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HOW THE VOTE WAS WON



276743 VOTES FOR WOMEN
Procession from Victoria Embankment to Hyde Park.
Assemblies 12-30 p.m., Starts 1-30 p.m.



**a cabaret evening
of original plays, verses and songs to
celebrate the centenary of women getting
the vote (some of them, anyway!)**

**Thurs 17th to Sat 19th May 2018 at 7.30pm
The Village Hall, Escrick**

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Welcome to our May production of How The Vote Was Won.

The idea for an evening of suffrage pieces was first mooted by Mike Waters a couple of years ago; he convinced the membership it would tie in perfectly with the suffrage centenary during 2018. Furthermore, his preferred pieces offered an abundance of acting opportunities, something which a regular play cannot always provide.

During the early stages of rehearsals, Mike was keen to enlighten the group with all things 'suffragette-y'! He disseminated his in-depth knowledge of the suffrage movement with a multitudinous array of historical research, some of which you may find contained within the programme. Please take home with you for further bedtime reading. There will be no exam to sit afterwards!

When we rehearse a regular play, we block each scene and then rehearse page by page, increasing to a full scene and then a full Act, ending with a full run during the last few weeks. It wasn't as straightforward this time around. Mike had to coordinate eleven pieces and seventeen actors with multiple crossovers and all within the same rehearsal period; and it was his first time directing with The Monday Players.

Well done Mike! It will all be worth the hours of planning and preparation. Time for you to enjoy a drink at the bar and enjoy the rewards of an appreciative audience!

The gratitude I feel towards those who battled for the rights of women has grown immensely during this process, as it has for others. Where we are now, a hundred years on, is remarkable, however there are still battles going on right now for women with the gender pay gap, #MeToo movement and Time's Up movement; the ironic timing of this has not gone unnoticed.

On a cheerier note, I hope you partake in a drink or two (or more) and enjoy another value for money evening!

The Monday Players would like to thank Anita and Barrie Shipley for organising and running the bar.

And finally... thank you to our audience, sponsors, village hall users and village hall committee for your continued support and patronage. It is, as always, greatly appreciated. Enjoy the show!

Nicki

THE DIRECTOR

The Plays and Their Authors:

A Note by Director Mike Waters

Many plays were written by suffrage campaigners and their supporters to highlight the arguments for and against giving women the vote. They were performed at rallies and other public meetings, primarily to entertain and encourage those who already supported the cause. Most were not written by professional playwrights and they are not necessarily literary masterpieces. Their power lies in their subject matter, not in the quality of the writing.

I thought that the centenary of (some) women getting the vote in February 1918 was a historic moment well worth commemorating and celebrating in its own right. But women's suffrage campaigners wanted the vote, not just as a matter of principle, but because of the ability it would give women to put pressure on politicians to address other issues where women were badly treated. These included double standards in sexual matters and unequal pay. Recent stories of the abuse of women by men in positions of power over them, and of the persistence of unequal pay, demonstrate the continuing relevance of the battle that reached a milestone, but not a conclusion, one hundred years ago.

I put together *The Politician and the Suffragette* using the actual words of contemporary pamphlets, articles and speeches by anti-suffrage campaigners. The intervention and ejection of the suffragette echoes the experience of Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney who were thrown out of a public meeting in Manchester in October 1905 for daring to ask a male politician if a Liberal Government would give votes to women.

Helen Margaret Nightingale's *A Change of Tenant* was first performed in 1910 by the Actresses' Franchise League which was formed "as a band of union between all women in the Theatrical Profession who are in sympathy with the Woman's Franchise Movement". Even after the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872, landlords sought to influence how their tenants voted and could evict a widow after her husband's death since their vote had died with him. Widows of farmers, publicans and shop keepers could lose their livelihoods in this way even if they were perfectly competent businesswomen.

The anonymous author of the *Cautionary Tale in Verse* (1911) took as a model Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1907).

Harry Major Paull's monologue *An Anti-Suffragist, or The Other Side* was published by the Actresses' Franchise League in 1910. The speaker naively recounts typical anti-suffrage arguments in a way that shows them up. She mentions Lord Curzon who was a figure in the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage. Paull was a retired civil servant and author who published over twenty books and plays, including plays for children.

