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## "Deeds not Words": How significant was the militant suffragettes' campaign in promoting the Suffrage Movement in Wales 1907-1914?

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**EMA for A329: The Making of Welsh History**

**Dissertation**

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**“Deeds not Words” How significant was the militant suffragettes’ campaign in promoting the Suffrage Movement in Wales 1907-1914?**

**Clare Munyard**

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**Abbreviations:**

**NUWSS – National Union of Women’s Suffrage societies**

**WFL - Women’s Freedom League**

**WLA – Women’s Liberal Association**

**WNASL – Women’s National Anti-suffrage League**

**WSPU – Women’s Social and Political Union**

## Introduction

### **“Deeds not Words” How significant was the militant suffragettes’ campaign in promoting the suffrage movement in Wales 1907-1914?**

This dissertation will consider what effects the militant campaign of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) had on the movement for the right to vote for women within Wales. It will look at how their actions at events within Wales affected the campaign. It will focus on the period between 1907 through to 1914. This is the period of the height of the campaign, until its pause in activity due to the outbreak of the Great War. It will concentrate on the WSPU and the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Society (NUWSS) within Wales as they were the two biggest and most prominent of the women’s suffrage movement. This study will also consider how an anti-suffrage campaign was inspired within Wales by militancy within the movement. It will compare if there was any damage; for example, any negativity brought about by the militant actions of the WSPU and whether this made a difference to the campaign’s success, in comparison to the NUWSS, who believed in education, peaceful demonstration and positive propaganda.

The aim of the campaigns was to secure the right to a voice for future generations, through the fight for women’s rights. The ultimate goal was achieving electoral equality. The women’s movement started in 1866, reaching its height of activity between 1907 and 1914, within the Edwardian period, a time when rigid patriarchal Victorian gender roles were being challenged. Women over the age of thirty who met specific property qualifications were granted the vote in the Representation of the People Act in February 1918. This same act gave all men over the age of twenty one the right to vote. It was not until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 women gained electoral equality (Wallace, 2009). The vote for women was fought by numerous different organisations and some fighting for anti-suffrage. The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Society was formed in 1897; called the Suffragists, they used peaceful methods of campaigning. By 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst believed that peaceful campaigning was not working and founded the Women’s Social and Political Union, who were a militant faction, throwing stones through windows, setting fire to post boxes, heckling ministers and bombing empty properties. Their motto was “Deeds not Words”.

Many studies focused on the campaign of suffrage within England or merged the Welsh campaign into British history. Initially the absence of any historical literature on the Welsh movement, gave the sense that Welsh women did not contribute to the campaign. In Geraint Jenkins (2007) *A Concise History of Wales*, the suffrage movement is not mentioned and in John Davies (2007) *A History of Wales*, it is mentioned briefly “There were the

protests of the suffragettes, who were more numerous in Wales than is generally believed". It was not until the 1990's that Welsh historians, whose focus was women's history began researching the campaign. The most recent book published in February 2019 by Diane Atkinson *Rise up Women*, is a comprehensive book of prominent suffragettes, described as a definitive history, yet it hardly discusses the movement in Wales and does not mention the WSPU members within Wales. To be able to review existing literature of the Welsh campaign, it is necessary to focus on books and articles that have been written specifically about the Welsh Suffrage movement.

The only comprehensive book is by Ryland Wallace *The Women's suffrage movement in Wales 1866-1928* (2009). It gives an overview of the movement and considers specific suffrage organisations. Wallace acknowledges the limitations and is aware that further work, including detailed study on specific locations in Wales needs to happen, Wales has lagged behind in historiographical developments (Wallace, 2009). There is limited study in to specific areas within Wales, although this essay will touch on this subject, it is outside of this dissertations scope and would be a worthwhile area of further research

