



STAINED STEEL:

TALES FROM STEEL CITY

Original short stories and a short walk through Sheffield's most atmospheric locations.

Sheffield U3A, Edited by Pat & Clare Ryan

Acknowledgements

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Each other!

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Foreword

Once upon a time there were two newcomers to this city of stainless and tarnished steel. They were not used to cities being country folk by tradition, bird song, pastoral scents and the occasional goat herd their experience and found this seven hilled, five rivered, two Universitied, post-industrial mini-metropolis a confusion of sounds, sights and accents. To get to know and to become to belong, they took to the back streets, side roads, alleys and ginnels and discovered a city of poetry, art, music, history, stables, architecture, energy and stories. So was born Steel City Wanderers, explorations on foot, on a theme of Sheffield, its history, its future, its people and its imaginings.

Creativity was the benchmark for every exploration, and this walk through atmospheric Sheffield brings iconic landmarks and hidden beauties with their specially commissioned short stories into the light. Each story is set in one of the locations, adding to the oral and written tradition of our city, and is written by an author who knows our city well and brings a long life of experience to the story telling.

Pat & Clare Ryan

Helping Hands

Paradise Square

Clare Ryan

Jan stood in the middle of Paradise Square and grumbled to herself, yet again, about the folly of deciding that this was a good place to meet. She glanced down the hill to the glowing windows of the Three Tuns and wondered why they hadn't agreed to meet there. At this time on a murky October evening the square was deserted and gloomy. She shuffled her feet and checked her watch. Only five minutes since she last checked. She was starting to get cold and the dampness was creeping through her coat. She looked at her phone to make sure she hadn't missed a call.

"Oh, well, may as well check my messages while I'm waiting", she thought.

A light rain started to fall and a small trickle of water worked its way beneath her collar. She could hear the occasional rumble of trams beyond the cathedral but here, in the square, it was very quiet. The rain grew heavier and a cold wind swept a few stray leaves in lazy circles across the greasy cobbles.

Jan rang Steve's number. No answer, again.

"I'll give it another few minutes and then I'll go and wait in the pub" she said to herself.

Jan looked around the square, at the Georgian facades marching up and down the hill, the plaques commemorating long forgotten musicians, Wesley's address to the people of Sheffield and the name plates denoting how many of these old buildings were now occupied by legal companies.

The wind had grown stronger and was howling round the house on the corner where her gaze was drawn to an upper window. She watched as a small white hand pressed itself against the bottom pane. A second hand and then a face appeared. A young girl was watching her. A feeling of great sorrow and longing permeated the damp air. Then another face appeared at the window, an older girl with a pale face. Both girls were looking intently at Jan. The smaller girl waved and then beckoned. Jan was perplexed. Most of this row of buildings housed offices and she couldn't understand how there were young girls in the building on the end.

A vague recollection of a school trip crossed her mind. Both girls were beckoning to her now and there was an urgency in their faces which prompted her to walk up the hill towards the building.

Jan opened her eyes to a confusion of light and sound. Coloured lights skittered across the wet cobbles as the wind howled and tossed paper and leaves into the air and all about her was crackle and hiss, the sound of voices and radios. She watched as rivulets of red trickled between the cobbles and she felt a sharp pain in her head as the square slowly stopped revolving and came into focus.

“Keep still madam, we’ll have you in the ambulance in a minute. Looks like you’ve been hit by a loose slate. These old buildings can be a bit of a danger in a gale. It’s a good job you weren’t a few feet away where the rest of the roof landed.”

Jan glanced up at the window. The girls smiled sadly and then turned and disappeared into darkness. Then she remembered. It had been called the House of Help for Women and Children. The hands of help had reached out across time to reach her too.

Paradise Square.

Best accessed by Silver Street Head or Paradise Street, Paradise Square is rightly described as “the most elegant survivor of Sheffield’s Georgian Townscape”. Built from 1736, the beauty of today’s square is the result of a comprehensive and sympathetic renovation in the mid-60’s. During its long and varied life, the square has been home to; the physician who attended at the birth of Queen Victoria, Sheffield’s Freemasons, a pub famous for its musical bands of blind beggars and a “House of help for Women and Girls in moral danger and from miserable surroundings”.

The square has been a market place, a venue for the preaching of John Wesley and a center of support and agitation for the Chartists Movement. The square declined in use and appearance becoming semi-derelict – why is it that Sheffield allows so much of its cultural heritage to decline, prior to the 60’s rescue.

The Cathedral Forecourt
The Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul, Sheffield
Margaret Maxfield

I know I'm not supposed to leave my current address, but I come here quite often to try to find out where I really am. As I hover over the forecourt at St Peter's (Oh I know very well it's changed but I can't bring myself to call MY church t'Cathedral) it all comes back to me.

When James Wilkinson were t'Reverend Minister at our Church, Tom, me and t'littlens all worshipped here. T'Reverend were all reight, but when John Wesley cum to see us in 1779, he chucked him out o' t'Church. So we all followed him to Paradise Square where he gave us a reight good sermon. T'Square were full to bustin wi folks. Tha couldn't a gor any more in.

James Wilkinson didn't really like t'poor folk but my Tom owned 'is own farm so we were all reight as long as we didn't try to mix wi t'gentry.

I died when I were 'avin my last babbie and my Tom ad me buried in t'graveyard. T'Grave were big enough to take all on us when necessary but when t'Church was made into a Cathedral in 1914, everything changed. T'Church were turned round - oh not taken up and turned really, but inside it were turned round and built out. And that's when our grave were built o'er. Now I'm not at all sure I know what happened to us at that time.