H. Crawford's poem *When Good Queen Bess Was On The Throne* (1908) invokes Queen Elizabeth as an example of a woman who was clearly fitted to take a part in Government, something that anti-suffrage campaigners denied was appropriate for any woman. The reference at the end to paying the piper reflects the fact that women had to pay taxes while having no say in what those taxes were.

Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St John's *Pot and Kettle* (1909) describes an anti-suffrage meeting infiltrated by suffragette hecklers and has its real-life counterpart in a meeting held



in York in 1912 which ended in disorder. The play mentions the occasion, in 1908, when two suffragettes manacled themselves to the grille over the Ladies Gallery in the House of Commons which made it difficult for women to see or hear what was going on and for whom it symbolised their invisibility and exclusion from Parliament. The grille had to be taken out before the locks could be filed off; it was permanently removed in 1917. Hamilton was an actress, playwright and feminist activist. St John's real name was Christabel Marshall. She was a friend of Edith Craig, the daughter of the actress Ellen Terry, and published Terry's correspondence with George Bernard Shaw.

The poem *Women This, and Woman That* by Laurence Housman was first published in the WSPU's newspaper 'Votes For Women' on 31st December 1909. The term 'Saint Stephen's' refers to the entrance to the House of Commons from where many suffrage delegations were turned away, sometimes violently, before being arrested. Themes that still resonate today are unequal pay and sexual harassment. Women objected to being told that their duty was to look after the home and their children while being denied a voice in legislation that affected them, such as 'sanitation, temperance, and schools'. Housman, the brother of the poet and classical scholar A. E. Housman, was a book illustrator, writer, committed socialist and pacifist, and one of the founders of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. Housman spoke in the Assembly Rooms in York in March 1911, encouraging women to evade the census of 2-3 April.

Evelyn Glover's *A Chat with Mrs Chicky* was first performed in February 1912. Mrs Chicky can't even vote in local council elections, although women generally could, because she is French. At this time, when a woman married she was obliged to give up her own nationality in favour of her husband's if it was different. So, by marrying a Frenchman Mrs Chicky is no longer British under the law but French. She can only become British again by marrying a British man or becoming naturalised. Glover is recorded on the 1911 census as a writer (journalism) on her own account, living by herself in Marylebone, London. She wrote two other suffrage works, *Miss Appleyard's Awakening* (1911) and *Showin' Samyel* (1914).

Hamilton's poem *Beware! A Warning to Suffragists* refers to a 'gamp', which is a large umbrella; 'Palace Yard', which is an open space between the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey; and 'skilly', which is a thin broth.

Hamilton and St John's *How the Vote Was Won* was first performed in April 1909 and became the most celebrated suffrage play. York suffragettes performed it in the Assembly Rooms on 28 February 1911. The maid Lily has been motivated to join the strike by Christabel Pankhurst, whose arguments echo those of leading York suffragette Annie Coultate who said in 1912 that the women who held back the suffrage movement were those who believed in it but did nothing. Lily doesn't think she should be treated like a criminal or a lunatic. In 1868 a court decided that women were 'legally incapacitated' from voting, a category which also included convicted criminals and the insane. Women suffrage campaigners were offended by being placed in the same category. There are references to several suffrage organisations. The 'National Union' is the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, headed by Millicent Garrett Fawcett. The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was the most militant of the suffrage organisations, led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel. The Women's Freedom League was formed in 1907 when some members of the WSPU broke away, resentful of the dominance of Pankhurst. 'Deeds, not words' was the slogan of the WSPU. The Prime Minister Asquith's unwillingness to 'receive people' in his new predicament is mocked because suffragettes were enraged by his repeated refusals to meet them.

Theodora Mills' song *Rise Up Women* is a reminder that the 'cause' of women's rights still 'goes marching on'.

THE NATIONAL SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN

1832: The Great Reform Act expressly restricted the vote in Parliamentary elections to male persons.

1867: The first women's suffrage society was formed in Manchester, followed by others in London, Edinburgh, Bristol and Birmingham.

