

FINDING GEORGE GARTSHORE

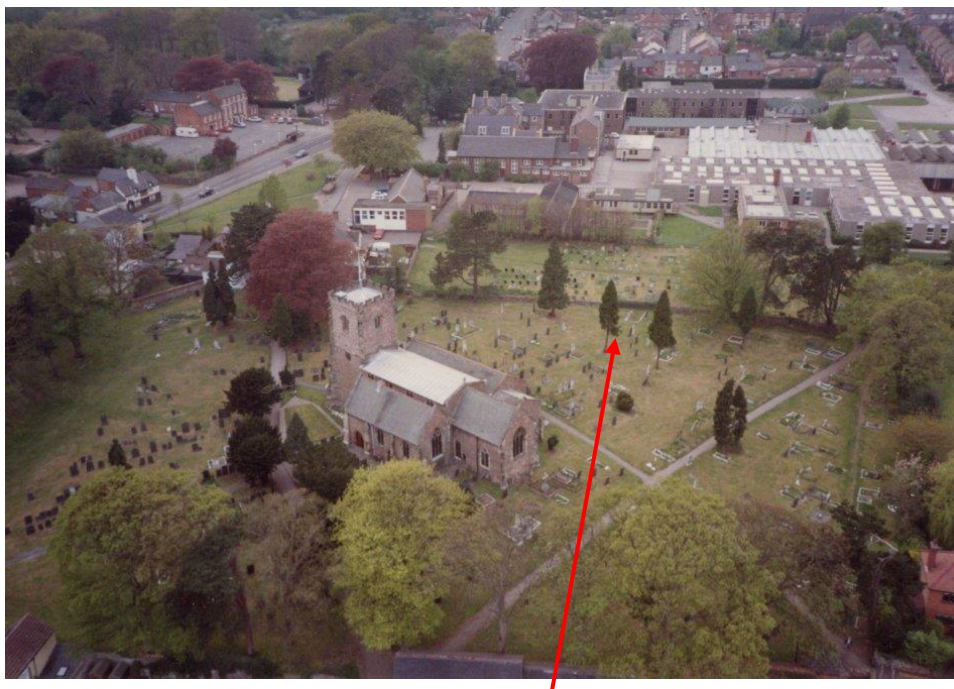
The story of one family's search to find and restore family graves in Saint Bartholomew's Church yard.

If, by chance you were strolling through St Bartholomew's Churchyard during the summer of 2021 and stumbled across a strange figure digging freely around the graves and hurriedly passed by, afraid to ask what was going on here's the full story to put your mind at rest.

Ignoring the cries of '*Burke & Hare*' and '*Here come the Grim Reapers*' a trio of cousins set about to rediscover and restore the graves of two long since departed family members in the old Churchyard of Saint Bartholomew's Church.

Following the death of the last of nine children of George & Olive Gartshore, former residents of 15 High Street, Quorn, now Church View Gardens, bringing to an end a generation of the well known Quorn family, a group of next generation Gartshores sought to trace the family tree to record for the present & future generations their ancestry.

Having traced their Quorn ancestry back to the 1860s and the arrival in the village of their Great Great Grandparents, cousins, David Kirkby, Pauline Smith & Annette Hollingsworth met with Reverend David Bowler to discuss the tracing of the Gartshore graves in the Old Churchyard of Saint Bartholomew's Church. Permission was gained to seek the two family graves but it quickly became apparent that this was not going to be a straight forward exercise as it was discovered that burial grids of the old churchyard were not kept. First, and most difficult to find was going to be the grave of Great Great Grandparents George & Mary Gartshore and their children Fredrick & Emily. Lost for many years, the position of the grave of the famous local Blacksmith who died in 1917, and his family was last recorded during the Women's Institute national grave memorial survey in 1981.



Saint Bartholomew's Churchyard and position of George & Mary's grave
(Photo courtesy of Quorn On-Line museum)

The second was of George's son & his Wife and the cousins Great Grandparents Edwin & Sarah Gartshore, whilst not lost required a little attention and a bit of investigation as to who was actually buried in and around the plot.

The quest to discover the last resting place of the first resident of the Gartshore family in Quorn began with the enlisting of the help of Sue Templeman of the Quorn Local History Group and acquisition of the WI National Grave memorial survey details from 1981.

Following several fruitless visits to the Churchyard, looking at and probing with metal spikes the seemingly growing area of grassland that it was thought the grave was in, by chance the stone runners of the grave were found placed within the grave of another family.



Photos courtesy of Quorn On-Line Museum

With the stone runners retrieved their true position and reinstatement was eagerly sought and with the likes of some divine intervention that moment came quite quickly after.

