

Welford and Weston Local History Society

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Newsletter 82 – October 15th, 2022

'Warwickshire Women and the fight for the vote'

A talk by Prof Sarah Richardson

25 November 2022, at 7:30 pm in Welford Memorial Hall

On 3 December 1913 a large and 'socially representative' audience met at the Corn Exchange at Stratford-on-Avon to listen to a debate on Woman Suffrage. The Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA) chose Margery Corbett Ashby as their speaker (later a candidate for the parliamentary seat of Birmingham Ladywood). Opposing her was Miss Gladys Pott, secretary of the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage. The great and good of Warwickshire were in attendance including Lord and Lady Willoughby de Broke of Compton Verney, Sir and Lady Fairfax Lucy, of Charlecote Park, Patience Hanbury of Lodge Farm, Kineton, Mr. and Mrs. Flowerdew Lowson of Snitterfield House, Wootton Wawen and Elizabeth Airth Richardson of Longbridge Manor, Warwick.



The protest march through Stratford in 1913

This vignette tells us many things about the fight for the vote in Warwickshire. Firstly, there were both pro- and anti-women's suffrage meetings all over the county. You could find activists in every town and village. Women's suffrage was a topic that gripped the nation before the war. Secondly, the population was split. Those opposing women's suffrage were numerous in Warwickshire. Margaret, Countess of Jersey, the oldest daughter of Baron Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey was deputy president of the League. Her younger sister, Cordelia, in contrast, pasted the *Common Cause*, the magazine of moderate suffragists into her scrapbook for 1916. Thirdly there were a wide number of women's suffrage organisations active in Warwickshire. Although the meeting was hosted by the CUWFA, Ashby was in fact a Liberal, and a member of the council of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The more militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was also active in the county and their more militant acts including planting improvised explosive devices in private homes in Solihull and at Northfield railway station, one even slashed a painting at Birmingham Art Gallery. Some activists were arrested and even force fed.



Lady Willoughby de Broke

This talk will uncover some of the forgotten stories of Warwickshire women's role in the fight for the vote and explore why a campaign with so much public support took over 70 years to be successful.

Sarah Richardson is a professor of modern British history at the University of Warwick and works on all aspects of women and political culture in the long nineteenth century. She is the author of articles & publications on women's suffrage, gender and the role of women in society.

I am very pleased to say that this talk will be available to people attending in person in the village Memorial Hall, as well as available remotely via Zoom. The choice is yours.

You will receive an email from Karen Dickinson, inviting you to join this meeting, about a week before the meeting itself. This email is being sent to all members, whether or not you will be going to the Memorial Hall or viewing remotely via Zoom. Please check in your junk folder if you don't receive it.

On the evening of the talk, you will be able to join the meeting by Zoom from 19:00. The talk itself will start at 19:30. If you are fairly new to Zoom, I would encourage you to join the meeting early, so that if you experience a problem, you'll have time to call Karen Dickinson (on 07970 179821), and get it sorted out before the talk starts at 19:30. If you are going to attend in person, the doors of the Memorial Hall, are open from 19:10. We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be another great talk.

Kind regards, Brad Plimmer 15 October, 2022.