate women's suffrage groups Tijana Radeska, *The Scottish Suffragette and Freedom Fighter*. Vintage News. On Line Publication, 2017, 20.
[531] *Western Gazette,* 30 November 1909.
[532] Hooligan behaviour was commonplace at suffrage meetings but it was not always young working-class men. At a meeting in April 1907 at the Victoria Rooms, Bristol twenty educated medical students declared their intention to break up the meeting. Miss Lamb hired six professional boxers to keep order. *Votes for Women*, 3 April 1907, 15.
[533] *Somerset Live* is an on-line local Somerset news source and carried articles related to the centenary of the Vote. *Somerset Live newspaper – Yeovil.*

Political Union (WSPU), supporting the militant suffragettes. She was frequently noted for taking part in protests for which she was arrested several times. Haverfield was part of the sisterhood of the WSPU and supported the leadership. For example, she was part of the 1909 Bill of Rights March, when Emmeline Pankhurst led the members of the WSPU in their attempt to enter the House of Commons. Police blocked their way, and Haverfield was among the hundred women arrested. In 1910, she was arrested again during a WSPU demonstration, when she hit a policeman in his mouth, about which she apparently stated, 'It was not hard enough, next time I will bring a revolver'. It wasn't the last time she ended up being arrested. The next year, in 1911, Evelina was among the 200 arrested in London following a public protest against the Manhood Suffrage Bill, during which the women damaged government buildings.[534]



WSPU - special events in the West country *Votes for Women* November 1909.

The WSPU organised other gatherings, alongside vigorous and continuous activities and publicity stunts in Bristol and Bath. A widely reported dramatic incident was at Temple Meads station in November 1909 when Winston Churchill had been invited to open the Bristol University Wills Building. Annie Kenney recounts that Churchill was surrounded by a large force of detectives, who had formed a semicircle around him. She says that he paled and stood as if petrified and only raised an arm to protect himself. He was stuck three times with a light-riding switch by Teresa Garnett who said 'Take that in the name of the insulted women of England'. Theresa was charged with assault but this was later withdrawn

[534] Tijana Radeska, *The Scottish Suffragette and Freedom Fighter*. Vintage News. On Line Publication, 2017, 20.

because Churchill was aware he would be subpoenaed as a witness. She was accused of having disturbed the peace and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.[535] Annie Kenney recorded that:

> Miss Theresa Garnett, the woman who had been twice through the hunger-strike and whom the Home Secretary wrongfully accused of biting, resolved to humiliate Churchill, both as a member of the Government which preferred rather to imprison women than to enfranchise them and torture them rather than to extend toward them the ordinary privileges of political prisoner, and on his own account for his slippery and disingenuous statements in regard to the Votes for Women question.[536]

The incident was reported in the *Western Daily Pres*s on the 12 December 1909.

The *Bath Chronicle* on Thursday January 6 1910 carried the headline: 'Mr Asquith and the Cabbage Patch'.[537] *Votes for Women* expanded upon this, noting: 'A Huge Crowd disappointed at absent Suffragettes – Exciting Scenes – Prime Minister Crosses Cabbage Patch and Enters Queens Hall by Back Door – will the Suffragettes use the Subterranean Passage?'[538] These headlines refer to an incident that occurred during Asquith's visit to Bath in 1910 where he was making a pre-election speech. It reported that his entrance to the queens hall was constructed as a secret pathway and that sawdust was put down to deaden Asquith's footsteps. The *Bath Chronicle* concludes that they have never seen such defensive arrangements mounted and offers a wonderful picture of the extensive preparations for sneaking Asquith into the hall, painting a portrait of the Prime Minister, huddled in a fur-lined coat and cap, surrounded by trusty followers; he then slunk into his car which bounded forward without one cry of votes for women. It seems that Asquith was very fearful of what the suffragettes might do and would go to great lengths to avoid a confrontation with them.

As already established, Annie Kenney as chief organiser was involved in awakening the women of the South West. In addition, the WSPU carried out other events in Bristol and the West Country to gain the wider attention of the public, local politicians and the support of local businesses. In 1910 the WSPU organised a spectacular theatrical event.[539] It was a Pageant of Great Women, a play with a cast of hundreds.[540] There were at least two productions for the WSPU in Bristol on November 5 November 1910 and the play was

[535] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*.
[536] Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*.
[537] *Bath Chronicle,* Thursday 6 January 1910.
[538] *Votes for Women,* January 1910.
[539] It was planned as a spectacular event.
[540] The staging of all productions was the responsibility of Edith Craig who was already a performer and designer. Katherine Cockin, 'Cicely Hamilton's Warriors: dramatic reinventions of militancy in the British women's suffrage movement*', Women's History Review*, 14: 3&4, (2005), 527-542.