1869 onwards: Parliament gave women the right to vote in parish, town and county council elections and to vote for, and stand for election to, positions on school boards and as poor law guardians.

1870 and 1884: Attempts to introduce women's suffrage for Parliamentary elections were defeated in the House of Commons when the Liberal Prime Minister Gladstone announced his opposition.

1897: A women's suffrage Bill passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons but the Conservative Government refused to allow it to be debated further. The National of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was formed to bring together many existing suffrage groups. It adopted the colours red, white and green. Its President for many years was Millicent Garrett Fawcett: a statue of her was unveiled in Parliament Square, London in April 2018.

1903: The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was formed in Manchester under the leadership of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel. It adopted the colours purple, white and green; the motto 'Deeds not Words'; and the slogan 'Votes for Women'.

1905: By now women had engaged in forty years of peaceful but fruitless campaigning for women's suffrage, involving letters and articles in the press, public speeches, marches, petitions and discrete lobbying.

Members of the WSPU began to undertake more 'militant' campaigning. Until 1908 this mostly took the form of publicly questioning and heckling politicians.

1906: The Daily Mail newspaper coined the term 'suffragette', intended to be derogatory, to distinguish the more militant campaigners from the more peacefully-minded 'suffragists'; the former adopted the term as a badge of honour.



1908, 1910 and 1911: Three times the House of Commons voted in favour of the principle of women's suffrage but the Government under Liberal Prime Minister Asquith refused to allow the matter to be debated further. Many suffrage campaigners were persuaded of the need for still more 'militant' action: on 30 June 1908 two of them threw stones through Asquith's windows at 10 Downing Street. Thereafter attacks on private property by militant campaigners increased. At first this took the form of throwing stones through the windows of Government offices, and later of shops in Oxford Street and Regent Street in London. Subsequently there were many arson attacks on private property. Such violent measures led the NUWSS to disassociate itself from the WSPU

1909: The first hunger strikes by imprisoned suffragettes, protesting at being denied political prisoner status, took place; and the Government introduced the practice of forcible feeding.

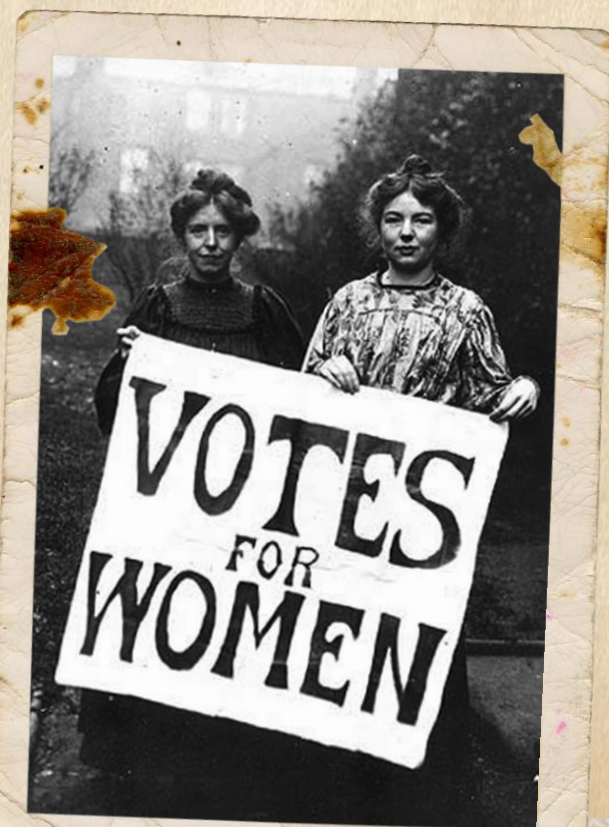
1910: A demonstration by suffragettes on 18 November led to violent scenes lasting several hours ('Black Friday') as the women were assaulted, often indecently, by police and male onlookers.

