

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023



Autumn rainbow. Photo by Sandra Mellard

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our Members, Donors and Supporters.

It's been another eventful year for the Friends of Loxley Cemetery (FoLC), and I list below some of the highlights since I last updated you in the Summer Newsletter.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 3 October at Burton Street Foundation in Hillsborough. Despite the foul weather the meeting was quorate even though members trying to attend via the new Zoom facility were thwarted. This was my mistake, and I apologise again unreservedly. Hopefully, our Secretary (Verity Brack), will be able to attend the next AGM and navigate me through these uncharted waters!

The meeting re-elected the three Officers and six members who put themselves forward for re-election to the Management Committee (MC), while welcoming back Ron Clayton for his second term on the MC. As always, thanks go to the retiring MC members (Linda Brownlow and Anne Williams) for their past services and to the existing MC members, without whose support we would not be able to function. We are still two members short of a full complement on the MC, and I invite any member to contact me, should they be interested in joining us.

Electronic Burial Register

Throughout this year a team comprising Malcolm Nunn, Susan Fisher and myself has met on most Monday mornings at Bradfield Parish Council (BPC) offices to transcribe sets of information received from the land owner (Mr Jamiel Ali) on to an electronic database for the Long Lane section of the cemetery. I am pleased to say that this task is now complete.

This database complements similar records transcribed by Sheffield Indexers in 2010 for the areas of the cemetery near the Chapel. As a result we can now respond quickly to members queries about those interred anywhere in the cemetery. My thanks to my co-workers and also to BPC for the use of their facilities throughout.

Volunteers

The battle with nature continues on a weekly basis. Our small team of volunteers assembles most Saturday afternoons (1.30 - 4) at the Chapel where our Head of Volunteers (Jane Pratt) is usually there to offer guidance (and refreshments) on the tasks in hand for the day.

This summer and autumn the volunteers have suffered extremes of weather from the glorious sunshine in May and June to the teeming rain in July and August. As a result, nature has flourished, and it is a great credit that the team has managed to maintain the previously cleared Long Lane section and create access to more of the grave plots around the Chapel. Well done to all involved.

But we do need more volunteers to help with this work. If you haven't done so already, please come to one of our Saturday afternoon sessions to find out what is involved. Tasks vary greatly and can be tailored to suit individuals.

Corporate Membership

The MC has recently discussed the matter of Corporate Membership of the FoLC. This is allowed under our Constitution. If anyone is interested in this, please contact me in the first instance. We hope to offer this facility in January 2024.

PS — Also in this newsletter there is an item designed to test your knowledge of the local area. Give it a try!

Mike Ford
Chairman

'PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE'

My Ancestors in Loxley Cemetery

The Sheffield Flood in 1864 is a significant part of my family history, as it carried away five of our ancestors – all with the surname Chapman – on that fateful night of 11 March. All but one are buried at Loxley Cemetery.

Chapman was a common surname locally, and over a hundred Chapmans are buried in the cemetery. My great-great-great uncle, Daniel Chapman, and several members of his family lived in a row of cottages beside their tilt mill at Little Matlock in the Loxley valley.

Daniel, his wife Ellen, their son Samuel and their nephews, William and Frederick, all perished in the flood. All but Frederick are buried on the terrace behind the Chapel, although the grave is unmarked. William's body was recovered in Swinton near Mexborough and brought back to Loxley. Frederick was never found.

Apart from the flood victims the cemetery holds several other members of my family. Another of Daniel's nephews, Hugh Chapman is buried in the West Section, Line F, Grave 75 along with his wife Martha. They are my great-great grandparents. Again, there is no headstone, but I am lucky to have inherited a photograph of them taken at their home, Elder Cottage, 203 Loxley Road, in the early part of the 20th century.



Hugh's parents, Samuel and Rosena Chapman, lived at Storrs Bridge on the River Loxley. Both survived the flood, although Rosena died a few months afterwards and is considered to be a flood victim.

My mother, Dacia June Chapman, married my father, Peter Robert Ramsey, at St Mark's Church, Malin Bridge in 1952. Within the collection of documents I inherited from them was a receipt from Loxley Chapel

Burial Ground to William Chapman, Hugh and Martha's son and my great grandfather.

The receipt was for the interment of William's wife, Ada, in 1939 and indicated the position of the grave plot. It is in the north-east section and lay under a mass of grass and brambles for many years until the volunteers cleared the area. There was no headstone, but there were traces of a kerb around the plot. I have now been able to clear this and reveal inscriptions for both Ada and William on the kerb edges. They are in excellent condition, and it is a wonderful discovery.