Looking round, I can see that one o' t' flagstones is from t'grave of William George Linley and his family. He were my Tom's dad who died in 1764, so he's still shown, but not for very long as all t'gravestones are gerrin wore away wi' all t'people walking all o'er them. And in any case that's not where he were buried. That were quite near our grave what were covered up.

Then when they started on t'Supertram all t'bodies that were still there were dug up and taken to Abbey Lane Cemetery. It were all supposed to be done in a caring way but someone looked behind the barriers that were shielding t'work and saw all t'bones being chucked into skips.

Anyway all t'names of them that were dug up are supposed to be in t'Archives whatever they are, but I don't suppose I'll be amongst them.

I'd better be gerrin back. I'll just look at that lovely memorial statue of James Montgomery. It's good to remember such a fine man but it's such a pity that no-one will ever know where I am.

The Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul, Sheffield

The cathedral church for the Church of England diocese of Sheffield, originally the parish church of St Peter, naturally enough fronts Church Street. Christian worship probably originated on this site in the 12th century, a succession of parish churches were, built, demolished and burnt down on this site with final rebuilding and additions being completed in 1880 and the transformation of cathedral status bestowed in 1914..

The attitude of the cathedral's dean and staff is very different from those of James Wilkinson, installed as vicar in 1754, with the cathedral having very much an open arms approach to the city, its denizens and visitors, hosting art exhibitions, debates, musical festivals and child care.

James Montgomery Statue at Sheffield Cathedral.

To the side of Sheffield Cathedral

Jan Henry

"Good day and God be with you my friends.

Welcome to my garden at the Cathedral.

Looking down at you, as you look up at me, allow me the pleasure of introducing myself.

James Montgomery Esquire, latterly poet and publisher in this fair city. You may have visited my theatre, the Montgomery on Surrey Street, or be familiar with my street and square in lovely Wath-upon- Dearne where I wrote some of my famous hymns.

"Angels from the realms of glory" is one of mine you may know. I wrote it for Christmas 1816 to celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

I stand here marking my second grave in this sacred place. I was moved here in 1971, on the two hundredth anniversary of my birth, from the hillside Sheffield cemetery where I had a view of the smoke laden city chimneys.

I campaigned with Parliamentarians, you know, to rid the city, or even the country, of the evil need for poor broken-backed lads to climb into those soot ridden chimneys to clean them. It were no more a national crime than a national disgrace.

A few steps from where I view you, is the very Cutler's Hall, where of an Easter Monday some good citizens of Sheffield gave an annual lunch for the Climbing Boys. I reported it in my newspaper, the Sheffield Iris.

Year by year, the change this attention to their welfare occasioned served to prove the need for it. These apprentices were tortured by this villainous trade, which cannot be taught without cruelty, learnt without suffering or practiced without peril to life and limb.

My friends, let me tell you a tale, for it is true. A lad who attended one of our dinners on Easter Monday came to a shocking and premature end. Two apprentices, not much more than a dozen years of age, were waiting on their sleeping master in a pub in Derbyshire. Men in drink ridiculed the

boys and tested them with a bribe of sixpence. Could they climb up the chimney there and then, though there was a fire lit in the range?

One lad was helped in to the flue and as he climbed up inside, a huge pile of soot fell down and set the chimney ablaze. The poor boy struggled to the bottom through the flames and was dragged out by the legs. He was so miserably scorched that he died after lingering three weeks in excruciating torture.

My Sheffield committee was first to present to Parliament the roused feelings of the public that mechanical apparatus should do the work of the climbing boys. Do you know their skin could barely be scrubbed for their annual treat over the road there?

I'll not delay you with the tale of the adventures in debate that took over thirty years to change the laws of England, just thank God that we got it done.

James Montgomery, at your service.

God keep you on your journey today."

Memorial to James Montgomery.

James Montgomery, born 4th November 1771 in Irvine, Ayrshire to missionary parents, was orphaned early, brought up in Fulneck, Leeds, and apprenticed in Mirfield and Wath upon Dearne. Learning the trade of publisher, Montgomery was twice imprisoned for seditiously reporting the fall of the Bastille and the truth of an oppression of political protest in his paper, the Sheffield Iris. Christmas 1816 saw him publish his hymn "Angels from the realms of glory", still in use 200 years later. Using his talent for poetry James Montgomery wrote couplets against the slave trade, the lottery and the cruel use of climbing boys as chimney sweeps. Furthering that goal he was influential and instrumental in getting this trade banned by law of Parliament. After his death in 1854 a public subscription raising a statue to him showed the respect felt by the people of Sheffield for this humanitarian and "revered townsman". The memorial is to the side of the Cathedral.

The Unveiling – 28 October 1925

Barkers Pool

Judy Mitchell

She was in place by 3 o'clock at the end of Leopold Street, directed into one of many silent, a waiting phalanx of bereaved family members. They had come here under these dark, grey skies to share again the bond of loss, an expression of collective memory.

Feet softly skittered and clattered on cobbles and tram tracks as black figures shuffled to assemble in sad but stoic sorrow. She pulled back her shoulders and lifted her head towards Barkers Pool and the tall flagstaff. Her unfashionable, black coat flapped against her ankles in the wind and hung off her shoulders. The coat had housed her very different frame nine years ago. Along the line she could see most people clutched a small wreath or simple bunch of flowers, pulled from allotments and green hedgerows, their simplicity contrasting sharply with the staged formality and pomp of the civil and military tributes. From the east of the City, she could hear the distant thud and rumble of massive forges and hammers and belching furnaces, relentless engines which had not paused to gasp at their loss.

