

Family History Group

Monumental Inscriptions at Heptonstall

After many years of work by many different groups of people, we are now ready to publish the inscriptions from all the gravestones in Heptonstall Churchyard and the adjacent Burial Ground.



An early drawing of the Old Church showing gravestones covering the whole area.

It has been a mammoth task. There are over 2,000 gravestones, many very old, often illegible or difficult to read. Over time different groups from our society have tackled this project and the latest group have been working since 2010 to complete the work started, we believe, in the 1980s.

The final list is to be found on our web site and we hope it will be useful, especially to many family historians who wish to discover their local ancestors.

We have many people to thank: members of the society past and present, and especially the group of Heptonstall residents who recently undertook the transcribing of the burial ground.

Follow the link *Gravestones* on the web site to find the final list of the transcriptions.

Local family names

It has been most noticeable whilst we have been carrying out this work that there are many names that are common locally and, as family historians, we know this is the case throughout the country.

We have in the past mentioned the popularity of two of our local surnames, Greenwood and Sutcliffe, but below we have a list of the most popular surnames occurring in the Heptonstall burial records up to 1812, which we think is of interest.

We have taken this list from the transcription of the Heptonstall and Cross Stone registers, carried out by Douglas Wilson and published in 1998. In this publication Elsie Read has produced a frequency table of the most common surnames found in the burial registers and this corresponds quite closely with our observations.

28,949 entries were transcribed. A few entries were not wholly legible, or irrelevant. The list shows the names with the given number of entries.

Greenwood	2564	Uttley	321
Sutcliffe	2194	Ingham	320
Crabtree	840	Sunderland	303
Horsfall	772	Crowther	281
Barker	699	Law	261
Helliwell	669	Ashworth	253
Stansfield	596	Clegg	247
Mitchell	574	Fielding	245
Marshall	534	Taylor	240
Thomas	504	Bentley	236
Crossley	503	Walton	236
Shackleton	445	Townend	226
Cockcroft	424	Akroyd	214
Wadsworth	383	Wilkinson	210
Pickles	364	Spencer	208
Eastwood	332	Robertshaw	206
Smith	331	Midgley	205

It is noticeable that of the names on the list many are derived from local place names and specific to the Upper Calder Valley. Others are commonly found throughout all areas of the country e.g. Thomas, Taylor and Smith, and are often names related to an occupation or a family name.

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