

Radical Heritage Trail

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From the 1790's to the present day there hasn't been a radical social or political movement in Britain which has not been reflected in Huddersfield. The campaign for the reform of Parliament, Chartism, the creation of the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party itself, the women's suffrage movement and Socialist Sunday Schools, were all represented here. As were the Luddites and Robert Owen's plans for a Socialist Utopia. In the 1830's Huddersfield was a major centre of the campaign for factory reform, led by Richard Oastler. Indeed whether it was the temperance movement, the co-operative movement, Secularism, 'Votes for Women' or the refusal to fight in the First World War, Huddersfield men and women were involved.

This trail will guide you around a number of the buildings and places in the town centre which have been involved in these, often dramatic, moments in our local and national history. It is only a beginning. There is much more to learn. The Huddersfield Local History Society's website (www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk) will lead you to the best places for further research.

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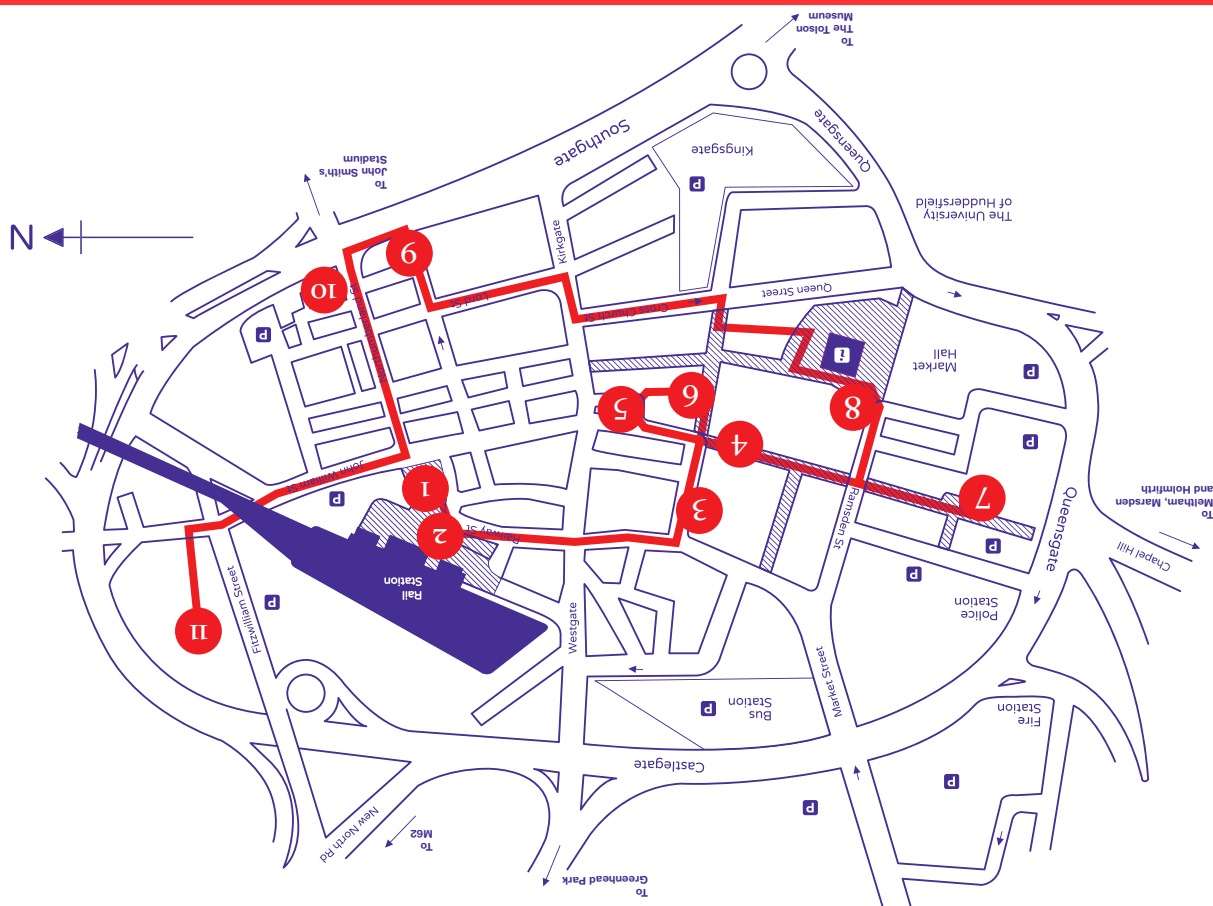
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Radical Heritage Trail

Key:
 One way traffic flow
 Parking
 Pedestrian area



Discover Huddersfield offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.