1913: The Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act (known as the Cat and Mouse Act) provided for hunger strikers whose health was deteriorating to be released until they recovered their strength, when they would be returned to prison to resume their sentence. On 4 June Emily Wilding Davison was fatally injured when she fell under the king's horse Anmer during the Epsom Derby; she died four days later. She may have been trying to attach ribbons or a scarf in the WSPU's colours to the horse's bridle. Her grave at St Mary's, Morpeth is festooned with ribbons in the WSPU's colours.

1914: On the outbreak of WWI suffrage campaigns were suspended and suffragette prisoners were released. The leaders of the WSPU embraced the war effort. Many other suffrage campaigners continued to lobby for the vote behind the scenes.

1918: The Representation of the People Act received royal assent on 6 February. It gave the vote in Parliamentary elections, for the first time, to all men aged 21 and over without further conditions (and with special rules for men returning from the war); and to women aged 30 and over, subject to meeting a property qualification which excluded 22% of them. Around 8.4 million women could now vote, comprising 39.6% of the electorate. Women voted in a general election for the first time on 14 December.

1928: The Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act gave women equal voting rights with men. All women aged 21 and over could now vote in Parliamentary elections. Fifteen million women were eligible; they were a majority (52.7%) of the electorate.



THE CAMPAIGN IN YORK

1866: Three women from York - Emma Fitch, Agnes V Smith and Ann Swaine - were among 1499 signatories of a suffrage petition presented to Parliament by John Stuart Mill MP.

1876: The York MP and railwayman George Leeman presented a petition from York in favour of women's suffrage.

1870s-1880s: Several women's suffrage meetings were held in York.

1889: The York Women's Suffrage Society was formed at a meeting of the York Women's Liberal Association and held a number of public meetings in following years. By 1909 it had an office at 10 Museum Street.

1901: The York Women's Suffrage Society joined the National of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1901. At the end of 1909 the York branch of the NUWSS opened committee rooms at the corner of Jubbergate and Parliament Street; and in 1913 the York branch was situated at 10 Museum Street.

1908: The York Women's Suffrage Society planned to send ten delegates to attend a demonstration organised by the NUWSS in the Albert Hall, London on 13 June. In June a branch of the Women's Freedom League was formed in York at a meeting at the Independent Labour Party rooms in St Sampson's Square.

Also, in June, Emmeline Pankhurst and others addressed meetings in the De Grey Rooms, and spoke to Rowntree's employees during their dinner hour, during the first visits to York by speakers from the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

1909: The WSPU organised public meetings in St Sampson's Square and Exhibition Square during the York Pageant in July.

1910: The York branch of the WSPU was formed following an initiative by Annie Coultate, 66 Nunthorpe Road, a school teacher. Violet Key Jones of Bishopthorpe was treasurer and full-time organiser; and Annie Coultate was hon. secretary. In October the York branch took an office at 35 Coney Street (the ground floor of which until summer 2017 was occupied by Currys PC World, albeit the property was by then numbered 36), moving to 8 New Street (then at the south-east junction with Coney Street) from April to December 1911 and to Colby Chambers, 11 Coppergate in January 1912.



In the next few years the York branch of the WSPU organised local public meetings; held whist drives and jumble sales to raise funds; sold WSPU newspapers in Coney Street and the Market Place; and hosted visits by star speakers, including Emmeline and Adela Pankhurst, Flora 'the General' Drummond and Laurence Housman. Local and visiting speakers often vigorously defended the use of militant, even violent tactics. Visiting MPs John Redmond, Keir Hardie, Philip Snowden and John Dillon were severely heckled. The Festival Concert Rooms (situated behind the Assembly Rooms, the De Grey Rooms, the Exhibition Buildings (situated behind the Art Gallery and also now demolished) hosted many suffrage meetings; and open-air meetings were held in Exhibition Square and the Market Place. Meetings were also organised at New Earswick, Dunnington and Selby.

1911: On 28 February the York branch of the WSPU performed three plays at the Assembly Rooms, including Cicely Hamilton's *How the Vote Was Won*. Three men and eighteen women (apparently including Annie Coultate and Violet Key Jones) evaded the census on 2-3 April by concealing themselves overnight, apparently in Bland's Court, off Coney Street (perhaps, in fact, in the WSPU's office in rooms above 35 Coney Street). If they didn't count politically, they refused to be counted at all!

