

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ACTIVISM IN CHELTENHAM

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*"The women's cause will be triumphant in the end because it is founded on justice"*<sup>1</sup>

The struggle by women to obtain the parliamentary vote began many years before the well known 'suffragette' activities led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. Prior to the passing into law of the *Representation of the People Act 1832* (known as the *Great Reform Act*) fairly affluent widows and unmarried women could in theory vote as the franchise was based on property ownership, but in practice women did not vote. A married woman was excluded in that she was deemed in law to own nothing; it was all her husband's. However, all possibility of women voting was stopped by the *1832 Act* precisely specifying that 'male persons' who satisfied property criteria were enfranchised.

As well as excluding women, the *1832 Act* effectively denied working men the franchise. This led to the rise of the Chartist movement demanding votes for all adults regardless of gender. This stance was changed to votes for all *men* aged over twenty-one when the proposal of equal voting rights for women was dismissed as unachievable and a potential hindrance to attaining complete male suffrage.

Nevertheless, female suffrage groups were formed, often to support their men but also to agitate for their own rights. One such organisation was the Tewkesbury Female Radical Association whose secretary was Miss Eliza Hale. In a letter to the Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star*, she stated their determination "to obtain for *them* and their husbands, brothers and sweethearts – Universal Suffrage". Chartist women held independent meetings; Eliza Hale chaired one in Cheltenham in July 1839 of 500 women addressed by Henry Vincent, a significant Chartist organiser.<sup>2</sup> They also took part in actions such as a female 'sit-in' at St. Mary's Church, Cheltenham in August 1839.<sup>3</sup>

By 1848 Chartism had ceased to be the mass-movement that it previously was and had not achieved its aims for men, leaving little hope for women in general and negligible hope for working class women. Subsequent efforts to obtain female suffrage were predominately made by middle class women (with several important exceptions) in terms of both the leaders and constituents. What follows is not a comprehensive account of all meetings and activists in Cheltenham, but hopefully covers some key people and events.

In 1869 the *Municipal Franchise Act* became law and enabled single and widowed female ratepayers to vote in local municipal council elections. This may have helped to spark a resumption of organised agitation for the parliamentary franchise. From the city of Gloucester, the first of a number of petitions was presented to Parliament on 4 May 1869; a petition from Cheltenham followed eight days later.<sup>4</sup>

In 1871 the Cheltenham branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was founded; members of a Cheltenham committee of the society in those days included Mary Jane Briggs, Lucy March Phillips, Theodora Mills, Mrs. Griffiths, Mrs. Robberds, Miss Platt, Mrs. Elizabeth Colby and Miss Cordelia Colby.<sup>5</sup>

Meetings in support of women's suffrage took place in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury. They often involved Mrs. Harriet McIlquham. She was a significant and nationally prominent suffragist associated with Tewkesbury and Cheltenham, active in a number of suffrage organisations over the years.<sup>6</sup>

Miss Rhoda Garrett, an important early figure in the suffrage movement and a pioneering interior designer, gave a talk on 3 April 1872 at the

<sup>1</sup> Frances Swiney in a letter to the *Cheltenham Chronicle* published 4 Jan 1913.

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 Jul 1839.

<sup>3</sup> Derek Benson, 'Chartism in Tewkesbury and District', *THS Bulletin* 19, 2010. For extended accounts of local Chartist activities also see, Benson, 'William Morris Moore (1813-1841)', *THS Bulletin* 20, 2011 and 'William Penn Gaskell' (1808-1882), *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 28, 2012.

<sup>4-5</sup> Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland A Regional Survey [Survey]*.

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Medley (1837-1910) London born suffragist and local government politician, married James McIlquham and lived at Staverton House, Boddington. See Jennifer Slack, 'Harriet McIlquham: A True Pioneer?', *THS Bulletin* 15, 2006, for a full account of her local government career in Tewkesbury and district.