Was it a grey day in Serre today?

She knew that the tiny, one street hamlet in northern France on the Somme River was so different to this huge, dirty, industrial place that had sent its Pals Battalion for that Big Push on the Western Front. This had been the City Battalion, the boys with soft hands, handkerchiefs and wristwatches. They were the university students, engineers, scientists, teachers, bankers and clerks with ambition, so many chances and opportunities all thrown away on that day, 1 July 1916.

That was the day she had lost her only son. He had been swept into this adventure in 1915; his eyes alight, tall, long-limbed and eager, filling every corner of their little cottage with patriotic fervour and energy. He had an answer for all her questions – he would be back soon, it would be over before she knew it, back to resume playing cricket as opening bat.

The letter bearing the news had arrived in the autumn. Missing presumed dead. No one had seen him die but they knew it was near Serre. No body.

Not knowing how he had died became a torment. The second letter had confirmed his death and had the usual platitudes, liked by his comrades, fought bravely. Those pals, like him, had been lied to and betrayed but fought like heroes nonetheless.

Later, newspapers had called it the greatest battle the world had ever seen. When the truth started to emerge, it had become the darkest day in the history of the British Army. When it was revealed that of the 651 men of the Sheffield Pals who were sent into action that morning, 512 had been killed or were missing or had died of wounds or been taken prisoner, it started to be known as one of the darkest days in the history of the City.

From the direction of the Cathedral, the procession had reached Barkers Pool. The Town Hall clock showed it was a quarter past three. General Sir Charles Harrington was received with a general salute. Arms were presented, the guard was inspected, the band played. From among the ranks of the old soldiers many instinctively stood to attention. Then, noise stopped and she could faintly hear the words of the speeches including those familiar words she had grown to despise - sacrifice, glory, selflessness, gallantry, glorious victory.

The moment of unveiling. Along the lines, hats came off and heads bowed. As the minutes passed, eyes that had been dry and soft became wet. Tears filled eyelids and over brimmed, hot globules of salty water again coursed down cheeks. Fists grabbed for handkerchiefs to stifle their grief. A bugle sounded. The Last Post. As the notes died away into the air, feet moved and the crowd breathed out.

Barkers Pool and The War Memorial

Barker's Pool is the city square in the centre of Sheffield. Named Barkers Pool, as originally on the edge of the early town and at the highest point it supplied drinking water which released from the reservoir was guided through channels that ran along the centre of the town's streets.

At the center of Barker's Pool is the First World War memorial unveiled on 28 October 1925. Four bronze figures of servicemen stand above panels showing the emblems of local regiments, Sheffield's coat of arms and the Navy, Merchant Navy, Army and Air Force. The four figures are of ordinary soldiers with their heads bowed and rifles reversed; two are clean shaven, two have moustaches. They are slightly less than life size. The figures were designed by G. Alexander, the memorial by C. Carus-Wilson.

David Wynne's Horse and Rider (a dark tale)

Fountain Precinct

Jane Barry

Between Barker's Pool and the busy Moor
There's a landscaped space where rich or poor
May rest in shade and peace is sure
A quiet bench is easy to secure

Close to a cat of mottled boulders, big and round
Is a child's wooden horse fixed to the ground.
Above one's eye a silver steed is frozen mid-bound
Lively and pawing and neighing without sound.

Bareback and naked and arrogant in his cruelty
The Elf king rides the horse each night with harsh severity.
It's exhausted and defeated but he goads it with temerity
He is immortal and empowered knowing no levity.

For he rides the hills and clifftops with the ease of an immortal
And his endless strength comes from inside a hidden portal.
The artist made them magical as things of grace and beauty
Not for one to be a tyrant and the other bound to duty.

David Wynne conceived this sculpture as an image full of spirit
But its secret life of wickedness is not to his demerit
That sorcerer from the Badlands casts a cruel spell

In secrecy, unheard, unseen, where mortals cannot dwell.

We enjoy that glorious image of a handsome silver horse
And its lithe and cheerful jockey on his frozen anchored course.

Never guessing at the magic that animates the pair
When from dusk to dawn at gallop the horse flounders in despair.

You can see if you look closely that its coltish limbs display
A hesitant reaction to something in its way.

Leaning back as if for ballast the rider smiles, uncaring
At the journey, harsh and punishing, they are forever sharing.

We would like to think that sculptures are exactly as they seem,
Not a worldly thing of beauty with a nightmare for a dream
That model hides its sadness which is felt throughout the night
When an evil silver jockey takes his haunted horse to flight.

Fountain Precinct and Balm Green Gardens

Fountain Precinct, a nine storey office block which may have had some architectural merit when designed in 1976, although the buff and brown tiles are not necessarily to everyone's taste nor a product of great imagination, is bounded by Balm Green, Barkers Pool and Leopold Street.

The front of the block is softened by a piazza, and two small gardens, over which rears the delicacy of David Wynne's Horse & Rider, and a small wooden horse – escaping from Stalag Luft or a child's plaything or an inspiration for artists, or a resting place where the homeless may dream of what may be.

Godot Unseen
Tudor Square, outside the Crucible Theatre
Peter Barclay

Daniel I'm Daniel
Gretrix I'm Gretrix
Daniel What are we waiting for?
It's Godot of course.
Gretrix So fast he'll speed by
Daniel In blindness whilst we dance.
Maybe we'll miss our chance - we always do!
Gretrix To see Monsieur Godot in full flight
dashing across our Tudor Square.

