

CASTLEFORD CEMETERY HERITAGE TRAIL

Exploring the history of the town and
the lives of the people who made it



DEvised BY CASTLEFORD CIVIC SOCIETY

Meet the Team

The trail researchers and writers

Helga Fox



Researching my family tree reignited a long-lost passion for history. Originally from Bristol, I moved to Wakefield in 1985. I began researching the history of Wrenthorpe, then the centre of Wakefield and the wider district. In January 2018, I became involved with the 'Forgotten Women of Wakefield' project to gain blue plaque parity for women. I joined Empath Action, now Empath Theatre, when it was established.

Working on the Castleford Cemetery Trail has not only given me the opportunity to collaborate with an amazing team and learn more about Castleford and its people, but also to share some fascinating discoveries.

David Pickersgill



I thought I was alone in my fascination with old graveyards until the Civic Society invited me to contribute to this excellent project. The longer I have spent researching the history of my home town (25 years and counting), the more names have jumped out from the gravestones in Castleford Cemetery and, in turn, the more I have come to realise what a great historical resource it is.

Because historical research tends to be a solitary pursuit, one of the things I have particularly enjoyed is being part of a tremendous team of talented researchers and like-minded people. I doubt this will be the last time we work together.

Jacqui Speight



I am a lover of all things cultural, be that art, history or antiques. As a Castleford-born woman and a local councillor of 10 years, I have been delighted to support this project and see it take shape. Castleford and its people mean a great deal to me: its rich industrial and social heritage are fascinating subjects and the Cemetery Heritage Trail will help bring long-forgotten stories back to life.

I hope local people joining the trail will discover more about some of the town's past citizens in the context of the times in which they lived. This is a brilliant way to immerse oneself in local history and to discover community heritage and identity.

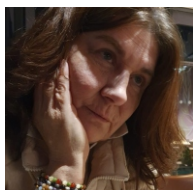
Kathryn Stainburn



Old cemeteries and church graveyards have always held a fascination for me. After floating the idea of a Castleford Cemetery Trail to several people, I realised I wasn't alone in my interest in headstones.

It's been a delight to be Castleford Civic Society 'lead' on this project and to pull together a fantastic group of individuals who share a passion for cemeteries, gravestones and the stories they can tell. Their amazing skill and commitment, along with the support of Wakefield Council and the council's heritage officer, have brought the idea of a Castleford's very own cemetery trail into being.

Helen Wilby



After inheriting a family tree from a Castleford-born great aunt, I was inspired to begin a search for all 64 of my four-times great grandparents. Some 28 years later, the end is in sight. From this I was drawn to consider the impact of the Industrial Revolution on people who resided or came to work in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

I then became involved with heritage and community arts organisations and began working with Helga through a mutual interest in female educators. Since then we have led genealogy workshops, history weekends and worked on historical events and projects. The Castleford Cemetery Trail has been a thrilling next project for me.

Castleford Cemetery Heritage Trail

Foreword

“A cemetery is a history of people – a perpetual record of yesterday and a sanctuary of peace and quiet today.” This quote by 19th century prime minister William Gladstone is certainly true of the gravestones which make up Castleford Civic Society’s Cemetery Heritage Trail.

Detailed research has revealed a rich history in the lives of Castleford’s former residents who make up this trail. We are given an insight into the life and times of the town during the 19th and early 20th centuries and the part its citizens played in local, national and international events.

Read about Mary Winchurch, whose life was tragically cut short as she did her bit for the First World War effort, and Captain George Perfect, a real Castleford character who lived on Beancroft Road when not sailing the seas. Put yourselves in the shoes of the Stein and Karle families, German pork butchers whose shops fell victim to mob violence in 1915; of Herbert Smith, who led the country’s miners into the General Strike in 1926; and of Arthur ‘Butch’ Speight, who tragically died on the evening of a political demonstration on Sagar Street in 1932.

Find out about Castleford’s industries through the gravestones of the pottery-owning Clokie and Masterman families, and world-leading bottle makers Sykes and Macvay.

This booklet can only provide a brief snapshot of the stories behind the names on the gravestones. There is more information about them on the society’s website, www.castlefordcivicsociety.org.uk, and in Castleford Library’s Local Studies section.

Castleford Civic Society hope you will enjoy following the trail and that it serves to encourage your interest in the town’s history.

