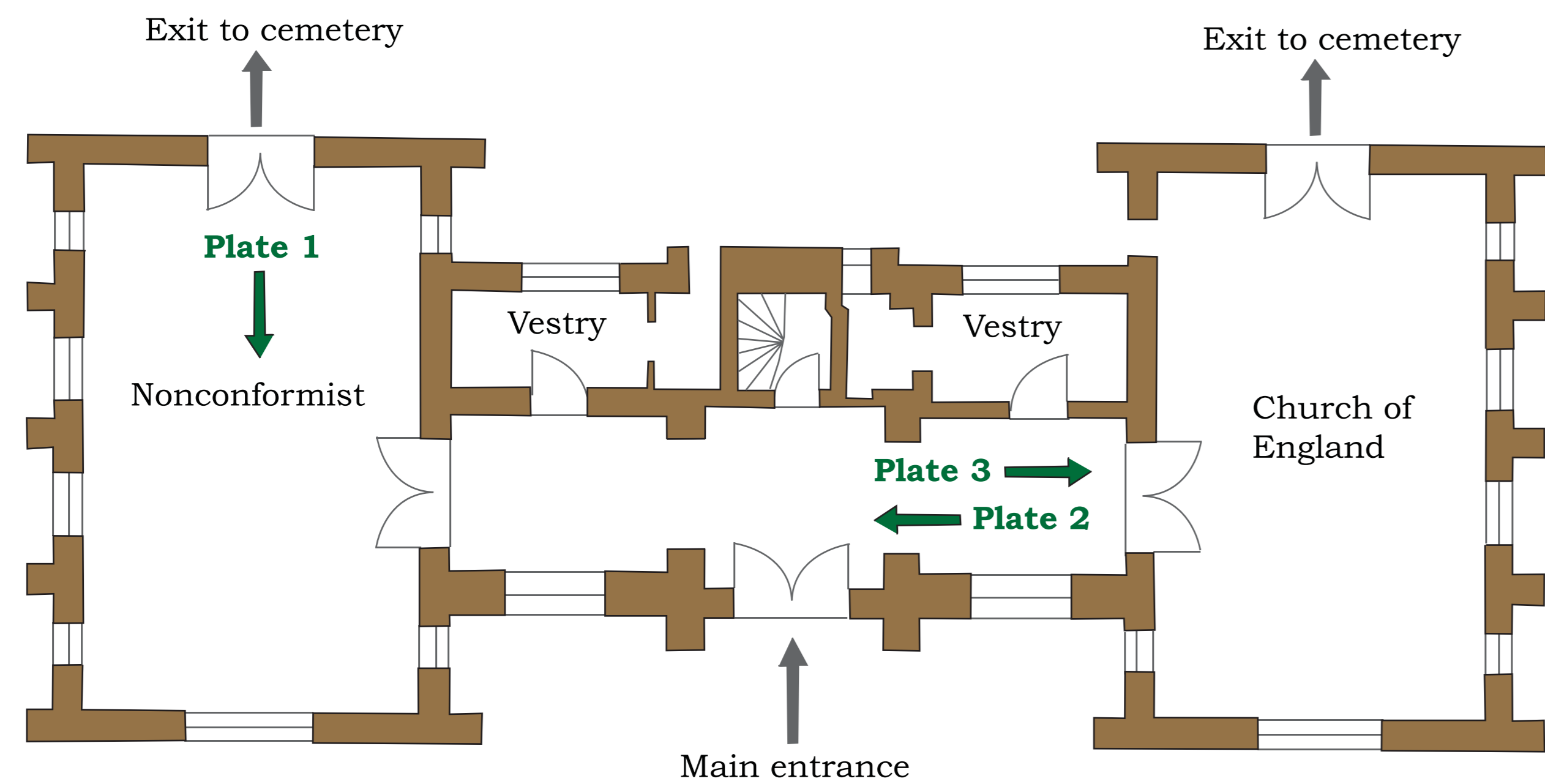


The Lye & Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels

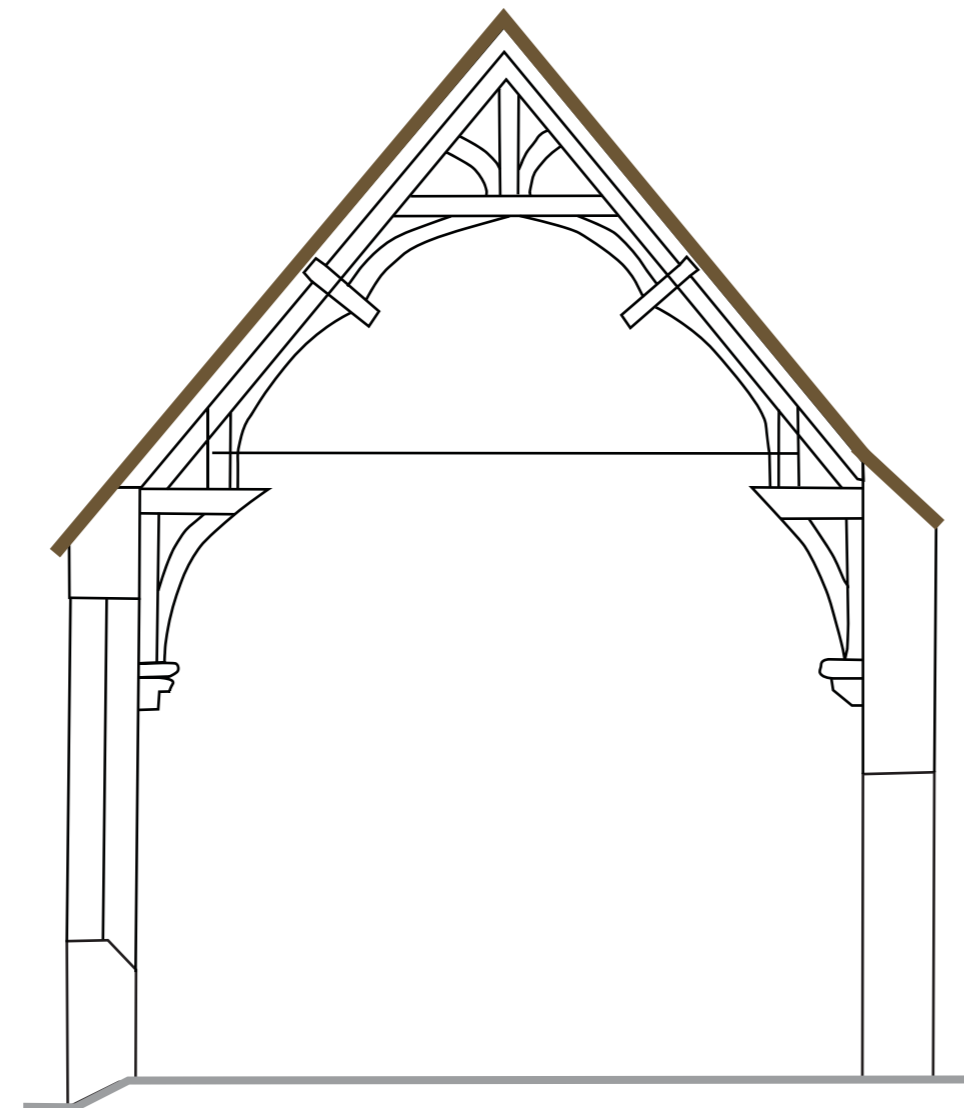
A plan of the ground floor of the building shows two separate denominational chapels.