Two years ago I was given a much-used wooden mallet, which had been in the donor's family for generations. The mallet has a label which reads:



"Mallet used when John Morton of Langsett Road Sheffield made the coffins for the victims of the Sheffield Flood. J Morton Builder Joiner and Cabinet Maker".

Is it possible that this friend's great-great-great uncle used this mallet to make the coffins for some of my ancestors who are buried at Loxley?

Mike Ramsey

A year of excellent progress

Thanks to the great efforts of our volunteer work team, who have had to deal with some extreme weather conditions through the summer and autumn, the cemetery is in even better condition than it was 12 months ago.

Last year we were still tackling brambles, willow-herb and bracken that were blocking paths and covering dozens of graves. Would we ever really get on top of them? Would they simply lie dormant over winter and emerge all over again in the spring?

In the event, the brambles and willow-herb seem to be in retreat. Grass has taken their place. Paths are often uneven but are at least usable. Most graves are visible and can be accessed.

As a result, more and more graves are being visited and maintained. Some have been completely rebuilt.

The cemetery volunteers have also been working on graves that have disintegrated and blocked pathways, making access and appearance even better and making maintenance easier.



ABOVE: Jane Pratt and Bob Paterson

BELOW: Sandra and Stuart Mellard



TEST YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE!



Name the address or location of this old butcher's shop and win a £25 Waterstones voucher. Send your answer to the Chair by email, and the first correct answer received will be the winner. Members of the Management Committee are not allowed to enter!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1st January 2024 — a gentle reminder to pay your £5 subscription for the year! Essential for supporting the work we do. Use our website to pay, please, and add a donation if you can.

20 & 21 January 2024 — Sheffield Heritage Fair at the Millennium Gallery. 10-4pm on the Saturday, and 11-4pm on the Sunday. We need help to man our stand! Please contact the chair or secretary if you are available.

11 March 2024 — 160th anniversary of the Sheffield Flood. Loxley Cemetery is part of the Flood Trail that starts at Dale Dike Reservoir and also includes the General Cemetery, Wardsend Cemetery and Burngreave Cemetery and leads to Millsands in Sheffield city centre.

Loxley Cemetery's smallpox story

Li No	Date	Name	Age	Residence	By whom	When
1862	Mar 23	William Fox	31	Jackson Row	Rev J Frame	
1869	Mar 11	Alice Unwin	69	Sheffield	Rev J Frame	
1870	Mar 11	Harriett Robinson	5 Months	Wanmore	Rev J Frame	
1872	Mar 24	Henry Robinson	29	do	Rev J Frame	
1875	Jan 24	Oliver Wood	4 Months	do	Rev J Frame	
1877	Jan 10	Phancey Wood	27	Ellerton	Rev J Frame	
1877	Jan 10	Annie Wood	9 Mo	do	Rev J Frame	
1888	Feb 16	Joseph Crapper	68	Wanmore	Rev J Frame	

This grave is now full and must not be opened again the last interment was a smallpox case

In 1887 and 1888 Sheffield suffered a serious epidemic of smallpox from which 600 people died. Our burial records have the name of one of the victims: Joseph Crapper, whose grave on the terraces behind the chapel is unmarked but whose burial record warns: 'smallpox - not to be opened'!

The grave actually contains the remains of eight people, all of them apparently family members:

- William Fox, died 1862, age 31
- Alice Unwin, died 1869, age 69
- Harriott Robinson, died 1870, age 5 months
- Henry Robinson, died 1872, age 29
- Oliver Wood, died 1875, age 4 months
- Phancey Wood, died 1877 age 27
- Annie Wood, died 1877, age 9 months
- Joseph Crapper, died 1888, age 68, smallpox victim

Joseph Crapper was born in 1820 and was a master shoemaker, or cordwainer, who made new shoes rather than a cobbler who repaired old shoes. On the 1841 census Joseph is living at Storrs with his extended family. In 1849 Joseph married Margaret Unwin, and by 1851 they have a daughter Phancey (also spelled Fancy) and later two more children — a son (Farewell) and a daughter (Winifred). They lived in the Loxley

Valley. From around 1865 to 1878, Joseph was the landlord of the Wisewood Inn on Loxley Road, as well as continuing to make shoes.

