

**Ladies Ladies Ladies**

**TG is 90 this year, do you have your badge?**



**AND TO CELEBRATE THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION THE BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM WILL BE SHOWCASING EMMA SPROSON;**

**DATES FOR THE EXPOSE ARE:**

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August

Times will be posted on the web site, Face Book and Twitter.

No Concessions BUT Pay for one visit and you get an unchained annual pass valid for 12 months.

Don't forget to wear your rosettes stand out be proud.

## Emma Sproson

**A formidable woman who dared to go against the protocol that society had put in place.**

**Emma knew that women of the time were intelligent and strong and tenacious and she couldn't understand they were not treated in that way.**

**From an early age Emma knew her own mind. She was not going to be shackled to a kitchen sink, having seen her mother struggle in poverty to bring up herself and her six brothers and sisters and living with a heavy drinking father. Emma ran errands and picked coal off the local tips and slag heaps to help out.**

*'Emma's dad was a big drinker at the Bacchus that Emma mentions is the name of the pub.'*  
*Dave Sproson, Great-Grandson*

**Her retorts were quick and showed a defiance not known of from someone of her class and stature.**

**Emma's story is as yet virtually untold but she was a woman before her time. She was self-taught. At around 9 years of age she went into service and did not attend school any longer but made up for this by reading every book she could whilst in the household to better her education.**

**Things didn't get any easier for her. When she was 13 she went to work in a shop, but was dismissed after accusing the owner's brother of making sexual advances towards her. Moving to Lancashire to find work, Emma**

**taught at a Sunday school and joined a church debating society, so earning how to argue in a public arena.**

**Attending a public political Emma asked Lord Curzon a question which he refused to answer as "she was a woman and did not have the vote". It is believed that this was the defining moment in her conversion to women's suffrage.**

**So how did a woman of working-class birth with a drunk as a father rise so high?????**

**She was determined. She became a suffragist, then a militant suffragette who was both arrested and imprisoned.**

*'Emma was pregnant with my Dad, George Herbert when incarcerated.'*

**Emma eventually turned her back on the Suffragettes and joined the Women's Freedom League (WFL), to become a peaceful Suffragist once more. The President of the Women's Freedom League was Dame Margaret Corbett Ashby whose legacy is T.G, or Townswomen's Guilds, who are still going strong today.**

**Emma also became a member of the Women's Tax Resistance League, who refused to pay tax in protest against disenfranchisement. In May 1911 she was sent to prison for seven days for refusing to pay for a dog licence. By this time she was married to Frank Sproson who was supportive of the movement for women's suffrage and of her throughout her life. She went on hunger strike and was reclassified as a political prisoner. Her dog was shot by the police.**

**In 1919 and 1920 Emma stood in local elections for the Labour Party in the Wolverhampton Park ward, but was unelected. In 1921 she stood in the Dunstall ward, where she was successful. In doing so, she became Wolverhampton's first female councillor. To mark her victory she waved a red flag from the balcony of Wolverhampton town hall, which earned her the nickname "Red Emma".**

**She served on committees dealing with health, particularly mental health, and housing for single mothers. In late 1922 she exposed financial corruption at the local fever hospital, although the subsequent investigation rejected the allegations.**

*'Emma sneaked into Moxley Isolation unit via the back doors as she had heard that the patients were not getting the food that the relatives were leaving, this caused an almighty raucous.'*

**She was censured by the Labour Party as a result.**

**Emma successfully defended herself at the local by-election in 1924, but left the Labour Party before the next election in 1927. She stood as an independent candidate but lost, which marked the end of her activity in political life.**



[Agi Chi](#), a specialist fine art photographer from the West Midlands and [Sara Trayers](#) Townswomen's Guilds visited Dave Sproson, Emma Sproson's grandson in his home in Dudley, West Midlands to look at his memorabilia and talk to him about his Grandmother Emma.

Photographs by Agi Chi







**Women's Social & Political Union**

---

**PUBLIC LUNCHEON**

HELD AT

*THE HOLBORN RESTAURANT,*

*Saturday, 20th April, 1907.*

---

To Welcome on the release from Prison—

Mrs. CHATTERTON, Miss WOODLOCK,

Miss LAMB Miss VARLEY,

Mrs. BARRETT, Miss MARSDEN,

Mrs. SPROSON, Mrs. LEIGH.

