



Sheffield
General
Cemetery
Trust

The Flocktons

William Flockton born 2 February 1804 was the son of Thomas Flockton, Carpenter, Joiner and Builder, and his wife Charlotte. From lowly beginnings Thomas Flockton rose to become one of Sheffield's most enterprising and successful builders, gaining a sound reputation as a constructor of quality houses with an attention to detail. In 1803 he was a tenant of a small cottage at Hawley Croft. In the 1720s it was an area of large houses built by affluent citizens in but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, it had become engulfed by houses, workshops and courts to become very down market. Thomas Flockton worked at a time of great trade depression and uncertainty in Sheffield due to the effects of the Napoleonic Wars.

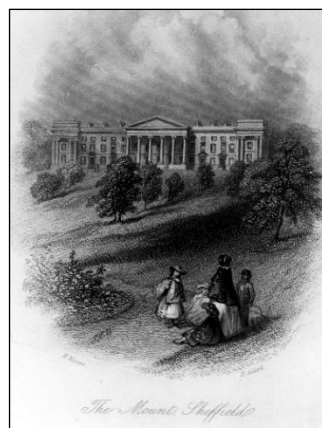
Thomas Flockton built houses from Carver Street, close to the town centre, out to Division Street which had established a reputation as a location for respectable artisans. Identifying the westward expansion of the town, he gradually moved out to build houses on the green fields at the top end of Wilkinson Street. By 1821 he had moved his family out to Rockingham Street and from that base his buildings were ever further westward as he aimed at an even more prosperous section of the community.

He ensured his son was given a good education. William Flockton's obituary told of his musical skills, 'his early fondness and taste for music'. He was the organist at St Paul's Church for a short while, offered himself as a candidate for the permanent position but failed to be appointed. He presented varied and interesting papers to the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society and had his opinions published in pamphlets and newspapers on many subjects both professional and otherwise.

William Flockton married Mary Tibbetts on 27 February 1824 and the couple had at least ten children. Initially Flockton worked for his father, probably completing his apprenticeship, and certainly gaining practical experience as he completed projects such as the flooring of the saloon at the Music Hall, 'every deal of which he laid down'. Gaining building skills William Flockton also had the reputation of building and financial integrity instilled in him by his father.

He appears to have aspired to be an architect from an early age, designing in his early twenties, a complex of public baths to the south of Glossop Road, known as the Broom Grove Baths. The leisure complex centred on warm and cold baths but also provided a landscaped pleasure garden and refreshments. The venture didn't take off and failed within a few years. Despite the financial loss incurred by the

scheme, within a few years Flockton at the age of 26, was able to raise the capital necessary for another ambitious project The Mount in Broomhill. Initially advertised in December 1831 it was to be a grand terrace of a size and high standard previously unknown in any part of the town. The Mount was the first neo-classical building in Sheffield, built of stone with an Ionic giant portico of six columns carrying a pediment. It was built to look like a country mansion but in fact consisted of 8 houses described as 'genteel dwellings'. At the time of its construction it was nicknamed, uncharitably, 'Flockton's Folly' as it was a bold scheme which was thought to be too far out of town to attract potential buyers. Flockton had no doubt about the quality of The Mount and its location and said it was 'a handsome Ionic edifice.... Substantially built and in design and taste far exceeding any of the present erections in the neighbourhood of Sheffield'.



The Mount, Glossop Road Source: *Picture Sheffield*

With its south-facing views over the Porter Valley, the Mount became a fashionable place to live and after the occupancy of one of the houses in 1835 by James Montgomery, hymn writer, poet and editor, another by George Wostenholm, cutlery manufacturer, in 1837, and another by the Wilsons, owners of the local Snuff Mill, the houses were much sought after attracting the upper tier of Sheffield society.

Self-taught, widely read and having natural talent, by 1833 William Flockton had his own business, set up according to local trade directories as an Architect, Joiner and Builder with an address in Devonshire Street. William and Mary Flockton's eldest son, Thomas James Flockton was born in 1824 and educated at the Wesley Proprietary Grammar School. He joined his father's business before he was 13 years old and later, to gain experience, spent 2 years in architectural offices in London with James Johnston and Sir Gilbert Scott. Before rejoining his father's practice he travelled and studied architecture, spending a few months with John, later Sir John, Fowler on railway work.

