

**Rose Lamartine-Yates and the Wimbledon WSPU: Reconfiguring Suffragette History
from the Local to the National.**

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Alexandra Hughes-Johnson hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it, is entirely my own work. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is clearly stated.

Signed:

Date: 20th September 2017.

Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines the suffragette movement in Wimbledon and the suffrage and political career of Rose Lamartine-Yates, the organising secretary of the Wimbledon branch of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). By focusing on the Wimbledon WSPU, a branch that has been described as one of the most successful (prosperous) branches of the WSPU, this thesis will move the focus of consideration away from the WSPU's national leadership, and London-centric organisation, towards the branch, where the majority of suffrage campaigning and individual political and feminist development took place.¹

Initially the research project constructs a local suffrage history of Wimbledon by examining what daily life and activism was like at branch level for the individuals who sustained Wimbledon's local suffrage organisations. Although the thesis focuses predominantly on the daily life and activism of WSPU women, demonstrating how the Wimbledon WSPU operated as an individual branch that initiated their own developments and took part in a vast range of militant activities, the thesis also considers the ways in which Wimbledon's local suffrage campaign was sustained by other suffrage organisations. These include; the London Society for Women's Suffrage (LSWS), the Wimbledon, Merton and Tooting Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (MFWS) and the Church League for Women's Suffrage (CLWS).

In addition to this, the thesis moves on to explore the relationship between health and suffrage by examining the ways in which different types of militancy affected the

¹ Krista Cowman, "The Stone-Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us': the function of militancy within the Liverpool WSPU 1906-1914," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 145 (1996): 176.

physical and psychological health of suffrage activists. Furthermore, by reflecting upon the significance of supportive friendships and networks, the research project demonstrates the ways in which suffragettes and suffragette sympathisers, within Wimbledon and beyond, used their homes as centres for refuge and recuperation from 1908-1914.

The final part of the thesis moves, to some extent, away from Wimbledon's suffrage activity and with Rose Lamartine-Yates as its focus, considers instead, daily life after the WSPU. By exploring the responses of Rose and the Wimbledon Union to the First World War and the cessation of militant activism, the research demonstrates that Rose's suffrage story and political career did not end when the WSPU disbanded in 1914. By examining Rose's involvement in the establishment of the wartime organisation, The Suffragettes of the WSPU, her role as a London County Councillor from 1919 and also her contribution to the Suffragette Fellowship Collection, the thesis demonstrates the centrality of Rose to every cause and organisation that she chose to support and establish and argues that although the fight for enfranchisement was an extraordinarily important part of Rose's life and political career, it alone, did not define her.

For my Pa, I hope you would have been proud of this.

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Abbreviations

Actresses Franchise League (AFL)

Central Society for Women's Suffrage (CSWS)

Church League for Women's Suffrage (CLWS)

Cyclist's Touring Club (CTC)

East London Federation of the WSPU (ELF)

East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS)

Electoral Fighting Fund (EFF)

Independent Labour Party (ILP)

Independent WSPU (IWSPU)

Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society (LWSS)

London County Council (LCC)

London Society for Women's Suffrage (LSWS)

Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (MFWS)

Men's League for Women's Suffrage (MLWS)

Men's Political Union (MPU)

National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS)

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)

Suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union (SWSPU)

United Suffragists (US)

Votes for Women (VFW)

Wimbledon Boro' News (WBN)

Wimbledon and Merton Radical Association (WMRA)

Women's Freedom League (WFL)

Women's Liberal Association (WLA)

Women's Party (WP)

Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)

Workers' Suffrage Federation (WSF)

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Methodology and Historiography.

1.1 Introduction

Context

The organised women's movement is often said to have begun in 1865, when John Stuart Mill included the issue of women's suffrage in his parliamentary election manifesto. Mill was elected as members of Parliament (M.P) for Westminster in 1865, the same year that the Kensington Society was founded.² On the 28th April 1866 three members of this society: Barbara Bodichon, Emily Davis and Jessie Boucherett drafted a petition that was the first of its kind, asking for the 'enfranchisement of all householders, without distinction of sex, who possess such property or rental qualification as your Honorable House may determine.'³ The petition was signed by 1,499 women and presented to the House of Commons on the 7th June 1866.⁴ In 1867, when Disraeli's Reform Bill was considered by the House of Commons, Mill argued that the term 'man' should be replaced with 'person.' The Commons however, rejected the amendment by a vote of 194 to 73.⁵ This petition and proposed amendment nevertheless mobilised women who had a keen interest in women's suffrage. For instance, In November 1867, the National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS) was formed. They sought the vote 'on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men' and pledged itself to

² The Kensington Society was a debating society that meet informally at 44 Phillimore Gardens, Kensington to discuss issues that were directly related to the position of women in Victorian Britain. Among various topics that were discussed by the society was women's and girl's education and Parliamentary reform. At the centre of the organisation were women such as Barbara Bodichon, Helen Taylor, Jessie Boucherett, Elizabeth Garrett, Louis Smith, Emily Davis, Alice Westlake, Katherine Hare and Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy. The society, and the women within it, is described by Elizabeth Crawford as being a 'catalyst for the birth of the suffrage movement.' Indeed the majority of the discussion group's members not only signed the 1866 suffrage petition but also used their connections across the country to help drum up the 1,499 women signatures achieved by the petition. For more information of the Kensington Society and the Women listed here see Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999)

³ Andrew Rosen, *Rise up Women!* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 7.

⁴ Rosen, *Rise up Women!* 7.

⁵ Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928* (London: Longman, 1998), 4.

partake in ‘all practical and constitutional methods.’⁶ By 1888 however, the NSWS had split in two and was succeeded in 1897 by the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The NUWSS, which was led by Millicent Fawcett, was a federation of seventeen of the largest suffrage societies whose sole purpose was to ‘obtain parliamentary suffrage on the same terms, as it is or shall be granted to men.’⁷ The ‘constitutional’ NUWSS however, was portrayed at the beginning of the twentieth century to be a movement that had come to standstill. Sylvia Pankhurst for instance, stated that by the early 1900’s the NUWSS, who sought women’s suffrage via all legal and constitutional means, had ‘sunk into an almost morbid coma of hopelessness.’⁸ Likewise Ray Strachey suggested that the suffrage organisation was ‘farther away than ever before in the history of the agitation’ from succeeding in parliamentary reform.⁹

It was therefore, on the 10th October 1903 at 62 Nelson Street, Manchester, at the home of Emmeline Pankhurst, that a group of women, eager to force the question of women’s suffrage to the ‘forefront of practical politics’, founded the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU).¹⁰ From this date on it was decided that the Union should be free from affiliation with any of the political parties and its immediate object was to obtain the parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men. Their membership was limited to women only and their motto was the infamous ‘Deeds not Words.’ It was not until the 13th October 1905 however, that a ‘deed’ as such took place. On this date Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney disrupted a Liberal Party meeting at the Manchester Free Trade Hall. This act resulted in the first imprisonment of WSPU activists and signalled the beginning of militancy. Over the next nine years, over 1000 women (and

⁶ Rosen, *Rise up Women!*, 7.

⁷ Smith, *The British Women’s Suffrage Campaign*, 14.

⁸ Smith, *The British Women’s Suffrage Campaign*, 14.

⁹ Smith, *The British Women’s Suffrage Campaign*, 14.

¹⁰ Pankhurst, Sylvia, “The History of the Suffrage Movement: XXVIII- How the WSPU was formed.” *Votes for Women*, London: The Reformers Press, October 8, 1908, 20. From Senate House Libraries, *Special Collections*.

around 40 men) would find themselves incarcerated for committing what police perceived as public order offences.¹¹

Between 1905 and 1914 WSPU activists took part in a range of political activities. Prior to 1905, when the WSPU was in its infancy, members engaged mainly in ‘peaceful and educational work’ such as campaigning at trade union meetings and talking at meetings at Labour Churches and Clarion Clubs.¹² By early 1906 however, WSPU marches, demonstrations and deputations to parliament, along with the heckling of politicians, became crucial militant tactics for the suffragettes. This innovative type of activism from the WSPU gained attention from the entire nation and drew many women from across the country, into the struggle for women’s suffrage. This in turn, meant that an increasing amount of WSPU branches were being formed across the country. It was these local branches however, that Teresa Billington-Greig played a key part in establishing at this time, that signalled a crucial change for the WSPU. It is argued that by 1907 the local WSPU organisations enjoyed a great amount of autonomy: they could elect their own committees and employees, were independent from the national headquarters and paid no fixed fees. Effectively the local Unions were only tied to the headquarters through sympathising with the WSPU’s aim of achieving ‘Votes for Women.’¹³ The autonomy enjoyed by local branches is argued to have been a source of division and disagreement within the WSPU in 1907 and culminated in Teresa Billington-Greig along with Charlotte Despard leaving the WSPU to form their own militant organisation, the Women’s Freedom League (WFL).¹⁴

¹¹ June Purvis, “Deeds not Words: The Daily Lives of Militant Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 18:2 (1995): 91.

¹² Rosen, *Rise up Women!* 31.

¹³ Richard Whitmore, *Alice Hawkins and the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester* (Derby: Breedon Books, 2007), 40.

¹⁴ Whitmore, *The Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester*, 40.

By 1908, the WSPU had its headquarters firmly in place at Clements Inn, London. They had begun printing their own national weekly newspaper, *Votes for Women* and were an organisation in growth. By placing the WSPU headquarters in such close proximity to the centre of political power it meant that direct militant action against political targets was not just achievable but impactful. Their ‘monster’ demonstrations on the streets of the capital were unavoidable and captivated the national media.¹⁵ The one tactic however, that defined (for some time) the tactics of the WSPU and one that was written about repeatedly in the local, suffrage and national media was the suffragette hunger strike. Used, primarily, as a form of protest for political prisoner status by Marion Wallace Dunlop in July 1909, it transformed the resistance of suffragettes while imprisoned to dangerous dimensions. After being sentenced to a month’s imprisonment for tarnishing a wall in Saint Stephen’s Hall, Dunlop initiated the tactic of hunger striking. Initially this manoeuvre was successful in its intended impact as Dunlop was released after just ninety-one hours of fasting. The effect of this action is summarised by suffragette Janie Terrero who stated that ‘the only thing the government really fears is the hunger strike...they fear it not because of our pain or suffering but because it damages their majorities.’¹⁶ It is clear that the WSPU members saw Dunlop’s hunger strike as an effective tactic as it created a dilemma for the prison and for the government, as they would not want a suffragette’s death on their hands. By August 1909, Ethel Smyth suggested that ‘it rather became the rule than the exception.’¹⁷

The British government however, only tolerated this type of resistance for a short time and just over two months after Dunlop initiated the tactic of hunger striking, they decided that they were not willing to let suffragettes terminate their imprisonment using this

¹⁵ Krista Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit: Paid Organisers of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) 1904-1915*, (Manchester: MUP, 2007), 5.

¹⁶ *Votes for Women*, “The Writing on the Wall.” London: The Reformers Press, July 9th 1909, 905. From Senate House Libraries, *Special Collections*. Terrero, Janie. *The Prison Experiences of Janie Terrero*. Manuscript. Museum of London, *The Suffragette Fellowship Collection*.

¹⁷ Ethel Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden* (London: Peter Davis, 1933), 203.

method. Therefore, on the 18th of September 1909, the Home Secretary directed the prison's medical officer at H.M.P. Winson Green, Birmingham, to forcibly feed prisoners who were refusing to eat.¹⁸ This was achieved by passing a tube through the nose or mouth, which would then pass into the stomach.¹⁹ Food was then pushed down the tube and into the stomach. This was a torturous process and was represented as such by the WSPU in their propaganda. Nevertheless, It would continue to be used against suffragette hunger strikers until the summer of 1914.²⁰

In response to this kind of treatment, experienced by hundreds of suffragettes, combined with the failure of three Conciliation Bills in 1910, 1911 and 1912, the WSPU argued that because the government were damaging women's bodies and would not give the time to a women's suffrage bill that they would respond by damaging property, particularly government property. From 1912 especially, the WSPU broke windows, set fire to empty buildings, burnt golf courses with acid and poured black tar through letterboxes to destroy mail. This most severe form of activism however proved too much for some of the WSPU leadership. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence and her husband Fredrick Pethick-Lawrence, the editors of the WSPU national newspaper *Votes For Women*, felt 'deeply alarmed' by the change in tactics and thought that this type of activism would 'alienate the movement from public support.'²¹ As a result of this, the Pethick-Lawrences felt 'unable to approve' of the new militant policy and were forced to leave the WSPU. They retained control of *Votes For*

¹⁸ Elizabeth Crawford, "Police, Prisons and Prisoners: the view from the Home Office," *Women's History Review*, 14:3 (2005): 500.

¹⁹ Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Virago, 1931), 316.

²⁰ Crawford, "Police, Prisons and Prisoners," 500.

²¹ Whitmore, *The Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester*, 132-133. See also, Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*: 411-412.

Women, which ceased to be the official organ of the WSPU and was replaced by *The Suffragette*, which was edited by Christabel Pankhurst.²²

Simultaneous to the removal of the Pethick-Lawrences came Christabel's new ideology: one that was presented in a series of articles, which were then published as a pamphlet named *The Great Scourge and How to End it*. Here it is argued that she portrayed the suffragette movement as a 'revolt against the system' under which 'women were treated as sex slaves.' She demanded 'votes for women and chastity for men.'²³ Alongside this ideology was also the adoption of an anti-male policy by Christabel Pankhurst and the portrayal of the suffrage campaign 'as a "sex-war" against men' rather than a constant battle with the Liberal Government.²⁴ Furthermore, her refusal to work with men's organisations and anti-male policies that stated that the WSPU could no longer appear on public platforms with men, pushed many male supporters away from the WSPU and caused the dissolution of the Men's Political Union (MPU). This policy also caused Christabel's sister, Sylvia, to become disillusioned with the party and pushed her to form the East London Federation of the WSPU (ELF). However, by 1914 Sylvia was expelled from the WSPU for continuing to ignore WSPU policy and the ELF renamed themselves the East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS) and continued in their campaign work well into the First World War. The Great War however, put an end to the WSPU as a militant organisation, with the leadership focusing their efforts on supporting the country's war effort.

²² Harold. L Smith, also suggests that it wasn't just the Pethick-Lawrence's disapproval of increasing violent militant tactics that caused a rift between the leadership of the WSPU but that it was the break with the Labour Party in 1912, and Christabel's adoption of various anti-male policies, that also contributed to Emmeline and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence's expulsion from the WSPU. See Smith's discussion of the 'sex-war' in Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign*, 56-57.

²³ Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign*, 39.

²⁴ Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign*, 39-40.

What is apparent from this historical context is that the historiographical narrative that has often been painted by historians of the women suffrage movement is one that is largely London-centric. What is seen when the history of the suffragette movement is examined, is a broad national history that has focused almost exclusively, on the flamboyant activities of the WSPU in the capital and the organisations central leadership. Although the London-centred narrative has not gone uncontested, particularly by historians whose studies have focused on the suffrage organisations within a particular, city, region, district or town, there is still a wealth of evidence present at a local level that has remained mostly in the shadows.

Overview of the Research

It is suggested by Krista Cowman that the WSPU branch was an important place for the ‘feminist and political development for many political activists.’²⁵ Furthermore, that the local branches of the WSPU played the biggest part in shaping the political and suffrage identities of their suffrage activists and that it was at a local level that ‘the majority of suffrage activists engaged in campaign work.’²⁶ Strikingly however, little has been published on the local branches of the WSPU and the local women who engaged in the struggle for women’s suffrage. Considering that there were over 121 WSPU branches within the United Kingdom by the end of 1914, it seems extraordinary that only a handful local movements (including, the suffrage movements of Lancashire, Merseyside, Portsmouth, York and Leicester) have been written about to any substantial degree.²⁷ This research project seeks to

²⁵ Krista Cowman, “The Stone-Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us’: The Function of Militancy within the Liverpool WSPU 1906-1914,” *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 145 (1996): 176.

²⁶ Cowman, “The Stone-Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us,” 176.

²⁷ Figure taken from a WSPU pamphlet that listed all branches across the United Kingdom in February 1914. The pamphlet appears to be a supplement to the Eighth Annual Report of the WSPU. For information by region see: The WSPU, *Branches Across the United Kingdom*, February 1914. Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, UDC, Box 382.

change this. By focusing on Wimbledon, which was described at the time as one of the most successful (prosperous) branches of the WSPU, this thesis aims to challenge the way in which the militant struggle for women's suffrage is represented in current historiography. Specifically the idea that 'only a small and privileged band of women were responsible for the militant struggle.'²⁸ This project builds on previous local studies and continues to move the focus of consideration away from the WSPU's national leadership and towards the branch where the majority of campaigning and individual political development took place.

The first two research chapters of this thesis will begin to construct this local suffrage history by examining the Wimbledon WSPU and its origins. By focusing on one of the project's main research questions: what was daily life and activism like at branch level for the individuals who sustained the branch?²⁹ This chapter will demonstrate how a branch that would potentially be classed as London centred operated as an individual Union that initiated its own developments and took part in a range of militant activities. Furthermore, by paying particular attention to the interrelationship between the local and national in the practice of the WSPU this initial chapter will show how the Wimbledon branch, and the activists within it, saw their suburban district of southwest London as their locale, and therefore, focused

G. Barnsby, *Votes for Women: The Struggle for the Vote in the Black Country* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1995); B. M. Willmott Dobbie, *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset: Eagle House, Batheaston* (Bath: Batheaston Society, 1979); I. Dove, *Yours in the Cause: A Brief Account of Suffragettes in Lewisham, Greenwich and Woolwich* (Lewisham: Lewisham and Greenwich Library Service, 1988); G. Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women* (London, 1994); D. Neville, *To Make Their Mark: the Women's Suffrage Movement in the North East of England 1900–1914* (Newcastle: History Workshop Trust, 1997); S. Peacock, "Votes for Women: The Women's Fight in Portsmouth," *Portsmouth Papers* 39 (1983); Krista Cowman, "Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother", *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920* (Liverpool, LUP, 2004); Krista Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed: The Huddersfield Women's Social and Political Union Minute Book January 1907–1909, a New Source for Suffrage History," *Twentieth Century British History* 13: 3 (2002); Richard Whitmore, *Alice Hawkins: and the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester* (Derby: Breedon House, 2007)

²⁸ Whitmore, *Alice Hawkins*, 10.

²⁹ Purvis, "Deeds not Words", 91-101. Here Purvis looks at what she terms the 'daily life' of militant and non-militants in the WSPU. This, according to Purvis, can mean anything from taking part in administrative work at local and national level, selling newspapers and working in WSPU shops to chaining yourself to railings outside parliament. She claims that the importance lies not in what types of activity women took part in on a day-to-day basis but that activism varied within the large organisation. The kind of militant you were depended on the type of day to day activism.

For a more in-depth discussion of the connections between the 'local' and 'everyday' see also; Karen Hunt and June Hannam, "Towards and Archaeology of Interwar Women's Politic: The Local and Everyday," in *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, ed. Julie V. Gottlieb and Richard Toye. (London: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2013), 124-141.

their activism there. One activist that this chapter and the thesis more generally will focus on is the Wimbledon WSPU's organising secretary, Rose Lamartine-Yates. It has been suggested that Rose was central to sustaining the Wimbledon WSPU as it was she who organised fund raising activities, 'At Home' meetings, the Wimbledon WSPU shop, along with constantly contributing to local and national newspapers on the local and national suffrage campaign³⁰. Unearthing Rose's story is essential to expanding our understanding of the ordinary membership of the WSPU and the relationship between activists and other members. Only by looking at branches like Wimbledon and the daily lives and suffrage experiences of women within them, can we continue to challenge existing assumptions such as: the fight for women's suffrage had little to do with women outside of central London and that the 'WSPU's most 'adaptable and mobile instruments were of course the young, unmarried and the unattached.'³¹ Although this thesis focuses predominantly on the suffrage movement in Wimbledon and the suffrage and political career of Rose Lamartine-Yates, the research findings will be compared to other historical research that focuses on the suffrage movement in different localities. Consequently, this thesis will be able to illustrate how local Unions in very different localities could perhaps operate in similar or different ways and furthermore, discern whether branches within different areas had coherent roles.

The study will then move on to examine the ways in which changing levels in militancy affected local WSPU activists. Particularly the ways in which activism affected their physical and mental health. Although there is a great deal of literature surrounding suffragette prison experiences (and the physical health consequences of hunger striking and

³⁰ Rose's role within the Wimbledon WSPU was the branch's 'organising secretary' a job which she had volunteered for in 1910. This role was unpaid, but would have been very similar to the work undertaken by a paid local organiser.

³¹ Brian Harrison, "The Act of Militancy: Violence and Suffragettes, 1904-14," in *Peaceable Kingdom*, ed. Brian Harrison (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 64. See also, June Hannam, "I Not Been To London': Women's Suffrage- A View from the Regions," in *Votes for Women*, ed. June Purvis, Sandra Holton (London: Routledge, 2000), 226.

force feeding) little attention is paid to the way in which prisoners recuperated from their prison experiences.³² Accordingly, the significance of the discovery that Yates' house, Dorset Hall was used as a 'refuge for suffragettes' becomes apparent.³³ In addition, press reports, particularly between 1909 and 1914 (when hunger striking had become a normal practice of imprisoned suffragettes) show that many activists, including Rose, had to stop their daily suffrage activism at various points because of health problems.³⁴ In order to develop this research, which stems from my MA dissertation, a further central question that the present thesis seeks to uncover is how the Wimbledon branch dealt with supporting and sustaining all of its members, particularly those who were active militants? Chapter four of this thesis therefore, will explore how suffragettes (at a local level) set up networks of care for former prisoners, both before and during the Cat and Mouse Act when hunger striking suffragettes were released from prison to recuperate sufficiently to be re-arrested to serve a further part of their sentence.

In order to examine a further central research question: what role did inter-organisational networks play in the connection of local suffrage branches?³⁵ The fifth chapter in this thesis will move the focus of consideration away from the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU and Rose Lamartine-Yates and explore the wider suffrage movement in Wimbledon. Specifically, the ways in which women and men directed their suffrage activity through organisations like: the Wimbledon branch of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage (CSWS) the London Society for Women's Suffrage (LSWS), the Wimbledon, Merton, and Tooting Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (MFWS) and the Church League for

³² For examples on what has been written on suffragette health see June Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain," *Women's History Review* 4 (1995). Jennian F. Geddes, "Culpable Complicity: The Medical Profession and the Forcible Feeding of Suffragettes, 1909-1914," *Women's History Review* 17:1 (2009)

³³ Gail Cameron, "Rose Lamartine-Yates (1875-1954)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004).

³⁴ Rosen, *Rise Up, Women!* 121.

³⁵ Krista Cowman, "Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside," in *The Suffrage Reader, Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini. (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

Women's Suffrage (CLWS). Krista Cowman, in her local study of Merseyside, explores the importance of friendship networks in building local suffrage branches and argues the importance of these networks to 'the breaking down of barriers between organisations that appear impenetrable at leadership level.'³⁶ Cowman suggests, in fact, that at a local level in particular, membership between various organisations could overlap. This research chapter then seeks to build on this by examining the significance of the aforementioned Wimbledon suffrage organisations and discern whether suffrage activists in Wimbledon located their political activities across a range of suffrage organisations or whether they remained loyal to a particular suffrage organisation.

Although the main aim of this thesis is to reconstruct suffragette history at a local level, it is important to also recognise that the suffrage years only represented a small, albeit significant period in many women's lives. With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, suffrage activists saw an end to WSPU militancy by a national WSPU leadership that embraced patriotism. As the WSPU had mobilised many women locally and nationally into the public sphere, it has been suggested that the 'unexpected demise' of their local Unions left a 'large vacuum.'³⁷ Accordingly throughout the final two chapters of this thesis this project will focus particularly on the insights that can be gained from exploring the ways in which the life story of Rose Lamartine-Yates functions as a lens into broader issues about women's daily life during WW1 and political activism through and beyond, the extension of the franchise.

The final section of the thesis particularly seeks to demonstrate that Rose's life, and the lives of other activists, should not only be defined by their suffrage activism. Chapters six and seven will make a significant contribution to the growing historiography which reveal the extent

³⁶ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations*, 97.

³⁷ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations*, 142-143.

and complexity of women's responses to WW1 and illustrate how the extension to the franchise opened up new possibilities for newly enfranchised women. In particular, Rose's local work during the war, her role in the formation of the wartime suffrage organisation: the Suffragettes of the WSPU, her job as a London County Councillor for North Lambeth from 1919-1922 and her contribution to the post-war memorialising of the suffrage campaign, will be focused upon.

Although this introductory chapter has given an overview of the proposed research project, its context and the key research questions, it is essential now to explore the ways in which methodologies have shaped this thesis and examine any methodological and source weaknesses that this thesis needs to consider and confront.

1.2 Consultation of Primary Sources

A benefit of choosing the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU and Rose Lamartine-Yates as a focus for this doctoral thesis is that there are an extensive range of undiscovered and under-explored primary sources available to gain new insights from. The first set of under-explored primary sources that the thesis will focus upon will be, national, local and suffrage newspapers. It will be through the systematic analysis of weekly editions of *Votes for Women* (hereafter *VFW*) *The Suffragette* (1912-1915) and *The Wimbledon Boro' News* (hereafter *WBN*) that will make this project particularly distinctive. The analysis of these newspapers (from 1908-1915) will enable this thesis to map out Wimbledon's role within the WSPU locally and nationally. The same newspapers will also allow one to piece together Rose Lamartine-Yates' career locally and nationally within the WPSU in order to assess whether her suffrage journey was idiosyncratic and to trace the interrelationship between the local and national practice of

the WSPU. The local and suffrage newspapers are a particularly rich source of information as they contain much needed accounts of local suffragette meetings, lectures, updates, key suffrage events and court proceedings. Additionally, in order to examine Wimbledon's broader suffrage politics, the weekly additions of *The Vote* and *The Common Cause* will be examined. The thesis will also refer to national newspapers such as the *Daily Herald* and *The Times* for material on the social and political context of Wimbledon. Nevertheless, because the information that these newspapers contain will be used to illustrate and support many of the arguments of this thesis, it is important to be aware of the limitations of using them as historical sources.

Throughout my training as a historian, I have always been taught to ask certain questions about the sources that I use, the most important questions being: who wrote it? when was it produced? why was it created? However, when these questions are asked of some of the newspaper articles that are analysed within this thesis, the answers are sometimes not obvious or easily obtainable. For instance, all of the articles in the *WBN* give no suggestion as to who they are written by. The only name that appears is that of the editor on the front page. Any proprietors or journalists are unknown. It is therefore difficult to know whose opinion we are reading. Nevertheless, when reading this local newspaper it is very clear that there is no attempt to report on local events in a biased or partial way. The accounts of suffragette meetings, for instance, are presented to the reader as they have seemingly been observed. Although the *WBN* appears to have little agenda, other than to inform the Wimbledon residents of the activities that took place in and around the town every week, the papers editor was a Liberal and a supporter of parliamentary reform. The same, however, cannot be said for *VFW* and *The Suffragette*, both of which were, at different times, official organs for the WSPU.

VFW began as a monthly newspaper in 1907 but began to be published on a weekly basis in April 1908. It was edited and financed by Emmeline and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence and was the WSPU's official newspaper until October 1912 when Christabel Pankhurst expelled the Pethick-Lawrences from the WSPU after a disagreement regarding the WSPU's proposed arson campaign. *VFW* remained under the control of the Pethick-Lawrence's until 1914, when it was given to the United Suffragettes (US). Consequently, from October 1912 the WSPU's official newspaper became *The Suffragette*, a newspaper that was edited by Christabel Pankhurst.

The source limitations of *VFW* and *The Suffragette* are several, as both newspapers were undoubtedly and unapologetically partisan. It is apparent from the outset that the official WSPU newspapers were published predominately to promote and gain support for the suffragette movement. This can be seen when the price of the weekly newspaper was reduced from 3d to 1d in order to boost circulation. This, along with a mass advertising campaign meant that the circulation of *VFW* eventually reached over 30,000 copies per week and *The Suffragette* over 17,000.³⁸ As these newspapers were one of the WSPU's main tools for propaganda and crucial to the recruitment of potential sympathisers, it is important to be aware that anything published in them would have been heavily biased, censored and have a specific political agenda: that being to promote and gain the vote for women on the same terms or as it shall be granted to men. However, although we have to bear this in mind when examining the newspapers' contents and also exercise some form of judgment when analysing these publications, it is also essential to note that these two newspapers are full of valuable historical evidence: articles, extensive coverage of suffragette marches, demonstrations, deputations, court trials, biographies and hundreds of advertisements. This

³⁸Elizabeth, Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement, A Reference Guide, 1866-1928*. (London: Routledge, 2001). See section on Women Suffrage Newspapers and Journals.

provides a historical record that is unparalleled in suffrage history and a source that is crucial, despite its apparent weaknesses, to this research project.

As the analysis of newspapers is clearly central to this thesis methodological approach, it is important to recognise that advancements in digital technologies have made it much simpler for present-day historians to access full texts of national, regional and international newspapers. Although the *WBN* and the *Suffragette* are still only available to view in archives or on microfilm, *VFW*, *Common Cause* and *The Times* are now easily accessible via searchable newspaper archives, namely The Times Digital Archive and Google News, meaning that researchers have immediate access to a vast amount of historical sources.

A further set of sources that are central to this investigation are the papers of Rose Lamartine-Yates and the Wimbledon WSPU. The Women's Library archive at the London School of Economics and the John Innes Society hold (in total) three files and one metal chest that contain archival material pertaining to the Wimbledon WSPU and Rose Lamartine-Yates. Rose's personal collections consist predominantly of manuscript and typescript lecture notes by Rose and many photographs. They also include press cuttings, flyers, membership cards and Annual Reports relating to the Wimbledon WSPU. The examination of these files was imperative to this research project as many of the archived sources concerning the Wimbledon WSPU and Rose have never been examined or published before. Accordingly, this will allow for the present study of a local branch and its leadership that is the first of its kind.

Nevertheless, as many of these sources will be used as lens through which this thesis will critically and analytically construct a local suffrage history of Wimbledon and Rose's

suffrage and political career, it is important to be aware that many of the documents in this archive are personal texts and therefore contain an unavoidable bias in the selection and presentation of the documents. Accordingly, this thesis will look beyond the written word, being mindful that because Rose was a middle-class women, who would had the education, time and knowledge to engage in the creation of documents including speeches and newspaper articles, that her writings and the material contained within her archives, may not always represent the views and experiences of all women within the local and national suffragette movement. By reading through the silences and examining Rose's papers in tandem with other suffragette's accounts and a wider range of primary sources, this thesis will be able to critically construct a history that is shaped by more than one woman's experiences and opinions.

The Suffragette Fellowship Collection is a further set of sources that this thesis will examine.³⁹ These being of particular importance to the investigation as Rose Lamartine-Yates along with Una Duval, was one of the founding members of the Women's Record Room, a repository that now forms part of the Suffragette Fellowship Collection. The examination of this material then is essential, as these archives may hold a substantial amount of information pertaining to the life Rose Lamartine-Yates and the activities of the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU. Although the examination of the personal papers, textiles, and printed ephemera housed at the Museum of London is undoubtedly crucial to this thesis, historians have voiced concerns regarding The Suffragette Fellowship archive.

³⁹ The Suffragette Fellowship collection comprises of books, pamphlets, periodicals, printed ephemera (leaflets, posters, tickets etc.), photographs, press cuttings, personal papers, textiles (including banners) and objects recording the campaign for women's enfranchisement. This collection has over 1800 pieces of material. Rose Lamartine-Yates, along with Una Dugale Duval was one of the founding members of the Suffragette Record Room, a repository that now forms part of the Suffragette Fellowship Collection. The examination of this is essential, as it will hold a great amount of information on Rose Lamartine-Yates and the Wimbledon branch.

Hilda Kean argues that suffrage feminists sought in the 1920s and 30s to ‘represent themselves within history’ and that the Suffragette Fellowship played a key role in encouraging women to ‘perpetuate the memory of the pioneers connected with women’s emancipation and especially with the militant suffrage campaign.’⁴⁰ Laura Mayhall agrees with Kean and suggests that the archive presents similar concerns to that of suffragette autobiographies (a further source that this thesis will utilise) as it is accounts within this archive and in post-war memoirs that are said to ‘support a post-war construction’ of women’s suffrage.⁴¹ A major part of this post-war construction is the rigid dichotomy between ‘militant’ and ‘constitutional’ suffrage organisations. Moreover, Mayhall suggests that the Suffragette Fellowship promoted the creation of a ‘master narrative’ of the militant suffrage movement. One that ‘privileged the sequence of events leading from action on the part of women, to their arrest and incarceration’ and also omitted forms of militancy that many women took part in, such as passive resistance and tax resistance. Because of this, Mayhall concludes that militancy is frozen into a ‘static, either/or position’ and loses sight of militancy’s ‘dynamic and evolving nature.’⁴² Furthermore, she suggests that members of the Fellowship ‘refigured’ women’s experiences, therefore creating, ‘our’ vision of the women’s suffrage movement today.⁴³ Nevertheless, although there are limitations of using the Suffragette Fellowship Collection, the source material contained within this archive will not be the only body of evidence that this thesis draws upon to examine the militant suffrage movement in Wimbledon. It seems that it is only when historians have used this archive as the ‘primary body of evidence,’ upon which they draw conclusions from, that their histories, perhaps, become more questionable.

⁴⁰ Hilda Kean, “Searching for the Past in Present Defeat: The Construction of Historical and Political Identity in British Feminism in the 1920’s and 1930’s,” *Women’s History Review* 3:1 (1994): 60-61.

⁴¹ Laura E. Nym Mayhall, “Creating the ‘Suffragette Spirit’: British Feminism and the Historical Imagination,” *Women’s History Review* 4:3 (2006): 322.

⁴² Mayhall, “Creating the ‘Suffragette Spirit,” 332-339.

⁴³ Mayhall, “Creating the ‘Suffragette Spirit,” 335.

1.3 Methodologies

As the focus of this thesis is to reconfigure suffrage history from the local to the national by reconstructing the daily suffrage activity of women in Wimbledon it seems most appropriate that the methodology chosen is one that complements the subject matter. Women's history is an historical approach that does this, as it takes women as its subject and places them at the heart of the historical narrative. Nevertheless although women's history, as a discipline and a methodological framework, is an 'integral part of British feminism', it has not gone uncontested.⁴⁴ This sub-chapter therefore, will examine the debates surrounding women's history as a methodological approach, particularly the ways in which biography has become an integral part of women's history, the use of patriarchy as an analytical tool by women's historians and the contentions surrounding women's history and gender history as approaches to historical research. Furthermore, this chapter will also demonstrate the ways in which women's and gender history have shaped the key research questions that will be central to this thesis.

The Emergence of Women's History and Feminist Biography

Although the 1960s is a period that signaled the emergence of second wave feminism in Britain, it is also recognised as the point at which women's history began to break into British academia, as it was during this time that a new generation of feminist historians were calling for a 'new social history' to be written.⁴⁵ One that would focus on women: a sex who,

⁴⁴ Krista Cowman, "There Is So Much, And It Will All Be History": Feminist Activists as Historians, the Case of British Suffrage Historiography, 1908-2007", in *Gendering Historiography: Beyond National Canons*, ed. Angelika Epple and Angelika Schaser. (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 2009), 142.

⁴⁵ Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and History*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 50.

until then, had remained largely 'hidden from history.'⁴⁶ Barbara Caine suggests that the emphasis on the need to 'recover, explore and understand' the lives and experiences of the very women that had been 'hidden from history' resulted in the emergence of histories, particularly biographies, that concentrated on the lives of 'exceptional' and 'heroic' women.⁴⁷ Although this tradition of biographical writing, that Natalie Zemon Davis names 'women worthies', had a 'polemical purpose', this being to reveal the range of women's abilities, it also provided an archetype to demonstrate what women had done and were capable of (if they were given the right education). Nevertheless, it is a tradition that has many limitations.

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Gerda Lerner for instance, argues that by simply asking which women are missing from history and what they achieved, resulted in a history of 'notable women' and does little to reveal anything about the activities that most women engaged in and the significance of women's activities to society as a whole.⁴⁹ Likewise, Barbara Caine suggests that the 'exceptional nature, unusual experiences and great achievements' that typify biographies of prominent women, create histories that are 'useless to historians' who wish to recreate and understand the daily lives and struggles of ordinary women.⁵⁰ Carolyn Steedman also maintains that 'the central stories' of prominent women can only be maintained by the 'marginality of others.'⁵¹ Therefore, in order to create a history of women that is representative of the 'mass of women', Lerner argues that historians need to be aware that women of different classes have different experiences, experiences that are further shaped by

⁴⁶ Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against it*, (London: Pluto Press, 1973)

⁴⁷ Barbara Caine, "Feminist Biography and Feminist History," *Women's History Review*, 3:2 (1994): 247-250

⁴⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women's History in Transition: The European Case", *Feminist Studies* 3 (1976): 83.

⁴⁹ Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies*, 3 (1975): 5.

⁵⁰ Barbara Caine, "Feminist Biography and Feminist History," *Women's History Review*, 3:2 (1994): 247-250

⁵¹ Carolyn Steedman, *Past Tenses: Essays on Writing Autobiography and History*, (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1992), 46.

their ‘work’, ‘expression’ and ‘consciousness.’⁵² Although Lerner’s argument here is important to consider when analysing the experiences of women in Wimbledon and beyond, it is also crucial to remember that women’s experiences are shaped by much more than this. For instance, issues such as: age, marital status, sexual orientation, familial responsibilities and friendship networks also played a large part in shaping the experiences of women. Particularly when the diverse range of women that were involved in the women’s suffrage movement is considered.

With these arguments considered it is crucial to note that although the current thesis has a biographical strand, which runs throughout its entirety, this research project will look beyond what Maureen Wright has termed the ‘spotlight approach’ and use Rose Lamartine Yates’s life as a lens through which to critically examine and understand the contemporary society in which she lived. Furthermore, it will examine the forces that shaped her and other women’s lives and decisions, within the campaign for enfranchisement and beyond.⁵³ By using individual lives and stories to re-examine particular societies, institutions and social and cultural movements, Caine suggests that biography can occupy a more ‘central ground’ by shedding new light onto different historical periods and ‘bring[ing] individuals and groups who had previously been ignored into the framework of historical analysis.’⁵⁴ Likewise, Sandra Holton argues that a ‘turn to personal history’ and the analysis of the daily lives of a set of individuals or a ‘reduction in focus to a single community, family or individual’, can result in the construction of ‘fresh narratives of the suffrage movement.’⁵⁵ Richard Whitmore’s monograph of Alice Hawkins and the Leicester suffragette movement is clearly an example of how, by focusing on a local community and using Alice’s life as a lens through

⁵² Lerner, “Placing Women in History,” 5.

⁵³ Maureen Wright: *Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy and the Victorian Feminist Movement: The Biography of an Insurgent Woman*, (Manchester: MUP, 2011), 6-7

⁵⁴ Barbara Caine, *Biography and History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

⁵⁵ Sandra Holton, “Challenging Masculinism: Personal History and Microhistory in Feminist Studies of the Women’s Suffrage Movement”, *Women’s History Review*, 20:5 (2011): 834-836.

which to explore and understand the Leicester WSPU, Whitmore was able to make a significant contribution to our understanding of working women's roles and contributions to the local suffragette movement.⁵⁶ This thesis however, seeks to go further than Whitmore, in the sense that the insights that are gleaned from Rose's life will not simply be used to shed light onto the Wimbledon WSPU but, they will be used to further illuminate our understanding of the wider suffrage movement in Wimbledon and the daily life of Rose and other activists after the cessation of militancy in 1914.

Patriarchy as an Analytical Tool

A further point of debate for women's historians surrounds the issues of oppression and the use of patriarchy as an analytical tool by women's historians. Lerner argues that although questions surrounding oppression are important to consider and have resulted in 'valuable accounts' that demonstrate how society, politics, class and individuals have affected women, questions that focus on oppression and/ or the subordination of women must not be regarded on their own.

Shelia Rowbotham however, went further than Lerner and suggested that when feminists began to recover women's experiences they found that it was necessary to use the concept of patriarchy and/or the subordination of women as the definitive theory and analytical tool for their arguments. Nonetheless, Rowbotham argued that when feminists began to write about women's experiences, they thought that it was necessary to differentiate women's subordination as a sex, from their class oppression. In addition, it was also argued

⁵⁶ Richard Whitmore, *Alice Hawkins and the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester*, (Cornwall: Breedon Books Publishing, 2007)

that inequality between men and women was not only spawned from capitalism but that it was also a distinguishing feature of all societies.⁵⁷ For Rowbotham then, patriarchy (as an analytical tool) posed problems for historians as the literal meaning of patriarchy is ‘the power of the father.’ This suggested that there was a single determining factor for the oppression of women and that there was and is a ‘universal and historical form of oppression.’⁵⁸ Rowbotham argued further by suggesting that the concept of patriarchy denied women historical agency, as the concept suggested a ‘fatalistic submission that allows no space for the complexities of women’s defiance.’⁵⁹

Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor have more recently defended the use of patriarchy, particularly as a theoretical tool for describing women’s oppression.⁶⁰ As socialist feminist historians, they share Rowbotham’s desire for further research into women’s lives and experiences but argue that patriarchy is a necessary tool that shows the uniqueness of sexual conflict. For Taylor and Alexander, women’s historical experiences cannot be properly recovered without the suitable framework through which certain questions can be asked. By simply detailing how women behaved or what they said on certain issues, Taylor and Alexander argue that we cannot gain the insight into women’s lives that is needed. For them, we must analyse women’s lives with the concepts ‘forged for that purpose’ (patriarchy) and examine the ‘underlying reality’ of those experiences.⁶¹ Taylor’s study of the tensions between socialism and feminism in the 19th century demonstrate how patriarchy cannot only be used as a theoretical and analytical tool but can also be successfully combined with class analysis.⁶²

⁵⁷ Sheila Rowbotham, “The Trouble with Patriarchy”, in *The Feminist Reader*, ed. Sue Morgan. (London: Routledge, 2006), 52.

⁵⁸ Rowbotham, “The Trouble with Patriarchy”, 52.

⁵⁹ Rowbotham, “The Trouble with Patriarchy”, 52.

⁶⁰ Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor, “In Defense of ‘Patriarchy’ ” *The Feminist Reader*, ed. Sue Morgan. (London: Routledge, 2006), 56-58.

⁶¹ Alexander and Taylor, “In Defense of ‘Patriarchy’”, 57.

⁶² Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem, Socialism Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Virgo Press, 1983). June Purvis, *Women’s History Britain, 1850-1945*, (London:UCL,1995), 8.

With the arguments of the aforementioned historians in mind it seems that there is a benefit of using patriarchy as an analytical tool because, as Judith Bennett has noted, women collectively, in the past and the present, are subjugated and disempowered as a group compared to men. Nevertheless, it is clear that patriarchy is a concept that must be employed carefully. Although patriarchy is essential to explaining women's oppression (prior to, during, and after women's involvement in the women's suffrage movement) it will not be the definitive theory and analytical tool for my arguments as there are a variety of factors that determine women's oppression. Factors that change depending on time and space. Judith Bennett suggests this when she argues that the disadvantages faced by women in the past and in the present day 'vary considerably', particularly by class, race religion, sexuality and world region.⁶³ Moreover this thesis does not seek to deny women of their historical agency, like Rowbotham suggests, the concept of patriarchy can do, when utilised alone. Instead, this thesis seeks to demonstrate how women, in face of oppression, were defiant and resistant to their position in society.⁶⁴

Women's History and Gender History: A Contentious Debate

When examining the historiographical debates surrounding women's history it is impossible to ignore the fact that a number historians over the past 50 years have felt that the limitations of women's history and sex as an analytical category were too great and as a consequence began to discuss the need for a new historical concept. Joan Kelly and Natalie Zemon Davis, for instance, suggest that we should not be studying women in isolation and opposed to men, rather, that women and men needed to be studied in relation to each other. Davis argued that 'we should be interested in the history of both women and men... not

⁶³ Judith Bennett, *History Matters* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 10.

⁶⁴ Rowbotham, "The Trouble with Patriarchy", 52.

working only on the subjected sex.⁶⁵ The goal of historians, she suggested, should be to understand the importance of gender groups and sex roles throughout various periods of time and societies. Kelly supported this notion stating that ‘the activity, power and cultural evaluation of women simply cannot be assessed except in relational terms.’⁶⁶ It was these calls by individuals such as Davis and Kelly that encouraged other historians to question whether it would be possible to produce a comprehensive work on social history without including gender.

One scholar who felt that historians needed to use gender as an analytic category was Joan Scott. Scott suggested that feminist historians, because of how they had been trained, had become comfortable with description as oppose to theory. She suggested that it was not enough for historians of women to prove that females had a history or participated in it because in the case of most non -feminist historians, they have responded by separating themselves from this kind of history or simply dismissing it. A typical argument is that ‘women had a history separate from men’s, therefore let feminists do women’s history which need not concern us.’⁶⁷ Scott suggested that the reason for such a response was because of the theoretical approach they had taken. The only way to resolve this, according to Scott, was to develop ‘gender as an analytic category.’⁶⁸ This required an analysis that she suggests went further than women’s history. In essence, it was an approach that analysed the relationship between men and women’s past experiences. Furthermore, Scott suggested that we should ask questions such as ‘how does gender work in human social relationships and how does gender give meaning to the organisation and perceptions of historical knowledge?’ Scott also claimed that only by using gender as an analytical category can we answer these questions.

⁶⁵ Zemon Davis, “Women’s History in Transition,” 90.

⁶⁶ Joan Kelly-Gadol, “The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women’s History,” *Signs* 1 (1976): 817.

⁶⁷ Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986): 1055.

⁶⁸ Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category”, 1055.

Although Scott recognised that historians had attempted to ‘theorise about gender’, they had done so using ‘traditional social scientific frameworks, using long standing formulations that [provided] universal causal explanations.’⁶⁹ It was the historians’ misuse of gender as an analytical category and theories such as patriarchy and psychoanalytical theory that Scott believed were limiting research.⁷⁰ According to her, they were ‘ahistorical and redundant’, therefore making it possible to propose her alternative approach.⁷¹

Scott maintained that historians had to alter some of the ways they had gone about studying the past and ask different questions. She suggested that ‘we need to scrutinise our methods of analysis, clarify our operative assumptions and explain how we think change occurs... we have to conceive of processes so interconnected that they cannot be disentangled.’⁷² Consequently, she created a theory which was informed by Derrida’s deconstructionism and Foucault’s ‘formulation of dispersed power’, asking historians to ‘analyse the language of gender.’⁷³ Not only did Scott believe ‘gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes’ but that ‘gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power.’⁷⁴ Going further still, she suggested, ‘changes in organisation of social relationships always correspond to changes in representations of power.’⁷⁵ Scott, therefore, invited historians to look at how ‘the so-called natural relationship between male and female, structured, naturalized and legitimized

⁶⁹ Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category,” 1055.

⁷⁰ Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category,” 1055.

⁷¹ Joanne Meyerowitz, “AHR Forum: Revisiting Gender A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 113:5 (2008): 1347.

⁷² Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category,” 1067.

⁷³ Meyerowitz, “Revisiting Gender,” 1347.

Deconstruction, is a way of reading and understanding texts. Derrida, the person who is associated with this method, suggested that texts can never definitively establish meaning due the fact that texts contain internal contradictions that undermine their claims to truth or meaning. He suggested that we should read what is not included or silenced.

With regard to Foucault, knowledge/ truth equals power. Yet he suggests that power is not necessarily possessed but that it is in flux and negotiable.

⁷⁴ Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category,” 1067.

⁷⁵ Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category,” 1067.

relationships of power.⁷⁶ Although Scott's article theorised a way for historians to do more than simply write women into history, her article did not stand uncontested and a great deal of criticism came from within the discipline of women's history.

Catherine Hall questioned the impact of Scott's article. She suggested that gender history as an approach to historical research was already emerging and being used by historians. This is exemplified when she stated that 'we did not need post-structuralism to develop gender as a category of analysis- rather it emerged out of years of work both with text and consciousness raising groups.'⁷⁷ Hall also demonstrates how gender (as a category of analysis) had been used in a book that she and Leonore Davidoff had published in 1987, entitled, *Family Fortunes*.⁷⁸ It was within this text that Hall argued that they had already used 'gender conceptually to mean the social organisation of relations between the sexes and argued that thought of in this way, gender is a constitutive element of all social relations.'⁷⁹ She further suggested that feminists did not need to use Foucault and post-structuralism in order to comprehend that 'power operates on many sites [and that] historical writing was a male centred form of knowledge.'⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Hall was by no means Scott's only critic. Some of the greatest points of contention concerning this article came from historians such as Judith Bennett and Marilyn Lake. Lake argued that the suggested shift from women's history to gender history worried many feminist historians and she was 'fearful that women once again will be lost sight of.'⁸¹ However, Lake did agree with Scott to some extent as she believed that historians should move beyond the women's sphere. Furthermore, they should make it their duty to

⁷⁶ Scott, "Gender: a Useful Category," 1073.

⁷⁷ Catherine Hall, "Politics, Post-structuralism and Feminist History," *Gender and History* 3:2 (1991): 209.

⁷⁸ Hall, "Politics, Post-structuralism and Feminist History," 209.

⁷⁹ Hall, "Politics, Post-structuralism and Feminist History," 209.

⁸⁰ Hall, "Politics, Post-structuralism and Feminist History," 209.

⁸¹ Marylyn Lake, "Women Gender and History," *Australian Feminist Studies* 7:8 (1988): 1.

‘reinterpret [and] rewrite the histories of whole societies.’⁸² One issue that Lake made very clear however, when commenting on gender as an analytical category, was that women must not disappear from sight when we ask questions about masculine history and its relationships with women.⁸³ Lake claimed that the subject matter was extremely important and that ‘we must constitute women as historical subjects’ and demonstrate how significant that history is.⁸⁴ Judith Bennett, a historian of medieval women’s history, went further than Lake. She suggested that the study of gender, as presented by Scott must be ‘pursued carefully and never in isolation from other feminist historical work.’⁸⁵ Bennett argued that ‘the Scottian study of gender ignores women *qua* womenit evinces very little interest in material reality and it intellectualises and abstracts the inequality of the sexes.’⁸⁶

What is important to note however, is that criticism of Scott’s work did not just come from within her own scholastic sphere. Her article was also scrutinised by labour historian Bryan Palmer, who questioned what has been called the ‘linguistic turn’ defined by Kathleen Canning as the way in which ‘language is seen as constituting historical events and human consciousness.’⁸⁷ Many gender historians embraced this new notion by placing ‘language and discourse at the centre of their examination of how gender was constituted and how it influenced historical processes.’⁸⁸ Not only this, but many began to comprehend language and discourse as things that made up ‘historical reality- constructing rather than simply reflecting it.’⁸⁹ Palmer argued, however, that the correct way to conduct historical

⁸² Lake, “Women Gender and History,” 3.

⁸³ Lake, “Women Gender and History,” 6.

⁸⁴ Lake, “Women Gender and History,” 6.

⁸⁵ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 63.

⁸⁶ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 258.

⁸⁷ For an in depth explanation of the ‘linguistic turn’ see Kathleen Canning, “Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience,” *Signs* 19:2 (1994): 68-404.

⁸⁸ Sonya O Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 203.

⁸⁹ Rose, *What is Gender History?* 103.

research is by continually relating ‘discursive events to their mediating material causes.’⁹⁰

This notion challenged Scott’s refutation of ‘historical materialism.’⁹¹ Palmer, however, was not alone in this as many feminist and women’s historians felt that only by looking at ‘the text or what was written’ can historians reconstruct reality.⁹²

Joan Hoff’s article “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis” is perhaps one of the most critical writings, that challenges gender history as a theoretical and analytical tool. Hoff built on the contentions of Palmer, Lake and Bennett but went much further. She suggests that from its outset, post-structuralism ‘threatened to sever the field of women’s history.’⁹³ She also sees post-structuralism as ‘the patriarchal ideology for the end of the twentieth century’ and an ‘obfuscatory set of male linguistic gymnastics.’⁹⁴ Furthermore, she also condemns historians who sought, through the method of deconstruction, to ‘erase flesh and blood women in favour of disembodied subjects.’⁹⁵ The most evocative way in which Hoff critiques post-structuralism and Scott’s methodology in particular, is by comparing deconstructionist methodology to violent pornography. She states that ‘post-structuralism defers radical feminism in the same way that violent pornography objectifies women-it disassembles and disconnects women from any material experiential base.’⁹⁶ Not only this, but she implies that people who use deconstruction as a method of historical research may be ‘unintentionally racist’ because it ‘prompts them to suggest that race like gender is a

⁹⁰ Bryan Palmer, “Response to Scott,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 31 (1987): 14-23. Bryan Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

⁹¹ For more on historical materialism see; Gregor McLennan, *Marxism and Methodologies of History* (London: Verso, 1981) and Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

⁹² Rose, *What is Gender History?* 104.

⁹³ Joan Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis” in *The Feminist History Reader*, ed. Sue Morgan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 178.

⁹⁴ Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,” 178.

⁹⁵ Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,” 178.

⁹⁶ Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,” 178.

discursively constructed concept.⁹⁷ She also worried that for women in non-English speaking countries, suggesting that by ignoring the ‘material details’, such as the written experiences and memories of women’s oppression in particular, post-structuralist historians were at risk of marginalising a part of other less developed countries history⁹⁸.

Not only did Hoff have issues with gender history and Scott’s work in particular, but Laura Lee Downs found aspects of Scott’s book *Gender and the Politics of History* disputable. Like Hoff, Downs implies a sense of personal danger emanating from Scott’s theory in her article “If ‘Woman’ is Just an Empty Category, Then Why Am I Afraid to Walk Alone at Night?” Downs’ fear of walking alone at night suggests a fear of sexual crimes and puts forward criticism that is beyond academic rational.⁹⁹ Downs refers to Scott’s method of deconstruction as a ‘sharp sword’ and suggests that Scott attacks previous feminist scholarship by rejecting ‘an ingenious chain of reasoning which links subjectivity and experience to the hope that oppressed persons, too might find some agency in history.’¹⁰⁰

One of the most recent debates surrounding women’s and gender history was put forward by Penelope Corfield, June Purvis and Amanda Weatherill. The exchange between this trio was published in the *Rethinking History* Journal between 1997 and 1999. In 1997 Corfield published her article ‘History and the Challenge of Gender History’ in which she focuses on the impact of gender and women’s history towards the end of the 20th century. Here she reflects on how gender has changed the way we approach research. Not only does Corfield believe that the study of gender has ‘enriched the study of history’ but argues the same for women’s history.

⁹⁷ Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,”183.

⁹⁸ Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,”183.

⁹⁹ Kent, *Gender and History*, 2012, 72.

¹⁰⁰ Laura Lee Downs, ‘If “Woman” is Just an Empty Category, then Why am I Afraid to Walk Alone at Night ? Identity Politics Meets the Postmodern Subject,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993): 414 -416.

One issue with Cornfield's argument however, is that she sometimes confuses the two terms (gender history and women's history) using them interchangeably, like they mean the same thing.¹⁰¹ For instance, Corfield talks of gender history 'mutating' out of women's history.¹⁰²

In turn, Purvis and Weatherill have a particular issue with the way in which Corfield uses phrases such as women's history, feminist history and gender history and the history of gender as if they are interchangeable terms, suggesting that they mean the same thing. They claim that 'women's history is defined by its subject matter [where as] feminist history may be defined by its approach and informed by theories of feminism.'¹⁰³ A further issue that Purvis and Weatherill have is with the way in which Corfield attaches meaning to gender history and it having a history. Not only do they argue that historians do not know enough about women's lives and the relationship between men and women, to establish what they call a 'fully fledged gender history' but they do not like what the term gender history in itself implies.¹⁰⁴ They indicate that the phrase suggests that an equal consideration should be given to men and women or femininity and masculinity meaning that references to women and their experiences can become lost. Additionally, they perceive a danger of gender history becoming simply another alternative to men's history, leaving little or no reference to women's lives.¹⁰⁵ Purvis and Weatherill go much further, denouncing gender history as a 'male stream incorporation strategy' that 'rapes women of the legitimacy to historicise women.'¹⁰⁶ For them it is incredibly important for women's and feminist women's historians to uphold this academic discipline as an area of research.¹⁰⁷ A further important notion that Purvis and Weatherill discuss is that they do not want gender and women's history to be seen

¹⁰¹ Penelope J. Corfield: "History and the Challenge of Gender History," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 1:3 (1997): 242.

¹⁰² Corfield: "History and the Challenge of Gender History," 241.

¹⁰³ June Purvis and Amanda Wetherill, "Playing the Gender History Game: A Reply to Penelope J. Corfield," *Rethinking History* 3:3 (1999): 333.

¹⁰⁴ Purvis and Wetherill, "Playing the Gender History Game," 333.

¹⁰⁵ Purvis and Wetherill, "Playing the Gender History Game," 334.

¹⁰⁶ Purvis and Wetherill, "Playing the Gender History Game," 335.

¹⁰⁷ Purvis and Wetherill, "Playing the Gender History Game," 333.

as the same thing because they see gender as a word that has been used because it is less threatening. They claim that it adds ‘an aura of complexity to what might be seen as a narrow or restricted field.’¹⁰⁸ Purvis and Weatherill conclude that they would rather offer a separate space for women’s histories to be configured and at the same time accept that there are problems for feminist and women’s history to maintain a strong academic position outside mainstream history, than make their historical approach more palatable for male historians.¹⁰⁹

Judith Bennet has a similar argument to Purvis and Weatherill. She insists that women’s history is ‘stronger than ever before’¹¹⁰. She suggests that although the study of ‘women’ as a category has been criticised for being ‘naïve’ and ‘old fashioned’, women’s history has ‘matured into a field of research writing and teaching throughout the world.’¹¹¹ For this to continue it is up to women’s historians to continue to contribute to this unique, ever changing and expanding field of research. For Bennett though, in order for this field to continue to develop, its links with feminism must be strengthened. Bennett argues that women’s historians can be guilty of avoiding ‘the hard feminist questions’ that a feminist women’s history requires.¹¹² Furthermore, that many women’s historians have succumbed to pressures to produce research that is more ‘palatable’ for non-feminist historians. Histories of women have, in Bennett’s opinion, become more ‘objective’ and less ‘political.’¹¹³ Bennett uses the example of language to exemplify her point. She suggests that strong language or phrases such as the ‘oppression of women’ and ‘patriarchy’ have almost disappeared from women’s history and been replaced with phrases that would gain approval from the academy. For instance, ‘subordination of women’ and ‘inequality of the sexes.’¹¹⁴ She concludes that

¹⁰⁸ Purvis and Wetherill, “Playing the Gender History Game,” 335.

¹⁰⁹ Purvis and Wetherill, “Playing the Gender History Game,” 336.

¹¹⁰ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

¹¹¹ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

¹¹² Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

¹¹³ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

¹¹⁴ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

although histories still appear that contain ‘hard hitting’ feminist analysis, a great deal of women’s history lack ‘explicit feminist content.’¹¹⁵ In Bennett’s 1989 publication “Feminism and History” and her most recent publication in 2006 *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* she maintains that the on-going fundamental focus of feminist women’s historians should concern the oppression of women. They should understand and detail the ways in which women in the past have been oppressed and how they have reacted to this treatment. Regardless of whether the history that is created shows women as ‘passive victims’ or ‘women who have colluded in, undermined, survived and sometimes even benefited from the presence of patriarchy.’¹¹⁶

This argument from Bennett, surrounding feminist women’s history, is an essential part of this thesis as it is not the objective of the current research to make it a palatable history for non-feminist historians. This history will not only ask ‘hard questions’ around the oppression of women and the existence of patriarchy and what this meant for suffrage activists in the Edwardian period but, it will seek to be ‘hard hitting’ in its feminist analysis.¹¹⁷ However, one issue that needs to be made clear is that although feminism, as a perspective, will shape the way in which I examine source material, this will not be a feminist women’s history that distorts evidence or twists conclusions to suit my own arguments: a suggestion that Judith Bennett argues, some non-feminist historians, have accused feminist historians of being guilty of. This study will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the sources examined and interpret the facts for what they are.

¹¹⁵ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

¹¹⁶ Judith Bennett, *History Matters*, 10.

¹¹⁷ Bennett, “Feminism and History,” 61.

1.4 Historiographies

The militant campaign for ‘Votes for Women’ by the WSPU has captivated the attention of many scholars. Interest in the militant campaign for women’s enfranchisement and more generally, feminist women’s history, grew particularly after the emergence of the organised women’s movement in Western Europe and the United States during the late 1960s. It is therefore essential to examine the various ways in which the militant struggle by the WSPU has been represented in historiography before and after the establishment of the ‘new-feminist’ school of suffrage history.¹¹⁸ This section will particularly provide a critical reading of the key historiographical arguments made with regard to; militancy, daily life, friendship networks and the local and national suffragette movement.

Militancy and the Representation of the WSPU

It is almost impossible to examine the history of the WSPU without considering the phenomenon of militancy.¹¹⁹ Militancy is a concept that has been problematic for suffrage historians as it is a malleable term whose meaning has changed over time.¹²⁰ It is this changing perception of militancy and its direct association with the WSPU that has both fascinated suffrage historians and divided them. This first ‘historian’, according to Jane

¹¹⁸ According to Sandra Holton’s, “The Making of Suffrage History”, the new-feminist school of suffrage history began during the 1960’s when socialist and radical feminist historians began to write about the suffrage movement in a way that ‘borrowed from the militant school of history’ yet provided a more complex assessment of the class divisions and tensions among suffrage activists. Shelia Rowbotham’s *Hidden from History* and Marion Ramelson’s *Petticoat Rebellion* are the first examples of this new type of history. See Sandra Holton, “The Making of Suffrage History” in *Votes for Women*, ed. J. Purvis and S Holton (London: Routledge, 2000), 26 and Sandra Holton, “Reflecting on Suffrage History” in *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustace, Joan Ryan, Laura Ugolini (London, Leicester University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁹ Sandra Holton, “In Sorrowful Wrath: Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst”, in *British Feminism in the 20th Century*, ed. H L Smith. (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 832.

¹²⁰ Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 97.

Marcus, to treat the suffragette movement ‘seriously’ was George Dangerfield.¹²¹ Writing in 1935, Dangerfield argued that there were four rebellions prior to the First World War that effectively caused what he described as the *Strange Death of Liberal England*.¹²² According to Dangerfield, the suffragettes and their associated militant organisation were one of the factors that caused the downfall of Liberalism in Britain at this time, the other three factors being Ulster Unionism, the Trade Unions and the Conservative Party. Although Dangerfield’s canonical work was largely ignored and snubbed as a popular history by his contemporaries, it is a book that is extremely insightful and powerfully argued.¹²³

Nevertheless, Dangerfield’s writing contains no references to the primary sources that shaped his argument (apart from numerous references to Sylvia Pankhurst’s *The Suffragette Movement*, a narrative that clearly influenced Dangerfield’s history) and suffers partially from what Sandra Holton describes as ‘gender-blindness.’¹²⁴ Although he is the first historian to examine the WSPU in any detail, he does so in a way that mocks and belittles the movement. Dangerfield presents the suffragettes as ‘fanatical women who chose the hardships of life.’¹²⁵ His use of humour in the extract below reveals much about his position on militancy:

From the spectacle of women attacking men there arises, even in this day, an outrageous and unprincipled laughter. And when a scene as ordinary as English politics is suddenly disturbed with the swish of long skirts, the violent assault of feathered hats, the impenetrable, advancing phalanx of corseted bosoms-when, around the smoking ruins of some house or church, there is discovered the dread evidence of a few hairpins or a feminine galosh-then the amazing, the ludicrous appearance of the whole thing is almost irresistible.¹²⁶

As Dangerfield’s history focused on the period 1910-1914, it is the more violent and provocative forms of militancy (such as arson, window smashing and stone throwing) adopted by the WSPU at this time that he has emphasised. Dangerfield does not consider

¹²¹ Jane Marcus, “Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women’s Suffrage,” in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. Jane Marcus. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2001), 3.

¹²² George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin, 1935), 9-10.

¹²³ Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, 9-10.

¹²⁴ Sandra Holton “In Sorrowful Wrath,” 832.

¹²⁵ Purvis, “The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes”, 104.

¹²⁶ Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, 152-153.

that the use of tactics such as arson and violent civil disobedience were only undertaken by a small number of WSPU activists. Instead, he uses the most extreme forms of militancy to characterise the WSPU and in turn, uses these tactics to present WSPU activists as laughable women who were violent, mentally unstable and at times sexually deviant.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the suffragettes are stereotyped in a sexist manner: as ‘puppets’ and an army of ‘intoxicated women’ who obeyed (without thinking or questioning) the dictatorial commands of their leaders, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst (women who he describes as ‘a pair of . . . infernal queens’).¹²⁸ Regardless of this sardonic representation of militancy and the WSPU leadership, it is this dominant narrative that until recently, became the accepted historical account of the WSPU.¹²⁹ Like many feminist women’s historians have sought to do in the past, it will be the aim of this research project to move away from Dangerfield’s traditional narrative and the subsequent histories that have been unable to free themselves from this dominant historical plot.¹³⁰

David Mitchell and Christopher Bearman are two historians that have clearly been unable to remove themselves from Dangerfield’s historical narrative. Like Dangerfield, Mitchell is sardonic and even misogynistic in his approach to describing the WSPU and its tactics. This can be seen when he describes WSPU militant activists as ‘young hot bloods’ and his use of words such as autocratic and cold and calculated to describe the Pankhurst leadership.¹³¹ Mitchell even goes as far as to compare the WSPU to the German terrorist Baader-Meinhof Gang.¹³² He argues that Christabel and Emmeline, like Ulrike Meinhof

¹²⁷ Holton, “In Sorrowful Wrath,” 832

¹²⁸ June Purvis, “Gendering the Historiography of the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Britain: Some Reflections,” *Women’s History Review* 22:4 (2013): 580.

¹²⁹ Sandra Holton, “The Making of Suffrage History,” 22-23. Here Holton suggests that the sardonic masculinist perspective viewed the militant women’s political movement as ‘marginal, deviant and dangerous.’ Not only this, but she argues that histories such as Dangerfield tended to “blame the victim” and mock and marginalize the suffragettes by deploying a “sexist stereotype.”¹²⁹

¹³⁰ Marcus, “Re-Reading the Pankhurst’s and Women’s Suffrage,” 3.

¹³¹ David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel*, (London: McDonald and Janes, 1977) 144-150.

¹³² Mitchell, *Queen Christabel*, 322.

(leader of the Baader-Meinhof Gang) acted on behalf of the masses and proved that liberal industrial societies were ‘infinitely vulnerable to a handful of determined fanatics.’¹³³

Furthermore, he argues that both organisations commanded an extraordinary degree of loyalty from their members, who are described as ‘ferocious spinsters [and] long suffering wives.’¹³⁴ Mitchell however, is not alone in his association of the WSPU with the modern idea of terrorism.

Christopher Bearman tells a very similar tale. Like Mitchell, Bearman ahistorically classifies the WSPU as a terrorist organisation and Emmeline and Christabel as its chief agitators, and argues that political violence between 1912 and 1914 ‘culminated in terrorist attacks.’¹³⁵ For Bearman the WSPU’s arson campaign, window smashing, acid attacks, and severe damage to artwork (like that done to Velazquez’s Rokeby Venus) means that Bearman likens the suffragettes to Islamic terrorists, as they pursued violent methods to achieve their political aims.¹³⁶

Krista Cowman however, argues that although the suffragettes may have been considered as terrorists at the time, we cannot view them in the same way as we view terrorists today. She states that ‘the key difference you have to remember, unlike today’s terrorist acts, where acts are being committed by people who do have a vote, who are enfranchised, these women were completely outside the system but asked to work within it.’¹³⁷ Bruce Hoffman in *Inside Terrorism* offers an important argument to consider in relation to Cowman’s argument surrounding the meaning of terrorism in different periods. Hoffman

¹³³ Mitchell, *Queen Christabel*, 322.

¹³⁴ Elizabeth Sarah, “Christabel Pankhurst: Reclaiming her Power,” in *Feminist Theories: Three centuries of Women’s Intellectual Traditions*, ed. D Spender. (London: Women’s Press, 1983), 261.

¹³⁵ Christopher Bearman, “An Army Without Discipline? Suffragette Militancy and the Budget Crisis of 1909,” *The Historical Journal* 50:4 (2007): 861.

¹³⁶ Gemma Edwards, *Social Movements and Protest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 185-186.

¹³⁷ Melissa Hogenboom, “Were Extreme Suffragettes Regarded as Terrorists?” BBC News Magazine, February 11 2012, accessed May 4 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16945901>.

for instance, suggests that terrorism is far from a straight forward term to define as its 'meaning has changed so frequently over the past two hundred years.'¹³⁸ Hoffman argues that terrorism in its original context although 'organised', 'systematic' and 'deliberate', was also 'associated with ideals of virtue and democracy.'¹³⁹

It is also important to remember that the WSPU's aim throughout the final militant stage in their activism was always to damage property and not lives. Suffragette memoirs illustrate this as one activist claimed that 'Mrs Pankhurst gave us strict orders about these fires: there was not a cat or canary to be killed; we were only allowed to give our lives.'¹⁴⁰ Another militant remembered how stones were even 'wrapped in paper or attached to string to avoid accidental injury to anyone.'¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, Bearman challenges the argument that suffragettes didn't seek to threaten human life. He argues that the WSPU did endanger peoples lives and that 'the question is not whether the campaign was terrorist, or whether the WSPU can be called a terrorist organisation, but whether its terrorism worked.'¹⁴²

June Purvis, was enraged by this suggestion and also by Bearman's 2007 article (in the BBC's *History* magazine) that stated that:

Terrorists do not perceive themselves as aggressors; they invariably claim to be acting defensively in response to wrongs done to them. The suffragettes are a case in point.¹⁴³

Purvis challenged his statement and his previous 2005 article on suffragette violence, when she publicly stated that suffragettes were unlike terrorists as they 'carefully chose targets to

¹³⁸ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 3.

¹³⁹ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Purvis, "Deeds not Words," 92.

¹⁴¹ Purvis, "Deeds not Words," 92.

¹⁴² Christopher Bearman, "An Examination of Suffragette Violence", *English Historical Review* (2005):393.

¹⁴³ Batey Phil, "Row Erupts over Suffragette Tale" *Times Higher Education*, January 28 2007, accessed May 4 2015, <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/row-erupts-over-suffragette-tale/207572.article>

avoid causing harm to civilians.’ Furthermore, that they were only employing this type of militant activism because they ‘lacked formal political representation.’¹⁴⁴ An issue that is also crucial to this argument is that these women were fighting for the right of half of the entire population, not a tiny faction and ultimately what other choice did they have? The suffragettes lacked a voice in the one place where it could potentially make a difference (parliament) and because of this I along with many other feminist historians argue that ‘the suffragettes were not terrorists but radical fighters in a just cause.’¹⁴⁵

Most recently though, cultural historian Fern Riddell has challenged the way in which historians have ‘ignored and ‘lessened’ the nature of suffragette violence.’¹⁴⁶ She argues that ‘all acts of militant suffrage can be viewed as acts of terror’ because they sought to influence the government and alter public opinion through a threat of violence.¹⁴⁷ She further argues that WSPU officials publically pronounced their support for suffragette violence and that the words of Christabel Pankhurst (who stated in 1913 that women were fighting a revolution and suggests there was nothing wrong with women using bombs and explosives) have been ‘diminished by time.’¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, although Riddell categorises the actions of some militants as terrorists, she does not (like Bearman) deny the claims of historians such as Liz Stanley and Ann Morley who suggest that militancy was a reactive phenomenon.¹⁴⁹ Instead, Bearman argues that militancy was a ‘calculated political act’ led by ‘professional militants’, rather than a direct response to repression.¹⁵⁰ Although Bearman’s analysis of various local

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, *Social Movements and Protest*, 185-186.

¹⁴⁵ Batey, “Row Erupts over Suffragette Tale”.

¹⁴⁶ Fern Riddell, “The Weaker Sex?” *History Today*, March 1, 2015, accessed June 22, 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost>.

¹⁴⁷ Riddell, “The Weaker Sex?” 24.

¹⁴⁸ Riddell, “The Weaker Sex?” 24.

¹⁴⁹ See Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, (London: Women’s Press, 1988),153.

They argue that militancy became a ‘reactive phenomenon’ because every shift in militant tactics was a reasoned response to repressive treatment received by women.

¹⁵⁰ Sandra Holton separates the ‘masculinist’ school of suffrage history into three perspectives, ‘sardonic-masculinist’, ‘liberal masculinist’ and ‘socialist masculinist.’ The ‘sardonic – masculinist’ is embodied in histories such as George Dangerfield’s *The Death of Liberal England*. These perspectives viewed the women’s political

and national newspapers and use of statistics to support his claims are extremely impressive, he blatantly refuses to engage with any feminist scholarship. For instance, he argues that the leadership of the WSPU was in direct control of all militant activity and that militants did not undertake militant acts without the leadership's approval. This claim, in particular, is one that feminist historians have shown over the past twenty years to be inaccurate. June Purvis, for instance, argues that feminist women's historians have shown that acts of militancy were often undertaken without the knowledge of the central leadership.¹⁵¹ Instead of engaging with this material, he argues that the only serious attempts to examine the 'practical issues' regarding suffragette violence have come, from liberal masculinist historians such as Andrew Rosen and Brian Harrison.¹⁵²

It is the acrimonious arguments of sardonic masculinist historians like Bearman, Mitchell and Dangerfield that this thesis seeks to challenge. The thesis will demonstrate that the WSPU were far from a terrorist organisation by exploring the range of militancy undertaken by the WSPU at a local level. Through the analysis of women's personal recollections of their experiences within the Wimbledon WSPU, this research seeks to contribute to the historiography surrounding militancy by illustrating that militancy, its meaning, and impact was relative to the individual, time and the place. Furthermore, the thesis will establish a more intricate and complex picture of suffragette history, than that provided by many sardonic masculinist historians, by attempting to move beyond the 'militant' and 'constitutionalist' narratives. Instead, part of the thesis will focus on the wider

movement as 'marginal, deviant and dangerous' and tended to blame the victim and mock and marginalise the suffragettes by deploying sexist stereotypes. 'Liberal masculinists' such as Brian Harrison and Martin Pugh are defined as those historians who reject the sardonic mode and are sympathetic to the 'ultimate goal of the campaigners' but are unable to break away from the gendered perspectives on political practice. 'Socialist masculinist' historians such as R.S Neale are argued by Holton to rehearse arguments that have been put forward in the past by Marxist and socialist critics of the women's suffrage movement and serve to classify gender relations within society under those between economic classes. See Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History' for a more complex definition.

