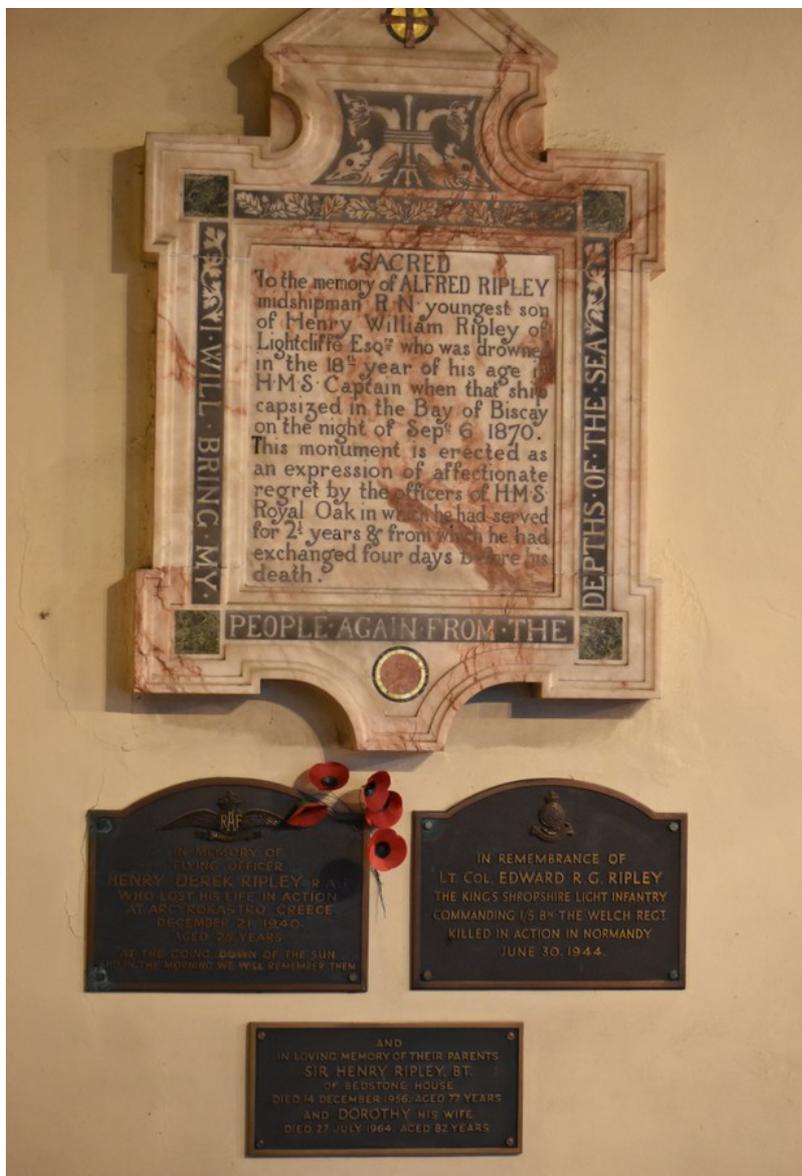


Midshipman Alfred Ripley RN

Alfred Ripley was the 6th son in a family of 11 children whose parents were Henry William and Sarah Ripley who were living in Holme House in 1864. He died at sea and a memorial tablet was erected by his former colleagues on the south wall of St Matthew's (old) church.



The family moved to Bedstone near Ludlow in Shropshire in the early 1880s and his brothers requested that the memorial be moved to St Mary's in Bedworth a few years after the new St Matthew's was consecrated.

We the undersigned Robert Ripley
 Henry Ripley and Hugh Ripley Sons
 of the late Sir Henry William Ripley Baronet
 do hereby signify our assent to
 and approval of the removal from the
 Church of Saint Matthew at Lightcliffe
 in the Parish of Halifax in the County
 of York to the Parish Church of Saint Mary
 at Redstone in the County of Salop
 The Mural Tablet erected to the memory of
 our late Mother Alfred Ripley in such Church
 of Saint Matthew at Lightcliffe approved
 by Sir Edward Ripley Baronet according to the
 request and authority on the other side of this
 Sheet of paper.

