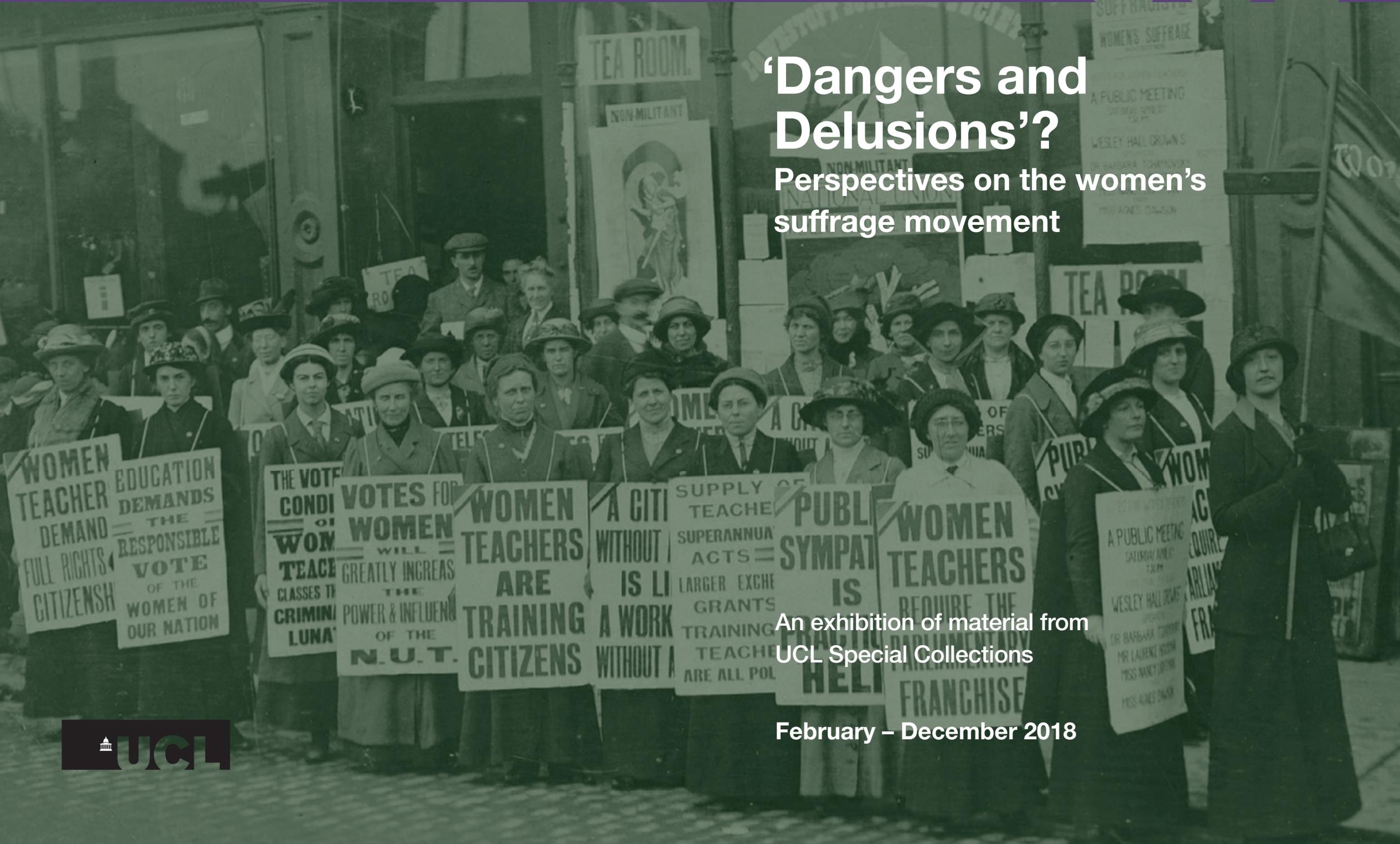




# 'Dangers and Delusions'?

Perspectives on the women's suffrage movement



An exhibition of material from  
UCL Special Collections

February – December 2018



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the women’s  
suffrage movement**

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**February – December 2018**

**#dangersanddelusions**

**CHELSEA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION**  
Saturday, December 14th, 1918  
From 7 a.m. till 9 p.m.

The Nation needs the help of women in this critical time.

**VOTE FOR PHIPPS**

INDEPENDENCE AND PROGRESS.

Central Committee Rooms: 24, King's Road  
where help will be welcomed and enquiries

Printed and Published by Fream, Manning & Co., 12a, Le...

**R**are the Reasons  
why women can't vote -  
Lord Curzon has plenty  
from which you can quote  
"Irrefutable reasons,"  
but while you are quoting  
Don't mention the countries where women  
are voting.

"Votes for Women," December 31, 1908. 461 1907-1908

**VOTES FOR WOMEN**

EDITED BY FRIDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE.

VOL. III. (New Series), No. 95. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1909. Price 1d. Weekly. (Postage 1/6)

**THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE SMUTTY.**



Mr. POT: "Kettle, you black, unrepresentative rogue, how dare you touch the British taxation without representation is legalised robbery?"  
SERVANT: "Now then, Pot, you're blacker than my coffee, and you refuse to assent them at all. It's a shame."

## Preface

The movement calling for women's right to vote in the United Kingdom was drawn out over several decades and generated intense differences of opinion, not only between those for and against electoral equality, but also within pro- and anti-suffrage campaigns. This exhibition draws on items held in UCL Special Collections – satirical commentaries, campaign literature, personal notes and petitions – to examine the actions and reactions surrounding the case for universal suffrage, from the 1860s up to the first legislative step towards equality for women: the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

## Introduction

Coming in to force one hundred years ago, the Representation of the People Act, 1918 granted the vote in Britain to some women over the age of 30. The long-running suffrage campaign that led to this change has strong resonance and interest for us today, although when it first began in the 1860s 'the Cause' was of no greater interest to political activists of the time than other campaigns over vaccinations, compulsory education or the early closure of public houses. It is also easy to overstate the revolutionary nature of what was a very conservative measure; only in 1928, a full decade later, was the vote extended to women on the same terms as men. Nonetheless this centenary provides an important opportunity to commemorate this historic change, and also to reflect on the progress made by women at UCL and in wider British society since 1918. This library display is linked to an Octagon Gallery exhibition in 2018, *Disrupters and Innovators: Journeys in gender equality at UCL*. It draws on UCL's rich library and archive collections to consider both the women's suffrage movement and the anti-suffrage reaction, in all their diversity.

Women's suffrage first became a matter of public debate in Britain during discussion over franchise reform in the early nineteenth century. However, the 1832 Reform Bill explicitly restricted the suffrage to 'male persons'. The Chartist movement included a demand for women's suffrage in the 1838 People's Charter, but this was dropped from later versions. From the 1850s and 1860s the women's movement became organised through the so-called Langham Place set, which included Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes and which published an early feminist periodical, *The English Woman's Journal*. After being elected to Parliament in 1865 on a programme that included women's suffrage, John Stuart Mill presented the Women's Suffrage Committee petition with 1,499 signatures to Parliament. He also introduced a suffrage amendment as part of the debate on the 1867 Reform Bill,

rejected by a vote of 194 to 73. Right up to his death a few years later Mill remained a strong supporter of women's suffrage, as illustrated by a letter to UCL Professor George Croom Robertson.

In 1865 the National Society for Women's Suffrage was formed to bring together local suffrage societies. These had been popping up in cities across the country, including Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham, Edinburgh and London. Many of this first generation of suffragists also were, or had been, associated with other campaigns, such as the anti-slavery movement, Anti-Corn Law League and protests over the Contagious Diseases Acts. Most of these pro-suffrage groups demanded the franchise for women on the same terms as men, which at that date would have included property and residence restrictions.

There was early success in gaining the vote for women ratepayers at a local level through an amendment to the 1869 Municipal Corporations (Franchise) Act. Women were also granted the right to vote for – and stand for election to – local school boards and, after 1894, Boards of (Poor Law) Guardians. By 1892 over half a million women were eligible to vote in local elections in England, Scotland and Wales.

However, success at national level was more elusive. Historians have argued that there was a parliamentary majority in favour of women's suffrage before the end of the nineteenth century, but the problem lay in how to pass a bill into law. Suffrage bills were introduced to Parliament on many occasions during the 1870s and 1880s, but the defeat of a women's suffrage amendment to the Liberal government's 1884 Reform Bill was a bitter pill for many. While many Liberal MPs supported women's suffrage in principle, they opposed it in practice, concerned that most of the women enfranchised would vote Conservative.

There was also a growing movement opposed to women's suffrage. It included both women and men, with the novelist Mary Ward (better known as Mrs Humphrey Ward) emerging as its moving spirit. Over 100 prominent women signed Ward's 1889 'Appeal against the Extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to Women'. The anti-suffrage movement became more organised in 1908 with the formation of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, of which Ward was President; a year later the Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage was formed. On display is Mary

Ward's 1910 appointment diary listing her upcoming anti-suffrage meetings; this was also the year that she was instrumental in helping her son get elected to Parliament. Groups in favour of extending the suffrage assiduously collected the propaganda material produced by those against – such as H B Samuels' 'Dangers and Delusions' pamphlet, preserved in the archives of the National Union of Women Teachers at UCL Institute of Education and exhibited here.