William Flockton designed the Mount Zion Chapel, Westfield Terrace, in 1834 using a neo-classical design as preferred by the Nonconformists. The building, later used as the entrance portico to the now demolished Royal Hospital, still stands with its façade restored in 1988 and converted to an office building.

A house built by Flockton on Glossop Road was put up for sale in May 1835 and advertised in the glowing terms that characterised Flockton's publicity, as:

an excellent and newly erected MANSION or DWELLING HOUSE, delightfully situated on the Glossop Road, near to Wilkinson Street. This very beautiful Residence has all the convenience of a Town Residence, conjointly with the salubrity of a Country Seat. As an architectural design, it is universally admired, it is most substantially built with the greatest care and of the very best Materials, and contains Dining, Drawing, and Breakfast Rooms, and small Library, Kitchen, Scullery, and Six Lodging Rooms, and Three Cellars, and a Coach-House; added to which, will be found all other necessary conveniences.

The Kitchen Garden will be amply sufficient for a Family. There is on the Premises, a never failing supply of the purest Spring Water, also a Reservoir with Soft Water. The House is finished in the first style, no expense having been spared in its erection and completion.

Sheffield Independent - Saturday 2 May 1835

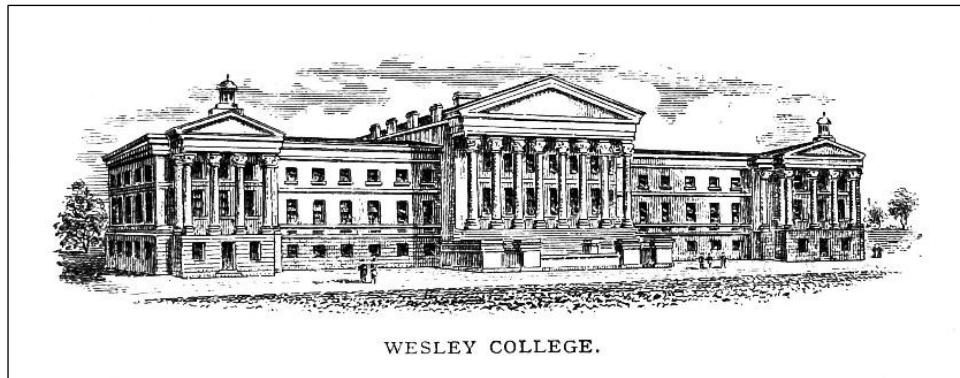
The house had one unusual feature: its orientation. Most of the houses in the western suburbs of Sheffield take advantage of the views and have south facing aspects. Although on a large plot the house was built close to Glossop Road and facing uphill in a north easterly direction. The house did not sell and it became Flockton's home. The area, an early middle-class suburb, had houses surrounded by gardens, and was away from the noise and pollution of the centre of Sheffield. Flockton, with his growing family found it so convenient for his needs that he remained there until his death in 1864. The house survives but only just. The garden has been built on and the area around the house is used for car parking.



Home of William Flockton & family *Source: SGCT Archive*

The Baptist Chapel at Rotherham, designed and erected under the superintendence of Flockton in 1837 was 'universally admired. In the union of beauty and convenience it is believed to surpass any other place of worship in the neighbourhood and is such as to reflect great credit upon the architectural skill of Mr Wm Flockton'.

The success of The Mount greatly enhanced Flockton's reputation as an architect and he used the design as a basis for his better known and extremely ambitious Wesley Proprietary Grammar School (now King Edward VII School) which he built nearby. The school was built at the instigation of a group of public minded Nonconformists shortly after the building of the nearby Collegiate School, a church school, in the Gothic style then popular with local Church of England churches and schools. Like The Mount it was neo-classical in design and commanded a view across the Porter Valley. Twenty-five bays wide, it had a pedimented centre of seven bays, with eight giant Corinthian columns, balanced by two end pavilions, also with Corinthian columns. The school was opened on 8 August 1838 although the building was not finished. It had accommodation for 250 pupils and work continued until 1840 when the School and the Chapel were completed.



Wesley College, Glossop Road *Source: Picture Sheffield*

Recovery House, later the Norfolk wing of the Royal Infirmary, was built by Flockton in 1839 and was designed to match the original hospital building. Other commissions from this time include Ashdell, now part of Westbourne School in 1840, 89-91 Endcliffe Vale Road in 1840, and 5 Broomfield on the corner of Newbold Lane in 1841.

