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DEWSBURY TOWN MANAGEMENT:	www.batleyanddewsbury.co.uk
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Patrick Brontë



His Life & Work
In Dewsbury
1809 - 1811

Patrick Brontë

His Life and Work in Dewsbury 1809 - 1811

In December 1809, a young Irishman, Patrick Brontë, arrived in Dewsbury to take up the post of curate at the Parish Church (now the Minster Church of All Saints', Dewsbury).

Although his stay in Dewsbury was for less than two years, Patrick had a tremendous impact on the spiritual and social life of the town at a pivotal time in its industrial life and heritage.

In 2009, several events were held in Dewsbury to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Patrick's arrival in the Town, which first established the Brontë connection with Yorkshire.

The exhibition which was produced for the 'Dewsbury Brontë 200' festival has been reproduced in this booklet and tells the story of Patrick Brontë's life and achievements in Dewsbury.

Patrick Brontë was not only a remarkable man in his own right, but also father of the world famous literary sisters - Charlotte, Emily and Anne

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Contents

4. Patrick Brontë - a Chronology 1777 - 1861
6. The History of Dewsbury Minster
8. Early 19th Century Dewsbury
10. Why Yorkshire? Why Dewsbury?
12. Patrick Brontë & All Saints' Parish Church Dewsbury
14. Patrick Brontë - The Man
16. The Talk Of The Town
18. Campaigner For Justice
20. The Literary Works of Patrick Brontë
22. Life After Dewsbury
24. The Dewsbury Area & Brontë Connections
26. Other Notable People with Dewsbury Connections



Patrick Brontë - a Chronology 1777 - 1861

- 1777 Born Patrick Brunty on St. Patrick's Day, at Emdale, in County Down, Ireland.
- 1794 Tried blacksmithing, linen weaving and then began teaching.
- 1798 Appointed tutor to the sons of the Rev'd Thomas Tighe.
- 1802 Admitted to St John's College, Cambridge. Financed by William Wilberforce, his associates, and by winning several 'scholarships'. Changed name to Brontë.
- 1806 April - Graduated as Bachelor of Arts.
Aug - Ordained deacon by The Bishop of London.
Oct - Took his first duties as curate in Wethersfield, Essex.
- 1807 Ordained priest by the Bishop of Salisbury at St. James' Palace
- 1809 Jan - Started curacy at Wellington, under the Rev'd John Eyton.
Nov - Offered the post of chaplain to the Governor of Martinique.
Dec - Started curacy at All Saints', Dewsbury, under the Rev'd John Buckworth. Proceeded to an active, caring ministry.
- 1810 Published *Winter Evening Thoughts*; the first Bronte to have a piece of literature in print.
- 1811 Appointed to Hartshead-cum-Clifton as minister. Published his revised *Cottage Poems*.
- 1812 Married Maria Branwell of Penzance at Guiseley Church.
- 1813 Moved to Clough House, Hightown near Liversedge. Published *The Rural Minstrel*.
- 1814 Birth of Daughter Maria
- 1815 Birth of daughter Elizabeth. Exchanged livings and moved to Thornton near Bradford. Published *The Cottage in the Wood*.
- 1816 Birth of daughter Charlotte.
- 1817 Birth of son Patrick Branwell.
- 1818 Published *The Maid of Killarney* - a novel. Birth of daughter Emily.



- 1820 Birth of daughter Anne. Patrick appointed Vicar of Haworth.
- 1821 Sister-in Law, Elizabeth Branwell came to Haworth to nurse his wife and stayed to help the family. Death of his wife Maria (aged 38, of cancer).
- 1825 May - Death of daughter Maria (aged 11, of tuberculosis).
June - Death of daughter Elizabeth (aged 10, of tuberculosis)
- 1829 Writes a series of letters to 'The Leeds Intelligencer' in favour of Catholic emancipation.
- 1837 Petitioned Parliament against the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.
- 1841 Campaigned for the funding of apprenticeships for local orphans.
- 1842 Death of sister-in-law, Elizabeth Branwell.
- 1844 Led action to rectify Haworth's unsafe water supply.
- 1847 Wrote to 'The Leeds Intelligencer' supporting a government plan for compulsory education.
- 1848 Sept: Death of son Branwell (aged 31, of tuberculosis).
Dec - Death of daughter Emily - 'Ellis Bell' (aged 30, of tuberculosis).
- 1849 Death of daughter Anne - 'Acton Bell' (aged 29, of tuberculosis, in Scarborough).
- 1853 Mrs Gaskell stayed at the parsonage.
- 1854 Marriage of daughter Charlotte Brontë to Revd Arthur Bell Nicholls. Raised funds to help the heavy casualties of the Crimean War.
- 1855 Death of daughter, Charlotte 'Curren Bell' (aged 38, of a wasting disease in pregnancy).
Asked Mrs. Gaskell to write a life of Charlotte.
- 1859 Preached what proved to be his last sermon.
- 1861 June 7th Died (aged 84 of bronchitis. Interred at Haworth).

