

A GUIDE TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Themes include: solidarity across communities; the impact of grassroots action; and refusals to be bystanders to injustice. Responsibility remains with educators to ensure that materials are age appropriate for their students.

The Poor Man's Lawyer at Mansfield House

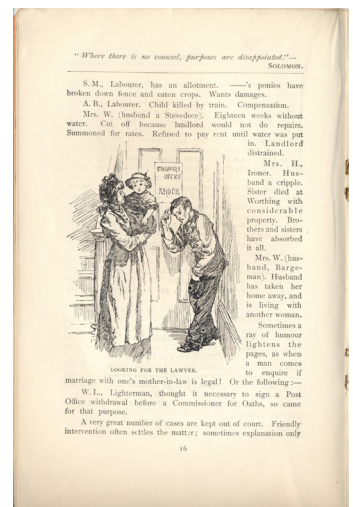
Free and accurate legal advice is essential in ensuring that everyone has access to justice. The Poor Man's Lawyer service at Mansfield House University Settlement in the Barking Road was established in 1891. Life was hard for most people in Canning Town and the Settlement provided education, leisure activities and healthcare. One of the first places in the UK to offer free legal advice, the model was copied all over the country. It helped inspire the legal aid system and the Citizens' Advice Bureaux.

Barrister Frank Tillyard began with one evening session a week, advising on whatever people from Canning Town needed help with. A committee was set up to assist Tillyard and many lawyers would volunteer over the coming years.

By 1917-18, as the First World War drew to a close, the advisers reported: "We are glad to say that we have been able to keep open in spite of all sorts of difficulties and a vast amount of anxiety has been relieved during the year. There have been a great many landlord and tenant inquiries and, alas, a good many cases of trouble between husband and wife when men have returned from the front." After the devastating Silvertown munitions factory explosion of 1917: "...quite a number of the compensation cases passed through our hands and we were able to advise widows and parents of injured children as to the investment of money received. In one case, we were able, by proper representations, to obtain a much larger sum for an injured girl than originally offered."

Help for women and children was always a priority, and many of the cases seen may have included what we may now recognize as domestic violence. Women legal advisors were on hand: "Domestic difficulties quite frequently lead to anxious situations: it is not unknown for the husband to be in one room with one lawyer, and the wife in another room telling quite a different story to his lady colleague". Frank Tillyard also compiled a guide for the National Union of Women Workers, to help women social workers give basic advice. The Poor Man's Lawyer reported seeing 2,000 clients in 1924. The Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949 founded our current legal aid system. After a break, Mansfield House set up the First Stop Law Shop in 1998, which provided free legal advice until it closed in 2001.

Thanks to Aston-Mansfield Collection



JOURNEY TO JUSTICE STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEWHAM

The suffragette connection

Emmeline and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, campaigners for votes for women, were also connected to Mansfield House. Frederick had been a member of the Settlement and gave free legal advice as part of the Poor Man's Lawyer scheme. He and Emmeline met at the Settlement and were married nearby. Both were imprisoned for their suffrage work and faced force-feeding while on hunger strike. They founded the journal *Votes for Women*. As we celebrate 100 years of women's right to vote in the UK, their story shows the connections between those who seek fairness and equality, and those who help make access to justice real through free legal help.

The Women's Library Collection, LSE Library



Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Emmeline Pankhurst and (Mabel Tuke) in court, 1912

The Mansfield Settlement and the Aston Charities Trust merged in 2000, forming Aston-Mansfield which still undertakes community work in Newham (see <https://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/>).

Secondary sources

Aston-Mansfield, *The Story of Aston-Mansfield: Serving the Community for over 100 Years*, 2004

Elaine Kaye, *Mansfield College Oxford*, OUP 1996

Dictionary of National Biography entries for Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence - <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/35491> and <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/37846>

H Harmer, *Longman Companion to the Labour Party 1900-1998*, Routledge 2014

Primary sources

From the Aston-Mansfield collection at Newham Archives:

Mansfield House University Settlement Report for 2 Years 1917-18 (Box 1, item 1/27)

Mansfield House University Settlement 1890-1925 (Box 1, item 1/100)

A Week at Mansfield House (Box 1, item 1/10)

Newham Recorder, 'Law Shop' first stop for advice, 29 April 1998 (Box 81, item 81/20)

From the British Library:

Frank Tillyard and F H Hamnett, *Legal Hints for Social Workers*, 4th edition published by the National Union of Women Workers 1916

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Special thanks to everyone who gave of their time and expertise to help compile this guide, which was researched by Bethan Rigby. In particular: Andrea Quaintmere from Aston-Mansfield, Jenni Munro-Collins from Newham Archives, and Dr Keith Cranwell. All mistakes are our own!

To download this and other stories of community action for justice in Newham go to <http://journeytojustice.org.uk/projects/journey-to-justice-newham/>