



MAKING HISTORY – Creation of a time capsule in 2013



A FABULOUS RESOURCE – The Grenoside Reading Room



The History of Grenoside Reading Room

In 2006, the trusteeship of the Reading Room passed from the Ecclesfield Parish Council to residents from the village of Grenoside and with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund it has now been restored and brought up to date. The building is now a hub for local activities for the use of all the residents of Grenoside and the surrounding areas.

Visit your Reading Room:

- **HIRE THE SPACE AND GARDEN** – for talks, events and art exhibitions
- **LOCAL HISTORY** – information and exhibition
- **INTERNET** – community access
- **HERITAGE** – themed activities
- **VOLUNTEER** – opportunities



Location The Reading Room is located just off School Lane (near to the junction with Norfolk Hill) in the village of Grenoside, approximately five miles north of Sheffield city centre.



Access Accessible via some of the main bus routes which drop off on Norfolk Hill, School Lane and Penistone Road (A61). These can be found at www.travelsouthyorkshire.com and include numbers 79A and 13.



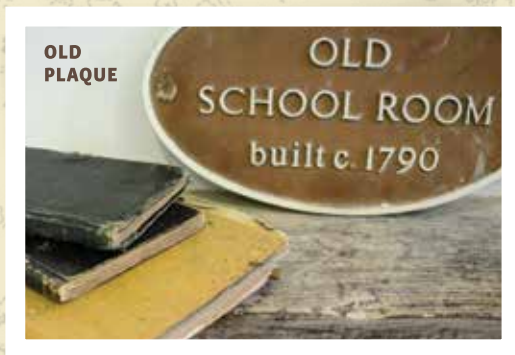
Supported by
The National Lottery
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



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THE GRENOSIDE
READING
ROOM
CIRCA 1790



Thomas Walker was the son of Samuel, former school master at the first endowed school, and also instrumental in the development of the steel business at Masborough. The trustees he appointed were all 'Dissenters' – Calvinists and Congregationalists and very much men of Grenoside, rather than Ecclesfield. This may have caused some upset as the Churchwardens of Ecclesfield Church (C of E) were also, at least nominally trustees. Also, under the trust, the building was to be used as a public meeting place for religious worship.

This building, one of only a handful of listed buildings in the area was originally built as a school, being the second endowed school in Grenoside – the first endowed school, under the trusteeship of the Church Wardens of Ecclesfield, was situated in Lump Lane. The exact date it was built, on land owned by Thomas Walker, is unknown, but the date has been narrowed down to between 1789 and 1791.

By a deed made on 22nd January 1807, Thomas Walker conveyed the land on which it was built to what became the Grenoside School Charity –

“The said Thomas Walker conveyed a piece of land with a school house lately built thereon at Grenoside, upon trust that the said premises should be used for the purpose of educating such a number of poor children as the trustees should think proper”.

Thomas Walker also endowed the charity with an annual sum of ten pounds, a rent charge from property he had sold to Josiah Ashton on Lump Lane. Other endowments consisted of rents from properties probably on the Cupola, these rents bringing in seven pounds ten shillings a year.

In 1828, money was raised by public subscription from the people of Grenoside to build a house for the school master next door to the school. The cost of this building was £232, and unfortunately only £147 was raised, the rest being paid off by a loan from Benjamin Tingle, one of the trustees.

The numbers of children attending the school varied. In 1818 there were 20 'free scholars' and an unknown number of paying pupils. In the 1860s, the number was 60, and in 1883 the average attendance was between 90 and 100, a huge number considering the school room where everyone was taught together was 18ft by 35ft.



The school from the start seemed to exist on a fairly precarious financial basis. The total income in the 1860s was £17 10s from the endowments, out of which came the master's salary, repairs and upkeep and books etc. Paying pupils did pay between 3d and 6d per week, but some or even all of that went to top-up the master's salary. The situation was made worse in 1865 when the executors of Benjamin Tingle called in the loan of £85 that he had made when the master's house was built. The situation was resolved when the Ecclesfield School Board agreed to take over the running of the school in 1892. In 1893, the school was transferred to the new Board School on Lump Lane, and the building became empty.

In 1894, there was a government inquiry into the charities in Ecclesfield. It was found at that time that the endowment of the Grenoside School Charity consisted of: an Empty School, The Old School Master's House, a rental charge of £10 per year from a property in Lump Lane, Rent from a property on the Cupola £30

per year. Mr J. D. Leader, the sole remaining trustee wondered what he should do with it.

Previously, a number of residents of Grenoside at a meeting chaired by William Dronfield, the clog maker from the 'Wood Yard' had resolved to ask the commissioners if the school could be used as a Reading Room and Institute, particularly 'for the young men of Grenoside, who when they left school had only the public house on one hand, and the street corner on the other'.

The commissioners agreed to this, and the original Grenoside school charity was divided into two;

The Old School Charity – to become the Grenoside Reading Room and Institute, with the endowment from the property on Lump Lane and rent from the school master's house.

The Exhibition Charity – endowed from the rent of the properties on the Cupola, to further the education of the young of Grenoside.

The Ecclesfield Parish Council became the trustees of both charities.

So the Grenoside Reading Room and Institute was born. The original purpose of the Institute was to provide a place where the young men of Grenoside could come and *better* themselves. Indeed, in the early days debates, lectures, and concerts were held there and there was a small selection of books and newspapers to read, besides the ability to play snooker and darts. However latterly, it was mainly used as a snooker room by a small number of men.

AN OLD MAP OF THE AREA C.1791



SUBSCRIPTION BOOK STATING THE FIRST TRUSTEES



ASHTON FAMILY C.1960 (REAR OF READING ROOM BEHIND)



THE OLD 'MEMBERS ONLY' SIGN