1. Cottage at Emdale, 2. William Wiberforce, 3. Dewsbury Minster 1806, 4. Maria Branwell, 5. Plaque at Clough House, 6. Charlotte Brontë, 7. Emily Brontë, 8. Anne Brontë, 9. Elizabeth Branwell, 10. Patrick Branwell Brontë, 11. Revd. Arthur Bell Nicholls, 12. Patrick Brontë

Patrick's Appearance

He 'was tall, well formed and of good presence...and had fine and almost classic features...but the pale blue eyes were slowly growing weaker...' ¹

He 'mostly wore black...occasionally a blue linen frock coat and a white cravat ...with his long strides and rapid gait...he carried a shillelagh everywhere...it was to earn him the nickname "Old Staff"' ³

Patrick's Nature

'Prompt in emergency...self reliant and strong.'

'He was brave, impetuous, daring, proud and generous, a good friend, and a good enemy where there was wrong doing.' ¹

Writing & Story Telling

Patrick had 'a relentless urge to...write...although his pen was feeble...' ³

'He had a gift of speaking without manuscript and story telling was an hereditary gift...' ²

Later in life '...the girls would hang on their father's lips as he depicted some tragic story in glowing words and with harrowing details.' ¹

'The seed of literary longing...would pour forth in his daughter's hearts.' ³

Warmth & Affection

'He was austere but nevertheless well liked...' ¹

'...the children were very fond of him...which often led to visits to parents in their cottages... he would walk miles to... perform. informal services...to alleviate the sufferings of the poor...to comfort and relieve' ³

He undoubtedly had 'warm affections and was capable of inspiring love.' ¹



Justice

'Justice for all was his strongest feeling... He would always support those in the right whatever their creed or class' ³

Earnest & Impetuous

'They said he was a very earnest man, but a little peculiar in his manner... impetuous, apt perhaps...to take offence where none was intended... at a supposed taunt or sneer.' ¹

Power & The Humble

Patrick never sought 'the company of wealthy people...He had a clear concept of what he believed to be his duty, he would not be turned aside by insult or ridicule.' ³

'A friend to the humbler folk... he was exceedingly intolerant of assertive ignorance (even of the wealthy) and quickly...put it down...' ³

1. Based on the childhood memories of older townsfolk gathered by W. W. Yates, founder of the Brontë Society 1893, author of 'The Father of the Brontës' 1897, Editor of The Dewsbury Reporter.
2. From Stephen Platten's, (Bishop of Wakefield 2005) Introduction to Imelda Marsden's reprint of W.W. Yates's book 'The Father of the Brontës'. Writers like Mrs. Gaskell have painted Patrick in too 'harsh' a light. Writers like W. W. Yates, Juliet Barker and Dudley Green may have helped 'readdress the balance.' ²
3. From 'A Man Of Sorrow' by Lock And Dixon.



Patrick Brontë : Oil on canvas c.1805-1815 Unknown artist



Early 19th Century Dewsbury

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Dewsbury, with a population of around 30,000, was a typical Yorkshire country town with a few scattered farmsteads and stone cottages.

The cloth trade and population of the town had expanded after a short branch of the Calder and Hebble Navigation Canal was completed in 1770, which linked Dewsbury to the main canal system and gave better access to distribution centres in Manchester and Hull.

Most people still worked at home or in small weaving sheds. Where larger establishments existed, they still ran on water power.



Dewsbury Township Map 1804. (courtesy of West Yorkshire Archive Service)

With the invention of the process of creating cloth from recycled wool (shoddy and mungo) in 1813, Dewsbury benefited economically from the canal, its location at the heart of the Heavy Woollen District and its proximity to coal mines. The railways arrived in 1848 when the Dewsbury Wellington Road railway station on the London and North Western Railway opened. The town experienced rapid growth so that by 1851 the population had risen to over 71,000 and a decade later was over 92,000.



When Patrick Brontë arrived in Dewsbury the Industrial Revolution was still in its infancy, although there were some undertones of discontent about the introduction of new labour-saving machinery in the mills for cropping the cloth.

The new machines undermined the work of the skilled croppers who feared for their jobs and their disgruntlement eventually led to the outbreak of violence of the Luddite Riots in the area in 1812.



