

CONSTANCE ANDREWS



Constance Andrews was the main organiser of suffrage actions in Ipswich. She was born in 1864 in Stowmarket and lived with her sister and brother-in-law at No. 160 Norwich Road, Ipswich. She first became officially involved in suffrage politics in 1907 as secretary of the Ipswich and County Women's Suffrage Society. She was ambitious and found their lack of action frustrating. So, she founded the Ipswich branch of the more militant Women's Freedom League (WFL) in 1909.

Andrews then organised and contributed to three different forms of protesting in Ipswich. Firstly, she organised a Green, White and Gold Fair in July 1909. This showed the people of Ipswich which women in the world currently had the vote, and demonstrated conditions UK women were facing in prison trying to get the vote.

Secondly, Andrews organised an all-night event at the Old Museum Rooms on 2 April 1911. She, and approximately twenty four other people, stayed there overnight in order to avoid the Government recording them on their census. This was part of the national 'No Vote, No Census' campaign, and aimed to harm the Government rather than the individuals involved. It was thought that if the Government wanted women's details to inform future laws, then women should be allowed to vote for the Government. Many women also said that if they were considered intelligent enough to fill in the census, then they could fill in a voting slip.

Lastly, Andrews became the first woman in the county to go to prison as part of the Tax Resistance campaign. Andrews refused to buy a dog licence in order to resist paying taxes. Some felt it was an injustice that the Government would allow women to pay tax and contribute to the country financially, but still not give them the vote. So, they refused to pay tax. Andrews did not settle her bill and was imprisoned on 20 April 1911. Many people met her on her release, cheering her actions. In 1912, she was voted onto the National Executive of the WFL and campaigned for votes for women throughout the country.

HORTENSE MARY LANE

Hortense Lane was born in 1877 and educated at Ipswich High School. By 1909 she was living at Whitton Street in Ipswich with her husband Frank Lane. They later moved to Cowslip Dairy Farm, Witnesham. She was one of the very first active suffragettes in Ipswich.

In 1909 Constance Andrews established an Ipswich branch of the Women's Freedom League (WFL). Lane joined the WFL in Ipswich in 1909. The WFL used a mixture of tactics to bring the issue of women's suffrage to the public's attention. They focused on non-violent campaigns which would hit the Government hard, rather than harming the women protesting.

Lane used the campaign of Tax Resistance to protest for women's votes. She did this even before it was a national campaign and would continually use this tactic from 1909 up until 1914. The Tax Resistance campaign was based on the injustice that the Government wanted women to pay for the running of the country, but wouldn't allow them to vote in elections. Lane resisted paying her Inhabited House Duty and refused to buy a dog licence repeatedly. She quite often did this alongside her friend, Dr. Elizabeth Knight, who was a prominent suffragette based in London. The slogan 'No Say, No Pay' was used.

When they refused to pay their taxes, a bill would be sent to remind them of the amount owed. If this was also not paid, then bailiffs would be sent to collect items from their home that equated to the amount owed. The items would be taken to auction in order to raise the amount owed. This is what happened to Hortense Lane and Elizabeth Knight. Lane always refused to pay the bill, and often her farm waggon was collected by the bailiffs and sold at auction to raise the money owed. These auctions were used by the WFL to gain maximum publicity for the suffrage campaign. Quite often other suffragettes would buy the items on sale to give back to the person resisting.

Lane also helped with local WFL events in Ipswich and helped to sell their paper *The Vote*.

ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836 – 1917) came to live in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. She fought on many issues regarding women's rights, including the right to vote.

In 1859 Anderson decided she wanted to become a doctor, which initially went against her parents' wishes. They later supported her wishes. However, as a woman no English medical school would accept her. It was thought that women were too weak to deal with such subjects. So, she trained as a nurse at the Middlesex hospital. Whilst there she attended classes intended for male doctors in training. The male classmates complained to such a degree, that she was eventually banned from the classes.

Upon discovering that the Society of Apothecaries did not ban women from taking medical examinations, she applied to be entered for the medical exam and passed in 1865. Therefore, Anderson became the first female qualified doctor in Britain. However, the Society of Apothecaries changed their rules immediately afterwards, ensuring other women could achieve the same. It was not until 1876 that the Government allowed women to attend university and medical schools.