Finally, a massive thank you to David, Helen, Helga and Jacquie, our team of researchers, writers and supporters. Thank you also to the Wakefield Council Bereavement Service. This project was supported with a Culture Grant by Wakefield Council as part of Our Year – Wakefield District 2024.

Kathryn Stainburn

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Castleford Cemetery Heritage Trail

About the Cemetery

Castleford Cemetery opened in October 1857, in response to the insanitary state of the overwhelmed All Saints parish church graveyard. A government inspector visiting the churchyard in December 1852 reported “numerous bones and fragments of bones, from almost all parts of the human frame – including several jaws with the teeth in, very slightly decomposed” poking out of the ground where one burial had to be interred on top of another owing to lack of space. A graveyard intended for a medieval village could no longer cope with demand and, furthermore, was a health hazard to people living in neighbouring properties.

A series of parliamentary acts during the 1850s allowed the creation of rate-funded bodies to establish and run municipal cemeteries. Castleford Burial Board was set up in 1853 and chose a spacious site to the east of the town. The earliest graves were on the north side of Healdfield Road – which for some years afterwards was renamed Cemetery Road – followed by the ‘new’ cemetery on the hillside to the south a few years later.

Both halves of the cemetery were subsequently extended to the east, bringing it to its present size. It was provided with a warden’s lodge (replaced by the current house in 1885) and two chapels: one for Church of England services, the other for Catholic and nonconformist funerals. Disused since the early 1970s, one of the chapels fell victim to subsidence in the 1990s and the other was demolished in 2022.

In line with 19th century religious convention, the cemetery was initially divided into areas of consecrated and unconsecrated ground: the former, blessed by a member of the local clergy, was reserved for burials of people who had been baptised into the Church of England; the other was where those of other denominations, or none, were laid to rest in a plot which was blessed by the presiding priest on the occasion of their interment.

At the time of the cemetery’s opening, the town was at the height of its 19th century industrial and population boom. Most local businesses and institutions were run by people who lived in Castleford (some were born here while others had moved from elsewhere seeking commercial opportunities) and this cemetery is where many of them were buried, their resting places often marked by impressive monuments in high Victorian style.

Wealthy business families were, of course, a small minority in a town where most inhabitants were poorly-paid labourers, but during the 19th and early part of the 20th century very few of these latter people could afford a lasting memorial for family members. However, as economic disparities lessened, more graves of people from working class backgrounds began to be marked with a permanent stone and the cemetery became more visibly representative of the town’s wider society.

There is another aspect to the site, too, for although many trees were lost to Dutch elm disease in the 1970s, the cemetery has become a nature haven. This is especially evident in spring, when swathes of primroses grow on and between the older graves, but also look out for the fearless squirrels, listen for birdsong and, if you are lucky, the ‘drumming’ of great spotted woodpeckers in the many mature trees which remain.

Glass Bottlemaking

Thomas Sykes and William Macvay

The men behind an overlooked industrial world 'first'.

GRAVE LOCATIONS A and B

In 1864, Thomas Sykes, a member of a long-established Castleford family of builders, entered into a partnership with William Macvay, the Derbyshire-born accountant at Edgar Breffit & Co's bottle works, to form a new company. After Thomas's death in 1869, his son Richard took his place at the head of the business.

The Albion Works of Sykes, Macvay & Co had two sites: one where the bus station now stands, the other between the railway crossing and present-day Burberry factory. In 1887, this was the first place in the world where bottle moulding machines replaced manual glass blowing, leading the transformation of the industry across Britain and the globe.

The so-called 'plank' machine had been designed by Howard Ashley, an iron founder from Ferrybridge, before Sykes, Macvay & Co took over the patent and issued £100,000 of shares to put it into production. They claimed it could make bottles at more than 10 times the rate of a traditional glassblower.

Other local companies soon followed this lead and, as a result, by the middle of the next decade Castleford was producing more bottles than anywhere else in the world – some 16 million a year.

Small-scale glass making had been



taking place in Glasshoughton since the 17th century but the first 'glasshouse' in Castleford itself – the Black Flag Works – was opened in 1829, on a site between Methley Road and the River Calder.