Canal in Dewsbury

Why Yorkshire? Why Dewsbury?

Patrick came from a poor Irish farming family. Having tried blacksmithing and linen weaving, his talent and fervour and two Evangelical Ministers gained him free tutoring, teaching posts and eventually a place at St John's College, Cambridge. Other Evangelicals secured his first two Curacies.

To Patrick, Yorkshire was 'the very centre of the Evangelical revival'. 'He, like all the earnest young clerics of the day, 'dreamt of serving God in one of the vital churches of his Kingdom ... the almost Holy Land, that was Yorkshire'.

The Rev'd John Wesley (1703-1791) preached eleven times in Dewsbury. He was an evangelist to the poor of the newly industrialised north where the explosion in population had brought hopelessness and hunger.

The widow of Wesley's great friend, John Fletcher, knew the 'pressing need for faithful clergymen and secured appointments for committed Evangelicals'. She watched the Irish Curate, listened intently to his speech and Patrick's spiritual passport to Yorkshire was made....'



Patrick 'knew that Dewsbury was a thriving little town, with a very fine church and... that the Vicar, The Rev'd John Buckworth, whom he had met, was much respected... a splendid preacher and writer of hymns...', who continued to run Matthew Powley's first Sunday School for the poor in the north. 'Buckworth was a man with a mission but his health was poor and he needed an evangelical curate.'

'Patrick once again travelled over the dusty English roads, but this time in the right direction northwards towards the Promised Land.'

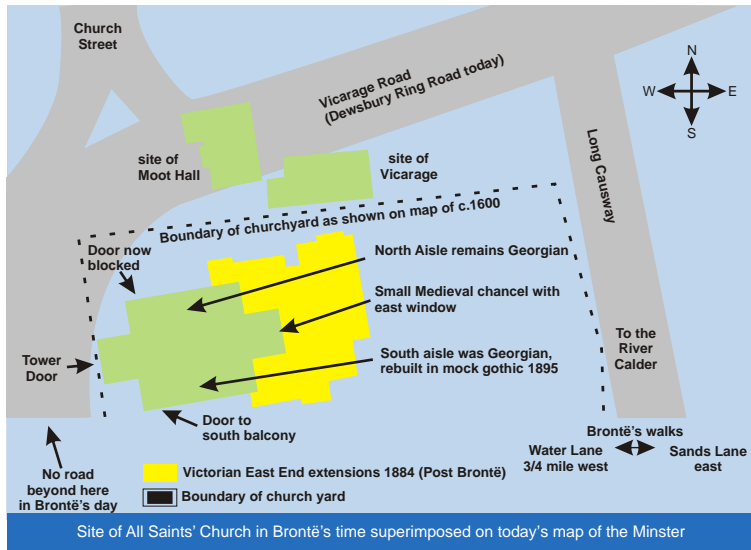
On 5th December 1809, Patrick Brontë arrived in Dewsbury to take up his duties as Curate at The Dewsbury Parish Church of All Saints.

Quotations from 'A Man of Sorrow' by Lock and Dixon



Mary Fletcher, who recognised Patrick's calling, also built an orphanage in Birstall.
© From 'A Man of Sorrow' by Lock and Dixon

Patrick Brontë & All Saints' Parish Church Dewsbury



The church of Patrick's time had been partly rebuilt by the Georgian Architect John Carr 1767.



The South West Aspect

Patrick was familiar with outer doors on the south and the

north walls leading to two huge balconies. They were lost when the Victorians rebuilt the South Aisle in 1895.

In 1809 Dewsbury Parish still included Ossett, Soothill and Hartshead St. Peter's, which was in the gift of the then Vicar- John Buckworth.

In Brontë's time, 1810, Buckworth erected the Church Sunday School. Lessons had formerly been held in cottages. He enlarged and improved this church and had 3 additional churches built in the parish. He became ill through 'excessive exertion'. His motto was 'A sinner saved by grace'.



The Moot Hall circa 1270 - 1962 - demolished for Dewsbury Ring Road.



Buckworth's Memorial

Patrick The Clergyman

'P. Brontë, Curate' was first written in Dewsbury's Registers at a wedding on 11th December 1809.

He changed é for ë while at Hartshead in protest at the French, Napoleonic Wars.

He performed 420 baptisms and during a typhus and flu epidemic, burials rose from 40 to 70 a month.

Whilst at All Saints', Patrick was often left for periods in full charge of the church.

