

## 1. PROJECT INFORMATION

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<b>Title:</b>	New Jerusalem Church (Wood St) Burials
<b>Interim/Final</b>	Final
<b>Report submission date</b>	25 September 2015
<b>Lead Author of Report</b>	Glen Hopkins

## 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

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### a. Brief description of both the research purpose and the underlying need for this research.

The research was intended to identify the names of the 60 persons who were re-interred from New Jerusalem Church on Wood St, Middleton to Boarshaw Cemetery

Following building work in early 1978, it was discovered that the site of the New Jerusalem Church contained burials, and building work was halted whilst the site was assessed. Contemporary reports suggest that 60 persons were re-interred at the time.



If sufficient evidence is found to identify those re-interred then there is a possibility of having the names listed at Boarshaw

**b. Table showing the timeline and milestones for the entire project.**

Milestone	Status	Details
Identify if records exist	Held on Microfiche at Middleton Library	
Identify location of existing records	Held on Microfiche at Middleton Library	
Examine and transcribe records	Transcription attached	Appendix A
Identify names	Transcription attached	Appendix A
Identify locations to determine if multiple use plots exist	Graveyard Plan attached	Appendix B
Summarise and present findings	Completed	Section 3

### **3. PROGRESS SUMMARY**

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**a. Describe report period progress.**

An initial online search indicated that a Microfiche (MF) copy of the church records was held at Middleton Library, and an initial visit was made on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2005 in order to determine exactly what these records contained and to look for any other information that the library might hold.

Within the MF records is a plan of the cemetery with plots listed and names inserted in some of them. This was followed by the list of burials in date order.

According to the records there were 108 burials between 1832 and 1880. Further examination revealed that some of the plots contained multiple burials from the same family. We then looked at the Middleton Guardian for the first 3 months of 1978 and found a single report in January stating that a coffin had been discovered during building work. We could not find a report of the re-interments.

Looking further in the MF records we found some letters from 1968 with quotes to demolish the building and plans for a replacement. There was also a survey report on the condition of the building itself. These were followed by a 1971 letter that the plans were unaffordable to the church and would not be progressed. (This noted that a "school room" would be used for worship).

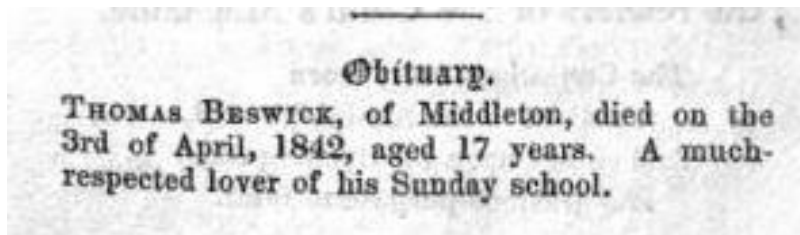
Further visits were made on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September when the microfiche records were transcribed. During the visit on 22<sup>nd</sup> the photographic archive was examined and two particular files contained relevant photographs. The first file under "Churches" has a few photographs of the building itself along with a series of 8 photographs of the site showing the recovery of the remains in progress. This file also contains close up photographs of 3 headstones (the information from which was added to the transcription).

The second file was photographs of Wood St itself and further photographs of the redevelopment of the area were discovered in this file, including a number that show the site of the church screened off, presumably for the recovery of the remains. These photographs were compared with maps of the area to determine the exact location of the building.

The following obituaries were discovered in The Magazine for the Children of the New Jerusalem Church Volume 1 (Undated)

## Obituary.

**DIED** at Middleton, on the 27th of January, 1842, Sarah Beswick, in the 20th year of her age. Also, on the 22nd of February, 1842, Alice Jaques, in the 24th year of her age. They had both been beloved and respected attenders of the Middleton New Church Sunday School.



An article in, "Rise and progress of the New Church signified by the new Jerusalem in the Revelation." (1861) provides details of Richard Boardman and a description of how the church came into being.

*At Heywood near Bury in Lancashire a Society had lately been formed yet their zeal and success have been so great that they have already erected a commodious building which serves them both for a place of worship and a Sunday school It was opened on Sunday the 9th of October 1814 and the collection amounted to 28 2s 8d a large sum for a country village The Society in this place took its rise in the following manner Four or five years before this time there was scarcely a single reader of the new doctrines in the whole village which is very populous But providentially one or two of the inhabitants were led to the New Church meeting in Middleton where Mr Richard Boardman\* a Leader of the Society in that place has successfully officiated for many years They were struck with the beauty and simplicity of the doctrines but chiefly with their evident tendency to promote a good and useful life by leading men to the true knowledge of the Lord and his Word and at the same time to the practical exercise of every Christian virtue They continued their attendance at Middleton for about twelve months during which time some others were added to their number until by degrees they formed themselves into a society established a library as well for the benefit of their neighbours as themselves and held regular meetings once a fortnight at the house of Mr James Ashworth which were begun in April 1812 and continued till the December following They then found it necessary to take a larger room which might serve both for a Sunday school and a place of worship Their number still continuing to increase a subscription was entered into to enable them to build a more convenient place which by the assistance of their friends and particularly of Mr John Richardson of Heywood they at length accomplished The place was accordingly opened as before observed on the 9th of October and Mr Boardman of Middleton who was the chief instrument under the Lord of raising the Society regularly dispenses among them the great truths of the new dispensation The number actual members is about twenty but the congregation that usually attends is computed at not less than four hundred The school is likewise in a flourishing condition and what with the assiduity of the teachers the zeal and activity of the members of the Church in general and the great reputation which the institution has already obtained among the inhabitants at large the prospect of extensive usefulness is every week becoming more and more evident.*