advertised in *Votes for Women*. Over fifty local women suffrage activists took part in the Princess Theatre production, their names were included in a Souvenir programme produced for a special matinee with the WSPU symbol on the front. The production was attended by the Pethick Lawrence's, and Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney who was responsible for the payment of fees for the production (£46 15s 3d). Annie Kenney wrote to thank Edith Craig who was a member of the Actresses Franchise League, for her work.[541]

The WSPU used every opportunity to communicate their cause and souvenir programmes provided an ideal opportunity to raise money for the event by gaining revenue from local businesses to advertise their products. The Pageant of Great Women contained a large number of advertisements for the WSPU that included *Votes for Women*, informing readers about the shop at 37 Queens Road and that they could buy *Women's Fight for the Vote* written by Frederick Pethick-Lawrence. It is likely that these businesses supported the event and that the WSPU used the same criteria as in *Votes for Wome*n, which only carried advertisements that supported their cause. The programme also included important events in the WSPU calendar in Bristol. Every opportunity was taken to keep their readership informed. The event might be attended by women interested in the theatre, but who had not attended other events held by the WSPU. They used every opportunity to recruit. The information that the WSPU held weekly 'at homes' in the Victoria Rooms, Clifton was also included to raise interest.[542] The adverts give the names of speakers and remind readers that on 10 November a monster meeting was to be held in the Albert Hall at 8.00 pm with Mrs Pankhurst in the chair. Although a London event, raising awareness of the opportunity to hear Emmeline Pankhurst would probably get the faithful to consider attending the event. The audience were invited to a 'votes for women' tea and a biscuit and *Votes for Women* would be on sale during the second interval.

The biggest suffrage-linked excitement, and biggest impact of the suffragettes on the 'Three Towns' of Plymouth, Devonport and East Stonehouse came in 1913, by which time arson and other tactics had become a regular part of the suffragette arsenal. Emmeline Pankhurst planned to return from America for a big WSPU rally in London on 7 December, and when the Home Office learned of this, the Home Secretary issued a General Warrant for her arrest in order to prevent her appearance. Pankhurst records that on her return from New York on the *Majestic* she received a wireless message informing her she was to be arrested on her

[541] Katherine Cockin, 'Cicely Hamilton's Warriors', dramatic reinventions of militancy in the British women's suffrage movement*', Women's History Review*, 14: 3&4, (2005), 527-542.
[542] The Victoria Rooms in Clifton, Bristol, were in a very central position in the city. It is a large venue and could possibly accommodate as many as 600 women.

arrival. The *Majestic* was due to dock in Plymouth on 4 December.[543] Lincoln's Inn announced that a women's bodyguard was being prepared to protect Emmeline Pankhurst.[544] Suffragettes roused awareness using their network of friends and made plans to subvert the plans to arrest their leader. Suffragettes came from all over the country and descended on Plymouth. Even after a stay in America Emmeline Pankhurst's followers were loyal and able through their networks to join together to support her and the cause. At least 5,000 were present by the morning of 4 December, when the White Star's *Majestic* entered territorial waters. The plan was to intervene and prevent Emmeline Pankhurst's arrest by the local Plymouth police. This included 20 women, trained in ju-jitsu tactics, who also carried wooden clubs under their skirts, who dubbed themselves as 'Mrs Pankhurst's bodyguard', and under the leadership of Flora 'General' Drummond, they were unashamedly determined on physical tactics to protect her.[545]

Conclusion

This chapter has been presented as a case study because it provides a comprehensive observation of how the WSPU became a mass movement and the importance of local organisation. This case study provided me with an opportunity to present as insight into how the WSPU constructed and delivered well-planned and carefully implemented campaigns. This evidence reinforces my thesis that the continued portrayal of the WSPU functioning as a militant organisation is not valid. Both the NUWSS and WSPU could be interpreted as women breaking the accepted norms of Edwardian woman's behaviour. They achieved this though the involvement of women in their activities and organisation, and in general the activities were rarely aggressive; they were passionate and intense, and therefore in the early twentieth century were seen as confrontational. Although headquarters made policy decisions, published *Votes for Women*, marketed, designed and constructed mega marches, the WSPU was not totally autocratic and the regions enjoyed some autonomy of decision making – particularly as decisions affected the local area. The use of a case study has enabled me to interpret, underpin, and support my original thesis in regards to the operation of the suffrage societies as women-led political organisations and employers.

