



Sheffield  
General  
Cemetery  
Trust

# undertakings

Edition 89  
Nov 2025



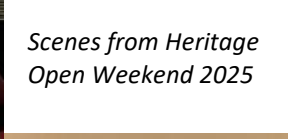
# News and Events

This year's summer seemed to consist of endless sunshine, an abundance of fruit, and swathes of wild flowers in the Cemetery. Now, suddenly, it's autumn again, all glorious colours, exotic, other worldly fungi, and spider webs glittering with dew. Hips and haws hang like jewels from the hedges and among the undergrowth all providing interest for those who visit the site or enjoy one of the many events.

Sadly, Heritage Open Weekend in September did not benefit from good weather although the exhibition on site featuring architects in the Cemetery is still, in October, attracting interest from visitors as are the other two on-site exhibitions, on World War II and on the 'Demon Drink' and temperance movement. Talks were given on the two main Heritage Open Days, both well attended. Dr Julie Rugg from York University spoke about the Burial Acts, and was full of interesting and intriguing information, entertainingly delivered, while Phil Parnham and Catie Evans spoke about the work of the Trust, with Catie focussing on the restoration of the Chapel, the structure of the vaults beneath the Chapel, and future plans. Also in September the Research and Interpretation team held an Open Day when we heard from one of the first volunteers, Joy Newton, whose husband helped create the individual plot maps we use today. The Cemetery also participated in the Nether Edge Festival, hosting music events and tours for the second year running.

The Research Team receive a flow of enquiries, some resulting from the Research Open Day during heritage week, but others from much further away. The most recent was from Fiona Stopford Taylor, descended from two branches of the same family in SGC, making a lightning dash from Australia to visit Sheffield. Also visiting this month were Helen Jackman, descendent of John Deakin, who joined the Inniskilling Dragoons as a boy and fought at Waterloo, and David Merrill, to lay flowers on the grave of John Chellingworth, who died in 1916 while on active service.

The Annual General Meeting was held in September this year, at the earlier time of 6.30, so that those attending could walk home through the Cemetery in the last of the daylight while the weather was still relatively warm. Dave Hunt, the Chair, delivered his report and introduced the new trustees (see last issue for details). One new trustee, Dawn Brissenden, has had to suspend trustee training because she is





expecting a baby. She intends to stay connected with the Cemetery though and we wish her well. We were also introduced to Lucy Bestwick who is currently in the process of becoming a trustee. Following the meeting, there was an opportunity for members, trustees and volunteers, to catch up.

## Julie Rugg: How the Church lost the plot: A History of Victorian Cemeteries Review Helen Brown



One of the highlights of SCGT's celebration of Heritage Open Days was a talk by Julie Rugg from York University. In the fitting setting of the Samuel Worth Chapel Julie gave us an insight into the Burial Acts of the later nineteenth century which influenced the decision to add a consecrated Anglican area to Sheffield General Cemetery, so substantially increasing the Church of England's income from burials, and leading to conflicts which threatened the fundamental stability of the Church.

Julie has very kindly donated some copies of her book on this topic (details below) for us to sell to support the work of the Sheffield General Cemetery Trust. As a result

of her generous donation we are able to offer these books below the recommended retail price of £85 while stocks last. The special price for a hardback copy is £60. If you would like to buy a copy or have any queries please email [publications@gencem.org](mailto:publications@gencem.org).

### **Churchyard and Cemetery: Tradition and Modernity in Rural North Yorkshire (427 pages, illustrated)**

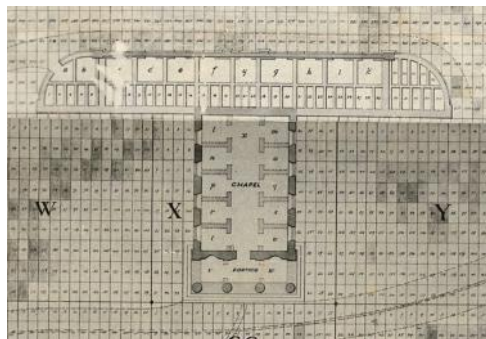
*The nineteenth century Burial Acts introduced changes that affected every English town and village outside London. New cemeteries, like Sheffield General Cemetery, which began as an essentially Non-Conformist enterprise, looked set to replace the centuries-old churchyard. This fascinating book provides new evidence which shows how the Church of England continued to have a substantial role in burial provision, and largely benefited from the Burial Acts. Both cemeteries and churchyards needed to respond to new expectations for burial space to guarantee that families could be buried together. The story of how this happened and the lasting effects these developments had is clearly and engagingly told in this important book.*

# Samuel Worth Chapel: the Vaults

Catie Evans, Trustee

The vaults beneath the Samuel Worth Chapel did not form part of the Chapel restoration project in 2012 due to financial constraints but some investigation was essential to understand the extent and structural integrity of this underground space.

The Cemetery records yield some information about vaults beneath the Nonconformist Chapel but other than the plot map, very few records or plans have been found to give a detailed picture of the extent or layout of the underground structure.



The burial plot map also clearly shows Catacombs and grave plots extending to the south (rear) of the Chapel but exactly what this looked like and how it connected to the Chapel had not been established. It appears that a carriageway would have run behind the Chapel, probably around 3m below the current ground level, where a door to Catacomb Y (marked intentionally out of sequence with the adjacent Catacombs) would open into the vaults. It is possible that a terrace would extend from the back of the Chapel, (shown on the sketch by one of our volunteers at the end of this piece), perhaps with a balustrade to the top of the Catacombs, overlooking the carriageway.

The first step in identifying the extent of the rear subterranean structure was established in 2022 when we uncovered the edge of the balustrade/ top of the Catacombs. This has now been measured and recorded and provides an additional element of information about the Chapel and its built structure.

20<sup>th</sup> century records reveal that a concrete staircase was installed at the rear of the building sometime around the 1930s, possibly to provide an air raid shelter beneath the Chapel but there was no indication of its exact location. The absence of any identifiable



*Rear structure uncovered in 2022*

original or later access meant the only way to access the vaults during the project was directly through the Chapel floor, where we hoped to verify the layout from the inside.

