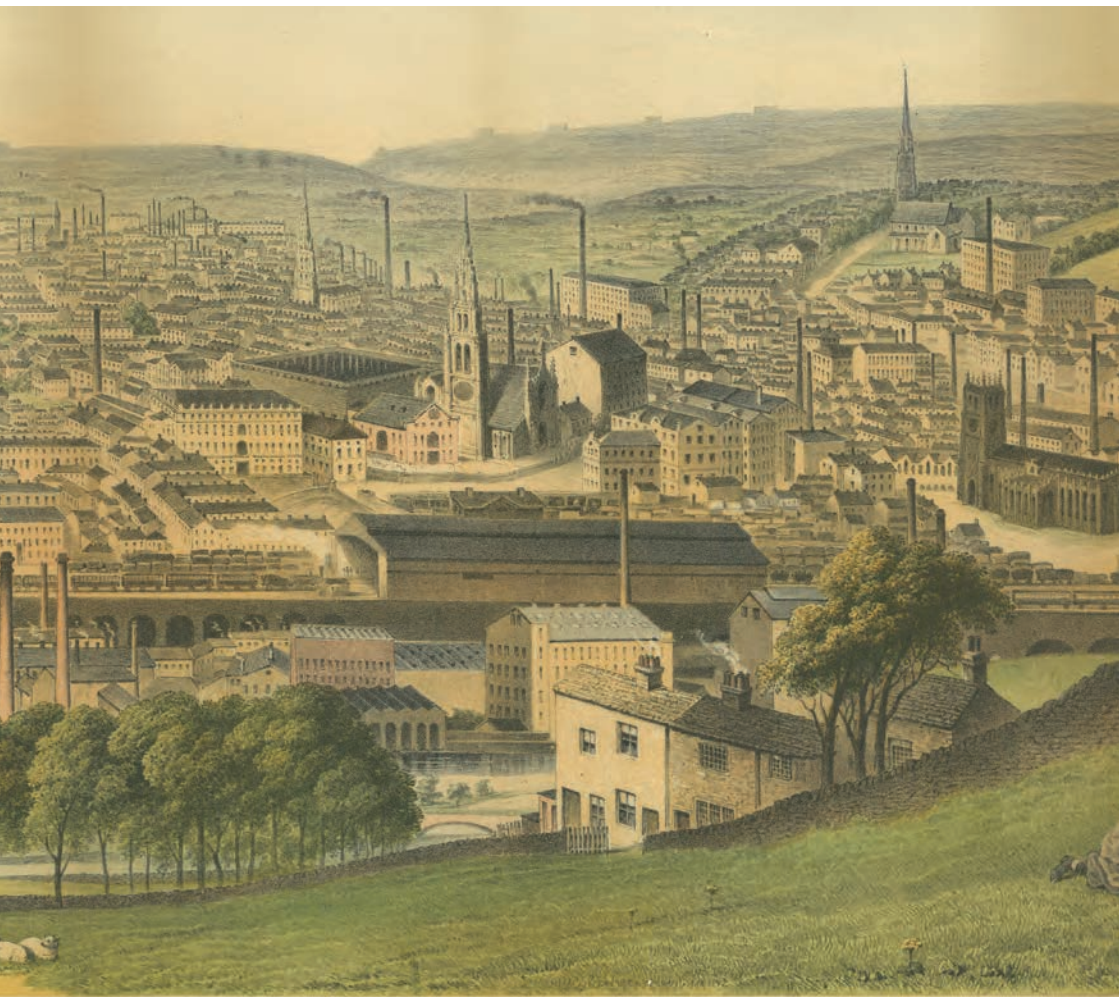


SQUARE ROOTS

A self-guided heritage tour in the
New Central Library and Archives





Welcome

Welcome to the New Central Library and Archives. This self-guided tour around the inside of the building will introduce you to the history of the site and its surroundings. If it whets your appetite, the back page of this leaflet tells you how to find out more about the local area.

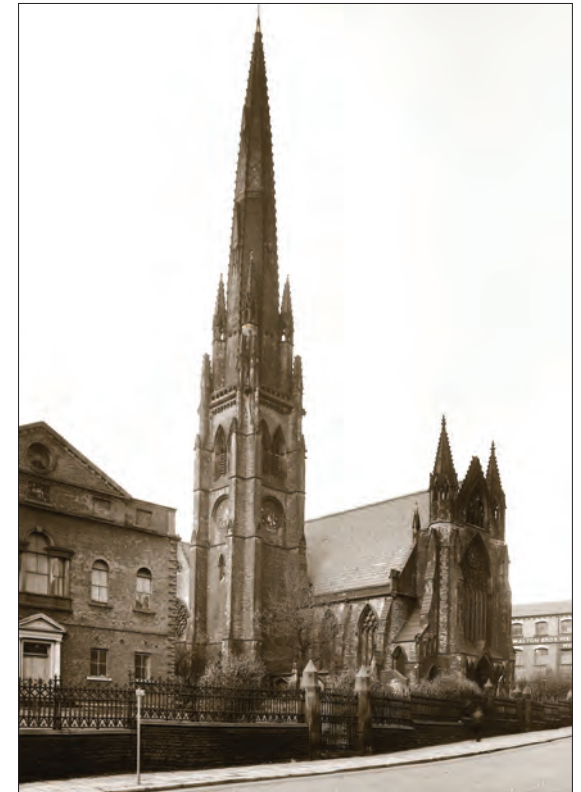


Square Congregational Church

The tour starts at the public entrance to the library.