---

CHAIRMAN :

Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS.



No. 114.

**METROPOLITAN POLICE.**

A Division.  
Cannon Row Station.

Take Notice, that you Emma Sprouson.  
are bound in the sum of Two Pounds to  
appear at the Westminster Police Court, situated at  
Rochester Row, Westminster at 10  
o'clock a M., on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March  
190 7, to answer the charge of\* disorderly conduct  
and resisting Police.

and unless you then appear there, further proceedings will be taken.

Dated this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March

One Thousand Nine Hundred seven

J. Spindall, P.S.  
Officer on Duty.

\* Being found drunk in a public street, or being guilty, while drunk, of disorderly behaviour in a street,  
or whatever the charge may be.



Borough of  
Wolverhampton  
to wit.



To Emma Spurgeon  
of 225 Gardner Road ~~Street~~, in the said Borough.

Information has been laid this day by

Thomas Pleshine

for that you on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of MAY 1911

at the said Borough, unlawfully did keep a certain dog without having in force a License granted under the Statute in that behalf authorizing you so to do, contrary to the Statute in such case made and provided.

You are therefore hereby summoned to appear before the Court of Summary Jurisdiction sitting at the Magistrates' Court, Town Hall, in the Borough aforesaid, on Tuesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of MAY 1911, at the hour of Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, to answer to the said Information.

Dated the

19<sup>th</sup>

day of MAY

1911

W. Hodgson



Justice of the Peace for the Borough aforesaid.

Summons to Defendant.  
30 Vic. c. 5. §. 8.

sure that is that meetings  
addressed by any of the  
Supporters will be safe ones  
for our active causes  
as to attract by crowds  
who come out of curiosity  
but remain to sympathise  
with us in our demands  
for justice

I enclose for some  
post cards just issued  
It will help if you get  
them filled up & posted  
The blank one is for the  
local M.P. If you can use  
more please let me know  
Yr. faithfully  
G. Paul Clayton

60 UPPER BROOK STREET,  
MANCHESTER.

3rd August 1906

Dear Mr. Spence

I have the last Sunday  
in October free & will give  
you that (the 28<sup>th</sup>)

Unless I hear from you  
to the contrary I shall consider  
that settled. I may be  
in London at that time  
& have to come to you  
from there but I suppose  
that will not matter.

My movements during the  
Autumn Session of Parliament  
will be very uncertain  
of one thing you may be



# Women's Social & Political Union.

116, PORTLAND STREET, MANCHESTER

All communications to be  
addressed to the—

Mrs. DEAN,  
6, Gerald Road,  
Lower Broughton,  
Manchester.

60 Upper Brook St  
26<sup>th</sup> July 1906

Dear Mr Spowson

Until we win this woman's battle  
I am ~~not~~ arranging to speak only where Branches  
desire me to deal mainly with the women side  
of Socialism. There are plenty of speakers  
on the general question & the women's side  
has until lately been neglected. If you  
agree to this I will give you a date. Perhaps  
you can arrange with other Branches in your  
neighbourhood to hold meetings at the  
same time so as to economise expenses  
I could give to your neighbourhood two or  
three days at the end of October or beginning  
of November. Please let me know your views  
as early as possible

Very truly yr  
E. Paulchen

I am now on my way  
to Ladybank for the  
Asquith demonstration  
On Monday I am at Glasgow  
on Wednesday at Edinburgh  
From there I go to London  
for the W.S.P.U. Conference  
& the opening of Parliament  
What will happen then.

I cannot tell but we  
women shall take some  
decided action you may  
be sure.

Thanks for your kind  
Sympathy very truly yours  
J. Rankin

In train going to Scotland  
12 Oct 1906

Dear Mr. Spence

Thanks for all the  
trouble you have taken. As  
it events turn out if we  
have been different for me  
to have kept any more  
engagements had they been  
made. I am almost afraid  
I shall be compelled to  
ask you to accept a  
substitute for me but  
hope not. I will write  
again as to this -  
Please let the Worcester  
Comrades know I cannot  
go to them,







*Russell's*

11 DARINGTON ST.  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
AND 2 MILL ST., CREW.





Telephone—  
Holborn 9301.

