

Lesson 1:

Enquiry 6b: Resources

Comparing towns

Location	Number who signed	Conclusions I can draw
e.g. Brighton		
Lancashire		
London		

Lesson 1:

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Timeline organising activity

National events	Suffrage events in Bristol
1832 First Reform Act Gives the vote to more men who own some property but excludes women who own property.	
7 June 1866 Liberal MP JS Mill presents petition to Parliament for female franchise on the same basis as men.	
1867 Second Reform Act Increases the number of male voters, and petitions are presented to support Mill's attempt to substitute the word 'person' for 'male person' in the Act.	
1884 Third Reform Act Excludes women but now 25% of men have the vote.	
October 1896 Local suffrage societies form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).	
10 October 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst founds Women's Social and Political Union in Manchester. Aim for suffrage on same terms as men and opposition to any government that does not grant women the vote.	
20 February 1904 Christabel Pankhurst raises the issue of votes for women at meeting addressed by Winston Churchill MP.	
13 October 1905 Christabel and Annie Kenney are arrested at Liberal meeting in Manchester – sent to prison.	
13 February 1907 Women march from Caxton Hall (Women's Parliament) to House of Commons because nothing on suffrage in King's speech. Police brutality and 54 women arrested.	
April 1908 Asquith (anti-female suffrage) new Liberal prime minister.	
13 June 1908 NUWSS procession of 13,000 women to Albert Hall in London.	

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<p>21 June 1908 WSPU procession and Hyde Park meeting. Government still refuses to put forward women's suffrage bill.</p> <p>30 June 1908 Women demonstrators in Parliament Square brutalised by police. Two retaliate by breaking 10 Downing Street windows. Mrs Pankhurst backs them up.</p>	
<p>29 June 1909 Eighth Women's Parliament sees first official window breaking – several government buildings. 108 women arrested. Stone-throwers sent to Holloway and go on hunger strike.</p>	
<p>January 1910 PM Asquith calls general election. No militancy during election but WSPU campaign in 40 constituencies. After election, an all-party Conciliation Committee drafts a franchise bill.</p> <p>6 May 1910 Death of King Edward VI. All WSPU campaigning stops until after funeral.</p> <p>14 June 1910 Conciliation Bill in Parliament. WSPU calls a truce and no militancy. Suffrage societies demonstrate in support of bill but despite passing second vote in Commons, Asquith does not support it and it runs out of time.</p> <p>18 November 1910 Parliament back and ninth Women's Parliament sends deputation to Downing Street about Conciliation Bill. Police brutality: 'Black Friday' – 100 women arrested. Two women die of their injuries. No government enquiry into deaths.</p>	
<p>January 1911 Asquith wins election. WSPU renews truce in hope Conciliation Bill will go ahead.</p> <p>2 April 1911 National boycott of the census by hundreds of women across the country.</p> <p>5 May 1911 Amended Conciliation Bill passes second vote and government promises more time. WSPU thinks it is winning.</p>	

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<p>7 November 1911 Instead government promises next Parliament (1912–13) franchise bill for men and women instead.</p> <p>21 November 1911 Tenth Women's Parliament, WSPU.</p>	
<p>1–4 March 1912 Mass window-smashing led by Mrs Pankhurst – two-month sentence followed by window-smashing in West End. 121 women arrested.</p> <p>5 March 1912 Annie Kenney becomes chief organiser in London after Christabel flees to Paris. Directs events and edits Votes for Women. Conciliation Bill defeated.</p> <p>April 1912 Mrs Pankhurst's sentence remitted but tried with Pethick-Lawrences for conspiracy – nine months. Go on hunger strike – released in June.</p> <p>July 1912 Campaign of secret arson attacks begins. Government's New Reform Act: no provision for women.</p> <p>October 1912 Split with Pethick-Lawrences. New militancy – acid attacks on letter boxes.</p>	
<p>January/February 1913 Golf Green ruined and telegraph wires cut. Mrs Pankhurst calls halt to militancy.</p> <p>12 February 1913 Burning of Regent's Park refreshment kiosk – first incident in a continuous programme of damage to empty buildings.</p> <p>18 February 1913 David Lloyd George's empty house destroyed by fire.</p> <p>24 February 1913 Mrs Pankhurst arrested again in connection with the fire.</p> <p>25 March 1913 Prisoners Temporary Discharge Act ('Cat and Mouse Act') is introduced to prevent hunger strikers from unconditional release.</p> <p>3 April 1913 Mrs Pankhurst receives sentence of three years in prison.</p>	

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<p>26 January 1914 Mrs Dacre Fox organises deputation to bishops asking them to take action.</p> <p>21 May 1914 Mass suffragette deputation to Buckingham Palace.</p>	
<p>10 August 1914 Six days after WWI declared, all suffragette prisoners released. Mrs Pankhurst suspends militancy and calls on her followers to defend their country. Suffragette relaunched as Britannia, a pro-war paper, and Christabel returns to England.</p>	

