

Emmeline Pankhurst

2018 marks the 100 year anniversary of women in the UK first being able to vote. What do you know about the campaign for votes for women? Maybe you've heard of one of the leading campaigners, Emmeline Pankhurst, who was the leader of the Women's Social and Political Union.

Who Was She?

Emmeline Goulden was born in Moss Side, Manchester in 1858. Her parents were involved in politics. At the young age of 14, she was introduced to the women's suffrage movement which supported the right of women to vote. At the age of 21, she married Richard Pankhurst who was 24 years older than her. He was a barrister who supported women's right to vote and they had four children together. In 1889, Emmeline and Richard started the Women's Franchise League which campaigned for women to be allowed to vote in local elections. When the organisation broke apart, she tried to join the Independent Labour party but at first was refused as she was a woman.



Did You Know?

Emmeline worked as a Poor Law Guardian in a workhouse and was shocked at the terrible conditions there.

Who Were The Suffragettes?

In 1903, five years after the death of her husband, Emmeline Pankhurst started the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela also became part of the group. The WSPU were more aggressive than other groups that supported women's right to vote. Instead of peaceful marches and public speeches, the WSPU held demonstrations, smashed windows and set buildings on fire. Their violent actions meant that these women were the first to be called 'Suffragettes'. Many of their protests were illegal and several of the suffragettes, including Emmeline Pankhurst, went to prison. Whilst in prison,

the suffragettes often went on hunger strike and refused to eat to raise further awareness of their fight. Emmeline Pankhurst was imprisoned several times and force-fed whilst on hunger strike herself.



Did you know?

In 1913, a suffragette called Emily Davison died when she was trampled by the King's horse at the Epsom Derby. She was trying to hang a suffragette banner on the horse.

What Changed In 1914?

The beginning of the First World War in 1914 changed Emmeline's political focus. She turned to the war effort and called for the suffragettes to do the same. They encouraged women to work in factories producing munitions for the soldiers and supported the young men fighting. Emmeline Pankhurst died just weeks before all men and women over the age of 21 were granted the vote by Parliament in July 1928. Two years later, a statue was built in London's Victoria Tower Gardens to remember the great suffragette.



Did you know?

Emmeline Pankhurst supported the White Feather Movement which wanted to make men who didn't volunteer to fight feel ashamed and join up to fight in the First World War.

Questions

1. How many years ago did women first receive the right to vote in the UK?

2. How old was Emmeline Pankhurst when she first became interested in women's suffrage?

Tick one.

21 ☐

14 ☐

24 ☐

3. Why was she refused membership of the Independent Labour Party?

4. Which organisation did Emmeline Pankhurst establish in 1903? Tick one.

☐ The Independent Labour Party

☐ The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies

☐ The Women's Social and Political Union

5. How was Emmeline Pankhurst's organisation different from other suffragists?

6. What did Emmeline Pankhurst support during the First World War? Tick one.

☐ Young men joining the armed forces

☐ Equal votes for women

☐ Men standing for election

7. How is Emmeline Pankhurst remembered in London?

8. What was the aim of the White Feather Movement? Tick one.

- ☐ to give white feathers to everyone who could vote
- ☐ to make men who didn't volunteer to fight feel ashamed
- ☐ to encourage women to work in factories

Answers

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Emmeline Pankhurst is remembered with a statue in London's Victoria Tower Gardens.

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