A hole just large enough for a camera was drilled in the Chapel floor. Having established the vault ceiling below was a barrel (curved) vault, it was critical not to compromise the structure. The hole was widened just enough to enable ladder access - this gave us the opportunity to survey and record the extent and condition of the vaults and provide further insight into Samuel Worth's original vision and its influences. The survey was carried out by the University of Sheffield Archaeology Department.

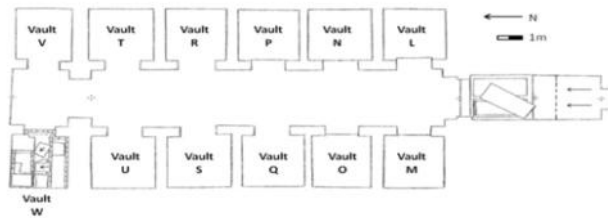


Figure 2: Scale plan of the first floor

The principle vault comprises a central chamber 23m long x 9m wide with 12 individual drop vaults, 6 on each side. Constructed in stone and brick, the brickwork shows evidence at one time of being painted or limewashed in white. This would have clearly emphasised the stone vault entrances and lintels, continuing the Egyptian detailing used in the Chapel.

The original entrance to the vaults is at the south (rear) of the Chapel and appears to be through a door and passage in the centre of a Catacomb range. Of the 12 side vaults, only one was used for burials, the rest remain empty. Two of these are 3m deep and drop down to the second floor, the remainder are filled with earth.



Vault W – Hadfield Vault: Vault W is located beneath the north west corner of the Chapel and is the family vault of the Hadfield Family - Joseph (d1846), his sister Ann (d1849) and their brother Samuel (d1849). Samuel was a Master Cutler and Town Trustee. Their father, Robert Hadfield, was a successful merchant in the export of cutlery and Samuel was the last to run the family firm. Their vault was identified by a funerary urn and plinth in the round headed niche, to the right hand side of the Chapel doors. The cost of a private family vault at this time was £10, around £1500 today.

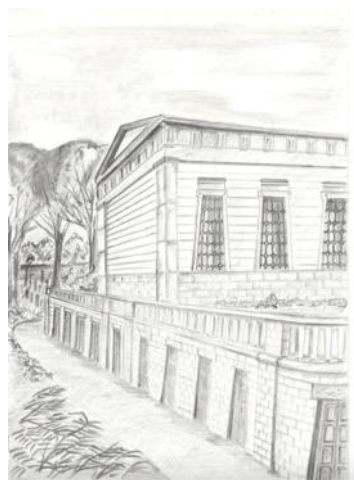


Adding in the cost of the coffins and plates, burial ephemera, carved stone inscription to the vault, the urn and plinth outside and the cost of the interments, this would have amounted to some considerable expenditure.

Lower vault: - Below the main vault chamber is a further subterranean vault, smaller, split into 4 rooms. There is no staircase or apparent 'built'

access to this lower level. A large stone slab in the centre of the floor of the main vault suggests there might have been some mechanism to lift coffins up (or down) between the vaults but more work is required to correctly establish the use of the lower space.

Outcome of the investigations: The burial records clearly show that the carriageway to the rear of the Chapel was used for public graves during the 20<sup>th</sup> century which means it could not now be excavated. However, the vault investigations provided us with some understanding of the subterranean structure from the inside and a valuable insight into how the vaults were originally approached. Kevin, one of our volunteers took a great deal of time to study the findings and produced an impression of how the rear of the Chapel may have looked when it was built. *See sketch right.*



The hole in the Chapel floor was filled towards the end of the project, so we currently have no access to the vaults but the opportunity to open them up permanently is on our list of future projects.

# The General Cemetery

## Stephen McClarence



*Major Morton's monument.  
Photograph Stephen McClarence*

On reflection, it was an unusual way to spend so much of my adolescence: exploring an overgrown, neglected and vandalised cemetery, photographing memorials and gravestones. But it was (I like to think) a fairly harmless way to spend Sunday afternoons.

My childhood home was a ten-minute walk from the General Cemetery, and on many a 1970s Sunday afternoon I shrugged off the more obvious appeal of the city's parks to stumble through the Cemetery's undergrowth, camera in hand.

Where some saw grim morbid abandonment, I saw grand romantic decay. Then as now, this Edgar Allan Poe of a Cemetery was a sculpture park, a monument to Victorian mortality. Some 20,000 graves commemorated 87,000 Sheffielders, many of them young, some of them worthy,

one of them notorious. They offered a century and a half of hand-chiselled piety, with a grieving angel at practically every turn.

Plenty of the rich and/or famous have memorials here - Mark Firth (steel magnate), John Cole (as in '...Brothers'), sundry Mayors and Master Cutlers, and the beguilingly named Amor Spoor, who had died in 1865. 'In life respected, in death lamented,' her inscription read. No-one could hope for more. Everyone who was anyone was buried here, along with a fair few who would probably have said they were 'nobody'.

Perhaps the most historically important grave was - and is - that of Samuel Holberry, Sheffield's notorious revolutionary Chartist. His People's Charter for parliamentary reform and his plot to seize the Town Hall were, his trial decided, an act of 'seditious conspiracy'. He was imprisoned but died, his stone (once deep in a jungle of undergrowth) laments, 'at the early age of 27 for advocating what appeared to him to be the true interest of the people of England'. The route of his 1842 funeral procession was lined by 50,000 people.

Forty years ago, some of the Cemetery's headstones, with their patiently mourning



cherubs, had been preserved. Others, however, had been insensitively laid as a pathway: none more insensitively, perhaps, than that of Margaret Green. It was a touching testament to Victorian infant mortality: she lost ten children in 19 years, their ages ranging from six days to six years. 'How sweet their slumbers are,' read their epitaph. Margaret's was more direct: 'She was brought as a lamb to the slaughter.'

There was any amount of social history for me to explore on those long-ago afternoons. Hannah Snidal, for instance, had died 'after an illness of only 57 hours'; her gravestone was intriguingly half-embedded in a tree trunk. And Ralph Barber, his stone announced, had bequeathed £500 to 'aged, destitute, unmarried females'.

