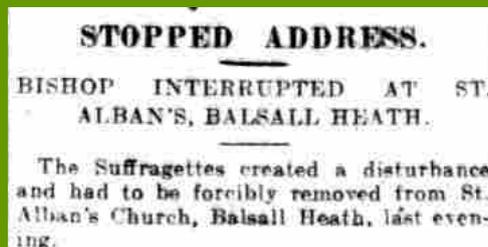


BACKGROUND:

The annual Patronal Feast of St Alban is taking place at St. Alban's Church in Highgate. The Vicar (Francis Underhill) has invited the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Wakefield) to perform the invocation. The ceremony is disrupted by Suffragettes led by local librarian Miss Turner. Another suffragette is Jane Francis, from Francis Stores on Runcorn Road. She is recognised by the policeman Henry Fischer.

The scene is based on a real incident that took place. It followed on from the burning down of Northfield Library in February 1914.



VICAR: We cordially welcome the Bishop of Birmingham and invite him to pronounce the invocation.

BISHOP: I greet you all. Today we give thanks for St Alban and rejoice that in Christ's name he spoke out fearlessly against oppression, did many acts of kindness and proclaimed God's justice. St Alban was Britain's first Christian Martyr and his story has resonance through to this day...

SUFFRAGETTES: (*jump to their feet*) We protest against forcible feeding! Votes for Women!

(*general commotion ensues as rest of congregation round on the three who stand their ground. The Vicar and Bishop both say nothing and wait. Gradually it is noticed that both men are silent and a calmness ensues*)

MALE CONGREGATION MEMBERS: (*takes their arms*) Come on ladies. Outside if you please.

MISS TURNER: Leave me alone!

SUFFRAGETTE: (*indicating Jane*) Don't you touch her, she's only a young girl.

(*the three leave reasonably peacefully with just some muttering. Order is restored and the Bishop continues*)

BISHOP: A man called Alban, believed to have been a Romano-British citizen of the Roman town of Verulamium around the end of the 3rd century, gave shelter to an itinerant Christian priest, later called Amphibalus...

(*noise outside from the suffragettes*)

BISHOP:... Impressed by what he heard, Alban was converted to Christianity by him.

(*louder noise from outside now - impossible to ignore*)

VICAR: (*to the Bishop*) Perhaps a hymn? A loud hymn? ? (*he scurries outside*)

Onward Christian Soldiers is sung loudly by all

SUFFRAGETTES: (*Enter with banners chanting slogans. They sing the "Sisters" song to same tune as Onward Christian Soldiers. As both versions of the tune end things break down into loud arguments.*)

VICAR: (*interrupts desperately trying to obtain order and control*) Ladies this is not appropriate!

(*more slogans and shouting. Sergeant Henry Fischer appear*)

FISCHER: I am going to ask you once and politely to move on. This is a breach of public order. Miss Turner I am surprised at you and as for you Jane Francis you don't want to be getting mixed up in this. Your parents will be deeply upset when they find out.

SUFFRAGETTE: Threats, Repression!

FISCHER: I don't know you lady, but I can tell you about repression first hand. Kindly be your way...NOW!

(*The three leave with more muttering. Jane pauses to look at Fischer who looks at her and shakes his head*)