

1911

On 24 May 1911, salaries are introduced for MPs.

The militant suffragette, Emily Davison hides in a cupboard in Parliament's St. Mary Undercroft Chapel - during the night of the 1911 census, depicted here as the envelope.

She does so in order that she can record her address as the 'Houses of Parliament' to express political balance with men.

The suffragettes are getting more violent in their campaign. Fires are started, acid is poured on grass, slogans are painted on walls and windows are smashed.

1909

Some members of the W.F.L. demonstrate by chaining themselves to a grille in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons, depicted here by the padlock.

Suffragettes embark upon prison hunger strikes. Marion Wallace-Dunlop is the first to refuse food when she is not given 'political prisoner' status. She had been arrested for damaging a wall in Parliament's St. Stephen's Hall. Other imprisoned suffragettes follow her lead, resulting in the Home Secretary ordering the force-feeding of women hunger strikers (illustrated here by the milk, eggs and feeding funnel).

The nation is horrified, and it gives the suffragettes powerful propaganda.

The emblem shows a suffragettes' prison badge worn on a buttonhole.

1908

Herbert Asquith becomes Prime Minister. Suffragettes are hopeful that the Liberals will support them, but they are disappointed, and become more militant.

On 17 January 1908, some suffragettes chain themselves to the railings of 10 Downing Street.

1907

On 7 February 1907, the N.U.W.S.S. organise a demonstration. Over 3000 women take part in the 'Mud March' through London, so-called because of the awful weather conditions.

The 'Women's Freedom League' (W.F.L.) is formed by members of the W.S.P.U who oppose violence.

1905

Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst are the first to be arrested in the battle for the vote. The handcuffs show that they are jailed for provoking trouble at a public meeting.

1903

Emmeline Pankhurst and others form the 'Women's Social and Political Union' (W.S.P.U.).

The shaking hands represent an agreement between the Liberal and Labour Parties whereby they would not risk standing against each other and risk splitting the vote.

1900

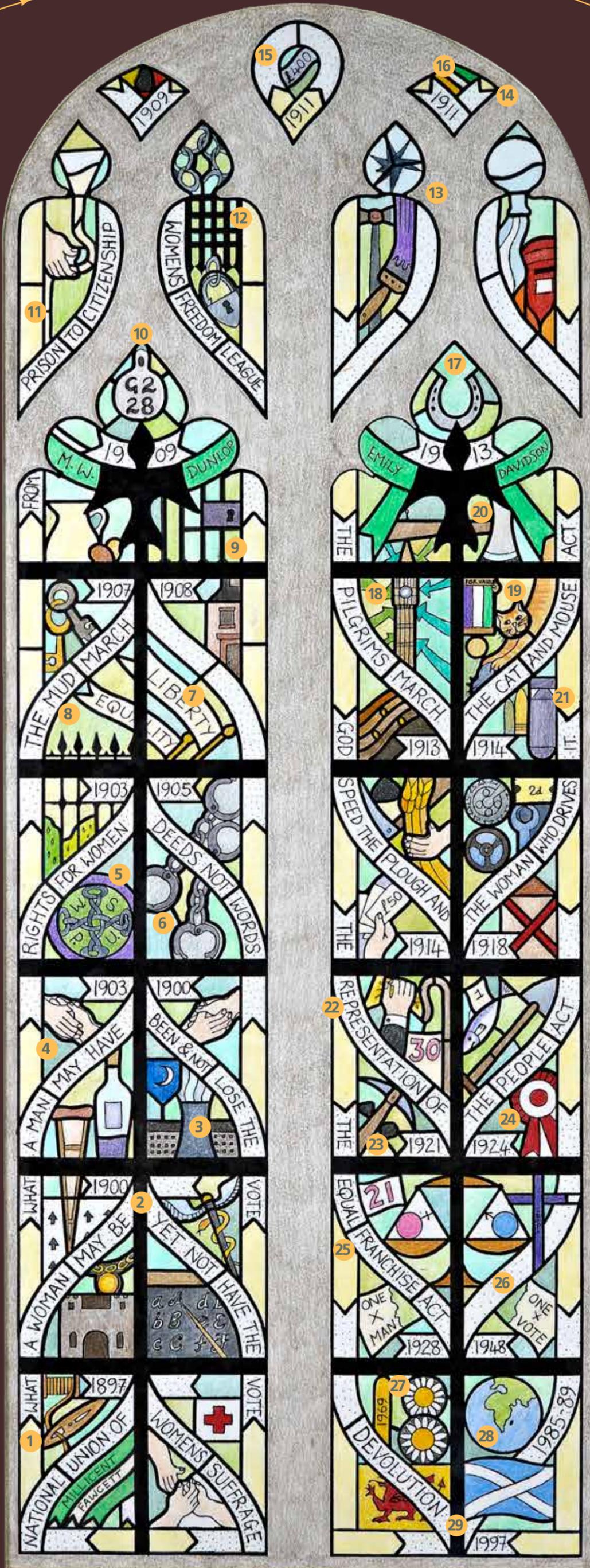
The 'Labour Representation Committee' is formed, to bring representation of the working classes to Parliament, shown here by the power station.

