



## Trailblazing Women: Anita Roddick



# TRAILBLAZERS: World War One's Inspirational Women

**Location:** Littlehampton, West Sussex

**Occupation:** Founder of The Body Shop, Human Rights Activist, Environmental Campaigner

### Why are they a Trailblazer?

Anita Roddick was born in a bomb shelter in Littlehampton, Sussex in 1942, the daughter of Italian migrants who ran a cafe. In 1976 she opened the first branch of The Body Shop in Kensington Gardens, Brighton. By 1981 it had mushroomed into 700 branches internationally and had become a household name, producing and retailing beauty products that were simply packaged and had not been tested on animals. The company was also one of the first to promote Fairtrade with developing countries, shaping ethical consumerism for decades to come. Awarded the DBE in 2003, Dame Anita also helped to enlarge the profile of Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth by publicising their campaigns in the shops. Her extensive charity work included founding 'Children on the Edge' in 1990, which helps children disadvantaged by conflict, natural disasters, disabilities and HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.

### What impact have they made on their community?

Following The Body Shop's success many other cosmetics companies stopped testing on animals. Today 'cruelty free' has become the norm. In 1988 The Body Shop created 'Ruby' the size 16 doll with the slogan 'there are 8 billion women who don't look like supermodels and only 8 who do' to tackle the damaging and unrealistic images of women used in the beauty and fashion industry. The Body Shop branches provided pitches for vendors of street newspaper 'The Big Issue' from its beginnings in 1991. In 2003 a new building, 'The Roddick Enterprise Centre' at Littlehampton Community School was built with money donated by Anita Roddick. The school successfully applied to become a Business and Enterprise School. Littlehampton College also hosts 'Roddick Days' such as 'Day of Action' and 'One World', which encourage students to give something back to their community.

### What connections are there between Anita and the Trailblazers of World War One?

Before Anita Roddick opened the first The Body Shop in Brighton, London-born animal rights activist Lady Muriel Dowding (1908 – 1993) had developed a collection of cruelty free products under the name 'Beauty Without Cruelty'. Lady Muriel held many positions in the early twentieth century animal welfare world, organising fake fur fashion shows, promoting vegetarianism, and being vice-president of the RSPCA. 'Beauty Without Cruelty' was initially set up as a charity in 1959 and became a company offering cruelty-free make up and toiletries from 1963.

### How do they inspire your class to be Trailblazers of the future?

The world of business is often considered a male environment where ruthlessness, competitiveness and greed are the dominating values. By creating a business which managed to put Fairtrade, animal rights, and environmental concerns at the heart of its operation Anita Roddick showed that there is a place for kindness and compassion in business. Anita Roddick started small. She opened the first The Body Shop in a Brighton backstreet with a bank loan. She has shown that it is possible to create success without huge resources and enormous sums of money behind you.



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