This was followed in 1834 by the Aire & Calder Bottle Works alongside the River Aire off Wheldon Road (bought by Edgar Breffit in 1839); John Lumb and John Simpson's works next to the railway on Albion Street in 1842; and Sykes, Macvay & Co in 1864.

Subsequent company amalgamations and rationalisation meant just one firm, John Lumb & Co (itself part of the United Glass Bottle conglomerate), remained in Castleford by 1930, with its two sites continuing in production until 1983.



The Macvay family grave. William is buried in St Mary's churchyard, Allerton Bywater.



There are few gravestones in the lower part of the cemetery: many of the graves might have been from pauper funerals.

Days of Conflict

Arthur ‘Butch’ Speight

When a political demonstration turned angry, a man died and a newspaper was sued for libel by the police.

GRAVE LOCATION C

The early 1930s were by British standards a time of political turbulence. An unstable ‘national government’ ruled the country after the collapse, in 1931, of a minority Labour administration, while ill feeling from the 1926 General Strike was still a potent force.

The rise of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain was echoed by the establishment of the British Union of Fascists, while the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was at its strongest in this period.

Add to this the hardships caused by the economic depression, and the conditions were rife for bitter political disputes.

On 4 August 1932, Castleford Trades and Labour Council met at the former Urban District Council offices on Sagar Street to discuss opposition to the much-hated means test, a way of determining eligibility for unemployment benefit.

Members of the local Communist Party were refused entry to the meeting and staged a demonstration outside. As the participants left at the end, they were booed and jeered – and the chairman, of the meeting, Councillor Arthur Pickersgill, was the subject of an assault.

Wider disorder then broke out. Both demonstrators and police officers claimed they were attacked, batons were drawn

and six men were arrested and convicted.

Among those in the vicinity of the incident was unemployed miner Arthur Speight, who minutes later collapsed and died on Carlton Street. The CPGB’s newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, claimed on several occasions that he was a victim of violence by police, that he was beaten, his body trampled upon and that people trying to help him were driven away.

Witnesses testified that Speight was not a part of the mob and had collapsed after hurrying away. The inquest into his death found he died from a heart condition.

The West Riding Constabulary successfully sued the newspaper’s editor, Clarence Mason, and its printers for libel.

Arthur Speight’s exact resting place in the lower part of the cemetery is unknown. His might have been a pauper burial, with his family unable to afford a funeral or a lasting monument. Most of these graves, if marked at all, would have received little more than a short-lived wooden cross.

Witnesses testified that Speight was not part of the mob and collapsed after hurrying away.

19th century Methodism

The Reverend Thomas Blanshard

The remarkable influence of nonconformist religion.

GRAVE LOCATION D

Although the Reverend Thomas William Blanshard's ministry in Castleford lasted only two years before his untimely death at the age of 44, his time here coincided with a period of remarkable growth and influence for nonconformist religion – and Methodism in particular – in this and many similar industrial towns.

The first Methodist chapel opened in 1815 on a site off what became Aire Street. By the time Blanshard came to Castleford 60 years later, there were 10 in the town itself and more in outlying villages – and the original Methodist church had split into competing Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist and United Methodist sects.

Blanshard was head of the Wesleyans in Castleford, whose main chapel stood on Carlton Street. In his time there were perhaps 1,000 members of Methodist chapels in total, while by the end of the 19th century his successor would have been in charge of 13 chapels and more than 800 members; add in the Primitive and United Methodists and that number might almost be doubled.

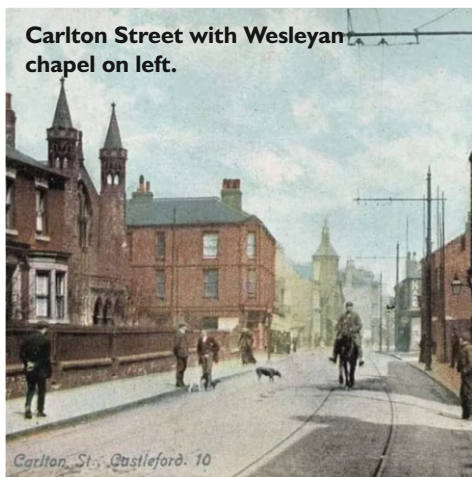
Methodism at this time was about much more than Sunday worship: chapels acted as educational and social centres, while its Sunday Schools were the places where many children saw their first books,



learned to read and, sometimes, to write. It is estimated that 60% of the town's children were members of a Methodist Sunday School by the end of the century.

