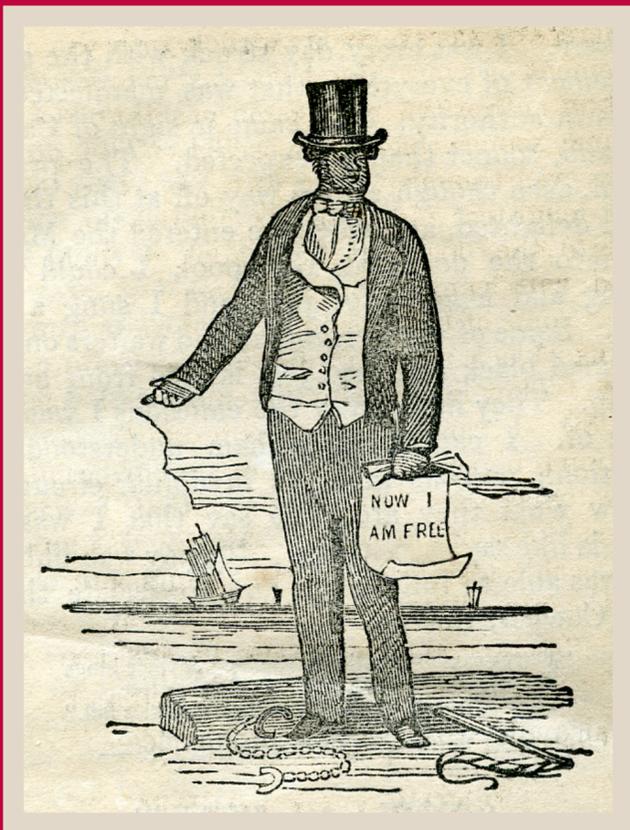
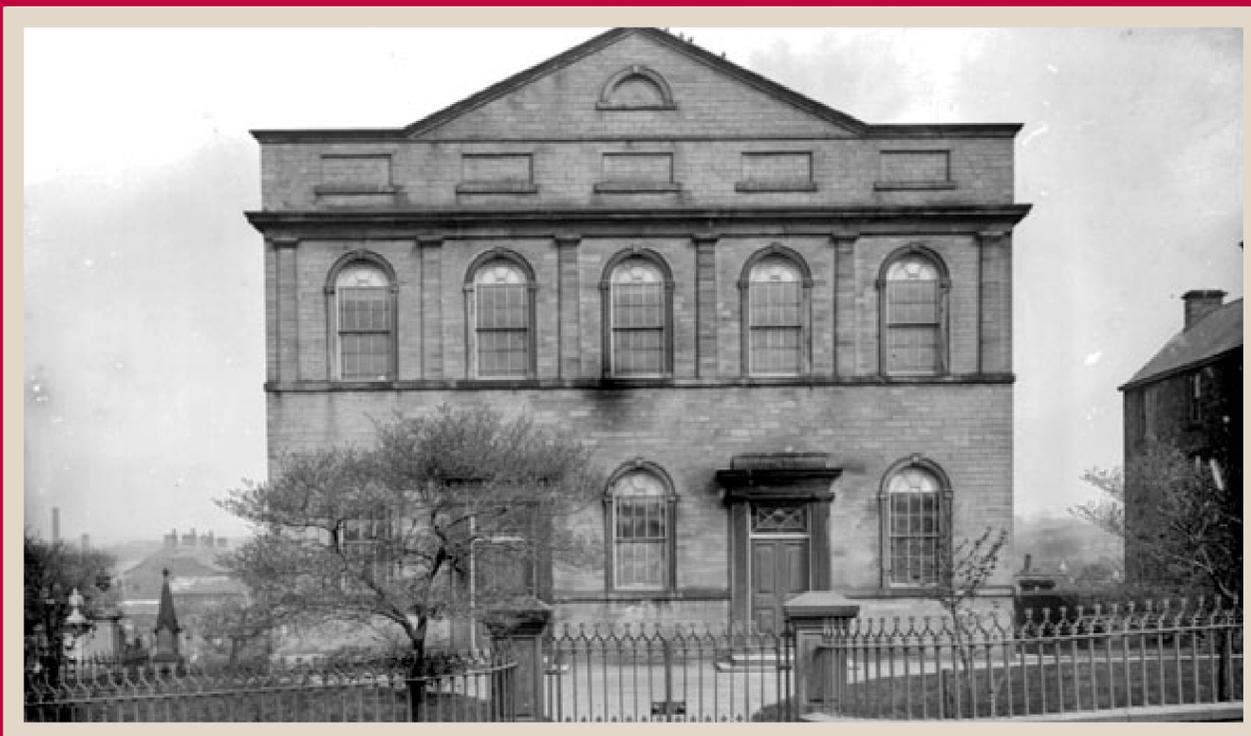
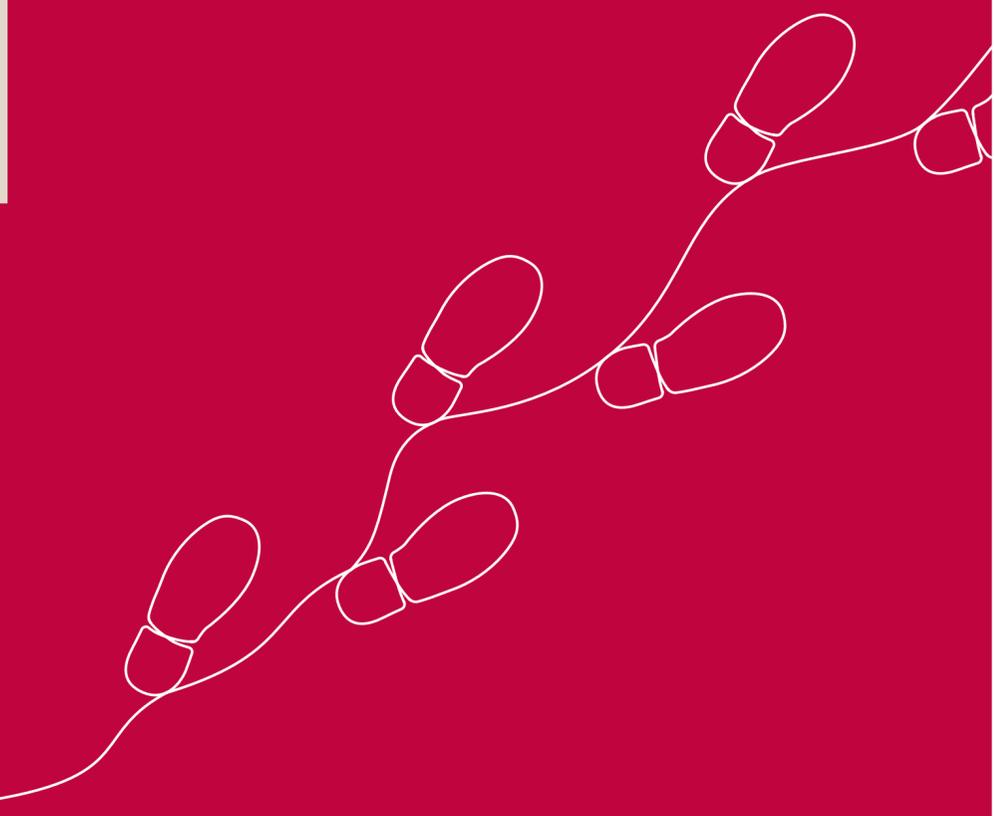