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National events	Suffrage events in Bristol
<p>1915 Mrs Pankhurst tours country, making recruitment speeches. Encourages women to hand out white feathers.</p> <p>July 1915 WSPU now called 'Women's Party'. Election delayed – demand for vote for all men grows because of war.</p>	
<p>6 February 1918 Representation of People Act: vote to all men over 21 and women over 30 or wives of occupiers of at least £5 annual value and female graduates 30+. Women can now stand for Parliament – 17 female candidates but only one succeeds.</p>	
<p>23 December 1919 Sex Disqualification Removal Act – women now able to be lawyers, civil servants and other professions.</p>	
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7 June 1866 Liberal MP JS Mill presents petition to Parliament for female franchise on the same basis as men.	
1867 Second Reform Act Increases the number of male voters and petitions are presented to support Mill's attempt to substitute the word 'person' for 'male person' in the Act.	1867 and 1870: Bristol suffragists sign petition for suffrage. Almost 50% of members stay with suffragists for over a decade. Bristol fifth city to start suffragist society in 1868. Key members – Agnes Beddoe, Mary Estlin, Florence Davenport Hill and Anna Maria Priestman (in 1870). 1871: linked to London branch. 1873→organising secretary – Park St. Helen Blackburn, 1874–80, organised large demonstrations and speaking tours of West Country, and wrote history of suffrage movement. Agnes Beddoe, Lilian Ashworth Hallet, Helen Bright Clark and Emily Sturge – main speakers.
1884 Third Reform Act Excludes women but now 25% of men have the vote.	1880: 4 November, Great Demonstration for Women at the Colston Hall with famous speakers, including Lydia Becker. Women's Liberal Associations (WLA) National, 1887 – Anna Maria Priestman and Emily Sturge set up WLA in 1881, one of the first in the country – members Mary Priestman, Helen Sturge, Eva Tribe, Helen Bright Clark, Helen Blackburn and Sarah Jane Tanner all joined.
October 1896 Local suffrage societies form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).	
10 October 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst founds Women's Social and Political Union in Manchester. Aim for suffrage on same terms as men and opposition to any government that does not grant women the vote.	Suffrage movement revived c.1900. Women's Co-op Guild speakers – Anne Martin, member of Women's Lib. Association.
20 February 1904 Christabel Pankhurst raises the issue of votes for women at meeting addressed by Winston Churchill MP.	1904: NUWSS send organiser to Bristol for a week – series of meetings but no long-term impact.
13 October 1905 Christabel and Annie Kenney are arrested at Liberal meeting in Manchester – sent to prison.	

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<p>April 1908 Asquith (anti-female suffrage) new Liberal prime minister. 13 June 1908 NUWSS procession of 13,000 women to Albert Hall in London. 21 June 1908 WSPU procession and Hyde Park meeting. Government still refuses to put forward women's suffrage bill. 30 June 1908 Women demonstrators in Parliament Square brutalised by police. Two retaliate by breaking 10 Downing Street windows. Mrs Pankhurst backs them up.</p>	<p>8 September: Durdham Downs demo. 21 September: Protest to King. 14 November: first protest in Bristol at Mr Birrell's meeting, Colston Hall.</p>
<p>29 June 1909 Eighth Women's Parliament sees first official window-breaking – several government buildings. 108 women arrested. Stone-throwers sent to Holloway and go on hunger strike.</p>	<p>18 February: Mrs Pankhurst's meeting. 30 April: Mrs Pethick-Lawrence and Lady Constance Lytton meeting. 3 May: 'Organ Pipes' Protest at Colston Hall. 12–13 November: attack on Churchill and stone-throwing protest.</p>
<p>January 1910 PM Asquith calls general election. No militancy during election but WSPU campaign in 40 constituencies. After election, an all-party Conciliation Committee drafts a franchise bill. 6 May 1910 Death of King Edward VI. All WSPU campaigning stops until after funeral.</p>	
<p>14 June 1910 Conciliation Bill in Parliament. WSPU calls a truce and no militancy. Suffrage societies demonstrate in support of bill but despite passing second vote in Commons, Asquith does not support it and it runs out of time. 18 November 1910 Parliament back and ninth Women's Parliament sends deputation to Downing Street about Conciliation Bill – police brutality: 'Black Friday'. 100 women arrested, two women die of their injuries. No government enquiry into deaths.</p>	

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<p>1–4 March 1912 Mass window-smashing led by Mrs Pankhurst – two-month sentence followed by window-smashing in West End. 121 women arrested.</p> <p>5 March 1912 Annie Kenney becomes chief organiser in London after Christabel flees to Paris. Directs events and edits Votes for Women. Conciliation Bill defeated.</p> <p>April 1912 Mrs Pankhurst sentence remitted but tried with Pethick-Lawrences for conspiracy – nine months – go on hunger strike – released in June.</p>	<p>1912: political tactics to support Labour Party if sitting MP hostile to women's suffrage. Labour candidate for East Bristol organised by Annie Townley and support from Walter and Bertha Ayles and Mabel Tothill. Immediate difference – 200 friends of women's suffrage in 1912. Ayles becomes candidate. November: attacks on post boxes for five days. 4–5 December: attacks on post boxes at Cotham Brow and Logan Road, Bishopston.</p>
<p>July 1912 Campaign of secret arson attacks begins. Government's New Reform Act – no provision for women.</p> <p>October 1912 Split with Pethick-Lawrences. New militancy – acid attacks on letter boxes.</p>	