October 1886

Robert Ripley
 Henry Ripley
 Hugh Ripley

Alfred served on HMS Royal Oak as a midshipman for 2½ years before transfer to the ill fated HMS Captain. He would have served mainly with the Mediterranean Fleet. HMS Royal Oak, which had both sail and steam, was converted into an ironclad during her construction as a wooden ship of the line. She was classified as an armoured frigate.



Midshipman Alfred was transferred to HMS Captain in early September 1870. He drowned 4 days later.

HMS Captain was an unsuccessful warship built for the Navy due to public pressure. She was a masted turret ship, designed and built by a private contractor against the wishes of the Controller's department. The *Captain* was completed in April 1870 and capsized in the Bay of Biscay off Cape Finisterre on 6th September 1870 with the loss of nearly 500 lives because of design and construction errors that led to inadequate stability. Of the crew, only 27 survived.

The image of the ship gives an indication of why it was unstable. The experimental turret guns can be seen pointing out of large openings just above the water line.

For such a small village to have two of its former inhabitants remembered in the national cathedrals must be unusual. General Joshua Guest being the other.

Some Ripley family connections with St Matthew's Church:

The new St Matthew's was provided with its clock by William Ripley, M.P. And the 5th bell by Fred, Harry & Hugh Ripley.

Sir Henry William Ripley's new house, Bedstone Court c.1900



Bedstone Court was built for, but not lived in by, Sir Henry Ripley. A “calendar” house – 365 windows, 7 entrances, 52 rooms and 12 chimneys. It is now an independent boarding school.

Sir Henry William Ripley, 1st Baronet (23 April 1813 – 9 November 1882), was a British businessman, philanthropist and Liberal Party politician who switched to the Conservative Party.

Henry William Ripley became a principal partner in Edward Ripley and Son, an important dyeing company based at Bowling Dyeworks, Bowling, established by his grandfather in about 1806. In 1836 he married Susan Milligan of 'Acacia', Rawdon. In the late 1870s he bought an estate at Bedstone, Shropshire.

He was active in local politics and sat as a town councilor for the Borough of Bradford. He was also a JP, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and took an active role in founding and running the Yorkshire Penny Bank. In 1866 he commenced construction of Ripley Ville an estate of "model houses" for the working classes. There would be similarities with Akroyd & Saltaire.



From 1868 he was also active in national politics. He was returned to Parliament for Bradford as a Liberal but his election was overturned on petition in 1869. He was re-elected in 1874 as an Independent, but was defeated in 1880 when he stood as a Conservative.

In 1880 he was created a **Baronet**, of Rawdon in the County of York and Bedstone, Shropshire. He died in November 1882, aged 69, and was succeeded as second Baronet by his eldest son Edward.

His third son Frederick was created a Baronet in his own right in 1897.

Amongst many others, Sir Henry William would have known Sir Titus Salts as a neighbour in Lightcliffe and Alderman Mark Dawson a fellow Bradford politician, who lived in Hipperholme & had a mill a mile or so from Ripley.

Other plaques in St Mary's give further details of the family. Lieut. Charles Roger Ripley, 2nd Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment, youngest son of Sir Frederick Ripley was killed in action at Bois Granier, 22/10/1914. (his father had been created a baronet in his own right in 1897)

Flying Officer Henry Derek Ripley RAF lost his life in Argyrokastrò, Greece 21/12/1940 aged 25.

Lt Col Edward R G Ripley, The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, commanding 1/5 Bn The Welch Regiment was killed in action in Normandy 30/6/1944.

Sir F Hugh Ripley died 15/7/1945 aged 67 and Sir Hugh Ripley of Bedstone House died in December 1956 aged 77 and his wife Dorothy in July 1964 aged 82.

Thanks to Chris Helme for providing the lead for this story and to Andrea Gilpin of Caring for God's Acre, Graham Jackson & Margie Savery who is related to the Ripley family for the up to date photograph of the memorial and St Mary's and additional information.