



Heritage Trail 1:

Extract from the Feminist Review 1980s *Birmingham Women: Past and Present* walk.

Colmore Row to Fleet Street, via the Jewellery Quarter.

Allow 90 minutes.

Starting point: the entrance gate to St Philip's on Colmore Row, opposite Church Street

1. Birmingham Maidens Club

The clubroom of this 19th century feminist group was in Ann Street (the original name of Colmore Row). Membership was confined to single women, who were obliged to leave the club upon marriage.

2. Birmingham's First Creche

Set up by Richard Cadbury in the 1860s in Ann Street. A mothers' meeting started from the nursery 'to show them how to apply their Christianity on the lines of good home management'.

3. Female Labour in the Metal Trades

Church Street housed many workshops in the 19th century, in which considerable numbers of women were employed. Mostly in unskilled roles, women tended to earn a third to a half of a man's wage.

4. Female Labour in the Button Trade

Ludgate Hill was similarly populated with workshops. Women and children dominated Birmingham's button trade, which employed about 6,000 in the 1860s. A number of women ran their own button businesses.

5. Female Labour in the Jewellery Quarter

The jewellery trade became permanently established in the area around St Paul's by the mid-19th century. This industry was dominated by men, with only a few women employed in unskilled roles like box making.

6. Charity School for Girls

A school to train girls for domestic service was erected in Graham Street in 1839. A ladies committee oversaw the day-to-day management, but decisions were passed by the men's committee.

7. Newhall Hill

This large expanse of open space in the 19th century was the town's meeting point for large rallies. Renowned for the great reform meetings, involving tens of thousands, which led to the 1832 Reform Act.

8. Science Museum

The former science museum celebrated the work of Birmingham men in the industrial revolution. Women's lack of scientific education, and exclusion from skilled trades, prevented a role in technical innovation.

Finishing point: the Coffin Works on Fleet Street



Women's History Birmingham