At the forefront of writing about women's equality in Wales is Angela V John, Professor of history at Swansea University. Two of her books focus on women who helped change the political landscape in Wales. She has written a biography on the life of Lady Rhondda (2013) *Turning the Tide*, a WSPU member in Newport. Her book *Rocking the Boat* (2018) combines Welsh women's different accounts of championing women's equality. Another book that John published is *Our Mother's land* (2011). This is an edited edition of historians' essays focusing on a hundred years of Welsh women's history. One essay in particular by Kay Cook and Neil Evans focuses on the movement within Wales from 1890-1918. They believed the Welsh women's movement had been overlooked and disregarded. A similar book edited by Jane Aaron and Ursula Masson (2007) *The very salt of life* covers women's political writings in Wales and has useful insights for the suffrage movement. All these secondary sources will give an aspect of understanding of how some of the women within the suffrage movement in Wales struggled to gain equality and what cultural and social factors affected that.

An article from the Liberal Democrat Journal, by Dr J Graham Jones, *Lloyd George and the Suffragettes at Llanystumdwy* (2002), will give context to the Liberal parties' experiences of the suffragette's actions, what led them to it and consequences. It is important to understand the movement within the north of Wales as focus can be unfairly based on just the industrial cities. To see what impact the Suffrage campaign had on rural parts, the study will consider a book by Barbara Lawson-Reay (2015) *Votes for Women, The North Wales Suffragist Campaign 1907-1914*, focuses on the Suffragists and how, in the face of adversity and opposition from the militant Suffragettes they were able to spread their campaign through northern Wales. A chapter within *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland* (Crawford, 2006) covers the campaign in Wales. It is a survey of the campaigns and gives a geographical understanding of its grassroots and comprehension of the wider

campaign throughout Britain. It is necessary to consider the rest of the movement in Britain, though it will be limited due to the scope of this dissertation.

There are a variety of primary sources to examine, but a limited amount of personal papers are available. Diaries and letters are either in private collections or have been destroyed. However the National Museum of Wales bought a rare collection of Suffragette memorabilia in 2018. It belonged to activist Kate Williams Evans and includes personal correspondence, along with a suffragette voodoo doll, not yet analysed in any historical literature. It is important to consider newspapers and postcards produced by the Suffragettes; these were used as propaganda to promote their campaign. National Newspapers could have been influenced by affiliation to political parties or personal prejudices towards the movement. By critically reviewing the primary sources it will seek to provide an insight into the suffrage campaign.

The first chapter will examine which of the two main societies were more successful in Wales and if so why. It will consider how the movement spread across Wales, more successfully in some areas than others and why this was the case. In chapter two this dissertation will consider how the WSPU's actions at events at Eisteddfod in Wrexham in September 1912 and the following month at Llanystumdwy affected the Suffrage movement and consider the consequences. The final chapter will examine how the Anti-suffrage movement manifested itself within Wales. By bringing all this information together, the dissertation will discuss how actions of the suffrage movement was promoted and accepted within Wales adding to the body of work that already exists.

The contribution women in Wales made for equality for all deserves to be discussed, understood and remembered.

## Chapter 1

### **Which societies movement was more successful in promoting the need for women's equality in Wales, the WSPU or NUWSS and if so why?**

The WSPU's campaign was more notorious across Britain because of their behaviour, that they believed enhanced their fight for equality, not only did they promote their fight through their own publications, but national and local newspapers also covered their conduct. The majority of which took place in London, due to parliament being based there. Their aim was to grab headlines, to bring their cause to the forefront. However because the WSPU were more notorious, other suffrage groups have not had the same notoriety. In Wales the WSPU had only five branches, which will be discussed later, compared to the NUWSS who were more prolific with twenty seven branches by 1913 (Crawford, p.211, 2006). The Suffrage Annual of 1913 states there were at least thirty seven different branches of various suffrage societies across Wales, which were based around the South and far North coast; there were none in central Wales. However this does not give an accurate representation of how many societies there were across Wales. Out of the thirty seven branches, only five of the society's papers survive. Bangor, Cardiff, Camarthen and Llangollen for the NUWSS and the Women's Freedom league branch at Swansea. Added to this the smaller branches would have been affiliated with larger societies. This is why it is not possible to get a clear picture of evidence (Beddoe, p.2, 2000).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Wales's political affiliation was placed firmly with the Liberal party. In the 1906 general election, the liberals won with a landslide, they gained 82% of the constituencies within Wales and also bought prominent politicians into the heart of the government. The political landscape of Wales affected the membership of the suffrage campaign in different ways. The WSPU did not have a strong presence in Wales only having five branches, John states this is due to Wales being a Liberal society and the WSPU focusing on opposing all Liberal candidates (John, P.1, 1994), however it has also been attributed to the fact that Wales as a Liberal, nonconformist society would not tolerate the behavior of the violent militant suffragettes (Seabourne, 2014). Cook and Evans however had another theory that it was due to the suffrage campaign being predominately an English middle class movement. England had areas where working class women joined the fight, but they were in waged work and had access to unions. The majority of working class women in Wales did not work outside the home. Those in the coal mining communities, a working man's wife had little time, with a family to care for and large work load, there would not be time to attend public meetings, let alone be actively involved in militant actions (Cook and Evans, p.157, 1991). All three of these theories would have contributed to the lack of membership of the WSPU compared to the rest of the United Kingdom. But there were Welsh women that were inspired to join the WSPU in Wales.