Daniel Like fishes flashing by under this October sky.

Gretrix Or bats that wheel and scratch our faces.
They are blind as the autumn.
Daniel But where is our Godot man?
Gretrix On a bike? Or walking by?
This optimist and this joker
poking fun at our Sheffield morning.
Daniel But sleep no more, Old Godot.
Daniel and Gretrix will find you yet.
Gretrix Spike your saddle, spoke your blasted wheels.
Daniel I feel it coming on –
an overriding wish TO DANCE.

But where is our man?
In Paradise or Tudor Squares?
Where is the joker I wonder.....
and It's getting cold -- I'm frit I tell thee.

Gretrix We need some tea.
From theatre bar or by a Winter Garden
whilst munching honeybuns.

Daniel Sweet dreams of cascades and falling waters
But how to get there - to be or not? That is the
question.....

Gretrix In Sheffield you need a blue bus pass to get
anywhere.

Daniel And Gretrix I feel that need to dance. .
Dance, dance. Oh Lord Let's do the Monkey
Dance -
Or the Bus Pass Dance -
Or the Cyclist Dance.

Gretrix I do love the Monkey Dance
(together) Humpa Bumpa
Stick it up your jumper.

(they continue with
linked arms) (they continue with linked arms)

Gretrix Oh this Monkey Dance, I do love it so
More and more, more and more we'll go.
Then we'll have some char and a chance to find
our Godot.

Daniel Him, I'm fed up with that waiting for Godot.
Where is he anyhow?

AUDIENCE YOU MISSED HIM.

Daniel Missed him? It's the same every day.

Gretrix Never mind Daniel, old Pal.
 Let's find that bite and a sweet cuppa.
 There's always another day tha knows.

Daniel Another day, another sweet dream,
 or the end of another heartache.

Peter Barclay bases his writing on observation of elderly Sheffield people, a familiarity with Becket's work and Shakespeare's Hamlet. To be or not to be: Hamlet Act 3.

Beckett, Godot and Cycling

Roger Godeau was a cyclist at Paris's Vélodrome d'hiver after the Second World War. The Vél d'hiv had been used as a transit camp for the 12,000 Jews rounded up in Paris during the occupation by the French police, from there, they were eventually transported to Auschwitz.

Some of the boys who hung around the stadium for a sight of their cycling heroes are purported to have told Beckett : " On attend Godeau." So Beckett perhaps had this sad setting and the shadow of the Holocaust, in mind when he was scripting the lines of the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon. Beckett himself in later years admitted to taking the name of Godeau, the choice of name must have been intended to be ironic as Beckett at least in his youth a keen cyclist, would have known that Roger Godeau specialised in the demi-fond in which competitors were paced by a motorcycle at high speed and there wouldn't be much waiting for Godeau to make his reappearance!

Tudor Square

Tudor Square is home to the Sheffield Theatres – The Crucible and Lyceum, both of which have staged the Becket repertoire.

The Angry Man

Upper Chapel, Norfolk Street

Denise West

“You’re not wearing that flat cap and raincoat when we go down’ t town”.

She issued this statement looking through the kitchen window, across the York stone patio to the one Grecian urn that was her garden. Her head bobbed up and down between the view and cleaning compost from her nails with a vegetable knife.

“Did you hear what I said?”

He lowered his newspaper slightly but she still couldn’t see his face.

“We’re down’t town already. This is where we live, Upper Chapel, Norfolk Street, Sheffield “. His delivery was monotonous and matter of fact.

“Alright no, need to be a clever dick. You never want to go anywhere. It were up to you, I’d be stuck in here forever. It’s not much fun for me looking after a chapel, surrounded by buildings and not having a garden of me own to sit in. You know I love to top up me tan, and it’s not the same on a patio - Grade 11 listed or not “.

He did not speak, but gripped the sides of his newspaper tighter until his knuckles shone white through the back of his hands.

“Just look at that urn, it’s a picture right now. If I could have a row of them you’d see now’t better at Versailles. But the bloody rules and regulations here, you could paper a wall wi em. Still, next time you go down to B & Q can you get me some” Miracle Grow”. Now I’ve put the forget-me-knots around the edge the pansies look pathetic, and could do with a boost, but don’t wear that flat cap and raincoat when you go to fetch it.”

“I’ve hung your blue suit on the wardrobe door. It could do with a brush down and don’t wear a pullover under it, it’s old fashioned, people don’t do it nowadays.”

“Perhaps *they* don’t but I do.” His voice was quiet but bristling with contempt.

“Just look at me nails. I’ve made a right mess of them I should never have gardened without me marigolds on. I shouted and shouted for you to find them from under the sink, but you took no notice as usual, pretended not to hear me . I’ll have to put some more polish on, after me bath that is. Oh!

and don't put that tartan tie on - you know the one. I think we bought it in Largs, anyway it's got soup down it. Next time you go down to B & Q you'll have to get some of that stain remover stuff and I'll have a dab at it "

He rustled the newspaper irritably as if straightening it and pulled it closer towards him.

"Just look at them birds on me urn, shoo, shoo "

She gave the window a hard rattle. The birds ignored her.

His tea-break over, he stretched and moved to get up for his afternoon shift.

"You can't wear your brown corduroys, by the way, when you change out of your work clothes "

He stopped in his tracks then turned towards her." They don't go with your grey jumper and anyway I think the cat from the Old Monk building peed up them when he got locked in your wardrobe yesterday, you can smell it . We'll have to get something..... "

"From B & Q I suppose " he announced smugly, marching across the room and slamming the door as he left.

