

# The Parish Church of St Giles', Pontefract



## A Guide to the Church's Civilian Memorials

Suggested Donation: £2

# A Warm Welcome to St Giles'

St Giles Church, is the Anglican Parish Church of Pontefract.

Situated in the heart of the town the Grade II\* listed building, with its unique octagonal tower that is visible for miles around, proclaims the Glory of God to the people of Pontefract and its many visitors.

We would like to thank you for choosing to visit our lively and growing church.

We are an open, welcoming and inclusive parish and we are sure that you will enjoy your visit.

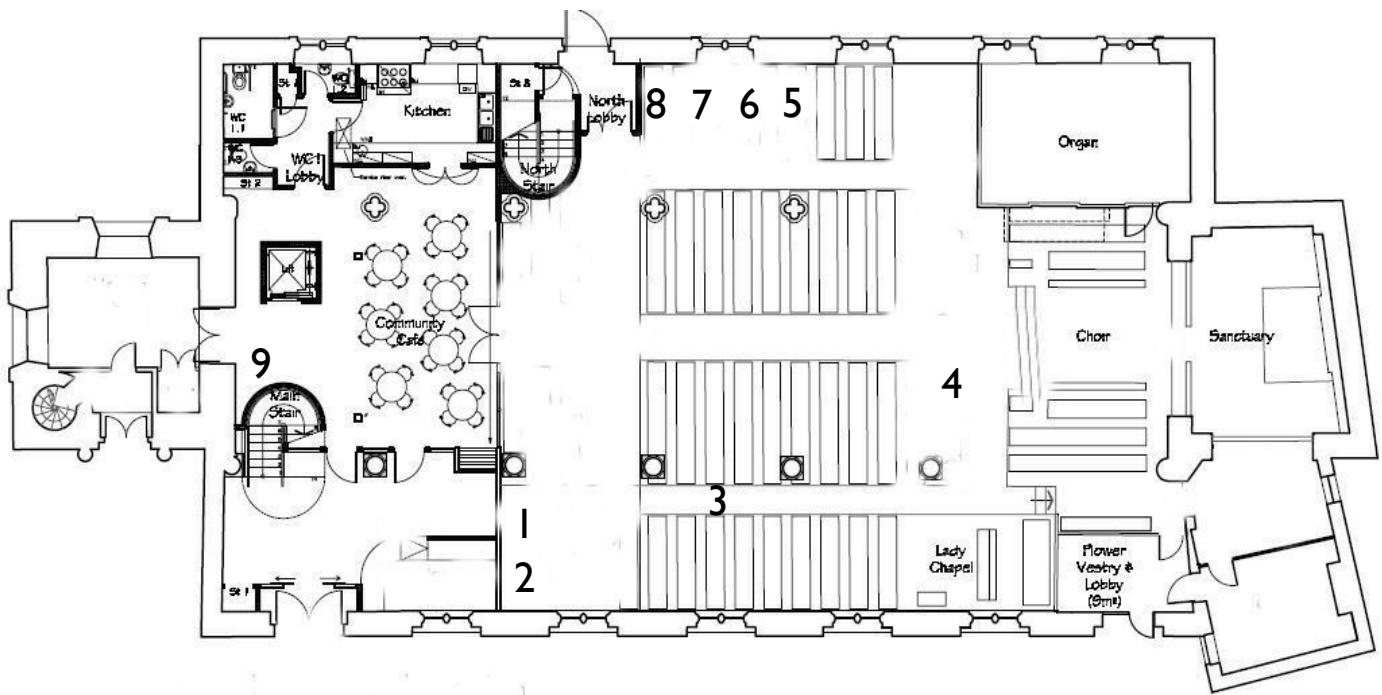
Everyone is welcome here at St Giles' and if you require any assistance or information, please ask one of our Open Church volunteers.

The Civilian Memorials are located around the Church. They are dedicated to notable people from Pontefract who held positions of responsibility either in town or else where. All of them worshiped here at some point.

The research for this guide was assisted by Bruce Dalglish and Adrian Pope.

*If you have enjoyed reading this visitors' guide,  
and would like to contribute toward the work of the church,  
please place your donation in the publications box  
on the wall in Reception.*

# Locations of the Memorials in St Giles'



## Key

1. Rev'd James John Christie Memorial
2. Robert Daniel Ryder Memorial
3. Viewpoint for Abraham Hale Memorial
4. Viewpoint for James Goddard Memorial
5. Rhodes Family Memorial
6. John George Lyon Memorial
7. Lambe Family Memorial
8. Michael Mitton Memorial
9. Queen Victoria Golden Jubilee Memorial

**Memorials on the First Floor** - please speak to a Church Warden or an Open Church Volunteer if you would like to see these.

Crewe Family Memorial

Jefferson Family Memorial

John Hepworth Hill

Some of the memorials mention the person being laid to rest in the Old Church or All Saints' Church. All Saints' Church, on South Baileygate, was destroyed during the sieges of Pontefract Castle during the Civil War. It was used as the town's burial ground until 1810. Repairs took place in 1831 and All Saints' became a separate parish in 1838.



# I. Rev'd James John Christie Memorial



TO THE MEMORY OF  
**JAMES JOHN CHRISTIE, M.A., R.D.,**  
VICAR OF THIS PARISH

(IN THE DUTIES OF WHICH HE WAS GREATLY ASSISTED BY HIS GIFTED WIFE)  
FROM 1878 TO 1899.

A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF GOD'S WORD AND SACRAMENTS.  
A MAN ZEALOUS IN EVERY UNDERTAKING  
FOR THE GOOD OF THE TOWN.

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED AND LOCAL SCHOOL PRIZES ARE FOUNDED  
BY PARISHIONERS AND OTHER FRIENDS.

Entering the main body of church walk towards the piano and turn around to face the door that you've just come through. On the left of the door you will see this memorial. It is dedicated to a former Vicar of Pontefract, Rev'd James John Christie and also mentions his wife Maria.

