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Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), Suffragette Leader and Single Parent in Edwardian Britain

June Purvis

This article explores the life of Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), the suffragette leader in Edwardian Britain, as a single parent, especially in regard to her youngest surviving child, Harry. After her husband’s death in 1898, Emmeline Pankhurst became an impoverished single parent with four dependent children to support—seventeen-year-old Christabel, sixteen-year-old Sylvia, thirteen-year-old Adela, and eight-year-old Harry. Five years later she founded and led the Women’s Social and Political Union, a militant women-only organisation that campaigned for the parliamentary vote for women, and became a feminist public figure. The conflicts that she faced between her public duty to a cause she passionately believed in and her private role as a single parent are discussed.

In June 1928, as Emmeline Pankhurst lay dying she told her eldest daughter Christabel, her co-leader in the suffragette movement in Edwardian Britain, that her ‘greatest griefs’ were the death of her husband and their son, Harry; that she had never recovered from the loss. Christabel wrote that her mother ‘had always been silent about things too deep for words, but she spoke more of them now than she had ever done’. In 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst had founded the Women’s Social
J. Purvis and Political Union (WSPU), the most notorious of the groupings campaigning for the parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as it is, or shall be, granted to men. For the eleven years of the suffragette campaign, from 1903 until the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, she had been a widow, commonly known by her married name, ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’. But it is less frequently commented upon that, when her husband died on 5 July 1898, Emmeline Pankhurst became an impoverished single parent with four dependent children to support—the seventeen-year-old Christabel, sixteen-year-old Sylvia, thirteen-year-old Adela, and eight-year-old Harry. A fifth child, a boy named Frank, had died from diphtheria when just four years old, in 1888. In this article, I shall explore the theme of Emmeline Pankhurst as a single parent, especially in regard to her youngest surviving child, Harry. In order to aid our understanding of this aspect of Emmeline Pankhurst’s life we need first to discuss the ways in which Pankhurst family history has been written, and second, to explore Emmeline’s parental role when her husband was alive.

After Emmeline Pankhurst’s death on 14 June 1928, just one month before her seventieth birthday, many tributes were paid to her as leader of the suffragette movement and as an important public figure. The New York Herald Tribune announced that ‘Emmeline Goulden Pankhurst was the most remarkable political and social agitator of the early part of the twentieth century and the supreme protagonist of the campaign for the electoral enfranchisement of women’, a view echoed in the British press. Mrs Pankhurst belonged to that class of famous women like Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale, proclaimed the Evening Standard. ‘She was a born leader’, wrote Beatrice Harraden, a writer and former suffragette, ‘one had only to hear her even for a short time to be caught by her eloquence, and to be convinced that she had greatness of spirit’. She continued, ‘It was at Mrs. Pankhurst’s bidding that women of all conditions of life, young and old alike, sprang up to join in the militant campaign for votes for women, justice for women, equal chances for women, the open road, a free pass for women—demands so long and patiently toiled for through long years of discouragement, by the older constitutional societies’.

But one of the Pankhurst daughters, Sylvia, was less impressed with her mother’s achievements and was busy writing a manuscript, not only about the suffragette campaign but also about the Pankhurst family. Sylvia, a socialist feminist and member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) during the suffrage years, had often been at odds with the women-centred views and policy of her mother and Christabel. She was upset when, in August 1906, Christabel first put into effect the WSPU by-election policy of independence from all political parties, including the Labour Party. As Christabel later explained, her aim was to ‘rally women of all … parties and women of no party, and unite them as one independent force’; by working ‘for any one party’, the WSPU would ‘have alienated women whose preference was for one or other of the remaining parties’. Emmeline agreed with Christabel on this strategy and when both resigned their membership of the ILP some months later, Sylvia was angry. Although the breaking of any close association with the ILP at the central level did not mean that such links were severed at
the local level, where many suffragettes also retained membership of the ILP, Sylvia was unhappy with what she saw as the marginalisation of class issues and the centrality of gender. Seeking to fuse her socialism and feminism, she eventually formed in 1913 the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (ELFS) which, although formally linked to the WSPU, followed an independent line. Thus the ELFS would not attack the Labour Party nor Labour parliamentary candidates unsympathetic to women’s suffrage, advocated mass rather than individual protest and included men as well as women. Such differences in policy and tactics led Emmeline and Christabel to expel Sylvia and her Federation from the WSPU in early 1914. The tensions between Sylvia and her mother deepened during the First World War, which Emmeline patriotically supported and Sylvia, as a pacifist, opposed.

After the war ended, Sylvia moved further and further to the left, becoming a founding member of the British Communist Party while Emmeline became disillusioned with communism and socialist politics. When Sylvia heard in 1926 that her mother was going to stand as a candidate for the Conservative Party in the next general election, she expressed in public her ‘profound grief’ at such a move. To Sylvia, her mother’s alliance with the Conservatives was the final insult to the memory of her father. Events over the next two years did nothing to heal the rift between mother and daughter. Unknown to Emmeline, in December 1927 Sylvia, now co-habiting with Silvio Corio, an anti-fascist refugee, gave birth to a son, out of wedlock. The following April, Sylvia decided to make the news public, a scandal that was blazoned on the front page of the Sunday Chronicle and the News of the World. She told one reporter about her neglectful mother, saying that she had written to her about the birth of her grandson, but had received no reply. The aged Emmeline campaigning in her constituency was deeply shocked by this news about her ‘errant’ daughter, with whom she was never reconciled. She died a few months later.

Sylvia’s disagreements with Christabel and their mother undoubtedly helped to shape the manuscript she began writing shortly after Emmeline’s death. She had already published, in 1911, one book on the WSPU titled The Suffragette: the history of the women’s militant suffrage movement 1905–1910, and she was determined that her second book would have a different content. As she explained to the former suffragette Mary Gawthorpe in the early 1930s, ‘The events covered by that book [The Suffragette] I truncated a bit not to repeat what I had written before—for I thought when we all are dead and gone people will read both those books if I do not bore them by too much repetition’. But what Sylvia did not identify, and perhaps was unaware of, was the way her relationship with Christabel and their mother influenced her second book.