He loved the quietness of the old meeting house building that greeted him on his rounds. On a day such as today with the rays of the afternoon sun emblazoned across the magnificent painted ceiling, it seemed to him on occasion that it was a beautiful, Persian, magic-carpet and the four winged evangelists in each corner would lift it upwards and away. He stopped on the gallery to look through "The Good Samaritan " window to the courtyard garden below where George Fullard's dramatic bronze statues graced the space. At first glance one might feel they are placed as natural occupants, using the courtyard as many do, to while away the time or have a sandwich in your lunch break. But to him they never seemed comfortable or compatible together. The "Angry Woman" and the "Running Woman ", unaware of each another, self-absorbed, alert and ready to go. He knew how they felt.

He headed back to the kitchen, the room was empty. He drank in the stillness, he could hear the city traffic but it seemed indistinct and far away as if the rush-hour had been muffled in a big fluffy blanket, and he in protective earmuffs. He gave the drooping fuchsia, some water. Suddenly, her head appeared around the door.

"Don't wear that flat cap and raincoat when we go down't town ".

She sat in the bath, bubbles up to her chin, humming whilst shaving her legs with his disposable Gillette. She heard a noise, he was coming up the stairs two at a time, running in fact by the sound of it. She could hear him banging about in their bedroom opening wardrobe doors and drawers. He's probably getting ready, she thought. Later, squeaky clean and wrapped in a lavender candlewick housecoat she emerged from the steamy bathroom.

"What's that stink? ", she said out loud.

Screwing up her nose she followed the trail down the stairs, through the back door and along the side of the building to the front courtyard. Rounding the corner she stared in utter disbelief at what unfolded before her. He had built a roaring bonfire near the sundial, and it was puthering with acrid smoke. He was throwing every piece of clothing and footwear he owned on to it. The final two items he held aloft above his head, ceremoniously. In the light of the fire she could see he was completely naked and moving in a frenetic way. He looked like Hiawatha doing a war dance. Suddenly he stood very still and casually dropped a flat cap and a raincoat into the flames.

Upper Chapel, Norfolk Street

The Upper Chapel is Sheffield's oldest non-conformist church with the congregation originating from 1662. The present building originally called 'New Chapel', was erected in 1700 and at one time had a congregation of 1000, which was one sixth of the population of Sheffield. The forecourt at the front of the building is a peaceful haven in our city, a point of tranquillity and peace, and home to a selection of statues by the Sheffield artist George Fullard, called 'Mother and Child', 'Running Woman' and 'Angry Woman'.

Holberry Cascades

Peace Gardens

Myra Kirkpatrick

A Trade depression in Britain in the mid – 1830s, together with disillusionment of the Whig government's 1832 Reform Act and the harsh New Poor Law were some of the reasons why the Chartist movement was formed. Started by the London Working Men's Association, with the help of a few Radical MPs, a six-point Charter was drawn up in an effort to enable the working man to have the power to improve the situation. Containing millions of signatures the Charter was rejected three times by the government.

In big industrial areas such as Manchester many of the cotton mills were at a standstill, working men unemployed or on short-time were starving – living in poor conditions in overcrowded cities with no proper sanitation or sewage disposal. In Liverpool one fifth of the working classes lived in one room cellars. In Leeds streets were a foot deep in rubbish. London workers had no option but to drink from untreated Thames water which led to epidemics of cholera, typhoid and other illnesses. One third of children across Britain and Ireland died before the age of five.

Ex-soldier, Samuel Holberry moved to Sheffield to work as a distiller where he met and married Mary Cooper in 1838. They both joined peaceful protests as Chartists to no avail. Militant leaders came to Sheffield and other areas to help organise armed Risings and Samuel and Mary along with others of the group plotted to use force, providing the Chartists with arms to use against the police, watchmen and soldiers – to fire the barracks and use barricades to possess the Town Hall.

The plot, however, had been exposed to the authorities by a Rotherham pub - landlord, who had infiltrated the group and he identified the leaders. Samuel and Mary were arrested. He freely admitted that he had aimed to upset the Government and that he was willing to die for the Charter.

He was convicted of conspiracy to riot and sedition and was sentenced to four years imprisonment in the Northallerton House of Correction, where it was said he was put on an illegal treadmill. Samuel died there of consumption. Later he was buried in Sheffield General Cemetery where up to 50,000 people attended his funeral.

In 1980 Sheffield City Council commemorated Holberry by naming a fountain in the Peace Gardens after him, which in recent years has since been replaced by the Holberry Cascades.

CHARTIST AIMS

1. Universal male suffrage (a vote for all men at the age of 21).
2. Voting to be done by secret ballot.
3. Equal electoral districts (constituencies) so that each MP would represent roughly the same number of voters.
4. No property qualification for parliamentary candidates to enable working men to stand for parliament.
5. Payment of MPs so that working men who had no other income except from their trades would be provided for when they left their jobs to enter parliament.
6. Annual elections. To check bribery and intimidation.

All the above, except the last one have been passed into our law over the last few years

The Holberry Cascades in the Peace Gardens

The Holberry Cascades are eight large water features that are dedicated to Samuel Holberry, who was the leader of the Sheffield Chartist Movement, and are located on either side of the four entrances to the main area of the Peace Gardens. The waterfalls from the bronze vessels represent both the pouring of water into Sheffield's five rivers, and the pouring of molten metal used in Sheffield's metal industries.

