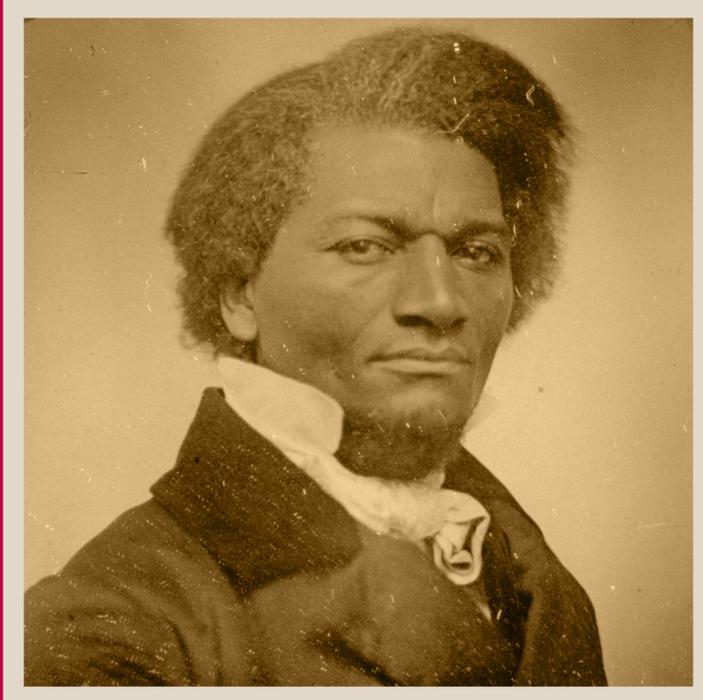
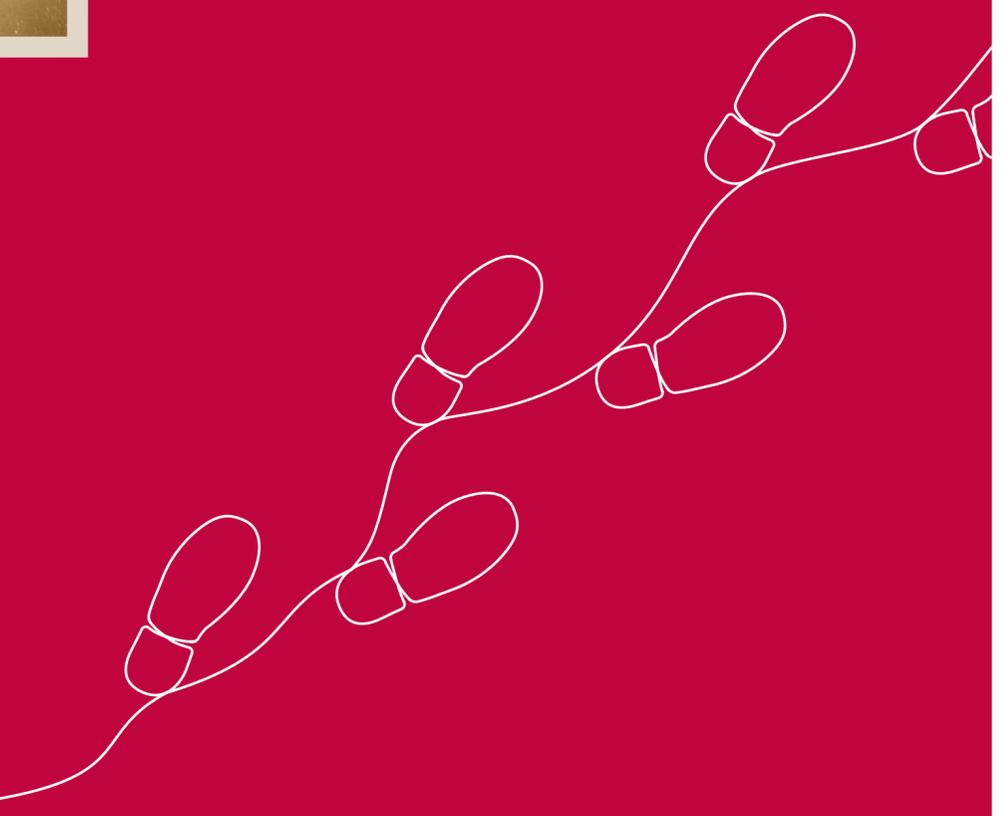


We are:
**Black Abolitionist
History Trails**

Huddersfield



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

Ellen and William Craft

[Ellen 1826–1891, William 1824–1900]



Born into enslavement in Georgia, Ellen and William Craft resolved to liberate themselves from slavery over Christmas in 1848. They devised a dangerous and death-defying escape plan: Ellen could pass for white and so performed as a white, southern gentleman, while William posed as her enslaved manservant.