One prominent member and secretary of the Newport branch was Viscountess Rhondda, Margaret Haig Mackworth. In 1933 she wrote her autobiography *'This Was my World'*, which gives an insight into why she felt the desire to join the movement. Margaret's father D A Thomas was a long standing Liberal MP in Merthyr Tydfil and her mother Sybil Haig Thomas was a Suffragist and president of the Abergavenny Women's Liberal Association, so there was already an undercurrent of desire to change things from the influence of her parents (John, p.53, 2013). However Lady Rhondda was inspired by her cousin Florence Haig, a Suffragette who was an active member of the WSPU in London and one of the first women to be imprisoned for militant acts. In her biography Lady Rhondda says 'for me and for many other young women like me; militant suffrage was the very salt of life. The knowledge of it had become like a draught of fresh air into our padded, stifled lives. It gave us hope of freedom and power and opportunity [...] it gave adventure and excitement' (Rhondda, p.120, 1933). Margaret felt constrained by her new marriage and by the upper class institution. Her days should just be filled with running the house and entertaining. She believed that the suffrage movement, needed militancy to be heard. Before committing to the cause she read every piece of literature on suffrage available and believed the constitutionalist approach would not work, she stated that there was no point in asking gently for crumbs offered for suffragettes, instead women should demand government measure and would bring whatever pressure was needed to ensure the demands were met (John, p.59, 2014). Lady Rhondda's stance does show that there were Welsh women that believed that the militant values of the WSPU were the only way to gain change. There were other Welsh women who took a similar view; otherwise there would not have been any branches of the WSPU in Wales, but of course, not many were upper class Viscountess who needed something to do. There were far more who affiliated themselves with the constitutionalist NUWSS.

The NUWSS was more successful in Wales with the number of branches that existed; they were the law abiding respectable side of the campaign. The first branch formed was in Llandudno which had a large English middle class community and this was attributed to its initial formation (Crawford, p.219, 2006). The inaugural meeting was held in 1907 and reported in the *Llandudno Advertiser*, an independent newspaper that gave a positive write up. However on the invitation to the meeting it clearly stated that no men or press were to be admitted (Lawson-Reay, p.12, 2015). It is plausible that one of the women present would have provided the newspaper with the information, which is why it was favorable, giving a clear account of the women present and what they discussed. It provides a clear understanding as to what the ladies wanted to achieve from campaigning, it was primarily for equal suffrage, but they wanted to use this for the greater good of Welsh society. They felt by having a parliamentary vote, they would be able to influence laws on education, sanitation, housing and overcrowding along with improving, infirmaries, workhouses and lunatic asylums (*Llandudno Advertiser*, 1907). The reporter gives the reader the impression of the positive reasons to support the movement. However there were those in Wales that

