

On This Day – 25th October 1855

Grace Cadell, pioneer physician and suffragette, born in Bo'ness

Grace Cadell was the eldest of four daughters born to the Superintendent of the Bo'ness coal works. Along with her sister Georgina was one of the first students of the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women, an umbrella organisation of Edinburgh University designed to get around the strict rules inhabiting women studying undergraduate degrees.

Cadell would later run The Hospice, a maternity hospital established on the Royal Mile by another early female physician Elsie Inglis, and became quite notorious in her day for her active involvement with the suffragette movement. Cadell was an active member of the Leith branch of the Women's Social and Political Union, and served as a medical advisor for women who were force-fed while imprisoned for taking part in demonstrations. She also opened her house as a refuge for suffragettes, and took part in a campaign of tax avoidance as a further protest in favour of women's suffrage. On one occasion she paid a £50 fine by bringing a sack full of copper coins to court as a further act of defiance.

Grace died in 1918, near the village of Rumbling Bridge in Kinross-shore, the same year that Parliament passed an act allowing women over the age of 30 to vote for the first time.

More information:

[Lothian Women's Forum](#)

[The legacy of Elise Inglis](#)