The area of the Peace Gardens was originally the churchyard of the 18th century St Paul's church. Sheffield, as usual, having little regard to its heritage, did not blink an eye when the church was demolished to make way for a proposed extension to the Town Hall – which was never built. Originally christened St Paul's Gardens, the signing of the Munich Agreement and an overwhelming desire for peace led to the informal naming as The Peace Gardens.

Fame at Last

Millennium Gallery Balcony overlooking Hallam University

Margaret Briddon

“Ere Wallace you seen all them folk on that balcony?”

“That I have Grommit and they seem to be looking over there at ‘University. You’d think they’d be looking at the Millennium Gallery, cos that’s where it ‘appened.”

“That’s what I’d a thought too, Wallace. I’ve ‘eard it were a nasty business, but what exactly was it?”

“Well, it seems as tho’ there was a wedding goin’, on with lots of guests and they were all looking round. A guided tour, like. But when the guide showed them old Barkingmad, that crazy monster made out of cutlery, with a head like a giraffe, the bride and groom said as how they hadn’t time to look at him. They were there to look at the art, not interested in cutlery; saw it every day at home, and off they went.”

“Ooh, er, he wouldn’t like that, old Barkingmad, a proper show off ‘im. I’ve seen ‘im strutting his stuff and rattling about when there’s no folk around. Best not to ignore ‘im.”

“That’s right lad, I wouldn’t tangle with ‘im. Too many cutting remarks. Really hurtful. Well it seems that as soon as the bridal pair were alone, old Barkingmad went wild and chopped them up. Dead. There was blood all over the place.”

“Good Lord Wallace. So what ‘appened to Barkingmad?”

“Well, ‘ee was dismembered, on the spot. Just a pile of knives, forks and spoons. No doubt he’s been melted down now. Serve ‘im right too, but they do say there’s a strange rattle to be heard at night. It gives the caretaker the shakes.”

“But then why are those old folk still lookin’ at ‘Hallam University and not the Gallery? I know, I’ll bet they’re going to put one of those blue plaque things on the wall.”

“For a famous person! That’s it Grommit! Who’s the most famous person who ever went there then?”

“It’ll be old Nick.”

“Oo-er old Nick?”

“ Not ‘im. Old Nick, our Boss.”

“Old Nick? That’s right Nicholas Park. Well done lad! Ooh, Grommit we’ll be on that plaque, cos’ that’s where we were conceived. Do you realize our names will be on it,? We’ll be famous.”

“Good Lord. Mind you, Wallace, they’ll ‘ave to put old Shaun the Sheep on too , it’s only fair.”

Millennium Gallery: An Unusual Wedding

Millennium Gallery Balcony overlooking Hallam University

Margaret Briddon

The Gallery Staff welcomed the wedding party and the handsome couple, Jane and Todd, posed before a lovely floral display. One for the album. Passing customers gazed, admiringly.

The ceremony went well as afternoon sunlight filtered through the windows of the Arundel room. When all had dined and the speeches were ended, the party were given a guided tour. Jane and Todd were extremely artistic, having met at Art College. Their shared interest in arts and crafts had almost become their whole world, hence their choice of the Gallery as a wedding venue.

The guests first admired the eye-catching Barkingmad, a strange monster created from scores of pieces of cutlery. Jane’s mother imagined that his giraffe like head quivered with pleasure at the attention he received.

“Come see this handsome monster, Jane.” she called, but almost felt sympathy for him as Jane called back.

“We’re not interested in kitchen stuff; we’re here to see the art.” Keen devotees of Ruskin, the pair spent two blissful hours examining his work. Meanwhile their guests had toured the Gallery, admiring the beautiful silverware, cutlery and cooking implements, all manufactured in Sheffield when it led the world in steel and silverware manufacture. As the gallery closed at six, Jane and Todd waved everybody off, suddenly excited because they’d booked the new attraction. A night in the Gallery.

To the amusement of the Caretaker the pair waltzed their way round the whole area and gorged themselves on cake and champagne, insisting that he indulged too. However, when they unrolled their sleeping bags he beat a hasty retreat to his quarters next door.

Silence, then an ominous rattle echoed around. Barkingmad was angry. Not just angry but enraged. Exploding into life he summoned the cutlery and kitchen implements and organised an attack on the sleeping newlyweds, who'd shown no interest in him. The Bowie knives, axes and penknives made short work of the couple. He even insisted that the delicate cucumber slicer dealt with their fingers and toes. Collecting bags from the shop labelled 'Shiny Sheffield', they quickly cleared the carnage, cleaning up with champagne and serviettes.

Amazingly no trace remained. Next day they were missed but the caretaker could only report on the blissful scene he'd left, however he distrusted the wily Barkingmad and wondered where the bodies could be buried. The unprecedented summer growth of the orange tree in the Winter Gardens gave him his answer.

Millennium Gallery

The Millennium Gallery is an art gallery and museum in the centre of Sheffield adjacent to the Winter Gardens. The gallery is a little visited view point overlooking the main buildings of Hallam University and the toppling hill down to the railway station.

Access the gallery either, excitingly by pushing through the emergency exit doors, or sideways, around the back of The Graduate Pub via the hidden garden.

The Hubs

The Hubs, Hallam University Students Union

Susan Halpern

They came from Grinder's Hill, or what used to be Grinder's Hill. A remnant of the old arched sign protrudes from the rubble. I stand here with the others outside the Hubs awaiting their arrival. My heart is pounding.

We had spotted them from one of the high towers. After working on the rotation mechanisms of all four towers for several days, we had at last managed to repair them. Thank goodness we found the parts we needed amongst the large stockpile of oddments we had stored in the old Activities Hub.