did not distinguish between the Suffragists of the NUWSS and the militant Suffragettes of the WSPU, as seen in the *North Wales Weekly News* they did not report on the positive account of the meeting. Instead it was acknowledged that it was an honour to have the first Welsh suffrage society in Llandudno, but hoped that members would not follow the violent examples of the Pankhurst's and go to goal as 'martyrs for The Cause' (Lawson-Reay, p.15, 2015). This negative account could be due to the fact that the *North Wales Weekly News* was also circulated in Liverpool, where readers would have greater awareness of the militant acts happening in England, primarily in London, where as Wales as yet had not witnessed any. But these kinds of reports could damage the acceptance of the suffrage movement in Wales. It does not however seem to have stopped the spread of branches within north Wales; with a further eleven branches forming by the 1912. This would have been helped by the Bangor branch of the NUWSS being in charge of translating suffrage literature into Welsh. Charlotte Price White, though middle class and English, was a former student of Bangor University. She was also branch secretary of the NUWSS branch in Bangor and realised the necessity of translating the Suffrage literature into Welsh to inform and to entice more women to join; this was done from 1910 onwards. The Bangor branch was in charge of translation for the whole of Wales. It does seem to have had an immediate positive effect as the movement began to be accepted to some extent in the slate quarry districts of Gwynedd (Cook and Evans, p.168, 1991). By translating information into the Welsh language, the NUWSS were more successful in promoting the movement to local people, enabling a larger coverage for their propaganda.

The NUWSS Cardiff branch had the largest membership base outside of London by 1913. The main reason for this seems to be due to deteriorating relationship between the Liberal government and the Women's Liberal Association. It is important to understand the background as to how allegiance with the Liberal party and Women's Liberal Association deteriorated as it gives a better understanding as to why the Cardiff branch of the NUWSS was so successful. The Liberal MP for Cardiff was Ivor Guest, a known opponent of women's suffrage. During the 1906 general election he needed the support of the Women's Liberal Association to help with his campaign. He promised to abstain from any vote regarding women's suffrage rather than vote against. Initially he honoured his word, but in 1908 he became treasurer and active member of the Women's National Anti-suffrage League, the first of many abuses of Liberal women's support by their government. By the end of 1908, Lloyd George, was refusing to admit any women to meetings he was addressing, which was due to heckling at previous occasions from the WSPU. It seems the government was not willing to distinguish between militant suffragettes and suffragists, or indeed Liberal Women supporters, as the Liberal party attempted to ban women from all political meetings (Masson, 2010). By 1910 relations between WLA and Liberal party were no longer tenable. At the WLA conference it was decided that if the parliament did not pass the upcoming Conciliation Bill, which would have enfranchised around one million women, the WLA would no longer work for the Liberal party, but would instead focus on their own cause. As

membership of the NUWSS grew across Wales, the WLA's declined. The NUWSS gave Liberal women the platform they desired to promote their own cause. The WSPU played only a small part in the increase of membership of suffrage support in south Wales. The most significant factor for NUWSS in Cardiff, being the largest and wealthiest outside of London was due to women being disenchanted by the Liberal party.

The combination of reasons for the NUWSS explaining the need for women's suffrage and what the vote would enable them to do, along with the foresight of the need to translate suffrage literature into Welsh to cover a wider audience were two of the reasons why the NUWSS was more successful than the WSPU in Wales. However the most prominent reason was due to the political affiliation of the majority of Welsh society. The Liberal party were not fulfilling the expectations of what they had promised they could achieve for women and the welfare of society. Yet this did not deter the WSPU from protesting in Wales.

## Chapter 2

### **Militancy within Wales – How did specific events affect Welsh public opinion of the suffrage movement?**

Wales played centre stage to some of the more widely publicised militant activities of the WSPU, outside of London. This was due to Wales being the home of two prominent members of the Liberal government. Reginald McKenna MP, was the Home Secretary and member of parliament for North Monmouthshire and David Lloyd George, MP for Caernarfon and Chancellor of the Exchequer (Beddoe, 2000). Lloyd George was an icon of Welsh aspirations; he had put subjects such as disestablishment of the Church in Wales and temperance issues at the forefront of his policies (Bahota, 2002). Women had pinned their hopes on a Liberal government, whose core beliefs were based on the principle, that all people are equal and deserve equal rights. But the Suffrage movement had their hopes crushed too many times. When the Conciliation Bill failed to pass through parliament for a third time, the militant WSPU could no longer contain their frustration and increased their campaign of militancy to become more hostile and rebellious (Beddoe, p.42 2000). Two of these incidents were widely publicised in national and local press, as well as in the publications of the different suffrage societies. Both of these incidents are not notorious for the actions of the Suffragettes, but the reaction of the crowds.

