

Batch 1: Ruskin Museum Visitor Web Biogs

Benjamin Creswick

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 27

Address at time of visit: 120, Bell Hagg Road

When Dr Balbirnie advised this ailing Walkley knife grinder to change job for his health, little did he know he was nudging a notable artistic career. Creswick spoke of being inspired by the Walkley Museum and showed the doctor a small sketch of Dante. The doctor, impressed, commissioned a portrait bust. In the 1870s Creswick and his family lived at three different Freedom Road addresses. By 1881, Creswick was at 120 Bell Hagg Road, recognised by Ruskin as an artist, and had already exhibited numerous busts of the great and the good, including Ruskin himself. Creswick went on to create the friezes that adorn the Sheffield and London Cutlers Halls and the Bloomsbury Library. His work appears on public buildings from London to Leeds, and even in Malaysia, for whom he sculpted Chung Keng Kwee, the founder of modern Taiping.

<http://benjaminreswick.org.uk>

Omar Ramsden

Date of visit: 1887

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: 70 Fir Street

Omar Ramsden was a Walkley-born silversmith who became one of England's leading designers and makers of silverware. He was one of the most successful silversmiths of his generation, producing high-quality silver which mixed Arts & Crafts idioms with a large dose of historicism. He learnt early in his career that his talents lay in designing and organising the work rather than making it himself and he employed up to 20 highly skilled craftsmen.

Omar was born on 21 August 1873 at 16 Fir Street, Walkley, the eldest son of Benjamin Woolhouse Ramsden (engraver) and Norah Ibbotson. (The family home became Number 70 when Fir Street's houses were renumbered between October 1880 and April 1881.) Benjamin was originally an Uppertorpe man, Norah from Prospect Place. Omar was baptised at St Phillips, Shalesmoor, where his parents had been married in November 1872. His striking name seems to have been a tradition within Norah's family, perhaps picked up in their family trade of ivory dealing.

Omar spent several years of his childhood in the United States, making the crossing by ship from Liverpool via Ireland – quite an experience for a young boy! The family returned to England from Illinois in 1887, the same year he first visited the Ruskin Museum.

In 1887, Omar was apprenticed to a silversmith, probably not his father as Benjamin was employed at this time and did not become an employer until around 1892 (*The Weekly News*).

In 1888 Omar began a distinguished career at the Sheffield School of Art, winning a succession of prizes and awards. It was here that he became acquainted with Alwyn Carr, his future business partner. At that time, Alwyn was living with two maternal aunts at 114 Freedom Road, Walkley. His father was a butcher and lived with his wife and Alwyn's two younger brothers at Elm Farm in the Upper Shiregreen/Wincobank area.

Ramsden and Carr embarked on a tour of Europe which lasted between 6 months and 1 year. They travelled through Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. After his return, in 1890 he began evening classes at the Sheffield School of Art.

At the time of the 1891 Census the Ramsden family still lived at 70 Fir Street. Father Benjamin was employed as a manager in a cutlery, silver and electroplate firm, though became himself an employer the following year – unsuccessfully as it turned out, he was bankrupted in 1896.

In 1881, 17-year-old Omar was an assistant teacher of modeling at the Sheffield Board School and a silver modeller, designer, chaser and engraver at Sheffield School of Art, winning two School of Art prizes in 1891-2.

The Master Cutlers' prize of £5.5s for a piece of ornament modelled of original design or from the cast, not less than 3ft. super in area and cast in plaster by the student Omar Ramsden.

Messrs. Martin, Hall & Co.'s prize of £5.5s. for best design for antique candlestick about 10.1/2" high and a small candlestick 6 – 6.1/2" high to match the above – Omar Ramsden.

He won a scholarship to Sheffield School of Art and to summer schools at the Royal College of Art and V & A (1894). In 1895 he created a ceremonial key for Sheffield Municipal Buildings, which is now held at Sheffield School of Art/Hallam University.

[image of key / image of school of art buildings]

While Benjamin endured bankruptcy, there was no stopping Omar's rise. In 1897 he won an open competition to design the City of Sheffield's Civic Mace – still in use today, although at the time its manufacture had to be deferred until Ramsden and Carr had returned from Europe.

[image of mace]

On their return in 1898, Ramsden & Carr registered their joint silver mark and moved to a London studio complex, sharing accommodation at No.6 Albert Studio in East Battersea, Wandsworth.

Over the next 10 years, their reputation grew and by 1911 Ramsden and Carr were joint occupiers of St Dunstan's studio in Seymour Place, South Kensington, London.

In 1914, Alwyn went to War. He enlisted with the Artists Rifles and in 1919 the Ramsden & Carr partnership was officially dissolved. Omar then adopted the new mark, OMAR RAMSDEN ME FECIT ('Omar Ramsden made me'), an adaptation of their previous OMAR RAMSDEN ET ALWYN CARR ME FECERUNT.

In 1921 Ramsden was made a member of the Royal Miniature Society and exhibited over 90 works with them. In 1926 he made the WWI memorial for Barrowby, Lincolnshire.