Further parliamentary bills were introduced with little chance of success in the 1890s. However, the decade did see significant growth in membership of suffrage societies as well as a broadening of the base support for the cause among working-class women, particularly in the north of England. An 1896 meeting of suffrage societies chaired by Millicent Garrett Fawcett agreed that 17 of the largest groups would federate as the National Union of Woman's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). By 1909 the NUWSS had 50,000 members, but votes for women were still no closer to becoming a reality.

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in 1903 by Manchester-based veteran suffrage campaigner Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia. The WSPU excluded men from membership and adopted 'Deeds, not words' as its slogan, in an attempt to distinguish itself from the constitutional methods of the NUWSS. It was not initially a militant organisation. However, when the Liberal Party won the 1906 General Election but failed to give women the vote, despite the personal support of the Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the WSPU began to adopt methods such as disrupting meetings, arranging large-scale demonstrations and civil disobedience. The exhibition allows connections to be traced between the new Woman's Press of the 1900s, encapsulated in the WSPU's bestselling and brilliantly publicised *Votes for Women*, the first volume of which is on display, and the feminist press of the 1970s, including the ground-breaking magazine *Spare Rib*.

The press dubbed WSPU adherents 'suffragettes', and after 1908 their protests took on increasingly violent forms such as breaking windows, arson and bombing public buildings, including Westminster Abbey. Many suffragettes boycotted the 1911 census by hiding, spending the night away from their place of residence or simply

spoiling the census form. High-profile acts sought to keep up the political pressure, among them the attack on 'The Rokeby Venus' at the National Gallery in March 1914; this prompted the radical magazine *Blast*, edited by former Slade pupil Percy Wyndham Lewis, to implore suffragettes to 'leave art alone, brave comrades'. In fact art was more often deployed to aid the suffrage cause in other ways, for example through the Artists Suffrage League (1907), the Suffrage Atelier (1909) and other groups. Laurence Housman designed banners for the WSPU and his satirical *Anti-Suffrage Alphabet* was sold to raise money for the organisation. On Derby Day 1913 Emily Wilding Davison was trampled when she ran in front of the king's racehorse and died from her injuries. Between 1905 and the outbreak of the First World War around 1,000 women – mostly from the WSPU – and 40 men were imprisoned for militancy.

Founded as a progressive and radical institution, topics such as women's rights were under discussion at UCL from the outset. By the end of the century, many of the female research and teaching staff had become strong supporters of women's suffrage. However, the Women's Union Society remained officially neutral on this divisive topic before the First World War; its minutes recorded that it did not include support for the suffrage movement in its programme. Nevertheless many individual students and graduates were involved in suffrage activities, while alumnae such as Marion Wallace-Dunlop, who in 1909 became the first suffragette to go on hunger strike, were visible campaigners. Not all of their male peers were supportive, as revealed in letters from Alexandra Wright to Professor Karl Pearson describing an incident in which UCL medical students disturbed a suffrage meeting.

In the years before the First World War the NUWSS and its leader Millicent Fawcett grew increasingly frustrated with suffragette militancy, which she felt was undermining parliamentary support for women's suffrage. The 'Conciliation Bill' proposed a very limited franchise that was nonetheless the movement's best hope since 1884, but it was to founder in 1910, and again in 1911 and 1912. On the outbreak of war in 1914 the Pankhursts called an immediate halt to WSPU militancy, urging their members to throw themselves into the war effort instead. The more democratically run NUWSS was more hesitant, but eventually most of its members also took up war work in place of campaigning.

Women's suffrage came back onto the agenda in 1916 because the possibility of a general election in wartime forced the government to amend the franchise to enable men serving in the armed forces to vote. The NUWSS lobbied hard to ensure that the question of women's suffrage was included in the final bill. On 19 June 1917 the House of Commons voted by 385 to 55 to accept the women's suffrage clause. Following this decisive vote, opposition in the House of Lords collapsed.

The Representation of the People Act, 1918 was in effect a largely conservative measure. It gave the parliamentary vote to women over the age of 30 who were property owners, local government electors, the wives of local government electors or university graduates voting in a university constituency. Around 8.4 million women gained the right to vote, a majority of whom turned out to be middle-class married mothers and housewives rather than younger factory workers or professional women.

A follow-up act, the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918, allowed women over 21 years old to stand for election. Emily Phipps, a graduate of the University of London and prominent member of the National Union of Women Teachers, was one of 17 women to stand in December 1918. Her campaign materials deployed the favourite suffrage colour green (for hope) and declared that a vote for Phipps was a vote for 'independence and progress'. In the event Phipps lost the Chelsea seat she was contesting to the sitting MP Sir Samuel Hoare, and it was Countess Markievicz (née Constance Gore-Booth), a former UCL Slade student, who became the first woman elected to the House of Commons – though as a Sinn Féin candidate she did not take up her seat, in line with the party's abstentionist policy. Not until 1919 did Nancy Astor become the first female MP to sit in the House of Commons.

#### Dr Georgina Brewis

Senior Lecturer in the History of Education  
UCL Institute of Education

### Further reading

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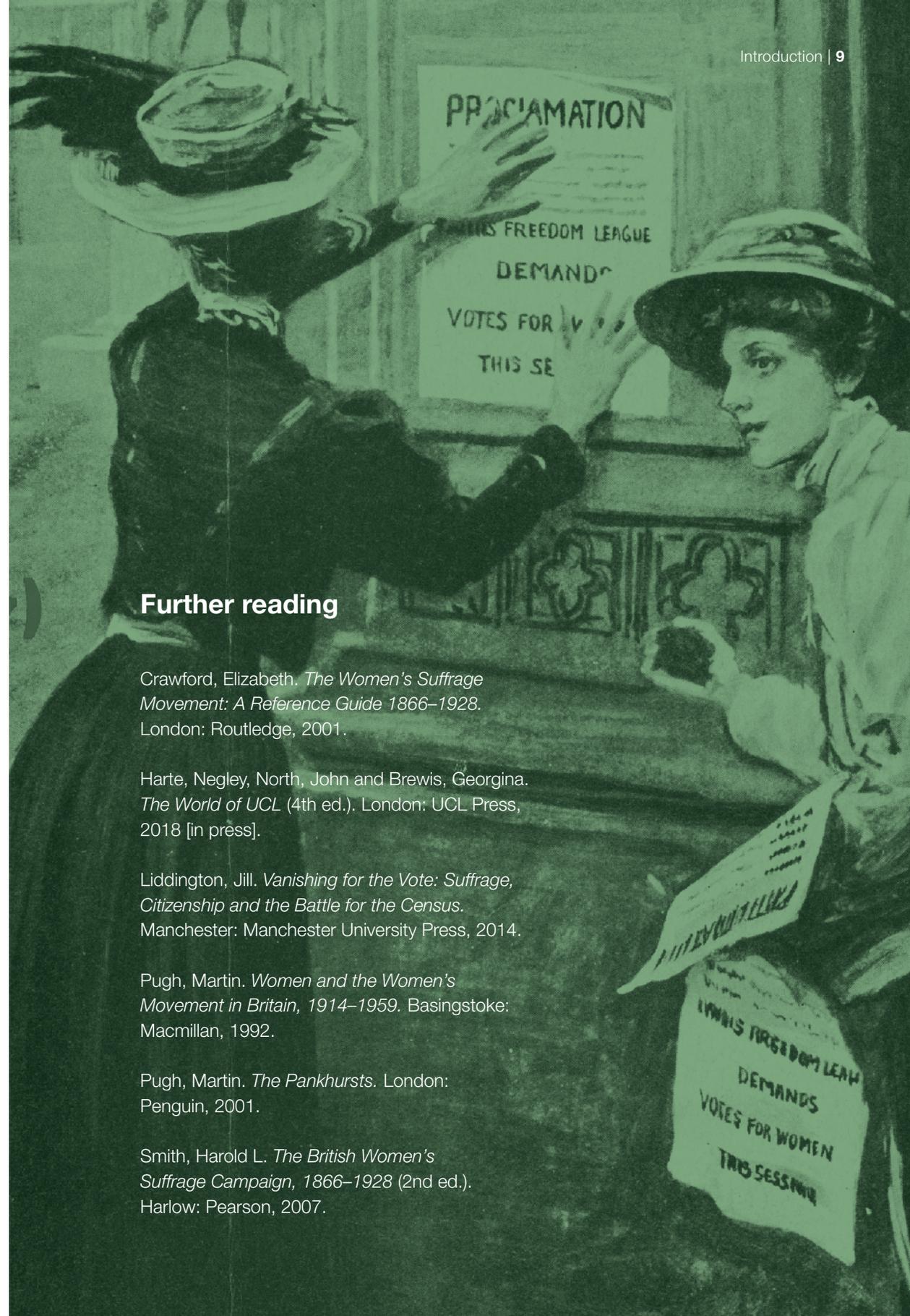
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## Main Case

### Recording the struggle

1

#### Photographs of a demonstration in support of women's suffrage in Lowestoft, Suffolk, 1914

NEWSAM LIBRARY ARCHIVES, UWT/G/2/4

The National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) was originally founded to campaign for equal pay for women teachers; over time it expanded its interests into a wide range of social, professional and educational issues, including women's suffrage. These photographs capture suffragists holding banners that argue specifically for the right to vote for women teachers. They may have been aimed at the less than sympathetic members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), hence the banner which proclaimed 'Votes for women will greatly influence the power and influence of the NUT'.



