

Commercial places, public spaces: suffragette shops and the public sphere

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Despite the expansion in suffrage history over the last two decades, the campaign of the Women's Social & Political Union (WSPU) continues to be defined almost solely by its public protest tactics, which from 1905 dominated the movement for women's suffrage. The WSPU's campaign has been seen very much as one focused on the public sphere, with its militant protest tactics contrasting with the more conservative, slow-paced agitation of nineteenth and twentieth century 'constitutional' organisations. As historiography on the militant campaign has expanded to incorporate analyses of themes such as suffragettes' bodies in protest acts, the sites of suffrage activism, and militancy's engagement with mainstream political traditions, this focus on the 'public' nature of the WSPU's campaign has been little questioned¹. Simultaneously, but distinctly, there has arisen a greater questioning of the roles of 'public' and 'private' in women's history and particularly the separate spheres ideology so widely used in gendered histories². Yet there has been little attempt to unite this critical consideration of space and place with the history of the militant suffrage campaign, nor to assess the movement by its appropriation of space. This article emphasises the duality of the WSPU's public/private campaign and assesses the role of suffrage shops in negotiating this demarcation at both local and central levels.

The WSPU's campaign was undoubtedly focused around its strategy to push women's suffrage onto the newspaper front pages, into the public consciousness, and onto the political agenda. However, to view it solely as a campaign of public protest is to ignore the substantial amount of background work that contributed to its efforts. Many 'constitutional' campaign elements continued to be used by the WSPU: 'drawing room'-style meetings, a sophisticated propaganda campaign that built upon the early use of suffragist literature, and most significantly, the 'behind the scenes' work of its staff can be considered central elements of the organisation's non-militant work.

The commonalities between 'militant' and 'non-militant' campaigns have been emphasised before. Yet, this has often relied on a reconsideration of the WSPU's membership putting into practice the organisation's strategy, rather than questioning the structure of its central organisation. Local studies have built up a more complex picture of the nature of the WSPU's campaign in the regions, emphasising the local-level co-operation between militants and non-militants, and the branch-level autonomy that permitted some differentiation in implementing policy³. And Sandra Stanley Holton, in particular, has argued for a reconsideration of the militant/non-militant distinction. However, Holton's attempts to show common elements between the two campaigns tend to emphasise the degree to which 'non-militant' organisations may be considered to have adopted some elements of 'militant' strategy, and questions the extent of militancy among the WSPU's membership⁴.

This article takes as its starting point the acceptance that the WSPU's campaign should not be considered solely 'militant' – not because of the questionable militancy of its members or the acceptance of some of its tactics by the non-militants – but by demonstrating that there was, inevitably, a significant quantity of administrative co-ordination and back-

office work; work that arose largely to support the ambition and scale of the organisation's contrasting high-profile protest tactics.

Public and private in the WSPU's campaign

Sylvia Pankhurst, writing in her 1911 history of the militant suffragette movement, stated:

I wish to emphasize the fact that this Woman's Movement has also another side to it, and that it is notable, not merely for its high daring courage and selfless enthusiasm, but for its broad and stable scheme of organization and finance, finely conceived and carried out with patient thoroughness of detail⁵.

In its publications and annual reports, the WSPU appeared as proud of this stable base of organisation as of its striking protest activities. In a 1909 supplement to its newspaper, *Votes for Women*, marking its second anniversary and its relaunch, the paper's co-editor boasted of its increased staff, now consisting of an editorial staff of four plus two editors, a publishing staff of four, and an advertising staff of two⁶. Annual reports were a means for the organisation to outline the increase in organisational resources, offering an insight into the growth of the organisation's low-profile, administrative work. The expansion of its paid staff from 40 in 1907 to 110 in 1910, charted by the WSPU's annual reports, indicated the growth in resources at the Union's headquarters⁷.