Relatively late in life, on 3 September 1927 Omar married Annie Emily Downs-Butcher in St Augustine's, Kensington, Middlesex, less than 6 week after her husband Charles had died in a nursing home in Peckham. Annie had two adult children and her address at the time of marriage was given as the extremely stylish Bailey's Hotel, Kensington. [[link http://www.millenniumhotels.co.uk/millenniumbaileys/about-hotel/history.html](http://www.millenniumhotels.co.uk/millenniumbaileys/about-hotel/history.html)]

By 1934 Omar had premises at 38 Maxwell Road, Fulham as well as the St Dunstan's studio, and it seems the household had a butler, who witnessed his will.

In November 1938, Omar was elected a member of the Royal Scottish Academy. He died within a year (August 1939), shortly before the outbreak of WWII, and left over £13,000 to Annie – a legacy worth something over £700,000 in today's terms. (Looking at Annie's subsequent legacy in 1950, it seems likely she had some private money of her own, as she left over £27,000 to her theatre manager son.)

Omar's former business partner Alwyn survived him by only a few months and died in April 1940 at Windsor. He left estate worth £20,413. 16s. 4d, divided among his brother Arthur Carr (a private tutor), Joan Carr, spinster, and Arthur Henry Hughes, with whom he had enjoyed a relationship lasting over 30 years.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Ramsden

Willis Wreaks

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 10

Address at time of visit: 133 Duncombe Street

Willis Wreaks was born in 1879 to John and Elizabeth Wreaks. He was baptised at St Michael and All Angels, Neepsend, and the family lived at 48 Watery Street. John worked as a silver engraver, eventually becoming a heraldic engraver. [[link http://www.handengravers.co.uk/hand-engraving/seals-and-heraldry](http://www.handengravers.co.uk/hand-engraving/seals-and-heraldry)]

Willis visited Ruskin's museum in June 1889, aged 9. By then he was living at 133 Duncombe Street, with his Mum, Dad, all 6 of his siblings and an aunt. It's possible that Willis visited as part of a school or group visit, since all the other names appearing on the same page as his are of similar age, and local streets – perhaps they were simply a gang of kids at a loose end that day.

Exam results in local newspaper reports show that Willis attended a number of classes at the Sheffield School of Art between 1895 and 1901, and won at least 8 prizes for his work. He studied various skills, including freehand drawing, design, modelling design and light and shade.

Willis became a die sinker, engraving the dies used to stamp designs on coins or medals. In 1906 he married Ellen Etchells and the couple had one child, Marie, in 1911, by when they were living at 178 Western Road.

Willis died in 1954 in Sheffield. Both his parents are buried in Walkley Cemetery.

Blanche Broomhead

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 18

Address at time of visit: 9 Bell Hagg Road

Blanche Broomhead was born towards the end of 1870, second child of Annie and Thomas Henry Broomhead, a silversmith, who lived at 9 Bell Hagg Road.

Blanche visited the museum in June 1889, aged 18. Given that she lived on the same street it had taken her some time to get round to it!

Some time between 1891 and 1901 she became housemaid to a Sheffield-born cutler and shopkeeper in Birkenhead.

Samuel Senior

Date of visit: 1887

Age at visit: 22

Address at time of visit: 29 Tennyson Road

Samuel William Senior was born in Sheffield in 1864. His father was a pen blade forger (although he later worked as a warehouseman), as was his brother John. Samuel himself worked as a pen and pocket blade forger for most of his life.

In 1887 he married Gertrude Colton, daughter of a Walkley file forger and they had one child, Florence. By 1911, Samuel was working as a theatre attendant, possibly due to poor health, as Samuel died in the same year at the age of 46.

Fanny Spooner

Date of visit: 1880

Age at visit: 48

Address at time of visit: 22 Bole Hill Road

Fanny visited the museum in September 1880. The entry above Fanny in the visitor's book is Mrs Spooner of Hallam Gate, Broomhill, and Fanny was part of an extended Spooner family who farmed in various places at Bole Hill, Lydgate Lane and Broomhill, and presumably for whom Spooner Road is named in Broomhill.

Fanny was born in 1831 the youngest child of farmers Joseph and Sarah. She had 2 older sisters and 4 brothers. By the time she was 20, Fanny was living in the family home and working as a servant (some family members seem to have habitually recorded themselves as 'servants' even while living at home – perhaps a bit like the arrangements in *Wuthering Heights*). By the 1860s, her generation had inherited the family land holdings and she was established as Housekeeper to brother John, who by now owned a quarry as well as the 35-acre farm. The farming household included brother Henry, nephew John, and two unrelated teenage servants.

By 1871 the family had named their property Spooners Farm, 22 Bole Hill Road. John was head of household with 51 acres. Henry by now is recorded on the Census as *brother and farmer* not servant and Fanny as *sister*. Nephew John Ellis was still living at the farm, and the family had two 16-year-old servants Jane Williams and Fred Redfern.

When John died in 1875, Fanny took over the household, and lived on her private income from land and houses – the local newspapers at this time begin to carry adverts for sublet parcels of land, as well as invitations to apply to Miss Spooner for domestic servant roles. Brother Henry remained with her, unmarried and with a private income. Nephew Ernest and one teenage servant lived with them. It was at this stage Fanny visited the local museum.

