

# The Women's Suffragette's Community Heritage Project

## LSE Library Visit Blog

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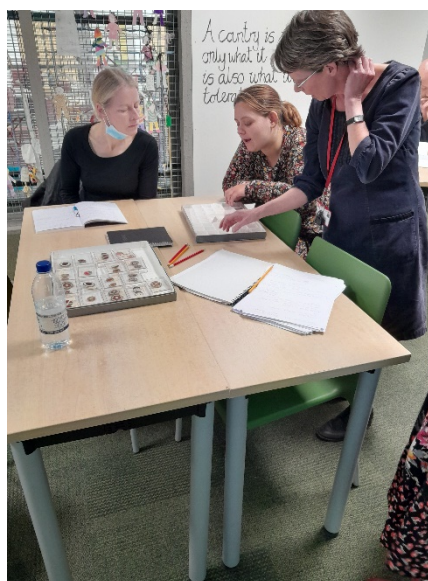
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Volunteer Researcher on The Women's Suffragettes Project

Working on the Women's Suffragette Community Heritage project has been a really positive and enjoyable experience. Our recent visits to the LSE Library have been highly informative and we've learnt so much in such a short space of time already! I can't wait to continue with the workshops.

The group of researchers and performers came together to learn new ways of researching about the past and to explore the story of the Women's Suffragettes Movement. At the beginning of the session, we set out to:

1. Develop an understanding of how and why the Women's Suffragettes movement began.
2. Explore the key people and events which took place during the movement.
3. Develop a clear timeline of events which took place.
4. Explore some of the tactics used during the movement to gain publicity for their cause including direct action, protests.
5. Develop an understanding of the life in prison, hunger strikes and the cat and mouse.
6. Explore the relationship between the Government, Police, and the Suffragettes.
7. Learn how to use access and use the archives and resources which the library has to offer.



The staff at the LSE Library gave us a talk identifying ways of using the library resources, teaching us how to use archives and artefacts. What to look out for, how to focus our enquiry skills, questions in order to gage the best result. We looked at how to use artefacts, newspaper archives, letters, courtroom records, and photographs. We were then given a tour around the library before being allowed to roam around freely to explore the resources.

We were then given a really insightful talk about the story of the Suffragette movement charting the timeline of events, the key figures which brought about the movement, their key strategies and how these differed from each group of the movement. I was really taken aback by the treatment which the women received in the prisons and by the Police themselves. It was heart-breaking to read about the hunger strikes and what they were forced to endure.

At the start we did find it was difficult researching and using all of the different materials. We knew that we needed to stay focused otherwise we'd keep going off task and wouldn't fully use the materials effectively. We separated ourselves into groups to research what life was like under the following headings:

1. Key figures in the Women's Suffragettes Movement
2. The tactics used to gain attention. (Direct Action)
3. The Bloody Friday story.
4. How the members were treated by the Police and Government
5. Life in Prison and Hunger Strikes
6. The effect which the movement had upon their lives.
7. What it was like being a member of the Women's Suffragette movement.

With each topic area we focused upon exploring real life stories of how the movement impacted upon the local community and people. What were their roles? How did people cope with the challenges?

We were able to find out the names of several people who were heavily involved in the movement which we'd never heard of. We were able to read letters and diaries from those who had been arrested, taken part in protests or direct action. We were even surprised to find that there were even men who were members of the movement!

The library visits also gave us the opportunity to research more into the information given to use from our background museum visits and work using the National Archives and internet research. We were able to explore further into the story of Black Friday, The Cat and Mouse Movement, the Propaganda from both sides and the events which shaped the outcome.

The research collected helped to form both our displays, education materials and our play. It's all been really invaluable.

\*We would like to thank both the LSE Library staff and our Researchers for their time.

