who might be ex-empt from call up. He was a keen the Great War, Smith headed the local Tribunal, deciding the Council between 1910-1911 and 1915-1916. During was a member of Brierley Hill UDC for 17 years, chairing As well as serving on the local board of Guardians, Smith

and the Old New Inn in Brierley Hill. including The Stewpony, the Old White Hart at Kinver, 1934. At that time Smith & Williams owned sixty premises The brewery was bought out by Julia Hanson & Son in Prize and Silver Medal at the 1920 Brewer's Exhibition. produced a number award-winning ales including 1st 1897. The Town Brewery, now the site of the fire station founders of what became Smith & Williams brewery in family, owners of the Delph Brewery. He was one of the William Henry Smith, a licensee, married into the Elwell

HTIMS H.W **9**

top of Compton Road. Kinver. To this day a house called "Iron House" is at the iron house. This was sold to a resident at Compton in holders in Britain. He is also reputed to have built the first which became one of the biggest producers of gas Brierley Hill. He sold the business to Westwood & Wright the Thomas Meese who built the first gas works in of the Glasgow Iron Works. This Thomas may have been section of the churchyard. Noah was one of the founders brother was Noah Meese whose grave is in the northern Thomas was the uncle of Jane and Thomas Moah. His

2 THOMAS AND ELIZABETH MEESE

loss of two children. read down the head-stone the broken buds represent the shortness of life, a rose is for love and family, and, if you



to them. In this case, the cut flower is symbolic of the of flowers on them. The flowers have meanings attached Many of the headstones in the churchyard have images



a competitor." Cooper established Roberts and Cooper become the Labour Club. He claimed family connections often visited his father in Dudley Road.

Waypoint 11 - Turning left by the side of the Cooper glossy black bricks

33 GEORGE LOVATT -THE BRIERLEY HILL GIANT

George Lovatt is also known as the Brierley Hill Giant. He is alleged to have weighed anything between 40 and 60 stones, depending on which source you read. By all accounts he was a kind and gentle man. Writing in the parish magazine following his funeral the vicar wrote: "... as Britain's, heaviest man, he had a fame which I have no doubt he would willingly have surrendered, with much of his weight, had this been possible. Those who knew him best give testimony to his cheery disposition under most trying circumstances. His funeral presented many problems, for the estimated weight of his coffin was between / and 8 cwt. Everybody concerned worked and his staff (and not least to the very efficient foreman responsible for the derrick), and to the Police for their



streets. I was sorry to have to order that the Church Yard gates should be closed to the public, I had no alternative. Over a big area of ground, it headstones, would have been considerable.

34 ANTHONY BOOTH V.C.

highest accolade in the armed forces. The London Gazette citation for this award read: "For his gallant

right-hand side is broken. A second bud, bottom centre, is rose. Look carefully and you will see that the bud at the At the top of this sandstone headstone is a beautiful carved

4 WEEZE CHILDREN

1865 but has now disappeared. resolved to take away my life." The grave was still standing in my enemies; be not with them at strife / For they were children dear / I am not dead, but lie sleeping here; / Pray for which appeared on his grave stone: "Mourn not for me my Several sources refer to an epitaph, written by himself,

was sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead!. caught up with him. He was convicted of stealing 40s and morning, saying: "...they could afford it." His life of crime could often be heard returning home cheerfully in the Joseph Pearson who would steal from richer people and were hanged. One of those was "Joe Merry", real name Three men are reputed to be interred in the churchyard who

THE THREE HANGED MEN **3A** MISSING HEADSTONES -

you'll be pleased to hear. churchyard. The bodies are still buried beneath the ground considerable cost. There are a number of these in the Mill's tomb is a chest tomb and would have been erected at

train. At least 12 people were killed. track towards Brettell Lane and crashed into a following Stations. The second half of the train rolled back down the a holiday excursion train broke near Brierley Hill/Round Oak

helped secure the site. A coupling on Mills went to the aid of the victims and disaster occurred in Brierley Hill and In August 1858 a terrible railway

ASDA supermarket now stands. town there were pits next to where the (1851-76). When he arrived in the Brierley Hill for a quarter of a century Chiet Superintendent of Police in William Mills (died 1907) was the

3 WILLIAM MILLS - THE POLICEMAN

Turner, 22; John Thompson, 21; and Thomas Dimmock 18. the names of the miners were: Cornelius Turner, 27; David illegible. Woodward quotes from the burials register that

celebrate its 200th anniversary, but the inscription was librarian W. H. Woodward wrote a history of the church to The grave was still standing in 1965, when Brierley Hill

Our sudden ends warns you my friends / Work while it is The coal pit rope asunder broke / And tell and dead we lay /

