

# 5 things you might not have known about Battersea Arts Centre

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Battersea Arts Centre used to function as a Town Hall Battersea Arts Centre  
After a rocky journey, full of drama, character and community spirit, the main hall at London's Battersea Arts Centre is starting its reopening countdown today.

[The arts and community space](#) in South London suffered a fire in 2015, a matter of months after capital works began on [a major redevelopment project](#), made possible with a £3.4million Heritage Lottery Fund grant, among other National Lottery funding.

For many, especially the local people who helped them in their hour of need, it makes the upcoming re-opening in September all the sweeter.

To celebrate, here are five things you might not have known about the venue:

## **1. Emmeline Pankhurst chaired meetings in the building when it was used as a Town Hall.**

Battersea was a focal point for the Campaign for Women's Suffrage in the early 20th century. Other members of the movement to preside over meetings there included Charlotte Despard and Emmeline's daughter Christabel.

**2. The name of Battersea Arts Centre's forthcoming 'Phoenix Season' was inspired by writer and theatre maker Stella Duffy**

Shortly after the fire began at Battersea Arts Centre, Stella Duffy created the hashtag [#BACPhoenix](#) to start talking about how the centre would rise from the ashes. It caught on fast, and [the reopening season](#), starting later in the year, is named after it.

**3. Many of the bricks, doors and windows demolished in the fire are being reused in the new building.**

It's part of the centre's plan to reduce their carbon footprint by 50% by 2020.

**4. 12 fire engines were sent to tackle the 2015 blaze.**

80 firefighters attended the fire, which caused the Grand Hall's ceiling to collapse

**5. The company whose show was running in the theatre when the fire broke out will be the first show of the new Phoenix Season.**

[Gecko](#) lost all their set and equipment in the blaze.

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