The contrast between this office work and the suffragettes' notorious militancy, each to a large extent reliant on its opposite, was a contradiction at the heart of the WSPU. To many in contemporary society, and in popular memory, the organisation appeared as a rash, hysterical band of militants. In reality these protest acts were supported by huge financial, propaganda, and organisational resources. But, the mundane, 'constitutional' elements of the WSPU's campaign were not limited purely to its back-office functions. The organisation continued to use lower-profile, non-militant campaign strategies alongside its dramatic militant tactics: centrally and regionally, the organisation held 'at homes' reminiscent of nineteenth century drawing room meetings; meanwhile local Unions spent much time on lower profile methods of raising campaign awareness, such as distributing propaganda literature; and of course the recruitment and co-ordination of branch staff relied largely on the administrative efforts of existing staff.

The WSPU's distinction in the women's suffrage movement – of being an organisation willing to centre its protest actions in the public sphere – was clearly not an easy strategy to fulfil. Overturning not only the conventions of suffrage campaigning but of women's place in society, and in many cases concern for the law, resulted in individual suffering and organisational condemnation. Exclusion and abuse were the consequences of developing the militant strategy.

For those suffragettes who disregarded the law – taking part in window-smashing campaigns, perhaps, or involved in firebombing of pillar-boxes in the later stages of the pre-war campaign - imprisonment meant exclusion from family, everyday life, and the suffrage movement. For campaigners unwilling or unable to contribute to illegal militant protest, the most common form of taking the campaign into the public sphere was the selling of the WSPU's newspaper, *Votes for Women*, in the street. Maria DiCenzo has assessed the harsh conditions faced by such campaigners, and has highlighted its contrast to the positive image promoted by the WSPU to encourage paper-selling⁸. The personal abuse inflicted upon street-sellers was regularly cited in suffragette histories as the most unpleasant element of the task: 'the sex filth with which elderly men in particular seemed determined to inflict on us was the most hateful part of my daily experience' recollected one suffragette news-seller⁹.

For the WSPU as an organisation, its militant strategy meant it too faced exclusion: Liberal Prime Minister Asquith refused to see WSPU deputations; and as the WSPU intensified its tactics, particularly after 1911, it faced increasing criticism from the non-militant societies. From press and public, too, the organisation faced abuse: in popular culture, postcards and magazine illustrations reveal the mocking tone of elements of public opinion, while newspapers' anti-militant polemics intensified as the WSPU's militant campaign developed.

Thus, from 1905, when the organisation first developed the use of militant tactics, the WSPU was an organisation of contrasting halves: its melodramatic, high profile militancy belied its sophisticated, underlying organisational resources. As part of its increasingly sophisticated, and increasingly commercial, propaganda strategy after 1908 - which in turn generated greater back-office work - many of the organisation's branches opened shops as bases from which to operate their local campaigns. The WSPU's main propaganda operations and the majority of its paid staff were based centrally, either at the WSPU's headquarters at Clements Inn or at its Woman's Press propaganda wing, based from 1910 in Charing Cross Road¹⁰. By 1909, the organisation's newspaper was being published weekly, literature such as leaflets and pamphlets were continuing to be published, and the organisation's purple, white and green colourscheme was being used on a growing range of suffrage merchandise. This last element was the most commercially-influenced of the WSPU's propaganda efforts and became the strand of propaganda most characterising the growth in Votes for Women shops. The sale of purple, white and green merchandise contributed to the financial viability of suffrage shops¹¹, and, as will be discussed later, was used to define the shops' position in the social and business environment.

The emergence of suffrage shops arose not only from the increasing sophistication and commercially-successful nature of the WSPU's propaganda campaign and from the contemporary expansion and innovation in trade and retailing, but, this article argues, from the organisation's questioning of the place of protest¹². With its public protest activities well known, but at the cost of exclusion and abuse, and its 'private' organisational resources firmly established, the WSPU can be seen to question the accepted place of protest, merging public and private campaign activities in its own public space.