23rd August, 1815: recorded a mining tragedy when four men lost their lives on west door towards the rectory, lay a tombstone which particular stretch, on the right of the path, leading from the Many graves have gone missing over the years. Along this

THE COAL MINERS **2A** MISSING HEADSTONES -

choice of material was made to reflect his Welsh origins. graves in the churchyard. It is reasonable to assume the The Morgan Hughes gravestone is one of only two slate

attacked with brain fever and died after a few hours from the Hill. Sadly, after a very short time in the town he was surveyor of Aberystwyth, found him a situation in Brierley Fortunately, a friend, who happened to be a brother of the Morgan had to return to working below ground, mining. Alas, the distressing circumstances of his mother mean that

Ystrad Meuring Grammar School by its headmaster, Rev. prizes. As a result of this brilliance he was offered a place at totally eclipsing all other competitors and winning several speech on adolescence in the presence of over 600 people, much so that at one Eisteddfod he gave an impromptu

But Morgan also had a gift: he was a very fine orator. So

was also working in the lead mines. lists his mother as a widow, and by 1861 Morgan, aged 16 small village not too far from Aberystwyth. The 1851 census Morgan Hughes came from a family of lead miners in a

attention / Aged 19 years Brierley Hill House where he received / Every Kindness and Meurig School / Who died on the 5th day of July 1863 / At Ystwyth / And a pupil of Lewis Evans / Headmaster of Ystrad Here rests in peace Morgan Hughes / A native of Ysbytty

The inscription reads: in two respects: the inscription and the slate it is made of. from the church in the direction of the rectory. It is unusual The grave is situated along the main path, leading away

2 MORGAN HUGHES - THE ORATOR

Let the Millward epitaph be a warning and eye on the ground whilst walking around. trip hazards, so it is important to keep your the ground is very uneven. Graves can be here, the vast majority in unmarked graves, safety reminder. With 25,000 people buried first on the tour, it is a good health and Which brings us to the reason this grave is

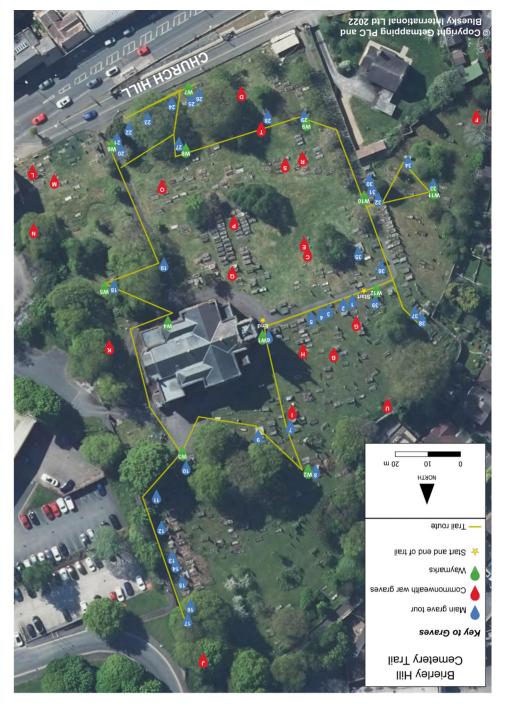


death is nigh and seek to be prepared to surprise: "Reader! Always suppose thy months later seems to be more of a Benjamin's son Samuel's death a few

neither the day nor the hour... something of a surprise "...for ye know the death of Benjamin Millward came as Reading the epitaph, one concludes that

both died within a few months of each 29muel was a stocktaker at an Iron works, Darby and Pargeter Colliery, and his son in 1861 as an ironworks labourer at the born at the Delph. Benjamin was recorded Benjamin Millward and Samuel Millward, The trail starts adjacent to the graves of

> THE SURPRISED MEN MILLWARD -



used in our historic industries. beneath your feet: clay, coal, iron and minerals the wealth of the town came from what is way through this tour you will find that much of UNESCO Global Geopark. As you work your Brierley Hill is part of the Black Country

Sadly, many of those graves have since 1979 of what graves were visible at that time. took place, although a survey was undertaken in individuals. No record was kept of where burials for the wealthier or higher social status monument. The graves you can see tend to be Many people were too poor to afford a lasting

the region of 25,000 people have their "long ninety years would suggest that somewhere in 24,340 burials. Additional interments in the last shows that up to the end of 1934 there were the entries in the church's burial resisters it people do you think are buried here? Counting Take a moment to look around you. How many

