

**Final Report: Leeds General Cemetery Research Internships**  
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Introduction

These two summer internships for University of Leeds students were funded as a result of Dr Laura King's project, titled *Living with Dying: Everyday Cultures of Dying within Family Life in Britain, 1900-50s*. This is a Leadership Fellowship supported by the Arts Humanities and Research Council. *Living with Dying* partnered with Special Collections in the Leeds University Library to carry out this project, which is centred around the Leeds General Cemetery (LGC) Burial Registers. The registers were transcribed, digitised and launched as an online index in November 2016.

Internship Aims and Objectives

The purpose of these internships was to:

- Carry out research in order to collect more information about the cemetery and the people buried there
- Investigate the research potential of the cemetery and its impact within various academic disciplines
- Produce resources to facilitate researchers of the cemetery and users of the index

It was agreed that the project would be approached through three main disciplines:

- Statistical analysis of the dataset
- Medical History and the compiling of a medical glossary
- Genealogical research of people buried at the cemetery

This project was supervised by Laura King, Louise Piffero and Tim Procter.

Statistical approach

**Training**

In July 2017 Kelsie and Imogen attended a one week training course in statistics run by Q Step, a programme designed to improve quantitative data analysis in the social sciences. We were introduced to the specialist software, R and RStudio, and how to use it to perform statistical analysis. We then applied what we had learnt in the training to analysis of the dataset which underpins the LGC Burial Registers Index.

**Initial statistical investigation**

Using the data from the transcribed and digitised burial records of the people interred at the LGC, we investigated the research potential of statistical analysis of this dataset.

The main focus of this investigation was a comparison of different groups of people within the data. Particularly, we explored the differences in both life and death that existed between the working class and upper class. We also traced the development of medical terminology within the context of the cemetery's lifetime.

We have written a full report titled, **Statistical Analysis and the Leeds General Cemetery Dataset**. This report sets out our research questions, our method, our findings and further research recommendations.

### **Illegitimate children**

Our internships were initially allocated 6 weeks. This was extended and with the additional time Kelsie undertook an investigation into the illegitimate children that are represented in the LGC burial records. She began this investigation to explore some of the reports made in the Medical Officer Reports. These stated that illegitimate children in Leeds were at a much greater risk of dying in infancy and childhood than the children of married parents. Further, much of the legislation introduced around the registering and recording of stillbirth in the late 1800s cited fears of unmarried parents committing infanticide and claiming that the child was stillborn. We were interested to see whether the children buried in the LGC reflected this assertion.

We isolated children who were likely to be illegitimate in the registers by searching for those whose parents' occupation is recorded as 'spinster'. This suggested that only their mother's occupation was recorded, and that said mother was not and had never been married.

Using R and Excel, we analysed the illegitimate children's causes of death and ages at death. We found that the vast majority of the illegitimate children buried in the LGC died under the age of 10. They also died of different illnesses than legitimate children. In particular, they were disproportionately likely to die "atrophy" meaning wasting/weakness and of diarrhoea, associated with poor sanitation. There was also an elevated rate of death from thrush and water on the brain. This is particularly interesting as these were associated with neglect, specifically the neglect that was common in "baby farming" (thrush resulting from malnutrition; fluid on the brain from large doses of narcotics to sedate the children).

However, the illegitimate children buried within the LGC were not more likely to be stillborn than legitimate children. This raises questions about the reality of the "threat" of infanticide being concealed as stillbirth. Is this the case in other cemeteries, or other places? Further research could establish whether or not our findings are anomalies. If it is an anomaly, why does the LGC have such a different section of illegitimate children?

Further research could also explore why so many of the illegitimate children were buried from 1860 to 1879. It may be the case that there were a large number of illegitimate children born in these two decades, but why? It may also be that terminology changed, or that the approach to stigma changed and mothers were more likely to conceal their status as unwed mothers.

## Medical History approach

### **Glossary for causes of death**

We created a glossary of medical terms and causes of death which appear in the burial registers. Our glossary explains unfamiliar terms and gives the historical context of the registers' main causes of death. This glossary will aid users of the index. It will be made available as website text to supplement the index in future.

We prioritised the top ten causes of death which appear most frequently in the burial registers. After covering these, we chose some archaic terms that required defining and terms which we found particularly intriguing or historically significant.

The list of causes of death we have written a narrative for and input to Emu is as follows:

1. Stillborn
2. Bronchitis
3. Consumption
4. Convulsions
5. Pneumonia
6. Inflammation
7. Diarrhoea
8. Dropsy
9. Natural decay
10. Cholera
11. Influenza
12. Bright's disease
13. Childbed
14. Teething
15. Quinsy
16. Mental health

In addition, we wrote guidelines on how to research and write a narrative for Emu about the causes of death recorded in the burial registers. This will be added to the Library manual for staff, Shepherd, which is on the Library Sharepoint.