We are:  
**Black Abolitionist  
History Trails**

Heckmondwike



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](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/local-study-library)

# The Abolitionists

## James Watkins

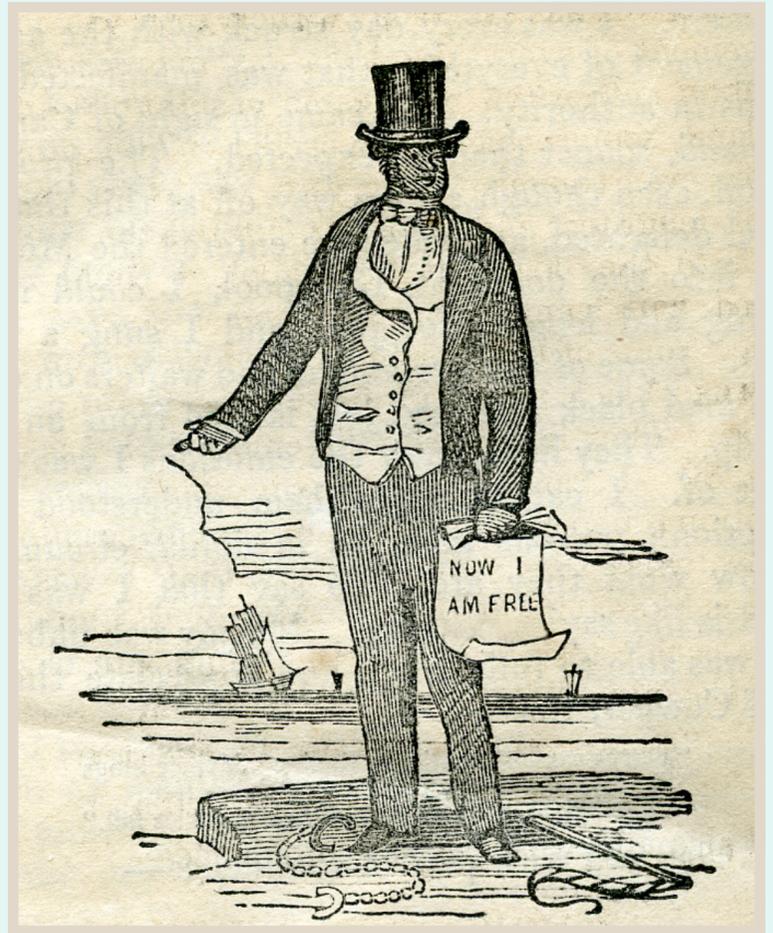
[1826-5 – ?]

