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The University of Manchester

WALTON

GUARDIAN

Sources for Women's Suffrage
in the *Guardian* Archive

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Introduction

This guide is intended to facilitate research on women's suffrage within the *Guardian* Archive. It identifies the material available in the collection, and highlights the *Guardian's* position on significant events from the late 1890s to 1920s. The guide includes information about key individuals, events and themes, and guidance for use of the *Guardian* Archive.

The *Guardian* Archive

The *Guardian* is one of Britain's leading newspapers, with a long standing reputation as a platform for Liberal opinion, and an international online community of 30.4 million readers. It was founded in Manchester in 1821 by John Edward Taylor, a cotton manufacturer, in the wake of the Peterloo massacre as a means of expressing Liberal opinion and advocating political reform. Over the next 100 years, the paper originally known as the *Manchester Guardian* would be transformed from a small provincial journal into a paper of international relevance and renown. The *Guardian* archive consists of two main elements: the records of the newspaper as a business; and an extensive collection of correspondence and despatches from reporters.

C.P. Scott

Charles Prestwich Scott was editor of the *Manchester Guardian* for 57 years (1872-1929), and was responsible for cementing the Liberal editorial philosophy of the paper, and ensuring a consistently high standard of journalism and journalistic integrity. He was also a Liberal member of parliament between 1895-1906. Scott was a steadfast supporter of the campaign for women's suffrage, although he did not approve of the more militant forms of protest employed by the Women's Social and Political Union.

Women's Suffrage

From 1866 women began to organise themselves into groups to campaign for women's suffrage. Efforts were made to include women in the 1884 Reform Bill, which extended voting to include agricultural labourers, but this failed. From 1888 women were able to vote in local Council elections, but they still did not have the right to vote in general elections. Seventeen women's groups came together in 1897 to create the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) led by Millicent Fawcett. The suffragists used peaceful law-abiding tactics to try and obtain the vote.

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) had been formed in 1903 after Emmeline Pankhurst became frustrated with the more passive demonstrations of other suffrage groups, such as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). This organisation, known as 'suffragettes', became increasingly militant in their actions. Pankhurst believed that protest needed to be more direct and the group took the slogan 'Deeds not Words' to highlight this.

After the First World War, in 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave partial franchise to women. Equal voting rights were given to women in 1928.

What types of records on women's suffrage are held in the Guardian Archive, and what kind of information do they contain?

The correspondence of the *Guardian Archive* contains over 100 letters relating to women's suffrage, both from supporters of women's suffrage, supporters of Universal Adult Suffrage, and Anti Suffrage campaigners. The correspondents include suffragists, suffragettes, MPs, politicians and journalists. The letters date from 1886-1916, but mainly date from 1909-1912, a time when the militant action was at its height.

The correspondence includes discussion of the methods used by women's suffrage campaigners, and the parliamentary bills on suffrage proposed during this time. It highlights the divisions within the suffrage movement and the Liberal party, and provides evidence of the treatment of suffragettes in prison. It also shows the attempts by C.P. Scott to mediate between the cause's supporters and detractors, and his concerns in relation to the incarceration and force feeding of members of the WSPU. There are multiple requests that Scott provide support for women's suffrage, both within the pages of the Manchester *Guardian*, and through his political influence.

The majority of the correspondence relating to women's suffrage can be found in the C.P. Scott general correspondence series. This is not a definitive list of all of the material on this subject held in the *Guardian Archive*, as there may be further items of relevance within the un-catalogued parts of the collection, which include newspaper cuttings, memoranda and photographs.

How are the records catalogues/arranged?

The catalogue is divided into two sections:

Part 1	Reference Numbers
Business Archive	GDN/1-449
Index of Scott General Correspondence	GDN/118-132, 135 and 332-336
Index of Wadsworth Additional Correspondence	GDN/149
Part 2	
Scott Editorial Correspondence	A series
Crozier/Wadsworth Editorial Correspondence	B series
Hetherington Editorial Correspondence	C series
Monkhouse Deputy Editorial Correspondence	D Series

Research Guides

The finding aids available for the *Guardian* Archive include:

- Changing Faces: A guide to researching the people behind the *Guardian* and *Manchester Evening News*
- The Boer War in the *Guardian* Archive
- Foreign correspondence in the *Guardian* Archive