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<p>26 January 1914 Mrs Dacre Fox organises deputation to bishops, asking them to take action.</p> <p>21 May 1914 Mass suffragette deputation to Buckingham Palace.</p> <p>10 August 1914 Six days after WWI declared, all suffragette prisoners released. Mrs Pankhurst suspends militancy and calls on her followers to defend their country. <i>Suffragette</i> relaunched as <i>Britannia</i>, a pro-war paper, and Christabel returns to England.</p>	<p>19 February 1914: scene at Bristol café (local papers did not report this and <i>Suffragette</i> only briefly).</p> <p>26 February: last showing of a film, <i>60 Years a Queen</i>, disrupted by suffragettes – but no report in local papers and <i>Suffragette</i> only briefly.</p> <p>14 March: Bristol Timberyard arson.</p> <p>16 March: church services interruptions.</p> <p>April, Easter: Failand Golf links arson.</p>
<p>1915 Mrs Pankhurst tours country, making recruitment speeches. Encourages women to hand out white feathers.</p>	<p>Mabel Tothill, Marianne Hill, Mariabella Fry and Marion Pease, all Quakers and suffragists, attend a Peace Conference (see <i>Western Daily Press</i>, 1915).</p>
<p>July WSPU now called 'Women's Party'. Election delayed – demand for vote for all men grows because of war.</p>	<p>ILP also anti-war, e.g. pro-suffrage Walter Ayles, ILP councillor.</p>
<p>6 February 1918 Representation of People Act: vote to all men over 21 and women over 30, or wives of occupiers of at least £5 annual value and female graduates 30+. Women can now stand for Parliament – 17 female candidates but only one succeeds.</p>	
<p>23 December 1919 Sex Disqualification Removal Act – women now able to be lawyers, civil servants and other professions.</p>	
<p>2 July 1928 Equal Franchise Act gives women vote on same terms as men.</p>	

Lesson 2:

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Biography cards

Helen Blackburn 1842–1903

- Pioneer of the movement.
- Secretary of Bristol Branch of Suffrage – ran suffrage events from 1872 from her rooms, 20 Park Street, then secretary of London organisation.
- Organiser of the big event in 1885, which demonstrated variety of work done by women.
- Editor of feminist journal.
- Early campaigner for women's rights, particularly the rights of workers – features on Fawcett statue plinth.
- 'A truly noble spirit' – Lillias Hallett.



Emily Sturge 1847–1892

- Founder of Bristol Women's Liberal Association (WLA), 1881.
- Supported Fawcett's Central Committee – suffragist.
- Youngest school board governor (for Redland High School), fundraiser for the university's English and history departments.
- Died at 45 in riding accident.



Helen Sturge 1858–1945

- Unmarried, set up lectures for ladies in Clifton.
- Honorary Secretary, Bristol WLA, 1890.
- Keen interest in Egypt – travelled up the Nile.
- Welfare of shop and factory girls – preventative mission.
- Full-time suffragist after father's death.
- Stood for local election, 1908, to city council because female ratepayers could vote in local elections.



Lesson 3:

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Biography cards

Bertha Ayles

- Came to Bristol in 1909 with her husband Walter Ayles, an organiser for the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Bertha lived here until her death in 1942.
- Suffragist and part-time trade unionist organiser, active in East Bristol – lived 12 Station Road, Bishopston.
- Member of the Women's Labour League and Chair of the ILP.
- With Mabel Tothill and Annie Townley (NUWSS organiser), set up a Friends of Women's Suffrage organisation in working-class East Bristol – had 200 members enrolled by 1912.
- Walter became prospective Labour candidate.
- Bertha had a baby in 1913 and a weak heart, so fewer public activities.
- Walter in prison during First World War as a conscientious objector.
- Walter became MP in 1928.



image credit: Bristol Radical History Group

Mabel Cross

- Wife of Clifton solicitor who was supporter of women's suffrage. Honorary secretary of Women's Reform Union – held weekly meetings in East Bristol to recruit working-class women to suffrage. Organiser of NUWSS Bristol.
- Part of Great Pilgrimage – set off from Bristol 14 July 1913.
- 50,000 pilgrims made it to London and nationally – collected 46,000 signatures along the way.
- Bristol group ran into trouble with a mob in Twerton in Bath, and Mabel, disguised in a man's coat, had to shelter in a house, but carried on to London.
- 'Banners flying accompanied by sympathisers'.
- Pilgrims wore distinctive uniform and simple hats and cockle shells, like the Tudor Pilgrims of Grace they were inspired by.
- Leader of pilgrimage, Mrs Fawcett, got sympathetic response from Prime Minister Asquith compared with suffragettes, but still no change to the franchise.



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Biography cards

Mary Sophia Allen 1878–1964

- Inspired by hearing Annie Kenney speak in 1909.
- Worked for West of England WSPU (suffragettes).
- Part of deputation to House of Commons – one of 105 women arrested.
- Went on hunger strike and was force-fed.
- 4 September 1909: came back to Temple Meads with Lilian Dove White, met by procession led by Annie Kenney.
- Third sentence: two weeks in Horfield Prison – see Western Daily Press, 27 November 1909 – after window-breaking at Board of Trade Office (Inland Revenue and Liberal Club) during Churchill's visit – gave an interview and refused to eat or wear prison uniform.
- Part of Woman Police during WWI and volunteer in General Strike.
- By 1934 had become a British Fascist (BUF) member and met Hitler and admired him.



Agnes Olive Beamish 1890–1978

- Irish family. Lived in Clifton – pupil of Clifton High School. Living in Westbury on Trym by 1901.
- Joined WSPU aged 16. Wore 'Votes for Women' badge to school.
- Went to Girton College, Cambridge – studied maths and economics – then became militant suffragette.
- By 1912, involved in pillar box raids in London.
- 1913: arrested with Elsie Duval, carrying incendiary materials.
- Re-arrested January 1914: charged with arson in Surrey.
- Convicted under another name – hunger strike and force-fed (doctor found she had been drugged with bromide to force-feed her).
- During WWI, joined Worker's Suffrage Federation.