In 1841 Flockton was approached to inspect the deteriorating All Saints' Church, Bakewell, with a view to restoration, remodelling or rebuilding. The church was noted for its spire, being one of the 'splendours of Derbyshire' but it had deteriorated sufficiently as to be close to collapse. Flockton gave his opinion both as an architect and as a builder and joiner which gave weight and credibility to his proposals. He proposed to 'renew very decayed stones and broken Ornaments, to point ... where needful, to carefully repair the roof...'

It is not clear what training, if any, Flockton had received or how he acquired his knowledge and appreciation of the Gothic style which enabled him to produce the very fine drawings which helped him achieve the careful restoration of All Saints' Church, Bakewell. Flockton's successful renovation was much appreciated by his Grace the Duke of Rutland and his published updates on the progress of his work introduced him to a wider audience. Elements of this work can be seen in his later ecclesiastical schemes. His tall spire of the Sheffield General Cemetery Church is very similar to that of All Saints' Church, Bakewell.

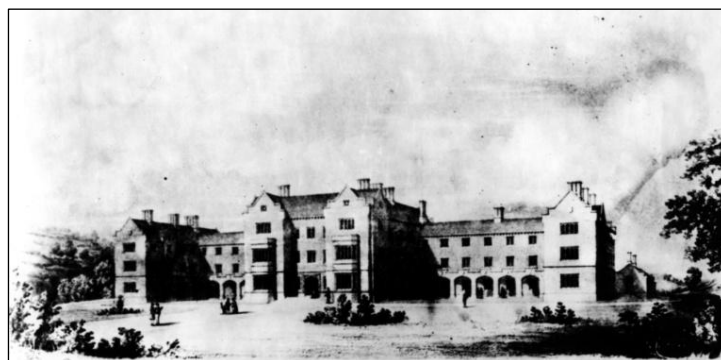
In 1841 Thomas Flockton, his wife Charlotte and son Henry were living in Broomfield, a house recently completed by his son William. Broomfield was one of a pair of semi-detached houses, skilfully camouflaged to give the appearance of single substantial mansion. Looking out of the windows Thomas Flockton would have seen two of his son William Flockton's greatest creations 'The Mount' housing some of Sheffield's most respected citizens and the monumental Wesleyan

Proprietary School. Thomas Flockton died in 1842 but there could have been no greater contrast between his final home in a green middle-class suburb to his origins in the squalor of Hawley Croft.



Thomas Flockton's home *Source: SGCTArchive*

When the Ecclesall Union Workhouse, later Nether Edge Hospital, on Union Road was being proposed, the Guardians chose not to build using the recommended government workhouse design. Instead they commissioned William Flockton to develop a proposal. His suggestion was a Tudor Revival style building with a central block having a hall, kitchen, chapel and administrative offices with male and female wings on either side. Completed to Flockton's design in 1843/4 with accommodation for 500 people, it included not just the buildings but the layout and approach roads and cost £15,000 to complete.

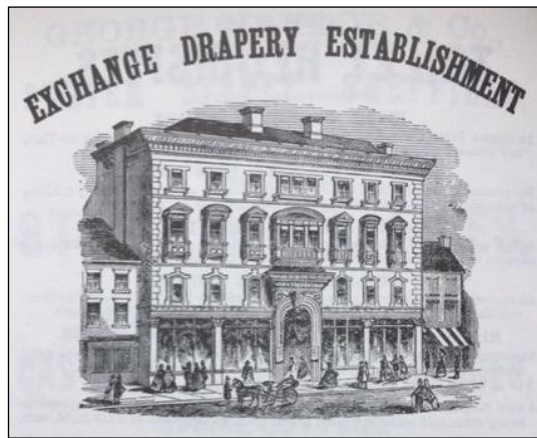


Lithograph showing Flockton's impression of the southeast view of the proposed Ecclesall Bierlow Union *Source: Picture Sheffield*

Also in the Tudor Revival style was Kenwood House, Rundle Road, designed and built in 1845 for George Wolstenholme, the owner of one of the largest cutlery firms in Sheffield.