Also of interest are the banners and posters hanging in the window of the background tea room. These proclaim the support of non-militant suffrage societies, aligning protesters with the suffragist National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) rather than organisations such as the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) who led the more militant suffragette movement.



2

**Housman, Laurence. *Sex-war and woman's suffrage: a lecture given by Laurence Housman (member of Executive Committee Men's League for Women's Suffrage) at the large Essex Hall, May 7th, 1912.* London: Women's Freedom League, 1912**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN COLLECTION 348

Laurence Housman (1865–1959) was an artist, writer, satirist, pacifist and tireless campaigner, particularly for women's rights. He was a founder member of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, published advice on strategies for protesters and gave many public speeches on the subject.

This lecture was published by the pacifist-leaning Women's Freedom League whose publications, including its newspaper *The Vote*, are advertised at the back of the pamphlet. It was delivered at the Unitarian Essex Hall, which hosted weekly meetings on women's suffrage and stood opposite the offices of the Women's Social and Political Union, from which the Women's Freedom League had broken away in 1907.

The breadth of Housman's achievements, demonstrated in the Laurence Housman Collection at UCL, could become overshadowed by the eminence of his brother A E Housman, a great Classics scholar, poet and UCL Latin Professor (1892–1911). But it was their sister Clemence, also a writer, who seems to have influenced Laurence. Letters reveal that the two discussed women's suffrage in relation to fluid notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. This lecture argues that the 'Sex-War' between men and women, far from being the result of the suffrage movement, was the very problem that suffragists aimed to resolve.

3

***Spare Rib*, no.70, May 1978 and no.73, August 1978**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LITTLE MAGAZINES SPA

*Spare Rib* is generally regarded as the mouthpiece of the Women's Liberation movement of the 1970s and 80s, and illustrates the transformation of women's roles in society throughout these decades. Whereas many women's magazines of the period would have concentrated on beauty and domestic themes, *Spare Rib* sought to confront stereotypical roles and highlight the challenges faced by women. Its articles provided advice, commentaries on social issues and features on feminist history.

The issues shown here date from 1978 and include pieces directly related to the suffrage movement: a short story by Evelyn Sharp (author, journalist and key figure in

the Women's Social and Political Union) and a special issue looking back at the progress (or otherwise) made since the introduction of the 'Flapper Vote' in 1928, when women under 30 were finally enfranchised.



**Metcalfe, Agnes Edith. *Woman's effort: a chronicle of British women's fifty years' struggle for citizenship (1865–1914), with an introduction by Laurence Housman. Oxford: Blackwell, 1917***

*UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN COLLECTION 378*

*Woman's effort*, a detailed historical survey, was Metcalfe's first book on women's suffrage; her last was optimistically entitled '*At last*', conclusion of '*Woman's effort*' (1919).

Metcalfe served as Treasurer of the non-violent Women's Tax Resistance League; an obituary in *The Vote* of 1923 describes her as 'our gallant comrade in the Tax Resistance Fight'. She already had a BSc from London University when her provocative application to train as a barrister alongside men at Gray's Inn was rejected in 1903. Instead of law she continued her career in teaching, wrote on girls' education and became H M Inspector of secondary schools – work that informed her stance on women's suffrage, as she explains in this book's preface: 'The question of the education of women is intimately connected with that of their enfranchisement.'

Published during the First World War, the book's dedication mirrors those to men serving in wartime: 'To my fellow-countrywomen, whose services to the community, both actual and potential, have in the past been perhaps too lightly esteemed.'

***Pi*, no.262, 2 May 1968**

*UCL RECORDS, COLLEGE COLLECTION PERS*

*Pi* (or  $\pi$ ) *Magazine*, founded in 1946, is the magazine of UCL's Students' Union. This edition commemorates the 50th anniversary of the 1918 Act by reproducing the front cover of *The Daily Mirror* of 23 September 1912. On it the paper reported a notoriously violent incident that occurred at a public appearance of David Lloyd George in his hometown of Llanystumdwy, Wales. A more cynical view of these events can be found in a letter to Lloyd George from E W Evans, a local journalist, which is now in the National Library of Wales.

The centre spread of *Pi* – actually the dedicated 'women's section', called *Fille* – is dedicated to the anniversary. It carries interviews with two prominent women representing opposite sides of the debate, the Conservative Member of Parliament Dame Joan Vickers and the former suffragette Lillian Lenton.



## The campaign

6

### **Blast 1. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1914**

*UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LITTLE MAGAZINES BLA*

Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957) was an English artist and writer who studied painting at the UCL Slade School of Fine Art from 1898–1901. On 2 July 1914, just 33 days before Britain declared war on Germany, Lewis launched *Blast: review of the great English vortex*. This radical 'little magazine' was intended to be a vehicle for the manifesto of the vorticist group of avant-garde artists. Today its publication is considered a transformative moment in the history of English modernist art and literature.

The magazine's confrontational pink cover and oversized typography sets the tone of this 'battering ram' for the vorticists. Charged with pre-war optimism, it advocated a new and vital art that embraced the dynamism of modern life while attacking staid institutionalism and all forms of sentimentality. The content is dominated by the vorticist manifesto, but also includes Lewis's article 'To suffragettes: a word of advice'.

In typically combative style, this piece of patronising machismo advises women to 'stick to what you understand' and 'leave works of art alone'. This provocation is countered, however, by his genuine admiration of the suffragettes' heroic energy, referring to them as 'the only things ... left in England with a little life in them'. Lewis sought a 'vivid and violent' reinvigoration of British culture, so his appreciation for the suffragist attack on the Establishment is fitting. The language is enhanced by a typically vorticist visual style, emphasising a rejection of stuffy tradition in favour of a dynamic modern culture. The geometric, oversized fonts employed here are more reminiscent of magazine advertisements than the text of a literary journal.

The First World War proved to be both the beginning and the end of the vorticists, with optimism swiftly giving way to despair and disillusion. The second and final issue of *Blast* was published on 20 July 1915, and was noticeably more sombre in tone and appearance than its predecessor.

7

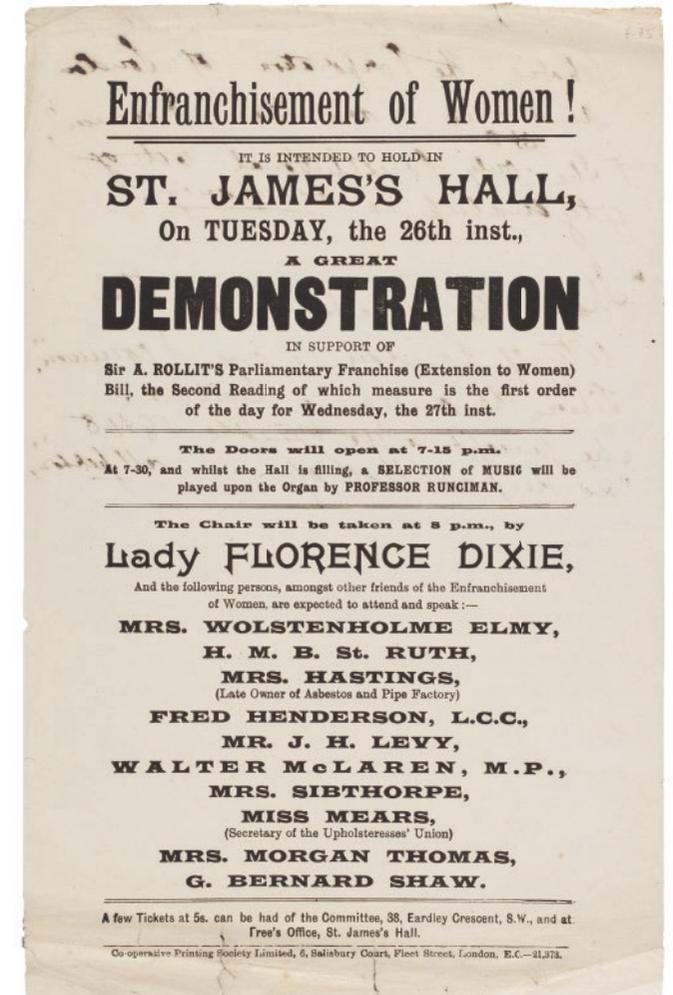
### **Notice of a demonstration in support of Sir Arthur Rollit's Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, 1892**

*UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MS ADD 157 BOX 1 FOLDER 5, F.75*

This printed notice was found in the papers of the women's rights campaigner Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, and has her manuscript notes about citizenship on the reverse. It advertises a demonstration in support of the 1892 Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, which proposed extending the franchise to between c.8–900,000 women, based on income and social status.