Image credit: © Museum of London

Violet Bland 1863–1940

- Originally a kitchen maid – set up own domestic college in Bristol in Henleaze.
- Already in her mid-40s when she joined the WSPU.
- Had recovering suffragettes to stay at Henley Grove – Annie Kenney, Lettice Floyd, Vera Wentworth and Mary Phillips. Had paid garden party, 1909, for heroines Lilian Dove White and Mary Allen.
- Arrested on Black Friday (see Western Daily Press report, 'Some Local Names', 19 November 1910– also Maud Fussell and Mabel Hunt of Clevedon).
- Smashed windows in London's West End in March 1912.
- Told court 'paid rates and taxes to tune of £1 a week for 20 years and had been working for citizenship for a number of years' – four-month sentence and hunger strike and force-fed. Secret hunger striker. Letter in Votes for Women about this sentence, 1912.
- Materials on her in London Museum's Biographical Collection.



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Biography cards

Theresa Garnett 1888–1966

- Born in Leeds, trained as a pupil teacher in 1907. Inspired by hearing Adela Pankhurst, joined WSPU.
- 15 November 1909: armed with horsewhip, attacked Winston Churchill (Home Secretary) at Temple Meads Station. Western Daily Press report, 23 December 1909: 'Take that in name of insulted women of England'. Story made the papers, even in USA.
- Sentenced to one month, Horfield Prison – went on hunger strike.
- Set fire to her cell, hunger strike, accused of biting a warden, manacled herself to a statue in House of Commons.
- Worked as nurse in WWI and decorated by Churchill for bravery.



Image credit: Bath in Time

Elsie Howey 1884–1963

- Grew up in Malvern, two years at St Andrews University.
- Joined WSPU in 1907 – arrested, 1908, trying to get into House of Commons: Pantechnicon Raid (jumped out of large removal vans).
- One of two women who attacked Augustine Birrell, March 1909, as he got off London train, and then hid in organ pipes at Colston Hall incident to shout 'Votes for women' in middle of Birrell's speech.
- Attacked at suffrage meeting, June 1909 – arrested in Penzance in Cornwall, went on hunger strike.
- Attacked Prime Minister Asquith and Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone at their holiday homes.
- Broke two of Liberty's windows in West End of London in window-smashing stunt, 1912.
- Evaded arrest many times but also imprisoned six times – lost several teeth during violent force-feeding.



Image credit: Bath in Time

Vera Holme (aka Jack Holme) 1881–1969

- Born in Merseyside.
- Professional performer – member of D'oyly Carte Opera Company.
- Rode on horseback in various suffragette processions. In AFL (actresses) and WSPU in 1908 – demos, deputations, selling papers.
- With Elsie Howey, Organ Pipes incident, May 1909 at Colston Hall – report in Bristol Times.
- With Minnie Baldock, who hired a room across the street from Colston Hall – used megaphones to shout 'Votes for women'.
- Rode on horseback, Women's Parliament procession, 1909.
- Chauffeur to Emmeline Pankhurst.
- In charge of horses, Scottish Women's Hospital WWI – an ambulance driver.
- Decorated for bravery by King of Serbia.



Image credit: © Museum of London

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Biography cards

Lilian Ida Lenton 1891–1972

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/suffragettes/8322.shtml>

Lilian interview from BBC sound archives – explains how she evaded capture.

- Born in Leicester, one of four children, trained as a teacher. Her father was a foreman carpenter.
- By 1911 census, family living in Bristol at 32 Pennywell Road – undoubtedly evading, probably with her mother.
- Known as ‘Pimpernel Suffragette’. Officially joined the WSPU in 1912. Said quickly she had enough of breaking windows and wanted to be an arsonist.
- In January, evaded police in disguise as grocer boy, nurse, etc. Arsonist at Kew Gardens (then living in Fishponds).
- Got pleurisy (fluid on the lungs) through force-feeding at Holloway Prison – could not stand trial – her case caused questions in Parliament.
- In prison when WWI broke out – served in Women’s Hospital Unit in Serbia, then Save the Children Fund.
- Disgusted by terms of 1918 suffrage – campaigned for 1928 changes – ‘Personally I did not vote for a very long time because I hadn’t either husband or furniture, although I was over 30.’



Image credit: © Museum of London



Victoria Lidiard (nee Simmons) 1889–1992

BBC interview she gave: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/suffragettes/8306.shtml>

- Born in Windsor, moved to Bristol: 21 Regent Street, Clifton.
- Left school at 14, learnt shorthand at evening classes, worked for photographer.
- Joined WSPU in 1910 with sisters and mother (despite her father’s objections), partly because of limited education compared with her brothers (chose to become vegetarian aged ten).
- Sold Votes for Women, chaired open-air meetings, also member of NUWW.
- Interrupted speech by Churchill at Clifton College, window-smashing, 1912, in London at Foreign Office, arrested – two months’ hard labour.
- Post-WWI, trained as optician – very successful businesswoman.
- Died at 102, longest surviving suffragette, having met Mrs Thatcher (GB PM 1979–90). Campaigned for ordination of women in Church of England.
- Plaque outside her home in Hove.



Plaque image credit: Jez Nicholson, Flickr

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Biography cards

Caroline Lehman 1859–1956

- Born in Kidderminster, daughter of army officer.
- Divorced and then separated – second husband, ended up living in Station Road, Shirehampton.
- Active in WSPU Bristol delegation to Downing Street, 1910, after Black Friday.
- Census boycott, window-smashing, 1912 – two months in Holloway, hunger strike.
- Her son at Clifton College – honorary secretary of Bristol Men's Political Union (male branch of WSPU).
- 1911 census protestor: 'Being an unrepresented ratepayer I refuse to give any information...'

Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence 1867–1954

- Born Apsley Road, Clifton – blue plaque at George Street house – later moved to Weston-super-Mare. Nonconformist background. Social work in London in 1890s and dressmaking business.
- 1901, married social reformer Frederick Lawrence, kept both names. Very wealthy – two homes – used London one as base for WSPU. WSPU treasurer.
- Arrested 1906 – released after two days of two-month sentence.
- 1907, co-editor with Fred of Votes for Women.
- Star WSPU speaker – chose colours for WSPU.
- 1909, arrested at Caxton Hall – several more sentences but split with Pankhursts over increasing militancy, but never criticised them in public – did not want to split the WSPU.
- Pacifist in WWI with Fred, stood as Labour candidate in 1918 election.
- Spent rest of her life as peace campaigner.



Image credits:
Photo: LSE Library
Plaque: iamdanw, Flickr

Jessie Smith 1865-1944

- Born in Scotland, lived 81 Sommerville Road, St Andrews. In Bristol most of her life – worked as elocution teacher.
- Signed Women's Franchise Committee, calling for women's enfranchisement, 1907 – linked to NUWSS but gave money to and then joined WSPU, acting in suffragette play in Bath.
- 1910, Caxton Hall demonstration to Parliament – one of 115 arrested. 1911, threw stone through Treasury window – five days in prison.
- 1911, took part in census avoidance: 'No Vote, No Census'.
- 1912, became more militant: 'a taxpaying woman who tried by peaceful methods to work for emancipation but after Mr Asquith's last proposal put stone through... Treasury window'.
- Died in Bristol in 1944.



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Biography cards

Annie Kenney 1879–1953

Annie Kenney (13 September 1879 – 9 July 1953) was an English working-class suffragette who became a leading figure in the Women's Social and Political Union. She co-founded its first branch in London, with Minnie Baldock. Kenney attracted the attention of the press and public in 1905 when she and Christabel Pankhurst were imprisoned for several days for assault and obstruction, after heckling Sir Edward Grey at a Liberal rally in Manchester on the issue of votes for women. The incident is credited with inaugurating a new phase in the struggle for women's suffrage in the UK, with the adoption of militant tactics.

In 1907 she arrived in Bristol to set up the WSPU branch.

- Working-class Oldham girl from large political family – had worked in a cotton mill briefly as a child.
- Joined WSPU after meeting Christabel Pankhurst – both interrupted Churchill in 1905, shouting 'Votes for women' – seen as first act of militancy by WSPU.
- Sent to be organiser in Bristol 1907–1911, often speaking in 1910 election three times a day. Sold Votes for Women and spoke all over West of England – membership hugely increased by her 'pin-up' girl of WSPU – presented as 'Lancashire lass'.
- Refused to sign 1911 census, gave an interview saying lots of women were at her flat that night.
- Charismatic organiser, went back to London in 1912 to be National Organiser of the WSPU. Imprisoned and went on hunger strike many times.
- Always loyal to the Pankhursts – retired from public life after 1918, married and had one son.



Image credit: LSE Library

Lesson 4:

Enquiry 6b: Resources

How fair is this report?

Excerpt from *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 13 November 1909

FOOLISH OUTRAGE WINDOW SMASHING AT POST OFFICE AND CLUB SUFFRAGETTES AT WORK

Senseless but highly dangerous, outrages were perpetuated in Bristol last evening by Suffragettes. ... they gave a taste of their 'quality' by smashing windows in the general Post Office and at the Liberal Club. After that they calmly awaited arrest. The names of the women are Nurse Ellen Wines-Pitman of 15 Southleigh Road Clifton and Vera Wentworth 22 of Clements Inn London.

About 9 in the evening Nurse Pitman standing outside the Post Office threw big stones with such effect that three plate glass windows were broken. Two of the windows were immediately over the desks of the desks provided for the writing of telegrams and as any sharp-edged pieces of glass fell through on to the desks and the floor had anyone been on the spot at the time he or she might have received severe injury. The third window [in the entrance] was badly shattered. A man who had witnessed

this foolish outrage took Nurse Pitman into the Post Office where she was detained by one of the official... she said her act was a protest against the government but she had no grievance with Post Office Staff...

