

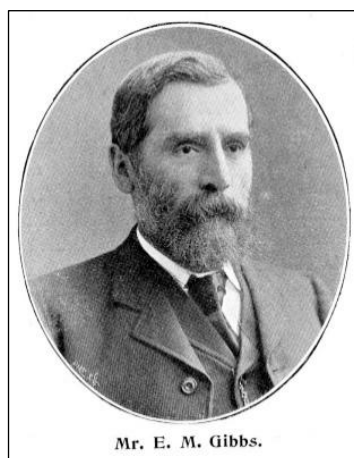


Sheffield
General
Cemetery
Trust

Edward M Gibbs

Edward Mitchel Gibbs was born in Sheffield on 18 October 1847, to William Henry Gibbs, a woollen draper and tailor, and his wife, Isabel, née Renton. He was educated at the Milk Street School and between 1862 and 1868 was articled to Flockton & Abbott. On qualifying, he remained with them as principal assistant. During his pupillage he attended classes at the Sheffield School of Art, before spending time in London as a student of Architecture at the Royal Academy and assisting in the office of Alfred Waterhouse. He gained practical experience working as Superintendent of Works to Archibald Neill of Leeds from 1868 to 1872 before returning to Sheffield to practise with Flockton & Abbott.

Gibbs was one of Sheffield's most prolific architects. The phrase 'If you want to see a monument to this man, look around you' accurately describes him as he was responsible for many of the city's principal buildings. He also played a leading role in guiding the changes in the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



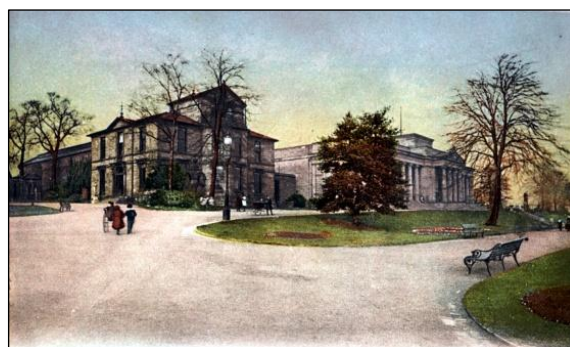
Mr. E. M. Gibbs.

E M Gibbs Source: *Picture Sheffield*

Weston Park on Western Bank which opened on 4 May 1874, was laid out by Robert Marnock who had been responsible for the layout of Sheffield Botanical Gardens in 1836. The entrance gates were designed by Gibbs and the modelling of the panels of the terracotta gate piers was by Geoffrey Sykes. Weston Hall was converted into Weston Park Museum by Gibbs by taking out walls and making large openings between rooms. The stable yard was transformed into two galleries after covering the stable yard with a glass roof. Gibbs' plan for a bandstand in the park did not materialise.



Weston Park gates *Source: SGCT Archives*



Weston Park Museum *Source: Picture Sheffield*

Edward Gibbs married Lucy Holdsworth in 1875, the daughter of Albert Holdsworth, manager of the Sheffield & Hallamshire Bank. They had a son, Edward Holdsworth Gibbs, in 1880 and later adopted another, Harry Beckett Swift Gibbs.

Upperthorpe Branch Library, opened on 8 May 1876 and Highfield Branch Library, opened on 1 August 1876 were both built to Gibbs' design.



Upperthorpe Branch Free Public Library *Source: Picture Sheffield*



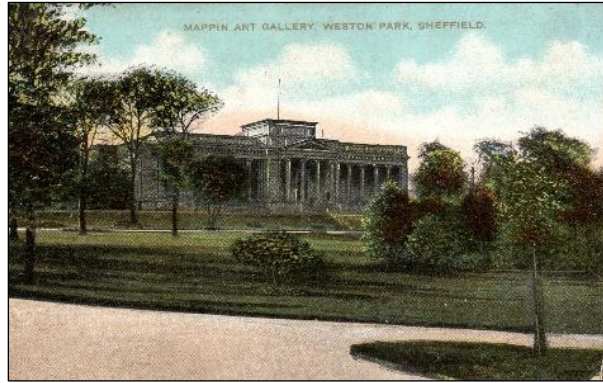
Highfield Branch Free Public Library *Source: Picture Sheffield*

In 1875 Gibbs went into partnership with Thomas J Flockton.