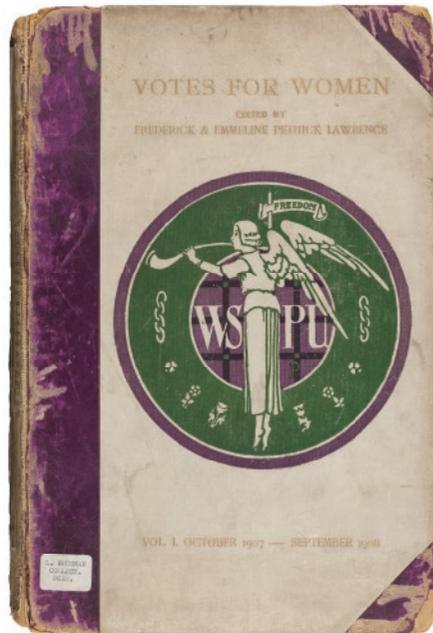
Prominent figures, including suffrage campaigners Lady Florence Dixie and Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy and the playwright George Bernard Shaw, were expected to attend. On the night the demonstration was apparently interrupted by members of the Women's Franchise League. They opposed the Bill because it did not expressly include married women.

An open letter from former Prime Minister W E Gladstone setting out his arguments against the Bill is also on display (see Item 16).



**Votes for Women. London: The Reformer's Press, 1907–8. Vol.1  
(October 1907 to September 1908), top left**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN  
COLLECTION 460 (BOX 10 FOLIOS)



**Votes for Women. London: St Clements Press, 1909–10. Vol.3  
(new series), nos.95 (31 December 1909), 128 (19 August 1910)  
and 132 (16 September 1910)**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN COLLECTION  
461, 465 AND 466

Published from 1907 until 1918, *Votes for Women* was funded and initially edited by Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. This husband and wife team wanted the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) to have its own newspaper after the splinter group, The Women's Freedom League, had broken away.

At the time of *Votes for Women's* foundation, suffrage newspapers were scarce. By 1910 printing had become weekly rather than monthly and circulation had reached 30,000 a week. The now influential editors were imprisoned in 1912. After being released they argued against the WSPU's increasingly violent methods of protest and were expelled, taking the paper with them.

The volume displayed here is bound in the colours Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence chose for WSPU. She explained her choice in a 1908 issue of the newspaper: 'Purple ... stands for the royal blood that flows in the veins of every suffragette ... white stands for purity in private and public life ... green is the colour of hope and the emblem of spring.'

The striking images, caricatures and cartoons seen here were typical of the contemporary press. Content also included campaigning articles by women and men, book reviews, obituaries, such as that for Florence Nightingale in no.128, and round-ups of local activism. All this incongruously appears alongside the more conventional activities of women's lives: advertisements for Selfridge's, property at the new Letchworth Garden City, vegetarian boarding houses and female private tutors.

**'A reply to Mr. Gladstone': leaflet issued with *Votes for Women*. London: St Clements Press, 1909–10. Vol.3 (new series), no.65 (December 1909)**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN COLLECTION 461

This leaflet was issued without a named author, but presented collectively by the Women's Social and Political Union. It is a good example of the platform that *Votes for Women* offered for responses to political developments.

Herbert Gladstone, son of William Gladstone, was serving in the Liberal government as Home Secretary at the time. He supported the police's use of violence against suffragettes, in particular the force-feeding of women prisoners on hunger strike.

Sylvia Pankhurst, Emmeline's daughter, explains in her 1911 book *The suffragette* how force-feeding was achieved by inserting a tube down the throat and into the stomach of the victim. She recounts the protests raised in Parliament about this dangerous procedure and how it was carried out – often by staff without suitable medical training. Pankhurst also describes how Labour MP James Keir Hardie's 'reminder that the last man prisoner to whom such treatment had been meted out had died under it' was, shockingly, 'met with shouts of laughter by the supporters of the Government'. Pankhurst concludes with a sharp attack on the Home Secretary: 'Mr. Gladstone tried to shelter himself behind the officials who were his subordinates, and to place the responsibility on the medical officers. For this he was strongly condemned by the *British Medical Journal*, which characterised his conduct as contemptible.'

No. 65.

## VOTES FOR WOMEN.

The Women's Social and Political Union.

Head Office: 4, CLEMENTS INN, STRAND, W.C.

Telegraphic Address: "Wospoin, London."

Telephone No. 2724 Holborn (three lines).

Founder and Hon. Secretary—MRS. PANKHURST.

Hon. Treasurer—MRS. PETHICK LAWRENCE.

Joint Hon. Secretary—MRS. TUKE.

Organising Secretary—MISS CHRISTABEL PANKHURST, LL.B.

Publishing Office—THE WOMAN'S PRESS.

Newspaper—VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Bankers—MESSRS. BARCLAY & CO., FLEET STREET, E.C.

Colours—PURPLE, WHITE, & GREEN.

## A REPLY TO MR. GLADSTONE

### Frog-marching in Liverpool Prison.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone has written to a correspondent to deny the charges brought by the Women's Social and Political Union of cruelty to a Suffragette in Liverpool Prison at a time when she was on remand, and therefore still **an unconvicted prisoner**.

He gives this denial on the strength of a **secret inquiry** held by the visiting justices, and he accuses the officers of the Women's Social and Political Union of bad faith in publishing their statement.

In spite of Mr. Gladstone's denial we adhere to the charges made. We do so on the strength of the **written testimony of the woman** on whom the outrage was perpetrated. Miss Selina Martin is personally known to the officials of the Union as a reliable and trustworthy woman of high moral character. In a letter from her posted to our head office at 4, Clements Inn, London, she stated:

We arrived at Walton Prison on Tuesday, the 21st [*i.e.*, while still on remand], and the following morning I broke my windows, fourteen in all, and barricaded my cell, and managed to keep the officials out for some time, but eventually the principal wardress got in with others, when they fell on me and beat me unmercifully. They pulled me off the bed and threw me on the floor. Then the doctor came and told me he would not let me go without food, but would feed me right away. He then ordered me to be dressed in my own wet clothes, and I was taken to a cold, damp cell without ventilation and was handcuffed behind and left on the floor. At night I was taken to a larger cell and kept in irons. **Thursday night I was thrown down, then turned over and frog-marched up some steps, letting my head bump on the steps as I was carried.** I was then forcibly fed, after which I was dragged to the top of the steps and thrown down. I have had a frightful struggle every time they have come with the instruments of torture, which the doctor does not hesitate to sneer about because I ask for a woman doctor. When I complained to the visiting magistrates about the brutal treatment meted out to me they only replied, "Well, the wardresses were justified."

This letter she corroborated personally in a conversation which she had with one of our members in the police-court at the time of her trial.

Electors! Mr. Gladstone asks you to believe his statement, based on a secret investigation, against the written testimony of a woman of high character. Our experience of official methods practised by the Home Office under Mr. Gladstone justifies our asking you to disregard his denial.

## Supporters and detractors

11

### **Ward family diary, 1910**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MS ADD 202/1–38/23

Mary Augusta Ward, née Arnold (1851–1920), was a social reformer, writer and anti-suffrage campaigner.

In her most famous novel *Robert Elsmore* (1888), Ward wrote that 'religion consists alone in the service of the people'. She herself worked as an educator in poor urban areas, establishing several educational settlements in London. However, despite her belief in a more equal society, she worried that in gaining political power women would lose their moral influence. Ward became the founding president of the Woman's National Anti-Suffrage League, created and edited the *Anti-Suffrage Review* and used her novels as anti-suffragette platforms. The Ward family's appointment diary from 1910 notes several anti-suffrage meetings that she would have attended.

Ward's novels have now passed out of popular favour, but her social works have not been forgotten. The Mary Ward House, a Grade I listed Arts and Crafts building near Tavistock Square, was the original site of her settlement work. It is also remembered as the location of a historic debate on women's suffrage between Ward and the famous feminist Millicent Garrett Fawcett. Ward was soundly defeated, losing the debate by 235 votes to 74.

12

### **Bentham, Jeremy. *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation: printed in the year 1780, and now first published.***

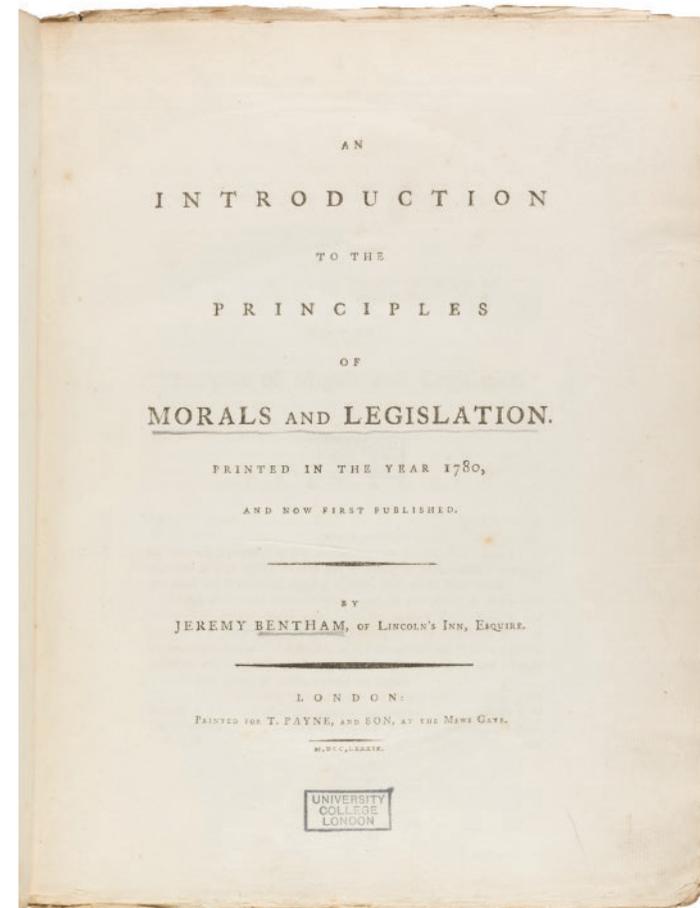
London: T. Payne and Son, 1789

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, BENTHAM COLLECTION 2.I 1.1

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), whose ideas and social supporters influenced the foundation of UCL and whose papers and publications are kept in UCL Special Collections, was an early observer of the lack of women's rights in many nations, including their lack of participation in government, legislation and voting. He had a significant influence on John Stuart Mill who, often in collaboration with his wife Harriet and her daughter Helen, wrote several works on women's rights.