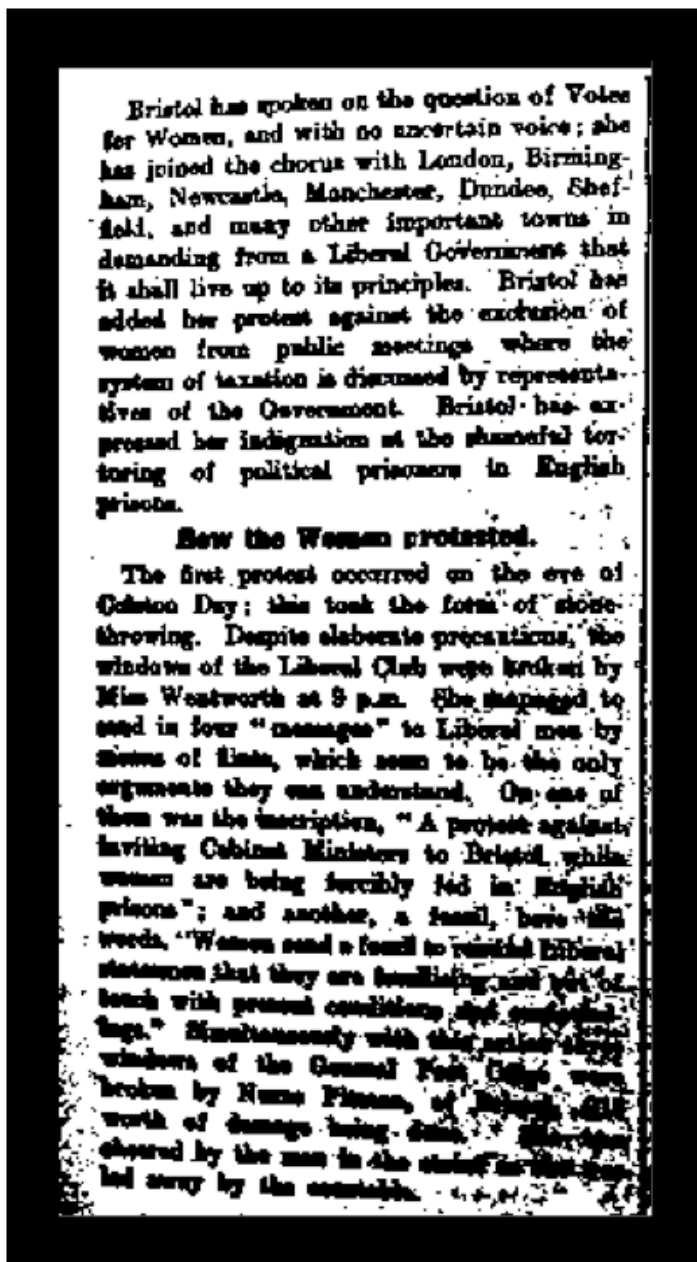
The outrage at the Liberal Club was of a similar nature and might have resulted in serious injury... Miss Wentworth threw stones through a lavatory window which is made up of small panes of coloured glass. The glass was shattered inward from the lead framework and the framework itself was bent and twisted so the stones must have been cast with a vigorous arm... messages were wrapped around the stones [e.g.] 'A protest against inviting Cabinet ministers to speak in Bristol while women are being forcibly fed in English prisons'.

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How fair is this report?

Excerpt from *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 13 November 1909



Transcript:

Bristol has spoken on the question of Votes for Women, and with no uncertain voice: she has joined the chorus with London, Birmingham, Newcastle, Manchester, Dundee, Sheffield, and many other important towns in demanding from a Liberal Government that it shall live up to its principles. Bristol has added her protest against the exclusion of women from public meetings, where the system of taxation is discussed by representatives of the Government. Bristol has expressed her indignation at the shameful torturing of political prisoners in English prisons.

How the Women protested

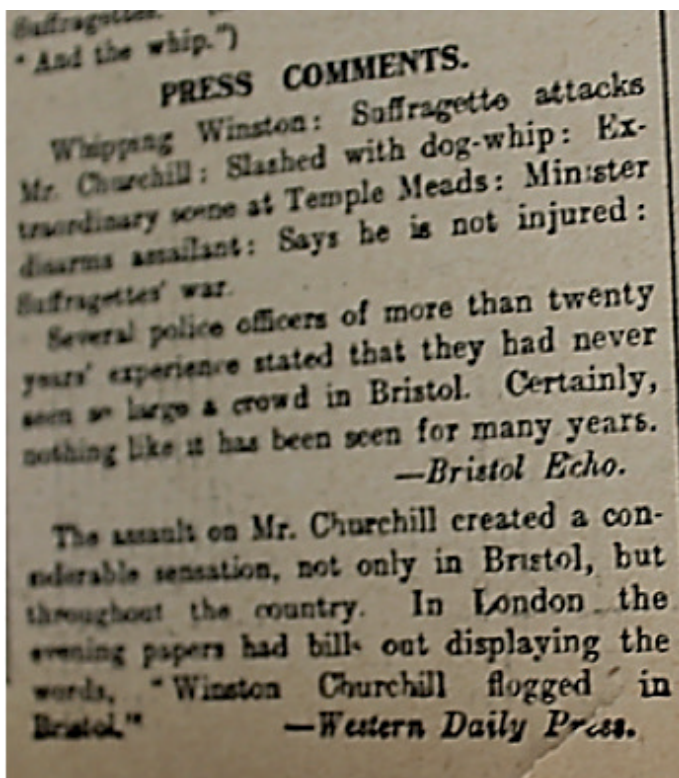
The first protest occurred on the eve of Colston Day; this took the form of stone-throwing. Despite elaborate precautions, the windows of the Liberal Club were broken by Miss Wentworth at 9 p.m. She managed to send in four 'messages' to Liberal men by means of [undecipherable] which seem to be the only arguments they can understand. One of these was the inscription, 'A protest against inviting Cabinet Ministers to Bristol while women are being forcibly fed in English prisons': and another, a fossil, bore the words, 'Women send a fossil to remind Liberal statesmen that they are fossilising and out of touch with present conditions and surroundings'. Simultaneously with this action three windows of the General Post Office were broken by Nurse Pitman of Bristol, £15 worth of damage being done. She was cheered by the man in the street as she was led away by the constable.

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Stories of 1909–12

1. Excerpts selected for *Votes for Women*, printed in London – this story was covered as far away as New York.



Transcript:

PRESS COMMENTS.

Whipping Winston: Suffragette attacks Mr Churchill: Slashed with dog-whip: Extraordinary scene at Temple Meads: Minister disarms assailant: Says he is not injured: Suffragettes' war.