The role of suffrage shops

The opening of Votes for Women shops began in late 1908, with towns such as Plymouth planning the expansion of their offices into retail outlets¹³. The trend for occupying retail space grew, with 1909 seeing the emergence of shops in Kensington, Edinburgh, Bristol and Bradford. The general election of January 1910 saw the WSPU campaign for a protest vote against the Liberal government. As part of this campaign, most major WSPU branches took shops - although usually termed 'committee rooms' - to assist in their propaganda work. Most of these shops were taken temporarily, for the duration of the election campaign, but for many branches the appeal of a suffrage shop led them to obtain permanent premises. At the end of the election campaign, the Islington WSPU wrote that 'people are in and out of the shop all day long, and the sale of badges and the crowd that collect round the windows show how much could be done if some kind friends would help to keep on the premises permanently'¹⁴. February 1910 saw the Putney & Fulham WSPU relocate to a new shop, while the Richmond & Kew branch was planning the opening of its own suffrage shop¹⁵. Following the January election, London WSPUs had opened branches in Croydon, Hammersmith, Kilburn and Lewisham, and by 1912 permanent shops had been established in Bath, Clacton, Hastings and Glasgow, as well as Chelsea, Hampstead, Streatham and Wimbledon. And by 1913, shops had appeared also in Bethnal Green, Limehouse, Poplar, and Bow, as part of the organisation's East-End campaign¹⁶.

For the WSPU's local branches, a high degree of autonomy was enjoyed in co-ordinating their local campaigns, a surprising element of freedom in an organisation with an autocratic leadership and a strong central base¹⁷. This autonomy gave the Unions freedom to innovate in their operations, and for many branches the suffrage shop may have been a financially-rational method of structuring its campaign activities. Rooms were often taken over the shops, turned into offices for the administrative side of campaign work. Meanwhile, the shops operated as meeting places, recruitment centres, dispensers of information and sellers of propaganda. This propaganda included suffrage literature, such as *Votes for Women*, postcards picturing key WSPU figures, and a whole array of propaganda-merchandise branded with the organisation's purple, white and green colourscheme, ranging from ribbons and rosettes to tea and soap¹⁸. 1910 saw the WSPU's centralised propaganda wing, the Woman's Press, relocate to new premises and open the flagship suffrage store.

With a 'Votes for Women' clock outside, and stocks of purple, white and green merchandise inside, the Woman's Press shop, like those of most WSPU branches, centred itself around a commercial aim of selling Votes for Women-themed propaganda, ranging from badges to bicycles. This emphasis on the shops' merchandising role built on the increased role of bazaars and sales in the WSPU's campaign. For local branches, sales offered fund-raising opportunities, and the chance to market some suffragette-themed merchandise, while the central WSPU had developed the use of bazaars as part of its propaganda strategy from 1909, when it held the 'Women's Exhibition' that focused on promoting its purple, white and green merchandise. Suffrage shops took these propagandist and fund-raising concerns to more sophisticated levels, providing permanent spaces for the sale of themed merchandise.

But the popularity of Votes for Women shops with the WSPU's constituent branches may be attributed not merely to commercial considerations, but to the desire for suffragettes' own public space. By 1909, the militant campaign had established itself in the public sphere, with militant deputations to parliament, disruption of politician's speeches, and suffragette protests in Downing Street. Facing increasing hostility over its militant activities, the organisation now created its own spaces, offering both protection and respectability. These became places in which public meetings could be held, funds raised, and *Votes for Women* marketed without venturing fully into the public sphere. Instead, in a partial inversion of previous campaigning strategy, the public were entreated to venture into campaigners' own space.

But, given that suffragettes were forming these spaces, in which there was a degree of protection and security, should these shops be viewed as a new venture in which suffragettes brought the campaign further into the public eye – or should they be considered a retreat from the public sphere, providing a more comfortable space in which campaigners could operate? The broadcasting of the WSPU's message could now be achieved through the information centres that shops became, rather than more active ventures into public spaces; but the intensifying nature of WSPU militancy across the country indicates that suffrage shops were considered a base from which to work, rather than the final effort in local branches' campaigns. To address the question of shops' place as 'venture' or 'retreat', however, a closer consideration of the interaction between specific public activities and the particular roles of suffrage shops is necessary.