Their disguise had to be perfect as they risked death if they were captured. Due to the inhumane and brutal practices of chattel slavery, it was forbidden for an enslaved person to read and write, so Ellen Craft bandaged her right arm and feigned disability as part of her performance in the hope that someone else could sign for tickets on trains and steamboats as they made their way to freedom.

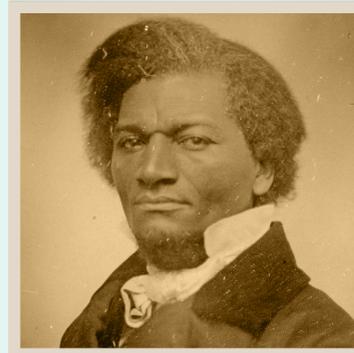
Eventually, the Crafts arrived in Philadelphia and moved to Boston but were forced to flee to England after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, a pro-slavery law passed by the US government which made the free states a hunting ground for enslaved people, by making the return of all fugitives to their white enslavers mandatory. Those who resisted the act, or helped fugitives to escape, were imprisoned and fined.

The Crafts travelled around Britain campaigning against US chattel slavery and racism. William Craft gave a lecture at the Philosophical Hall in November 1856.

The Huddersfield Chronicle reported some of William Craft's speech from the Philosophical Hall: "Mr. Craft held it to be the duty of all men to aid in sweeping slavery from the sight of Heaven. He considered slavery inhuman in practice, and the greatest stumbling block both to civilisation and Christianity: for it was quite clear that no man could enslave and brutify another, without equally debasing himself. To obtain a comprehensive view of slavery, it was well to understand some of its fundamental laws. The slave code said a slave was one who was in the power of the master to whom he belonged; one who could not own or acquire anything. They might imagine what the moral condition of the female portion of the community must be, when stripped of all legal protection, and left entirely at the mercy of unprincipled men. The wrongs and outrages slaves suffered were such that they could not be laid before a public audience. From having been a slave twenty-three years himself, he could say that he believed it the greatest curse which had ever blasted the happiness of man."

The Abolitionists

Frederick Douglass [1818–1895]



Born into enslavement in Maryland, US, Douglass was a pioneering and revolutionary activist for abolition, equality, feminism, and social justice until the day he died. He was an author, journalist, poet, artist, philosopher, and powerful speaker: his autobiographies sold tens of thousands of copies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Douglass' first visit to Britain and Ireland began in the summer of 1845, and he lectured in Huddersfield in 1847, shortly before he was due to return to the US. While in Britain, he lectured over 300 times, sold copies of his narrative, and worked with Abolitionists to raise awareness of US chattel slavery. He collaborated with activists in Newcastle to purchase his legal freedom.

When Douglass returned to England in 1859-1860, he lectured once again in Huddersfield, speaking at the Ramsden Street Chapel in March 1860.

The Huddersfield Chronicle noted that: “Mr. Douglass related that he was born a slave, and that he owed his freedom to the people of this country, and especially to the ladies of the north of England, who, when he first came to this free land, subscribed £150 and bought him, and made him a present of himself to himself.”

Moses Roper [1815–1891]



Born into enslavement in North Carolina, US, Roper was a pioneering freedom fighter who travelled to every corner of Britain and Ireland lecturing about the brutal torture he experienced and witnessed across the southern states.

His revolutionary autobiography sold tens of thousands of copies, including 5,000 in Welsh. At the end of his anti-slavery meetings, Roper sold copies of his book and exhibited weapons of torture.

The Halifax Express of March 1840 reported that Moses Roper “delivered an address in Ramsden Street Chapel, Huddersfield” and “exhibited the fetters with which the slaves are bound and produced a very strong feeling of indignation to the audience against the horrors of slavery, and the cruelties of slaveholders towards their slaves”.

