

'A STROLL AMONGST THE STONES'

Take a short walk along a path through the lower churchyard and with the aid of these notes discover a few of the fascinating and poignant tales these stones can tell.

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A stroll amongst the stones

The churchyard at Old St Stephen's is 'busy' with nearly 900 memorials occupying a comparatively small space. This journey through the past highlights a few of the more interesting or intriguing memorials. They all face east, and are best seen in morning light. Many of the stones are eroded and difficult to read but have been included in this trail because of their special interest.

Text in italics is quoted from the gravestone.

The walk concentrates only on the south graveyard. The listed gravestones are indicated by a small white peg at the side of the stone. **Take care; the ground is uneven!**

The numbers (e.g. 619) refer to the entry in the book of Monumental Inscriptions where the full inscription may be found. Copies of the book can be seen in the church or purchased from Bay Museum.

The Stroll

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From the church porch turn left along the path to the east gate. By the notice board turn right into the graveyard.

865 Early death was a common occurrence in the Victorian era, particularly amongst infants and drowned seamen, as inscriptions in this graveyard testify. The first stone to the immediate left of the gate, however, records an accidental death of a slightly different kind. *...and of Robert [Emmerson] their son who unfortunately fell from aloft and was killed on [board ..AMDA...in] the Baltic May 23 1867.*

Notice the beautifully carved flowers on the other Emmerson stone immediately to your right.

Now follow the fence on the right for about 30 paces to where two stones block your route.

831 The Cooper stone nearest the fence highlights the *commonality* of death by drowning. The father drowned age 32 and his two sons aged 33 and 20. The wife and mother died age only 37.

In memory of Thomas Cooper Master Mariner who was drowned near Boulogne June 9th 1858 aged 32 years Also Elizabeth his wife died April 23rd 1868 aged 37 years Also William their son who was drowned in the Brig (R.H.Beck) of Whitby 1st September 1872 aged 20 years Also Thomas their son who was drowned at Newport Mews, U.S.A. August 13th 1886 aged 33 years.

830 **The Crosby grave to the immediate left** is that of another old Bay family and is a reminder of the grief many families had to endure. Jane Crosby was only 25 when she died in 1859. Her new born son died only five weeks later. Only two years later Jane's husband Allison Crosby *... was drowned in the Brig 'George Andrews' near West Hartlepool February 9th 1861 aged 27 years.*

829 **To the left again, the stone with a carved anchor is that of** Benjamin Avery who died in 1862 aged only 38 years. His three daughters all died young, Mary Storm Avery in the year before her father age 6, Jane only days after her father age 2 and Martha two years later age 3. The only son, Benjamin was drowned off the Holland coast in 1878. Benjamin's wife Mary outlived all her family and died in 1891 age 87.

827 **Now go down towards the wall..**

The last grave (with a carving of a pointing finger) is *in memory of John [Ragan] who was accidentally killed by falling from a cart near Cloughton October 16th 1883 aged 24.*

Walk forward about 12 paces to the grave with the kerbstone and carved rose on the headstone.

814 The bottom inscription records that *William Harold [Moorsom] beloved and younger son of the above was accidentally drowned on **Christmas Day** 1915 through the capsizing of a boat, aged 29 years and was buried on 16th January 1916 at Spezzia, Italy.* The Moorsoms' were an old Bay family, recorded from the 1600s

Walk forward for about 6 paces.

803 This lovely stone, erected to the memory of James Morton, displays the crossed crooks and lamb which were part of the regalia of the Ancient Order of Shepherds, an early friendly society which had a strong following in Bay. The stone (793) immediately in front displays the same symbols. Note also the winged cherub on the stone to the left.

From here head up diagonally towards the east window of the church. Half way up, over to the left, notice the heart in the hand on the stone in memory of John Thompson.

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The stone close to the fence is hard to read, but is very significant.

782 *In memory of William Poad Master Mariner who was drowned by the upsetting of the lifeboat while attempting to save the crew of the Brig 'Ann' of London February 4th 1843. In total six local men were drowned in this disaster. Four of the crew of the Ann were also lost.*

Continue ahead following the fence for about 10 paces to the white stone opposite the vestry door. The stone to the left of this is for a member of another old Bay family.

754 *In loving memory of Andrew Storm, Grocer of Robin Hood's Bay who died June 10th 1898 aged 82 years. "His end was peace".*

The fifth stone to the left is very old and worn, but holds a poignant message:

759 *Jacob Storm died May 3rd 1737 aged 24 years.*

And Neptune's waves have tossed me to and fro / yet now I am by God's decree in harbour here below, where I do safely anchor ride with several of our fleet, / yet once again I must set sail our Admiral Christ to meet.

The second stone to the left again, with a draped urn, commemorates:

761 *Christopher Truemanwho was drowned near Bilbao February 4th 1843 aged 21 years. There is a mystery here as we know that a Christopher Trueman was one of the men lost in the 1843 lifeboat tragedy in Bay on Feb 4th 1843.*

Go forward to the next line of stones and slightly left, to a stone with a small inset cross.