Several police officers of more than twenty years' experience stated that they had never seen as large a crowd in Bristol. Certainly, nothing like it had been seen for many years.

Bristol Echo

The assault on Mr Churchill created a considerable sensation, not only in Bristol, but throughout the country. In London, the evening papers had bills out displaying the words, 'Winston Churchill flogged in Bristol.'

Western Daily Press

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Stories of 1909–12

2. *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 2 November 1912.

**RUMOUR OF A SUFFRAGE
OUTRAGE IN BRISTOL.**
RED OCHRE IN A PILLAR BOX.

An alarming rumour was prevalent in Bristol last night of an outrage by Suffragettes. The report was that at one of the suburban pillar-boxes, when the postman went to clear it last evening, he found the letters so damaged with red ochre as to be undecipherable, and that literature connected with the Suffragettes had been found in the box, indicating that they were responsible for the damage. What actually happened was that the postman found a single circular of "Votes for Women" containing a small quantity of red ochre powder, and this had discoloured ten letters, but in no way preventing them from being delivered in the ordinary way. The Post Office officials are inclined to regard the matter more in the light of a practical joke, probably committed as a sequel to the meeting of Mrs. Pankhurst in the city on Wednesday, and do not regard it as an attempt on the part of the militant section of the Suffragettes to damage the property of the Postmaster-General. The incident happened at Westbury Park.

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BRISTOL PILLAR BOXES.
MORE SUFFRAGIST ACTIVITY.

Last evening, a postman, collecting the letters in a pillar-box at Logan Road, Bishopston, discovered that a red fluid, resembling varnish, had been placed in the box, and had marked several of the postal packages, although it had rendered none of them undecipherable. On the previous night a pillar-box at Cotham Brow had received somewhat similar attention, but in this case soot and oil had been placed in the box in place of the red fluid. The presence of a pamphlet in one of the boxes relating to the women's suffrage movement, and entitled "Why women want votes," pointed to the occurrence being due to some one associated with the women's suffrage movement. The police were communicated with.

Transcript:

BRISTOL PILLAR BOXES MORE SUFFRAGIST ACTIVITY

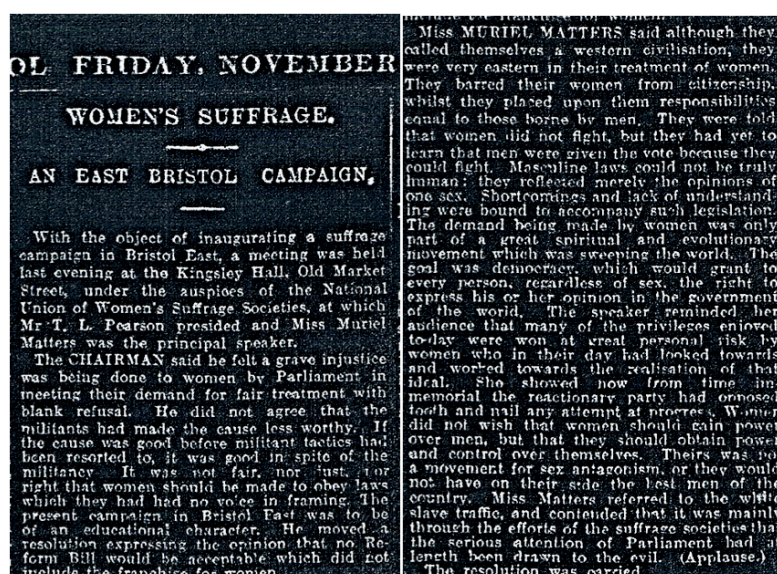
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Stories of 1909–12

3. Reported in *Clifton Chronicle*.



Transcript:

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER (?) WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AN EAST BRISTOL CAMPAIGN

With the object of inaugurating a suffrage campaign in Bristol East, a meeting was held last evening at the Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, under the auspices of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, at which Mr T. L. Pearson presided and Miss Muriel Matters was the principal speaker.

The CHAIRMAN said he felt a grave injustice was being done to women by Parliament in meeting their demand for fair treatment with blank refusal. He did not agree that the militants had made the cause less worthy. If the cause was good before militant tactics had been resorted to, it was good in spite of the militancy. It was not fair, nor just, nor right that women should be made to obey laws which they had had no voice in forming. The present campaign in Bristol East was to be of an educational character. He moved a resolution expressing the opinion that no Reform Bill would be acceptable which did not include the franchise for women.

Miss MURIEL MATTERS said that although they called themselves a western civilisation, they were very eastern in their treatment of women. They barred their women from citizenship whilst they placed upon them responsibilities equal to those borne by men. They were told that women

did not fight, but they had yet to learn that men were given the vote because they could fight. Masculine laws could not be truly human: they reflected merely the opinions of one sex. Shortcomings and lack of understanding were bound to accompany such legislation. The demand being made by women was one part of a great spiritual and evolutionary movement which was sweeping the world. The goal was democracy, which would grant every person, regardless of sex, the right to express his or her opinion in the government of the world. The speaker reminded her audience that many of the privileges enjoyed today were won at great personal risk to women who in their day had looked towards and worked towards the realisation of that ideal. She showed how from time immemorial, the reactionary party had opposed tooth and nail any attempt at progress. Women did not wish that women should gain power over men, but that they should obtain power and control over themselves. There was not a movement for sex antagonism, or they would not have on their side the best men of the country. Miss Matters referred to the white slave traffic, and contended that it was mainly through the efforts of the suffrage societies that the serious attention of Parliament had been drawn to this evil. (Applause.)