By 1891 Fanny and Henry had moved out of the farm to 61 Bole Hill Road with one servant, Mary Crawshaw. Henry died a year later and by 1901 Fanny had moved along the road again to number 245, where she lived with a widowed servant and her child.

When she died in 1906, Fanny left over £2015 to two cousins, equivalent to anything between £200,000 and well over a million in today's terms.

Richard Mabbott

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 11

Address at time of visit: 56 Fulton Road

Richard Mabbott was born in Sheffield in 1878 to Charles (a razor haffer) and Sarah. It is possible that Charles had come to Sheffield for work, since the Mabbotts were a Lincolnshire family, though Charles was born in Kent.

In the 1881 Census the family was living at 33 Spooner Road. Richard may have been born there or in the house of his grandparents who lived at number 41 Spooner Road.

Richard visited the museum in June 1889 aged 10 or 11, listing his address as 56 Fulton Road. All the other identified visitors from the same page of the visitor's book are of a similar age and a number of them lived on Fulton Road or nearby streets. It is not clear if they visited as a group or as individuals.

The family remained at 56 Fulton Road and over time Richard accumulated six younger siblings.

By 1901, Richard had begun work as a butcher's assistant. He married Gertrude Alice Siddall on 16 July 1906 at St Philip's, Shalesmoor. By 1911 the couple were living at 80 Commonsides with their first child Marjorie, aged 8 months (Marjorie died in 1915 aged 5). By now, Richard was working as a Butcher working for the Co-operative Society. Two sons, Frank Sidall Mabbott and Richard Mabbott were born over the next few years and baptised at St Nathanael's, Crookesmoor.

By 1913 Richard had acquired his own butcher's premises at 182 Crookesmoor Road and the family association with this shop continued until at least the 1960's.

There is no evidence that Richard served in WWI. Perhaps he was too old, as he would have been 36 at the outbreak of the war. His younger brother Frederick served in the Royal Garrison Artillery in India.

Richard continued to live at 182 Crookesmoor Road until his death in early 1947. He was buried in Crookes Cemetery on 25 January and Gertrude Alice was buried in the same grave in 1956.

Their two sons Frank and Richard were also butchers. Frank had a shop in Crosspool, while Richard carried on the family business at 182 Crookesmoor Road.

Ann Elizabeth Ellison

Date of visit: 1880

Age at visit: 40

Address at time of visit: 114 Freedom Road

When Ann visited the museum, she was head of household, living on private means with her younger sister on Freedom Road.

Ann Elizabeth Ellison was born in 1841 to Sarah and Charles, a file cutter. She had two younger sisters, Emily and Clara. Ann left home temporarily to train as a schoolteacher, while her sisters remained in the family home, where Charles had changed track and set up as a grocer.

By the 1870s, Ann had rejoined the family home, now 70 Freedom Road, and was almost certainly working as a schoolteacher, while sister Clara worked as a milliner. Sister Emily was engaged to Charles Carr, a Pitsmoor-based butcher, later manager, and the couple went on to have 3 children, of whom the eldest Alwyn came to live with Ann in his teens. Alwyn went on to become one of the outstanding silver designers of his generation, and we can only speculate whether he was inspired in some way by the Ruskin Collection at St George's.

When Ann visited the museum in 1880 she was living at 114 Freedom Road, with Clara and father Charles, apparently on their own private income. We don't know what took her out to the countryside – was she inspired by Ruskin's ideas of rural sanity? – but Ann died at Padley Rise, Grindleford Bridge, Derbyshire in 1907. She left £1538 6s 3d to her sister Clara and nephew Alwyn.

Interestingly, when Clara died in 1915, she left over £750 to Omar Ramsden Alwyn's business partner and attorney. Was this because Alwyn was at War? Had there been an agreement (or disagreement?) between the sisters about supporting Alwyn and Omar's partnership as two increasingly successful artists?

John Fanshaw

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 26

Address at time of visit: 30 Daniel Hill Street

Tobacconist's son John started life on Gibraltar Street in 1855, but by his mid-teens was living with his Aunt at Northumberland Road. He clearly had a strong artistic interest and talent, and presumably this prompted and enriched his museum visit. In the early 1870s John won numerous school prizes for his artwork and a 1878 newspaper notice mentions him giving an illustrated talk in Eckington. By the time of his museum visit in 1881 John had married Jane

Emma North from Taunton – one wonders how they met – and was working as a lithographic artist.

John went on to become a long-serving Arts Master at the Central Secondary School. He and Jane had 5 children who survived infancy, one son who died shortly after his birth in 1887. John died aged 76 in 1931 and is buried along with Jane and daughter Katherine in a family grave number 116 at Burngreave Cemetery.

Samuel Padget Dibb

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 7

Address at time of visit: 145-147 Howard Road – Walkley Conservative Club

Samuel Padget Dibb was born on 5 August 1881, probably in the family home of 137 Duncombe Street. His parents were Samuel Leonard, a School Attendance Officer and Janet Hay Dibb. They had married in India in 1873 and one of Samuel's elder brothers was born there.