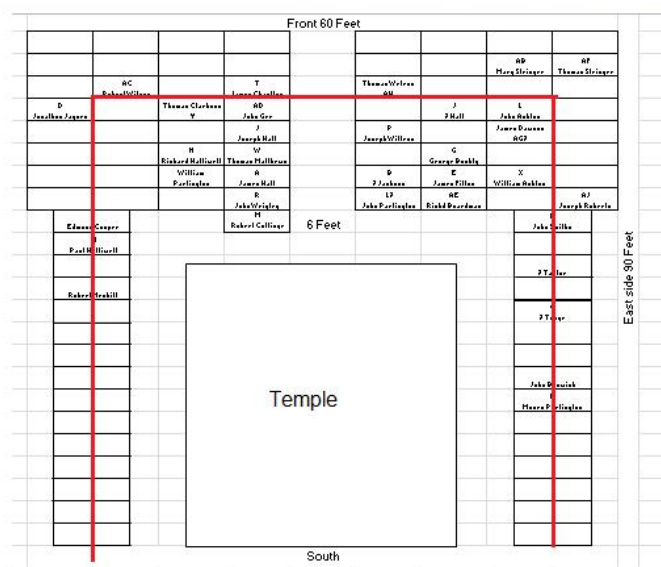
*\*Mr Richard Boardman departed this life at Middleton on the 21st Jan 1845 in the 81st year of his age highly and deservedly respected by all who knew him He was the gratuitous Leader of the Society for nearly forty years Ed*

During the visit on 24<sup>th</sup> a more detailed search of the Middleton Guardian was made. The article referred to above (Middleton Guardian, 27.01.78 P1/2) has the headline "1838 Coffin found on building site" The article itself notes that a compulsory purchase order was applied for in 1968 and the church was later demolished. This is followed by a statement for the secretary of the church who believed that there had been no burials for over 100 years; they thought the stones were memorials, rather than graves. It also notes that the church had been sold to a transport firm in 1964 and church meetings continued for a time in the adjacent schoolroom (Believed to be on Wood St West).

The final paragraphs indicate that the site had been grassed over and the stones were only rediscovered when workmen removed the topsoil. A statement from the borough architect states that the graves were a few feet down.

A second reference was discovered on page 2 of the 10.02.78 edition that states that an exhumation order had been granted. I was not able to find any other reference in the Guardian up to June 1978.

Looking at large scale maps published in 1841 and 1891 it can be seen that the Temple building was extended on 3 sides between those dates. The MF graveyard plan appears to show the earlier layout. It is therefore likely that the extension was built over existing graves. I estimate that the red line on the earlier plan represents the footprint of the later building work.



## **b. Describe preliminary results.**

The results are tabulated in appendix A with just 1 point to note. The burials appear to end in 1857, with a further record from 1880. This has no burial plot listed but has wording that appears to read "Wnc Westall" it is unknown whether this was a final interment or if it is a reference to the Rev. William Westall who was the minister at the church for around 30 years up to 1908. The wording is hand written in script and was compared to other similar script in the same records. It is possible that Reverend Westall was signing the register to show that burials had ceased.

Due to the nature of handwritten script, it was not possible to identify the burial plots in 100% of the cases. This was particularly difficult on the plan due to the single capital letters which could not be compared directly to other writing on the same page

The cemetery plan matches the record list but also shows that there was no order in either the plot use, or the linear lettering of the plots themselves.

The occupations shown in the records appear to be that of the head of the household, rather than that of the person interred.

33 lettered plots have been identified as used with the following letters missing from the sequence

Q – May be Eliza Partington as this would fit the date order of the sequence

W – Plan shows Thomas Matthews, and a record exists of his son being buried, possibly in that plot. However Sarah Taylor and James Partington also appear to be in the same plot, but none of these burials match the sequence of the allocated letters.

AA – Not identified

AI – This may be the plot I have identified as AJ due to the similarity in the script lettering

The majority of the graves would have been built over when the church was extended to 3 sides between 1841 and 1891. When the first graves were discovered and additional burials searched for, it is possible that these graves and the graves to the sides of the church were not discovered.

## **c. Describe any concerns you may have about your project's progress.**

It was hoped that the research would identify either 60 individuals or 60 burial plots that were exhumed; neither of these have proved to be the case.

## **4. PROGRESS STATUS**

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Having made a thorough examination of the records available, I do not believe it will be possible to confirm exactly how many sets of remains were transferred or who these were the remains of. The coroner's office may hold further records but it is unlikely that these will be publicly available.