

TEACHERS' OVERVIEW – Our Strong Women Resource

Spark a local history legacy with your thematic study.

Women and working class people are often missing from the history books. Use this resource to engage primary and secondary sources about women's roles in local history. Document, share and safeguard the stories of strong women in your community today.

This resource is aimed at KS2 and was co-created for you by interference-art with Year 4 pupils and their teacher at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, in collaboration with a local historian, a local journalist and a local archivist. It was commissioned by Heart of Glass.

Visit: heartofglass.org.uk/strong-women for more information and Strong Women resources.



ST HELENS

In 2023, artist Carrie Reichardt co-created this beautiful mural comprising 450 hearts made by community members in celebration of Strong Women of St Helens.

We suggest starting off your Strong Women project with a visit (see teacher guide).

Why not start collecting research here for your collaborative class display?

Could your class:

- Take rubbings from the mural?
- Make a note of some names and dates?
- Record any found facts?
- Write down any questions pupils might want to research back at school?



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heartofglass

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ENGLAND**



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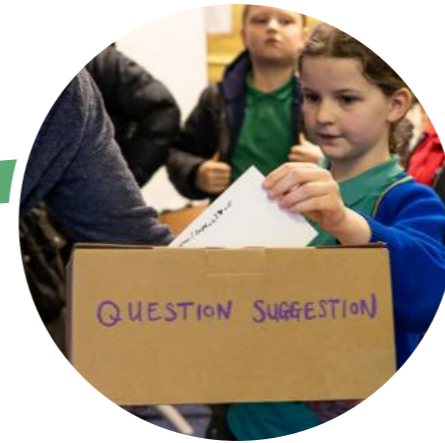
1 Strong Women Mural Visit

FOCUS: introducing strong women of St Helens past and present.

Take a class visit to the Strong Women mural to spark conversations about local history.

LOCATION: Parr Cons and Working Men's Club (The Connie Club), WA9 2DG.

Can't visit? See photos of the mural at heartofglass.org.uk/strong-women



2 Strong Words and Strong Women Bunting

Class activity

FOCUS: collaborate to build a wider vocabulary and start a history display.

Make space to map your research and share the findings of your investigation.

- **Activity 2a Strong Words** Make a collaborative class list of all the 'strong' synonyms you can think of.
- **Activity 2b** Cut out the **Strong Women Bunting**, fill the letters with your strong synonyms, then add the finished bunting to your class display.

Why not keep some display room for a glossary of new/challenging words? You can use the 'Glossary' label provided.



3 St Helens Past: Tape and Tag Timeline and Fact Card

Group / class activity

FOCUS: understand and chronologise significant events in local and national history. Work with secondary sources to explore women from St Helens' past.

- **Activity 3a Tape and Tag Timeline** - put a strip of tape across your display board and place the tags along it, discuss and agree the order as a class. Use blank tags to add more events.
- **Activity 3b Match Game** - in small groups, match each **Strong Women Fact Card** to a timeline event. Use the blank cards to add your own examples of strong women from history.



4 Interview a Strong Woman of today

Pairs / individual worksheets

FOCUS: invent and ask open questions. Create and collect first-hand sources.

Invite a strong woman to visit your class for an interview. She could be someone in your school or wider local community.

- Display and discuss the **Sources Poster**.
- **Activity 4a Interview a Strong Woman** - prepare by planning closed and open questions for your strong woman. Post your top question(s) in the class suggestion box for review.
- Use **Activity 4b Powerful Portrait / First-hand Facts** template during the interview to sketch a portrait, and record your strong woman's testimony.



5 Share Her Story

Class / school activity

FOCUS: communicate confidently and leave a local history legacy and oracy.

