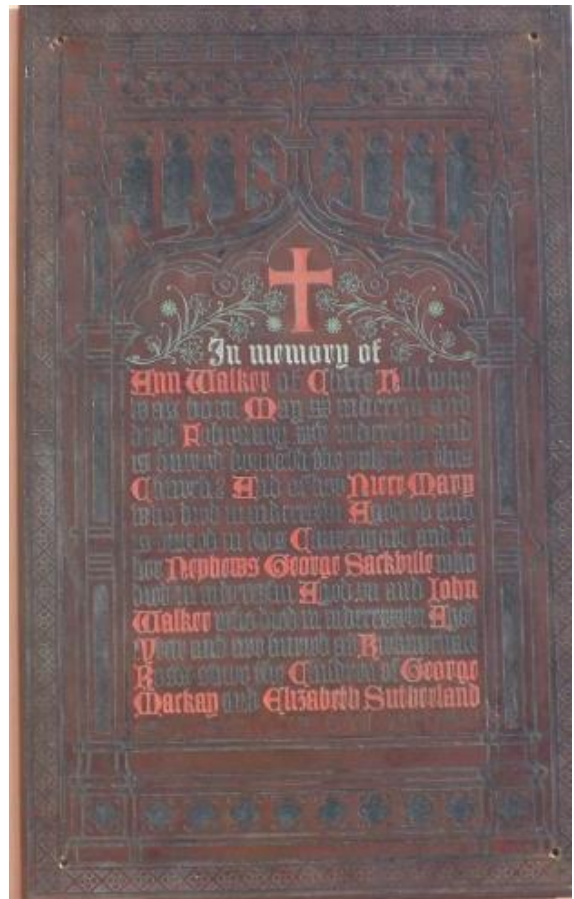


The memorials in the tower

This tower is all that is left of the old St Matthew's Church which was demolished in the early 1970s. It was rescued and is now owned by a national charity, **Friends of Friendless Churches**, which looks after over 70 churches across England and Wales. They rescued four memorials from the church and placed them in the tower for safe keeping. There were other memorials, some were too damaged to be worth keeping and others went up to the new church.

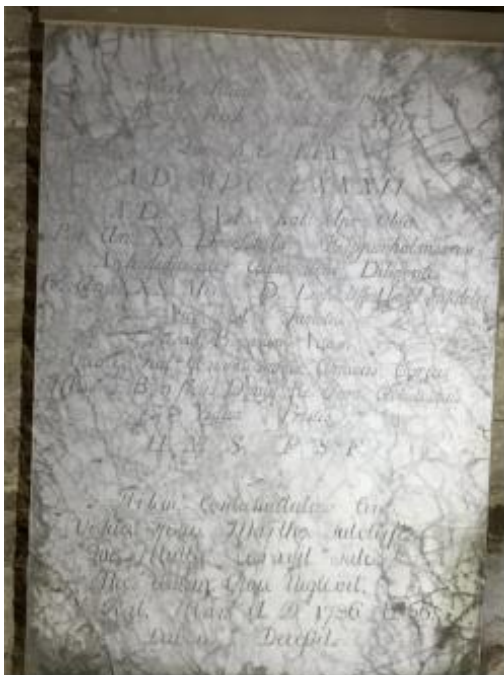


The **Ann Walker** memorial was given by her nephew and heir, Evan Charles Sutherland Walker, in the early 1860s. Its dedication is to her, a niece and two nephews, siblings of Evan Charles. It replaced a window in the north wall of the church close to where Ann was buried in a vault below the church. Until recently the memorial was high on the north wall above the memorial to her parents. In 2022, it was renovated by Skillingtons of Grantham in partnership with **Friends of Friendless Churches** who own the tower. This was after a fund-raising initiative by the group that became **In Search of Ann Walker**. It now hangs just inside the tower on the left where the intricate detail on it can be more clearly viewed.



Three more memorials have now been restored and are to be returned when the work on the tower is complete. Here are their pre- and post-restoration images.