Adult education was also provided in the form of mutual improvement societies, where members gave talks followed by discussion and debates.

Born in Terrington, near York, Thomas Blanshard served in Otley, Shotley Bridge near Durham, Leith, Bedale and Stokesley before coming to Castleford. He also worked in Sierra Leone for three-and-a-half years from 1860, on behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.





Days of Conflict

The German butchers riot

A First World War outrage turned suspicion to fury and prompted attacks on the town's German businesses and families.

GRAVE LOCATIONS E and M

In the late 19th century, numerous pork butchers and their families emigrated from the Baden-Württemberg area of Germany to set up business in Britain, some of whom came to Castleford.

By and large they were happily accepted in what could be very insular communities – until the outbreak of the First World War changed everything. In August 1914 the Aliens Restriction Act required German citizens to register with the police, while men of military age could be sent to internment camps if considered a threat.

When the RMS *Lusitania*, en route from New York to Liverpool, was torpedoed by a German U-boat on 7 May 1915, with the loss of 1,197 lives, war-induced suspicion of Germans turned into national outrage.

On the evening of Saturday 15 May, an angry crowd gathered outside the shop of Charles Farber at 94 Carlton Street. Extra police were on duty but to no avail as dozens of bricks were thrown through the windows. Reinforcements had to be brought from Pontefract and it took a baton charge to break up the mob.

Elsewhere in the town, other German butchers suffered similar attacks. Around 10.30pm, at the opposite end of Carlton Street, Alexander Stein's shop was attacked, after which the rioters moved on

to Bridge Street and meted out the same treatment to the businesses of George Holch and Charles Schumm. On Albion Street, around midnight, the shop of Christian Bregenzer was stoned, then the mob headed to Beancroft Road and shattered the windows of George Karle's shop. It took a second police baton charge to bring an end to the destruction.

In all, the windows of 16 shops – butchers and adjoining premises – were smashed at a cost of £200 and council workers cleared away a cart-load of bricks, bottles and broken glass.

By October 1915 there were no German butchers trading in Castleford. Some, however, reopened after the war.



Chemicals

Percy Waterhouse

Chemical manufacture was for many years one of Castleford's main industries and another which was fraught with danger.

GRAVE LOCATION F

Chemical manufacturing began in Castleford in 1863, when Hunt Brothers established an acid plant on Cinder Lane overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Aire and Calder. This was the town's only chemical works until, in 1915, Hickson & Partners bought a site on Wheldon Road to produce TNT for the war effort.

TNT manufacture ceased soon after the conflict ended and output switched to sulphuric acid, benzole and textile dye ingredients.

On 4 July 1930, process worker Percy Waterhouse was one of 12 Hicksons employees killed instantly by a massive explosion in an acid-mixing plant, which also injured 32 of his workmates.

The blast damaged more than 300 houses in the terraced streets which then stood between Wheldon Road and the works, many of them beyond repair, and made around 500 people homeless.

Debris, including twisted girders, corrugated sheets, bricks and concrete, was scattered over a wide area and dozens of town centre shop windows were shattered. The cost of the damage across Castleford was estimated at £200,000 – £16.5 million at 2025 values.

Many displaced residents slept that night on the ballroom floor above the



Castleford Industrial Co-Operative Society's store on Carlton Street. An appeal by Castleford Urban District Council quickly raised in excess of £1,000 and more than 7,000 meals were provided in subsequent days. Many homeless families were rehoused on the newly-built Three Lane Ends estate.

Percy Waterhouse was born into a degree of middle-class comfort in a sizeable house on Beancroft Road but, along with his eight siblings, became an orphan at the age of 10. He began his working life as a printer before enlisting in the Royal Field Artillery when the First World War began. In 1916, while fighting in Greece, he contracted malaria.

Another major explosion at the Hicksons plant in 1992 killed five people and injured 14 others. It closed in 2005 (Lambson Acids, the former Hunt Brothers plant, had closed some years previously), ending more than 140 years of chemical production in Castleford.

Debris, including twisted girders, corrugated sheets, bricks and concrete was scattered over a wide area...