An 1845 Trade directory lists Flockton as an Architect of Victoria Buildings, Fargate. Originally built for the Exchange Drapery Establishment, the front of the building

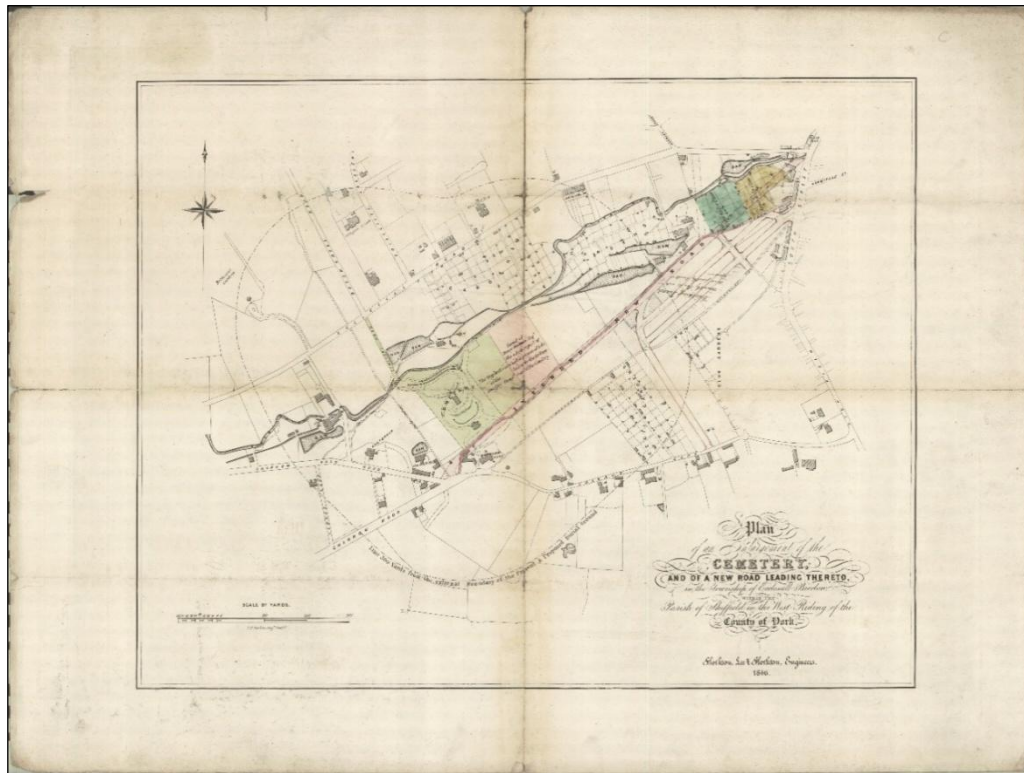
was later taken down and rebuilt to accommodate street widening plans and is now occupied by Marks and Spencers.



Victoria Buildings, Fargate Source: *Illustrated guide to Sheffield, 1862*

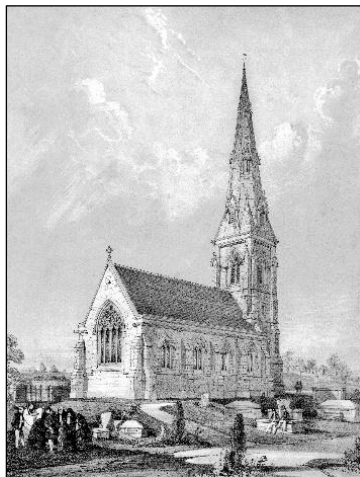
In 1845 William Flockton took his son, Thomas James Flockton and William Lee, into partnership, the style being either Flockton, Son & Lee or Flockton, Lee & Flockton. Lee was an assistant Surveyor of Highways of Sheffield & Ecclesall and reported to the first Borough Council on the Sanitary condition of Sheffield. The partnership lasted until 1849, their work including the Holy Trinity Church, Wicker on Nursery Street in 1848 and a design (1849 & unbuilt) for St Mark's Church, Broomhill.

In 1846 the Sheffield General Cemetery Company decided to extend the Cemetery with the addition of consecrated land. The Flockton firm was paid to submit the application for the Act of Parliament to authorise the Consecration of the Land, to cost the proposed extension and to make 'a Plan or Sketch of the Ground and of the Works connected therewith'.



