

TEWKESBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE PUBLICATION OF
T.H.S. PUBLICATION NO 5
A COMBINED BOOK AND CD-ROM



Tony Skelsey
Author of
*A History of
Tewkesbury's Municipal Cemetery*



Mike English
Indefatigable researcher
who transcribed
The Borough Burial Records 1857-1967

Between 1832 and 1849 two Cholera epidemics killed 130 citizens in Tewkesbury. They were mostly poorer people. However, **Cholera** frightened the better off into raising a local tax to set up a Board of Health which eventually led to improvements in the water supply and housing in Tewkesbury.

However, so many died that it brought to an end the tradition of burying richer citizens in the Abbey Church yard. The '**Plague Pit**' has long been part of Tewkesbury folklore but it was really a Cholera Pit and Tony Skelsey pinpoints its location and also reminds us that an unmarked statue in the cemetery is, in fact, the Cholera Memorial.

The shortage of burial space also led to the 1853 Burial Act and, within 4 years, Tewkesbury had its own cemetery which lies almost forgotten behind the houses in Gloucester Road. It is, however, a delightfully serene place and Tony lovingly tells the story of its development and the quarrels between Anglicans and Non-Conformists.

Every grave tells a story and we have incorporated those behind some of the fascinating headstones. There is also the sumptuous and aesthetically important **Grove Mausoleum**.

Tony reminds us of the necessary extensions as space is exhausted and ponders the future with no room for further expansion. Tony emphasises that, for years, graves have replaced previous burials and that this practice will have to continue.

A by-product of the research was the discovery that a rudimentary hospital for infectious diseases was built in the cemetery around 1900 before it was decided that Tredington was a far better location for solving such a delicate problem!

Tony's history has long needed telling but we have incorporated three invaluable databases for genealogists. It was when he was an engineer with Tewkesbury Borough Council that Tony was approached by a researcher, **Mike English**, who was keen to produce an electronic record of the **Borough Burial Register** of which there is only one copy that is being ravaged by age. Over 10 years, Mike completed this project and has even produced a computer map of the first cemetery which allows genealogists the opportunity to find the location of certain graves.

Fleet Graphics' use of digital technology has enabled us to use colour photos at an affordable price.

Tewkesbury Historical Society is delighted to bring together the research over many years, undertaken by these two enthusiasts in this unique combination of a paper history and electronic burial record.