¹⁵¹ Purvis, "Gendering the historiography of the suffragette movement," 584.

¹⁵² Christopher Bearman, "An Examination of Suffragette Violence," 242. Christopher Bearman, "An Army Without Discipline? Suffragette Militancy and the Budget Crisis of 1909." *Historical Journal* 50 (2007): 861.

campaign for enfranchisement in Wimbledon and will seek to show that Wimbledon had a broad and expansive local suffrage movement, with activists able to locate their political activities across a range of local suffrage organisations.

One masculinist historian who is described as being more ‘considered’ in his analysis of the suffragette movement, however, is Brian Harrison.¹⁵³ In “The Act of Militancy: Violence and Suffragettes, 1904-1914” he examines the nature of militancy as a tactic and a process. Harrison’s central argument concerns militancy in terms of an escalating phenomenon, however, a phenomenon that only risked the lives of WSPU members as, ‘martyrdom, not murder, was their style.’¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Harrison dispels one of the anti-suffragist and sardonic masculinist arguments, that militancy was seen as reflecting the ‘instability of the female temperament.’¹⁵⁵ Instead, he argues that militancy did not derive from a psychological type but from what he describes as ‘temporary tactical necessities’ and the militant’s conversion to these temporary tactical necessities originated from, either the ‘awareness of injustice [or a] personality, situation or incident.’¹⁵⁶ Harrison further argues that when converted WSPU members ‘stepped onto an escalator which gradually shifted them towards the more extreme forms of militancy.’¹⁵⁷ The explanation for his escalation theory lies in the need for the WSPU to gain publicity. However, Harrison suggests that headlines could only be retained if militancy was ‘suitably stage-managed.’¹⁵⁸ It is because of the need for militancy to have a huge impact that he suggests that without the First World War, ‘militancy would probably have ended with a bang, not with a whimper.’¹⁵⁹ This links us

¹⁵³ Holton, “The Making of Suffrage History,” 22-23.

¹⁵⁴ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 26.

¹⁵⁵ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 30-40. Sandra Holton offered a similar argument to that of Harrison’s when she suggests that the meaning of the vote lay in ‘the mesh experienced by suffragists between the politics of ordinary everyday life and their subsequent involvement in [formal politics]. See: Sandra Stanley Holton, “The Suffragist and the Average Woman,” *Women’s History Review*, 1 (1992.)

¹⁵⁶ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 30-40.

¹⁵⁷ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 42.

¹⁵⁸ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 52-55.

¹⁵⁹ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 52-55.

directly back to Bearman's argument surrounding terrorism. Harrison suggests that if WW1 would not have taken place, militancy may have taken the form of an assassination or a kidnap attempt. It is this notion of gradual inexorable momentum in the WSPU's militancy along with Harrison's argument for why suffragettes entered into militancy that this thesis will test. By analysing material from the Wimbledon WSPU, this research will assess the reasons for women's entrance into suffrage and examine whether, once converted, their militancy escalated, like Harrison claims. The thesis will also test Harrison's claim that the WSPU's most 'adoptable and mobile instruments were ...the young, unmarried and unattached.'¹⁶⁰ This thesis will show through the critical analysis of historic suffrage events such as Wimbledon women's response the 1911 census boycott, that individuals like Rose Lamartine-Yates did not embody all of these credentials and they, along with others of a similar background were, still versatile and ultimately essential to the running and success of their local branches.

Although this chapter has considered the ways in which masculinist historians have interpreted militancy and represented it and the WSPU, this section has not yet discussed in detail how feminist scholarship has challenged traditional assumptions surrounding militancy and the ways in which this historiography has shaped this thesis.

Liz Stanley and Ann Morley in their 1988 ground breaking personal history, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison* redefined the meaning of militancy by examining it in the context of personal friendship networks. What they found were a band of women who displayed differing forms of militancy and who were not driven by orders from above but who embarked upon militancy as a 'direct' and 'reasoned' response to their repressive

¹⁶⁰ Harrison, "The Act of Militancy,"64.

treatment.¹⁶¹ Although Emily Wilding Davison and Mary Leigh took part in vast range of violent militant action, Stanley and Morley make clear that militancy did not have to be violent. For instance, they suggest that Rose Lamartine-Yates and Elinor Penn Gaskell were militant in a different sense. For them, taking part in deputations to parliament and speaking to mass audiences could be deemed equally as militant as violent actions such as attacks against property. Furthermore, Stanley and Morley suggest that the militant activity undertaken by suffragettes depended on their locality. In fact, at a local level, they argue that a ‘wide range of militant activity’ was used.¹⁶² Furthermore, by exploring Emily’s life and her militancy in relation to her friends (whose lives had not been previously explored by suffrage historians) they were able to establish a wider range of meanings than one suffragette might attach to militancy or the vote.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, as Rose Lamartine-Yates has only been briefly researched for the light she can shed on Emily Wilding Davison there is clearly scope to move beyond the work of Stanley and Morley and construct a more complex history of Rose and the Wimbledon movement. This thesis will test Stanley and Morley’s argument that there was a wide range of militant activity available to activists at a local level and that this militancy was a ‘response’ to the government’s repressive treatment by focusing specifically on the various ways in which militancy manifested itself within the Wimbledon WSPU and the local impact of key events in suffrage history such the government torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill, the introduction of the Manhood Suffrage Bill and the withdrawal of the Franchise Bill in 1913.

Unlike Stanley and Morley, Holton defines militancy by trying to enter the mind of the suffragette. She argues that militancy must be understood principally in terms of a ‘cast

¹⁶¹ Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 153.

¹⁶² Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 152.

¹⁶³ Sandra Holton, “Challenging Masculinism: Personal history and the Micro History in Feminist Studies of the Women’s Suffrage Movement” *Women’s History Review* 20:5 (2011): 836.

of mind, a moral philosophy' and 'a way of looking at the world.'¹⁶⁴ This notion challenged this project to explore militancy in a more complex way than simply evaluating militancy as physical act. By analysing militancy as a physical act of defiance and also a state of mind, this thesis will consider the various ways in which activists approached the question of 'why' women campaigned and suffered for the vote. In doing so, this project seeks to contribute further to our understanding of what women, in provincial settings, felt the attainment of the vote could do for them.¹⁶⁵

Most of the historians' arguments that have been examined so far have sought to define militancy in various ways however, none of them have directly engaged with the question of 'what was suffragette militancy?'¹⁶⁶ Accordingly, Krista Cowman attempts to answer directly this question by illustrating the range of militancy that was embraced by suffrage activists from 1905-1914. Most scholars, Cowman suggests, distinguish between 'early', 'non-violent and quasi-illegal' militancy and 'later' militancy that is often presented as 'alienating and self-defeating.'¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, for Cowman, militancy is much a more 'diverse' and 'eclectic' notion than is often suggested.¹⁶⁸ Cowman argues that militancy was something that would have manifested itself in very different ways for different women.¹⁶⁹ Cowman uses the effective example of Alice Kedge, a working-class maid who bought herself a 'Votes for Women' badge and attended several meetings. When her mother saw the badge she requested that she throw it away, Alice defiantly 'tucked it under the lapel of [her] coat.'¹⁷⁰ Alice is the perfect example of someone who did not want to upset her mother or anyone else but wanted to support the militant cause. And so, she did in her own way. This

¹⁶⁴ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath," 10.

¹⁶⁵ Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath," 7.

¹⁶⁶ Krista Cowman, "What Was Suffragette Militancy? An Exploration of the British Example," in *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reform*, ed. Pirjo Markkola et al. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁷ Cowman, "What Was Suffragette Militancy?" 300.

¹⁶⁸ Cowman, "What Was Suffragette Militancy?" 300.

¹⁶⁹ Cowman, "What Was Suffragette Militancy?" 303.

¹⁷⁰ Cowman, "What Was Suffragette Militancy?" 303-304.

argument challenges that of Harrison who viewed militancy in terms of an escalating phenomenon. Cowman accepts that militancy evolved over time and that there were differing degrees of it. However, she argues that ‘each new type of militancy augmented rather than replaced its predecessors.’¹⁷¹ This argument is something that this thesis will test, particularly when the impact of the changing levels of militancy is examined at local level and national levels in chapters two and three.

A further historiographical piece that has influenced this thesis is Laura Mayhall’s full-length study on the militant suffrage movement that broadens the definition of militancy by focusing on non- WSPU organisations such as the Women’s Freedom League (WFL). Mayhall seeks to ‘reintegrate women’s suffrage into broader treatments of British political culture’ and suggests that militancy should be seen in relation to the 18th and 19th century political and intellectual traditions. She also highlights the justification of suffrage militancy as a ‘political ideal and range of practices.’¹⁷² The arguments that have shaped this thesis, however, lie in some of her smaller, yet still significant, conclusions. The first is Mayhall’s suggestion that militants deployed an ‘idiom of constitutionalism’: namely, that suffragettes staged many of their protests in a way that illustrated their exclusion from politics.¹⁷³ Furthermore, linked directly to this, is the idea that militants used the courtroom as a ‘public forum’ for their resentment toward the state.¹⁷⁴ When examining the daily life of militant activists at a local level one will consider these key arguments, by discerning firstly; if militants staged their protests in the same way as Mayhall suggests. And, through the examination of Rose Lamartine-Yates’ first imprisonment, whether Rose used the courtroom as a way to articulate her objections. The final way in which Mayhall’s study has shaped the

¹⁷¹ Cowman, “What Was Suffragette Militancy?” 304.

¹⁷² Laura Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁷³ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, chapter 3.

¹⁷⁴ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 76-77.

questions asked in this thesis is in relation to the scale and scope of militancy. Mayhall suggests that suffragettes operating between 1910 and 1914 found it difficult to ‘define the scope of [their] resistance,’ because at this time militancy was becoming increasingly more violent. While some embraced it, others rejected the more violent tactics. When considering the changing levels of militancy in Wimbledon, this thesis will examine the way in which the local branch dealt with the more violent and provocative tactics and discern whether they embodied them (like a minority of activists did) or if they worked across organisational lines and developed new groups, like Mayhall suggests they did.¹⁷⁵

At the beginning of this chapter, it was suggested that the changing perception of militancy and its direct association with the WSPU has both captivated suffrage historians and divided them. As we can see from the various arguments above, the term ‘militancy’ will never go unchallenged and its meaning will carry on changing as more historians research the WSPU. Nevertheless, this chapter is not simply concerned with debates surrounding militancy, despite its importance as a concept. This thesis is also shaped by other historians arguments surrounding local suffrage, daily life and friendship networks.

Daily Life and Friendship Networks

Directly linked to historiographical arguments surrounding militancy is the notion of the daily life of suffragettes.¹⁷⁶ June Purvis, for example, is one historian who has explored

¹⁷⁵ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 8.

¹⁷⁶ Purvis, “Deeds not Words,” 91-101. Purvis looks at what she terms the ‘daily life’ of militant and non-militants in the WSPU. This according to Purvis can mean anything from taking part in administrative work at local and national level, selling newspapers and working in WSPU shops to chaining yourself to railings outside parliament. She claims that the importance lies not in what types of activity women took part in on a day-to-day basis but that activism varied within the large organisation. The kind of militant you were deepened on the type of day to day activism.

this neglected theme.¹⁷⁷ Purvis argues that the juxtaposition of the WSPU and their ‘suffragettes’ to the constitutionalist ‘suffragists’ of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (hereafter NUWSS) obscures the range of militancy that was available on a daily basis to activists within the WSPU.¹⁷⁸ In particular, Purvis emphasises the range of opinions and actions of WSPU activists at a local and national level by examining the daily life of activists inside and outside of prison. Purvis makes it very clear that members who worked for the organisation at an administrative level, for instance as typists, secretaries, treasurers, sales assistants and organisers, did not have to be actively militant. Nevertheless, this does not mean that militant activists did not undertake administrative roles.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, activism that was not militant such as working in WSPU shops or offices and selling newspapers on street corners could, nonetheless, end up in arrest and imprisonment. As it is apparent from the above description, there is a huge amount of complexity in clarifying the differences between the daily life and suffrage activities of ‘militants’ and ‘non-militants’ or ‘militants’ and ‘constitutionalists.’ Although women within the WSPU and WFL are so often described as ‘militant’ and compared to the ‘constitutionalist’ NUWSS, it is crucial to remember that this ‘division in labour,’ as referred to by Sandra Holton, was not absolute.¹⁸⁰ Although these terms will be used throughout the thesis to refer to, and differentiate between, suffrage activists, organisations and their tactics, this research will always seek to look beyond the dichotomy suggested by these terms and reflect up Holton’s argument that at least until 1911 the constitutionalist and militant wings of the movement worked in symbiosis.¹⁸¹

When exploring the variety of roles that were undertaken by women, from

¹⁷⁷ Purvis, “Deeds Not Words,” 91-101.

¹⁷⁸ Purvis, “Deeds, Not Words,” 91-92.

¹⁷⁹ Mary Richardson, for instance, was a paid organizer for the WSPU but was imprisoned various times, most famously for slashing the *Rockeby Venus*. Whilst in prison she also went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed various times.

¹⁸⁰ Sandra Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women’s Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 30.

¹⁸¹ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 30.

administrative work to participating in deputations and demonstrations, Purvis also considers the impact of daily life within the WSPU on activists' personal lives. Purvis suggests that because political commitment was so demanding within the WSPU that activists may have found it difficult to juggle their personal and political lives. She argues that married women, in particular, may have faced significant difficulty in engaging in militancy on a daily basis due to Edwardian ideologies that placed women at the centre of the home.¹⁸² Purvis suggests that 'militant wives' would have to fit their political life around their domestic, familial and personal duties.¹⁸³ It is implied therefore that suffragettes who had supportive husbands and the help of servants, nannies and/or housekeepers to aid them in their private duties would have perhaps found it easier to partake in their own degree of militancy. Either that or it was unattached women who made up the majority of militants. This argument is one that this thesis will test in relation to the daily lives of local suffragettes. Not only will the thesis explore how, when married, women managed their personal and political lives, it will also question how supportive their husbands were to the suffrage cause and whether their class status hindered or aided their ability to fight for 'Votes for Women.' This will test the traditional notion surrounding the idea that that it was easier for young, middle class, unmarried and unattached women to be militant.¹⁸⁴

From Purvis' writing, we see that she discusses political and domestic life as if they are separate categories that were not necessarily connected. Sandra Holton, however, challenges this assumption. Although, like Purvis, she believes that the majority of suffrage activists fitted their political activity in and around their everyday commitments to family, friends, work and even other political or charitable organisations. Holton emphasises the

¹⁸² For a more in-depth explanation on the historiography surrounding the ideology of separate spheres see, Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age To Separate Spheres: A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (1993): 384-414.

¹⁸³ Purvis, "Deeds, Not Words," 94.

¹⁸⁴ Harrison, "The Act of Militancy," 64.

need for their ‘extraordinary’ suffrage activities to be looked at as part of their ‘average’ everyday lives.¹⁸⁵ By exploring the notion of the ‘suffragist and the ‘average woman’, she argues that ‘Votes for Women’ was not a single issue but something that was inextricably linked to activists’ past experiences and their daily life. She states that ‘in having a voice in the public arena they, [women], aimed both to address women’s problems in their private lives, and to bring political life more into line with those values into which women were inducted as part of the preparation for female sex roles and above all motherhood.’¹⁸⁶ It is not surprising therefore that she concludes that the ‘suffragist’ and the ‘average woman’ can often be found as representing the same person.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, one aspect of WSPU life that historians agree upon is the notion surrounding ‘sisterhood.’ Purvis argues that within the WSPU there was a ‘feeling of comradeship and it was what Annie Kenney called ‘a bond of fellowship’ that united the militant movement.¹⁸⁸ The reason for this was perhaps because all members of the WSPU, if not united in class, sexual orientation, marital status or location, were united in purpose.¹⁸⁹ Cowman suggests that the notion surrounding female networks had disseminated from the women’s networks that had existed within organisations like the Independent Labour Party (ILP). For Cowman, it was within the ILP that they developed a ‘strong understanding’ on the significance of comradeship.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Cowman and Brown recognise that although much of the research on the women’s movement have focused on networks of women and ‘webs’ of friendships, very few studies have examined what is meant by

¹⁸⁵ Holton, “The Suffragist and the Average Woman,” 9-20.

¹⁸⁶ Holton, “The Suffragist and the Average Woman,” 13.

¹⁸⁷ Holton, “The Suffragist and the Average Woman,” 13.

¹⁸⁸ Purvis, “Deeds, Not Words,” 95-96.

¹⁸⁹ Purvis, “Deeds, Not Words,” 95.

¹⁹⁰ Krista Cowman, Heloise Brown, “Exploring Suffrage Friendships” in *Celebrating women’s friendship: Past Present and Future*, eds. Ruth Symes, Heloise Brown (York: Rawnerve, 1999), 123.

friendship within the WSPU or 'how friendship related to the notion of comradeship.'¹⁹¹ Liz Stanley goes as far as to argue that, if as historians, we do not recognise the importance of these friendship networks then our understanding of the women that we research can become 'impoverished.'¹⁹² She suggests that when their friendships are 'placed in the shadows', and the focus is on the individual alone, they appear '[extraordinary,] outrageous and atypical.'¹⁹³ This is not to say, however, that some suffragettes did not embody these characteristics. Brown and Cowman support Stanley's notion as they argue that friendship networks can no longer be placed on the side-lines because the existence of these ties was imperative to the success of the suffragette movement's ability to mobilise and sustain such a large number of followers over an extended period.¹⁹⁴ It will be an aim of this thesis to address this issue by recognising Rose and the other activists we encounter within their friendship networks

Linked directly to the later argument is Krista Cowman's more recent piece of literature that focuses solely on political organisers in the WSPU. The ways in which this scholarly work by Cowman has shaped this thesis is particularly important to consider as the woman who is a central focus of this thesis was an honorary organising secretary for the WSPU. Krista Cowman argues that although historiography is rich in chronological histories of the suffragette movement and experiences of militancy, which are unmistakable and dramatic. Literature that demonstrates the mechanics of how the WSPU functioned as an organisation, the retention of its members, and what constituted suffrage activism on a daily basis is extremely limited.¹⁹⁵ In particular, Cowman suggests that very little is known about women who were organisers within the WSPU and seeks to emphasise their significance and

¹⁹¹ Cowman and Brown, "Exploring Suffrage Friendships", 122.

¹⁹² Liz Stanley, "Feminism and Friendship in England from 1825-1938," *Studies in Sexual Politics*, 8 (1995): 4.

¹⁹³ Stanley, "Feminism and Friendship," 4.

¹⁹⁴ Cowman and Brown, "Exploring Suffrage Friendships," 121-152.

¹⁹⁵ Krista Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 3.

the role of women who she perceives to be at the heart of the WSPU. Cowman focuses specifically on the function of paid organisers and is concerned with what their daily activities reveal about how the WSPU functioned as a political organisation. Cowman's organisers are the 'heroic individuals' of the suffragette movement because, in her view, without these women undertaking crippling organising schedules, the WSPU would not have been able to sustain its organisation or political impact nationwide.¹⁹⁶ Although Cowman examines, in considerable detail, the function of WSPU organisers, their background, schedules and the relationship between organisers and the WSPU leadership. She only has the space to briefly explore local honorary organising secretaries, who it will be suggested here, sustained the suffragette movement at branch level.

Accordingly, this thesis seeks to build on Cowman's work, in the sense that it will explore the suffrage journey of Wimbledon's organising secretary alongside other women who were at the heart of the Wimbledon WSPU's branch activity, by investigating what daily life and activism was like at branch level for the individuals who sustained the branch. Furthermore, although Cowman considers the demands placed on WSPU organisers and analyses the ways in which paid organisers' 'punishing schedules' affected their health, she leaves room for further research into this area and scope for a even more complex investigation.¹⁹⁷ By asking similar questions to Cowman about the impact of organisers' daily life on their health, the fourth chapter in this thesis will explore the various ways in which daily activism, within Wimbledon and beyond, affected the physical and psychological health of suffrage activists. Furthermore, the chapter will also build upon Cowman's suggestion that organisers relied heavily on the hospitality of friends and suffrage sympathisers when traveling around the country by exploring the various roles and contributions of suffragette

¹⁹⁶ The notion of the 'heroic individual' comes from Holton, "The Making of Suffrage History", 27.

¹⁹⁷ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 57.

rest houses and nursing homes in suffragette recuperation.¹⁹⁸

Women and the Suburbs

Although it is the locality of Wimbledon that this thesis is focusing on, it is important to consider how historians have represented other local branches of the WSPU and how their conclusions might shape this project. Although it has been argued that the branch was an important place for the feminist and political development for many suffragettes, the local branches of the WSPU is an area that has been overlooked in suffrage historiography.¹⁹⁹ By the end of 1914 there were over 121 WSPU branches. It is therefore, surprising that only a small number have been researched to any substantial degree. Nevertheless, there are a number of texts on which this thesis will build upon.

As the focus of this project is to reconfigure suffrage history from the local to the national by exploring the suffrage movement in Wimbledon and the suffrage career of their organising secretary, it will be this area that this section will focus upon initially. Gail Cameron, Gillian Hawtin and Elizabeth Crawford have all contributed to what we know on the Wimbledon WSPU and its organising secretary Rose Lamartine-Yates.²⁰⁰ Cameron and Crawford's contributions take the form of entries in two separate biographical dictionaries. The accounts however, are very brief and are only useful in the sense that their work provides us with the empirical details and the sources employed in their production. Accordingly they are useful in providing a starting point upon which to build. Gillian

¹⁹⁸ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 81. Here I am referring to Annie Kenney's reliance on the Blathwayt family in Bath.

¹⁹⁹ Cowman, "The Stone-Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us," 176.

²⁰⁰ Cameron, "Rose Lamartine-Yates". Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 765. Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women*.

Hawtin's *Votes for Wimbledon Women* is an example of a piece of historiography that has gone further than Crawford and Cameron. Hawtin's account is one that places Rose at the centre of the Wimbledon WSPU; she is represented as an individual who was crucial to the running and sustaining of the of the Wimbledon branch. Although this short study is one that has clearly consulted existing primary source documents concerning Rose and Wimbledon, such as the *WBN*, it is very thinly referenced and leaves key primary sources untouched.

Furthermore, although the history is suggestive, it leaves much to be analysed. This can be seen in many of the questions that Hawtin leaves unanswered such as 'subtract, Rose Lamartine-Yates, a Joan of Arc manqué... and what would be the net result?' This study will answer questions like this by considering how important an energetic individual such as Rose could be to the success and nature of a local WSPU branch. By moving away from the initial work of these historians, this thesis will construct a history that is far more detailed and based on a systematic analysis of all of the abundant primary sources. Nonetheless, although there are very few secondary sources available on Wimbledon and its role locally and nationally within the WSPU, it is imperative to consider how historians represent other local branches of the WSPU and how their conclusions might shape this project.

Arguably the first, and one of the most influential local suffrage histories is Jill Liddington and Jill Norris's *One Hand Tied Behind Us*. A local study that explores the suffrage activism of working-class 'radical suffragists' in the cotton districts of Lancashire.²⁰¹ *One Hand Tied Behind Us* was a ground-breaking piece of research because it was through this local study of the Lancashire and Cheshire Textile and Other Workers' Representation

²⁰¹ Liddington and Norris define 'radical suffragists' as women who had strong ties with working-class organisations such as the Women's Co-operative Guilds, Independent Labour Party and Trade Unions, and, who 'shared considerable industrial experience and a political radicalism that set them apart from other non-militants; together they appeared to have worked as an effective pressure group during the 1900's.' Selina Cooper, Ada Nield Chew, Eva Goore Booth, Esther Roper and Sarah Reddish are among the names of women who Liddington and Norris describe as being 'leading radical suffragists.' Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us, The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*. (Virago: London, 1978),15.

Committee that Liddington and Norris created a new and alternative suffrage history: one that challenged the traditional suffrage narrative that has become so entrenched in the historiography.²⁰² By bringing to the fore the story of (what Liddington and Norris refer to as) the ‘forgotten suffragists’, their study is a stark reminder that by researching the daily lives and activities of women at a local level, that a narrative can be uncovered that not only offers an alternative historiography but that also broadens our understanding of ‘the history of the suffrage movement’ whilst still remaining narrow in its remit. *One Hand Tied Behind Us* suggests the importance and political influence that the ‘radical suffragists’ had on local campaigning methods and policy initiatives and demonstrates how the suffrage campaign in Lancashire was inextricably connected to the Labour Movement.²⁰³ However, the greatest way in which Liddington and Norris’ work has shaped this current research comes from their suggestion that the vote was only the beginning of rights for women.²⁰⁴ For the ‘radical suffragists’ the vote as ‘a symbol of equality’ or ‘an abstract right’ was not important to them, they were interested in what the possession of the vote could do to improve the conditions of working women.²⁰⁵ It is this argument that will be tested at different stages in this thesis because it seems pertinent to consider not only what the vote meant to women at a local level but also whether or not women in Wimbledon, particularly Rose, saw enfranchisement as a avenue to greater freedoms for women.

June Hannam and Leah Leneman have also both emphasised the importance of local branches to the reconfiguring of suffrage history, however, their argument is one that is slightly problematic for this study. Hannam and Leneman both suggest that only through studying local branches (by local they mean branches that are outside of London), historians

²⁰² The dominant historical narrative concentrates of the ‘London centred’ campaigns of Emmeline Pankhurst’s WSPU, with their militant tactics and autocratic leadership and the constitutional, democratic and law-abiding NUWSS headed by Millicent Fawcett.

²⁰³ Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 18.

²⁰⁴ Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 25.

²⁰⁵ Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 25.

can begin to challenge traditional notions surrounding what is termed ‘the London centeredness’ of the NUWSS and the WSPU.²⁰⁶ This traditional narrative is one that focuses almost exclusively on London, where the headquarters of most of the national suffrage organisations were located, as well as where all of their lobbying activities and large demonstrations were centred.²⁰⁷ Hannam and Leneman both suggest that although the suffrage movement had a focus on the centre of political power in Britain, for rank and file suffragists, ‘it was their local group which provided the key site for much of their suffrage activities.’²⁰⁸ Even though I would agree with the later statement regarding the key site of militancy, this thesis will argue that although Wimbledon was an urban borough of London and could be seen as ‘London centred’ because of its proximity to London, the Wimbledon WSPU operated as an individual branch that had considerable autonomy. Therefore, by analysing the daily life of activists within a suburb of the metropolis and exploring Wimbledon’s contesting identity as a provincial but also metropolitan branch, this thesis provides a rather different focus than existing local studies, which have tended to focus on large urban centres that were a good distance away from the capital.

Even though there are still only a small number of studies that look specifically at the role of local branches within the suffrage movement, and only a handful that focus on the militant movement alone, there are some incredibly insightful pieces of

²⁰⁶ Hannam, ‘I Had Not Been To London’. Leah Leneman, ‘A Truly National Movement: The View From Outside London’, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, ed. in, M. Joannou, J. Purvis (Manchester: MUP, 1998)

²⁰⁷ Although the WSPU was originally formed in Manchester in 1903, and had their headquarters there to begin with, the leadership believed that after the Liberal Party’s landslide victory, in 1906, that London was the most appropriate place for the WSPU to establish their central offices. After sending Annie Kenney to London to drum up support for the WSPU and the establishment of a Central London Committee (which included Sylvia Pankhurst as secretary, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence as Treasurer, Annie Kenney, Flora Drummond, Mary Clarke and Emmeline Pankhurst) the WSPU established their London office on the ground floor of Emmeline and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence’s Clement’s Inn house. Andrew Rosen suggests that it was with the establishment of this office that WSPU activity began to be conducted on a more regular basis. One of the rooms at Clement’s Inn was used for meetings and where demonstrations were organised. For more on the WSPU’s move to London and the early years of the WSPU in Manchester please see; Rosen, *Rise UP Women!* 58-78; Karen Hunt, ‘Rethinking the Early Years of the WSPU’. *Bulletin of the Marx Memorial Library*, 139 (2004): 7-23; Karen Hunt, ‘Why Manchester? Why the Pankhursts? Why 1903? Reflections on the Centenary of the Women’s Social and Political Union.’ *Manchester Region History Review*, 17 (2004): 2-9.

²⁰⁸ Hannam, ‘I Not Been To London,’ 226.

local research that have shaped this thesis. In particular, Krista Cowman's regional study of the political organisations in Merseyside (which was the first of its kind) puts forward some very important and pertinent questions and conclusions to consider. Throughout her study, Cowman not only sheds new light on the various ways in which women's political organisations functioned at a local, 'grass roots' level, she also shows how local women managed their involvement in political organisations around their concerns and obligations with regard to employment, family and friendships.²⁰⁹ More specifically though, it is Cowman's arguments and conclusions surrounding Merseyside's local suffrage organisations that this thesis has been influenced by. One of the most important things that Cowman's research shows is that Merseyside had a wide-ranging suffrage movement, with suffrage activists able to locate their political activities across a variety of suffrage organisations.²¹⁰ These findings are particularly important for this thesis to consider when the daily suffrage activities of women within a number of suffrage organisations are analysed in chapter two, three and five. Not only will this thesis question whether membership spanned over different suffrage and political organisations (and if so, how did activists manage their involvement in various campaigns), it will also question the extent to which local suffrage activists were able to transcend tactical, organisational, class and religious differences and unite under a single issue that was the vote.²¹¹ A further conclusion of Cowman's that this research will also consider, is that it was the individual, local suffrage organisations of Merseyside that often drew previously 'apolitical women' towards politics.²¹² Furthermore, that the suffrage movement also acted as a 'catalyst': politicising Edwardian women and 'drawing them into the public arena.'²¹³ These notions will also be considered throughout the exploration of daily

²⁰⁹ Cowman, *"Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!"*, 4.

²¹⁰ Cowman, *"Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!"*, chapters 4, 5 and 6.

²¹¹ Cowman, *"Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!"*, chapter 6. See also: Cowman, "Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside."

²¹² Cowman, *"Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!"*, 97.

²¹³ Cowman, *"Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!"*, 97.

suffrage activity in Wimbledon, particularly when the thesis analyses the tactics utilised by Wimbledon activists to recruit and retain membership to suffrage organisations.

Cowman's analysis of the Huddersfield WSPU's minute book is also a crucial secondary source, that suggests important questions to consider. She states that the minute book's greatest lesson for historians is the 'light it throws on the way in which aspects of the local organisation of the WSPU functioned.'²¹⁴ In particular, the minute book demonstrated that WSPU members were not solely dedicated to suffrage but that the branch displayed broader concerns.²¹⁵ For example, the Huddersfield WSPU were concerned about the lack of local public toilets for women and therefore combined with the 'Women's Co-Operative Guild and women from the local ILP to campaign on this issue.'²¹⁶ When examining the minute book of the LSWS, in the fifth chapter of this thesis, this research will be able to draw on Cowman's conclusions in order to create a more complex picture of the daily concerns of suffrage activists within the Wimbledon LSWS and determine whether the fight for suffrage was always at the heart of their activities.

A further significant argument presented by Cowman comes from her local study on the suffragette movement in York. In this she suggests that individual personalities played an important factor in determining the success or failure of the local campaign. Violet Key Jones is named as assuming a leadership role amongst her colleagues and it is suggested that it is 'highly unlikely' that she was paid for her efforts as an organiser. Nevertheless, she became the 'public face' of the branch and was the individual who most symbolised militancy within York.²¹⁷ Similarly, Richard Whitmore's *Alice Hawkins and the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester* suggests that outside of central London, it was the 'thousands of nameless

²¹⁴ Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed," 307-308.

²¹⁵ Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed," 307-308.

²¹⁶ Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed," 307-308.

²¹⁷ Krista Cowman, *The Suffragette Movement in York*, (York: Borthwick Institute, 2007), 30.

women' that were the faces of the local suffrage movements.²¹⁸ Moreover, that the Pankhursts had 'little reality in Leicester' and quite often meant nothing to local women.²¹⁹ He suggests that it is only by focusing on local women like Alice Hawkins (who he argues 'was one of the most influential members within the local movement') that a 'real understanding' of the local fight for 'Votes for Women' can be achieved.²²⁰

Like Cowman and Whitmore, this research will show that the success of particular branches depended on key individuals and that these individuals may have been more important to the local fight for women's suffrage than the central leadership of WSPU. Nevertheless, although recovering certain individuals and activities within localities is interesting for suffrage historians, for the story that they can tell of a specific area, it is the distinctiveness of the research that is most important. Throughout this project therefore, I will determine why day-to-day activism within the Wimbledon was distinctive because only then can we merit a detailed investigation.²²¹

For Cowman, the militant movement in York adds further dimension to our knowledge on the campaign for women's suffrage as it shows that the type of militancy undertaken by local activists ranged in the type of act and its severity. By comparing York's local movement to the national picture, Cowman argues that it does not mirror the traditional national narrative surrounding severe militancy that escalated over time. Activists in York seem to have undertaken their militancy anonymously or went outside of their locality to take part in more severe forms of militancy. Likewise, Sarah Peacock's study on the fight for women's suffrage in Portsmouth, also provides historians with a history that has

²¹⁸ Whitmore, *Suffragette Movement in Edwardian England*, 10.

²¹⁹ Whitmore, *Suffragette Movement in Edwardian England*, 29.

²²⁰ Whitmore, *Suffragette Movement in Edwardian England*, 10.

²²¹ Cowman, *The Suffragette Movement in York*, 14.

‘distinguishing features.’²²² Peacock argues that unlike other cities, suffrage activists in Portsmouth and South-East Hampshire displayed ‘little or no militancy’ and that the most active suffrage organisation was not the WSPU who are traditionally associated with campaign for women’s suffrage but the NUWSS.²²³ Furthermore, Peacock argues that, unlike other cities, the names of suffragettes who were important to the local movement are ‘shadowy figures, little more than names.’²²⁴ Although Peacock’s findings are significant, this research would argue against Peacock’s suggestion that the local activists took part in little or no militancy. Her study suggests, in fact, that Portsmouth’s activists were taking part in militancy, just not militant activism that broke the law. This is an issue that this thesis will address throughout, as it is essential to recognise the significance of all forms of militancy, whether that be selling newspapers on street corners or smashing windows. The WSPU needed women to take part in a range of militancy, locally and nationally, in order for the campaigns to be sustained.²²⁵

Another local study that has also added to the historiography and shaped this project is Willmott Dobbie’s *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset*. This local study focuses on the diaries of Mary and Emily Blathwayt, which provide ‘a chronicle of everyday life’ and is an ‘interesting example of those who became active in the women’s cause only when the movement had begun.’²²⁶ Dobbie quotes extensively from these diaries and uses them to demonstrate how the Blathwayt family played an essential role in aiding the recuperation of suffragettes whose health had been affected by their activism and imprisonment. It is suggested that so many suffragettes visited *Eagle House* to rest and recuperate (one of the suffragettes being Rose),

²²² Peacock, “The Women’s Fight in Portsmouth”, 3.

²²³ Peacock, “The Women’s Fight in Portsmouth”, 20.

²²⁴ Peacock, “The Women’s Fight in Portsmouth”, 21.

²²⁵ Peacock, “Women’s Fight in Portsmouth”, 2-23.

²²⁶ June Hannam, “‘Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work’: The Blathwayt Diaries as a Source for Suffrage History”, in *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 52-56.

that Colonel Blathwayt had a summer house built which they named the *Suffragette Rest*.²²⁷ Although his book lacks an in-depth analysis of the sources, the information he provides leaves scope for a more in depth study that looks specifically at the recuperation of suffragettes. It is suggested by Krista Cowman that the Blathwayt's *Eagle House* was not the only sight for recuperation. She refers to the importance of a 'number of large country houses' which were open to organisers and other suffragettes as a place of rest and recuperation, and one of the houses that seem to be have used for 'refuge for suffragettes' is Rose Lamartine-Yates' house, *Dorset Hall*.²²⁸ In light of this discovery and in order to develop this research further, it will be an aim of the fourth chapter of this thesis, to uncover how the Wimbledon branch dealt with supporting and sustaining its members, and members from other regions and branches. This local study, will allow for the investigation into the significance of individuals like Rose and the Blathwayt family and the provision that they may have made for themselves and others in their own homes.

Although this chapter has put forward a variety of questions which need to be answered in order to shed new light on to a relatively deprived area of suffrage research, there are a number of questions and areas of research that are central to this thesis contribution to knowledge. These being: the interrelationship between the local and national in the practice of the WSPU, the local daily life and developing militant activism of suffragettes such as Rose, the impact that the suffragette movement had on local activists' physical and mental health: the ways in which local branches sustained extreme militancy by providing individual members with facilities for recuperation through the provision of suffragette refuges, safe from police surveillance and the danger of re-arrest, and the way in which local suffragettes transformed and altered their daily lives when the WSPU ceased to

²²⁷ Dobbie, *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset*, 44. Rose is pictured planting a tree in Annie's Arboretum during a visit which would have been around the time of her first imprisonment in February 1909.

²²⁸ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 53.

exist.

By focusing on these critical research areas and examining these central research questions, this local study will not just shed new light on the suffrage movement in Wimbledon but, will crucially shift the focus of consideration away from the WSPU's national leadership, 'back to branch level where the majority of suffrage activists engaged in campaign work and developed a political identity.'²²⁹ By examining the movement at branch level this research will not just add volume to what is already known. It will allow, through the analysis of undiscovered sources, an identification of previously unknown individuals who were vital to the Wimbledon branch and arguably the movement as a whole, bringing us closer to the experiences of women in the suffrage movement.²³⁰ A study of Wimbledon is not only necessary in order to overturn the idea that central London was the epicentre for politics and militancy within the WSPU but it is also important because by concentrating on a metropolitan branch, that identified as a provincial organisation and focused the majority of its activity within the Wimbledon locality, this thesis can make a significant contribution to the history of suffrage activism in London and also demonstrate how important local branches were to the shaping of suffragettes' identities and to the success and sustainability of the whole WSPU organisation. Without dedicating a study of this size to Wimbledon, these particular issues would be difficult to comprehend.

²²⁹ Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed," 298-315. See also, Hannam, "I Not Been To London," 226.

²³⁰ Cowman, "Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed," 298-315.

Chapter 2: Rose Lamartine-Yates and the Wimbledon Branch of the WSPU

Introduction

By their untiring work in their own particular district and by the support, so loyally accorded to head quarters, local Unions add incalculably to the strength of the movement as a whole.¹

This quote from the seventh Annual Report of the WSPU suggests that the local branches of the WSPU played an enormous part in sustaining the national organisation. Furthermore, twenty first century historians, Krista Cowman and June Hannam, in their earlier local studies of the WSPU suggested very similar arguments. Hannam for instance, contends that in order to reconfigure suffrage history our key focus should be the local branches of national suffrage organisations, as it was their ‘local group that provided the key site for much of their suffrage activities.’² Cowman argues further, suggesting that because a great deal of campaigning took place at branch level, the local Unions were the places where women developed into feminist and political activists.³ Considering that by 1914, there were 121 local WSPU branches spread throughout the United Kingdom, this chapter seeks to build on the arguments of the aforementioned historians and suggest that it was these local Unions, and the activists within them,

¹ The WSPU, *The Seventh Annual Report of The National Women’s Social and Political Union*, February 28. 1913. Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, UDC, Box 382.

² Hannam, “I Had Not Been To London”, 226.

³ Cowman, “The Stone-Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us”, 172.

that were the backbone of the national suffragette movement.⁴ This chapter will explore this argument by continuing to move the focus of consideration away from the WSPU's national leadership, and its head quarters, towards the activity of the local suffragette movement in Wimbledon and the women who sustained it.

Although Wimbledon was one of 36 branches in and surrounding London, this chapter will suggest that because Wimbledon was a suburb of London and around ten miles out of the city centre, that the branch and its activists saw their locality as Wimbledon and therefore focused their daily militant activity in this area.⁵ In order to test this argument, this chapter will determine what daily life and activism was like at branch level for the individuals who sustained the Wimbledon branch.⁶ Moreover, a key focus of this chapter will concern the central role of the branch's organising secretary, Rose Lamartine-Yates. Here this chapter will explore her journey into suffrage and her role in determining the success of the Wimbledon branch.⁷ This chapter will also consider the impact of changing levels of militancy on the Wimbledon Union and examine how this affected the interrelationship between militant activism at a local and national level. Nevertheless, before this

⁴ Figure taken from a WSPU pamphlet that listed all branches across the United Kingdom in February 1914. The pamphlet appears to be a supplement to the Eighth Annual Report of the WSPU. For information by region see: The WSPU, *Branches Across the United Kingdom*, February 1914. Pamphlet. From The Women's Library at LSE, UDC, Box 382.

⁵ Figure taken from a WSPU pamphlet that listed all branches across the United Kingdom in February 1914. The pamphlet appears to be a supplement to the Eighth Annual Report of the WSPU. For information by region see; The WSPU, *Branches Across the United Kingdom: London and Suburbs*, February 1914. Pamphlet. From The Women's Library at LSE, UDC, Box 382.

⁶Purvis, "Deeds not Words", 91-101.

⁷ The term 'suffrage journey' was created by Karen Hunt. Hunt implies that suffragism should be seen as an evolving process rather than a static and stagnant position. With regard to Dora Montefiore, Hunt argues that her suffrage politics were expansive and evolving and that in order to understand more about individual women's suffragism that we must consider their 'suffrage journey.' See: Karen, Hunt, "Journeying through suffrage: the politics of Dora Montefiore" in *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Direction in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustace, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini. (London: Leicester University Press, 2000.)

chapter begins to answer any of these questions, it is essential to uncover how the local Union emerged in Wimbledon during the early Edwardian period.

2.1 The Birth and Infancy of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Wimbledon.

Wimbledon, although having merged with the towns of Merton, Mitcham and Morden in March 1965 to form the new London Borough of Merton, has remained one of the most famous and characteristic suburbs of London. Whether it be internationally renowned for its tennis championships or as the home of some of England's most notable families, such as the Churchills, the Cecils and the Spencers it has retained its own individual character over the years, transforming over four centuries from a 'tiny village on top of a hill' to a 'large railway suburb of London.'⁸ Nevertheless, Wimbledon's significance with regard to this thesis lies in the town's women's suffrage movement.

The suffrage movement in Wimbledon is described by Elizabeth Crawford, as having 'a long and honourable history' with Rhona Garrett, Ernestine Rose and a Miss Beeding holding the first suffrage meeting in March 1873.⁹ This meeting was followed by further interest into the issue of women's suffrage on the 4th December 1883 when Henrietta Muller and Mrs Ashton Dilke addressed an audience of approximately 200 people, mainly women, at the Wimbledon Lecture Hall. The issues that were discussed however, are not clear. Nevertheless, by March 1885 it appears that some women in Wimbledon wanted a Reform Bill for women, as

⁸ See Richard Milward, *Wimbledon: 1865-1965* (Wimbledon: Wimbledon Society Museum Press, 1997) and Richard Milward and Cyril Maidment, *A Surrey Village in Maps*, (Wimbledon: Wimbledon Society Museum Press, 2000), 26.

⁹ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 185.

Florence Fenwick Miller gave a lecture to the Wimbledon and Merton Radical Association stating this issue.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was not until 1905 when Lady Frances Balfour (president of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage) visited Wimbledon to speak at a drawing room meeting, that was held at the home of Mrs J.P Schwann, that the issue of women's suffrage really began to emerge within Wimbledon, as it is believed that the Wimbledon branch of the CSWS was formed as a consequence of the meeting.¹¹ Yet, Wimbledon's constitutional campaign for enfranchisement isn't recognised to have had 'real local impact' until May 1907 when Bertrand Russell, godson of John Stuart Mill, stood as a women's suffrage candidate sponsored by the NUWSS for the Parliamentary by-election.¹² Although local Liberals and some radicals backed Bertrand, Wimbledon was and still remains a safe Conservative seat.¹³

The first sign of any WSPU campaigning within Wimbledon occurred a few years after the CSWS emerged (in January 1905) when Flora Drummond and Minnie Baldock (organisers for the WSPU) were reportedly 'ejected' from a political meeting in Wimbledon for 'constantly interrupting' an assembly of MP's and their supporters.¹⁴ The report in the *WBN* suggests that the notion of women's suffrage

¹⁰ The Wimbledon and Merton Radical Association was formed on 13th July 1884 by Thrustan Holland. As the branch was intended to cover Wimbledon, Tooting, and Merton the WMRA held their branch meetings at Bay Tree Assembly Room, Kingston Road, Wimbledon. For more information see: Gillian Hawtin, *Early Radical Wimbledon, 1880-1931*, (1993).

¹¹ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 185.

¹² Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women*, 1.

¹³ By 1908 Wimbledon had two LSWS branches- one in the north and another in the south. The north branch's secretary was Miss Hughesdon (10 Spencer Hill) and Mrs Leonard Hobhouse (2 Lansdowne Road) and the south branch secretary was Mrs Margaret Beatty (5 Elm Grove).

¹⁴ More information on the CSWS in chapter 5.1.

The Wimbledon Boro' News, 'Suffragettes Ejected.' January 12, 1907. From The British Library. Microfilm. Flora Drummond or 'The General', as she became known, joined the WSPU in 1905. She was a WSPU organiser and very close to the central leadership. Flora was in charge of all local Unions and arranged many of the WSPU pageants and demonstrations. Minnie (Lucy) Baldock is said to be one of the earliest supporters of the WSPU. Like Flora Drummond she was a WSPU organiser, however she only worked for the WSPU up until July 1911 when she became seriously ill

was something that the people of Wimbledon were not sympathetic towards (at least according to the paper's narrative). Mr Julius Bertram, MP, argued that 'such demonstrations would do no good' because he was sure that 'there was no desire for the vote on [the] part of women in general.'¹⁵ Mr Bertram suggested that instead of acting in such a manner, the suffragettes should attempt to 'convert their own sex' in order to have a chance at achieving the vote in 'this generation.'¹⁶

In the winter of 1907, the WSPU had begun to do just that as Flora Drummond and Minnie Baldock headed the 'great winter campaign for the vote in London.'¹⁷ With the support of various paid and voluntary speakers and workers, they organised a huge open-air and lecture hall campaign across London and its suburbs. These campaigns would later become synonymous with the WSPU and the conversion of many women to the suffragette movement.¹⁸ The campaign, however, did not reach Wimbledon until May 1908 when a talk by Miss Evelyn Sharp was organised at the Wimbledon Lecture Hall.¹⁹ The surge of support for 'Votes for Women' however, took a further five months to develop in Wimbledon, as it was not until 29th October 1908 that a suffragette meeting was organised by sympathisers in the locality.

with cancer and had to be operated upon. For more biographical information see; Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 28, 75. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 213, 219.

¹⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, 'Suffragettes Ejected.' January 12, 1907. From The British Library. Microfilm. Julius Bertram was the Liberal MP for the Hitchin division of Hertfordshire from 1906-1910. Although he did not seem to have any direct links to Wimbledon, he directly opposed the Women's Suffrage Bill introduced into parliament in November 1906 by Mr Keir Hardie. Minnie Baldock and Flora Drummond were so incensed by his action in obstructing the Bill that they interrupted a Liberal meeting in Wimbledon to voice their anger.

¹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, 'Suffragettes Ejected.' January 12, 1907.

¹⁷ *Votes for Women* "The National Campaign." October 1907.

¹⁸ *Votes for Women*, "The National Campaign." October 1907.

¹⁹ *Votes for Women*, "Programme of Events." May 14, 1908. Evelyn Jane Sharp joined the WSPU in 1906, she was already a well-known journalist and had published various novels. She undertook several itinerant speaking engagements for the WSPU and worked in the WSPU headquarters. When the Pethick-Lawrences' were expelled from the WSPU organisation, she followed them and edited the *Votes for Women* newspaper. For more information see Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 233 and Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 27.

This initial 'At Home' took place in the drawing room of Stina Bather, in Marryat Road, Wimbledon and was chaired by a Mrs Lorsignol.²⁰ Evelyn Sharp and Louise Phillips were the speakers.²¹ 'At Homes' were a form of meeting used by WSPU branches throughout Britain and acted as an intermediary between a branch meeting and a public meeting. Topics at the 'At Homes' ranged from contemporary arguments in favour of women's suffrage to historical examples and context, which legitimatised the WSPU's tactics. This meeting is notably significant as it was this assembly that signalled the beginning of the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU because, as a consequence of the meeting, those who had become interested in 'Votes for Women' gathered to discuss and construct a local campaign.

Interestingly though, it wasn't idiosyncratic of Wimbledon women to establish a WSPU branch after hearing speakers discuss their recent prison experience or their reasons for converting to women's suffrage. For instance, Richard Whitmore's depiction of the suffragette movement in Leicester illustrates that it was after a meeting where Annie Kenny, Anne Cobden Sanderson and Theresa Billington-Greig (organisers for the WSPU) spoke of their prison experiences, that a WSPU branch in Leicester was established.²² Nevertheless, unlike the local branch in Leicester (where the local movement was established immediately) the Wimbledon branch was not formed at the meeting on the 29th October 1908 as the *WBN* reports suggest.²³ On the advice of Miss Katherine

²⁰ 'Women's Suffrage in Wimbledon', *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, October 31, 1908.

²¹ Wimbledon WSPU, *Report of the Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union*, Pamphlet. From The Women's Library at LSE, *Papers of Rose Lamartine-Yates*, 7RLY. No date is given but the report looks to have been published sometime between October 1908 and early 1909. It may have been the first Annual Report of the Wimbledon WSPU branch although it is not officially named as such.

²² Whitmore, *The Suffragette Movement in Edwardian Leicester*, 42.

²³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Women's Suffrage in Wimbledon." October 31, 1908.

Douglas Smith, a part-time organiser and press department worker for the WSPU, archival evidence reveals that only a ‘Wimbledon Committee’ was established.²⁴ The committee of seven members (with the power to add additional committee members up to the total of 12) included; Stina Bather, Elizabeth Belmont, Miss Field, Mrs Lorsignol (as Hon. Treasurer), Margret Grant (as Hon. Secretary), Jane Shervill (as Hon. Literature Secretary) and Dr Frances Bather (as representing associates).²⁵

Although the Wimbledon branch and its committee was initially established in October 1908, it was not until the 13th January 1909 (at a general meeting held in the Johnston’s Rooms, Broadway) that the newly formed Wimbledon Committee expanded to form the Wimbledon WSPU.²⁶ It was during this time that Mrs de Canole, Rose Lamartine-Yates, Miss McVinish and Margaret Beatty (appointed as Literature Secretary on the retirement of Miss Shervill in March 1909) were also added to the local Union’s Committee.²⁷

²⁴ A Committee is defined as ‘a group of people appointed for a specific function, typically consisting of members of that group.’ It seems that this group of women may have been tasked with increasing interest in the suffragette campaign in the Wimbledon area so that there were enough members to establish a full local committee and functioning branch. See also Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 233.

²⁵ Please note that when first names of women and men are available that they will be used. In the few instances that first names cannot be found I will use either; Mrs, Miss, Dr or Mr.

²⁶ Wimbledon WSPU, *Report of the Wimbledon Women’s Social and Political Union*, Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, *Papers of Rose Lamartine-Yates*, 7RLY.

²⁷ Although the Censuses from 1911 and beforehand are available it is very difficult to obtain information on some of the women active in the Wimbledon WSPU. Many did not live in Wimbledon in 1891 and 1901 and then in 1911 many resisted and evaded the census- something that will be discussed in more detail in chapter three. Young, unmarried women have been particularly difficult to place, however some census data has been found for some of the women. Although Mrs Bather herself is not available on the Census, we can see that her husband is and he lived at 46 Marryat Road, Favo, Wimbledon. She also had 2 daughters (10 and 14) and 2 sons (6 and 11 months), plus a housemaid and a cook in 1911. Elizabeth Belmont is shown to have lived at 40 Merton High Street in 1901, she was married to Basil Belmont and had one step-daughter aged 24. There are two Miss Shervill’s that appear in the 1911 Census, Florence (28) and Christina (36), they both lived with their widowed mother Jane and are both single. Although it is not clear which one is the woman listed as a local WSPU committee member, the census suggests that it is Christina as Florence is shown to work as a civil servant for the government. Rose Lamartine-Yates, only appears on one Census schedule in 1911 but at the time she was staying at the Lamartine-Yates’ holiday home in Whitsable Kent. Rose’s husband is, however, listed on the electoral register which shows

By January 1909, the number of members within the Wimbledon WSPU had increased 'fourfold' from around 12 members in October 1908 to approximately 50 in January 1909, thanks to the organisation of public meetings by the Wimbledon Committee from November 1908.²⁸ One meeting in November 1908 reported that 'hundreds' had gathered at the Lecture Hall in November 1908 to hear 'the General', Mrs Drummond speak.²⁹ Likewise, just a week later, Katherine Douglas Smith is reported to have attended the Lecture Hall to give 'a bright and bracing address' to hundreds of people.³⁰ Notably, the newspaper reports surrounding Wimbledon's public meetings, detail that the audience members in attendance were in the 'hundreds.'³¹ This is particularly impressive considering that the Wimbledon WSPU were only speaking in public once a week in 1908.³² Nonetheless, increased audience attendance seems to have been crucial to the Wimbledon Union's recruitment campaign as it was through these meetings that the local movement built their membership. The use of WSPU meetings to recruit new members is exemplified at a meeting in December 1908 when Mrs Loringol used the public event to appeal for local helpers and distributed membership cards. Sympathisers were also encouraged to send their names and addresses to the organising secretary, Margaret Grant. After the meeting, Margaret Grant's

that in 1909 they lived at Dorset Hall at 152 Kingston Road, Wimbledon. More biographical information on Rose will follow in this chapter.

²⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Women Social and Political Union." January 16, 1909. From the British Library. Microfilm.

²⁹ *Votes for Women* "Wimbledon WSPU," November 26, 1908. Although Flora Drummond was scheduled to speak in Wimbledon in November 1908, she was unable to attend at the last minute because she had been sent to support a by-election campaign in Chelmsford. Instead, the audiences were addressed by Mrs Loringol and Mr Bather, who, in explaining Mrs Drummond's absence, remarked that 'even a General had to follow orders.'

³⁰ *Votes for Women* "Wimbledon WSPU," November 26, 1908.

³¹ *Votes for Women* "Wimbledon WSPU," November 26, 1908,

³² Their meetings were held on the same day and time every week- Sunday at 3pm.

December 1908 report in *VFW* reveals that because of this appeal, ‘several names were obtained.’³³

By January 1909, it appears that the local Union remained intent on building on their promising beginnings by not just seeking to increase their membership, but also focusing on the recruitment of a large number of voluntary workers.³⁴ Local newspaper reports reveal that this was the branch’s main objective as they described how, ‘during the past fortnight to three weeks the WSPU had been carrying out a most determined and active campaign in Wimbledon with the object of gaining members and sympathy for the movement.’³⁵

Various tactics were utilised by the Wimbledon WSPU to secure local people’s interest in the movement. For instance, at the beginning of 1909 Stina Bather and Margaret Grant began the sale of *Votes for Women*, the official newspaper for the WSPU, at the railway bridge in Wimbledon.³⁶ The local WSPU also maximised their weekly meeting attendance by chalking meeting announcements on the pavements of various streets in the town. They also encouraged members to bring as many friends as possible to the local meetings.

Importantly though, the Wimbledon WSPU didn’t not just restrict their meetings to public indoor meetings at the Lecture Hall in Wimbledon or to the ‘At Homes’ discussed previously. Wimbledon Common was also used as a space in which to introduce the Wimbledon public to the WSPU and their policies. The first

³³ *Votes for Women* “Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU,” December 10, 1908.

³⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Women Social and Political Union.” January 16, 1909.

³⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath’s Hall.” February 27, 1909.

³⁶ Wimbledon WSPU, *Report of the Wimbledon Women’s Social and Political Union*.

meeting on the common took place in December 1908, with Flora Drummond and Mary Phillips speaking at the event. At this point Margaret Grant reflected on Wimbledon Common as a site for public meetings, declaring that it provided a ‘splendid pitch and we believe that these meetings will do much good in the district.’³⁷ This kind of approach seemed to work well in Wimbledon as some meetings on the common were securing over 1000 attendees at this early stage in the Wimbledon Union’s existence.³⁸ Wimbledon Common as a space for public engagement is an issue that this investigation will consider in greater detail throughout the duration of this thesis.

These meetings, whether outdoors on Wimbledon Common or indoors at the Lecture Hall, were usually chaired by a Wimbledon WSPU member. A speaker (either from the Wimbledon Union or sent from headquarters) would seek to educate large crowds on various issues regarding women’s suffrage such as ‘the principle of the vote’ or ‘attitudes to anti-suffragists.’ The various activities of the local and national suffragette movement were also discussed, as were any upcoming events such as deputations, demonstrations and exhibitions or further meetings.

One meeting of notable significance was organised in February 1909 at Bath’s Hall in Wimbledon and was attended by Christabel Pankhurst and Flora Drummond. During this mass public meeting Christabel Pankhurst spoke about what the WSPU meant by the term ‘Votes for Women’, as she felt ‘compelled to discuss the issue’ because, she explained, that she had discovered that the ‘general public were apt to get confused upon the point.’³⁹ Christabel explained the meaning

³⁷ *Votes for Women* “Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU,” December 10, 1908.

³⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Successful Meeting on the Common.” November 14, 1908.

³⁹ *Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath’s Hall.” February 27, 1909.

of 'Votes For Women' in the 'plainest way possible.'⁴⁰ She argued that one of the main confusions people had with the WSPU was that they thought that the organisation was asking for the vote on the part of all women. They were not, as all men did not have the vote at this time. She explained that all the WSPU wanted, at this point, was 'the vote on the same terms as it is granted to men.'⁴¹ Moreover, she went on to clarify how the vote would be used. If it was granted to women, she stated that it would not be used as a weapon (like Christabel felt many individuals thought that it would be) but as a way to help men. She explained this point by rhetorically asking 'if men consulted their wives on everyday issues, why not in parliament.'⁴² Her answer to this was that men were potentially scared of the unknown and ultimately the 'competition.' For Christabel, it was not an argument of whether women thought that they could do a better job than men, in fact, she argued that 'we think we are quite as good as men, no better and no worse.'⁴³ Her argument was more about the principle of the vote, one that she stated was 'really a liberal principle.' That being, 'that taxation and representation should go together.'⁴⁴ Although it is unknown why Christabel came to Wimbledon to speak at this time, it could be suggested that she was asked to speak by the Wimbledon branch in order for them to increase local awareness of the 'Votes for Women' campaign and ultimately help to increase the local membership. Krista Cowman argues that occasional visits from these 'star speakers' could 'pay dividends' in terms of helping to build up local membership.⁴⁵ Likewise, Richard Whitmore suggests that the

⁴⁰ *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath's Hall." February 27, 1909.

⁴¹ *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath's Hall." February 27, 1909.

⁴² *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath's Hall." February 27, 1909.

⁴³ *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath's Hall." February 27, 1909.

⁴⁴ *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Drummond at the Bath's Hall." February 27, 1909.

⁴⁵ Cowman, *The Militant Suffragette Movement in York*, 14.

Leicester branch ‘blossomed’ under the guidance of national leaders, particularly those who came to speak, organise and instruct the branch.⁴⁶

The significance of Christabel’s attendance and speech at this meeting early in the Wimbledon WSPU’s lifetime, cannot be under-estimated. Christabel is repeatedly described by historians as being an extremely charismatic individual and a woman who was integral to the success of the WSPU. June Hannam implies this when she argues that historians have continually emphasised her charismatic leadership over the years.⁴⁷ Andrew Rosen, for instance, argued that because of the way in which she showed utter devotion to the militant campaign that she inspired others to do the same. He goes as far as to say that her closest subordinates ‘worshipped Christabel’ and were unquestioning in their devotion.⁴⁸ Christabel’s ability to convert sympathisers and encourage militant activism can be seen in a speech that Rose Lamartine-Yates made at the Wimbledon Exhibition in May 1909. During this speech she confirmed that her choice to attend a suffrage deputation in February 1909 and put herself at risk of being imprisoned, was to some extent influenced by Christabel’s Bath’s Hall speech.⁴⁹

The idea that members of the leadership could not only persuade women to become interested in the WSPU, but encourage them to take part in militancy is extremely significant. As it signifies how essential speakers could be to the conversion of women into active militants. Brian Harrison’s claim that the conversion of an individual to the suffragette movement usually originated from a

⁴⁶ Whitmore, *The Suffragette Movement in Leicester*, 55.

⁴⁷ June Hannam, “Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work’: The Blathwayt Diaries as a Source for Suffrage History”, in, Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan, and Laura Ugolini (eds), *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 59.

⁴⁸ Rosen, *Rise up Women!* 208-209.

⁴⁹ ‘Wimbledon Suffragists’ Exhibition’, *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, May 15, 1909.

‘personality, situation or incident’, is essential to consider here.⁵⁰ However, it is an argument that will be addressed later on in the chapter.⁵¹ This decision by Rose to take part in a deputation that would ultimately see her imprisoned for a month, was much more complex than Harrison suggests.

Notably though, the efforts of the WSPU in Wimbledon were not just aimed at gaining the support of women. A meeting at the Lecture Hall was called in February 1909, for ‘men only’ and focused on gaining support and sympathy for the vote from the men of Wimbledon.⁵² Dr Frances Bather and Mr Duval, who were the speakers at the meeting that was organised by the Wimbledon WSPU, argued that many men objected to women’s suffrage because they looked at it as a ‘female question.’ They went on to explain, that in order to be ‘practical’ about the issue of women’s suffrage, men must consider how the removal of the ‘sex-disability’ would benefit the community and the nation as a whole. They concluded that ‘what was good for one class or sex must be good for the whole community.’⁵³ Although it is surprising that this meeting was organised just for men to attend, it is essential to indicate that meetings of this sort were taking place. Furthermore, that meetings for men only (where male sympathisers would speak about the militant movement) were quite common. According to Sandra Holton, men that were drawn towards aiding the women’s suffrage campaign took on a variety of roles, one of which was promoting amongst men the ‘unproblematic activities’ of militancy.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy: Violence and Suffragettes, 1904-1914”, 30-40.

⁵¹ See sub-chapter 2.3 ‘How I Became a Suffragist’: Rose Lamartine-Yates’ Journey into Suffrage.

⁵² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Women’s Suffrage Meeting For Men Only.” February 6, 1909.

⁵³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Women’s Suffrage Meeting For Men Only.” February 6, 1909.

⁵⁴ Sandra Holton, ‘Manliness and Militancy: The Political Protest of Male Suffragists and the Gendering of the Suffragette Identity?’ in C. Eustance and A. John, *The Men’s Share: Masculinities Male Support and Women’s Suffrage in Britain 1890-1920*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 116-117.

Insights such as this allow us to see that gaining sympathy and ultimately the membership of women was more complicated, at a local level, than is often assumed. Although men's support and understanding of the suffragette movement were essential for the WSPU due to the way in which suffrage had to be granted to women (men of political standing would have been needed to support any Bill put forward in Parliament in order for any laws regarding women's suffrage to be granted) it does not seem that this was the only reason for the organisation of these meetings. Many women may have wanted approval or even permission from their husbands or fathers to take part in the suffragette movement. Furthermore, if men were not informed of the benefits of 'Votes for Women' or questioned on their attitudes towards the issue, then their sympathy may not have been gained. This can be seen in a letter from Tom Lamartine-Yates to his wife Rose where he wrote,

My dearest, today is thy birthday, and what a momentous one. The present I give thee is not gold or silver, but permission freely and gladly to offer up thy liberty for the benefit of the downtrodden woman. Today is the decision-tomorrow the sacrifice whence can only come good tho.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, many men and women refused to accept that women needed the vote. The ideology of separate spheres and the image of the woman at the heart of the home was still very much etched in the minds of many men and women at the beginning of the Edwardian period. Mr T Brown confirmed this argument at a debate on women's suffrage in Wimbledon, where he argued that he opposed women's suffrage because he thought that 'men had their sphere and women had their own.' For him, women's suffrage 'was not in the interests of home.'⁵⁶ This type of attitude however, did not deter the local WSPU. Instead, what becomes apparent

⁵⁵ A letter written by Tom Lamartine-Yates to his wife on her birthday and the evening before she attended a deputation with the WSPU. <http://www.keithatkinson.me.uk/genealogy/5-william-swindlehurst-1824-c-1891-the-lamartine-yates> (Accessed 14/01/15)

⁵⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Women's Suffrage Debate at St George's Hall." March 6, 1910.

during early 1909, is the local WSPU's steadfast determination to defy gender stereotyping and encourage others to do the same by persuading them to attend meetings where they would be educated on the reasons why women's enfranchisement was essential.

2.2 Wimbledon and the Press: The Emergence of Mrs Rose Lamartine-Yates

The efforts to persuade individual attendance to meetings, increase membership and report on the progress of the local movement were not just restricted to outdoor and indoor meetings. The Wimbledon Union also took full advantage of the suffrage and local newspapers as a means of propaganda.⁵⁷ This can be seen particularly in the *WBN* and *VFW*. Throughout the final pages of each edition of *VFW* for instance, there were pages that were dedicated to local WSPU branches. Under the 'local notes' and the 'campaign across the county' section of these newspapers, the weekly reports of secretaries and organisers were printed. These detailed various meetings, visiting speakers, lectures, stall sales and important events in their areas. Krista Cowman suggests that because many WSPU members would have received *VFW* from the *Votes* Secretary of their branch or on subscription from Headquarters, that this section of the newspaper 'served the function of a message board' for the WSPU and its local branches.⁵⁸ Although the coverage of the Wimbledon WSPU and their activities, within these local columns of *VFW* reveal that the branch was particularly active from its foundation in 1908, the content of the reports published from November 1908 to September 1909 were very repetitive. From its foundation in 1908 until September 1909, the *VFW*

⁵⁷ Wimbledon WSPU, *Report of the Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union*.

⁵⁸ Cowman, "The Militant Suffragette Movement in York", 9.

reports were written by the branch's organising secretary, Margaret Grant and regularly focused upon the previous weeks' 'successful meetings.'⁵⁹ For example, one article in December 1908 reported that a 'successful meeting was held in the Lecture Hall, Lingfield Road, where Mrs Eates, Mrs Joachim and Georgina Brackenbury spoke.' Similarly, a report in March 1909 detailed an 'enthusiastic meeting' held on Wimbledon Common where Miss Nellie Smith addressed the crowd.⁶⁰

The reporting on the success and attendance of the local meetings however, does not seem to have been the only purpose of the local Union's press reports during early 1909. One of their objectives centred on the local WSPU's recruitment campaign. This can be seen in a report in February 1909 when *VFW* detailed how the local area was being 'worked up' by Miss Clarkson and Miss Law and that workers were 'urgently needed for chalking, canvassing [and] speaking.'⁶¹ Likewise, the 'local notes' on May 7th 1909 pleaded for voluntary workers, stating that 'volunteers are urgently needed to sell *VFW*- the names of any who would help in this way would be welcomed.'⁶² It seems clear from these reports, along with the pleas from Wimbledon members at public meetings that have previously been discussed, that the need for volunteers to assist the Wimbledon Union during 1909 was a paramount concern. Voluntary workers would have been essential assets to the Wimbledon WSPU because it would have been partly through their work (selling newspapers, speaking at meetings and helping to organise various suffrage events in Wimbledon) that an increased interest in the 'Votes for Women' campaign

⁵⁹ *Votes for Women* "Local Notes", December 10, 1908. See also, *Votes for Women* "Local Notes." March 5, 1909.

⁶⁰ *Votes for Women* "Local Notes", December 10, 1908. See also, *Votes for Women* "Local Notes." March 5, 1909.

⁶¹ *Votes for Women* "Campaign Throughout The Country." February 11, 1909. .

⁶² *Votes for Women* "Local Notes." May 7, 1909.

locally and nationally came about. Accordingly, an increase in voluntary workers potentially meant an increase in individuals attending local suffrage meetings and therefore more members being retained.

The significance of well-attended suffragette meetings is summarised in a WSPU article that argued that suffragette meetings were ‘the most valuable form of propaganda’ because at meetings of this sort ‘a class of people otherwise untouched [were] frequently influenced.’⁶³ It would seem that the influence came after listening to a speaker at the meeting. This is implied by the *VFW* newspaper as it stated that if a meeting could be organised in any local area then this should be communicated with the WSPU head office, who would send a speaker.⁶⁴ This method of organising a meeting where a suffragette spoke on a subject was a tactic that worked well for the WSPU, as it converted many people to the suffragette cause. It is clear that this method was particularly successful in Wimbledon as its branch was established after local women had listened to contemporary arguments for suffrage from Evelyn Sharp and Louise Phillips.

Although Wimbledon had various visiting speakers during the early months of 1909, for instance, Georgina Brakenbury, Christabel Pankhurst, Evelyn Sharp and Flora Drummond, we still see the emergence of Rose Lamartine-Yates as the main speaker at these meetings from May 1909. Rose was first reported as a speaker at a Wimbledon WSPU meeting on the 21st May 1909, when she spoke on prison life in a speech that was described as gaining an ‘encouraging response.’⁶⁵ It appears that Rose had been well received at the Wimbledon meetings, as she began to

⁶³ *Votes for Women* “Drawing Room Meetings.” March 19, 1909.

⁶⁴ *Votes for Women* “Drawing Room Meetings.” March 19, 1909.

⁶⁵ *Votes for Women* “Local Notes.” May 21, 1909.

appear repeatedly as the main speaker at the weekly WSPU meetings. On the 2nd July 1909 one report detailed not only that she spoke at the weekly meeting, but that she also ‘took the chair.’⁶⁶ A further report also detailed how Rose ‘took the chair’ and gave a full account of the last fortnight’s activities and explained in ‘popular language’ the history of the suffrage movement.⁶⁷ Reports such as these suggest that Rose was not just beginning to gain more responsibilities within the Wimbledon branch but, that she was also putting her view on the suffrage situation forward and controlling the content of the meetings.

As the research moves further into 1909, the reports in *VFW* and the *WBN* imply that Rose wasn’t just present at the public meetings of the Wimbledon WSPU because she was becoming increasingly more important to the functioning of the branch itself, but that her speeches were now so well received, that the Wimbledon public became ‘quite eager to attend the gatherings.’⁶⁸ This was suggested in one article that detailed how a ‘large and appreciative audience gathered on the common on Sunday to hear Mrs Lamartine-Yates.’⁶⁹ The address was so well received that many of the audience members were said to have offered ‘interesting questions’ to Rose.⁷⁰

Rose’s essential voluntary work for the WSPU however, did not just remain within Wimbledon at this time. During August 1909, when the WSPU’s ‘Holiday Campaign’ began and the local activity subsided, Rose headed up the propaganda

⁶⁶ *Votes for Women* ‘Local Notes.’ July 2, 1909.

⁶⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon Social and Political Union.” July 24, 1909.

⁶⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon Social and Political Union.” July 24, 1909.

⁶⁹ *Votes for Women* ‘Local Notes.’ July 23, 1909.

⁷⁰ *Votes for Women* ‘Local Notes.’ July 23, 1909..

campaign in Whistable, Kent.⁷¹ A flag was hoisted up over her cottage and a poster was exhibited in her front garden to attract interest into the suffragette movement.⁷² Furthermore, a report in *VFW* detailed that Rose was happy to hear from anyone who wanted to assist her in the propaganda work in this area. Rose's work for the WSPU during the holiday season demonstrates not just how committed she was to the national movement but it also shows that whatever the location, whether it be Wimbledon or Whistable, she was determined to lead by example and do everything that she could to increase awareness of the WSPU and its campaign.

It is because of her desire to push the issue of women's suffrage to the front of people's consciousness that her name appeared more and more in *VFW*. Furthermore, when Rose was written about with regard to her campaigning or speaking, she was described in an extremely positive and enthusiastic light by her colleagues. It is therefore unsurprising that when Rose returned from her 'Holiday Campaign' at the end of September 1909, she was selected as the person to replace Margaret Grant, who had resigned as organising secretary for the Wimbledon branch due to 'pressure of work' earlier in the month.⁷³

From October 1909 up until the end of the First World War the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU (under the guidance of Rose) would become a highly active and prosperous WSPU branch. Furthermore, it is argued in this thesis that the success of this branch was partly due to Rose and a small group of women, who sustained the local Union and its members throughout the branch's lifetime. Nevertheless, before this chapter delves deeper in to the daily life and activities of the Wimbledon

⁷¹ By the Edwardian Era holidays had become a well-established part of many peoples lives across the social class spectrum. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the WSPU took advantage of the opportunity to spread WSPU propaganda in popular holiday resort locations across the British Isles. The idea of an organised 'Holiday Campaign', as is became known was first reported in *Votes for Women* in August 1908, when several suffragettes informed Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence of there intention to spread the 'Votes for Women' campaign in the seaside areas and country towns and villages where they, along with many others were spending their holidays. Information from Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 46-47.

⁷² *Votes for Women*, "Holiday Campaign." August 20, 1909.

