

**WALTON ON THE HILL & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**FOR HEADLEY, KINGSWOOD, TADWORTH & WALTON**



Charity Reg. No. 803796

Hon. Secretary Sandie Hunt [huntsandie47@gmail.com](mailto:huntsandie47@gmail.com)

Harvesting by the old mill, near Millfield, Dorking Road, Tadworth in 1947. Roque's map of 1762 shows the current windmill but it is believed a windmill has stood in this vicinity long before. The surviving mill was built c1762. Two of the four sails were lost in 1921 and it was damaged by a flying bomb during World War II.

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

A special thank you to Tim Richardson for his talk last April 1913 *When Words Turned to Deeds - bombs, arson and a Derby Day tragedy*. Tim delivered a fascinating insight into the lengths the suffragettes were willing to go to obtain the vote for all women and disenfranchised men. See the end of this newsletter for the article Tim highlighted in his talk <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ZPER34-142-13.jpg>



The picture above is from the *London Illustrated News* issue of May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1914. It shows a house in Burden Lane, Cheam subjected to an arson attack by the suffragettes. Copies of *The Suffragette* newspaper were found at the site. One of six new houses on the quiet country road. The sale was due to be signed on the following Monday. High winds had helped spread the fire and destroy the house. Was this the work of the same team who placed the incendiary device at Lloyd George's home in Walton on the Hill?

Lorraine Spindler

**Our next meeting & AGM  
2 October 2024 at  
Good Shepherd  
Church Hall  
Station Approach Rd  
Tadworth KT20 5AH  
Doors open at 7.30 pm**

**Flying from Croydon Airport  
The Glory Years of Air Travel**

Presented by Graham Roy

The 1920s and 1930s were the glory and pioneering years of air travel, during which Croydon Airport held a unique position. It was London's main international airport and the starting and finishing point for many record breaking flights, not least by such pilots as Amy Johnson, surely one of the most celebrated aviatrix of all times.

Graeme Roy is the Chair of Trustees of the Historic Croydon Airport Trust, who will take us from World War I, through the inter war years, World War II and right up to the late 1950s.



**Please check your emails before our meeting in case of last minute changes.**

# D-Day Commemoration at Headley Court Friday 7th June 2024 & Headley during World War Two By Peter Denyer



In the run up to D-Day for a small village Headley played an important part. Headley Court served as Headquarters of the First Canadian Army Europe and played a major part in the planning process. Headley Heath was used by The Canadian Corps of Engineers to train soldiers to operate earth moving equipment which would be used after the initial landings to build roads and bridges to help the troop concentrations move about and progress further into Europe.



Two events took place in the village in the week of the 80th anniversary of D-Day the first on the 1st June was a walk on Headley Heath to show visitors the scars in the landscape still visible to this day. The second event was organised by Michael Hayman, Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey, who has lived in Headley for 10 years and was attended by the His

Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Mr. Michael More-Molyneux, and the Honorable Ralph Goodale PC, High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom.



Following speeches and formalities the High Commissioner was presented with a commemorative book of photographs and writings. In return Headley Village was presented with a ceremonial Canadian Flag to be flown on occasions, at the Church and Cricket Club. The final act was the ceremonial planting of a Maple Tree to cement the relationship between the Canadian people and Headley village and Headley Court, which is currently being refurbished and turned into a retirement complex.



Effingham Schools Combined Cadet Force were formally inspected and a special coin awarded to the outstanding cadet.



In accepting the flag, Cllr Preedy commented that since Headley Court has become synonymous with the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, its role in the Second World War risked being forgotten. So, it was very timely to have some permanent reminders of this role.

*one of them shall be forgotten. From Canada to all of you: Thank you for remembering."*

During Elizabethan times, the site where Headley Court now stands was a farm called Tilers Farm. In the 1890s, Walter Cunliffe purchased the site to build himself a state-of-the-art residence now known as Headley Court.

Walter was a member of the Cunliffe family, who were bankers and lived at what is now Tyrrells Wood Golf Club. Walter prospered and became Governor of The Bank of England during World War I. He died in 1920.

When World War II started, the government and military authorities requisitioned large houses and estates throughout the country to provide additional accommodation for the war effort. Headley Court was requisitioned in 1939, and the Cunliffe family packed up and moved out.