1. Harriet  
McIlquham  
(1837-1910)

Cheltenham  
Chronicle &  
Gloucestershire  
Graphic [CCGG]  
29 Jan 1910  
[all CCGG images  
courtesy of Glos.  
Archives]

Cheltenham Corn Exchange on *The Electoral Disabilities of Women*. The meeting was chaired by Henry Samuelson, Cheltenham's Liberal MP and in attendance were the local Congregational minister, Dr. Andrew Brown and the Unitarian ministers, Revs. John Robbards and David Griffith. Also on the platform were Miss Liliash Ashworth, a leading early suffragist organiser, and Miss Agnes Garrett (cousin of Rhoda). Rhoda Garrett gave a summary of the disadvantages endured by women and stated: "We only ask that women who fulfil the same conditions as men – who are householders, who pay taxes, and are rated to the relief of the poor, shall be admitted to the franchise. More than this we do not ask – at present."<sup>7</sup>

During the 1880s and into the 1890s there was a relative decline in the women's suffrage movement. A number of developments and issues combined to take the momentum out of the general issue of reform and left women isolated. Reforms in local government gave the vote to female ratepayers and allowed them the right to stand for election to school boards, poor law boards and later, rural district and urban district councils – rights that Harriet McIlquham took full advantage of. Gladstone's *1884 Reform Act* gave the parliamentary franchise to many more working men, but again expressly excluded women. Other issues competing with the suffrage campaign for the attention of women included the *Contagious Diseases Acts*, married women's property rights and women's higher education. Splits in existing organisations occurred over such issues as Irish home rule, moves to affiliate with political parties and conflict over whether married women should

be included in the franchise. Suffragists were also disheartened by the emergence of organised anti-suffragist movements.

Significant activities in the district had greatly reduced by the late 1880s, although Mrs. McIlquham was still active as a member of both the Women's Franchise League, founded in 1889 by Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her husband Richard, and the radical Women's Emancipation Union [WEU], founded by Elizabeth Wolstenholme in 1891. Cheltenham's Elizabeth and Cordelia Colby were members of the council of the League and Mrs. Frances Swiney of Cheltenham had her *Plea For Disenfranchised Women* published by the WEU.<sup>8</sup>

Frances Swiney played a leading role in the resurgence of the women's suffrage movement in Cheltenham. In 1896 she became president of the reformed Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society [CWSS] which joined the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies [NUWSS] in 1898. (Rosa) Frances Emily Swiney née Biggs (1847-1922) was born in India but spent her childhood in Ireland. She married Major John Swiney and settled in Cheltenham in 1877. In addition to her political activities, she was a talented painter, a writer, and was involved in other organisations such as the Primrose League, Malthusian League, the Secular Education League, the Eugenic Education Society, the Food Reform and Health Association, and others. She was a theosophist, teetotal and a vegetarian, chairing some NUWSS meetings at Mrs. Gard's Holborn House Hotel in Winchcombe Street, described as "the only vegetarian hotel in England".<sup>9</sup>

From 1903 until 1918, (Mary) Theodora Flower Mills (1874-1958) of Leckhampton was secretary of the CWSS. She was also active in the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection. Theodora was a successful writer (often of books for children) and a talented songwriter, composing several songs used nationally and internationally by the women's suffrage organisations.<sup>10</sup>

The turn of the century saw a radical change of tactics in the movement. In 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union [WSPU]. This was a non-party, all-women

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, *Survey*; Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928* [Guide].

<sup>8</sup> Crawford, *Survey*.

<sup>9</sup> David Doughan, 'Swiney, (Rosa) Frances Emily (1847-1922)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41247>, accessed 13 April 2014]; *Who's Who in Cheltenham, 1911*; *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 12 Dec 1908.

<sup>10</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 Nov 1939, letter from Miss Mills; Crawford, *Guide*.



2. Suffragist garden party and meeting at Mrs. Swiney's Sandford Lawn home, 16 July 1910. Theodora Mills (1874-1958), Frances Swiney (1847-1922), Rev. John Smith, local Unitarian minister. CCGG 23 Jul 1910

militant organisation, whose slogan was 'deeds, not words'. They became known as the 'suffragettes' as opposed to the non-militant NUWSS, led by Millicent Fawcett, known as the 'suffragists'.