Born into US chattel slavery in Maryland, James Watkins escaped in 1845 and settled in Hartford, Connecticut with his wife, Mary Eliza Watkins (née Wells) and three children.

The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act forced him to flee to England for safety, where he spent over a decade lecturing against slavery, racism, colonization, and segregation.

He was a strong supporter of free produce, urging British audiences to import free-grown goods such as cotton from India or the African continent instead of relying on the import of goods produced by enslaved people in the south of the United States.

Image © Bolton Council. From the collection of Bolton Library and Museum Services.



## The Upper Independent Chapel

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

The church was actually demolished and rebuilt on Chapel Lane but moved to the exactly the same site in 1890 and as you can see the building still stands, although converted into flats.



# The route

## Starting point:

Heckmondwike Library

1. Walk north-west on B6177 towards Brook Street
2. Turn right onto Church Street
3. Continue onto Grove Road
4. Turn left onto High Street
5. Turn right onto High Street [A638].

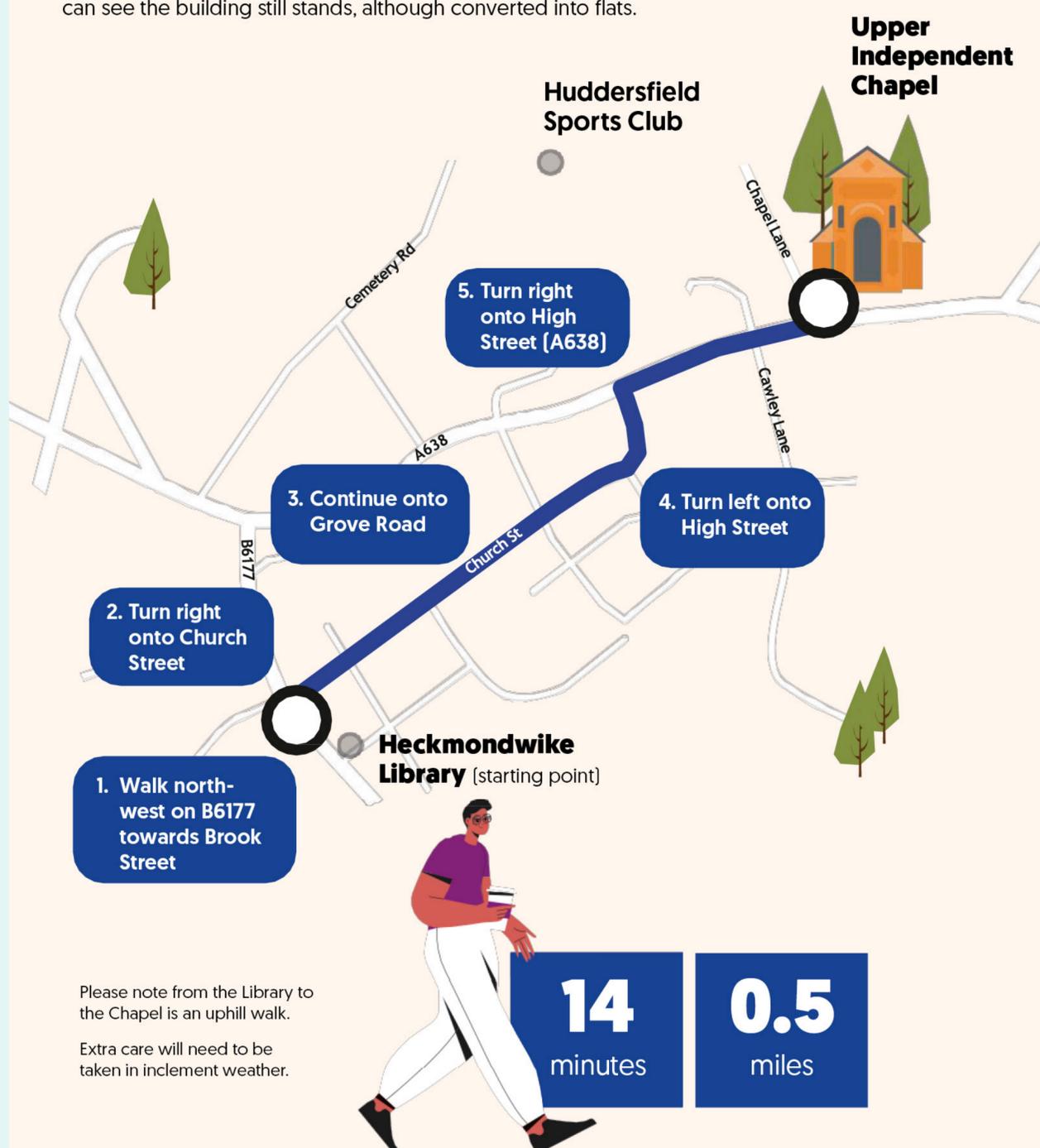
The trail should take approximately 14 minutes, and is a distance of 0.5 miles.

