

historyTM
works

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)



The Cambridge Suffragettes



It's Not Your Right!

Until recently, women were not thought to be equal to men. Women were thought of as weak and stupid.

Women were denied rights that now we take for granted. They were not allowed to get a degree, to vote in general elections or to do lots of jobs, like being a doctor.

Indeed, women were regarded as the property of their father or husband. This meant women couldn't own anything themselves and that these men could do what they wanted to them. Hitting your wife was not against the law!

www.historyworks.tv
@historyworkstv

Here is a drawing of a wife sale. Can you imagine how this woman would have felt?

FACTOID

Some women were even sold at a market, alongside cows and sheep. As late as 1928 a woman was sold for only £1!



history
works™



Women Fight Back!

SOME REASONS

Why Working Women Want the Vote.

- Because** as long as women cannot vote for Members of Parliament they are not asked what they want, and they are treated like children who do not know what is good or what is bad for them.
- Because** only those who wear the shoe know where it pinches, and women know best what they want and what they don't want.
- Because** Members of Parliament must attend to the wants and wishes of those who have votes, and they have not time to attend to the wants and wishes of women who have not got votes.
- Because** laws are made which specially affect women's work and the work of their children.
- Because** if women are working as dressmakers, tailoresses, printers, confectioners, and laundresses, or in any factory or workshop, the laws under which they work are made for women without women being asked if these laws are good or bad for them.
- Because** if the laws under which women work are bad, women cannot have those laws changed unless they have the vote.
- Because** the vote has been given to women in some of our Colonies and has been of great use.
- Because** the way to help women is to give them the means of helping themselves.
- Because** the vote is the best and most direct way by which women can get their wishes and wants attended to.

In the mid 1800s, women grew frustrated with the inequality. They began to unite, and to campaign for women's rights.

The first group to do so, called themselves the Suffragists. They campaigned using peaceful means, for lots of different rights. They focused, however, on getting women the vote!

This is a pamphlet from 1913, listing the reasons why women thought they should have the vote. Which one do you think is the most convincing?

The Suffragists in Cambridge – “No vote, No Census!”



Here is a picture of Henry Fawcett, husband to Millicent who led the Suffragist movement. What do you think he thought of the campaign?

The Suffragists were very active in Cambridge! They held SIX meetings in the area in 1907.

At one meeting, the Suffragists were encouraged to bring their husbands! Do you think the men would have wanted to go?

FACTOID

A Census is when the government records who everyone is and where they live

history
works[™]

In 1911, the Cambridge Suffragists gathered together and refused to fill in the Census. If the government wouldn't treat them as citizens, they would not comply with its regulations.

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)

Women Fight Back, Harder!

In the early 1900s, some women got tired of the lack of progress the Suffragists had made using peaceful means. They broke away into a new group called the Suffragettes.

The Suffragettes used much more violent means to pressure the government into giving them the vote. They planted bombs at train stations, churches and even at the houses of politicians! They smashed all the shop windows in Oxford Street and even slashed up paintings in the National Portrait Gallery!

FACTOID

'Suffrage' means the right to vote. This is why they called themselves Suffragettes!



The Suffragettes in Cambridge

Like the Suffragists, the suffragettes were also very active in Cambridge. Their leader, Emmeline Pankhurst came to speak three times!

Their speeches often became loud or violent events, as men tried to prevent the Suffragettes from getting across their message. Opponents would sing, blow whistles, or even ring the bells of Great St Mary's for hours, so no one could hear the speakers.

Once, a suffragette, Mrs Brailsford was speaking to a crowd from a lorry on Parker's Piece. Children and teenagers, trying to silence Mrs Brailsford, started moving the van from side to side, then pushed it into the middle of a cricket match!



www.historyworks.tv
@historyworkstv

Photo of Suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst talking from a car to a large audience

history
works

“Deeds Not Words”

The Suffragettes did more than just talk – their motto was “Deeds not words”. They proved this in Cambridge!

