

We are:
**Black Abolitionist
History Trails**

Dewsbury



We are:
**Kirklees
Libraries.**



History

Abolitionists sought to end or abolish chattel slavery during the 19th century. Black men and women, often survivors of chattel slavery, were freedom fighters and leaders of the anti-slavery movement.

Black women and men wrote powerful condemnations of slavery in their autobiographies and slave narratives (sometimes outselling famous Victorian contemporaries in terms of initial sales), lectured on abolitionist platforms, wrote poetry, and composed paintings and illustrations depicting the brutality they had experienced as well as the loved ones they were forced to leave behind.

Throughout the 19th century, they visited nearly every corner of Britain and Ireland to lecture and inform the transatlantic public about their experiences.

They lectured in large cities to small fishing villages, spoke in town halls, churches, chapels, the private parlour rooms of wealthy patrons, school rooms, and open spaces.

Black freedom fighters organised lectures to all audiences: upper class and the aristocracy, middle class printers and merchants, working class communities, women's abolitionist societies, and children's groups too.

Black Abolitionists who visited Kirklees included Frederick Douglass, Moses Roper, William and Ellen Craft, James Watkins, Sarah Parker Remond, Jacob D. Green, Turner Williams, Samuel Robinson, and Henry 'Box' Brown.

Survivors like James Watkins reminded audiences where goods like cotton and rice came from "[if] you could hear the groans of the slaves, and witness for a moment their sufferings ... [you] would never again touch Savannah rice ... you would feel you were eating the blood and bones of the negroes."

Countless freedom fighters who visited Kirklees became famous in Britain and Ireland for their international campaigns for liberty and social justice that still resonates today.

For further information please visit:

www.kirklees.gov.uk/local-study-library

The Abolitionists

Henry 'Box' Brown [1815–1897]

Born into enslavement in Virginia, US, in 1815, Henry 'Box' Brown liberated himself from chattel slavery by posting himself in a box, a horrific ordeal that lasted 27 hours and nearly killed him. He was welcomed by white Abolitionists in the free state of Philadelphia.



Brown realised his dramatic escape lent itself very well to entertaining audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, and performed alongside the famous box he travelled in. In 1850, Brown travelled to Britain and for nearly two decades, re-enacted his escape through lectures, a panorama (a large painting on thousands of feet of canvas), performances, and even dramatised his life on stage in Margate, Kent.

Henry 'Box' Brown lectured in Centenary Chapel, Dewsbury - today known as Dewsbury Elim Church. This historic and beautiful Georgian-style Centenary Chapel, built in 1846 to celebrate the centenary of Dewsbury's first Methodist Society, has proven the perfect venue to visit, celebrate and discover more about a little-known but important aspect of local history.

In The Huddersfield Chronicle of July 1851, one newspaper correspondent wrote that "Mr. Henry Box Brown, the well-known fugitive slave, exhibited his unrivalled panorama in the large room behind the Centenary Chapel, Dewsbury. It set forth in very striking colours the awful extent and the vast amount of evil carried on in that so-called 'Land of Liberty', America. We are sorry to say that the exhibition was but indifferently supported."



The Abolitionists

Sarah Parker Remond [1826–1894]

Born free in Massachusetts to a family active in the social justice campaign, from an early age Remond fought against racism, chattel slavery, and segregation in public spaces. She became a renowned anti-slavery activist, lecturer and physician in the US, Britain, Ireland and Italy, and was one of the first women to lecture against slavery on the British stage.



Remond gave at least 45 lectures in Britain between 1859 and 1861, urging audiences to boycott cotton and rice from America. She raised large sums of money for the anti-slavery cause.

Her lectures inspired new anti-slavery societies and donations to the abolitionist cause. She lectured at Dewsbury Centenary Chapel in 1860. In January 1860, The Huddersfield Chronicle correspondent wrote “her language is said to be exceedingly impressive and delightful, and crowded meetings have welcomed her wherever she has stood up to advocate the interests of her oppressed people.”

Health and wellbeing information

Being outdoors is good for us! It can reduce stress and blood pressure and improve our well-being. Whether you want an energetic day out on your bike, or would rather explore short distances on foot, there is a Black Abolitionist History Trail for you.

If you want to learn more about getting active, the NHS website has lots of information: www.nhs.uk



The route

Starting point:

Dewsbury Library

1. Walk north-west on Railway St
2. Turn left towards Longcauseway
3. Turn right onto Longcauseway
4. Turn right onto Church St
5. Turn left onto Daisy Hill.

The trail should take approximately 6 minutes, and is a distance of 0.3 miles.

The trail is mainly uphill and includes crossing roads (at pedestrian crossings) and some uneven surfaces.

Extra care will be needed in inclement weather.



History of Elim Chapel

Centenary Chapel, Daisy Hill in Dewsbury, The Chapel was built in 1839 to celebrate the centenary of Methodist worship in Dewsbury, and it remained a Methodist chapel until 2007 when it changed to a Pentecostal church, known as Dewsbury Elim Church.

Explore other places where the Black Abolitionists visited in Kirklees

While some of the locations in Kirklees where Black Abolitionists lectured or published their narratives no longer remain, the sites still act as visual monuments to their courageous and inspiring heroism against chattel slavery and racism.

Upper Independent Chapel, Heckmondwike

Originally the chapel was located on Chapel Lane but moved to the High Street in 1845.

The church was demolished and rebuilt on exactly the same site in 1890 and that building still stands.

James Watkins lectured in the Upper Independent Chapel.

Philosophical Hall and Ramsden Chapel, Huddersfield

Moses Roper and the Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward spoke at Ramsden Chapel, as did Frederick Douglass.

William Craft spoke at the Philosophical Hall.



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Dewsbury



Dewsbury Elim Church

Sarah Parker Remond and Henry 'Box' Brown both spoke at Centenary Chapel, now Dewsbury Elim Church.



Philosophical Hall and Ramsden Chapel

Moses Roper and the Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward spoke at Ramsden Chapel, as did Frederick Douglass.

William Craft spoke at the Philosophical Hall.



Huddersfield



Huddersfield Library

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Kirklees Libraries



If you would prefer a paper copy of the trail you can pick one up from the following Kirklees Libraries: Huddersfield, Heckmondwike and Dewsbury.

We are:
Kirklees
Libraries.