For the marketing of the WSPU's newspaper, suffrage shops offered the convenience and comfort of a professional retail outlet that contrasted with the experiences of individual members who ventured on to the streets to sell the paper. However, there seems little indication that street-selling was entirely displaced by suffrage shops, with the paper continuing to urge WSPU members to contribute through street-selling. Moreover, *Votes for*

Women's ever-rising circulation seems to testify to successful marketing strategies; in 1910, by which time many branches had established shops, the paper recorded a circulation that had increased to 40,000 per edition from its 1907 launch figures of 2000¹⁹. And in 1913, the Kensington branch, which had been one of the first to open a shop, reported annual sales of the WSPU's newspaper of almost 18,000 - nearly 70 copies for each working day²⁰. Likewise, although suffrage stores may have replaced locally-held bazaars and sales with a more centralised form of retailing, dedicated stores may have offered a more attractive, sophisticated method of trading, and given greater prominence to branches' fund-raising efforts.

Further, propaganda meetings, an important part of raising the profile of the WSPU and the suffrage issue, could now be held in the organisation's own space – yet remain a public event. With the growth of the movement came an expansion in 'educational' public meetings and lectures on the suffrage issue: 'During the past year more than twenty thousand meetings had been held by the WSPU alone' wrote Sylvia Pankhurst at the end of 1910²¹. Previously, such gatherings had often been held in public buildings - typically a lecture hall or town hall – or held as open-air meetings in public spaces. From an organisational point of view, the use of a Votes for Women shop made the co-ordination of meetings an easier task, with less time and less cost spent on the bureaucracy of organisation. More significantly, the holding of meetings within the suffragettes' own space would have given campaigners greater confidence to organise and control gatherings of a potentially-hostile public. The public's attendance within suffragettes' own space placed them in the subject position of visitors on campaigners' territory, empowering the organisers with ultimate control and ownership of the meeting. The hosting of meetings on suffragettes' own territory may have signalled a minor retreat from occupation of the public sphere, but the WSPU's militancy had begun with the disruption of politicians' meetings in public spaces, and so the organisation was aware of the necessity for control over its own events.

Aside from marketing propaganda items, therefore, suffrage shops' major contributions were in providing spaces in which campaigners could host their public activities; the invitation of the public into suffragettes' own space to some extent reversed the relationship between campaigners and the public. But shops also gave prominence to those campaign activities which had previously had a lower profile, as back-office work. Branch offices, although listed in the WSPU's *Votes for Women* newspaper, and undoubtedly known of locally by many, were effectively private spaces, sites of the low-profile administrative work of committed suffrage campaigners. In areas such as recruitment of staff and campaigners, and the provision of public information, most suffrage shops were prominent, permanent centres that absorbed the duties of branch offices. This prominence was particularly noted during the January 1910 general election: in Liverpool, 'great crowds... quite blocked the pavement outside the committee rooms in their desire to see the election posters displayed in the windows'; similarly the Scarborough WSPU noted 'a crowd is always round the window reading the posters and leaflets', and in Brighton, it was claimed that 'great interest has been taken locally, and there is always a group outside [the shop] reading the WSPU notices'²². The attention these shops drew to the branches clearly benefited the recruitment of new members: in 1909 the Lewisham WSPU claimed that 'fifteen new members have been enrolled since we have opened the shop' while in Southport, the branch's shop encouraged people to 'give talents, time, and money' to the campaign²³.

For those outside the movement, the public spaces provided by shops provided an environment less daunting than a formal office, locations into which they could venture with greater confidence, while to those involved in the day-to-day running of local branches, shops gave them high-street prominence. For the recruitment of new volunteer staff and

active campaigners, in particular, shops assisted by providing prominent advertising space and accessible recruiting places, more akin to a retail environment than a radical political movement. And many of the shops saw the necessity of drawing in a public that may not ordinarily have ventured into a branch office, developing environments that were attractive to non-suffragettes:

One of our windows is filled entirely with scarves, hatpins, badges, belts, and anything else we can show in the fighting colours of the Union. It is a very attractive window, and it does not appeal exclusively to the feminine suffragist. The other day it brought in a well-known man of letters to buy a tie²⁴.

