

# NORTHERN SOLES

A COAST TO COAST WALK

With a (very small) spring in his step and a song playing on his smartphone, Steve Ankers sets out on a 200-mile coast to coast walk from the Mersey to the Humber.

Travelling from one City of Culture to another takes him through snow, torrential rain and sweltering heat to a mighty gathering of brass bands, a collection of police truncheons, a ghost train, the Taj Mahal of swimming, and a liquorice festival. He encounters a Vimto sculpture, the country's finest cat hotel, a lost town, and a justification for donkey stoning. He discovers where gravity was invented, where rugby league was first discovered, how wind turbines breed, and why Sylvia Pankhurst is still a hero in Addis Ababa. And he consumes more scouse, spam fritters, and potato patties than you can shake a black pudding at.

Best of all Steve gets to meet his heroes – the largely unsung volunteers and staff at the heart of our heritage and communities, and those who, in this centenary year for women's suffrage, honour the legacy of those who fought for the vote and still campaign vigorously today on issues of gender inequality and injustice.

It's a fascinating journey, and a passionate and often funny one.

*"Ankers has a Bill Brysonesque knack of finding infectious delight in apparently inconsequential, unheralded attractions, especially those that mark 'the faltering progress of society's rank and file.'"*

Mark Elliott, travel writer

*"This delightful road trip bristles with insights."*

Polly Toynbee, Journalist and writer on social affairs

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*"Travel writing with good humour and a welcome attention to issues of equality and social justice."*

Helen Pankhurst, international development and women's rights activist