James John and his wife Maria were both born in Jersey, the Channel Islands. He was Vicar of Pontefract from 1878 - 1899. He is recorded in 1861 as being Second Master at the East Retford Grammar School and in 1871 as Clergyman without the care of souls, schoolmaster at Rotherham Grammar School. It seems that he made himself unpopular at St Giles' by trying to revive the system of tithes. A tithe is giving a tenth of your income to the church. In Medieval times tithes were collected in villages and divided between the parish priest, upkeep of the church, the poor and the bishop. Such was the strength of feeling that an effigy of him was burned in the Market Place! The Christie family also had a motto: *Sic viresco*: thus I flourish.

James also has a window in Church. It is located in the North Aisle and depicts St Paul and Dorcas (a woman who St Paul raised from the dead). He is also mentioned on Memorial 9 as he was the Vicar at the time of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

## 2. Robert Daniel Ryder Memorial



IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
**ROBERT DANIEL RYDER,**  
BORN 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 1829, FELL ASLEEP 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 1910.  
HE WAS A CHURCHWARDEN OF THIS PARISH FOR MANY YEARS,  
A GOVERNOR OF KING'S SCHOOL, PONTEFRACT, CHAIRMAN OF THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE LOCAL ALMSHOUSE CHARITIES AND A TRUSTEE  
AND TREASURER OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF THIS TOWN.  
*REQUIESCAT IN PACE.*  
THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY HIS WIDOW,  
**CATHERINE PENHORWOOD RYDER, A.D. 1912.**

This memorial is located on the wall to your left as you look at the memorial to Rev'd James John Christie.

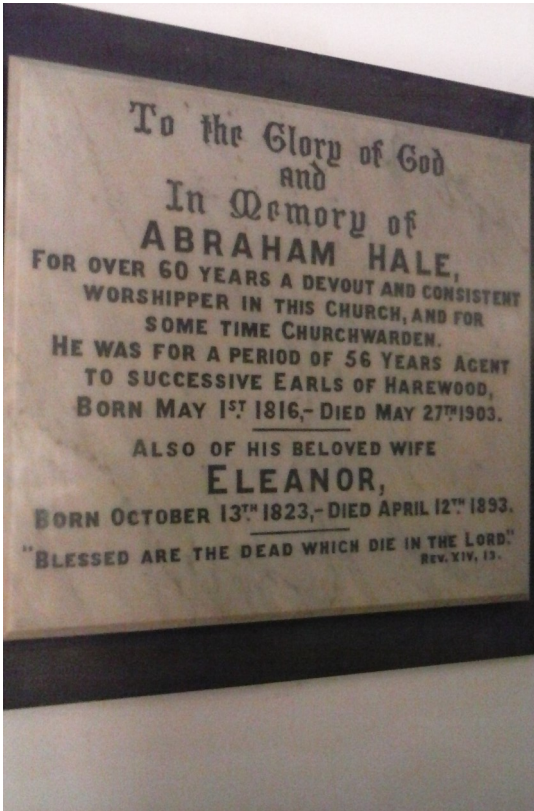
Robert was born in Westminster and trained to become a Bank Manager. When he moved to Pontefract he worked as a Banker's Clerk for Joseph Walker (who has a window in the South Aisle). A Banker's Clerk records all transactions that take place at a bank from cashing cheques to loans. According to the 1901 Census he was still working as a Bank Manager aged 71. His wife Catherine was born in Bramham.

Robert seems to have taken a particular interest in helping the poor of Pontefract both in housing and education. An Almshouse is charitable housing that helps people to live in an area without having to pay rent. They also acted as hospitals and gave accommodation to travellers. It is recorded that Pontefract had as many as 10 during Robert's life time.

The first National Schools in Britain were founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. They were set up to provide basic education to the children of the poor based on the teachings of the Church of England. These schools were among the first to provide basic education to the children of the poor. Over time they were absorbed into the state system as either fully state-run schools or as state funded faith schools.