⁷³ *Votes for Women*, 'Local Notes.' September, 1909.

WSPU, the investigation will take Rose as its focus and consider the background of this indispensable woman.

2.3 ‘How I Became a Suffragist’, Rose Lamartine-Yates’ Journey into Suffrage.

In 1908, at a meeting of the Cyclist’s Touring Club in London, Rose Lamartine-Yates (the first ever woman to be elected to the CTC’s council) declared that she ‘was not a suffragette.’ Nevertheless, just one year later, Rose joined the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU and wrote a speech entitled ‘Why I Became a Suffragist.’⁷⁴ Rose later became one of the most active and prominent suffrage activists in Wimbledon and as we have already seen, the organising secretary for the Wimbledon WSPU. Given Rose’s rapid change of mind and decision to become involved in the suffrage movement, it is necessary to explore her speech, a critical primary source, in further detail. Through its examination and the simultaneous analysis of other key sources, written after Rose’s first imprisonment, this sub-chapter will construct a more complex picture of Rose’s character, her initial journey into women’s suffrage and her ultimate dedication to the cause. In order to further understand how typical Rose’s tale of conversion was, her early writings will be compared to those of other suffrage activists in order to test Kabi Hartman’s argument surrounding suffragette conversion narratives.⁷⁵

Rose Emma Janau was born of French patronage on the 23rd February 1875 at 33 Dalryell Road, Lambeth, London and was the youngest of three

⁷⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*. Manuscript. From The Women’s Library at LSE, 7RLY. Gail Cameron, ‘Rose Lamartine-Yates (1875-1954)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/63902>, accessed 30th 2013]

⁷⁵ Kabi Hartman, “What Made Me a Suffragette”: the New Woman and the Conversion Narrative.” *Women’s History Review*, 12:1 (2003), 35-50.

children.⁷⁶ Both her parents, Elphege Bertoni Victor (b.1847), a teacher of foreign languages and Marie Pauline (b.1841) were born in France but later became naturalised British citizens. Rose therefore received a wide-ranging and comprehensive education. One that would have rivalled any male's education during the Victorian era. She was schooled at Clapham and Truro High Schools and travelled to Kassel and the Sorbonne to study at the University of Paris.⁷⁷ In October 1896, Rose entered Royal Holloway College to study Modern Languages and Philology and resided there for three years. However, she left the college before her final year, due to a breakdown in health.⁷⁸ This 'breakdown' (as Rose's close friend Mary Leigh described it) in a short, unpublished biography that the WSPU drum major wrote about Rose, was described as an attack on Rose's sight and spine.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, determined not to be defeated by this illness, Rose proceeded, just a year later, to pass the Oxford Final Honours Examination (the highest examination that was open to women at Oxford University).⁸⁰ Nevertheless, although women were allowed to sit the examination, they were not allowed to be awarded their degree on the grounds simply that they were a woman. In fact it was not until 1920 that Oxford allowed women to receive any form of degree.⁸¹

By 1900 Rose had married Tom Lamartine-Yates, a solicitor she had met through the Cyclists Touring Club. Tom was the eldest son of Elizabeth (neè Eaves) and William Swindlehurst however he changed his last name to Lamartine-Yates by deed poll in 1878, after his father was imprisoned for fraud against the Artisans

⁷⁶ Cameron, 'Rose Lamartine-Yates (1875-1954)', ODNB.

⁷⁷ A.J.R., eds, *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who*, (London: Stanley Paul & CO, 1913)

⁷⁸ Entry for Janau, Rose Emma *Royal Holloway University Entrance Book*, From Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections.

⁷⁹ Leigh, Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*, date unknown. Typescript Biography. From Women's Library at LSE, *papers of Mary Leight*, MLB/E.

⁸⁰ A.J.R., eds, *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who*, (London: Stanley Paul & CO, 1913)

⁸¹ Claire Jones, "Women's access to higher education: An overview (1860-1948)," *Herstoria*, July 21, 2012, accessed January 12 2014, www.herstoria.com.

Dwelling Company.⁸² Although Tom started his career as an engineer, he began to study law in 1866 and at the time of his father's conviction (October 1877) he had just qualified as a solicitor. Furthermore, as the name Swindlehurst was being viewed as a 'dirty word' by the press, with the emphasis on 'swindle', he would not have needed much encouragement to change his name.⁸³ He would not have wanted to have been easily associated with his father's scandal, especially if he sought to set up his own law firm. As Rose was Tom's junior (by twenty six years) it is unsurprising that she was his second wife. Tom had previously been married to a woman named Fanny however, their marriage was childless and brief as Fanny died in October 1896. Tom had been friends with Rose's parents, so had known her all her life, and it appears that their courtship began in 1898 with the full approval of Rose's parents. Their marriage took place in 1900 in Stoke d'Abernon in Surrey.

During their first years of marriage, they were both 'passionate cyclists' who toured throughout Europe with the club.⁸⁴ Rose became a leading figure within the reform party, becoming the first women member to be elected to the CTC's council in 1907. It was during this time, when Rose stood for election to the CTC's council, that she made the statement that she 'was not a suffragette.'⁸⁵ However, as this statement was made prior to her election to the club's national council, it would seem that Rose was attempting to reassure her fellow members (who were mainly male) that she was committed to her role on the national council. Nevertheless, just a year later, Rose wrote that although it was 'an honest statement' it was at the

⁸² <http://www.keithatkinson.me.uk/genealogy/5-william-swindlehurst-1824-c-1891-the-lamartine-yates>. Accessed January 14 2015.

⁸³ <http://www.keithatkinson.me.uk/genealogy/5-william-swindlehurst-1824-c-1891-the-lamartine-yates>. Accessed January 14 2015.

⁸⁴ Cameron, 'Rose Lamartine-Yates (1875-1954)', *ODNB*.

⁸⁵ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 763.

same time ‘untrue.’⁸⁶ She stated that, ‘for looking into the matter seriously I find I have never been anything else, therefore, I never really became a suffragist, I was born one and the tale I have to tell is rather how I became to realise I was and must remain one at whatever the personal cost.’⁸⁷

Initially the speech, written in 1908, had the title ‘why I am a suffragist’ but, during the editing process, ‘why I am’ was replaced with ‘how I became.’⁸⁸ It could be suggested that it was changed to this because it was intended to be published.

However, whether its publication was Rose’s intention, is very unclear.

Nonetheless, the latter phrase, is perhaps a more appropriate title because the tale that followed, was one that describes how different experiences and observations in Rose’s life shaped her as a woman, and as a political activist. Rose’s testimony is particularly insightful because she reveals that it was not until her adult life that she became aware of any injustices that women had upon them. During her ‘early life’ she states that, ‘it never occurred to me that [women] [were] considered by the world as less than [men].’⁸⁹ She suggested that it was her mother that bred into her the ‘instinct that [a] trained and competent woman was no different from [a] trained and competent man.’⁹⁰ This notion would become one that Rose would carry with her for her entire life.

Rose suggested however, that it was not just her mother who showed her that women could more than compare to men. Her fellow students whom she described as having ‘more than average talent and capacity’ were also responsible

⁸⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

⁸⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

⁸⁸ It is clear from the primary document that the words have been replaced because ‘why I am’ has been crossed out and ‘how I became’ has been written above the original title.

⁸⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

⁹⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

for forming this notion.. She stated that ‘it was my good fortune in school and college life to mingle with women who could compare, or more than compare with their masculine colleagues.’ Nevertheless, Rose’s experiences and opinions seem unique when comparing them to other suffragettes’ early life experiences. For instance, when Sandra Holton’s analysis of the autobiographical writings of Hannah Mitchell, Mary Gawthorpe and Helena Swanwick is considered, it seems that their early life experiences were completely different from Rose’s.⁹¹ This is particularly obvious when we consider the relationship that these activists had with their parents and the way in which their childhood and adolescent experiences shaped them as women and political activists.

For instance, Mary Gawthorpe’s decision to establish herself as an ‘independent woman’ was prompted by a series of incidents that she called ‘the battle of the beds.’⁹² From a young age, Mary recalled how she would hear loud disruptions coming from her parent’s bedroom, normally after her father had returned home from drinking. Although she did not at the time understand what the disturbances were, she felt the need to protect her mother and did this by offering to share her own bed with her. This protective instinct stayed with Mary because after she successfully and independently established herself as a schoolteacher, she not only left home herself but organised the removal of her mother and brother as she did not want them to be affected by her father’s ‘feckless behaviour’ anymore.⁹³ Like Gawthorpe, Helena Swanwick’s childhood memories of her mother’s situation and her own experience (as the only daughter of six children) also pushed her towards securing her own independence. Although, like Rose,

⁹¹ Holton, “The Suffragist and the “Average Woman”, 9-24.

⁹² Holton, “The Suffragist and the “Average Woman”, 9.

⁹³ Holton, “The Suffragist and the “Average Woman”, 10.

Helena received a much better education than that provided to most women in the Victorian era, she did not enjoy a happy relationship with her own mother, particularly after Helena's father died. After her father's death her mother was 'almost insane with grief' and as a consequence Helena was emotionally deprived and isolated in a domestic space in which her mother felt she should remain.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, unlike her mother, Helena was not willing to accept a role that left her financially, psychologically and emotionally dependent on a man. She had seen what this acceptance had done to her mother, particularly after her father's death, and she was determined to create a better future for herself.

Like Helena Swanwick, Hannah Mitchell's relationship with her mother was also very unstable. Hannah's mother was a domestic servant who hated her isolated, dirty and drudge life, married to a sheep farmer in Derbyshire. Above all, she is described as hating and resenting her children, particularly for the burden that they placed her under. Consequently, she had a 'violent temper' and physically abused her six children.⁹⁵ Hannah described how she never felt loved or wanted by her mother and was expected to accept the same sense of struggle and way of life in which her mother was trapped. However, unlike Mary and Helena, she did have a close relationship with her father who, along with her uncle, taught her to read. Hannah was promised an education after her brothers had spent their time at school. Her mother however, chose to only send Hannah's elder sister away to school. Consequently, Hannah only ever spent two weeks in formal education. Hannah did however, begin an apprenticeship as a dressmaker but was ordered to break the apprenticeship by her mother and return to help on the farm. This

⁹⁴ Holton, "The Suffragist and the "Average Woman", 14.

⁹⁵ Holton, "The Suffragist and the "Average Woman", 16.

culminated in Hannah's decision to run away from home at the age of 14. From that point onwards, she became a domestic servant and then a seamstress and dressmaker. She later married, prior to which she became involved in the socialist movement where she learnt about birth control techniques, and the possibility of reducing family size. Because of this, she 'saw the hope for a better life for married working-class women and a happier domestic environment than she had known as a child.'⁹⁶

Although Helena, Hannah and Mary all have a different story to tell of their lives, the lives of their mothers and the relationships they had with them, their somber tales are all informed by the multifaceted nature of 'sexual injustice' and the 'subjection of women' in Victorian society.⁹⁷ It is because of these experiences, that Holton suggests that these women were determined to become women who were self-governed and of independent means. Furthermore, it was then during this journey that they became introduced to the suffrage movement through their involvement in different debating groups and movements such as the socialist movement. What is essential to consider here though, is the suggestion by Holton that the experiences of these seemingly 'average' and 'ordinary' women were far from divorced from the rest of their lives. Their experiences in their ordinary everyday life were inextricably linked to their lives as suffragists.

Brian Harrison further argues that it is essential to enquire where a suffragette's inspiration comes from, suggesting that their decision to become

⁹⁶ Holton, "The Suffragist and the "Average Woman", 17.

⁹⁷ For a more detailed account of their experiences please see, Holton, "The Suffragist and the "Average Woman," 9-24.

involved in the militant movement stems from an awareness of injustice.⁹⁸ For Harrison it is usually a ‘personality, situation or incident’ that initially inspired the woman to become militant. With regard to Rose, we will see that it is a series of situations or incidents that inspired her to become involved in the suffrage movement. Moreover, Rose’s writing demonstrates that you didn’t have to have a difficult childhood or teenage life to have an intrinsic sense of personal autonomy. Nevertheless, if Rose felt no restrictions towards women in her early years, what aspects of Rose’s life: her experiences and observations, inspired her to become involved in the suffragette movement? Furthermore, how did these restrictions on womanhood influence her not just as a political activist but as a woman and a parent?

For Rose, it was not until ‘full womanhood’ was reached that she experienced any restrictions upon women’s lives whatsoever.⁹⁹ The ‘first barrier’ that Rose viewed as a constraint on women was the ‘absurdity [of] ‘hair-up and long skirts.’¹⁰⁰ When Rose was made to dress in this particular way, because it was the ‘attire suitable for the occasion’ she felt for the first time in her life ‘the hand of tyranny and oppression.’¹⁰¹ Her clothing, it is implied, was a means of control, insisted upon in order to ‘construct, maintain and police middle-class femininity.’¹⁰² Even though it seemed ridiculous to Rose that women were expected to dress in a certain way and had to remain restricted in their clothing, regardless of the occasion, historian Christopher Breward suggests that men’s dress during the Victorian era also had similar restrictions and expectations. He argues that the tailoring journals

⁹⁸ Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 30-40.

⁹⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰¹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰² Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 9.

and etiquette guides promoted a ‘gentlemanly’ ideal.¹⁰³ One guide reads ‘we regard dress not merely as an envelope of broadcloth, cassimere silk, satin or velvet, wrought up in more or less taste after the model of a prevailing pattern but as one of the most significant expressions of character and sustaining an intimate relation with manners and morals.’

Rose’s second barrier was uncovered when she looked in to practicing law. Rose had a keen interest in the law but found that she was not able to become a solicitor or a barrister because these professions were ‘protected professions’, reserved only for men.¹⁰⁴ Rose implied that a woman’s place, even towards the end of the Victorian era, remained within the home as she, along with other women, were told that they had to be content with the theoretical knowledge of the law.¹⁰⁵ Rose argued not just in this piece of writing (‘How I Became a Suffragist’) but, in a letter written to a London daily paper that it was ‘absurd’ and ‘unjust’ to protect professions just for men’s monopoly and pamper them because they feared the competition.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, the issue of ‘protected professions’ was something that clearly held Rose back as far as a career in the law was concerned. It is implied that her ‘Barrier to the Bar’ was to some extent lifted when she married solicitor, Tom Lamartine-Yates. This is evident when she recorded that Tom was not only willing to indulge her interest in the law theoretically but during the first years of their marriage. Tom ‘patiently put me through a practical legal training until legal

¹⁰³ Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer; Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914*, (Manchester: MUP: 1999), 41.

¹⁰⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

discussions became a feature of our home pleasure.¹⁰⁷ It is apparent that Tom not only saw Rose as his equal, but also as his lifelong companion, a woman who he greatly admired. Mary Leigh described their companionship as a ‘partnership’, declaring that ‘a happier partnership could not have existed.’¹⁰⁸ The idea of marriage being an entity that to some extent freed Rose from the public restrictions upon her, is a notion that is extremely significant. It demonstrates that towards the end of the Victorian era of separate spheres, some women were perhaps moving away from the ideals surrounding ‘the cult of true womanhood.’¹⁰⁹ Rose and her relationship with Tom demonstrates that although all women at this time were not completely free from the ‘angel in the home’ stereotype, they were not all the passive, submissive, pious and domesticated creatures that they are assumed to have been.¹¹⁰

Jeanne Peterson suggests a similar argument in her study of Victorian women in the Paget family. She argues that by the 20th century, the image of the angel in the home had begun (like other features of Victorian society) to fracture. She even goes as far as suggesting that the angel in the home was simply an ideal. One that was ‘much talked of in Victorian circles, yet [was] nowhere to be found among living women.’¹¹¹ Although one would not agree entirely with the latter statement, Peterson’s suggestion that some women experienced few restrictions on their freedom to read, study and travel, is one that relates directly to Rose’s experiences and particularly to her relationship with her husband. Rose’s

¹⁰⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹⁰⁸ Leigh, Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*.

¹⁰⁹ For a more in-depth discussion on these two notions, see Amanda Vickery, “Golden Age of Separate Spheres?” *Historical Journal*, 36: 2 (1999).

¹¹⁰ See Martha Vicinus, *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977)

¹¹¹ Jeanne Peterson, “No Angels in the House: The Victorian Myth and the Paget Women,” *The American Historical Review*, 89:3 (1984), 677-708, accessed February 3, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1856121>.

relationship with Tom seems to challenge turn-of-the century critiques of marriage by feminist writers such as Cicely Hamilton who described, in *Marriage As a Trade*, wedlock being a profession rather than a sacred bond between two people.¹¹² In Rose's case, her marriage to Tom was one that was encompassed by love, support and above all freedom for Rose to speak her mind and pursue any career or vocation that she wanted to. As we will see throughout this thesis Tom's broad-mindedness and supportive nature was something that remained for their entire marriage and it is a feature that becomes particularly apparent when Rose becomes involved in the suffragette movement.

Linked directly to the issues of 'protected professions' for Rose was the problem of women's wages. She observed and argued that women's work being paid at a lower rate than men's was something that 'has always been a sore point within me.'¹¹³ The explanation for this at the time, was that employers assumed that men had a family to look after whereas a woman only needed a wage to care for herself. Rose however, disputed this assumption. She suggested that it was simply an excuse for paying women a lesser amount than men. She rhetorically asks her audience 'have you ever known an employer, when selecting say a clerk ask him whether he has a wife and children and increase his salary according to the number of persons the candidate has to provide for? I think not.'¹¹⁴ For Rose it was the work itself and not the worker that the employer paid. Furthermore, because of that, she argued that if the work is completed, the 'reward' earned by the employee should disregard any sex, responsibility or any other distinction.¹¹⁵ 'It is absurd', Rose contended, 'to say I'll pay 20/- a week to a woman clerk and 35/- to a man

¹¹² Cicely Hamilton, *Marriage As A Trade*, (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1909)

¹¹³ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹¹⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹¹⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

clerk (doing the same work) as to say, I'll pay 20/- a week to a man clerk with brown hair and 35/- to one with fair hair... would that be fair? Why not?'¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, regardless of how unfair the issue of women's wages were, along with all the other impositions that were placed upon women during the late Victorian/early Edwardian era, women did not have the ability to make changes to any type of legislation regarding the above issues because they had no voice in parliament to remedy the issues and enforce justice. Rose echoes this when she argued that that laws were made by men without the consultation of women and were therefore made to protect the man and oppress the women. Furthermore, what is apparent from the analysis of Rose's writing is that men were not just protecting themselves in the public sphere. They were also doing so in the private sphere. Rose stated that the notion that 'the woman's sphere is the home' [is] a trite little sentence' because even in the home, he did not let her be, as he alone legislated for that sphere too.¹¹⁷

Two of the legislations that Rose argued affected hers and other women's lives fundamentally were: 'the one sided law of divorce and the guardianship of children.'¹¹⁸ With regard to divorce, Rose argued that the 'inequality is so marked that the law seems to be punctuated "Man-Made" between every word.'¹¹⁹ Holly Furneaux supports the argument surrounding the sexual double standards of The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. She suggests that because the Act stated that men were able to divorce their wives on a single count of adultery and a woman had to apply for the divorce on two counts (that this law, along with the

¹¹⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹¹⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹¹⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹¹⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s) ‘helped to enshrine a sexual double standard.’¹²⁰ Although Rose declared that this was an unjust law that affected women and their freedom within relationships, it did not exasperate her to the extent that the law surrounding the guardianship of children did. Rose contended that although nature stipulates that a child needs a father and a mother, the law in England regarding the guardianship of children only ‘required either a father or a mother, to suit man’s convenience.’¹²¹ This convenience being that, if the child was legitimate it shall have only a father and if illegitimate, a child should only require a mother. Effectively this reduced marriage to ‘an act of accepted ownership of children on the man’s part.’¹²² After giving birth to her only son, Paul, in 1908, this act was particularly painful for Rose to digest because by law she had few rights and little influence towards the baby she had given birth to. Rose, along with all other mothers in Britain, had very little say in their child’s upbringing, religion or education. Furthermore, upon the death of the child’s father, the guardianship did not go directly to the biological mother but to whomever the father choose to appoint.¹²³ Only in the event that the father selected the mother as the child’s guardian, did she regain an ounce of her natural responsibility. The way in which this law was framed was so distressing to Rose that she referred to it as a ‘grotesque extreme.’¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Holly Furneaux, “How Repressed were the Victorians?” Accessed February 17, 2015.

<http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/victorian-sexualities>

¹²¹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹²² Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹²³ Although the 1839 Custody of Infant’s Act permitted mothers to petition the courts for the custody of their children up to the age of seven and to apply for access to older children and the 1873 Infant Custody Act suggested that children’s needs should be of paramount concern when deciding custody rights, the laws surrounding the guardianship of children did not protect mothers. Although they allowed for mother’s to petition for custody or access to their children, contemporary accounts, such as those of Rose and Dora, suggest that the laws regarding the guardianship of children were insulting to women.

¹²⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*. Manuscript. From The Women’s Library at LSE, 7RLY.

Rose however, was not alone in this feeling. Fellow suffrage activist Dora Montefiore also came across this ‘sex disability.’ Unlike Rose however, Dora’s life was directly affected by this law when Dora’s husband died in 1889.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, it was not until Dora was left to deal with matters of business with lawyers, that she discovered ‘what the real social position of a widow meant to a nineteenth century woman.’¹²⁶ When explaining the terms of her husband’s Last Will and Testament one lawyer stated ‘as your late husband says nothing about the guardianship of the children, they will remain under your care.’¹²⁷ Dora described how at that point she had to restrain her anger, because to her, her husband would have naturally never thought to leave their children to anyone but their mother. However, due to the state of the law, the lawyer explained that her husband was free to leave their children to whomever he thought appropriate. Furthermore, as far as the law was concerned, the children had one parent and that was the father. For Dora the law was so ‘insulting to all motherhood’ that, as far as her children were concerned, she felt that she was better off being a man’s mistress than his wife because through marriage she had unknowingly given up any rights of parental guardianship.¹²⁸ It was from that particular experience (although Dora did not realise it at the time) that she became a suffragist. One that was determined to alter the law.¹²⁹ Like Dora, this ‘sex disability’ was for Rose, one of the most pressing issues that pushed her towards women’s suffrage. However, in order to make changes to this law, or any other law for that matter, Rose and Dora knew that they required a voice in the political arena.

¹²⁵ Karen Hunt, “Journeying Through Suffrage,” 163.

¹²⁶ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*: Chapter II. Accessed on March 7, 2014, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/montefiore/>

¹²⁷ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*: Chapter II.

¹²⁸ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*: Chapter II.

¹²⁹ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*: Chapter II.

After her exploration of various restrictions on womanhood, Rose declared that ‘such things had set one thinking, is woman really an inferior being and was she intended to be so?’¹³⁰ The answer was clear. She was not. Furthermore, it seemed strange to Rose that men would even think or act on the assumption that women were inferior. Rose argued that both women and men should have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as men however, because of men women were dumb with regard to all legislative and national affairs. Furthermore, the only way to move away from this state of affairs was to make themselves heard.¹³¹ For Rose, there was only ‘one instrument’ that could attain this. This was the vote. This viewpoint is apparent when she proclaimed that the vote ‘can be heard, [as] it is the only recognised voice of the citizen [because] it can make itself felt.’¹³² Furthermore, it was ‘the vote and it alone [that] can place woman within her natural and constitutional rights as a human being and a citizen.’¹³³ It was this realisation by Rose, that the vote was in many cases the key to her freedom and ability to change the man-made laws in Britain, that pushed her towards fighting for women’s suffrage. Rose implied this when she stated that, ‘the realisation that [the vote] is the only means of winning fair treatment of womanhood, converts the passive thinker into the active suffragist.’¹³⁴

Nevertheless, what is even more essential to consider is that Rose does not just explain why she turned to women’s suffrage but, she goes on to detail how she became a militant activist. For Rose, it was ‘the realisation that to fight without any weapon that stings is to fight in vain’ that pushed her towards confirming that she

¹³⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹³¹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹³² Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹³³ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹³⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

was in fact a ‘militant suffragist.’¹³⁵ A critical element to explore when considering the statement that she was a militant suffragist is the way in which Rose uses language to further her point. The term suffragist implies that Rose was a peaceful, constitutional activist who would not have broken the law in the pursuit of women’s enfranchisement. However, when she places militant in front of this term it takes on a different meaning, one that would be directly associated with the WSPU. Looking at the source with hindsight, it seems that the term suffragette would have been a more appropriate and representative word to use, however, as Rose wrote this speech in 1908 she had not taken part in any form of militant activity and she may not have realised how far she was willing to go for the WSPU. Furthermore, the term suffragette was a word that was recently new in terms of its association with militancy because it was not until 1906 that the word was first used by the journalist Charles E Hands in the London *Daily Mail* to directly describe the activists of the WSPU.¹³⁶ Although after this point it was a term that was embraced by the WSPU, prior to this, suffrage activists would have referred to themselves as suffragists and after 1906 often used both terms interchangeably. A further reason for the use of the term suffragist is perhaps due to the type of narrative that Rose was writing. As the source tells the tale of how Rose became a suffrage activist, who had not by this point in 1908 taken part in any militant activity, she would see herself as a suffragist. Accordingly, it is crucial to pinpoint when she became a suffragette and more importantly, the pivotal moment when she began to recognise herself as one.

¹³⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist*.

¹³⁶ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, 452.

'How I Became a Suffragist' is a piece of writing that Kabi Hartman has defined as a 'conversion narrative.'¹³⁷ The typical 'conversion narrative' for Hartman centres around two key points: the initial 'process of conversion' followed by a person's 'consecration' into the WSPU by a 'baptism of imprisonment.'¹³⁸ This is, for her, the archetypal way in which suffragettes represented themselves after conversion to the movement. Furthermore, she argues that these 'conversion narratives' shared many of the characteristics of spiritual autobiographies, especially the way in which spiritual autobiographical writings follow a specific and established order of events and identify strongly with Christ and religion.¹³⁹

Nevertheless, if Rose's experience is explored alone, it seems that although her narrative is centred around her realisation that she was a suffragist or what Hartman calls the 'process of conversion', it is not straightforwardly a 'conversion narrative' in the way that Hartman suggests. Hartman also argues that some suffragette writings, particularly those published in *VFW*, explored the conversion to 'the Cause' and often focused on the *VFW* newspaper or what she calls the 'suffragette bible' as a critical part of the conversion process.¹⁴⁰ However, Rose's story shows that suffrage propaganda periodicals did not overtly play a part in her decision to become a suffragist. Rather, her alliance to the cause was due to the injustices and barriers that she had observed and experienced in her early adult years. Nevertheless, the difference between what Rose's narrative shows and what Hartman argues are key characteristics of a conversion narrative, may lie in the issue that Rose's narrative is quite a specific and singular example. Hartman consulted

¹³⁷ Hartman, "What Made Me a Suffragette," 35-50.

¹³⁸ Hartman, "What Made Me a Suffragette," 35.

¹³⁹ Hartman, "What Made Me a Suffragette," 36. Spiritual autobiography follows a specific and established order of events, usually a movement from imprisonment in to 'spiritual darkness and sin to awakening, illumination and righteousness.'

¹⁴⁰ Hartman, "What Made Me a Suffragette," 37.

many conversion stories that were contained within the *VFW* periodical along with the experiences of suffragettes such as Constance Lytton.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, this does not mean that Rose's conversion is not important, as many suffrage activists writings and experiences, however similar, will also have resonated with their individual experiences. Furthermore, this document demonstrates that not all suffragettes used biblical language to describe their initial journey into suffrage. The only reference that Rose makes to the bible is when she questions the unjust laws against women concerning employment, guardianship and divorce. Referring to the bible, she stated that God created men and women as equals and that those who accept the 'scripture as Holy writ' (by this she means the sacred law) should look back to the story of creation and decipher its real meaning, that being, we were all created equal.¹⁴² Nevertheless, one must consider that the second critical part of Hartman's conversion narrative' is the 'baptism of imprisonment.'¹⁴³ And as this source was written before Rose's imprisonment for the cause, it essential to examine a similar narrative published after her arrest and first imprisonment.

2.4 'A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith', The Birth of a Suffragette

February 1909 was said, by Mary Leigh, to be the date that 'a new life was to open out for Rose,' as it was on the 22nd February 1909 (the eve of Rose's birthday) that she attended a public meeting held in Wimbledon where Christabel Pankhurst was the chief speaker.¹⁴⁴ During the meeting Rose felt a 'definite call' and on the way home she asked her husband 'if he could give her the birthday present she so

¹⁴¹ For a detailed biography of Constance Lytton please see: Lyndsey Jenkins, *Lady Constance Lytton, Aristocrat, Suffragette, Martyr*. (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015)

¹⁴² Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *How I Became a Suffragist..*

¹⁴³ Hartman, "What Made Me a Suffragette," 41.

¹⁴⁴ Leigh, Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*, date unknown. Typescript Biography. From Women's Library at LSE, *papers of Mary Leight*, MLB/E.

urgently desired... A month in Holloway gaol for the cause.¹⁴⁵ Tom could only ‘press her hand’ and when they arrived home, together they, worded the telegram that offered Rose to the WSPU for the next deputation. The affirmative reply from Christabel Pankhurst the next morning decided it.

On the 24th February 1909 Rose attended a deputation, led by Emmeline Pethick- Lawrence, from Caxton Hall to the House of Commons, to present a petition under the Bill of Rights to the Prime Minister.¹⁴⁶ However, Rose was seized by police officers when she attempted to deliver the petition and was subsequently arrested and charged with ‘obstructing the police in the execution of their duty.’¹⁴⁷ She was held at Cannon Row police station for three hours until she was released on bail. The following morning Rose’s ‘mock trial’ took place at Bow Street Court.¹⁴⁸ Rose referred to it as a ‘mock trial’ because she argued that ‘the charge was in fact the verdict.’¹⁴⁹ At the trial Rose spoke about the deputation, in the dock, and argued that it was her ‘constitutional right’ to take part in this deputation and that it was the police that obstructed the suffragettes from entering the House of Commons and not the other way around.¹⁵⁰ Rose felt so passionately about this constitutional right that she stated that if the courts saw this as a crime, she was willing to bear any punishment that they believed she deserved.¹⁵¹ Rose argued this because she felt, more than anything, that she must stand by what she believed in, regardless of whether the court’s opinion was that it was a criminal and not a

¹⁴⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*. Manuscript. From The Women’s Library at LSE, 7RLY.

¹⁴⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁴⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁴⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁴⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁵⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁵¹ *Votes for Women* “At Bow Street, Mrs Lamartine-Yates.” March 5, 1909.

constitutional act.¹⁵² The way in which Rose used the courtroom as a platform to legitimise her actions and ultimately her claim to citizenship is said, by Laura Mayhall to have been a new strategy implemented by the WSPU in 1908. She argues that they ‘utilised the courtrooms to great advantage’ and even draws on Rose’s trial as an example of how WSPU militants used the courtroom as a place for ‘urging magistrates to refrain from enforcing unfair laws.’¹⁵³

Rose’s belief in her convictions was very important to her as she wanted to set the best example she could for her child. This opinion is clear when her courtroom speech is examined. She stated that her decision to take part in the deputation was made after considering what her son would have thought if she had not have taken part. She stated that when her son grew up he might have asked her ‘what did your do mother in the days of the women’s agitation to lay the views of the women before the Prime Minister?... and I could but blush if I said to him I made no attempt to go to the Prime Minister, and therefore, for that public and private reason, I stand before your worship today to bear whatever punishment you think me deserving of.’¹⁵⁴ This persistent attitude and belief in standing by her decision was also echoed when she refused to ‘be bound over to keep the peace.’¹⁵⁵ Subsequently Rose was sentenced to ‘one month’s imprisonment in the 2nd division in default of being bound over to keep the peace.’¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² *Votes for Women* “At Bow Street, Mrs Lamartine-Yates.” March 5, 1909.

¹⁵³ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 76-77.

¹⁵⁴ *Votes for Women* “At Bow Street, Mrs Lamartine-Yates.” March 5, 1909.

¹⁵⁵ *Votes for Women* “At Bow Street, Mrs Lamartine-Yates.” March 5, 1909.

¹⁵⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

Soon after Rose's release from prison, she wrote a speech entitled, 'A Month in A Common Gaol For the Faith.'¹⁵⁷ What is crucial about this document is that it is markedly different to the 1908 source explored previously. In particular, the language that was used in the article took quite a religious tone. This is clear from the outset of the piece as Rose wrote 'shall we live in the faith that is in us, fearing nothing, fearing no one, or shall we stand by when the light leads to suffering and scorn.'¹⁵⁸ Rose's answer comes from a 'persistent voice' who said 'leave all- go forward.' She described this as an 'apostolic call' and 'only those who have eagerly watched for an opportunity of providing the sincerity of their faith and have heard the call to action can understand its mystic nature and irresistible obedience it demands.'¹⁵⁹ This language of martyrdom and explicit use of biblical imagery makes it clear that Rose felt she had waited long enough for the opportunity to show her allegiance to the suffragette movement and that when she saw an opportunity to do so she felt that she had no other choice than to sacrifice herself and to fight for her own and other's freedoms.¹⁶⁰ She had donned her armour in preparation for the holy crusade and become, it seems, a warrior to her religion: the cause. This warrior-like attitude can be seen when she describes the torture of hunger, coldness, illness and sleeplessness whilst in prison. She stated that it was a 'sacrifice' that is worth enduring for 'the faith' and the 'uplifting of womanhood.'¹⁶¹ She then asked 'for the uplifting of womanhood and humanity, is it not an echo of the Crucifixion- is it nothing to you who pass by?'¹⁶² By Rose experiencing the 'baptism of imprisonment' it seems that she had completed her

¹⁵⁷ It does not seem that this speech was written to be published but one that would be given locally in various talks and meetings. This was something that many suffragettes who had been imprisoned for the cause did. Mrs Patricia Woodlock, for instance, a Lancashire militant, visited Wimbledon in July 1909 to talk on her experiences whilst in Holloway prison.

¹⁵⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁵⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁶⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁶¹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

¹⁶² Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

duty to the suffragette movement by suffering for it. Thus, essentially rededicating herself to her faith, which was the cause.¹⁶³ Perhaps it is because of this experience that she then begins to refer to herself in writing as a suffragette rather than a suffragist. Nevertheless, although we can see the way in which Rose described herself and her experience changing after imprisonment, it is not clear why she uses religious connotations to exemplify her descriptions as this is the only time that she writes in this manner.

Shadd Maruna, Louise Wilson & Kathryn Curran, in their collaborative research into contemporary conversion narratives written after imprisonment, present an essential argument to consider. For them, Christian conversion narratives work as a type of ‘shame management’ and ‘coping strategy’ for prisoners.¹⁶⁴ The narrative and use of Christian language to describe their ordeals or crimes enables prisoners to create a new social identity, one that replaces the stigmatisation of them as criminals. Instead, their experiences whilst in prison are described with purpose and meaning, therefore empowering them. Furthermore, the use of Christian language and a conversion to Christianity provides the prisoner with a language and framework for forgiveness and allows a sense of control.¹⁶⁵ By looking at this notion in relation to Rose’s writing, there are elements of their argument that seem to correspond. For instance, it seems that she needed to see this experience as a sacrifice in order to cope with her experiences whilst in prison. Furthermore, by describing herself as a warrior to the faith she is purposefully removing any insinuation that she has committed a criminal offence. She is, as Maruna, Wilson

¹⁶³ Hartman, “What Made Me a Suffragette,” 35.

¹⁶⁴ Shadd Maruna, Louise Wilson & Kathryn Curran, “Why God is Often Found Behind Bars: Prison Conversions and the Crisis of Self-Narrative.” *Research in Human Development*, 3:2-3 (2006) 161-184.

¹⁶⁵ Maruna, Wilson & Curran, “Prison Conversions and the Crisis of Self-Narrative,” 161-184.

and Curran suggest, establishing a new form of identity.¹⁶⁶ This new form of identity is clear when Rose describes in her writing that the women who were imprisoned during the deputation were ‘determined to establish our identity as suffragettes.’¹⁶⁷ This statement appears to support Kabi Hartman and her argument surrounding the process of conversion and the way in which the ‘baptism of imprisonment’ to some extent created a new kind of woman. Nevertheless, we must consider that an experience such as this is bound to affect anyone’s life. Rose was after all, just a woman fighting relentlessly for a cause she believed in and just because her imprisonment confirmed (for her) her identity as a suffragette, she still identified herself as a mother, wife, daughter, and educated woman as well as a militant activist. Therefore, although Rose leaves prison with a clear dedication to the cause, one does not see a new individual, simply a woman who has become deeply committed to the suffrage cause. However, we must not forget that her reasons for this commitment stem from the injustices and barriers that she described so passionately in her speech ‘How I Became a Suffragist.’ Her imprisonment alone does not explain her conversion, it just shows us the journey on which Rose had to go through to commit her life to fighting against everything she believed was wrong with society’s view of womanhood.

Rose’s journey into suffrage is one that does not conform fully to the notion of the archetypal suffragette conversion narrative. From the outset this chapter has shown that Rose’s early life was unlike many of her colleagues. She was brought up to believe that her sex should not affect the way in which she lead her life and her education confirmed that she was just as competent as the next man or woman.

¹⁶⁶ Maruna, Wilson & Curran, “Prison Conversions and the Crisis of Self-Narrative,” 161.

¹⁶⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

Nevertheless, when she started to engage more in social activities and pursue her aspirations, the way in which she saw society stigmatising and disabling women, these forms changed her mind dramatically. Like other suffrage activists, Rose became disillusioned with various government policies regarding issues such as divorce, guardianship, wages and employment and realised that the only way to challenge the fundamental inequalities and injustices against women was to have a say in the legislature. However for Rose, and many others, the only means of achieving this change was to be able to vote, because without a vote these women did not have a voice in parliament. As the militant suffragette movement was the way in which Rose saw fit to campaign for 'Votes for Women', it seems only natural that it was her initial involvement within this movement and her imprisonment that changed her viewpoint and shaped her identity even further. Nevertheless, one cannot, at this point, conclude to what extent militancy shaped Rose and her activism because this is only the beginning of her suffrage journey. Rose and many other activists in the Wimbledon WSPU would, for many years, become more deeply involved in the suffrage campaign, dedicating much of their lives to the cause. The movement would not only shape Rose's life but also the lives of her comrades. Accordingly, the next section of this chapter will consider the range of ways in which Rose and the Wimbledon WSPU fought towards securing 'Votes for Women.'

2.5 The Daily Life of Activists Within the Wimbledon WSPU from 1908-1910 and the Impact of Changing Levels of Militancy.

Gail Cameron has argued that under the leadership of Rose Lamartine-Yates, the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU became 'one of the most active and

prosperous branches in the organisation.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the reasoning behind this success has not yet been explored. Although it is now clear where the Wimbledon branch emerged from and why Rose became involved in the fight for women's suffrage, this chapter has not yet examined the various ways in which the Wimbledon branch and its members worked towards securing 'Votes for Women.' This sub-chapter therefore, will focus on the day-to-day activism of the Wimbledon branch. It will investigate what daily life and activism was like for the women at the heart of the branch, because it was at this local level that the majority of campaigning took place. Furthermore, as the campaign for 'Votes for Women' is inextricably linked to militant activism, this sub-chapter seeks to determine whether militancy was at the heart of this local branch. This will be achieved by asking the following questions: what did militancy consist of within Wimbledon, was there a balance between constitutional and militant activism, did the Wimbledon branch display differing forms of militancy, did militant activism at a local level mirror the national picture, and finally, was the Wimbledon branch driven by orders from above or did they initiate new developments? By examining the suffragette movement in Wimbledon in this way, this chapter will begin to create a picture of what daily life within the Wimbledon WSPU was like and identify previously unknown individuals who may have been vital to the branch or even the movement as a whole. The resulting data should bring us as historians closer to the daily experiences of local women in the suffragette movement.

As the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU was formed in 1908 (over five years after the national movement was founded) the daily activism during the initial months of the Wimbledon branch's existence was a lot less 'spectacular' than the

¹⁶⁸ Cameron, "Rose Emma Lamartine-Yates (1875–1954)," *ODNB*.

events that were being organised by Christabel Pankhurst in the metropolis.¹⁶⁹ As has been shown briefly at the beginning of the chapter, the Wimbledon WSPU's tactics initially centred on peaceful meetings in Wimbledon's Lecture Hall and on Wimbledon Common and the sale of *VFW*. Even so, the local campaign was extremely active at the beginning of 1909. New members and associates were reported, two meetings a week were now taking place, two new songs of the Wimbledon Union were created, and a Wimbledon exhibition was organised.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, it was a meeting on the 22nd February 1909 at Bath's Hall, where Christabel Pankhurst spoke about what the WSPU meant by the term 'Votes for Women.' This was a key turning point not just for Rose Lamartine-Yates, as we saw earlier in the chapter, but also for the local Wimbledon branch as it was after this meeting that we really see the Wimbledon Union step up its local campaign.

In the spring of 1909, two exhibitions (one at the Wimbledon Suffragists Exhibition and another at the Women's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink in Kensington, London) were the focus for the local Union's volunteers. This is apparent from a report in the *WBN* that detailed how 'one hundred pounds worth of goods have been prepared' for the Women's Exhibition from the 13th-26th May.¹⁷¹ A Wimbledon banner of applique work designed in the purple, white and green of the WSPU was also being created for the exhibition. Prior to the WSPU's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink, the local Wimbledon branch showcased their creations at an Exhibition organised at the lecture hall in Wimbledon. This

¹⁶⁹ Spectacular events were being planned in London by Christabel Pankhurst in order to attract media attention. In February 1908 for example she organised a Women's Parliament and in June a mass meeting in Hyde Park which attracted between 250,000-500,000 people. See 'Christabel Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union, in, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Maroula Joanou and June Purvis (Manchester: MUP, 1998)

¹⁷⁰ *Votes for Women* "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," February 4, 1909, From Senate House Library, *SHL Special Collections*.

¹⁷¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon Suffragist Activity," April 17, 1909.

display of goods, created for the WSPU's Women's Exhibition, was received extremely well within Wimbledon. One report detailed that the 'dainty and artistic embroidery, needlework, leatherwork and painting spoke volumes for [the] capabilities of the Wimbledon suffragists.'¹⁷² The banner designed by the Wimbledon WSPU, which showed the 'familiar windmill in purple on a white satin background with green trees surrounding, finished with the words: 'freedom', 'votes', 'equality', was said to have 'shown the aspirations which animate the members of the Union.'¹⁷³ Amongst all of this, the Wimbledon Union made the most of their local exhibition by serving Afternoon Tea and providing entertainment. Miss Lidal, Miss Gant and Miss Theodora Davis sang, Miss Maud Aldis played the violin and Mrs Railton played the piano. To end the night, Rose gave an interesting address on the constitutional aspect of the vote. She alluded to an article that had been published about her in *Punch* magazine concerning the unwomanliness of leaving her eight-month year old baby during her arrest and imprisonment after attending a deputation. Rose argued that it would have been 'more unwomanly to have made the baby an excuse for shirking' when she knew it would be well looked after in her absence.¹⁷⁴ She concluded that 'women had a right to be heard and they could only be heard in one way and that was the vote.'¹⁷⁵

Although the local exhibition was a display of materials made for the Women's Exhibition in Kensington, it seems to have been a significant event for the local Union at this time, particularly in aiding them in gaining support for their local campaign. The exhibition was an opportunity for them not just to gain sympathy for the 'Votes for Women' campaign, through the numerous speeches

¹⁷² *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon Suffragists Exhibition," May 15, 1909.

¹⁷³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon Suffragists Exhibition," May 15, 1909.

¹⁷⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon Suffragists' Exhibition," May 15, 1909.

¹⁷⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon Suffragists' Exhibition," May 15, 1909.

they gave on the night of the exhibition, but also to demonstrate their capabilities as ordinary women possessing many and various talents. By showcasing themselves and their campaign in this way, they not only demonstrated to the residents of Wimbledon the importance and significance of the campaign but, most importantly, they allowed people to see them in a different light. Miss Naylor made reference to the effectiveness of the exhibition when she stated at a meeting on Wimbledon Common, that the exhibition had been a ‘revelation to many who had formed opinions of what a suffragette was like.’¹⁷⁶ Now they were not just suffrage activists, but dressmakers, painters, musicians, and most importantly ordinary women who were mothers, wives, daughters and sisters: ordinary women, campaigning for an extraordinary cause.

The Wimbledon Suffrage Exhibition was not the only thing that marked a change in the way in which the members of the Wimbledon branch were spreading the ‘Votes for Women’ message locally. Their open-air meetings resumed around the same time as the Women’s Exhibition and were now twice weekly instead of once. A further change to the open-air campaign was the focus of the meetings. In the past the Union’s speakers would generally have talked about events that had taken place or were happening in Wimbledon, with regard to the suffrage campaign. Thus giving a general overview of events locally and nationally. The only time that the Wimbledon public heard speakers’ address that focused on specific issues that sought to educate the public was if the speakers were visiting from across the country and being paid for their talks in Wimbledon. However, when the open-air meetings resumed in May 1909, we see that addresses, regardless of whether the talks were being given by visiting speakers or members of the Wimbledon Union,

¹⁷⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon Suffragists’ Exhibition,” June 12, 1909.

began to have a specific focus. For instance, Georgina Brackenbury's address on the 2nd May focused on women's economic position. Likewise, on the 13th May, Rose Lamartine-Yates spoke on the constitutional aspect of the vote and on June 5th 1909, Miss Wyatt detailed what the vote had done for men. By tailoring their addresses to specific issues, the Wimbledon suffragettes reminded the general public that they weren't interested in the vote for its own sake but what it could do for women, whether that be equal pay, having a political voice or improving mother's or worker's rights. In doing this, the Wimbledon branch helped audience members to understand contemporary arguments for the vote and therefore relate to the cause much easier than they may have done before. Miss Wyatt suggested the effectiveness of these tailored addresses, which sought to educate the public, when she detailed the methods by which public interest had been awakened by the local movement, namely the holding of indoor and outdoor meetings. Additionally, Lieutenant-Colonial A.R Savile stated that by listening to the speakers' 'informed and educational addresses', those who were 'uninformed with regard to the subject would be enlightened...any opponents converted to the true faith...[any] sympathisers...induced to become workers, workers [that] might receive much encouragement to persevere in the good work [of the Union].'¹⁷⁷

The idea that speakers could awaken public interest in the 'Votes for Women' campaign is a very important issue because without these workers, whether they were paid or voluntary workers, the local and national WSPU would not have been able to function. Reports in *VFW* during the summer of 1909 illustrate, once more, how vital voluntary works were to the local campaign as they included pleas for more volunteers. One report stated that 'workers [were] urgently needed for

¹⁷⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Votes for Women's Suffrage Meeting at Queen's Hall," 3 July 3,1909.

chalking, canvassing and speaking.¹⁷⁸ Another detailed how Wimbledon was a 'large and very scattered district' and how they would be glad if volunteers would communicate with the branch.¹⁷⁹ Although the speakers' addresses are said to have awakened the local movement, members of the Wimbledon Union knew that sympathy alone could not win the fight for women's suffrage.

By July 1909, the addresses of the local Union's speakers were becoming increasingly more explicit with regard to the promotion and encouragement of militant tactics. This is apparent when Lieutenant Colonial A.R Savile, took the chair at a local suffrage meeting at the Queens's Hall in July 1909 and argued that it was 'deeds and not words alone that would win such a struggle.'¹⁸⁰ Saville, who was joined and supported by speakers Rose Lamartine-Yates and Mr Baillie Weaver, suggested that constitutional methods had been tried and tested over the past few years and had resulted in the advancement of militant methods. 'Militant methods have advanced leaps and bounds in the last two years', he declared, and now 'nothing but bold attack could secure the vote.'¹⁸¹ The purpose of this assertion was to further advertise the deputation that was taking place in London on the following Tuesday and encourage, it seems, members of the Wimbledon branch to take part.¹⁸² However, what we see in Wimbledon at this time are very few local women attending the various deputations.

In 1909 local and national reports show that Rose Lamartine-Yates was the only Wimbledon member to be among the hundreds of women who attended the

¹⁷⁸ *Votes for Women* "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," February 11, 1909.

¹⁷⁹ *Votes for Women* "Campaign Throughout the Country," February 18, 1909.

¹⁸⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Votes for Women's Suffrage Meeting at Queen's Hall," 3 July 3,1909.

¹⁸¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Votes for Women's Suffrage Meeting at Queen's Hall," 3 July,1909.

¹⁸² Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," July 2, 1909.

WSPU's deputations to parliament and who was imprisoned for her actions. Nevertheless, the members of the local Wimbledon WSPU are seen to be taking part in other activities in the metropolis. For instance, one report stated that 'a good contingent of members of the Wimbledon WSPU took part in the procession from Kingsway to Hyde Park in honour of Miss Woodlock, a Lancashire organiser who had been released from prison after three months in Holloway gaol.'¹⁸³ Nevertheless, although the Wimbledon activists were occasionally taking part in events at a national level, their day-to-day campaigning took place in Wimbledon.

From July 1909 until December 1909, the daily activities of the volunteers included the sale of *Votes of Women* newspapers, prior to, during and after their Sunday meetings on the Common. Here, on a weekly basis they would sell 'ten dozen newspapers' in just one afternoon.¹⁸⁴ This along with their daily sale of 'Votes' at various railway stations such as Wimbledon, Wimbledon Park and Raynes Park, helped the weekly circulation of *Votes for Women* increase to 20,000 copies in 1909, with a minimum of approximately 4000 copies being sold in Wimbledon alone.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, by October 1909 it appears that the Wimbledon branch were seeking to step up their propaganda work even more as they advertised in *VFW* for a suitable premises for a local WSPU shop. The advertisement stated that the 'Wimbledon WSPU desires to open offices in Wimbledon as a centre for propaganda work and for the sale of literature' and asked for correspondence from

¹⁸³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Famous Suffragette in Wimbledon," 3 June 19, 1909. Her release from prison in June 1909 was a cover cartoon on the 18th of June issue of *Votes for Women*. A breakfast at the Inns of Court Hotel in Holborn took place as well as a procession to Hyde Park to celebrate her sacrifice and release. Miss Woodlock was described as one of the 'most untiring workers and a brilliant speaker' and had been imprisoned twice before this. For more information see Crawford, *The Women's Movement*, 758.

¹⁸⁴ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," *Votes for Women*, October 15, 1909.

¹⁸⁵ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," *Votes for Women*, October 29, 1909. See also, *Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Women's Social and Political Union," June 5, 1909.

anyone who had a suitable premises.¹⁸⁶ In addition to this, the local Union's membership was reported to have been 'making steady progress' with membership increasing and more people being willing to sell newspapers not just on the streets and at railway stations, but from door to door. A play was also being organised for a local event in December.¹⁸⁷ By the 26th November 1909, the Wimbledon WSPU had acquired suitable premises for their shop with a room above that they planned to use for WSPU meetings on weekdays. The shop opened on the 1st December, 'the premises having been prepared, arranged and stocked' by a number of Wimbledon members, including Mrs Lorsingnal, Mrs Martin and Mrs Dickenson.¹⁸⁸ The necessary fittings and furniture were 'given, lent or subscribed to by Mr and Mrs Lamartine Yates, Mr and Mrs Belmont, Dr and Mrs Bather, Mr Ellis and other friends.'¹⁸⁹ The shop 'did a great deal of business' in its opening month. Nevertheless it was not until 1910 that we see how important and effective the shop was for the local campaign, an issue that we will return to later in this chapter.¹⁹⁰

The Wimbledon WSPU ended their 1909 suffrage campaign in December with a night filled with entertainment. A report on the 18th December detailed a how the Lecture Hall was 'packed to its utmost limits with an audience who vastly appreciated a very excellent entertainment given by the Wimbledon WSPU.'¹⁹¹ The hall was showered with flags in the suffragette colours and portraits of various heroines of the movement. Various musical instruments and songs were offered with the 'pièce de résistance' of the evening being a 'bright and clever piece' by

¹⁸⁶ Rose Lamartine-Yates, 'Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU,' *Votes for Women*, October 1, 1909.

¹⁸⁷ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Local Notes: Wimbledon WSPU," *Votes for Women*, December 10 1909.

¹⁸⁸ Wimbledon WSPU. *Report of the Year Ending October 1910*. From Leeds Central Library, *The Papers of Mary Gawthorpe, Series III, 1881-1990, Reel 15, Box 6*. Microfilm.

¹⁸⁹ Wimbledon WSPU. *Report of the Year Ending October 1910*.

¹⁹⁰ See pages 132-134.

¹⁹¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffrage Entertainment at the Lecture Hall," December 18, 1909.

Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St John, a play entitled 'How the Vote was Won.'¹⁹² This final event in 1909 demonstrates where the Wimbledon Union's strengths really stood at this point in time. Not only does it illustrate that the Wimbledon WSPU were extremely good at organising events that would help them gain people's support for the suffragette campaign, but it also demonstrates how creative they were in the ways in which they showcased themselves and their cause.

Nevertheless, what is apparent when events such as this are explored is that although the Wimbledon WSPU seem to have been extremely effective in the sale of propaganda, persuasive in the way in which they gained large attendance figures at meetings and therefore sympathy for the local movement, their daily activism (at this time) did not resemble the more provocative and extreme militant tactics that were being reported in *VFW*. This suggests that even though many of the Wimbledon suffragettes were undertaking roles for the WSPU that would have shattered Edwardian notions surrounding the acceptable behaviour of women (such as selling newspapers on street corners, speaking on politics in public spaces, and collectively organising propaganda events for the 'Votes for Women' campaign) their local daily activism only partially represented the overall tactics of the WSPU.¹⁹³ By the end of 1909 the heckling of politicians and suffragette deputations to Parliament were a regular occurrence for many women. Moreover, Marion Wallace Dunlop had also initiated the hunger strike by July 1909. An act that transformed the tactics of the WSPU and one that was taken up by many suffragettes whilst imprisoned. Nevertheless, just because the Wimbledon Union was not taking part in militant activities that would see members imprisoned for

¹⁹² *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffrage Entertainment at the Lecture Hall," December 18, 1909.

¹⁹³ Cowman, "The Stone Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us," 181.

their actions or that would attract newspaper headlines, it does to mean that their work was any less important. Krista Cowman's argument surrounding 'What was Suffragette Militancy?' seems apparent here as she suggests that militancy was something that manifested itself in very different ways for different women.¹⁹⁴ For the Wimbledon WSPU, these new types of militancy seemed to augment rather than replace their current methods.¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, what seems pertinent to uncover now is whether the Wimbledon Union continued its local campaign in this way? If it did not, at what point did the local Union become more involved in more violent and provocative militant action?

At the beginning of 1910 the weekly 'At Homes' were in 'full swing' and the weekly meetings on Wimbledon Common were also taking place every Sunday regardless of the weather conditions. The willingness of large crowds to gather on the Common for the weekly meetings was testament to the local interest in the Wimbledon women's suffrage movement. Miss Loringol suggested this when she stated that 'interest in women's suffrage may be judged by the willingness of large crowds to stand Sunday after Sunday on cold, wet grass to hear and question the WSPU speakers.'¹⁹⁶ One thing, however, that did alter suffragettes daily activities was the establishment of the Wimbledon Union's shop in December of the previous year. However, it was not until February 1910 that the local WSPU began to focus its attention towards the shop. One report on the 4th February announced that the Wimbledon workers were 'devoting themselves to making their shop additionally attractive' whilst another detailed how members were dedicating a lot of attention to

¹⁹⁴ Cowman, "What was Suffragette Militancy?," 303.

¹⁹⁵ Cowman, "What was Suffragette Militancy?," 304.

¹⁹⁶ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Campaign Across the Country: Wimbledon," *Votes for Women*, March 4 1910.

‘varied displays of home-made products in their shop window.’¹⁹⁷ The following week it was reported that they would have a special display of children’s clothes.¹⁹⁸ In addition to the products presented in their popular window displays, the Wimbledon shop stocked ‘oriental sweet meats, rice and oil. Home-made cakes, jams, flowers, eggs and fowl’ and ‘medallion china sent from Head Quarters.’¹⁹⁹ The shop also had a banner and poster department and was also home to a ‘lending library’ that consisted of 80 books that had been ‘generously donated’ by Wimbledon members.²⁰⁰

Although the Wimbledon shop was only part of the local campaign, we must not underestimate its effectiveness. *VFW* described the importance of WSPU shops when it stated that they were ‘one of the most effective ways of keeping our campaign before the public.’²⁰¹ The Wimbledon shop was not just a place where the local Union could sell newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets and home-made goods. It was also used as a meeting place and a ‘centre of propaganda and communication’ and a ‘rallying ground’ for its speakers, members and ‘twenty-one voluntary works.’²⁰² John Mercer’s work on the campaign shops of the WSPU draws on the multifunctional role of the local WSPU shops.²⁰³ He suggests that with the emergence of these new stores, came a new location for campaign activity and a

¹⁹⁷ Rose Lamartine-Yates, “Campaign Across the Country: Wimbledon,” *Votes for Women*, March 4 1910.

¹⁹⁸ Rose Lamartine-Yates, “Campaign Across the Country: Wimbledon,” *Votes for Women*, February 11 1910.

¹⁹⁹ Wimbledon WSPU. *Report of the Year Ending October 1910*.

²⁰⁰ Wimbledon WSPU. *Report of the Year Ending October 1910*.

²⁰¹ Rose Lamartine-Yates, “Campaign Across the Country: Wimbledon,” *Votes for Women*, February 4 1910.

²⁰² Rose Lamartine-Yates, “Campaign Across the Country: Wimbledon,” *Votes for Women*, July 15, 1910. See also, Wimbledon WSPU. *Report of the Year Ending October 1910*.

²⁰³ John Mercer, “Shopping for Suffrage: The Campaign Shops of the WSPU, *Women’s History Network*, 18:2 (2009) 296-302.

‘middle-ground for induction into the movement.’²⁰⁴ Furthermore, by local Unions situating their shops on the local high streets they ‘occupied a position halfway between the public acts of protest and the profile branch work that made up the organisations campaign.’²⁰⁵ As a result, they were then able to adopt several functions as a meeting, retailing and recruitment space.

The amount of money raised by the local Unions does not appear in the WSPU Annual Reports. Nonetheless, the WSPU do acknowledge the outstanding work and ‘generous contributions’ that were made to the national fund by local Unions (the fund maintained the WSPU head quarters and financed national work).²⁰⁶ The 1910 Annual Report detailed that although local Unions raised and spent large sums of money independently, ‘several thousands of pounds’ were raised by the local branches- much of which would have been raised by the sale of items in WSPU shops.²⁰⁷ This is apparent when we look at two of the surviving Annual Reports of the Wimbledon WSPU. These state that the turnover in 1909 (when there was no shop) amounted to £23, whereas the turnover in 1910 amounted to £221, rising to £328 17s 5d in 1911.²⁰⁸ It is clear then, that the establishment of the local shop was essential in securing additional funds. The Annual Report also suggests that the shop was crucial as it states that the increase in money raised would not have been possible without the shop and ‘its splendid window space.’²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ John Mercer, “Shopping for Suffrage”, 296-302.

²⁰⁵ John Mercer, “Shopping for Suffrage”, 296-302.

²⁰⁶ The WSPU, *The Fourth Annual Report of The National Women’s Social and Political Union*, February 28. 1910. Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, UDC, Box 382.

²⁰⁷ The WSPU, *The Fourth Annual Report of The National Women’s Social and Political Union*, February 28. 1910.

²⁰⁸ The Wimbledon WSPU, *The Third Annual Report of The Wimbledon Branch of the Women’s Social and Political Union*, October 31. 1911. Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, *Papers of Rose Lamartine-Yates*, 7RLY.

²⁰⁹ The Wimbledon WSPU, *The Third Annual Report of The Wimbledon Branch of the Women’s Social and Political Union*, October 31. 1911.

Alongside the reporting of the success of the Wimbledon WSPU shop, was the reporting of ‘The Truce’ in February 1910, introduced by the national leadership in order to aid the introduction and reading of the Conciliation Bill. The Conciliation Bill, as it was called at the time, was a private members bill that was sponsored by a Conciliation committee that was comprised of 54 MPs and saw Lord Lytton as Chairman and Henry Noel Brailsford as the secretary.²¹⁰ The Bill proposed to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to women occupiers but invoked particular qualifications that meant only a million women would be enfranchised.²¹¹

Unsurprisingly however, ‘The Truce’ (or cessation of militant tactics) did not have a huge effect in Wimbledon, because, as has already been noted, the members were not taking part in any of the more violent and provocative forms of militancy. Nevertheless, the cessation of militant tactics was widely spoken about in Wimbledon, particularly at the local WSPU meetings on Wimbledon Common. For instance, a report in March 1910 detailed how the speakers commented on the cessation of militant tactics arguing against those who suggested that militant tactics had been stopped because they had proved to be of no use. Instead the speakers insisted that the ‘truce was far from a sign of weakness [but] a sign of strength’ and

²¹⁰ Rosen, *Rise Up Women!* 134.

Henry Brailsford was a journalist writing for a series of newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Morning Leader* and the *Daily News*, resigning from the later after the *Daily News* refused to condemn the force feeding of suffragettes. He was also a member of the ILP from 1907, member founder of the MLWS and husband of WSPU activist- Jane Brailsford. For more information please see; F.M Leventhal, “Brailsford, Henry Noel (1873-1958),” *ODNB*, 2011. From www.oxforddnb.com, accessed 8 June, 2017.

Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer Lytton was a Conservative politician and advocate of women’s suffrage. He was a member of the MLWS and the elder brother of Lady Constance Bulwer-Lytton. It was after Constance’s bravery in disguising herself as Jane Warton that he chaired the 1910 Conciliation Committee. For more information please see; Jason Tomes, “Lytton, Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer-Lytton-, second Earl of Lytton (1876-1947),” *ODNB*, 2008. From www.oxforddnb.com, accessed 8 June, 2017.

²¹¹ Specifically the proposed Bill would extend the franchise to ‘every women possessed of a qualification, with the meaning of the Representation of the People Act 1884, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered, to vote for the county or borough in which the qualifying premises are situate.’ The Bill purposefully had a narrow remit in order to gain Conservative support.

that the Union's previous tactics had placed the government into an unstable position.²¹² An important thing to note concerning the reporting and position of the local WSPU is that the Wimbledon Union's position mirrored that of the national WSPU. This is apparent when we compare a report in *VFW* with that of the *WBN*. One *VFW* report for instance, detailed how militant methods had 'revived the women's movement' and that the WSPU would resort to them in the future if the government continued to deny enfranchisement to women.²¹³ When compared to a *WBN* report that detailed the position of the local Union, which stated that it was entirely up to the government's discretion as to whether militant tactics would cease to continue, we can see that one echoes the other.²¹⁴ This is perhaps due to the fact that the meetings that the *WBN* were reporting, were the majority of the time, updating the Wimbledon members and the wider audience on the position of the Conciliation Bill. This is clear in a report on the 18th June 1910 that shows how Rose Lamartine-Yates (who presided at the meeting) preceded to explain that the Conciliation Bill, which was had been presented by Mr Shackleton for the first reading on Tuesday June 14th, 'is not a women's Bill' because it does not embody the demands of the WSPU. Instead, Rose argued that it was a 'compromise suggested by the committee' in order to 'suit all parties.'²¹⁵ Furthermore, the speaker, Una Dugdale explained that as 'unsatisfactory as the Bill was' that it would 'nevertheless remove the stigma at present attaching to all womanhood by reason of her inability to attain citizenship, however capable.'²¹⁶ Indeed, Emmeline Pankhurst also felt that the Bill was too narrow, commenting to Henry Nevinson that she had spoken to Henry Brailsford declaring her objection to the narrow remit which

²¹²*The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon WSPU," March 19, 1910.

²¹³ *Votes for Women*, "The Truce," March 11, 1910, From Senate House Library, *SHL Special Collections*.

²¹⁴*The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon WSPU," March 19, 1910..

²¹⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon WSPU," June 18, 1910.

²¹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon WSPU," June 18, 1910.

excluded women lodgers and university graduates. Nonetheless, like Una Dugdale had done in Wimbledon, the WSPU publically supported the measure with Christabel Pankhurst commenting that ‘it should all be much better’ if the Bill should be ‘peacefully settled now.’²¹⁷

In June 1910, the Wimbledon WSPU were not only feeding back to the branch much more regularly than they had done in previous years on the political situation in London but they were also becoming increasingly more involved in the activities in the metropolis. For instance, in June of that year ‘a large number of members of the WSPU accompanied by a sprinkling of male associates’ were reported to have assembled at the District Railway Station and travelled to Westminster in two carriages especially reserved for them’ to attend the ‘Great Suffrage Procession’, which saw over ten thousand women take part in a peaceful procession from Embankment to the Albert Hall.²¹⁸ The Wimbledon WSPU were said to have made ‘a brave show when they drew up on the embankment headed by the beautiful banner of the Union, on the face of which is a representation of the windmill.’²¹⁹ In total around a 100 women from the Wimbledon branch walked behind the banner along with many more women from Wimbledon who were said to have marched in other parts of the crowd amongst the women workers of various kinds.²²⁰ The number of women that attended the procession demonstrated how important it was for the suffragettes in the Wimbledon WSPU that the Conciliation Bill should succeed because never before had a contingent so large attended a national event. The local meetings on the Common also illustrate how important the success of the Bill was. During one of the gatherings, in July 1910,

²¹⁷ Rosen, *Rise Up Women!* 136.

²¹⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon in The Great Suffrage Procession,” June 25, 1910.

²¹⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon in The Great Suffrage Procession,” June 25, 1910.

²²⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Wimbledon in The Great Suffrage Procession,” June 25, 1910.

Rose referred to the situation as ‘critical’ and that ‘no effort must be relaxed by those who wish the Conciliation Bill through.’²²¹ She also insisted that every woman should prepare to carry out her individual responsibility and give her utmost service to the cause.

With the Conciliation Bill passing its second reading by a vote of 299 to 189 in July 1910, the Wimbledon WPSU remained optimistic that the government would grant further facilities for the Bill and therefore continued to fight on. They declared at public meetings that women still had to be ‘hopeful’ regarding the Conciliation Bill and that resolutions calling upon the government to grant facilities for the proposed legislation were being echoed all over the country.²²² Furthermore, that it was more pressing than ever for the local suffragettes to fight towards the ‘Votes for Women’ campaign. Helen Ogston suggested at one meeting in November 1910, that it was ‘the duty of all suffragette workers to [continue] to use their personal influences [whatever these may be] to mould public opinion still further in their favour.’²²³ This is exactly what is seen in the autumn of 1910. People using their own influences and initiatives to push the issue of women’s suffrage continually forward, in the hope that others would sympathise further with their cause.

One example of how Wimbledon activists used their influence appears in a letter to ‘the Right Honorable Henry Chaplin, M.P [and] member of the Wimbledon Division of Surrey.’²²⁴ In this letter, signed by ‘many of the leading inhabitants of

²²¹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “WSPU,” July 23, 1910.

²²² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “WSPU,” November 5, 1910.

²²³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “The Press and Women’s Suffrage,” November 19, 1910.

²²⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “The Conciliation Bill, An Appeal to Mr Chaplin,” November 19, 1910.

Wimbledon' they appealed for Mr Chaplin to allow the bill to 'receive the fair treatment to which is its intrinsic importance and the number of its supporters within and without the Houses of Parliament undoubtedly entitle it.'²²⁵ Mr Chaplin, who represented the Wimbledon area at this time, was very open about his opposition to women's suffrage. However, after the letter was published in the press, Mr Chaplin agreed that even though he would oppose the Bill, he did not have the 'slightest objection to the question being discussed.'²²⁶

By the 18th November 1910, when Parliament had reconvened, it became clear that the government were not going to announce facilities for the Conciliation Bill and would instead focus on 'government business' until the dissolution of Parliament.²²⁷ The failure of the government to announce facilities for the Conciliation Bill by Autumn of 1910 not only begin to shatter any hope that the local Union had of the vote but it also reaffirmed, more than ever, the belief that they were living in a nation where they were not only unequal but where they were stripped of a voice in the public and political arenas. One Wimbledon suffragette insinuated this when she stated that 'the House of Commons was about the very last place which one would associate with freedom.'²²⁸

The most striking way that the Wimbledon suffragettes used their influence in 1910, was via their attendance at the deputation to the House of Commons on

Henry Chaplin, a former member of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet, was the conservative member of parliament for Wimbledon from May 14th 1907 to April 8th 1916, at which point when he was raised to the peerage as Viscount Chaplin, of Saint Oswald's, Blankney, in the County of Lincoln. In 1876 he married Lady Florence Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, daughter of the 3rd Duke of Sutherland. They had one son and two daughters. Lady Florence however, died during the birth of her youngest daughter, Florence. Chaplin remained a widower until his death in May 1923, aged 82.

²²⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "The Conciliation Bill, An Appeal to Mr Chaplin," November 19, 1910.

²²⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "The Conciliation Bill, An Appeal to Mr Chaplin," November 19, 1910.

²²⁷ Rosen, *Rise up Women!* 138.

²²⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Wimbledon WSPU," October 29, 1910.

the 18th November 1910. Accordingly, a deputation where over 300 women, divided into battalions of 12, marched onto the House of Commons in an attempt to protest at the shelving of the Conciliation Bill. Although this deputation signalled the end of the cessation of militancy, it was also an event that resulted in the brutal assault and physical and sexual violation of suffrage activists: a day that was, and is now known as ‘Black Friday.’²²⁹ The attendance of Wimbledon suffragettes at this deputation is extremely significant as it clearly demonstrates how Wimbledon’s attitude and approach to militancy developed over time. Edith Begbie and Beatrice Martin were among the women who formed the deputation from Caxton Hall and although neither of these women were assaulted in the ways in which have been recorded in the depositions taken by Henry Brailsford and Jessie Murray, both Edith and Beatrice witnessed what they recalled as ‘ghastly scenes’ and retaliated against the physical and sexual assault of their comrades by throwing stones and smashing ‘Winston’s Window.’²³⁰ Consequently they received two weeks in prison for this window smashing.

On their return from Holloway Prison on Wednesday 7th December Edith and Beatrice were greeted at the District Railway Station with a ‘goodly contingent of the Wimbledon WSPU’ where they were presented with purple, white and green bouquets by Mrs Lorsignol’s son and daughter and were driven away ‘amid cheers

²²⁹ The 18th November 1910, soon became known as Black Friday after women who tried to rush past the police at the Houses of Parliament were reportedly assaulted by police officers. 115 women and 4 men were arrested during the incident. After the incident Henry Brailsford and Jessie Murray began to gather depositions from women who said that they had been assaulted. The depositions reveal the horrific sexual nature of the attacks. Many women recorded having their breasts grabbed, their thighs gripped and their knees pushed between their legs. For more information please see H.N Brailsford and Dr Jessie Murray, *The Treatment of the Women’s Deputation by the Metropolitan Police, A Copy of Evidence Collected by Jessie Murray and H.N Brailsford*. (London: The Women’s Press, 1911) From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection. This was forwarded to the Home Office by the Conciliation Committee for Women’s Suffrage in support of their demand for a public inquiry. See also Rosen, *Rise Up Women!*, 139. Testimonies are also available in a number of suffrage autobiographies.

²³⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, “Suffragette Prisoners Welcome,” December 10, 1910.

in carriages flying the flags of the Union.²³¹ In the evening, they were entertained in Mr Follett's room on the Broadway, an event that was attended by over 50 Wimbledon members. Rose proposed a toast to 'Votes for Women' and to the health of the two women and finally to the success of the Wimbledon Union.²³²

The significance of this celebration, however, does not simply lie with the event itself and the efforts of these two brave women but, in what the Wimbledon WSPU had begun to represent at this time. From this moment on, the Wimbledon Union embraced militancy in a way that they would not have done previously. Furthermore, it also signals a change in the way in which more extreme tactics are spoken about. For instance, Mrs Lorsignol states that the motto of the branch should now become 'no surrender.'²³³ She also appealed to the women of the Wimbledon Union to never allow themselves to be insulted and brutalised in the ways in which Edith Begbie and Beatrice Martin had witnessed. Instead, she suggested that they should have a weapon to protect themselves, 'even if it was only a stone.'²³⁴

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter it was suggested that it was an individual's local branch that provided the 'key site' for much of their suffrage activities.²³⁵ Furthermore that it was at a local level that the majority of campaigning took place, meaning that it was within the local Unions where women developed into feminist

²³¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffragette Prisoners Welcome," December 10, 1910.

²³² *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffragette Prisoners Welcome," December 10, 1910.

²³³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffragette Prisoners Welcome," December 10, 1910.

²³⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro' News*, "Suffragette Prisoners Welcome," December 10, 1910.

²³⁵ June Hannam, 'I Had Not Been to London', 226.

and political activists.²³⁶ Throughout this chapter it is clear that from the Wimbledon WSPU's formation in October 1908 until December 1910, that the majority of Wimbledon suffragettes saw their locality as Wimbledon, as it was within this area that they sold their newspapers, spoke at public meetings and organised various events and exhibitions. It has also been suggested that the success and prosperity of the local Union was due to the work of a group of significant individuals and, that the branch's organising secretary, Rose Lamartine-Yates, was a woman who was indispensable to the local Union.

Furthermore, this examination of the daily activities of Wimbledon suffragettes between 1908 and 1910, has begun to reveal the range of militant activity that local women took part in. Whilst some women chose to be more moderately militant, by selling newspapers or working in the WSPU shop, others (particularly after the failure of the Conciliation Bill in 1910 and Black Friday) chose to campaign for the vote by engaging in stone throwing and being imprisoned for their actions. At this point it is also important to note that activists' militancy, within the Wimbledon WSPU, doesn't appear to have been driven by orders from above. Instead, Wimbledon women embarked upon militancy as a 'direct' and 'reasoned' response to their own and others repressive treatment.²³⁷

A further key conclusion that should be taken from this chapter surrounds the branch's official and collective approach to the escalation of militancy. By November 1910, it appears that the Wimbledon Union become more receptive to more violent forms of militancy, due to the treatment that their comrades received

²³⁶ Cowman, 'The Stone Throwing Has Been Forced Upon Us', 172.