1912: A York Men's Committee for Women's Suffrage was formed.

1913: Seventeen York women took the train from York to London on 22 January to attend a rally. A deputation of suffragettes tried to enter the House of Commons. Several women, including Annie Seymour Pearson of 14 Heworth Green, York, were arrested on a charge of obstructing the police. Annie was sentenced to either a forty shilling fine or two weeks in Holloway Prison. She chose the latter option but was released after two days when her husband paid the fine. On 28 January letter bombs, addressed to Prime Minister Asquith, were posted in pillar boxes in Wigginton Road, Castle Mills Bridge, Parliament Street and Balmoral Terrace. One of them exploded in the sorting office, setting fire to a number of other letters. Two postmen sustained injuries to their hands. The perpetrators were not caught. On 3 March several suffragettes were ejected from a meeting in Exhibition Buildings addressed by Labour MP Philip Snowden, one of them, Violet Key Jones, having first tied herself to her chair. In April a bomb was left at the offices of the Yorkshire Evening Press in Coney Street. In August Annie Seymour Pearson, Violet Key Jones and Annie Coultate effected the escape from Annie Seymour's house of a convicted would-be arsonist, Harry Johnson, when he visited her, under police escort/guard, during a period of temporary release from Wakefield goal under the Cat and Mouse Act. Johnson apparently spent a week in the house of Mrs Bell, a WSPU supporter in Acomb, before moving on to Birmingham and then London.

1914: In February and March suffragettes interrupted church services at Bishopthorpe church and York Minster with prayers for 'the women who are being tortured in prison for conscience sake', referring to Emmeline Pankhurst and other hunger strikers. In May suffragettes threw down suffrage leaflets from the dress and upper circles in the Theatre Royal. Also, in May, letter bombs ignited in pillar boxes in the Mount and Heworth areas and in Bishopthorpe Road.

RUNNING ORDER

The Politician and the Suffragette

A Liberal politician
A suffragette
A male steward

Bob Wells
Linda Baillie
Alan Rome

A Change of Tenant (by Helen Margaret Nightingale)

Squire Brooks
Keen, the squire's servant
Mrs Basset, a widow
John Smith, the prospective new tenant

Nick Leaf
Linda Baillie
Lisa Valentine
Alan Rome

SCENE CHANGE

Cautionary Tale in Verse

Sadie Ashton

An Anti-Suffragist, or The Other Side (by Harry Major Paull)

Miss de Lacey

Julia Birkett

FIRST INTERVAL

When Good Queen Bess Was On The Throne (by H. Crawford)

Maudie Spark, Queen of the Comediennes

Astrid Croasdale

Pot and Kettle (by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St John)

Frederick Brewster
Maria Brewster, his wife
Marjorie Brewster, their daughter
Nell Roberts, their niece and a suffragette
Ernest, Marjorie's boyfriend

Gary Bateson
Jill Pearson
Nicki Clay
Linda Baillie
Andrew Faulkes

276743 VOTES FOR WOMEN
Procession from
Victoria Embankment to Hyde Park
Assemblies 12-30
Sunday, June 12th

SCENE CHANGE

Woman This, and Woman That (by Laurence Housman)
Norma Nicholson, Lisa Valentine, Nicki Clay,
Sadie Ashton, Julia Birkett and Astrid Croasdale

A Chat with Mrs Chicky (by Evelyn Glover)
Mrs Holbrook
Mrs Chicky

Helen Lawley
Elaine Wells

SECOND INTERVAL

Beware! A Warning to Suffragists (by Cicely Hamilton)
Nicki Clay

How The Vote Was Won (by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St John)
Horace Cole, a clerk
Ethel Cole, his wife
Winifred, Ethel's sister and a suffragette
Lily, Horace and Ethel's maid
Gerald Williams, Horace's neighbour
Agatha, Horace's sister and in service as a governess
Molly, Horace's niece
Madame Christine, Horace's distant relation
Maudie Spark, Horace's first cousin
Lizzie Wilkins, Horace's aunt
Newspaper seller

Bob Wells
Pat Davison
Norma Nicholson
Lisa Valentine
Samuel Valentine
Jill Pearson
Julia Birkett
Linda Baillie
Astrid Croasdale
Helen Lawley
Gary Bateson

Rise Up Women (by Theodora Mills)
Sung by all the women.