While fulfilling practical purposes for suffrage work, Votes for Women shops made local campaigning a less demanding and more attractive prospect: the keeping of a shop, although collectively time-consuming and financially costly, undoubtedly offered more appeal to many campaigners than more active and possibly confrontational forms of protest. ‘Nobody said so in committee, but I do not believe that a single member of that serious and grown-up group of Kensington Suffragettes was above feeling a secret thrill of glee at the thought of keeping shop at last’ wrote Evelyn Sharp on the opening of Kensington’s store²⁵. Although the efforts to create a distinct suffragette space should not be considered a complete retreat from the public sphere, Votes for Women shops were based less on campaigners making contact with non-suffragists. Instead, there was greater emphasis on encouraging the public to initiate a connection with the suffrage movement. A prominent but passive form of campaign activity, the shops offered greater security to campaigners and demanded greater participation by the public.

The siting of suffrage shops

The necessity to draw the public into WSPU’s own space meant Votes for Women shops clothed themselves in the respectability of female retailing and capitalistic commerce. Shopkeeping was a common female business concern, perhaps one of the most ‘respectable’ of women’s forays into business and the public sphere. And, as might be expected from a women-only organisation campaigning for female enfranchisement, suffrage shops came to be ‘feminine’ spaces, with an emphasis on colourful decoration, luxury goods and domestic products. The range of purple, white and green goods – such as brooches, hatpins, tea, stationery, and the flagship store’s ‘almost unending variety of bags, belts &c’²⁶ – was centred around notions of middle-class domesticity and personal adornment, so complying with conventional gendered identities. In some cases the issue of Votes for Women was at risk of being subsumed beneath these attempts to market merchandise in an appealing format: the Kensington shop, for instance, appealed to ‘domestic friends to remember us when making jam, and to give a pot or two tied up with ribbons for our window. Gifts of flowers are greatly welcomed for the same purpose’²⁷; hardly the concerns commonly associated with the militant campaign. But the emphasis on visual appeal, comfort and luxury presented these shops as places of retail indulgence.

The marketing of the shops underlined the appeal they offered to the ‘feminine’ woman: articles in *Votes for Women* described the ‘brooches, scarves, and all kinds of pretty things in the colours’ that were available for purchase²⁸. By couching their outlets in terms of affluent, feminine retailing, branches distanced themselves from the image of hysterical militants, presenting themselves instead in terms of conventional, mainstream femininity. And, notably, this femininity – manifested in the (very) conspicuous consumption of material goods – was a predominantly middle-class one. The WSPU’s East End stores focused on attracting working-class women for information, meetings and events, but for many of the organisation’s outlets – including its main London store – the potential of respectability and

financial returns determined their identity as predominantly middle-class, conventionally feminine spaces. Ultimately, the domestic-centred retail appeal that these shops offered to the public promoted suffrage shops as non-threatening places; as much feminine as they were feminist.

The emphasis on the range of purchasable goods also presented suffrage shops as commerce-focused centres, validating their enterprises with the mode of business: 'In a nation said to be, by the greatest rebel of his time, a nation of shopkeepers, the great thing was to keep shop well, and this was certainly done by the Women's Social & Political Union'²⁹; 'it is a real business-like shop, with two shop windows; and everything, wherever you look, is glowing in purple, white, and green'³⁰. Photographs and notes from the campaign show the extent to which the outlets adopted the superficial trappings of conventional businesses: the layout of the shops, usually with a main counter behind which were displays of purchasable goods, selections of literature for shoppers to browse and window displays intended to attract consumers, all pointed to their place as mainstream retail outlets.