The first was at the National Eisteddfod, held in Wrexham in September 1912, where as part of the Chaining of the Bard ceremony, David Lloyd George gave an address in Welsh to a crowd that was estimated to be between 13000 and 16000 people (Historypoints, 2019). He had only just started to speak when a female voice from the crowd shouted 'How dare you have political prisoners fed by force' (Riddell, p.146, 2019). This was a reference to the force feeding of suffragette prisoners who were on hunger strike in prison. It was shouted by Kitty Marion, who had experienced force feeding numerous times. She was a prominent member of the WSPU based in London and a close ally of Christabel Pankhurst, daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst. After her outburst she started to run towards the stage and Lloyd George. It was at this point that the crowd turned against her, ripping her clothes, pulling her hair, pushing and attacking her, the police had to rescue her. Other suffragettes in the crowd, shouted 'Votes for Women', were also attacked. In a local Welsh language weekly newspaper, *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, that promoted Liberal and non-conformist points of view, described how the suffragettes in the crowd were ejected. At no point does it describe what the women were shouting. The reporter described the women as 'shrieking in a thin voice' and went on to say 'one of the petticoat bandits would scream their inane message' (Peoples collection Wales, 2011). It shows that they were not interested in what the women had to say and were not impressed by them, not only disturbing the Eisteddfod but interrupting Lloyd George. The article goes on to describe, how as more women shouted, the angrier and more volatile the crowd became, reporting 'everyone would shove and push

the women, so roughly that a few of the silly women will be bruised and scarred for the rest of their lives' (Peoples Collection Wales, 2011). The local newspaper was apathetic to their cause. The event was also covered in the national papers.

In *The Times* newspaper an article entitled 'Mr. Lloyd George at the Eisteddfod-Suffragists roughly handled' (The Times, p.6, 1912). The reporter covers more of the actual event and takes the reader through the timeline of what happened in a calmer tone than that of the local Welsh paper. There is not the disgust from this reporter about the suffragette's behaviour compared to the *Baner ac Amserau Cymru's* report and explains the history of the Eisteddfod. Further into the article it discusses the treatment of the women by the Welsh people present. A large force of policeman had to be sent to protect the suffragists, as they had been severely handled and roughly treated. It is also reported that a voice in the crowd shouted 'you must remember that you are not in England now; you are among ancient Britons' (The Times, p.6, 1912). A reference to their national identity, Celtic past and berate the English invaders. *The Times* was not affiliated with a particular party and was not known to be for or against the suffrage movement, giving a more impartial report on the event. However it is interesting to see that even though it was the WSPU members who disrupted the Eisteddfod, who were known as the suffragettes, the article refers to them as the suffragists, this was an ongoing problem for the NUWSS who were aware of the two different societies not being indistinguishable.

The suffragettes also had their own publication, *Votes for Women*, which was used as a propaganda tool; these were sold through subscription to the WSPU members and also on the streets. They ran a full page spread on the incident at the Eisteddfod entitled 'Mr. Lloyd George Incites Violence' (Pankhurst, 1912). The newspaper was edited by Christabel Pankhurst and within the article there is a personal account written by Kitty Marion. The article focuses on the acts of violence initiated by the crowd on the suffragettes. She describes the treatment as outrageous and says 'it must make every Welshman ashamed of his country; and it may even make Mr. Lloyd George stop to think whether it would not be wiser to answer the questions addressed to him' (Pankhurst, 1912). At no point does the article address any wrong doing by the women who were at the Eisteddfod or any comprehension as to why the Welsh reacted so harshly. It discusses how different newspapers reported the event; they are used by Christabel to validate her argument of how violently the women were treated at the hands of Welsh men. The newspaper reports she uses are from *The Daily Mirror* an independent paper that at the time had no political allegiances, *The Daily Sketch*, a conservative paper based in Manchester. The account she uses the most to quote from and describes the situation as abominable behaviour of the crowd was from *The Manchester Guardian*, it was considered to be a Liberal paper, however the editor and owner Charles Scott, was known to be in favour of women's suffrage and letters were frequently exchanged between himself and Emmeline Pankhurst, which was not common knowledge at the time (The Guardian, 2014). It is no surprise that Christabel would use reports that were favourable to her argument. In Kitty Marion's personal

