

7

26-28 Chapel Walk

Adela Pankhurst, the youngest of WSPU founder Emmeline's three daughters, spent just a few years in Sheffield but made quite the impact (see also: Sheffield Town Hall, Cutlers' Hall, 45 Marlborough Road). As organiser for the WSPU's Yorkshire branch, she opened a suffrage shop on Chapel Walk in 1908, selling merchandise, holding classes and producing campaign materials. After Adela left town the shop was run by Elsa Schuster, who had taken part in the 1910 Black Friday demonstration in London and spent time in prison for stone throwing. The site was commemorated with a crowdfunded plaque on International Women's Day 2018.



8

Cutlers' Hall

An opulent building in the heart of the city, the Cutlers' Hall is a symbol of Sheffield's industrial prowess. For centuries it has hosted political luminaries of the day at its annual Cutlers' Feast – an event that has been seized upon as an opportunity for protest more than a few times. Adela Pankhurst attempted to disrupt the 285th feast in 1908, when Reginald McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was speaker. She entered in disguise as a kitchen maid and was promptly thrown out by police. Four years later, Winston Churchill was smuggled into the event in a luggage lift to dodge the crowd of suffragettes outside. The women didn't let him feast in peace, though, sending him telegram after telegram throughout the dinner.

10

Marlborough Road

Thousands of women across the country boycotted the census on 2nd April 1911. Some spoiled their forms, others gathered away from their homes for the night, their general argument being: "women do not count, neither shall they be counted". Adela Pankhurst at the time lived on Marlborough Road in the leafy suburb of Broomhill, in a detached house that was no stranger to women's suffrage plotting. When the census enumerator knocked on the door that night they counted Pankhurst and the house's owner Helen Archdale, though noted that there were also 48 female visitors present, names unknown, and one male, who turned out to be reporting on the act of civil disobedience for the Sheffield Telegraph.

Though a plaque bearing her name now sits in front of the house, Adela has become a relatively forgotten Pankhurst, and it's fair to say her life took quite a turn after her few years in Sheffield. In 1914, after clashes over her socialist politics, Adela's mother Emmeline gave her a one-way ticket to Australia. There, she got involved in communist and anti-war causes, before becoming an organiser for the fascist Australia First Movement in the 1940s.



9

Then: Crookesmoor Recreation Ground Now: The Ponderosa

One Saturday evening in July 1910, around 5,000 people gathered in this park for a Votes for Women rally held by the WSPU and WFL. Speakers included Annie Kenney, a suffragette from Oldham with a background in the cotton mills who, by the end of the struggle for women's votes, would have been jailed a total of 13 times. The biggest crowd, however, gathered around the by then locally notorious Adela Pankhurst, who spoke on behalf of women who were ready to die for representative government. Though the event was mostly peaceful, some threw stones at Adela and one man told her she'd be "better at home mending stockings".

WE
BELIEVE
IN
DEMOCRACY

11

King George V post box, Surrey Street

Suffragette tactics became increasingly militant as time went on, driven by the belief that it'd be "deeds not words" that would finally bring about change. In 1913, WSPU organiser Molly Morris slipped bombs – which she referred to as "little troublemakers" – into post boxes around Sheffield, including the King George V post box next to the Town Hall on Surrey Street. Molly managed to evade suspicion at the scene, as a detective turned to her and said: "we know it's the London lot who do this kind of thing, Miss Morris, and not you young ladies."



12

The Great Pilgrimage route: Snig Hill, Pinstone Street, The Moor

Across five weeks from mid-June 1913, 50,000 suffragists marched to London from all corners of England and Wales. The Great Pilgrimage was organised by the NUWSS, the non-militant side of the movement; they made sure to hold high banners reading "law-abiding" to set themselves apart from the WSPU, who were stepping up their militancy since the Liberal government dropped a bill that would've given women the vote. On Saturday 5th July the northern contingency marched into Sheffield city centre via Attercliffe, accompanied by the Sheffield Recreation Prize Band. They held an open-air assembly at Snig Hill and once the weekend was over continued onwards down Pinstone Street, The Moor, and eventually to London – where two-and-a-half weeks later NUWSS leader Millicent Fawcett, among others, addressed a huge rally at Hyde Park.

13

Montgomery Hall

Montgomery Hall hosted a number of meetings on the subject of women's voting rights. In 1907 hundreds gathered here for the Sheffield branch of the WSPU's first public meeting. Speakers included the socialist suffragette Mary Gawthorpe from Leeds and Teresa Billington, the first suffragette to be sent to Holloway Prison. In 1909 Johnston Forbes-Robertson, one of the biggest Shakespearean actors of the day, spoke at the hall to encourage men to come out in support of votes for women. Eight years later – shortly before the first British women were to gain the right to vote – women's and trades organisations gathered at the hall for a conference presided over by Dr Helen Wilson of the Sheffield branch of the NUWSS. Getting the vote was the first step; here the discussion centred on how women could best use this new power – taking in everything from motherhood endowment to equal pay to education reform.

On 6th February 1918, after decades of struggle, the Representation of the People Act finally gave the vote to some women – specifically those over the age of 30 who owned property, or who were married to a man who did. Sheffield was right there at the very beginning of the organised movement and, over the years, the suffrage campaign resonated in many of its buildings and public spaces (some now long gone). This tour maps out some of these significant sites of suffrage.

Discover stories of pilgrimages and rousing speeches, riots and bombs. Get to know the Pankhurst sister who spent a few years causing trouble in the city, the suffragettes who rallied together with their militant "deeds not words" tactics, and the law-abiding suffragists who focussed on appealing to reason.

You won't find plaques commemorating most of these people or events, but each deserves to be remembered for the part they played in the ongoing march towards equality.