INTRODUCTION

https://discover.dudley.gov.uk/downloads/ Find out more about these trails at Brierley Hill High Street Heritage Action Zone. Geological Heritage Trail delivered through the Architectural Heritage Trail and Brierley Hill within the borough, including the Brierley Hill of a number of self-guided trails you can do through the history of Brierley Hill, and forms one journey through a graveyard but also one Hill. When you follow this trail, it is not just a of the people who shaped the history of Brierley public were invited into the graveyard for a tour tours provided by Tim Sunter in 2023, where the This trail was inspired by the 'Graves by Night'

> MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD WELCOME TO A TOUR OF ST

Who's Who

amongst the gravestones and

in St. Michael's Churchyard

Discover over 200 years of history

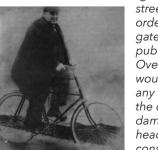
monuments in the churchyard of

St Michael's Church, Brierley Hill

with Caleb Roberts (Grave 15), his son in law, expanding from timber merchants into ironworks in partnership with his brother-in-law Samuel Newton (Grave 38). In later years, Cooper lived at the Limes in Pearson Street, later to to the Chartist Thomas Cooper, also a shoemaker who

Monument, move to the western extension. Look for the

together, so the unprecedented task was carried out with ability and rever-ence. I am grateful also, to the undertaker excellent work in controlling the huge crowds in the



would have been impossible for any number of police to control the crowd, and the consequent damage to graves, and possibly

Anthony Booth was a recipient of the Victoria Cross, the conduct on 12th March 1879, during the Zulu attack on



the Intombi River, in having, when considerably outnumbered by the enemy, rallied a few men on the south bank of the river, and covered the retreat of fifty soldiers and others a distance of three miles. The Officer commanding 80th Regiment reports that, had it not been for the coolness displayed by this Non-commissioned Officer, not one man would have

A native of Nottingham, Booth came to live in Brierley Hill following his military service. On his death bed he converted to Catholicism. His funeral took place at St Mary's Church late on a snowy December day, and by the time the coffin left the church the party had to move in darkness through the snow to his final resting place here. Only lighted tapers lit the way. Three volleys of a firing party range out. Before the party moved away, the accompanying band played "Soldiers of the Queen" and marched to the local

35 T.H. BAKER AND PHILLIS AND FRANK HIGGS - JEWELLERS

Thomas Henry Baker, a watchmaker, was originally from Calne, Wiltshire. He set up his jewellery business on High Street, Brierley Hill on 6th of October 1888. His

daughters, Phillis and Cecily joined the business in 1910. Retiring in 1912, Baker sold the business to Frank Higgs and, in 1915 Phillis and Frank married. Frank joined the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) in the Great War, leaving Phillis to run the shop. Business boomed, but an economic

depression followed the war. At one stage, Frank and Phillis even had to pawn their 22ct gold wedding rings to keep the business afloat. Their wedding rings were replaced for just 1s. 6d with gold plated ones in order to keep respectability. Fortunately, the business survived and thrived over the following decades and even today continues as a well-known retail outlet.



36 GUTTERY FAMILY

John Guttery was a carpenter and builder who lived in Mill Street, Brierley Hill. He was known as "The Irish Cooper" and wore his hair in long curls down his back. The family were Congregationalists, but at the age of 12 his son Thomas attended Bent Street Primitive Methodist Church. At the age of 17 years he became a preacher. He was to achieve fame in the Primitive Methodist world, spending time in Canada, Sunderland, London, and Southport. Thomas achieved fame for his oratory in the pulpit and, as a Liberal, in politics. He died in 1895.

Thomas's son, Arthur T., continued his father's work, and became so well known that in a forward to his biography the Prime Minster of the day, David Lloyd George wrote: "The tragic and premature death of Mr. Guttery came as a heavy loss, not only to his own denomination but to the Free Churches of England, in which, by his strength of character and his outstanding personality, he held a distinctive position. Our friendship, which I greatly valued extended over many years. I believed he owed his wide public influence in a large part to his natural gift of oratory. As a platform speaker he could grip the attention and arouse the enthusiasm of large audiences. As an ally, he counted as a great asset; as an opponent no one could afford to disregard him. The services he rendered the religious and social life of this country were inestimable. His voice was like that of a Prophet's - an inspiration for great causes - and rang like a trumpet call for the furtherance of national righteousness

37 HENRY PARRY

Following the death of his father in a railway accident at Round Oak, Henry attended the school of David Clark. At the age of 15 or 16 he entered work for the Earl of Dudley and became secretary to Frederick Smith Shenstone, Chief Agent to the Earl of Dudley. In the mid 1870s, Henry progressed to become the manager of the New Level Ironworks (the site is now occupied the by the Merry Hill Centre). When the Earl's Round Oak work commenced the

manufacture of steel, Parry figured out the method of transporting molten iron up the hill to the works to be converted into steel. He was a founder of the



Brierley Hill camera club and this portrait of him was taken on the club's first outing to the Sheep Walks. He was elected to Brierley Hill UDC in 1904 and it was he who suggested that negotiations should be opened with Kingswinford RDC to create a sewerage works at the farm at Round Hill. He was also chair of the Brierley Hill Higher Education Committee.