Sadly, the lower part of the Cemetery was cleared in the early 1980s and restyled as parkland. Many fascinating gravestones were bulldozed and their fragments used to create new pathways. They included that of Thomas Axe, who died in 1857, aged 47. The inscription read: 'This stone was erected by the members of the Sheffield Skating Club, of which he was a founder, as a mark of their esteem and to commemorate their admiration of his great ability as a figure skater.' A metal plaque depicting a pair of skates was embedded in the stone.

After walking up the Cemetery's hill, visitors could take in the 1850 Anglican Chapel, admire the bookish statue of the poet and newspaper editor James Montgomery (now resited outside Sheffield Cathedral) and leave by the ornate 1836 Egyptian gateway with its grand iron gates showing serpents circling themselves into wreaths and biting their own tails for the sheer decorative joy of it.

Looking at my (mostly black-and-white) photographs now, I realise that none of them have living people on them; or, of course, dead ones.

A few weeks ago, Sue Turner, the General Cemetery Trust's infectiously enthusiastic Burial Research Volunteer, gave me a guided tour. It made me realise that the Cemetery has had what you might tactlessly describe as a new lease of life. It was far busier than I remember from all those years ago, with an endless stream of dog-walkers and a soundtrack of cawing crows and chattering, clattering magpies.

Over a couple of subsequent visits, I've discovered memorials I've never seen before: the gravestone of Emma, the wife of Israel Clarke, for instance. She died in 1872, aged 44, and was remembered by a poignant couplet:

'Severe afflictions strewed her path below  
Yet she in lamb-like patience strove to grow.'

Who, though, could match the inscription on the memorial to the industrialist Marmaduke Wardlow, who died in 1922, aged 58: 'To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die.'

It shows what life-affirming places cemeteries can be.



*Stephen McClarence and Sue Turner at the Lion Gatehouse entrance.*

*Steve is a well known travel journalist whose work has appeared in The Times, Sunday Times, Daily and Sunday Telegraph and the Yorkshire Post, as well as many other publications.. Teatime at Peggy's, a glimpse of Anglo India, by Stephen McClarence and Claire Jenkins, is available now. We are grateful that he has shared his photos of the Cemetery with us, particularly those of monuments since lost or damaged.*

## Thanks to

Stephen McClarence for sharing his photographs of the Cemetery from the 1970s/80s.

Shirley Harrison for sharing her photographs of the Cemetery from the 1970s/80s.

Both Stephen and Shirley have given the Trust permission to use their work.

Thank you to our hardworking staff and especially grateful thanks to all the many people who voluntarily contribute their time, labour, and expertise to support the Trust and its work.

# Researching Thomas Lenthall, husband of Lilian (Riley) Nixon Walker

## Jennifer Jorgensen with Maren Jorgensen

We are Jennifer and Maren Jorgensen, from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. We travelled to Sheffield, England in July 2025 to research Lilian Riley Nixon Walker, our great and great, great grandmother.

As the third and fourth generations searching for information on Lilian Riley's life and origins, we are continuing the path of a long line of family sleuths. Lilian Riley's daughter, (Lilian) Mabel Walker Darney (my grandmother) sought to find the answers to her mother's beginnings back in the day of no Internet, DNA or frequent cross-Atlantic travel. Mabel spent countless hours and many postage stamps inquiring and requesting birth certificates and other documentation.

As a young girl, I was enthralled with this mystery of our family and have passed that fascination on to my daughter Maren. My mother, Grace Darney, also had the researching bug. She helped Mabel organize her papers, asked her a lot of questions of her grandmother and set to work. With the advent of computers and helpful programs such as Family Tree Maker, Grace found it easier to collate and analyze the growing amount of information. Who were Lilian Riley's parents? Did her mother have other children? Was she married?

Lilian Riley was born on May 2, 1882, in Union Workhouse Ecclesall Bierlow. She was placed with Harriet and Joseph Nixon of Stockport when she was just two years old. She had a loving childhood (for the most part) but always wondered who her mother was. Did she die in childbirth like so many women did in those days? If not, why did she give her away?

With workhouse records destroyed in the War, it wasn't clear if she lived in the workhouse or was just born in the infirmary because it was close. Did her mother go there with the intention of leaving her there? Who was her mother? Our research uncovered that many



ipatients of the infirmary were not 'inmates' (as they called them) of the workhouse. They simply lived nearer to the hospital than other facilities. However, Lilian Riley's birth certificate (which she carried with her, her entire life) was issued 12th August 1884, so she may have spent her first two years in the workhouse and then removed to be given to her new family.

Lilian's mother's name was also on the birth certificate – Mary Riley – which was a boon for finding more information. However, 'Mary Riley' was a very common name in Sheffield at that time. Through Grace Darney's diligent efforts of painstaking perusal of City Directories and newspaper clippings of women aged 14 to 42 she came up with a Mary Riley in her 20's. She wasn't sure she had the correct Mary Riley until years later when she matched DNA with Mary's descendants – the great-grandchildren of Robert Lenthall, son of Mary (Riley) and Thomas Lenthall.

Records showed that Mary and Thomas Lenthall married a few years after Lilian was born. Could this be her father? While the DNA link could be for just a maternal connection it was a strong indicator. I with my mother Grace Darney visited Sheffield in September 2024 and explored many cemeteries but it wasn't until the follow-up trip in July 2025, that my daughter Maren and I made our way to the General Cemetery to discover the tucked away grave of our potential great, great, (great) grandfather. We were thrilled.

The General Cemetery is a fascinating area with a beautiful park. We are so thankful we connected with Shirley Baxter and that she gave us her time and help. Not only for providing us with an informative tour of the many aspects of the Cemetery – the Catacombs and the stone spiral were amazing – but also taking the time to find the grave of our Thomas Lenthall. We would not have been able to find it ourselves. Thank you again for making our trip a success.