account within the article she describes how she was treated, hair ripped from its roots, clothes torn and indecently assaulted. Dr Fern Riddell states that the crowds were so violent towards the suffragette's because of a large anti-suffrage movement in Wales (Riddell, p122, 2019). But there is no proof to substantiate this, in fact in the next chapter it will prove that the anti-suffrage movement only started to grow after this event. The intense reaction of the crowd is more likely to be due to the iconic status of David Lloyd George within Wales and also due to the importance of the National Eisteddfod which is treasured by the Welsh and important to their cultural and national identity. It also shows that the local Welsh newspapers compared to the national ones, were disgusted by the behaviour of the WSPU, it certainly did damage to the suffrage movement in Wales at this time, but more was yet to come.

Later that month David Lloyd George opened a village hall at Llanystumdwy. Local suffragist groups had pleaded with the WSPU to stay away and not to attend this event, but their warnings were not heeded. Again as Lloyd George began to speak he was heckled by women from the WSPU who were in the crowd. The Welsh in attendance reacted even more ferociously than they did at the Eisteddfod. The men present start to chant in Welsh 'I' r Afon a hi' which means that they wanted to throw the women in the river (Lawson-Reay, p112, 2015). The suffragettes were man handled towards the river, clothes torn; hair ripped out and were hit and kicked. The police struggled to rescue them such was the anger from the crowd at the disturbance. There was a large presence of press in attendance, presumably expecting trouble. The majority of the national press condemned the attacks on the women, with headlines such as 'Fierce Attacks On Women' (Daily Mirror, 1912). 'Suffragists Mobbed-Thrown Over A Hedge' (Daily Telegraph, 1912). But it seems that the WSPU were anticipating a similar reaction to what happened in Wrexham two weeks prior and possibly wanted the crowd to react, as it seems they were prepared. In a letter found in Lloyd George's correspondence after his death, a witness, of the incident at Llanystumdwy wanted to make him aware of what he saw. Newspapers were reporting that the men were ripping women's hair out, but Mr Evans, the witness said he was standing close to one of the woman this happened to and her hat fell off, he still has it in his possession, within the hat the woman had sown clumps of false hair, to make it look like her hair had been ripped out (Evans, 1912). A newspaper report from *Poverty Bay Herald*, though based in New Zealand seems to corroborate his letter. The article written on 12<sup>th</sup> November, entitled 'Like Porcupines' states that the women had dressed themselves in a kind of protective armour, they wore padded clothing which they had sown pins into which were sticking out, so that anyone who did try to grab them would get stabbed (Poverty Bay Herald, 1912). This article was written about 6 weeks after the incident but cites London newspapers from 27<sup>th</sup> September. There is also a very similar report in *The Anti-suffrage Review*. All this evidence suggests that the WSPU did not care of the consequence or whether this promoted them positively or damaged their reputation in Wales, they just wanted the headlines and it had worked.

The cases at the Eisteddfod and Llanystumdy, could be seen as Wales not being interested or hostile to the suffragette's cause, in particular the WSPU militants who were considered to be English invaders, were seen to be disruptive and having no regard for Welsh values and traditions. But there was also the issue of the general public not distinguishing between the different suffrage societies. They assumed they were all the same, because of these militant acts of verbally attacking a Welsh icon as Lloyd George, the militant WSPU did damage the campaign for those present and in particular those in north Wales.