- **Activity 5 Share Her Story** - add your Powerful Portraits and First-Hand Facts cards to the display board. Next, how could you share and keep her story alive in local memory?
- use your display to 'show and tell' other classes or families and carers?
- give a talk / presentation in assembly?
- add your research to St Helens Community Archive?
- recount her story using past tense, and enter a local writing competition

Our Strong Woman

Sheets needed for each activity and labels for class display board

St Helens Archive

Gamble Building, Victoria Square, St Helens, WA10 1DY

- Holds records including maps, plans and images. You can also purchase prints.
- You can search their records online: sthelens.gov.uk/history

St Helens Community Archive Online

- Search others' / share your own local history material:
sthelenscommunityarchive.org.uk

Other Sources for St Helens History

- Eccleston Library holds St Helens newspapers - available to view on microfilm
- Peeps in the Past - St Helens History Channel on YouTube
- North West Film Archive in Manchester - holds the moving image collections for St Helens which can be viewed in Manchester (not all digitised)
- Coal and Glass video created using St Helens Archive's oral history interviews with strong women in the coal and glass industries (18 mins): youtube.com/watch?v=iOQfubh0-MQandt=2s

Strong Woman of St Helens Resources

Visit heartofglass.org.uk to access a digital download of this resource as well as other Strong Women project information and resources heartofglass.org.uk/strong-women

Historical Themes to research

Industries: coal, glass, copper, brewery, cotton, pottery, chemical, manufacture, engineering

Histories: working class, women's suffrage, sport, health, education, philanthropy, witches

Mapping Local History: Compare then and now

- The National Library of Scotland website is a free resource with excellent search functions and ways to visualise location data (A1 prints can be ordered for a small fee): maps.nls.uk
- Digimap: For a monthly subscription, use this resource to find maps from the past, and compare with 1800s contemporary maps. Available to print direct from site digimap.edina.ac.uk

More Women of St Helens through time...

1500s - 1700s

- Isabel Robey: hanged as a witch, 1612.
- Sarah Clayton: colliery owner (collaborated with her nephew, Thomas Case, who was a slave trader).
- Sarah Cowley: bequeathed estate for free education of children of St Helens.

1800s

- Ellen Bishop (1813 - 1889): refused to marry so she could make her own decisions about her wealth and charitable giving. Instrumental in the opening of many schools.
- Eliza Mulvaney (née Bishop): set up the Protestant Orphan Society Committee for destitute children in Dublin, 1844. Returned to St Helens to start Concern For Children (early social workers) around 1854.
- Catherine Littler: Abbey Inn landlady; inherited husband's farming land in 1856; gave the community use of Dentons Green Lane (playing field used by Saints RFC).
- Esther Allpass Pinnington: St Helens' first working class woman to get the vote.

1900s

- Christine and Constance Pilkington: sisters who helped 'wayward' girls and improved physical health and opportunities for local young people via Peter Street Girls Institute and Girl Guides.
- Ethel van Schaik: St Helens' first woman police constable.
- Lily Parr: footballer born in St Helens, celebrated at the National Football Museum.

2000s

- Sue Gerrard: local historian, writer and journalist.
- Claire Rigby: local historian who runs Momo's café (a community hub, where local history abounds!).

