

POST CODE: B63 2UL **ADDRESS:** Churchyard, St Peter's Church, Church Road, Cradley

GPS Location: N. 52.464050 W. -2.086549

Memorial Location: Inside main building

Grave: Churchyard 1882 Ext, Row 13, No 1.

Tommy Two-Sticks, the Wandering Vicar of Cradley

Rev Joseph Hesselgrave Thompson



The son of a Yorkshire businessman, in 1856 Rev Joseph Hesselgrave Thompson arrived at Cradley Chapel, as St Peter's was known then. He used 2 walking sticks following an accident and became known as "Tommy-Two-Sticks". He was vicar for 33 years until he died on April 18th, 1889. As one of the older residents of Cradley said after his death:- "O, yo' mane ode Tummy-Tew-Sticks, does yer? Ar, 'e were a bit o' a funny 'un 'e were."

He was popular with young children and his vicar's notebooks entitled '*A Mirror to the Flock*' contain invaluable information about the families he visited in the village including church attendance, education, family relationships and the difficult conditions that ordinary working people endured. In August 1867 after an explosion at Homer Hill Colliery, he had to be stopped by officials from putting himself in danger by going down the shaft to comfort badly injured miners.

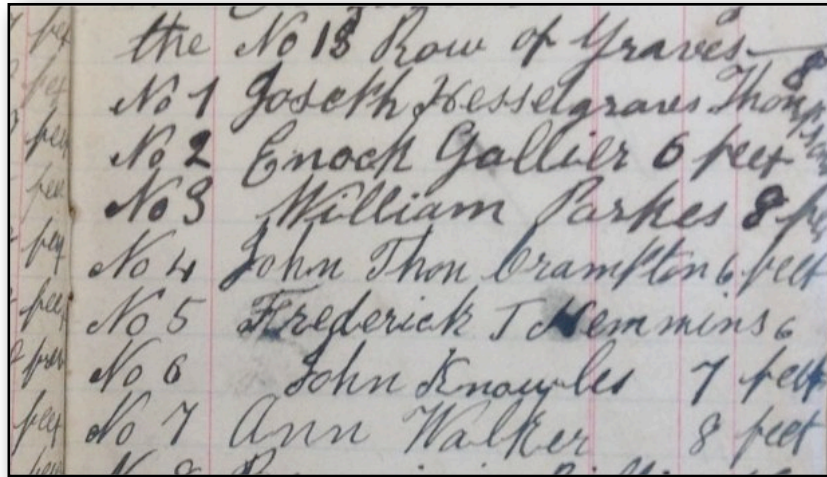
He was quick to criticise the wealthier members of his congregation when he thought they deserved it and false hair, false eyebrows, rouged cheeks or conspicuous dress immediately attracted his attention, either inside or outside of Church.

The eccentric bachelor lodged at several addresses in Cradley and travelled extensively in Britain and throughout Europe collecting a huge number of botanical specimens, many contained in the Hull University Herbarium. He found a rare plant in Cradley called Stinking Goosefoot (*Chenopodium Vulvaria*), which has a disgusting smell of rotting fish. Rev Thompson was proud to give a talk on this to the Worcestershire and Malvern Field botanical clubs.