An evangelical, he frequently preached from the three-decker pulpit that faced the high box pews. It was said "You could understand his meaning better than the vicar's but he was not so clever"

Patrick held cottage meetings involving earnest prayer, worked in the new Sunday School teaching reading and writing and he catechised the children and Wesleyan Scholars monthly.

Patrick at The Vicarage

Brontë's small, oak panelled room, off the western entrance hall, was once the Butler's Pantry.

He worked at his desk and books, and often strode round the 'convenient garden', while composing.

He mostly ate oatmeal but on Sundays he ate cold meats and sweet dumplings with the Buckworths.

When missionaries were later trained at the Vicarage, Patrick lodged at 'The Ancient Well House' in Priest Lane, now Church Street.



Dewsbury All Saints Parish Church 1823, as Brontë knew it.



The Vicarage 1350 - 1884

The Talk of the Town

There are several dramatic stories about Patrick Brontë during his time in Dewsbury. Many of these were related by the local journalist W.W. Yates in his book written in 1897 entitled, *The Father of the Brontës: His Life and Work at Dewsbury and Hartshead*. These stories not only give an insight into Patrick's character, but also into how he endeared himself to the people of Dewsbury and became something of a local hero - quite the 'talk of the town'.

Lifesaver

One of Patrick's favourite walks was along the banks of the River Calder which ran near the vicarage. On one of his strolls, he passed a group of boys playing on the river bank. Patrick had not gone very far when he heard a splash and a cry and saw a rather simple-minded boy had fallen into the swiftly flowing river. Patrick immediately ran back, plunged into the river and rescued the boy and then took him home to his mother.



Battling with Bell Ringers

Patrick was a strict keeper of the Sabbath and he had not been in Dewsbury long when he revealed his fiery Irish temper.

One Sunday, The Rev. John Buckworth was away and Patrick was in temporary charge of the parish. Having returned to the vicarage after conducting the evening service, he was surprised to hear the church bells ringing again.

The bell-ringers were entering a competition the next day, and in the absence of the vicar, had decided to have a practice ring. Not knowing anything about this, Patrick seized his shillelagh, rushed to the church and up the winding steps of the bell tower and burst in on the

startled bell-ringers. Brandishing his shillelagh he accused the ringers of desecrating the Sabbath and drove them all out of the tower and into the churchyard.

Whitsuntide Walk

At Whitsuntide, it was customary for the scholars and teachers to walk in procession through Dewsbury to Earlsheaton for the "sing" which would take place at the Town's Green in the centre of the Village.

During the procession on Whit Tuesday in 1810, the parade had just turned off Wakefield Road towards Earlsheaton when a drunken man stepped into the road and refused to let the marchers pass. On seeing this, Patrick hastily came forward, seized the man by the collar, and flung him to the side of the road. Patrick then led the procession to the Town's Green as if nothing untoward had occurred. Years later, a Mr. Senior, who had been a boy in the procession, told W.W. Yates; "The bully came from Gawthorpe, near Ossett, and was a notorious cockfighter and boxer, and much addicted to drinking.... what happened was soon known by all of us...and we talked about it for many a Sunday."

Patrick must have also related this story to his children, as Charlotte used the incident in her novel *Shirley*, where the Rev. Matthew Helstone meets obstructing dissenters and takes firm action to enable the Sunday school march to continue.





One of the most famous incidents during Patrick's curacy at Dewsbury concerned a young man called William Nowell of Dawgreen, Dewsbury; who had been arrested and wrongly imprisoned as a deserter of the army.

Britain was at the time in the middle of the Napoleonic wars and in order to maintain a supply of soldiers, recruiting officers were sent to local

fairs to offer a 'recruiting shilling' to any likely candidates. In September 1810, a soldier named James Thackray, stated that Nowell had accepted the King's Shilling at the horse fair held at Lee Fair, near Wakefield and had therefore been formally enlisted to the 30th Regiment.

On 25 September 1810, soldiers appeared at William Nowell's home to arrest him for failing to report at the Regimental headquarters. Nowell pleaded that he had not attended Lee Fair and had several witnesses who could testify that he had been in Dewsbury that day. The magistrate refused to accept the testimonies of these witnesses and committed Nowell to Wakefield Prison.

The case caused an immediate outcry in Dewsbury and Patrick was one of four men who went to meet with the magistrate in Wakefield to plead for the case to be re-heard. They were accompanied by two new witnesses who swore that they had been with the soldier James Thackray at the Lee Fair, and he had not enlisted any new recruits that day. The magistrate refused to examine the new witnesses and William Nowell remained in prison.



Determined not to be beaten and to see justice being done, Patrick, together with the churchwardens and principal inhabitants of Dewsbury, wrote to the Leeds Mercury and the War Office to demand a retrial.