The views expressed by Bentham on equality of gender vary across his large body of work. In this book, his first printed opinion on the subject, he criticises the view that women's minds are inferior or less capable of moral sensibility. In a section headed 'Of circumstances influencing sensibility' he writes that indications of 'moral sensibility' in

a woman 'are commonly stronger in her than in the male' (pp.lvi–lvii).



Bentham supported women's rights in his *Plan of Parliamentary Reform* (1817–18), but he appeared later to think that achieving women's suffrage was unrealistic at the time. His vast archive is still being transcribed, but discoveries so far include his innovative argument for the use of gender neutral pronouns: 'When both sexes are meant to be intended, employ not the word man but the word person.'

A book label pasted into the front of this copy of Bentham's book indicates that it was exhibited in the Exhibition of Books, part of the Festival of Britain in 1951. Bentham's work was exhibit no.302.

## Letter from John Stuart Mill to George Croom Robertson, 5 November 1872

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MS ADD 88/8, FF66-7

MS ADD 88/8

66

Arignon  
Nov. 5. 1872

UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE  
LONDON

Dear Mr Robertson

You seem to us to underrate the value of "a pretty face" in a lecturer on women's rights. As my daughter says, it is not for the sake of effect on men that it is important, but for the influence it has on the younger women. It shows them that the championship of women's cause is not confined to women who have no qualifications for success in the more beaten track, and that they would not, by joining in the movement, forfeit their chance of the ordinary objects of women's ambition. This is an advantage which outweighs even some inferiority in lecturing powers. It is above all on the minds of women that we ought to work for when the majority of them think the change right, it will come.

We have a strong impression that money is more usefully expended on lectures in the provinces than in and about London. In London and the suburbs nearly all who are likely to come to a lecture have at least heard of the subject, and are already either

John Stuart Mill was the first MP to call for women's suffrage. He and Robertson were both involved in the London National Society for Women's Suffrage, to which this letter refers. However, there was considerable disagreement within the women's suffrage movement over their objectives and the approaches they should take.

In an earlier letter to Mill, Robertson criticised one of the Society's female speakers for her poor lecturing skills, opining that she is merely a 'pretty face'. In response, Mill here argues that having an attractive woman speaking on enfranchisement is important as an illustration to younger women 'that the championship of women's cause is not confined to women who have no qualifications for success in the more beaten track, and that they would not, by joining in the movement, forfeit their chance of the ordinary objects of women's ambition ... It is above all on the minds of women that we ought to work, for when the majority of them think the change right, it will come'.

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favourable or hostile: but in country places the lecture often pieces into a quite fresh stratum of public opinion. It is often found that before any lecture given in a country town, nobody in the place had been before on a Division. This is the only way we can see of breaking the fall which is sure to be met with: and if Mr Jacob Bright knows that your Committee recommends this policy, it will be more likely than anything else to check his policy, if indeed, our subscriptions to the former fund were made with the express view of lectures in the provinces. The general subscription arose out of my daughter's offering £100 to Mr Taylor for country lectures.

There is much to be said for your idea of addressing Mr Jacob Bright against the reintroduction of his bill next year; and I should much like to see the sort of address you would think of sending, if you would put it on paper in a rough way. It is important however not to include Mr Eastwick in the name of application with Mr Jacob Bright. You may remember that Mr Eastwick said, last session, that he thought the parliamentary conduct of the question should be placed in other hands: any address, public or private, should be made exclusively to Mr Jacob Bright. We think that the great matter, and it is a powerful one, for making

some sort of an address to him, is in order that we may influence members who are favourable to the suffrage.

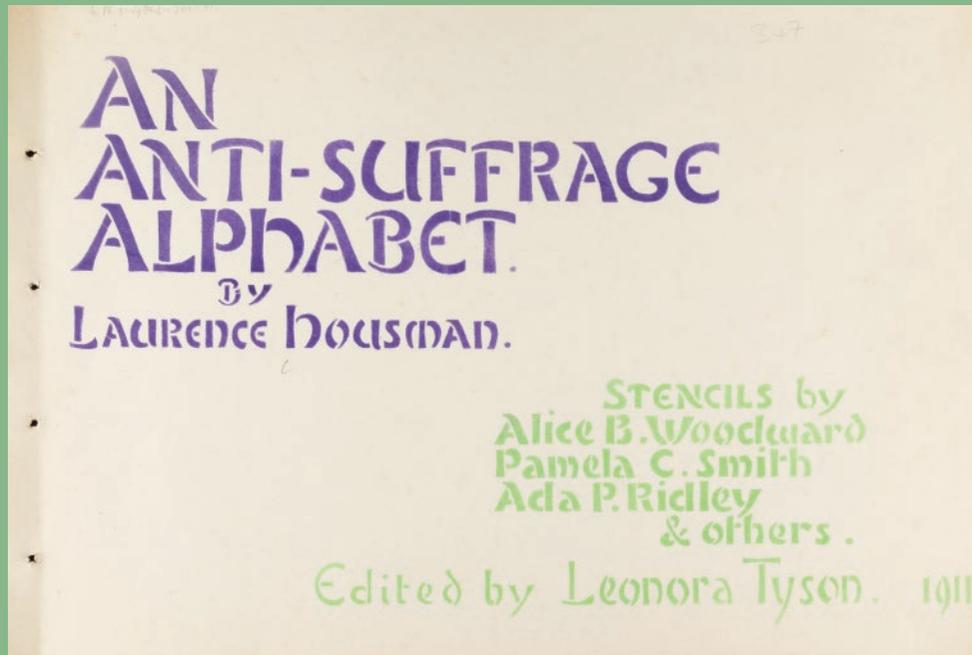
The decline of the annual subscriptions from £350 to £217 is less than I should have expected and not at all discouraging, when we consider, on the one hand the general tendency of subscriptions to fall off somewhat after the first year or two, through negligence or forgetfulness, and on the other, the subscriptions wholly to have been drawn off by the rival Committee, and the general damp to the hopes of supporters by the unparliamentary division last summer.

I am  
Dear Mr Robertson  
very truly yours,  
J. S. Mill

UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE  
LONDON

Housman, Laurence. *An Anti-Suffrage Alphabet*. Stencils by Alice B. Woodward, Pamela C. Smith, Ada P. Ridley & others; edited by Leonora Tyson. London: The Women's Social and Political Union, 1911

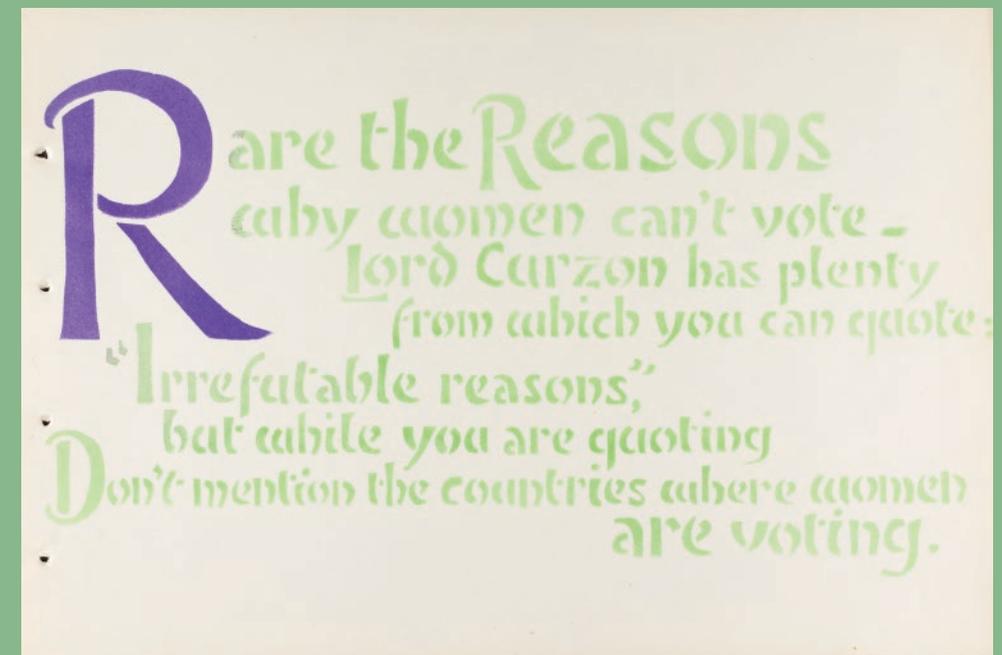
UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LAURENCE HOUSMAN COLLECTION 347



This satire of anti-suffrage attitudes was produced to raise funds for the women's suffrage movement. It was advertised in *Votes for Women* on 15 December 1911, probably to coincide with the Christmas gift-buying season. Merchandise, sold in regional branch shops, was important in promoting the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). To help, the Woman's Press was established in 1907 as a strategic marketing arm.