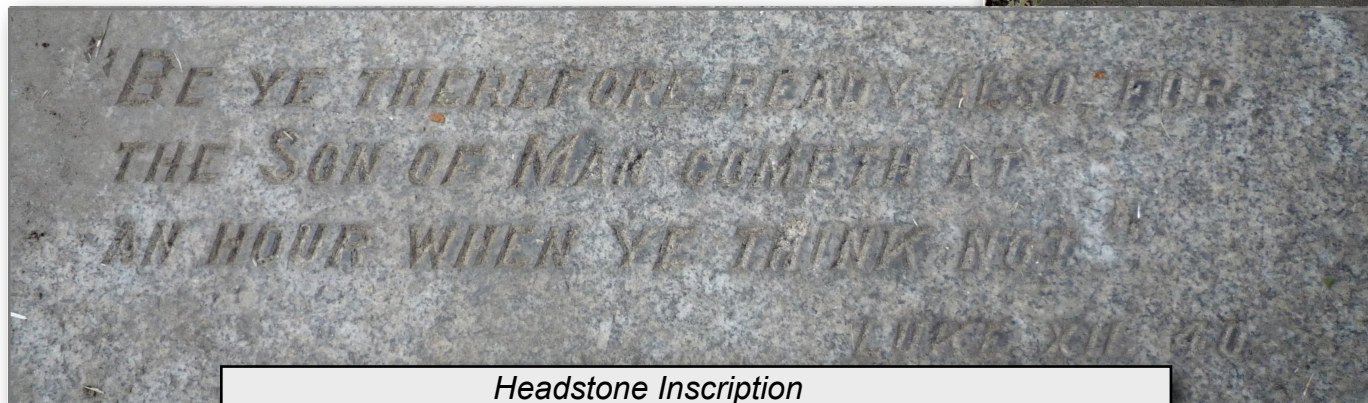




Just three days short of his seventy-eighth birthday he died in his lodgings one morning very suddenly. Tommy 2 sticks chose to be buried not in the Church itself, which was usual and would have been expected, but in the Churchyard amongst his parishioners.



Record of grave

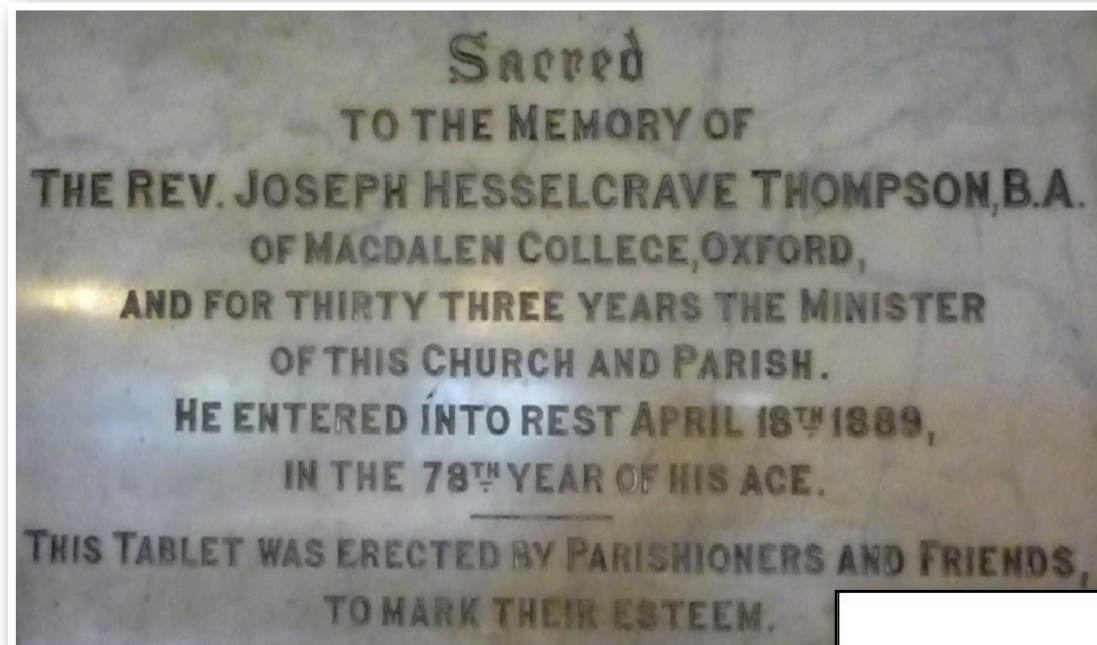


Headstone Inscription

BE YE THEREFORE READY ALSO, FOR THE SON OF
MAN COMETH AT AN HOUR WHERE YE THINK NOT.
Luke XII, 40



There is a memorial plaque to Rev Thompson on the south wall inside the main St Peter's church building.



Sacred
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOSEPH HESSELGRAVE THOMPSON, B.A.
OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD,
AND FOR THIRTY THREE YEARS THE MINISTER
OF THIS CHURCH AND PARISH.
HE ENTERED INTO REST, APRIL 18TH 1889,
IN THE 78TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.
THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS
TO MARK THEIR ESTEEM