[543] Pankhurst, *Unshackled,* 259.
[544] Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst,* 103.
[545] *Devon Live*, is a regional newspaper produced for a Devon readership. The article was one of many celebrating 100 years of Devon women who fought for freedom. Its source was the Devon History Society and was part of a collaboration with the Trinity Mirror and Amnesty. Although Emmeline Pankhurst was not from Devon, the series of articles are celebrating 100 years of suffrage and the leader of the WSPU causing a stir was an historic moment for Devon.

The same analysis could be applied to other regions, and this chapter provides a framework for historians interested expanding research into the region. Local research can identify suffragettes who were at the vanguard of the significant growth of both the NUWSS and WSPU from 1907. Views from the provinces have already been provided by Krista Cowman and June Hannam.[546]

Historians have recognised Bristol's importance to the South West as it was the largest city in the area and Hollis concludes that 'Bristol possessed one of the most impressive women's movements in the country'.[547] Suffragettes in the West Country supported the WSPU's national campaign and attracted major figures such as Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst to make speeches and lobby Government MPs such as the local MP Austin Birrell. The suffragette movement in Bristol was arguably the most significant outside London. Bristol women played a full share in the suffrage campaign and were very active in the local branches.[548]

The WSPU in the South West contributed to changes in values, belief systems, identities and cultural practices across the region. Attempting to reach and educate women proved to be a constant challenge for the movement. The prominence and role of the WSPU newspaper, *Votes or Women,* showed that the Union understood and were aware that women could be reached in a variety of ways. The significant growth in the region across a short span of time identifies how the Union used gendered power to enable momentous recruitment, increasing the involvement of women from all sectors and geographical areas. The importance of local involvement, networking and use of 'old boys' 'setup in the wide-ranging events, including radical pressure and protests against political characters, was a significant factor in its success. Local friendship ties, family links and friendship, all served to show how the WSPU continued to plan, synchronise and enlarge its activities and politicised women in the West of England. Branches were formed and local campaigners enabled the construction and creation of branches. The roles of local activists were important, women who concentrated on grass roots events. The heroine and star of the 'how the west was won' was Annie Kenney. Her ability to manage, set up structures and systems, making important links with significant influential people across the west country, was central to the establishment of the WSPU in the South West.

---

[546] Cowman, 'Crossing the Great Divide, Interorganizational suffrage relationships in Merseyside (1895-1914)' and Hannam, 'I had not been to London, a view from the Regions', 226-225.
[547] P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1987), 213.
[548] Hannam J, ***Enlarged Sphere of Usefulness****": The* ***Bristol*** *Women's Movement, c.1860– 1914 The* ***Making of Modern Bristol****.* p. 342

Conclusion

This study has sought to identify and find alternative ways of examining suffrage history post-1905, with a focus on the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). The years 1905 and 1906 were pivotal for both societies. The NUWSS became a stronger and more united organisation, and the WSPU left Manchester and established the society in London. Both societies grew rapidly and successfully used mega demonstrations to communicate to politicians, newspapers and society the need for women to become citizens. The key intent of this thesis was to address: how did they do it? Previous studies of the suffrage movements have not examined or asked how the NUWSS and WSPU were able to achieve such powerful results.[549] However, this study has thoroughly examined structures, systems and strategies used by the NUWSS and WSPU to accomplish their outcomes.

Historians have focused on events, especially the more sensationalised ones, along with the resulting representation of these events in the newspapers.[550] They have largely neglected the day-to-day running of the organisations, which this thesis has taken as its focus. This research has suggested that a better understanding of their activities is revealed by investigating the procedures of the NUWSS and WSPU. It is insufficient to present *what* took place without regard to *how* they achieved their successes. In doing so, the strategic aims of both societies have been examined.

This thesis has questioned the continued separation of the NUWSS and WSPU into constitutional and militant societies in the majority of work by historians. The concepts of unitarist and pluralist were firstly explored in an attempt to find an alternative focus and understanding of the societies. By applying these terms of reference, this research revealed that there were more similarities than differences between the two societies. This analysis provided an opportunity to use a new theoretical concept of gendered appropriations of techniques and strategies used by men to gain power in identifying how both societies successfully seized market opportunities and raised an awareness of how the lives of women in society could be transformed through their activities.

---

[549] Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*; Pugh, *The March of the Women*.
[550] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy;* Myall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*; Purvis, 'Deeds Not Words'; Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*; Pugh *The March of the Women*; Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography;* Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*; Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914*.

This new and original approach visits the much-neglected study of how two very successful all-women societies transformed many aspects of womens lives. It is important to acknowledge the role of their contribution to social change, as both political organisations and significant employers, through their business ventures and in very successfully raising awareness to all sectors of society. They achieved this by utilising a variety of methods and resources previously used by other successful organisations.