38 SAMUEL NEWTON

Samuel Newton purchased the former British Iron Company works in Brierley Hill when it was dismantled and removed to Corngreaves. His partners in the purchase were his brother-in-law, Ebenezer Cooper (Grave 32), and Caleb Roberts (Grave 15). Roberts and Cooper had intended to extend their timber works with the provision of a sawmill on the site. However, Samuel had arranged a partnership in a rolling mill and consequently the business carried on as the Nine Locks Iron Works. Eventually, Roberts and Cooper moved on to own other ironwork businesses and the partnership was dissolved. Newton continued with the business as Samuel Newton and Sons. Newton a staunch methodist attended Banks Street and Mount Pleasant methodist churches.

Waypoint 12 - The right turn on the path back towards the tower, note the grave of Amos Westwood - a brickmaker. You are looking for the large grave surrounded by railings.

39 JOSIAH BECKLEY

The Beckley family ran a grocery provisions business. But if you look around the back of the monument you will see a memorial to Josiah Beckley who was Brierley Hill's town surveyor for 32 years. Beckley made huge improvements to the town, including a sewage system he had installed in Moor Street, including filter beds. He is also recognised for 23 undedicated streets where he organised a channelled sewage system for property owners. He was also responsible for the paving of the High Street and rectifying various level as well as landscaping the Church Hill (war memorial) gardens. Here he created and covered the gardens with trees, shrubs and an ornamental wall. Other achievements including paving many of the side streets, tree planting schemes from Silver End to Round Oak and the design and installation of the drinking fountains in the town and improvements to the town hall with the introduction of a library, local board room, reading rooms and caretaker's accommodation. He is pictured below standing on the bonfire, the building of which he supervised for Queen Victoria's jubilee.



Josiah Beckley (on the ladder)

Head back towards the main entrance of the church, as you face it, look to the right of the door where you will see a stone baptismal font with a carved inscription on its outside rim 'TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN MEMORY OF THE **FALLEN HEROES**



The font was commissioned to commemorate the Delph men who served in WW1. It originally stood in the Good Shepherd Mission Church, Delph.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

There are 21 in total, visit this webpage for more

https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/ cemetery-details/43802/brierley-hill-st-michaelchurchyard/

This trail was funded through the Brierley Hill High

For further information about this initiative administered by Historic England and Dudley MBC visit: www.regeneratingdudley.org.uk/brierley-hill-projects

Thanks to all those at St Michael's Church for their

magnificent support.

Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

HM Government

💓 Historic England





March 2024

Funded by

pigeon flyer and presented the W.H.Smith trophy to be raced for by local flyers. He died of a heart attack during a finance meeting in 1918.

Waypoint 1 - At WH Smith grave look north, and you'll see some old tree stumps and an obe-lisk, you will pass a sequence of four crosses, the grey one on the end is our next stop.



7 ALF TANDY

Landlord of the Miners Arms on Dudley Road. Alf Tandy achieved minor fame for a remarkable act of kindness. In 1912, in pursuit of a minimum wage, miners went on strike. Industry relied on coal, so the knock-on effect was considerable. To help families who were struggling to buy food Tandy advertised that he would give away soup and bread from his pub. Crowds of people turned up, carrying jars, jam pots and other implements in which soup could be poured. So many arrived that the trams were held up. 500 loaves and a 125 gallons of soup were distributed, gaining Alf a special place in locals' hearts.

In June 1980, the Black Country Bugle published a picture of Alf Tandy's Soup Kitchen with the caption reading "...a publican who is still remembered for his kind heart during those 'Hungry Days in Brierley Hill..."

Waypoint 2 - An obelisk signifying the Harris family grave

8 HARRIS FAMILY



This memorial is an obelisk, something that became fashionable in churchyards in Victorian times after the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt.

In 1852, Peter Harris with George Pearson founded the Harris & Pearson brick-works in Brettell Lane. The Grade II listed office building is still there, thanks

to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund https://www.harrisandpearson.info/ . Harris's son carried on the business after his death. The Harris family were

philanthropic and the daughters who lived at The Elms (which stood on what is the site of the Civic Hall Green today) were very generous. Two Alms-houses in Brettell Lane were donated by the Harris family.