Samuel was just 7 when he visited the museum in June 1889. All the visitors noted on that page of the visitors' book seem to be boys, mostly aged 9 or 10.

By then the family had moved to 145-147 Howard Road, Walkley Conservative Club. Here, his mother worked as the Club Stewardess while dad was still a School Attendance Visitor.

For a while Samuel joined his father working for the school board, but his true love was clearly the theatre. When the family moved to 48 Aldred Road, Samuel remained with his parents and then his widowed father into his early 30s and by 1911 was working as stagehand and scene shifter at the Hippodrome on Cambridge Street, before moving on to the London Palladium.

Samuel joined the Royal Irish Regiment at the outbreak of World War I and was posted to France in 1915. During his service he suffered from several periods of ill-health, including the effects of poison gas which affected his throat, though a later claim for a pension was rejected on the grounds that the problems with his throat were due to smoking cigarettes. Samuel was demobbed in 1919 and seems to have set sail for New Zealand 2 years later aboard the SS Waimana.

In New Zealand Samuel became a trade union official representing theatre workers, but in 1932 was convicted of misappropriating union funds and sentenced to 6 months in prison. The prison record clearly didn't help his career and thereafter Samuel usually appears to have worked as a kitchen hand.

Martha Lawley

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 11

Address at time of visit: 47 Orchard Road

Martha A. Lawley was born in 1878, the eldest child of John and Kate Lawley, a silversmith and silver burnisher respectively. They lived at 47 Orchard Road.

Martha visited the museum in 1889, aged 11. Just two years later, 13-year-old Martha was living as a servant with Joseph Newton, stonemason and publican, and his wife Mary at Walkley Old Cottage.

It seems she became ill, for Martha died in Spring 1894, aged 16, back home at 47 Orchard Road, and is buried in Walkley Cemetery in Grave C687, the same grave as her 5-month-old sister May (d. Nov 1894) and 21-month-old brother John (d. May 1887).

Fred Ford

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 9

Address at time of visit: 161 Cundy Street

Fred Ford was born in Sheffield in 1880 to Fanny and Thomas, a blacksmith. In 1881, the family lived at 75 Walkley Street and Fred was one of 6 children. By the age of 10 he was living at 161 Cundy Street and had 4 additional younger siblings.

Fred visited the museum when he was 9. The visitor book suggests he visited with Charles Hatcher who also lived on Cundy Street.

By the time he was 21, Fred was living as a servant at the Bell Hagg Inn, working for publicans Arthur and Elizabeth Tarbuck.

George Cryer

Date of visit: 1883

Age at visit: 41

Address at time of visit: 41 Blake Street

Sheffield-born George Albert Cryer married Sarah Waterfall in 1868 and by 1881 they were living at 41 Blake Street. George worked as a file forger. Over time George and Sarah had 4 children, the sons following their father into the metals industry, and daughter Florence becoming a dressmaker – a very common occupation for young women of the time.

When George died, aged 59, in 1901, he left over £400 to his sister Rosetta. He is buried in the cemetery of St Phillip's, Shalesmoor.

Nora Wright

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: 11 Bole Hill Road

Nora Wright was born in 1875, to Samuel, a Woolwich-born table blade grinder, at times unemployed, and Ann, a laundress. She had 3 older sisters, of whom Frances was in Sheffield Children's Hospital for a time and returned home paralysed.

By the time she was 16, Nora was working a scissors burnisher and dresser cutler. She married in 1899, Arthur Booth, a Walkley-born table blade grinder.

Unlike many married women, Nora is recorded on the Census as having returned to work as a scissor burnisher by the time daughter Phillis was 11. She was widowed in December 1918, and she herself lived into her 70s, dying in 1947. Nora is buried in a family grave in Walkley Cemetery, with her parents, sister Caroline, husband Arthur and a couple by the name of Lawley, of whom the wife had been a Wright.

Allan Sykes

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 7

Address at time of visit: 108 Carr Road

Allan Sykes was born in 1874 at 108 Carr Road, the seventh child of 10 children, and baptised at St Mary's, Walkley. His father was an engine smith and mother had worked as a dressmaker before marriage. The couple had moved in to Walkley, neither of them native Sheffielders.

He visited the Ruskin museum in June 1881, aged 7. His name in the visitors book is in the same handwriting as four other boys, aged 6 to 12, all from Carr Road (Charles Herbert Oliver, Leonard Oliver and Herbert Mellor), as well as Allan's 11-year-old brother Harry. Was this a group of friends or possibly a school trip? There is no direct evidence that Allan attended Walkley Primary but his sister Annie certainly did and so it is likely that all the siblings did – the school is only some 500 metres from their house.

By the time he was 17 Allan was working as a pupil teacher and still living in the family home at 108 Carr Road.

He married in April 1904, one Gertrude Cowley of 13 Melbourne Road, Crookes, in a service at St Mary's, Walkley. Gertrude was a self-employed piano teacher, her father a clerk/commercial traveller and her brother a trainee solicitor.

Allan and Gertrude moved to 29 Brighton Terrace Road, Crookes and by 1911 were living there with their two sons, Allan Cowley Sykes born

and newborn Leonard Sykes. Allan had moved out of teaching and into an office job, as a steel manufacturer's clerk. The couple later moved to Fulwood. Allan died in 1955 and Gertrude in 1964.