CASTLEFORD CEM

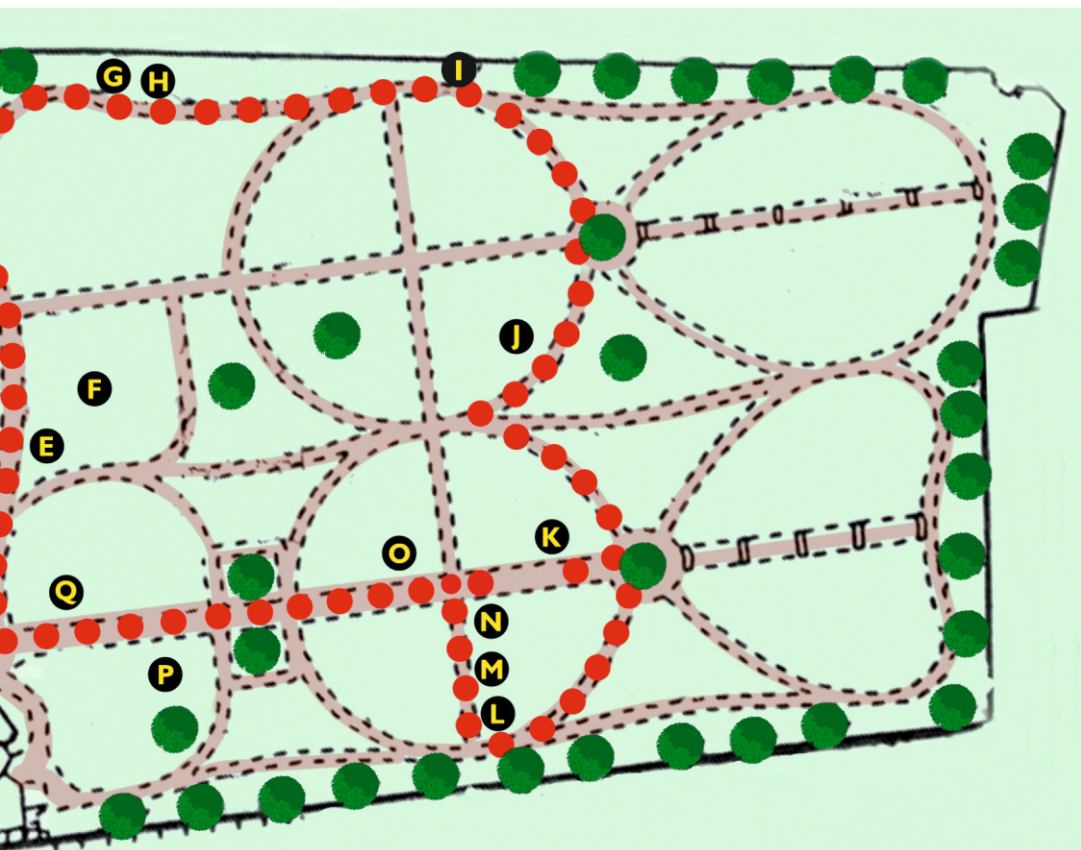


● ● ● ● ● Suggested route

◀ ▶ Entrance/exit

- A** Thomas Sykes
- B** Macvay family
- C** Arthur Speight *unmarked*
- D** Rev Thomas Blanshard
- E** George & Mary Karle
- F** Percy Waterhouse

ETERY TRAIL MAP



SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD

G Sapper Albert Gledhill
H Sergeant Charles Hughes
I Mary Ann Winchurch
J Clokie family
K Herbert & Sarah Smith
L Wheldale Colliery fire

M Stein family
N Samuel Ingram
O John Masterman
P Charles Saniter
Q Captain George Perfect



The Toll of War

Albert Gledhill and Charles Hughes

Not all war deaths occurred in hostile territory, sea or air space.

GRAVE LOCATIONS G and H

When Glasshoughton-born colliery fitter **Albert Gledhill** signed on the dotted line at the army recruiting office on Eastgate, in Leeds, he would have had little idea what part he might be about to play in the fight against Nazism. However, to enable the army to make the most of the skills Albert had learned down the pit, he was posted to the Royal Engineers.

On 8 August 1942, Sapper Gledhill was killed in an accident at the training base at Inverary, western Scotland. Even though Britain and its allies were then struggling to gain the upper hand in the war, troops were learning the methods of amphibious invasion which would in future be needed in order to free occupied Europe.