On 17 January 1907 prominent local activists from the CWSS, the WSPU and other groups, formed a deputation that questioned the incumbent Liberal Cheltenham MP, John Edward Sears, as to the amount of support they could expect from him in Parliament on suffrage issues. Mrs. Swiney and Miss Mills led the CWSS contingent, Mrs. Earengy the WSPU, Mrs. Lovell and Mrs. Wicks the Women's Liberal Association, Mrs. Lake the Women's Co-operative Guild, and Mrs. Ursell "representing working women".<sup>11</sup>

Three days later Emmeline Pankhurst's daughter Christabel, a leader of the WSPU's militant activities, spoke at the Glevum Hall, Gloucester under the auspices of the Gloucester branch of the Independent Labour Party. The hall was "packed", Mrs. Earengy was chairman and among others was supported by Theodora Mills and Harriet McIlquham. The latter declared her intention to support militancy:<sup>12</sup>

Mrs. McIlquham ... said she was one of the old respectable workers on the cause of women's suffrage, but nothing, she was convinced would be done until they became outrageous. She grieved to say it, but that was borne in upon her by her own experience. She had been working in the cause for over 50 years, and did they wonder that she threw herself in with 'the

impatient lot?' Since she was first interested in the question by a lecture given by George Jacob Holyoake, she had gone quietly on in the movement led by John Stuart Mill and others, but now she was heart and soul with the 'insurgents'.

It is unclear whether Harriet McIlquham was ever an official member of the WSPU although she certainly donated money and carried out work for them. Frances Swiney similarly contributed to the WSPU and defended militant action. There appears to have been a good deal of support and collaboration between the various suffrage groups in Cheltenham.

A mildly militant activity in Cheltenham was punished in 1908. Mrs. Emma Sporson was summonsed for chalking the pavement with 'Votes for Women' slogans and announcements of meetings. She refused to plead and stated "I wish respectfully to submit that this court is established on laws made by the will of men and in which women have no consent. Therefore, I don't consider this Court is a proper authority to try me. I refuse to make any promise, pay any fine, or enter into any recognisance." The sentence was a 5s. fine [25p – perhaps worth £25 today] or seven days' imprisonment; local suffragists in attendance (that included Frances Swiney) paid the fine.<sup>13</sup>

During the municipal elections in Cheltenham in November 1908, the CWSS were campaigning near Leckhampton Road polling station. Theodora Mills, while trying to deliver her speech, was shouted down and pulled from her rostrum three times. Three women with her were also roughly handled and the scarlet-and-white banner of the society was pulled down.<sup>14</sup>



3. Cheltenham Women's Freedom League members on polling-day of the 1910 General Election. Florence Earengy, Miss Howe and Miss Boulton. CCGG 10 Dec 1910

<sup>11</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 Jan 1907, a lengthy report is given with mention of several more people involved.

<sup>12</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 26 Jan 1907.

<sup>13</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 9 Jul 1908.

<sup>14</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 5 Nov 1908.



4. Advertising Christabel Pankhurst speaking at Cheltenham in April 1911. CCGG 29 Apr 1911

Florence Earengy née How (1877-1963) and her solicitor husband William George Earengy (who later became a judge) were both involved in the local suffrage movement; Florence was the literature secretary of the CWSS in 1907. She was the sister of the prominent suffragette Edith How-Martyn who organised the first meeting of the WSPU in Cheltenham on 28 September 1906. Florence Earengy was secretary for the first year of the WSPU in Cheltenham before defecting to the Women's Freedom League [WFL] and becoming its secretary; her husband chaired meetings of this WFL Cheltenham branch. The League was a breakaway group from the WSPU with Edith How-Martyn one of its leaders. The WFL opposed violence, instead using forms of protest (also used by the WSPU) such as demonstrations, non-payment of taxes and refusing to complete census forms, 'if we don't count we won't be counted'. The latter tactic is borne out today by not being able to find several of the local suffragists, such as Frances Swiney, Theodora Mills and Florence Earengy on the 1911 census returns. Although Mrs. Swiney was president of the local NUWSS she contributed to the WFL, Miss Mills served on the league's committee and Harriet McIlquham was a WFL member in her later years. By 1912 the secretary of the Cheltenham WFL was Mme. Lilian Borovikowsky of Mostyn Villas, Hale's Road; she had been arrested in 1909 in London while trying to present a resolution to the Cheltenham MP John Sears.<sup>15</sup>