Our Strong Woman

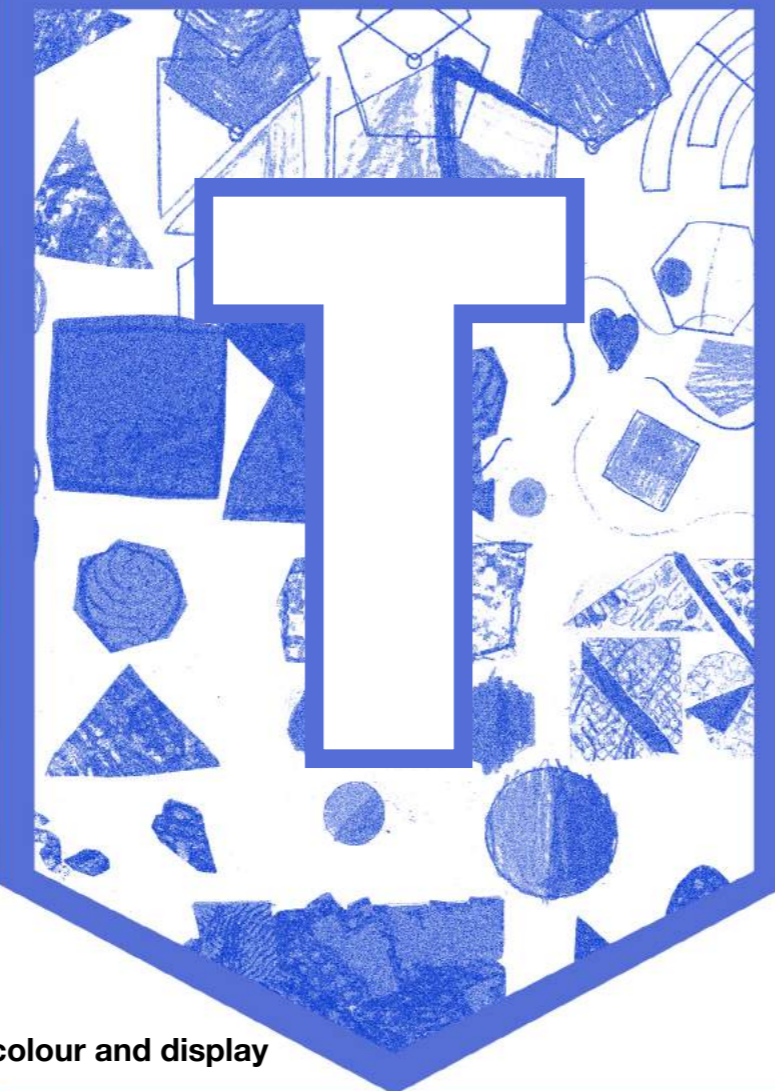
St Helens past

St Helens today