As the analysis progressed I became aware that it is difficult to isolate all of the behaviours the suffrage movements contributed to social change. Their activities and methods of organisation transformed the understanding of women's roles in society, and converted long-standing beliefs and views. In the broadest terms this study has identified numerous actions, events, programmes, occasions, incidents and even confrontations that contributed to wider social change. The contribution of the NUWSS and WSPU can only be an impression and although it is sometimes problematic to extract actual activities, a conclusion can be drawn; they made a massive contribution to social change, especially for women from all classes.

One clear contribution to broader social change can be seen through the clever use of schedules, information processes and communication, showing society that women had skills that led to very successful results. The leadership employed organisers that had clear and developed organisational skills. This enabled both the NUWSS and WSPU to set up systems and structures, and engage other organisations such as the railways to achieve their aims. One significant outcome, part of their exceptional organisational skills, meant that the women attending the marches were in the right place at the right time. Both the NUWSS and the WSPU consistently produced events that always proceeded at the given time, and were well ordered. In addition, they understood the role of pageantry and spectacle, and used different themes to demonstrate how women were marginalised in Edwardian society. They informed both politicians and the general public through the originality of their ideas, and successfully got their message across. In addition, banners, placards, leaflets and posters were produced, often by local regional groups, and these were always consistent with headquarters' guidelines. The WSPU were very astute on more than one level. Their banners although smaller, lighter, and cheaper, were created by using women's skills with needlework. They used ideas from Trade Union banners, and reinterpreted and recreated hangings and pennants to suit the message they were triumphantly getting across. A good example of gendered use of power strategies would determine that the WSPU's use of what became known as 'the colours' as an emblem. This is one of the first practices of branding undertaken on a large scale by a protest group. The

Trade Unions did adopt red, but the purple, white and green of the WSPU was recognisable by all sectors of society. The leadership encouraged women to wear the colours at all times and it was both a uniform, a brand and a leitmotif.

Pluralist and unitarist were used as an analytical device in attempt to find a new diagnostic tool that could be used as an alternative to the use of the term's constitutional – for the NUWSS – and militant for the WSPU. My findings did produce an interesting fit of both organisations into the different categories, yet what also emerged was a very important conclusion; the organisations were very similar, and rather than separating them through events and outcomes it was possible to produce a better understanding by focusing on the similarities in organisation and structure. The similarities that emerged were patterns of development, beliefs and regimes, with comparable rates of pay, training and development. Both the NUWSS and the WSPU understood the significance of the use of colours, dress, uniform, rules and regulations.

A fundamental emphasis of my thesis was a persistent concern that historians continued to focus on the distinction between the NUWSS as a constitutional society, and the WSPU as a militant organisation.[551] My unease stemmed from the understanding that at the beginning of the twentieth century middle class women were expected to be homemakers and working-class women were generally employed in low skilled, low paid work. Women speaking in public and marching through the streets could be viewed as militant. What emerged was a discovery that both groups actively protested, marched, and were involved in by-elections. A definition of militancy proved problematic because it is not distinctly defined in any historical work. This is because as it was a changing pursuit over time. It was only post-1912; a small group of suffragettes were noticeably 'militant' in that they engaged in targeted damage to property. My findings however, did reveal that the militant perspective was credited to Christabel Pankhurst when she explicitly stated that she was undertaking militant activity.[552] However, arguably her first militant act can be regarded as constitutional: she interrupted a government minister during his speech and with Annie Kenney unfurled a banner. Male writers in the 1950s had produced a distorted perspective of suffrage movement with their depiction of suffragettes as screaming sisters.[553] During the 1970s historians only researched and wrote about the WSPU.[554] They were attracted by the idea of Edwardian women as militant. Even by the turn of the twenty-first century, in the year

[551] Pugh, *The March of the Women*.
[552] Pankhurst, *The Story of How We Won the Vote*.
[553] Purvis, 'A Pair of…Infernal Queens', 259-280.
[554] Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty;* Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914*; Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*; Pugh *The March of the Women*.

2000, a male historian was still identifying the Pankhursts as militant, and leading an autocratic society.[555] However, Martin Pugh did acknowledge that what was taking place in the regions was quite different with more cooperation between the societies. Meanwhile, I can only hope that I am one of a few historians who can look past this separation in order to complete a more nuanced analysis into both *how* and *why* women only societies were so successful.

This leads to my ultimate question: how did two women-only societies set up and manage very successful organisations?