The resolution was carried.

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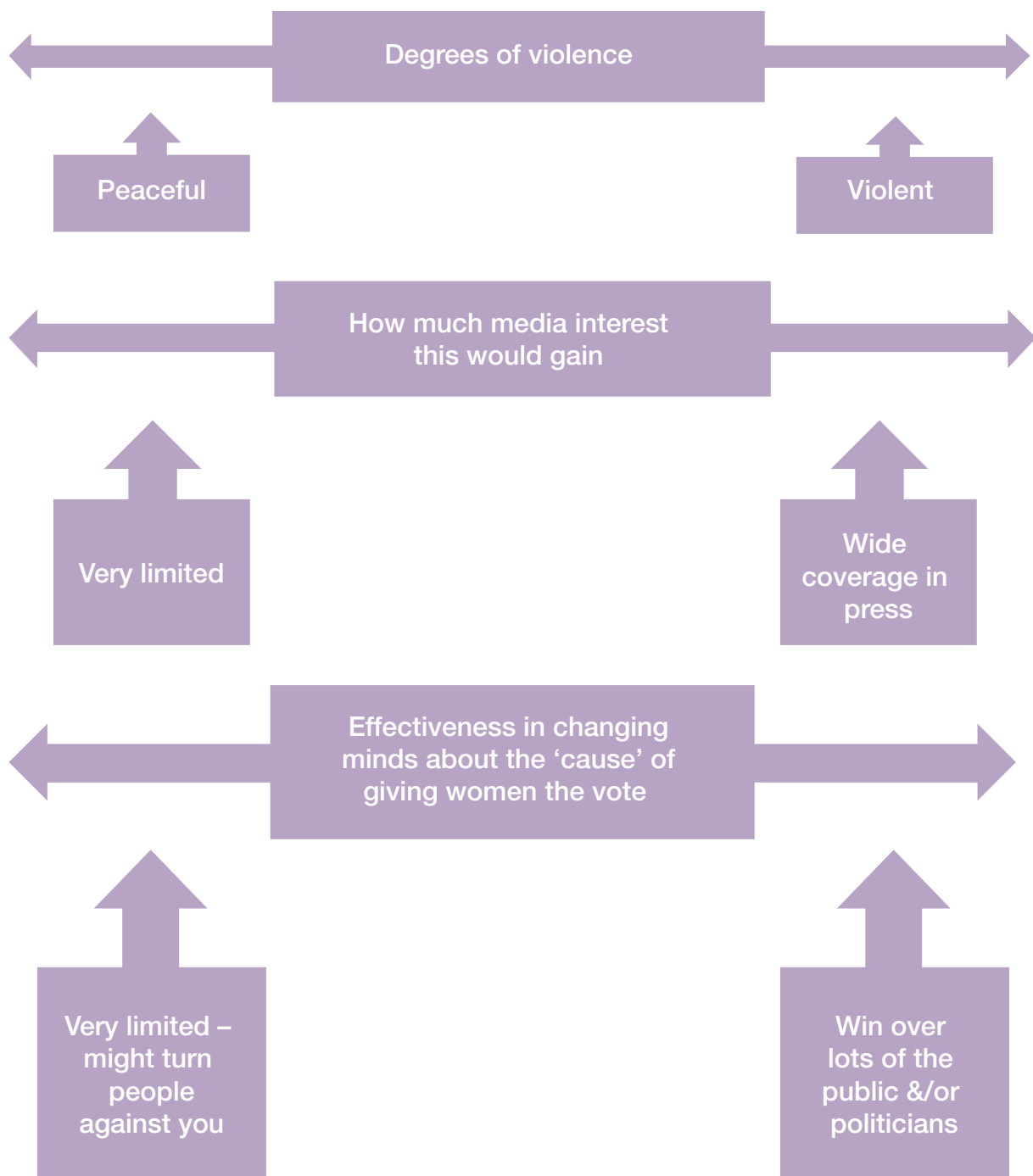
Suffrage activities

Attendance at Hyde Park rally 1913	Volunteer-run shops by NUWSS	Hunger strikes in Horfield Prison
Attack on Winston Churchill, Home Secretary, during visit to Bristol in 1909	Petition thrown into King George V's carriage during Royal Visit	Large-scale meetings on the Downs, Colston Hall and Victoria Rooms
Setting fire to five buildings in local area	Pouring acid into letter boxes	Stone-throwing at King and Inland Revenue offices
Throwing a dead kitten at a local MP	Protests against 1911 census, refusing to be included	Supporting an election candidate whose party supports women's suffrage
Opposition to anti-suffrage political candidates in local and national elections	Interrupting church services	Volunteer-run shops by WSPU
Disrupting political meeting – by hiding in the organ at the Colston Hall		

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Scales



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Statements

Statements	Support	Disagree
Both groups did lots of activities but still had not achieved their aim of getting any women the vote		
The publicity the suffragettes got meant the government could not ignore the issue		
Suffragettes built up a lot of membership under Annie Kenney		
The suffragette militant tactics got more support in Bristol for votes for women		
The suffragists got more widespread support in 1913 in Bristol with the Great Pilgrimage		
The suffragettes were better at publicity than the suffragists		
The suffragists and suffragettes got mainly fair treatment in the local papers		

Outcome activity: Similarities and differences between Bristol and the rest of the country **Enquiry 6b: Resources**

Similarities	Differences