# 3.Viewpoint for Abraham Hale Memorial



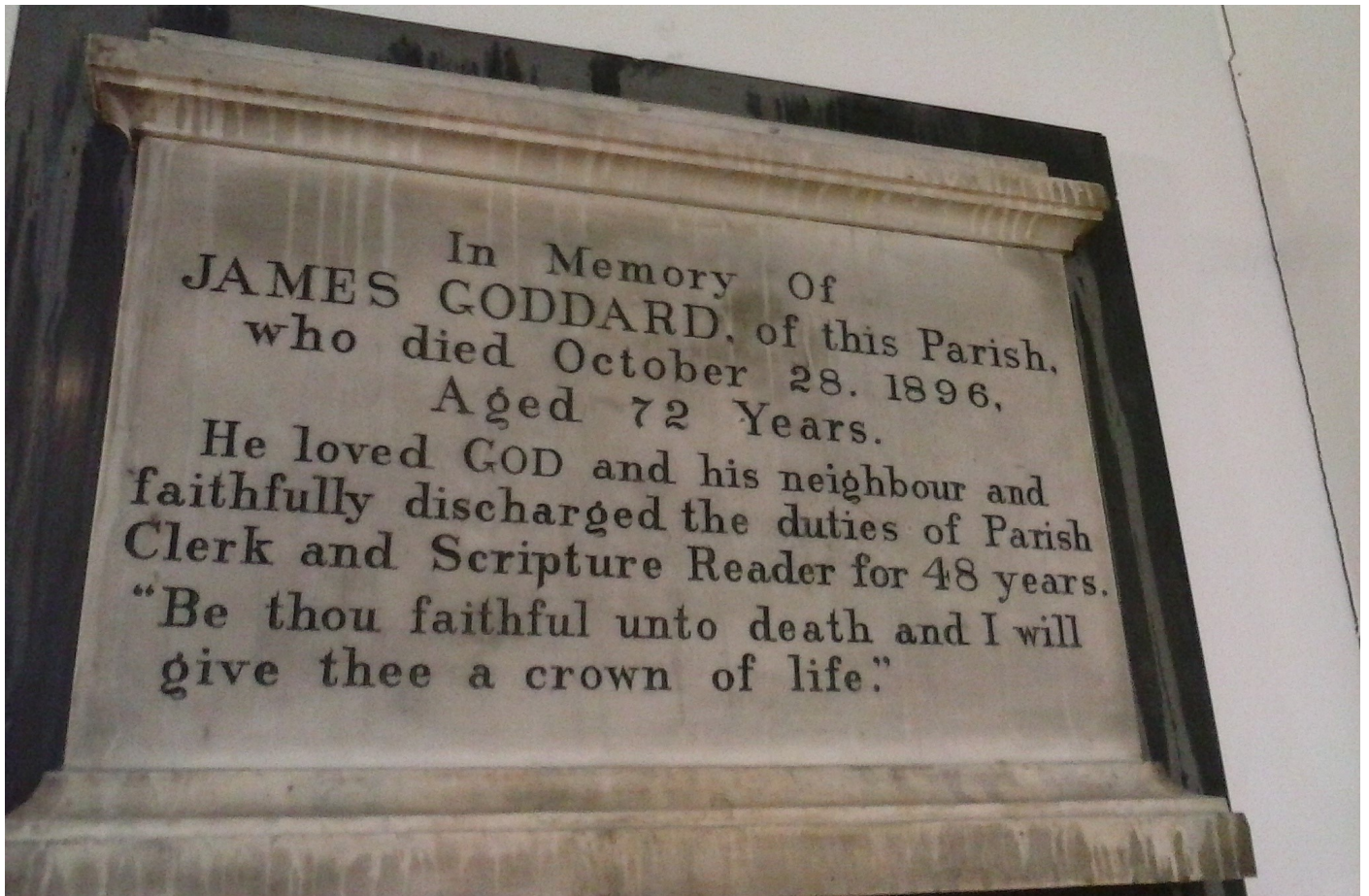
After you have looked at the first two memorials walk about halfway down the South Aisle. Look up to the north end of the balcony and you should be able to see this memorial. It is dedicated to Abraham Hale who was a churchwarden. He was born in London where he was a bank manager. After moving to Yorkshire he worked for several Earls of Harewood, owners of Harewood House near Leeds, helping to manage their affairs. Research into his gravestone and the Censuses of 1871, 1881 and 1891 seems to suggest that they had several children some of whom died young. It was not uncommon for

Victorians to have large families as children tended to die young.

To the Glory of God  
And  
In Memory of  
**ABRAHAM HALE,**  
FOR OVER 60 YEARS A DEVOUT AND CONSISTENT  
WORSHIPPER IN THIS CHURCH, AND FOR  
SOME TIME CHURCHWARDEN.  
HE WAS FOR A PERIOD OF 56 YEARS AGENT  
TO SUCCESSIVE EARLS OF HAREWOOD,  
BORN MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> 1816, - DIED MAY 27<sup>TH</sup> 1903.  
-----  
ALSO OF HIS BELOVED WIFE  
**ELEANOR,**  
BORN OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup> 1823, -DIED APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> 1893.  
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“BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD .”  
REV. XIV.13



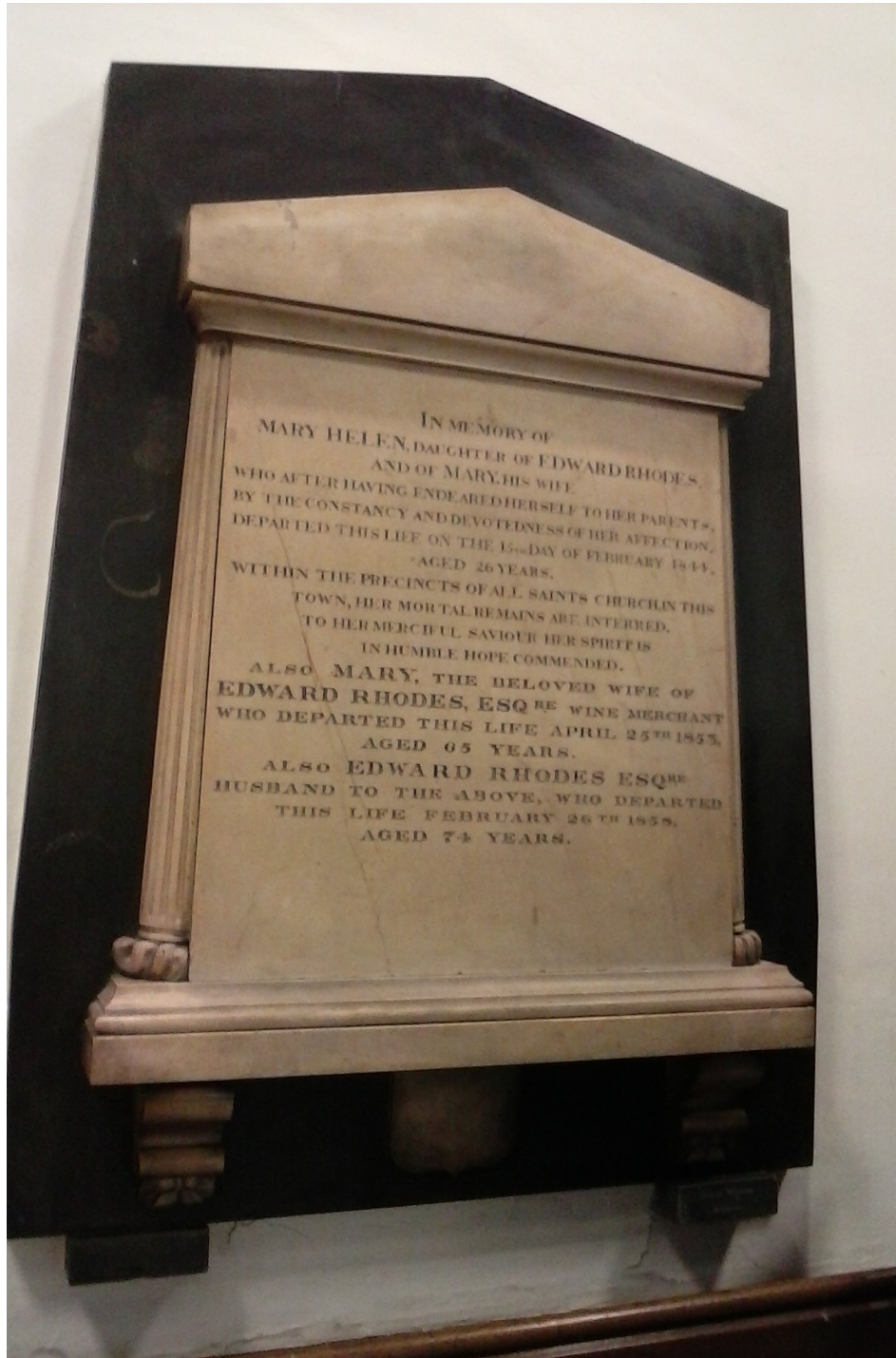
## 4.Viewpoint for James Goddard Memorial