The gender balance within the NUWSS and WSPU has never been fully addressed, and yet is an important consideration. My work has tried to address this imbalance. What emerged from my research is that women did not try to invent new-fangled ways of working. This became particularly evident through my investigation into the WSPU setting up shops. Department stores in the West End established tearooms as a respectable place for women to meet. The WSPU appropriated and utilised this technique for their own shops, constructing a place for women to meet, giving them an opportunity to discuss, share ideas and become politicised. This led to my following a new avenue of analysis asking about further relationships between gender and power. I found excellent examples of how the WSPU utilised what I have marches in blocks according to their branches. The suffrage demonstrations followed this by alphabetical termed 'male systems' for the mega marches in London. For example, Trade Union demonstrations usually organised order by cities and towns.

Both societies needed to raise awareness across the nation. Mega demonstrations gave them much needed publicity. In 1913 the NUWSS planned and executed what became known as the Pilgrimage. It was scheduled to take their message to women throughout the nation. The suffragists marched from seven different points across the country visiting towns and cities as they marched from the furthest point, for example Penzance, to finish in Hyde Park, London. This new and ground-breaking activity indicated that the NUWSS needed to raise awareness among women in small towns and cities, in a different way. This facilitated the increased ability to conduct smaller meetings, reach women in their own towns, encourage women to join, and educate them of the reason for pressurising for the vote. In addition, they found it necessary, because of the increased combativeness by the

[555] Pugh, *The March of the Women*.

WSPU, to establish that they were a non-violent society. Women could join the pilgrimage and leave at any time. Very few women completed the whole journey. At the culmination, of all the groups in Hyde Park, they were greeted by large supporting crowds. Millicent Fawcett and many of the leadership mounted and spoke on many platforms. Although it lacked the flamboyancy of the mega demonstrations, it was deemed to be successful. The Pilgrimage raised awareness for women who would not have the opportunity to join in large demonstrations. Local activity and organisation were the lifeblood of the NUWSS.

The WSPU published its own newspaper, *Votes for Women*, providing a vital source of understanding of how the society operated and its evolving culture. Its format was very similar to the national dailies, who produced sensationalist stories. It sold at the affordable price of 1d and published events, and accounts of their own and national newspapers' views. A significant insight into regional events was published weekly. This study used this vital source for researching the regions, with an awareness into its inherent bias. It is a fascinating vision of Edwardian society, with advertisements of fashion items sold by West End stores produced in WSPU colours. The NUWSS did produce a newspaper, though the *Common Cause* was published much later and reflected the approach of the Union. It did not use sensationalism and preferred a reporting style that was closely mirrored the event it was reporting.

The penultimate chapter of this thesis vitally important because only a small amount of research by historians has been undertaken into the establishing the WSPU in the regions. The South West is a large and diverse territory. Annie Kenney was appointed as senior organiser for the region and opened up societies across the South West and South Wales. This study reveals the communication and networking that supported the rapid growth across the region. What a regional study does reveal is the importance of this contribution to the success of the suffrage movement. It was the effective recruitment of women, giving them a political education, involving women in a variety of activities throughout a wide and varied region, contributed to the success of both the NUWSS and the WSPU as important agents of social change.

The investigation uncovers the importance of involving both individuals and influential families. Demonstrations were carried out locally on both a small scale and huge Bristol gatherings. The role of local women at the hustings at by-elections provided support and local knowledge. What is revealed is the autonomy in the different areas and the newly developed societies were often responding to local needs. The diaries of the Blathwayt family, provided an insight into how women joined and left both the NUWSS and the WSPU.

It also reveals that women often belonged to more than one society moving between them according to the situation locally. Friendship links provided a sisterhood amongst the membership, offered support and guidance.

Suffrage history since the 1960s has generally concentrated on the WSPU's actions, events, and the leadership. It is now vital that a new understanding is reached that pushes aside the concentration on the division into constitutional versus militant. A few historians have acknowledged that this division should be reinterpreted, but as a distinction it is still present in much writing about the suffrage movement.[556] This study not only disputes this division but goes further to suggest a new examination from 1905. There is an important factor not previously considered in depth; that both societies were led and managed by women. This led to a new interpretation showing an understanding of how women can exploit male power and become very successful business enterprises.

It is imperative that the concentration moves to the success of the NUWSS and WSPU as women-only enterprises. Yet again previous histories have only rarely explored or researched one vital area of examination, the regions. Not all activity was London centred. The contribution of the regions should be addressed to identify their involvement in the suffrage societies and how they successfully circulated, disseminated, networked and politicised women. All the research undertaken points to substantial social change that was taking place for women in society during the early years of the century. This must become a new central focus of suffrage history.