Many women and children worked in brick making. In 1864, Mr. I. H. White inspecting local brickyards, noted a girl of 12 working in a chain of 10 girls, emptying a kiln of 17,000 bricks. The bricks were being tossed two a time from one person to an-other, each brick weighed 7.5 pounds. Mr White estimated that in a normal working day the girl would handle 36 tons and make 11,333 complete turns of her body.

9 FISHER FAMILY

Frederick Pearson Fisher was a popular family doctor, working from Talbot House in Brierley Hill. The Fisher family lived at The Level in Brierley Hill. During the Great War, Fred served in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and was awarded the Military Cross, his citation read: "For



conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. On learning that the enemy had projected gas into one of our deep mine galleries, he descended to the bottom of the main shaft and established an aid post there. He then advanced with his party into the gassed area and rescued several miners. He remained at his post without relief for fourteen hours and saved many lives." Fisher Street is named after the family.

Military cross

Waypoint 3 - Car park adjacent to the Marsh family vault

10 MARSH FAMILY

In 1867, Alfred Marsh founded a pork business in Brierley Hill High Street. Aided by his wife, Clara, the business became the largest bacon processing plant in the United Kingdom and, indeed, Europe. By 1924 the factory, located in the car park at the rear of the Moor Centre was slaughtering 4,000 to 5,000 pigs a week (10 to 12 per minute) and had 75,000 hams in various stages of curing. In



one day, a man could salt 1,200 to 1,400 hams. Around 2,000 British farmers regularly sent their pigs to Brierley Hill from all over the country, including Northern Ireland. On Alfred's death, his

son, A. Ernest Marsh took over the business, and much of its success was down to him. Ernest was chairman of the district council for nine years until 1926 and donated Marsh Park to the town. He had a special interest in housing development and planning, and by 1937, 3,000 council houses had been built. Ernest also helped the Earl of Dudley found Dudley Zoo and was its first chairman.

Go to YouTube listen to 'I Don't Want to Be a Scratching' (Brierley Hill Song Book)

11 ARTHUR AND ALICE GIBBONS

Two graves adjacent to each other, the right hand one missing its top, belong to Alice and Arthur Gibbons. The Gibbons family made an extraordinary contribution to education in the town. Arthur was head teacher of Brockmoor School for more than 30 years, whilst also becoming the first principal of the art school in Brierley Hill. He was one of the designers of the terracotta figures to be seen adorning the former Technical Institute and Library in

Bell Street. His sister Alice was head of Bent Street Girls School for 20 years, whilst a second sister, Sarah (grave 17), was head of a Pensnett School. Two brothers, Francis & Owen were famous for their artistic skills and went on to found Gibbons & Hinton tile works (see grave 17).

12 JAMES WRIGHT AND BEATRICE PASHLEY

James Wright was the owner of the Delph Bottle works. In 1893 a leak of molten glass from a furnace was discovered. Usual practice in those pre-Health and Safety days was to go beneath the furnace and throw water on the lead. The glass would then solidify and seal the breach. On this occasion, two men, Albert Ryder and Enoch Oliver undertook the task. Tragically a firebrick fell lose and the molten glass at 1,370°C (2,500°F) cascaded onto the men. Their charred remains were recovered two to three hours later. Oliver is buried in an unmarked grave in this churchyard. Wright came in for criticism for insensitive comments he made at the funeral hoping that other workers would work to fill the two victims' places. In his defence, he also made the biggest contribution to the distress fund set up to aid the Ryder and Oliver families.

On the left-hand side of the monument is a family memorial to Beatrice Pashley Wright, James's daughter. The memorial describes how she died in 1929 "from illness following

devoted service in Russia and Poland throughout the Great War." Beatrice had converted to Catholicism in 1908 and had become a nun. She served in Lemberg (now Lviv in Ukraine) and during various sieges took shelter in the city's catacombs, from which they had to creep out at night to get water from public foun-tains. Beatrice became Mother Superior at the Convent of The Holy Family of Nazareth, Enfield, Middlesex.

13 HOLCROFT FAMILY

Sir Charles Holcroft (1831-1917), Iron and coal master and benefactor of Birmingham University. He was the son of Thomas Holcroft of Brierley Hill. In his youth he lived at Corbyn's Hall and in later life until his death lived at the "The Shrubbery" Kingswinford.

Holcroft took a great interest in geology and assembled an extraordinary collection of fossils. He was a member of the Governors of the University of Birmingham to which he made significant endowments. On his death his fossil collection was do-nated to the Lapworth Museum. Holcroft left almost £1.5 million on his death (equivalent to £87 million in 2024). Holcroft Road in Stourbridge is named after the family. See site 9 in the Brierley Hill Geological Heritage Trail.