The respectability of capitalistic commerce served to distance WSPU branches somewhat from the militant campaigning associated with the organisation as a whole. Identifying their outlets with private commerce rather than political activism helped de-radicalise the branches' image, increasing the shops' appeal and approachability amongst the wider public; siting suffrage shops within the business community – both geographically and ideologically – made them mainstream and appealing public spaces. So, suffrage shops were imbued with an image of middle-class retail indulgence that complied both with mainstream gendered identities and with respectable commercial concerns.

But, of course, the shops' conspicuous single-issue focus on Votes for Women partially undermined these attempts at mainstream respectability. And the prominence of their 'Votes for Women' status also made suffrage shops themselves vulnerable to militancy. WSPU shops were appearing at a time when the organisation was embarking on its window-smashing campaign, which saw groups of suffragettes take their protests out on the windows of political buildings – and West End stores. By creating suffragette spaces in a form that was being subjected to WSPU militancy, the organisation was perhaps inviting replies to its militant strategy, and these responses came in the forms of imitations of suffragette militancy. Following a major suffragette window-smashing campaign, which saw destruction in Oxford Street, Regent Street and Piccadilly, the WSPU's London shop was subjected to a similar attack: 'A band of 200 young men, who were said to be medical students,' reported *The Times*, 'broke the windows with stones amid loud cheers from a crowd that had followed them'³¹. Elizabeth Crawford cites a violent attack on the Bristol WSPU shop in 1913, again by university students, in which windows were smashed, signs painted-over and furniture burnt, while in Newcastle, the WSPU shop's windows were smashed on at least three occasions³². But not all attacks were as violent: the Kensington branch described 'the ubiquitous small boy... the natural enemy of all change and all progress... when there is snow on the ground he has an easy weapon to hand'³³.

The intensifying anti-militant sentiment manifested in attacks on WSPU shops meant the outlets of other suffrage organisations made increasing efforts to distance themselves from the militants. 1912 – a year that saw the most dramatic intensification of suffragette militancy - also saw the largest non-militant suffrage organisation, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, produce posters that referred to its 'non-militant' status, and proclaiming, in at least one instance, 'The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies Protests Against Violence'. The displaying of these in the organisation's shops, and in some cases the commissioning of permanent signwork pointing out shops' non-militant status, was

one part of the non-militants' increasing attempts to distinguish their campaign from the growing lawlessness of the WSPU's activities. But, for their shops, such proclamations also served more immediate purposes, protecting the premises and staff from the attacks inflicted upon some WSPU shops.

The attacks on WSPU property were a result of its radicalising campaign strategy, which, particularly after 1912, inspired condemnation and retaliation. Yet the WSPU's suffrage shops largely promoted an organisational identity at-odds with this 'terroristic' image. The respectability and legitimisation offered by appropriating elements of mainstream women's retailing appeared to continue in most WSPU shops through to 1913. By this time, the organisation's newspaper had been re-established with a new editor, and the campaign's purple, white and green merchandise range was being phased out – both propaganda shifts that resulted from the intensification of the WSPU's militant strategy, and both changes that reduced volumes of purchasable propaganda³⁴.

With the decline in suffrage merchandise in 1913, the shops' retail identity was thereafter lost. A continued insistence on mainstream respectability in suffrage shops would have seemed anachronistic in an organisation that was now torching unoccupied buildings, bombing empty railway stations and burning mail in pillar boxes. Although WSPU records are few, it appears that by this time the significance of Votes for Women shops had been superseded by the radicalised direction of the militant campaign. Many shops remained, particularly in London, but appear to have concentrated less on the retail-centred aspects of their activities, in effect regressing to the conventional activities of branch offices. Most continued their less commercial propaganda activities such as public meetings and educational efforts, and undertook further fund-raising activities, such as raising subscriptions for the organisation's 'Self Denial Fund'³⁵. Meanwhile, the WSPU's increasingly terroristic tactics pushed the organisation's leadership underground. Raids on the WSPU's headquarters, confiscation of records, censorship of the organisation's newspaper, and the imprisonment and voluntary exile of key leadership figures reduced the effectiveness of its propaganda efforts, and overtook the retail-led contribution of Votes for Women shops.