As Hilda Kean tellingly comments, in The Suffragette Movement: an intimate account of persons and ideals, published in 1931, Sylvia writes not just as an ‘angry socialist’ but also as a ‘rejected daughter’. Thus in The Suffragette Movement Emmeline Pankhurst is represented as not only a failed leader who defers to the hated Christabel, their mother’s favourite child, but also a failed mother who neglected her less favoured children, namely Sylvia herself, Adela, and especially
Harry. Emmeline Pankhurst, asserts Sylvia, was so selfish and driven that, when
Harry was ill with infantile paralysis, or what we would now call poliomyelitis, she
still continued with her plan to leave him and undertake a lecture tour in the USA.
‘So ruthless was the inner call to action, that, finding her son thus stricken, she
persevered with her intention … there was never a moment of doubt as to where
she should be substitute—on the platform or by the bedside of her son.’15 Harry
died and, by implication, his mother is to blame. This is, perhaps, the most harsh
criticism that any daughter could make about her mother. But is it justified? As we
shall see, there is an alternative story to be told.

As the first Pankhurst daughter to write her memoirs, Sylvia’s *The Suffragette
Movement* held a particular sway. It was taken up and adapted in the 1930s and
1950s by influential male historians, such as George Dangerfield and Roger
Fulford.16 Then, in 1977, *The Suffragette Movement* was reprinted in a cheap,
paperback edition by Virago, a feminist publishing house, and eagerly read by
feminist historians, keen to find out about our foremothers. Socialist feminism was
the dominant perspective shaping and influencing the growth of women’s history
in Britain during this decade, and Sylvia’s *The Suffragette Movement* became the
accepted ‘truth’ about the Pankhurst family, a fascinating first-hand account of
what it was like to live in such a remarkable, politically active family. Although this
narrative has been questioned by a few scholars, its influence is still strong.17 For
example, Martin Pugh in *The Pankhurs* relies heavily on Sylvia’s text, making at
least fifty-eight references to it and only thirteen to Christabel’s *Unshackled: the
story of how we won the vote*, published posthumously in 1959, one year after her
death.18 Yet when *The Suffragette Movement* was first published in 1931, both
Christabel and Adela were hurt by what their sister had written about their mother.
When ageing former suffragettes asked Christabel to tell her side of events, she
firmly replied that she would not disagree with a member of her family in public, a
position from which she did not budge in her lifetime.19 Adela, by 1933 living in
Australia, in an unpublished comment noted that in *The Suffragette Movement*,
Sylvia:

makes out that my father was faultless, my mother full of faults. Readers should
understand that in Sylvia’s eyes to cease to be a socialist, if one had ever been one,
is a moral crime … I am convinced that had my mother remained in the I.L.P. or
become a pacifist or communist, her conduct in relation to Harry and myself
would not have received any censure from Sylvia and the bitter feelings she writes
about her childhood would never have been penned.20

Adela wrote to former suffragette Elsa Gye about her worries and Elsa replied,
‘Your mother was a very great woman & cannot be judged by ordinary mothers …
Great women do not make the best mothers’.21 That comment is clearly
gendered—would we say the same about great men? But it also contains a conflict
that was only too evident for Emmeline Pankhurst, a single parent who became a
public figure—how was she to care for, and relate to, her children, especially her
youngest child, Harry? I shall explore this issue by drawing especially upon the
writings, many unpublished, of Adela since she and Harry were the two youngest
children and close to each other. As we shall see, Adela offers a differing account of family life from that presented by Sylvia.

When Richard Pankhurst died in 1898, from a gastric ulcer that had perforated his stomach, the forty-eight-year-old Emmeline, nearly twenty years his junior, was heartbroken. Richard, a radical lawyer, had been her constant companion in struggling radical causes, such as women’s suffrage, for nineteen years. He had never abandoned his radical politics in order to make a comfortable living from his legal practice, and nor did Emmeline want him to, despite the constant conflict they experienced between ‘purse and politics’. The newly wed couple, married in December 1879, had initially lived in Manchester, then moved to London, and back up North again in 1893. They were living at 4 Buckingham Crescent, Daisy Bank Road, Victoria Park, Manchester when Richard died. Richard had always given, unsparingly, free legal advice to trade unions and other socialist groupings, and when he made public in September 1894 that he was joining the ILP, as his wife had already done, many of his clients no longer required his services. Nonetheless, he continued with his radical politics and exhausting schedule of legal work, despite failing health.

The joint interest of Richard and Emmeline in politics had been the central issue around which family life revolved. Consequently, their children had not been segregated from adult life but, in Rebecca West’s memorable phrase, ‘bobbed like corks’ on its tide, rarely playing games but more commonly participating in the political gatherings in their home. But Richard’s desire to enter parliament as a Liberal MP, a political ambition strongly supported by his wife, could not be realised on his salary. So when they lived in London, Emmeline had set up a shop selling fancy goods to supplement the family income. During these years, her sister Mary had lived with the growing family, helping with the mothering. A children’s nurse, Susannah, was also employed. Despite her demanding round of politics, shop work and domestic life, Emmeline never wanted to be a full-time wife and mother. When in 1891 an interviewer for The Woman’s Herald asked her if she found her political work and the running of the business, where she supervised her shop assistants for about eight hours a day, a bar to her domestic duties, she replied decisively:

In no way; I enjoy to the full the happiness of home. I have four little children, who, I might say, are quite as happy, quite as well looked after, as any children ... I have an excellent nurse and governess to whom I can confidently entrust my children. I do not think the mother is the best instructress of her own offspring ... she is often too indulgent ... My children look forward to my return as a treat ... I am a Radical, devoted to the politics of the people, and to progress, especially where the education, emancipation, and industrial interests of women are concerned.

Emmeline makes clear in her autobiography that Richard was supportive of her life outside the home. ‘Dr. Pankhurst did not desire that I should turn myself into a household machine. It was his firm belief that society as well as the family stands in needs of women’s services’. But the effect upon their children of the frequently absent Emmeline, despite the arrangements she made for alternative
childcare, seems to have had a particularly bad effect upon Sylvia, Adela and Harry.

Sylvia, in *The Suffragette Movement*, writes a tale of woe about her childhood, praising her adored father and criticising her overworked mother. Christabel was ‘our mother’s favourite’, the child who enjoyed ‘the sunny favour of the household’. Sylvia claims she was treated less favourably, often disciplined by the servants for dawdling behind when her boots were too tight or for refusing to eat her cold, lumpy porridge or to take her cod liver oil. Her mother is described as a stickler for discipline, tolerating ‘no likes and dislikes’, while her father, who could presumably have changed the discipline regime, is praised. ‘It was Father’s rule—O splendid father!—that as soon as one said: “I am sorry”, all punishment must end; benign forgiveness must erase all memory of offence.’