Please note from the Library to the Chapel is an uphill walk. Extra care will need to be taken in inclement weather.

## The Route

### History of the Upper Independent Chapel

Originally it was located on Chapel Lane but moved to the High Street in 1845. The church was actually demolished and rebuilt on Chapel Lane but moved to the exactly the same site in 1890 and as you can see the building still stands, although converted into flats.



## **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.

### **Dewsbury Elim Church**

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

### **Philosophical Hall and Ramsden Chapel, Huddersfield**

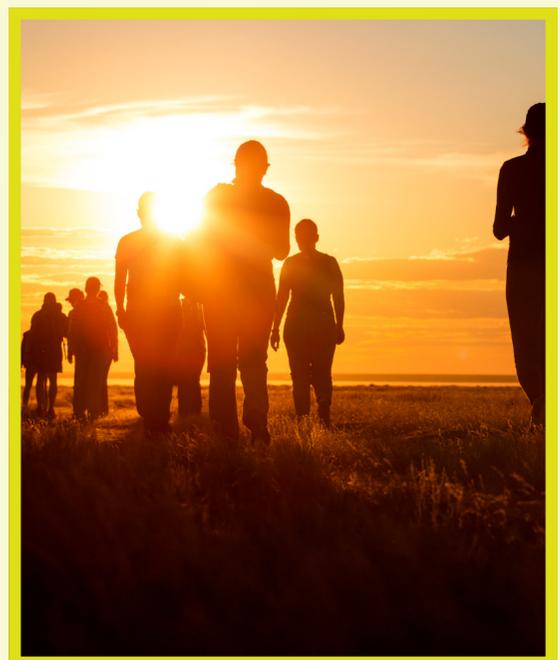
Moses Roper and the Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward spoke at Ramsden Chapel, as did Frederick Douglass.

William Craft spoke at the Philosophical Hall.

## **Health and wellbeing information**

Being outdoors is good for us! It can reduce stress and blood pressure and improve our wellbeing. 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](http://www.nhs.uk)



