

About Raikes Road Burial Ground

Opened in 1846 to deal with the overspill from Holy Trinity Church graveyard (at the top of the town), it was the Parish burial ground until 1876 when the municipal cemetery at Waltonwrays was opened. Following its closure it remained forgotten and neglected until the Friends of Raikes Road was formed in 2012. A Lottery-funded grant was obtained and the Friends have undertaken work to restore and maintain the site, balancing its original purpose with the ecology which has developed.

The last resting place of many local people, including the grandparents of Rudyard Kipling, the well-known writer, Raikes Road is of interest to those looking for family history, ecology, gravestones or just a peaceful place to visit. It is still a consecrated site.

To arrange a visit please contact the Friends of Raikes Road Burial Ground. Contact details can be found on the back page of this leaflet.

How to find us



Contacts

If you would like to know more then please contact the Friends by one of the means listed below. We would love to hear from you.

By telephone: 01756 700553
(c/o Skipton Town Council)

e-mail: les@skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk
website: www.frrbg.org

Welcome to

RAIKES ROAD BURIAL GROUND



A VICTORIAN CEMETERY IN THE HEART OF SKIPTON



WILDLIFE

Raikes Road Burial Ground is home to a wide range of different species of flora and fauna. There are 17 tree species, including beech and a host of fungi.

The Burial Ground's birds include typical woodland species such as the nuthatch and tawny owl. In winter, mixed flocks of great, blue, coal and long-tailed tits and goldcrests can be seen.

Insect species include the fascinating moth fly which has long been associated with graveyards. The Ground's star attractions are the mammal species. As well as the ubiquitous brown rat and red fox, there are also brown long-eared bats and, unusually, a thriving population of locally-rare water shrews.

To encourage more wildlife, bird and bat boxes have been installed and several areas have been planted with bluebells and other wildflowers.

BUILDINGS

There were two buildings on the site: A Chapel, built when the Ground was opened, and a Mortuary, constructed some time later, probably in the 1850s.

Geophysical work on the Chapel shows a two-cell structure, whilst recent archaeological work on the Mortuary has identified a subterranean building, probably unique to the area.



Gravestone detail



Water Shrew

PEOPLE

A cross-section of Victorian society can be found in the Ground. The higher ground is the best preserved area with wealthy people being commemorated by large and elaborate monuments. Over the years, many monuments have disappeared, but those which remain are interesting and well-preserved.

The Ground is multi-denominational, being the resting place of many Wesleyan Methodists, including the Rev. Joseph and Frances Kipling, grandparents of the famous writer, Rudyard Kipling.

Interesting people range from William Oldfield, an Optician and self-taught astronomer, to William Birtwhistle, from a wealthy cattle droving family. Other people are buried here whose names were never known.

Look out for unusual gravestones, some with spelling and carving errors, all adding to the personal nature of the people and the Ground.