

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Greenwich		
Unit of Assessment: 28 - History		
Title of case study: Diversifying Gender Equality Activism Through Allyship: Past, Present & Future		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Jan 2014 – Dec 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Claire Eustance	Senior Lecturer & Programme Leader, History	17/03/2009 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Jan 2014 – Jul 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The 2018 centenary commemoration of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which granted the vote to some women for the first time, was an ideal showcase for Eustance's research into the diverse character of British women's suffrage and gender equality campaigns in the first half of the twentieth century. At both national and local levels, curatorial/heritage, educational and public beneficiaries of the two exhibitions and over 20 public and specialist interest group talks, educational workshops and online resources she delivered between 2017-18, developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a deeper awareness and understanding of diversity in British gender equality campaigns in the past; • new ways of thinking about contemporary gender equality issues; • and a desire to seek out engagement with initiatives working to resolve them. <p>Eustance's collaborations with local heritage, library and community sites helped to amplify community and personal connections to past equality campaigns for some 2500 adults and school-age children in Greenwich and Lewisham. Through co-producing research-based content with national and local organisations, she has provided valuable insights for their own future programming and sustainability. In developing opportunities for creative interactions around equality, diversity and citizenship past and present, for KS2-A level students, Eustance has also helped pupils reflect on the roles they can play in such campaigns, and the methods they can use to provoke discussion and engagement in them.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Eustance's research since 2009 has situated women's rights and gender equality campaigns between 1860-1960 in a diverse landscape of reform. Despite high levels of public awareness about the 'votes for women' campaign in early 20th century Britain, popular histories and KS1-4 school curricula focus almost entirely on relatively privileged, able-bodied white women. Eustance's work has developed a more intersectional and localised approach to these campaigns for the vote and other related activism, in the following ways:</p>		
<u>Men's involvement in British women's suffrage campaigns</u>		
<p>Eustance has focussed extensively on male support for women's suffrage in Britain. Most recently, she has mapped extensive and highly organised networks of support among men in Parliament, political parties and across diverse economic, professional, religious and ethnic groupings. Tracing the private and public lives of a cross-section of these male supporters, she illuminates the exposure these men risked, including ridicule, censure, ostracism, unemployment, bankruptcy, imprisonment and forcible feeding (3.2, 3.4, 3.5).</p>		
<u>Beyond Suffrage – the emergence of feminisms at home and abroad</u>		
<p>By mapping and interpreting activism by both sexes which occurred alongside, but was also distinct from, the single issue of electoral reform, Eustance has investigated the complexities, omissions and contradictions in the definitions and experiences of gender from which self-</p>		

consciously feminist activism in Britain and its empire emerged over the course of the 20th century. Her study of the Women's Freedom League (1907-62) and interwar women's radical print media, highlights regionally-based, ethnically-, socially- and gender-diverse alliances active across multiple issues, such as women's ordination and support for the South African women's anti-apartheid Black Sash movement. Through this work she counters claims that organised campaigns for gender equality before the so-called 1970s 'second-wave' of feminism, were narrowly focussed, mono-cultural and faded away entirely after 1918 (3.1; 3.4; 3.5)

Commemorating locality in women's rights and gender equality campaigns, 1918-2018

In 2018 **Eustance** initiated a community-centred project, [Greenwich100](#) (3.3), aligned with the commemorative aims of the nationwide public engagement [Vote 100 project \(UK Parliament\)](#) (2017-18). Collaborating with local government, leisure and heritage organisations, and working with local historians and volunteers from the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust (Dr Ann Dingsdale, Carolyn Ayers and Lynne Dixon), she applied the methodologies and findings of her wider scholarship to illuminate and disseminate local histories of women's rights and gender equality campaigns before and beyond 1918, in Greenwich and Lewisham. This research revealed distinctive patterns of developing political consciousness and women's activism in local government, housing reform and other initiatives between 1860-1939, as well as intersections of gender, class, ethnicity and religious faith. Growing out of this research, a travelling public exhibition was staged in 2018 at 12 venues, alongside a rich programme of educational workshops, public talks, and creative events (3.3).