# Seasons of mists....

## Sally Puddifoot Landscape Conservation Manager

Autumn seems to have arrived earlier than normal. Trees stressed after prolonged drought, have shed leaves early. Fruiting has been prolific; it is an incredible year for berries and fruit. This again is due to the trees worrying about their survival so concentrating on their reproduction. 2025 could be a Mast Year based on the abundance of acorns, conkers and sycamore seeds. This from the Woodland Trust explains a bit more about what a Mast year is and why we have them:

*Every species of tree and shrub has a distinctive way of reproducing. Autumn is the prime time to see this and can help us recognise different species too. Acorns, conkers, winged seeds and an array of fruits, berries and cones make autumn's colourful leaf displays even more enjoyable.*

*Every few years, some species of trees and shrubs produce a bumper crop of their fruits or nuts. The collective term for these fruits and nuts is 'mast', so we call this a mast year.*

*Two of our most recognisable trees, oak and beech, fluctuate massively year on year in the amount of acorns and beech nuts they produce. Some years seem to have very little while in others, the fallen nuts create a thick carpet beneath the trees.*

*What do we know about autumn 2025 so far? It's too early to tell for sure yet, but the records so far this autumn suggest it's an exceptionally good year for acorn crops. According to Nature's Calendar, the largest average crop in the last 20 years was 2013, and our last mast year was in 2022. We'll have to wait until the end of the season to see how 2025 matches up.*

So, we will wait and see – the advantage or disadvantage of a Mast Year is we get hundreds and hundreds of tiny sycamore and ash seedlings next spring, which are quite fun and relatively easy to pull up.

We are looking forward to the SGCT Fungi Walk. We haven't seen masses of fungi but we did spot this one in the grassy path edges. It is called Yellow Club Fungus. It is an interesting fungus as it appears to have a symbiotic relationship with micro-organisms. It is also an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. This from Sidmouth nature website explains :

*Yellow Club Fungus plays a unique and often underappreciated role in its ecosystem. While many fungi act as decomposers or form symbiotic relationships with plants,*



*Yellow Club Fungus is believed to exist in a more complex relationship with soil micro-organisms, including bacteria and other fungi. These interactions help create a balanced and healthy soil environment, contributing to the overall health of the grasslands and woodlands it inhabits.*

*The presence of Yellow Club Fungus and other club fungi is often a good indicator of a well-preserved ecosystem with high biodiversity. Grasslands that support these fungi are also likely to harbour other*

*rare species of fungi, plants, and invertebrates, making these habitats conservation priorities. As grassland ecosystems face pressure from development and agriculture, protecting these fungi can contribute to broader ecosystem conservation."*

There is good and bad news about our Psalm 27 garden and the other garden areas in the Gatehouse vicinity. The bad news is that box moth caterpillar is slowly but surely snacking away on our lovely box hedges. We have dug up and discarded the worst affected area as we don't feel it's going to recover. Volunteer Oksana donated us some skimmia which we have planted to replace it. It looks very smart and provides all year round evergreen foliage. Other areas of the box hedge are badly damaged and we purchased some box moth pheromone traps to try and control the outbreak.



The good news is that Sue T and the other garden volunteers have been managing the Memorial Garden areas. Despite the drought conditions the gardens have continued to reward us with summer and early autumn colour. I've ordered some more bulbs to plant this autumn, striking purple alliums and a lower growing white variety. The rest of the Landscape Team have been working hard on (among other things) meadow cuts – concentrating on path edges where we get an abundance of wildflowers. Cutting and removing the waste removes potential nutrients so will favour delicate wildflowers which are so beneficial for our pollinators and is not so favourable for grasses which by

and large prefer a fertile soil.

# The Eberlin Clock

Peter Kennett

*Below is an article which Peter wrote for members of Cemetery Road Baptist Church. He has very kindly shared it with Undertakings after seeing the mention of John Eberlin's interest in his Eberlin ancestors in the last issue. Frederick Eberlin, Louis' father, is buried in Plot L 206. Louis Eberlin and his wife are in Plot II 55, both in the Nonconformist area. Various members of the Hiller family, including Louis Hiller, friend of Frederick, are also buried in the SGC.*

How many of you have noticed that the large wall clock which hangs on the wall of the Community Room has been missing since early November? Nobody, but nobody has mentioned it!

The clock has the name "L. Eberlin" painted on its face, so who was Eberlin? How long has it been on the wall? The name is of German origin, and we know that some of the church members at the time when the church moved from Eyre Street to its present building in 1859 were of German extraction. In fact, the church's Trust Deed of 1863 is signed by Frederik Eberlin and four members of the German Hiller family, all of whom were pork butchers. Apparently, German Baptists who were fleeing some sort of persecution on the



*The Eberlin clock in situ.  
Photograph Peter Kennett*



*The spring and fusee mechanism of the Eberlin clock. Photograph Jim Kennett*

continent were able to set up in business in Sheffield and pork butchers' shops did not need a lot of capital. Louis Eberlin, unlike one of his older brothers, did not follow his father into the pork butcher business, but became a jeweller and clockmaker.

At that period, a lot of businesses had a large wall clock on their premises, with their name painted on the clock face. We can only speculate, but it is

possible that the clock was donated to the church by Louis' family after his death. This would certainly fit in with the thriving use of the room as a schoolroom, so that the scholars could see how much longer it would be before they could go home!

The clock has not worked for many years. However, Jim Kennett, Jean and Peter's son, had taught himself how to repair Victorian clocks, and had successfully rebuilt a wreck of a clock which had lain in our loft for 45 years or so. He was willing to have a go at the Eberlin clock, so we took it over to his home in Cheshire in early November.

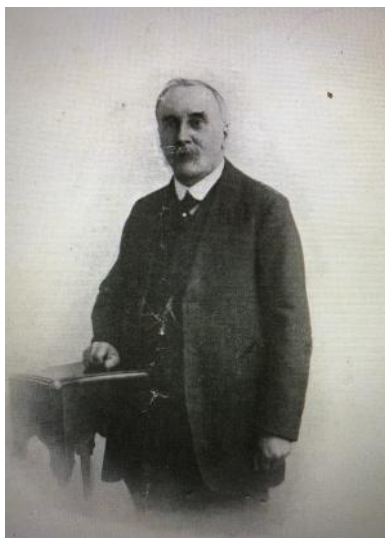
The mechanism of this clock is robust and is remarkably simple. It is known as a fusee system: as the spring runs down, it is compensated for by a tiny chain, which winds onto a tapering cone and thus keeps correct time. However, it has a lethal spring, which needs special tools to extract it, even when broken, so Jim had to send off the clock's innards to an expert horologist for a new spring – once he could find one! In the meantime, a family effort resulted in the wooden casing being repaired and polished.