In Memory Of  
**JAMES GODDARD**, of this Parish,  
who died October 28. 1896,  
Aged 72 Years.  
He loved GOD and his neighbour and  
faithfully discharged the duties of Parish  
Clerk and Scripture Reader for 48 years.  
"Be thou faithful unto death and I will  
give thee a crown of life." [Revelation 2:10]

Walk down to the Chancel Steps and look up to south end of the balcony. This memorial is located to right of the window that is cut in half by the balcony. It is dedicated to James Goddard who was born in London. When he moved to Pontefract he had a post office in the market place. A Parish Clerk is an employee of either the town or parish council. They are responsible for making sure that the council's decisions are implemented.

## 5. Rhodes Family Memorial



From the Chancel Steps turn right and walk into the North Aisle. This memorial is located between the two windows.

IN MEMORY OF  
**MARY HELEN**, DAUGHTER OF **EDWARD RHODES**,  
AND OF **MARY**, HIS WIFE  
WHO AFTER HAVING ENDEARED HERSELF TO HER PARENTS,  
BY THE CONSISTENCY AND DEVOTION OF HER AFFECTION,  
DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY 1844,  
AGED 26 YEARS.  
WITHIN THE PRECINCTS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH, IN THIS  
TOWN, HER MORTAL REMAINS ARE INTERED.  
TO HER MERCIFUL SAVIOUR HER SPIRIT IS  
IN HUMBLE HOPE COMMENDED.  
ALSO, **MARY**, THE BELOVED WIFE OF  
**EDWARD RHODES ESQ<sup>RE</sup>** WINE MERCHANT  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 1853,  
AGED 65 YEARS.  
ALSO **EDWARD RHODES ESQ<sup>RE</sup>**  
HUSBAND TO THE ABOVE, WHO DEPARTED  
THIS LIFE FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup> 1856,  
AGED 74 YEARS.

The Census of 1851 has the family living in The Nag's Head Inn on Ropergate (now knocked down). Mary was born in Huddersfield and Edward was born in Carleton.

Average life expectancy in Victorian Britain was shorter than it is today. In larger cities one child in every five born in the 1830s and 1840s died before they were five. The main causes were polluted water and damp housing.

At birth average life expectancy was in the high 30s in 1837. By 1901 it had risen to 48. Although well off families like many of the people these memorials are dedicated to could afford basic health care, disease such as tuberculosis were still fatal at this time.