Related Collections

- Papers of W.E.A. Axon (journalist)
- Papers of W.P. Crozier (editor, 1932–1944)
- Papers of A.N. Monkhouse (critic)
- Papers of C.E. Montague (journalist)
- Papers of A.P. Wadsworth (editor, 1944–1956)

Finding Aids

Also available are catalogues for series within the archive's correspondence, including:

- C.P. Scott editorial correspondence – A series
- Foreign correspondence
- Boer War correspondence
- W.P. Crozier's confidential foreign affairs correspondence
- Morgan Philips Price correspondence

The finding aids and catalogues can be found at: [Guardian Archive, Guide to Special Collections](#) and on the special collections [online catalogue, ELGAR](#) (Electronic Gateway to Archives at the Rylands).

Further collections relating to women's suffrage held at the John Rylands Library can be found at: [Women's Suffrage Movement Archives](#)

Which individuals of interest will I find in the Guardian Archive relating to women's suffrage?

Emmeline Pankhurst

Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), leader of the National Women's Social and Political Union. Emmeline Pankhurst directed the WSPU through its campaign of military action. After her husband died in 1898, leaving the family with debts, she worked as a registrar of births and deaths in order to look after her family, becoming increasingly frustrated about the limits she saw that were placed on women. She became friendly with C.P. Scott whilst living in Manchester and kept up her correspondence with him when she moved to London.

Christabel Pankhurst

Christabel Pankhurst (1880–1958), suffragette and Organizing Secretary of the WSPU. Christabel Pankhurst was the daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst. With her mother and sisters, Sylvia and Adela, they used militant action to campaign for women's suffrage and organised other groups to fight for the cause. She campaigned for the WSPU whilst studying and obtaining a first class honours degree in Law from the University of Manchester.

Sylvia Pankhurst

Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960), political activist, writer and artist. Sylvia Pankhurst started working for the WSPU in 1906 and also contributed articles to the WSPU's newspaper, *Votes for Women*. In 1911, she published a propagandist history of the WSPU's campaign, *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement*. She later began to align herself more to the Labour party and moved away from the WSPU along with her sister Adela.

Pethick-Lawrences

Lady Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867–1954), suffragette and Hon. Treasurer of the WSPU, and Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence (1871–1961), politician, were both prominent members of the WSPU. In 1907 the Pethick-Lawrences founded and became joint editors of the periodical *Votes for Women*. They were imprisoned in 1912 for conspiracy to stone throwing although they were not supporters of this action. They became less happy with the increasingly violent militant methods that the WSPU took up after 1912, and were expelled from the WSPU by Christabel Pankhurst.

Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett

Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929), suffragist. Garrett Fawcett became leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1897 and campaigned for enfranchisement of women householders. When the militant campaigns of the WSPU dramatically pushed the campaign for women's votes, she reorganised the NUWSS in 1907 to bring in the numerous women's groups under one umbrella. Although against militant actions, she often took part in peaceful demonstration and marches. The constitutional methods of the NUWSS were thought of as more inviting to working class women than the militant methods used by the WSPU.

David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George, first Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor (1863–1945), First Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, Prime Minister. Lloyd George was a Liberal politician and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1908–1915. He was a supporter of women's suffrage but became figure of dislike for the WSPU due to his lack of support for the inclusion of women in the suffrage reform bills presented to parliament. His partially built house was firebombed by campaigners for women's suffrage in 1913.

Henry Asquith

Henry Herbert Asquith (1852–1928), Prime Minister, 1908-1916. Asquith was opposed to women's suffrage, despite the growth of support for the cause within his cabinet. He was seen by many of the WSPU as an obstacle to reforms proposed during this period.

Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill (1874–1965), politician, and Home Secretary 1910-1911. He was generally in favour of women's suffrage but was against the idea of his actions being dictated by the campaign of the WSPU, and voted against the suffrage bill in 1910. There are letters from the period where Churchill, as President of the Budget League, was making speeches across the country in support of the People's Budget in which he asks for assurance that there will be no interruptions by women protesters. He became the Home Secretary from 1910-1911 and introduced the 243A act for suffragette prisoners.