Allan's grandson David writes:

my impression of my paternal grandparents is that they were very concerned about status and seemed to convey that they believed that the aim in life was to work in an office and be in administration rather than 'working with your hands'. This caused them to distance themselves from Allan's family as they were mostly working with their hands. He worked for Vickers and was an administrator in charge of an office with a number of staff under him. He travelled to business every day by tram and was dressed in a smart suit, tie, waistcoat, etc., complete with watch and chain. He and his wife lived on Westwood Road, Fulwood, which looked over to the dam opposite and all the parkland. Gertrude said they met at church where he was a Sunday School Teacher.

Charles Herbert Oliver [10] & Leonard Oliver [6]

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 10

Address at time of visit: 57 Carr Road

Charles Oliver

Charles Herbert Oliver was the second of 5 brothers, born to Clara and John Lupton Oliver, a grain merchant. The family moved to 57 Carr Road sometime during the 1870s and lived there until the 1890s when they moved to 106 Uppertorpe.

In June 1881 he visited the Ruskin museum when he was 10 years old along with his 6-year-old brother Leonard and three other boys from Carr Road – Harry Sykes, his brother Allan and Herbert Mellor.

As a young adult, Charles went into the family Corn and Hay Dealing business, initially based at 238 Gibraltar Street. After his mother died and father remarried the family moved to Uppertorpe and took on a 19-year-old domestic servant, Charlotte Martin.

In 1901 Charles married Alice James. The couple moved to 36 Hadfield Street and had a son. Charles remained in the family business and, after his father died, received a share over a large inheritance – over £12,000 split between himself and his plumber brother Vernon. Charles lived until 1949, and left over £14,000 to his brother Vernon, by now a Master Plumber, and son Harry.

Leonard Oliver

While Charles ended up taking over his father's business, six-year-old Leonard grew up a plumber and went into business with his brothers Vernon and George. Leonard and Vernon clearly had the business edge, both named

as employers, with brother George an employee, according to records of the time. All three remained single, living in the family home at 106 Upperthorpe, Leonard died relatively young at 52, in 1927, just a few months after his father. In his will he left a healthy £11,194. 18s. 11d. to Vernon, a sum worth something like ten times that these days.

Walter Rann

Date of visit: 1880

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: 102 Fulton Road

Walter was born and raised in a Pitsmoor back-to-back (back of no 60 Marshall Street), until the family moved to 102 Fulton Road, Walkey, sometime before he visited the museum in November 1880.

By this time Walter had begun work as an apprentice wood engraver, an artist. He visited with Thomas Woodcock [\[link?\]](#) of Fir Street, another apprentice woodcarver. An 1881 *Sheffield Independent* report noted that Walter Rann was awarded 'Excellent in model' in the Second Grade Local Examination. At this stage, Walter's father Thomas was working as an engine turner and of his 3 sisters 16-year-old Fanny was a dressmaker.

Less than 5 years later, Walter died at 100 Fulton Road, aged just 19. Fanny, too, died that year and like Walter is buried in Burngreave Cemetery.

Walter's parents lived on, moving to 212 Heavygate Road with their youngest daughter Lucy. Dad Thomas worked into his late 60s as a rose engine turner doing ornamental engraving for watches.

George Bacon senior

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 42

Address at time of visit: 110 Industry Street

Sheffield-born George Bacon was a cutler all his life. On his death he was recorded as a pen and pocket knife manufacturer, suggesting that he specialised in small blades. Both George and his wife Sarah Ann (nee Stevenson) came from the Carver Street/ Trafalgar Street area of Sheffield. By the time of George's museum visit in 1881 the family were at 110 Hoole Street, later moving to Walkley Street and then Rangleley Road, where George and Sarah lived until George's death in 1908. George's daughters all worked in cutlery warehouse jobs, but his elder son, 'moved up'.

George Bacon junior

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 19

Address at time of visit: 110 Industry Street

George Bacon junior appears just the kind of bright young man of artisan class that Ruskin had in mind to benefit by his museum. When George visited the museum, possibly with his father, he was working as a 19-year-old assistant schoolmaster. He married Ellen in 1888, and by the turn of the century they had moved to Onslow Road near Endcliffe Park and had 4 children. George rose through the teaching ranks to become a headteacher by 1911. Their children variously married between 1910 and 1920, but it is not known what became of George and Ellen, where they moved or when they died.

Henry Herbert Barker

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 10

Address at time of visit: 120 Cromwell Street

Barnsley-born Henry Herbert Barker was son of Elizabeth and Henry, a tea dealer/grocer, and came to Walkley via Shipley in Yorkshire. Clearly his father travelled for his work.

When 10-year-old Henry visited the museum in 1889 he lived on Cromwell Street. Just two years later the family were at 27 Fir Street. Dad Henry was working as an Insurance and Commission Agent and son Henry was now the eldest of 7, with 4 younger sisters and 2 brothers. The family had an 18-year-old servant.

