

Female Chartism

Unfortunately there is very little evidence of the role that women played in the Chartist movement. It is known that Alice Mann was one of the founders of the Leeds Workingmens' Association in 1837 but after this date, the only references (so far) to her are a handbill written in the 1840 protesting about Corporation spending and she is last listed in the Leeds Directories in 1852.

Alice was the widow of James Mann, himself involved in radical politics for many years. Both James and Alice were booksellers and presumably she carried on the business after the death of James. Her premises were listed as being in Central Market and latterly Boar Lane.

Nationally, there is evidence that in relation to women's suffrage some prominent Chartist's were in favour of including this demand, and in some places there were female political unions created.

Northern Star 29th August 1840

FEMALE CHARTIST – A large number of the female chartists of this town, met at the house of Mr. James Illingworth 21 Vicar Lane on Wednesday evening last, when it was unanimously agreed to accompany the procession which will take place on Monday 7th to escort Messrs. McDouall, Collins and White into the town, After the transaction of business it was resolved to adjourn the meeting to Tuesday evening next, when all female friends to the same are requested to attend, to make all necessary arrangements as to what order they should go in the procession.