

Launch of 'Suffragette City'

26 February 2018

Thank you. I am delighted to be here with you all this evening.

I'm also delighted to be partnering with The National Trust again, this time to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act.

Suffragette City is an important part of The National Archives Suffrage 100 season of events, exhibitions, films and debates to mark the centenary.

The National Archives' records bring to life the stories of hundreds of women – like Lillian Ball - and some men, who also campaigned for equal suffrage. By telling the stories of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, in the place where the national militant campaign was orchestrated – we have together created a truly unique and immersive experience for people today.

In our files we find poignant personal accounts of those times, through petitions, personal letters, statements made in court and shocking accounts of forcible feeding. It is in these personal accounts that the mental and physical impact of the campaign becomes dramatically clear.

These accounts provide us with the opportunity to reflect on that turbulent time in our history and to think about wider themes of representation, democracy and participation - connecting past generations with the present. That's why we are delighted to be a part of the nationwide 'Vote 100' campaign alongside the National Trust and other partners.

I'd like to congratulate everyone involved in making this project a success – with particular thanks to Rowena Hillel and Vicky Iglkowski for leading the project from The National Archives, plus Katie Fox and Jenni Orme for their support.

I'd also like to thank The Friends of the National Archives for their support and Joseph Watson and Emma King from The National Trust, and Helen Scarlett O'Neill and Harry Ross and their team for the design and production.

Emmeline Pankhurst once said '*We are here, not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become law-makers*'. 100 years on, Suffragette City is a glimpse into the suffragettes' world - standing here, we can almost hear their whispers and roars.

Thank you.

*Jeff James
Chief Executive and Keeper
The National Archives*