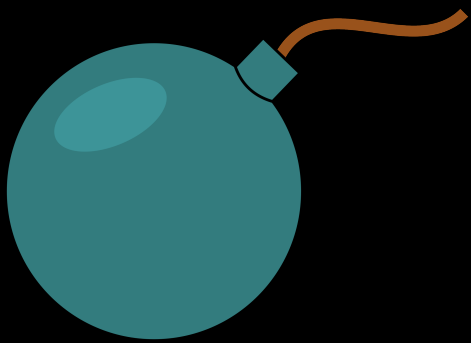
In 1913, the Suffragettes tried to set fire to the Varsity Rugby Pavilion using a bomb they had made at home in a mustard tin! A woman’s shoe and a card reading ‘Votes for women’ was found near the scene of the crime!



At almost the same time, a square parcel, labelled ‘Votes for Women’, was discovered in the lounge of a hotel in Cambridge! Everyone was terrified because they thought it was another bomb, about to explode, but it turned to be only a block of wood!



That Wasn't All...!!



In the same year, 1913, a suffragette was also convicted of setting fire to a house in Storey's Way, just a few minutes from the town centre!

And as if that weren't enough, the Suffragettes also planted a bomb at a railway crossing! It was made from a bootlace, leading into a tin filled with flammable materials, like cotton-wool soaked in oil and charcoal. It didn't go off, but it was a close call!

A Sacrifice for the Cause



In June 1913, Emily Davidson, a suffragette, died after she tried to pin a suffragette scarf to the King's Horse as it raced in the Epsom Derby.

People are unsure whether she intended to die, but regardless, she became a **martyr** for the Suffragette cause.

Emily

The King's Horse

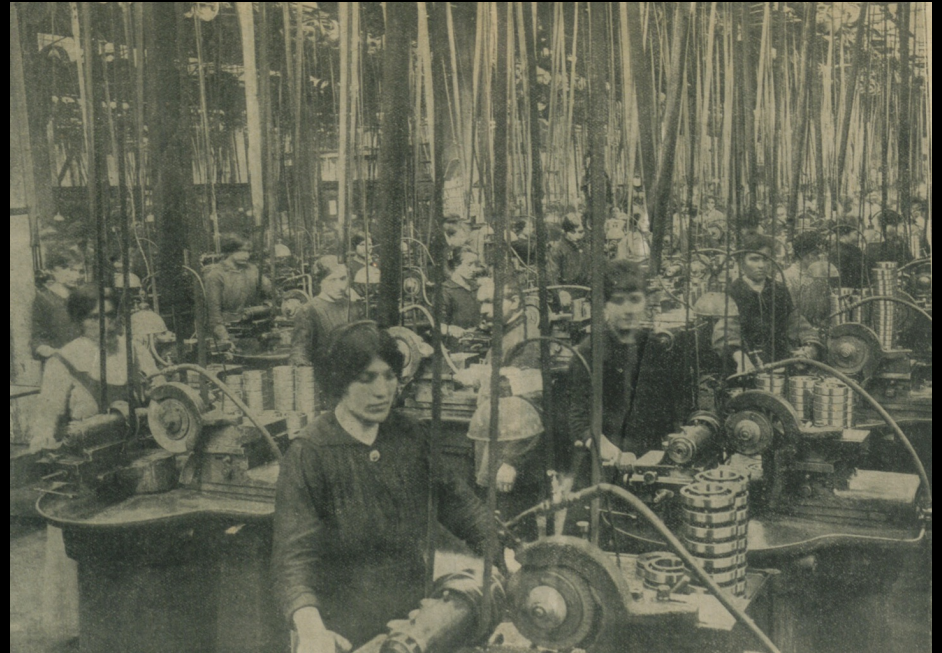
Success!

Emily Davidson's death, along with the horrible force-feeding of Suffragettes, who went on hunger strike when arrested, meant that gradually the public began to sympathise with these women.

After women helped out a lot at home during the First World War, working in factories and as nurses, some women were given the vote in 1918.

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)

Photo of women working in a factory in World War One from the [British Library](#)



history
works

But the Fight Isn't Over!

It wasn't just the ability to vote that women wanted. The suffrage movement wanted other rights and they had to fight for these too!

Women also wanted to be educated alongside men. This would allow them to qualify for jobs, such as a doctor, or lawyer. In the 19th century, women couldn't do these jobs!

In 1869, Emily Davies set up Girton College, the first College at Cambridge for women. It was set up 30 miles from Cambridge, so they did not to offend the male students!

www.historyworks.tv
@historyworkstv

Photo of [Girton College](#)

FACTOID

There were only 5 girls at Girton College in 1869, but hundreds of men in the University! Can you imagine being one of those five? Would you feel special? Intimidated?