14 DRINKWATER COLE

On Brierley Hill High Street is a historic fountain "Presented to the town by the first Local Board 1868". It is perhaps a very fitting that the first chair of the Board which installed the first water fountain in Brierley Hill was one Drinkwater Cole! Cole re-placed Richard Williams as manager of the Brierley Works, owned by Messrs. John Bradley & Co. For many years he was churchwarden and elected chair of the first local government board in 1867. See site 1 of the Brierley Hill Architectural Heritage Trail for more information about it.

15 CALEB ROBERTS

Roberts went into partnership with his father-in-law, E.Cooper. On the death of his father, who owned a timber works adjacent to the Nine Locks in the Delph, Roberts took over the works in partnership with his father-in-law, E.E. Roberts. Roberts and Cooper vigorously expanded their business over the next 40 years, taking over ironworks in Brettell Lane, The Leys, Bromley and Great Bridge. A further diversification into brick working is illustrated by the stones along the front of the church, which are stamped with the company's name. In January 1915, the company purchased

a captured German ship, Nauta, in order to aid their overseas timber trade. The ship was renamed "S.S. Brierley Hill". Sadly, the Brierley Hill was torpedoed and sank in late 1916. Always regarded as a 'hands on' owner, Caleb was killed in an accident at his works in 1918 when a boiler fell on him.

16 HIGGS & SONS

The son of an inn keeper, the host of The Golden Lion in High Street, Joseph Higgs was articled as a solicitor in 1875. He founded the solicitors Higgs & Sons which is still very much part of Brierley Hill - presently employing well over 200 people. Higgs married twice, first to Eliza, the daughter of Thomas Higgs of the Delph, and then to the daughter of Drinkwater Cole (Grave 14). Three of his sons became solicitors themselves. His was remembered at the time of his death for taking "Pearsall v Brierley Hill Local Board" all the way to the House of Lords. This established case law re compensation for highway works which was followed nationally for many years. He also organised the purchase of mining rights from the Earl of Dudley to prevent further homes collapsing in the East Ward of the town. At the on-set of the Great War, Higgs made Belgian refugees welcome at his home in Dudley Road.

17 WILLIAM & SARAH HINTON

The pale green dull surfaced stone is Westmoreland. In 1871 William Hinton was living in lodging at Chapel Street, Pensnett. Also lodging there was Sarah Gibbons, sister of Arthur and Alice (grave 11). They married in 1876. Along with the rest of the Gibbons family the Hintons made an extraordinary contribution to education in the town. William was the head teacher of Moor Street School for 32 years, and Sarah taught at Pensnett and became head mistress of the girls Board School in the district. Following retirement, William continued to chair the Kingswinford Board of

Managers. In 1885 Hinton went into partnership with his brother-in-law, Frank and Owen Givens and formed an art tile factory at Buckpool. Owen was formerly the curator of the Royal Architectural Museum in London and Francis was the art director at Doulton's Royal Pottery Lambeth. Gibbons, Hinton & Co. became one of the leading innovators and manufacturers of decorative tiles. Examples of the work can be seen in the foyers of the former Library and Technical Institute, Bell Street.

Gibbons & Hinton tiles

Waypoint 4

Chest tomb on southern wall of the church. To its left is the church's oldest gravestone, that of the Green family.





18 THOMAS CLULOW

Born in Tipton, Thomas Clulow moved to Brierley Hill at the age of 3. He was a Lime Master, lime being a crucial ingredient in the smelting of iron, causing the separation of the pure iron from the slag. The slag would be skimmed off, broken up and could be used to build walls. The wall in front of the War memorial adjacent to the church is one example. Clulow's gift to Brierley Hill was a journal (now available to borrow in the library) which describes the history of the town. Recording the social history of town, he had a fondness for nicknames and tells of "Mad Jack", a silly and trouble-some man who climbed onto the roof of the church and couldn't get down; "Nanny Diddle", a tall paralytic beggar; "Humpy Socker", a vendor of nuts who imbibed the 'wet'; "Molly Moggy", Bell Street scandal monger; "Blind Joe" from Dudley who moved with a stick; and "Petticoat Billy", always dressed as a woman. Clulow's son, John W., also interred here, became a well-known local solicitor.

19 FRANKLIN AND CLARK

Samuel Franklin was curate of St Michael's from 1858 until his death. He is one of only two curates who are buried in the churchyard. Christian tradition has it that

burials are made with feet facing the East, ready to greet the son of God on the day of resurrection. Clergy are buried in the opposite direction ready to greet their flock on that glorious day! The adjacent grave contains the remains of three children of David and Ann Clark. Ash Tree School, also known as Geary's (who Clulow refers to as "Old Nibble Stick") was situated just behind St Mary's Catholic Church in the High Street. With no National Health Service, dubious medical practices, a reliance on wells and high levels of pollution, the child death rate in the town was, to put it mildly, horrendous.