²³⁷ Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 152.

during Black Friday. Accordingly, they publically advocated the use of stone throwing as a militant tactic. However, as this chapter has only explored the daily life of Wimbledon activists over a two and a half year period no concrete conclusions can be drawn at this point. With militancy as its central focus then, the chapter that follows will build on these initial insights and delve deeper into the daily activities of the Wimbledon WSPU and consider the extent to which changing levels of militancy impacted upon the daily activities of Wimbledon suffragettes between 1911 and 1913.

Chapter 3: The Daily Life of Activists Within the Wimbledon WSPU and the Impact of Changing Levels of Militancy in Wimbledon from 1911-1913.

Introduction

It is apparent that by the end of 1910 the Wimbledon WSPU were becoming increasingly susceptible to the more violent and provocative forms of militancy, particularly window smashing, an act that had been a principal tactic of the WSPU from as early as 1908. However, by 1912 the suffragette campaign entered, into the final stage of militancy. A militant phase that was defined by a series of bombing and arson attacks on various properties throughout the country. This final phase of militancy is illustrated in *The Suffragette*. One edition reads ‘militancy increases, flames on Regents Park, raid on golf greens, [and the] pillar-box campaign continues.’¹

With the phenomenon of suffragette militancy as its focus then, this chapter will consider the ways in which the increasingly violent and extreme forms of militancy manifested themselves in the Wimbledon WSPU between 1911 and 1913 and question the extent to which changing levels of militancy affected the daily life of Wimbledon activists. Through the exploration of the daily activities of the Wimbledon WSPU and the analysis of a number of key events in suffrage history such as: the 1911 census night and the Conciliation and Reform Bills, this chapter will consider the notion that militancy was a ‘reactive phenomenon’ and an

¹ *The Suffragette*, “Militancy Increases.” London, England, 21st February 1912. From The British Library, *general reference collection 1912-1913*. Microfilm.

escalating process and determine the extent to which local militancy mirrored that of the national picture.² In particular, this chapter seeks to illustrate that there were a variety of militant activities available to Wimbledon women at all times.

Furthermore, that militancy, its meaning and impact, was relative to the individual and WSPU branch.

3.1 From Compton Hall to Wimbledon Common

On the 28th January 1911, the Wimbledon WSPU greeted the New Year, as it had done in previous years, by continuing their Sunday meetings on the Common and holding the first of a series of ‘At Homes’ that had been arranged for the spring. At this time, the meetings were taking place at the local WSPU’s rooms at Victoria Crescent, but by February the location of these meetings had been changed to Compton Hall. There is no specific reason given by the Wimbledon WSPU as to why they moved the location of their Friday meetings, they simply state that they had decided to hold their ‘weekly reunions and meetings’ at Compton Hall. It could be suggested that this change in location was a sign of growing membership or greater attendance to WSPU meetings, as Compton Hall would have facilitated a much greater number of people. However as the membership records of the Wimbledon WSPU are non-existent, it cannot be certain that this is the case. What can be certain though, is that the Wimbledon Union was committed to increasing its local membership. This can be seen in Wimbledon’s report in *VFW* in January 1911 which detailed that ‘the largest hall has been secured’ for the afternoon meetings

² See Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 153. They argue that militancy became a ‘reactive phenomenon’ because every shift in militant tactics was a reasoned response to repressive treatment received by women. See also, Harrison, “The Act of Militancy,” 42.

and that 'each member should bring at least one friend' to hear, what Rose Lamartine-Yates referred to as 'a special series of addresses.'³

The first of these 'special addresses' was given by Annie Cobden Sanderson, WFL campaigner and speaker, on whether women should pay taxes and another by Rose, who spoke on the life of Mary Wollstonecraft. Rose cleverly spoke about Mary Wollstonecraft's life in a way that demonstrated how different experiences in her 'eventful life' had pushed her to think for herself and to 'bravely defy the conventions of the time.'⁴ For Rose, it was Mary Wollstonecraft's defiance and determination to succeed in the face of prejudice that made the 'present day suffragettes claim her as one of their pioneers.'⁵ Rose's use of Wollstonecraft, as an example of how few women over 100 years before the establishment of the suffragette campaign had fought against the restrictions imposed upon their lives, was particularly clever because by giving the audience an example of a recognised individual, who had refused to be confined by their gender and societal restrictions, Rose was informing potential sympathisers that it was acceptable to defy the traditional conventions of appropriate female behaviour in the Edwardian period. Moreover, she was pressing them to use their voice, in their own way, like Mary Wollstonecraft had done, and like Rose and many other suffragettes were doing at this time.

Although the largest halls in Wimbledon were being secured to hold public WSPU meetings, the Wimbledon Common remained the key site on which the majority of the Union's gatherings were held. This can be seen when the first two

³ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Campaign throughout the country, Wimbledon." *Votes for Women*. London, England, 6th January 1911, 232.

⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffrage Meeting at Compton Hall", 11th March 1911, 3.

⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffrage Meeting at Compton Hall", 11th March 1911, 3.

lectures (given as part of the 1911 spring series of addresses) took place on the Common. The first lecture was given on the 16th February, by Rose's friend and comrade Emily Wilding Davison. Rose had developed a particularly close friendship with Emily when the two crossed paths at Royal Holloway College in the 1890's.⁶ This friendship continued within the WSPU, with Emily and Rose appearing alongside each other at local meetings and various WSPU events, such as the Hyde Park Demonstration in 1910. Emily was described as a 'matter of fact little woman' in the *WBN* report which detailed her lecture on prison life and prison reform, describing how she had 'compelled the crowds close attention for over an hour.'⁷ During the address Emily recalled her personal experiences of prison life and declared that although the suffragettes had done much to secure prison reform with regard to clothing, food and exercise that 'much remained to be done.'⁸ Mary Leigh, another friend and comrade of Rose's, also spoke just a few weeks later on the 'Common objections to the Conciliation Bill.' She stated that she was constantly asked; 'why not give votes to all women? Why enfranchise women of property? Why should working-class women have a vote?' so on and so forth. Mary argued that although it was impossible to please 'all parties', the Conciliation Committee had 'endeavoured to effect a compromise that would meet all requirements in a reasonable manner.'⁹

This two-pronged type of campaigning, 'At Home' and on the Common, with WSPU speakers (who tailored their addresses to specific issues) at the centre of WSPU meetings was essential to keeping the local audiences captivated, and the local press engaged. Furthermore, this style of campaigning, which had become a

⁶ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Emily Wilding Davison," *The Suffragette*, June 13, 1913.

⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union", 18th February 1911.

⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union", 18th February 1911.

⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffragette Meeting on the Common", 4th March 1911.

fundamental part of daily activism for the Wimbledon WSPU, also encouraged local sympathisers to play a role in the campaigns of their local Union, in turn, keeping the local campaign responsive and progressive.¹⁰

3.2 “Sex Must Schedule”: the Wimbledon WSPU and the 1911 Census

By April of 1911 the spring series of lectures and meetings were coming to an end with the Wimbledon WSPU’s weekly meetings postponed from the 7th April until after the Easter holidays. As the 1911 census was fast approaching by this point, suffrage organisations urged women to use this event to challenge the law by boycotting the census. *VFW* reported that suffragettes were ‘looking forward’ to the protest and suggested that resisters and evaders would be in the ‘many thousands.’¹¹ The newspaper also gave advice on the ways in which activists could resist on census night such as; refusing to fill in the census form, lending their homes to the WSPU for the evening or leaving their houses unattended on the night and writing across the census schedule ‘house deserted by women who want the vote.’¹² Jill Liddington has suggested that this call by suffrage organisations to defy the law in this way was a direct challenge ‘to the very meaning of citizenship.’¹³

Due to the emphasis placed upon the resistance and evasion of the census by *VFW*, this sub-chapter will explore the response of Wimbledon activists to the call to boycott the 1911 census. This section will consider individual motives for evasion, resistance and compliance and examine what the schedules of Wimbledon

¹⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Votes for Women, Suffrage meeting at Queen’s Hall,” 3rd July 1909.

¹¹ *Votes for Women* “Suffragist Plans for Census Night,” London, England, 31st March 1911, 417-428. From Google News Archive. <https://news.google.com/newspapers> (accessed August, 12, 2015).

¹² *Votes for Women* “Suffragist Plans for Census Night,” 31st March 1911, 417-428.

¹³ Jill Liddington, *Vanishing for the Vote, Suffrage, Citizenship and the Battle for the Census*, (Manchester: MUP, 2014), 2.

residents tell us more broadly about the family structures and personal identities of Wimbledon militants.

Information as to the local WSPU's stance with regard to the census (that was due to take place on the 2nd April 1911) was relatively scarce during local meetings and throughout the Wimbledon press. Not only did the Wimbledon WSPU not clarify their position with regard to the census, nothing is written by Rose Lamartine-Yates or anyone within the Wimbledon WSPU in the 'campaign across the country' section in *VFW* or the *WBN* prior to or after the census. Considering that Rose had contributed updates to the *WBN* and *VFW* every week for nearly two years, it was very unusual that she remained silent on this issue. These sources alone, might suggest that the Wimbledon WSPU not only refrained from encouraging local activists to evade and resist the 1911 census, but also took no part in census evasion or resistance itself. This however is untrue.

In fact, local press reports indicate that many Wimbledon suffragettes were active on census night. The *Daily Sketch* on the 4th April 1911 reads 'women suffragists dodge the census by spending the night in caravans on Wimbledon Common' and shows a picture of ten women holding placards with the phrases 'No Vote, No Census' and 'Votes for Women.'¹⁴ Although it is clear that some of the women captured in the photograph were members of the Wimbledon WSPU, due to the decoration of the placards they are holding, it is unclear, firstly, who these women were, and secondly, whether there were multiple suffrage societies present on Wimbledon Common on the evening of the 2nd April. However, as there was no

¹⁴ *The Daily Sketch* "Women suffragists dodge the census by spending the night in caravans on Wimbledon Common," 4th April 1911.

Women's Freedom League (WFL) branch in Wimbledon until 1915 it is unlikely that the women present in the photograph were associated with the WFL. Be that as it may, it is plausible that some of the women present on the Common were members of the local NUWSS branch. Lawrence Housman in his autobiography suggests that we must not disregard the 'constitutionalist' societies, with regard to their part in the census boycott, because the census resistance and evasion was an idea that 'caught on' very quickly and 'found a certain amount of favour' among constitutionalists.¹⁵ This resistance was done on such a large scale, he argued, that the Government was unable to touch the women's suffrage movements. Nevertheless, as it is the activism of the Wimbledon WSPU that this chapter is centred around, it is here that our focus will remain.

Although we cannot be certain which Wimbledon suffragettes stayed on the Common on census night, the recently published 1911 census records can establish names of Wimbledon members who evaded the census (even though they may not be found on the census records). The following section analyses ten women and one man, who were either part of the Wimbledon WSPU's committee in 1911 or who were recorded in the press to be active in the local suffragette movement in 1911.¹⁶

With headlines such as 'complete success of census protest' in *VFW* and WFL founder/member Margaret Wynne Nevinson commenting that 'all over the country the names of thousands of women are missing from the census papers' it

¹⁵ Jill Liddington and Elizabeth Crawford, "Women Do Not Count, Neither Shall They Be Counted: Suffrage, Citizenship and the Battle for the 1911 Census," *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011): 102.

¹⁶ Mrs Elizabeth Belmont, Mrs Helen Skeate, Mrs Fannie Mitchell (Wimbledon WSPU Committee members 1910-11), Mrs Edith Begbie (Chief Shop Steward), Mrs Rose Lamartine-Yates (Hon Organising Secretary and Treasurer), Miss Christina Bremner, Mrs Stina Bather, Mrs Jane Shervil, Miss Lille Gant, Mrs Margaret Beatty. Mr Thomas Lamartine-Yates.

would at first seem that women's suffrage activists from across the country embraced this protest.¹⁷ Jill Liddington and Elizabeth Crawford in their recent work on the 1911 census protest, point to the fact that some reports at the time claimed that the number of census evaders 'ran into six figures.'¹⁸ It is therefore surprising to find that only 7 Wimbledon women either evaded or resisted on census night (resisters are defined by Liddington and Crawford as people who returned 'rebellious schedules').¹⁹ Nevertheless, if we consider that out of the 11 people sampled, 8 out of the 11 or 72% of the sample either evaded or resisted, it would seem that Wimbledon's response to the census boycott was much higher than expected. Especially when you consider that Liddington and Crawford have argued that evasion and resistance was 'sporadic, with incidence of compliance higher' in local areas.²⁰ In what ways then, did Wimbledon activists evade and resist the census and what do the compliance examples tell us about the individuals who returned completed census schedules?

By looking directly at the census schedules of the 11 people sampled it is clear that of those examined 4 evaded the census, 4 resisted and 3 women complied, declaring all of the information requested. The three women that complied were; Mrs Fannie Mitchell (Wimbledon WSPU Committee member and Hon Assistant Secretary in 1911), Miss Jane Shervill (Wimbledon WSPU Literature Secretary, 1909), Mrs Margaret Beatty (Wimbledon WSPU Literature Secretary, 1910).²¹ Although it is not clear whether or not Jane Shervill was a member of the

¹⁷ Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 102.

¹⁸ Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 102.

¹⁹ Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 105.

²⁰ Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 119.

²¹ Fannie Mitchel, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911. Margaret Beatty, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911. Christina Shervil, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

Wimbledon Union during 1911, her resignation from the WSPU committee may perhaps suggest that she was no longer fully supportive of WSPU strategy and therefore go some way to explaining why someone, who once supported the WSPU, provided their details to the Enumerator. Margaret Beatty and Fannie Mitchell's schedules, however, are a little more puzzling, considering that both women were members and Fannie Mitchell was even on the Wimbledon WSPU Committee in 1911. What then could be the possible explanation for this unexpected rejection of the call to boycott the census? Liddington and Crawford note that 'individual motives for resistance, evasion or compliance were often mixed' and that it is crucial to remember this. Of further importance was the fact that woman, during the Edwardian period, 'possessed multiple identities: suffragette or local citizen, wife or daughter, teacher or doctor.'²² This could have certainly been the case for Margaret Beatty, because as chapter five shows, Margaret was not just a member of the Wimbledon WSPU in 1911, she was also a member of the Wimbledon London Society for Women's Suffrage and the organising secretary of The Church League for Women's Suffrage and may have chosen (like the majority of women within these societies) to comply on census night. Nevertheless, Fannie Mitchell's compliance could have been due to the fact that, although she was a suffragette, she was also a mother and a wife and perhaps felt that she must comply to save her family from local embarrassment. It does not seem however, that her husband pressured her into complying, as he was not at home on the night of the census.²³ Further, her decision to fully comply with requirements rather than adopting an alternative (such as returning a rebellious schedule) suggests that Fannie could perhaps not afford the £5 penalty that she would be liable to pay for refusing

²² Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 120.

²³ Fannie Mitchel, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

information and may have evaded the census if her husband was home to care for her children.

Three Wimbledon suffragettes that did follow the call to protest against the census were Rose Lamartine-Yates (Hon Organising Secretary) Edith Begbie (Chief Shop Steward) and Christina Bremner, all of whom resisted on the 2nd April. Rose, along with her husband, were found at the address of their holiday home, 'The Cottage Near Blue Anchor, Seasalter Whistable, Kent.'²⁴ Rose was recorded along with her husband, Tom Lamartine-Yates, however, they refused to give most of the details to the Enumerator. Tom was listed as 'Head', 'Married' and 'Barrister of Law' but he lied about his age writing 'about 42' (when in fact he was 62). Rose also lied about her age writing that she was 'about 40' (when she was 36) she also wrote that she was married but refused all other information throughout the rest of the record.²⁵ The Lamartine-Yates' also spoiled their census record by writing in the right hand corner 'Sex Must Schedule' connecting their resistance directly to the battle for enfranchisement.²⁶ One of the most significant things to note about the Lamartine-Yates' census schedule is that it is a very rare example of resistance because it shows a husband and a wife who were united in their fight for women's enfranchisement, something that is not usually seen in households where a suffragette and her husband are present. Usually the man complied for himself and refused the information for the woman, or women, present in the house. On census night many addresses housed multiple suffragettes, some addresses housing in the region of 25 evaders. For instance if the census schedules of Mrs Eleanor Penn Gaskell (organising secretary of the Kilburn WSPU) and her husband Mr George

²⁴ Rose Lamartine-Yates, Whistable, Kent: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

²⁵ It may also be plausible that the enumerator guessed their ages, rather than them lying.

²⁶ Rose Lamartine-Yates, Whistable Kent: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

Penn Gaskell are examined, it is clear that George declares all the information for himself but refuses to provide information for his wife and the other women evading the census in their house, at 12 Nicoll Road, Willesden. However, George Gaskell does not just refuse this information but explains his reasons behind the refusal to give information on behalf of the suffragettes:

A number of women suffragettes spent the night of the 2nd April in my house. As members of a disenfranchised sex they object to giving any particulars concerning themselves for the purpose of enumeration under a census in the framing of which their sex has had no voice. They base themselves upon the principle that the government should rest upon the consent of the governed, and as I myself uphold this democratic principle I do not feel justified in filling up the particulars concerning them against their will.²⁷

Of further insight is the census resistance of Edith Begbie at 107 Ridgway, Wimbledon, Surrey. Like Rose, she also entered only her name and her age as 'about 45' and, at the bottom of the census record, she also resisted by writing 'all information refused.'²⁸ However, although she refused all information, there is no indication on the record that her resistance is linked directly to the 'Votes for Women' campaign.

VFW encouraged their readers to directly associate their census resistance to the suffrage campaign, This can be seen throughout the suffragette newspaper on the 31st March 1911 as *VFW* gave numerous examples of what would be appropriate for suffragettes to write on their records. One example reads, 'no vote no census, if I am intelligent enough to fill in this census form then I can surely make a X on the ballot paper.' Another read, 'no vote no census, if you expect women to fulfil duties give them the right to which, by the performance of those

²⁷ George Penn Gaskell, Willesden: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911

²⁸ Edith Begbie, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

duties, they are entitled.²⁹ As we can see from the census resisters above, neither followed the guidelines in *VFW*, they followed their own initiatives and resisted in a way that they saw fit.

Another suffragette that resisted in a different way than was suggested in *VFW* was Miss Christina Bremner. Christina was listed as a 'visitor' at 'Holy Mount, Pepys Road, Wimbledon, Surrey' and, unlike all the women in this sample, listed her occupation as a 'suffragette', linking her refusal of information directly to the suffrage struggle and identifying herself as a member of the militant movement.³⁰ Nevertheless, although Edith and Rose would have also seen their occupation as a suffragette, their refusal to declare this does not make their resistance any less worthwhile. Clearly, these three women boycotted the census in a way that they felt appropriate and personal to them. Did it really matter that they did not follow the examples listed in *VFW*? Local WSPU members were militant in a variety of ways, and just because these women did not follow the national examples or, like other local women, evaded the census all together, they showcased their resistance to the census, and embraced militancy, in an individual and powerful way.

Four local women that did follow the national example however and evaded the census by neither appearing at their own addresses or any other location were; Mrs Elizabeth Belmont, Mrs Stina Bather, Miss Lillie Gant (all members of the Wimbledon WSPU) and Mrs Helen Skeate (Wimbledon WSPU committee member, 1911). Elizabeth Belmont, who is present with her husband Basil Belmont and their

²⁹ *Votes for Women* "Suffragist plans for census night," 31st March 1911, 417-428.

³⁰ Christina Breamner, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

daughter, Lily, on the 1901 census at their home, 40 High Street, Wimbledon, is missing from the 1911 census.³¹ Basil, however, provided all the information required on the census record, including that he was married. Similarly Helen Skeate's husband, William of 66 Peppys Road, Wimbledon, also provided all the details required by the Enumerator, including that that he was married.³² Stina Bather was also missing from her address at 46 Marrgat Road, Wimbledon. Surprisingly her husband Frances supplied all the details required on the census record.³³ The reason that it is more surprising that Frances supplied all of the information required, compared to Basil Belmont and William Skeate, is due to the fact that Frances had previously been extremely supportive of the local suffragette movement. Initially, when the branch was formed in 1909, he along with his wife opened up their home for WSPU meetings. Furthermore, Frances was listed on the WSPU's 1909 committee as 'representing associates' and he also made various speeches at WSPU meetings in support of women's suffrage.

Nevertheless, what is important to note, at this point, is that having these women missing from their address on the night of the census, and any other address for that matter, is something that was very Common on the night of the 2nd April 1911. They are examples of what Liddington and Crawford have aptly named the 'mysterious missing wife.'³⁴ Although the location of these women is indeed a mystery and we cannot be sure where Stina Bather, Helen Skeate and Elizabeth Belmont were on the night of the census, it is highly probable that these women

³¹ Basil Belmont, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1901. Basil Belmont, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

³² William Skeate, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

³³ Frances Bather, Wimbledon: Census Schedule for England and Wales, 1911.

³⁴ Liddington, *Vanishing for the Vote*, 6.

were either evading the census, in mass, at friends house or taking part in the mass evasion of the census in caravans on Wimbledon Common.

Significantly, the census records also indicate that these women had the opportunity, capacity and resources to evade the census- something that was clearly not open to all women, especially those with young children. Not only were Elizabeth Belmont, Helen Skeate and Stina Bather all married and therefore may have had the support of their husbands to evade the census on the night of the 2nd April. These three women, with the exception of Stina Bather, all had children at home who were over the age of 18 years old and therefore able to care for themselves. In Stina Bather's case, even though the census schedule lists 4 children (Hilda, age 14, Sven, age 6, Rosalind, age 10 and Henry age 11 months), it also shows us that the Bather family had two servants, Emily Stroud and Agnes Mellor, women who would have cared for the children whilst Stina Bather was away. The use of servants to care for children whilst mothers were taking part in suffragette activities seems to have been something that Wimbledon activists felt comfortable with. This is evident when Rose Lamartine-Yates left her 8 month year old son, Paul, in the hands of his nurse and 'the gardener's capable wife', when she attended a deputation to the House of Commons in 1909.³⁵

The final example, in this sample, of a WSPU woman who evaded the census is Lillie Gant, who on the night of the census was missing from her parent's home, 83 Merton Hall Road, Wimbledon. We know that this is her as she can be seen on the 1901 census at 10 Leyland Road, Lee, Lewisham, at the age of 20, as the daughter of Arthur and Catherine Gant. By 1911 it is clear the Gant family had

³⁵ Leigh, Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*.

moved to Wimbledon and that she was most definitely still living with her parents because she was not only an assistant to her father's dressing-gown business but she was also unmarried and unlikely to be living alone. Unlike all of the other activists in this sample Lillie Gant is the only single woman, all the other women are married and/or have children. This would have made it relatively simple for Lillie Gant to be away from her family home on census night, as she had no other responsibilities, it seems, than to care for herself and attend to her work as a dressing-gown assistant. Moreover, as Lillie Gant is seen multiple times in the local newspaper as active in the Wimbledon WSPU, it would seem that she faced little opposition from her parents regarding her association with the WSPU, making her daily activism relatively easy to take part in.

Although the suffrage activists within this sample are only representative of around 10% of Wimbledon WSPU women, the examination of the 10 census schedules offer some surprising yet significant insights.³⁶ 72% of the sample either resisted or evaded the census on the 2nd of April 1911, a statistic which is not only striking because the percentage of resisters and evaders is much higher than one assumed but because it goes some way to challenging Liddington and Crawford's claim that census evasion and resistance for local branches was 'patchy and sporadic, with the incidence of compliance higher than expected...[and] evasion figures lower than expected.'³⁷ Furthermore, the census schedules of the Wimbledon suffragettes have shown that suffragettes' responses to the call to boycott were extremely varied. Compliance demonstrates that Wimbledon activists

³⁶ Although it is difficult to know how many women were members of the Wimbledon WSPU in 1911, as membership records cease to exist it is estimated that by 1911 there would have been around 100 members at the very least. We know this because the Wimbledon WSPU Annual Report from 1909 states that the local branch had around 52 members this number is then reported to have increased 'significantly' year on year.

³⁷ Liddington and Crawford, "Battle for the 1911 Census," 119.

had 'multiple identities' and had to consider which was the most important part of their identity in that particular circumstance, while resistance demonstrates the agency of Wimbledon women. Their census returns make it clear that they didn't feel compelled to follow the national resistance examples that populated the pages of *VFW*. Rather, they chose to resist and be militant in an individual and significant way.

Furthermore, although it is often argued that it was easier for single women to partake in suffragette activities, as their responsibilities were fewer than that of married women with families, the census schedules of the Bather, Belmont and Skeate families suggest that married women too could, and did, engage in militancy. Furthermore, that it may have been easier for middle class suffragettes to partake in a range of militant suffrage activity because it was these women who had the support systems in place, in the way of a husband and/or servants, which enabled them to evade the census. While Brian Harrison, claims that the WSPU's most 'adoptable and mobile instruments were ...the young, unmarried and unattached', this research shows that 9 out of the 10 women sampled were not only married but 8 of them had children and their average age was 42 years of age, suggesting a far greater diversity of membership than Harrison suggests.

Nevertheless, although the census schedules examined have offered insightful information into the lives of Wimbledon suffragettes and contributed towards the construction of a more vivid picture of Wimbledon's census strategy, Wimbledon women's actions on census night have a far greater significance. In 1911 the Wimbledon suffragettes along with millions of women across the country were being treated, politically, the same as a child, a criminal, and a lunatic.

Therefore, the choice of Wimbledon suffragettes to defy collectively the government, by refusing to be counted on census night, demonstrates just how much enfranchisement meant to them. Their defiance represents the courageous stand that women took, across the country, to certify, not only their right to a vote, but their right to a voice.

3.3 The 1911 Conciliation Bill and the Impact of the Manhood Suffrage Bill on Local WSPU Activism.

As the Easter holidays came to a close, the Wimbledon WSPU resumed their usual Sunday meetings on Wimbledon Common. The meetings that followed the Easter break, however, were entirely focused on the new Conciliation Bill that was to be presented to Parliament on the 6th May. Discussion surrounding the new Suffrage Bill remained at the forefront of people's minds at the local meetings, as it was believed that this Bill would receive a 'large majority of support.'³⁸ This was because, unlike the 1910 Bill, the new one had been drafted to allow for the admittance of amendments. Because of this, Mr Bather, a regular speaker at the Wimbledon WSPU's local meetings, argued that the Bill would receive 'the powerful support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Lloyd George.'³⁹ Furthermore, Mr Bather suggested that the Bill, prior to its first reading, already had the support of various Mayors from a range of towns and cities across the country. These included Birmingham, Cardiff and Manchester. Although this new Bill seemed more likely than its predecessor to succeed, it was not the Suffrage Bill that the Wimbledon WSPU wanted as it did not embody their demands. Miss Maude Roydon and Sir

³⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffrage Meeting on the Common," May 6, 1911.

³⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffrage Meeting on the Common," May 6, 1911.

George Kemp's Suffrage Bill was 'by no means the ideal measure' that they had been working towards as it did not remove the sex disqualification entirely.⁴⁰ In fact, it only sought to enfranchise those women, who at present, possessed the municipal franchise. However, the *WBN* reported that the local and national WSPU supported the Bill because, if passed 'it would actually make sex no longer an absolute bar to the political franchise.' Furthermore, it is implied that even though the Bill was a huge compromise for the WSPU, the majority of WSPU members agreed that the Bill was a stepping stone to full enfranchisement. As getting a few women enfranchised would 'destroy forever the principle embodied in the franchise laws that sex was a bar.'⁴¹ Phillip Snowdon's wife reiterated this notion at a meeting at the Wimbledon LSWS where she stated that 'we have to go a little way at a time and things might adjust themselves in time.'⁴²

On the 12th May 1911, the image on the front page of *VFW* of a suffragette on horseback planting a lance through a hurdle which had inscribed 'second reading' on it, confirmed that the Bill was one step closer to being made the law as it 'surpassed expectations' and secured a majority of 167 MP's at its second reading (145 Liberals, 53 Unionists, 31 Nationalist and 26 Labour MPs voted in favour of the Bill).⁴³ As far as the suffragettes were concerned, 'the next step was left to the House of Commons to give time to later stages of the Bill so that it would become law this session.'⁴⁴ *VFW* urged suffrage activists throughout the country to 'lose no

⁴⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "The Value of the Votes," May 6, 1911.

⁴¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "The Value of the Vote," May 6, 1911.

⁴² *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Women's Suffrage Meeting, Mrs Phillip Snowdon's Eloquent Pleas," May 13, 1911.

⁴³ *Votes for Women* "The Outlook," London, England, May 12, 1911. From Google News Archive. <https://news.google.com/newspapers> (accessed September, 12, 2015).

⁴⁴ *Votes for Women* "The Outlook," London, England, May 12, 1911.

time in urging members of parliament to vote for this resolution.⁴⁵ The weeks that followed saw the national and local Unions continuing their activism as they had done before, but at the same time, preparing for a great suffrage procession that was to take place on 17th June to celebrate the coronation of George V but also, and more importantly, to demonstrate to the government that the national WSPU were committed to keeping the issue of women's suffrage at the forefront of people's minds and securing the successful passage of the Conciliation Bill.

VFW reported that in June 1908 Herbert Gladstone, 'speaking from the front government bench, called upon women to show by great outdoor demonstrations, their demand for enfranchisement.'⁴⁶ Although it was argued in *VFW* that the WSPU had fulfilled Gladstone's demand on numerous occasions, the WSPU's demonstration on the 17th June 1911 broke all previous records for attendance and scale. *VFW* reported that 'it can be said without fear of contradiction that no such procession ever walked through the streets of London or any city of the world before.'⁴⁷ The Wimbledon WSPU alluded to the great procession in a report from the *WBN* that stated 'the Wimbledon women had worthily sustained their part in a 'very strong contingent' of the local WSPU (68 women and men in total) in full regalia behind the famous windmill banner. For the Wimbledon Union the importance of the great procession not only lay in the extraordinary WSPU contingent present on June the 17th but the way in which Wimbledon activists used this event to raise money for their local Union. On the train to London it is reported in *VFW* that Miss Amy Skeate and her 'travelling shop' were a great success, with Amy selling 'badges and chocolate on a

⁴⁵ *Votes for Women* "The Outlook," May 12, 1911.

⁴⁶ *Votes for Women* "The Outlook," June 23, 1911.

⁴⁷ *Votes for Women* "The Outlook," June 23, 1911.

considerable scale.’⁴⁸ Moreover ‘17 dozen votes’ were also sold along with the making of some new members.⁴⁹ The way in which the Wimbledon Union utilised this opportunity to rally support for the cause on a short train journey from Wimbledon to London, demonstrates how determined and relentless this local Union were in raising funds for their local branch and also promoting the WSPU and recruiting new members. However, for the Wimbledon WSPU the most significant aspect of this event was that all suffrage societies, whether they be militant or non-militant, were able to use the procession to transcend organisational allegiances and become ‘united in this spectacular moment.’ Miss Dickenson, a local activist, suggests this when she remarked that because of this united stand ‘the march was ‘an object lesson which no one who saw it would fail to understand and appreciate.’⁵⁰

After the procession, local members were optimistic about the passage of the Bill. During a meeting held the day after the great procession, Miss Dickenson declared that although the ‘triumph and fatigue’ of the previous day was apparent among the local activists and would normally warrant a slight break from activism, they were not to take any ‘risks’ at this point. The vote, she argued, was ‘almost within [our] grasp and therefore no risks were to be taken ‘until victory was final and absolute.’⁵¹ As requested, the local campaign continued. In *VFW* members were asked to ‘concentrate on the weekly meetings held each week at Compton Hall’ and also on the All England Tennis Tournament that was to take place the following week.⁵² The emphasis placed upon the Wimbledon tennis championships

⁴⁸ *Votes for Women* “Campaign Across the Country; Wimbledon,” June 30, 1911.

⁴⁹ *Votes for Women* “Campaign Across the Country; Wimbledon,” June 30, 1911.

⁵⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Wimbledon WSPU,” May 13, 1911.

⁵¹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Wimbledon WSPU,” May 13, 1911.

⁵² *Votes for Women* “Campaign Across the Country; Wimbledon,” June 30, 1911.

suggest that this was an important time for campaigning for the Wimbledon WSPU, especially with the Conciliation Bill at the forefront of activists minds. More volunteers were asked to come forward in order to maximize the distribution of *VFW* and the recruitment of new members at the train stations and outside the sports arena. These tactics seemed to have worked for the Wimbledon Union as they detailed a 'record attendance' at their August meeting which was held at Compton Hall.

Although the 'Holiday Campaign' was in full swing by August 1911, the daily campaign work continued on a small scale in Wimbledon with the weekly meetings on the Common being chaired by Miss Dickenson and Mrs Darce Fox. Throughout the summer and well into the autumn, the theme of the local meetings remained around the Conciliation Bill and the reasons why women were campaigning so hard for the vote. For instance, Mrs Hugget analysed the statistics on various issues surrounding women's lives and explained how they had improved after women had been given the vote in New Zealand. Emily Wilding Davison spoke on the history of the suffrage movement, arguing that throughout history the question of the franchise 'had always meant and would always mean simply the right of those who paid the piper to call the tune.'⁵³ Taxation and representation, she indicated, must go together.⁵⁴ Mr Cecil Chapman, speaking at the end of October, supported this argument stating that 'men had gone through the same independence and enfranchisement as women were making today' and suggested that he could not understand how 'any thinking man, who valued his vote, could hold aloof from women in their fight for political freedom.'⁵⁵ Nevertheless, by the second week of

⁵³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon WSPU," October 7, 1911.

⁵⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon WSPU," October 7, 1911.

⁵⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Women and Home Life," October 21, 1911.

November the fight to push forward the passage of the Conciliation Bill ceased.

The government crushed suffragettes hopes of a Conciliation Bill with the announcement of a Manhood Suffrage Bill in November 1911.

On the 10th November 1911, the front page of *VFW* read that ‘the government has decided to range themselves defiantly in opposition to women suffrage,’ despite the fact that the agitation for women’s enfranchisement was ‘national in its scope and unprecedented in its magnitude.’⁵⁶ The WSPU therefore declared that they were going to immediately resume their ‘militant anti-government policy.’⁵⁷ This re-ignition of WSPU militancy began with a deputation of women headed by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence to the Prime Minister and Mr Lloyd George on the 21st November 1911.

This deputation on the 21st November was a key turning point for the Wimbledon WSPU, as it was during the deputation where 220 women and 3 men were arrested that Wimbledon suffragettes violently demonstrated, for the first time, their outrage at the torpedoing of a new Conciliation Bill and the introduction of the Manhood Suffrage Bill. During this deputation to Parliament Square it is reported that the majority of attendants were arrested. Of the 220 reportedly arrested, four were Wimbledon suffrage activists: Bertha Bacon, Beatrice Lee, Annie Thoy and Tom Lamartine-Yates. Although Tom was arrested during the protest, he was released without charge from police custody as his offence wasn’t deemed as serious as that of Bertha Bacon, Beatrice Lee and Annie Thoy who were not released from police custody. During the deputation the Wimbledon suffragettes

⁵⁶ *Votes for Women* “Anti-government policy,” November 10, 1911.

⁵⁷ *Votes for Women* “Campaign Across the Country; Wimbledon,” June 30, 1911.

were arrested for smashing three windows in the dining room of The Westminster Palace Hotel where '60 or 70 guests, including the Bishop of Gloucester, were having dinner at the time.'⁵⁸ Although this wasn't the first time that Wimbledon activists engaged in window smashing, this incident indicates how WSPU members, who identified with branches outside of London, had within them a local strength of feeling and a want to express support for national policy in these circumstances.

The acts and arrests of these three women were embraced by the Wimbledon WSPU. This is apparent when Rose Lamartine-Yates declared, in a meeting at Lingfield Road on the 22nd November, that the demonstration and the actions of her fellow members were a 'decided success.'⁵⁹ The main reason that Wimbledon's organising secretary argued that it was a success was because Wimbledon suffragettes now got the opportunity to appear in court, therefore enabling them to use the courtroom as platform to justify their actions in the name of 'Votes for Women.'⁶⁰

Bertha, Beatrice and Annie all appeared at Bow Street Court on Friday the 1st December, charged with 'breaking three windows in the dining-room at the Westminster Palace Hotel.'⁶¹ Evidence at the trial was given by a police constable who produced a stone that he argued had been found on Bertha. Bertha stated that it did not look like her 'lucky stone' and wondered what had become of it! Nevertheless, Bertha confessed to breaking the windows of the Palace Hotel by stone throwing, declaring, 'of course I broke the windows, I went out for that

⁵⁸ *The Times*, "The Suffragist Disturbances." London, England, November 25, 1911. The Times Digital Archive. [Accessed 30 March 2017]

⁵⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon WSPU," October 7, 1911.

⁶⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon WSPU," October 7, 1911.

⁶¹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon Suffragettes in Court," December 2, 1911.

purpose, it was my duty.⁶² Moreover, she argued that because of the announcement of the Manhood Suffrage Bill, that there was, ‘a wave of feminist indignation sweeping across the country and we cannot help it.’⁶³ As there was no evidence to suggest that Beatrice Lee and Annie Thoy threw any of the stones that damaged the building, they were discharged. Bertha however, was to pay a fine of £5 and 4 for damages or she would be imprisoned for 21 days in the second division of Holloway Gaol. The judge supported his decision by declaring that Bertha’s case was more serious than others he had previously encountered because she could have potentially injured some of the 70 dinners that were present in the Palace Hotel dining-room on the night of the 21st November.⁶⁴ The statement by the magistrate that Bertha’s actions could have potentially caused injury to members of the public, is one that is particularly significant because suffrage historiography often suggests that the WSPU were extremely careful when undertaking certain militant acts, despite suggestions at the time. June Purvis, for instance, argues that the WSPU ‘carefully chose targets to avoid causing harm to civilians.’⁶⁵ Furthermore, that some militants threw stones that were ‘wrapped in paper or attached to string to avoid accidental injury to anyone.’⁶⁶ Moreover, Purvis argues that Emmeline Pankhurst reiterated many times that the WSPU’s actions should always avoid injuring or endangering the lives of human beings. This however, is something that Bertha Bacon, was either not aware of, or did not care to comprehend at the time- she made a decision and stood by it. At this point, it is apparent that although members of the national leadership were making public

⁶² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Wimbledon Suffragettes in Court,” December 2, 1911.

⁶³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Wimbledon Suffragettes in Court,” December 2, 1911.

⁶⁴ It is not clear from newspaper reports whether Bertha chose to pay the fine or take the 21 days imprisonment. However *VFW* assumed that Bertha served the 21 days and was released on the 14th December 1911.

⁶⁵ Purvis, “Deeds not Words,” 92.

⁶⁶ Purvis, “Deeds not Words,” 92.

statements, directing activists as to the most appropriate ways to commit militant acts, WSPU women did not necessarily take notice of this guidance. Furthermore, although public statements regarding militant tactics stressed this care for human life, limited evidence on private responses to WSPU tactics and decision making mean that it is difficult to know what was being said privately by the national leadership or by ordinary WSPU members, locally and nationally.

The reaction of the Wimbledon WSPU to Bertha Bacon's actions is of further importance to the statement above because regardless of the magistrate's acknowledgement that citizens could have been injured by the actions of Wimbledon suffragettes, the Wimbledon WSPU, just a day after Bertha's appearance in court, did not acknowledge the judge's statement and embraced their member and declared that 'each broken window was a picture which told its own story.'⁶⁷ Even WSPU members such as Alice Abadam, an itinerant suffrage speaker who described herself as 'taking a non-militant part in militant tactics', stated that she supported the militant actions of local members.⁶⁸ In an address delivered on Wimbledon Common, she compared the WSPU to that of an army corps. Stating that the party resembled a 'well organised army corps, complete in all branches and it was therefore more efficient than an equal number of troops all of one arm...each woman adopted the arm for which she was best fitted but all worked together and in harmony for the great cause of votes for women.'⁶⁹

By the beginning of 1912, there had been a shift in not only in the type of militant activity that the Wimbledon WSPU were taking part in but also the way in

⁶⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffragettes on the Common," December 2, 1911.

⁶⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Mrs Abadam on Militant Tactics," November 25, 1911.

⁶⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Mrs Abadam on Militant Tactics," November 25, 1911.

which the Wimbledon branch were engaging and embracing stone throwing as a WSPU tactic. Although, stone throwing had been a tactic embraced by the WSPU from 1908, it was only at the end of 1910 that this tactic was used by Wimbledon suffragettes. By 1912 these militant tactics were also being openly celebrated by the Wimbledon Union. For instance, in February 1912 the WSPU organised a ceremony in honour of Wimbledon women who had been imprisoned for the suffrage cause. The Wimbledon WSPU stated that in the course of its three years existence, the number of Wimbledon suffragettes imprisoned has doubled each year. The *WBN* reported that ‘banners and flags told of the militant spirit, ever ready if duty calls, whilst the tables with their dainty flowers... and the merry laughter told of the rejoicing of friends once more united in the certain hope of approaching victory.’⁷⁰ However, although the local membership of the Wimbledon WSPU may have supported the more violent and extreme militant actions of their comrades, it is important to consider if this was something that was mirrored by local Wimbledon residents.

By March 1912 Wimbledon WSPU activists faced a huge backlash from the general public during their meetings on the Common. This can be seen in a report published in the *WBN* on March 16th 1912. The audience that gathered on Wimbledon Common for the first spring open-air meeting were described as being unfriendly, ‘hostile’ and ‘particularly noisy.’⁷¹ What is significant about the hostility shown by the Wimbledon residents is that their hostility is said, by the Rose, to be in reaction to Wimbledon women’s violent actions, particularly hostility against the WSPU’s use of window smashing as a anti- government militant tactic. Although

⁷⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes at Play,” February 3, 1912.

⁷¹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes Open-Air Campaign,” March 16, 1912.

Rose knew that Wimbledon residents did not support this type of activism, she declared during the open-air meeting on the Common, that the ‘suffragettes were not afraid to face the consequences of their acts.’ Alluding to the breaking of windows, she said that ‘suffragettes had been driven to do what they did because they were determined to put a stop to the breaking and wreaking of women’s lives.’⁷² She pressed the issue further by declaring that ‘broken glass could be repaired at a small cost but broken and ruined lives, no money could repair.’⁷³ Although there was no sign of violence from the crowds during this meeting, we see the attendance of the police for the first time in the history of these meetings. The police presence signaled that Wimbledon residents were becoming openly hostile to what they saw as significant changes in the tactics embraced and encouraged by Wimbledon suffragettes.

Nevertheless, it was not just Wimbledon residents that began to take a stand against the more violent forms of militancy shown by the Wimbledon WSPU. Other local non-militant suffrage societies began to stand against the local WSPU’s actions. A letter written to the editor of the *WBN* by a Mrs Margaret Cotton demonstrates this, as the letter clearly seeks to define the difference between the WSPU and her organisation, the NUWSS. She writes ‘will you allow me to remind your readers of the difference between the Constitutional and Militant Societies...the NUWSS is a law abiding organisation which has been working for fifty years on constitutional lines and deeply regrets the militant tactics of the younger society over which it has no control.’⁷⁴

⁷² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes Open-Air Campaign,” March 16, 1912.

⁷³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes Open-Air Campaign,” March 16, 1912.

⁷⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Suffrage Crisis,” March 9, 1912.

Despite this defiant stand against militancy, from some of the general public and the local NUWSS branch, members of the Wimbledon WSPU continued to defy the government by breaking more windows. Edith Begbie, Jessie Heward, Miss Wilkinson and Audrey Aimler, all Wimbledon WSPU volunteers, were among 130 women arrested in central London for ‘window smashing in the suffrage war.’⁷⁵ Edith Begbie argued in the dock that ‘I feel the need of our agitation more and more keenly everyday’ while Jessie Heward spoke of the ‘excessive and unfair terms of imprisonment’ given to women who were frightening for the vote. Regardless of their appeals, all were sentenced to four months imprisonment in Holloway gaol as a result of their actions.⁷⁶ From the term of imprisonment given to these three Wimbledon suffragettes it is clear that their sentences are much greater than that of Bertha Bacon’s just 4 months earlier. By 1912 it appears that magistrates were giving much more severe sentences than they had done previously, perhaps in an attempted to crackdown on or deter others from embracing this type of activity. The Wimbledon WSPU sought to highlight this by declaring that suffragettes who broke window panes in 1912 were being punished more severely than before, and more importantly, were even receiving harsher sentences than ‘men who committed grievous crimes against children.’⁷⁷ In an address on the 4th May, Miss Naylor declared that the window smashing would not stop and that the local WSPU would ‘go as far as they believed was necessary even to the sacrificing of their own lives in order to win the great reform.’⁷⁸ This comment from Miss Naylor not only suggests that the Wimbledon WSPU were not only in support of the increasingly militant tactics committed by their members, but also that Wimbledon suffragettes were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the vote. These women, at this point in

⁷⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Women In The Dock,” April 6, 1912.

⁷⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Women In The Dock,” April 6, 1912.

⁷⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes In The Broadway,” May 4, 1912.

⁷⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes In The Broadway,” May 4, 1912.

time, felt that they had no other choice because nothing else but ‘deeds’ would do. Rose, in an address given at a meeting in the Lecture Hall in May, alluded to this fact when she discussed how she wished that it would be possible to educate people as to why the women of Britain were entitled to vote. But she argued that the WSPU couldn’t wait ‘for education to do what militancy could do in a shorter time.’⁷⁹ Statements like this from Rose, demonstrate a change in local WSPU attitudes to education and the recruitment of women to the local branch. Here it appears that the Wimbledon Union were no longer attempting to convert the public, nor did they care what they thought about militancy.

In the summer of 1912, the local suffragette prisoners were ‘welcomed home’ at a garden party held by Rose and Tom Lamartine-Yates, at their home *Dorset Hall*. At the celebration Edith Begbie and Miss Wilkinson were thanked for their courageous efforts and awarded ‘little medals’ and ‘a small bouquet of purple and white sweet peas with green foliage’ for their sacrifice.⁸⁰ With the return of the local WSPU prisoners also came the reestablishment of a calm and receptive audience at the weekly meetings. This may have been due to the fact that throughout the summer the suffragette meetings on the Common and in the lecture halls in Wimbledon were focused much less on imprisonment, window smashing and the implementation of more severe forms of militancy. Instead the Wimbledon WSPU focused their efforts on the suffragette demonstration in Hyde Park.

The demonstration was set to take place on July 14th 1912 (Emmeline Pankhurst’s birthday and the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille) and was

⁷⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes In The Broadway,” May 18, 1912.

⁸⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffrage Garden Meeting, Wimbledon Prisoners Welcomed Home,” July 6, 1912.

organised to further demand the inclusion of women in the Reform Bill, which was now before the country. What is crucial to highlight at this point, is that this demonstration was reported to have been ‘planned, financed and carried through’ by the local branches of the WSPU, not the national leadership.⁸¹ Although the organisation was overseen by Sylvia Pankhurst, it was principally a local initiative. Nevertheless it was not just the local London WSPU branches that were seen to take place in this demonstration but a number of ‘local bodies’ who, Rose Lamartine-Yates argued, allied themselves to the local WSPU’s for this ‘special demonstration.’⁸² Among the groups that took part were: the Women’s Freedom League, The Tax Resistance League, The Men’s Political Union, The Independent Labour Party, The Actresses Franchise League, The New Constitutional Society for Women’s Suffrage, The Irish Women’s Franchise League, The Cymric Suffrage Association, The Australian and New Zealand Women Voters Association, and The Church League for Women’s Suffrage. The fact that all of these organisations took part in this demonstration, with many offering notable speakers for this mass meeting, illustrates the power of the local Unions and also the local inter-organisational networks that were apparent at branch level.⁸³

The ability of local suffrage activists to organise an event that incorporated all of these suffrage organisations also demonstrates not just that local branches worked independently from the national Union, but that local women used their national and international friendship connections to achieve something that their national leaders may not have been able to do. This reinforces the view of Krista

⁸¹ *Votes for Women* “The Hyde Park Demonstration,” July 19, 1912.

⁸² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffrage Demonstration in Hyde Park,” July 13 1912.

⁸³ The notion of local inter-organisational networks is something that this thesis will examine in more details later on in this thesis, in a chapter that explores the role of other suffrage organisations within Wimbledon.

Cowman who suggests the ‘vital importance of friendship networks’ in not just building local branches but also in enabling the break down of barriers between organisations that ‘appear impenetrable at leadership level.’⁸⁴

It is clear after examining *VFW* surrounding the weeks prior to, during and after this demonstration that the leadership did engage with this demonstration. The demonstration was not advertised in *VFW* and the subsequent report in the newspaper on the 19th July, does not mention the attendance of any other suffrage society other than the WSPU. It seems very strange that a demonstration that saw ‘dense crowds that thronged around 20 platforms’ not only lacked advertisement in the WSPU’s newspaper but also barely reported on the success of the demonstration after the event. This was perhaps due to the fact that other suffrage societies were central to the demonstration and the WSPU did not agree with this or want to promote it.⁸⁵

After the organisation of the Hyde Park demonstration, the Wimbledon suffragettes returned their focus to the weekly meetings on Wimbledon Common and the ‘Holiday Campaign.’ However this year, the suffragettes were determined not to let the holiday season interfere with their local work. The *WBN* states that although ‘most people were thinking about holidays, the suffragettes seem to allow nothing to interfere with their regular Sunday meetings on the Common.’⁸⁶ In previous years, the local WSPU suspended some of their weekly meetings over the summer or cut short their summer campaign due to the WSPU’s ‘Holiday

⁸⁴ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside’s Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 97.

⁸⁵ This idea that the national and local WSPU leaders had different ideas on how to further the campaign for enfranchisement and the notion that friendship networks inter-organisational leads us to question the notion highlighted in suffrage historiography of the WSPU/NUWSS/WFL, militant/constitutionalist split, comparing the national view to the local reality.

⁸⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes on the Common,” August 17, 1912.

Campaign.’ Nevertheless, the focus of the summer meetings in 1912 did not surround the activities of the local Union but centred around the reporting of particular events in the wider suffragette movement.

One meeting in August 1912 focused on the death of Nurse Ellen Pitfield, a 45-year-old midwife and WSPU member who had been suffering from terminal cancer. Ellen Pitfield famously set fire to the General Post Office on 5th March 1912 and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. *The British Journal of Nursing* argued that her sentence was ‘unduly harsh’, furthermore, that her medical care whilst in prison was substandard.⁸⁷ She died less than 3 months after her release.⁸⁸ Her death was described by Rose Lamartine-Yates as ‘a merciful release from intense suffering caused by the brutal treatment of the Government’s agents on Black Friday.’⁸⁹ Although Nurse Pitfield died of terminal cancer, it was claimed that her cancer was a direct consequence of the injuries she incurred during the Black Friday demonstration with Rose declaring that ‘the government were directly responsible for her death.’⁹⁰ Indeed Sylvia Pankhurst, in her history of the suffragette movement, corroborates this suggestion arguing that Nurse Pitfield had sustained an open wound on Black Friday that never healed and in which incurable cancer had developed.⁹¹

This example was not the only time that the Wimbledon WSPU took umbrage with the government for the treatment of suffragettes. In a letter written in the *WBN*, a Wimbledon WSPU member (whose name isn’t disclosed) wrote in

⁸⁷ Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 379. See also, Hugh Pitfield, “Notes on Ellen Pitfield,” Accessed October 8, 2015 http://www.pitfield-family.co.uk/DorsetFamily/PS02/PS02_453.htm

⁸⁸ Rosen, “*Rise up Women!*” 158.

⁸⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes on the Common,” August 17, 1912.

⁹⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragettes on the Common,” August 17, 1912.

⁹¹ Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 379.

admiration of the ‘courage and ‘unselfishness’ of suffragettes, Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans, who had attempted to set fire to a theatre in Dublin. She argued not whether the arson attack was right or wrong, that, for her, was besides the point. The suffragette’s issue regarded how actions like those committed by Mary and Gladys could be prevented in the future. For the author of the letter, the way forward was for the Government to take responsibility for the position that they were forcing these women into and ‘give votes to women outright.’⁹² She argued that the government knew that the WSPU would not abandon militancy and that the five years of penal servitude given to Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans by the court would only have inflamed women. The Wimbledon suffragettes declared that ‘by their decision to give long sentences of penal servitude, the government themselves have created a situation that was intolerable.’⁹³ The local Union was clearly placing the ultimate responsibility for suffragettes actions and the consequences of militancy at the government’s door: an argument that had been echoed throughout *VFW* for many years and was used, once again, to defend the actions of Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans. This is evident in a report on the trial of the suffragettes that shows how WSPU women felt that there was no other choice than to push forward with militant actions because this was the only way in which they felt they could demonstrate their outrage to the fact they were not classed as citizens in the eyes of the law. This is clear when Mary Leigh declared, during her trial, that she ‘refused to be governed by a government that compels me to be and to remain in the same category as aliens, paupers and lunatics who are denied the vote.’⁹⁴ This notion that militant actions were, to some extent, committed in reaction to the government’s stance on women’s enfranchisement, brings us back, once again, to the suggestion

⁹² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Suffragists Sentences,” August 24, 1912.

⁹³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Suffragists Sentences,” August 24, 1912.

⁹⁴ *Votes for Women* “Trial of the Suffragists in Dublin,” August 16, 1912.

that militancy was reactionary and something that was embarked upon as a 'direct' and 'reasoned' response to women's repressive treatment.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, although the Wimbledon Union was supporting the actions of suffragettes like Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans and pushing forward the argument that the government were the only ones who could stop the WSPU's militant campaign, the Wimbledon WSPU were not at this point in 1912 taking part in these types of militant actions to forward 'Votes for Women.' Some reports in the summer of 1912 even stated that some local activists 'regretted the action' of Mrs Leigh and Miss Evans.⁹⁶ In fact, for the rest of 1912, the Wimbledon WSPU did not take part in any form of militant activity that had the potential to see them imprisoned.

The daily activism of Wimbledon suffragettes in late 1912/early 1913 may have remained non-violent in order to secure alterations to the upcoming Franchise Bill. Emmeline Pankhurst spoke of the reasons that were put before the government, as to why women should be included in the Bill, in a public meeting held at St Mark's Hall in Wimbledon where she was the chief speaker. She stated that a deputation representative of mainly working women had put their cases before the Chancellor, Mr Lloyd George, in order to illustrate not just why women wanted the vote but how it would benefit the lives of all classes of women. Emmeline Pankhurst argued that the promise of the Prime Minister to draft a bill that was open to amendments was broken by the insertion of the word 'male', instead of 'person.'⁹⁷ It was, therefore, via the working women's testimonies that the

⁹⁵ Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 153.

⁹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "The Suffragists Sentences," August 24, 1912.

⁹⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Mrs Pankhurst at St Mark's Hall," January 25, 1913.

WSPU hoped to persuade the government to alter the Franchise Bill to include women. Emmeline Pankhurst finished her speech by addressing the issue of militant tactics. She argued that government had forced suffragettes to use violence and that the only way to stop militancy was to ‘tell the government to give us the vote.’⁹⁸ Finally she urged sympathisers to present themselves to the Wimbledon WSPU and to ‘make it their business to understand the movement and give it their support.’⁹⁹ Rose Lamartine Yates suggested that Emmeline Pankhurst’s call to support the local movement had enlivened many Wimbledon residents. She stated that ‘Mrs Pankhurst’s meeting was an unqualified success, the hall being full to its capacity and subscribers obtained and great interest generally awakened.’¹⁰⁰ This renewed enthusiasm would prove essential to the local and national WSPU in the weeks that followed Emmeline Pankhurst’s meeting because by the end of January 1913, the Speaker of the House of Commons (himself an anti-suffragist) argued that if the women’s amendment was to be passed, and the word ‘male’ deleted, that it would be a ‘new Bill’ and would therefore need to be withdrawn and reintroduced as an amended version. As a result of the Speaker’s ruling, Mr Asquith declared that the Government would withdraw the Bill and once again the hopes of women’s enfranchisement were dashed.¹⁰¹

3.4 Arson, Violence and the Fight for Free Speech in Wimbledon.

The withdrawal of the Franchise Bill triggered fury throughout the WSPU, signalling an increase in violent militant action and the widespread use of arson as a

⁹⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Mrs Pankhurst at St Mark’s Hall,” January 25, 1913.

⁹⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Mrs Pankhurst at St Mark’s Hall,” January 25, 1913.

¹⁰⁰ Rose Lamartine-Yates, “Wimbledon”, *The Suffragette*, January 31, 1913.

¹⁰¹ Sybil Oldfield, *International Woman Suffrage*. Volume I, July 1913-October 1914 (London: Routledge, 2003), 45.

WSPU tactic. An edition of *The Suffragette* on 21st February 1913 illustrates the severity of the tactics now being employed across the country. The article read ‘Guerrilla warfare continues, Mrs Lloyd George’s house wrecked by bombs, flames on Regent Park, raid on golf greens and pillar-box campaign continues.’¹⁰² It is also reported that telegraph lines were being damaged in order to cut into the centre of communication in the capital. All of this making it ‘abundantly evident that justice can be withheld from women only at the sacrifice of law and order.’¹⁰³ Although the article suggests that this warfare was taking place across the country, the Wimbledon suffragettes did not seem to be involved in this type of militancy, at this point. It is clear however, from the addresses given directly after the withdrawal of the Franchise Bill, that the Wimbledon WSPU were infuriated by the Prime Minister’s decision and incited their members to fight against the government in whatever way they saw fit. Rose Lamartine-Yates argued that ‘if those in authority could not see the terrible conditions which now existed, then it became the duty of women to show them that with holding votes would lead to a far greater disaster than giving them votes.’¹⁰⁴ This address in February 1913, is important to consider because although Rose does not explicitly encourage the use of arson as a tactic that should be taken up by the local WSPU, she is encouraging the Wimbledon suffragettes to ‘show’ the government what withholding votes for women would accomplish.

At the end of February 1913, the Wimbledon suffragettes had heard their call to duty and for the first time in the history of the Wimbledon WSPU, a number of suffragettes committed militant acts in or near to Wimbledon. The first act of

¹⁰² *The Suffragette*, “Militancy Increases,” London, England, February 21, 1913.

¹⁰³ *The Suffragette*, “Militancy Increases,” London, England, February 21 1913.

¹⁰⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Handicapping The Women,” February 8, 1913.

violence was a raid on golf greens on Wimbledon Common. Suffragettes had carved ‘Votes for Women’ into the turf with a ‘rough instrument’ near the first hole close to the famous Wimbledon Windmill. The letters were reported to be around ‘thirteen inches long.’¹⁰⁵ A similar raid was seen at Raynes Park golf course, where two greens were ‘cut up, new holes having been made’ and the words ‘Votes for Women’ and ‘No Surrender’ were cut into the turf declaring their motive for the onslaught.¹⁰⁶ Local suffragettes however, did not stop there. There was also an attempt to destroy the All-England Lawn Tennis Club via a suspected arson attack. It is reported that a Wimbledon suffragette ‘who refused all information concerning herself’ was found in the grounds.¹⁰⁷ A ‘black leather bag and a ladies dress basket’ that contained ‘paraffin oil, bundles of wood and shavings and a number of gardeners tool’ was also found near by.¹⁰⁸ A piece of paper with ‘no peace until women get the vote’ was also discovered at the scene.¹⁰⁹ Although all local and national newspaper coverage of this event suggests that the details of the woman are ‘unknown’, *The Times* reported that the suffragette who appeared in court was ‘a woman aged about 35.’¹¹⁰ She appeared at Wimbledon Police Court on the 27th February 1913 and pleaded ‘not guilty’ to the charge of being the ‘suspected person in the grounds for the supposed purpose of committing an arson attack.’¹¹¹ Nevertheless, after testimony from the grounds-man was heard, stating that ‘shortly after 10’oclock on Wednesday night I saw the accused, who must have climbed over

¹⁰⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Raid on Golf Courses,” February 22, 1913.

¹⁰⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “The Raid on Golf Courses,” February 22, 1913.

¹⁰⁷ *The Times*, “Raids On Recreation Grounds,” February 28, 1913. From The Times Digital Archive [Accessed 29th Mar. 2017]. See also, *The Suffragette*, “Attempted Fires: One Woman Arrested,” March 7, 1913.

¹⁰⁸ *The Times*, “Raids On Recreation Grounds,” London, England, February 28, 1913., *The Suffragette*, “Attempted Fires: One Woman Arrested,” March 7, 1913.

¹⁰⁹ *The Suffragette*, “Attempted Fires: One Woman Arrested,” London, England, March 7, 1913.

¹¹⁰ *The Times*, “Raids On Recreation Grounds,” February 28, 1913, 8.

¹¹¹ *The Suffragette*, “Attempted Fires: One Woman Arrested,” March 7, 1913.

the hedge, in the centre covered court', the defendant was sentenced to two months imprisonment in the second division.¹¹²

These three acts are particularly significant when examining the changing levels of militancy within the Wimbledon WSPU, because they illustrate not only how attitudes and militant tactics changed over time but also how far some Wimbledon activists were willing to go for the suffragette movement. The crucial difference that we see in 1913, however, is not that the acts themselves were more violent, dangerous and provocative than before, but that the location in which the attacks were taking place had altered. Never before had the Wimbledon WSPU committed violent attacks in their own locality. On every other occasion, the more severe forms of militancy took place in the capital. What then made the local suffragettes decide to commit this type of militancy on their own doorsteps?

Wimbledon suffragettes would have been well aware of the arson attacks and golf course raids occurring in central London and across the country and may have felt that their actions would gain more publicity and, potentially, be more effective if they took place locally. Furthermore, as many of these acts were committed at night-time, when the risk of being caught by police was lower, local women could only travel a limited distance, so they would have had to target local venues. Clearly, their local targets were not random and venues like the All-England Lawns Tennis Club may have been chosen in order to gain the most publicity. Although the actions of Wimbledon WSPU women had gained publicity within the national and local presses, their extreme militancy also evoked outrage amongst

¹¹² *The Suffragette*, "Attempted Fires: One Woman Arrested," March 7, 1913.

many local residents. This is perhaps because residents were seeing a return to levels of extreme militancy not seen since Wimbledon women engaged in window smashing.

Lenora Tyson in a meeting of the Wimbledon WSPU at Queens Hall in Wimbledon, noted that ‘a year ago last March, when the first large window smashing raid took place [where Wimbledon suffragettes were present] the public saw red.’¹¹³ It was therefore unsurprising for the Wimbledon WSPU that the public’s reception to the raids on golf courses and the attempted arson attack on the All-England Lawns Tennis Club was once again negative. Be that as it may, the Wimbledon Union did not expect the reaction that they received during their first Sunday meeting on Wimbledon Common in March 1913. On the 8th March 1913 the *WBN* reported scenes of ‘women [being] brutally assaulted’ with men striking the suffragettes and clutching at their hats. It is also noted that the speaker’s platform was ‘rushed’ resulting in several women crashing to the ground and ‘in imminent danger of being trampled by the mob.’¹¹⁴ As they fell some shouted ‘the women are down...kill them, kill them.’¹¹⁵ It is reported that the police pushed back the mob and managed to get the suffragettes to the safety of a sympathiser’s house. Some women however, (including Rose Lamartine-Yates and Nancy Lightman) were ‘badly bruised and shaken’ with one woman nursing a ‘badly sprained ankle.’¹¹⁶ This attack on Wimbledon suffragettes was denounced by the Wimbledon WSPU. Rose demanded that the men who attacked the suffragettes were guilty of much worse militancy than that practiced by the women. She argued that ‘5000 men could

¹¹³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting at Queen’s Hall,” March 8, 1913.

¹¹⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913.

¹¹⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913.

¹¹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913.

never again condemn the women for their militancy because they had adopted far worse militancy than the women and did not hold life sacred as the women did.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, not all Wimbledon residents opposed the militancy of the suffragettes. Rose suggests this when she thanked ‘the brave men and women’ (many of whom were not suffrage supporters) who had ‘gallantly done their best’ to defend the women being attacked. The *WBN* also declared that the attack was ‘a lasting disgrace to the fair fame of Wimbledon.’¹¹⁸ However a Mr G.T Sadlee in a letter written to the editor of the *WBN*, proclaimed that because the militant suffragettes had used violence to further their argument that they should not be surprised that ‘two can play that game.’¹¹⁹ The letter asked not only for ‘a truce’ to suffragette violence but also to the cessation of suffragette meetings on Wimbledon Common for a month. He argued that this should be taken up by the local activists because if they continued to hold meetings that upheld violent methods that ‘they’ (the men that rushed the women’s platform) would do the same again. This threat however, did not deter the Wimbledon suffragettes.¹²⁰

On the 15th March, the week after the rush on the suffragettes, Rose and Marie Naylor took the stand at their ‘usual pitch.’¹²¹ The women were surrounded by a ‘menacing crowd’ who were ‘just as violent and unrestrained’ as the week before.¹²² The women however, were protected this time ‘with a good and sufficient

¹¹⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting at Queen’s Hall,” March 8, 1913.

¹¹⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913, 2.

¹¹⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913, 2.

¹²⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Women Brutally Assaulted,” March 8, 1913, 2.

¹²¹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting on the Common,” March 15, 1913.

¹²² *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting on the Common,” March 15, 1913.

support of police.’¹²³ The police presence meant that the anti-suffrage mob were unable to indulge in the brutal license that had marked their behaviour on the previous Sunday. In defiance of the mob, Rose began her address by talking about the value of free speech and pointed out that the men who were in attendance ‘would be the first to rebel against any attempt to curtail their liberty of freedom, so why should the suffragettes be any different?’ After this, Rose was followed by Marie Naylor who spoke on ‘the great struggles which had taken place in many countries and in all ages for liberty and freedom’ and maintained that nothing, particularly threats of violence from men who enjoyed many freedoms that women did not, would stop the suffragettes in their fight for freedom and equality.’¹²⁴

The suffragettes fight for free speech, however, did not end with the Wimbledon suffragettes defying the threat of violent anti-suffrage activists. After the Easter holidays the Wimbledon WSPU gave their first spring address on the Common, but were again faced with an aggressive crowd. Nonetheless, Rose proceeded to address the crowd only to have 2 eggs thrown at her, this was followed by ‘offensive catcalling, boos, hisses and yelps’ from the audience.¹²⁵ The crowd became increasingly aggressive and attempted, once again, to rush the platform that Rose was speaking on. This behaviour resulted in the arrest of five men who were later charged with ‘behaving in a disorderly manner’ and the assault of police officer.¹²⁶ The men in question however, only received a fine for their behaviour. Nevertheless, it was an incident that marked a further turning point for the Wimbledon WSPU, because it signalled the beginning of the WSPU’s campaign

¹²³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting on the Common,” March 15, 1913. From The British Library. Microfilm.

¹²⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette on the Common: Free Speech Vindicated,” April 26, 1913.

¹²⁵ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 114.

¹²⁶ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 114.

for free speech on Wimbledon Common. Following this event, magistrates outlawed suffragette meetings in public parks. Laura Mayhall suggests that Wimbledon magistrates ‘used the men’s trial as an opportunity to criticise suffragettes for holding meetings that held the potential for [inciting] violence.’¹²⁷ Mayhall further suggests that the Wimbledon magistrate then used this incident to appeal to the chief commissioner of police and encourage him to ban suffragette meetings in public places, as this was the only way he could foresee order being maintained. As a result Sir Edward Henry (head of the Metropolitan Police) proclaimed that suffragette meetings could no longer be held in public spaces because they were unable to stop public disorder from taking place.¹²⁸ The notion that a local incident caused so much uproar within Wimbledon that it was communicated to national authorities is particularly important because it demonstrates that local incidents were being used to inform national developments by authorities.

Rose and the Wimbledon WSPU however, ignored this attempt to stop public meetings declaring that ‘suffragettes’ meetings on the Common would continue.’¹²⁹ She argued that ‘the suffragette meetings on Wimbledon Common have been constitutionally conducted for 4 years and are still so conducted-any temporary disorder being entirely created by a [small] section of the audience and not by the speakers or the character of the speeches.’¹³⁰ Unsurprisingly then, the Wimbledon WSPU declared that the prohibition did not apply to them and declared

¹²⁷ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 114.

¹²⁸ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette Movement*, 114.

¹²⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting on the Common: Letter to the Editor,” March 19, 1913.

¹³⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette Meeting on the Common: Letter to the Editor,” March 19, 1913.

‘free speech vindicated.’¹³¹ The government’s attempt to restrict the suffragettes right to free speech was not only challenged in Wimbledon but also in Hyde Park. *The Suffragette* praises the Wimbledon WSPU, in particular Rose, for defying the government’s orders and addressing the Wimbledon crowd of around eight to ten thousand people and declared the meetings a resounding success.¹³² The main achievement that came from the continuance of these public meetings, particularly the meetings on Wimbledon Common, was the personal sense of achievement that the suffragettes felt from addressing thousands of people in order to maintain their right to a voice.

For Rose, maintaining the right to free speech was more important than any other type of militant activism. In fact, Rose wrote in a letter written to Edith How-Martyn in 1928, that her fight to maintain free speech in Wimbledon was ‘my most valuable contribution to the campaign.’¹³³ Initially this statement seemed surprising because it had been assumed that Rose’s imprisonments, attendance to deputations or the sustainment of a strong and prosperous militant campaign in Wimbledon, would have been, what she believed was her greatest contribution to the militant movement. Yet when this statement was considered for a little longer and her words more closely, her words were not so surprising as the holding of public meetings on Wimbledon Common every Wednesday and Sunday, at 2pm, was the Wimbledon’s WSPU’s most prominent militant tactic and a sign of strength for the local movement. Furthermore, Rose’s assertion that maintaining the right for free speech was her defining militant act illustrates that militancy, its meaning and impact is relative. Relative to the individual, the time and the place. Ultimately, for

¹³¹ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News* “Suffragette on the Common: Free Speech Vindicated” April 26, 1913.

¹³² *The Suffragette*, “Fight for Free Speech,” April 25, 1913.

¹³³ Rose Lamartine-Yates to Edith How-Martyn, 1923. *Letter*. From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, *Group C Vol 3 (21) 57.113/12*.

Rose and many other suffrage activists, the right to free speech was the most important part of the suffragette campaign. Without the power to speak freely in public places the campaign for women's suffrage would not have reached the thousands of women that it did in the Edwardian period.

3.5 'The First Guard of Honour:' Rose Lamartine-Yates and Death of Emily Wilding Davison.

Throughout this chapter it has become clear that Rose remained a central figure in the Wimbledon WSPU throughout 1911, 1912 and 1913. However in June 1913, an incident occurred that pulled Rose's focus away from the local WSPU branch. This event was the death of her dearest friend and comrade, Emily Wilding Davison. On the 4th June 1913 Emily Davison attended the Epsom Derby with the intent of making a 'public petition to the king' in protest of the treatment that her comrades were receiving under the Cat and Mouse Act.¹³⁴ With the intent of stopping the King's horse, Emily, armed with a WSPU flag tied around her body, walked calmly under the white railings near Tattenham corner and attempted to grab the reins of the King's horse, Amner. The horse ran straight into Emily, knocking her to the ground. As a result of her actions she sustained numerous internal injuries and had severe concussion and a fractured skull. She was taken to Epsom Cottage Hospital straight after the accident where an operation was performed to relieve pressure on her brain. Unfortunately, Emily did not recover from her injuries and died just four days later.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ June Purvis, "Remembering Emily Wilding Davison (1872-1913)," *Women's History Review*, 22:3 (2013): 353.

¹³⁵ Purvis, "Remembering Emily Wilding Davison (1872-1913)." 353. For a detailed analysis of Emily Wilding Davison's life, please see; Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*.

The death of Emily Wilding Davison is argued by June Purvis to have become a ‘defining moment in British political history.’¹³⁶ A statement that could not be more accurate, particularly with the release of the film ‘Suffragette’ to cinemas across the world. The film ends with the death of Emily Wilding Davison, and the footage of her funeral procession, captured at the time by Pathé news. Emily’s death is once again seen as the ‘defining moment’ or the defining militant act of the suffragette campaign. Although her death is discussed throughout suffrage history, few suffrage historians have looked at the impact of Emily’s death on her close friends. The focus here then, is to briefly explore the impact of Emily’s death on a woman who was included in Emily’s innermost friendship network, Rose Lamartine-Yates.¹³⁷

As has already been discussed at the beginning of the chapter, Rose and Emily had become close friends during their years together at Royal Holloway College. Their friendship blossomed further when they worked and campaigned together from 1910-1913. Emily not only spoke numerous times for the Wimbledon WSPU on prison life and the wider suffrage campaign, she also stayed frequently at *Dorset Hall* with the Lamartine-Yates family. Although Emily was not a Wimbledon suffragette, (as she did not become a member by enrolling through the Wimbledon branch) she developed firm connections with the Wimbledon branch through her many visits and sustained an incredibly close friendship with Rose.¹³⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that Rose’s focus moved away from the Wimbledon WSPU in June 1913.

¹³⁶ Purvis, “Remembering Emily Wilding Davison (1872-1913).” 353.

¹³⁷ For a more detailed description of Emily Davison’s innermost friendship network, please see; Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 171-185.

¹³⁸ For further examples of how national figures forged connections with local branches see; Heloise Brown and Krista Cowman, “Exploring suffrage friendships.” In *Celebrating women’s friendship: past present and future*, edited by Ruth Symes and Heloise Brown. (York. Rawnerve, 1999), 135.