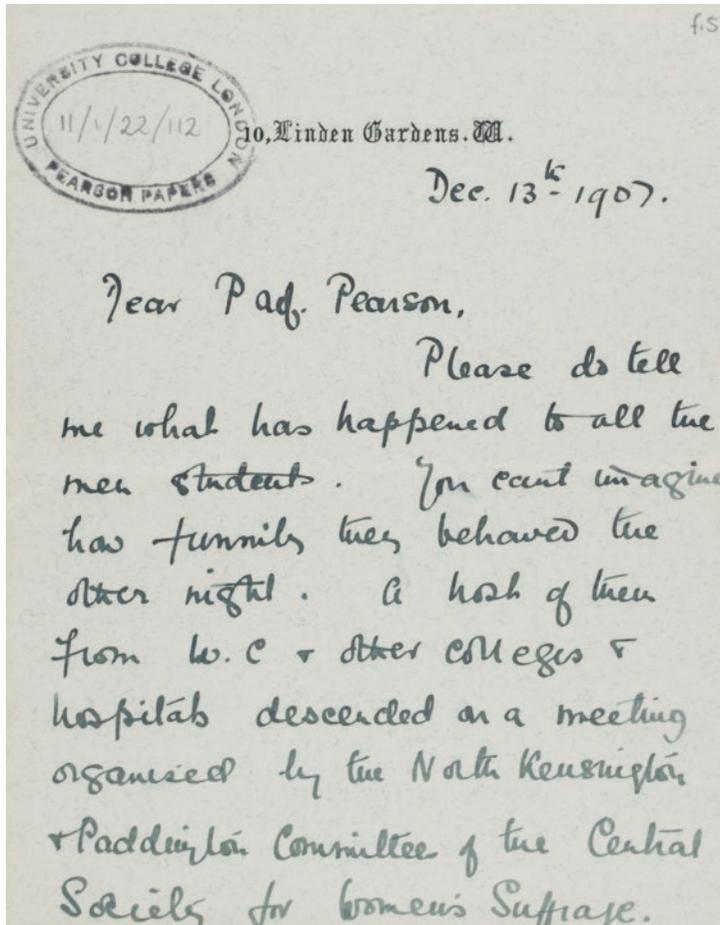
Laurence Housman, who had written children's fairy tales and first worked as a book illustrator, designed the volume in imitation of a child's alphabet. Stencils were contributed by female artists such as Ada Ridley, then in her forties. She had grown up in Ipswich, and was involved in the women's suffrage movement with her mother.

Copies were hand-printed, in the WSPU's colours of purple and green on white, by Leonora Tyson at her home in Streatham. Aged 28 years at the time, Tyson had served on the Streatham and Lambeth branch committees of the WSPU. Heavily involved in suffrage activism, she was arrested the following year and force-fed in prison after going on hunger strike.



## Two letters from Alexandra Wright to Karl Pearson, 1907

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PEARSON/11/1/22/112, FF5-11



These two letters are from women's suffrage supporter Alexandra Wright to her friend Karl Pearson, then Professor of Applied Statistics at UCL. The first describes a disturbance at a meeting of the North Kensington and Paddington committee of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage by male medical students from UCL and other London medical schools. Wright describes how they came armed with sticks, fireworks and foul-smelling chemicals, and disrupted the meeting by singing and playing musical instruments. They then broke out into fights, intimidating other attendees and vandalising the hall.

at the Paddington Baltham Hall Queen's R<sup>o</sup>.w. They were armed with club sticks, mouth organs, squibs crackers to say nothing of bottles containing those delicate perfumes which are supposed to belong more especially to the genus medical student. They had evidently been at some pains to learn a whole repertoire of music-hall songs, ancient & modern. They seemed to imagine that they were terrible fellows, some of my friends tell me that they were politely told that their lives were in danger if they did not immediately move away from among them! Directly the speakers appeared they began to lead us to a sort of mixed orchestral concert, the prevailing note of which was pandemonium! Finally our chairman, Mr. Henry Jowett M.P. having put the resolution, which was carried by the front seats people unchallenged by the gentlemen at the back, to the speakers left the ~~chair~~ platform.

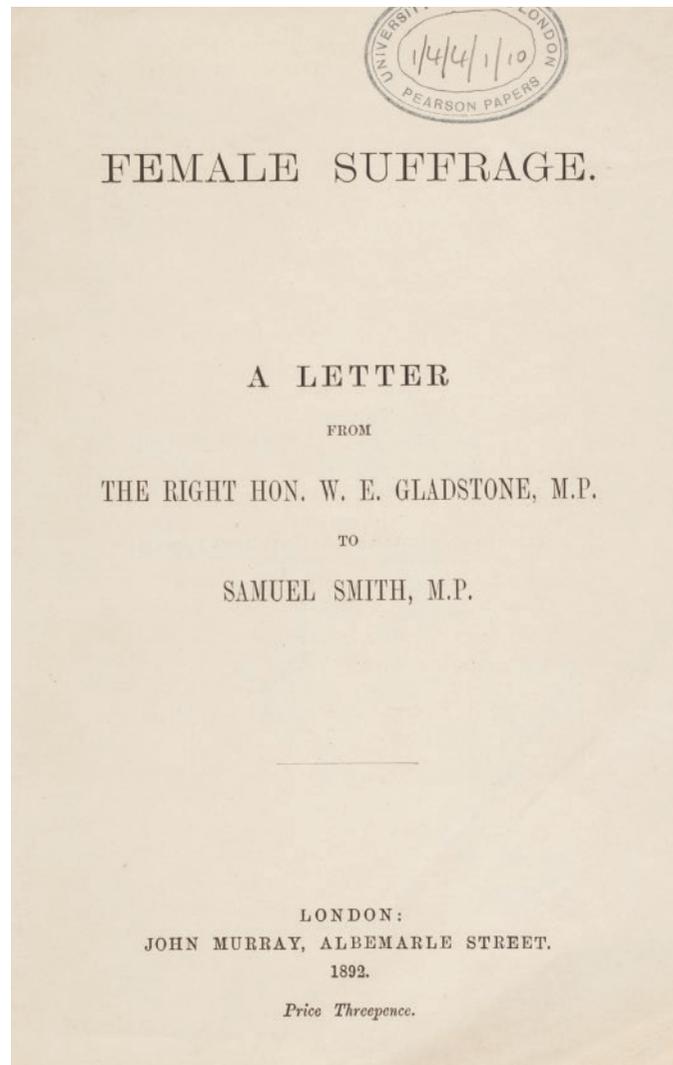
In Wright's second letter she reports that she recognised one of the ringleaders when she visited UCL, and wished that there could be a more reasoned debate between the two sides.

The students were by this time spoiling for a fight with each other & with us. Suddenly there was a rush from the back of the Hall, chairs, tables & students tumbled over one another. Luckily most of the audience had gone by this time, but I myself picked up one woman they had pushed over & I believe other stewards did the same. These men started pulling down banners & posters & fighting

**Female Suffrage. A Letter from the Right Hon. W E Gladstone MP to Samuel Smith MP, 1892**

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PEARSON/1/4/4/1/10

This open letter from William Ewart Gladstone to fellow MP Samuel Smith sets out Gladstone's opposition to the 1892 Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill. He argued that the wording and ramifications of the Bill had not been properly considered; it excluded married women and did not specify whether all those who were enfranchised could also hold public office. Gladstone also stated that there were women who did not want the vote and that this Bill would place upon women a responsibility to which they were not suited:



'I have no fear lest the woman should encroach upon the power of the man. The fear I have is lest we should invite her unwittingly to trespass upon the delicacy, the purity, the refinement, the elevation of her own nature, which are the present sources of its power.'

The Bill was fiercely contested in Parliament by both suffragist and anti-suffragist MPs. It was defeated by just 23 votes.

A notice advertising a demonstration in support of the Bill is also on display (see Item 7).

FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

1, CARLTON GARDENS,  
April 11, 1892.

DEAR MR. SAMUEL SMITH,

In reply to your letter, I cannot but express the hope that the House of Commons will not consent to the second reading of the Bill for Extending the Parliamentary Suffrage to Women, which will come before it on the 27th instant.

The Bill is a narrow Bill, inasmuch as it excludes from its operation the entire body of married women; who are not less reflective, intelligent, and virtuous, than their unmarried sisters, and who must I think be superior in another great element of fitness, namely the lifelong habit of responsible action. If this change is to be made, I certainly have doubts, not yet dispelled, whether it ought to be made in the shape which would thus be given to it by a halting and inconsistent measure.