Further condemnation of Emmeline as a mother is apparent in Sylvia’s description of her young brother, Harry. Thus her mother is chastised for not breastfeeding the baby boy and generally neglecting him:

Harry, at birth, was the finest of Mrs. Pankhurst’s children, but apparently his bottle did not agree with him; perhaps the nurse mismanaged him; he did not get his mother’s personal care. His health at several stages gave occasion for anxiety … Yet he was a beautiful, sturdy-limbed child, and at three years spoke with remarkable fluency.

Harry, claims Sylvia, became a solitary child, often wandering away on his own, the four-year gap between him and Adela seldom bridged. Further, Sylvia asserts that it was she, not Adela, with whom Harry developed a ‘tender bond’. When the family returned to Manchester in 1897, Sylvia remembered how Harry was sent to a small school kept by a kindly, elderly man. However, the schoolmaster was unable to devote much attention to the new pupil, the youngest in the class, since the single schoolroom was not only dull and poorly lit but had an assortment of boys of different ages and abilities.

Adela’s recollections of her childhood, however, are very different from Sylvia’s. For Adela, Sylvia was ‘for many years’ their mother’s favourite, ‘the one she loved & trusted most’. Her tall elder sisters, the best of friends, enjoying the craze for bicycling popularised by the socialist Clarion Cycling Clubs, teased her mercilessly, especially when she began to put on weight:

I began to get fat; my hair was thin, ‘rats tails’ my sisters called it … Christabel and Sylvia sang and shouted after me ‘she is a lump—a lump—a lump’ until I was almost beside myself … I grew more and more oppressed and listless day by day. Harry, too, was pale and delicate, repressed and miserable. He got his share of teasing but less than mine and with less animosity. My sisters took little notice of him. He was small and unimportant and they with their cycling and socialist interests, by this time nearly grown up. Father and mother must have been worried over Harry, for his development was retarded, but they did not think of the one thing needful; that my mother should give up her public work and devote herself to her only son. It would have been treason to the Cause. My father whom we all thought knew everything did not suggest it … One excitement followed another in public life. Strikes, elections, free speech demonstrations, public bodies—but we two younger children drooped more and more.
The unhappy Adela and Harry, unlike their elder sisters, spent a lot of time with the 'proletarians' in the kitchen, hearing conversations about the sordidness of poverty and the attitude of mind of people who lived in the slums. When Adela and Harry moved 'upstairs' in the house, they brooded over the smallest troubles, wilting under the watchful eye of their elder sisters, who were treated as grown-ups by their father:

When Harry and I were in trouble, they made us feel like criminals. A little harmless fun or mischief was treated as a great crime by Christabel and Sylvia, long after our parents and nurse had forgotten it. Sylvia, with a long face and in the sharp shrill voice peculiar to her, would revive all the humiliation. She was a fearful 'telltale' and would retell all the unpleasant things she knew against me to aunts and friends. My mother was, of course, quite unconscious of this. Harry took his cue from me and wilted under my mother’s displeasure.35

But if Harry and Adela viewed their mother with a mixture of love and fear, their father was a more distant figure of authority. Both were terrified of him, unable to comprehend his lectures on socialism, capitalism, religion and suffrage.36 Sylvia’s and Adela’s differing accounts of their childhood within the same family will not surprise most researchers; one child’s experiences are not the same as another’s. But it is Sylvia’s story of their mother that has been privileged and accepted as the dominant narrative.

What Sylvia and Adela both agreed upon was that their mother was devastated when their father died. The eight-year-old Harry, in his attempt to lighten the gloom, told some ‘little jokes’ to bring smiles to sorrowful faces.37 But there were no smiles for the broken-hearted Emmeline. Her fears about Richard’s financial status were soon confirmed. He had left no money, nor a will, only the debts he had been struggling for years to liquidate. How was she to support herself and her four financially dependent children, and give her daughters, who were much older than Harry, those opportunities whereby they could earn a living in a job of their choice? The ever resourceful Emmeline, with her strong self-reliant nature, determined that the debts had to be settled. She decided that the only way forward was to move from the leafy suburbs of Manchester to a smaller house, sell the furniture, paintings and books, and to economise generally.38 Above all, Emmeline knew that she would have to find employment, not an easy task for the impoverished widow of a well-known ‘socialist’ barrister. On 30 August 1898, she resigned her unpaid, time-consuming work as a Poor Law Guardian and decided to set up another business like the one she had opened in London, a shop selling silks, cushions and artistic wares. Such a venture, she hoped, would provide income for her family and employment for herself and Christabel, who was yet to return from Switzerland.39 Emmeline had barely finished the task when the Chorlton Board of Guardians offered her the salaried post of Registrar of Births and Deaths. She gratefully accepted the offer—now she would have both a steady salary and a pension in retirement.

Setting about finding a humbler house that would also include a large room suitable for the registry, Emmeline eventually rented a semi-detached residence off busy Oxford Road and near to the city centre, 62 Nelson Street. And, as in the
past, she managed her life and her family as a mother and worker, by relying upon the help of servants and some close extended kin. Thus she employed a housekeeper and cook, Ellen Coyle, to assist with the domestic arrangements and childcare, as well as a housemaid, Mary Leaver. Emmeline’s sister Mary, who had left her unhappy marriage, came to live at 62 Nelson Street, as well as, temporarily, two of her brothers, Walter, an accountant who helped to keep the shop’s books, and Herbert, a bookbinder. These relatives supported the grief-laden Emmeline, who was frequently laid low with migraine, helped with the care of Adela and Harry, and generally made a contribution to the impoverished Pankhurst household.

The newly widowed Emmeline was pleased when Sylvia and Adela were fortunate enough to find openings that suited their interests. Sylvia, a talented artist, was offered a free studentship at the Manchester Municipal School of Art. Adela, who wanted to be a schoolteacher, was given a free training place at a state-aided Higher Grade Board School, which meant that her removal from Manchester High School for Girls was not so disastrous—although she would return to the High School within a couple of years. But the youngest child, Harry, was a problem for his grieving mother.