Anderson helped to establish the London School of Medicine for Women in 1874, with the specific aim of training women to be doctors. Anderson advocated a medical career as good preparation for public life as a woman. However, some still argued that women's place was in the home. Anderson was becoming frustrated and angry with the attitudes and limitations on women's lives.

Whilst Anderson's main focus was medicine, she saw women's suffrage as an important element in gaining further women's rights. On 27 April 1866 the MP John Stuart Mill agreed to present a petition to parliament on women's right to vote, if a hundred signatures could be found. Anderson was inspired. She organised a working group to meet at her home in London, with the aim of gaining signatures. The group called itself the 'Women's Suffrage Committee'. Within two weeks, 1,499 women from all over the country had signed the petition initiated by Anderson and her friends, including sixteen women from Ipswich. Anderson then presented the petition to John Stuart Mill, where it was heard in Parliament. Whilst 196 voted against women's right to vote, 73 voted for it. This was seen as a success. This action paved the way for future suffrage organisations and actions.

Anderson also followed her own advice about medical life preparing you well for public life. In 1908 she became the Mayor of Aldeburgh; the first female Mayor in England. She highlighted the irony of this position: she could serve in politics but still not vote.

MILLCENT FAWCETT

Millicent Fawcett (1847 – 1929) was the second youngest of the Aldeburgh Garrett daughters. She and her sisters, Elizabeth and Louisa, all fought for women's rights and suffrage.

Fawcett's eldest sister, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, moved to London and became the first female doctor in Britain. Fawcett would often visit her in London and became introduced to the movement for women's right to vote. When she was 18 she heard a speech by MP John Stuart Mill, who supported women's right to vote. She immediately became one of his supporters. She also got to know the MP for Brighton, Henry Fawcett, who was also a keen supporter of women's suffrage. Millicent and Henry married in 1867. When 1,499 women signed a petition asking for the vote in 1865, including the three Garrett sisters, it was John Stuart Mill and Henry Fawcett who presented it to Parliament.

Through her marriage to an MP, Fawcett was introduced to the world of politics. As Henry was blind she often helped him in his daily work and wrote articles on politics. She was also a member of the London Suffrage Committee.

She worked to create a national organisation for women's suffrage and became president of the newly formed National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1897. Their supporters became known as suffragists. Fawcett believed in peaceful and constitutional methods to gain women the right to vote. However, some women became frustrated with this approach and broke away from the NUWSS to form their own group. Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. Their supporters became known as suffragettes. They used militant methods to gain women the right to vote, preferring to smash windows then sign petitions.

Whilst Fawcett didn't agree with the tactics of the WSPU, she never openly criticised them and was happy to work with them whenever there were areas of agreement.

MARY AUGUSTA WARD

Mary Augusta Ward (1851 – 1920) was a self-made woman. Her 1888 novel, *Robert Elsmere*, made her the highest earning novelist in England. For her next novel, publishers offered Ward £10,000. She used this success to speak about her ideals and fight for them.

She came from a family that fought for people's rights. Her uncle, William Foster, was responsible for the Universal Education Act in 1870 which provided basic levels of literacy and numeracy for all children in Britain. Ward also launched a 'lectures for women' programme at Oxford University, which was a stepping stone to allowing women entrance to universities.

In 1908 she became the president of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League. The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League did not believe women should have the vote. Whilst Ward had sympathy for the poor and valued education, she was completely against women's suffrage. Ward herself considered women too weak to vote. As an organisation the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League regarded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) as terrorists. The suffragettes' violent and militant actions were not considered worthy of the vote. Some thought that if suffragettes behaved as criminals, then they did not deserve the right to vote.

A further reason for why they believed women shouldn't have the vote was that men risked their lives in war and women did not. This is why men deserved more rights than women.

In Ipswich in 1909 Constance Andrews established a local branch of the Women's Federation League (WFL), which would follow a more militant campaign to achieve women's suffrage. Andrews would receive much criticism over the following years, partly due to the strength of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League. In 1909 Ward had collected over 250,000 signatures on a petition against women having the vote. This petition was used time and again by the Government to say that women did not even want the vote, never mind deserved it.

HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH

H. H. Asquith (1852 – 1928) was a Liberal Party politician who served as Prime Minister for the United Kingdom from 1908 – 1916.