Herbert John, Viscount Gladstone

Herbert John, Viscount Gladstone (1854–1930), politician and governor-general of the Union of South Africa. Gladstone was Home Secretary from 1905-1910, during a period of increased incarceration of women due to acts of violence in the name of women's suffrage. He was a supporter of women's suffrage but decreed in 1906 that women were to be imprisoned in the second, not the first division of prisoners. In 1909 he ordered women who went on hunger strike to be force fed.

Henry Brailsford

Mr Henry Noel Brailsford (1873–1958), journalist and author and leader of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. He became active in the women's suffrage campaign and tried to bring the constitutionalists and militants together. Brailsford was the honorary secretary of the Conciliation Committee, formed in 1909, which produced a number of bills in favour of women's suffrage for debate in parliament.

Rosalind Nash

Rosalind Nash (1862–1952), journalist. Nash wrote primarily on suffrage and labour questions and was a member of the Women's Co-operative Guild. She was related to Florence Nightingale, and looked after her papers after her death. Nash was married to Vaughan Robertson Nash, journalist.

Evelyn Sharp

Evelyn Sharp (1869–1955), children's writer and suffragette. Sharp became the *Manchester Guardian's* first regular women's page writer. She was a non-militant suffragist but in 1906 joined the WSPU. She was a pacifist, and during the First World War edited the women's suffrage journal *Votes for Women* and refused to pay taxes.

Reginald McKenna

Reginald McKenna (1863–1943), politician and banker, was the First Lord of the Admiralty from 1908-1911 and Home Secretary from October 1911-1915. McKenna was responsible for the introduction of the Cat and Mouse Act in 1913.

What themes will I find in the Guardian Archive relating to women's suffrage?

Militant Action

The WSPU was formed in 1903 and began militant action in 1905 which continued until the start of the First World War. Protests began with the interruption of the speeches by MPs. The action escalated to include stone throwing, window smashing and from 1912, targeting property with violence and arson. The escalation in militant action led to the segmentation of the organisation, and groups such as the Women's Freedom League (WFL) were formed. There were periods where the WSPU abstained from action, most prominently during the reading of the 1910 Conciliation bill. C.P Scott often reiterated in the *Manchester Guardian* that militant action was a hindrance to the campaign for women's suffrage. There is correspondence that relates to the escalation of militant action, and also attempts to gain assurances from the WSPU that politicians' speeches would not be interrupted by its members.

Imprisonment

The suffragettes felt that their actions should be recognised as political, and if sentenced to imprisonment, they should be treated as political prisoners and placed in the first division of prisons. This would afford them certain rights such as having visitors, reading material, and permission to send and receive correspondence. As the militant action of the WSPU became more aggressive, suffragettes were placed in the second division of prisons, where they were kept in isolation, had no visitors and were not able to correspond with the outside world for at least a month. As most sentences were less than a month, this was intended to curtail the suffragettes' ability to continue with propaganda activities.

In March 1910, Rule 243A was introduced by the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, to allow prisoners in second and third divisions certain privileges of the first division, provided they had not been convicted of a serious offence.

Forcible Feeding

Marion Wallace Dunlop was the first suffragette to go on hunger strike in prison in 1909 as a protest against being put in the first division and not treated as a political prisoner. Initially, suffragettes who went on hunger strike were released, but later that year, forcible feeding was introduced by the Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone and this soon became a common practice. Descriptions of their experiences written by prominent suffragettes caused a public outcry. In 1913 the Cat and Mouse Act was passed which meant that women who went on hunger strike were released on certain conditions, and then imprisoned to serve their remaining sentence once their health had returned.

C.P. Scott expressed concern regarding the treatment of suffragette prisoners, and was kept informed and updated by the Pankhursts on the health and wellbeing of those in prison, including Mary Jane Clarke, suffragette and sister of Emmeline Pankhurst, who died following imprisonment and forcible feeding.

Conciliation Bills

During the early 1900s, there were a number of bills and amendments discussed for the provision of women's suffrage but the correspondence focuses mainly on the three Conciliation bills debated in Parliament to allow women householders the right to vote. Conciliation Bills were debated in 1910, 1911 and 1913. In 1910, the Conciliation bill was to be given a second reading, but the Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith declared there would not be time to hear the bill. The WSPU sent a delegation in protest on 18th November, 1910. Of the 300 suffragettes, over 200 were reported to have been assaulted by police, which is documented by many reports and photographs. This day became known as Black Friday.

