

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025



Message From The Chair

We appear to be in the clutches of an autumn with falling temperatures, winds and much needed rain. Our harvest of veg, fruits and conkers is amazing this year. I hope that you members have had the same. As always, there is plenty to report to Friends and Supporters on what has been happening since our Spring Newsletter in May.

Open Day (7 June 2025)

A day of mixed weather saw our first Ecology Tour given by Gerry Firkins, a local botany specialist. The tour was well attended, as was the book stall, grave finding tent and a ceremony to dedicate two trees as a result of a grant received from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). Many thanks to local councillor Penny Baker for dedicating the trees and a Sheffield Flood Trail plaque, supplied by local historian and Friends member Ron Clayton.

National Federation of Cemetery Friends

I was accompanied by our secretary (Verity Brack) & Management Committee member (Sue Fisher) on a visit to Bradford for the AGM of this national organisation which the Friends Group joined in 2020. We started with a tour of the wonderful Undercliffe Cemetery, which is well worth a visit for anyone interested in cemeteries and to see what can be achieved by volunteers with local support. We also met members of Friends Groups up and down the country and came away with ideas for fundraising etc.

Building local connections

We continue to forge links with local organisations and have hosted Wadsley Scouts, Loxley Primary School Y5s, Wadsley Beavers & Wadsley Cubs on various dates during the summer. These were well attended, and it was great to see the enthusiasm and hard work



put into even the most mundane of tasks in the cemetery. This augurs well for the future.

Hillsborough Garden Fair & Stannington Gala

Well done to Management Committee members Peter Easter, Sue Fisher and Verity Brack for 'manning' the stalls at these local community events in June and July.

Heritage Open Day (13 September 2025)

Another successful day when the weather was, in the most part, kind to us over a dreadful weekend. We had around 20 attendees at both my Chapel talk and Malcolm Nunn's War Graves tour. The event also attracted new members and volunteers and the book/cd/map sales were encouraging.