Jim installed the clock at Christmastime and took infinite care to ensure that it is mounted exactly right, so that it goes "tick tock" evenly and not "TICK tock" or even "tick TOCK"!

So now we need a reliable person to be the winder-upper-in-chief, to ensure that it is wound up, carefully, every Sunday. Yes, I hear you say, why not simply buy a cheap electric action for the clock and save the bother? What, have you no sense of history and of high quality Victorian clockmaking?!



*Cemetery Road Baptist Church  
Photograph Steve HB*



*Louis Eberlin  
Photograph 'The Watchword' 1919*



# Research, Interpretation and Publication

## Team News

### Sue Turner

The Research, Interpretation and Publication (RIP) team have been busier than ever recently, working many more hours than we initially signed up for! Our 10.30am till 3.30pm session in the Office on Thursdays is just the tip of the iceberg as, thanks to the internet and the 'cloud', we spend lots more hours at home researching, discovering, and bringing long forgotten stories to new audiences. Not that we're complaining: we love our work!



*Researchers at work.*

We particularly like meeting people who make enquiries about their ancestors buried in the Cemetery and several have done so recently. It is good to chat and see what it means to them when we show them their family plots and tell them more about their family history. Often, they give us information about their loved ones which we can add to our files and some offer to write about their visit - as you can see in the articles in this, and other issues of Undertakings.

Researching an individual or a topic associated with the Cemetery is another great part of our role and previously our efforts have resulted in books or photo boards. Currently we are publishing our work via the Trust's website ([www.gencem.org](http://www.gencem.org)) under the Research and Stories banner. This already has short research stories in a variety of categories but in the coming months we will be adding longer, in-depth articles. Newly added ones will be promoted via social media and Undertakings.

We are fortunate to have many of the original Cemetery's records available to use in our research, but they are kept in Sheffield Archives, and some are difficult to read and interpret. Previous volunteers have spent long hours transcribing the records and adding them to several spreadsheets to make our job easier. Now we hope to go one step further and have all the records in one database, easy to use and available to all. Sounds simple but the reality is very many long hours ahead of us, checking and correcting the records, taking images of the entries in the books, and populating a database that will make our lives easier. We would value more help with this work so if you feel you could offer some time, then please contact [research@gencem.org](mailto:research@gencem.org) or call in to see us in the Office on a Thursday.

# Hezekiah Kelsey

## Shirley Baxter



During the Spring Jeremy Youle contacted the Research team to ask about the grave of Hezekiah Kelsey, cabinet maker and uncle to George Edwin Kelsey, Jeremy's great grandfather. There were in fact three plots associated with the Kelseys, those of Hezekiah and two of his sons, although sadly, George Edwin himself was not buried here but in Crookes Cemetery. Jeremy's mother, Margaret Sanderson, had begun re-

searching her family in the 1980s, long before the age of the internet, writing letters, interviewing relatives, finding primary sources and travelling to relevant sites, painstakingly unpicking the multiple strands of Kelsey family history. After her death Jeremy re-read her work, added some further research of his own, collated all the material, and this year published a book of their work, *The Kelseys of Haxey*, by Margaret Sanderson and Jeremy Youle, a copy of which he has kindly donated to the research archive.

The stories of Hezekiah and his nephew are examples of the rapidly increasing migration from the country to the town during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The children of tenant farmers had little to inherit except a continuation of the tenancy and for some, the idea of an alternative way of living, once they were aware of the possibility, must have seemed exciting if not essential. The following is a summary of information in the book concerning Hezekiah.

The parents of Hezekiah, Thomas Kelsey (1780-1860), a tenant farmer at Broomston, near Westwoodside, and Mary Morris (1779-1860) were married at Haxey Church in Lincolnshire. They had at least six children—Elizabeth, William, Joseph, Gervas, Hezekiah and George. When Thomas died, he left an annuity and furniture to his wife, money to his sons Gervas and Joseph, parcels of land to William and George, farmers, as well as everything else of value to George. Elizabeth, who was married, and Hezekiah, already established as a cabinet maker in Sheffield, and were not mentioned.

When George took over the farm at Broomston, he visited the markets in Sheffield and Doncaster regularly and was always keen to get the first new potatoes to Sheffield. He went by pony and cart bringing back hay from the hay market, about 34 miles by modern roads. Perhaps he occasionally met his brother Hezekiah on market days. But then Sarah, George's wife, died in childbirth when George Edwin, the third

son and fourth child, was eight. George senior remarried and had two more children but George Edwin left home at around 15 fleeing a strict father and possibly an unkind step mother. Perhaps he just didn't want to be a farmer. He had three brothers after all, any one of whom might have proved keen on farming. He made his way to his uncle Hezekiah who had also abandoned Lincolnshire as a young man.

It is not known exactly when George's brother Hezekiah (1819-1890) left home but he quickly found his feet. Between 1841 and 1881 he is recorded as being a cabinet maker in Sheffield, at several addresses, one intriguingly known as 'Kelsey's Houses', which was on Wentworth Street, Nether Hallam. Over the years he had several other jobs, including shop owner, beer retailer, grocer, provision dealer, upholsterer, undertaker and tailor. This includes being a beer retailer at 386 South Road in Walkey. (Footnote: 'Kelsey's Houses' were on Wentworth Street in Nether Hallam. The other addresses associated with Hezekiah, are 2 and 15 Hollis Croft, 129 Upper Hoyle Street, 122 King Street and 122 Martin Street. He also applied for a beer and wine licence for premises in Clifton Street in 1869. He sounds like an enterprising chap and Margaret's notes say he was reputed to be a 'jolly fellow.'

When George Edwin arrived in Sheffield, Hezekiah sent a message back to George Edwin's father. He confirmed that George had arrived and offered to take him on as apprentice cabinet maker, if his father would allow it. Clearly he did, because cabinet making became George Edwin's chosen career.