Glossary

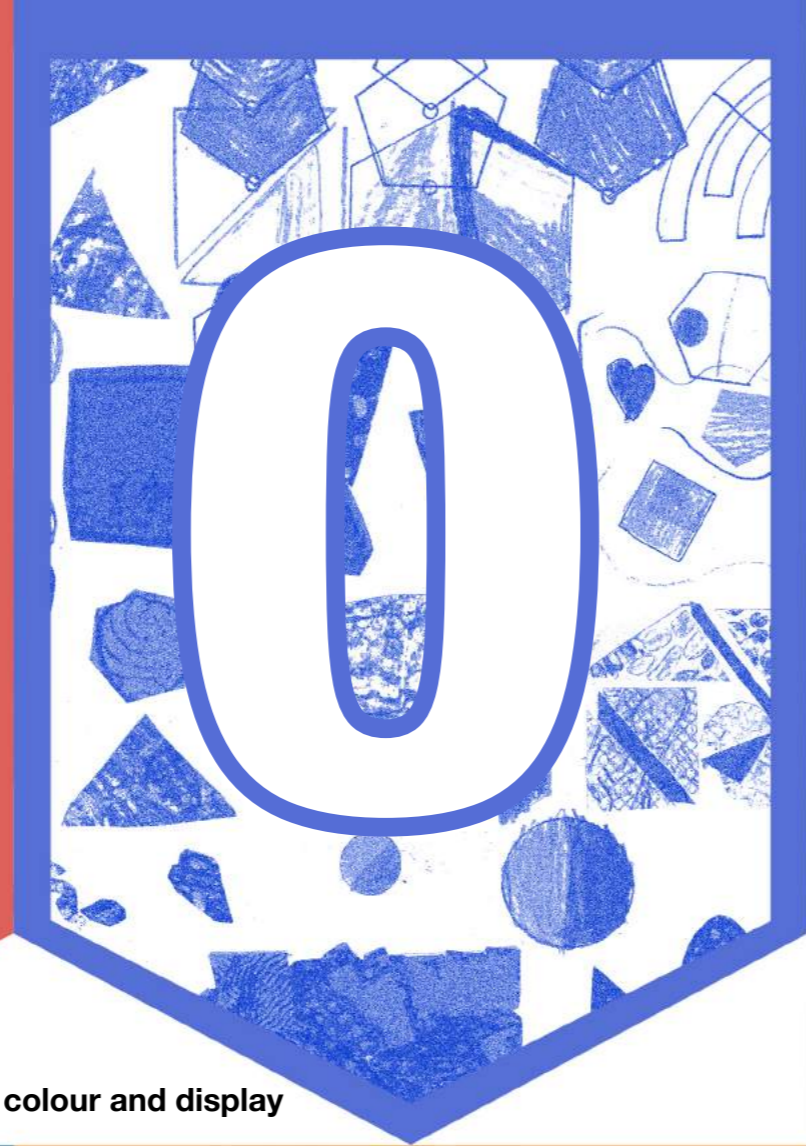
Labels for class display board

