



# The extension of suffrage

A virtual museum by  
*type your name here*



# Welcome to the Voting History Museum



Please enjoy this tour through british history and learn about suffrage.

There were many hurdles and difficulties along the way and this is how voting came to be.



# St Peter's Field Manchester



It was a day of excitement! Lots of families packed up a picnic, and headed towards Manchester (St Peter's field). Everyone thought they were just going for a nice day out to listen to Henry Hunt speak. He was known as champion of the people because he said all men and women should be allowed to vote. The people wanted their voices heard. About 60,000 people turned up to listen peacefully and hoped to influence the government on what they thought.

Unfortunately, local magistrates were not happy with this because they thought that the protesters were a threat to them so they sent for the Yeomanry. These were volunteers who acted as citizen military police in times of trouble. Made up of wealthy locals who could afford horses and fancy uniforms. It then quickly turned into a bloody massacre.



# The Peterloo Massacre



The massacre brought out all of the yeomanry when charging through the crowd knocking people over and injuring them. About 15 people were killed and over 650 were injured. Henry Hunt along with many others went to jail.

## George Cruikshank cartoon drawing

"massacre at St Peter's Field"

George Cruikshank drew this picture to show sympathy towards the protesters by portraying the protesters as being scared, frightened and trying to save themselves, whereas the men on the horses (the yeomanry) had bloody swords and looked angry and fierce. The horses were also trampling on the people that were on the floor. He also added speech from one of the yeomanry saying "down with em chop em down...they want to take our beef and pudding...the more you kill the less poor rates you have to pay" so they are being encouraged by their leader to kill. A small success of Peterloo was that it made more people aware of the need for change.

The working class people were still frustrated with this because many men were unemployed or getting paid less due to the industrial revolution so they did not have enough to feed themselves because the food prices were also getting higher.



# Chartism

A group of campaigners for reform to benefit working class people became known as Chartists. They created a list of 6 reforms known as the People's Charter.

Chartists were people who acted on behalf of the working classes, their goal was to get the government's attention and to tell them that they should make their 6 reforms become law.

To get it noticed they went round all towns and cities asking for signatures to show what people wanted. In the end they got millions of signatures to petition the government however, when they got to Westminster they were laughed at by the politicians.

Although they were unsuccessful and failed at this point this still led to future reform and suffrage .



## THE SIX POINTS OF THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

1. A vote for every man of twenty-one years of age and sound mind
2. The secret ballot
3. No property qualification for MPs
4. Payment of MPs
5. Equal constituency sizes
6. Annual parliaments

*All but the last of these points would eventually be enacted - but none during the life of the Chartist movement*

# **The extension of male suffrage & change**



In 1867 men in towns were given the vote which made it so that 2 million people were now allowed to vote which was important because it was a good start and it got better from there.

Then in 1872 the ballot was made secret which made their votes actually count.

In 1884 all working men over 21 were allowed to vote, now 6 million were allowed to vote.

In 1880 men that lived in cities got lots more opportunities for education some went to night school, some went to reading clubs and some even Sunday school.

Trains then started bringing daily newspapers for people to read.

Then a man called Timothy Claxton and some of his friends set up a library full with all kinds of books so people could gain lots of knowledge.



# **Why were women at St Peter's Field**



Why did women go to St Peter's field even though they they were not campaigning?

Women were there to support their husbands and help them campaign. They also helped because they knew it could make a massive change and difference to lots of decisions.

A woman called Mary Fildes was president of the Manchester Female Reform Society. She was on the platform with some of the other speakers to help campaign.

Women's dresses seemed to not be very flexible so they could not escape the soldiers very easily. It would appear a higher percentage of women were killed or injured, possibly for this reason.



# **Women campaigners**



Lots of the campaigners were campaigning for women's suffrage and wanted the women who paid taxes to be represented. They also wanted women to have equality in all areas and that slavery should be banned.

Harriet Taylor Mill was one of the main protesters, she thought if she wanted things to change she would have to do it herself so she kept campaigning.

She started a petition asking for women's suffrage to be added to the bill. They managed to get 1521 signatures when they brought it to the MPs but she got laughed at. In 1868 she tried again with a larger petition including Florence Nightingale and lots more signatures and it did not get laughed at this time and had a little effect.



# ***What later women's campaigns were for***



On 10th March 1914 a week before the war started a woman called Mary Richardson entered the national history museum. She had been there many times before but this time not to look at the art she was there to commit a terrible act of vandalism.

She smashed a famous painting with an axe and striked 7 lines across it. A couple of minutes later the police came and asked her why she did it and she said because “i am a suffragette.”

Lots of women really wanted the right to vote in the 19th century so they decided they really wanted it. They started being violent to get the MPs attention.

The MPs said your husbands can vote for you. But some of the women that were campaigning were not married and they were working women. They started getting even more violent. They held rallies outside Buckingham Palace, smashed windows of random peoples houses. Every time more of them got arrested they set buildings on fire, they even set off a bomb in Westminster Abbey.





# The NUWSS



The NUWSS stands for National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and a woman called Millicent Fawcett was elected president in 1870. It was the largest women rights to vote campaign. They were known as the suffragists. The suffragists tended to be the working class.

They wanted to support women's education for medical profession. They hoped by giving the vote to all adults regardless of property they would be able to improve conditions for all workers including women.

They used peaceful protests and persuasion and petitions and debates in the hope that the government would be gradually persuaded into helping them.

But then a part of them disagreed. They were then called the “radical suffragist” who wanted more than the possession of the vote. They wanted to improve the lives for people like them .



# **Outcomes**

- ❖ The suffragettes violence were harming themselves so the government thought it was silly and were now less likely to change the law for them
- ❖ By 1914 the police decided they had to do something about the suffragettes violence
- ❖ The violence made more people aware of the situation so that encouraged more women to support the peaceful campaigns
- ❖ In 1913 the NUWSS organised a pilgrimage to London around 50,000 women showed that peaceful campaigns were possible
- ❖ The beginning of the war meant that women were now campaigning for the right to serve
- ❖ The women helped in shops, cooking for all the soldiers they also helped in factories making weapons and also helped in the hospitals
- ❖ Once the war had ended in 1918 women over 30 were allowed to vote
- ❖ Then finally in 1928 the Representation of the People Act meant that women now had the same rights as the men!





## **End of your museum**



Thank you for visiting the  
museum of Voting History.

I hope you have enjoyed your  
tour around this wonderful  
place today and have learned  
about this important piece of  
British history.