So, at last, we could see the extent of the devastation that had hit Sheffield. To the north east, the train station, bus interchange – gone, and flat wastelands beyond. To the North, the tall University Towers, all that student life, studies, knowledge, history and scientific innovation – our hearts sank. To the West, the heart of the City; daily life, citizens meeting, shopping, eating, commerce, leisure – extinguished. And over there (*points towards the Showroom/Galleries area*), film, art, culture, laid waste.

Only this, The Hub, still stands in its circular glory, always an icon. But the silence is deafening. Sometimes in the past weeks since The Worst happened, I thought I could hear the echoes of student laughter – for here was a centre where the young gathered. Relaxation, hard play, drinks, laughter. I hear their voices in the circular walls of each hub. In the old Stage area, where we now sleep, I can hear faint voices and applause if I listen hard into the stillness of the night. My mind is beset with ghosts of our so precipitously lost past.

And now the moment has come and the invaders are getting close. They move so slowly. Who are they, and will they be Friend or Foe? Can we tell them our story? We worked so hard to make this Hub a fortress, and we were successful, our clever band of visionaries, scientists, technicians and inventors. Despite the scorn of many, we foresaw the invasion and they let us have our way. We were still working on the fortifications when The Worst happened, and what we had accomplished was enough to keep The Hub standing. As our food supplies diminish, our captors or killers, maybe our saviours, close in to take over and change our lives forever.

Outside The Hubs, (An alternative View)
The Hubs, Hallam University Students Union
Sue Halpern

“This is the fortieth day since The Worst happened. I’ve waited, I’ve watched from the high towers (*points upwards to the lookout projections on the roof*), I’ve lingered by the doors here, my heart in my mouth. And now it beats too strong, racing, pounding in my chest. And the air is fresh, beyond belief. God, Fate, whatever whoever you are, thanks be for saving me. The other day I set all four of the rotating towers in motion. I looked out at the devastation of what was once our Sheffield. In all directions – here to the north/south/east/west (*points*) – all laid waste.

And on this the fortieth day, I saw *You* approach from Grinder’s Hill. I am the first to come out. I look at *You*, and I can’t tell – Are you Friends or Foes?

So you don’t answer! I’ll tell you more.

Within the building here are others of my type. My friends feared to test the air. They are still within, waiting. We were amongst those who knew the invasion was coming – we saw the signs, and we were scorned. Yet we gained authority to work in this building. Among us there are clever men, scientists, inventors. We were on our mission here, in the Hub, to fortify it against chemicals, missiles. It has not let us down, though our work was not yet complete when the attack happened. Still it stands, an icon as ever.

This was a place where students came for pleasure. There, over to the north, was the Hallam University with high towers and poetry – now nothing can be seen of it. Over there – Sheffield bus and train stations – our transport system, now no more. Over there, art, films, culture. And to the west, the centre of our city where life happened, day by day, people shopping, meeting, eating – where is it all now?

Within, we have command of The Hubspace. On level 1, in the area of The Stage and the Common Room, is our encampment. We have had everything we needed to survive, but now our supplies are diminishing. Down here, Bar Phoenix (a phoenix arisen, indeed) has served us well as our food hub, and our working tools are stored in the Support Pod and the

Activities Pod. They may be of interest to you. Please deal well with us, with our home, Escafeld, Sheffield, and now by what name?

This building, does it look mean or mighty to you? We have made it our fortress, our heaven and our hell. Now it stands, like Ozymandias. It's a poem by Shelley. Do *you* have poetry? There was once a great ruler, Ozymandias. He lived a powerful life, his kingdom flourished. But many years later the kingdom was laid waste, and all a traveller could find was a shattered statue. And now I feel as the poet felt: -

'Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck,
boundless and bare, The lone and level sands, stretch far away ' ----
Boundless, and bare."

The Hubs.

The Hubs, adjacent to the red brick and highly conservatively designed University Science Park was originally the National Centre for Popular Music, a National Lottery funded initiative which opened in March 1999, and only lasted eighteen months before closing its doors. A subsequent short lived life as a music venue was no more successful and eventually the building was purchased by Sheffield Hallam University and became the hugely successful Students Union. The building is a true example of "pop" architecture, and is four stainless steel drums, surrounding an atrium area. The drums, whose tops were built to rotate in to the wind, no longer do so and now point randomly out over Sheffield.

The entrance to the Hubs is equally "poptastic", with a series of canted steps with tubular pinball flippers, stone balls and a red pathway.

Duologue
Sheffield Railway Station Forecourt
Lorraine Wickham

The scene is set on the Midland station forecourt, in earlier times, when it was possible to park cars in the late evening, while enjoying Sheffield's social life. The parts are spoken by one female (F) and one male (M) voice.

M: It's Friday night, not that it's any different to me, but the youngsters all come out to enjoy themselves. It's cold, it's dark and the rain is relentless.

F: Friday night and the time is right for meeting friends, a few drinks, non-alcoholic as I'm driving, and a dance at the Leadmill. Shame about the rain, but at least I've parked just across the road.

M: Now, here's some good news. A car boot yields to my pressure on the release button and I escape from the rain, across the rear seat and relax into a warm sleep.

F: A quick goodnight and I leap inside, seize the wheel, turn the key in the ignition and check the rear view mirror. What is it? Not outside, but inside. Is it a coat? No, a pile of coats? It's a man wearing a coat.

"Hey" I'm out of the car in a flash, rapping on the window of my friend's car. "There's a man in my car."

There are no jokes, no questions at all. We both return to my car, knocking on the windows and offering helpful advice like "You're in my car" to a figure intent only on sleeping.