Hezekiah's work led him to appear in the local press from time to time. There are no revelations or scandals, but the notice from 1872 telling people he was taking over a business is worded with a nice excess of politeness. And for those interested in such things, the auction details from 1881 tells us what materials a 19<sup>th</sup> century cabinet maker might stock:

*Sheffield Daily Telegraph Sat 17 Aug 1872*

JOHN MORRIS, CABINET MAKER, UP-HOLSTERER and UNDERTAKER, 2 HOLLIS CROFT, SHEFFIELD, most respectfully returns thanks to his numerous Friends and Customers for past favours, and begs to inform them that he has DISPOSED his BUSINESS to Mr H KELSEY, who has been in his employment for 28 years, for whom he solicits patronage which has been bestowed upon him for many years; and has every confidence that his Successor will make it his study to give entire satisfaction to those who may honour him with their commands.

HEZEKIAH KELSEY respectfully informs his Friends and the Public generally that he has TAKEN to the Old-established BUSINESS as above, successfully carried on by Mr J Morris for a number of years, and solicits the support of those who may favour him with their commands; and assures them that no exertion shall be wanting on his part to execute

all Orders so as to give entire satisfaction, and on the most reasonable Terms.

*Sheffield Daily Telegraph Sat 22 Oct 1881*

To CABINET MAKERS, JOINERS, BROKERS, AND OTHERS. MR NICHOLSON Has instructions from Mr Kelsey, Cabinet Maker (successor to Mr Morris), who has Removed to more convenient workshops in Brightmore Street, to SELL by AUCTION, on the Premises, No 15 Hollis Croft, on MONDAY, October 24, at 11 o'clock, the following items, Three CABINET MAKERS BENCHES, great quantity of PITCH PINE, in Planks and Boards, capital VENEERS, Italian walnut wood, in Boards; various Wood, Tools, Gas Fittings and Piping, Matting, Seating, Iron, Kitchen Dresser, Cupboard, Painted Tables, Secrétaire, Dressing Commodes, Clothes and Tool Chests, Bench and vices, etc etc. Sale at Eleven.

*Sheffield Daily Telegraph Mon 7 July 1879*

ROOM SUITE – Mr Kelsey, Cabinet Maker, Hollis Croft has left over from his Sale by Auction last week at Mr Nicholson's, a splendid SUITE in Walnutwood, covered in figured Blue Silk Rep, and upholstered with hair. It may be treated for and seen at his works.

And what else? Hezekiah Kelsey married Mary Ellis from Doncaster in 1843, and they had 5 children. When he died his estate was worth £1,025 (equivalent to about £110,000 now.) Of the children, Henry became a teacher, starting as a pupil teacher in Sheffield. He progressed to being a national schoolmaster in Loughborough and finally a headmaster. Catherine Alice (or Alice Kate) was a milliner and Annie a dressmaker. Edwin was a cabinet maker. Thomas was a die sinker (an engraver of dies for stamping coins etc)"

Hezekiah died aged 70 in 1890 and is buried with his wife Mary Ann, and daughter Annie Varah, in the Anglican area, plot D3 88, which was purchased by his son Thomas. Thomas himself, Thomas' wife Jane, and three of their family were buried in E3 86, also



*Margaret Sanderson and Jeremy Youle  
2010*

in the Anglican area. Edwin Kelsey, undertaker and son of Hezekiah, was buried in D3 4, Anglican, along with his wife and four other family members. D3 4 was purchased by Hezekiah. All visible signs of the graves were swept away when Sheffield City Council cleared part of the Cemetery in 1980-1 to create the parkland area, but the Kelseys, like most of the other people buried in the Cemetery, still remain quietly where they were placed so many years ago.

Many thanks to Jeremy for sharing this research with the Trust.



# Into the Trees and Rip it Up nights at the Chapel

Andy Smith, Events Manager



Once a month we turn the Chapel into a nightclub celebrating the alternative music of the 1980s. These two nights, **Into The Trees** and **Rip It Up**, have grown in popularity and fame in the city and beyond.

In the 1980s Sheffield was home to a well-known nightclub, The Limit, on West Street. On Thursday nights The Limit hosted a night that became famous in Sheffield folklore as the home of alternative music. The music was what is described as post punk and included goth, punk, indie, electronic and rockabilly. Thursday nights at the Limit played more than a small part in a young me moving to the city in the 1980s.

After the Chapel renovation Emma, then events manager, started an event called **Kick In The Eye** with some local DJs. This was run several times a year and became very popular. It was very much a homage to the Limit nightclub nights. It was also my first experience of the Chapel and how wonderful a venue it is and led to me getting involved.

As the Chapel venue began to grow in popularity it became clear to us that if we were licensed to sell alcohol we could run more events. Thanks to the work of Catie we were licensed nearly 3 years ago. The capacity was capped at 60 so we had to look at how we could make events work profitably with the limited numbers. We decided to re-launch the music night, running it by ourselves and called it **Into The Trees**, a line from a famous song by the band The Cure. Now this hugely popular monthly event usually sells out within an hour and attracts people travelling from as far afield as Peterborough and London, with ages ranging from 18 to 70.

We set up a dedicated Facebook page which now has 700 followers. Songs are requested for upcoming nights, alternative music is discussed, and members are given first access to tickets.

Following the success of **Into The Trees** a second night was launched called **Rip It Up** (a song by a popular 80s band Orange Juice) This night we describe as a less dark tribute

to the 80s and it also sells out quickly. As a result, we were asked to DJ at Pete McKee's School Disco, one of The Leadmill's closing events.

The nights have become very special and there is a huge sense of community and family that has grown around them. The Chapel it turns out is a safe space for people who don't want to go into town and are nervous about going out, and also to the LGBTQ+ community.

I wanted to share some of the stories from people who come as they tell it better than I ever can...