10,134 - CAMBRIDGE GIRTON COLLEGE

history
works

Women Still Faced Problems!



Lots of people thought girls were incapable of doing hard, logical, subjects like Maths.

In 1890 Philippa Fawcett proved them wrong! In the University's maths exams she stunned all the boys by getting the highest mark by far!

But, women also were not actually awarded degrees, even if they studied hard and passed their exams!

This meant a woman couldn't be a doctor, even if she had all the training, because the job required a degree!

This is a photo of Philippa. Can you image how she would have felt when the results were announced? Remember, she still didn't actually get a degree!

www.historyworks.tv
@historyworkstv

Photo from the University of
Cambridge

history
works[™]

A close-up photograph of a person with dark hair, wearing a dark shirt, speaking into a professional microphone. The background is slightly blurred, showing another person in a floral shirt.

The Push for Change

In 1897, the two female colleges, Girton and Newnham, proposed to the University that female graduates be given a degree. The University held a vote on the matter.

At the time, there was a great surge of anti-women feeling among the male students, who were threatened by women's rise to equality.

Mr J. P. Thompson said: “If I gave a beggar my coat, he had no right to demand my trousers too.”

Mr. Thompson was using a metaphor! Can you think what he was trying to say?

Hint: women are the beggars in his scenario!

“Frustrate the Feminine Fanatics!”



On the day of the vote, a crowd gathered outside the Senate House. The men put out lots of posters against the female students.

One read “Frustrate the feminine fanatics!” and another “No gowns for Girtonites!”

Above what is now the University Press Bookshop, male students hung a mocking effigy of a female student riding a bicycle, wearing bloomers and coloured stockings.

Here is a picture of the scene! Can you see the effigy? Which building is St Mary’s Church? Can you imagine the tense atmosphere, as people waited for the result?

The Riot!

The result came in... **Women were NOT allowed degrees!**

Suddenly, the thrilled male students started throwing eggs, flour, confetti and even fireworks! They tore down the effigy of the woman on the bike and shredded it to pieces, then stuffed it through the gates of Newnham College

They lit a bonfire outside of the college and burnt effigies of the colleges' principles, Miss Clough and Miss Jex-Blake.

Here is a picture of Anne Clough! How do you think she and her students felt on that day?

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)

Photo from [Newnham College](#)

FACTOID

Riding a bike, was seen as something only men did. A woman on a bike was a symbol of the new woman, claiming equality.



history
works

The Steamboat Ladies

After all that fuss, women still were not allowed degrees!

Between 1904 and 1907, Trinity College in Dublin allowed women who had studied at Oxford or Cambridge, to get their degree from there! 700 women took up their offer and got the steamboat across to Ireland to receive their degree. They were known as the Steamboat Ladies because of the transport they took!



Photo of a steamboat from the [British Library](#)

A Degree, at Last!



Painting of the
Queen Mother by
Richard Stone

After the failure of 1897, women tried again in 1921 to get a degree. They failed, again!

In 1947, the women tried once more and, third time lucky, they were given the right to receive a degree!

The first
degree was
given out in
1948.

FACTOID

**The first ever degree from
Cambridge went to Queen
Elizabeth II's mum!**

All That Hard Work Pays Off, Eventually!

In 1998, Cambridge University held a ceremony to honour all the women who had passed it's exams, but who had not received a degree.

More than 900 women attended the event at the Senate House!



This is a picture of the Senate House, where Cambridge Students graduate from. How do you think the women felt, as they finally stepped into such a grand building?