It's just outside the railway station so I find an office, to summon the Transport police. My friend returns to her car, driving towards mine with the headlights on full beam, blocking my car's path.

M: It's like a police cordon surrounding the car, which is illuminated by the car ahead. Anyone would think I'm a dangerous criminal. I sit up and light a cigarette to calm my nerves.

F: I can't believe the number of officers surrounding my car and yet no one seems to have mentioned the obvious. The guy is still in there and he's smoking!

“Hey” I open the door to make sure the guy gets the message loud and clear. “Nobody is allowed to smoke in my car!”

The boys in blue step forward and help the guy out of the car. Maybe they were afraid I was going to help him out myself. They also check the interior, recovering his bag and a pair of glasses.

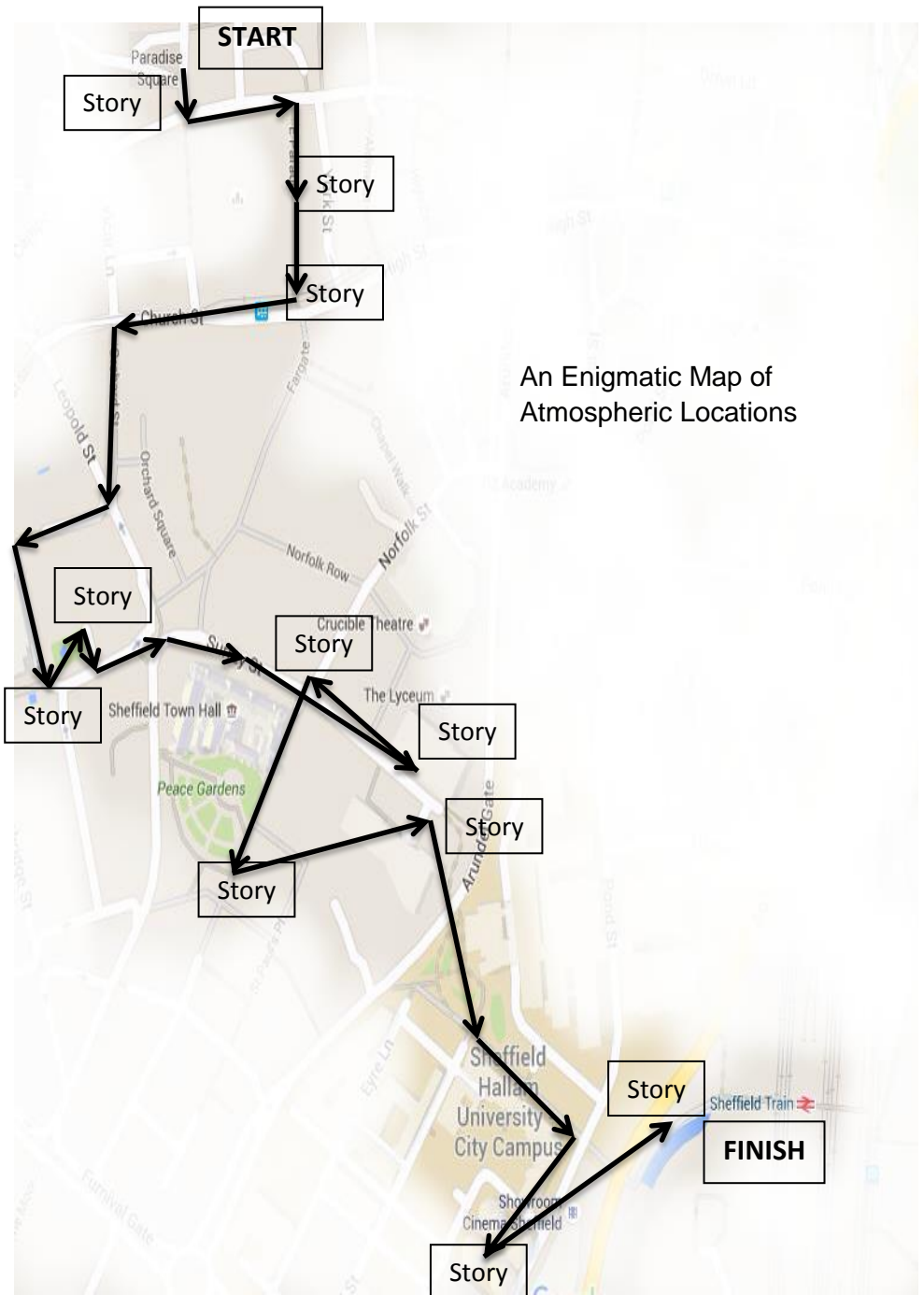
Strangely, the man did not speak, even after his possessions were returned to him. The sight of his glasses gave a glimpse of humanity to the erstwhile mad axe-man of my thoughts. I enquired what would happen to him and was informed he would spend a night in the cells.

I hastily added, “Don’t worry, I won’t be pressing charges.”

The guy just smiled as they led him away, living proof of what I had been told. He had the best outcome possible, a bed for the night. As for me, I still check the rear view mirror whenever I climb into my car, just in case there’s a foreign body, inside the car.

Railway Station

Originating when Sheffield and the country was served by multiple railway companies, and still known to many as the Midland Railway Station, this largely classical aspiring building faces out over its cast-iron porte cochere to a magnificent public square with tumbling fountains, soaring flights of steps and a steel wall of water. This story is set in the pre-pedestrianisation period when the station front could be approached by car and car parking was permitted.



An Enigmatic Map of Atmospheric Locations

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