Walk down
The Company

VOTES FOR WOMEN



BEHIND THE SCENES

Director	Mike Waters
Assistant Director	Pat Davison
Musical Resource	Alma Belbin
Lighting & sound	Ken Davison & David Belbin
Set	David Lane, Bob Wells & Sadie Ashton
Stage management	David Lane & Pat Davison
Stage crew	Nick Leaf, Bob Wells & Alan Rome
Props co-ordinator	Pat Davison
Prompt	Pam Newsholme
Costumes	Sadie Ashton
Transport	Nick Leaf
Publicity	Graeme Parker
Ticket sales	Sadie Ashton
Bar	Anita Shipley & Barrie Shipley
Refreshments	Barbara Hardcastle
Front of House	Pamela Yates with Sadie Ashton, Lynne Edwards, Barbara Hardcastle, Robert Hardcastle, Jack Harrison, Graeme Parker, John Parker, Nancy Waters, Kath Wilson, Terry Yates & Joy Young



THANKS

We would like to thank the following persons / organisations for their contributions to this production:

Escrick & Deighton Club

Fasprint, Selby

(production of posters / flyers / tickets / programmes)

Keith Pearson and Mick Stannard

(creation of placards and sandwich boards)

Riccallish Allsorts

Tony Stevens of North Duffield Conservation and Local History Society

(loan of the lectern)

We would like to thank the following individuals / groups for their kind co-operation regarding use of the village hall during the production week:

Derwent Dance School – Kate

Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association

Turus Personal Training – Mike Hall

Jill Smowton (village hall bookings secretary)

A Special Thank You:

The Monday Players managed to contact the holder of the copyright for Cicely Hamilton's poem *Beware! A Warning to Suffragists* and the plays *Pot and Kettle* and *How The Vote Was Won* – Elizabeth Perrin, who lives in Canada.

We are grateful to her for granting us permission to perform these items and in acknowledgement of this we have made a donation to **St Leonard's Hospice**.

Cicely Hamilton spent time in York during the Second World War.



**PLEASE NOTE THAT PHOTOGRAPHY AND/OR
FILMING OF THE PERFORMANCE IS NOT PERMITTED.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.



10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

Suffrage for women could have happened much earlier. MPs in the House of Commons voted in favour of the principle of women's suffrage in 1870, 1897, 1908, 1910 and 1911 but the Liberal Prime Ministers of the day (Gladstone and Asquith) blocked further debate. Asquith opposed women's suffrage both on principle and because he feared women voters would be Conservatives. The backlash in 1910 was understandably ugly. Hundreds of women descended upon parliament to protest the action, with 115 of them getting arrested

Mr Selfridge was an ally. Keen to market his still-iconic shop to women, Henry Gordon Selfridge supported the suffrage movement by advertising in publications run by the activists and flying the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) flag above his store. He even reportedly refused to press charges against one young woman who broke one of the store's famous windows, as a sign of his support for the movement.

The WSPU were more popular than Labour. Despite the Labour Party still being one of the biggest political parties to this day, there was once a time when their donations trailed behind the WSPU - perhaps a sign of just how popular the movement for suffrage among the general public was? In 1908, Labour Party subscriptions and donations were around £10,000, while by 1909 the WSPU had a growing annual income of over £21,000.

Not all women supported women getting the vote. Some, including author Mary Ward even actively campaigned against it as part of the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage.

To protect themselves in violent protests, the Suffragettes were trained in Jiu Jitsu. The idea behind the training was that appointed bodyguards would surround leaders like Pankhurst and defend them against the police. Suffragette Edith Garrud led the teaching and a cartoon image of Edith in a 1910 Punch issue shows the Jiu Jitsu expert singlehandedly fighting several policemen.