## Genealogical Approach

### **Sarah Frankland her family**

We became interested in this family when we noticed the occupation 'casket manufacturer' in the burial registers. The entry in question was Sarah Frankland, who died in 1888 and whose father's occupation was recorded as 'casket manufacturer'. We had difficulty tracing Sarah's parents' and their business, primarily because Sarah's father had a very common name - John Brook. Nevertheless, Sarah Frankland turned out to be a fruitful starting point for an investigation into the use of the Leeds General Cemetery by one family across several generations. At least 25 people in the family were buried at the the LGC between 1846 and 1963 in 6 different plots.

We used census, birth, marriage and death records to research the history of this family. We wrote the family's story up into a blog post for the *Living with Dying* website and a biography to be stored in EMu, Special Collection's catalogue.

Two resources were created using Prezi to visually display this information.

- A family tree of the Franklands which contains biographical information about the individuals <https://prezi.com/p/btiw31gntdfc/>
- A timeline which displays the chronological order in which these people entered the cemetery, and the different plots in which they were buried. <https://prezi.com/p/btiw31gntdfc/>

One of the main points of interest this family illustrated is 19th century social attitudes towards stillbirths and their burial practices.

## **The Wompras**

We became interested in this family after noticing that there were a number of people buried in the LGC with the surname Wompra. 12 people bearing the surname Wompra were buried in the LGC between 1874 and 1944. As the surname Wompra was unusual, we investigated further, attempting to establish the relationships between each of the Wompras. Tracing the family was fairly straightforward, as both the name Wompra and the mother's maiden name (Kezia Major) were unusual.

We also used census records to trace where the Wompras had lived throughout their time in Yorkshire. It seemed that the Wompra family had been a farming family for several decades, but had chosen to move into central Leeds and found work as joiners and drivers in the city. This may well have been part of the wave of migration that took place during the mid-1800s as part of the industrial revolution. We found that they appeared to have moved relatively often, into various areas of Leeds. They also moved briefly to Middlesbrough, Kezia's hometown. Further research could establish why this might have been: were her parents ageing? Did the move coincide with one of her parent's becoming widowed? This could give us an insight into the daily lives and care expectations of families as they moved around to find work in the wake of the industrial revolution.

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### **Investigation into informants in the burial registers**

Using the information we had collected about the relationships within the Frankland and Wompra family, we attempted to trace the relationships between the deceased and the informant in the LGC registers.

Informants were central to the registering of deaths in 19th century England. Prior to the creation of laws governing the registration of births, death and marriages, informants were often the sole source of information to "officially" register the death. However, little is known about how informants self-selected.

We used our investigations into family groups in the LGC to identify buried individuals and trace the relationship between the deceased person and the informant. We found that in most cases, the informant was the same person who could be considered the 'head of household'. Sometimes this was the same person who was listed as 'head of house' on the census closest to the death, such as a husband, father or son. In some cases, it was less direct, such as a son-in-law or nephew-in-law. Either way, it became clear that early in the life of cemetery, it was common for acting as the informant to be a task for the closest male relative. It is possible it was viewed as a "man's job" because it was official or unpleasant. It may have been analogous to the traditionally feminine role of caring for the dying and dead.

However, it also appears to be the case that at some point after 1900, it became increasingly uncommon for the informant to be a relative of the deceased. Further, the same person begins acting as the informant for multiple deaths. We suspect that this indicates the move towards having medical professionals inform on the death, but further investigation is needed into how this change came about and to what extent it was influenced by specific legislation. From a social history perspective, it would also be interesting to know more about how this change impacted on the social role of the informant: if informing was acting as a final, official act of caregiving for the deceased, how did people feel about that role being handled to professionals?

### Comparison with the Quarry Hill Collection

The LGC burial registers can be used in conjunction with the reference books that were compiled when the 'unhealthy' area of Leeds, Quarry Hill, was due to be cleared. These reference books are held by Special Collections. We searched the names of occupiers and owners listed in these reference books in the search tool of the LGC index to see if any people displaced in the Quarry Hill clearing ended up being laid to rest at the LGC. Our results are recorded and discussed in the following report: **The Leeds General Cemetery Index and the Quarry Hill Collection.**

## Public Engagement

We have been writing up our research findings in a series of blog posts for the Living with Dying website. A list of these blogs is as follows:

1. The Dead and the living interconnected on campus: An Introduction to St George's Field
2. Top Ten Ways to Die in Victorian Britain
3. Open to All: Religion and the Cemetery
4. Class Beneath the Grass: Segregation within Cemeteries
5. A Family's History, Discovered using a Cemetery
6. A Wompra Family History
7. Illegitimate Children
8. Further reading and annotated reading list

The final blog post will include links to many of the resources we have produced (the statistics report, the informant investigation, the illegitimate children report), as well as Kelsie's undergraduate dissertation.

Jess Hammett, the public engagement fellow for the *Living with Dying* project, has been tweeting the blog posts we produced. Leeds University Library Galleries have also tweeted a link to these blogs and done a similar Facebook post.

At the end of the project we wrote a summary of our internships in a blog for the Library Word Press.

## Conclusions

The outputs of this project and all the resources we have produced will be stored in a One Drive folder and shared with Laura King and Louise Piffero. The reports and blog posts will be stored in the University of Leeds data depository along with the data generated by Laura's Living with Dying project.