In attendance at the ceremony was Jim Jobbins a 99-year-old D-Day veteran.



The Honorable Ralph Goodale PC, High Commissioner of Canada for the United Kingdom, said: *"The bonds linking Canada and the United Kingdom are deeply rooted in places like Headley Court. From hundreds of years of shared history and heritage, touching every dimension of our lives, our two countries have between us a vast reservoir of mutual respect and trust, based on our lived-experience with one another and on the values, we have promoted and defended together in the world for a very long time. So, it was that thousands of young Canadians came to this part of Surrey eight decades ago to become part of the largest, most consequential military operation in human history – shoulder-to-shoulder with Britain and other allies, they gave their all for freedom, democracy, human rights and decency. Not*



*In 1940, the building was handed over to the Canadian Forces and became The Headquarters of the 1st Canadian Army Europe under General McNaughton (left) and later General Crerar.*

As the number of Canadian troops providing backup facilities and security increased, a

number of smaller buildings in the village were either taken over and temporary hutments were built to accommodate the troops and provide NAAFI facilities; some of these can still be seen in the village near The Forge and Slough Lane.

Headley Court was a centre for administration and planning, and Winston Churchill was a regular visitor along with other national leaders. Royalty also visited to show support and review troops.

Regiments present in and around Headley Court included The Lorne Scots, Royal Canadian Signals, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, and many others. Following D-Day, Headley Court was rapidly run down and very few troops remained.



*A detachment of the Canadian Women's Army Corps lay a wreath on a WWI Cenotaph at Headley Church (above) on Remembrance Day 1945.*

At the end of the war, Headley Court was handed back to the Cunliffe family. However, in the years since they had settled elsewhere, and the estate was put on the market. It was bought by a charity in memory of the pilots involved in the Battle of Britain, and the estate was handed over to the RAF to create a rehabilitation facility for officers.

Work began to construct accommodation and administration buildings in the grounds, as well as buildings for physiotherapy, gymnasiums and hydrotherapy pools. When work was completed, officers requiring rehabilitation moved in and other ranks remained at a facility in Chessington. When the facilities at Chessington were closed, Headley Court

treated all ranks of RAF personnel. Headley Court's reputation grew and it became a tri-service establishment, treating the Army and Royal Navy as well as the RAF.

When our troops became involved in Iraq and Afghanistan, the workload increased and temporary ward blocks and accommodation were rapidly built in the grounds to accommodate the numbers of patients and staff. At this time, the site was redesignated as The Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre. In the 2010s, the Ministry of Defence decided to build a new facility in the midlands. Headley Court closed in 2018.

The site was sold to developers and split into three sections: married quarters, which is now a private housing estate; the main house and grounds; and the facilities area. Currently, the facilities area has planning permission for housing and the main house site is being developed as a retirement complex.



Elsewhere in Headley, High Ashurst House (above) was requisitioned and handed over to the Canadian Corps of Engineers because Headley Heath was needed to allow soldiers to be trained in the use of construction machinery. Before this, the Heath had been used to graze animals and collect firewood and gorse for heating and baking, as well as bracken for animal bedding.

In 1918, the Lord of the Manor who lived at High Ashurst and had lost his heir in the war, sold the estate. The house became a boarding school for girls and The Lordship of the Manor was bought by a London Solicitor who built a new Manor House in Headley on the opposite side of the heath.

After World War II in 1947, Headley Heath was presented to The National Trust, but without any endowment. A local committee was formed to manage the Heath on behalf of The

National Trust. Today, it is still managed by the National Trust but as part of The Surrey Hills Estate.



When you walk on the Heath today, you can see evidence of the Canadians and their practice work in the humps, bumps and trackways they left. Using bulldozers, graders and excavators they practised building roads, digging trench systems and gun emplacements and rudimentary airstrips. The steep chalk valleys towards the back of the Heath proved invaluable for practicing controlling machines on steep gradients. As each new group of soldiers arrived they would destroy what the previous group had built and start afresh.

