

Sources for the Study of Godfrey Sykes (1824-1866) (designer, metalworker, sculptor, painter)



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Front cover illustrations - left to right:

Base of Godfrey Sykes Monument, Weston Park, c. 1980
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield w00789*)

Pinstone Street at junction with Norfolk Street, from an oil painting
by Godfrey Sykes, c. 1850
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield s18753*)

Godfrey Sykes' Monument, Weston Park, 2013
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Picture Sheffield a00965*)

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With thanks to Sylvia Dunkley.

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Introduction

This Guide lists sources within Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library relating to the life and work of Godfrey Sykes (1824 - 1866) who, having studied and been a teacher at the Government School of Design in Sheffield, came to be much admired for his design work.

Sykes was born in New Malton, Yorkshire in 1824. His father worked for the Sheffield company of Francis Newton and Sykes was apprenticed to a firm of Sheffield engravers, Bell & Tomkin, before working on his own account making showcards and silverware. In 1843 when the Government School of Design opened in a rented room at the Bath Saloon on Victoria Street in Sheffield, Sykes became a pupil and was soon winning prizes, including being the first recipient of the Overend Prize for his design for bronze gates for a school of art.

Sykes's early works were paintings of local scenes and of Sheffieldsers at work but when Alfred Stevens came to Sheffield in 1850 to become chief designer for Henry E Hoole & Co, Sykes started to work unpaid for three days a week with Stevens learning metalwork production techniques. By the mid-1850s he was receiving commissions for decorative schemes such as the sixty foot frieze for the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute and for interiors of houses commissioned by some of Sheffield's leading citizens.

Sykes taught for a while at the School of Design but in 1859 his London career began when he started work on designs for the Horticultural Society Garden Buildings in South Kensington and was appointed chief decorative artist for the new South Kensington Museum, later the V & A, where he popularised the use of terracotta. He was responsible, in particular, for the details of the garden and the arcade. Prince Albert and Queen Victoria took a keen interest in his designs and sometimes visited him at home. Among other visitors were Charles Dickens and William Makepiece Thackeray who commissioned him to design the cover for the first edition of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

Sykes was not able to see his work on the South Kensington Museum completed as he died from a lung infection in 1866 when he was only 41. His colleague, James Gamble, who went to work with him in London, designed a commemorative memorial which was erected in Weston Park in 1875. The memorial column includes a portrait medallion of Sykes. The Park entrance gates are to Sykes' designs. Sykes has been celebrated in Sheffield a number of times since his death and his local paintings were shown for several years as part of an old Sheffield paintings' display at High Hazels Museum. His Mechanics' Institute frieze was recently restored and put on temporary display by Sheffield Hallam University. There are a number of his Sheffield landscapes and paintings of Sheffield craftsmen at work in the Museums Sheffield collection.

This Guide is not intended to be a detailed exploration of the life and work of Sykes but is designed to direct any reader who wishes to carry out their own research to what is available within Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies, together with material that can be found in the Sheffield Hallam University Special Collection and at Museums Sheffield which has a considerable collection of his paintings and examples of his design work.

Timeline showing key dates

1824	Born, New Malton, North Yorkshire
1843	Pupil at newly opened Government School of Design in Sheffield
1848	Elected a free student for life for winning the first prize two years in succession
1850 - 1851	Worked with Alfred Stevens, designer at Henry Hoole & Company
1853	Won Overend Prize of £50 for design of bronze gates for a School of Art
1853	National Gallery acquired his <i>Adoration of the Shepherds</i> (now in the V & A's collections)
1853	Tobacco jar exhibited in Dublin
1854	Received commission for sixty foot frieze allegorizing the arts and crafts for the front of the balcony of the lecture theatre at the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute
1855	Completed decorations for Richard Solly's house 'Fieldhead'
c.1856	Commission for the ceiling of the Telegraphic Newsroom in Sheffield completed
c. 1856/7	Appointed assistant master at the Sheffield School of Design having already been a teacher there for several years
1857	Silver inkstand designed by Sykes presented to Young Mitchell, Head of the School of Design
1859	Went to London to assist with decorative schemes for the 1862 London Exhibition and to work on the decoration of the Horticultural Society's garden buildings in South Kensington
1859 onwards	Chief decorative artist at the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A)
1860	Designed the cover for the first edition of the <i>Cornhill Magazine</i> which inspired Thomas Hardy to write a poem about it
1860	Married Ellen Palfreyman
1861 - 1862	Visited Italy
1862 - 1863	Painted profile head of Prince Albert as preparatory study for a commemorative mosaic portrait for the South Kensington Museum
1863	Executed Lunette painting, <i>Model Drawing</i> , at the South Kensington Museum as part of a project led by Richard Redgrave, the South Kensington Museum's Art Superintendent
1863	Designed the tomb in Kensal Green cemetery of William Mulready (1786-1863)
1864	Exhibited designs for the soffit of an arch and for mosaics and woodcarvings in the Kensington Museum South Court at Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition
1866	Died, Old Brompton, London and buried in Brompton Cemetery
1866	Exhibition of his oil pictures and architectural drawings held at the South Kensington School of Art
1875	Weston Park memorial erected
1929	Paintings shown in Exhibition of Pictures of old Sheffield at Mappin Art Gallery
1935	Exhibition of his paintings at the Graves Art Gallery
2009	Mechanics' Institute frieze restored and temporarily displayed in Sheffield Hallam University's Cantor Building

A selection of images from the collections at Sheffield Archives and Sheffield Local Studies