The LGC burial registers have proven to be a powerful and versatile source. This is due to the vast number of entries, the detailed information recorded in each entry and the historical time period the recordings cover, from the start of the Victorian era spanning to most of the 20th century. As a result, this resource is rich with information and research potential in a number of different disciplines. These include the study of disease and health, medical history, family history, death studies and other branches of social history.

Throughout the project, we have recorded a large number of interesting avenues for research in relation to the LGC burial registers. We did not have the time to pursue all of these. Further work and investigation into the burial registers as a resource for research would be very much worthwhile. Below we have outlined our numerous ideas and recommendations for further research on this topic.

## Further Research Recommendations

We have set out a number of further research suggestions that arose from the Statistical Analysis of the LGC report. Please consult the Further Research Recommendations section of this report for suggested research avenues that involve statistical analysis.

### **Further narratives for causes of death**

We outlined a number of causes of death that we thought would benefit from having an explanatory narrative written about them. If somebody had the opportunity to continue contributing to the medical glossary we began then we would recommend writing summaries and historical contextualisation for the following causes of death which appear in the burial registers:

- Malformation of heads
- Accident
- Poison
- Thrush
- Sudden death
- St Anthony's Fire
- Vaccination
- Visitation of God

### **Biographies arising from causes of death**

Some of the causes of death listed in the registers are so intriguing that they invite further research into the lives of the people affected by these causes of death. We think it would be worthwhile researching and writing biographies for the following people who are recorded in the burial registers with a fascinating cause of death.

- May Brown, who died 'following confinement'
- Annie Naylor, 18 years old, 'killed by lightning'
- Margaret Haigh, died 1885 of childbirth & affection
- Arthur Tinker, 'effect of fright'
- 'Hanging' - John Riley (1879) and Emma Mcnichol (1932)
- 'Lacking of the tongue' - Mary Wilkinson
- Martha Fawcett and Sarah Thornton, died of 'break up of nature'
- Annie Hurlstone, 02/09/1937, 'gun shot in the head'
- Harry Pickles, 'killed by motor'
- John Oddy, gentleman / clergyman - general paralysis (syphilis?)
- Anyone affected by fires or 'burnt to death'

### **Biographies arising from interesting occupations**

Similarly, many of the occupations recorded in the register would be worth following up. Research into these people could result in biographies being written about their lives.

- Medical occupations - surgeons, medics, physicians, vaccination officers
  - Frederick Hainsworth
    - Born 18 Apr 1849. Married Sarah Elizabeth ROBINSON JUNE 6TH 1878. By 1891 census they are living in 6 Woodhouse Street with 4 children, Alice, Lucy, Lily and James
- Artists, musicians
- “Slubber”
- Cheer monger - actress
- James Veitch - sweet shopkeeper and hairdresser
- Surgical string polisher
- Arthur Vizard, surgical instrument maker

Alternatively, it may be useful to create a glossary of occupations listed in the burial registers, in a similar style to the medical glossary of cause of death terms used.

### **Research of ordinary people**

Numerous unrelated people were buried in common graves. It would be interesting to investigate one common grave and all the people within it, as a cross section of society. The idea would be to collect as much biographical information as possible about the different people. This would cover a variety of very different people of all ages working in an array of occupations.

### **Notable families**

- Michael Sadler
- Luptons
  - Joseph Lupton was the coolest Lupton
  - Sarah Lupton
  - Stillborn baby Lupton

### **Mapping**

There is a wealth of geographical information stored in the burial registers birthplace and residence field. Using a tool like History Pin, this information could be displayed on a map to show the geographical spread of a variety of different factors such as:

- Mapping certain diseases
  - We could use the occupation field to identify areas occupied by e.g. textile workers and compare this to the cause of death information we have to

investigate how diseases caught at work could spread through families and communities.

- We could choose specific diseases and trace their spread through areas
  - This would be interesting to do as a comparative exercise. For example, we could map what causes of death were rife before and after the Quarry Hill clearance in the same area
- Mapping the spread of families
  - Through this project, we have found a number of large families buried together in LGC. Were all these families geographically close in life as well as death? Are there any examples of people being moved from other areas/cities to be buried alongside family in the LGC?
- Usage outside of Leeds
  - Are there examples of non-Leeds residents being buried in the LGC? If so, how did they come to be interred in a general cemetery in Leeds?
- Not a geographically investigation but a religious one: it may be possible to use the 'officiating minister' information to trace these ministers and begin to build a picture of the religious makeup of the cemetery. Given the strong religious motivations of the LGC's founding committee, it would be interesting to see whether the actual users of the cemetery reflected this intention, as well as whether and how this changed over time.
  - Researching this might also provide insight into those who had no service, and why this may have been.

However, this information has not been transcribed, meaning that working with this informant would be more time-consuming than working with digitised information. We would therefore recommend that this be considered a large scale project.

### **Presenting information about the cemetery**

Given the long lifespan of the cemetery, the breadth of the collection and the unusual way the cemetery came to form part of the university, we think it may be useful to create an interactive guide to the cemetery's history using a tool such as timeglider. This could make the cemetery and its collections more approachable for family historians.