741 *James Storm...second mate of the "S.S. Saxon Monarch" lost with all hands October 1881.*

Several hundred fishermen were lost during the great storm that swept the east coast in 1881. The greatest loss was at Eyemouth on the Scottish coast where over 100 perished.

Turn right to the 7th stone up, with spiral columns, anchor and open book.

749 *Andrew Storm Captain of the Brig 'Magnet' who was lost in Sizewell Bay on December 27th 1886 and interred here February 15th 1887 aged 56 years. He was one of only a few 'Lost & Found' seamen buried in this graveyard. Many drowned seamen were never found and only a memorial records their passing.*

748 *The Storm gravestone to the immediate left is one of the oldest in the graveyard: Here lieth the body of William Storm enterd November ye 15 day 1703.*

Move forward to the next line of stones.

729 *The very clear polished granite stone with its leaning anchor is for William Harrison, a member of another old Bay family; notice the use of surnames as Christian names amongst his children.*

Now turn left down to the third stone of another Storm grave.

732 *There are 62 Storm stones in this churchyard, commemorating over 168 members of the Storm family. This stone, as with so many others, records a sad story.*

William Storm who died the 2nd March 1827 aged 71 years

By storms at sea, two sons I lost Which sore distressed me

Because I could not have their bones To anchor here with me

Go forward to the next but one line of stones and look carefully at the stone with the yellow panel.

702 *This stone records the death of JOHN STORRY of Wrelton who died December the () 1768 aged 25 years. John reputedly fell from the roof during the construction of Prospect House, now The Bay Tree, the first house to be built 'up Bay'. Do you see him falling?*

From here head diagonally left to the prominent white 'anchor' stone.

659/660 *This prominent and beautifully carved white cross and anchor marks the graves of members of the Knightly Smith family. Involved in the shipping business at the time when sail was giving way to steam they later became prominent local shop owners in Bay. William Knightly Smith's son George was captain of the steamer Wykeham which was lost near Lagos March 1883.*

Go past these stones then diagonally up to the horizontal stone (to Jane Estill) then continue past two stones to the stone to William Cornforth of Hawsker and his sons Estill and Jilson.

625 *Many of the gravestones in this graveyard record death by drowning, some like this one, far from home. Jilson ...who was drowned in the Barque "Heart of Oak" near Gibraltar April 25th 1866 aged 16 years.*

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Now go forward and a little to the right to the stone to Elizabeth Harland; the stone next to it is hard to read but records the death of another Elizabeth Harland.

620 Amongst several members of the Harland family recorded here is Elizabeth who died in 1848 aged twenty. We believe that one of the maidens garlands preserved in the church was made for Elizabeth. Further information about these special artefacts can be found in the church.

Immediately to the right is a stone with a four petalled flower in a circle.

619 This is the grave of Elizabeth & Richard Wilson who both died in 1873 in their late 70s and ...also *RICHARD their son lost at sea with the Brig "Jane" at Whitby December 25th 1851.*

From here go through the row and turn left.

609 The Watson gravestone poignantly records the early deaths of all five children of William and Mary. Rebecca Jane died on **Christmas Day** in 1874 when only three weeks old. In 1880 one year old William died followed in 1883 by Fanny Rebecca who died when only one year and seven months. Mary's husband died in 1886 and in 1895 fifteen year old Thomas Harrison was*drowned from the 'James Eleanor' at Southwold while on voyage to London and was found on the beach at Kessingland. Lowestoft.* The eldest son, Robert, died at Aden in 1904 at the age of twenty seven. Mary Mercy outlived all her family and was seventy nine when she died in 1926.

Return uphill to the two white crosses.

615/616 These two prominent white crosses mark the graves of members of the Cooper family. The Reverend Robert Jermyn Cooper was vicar of Fylingdales from 1858 to his death in 1916. He was largely responsible for closing Old St Stephens and the building of the new church which can be seen in the distance.

Turn round to look at three very old small stones, dating from the early 1700s. One of them has an inscription on the back:

629 *Here lieth the body of Elizabeth Ward inter'd October 23 / 1729 aged 77 years*

This brings to an end your brief tour of part of this graveyard. This closing inscription is to the memory of Mary Windle who was only 21 when she died in 1821. (716)

***Stranger or friend whatever cause has led thee to survey these mansions of the dead.
Behold the young short of meridian bloom , torn from her friends to moulder in the tomb.
Then here with serious thoughts thine eyes extend and view the sure resemblance of thy end.
Nor time delay thy thoughts to Heaven incline - since the next opening grave may chance be thine.***

You have been warned!

881 **Inside the church**, to the left of the altar is one of the oldest memorials. Dating from 1670 it has a fascinating tale to tell about Captain William Farsyde *buried in this chapel 13th October 1670.* The inscription is still clearly legible and is well worth reading.

590 If leaving by the west gate, glance to the right to see a large elaborate stone cross. This marks the grave of William Farsyde, the last of the Farsydes to live at Thorpe Hall. *To the memory of William Farside born Jan 25 1857 died March 2 1928.* Adjacent memorials commemorate his father, George James Watson Farsyde, his mother Hannah Hutton and his sister Mary Parkinson Hutton.