Colours—  
Green, Gold & White. "Despard, Holborn 9301, London."

Telegrams—

**WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.**

(NON-PARTY)

**DARE TO BE FREE**

President—Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY.  
Hon. Treasurer—Dr. O. LEWIN.  
Hon. Financial Secretary—Mrs. GERARD.  
Hon. Political Secretary—Mrs. SPILLER.  
Hon. Organising Secretary—Mrs. WHETTON.  
Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.  
Bank—Barclays Bank Limited.

HEAD OFFICE—  
144, HIGH HOLBORN,  
LONDON, W.C.1

January 14. 1937.

Dear Mr. Sproun,

Thank you so much for your letter.

It is indeed a grief to us to know that our old friend and colleague has passed on. She was indeed a very wonderful woman and the Women's Freedom League was especially proud of her. We send you our very warm sympathy.

I enclose a Bulletin, on page 5 of which we have a little notice of Mrs. Sproun.

With kindest thoughts, I am

Yours sincerely  
Florence A. Underwood



Emma Lloyd Sproson



VOTE FOR



**SPROSON**

*And Don't "Luce" Emma Down.*

---

Printed and Published by W. Willetts, Heath Town, Wolverhampton.

*Mrs Sproson (Luce)*



Mrs Sproson

VOTES FOR WOMEN.



*Yours faithfully  
Emma Sproson*

MRS. SPROSON,  
WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE,

*Photo, Bennett-Clark,  
Wolverhampton.*

**Mrs Sproson**



Cottages No 58; Casteeroff Rd. (RIGHT HAND)  
600 years old suggested. Demolished about 1955.  
Emma SPROSON owned them and ran a  
shop (left hand)

Painted by George SPROSON around 1950<sup>s</sup>  
Cromwell Barracked some of his soldiers  
here when in pursuit of Charles





VOTES FOR WOMEN.



**Mrs. PANKHURST**

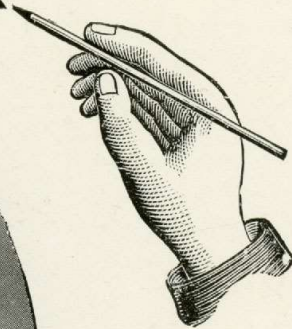
*The Women's Social & Political Union, 4 Clement's Inn, Strand, W.C.*

**Mrs Pankhurst**

Wolverhampton Municipal Elections—Tuesday, March 22nd, 1927.

**DUNSTALL WARD.**

**ONE for SPROSON X**



Committee  
Room—  
32  
Dunstall  
Road  
near  
Christ Church

**Meetings :**

Tuesday, March 15th, at 7-30 p.m.,

St. Andrew's Schools, Coleman Street.

Friday, March 18th, at 7-30 p.m.,

Christ Church Schools, Leicester Street,

Saturday, March 19th, at 7-30 p.m.,

Dunstall Road (near Christ Church).

---

Printed & Published by Frank J. Tustin, 60 Clarence Street, Wolverhampton.



# Votes For Women



**The Struggle for the Vote in  
the Black Country 1900-1918**

*George J. Barnsby*





Emma Grosvenor, London, circa November 1911.



From Left

Mrs H W Nevington, Mrs Emma Sproson,  
Mrs How Martin, Mrs Despard,  
Miss Tite.



Emma Sproson 2nd left.





Emma Sproson

As a result of TG getting involved with the People's Picture, we did hours and hours of research on Emma as we knew that she had links with TG we hoped that she would become the Face of Suffrage.

Sara Trayers, TG National Recruitment Officer, got to know her Great-grandson and he and



Image Credit Agi Ch & Dave Sproson







• Image Credit Agi Ch & Dave Sproson



TG Honorary National Treasurer at New Street Station



TG Chairman Jenny Rideout with Dave Sproson at New Street Station



TG Chairman Jenny Rideout with Dave Sproson at New Street Station





TG national Vice-Chairman Beryl Hales at New Street Station





Sara Trayers, TG National Recruitment Officer with TG members at New Street Station TG at New Street Station