Whilst en route to Quorn to continue the search for the lost grave, David made a detour via the Loughborough Cemetery to visit his Father's grave where he met Dave Spencer, owner of Grave Concerns, a family run national grave maintenance service. After discussing the work that the cousins were undertaking Mr Spencer stated that he was heading for Saint Bartholomew's Church but wasn't sure of his directions and asked if he could follow David. On arrival at the Churchyard, David and Mr Spencer made for the open plot of land where it was presumed that the grave was situated and Mr Spencer gave David instruction as to what to look for in terms of ground conditions and to continue to spike the ground for signs of rocks or bricks that could indicate foundation stones for the stone runners. Within twenty minutes of Mr Spencer's departure hard substructure was hit that was subsequently revealed as a brick and stone rectangular base the size of the stone runners... just a coincidence of events or was someone looking down on the cousins from above helping them in their search?

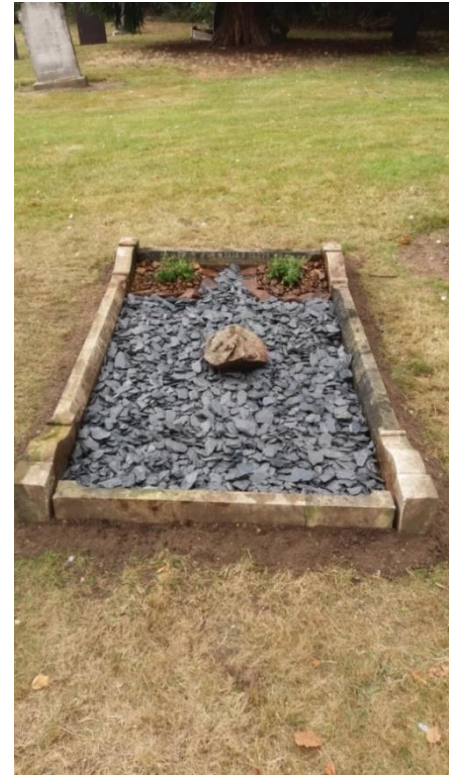
With the foundations possibly revealed and runners temporarily positioned the cousins, Reverend Bowler and Sue Templeman were all in agreement that this was the position of the lost family grave.

Gartshore Grave F78





With the unstable bricks and rubble removed the stone runners were positioned on new concrete bases, levelled and infilled with blue slate and finished with perennial plants at the head and a granite stone in the centre representing the rock that Great, Great Grandad George built the Gartshore family on in Quorn.



One down and one to go and with a headstone already in place marking the last resting place of the Cousins Great Grandparents Edwin & Sarah Gartshore what problems could there be...

It soon became apparent though that all was not right as a memorial stone to the Williamson family of Harry, his wife Dolly and their son Harry lay in the plot.



Back to the trusted Women's Institute map and it was discovered that the Williamson plot was in fact adjacent to Edwin & Sarah's and the stone had been moved for any number of reasons.

Further investigation though brought a further intriguing revelation, Dolly Williamson, Harry's Wife was in fact Edwin & Sarah's Daughter and was buried next to her parents.

So, with the Williamson memorial repositioned in its correct position time had come to respectfully mark the last resting place of Edwin & Sarah Gartshore and the memorial to their son Walter who had been killed in the Great War, a further son, Thomas, and



his wife Ada, what could go wrong... nothing really other than a recreation of a scene from a spine-chilling horror movie!

Working alone one morning on Edwin & Sarah's grave David was disturb by rustling in the trees, quickly glancing up in a heart stopping, raised hairs on the back of the neck moment he was confronted by what seemed to be a cloaked figure in the distance looking directly at him.

A few deep breaths later it was established that the 'figure' was in fact a cross situated in the shadow of one of the Churchyards trees and the rustling had been a squirrel!

Was this squirrel a reincarnation of Alfred Hitchcock as David remarked that it certainly had seemed like a very realistic scene out of a horror

movie?



Onwards and upwards after the fright and a blue brick surround was placed around the plot and looking like something out of a police accident scene it was left overnight for the bricks to set on there concrete foundations.

Back the next day and it was the finishing touches, blue slate chippings, as with his Parents grave and flower seeds at the headstone including Flanders poppies in memory of Walter Gartshore tragically lost in the Great War, and along side daughter Dolly with her family now reinstated.

So ended a labour of love, found after many years the grave of the famous Quorn Blacksmith George Gartshore and his family has been re-established and with his son's grave marked, for all to see the last resting places of the first residents of one of Quorn's most famous families has been reunited with

the last resting places of those in the new Churchyard, to allow all the family to pay their respects.

On behalf of the Gartshore family David, Pauline & Annette would like to thank Reverend David Bowler and Sue Templeman for their help, support & encouragement with this project and to those strolling in the Churchyard and dared to venture to ask what he was doing, David would like say a very big thank you for taking time to show an interest in the Gartshore family.