## 6. John George Lyon Memorial

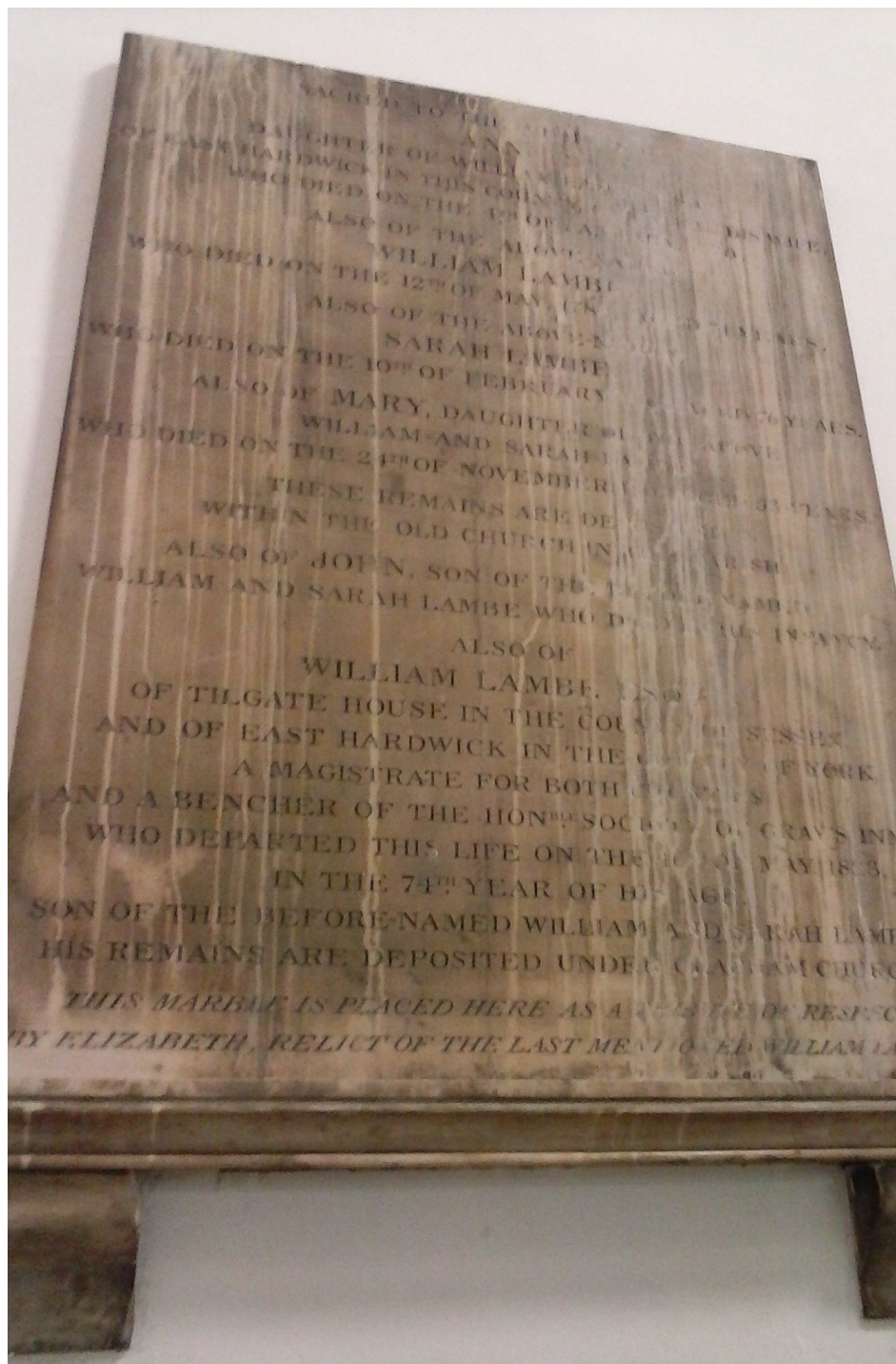


In Loving Memory of  
**JOHN GEORGE LYON, J.P.**  
The first Freeman of the Borough of Pontefract.  
Born 17 Novr. 1841 - Died 27 Aug. 1915.  
His good works live after him.  
This tablet is erected by his Widow and Children.

According to the 1901 Census John was born in Middlesex and lived in Carleton. He made his money as a tar distiller. He had five children. Two of his three daughters were born in London and the younger daughter and his two sons were born in Pontefract. At the time of the 1901 Census he had two grandchildren who were born in Nottingham. In 1920 his widow gave £500 for one of the bells in the bell tower to be recast in his memory.

This memorial is located under the window to the left of The Rhodes Family memorial. A Freeman is a person who has been granted the freedom of a town or city if they have done something significant for the community. Amongst the rights of Freeman is the right to herd their sheep and cattle through the town or city.

## 7. Lambe Family Memorial



SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
ANN  
DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM LAMBE ESQ  
OF EAST HARDWICK IN THIS COUNTY AND SARAH HIS WIFE  
WHO DIED ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY 1770  
ALSO OF THE ABOVE-NAMED  
WILLIAM LAMBE  
WHO DIED ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 1782, AGED 71 YEARS  
ALSO OF THE ABOVE-NAMED  
SARAH LAMBE  
WHO DIED ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY 1800, AGED 76 YEARS  
ALSO OF MARY, DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE  
WILLIAM AND SARAH LAMBE  
WHO DIED ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER 1803, AGED 53 YEARS  
THESE REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED  
WITHIN THE OLD CHURCH IN THIS PARISH  
ALSO OF JOHN, SON OF THE BEFORE NAMED  
WILLIAM AND SARAH LAMBE WHO DIED IN HIS INFANCY  
ALSO OF  
WILLIAM LAMBE ESQRE  
OF TILGATE HOUSE IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX,  
AND OF EAST HARDWICK IN THE COUNTY OF YORK  
A MAGISTRATE FOR BOTH COUNTIES  
AND A BENCHER OF THE HONBLE SOCIETY OF GRAY'S INN;  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 1823  
IN THE 74<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE  
SON OF THE BEFORE-NAMED WILLIAM AND SARAH LAMBE  
HIS REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED UNDER CLAPHAM CHURCH  
THIS MARBLE IS PLACED HERE AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT  
BY ELIZABETH RELICIT OF THE LAST NAMED WILLIAM LAMBE.



This memorial is located to the left of the window. It is dedicated to two generations of the Lambe Family of East Hardwick. East Hardwick did not have a church of its own at the time this memorial was placed so this is why this memorial is in St Giles'. The main person of interest on this memorial is William Lambe ESQ, or to be more exact, where he is buried.

William was born in Yorkshire in 1749. Like many sons of wealthy people he became a magistrate. The few records that show what William did as a magistrate suggest that he mainly dealt with land disputes. They show that he had chambers at Middle Temple by 1797. He became a Bencher (a elected member of the governing body) of Gray's Inn around that time. A list of Benchers for Gray's Inn shows that a William Lambe became a Bencher in 1800. It is difficult to tell, however, if this is our William because the records spell the surname Lamb without an 'e'. His address at the time of his death is vaguely recorded in the Clapham burial register as London.

There are two churches in Clapham where William could have been laid to rest. The first is Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common North Side. Holy Trinity Church is famous for being the base for an evangelical group known as The Clapham Sect. The Clapham Sect was set up in around about 1790 with the aims of liberating slaves, abolishing slavery and reforming the penal system. They were led by the MP William Wilberforce (1759-1833). In order to have been buried in either of the two Clapham Churches, William Lambe would have had to have some sort of link with them. By being both a lawyer and possibly having a link with Holy Trinity Church Lambe may well have been aware of The Clapham Sect and possibly have been a member or supporter. Not everyone who attended Holy Trinity was in support of the end of slavery however. One of Wilberforce's leading opponents, and founder of the RNLI, George Hibbert MP (1757-1837) lived in Clapham and worshiped at Holy Trinity.