Eventually, a hearing was arranged for 2 November 1810. Patrick and eminent Dewsbury men attended the hearing along with fifteen witnesses who could testify that Nowell had not been at Lee Fair on the day in question. Following the hearing, the evidence was sent to London and five days later William Nowell was released from prison after spending ten weeks in custody.

After the hearing, Patrick Brontë received the following letter from the Secretary of War, Lord Palmerston:

WAR Office, 5th December, 1810.

Sir,

Referring to the correspondence relative to William Nowell, I am to acquaint you that I feel so strongly the injury that is likely to arise to the Service from an unfair mode of recruiting, that if by the indictment that the lad's friends are about to prefer against James Thackray they shall establish the fact of his having been guilty of perjury, I shall be ready to indemnify them for the reasonable and proper expenses which they shall bear on the occasion.

I am, sir, Yours, & C.,
PALMERSTON

To the Rev. P. Brontë, Dewsbury, near Leeds.

On 7 December 1811, the soldier James Thackray was found guilty of perjury at York Assizes and sentenced to seven years transportation. After a long struggle, justice had been done.



Old Wakefield Prison



The Literary Work of Patrick Brontë

The literary works of the Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne) are well known throughout the world. It is however, perhaps a little known fact that their father, Patrick, was the first member of the Brontë family to have a piece of literature appear in print.

In 1810, at the time when Patrick was a curate in Dewsbury, his first piece of writing was published. The 265-line poem, entitled *Winter Evening Thoughts*, covered a range of issues including descriptions about the sufferings of the poor.

**"Where blinking embers scarcely glow,
And rushlight only serves to show
What well may move the deepest sigh,
And force a tear from pity's eye.
You there may see a meagre pair,
Worn out with labour, grief, and care."**

Patrick Brontë, from *Winter Evening Thoughts*, 1810



The former vicarage

Shortly afterwards, Patrick published a collection of twelve poems, which was printed at Halifax in 1811 under the title of *Cottage Poems*. It would seem that this was a great labour of love for Patrick for in the advertisement he wrote:

"When released from his clerical avocations, the Author was occupied in writing the *Cottage Poems*; from morning till noon, and from noon till night, his employment was full of real, indescribable pleasure such as he could wish to taste as long as life lives."

Patrick Brontë in the Advertisement to *Cottage Poems*, 1811

Patrick was keen that his poems could be read and understood by as many underprivileged people as possible, for in the advertisement preceding the work, he also wrote:

"*Cottage Poems* ... is chiefly designed for the lower classes of society ... For the convenience of the unlearned and poor, the Author has not written much ... has aimed at simplicity, plainness, and perspicuity, both in manner and style."

Amongst the poetry in *Cottage Poems* is an 'Epistle to the Rev. J --- B ---, whilst journeying for the recovery of his health'. This is clearly dedicated to the Reverend John Buckworth and demonstrates Patrick's feelings and admiration for his vicar:



After leaving Dewsbury, Patrick continued to write and his next work *The Rural Minstrel*, was published in 1813 whilst he was the incumbent at St. Peter's Church, Hartshead and living in Hightown. This was a collection of eleven poems, including one addressed to his new wife Maria on her thirtieth birthday and another entitled 'Kirkstall Abbey', believed to be the place where he proposed to her.

In 1815, soon after moving to Thornton, Bradford, Patrick submitted a short story to the magazine, *The Pastoral Visitor* and later that same year he published another short story along with four poems entitled *The Cottage in the Wood*.

Patrick's longest literary work was a short novel, *The Maid of Killarney*, which was published in 1818 and tells the story of a young Englishman's wanderings and experiences in Ireland.

In the following years, Patrick wrote several pamphlets, sermons and letters to the press but *The Maid of Killarney* was Patrick's last attempt to write a connected story. However, having a father who was a published writer no doubt had some future influence on his daughters Charlotte, Emily and Anne.

**When warmed with zeal, my rustic Muse
Feels fluttering fain to tell her news,
And paint her simple, lowly views
With all her art.**

**And though in genius but obtuse,
May touch the heart.**

**Of Palaces and courts of kings
She thinks but little, never sings,
But wildly strikes her uncouth strings
In some pool cot,
Spreads o'er the poor hen fostering wings,
And soothes their lot**

*

**To all my heart is kind and true,
But glows with ardent love for you;
Though absent, still you rise in view,
And talk and smile,
Whilst heavenly themes, for ever new,
Our cares beguile.**

Patrick Brontë, from 'Epistle to the Rev. J...B...
Whilst Journeying for the Recovery of his Health':
Cottage Poems; 1811

Life After Dewsbury

After his brief but eventful time at Dewsbury, Patrick Brontë was appointed to the perpetual curacy of Hartshead. Although he began to officiate at the church in 1810, it was not until the end of March 1811 that Patrick first signed the register as minister. As there was no parsonage house in Hartshead, Patrick lodged at Thorn Bush Farm, then known as Lousy Thorn Farm, just by the church.