 cut out and display

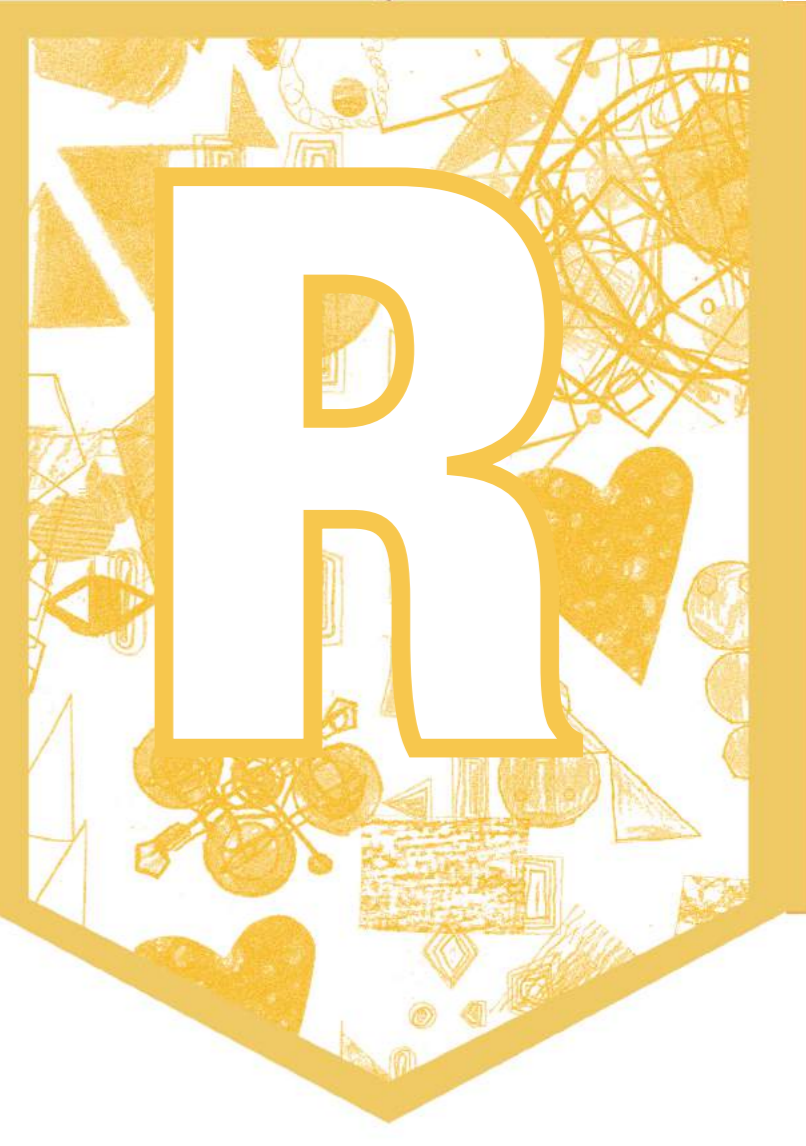
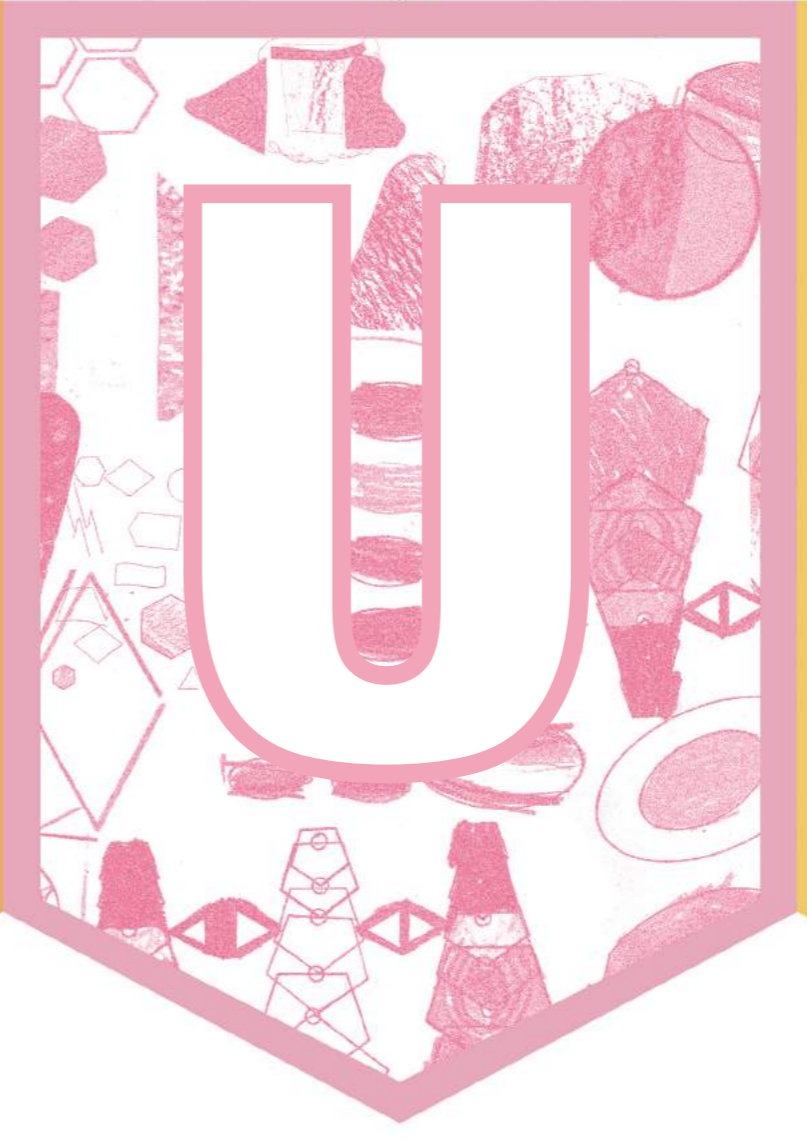