After the incident at the Epsom Derby, Rose's immediate concern was the welfare of Emily. This is apparent when we consider that it was Rose and Mary Leigh who visited Emily during her final days at Epsom Cottage Hospital. Nevertheless, Rose's duty as a friend did not end when Emily died on the 8th June 1913. In fact, Rose along with her husband Tom, were not only central to Emily's inquest into her death (as Tom was the solicitor who represented the Davison family at the inquest) but they played a significant role in the family preparations for the funeral. Emily's brother, Captain Davison, stayed with the Lamartine-Yates's during the inquest and the family helped the Captain organise the funeral whilst he stayed at *Dorset Hall*. Their generosity to the Davison family is apparent in a letter that the Captain wrote to Tom, thanking them for their kindness and support with the funeral and inquest. Emily's mother also wrote to the Lamartine-Yates' thanking them, once again, for all they had done for the Davison family and for their sympathy concerning 'my dear daughter's sacrifice.'¹³⁹ Furthermore, it is clear from the examination of *The Suffragette* newspaper, on the 13th June, that Rose's time wasn't just taken up with funeral arrangements. She was also busy writing a tribute to Emily in the suffragette newspaper. Her tribute read:

As I stood with Mary Leigh by the bedside of our dying comrade and my old college friend, it seemed as though there was nothing which was hers left to give that she had not freely given to the women's movement...She had felt the call, she knew that suffering and outraged womanhood looked to her as indeed to all of us, to do her utmost to release her from bondage. No penalty, no pain, not loss of life itself could hold her back from responding to that call...She had given her life for us and for all humanity counting but not fearing the cost.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Captain Davison, *Captain Davison to Tom Lamartine-Yates*, June 20, 1913. Letter. From Women's Library at LSE, papers of Emily Wilding Davison, 7EWD/B. Mrs Davison, *Mrs Davison to Rose Lamartine-Yates*, 1914. Letter. From Women's Library at LSE, *papers of Emily Wilding Davison*, 7EWD.

¹⁴⁰ Rose Lamartine-Yates, "Emily Wilding Davison," *The Suffragette*, June 13, 1913.

Unlike Christabel Pankhurst's tribute to Emily's death that superficially used the language of comradeship to 'obscure the nature of personal ties in the messages of sympathy,' Rose's tribute to a 'comrade and a college friend' reinstates the degree of solidarity she felt with Emily.¹⁴¹ Rose's words also demonstrate the extent to which Rose understood Emily's militancy and confirms how significant a person Emily was to Rose and Rose to her. This is apparent because this level of identification with Emily and her militancy is something that could not have been fabricated and would have only come with in-depth discussions on what the women's movement and their call to fight in it, meant for both women. Stanley and Morley's study supports this reflection as they argue that these women were not just friends, but women who 'shared similar world views.'¹⁴² Furthermore, the role that Rose played in Emily's funeral procession, as first guard in honour of Emily's coffin, confirms, once more, the friendship that clearly existed between these two women.

Although Emily Wilding Davison's death remains to this day the defining militant act of the suffragette movement and her funeral procession the WSPU's most memorable and moving public display of strength and feminist solidarity, this sub-chapter is a poignant reminder that in order to fully understand the impact that such a harrowing event could have on those closest to Emily, that we must look beyond the national picture. This research has been able to illustrate that by focusing on locality and friendship, a more complex and personal narrative can be configured.

¹⁴¹ The suggestion that Christabel Pankhurst used the language of comradeship to 'obscure the nature of personal ties in messages of sympathy sent after Emily Davison's death,' is presented by Heloise Brown and Krista Cowman in "Exploring suffrage friendships", 140.

¹⁴² Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 127.

After Emily's funeral Rose took nearly a year off from the Wimbledon WSPU due to a 'severe illness.'¹⁴³ Although it is not clear what Rose's illness was, it could have been something associated with the illnesses that Mary Leigh mentioned 'attacked her sight and spine' in her adolescent years. Yet it seems that it was more than likely triggered by the death of her comrade.¹⁴⁴ What is clear however, is that in November 1913 after several attempts to recover from her illness in 'the fray', she was 'ordered aboard for rest.'¹⁴⁵ During this time the Wimbledon WSPU was organised by the Union's second in command, Edith Begbie. The support network that surrounded Rose in Wimbledon becomes evident at this point in 1913 as WSPU members, along with other branch speakers, attended the WSPU meetings in the place of Rose. Thus ensuring the continuance of a successful local campaign. For instance, on October 4th Mrs Dacre Fox addressed a meeting on Wimbledon Common. Miss Nutall (Wimbledon WSPU chairman) also spoke on 1st November and informed the crowds of why Rose had been absent from the meetings. The *WBN* reported that the meeting 'passed a resolution of sympathy with Mrs Lamartine-Yates in her illness.'¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, illnesses like Rose's were not uncommon. Suffragettes across the country suffered from poor health, whether this be as a result of overstrain and stress whilst organising local and national campaigns or as a consequence of imprisonment and the treatment received whilst imprisoned. It will therefore be the intention of the next chapter to explore the ways in which activism affected the physical and mental health of WSPU activists. Particularly the ways in which the Wimbledon WSPU, along with other localities, dealt with supporting and sustaining the health of its members.

¹⁴³ Leigh Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*.

¹⁴⁴ Leigh Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*.

¹⁴⁵ Leigh Mary, *Biography of Rose Lamartine-Yates*.

¹⁴⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Suffragette Meeting at Queens Hall," November 15, 1913.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the various ways in which militancy manifested itself in the Wimbledon WSPU between 1911 and 1913. By exploring the local daily militant activities of Wimbledon women and the local impact of key events in suffrage history such as: the 1911 census night, the Conciliation and Reform Bills and the death of Emily Wilding Davison, this chapter has shown that although suffragette militancy evolved over time, it cannot be seen as a simple escalating process, becoming more violent and provocative as we move towards 1914. Although the Wimbledon WSPU embraced militant tactics such as arson and window smashing, this chapter has shown that these acts were committed in response to the actions of the government. Specifically, the government torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill and the introduction of the Manhood Suffrage Bill and the withdrawal of the Franchise Bill in January 1913.

Furthermore, it is evident that these tactics existed amongst other militant strategies. The resistance and evasion of the 1911 census, along with the fight to maintain free speech on Wimbledon Common, are just a few examples of the other types of militancy that were embraced by the Wimbledon Union. Suggesting, that militancy ebbs and flows and that the types of militant activism emphasised in the suffrage press (such as stone throwing, window smashing, hunger-striking, and arson) were just one part of a huge militant campaign.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Rose's assertion that maintaining the right to free speech was her 'main contribution' to the women's movement reminds us not just of the range of militancy that women

¹⁴⁷ *The Suffragette*, "Militancy Increases." London, England, 1912. From The British Library, *general reference collection 1912-1913*. Microfilm.

became involved in, but that militancy, its meaning and its impact, is relative to the individual, the time and the place.

The final thing that this chapter has shown is that militancy had a price and that although women locally and nationally were engaging in differing forms of militant activism, with the more violent tactics of the WSPU augmenting rather replacing the less violent tactics, the fight for women's enfranchisement had consequences. In the case of Emily Wilding Davison, her activism resulted in the ultimate consequence, the loss of her life. Although, it is essential for us to move beyond Emily's death, it is also crucial to use her sacrifice as a starting point into considering the extent to which militancy affected suffragettes' health. It is therefore in the next chapter that this thesis, that the relationship between militancy and health will be examined. Particularly the ways in which day-to-day campaigning, locally and nationally, impacted upon suffragettes' physical and mental health.

Chapter 4: Health and Suffrage in the Wimbledon WSPU and Beyond: The Impact of Daily Activism and Imprisonment on Militants' Health.

Introduction

By the end of 1913 it is evident that Wimbledon suffragettes engaged in a range of daily militant activity. Yet, although it has been argued that militancy within the Wimbledon WSPU was less an escalating process, with members embracing a variety of militant actions throughout the lifetime of the local WSPU branch, clearly militancy was not necessarily conducive to maintaining suffragettes' physical and psychological health. Nevertheless, the ways in which activists' health was affected by their involvement in the militant movement is an area that has attracted little attention from historians. While the diurnal experiences of militant activists have been explored, particularly the prison experiences of suffragettes within the WSPU, their testimonies have not been examined solely and directly in relation to health.¹

This chapter therefore, explores the relationship between health and suffrage by examining the ways in which different types of militant activism affected the physical and psychological health of WSPU women. Furthermore, this chapter reflects upon the significance of supportive friendships and networks by demonstrating the ways in which the suffragettes and their sympathisers, within Wimbledon and beyond, used their homes as centres for refuge and recuperation.

¹ See June Purvis, "The Prison Experiences Of The Suffragettes In Edwardian Britain." Geddes, "Culpable Complicity: The Medical Profession And The Forcible Feeding Of Suffragettes, 1909–1914."

4.1 The Health Consequences of Daily Activism Outside of Prison

The first signs that the daily activities of Wimbledon women were beginning to have an affect on local activists' health was in June 1911 when a report in the *WBN* commented on the 'fatigue of the previous day' felt by Wimbledon suffragettes after a full week of campaigning. The week in question ended with a 'very strong contingent' of Wimbledon suffragettes taking part in 'the great procession' to the Albert Hall on the 17th June 1911. The contingent, spoken about in the *WBN*, can be seen in a photograph that shows Wimbledon suffragettes passing St James' Palace with their famous windmill banner and another banner that reads 'taxation without representation is tyranny.'² As was mentioned in chapter three, Mrs Dickenson (who presided at a meeting on Wimbledon Common on Sunday 18th June) described the demonstration where over 40,000 women from 28 suffrage societies walked from the Embankment to the Royal Albert Hall in South Kensington, as 'a triumph.'³ Furthermore, although local suffragettes 'might have reasonably claimed a rest,' after a demanding and exhausting week, suffragettes were told that no rest or risks were to be taken until 'victory, final and absolute was assured.'⁴

This notion of suffragettes performing exhausting schedules and working non-stop, sometimes for multiple weeks at a time, is something that seems to have been quite common within the WSPU. Annie Kenney for instance, when she was working for the WSPU as a paid organiser, recalled how she was 'never still for a

² Photographer unknown, "A Suffrage Procession in London." Photograph. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Women's Franchise Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*. See Appendix One.

The image shows the famous windmill banner, which Wimbledon suffragettes marched behind on the procession to the Albert Hall on the June 17, 1911.

³ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union", June 24, 1911, 2.

⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro' News* "Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union", June 24, 1911, 2.

moment.’⁵ Her autobiography also suggests that the minutiae of suffragettes daily work was much more demanding than simply organising meetings and rousing up support. Annie indicates that organisers did everything in their power to build up the local branches and districts and galvanise support for women’s suffrage. ‘If we were not ringing a bell, calling them to meetings, we were chalking pavements or the doors of barns, giving away handbills, speaking in the market place or at street corners.’⁶ Although this description is given with reference to Annie’s work as a paid organiser for the WSPU, the day-to-day work of paid organisers and unpaid, volunteer organising secretaries shared some similarities. Krista Cowman suggests this when she recalled how Edith Rigby (the mainstay of the Preston WSPU), Alice Milne (organising secretary of the Manchester WSPU) and Alice Hawkins (organising secretary of the Leicester branch) were ‘full-time workers’ for the WSPU who, through their unpaid work, ‘considerably lightened’ the workload of some paid organisers.⁷ Like the aforementioned trio, Rose Lamartine-Yates was also a full-time worker for the WSPU and performed the following duties: organised the local meetings, enrolled new members, addressed local meetings, organised local suffragette bazaars and garden fetes and contributing weekly reports to the local, national and suffrage press. However, I would go further than Cowman and suggest that Rose did much more than lighten the workload of district organisers. From 1910 Rose was not only the face of the Wimbledon suffrage campaign, she was also the driving force behind the local movement and was the key to its success.⁸

⁵ Annie Kenney, *Memoirs of a Militant* (London: Arnold, 1924), 100.

⁶ Kenney, *Memoirs of a Militant*, 100.

⁷ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 68.

⁸ Itinerant organisers are paid organisers who travelled throughout the country to organise for the WSPU. Unlike district organisers, they did not have a fixed area that they focused upon.

One of the most prominent ways in which Rose and other organisers, locally and nationally, pushed forward the issue of women's enfranchisement was via public lectures and meetings. The local suffragette campaigns were met with public resistance and hostility. Very early into Rose's suffragette career she, along with her colleague, Gertrude Wilkinson came face-to-face with a great deal of animosity from members of the public in Whitstable, Kent, when both women organised an open-air meeting as part of their Whitstable 'Holiday Campaign.' Nevertheless, when the women got up to speak they witnessed, what Rose referred to as, 'the disgraceful behaviour of the lowest section of the Whitstable population.'⁹ Both women were attacked by a number of Whitstable residents who attempted to 'personally injure' the WSPU speakers. This however, was not the only time that Rose experienced a physical assault inflicted by a member of the public. By 1913, when suffragette militancy had escalated to include arson, the firebombing of post-boxes and the cutting of telephone lines, speakers present on Wimbledon Common risked their physical and psychological wellbeing on a number of occasions as they were faced with increasingly aggressive audience members. A report in the *WBN* on the 8th March, illustrates how suffragettes' health was being endangered. The newspaper described how the speaker's platform was rushed at a Sunday meeting. The report not only stated that the WSPU's new flagstaff (which was originally a gift from Mr Basil Belmont) was destroyed but, that a number of suffragettes were left 'bruised and dishevelled' by a 'rush' of angry men.¹⁰ Rose and her colleagues were

⁹ *Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*. August 1909. From The Women's Library, LSE, *The Rose Lamartine-Yates Collection*, 7RLY.

¹⁰ Wimbledon WSPU. *Fifth Annual Report of The Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union, Year ending 31st October 1913*. From The Women's Library, LSE, 7RLY.

forced to abandon their meeting and were offered safe shelter by Mrs Gibson, a suffragette sympathiser.¹¹

Notably though, it was not just the Wimbledon suffragettes that experienced various levels of resistance to their local 'Votes for Women' campaign. On many occasions suffragettes were not just physically attacked but also verbally and psychologically abused whilst they were campaigning across the country. Hannah Mitchell for instance, described that after speaking at one meeting in Manchester, she was roughly handled and 'literally shook.'¹² Mary Richardson also remembered being 'stiff with terror' at the prospect of 'facing the mob' in Hyde Park.¹³ She recalled how she was frightened of one man who wore a locks of a women's hair in his buttonhole, displaying the locks 'like trophies in [his] coat.'¹⁴ Annie also described talking at the Somerset elections and being pelted with rotten eggs. Writing that, night after night she went home covered in eggs, 'the smell of which remained in my memory for weeks.'¹⁵

What is so extraordinary is that these women seemed to take this form of treatment in their stride. They were willing to sacrifice their health in order to further the campaign for women's enfranchisement. The vote was uniquely important to them and many thought that it was their 'duty' to move forward and continue to rally support locally and nationally, regardless of the consequences. In her memoirs, Annie talks about why she put up with such treatment, describing

¹¹ Wimbledon WSPU. *Fifth Annual Report of The Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union, Year ending 31st October 1913*. From The Women's Library, LSE, 7RLY.

¹² Mary Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953), 54.

¹³ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 54.

¹⁴ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 54.

¹⁵ Hannah Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 41. Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 109.

what she felt she must overcome for the good of womankind. 'Fish, flesh fowl or eggs, it made no difference... no matter how soft or hard the arguments which were flung in our faces, we were doing our duty.'¹⁶ Like Annie, Rose was also undeterred by the physical and verbal abuse she received. She stated that it was the 'consciousness that duty prevailed above self interest that made every irksome task a pleasure and seemed to keep fear at bay.'¹⁷ Mary Gawthorpe went further than this and suggested that they didn't simply have a duty to themselves and other women but essentially they were employed by the WSPU and 'well or ill the movement had to go on.'¹⁸ It is this commitment and this idea that suffragettes had a duty, not just to themselves, but to other women and to the suffragette movement as a whole, that became so imbedded in their minds. Indeed, Sandra Holton has argued that suffragette activists put themselves through such treatment because of a belief in a greater cause and way of life.¹⁹ However, this did not mean that suffragettes didn't begin to recognise that daily life and WSPU schedules were beginning to affect their health and wellbeing.

Mary Gawthorpe's account of how her public speaking had begun to worsen is particularly insightful as it illustrates that there were often tell-tale signs that suffragettes were experiencing deteriorating health. Mary stated that Teresa Billington-Greig told her in 1906, that her speech given whilst in Leeds was erratic. This Mary suggested, was due to being nervous and tired. So much so that the

¹⁶ Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 110.

¹⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*. Unpublished speech. From The Women's Library, LSE, 7RLY.

¹⁸ Gawthorpe, Mary. *Book of Suffragette Prisoners*. Manuscript. From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, The Museum of London, *Fonds 1-3, group C*.

¹⁹ Sandra Stanley Holton, "In Sorrowful Wrath": Suffrage Militancy and the Romantic Feminism of Emmeline Pankhurst', *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harold L. Smith (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990) 9-11.

doctor had prescribed her some form of stimulant or sedative.²⁰ Mary recognised that after this point her health had gotten ‘decidedly worse.’²¹ She goes on to explain, ‘I could not collect my thoughts and they did not quite leave me.’²² It is at this point that Mary described this feeling as a ‘miserable strain.’²³ What is particularly important to note is that Mary suggests that the ‘abundant detail’ of her job within the WSPU, the lack of time for reflection and too many speeches to comprehend, all contributed to the ‘disorientating effect’ of speaking and campaigning.²⁴ Nonetheless, Mary was not alone in feeling this way. Annie Kenney too remembered how she worked for nearly nine years on the verge of ‘breaking-point.’²⁵ Like Mary and Annie, Rose’s health was similarly affected by her day-to-day work as Wimbledon’s organising secretary. This is evident from the 1911 Wimbledon WSPU Annual Report. This stated how Rose’s health had been ‘seriously impaired’ and when she returned as organising secretary, her ‘heavy task was to be lessened.’ Nevertheless, the report suggests that when Rose returned to her role in May 1911, that she was still ‘only partially restored to health.’²⁶ However, not all WSPU women could fight through their physical and psychological ills and return to their local and national roles. Many worked themselves to such a point that their bodies and minds could take no more.

Although many WSPU women undoubtedly worked themselves to the point of mental and physical exhaustion, only a few recorded reaching a point that meant that they could no longer continue their work for the WSPU, whether it be paid or

²⁰ Mary Eleanor Gawthorpe, *Up Hill To Holloway* (Penobscot, Me.: Traversity Press, 1962), 234-235.

²¹ Gawthorpe, *Up the Hill to Holloway*, 234-235.

²² Gawthorpe, *Up the Hill to Holloway*, 234-235.

²³ Gawthorpe, *Up the Hill to Holloway*, 234-235.

²⁴ Gawthorpe, *Up the Hill to Holloway*, 234-235.

²⁵ Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 11.

²⁶ Wimbledon WSPU, *Wimbledon WSPU Third Annual Report*, October 31 1911. Report. From The Women’s Library, LSE, *The Rose Lamartine-Yates Collection*, 7RLY.

voluntary. Hannah Mitchell for instance, suggested that work as a WSPU organiser pushed her health to the point where she experienced a complete mental breakdown. Signs that Hannah's health was deteriorating occurred throughout her time as an organiser. She suffered from insomnia and recalled that 'exciting days and sleepless nights are not conducive to good health.'²⁷ When speaking at a by-election in the Colne Valley, Hannah realised that her health had broken down so much that she 'found the atmosphere turning black' and heard her own voice grow faint, 'as if speaking from a distance.'²⁸ After returning home and receiving some disturbing news, she became unconscious. Later she woke to find herself in bed and a doctor was by her side. She wrote how she 'wandered mentally in a strange world, all sorts of delusions passing through my disordered mind.'²⁹ The diagnosis was that she had experienced a 'nervous breakdown', which was due to 'overwork and underfeeding.'³⁰

Even though this is an extreme example of the health consequences of activist's daily life outside of prison, it is unsurprising that some WSPU women, particularly those who were organisers, suffered from these types of health breakdowns. Many of the young women within the WSPU had never before experienced work and the pressures of it on this scale. Indeed, Krista Cowman suggests this argument in her ground-breaking work on paid organisers. She states that because many organisers were 'young women who had led sheltered and

²⁷ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 168.

²⁸ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 168. The date of this by-election is not stated but it seems to have taken place immediately before her illness and departure from the WSPU. The date therefore would be somewhere between the end of 1906 or the beginning of 1907.

²⁹ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 169.

³⁰ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 169.

restricted lives before joining the WSPU', the demands placed upon them could prove too much.³¹

Hannah Mitchell was able to recover from her mental breakdown by travelling to the seaside and staying with a friend's mother in a small boarding house. During this time she began to 'pick up the threads of life' and separate the 'delusion from the realities.'³² Essentially, when analysing Hannah's description it is clear that although her mind began to recover and she started to see things more clearly, she knew that she was still 'totally unfit for any kind of work, either physical or mental.'³³ Crucially here, there is a direct link between mental and physical health. From Hannah's description, it seems that with mental illness came a physical one too.

The impact of Hannah's mental breakdown had long-term as well as immediate consequences for her health. This is evident when she goes on to describe the years that followed her breakdown. It is apparent that this traumatic period in her life had a lasting effect on her mental health. For months after the event she suffered from periods of depression and was at times tempted to end her own life. It seems that this was made worse by the Pankhurst leadership, as during their administration it is alleged that no one contacted Hannah or demonstrated (she felt) any type of interest into the state of her health.³⁴ Consequently, she was 'deeply hurt' and unable to work with them again. Hannah made a crucial and poignant point when she summed up the effect of her experiences. She stated, 'I did not realise that in a great battle the individual does not count and stopping to pick

³¹ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 33.

³² Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 169.

³³ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 169.

³⁴ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 170.

up the wounded delays the fight.³⁵ This suggests that illness within the WSPU was not conducive to securing 'Votes for Women' and that in Hannah's case, her period of ill health was of no interest to the Pankhurst leadership, because she was of no use to them. An advertisement in *VFW* in July 1911 appealed to WSPU members, whose health was 'broken down.' It invited them to stay at *Blayis House* in Slough and suggests that rest and recuperation was necessary because 'perfect health was essential to the reformer.'³⁶ This treatment of Hannah by the Pankhurst leadership, coupled with advertisements that promoted perfect health, suggest that wellbeing was essential for the individual. Furthermore, it was fundamental to the WSPU as they relied so heavily on militants, whether paid or volunteering, to fight for their cause across the country.

Nonetheless, Hannah's experience is only one example of how the WSPU leadership dealt with workers' health breakdowns. When Mary Gawthorpe left the WSPU in 1912, after being 'laid up for nearly two and a half years as a result of overstrain and injury received in the campaign,' she had a much different experience.³⁷ Mary received a letter from Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence accepting her resignation on the grounds of ill health. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence also wished her 'joy' in her new *Freewoman* venture. In contrast, Hannah's health breakdown and departure from the Union was not acknowledged by the WSPU. These different reactions from the central leadership seem to have depended on the existing relationship between leader and organiser and also on who was responding to the incident. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence had nearly suffered a mental breakdown herself and therefore was much more sympathetic to suffragettes' periods of ill

³⁵ Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up*, 170.

³⁶ *Votes for Women*, "Advertisements." July 14, 1911.

³⁷ *Mary Gawthorpe Fund Letter*. Manuscript. From Princeton University, *Dora Marsden Papers*, Box 2, Folders 1. Source originally quoted in L. Meredith, "Mary Gawthorpe's post-WSPU career, 2011."

health. The Pankhurst family however, particularly Christabel Pankhurst who was blessed with 'robust health', could be 'perplexed and irritated' by illness in others.³⁸ In general though, Mary and Hannah's accounts demonstrate that for some women, daily life outside of the prison gates could be extremely punishing to suffragettes' health, with the pressures of their daily schedules ultimately ending their WSPU careers.

From the daily experiences of WSPU women outside of prison, it is clear that daily militancy consisted of much more than the individual and collective militant acts that captivated the headlines of the contemporary local, national and suffrage press. Yet it was this type of militancy, the relentless daily campaigning in various localities, that was just as challenging, in some ways, as the more violent and provocative acts of militancy which could have resulted in imprisonment. Suffragettes were willing to sacrifice their health throughout their day-to-day campaigns. For some however, their health could be completely transformed just by their daily activism. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognise that it was not just daily activism that impacted on suffragettes' health. From 1905-1914 around one thousand women were imprisoned because of their militant actions. It is important then, considering this statistic and the perceived relationship between imprisonment and health in suffrage historiography, that this approach, which takes a more expansive view of health and suffrage campaigners, considers the ways in which imprisonment affected women's health within Wimbledon and beyond.

³⁸ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 57.

4.2 The Health Consequences of Imprisonment

The first imprisonment of a suffragette occurred on 13th October 1905, when Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst interrupted a Liberal Party meeting at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester. After the two women were ejected from the meeting, they were arrested when Christabel spat at a police officer. Both women were imprisoned after they refused to pay the five-shilling fine. From that point onwards, increasing numbers of militant suffragettes found themselves imprisoned for committing various misdemeanours. This could be anything from what the police perceived as public order offences to violent attacks on public and private property. The focus here however, is not why these women were sent to prison but what their prison experiences tell us about their health.

As has been acknowledged in chapter two, the first Wimbledon suffragette to be imprisoned was Rose Lamartine-Yates. She was arrested on the 24th February 1909 whilst on a deputation to the House of Commons. She was sentenced to a month in Holloway gaol for obstructing the police. The prospect of imprisonment however, did not seem to concern Rose. In fact, when entering the Black Maria (the police van that transported prisoners to gaol) she recalled how ‘a calmness filled my soul as I waited, expecting I know not what.’³⁹ This description of being incredibly calm and ready for whatever faced her in Holloway prison, is a statement that was very surprising. For many suffragettes it was this initial entrance into the Black Maria and more specifically, the prospect of incarceration and the notion of the unknown, that began to affect suffragettes’ health before they even entered prison. For instance Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, tells a common tale of the fear and

³⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

anxiety she faced before she entered Holloway gaol. She detailed how, when she had imagined what the inside of a Black Maria would look like, ‘a sort of bus with hard benches each side’, the reality was something that she described as making her ‘heart die within [her].’⁴⁰ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence recalled how she was not prepared for the ‘extreme revulsion’ that possessed her at the prospect of being locked up in one of six cages on either side of the prison van. ‘I shut my eyes and prayed that I might not lose self control.’⁴¹ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence however, was not alone in feeling this way. Mary Richardson described the ‘coffin-like compartments’ of the Black Maria and recalled that after the last cell door was closed in the prison van, she felt ‘indescribably lonely...the numbness in my limbs was nothing to the numbness in my mind.’⁴² The process of entering Holloway affected Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence to such an extent that after the gates had closed behind her, she remembered that she felt that she was ‘heading for a nervous breakdown’ and could no longer maintain an ‘objective attitude’ to her surroundings.⁴³ Nevertheless, regardless of this initial impact upon suffragettes’ mental health, the standard process that all prisoners had to undergo when entering the prison began.

Rose described the standard process for second division inmates. She wrote, ‘on reaching Holloway we were put into an intensely cold reception cell containing only one small stool.’⁴⁴ They were given a small amount of ‘lukewarm cocoa in a filthy tin’ and then after hours of waiting, we were stripped and weighed and made

⁴⁰ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World* (Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, 1976), 169.

⁴¹ Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁴² Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 14-15.

⁴³ Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁴⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

to take a bath 'in public view.'⁴⁵ Prison clothes were given and then suffragettes were taken to their cells. It is at this point that many suffragettes describe the initial health impact of imprisonment. Rose recalled how she had 'intense fatigue' whilst Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence described how she lay alone in her cell 'weary' and 'utterly exhausted.'⁴⁶

Regardless of prison's initial effect on the mental and physical state of suffragettes, prison regulations imposed a specific routine on daily life whilst in prison. Rose recalled that prisoners were up at 5.30am and doors unlocked at 6am so that they could go to the lavatory. After this, 'bed and bedding was to be tightly rolled and put on the shelf while still warm, [then the] floor, slab, chair and mattress-board was all to be scrubbed with a filthy piece of fibre brush and cold water before 7am.'⁴⁷ At 7.15 breakfast arrived, which was 'a lump of bread, a piece of margarine and a hot sticky beverage, the composition of which [Rose] was not able to discover.'⁴⁸ Polishing the tin bedroom utensils was the last job and then each cell was ready for inspection. A visit to the chapel and an hour of exercise (where talking was not permitted) followed. Lunch was served at 12pm and dinner at 5pm.

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Although this description is expressly that of the prison routine at Holloway gaol, references made by June Purvis to Maud Joachim's recollection of her prison

⁴⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

⁴⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*. Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in A Changing World*, 169.

⁴⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

⁴⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

⁴⁹ June Purvis, "Deeds, Not Words", 96. Purvis, "The Prison Experiences Of The Suffragettes In Edwardian Britain".

routine suggest that the accounts presented tell a ‘familiar tale.’⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a report in *VFW* that detailed the imprisonment and daily routine of Hugh Franklin, Men’s Political Union (MPU) Committee member who was imprisoned in Holloway after attempting to strike Winston Churchill with a dog whip, revealed that men received increased benefits whilst incarcerated. Advantages that women who had committed similar crimes did not experience. For instance, the report revealed that whilst Hugh Franklin was in prison ‘he was allowed between three and four hours of daily exercise.’⁵¹ A benefit that was ‘a very different matter to the one hour allowed to women prisoners.’⁵²

Time outside of this routine was spent alone in one’s cell.⁵³ It was during this period of solitude that suffragettes’ mental health seems to have begun to deteriorate. Rose insinuates this when she described how the twenty-three hours of solitary confinement that she experienced each day, made her ‘question whether the cause of womanhood was worth this mental and physical suffering.’⁵⁴ Rose goes further stating that, twenty three hours alone in one’s cell felt like ‘mental chloroform being administered without any physical numbness to balance it... the stagnation, the isolation, the system of depression, the intense insanity of the routine would unhinge the mind were there not a set purpose and will, to carry one through the ordeal.’⁵⁵ It is unsurprising then, that suffragettes did everything they could to occupy their time alone.

⁵⁰ Purvis, "Deeds, Not Words", 96.

⁵¹ *Votes for Women*, "Mr Franklin Released." January 13, 1911.

⁵² *Votes for Women*, "Mr Franklin Released." January 13, 1911.

⁵³ Purvis, "Deeds, Not Words", 96. Purvis, "The Prison Experiences Of The Suffragettes In Edwardian Britain", 109.

⁵⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

⁵⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

For instance, Vera Holme (a WSPU activist and Actresses Franchise L member since 1908) tried to occupy herself during these hours by drawing whilst incarcerated. This can be seen from a sketch of hers executed whilst in Holloway.⁵⁶ The drawing consists of two depictions of her prison cell in Holloway. They were drawn onto a tiny envelope that she must have hidden after she had received a letter in prison. One sketch details her surroundings, as if she is looking out of her cell and the second drawing, which reads 'Holloway Prison, cell F3.21', is her view from the door of her cell looking towards the window. The sketch shows a bed to the left-hand side of the pictorial space, with what looks like various tin buckets and utensils in the centre.⁵⁷ A hand-wash basin can be seen to the right of the compositional space.⁵⁸

Vera's drawing and Rose's testimony illustrate that whilst incarcerated, suffragettes felt that the preservation of their mental health was crucial. Accordingly, they employed various tools to occupy their minds whilst in prison. For Vera, drawing was the activity used to keep her mind occupied, one that allowed her to deal with the endless silence and the seclusion from the outside world. Whereas for Rose, her mental sanity was maintained through the knowledge and constant internal reminder, that her sacrifice was for a greater cause. Unfortunately however, some suffragettes, no matter how hard they tried, were unable to deal with the claustrophobic confinement and seclusion from the outside world.

⁵⁶ Holme Vera. *Sketch*. From The Women's Library, LSE, *Papers of Vera Holme 7VJH*. See Appendix Two.

⁵⁷ Holme Vera. *Sketch*.

⁵⁸ Holme Vera. *Sketch*.

Emmeline Pethick- Lawrence detailed possibly the worst psychological outcome of incarceration. She remembered how she became ‘terribly depressed’ and it seemed to her that she was in her ‘grave forgotten by the world.’⁵⁹ As a consequence of this state of mind, Emmeline suffered a nervous breakdown whilst in prison in 1906. She was released after only a few days because she was ‘on the edge of a nervous collapse.’⁶⁰ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence’s psychological health had deteriorated to such an extent that she was unable to undertake any work for the WSPU for more than six months.⁶¹ Her husband, Fredrick Pethick-Lawrence was so concerned about his wife at this time that he travelled with her to Italy so she could recuperate. Furthermore, after this incident he wholeheartedly devoted himself to the cause, taking over all his wife’s responsibilities within the WSPU for the interim.⁶²

Emmeline referred back to this imprisonment in an article in *VFW* three years later.⁶³ She talked about how she saw herself as ‘a failure’ in 1906 for allowing herself to be affected in such a way. Nevertheless, she felt that she had ‘no other option [at the time] than to yield.’⁶⁴ Yet in 1909, when the article was released, she discussed how she had become more resilient over time to the affects of imprisonment. This statement, three years after her period of depression, demonstrates how suffragettes’ experiences contributed to changing women’s mind-sets. Undoubtedly Emmeline Pethick- Lawrence’s suffrage journey had changed her. She became more resilient and determined that she would not let her next

⁵⁹ Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁶⁰ Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁶¹ Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁶² Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part In A Changing World*, 169.

⁶³ Pethick-Lawrence, Emmeline. “Why I Am In Prison”, *Votes for Women*, March 12, 1909, 8.

⁶⁴ Pethick-Lawrence, Emmeline. “Why I Am In Prison”, *Votes for Women*, March 12, 1909, 8.

imprisonment affect her health as it had done in 1906. She declared that, ‘when the need should arise’ she would be ‘ready for it.’⁶⁵

Although Emmeline felt that she had failed herself and the WSPU in 1906, it seems that being psychologically affected by imprisonment in the early years of the militant movement was not uncommon. For example, Dora Montefiore remembered how incarceration had also affected her whilst she was serving her prison term in 1906. She recalled being ‘unwell...the affect of the close imprisonment and the evil psychological atmosphere with which I was surrounded had begun to tell seriously upon my health.’⁶⁶ Like Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, she was released from prison early as the doctor stated that she was ‘not fit to be here anymore.’⁶⁷ Although Emmeline and Dora’s experiences are quite poignant examples of how suffragettes’ psychological health could deteriorate whilst in prison, it is important to recognise that it was not uncommon for imprisonment to affect women’s mental wellbeing and that many of the suffragettes did not leave prison unscathed.

Nevertheless, it was not just suffragettes’ mental wellbeing that was affected by their imprisonment but also their physical health. Rose suggests this when she recalled that after the first week of being in prison she was suffering from pleurisy, ‘the natural result’, she argued, ‘of the absurd clothing which leaves unprotected the most vital parts of the body.’⁶⁸ During her second week she detailed how she

⁶⁵ Pethick-Lawrence, Emmeline. “Why I Am In Prison”, *Votes for Women*, March. 12, 1909, 8.

⁶⁶ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*. From <http://www.marxists.org/archive/montefiore/1925/autobiography/index.htm> (Accessed on 12/09/15)

⁶⁷ Dora Montefiore, *From Victorian to Modern*. From

⁶⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

injured herself ‘internally’ from lifting the heavy weights of pails and a bed board.⁶⁹ These details of how daily prison life affected Rose’s physical health offer us a unique insight into how daily life in prison affected suffragettes’ health. Especially when it is considered that the vast majority of suffrage historiography links the suffering and ill health of suffragettes, whilst in prison, to hunger striking and/or force feeding.

For instance, Jennian Geedes and June Purvis both discuss how the force feeding of suffragettes whilst in prison was an ‘abuse that caused serious physical and psychological consequences.’ June Purvis uses specific examples to illustrate the ‘torture endured’ by many suffragettes whilst being force fed.⁷⁰ Yet this direct association between hunger striking and the force feeding of suffragettes to physical and psychological illnesses is to be expected. Much of the suffragettes’ life-writing places hunger striking and force feeding at the centre of their suffrage narratives.⁷¹ Moreover, the notion that WSPU women forged a ‘common identity’ through the experiences of the suffragette hunger strike and forcible feeding, was something that the Edwardian militant campaign promoted.⁷² Nevertheless, just because some suffragettes actively positioned imprisonment, hunger striking and force feeding (and the consequences of them) at the centre of their suffrage narratives, does not mean that their experiences are not valuable to our understanding of how women’s health was affected by imprisonment.

⁶⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose. *A Month in the Common Gaol for the Faith*.

⁷⁰ Purvis, “The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain,” 124.

⁷¹ Mayhall, ‘Creating the Suffragette Spirit’, 319.

⁷² Mayhall, ‘Creating the Suffragette Spirit’, 319.

4.3 The Campaign for Political Prisoner Status and the Health Effects of Hunger Striking and Force Feeding.

The testimonies that have been used thus far to describe a suffragette's daily life in prison are mostly accounts that detail life as a Second Division prisoner. An important feature of prison life and militancy for some suffragettes in the WSPU, was to be regarded as political prisoners and therefore to become entitled to the privileges of a First Division prisoner.⁷³ Unlike other categories of inmates, First Division prisoners were allowed to order their own food, have frequent visits, write and receive letters and wear their own clothes. Most importantly however, First Division status meant that suffragettes were no longer categorised as common criminals. It was the protest for political prisoner status by Marion Wallace Dunlop in July of 1909 that transformed the resistance of suffragettes whilst imprisoned to dangerous dimensions. After being sentenced to a month's imprisonment for tarnishing a wall in Saint Stephan's Hall, Marion initiated the tactic of hunger striking. Initially the tactic had its intended impact as Marion was released after just ninety-one hours of fasting.⁷⁴ The effect of this action is summarised by suffragette Janie Terrero in 1912. Janie stated that 'the only thing the government really feared was the hunger strike, they fear it not because of our pain or suffering but because it

⁷³ The question of how suffragettes were treated whilst in prison was a major issue for the WSPU. The Prison Act of 1898 had given magistrates complete discretion in allocating prisoners to one of the three divisions in the prison. There was little uniformity in the allocation of prisoners to certain divisions, with allocation being somewhat of a lottery up until 1909. The WSPU felt very strongly about the need to be recognised as First Division prisoners, because only then would they be classed as political prisoners and given considerable privileges that other divisions did not enjoy. Nevertheless, in December 1909 the Home Office declared that because of the 'wilful persistence of the militants' offences and the extent to which they had been taking advantage of their First Division privileges in order to continue WSPU work from prison, suffragettes should henceforth be assigned to the Second Division.' For more information see Geddes, "Culpable Complicity", 81.

⁷⁴ *Votes for Women*. "The Writing on the Wall". July 9, 1909.

damages their majorities.⁷⁵ It is clear that WSPU members saw Marion's hunger strike as an effective tactic. It created a dilemma for the prison and for the government because they didn't want a suffragette's death on their hands. By August 1909, Ethyl Smyth suggested 'it rather became the rule than the exception.'⁷⁶

Suffragette Mary Richardson described the torture of hunger striking when she revealed that she 'had never done anything more difficult than to sit down and feel my throat parched.'⁷⁷ Lucy Burns recalled in *VFW* how the worst thing about the hunger strike was the 'fear of being overpowered.'⁷⁸ She explained that her fear was not of being overpowered by the prison authorities but, by her subconscious self. She related how she was frightened of walking in her sleep (because she was hungry) and taking the food that had been left for her overnight. Dorothy Shallard argued that this food was left on purpose, 'to tempt us' and that she could not dream of anything but food, 'beautifully spread banquets, one after the other.'⁷⁹ Mary Richardson however, had a different experience of hunger striking. She remembered that after three days without food, the desire for it had 'entirely disappeared.'⁸⁰ Mary recalled how 'the black depression that is part of every hunger strike' was 'worse to bear than the weakness of one's limbs.'⁸¹ She also described how suffragettes helped each other through this stage in their hunger strike. She detailed how 'a rather brilliant woman came to see me once and with the kindest of intentions tried to fly me like a kite out of my depression.'⁸²

⁷⁵ Terrero, Janie, *The Prison Experiences of Janie Terrero*, Manuscript. From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Museum of London.

⁷⁶ Ethyl Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden*, (London: P.Davis, 1934), 203.

⁷⁷ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 16.

⁷⁸ *Votes for Women*, "Stories of the Hunger Strike." August 20, 1909.

⁷⁹ *Votes for Women*, "Stories of the Hunger Strike." August 20, 1909.

⁸⁰ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 77.

⁸¹ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 75-77.

⁸² Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 78.

Wimbledon suffragette Edith Begbie, also described how she had actively sought to support other suffragettes who were suffering from depression whilst in prison. A report in the *WBN* detailed how Edith had ‘given them a goal further than any goal that they had before, she taught them how to go forward and suffer for their faith.’⁸³ She did this by encouraging them to believe in ‘a much higher ideal than they had before of what women could be’ and of what they could achieve.⁸⁴ We can see from these descriptions that even though the lack of food affected women’s mental health whilst in prison, succumbing to pressure was not an option. Consequently, when this pressure was felt, support would come from their comrades.

This concept of not giving into pressure is one that can also be seen in more contemporary testimonies of former Irish hunger strikers who described their time in prison in the 1980s. Former IRA member and hunger striker, Pat Sheehan recalled that as he became physically weaker, he became mentally stronger and sought to defy the government even more than when he was in good physical health.⁸⁵ Sylvia Pankhurst remembered a similar experience, stating that although she was becoming weaker physically and that her digestion was suffering, her mind, like Sheehan’s, increased in resilience. ‘I used to feel I should go mad’, she wrote, ‘but I have got over that.’⁸⁶ Mary Richardson seems to have responded in a similar

⁸³ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, ‘Suffrage Garden Meeting: Wimbledon Prisoners Welcomed Home,’ July 6, 1912, 2.

⁸⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro’ News*, ‘Suffrage Garden Meeting: Wimbledon Prisoners Welcomed Home,’ July 6, 1912, 2.

⁸⁵ Pat Sheehan recalls taking part in the 1981 hunger strike by republican prisoners, See the testimonies section http://irishhungerstrike.ie/?page_id=65.

⁸⁶ Sylvia Pankhurst, *Sylvia Pankhurst to Emmeline Pankhurst*, March 18th 1913, Letter. From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Ref 50.80.(98)

way. When faced with lack of food, she too became quite stubborn and mentally resilient. Indeed, she compared this type of behaviour to the mentality of a child.⁸⁷

The British government however, only tolerated this type of resistance for a short time and just three months after Marion Dunlop initiated the tactic of hunger striking they decided that they were not willing to let suffragettes terminate their imprisonment using this method. Therefore, on the 18th September 1909, the Home Secretary directed the prison's medical officer at H.M.P. Winson Green, Birmingham, to forcibly feed prisoners who were refusing to eat.⁸⁸ By 1909 force feeding (or artificial feeding as the government called it) had been practiced by trained medical professionals for around fifty years in Britain. It was used mostly in lunatic asylums. Accordingly, the process was considered to save the lives of severely ill patients, as some were either unable to feed themselves using a spoon or cup or were not mentally capable of making the decision to stop eating. The doctors, who advised the Home Office, had not appreciated how different the circumstances would be when force feeding a mentally strong, fighting suffragette as compared to a mentally ill patient. Nor did they appear to have considered the likelihood that serious medical injuries to suffragettes would be high.⁸⁹ This dilemma was addressed by activists in *VFW*. Suffragettes claimed that the doctors who put the process in place were a 'disgrace to their profession' and that the scheme possessed 'grave danger to [the] life involved.'⁹⁰ It is these negative connotations, regarding the consequences of force feeding, that the following part

⁸⁷ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 78.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Crawford, "Police, Prisons and Prisoners: the view from the Home Office," *Women's History Review*, 14, 3 & 4, 2005, 500.

⁸⁹ Geddes, 'Culpable Complicity', 79-94.

⁹⁰ *Votes for Women*, "Forcible Feeding", October 1, 1909.

of the chapter will explore suffragette experiences of force feeding and the health problems related to it.

Emmeline Pankhurst stated in *VFW* that the method of force feeding was ‘a disgusting and cruel process’ and one that can only be described as ‘torture.’⁹¹ Elise Duval also recalled what the process involved in a letter to Hugh Franklin. She wrote how at first, they tried to feed her by forcing a tube down her nostril (the most common method) and then when they could not succeed they attempted to drive a tube down her windpipe in order to make her choke.⁹² At this point, they were able to introduce a tube down her throat and into her stomach, but to do this they had to ‘fight to open [her] mouth and get the gags in.’⁹³ Maude Kate Smith (in an oral interview with Brian Harrison in 1975) recalled how the tube would then have been filled with ‘softened food’ (often a mixture of milk and eggs) which would pass into the ‘aching, bruised and quivering body.’⁹⁴ The immediate consequences of force feeding for most suffragettes was the initial pain of the instruments being inserted into their bodies and the brute force used by wardresses and other prison officials to hold them down. Maude claimed to have suffered ‘such intense pain that it picked me up once and threw me across the cell.’⁹⁵

Mary Richardson adds a different dimension to the description of the pain experienced by suffragettes. She tells us that ‘as the nozzle turned at the top of my nose to enter my gullet it seemed as if my left eye was being wrenched out of its

⁹¹ *Votes for Women*, “Torture in English Prisons”, May 10, 1912.

⁹² Duval, Elsie, *Elsie Duval to Hugh Franklin*, April 29, 1913, Letter. From The Women’s Library, *The Duval Papers*.

⁹³ Duval, Elsie, *Elsie Duval to Hugh Franklin*, April 29, 1913.

⁹⁴ Oral Evidence on the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: the Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981, *The Lost World of the Suffragettes*, BBC 4, last broadcast 11/02/2012 8pm. From <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01bw7hv> (Accessed 8 December 2012)

⁹⁵ The Brian Harrison interviews, 1974-1981, *The Lost World of the Suffragettes*, BBC 4.

socket.⁹⁶ Additionally, Doctor Forbes Winslow, in a report for *VFW*, stated that as well as the immediate pain felt by suffragettes during force feeding, one of the main immediate risks, in addition to this, was ‘injury to the mouth.’⁹⁷ He also detailed how he had seen many instances of broken teeth due to the force used to insert the gag. Kitty Marion, in her unpublished autobiography, claimed to have lost a back tooth as a consequence of force feeding.⁹⁸ Miss Billinghamurst (known to her contemporaries as the ‘cripple suffragette’ as she suffered from total paralysis as child) also stated that she had her tooth chipped due to force feeding.⁹⁹ She explained that the doctor at the time ‘chipped a piece off one of my side teeth to make a place to insert his instrument.’¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, weekly advertisements for dental surgeries and promises of ‘the best artificial teeth’ within *VFW* could also suggest that damage to suffragettes’ mouths was a consequence of force feeding.¹⁰¹ Dr Winslow also recalled how he had been visited by a woman who had bitten off part of her tongue, where it had been twisted behind the feeding tube.¹⁰² Sylvia Pankhurst, in a letter to her mother in 1913, also described how her mouth had been damaged. She stated that ‘my gums are always bleeding.’¹⁰³ From these accounts alone, a picture is already emerging of what a cruel and damaging ordeal this process could be. Nevertheless, the immediate pain caused by force feeding and mouth injuries only seem to have been the start of the health consequences for suffragettes who were force fed.

⁹⁶ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 84.

⁹⁷ *Votes for Women*, “Forcible Feeding”, October 1, 1909. See also *Votes for Women*, “Torture in English Prisons”, May 10, 1912.

⁹⁸ Marion, Kitty, *Kitty Marion’s Unpublished Autobiography*, From The Women’s Library at LSE, 7KMA, p257

⁹⁹ Crawford, *The Suffragette Movement*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁰ Rosa May Billinghamurst Papers, *Force Feeding: Miss Billinghamurst’s Case*, From The Women’s Library at LSE, 7RBM. See also: Crawford, *The Suffragette Movement*, 53-54.

¹⁰¹ *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, October 22, 1909.

¹⁰² *Votes for Women*, “Forcible Feeding”, October 1, 1909.

¹⁰³ Copy of a letter which was received by Mrs Pankhurst from Sylvia Pankhurst, March 18th 1913, Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Ref 50.80.(98)

Kitty Marion later described how force feeding could instantly put a suffragettes' life at risk. For example, during one 'operation' she recalled how she began to suffocate.¹⁰⁴ 'I closed my eyes and felt the tube penetrate my nostril but when it reached my throat something went wrong... I was suffocating ...when the tube was withdrawn I collapsed into a chair and could only breathe and take in short, sharp, painful breathes.'¹⁰⁵ This experience affected Kitty's health so much that she recalled experiencing 'every pain imaginable' from the waist up.¹⁰⁶ When examined by doctors, hours after the ordeal, her heart rate was still weak and her temperature 'icy cold.'¹⁰⁷ As a result she was removed to the hospital ward to recover. *The British Medical Journal* reported the serious side effects of Kitty's experience of force feeding and suggested that her removal to the hospital wing was 'typical of a considerable number' of suffragettes.¹⁰⁸ Evidence provided by Mary Richardson and Constance Lytton however, suggests that referral to the hospital wing was far from typical. This becomes apparent when Mary recalled how when, the feeding was done, she was 'left alone to gasp for breath and recover [her] senses.'¹⁰⁹ Constance's experience was similar to this as she remembered that when the doctor had finished, she was left 'helpless.'¹¹⁰ She could not move and remained in an 'intolerable mess.'¹¹¹ Emmeline Pankhurst also suggested that referral to the hospital ward was the last option. This is clear when she described how Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence became very ill from one instance of force feeding but was not

¹⁰⁴ Marion, Kitty, *Kitty Marion's Unpublished Autobiography*, 219.

¹⁰⁵ Marion, Kitty, *Kitty Marion's Unpublished Autobiography*, 220.

¹⁰⁶ Marion, Kitty, *Kitty Marion's Unpublished Autobiography*, 220.

¹⁰⁷ Marion, Kitty, *Kitty Marion's Unpublished Autobiography*, 220.

¹⁰⁸ Victor Horsley et al, "Forcible Feeding, Preliminary Report of the Forcible Feeding of Suffrage Prisoners", *The British Medical Journal*, August 31, 1912.

¹⁰⁹ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 84

¹¹⁰ Constance Lytton, *Prisons and Prisoners: The Stirring Testimony of a Suffragette*, (London:Virgo Press, Limited, 1988), 270.

¹¹¹ Lytton, *Prisons and Prisoners*, 270

referred to the prison hospital or released on medical grounds until she reached a 'state of complete collapse.'¹¹² Mary suggested the same when she stated that 'after ten weeks of forcible feeding I was released, little better than a breathing corpse.'¹¹³ Like Mary Richardson and Emmeline Pankhurst, Edith Begbie argued in the *WBN* that referral to the prison hospital was the last resort. She stated that she had seen 'comrades in paralysis brought in on stretchers to be forcibly fed.'¹¹⁴

Edith Begbie and Gertrude Wilkinson (another Wimbledon suffragette who was imprisoned in 1912 for window smashing) suggested that the situation became so intolerable in prison that some women were seriously contemplating committing suicide. Edith and Gertrude recalled how their 'hearts were breaking' on the day that they had left prison because they had left four women behind, one of whom they were afraid would commit suicide if she was not released. Edith described how the woman in question 'fainted' and 'six times the officials tried to force feed her, the woman said she would commit suicide the next time they tried to feed her.'¹¹⁵ The idea that force feeding was psychologically traumatising for suffrage activists is not just alluded to by Edith and Gertrude, Constance Lytton also claimed that the experience of force feeding and the process that led up to women being fed was psychologically traumatising. For Constance, it was the wait to be force-fed that was so mentally agonising. So much so that she argued that she was 'positively glad when the time had come.'¹¹⁶ One testimony of a Irish hunger striker in the 1980s puts Lytton's experience into perspective. He too recounts the psychological torture

¹¹² Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 2785

¹¹³ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85

¹¹⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffrage Garden Meeting: Wimbledon Prisoners Welcomed Home", Wimbledon, England, July 6, 1912.

¹¹⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffrage Garden Meeting: Wimbledon Prisoners Welcomed Home", Wimbledon, England, July 6, 1912.

¹¹⁶ Lytton, *Prisons and Prisoners*, 268.

that accompanied waiting to be force fed stating that, ‘the mental agony of waiting to be force fed is getting to the stage where it now outweighs the physical discomfort of having to go through with it.’¹¹⁷ Not only is it clear from this description that the wait to be force fed was mentally crippling for hunger strikers, it illustrates that suffragettes do not remain alone in their experiences. Over 65 years after suffragettes described the same mental cruelty, Irish hunger strikers recounted similar experiences.

Additionally, it is important to note that although Brian Harrison does not compare suffragette experiences to other hunger strikers in his assessment of women’s health in the women’s movement, he does argue that that there was a form of ‘psychological torture’ involved in hearing prison doctors and wardresses approaching suffragettes’ cells with the instruments used for the horrific process.¹¹⁸ Harrison argues further, suggesting that it was this waiting, coupled with the ‘mounting cries of agony from the prisoners they fed’, that ‘exceeded the physical horror of forcible feeding.’¹¹⁹ Constance detailed in her autobiography how when she heard the sound of Elise Howy being force fed in the next cell to her, that ‘it was almost more than I could bear.’¹²⁰ Moreover, Maude Kate Smith’s testimony suggests suffragettes became increasingly aware of the impact that their defiant cries had on other inmates when she detailed how she ‘didn’t make a sound whatever they did to me’ because she was aware that other suffragettes had to be forcibly fed after her and she ‘didn’t want to frighten them.’¹²¹

¹¹⁷ “Testimonies”, on <http://irishhungerstrike.ie/>, accessed June 7, 2014.

¹¹⁸ Brian Harrison, “Women’s Health and the Women’s movement in Britain:1840-1940” in *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940*, ed. Charles Webster (London: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 47.

¹¹⁹ Harrison, “Women’s Health and the Women’s movement”, 47.

¹²⁰ Lytton, *Prisons and Prisoners*, 270

¹²¹ The Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981, *The Lost World of the Suffragettes*, BBC 4.

Although it is clear from various suffragette testimonies that hunger-striking and forcible feeding had horrific physical and psychological health consequences, it is important to be mindful that imprisonment, hunger striking and force feeding did not just affect the immediate health of suffragettes. Particularly after the introduction of the Cat and Mouse Act in 1913, as the act sanctioned the release of prisoners when they were in a grave state of health and then allowed for their re-arrest when officials saw fit for them to continue their sentence, and consequently, we see an increasing number of women whose long-term health were affected by this cyclical process.

Mary Blathwayt detailed in her diary, kept throughout the duration of the ‘Votes for Women’ campaign, how Annie Kenney had began to suffer from a ‘weak heart’ after she was arrested, released and rearrested under the Cat and Mouse Act.¹²² Worried about the state of Annie’s health, Mary Blathwayt wrote to the medical officer at Holloway prison and declared that Annie had something wrong with her heart and that they should not forcibly feed her.¹²³ Grace Roe’s testimony corroborates this as she suggests that Mary’s letter was left unnoticed by the prison authorities. In an interview with Brian Harrison in 1974, Grace went on to recall that Annie was affected for the rest of her life by her experiences in prison, particularly her final imprisonment. During this interview she argued that Annie had ‘suffered tremendously from her last hunger strike’ and felt that ‘she never really got over it... she lost her figure and was not herself in the same way again.’¹²⁴

¹²² Blathwayt, Mary, *Mary Blathwayt’s Diary*, May 6, 1913. Diary. From The Gloucester Archives.

¹²³ Blathwayt, Mary, *Mary Blathwayt’s Diary*, May 6, 1913.

¹²⁴ The Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981, Grace Roe Interview, 8SUF 013

In the same set of interviews with Harrison, Maude Kate Smith detailed how force feeding affected suffragettes' health long after the movement had long disbanded. From her own experience she remembered how a doctor had forced something so hard up her nostril during the force feeding process and that it damaged the membrane in her nose and throat. She recalled that 'he disarranged it so it is always tender,' and 'it still bleeds now and again...that's after 60 years.'¹²⁵ She stated further that 'they never told you the side effects' of forcible feeding and that 'you never get well again' after undergoing the torturous process. After a fortnight Maude suggested that she contracted 'chronic pigmentary colitis', an illness that she maintained 'you have for the rest of your life.'¹²⁶

This analysis of how daily activism and imprisonment affected suffragettes' physical and psychological health has revealed aspects of suffragette experiences, within the Wimbledon WSPU and beyond that have not been drawn upon before. These testimonies demonstrate that historians have too eagerly assumed that the health effects of activism began either inside the prison itself or after the experience of force feeding and that the main consequences of imprisonment were physical. What this particular examination of primary sources has begun to suggest however, is that the health consequences of daily activism and incarceration were much more complicated than this.

For some activists, for instance Rose Lamartine-Yates and Mary Gawthorpe, daily campaign work, exhausting schedules and physical assault during local and national addresses could be just as damaging to a suffragettes' health as

¹²⁵ The Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981, *The Lost World of the Suffragettes*, BBC 4.

¹²⁶ The Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981, *The Lost World of the Suffragettes*, BBC 4.

imprisonment. However for others, like Emmeline Pethick- Lawrence, imprisonment and/or the prospect of incarceration were too much to contemplate and therefore demonstrates the notion that suffragettes' mental wellbeing was often being affected as soon as these women were arrested and enclosed within a prison van. This indicates that imprisonment was not necessarily the initial catalyst to suffragette ill health. However, for others like Edith Begbie, Gertrude Wilkinson, Maude Kate Smith and Kitty Marion, their physical and psychological health was not affected until they were incarcerated and hunger striking and force feeding had taken place. Accordingly, these variances demonstrate that experiences of suffragette prisoners' was not a uniform one, as might be suggested in some suffrage literature.

Although it is apparent that daily activism inside and outside of prison had a wide-ranging impact upon suffragettes' health, it is essential to be mindful that women within the WSPU were not left to recover from their ordeals alone. In fact, throughout the lifetime of the WSPU, there is increasing evidence to suggest that suffragettes locally and nationally used their homes as centres for recuperation, a notion that will be explored in the final section of this chapter.

4.4 From *Dorset Hall* to *Eagle House*: the Role of Friendship and Supportive Networks in Sustaining the Health of Suffrage Activists

The importance of friendship and the supportive networks within the WSPU in the Edwardian era is something that cannot be underestimated, as these

networks were central to sustaining the organisation at a local and national level.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, although historians have discussed women developing bonds of friendship and supportive networks whilst in prison, the importance of these networks outside of prison and their role in suffragettes' recuperation is an area that has only ever been briefly touched upon.¹²⁸ Accordingly, the final section of this chapter will demonstrate the various ways in which friendships and supportive networks in Wimbledon and beyond, helped to sustain the health of WSPU activists whilst campaigning and after imprisonment.

Of particular interest are a number of houses throughout England that were open to suffragettes and were intended for their use, whatever the state of their health.¹²⁹ Particularly important for the purpose of scrutiny are: the Lamartine-Yates' *Dorset Hall* in Wimbledon, The Blathwayt's *Eagle House* in Bath, Minnie Turner's *Sea View* in Brighton, the Brackenbury's *Mouse Castle* and Nurse Pine's *Pembridge Gardens* in Kensington, London. Focusing specifically on the role played by these individuals and their establishments in caring for individuals whose health had been physically and/or mentally affected by campaigning and imprisonment, the final section of this chapter will demonstrate that without the existence of friendship and supportive networks, that suffrage activists' health may not have been sustained in the short and long term.

¹²⁷ Hannam, "Suffragettes Are Splendid for Any Work", 53.

¹²⁸ See Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain" for a discussion on the ways in which suffragette prisoners developed 'supportive networks' and a 'culture of sharing.' See also Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*. Within her book on paid organisers, she shows how a number of WSPU members and suffragettes sympathisers, opened up their homes for WSPU organisers.

¹²⁹ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 53. Annie Kenney's testimony refers to a number of country houses that were 'open to us at all times.'

For as long as *VFW* included advertisement pages, there existed advertisements where suffragettes or suffragette sympathisers openly offered up their homes to suffrage activists across the country. One advertisement read ‘rest for tired suffragettes, artists wife (Mrs Purchas) will take suffragettes as guests in healthy village, very bracing, 800 ft high, near Dunstable Downs.’¹³⁰ Another stated ‘a rest for suffragettes, lady (bright and musical residing in the Cornish Rivera, overlooking lovely bay) can receive party of three ladies requiring good food, sea view and complete rest in a picturesque Cornish village near Falmouth.’¹³¹ The aforementioned advertisements are testament that suffragettes and suffragette sympathisers opened up their homes to WSPU organisers throughout the duration of the campaign for enfranchisement. There is also a sense though that many of these women saw it as part of their duty to the campaign to perform similar acts of hospitality.

Minnie Turner of *Sea View* house in Brighton illustrated this when she wrote that apart from ‘arranging weekend meetings’, ‘entertaining the speakers’ was her main contribution to the suffrage cause.¹³² This contribution is attested to in visual form in *VFW*, with an advertisement for Minnie Turner’s hospitality which read, ‘spend your holidays in Brighton.’¹³³ Accordingly, suffragettes made their way to the South coast. Mary Clark, for instance, made *Sea View* her home while she was based as a WSPU organiser in Brighton in 1910.¹³⁴ Interestingly her host, Minnie, claimed that ‘more of our leaders [and] speakers have stayed with me than in any other

¹³⁰ *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, October 12, 1909. See also, *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, August 12, 1910.

¹³¹ *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, October 12, 1909. See also, *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, August 12, 1910.

¹³² Turner, Minnie, *Miss M.S Turner (Of Brighton) Some details of her experiences in the suffragette campaign*, From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, 20.

¹³³ *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, August 12, 1910.

¹³⁴ Turner, Minnie, *Miss M.S Turner (Of Brighton) Some details of her experiences in the suffragette campaign*, From The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, 20.

home... my guests included Mrs Pankhurst, Lady Constance Lytton, Annie Kenney, Mary Leigh and Mary Phillips.¹³⁵

Beyond being safe and convenient places to stay, the first and most important role of these establishments was that they catered to suffragettes, offering WSPU organisers a place to ‘rest’ and a bolthole where they could receive ‘every home comfort.’¹³⁶ Annie Kenney felt that the Blathways’, who owned *Eagle House*, treated her as though she ‘was one of their own family.’¹³⁷ Colonel Blathway, for instance, wrote how Annie came and went as she pleased, writing on the 14th January that ‘Annie came just in time for supper’ and then on the 16th January that she had ‘left after breakfast.’¹³⁸ Mary Blathway’s account corroborates this as she recorded on the 22nd May 1908 how Annie gave little notice of her arrival. She wrote, ‘I had a telegram from Miss Annie Kenney this morning to say she was coming by the train that arrived at Bath 3.15.’¹³⁹ Although it is not explicit whether there was an arrangement made between the Blathways’ and Annie, concerning the notice she needed to give them before travelling to *Eagle House*, it seems that she was welcomed there whenever she was in the West of England. The diaries imply that all she had to do was inform them of her arrival and her every need would be taken care of. Mary Blathway wrote how she and her father went to the station to meet Annie and that her ‘father drove her back in the motor car.’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Turner, Minnie, *Miss M.S Turner (Of Brighton) Some details of her experiences in the suffragette campaign.*

¹³⁶ *Votes for Women*, “Advertisements”, August 12, 1910.

¹³⁷ Blathway, Colonel, *Colonel Blathway’s Diary*, May 14 and 16, 1913. Diary. From The Gloucester Archives, 21/23 D2659

¹³⁸ Blathway, Colonel, *Colonel Blathway’s Diary*, May 14 and 16, 1913.

¹³⁹ Blathway, Mary, *Mary Blathway’s Diary*, May 22, 1909.

¹⁴⁰ Blathway, Mary, *Mary Blathway’s Diary*, May 22, 1909.

Although Annie is the suffragette who takes up the Blathway's hospitality most regularly (perhaps because of her close friendship with Mary Blathway and her organising commitments in the West Country, particularly Bristol) there are numerous accounts of when a number of suffragettes stayed at the Blathway residence in order to rest and recuperate from their busy schedules. For instance, on the 3rd July 1909 Mary Blathway wrote that 'there are quite a lot of suffragettes staying here now, Annie Kenney, Elsie Howey, Vera Wentworth, Mary Phillips and Millicent Browne.'¹⁴¹ In fact, so many suffragettes would stay at *Eagle House* that Colonel Blathway had a summerhouse built which they named the *Suffragette Rest*.¹⁴² It was used mostly as a place to write, read or have afternoon tea.¹⁴³

During their stay suffragettes were also encouraged to plant a tree in the grounds or in 'Annie's Arboretum' as it became known. Although the house still exists, the arboretum was destroyed in the 1960's to make way for a new housing estate, destroying all of the trees planted.¹⁴⁴ The only tree that has survived to this day is the Austrian pine that was planted by Wimbledon organising secretary, Rose Lamartine-Yates, who stayed at *Eagle House* for a short time in 1909 to recuperate from her imprisonment.¹⁴⁵

Establishments such as *Eagle House* not only provided rest for tired suffragettes. They also catered to activists more practical needs. For instance, Mary

¹⁴¹ Blathway, Mary, *Mary Blathway's Diary*, July 3, 1909.

¹⁴² Blathway, Mary, *Mary Blathway's Diary*, August 22, 1909.

¹⁴³ Blathway, Mary, *Mary Blathway's Diary*, August 22, 1909.

¹⁴⁴ See: <http://www.bathintime.co.uk/image/249455/blathwayt-col-linley-a-view-of-annies-arboretum-and-the-suffragettes-nest-in-the-grounds-of-eagle-house-batheaston-c-1910> for and image of Annie Arboretum.

¹⁴⁵ A picture of Rose Lamartine-Yates planting the Australian Pine, with Annie Kenney by her side, still exists. See Appendix Three.

Blathwayt detailed how she washed Annie's clothes.¹⁴⁶ Advertisements in *VFW* also suggest that it was not just the practical needs of suffragettes that were taken care of. Advertisements also detailed how 'special care is given to those needing rest' and that 'every attention' was thought of.¹⁴⁷ Some even mention how 'food reformers are catered for.'¹⁴⁸

Even though it is clear from the Blathwayt diaries that the facilities at *Eagle House* were offered up free of charge by the family, many of the advertisements in *VFW* suggest that other suffragette sympathisers required payment for their hospitality. Some advertisements like Minnie Turner's of *Sea View* in Brighton did not explicitly request any type of payment for board, however, there are numerous occasions when other adverts include tariff information. For example, one establishment charged '21s weekly, weekends 8s 6d.'¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, although some of these houses would have been sympathetic to suffragettes, as they were advertising in the WSPU's official newspaper, some could not offer up their services free of charge as they were businesses and needed payment in order to make a living. Some however, could have been true sympathisers but didn't possess the fiscal ability of the Blathwayts to offer their hospitality free of charge.

Nevertheless, organisers within the WSPU did rely on families like the Blathwayts to offer up their services free of charge in order for them to sustain their activities. Annie Kenney argues this when she wrote that, 'the question of

¹⁴⁶ Blathwayt, Mary, *Mary Blathwayt's Diary*, August 22, 1909.

¹⁴⁷ *Votes for Women*, "Advertisements", August 12, 1910. See also, *Votes for Women*, "Advertisements", "Advertisements", December 23, 1910.

¹⁴⁸ *Votes for Women*, "Advertisements", December 23, 1910.

¹⁴⁹ *Votes for Women*, "Advertisements", August 12, 1910.

hospitality was a serious one.¹⁵⁰ If sympathisers like the Blathwayts' and Minnie Turner along with other, 'large country houses' that were 'open to [suffragettes] at all times' required a payment, the WSPU might have paid a great deal more money out to their organisers in expenses.¹⁵¹ Not only this, but services such as food, laundry and the cost of caring for these women would have had to have been found also. Clearly the WSPU did not have unlimited funds and had to show parsimony. For instance, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence was renowned for keeping a 'tight hold on the purse strings.'¹⁵² She also regularly berated organisers whom she suspected were developing 'a tendency to be more than necessarily extravagant with board and lodging.'¹⁵³ Nevertheless, we must be mindful that residences such as *Eagle House* and *Sea View* were not the only places used by suffragettes to recuperate from their prison ordeal and busy schedules.

Dorset Hall in Wimbledon, home of Rose Lamartine-Yates, also appears to be place in which suffragettes visited and stayed to recuperate from their exhausting schedules. The most notable suffragettes to have stayed at *Dorset Hall* are Emily Wilding Davison, Mary Leigh and Mary Gawthorpe. With regard to Emily Wilding Davison and Mary Leigh, both women were regular speakers at the meetings on Wimbledon Common and would have stayed at *Dorset Hall* after their appearances.¹⁵⁴ Paul Lamartine-Yates suggests this when he states that various WSPU speakers stayed at 'our house' after they had addressed 'Rose's meetings.'¹⁵⁵

A photograph of Mary Leigh, taken in the gardens of *Dorset Hall* corroborates Paul's

¹⁵⁰ Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 120. Quoted originally in Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 49.

¹⁵¹ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 53. Annie Kenney's testimony refers to a number of country houses that were 'open to us at all times.'

¹⁵² Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 49.

¹⁵³ Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 49.

¹⁵⁴ Mary Leigh and Emily Wilding Davison are regularly reported in the *WBN* as speakers at the WSPU's meetings on the Common. See chapter 3.

¹⁵⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine-Yates' autobiography*. Manuscript. From The John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates Collection, 1875-1954, Vol 1*.

statement. In the image Mary is seen in the purple white and green uniform that she wore as leader of the Drum and Fife Band.¹⁵⁶

A further set of photographs that were taken in the gardens of *Dorset Hall*, reveal images of Rose Lamartine-Yates with Mary Gawthorpe and also shows Mary Gawthorpe holding the hand of a two year-old Paul Lamartine-Yates.¹⁵⁷ The pictures would have been taken at some point between September 1910 and May 1911 whilst Mary was staying with the Lamartine-Yates family.¹⁵⁸ Mary was offered a place to stay by Rose after she discovered that her friend was suffering with her health 'as a result of overstrain and injury received in the votes for women campaign.'¹⁵⁹ Letters written by Mary Gawthorpe to various WSPU members reveal that from October 1910, Mary was carrying out a 'bed-side effort' from the comfort of *Dorset Hall* in Wimbledon. Although Mary was 'grievously disappoint[ed]' not to be able to manage 'the vitally important Autumn campaign' that she had organised in Manchester, she managed the financial aspect of the campaign from *Dorset Hall*, leaving Georgina Brakenbury and a number of 'local workers', to conduct the political campaign in Lancashire.¹⁶⁰ Mary stayed with the Lamartine-Yates family for at least six months and received number postcards filled with get-well wishes during her stay. Mary was cared for by the family and other members of the Wimbledon

¹⁵⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, photographer, "Mary Leigh at Dorset Hall." Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*. See Appendix Four.

¹⁵⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, photographer, "Mary Gawthorpe and Paul Lamartine-Yates." Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*. See Appendix Five. See also: Photographer unknown, "Rose Lamartine-Yates and Mary Gawthorpe" Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*. See Appendix Six.

¹⁵⁸ The analysis of Mary Gawthorpe's correspondence between September 1910 and May 1911, reveal that Dorset Hall was the place in which she was residing. All of her official correspondence from headquarters and local WSPU members was redirected from the Lancashire headquarters at 154, Oxford Road, Manchester to *Dorset Hall*, Merton from October 1910.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Gawthorpe Fund Letter, Dora Marsden Collection, Box 2, Folders 1-2; Source quoted in L. Meredith, "Mary Gawthorpe's post-WSPU career, 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Gawthorpe, Mary. *Letter to WSPU Members*. Letter. From Leeds Central Library, *The Papers of Mary Gawthorpe, Series III, 1881-1990*, Box 6, Reel 15. Microfilm.

WSPU and it is clear how grateful Mary was to those who had looked after her and enquired about her health in Wimbledon as she acknowledged the Wimbledon WSPU when she wrote to *VFW* in 1910. In her letter she thanked all the Wimbledon members who had enquired about her health and regretted that due to the state of her health she could not thank them personally.¹⁶¹ The Wimbledon WSPU however, did not just help Mary whilst she stayed at *Dorset Hall*. When Mary Gawthorpe left the Lamartine Yates residence to stay at *Baylis House*, a food reform establishment in Slough that offered ‘rest and recuperation’ for tired suffragettes, Rose, along with other Wimbledon WSPU members, set up a fund to raise money to pay for Mary’s care as her illness ended up consuming her life.¹⁶² She was left ‘laid up for nearly two and a half years’ and this had left her unable to perform her role as WSPU organiser.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, it was not just prominent suffragettes that visited *Dorset Hall* to rest and recuperate. In July 1912 Wimbledon hunger strikers made their way there. Edith Begbie, who described being ‘extremely pulled down by the hunger strike’ and Gertrude Wilkinson, ‘who looked extremely weak and ill,’ can be seen in a photograph resting in a hammock under an umbrella in the summer gardens of *Dorset Hall* after they had been released from prison.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless it is important to note that Edith Begbie and Gertrude Wilkinson did not stay at *Dorset Hall* to recuperate. The picture that captures them resting in the garden was taken during a ‘welcome home’ that took place at Rose’s house. Moreover, one would also argue that although Mary Gawthorpe stayed with the Lamartine-Yates family for a

¹⁶¹ Mary Gawthorpe, *Votes for Women*, 9th September 1910.

¹⁶² *Advertisement for Baylis House*. Advertisement. From Leeds Central Library, *The Papers of Mary Gawthorpe, Series III, 1881-1990*, Box 5, Reel 13. Microfilm.

¹⁶³ Mary Gawthorpe to Dora Marsden 13th November 1910, Dora Marsden Collection (cited in Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 174).