Aged around 21, Henry married Clara Caunt. And they moved to 459 Spring Vale Road, Henry working as an Ordnance Clerk.

Later they moved to Hillsborough, where Henry worked as a wages and cash clerk. After 2 infant deaths the couple had one son who lived at least until he was 5.

James Alfred Morton

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 15

Address at time of visit: 124 Cromwell Street

James Morton was born in 1874 to Asenath and John, a lithographic printer. He was the third of seven children. The family moved from Martin Street, near St Philips and Oxford Street, to 124 Cromwell Street sometime between 1881 and 1889.

By 1891, 17-year-old James was working as a spoon and fork stamper. He developed his specialism to work with White metal (German silver). By 1901 James was married to Harriett and living at 12 Aldred Road next door to his brother John, a bookbinder, and his family.

James and Harriett later moved to 125 Northfield Road, where they raised 3 children and employed a general servant.

John Henry Reaney

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 25

Address at time of visit: 367 Walkley Road

John Henry Reaney was born in 1864, son of Susan and George, a table knife grinder. He was the third of their six children. The family moved into Walkley from the Langsett Road area sometime in the 1870s.

By 1881, they were at 164 Freedom Road and John, aged 17, was working in the knife industry like his older siblings, as a table knife grinder like his dad. He married a Walkley girl, Harriet Watson, in 1886 and the couple went on to have 5 daughters, some of whom also went into cutlery-related work.

John died in 1901, and his widow moved back down towards Langsett Road with her daughters.

John Machin

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 24

Address at time of visit: 1 Jericho Street

John Machin grew up in the St Philips area of Sheffield and became a scissor smith like his London-born father George Machin. He remained in this trade all his life. He doesn't seem to have moved to Walkley until after 1891, where the family lived variously at 25 Daisy Walk, 37 Harold Street and 51 Walkley Street before moving to Crookes. John married Mary Ann in 1878 and the couple had 12 children in total, of whom 7 died young and 5 survived.

In time John became a manager of the firm his father had established and moved with Mary to 47 Toftwood Road. Both John and Mary are buried in unconsecrated ground within Crookes Cemetery.

Martha Whitehouse

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: Orchard Road

Martha Whitehouse was born in 1874 in a West Bromwich back-to-back, daughter of Sarah and Reuben, an outdoor labourer. Her older brother, also Reuben, had been born in Sheffield while mother Sarah was still living with her parents, pearl button makers. In time, young Reuben too, became a pearl button maker.

Sometime in the 1880s Sarah and family returned to Sheffield and lived at the Roscoe Wheel, Rivelin. However, when 14-year-old Martha visited the museum in June 1889, she gave her address as Orchard Road, and probably lived with her older brother at 43 Orchard Road. Shortly afterwards Reuben married Mary Fern at St Mary's Walkley and it seems Martha moved with them to 23 Harworth Street.

Mary Taylor

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 53

Address at time of visit: 36 Birkendale

Intriguingly Mrs Taylor seems to have been a British citizen born in France around 1827. Due to family connections or work commitments? Husband Joseph was a Baslow-born saw file manager, and all their 5 children were born in Sheffield, from 1854 onwards.

Eldest son Samuel took on office jobs in the metals industry and eventually worked through clerical ranks to become a file manager like his father. The two elder daughters moved away, perhaps to get married, while the youngest remained in the family home helping out. Mary's younger son John also worked in the metals industry.

The Taylor family home on Birkendale was a Freehold Land Society purchase. Records show that many of the Land Society property owners were skilled artisans or associated managers like Joseph. In time son Samuel moved back in after he was widowed, and later on younger son John and his family took the property over, keeping it in the family.

A few years after the museum visit, Joseph was unfortunately involved in a bankruptcy case. However, it was found that he had acted with probity throughout, standing as trustee for several land societies who had assured him, inaccurately, that their loans were secured with other holdings.

Mary died at the age of 70, and was buried at All Saints Ecclesall on 18 September 1897. Husband Joseph seems to have worked into his 70s and was buried with Mary in 1909.

John Ellis

Date of visit: 1883

Age at visit: 27

Address at time of visit: 55 Bole Hill

John Ellis's father died when John was just 2 years old. He went to live with his maternal uncle, John Spooner, a quarry owner and farmer at the family's Bole Hill farm. [Fanny Spooner \[link\]](#), another museum goer, was his aunt although the two did not visit together.

By the time of his museum visit, John Ellis was head of household at the Bole Hill farm. He farmed 28 ½ acres, employed a boy as farm servant, and a domestic servant. His widowed mother lived with him.

Sometime after the visit John married Christiana and the couple moved to 56 Rivelin Street, where they remained until John's death in 1909. Heseems to have retired quite young from farming, by the time he was 45 – perhaps able to live on private income from land and property? John is buried in Walkley Cemetery, Section B No 32.

James Congreve

Date of visit: 1883

Age at visit: 43

Address at time of visit: 125 Greaves Street

Sheffield-born James worked in the cutlery industry as a table knife haffer when he visited the museum, and was married with a son and 3 daughters

Over the next few years the family moved to 131 Freedom Road Walkley and gained another 2 daughters. After Betsy, his wife, died in 1898, James and all five of his still unmarried daughters moved a few doors along to 111 Freedom Road. The young women worked variously as two stationery binder sewers, a dressmaker, a table knife wiper, and one stayed at home, perhaps as housekeeper to the others.