Waypoint 6 - the main entrance to the church adjacent to the Corbett and Stevens graves

20 JOSEPH STEVENS

This grave has an urn on the top which symbolises the soul. Joseph Stephens was one of the founders of the world-famous Stevens & Williams, later known as the Royal Brierley, Glassworks. See graves 25 and 26 for more information on this remarkable company and read site 25 in the Brierley Hill Architectural Trail.

21 CORBETT FAMILY - THE SALT KING

Joseph and Hannah Corbett ran a canal transport business at the Delph in Brierley Hill. Their son, Johr often piloted the vessels and studied his books as the barges made their way along the canals. As the railway arrived in the town, Corbett moved to the Leys Foundry, and then to the British Alkali Co., salt manufacturers at Stoke Prior, near Droitwich. With the engineering skills he had picked up, he identified inefficiencies in the manufacturing process for salt. Buying the company in 1857 his innovations drove production from 26,000 to 200,000 tonnes annually. He gained the title "The Salt King". As a philanthropist, Corbett donated the Corbett Hospital to Stourbridge, improved wages and living conditions for his workers, including new homes and a school, and substantially funded the renovation of this church where his parents are buried. He became an M.P. for Droitwich and built Château Impney as his home (now a hotel). Corbett Road and Corbett Crescent are local roads named after him.

Iron Railings - Look carefully at the Brecknell grave behind you. Brecknell was wheelwright who worked in Mill Street. You will see the remnants of some iron railings which used to surround the grave. These were removed during the Second World War to contribute towards the war effort. However, maybe the work was too hard as only the railings on this side of the church have been removed. Those to the North of the church remain in place.

22 RICHARD WILLIAMS

Employed as an agent in an ironworks, Richard Williams managed the Brierley Foundry on behalf of Foster, Rastrick & Company of Stourbridge - the makers of the early railway engines Agenora and The Stourbridge Lion (the first steam train to run in America). He lived at Brierley House, which was at the top of Moor Street. The 47 Acre Brierley Estate covered the area we now know as the Hawbush Estate, including Fisher Street, Addison Road and Waldron Avenue. The house itself stood approximately where Cooper Avenue is and had extensive outbuildings, lawns, pleasure grounds and gardens. It was Richard Williams who employed Morgan Hughes (see grave 2).

23 ROBERT DRAKE

Brierley Hill grew from industries sited along Brettell Lane, so prior to the Brierley Hill Local Board and the Urban District Council, the local government was known as 'The Brettell Lane District of Highways'. At annual vestry meetings in St Michaels, a surveyor (and rate collector) was appointed. For many years this was Robert Drake, which makes him perhaps Brierley Hill's first public servant.

24 JOHN PALMER

John Palmer is recorded in the 1851 and 1861 Census as living with his family in Kinver and is listed as a "roller of ironwork." By 1871 he and his family were living at Albion Street, Brierley Hill and near other relatives.

Waypoint 7 - boundary wall of churchyard, next to Church Hill

25 JOSEPH SILVERS

The graves of Joseph Stevens, Joseph Silvers and William Cox Stevens, between them tell the story of the creation of one of the most famous glass companies in the world: Stevens and Williams, or Royal Brierley.

Glass making was established in Moor Street in 1786 under the name of *Honeybourne*. In 1848 Josephs Silvers and Williams purchased the works and continued to make glass. daughter of Joseph Silvers, Maria (his cousin).

Samuel Cox Williams married the daughter of Joseph Silvers, Ellen, and when she died he married Ellen's elder sister Eliza. Stevens and Williams gave their name to the firm and in 1870 moved to their North Street site. The glass company continued to flourish and grow. It employed two internationally famous glass designers: Frederick Carder and John Northwood. Carder eventually emigrated to America and founded the Steuben Glass Works. Northwood achieved fame for recreating the Portland Vase and reintroducing cameo glass to the UK. A statue of him stands at one of the entrances to the Merry Hill Centre. It is hard

not to exaggerate the significance of Royal Brierley in the

William Stevens, son of Joseph Stevens, married the



Stevens & Williams wine glasses

See Graves 20 and 25

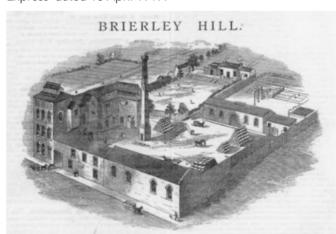


26 COX-WILLIAMS

The most common names on gravestones in St Michael's are Higgs and Cartwright. This branch of the Higgs family