Square Congregational Church occupied this site for 112 years, between 1857 and 1969. Looking at the bottom photo, you have come in where the galleried pews are, at the right of the picture. Around the library, you will find evidence of the church – from the imposing spire and rose window to small features in carved stone.

Square Church was built because the congregation outgrew Square Chapel, dating from 1772, and with the new church, the Chapel became its Sunday School. For years, the new church was filled to capacity and annual Church Manuals detail the congregation's involvement in the town's life, in education, temperance, helping the poor, supporting charities and, in World War One, sending parcels to service personnel and supporting refugees. In 1969, however, declining numbers, in an area of Halifax that had become run down and depopulated, resulted in closure. Between 1971 and 1973, 2 fires and a gale destroyed much of the church and left it unsafe. In 1976, all but the spire, steeple and certain walls were demolished.



Square Church 1950s/60s

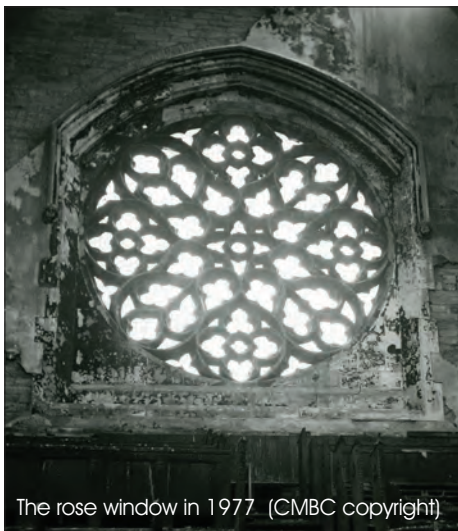


Square Church Interior 1969 (Herbert C Morris, ARPS and member of Halifax Photographic Society)

The Rose Window

Walk straight ahead and make your way up the main staircase, stopping on the landing, at the Rose Window.

Square Congregational Church was designed by London architect Joseph James, in the Decorated Gothic style. During the Gothic Revival of the 19th Century, many domestic, civic and religious buildings looked back to the Medieval past for their inspiration. Rose windows, so-called because of the flower-like shape created by their stone tracery, were a key feature of Medieval Gothic cathedrals, particularly in France. There, the rose window often appeared at the west end of the church but in England it was usually in the transepts, in a similar position to this one, which faces south. An 1858 description says that 'the whole of the windows' were filled with tinted & stained glass. The most elaborate was a 'seven light' window at the east end, above the door.



The rose window in 1977 (CMBC copyright)

The Spire

Continue up the stairs, past the first floor. When you arrive at the second floor, look up at the church spire through the skylight window.

The spire is another feature of the Gothic style and, spiritually, draws the eyes towards the heavens, in contemplation of God. Square Church spire is octagonal and 235 feet tall. When it was built, it was the second tallest spire in the county after Wakefield Cathedral and was paid for by Francis Crossley, of the Dean Clough carpet manufacturing family. When fellow industrialist Colonel Edward Akroyd built All Souls, Haley Hill, consecrated in 1859, however, its spire was 1 foot taller. It has been suggested that Colonel Akroyd deliberately opted for something grander for Akroydon than originally planned, when he learned of the Crossleys' plans for Square Congregational!



Square Church 1863

Beacon Hill

Walk to the far end of the second floor and look out of the window facing Beacon Hill.

From early times, the Magna Via, the ancient road from Wakefield, provided a main route into Halifax over Beacon Hill. This route was trodden by Medieval lords of the manor and their men, by packhorses transporting wool and finished cloth, by Sir Thomas Fairfax after English Civil War defeat and by the preacher John Wesley.

A grisly episode in the Hill's history relates to the Cragg Vale Coiners. In 1774 and 1775, as a deterrent to others and in the face of great local protest, the dead bodies of Thomas and Normington, convicted murderers of excise man William Deighton, were suspended in chains on Beacon Hill and left to rot, their arms pointing towards the scene of their crime.

A contrastingly happy event took place in August 1785, when Joseph Binns, accompanied by Mr Newmarch and Mr Frobisher, ascended from Beacon Hill in a hot air balloon in sight of thousands of delighted spectators, before navigating the balloon a further 20 miles.

The name Beacon Hill relates to the network of beacons which conveyed news around the country, in times of both crisis and celebration. In 1588, this warned of the Spanish Armada and was on the alert in case of invasion during the Napoleonic wars from the 1790s.