## Chapter 3

### Anti-Suffrage within Wales and how it was inspired

The anti-suffrage campaign was not a unique entity to Wales, it was a nationally run society. But in Wales the focus of the campaign was in the north with fifteen branches, compared to only two in the south based in Cardiff and Newport (Tippings, p.104, 2019). Considering there were no WSPU branches in North Wales it is important to understand why this is. The anti-suffrage campaign in Wales reached its height in 1912 run by the NLOWS – National League of Opposing Women’s Suffrage. Members were across the spectrum of society, led by upper class men and women, who believed that if women were given the vote it would be a threat to imperial government and happiness within British homes (Bush, p.432, 2002). In Edwardian Britain a women’s place was within the home, caring for her husband and her family. The social welfare of education, sanitary reform, care of the poor, sick and elderly were seen as a non-political extension of familial duties (Bush, p.432, 2002). Ironically the sentiments of the anti-suffrage campaign were the reasons why the NUWSS was formed, as was seen in chapter one and the reason why the Llandudno branch was formed, they believed the vote of women was needed to change social welfare, as male politicians were not doing a very good job of fixing it. The majority of the activities the NLOWS used to promote their campaign of anti-suffrage were very similar to the tactics the NUWSS used; they held talks, wrote to MPs, petitioned parliament and had their own monthly newspaper, *The Anti-Suffrage Review* (Wallace, 2009).

The Welsh press showed little interest in the anti-suffrage campaign, they rarely reported on any events, it seems that militant acts were of greater value as they could be sensationalised and sold more papers (Wallace, p.208, 2009). One unique way the anti-suffrage movement showed their distaste of the suffrage campaign within Wales, was through a Voodoo doll which was posted anonymously through a women’s letterbox in West Wales. (Picture in illustrations) There does not seem to be any occurrence of this happening elsewhere in Britain. It is not known who the sender or recipient of the doll was, but the statement it is making is strong. The figure is homemade and is portrayed as a grotesque caricature of a suffrage campaigner. It has several pins sticking out of its body all of which is insulting and threatening. It is likely to have been made by someone who had a hatred for the suffrage campaign in Wales. It is typical of anti-suffrage propaganda distributed in this period, but that was usually done in depictions on postcards, the voodoo doll is rare and unusual, showing the strong sentiment of the sender and their dislike of the suffrage movement (*Anti-suffrage Voodoo doll*, n.d).

The NLOWS ran a touring campaign through the North Wales in 1912, run by their organising secretary, Welsh born Gwladys Gladstone Solomon. It coincided with the highly publicised disruptions of the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham and the heckling of David



Lloyd George in Llanystumdwy (Wallace, p.200, 2009). This was discussed in further depth in the previous chapter. Of course the NLWOS would capitalise on this. In the October edition of the Anti-suffrage review, Leonora Lockhart, a columnist for the paper based in London, wrote an article entitled 'The Warning in Wales'. The article chastises the Suffragettes behavior but also refers to the Welsh men present as 'a rough uncontrolled mob whose passions were provoked' the article is showing empathy for the men and by doing this laying the blame of their violent actions completely with the WSPU. It goes on to say that 'The actions of the Suffragists in this case was inexcusable' [...] 'They bore down upon the National festival of a quick tempered and passionate people whose nationality is their very religion' (Lockhart, P.236, 1912). Within the article she states that she obtained the information from other suffragette papers, proving she was not present. It is also interlaced with references to religious context, comparing the Suffragettes as Eve and the Welsh men as Adam, stating that the brute of man cannot be uncovered without the serpent of the woman who tempts him in to his own undoing. The NLOWS hopes that the WSPU members will learn from the consequences of their actions in Wales and believes that they had become 'Drunk with the sight of power, the delicate situation where women may read danger signals is lost' (Lockhart, p.236, 1912). A comment possibly linked to the Temperance movement who considered drink to be the first step to a women's ruin as well as a jibe as to their morality. The use of militancy would have been a boost to the NLOWS, as they could use these as examples to enhance their point. It is therefore no surprise that during the NLOWS touring campaign through the north of Wales in September 1912 branches increased from three to seventeen. Not only is this due to the promotion of the society by Mrs Solomon but also primarily to do with the antics of the militant WSPU at Welsh locations. It demonstrates that actions of the WSPU did damage the suffrage campaign in North Wales at this time.

