

4th meeting of the Emily Davison Lodge

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In March 2014 The Emily Davison Lodge paid a visit to Arber & Co on London's Roman Road in order to bid a fond farewell to the printing press that had served the local suffragettes so steadfastly in their campaigning. Due to dwindling business (steep parking prices outside the premises imposed by the local council), the proprietor, Gary Arber, had decided to close down the shop that his grandfather had established in 1897.

The 700 lb. metal angel we had come to pay tribute to was a "Golding Jobber" which, though no longer in use, was once regarded as the workhorse of the industry, having the advantage of a greater "open time" for feeding paper over other hand presses of the day. The machine's overall design is exquisite to the eye, a credit to the Boston based company Golding & Co who produced it in 1901. The Emily Davison Lodge believe that Arber & Co acquired their model quite soon after this date.

It was a little later, in October 1912, that Sylvia Pankhurst established a branch of the W.S.P.U (the Women's Social and Political Union founded by her mother Emmeline in 1903) just down the road from Arber & Co at 198 Bow Road. Expelled a few months later for over focusing on working class women and their families in the fight for female suffrage, the group re-banded as The East London Federation of Suffragettes in January 1914. Activities included talks, marches, May Day processions, the inauguration of a People's Army at Bow Baths, an all important delegation of female workers sent to meet with Prime Minister Asquith, the establishment of a toy factory and associated nursery where mothers could earn a living wage and the production of a newspaper, 'The Woman's Dreadnought.' When WW1 broke out the E.L.F.S, unlike the W.S.P.U who turned their efforts to the war cause, carried on campaigning for the vote and workers' rights. With great vision, Sylvia Pankhurst took over the Gunmakers Arms on the Old Ford Road and renamed it the Mother's Arms. Here a Mother and Baby clinic with associated creche and a Montessori School were made available to the local working class folk.

In order to pay our last respects to the printer that had so faithfully reproduced the hand bills and pamphlets of the East London Federation of Suffragettes (of particular note are Sylvia Pankhurst's pamphlets 'Join the People's Army' and 'Lovers of Freedom') we had to descend down into a very dark basement and tip toe over numerous boxes of rusting parts and yellowing flyers. What an impression this beauty made upon us! How majestic and yet how sad to see it so hidden away in all the darkness and dust. But Mr Arber kindly kept

our spirits up by relating stories of his grandmother Emily Arber, herself a suffragette, who would bully her husband lest he give the suffragettes their printing for free and who confided in her grandson that she had once chased a policeman into the local canal in order to avail other militant women of arrest!

The Emily Davison Lodge would like to dedicate this humble pamphlet - its images and the inspiring words of Sylvia Pankhurst contained herewith* - to the printing press formally owned and operated by Arber & Co (and which currently rests in peace in a private collection).

{{{{Good job, Golding Jobber!}}}}

* From 'A Minimum Wage for Women,' The Woman's Dreadnought, September 1914 and 'How Shall We Get the Vote?' The Woman's Dreadnought, March 1914