Conclusion

A discussion of suffrage shops raises several issues in assessing the public nature of the women's suffrage movement. Significantly, the roles of campaigners and the public were to some extent inverted by the creation of campaigners' own space into which the public was invited. This necessitated greater participation by the public, and involved a form of public campaigning more passive than had previously been seen in the twentieth century movement. Further, to encourage public participation, the shops appropriated the trappings of mainstream consumerism: making the campaign appealing involved developing elements of it into a purchasable force led as much by consumers as by campaigners. Ultimately, though, these shifts in the relation between campaigners and the wider public may be considered a product of a more specific negotiation between the distinct halves of the WSPU's campaign.

While serving practical campaign purposes, suffrage shops offered the WSPU a means of reconciling the contrasting halves its public/private campaign. Whether this reduced the profile of its public campaigning or raised awareness of its private work is central to assessing these shops' contribution to the campaign. This article argues that the WSPU's shops were a positive force. For campaigners, shops created a public space in which the challenging and confrontational elements of its other public activities were largely absent; for the public, they offered more appeal and had greater prominence than formal offices. Suffrage shops promoted a self-image centred around femininity and commerce, providing a

more conventional, respectable image for the campaigners within, and a more appealing, mainstream image for the public without. So, Votes for Women shops harmonised the public/private elements of the WSPU's campaign, creating a third space that adopted conventional commercial superficialities as a means of popularising the campaign. More complex to define than other campaign elements, suffrage shops were nevertheless an innovative contribution to the near-universal reach of the women's suffrage movement.

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- ¹ See for instance: Green, B., *Spectacular Confessions: autobiography, performance activism and the sites of suffrage 1905-38* (Macmillan, 1997); Lawrence, J., 'Contesting the male polity: the suffragettes and the politics of disruption in Edwardian Britain', in A. Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power: British politics 1850 to the present* (Stanford University Press, 2001).
- ² See in particular: 'Women's history in the new millennium: rethinking public and private', *Journal of Women's History* (special issue) (2003), 1.
- ³ See for instance: Cowman, K., "'Crossing the great divide": inter-organisational relationships on Merseyside 1895-1914', in C. Eustance, J. Ryan & L. Ugolini (eds), *A Suffrage Reader: charting directions in British suffrage history* (Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 37-52.
- ⁴ Holton, S. S., *Feminism and Democracy: women's suffrage and reform politics in Britain 1900-18* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- ⁵ Pankhurst, E. S., *The Suffragette: the history of the women's militant suffrage movement 1905-10* (Gay & Hancock, 1911), preface.
- ⁶ 'Supplement to *Votes for Women*' (24th September 1909).
- ⁷ WSPU Annual Reports for 1907 and 1910 (Museum of London Suffragette Fellowship Collection).
- ⁸ See: DiCenzo, M., 'Gutter politics: women newsies and the suffrage press', *Women's History Review* (2003), 1, pp. 15-34.
- ⁹ Richardson, M., *Laugh A Defiance* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953), p. 12.
- ¹⁰ After October 1912, the WSPU's headquarters, including the Woman's Press, moved to Lincoln's Inn.
- ¹¹ The paucity of WSPU records means no complete statistics are available on which to assess the financial successes of suffrage shops, however the Woman's Press's main store was said to be 'fully justified by the result, and the average shop takings amount to £20 a week' (WSPU 1910 Annual Report, Museum of London Suffragette Fellowship Collection). Meanwhile, the Kensington WSPU published its own shops' accounts: 1913 saw the store's receipts total £214, 10s, 8d, and items such as tea, soap and cigarettes 'added satisfactorily to the yearly income' (Kensington WSPU 1913 Annual Report, Papers of Sylvia Pankhurst). And the Harrow WSPU reported 'the shop astonishes everyone by its success under the skilful management of Madame Myers. The sales during the eight weeks from its opening to Christmas day amounted to £65, of which £25 was taken in Christmas week' (*Votes for Women* (7th January 1910), p. 234).
- ¹² The 'retailing revolution' that led to the emergence of chain stores, department stores and the heavier promotion of shops, goods and services is usually dated from around 1870, but can be seen as continuing well into the twentieth century. See for instance: Mathias, P., *Retailing Revolution* (Longman, 1967); Fraser, W., *The Coming of the Mass Market* (Macmillan, 1981).
- ¹³ *Votes for Women* (3rd December 1908), p. 170.
- ¹⁴ *Votes for Women* (14th January 1910), p. 250.
- ¹⁵ *Votes for Women* (4th February 1910), p. 299.
- ¹⁶ *Votes for Women* (6th October 1911), p. 7, profiles the Scarborough, Bath and Clacton WSPU shops. The East End shops are discussed in: Pankhurst, E. S., *The Suffragette Movement: an intimate account of persons and ideals* (Originally published 1931; Virago reprint, 1978), p. 416.
- ¹⁷ For an overview of local branches' autonomy and structures, see: Hannam, J., "'I had not been to London": women's suffrage – a view from the regions', in J. Purvis & S. S. Holton (eds), *Votes for Women* (Routledge, 2000), and Leneman, L., 'A truly national movement: the view from outside London', in J. Purvis & M. Joannou (eds), *The Women's Suffrage Movement: new feminist perspectives* (Manchester University Press, 1998).
- ¹⁸ Also: Boadicea brooches, tricolour brooches, motor scarves, handkerchiefs, hatpins, leather purse bags, regalia, ribbon badges, 'Votes for Women' ribbon, ribbon belts with 'haunted house' buckles, ties, 'Votes for Women' buttons. Games sold by suffrage shops included: WSPU playing cards, In and out of prison, Rushing