[556] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy* and Myall *The Militant Suffrage Movement,* 7.

Appendix One

Table of Annual Income- WSPU

1906-7:	£2,959
1907-8:	£7,545
1908-9:	£21,213
1909-10:	£33,027
1910-11:	£29,000
1911-12:	£33,980
1912-13:	£35,710
1913-14:	£346,875

Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women- A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1866-1914* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), 218.

NUWSS Funds 1904-1913 – (in £s)

	Central funds	**Local Funds**	**Election Fighting Fund**
1904:	1,534		
1905:	891		
1906:	1,504		
1907:	1,470		
1908:	3,296	4,000-5,000	
1909:	3,385	8,000-10,000	
1910:	5,503		
1911:	5,734	12,670	
1912:	10,486	17,499	4,158
1913:	18,886	25,000	4,035

Source NUWSS Annual Reports.

Bibliography

PRIMARY MATERIALS

Manuscript and archival sources

The Women's Library

Box 2LWS/A1 Flo 83, The Women's Suffrage Movement – Appendix 2-1 (NWS) – Various Committee Minutes 1907-1911.

Box 2LWS/A1 Flo 83, Women's Suffrage Movement – Appendix 2-5 (2NWS) – Circular letters 1906-1918.

Box 2LWS/A1 Flo 83 - General Correspondence 1899-1918.

Box 2NWS/B – Council Meetings 1907-1918.

Box 2LSW/D/2/1 291 – Pilgrimage from Cornwall to London.

LSWA/A Box FL 370 – administration papers 1906-1908.

Box 2LSW/D FL 297/5, The Election Fighting Fund (EFF).

SLSW/E//0/1/3/36 Box 338 Notice to Committee Secretaries 31 May 1911.

2LSW/D Box 2LSW FL291, correspondence with NUWSS branches from Fleet to Banbury.

2LSW/D Box 2LWS FL388 – Various Meetings – 1907-1911, 1912-1913, 1916 Queens Hall Meetings March 1911.

Box 2LWS FL 338 - Box FL 370 – related to processions including Coronation Procession – 1911 – National Convention 1911 – London Procession 1908.

Box 2LSW/C FL 153 – Election Policy Folder - general Correspondence – 1909-1910.

The Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, Annual Report. London, 1897.

Bristol Central Library (formerly Avon County Reference Library)

Beddoe, Mrs. *The Early Years of the Women's Suffrage Movement,* Bradford on Avon, pamphlet, 1911.

Newspapers and periodicals

Berwick Advertiser
Common Cause
Daily Chronicle
Daily Mirror
Daily Telegraph
Derby Daily Telegraph
Guardian
Manchester Guardian
Nottingham Mercury
The Observer and Observer Magazine
Punch
The Times
Votes for Women
Western Daily Press

Printed primary material

Billington-Greig, Teresa. *Suffragist Tactics: Past and Present*. London. 1907.

Blackburn, Helen, ed. *A Handbook* for *Women engaged in Social and Political Work.* Bristol: J W Arrowsmith, 1881.

Kenney, Annie. *Memories of a Militant.* London: Edward Arnold, 1924.

Mason, Bertha. *The Story of the Women's Suffrage Movement.* London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1912.

Pankhurst, Christabel. T*he Great Scourge and How to End It.* London, 1913.

Pankhurst, Emmeline. *My Own Story.* London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914.

Pankhurst, Sylvia. *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst: The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship.* Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1936.

Pankhurst, Christabel. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote.* London: Hutchinson, 1959.

Strachey, Ray. *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain.* London: Bell & Sons, 1928.

Strachey Ray. *Millicent Garrett Fawcett*. London: John Murray, 1931.

Digital resources

Old Bailey Proceedings Online, www.oldbaileyonline.org.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Published books

Abrams Fran, *Freedom's Cause: Lives of the Suffragettes*. London: Profile Books, 2003.

Alberti Johanna, *Eleanor Rathbone:* London: Sage, 1996.

Atkinson Diane, *Suffragettes in the Purple White and Green: London: 1906-14.* London: Museum of London, London: 1992.

Atkinson Diane, *The Suffragettes in Pictures.* Gloucestershire: The History Press, 1996.

Bartley Paula, *Votes for Women 1860-1928.*London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1998.

Bartley Paula, *Emmeline Pankhurst.* London: Routledge, 2002.

Beckett Jane and Deborah Cherry, *The Edwardian Era.* Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1987.

Boyce L, *The Bristol Suffragettes*. Bristol: Silver Wood Empowered Publishing, 2013.

