

Replica of suffragette's badge seized en route from Australia to Ewell

By [Alice Foster](#), Reporter

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The metal replica of a militant suffragette's badge was seized by customs en route from Australia to an exhibition on the women's suffrage movement.

An Australian MP has loaned the exhibition a replica of the badge awarded to suffragette Muriel Matters who was imprisoned after chaining herself to a grille and other exploits.

But last week HM Customs and Revenue seized the Holloway prison badge as it entered the UK because they disputed its stated value of under £130.



Replica of the badge awarded to suffragette Muriel Matters

On Tuesday Bourne Hall, in Ewell, opened its exhibition *Dying for the Vote*, which marks the centenary of the King's Horse killing suffragette Emily Davison at the Epsom Derby.

Australian MP Frances Bedford, who founded of the Muriel Matters Society, sent the badge by courier and it is currently being held by customs in Coventry.

Irene Cockroft, guest curator of the exhibition said: "We have tried to sort this out by confirming the badge is a museum piece and only on loan.

"It is intended that Frances Bedford MP will collect the item to take back to Australia at the end of the exhibition.

"It is so sad to see an act of international goodwill fall victim to bureaucracy."

The Women's Freedom League awarded the badge to Australia-born suffragette Ms Matters who was jailed in Holloway prison.

She is most famous for chaining herself to the grille of the Ladies' Gallery at the House of Commons in 1908.

A section of the grille, which obscured women's view of parliamentary debates, forms part of the Bourne Hall exhibition and is on loan from the Palace of Westminster.

Dying for the Vote examines Ms Davison's life and the suffragette movement in Surrey, and celebrates the granting of votes for women in 1928.

The exhibition runs until July 27 at Bourne Hall, in [Ads by Google](#)

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