

# Augustus Wykeham Clifton on Suffragettes, 1909

*Newspaper report on part of the speech given by Augustus Wykeham Clifton (1829-1915) at the Rose Queen Crowning Ceremony, Lytham, 1909. This is followed by another article in which a local reporter interviews two suffragettes.*

## MR. CLIFTON AND THE SUFFRAGETTES.

### His Growing Hatred. One Exception.

Mr. Clifton was allowed to intervene at another point of the performance, to "have a shy at the Suffragettes as a reward for his services in crowning the Rose Queen. He supposed the Suffragettes had been trying to proselytise Lytham, but hoped they would be unsuccessful. "I hate Suffragettes—except one whom I like very much—but all the others, I hate them," Mr. Clifton exclaimed with increasing vigour.

Having said he would subscribe to having them put down, he called their attention to what happened the previous day, when no less than a hundred were apprehended by the police. Only think of that, and Mr. Asquith, whom they wanted to see, was obliged to go home in a small motor car following his own. The Prime Minister, in order to avoid a crowd of incensed viragoes—(laughter) —had to do that. He (Mr. Clifton) did not know what to suggest but the stick and that every Suffragette should be placed in

### A Straight Waistcoat.

(Laughter). The making of these would employ much unemployed labour and insertion of the woman therein would employ a great deal more. (Laughter) He was afraid his views could not be carried out, but he really thought something ought to be done. Whenever a Member of Parliament spoke in public no matter what politics he was, they interrupted. One girl rang a bell when Mr. Winston Churchill spoke—not that he admired the latter. She ought to have been killed or chained up so that she could not ring her bell.



He wished he could carry his ideas into effect. He declared he would use his stick (brandishing it in the air). He was a very old man—over 80—and would not be able to crown the Rose Queen much longer, but as long as his legs would carry him, he would be happy to place them at their service. (Applause.)

The exception Mr. Clifton referred to, was, we believe, Mrs. Dr. Rigby, of Preston, with whom he had an interview as a result of a correspondence in our columns nearly two years ago, and of whom he subsequently wrote a high appreciation, though still dissenting from her views.

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*Newspaper report from July, 1909*

## SUFFRAGETTES' LOCAL CAMPAIGN.

**Interview with Mrs. Rigby.**  
**By "Will -o'-the-Wisp"**

During the opening of the Suffragette campaign in Lytham last week, I took the opportunity of interviewing Mrs. Rigby, wife of Dr. Rigby, a Preston doctor, whose correspondence with Mr. A. W. Clifton almost two years ago will be remembered by our readers.

**With Mrs. Rigby.**

I was especially pleased to meet Mrs Dr. Rigby, of Preston, and can say, must endorse the opinion expressed by Mr. Clifton that she is a very charming woman indeed. Having been permitted to ask her a few questions, I boldly but not unkindly inquired:

"What would you have been doing if you had not been engaged in this movement?"

With just one moment's hesitation, she answered: "Possibly playing golf or bridge."

"It is argued that married women should stick to their homes."

"That is the ideal. But they don't. Take the ordinary quiet woman, and see the kind of thing she does with her time. Look at what she reads. What does she know, for instance about the care of children in the workhouse. Politically she is quite ignorant."

"What has prompted this visit to Lytham?"

"Well, we want to influence the people who have leisure—people who have come from the manufacturing towns to live here. We feel they should take their share in the movement. We who live in towns have got it."

"So that the people who have come here to rest are not to be allowed to rust, as the saying goes?"

"They're not to be allowed to forget that they belong to the places they left behind them."

"What is the plan of campaign here?"

"It is proposed to form an organization, and carry on propaganda."

"How, did you become associated with the movement?"

"I happened to be in Liverpool at the time Miss Gawthorpe was addressing open-air meetings at the mill gates, and I sent in my name."

"So the subject always appealed to you?"

"No. Six years ago I had the usual notion that it was not woman's sphere"

"You have been to prison?"

"Yes. For a fortnight, two years ago, and a month last February."

"How did you come to be arrested?" "Through trying to get into the House of Commons."

"What were your impressions of prison?"

"Well, I did not find it so disagreeable as I had expected. What really brought me into the movement was this I was secretary of a Mill Girls' Club in Preston, to provide good educational and social classes. I went to the University Settlement in Manchester, and the Warden, a very fine woman, to whom many of us owe so much, put into my hands a book which set up new lines of thought about woman's duties and, capabilities. One finds the rest for oneself."

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**Interview with Miss Johnson, our Lady Guardian (a local Fylde Poor Law Guardian).**

"So you're an out-and-out Suffragist, Miss Johnson?"

"Yes. I don't like the fighting and unseemly scenes, but if it came to a question of making a sacrifice for principle, I would not mind going to prison, because I believe strongly in the justice of the movement.

I am used to fighting as you know from my work on the Fylde Board of Guardians. The Women's Union would be glad for me to take more active part in their propaganda, but I have my business to attend to.

If it was off my hands I should devote the whole of my time to public work. That's my ambition in life. However, one of the leaders of the Votes for Women movement assures me that I am doing good work as a Lady Guardian."