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WOMEN'S
SUFFRAGE
TOUR OF
SHEFFIELD

PROGRESS AND EQUALITY



1

Then: Democratic Temperance Hotel, 33 Queen Street
Now: Exact location unknown

The start of the story of British women's struggle for the vote can arguably be dated to 26th February 1851, when the first organisation dedicated to the cause was formed in a Sheffield hotel. The Sheffield Women's Political Association was run by women for women, most of whom were active in the working class Chartist movement. One of the instigators was well-known abolitionist Anne Knight, who wrote what's considered the first pamphlet on women's suffrage, inspired by her frustration at the silencing of female delegates at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention. In order to have their voices heard and respected, it became clear, women had to have the vote. Addressed to "the women of England – Beloved Sisters", the association's manifesto, written by its chair Abiah Higginbottom, called on women to "shake off our apathy and raise our voices for right and liberty, till justice in all its fulness is conceded to us... for what is liberty if the claims of women be disregarded?" The women sent a petition to the House of Lords, though it would be some years before a national movement gained momentum.

2

Then: Temperance Hall
Now: Duke Street (residential)

The working class orator Jessie Craigen cut quite a distinctive figure on the suffrage circuit. Known for her deep voice, tattered clothes, fierce wit and her constant companion, Tiny the dog, she travelled the length and breadth of the north, taking the argument to workers in the streets and at factory gates. In the summer of 1879, Jessie and Tiny tipped up in Sheffield, making a stop at the Temperance Hall that then stood on Duke Street. According to the Women's Suffrage Journal, she won over more than a few local men with her speech here – including a Mr Cook, who commented that he "never thought about women's suffrage, except that it was a good joke, till Miss Craigen came", for "whose daughters and wives were they that had to go to service and into factories and workshops and wanted protection? Why ours." Craigen's tour of Sheffield also made stops everywhere from a patch of waste land in Heeley to a road lined with steel and cutlery works in Attercliffe.



3

Then: Albert Hall
Now: John Lewis store

As the reform bill of 1884 approached, women across the country ramped up their calls to be included in any changes to the voting system. Campaigners organised Grand Demonstrations in major cities to show they were serious. The Sheffield event on 27th February 1882 was presided over by Lady Harberton (who, as an aside, was also a founding member of the Rational Dress Society, calling for more practical fashions for women). Every seat in the Albert Hall was filled, every aisle crowded, with thousands of women from all social classes. Their efforts failed to affect the Reform Act, which extended the vote to more men but did nothing for women. But the event did lead to the founding of the Sheffield Women's Suffrage Society that, in 1897, became part of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) under Millicent Fawcett's leadership.

The Albert Hall was the scene of suffrage action a few more times over its years, including, in 1907, when a speech by War Secretary Richard Haldane was interrupted by a man shouting "are you in favour of votes for women?" Women weren't allowed a ticket to this meeting unless they could prove they weren't suffragettes, so Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) organisers Adela Pankhurst, Annie Kenney and Mary Gawthorpe held a rival meeting outside. On 15th October 1910 the Women's Freedom League (WFL), a less violent WSPU breakaway group, staged a pair of suffrage plays in the hall. Written by Cicely Hamilton and directed by Edith Craig, *A Pageant of Great Women* and *Anti-Suffrage Waxworks* were equal parts entertaining and educational, aimed at exposing double standards in society.

4

Then: Friends Meeting House
Now: Hartshead Square

African-American journalist Ida B. Wells visited Sheffield on her tour of the country in 1893. She spoke here on the horrors of lynching in the American South, in the hope of appealing to the sentiments of those involved in the debates and causes of the day in Britain. Wells would go on, two decades later, to establish the US's first black women's suffrage association.

FIRST
IN THE
FIGHT

5

Sheffield Town Hall

The Town Hall saw its fair share of agitation in the first decade of the 20th century, including scenes involving two members of the country's most illustrious suffragette family. WSPU founder Emmeline Pankhurst visited the city in 1906, attracting a crowd around the Jubilee Monument (which then stood in Town Hall Square) with her attack on the government and the brutal treatment of suffragettes. Two years later, her daughter Adela ended up on the steps of the Town Hall after attempting to storm the Cutlers' Feast (see also: Cutlers' Hall). From here she spoke of inequalities and society's wrongs against women, before rioting broke out between the police and the 900-strong crowd as they moved towards Leopold Street.



6

Norfolk Barracks

In its early years, the barracks on Edmund Road (also known as the Volunteer Artillery Drill Hall) hosted everything from flower shows to dances, as well as the occasional political meeting. On 21 May 1909, prime minister H. H. Asquith was scheduled to visit. He'd already had an encounter in this place back in 1906, when he was heckled by women holding "votes for women" signs and responded by calling their cause a "sham issue". By 1909, disrupting meetings and badgering members of the Liberal government was a trademark WSPU tactic; this time, hardened suffragettes – some of whom had by now done stints in prison for the cause – descended on the barracks from across the north. No woman was allowed to enter the meeting due to, as Asquith put it, the suffragettes' "unladylike behaviour". Instead, the WSPU and WFL gathered a

crowd estimated at around 10,000 outside. The Sheffield Independent reported scenes of "wild disorder" caused by these "hatless women", who only dispersed when police drew their truncheons.

According to the Yorkshire Telegraph: "when it was all over the crowds slowly departed, discussing, not the Premier's defence of the budget, but the struggles of the Suffragettes". WSPU figurehead Christabel Pankhurst applauded the effort, writing that "the women who were barred out from the Prime Minister's meeting called upon the general public... and to this appeal there was a wonderful response". The building still stands and is now in commercial use.