

THE 1866 SUFFRAGE PETITION IN THE NORTH EAST

Although in small numbers, women from all areas of the country signed the 1866 suffrage petition. Out of approximately 1,500 women who signed, 30 were from the North East including 24 from Newcastle, three from Scarborough and two from Darlington.

THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH EAST

As the largest city in the North East of England, Newcastle played a key role in the region's campaign for women's suffrage. A Newcastle and Gateshead branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was founded by 1872 and in 1900 the Newcastle Women's Suffrage Society, a suffragist group, was founded.

The militant Women's Social and Political Union was also active in Newcastle. In 1913, corrosive liquid was poured through letter boxes and a pavilion and a bowls house at Heaton Park was set on fire.



30
women
signed
from the
North East

ACTIVITY 1

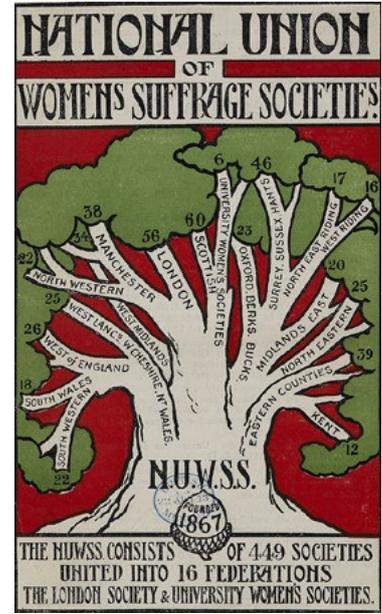
Use the sources and your own knowledge to answer the questions.

Source 1

A poster from 1913 promoting the suffragist campaign groups: The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

Q: Analyse the suffragist poster and describe three things it suggests about the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Source 2

At Whitley Bay yesterday Cissie Wilcox, twenty-five, of Gateshead, was charged with being a suspected person... [Having been found with matches near a school] When charged at the police station next morning she said to Inspector Jackson, 'This is being done to rouse the people of Whitley Bay to a knowledge of their duty respecting the women's suffrage cause.'

Extract from an article in the Sunderland Daily Echo, 1913, describing the arrest of Cissie Wilcox.

Q: Source 2 is an extract from a local newspaper. How would articles like this have influenced local attitudes to the campaign for women's suffrage?

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Source 3

A disturbance was caused at a morning service in Newcastle Cathedral, yesterday, by a suffragette. Just before the commencement of the singing of the anthem, a representative of the militant party, seated in the nave, startled the congregation by reciting a prayer for Mrs Pankhurst

Extract from an article in the Newcastle Journal, 1913, about a suffragette protest.

Q: Source 3 is an extract from a local newspaper. What does this source suggest about the way the media portrayed the suffragettes' campaign tactics?

Source 4

Needlework made in Holloway Gaol in 1911 by the suffragette prisoner Cissie Wilcox.

Q: Source 4 is an image of needlework done by one of the suffragette prisoners. Why do you think the women would have created this type of object while in prison?




ACTIVITY 2

Jane Procter was from Yorkshire and was one of the women who signed the petition in 1866. Using the information about her and the prompts provided, write a speech from Jane's perspective. Imagine you are addressing a group of women who are undecided about the cause. Make the case for women to have the right to vote but also to use non-violent campaigning tactics.

Biography of Jane Procter (1911-1882), Darlington – 1866 suffrage petition signee

Jane Procter started her life in the Yorkshire village of Yarm and was the daughter of a merchant in the Yorkshire area. However she worked as a teacher for a many years across the North East of England. By her thirties she and her two sisters had founded a school in Selby, near Leeds, and in 1848 the three sisters bought a house in Darlington and founded Polam Hall School, which is still in existence today.

For 50 guineas a year, girls could attend Polam Hall School and were taught a broad selection of subjects including; 'reading, writing, arithmetic, English Grammar, Composition, Geography, Astronomy, the use of globes, History, Botany, needlework, drawing and the French and German languages.'¹

Jane taught until she was well into her old age. She and her sisters used the money they inherited to devote their life to teaching and empowering young women.


I want to take a moment today to explain why the petition is significant...


Throughout Parliament's history decisions that affect both men and women have been made only by men. The problem with this is...

¹ Lloyd, C. (2012). In the tracks of Polam's progress. The Northern Echo. [online] Available at: www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/9982597.in_the_tracks_of_Polam___s_progress/ [Accessed 18 Oct. 2016].



We can all be using non-violent methods to campaign for votes for all, you could...

Thank you for listening.

List of sources

Source 1 – National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies Poster showing the reach of its organisation across the country – Image courtesy of the London School of Economics.

Source 2 – Newspaper extract – (1913) ‘A suspected person’, Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, 30 Oct.

Source 3 – Newspaper extract – (1914) ‘Militant Suffragettes – Disturbance in Newcastle Cathedral’, Newcastle Journal, 13 July.

Source 4 – Needlework made in Holloway Gaol in 1911 by the suffragette prisoner Cissie Wilcox – Image courtesy of The Museum of London.