3. References to the research

1. **C. Eustance**, & M. Di Cenzo (authors), 'Many more worlds to conquer': the feminist press beyond suffrage', chapter in C. Clay *et al* (eds), *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Interwar Britain, 1918–1939* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2017). ISBN: 9781474445054. <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/17013/> [Hard copy available from the university on request] [REF2 Submission – Identifier 17013]
2. **C. Eustance** (curator and author), *Suffragettes in Trousers: The men who supported women's suffrage in Parliament*, 2017. A public exhibition commissioned by the Houses of Parliament and installed at Portcullis House, April-May 2017 and Sept-Oct 2017. Legacy online materials available at <https://www.parliament.uk/suffragettesintrousers> and PDF of public information leaflet (https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/parliamentary-archives/Suffragettes_in_Trousers_Booklet_Final.pdf)
3. **C. Eustance** (author and curator) with C. Ayers, A. Dingsdale, C. Dixon (co-curators) 'Beyond the Suffragettes: Celebrating women's and men's contributions to gender equality in Royal Greenwich from the 1860s to the present', a public exhibition installed at libraries and other venues across the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the City of London and Kent, March – September 2018. Funded by the University of Greenwich and supported in-kind by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust. See also www.greenwich100.com
4. **C. Eustance** (author), 'You who have the vote and exercise it, consider what it is worth to you'¹: male support for women's suffrage in Edwardian Britain', chapter in K. Cowman (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to British Women's Suffrage* (London: Routledge, in press). *Originally to be published autumn 2020: delayed to July 2021 due to Covid disruption: current draft available here:* [https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/24463/3/24463%20EUSTANCE_Male_Support_Women's_Suffrage_Edwardian_Britain_\(Draft\)_2019.pdf](https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/24463/3/24463%20EUSTANCE_Male_Support_Women's_Suffrage_Edwardian_Britain_(Draft)_2019.pdf)
5. **C. Eustance** (author), 'The Women's Freedom League and the growth of feminism in British before 1918', chapter in K. Cowman (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to British Women's Suffrage* (London: Routledge, in press). *Originally to be published autumn 2020: delayed to July 2021 due to Covid disruption: AAM available here:* [https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/24461/3/24461%20EUSTANCE_Women's_Freedom_League_Feminism_British_1918_\(AAM\)_2019.pdf](https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/24461/3/24461%20EUSTANCE_Women's_Freedom_League_Feminism_British_1918_(AAM)_2019.pdf)

4. Details of the impact

Since 2014 – when the UN Women Solidarity Movement for Gender Equality launched its [HeforShe campaign](#) (promoting the need for “*men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for gender equality*”) – **Eustance’s** timely research has illuminated the historical role of such allies; and the importance of intersectional alliances in such activism to effect change, with the following impacts:

Improved stakeholder and public awareness and understanding of diversity in British gender equality campaigns, and stimulus to discover more.

As invited curator for the 2017 ‘Suffragettes in Trousers’ exhibition, Portcullis House **(3.2)**, **Eustance** brought the seldom-discussed roles of male MPs and campaigners for women’s suffrage into view for parliamentary staff and MPs in a key public area of the parliamentary estate. The curators of the Vote100 engagement programme specifically benefitted from **Eustance’s** “*unique research and knowledge*” on male allyship in suffrage campaigns **(3.4)**, to develop the displays **(5.1a)**. The exhibit also generated further new content and beneficiaries:

- BBC Parliament Channel used both research from the exhibit and **Eustance** in the documentary *Suffragette Allies* (30 mins: 1st aired 11 February 2018; repeated 36 times across 2018-2019) **(5.1b)**.
- The exhibit’s online legacy presence (2017-present) provides ongoing public access and creative interactions, e.g. as a ‘story starter’ prompt in the weekly magazine *The People’s Friend* (Nov. 20) **(5.1c)**.
- BBC R4 ‘Women’s Hour’ (6 September 2018), and BBC R3 Sunday Feature (‘Judy Punches Up’ 22 November 2019), both featured **Eustance** discussing ‘Suffragettes in Trousers’ research.

A broad range of specialist and public groups have engaged with this research through the extensive programme of c.20 talks by **Eustance** across 2017-19. Five invited presentations to diverse audiences in 2018 – including DEFRA women’s network (‘serving to ‘promote gender equality and to empower/enable women to thrive at their workplace’), Chevening fellows from 31 different countries and U3A members – were attended by approx. 400 people in total. Feedback (10% of overall audience) shows substantive change in knowledge and understanding stemming from participation **(5.2)**:

- **41%** respondents indicated limited or no prior knowledge of subject matter before the event.
- **92%** recorded knowledge and understanding gains after the event.
- **61%** specifically acknowledged greater historical awareness after the event.