But it is a change which obviously, and apart from disputable matter, ought not to be made without the fullest consideration and the most deliberate assent of the nation as well as of the Parliament. Not only has there been no such assent, but there has not been even an approach to such consideration. The subject has occupied a large place in the minds of many thoughtful persons,

**Samuels, H B. *Woman Suffrage: Its Dangers and Delusions*.  
London: Twentieth Century Press, 1910**

NEWSAM LIBRARY ARCHIVES, UWTID/4/4

*The claims put forward by the Women Suffragists ... are all based upon a fallacy, the fallacy of supposing that women can govern a State, a Nation and an empire just as well as men. There could hardly be a greater delusion.*

This pamphlet was collected by the National Union of Women Teachers and is held in their archive at the UCL Institute of Education. As the NUWT were in favour of extending the franchise, H B Samuels' piece was probably collected as research into the views of those who were not; the item sits in a folder alongside campaign material both for and against women's suffrage. The pamphlet attempts to dispel the notion that men and women are 'equal in value and intelligence', calling the women's suffrage movement 'foolish' and 'detrimental to the best interests of the community'. Samuels finally concludes that 'house-work is a necessity, and ... the duty devolves upon the wife or daughter or female'.

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE: Its Dangers and Delusions.

The Woman Suffrage movement, from having been only a curiosity, has now become a danger. The vast sums of money subscribed by wealthy ladies whose outlook on life is blurred by a false sense of superiority, added to by donations from others whose ambition it is to prove to an uninterested world how essential they are to the world's well-being, have resulted in attracting large numbers of sensitive and impressionable females to the "Cause." Many of them, having no desire or capacity to do anything useful, imagine themselves equal in value and intelligence to the average man. The average man, however, is not impressed, and estimating them at their real value passes by on the other side. These females, fortified by the indisputable fact that sex-inequalities exist everywhere, foolishly assert that a Parliamentary vote would prove a magic wand with which to dispel all the "irksome and irritating" conditions that laws, customs and Nature itself have imposed on womankind.

Were the various Suffrage societies left to the women themselves it is quite certain they would fizzle out for want of moral strength and ethical value. The mistaken and assumed chivalry exhibited by politicians of

## Table Case 1

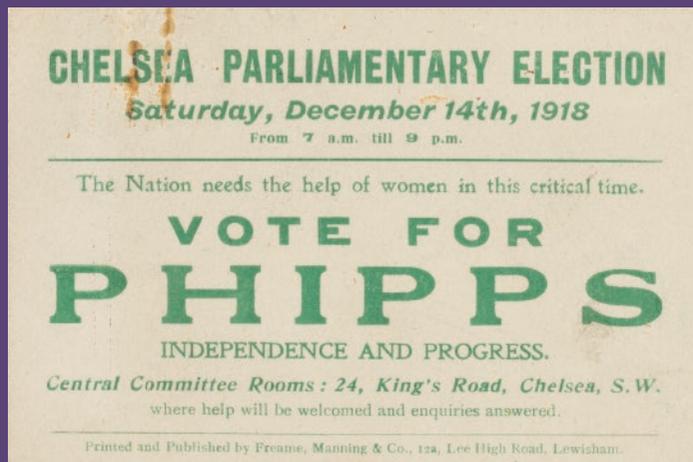
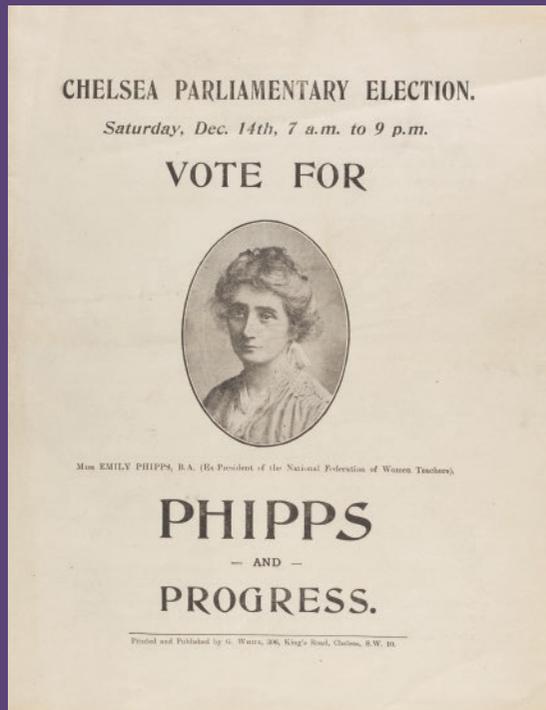
### The candidacy of Miss Emily Phipps

18

and

19

#### Emily Phipps' campaign material for the Chelsea parliamentary election, 1918



20

#### Photograph of Miss Phipps and her helper, Miss (Adelaide) Jones, 1918

NEWSAM LIBRARY ARCHIVES, UWT/D/35/31, UWT/D/35/2 AND UWT/G/2/10

Emily Frost Phipps (1865–1943) was a headteacher, barrister and suffragette. In the 1918 general election, the first in which women could stand as parliamentary candidates, Phipps stood as the Independent Progressive candidate in Chelsea against the incumbent Conservative Sir Samuel Hoare.

Phipps hoped to appeal to newly enfranchised women voters with a focus on the home, health and education: one of her slogans was 'The fireside, the school, the health of the community and a general levelling up'. While she did not win, she did gain 20.9 per cent of the vote, enough to keep her deposit.



Adelaide Jones, who is pictured with Phipps, was a former teacher who helped Phipps with her campaign. Phipps and her close friend, fellow headteacher Clara Neal, both shared a house with Jones after their retirement, first in London and later in Eastbourne.

## Table Case 2

### Women's voices at UCL

21

#### Minute Book of the Men and Women's Club, 1885–89

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PEARSON 1/5/1/2

Although it is frequently claimed that UCL was the first university in England to admit women on equal terms with men, the facts are actually more complex.

Women were admitted to University of London degrees in 1878, but they were not admitted to all Faculties at UCL until after the First World War. Meanwhile physical areas such as building entrances and common rooms were segregated.

The Men and Women's Club was formed in 1885 by the recently appointed Chair of Applied Mathematics, Karl Pearson, to discuss 'relations between the sexes'. Its meetings were often fraught and tense, and the Club collapsed in 1889. Nevertheless it neatly reflects the anxieties surrounding the emergence of the 'New Woman' and the changes wrought by the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 with its attempt to hold scientific discussion on topics such as marriage, sexuality and prostitution. On display is a discussion of the notorious Contagious Diseases Acts, which allowed the arrest of women suspected of being sex workers, and the confinement of those arrested women found to have sexually transmitted infections after compulsory medical checks were conducted. The Acts had only recently been repealed (pp.184–5).

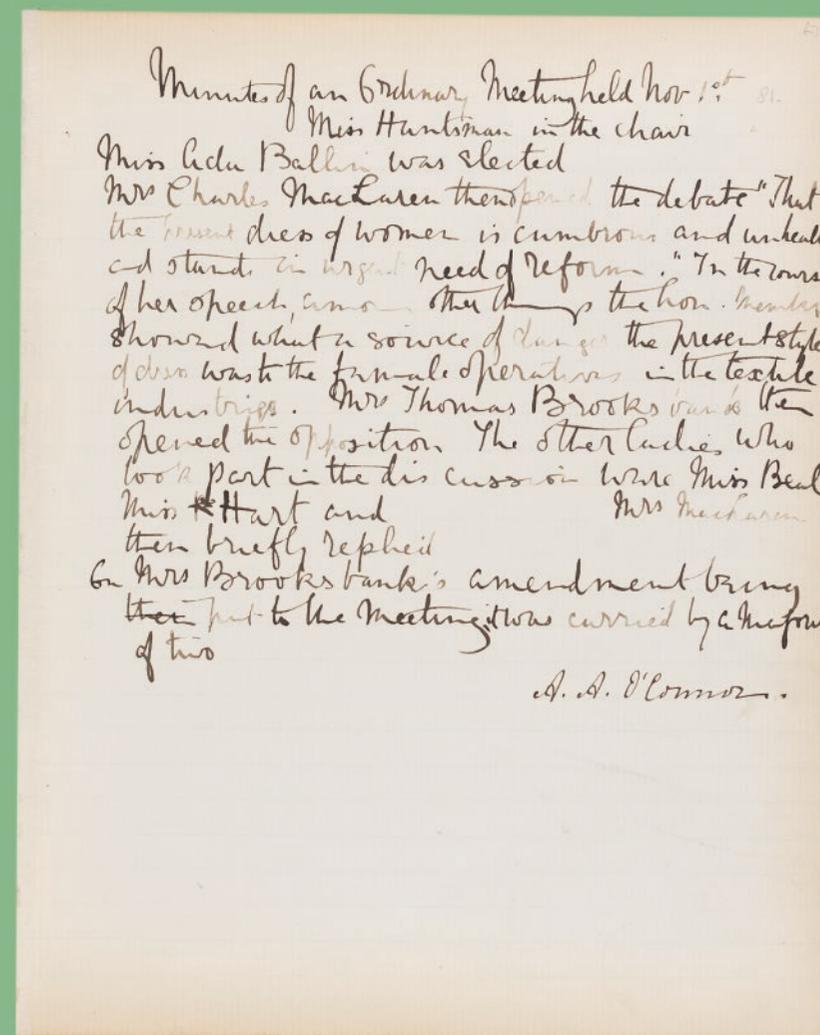
22

#### University College London: Women's Union Debating Society Minute Book, 1878–88

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MS ADD 123/1

The Debating Society represents another contested space. As UCL's Council refused to permit the admission of women to the male students' Debating Society, it was necessary for them to form a separate society, which first met on 9 December 1878.