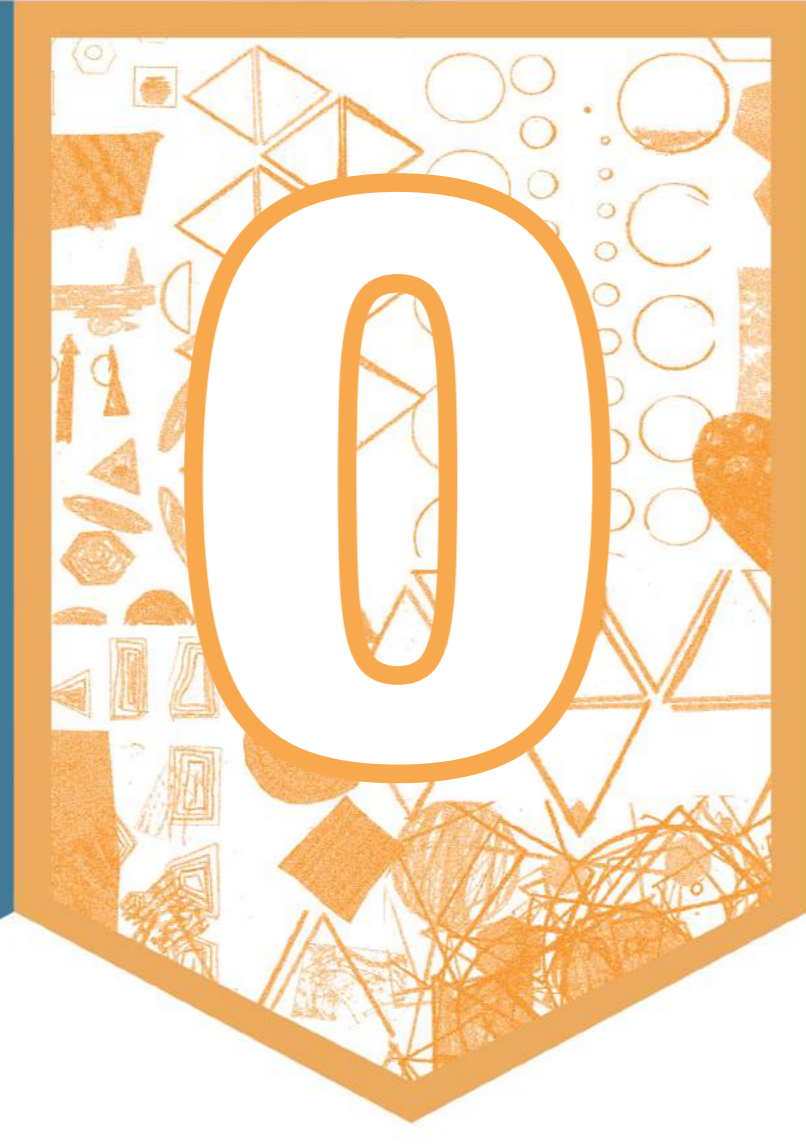
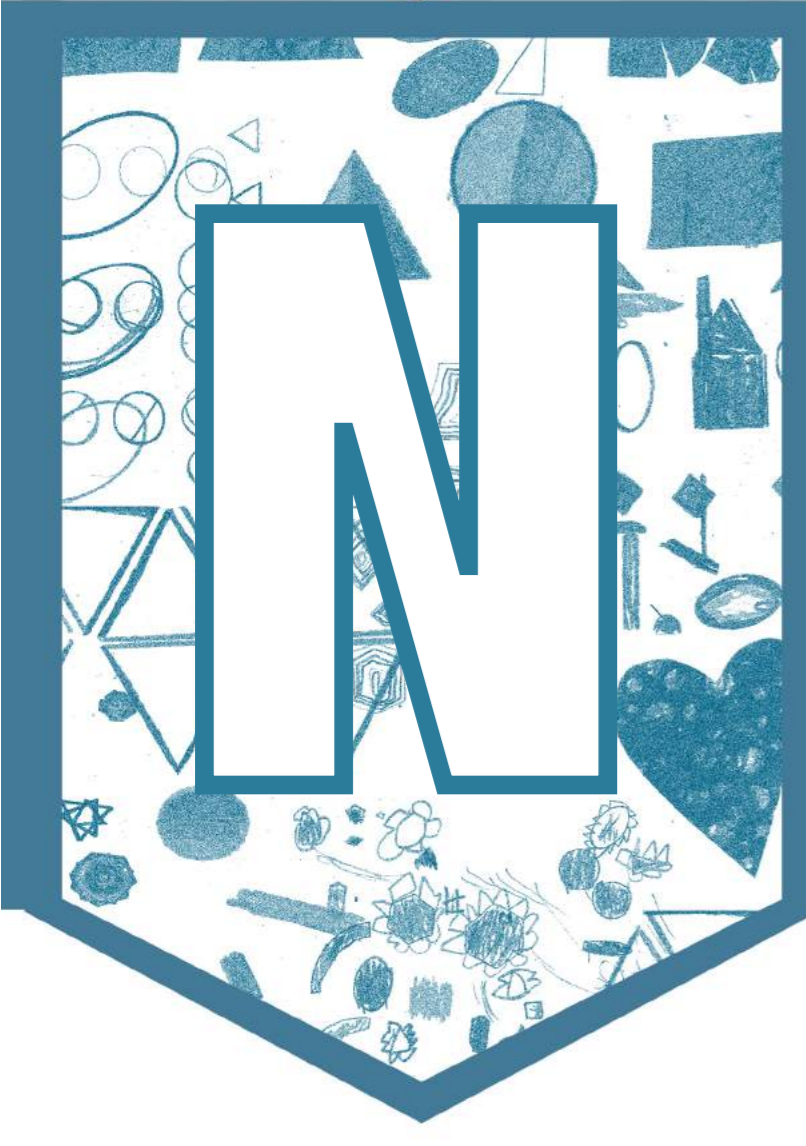