One effect of this can still be seen today; the seed bank of heather was disturbed and buried deeply underground, so it is now very difficult for much heather to grow. All the disturbance produced a good seedbed so that after D-Day when the troops left, weed species like bracken and silver birch were easily established and to this day prove difficult or impossible to control.

See the Headley Heath WW2 trail <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/surrey/headley-heath/headley-heath-second-world-war-walking-trail>



We know little of what went on during the war. There are now no people in Headley who were teenagers during the war, but a few years ago

a number of oral histories were taken. From these, it sounded as if High Ashurst was relaxed and the troops were happy to allow the local teenagers access to the Heath.

A section of the Heath near Brimmer Pond was fenced off and taken over by the RAF, where they stationed an aircraft beacon and a hut for the operators. At night, the beacon flashed a different letter in Morse code which was known to aircraft crew returning from Europe. Along with two other beacons, this allowed disorientated pilots to plot a route to Kenley Airfield and safety.



On the far side of the Heath, along the road to High Ashurst from Box Hill, stands Belassis House (above), which was used as a secretive base for The SOE (Secret Operations Executive). This was used to train mainly Czechoslovak nationals to be parachuted back into Czechoslovakia to work underground with the resistance. Trainees included the two operators Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš who were tasked with killing Reinhardt Heydrich in Operation Anthropoid.



*Gabcik & Kubis*

Between Belassis House and High Ashurst was a small prison camp for German officers who it was hoped could be converted to work for the allies. Some of these officers were later

involved in the recovery of stolen and hidden art works from Austria and Germany.

The troops stationed around Headley were a long way from home and romances blossomed with the local girls. There were two babies born to residents of Slough Lane in 1943 and when the mums pushed the babies in their prams past the billets in Slough Lane, they were given food treats mostly unobtainable in wartime Britain.

Generally, the Canadians were welcomed and the locals enjoyed their company. This stopped very rapidly as the troops moved to the South Coast to take part in D-Day.



*Juno Beach - Reserve troops of the Canadian 3rd Division coming ashore at Bernières, Nan sector, Juno Beach, on D-Day, June 6, 1944.*

The Canadian objectives upon landing at Juno Beach were to cut the Caen-Bayeux road, seize the Carpiquet airport west of Caen, and form a link between the two British beaches of Gold and Sword on either side of Juno Beach. The Canadians suffered 1,200 casualties out of 21,400 troops who landed at Juno that day—a casualty ratio of 1 out of 18.

## Remembering Anyta A Memorial Event organised by Tim Richardson and Pia Chamberlain

A service of remembrance was held, on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024, at St Andrew's Church. It was led by the Rev. Christine Colton and marked the 80th anniversary, to the day, of the death of local nurse Dorothy Anyta Field, who helped to save the lives of 75 wounded men in World War Two, before she lost her own.



The ceremony, was attended, by the mayor of Reigate and Banstead, Councillor Eddy Humphrey, and representatives from the British Legion.



A wreath was placed at the War Memorial, after which the service resumed inside the church. Tributes were paid to Sister Dorothy Anyta Field and the names of six other locals, who died in action during the Normandy campaign, were also read out.

WALTER BURN GIBSON, of Tadworth,  
Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow)  
Regiment  
K.I.A. 23rd July 1944

JAMES EDWARD PAYNE, of Lower  
Kingswood, Royal Army Service Corps  
K.I.A. 23/24th July 1944

EDGAR WILLIAM PRYCE GRIFFITHS, of  
Walton-on-the-Hill, 5th Bn, Dorsetshire  
Regiment  
K.I.A. 31st July 1944

DOROTHY ANYTA FIELD, of Lower  
Kingswood, Queen Alexandra Imperial  
Military Nursing Service  
K.I.A. 7th August 1944

JACK MARSH, of Lower Kingswood, 1st Bn,  
Worcestershire Regiment  
K.I.A. 10th August 1944

ERNEST WILLIAM PERRY, of Lower Kingswood, 5th Bn Dorsetshire Regiment  
K.I.A. 14th August 1944

RICHARD RIDLEY HASTINGS JAMES, of Kingswood, 12th (2nd Bn The Queen's Westminsters) Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps  
K.I.A. 30th August 1944

Refreshments were served after the service, giving those attending an opportunity to reminisce and exchange their own stories.