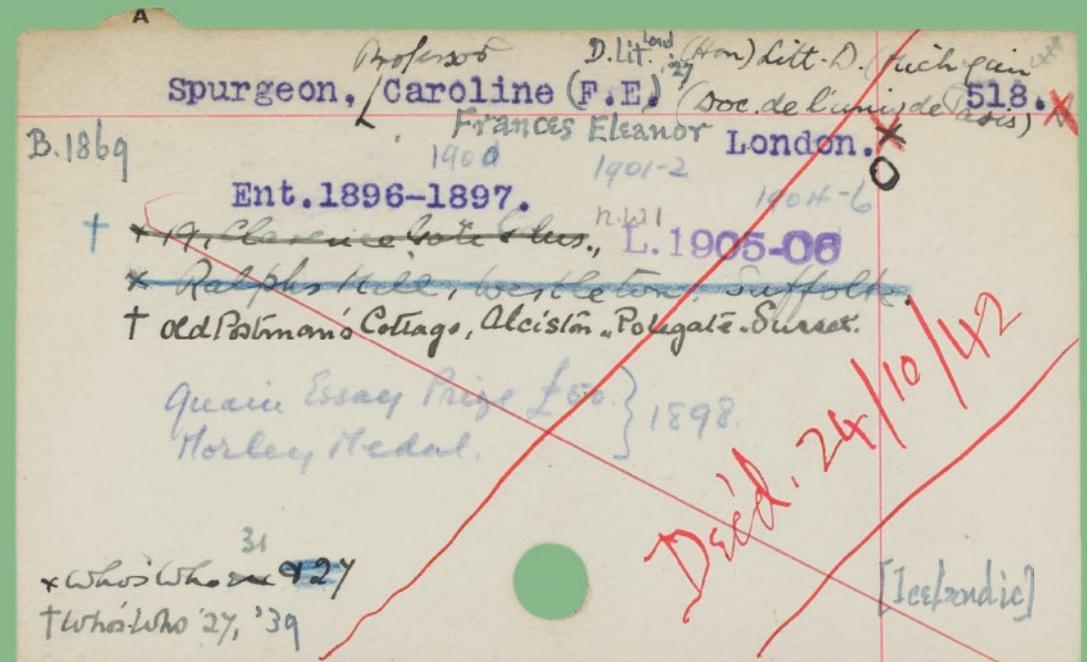
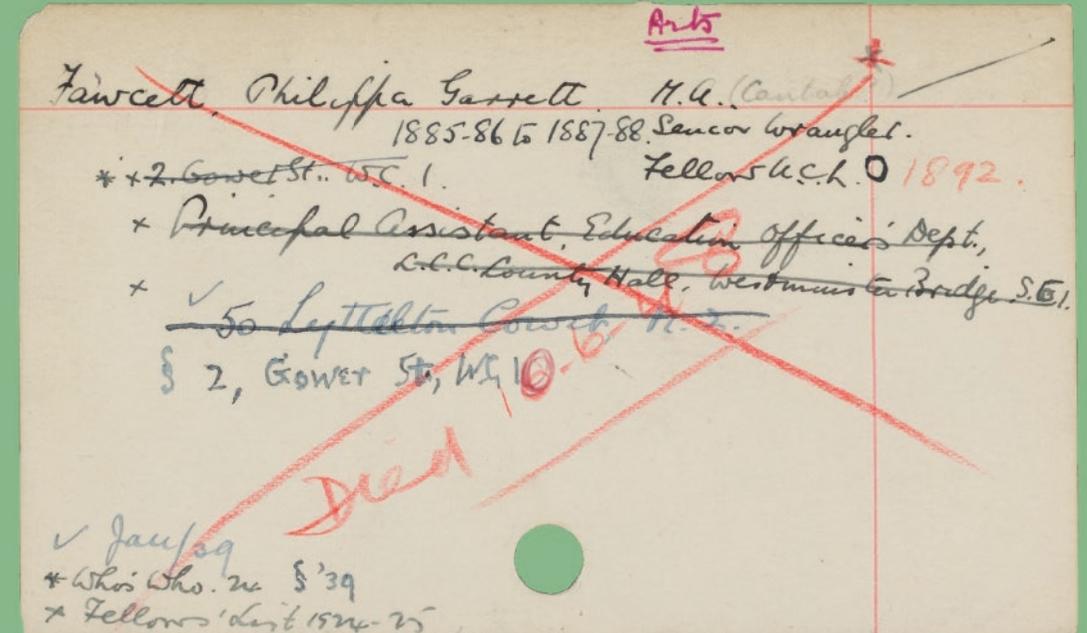
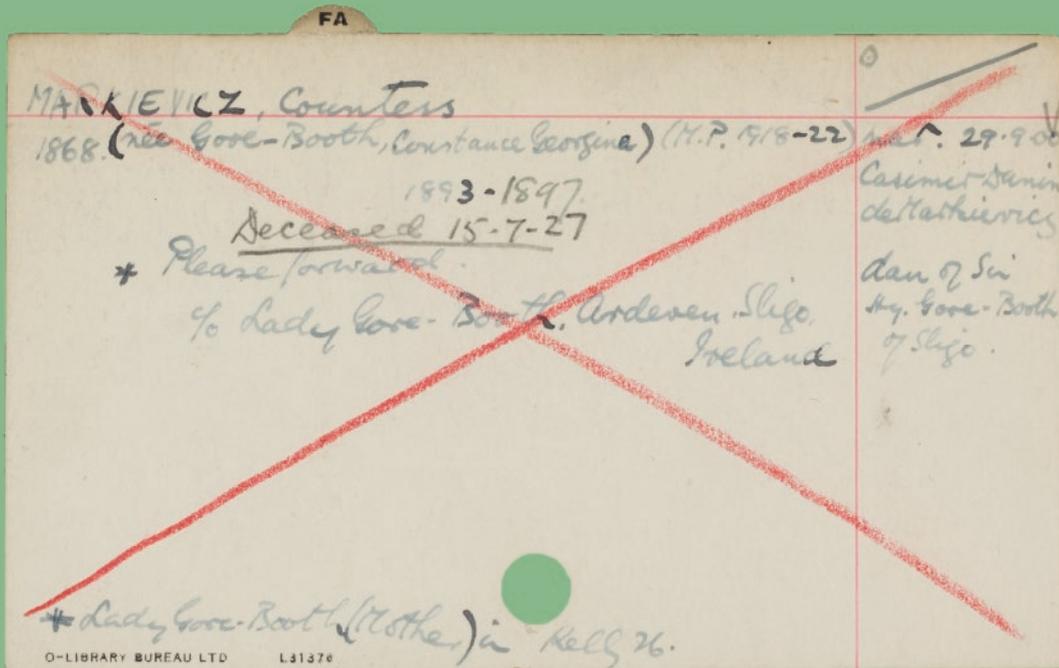
Fittingly the subject of the first debate held was 'Is discontent a virtue to be cultivated?' Other early debates focused on nationalism, 'cheap' literature and whether education will 'improve the class of domestic servants'. On display is the proposition that 'the present dress of women is cumbrous and unhealthy and stands in urgent need of reform' (f.72).



**Student Registry cards**

UCL RECORDS, UCLCA/SA

A selection of record cards from the UCL Registry shows details of some of UCL's most prominent female students. These are a rich source of information for researchers, as they were constantly updated by clerks with information about students' families as well as their subsequent careers. The card for Constance Markievicz, for example, was composed entirely posthumously; it is filed under her married name, not under her maiden name of Gore-Booth, although she was a student at UCL before her marriage.



**WOMEN  
TEACHERS  
REQUIRE THE  
PARLIAMENTARY  
FRANCHISE**

**PUBLIC  
SYMPATHY  
IS  
PRACTICAL  
HELP**

## Acknowledgements

The Library Services Exhibitions Group arranges themed exhibitions in the Main Library, drawing on highlights from UCL Special Collections. The planning for this exhibition has been co-ordinated by Helen Biggs. It has been curated by members of the Exhibitions Group and Nazlin Bhimani, Vanessa Freedman, Gill Furlong, Kathryn Hannan, Katy Makin, Colin Penman, Robert Winckworth, Jessica Womack and Vivian Yip.

The catalogue has been prepared with contributions from Kathryn Hannan, Katy Makin, Colin Penman and Robert Winckworth. The introduction was contributed by Dr Georgina Brewis, Senior Lecturer in the History of Education, UCL Institute of Education.

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Edited by Catherine Bradley

## Exhibition Location

Main Library staircase and first floor  
UCL Library Services  
Gower Street  
London  
WC1E 6BT

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/exhibitions>

*From autumn 2018 visitors to the London Borough of Newham's public libraries will be able to view a touring version of this exhibition featuring items from both UCL Special Collections and Newham Archives. Further information will be available on the UCL Special Collections' blog.*