

97 Charles Street Heritage Group

# Emmeline (Emmie) Davies & The Castle Banner

**Memories of Emmie and a profile of her mother, Annie Lacon**

Edited by Russ Hickman

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## Recollections from John Dickie

"Emmeline Davies was truly a remarkable woman. She was one of the first members of the Labour Party whom we met upon our arrival in Northampton. At that time, Emmeline was an elderly widow residing in a house on Harborough Road. She played a pivotal role in the Kingsthorpe branch, with her house serving as the central base for the ward during elections. In 1974, we managed to gain overall control, winning all five seats in Kingsthorpe, which was significant considering there were fifteen seats in total—many with four or five members each.



Fondly known as "Emmie", she was highly respected for her exceptional skills in managing a committee room. Her home was steeped in Labour history, and it was the only private residence I had ever visited that featured genuine

William Morris wallpaper.

Her late husband, Edgar, served as President of Northampton Trades Council. There is an amusing story of him being part of a trade union delegation to Moscow, where he was invited to join the Central Committee atop Lenin's

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Tomb for the May Day salute. Wearing the Trades Council chain of office, Edgar was mistaken by the Russians for an international dignitary, he may even have been invited by Stalin himself.

In her later years, Emmeline turned her attention to embroidery, producing several stunning banners, one notable example for Castle Ward. Another, a beautiful white silk banner for Northampton Chile Solidarity, featured an embroidered portrait of Comrade Allende. This banner, which was reportedly used as a stage backdrop at the Labour Club, led numerous anti-Pinochet demonstrations in London, although it has since gone missing. Emmeline also created a banner for the International Brigaders in Corby, listing all the battle honours of the British battalion."

### **Recollections from John Rawlings**

"Emmeline worked as an industrial chemist for the Co-op Dairy in Far Cotton, which also operated a coal yard. John recalls her being a lovely, very polite person with a distinctive voice. He remembered that she kept her husband Edgar's ashes on the mantelpiece. John also recalled meeting Emmeline once in the library, where she mentioned she used to confuse him with Tony Berry, but then recognised John as the one with the "Hitler fringe"."

### **Profile: Annie Lacon (1880-1968)**

Emmie's mother, Annie Lacon, was born in Birmingham in 1880. In 1906, Annie attended a meeting in Birmingham where Emmeline Pankhurst spoke and immediately became the first member of the Birmingham branch of the Women's Social & Political Union (WSPU). It was at this meeting that she also met her future husband, Edgar Davies.

In 1907, Annie was selected as a delegate from Birmingham to protest at the House of Commons. On 20 March 1907, she was arrested, along with around seventy other women, and charged with disorderly conduct and resisting

arrest. She was tried the following day, fined five shillings, which she refused to pay, and consequently spent fourteen days in solitary confinement. Annie continued her involvement with the WSPU, and after the death of her husband, she gave birth to a daughter named Emmeline. She later lived with her sister before relocating to Northampton in 1948, where her daughter was employed. Annie remained active in the Labour Party in Northampton for the rest of her life and was also a member of the Northampton Business & Professional Women's Club. She belonged to the Women's Freedom League and was a birth-control campaigner. Annie Lacon died in 1968.

The archive includes four copies of the Suffragette Fellowship newsletter (1946–1966), a roll of honour of Suffragette Prisoners (c. 1960), summons and press cuttings relating to her imprisonment and suffrage activities, including: a postcard from Mrs Pankhurst (1907), a pamphlet (1957), photographs of Lacon (1950), a press cutting about Lacon, and various ephemera connected to suffrage celebrations from the 1960s and 1970s



Annie  
Lacon (Left)  
with  
Margaret  
Bondfield in  
1950

LSE  
Archives  
(catalogue  
reference  
7LAC)

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