Harry, a sensitive boy, developed acute and permanent astigmatism after catching chickenpox and then measles. Unhappy at Mr Lupton’s school, where he was unable to read by the dim light shed on his desk, Adela, to whom he was close, often looked after him. ‘I used to read to him’, she recollected, ‘but Sylvia mocked at my way of doing it and made both of us self-conscious so we gave it up. Sylvia considered my mother was “working for others” in her public life. She would have called it treason, if mother had decided to devote her spare time to her only son.’ Each day Adela would also collect Harry from school. But when Ellen, the housekeeper and cook, told Harry it was silly to have a girl calling for him, the practice stopped. Harry began to truant. His Uncle Herbert, suspecting what was going on, followed the boy one day and discovered that he was slinking off to railway stations to watch the trains. Deeply worried about what to do for her son, Emmeline consulted a doctor who advised that nothing was wrong apart from the boy’s nervousness and lack of self-control. She decided it was best to remove Harry to another preparatory school.

Emmeline’s financial plight had not gone unnoticed and a ‘Dr. Pankhurst fund’ had been set up which, within seventeen months of Richard’s death, had amounted to nearly £935. Although this fund gave Emmeline supplementary financial help for the children over the next few years, its administration caused her to feel very bitter, as though she and her children were objects of charity. Her determination to be treated with dignity and not as an impoverished widow who was expected to bow to the authority of a committee of male administrators was strengthened when, in 1900, she was elected as an ILP candidate for the Manchester School Board. Emmeline was particularly indignant when, in the autumn of 1902, she was informed, without any consultation, that a decision had been made to reduce the allowance for the maintenance and education of her children to £50 per annum, payable monthly. The burden of supporting her children financially was now
particularly heavy since her brothers were no longer living at 62 Nelson Street. Emmeline complained bitterly to Mr Nodal, a Stockport newspaper proprietor and one of the administrators of the fund, a man she knew and whom she respected, pointing out that she needed the usual sum of £8. 6s. 8d. per month in order to send regular weekly payments to Sylvia, who was studying art in Venice, and to pay the fees for her third daughter, Adela, who was back at the High School for Girls preparatory to going to Owens College [later Manchester University]. She had already explained to Mr Nodal that only one of her children, Christabel, was earning—‘engaged in business with me’—while her son, ‘is 12 & is at a preparatory school. I intend next year to send him to a Public School’. Emmeline concluded passionately that either she would decline to take any more money from the administrators and state her case to the subscribers, or the balance must be paid to her to deal with. ‘After all the money is the children’s & surely I & they know best how to deal with it.’

Nodal replied immediately, telling Emmeline that he had been present at the committee meeting, but his proposal to hand the balance of the money over to her at the end of the year had been a minority view. The other administrators, he suggested, had been mainly influenced by the consideration that the balance of the fund ‘should now be husbanded for the boy [Harry], to give him the best possible start in life; that it is more difficult and expensive to do this for a youth than for a girl’. The remaining sum of £270 would be exhausted in less than three years, when Harry would be fifteen. ‘He ought to go to College longer—unless he should happen to be placed in a good business or profession, where a premium would probably be required. No money to provide this would then be in the hands of the Committee.’

Emmeline was extremely agitated by Nodal’s reply and wrote not one but two letters to him, both dated 29 November 1902. She explained again that the ‘very talented & industrious’ Sylvia needed further financial support, as did Adela with her ‘distinct literary gift’—although this was not so for Christabel, now a student at Owens College, since her education involved ‘no cost’ to her mother. Then, with a feminist sting in her writing, Emmeline pointed out, ‘I believe & my husband thought it too that it is quite as important to give opportunity of education to gifted girls as to boys. I am carrying out his wishes in what I am doing’. She then spoke about Harry, explaining why she believed the decision of the administrators to withhold the money from her was against her present needs and those of the children:

Harry who although 13 is still in an elementary stage (he was delicate as a little one & went to school late indeed he has only just left kindergarten) … wishes to be an Engineer & I feel for him the Technical School will be best. However it is too early to decide as to this until he is more advanced. When he is old enough to go to College or to be apprenticed his sisters will be independent & with me will see that their only brother & my only son will have every opportunity … If my income from other sources is reduced now at what I maintain is the most expensive stage in the children’s lives I shall be obliged to take more money out of the business [shop] instead of as now letting profits go to increase the very small capital with which I started a venture which has been entirely justified by results. I am building
up a source of independence for the future there. Even if the worst happened & I
died before Harry's Education is complete my life is insured for £1500 & I pay the
premiums amounting to over £40 per ann [annum] so that is amply provided for.
I have told you all this in order that you may see how right I am in saying that it
is for the next 2 or 3 years that the money is of use to us.\footnote{50}

Despite this long explanation, Emmeline would not compromise over the original
terms agreed for the payment of the money. ‘I cannot without a sacrifice of self
respect accept the reduced sum. Rather will I try to do without it altogether. I have
had a big struggle & so far have succeeded & will continue to do so … For the
children’s sake I have borne what I would not submit to for my own.’\footnote{51}

The disagreement was not settled quickly, but dragged on. Emmeline’s iron will
would not bend. Determined to be treated as an individual being in her own right
who should be respected for the work she had undertaken with her husband, she
informed Mr Nodal in early December, ‘That Fund was intended to be a testimo-
nial to my husband’s public work not a relief fund & I who in my small way worked
with him am entitled to at least courteous treat & I will have it’.\footnote{52} But the adminis-
trators of the fund stood firm. Emmeline’s constant struggle between the parenting
of her young children and her role as the breadwinner for her family was brought
into sharp focus yet again on Christmas Day when Adela fell ill with diphtheria and
scarlet fever. ‘I have been compelled to isolate her by sending the other members of
the family away and as I cannot nurse her myself because of my official work as
Registrar I have had to engage a trained nurse’, she informed Nodal. ‘This is of
course a great trial & anxiety to me & also a source of great expense. I have to pay
a nurse [to look after Adela] … £2. 2. 0 per week. There is also rent of rooms for
other members of the family & the expenses of doctor etc.’\footnote{53}

There seemed no end to the burdens that fell on Emmeline’s shoulders. ‘Since I
last wrote you’, she told Nodal early in the New Year of 1903, ‘I have had an anxious
time for my boy has been ill away from home & for some time I feared he too was
going to have fever. Happily however he is now well again & my daughter is con-
avalescent’. The strain of all these family illnesses, she feared, was taking its toll upon
her health. ‘All this is a great worry as I have so much other work to do (as the man
as well as the mother of the family) & I feel rather run down & fretful about things,
especially as however careful I am, I cannot help spending money freely at a time
like this.’ Yet, despite feeling poorly, and despite expressing her gratitude to Mr
Nodal for his ‘great kindness’ towards her, Emmeline’s resolve to be treated with
respect remained unshaken. ‘[I]f we cannot have the money for their [the
children’s] immediate needs without humiliation’, she insisted, ‘we had better do
without it altogether. I shall have to work harder & we must learn to do without
some things but better that than lose our sense of independence.’\footnote{54}