The first proposal for a road to connect the Cemetery and the proposed consecrated part with Sheffield Moor. Part of an application to Parliament for an Act to authorise the Consecration of the Land *Source: SGCT Archive*

At the meeting of the Directors of the Cemetery Company held at the Company's Office, East Parade, on Tuesday evening 27 July 1847, it was resolved 'that the Plan for the Cemetery Church produced by Mr Flockton, be approved and adopted but the intended structure shall not cost more than Fifteen hundred pounds'.



Sheffield New Cemetery Church, c 1848 *Source: Picture Sheffield*

Flockton's design for the Anglican Church was in the neo-Gothic style with a detailed exterior, contrasting with the simplicity of the neo-classical Nonconformist Chapel. The Church was constructed using two different sandstones. The corner stones were cut from Millstone Grit but the main walls were constructed using the

local Coal Measures sandstone. The spire of the Church was deliberately out of proportion to the rest of the building to be visible from a considerable distance. Flockton played up its size to give it prominence in the landscape.

White's Directory for 1849 referred to the construction of 'a handsome church in the decorated style of early English architecture, with a lofty tower and spire' and how 'the chapel and the church, standing near the crown of the acclivity, form conspicuous objects in the beautiful vale of the Porter, on the opposite side of which are the Botanical Gardens and many handsome villas'.

After Lee's withdrawal from the partnership in 1849, Flockton & Son continued to work on many substantial buildings in Sheffield including:

Christ Church, Pitsmoor Road, 1849-50

St Matthew's, Carver Street, 1854-5

St Jude's*, Moorfields, rebuilt 1855

Improvements to the Church of Saint Peter & Paul, (now the Cathedral), 1856

Holmwood House, Ecclesall, c1856

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Upper Hanover Street, 1856 (gutted in 1940 & rebuilt)

St Stephen's Church, Fawcett Street, 1858

The Baptist Chapel, Cemetery Road, 1858-9

The Church of England Educational Institute, St James's Street, 1860

The Savings Bank, Norfolk Street, 1860,

Abbeydale Villa, later Abbeydale Park, 1860

Burngreave Cemetery & Chapels, 1861



Church of England Educational Institute Source: *Illustrated Guide to Sheffield, 1862*

Many of Sheffield's industrial elite also called upon Flockton and Son to design their grand homes in developing suburbs such as Ranmoor and Fulwood. Oakbrook on Fulwood Road was refurbished in 1855 for Mark Firth, a steel manufacturer. It is now part of Notre Dame High School. Tapton Hall, on Shore Lane, 1855, was commissioned by Edward Vickers another steel magnate. It was an Italianate villa, formal in style with a grand entrance and the roof concealed behind a balustrade. It is now a Masonic Lodge.

In 1858 the Flockton practice won the competition to build new premises for the Sheffield and Hallamshire Savings Bank in Norfolk Street, with a neo-classical façade, Corinthian pillars, impressive entrance porticoes and surmounted by balustrades and urns.



Sheffield and Hallamshire Savings Bank *Source: Illustrated Guide to Sheffield, 1862*

Thomas James Flockton withdrew from the firm of Flockton and Son in 1862 and William Flockton continued to practise until 1864 under the style of Flockton and Son, with Charles Flockton and then, Marcus Flockton.

William Flockton suffered an apoplectic seizure a few years before his death which deprived him of the full use of his limbs. He bravely struggled on working despite the effects of the attack. Flockton died on 26 September 1864.

In 1856 on the death of his mother-in-law, Hannah Tibbetts, her executors bought plot M 3 in the Anglican area of the General Cemetery for her burial. In 1864 and 1875 the grave was used for William Flockton and his wife Mary respectively. Lucy Mabel Flockton, one of Flockton's grandchildren, who died aged 11 years and 6 months in May 1879 was also buried in the grave. Very much a family man, Flockton used to speak with pleasure of the numerous members of his family, being particularly proud on the birth of his twentieth grandchild. It is therefore

appropriate that three more plots, M 1, M 2 and M 4 were bought by family members and today, the bodies of 15 members of the Flockton family lie together just a short distance from Flockton's Cemetery Church.



Plot M 3 in the Anglican area of Sheffield General Cemetery Source: *SGCT*