

HISTORICAL GUIDED WALK

CELEBRATING VOTES FOR WOMEN IN DONCASTER 1918-2018

1. THE MARKET SQUARE – ADELA PANKHURST

The 'forgotten sister', Adela was the WSPU organiser for much of Yorkshire, and visited Doncaster frequently to recruit, speak and fundraise. She often spoke from a platform or the back of a horse-drawn cart in the square in front of the market. In 1908, the first meeting of the Doncaster WSPU took place in the Market Square, and a number of women were due to speak. A large crowd assembled but the meeting had to be abandoned due to the behaviour of a number of hooligans. However, local newspapers reported that the women made many friends and gained much support. Interviewed by the Doncaster Gazette after the meeting, Adela said: "I am not in the least discouraged; a good many people in the crowd were sympathetic."

2. THE GUILDHALL SITE – LILIAN LENTON

Lilian was one of the most exciting, glamorous and courageous of the suffragettes. She was an active militant, using safe houses, false names and different types of clothing - her nickname is the popular press was the 'suffragette in disguise'. In 1913, she arrived in Doncaster, living at 15 Osborne Road near Town Moor with other militant suffragettes. In the same year, she was arrested on suspicion of trying to burn down Westfield, a large house in Balby. Her initial trial was at The Guildhall, which once stood on Frenchgate. Lilian said that her aim "was to burn two buildings a week, in order to create such a condition in the country that it would prove impossible to govern without the consent of the governed."

3. DONCASTER RAILWAY STATION – RAILWAY SUFFRAGETTES

Violet Key-Jones was born in York but campaigned all over Yorkshire. She was very active, and used her small private income to fund her travel up and down the country. She was known as the 'railway suffragette' because of her frequent train journeys, and used Doncaster as one of her bases. In 1908, another Doncaster suffragette, Lina Lambert, organised a special train to take WSPU members down to London for the famous Hyde Park rally, which attracted more than 300,000 activists. The Doncaster Gazette reported that the train fare to London was 9 shillings return, with tickets available from a Mr T Smith on St Sepulchre Gate.

4. POST OFFICE, PRIORY PLACE – KATHLEEN BROWN

The post box outside the post office was frequently attacked. In 1913, acid was poured into the box. A fragment of letter was found inside the box, presumably written by the suffragette responsible, justifying their actions. Only part of the letter remains, and the identity of who poured the acid into the post box is a mystery. Kathleen Brown was a prominent suffragette from Newcastle who was sent to Doncaster by the WSPU to support the local campaign in 1913, and who lived at 15 Osborne Road. The property served as a safe house, accommodation for like-minded women, a meeting place and a base from which to plan activities. Kathleen was imprisoned three times for her actions: who exactly was she, and did she plan the post box attack.

5. THE MANSION HOUSE – HANNAH CLARK

Hannah was a suffragist. She was not in the WPSU but was a member of the non-militant National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (or NUWSS). After 1918, Hannah went on to have a successful career in local government. She was the first female councillor in Doncaster, and was elected to the Wheatley ward in 1920. She was also an alderman, was granted the Freedom of the Borough, and was part of a notable local Quaker family. As well as Hannah Clark, prominent Doncaster suffragists included Nina Hutchinson, the NUWSS branch secretary for Doncaster, and Eva Austen, who wrote regularly to local newspapers to make the case for female suffrage.

6. HALL GATE – VIOLET KEY-JONES.

Violet was the WSPU's organiser in Doncaster, and her office was on Hall Gate. From here, various militant actions were planned, including the bomb which was planted in Wheatley Hall in 1913. The bomb failed to go off, but local suffragettes were blamed. No-one was ever charged with the offence, but Violet gave interviews to the local newspapers talking about the incident. When the Doncaster Chronicle interviewed Violet about the attack, she said she could not acknowledge the outrage to be the result of her teaching, but said it was a direct result of the way the Government had treated the women's suffrage question, and it showed that "the women were in earnest."



7. WATERDALE – LADY BETTY BALFOUR

In 1913, Doncaster's suffragettes organised a public rally on Waterdale. One of the speakers was Lady Betty Balfour, who was a member of the NUWSS and had travelled to Doncaster especially for the occasion. She had previously spoken at a meeting in The Guildhall. However, a group of men heckled the speakers, shouting and singing so that they could not be heard. The mood soon turned so ugly that the women were forced to abandon their speeches and flee in a waiting car from Waterdale the short distance to what is now Doncaster Catholic Club, where they took refuge until the unruly crowd had dispersed. Violet Key-Jones and her bodyguards hid there until it was safe.

8. THE WAR MEMORIAL, BENNETTHORPE – EMMELINE PANKHURST

In 1914, the WSPU leader Emmeline Pankhurst called for all campaigning to be stopped so that women could support the war effort. Not all women agreed, and some did carry on the fight. For example, Violet Key-Jones continued to campaign: still running her town centre office on Hall Gate, operating a market stall and interviewing the Bishop of Knaresborough on the wickedness of forced feeding. Four years later, a minority of women were granted the vote but it would take another 10 years for all women to be enfranchised and be able to vote in the same way as men. During WWI many women who had been suffragettes and suffragists served in theatres of war. Lilian Lenton was active in Serbia with the Scottish Women's Hospitals Unit and was awarded the French Red Cross Medal for her service as an orderly. The War Memorial in Doncaster features the figure of a nurse in uniform - illustrating that women, as well as men, served and made sacrifices.



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6 HALL GATE - VIOLET KEY-JONES



7 WATERDALE - LADY BETTY BALFOUR



8 THE WAR MEMORIAL, BENNETTHORPE - EMMELINE PANKHURST

A large, faint map of Doncaster, England, serves as the background. The map shows a grid of streets and various landmarks. The text "L.B. DONCASTER" is prominently displayed in the center, and "Hyde Park" is visible at the bottom. A dotted line with numbered markers (1-8) traces a path across the map, connecting the locations shown in the photographs.