The principal works of Flockton & Gibbs were:

- Glossop Road Baths, 1877, now demolished.
- The Sheffield School for the Blind on Manchester Road, 1879. It had accommodation for 35 boys and 35 girls plus the necessary staff.
- Premises at 10–12 Fargate, designed for Thomas Watson & Co. grocers, 14 Fargate designed for Thomas Widdowson, Bookseller, and 16–18 Fargate, designed for the London Mantle Company. By 1920 they were incorporated into the premises of Cole Brothers. The ground floors of the above buildings were altered when taken over and new shop windows were installed to correspond with those of Cole Brothers.
- Shop premises, Robert Proctor, 20–26 Fargate, 1880, now replaced.
- Unitarian Church, Moorgate, Rotherham, dedicated to Our Father, 1880.
- Sheffield Union & Vestry Offices, West Bar, 1881, destroyed by enemy action, 1940.
- The Assay Offices, Leopold Street, 1881 but now replaced.
- The Sheffield School Board bought The Ragged Schools and Orphanage in 1877 and began the erection of orphan homes on Lydgate Lane, Crookes in 1880. After 1926 the building was used for Night Nurses at Sheffield Royal Hospital, later St Veronica's Home for Babies and now for commercial purposes.
- Channing Hall, Surrey Street, 1882. The building consisted of shops on the ground floor with the Congregational Hall of Upper Chapel on the first floor.
- Premises, G H Hovey, Angel Street & Castle Street, 1882, but destroyed by fire in 1893. Rebuilt but severely damaged by enemy action in 1940 and since demolished.

- The Fire Brigade Station, Rockingham Street, 1883. The accommodation included a residence for the Superintendent, 21 houses for firemen, a house for 6 engines, stabling for 6 horses, a harness room, hose tower and fire escape shed. The premises were demolished in 1906 to allow for the widening of West Street.
- Premises for the North of England manufactory for the Blind, 53-55 West Street, built in 1883 but demolished to allow for the widening of West Street.
- Business premises, 28-36 Fargate, 1884.
- Furniture showrooms for Johnson and Appleyard Ltd, Fargate and 64-70 Leopold Street, 1884, occupied after December 1905 by Wilson Peck Ltd.
- The Royal Insurance Company's building, 32-36 Church Street, 1884, originally consisted of three stories with a cupola at the corner with Vicar Lane, but after War damage the building was reduced in height by one floor.
- The Sheffield Technical College, Abney Street, 1886. It was extended in 1891 and again in 1896 towards Portobello Street. The accommodation was for the Departments of Metallurgy and Engineering and included a Lecture Room for mining.
- The Deaf and Dumb Institution, Upper Charles Street and Cambridge and Cross Burgess Streets, 1886. Included a Schoolroom for 30 children, a large meeting room, a reading room, ancillary accommodation and a superintendent's house.
- The Mappin Art Gallery, Weston Park, 1887 but suffered severe damage in WWII.



Mappin Art Gallery, Weston Park *Source: SGCT Archive*

- Monument in the form of an obelisk to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, Fargate, 1897. Later removed to Endcliffe Park.



Jubilee Obelisk, Fargate *Source: SGCT Archive*

- The Hospital at Lodge Moor, 1888, built as a branch of the Borough Hospital, later Winter Street Hospital for the accommodation of cases of smallpox. The wooden buildings were arranged in a six-acre compound surrounded by a seven feet high wooden fence. 12 wards each accommodated 10 patients and attached to each ward were a nurses' duty room, nurses' bedroom, bathroom, toilet and offices. Other buildings had rooms for the doctor, laundry maids and porters, a stable and a shed for conveyances, a workhouse and a laundry.