Whilst several leading parliamentary figures supported women's suffrage, Asquith strongly opposed it. He did not see how giving women the vote would improve the Government. He also worried that many women would vote for his opposing party, the Tories. As a result, he gained opposition from all groups that supported women's suffrage, such as the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).

However, in June 1910 the Government put forward a Conciliation Bill. The Government had decided to grant some women the vote and the Conciliation Bill would grant this. It was voted for by MPs and would take two days to be amended and processed. During this time, all suffrage movements came to London to show their support for the Conciliation Bill. The procession of people was said to be 2 miles long, with 16 members of the Ipswich Women's Federation League (WFL) there. Emmeline Pankhurst, president of the WSPU, came to Ipswich to share their success and was considered inspiring.

When, Asquith announced, on the 23 July 1910, that the Conciliation Bill would not go ahead all suffrage organisations were bitterly disappointed and angry. A protest was organised in London by the WSPU to display their anger, which included the smashing of MP's windows. Local women to Ipswich, such as Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Grace Roe attended, with Grace being arrested. The actions of the WSPU were heavily criticised, even by some women. Millicent Fawcett, president of the NUWSS, called the violent behaviour disgusting and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson felt she could no longer support the WSPU. By many others it was thought that these violent protests would turn Asquith even further against women's suffrage.

Asquith kept avoiding changing the law regarding women's right to vote. He resigned in 1916.

LORD CROMER

Lord Cromer (1841 – 1917) was born in Cromer, Norfolk. He was a British diplomat and was British controller-general in Egypt in 1879.

Cromer was the first President of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, formed in 1910. Cromer was firmly against women's suffrage, and in support of the British Empire. His traditional ideals meant that he saw little need for change. He believed that the British Empire was representative of Britain's strength as a country. Part of this strength lied in upholding old ideas and being a male dominated society.

Cromer's organisation, the National League of Opposing Women's Suffrage, published their arguments in pamphlets. One was entitled '*The Woman MP: A Peril to Women and the Country*'. The reasons they presented for why women should not have the vote were not new. In fact, they had been heard for decades and across the whole country. These arguments against women's suffrage had been regularly heard in Ipswich.

In Ipswich on 12 April 1871 two women spoke about the right of women to vote. These two women were Millicent Fawcett (future president of the NUWSS) and her cousin Rhoda Garrett. They tackled the reasons that people were presenting for why women should not have the vote, and argued against each one of them. These reasons included; 1. Women have never voted, why now? 2. Women belong in the home and may get distracted by politics if they have the vote. 3. If a wife had the vote she might use it in opposition to her husband. 4. Women are too delicate and gentle to be in the vicinity of a polling booth. 5. Women are physically and mentally inferior, so should be excluded from public life. 6. Women are more easily influenced than men.

The National League of Opposing Women's Suffrage ran until 1918.

HERBERT HENRY STANSFIELD

H. H. Stansfield was an art teacher at Ipswich School of Art. He was married to Hephzibah Stansfield and they lived at the Old Mill House, Winesham.

Both Herbert and Hephzibah were staunch supporters of women's suffrage. They both supported the census evasion event of 1911 in Ipswich. The census boycott was a protest at the Government, and used the slogan 'If women don't count, don't count women'. They wanted to show the Government that if women were counted as citizens on the census then they deserved the vote. By boycotting the census, women hoped to punish the Government as they would not have the full information they needed and would notice the absence of women.

Stansfield also spoke regularly in Ipswich in support of women's suffrage. For instance, he spoke in 1908 at a meeting with Millicent Fawcett (the President of the NUWSS). He was trying to raise support for an Ipswich branch of the Men's Suffrage League, which had been established in 1907 in London.

The Men's Suffrage League was established by prominent men, who used their position in society to fight for women's suffrage. They considered it right and fair that women should be granted the equal rights to vote as men. They also considered the treatment of suffragettes as appalling and often spoke out in support of them. Whilst the Men's Suffrage League did not use militant tactics, it publicly supported the Women's Federation League (WFL) and Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), who both had branches in Ipswich.

The actions of the Men's Suffrage League included publishing lists of prominent men who supported the cause of women's suffrage, fighting elections on the issue of women's right to vote and writing about their support in newspapers such as the Daily Mirror. Whilst a branch of the Men's Suffrage League was never established in Ipswich, other local men showed their support for the cause partly due to Stansfield's public displays.