

After ending last month's letter with a reference to how Elizabeth I went on to become one of our most famous and respected monarchs, despite being a lowly female, it feels like there's something of a continuation of that theme in this month's letter. Skip forward 300 years ago, women are still second class citizens, considered capable of ruling a country in the case of Queen Victoria, but not capable of voting in democratic elections. There are a few New Zealanders in the club, and I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that your country was the first to give women the vote in 1893. Here in the UK however it was a slow fight for the right to vote, women over 30 who owned property could vote in 1918, but it took until 1928 for women to be made equal with men, and all of the population over the age of 21 could finally have a say in how their country was ruled.

The right to vote was hard fought for by several groups of women, most notably the Suffragettes, but other, less violent groups, also took part in the struggle, and are rather forgotten by history. The Suffragettes however, suffered immensely for their beliefs, before World War One members were imprisoned, and went on hunger strike. Some members, such as Emily Wilding Davison, made the ultimate sacrifice, she threw herself under the King's Horse at the Epsom Derby in 1913.

The impact that the Suffragettes had on gaining the vote for women is debatable, some argue that they actually delayed the granting of the vote for women. Their violent actions angered some members of the general public, and more peaceful groups were engaged in behind the scenes talks with politician. However, with the rose tinted view of the past, it's hard not to admire, and be thankful to our ancestors, the women who stood up for their beliefs, and weren't content to let the status quo continue.

In the UK we're building up to a general election, and all the polls tell us it will be a close election, and one in which women are far less likely to vote than men. I wouldn't dream of telling you who to vote for, but I do urge you to go and vote. If you don't think any of the candidates are ones you want to vote for then spoil your ballot paper, make it know that you have a voice. If you know you'll struggle to get to a polling station then register for a postal vote.

The Suffragettes were identified by colours of green and purple, so in celebration of the campaign for votes for women those are the colours I've chosen for this month. We have a voice in 2015, please use it.