

Media Release

Bristol, 19 November 2018 (updated 10 December 2018)

A Blue Plaque for Bristol's Pioneering Suffrage Women

On Saturday 15 December 2018 at 3 West Mall, Clifton, Bristol MP Thangam Debbonaire will lead the installation ceremony of a Blue Plaque for Bristol's pioneering suffrage campaigners

One hundred years after women voted in British Parliamentary elections for the first time, Bristol MP Thangam Debbonaire will be guest of honour at the installation of a Blue Plaque at 3 West Mall, Clifton to commemorate Bristol's first women's suffrage society.



The Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage was set up when Florence Davenport Hill (1828/9–1919) invited a group of like-minded individuals to a meeting at her home at 3 West Mall (formerly 3 The Mall), Clifton, Bristol on 24 January 1868. Although Florence was in her thirties, she needed her father's permission to hold the meeting!

Florence Davenport Hill (Bristol Reference Library)

The Bristol society joined the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1896, and continued campaigning until all women won the vote in 1928. Mrs Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the leader of the NUWSS, was honoured by a statue in Parliament Square earlier this year.

It was on 14 December 1918 that women voted in Parliamentary elections for the first time. In Bristol, more women voted than men and many of them queued up before the polling stations opened. Some of the women who voted for the first time in their lives were in their nineties.

With the support of the Bristol Civic Society Blue Plaques Panel and the generous permission of the building's owner, the Bristol Society for Women's Suffrage will be commemorated by the installation of a Blue Plaque at 3 West Mall (formerly 3 The Mall), Clifton as a permanent memorial to Bristol's pioneering suffrage women. The Blue Plaque has been organised by local author Lucienne Boyce (*The Bristol Suffragettes*).



Bristol West MP Thangam Debbonaire said, *“As a woman voter as well as a woman MP, I know how far we have to come before we have true equality in all aspects of life. But without the dedication and struggle of the women who campaigned for the right to vote, we would have no representation. We would be left out of all decisions affecting our lives. I am proud to be part of celebrating these women’s achievements.”*

Thangam Debbonaire, MP

The installation ceremony will take place at 11.30 on Saturday 15 December 2018 at 3 West Mall, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4BH. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge for this event.

The Blue Plaque has been made possible with funding obtained for the Votes for Women 100 Project from the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust, the Regional History Centre at the University of the West of England, and the Government Equalities Office in a bid led by Bristol Women's Voice, together with a crowdfunding campaign. **Votes for Women 100** has been organised by a partnership of M Shed, the West of England and South Wales Women's History Network, the University of Bristol, the University of the West of England, Bristol Libraries, and the Diversity Trust.

For more information about the Bristol Civic Society Blue Plaques Panel see

<https://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/about-us/areas-of-interest/215-blue-plaques.html>

Lucienne Boyce

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