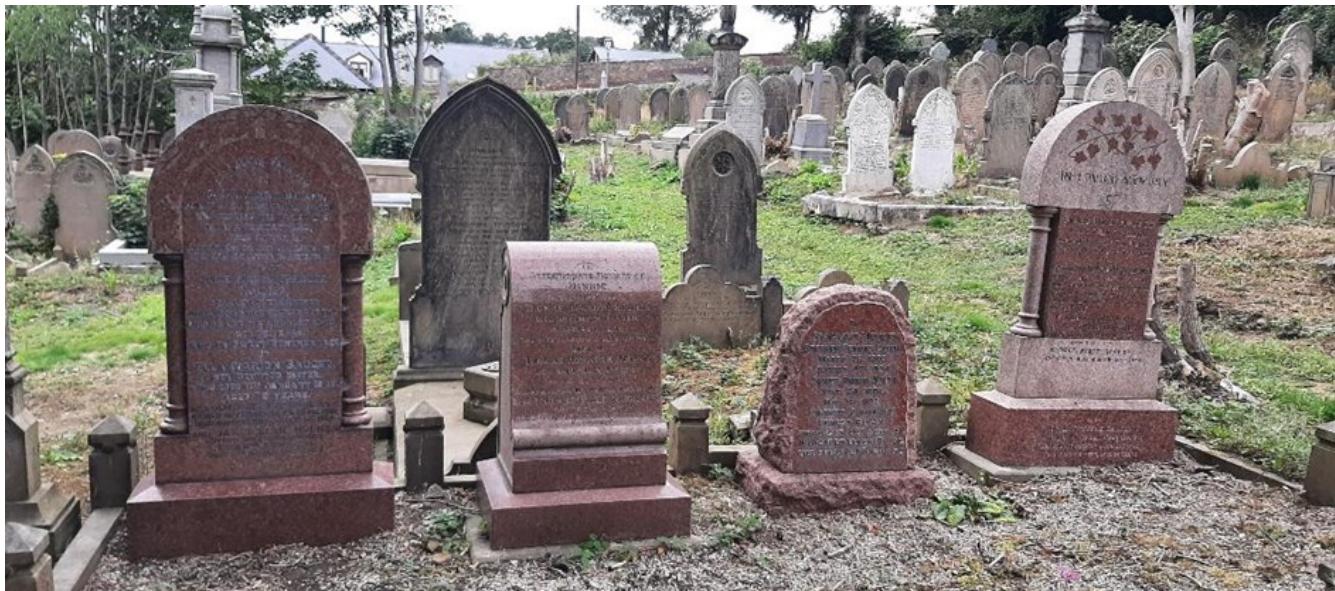
Volunteer Sessions

These continue to be held on most Saturday afternoons (13:30-16:00). The work-load has been relentless through the summer but should now be easing off a bit. The established Volunteering Team led by Jane and Peter Pratt has been joined by a student (Jeff) from Hallam University, a popular and welcome addition. We hope to recruit some more from this term's intake.

Mike Ford (Chair)

'PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE'

The Holmes family in Loxley Cemetery



To the west of the Chapel there is a large burial plot containing four pink granite memorials. Headstones of this material are rare in the cemetery, and they intrigued me. This is the family of Reverend Thomas William Holmes, who preached at the Tabernacle Congregational Church in Albert Terrace Road, next to the General Infirmary.

The Reverend Holmes and his wife, Ellen Ann, had seven children, four boys and three girls, one of whom died in infancy.

Plot CWS 47 (right hand side of the photo) holds James Willie Holmes, the eldest son, who became a surgeon and physician but sadly died of kidney disease aged 43. He had not been married long and had no children. The second son, George Hirst Holmes, emigrated to Canada and became a sheep farmer. He returned to England to live with his mother and father some time between 1906 and 1924. I cannot find a record of any marriage or of any children for him. James Willie and George Hirst are buried in this plot, along with Rev. Thomas Holmes and his wife Ellen.

Added to the base of this headstone is a memorial inscription for James Stevens Bartlett, who was killed in action during WW1 at Bullecourt, France, in May 1917. James Stevens Bartlett was the son of Mary Barber Holmes, the Rev's eldest daughter, and is commemorated at the Villiers-Bretonneaux Memorial in France. He was fighting with the Australian Infantry, having emigrated some years previously.

Plot CWS 49: this is the grave to the left of that of the Rev. Holmes. It has four members of the Dixon family, the Rev's youngest daughter Margaret Ellen

being married to Ernest Dixon. Ernest and Margaret had two sons, both of whom sadly died in infancy. The first son, Stephen Holmes Dixon, is commemorated by the phrase '*In fragrant memory of...*'.

Plot CWS 51: this plot (second from the left in the photo) contains the Rev Thomas and Ellen's third son, Thomas Howarth Holmes, and his wife Minnie. Thomas Howarth was the manager of the Midland Bank on the Wicker. Their son, grandson of the Rev., another Thomas William Holmes, has his ashes interred here.

Plot CWS 53: this is on the far left of the photo and contains Joseph Henry Holmes, the youngest son, and his wife Alice Mabel Spencer Holmes. Joseph Henry was an accountant and stockbroker who ran a well-known company in Sheffield. Also interred are Ella Marion Badger, Alice's sister, and the ashes of Janet Elsie Holmes. Janet Elsie was the wife of Oliver Spencer Holmes, who was Lord Mayor of Sheffield 1953-1954. Oliver Holmes is mentioned on this headstone but according to our burial records is actually buried in Plot CWS 47 with his grandfather!

Reverend Thomas William Holmes

Thomas William Holmes was born to Joseph and Hannah Holmes, at Fitzwilliam Street, Sheffield in 1836. According to his birth record, his father was a plasterer but later documents say that both his father and mother were school teachers; maybe school teaching was a part-time occupation for them. They were Wesleyan Methodists and attended Mount Tabor

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The Holmes Family



Thomas and Ellen Holmes

Chapel. Thomas' father died while he was very young and Thomas came largely under the influence of his uncle, James Howarth, an edge tool manufacturer of Bath Street. James Howarth was a local preacher and influenced Thomas to also become a minister and preacher. James Howarth had such a high opinion of Thomas' powers that he declared Thomas "could eulogise a broomstick!".