Bradley K, *The (First) History of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cornwall 1870-1914*. London: Hyptia Trust, 2000.

Brierley L and Reid H, *Go Home and do the Washing*; *Three Centuries of Pioneering Bristol Women.* Bristol: Broadcast Books, 2000.

Bryson V, Feminist *Political Theory, An Introduction.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Caine Bush J, *The National Union of Women Workers and Women's Suffrage*, in Myram Boussabba, ed *Suffrage Outside Suffragism, Women's Vote in Britain 1880-1914.* 1992.

Caine B, *Victorian Feminists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Cowman K, '*Incipient Toryism'? The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party, 1903-1914.* History Workshop Journal, Issue 53, 2002.
Cowman K, Mrs. *Brown is a Man and a Brother: Women in Merseyside's Political*

Organisations 1890-1920. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000.

Cowman K, *Women of the Right* Spirit, *Paid Organisers of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) 1904-18.* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2007.

Crawford E, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland; A Regional Survey.* Routledge, London: 2006.

Dresser M and Ollerenshaw (Ed), *The Making of Modern Britain*. Redcliff Press, Tiverton: 1996.

Dicenzo M, *Feminist Media History. Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere.* Palgrave Macmillan, London: 2011.

Eustance C, Ryan J, Ugolini A *Suffrage Reader.* Leicester University Press: 2000.

Dangerfield G, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Stanford University Press, New York: 1997.

Fawcett MG Dame*, Women's Suffrage, A short History of a Great Movement*. Adamant Media Corporation, London: 2005.

Garner L, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty,* Heinemann Educational, London: 1984.

Garrett M and Thomas Z, *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual, Culture. Politics and Enterprise.* Bloomsbury, London and New York: 2019.

Hannam J, An *Enlarged Sphere of Usefulness; the Bristol Women's Movement, 1860-1914. The Making of Modern Bristol.* Ed Dresser M and Ollerenshaw P, Redcliffe Press: 1996.

Hannam J, '*To make the world a better place': Socialist Women and Women's Suffrage in Bristol,* (Myram Boussabba Ed,) *Suffrage Outside Suffragism, Women's Vote in Britain 1880-1914, 1995.*

Hannam J and Hunt K, *Socialist Women: Britain, 1880s to 1920s.* Routledge London: 2002.

Hannam J, *Feminism*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow: 2007.

Harrison B, *Prudent Revolutionaries*. Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1987.

Hartley P, *Emmeline Pankhurst*. Routledge, London: 2000.

Hattersley R, *The Edwardians*. Little Brown. London: 2004.
Herbert M, *'Up Then Brave Women' Manchester Radical Women 1819-1918.* North West History Society. Manchester: 2012.

Holton S, *Feminism and Democracy – Womens Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1918.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1996.

Holton S, *Suffrage Days, Stories from the Womens Suffrage Movement*. Routledge, London: 1996.

Hume LP, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897-1914*. Garland Publishing, New York, 1982.

Hunt K, *Socialist Women Britain*, 1880s to 1920s, Routledge. London, 2002.

Lawrence J, *Contesting the Male Polity: The* Suffragettes and the Politic of Disruption in Edwardian Britain in *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics 1750 to the Present.* Stanford University Press Palo Alto, CA, USA: 2001

Malos E, *Bristol Women in Action; Bristol's Other History*, Bristol Broadsides Co-op Ltd, Bristol Broadsides (Co-op) Ltd, Bristol: 1983.

Mackenzie M, *Shoulder to Shoulder: A Documentary.* Vintage Books, London: 1988.

Maguire L, *The Conservative Party and Women's Suffrage,* Myram Boussabba Ed, *Suffrage Outside Suffragism, Women's Vote in Britain 1880-1914.* 1995.

Joyce Marlow Ed. *Votes for Women*: *The Virago Book of Suffrage*ttes. London: 2000.

Maroula Joanou and June Purvis, The *Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*. Manchester: 1988.

Mayhall L E Nym, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930. OUP, O*xford: 2003.

David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel: Biography of Christabel Pankhurst*. Macdonald and Jane's Publishers, London: 1977.

McPhee and Fitzgerald, *The Non-Violent Militant, The Writing's of Teresa Billington-Greig* Routledge and Keagan Paul, London: 1987.

Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization*. Sage Publication, London and New Delhi: 1997.

Leslie Parker Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,* 1897-1914. New York: 1982.

Pederson S, *Eleanor Rathbone, The Politics of Conscience. University* Press, Cambridge: 2004.

Pugh M, *The March of Women. A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1866-1914*. Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2000.

