

Did Emily Davison Intend to Kill Herself?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/the-death-of-emily-davison/967.html>

Suffragette Emily Davison has died four days after being trampled by King George V's horse, Anmer, at the Derby, Epsom. You are part of the police team being called in to investigate this incident. Your task is to find out:

1. What actually happened on June 4th 1913
2. Did Emily Davison intend to die?



Source A: Emily Davison is fatally injured after being trampled by Anmer. Pictures show that Davidson ran onto the course and stood sideways waiting for the Kings horse to come by.

Source B: The Police found the following items on Miss Davison's person:

1. A return ticket from Epsom to London
2. A ticket to a Suffragette event later that day
3. A race card which she had marked up showing which horses she expected to win.
4. Two enormous Suffragette banners pinned to the inside of her jacket

Source C: In previous weeks Emily Davison had been seen stopping horses on the common in her home town of Morpeth and pinning Suffragette pennants to them



Emily Wilding Davison was born in Blackheath in southeast London on 11 October 1872. She studied at Royal Holloway College and at Oxford University, although women were not allowed to take degrees at that time.

In 1909, she was sentenced to a month's hard labour in Strangeways Prison in Manchester after throwing rocks at the carriage of chancellor David Lloyd George. She attempted to starve herself, and resisted force-feeding. A prison guard, angered by Davison's blockading herself in her cell, forced a hose into the room and nearly filled it with water. Eventually, however, the door was broken down, and she was freed. She subsequently sued the wardens of Strangeways, and was awarded 40 shillings.

By 1911, Davison was becoming increasingly militant. On 4 June 1913, she ran out in front of the king's horse as it was taking part in the Epsom Derby. Her purpose was unclear, but she was trampled on and died on 8 June from her injuries.

Source D Emmeline Pankhurst 'My Own Story' (1914)

Miss Davison went to the races at Epsom, and breaking through the barriers which separated the vast crowds from the course, rushed in the path of the galloping horses and caught the bridle of the King's horse, which was leading the others. The horse fell, throwing the jockey and crushing Miss Davison in such a shocking way that she was carried from the course in a dying condition. She died four days later. Members of the Union were beside her bed when she breathed her last. On June 14th she had a great public funeral as crowds lined the streets watching the funeral car followed by thousands of women.

Emily Davison had graduated from Oxford University with a first class degree, yet she chose to join the struggle to get women the vote. She suffered many imprisonments and was forcibly fed. She barricaded herself in her cell and could only be taken from the door as icy water was hosed in from outside. **She believed the vote for women would only arrive when someone sacrificed their life.** On one occasion she threw herself headlong from the balcony in prison and gained cruel injuries.

Emily Davison's skull was fractured by the horses hooves. For three days she lay unconscious in a hospital bed. The Suffragette leaders were stunned. On June 8th 1913 Emily Davidson died from her injuries. Many believed that she was a Martyr.

Tasks:

1. Copy and complete this table:

Sources that suggest Emily Davison intended to kill herself	Evidence	Sources that suggest Emily Davison did not intend to kill herself	Evidence

2. 'Emily Davison intended to die for the Suffragette Movement'. Discuss

Write a balanced answer (3 paragraphs)

3. Do you think Emily Davison was incredibly brave or incredibly foolish? Give reasons for your answer

