

Suffragette Film Review



When we learn about suffragettes it is usually only about the rich and influential ladies supporting the cause, but do we ever consider the ordinary women who were the foot soldiers of the cause? The film "Suffragette" revolves around the life of Maud Watts, a working class woman, as she draws further into supporting all male dominated women.

Maud Watts' life is drastically different from Emmeline Pankhurst (a famous suffragette who is in a few scenes in the film) as her situation is a lot worse because she has to work for her living and look after her young child, on top of supporting the suffragettes. Also Pankhurst's family supported her but Maud's husband tries to oppress her. The inequalities ran deep so in a marriage that the man could decide everything regarding to his wife even if she expressed her wishes against it, causing her to suffer at the hands of someone who is meant to be her equal. This meant that in the film when Maud Watts was thrown out of her home by her husband it was perfectly acceptable and she could do nothing to oppose that. Additionally all children were "owned" by the father and he had legal right of them so when Maud had to leave her home she was no longer allowed to look after her son and couldn't get him back after the father decided to give him away for adoption.

The main thing to be concerned about this film is whether it is historically accurate or not because if it is not it could distort your image of earlier feminism. Some of the events in the film did happen like the acts of

dropping bombs into post-boxes, the bombing of an important political figure's house, the police watching the suffragettes and taking pictures of them, force feeding imprisoned suffragettes and one of the suffragettes did jump in front of the king's horse at the Derby. First of all force feeding had a terrible impact on the women's bodies by scarring their throats and making them weak, so much so that after a few days of force feeding in prison they would be released until they were better and then taken back, this process being called the Cat and Mouse act. Also the house that was bombed was owned by David Lloyd George and the suffragettes only did what they did to get him to see how desperate they were for their cause and also because he said he supported women's rights but never did anything to help them. Luckily no-one was harmed as there was no-one living there, the building only being under construction. There were post-boxes which were bombed or set fire to by the suffragettes and there is a famous post-box in Newport which was bombed. Probably to try to suppress them, the police kept their eye on the suffragettes and took pictures and tried to find out information about them which could be used against them in the press. One of the most famous suffragettes is Emily Wilding Davidson who is known for jumping in front of the king's horse and then unfortunately dying from her injuries. We do not know whether or not she did it deliberately or if she knew she was going to die but the suffragettes promptly named her as a martyr.

You should watch this film because you could gain some insight on what life was like when fewer opportunities were available for women than there are these days and how the struggle for votes started.