# Explore where the Black Abolitionists visited

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

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

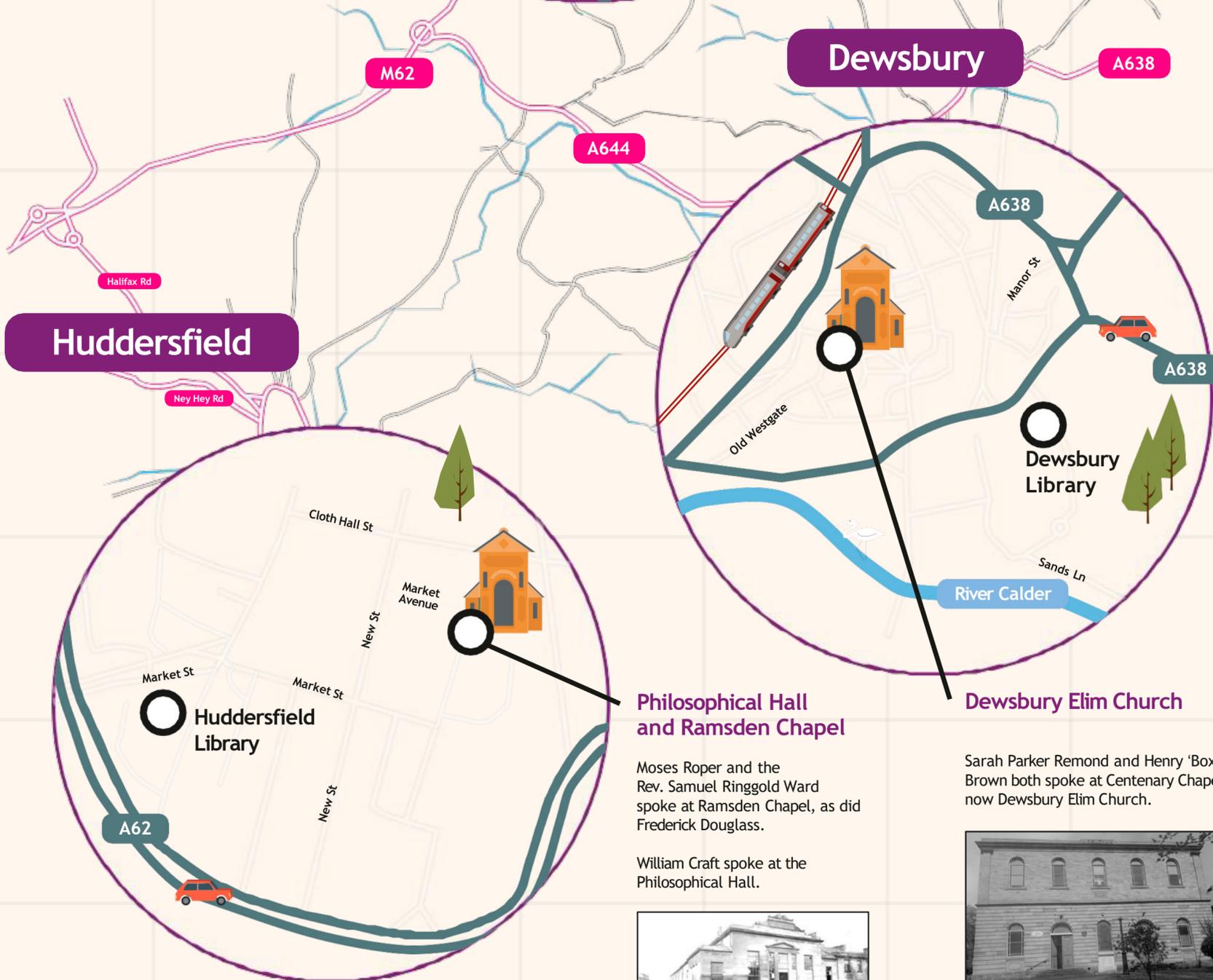
The church was demolished and rebuilt on exactly the same site in 1890 and that building still stands.

James Watkins lectured in the Upper Independent Chapel.



## Heckmondwike

## Dewsbury



## Huddersfield



## Huddersfield Library

## 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.



## Dewsbury Elim Church

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



Photo credits: Frederick Douglass (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/282066>). Henry 'Box' Brown ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Box\\_Brown#/media/File:Henry\\_Box\\_Brown\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Box_Brown#/media/File:Henry_Box_Brown_(cropped).jpg), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Box\\_Brown#/media/File:Boxbrown.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Box_Brown#/media/File:Boxbrown.jpg)). Ellen Craft ([https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2b/Ellen\\_Craft\\_escaped\\_slave.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2b/Ellen_Craft_escaped_slave.jpg)). Moses Roper ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses\\_Roper#/media/File:Moses\\_Roper\\_-\\_1846\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Roper#/media/File:Moses_Roper_-_1846_(cropped).jpg)). Sarah Parker Remond ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarah\\_Parker\\_Remond.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarah_Parker_Remond.jpg)). Buildings (except Dewsbury Elim Church) (<https://kirkleesimages.org.uk/>).

## Image credits:

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Kirklees Council BAME (Black, Asian Minority Ethnic Employee Network)

Kirklees Council

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.**