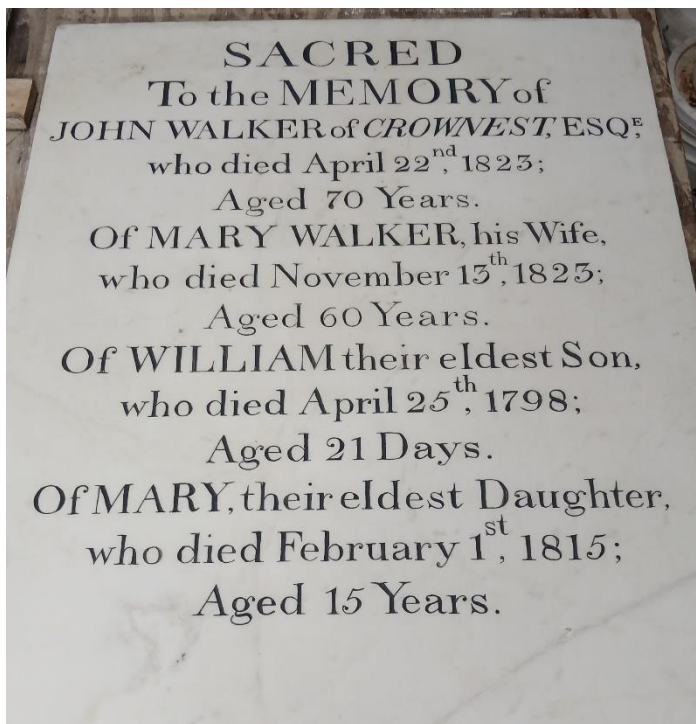
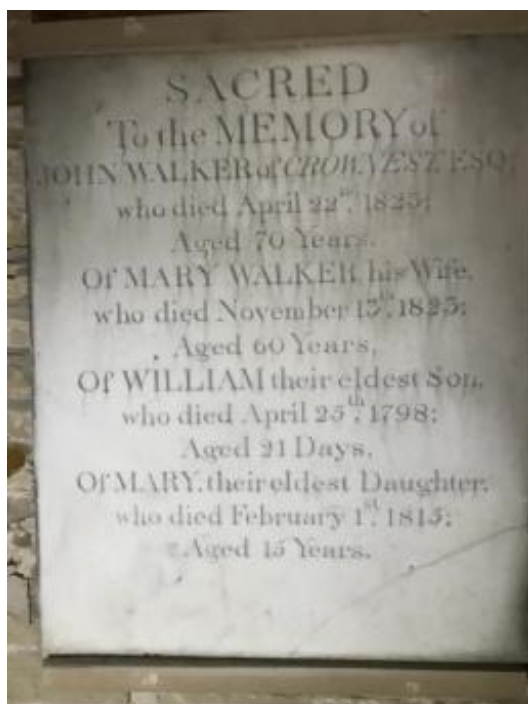
Next to the brass plaque on the left there was a memorial tablet dedicated to **Rev Richard Sutcliffe** who was the perpetual curate here when the church was built. The inscription is difficult to read because it is partly in Latin and partly in abbreviations. Translated it says he was a good priest helping members of the parish. A translation will be mounted next to this tablet which will be repositioned above the door.



Rev Sutcliffe's appointment would have been made by the Vicar of Halifax and agreed by William Walker, Ann Walker's grandfather, who had the church built. He was also headmaster of Hipperholme Grammar School. He left money for the poor of the parish.

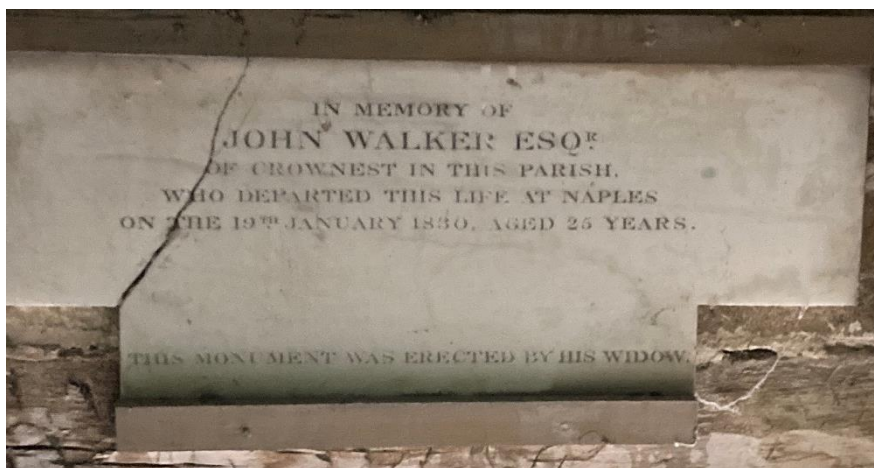
To your right, above the landing, was a memorial to **John and Mary Walker**, Ann Walker's parents. They were buried under a large ledger (flat) stone beyond the apse of the old church.