✂ cut out, colour and display





 cut out, colour and display



ACTIVITY 3A

Tape and Tag Timeline

Add your class' Strong Women and dates

cut out and display

STRONG WOMEN

STRONG WOMEN

NAME

DATES

NAME

DATES

1842

The Mines and Collieries Bill banned women, girls and boys under 10 from working underground in mines.

1859

Women were also banned from working on pit brows.

1921

England's **Football Association (FA)** banned **women** from playing on professional pitches or at FA registered clubs. The ban came when women's football was at its most popular. It lasted 51 years.

1880

Education Act made school compulsory between ages 5 - 10, but it cost to attend. National Schools provided free education for many children whose families could not afford to pay fees.

1939-1945

Second World War
Women took on many war time roles on the Home Front – such as the Women's Voluntary Service who helped people during air raids and evacuations.

1914-1918

First World War
Women filled much-needed roles at factories and farms while millions of men were away. While doing the same work, women did not have voting rights equal to men.

1948

The National Health Service (NHS) began on 5 July 1948, providing (mostly) free healthcare for all. Access to health care until then was unaffordable for most people.

1918

Votes for Women
In 1918, after a long suffrage* campaign, women aged 30, who owned property, gained the vote. By 1928, all people over the age of 21 had equal voting rights. (*suffrage: the right to vote)

1984-1985

UK Miners' Strike tried to prevent colliery closures.

1993

Women Against Pit Closures campaign to save Parkside Colliery in Newtown-le-Willows.

STRONG WOMEN



Hannah Rosbotham 1858 - 1935

FACTS

- During a terrible gale in 1881, Sutton National School's roof collapsed. Hannah rescued five children trapped underneath it.
- She was the first woman awarded the Albert Medal by Queen Victoria, for her courage.

STRONG WOMEN



Lizzy Ashcroft 1905 - 1973

FACTS

- Came from Parr, St Helens.
- Lengthy 15 year career playing for two of the greatest women's football teams: St Helens Ladies FC and the legendary Dick Kerr Ladies
- Kept playing women's football for 14 years after the English FA banned it in 1921.

STRONG WOMEN



Sister Kathleen Duffy 1930 - 2015

FACTS

- Worked at Providence Hospital, trained NHS nurses, and later worked with young people and cared for the blind.
- Awarded a medal for her service to the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II.
- "Sister Duffy devoted her life to the people of St Helens through her never-ending desire to help the poorly." (source: St Helens Star)

STRONG WOMEN



Sylvia Pye 1927 - 2018

FACTS

- Sylvia was the Chair of National Women Against Pit Closures, during a time when the government was shutting down coal mines.
- In 1993, she and other volunteer women set up a camp at Parkside Colliery.
- They occupied Parkside for 24 hours a day for a year to stop the pit from being dismantled. They even took over the top of the pit's 200 feet high winding tower.
- Sylvia and her supporters' aim was to keep the coal mine open and save 800 local jobs.

STRONG WOMEN



Pit Brow Lasses 1800s onwards

FACTS

- It was once common for whole families to work in coal mines. Then in 1842, women and girls were banned from underground work. The loss of income caused hardship.
- Some woman gained work on the 'pit brow' instead. Pit Brow Lasses picked stones out of coal when it was hauled above ground.
- To protect from coal dust, they wore clogs, trousers, skirt, apron, jacket and headscarf.

STRONG WOMEN



Evelyn Pilkington 1880 - 1955

FACTS

- Fought for women's right to vote, be heard and be part of politics. Led an organisation that helped women understand voting.
- Became first female councillor elected in St Helens in 1920, and the first woman Justice of the Peace (volunteer local judge) in 1925.
- By 1939 Evelyn was chair of St Helens Juvenile (youth) Court. Instead of sending young people to prisons, she often sent them to youth clubs to get help nearer home.
- Look up her cousins Constance and Christine. They helped set up youth clubs in St Helens.

STRONG WOMEN



Glass Factory Workers 1914 - 1918

FACTS

- During the First World War, women were employed to do what had been men's jobs.
- Women workers at the Pilkington Glass factory in St Helens produced a wide range of glass products - from large sheets to small portholes for submarines.
- This drawing is based on a photograph of women at Pilkington Glass in 1918, carrying sheet glass and a tube of rolled glass.

STRONG WOMEN



Women's Voluntary Service since 1938

FACTS

- During WW2, the Women's Voluntary Service provided emergency rest centres, food and first aid to civilians during and after air raids.
- Helped people during evacuations.
- Official Army and Navy 'sock darter', fixing 38,000 pairs weekly for UK and US soldiers.
- The WVS still exists today, as the Royal Voluntary Service.