Others spoke of their desire to research further: “*You have wheted [sic] my appetite to find out more about men’s involvement*” **(5.2: BL33)**

This desire to learn more inspired one participant to pursue her academic studies further, “*an ambition [she] held for many years*”. Now enrolled on a PhD with **Eustance** at Greenwich exploring Greenwich suffrage campaigns, there have been positive wellbeing, as well as intellectual benefits: “*as the years passed my confidence diminished. [Eustance’s] support gave me the impetus to apply. That confidence has grown and been sustained.*” **(5.3)**.

Deeper understanding of contemporary gender equality issues and stimulus to participate in initiatives supporting gender equality

Attendees registered increased awareness of the resonance of these historic campaigns with contemporary gender equality issues, and the factors that continue to act as barriers to gender equality:

- “*It would be interesting to compare this with current fights for women’s rights.*” **(5.2:CH3)**
- “[there are] *Echoes of the value of male support for issue [sic] like FGM and forced marriage.*” **(5.2:NA1)**

- “Fighting for women’s rights is not a matter for women only.” (5.2: CH12)
- “it’s still necessary for us to have events like this specifically about women’s issues... otherwise they...still tend to get buried” (5.2:BL31)

There was also increased understanding of, and willingness to participate in contemporary campaigns for gender equality:

- “it is in my interest as a man to push gender equality as a vital component of development and society.” (5.2:CH9)
- “I will look for opportunities to raise issues about gender equality in trade policy.” (5.2: DEFRA1)

Amplifying community histories and personal connections to equality campaigns

Through the *Greenwich100: Beyond the Suffragettes* mobile exhibition, staged across 12 distinctive venues across London, Greenwich, Lewisham and Kent associated public lectures and online resources in association with Greenwich Council and RGHT (3.3), **Eustance** amplified the local histories of women and men involved in groups like the Women’s Freedom League, on both sides of 19th and 20th century suffrage campaigns, (3.4, 3.5).

Visitors ranged from regular library users and parishioners, to one-off international tourists (5.5a). No visitor numbers were recorded for the library venues, although Woolwich Library is one of Britain’s busiest, while Severndroog Castle had 237 visitors during the 3 weeks of the exhibit (5.5b). The complementary public talks (May-November 2018) were attended by approx. 500 people.

The focus on local activism and activists led to audience impacts grounded in an enhanced sense of local identity and personal connections to the histories depicted. These included: “surprise” and civic pride at the extent of local participation: “I didn’t think there were such forward-thinking women on the estate” (5.5b; 5.4:BtSE55); and finding it “empowering” (5.4:BtSE76). Others shared their increased positivity about the potential for change: “[it] feels like we might finally being [sic] taken seriously by the big decision makers and change is coming.” (5.4:BtSE70).

Building local & national audiences and programming through collaboration

Five national and local organisations benefitted operationally from collaborating with **Eustance** on the two exhibitions. The co-curators of the Houses of Parliament 2018 *Voice and Vote* immersive exhibition used materials from **Eustance’s** 2017 exhibit in their own. The success of *Voice and Vote* (visited by over 107,000 people) was dependent on “the audience based [sic] developed by the *Vote100* outputs prior to 2018, of which **Dr Eustance’s** ‘*Suffragettes in Trousers*’ outputs were a key part.” (5.1a)

Similar benefits accrued to local heritage and amenity partners staging the Greenwich100 exhibit. For the RGHT “*Raising the profile of the Trust’s works is paramount to its survival*”, so being a partner in the project enabled it “to tap into and engage with new audiences and take our stories and collections to areas we don’t always reach”. At Severndroog Castle “This was the first exhibition of its kind ... it has proved to us that free standing displays are workable in the small display space”. At Woolwich Library the exhibit and two events for schools “made *International National Women’s Day* [2018] – a success”, providing clear pathways to “more incredible events to be hosted at Woolwich”, while at St Alfege the exhibit provided extra content to engage visitors across Open Heritage weekends (Sept.2018). (5.5a, b, c, d).

