

AMY MONTAGUE (1864 - UNKNOWN)

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Amy Montague photo from Devon Live

Amy Montague was an activist who lived in Cridton and took part in the suffrage campaign, was a Secretary for the Exeter branch of the Women's Social and Political Union, and took part in the Census resistance of 1911. Amy was born in 1864 in London and was the daughter of a retired army officer. She also married a retired army officer.

She had many interests, including nature, folklore and drama. Her family was much demand in Cridton because her husband Leopold was an amateur dramatist, so they often took part in plays in the town.

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Amy Montague was the Secretary for the Exeter Branch of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) from its founding in 1907. That same year she campaigned against the Liberals in a By-Election in Newton Abbot as the Liberal Government refused to give women the vote.

In 1908 she led the Devon group in the National Votes for Women Campaign in Hyde Park. There she spoke from the same platform as one of the suffragette leaders Christabel Pankhurst. She continued to speak at meetings in favour of female enfranchisement until the First World War when the suffragette campaign was called off so that the suffragettes could help with the war effort.

She also refused to be counted in the 1911 Census. Women resisted the census as they were asked intimate questions about their fertility and marital status but at the same time they could not vote. We do not know how she resisted, but she would have either stayed away from home to avoid being counted, or spoiled her census form.

In the First World War she devoted time to working in the Red Cross Hospitals in Exeter and Crediton. Both of her sons died in action during the war.

Researched and written by Elizabeth Strange, Curatorial Research Volunteer.

Bibliography

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