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)

history
works[™]



Discover More

Lots of information on the protest at the senate can be found here:

<http://historyworks.tv/projects/2014/03/13/cycle-of-songs/#8-on-her-bike-womens-fight-for-degrees>

Information on the key players of the early suffragette movement can be found here:

<http://herstoria.com/womens-access-to-higher-education-an-overview-1860-1948/>

A simple summary of the wider Suffragette movement can be found on BBC Bitesize:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/history/britsuff/suffrage/revision/1/>

For more information about the Cambridge Suffragettes and Suffragists, there is a online 'scrapbook' of every mention of women from 1897 to 1990. It can be found here:

<https://archive.org/details/CambridgeshireWomenScrapbook1897To1990>

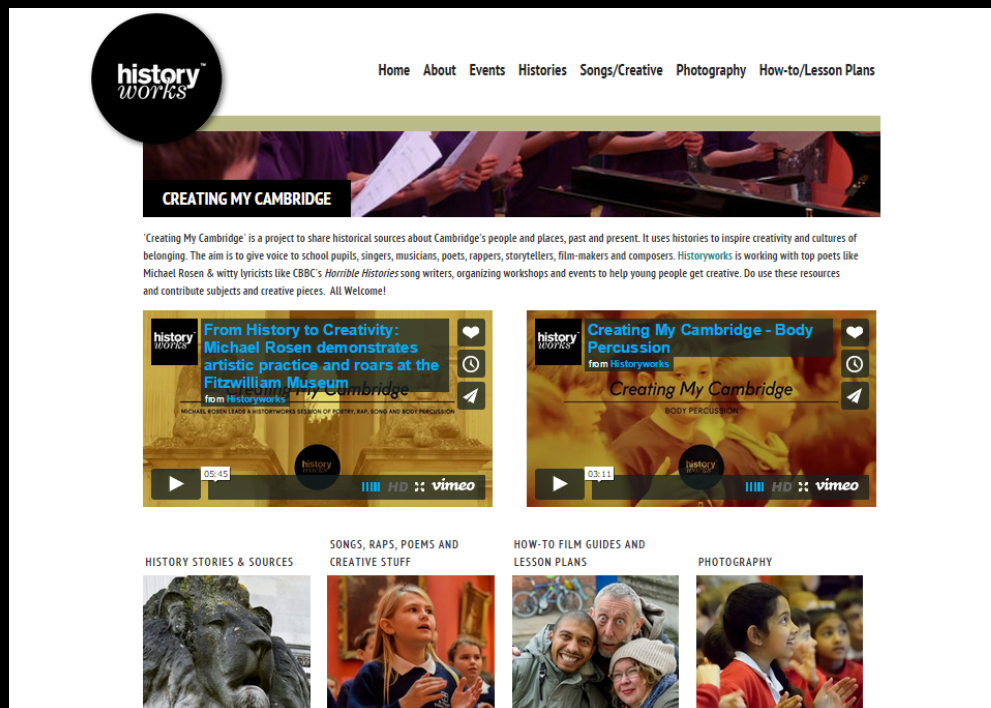
By searching "Suffragette" or other key words, such as "Suffrage", the relevant articles can quickly be found.

www.historyworks.tv
@historyworkstv

history[™]
works

Web Resources available at:

<http://www.creatingmycambridge.com/history-stories>



The screenshot shows the 'historyworks' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Events, Histories, Songs/Creative, Photography, and How-to/Lesson Plans. The main header features the 'historyworks' logo and a large banner image of children singing into microphones, with the text 'CREATING MY CAMBRIDGE' overlaid. Below the banner, a paragraph describes the project: 'Creating My Cambridge' is a project to share historical sources about Cambridge's people and places, past and present. It uses histories to inspire creativity and cultures of belonging. The aim is to give voice to school pupils, singers, musicians, poets, rappers, storytellers, film-makers and composers. Historyworks is working with top poets like Michael Rosen & witty lyricists like CBBC's *Horrible Histories* song writers, organizing workshops and events to help young people get creative. Do use these resources and contribute subjects and creative pieces. All Welcome!

Below the text are two video thumbnails. The first is titled 'From History to Creativity: Michael Rosen demonstrates artistic practice and roars at the Fitzwilliam Museum' and has a duration of 05:45. The second is titled 'Creating My Cambridge - Body Percussion' and has a duration of 03:11. Both videos are from 'historyworks' and are available on Vimeo.

At the bottom, there are four categories with corresponding images: 'HISTORY STORIES & SOURCES' (a stone lion), 'SONGS, RAPS, POEMS AND CREATIVE STUFF' (a girl singing), 'HOW-TO FILM GUIDES AND LESSON PLANS' (a group of people), and 'PHOTOGRAPHY' (a group of children).

www.historyworks.tv
[@historyworkstv](https://twitter.com/historyworkstv)

history
works™