A strange story circulated for many years following the attempted Luddite attack on Rawfolds Mill, near Cleckheaton in April 1812.

The mill owner, William Cartwright and a handful of men, prevented the rioter's entry and after a furious 20 minute battle the Luddites retreated, many of them injured and two mortally wounded.

In an account told to W.W. Yates, it is said that Patrick, coming past the church late one evening heard a disturbance in the churchyard. As he watched, he saw a few men secretly burying their dead in the south-east corner of the graveyard. Realising what was happening, Patrick let the incident pass without any comment.



St. Peter's Church, Hartshead.

Following his marriage to Maria Branwell at Guiseley Parish Church in December 1812, Patrick and his new wife moved into Clough House in Hightown. It was there that their first two children were born, Maria in 1813 and Elizabeth in 1815.

Early in 1815, Patrick was approached by the Rev. Thomas Atkinson, who was the perpetual curate of Thornton, near Bradford, with the idea that they should exchange livings. The proposal was attractive to Patrick, as not only was a parsonage house available to the incumbent, but he would also have

involvement with a larger parish and an increased income.

The four famous Brontë children were all born at Thornton: Charlotte 1816, Branwell 1817, Emily 1818 and Anne 1820. Although the family were happy at Thornton, the parsonage had now become too cramped for a family of six children, their parents and two servants.



The Parsonage, Thornton

In April 1820 the Brontë family moved to Haworth and to the now famous Brontë Parsonage. Unfortunately, just nine months after their move, Maria became seriously ill and died in September 1821. In a letter to Rev. John Buckworth, Patrick wrote:

"I was at Haworth, a stranger in a strange land. It was under these circumstances, after every earthly prop was removed, that I was called on to bear the weight of the greatest load of sorrows that ever pressed upon me."

Further tragedy occurred just a few years later when his two eldest children, Maria and Elizabeth, both died in childhood. Patrick's four surviving children lived into adulthood but all died before him. Both Branwell

and Emily died in 1848, Anne in 1849 and Charlotte in 1855.

Patrick Brontë was to remain at Haworth for 41 years until he died from chronic bronchitis in 1861, aged 84. His body was interred at Haworth Church.



The Parsonage, Haworth



The Dewsbury Area & Brontë Connections

Although Patrick Brontë was a resident of Dewsbury for a relatively short period, the Brontë connections with the area were to continue with his daughters.

In 1831, the 14 year old Charlotte Brontë attended Miss Wooler's private boarding school at Roe Head, Mirfield. The school never had more than ten pupils and it was here that Charlotte met her lifelong friends, Ellen Nussey of Birstall, and Mary Taylor of Red House, Gomersal.

One of the most unexpected events of Charlotte's stay at Roe Head was when her brother Branwell paid her a surprise visit in 1832. Although only 14, he had walked the eighteen miles from Haworth just to see her and had another eighteen miles to walk home.



Roe Head, Mirfield



Ellen Nussey of Birstall;
Lifelong friend of Charlotte Brontë

When Charlotte was nineteen she returned to Roe Head as a teacher in July 1835, a position she was to hold for three years. Emily accompanied her as a pupil but suffered terribly from homesickness so soon returned to Haworth and Anne took her place at the school.

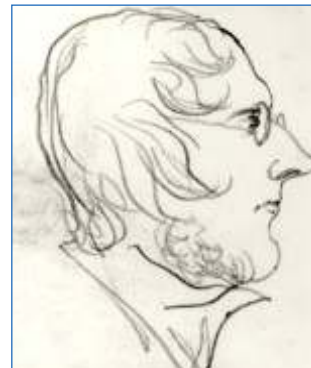
Early in 1838, Miss Wooler moved her school to Heald's House, Dewsbury Moor. Although only three miles from Roe Head, Charlotte wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey that she found the air 'less pure'. Anne became quite ill and had to be taken home but Charlotte returned to Heald's House and later wrote to Ellen, "I am again at Dewsbury, engaged in the old business teach, teach, teach..."