Betsy, James and two of their daughters are buried together in Walkley Cemetery, Section B, No 535.

William Clague

Date of visit: 1883

Age at visit: 53

Address at time of visit: 207 Providence Road

Draper William Clague was born in the Isle of Man and married first Sheffield-born Mary, then after he was widowed, Lavinia from Staffordshire and being widowed again, made a third marriage to Derbyshire-born Ann. He became a respectable man, a city councillor, with a busy and well-served household. William's eldest son Harry was a medical student at the time of his museum visit.

Clague arrived in Sheffield in the 1850s, opened successful drapers stores and eventually employed 6 men, 1 woman and 4 boys in his drapery business. After he died in 1892, his son Herbert took over the drapery business and also a loan and investment company but was declared bankrupt in October 1925, a sad ending to the business knowing William had been such a prosperous and successful businessman and respected councillor.

Walter Henry Copley

Date of visit: 1883
Age at visit: 13
Address at time of visit: 74 Creswick Street

Walter was born in 1870 to parents Jane and William, a saw maker. Mother Jasne died when he was 3 and by the time of the museum visit Walter had a stepmother and older sister. When 13-year-old Walter visited the museum he was probably still at school, although could possibly have begun some work for income.

Walter became a metal smith and went on to marry Clara Briggs in 1904. They moved to the Penistone Road area and had a son.

Walter outlived his wife and died in 1953 age 84. He is buried in Crookes cemetery, Section dd, No 2254, with his wife who had died in 1947.

Samuel Prentice

Date of visit: 1881
Age at visit: 39
Address at time of visit: 219 Greaves Street

Norfolk-born Samuel Prentice grew up in a school for pauper boys and presumably had to make his own way in the world. By the age of 19 he was in Derbyshire working as a farm labourer and came to Sheffield to work as a steel melter furnaceman some time before his museum visit in 1881. At that time he was married to Sarah and they had 4 children. Samuel and Sarah are buried together in St Philip's, Shalesmoor.

Thomas Blackburn

Date of visit: 1885
Age at visit: 54
Address at time of visit: 25 Cromwell Street

Printer Thomas was the son of a rural Pig Dealer, who seems to have found his vocation in printing a profession he followed all his life. It's easy to see how he would have loved Ruskin's collection of medieval manuscripts! At this time of his visit, he was married with 6 children, the eldest a 25-year-old journeyman plumber.

By the turn of the century Thomas worked as a timekeeper, a less arduous task than compositing for a man of 70 in an age without pension provisions. Perhaps his eyesight or arthritis made it hard for him to do compositing now, or perhaps he was found a 'suitable job' simply because he loved the printshop atmosphere too much to leave it?

William Flower

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 35

Address at time of visit: 23 Walkley Street

Joiner and cart maker William Flower was born in Thorne in 1846, son of a Master Tailor – so grew up in a skilled artisan household. His wife Elizabeth Ann Woodhouse was Sheffield-born, in 1847. William and Elizabeth visited the museum together. At the time of their visit, they lived at 23 Walkley Street with their 3 sons. Over the next decade they moved along the road to 135 Walkley Street. The couple's sons all went into cutlery-related occupations.

After Elizabeth died in 1895, aged 49, William remarried in 1903 with Beatrice Martha Battersby, 25 years his junior. They lived at 137 Hoole Street and seem to have had a son, who died in infancy.

William died in 1926 at the age of 80 and his second wife in 1928 at the age of 53. Both left wills that were contested in London and Beatrice left a substantial amount to her brother.

William Turner

Date of visit: 1881

Age at visit: 36

Address at time of visit: 27 Fir Street

Manufacturer William Turner lived at 27 Fir Street with his wife, four daughters and a household servant. William died young just two years after his museum visit. Widow Martha later remarried.

Thomas Woodcock

Date of visit: 1880

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: 50 Fir Street

Teenaged woodcarving apprentice Thomas visited the museum with his friend and fellow apprentice Walter Rann of Fulton Road.

His father William was a notable gardener and developed Mark Firth's Oakbrook House gardens, as well as setting up and taking on roles in various horticultural societies.

It looks as though Thomas sadly died young, aged just 22, in 1889, and is buried in Walkley Cemetery, Grave B801. It's a sad coincidence that his friend Walter Rann also died young, in 1885, aged 19.

Fox Family: Mary [42], Tom [10], Arthur [8], Lily [5]

Date of visit: September 1880

Address at time of visit: 89 Daniel Hill Street

In September 1880, Mary Fox took her 3 youngest children on a museum outing. Sheffield-born Mary was a table blade striker's daughter, married to Henry, a joiner's toolmaker.

The elder two sons at 20 and 15 were presumably either at work as joiner's toolmaker and errand boy respectively, or off on their own pursuits.