Sister Dorothy Anyta Field, from Lower Kingswood, died alongside colleague Sister Mollie Evershed, from Soham, Cambridgeshire, when the hospital ship they were on struck a mine off the French coast on 7 August 1944.



Dorothy, better known by her middle name, Anyta, trained at King's College Hospital, London.

Anyta was born in Epsom, Surrey on the 22nd May 1912, the daughter of Charles and Ethel (nee Taylor) Field. She was baptised in Cheam Parish Church on the 27th July 1912. Anyta grew up living at Kingswood Knoll before her three year training at Kings College hospital. in 1932. Dorothy qualified by examination as a State Registered Nurse in 1935. On the 22nd November 1935, she

joined the Register of Nurses, her contact address given as c/o Roland Field, Esq., 63, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

Later Anyta joined Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service, caring for wounded service personnel. Following D-Day, 6th June 1944, she was nursing wounded soldiers from the continuing battle on the French mainland.

Patrolling the makeshift wards on HMHS Amsterdam, they treated head wounds, bandaged mutilated limbs and offered comforting words. Just as one of the ship's surgeons completed a leg amputation – disaster struck. The ship, a requisitioned passenger ferry, about to make its third trip home, hit a mine. An almighty explosion tore through the 350-foot ship, ripping it open as if by a can-opener.

Panicked crew and passengers fought to escape as the stricken vessel, almost cleaved in two, rapidly began to sink. Lifeboats were lowered and the ship's frantic souls piled in, filling them to bursting. Both nurses had the chance to save themselves but they didn't and were incredibly brave. Anyta had reached the safety of a lifeboat but, with the ship sinking, she returned and went below decks time and again to rescue wounded men and get them to the lifeboats.



During the Battle of the Falaise Pocket of Operation Overlord the Normandy Landings casualties had regularly been evacuated aboard the Hospital Ship Amsterdam. She made several successful Channel crossings where soldiers were taken to English ports.

When the ship hit a sea mine, Anyta was the sister in charge. On board Anyta was up against the clock to get her patients to the safety of the lifeboats. This quickly became dangerous especially as those patients who had lost lower limbs were helpless. Anyta and

Mollie, rescued 75 men even though the deck was angled to the surface of the water.

Despite their efforts fifty-five wounded men were lost as were ten medical staff and thirty crew members. Also lost were eleven German prisoners of war. Total losses, 106 souls, including Anyta and Mollie.



The nurses were posthumously Mentioned in Dispatches and each man wrote to the parents of each Sister thanking them for their lives and brave actions. (See *Quiet Heroines: Nurses of the Second World War* by Brenda McBryde).

They were posthumously awarded the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct (London Gazette of 29th December 1944). The King's



Commendation could be awarded to both military and civilians during war and peacetime, and in non-military circumstances.

This summer, Anyta and Mollie were included in the *Standing With Giants* installation overlooking Gold Beach in Normandy, marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The installation contains 1,475 silhouettes, each representing a life lost. It will be in place behind the British Normandy War Memorial until the end of August. All the silhouettes will be brought home apart from those of the two nurses, which will remain.



The memorial at St Andrews is engraved with Anyta's and her brother Brian's name. Brian was killed in a flying accident earlier in the war.

Local History Society committee member, Tim Richardson, shared Anyta's bravery with the listeners of BBC Radio Surrey.

*We will remember them.*

The BBC WW2 People's War provides an insight into the terrible events on 7th August 1944 by the eyewitness and survivor Patrick Manning – for a full account see

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/39/a4368639.shtml>

*“there was a muffled explosion, the lights went out, and the ship listed. We managed to get our trousers on and our lifejackets, but as we looked out of the porthole, all we could see was water and the deck was wet underfoot. There was a horrible smell of ether in the air. We found the cabin door wouldn’t open. In desperation, we kicked and banged on the door but nothing happened. We then noticed that a piece of one of the bunks was jammed against it. This was all happening within minutes but it seemed like forever. It was a nightmare. We managed to get out into the alleyway and made our way to the stairway. It was there we found Artie Mallows, the steward who had called us, standing by the stairs with blood running down his face. He had been in the stores when the ship was hit and must have been hit by boxes falling on him. We found him a lifejacket and helped him on deck.*