The other church in Clapham where Lambe could have been buried is St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove which replaced another older church on this site. This was the main burial ground in Clapham. Lambe had another memorial dedicated to him and his wife in St Paul's which has since been lost. Fortunately, we have a record of it taken in the 1920s:

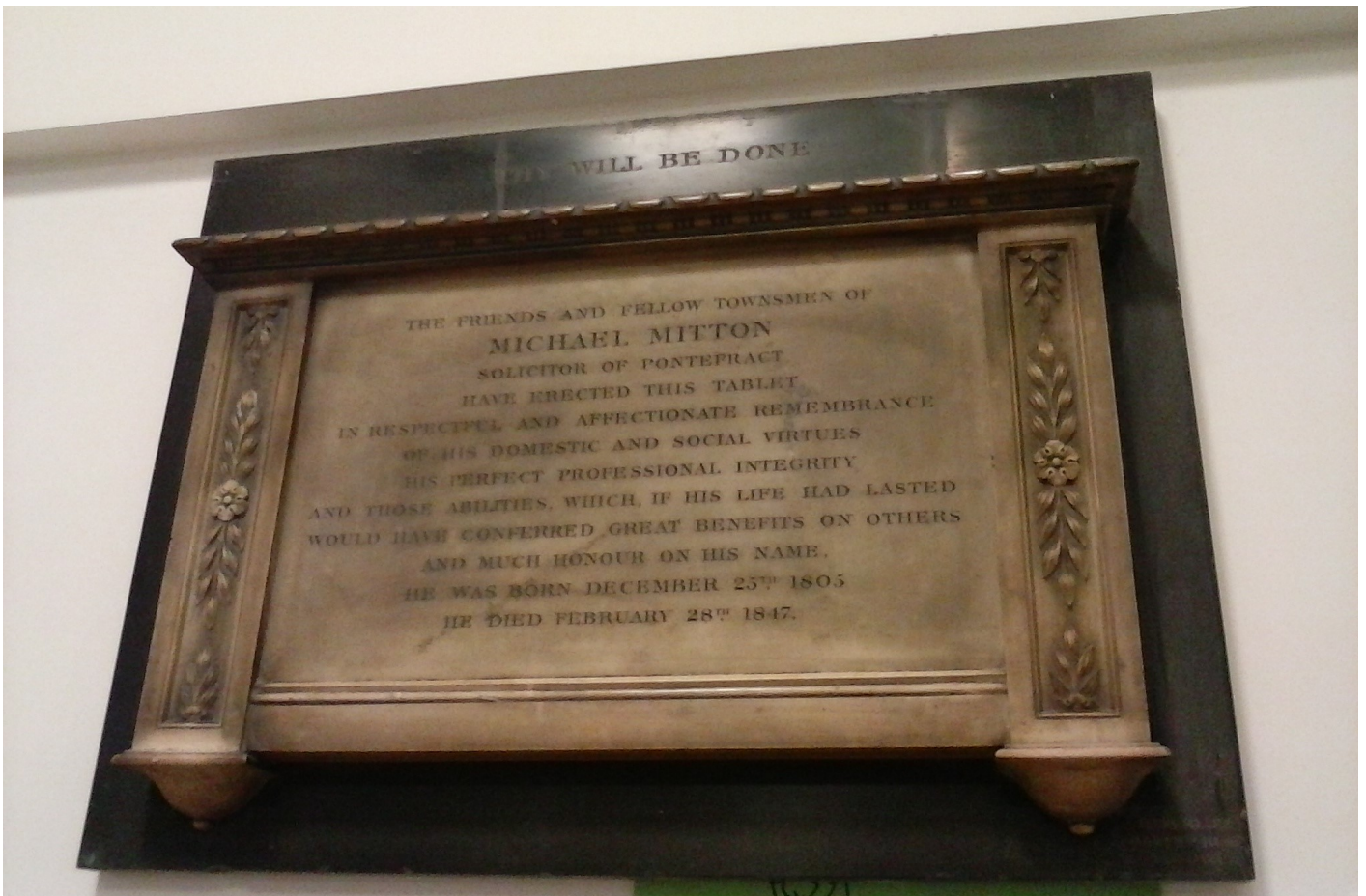
Wm Lambe, Esq ... York ... Northern Counties, of the Honourable ... of Gray's Inn, d. May 16 1823, ag. 73. Eliz., his widow, d 23 Apr., 1847, ag. 77.<sup>1</sup>

Lambe died 10 years before The Abolition of Slavery in 1833. Although we are unable to prove his involvement in The Clapham Sect it is nice to think that he may have played a part in or supported the campaign to end of slavery.

With special thanks to Holy Trinity Church Clapham and Peter Jefferson Smith for providing more information on The Clapham Sect.

<sup>1</sup>It is not recorded whether the memorial said where William Lambe was buried.

## 8. Michael Mitton Memorial



THY WILL BE DONE  
THE FRIENDS AND FELLOW TOWNSMEN OF  
**MICHAEL MITTON**  
SOLICITOR OF PONTEFRACT  
HAVE ERECTED THIS TABLET  
IN RESPECTFUL AND AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
OF HIS DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL VIRTUES  
HIS PERFECT PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY  
AND THOSE ABILITIES WHICH IF HIS LIFE HAD LASTED  
WOULD HAVE BEEN CONFERRED GREAT BENEFITS ON OTHERS  
AND MUCH HONOUR ON HIS NAME.  
HE WAS BORN DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> 1805  
HE DIED FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> 1847

This memorial is on the wall to your left as you look at The Lambe Family Memorial.

In the 1841 Census it is recorded that he was living in Ropergate and married with one daughter.