Sources help us understand the past

Primary Sources

- A first-hand account of a topic, from someone who had experienced it
- Original information
- Can also be objects from an event or time period
- Can be created at the time of an event, or after it

Primary sources can include:

- Interview
- Newspaper report by a journalist who was there
- Diary
- Performance or speech
- Letter
- Survey or census record
- Drawing, sketch or artwork
- Photograph

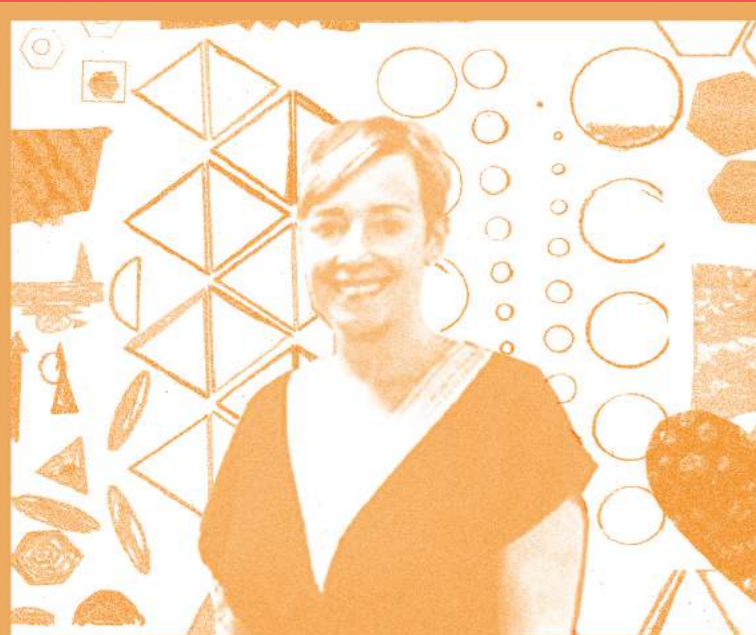
Secondary Sources

- A second-hand account, by someone who did not experience the event directly
- Often based on primary sources, interpreting them to build a clearer picture of what actually happened
- Do not need to have been created at the time

Secondary sources can include:

- Biography
- Article that quotes the original newspaper report
- Book about a specific topic
- Review of a play / Report on a speech
- Essay or study
- Report that uses data someone else collected
- Article about the sketch or art
- Artwork based on a photo

How strong women are using source material to keep history alive in St Helens today



Mrs. Sharrock
Teacher, Holy Spirit Primary School

"I love to research sources and investigate real people's lives for our local history studies. Knowing about the past helps us make sense of the present."



Victoria Brokenshire
St Helens Archivist

"At the Archive, I take care of documents, records, objects and photographs, and help people to research local history with them. I also research and share histories with visitors and through our blogs."



Claire Rigby
Local Historian

"I research sources for local history talks. I also share sources on a St Helens history Facebook group so our local histories are not forgotten."



Sue Gerrard
Journalist and Author

"As a St Helens journalist, I reported from our community and interviewed people. I now write stories and run writing competitions to get people involved with local history."

Interview Prep – tips to get ready

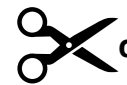
Journalists prepare for interviews by planning their questions. Here are some tips to help you think like a journalist.

Ask questions that help people to open up:

- Closed questions prompt a "Yes" or "No" answer. Avoid closed questions e.g. Did you grow up in St Helens?
- Instead, try asking a short warm-up question. This can help your interviewee recall facts, people, things e.g. Where did you grow up? When did you grow up?
- Open questions are used by journalists because they encourage people to give more information e.g. What was your childhood in St Helens like?

Be a kind interviewer:

- What might make the person feel comfortable and welcome?
- How can you show them you're listening?



cut out, write your question, post it in a class suggestion box

My Strong Woman question suggestions

Start with a short warm-up question, then follow up for more details with an open question.

My name is...

My warm-up question is...

My follow-up question is...

This is a powerful portrait of...

First-hand facts Notes and quotes from our interview