Force-feeding was a serious problem. The force-feeding of hunger-striking suffragettes was invasive, demeaning, and dangerous, and in some instances, it damaged the long-term health of the victims. It should also be remembered that women were given disproportionately long sentences for minor offences such as protesting, resisting arrest, or smashing a window. The Cat and Mouse Act of 1913 attempted to address the issue, but instead created a vicious circle: women whose health was damaged were released from prison to recover, only to be returned to prison when they were fit again to finish their sentence.

Emily Davison's 'address'. Activist Emily Wilding Davison became a martyr for the cause when she died from injuries suffered after stepping out in front of the King's horse at the Epsom Derby in June 1913. But before this act she spent the night in a cupboard in the House of Commons on census night in 1911 so she could put 'House of Commons' as her address on her census return.

Men played a key role too

Despite the most famous faces of the Suffragette movement being women, there were several men who fought alongside them to secure a woman's right to vote. These include the MPs Keir Hardie and George Lansbury, who were both vocal supporters of the suffrage movement. Mr Hardie regularly raised the issue in the House of Commons and attended WSPU events. Mr Lansbury even resigned from his seat so that he could fight a by-election on the suffrage question. In 1913 his dedication went even further, and he was imprisoned after making a speech at a WSPU rally in support of their campaign of arson attacks.



Not all women were given the vote in 1918. Despite this year's quite rightly celebrated centenary, the legislation passed in 1918 did not give all women the right to vote. Only those aged 30 or over were eligible to head to the ballot box (for men the age was 21), and even then, only if they or husbands met a property qualification (no such condition now applied to men). Nevertheless, this extended the right to vote to 8.4 million women.

Full suffrage was passed 18 days too late. Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the Women's Social and Political Union who committed most of her life to campaigning for suffrage, died 18 days before full equal voting rights were granted. She passed away aged 69 on 14 June 1928, just weeks before the Conservative Government's Representation of the People Act (1928) extended the vote to all women over 21 years of age.

WHY THE VOTE WAS WON

In 1918 all men over 21 got the vote because Parliament could no longer reasonably confine the vote to those men who met a property qualification since all adult men had been liable to be conscripted into the armed forces. Also, no man returning from the war could have voted in the election of December 1918 unless the requirement to have lived in their constituency for at least twelve months was lifted. Those issues had to be addressed and, once the subject of voting reform was opened up, it was impossible to continue to ignore the claims of women. Confining the vote to women over 30 who met a property qualification meant that women, who previously could not vote at all, did not suddenly constitute a majority of the electorate.

Reasons given at the time for the decision to give (some) women the vote included that it acknowledged women's contribution to the war effort. They had worked in areas like heavy industry and munitions for which anti-suffrage campaigners had claimed they were mentally and physically unsuited. And they had seen their menfolk go off to war and kept hearth and home going in their absence.

The argument that only men deserved the vote because only they put their lives at risk by going off to fight while women stayed safely at home was confounded by the thousands of civilians killed and injured by German shelling of East Coast ports and bombs dropped from airships and aircraft. The aerial threat to men, women and children at home would clearly only increase as the technology developed.

The Liberal Prime Minister Asquith, who had personally opposed women's suffrage, was succeeded in 1916 by Lloyd George who was more supportive. In the House of Lords, the influential Lord Curzon maintained his long-standing opposition but did not press the matter in view of the House of Commons' acceptance of it.

Before WWI women had been given the vote in New Zealand, Australia and some American states (and the Isle of Man!). The military contributions of those countries to WWI showed they had not been enfeebled as a result, as anti-suffrage campaigners had argued would be the case in the UK. Also, it would have been wrong to exclude the majority of the adult population from taking a full part in the much-needed reconstruction of the UK's social infrastructure (even before the casualties of WWI there were a million more adult women than men in the UK).

Continuing to deny women the vote risked a return to the militant suffrage campaigns of the immediate pre-war years, bringing about massive disruption of political life leading up to the general election that would have to be held before reconstruction could begin.

Few could have contemplated with equanimity the risk of a resumption of marches and demonstrations, the persistent disruption of political meetings and heckling of politicians, arson attacks, the mass imprisonment of women, hunger strikes and the return of the Cat and Mouse Act.