Developing new learning resources and creative interactions with Key Stage 2 to university students around equality, diversity and citizenship

The Historical Association and Association for Citizenship Teaching have capitalised on **Eustance’s** expertise, producing two podcasts (drawing on 3.1, 3.2, 3.4 and 3.5), as part of the free-to-access [Women’s Suffrage: History and Citizenship Resources for Schools](#) (launched November 2018). Although there are only partial Google Analytics data for track plays of each for Nov. 2018-19, & evaluation of the whole resource by Oxford University has been delayed by Covid,

it is reasonable to assume the resources have been consulted as least as much during periods of lockdown home schooling across 2020.(5.8)

An interactive workshop based on the themes of the Greenwich100 exhibition, exploring aspects of citizenship (part of the mandatory 'British Values' curriculum focus) was also delivered to 150 KS2 primary pupils from Meridian Primary School, Greenwich and St Peter's Primary School, Woolwich. Both schools are in a borough where 20% of residents live in neighbourhoods ranked amongst the most deprived in England (English Indices of Deprivation, 2019), with ethnically diverse student bodies. Pupils benefitted from accessing research about local male, BAME and working-class participation in suffrage campaigns through drama readings and mini quizzes, and engaged creatively with the ways such activism was delivered, via poster, banner and badge-making: resources and activities which teachers felt could be reused in subsequent teaching around these topics (5.6a). Five Greenwich UG drama students who worked with **Eustance** on the rehearsed readings for these workshops discovered "*a whole new face of theatre and of audience involvement*" in working with the children: "*Performing our piece for the children was ... a very new, but incredibly beneficial experience*". (5.6b)

Participants in schools' workshops based on **Eustance's** research around the Women's Freedom League and 'Suffragettes in Trousers' have used their newfound knowledge in rewarding ways. After one such workshop at Bromley High School (Girls' Day School Trust secondary) a VIth Form student consulted further with **Eustance** to develop her entry for the Historical Association's 2018 Great Debate for 16-19 year-olds, on the question 'Was the 1918 extension of the franchise the most significant moment in British democratic history?'. The student subsequently won both her heat and the national final (5.7, 5.9).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. 'Suffragettes in Trousers' exhibition:
 - a. Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, Parliament Heritage Collection Manager & Mari Takayanagi, Senior Archivist, Parliamentary Archives, March 2021 testimonial.
 - b. [People's Friend](#) November 2020, 'Story starter' prompt
 - c. Gabrielle O'Neill, BBC re: participation in BBC Parliament documentary, Dec.2017
2. Feedback questionnaires completed by beneficiaries of 3 special-interest lectures: Foreign and Commonwealth Office [Chevening Scholars Programme](#), April 2018; South East London U3A Network, June 2018; DEFRA's EU Trade Directorate & DEFRA's Women's Network Nov.2018; and 2 public lectures, The National Archives, April 2018, and British Library, June 2018.
3. Amanda Barrie, PhD student, University of Greenwich 2019-present, letter February 2020.
4. Feedback forms, *Beyond the Suffragettes* exhibition & selected *Greenwich100* talks, 2018.
5. Site & other beneficiaries, *Beyond the Suffragettes* exhibition, 2018, testimonials:
 - a. Rebecca Parrant, Heritage & Interpretation Manager, St Alfege Church, Greenwich, 10 March 2021
 - b. Laura Allen, Heritage Manager, Severndroog Castle, 8 July 2018.
 - c. Carolyn Ayers, Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust, 10 March 2021.
 - d. Tatyana d'Souza, Woolwich Library/GLL, 13 March 2018.
6. Meridian Primary School workshop supporting evidence:
 - a. email testimonial, Jeff Mason, curriculum lead, History, Meridian Primary School;
 - b. Greenwich drama student testimonial, 2018.
7. Kristina Lewis, Head of History & Politics/ Enrichment & Outreach, Bromley High School 2019 email; [Historical Association news item March 2018](#).
8. Harvey Edser, web editor, Historical Association/Association for Citizenship Teaching, [Women's Suffrage: History and Citizenship Resources for Schools](#), email re: podcasts track play data, 2 March 2021.
9. Twitter screenshots of feedback and interaction with *Greenwich100* activities