# 9. Queen Victoria Golden Jubilee Memorial



This memorial is located at the back of the café.

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee was celebrated on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1887. St Giles' decided as a way of celebrating it they would have the bells rehung. Rev'd James John Christie (Memorial 1) and Robert Daniel Ryder (Memorial 2) are listed on this memorial as part of the group who decided on it.

# Civilian Memorials on the First Floor

## Crewe Family Memorial



Sacred to the memory of captain Andrew Crewe, of an antient family of that name in Cheshire, fa branch whereof removed a century ago into Wiltshire who after 46 years spent with fidelity and reputation, In the service of his country, retired to Pontefract, where he died, August 13th, 1744, aged 70.

And of Mary, his wife, descended from the Moyles and Eyres of Devonshire and Wiltshire, who died Feb. the 18th, 1733, aged 63.

Also, of Margaret, wife of William Crewe, son of Andrew Crewe of this town, Esq., and daughter of Edmd. Abhot of the same place gentleman, who died April the 12th, 1753, aged 59.

And, of Catharine, second wife of William Crewe, and daughter Of Charles Waterton, of Walton Hall, in this county, Esq., who died April the 25th, 1756, aged 34.

And, of William, son of William and Catharine Crewe, who died in his infancy.

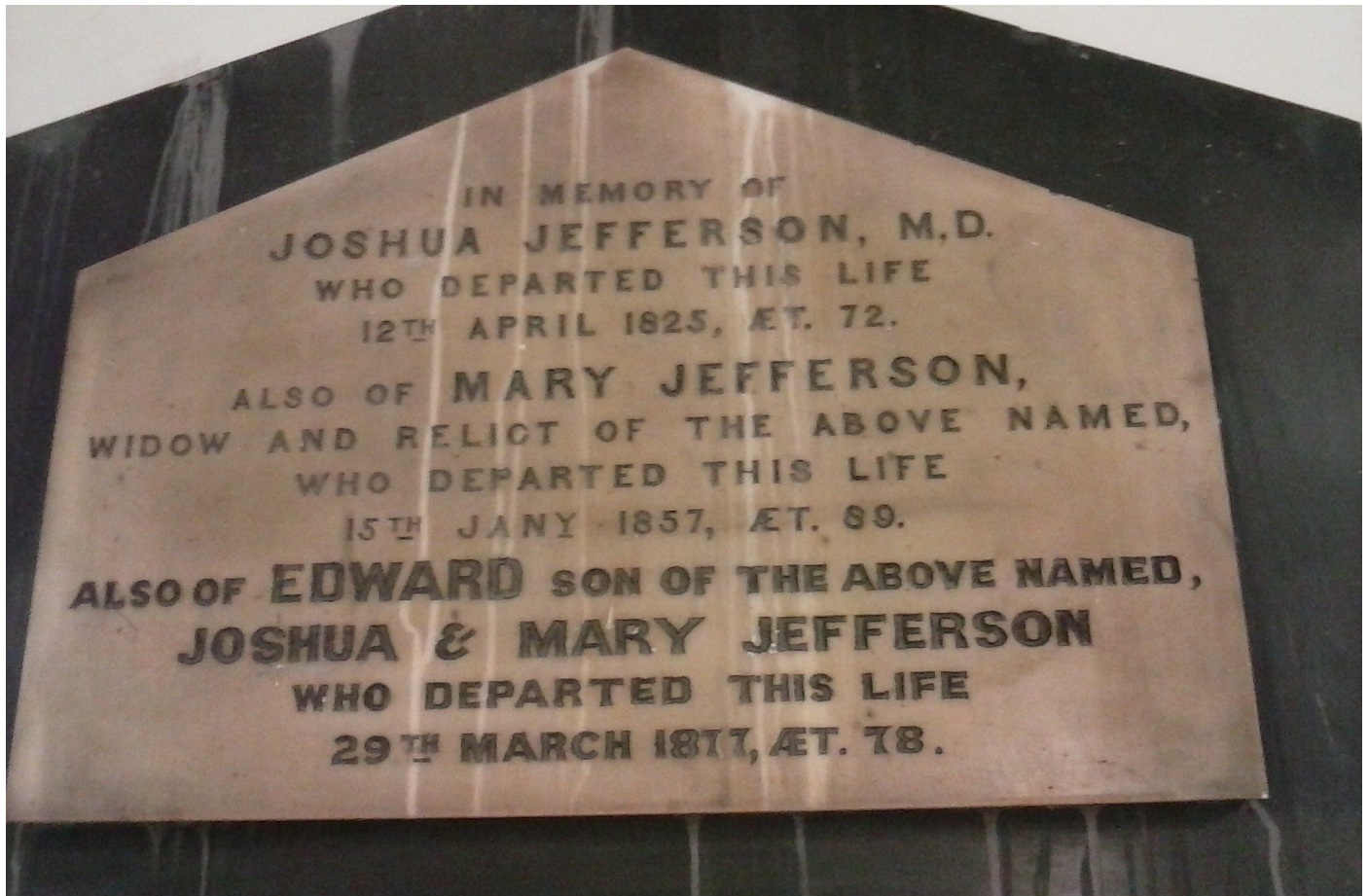
Also,  
of William Crewe, who served the office of mayor of the corporation in the years of 1740, 1753 and 1768, then resigned his gown, and retired from public business he died February the 21st, 1782, aged 76.



There are two significant things of interest on this memorial. The first of these is Catherine the daughter of Charles Walton. Charles Walton lived at Walton Hall near Wakefield. He explored British Guiana and parts of Brazil between 1804 and 1824. The writings of his expeditions inspired Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. On his return from South America he turned Walton Hall into the first wildfowl and nature reserve by building a nine foot high wall round the three miles of his estate. He invented nest boxes and was an early opponent of pollution by successfully arguing that a soap works was affecting the trees on his land.