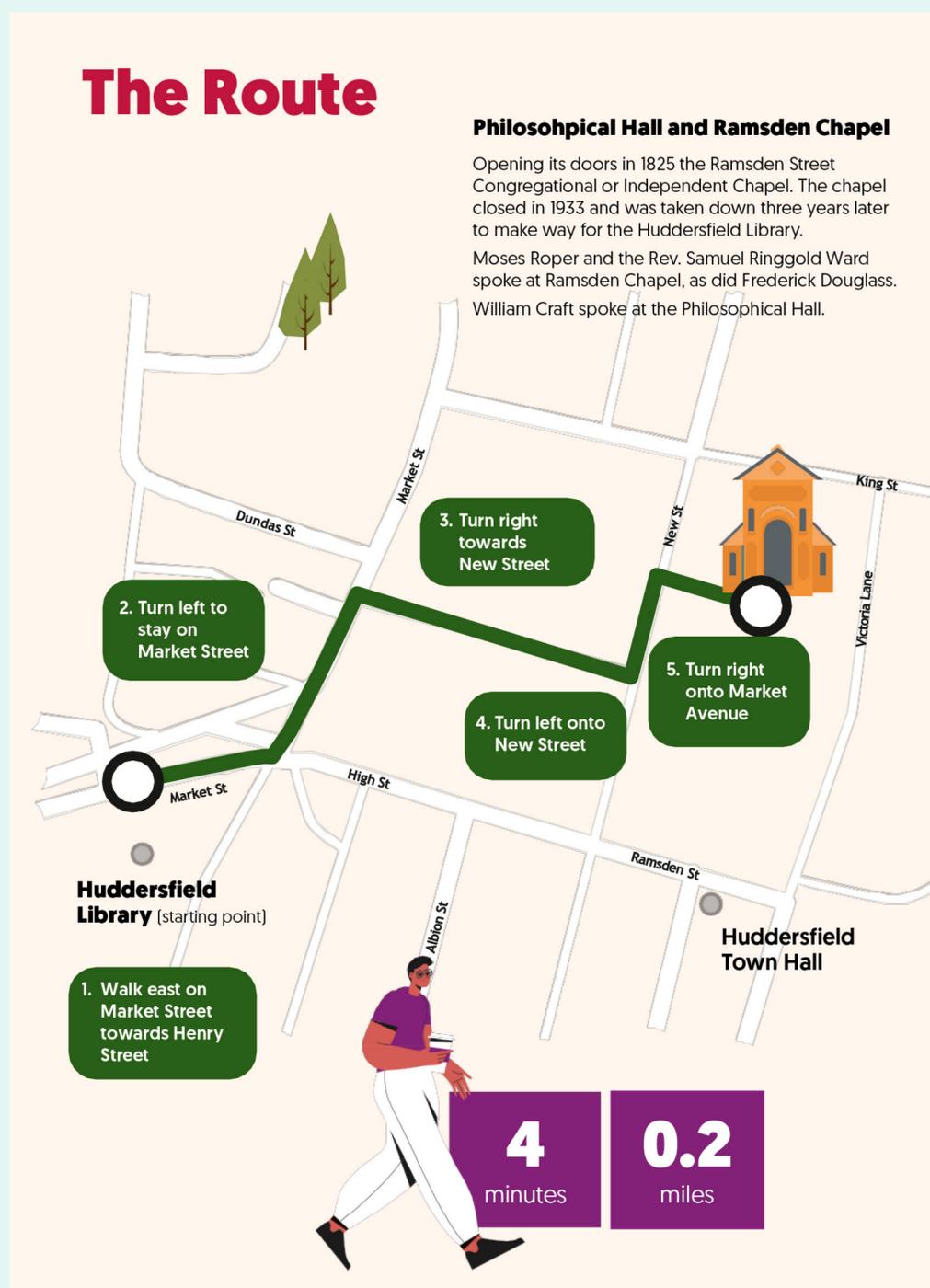
The route

Starting point:

Huddersfield Library

1. Walk east on Market Street towards Henry Street
2. Turn left to stay on Market Street
3. Turn right towards New Street
4. Turn left onto New Street
5. Turn right onto Market Avenue.

The trail should take approximately 4 minutes, and is a distance of 0.2 miles.



Philosophical Hall and Ramsden Chapel

Opening its doors in 1825 the Ramsden Street Congregational or Independent Chapel. The chapel closed in 1933 and was taken down three years later to make way for the Huddersfield Library.

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

William Craft spoke at the Philosophical Hall.

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.

