

100 Years of women in politics:

The Representation of the People Act, passed on 6 February 1918 gave most women over the age of 30 the right to vote in parliamentary elections for the very first time.

This display celebrates 10 of the many women in British political history, national as well as local who have 'made a difference'.

The reverse of the display explains their importance and where to discover more.

Alice Mary Wicks (1862-1949)



"An Independent woman"

Dame Annie Maud Burnett (1863-1950)



"The Trailblazer"

Margaret Grace Bondfield (1873-1953)



"The first in Cabinet"

Mary Gunn (1883-1959)



"The first to wear the robes"

Ellen Cicely Wilkinson (1891-1947)



"A true crusader"

Dame Irene Ward (1895-1980)



"The feisty back-bencher"

Barbara Castle (1910-2002)



"Equal pay for women"

Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013)



"The Iron Lady"

Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam (1949-2005)



"The peace maker"

Chingelu Susan 'Chi' Onwurah (1965-)



"A first for Newcastle"

This display has been made possible by Historic England and Gateshead Council's Library Service.

It complements a series of CPD sessions for teachers and other learning professionals. It was researched and curated by Anthea Lang, local historian and author. Further copies are available in PDF format from

www.gatesheadlibraries.com

100 Years of women in politics:

Dame Annie Maud Burnett (1863-1950)

Elected to Tynemouth Council in 1910, becoming the first woman to hold that position in the north of England. She was made a Dame in 1918 for her services during the First World War as President of the Tynemouth War Savings Association.

She later became the first female Mayor of Tynemouth, serving two terms in 1928-1930. There is a Blue Plaque on her house in Priors Terrace, Tynemouth, where she lived all her life.

Further links:

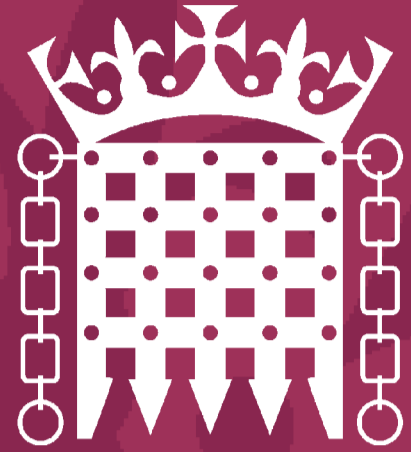
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maud_Burnett

Alice Mary Wicks (1862-1949)

In November 1920, Mrs Alice Mary Wicks (Independent) was elected to represent the East Central Ward, defeating Peter S Hancock, a Trade Union Clerk, by a majority of 140. In doing so, she became Gateshead's first female councillor.

Her profession was listed as 'Married Woman' although she had in fact been a widow since 1891. She had previously been Mayoress for her uncle Alexander Gillies during his six terms as Mayor between 1900-1909.

www.gatesheadlibraries.com



Ellen Cicely Wilkinson (1891-1947)

Manchester-born Ellen was interested in socialism from an early age. A strong supporter of women's suffrage and the trade union movement, she was briefly a member of the Communist Party which led to her being nicknamed 'red' Ellen. From 1924-1931, she was Labour MP for Middlesbrough East then, from 1935 until her death in 1947, for Jarrow. She was heavily involved in the Jarrow Crusade and in 1945 became Education Minister in Attlee's first Labour government.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Wilkinson

Mary Gunn (1883-1959)

Born in Sunderland to poor Irish parents, her first job was as a servant. She was elected to Gateshead Council in 1921 and also served, with her husband, on the Board of Guardians (the organisation responsible for poor relief). Elected an Alderman in 1937, she became Gateshead's first female Mayor in 1942.

She was the first woman to chair Gateshead's Labour party and for many years was Chair of the Education Committee.

www.gatesheadlibraries.com

Margaret Grace Bondfield (1873-1953)

Margaret worked as a shop assistant and was so appalled at the working conditions that she became a member of the shopworkers' union and helped found the Women's Labour League (WLL) in 1906. In 1928 she was one of the first three women to be elected as a Labour MP, first for Northampton and then for Wallsend. A strong supporter of women's suffrage, she became the first woman Cabinet Minister and the first woman Privy Councillor.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Bondfield

Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013)

Margaret Thatcher, a grocer's daughter from Grantham, became Conservative MP for Finchley in 1959 and entered the Cabinet in 1970 as Education Secretary. In 1975, she became the Conservative Party's first female leader.

She became Great Britain's first female Prime Minister in 1979 and resigned in 1990 as Britain's longest serving Prime Minister for over 150 years. She was appointed to the House of Lords in 1992, becoming Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven.

Further links:

<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/essential/biography.asp>

Barbara Castle (1910-2002)

Barbara Castle was elected MP for Blackburn in 1945 and remained so until 1979. As Minister for Transport she was responsible for introducing the breathalyser test and the compulsory wearing of seatbelts.

Famous for her stance on equal pay for women, she was responsible for the Equal Pay Act of 1970. Following her defeat in the 1979 General Election, she was elected MEP for Manchester West and in 1990 became Baroness Castle of Blackburn.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Castle

Dame Irene Ward (1895-1980)

Educated at Newcastle's Church High School, Irene was first elected Conservative MP for Wallsend defeating Margaret Bondfield. She lost her seat in 1945 but was returned as MP for Tynemouth in 1950 - which she held until her retirement in 1974 when aged 79.

A strong supporter of Tyneside industry, she was also a strong advocate for equal pay for women. She was created a life peer as Baroness Ward of North Tyneside in 1975.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irene_Ward



Chinyelu Susan 'Chi' Onwurah (1965-)

Born in Wallsend, Chi graduated from Imperial College London with a degree in electrical engineering and became head of Telecoms technology at OFCOM. She was elected MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central in 2010.

She is a strong campaigner against gender stereotyping and is currently Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation. She is Newcastle's first black MP.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chi_Onwurah

Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam (1949-2005)

Mo Mowlam was elected MP for Redcar in 1987. She joined the Shadow Cabinet under John Smith as Secretary of State for Heritage, served under Tony Blair as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and oversaw the signing of the historic Good Friday Peace Agreement in 1998. For a number of years she suffered from a brain tumour and resigned her seat in 2001 but remained active in politics until her death in 2005.

Further links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mo_Mowlam