Anne Brontë

The pupils were regularly taken for walks in the area, led by Charlotte and on Sundays, they all worshipped at St. John's Church, Dewsbury Moor. It is thought that Patrick also returned to Dewsbury at this time in order to visit his daughter at the school.

In spring 1839, Anne became the governess to two of the children of Dr & Mrs Ingham of Blake Hall, Mirfield. Sadly, she had little practice at handling children and was eventually dismissed. Her experiences at Blake Hall and her descriptions of the children's behaviour were later to form the first half of her novel, *Agnes Grey*.



Branwell Brontë

In 1849, Charlotte's novel, *Shirley* was published and caused quite a sensation in the area. Local people had only just discovered that the quiet visitor from Haworth was in fact the famous 'Currer Bell', author of *Jane Eyre*. They now found themselves, along with local people and places appearing in her latest novel.

Shirley is set in 1812, at the time of the Luddite Riots and Charlotte drew upon her own and her father's knowledge of the area for inspiration. Some of the many local references within the novel include Oakwell Hall at Birstall, which features as 'Fieldhead', home of the heroine; Red House at Gomersal features as 'Briarmains'; whilst Kirklees Park is described as 'Nunnwood' and Dewsbury is 'Whinbury'.

From Patrick's first arrival in West Yorkshire in 1809, the area of Dewsbury and the Spenn Valley, its people and the events of the time, obviously had a lasting impact on the Brontë family.



Red House, Gomersal. Home of Charlotte Brontë's
lifelong friend, Mary Taylor



Oakwell Hall, Birstall

The History of Dewsbury Minster



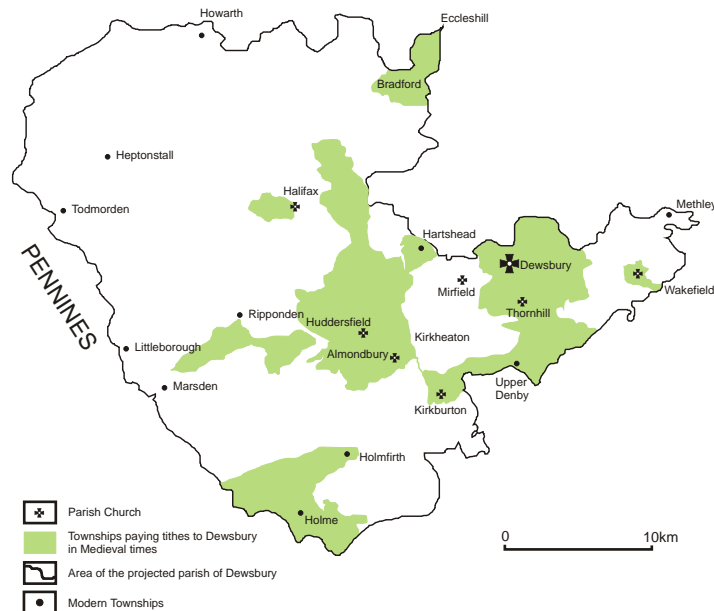
AD627 Paulinus sailed down The River Calder to bring Christianity to Dewsbury. Here he preached, celebrated Mass and baptised many people.

AD850 Dewsbury had a great stone Celtic Cross in celebration of Paulinus. Fragments are displayed in The Heritage Centre.

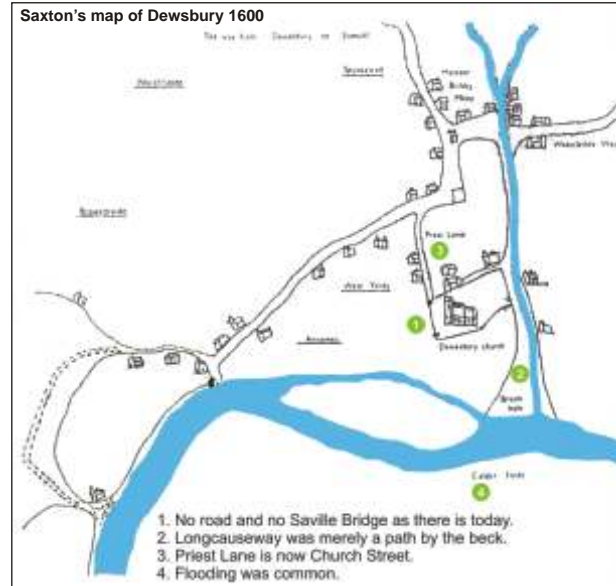
In Saxon times Dewsbury's Parish covered the 400 square miles outlined below.

AD980 A huge Anglo Saxon Minster Church stood in Dewsbury. Its stonework is still visible in the Worship Area.