Constitutional v Militant

Throughout the correspondence, there are letters from constitutional suffragists who believed in using political methods to try and achieve women's suffrage. They demonstrated, and formed protest parties, but on the whole were passive in their methods. These women's suffrage societies, including the NUWSS, and later the WFL, were often scathing of more militant methods of protest, believing that these actions were detrimental to the cause.

Who do I contact to undertake research using original documents?

The University of Manchester *Guardian* Archive is housed in the John Rylands Library and can be accessed in the reading room by anyone, free of charge. You will need to make an appointment well in advance of your visit (with the reference numbers of the items you wish to see); this is so that we can make sure you have the material that is most useful to your particular enquiry. Please note that in accordance with the Data Protection Act, some of this material may not be available to view.

Please read the information about the John Rylands Reading Room before you make your visit. Alternatively, you can contact us with your enquiry and we will do our best to help you.

All applications to undertake research should be made in the first instance to Karen Jacques, Collections and Research Support Assistant by email to karen.jacques@manchester.ac.uk or by post to The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester, 150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH.

How can I access past articles from the Guardian?

Online sources

- ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The *Guardian* and the *Observer*

ProQuest enables researchers to search over 20 different article types, including: News, Editorials, Letters to the Editor, Obituaries, Birth and Marriage Announcements, Stock Photos, Advertisements and so forth. ProQuest is available free to the University of Manchester staff and students.

- Manchester Central Library

Manchester Guardian online newspapers are available to library members.

Manchester Guardian 1821-2000 is available on the Manchester City Council 24 Hour Library.

- The *Guardian* and *Observer* Digital Archive

This resource will eventually contain the digital reproduction of every page, article and advert published in the *Guardian* (since 1821) and the *Observer* (since 1791). Currently the archive covers the period of 1821-2003 for the *Guardian* and 1791-2003 for the *Observer*. This is a subscription service but many schools, universities and public libraries subscribe. Access to the *Guardian* and *Observer* digital archive is also freely accessible from the *British Library* reading rooms at St. Pancras, London.

Microfilm

A complete set of microfilms for the *Guardian* is also now available at the British Library Newsroom on the St. Pancras site, Central London.

What other resources would be useful for research on women's suffrage and the Guardian archive?

Books and Articles

Fawcett, Millicent, *Women's suffrage: A short history of a great movement*. (1912). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (1 Oct. 2015).

Bartley, Paula, *Access to History: Votes for Women*. (2003) Third Edition Paperback. Hodder & Stoughton.

Bartley, Paula, *Emmeline Pankhurst*. (2002). Routledge Historical Biographies.

Philips, Melanie, *The Ascent Of Woman: A History of the Suffragette Movement*. (2004). Abacus; New Ed edition

Meeres, Frank, *Suffragettes: How Britain's Women Fought & Died for the Right to Vote*. (2014). Amberley Publishing (15 July 2014)

Purvis, June, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography (Women's & Gender History)* (2003), Routledge; New Ed edition

Carwford, Elizabeth, *The Women's Suffrage Movement. A Reference Guide 1866–1928* (1999), UCL Press.

Journal

Bartley, P., & Alberti, J. (2005). Emmeline Pankhurst. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(1), 70–72.

Online Resources

[Spartacus Educational Votes for Women](#) (information on all areas of Women's Suffrage with links to Primary Source material).

[Helena Swanwick and Evelyn Sharp - pioneering Guardian journalists](#) (archive teaching resource)

[Emily Davison Derby coverage](#) (archive teaching resource)

[Mary Jane Clarke, an Unsung Hero](#) (John Rylands Library Special Collections Blog)

[Women and the vote workshop](#) (GNM Education Centre information for teachers)

[BBC Archives: Suffragettes](#) A collection of Archives from various BBC programmes.

Other Archives

The Working Class Movement Library has a number of items relating to Women's Suffrage including material on the Women's Freedom League, Charlotte Despard, Margaret Blondfield and Annie Kenny

The Archive and Study Centre at the People's History Museum in Manchester hold a number of items relating to Women's Suffrage including the records of the Women's Labour League.

Catalogue Index, Individuals and Themes

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