- The first church at Ranmoor, 1879 was destroyed by fire in 1887, only the tower and spire surviving. The present, larger, church opened in 1888 with the tower and spire free standing but arranged to form part of the rebuilt church.
- Premises for George Binns, 2-12 South Street, now The Moor, 1889, demolished.
- Independent House, Printing & Publishing Offices, Fargate, 1892, for the Sheffield & Rotherham Independent.
- A provision shop and store for A H Holland, 9 Fargate, 1892, later adapted for use by Austin Reed Ltd.
- Sheffield & Hallamshire Bank, later Midland Bank, 89 Wicker, 1893.
- City Mews, 30 -44 Pinstone Street, Reuben Thompson, Cab & Omnibus Proprietor, 1893-6.
- Newton Chambers & Co., Union Street & Furnival Street, 1894.
- The Palatine Buildings, 18-28 Pinstone Street ,1895, had shops on the ground floor with office accommodation and two storeys of dwelling houses on the upper floors.
- The Towers, Sandygate, house for C D Leng of the Sheffield Telegraph, 1895-6.
- Laycock House, 68-76 Pinstone Street, 1896, five sale shops on the ground floor with dwelling houses on the upper floors.

In 1895 Charles Burrows Flockton became a partner in the practice with his father, Thomas J Flockton and Edward Gibbs, under the style of Flockton, Gibbs and Flockton.

The principal works of Flockton, Gibbs and Flockton were:

- Foster's Building, High Street, 1896, shops on the ground floor with several storeys of office accommodation above.
- Auction Mart, erected for Nicholson, Greaves, Barber and Hastings, Auctioneers & Valuers, 2 High Street, 1897, and later the Barclay's Bank building.
- Extension to the Court House, formerly the Town Hall, on Castle Street and Waingate. This included the addition of a Police Court with room for magistrates, additional offices for Clerk of Court, rooms for solicitors and witnesses, cells under the Court and a covered way to Castle Green, 1897.
- Littlewood Memorial Hall next to Scotland Street Methodist Church, Furnace Hill, 1897.
- Extension and remodelling of the T B & W Cockayne Ltd departmental store on Angel Street, 1897. Destroyed in the Sheffield Blitz.
- Ryegate House, Arthur Neal, solicitor, Tapton Crescent Road, 1897.
- The Thatched House Restaurant and a sale shop for Boots the Chemist at 4 High Street, 1898.
- Departmental store for John Walsh Ltd., High Street, 1897-1901. Destroyed in 1940.
- The Athenaeum Club, 1897-1901, premises with a frontage on George Street and the rear to Mulberry Street. The building was destroyed in the Sheffield Blitz.
- Sale shops, 9 – 21 Waingate, 1899, shops of two storeys except for one end block which was three storeys in height.
- Sunday School premises, Allen Street, 1899 built for the Methodist New Connexion.

Thomas J Flockton died in 1899. Gibbs and Charles B Flockton continued to practise under the style of Gibbs & Flockton until 1910.

The principal works of Gibbs & Flockton were:

- Wesleyan Day Schools, Wesley Church, Workshop, 1900
- Building Trades Exchange and Club, Cross Bedford Street, 1902.
- Business premises, corner of Angel Street & King Street, 1902.
- Lodge Moor Hospital permanent buildings. These included an administrative block, nurses and maids' homes in 1896, reception and isolation block 4 wards each of 4 beds and tower, 1897, 6 single storey wards each for 22 beds and necessary ancillary accommodation together with an increase in the number of nurses' rooms and maids' cubicles, 1899, (page 31.jpg)
- Sheffield Telegraph Offices, Fleet Street & Fetter Lane, London, 1903.
- Western Bank, 1905, buildings round three sides of a quadrangle consisting of Firth Hall and accommodation for the Faculties of Art, Science and Medicine. The Edgar Allen Library, an octagonal building was opened on 26 April 1909. In 1914 a second quadrangle was designed to make a northeast extension.