Over time all the Fox children were to enter the cutlery trade: William as an edge tool filer, Tom an engine tenter, Arthur an engraver, Lilly a cutlery warehouse girl, later a warehouse woman. At this time, women's work was very poorly paid compared to men's regardless of the levels of skill, danger or difficulty involved. Common women's work involved buffing and polishing, burnishing, and also wrapping and packaging.

By 1901 Mary, Tom, Arthur and Lily were living in a back-to-back at 73 Summer Street, while Henry Snr was living around the corner at 20 Mitchell Street as a boarder. By this stage Arthur had moved from metals to become a hotel waiter.

Lily married a miner in 1902 and the couple moved to Attercliffe, where brother Tom soon joined them as a boarder, and began work as a colliery labourer.

Mary Fox died aged 67 in 1906. Lily died aged 43 in 1919, perhaps in the influenza pandemic?

Charles Hatcher

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 13

Address at time of visit: 166 Cundy Street

Birmingham-born Charles Hatcher moved to Sheffield in his childhood sometime between 1885 and 1887 and was second of seven children in the family.

The Visitors Book suggests Charles visited with F. Bingham and 9-year-old Fred Ford, who also lived on Cundy Street. Perhaps they were fascinated by the collection, perhaps they were banned from crowded houses on a wet day, we'll never know.

Like many teenagers of the time, Charles began work as an errand boy. He went on to become a skilled artisan as a coach spring smith and live near Hillsborough Barracks. He was married to Florence and had 3 daughters and 1 son.

On 5th August 1905 Charles was sentenced to a 21 day prison sentence for bastardy arrears. He spent 20 days in HMP Wakefield. His prison record says he had brown hair and was 5 feet 3 1/4 inches tall.

Charles later moved to Mexborough and and boarded with another former Walkley man, Willie Melliush and his family. He went into colliery labouring work, perhaps finding it hard to resume his skilled trade after his time in prison, and by 1911 his 3 daughters were living with him.

Frank Baker

Date of visit: August 1889

Age at visit: 8

Address at time of visit: 52 Palm Street

Frank visited the museum when he was 8, taking along his 5-year-old brother, George. Wonder what their favourite exhibit was?

Frank was born in 1881 at Spooner Road, Broomhill. His parents were Ellen and James, a commercial colliery manager, and he had 6 older brothers and sisters, later gaining 2 younger ones also.

By 1891 his family had moved to Palm Street in Walkley, his father working as an estate agent and two of his elder siblings had begun work as a butcher's steelmaker and a dressmaker.

After mum Ellen died, Frank, his dad and brother George ended up lodging with Tom Cross on Lonsdale Road, Walkley. By this time (turn of the century), Frank worked as a crane hand in rolling mills.

Frank married Gertrude and they had 2 surviving sons and a boy who died in infancy. The family lived at Darnall and Frank worked as a labourer at a projectile tile manufacturers.

Frank died in Sheffield, in March 1954, aged 73.

Edward Howe

Date of visit: 1889

Age at visit: 14

Address at time of visit: 14 Elton Street

Edward grew up in what is now Ruskin Park – first on Harworth Steet, later Elton Street, among other addresses. Like many of their class, Edward's family seems to have been fairly mobile within a small geographical area, probably due to shifting demands from landlords, and changes in family income and requirements. Edward's cutlery-working family was exactly the kind of typical working-class family that Ruskin had in mind when he conceived the museum to bring art and culture to the working masses.

Frank Godbehere

Date of visit: 1885

Age at visit:

Address at time of visit:

As child and adult, Frank lived at various local addresses always within Walkley, apart from a brief interlude at broughton Road, by Hillsborough Park after he first married. Frank worked as a saw hardener and temperer until his death aged 48 in 1912, leaving behind widow Martha and four daughters still living in the family home.

He was just the sort of working class person that John Ruskin was hoping to appeal to with his museum.

Jemima Godson

Date of visit: 1885

Age at visit: 59

Address at time of visit: 151 Freedom Road

At the time of her visit, Jemima lived with her husband William, in his 60s, a 'timekeeper cutler'— timekeeping seems to have been an interim job for older workers in the lead-up to retirement. Their eldest son worked as a steel caster. By 1891 Jemima also had daughter Mary and granddaughter Florence at Freedom Road with her. Florence was not, in fact, illegitimate, but Mary had resumed the family name and taken flight from a very unfortunate marriage. Frederick von Wiesenberg (or was he Walter? He used both) was doubtless a charmer when he wanted to be. Known locally as The Baron, he was known too as a fraudster, con man, outstanding raconteur and good company in the pub. The Baron hit the local and national newspapers. He was in and out of prison frequently, and Mary obviously decided that she and Florence were better off at home with Jemima.

Jemima died on Christmas Day 1899, and never got to see how her granddaughter Florence flourished in life despite the early scandals. She is buried with William and other family members in Walkley Cemetery,

John Bennett

Date of visit: 1885

Age at visit: 20

Address at time of visit: 76 Walkley Street

John Bennett was a career teacher, who remained single and living with his parents, then widowed mother on Walkley Street for much of his life. He seems to have visited with a Mary and a Maggie [ages?]. In 1881, his married sister and her family also lived at 76 Walkley Street, so perhaps he'd taken visited with his niece and other family or friends.