Over 250,000 trainees passed through the base on Loch Fyne. Albert Gledhill, however, never got the chance to put into practice what he had learned there.

The 'war to end all wars' was 17 years in the past when **Charles Hughes** died in May 1935, yet he was surely as much a casualty of that conflict as the thousands of men who lost their lives in the trenches.

In 1917, 30 year-old Sergeant Hughes led a platoon of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in an attack on a German trench. They achieved their objective but, in response, the surviving enemy troops

released a volley of mustard gas. Although Hughes and his comrades were equipped with gas masks, these were not sufficient to protect against the poisonous fumes.

Many years later, Charles's grandson recalled: 'Apparently my grandad had a long, lingering death and couldn't work properly after the war. His hacking cough was often heard in the night by the family.'

'He said of his experience in the war that 'It wasn't much fun guarding corpses so the rats didn't eat them'.'



The Toll of War

Mary Ann Winchurch

One of the many women who stepped forward to work in First World War munitions production – and paid with her life.

GRAVE LOCATION I

The story of women stepping up to work in many usually male-dominated industries during the two world wars is well known and is commemorated by, among others, the Women of Steel sculpture in Sheffield and the Barnbow Lasses memorial at Cross Gates.

The latter, which remembers 35 victims of an explosion at the munitions factory in 1916 (five of them were from Castleford), testifies to the dangers some of these women faced, a world away from the largely home-based, domestic lives most of them were living previously.

Mary Ann Winchurch was one of the thousands of women who swapped home and hearth for the hazardous business of weapons production – and on 13 October 1917 she paid for it with her life.

Yet nothing is known of what happened to her beyond the basic details on her gravestone, for even major disasters, let alone an individual death such as Mary's, were hushed up for fear of affecting morale and to avoid revealing the location of factories vital to the war effort.

There are few records, either, of the Royds Green munitions factory, south of Rothwell, where she died and no physical traces remain: it most likely stood where junction 30 of the M62 is now located. It



was one of two satellite locations of the main Barnbow plant where raw materials were received and stored before being moved to the production site.

How long had Mary been working at Royds Green before that fateful day? Perhaps she answered the call as soon as the Barnbow factory was opened, in 1914, or she might have been forced to seek employment after the death of husband Samuel in March 1916.

Mary was born in Whitwood, to where the young Samuel and his parents had moved from Bilston, in Staffordshire, one of many families who left the 'Black Country' for better prospects in the new collieries being sunk in Yorkshire. At the time of their deaths, the couple lived on Savile Road with their nine children and an adopted daughter. Their house was rented from Thomas Hunt, one of the owners of the adjacent chemical works, although in 1913 Samuel was recorded as being a brickworks manager.

Yet nothing is known of what happened to her beyond the basic details on her gravestone...



Pottery

The Clokie and Masterman families

The industry which started Castleford's 19th century growth.

GRAVE LOCATIONS J and O

Much of Castleford sits on a thick bed of clay, so small-scale domestic pottery and roof tile production had probably taken place since medieval times.

In 1790, however, Leeds cloth maker David Dunderdale established a pottery on the banks of the River Calder, off Methley Road, and began producing fine wares which were soon sold throughout the country and exported to Europe and the United States. His Castleford Pottery business used Cornish china clay, brought in via the Aire & Calder Navigation, rather than the local raw material.

This enterprise lasted until 1820, after which the site, on what is now Pottery Street, passed through many changes of ownership – sometimes there was more than one company using the premises – until, in 1872, it was acquired by the partnership of Hugh McDowall Clokie and John Masterman. The company title changed to Clokie & Co in 1888 and it continued to operate under that name until it closed in 1961, which marked the end of pottery production in Castleford.

Clokie's specialised in the distinctive blue-and-white Cornish ware, tableware and kitchenware. For a time in the 1930s it produced art deco-style wall plaques and was one of the main manufacturers

of royal commemorative mugs. Ethelwyn Clokie was the firm's managing director in its latter years.

On the opposite side of Methley Road was Castleford's other principal pottery, Hartleys, who also made bricks. This was established around 1852 and lasted until 1960. Its principal products were tableware and cookware, along with a late foray into distinctive hand-painted art pottery in the 1950s.