Firth Hall, Western Bank *Source: SGCT Archive*

- Applied Science Department, St George's Square, 1904, incorporated the Technical Department, and the Departments of Mining & Metallurgy together with an Assembly Hall, Mappin Hall.
- Shop, Restaurant and Café for Messrs. Arthur Davy & Sons Ltd. Castle Street and Haymarket, 1904.
- Flour Mills, Messrs. Price & Son, Millsands, 1904 to replace those destroyed by fire in 1903. In 1949 the buildings were adapted as a bottle goods store by Messrs Tennant Brothers Ltd., Brewers & Bottlers and used as such until 1961.
- Showrooms on Leopold Street for furniture, carpets and fabrics, built for Johnson & Appleyard Ltd., 1905. Later occupied by Marshall & Snellgrove.
- Exchange Restaurant & Café for William Stephenson, on Castle Street, 1905, destroyed by enemy action.
- Reconstruction of the Wesley Proprietary Grammar School as a day school for boys, 1906
- Reconstruction of the Sheffield Collegiate School as a Training College for Teachers, Collegiate Crescent, 1906, including an assembly hall for 100 students, library for 50 students, rooms arranged so that they could be turned into a large hall, three classrooms, common room, rooms for principal, lady superintendent and teachers, a hostel for 27 students, Hall of Residence for 80 women students. A house, Southbourne, was extended to provide a Hall of Residence for 80 male students and accommodation for principal and staff extension to the Women's Hall to increase the accommodation to 140 women students.
- Royal Hospital Annexe, Fulwood, 1908, provision for beds for 21 men and 21 women as well as necessary ancillary accommodation.
- The White Building, 1-10 Fitzalan Square, 1908, sales shops on the ground floor with offices on the upper floors. It is faced with a white ceramic material of glazed terracotta.



The White Building, Fitzalan Square *Source: SGCT Archive*

In 1910 Gibbs & Flockton took their assistant John Charles Amory Teather into partnership, the style of the firm becoming Gibbs, Flockton and Teather. During the First World War, J Amory Teather served in the Engineer's Department of Hadfields Ltd. at their East Hecla Works and did not resume his partnership in Gibbs, Flockton and Teather until 1920.

The principal works of Gibbs, Flockton and Teather were:

- The Surgical Wing, Royal Infirmary, 1911, provided 200 beds, 2 operating theatres and ancillary accommodation.
- Boys Charity (Bluecoat) School, Psalter Lane, 1911, later Sheffield College of Art. Accommodation for 100 boys, members of staff and administration.
- Offices and shops, Sheffield Daily Telegraph, High Street, 1913,
- Scala Picture Theatre, corner of Winter Street & Brookhill, 1921. Closed as a picture house in 1952 when acquired by Sheffield University.

Harry Beckett Swift Gibbs, the adopted son of Edward Gibbs, was taken into partnership soon after his return from service with the Royal Field Artillery in World War I. The style of the firm becoming Gibbs, Flockton, Teather and Gibbs. The

partnership was not successful and was dissolved in 1923. Gibbs, Flockton and Gibbs remained in partnership until June 1928.

Edward Gibbs was a man of wide interests with a passion for knowledge and an understanding of the art of building. Although an accomplished draughtsman, he never overlooked the practical aspects of an architect's job. As a designer he was often traditional but could, when the occasion demanded a different approach, be both experimental and forward-looking. The building at the corner of Union and Furnival Streets built for Messrs Newton, Chambers & Co although undistinguished in its architectural form, was the earliest iron and steel framed building in Sheffield. It was completed in April 1894.

Gibbs was very interested in the development of the city of Sheffield, and in issues of town planning in general. His studies were supplemented by visits to North America and Europe, particularly Germany. With his partner T J Flockton, a scheme for a Central Railway Station in Sheffield to be situated in Exchange Street area was published. Later he was the author of a plan and model for the development of Sheffield suburbs and for a scheme including markets and a viaduct leading to the Victoria Station.