Pugh M, *The Pankhursts: The History of One Radical Family.* Mills Lane. London: 2001.

Purvis J and Holton SS Eds, *Votes for Women*. Routle*dge* London and New York: 2000.

Purvis J, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography.* Routledge London: 2002.

Purvis J and Holton SS Eds, *Votes for Women.* Routledge London: 2000.

Raeburn A, *The Militant Suffragettes*. Michael Joseph, London: 1973.

Rosen A, *Rise up Women*, *The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914.* London: 1974.

Rover C, *Womens Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 1987.

Richardson M, *The Bristol Strike Wave of 1889-1890; Socialist, New unionist and New Women Part One: Days of Hope*. Bristol Radical History group, Bristol: 2012.

Richardson M, *The Bristol Strike Wave of 18899-1890, Socialists, New Unionists and New Women: Part Two Days of Doubt*. Bristol Radical History group, Bristol: 2012.

Rowbotham S, *Hidden from History.* Pluto Press, London: 1973.

Rowbotham S, Dreamers *of a New Day: Women who Invented the Twentieth Century.* London: 2010.

Rover C, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain, 1866-1914.* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 1967.

Rubinstein D, A *Different World for Women, The Life if Millicent Garrett Fawcett*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, London: 1991.

Harold Smith, *The British women's suffrage campaign 1866-1928*. Pearson Education Limited, Essex: 1998.

Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution*. Wildwood House Limited, England: 1984.

Tickner L, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1988.

Wilson AN, After *the Victorians, The World our Parents Knew* Arrow. Books, London: 2006.

Journal articles

Caine, Barbara. 'Feminist biography and feminist history', *Women's History Review,* 3:2 (1994): 247-261.

Cowman, Krista. 'Incipient Toryism': The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party 1903-14', *Women's History Journal*, 53 (2002): 129-148.

Cowman, Krista. 'A Footnote in History? Mary Gawthorpe, Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement and the Writing of Suffragette History', *Women's History Review*, 14:3 & 4 (2005): 447-46.

DiCenzo, Maria. 'Gutter Politics: women newsies and the suffrage press'. *Women's History Review,* 12.1 (2003): 15-33.

Hannam, June. 'Women's History, feminist history'. *Articles-Making History,* 1-5.

Hartman, Kabi. 'What made me a suffragette:' the New Woman and the new conversion narrative' *Women's History Review,*12.1, (2003): 35-50.

Heilman, Anne. 'Words as Deeds: debates and narratives on women's suffrage'. *Women's History Review,* 11.4 (2002): 565-576.

Stanley, Sandra Holton. 'The Suffragist and the average woman'. *Women's History Review*, 7.1 (1980): 9-24.

John, Angela. 'Behind the Locked Door'. Evelyn Sharpe, Suffragette and rebel journalist'. *Women's History Review,* 21.1 (2003): 5-13.

Liddington Jill. '*Era of Commemoration: Celebrating the Suffrage Centenary', History Workshop Journal 59 (2005):*194-218.

Mayhall, Michelle. '*Only be ye Strong and very courageous'. The militant Suffragism of Lady Constance Lytton* Women's History Review, Volume 7, Number 1, (1908.): 61-84.

Nym Mayhall, Laura. 'Creating the 'suffragette spirit'. British feminism and the historical imagination'. *Women's History Review*.4: 3, 319-344.

Mercer, John. 'Shopping for Suffrage: the campaign shops of the Women's Social and Political Union'. *Women's History Review.*12.2, 293-309.

Murray, Simone. 'Deeds *and* Words: The Women's Press and the Politics of Print'. *Women: a cultural review.*11.3 (2000): 197-222.

Offen, Karen. 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, (1988): 14.1, 119-157.

Purvis, June. ‘Deeds not Words.’ The Daily Lives of Militant Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain’. *(Women’s Studies International Forum, 18 (1995)*: 91-101.

Purvis, ‘A ‘Pair of …Infernal Queens A Reassessment of the Dominant Representations of Emmeline and Christabel, Pankhurst, First Wave Feminists in Edwardian Britain*’ Women’s History Review*, 5.2 (1996): 259-280.

Purvis, June. ‘Emmeline Pankhurst, a biographical interpretation’ *Women’s History Review*, 12.1 (2003): 73-102.

Purvis, June & Wright, Maureen. ‘Writing Suffrage History: the contending autobiographical narratives of the Pankhursts.’ *Women’s History Review,* Volume 14, Number 3 and 4, (2005): 405-433.

Purvis, June. ‘The Suffragette and Women’s History’*. Women’s History Review,* 14 3 and 4, (2005): 357-364.