Bonfires and beacons have also been lit on the hill to mark royal jubilees and coronations, the peace celebrations after World War One and VE Day and VJ Day after World War 2.

Look for the beacon pan still in place on top of Beacon Hill



Beacon pan, Beacon Hill, copyright Elli Clarke 2017, by permission



Murder of Mr Deighton, Local Studies handbill

Halifax Railway Station

Now look to the right to see the railway station.

The 'new' Halifax Station, designed by Thomas Butterworth, opened in June 1855, to coincide with the opening of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. The Grade 2 listed station building can now be seen in the grounds of Eureka, adjacent to the current station premises. From 1884,



Visit of the Prince of Wales, 1863. Local Studies illustration

the station was completely reorganised to meet increasing passenger and freight demand. The current station approach opposite the bottom of Horton Street was introduced and the station in its new form opened in June 1886.

When H.S. Lawrence described Halifax station in 1905, it had five platforms, with 7 sets of metals. There were dining, refreshment and waiting rooms on the various platforms and also bookstalls, stationmaster's and parcel offices.

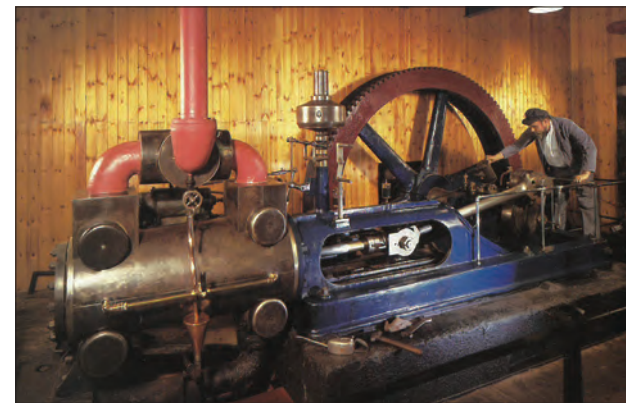
One of the more momentous events in the station's history was the visit of HRH The Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII) to open the new Halifax Town Hall, in August 1863. The visit started badly when the Prince's train stopped in the wrong place, leaving him to alight on to the bare platform instead of the red carpet. This was followed by the non-arrival of a specially manufactured Crossley's carpet in time for the Prince to walk from the station entrance to the Mayor's carriage. Today's media might have dubbed it Carpetgate!

Calderdale Industrial Museum

Now head down to the first floor and look out of the window towards the red brick building which is now Calderdale Industrial Museum.

Among previous occupants of this building, formerly Albion Works, constructed in the 1890s, were a wool warehouse, underclothing manufacturers, a boot and shoe warehouse, a blouse factory, leather stores and Stirk's machine tool makers. Calderdale Industrial Museum opened here in 1985. Through an impressive range of exhibits, the Museum told the story of how the district became a manufacturing centre for the textile and engineering trades - but it was closed to the public in 1998.

In 2016, Calderdale Industrial Museum Association (CIMA) was granted a licence to manage the site and its collections and the museum now opens regularly for visitors to tour the collection. The museum forms a valuable part of a revived cultural quarter, along with the Library and Archives, Piece Hall and Square Chapel Arts Centre.



Enid Steam Engine, 1926

Central Libraries in Halifax

Now head down to the Lower Ground Floor, to the Local Studies and Archives section and have a walk around.

This floor has a different feel to the rest of the building, with more wood in the design and older items among the collections. If you have time to linger, this is the place to find out more about the history of the locality. It is also worth looking in the Archives search room, where you will see Gothic revival pointed arch windows from the original church.

We hope you like the New Central Library and Archives building. This is the fourth municipal central library in Halifax. The first was opened in the Assembly Rooms in Harrison Road in 1881 but constant overcrowding led to a replacement in Belle Vue Mansion, Hopwood Lane, bought from Sir Francis Crossley (who had earlier paid for Square Church spire) and opened as a library in 1890. The desire for a more central location led to the construction of purpose-built premises in Northgate, which opened in January 1983. Finally, as part of the town centre development strategy, the New Central Library and Archives opened at the current site in September 2017, to the design of Edinburgh architects LDN.



Belle Vue, Local Studies postcard

Find out more about the locality

Weaver to Web – online visual archive of Calderdale history:
www.calderdale.gov.uk/wtw

Local Studies Library & the Library catalogue:
www.calderdale.gov.uk/libraries

West Yorkshire Archives (Calderdale) & the Archives catalogue:
www.wyjs.org.uk/archive-service

Calderdale Industrial Museum:
www.calderdaleindustrial.co.uk/

Halifax Piece Hall:
www.thepiecehall.co.uk

Bankfield Museum & Shibden Hall, Halifax:
www.calderdale.gov.uk/museums

Halifax Visitor Information Centre:
www.visitcalderdale.com/serv-halifax-visitor-information-centre

Visit Calderdale:
www.visitcalderdale.com

You may also like to visit Square Chapel Arts Centre:
www.squarechapel.co.uk/