Dewsbury Elim Church

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

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



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Upper Independent Chapel

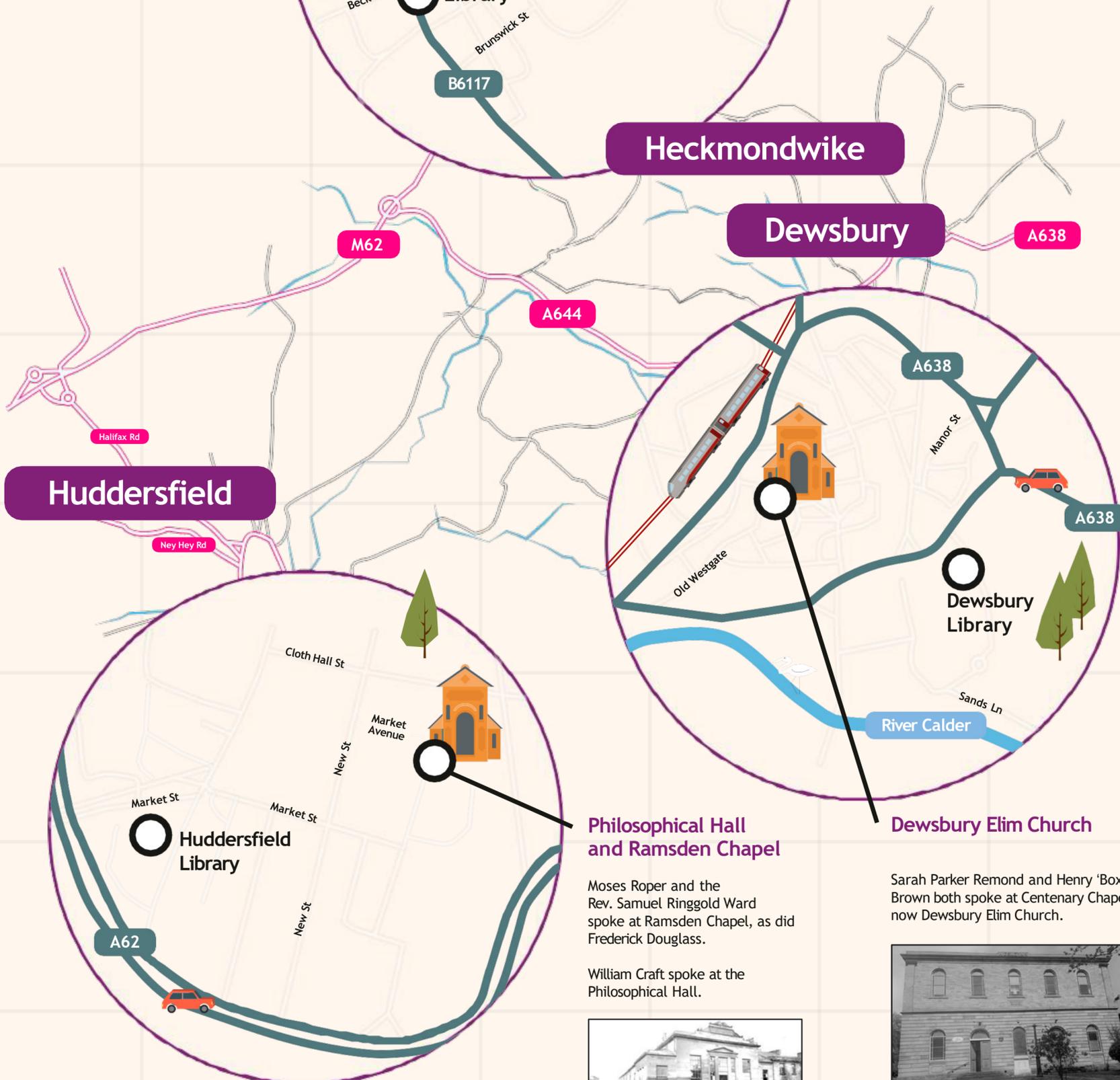
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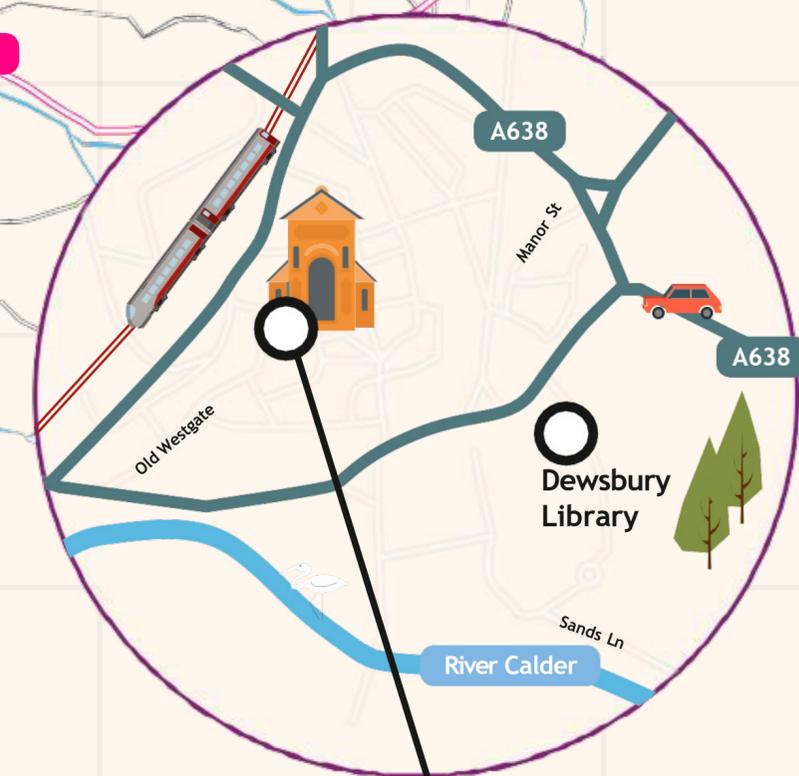
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Heckmondwike



Dewsbury



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Huddersfield



Huddersfield Library

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Elim

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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.

