

The naming of the bridge – Mary Murdoch

In spring 2020, a new bridge will open in Hull that will connect Hull city Centre to the Marina, Waterfront and Fruit Market. The bridge will cross the dual carriageway of the busy A63 and allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road safely. It will also help with traffic congestion on the A63. It will shape the future of Hull and improve the lives of the people who live here.

Mary Murdoch also helped shape the future of Hull and improved the lives of the people who lived here. This is why I believe the bridge should be named after her. Although Mary Murdoch was born in Scotland, she had a life-long association with Hull. She was the first woman doctor in the City, a social campaigner and was a suffragist too. She was also the first woman in Hull to own a car and earned a reputation for driving around at speed!

She was born on 26th September 1864 in Elgin in Scotland. In 1893, she was one of only a handful of women (it was highly unusual for women to train as doctors at the time) that attended the London School for Medicine for Women. After graduating, her first appointment was as a House Surgeon at the Victoria Hospital for Sick Children in Park Street in Hull. She became Hull's first female G.P. in 1896, after she had been in London for a year.

Mary Murdoch was also involved in several public campaigns, including working to improve the appalling living conditions of the City. She founded the first creche in Hull and a school for mothers. She also encouraged male dock workers to have a more active role in looking after their children. Mary developed a good understanding of the difficulties faced by the poor in Hull through her work as a doctor. She realised that problems, such as poor nutrition, hygiene, housing, precarious employment and child-care were linked. Mary was critical of the poor-quality housing in Hull and this got her into trouble with some of Hull's Councillors as they believed she was portraying Hull in a bad light.

Mary was also politically active. In 1904, she founded the Hull Women's Suffrage Society which was part of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society. Mary even acted as NUWSS branch delegate during out of town trips, such as when they visited London and presented petitions to the House of Commons. The NUWSS' words not deeds were the way to convince people to grant the vote to women. However, she disagreed with their policy and decided to join the Women's Social and Political Union and became a suffragette. Suffragettes believed in deeds not words.

Mary Murdoch went out to see a patient in dangerous weather and caught influenza. She died on 20th March 1916. Her car led her funeral and 1000s of people came to show their respect and gratitude for everything she had done in Hull. Mary Murdoch was an inspiring person for people in Hull. She was a resilient, hardworking woman and she never gave up her dreams. She endlessly fought for what she believed in. No matter what tasks and heralds were thrown at her, she carried on, determined to change people's lives. She was brave to do all the things she did and smart, so she succeeded. She was extremely independent and confident, and she wanted to change Hull for the better. Even though it was a long time ago, she still inspires people today. Not many people in Hull have not heard of her, let alone knowing her inspiring story and legacy. This is why I think the bridge should be named after her. She was a hardworking, independent woman and I hope that she will carry on inspiring people for many years to come.