

Suffragette

On Wednesday 14th September, nine members enjoyed the excellent Suffragette (certificate 12).

Staring Carey Mulligan as Maud Watts, the fictional story is interwoven with the real events of the Suffragette movement, leading up to the death at the Derby of Emily Davison under the hooves of the King's horse Anmer. Maud Watts' journey from laundry worker (sexually abused at the hands of the owner), to radicalised suffragette is well done, bringing home the horrors of working class life (especially for women) in the early (pre World War 1) part of the 20th century. The attitudes of most of the men in the film are predictably of their time, including that of Maud's husband Sonny (well played by Ben Wishaw).

The supporting cast is uniformly excellent: Brendan Gleeson plays an empathetic but ultimately law upholding detective; Helena Bonham-Carter as Edith Ellen, a chemist loosely based upon two real suffragettes, Edith Garrud and Edith New; Meryl Streep as Emmeline Pankhurst; Natalie Press as Emily Davison, whose role is sadly underwritten; Anne-Marie Duff as Violet, Maud's friend who is abused by her brutal husband.

The film was made in 2014 and released in 2015. Some scenes were shot in the Houses Of Parliament, others — to recreate the factory and prison scenes — were shot in the historic dockyard at Chatham.

The close of the film shows a scrolling list of countries who gave women the vote, both before and after the UK (which gave women partial suffrage in 1918 and full voting rights in 1928), including some very surprising late comers (e.g. Switzerland, full suffrage in 1971) and one not so surprising country where women only got the vote for municipal elections in 2015 (Saudi Arabia).

The fight for women's rights continues...