In 1868 Phancey Crapper married Henry Robinson, a labourer. They lived just down the road from the Wisewood Inn in Hounsfield Row. They had two children - Harriott, born 1869 who died in 1870, age five months, and Ratcliffe who was born in 1871. Phancey's husband, Henry, died in 1872 age 29.

Phancey then married Henry Wood and gave birth to Oliver in 1874 (died 1875) and Annie (died 1877). Phancey herself also died in 1877, aged 27.

Joseph was the last to be buried in that grave in 1888. It then contained Joseph, his daughter, his mother-in-law, a son-in-law and three infant grandchildren. We do not know the relationship of William Fox to the others.

More than 6000 people in the town caught smallpox at this time. About 87% of the Sheffield population was vaccinated, so it seems that the epidemic was badly handled by the authorities.

The main fever hospital was at Winter Street. It was small and in an area of over-crowded housing. The disease spread rapidly, and the hospital was unable to handle the number of patients properly. Some were sent home despite being ill, while those with mild symptoms often did not realise that they were infected until too late. Also, the town council was slow to react.

A direct result of this epidemic was the rapid construction of Lodge Moor isolation hospital, built in 1888 with appropriate facilities and situated well away from the town.

The Sheffield epidemic was also instrumental in the creation of the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act of 1889, which introduced compulsory notification of infectious diseases. It also proved that vaccination was effective against the disease, although some were opposed to vaccination. The figures speak for themselves: of all the smallpox cases in that epidemic in Sheffield, 50% of the unvaccinated died, but less than 5% of the vaccinated died.

I wonder if Joseph Crapper was one of the unvaccinated?

Verity Brack

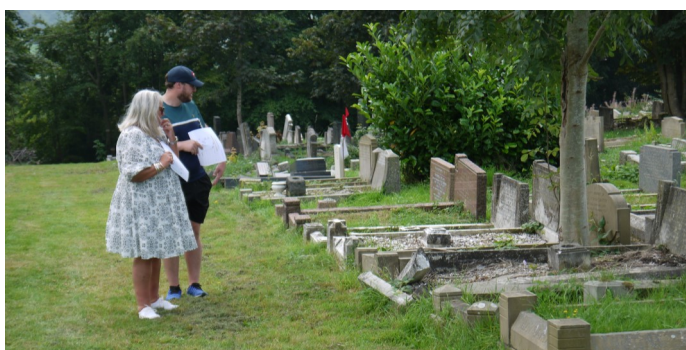
Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Wentley</i>									
Registrar's District <i>ecclesfield</i>									
1888 DEATHS in the District of <i>ecclesfield</i> in the County of <i>York West Riding</i>									
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
37	<i>Fifteenth Holm Lane Hellebro Ecclesfield R. S. D.</i>	<i>Joseph Crapper</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>68 Years</i>	<i>Shoemaker (Master)</i>	<i>Small Pox chronic days bronchitis certified by R. G. Silverlock M. B. S.</i>	<i>The Mark of John Hanson Son in Law In Attendance Tipton Road Hellebro Ecclesfield</i>	<i>Fifteenth February 1888</i>	<i>George Pitts Registrar</i>

Our autumn visitors ...

Our Heritage Open Days in September were again very successful in bringing visitors to the cemetery. And a class from Loxley School again visited in November as part of the Remembrance Weekend.

Compared with a year ago, access around the cemetery was much easier, and many visitors remarked on the improvements.

Heritage Open Days



Loxley School visit



VICKIE PRIESTLEY



Some of you will know Vickie as a Councillor for the Stannington Ward for many years and Lord Mayor (2013-2014), both for the City Council. Sadly, she recently lost a battle with cancer and has passed away.

It is important to note that Vickie and her fellow councillor, Penny Baker, were instrumental in setting up the Friends of Loxley Cemetery in the autumn of 2019. They called the Public Meeting held in the Wisewood Inn that started the ball rolling, and the rest, as they say, is history. Vickie was always very supportive of the Group's activities and interested in our progress. She will be sorely missed.

We hope to commemorate her involvement with the planting of a tree and daffodils, together with a plaque, up at the cemetery. We will keep members informed of developments.

How to contact us ...

For general inquiries and volunteering, please email our Secretary, Verity Brack:

loxley.secretary@yahoo.com

For membership and subscription inquiries, please contact our Treasurer, Jane Pratt:

loxleytreasurer1@gmail.com

For committee information, archive and specific inquiries, contact our Chairman, Mike Ford:

loxley.chair@gmail.com or Tel: 07879 075619