The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League (which had a branch in Cheltenham) accused Cheltenham Ladies' College, as well as some other

educational institutions, of being "hotbeds of feminism", a charge denied by the headmistress, Lilian Faithful, in a letter to the *Times* of 18 April 1912. However, a number of her former pupils did go on to be active in the suffrage campaign; among them were: Dorothy Jewson, Eliza Dunbar, Mary Sinclair and Dorothy Pethick.<sup>16</sup> During December 1908 meetings of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League were held in Gloucester and Cheltenham. The main speaker was Mary Angela Dickens, the granddaughter of Charles. She talked of a "shrieking sisterhood" and "a nation weakened by substituting in her counsels women for men". The Cheltenham meeting was held in the town hall; in another part of the building a meeting of the Women's Suffrage Society took place at the same time. Mrs. Swiney, president of the society, thought that "the spirit of the anti-suffragists was the same spirit that poisoned Socrates ... and that crucified Christ."<sup>17</sup>

During the 1910 general election local suffragists campaigned for their cause. They were furious at the Liberal government for shelving the *Conciliation Bill* which would have extended the franchise to some wealthy, property-owning women. In fact the Liberal candidate, Richard Mathias, was returned in Cheltenham, but was unseated on petition due to irregularities in his campaign and expenses. The resulting by-election in April 1911 again saw the local suffragists campaigning to 'keep the Liberal out'. Christabel Pankhurst spoke at the town hall on 27 April, the eve of the poll, attacking the government. Lewis



5. "Miss Ainsworth a very eloquent suffragette speaking in Liverpool Place during the 1911 Cheltenham bye-election campaign". CCGG 29 Apr 1911

This is probably Laura Ainsworth (1885-1958) a very active militant suffragette nationwide.

<sup>15</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 21 Sep 1912; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 Jan 1934; Crawford, *Survey*.

<sup>16</sup> Lucienne Boyce, *The Cheltenham Suffragettes*, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 12 Dec 1908; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 12 Dec 1908.



6. Suffragists outside their 64 High-street headquarters during the 1911 Cheltenham by-election.  
CCGG 6 May 1911

Mathias (brother of Richard) stood this time but was defeated by just four votes by the Conservative, James Tynte Agg-Gardner.

The defeat of the Liberal was greatly helped by the work of the WSPU organiser appointed to Cheltenham in February 1911, Miss (Susan) Ada Flatman (1876-1952). In February 1912 she was ejected from a meeting at Gloucester's Shire Hall when she attempted to question the government minister C.E. Hobhouse on suffrage issues.<sup>18</sup> Her flair for publicity and ability to attract star suffragette speakers to the town, such as Miss Annie Kenny, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and the aforementioned Christabel Pankhurst, injected much vigour into the existing activities of the local NUWSS and WFL. Christabel's mother, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the founder and president of the WSPU, addressed an audience at the town hall on 15 February 1911 remarking that Cheltenham was "one of those places which were largely



7. Ada Flatman  
(1876-1952)  
Speaking in  
Cheltenham during  
the 1911 bye-  
election campaign.

CCGG 6 May 1911

disenfranchised owing to the number of women ratepayers and rent-payers living in them".<sup>19</sup>

In March 1913 three Cheltenham women were in court for attaching posters to Post Office pillar boxes: Misses Winifred Boulton, Agnes Bales and Ruth Eamonson. They were each sentenced to a fine of 10s. [50p – perhaps £50 in today's values] or fourteen days imprisonment. A month before there were local reports of adhesive gum being poured into pillar boxes, allegedly by "suffragists".<sup>20</sup> In August 1913 a suspected bomb with the slogan "votes for women" painted on it in red was found on the steps of Cheltenham Town Hall. However, it was declared not to be a viable explosive device and was thought to be a hoax.<sup>21</sup>

However, during the following winter a far more serious event occurred in the area. In the early hours of Sunday 21 December, an unoccupied house, Alstone Lawn in Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, was found to be on fire. The fire brigade dealt with the blaze but damage was estimated at between £300 and £400 [perhaps £30,000 to £40,000 in today's values]. The police found "suffragist literature" and "footprints of stockinged feet" at the property along with an empty two-gallon can containing traces of paraffin; splashes of this liquid were found on the walls and floors. Later that day two "known suffragettes" were arrested; their boots and clothing smelt strongly of paraffin.<sup>22</sup>