¹⁶⁴ Photographer unknown, “Suffragettes in Hammock” Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*. See Appendix Seven

relatively long period of time, *Dorset Hall* was not a place that suffragettes (who were not close friends of the family) stayed. *Dorset Hall* then, was unlike *Eagle House* and *Sea View*. The latter two were recuperation centres that regularly welcomed suffragettes from all over the country. *Dorset Hall's* function was first and foremost a home and then was also utilised as a site for Wimbledon WSPU garden fetes, WSPU meetings and on occasion, a place of rest and refuge for close friends of Rose. Nonetheless, the hospitality shown by Rose to visiting speakers and close friends, along with the hospitality of others at *Eagle House* and *Sea View*, demonstrates how important friendship networks and networks of care were to the sustaining of activists' health in various localities across the country. Without these networks, suffragettes would have faced increasing difficulty in recuperating from their daily militancy.

4.5 The Role of Suffragette Retreats and Hospitals in the Recuperation of Suffragette Prisoners

By the end of 1909 and the beginning of 1910, it is apparent that hunger striking had become a permanent part of WSPU strategy. Furthermore, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter, hunger striking and force feeding could have significant health consequences for the women involved, both during and after being released from prison. It is therefore, essential to look at the ways that centres for suffragette recuperation adjusted in order to aid women in their journey to health rejuvenation.

By 1911 there is evidence to suggest that the role of rest homes for suffragettes changed. Rather than being a place of relaxation and respite, they

became more akin to a nursing home or sanatorium (not to be confused with the psychiatric facilities of the same name). Minnie Turner's house in Brighton for instance, adapted to the needs of the suffragettes who had been hospitalised prior to arrival at *Sea View*. This can be seen when she aided the recuperation of Minnie Baldock who came to *Sea View* after she had become seriously ill with cancer and had been operated on in 1911 by Dr Louisa Aldrich-Blake at the New Hospital for Women, Euston Road, Bloomsbury.¹⁶⁵ Elizabeth Crawford suggests that Mabel Tuke (Honorary Secretary of the WSPU) organised Minnie Baldock's stay at *Sea View* as she wrote to Minnie, whilst she was recovering in hospital, stating that 'I am sure we can fix up a country visit for you when you come out of hospital with some kind of member of the Union.'¹⁶⁶ Minnie Turner also aided Emily Wilding Davison at *Sea View* in her recovery from her experiences at Holloway in 1912. By this time, 'rest cures', 'home-made bread' and 'out-door sleeping accommodation' were offered by Minnie Turner in order to aid the recuperation process.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, in many cases, suffragettes would need much more than simply 'rest cures' to enable a strong recovery and care progressed from mainly nursing duties to invasive procedures.¹⁶⁸

The consequences of hunger striking and force feeding had become so severe that the establishment of suffragette nursing homes became essential. One establishment that became particularly adept at dealing with the changing needs of suffragettes was Catherine Pine's nursing home in London. Nurse Pine's nursing

¹⁶⁵ The New Hospital for Women, later known as the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for Women, opened in 1890 and was the first hospital that was purpose built for women patients who were to be treated by female doctors. For more information in this see; Elizabeth Crawford, *Enterprising Women, The Garretts and their Circle*, (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2002)

¹⁶⁶ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 29.

¹⁶⁷ Turner, Minnie, *Miss M.S Turner (Of Brighton) Some details of her experiences in the suffragette campaign*. See also, Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 691.

¹⁶⁸ Turner, Minnie, *Miss M.S Turner (Of Brighton) Some details of her experiences in the suffragette campaign*,

home, located in Pembridge Gardens, Notting Hill was one of the most prominent nursing homes that is known of in relation to the WSPU. Although it is not apparent when this nursing home was first established, it is clear that Nurse Pine qualified at St Bartholomew's in 1901 and continued to work as a hospital sister until 1907. David Doughan believes that it was after nurse Pine left St Bartholomew's that the nursing home was established.¹⁶⁹

The first sign of the existence of her nursing home in suffragette testimony is in relation to the illness and death of Harry Pankhurst, Emmeline Pankhurst's son. Harry was admitted to 3 Pembridge Gardens in April of 1908. In January 1910, prior to his death, he is found at Nurse Pine's new premises at 9 Pembridge Gardens and his sister, Sylvia stated how 'she found him at a nursing home at Pembridge gardens, completely paralysed from the waist down.'¹⁷⁰ He was, at the time, also under a Doctor Mills who regularly 'tested the boy's progress.'¹⁷¹ During this time and after Harry's death, the nursing home was also being used by suffragettes as a place to recuperate from their prison ordeals. This is apparent from an examination of the 1911 census for 9 Pembridge Gardens. On the census record we can see that Nurse Pine provided the names of three non-suffrage patients and a nurse but then wrote underneath 'above names at request, for the rest No Votes No Information, Catherine Emily Pine, the occupier.'¹⁷² Although Nurse Pine was a member of the WSPU by this time and clearly supported women's suffrage, it appears that her nursing home was not solely open to suffragettes seeking

¹⁶⁹ David Doughan, 'Pine, Catherine Emily (1864–1941)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63884>, accessed 18 May 2017]

¹⁷⁰ Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 26.

¹⁷¹ Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 322-323.

¹⁷² Copy of the census record held at the Kensington Central Library, Copy also included in Jill Liddington and Tara Morton, "Walking with Women's Suffrage in Kensington and Chelsea, *Herstoria*, Spring 2011, 30-33.

recuperation and care. The three names that are declared (but are not detailed) on the census suggest two different possibilities: first that there were three suffrage activists (who did not wish to boycott the census) staying with Nurse Pine, second that the nursing home was used by other individuals who were not affiliated to any suffrage organisation but came to be spoken for by Nurse Pine. Mary Richardson's testimony points to both scenarios. She stated that although 'Sister Pine' welcomed people of all kinds into her nursing home, the edifice itself was becoming synonymous with the campaign for women's suffrage.¹⁷³ As a consequence, Nurse Pine lost the support of some of her 'wealthier patients.'¹⁷⁴ This however, did not seem to deter Nurse Pine and her associate Sister Townsend, in the role that they were playing in sustaining suffrage activists' health. Mary Richardson wrote how 'after ten weeks of forcible feeding I was released, little better than a breathing corpse and was taken to 'our own nursing home in Pembridge Gardens.'¹⁷⁵ Not only did she suggest that this was a nursing home that the WSPU heavily relied upon but, she also believed that the women who ran the home were essential to sustaining her own health and that of others. She recalled how Sister Pine and Sister Townsend were 'two heroic nursing sisters.'¹⁷⁶ She considered them heroines in a 'double sense' as not only did they have the 'patience of angels and performed miracles in restoring us to health and sanity' but also, they 'took us in when others refused us.'¹⁷⁷

This testimony by Mary Richardson appeared within her autobiography, before she looked back at the introduction of the Cat and Mouse Act of 1913. This

¹⁷³ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85.

¹⁷⁴ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85.

¹⁷⁵ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85.

¹⁷⁶ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85.

¹⁷⁷ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 85.

suggests that her experience of *Pembridge Gardens* occurred prior to its introduction. This testimony, regarding the role that Nurse Pine and her nursing home played in sustaining suffragettes' physical and mental health, is one of the only testimonies to detail the role and function of nursing homes prior to the introduction of the Cat and Mouse Act. The only other source that details the importance of nursing homes to sustaining activists' health prior to the introduction of this act is a report on MPU member William Ball, produced after his release from The Colney Hatch Asylum. The report detailed how Ball was in a 'very serious condition of health... his body [was] horribly emaciated and his nose and throat [were] so swollen and inflamed by the disgusting [operations] that his voice [was] exceeding faint.'¹⁷⁸ The report went on to state that although William Ball's state of health was alarming, 'there [was] no reason why he should not ultimately completely recover', because he was 'in a nursing home where he [was] receiving every care and attention.'¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the majority of testimonies that recall nursing homes like *Pembridge Gardens* and later the Brackenbury's *Mouse Castle*, occur after the introduction of The Cat and Mouse Act. But what was the impact of the Cat and Mouse Act and how did its introduction affect the health of suffrage activists and the role played by suffragette nursing homes?

The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health) Act, 1913, more commonly known as and referred to as the Cat and Mouse Act was introduced on the 25th April 1913 by the government in order to combat the impact of the suffragette hunger strike. Although force feeding was the initial measure introduced in 1909, to try and stop the militant tactic, the government found that suffrage

¹⁷⁸ *Votes for Women*, "The Pentonville Atrocity." February 16, 1912.

This was the only report found in *Votes for Women* from 1910-1914 that refers to men using nursing homes.

¹⁷⁹ *Votes for Women*, "The Pentonville Atrocity." February 16, 1912.

activists were still avoiding completing their prison sentences because many of them were being released part-way through their sentence due to ill health. The act therefore, provided for a ‘temporary discharge of prisoners whose further detention in prison was undesirable on the account of the condition of their health.’¹⁸⁰ They were then recalled to prison on a specific date, once authorities thought they would have regained enough strength to complete the remainder of their sentence. Then the process would begin again. During their release these activists were monitored under strict surveillance by police authorities. The reason being that many activists, like Emmeline Pankhurst, openly stated on their release that they had ‘no intention of obeying this infamous law.’¹⁸¹

Although the Cat and Mouse Act stated that prisoners were to receive a temporary release, if the state of their health meant that it was ‘undesirable’ to return them in prison, it seems that prison authorities left prisoners’ health to deteriorate to such an extent that they sometimes described themselves being released in ‘death-like’ states of health.¹⁸² Mary Richardson for instance, was released in a state of unconsciousness. Her last memory being of a ‘drop pearl earrings’ worn by a woman visitor.¹⁸³ She goes on to explain, ‘the next thing I knew I was being carried out of the cell...moments after I felt the vibrations of my stretcher as it was being pushed into an ambulance. I vaguely knew I was leaving Holloway.’¹⁸⁴ Emmeline Pankhurst also recalled being in a ‘very weakened condition’ when released under the Cat and Mouse Act. She wrote how she ‘felt some alarm for [her]

¹⁸⁰ The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health) Act, 1913 From <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/case-study-the-right-to-vote/the-right-to-vote/winson-green-forcefeeding/cat-and-mouse-act/cat-and-mouse-act-2/> (Accessed on 14/08/13)

¹⁸¹ Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Nash, 1914), Kindle Edition, loc 3356.

¹⁸² Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 3609.

¹⁸³ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 172.

¹⁸⁴ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 172.

own condition' but, that she knew that nothing could be done, 'except to wait.'¹⁸⁵

When the time came to leave the prison, authorities sent Emmeline Pankhurst from prison 'gasping and half unconscious.'¹⁸⁶ Additionally, Annie Kenney recalled that if the doctor had not have released her from gaol within three days that he would have had her death on his hands.¹⁸⁷

The importance in looking at examples of activists' state of health when released from prison, is so that we can see the way in which suffragette nursing homes made it possible for these individuals to recover from what they describe as being near to death. Mary Richardson remembered the 'pink walled room' inside *Pembridge Gardens* and suggested that it was Sister Pine and Doctor Murray that enabled her to 'become [herself] again.'¹⁸⁸ Emmeline Pankhurst's testimony however, suggests the role of *Pembridge Gardens* and the intervention of the staff there were of a much greater significance. She argued that it was within this suffragette nursing home that she was able to 'return to life and health.'¹⁸⁹ She stated that the nurses assisted her using 'every medical resource', effectively saving her life.¹⁹⁰ What is important to consider here however, is that although *Pembridge Gardens* played a significant role in restoring some suffragettes back to health, other nursing homes that had emerged by 1913 played a very similar role.

¹⁸⁵ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 3491-3504.

¹⁸⁶ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 3491, 3504

¹⁸⁷ Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 231.

¹⁸⁸ Richardson, *Laugh of Defiance*, 172. See Appendix Eight for a picture of the rooms inside *Pembridge Gardens*.

¹⁸⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 3491, 3336.

¹⁹⁰ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, loc 3491, 3336

Annie Kenney recalled how ‘Mrs Brackenbury lent us her house at 2 Campden Hill Square [Kensington, London]...we called it *Mouse Castle*.’¹⁹¹ Annie wrote that ‘all the mice went there from all prisons and were nursed back to health.’¹⁹² Mary Blathwayt’s diary entry on the 15th August 1913 adds some substance to Annie’s recuperation experience in *Mouse Castle*. She wrote that Annie’s ‘state of weakness and emaciation is very serious’ and that she was in an ‘intermittent state of coma.’¹⁹³ She further stated that Dr Flora Murray, Dr Mansell Moullin and Dr Hugh Fenton all attended to her.¹⁹⁴ Sylvia Pankhurst also remembered that *Mouse Castle* was her ‘home when out of prison’, and her experience gives us a unique insight in to the precision of care given by medical staff after a suffragette had been released after hunger striking. Sylvia detailed how on her release, ‘I only had a drink of warm water.’¹⁹⁵ She further informs us that, ‘under the care of a doctor and nurse, I took but two ounces of liquid food at a time, the doses, after a day or two, being gradually increased until food was reached. In such matter I left myself in the hands of a doctor and a nurse.’¹⁹⁶ This programme of feeding by increments would have been essential for suffragettes who had been on hunger strike because, it could prove fatal if one ate normally after not eating for prolonged periods of time, a condition known as ‘Refeeding Syndrome.’¹⁹⁷ When examining evidence like this, it brings to the surface a realisation of the role played by health professionals and the nursing homes within which recovering suffrage activists resided. The activists were not simply sustained but essentially lives were saved. These nursing homes however, played a further

¹⁹¹ Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 232.

¹⁹² Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 232.

¹⁹³ Blathwayt, Mary, *Mary Blathwayt’s Diary*, August 15, 1913.

¹⁹⁴ Blathwayt, Mary, *Mary Blathwayt’s Diary*, August 15, 1913.

¹⁹⁵ Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 476.

¹⁹⁶ Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 476.

¹⁹⁷ Hisham M Mehanna, Jamil Moledina, Jane Travis, “Refeeding syndrome: what it is, and how to prevent and treat it” *British Medical Journal*, June 2008, 336, 7659. From <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2440847/#> (Accessed on 10/08/13)

role. Alongside being sites for recuperation, they were also places that protected suffragettes and aided the ‘mice’ to escape from the patrolling police and detectives.

Emmeline Pankhurst recalled how these special police, colloquially termed ‘Cats’, guarded the nursing home as if it were a besieged castle.¹⁹⁸ ‘Under my window two detectives and a constable stood on guard night and day [and] in a house at right angles to my refuge, three more detectives kept constant watch.’¹⁹⁹ The reason why these nursing homes, particularly *Mouse Castle*, were surrounded by police was due to officers seeking to re-arrest suffrage activists who were due to resume their sentence. Mary Richardson recalled the impact of this on activists stating that, ‘it meant ex-prisoners could be rearrested at sight.’²⁰⁰ As a consequence, ‘all of us were exiles, unable to live at home, see friends or attend any meetings.’²⁰¹ Nevertheless, the defiant activists planned their escapes and ‘laughed over the getaways [they] made.’²⁰²

Emmeline Pankhurst was the first to escape and Mary recalled how a look-a-like of the former tricked detectives. Mary explained how a woman disguised as Emmeline Pankhurst left *Mouse Castle* in a motor car, ‘bidding friends a sorrowful farewell.’²⁰³ Unknown to the detectives, who had followed the first car, the real Mrs Pankhurst left the same address minutes after this ‘unobserved and went to do a little shopping at Baker’s store.’²⁰⁴ Emmeline Pankhurst was not the only one to escape arrest on numerous occasions. Annie Kenney recalled how one of the

¹⁹⁸ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, Loc 3368.

¹⁹⁹ Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, Loc 3368.

²⁰⁰ Richardson, *Laugh of defiance*, 86.

²⁰¹ Richardson, *Laugh of defiance*, 86.

²⁰² Richardson, *Laugh of defiance*, 87.

²⁰³ Richardson, *Laugh of defiance*, 87.

²⁰⁴ Richardson, *Laugh of defiance*, 87.

younger members of the WSPU was ‘exceedingly clever in thinking of successful escapes’ and they called her ‘The Elusive Pimpernel.’²⁰⁵ This young lady, who had a ‘china doll like figure’, had planned her escape whilst in Holloway. Within a few days of her release a laundry van arrived at *Mouse Castle*. ‘The week’s laundry was taken’ and unbeknown to the onlookers, one basket was considerably heavier than the rest. Consequently, it was revealed that the ‘Pimpernel’ was secreted in the heavy basket and ‘with the van went the suffragette.’²⁰⁶ The presence of detectives perched on walls and guarding every exit was however, not conducive to good health and a steady recovery. Emmeline Pankhurst in particular stated how it made her recovery ‘slow and difficult.’²⁰⁷

The situation became so intolerable in London, that in order for Catherine Pine’s nursing home to maintain the atmosphere necessary to the recuperation of her other patients, Nurse Pine (the devoted attendant of Emmeline Pankhurst at this time) travelled with Mrs Pankhurst to the home of her friend Dr Ethel Smyth, *The Coign*, in Woking to enable her recuperation.²⁰⁸ Soon however, a ‘small army of police’ had besieged this house like the nursing homes before it.²⁰⁹ The situation became so bad that Mrs Pankhurst could not even go to the window or take fresh air in the garden without being watched. She described it becoming so ‘intolerable’ that she was determined to ‘end it.’²¹⁰ Consequently she confronted police detectives by attempting to attend a WSPU meeting on the 26th of May 1913, supported by Dr Flora Murray, Nurse Pine and Dr Ethel Smyth. The police however, placed Mrs Pankhurst under arrest and took her to Bow Street police station where the process

²⁰⁵ Kenney *Memories of a Militant*, 246-247.

²⁰⁶ Kenney *Memories of a Militant*, 246-247.

²⁰⁷ Pankhurst, *My own story*, loc 3402.

²⁰⁸ Ethel Smyth, *Female Pippings in Eden*, 213.

²⁰⁹ Pankhurst, *My own story*, loc 3402.

²¹⁰ Pankhurst, *My own story*, loc 3402.

of arrest, then release, followed by re-arrest would begin again. Dr Ethel Smyth wrote that ‘one’s brain can no longer follow the revolutions of the hellish wheel on which she was bound.’²¹¹ Although experiences of hunger striking, imprisonment and recuperation affected all suffrage activists’ state of health to some extent, the impact of the Cat and Mouse Act had particularly detrimental affects to those involved, simply because of the cyclical nature of the act. Yet although the Cat and Mouse Act hit the WSPU at its heart, it did not put a halt the organisation’s militant activity.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter the various ways in which the daily activism of WSPU women affected suffragettes’ health inside and outside of prison have been examined. Linked directly to this has been the consideration of the role of suffragette friendships, networks of care, and the existence of suffragette rest homes and nursing homes, to the sustainment of WSPU activists and their health.

This examination, while introducing fresh evidence of suffragette’s experiences within the Wimbledon WSPU and beyond, also challenges the notion that the health of WSPU women was only compromised during incarceration or as a consequence of hunger striking and force feeding. The first section of this chapter has demonstrated that the physical and psychological health consequences of daily life, both inside and outside of prison, were more complicated than many assume. Daily life outside of prison could be just as dangerous to a suffragette’s physical and psychological wellbeing as imprisonment.

²¹¹ Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden*, 213.

Moreover, this chapter has also revealed how important suffragette friendship networks were in providing networks of care for suffragettes who were in need and also how significant suffragette rest houses, namely The Blathwayt's *Eagle House* and Minnie Turner's *Sea View*, were to sustaining suffragettes health. These establishments adapted to the changing needs of activists, demonstrating their organisers and owners' commitments as friends and sympathisers to the suffrage cause. Finally, it has become apparent how essential nursing homes were to sustaining suffrage activists' health. Without the existence of establishments like *Pembridge Gardens* and *Mouse Castle* in London many women would not have survived their prison ordeals. Not only did these nursing homes and the people within them provide activists with a safe refuge where they could recuperate, their existence and the work of these institutions also sustained and saved lives.

Above all, what we must take from this examination is how powerful friendship and the support of a mutual cause can be to sustaining an organisation and the health of its members. Collectively, it was women locally and nationally, coupled with the nurses, doctors and suffragette sympathisers who ran the supportive suffragette institutions, that played a huge role in repeatedly rescuing suffrage activists.

Chapter 5: The Wider Suffrage Picture: Other Suffrage Organisations in Wimbledon.

Introduction.

Throughout the course of this thesis the focus has remained predominantly on the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU and the suffrage journey and political career of their organising secretary, Rose Lamartine-Yates. However, it is essential to note that Wimbledon's local suffrage campaign was sustained by many other suffrage organisations who worked to secure women's enfranchisement in the same locality as the Wimbledon WSPU. Women and men not only directed their suffrage activity through the WSPU but through other suffrage societies such as: the Wimbledon branch of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage (CSWS), the London Society for Women's Suffrage (LSWS), the Wimbledon, Merton and Tooting Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (MFWS) and the Church League for Women's Suffrage (CLWS).¹ Accordingly, this chapter will move the focus of consideration away from the daily activities of the Wimbledon WSPU and concentrate instead on the wider campaign for suffrage in Wimbledon. Through the examination of correspondence and Annual Reports, in tandem with a range of suffrage and regional publications, this chapter will explore the daily campaign work of women and men within the local branches of the CSWS, LSWS, MFWS, and CLWS and examine the significance of these local suffrage organisations within Wimbledon and beyond. The chapter will also pay particular attention to the role that inter-organisational networks played in the connection of local suffrage

¹ Please note that the CSWS changes to the LSWS from 1907.

branches, considering the extent to which cross membership occurred between local suffrage organisations and the role that friendship and family networks played in this.²

5.1: The Wimbledon Branch of the London Society for Women's Suffrage.

Wimbledon's constitutional campaign for enfranchisement is recognised to have begun in 1905, when the president of the CSWS Lady Frances Balfour, spoke at a drawing room meeting in the home of a Mrs J.P Schwann.³ However, Elizabeth Crawford and Gillian Hawtin suggest that the Wimbledon CSWS did not become an active branch until 1907, when the branch supported the honorary Bertrand Russell (who stood as an NUWSS candidate in support of women's suffrage) in the May by-election of that year.⁴ Nevertheless, this research project has uncovered archival evidence that indicates that the Wimbledon CSWS was an active branch from January 1906, moreover, that Bertrand Russell was not the first Member of Parliament that the branch supported. This is exemplified in a letter that Wimbledon CSWS member Maurice Hill, had written to secretary of the CSWS, Edith Palliser. The letter reveals that Maurice had written to Edith on the 23rd January 1906 to ask whether headquarters had 'any ladies who would come down and help us with the [1906] General Election.'⁵ Conservative candidate Charles Eric Hambro was elected as MP for Wimbledon in 1900 and stood for re-election again in the 1906 General Election. His opponent was Liberal candidate, George Lane Fox-Pitt. Maurice stated that Mr Fox-Pitt was 'very strongly for women's suffrage'

² Krista Cowman, "Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside."

³ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 185.

⁴ The CSWS was one of seventeen suffrage societies that affiliated to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1897 and in 1907 the CSWS becomes the LSWS.

⁵ Hill, Maurice. *Maurice Hill to Edith Palliser*, January 23, 1906. Letter. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

and that they ‘should be very glad of help [from headquarters].’⁶ The suffragists’ efforts to promote Mr Fox-Pitt however, did not enable him to win what had always been a ‘safe’ conservative seat in Wimbledon. Nevertheless, Mr Fox- Pitt was able to cut Mr Hambro’s majority to just 2114 in 1906.⁷

Gillian Hawtin has suggested that this cut in Hambro’s majority implied that Wimbledon voters weren’t opposed to a women’s suffrage candidate.⁸ However, the by-election of 1907 where Bertrand Russell stood as a pro-suffragist candidate for the NUWSS, suggests that this was not the case. Russell was defeated by the Conservative candidate Henry Chaplin by a huge majority of 6964 votes.⁹ Furthermore, Bertrand Russell’s own words also suggest that the Wimbledon population was strenuously opposed to a women’s suffrage candidate and women’s equality more generally. He stated that it would be difficult, in fact impossible, for people [today] to imagine ‘the bitterness of the opposition to women’s equality in Wimbledon.’¹⁰ In an attempt to illustrate the opposition that he and the NUWSS faced, he stated that ‘when, in later years, I campaigned against the First World War, the opposition I encountered was not comparable to that which the suffragists met in 1907.’¹¹ According to Russell, ‘the subject was treated by the whole population as one of mere hilarity.’¹²

Nevertheless, although it appears that the Wimbledon public were not particularly accepting of a women's suffrage candidate, the by-election gave the

⁶ Hill, Maurice. *Maurice Hill to Edith Palliser*, January 23, 1906. Letter.

⁷ Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women*, 4.

⁸ Hawtin, *Votes for Wimbledon Women*, 4.

⁹ The by-election of 1907 was called after Charles Eric Hambro resigned his seat.

¹⁰ Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, (London: Routledge, 210), 144.

¹¹ Russell, *Autobiography*, 144.

¹² Russell, *Autobiography*, 144.

NUWSS and the local branch of the LSWS some form of exposure and an opportunity to promote the local constitutional campaign. The *WBN* reported that three meetings took place before the by-election in order to promote the candidature of Bertrand Russell.¹³ The first was at Worple Hall, the second at Queen's Road and the third at Parochial Hall, Raynes Park. The meetings were said to have been 'crowded to excess', with many present 'from pure curiosity to hear the ladies who have come to fight the suffrage battle.'¹⁴ The speakers were recognised as including 'some of the most convincing and eloquent speakers, who made the deepest impression even on their opponents.'¹⁵ Amongst the speakers was NUWSS leader Millicent Fawcett. Millicent not only promoted Russell as an 'honourable gentleman' who was aiding 'helpless women' to get the vote, she also criticised his opponent Henry Chaplin. Throughout his campaign speeches, Chaplin had made reference to Russell and the NUWSS as 'a few masculine women and a feminine man.'¹⁶

Although the *WBN* recorded that the impression that the suffragists were producing was an 'altogether most favourable one', the addresses and attendance of suffragists such as: Ethyl Snowden, Miss Alison, Millicent Fawcett and Mrs Lupton were objected to by some audience members. This became apparent during the Worple Hall meeting when audience members shouted 'derisive remarks' to the suffragist speakers such as 'go home and mind the baby.'¹⁷ Pandemonium then ensued when 'howls' and 'shouts' were followed by the release of a number of 'large live rats' into the front of the hall. It is suggested that the rats were released to

¹³ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election." 11, May 1908..

¹⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election." 11, May 1908.

¹⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election.", 11, May 1908.

¹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election." 11, May 1908.

¹⁷ Russell, *Autobiography*, 144.

'terrify or perhaps injure' the women suffragists who were in attendance on the front row.¹⁸ Although it is evident that every effort was made by some male audience members to break up the meeting, the local press credits the suffragist speakers, Russell and his colleagues (Mr Octaves Holmes Beatty and Mr St George Lawrence Fox-Pitt) for their determination in preventing the meeting from being cancelled. The meeting continued and Russell was able to speak without disruption for the continuing duration. He declared that he was a passionate supporter of free trade, a Temperance reformer and an advocate for the taxation of land values, arguing that it would pay for 'great social reforms such as the Old Age Pensions.'¹⁹ Russell further stated that he stood in this constituency 'first and foremost for suffrage on the same terms as men and on which hereafter it might be granted to men.' Furthermore, 'he declared that he would do his best on all occasions to obtain fair play for women.'²⁰

Even though Russell affiliated himself to the NUWSS during his first speech at Worple Hall, he ensured that he made a clear distinction between what he referred to as 'militants' and 'non- militants', stating that he 'worked only on pacifist grounds' and 'disliked the militants.'²¹ Although this final statement was clearly made to distance himself away from the national militant campaign and their flamboyant actions, his association with the NUWSS does not appear to have aided his campaign. He was only able to secure 3299 votes. In contrast, Chaplin secured

¹⁸ Russell, *Autobiography*, 144.

¹⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election.", 11, May 1908.

²⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election.", 11, May 1908..

See also: Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People, Party, Language and Popular Politics in England 1867-1914*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1998)

²¹ Russell, *Autobiography*, 144.

10,263, an increase on the Conservative's majority by 4850 votes from the 1906 General Election.²²

After the 1907 by-election, the Wimbledon society's activities disappeared from the local newspapers and it seems that the local branch faced an upward struggle with regard to gaining sympathy and support from members of the Wimbledon population. In fact, correspondence between the Wimbledon LSWS and Philippa Strachey (the LSWS national secretary from October 1907) suggests that the Wimbledon branch's activities had come to a standstill after the 1907 by-election. One letter from Wimbledon's local secretary Margaret Beatty, reveals that the Wimbledon LSWS had only had two drawing room meetings by this point in the year. This however, is not the only thing that the correspondence shows. A letter from Mr Minchin (an LSWS supporter) implied that after the by-election, local sympathisers were also unwilling to give up their time for the Wimbledon branch. Mr Minchin wrote that 'I fear that it is absolutely impossible for myself or my wife to undertake any new work [for the Wimbledon branch].'²³ Mr Minchin did however, enclose a cheque to the LSWS with orders that it was to be given to the Wimbledon committee. These two letters from Margaret Beatty and Mr Minchin are the only two forms of correspondence in the Wimbledon LSWS collection that relate to the branch's activity in 1907. There are very few reports in the local Wimbledon press during this time, which suggests that although interest into the suffrage question was developing in Wimbledon, its progress was slow. Public work was particularly limited within the organisation, with only a handful of meetings taking place in the private drawing rooms of a small number of women.

²² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Bye Election," 11, May 1908.

²³ Mitchel, Mr. *Letter to Philippa Strachey, October 1907*. Letter. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

This also appears to have been the case during 1908, as only two public meetings are reported to have taken place during the year. The first was a lecture hall meeting in May 1908, and the second was a garden party meeting in July. The lecture hall meeting is of particular significance, as the words spoken by Lady Gibb during the meeting's address illustrate that the issue of women's suffrage wasn't, at this time seen as an entirely appropriate or achievable aim by the public. Lady Gibb suggested that those who attended the meeting with 'unbelieving hearts' would, if they opened their minds, leave with 'at least a little doubt.'²⁴ Lady Frances Balfour who was also in attendance, argued further. She stated that women wanted the vote for the purposes of 'self-preservation.'²⁵ She added, that as 'free citizens' she objected to being classed with paupers, felons, peers and outcasts.'²⁶ Furthermore, that women were equal to men and deserved 'a share in the making the laws and freedoms' of the country.²⁷ These two public meetings in 1908 are examples of how the Wimbledon LSWS was taking the public stage in an attempt to increase membership to the NUWSS. Nevertheless, the lack of any further public meetings in 1908 and the continuance of the society's discreet private meetings, remind us that during this period in time the Wimbledon society was only in its infancy

Although the Wimbledon LSWS was active from 1905 it had (from that date) been the only suffrage organisation in the Wimbledon locality. However, in October 1908 when the Wimbledon Committee of the WSPU was formed, the dynamics of this local suffrage campaign started to change. The establishment of the Wimbledon Committee and the expansion of the committee into a Wimbledon

²⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Women's Suffrage Meeting." May 16, 1908.

²⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Women's Suffrage Meeting." May 16, 1908.

²⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Women's Suffrage Meeting." May 16, 1908.

²⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Women's Suffrage Meeting." May 16, 1908.

WSPU branch in January 1909 provided the LSWS with a direct challenge to their constitutional tactics. From January 1909, the *WBN* was littered with reports of WSPU gatherings, assemblies of suffragettes on Wimbledon Common and the appearance of inspirational speakers such as Christabel Pankhurst and Evelyn Sharp. Unlike the LSWS campaign, the local WSPU campaign was very much in the public eye. It was energetic, flamboyant and unapologetically visible.

It is not unsurprising then, that by the beginning of 1909 the Wimbledon LSWS had set up two committees. One in North Wimbledon (the president of which was Mrs Purvis) and one in South Wimbledon (the president of which was Mrs Brown). The branch's organising secretaries and treasurers were Miss Boyd, Miss Therafall and Miss Minchin. From the Annual Reports of the Wimbledon LSWS it is clear that the two committees were working as one branch because when they detail the activities of the society, they repeatedly use the term 'Wimbledon branch' and do not differentiate between the north and south committees. It would appear then, that the two committees were established not because of a rift in the LSWS camp but, due to the fact that the LSWS wanted to keep their constitutional campaign at the forefront of Wimbledon's consciousness during this time. This became particularly apparent during a January meeting at the Queen's Hall in Wimbledon. The speaker during the meeting Lady Grove, was asked by an audience member why women should support the constitutional campaign over the militant one? Lady Grove argued that she never belonged to a society that employed militant tactics and therefore expressed the 'strong disapproval of their methods.'²⁸ In Lady Grove's opinion, the only way to secure enfranchisement was by the law-abiding,

²⁸Huphendon, Mary. *Report of the Queen's Hall meeting*, January 27, 1909. Letter. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

constitutional work of the LSWS. This notion was one that was echoed by many LSWS members, particularly at local meetings where suffragists openly disapproved of the militant tactics. By November 1909, the LSWS had even written to the local newspaper to ‘express their disapproval of the disturbance of public meetings and other breaches of peace.’ They also affirmed (on behalf of the National Union to which it belonged) ‘its steadfast adherence to the lawful and constitutional methods of agitation.’²⁹ The true way of advancing women’s suffrage, they argued, was by ‘energetic, law-abiding propaganda.’³⁰ Nevertheless, although this seemed to be the official opinion of the local society’s committee, not all LSWS members felt so strongly opposed to the WSPU and their tactics.

In fact, a letter from Wimbledon LSWS member Alice Pollard to Millicent Fawcett, in November 1909, implies that Wimbledon members were unhappy with the public disavowal of militant tactics. This is apparent when Alice Pollard denounced what she referred to as the society’s ‘continuing policy of constant public protest against the militants and their ways.’³¹ Alice suggested that if the NUWSS continued in this way that they would ‘drive out of the society some of the best blood in it- the people who are really keen, earnest and really have done and are doing excellent work for the society.’³² Although Alice implies that she and other members may leave the local LSWS branch if the NUWSS failed to accept militant tactics, she stated that she didn’t want the NUWSS to be a militant society and she simply asks that ‘they shall do their work in their own way and us ours’, without the constant disapproval of the organisations differing methods. It is essential to note

²⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragist’s Protest.” November 20, 1909, 8.

³⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragist’s Protest.” November 20, 1909, 8.

³¹ Pollard, Alice. *Alice Pollard to Millicent Fawcett*, November 3, 1909. Letter. From The Women’s Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

³² Pollard, Alice. *Alice Pollard to Millicent Fawcett*, November 3, 1909.

however, that Alice Pollard was not the only Wimbledon member that approached the national executive of the NUWSS with concern of her organisation's stance on militancy. Mrs Norton Taylor also wrote to the national committee in May 1909. She suggested that the NUWSS and the Wimbledon branch of the LSWS should consider learning from the Wimbledon WSPU and organise Sunday meetings on Wimbledon Common. Mrs Taylor's letter was forwarded on to Pippa Strachey, who, in her reply, declared that 'the committee do not view favourably the idea of Sunday meetings but are doing their best to arrange open-air meetings at times suitable for the general public.'³³ She stated that there was to be a succession of open-air meetings in Wimbledon and that all information would be sent to Miss Boyd, the organising secretary of the Wimbledon branch.

Local reports and correspondence however, suggest that these open-air meetings didn't happen. In fact, the first public open-air meetings of the LSWS didn't take place until well into 1911. Although the 'At Homes' continued, with suffrage supporters at one meeting declaring that 'they had been quite converted' to the suffragist cause, it was not enough for some members.³⁴ The militant organisation was provocative and it was calling. This is apparent in a letter that Alice Pollard wrote to the president of the Wimbledon LSWS, Mrs Purvis in July 1910. In the letter, Alice stated that she had been considering her position as a Wimbledon LSWS committee member for some time, and that she had come to the conclusion that she must ask the committee to 'accept [her] resignation.'³⁵ The reasons for her resignation are most enlightening. The correspondence detailed that she had been

³³ Strachey, Phillipa. *Letter to Mrs Norton Taylor*, May 11, 1909. Letter. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

³⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffragist's Drawing Room Meeting," July 10, 1909, 5.

³⁵ Pollard, Alice. *Alice Pollard to Mrs Purvis*, July 7, 1910. Letter. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

working with the WSPU 'for some years.'³⁶ Furthermore, that her loyalties had to remain with the WSPU because it was these 'brave and loyal women who have put suffrage before everything else and have been forced, by the government, into militant action.'³⁷

The movement of Alice from the LSWS to the WSPU however, doesn't seem to have been something that was idiosyncratic of the Wimbledon suffrage movement. For instance Sarah Peacock, in her local study of the Portsmouth suffragette movement points out that the NUWSS was attacked locally for its adherence to constitutional tactics. NUWSS member Blanche Surry left the Portsmouth branch for the WSPU, declaring that she was 'tired of the 'mildly constitutional tactics.'³⁸ Likewise, Krista Cowman suggests that the formation of the WSPU branch in Liverpool provided 'a more direct challenge to the tactics of the constitutional suffragists' and drew many women away from the NUWSS.³⁹ Yet, although it is clear that the establishment of the WSPU in local areas could draw women away from the NUWSS, it is important to recognise that women didn't always leave one suffrage organisation and move to another.

If Alice Pollard's letter to Mrs Purvis from July 1910 is revisited, it appears that although Alice resigned from the LSWS Committee and dedicated her activism towards the Wimbledon WSPU, she did not stop her membership to the National Union. Alice asked if she could remain a 'lay member' of the NUWSS because she

³⁶ Due to the fact that Alice stated in 1910 that she had been working with the WSPU 'for some years,' it can be presumed that Alice joined the WSPU branch when it was in its infancy in 1908 or early 1909.

³⁷ Pollard, *Alice Pollard to Mrs Purvis*, July 7, 1910.

³⁸ Peacock, "The Women's Fight in Portsmouth", 6.

³⁹ Cowman, "*Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother*", 72.

was ‘unwilling to leave so many old friends behind.’⁴⁰ She wrote further, stating that although she identified herself as a militant suffragette, she wanted to keep herself open to the LSWS so that they could ‘count on me at all times for help and support in any suffrage work I may reasonably undertake.’⁴¹ This discovery is particularly significant because Alice Pollard is the first Wimbledon activist that is known to be a member of both a constitutionalist and militant organisation during the same period of time. Unsurprisingly though, Alice Pollard was not the only Wimbledon LSWS member to have been involved with more than one local organisation.

Further research into the membership of the Wimbledon WSPU and LSWS reveals that Margaret Beatty, who we know from a letter analysed earlier in this chapter was the local secretary of the Wimbledon LSWS in 1907, also appears to have been a member of both the Wimbledon LSWS and the Wimbledon WSPU. Not only is she listed as a member in the Wimbledon LSWS 1910 and 1911 Annual Reports, but she is also listed as the local WSPU’s ‘Literature Secretary’ in their 1910 Annual Report. In addition to this, the February 1912 edition of the Church League for Women’s Suffrage monthly paper insinuates that Margaret Beatty was also the organising secretary of the newly formed Wimbledon branch of the CLWS (an organisation that we will come back to later on in this chapter).⁴²

The notion that suffrage activists within Wimbledon located their activities across a range of suffrage organisations, is again something that is seen beyond Wimbledon. Suffrage historians have challenged the traditional idea that the suffrage movement was so rigidly split between the constitutional NUWSS and the militant WSPU. Liz Stanley and Ann Morley, for instance, have shown how suffrage

⁴⁰ Pollard, *Letter to Mrs Purvis*, July 7, 1910.

⁴¹ Pollard, *Letter to Mrs Purvis*, July 7, 1910.

⁴² See sub-chapter 5.2.

friendship networks could break down organisational barriers. Likewise, Krista Cowman has shown the ‘complexity of relationships within and between suffrage organisations’ and suggested that organisational division was not simply due to differences in policy and tactical decisions, but that party politics, religion, and class also played a crucial role in this.⁴³ One of the most crucial arguments that Cowman makes however, is her assertion that women's shifting organisational allegiances appear to relate to ‘the concept of identity’ and the ways in which suffrage activists perceived themselves and their activism at different times in their life.⁴⁴ Karen Hunt’s research that explores the suffrage journey of Dora Montefiore, demonstrates perfectly how an activist could identify with different suffrage organisations and political parties throughout her lifetime. Hunt’s analysis of Dora Montefiore’s ‘expansive and evolving politics’ reminds us that women journeyed through suffrage.⁴⁵ Like Montefiore, Wimbledon women such as Alice Pollard and Margaret Beatty, may have felt that it was important for them to be involved in different areas of a broad and expansive local suffrage movement because it was crucial for them to have the freedom to identify themselves, at different times in their lives, as a militant, a constitutionalist or a Christian. Although the research presented so far suggests that that women’s membership of suffrage societies in Wimbledon could span across two or even three organisations, demonstrating the ‘multifaceted layers of suffrage identity,’ it is important to remember that all suffrage organisations secured a separate membership of their own.⁴⁶

This chapter has already demonstrated that the activism of the LSWS centred around the lawful and constitutional activism of its members. The NUWSS

⁴³ Krista Cowman, “Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside,” 41.

⁴⁴ Cowman, “Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside,” 41.

⁴⁵ Hunt, “Journeying Through Suffrage: the politics of Dora Montefiore”, 173.

⁴⁶ Cowman, “Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside,” 47-48.

supported local pro-suffrage candidates in local by-elections and General Elections, and organised discreet meetings in the homes of prominent local suffragists.

Although the membership of the Wimbledon LSWS only amounted to 55 women at the end of 1909, this number began to dramatically increase after the formation and growing prominence of the WSPU in 1910.⁴⁷ For instance, by the end of 1910 the LSWS had recruited 61 new members and retained over 116 local members.⁴⁸ This number increased to 132 in 1911.⁴⁹ This rapid increase in membership (particularly between October 1909 and 1910) suggests that although the emergence of the Wimbledon WSPU may have initially posed a direct challenge to LSWS membership, the establishment of a local militant organisation also strengthened the local LSWS and their commitment to law-abiding, discreet activism. Indeed, Krista Cowman's research on the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society suggests that the 'emergence of a direct rival gave the NUWSS on Merseyside a remarkable degree of tenacity.'⁵⁰

The LSWS 1910 Annual Report reveals that the Wimbledon branch had embraced its discreet methods of campaigning by focusing much of their work on holding various drawing room meetings throughout the year. This, teamed with 'an annual meeting of members and friends at Stamford House, a garden party meeting held at Holmhurst (the home of Mr and Mrs Arthur Holland) and a public meeting at St John's Hall, undoubtedly contributed to keeping the suffrage flag flying in Wimbledon and the dramatic increase in the society's membership.'⁵¹ Nevertheless,

⁴⁷ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1909*. Manuscript. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

⁴⁸ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1910*.

⁴⁹ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1911*. Manuscript. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

⁵⁰ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 72.

⁵¹ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1910*.

it is essential to recognise that the Wimbledon LSWS engaged in much more than the organisation of drawing room meetings and a small yet significant number of public meetings.

In fact, much of the LSWS's local work, especially at the beginning of 1910, focused on the NUWSS's call for suffragists to concentrate their work on the 1910 General Election and the voters' petition. Suffragists were asked to 'obtain signatures of electors to the great national petition.'⁵² The NUWSS hoped that the signatures gained at polling stations 'would speak for itself as a whole sample of evidence' and be used to illustrate that the public felt that the 'Parliamentary Franchise should extend to women on the same terms or as it is granted to men.'⁵³ Although the local newspaper fails to report this work by the LSWS, the *Common Cause* (the official organ of the NUWSS) and the 1910 Annual Report of the Wimbledon LSWS, illuminate the role of Wimbledon women in this petition. Although the local report in the *Common Cause* detailed how it was 'impossible to arrange for the voters' petition to be outside every polling station', workers were placed outside five polling stations in Wimbledon.⁵⁴ The London Society also sent Wimbledon members to polling stations in Merton and Mitcham. This, along with the work of members who 'spent many evenings before the election canvassing for signatures by house to house visits,' secured 1424 signatures on the voters' petition.⁵⁵ Further signatures were called for during the second General Election in 1910. However on this occasion, there was no contest in Wimbledon, and therefore no election work. Nevertheless, Wimbledon members utilised their experience and

⁵² *Common Cause*, "The Story of a Petition." February 10, 1910.

⁵³ *Common Cause*, "The Story of a Petition." February 10, 1910.

⁵⁴ *Common Cause*, "The Story of a Petition." February 10, 1910.

⁵⁵ *Common Cause*, "The Story of a Petition." February 10, 1910. See also: Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1910*.

worked in other constituencies. Their work for the women's suffrage candidate, Mr Herbert Jacob at East St Pancras was particularly recognised.⁵⁶

The importance of the work of the Wimbledon WSPU during these two elections however, lies not in the number of signatures achieved, but what the signatures represented across all localities. If we consider that Wimbledon was only one of 207 NUWSS local societies in 1910 (the majority of whom would have been involved with the Voters Petition) it is safe to say that through the individual and collective work of NUWSS societies, that several hundreds of thousands (if not millions of electors) would have had the question of women's suffrage brought to them. Not all of those approached by suffragists would have supported the campaign for women's enfranchisement but even if they didn't support the cause, the petition gave local suffrage societies the opportunity to understand some of the reasons why the public was opposed to women's suffrage. Helen Fraser suggests this when she stated that the voters' petition allowed the NUWSS to 'recognise precisely where the question [on women's suffrage] stood.'⁵⁷ For Helen, to live in 'fools paradise' and declare the country's conversion or, on the other hand, talk pessimistically of no voters caring or willing to help, were both wrong positions and equally harmful.⁵⁸ This effort by the NUWSS to understand actively the thoughts of voters so that they could adapt or amend their meetings, talks, and literature, to tackle certain issues, demonstrates the realistic and pragmatic approach that the National Union had to their campaign.

⁵⁶ Herbert Jacob, MLWS vice chairman, JLWS vice-president and director of the IWFC stood as the women's suffrage candidate for St Pancras East in 1910. He polled 22 votes. His opponents Joseph Martin (Lib) polled 3,891 and Jon Hopkins (Con) polled 3,038. For more information see Leslie Hulme, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897-1914*, (London: Routledge, 1982), 93. See also, Angela John, "Between the Cause and the Courts: The Curious Case of Cecil Chapman" in *The Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini. (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 147.

⁵⁷Helen Fraser, "The Political Situation." *Common Cause*, February 17, 1910.

⁵⁸Helen Fraser, "The Political Situation." *Common Cause*, February 17, 1910.

Undoubtedly though, the biggest issue for the Wimbledon LSWS in 1910 was the Conciliation Bill that had been drafted by an all-party Conciliation Committee. The committee was comprised of 36 MP's and was chaired by Lord Lytton. The Bill was formulated based on municipal franchise and sought to extend the franchise to women.⁵⁹ The NUWSS rallied behind the Bill, organising large meetings and demonstrations such as a large ticketed event at Queen's Hall on 28th June and the Great Trafalgar Square demonstration on the 9th July 1910. Interestingly, the Trafalgar Square demonstration seems to have been the first national event that Wimbledon members had attended. Before July 1910 there is no evidence to suggest that Wimbledon women extended their campaign work outside of their locality, apart from during the 1910 St Pancras election. Nevertheless, although Wimbledon women are reported in the Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report to have attended the national demonstration, the reports state that 'the number was not as large as it should have been.'⁶⁰ Implying perhaps, that many local women were unwilling to support their movement at a national level. This is a stark contrast to the efforts of Wimbledon WSPU women, who we have read in chapter three, filled carriages in full WSPU regalia for the 1911 'Great Procession' and transformed the train into a 'travelling shop.'⁶¹ The apparent lack of Wimbledon LSWS members at the 1910 national demonstration, however, should not be seen as evidence that the local society was unsupportive of the Bill and the national movement more generally. The Wimbledon branch organised numerous drawing room and garden meetings to promote the Conciliation Bill locally. One included a meeting where Lawrence Houseman and Cicely Corbett spoke about the

⁵⁹ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland*, 185.

⁶⁰ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1910*.

⁶¹ See chapter 3, page 20 for more details on this. *Votes for Women* "Campaign Across the Country; Wimbledon," June 30, 1911, 619.

achievements of women and the suitability of them as voters. Cicely Corbett ended the meeting by declaring that ‘this meeting of inhabitants of the Wimbledon division records its approval of the Conciliation Committee’s Suffrage Bill that is now before Parliament and urges the government to grant facilities for the Bill to be passed into law.’⁶²

This discreet, often private locally focused campaign typified the Wimbledon society’s approach to their battle for enfranchisement. Notably, when a greater variety of more public forms of campaigning were utilised by the Wimbledon LSWS, this was located just beyond Wimbledon. For instance, a large number of Wimbledon LSWS members are recognised for attending a mass suffrage demonstration held in Guildford on 29th October 1910 in support of the Conciliation Bill. Credit is also given to the Wimbledon society for the making of a suffrage banner that is described as ‘a black windmill standing against a fiery red and white sky with a green foreground.’⁶³ The banner is reported to have been designed by NUWSS committee member and chairwoman of the Artists Suffrage League, Mary Lowndes and ‘worked on’ by Wimbledon members Mrs Maude and Miss Boyd.⁶⁴

Yet, although the Wimbledon society continued to campaign in this way, with the branch present at another local public meeting and demonstration in

⁶² *Common Cause*, “Reports of Societies within the National Union, London-Wimbledon.” June 30, 1910.

⁶³ Mary Lowndes’ design for the Wimbledon banner can be seen in Mary Lowndes’ ASL collection of banner designs held at The Women’s Library at LSE. The design is hand drawn and hand painted in green, red and black watercolor with the image of the windmill on the hill and white lettering that reads ‘Wimbledon’ against a black background.

⁶⁴ Mary Lowndes’ design for the Wimbledon banner can be seen in Mary Lowndes’ ASL collection of banner designs held at The Women’s Library at LSE. The design is hand drawn and hand painted in green, red and black watercolor with the image of the windmill on the hill and white lettering that reads ‘Wimbledon’ against a black background.

Richmond in January 1911, they did showcase themselves on the national stage on two occasions during the lifespan of the local organisation. These two occasions were, The Great Suffrage Procession in 1911 and The 1913 Woman's Suffrage Pilgrimage. Unlike the Trafalgar Square Demonstration, The Great Procession and the 1913 Pilgrimage were attended by a good number of local women. The 1911 Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report suggests this as it recorded that the Great Suffrage Procession was attended by 'a great number of women', 33 to be precise.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the attendance of the Wimbledon LSWS wasn't reported in the local newspaper. In fact, the *WBN* rarely reported upon the activities of the LSWS. The WSPU are mentioned nearly every week, whereas the LSWS only appeared in the *WBN* once every month. Although the reasons for this are not clear, it could be assumed that Rose Lamartine-Yates wrote reports of the WSPU's local activities much more regularly than Miss Boyd. Furthermore, because many of the WSPU's activities took place in open spaces, rather than in private spaces, their daily campaign work was much easier to observe than the Wimbledon LSWS branch. There was one suffrage event however, in 1913, that the *WBN* did publish a substantial report on and that was the involvement of the Wimbledon LSWS in the suffragist pilgrimage.

The notion of a 'Woman's Suffrage Pilgrimage' was put forward by Katherine Harley at a NUWSS sub-committee meeting on 18th April 1913 with the intention, Elizabeth Crawford suggests, of acting as a 'counter to suffragette militancy.'⁶⁶ The NUWSS recognised that they could use this form of spectacle to differentiate themselves from the increasingly violent and provocative actions of the

⁶⁵ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1910*.

⁶⁶ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland*, 550.

See also, Elizabeth Crawford, "Suffrage Stories: Devon Suffragists," Blog Post, <https://womanandhersphere.com/tag/suffrage-pilgrimage> [Accessed April 4, 2017]

WSPU and promote the disciplined and law-abiding arm of the suffrage movement. Wimbledon member Miss Webster, wrote to the *WBN* days before the Pilgrimage and suggested that the success of the Pilgrimage ‘cannot be overestimated...we are so often told that there is no popular demand [for the vote] this is, of course, untrue and now is our chance to prove it.’⁶⁷

The Pilgrimage began on 18th June 1913, with societies traveling from all ends of the country: the Northern Eastern Federation traveled the Newcastle to London route and the West Cheshire and North Wales Federation traveled the Carlisle to London route. London was approached by six main routes: northern routes via Highgate and Tottenham, east coast routes via Blackheath, south-east via Stratham and Brixton and the west country routes via Richmond and Hammersmith.⁶⁸ The Pilgrimage culminated at 5 pm on 26th July, at a meeting in Hyde Park where speakers addressed thousands on 19 platforms. The 19 platforms represented all of the federations of the NUWSS).

Although the Wimbledon LSWS couldn’t take part in the Pilgrimage ‘up hill and down dale’, they did welcome those who walked through the town on what the *WBN* reported as ‘their triumphant entry to London.’⁶⁹ On the morning of Friday 25th July, over ‘50 Wimbledonians’ (a third of Wimbledon LSWS members) joined the Portsmouth contingent of the Pilgrimage who had been traveling since the 17th July, on the Portsmouth Road. The Wimbledon society were described as ‘very picturesque’ and the Wimbledon banner as ‘very effective’ as they marched to meet

⁶⁷ Webster, Miss. *Miss Webster to The Wimbledon Boro’ News, October 6th, 1913*. Letter. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LSWS Scrapbook, Women’s Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

⁶⁸ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland*, 550.

⁶⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Women’s Suffrage Pilgrimage.” August 2, 1913, 3.

their comrades through Ravenscroft Park.⁷⁰ On the outskirts of the crowd, Wimbledon women were seen selling newspapers, distributing leaflets and educating the unconverted.⁷¹ Miss Ellis (a Wimbledon Committee member) is recognised in *Common Cause* for organising, with Phillipa Strachey, ‘the army of sellers’ that distributed thousands of newspapers during the Pilgrimage.⁷² It was reported that ‘nothing was too much’ for the two workers. *Common Cause* also recorded that during the Friday and Saturday of the march, the newspaper had experienced ‘record sales’ with a number of sellers completely selling out of the newspaper.⁷³

Alongside the reporting of record sales of newspapers is the notion that Wimbledon women were heard to be arguing with the unconverted. This is something that is particularly interesting because prior to this chapter, this research has only shown how the public was opposed to Wimbledon's militant campaign. Yet, the newspaper article implies that there was also opposition to the arm of the movement who prided themselves on disciplined and law-abiding daily campaigning. Although the *WBN* reports that the majority of the public were ‘sympathetic’ towards the pilgrims, it recognised the unsupportive and unconverted passers-by. One man told a Wimbledon suffragist that ‘if she had only found a husband, she would not want a vote.’⁷⁴ His calculations were somewhat upset when she stated that she had married for 31 years! In addition to this, women were occasionally offered a toy hammer or a shirt that a man insisted ‘needs washing.’⁷⁵ These kind of comments however, seem quite harmless when compared to the

⁷⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Women’s Suffrage Pilgrimage.” August 2, 1913, 3.

⁷¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Women’s Suffrage Pilgrimage.” August 2, 1913, 3.

⁷² *Common Cause*, “The Pilgrimage and The Common Cause.” August 1, 1913. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LWS Scrapbook, Women’s Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

⁷³ *Common Cause*, “The Pilgrimage and The Common Cause.” August 1, 1913.

⁷⁴ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

⁷⁵ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

remarks and treatment of others such as Helena Swanwick, who recalled being pelted with rubbish at marches and whilst speaking. Furthermore, during the Voters Petition she insisted that many suffragists were treated like prostitutes at polling stations, with some men propositioning women as if they were 'touting for business.'⁷⁶ This kind of attitude and treatment of suffragists takes us back, once again, to the notion of what was deemed, by many contemporaries, as the correct conventions of acceptable behaviour of Edwardian women. As Ray Strachey has noted, although 'constitutionalists' were law-abiding activists, they were still advocating the cause as they went about their everyday lives, living among those who knew what they believed in and 'laughed as they braved all the conventions by standing up at street corners and in public parks to address passers-by.'⁷⁷

Nonetheless, although the Wimbledon suffragists didn't escape this demonstration without ridicule, there was nothing that could bring down the might of the 1913 Pilgrimage for the local Wimbledon branch. They are said to have approached such treatment on the day with 'wit and laughter' and marched on in there thousands. Elizabeth Crawford has argued that for many NUWSS women this Pilgrimage was an experience so original, spectacular and memorable, that it can be seen as being as emotionally impactful as imprisonment was for WSPU women. Nothing therefore, was going to impede the preservation of this memory and experience for the Wimbledon suffragists.⁷⁸

Alongside the LSWS's involvement in the NUWSS Pilgrimage of 1913, was what the Wimbledon society referred to as 'remarkable progress' with regard to

⁷⁶ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

⁷⁷ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

⁷⁸ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland*, 550.

their local campaign throughout 1912 and 1913.⁷⁹ Their 1912 Annual Report recorded 33 new members and 181 new 'Friends of Women's Suffrage' (this was a scheme created at the same time as the Labour/suffrage alliance and the formation of the Electoral Fighting Fund (EFF) in support of Labour Party candidates in parliamentary elections).⁸⁰ The Friends of Women's Suffrage scheme was intended to 'increase the number of working-class women supporting women's suffrage, by allowing those who couldn't afford the NUWSS subscription to enroll as 'friends.'⁸¹ It is essential to note, however, that working-class women's support did not seem to have been secured in the same way that middle-class women's membership had been achieved. Although the local organisation continued to hold one drawing room meeting a month throughout 1912 and 1913, they slowly began to team these private meetings with a small number of public lecture hall meetings and even open-air meetings.

The first of the 1912 public meetings took place in Wimbledon's Lecture Hall in March. The importance of this meeting lay in the focus that the speaker bestowed on the benefit of the vote to 'the whole community.'⁸² The speaker, Rev W. C Hawksley (Vicar of All Saints' Portsmouth) suggested that the suffrage campaign was 'intended for the good of the whole community.' Furthermore,

⁷⁹ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1912-1913*. Manuscript. From The Women's Library at LSE, 2LSW/E/04/70.

⁸⁰ Wimbledon LSWS. *Wimbledon LSWS Annual Report, 1912-1913*.

In January 1912, at the Labour Party Conference, the party stated that it was to make women's suffrage part of its programme, and pledged not to accept any reformed franchise legislation that refused to include women. Following this, and the failure of the third Conciliation Bill in March 1912 the NUWSS declared an 'electoral alliance' with the Labour Party and an Electoral Fighting Fund, was established to facilitate the election campaigns of Labour Party candidates during parliamentary by-elections. Catherine Marshall became the secretary of the EFF committee. See also, H.L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928*. (London: Longman, 1998), 66-67.

⁸¹ Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign*, 67.

⁸² Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

securing women's enfranchisement would 'benefit all women and children.'⁸³ Millicent Fawcett's speech in Wimbledon, in May 1912, also followed a similar discourse. Yet, during Millicent Fawcett's speech, her emphasis remained on working-class women. Speaking on the NUWSS' 'modification of our present election policy' to support Labour Party candidates' in upcoming by-elections, she detailed 'the advantages of a fully representative government in giving protection to all against legislative oppression' and suggested that it would result in the 'betterment of the working classes.'⁸⁴ By focusing on how the vote could benefit the whole of society and specifically the working class, the LSWS's meetings contributed to the influx of hundreds of 'friends' to the Wimbledon society throughout 1912. However, with the increase in the number of working-class friends to the local organisation also came a small decrease in the local society's middle class and Liberal membership.

During 1912, nine of the society's members, which included honorary secretary and Liberal Mrs Therelfal, resigned from the local branch. Although no correspondence exists that explains or implies their reasons for leaving the LSWS, it seems more than coincidental that the year that the NUWSS opted to form an alliance with the Labour Party, that 9 women (some of whom were committed to Wimbledon's Women's Liberal Association) left the Wimbledon LSWS in the same year. Sandra Holton's research into the NUWSS implies that the society's new policy could most definitely have been a reason for resignation. She states that 'committed Liberals [challenged] the policy' and argued that 'the potential loss of Liberal support for women's suffrage far outweighed the value of the help that the

⁸³ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 46.

⁸⁴ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 79. See also, *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Speech by Mrs Fawcett." May 4, 1912, 2.

Labour Party seemed prepared to offer.⁸⁵ Likewise Krista Cowman's research into the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society (LWSS) suggests that this drastic change in policy could leave members of local NUWSS organisations' infuriated with the decision. In fact, the LWSS were so 'outraged' with the Labour/NUWSS alliance and the establishment of the EFF, that the Liverpool branch (who 'had strong leanings towards Liberalism') wrote a resolution 'calling on the EC to prevent the EFF from operating in any constituency where the effect would be to put in a Unionist.'⁸⁶ Cowman however, picks up on a much broader, yet particularly significant issue with regard to the impact of the NUWSS policy change, and that is the notion that some suffragists felt that the EFF 'threatened the feminist unity of the NUWSS as it would potentially put non-socialist women in opposition to other women.'⁸⁷ This argument is crucial when the reasons for the resignation of a large number of Wimbledon LSWS members are considered. Because prior to this change in policy, the NUWSS had, to some extent, been able to transcend political party affiliation.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the EFF is not an issue that the Wimbledon society discusses, whether that be during private drawing room meetings or during their public gatherings or throughout their Annual Report of 1912 -1913. Instead, the focus of the Wimbledon LSWS was to continue to strengthen its local suffrage campaign amongst all classes of women. One of the ways in which the local branch sought to do this in 1912 and 1913 was to continuously refer to the fact that the LSWS was a constitutional, law-abiding organisation that opposed militancy. This chapter has previously shown that the

⁸⁵ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 79.

⁸⁶ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 75.

⁸⁷ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 75.

Wimbledon branch had faced a backlash from members who disapproved of the NUWSS' denouncement of militancy in 1909 and 1910. However, by 1912 it seemed that the LSWS were compelled to further themselves from the WSPU. With local reports detailing multiple arrests of Wimbledon suffragettes such as Bertha Bacon and Edith Begbie, and reports of public heckling and a backlash from the public during meetings on Wimbledon Common, it seems that the Wimbledon LSWS used this negative perception of the WSPU to their advantage and clearly differentiated themselves from the militant movement.

The first sign of this constitutional/militant opposition became apparent during a May 1912 local meeting where Millicent Fawcett spoke. During the meeting she insisted that the NUWSS 'held the method of peaceful propaganda, seeking to convince the country quietly that what they sought was just and sensible.'⁸⁸ She went further, declaring that the work of the militants is 'worse than thrown away' by their methods.⁸⁹ She even described them as 'flurried and hysterical', descriptions that mirrored the picture painted of suffragettes by the anti-suffragists.⁹⁰ At another meeting in 1912, there is further reference to constitutionalist activism as 'the best, wisest and sounded cause.'⁹¹ This rhetoric then moves into 1913. After reports of attacks on local golf courses and an attempted arson attack by a Wimbledon militant, the LSWS declared that 'all who break the law must be punished.'⁹² This open dissent of WSPU tactics coupled with

⁸⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Speech by Mrs Fawcett." May 4, 1912, 2.

⁸⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Speech by Mrs Fawcett." May 4, 1912, 2.

⁹⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Speech by Mrs Fawcett." May 4, 1912, 2.

⁹¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Meeting at the Lecture Hall." March 30, 1912, 6.

⁹² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "The Vote, The Betterment of Women in the World." November 8, 1913, 3.

Millicent Fawcett's attack on the WSPU, brought the two organisations' into direct opposition.

This becomes clear after a letter written by Rose Lamartine-Yates appeared in *The Standard*. The letter attacks Millicent Fawcett and the Wimbledon NUWSS for their criticism. Firstly, Rose considers Millicent Fawcett's comments and suggested that 'all methods advocated by Mrs Fawcett have failed to secure women the Parliamentary vote.'⁹³ Furthermore, that it was actually 'the militants' who were 'doing the bulk of the constitutional work.'⁹⁴ Although Rose recognises that lawless actions were embraced by some suffragettes, she argued that 'they form a very small part of the work of the great WSPU.'⁹⁵ As the local WSPU organiser, she stated that it was 'regularly brought home to me how relatively small our militant work is compared to our educational work in our own district.'⁹⁶ With this in mind, Rose suggested that 'Mrs Fawcett examine things from a wider aspect.'⁹⁷ However, instead of Rose continuing to attack Mrs Fawcett, she then moved her focus of attention onto the local NUWSS branch. She declared that 'apart from unreported private drawing room meetings, one indoor meeting and one summer open-air meeting', that the constitutionalist branch is not recognised.⁹⁸ She further compares the constitutionalist campaign to her own, and concludes that 'the constitutionalists have no local voice.'⁹⁹

⁹³Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, London, England, 28th August, 1912. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LSWS Scrapbook, Women's Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

⁹⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

⁹⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

⁹⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

⁹⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

⁹⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

⁹⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Rose, "The Militants at Work; A Wider Aspect." *The Standard*, August 28, 1912.

Apart from the exaltation of her own organisation, this piece of writing illustrates the complexity of the use of terms ‘constitutionalist’ and ‘militant’, with Rose herself asking the audience and the NUWSS to look beyond this dichotomy and at the wider aspect of the campaign for enfranchisement. Although Rose’s assessment and comments on the local work of the LSWS are particularly unsavoury, they are to some extent correct. Although one would challenge her statement that the LSWS had ‘no local voice’ in Wimbledon, it is not unfair of her to emphasise that the Wimbledon WSPU had done much of the ‘constitutional’ and educational work in the locality and held tens (if not hundreds) more meetings than the Wimbledon LSWS. The LSWS was restrictive, not just in its local campaign work, but in the opportunities that the local branch provided for its members. Nevertheless, something within the Wimbledon LSWS changed by 1913.

The Annual Report of 1912 and 1913, in tandem with the *WBN* reports in 1913 and 1914, reveal that the Wimbledon LSWS made a concerted effort to lift their organisation from the privacy of the drawing room. The first meeting that signaled the emergence of a more public local campaign for the LSWS, took place in September 1913 ‘on the corner of Quick Road’, on a Thursday evening. During the meeting Miss Cicely Corbett spoke on the necessity of the vote to women, arguing that those without the vote were ‘a neglected class.’¹⁰⁰ Miss Corbett also sought to reassure the public, particularly the men present (whose support and help was asked for) by challenging anti-suffrage predications such as that the extension to the franchise would mean that women would neglect their homes and families. She insisted that the vote would make women ‘better wives and mothers, as well as

¹⁰⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “London Society for Women’s Suffrage, Open-air Meeting.” September 27, 1912.

citizens.¹⁰¹ Public meetings such as these remained part of the Wimbledon Society's public educational campaign from 1912 to 1914. In total, from December 1912 to June 1914, the Wimbledon branch of the LSWS organised no fewer than eleven public meetings alongside monthly drawing room meetings. In addition to this, we also see the emergence of various 'social events', suffrage sales and bazaars organised by the Wimbledon LSWS. One suffrage sale that the Wimbledon branch contributed over £150 worth of 'articles' to was the Oriental Bazaar that was held at The Empress Rooms in Kensington. The Wimbledon branch held stall 'No. 12' where they advertised 'Christmas presents for men, North American Indian dolls, baskets and children's clothing.'¹⁰² It was reported in the *WBN* that some of the toys, artistic jewellery, clothing and 'beautiful fancy work' were made during October and November at 'working parties' held by Wimbledon member, Lady Anderson.¹⁰³ Prior to the sale of these items at the Oriental Bazaar in Kensington, the Wimbledon branch showcased their creations (like the Wimbledon WSPU had done prior to the Women's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink in the spring of 1909) at Stamford Lodge- the home of Lady Anderson.

In addition to the Wimbledon society's exhibition of their creative abilities, they also demonstrated their musical competencies at various 'social evenings' in 1913 and 1914. One of the most notable of these 'social evenings' was organised on 5th May 1913, 'where a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen, but mostly ladies, accepted the invitation of the Wimbledon branch of the LSWS to a social gathering'

¹⁰¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "London Society for Women's Suffrage, Open-air Meeting." September 27, 1912.

¹⁰² LSWS, *The LSWS Oriental Bazaar Programme*, Manuscript. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LSWS Scrapbook, Women's Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

¹⁰³ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Wimbledon Suffragist's Work," November 29, 1912.

at the Wimbledon Assembly Room and the adjoining Wimbledon Theatre.¹⁰⁴

Admission cards for the evening were advertised as being 'free on application' to committee members, Mrs Mallet and Miss Webster. During the 'social evening' various members of the Wimbledon society provided entertainment via a pianoforte solo by Mrs Drower and songs by Mr Dewey and Miss Hughes.¹⁰⁵ A duologue entitled 'a chat with Mrs Chicky' was also given Miss Ellis and Miss Cotton Minchin. Finally a suffrage speech was given by Mrs Corbett Ashby¹⁰⁶.

Unfortunately, there are no newspaper reports or notes in the LSWS's scrapbook that discuss the impact of these seemingly low-key public and social events, nonetheless, it is important that their local influence is not underestimated.

The exhibition of 'handmade articles' in Wimbledon prior to the LSWS Oriental Bazaar, along with the organisation of a social evening in May 1913, were particularly significant public events for this seemingly private organisation who, in Rose Lamartine-Yates' opinion, had little impact locally. The efforts of the Wimbledon society to promote their law-abiding, ladylike, constitutional campaign via private drawing room meetings, public lecture hall gatherings and themed events, demonstrates how the Wimbledon LSWS altered their local campaign after September 1912. The increased visibility of the Wimbledon society at a greater number of public educational meetings teamed with the organisation of an exhibition and social evenings (that continued into 1914) enabled suffrage sympathisers in Wimbledon to see the branch in a different light. Additionally, this change in local LSWS tactics also illustrates how the political opportunities for

¹⁰⁴ Wimbledon LSWS. *Programme for the Social Evening*. May 5, 1913. Manuscript. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LSWS Scrapbook, Women's Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

¹⁰⁵ Wimbledon LSWS. *Programme for the Social Evening*. May 5, 1913.

¹⁰⁶ Wimbledon LSWS. *Programme for the Social Evening*. May 5, 1913.

women within the local LSWS became less restricted. By offering women political work in both a public as well as private space, the society had expanded political opportunities for local women whilst still allowing Wimbledon members to maintain the image that they belonged to a respectable, law-abiding and constitutional suffrage organisation.

In fact, there was only one instance when women within the Wimbledon LSWS took part in any form of public activism that may have challenged the above notion of the ladylike, law-abiding suffragist. This occurred on Wednesday 24th June 1914 when ‘the curiosity of passers-by was aroused by an unfamiliar red, green and white flag which floated from a van on the Broadway...the flag of the London Society for Women’s Suffrage.’¹⁰⁷ The *WBN* reported the occasion as ‘somewhat unusual since this particular society chiefly confines itself to public indoor meetings, drawing room meetings and so on.’¹⁰⁸ It was because of the appearance of the flag, which was ‘so rarely seen on the streets’, that such a large crowd was drawn to the spot on the Broadway.¹⁰⁹ What is interesting with regard to this report is the reason given by Mrs Abbott (the speaker present during the LSWS’ street corner appearance) as to why this meeting was arranged. Mrs Abbot stated that at that present moment, ‘when so much was being read in the papers about the methods of militant suffragists, that it was the ‘proper moment’ for the Wimbledon LSWS ‘as a law-abiding society’ to come out on the streets and emphasise what the NUWSS meant with regard to ‘Votes for Women.’¹¹⁰ ‘Votes for women’, she argued, meant the vote for some women, on the same terms as men. Mrs Abbot argued further, stating that men had ‘no right to deny the same citizenship [that they enjoyed] to

¹⁰⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹⁰⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹⁰⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹¹⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

women.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, although Mrs Abbott spoke about the vote in this unfamiliar, street venue, a place that was ordinarily occupied by the local WSPU branch, the public did not confuse the two local organisations. Mrs Abbott did not receive the aggressive anti-suffragist backlash that Rose Lamartine-Yates had faced on Wimbledon Common in 1913 and 1914. Instead, Mrs Abbott was reported to have ‘exceedingly impressed’ the audience with her ‘convincing arguments.’¹¹² This appearance by the Wimbledon LSWS is a stark contrast to the 1909 branch who ‘did not view favourably the idea of public meetings on Wimbledon Common,’ never mind the association of their branch with public meetings on the streets of Wimbledon.¹¹³

Nevertheless, regardless of how successful this public meeting was for the LSWS, the meeting was the last of its kind. Moreover, it also signaled the last of any public meeting by the Wimbledon Society. After the outbreak of the war on the 4th August 1914, the Wimbledon LSWS called an ‘emergency committee meeting’ on the 11th August 1914. During the gathering they considered ‘how the branch can co-operate with the local authorities and societies for the amelioration of distress at the present crisis.’¹¹⁴ Taking into consideration Millicent Fawcett’s advice to National Union branches to focus on local relief work, by ‘devising and carrying through some well-thought-out plan which can be worked continually over many months to give aid and succour to women and children brought face to face with destitution in the consequences of the war,’ the Wimbledon LSWS ‘unanimously decided’ that their branch would cease suffrage activism. The local branch worked with the

¹¹¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹¹² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹¹³ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Law-Abiding Suffragists’ Out-Door Meeting.” June 27, 1914.

¹¹⁴ Wimbledon LSWS. *Notes on Emergency Committee Meeting*. August 11, 1914. Manuscript. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Wimbledon LSWS Scrapbook, Women’s Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*

Mayors' Committee, the Guild of Help and local authorities to relieve local distress. Miss Potts and Mrs Purvis also volunteered to help with 'maternity work' and establish a 'mothers and babies welfare workroom.'¹¹⁵ After this final report, that suggests the initial aims of the Wimbledon LSWS, there is a very limited amount of information in the national, local and suffrage presses that indicate the direction in which these local women went during the First World War. Although it has been suggested that many ex-NUWSS women naturally entered organisations such as the Civic Service League and the Women's War Service Bureau, there is no evidence to suggest that Wimbledon NUWSS women worked within these organisations. After the 1914 'emergency committee meeting', suffragists such as Mrs Purvis, Miss Minchin and Miss Hughes are lost to history. The only reference to the work of LSWS women within Wimbledon is in September 1914 when the *WBN* suggests that members of the Wimbledon WSPU and NUWSS (along with members of The Red Cross) 'organised and equipped a hospital' that would 'aid the wounded sent to England from the seat of the war.'¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, as the newspaper report doesn't state the names of the women involved, it is impossible to know the real extent of the Wimbledon Society's contribution to the war locally and nationally.