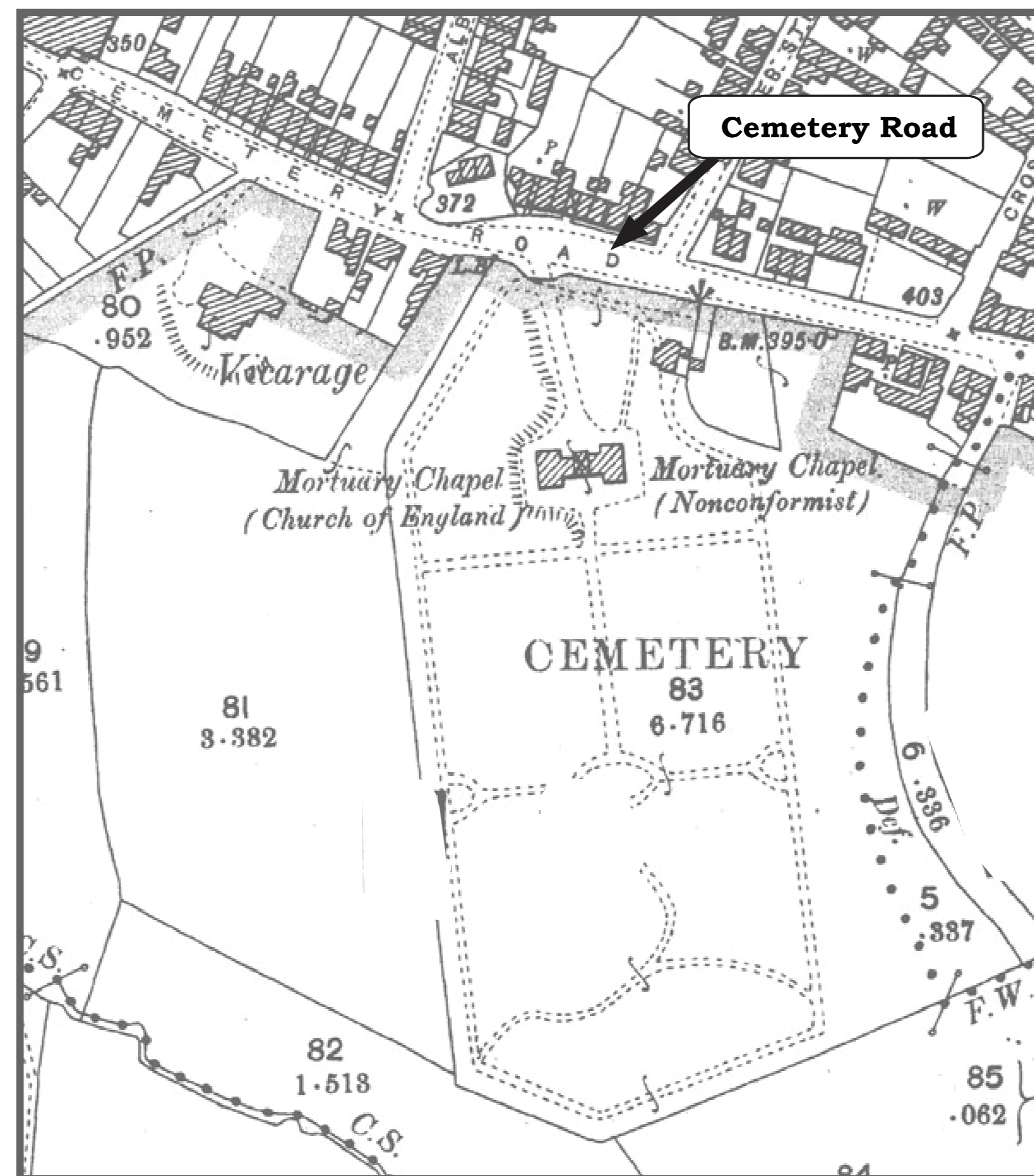
Below:
The clock, mounted in an ogee frame, was installed in 1912 to celebrate the coronation of George V.



Below and right:
The chapels Gothic exposed timber roof structure - known as a 'hammer beam' roof.



Below:
The iron bell which sat at the base of the chapels octagonal spire.



Left:
2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map (1903-1912)

Right & below:
The original polychromatic encaustic tiled floors still survive within the entrance lobby and side passages. Decorative tiles are also used externally: alternate bands of plain and 'fishscale' tiles can be seen on the gabled roof, a favourite architectural feature of the period.



The many arched doorways and windows are classic examples of Gothic Revival architecture.