Emmeline’s stubbornness and refusal to compromise paid off. By the end of
January 1903 agreement had been reached that the old level of payments would be
resumed. However, when no money had arrived by early February, the uncertainty
made her feel ill:

I have counted on the money for January & February to pay some of the expenses
incidental to my daughter’s illness & I really need it for apart from illness this is a
time of the year when I have heavy charges to meet insurance premiums etc. What must I do? ... How thankful I am that so far I have had strength to work & earn money myself.\textsuperscript{55}

As no further letters between Emmeline and Nodal are extant about the payment from the Dr. Pankhurst Fund we may assume that the contentious matter was finally settled. The weary, hardworked Emmeline, anxious for the future of all her four children, decided that priority had to be given to Harry, who was far behind in his schoolwork. Believing that he might benefit from being at boarding school, she sent him to King’s School, Hampstead. Alternate Sundays, when he was allowed time off, Harry would visit Sylvia, who was now back from Italy and studying art in London. Although he was happy at his new school, he was still backward for his age and Emmeline was eventually forced to bring him back home, in July 1906. The shop was running at a loss and she could not afford the fees.\textsuperscript{56}

In the grief and desolation that had beset Emmeline in the early days of her widowhood, her interest in politics had waned. However, the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 rekindled old sparks that had been temporarily dampened. Her late husband had been on the side of the Boer republics in William Gladstone’s time, and Emmeline held to the same position now. She saw Britain as an imperialist aggressor, bullying a small community of Dutch settler farmers who were defending their homes and land. The Fabian Society’s refusal to oppose the war made her so angry that, together with fifteen others, she resigned her membership in 1890.\textsuperscript{57} Her children adopted the same unpopular views as their mother, thus courting reprisals. Harry, who spoke up for peace at Mr Lupton’s school, was fiercely attacked outside the school gates by some of his fellow pupils; the schoolmaster found him unconscious in the road and carried him home. Adela, for a similar stand at the High School for Girls, was struck in the face by a book thrown across the classroom by one of the pupils, the teacher witnessing the incident offering no rebuke.\textsuperscript{58} Despite such unpleasant incidents, Emmeline would not budge from her anti-war views.

Her gradual return to political life became noticeable during the 1900 general election, and after her election to the Manchester School Board as an ILP candidate. By late November 1901, both Emmeline and Christabel were subscribers to the North of England Society for Women’s Suffrage. During the summer of 1902, Emmeline was speaking alongside Eva Gore Booth, Esther Roper and Christabel at meetings in Lancashire, organised under its auspices.\textsuperscript{59} When Christabel said to her mother one day in 1903, ‘It is unendurable to think of another generation of women wasting their lives begging for the vote … We must act’, Emmeline took note.\textsuperscript{60} ‘After that’, she recollected, ‘I and my daughters together sought a way to bring about that union of young and old which would find new methods, blaze new trails.\textsuperscript{61} Thus on 10 October 1903, together with a small group of socialist women suffragists, she founded the WSPU, to campaign for the parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as it is, or shall be, granted to men. As Emmeline recollected, ‘We resolved to limit our membership exclusively to women … and to be satisfied with nothing but action on our question. Deeds, not words, was to be our permanent motto’.\textsuperscript{62}
Emmeline Pankhurst’s single-mindedness about the votes for women campaign, fuelled by her passion to end the unjust and oppressed condition of her sex, was to be severely tested in the years to come—not only in the political arena but also in regard to her family. For Sylvia, her mother’s devotion to the women’s cause was soon ‘overshadowing all personal affections’ so that ‘[w]e were no longer a family’; worse, it was rooted in the wrong-headed notion that it was ‘the fulfilment of her destiny’. But Adela had a much kinder remembrance of their mother. She suggested that their father, with his frequent exhortations such as ‘Life is nothing without enthusiasms’ and ‘If you do not work for others you will not have been worth the upbringing’, had a profound influence on his widow and children, reaching far beyond his death. Their mother’s memory of ‘her husband was a hard taskmaster’ in that ‘she felt her duty lay still in public service’, an ideal she always kept before their children.

Emmeline seems never to have disagreed with Christabel during the long suffrage struggle. Christabel, who had been awarded a first-class honours degree in Law, became in 1906 the Chief Organiser of the WSPU, leading the suffragette campaign with her mother. During these suffrage years, Emmeline as a single parent did her best to support her children, a task that was not always easy. A charismatic leader and powerful orator, she was always leading from the front and, until 1912, was the WSPU’s key itinerant speaker, travelling up and down the country, trying to persuade the public and the Liberal Government to support the women’s cause. She endured thirteen imprisonments, hunger strikes—and later in the movement—also thirst strikes. Although never forcibly fed, such forms of protest did tremendous damage to her body. Her maternal duties, as before her WSPU days, were always fitted around her political life. In particular, during these turbulent years Emmeline felt a particular responsibility for the gentle Harry whom Teresa Billington-Greig called cruelly, ‘the only girl in the [Pankhurst] family’.