5.2: The Wimbledon Church League for Women's Suffrage

Previously in this chapter, it was suggested that Wimbledon women felt that it was important to be involved in different areas of a broad and expansive local suffrage movement. Although the research presented so far points to the fact that women's membership to suffrage societies in Wimbledon could span across two or

¹¹⁵ Wimbledon LSWS. *Notes on Emergency Committee Meeting*. August 11, 1914.

¹¹⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffragettes Give Useful Service." September 15, 1914, 3.

even three organisations, the project has only considered two of the local organisations that offered Wimbledon women a space in which to focus their activism.¹¹⁷ One suffrage organisation that offered local women an alternative location for suffrage activity was the Wimbledon branch of the Church League for Women's Suffrage (hereafter CLWS or the League).

The CLWS was established in December 1909 by Reverend Claude and Mrs Hinscliffe. Their object was to 'band together on a non-party basis, suffragists of every shade of opinion who are Churchpeople in order to secure for women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men.'¹¹⁸ The CLWS was non-party and welcomed both militants and constitutionalists to its membership. The only restriction was that members had to part of the Church of England or 'of Churches in full communion.'¹¹⁹ In other words, they had to be practicing Anglicans. By 1912, three years after the national organisation was founded, the society had 2,050 members and 34 branches.¹²⁰ Although the organisation was relatively small in comparison to the WSPU, WFL and the NUWSS (the latter of which had 26,000 members and 207 branches by 1911) it was an organisation that 'never sought a mass membership or a high-profile campaign.'¹²¹ Instead, its main aim was to promote women's suffrage within The Church of England, therefore adding 'an extra dimension to the suffrage campaign.'¹²²

¹¹⁷ Cowman, "Inter-organisational Suffrage Relationships on Merseyside," 47-48.

¹¹⁸ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Objects and Methods." February 1912. From The British Library. Microfilm.

¹¹⁹ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Objects and Methods." February 1912. See also, Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 107.

¹²⁰ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Objects and Methods." February 1912.. See also, Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 107.

¹²¹ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 107.

¹²² Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 107.

In the February 1912 edition of the CLWS Monthly Paper, it is reported under the 'notes and news' section of the paper that the League had gained a new branch that was located in Wimbledon. It is clear from the Wimbledon branch's local report, that was sent to the League's paper by newly elected honorary organising secretary Margaret Beatty, that the Wimbledon branch of the CLWS was formed on the 16th January 1912 following an 'Inaugural Meeting' that was held at Margaret's home, 5 Elm Grove, Wimbledon. During the meeting, Reverend Claude Hinscliff gave an address on 'the Church and politics and explained the work of the League.'¹²³ The work and methods of the League were said to have been 'educational and devotional', with the CLWS arranging 'hundreds of meetings each year' at which 'the Religious Aspect of the Women's Movement [was] persistently emphasised.'¹²⁴ It was reported by Margaret Beatty that after the address 'much enthusiasm was shown' with five women: Miss Evans, Mrs Roberts, Mrs Webster, Miss E Webster and Miss Mead, all joining the local branch that day. Two members also volunteered to sell the monthly newspaper on the streets of Wimbledon.¹²⁵

From the local League's foundation in January 1912, the Wimbledon branch focused much of its activities on educational meetings in the privacy of their members' drawing rooms. One of the 'At Homes', as it was occasionally referred to by the Wimbledon CLWS, took place in the drawing room of Miss Webster (CLWS member and the honorary organising secretary of the Wimbledon LSWS) at 9, Ridgeway Gardens on May 20th, 1912. It was reported that a 'most interesting address was given' on the issue of Christianity and the women's movement.¹²⁶

Alongside these talks, that were tailored to specific issues such as 'the work of the

¹²³ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "The Methods of League." June 1913.

¹²⁴ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "The Methods of League." June 1913.

¹²⁵ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "The Methods of League." June 1913.

¹²⁶ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." July 1912.

league', were constant pleas from Margaret Beatty for women willing to help sell the League's Monthly Paper on the streets of Wimbledon. The local circulation of the newspaper as a means of propaganda work was something that wasn't just encouraged within the Wimbledon branch but also from a national level. One article on paper selling in the February 1913 edition of the CLWS paper, argued that there was no excuse for every member not to be doing something to help the League. Furthermore, that there was 'no doubt how much valuable propaganda work can be done by selling the magazine in the streets.'¹²⁷ Although the CLWS recognised that paper selling 'was not the most delightful occupation', they insisted that the positives of this form of propaganda outweighed the negatives. It was argued that 'if undertaken with 'the right spirit', one can even take pleasure in it by knowing that one had advanced a cause 'for which women and men have suffered so much.'¹²⁸

Although the sale of newspapers was encouraged and taken up by some Wimbledon members, Margaret Beatty's update on the Wimbledon League, in the October 1912 edition of the Monthly Paper, suggests that some local women may have felt uncomfortable with newspaper selling on the streets on Wimbledon. Margaret writes that 'the secretary will be glad to hear of any lady willing to sell the monthly paper either on the streets or among her friends.'¹²⁹ The inclusion of the statement 'among her friends' implies that women within the Wimbledon CLWS may have felt that street selling was a type of public work that they saw as too radical and an unladylike task. This may have especially been the case for women members who still remained tied to the NUWSS as well as the Church League. Krista Cowman implies that this could well be the case as she suggests that

¹²⁷ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Paper Selling." February 1913.

¹²⁸ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Paper Selling." February 1913.

¹²⁹ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." October 1913.

Liverpool NUWSS members did not engage in public work that may have been seen as ‘radical or ‘unfeminine.’¹³⁰ In fact, she states that ‘impromptu meetings were unheard of [and] even the *Common Cause* was not sold on the streets.’¹³¹ Unlike many of her fellow CLWS members, Margaret Beatty had been a member of the NUWSS as well as the WSPU and therefore would have been au fait with the way in which the Wimbledon WSPU branch distributed *Votes for Women* at train stations, on the Broadway, and at local parks. Nevertheless, even though the CLWS was open to Anglicans from both militant and constitutionalist societies, the Wimbledon League’s membership consisted of mainly Wimbledon NUWSS members. In fact, of the ‘new members’ listed by the CLWS each month, only two WSPU members (Miss Dickenson and Mrs Huggett) can be linked to the Wimbledon WSPU.

However, it was not just the membership of the CLWS that was linked to the local LSWS, the activities in which the Wimbledon League chose to partake in also indicate an LSWS influence. For instance in March 1913, the Monthly Paper reveals that the Wimbledon LSWS’s ‘Annual Business Meeting’ was followed by ‘a well-attended Social Evening at St Mark’s Hall.’ The social evening was similar to those organised by the Wimbledon LSWS in May 1913 and 1914. It began with an ‘appropriate little speech’ by Dr Letitia Fairfield, and ended with an evening of songs by Effrico Piazza, Fraus Gabler, Miss Miles and Mrs Huggett.¹³² Members also brought gifts that were sold during the evening to raise funds for the Wimbledon branch. Nevertheless, unlike the Wimbledon LSWS, who focused much of their activities within their locality and in the privacy of their homes and gardens, the Wimbledon CLWS supported and attended nationally organised public meetings

¹³⁰ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside’s Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 72.

¹³¹ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside’s Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 72.

¹³² *The Church League for Women’s Suffrage Monthly Paper*, “Wimbledon.” March 1913.

and demonstrations from the beginning of the Wimbledon League's foundation. Soon after the establishment of the Wimbledon CLWS, the local branch was reported to have been well represented at a suffrage demonstration at Richmond on 26th January 1912, with the Wimbledon contingent being sent with a 'small banner bearing the name of the branch and the badge of the League in gold letters on white linen.'¹³³ Likewise, on 19th June 1912, eight Wimbledon members were sent to take part in a procession and a 'Great Religious Meeting' at Queen's Hall in London.¹³⁴

Even though the CLWS are seen at national public meetings from January 1912, the local branch didn't organise their first public meeting in Wimbledon until May 1913. The meeting was held at St Mark's Hall, Mr Cecil Walsh presided and Bishop Powell and Dr Helen Hanson were the speakers. The meeting was described reported as being a 'great success', with 13 new members joining the Wimbledon League that month. This number is three times greater than the local League had ever recorded in the history of their branch reports, demonstrating the effectiveness of public meetings, with regard to education and recruitment. The Wimbledon branch reflected upon the impact that their first public meeting had and declared that the speaker's address' had made a 'deep impression' on those in attendance.¹³⁵

Of further interest with regard to the Wimbledon League's public meeting at St Mark's Hall, is the discussion of militancy and the WSPU. It was reported that Bishop Powell had 'dwelt on the burning sense of wrong and injustice which were behind the tactics which some deplored' and Dr Hanson 'conclusively [showed] the

¹³³ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." March 1912.

¹³⁴ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." July 1912.

¹³⁵ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." May 1913..

need for Votes for Women not only in England but in other parts of the Empire.¹³⁶ Furthermore, Reverend Babington (the Vicar of St Peter's in South Wimbledon) said that if Wimbledon Common 'was made a pandemonium on Sunday afternoons that it was not the fault of the women.'¹³⁷ These statements made by CLWS members and sympathisers at the League's first public meeting are particularly important to consider because prior to this, the issue of militancy had never arisen. Now although it is surprising that militancy didn't seem to be a divisive issue within the Wimbledon CLWS (especially when we consider the way in which the Wimbledon WSPU and NUWSS came into direct opposition over militant tactics in 1912 after Mrs Fawcett attacked the Wimbledon WSPU), the fact that NUWSS and WSPU members were transcending organisational tactics in favour of a united issue and a single aim, says a great deal about the CLWS and its ability to offer an alternative location for suffrage activity. A place where militants and constitutionalists could work alongside each other. Krista Cowman suggests that one of the reasons that suffrage activists from the aforementioned organisations were able to work together was because 'the intermingling of the single issue of the vote with broader concerns about spirituality allowed the issue of militancy to become less relevant.'¹³⁸

Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all local branches, where militants and constitutionalists were present as members, were able to work together harmoniously. For instance in February 1914, the Worcester branch of the CLWS proposed a motion that the League should 'declare itself opposed to

¹³⁶ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." May 1913.

¹³⁷ *The Church League for Women's Suffrage Monthly Paper*, "Wimbledon." May 1913.

¹³⁸ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 72.

militancy.¹³⁹ Although this motion was rejected, Elizabeth Crawford argues that the CLWS lost a number of members which included the Bishop of Worcester.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, even though the League rejected the proposed motion, the CLWS make an ‘important statement’ that ‘disassociate[s] itself from the distinctive methods, violent or otherwise of all suffrage societies founded upon a political rather than a religious basis.’¹⁴¹ However, it is difficult to know what the national and local impact of the League’s announcement was because the outbreak of the First World War was declared during the same month.

Due to the fact the activities of the Wimbledon CLWS do not exist in the *WBN*, it is almost impossible to detail what happened to the Wimbledon League, or its members, after August 1914. What is clear though is that a ‘Special Meeting’ of the CLWS Executive Committee was held on the 10th August 1914 to consider the current war-time situation. It was concluded that ‘at this crisis in our present history of our nation we feel that we must abandon in great measure our Suffrage work.’¹⁴² The organisation was placed at the ‘disposal of the authorities to render any service for which it can be utilised’ and all branches were asked to summon an urgent meeting to consider what help they could give in their localities.¹⁴³ It could be assumed that the some members of the Wimbledon CLWS, like those in the WSPU and NUWSS, focused their activities on local relief work. Krista Cowman suggests that although some members, specifically in Liverpool, joined the Home Service Corps (HSC) and the Soldiers and Sailors Family Associations (SSFAs), the war

¹³⁹ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement* 111.

¹⁴⁰ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement* 111.

¹⁴¹ *The Church League for Women’s Suffrage Monthly Paper*, “Important Statement.” August 1914.

¹⁴² *The Church League for Women’s Suffrage Monthly Paper*, “Our Plans for the Crisis.” August 1914.

¹⁴³ *The Church League for Women’s Suffrage Monthly Paper*, “Our Plans for the Crisis.” August 1914.

caused ‘something of a membership crisis for the CLWS.’¹⁴⁴ Even though some women attempted to maintain and strengthen their organisation, so that ‘women may speak with force and power in the social and industrial settlements necessary after war,’ little suffrage work was undertaken during the war, emphasising how difficult it was for organisations to retain a membership and a strong organisation whilst the country was involved in this crisis.¹⁴⁵

5.3: The Wimbledon, Merton and Tooting Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage.

The final suffrage organisation to be established within Wimbledon prior to the outbreak of World War One was the Wimbledon, Merton, and Tooting branch of the Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (hereafter Wimbledon Federation or MFWS). As the national arm of the MFWS was not formed until 1912 by honorary secretary Victor Prout, it is unsurprising that the Wimbledon branch was formed relatively late in comparison to the other women’s suffrage societies that have been discussed previously. The *WBN* reveals that the Wimbledon Federation was ‘duly launched’ in November 1913 at Mr Johnson’s Rooms at 6 Broadway, Wimbledon. It was decided that the branch would hold public meetings ‘as soon as possible to bring the Federation and its objects before the Wimbledon public. There was said to have been a great deal of interest and intrigue surrounding the Men’s Federation and as consequence, no less than 47 members were secured during the branch’s launch. This number was more than double the number secured by any of the Wimbledon women’s suffrage societies during their founding meetings. Included in

¹⁴⁴ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside’s Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 156.

¹⁴⁵ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside’s Political Organisations 1890-1920*, 156.

the Federation's membership was the local committee that consisted of: Mr G T Heard as Honorary Secretary, Mr William Skeate as Honorary Treasurer, Mr F Baker, Mr Octavious Holmes Beatty, Mr H. G Steer, Mr W. H Stoakley and Mr H.O White. What is particularly interesting with regard to the committee members listed above is that it is not the first time that this research has come across some of their names in relation to Wimbledon's broader campaign for enfranchisement. Especially Octavious Beatty and William Skeate, whom this thesis previously encountered when considering the Wimbledon by-election in 1907 and Wimbledon's reaction to the 1911 Census boycott. Yet their names seem more familiar, not necessarily because of these previous encounters, but because of the multiple references to the wives of these men, Helen Skeate (Wimbledon WSPU Committee member from 1911) and Margaret Beatty (Wimbledon WSPU committee member, LSWS member and founder of the Wimbledon CLWS).

The significance of these men standing on the committee of the Wimbledon MFWS, and therefore openly campaigning for and supporting their wives and other women's commitment to secure 'Votes for Women', cannot be overlooked. Throughout this thesis, it has already been made clear that Tom Lamartine- Yates was incredibly supportive of his wife's involvement in the local suffrage movement. Not only did he demonstrate his support by buying furniture for the local WSPU shop, and representing Rose and her comrades in court when they were arrested, he was even willing to jeopardise his own law business in support of his wife and a cause that she believed in so firmly. Although there seems to have been a great deal of support from some activists' husbands within Wimbledon, this research has only been able to refer to a small number of couples when making this assessment. Even though it may seem that some men within Wimbledon were particularly open-

minded with regard to women's enfranchisement, the scenes on Wimbledon Common in 1912 and 1913 (of men attacking women speakers) reminds us that women's suffrage was a particularly divisive issue, especially within marriage and families.

For instance, Helen Archdale (a WSPU organiser and suffragette hunger striker) found out that her mother-in-law disapproved of her activism so much, that her mother-in-law hatched a plot to kidnap Helen Archdale's sons. Helen only foiled the plot after her brother-in-law wrote to her to tell her that his mother had said that she was going to keep Helen's boys and get them away from 'that pernicious mama of theirs.'¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, Nellie Hall in a 1965 interview, suggested that marriages came under great strain when husbands and wives didn't agree on women suffrage. This is evident when she recalled that 'at least two suffragettes had left their husbands and many quarreled bitterly.'¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Frances Bartlett went to prison under different names such as, Frances Satterley (her maiden name) because she was conscious of her husband's position and wanted to spare him any embarrassment.¹⁴⁸ Krista Cowman, also recalls how Margaret Haig's mother-in-law disapproved of her activism meaning that Margaret felt that she had to hide from her mother-in-law when selling suffrage newspapers.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, some husbands and families wanted to avoid much more than embarrassment. June Purvis argues that some men became so upset with their wives involvement within organisations like the WSPU because they

¹⁴⁶ Radhika Sanghani, "Suffragettes lost husbands, children, and jobs: The heavy price women paid," *The Telegraph*, October 12, 2015, accessed April 20, 2017.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/suffragettes-lost-husbands-children-and-jobs-the-heavy-price-women-paid>. See also Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of Suffragettes," 114-118

¹⁴⁷ Sanghani, "The heavy price women paid," *The Telegraph*, October 12, 2015. See also Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of Suffragettes," 114-118

¹⁴⁸ Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of Suffragettes," 114-118

¹⁴⁹ Cowman, "What was suffragette militancy?" 311.

introduced women to a campaign that wasn't just a single-issue campaign to secure 'Votes for Women.' Many suffrage organisations, she argued, wanted 'a radical transformation of women's subordinate role in society, they wanted equality for women in the family, in law, in employment and the public sphere.'¹⁵⁰

Although the Wimbledon MFWS represented (along with other men's organisations such as The Men's League for Women's Suffrage (MLWS) and the Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement (MPU) the choice of men to support, encourage and campaign for women's enfranchisement, the Wimbledon MFWS was only able to do this for nine months. Nonetheless, during those nine months, the Federation exerted their influence locally and made a notable contribution to Wimbledon's local fight for the vote. Just a few days after the Wimbledon Federation's establishment, the branch decided to bring their organisation to the streets of Wimbledon. They organised their first open-air meeting on the 10th November on the Broadway. During their first public meeting the Federation explained that they were a 'body consisting of men only' and asked those who were 'genuinely interested' in its object (which was to 'secure for women the Parliamentary Vote on the same terms or as it shall be secured for men') to communicate with Mr Heard or Mr Stoakley.¹⁵¹ As their first meeting continued, the branch insisted that they were 'fighting for the principle of breaking down the sex barrier' which kept all women from the full responsibilities of citizenship.¹⁵² What is crucial to note here, is that even though many of the men within this local organisation were husbands of suffrage activists, they had not formed the Wimbledon MLWS because women wanted them to, but because 'it was a matter of

¹⁵⁰ Purvis, "The Prison Experiences of Suffragettes," 114-115

¹⁵¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 15, 1913, 3.

¹⁵² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 15, 1913, 3.

elementary justice' and that they were 'proud' to stand upon a suffrage platform.¹⁵³ Furthermore, they felt that 'the time had come when the men must step into the arena and get the Government to understand that they will stand by women and see justice done by them.'¹⁵⁴

As the Wimbledon Federation continued their locally focused campaign towards the end of 1913 and into 1914, their public meetings began to deal with specific issues that related directly women's inequality. At one meeting the Wimbledon branch discussed the gender pay gap and dwelt upon the need for enforcing 'equal pay for equal work.'¹⁵⁵ They argued that low wages paid to women made 'strong reason' for supporting and the granting of the vote as they felt it would raise women's status.¹⁵⁶ At a further meeting on the Grove in 1914, William Skeate drew upon the fact that the local Federation (which consisted of 'men from all parties and all sects bound together') were able to transcend, class, religious and party political allegiances and spoke on the need for the vote among working women. Appealing to local working men to come and help the Wimbledon CLWS, he stated that 'the Federation was not out to get the vote for a certain number or any number of women nor to get the vote to any class of women but to remove the sex barrier.'¹⁵⁷

Local street meetings also seemed to be a place where men spoke about their 'conversion to the cause of women's suffrage.' Mr Steer informed the audience that he was converted after witnessing the 'violence and brutality shown towards

¹⁵³ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 22, 1913, 3.

¹⁵⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 22, 1913, 3.

¹⁵⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 22, 1913, 3.

¹⁵⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage." November 22, 1913, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Suffragists on the Grove." December 13, 1913, 3.

WSPU women on the Broadway and on the Common throughout 1912 and 1913.¹⁵⁸

This issue of brutality towards women appears again in a speech by Mr Skeate on the Broadway in January 1914. In a brief speech, which touched on the issue of militancy, he explained that although he didn't consider the MFWS as militant, he argued that 'until a definition had been arrived at as to what constituted militancy' how could he give a definitive answer.¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, William Skeate used the example of women on the Common, who were attacked because of their support and promotion of militancy. He argued that when women were treated with 'the utmost brutality for daring to ask a perfectly reasonable question at a public meeting' that he didn't consider them as militants. For William Skeate, it was the contrary, 'those "men" who perpetrated such outrages', by attacking innocent women, were the ones that should be considered as militant.¹⁶⁰

Alongside their street meetings, the Wimbledon Federation also organised a mass indoor suffrage meeting at the Queen's Hall in Wimbledon in February 1914. The MLWS are reported to have been 'distributing literature' and promoting the Queen's Hall meeting with 'great enthusiasm' weeks before it took place. It was because of this local promotion, that the meeting was said to have been 'well attended', with speakers from various suffrage societies taking centre stage.¹⁶¹ Dr Bather, a suffrage sympathiser, well-known local scientist and MFWS member, presided over the meeting. He explained the objects of the Federation, encouraged men to join and discussed the 'present situation' with regard to the vote. He also encouraged men to 'consider what their action should be at the approaching

¹⁵⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men's Suffragists on the Grove." December 13, 1913, 3.

¹⁵⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men Suffragists on the Broadway." January 28, 1914, 2.

¹⁶⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men Suffragists on the Broadway." January 28, 1914, 2..

¹⁶¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Men Suffragists' Meeting." January 31, 1914, 4.

General Election.’¹⁶² He noted that a vote for the Conservatives would be ‘favourable to the cause.’¹⁶³ Other speakers included, Reverend J. Millard of all Hallows Church and Dr Drysdale, general secretary of the MLWS and founder of the International Men’s League (IML). The meeting and the lineup of speakers were said to have been ‘quite a new departure in Wimbledon for the reason that its speakers were all men.’¹⁶⁴ Although men regularly spoke at local WSPU, CLWS and LSWS meetings, prior to this event, a woman speaker usually accompanied male suffrage sympathisers. Nevertheless, the fact that the speakers were all men is not the only notable issue here. Also of importance, is what the differing speakers at this meeting represented. The MFWS were well advised to have asked speakers from different suffrage organisations, classes, and religious backgrounds, to attend the public meeting. The attendance of Wimbledon’s Dr Bather, Dr Drysdale of the MLWS and Reverend Millard (who was not just a religious man but also well-known speaker in the working class East End and County Council Member in Poplar), reinstated the notion that the Wimbledon Federation had eluded to in their earlier meetings, this being that all men, from all sections of society were welcome into the MLWS. Furthermore, that the most important thing was that members of the Federation were ‘bound together with the one object of obtaining the vote for women.’¹⁶⁵

Unfortunately though, this public meeting at Queen's Hall was the last of its kind for the Wimbledon, Merton, and Tooting MLWS. Although the Federation

¹⁶² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage: Meeting at Queen’s Hall.” February 7, 1914, 3.

¹⁶³ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage: Meeting at Queen’s Hall.” February 7, 1914, 3.

¹⁶⁴ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage: Meeting at Queen’s Hall.” February 7, 1914, 3.

¹⁶⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Suffragists on the Grove.” December 13, 1913, 3.

continued its campaign on the streets of Wimbledon, with the *WBN* reporting three meetings on the Broadway between March 1914 and July 1914, their campaign was particularly short-lived. By August 1914, the Wimbledon branch chose to ‘suspend all active operations at present’ in light of the present situation into which the country had entered.¹⁶⁶

Conclusion

By moving the focus of consideration away from the daily activities of the Wimbledon WSPU and focusing instead on the wider campaign for enfranchisement in a specific locality, this chapter has shown that Wimbledon had a broad and expansive local suffrage movement with suffrage activists able to locate their political activities across a range of local suffrage organisations. This research has shown that the LSWS and the CLWS were able to secure their own separate and distinct local membership. Furthermore, that women’s allegiances could span across two or even three suffrage organisations, revealing how important it was for local women to have the freedom to identify with different organisations at different times in their lives.

The membership of women across organisations has also challenged the traditional notion that the suffrage movement was rigidly split between the constitutional NUWSS and the militant WSPU. The current research has also demonstrated that the phenomenon of suffragette militancy could become a divisive issue within suffrage organisations such as the LSWS. This chapter, like others before it, has also illustrated the complexity of the terms constitutionalist and

¹⁶⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage.” August 15, 1914.

militant and has reminded us how important it is to look beyond this dichotomy and at the wider aspect of the campaign for enfranchisement.

Furthermore, research into the Wimbledon CLWS and MFWS has shown how individuals, from different walks of life, could move beyond tactical and organisational differences and become united under a single issue. A further conclusion gleaned from this chapter is that the Wimbledon CLWS and MFWS offered women and men an alternative location for suffrage activity. Moreover, that these organisations provided local suffrage activists with a space where constitutionalists and militants could work alongside each other. Within the CLWS, women and men were united under religious terms and therefore able to transcend organisational, party political and class differences, in favour of what they saw as, their most essential demand. The enfranchisement of women.

Chapter 6: Daily Life After the WSPU, 1914-1918

Introduction

With the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 suffrage activists saw an end to WSPU militancy, an amnesty for all political prisoners and the leadership of the WSPU electing to take a patriotic stance with regard to the conflict. The Pankhurst leadership argued that to secure ‘Votes for Women’, they needed a ‘national victory.’¹ Since, ‘what would be the good of a vote without a country to vote in!’² Soon after the onset of the war, the WSPU leadership appealed to the ‘patriotism of women’, organising a series of ‘patriotic meetings’ throughout the country in order to ‘urge a response to Lord Kitchener’s appeal for army recruits.’³ *The Suffragette* also encouraged WSPU women to become members of local relief committees and employment committees, such as the Queen’s Work for Women Fund and the Mayoress’s Committee for the National Fund.⁴ Women were also urged to attend first aid and cookery classes so that they could help in hospitals. To demonstrate that this approach was successful, *The Suffragette* suggested that ‘the WSPU is well represented among the nurses on the front...whilst others are acting as dressers in hospitals [and] cooking regularly for a number of camp hospitals.’⁵ Some were even becoming ‘expert motorists with a view to driving ambulances.’⁶ Nevertheless, not all suffrage activists within the WSPU responded to the war in the same way. As Angela Smith has noted, the First World War ‘polarised women, often

¹ Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won The Vote* (London, Hutchinson, 1959), 288. Original quote found in June Purvis, “Emmeline Pankhurst and the Aftermath of Suffrage,” in *The Aftermath of Suffrage, Women, Gender and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945*, ed. Julie V Gottlieb and Richard Toye. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19.

² Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 288.

³ *The Suffragette*, “Women Rally to their Country’s Call.” April 16, 1915.

⁴ *The Suffragette*, “Women Rally to their Country’s Call.” April 16, 1915.

⁵ *The Suffragette*, “Women Rally to their Country’s Call.” April 16, 1915.

⁶ *The Suffragette*, “Women Rally to their Country’s Call.” April 16, 1915.

dividing those who had worked closely together.⁷ While some WSPU women embraced their leaders form of patriotism, others refused to support the war and were angered by the WSPU's suspension of women's suffrage.

Rose Lamartine-Yates became particularly outraged by the WSPU's position, that in October 1915, Rose formed The Suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union (SWSPU). The SWSPU were a democratic organisation with a committee that was elected and held accountable by its members.⁸ Nevertheless until now, very little is known about the SWSPU, particularly regarding their activities during World War One. It is therefore, the initial aim of this chapter to shed light onto this organisation in order to reveal the various ways in which small (newly formed) suffrage organisations contributed to the wartime battle for enfranchisement. Through the analysis of Rose's personal papers, Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography, *The Wimbledon Boro News* and *The Suffragette News Sheet*, the first part of this chapter will establish Rose's role within the SWSPU, the daily activities of the organisation and the members within it. The chapter will also assess the contribution of the SWSPU to the wider fight for women's suffrage during World War One. In doing so, it will make a significant contribution to the growing historiography which reveals the extent and complexity of women's responses to war and build on Angela Smith's argument that 'there was a great deal of suffrage activity emanating from various suffrage societies during this time.'⁹ This

⁷ Law suggests that the belief that the women's movement abandoned the campaign for suffrage during wartime 'belies the complexity of wartime events and the composition of the movement,' See; Cheryl Law, *Suffrage and Power, The Women's Movement 1918-1928*, 13.

Angela Smith, *Suffrage Discourse in Britain During the First World War* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd: Aldershot, 2005), 2.

⁸ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 664.

⁹ Smith, *Suffrage Discourse in Britain*, 2. Jo Velloccott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote, The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism During the First World War*, (London: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2007), Nicolleta Gullace, "The Blood of Our Sons", *Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War*, (London: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2002), Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in*

chapter however, will not just explore the role, activities and contribution of the SWSPU to the wartime suffrage campaign, it will also examine the impact of the Great War upon on the Wimbledon WSPU. Particularly, the ways in which this local suffragette society contributed to ‘reliving distress caused through the war.’¹⁰

6.1 From Omonville-la-Rouge to Wimbledon: The Declaration of the Great War and its Impact Upon the Local Militant Campaign for Suffrage.

Throughout 1914, the Wimbledon WSPU were still holding regular meetings on the Wimbledon Common and meetings took place for at least a week after the war broke out. This attempt by the Wimbledon WSPU to maintain their weekly routine appeared to have stopped after a meeting took place on the Wimbledon Common on the 10th August 1914 where a Miss Emma Wylie delivered, what seemed to have been, the last address of the Wimbledon WSPU on the theme of women and wartime.¹¹ The reason that it originally appeared that this was the last meeting of the Wimbledon WSPU, was due to the fact that there were no public meetings reported in the *WBN* for the rest of 1914. However, in the weeks that followed the declaration of the First World War, the Wimbledon branch of the WSPU did not ‘officially’ declare that the branch had suspended their activism. Where other local suffrage branches, such as the Wimbledon branch of the MFWS and the LSWS, wrote to the local newspaper, confirming the suspension of ‘all active operations for the present,’ the Wimbledon WSPU remained silent.¹² What then was the reason for the Wimbledon Union’s unusual lack of communication?

Interwar Britain, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women’s Movement in Britain, 1914-1959*, (London: Mcmillian, 1992).

¹⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “The Suffragists and the War.” September 5, 1914, 3.

¹¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragettes on the Common.” August 8, 1914, 2.

¹² *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage.” October 10, 1914, 8.

Krista Cowman, in her study of political organisations in Merseyside, has suggested that there is a 'lack of substantial records', nationally and locally, with regard to the WSPU's actions immediately after the declaration of war. Particularly, records that relate the suspension of militancy. This therefore makes it almost impossible, she argues, to recreate what happened directly after the outbreak of the war.¹³ All that is known for certain, is that on 12th August 1914, Emmeline Pankhurst sent 'a circular' to WSPU members informing them of the 'temporary suspension of militant activity until the conflict was over.'¹⁴ Moreover, *The Suffragette* ceased printing after the 7th August 1914 and did not reappear again until 1915. Nevertheless, although there is an absence of official WSPU records during these months, the local Wimbledon press and personal records of Rose Lamartine- Yates mean that it is possible to recreate the activities of the Wimbledon WSPU in the months that followed the war.

When the war was declared on the 4th August 1914, Rose was holidaying in Omonville-la-Rouge, a village west of Cherbourg near the Cap de la Hague where her family, the Janaus', owned a house.¹⁵ Her husband, Tom, had joined her for a fortnight's holiday, arriving just two days before the outbreak of the war. Yet when the war was announced, boat services had been cancelled and the family were unable to return home. They did, however, manage to secure safe passage back to England, on a 'resumed butter boat service' at the beginning of September.¹⁶ When

¹³ Cowman, "Mrs Brown is a Man and a Brother!" 142-143.

¹⁴ June Purvis, "The Pankhursts and the Great War," in *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-1919*, ed. Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 143.

¹⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*. Manuscript. From The John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine Yates Collection, 1875-1954, Vol 2*.

¹⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

Rose arrived home she was faced with the circular from Emmeline Pankhurst declaring ‘the temporary suspension of activities,’ and stating that the resumption of activities and the reappearance of *The Suffragette* were to ‘be announced when the time comes.’¹⁷ It seems, however, that Rose ignored this letter because as far as she was concerned the Wimbledon WSPU was still an active branch.

This is clear from the 1914 Annual Report. The report, which detailed the activities of the Wimbledon WSPU during 1914, stated that ‘the annual general meeting was held at the office 9 Victoria Crescent’ during the first week in March 1915. ‘Mrs Lamartine Yates presided and the committee for the current year was duly elected.’¹⁸ Although Rose remained as honorary organising secretary and treasurer, the appointment of other officials was left to the newly elected committee. The report also reveals that it was at this point, that the Wimbledon Union decided that ‘in the absence of *The Suffragette* and during the period of truce with the government’ that all suffrage newspapers were to be ‘stocked.’¹⁹ However, although militant activism was not taking place during this time, the Wimbledon WSPU believed that the subject of women’s enfranchisement was still a concern for many local women. Because of this, the branch chose to ‘keep in touch with the only subject which unites all suffragists’ by holding weekly meetings, readings and discussions at 3’oclock on Saturday afternoons. This was open to ‘members and their friends.’²⁰

¹⁷ Emmeline Pankhurst, *Letter to WSPU Members*, Suffrage Pamphlet. From The Women’s Library at LSE, *UDC Pamphlet Collection*, UDC 396.11B.

¹⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Wimbledon WSPU Annual Meeting.” March 13, 1915, 6.

¹⁹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Wimbledon WSPU Annual Meeting.” March 13, 1915, 6.

²⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Wimbledon WSPU Annual Meeting.” March 13, 1915, 6.

This continuance of suffragette meetings by the Wimbledon WSPU into 1915 is highly significant as they were, the only local WSPU branch that is known to have defied instruction and continue their local meetings. Although historiography surrounding the activities of local WSPU branches after the war is scarce, it is possible to compare Wimbledon's actions to that of the Liverpool branch of the WSPU. This Liverpool branch closed their shop after the leadership suspended militancy and sent the remainder of their money down to London.²¹ The majority of their members, Krista Cowman argues, 'fell away from traceable public activity with the demise of their Union' or 'drifted into other bodies' such as the Church League for Women's Suffrage and the Home Service Corps who became the 'natural successor of the Liverpool WSPU.'²² This notion that suffragettes may have moved into other organisations after the suspension of militancy, will be considered later on in this chapter.²³ Nevertheless, even though it is clear that the Wimbledon WSPU refused to accept that the war signalled the end to their suffrage work, it would only be a matter of time before they began to realise that they could not continue to meet and campaign for the vote, under the auspices of the WSPU.

6.2 From Suffragette Shop to WW1 Soup Kitchen: The Transformation of 9 Victoria Crescent.

After the outbreak the First World War, Rose Lamartine-Yates and the Wimbledon WSPU were left with the predicament of what do with the WSPU shop at 9 Victoria Crescent. Although Rose objected to the transformation of the WSPU into a patriotic, pro-war organisation and refused to help the military effort directly,

²¹ Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations*, 142-143.

²² Cowman, *Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations*, 142-143.

²³ See section 6.3 'Reunite without delay': Rose Lamartine Yates and 'The Suffragettes of the WSPU.'

she felt that she could perhaps aid the women and children 'left behind in straightened circumstances.'²⁴ It was therefore, in September 1914, that Rose 'tried to minimise the suffering brought upon women and children in the locality by reason of the war' by persuading the WSPU committee to transform the bottom floor of their WSPU shop into a soup kitchen. It was reported in the *WBN* that many homes had lost their wage earner by the call to arms and, that many more would be 'affected indirectly by the loss of employment consequent upon the dislocation of trade.'²⁵ Thus, that the local suffragettes were 'anxious to extend a helping hand.'²⁶ Rose encouraged local firms to donate necessary kitchen equipment and recruited volunteers to peel 'hundredweights of potatoes and carrots', to prepare and cook the soups and serve 'simple lunches.'²⁷ Each meal was priced at ½ d (2 farthings or a half penny) on presentation of a 'War Distress ticket.' Meals were served 'twice daily' between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. and again from 6 to 8 p.m. enabling those without time nor means to obtain a hot meal for 2 farthings. The committee tried to minimise their outgoings by appealing, once more, to thriving local businesses, encouraging them to donate 'all kinds of vegetables, fresh and dried bones, meat, rice, semolina, barley, macaroni and table remnants, provided the last are sound and sweet.'²⁸ During the Christmas period people were asked to donate any leftovers that they had after making their Christmas pudding so that the Wimbledon kitchen could create a special winter treat for the residents in need. Paul Lamartine Yates recalled the 'drama of the Christmas pudding' and how, after all of the ingredients had been put into a huge copper pan, the cooks were unsure how they would stir it! 'The women tried and failed', he recalled, and had to resort to

²⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

²⁵ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffragettes to Relive Local Distress." September 19, 1914, 1.

²⁶ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffragettes to Relive Local Distress." September 19, 1914, 1.

²⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

²⁸ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, "Suffragettes to Relive Local Distress." September 19, 1914, 1.

enlisting the aid of ‘two stalwart male supporters, one who knelt and stirred, while the other stood behind and held him from falling over.’²⁹ The Wimbledon WSPU believed that if Wimbledon residents and tradesman could respond ‘regularly’ and ‘generously’ to this scheme that the energy of the suffragettes should be able to prevent ‘any extreme distress in our midst’ during the war.³⁰ It seems that this ‘excellent scheme’ did help to prevent severe affliction in Wimbledon, so much so that suffragettes opened up a further kitchen in the neighbouring Merton.³¹ The service in both Wimbledon and Merton, was maintained throughout the war, with the Wimbledon kitchen reportedly selling over 40,000 meals in just one year.³²

The soup kitchen, however, was not just a place where those in distress could come for a hearty meal. Although it is clear that the upper floor of 9 Victoria Crescent was still being used to hold suffrage meetings, it was also a place where conscientious objectors (COs) could visit for advice and help. As Quakers, Rose and Tom sympathised with those who refused to take part in any activity that would have been seen as ‘directly or indirectly helping the war effort,’ and many benefited from their help.³³ Tom’s empathy with the COs was particularly apparent after he became the legal representative for many of them in court. Interestingly, even though Rose and Tom overtly offered help and advice to COs they did not seem to experience any animosity from the local residents of Wimbledon, which is surprising considering the profound affect that conscientious objection is usually

²⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

³⁰ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragettes to Relieve Local Distress.” September 19, 1914, 1.

³¹ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragettes to Relieve Local Distress.” September 19, 1914, 1.

³² Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

³³ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

deemed to have had on public opinion.³⁴ 'The Lamartine Yates' perhaps escaped criticism locally due to the fact that by opening of the soup kitchen they were seen as 'doing their bit' for the community. CO's in Wimbledon, however, were not as fortunate. One Wimbledon CO was verbally attacked by 'an irate old lady', who, after seeing him milking a cow, shouted, 'young man you should be at the front.' To which he replied 'pardon mam, the milk's this end!'³⁵

Rose openly criticised the notion that all young men should respond to Lord Kitchener's call to voluntarily enlist into the army. Although she was more than willing to partake in relief work, like so many Quakers during the First World War (by establishing organisations like 'The Friends War Victims Relief Committee) Rose refused to accept that men had a duty to fight on the front line. One day, when Rose was walking past the local church, St Mary's, and saw the recruiting posters on the front door, she invited the vicar, Mr Jagger, to *Dorset Hall* for tea. Paul Lamartine Yates recalled 'how he must have been surprised because we never went into his church.'³⁶ Nevertheless, he accepted Rose's invitation and was greeted with a 'a long lecture on the doctrine of Christianity.' At the end of the meeting she asked him if he had read the 'Ten Commandments and whether he recalled the statement 'thou shalt not kill' to which he replied that he did. Rose then proceeded to ask him to remove the recruiting posters stating that 'Jesus in his Ten Commandments was categorical... he allowed no exceptions, even though his own country was subjected to the tyranny of Rome... I therefore count on you, Mr

³⁴ For a broader context on wartime attitudes to and activities of the Quaker community see; Thomas Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community*, (Oxford: OUP, 2001)

³⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

³⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

Jagger, to remove the posters.³⁷ Mr Jagger challenged Rose, stating that ‘this is a just war to defend democracy against tyranny.’ The recruiting posters remained.

This challenge to recruitment of local men to the war effort was not the only thing that Rose resisted against with regard to the war. On the 22nd October 1915, Rose, with other like minded women, protested against an issue that had caused open dissent among many WSPU members: the decision, by the leadership of the WSPU, to suspend militancy and to transform the WSPU into a pro-war organisation.³⁸

6.3: ‘Reunite Without Delay’: Rose Lamartine Yates and ‘The Suffragettes of the WSPU.’

With the outbreak of the Great War, Angela Smith argues that Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst ‘dramatically changed the course of their militant campaign.’ Instead of continuing to challenge the government they ‘joined forces with their old Liberal adversaries to support the war effort.’³⁹ In doing so, they immediately alienated many of their WSPU members. Furthermore, Stanley and Morley have noted, that ‘there was a strong pacifist current running through the WSPU from its earliest days’ and that this did not disappear when the war was announced.⁴⁰ In fact, in the weeks that immediately followed the cessation of militant activism, a number of WSPU members who found themselves ‘unable to

³⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

³⁸ Cameron, “Yates, Rose Emma Lamartine (1875-1954),” ODNB.

³⁹ Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 181.

⁴⁰ Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 174.

agree with the tactics' chosen by WSPU officials.⁴¹ Rose, for instance, felt that despite the changes in the country's circumstances, sustaining suffrage propaganda work should remain a priority.⁴²

Nevertheless, it took just over a year for WSPU members to begin to unite and voice their displeasure at the Pankhurst's stance. Initially, WSPU women who had found themselves unable to agree with the tactics chosen by WSPU officials, met informally to discuss 'the general situation and the possibility of continuing the struggle for the vote and all which the vote entailed.'⁴³ At one of the meetings 'at a house in Bayswater' two organisers, Mrs Emily Duval and Miss F Haughton, were chosen to rally as many members as possible so that a meeting could be arranged to protest against 'the abandonment of suffrage work at this critical time in the history of women.'⁴⁴

On two separate occasions in October and November 1915, public meetings took place that objected against the way in which the Pankhursts had ceased campaigning for enfranchisement 'in favour of other purposes outside the scope of the Union.'⁴⁵ The first was a meeting organised by Rose and the second, by her friend and colleague, Elinor Penn Gaskell- organising secretary of the Kilburn branch of the WSPU. The focus of this chapter however, will remain on the first protest meeting that took place at Caxton Hall, Westminster on the 22nd October 1915.

⁴¹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Retrospective." December. 1915. From The Women's Library, LSE. 7EWD/G/6.

⁴² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Retrospective." December. 1915.

⁴³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Retrospective." December. 1915.

⁴⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Retrospective." December. 1915.

⁴⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Retrospective." December. 1915.

Although the details of the meeting are extremely difficult to ascertain, because no minutes of the session exist, an account of the protest was recorded in the newspaper of the Women's Freedom League (WFL), *The Vote*. The first thing that is clear from the newspaper report of the protest meeting is that criticism of the Pankhurst's stance was widespread across a diverse membership. The women who attended, Rose, Amy Haughton, Dorothy Evans, Mary Leigh and Annie Cobden Sanderson, to name a few, were all women united in their disapproval of the WSPU leadership's decision to no longer use the Union's name, and its platform, to campaign for women's suffrage.⁴⁶ This is apparent from a resolution passed during the first assembly. The resolution stated that 'this meeting of members and recent members of the WSPU reaffirms the unshaken faith in the women's movement and its belief that only by the attainment of the aims for which the women of the WSPU have striven and suffered can the uplifting of the human race be achieved.' Moreover, these aims could only be attained 'by continuing to realise the unity of women across the world based on their political helplessness and common sufferings, and by faithfully safeguarding the interests of women at the present critical time in their economic and social history.'⁴⁷ The resolution suggests that despite the monumental change in the political context, the vote (for many women) remained their most important demand.

The article in *The Vote* also revealed that WSPU members wanted to find out what had happened to the funds held by the national WSPU and therefore requested a 'properly audited Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet' to be released by the leadership.⁴⁸ The last financial statement issued by the WSPU had

⁴⁶ *The Vote*. "A Protest Meeting." November 5, 807, 1915.

⁴⁷ *The Vote*. "A Protest Meeting." November 5, 807, 1915.

⁴⁸ *The Vote*. "A Protest Meeting." November 5, 807, 1915.

been in the spring of 1914. When asked about this by a *Weekly Dispatch* interviewer, Emmeline Pankhurst explained that ‘since the war had begun the WSPU ‘s work had been diverted to new channels, and the funds contributed for suffrage work had been set aside and not touched for the purposes of the war campaigns.’⁴⁹ Although the funds were initially put to one side during the war, June Purvis’ biography of Emmeline shows that by 1917, the WSPU funds had been used by Christabel to purchase *Tower Cressey*, ‘a large house in Aubrey Road, Kensington.’ She bought the house so that it could be turned into a nursery and adoption home for orphans. Ethel Smyth recalled being ‘horrified’ by the amount of money that Christabel had wasted on ‘unnecessary luxury’, elaborate armchairs and chaises-longues with which the house had been refurbished.⁵⁰ Emmeline’s statement to the *Weekly Dispatch*, however, was not enough ‘to silence her critics.’⁵¹ As a consequence, and also to discuss the further actions and ‘the possibilities and nature of future work,’ the women present at the October meeting decided to organise a ‘General Conference’ to be held at St George’s Hall Bloomsbury on the 5th December 1915.⁵²

The General Conference signalled the rebirth of the active campaign for ‘Votes for Women’ as it was on the 5th December 1915 that the Chair of the conference, Rose, and a temporary executive of : Mrs Cobden Sanderson, Mrs McLeod, Mrs Schutze, Miss Tim, Mrs Mary Leigh, Mrs Best and Miss Zoe Procter, Miss F Haughton, Mrs F.E. Smith and Mrs Metge decided (in their words) ‘to act together as The Suffragettes of the WSPU.’⁵³ The conference was reported to be

⁴⁹ June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 283.

⁵⁰ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 300.

⁵¹ Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 283.

⁵² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Retrospective.” December. 1915.

⁵³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Retrospective.” December. 1915.

‘earnest and business-like’ and passed a number of resolutions to define the organisation’s future policy. This policy was as follows; ‘proceed to devote ourselves to suffrage work’, ‘act unitedly as a group of the WSPU for suffrage only,’ ‘resume the highly important social and political work of the Union after the recent deplorable break in its activities and express our willingness to re-unite on the same terms of the original membership cards.’⁵⁴ Furthermore, the SWSPU pledged to play no part in making any form of personal attack on the former leaders of the WSPU, either in the Press or otherwise. All their energies were to be devoted to working for the enfranchisement of women. These resolutions were seconded by the suffragettes in attendance, who, it is said, ‘came from all ends of the country.’⁵⁵ The suffragettes in attendance then enrolled as new members and ‘re-affirmed their original suffrage pledge,’ which was to ‘endorse the objects and methods of the WSPU and hereby undertake not to support the candidate of any political party at Parliamentary elections until women have obtained the Parliamentary vote.’⁵⁶

The conduct of the first meeting suggests that the SWSPU did not intend to establish a suffrage organisation that was completely detached from the original WSPU. Rather, it is apparent that the women met not because they wanted to form a suffrage organisation that was in opposition to the WSPU but because they wanted to continue the original work of the WSPU: an organisation and a cause which many of them had devoted a huge part of their lives to. It is clear from the first statement made by the SWSPU, in *The Vote*, in November 1915, that many WSPU women simply couldn’t understand why the leadership of the WSPU chose to stop their campaign for women’s suffrage. Yet, even though suffragettes were

⁵⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Retrospective.” December. 1915.

⁵⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Retrospective.” December. 1915.

⁵⁶ See an example of a membership pledge card in Appendix Eight.

disappointed at this outcome, and had their own personal opinions on the leadership, they were determined to keep the disagreements professional and political and not allow their own personal opinions to impede the SWSPU and their future campaign work.

Laura Mayhall has argued that the campaigning for women's suffrage during wartime, became 'a form of resistance once the nation deemed it selfish for women to struggle for political rights during the war.'⁵⁷ Articles such as 'Patriotism Before Politics' appeared in the national newspapers, reaffirming, Mayhall suggests, 'the nation's new priorities.'⁵⁸ This attitude, however, didn't seem to concern the women of the SWSPU because in December 1915, the organisation published its first newsletter. *The Suffragette News Sheet* (hereafter referred to as the *News Sheet* or the *SNS*) was to be the official organ of the SWSPU. The *News Sheet* was published on a monthly basis, ranged between 3 and 8 pages in length and included articles, cuttings, letters, correspondence regarding suffrage work and concerns and notices that informed members of upcoming SWSPU fixtures. The *News Sheet* was edited by Amy Haughton and required an annual subscription and post fee of 1s/6d.⁵⁹

The timing of the release of the first *News Sheet* is particularly interesting because by December 1915 there were various statements that had appeared in the Press with regard to Parliament and a Registration Bill.⁶⁰ This, taken in conjunction with Lord Lansdowne's announcement in the House of Lords, on November 4th of

⁵⁷ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 118.

⁵⁸ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 118.

⁵⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "The Suffragettes of the WSPU." April. 1916. Little biographical information is available regarding Amy Haughton. The only thing that is clear is that she wrote a series of articles for the weekly feminist review, *The Freewoman*. It seems that she brought this experience to the SWSPU as she was the editor of the *SNS*.

⁶⁰ See sub-chapter 6.4.

a Government measure to revise the electoral register, gave the SWSPU further reason to push their organisation forward and therefore make the government see that the fight for women's suffrage was still very much alive. In fact, the notion that the desire for women's suffrage had fallen to the wayside during the war, was picked up by the SWSPU in their December edition of the *News Sheet*. They actually printed what appears to be part of a play script from a scene in the House of Commons. Representatives of the SWSPU are detailed as visiting the lobby of the House to remind MP's that 'you cannot as honourable men tamper with the Franchise Laws unless you include votes for women in the changes.'⁶¹ An MP challenges the women, declaring 'What? You are awake? I thought all the suffragettes had gone to sleep since the War! To which representative of the SWSPU told the MP to 'keep your eyes on us,' because there is 'no more napping.'⁶²

The first step in the SWSPU's campaign was to recruit members. The first edition of the *SNS* demonstrates that the SWSPU was clearly concerned with recruitment, as one of the first articles within the newsletter addressed the question of 'why you should join us?' The article encouraged 'all those in sympathy with what has been done to reunite without delay' and therefore 'strengthen the body of suffragists pressing forward their just claim to the vote.'⁶³ Although the SWSPU received over 50 subscriptions by March 1916, it also faced opposition. When the organisation approached 'old WSPU' members to join the new organisation many refused and wrote letters to the SWSPU asking them why they worked for the vote in war-time. 'Why not wait', they wrote, 'until the war is over.'⁶⁴ As a result, the *News Sheet* began, from April 1916, to include an 'explanatory' note that elucidated

⁶¹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "No More Napping." December. 1915.

⁶² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "No More Napping." December. 1915.

⁶³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Why Should you Join Us." December. 1915.

⁶⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Why We Work for The Vote in War Time." March. 1916.

the reasons for the formation of the SWSPU and also made a clear differentiation between the pre-war WSPU and the new organisation. The Suffragettes of the WSPU, they maintained, were a body of 'the old WSPU who differ from their former leaders in thinking it right to continue suffrage propaganda during the war.'⁶⁵ The message appeared on the front page of every copy of the *SNS* that was printed.

As membership to the SWSPU increased so did their activism. A 'splendid little band of sellers' are reported as 'keeping 'Votes for Women' in the public mind' by selling the *SNS* across London. Meetings were being held in Hyde Park at 3pm on a Sunday and at 8pm on a Thursday in the SWSPU offices at the Emily Wilding Davison Lodge Rooms - 144 High Holborn. Meaning that SWSPU meetings were taking place at least once a week, either in Hyde Park or High Holborn.⁶⁶ As the SWSPU office had only been open since March 1916, the Union organised a 'House Warming' at the new SWSPU offices on the 13th April. It was reported that members turned up in 'very fair numbers' and listened to talks by Mrs F E Smith (honorary treasurer of the SWSPU) Amy Haughton (honorary editor of the *SNS*) and Rose Lamartine-Yates on the importance of continuing the fight for women's suffrage. Amy Haughton urged members to 'work hard' and reassured them that speakers and funds would be forthcoming if they remained determined and 'let the public realise the spirit of the suffragettes was still alive.'⁶⁷ Mrs Smith also noted that the house warming and 'At Home' was 'pleasantly cheering and satisfactory and would be the precursor of many larger and more successful gatherings in the near future.'⁶⁸ Although the statements made by members of the SWSPU are very positive in their outlook, their reference to the lack of speakers, funds and support

⁶⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Explanatory." March. 1916.

⁶⁶ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "SWSPU Fixtures." May. 1916.

⁶⁷ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "The SWSPU Office House Warming." May. 1916.

⁶⁸ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "The SWSPU Office House Warming." May. 1916.

within the suffrage community and beyond, implies that the SWSPU was not gaining the momentum that leaders of the re-union thought it originally would have done. Nevertheless, they were not willing to give in at this point.

By the early summer of 1916 it appears that the SWSPU had gained some form of momentum organising a greater amount of meetings in the capital. Notices such as ‘STOP THE PRESS! SWSPU Public Meeting, Votes for Women- The Burning Question Again!’ appeared in the *News Sheet* and successful meetings were also being detailed.⁶⁹ One meeting held at 144, High Holborn on May 4th, where Mrs F.E Smith gave an address on the ‘The responsibility of women’, reported that members were ‘intensely interested’ and three new members, who also volunteered to be sellers for the SWSPU, were recruited.⁷⁰ More significantly, however, by May 1916, they were beginning to team their weekly meetings and the sale of the *SNS* with deputations to parliament. The first deputation in which representative of the SWSPU were present took place after the following letter was sent to all Members of Parliament at the beginning of May;

‘Dear Sir,

The Executive Committee of the Suffragettes of the WSPU require me to address you on their behalf with regard to the understood decision of the Government to bring in a Registration Bill... My committee urges upon you the necessity of dealing with the claim of women to the Parliamentary Franchise, now that the Franchise question is being reopened...The committee would also remind you of the many pledges given to women in the past and of the strengthening which

⁶⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “STOP THE PRESS.” May. 1916.

⁷⁰ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Reports of SWSPU Meetings.” May. 1916.

the women's claim has received through the country's demand for their co-operation in carrying on the work of the nation...Having regard to the numerous occasions on which, during the war you have recognised the value of women's work, my committee cannot believe other than your intention of recognising the claim of women to citizenship.'⁷¹

The deputation that followed to Parliament Square on the 29th May 1916, was attended by SWSPU members, along with representatives from; the Women's Freedom League, The United Suffragists (US) and the Actresses Franchise League (AFL). A newspaper report described how 'a picket of women with their colours reminded Members [of Parliament] of their determination to be included in the coming Bill.'⁷² What is particularly striking about this deputation, and others during 1916, is that they were regularly attended by multiple suffrage societies and not just representatives of the SWSPU. Similarly a deputation to the Prime Minister that was organised by the WFL in December 1915 included representatives from over 10 wartime suffrage organisations, including; the East London Federation for Suffragettes (ELFS), The Free Church League for Women's Suffrage (FCLWS), and The Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (NMFWS). This interconnection between the wartime suffrage organisations was not just restricted to their attendance at deputations. Throughout 1916 and 1917 the SWSPU, the IWSPU, US and WFL collectively signed circular letters to Parliament and the Prime Minister. Furthermore, in November and December 1916 the *SNS* detailed how the representatives of the SWSPU 'had agreed to take part in three suffrage sales,' one on 24th and 25th November organised by the WFL and another on

⁷¹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "In Parliament Square." June. 1916.

⁷² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "In Parliament Square." June. 1916.

December the 2nd organised by the US. Nevertheless, as many of the leaders of these wartime suffrage organisations, had all, at one time, been ‘supporters and generous benefactors of the WSPU’, it is unsurprising that friendship networks would span across organisations.⁷³ However, it is important to note that these collective activities and demonstrations moved beyond friendship. Their collaborations show that the war-time suffrage movement didn’t just have a shared political commitment to securing enfranchisement for women but, that they understood that they could have a greater impact on the government as a collective band of women and men.

Laura Mayhall argues that throughout the war, suffrage organisations, particularly the SWSPU, IWSPU, WFL and US, shared resources and worked together in continuing the fight for women’s suffrage.⁷⁴ The SWSPU were especially closely aligned to the WFL, as these bodies actually worked from the same building (144 High Holborn) throughout 1916 and 1917. The fact they were working towards the same goal, in the same set of offices, would suggest that they not only shared resources but consulted each other and perhaps even organised suffrage events together. A report in *The Vote* on the 8th June 1917 exemplifies the interconnections between the SWSPU and the WFL as the Suffragettes of the WSPU ‘took a large advertisement’ in the *Vote* concerning a memorial meeting that was to be held at Hyde Park on the anniversary of Emily Wilding Davison’s death.⁷⁵ The interconnection between the SWSPU and the WFL actually remained well into the 1920s with Rose Lamartine Yates being vigorously supported and promoted in

⁷³ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, 694.

⁷⁴ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffragette*, 118.

⁷⁵ *The Vote* “Memorial Meeting.” 8 June, 1917.

The Vote during her bid for a seat on the London County Council in Lambeth in 1919.

Now although it has briefly been mentioned that there were a series of interconnections between suffrage organisations during the war, these societies were also often divided on the precise terms that suffrage would be granted. Pre-war disputes about the merits of adult suffrage versus suffrage on the same terms or as it shall be granted to men were not easily resolved. Sylvia Pankhurst, in her history of the suffragette movement, suggests that there was an effort made by the Workers' Suffrage Federation (formally ELFS) to unite all the active suffrage societies on the demand for adult suffrage.⁷⁶ She organised numerous meetings in 1916, first at the International Suffrage Shop and then later in the year, at Essex Hall. She argued that although the idea gripped some suffragettes, with members of the US most keen to move in their direction, that the 'old guard' of the WFL, ISWSPU and SWSPU, would not permit its old policy to be dislodged.⁷⁷ The SWSPU argued that the removal of the sex barrier had to be their primary focus and was something that they considered as 'the Alpha and Omega of our existence.' They argue that 'we-the SWSPU consider it our business as a Women's Suffrage Society to obtain the removal of the sex barrier.'⁷⁸ However, although the SWSPU insisted that the removal of the sex disqualification was their primary concern, they went on to argue that 'what women are enfranchised and what women aren't enfranchised is not our concern for the moment' (by this they mean which class of

⁷⁶ In March 1916 the East London Federation of Suffragettes changed their name to the Workers' Suffrage Federation. Alongside their humanitarian work in the East End, they also campaigned for adult suffrage or what they later termed human suffrage. For more information see: Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 184-185.

⁷⁷ Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 599.

⁷⁸ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Women as Citizens." December. 1916.

women were enfranchised).⁷⁹ One member, Helena Jones, argued that the SWSPU felt that societies that had ‘yielded to the fascination of votes for all men and women are riding for a fall,’ because their demand relied on two distinct reforms; the acknowledgement of women as persons and the near doubling of the male electorate. The SWSPU argued that these demands were so far reaching in their effects that they would not likely materialise in one single Act of Parliament. Those considerations, led them to persist in ‘the old demand that of votes for women on the same terms as they are or given to men.’⁸⁰ Laura Mayhall suggests that the fact that militant organisations couldn’t unite on the question of women’s suffrage, with the WFL, US, ISWSPU and SWSPU maintaining support for a parliamentary measure that granted women’s suffrage ‘on the same terms or as it shall be granted to men’, that tensions arose between the aforementioned organisations and the WSF. Nevertheless, this did not stop the SWSPU from working alongside the WSF. In September 1916, for instance, the SWSPU and the WSF held a joint meeting in Hyde Park to discuss the hardships suffered by women during the war, focusing for some time on the difficulty women faced on ‘making ends meet’ due to the rise in food prices.⁸¹ Furthermore, Liz Stanley and Ann Morley have noted that the pages of the *Woman’s Dreadnought* (the WSF’s newspaper) reveal that Rose Lamartine Yates contributed £1 a month to a variety of ELF/WSF funds, she is even noted to have given pears to the ELF food fund in 1914.⁸²

Although it is apparent that throughout 1916 that the SWSPU were working alongside multiple suffrage organisations to keep the suffrage flag flying, there were still organising their own events and publishing their opinions on why women

⁷⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Women as Citizens.” December. 1916.

⁸⁰ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Women as Citizens.” December. 1916.

⁸¹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “SWSPU Meetings and Fixtures.” September. 1916.

⁸² Stanley and Morley, *The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison*, 182.

should receive the vote. For instance, on the 5th October 1916 and on the 8th November 1916 the SWPSU organised two mass public meetings at Essex Hall.⁸³ At the October meeting Miss Abadam gave ‘an interesting address on Women in the New World Drama,’ which ‘dealt largely with the biological and theoretical origin and significance of the feminine and from it deduced that women had been artificially displaced from her rightful position in the world.’⁸⁴ Miss Abadam stated that it was now woman’s duty to regain her rights by securing the vote. Lawrence Housman (ardent supporter of women’s suffrage, member of the US and former WSPU supporter) gave an address at the November meeting entitled ‘War and Votes for Women.’⁸⁵ Here, he was reported to have spoken ‘generally on the effects of the war on women’s suffrage.’⁸⁶ These two public meetings took place alongside the SWSPU’s ‘important series of lectures’ that were being given at the Aquarian Bureau at 144 High Holborn every Monday at 5.30 PM throughout November and December. The first four lectures were given by Miss Abadam and the last three by Mrs F.E Smith.

What is particularly intriguing about the Essex Hall meetings and the series of lectures in 1916 is the presence of Miss Abadam, a woman who isn’t present as a speaker for the SWPSU before these meetings. She was however, a regular speaker for the Wimbledon WSPU. Nevertheless, Alice was not a WSPU member and it is unclear whether or not she was an SWSPU member. Rather she was a peripatetic speaker for a variety of suffrage societies, particularly before the war. The reason that Alice’s presence is of particular interest and importance is due to the fact that

⁸³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Essex Hall Meeting.” November. 1916.

⁸⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Essex Hall Meeting.” November. 1916.

⁸⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Essex Hall Meeting.” December. 1916.

⁸⁶ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “Essex Hall Meeting.” December. 1916.

she was the only woman, apart from Rose, who can be identified as being associated with both the Wimbledon WSPU and the Suffragettes of the WSPU. No other women who were members of the Wimbledon WSPU, or associated with the local Union, seem to have joined the new suffrage organisation that was established by their organising secretary. As we have already seen earlier in this chapter, the *WBN* does record that some Wimbledon suffragettes focused their efforts in sustaining the cost price soup kitchen that was opened in the old Wimbledon WSPU shop by Rose Lamartine Yates in 1914, so there is a distinct possibility that some of the Wimbledon activists were working in the soup kitchen throughout the war. However, as the *WBN* does not record the names of the women working in the kitchen we cannot know this for certain. Reports in the *WBN*, also suggest that members of the Wimbledon WSPU, along with members of The Red Cross, ‘organised and equipped a hospital’ that would ‘aid the wounded sent to England from the seat of the war.’⁸⁷ But again the names of the women involved in this remain hidden. All this considered though, it is still surprising that there isn’t a single Wimbledon suffragette, whom we can be absolutely certain followed Rose to the SWSPU. Nevertheless, one must recognise that many Wimbledon WSPU members may have agreed with the Pankhurst’s pro-war stance and wanted to remain loyal to the organisation and perhaps did not see the value in establishing a new group.

6.4: ‘No Vote No Register’: Suffragette Opposition to National Registration Day.

⁸⁷ *The Wimbledon Boro News*, “Suffragettes Give Useful Service.” September 15, 1914, 3.

Unlike suffrage societies like the United Suffragists, the Suffragettes of the WSPU were not a single-issue organisation. Rather there were various other campaigns mounted by them throughout the war. One of the first campaigns that the SWSPU became involved in was the opposition to National Registration Day on 15th August. National Registration Day required ‘all individuals between the ages of fifteen and sixty five to register for national service.’⁸⁸ While Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst encouraged men and women to register, other organisations like the ELFS actively protested against the Registration Bill and staged a demonstration, arguing that ‘no register be passed without safeguards, that parliament implement legislation forbidding sweated labour, that women receive equal pay for equal work and that women be enfranchised immediately.’⁸⁹ The WFL were ‘more ambivalent towards the question’, because after the WFL branches took a referendum on the issue, ‘there was no majority in support of resistance.’ Members were therefore told to take action on their own behalf but that the WFL would not officially support them.⁹⁰ Although the SWSPU wasn’t officially formed until December 1915, its future members were actively involved in resisting registration. SWSPU member, Alice Heale, was arrested and appeared at the South Western London police court in August 1915 after refusing to fill in a registration form supplied by the municipality. In the March 1916 edition of the *SNS*, Alice Heale recalled her protest against the National Registration Act. On her form Alice declared ‘No Vote No Register: I refuse, without the safeguard of the vote, to help the government in any way to build up the lost trade of the country, I refuse without the safeguard of the vote to help in any way to compile a register of women which can and may be used for forced immigration schemes’ [and finally] ‘I refuse

⁸⁸ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 132.

⁸⁹ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 132.

⁹⁰ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 132.

to take part in any under hand plot to force men against their will to give their lives to the defence of the country.⁹¹ This protest was reminiscent of the 1911 census boycott with ‘No Vote No Census’ replaced by ‘No Vote No Register.’⁹² It is clear, however, that the lack of a vote was not Alice’s only reason for refusing to provide information to her municipality. Alice’s objection to forced male conscription and the timing of the article, in March 1916, (just after the Military Service Act was introduced) suggests that she was also a conscientious objector. In fact, the SWSPU actually described Alice as ‘conscientious objector to the National Registration Act.’⁹³ Alice however, was far from alone in her objection to forced male conscription. As we have already seen, Rose actively protested in her hometown against male conscription.

The resistance to the National Registration Act, however, was not the only campaign mounted by SWSPU members during the First World War. One of the largest and most determined campaigns that the SWSPU supported, along with many other suffrage societies, was the pursuit of the equal moral standard. This is exemplified by their resistance to government attempts to regulate women’s sexuality, focused on The Royal Commission for Venereal Disease and its final report, released on the 2nd March 1916.

6.5: The Final Report on the Commission for Venereal Disease

The Royal Commission was established in 1913 following mounting pressure by the medical profession and feminist and social purity campaigners for

⁹¹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “No Vote, No Register.” December. 1915.

⁹² Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 132.

⁹³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “No Vote, No Register.” December. 1915.

an inquiry into Venereal Disease. The examination of the suffrage press, prior to the war, reveals that The Royal Commission had already caused controversy when Christabel Pankhurst attacked the government in November 1913 for the ‘intolerable insult that women were a minority on the Commission considering that VD is directly due to men’s defiance of the laws of nature.’⁹⁴ Millicent Fawcett, who was invited to sit on the Commission by Asquith but declined the invitation because of her suffrage work, was equally critical of the small number of women appointed to the Commission. She was particularly outraged at the omission of Dr Helen Wilson (Secretary and President of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and President of the Sheffield Women’s Suffrage Society) from the Commission. She wrote to Asquith declaring her disappointment with the Commission’s ‘narrow remit’, arguing for the close connection between VD and ‘commercialised vice’ and asked that ‘the causes of the evil not merely its symptoms’ be considered.⁹⁵

From the commencement of the inquiry the Commission held 86 meetings, examined 85 witnesses (only 8 of whom were women) and asked 22,296 questions. The final report was divided into five sections (introduction, prevalence, effects, means of alleviation or prevention and recommendations and general conclusions).⁹⁶ The commission concluded that VD was essentially an ‘urban phenomenon with the number of persons infected with syphilis more than ten percent of the population in large cities. Although they were unable to supply exact statistics the Commission concluded that VD was ‘a major threat to public health.’⁹⁷

⁹⁴ David Evans. “Tackling the ‘Hideous Scourge’: The Creation of Venereal Disease Treatment Centres in Early Twentieth Century Britain.” *The Social History of Medicine*, (1992), 417.

⁹⁵ Evans. “Tackling the ‘Hideous Scourge,” 417-418.

⁹⁶ Final Report of the Commissioners, *Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases*, London, HMSO, 1916. Pamphlet. From the Women’s Library, *AMS- records of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene*.

⁹⁷ Evans. “Tackling the ‘Hideous Scourge’, 417.

The Commission made thirty-five specific recommendations, the majority of which related to the diagnosis and treatment of VD.

This Final Report by the Royal Commission was described in April 1916, by the SWSPU as being ‘sorry reading’ but a document ‘that every woman should make a point of reading.’ The value of the Report’s for the SWSPU came from the report’s educational recommendations, with ‘sex instruction based on moral principles appearing as the core of [the report’s] preventative strategy.’⁹⁸ It is clear that the SWSPU believed in the sexual education of boys because they stated that if young men (or what the SWSPU referred to as ‘the big school boys’) were taught that there were consequences to sexual promiscuity, they argued that the future can be protected ‘if the youth were to be instructed.’⁹⁹

Nonetheless, although the SWSPU recognised that the ‘the document had its value’, it is the limitations of the document that they focused upon. This is particularly apparent when the *News Sheet’s* articles by SWSPU member and journalist, Juliette Heale, are considered.¹⁰⁰ One of the main limitations of the report, for Juliette Heale, was that although the report advocated medical treatment and moral instruction, it failed to consider alternative preventative strategies involving physical hygiene, self-disinfection and condoms. She argued further, stating that the report condoned vice and left women, particularly mothers,

⁹⁸ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil.” July. 1916.

⁹⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil.” July. 1916.

¹⁰⁰ Juliette Heale (1857-1944) was the sister of musician and singer Alice Heale (1862-1949) whom I referred to with regard to National Registration Day. Juliette was a journalist and one time editor of *Myra Journal* and wrote for *Lady’s World*. Juliette was also a contributor to *Votes for Women*. Thanks to Elizabeth Crawford for providing me with this information following a talk that I gave at the Institute of Historical Research in February 2017.

‘penalised and at risk.’¹⁰¹ Juliette’s main concern, however, is the impact of the report on the family. She argued that the report ‘penalises motherhood’ and suggests that the findings of the report protect men, leaving his family open to the dangers of infection. In a series of articles, she repeatedly used the example of the infection of a wife and child by her seemingly ‘respectable’ husband.¹⁰² One article in April 1916 questioned why an ‘infectious husband or father’ is not forced to seek treatment and tell his wife that he is suffering from a Venereal Disease.¹⁰³ Another article in the *SNS* argued that the laws and conventions regarding VD in adult males are ‘so tender’ that ‘preventative measures that he dislikes are not taken.’¹⁰⁴ In an article in May 1916, Juliette argued that the greatest way to prevent infection within the household would be to prosecute fathers of ‘cankered infants’ and infected wives if ‘the wholesale ruin could be traced back to his callous indifference.’¹⁰⁵ She suggested that ‘penalties varying in degree according to the injury inflicted, should be dealt the man knowing himself infectious, if the wife’s health suffers or if any blighted children are born.’¹⁰⁶ She went as far as to argue that a ‘certificate of fitness,’ which can be trusted, be required from every would-be husband and that ‘the death of a healthy young wife after a year of marriage should be the subject of rigid examination.’¹⁰⁷

The SWSPU’s articles on The Final Report of the Royal Commission on VD offer a particularly interesting discussion on the issue of compulsory

¹⁰¹ Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast, Sexuality and the Early Feminists*, (London: New Press, 1995), 382.

¹⁰² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Penalising of Motherhood.” April. 1916.

¹⁰³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Penalising of Motherhood.” April. 1916.

¹⁰⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Penalising of Motherhood.” April. 1916.

¹⁰⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: More of a Money Question.” May. 1916.

¹⁰⁶ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil.” July. 1916.

¹⁰⁷ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil.” July. 1916.

notification which meant that every doctor should be bound by law to register a patient with venereal disease. Although Laura Mayhall argues that suffragettes opposed compulsory notification, examination and treatment of anyone for VD, the SWSPU's position regarding the compulsory notification of VD was a little more complicated than Mayhall has assumed.¹⁰⁸ In July 1916 for instance, an article in the *SNS* seems to advocate for compulsory notification and treatment stating that although 'it is difficult', perhaps impossible, for the law to interfere with sexual relations, 'it can' and 'should' deal with the devastating results by 'punishing the guilty who knowingly poison healthy partners.'¹⁰⁹ Another article, written again by Juliette Heale, actually overtly considers the notion of compulsory notification and treatment for VD. Juliette writes that 'no one would complain if venereal disease- at the root of every dread chronic malady which destroys humanity- were compulsory notifiable and treated, whether the patients were suffering as a punishment for sin or innocent themselves, by the sin of a guilty spouse.'¹¹⁰ Here it seems that Juliette is insinuating that if she, and the SWSPU, were confident that a law enforcing compulsory notification and treatment would be enforced equally, they may support it.

However, although Juliette Heale's writings suggest that she, along with other SWSPU members, would consider compulsory notification and treatment for those infected with VD this was not the 'official' position of the SWSPU. In fact, in November 1916 representatives from the leadership of the SWSPU attended an emergency conference of women's organisations that was co-ordinated by the WFL to discuss the pending Criminal Law Amendment Bill (CLAB) and its

¹⁰⁸ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 127.