DUKE OF WILLIAM

were maltsters and licensees of the Duke William in Delph Road. Thomas Higg's daughter married Joseph Higgs. Next door to the Duke William was the Delph Brewery which was run by the Elwell family, one of whom married W.H.Smith (Grave 6) and another Frederick Warren (Grave 29). The brewery was taken over by the North Worcestershire and then Kidderminster Breweries. It suffered from subsidence and was demolished in the early 1900s. Living nearby on Delph Road was Rev. Robert Harris who was fond of taking a walk before his Sunday morning service through the Delph, and would call for a glass of beer at a "wobble shop" - the first house by the Delph brewery. It was an age of practical joking, and one Sunday morning some of the customers put back the grandfather clock an hour. As a result, Parson Harris met his flock coming away from church as he reached the top of Rock's Hill. No service that morning. County Express dated 13 April 1917.



The Delph Brewery was a substantial business.

28 DUNN - THE FARMER

A reminder that not all of Brierley Hill was industrial. Rowland Dunn was a farmer living in Amblecote Road. The 1851 census has him living with his mother, Hannah who owned 20 acres of land, in Mount Pleasant. It is possible that the land farmed by Rowland was on the site of what is now the Blue Ball housing estate.

Pass the fallen grave of Harden Cooksey who was, as his grave states, the churchwarden at this church for many years. If you listen carefully, you may hear him turning in his grave at the mention of a church scandal! "In 1804, the

Churchwardens questioned Brierley Hill Chapel's bill for sacramental wine, it included three bottles of rum. Mr. Phillips, the Clerk of the Chapel, admitted that the rum was for his own use and was reprimanded for such misconduct. Not surprisingly, the Vestry refused to accept any more wine bills for Brierley Hill unless the wine was ordered by one or more churchwardens!"

Waypoint 9 - Warren grave - a large grave as you approach the rectory

29 FREDERICK WARREN

Born into a family of decorators in Church Street, Brierley Hill, Frederick married George Elwell's other daughter, Agnes in 1883. Soon after he was made licencee of The Golden Eagle in High Street (1884-1888) prior to moving the Old Whimsey Inn, Church Street - one of the chain of Elwell establishments in 1888. George Elwell died in 1908 and left The Plough Inn (located opposite this churchyard) and brewery and £3,000 to his daughter Agnes. W. H. Smith and Frederick Warren were forgiven 'certain moneys advanced on mortgages'. From 1899 to his death in 1912,



Property to his death in 1912,
Frederick ran the Plough
brewery. He also owned
The Talbot in Brettell
Lane and The Boat in
Brockmoor.

Waypoint 10 - Make your way towards the rectory garden wall, turn right and up the hill on your left. You'll see a white statue with an angel on top an adjacent to a holly tree, that's a next stopping point.

30 CHARLES HORTON SNR. & JNR.

Charles Horton (senior) was not a native of Brierley Hill but came to the town as an apprentice. He later built a business on his own account, becoming one of the largest and best-known builders in the neighbourhood. Many of the buildings he constructed have, alas, disappeared and included Brierley Hill Town Hall (on the site of the present day library), Moor Street and Hill Street Board Schools, Dudley Great Western Railway Station and a large hotel at Droitwich (which became the subject of legal action against



John Corbett). At the time of his death, he was working on Brierley Hill Post Office, which is still standing. His son, also interred here, built the former Library and Technical Institute, and carried out, at cost, the major improvements to St Michael's in 1899, including encasing the tower.

31 THE GORDON FAMILY

John Gordon was the Chartermaster, or "Butty", of the Robin Hood Colliery, Merry Hill. Chartermasters were contractors who ran collieries on behalf of the mine owners, employing the miners and getting paid according to the tonnage produced. He was active in Church affairs and a window in the church is dedicated to him by his wife Drusilla.



Drusilla continued her husband's work at the Robin Hood Colliery following his death. John's brother, Joseph, became the chief reporter of the County Express. He was a member of the UDC for 30 years, commanded Brierley Hill Special Constabulary from 1911 to 1928 and for many years was the honorary secretary of the local fire brigade. Gordon Crescent is named after the family.

32 EBENEZER COOPER

The son of a boot and shoemaker in Dudley Road. At the age of 9 he went to work at Oak Farm Iron Works in Kingswinford, walking there and back every day. He later worked at several iron works including ten years at Noah Hingley and son, Harts Hill. He commenced business on his own account in 1870, leading Hingley to claim he "would never pay another ironworker enough to become