***\*Kick in the Eye/Into The Trees** certainly changed my life. As a regular since its inception, I was caught unawares when a random stranger complimented my hat while I was waiting for drink at the bar. Some days later, I received a message from said stranger, who had been trying to find out my identity, via Facebook. It was the offer of a date! After, initially, declining the invitation, I decided to accept the offer of a mere, harmless drink. Little did I know what was to come. The subsequent offer that I received, after a fair few dates, came four months later; a proposal of marriage! And nine months later, we were, indeed, married.....at the Samuel Worth Chapel! Returning to the place where it all began. Definitely a life-changing venue!*

*\*I know that you and the DJs and my mates thought I was drunk when I told you all that these club nights had changed my life but honestly and soberly they really have! I had two close bereavements earlier this year and being able to come somewhere with people my own age and dance all night long has reconnected me to the old me and I am so grateful for them.*

*\*I'd stopped going to goth nights as I was struggling with mobility and fainting. It was having a negative knock on effect on my husband and putting strain on our marriage as I was avoiding going out and becoming withdrawn through lack of confidence. But these are great nights. There are seats, it's not overcrowded, it's cooler than most clubs, and I had brilliant support from other attendees when I did get ill one night. I feel safe here. It's really changed my life as alongside physio I'm even able to dance for more than one song at a time and have started to do more socially generally.*

*\*A safe place where I can dance with my walking stick (post stroke ), and never feel judged.*

*\*In just under a year, since I started volunteering at the bar, I have seen endless joy, fun and dancing. I have seen a group dressed as the gang from "A Clockwork Orange", our regulars in elegant black gothic wear, boots and hats, a certain someone who wears the*

most outrageous colourful clothing you can imagine, regular games of balance the beer cans and the spread as much gothness as possible around the space. And of course, ducks, thousands and thousands of little plastic ducks that have made the Chapel their home. Because of these people and the friendship they have shown, I went from someone shy and reserved, who had never poured a pint in my life, to a regular member who has grown and partakes in the madness.

*\*We love the cemetery and your secret chapel, mysterious and spooky. What a place to dance and sing to our favourite tunes. We started with **Kick in the eye** now we come to **Into the trees** and **Rip it up**. We come away from a night in the chapel, walk up for a taxi discussing how lucky we are to have found somewhere we can still dance and relive our youth. It makes me feel quite emotional. The volunteers, Andy, Harry, Joey and Annie we love your enthusiasm for the music. I almost feel I want to keep the nights a secret because it's so special.*

*\*I've been coming to these events for about 2.5 years. Back in the early 1980s I used to go to clubs where we thrashed around to The Sisters of Mercy, Death Cult etc...but I thought all that had gone. It's been like a miracle to rediscover it all at the Chapel; everyone is friendly, you can wear what you want and enjoy your music without any hassle - a haven in a Chapel in a Cemetery - perfect!*

*\*Love this night, I'm a semi-regular coming all the way from Cambridge. Thank you to everyone involved in such a great night in such a great location*

*\*Thank you all for making me want to go out and dance again. The early start, the reasonable end time, the wide and wild variety of tunes, the carefree crowd, the restricted numbers. It all helps massively!*

These nights have become a mainstay of our events program; they have raised at least £35,000 for the trust and the folks that come were the main contributors to our crowd funded PA system which has enabled the other music nights to flourish. They have spawned 4 other DJ nights that are also growing in popularity. Most importantly they have created a community of people who meet every month and dance together and breathe life into the Chapel.

These events are only made possible by our 4 DJs Annie, Harry Joe, and Phil plus the amazing volunteers, particularly Jules and Julie on the bar, John stewarding, and Paul our ever-present security person.

I will leave the final word to Kathy who comes with her son Issac who is a wheelchair user:

*It was such a breath of fresh air to discover Into the Trees – completely accessible!! It has changed our lives. Isaac can dance the night away with his music-loving community. And we love the Samuel Worth Chapel and the cemetery.*

*Shortly before finding **Into the Trees** we were experimenting with organising our own music events; evolving out of two music quiz nights in 2023, we landed on the idea of 'Are Friends Electric?', a club event for everyone, those living with and without additional needs and where some of the DJs also have additional needs. Andy offered the SWC as a venue and the rest is history. We don't know of any other club event in the UK that is similarly rooted in inclusion.*



## Researching Uncle Sam David Worth

*David Worth, descendent of Samuel Worth, designer of the General Cemetery, concludes his research on his Sheffield ancestor.*

The architect Christopher Wren, who designed St Paul's Cathedral in London, has inscribed on his tomb there "Lector si monumuntum requires circumspice" ("Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you"). Unfortunately, with some exceptions, we can't do that for Samuel Worth although he is buried within the Cemetery he designed.

We don't know exactly when Samuel arrived in Sheffield but gauge it to be between 1822 and 1824 as he entered into a partnership with Joseph Botham in 1826. Nothing of interest came from that partnership which was dissolved on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1827. He formed a second partnership with James Harrison in 1827, dissolved in May 1831, which designed two buildings of note.

The first, was the **Free Writing School, Townhead Street, 1827**. I have found no evidence of this other than a description that it was "a plain, brick, workman-like building capable of accommodating 40 pupils and a house for the master". In the July 1827 issue of the Sheffield Independent there was an advertisement inviting persons to contact Samuel Worth regarding the erection of the school. The oldest map of the area in 1851 shows nothing resembling a school so presumably it was demolished

when the street was developed in the 1840's as shown on Franklin's Sheffield map of 1851.

In 1829 the **Surgeons' Hall** was built at the end of Surrey Street on an awkward site next door to the United Methodist Church. It remained in use as an independent medical school until 1888 when the school moved to Leopold Street and was later incorporated into Sheffield University. The building continued in use after the school had left and latterly was an Army Recruiting Centre and Information Office. The building was demolished in 1971 as part of the development of the city centre. Above the central windows of the building was a plaque stating "ars longa, vita brevis" (art is long, life is short). When the building was demolished in 1971 the blocks were move to the Hallamshire Hospital and mounted in a wall by the bus stop .



*Surgeons' Hall/Sheffield Medical School. From an engraving of Surrey Street c 1830. Public Domain*

In 1831 the partnership built **eighteen Dwelling Houses on Glossop Road**. I have found no details of which these were but, from the 1841 and 1851 maps of Glossop Road, the best possibility seems to be a block entitled Stanton Broom situated on Glossop Road just after the junction with Clarkhouse Road and opposite to what is now the Hallamshire Hospital.

