

HISTORY in the HEADSTONES

The Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Trail

Take a stroll around the tranquil surroundings of The Lye & Wollescote Cemetery to discover the fascinating stories of some of those who shaped the town's history, with graves marked in blue having more details overleaf. Allow 45 minutes along relatively flat, surfaced paths with a few gently sloping areas.

23: Henry Wooldridge - Inventor of the 'frost cog'
A man of humble beginnings who started his own nail making business and then began making horseshoes, and in the 1880s invented the 'frost cog' a device to prevent horses from slipping on icy roads.

22: Sgt. Harry Kendrick - RAF Bomber Command
Sgt. Kendrick was killed in a bombing raid over Nuremberg in 1944 when over 100 airplanes were lost and many men were missing or killed. It was the biggest air raid loss of the Second World War.

21: Walter Edwin Dukes
Along with eight other men Walter lost his life in the Coombes Wood Colliery disaster of 1927, then considered to be the worst mining accident in the South Staffordshire coalfields.

20: Lieut. Evelyn Victor Turner - Hero of the Somme
Killed in action on the 18th of November 1916, officially the last day of the Battle of the Somme.

LYE SPY

Hidden meanings in the Headstones:

Many of the headstones in Lye and Wollescote Cemetery contain hidden messages that reflect something of the life of the person within. Can you find headstones with:

- Angels** - escorting the departed soul to heaven
- A broken column** - indicating a life cut short
- Clasped Hands** - a symbol of friendship and farewell

How many more can you spot?

19: Dr. Edwin Webster Hardwicke - The Hollywood connection
Dr. Hardwicke and his wife Jessie came to Lye shortly after their marriage in 1892. They lived at Lye Cross House where their son, renowned Hollywood actor Sir Cedric Hardwicke, was born in 1893.

18: Mercy Taylor - An unusual gravestone
This headstone is the only one of its kind known in the Black Country. These heart-shaped stones are found mainly in the North East where, in the early 20th century, they were made from clay taken from the mines. This particular stone was made by the North Bitchburn Coal Company of Darlington.

17: Alfred Edwin Morris
A jeweller and watchmaker of Stourbridge Road, Lye, whose son Edwin Morris, born in 1894, was Mayor of Lampeter in 1942 and became the first English Archbishop of Wales in 1957. Note other children of the Morris family recorded on this gravestone who died when young.

16: Frank Haywood - The 'Titanic' link
The Haywood family grave is marked with two headstones, one of which states that Frank Haywood died at sea on 22nd April 1904 in his 17th year. Behind these brief words lies a tragic story and a link with one of the most famous shipping disasters of the 20th century.

15: Owen Freeman
Manager of George King Harrison's brickworks and accomplished architect, he was the designer of many buildings which still exist today in Lye High Street.

14: Alice Perks - An early suffragette
In 1896, long before the suffragette movement really got underway, Alice Perks went to a meeting of the Lye Parish Council and proposed the names of twelve women to be members. Needless to say, this proposal was not taken up, but Alice Perks could perhaps be regarded as an early suffragette.

12: Titus Webb - Citizen of the United States
Born in 1796, he sailed to America in the early 19th century and settled in New York. He returned to live with relatives in Lye where he died in May of 1881.

13: Joseph Richard Hurdiss
The proprietor of Hadcroft Brickworks established to produce the bricks for the Stambermill Viaduct built in 1882.

11: John Abel - Brocksopp's Hall
John Abel, a blacksmith, was born in an ancient house known as Brocksopp's Hall that once stood in Dudley Road. A priest's hiding hole was discovered in the top storey and a workman employed by the Abel family extracted a cannon ball out of one of the beams - a relic of the English Civil War.

10: Samuel Perks
From 1895 members of the Perks family, including Samuel, were occupants of the last 'Mud House' in Lye which was demolished in around the 1960s.

9: Muslim Burial Area
The first known Muslim burial in the Cemetery was that of eleven-month old Nahid Akhtar, who died in 1978. The Muslim burial area, highlighted on the tour plan, is orientated towards Mecca.

8: Amos Perrins
Another founder of the Bethel Chapel, Amos was one of the first working men to be appointed a Justice of the Peace and was a member of Lye Urban District Council for many years. Father of Wesley Perrins, MBE and Member of Parliament, Amos was an ardent supporter of women in politics.

7: Mary Herrin - Centenarian
Born in 1817, she witnessed many 19th century historical events and lived during the reigns of six monarchs from George III to George V in 1917 when she died.

4: The Round Brothers
In 1875 Philip Round and his brother, James, started in the hollowware trade, becoming one of the foremost manufacturers in the district. The Round factory workshop in Orchard Lane, established in 1849 is still in existence.