Some MPs and peers supported the extension of voting to some women over 30 on the grounds that, by making this limited concession, they would be able to stave off demand for more radical change. They were right: it was another ten years before women obtained the vote on the same terms as men.



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MEMORY LANE

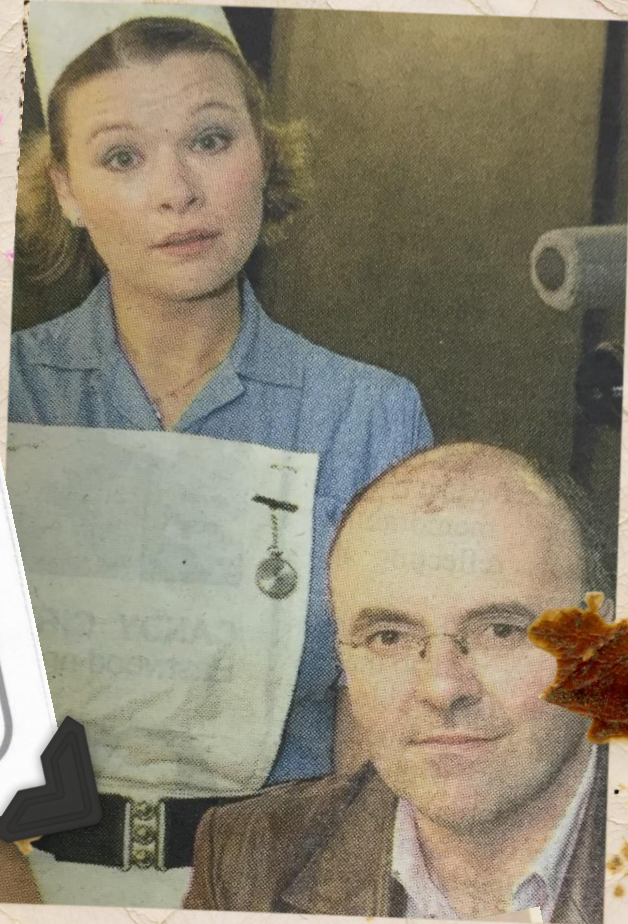
The Monday Players
Present

COMIC POTENTIAL

A Play by Alan Ayckbourn
By kind permission of Samuel French Ltd

The Village Hall Escrick
3, 4 & 5 April, 2008
7.30pm

Tickets £5.50
(Concessions £5.00)
Available from Escrick Village Store
Members of Monday Players
Or Telephone 01904 728303



Sci-fi comedy fun

by Graham Britton
editorial@selbytimes.co.uk

FUTURISTIC androids will be landing on an Escrick stage in time for the latest performance by an amateur theatre group!

Audiences are in for an action-packed treat of energy, music and hilarity as the Monday Players take to the stage to perform *Comic Potential*, a romantic sci-fi comedy by Alan Ayckbourn.

The play was first performed in Scarborough in 1998, and then headed to the West End the following year, where it received rave reviews. It's described as an hilarious

and heartbreaking play set in the foreseeable future, where everything has changed – except human nature.

Monday Players chairman David Lane said: "It's set in a future where TV daytime soap operas are performed by android actors emotionally programmed by a control room.

"One of these androids – JC-F31-333 – finds herself humanised, complete with a sense of humour, and is renamed Jacie

Triplethree.

"It involves 18 cast members paying 22 parts, and director Barbara Miller has done a fantastic job. There's also a great number of stage crew, lighting and sound crew, who are crucial to facilitating the play."

Comic Potential will be showing at Escrick Village Hall tonight, tomorrow and Saturday. Each performance starts at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £5.50 (£5 concessions) and are available from Escrick Village Store, Monday Players members or by calling 01904 728303.

FOR NEWS
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Race for Sheriff's Place on Tuesday



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Dog Tired wishes The Monday Players a very successful production of
HOW THE VOTE WAS WON

NEXT PRODUCTION



www.mondayplayers.com



Par For The Course

by Peter Gordon

Marital friction, gender confusion, food poisoning and a drunken confession.....

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Thurs 15th to Sat 17th
November 2018 at 7.30pm
The Village Hall, Escrick