Mrs Gladstone Solomon used this opportunity to write to David Lloyd George after the incident in Llanystumdwy. Even though she lived in London, she used the fact she was staying in Caernarvon, Lloyd George's constituency to bring this to his attention, writing the Caernarvon address on her letter, even though it was headed NLWOS paper. She explained why NLWOS campaign in Wales and why the anti-suffrage society wanted his support in ensuring women did not get the vote. In her letter she plays on the Liberal governments concerns if the Conciliation Bill did come into effect. She tells him that the Liberal government will be wrecked if women get the vote. She lists the governments achievements and threatens that they will lose, Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment and land reform for the sake of quarter of a million women, which would benefit the Conservative party. (Gladstone-Solomon, 1912). She hits some home truths here; it does seem that the Liberal government did not want women to have the vote as they were concerned that it would be detrimental to the Liberal party and would lose them seats in parliament. In late 1911 the Liberal party commissioned a report on the proposed outcome of passing the Conciliation Bill. The overwhelming conclusion was, if women were granted the vote the Liberals would

lose the next election. It is quoted within the report that it would be 'suicidal to pass bill' and 'detrimental to the party' and 'would completely wipe out Liberal Representation' (Liberal Party, 1911). It confirms that the threats the NLWOS were promoting of enfranchisement to women was the conclusion that the Liberal party had already come to themselves. The government was not going to allow women the vote, no matter what militant acts the WSPU enacted because the outcome would be the loss of parliament. Women's suffrage was far from a straightforward demand. In simple terms it was women asking for the same voting rights as men. But men themselves also had limited enfranchisement and it was considered that by giving women the vote, it would give the Conservative party an electoral advantage.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that militant tactics of the WSPU suffrage campaign played a significant role in promoting the women's suffrage movement within Wales. Even though the NUWSS were more successful in Wales, due to their membership and society numbers having at least twenty two more branches than that of the WSPU, they would have gained members due to the militant campaign. The WSPU's aim was to bring the fight to the forefront of people's thoughts and in doing this it raised consciousness of the issues. Women inspired by them, but not necessarily agreeing with their tactics would have joined the NUWSS. It proves that even though Wales had a small number of WSPU branches, their campaign was significant in promoting the suffrage movement, as without their headline grabbing militant actions the campaign would not have necessarily been bought into societies' peripheral.

It has revealed that the acts of militancy exhibited by the WSPU at important Welsh events and by heckling Lloyd George caused negative consequences. It helped to increase the anti-suffrage campaign in Wales and affected the movement in a detrimental way for the NUWSS as many individuals were unable to distinguish between the militant suffragettes and the constitutional suffragists. Equally the Liberal Party's inability to differentiate between members of the WSPU and the WLA resulted in a complete ban of all women attending any political events. Whilst banning them was intended to prevent negative coverage, it disenfranchised the cause of many women within the party, many of which related to the cause of women's suffrage. This resulted in them leaving the WLA and joining the NUWSS. Even though the WSPU caused the NUWSS problems, the NUWSS in Wales were successful in their own right, establishing a network of branches in North Wales, initially due to the middle class English inhabitants of the coastal towns, but also having the insight to appreciate the need to share suffrage literature in the Welsh language, however further research would help to determine this.

Nevertheless the WSPU's actions bought the argument to more people within society, whether they agreed with the campaign or not. By amalgamating what has been discussed this dissertation has bought together historiography of the suffrage movement in Wales that has not been discussed within one framework before. The militant campaign of the WSPU was significant in promoting the campaign in Wales but for the most part it was for their negative conduct, that however was their aim, 'Deeds not Words' is appropriate.

**Word count: 6553**

## Illustration

**\*Image Removed for Copyright Reasons\***

*Anti-suffrage voodoo doll. C: early twentieth century, National Museum of Wales*

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