



Holloway Brooch £12,000.00

In my 'job' I am fortunate to handle many beautiful and precious objects from the past. However the piece which always resonates with me most is one of these tiny silver brooches, so understated and unassuming, yet with such evocative connotations. At the beginning of the 20th century those denied the right to vote or take part in political life in Britain were the inmates of prisons and asylums for the insane – and women. The Suffragette Holloway brooch was designed by Sylvia Pankhurst and presented to Suffragettes who had been imprisoned for their militant actions in support of the cause of suffrage for women. The silver brooch by Toye and Co. is in the shape of a portcullis, representing the House of Commons, with a convict's arrow enamelled in the colours of the Suffragette movement – purple for regal dignity, green for hope and white for purity, with convict chains to either side. It measures one inch by 3/4 of an inch.

This Holloway brooch was presented to Anna Lewis in 1914 for her militant actions in support of the cause, for which she was imprisoned and endured forcible feeding. Anna was left with a hoarse voice for the rest of her life as a result. She set up a special home to nurse other Suffragettes back to recovery after similar cruel treatment. Her name is listed on the Suffragette Roll of Honour [as Ann Lewis]. Holloway brooches rarely come onto the market and this is only the fifth example I have had the privilege to handle in 35 years. History in my hand.