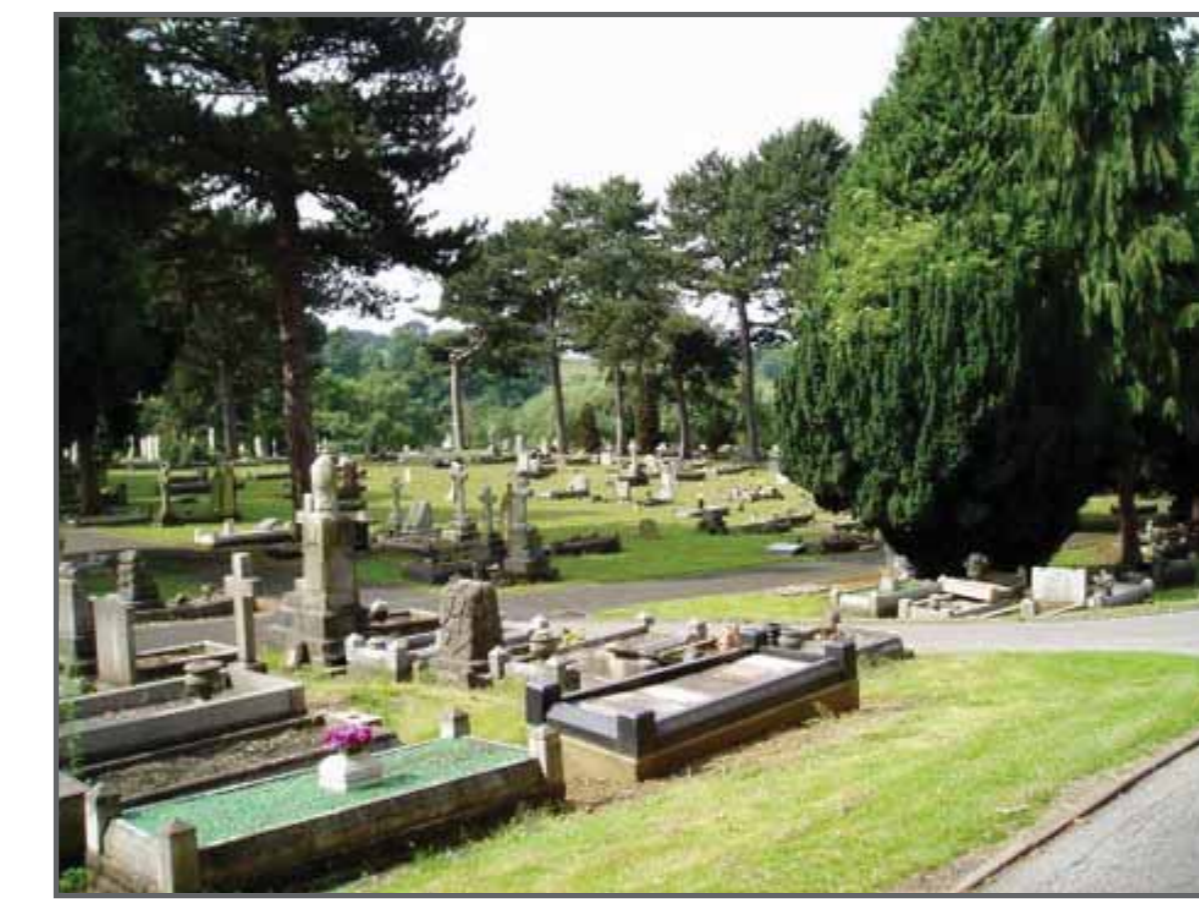
Left:
The roof of the basement (located underneath the Church of England chapel) comprises four bays of brickwork vaulting supported by iron joists and cast iron columns.

Thanks to funding from The National Lottery through 'Awards for All' a book has been published tracing the history of The Lye & Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels. This book explains the links between people laid to rest in the cemetery and the part they played in the social history of the area. For more information (including a cemetery layout) please refer to the project website: www.lyeandwollescote.info

For further information on the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust, visit: www.wmhbt.org.uk, or for The Lye & Wollescote Historical Society visit: www.communicate.co.uk/bc/lwhs

The grade II listed Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels building is dated 1878, designed by Thomas Robinson of Stourbridge and constructed by C.A. Horton of Brierley Hill. The Gothic Revival building is a perfectly symmetrical structure, 'H' shaped in plan, with two small mortuary chapels. The chapels are linked by a central doorway and lobbies under a small but prominent central tower and spire, terminating in a weathervane also dated 1878. Each chapel has its own vestry with corner fireplace, separated in the centre by a stone spiral staircase leading up to the clock room and belfry.

The building and graveyard are divided into two distinct halves; the western side is consecrated for Church of England use and the eastern side for Nonconformist use. Located below the west chapel is a large vaulted basement.



By the late 18th century there had been a significant increase in population and churchyards in England became severely overcrowded. They were extremely insanitary and seen to be a health hazard. The Lye and Wollescote Cemetery is an excellent example of the emergence of large publicly funded cemeteries during the 19th century, which was partly due to the passing of the 'Burial Acts'.

During this time, cemeteries were designed as landscaped parks. The Victorians popularised the celebration of death, and cemeteries provided a focus for large funerals and visiting graves which often became family monuments.