

Lego suffragette goes on display in Edinburgh

Hope is a 32,000 Lego® brick figure and she is now on display at 7-8 Chambers Street until 25 July.

She stands next to information boards about suffrage in Scotland and the university's alumni, many of whom campaigned for women's rights.

The figure was commissioned by the UK Parliament's Education and Engagement team and Hope was originally displayed in the House of Commons. She was built by three people in 2018 when it took 171 hours to complete the task.

The name Hope was chosen after a public poll and now the figure is on a national tour to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1928 Representation of People (Equal Franchise) Act that gave equal voting rights to all women and men. It will take five years to do so but the figure will be shown in every region and nation of the UK as an educational campaign to get everyone talking about women's suffrage and democracy.


Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal (Community Relations) and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh, said: "We are honoured to be able to host Hope at the University. We encourage people to visit the statue and find out more about the Suffragette movement and what its legacy means for women's rights and gender equality."

The University's own inspirational women include the famous Edinburgh Seven – Mary Anderson, Emily Bovell, Matilda

Chaplin, Helen Evans, Sophia Jex-Blake, Edith Pechey and Isabel Thorne.

The group began studying medicine at the University in 1869, but were ultimately prevented from graduating.

The campaign they fought ultimately led to a change in the law to allow women to study medicine in the UK. It also put the rights of women to a university education on the national political agenda, which eventually resulted in legislation to ensure that women could study at university in 1877.

In 2019, the University's Chancellor  Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited the University to commemorate the Edinburgh Seven as they were awarded posthumous honorary degrees.

Another pioneering graduate was Chrystal MacMillan, who was the University's first female science graduate and was also a well-known suffragist and peace activist.

Chrystal was a prominent voice in the women's rights movement, working for the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies and campaigning throughout Scotland.

In 1908, she made history when she became the first woman to plead before the House of Lords, presenting her case that female university graduates should be given the right to vote.



Photos Edward Cawood