*It was approximately 7.00a.m. and foggy; the ship seemed to be broken in the middle with one half listing one way and the other half the other. One of the funnels and the mast were down and the screws were out of the water. Only one LCA could get away to pick up survivors.*

*There seemed to be only us three on the aft end of the ship, when we heard someone shouting. We told Artie to stay where he was and scrambled up to the after end. There was a sergeant in the medical corps standing there, ready to jump over the side. If he had he would almost certainly have hit the propellers and died. We managed to take him back to where we left Artie, but Artie had vanished. We found the sergeant a lifejacket and got him over the side to a ledge and then jumped into the water. There was quite a heavy swell so, finding it hard to swim in a lifejacket, I paddled. I kept thinking to myself that I had to get away quickly in case I was sucked down with the ship. Then I spotted the LCA. As I reached it I was told there was no room as they were already overloaded and were afraid of capsizing. I reluctantly let go of the grab lines and carried on paddling.*

*I could hear a lot of screaming and shouting. I looked around and could see some of the wounded soldiers jumping over the side, and*

*there were two people stuck in portholes, I was told afterwards that they were nurses.*

*As I continued paddling I heard a gushing noise then saw what looked like ashes shooting out of the funnel amid lots of noise. Then there was nothing, just wreckage floating in the water and deathly silence.*

*I continued paddling, it seemed to get foggier and at one point I thought I was sinking. After what seemed like hours I heard engines; I shouted and shouted and an American torpedo boat loomed up. I was taken to a naval cruiser and from there to a hospital ship that brought us home.*

*Afterwards I found out that nearly all the catering staff were killed (around thirty men). Artie Mallows, the steward, also died after he was picked up. I was told afterwards that the ship had sunk in 8.min it seemed a lifetime”*

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**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS. DO YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE FOR OUR NEWSLETTER OR WISH TO CONTACT US? Please email [lorrainespindler@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lorrainespindler@hotmail.co.uk)**

**All Enquiries please forward to the W&DLHS Secretary Sandie Hunt [huntsandie47@gmail.com](mailto:huntsandie47@gmail.com).**

# FROM PAVEMENT-CHALKING TO ARSON, WINDOW-BREAKING, AND BOMBING: THE PROGRESS OF MILITANT SUFFRAGISM.

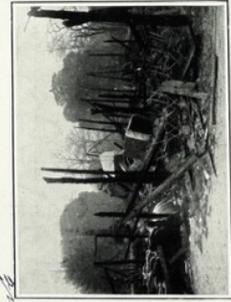
PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATIONS, C.N., SPORT AND GENERAL, ILLUSTRATIONS BUREAU, PARKING, U.S.A., AND JOURNAL, DRAWINGS BY A. FORTMEYER AND S. BODGE, DIAGRAMS BY COURTESY OF THE "DAILY MAIL."



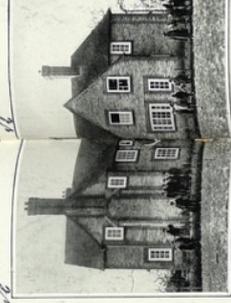
EARLY METHODS: A SUFFRAGETTE WRITING ON THE PAVEMENT.



DESTRUCTION OF A SHOP WINDOW BY A SUFFRAGETTE THROU.



ARSON: REMAINS OF THE SUBVERSIVE TEA PAVILION IN NEW GARDENS, A LONDON LANDMARK.



THE HOUSE BEING LED BY MR. LEVY.



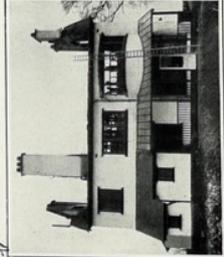
ARSON: THE REFUGEMENT BURN IN ROBERTS PARK BURN ALMOST TO THE GROUND.



DESTRUCTION OF HOUSES DESTROYED BY SUFFRAGETTES.



OBSTRUCTION. MR. ARTHUR TACKLEY BY SUFFRAGETTES.



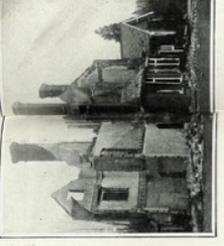
ARSON: A COBB HOUSE AT CHEAM BURNED OUT.