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- the house, The suffragette puzzle, Panko, Suffragette, and Pank-a-squith. Also available were items such as stationery, cigarettes, postcard albums, blotters, notebooks, and Christmas cards.
- ¹⁹ Pankhurst, E.S., *Suffragette Movement*, p. 223.
- ²⁰ Kensington WSPU 1913 Annual Report (Papers of Sylvia Pankhurst).
- ²¹ Pankhurst, E.S., *The Suffragette*, p. 489.
- ²² *Votes for Women* (7th January 1910), p. 234.
- ²³ Lewisham: *Votes for Women* (25th June 1909), p. 860. Southport: *Votes for Women* (7th January 1910), p. 234.
- ²⁴ 'Painting Kensington Purple, White and Green', *Votes for Women* (12th March 1909), p. 422.
- ²⁵ *Votes for Women* (12th March 1909), p. 422.
- ²⁶ *Votes for Women* (1st July 1910), p. 651.
- ²⁷ *Votes for Women* (25th June 1909), p. 860.
- ²⁸ *Votes for Women* (6th October 1911), p. 7.
- ²⁹ *Votes for Women* (13th May 1910), p. 533.
- ³⁰ *Votes for Women* (12th March 1909), p. 422.
- ³¹ *The Times* (5th March 1912), p. 8.
- ³² Crawford, E., *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a reference guide* (UCL, 1999), pp. 632-3. The WSPU's ability to turn any events to serve its campaign resulted in the Bristol branch issuing postcards picturing the destruction of its own shop.
- ³³ *Votes for Women* (12th March 1909), p. 422.
- ³⁴ *Votes for Women* ceased to be the WSPU's newspaper following the expulsion of its founders, Emmeline and Frederick Pethick Lawrence, from the organisation in October 1912; they continued publishing the newspaper separately. The WSPU launched *The Suffragette*, edited by Christabel Pankhurst, although she lived in exile in Paris from March 1912. *The Suffragette* struggled to retain circulation figures close to those achieved by *Votes for Women*, the radicalised strategy of the WSPU doubtless alienating much of its potential readership.
- ³⁵ In Spring 1913, London shops were still in use by the Fulham & Putney WSPU, the Streatham Union, Sydenham & Forest Hill WSPU, the Kensington branch, Westminster & St George's WSPU, and the West Ham Union. Listed in *The Suffragette* (18th April 1913), pp. 459-60.