On 21 March 1907, Emmeline Pankhurst resigned her post as Registrar of Births and Deaths in order to concentrate full time upon the suffrage cause. For some time, the wealthy Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, who had joined the WSPU as its Honorary Treasurer, had been urging her to do so, pointing out that WSPU funds were now sufficient to give her, the WSPU’s most inspirational speaker, a guaranteed income of £200–300 per annum. Emmeline Pankhurst had not taken the decision lightly. She still had Harry to support and she also valued her independence. However, a decision was forced upon her when the Registrar General informed her that she had to choose between her political activity and her official post. Emmeline gave up her Manchester home, closed her failing shop and moved to London, where WSPU headquarters were now located. Christabel was living with Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and her husband, Fred, and there was insufficient room in their flat to accommodate another adult. Nor did ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’ wish to live with a couple she hardly knew. From now on Emmeline Pankhurst never had a permanent address but lived in hotels or flats that were rented or lent by friends. At this natural break in her life, she made arrangements for the seventeen-year-old Harry’s future.
Emmeline decided that Harry, who was not academically gifted, would be able to support himself in life if he learnt a trade, and so she apprenticed him to a builder in Glasgow. But the builder went bankrupt. When she returned from the provinces to London in early 1908 she found her son staying at Sylvia’s lodgings, ‘a worrying disappointment for her’. Christabel, realising that a harsh outdoor life was unsuited to Harry’s delicate health, came up with the idea that he would fare better in an office as a secretary. Emmeline enthusiastically embraced the suggestion, offering to pay for classes in shorthand and typing and to give her son a weekly allowance of £1 per week. She also suggested that Harry, whose irregular schooling had always been hindered by poor eyesight, should get a reader’s ticket for the British Museum so that he could further his general education. Once the matter of Harry’s future was settled, the energetic Emmeline was soon off campaigning again, in the provinces. With their mother out of the way, Christabel and Sylvia arranged an eye test for their brother and the purchase of spectacles that Emmeline had discouraged. But Harry, like his sisters, had less interest in studying than in the suffrage and socialist movements. Soon he was heckling politicians, chalking pavements, speaking at street corners and, an ardent socialist, lecturing for the ILP on the virtues of ‘back to the land’ ideals. When Sylvia suggested to her mother that Harry should have some experience of agriculture, before he spoke on the subject, the anxious Emmeline, keen to secure vocational training for her boy, sought the advice of Joseph Fels whom she had heard about through her friendship with the Labour MP, Keir Hardie. Fels, a small, wiry, Jewish American, had arrived in Britain to pioneer farm colonies, as a way to ease unemployment in the East End of London. Thinking that the fresh country air would be beneficial for her son, Emmeline arranged for Harry to be apprenticed to Fels’ smallholding and farm at Mayland, in Essex.

Emmeline’s hopes for her boy were suddenly dashed when he became ill with serious inflammation of the bladder. The hard toil in all weathers had not improved but weakened his health. The ever thoughtful Harry had not wanted to worry his mother and not told her of his woes until it was too late. Emmeline arranged for her son to be brought from Essex to 3 Pembridge Gardens, London, the nursing home of two WSPU members, Sisters Gertrude Townend and Catherine Pine. She was deeply shocked when told that Harry needed an examination, under chloroform, but her fears subsided when he came round safely from the anaesthetic and some of the symptoms of his illness appeared to recede. In a more optimistic yet cautious mood she wrote to Dr Mills, asking if it would be possible to alter Harry’s next appointment with him from Saturday, 3rd April to Monday, the 5th:

Mr. Pethick Lawrence has very kindly invited Christabel, Harry & myself to go with him to Margate for the weekend and on my telling him the position of affairs he suggested that I should write & ask you if we can put off our appointment with you until Monday morning in order that Harry may have the change of air until then. Of course we are entirely in your hands in the matter.

As Harry was showing some improvement, Dr Mills probably agreed to the change of plan.
Soon Emmeline Pankhurst was back in the provinces, campaigning this time in Sheffield. The busyness of her life left her little time to be with her children. Christabel and Adela she saw regularly, while the skills of the artistic Sylvia, living in London, were put to good use in creating designs and decorations for the WSPU. But Harry, who lived at a distance and was unsettled, was always a worry. Furthermore, in the days before a National Health Service, the not wealthy Emmeline had to pay her son’s medical bills. In this instance she later sent Dr Mills a cheque for £4. 4s. 7d. Realising that she needed to earn more money in order to care for her son, Emmeline wrote to an old American friend enquiring about the possibilities of a lucrative paid lecture tour in the USA that autumn. Meanwhile, she made sure that she spent some brief spells in London during April and May, when she could see Harry and also participate in WSPU business.

Harry’s health had improved sufficiently to allow him to accompany his mother to the WSPU grand bazaar or ‘Exhibition’, as it was called, held in the Prince’s Skating Rink, Knightsbridge, from 13 to 26 May, to raise money for the cause. Emmeline’s mother’s heart swelled with pride as her tall, lean son with his broad shoulders and graceful droop of his head, stood by her side. People came up to her commenting, ‘What a charming boy … I did not know you had a son’. The nineteen-year-old, eager-to-please Harry, so like his father in his support for the women’s cause, was proud of all his mother had achieved and keen, as the only man in the Pankhurst family, for her comfort. He personally knew the hostility that campaigning for the women’s cause could arouse since a hostile crowd had once attempted to overturn his barrow full of ‘Votes for Women’ literature. Now, in the more tranquil setting of the Exhibition, Harry helped to set up the stalls and fetch and carry generally. As he now seemed fit, Emmeline thought it would be best if he went back to Fels’ farm since she believed that an active, outdoor life would help him to grow stronger. Perhaps also, at the back of her mind, was the thought that her gentle, shy boy needed to mix more in the company of men rather than with his sisters and all the other women in the WSPU.

Emmeline had planned her American tour for that autumn of 1909 when, a few days before she was due to leave, Harry was struck down with inflammation of the spinal cord and was paralysed from the waist down. The sick young man was taken from the farm in Essex again to the nursing home in Pembridge Gardens. The sight of her son in great pain, unable to use his legs, tore at Emmeline’s heart. Knowing that she needed money for Harry’s medical care, especially if he should become an invalid, she felt that she had no choice but to undertake her lucrative lecturing trip, confiding to another suffragette, Miss Birnstingl, ‘I don’t like going at all’. Emmeline left Harry under the skilled care of Dr Mills, nurses Pine and Townend, and under the overall charge of her sister, Mary, and Christabel and Sylvia. Since Mary was a WSPU organiser in Brighton and Christabel its Organising Secretary, it was difficult for them to attend to Harry full time. So the task fell on Sylvia, who held no organisational role in the WSPU. After months of hard toil, painting the decorations for the WSPU Exhibition in Knightsbridge, Sylvia had retreated to the picturesque village of Penshurst in Kent, to paint and study for her own delight. ‘I returned from my work in the little wood, with my canvas on my back, to find a
telegram announcing that my brother had been brought to London seriously ill’, she wrote in The Suffragette Movement. ‘I found him at the nursing home in Pembridge Gardens, completely paralysed from the waist downwards, and suffering intolerable agony.’ However, Sylvia, for whatever reason, did not tell Adela, now a WSPU organiser in Yorkshire, that Harry was seriously ill. ‘My dear brother’s illness was kept from me to the last’, recollected Adela many years later, still feeling keenly the sadness of the situation. ‘Sylvia did not inform me of it and that, too, was a sacrifice to the Cause—lest I should fail towards it in my grief for the dear boy.’