The following day the women appeared in court at Cheltenham. They were barefoot having refused to wear shoes and stockings offered to them in place of their own evidential items, and their hair was not pinned 'up' as was the custom. They refused to give their names to the police or the court and were described on the charge sheet as 'Red' and 'Black'. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* reporter thought it relevant to note that "The shorter one's hair looked well kept, and curled nicely at the ends. The other young lady was the better-looking, but her hair was lank, and the free method of wearing it not so becoming to her." The women refused to recognise the court as "There are no women to try us". They were ordered to be remanded and were taken to Worcester Gaol – still barefoot and with their hair down.<sup>23</sup> William Earengy appeared in court on 12 January

<sup>18</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 3 Feb 1912.

<sup>19</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 18 Feb 1911.

<sup>20</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 1 Feb 1913 and 8 Mar 1913.

<sup>21</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 Aug 1913.

<sup>22</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 27 Dec 1913.

<sup>23</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 Dec 1913.



8. 'Red' and 'Black' being escorted to Worcester Gaol by Inspector Whyton and Detective Towell; the latter is carrying the stockings and shoes that the women refused to wear.

CCGG  
27 Dec 1913

unsuccessfully requesting the return of the property of the defendants while disassociating himself from their actions; he stated that he had been instructed by an anonymous agent.<sup>24</sup>

In prison, the two women immediately went on a hunger strike (in fact they had refused to eat anything since their arrest). After a week, acting on the advice of the prison doctor, the Home Secretary ordered their release under the provisions of the *Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill Health Act 1913*, known as the 'Cat and Mouse Act': suffragettes undertaking hunger strikes were released from prison under police surveillance as soon as they became ill, thus allowing the authorities to avoid controversial force feeding, they could then be re-imprisoned upon their recovery on their original charges. Their release was on condition that they appeared at Cheltenham in January to answer the arson charges. They both absconded, and Cheltenham issued arrest warrants.<sup>25</sup>

In fact the identity of at least one of the women was confirmed from finger prints unwillingly taken from them.<sup>26</sup> She was Lilian Lenton (1891-1972), born in Leicester, the daughter of a carpenter. She was a professional dancer who during her suffragette activities also used the names Ida Inkley and May Dennis. She had joined the WSPU in 1912 and took part in a window-smashing campaign in March of that year for which she was jailed for two months. In early 1913 she was

involved in arson attacks in London and was arrested on suspicion of setting on fire The Tea House in Kew Gardens. In Holloway Prison she went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed after two days, contracting pleurisy as a result of food entering her lungs and nearly died. This caused some public outrage and she was quickly released. She was arrested in Doncaster in June charged with arson but was soon released. She was sought in Leeds but evaded the police by dressing as an errand-boy and eventually escaping to France on a private yacht. She was again arrested in October at the left luggage office in Paddington Station while collecting a bicycle. On remand, she went on hunger and thirst strike and was again forcibly fed. Becoming ill, she was released for five days into the care of a Mrs. Diplock, but absconded. After the Alstone Lawn episode she was at large until early May 1914 when she was arrested in Birkenhead charged with the Doncaster arson. Again she went on hunger and thirst strike and was released on 12 May 1914.

During World War 1 Lilian Lenton served in Serbia in the Scottish Women's Hospital Unit and was awarded the French Red Cross medal. After the war she travelled in Russia and later worked in the British Embassy in Stockholm. She was a speaker for the Save The Children Fund and the Women's Freedom League and was editor of the latter's *Bulletin* for eleven years. She spent some time in Scotland working in animal welfare and was later the financial secretary of the National Union of Women Teachers and treasurer of the Suffragette Fellowship.<sup>27</sup>



9. Lilian Ida Lenton (1891-1972)

Dancer, militant suffragette, arsonist, and winner of the French Red Cross medal. Photograph taken when she was in custody – she was probably unaware it was being taken.

Criminal Records Office, 1914 © National Portrait Gallery, London

<sup>24</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 17 Jan 1914; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 Jan 1914.

<sup>25-26</sup> *Gloucester Journal*, 3 Jan 1914.