Gibbs was a member of the Sheffield Club, became a Justice of the Peace in 1906, and was elected a Fellow of the RIBA on March 1892. His nomination forms were signed by T J Flockton, C J Innocent, J B Mitchell-Withers and C Hadfield, all the most well-known and respected members of the profession in Sheffield. A founder member of the Sheffield Society of Architects and Surveyors in 1887, he was elected a Council Member in its first year of operation and remained on the Council until 1891 when he became Vice-President, 1892-3, and its President from 1893 to 1895. In later life he again became a Council Member from 1927-9 and again in 1935.

His involvement in buildings which were to become the University of Sheffield began in 1903 with his work on Western Bank. Gibbs became the University architect and designed all its major buildings over the next thirty years including the Edgar Allen Library. This was opened in 1909 by the then Prince of Wales, (later His Majesty King George V). It was one of the earliest specially designed university libraries in the country and on arches above the alcoves were carved portrait heads of the founders and benefactors, including one of Gibbs.

His deep interest in architectural education was shown by his early promotion of systematised courses and instruction in place of the haphazard methods of training by pupillage then the only way of entry to the architectural profession. From 1903 he fought to ensure the University of Sheffield had a Department of Architecture and when one was formed in 1907, the courses were largely built on classes he had developed for the pupil members of the Sheffield Society of Architects and Surveyors. His son, Harry B S Gibbs was one of the first intake of students. Gibbs retained his interest in the Department all his life and was awarded an Honorary MA in June 1920.

Gibbs was a Liberal in politics and initially a Unitarian in religion, being active in the Sunday School movement and a Superintendent of the Upper Chapel school on Norfolk Street in its early days.

Edward Mitchel Gibbs died on the 22 December 1935 at the age of 88 years having practised in Sheffield from 1872, a period of over 63 years. His funeral was held at the Unitarian Upper Chapel on Norfolk Street where Gibbs had designed much of the interior. The Reverend Alfred Hall paid tribute to him saying,

Gibbs' aim was to make Sheffield beautiful. All his artistic insight and architectural skill were devoted to that end, and, though tastes and

fashion had changed, all men would acknowledge that the buildings he conceived and erected were dignified and noble.

Reverend Hall then read out a document left by Gibbs which said,

Born of Unitarian parents, I was a staunch supporter of the Unitarian precepts for many years, but under the teaching of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer became an agnostic. I hope the Minister, if he accepts the responsibility of conducting my funeral, will do so in the simplest manner possible, remembering that I am an agnostic.

His obituary in The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent called him a 'man of great personal charm as well as a brilliant architect' and 'If Mr Gibbs had had his way many street improvements for which there is a crying need to-day would by this time have become a reality. He did in fact prepare a model town plan of Sheffield, which was the subject of much discussion'.

In his Will, Gibbs left over £52,000, mainly to his son Harry B S Gibbs who benefitted from his house Woodcroft at 7 Riverdale Road, the freehold of The White Building in Fitzalan Square and his share in the firm of Gibbs & Gibbs. The Will included payments to nieces Minnie, Elsie and Daisy, the daughters of his brother Robert Renton Gibbs and Margaret Gibbs the widow of his brother Archibald Watson Gibbs. Benjamin Powell and Edgar Morton each received £1000 in recognition of 'their very long and faithful services to the firms in which he had been a partner'. William John Brain received £50 in grateful recognition of his faithful service and William Garner of the firm 'Gibbs and Gibbs' received £250.

Edward Mitchel Gibbs was taken to City Road Crematorium and thereafter his remains were interred in plot H1 116 in the Anglican area of Sheffield General Cemetery on 30 December 1935. Also buried in the plot were his wife Lucy Gibbs and elder son Edward Holdsworth Gibbs.



Memorial to the Gibbs family *Source: SGCT Archive*