John was the younger son of the previously mentioned William Walker. He and Mary were the parents of a baby son William who died at 3 weeks old, daughter Mary who died aged 15 years, Elizabeth, Ann and John. They lived firstly at Cliff(e) Hill then at Crow Nest, when his older brother, William Walker, died and John inherited the estate.



This memorial will be repositioned on the left next to the already restored brass plaque.

The two parts of the lovely memorial to **John Walker junior**, who died on his honeymoon in Naples, will be reunited when they are returned and placed down to the right again as you enter the tower. Previously the dedication provided by his widow Fanny was fixed above the doorway.



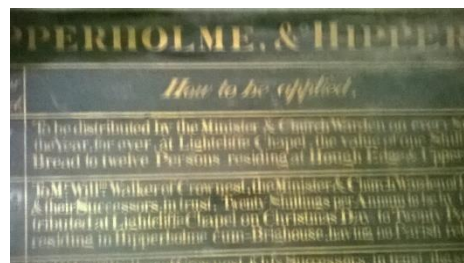
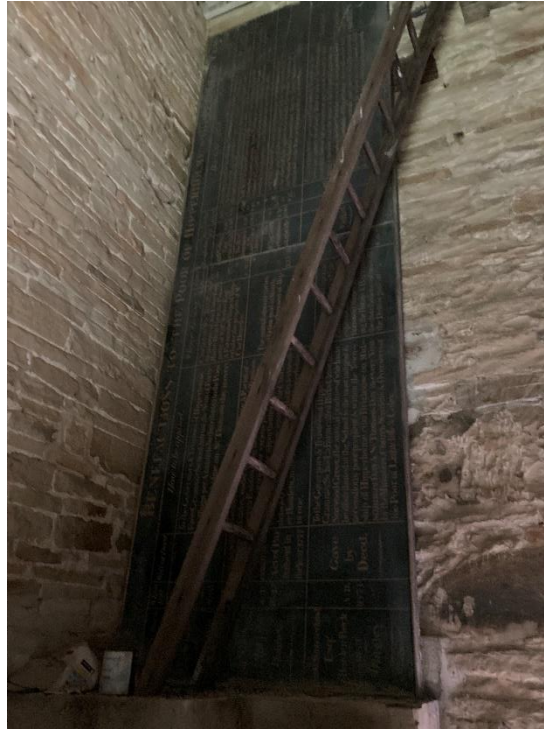


IN MEMORY OF
JOHN WALKER ESQ^R
OF CROWNEST IN THIS PARISH,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE AT NAPLES
ON THE 19TH JANUARY 1830, AGED 25 YEARS.

THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED BY HIS WIDOW.

When John died his wife Fanny was pregnant, but the little boy was stillborn. John's sisters, Elizabeth Sutherland and Ann Walker, then inherited the Walker estates. Fanny was provided for by an arrangement known as 'the widow's share'.

Also in the tower, against the east wall is the Benefactors' Board. This records donations to charity to assist the poor of the area. Ann's uncle William Walker made a donation, and this responsibility was taken on by Ann and is now continued by the *In Search of Ann Walker* group raising money for the Brighthouse Food Bank each Christmas. This board, once cleaned, will be placed on the north wall on the first landing.