<sup>27</sup> Crawford, *Guide*. Video and audio of Lilian Lenton and other suffragettes, including Ada Flatman, can be found on [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/suffragettes>, accessed 27 Apr 2014]. There is also a splendid collection of suffragette photographs available at [<http://www.bathintime.co.uk/search/keywords/suffragettes>, accessed 27 Apr 2014].

In the summer of 1913 the NUWSS organised mass protest marches, known as the Women's Suffrage Pilgrimage, from seventeen cities across the country to London. On 15 July some participants from the Western contingent came to Cheltenham. Under the headline "Cheltenham Disgraced", the *Cheltenham Chronicle* carried a lengthy article describing the scenes that occurred at the traditional street meeting place – the 'Clarence Street Lamp':

[the speakers] were subject to disgraceful treatment at the hands of gangs of hooligans and loafers whose actions can only be regarded with shame and contempt by the decent-minded men of the town ... Respected citizens of this and other Gloucestershire towns, engaging in a constitutional manner, were assailed with vegetables in varying stages of putrefaction, and eggs and epithets equally vile, and had their meeting broken up in disorder without a single speech having been delivered.

The Misses Bude and Hutton of Gloucester were pulled from their bicycles and mobbed, having to be rescued by the police. Charles Fox (who had stood as a Labour candidate for Tewkesbury) was shouted down. Mrs. Swiney received similar treatment and was pelted with eggs to shouts of "Go it, Marie Lloyd". The bearded Rev. William Henry Jarvis, Free Church minister of Golden Valley, was greeted with cries of "Hello Kruger". He was joined by the Rev. John Henry Smith – both were shouted down and pelted with eggs. The disorder continued for some time and the suffragists required police protection to make their exits from the area. Similar scenes occurred in Cirencester the next day (Frances Swiney was present) and in Swindon the day after that (involving Theodora Mills).<sup>28</sup>

With the outbreak of World War 1 the WSPU suspended their militant activities and supported the war effort. The non-militant NUWSS was split with a minority opposing the war, but they too quickly announced a suspension of political activity for the duration, instead concentrating on war work through the Women's Service Bureau. However, a number of leading figures from suffrage organisations opposed the war, such as the Pethick Lawrences of the WSPU, Charlotte Despard of the WFL and Sylvia Pankhurst (daughter of Emmeline) via the East London Federation of Suffragettes. In 1918 the *Representation*

*of the People Act* gave the vote to women over the age of 30 who were householders or married to householders and to female graduates in university constituencies. It was not until 1928 that all women achieved equal voting rights with men.

The long and difficult struggle of women for electoral rights was illustrated by the words of Frances Swiney when she spoke after presentations were made to her by Cheltenham MP Sir James Agg-Gardner, friends and old colleagues in 1920:<sup>29</sup>

Remember, you had the very hardest and most ungenial soil in which to begin your work here in Cheltenham! If Oxford is the home of lost causes Cheltenham is the town of no ideals. We had to fight against prejudice, against the most unstintedly expressed ignorance and also against the most dense materialism.

She went on to thank Agg-Gardner for his support of the movement (although he was a stern critic of militant suffragette activities) and paid tribute to those she had worked with in the past, especially Harriet McIlquham and Theodora Mills. The former had died in 1910 and received fulsome praise in local newspapers for her local government and suffrage work.<sup>30</sup> Miss Mills lived until 1958; she was a regular correspondent with the local press, often correcting erroneous statements made concerning past suffrage activities and defending their record. A local newspaper upon her death described her as "one of Cheltenham's oldest original suffragettes" and noted that she "was as forthright in her writing as she was in her utterances".<sup>31</sup> Frances Swiney died in 1922 and is buried at Leckhampton; a wreath at the funeral from the Cheltenham Women Citizens Association carried the words: "In deep and most grateful appreciation of steadfast and courageous service for the welfare of womanhood throughout the world".<sup>32</sup>



10. Frances Swiney  
(1847-1922)

President of the  
Cheltenham Women's  
Suffrage Society for  
23 years.

Cheltenham Looker-on  
7 Feb 1920, courtesy of  
Cheltenham Local and  
Family History Library

<sup>28</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 Jul 1913.

<sup>29</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 7 Feb 1920.

<sup>30</sup> *Tewkesbury Register*, 29 Jan 1910; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 27 Jan 1910.

<sup>31</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 Dec 1958.

<sup>32</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 May 1922.