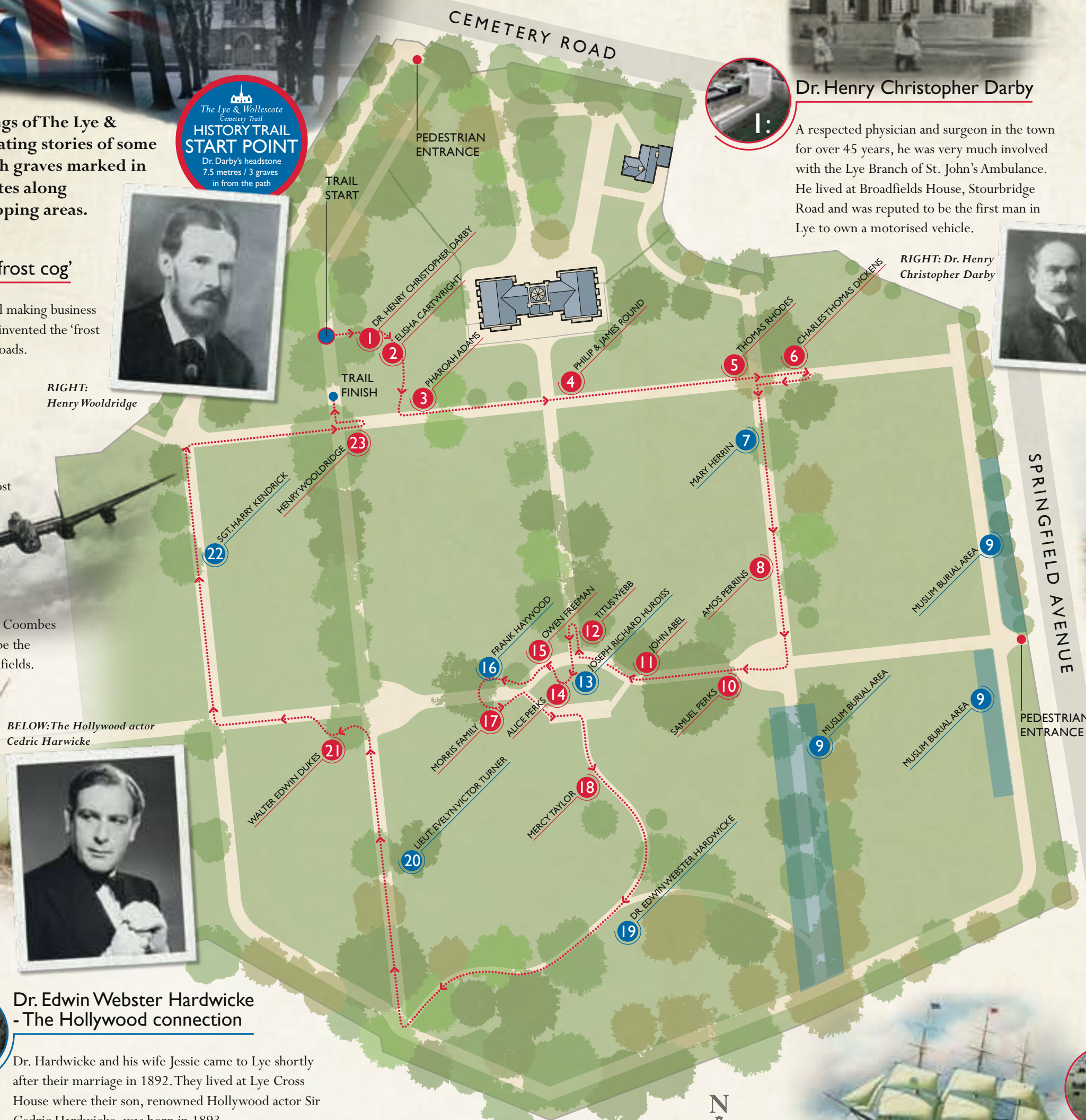
6: Charles Thomas Dickens - Bethel Chapel Founder
A local blacksmith who once worked for Thomas Rhodes, he was one of the founders of a nonconformist religious society in 1891. Services were held in his house until the Bethel Chapel in Hill Street was built in 1900.

5: Thomas Rhodes - Lye's bucket maker
A pioneer of the vitreous enamel trade, Thomas Rhodes founded the Providential Works in 1856 providing employment for many in the town. Rhodes Buildings is still in existence in the High Street.

3: Pharoah Adams
A well-known local butcher in Lye High Street, he was famed for his great generosity during World War I and the General Strike of 1926. An enthusiastic sportsman, he won many awards with his beloved champion trotting pony 'Jimmy'.

1: Dr. Henry Christopher Darby
A respected physician and surgeon in the town for over 45 years, he was very much involved with the Lye Branch of St. John's Ambulance. He lived at Broadfields House, Stourbridge Road and was reputed to be the first man in Lye to own a motorised vehicle.

2: Elisha Cartwright
Established a clothing emporium at Lye Cross known as The Centre Building which had the first electrically illuminated sign in Lye. The building is still in existence. Elisha's son, born in 1905, was also called 'Centre'.



BELOW LEFT: Look out for this circular sign adjacent to the path, which marks the start of the trail. The map below will then guide you through the 'History in the Headstones'.

LEFT: Broadfields House

LEFT: The Centre Building

RIGHT: 'Jimmy'

ABOVE: The Bethel Chapel

LEFT: The Round factory workshop

RIGHT: Mary MacArthur addresses the chainmakers strike, 1910

ABOVE: The last 'Mud' house, Cross Walks

ABOVE: The Stourbridge Lion - rail travel was amongst the many innovations Mary Herrin witnessed in her life

BELOW: Stambermill Viaduct, Hadcroft bricks replaced the original Brunel wooden structure