AD1086 Domesday book records that Dewesberia had a church and a priest.



Norman Architecture. All Hallows, was extended in both **AD1170** and, with unique cluster columns in **AD1220**. The pillars and significant Norman and Viking grave slabs remain.



1884 - 1887
The Victorians demolished the small medieval Chancel where the altar had stood and added vast East End extensions comprising all but the present Worship Area and Tower.

Reordering 1978
The Church was now too big and cold. The magnificent 90-year-old East End extensions were closed off for other activities and services returned to the 1,000 year old Worship Area.



1995
The East End was reordered with a mezzanine floor to provide community rooms, a Refectory, Heritage Centre, Crèche and The Paulinus Chapel.

2003
The Worship Area was reordered with new flooring, heating, lighting, central entrance, seating and a newly refurbished organ and casing.

Tudor Period 1485 - 1603. 'Beam & Boss' roof erected. The Parish Registers were started in **1538**. They are among the oldest in Britain.

1600
A map of Dewsbury by Saxton who was taught cartography by John Rudd, Vicar of Dewsbury.



This was the All Saints Parish Church that Patrick Brontë would have discovered in 1809.

Some other notable people with Dewsbury connections



Baroness Betty Boothroyd: *First lady speaker of the House of Commons*
 Betty Boothroyd was born in Eastborough, Dewsbury. After a spell as a dancer with the Tiller Girls, she embarked on a political career and was elected as a Labour MP for West Bromwich in 1973. She stepped into the history books by becoming the first female Speaker of the House of Commons in 1992 and became one of the most recognisable and respected politicians in Britain, renowned for her no-nonsense approach, wit and scathing putdowns. In 2000 she retired as an MP.



Eileen Fenton: *Legendary cross channel swimmer*
 Born in Dewsbury in 1928, Fenton was swimming by the age of two and was soon a member of her local club. She became involved in coaching along with pursuing her own interest in long distance swimming and took part in the Daily Mail First International Cross-Channel Race on 22 August 1950. Despite sustaining an arm injury during the Channel swim, Fenton was still the first woman to complete the race in 15½ hours for which she won £1000. The people of Dewsbury were overjoyed at her victory and she received a hero's welcome upon her return. Fenton continued to coach at Dewsbury Swimming Club teaching thousands of local youngsters to swim.



Wallace Hartley: *Brave Bandleader*
 When an iceberg struck the Titanic in 1912, the ship's orchestra gallantly played on until the ship sank two hours later. The brave bandmaster leading them was Wallace Hartley of Dewsbury, who courageously kept his band playing cheerful music to calm passengers. Finally when all was lost, Hartley led the band in playing the hymn, 'Nearer my God to Thee'. A newspaper at the time reported, "the part played by the orchestra on board the Titanic in her last dreadful moments will rank among the noblest in the annals of heroism at sea".



Mike Stephenson: *The Golden Boy of Rugby League*
 Born in Savile Town in 1947, Mike 'Stevo' Stephenson started his rugby career with Shaw Cross Boys' Club. He played rugby league at international level and was a member of Great Britain's victorious World Cup winning team in 1972. He secured his place in sporting history (and the Guinness Book of Records) when in 1973 he signed a life contract for an Australian team for a then world record fee of £20,000. Stephenson joined Sky Television's rugby league commentary team in 1990 and now divides his time living in both England and Australia.



Eddie Waring: *Mr. Rugby League*
 A former pupil of Eastborough School and Wheelwright Grammar School, Waring started his working life as a journalist supplying match reports for a local paper. He went on to become the voice of Rugby League on television, with his BBC commentaries reaching millions of viewers. His popularity took him to the world of entertainment and he became a commentator for the BBC show "It's a Knockout".



Patrick Stewart: *Award Winning Actor*
 Born in Mirfield in 1940, Stewart became involved in local amateur dramatics and worked as a journalist with the Dewsbury Reporter and as a salesman at Hudson's furniture store in Daisy Hill, Dewsbury before enrolling at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Since his first professional role in 1959, Stewart has played a wide variety of roles on stage, film and television. He is perhaps most widely known for his role as Captain Jean Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise in 'Star Trek: The Next Generation.'



Baroness Sayeeda Warsi: *First Muslim Woman to serve in the Cabinet*
 Born in Dewsbury in 1971 to Pakistani parents, Warsi was educated at Birkdale High School and Dewsbury College, and then at the University of Leeds where she read law. She became the youngest female member of the House of Lords when she was made a life peer in 2007. In 2010 David Cameron appointed her as Chairman of the Conservative Party making her the first Muslim woman to serve in the Cabinet.