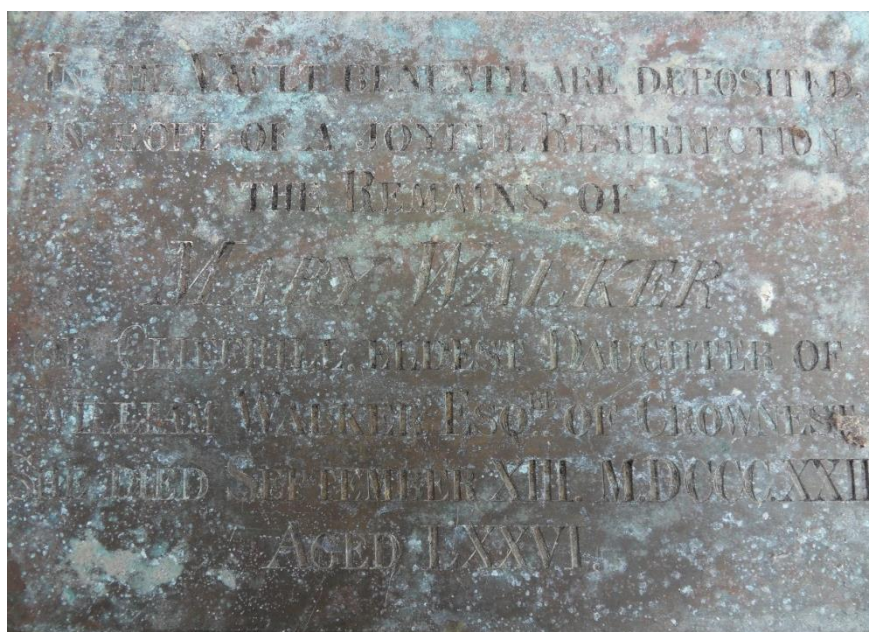


William Walker AD 1810 Left by Will

Extract from Will: I give my Executors & Trustees & their heirs one annuity clear yearly rent or sum of £10 upon trust that they or the survivors or survivors of them or his heirs shall do distribute the same at the Chapel of Lightcliffe on Christmas Day every year for ever; to & amongst such poor persons of the Township of Hipperholme aforesaid as they shall think fit the sum of two pounds part thereof being the interest of £50 paid to me under the will of the late James Gledhill & the residue thereof I declare to be donated from myself.

This bequest was under the Statute of Mortmain.

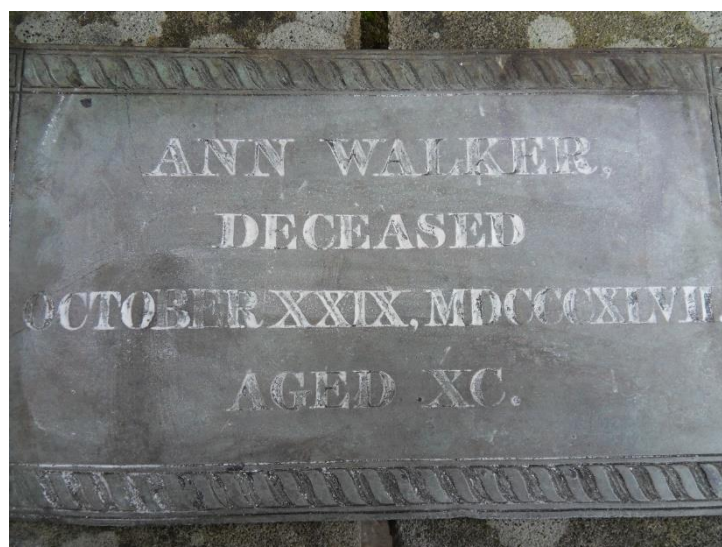
When Ann Walker's aunts were buried in the vault, plaques would have been placed nearby. There was possibly one for Ann but, if so, it has gone. These will be available to view on our walk.



IN THE VAULT
BENEATH ARE
DEPOSITED IN HOPE
OF JOYFUL
RESURRECTION THE
REMAINS OF
MARY WALKER OF
CLIFF HILL ELDEST
DAUGHTER OF
WILLIAM WALKER
ESQ OF CROW NEST
SHE DIED SEPTEMBER
13TH 1822 AGED 76

The memorial inscription on the youngest Walker daughter's plaque is somewhat brief in comparison but note the use of Roman numerals again.

ANN WALKER
DECEASED 29TH OCTOBER
1847
AGED 90



It is tempting to speculate what a plaque to their niece, Ann Walker, might have said if indeed one ever existed.

Ian Philp, Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard. 2026