



## News from the St. Tudy History Group Research Team ...

As it will be International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, my thoughts go to those brave women who were involved in the Suffragette and Suffragist movements in the late 1800's and early 1900's. On researching, I found to my surprise that there were more than 40 different suffrage societies from the well-known NUWSS and WSPU to the smaller organisations, trade affiliations and religious groups, commencing in 1897 and continuing until the London Provisional Petition Committee in 1928. Together with votes for women, the campaigns were about other issues such as child poverty, poor working conditions and bonded white labour.

There seemed to be many different groups of women and men, tackling "the cause" covering all aspects that I had not considered, all contributing towards a common goal. Some of these groups were the YHB - "Young Hot Bloods" founded in 1907. They were a younger group of militant suffragettes within the WSPU, all under the age of 30. The members pledged to undertake "danger duty". In addition, the AFL - Actress Franchise League was formed in 1908. They used member's skills to supply entertainers for suffrage events, put on suffrage plays, processions, and sold literature to raise funds. Some of the most famous actresses of the day such as Ellen Terry and Lillie Langtry were involved. Another was the WTRL - Women's Tax Resistance League, formed in 1909. The League focused on the non-payment of taxes, the Society's motto was "no vote, no tax". Also formed in 1909 was the SA - Suffrage Atelier, who were an arts and crafts society using traditional handicraft methods to produce artwork, which it supplied to various suffrage societies and supporters. I was surprised to find that there were also many groups set up by men. A few of these were the MLWS - Men's League for Women's Suffrage in 1907 who concentrated on obtaining men's support for votes for women, and the MPU - Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement in 1910 who tackled the indifference of the government to women's suffrage.

If you are wondering if St. Tudy had been swept up in all of this, well, the answer is yes. I found a newspaper article from July 1909 when the first meeting was held for the Camelford and District Unionist Women, Lady Onslow of Hengar was elected president. The WUA appears to have become more popular with women activists. In December of that year the St. Tudy and St. Breward members of the WUA were invited to Hengar by Lady Onslow and Mr S T Button who gave addresses on political matters, then tea and an enjoyable entertainment followed with dancing on the lawn. The Primrose League was closely associated with the WUA, and all the Onslow family seems to have been active in this organisation too by holding annual garden fetes and demonstrations at Hengar from July 1910 onwards. There were some familiar prominent names from St. Tudy mentioned in the newspaper reports such as Dr. Cole, Inspector General May, Col. Hext and Mr. R K Elford.

A small number of women were finally given the vote after WW1 in 1918, but it took a further ten years for universal franchise to be granted to all women over the age of 21, in 1928.

A big "thank you" to all those men and women of St. Tudy who fought so long and hard for the right to vote. From what I can tell Lady Onslow was a very kind and generous person, and I am pleased that she lived to see the day when all of St. Tudy could vote together. **PAM FREE**