For Christabel, her mother’s decision to leave her sick son and travel to the USA was based on financial ‘necessity’. But, as noted earlier, for the resentful and embittered Sylvia, writing of the incident over twenty years later in The Suffragette Movement, her mother’s decision was heartless, implying that she was responsible for Harry’s death. When Adela, in 1931, read Sylvia’s account of Harry’s death she was deeply upset. In an unpublished essay, she commented that Harry ‘would surely be hurt to know that Sylvia used the opportunity which his dependence on her in the last few months of his life gave her to make money by trying to blast his mother’s reputation’. And Sylvia herself changed the story, in her later biography of her mother titled The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst, published in 1935. In this book, Sylvia asserts that her mother ‘steeled herself to persevere with her journey, declaring that he [Harry] would recover as before’. Such contradictory statements by Sylvia have been missed by most historians, who have taken the account of the Pankhurst family in the influential The Suffragette Movement as the standard reading of events.

Christabel, Sylvia and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence were amongst those who bade Emmeline goodbye when she caught the boat train from Waterloo on 13 October 1909, on her way to the USA, her first visit to that country. ‘I shall never forget the excitement of my landing’, she recollected five years later, ‘the first meeting with the American “reporter”, an experience dreaded by all Europeans.’ But the excitement was dulled by her constant worry about Harry. In a speech at Boston, she spoke not only about the campaign for women’s suffrage but also about her sick son. ‘As the youngest of her family, he has always been “her baby”, and though the doctor assured her it would be all right for her to go’, she told a local press reporter, ‘she was in acute anxiety till she got the good news he was better.’ But it was not to be. When Emmeline arrived back in England on 8 December, she heard the bitter truth from which Christabel and Sylvia had tried to protect her, namely that Harry would never walk again and that his future was bleak.

Christabel, as the eldest and favourite daughter, felt a special responsibility about conveying such news to her mother, explaining to Dr Mills, ‘As to Mother, I want things to be made as easy as possible. At the very best it will be very terrible I am afraid’. Emmeline was stunned when she was told that her only son would be an invalid. ‘He would be better dead!’ she cried out in despair. It was decided that Sylvia, who was less active in the suffragette movement than her sisters, would stay with Harry until he was stronger and then resume her artistic career. The following
evening, on 9 December, Emmeline spoke at a welcome home meeting at the Albert Hall.  

The Pankhurst family, determined to do all they could for Harry’s welfare, were grateful when some suffragist friends who were going to India for a year, placed at their disposal, their house, studio and servants. The sick Harry was to be moved there the next day, when his old bladder problem of the previous year recurred. A worried Dr Mills called in consultants who confirmed that there could be no hope of recovery; Harry might live, at the most, for three weeks. The distraught Emmeline could not believe that her only son was dying; neither could she bring herself to tell him the diagnosis of the doctors. All the excitement of the women’s movement that fired her was drained from her; she hovered by her son’s bedside, ‘dull as spent ashes’. Out of duty, Emmeline attended some WSPU functions and published, jointly with Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, a statement about WSPU publicity for the forthcoming general election. But the Christmas message to all WSPU members was left to Emmeline Pethick Lawrence to write.

While sitting by Harry’s bedside during some of the long nights, Sylvia listened to his recollections of his childhood and of his hard life on the farm. One night he confided that he had fallen in love with a young woman of his own age, Helen Craggs, whom he had met when by-election campaigning in Manchester the previous year. Helen had then returned to her boarding school at Brighton and they had exchanged letters. Once, he had even travelled down to Brighton and spent the night on the cliffs, hoping to catch a glimpse of her—which he did. Now Harry, on his sickbed, longed to see Helen again. Next morning, Sylvia contacted a Mrs May and asked if she could find the young woman. Soon Helen was at the nursing home. ‘Think of him as your young brother. Tell him you love him; he has only three weeks to live’, begged Sylvia. To Sylvia, who watched the young couple with ‘anxious absorption’, Helen’s tenderness was real. And it was. Many years later, she confided to Grace Roe that Harry was her first and only love. But for Emmeline Pankhurst, the sight of the growing tenderness between the two young people was too much to bear. She chided Sylvia for acting on her own initiative, without consulting her first. This young woman was taking from her ‘the last of her son’.

Emmeline, her daughters and Helen were at the nursing home for Christmas 1909, the last they would ever spend with Harry. On New Year’s Eve, a mournful Emmeline wrote to WSPU member Elizabeth Robins, the well-known writer and Ibsen actress, ‘I came back from my American visit hoping to find my boy on the way to recovery but alas he is still very very ill & I am here with him now’. Emmeline was by her son’s bedside on 5 January 1910 when he died. She undertook the painful task of registering his death the next day. Emmeline was inconsolable, ‘broken as I had never seen her’, remembered Sylvia; ‘huddled together without a care for her appearance, she seemed an old plain, cheerless woman. Her utter dejection moved me more than her vanished charm’. Emmeline had lost all the men in her immediate family—little Frank, her beloved husband, and now her twenty-year-old son. Four days later she wrote to Mary Phillips, the WSPU
Figure 1  Emmeline Pankhurst with her son, Harry, 1890. June Purvis Private Suffrage Collection.

Figure 2  Suffragette Helen Craggs, Harry’s sweetheart. June Purvis Private Suffrage Collection.

Figure 3  Harry Pankhurst, c 1909. June Purvis Private Suffrage Collection.

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organiser in Bradford, where she was due to speak, ‘If you can arrange it I would be grateful if Bradford friends would just behave to me as if no great sorrow had come just now. It breaks me down to talk about it although I am very grateful for sympathy. I want to go through my work and know that you will help me to do it.’

Emmeline’s elder brother, Herbert Goulden, stepped in to help his sister by buying a plot for Harry in Highgate cemetery and paying the funeral expenses. As the family drove to Harry’s funeral on 10 January 1910, Emmeline was bowed as Sylvia had never seen her. Emmeline and Richard had been unable to face the sad task of arranging a headstone for their first little son, and neither could she contemplate it now. ‘Sylvia, remember when my time comes, I want to be put with my two boys!’ Emmeline was due to speak in Manchester that evening, at the Free Trade Hall, and the organisers were wondering whether she would appear. But her power of detachment, her ability to subordinate her private grief to the wider claims of the women’s movement, ‘always a distinguishing mark of her character’, came to the fore again. She caught the train from London to Manchester where over 5000 people were waiting, including a strong force of Liberals who wanted to interrupt the meeting. One suffragette, Una Dugdale, recollected that Emmeline’s speech was electrifying. The audience was amazed that she had travelled to speak to them; those who came to create a disturbance were silenced by the pathos of her words. ‘Surely every mother here knows that I would rather be quiet to-night, by my own fireside with my sad thoughts, and it is only a sense of my great responsibility and duty in this campaign that has urged me to appear.’