Also in March 1831 the partners, Worth and Harrison, were invited by the Cutlers' Company to build a new **Cutlers' Hall\*** at 17 Church Street. A drawing by Samuel of the old hall before its demolition in 1831 is held by the Company. That decision seems to have been quickly rescinded and led to the dissolving of the Worth/Harrison partnership as the Cutlers Company issued a general invitation for all architects to submit plans for a new hall by September 1831, and Samuel must have decided to submit his own. 13 plans were received and those of Worth and Benjamin Broomhead Taylor were selected by the Committee with Worth gaining 13 votes and Taylor 10. Later, in November, the decision was reviewed and the two winning architects were asked to work together. As was the custom of the day individual contractors were employed with the architect acting as Clerks of Works.



*Cutlers' Hall. Creative Commons.*

The frontage of the new hall was similar to the old hall with entrances at each side but in



classical style with Corinthian pillars. The right hand side of today was added in 1887 by J M Mitchell-Withers, who had been a pupil of Samuel Worth, hence the continuation of the earlier style. This filled the space between the Hall and the Sheffield and Hallamshire Bank. The simplicity of the front façade to the building hides what proved to be a challenging complexity for the architects in both size, shape and Company demands. The building was completed in 1832 at a full cost of £8,846.12.1 and the last payment made to the architects in October 1833.



*Engraving Thomas C Holland 1830s*

Three years later Samuel Worth won the commission to design the layout and four main structures of the **General Cemetery**, on the 9 acres of sloping land bought in 1834 by the Cemetery Company. He designed the bridge and main gateway to the Cemetery from Ecclesall Road, the lodges flanking the gateway, the Registrar's House (originally the Minister's House) at the top of the Cemetery on Cemetery Road, the Catacombs, and most imposingly the Non-Conformist Chapel, seated in the centre of the site, with views across the Porter Valley, in the neo classical style. The buildings are Grade II listed or above.

The **Sheffield and Hallamshire Bank\*** was established in Sheffield in 1836 and, the business growing rapidly, acquired a site in Church Street next to the Cutlers' Hall for a new headquarters. In 1837 Samuel was commissioned to design the whole building and produced a building similar in many ways to its neighbour. The total cost of the build was £5,782 and Samuel's fee was £202.13. The building was extended in 1878 and refurbished in the 1960s, due to Second World War damage. By 1835 Samuel was able to purchase a plot of land himself, at **463 Glossop Road/ Westbourne Road\***, where he built an impressive residential house, West Mount, with a massive frontage. He probably occupied the house for a period of time until a buyer was found. The building is still standing but has now been converted to offices.

In 1838 Samuel surveyed a 12-acre site in Broomhill and designed a house, **Ashdell\***, for John Shepherd, similar to but plainer than West Mount. It is understood there were differences of opinion between architect and client and that another architect was brought in to finish the project. In the same year, Samuel's design for the **Union Workhouse, Hayfield, Derbyshire\*** was accepted, with a maximum cost level of £2000, for a workhouse for 100 to 120 persons. It would seem that some of his designs were cut from the contract; how much input Samuel had into the building is not known but given the state of travel at that time it was possibly very little. The House was completed in

1841 and was altered and extended a number of times; latterly it was taken over by the NHS as Ollersett View Hospital. The buildings still exist and were converted in 2002 to residential use. Samuel was appointed architect and Surveyor for North Derbyshire in 1841 and the Hayfield work had perhaps led to this appointment and the Buxton one below.

**Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham** was designed by Samuel Worth and John Frith for the Rotherham General Cemetery Company in 1840. It opened on the 8th September 1841 and initially comprised about 7 acres. A chapel was erected, which had an entrance at each end and a central partition which enabled use both by Anglicans and Nonconformists. The cemetery was extended in 1869.

**The Royal Hotel, Winster Place (Now Spring Gardens), Buxton\***

was designed by Samuel and built between 1849 and 1852. The Clerk of Works was Robert Ripon Duke who went on to design many of Buxton's buildings including the Octagon. Records indicate that the hotel was financed by Andrew Brittlebank, a solicitor from Winster, which is why its address is Winster Place. However, the buildings Grade II Listing indicates it was built for the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire. The prestigious building is 3 stories high and has a curved frontage. The hotel was enlarged by R R Duke in 1882 but was taken over by the Buxton Lime Company in 1914 and renamed the Royal Exchange. The building now accommodates retail use.



*Royal Hotel, Buxton 1849*



*Borough Bridge*

Finally, **Borough Bridge, Corporation Street\***, over the Don, was built in 1853 as part of Corporation Street to give access to the M & S L railway's Bridgehouses goods depot. It was designed in conjunction with Samuel Holmes. The decorative 3 arch bridge withstood the waters of the Sheffield Flood in 1864 and is still in daily use.

*\* Grade II or Grade II\* listed*

## Events

Keep up to date by visiting

[gencem.org/whats-on](http://gencem.org/whats-on)

Tickets for the history tours, which usually take place on the first Sunday of the month, should be booked through our website [www.gencem.org](http://www.gencem.org) which links to TicketSource.

The café and bookstall in the Samuel Worth Chapel are open on tour days.

Book your tickets at [ticketsource.co.uk/sgct](http://ticketsource.co.uk/sgct)

## Membership

You can join us as a member by visiting

[gencem.org/membership](http://gencem.org/membership)

**The membership costs £10 per person per year and is renewable from the date of joining.**

This edition of Undertakings was edited by Shirley Baxter



[facebook.com/SheffieldGeneralCemetery](https://facebook.com/SheffieldGeneralCemetery)



[@SheffieldGenCem](https://twitter.com/SheffieldGenCem)



Sheffield  
General  
Cemetery  
Trust

**The Sheffield General Cemetery Trust, The Gatehouse, Cemetery Avenue, Sheffield S11 8NT**

**0114 268 3486 - [sgct@gencem.org](mailto:sgct@gencem.org) - [www.gencem.org](http://www.gencem.org)**

**Charity No. 1103158 - VAT Registration No. 222 3822 40 - Company No. 04997593**