"What a woman may be yet not have the vote/what a man may have been and yet not lose the vote" (slogan from a women's suffrage poster in 1912). It describes how a woman can be a mayor, a nurse, a mother, a doctor, or a teacher, yet still cannot vote.

Meanwhile, a man can be a convict, a lunatic, unfit for service or a drunkard and not lose the vote.

1897

Under the leadership of Millicent Fawcett existing suffrage societies regroup as the 'National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' (N.U.W.S.S.), determined to gain women the right to vote.



START

END

1912

The latest Conciliation Bill is defeated when Irish MPs, for tactical reasons, vote against it. This is represented here by the Irish tricolour flag.

1913

The horseshoe signifies that on 8 June 1913, Emily Davison dies after falling under the King's horse during the Epsom Derby.

The image of Big Ben represents that on 26 July 1913, 50,000 women arrive in London on a pilgrimage organised by the N.U.W.S.S.

Increasing numbers of imprisoned suffragettes are refusing to eat. W.S.P.U. members are even awarded medals 'for valour' by fellow campaigners. The government dislike this martyrdom so they introduce the Prisoner's Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act (also known as 'The Cat and Mouse Act'). This Act targets hunger striking suffragettes by releasing them when ill and re-arresting them when healthy.

1914

The axe symbolises that on 10 March 1914, the militant suffragette, Mary Richardson, takes an axe to Velasquez's Rokeby Venus painting in the National Gallery.

On 4 August 1914, Britain declares war on Germany and the women's suffrage campaign is halted. During the War, an estimated two million women replace men in traditionally male jobs to release men for the armed forces.

1918

The Representation of the People Act 1918 is passed. The Act gives some women over 30 the vote in Parliamentary elections for the first time.

The Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918 is passed and allows women to stand as Parliamentary candidates. Women vote for the first time in the general election held in December 1918. The first woman wins a seat, Constance Markievicz, but she refuses to sit in the Westminster Parliament. It is not until 1919 that Nancy Astor becomes the first female MP to take her seat.

1921

The mines in the First World War had been controlled by the State, but subsequent private owners refuse to match the wages that the miners had received. This results in a three month miners' strike.

1924

The first Labour government takes office, led by Ramsay MacDonald.

1928

Emmeline Pankhurst dies. Shortly afterwards, the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928 is passed, meaning everyone over the age of 21 is now able to vote.

1948

The Representation of the People Act 1948 abolishes 'plural voting', all remaining two-Member borough seats and the residency qualification.

1969

The voting age for men and women is reduced from 21 to 18.

1985-89

The Representation of the People Act 1985 grants British citizens living overseas the right to vote in Parliamentary elections, provided they have resided in the UK within the last five years. In 1989, this changes to 20 years and it has since been reduced to 15 years.

1997

Wales and Scotland hold referendums as to whether they should have devolved decision-making bodies. In 1999, elections are held for the National Assembly in Wales, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Dearsley Bequest Windows