By 1861 Thomas was a minister of the Wesleyan Free Church in Holmfirth. He married Ellen Ann Hirst in Huddersfield in 1861 and then moved to Marsden as an 'independent minister'. In 1872, he was persuaded to return to Sheffield to head The Tabernacle on Albert Terrace Road, close to the Infirmary. The Tabernacle was the 'new congregational church' in Upperthorpe, built in 1862 in the Italianate style, sporting a frontage with four pilasters and two columns. It had seating for 700 worshippers and a large lecture room. When Rev T W Holmes accepted the pastorate in 1872, he was welcomed by a ceremony in the Tabernacle, followed by a 'social tea' for more than 200 people! The Tabernacle in Albert Terrace Road was presumably demolished in the 1960s when the area was redeveloped.

Reverend Thomas William Holmes was pastor at the Tabernacle for 40 years, and seems to have been a very popular and well-liked person. When he died in 1925 the local papers were full of praise for him, one reporting that Archdeacon Sandford had written "His heart was full of love, and it was a joy to him to spend it. He did much to purify, sweeten, and elevate public life. Mr Holmes was never a killjoy."

Verity Brack

Young volunteers at work

Over the last year or so, we have been heartened by the enthusiastic support of volunteers from Wadsley Cubs, Beavers and Scouts, as well as from Loxley Primary School.

The photos here show Wadsley Cubs and pupils from Loxley School in action, making a very positive contribution to the upkeep of the cemetery.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting is on Thursday 30 October at the Burton Street Foundation in Burton Street, Hillsborough, S6 2HH.

The meeting starts at 7pm and will finish by 9pm. It is important that we have a quorum, so please find time to attend. It is also a great opportunity to hear about the year's work and ideas for the future. And comment on them!

There will be an on-line Zoom option, and members can also vote remotely via a form on the website, allowing all FoLC members to have a say in the running of the group.

SUMMER SUNSHINE AND SHOWERS

Our open day in June brought the classic British weather combination — sunshine and showers. We arranged our first Ecology Tour, led by Gerry Firkins, and Malcolm Nunn led a tour of the War Graves. We sold books and CDs from the book tent. There were inquiries about specific family graves, and a ceremony dedicated two trees in memory of the victims of war and the Sheffield Flood.

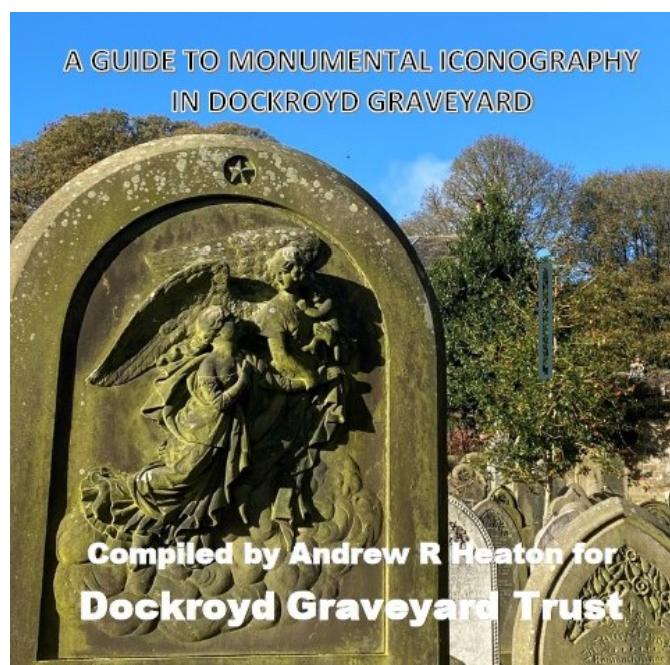


Malcolm Nunn leads a tour of the War Graves

HEADSTONE SYMBOLS

Anyone interested in the many sometimes puzzling symbols to be seen on headstones at Loxley Cemetery will find this book invaluable. The headstones in Dockroyd Graveyard in West Yorkshire are very similar in age and style to those at Loxley.

Copies of the book are available from our secretary for £10 each plus £2 for packing and postage. We will deliver free of charge to the Sheffield post-code area.



Expert grave information



Dedicated trees for war victims (L) and flood victims (R)

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 archive and committee business, contact our chairman, Mike Ford:
loxley.chair@gmail.com or Tel: 07879 075619

Our website:
e-voice.org.uk/friendsofloxleycemetery