¹⁰⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil." July. 1916.

¹¹⁰ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "The Penalising of Motherhood." April. 1916.

recommendations for compulsory notification of VD. The SWSPU also signed a manifesto, along with 15 other suffrage organisations, that laid out the societies objection to the Bill. *The Manifesto of Organised Women*, the main purpose of which was to ‘strenuously oppose’ the immediate introduction of compulsory notification and compulsory treatment was published in the *SNS*, in other suffrage journals and sold to the national press¹¹¹ Furthermore, the SWSPU’s founder, Rose Lamartine Yates, dedicated herself and her organisation to the declarations of the manifesto by taking centre stage, with Charlotte Despard, during the deputation to the Home Secretary in opposition to the CLAB on 4th December 1916. Rose discussed the deputation’s further opposition to ‘all proposals for compulsory detention in either Poor Law institutions or prisons suffering from the diseases.’¹¹² The *SNS* did recognise, however, that not everyone in their wartime suffrage organisation was of the same opinion. The SWSPU prided themselves on being a ‘democratic organisation’ and because of that they wrote in their December edition of the *SNS* that it is perfectly acceptable for ‘individual women [to] voice individual opinions’ but that those opinions had ‘no authority to speak for their sisters.’¹¹³

Although it seems that the SWSPU were not completely united on the most effective way to deal with the spread of VD, it is evident that they repeatedly linked the campaign for enfranchisement to sexual politics. The pages of the *SNS* are littered with references to the ‘the voting male’ and the ‘helpless’ and ‘dependent women and children.’¹¹⁴ Repeatedly articles stated that ‘the only true remedy for this

¹¹¹ See ‘image 5’ in the appendix for a copy of the manifesto.

¹¹² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Manifesto of Organised Women.” December. 1916.

¹¹³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Manifesto of Organised Women.” December. 1916.

¹¹⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Royal Commission on Venereal Disease: No tinkering with the devastating evil.” July. 1916.

situation' is that women are enfranchised.¹¹⁵ The SWSPU emphasised the 'necessity of women being enfranchised in order that they might be able to press their views in the House of Commons' and furthermore, that the vote was the only thing that could combat 'this social evil' and achieve 'a high moral standard for men and women.'¹¹⁶ This direct association with sexual morality and the vote, however, is not surprising. Christabel Pankhurst, for instance, a leader who previously inspired many of the SWSPU women, was an ardent believer that when women were enfranchised that they could then push for laws to be passed that would then alter the sexual behaviour of men. Christabel argued that because the laws of the land were 'made and administered by men' without the consultation of women that men were protected and therefore male immorality and the sexual exploitation of women is encouraged.¹¹⁷ The only solution then, or in her words, 'the real cure of the great plague' was 'Votes for Women', as the vote would 'give women more self reliance and a stronger economic position.'¹¹⁸ Paula Bartley suggests that this relationship between sexual morality and the vote has 'enjoyed a long history in the annals of women's suffrage' and actually throughout the campaign for women's enfranchisement suffragettes and suffragists alike 'placed women's franchise within the wider context of sexual politics.'¹¹⁹ Now although it is apparent that throughout 1916, the SWSPU did not just focus its activities on campaigning for women's suffrage during the war, the enfranchisement of women remained their most pressing concern, particularly by October 1916.

¹¹⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Deputation to Home Secretary." December. 1916.

¹¹⁶ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Deputation to Home Secretary." December. 1916.

¹¹⁷ Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge and How To End It*. 1913. From The Women's Library, 616.951 PAN.

¹¹⁸ Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge*.

¹¹⁹ Paula Bartley, *Votes for Women: 1860-1928*, (Tunbridge Wells: Grey Publishing, 2008), 1865

6.6: 'The Elusive Conference': The SWSPU's Final Offensive

October 1916 was a crucial time for the SWSPU and other wartime suffrage societies because it was during this month that the decision was made by the Prime Minister to establish a Parliamentary Conference to report on Electoral Reform.¹²⁰ The conference was presided over by Speaker James William Lowther who chose 32 MPs and Peers to be members. He attempted to represent all parties and interests and included 'approximately 17 women's suffrage supporters and 10 anti-suffragists.'¹²¹ Throughout the time that Conference members meet to discuss electoral reform, the SWSPU doubled their efforts and refocused almost entirely on campaigning for women's suffrage. The *SNS* from October 1916 to January 1917 was littered with reports of suffrage meetings and advertisements detailing their involvement in different suffrage fairs. In November alone the SWSPU had stalls at six different suffrage fairs, held a series of lectures at their head office and organised a mass meeting at Essex Hall. They also sent a telegram to the Speaker of the House that asked for a 'prompt solution to their question' on women's enfranchisement. SWSPU leaders, Rose Lamartine-Yates and Mrs F. E Smith also attended 'a private conference of societies working towards women's suffrage.'¹²²

By December the SWSPU were also in attendance, among several other suffrage societies, at a picket at the House of Commons, 'every Wednesday and Thursday during the sittings of the Conference on Electoral Reform.'¹²³ The *SNS* also featured an inspiring front-page article by Rose Lamartine Yates entitled 'Have No Fear.' In the article she appealed to men and women alike stating 'women have

¹²⁰ Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 600.

¹²¹ <https://ukvote100.org/2017/01/11/the-burning-question/> (accessed January 13th 2017)

¹²² *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Our Message to the Speaker." November. 1916.

¹²³ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Picketing the House." December. 1916.

never failed him in his need, why fear her in politics...let him have the courage to resist no longer women's full enfranchisement...have courage yourselves to call women to your councils... have no fear.'¹²⁴ This notion of having no fear is replaced with 'hope' in the January edition of the *SNS*. In the 'New Years Greetings' members from other suffrage societies wrote to the SWSPU, Edith Mansell Moullin wrote a message encouraging members to 'hope on, work on with hearts full of love and free from all 'hatred and bitterness towards anyone.' Mrs Despard wrote with 'hope [that 1917] will see the recall of women to their true place in the State.'¹²⁵ This wish was to some extent granted by the end of January 1917 when the Report of the Speaker's Conference recommended a form of women's suffrage.

According to Mari Takayangi, it was decided by the Conference; 'following arguments that were led by Willoughby Dickinson on the 10th and 11th January 1917 [that] 'some measure of women's suffrage should be conferred'.¹²⁶ The actual recommendation on women's suffrage in the Speaker's Conference Report stated that 'a majority of the Conference was also of the opinion that if Parliament should decide to accept the principle, the most practical form would be to confer the vote in the terms of the following resolution- 33) Any woman on the Local Government Register who has attained a specified age and the wife of any man who is on that Register if she has attained that age, shall be entitled to be registered and to vote as a parliamentary elector. Various ages were discussed, of which 30 and 35 received most favour.'¹²⁷

¹²⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "Have no Fear." December. 1916.

¹²⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "New Years greetings." December. 1916.

¹²⁶ <https://ukvote100.org/2017/01/11/the-burning-question/> (accessed January 13th 2017)

¹²⁷ David Lloyd George, *The Recommendation on Women's Suffrage in the Speaker's Conference Report*. 29 January 1917. Pamphlet. From Parliamentary Archives, *LG/F/166/5/1*

The recommendation was a huge compromise for many suffrage societies, many of whom had campaigned for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men. However, it was a compromise that suffrage societies like the SWSPU were willing to accept, as it would enfranchise nearly six million women. In the February edition of the *SNS* the SWSPU label the recommendation as ‘The Women’s Victory.’¹²⁸ Nevertheless, they do admit that they are ‘dissatisfied’, not with the resolution, but the fact that resolution had ‘no legislative value.’¹²⁹ They argued that it will not be a victory until the recommendation was approved by parliament and received royal assent. They felt so strongly that women’s enfranchisement should be secured immediately, following this recommendation by the Conference, that they organised a deputation to the Prime Minister writing to him to ask whether he would ‘receive a deputation on the immediate need of the enfranchisement of women’ and took part in the deputation of women workers to the Prime Minister that was presided over by Millicent Fawcett in March 1917.

Further analysis of SWSPU reaction to this development is impeded because after February 1917 there appears to be no more editions of the *News Sheet* printed. As noted earlier, the front page of the February *News Sheet* declared ‘Women’s Victory’ in relation to the Speaker’s Conference on Electoral Reform. This could imply, that the recommendation for women’s suffrage to be included in the Electoral Reform Bill meant that the SWSPU’s work was complete. However, there is no statement in the February edition of the *SNS* that declared that the *News Sheet* would cease printing. It could simply be the case that the later editions of the

¹²⁸ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Women’s Victory.” February. 1917.

¹²⁹ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, “The Women’s Victory.” February. 1917.

SWSPU's newspaper have just been lost to history or that the costs of running the paper became a prohibitive during the later stages of the war.¹³⁰ Krista Cowman suggests that the *SNS* and the SWSPU disappear from view because they were 'hampered by lack of funds.'¹³¹ The fact the *SNS* was particularly short in length, only ever amounting to a maximum of 8 pages, and was published once a month, could imply that the SWSPU suffered from a lack of funding. However, the size of the paper and the regularity of its publication could also have been the result of war time paper shortages. Furthermore, the disappearance of the *News Sheet* could also be linked to the new restrictions introduced in 1917 with regard to the sale of suffrage material. Laura Mayhall argues that suffragettes 'faced new restrictions on the distribution of suffrage materials in public places.'¹³² With the public park and railway station being the key site for SWSPU members to sell the *SNS*, it could be possible that the ruling by the London County Council that 'forbid the sale of literature in parks and open spaces in London' was the final straw for the SWSPU.¹³³

Nevertheless, it is peculiar that the organisation seems to disappear without, at the very least, a final statement or goodbye. Perhaps the committee of the SWSPU were convinced that the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform would be introduced fairly shortly into law. In fact, there is one statement made by a friend of the SWSPU, Israel Zangwill, that suggests that the SWSPU's work would be done if the Conference was to recommend women's suffrage. He writes that he 'would be very glad to wish the *Suffragette News Sheet* a

¹³⁰ Only one copy of the newspaper exists, as far I am aware, and that is housed in the Emily Wilding Davison Collection at the Women's Library at LSE. There isn't even a copy or reference to the paper that exists in any of Rose Lamartine Yates's collections.

¹³¹ Krista Cowman, *Women in British Politics: 1689-1979*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 74.

¹³² Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 119.

¹³³ Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 119.

happy disappearance during 1917, with its programme realised.¹³⁴ But even with the passing of the Representation of the People Act on 6th February 1918, their original aim had not been achieved. Only women who were over thirty years of age, who were occupiers or wives of occupiers with land premises of not less than five pounds annual value, and women who held university degrees, received the parliamentary franchise. It was a start but it wasn't votes for women on the same terms or as it shall be granted to men- the SWSPU's aim from the outset and something that Rose Lamartine-Yates had been fighting for over ten years by 1917.

Conclusion

Although the SWSPU as a wartime suffrage organisation appeared to have ceased campaigning by March 1917, their contribution to the wartime suffrage campaign and the campaign for women's suffrage is still worthy of analysis. This chapter has shown that for just under two years the Suffragettes of the WSPU were among a large number of suffrage societies that refused to suspend the campaign for the vote during the war, as demanded by the Pankhursts. The SWSPU were able to build on their pre-war suffrage activities and connections and form an organisation which remained focused on the franchise. Furthermore, whilst sustaining their suffrage propaganda work, the SWSPU also contributed to the on-going campaign for an equal moral standard. Their campaigning, whether as a lone organisation or in association with other suffrage societies challenges the notion that during the war 'the suffragettes were sleeping.'

¹³⁴ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "New Years greetings." December. 1916.

Charlotte Despard, leader of the WFL, recognises the SWSPU's contribution to 'keeping the suffrage flag flying' when she referred to the members of the SWSPU as her 'fellow workers' and 'dear friends' and stated that 'in the midst of evil, as well as of good report, we, together, have kept the suffrage flag flying.'¹³⁵ Likewise Nina Boyle, WFL member and chief of the Women Police Volunteers, also recognised their contribution to keeping the wartime 'suffrage flag flying.' Nina Boyle also identified how a small organisation like the SWSPU had given hope to women. She writes that 'the fact that so many of the smaller groups of suffragists have kept the suffrage flag flying and have held together and kept their little journals published gives hope and heart and help to us all.'¹³⁶ This poignant statement by Nina Boyle really exemplifies the contribution of small wartime suffrage organisations, like the SWSPU, who before now, have remained predominately in the shadows of history. Furthermore, Boyle's statement reminds us that without further research into these smaller wartime suffrage societies, we cannot fully comprehend the impact of wartime suffrage organisations to the campaign for enfranchisement. Of course women's suffrage would never have been secured without the long and bitter struggle by women's suffrage campaigners across the decades. However, as we near the centenary of the of The Representation of the People Act it is important to recognise the role and contribution of the smaller groups of suffrage activists that during the war kept the suffrage flag flying.

¹³⁵ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "New Years greetings." December. 1916.

¹³⁶ *The Suffragette News Sheet*, "New Years greetings." December. 1916.

Chapter 7: 'Here Indeed One Can Say, This Life Has Been Lived

Abundantly': Rose Lamartine-Yates, 1919-1954

Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis will draw Rose Lamartine Yate's suffrage journey, political career and ultimately her life, to a close. Rose is not only considered within Wimbledon and beyond for her contribution to the suffrage campaign from 1908-1918 but also because of her role as a London County Councillor in North Lambeth, and additionally her role in the memorialisation of the suffragette movement during in the 1930's and 40's.

This first section of this chapter then, seeks to construct a more detailed and complex picture of Rose's political career by focusing on her election to the London County Council for North Lambeth from 1919-1922. This sub-chapter will analyse Rose's LCC campaign and her role and achievements whilst serving as a London County Councillor for North Lambeth. In doing so, it will demonstrate the ways in which the extension to the franchise in February 1918 opened up new possibilities for Rose, and other women, at a local as well as national level.

The final section of the chapter will consider Rose's role in the formation of the Women Record Room. Rose, along with Una Dugdale Duval, is described by the historian Elizabeth Crawford, as one of the 'prime movers' behind the formation of the Women's Record Room in May 1939, a repository which

constituted a ‘formal archive in order to house relics and memoirs of the militant movement.’¹ Part of this archive now forms what is known today as the Suffragette Fellowship Collection.² Nevertheless, very little is known about the origins of the Suffragette Fellowship Collection, particularly Rose’s role in the establishment of the Women’s Record Room. The final section of this chapter then, seeks to fill this historiographical gap by exploring the origins of the Fellowship and the role of Rose in its foundation.

7.1: Equal Pay, Public Housing and Nursery Education: Rose Lamartine Yates: Councillor for North Lambeth.

After the passage of the Representation of the People’s Act in 1918, Cheryl Law suggests that the enfranchised woman’s ‘immediate concern was to establish women’s entitlement to stand for parliament’ as it wasn’t clear that the limited franchise success allowed women to stand as parliamentary candidates.³ In fact, when the question was raised as to whether women could stand as MPs, it appeared that responses were ‘as strongly polarised as they were over women’s suffrage.’⁴ Nevertheless, during the final days of the coalition government a free vote on the subject was held to end all confusion. As a result, the Parliament Qualification of Women Bill was passed on 21st November 1918, making women eligible to stand as an MP on equal terms as men (ironically the bill allowed women between the ages

¹ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, 763-764.

² The Suffragette Fellowship Collection is housed at the Museum of London. It was formed in order to perpetuate the memory of the pioneers and outstanding events concerned with women’s emancipation, particularly the militant suffrage movement of 1905-14.

³ Cheryl Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women’s Movement, 1918-1928*, (London: I.B Tauris Publishers, 2000), 110.

⁴ Cowman, *Women in British Politics*, 116.

of 21 and 30 to stand for a parliament that they could not elect!)⁵ With only three weeks between the passage of the Qualification of Women Bill and the General Election of 1918 on the 14th December, Krista Cowman argues that ‘women now faced a far greater hurdle- finding a seat.’⁶ As a result, only 17 women stood as parliamentary candidates in 1918 and only 9 of them were adopted by the Liberals, the Conservatives or the Labour Party.⁷ Christabel Pankhurst famously represented the Women’s Party and the Coalition, in Smethwick, Staffordshire, and WFL founder, Charlotte Despard, stood as the Labour candidate for Battersea. However, all women candidates at the election were unsuccessful, apart from Sinn Fein candidate Constance Markievicz who refused to take her seat. Christabel Pankhurst achieved the greatest number of votes at 8,614 and narrowly missed victory within her constituency.⁸

Nevertheless, securing a seat as an MP was not the only avenue into public office. After the disappointment of the 1918 General Election, the WFL newspaper, ‘vigorously promoted’ women’s involvement in the upcoming London County Council (LCC) elections that were due to take place in March 1919.⁹ *The Vote* encouraged women to come forward to ‘ensure that women are returned to the coming London and other County Council elections.’¹⁰ Even though women had an established tradition of involvement in municipal politics, which stretched back to their involvement in Poor Law guardianship and school boards, Cheryl Law suggests the municipal elections offered ‘a more accessible method of gaining

⁵ Cowman, *Women in British Politics*, 116.

⁶ Cowman, *Women in British Politics*, 116.

⁷ See Appendix Nine for a complete list of all women candidates and the votes they polled

⁸ *The Vote*, “Votes Polled By Women Candidates.” January 3, 1919, 278.

⁹ Law, *Suffrage and Power*, 123.

¹⁰ *The Vote*, “Women and the County Council Elections.” January 3, 1919. 8.

political power for women.¹¹ This was certainly felt to be the case by Rose Lamartine Yates, who after the war, had begun to consider her next step. The Wimbledon and Merton soup kitchens had closed and the SWSPU had ceased existence.

At this juncture autobiographical evidence, from her son Paul Lamartine Yates, suggests that she was approached by the Labour Party who were ‘interested in adopting her as a candidate for the 1918 General Election.’¹² Nevertheless, financial difficulties ensued and although Rose offered to provide the agent for free, and pay half of the election expenses, negotiations ‘fell through’ as money could not be raised to support her campaign. Her son argues that the local Labour Party had ‘imagined that Rose was rich and that they could get a candidate for nothing.’¹³ The reality of Rose’s situation was that the war and the suffrage campaign had hit the Lamartine Yates’ hard. During her time in the WSPU, it is said that Rose had ‘personally financed many of the activities’ and by 1914 the family had run up such a bank overdraft that Tom ‘had been obliged to liquidate some investments to clear the debt [and] ‘drastically curtail’ the staff at Dorset Hall.¹⁴ However, it is interesting that her son speculates on this ‘might have been’ event. He implies that because Rose was ‘immensely popular in Wimbledon, even among the anti-suffrage majority who admired her energy and courage,’ that it was entirely possible that Rose could have been elected as an MP. If so, he argued that she would have been ‘the first woman to enter the House of Commons, even before Nancy Astor’.¹⁵ However,

¹¹ Law, *Suffrage and Power*, 123.

¹² Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

¹³ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

¹⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

¹⁵ The London Unit of the NFWT was an organisation that was close to the family as Thomas Lamartine Yates was the NFWT’s legal advisor. Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

traditionally the Conservative candidate had always won Wimbledon by a massive majority and it would have been incredibly difficult for Rose, and the Labour Party in particular, to take this 'safe' seat.¹⁶

The Labour Party, however, was not the only organisation to approach Rose, offering her a potential position in public office. Late in 1918, The London Unit of The National Federation of Women Teachers (hereafter referred to NFWT or London Unit) approached Rose and asked her to become a candidate for the upcoming LCC elections.¹⁷ The NFWT offered to pay most of the expenses as they felt that Rose would 'champion the Women's Cause in the LCC.'¹⁸ North Lambeth was the chosen constituency because it was a two-member constituency where the Liberals had agreed to only field one candidate whom Rose, as an independent, would oppose.

Rose's election address was brief and practical. In education; smaller classes and better paid teachers- 'equal pay for equal work', restoration of the halfpenny fare on trams for children, mother's work made easier and no increase in rates- costs to be shared by richer districts.'¹⁹ Her campaign poster also asked the public to 'vote for a woman this time who understands children and the difficulties of housewives...give one of your two votes to Mrs Lamartine Yates.'²⁰ Nonetheless, it was not just the NFWT that were supporting Rose in the contest, the WFL also ran a ferocious campaign in *The Vote*. Although the WFL promoted all women

¹⁶ The Wimbledon seat was won in the 1918 General Election by Conservative candidate, Joseph Hood who achieved a majority of 10, 573- 63.2% of the vote.

¹⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

¹⁸ *Twelfth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teacher, 1918*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

¹⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

²⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*. See Appendix Ten

candidates in the upcoming municipal elections, they stated that they were ‘concentrating their efforts on forwarding the Candidates of Mrs How Martyn for the Middlesex County Council and of Mrs Lamartine Yates for the North Lambeth Division of the London County Council.’²¹ Advertisements in *The Vote* read ‘workers urgently wanted every day and night until and including March 6th.’ Women were not just needed for canvassing and speaking but asked to ‘act as postmen’ delivering election addresses and polling cards by hand.²² The campaign extended over ten days with three indoor and outdoor meetings every night. Venues included Bedford College, York Gate and Regents Park.²³ On polling day, on the Thursday 6th March 1919, it seemed that this two-pronged campaign from the London Unit and the WFL was successful with Rose securing one of the two seats in the constituency alongside the progressive candidate- Owen Jacobseen. Rose polled 2619 votes and Owen polled 2636 votes. What is even more striking about Rose’s success in the LCC election is that she was the only independent candidate to be elected and was one of 6 women out of 124 candidates to secure a seat on the new council.

The success of the LCC election was a monumental moment for Rose and she described the day in *The Vote* as ‘a triumph’, stating that ‘although the poll was small, the intensity behind the number was inspiring.’²⁴ North Lambeth, she argued, were not ignorant and not asleep. They were physically cramped-with three children and two parents living in one bedroom. Rose had visited the houses of Lambeth residents so that she could truly understand the issues that affected their lives. She

²¹ *The Vote*, “Women Wanted on the London County Council and on the County Council throughout the United Kingdom.” February 21. 1919, 90.

²² *The Vote*, “Women Wanted on the London County Council and on the County Council throughout the United Kingdom.” February 28. 1919, 97.

²³ *The Vote*, “Meetings to Promote Candidature of Women for the March Election.” February 14. 1919, 83.

²⁴ *The Vote*, “Winning a Seat on the LCC.” March 14. 1919, 114.

stated that what the North Lambeth residents wanted ‘they were humanly entitled to have.’ Furthermore, it meant an incredible amount to her that North Lambeth voted for ‘a woman independent of party as one of its representatives,’ because essentially, it meant that they trusted that she would do her uppermost to improve the conditions in which they lived and improve the facilities available for their children- something that she aimed to do from the very beginning.²⁵

It is clear from Rose’s suffrage activism in Wimbledon and beyond that she was far from a traditional Edwardian woman. This was particularly the case when it came to fashion because as we have seen in chapter two, Rose challenged the ‘absurdity of hair up and long skirts’ from an early age.²⁶ It is therefore unsurprising that she continued to defy convention when she became a London County Councillor. Her attire (or lack of) at the first meeting of the LCC initially sparked controversy when it was reported, in one of the national newspapers, that ‘tradition had been broken by a hatless woman member!’²⁷ It was reported that all women councillors ‘arrived well and timely and looking very business like at the first meeting of the LCC.’²⁸ However, the newspaper reported how ‘it has always been the custom for women members to wear their hats when attending council meetings’ but that ‘the old tradition was broken by Mrs Lamartine Yates whose grey hair was uncovered, and who wore a gown of light brown checked material.’²⁹ Rose was compared to ‘the Duchess of Marlborough who was wearing a brown beaver coat and a small black satin toque and a Miss Adler, in a well-cut black costume and

²⁵ *The Vote*, “Winning a Seat on the LCC.” March 14. 1919, 114.

²⁶ See chapter 2.3.

²⁷ “Fashions at the LCC” (author and newspaper unknown) Newspaper cutting. From The John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine Yates Collection, 1875-1954, Vol 1*.

²⁸ “Fashions at the LCC” (author and newspaper unknown).

²⁹ “Fashions at the LCC (author and newspaper unknown).

black velour hat.³⁰ This public outcry concerning Rose's appearance at the LCC meeting, is an issue that Rose would undoubtedly have found absurd. She became a councillor for North Lambeth to help and fight for the needs of her constituency, not worry about the clothes that she wore. The fact that the paper cutting that described 'Fashion at the LCC' was cut out by Rose and kept in her personal collection suggests that she found the issue slightly ridiculous or even amusing. Alongside this cutting is one from another newspaper that comments on the significance of 'The Woman Member's Hat.' The article challenges the publication of the first article, that inadvertently ³¹ condemned Rose for not wearing a hat, stating that the fact that all other women members wore their hats 'is of no consequence; it merely implies that they had not thought about it- they had probably not done their hair with a view to going hatless; they were not sure about the etiquette of the occasion but Mrs Lamartine Yates cared for none of these things. She was at work indoors; a hat was an inconvenience and therefore she took it off and solved the great question that has been agitating the minds of politicians.'³² This argument would have rung true for Rose, she was indeed at work and to a woman that is rarely pictured with a hat, whether outside or inside during the Edwardian period, it would probably have seemed more trouble than it was worth. Teamed with the fact that she declared, from an early age, her opposition to fashion customs, Rose probably wouldn't have cared what the other LCC members were wearing or what the press thought about her appearance.

It was not just Rose's choice of attire that gained people's attention during the LCC meetings. It is also reported that from March 1919 the weekly LCC

³⁰ "The Woman Member's Hat"(author and newspaper unknown).

³¹ "The Woman Member's Hat"(author and newspaper unknown).

³² "The Woman Member's Hat"(author and newspaper unknown).

meetings ‘had become more interesting.’³³ The NFWT suggest, in their Annual Report, that this was due to the fact that ‘the reactionaries can no longer sit in comfort and know that their resolutions will go through unchallenged.’³⁴ Indeed, Rose wasted no time in presenting the issue that both she, and the London Unit, felt were the most pressing issues in their locality. One of the first issues raised by Rose at the LCC meetings was the issue of women’s wages, in particular the salaries of women teachers. At a meeting in May 1919, Rose presented the Council with a petition ‘signed by over 12,000 women’ urging the council to ‘raise the women teachers salaries to the level of those of the men teachers.’ In addition to this, the LCC also received a ‘strong deputation’ of women in July 1919 that confirmed the NFWT’s policy, which Rose supported, of ‘no sex differentiation in salaries.’³⁵ Nevertheless, the issue of equal pay was not resolved because in the London Unit’s Annual Report of 1920, the NFWT states that ‘the vexed question of women teachers’ salaries has our ever concentrated efforts.’³⁶ This is because between the publication of the two Annual Reports in 1919 and 1920, the Burnham Committee Report was released. The report agreed the national salary scale for teachers, suggesting that women’s rate of pay be four-fifths of that of their male colleagues.³⁷ The London Unit declared their outrage at this sex differentiation in teachers’ salaries and declared that ‘there will be no period of peace’ until women teachers were paid equal of male teachers.³⁸

³³ *Second Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1919*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

³⁴ *Second Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1919*.

³⁵ *Second Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1919*.

³⁶ *Third Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1920*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

³⁷ The Burnham Committee of 1919 was established to determine a national pay scale for teachers. The 1919 Report suggested a minimum scale for primary school teachers that would be payable from 1920. For more details on the Burnham Committee and equal pay for teachers in London, please see; Dina M. Copelman, *London Women Teachers, Gender, Class and Feminism 1870-1930*, (London: Routledge, 1996)

³⁸ *Third Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1920*.

Rose made an initial contribution to the campaign for equal pay by trying to press this issue during the LCC meetings. The NUWT comment in further Annual Reports on the ‘splendid work of Mrs Lamartine Yates in the Council chamber, on the question of equal pay.’³⁹ They further state that her campaign in the LCC for equal pay ‘cannot be overestimated’ and that ‘the calls on her energies have, at times, been almost beyond the pale of human endurance.’⁴⁰

Nonetheless, it wasn’t just equal pay for women teachers that Rose campaigned for whilst on the LCC, the majority of her time as a London County Councillor was spent fighting to improve the lives of women and children within North Lambeth.⁴¹ One of the most pressing issues, in North Lambeth, was the housing situation. Rose described how residents ‘had gladly shown [her] the bad dwellings in which they had to live, freely expressing their indignation with authorities that consider[ed] them fit for human beings.’⁴² One report in the *South London Press*, recalled how one man had to sleep in ‘the same room in which the coffin of his dead child awaited burial.’⁴³ In order to awaken public interest into the ‘shocking conditions’ in which so many of North Lambeth’s residents were ‘compelled to live’, an invitation was sent to Queen Mary to ‘make a personal inspection of the conditions under which her subjects lived in North Lambeth.’⁴⁴

³⁹ *Second Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1919.*

⁴⁰ *Third Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1920.*

⁴¹ Rose’s activities within the LCC, and North Lambeth in particular, are very difficult to trace as very few records seem to remain. In fact, her son actually stated, in his unpublished autobiography, that ‘no written records that detail Rose’s LCC activities exist.’ This is slightly misleading because the Institute of Education house a collection on the NUWT that includes numerous annual reports, note books, cuttings and letters that offer insight into Rose’s activities in the LCC. The only downfall to this collection is that it only includes information that relates directly to the NUWT’s own aims.

⁴² *The South London Press*, “Housing in North Lambeth: Man Sleeps in Same Room as Dead Child.” May 16. 1919.

⁴³ *The South London Press*, “Housing in North Lambeth: Man Sleeps in Same Room as Dead Child.” May 16. 1919.

⁴⁴ *The South London Press*, “Housing in North Lambeth: Man Sleeps in Same Room as Dead Child.” May 16. 1919.

The invitation was signed by Mr Frank Briant M.P, Mr Owen Jacobsen and Rose. The trio also worked together to ‘show up the scandal of empty houses’ which meant that rebuilding in these deserted locations could go ahead. Rose argued repeatedly that the LCC had ‘the power to build houses and schools for the people and to order the insanitary [houses] to be pulled down.’⁴⁵ She argued that North Lambeth houses were overcrowded because so many empty ones are unfit to be inhabited’ therefore making residents’ rents and rates ‘unnecessarily high.’⁴⁶

Rose demanded that all new housing must ‘at least have windows with daylight, no living rooms in basements, proper coal cellars, an automatically flushed W.C for each household, electric lights, bathrooms, hot water supply, washing troughs and drying rooms.’⁴⁷ These were what Rose saw as the basic requirements for a family’s home. Furthermore, it was these requirements that Rose felt would help give a little more free time to working woman. This is apparent when she declared that ‘every labour saving device should be incorporated to relieve the overworked housewife.’⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it seems that Rose and the other representatives for North Lambeth were not as successful as they might have hoped as the housing situation remained a key issue in the 1922 elections for the seat.⁴⁹

In addition to Rose’s activities to improve housing for the residents of North Lambeth, she also ‘persistently supported every effort to improve the tram service and reduce the fares’ notably securing the half penny fare for children in her constituency. Her argument was that this fare was essential for women and families,

⁴⁵ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Rose Lamartine Yates, Independent Candidate North Lambeth*. Pamphlet. From The Institute of Education, UWT/D/35/24

⁴⁶ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Rose Lamartine Yates, Independent Candidate North Lambeth*.

⁴⁷ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Rose Lamartine Yates, Independent Candidate North Lambeth*.

⁴⁸ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Rose Lamartine Yates, Independent Candidate North Lambeth*.

⁴⁹ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Mary S Allen, O.B.E, Independent Candidate North Lambeth*.

as it would help women to manage the ‘family purse.’⁵⁰ However, by far Rose’s greatest achievement whilst on the LCC was the securing of a London County Council Grant to open a children’s minor aliment clinic in North Lambeth in 1921. Her bid for the grant was supported by an appeal from local teachers who felt that a clinic that would provide advice to parents and act as a minor aliment treatment centre for school-aged children would benefit the families of North Lambeth.⁵¹

Rose’s work to establish the clinic began in December 1919 when she informed the committee that she had approached Lord Haddo (a Scottish Peer and Politician and also a Progressive member of the LCC for Peckham from 1910-1925) ‘with the view to the establishment of a clinic in Lambeth.’⁵² It was thought that a building opposite to Waterloo Station could be acquired. Minutes for the London Unit suggest that along with a grant from the LCC, the London Unit also played an important role in helping Rose to raise funds for the purchase and maintenance of the building. One of the ways in which Rose and the London Unit raised funds for the clinic was by organising an American sale that was to be held in the Memorial Hall after Christmas.⁵³ The American Sale would have been a themed, fund-raising event. Similar to the themed sales/suffrage bazzars organised by women in the suffrage movement. The sale of American goods would have offered Rose and the London Unit, a key fun-raising opportunity for the clinic. An auction sale ‘for the purpose of raising funds for a welfare clinic’ also took place in March 1920. Rose asked that every tradesman of North Lambeth, ‘to give of his wares, be it cups and

⁵⁰ LCC Campaign Pamphlet. *Rose Lamartine Yates, Independent Candidate North Lambeth.*

⁵¹ Rose Lamartine Yates, *The Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic (Cuttan Memorial)* Manuscript. From the Institute of Education, UWT/D/49/1

⁵² *Extracts from minutes of meetings of L.U. officers and committee.* Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, UWT/D/49/1

⁵³ *Fifth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1919-20,* Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

saucers or kippers, boots, pianos, chairs or soup- no matter what the more the better.⁵⁴ The American sale alone raised 300 pounds meaning that this money, in addition to the profits made from the auction and the money obtained from the voluntary contributions of London Unit members, allowed for the purchase of the premises opposite Waterloo station and also for the building's refurbishment, remodelling and redecoration. Rose and the clinic committee (which consisted of three other women members; Miss Dawson, Miss Croxson and Mrs Lockwood) were also able to purchase all the equipment needed for the minor aliment children's centre. It was said to have been 'fitted up simply but adequately and is very airy and pleasant looking.'⁵⁵ The building comprised of 'a doctors room, a nurses room, a large waiting room and offices.' It is clear that Rose used her position on the LCC and on the committee of the clinic to ensure that women were at the centre of this clinic. The medical professionals appointed to the clinic were all female, the clinic doctor employed was Mrs Annie Sutherland and the clinic's nurse was a Mrs Woodhouse. At a committee meeting before the opening of the clinic, it was agreed by the committee that the clinic should be named after its founder, Rose Lamartine Yates and also a recently deceased London Unit member who had helped Rose initiate the scheme.

On the 24th September 1921, 'The Mayor of Lambeth and his colleague, Councillor Locket, declared The Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic (Cутten Memorial) open. Unfortunately, archival evidence regarding the daily workings of the clinic are scant and we have to rely on the incomplete collection of London Unit Annual Reports that detail the progress of the clinic. In the 1923 Annual Report the clinic is

⁵⁴ *The South London Press*, "For North Lambeth Children." January 30. 1920. From The British Library, Microfilm.

⁵⁵ *Extracts from minutes of meetings of L.U. officers and committee.*

described as a ‘success’, with several additions being made to the clinic by its second year.⁵⁶ These improvements included ‘a rest room for nurses’ and ‘a dental treatment centre.’⁵⁷ The addition of a restroom for nurses implies that multiple nurses had to be employed to cope with the demand placed on the minor aliment unit. In fact, it is reported that in 1925 alone the minor aliment centre had ‘treated over 4,000 cases.’⁵⁸ The dental centre, with its female dentist, offered by the LCC, had also treated over 2,000 cases in just one year.⁵⁹ By 1931 the minor aliment centre was treating up to ‘21,632 attendees’ with ‘2538 attendees’ made to the dental department.⁶⁰ The Annual Report also details how the clinic put on an annual Christmas party for ‘200 little patients’ where they were provided with tea, music, oranges and ‘stockings were distributed by Father Christmas.’⁶¹ Not only does this archival evidence suggest that the clinic was clearly needed by the children of North Lambeth, from its foundation in 1921, but that throughout the 1920s and 30s the Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic was of great importance in the daily lives of North Lambeth residents. The London Unit support this claim, when they stated in their 1932 Annual Report that the care provided by the clinic ‘cannot be over estimated’ and that members realise more than ever ‘what a boon the clinic has become in the poverty- stricken area of Lambeth.’⁶²

The existence of The Rose Lamartine Clinic and the centrality of the institution for the residents of North Lambeth clearly lasted beyond Rose’s time as

⁵⁶ *Seventh Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1922-23*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

⁵⁷ *Seventh Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1922-23*.

⁵⁸ *Ninth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1925-26*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

⁵⁹ *Ninth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1925-26*.

⁶⁰ *Fifteenth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1931-32*, Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, *London Unit Annual Reports*, UWT/F/73/24.

⁶¹ *Fifteenth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1931-32*.

⁶² *Fifteenth Annual Report of The London Branch of The National Union for Women Teachers, 1931-32*.

an LCC candidate. Rose only served one term as an Independent candidate for North Lambeth as she resigned her seat in 1922, offering her support for Independent candidate, Mary Allen. Paul Lamartine Yates suggests that ‘a number of considerations prompted Rose not to seek re-election in 1922.’ Firstly, the Liberals had decided that this year they were going to field two candidates instead of one and as an Independent she wouldn’t just have to fight the Conservative candidates but those too. Nevertheless, Rose’s reason for giving up her seat was much closer to home. For nearly 20 years Rose had dedicated her life to ‘women’s issues’ on a local and national scale. At the beginning of the 20th century she became the first woman councillor on the CTC board, she served the Wimbledon WSPU as their organising secretary from 1909 until 1915, she established two cost-price restaurants during the war and continued the campaign for suffrage under the auspices of the SWSPU and then dedicated nearly four years of her life to improving the lives of the residents of North Lambeth. It seems that by 1922, she wanted to spend some time with her family. This was implied in her official reason for retiring from the LCC. She stated that ‘I can only continue to serve by unduly depriving my family of certain home rites which it is the peculiar privilege and duty of a mother to perform. The marked unselfishness of my husband and son in being willing to forgo these in the public interest does not, I feel, justify me in further encroaching on their goodwill.’⁶³ However, although Rose officially retired from her position on the LCC, she could not cut loose all of her links to the constituency. In fact, Rose remained the Honorary Treasurer of the Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic until 1934, when she retired. Nevertheless, the clinic continued to remain an integral part of North Lambeth’s health care system up until 1958 when it was closed and offered to the National Health Service as it was ‘no longer needed in Lambeth due

⁶³ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

to various circumstances, among them was the improvement in the health of children in the past 38 years.’⁶⁴

It seems, however, that Rose retired as Honorary Secretary because she was placing her efforts in to collating material that she kept during the suffragette years. After Rose left the LCC to dedicate more time to her family in 1922, Rose, Tom and Paul travelled for a short time to South Africa and briefly considered emigrating to and settling near to the Letaba river which was located in the eastern Limpopo province of South Africa. They planned to purchase plots of land where they would produce and market citrus fruits. Nevertheless, Tom was now 76 years of age and fell ill twice whilst they had visited South Africa, so they decided to abandon the idea and remained at Dorset Hall ‘living quietly’ together until the unfortunate death of Tom, from Liver cancer, in May 1929.⁶⁵

The loss of her lifetime companion was crippling to Rose. Her son described the ‘intense loneliness’ felt by Rose after Tom’s death. He detailed that after she had buried herself in answering the many sympathy cards she had received, and had arranged the funeral, that ‘she faced nothingness.’⁶⁶ To make things worse, Paul returned to Cambridge to continue his degree and she was left to look after *Dorset Hall* all by herself, impossible, even with the help of an elderly gardener and ‘one living in servant.’⁶⁷ However, when Paul, left university and moved to Germany for four years, Rose ‘very slowly and reluctantly’ reached the conclusion

⁶⁴ Miss H. D Deadman, *Cutten Memorial Clinic: Important Notice*. Manuscript. From The Institute of Education, UWT/F/73/24

⁶⁵ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

⁶⁶ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

⁶⁷ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

that 'Dorset Hall had to go.'⁶⁸ The 'golden days', and they were indeed golden,' could in no way be reinstated.'⁶⁹ Although Rose 'toyed with several plans for Dorset Hall' such as a museum, and a public park to the building of a housing estate, she finally succumbed and sold the property to the Merton and Morden District Council.⁷⁰

It was in the process of moving to a 'comfortable flat' in Manor Fields at the top of Putney Hill, that Rose had to consider what to do with everything that the family had accumulated during their twenty-nine years at Dorset Hall. She couldn't very well take the contents of this thirteen-room house to her new apartment. Much of the furniture then was sold or given away to people that she knew and much of the correspondence she had saved over the years was destroyed. However, Rose refused to destroy any of the material relating to her suffragette years. Once she was settled in her new home, Paul described how she began 'putting it into order and conceived the idea of creating a permanent home for the memorabilia of the movement.'⁷¹ This permanent place of residence would be known as 'The Women's Record Room.'

7.2: Memorialising the Suffragette Campaign: Rose Lamartine Yates and the Women's Record Room

Throughout suffrage historiography there are brief references to the involvement of Rose in the Suffragette Fellowship Collection and particularly the

⁶⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

⁶⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

⁷⁰ Dorset Hall is now owned by *Merton Priory Housing* and has been split up in retirement flats for the elderly.

⁷¹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

Women's Record Room. The chapter has noted Elizabeth Crawford's suggestion that Rose was one of the 'prime movers' behind the formation of the Women's Record Room, a repository which constituted a 'formal archive in order to house relics and memoirs of the militant movement.'⁷² Likewise, Gail Cameron states that Rose was 'instrumental in building an archive of the suffrage campaign.'⁷³ Nevertheless, although it is recognised that Rose was instrumental in the formation of the Record Room, the extent of her involvement and the function and impact of the repository is an area that is yet to be considered by suffrage historians. The final section of the chapter then, will analyse the establishment of the Women's Record Room and the role of Rose in this. The purpose and function of the Record Room and its relationship to the Suffragette Fellowship will also be considered.

Throughout Rose's time in the WSPU, she kept and collected a great deal of material pertaining to the suffragette campaign in Wimbledon, including: Wimbledon Annual Reports, photographs, correspondence, badges, banners and pamphlets. It appears that these artefacts were so important to her that she couldn't bare to part with them. Yet at the same time, she knew that she didn't have the space in which to store them. It was then (in the mid 1930s) that she 'conceived the idea of creating a permanent home' for this suffrage material.'⁷⁴ It was at this point that Rose approached the Suffragette Fellowship, an organisation which had been housing relics and memoirs of the militant movement in the houses of their members since their formation in 1926. Elizabeth Crawford suggests that the fellowship's suffrage material was kept for some time, at Geraldine Lennox's house and then by Mary Phillips until a Record Room was opened in around 1937 at the

⁷² Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 763-764.

⁷³ Cameron, 'Yates, Rose Emma Lamartine (1875-1954)', *ODNB*.

⁷⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates' autobiography*.

Minerva Club on Brunswick Square, London.⁷⁵ The material was moved in 1939 when Rose managed to secure a house in Westminster that would enable Rose and the Fellowship to ‘make a complete history of the women’s fight for emancipation.’⁷⁶ The 1938 *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter* informs us that Rose ‘consented to act as the Honorary Treasurer of the Women’s Record House’ and called on women to contribute to the Women’s Record House Fund, which she suggested, needed ‘some three hundred thousand shillings to ensure continuity.’⁷⁷ Rose explained, ‘I already have a pound column, a shilling column and a pence column opened by subscribers eager to be the first in each column, which column will you come to and how many subscriptions will you collect and send on to me in cheques, postal orders or stamps?’⁷⁸ At the end of the column she wrote ‘just as to win citizenship for women we thought no sacrifice too great, so let us be true to our tradition, make great and willing sacrifices to leave behind us this unique historic record, yours in the cause, Rose Lamartine Yates.’⁷⁹

What is particularly noticeable about this article in the Fellowship’s newsletter is Rose’s reference, twice, to ‘making an historic record’. Never before this point, had one considered that Rose had kept much of the material that illustrates, so vividly, her significance within Wimbledon WSPU, so that an historic record could be created of her time in the suffragette movement. But here, in this article, her intention is clear. The records that she had saved, along with many other

⁷⁵ Geraldine Lennox was a former WSPU member and sub-editor of *The Suffragette*. She was also a custodian of The Suffragette Fellowship. Mary Phillips was a WSPU member and paid organiser for the WSPU from 1908-1913. Mary was also a member of the ELFS and is credited for naming their newspaper *The Workers’ Dreadnought*. Like Geraldine Lennox, she was also a custodian of the Suffragette Fellowship artefacts. For more biographical information see: Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, 341, 546.

⁷⁶ Rose Lamartine Yates, “The Miracle.” *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. 1938. From The British Library.

⁷⁷ Rose Lamartine Yates, “The Miracle.” *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. 1938.

⁷⁸ Rose Lamartine Yates, “The Miracle.” *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. 1938.

⁷⁹ Rose Lamartine Yates, “The Miracle.” *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. 1938.

suffragettes, would become part of an archive that historians use today to construct the histories of the suffragette movement. Hilda Kean, suggests that this creating of a historic record by suffragettes, was indeed something that they ‘consciously developed.’⁸⁰ Instead of throwing away banners, letters and badges, suffragettes kept them, handed them down for generations or gave them to museums therefore ‘giving an importance not usually applied to the ephemeral, or everyday,’⁸¹ Kean argues further, stating that the visual images such as postcards and photographs that were donated to museum collections ‘serve to create another layer of meaning.’⁸² Here, she argues, ‘was a political movement but also one that intended its present activities to be remembered in the future as an important historical phenomenon.’⁸³

The Women’s Record House at 6 Great Smith Street, Westminster, was opened by Rose in May 1939 and housed a vast range of suffragette material from banners to postcards. Each room had its own theme; ‘the early beginnings of the movement, the militant phase, prison records, souvenirs and reminiscences.’⁸⁴ However, the Record House wasn’t just used as a place to house relics, it also opened for weekly meetings of the Fellowship. Among the speakers were Teresa Billington-Greig who spoke on ‘More Women in Parliament’ and Dr Joyce Mitchell on ‘Social Credit.’⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the existence of the Women’s Record House was short lived, as it had to close in September 1939 ‘on account of the war.’⁸⁶ However there is confusion as to what actually happened to the relics housed in the Record Room as Gail Cameron has claimed that the building was destroyed in a bombing

⁸⁰ Hilda Kean, “Public History and Popular Memory: issues in the commemoration of the British militant suffrage campaign,” *Women’s History Review*, 14 (2005) : 585.

⁸¹ Kean, “Public History and Popular Memory,” 586.

⁸² Kean, “Public History and Popular Memory,” 586.

⁸³ Kean, “Public History and Popular Memory,” 586.

⁸⁴ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

⁸⁵ *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. “1938 Meetings.” 1938. From The British Library.

⁸⁶ *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. “Women’s Record House.” 1939-40. From The British Library.

during the Blitz and that only some material was salvaged- that being the material which formed part of the Suffragette Fellowship Collection.⁸⁷ However, Elizabeth Crawford suggests that ‘the premises were vacated’ and the material housed in the Record Room was taken for ‘safe-keeping’ at the home of Una Duval.⁸⁸ The confusion as to what happened to the material in the Record House is cleared up when the 1940 *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter* is examined. The newsletter corroborates Crawford’s argument as it states that when the Record Office was closed, in September 1939, that the ‘suffrage records, which are irreplaceable, have been removed and distributed to places of safety.’⁸⁹ The records that Rose contributed to the collection were taken back to her house for safekeeping. It appears that she never returned them to the Fellowship as there is very little that relates to her, or the Wimbledon WSPU, within The Suffragette Fellowship Collection today. Instead, a great deal of material pertaining to her life in the Wimbledon WSPU, and her friend Emily Wilding Davison, was donated to the Fawcett Library (now the Women’s Library at LSE) by her daughter in law, Ruth Yates. The Women’s Library, however, do not hold all of the material pertaining to Rose’s life. The John’s Innes Society also have an incredible collection of letters, photographs and even birth certificates, which belonged to Rose. They now sit in a metal chest, with Rose’s name engraved in the front, in a small attic in a little lodge that belongs to the John Innes Society in Wimbledon.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Cameron, Yates, Rose Emma Lamartine, 1.

⁸⁸ Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*, 663.

⁸⁹ *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. “Women’s Record House.” 1939-40. From The British Library.

⁹⁰ John Innes (1829 - 1904) was a businessman, property developer and benefactor who who lived in the old village of Merton and created Merton Park. His name has become famous through his bequest that founded the first horticultural research institute in the country.’ From <http://www.johninnesociety.org.uk/home> (Accessed September 1, 2017).

Nevertheless, the idea of reopening the Women's Record Room was considered important to many former activists and in 1944, after free accommodation was offered in Kensington by the International Women's Service Group, the material was gathered together and catalogued. Rose's position as treasurer and amateur archivist, was taken over by a Helen Archdale who 'offered to examine and catalogue the collection.'⁹¹ Due to the various locations of the documents, the material was 'in much confusion.'⁹² After the war, on February 6th 1947, the Record Room was re-opened from 2-6pm every Saturday at 41 Cromwell Road, London. The Record Room initially received many visitors with school children reflecting on how the displays were 'very moving.'⁹³ One student explained how she was 'appalled to see in the photographs the brutality of treatment which was accorded to the suffragettes when they were arrested.'⁹⁴ With the attraction of school visitors and the discovery of the museum by journalists and filmmakers (the archive was used as a basis of Howard Spring's *Fame is the Spur*) the museum was eventually having its desired effect-for people to see and reflect upon the sacrifices of women in the suffragette movement and therefore confirm its historical importance.⁹⁵

By 1949, however, the running of the museum became too arduous and an expensive a task. The trustees, many of whom were elderly women by this time, decided that 'the financial responsibility for housing the collection was 'a heavy one' and one that 'could not continue indefinitely.'⁹⁶ The best course of action was to

⁹¹ *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. "Women's Record House." 1944 From The British Library.

⁹² *Suffragette Fellowship Newsletter*. "Women's Record House." 1944 From The British Library.

⁹³ *Calling All Women*. "Women's Record House." February 1947. From The British Library.

⁹⁴ *Calling All Women*. "Women's Record House." February 1947.

⁹⁵ Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 664.

⁹⁶ *Calling All Women*. "Record Room and London Museum." February 1949. From The British Library.

find a new home for the collection. It was therefore, ‘after careful consideration,’ that the trustees (Edith How-Martyn, Enid Goulden Bach, Una Duval, Mari Hussey, Winifred Mayo and Stella Newsome) accepted an offer from the London Museum who had ‘ensured a permanent and dignified home for the suffragette records, which will be in keeping with their value and significance in British Social History.’⁹⁷

It is not surprising that Rose played no role in the re-opening of the Record Room and its transfer to the Museum of London, because as has been seen throughout this thesis, she did have a habit of putting all of her efforts into one cause and then moving onto the next. After the establishment of the Record Room in 1939, however, it does not seem that Rose was ever again active in public life. Instead, she settled in her Putney flat and ‘delighted in her grandchildren’- whom she adored. In 1951, she brought her son a house in Sevenoaks and ‘visited frequently.’⁹⁸ Just three years later, after a brief illness, she died of colon cancer at the age of 79. She was cremated and buried next to her beloved husband, Tom, in the family’s plot in St Matthew Avenue, Brookwood Cemetery.⁹⁹ At her funeral service the following tribute was read:

Let us be truly thankful to God for the life that has closed. Hers was devoted with passionate energy to helping people and causes. She was every inch a fighter. She fought injustice, fought for the advancement of her sex, fought for the welfare of children and for the rights of those she befriended; no matter what the cost to her person.

With her gifts of speech and the dynamic of her personality she could make the crowd hers. Fear she knew, but she so mastered it that the world saw only unflinching courage in all her battles. Fiercely burned within her a divine determination to do good.

⁹⁷ *Calling All Women*. “Record Room and London Museum.” February 1949.

⁹⁸ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

⁹⁹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

What an example to others was her spirit of selfless devotion to the many tasks she took on. How high and unswerving the principles of personal conduct and of thought which she set. There could be no compromises with the mediocre, no countenancing wrong.

Yet with all she sought and gave affection in large measure. So many people loved her, though many of them already passed away. So many valued her genuine interest in their problems and the practical solutions she achieved. So many enjoyed the brilliance of her conversation, ranging with wit and understanding of all manner of things. And to the end, despite infirmity, she cared most for the comfort and well-being of others and least for herself.

Here indeed once can say: this life has been lived abundantly.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

This tribute to Rose, her life and achievements, not only captures so accurately her character but also her determination throughout her entire life to fight for what she felt was just and right. What we have seen, not just throughout this chapter, but throughout this thesis, is a woman who was ‘almost inexhaustible.’

¹⁰¹ From 1900 – 1922 she didn’t stop campaigning, whether it be for women’s suffrage, women’s legal rights as wives and mothers or children’s fares on Lambeth trams, she didn’t stop. But it seems that she didn’t stop because she couldn’t. She lived in a world where there were so many injustices and causes to champion that she felt that it was her duty to dedicate her whole self to whatever cause she chose to back. She became a public figure to whom people looked up to, which in turn, nourished her energies even further.

This chapter has demonstrated that although the fight for enfranchisement was an extraordinarily important part of Rose’s life and political career- a part of her life that she clearly looked back on with pride and delight, it alone did not define

¹⁰⁰ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

¹⁰¹ Lamartine-Yates, Paul. *Paul Lamartine Yates’ autobiography*.

her. She was an ardent suffragette, but her significance extended far beyond her work for women's suffrage. The exploration of Rose's LCC career has demonstrated how Rose's election to the London County Council provided her with a platform on which she, as a practical woman and mother, used her voice and influence to help improve the lives of women and children in North Lambeth by shaping the local political agenda and ensuring that local women and children were a priority. She not only worked tirelessly to improve the living conditions of North Lambeth residents, suggesting houseplans, that would benefit housewives and working women, she campaigned for equal treatment of women in wages and stood up for the better treatment of children and poor families. The Rose Lamartine Yates Clinic was the most tangible benefit that she secured for the North Lambeth community.

The exploration of Rose's life throughout the interwar period, however, has not only brought Rose to the fore with regard to her role and achievements whilst on the LCC, but also with regard to Rose's role in the establishment of the Women's Record House. By considering Rose's contribution to the founding of a formal archive that now forms part of The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, this research has added further historical evidence to the suggestion that suffragettes actively historicised the militant movement for enfranchisement. Moreover that Rose Lamartine Yates was central to this historicisation of the past.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

From private and reticent beginnings in 1905 to provocative public campaigns on Wimbledon Common up until the summer of 1914, the suffrage campaign for enfranchisement in Wimbledon was a broad and extensive local movement. The local suffrage campaign brought a considerable number of Wimbledon women to the forefront of popular politics, introducing many women into the public political arena for the first time in their lives. Like other local studies into the suffrage movement, this research has suggested that the Wimbledon branches of the WSPU, NUWSS and CLWS were the location in which the majority of suffrage activists engaged in suffrage campaign work. Furthermore, that it was within these microcosms that local women developed their suffrage and political identities. It is apparent that the local branches of the Wimbledon WSPU and NUWSS removed themselves from their local comfort zones and showcased the Wimbledon movement at important national events. They also engaged in various national meetings, deputations, processions and rallies. Accordingly, it was this suburban district of south-west London that provided the 'key site' for much of their suffrage activism.¹

Taking the Wimbledon WSPU as its primary focus, this local investigation has shown how a branch, which may be perceived by some as London centric, operated for six years as an individual branch that initiated much of its own developments and enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy in its daily

¹ Hannam, "A View from the Regions," 226.

organisation. This seems to have been particularly the case when we consider the various ways in which the Wimbledon WSPU embraced militancy. The research conducted in chapters two and three challenges the notion that militancy was an escalating phenomenon and a tactic that the majority of WSPU women embraced.² Although suffragette militancy undoubtedly evolved over time, with the Wimbledon WSPU engaging in more violent and provocative militant tactics, this research has shown that these actions were committed in response to the conduct of the government and the treatment of their comrades in incidents like Black Friday. Furthermore, it is evident that these extreme militant tactics existed amongst a range of other militant strategies. For example, the resistance and evasion of the 1911 census, the sale of newspapers, and the fight for free speech on Wimbledon Common. This illustrates that militancy in Wimbledon ebbed and flowed and that the types of militant activism that were emphasised in the national press (such as the fire-bombing of post boxes, the cutting of telephone lines and window smashing) were, for Wimbledon women, an incredibly small part of a much broader campaign. Furthermore, through the analysis of women's personal recollections of their experiences within the Wimbledon WSPU, this thesis has contributed to the historiography surrounding militancy by illustrating that militancy is a chameleon concept. In other words, its meaning and impact is relative to the individual, the time and the place.

Related directly to the conclusions surrounding militancy, is the distinctive notion put forward within this thesis that militancy was not conducive to maintaining suffragettes' physical and psychological health in Wimbledon and

² Harrison, "The Act of Militancy," 26.

beyond. Furthermore, that the health of suffrage activists was compromised during day-to-day campaigning as well as throughout incarceration. Nevertheless, the most important conclusion and contribution to historical knowledge which derives from chapter four is an illustration of how imperative suffrage friendship networks were in providing networks of care for suffragettes in need of recuperation. Prior to the current research little was known about the ways in which suffragettes' health was sustained between 1903 and 1914. Accordingly, the data gleaned from this fresh study allows for a greater awareness of how essential nursing homes and recuperation centres (such as *Pembridge Garden's*, *Eagle House*, *Sea View* and *Mouse Castle*) were to the recuperation and ultimately the survival of suffragettes across the country.

This thesis has also shown how critical the unearthing of women's individual suffrage stories can be to expanding our understanding of the ordinary membership of suffrage organisations. The analysis of Wimbledon women's evasion, resistance and compliance of the 1911 census enabled further insight into the public and domestic lives of local WSPU members. Furthermore, this study permits a greater understanding of the ways in which economic, social and familial circumstances impacted upon the ways in which some activists could engage with the call to boycott the census. One of the most significant conclusions that can be taken from this area of research is the notion that the suffragette movement brought women of all different classes, religions, ages and familial structures together. Although the analysis of the census schedules demonstrates that it may have been easier for single women to engage in militancy, they equally show that it was just as simple for middle-class suffragettes to engage in suffrage militancy. This is because middle-class women often had the support systems in place to do so. For

example they may have had a husband and/or servants that facilitated their involvement in the local suffragette campaign. Accordingly, this challenges Brian Harrison's suggestion that 'the most adoptable and mobile instruments were the young, unmarried and unattached.'³

Prior to the current local investigation, the only name that may have been recognised with regard to the Wimbledon suffrage campaign was Rose Lamartine-Yates. By focusing on the Wimbledon locality and the daily activism of women within the local WSPU, NUWSS and CLWS, this thesis has actively sought to bring forward the names and suffrage stories of a number of Wimbledon activists who, prior to this study, would have remained shadowy figures and little more than names. Nonetheless, even though the recovery of their stories is important, it is their contribution to the local campaign that remains the most crucial. By examining the contribution of women such as: Rose Lamartine-Yates, Margaret Beatty and Edith Begbie, this research questions the role and importance of the well-known, charismatic and celebrated national leaders. This thesis concludes that it was, in fact, the local leaders of the Wimbledon suffrage movement who were the backbone the local campaign. Furthermore, it was these inspirational women who were crucial to the function, growth, and success of the Wimbledon campaign for enfranchisement. Until now however, their names have remained missing from the histories of the Edwardian suffrage movement. A poignant reminder that without a greater scholarly focus on the local women who engaged in the fight for enfranchisement across the country, we will only ever create a partial history.

³ Harrison, "The Act of Militancy,"64.

A further conclusion that can be drawn from this study derives from moving the focus of consideration away from the WSPU and concentrating specifically on the broader campaigns for the vote within Wimbledon. Through the exploration of the daily activities and functioning of the LSWS, CLWS and MFWS this thesis has been able to demonstrate that the suffrage movement in Wimbledon was a broad and expansive movement with suffrage activists able to locate their activities and suffrage identities over a wide range of suffrage societies. The project has also shown that when women and men were able to establish their suffrage activism within organisations like the CLWS and MFWS, that these organisations provided activists with a space in which women and men could transcend party political allegiances, organisational tactics, class and sometimes gender and religious differences and become united under a single issue. This research into other suffrage organisations in Wimbledon is a particularly distinctive element of this thesis because of the ways in which it can add to a wider history of lesser-known suffrage organisations like the CLWS and the MFWS and the contribution that they made to campaign for enfranchisement. Histories that still remain relatively uncharted.

Perhaps the most poignant and distinctive conclusions that this research presents surrounds daily life after the WSPU, from 1914- 1918, and feminism during the interwar period. Throughout historiography it is suggested that the suffrage campaign for enfranchisement during wartime was fractured and fragmented. Furthermore, it has also been implied that WSPU women abandoned the 'Votes for Women' campaign after the Pankhurst leadership suspended suffrage activism during wartime. Although some women embraced their leader's form of patriotism, the final section of this thesis has been path breaking in its findings and

conclusions as it has illustrated that the Wimbledon WSPU defied convention and continued suffrage activism during World War One, furthermore, that many suffrage activists refused to support the war and formed small wartime suffrage organisations, like the Suffragettes of the WSPU, in order for suffrage campaign work to continue. This thesis has not only brought the SWSPU to the fore, it has also suggested that without further research into other small wartime suffrage organisations, we cannot fully understand the impact of wartime suffrage organisations on the broader campaign for enfranchisement. Of further importance is the way in which the final section of the thesis demonstrates how the extension of the franchise in February 1918 opened up new possibilities for women at local and national levels. Not only has this thesis demonstrated how municipal politics offered newly enfranchised women a more accessible method of gaining political power and influence, it has also added further historical evidence to the suggestion that suffragettes actively historicised the past.

The final statement within this conclusion however, must take Rose Lamartine Yates as its focus. Prior to this investigation, Rose's incredible life and career was concealed. Nevertheless, through the exploration of Rose's daily life, suffrage journey and political career this research has shown how central Rose was to every cause that she championed. She isn't just recognised as an ardent suffragette but a county councillor, a memorialiser and a social and moral reformer. Moreover, that her devotion, passion and energy to helping people and causes was selfless. She wasn't just a fighter but an inspirational woman who deserves her rightful place in history.

Appendices

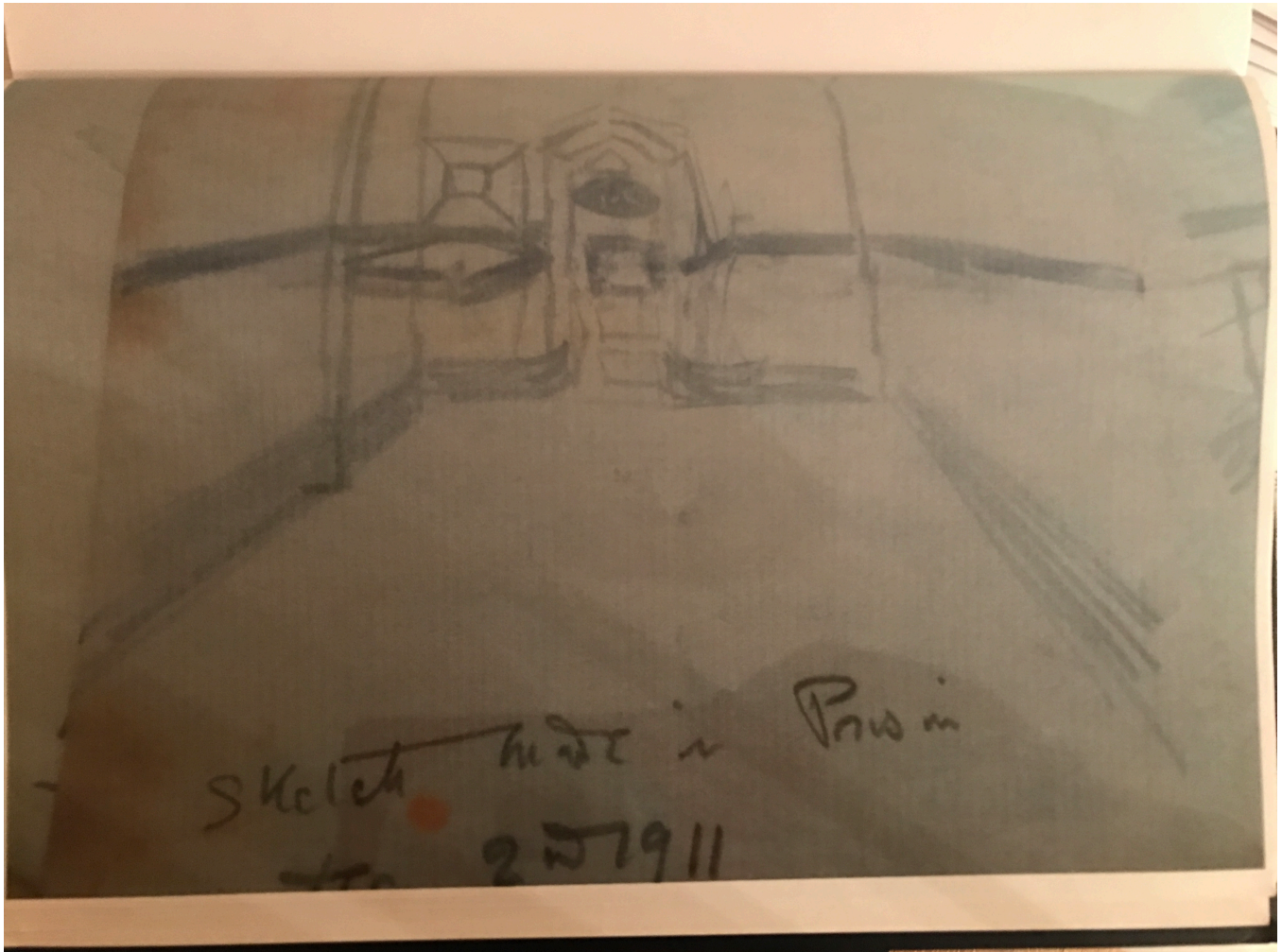
Appendix One

Photographer unknown, "A Suffrage procession in London." Photograph. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Women's Franchise Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*



Appendix Two

Holme Vera. *Sketch*. From The Women's Library, LSE, *Papers of Vera Holme 7VJH*.



Appendix Three

Blathwayt Colonel, "Rose Lamartine-Yates Planting an Australian Pine With Annie Kenney," Photograph. From The John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates Collection, 1875-1954, Vol*



Appendix Four

Lamartine-Yates, Rose, photographer, "Mary Leigh at Dorset Hall." Photograph.
From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*.



Appendix Five

Lamartine-Yates, Rose, photographer, "Mary Gawthorpe and Paul Lamartine-Yates." Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*.



Appendix Six

Photographer unknown, "Rose Lamartine-Yates and Mary Gawthorpe"
Photograph. From the John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates 1875-1954*.



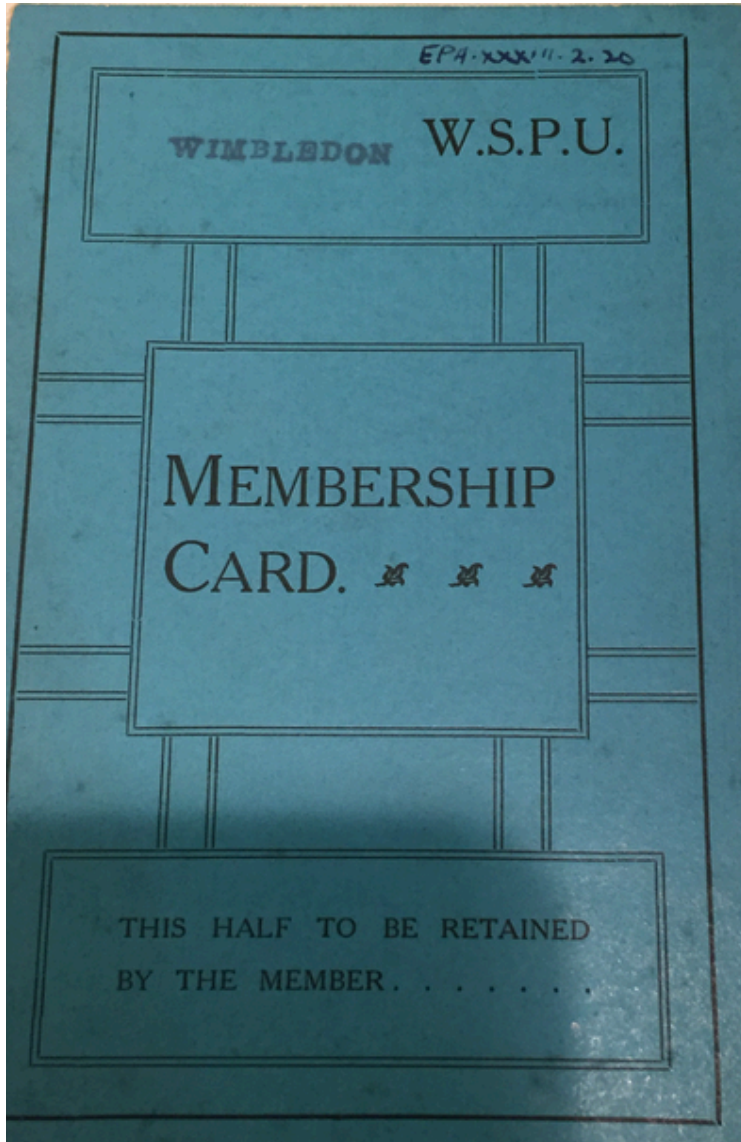
Appendix Seven

Emmeline Pankhurst and Nurse Catherine Pine inside *Pembridge Gardens*. From LSE Library Online.



Appendix Eight

Women's Social and Political Union Membership Card. From The Wimbledon Museum, *Women's Franchise, Wimbledon and District EPH XXXIII.2*



The **WIMBLEDON** Women's Social and Political Union,

OBJECTS.

To secure for Women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to Men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

METHODS.

The objects of the Union shall be promoted by :—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such time as the franchise is granted.
3. Participation in Parliamentary Elections in opposition to the Government Candidate and independently of all other Candidates.
4. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the position of outlawry to which Women are at present condemned.
5. The organising of Women all over the country to enable them to give adequate expression to their desire for political freedom.
6. Education of public opinion by all the usual methods, such as public meetings, demonstrations, debates, distribution of literature, newspaper correspondence, and deputations to public representatives.

MEMBERSHIP.

Women of all shades of political opinion, who endorse the objects and methods of the Union, and are prepared to sign the Membership Pledge, are eligible for membership. It must be clearly understood that no Member of the Union shall support the Candidate of any Political Party in Parliamentary Elections until Women have obtained the Parliamentary Vote.

Appendix Nine

The Vote, "Votes Polled By Women Candidates." January 3rd. 1919. From The British Library, Microfilm, 278.


VOTES POLLED BY WOMEN CANDIDATES.			
Miss CHRISTABEL PANKHURST	Coalition.	Smethwick.	8,614.
COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ.	Sinn Fein.	Dublin (St. Patrick's).	7,835.
Miss MARY MACARTHUR (Mrs. W. C. Anderson).	Labour.	Stourbridge.	7,587.
Mrs. DESPARD.	Labour.	Battersea (N.).	5,834.
Miss ALISON GARLAND.	Liberal.	Portsmouth (Southern D.).	4,283.
Miss VIOLET MARKHAM (Mrs. Carruthers).	Liberal.	Mansfield.	4,000.
Mrs. DACRE FOX.	Independent.	Richmond.	3,615.
Mrs. PETHICK LAWRENCE.	Labour.	Manchester (Rusholme).	2,985.
Miss E. PHIPPS, B.A.	Independent.	Chelsea.	2,419.
Mrs. HOW-MARTYN, B.Sc.	Independent.	Hendon.	2,067.
Mrs. J. McEWAN.	Liberal.	Enfield.	1,987.
Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY	Liberal.	Birmingham (Ladywood).	1,552.
Mrs. OLIVER STRACHEY.	Independent.	Chiswick.	1,263.
Miss EUNICE G. MURRAY.	Independent.	Glasgow (Bridgeton).	991.
Miss W. CARNEY.	Sinn Fein.	Belfast (Victoria).	395.
Hon. Mrs. MACKENZIE.	Labour.	Welsh University.	176.
STILL TO BE ANNOUNCED.			
Mrs. LUCAS.	Ind. Unionist.	Kennington.	

Appendix Ten

Rose Lamartine-Yates' London County Council Campaign Poster. From The John Innes Society, *Rose Lamartine-Yates Collection, 1875-1954*.

London County Council Election, N. Lambeth.
Polling Day: Thursday, March 6th, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**VOTE FOR
A WOMAN THIS TIME.**



**Who also understands the Children and the
Housewife's difficulties.**

Pure Milk—Cheap and Plenty.
New Houses to be built and existing ones to be put in proper repair.
A Fire for every Home.
Short Distance Trams—A Seat for Everyone.
Every Child an equal chance.
Mother's work made easier.
No increase of Rates—Cost to be shared by richer districts.
Fair Play for Discharged Sailors and Soldiers—Wages not to be
lowered because of Pension received.

GIVE ONE OF YOUR TWO VOTES TO

MRS. LAMARTINE YATES

MEETINGS (Indoor).—Lollard Street Schools, Thursday, 27th February.
St. Andrew's School, Roupell Street, Monday, March 3rd.
Johanna Street Schools, Tuesday, March 4th.

ALL AT EIGHT P.M.

Printed by Wayre & Son, Ltd. (T.U.), Lower Kennington Lane, S.E.; and Published by
Anna Munro, 10 Hercules Road, S.E.

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Calling All Women.

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The Common Cause.

The Daily Herald.

The Kilburn Times.

The Times.

The Vote.

Votes for Women.

The Suffragette.

The Suffragette News Sheet.

The West London Advertiser.

The Wimbledon Boro' News.

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The Women's Freedom League Temporary Newsletter

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