With a heavy heart Emmeline now threw herself into the by-election work that was part of the general election campaigning. To what extent the heavy losses sustained by the Liberals in the January 1910 general election were due to WSPU policy is debatable, but they were returned with no overall majority in the Commons, polling only 275 seats while the Conservatives held 273, the Irish Nationalists 82 and Labour 40. Realising that the new political situation might be useful to the women’s cause, Henry Brailsford, a journalist, set about forming a Conciliation Committee for Women’s Suffrage which eventually consisted of fifty-four MPs across the political spectrum. On 31 January, Emmeline declared there would be a truce on militancy, only peaceful and constitutional methods being used.

Despite her public composure, Emmeline was struggling privately to control the heartbreak over Harry’s death that was threatening to submerge her. On 3 February 1910, she wrote to Elizabeth Robins:

Forgive me for not writing to you sooner & believe that the delay does not mean that I do not value your dear letter of sympathy.

In the time of self reproach for things left undone & bitter regret for what might have been perhaps prevented had I rightly understood[,] your letter has given me comfort.

I am sticking to my work as best I can. I dare not give myself up to grief it would be selfish & hurtful in every way.
Three days later, Emmeline confessed to Elizabeth, ‘Work is the only cure for the thoughts I find so uncontrollable just now’.\(^{105}\)

Thus we come back to our central question—was Emmeline Pankhurst’s treatment of her son Harry indicative of her failings, as her daughter Sylvia saw it, as a mother? It seems to me that Emmeline Pankhurst faced the conflicts that so many single mothers without a secure income have faced throughout the ages, dilemmas that were magnified because she was a feminist public figure, fighting for a cause in which she passionately believed in a society that regarded women as second-class citizens. Perhaps we should leave the final word with Emmeline’s youngest daughter, Adela, whose voice has been rarely heard:

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\text{[M]} \text{y mother … bore more burdens on her frail shoulders than anyone else I know of … she struggled bravely and by incredible labor, achieved much both for her family and the world … while I can see she had failings and made mistakes, she was single-hearted in following what she thought was her duty and whole-hearted in her devotion to the ideals she held … It is just and right that women should honor her, for if, eventually, we lost her as a mother—they gained her as political leader.}^{106}
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Notes


[2] Christabel Harriette was born on 22 September 1880, Estelle Sylvia on 5 May 1882, Henry Francis Robert (‘Frank’) on 27 February 1884, Adela Constantina Mary on 19 June 1885, and the last son, also called Henry Francis but known as ‘Harry’, on 7 July 1889.


[9] *News of the World* (8 April 1928). Unknown to Sylvia, news of her son’s birth had been kept from the increasingly frail Emmeline Pankhurst, for fear of its consequences.


[17] For a questioning approach see, for example, Kean, ‘Searching for the Past in Present Defeat’ and Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*.


[29] Ibid., p. 102.

[30] Ibid., p. 103.

[31] Ibid., p. 146.

[32] Ibid., p. 147.


[34] Ibid., pp. 17–18.

[35] Ibid., p. 4.


[38] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, p. 54.


[40] Jill Liddington (2006) *Rebel Girls: their fight for the vote* (London: Virago), p. 21, notes that according to the 1901 census, these persons, apart from Mary Clarke, were listed as living at 62 Nelson Street as well as a fourteen-year-old nephew, also called Herbert; Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, p. 56.


[43] Ibid., p. 29.

Dr. Pankhurst Fund, List of subscriptions. The Dr. Pankhurst Fund, the Hon. Treasurer’s account of receipts and payments to 31 December 1899, lists the receipt as just over £1153; both in June Purvis, Private Suffrage Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 27 November 1902, Purvis Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 18 November 1902, Purvis Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 27 November 1902, Purvis Collection.

Mr Nodal to Emmeline Pankhurst, 29 November 1902, E. Sylvia Pankhurst Archive, the Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 29 November 1902, Purvis Collection.

Ibid.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 1 December 1902, Purvis Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 28 December 1902, Purvis Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 26 January 1903, Purvis Collection.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr Nodal, 11 February 1903, Purvis Collection.


Ibid., pp. 155–156.


Ibid., p. 36.

Ibid., p. 38.


David Mitchell interview with Teresa Billington-Greig, 12 September 1964, David Mitchell Collection, Museum of London, ‘I always said—I could be cruel sometimes—that he [Harry] was the only girl in the family’.

*Labour Record*, April 1907.

‘Mrs. Pankhurst’s Post’, *Daily Chronicle* (23 March 1907); Registrar General to Emmeline Pankhurst, 4 March 1907, Jill Craigie Collection, The Women’s Library (WL), London Metropolitan University.


Ibid., p. 306.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Dr Mills, 1 April 1909, WL.

Emmeline Pankhurst to Dr Mills, 7 May 1909, WL.

Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 147.


Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, p. 129. Sylvia’s claim in *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 306, that Emmeline ‘brushed’ aside advice from Dr Mills that Harry was ‘too
delicate’ to return to the hard toil of the farm must be questioned. As we have seen, Emmeline in her letter dated 1 April 1909 to Dr Mills sought his advice and was unlikely to have acted against it.

[78] Emmeline Pankhurst to Miss Birnstingl, 30 July 1909, Craigie Collection, WL.


[81] Christabel Pankhurst, Unshackled, p. 137.

[82] E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 320. Harrison, Sylvia Pankhurst, p. 108, supports Sylvia’s account, suggesting that Emmeline Pankhurst was ‘Not a natural carer and uneasy with the sick, she managed to salve her conscience by persuading herself that the trip would raise funds for Harry’s health care’.


[87] Christabel Pankhurst to Dr Mills, 4 October 1909, WL.


[92] Votes for Women (31 and 24 December 1909), pp. 210 and 200, respectively.


[96] Emmeline Pankhurst to Miss Robins, 31 December 1909, Robins Papers, Harry Ranson Humanities Research Centre (HRHRC), University of Texas at Austin.


[104] Emmeline Pankhurst to Elizabeth Robins, 3 February 1910, Robins Papers, HRHRC.

[105] Emmeline Pankhurst to Elizabeth Robins, 6 February 1910, Robins Papers, HRHRC.