Cover Image:

Richard Oastler 'The Factory King' and leader of the campaign against child labour from 1830, returning to Huddersfield after his release from prison. A triumphal procession along Cross Church Street accompanied by Lindley Band.



1 St George's Square Statue of Harold Wilson

Leader of the Labour Party, 1963 - 1976, and Prime Minister 1964 - 1970, and 1974 - 1976, was born and raised in Milnsbridge just two miles from the town centre.



2 St George's Square May Day 1907

Completed in 1853, this became the largest public space in town and venue for mass meetings of all kinds. Processions of temperance groups such as the Band of Hope, and the Labour Movement's May Day marches made their way here. It was the place for strike meetings, and huge political public meetings of all kinds gathered here to express the town's views on the major events of the day.



3 The White Hart

The White Hart had a role in the drama of Huddersfield's Luddites and in the

early 19th century was the meeting place of several trade unions and political organisations. The committee of the Radical candidate Captain Wood was based here in the stormy election of 1832. The Radical Association, forerunner of the local Chartists, was founded here in 1835.

4 Site of 'Thornton's Temperance Hotel' 1855 to 1909

Established by the secularist and temperance campaigner Joseph Thornton, it became a centre of radical discussion. Several leading Secularists stayed at the hotel, including Charles Bradlaugh. Meetings of a local branch of the Fabian Society were held here in the 1880's which led to the formation of the local Independent Labour Party (ILP).



5 Market Place

Original centre of the town and also of much social protest. In 1799 a food riot here led to arrests. The square and the George Inn were barricaded in anticipation of a radical uprising in

1820. In 1842 the Riot Act was read and cavalry used to disperse strikers who had poured into town from the Holme and Colne Valleys. The Market Cross remains a focus for political rallies to this day. The original George Inn, scene of so many conflicts, was removed to open up John William Street and re-erected in St Peter's Street.



6 Market Walk

Huddersfield was in the forefront of the struggle for a free press in the 1830's. A shop located here selling 'unstamped' (illegal) radical newspapers and other subversive publications changed hands several times. One owner, Chris Tinker, a Socialist and Republican, was gaoled for selling unstamped newspapers. When he emigrated to America in the 1840's he sold the shop to the famous radical journalist Joshua Hobson.



7 Huddersfield Co-operative Society, Buxton Road

Originally formed in the 1820's by followers of Robert Owen, this building was opened in 1906 by which time Huddersfield Industrial Society was the town's largest retailer, a major employer and provider of services as diverse as laundry, coal deliveries and funerals.

8 The Philosophical Hall

The Philosophical Hall, later the Theatre Royal, located in what is now the Piazza. It was a venue for many political meetings from the 1840's to 1860's. Home of the Secular Sunday School and a short-lived Republican Party, Charles Bradlaugh came to speak here in 1866 but was locked out of the hall and was arrested for attempting to force an entry.



9 St Peter's Street

Former clubrooms for the Huddersfield branch of the ILP, formed in 1892, the immediate predecessor of the Labour Party. From 1906 to 1936 the Socialist Sunday School met in an upstairs room. With the Friendly and Trades Club it was a centre for the town's anti-war movement during the First World War.



10 Friendly and Trades Club

Originally built in 1861 as the Mechanics Institution, in 1883 it became the home of the town's friendly societies, trade union branch offices and the meeting place for Huddersfield Trades Council. The Trades Council was instrumental in forming the local ILP and the town's branch of the Labour Party. Closed in 2002, it was converted into creative lofts within what is now the town's 'Cultural Industries Quarter'.



11 Hall of Science Bath Street

Built in 1839 by followers of Robert Owen and probably the last of its kind still standing. It was a home for Socialist meetings and educational events. In the 1840's local Chartists also used the building. It later became a Baptist chapel.