Other shorter-lived potteries were located at various times at Half Acres, on Healdfield Road, Cinder Lane and near the railway crossing on Albion Street.



Coal Mining

Herbert and Sarah Smith

National and international miners' union leader and a crucial figure in the General Strike of 1926.

GRAVE LOCATION K

Born in a workhouse, orphaned at the age of six and working his first shift down Glasshoughton Colliery alongside his adoptive father when only 10 years old, Herbert Smith defied his difficult start in life to rise to leadership of Britain's most powerful trade union.

He had no formal education and an infamously blunt manner; however his determined character and leadership ability inspired loyalty among those he represented and earned respect from colliery owners and politicians.

After working his way through the local and Yorkshire union ranks, he was elected as the president of the Miners Federation of Great Britain – forerunner of the National Union of Mineworkers – in 1921, a post he held until resigning in 1929. He also served as president of the Miners International organisation.

It can be argued that it was Herbert Smith who fired the starting gun on the General Strike when, in response to prime minister Herbert Asquith's proposal to settle a dispute between the MFGB and colliery owners over wage cuts and a longer working day, he gruffly stated: "Nowt doing." Within hours, on 1 May 1926, more than a million workers had walked out on strike.



As well as a union leader, he served on West Riding County Council, Castleford Urban District Council and Barnsley Borough Council. He was also a magistrate and took a particular interest in the rehabilitation of young offenders.

Herbert married Sarah Ann Ripley in 1885 and was always keen to credit "our Sally" for her unstinting support.

By the time of his death they lived in Barnsley but he had long insisted his final resting place should be back in Castleford. Crowds of mourners lined Healdfield Road and a brass band played as his cortege approached the cemetery.





Coal Mining

The Wheldale Colliery Fire

An underground fire which killed five men illustrates the industry's constant dangers.

GRAVE LOCATION L

On 8 December 1891, a fire broke out in a wooden cabin around 450 yards from the bottom of the shaft at Wheldale Colliery. It was thought that a paraffin lamp had been knocked over. Flames quickly took hold and thick smoke poured through the workings.

Of the 20 or so men at the coal face, most escaped along a clear roadway but others attempted to exit through passages by then filled with choking smoke.

Among them were George Goodwin, brothers John and Joseph Milner, William Oakey and William Tilley. Despite the desperate attempts of workmates, all five were overcome by smoke and most likely died before the flames reached them.

One colleague who was attempting to

lead Goodwin to safety heard him gasp: "I can't go any further – I'm done." Those were his last known words.

After a week of unsuccessful attempts to quell the fire, it was only possible to extinguish it by flooding that part of the pit. It was not until 26 December that the first two bodies were found and three further days before the others were recovered.

All five men were identifiable only by the names stamped on their lamps. Between them, they left three widows and nine fatherless children.

By the time Wheldale Colliery closed in 1987, a total of 74 men and boys had lost their lives in accidents there, including nine as a result of a gas explosion in 1923.



Farming

Samuel Ingram

Even in Castleford's 19th century boom years it had a close connection with the land, as industry and agriculture sat side by side.

GRAVE LOCATION N

For hundreds of years, Castleford was an essentially agricultural village, where no more than a few hundred people eked out a subsistence living from the land.

Even as the potteries and bottle works began to proliferate in the first half of the 19th century and its population rapidly grew, farmland abutted right to the edge of the built-up area. Likewise, although the arrival of the railway meant food could come from anywhere in the country, local farms continued to supply most of the town's meat, vegetables, cereals and milk.

Some time in the 1850s, a young bank accountant, Samuel Ingram, gave up his career in finance and moved more than 150 miles from Melrose, in the Scottish Borders, to Castleford, where he became the steward (labourers' supervisor) at Wheldale Farm, on the south bank of the River Aire to the east of the town.

This was undoubtedly a bold move in terms of distance, but less of a career change than it might at first seem, since he was born into a farming family on the Duke of Roxburgh's estates.

He lodged at the farm with Harriet Lee, widow of former bailiff – i.e. manager – Joe. Romance evidently blossomed and the pair married in 1867. Four years later the census lists Samuel as the Wheldale



Farm bailiff. At his death, however, the couple's address is given as Hillam Hall Monk Fryston.