ARSON: CROSSLEY GREEN RAILWAY STATION BURNED.



ARSON: LADY WHITE WING BURNED DOWN.



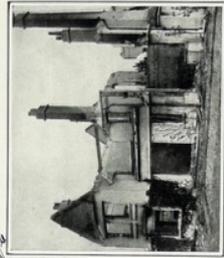
ARSON: FULHAM PARK BOWLING GREEN PAVILION BURNED.



ARSON: FARMINGTON HALL NEAR BUNDEY BURNED WITH DAMAGE RESTIMATED AT £200.



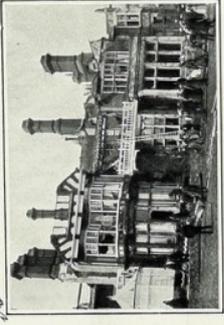
ARSON: SAUNDERTON RAILWAY STATION BURNED.



ARSON: A HOUSE NEAR COBBLES WOOD BURNED.



ARSON: A RAILWAY-CARRIAGE BURNED ON THE LONDON AND SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY AT FERRINGTON.



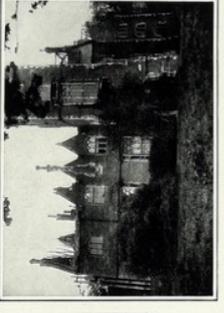
ARSON: HOUSE FORMERLY SHARPER DU CHESNAY AT ST. LEONARDS.



ARSON: TENNIBIDGE WELLS CHURCH PAVILION BURNED.



ARSON: THE BURNED ORGAN OF PENN CHURCH, BUNDEY.



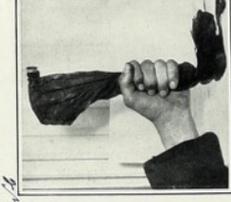
ARSON: FARMINGTON HALL NEAR BUNDEY BURNED WITH DAMAGE RESTIMATED AT £200.



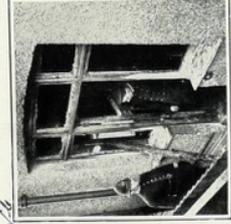
ARSON: THE BURNING MANUFACTURE BURNED, INSTANTLY SUBMERGED "UNRECOVERABLE FROM MINISTERS' FOUND."



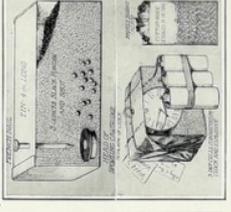
ARSON: A SUFFRAGETTE BURN CAPTURED IN A "SOCIETY" BAG.



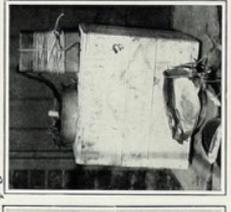
ARSON: HILL STREET COBBLES GREEN, BUNDEY.



BOMBING: WHERE THE BOMB WAS FOUND IN ST. PAUL'S CH.



BOMBING: BOMBS FOUND AT BOY STREET AND IN A TRAIN.



BOMBING: A BOMB AND REMAINS OF A BOMB AT WALTON HEATH.



"WHICUTING". A SUFFRAGETTE WITH TELEGRAPH AND SIGNAL WIRE CUTTER.

1913. Widows' houses. Get in front of them. The houses were found by Mr. ...

1910. 119 Street Road, 120 Street, Premier's ...

The "wild women" have been proved to be their work. Such matters are obviously exceedingly difficult of proof, but there can be no doubt that a great deal of the damage done is due to the militant and no others. On this double-page and on another page in this issue, we give a number of illustrations which depict the progress of militant methods and of outrages generally attributed to militant Suffragettes.

The Suffragettes, who began their vote-seeking by such comparatively innocent devices as chalking announcements on the pavements, holding meetings, and so forth, Ministers in the hope of securing their support, have, we need hardly say, now developed military to a very dangerous extent, and have caused much damage to property by breaking glass, by committing arson, and by exploding bombs. It must be understood, of course, that not all the outrages credited of late to these vote-seekers who have bet