

MAPPING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE 1911

SUFFRAGE GLOSSARY

ANTI-SUFFRAGIST – someone who was opposed to votes for women. A Women's National Anti-Suffrage League was founded in 1908 and established over 100 branches in the next ten years.

CAT AND MOUSE ACT - in 1913, the Liberal government Home Secretary Reginald McKenna introduced the Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill Health Act, or what became commonly known as the 'Cat and Mouse' Act. The Act aimed to prevent potential suffragette prisoner deaths from hunger strikes - preventing suffragette 'Martyrs' from being created. It allowed suffragette prisoners suffering from the ill effects of hunger striking to be temporarily released, but then automatically rearrested once sufficiently recovered. Many temporarily released suffragettes went into hiding during this time, or on the run to avoid recapture by the police - playing a game of 'Cat and mouse'. To counter this tactic the state sanctioned the use of forcible feeding (see below).

CENSUS – a population and household survey taken by the government every 10 years.

CONSTITUTIONAL – a legal and peaceful way of campaigning using tried and tested political methods such as petitions.

ENFRANCHISEMENT – to be granted the vote.

EQUAL FRANCHISE ACT – the Equal Franchise Act was passed in 1928 granting women aged 21 and over the vote. This gave them the vote on the same terms as men.

FORCIBLE FEEDING – this was a torturous practice used on many suffragettes who went on hunger strike in prison. A tube was forced either down the mouth or nose and liquidised food forced through it into the stomach. Suffragette's who were subjected to the practice describe the immense pain suffered and the brutality of the way it was administered by prison staff. Women who resisted forcible feeding were pinned down; clamps were sometimes used to pry the jaws open so the feeding tube could be inserted. Some suffragette's teeth were broken. The feeding tube often found its way into the lungs rather than the stomach causing long term damage to women's health from which some never recovered. There are even some accounts by suffragettes of feeding tubes being administered anally and even vaginally and together with the force used the practice has been likened to rape.

FRANCHISE – is another word for the right to vote in public elections.

HOME RULE - the Irish Home Rule movement campaigned for self-government for Ireland within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It was the dominant political movement of Irish nationalism from 1870 to the end of World War I. Irish constitutional nationalists sought the return of a domestic legislature to Ireland, having been under direct rule from Westminster since the Act of Union of 1801.

HUNGER STRIKE – a hunger strike is a tactic sometimes used by prisoners to protest about their imprisonment or the conditions in which they are kept. It involves a refusal to eat and in extreme cases can also include a refusal to drink.

PETITION – a petition is a request or application, submitted in writing, and usually signed by many people, to either an individual, group or organisation, including the government.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT – in 1918 this Act granted the vote to women over 30 who were also householders, the wives of householders, owners of property worth over £5 or university graduates. It also granted the franchise to all men over the age of 21.

SUFFRAGE – means the right to vote in political elections.

SUFFRAGETTE – the word suffragette is usually used to describe a woman who was willing to break the law during the Votes for Women campaign who most often belonged to a 'militant' society such as the WSPU or the WFL.

SUFFRAGIST – the word suffragist is most often used to describe a woman who campaigned for the vote using law abiding methods most often associated with a suffrage society such as the NUWSS.

For more information visit: www.mappingwomensuffrage.org.uk