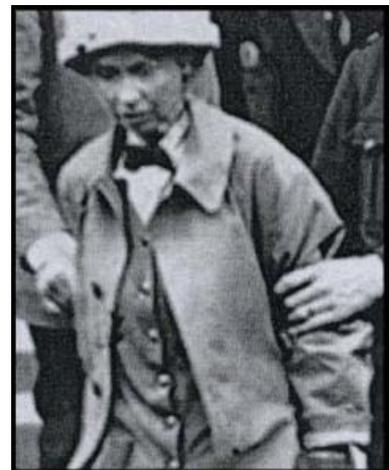


FRANCES PARKER – KIWI SUFFRAGETTE

March 2016

Frances Mary Parker OBE (1875-1924) (#5776 on the family tree) has been in the news lately because her suffragette medal came up for sale. Born in Kurow, Otago, New Zealand, Frances left home at the age of 22 to study at Newnham College, Cambridge, paid for by her uncle the future Lord Kitchener.

By 1908 she had become involved in the women's suffrage movement eventually becoming a prominent leader of the Women's Social and Political Union in Scotland. In June that year she was one of the speakers on Adela Pankhurst's platform at the WSPU demonstration in Hyde Park on 'Women's Sunday'. Imprisoned several times for her role in violent protests and attempts to burn down prominent buildings, including the cottage of Robert Burns - Scotland's national poet - she went on hunger strike in 1912 and in 1914, and was subjected to force-feeding which involved acts of physical abuse and indecent assault. She sometimes used the alias of Janet Arthur and her antics caused her uncle great outrage.



'Frances Parker – Kiwi Suffragette'

Frances was awarded the medal which came on the market in February this year. Still in its original case the medal is inscribed 'Presented to Frances Parker by the Women's Social and Political Union in Recognition of a Gallant Action whereby through Endurance to the last Extremity of Hunger and Hardship, a Great Principle of Political Justice was Vindicated.' Following her death in 1924 Frances left the medal to her friend and co-suffragette Ethel Moorhead in whose family it remained until auctioned.



Frances Parker's Suffragette Medal.

The purchaser was the Te Papa Museum in New Zealand.