The second thing of significance on this memorial is the second William Crewe who was Mayor of Pontefract. Pontefract had its own mayor from 1485 to 1973. The Borough of Pontefract was dissolved in 1973 and the property and rights were transferred to Wakefield Council. The modern day Mayor of Wakefield still wears the Pontefract Mayoral Chain when in Pontefract on Mayoral business.

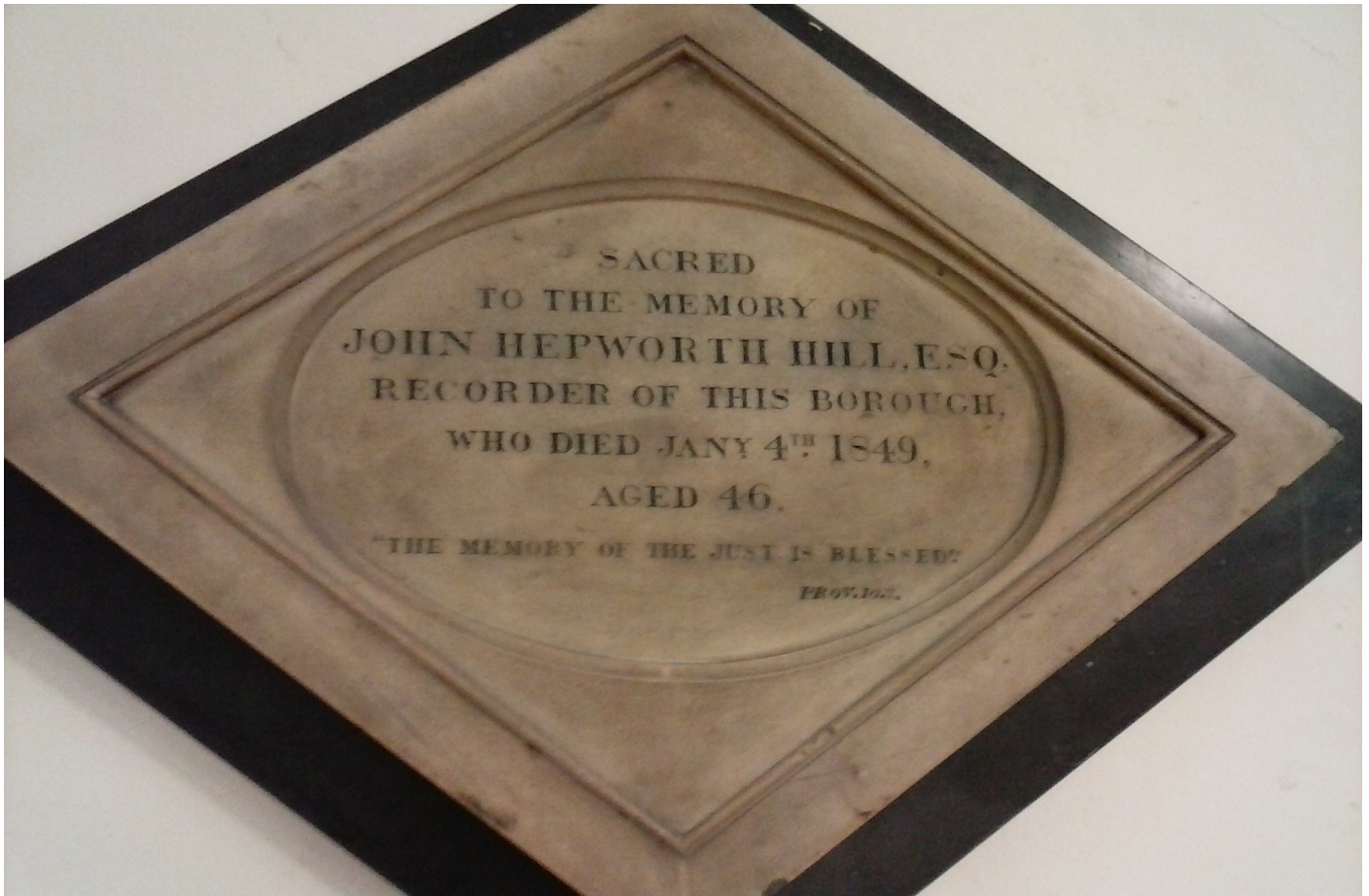
# Jefferson Family



IN MEMORY OF  
**JOSHUA JEFFERSON, M.D.**  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1825, ÆT. 72.  
ALSO OF **MARY JEFFERSON,**  
WIDOW AND RELICT OF THE ABOVE NAMED,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
15<sup>TH</sup> JAN<sup>Y</sup> 1857, ÆT. 89.  
ALSO OF **EDWARD** SON OF THE ABOVE NAMED,  
**JOSHUA & MARY JEFFERSON**  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1877, ÆT. 78.

Joshua Jefferson was a surgeon and apothecary. He is recorded in 1817 as being a founder member of the Pontefract Branch of the Church Missionary Society. Mary was born in Ferrybridge. Edward went on to become a solicitor.

# John Hepworth Hill



SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
**JOHN HEPWORTH HILL, ESQ,**  
RECORDER OF THIS BOROUGH,  
WHO DIED JAN<sup>y</sup> 4<sup>TH</sup> 1849,  
AGED 46.  
“THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.”  
PROV. 10.7

The 1841 Census records that John was a widower and had four sons aged 10 and under.

A Recorder of the Borough is appointed by the Mayor and Council to record the proceedings of their courts and customs. This position is usually given to a highly experienced barrister.



# The St Giles' Project is supported by:



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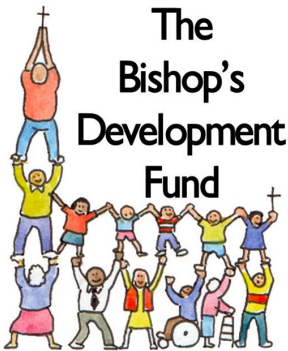


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