History of the Franchise

Window number 4
1897 – 1997

St. Stephen's Hall, Palace of Westminster



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Emily Wilding Davison

1872 – 1913

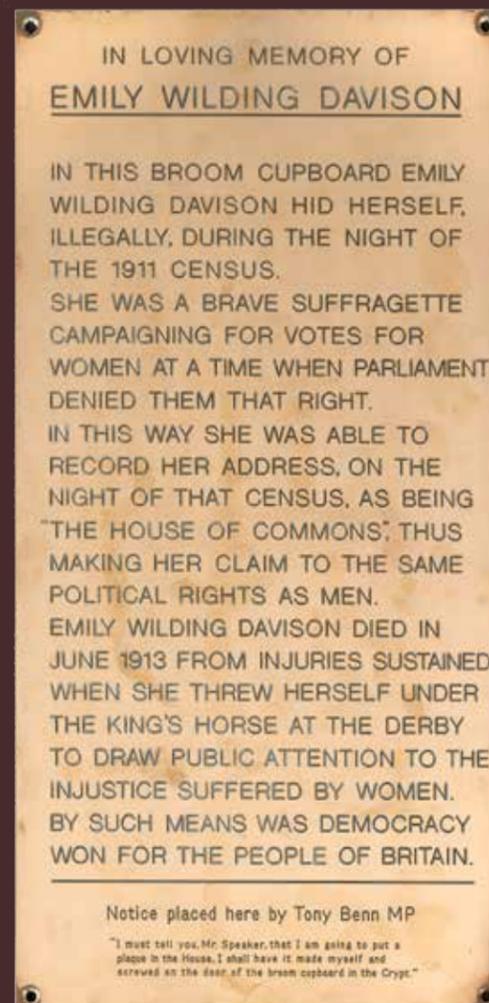


Miss Emily Wilding Davison, B.A.

Emily Wilding Davison was a militant campaigner for votes for women. She was a member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), but also acted independently on many occasions. She undertook many protests at the Houses of Parliament and appears a number of times in police reports to the Serjeant at Arms on suffragette action within the building.

On census night in April 1911 she hid in a broom cupboard in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, off Westminster Hall. This was part of a national effort by suffragette organisations to organise a mass disruption of the census. Emily Wilding Davison was fatally injured at Epsom racecourse by the King's horse running in the 1913 Derby.

- 11 Oct 1872**
Emily Wilding Davison born in Greenwich
- 1906**
Joined the Women's Social & Political Union
- 1908**
Awarded a degree in modern languages, University of London
- 30 March 1909**
Detained in Parliament as part of a group attempting to present a petition
- 4 April 1910**
Found hiding in a ventilation shaft, House of Commons
- 23 June 1910**
Broke a window in the Crown Office, House of Lords
- 24 June 1910**
Banned from the building by Speaker Lowther
- 19 Nov 1910**
Threw a hammer through a House of Commons division lobby window
- 2-3 April 1911**
Hid in Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, off Westminster Hall, on census night
- 26 June 1911**
Found climbing over railings at Members' staircase, House of Commons
- 4 June 1913**
Fatally injured during protest at the Epsom Derby
- 8 June 1913**
Died in hospital
- 14 June 1913**
Funeral procession in London
- 15 June 1913**
Burial in Morpeth, Northumberland



He said, 'What are you doing here?' She said, 'I am a Suffragette and my ambition is to get into the House to ask a question.'

Police report following the discovery of Emily Wilding Davison in a ventilation shaft, April 1910

'A lady who breaks the windows of the Crown Office & gets into our ventilating shaft is evidently not a desirable personage to have hanging about St. Stephen's Hall so her name had better go on the Index Expurgatorius.'
Speaker Lowther, June 1910

'To Mr Asquith. Do justice before the General Election or Judgment will surely fall.'

Emily Davison, label on hammer thrown through Division Lobby window, Nov 1910

'Miss E W Davidson [sic] Found hiding in Crypt of Westminster Hall since Saturday.'
Census form, April 1911

'She was a brave suffragette campaigning for votes for women at a time when Parliament denied them that right.'
Tony Benn MP

www.parliament.uk/women



OPEN OUT THE LEAFLET TO EXPLORE WINDOW 4: 1897-1997



Subsequently the John Hardman Studio in Birmingham was appointed to manufacture the windows. Hardman's link with the Palace can be traced back to the mid-19th century, as they made most of the stained glass and metalwork to A.W.N. Pugin's designs during the works following the 1834 fire.

The 'Dearsley Bequest' windows were installed in January 2002. There are four separate windows, each containing a timeline of significant images relating to the development of the franchise.

The design and manufacture of the stained glass windows in St. Stephen's Hall originate from a generous bequest made by Mrs. Nora Dearsley, an admirer of the Palace of Westminster who died in 1995. It was decided that Mrs. Dearsley's bequest would be used to replace the stained glass windows in St. Stephen's Hall that were bomb damaged during the Second World War. A design competition was held in 1997, using the 'history of the franchise' as the subject for the windows. Designs by a number of stained glass artists were considered by the House of Lords Works of Art Committee. The Committee selected the submission by Shona McInnes of the Leadline Stained Glass Studio in Yorkshire.