Little is now left of Wheldale Farm. Its buildings are long demolished and much of its land is buried by colliery spoil, but it remains an intriguing place. The Domesday Book lists a manor of *Queldale* and says there was a church there, yet this is the only record of such a building and a brief 1995 archaeological survey found no physical evidence.

However, in a horse paddock between Wheldon Road and the railway line there are still a few of the tell-tale humps and hollows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, a last vestige of centuries of farming history on this site.

Ridge and furrow at Wheldale Farm.





Education

Charles Saniter

Spanning the change from private to public secondary education, Charles Saniter will have taught the young Henry Moore.

GRAVE LOCATION P

Charles Saniter lived, died and was buried within sight and playing field sound of Castleford Grammar School. Although he only taught there for eight years before his premature death, this was not his only contribution to education in the town.

Before joining the staff of pioneering headteacher T R 'Toddy' Dawes in 1906, Saniter had run a private grammar school, on Commercial Street, for several years. Prior to the 1902 Education Act, there was no local authority funding of secondary education, so any pupils wishing to continue their schooling after the age of 11 had to do so privately.

Although the vast majority of Castleford children left for work as soon as allowed, there were enough sons and daughters of middle-class parents to support a number of small fee-paying grammar schools in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Charles John Herman Saniter was born in Middlesbrough and grew up in nearby Redcar. His father, Ludwig, was a Danish merchant who migrated to England in 1851 and married Jane Best, from Newcastle, in 1858.

Charles was educated at Sir William Turner Grammar School, Redcar, where local newspaper reports suggest he excelled both academically and in drama

productions. He then benefited from the introduction by London University of a scheme which allowed students to study remotely, in their own time, while also working for a living. He gained a BA degree while teaching at the Crossley School, in Halifax.

Charles Saniter was one of six teachers and 115 pupils present on the opening day of Castleford Grammar School, on 13 September 1906. He was appointed as the French master and was also made responsible for discipline.

Toddy Dawes was full of revolutionary ideas, establishing connections between the school and town, staging dramatic performances and seeking out European links. With his Danish roots and love of the stage, Charles Saniter would have been at the heart of the activities which would soon encourage the young Henry Moore and Albert Wainwright to develop their creative talents under the schools's art teacher, Alice Gostick.

Charles Saniter was one of six teachers and 115 pupils present on the opening day of Castleford Grammar School...

Waterways

Captain George Perfect

Despite it being more than 60 miles from the coast, Castleford had a strong maritime connection in the 19th century.

GRAVE LOCATION Q

A walk around the cemetery will reveal a number of gravestones commemorating a 'mariner' or a 'waterman'. Even after the railways had come to dominate passenger and freight transport, the country's inland waterways and coastal shipping routes continued to thrive – and they played a big role in Castleford's economy.

The town stood in a crucial location on the Aire & Calder Navigation system, a busy transport artery linking the industrial West Riding with Goole and Hull. In the 1820s and 1830s the company made big investments to widen and straighten the canal and the River Calder at Castleford, as well as building new boat inspection, maintenance and toll collection facilities on Lock Lane.

The 1851 census listed 15 men in the town as mariners or sailors (which meant they owned a vessel) and 34 more as watermen (who crewed a boat owned by someone else), along with rope makers and boat painters. There was also a small boat-building yard alongside the canal to the west of Lock Lane, with the first launch recorded in 1808 and the last in 1874.

In May 1864, a boat by the name of *Miranda* was launched from this yard, which was owned by Richard Cliff. The customer was Captain George Perfect,



arguably Castleford's leading maritime business owner, who was also heavily involved in the wider commercial, local government and social life of the town.

He was born in Castleford, in 1829, into an old-established seafaring family. His grandfather was a ship's joiner and his father, John, a vessel owner whose business took place along the Aire & Calder Navigation and up and down the east coast. The young George began employment as a boat boy at the age of 11, progressing through the ranks until becoming a master mariner by 1854.

The name of Captain George Perfect appears on many of the boards which ran Castleford's affairs in the later part of the 19th century. He married Ann Brough in 1855 and they lived at 89 Beancroft Road. He was a Wesleyan lay preacher who, according to his obituary in the *Pontefract & Castleford Express*, "delivered his sermons with raciness and wit", as well as a supporter of many local good causes.

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