Victoria Street looking towards the Bath Saloon (where the Government School of Design was opened in 1843) from Glossop Road (*Picture Sheffield: s244288*); The Drawing Room at Endcliffe Hall, painted ceiling attributed to Godfrey Sykes (*Picture Sheffield: s05551*); Godfrey Sykes' Gates, Western Bank (*Picture Winter Sheffield: t01531*); Detail of Godfrey Sykes' gate posts, entrance to Western Park, Winter Street (*Picture Sheffield: y01772*); Shambles Market, Market Place and King Street (*Picture Sheffield: s00307*)

List of documents, books, photographs and other items available at Sheffield Archives and Sheffield Local Studies Library

General

Diamond, Michael, *Art and Industry in Sheffield, 1850-1875: Alfred Stevens and his school* (Sheffield City Art Galleries, 1975)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 708.2 SQ*)

List of Works by School of Art Students in the Museums Sheffield collections
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: M P 6478 M*)

'Sheffield's Forgotten Artists' from *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 7 Aug 1957 in Lea, C. H., *Photographs relating to Sheffield*, vol. 20, p. 7
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 914.274 SQ*)

Graves, Sue, *The Art Scene in Sheffield 1843-1900 with particular reference to the Sheffield School of Design* (MA Thesis, University of Sheffield Department of Continuing Education, 1999-2002)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 709.4274 SQ*)

Wills, Hilary, *Sheffield Artists 1840-1940* (Basement Gallery, 1996)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 759.2 SQ*)

Government School of Design, Sheffield

Basford, John, *A School of Art is Beginning: From Sheffield Government School of Design to Sheffield Hallam University*, Part 1 1843-1963 (Sheffield Hallam University/Sheffield Institute of Arts, c 2013)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: PAMP 358 S and Sheffield Hallam University Special Collection: 707.110942821 SC*)

School of Design, Sheffield, established under the superintendence of Government, 1843: *The Report of the Committee of Management for the Year Ending July 1 1845*
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 445 M*)

School of Design, Sheffield: invitation to annual meeting and distribution of prizes, 1850
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 728 S*)

School of Design, *The seventh annual report of the Government School of Design, Arundel Street, Sheffield' with a report of the proceedings at the annual meeting held in the Music Hall, 10 Oct 1850*
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 707 SST*)

Kirby, John, 'The Sheffield School of Design and the Great Exhibition 1851' in *Victorian Society Newsletter*, Sep 1979, pp. 20 - 25
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 720.94274 SQ*)

School of Design, Sheffield: historical article in *Victorian Society Newsletter* (April 1980, pp. 6 - 8)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 720.94274 SQ*)

Sheffield School of Art, *Annual Reports 1848 - 1904* (some gaps)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 707 S*)

Sources for the Study of Sheffield's School of Art, 1843 - 1969 (Sheffield Libraries Archives and Information, 2015)
(*Sheffield Archives*)

Godfrey Sykes

Armitage, Harold, 'Godfrey Sykes' [taken from *Cornhill Magazine*, new series, vol. 32, 1911 - 1912)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 2784 M*)

Attacks on the removal of his decorations from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, with letter from Charles Green, and copy of cover of *Cornhill Magazine*, 1874, designed by Sykes
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 29, pp. 137-138 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

Biographical details in Stainton, J. H., *The Making of Sheffield, 1865-1914*, (E Weston & Sons, 1924), p. 228
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74S*)

Biographical details in a letter from Henry Archer
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 5, p. 40 942.74 SF microfilm*)

Biographical note and picture of his monument in Weston Park, Sheffield
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 25, p. 32 942.74 SF microfilm*)

Biographical notes and photographs of his chief paintings
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 27, pp. 136-137 942.74 SF microfilm*)

Biographical notices relating to Sheffield [with] Leader Collection of pictures and cuttings
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: M 2693 microfilm*)

Birthplace, sketch and note
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 49, p.18 942.74 S microfilm*)

Brief details in *Sheffield by Henry Tatton*, vol. 2, p. 348
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74 SQ*)

Catalogue of the special exhibition of oil paintings, water-colour drawings, archaeological and other studies by Godfrey Sykes, at the South Kensington Museum, Jun 1866
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets*, vol. 68, No. 2, 1866, 042 S)

Description and picture of his monument in *Sheffield Illustrated*, vol. 1, p. 52
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 914.274 SF*)

Description of the exhibition of his works at Graves Art Gallery and reproductions of some of his paintings in
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield*, vol. 12, pp. 160-163 942.74 SF microfilm)

Description of monument and picture of cottage where he was born in *South Yorkshire Notes and Queries*, vol. 2, p. 241
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 913.4274 S*)

Design of ceiling of Telegraphic Newsroom in the Fitzalan Markets
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield*, vol. 9, p. 127 942.74 SQ microfilm)

Details and illustrations on the monument in Weston Park
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield*, vol. 45, p. 88 942.74 SQ (microfilm))

Drawing of Old White House, Highfield (Godfrey Sykes' House)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield*, vol. 14, p. 28 942.74 SQ)

Family tree of his family in *Yorkshire County Magazine*, vol. 3, 1893, pp. 183-184
(*Sheffield Reference and Information Library: 914.274 ST*)

Godfrey Sykes in Peters, Thomas, 'What Part Sheffield has played in Art Decorative during the last Century', paper read at the Conference of the Institute of British Decorates, Sheffield, 21 Jun 1921
Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, vol. 117, No 130, pp. 7-8, 042 S)

Illustration of his monument
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield*, vol. 2, p. 20942.74 SF microfilm)

Memorial etc., to Godfrey Sykes in Weston Park, Sheffield, designed by James Gamble, photographed 29 Jun 1912
(*Sheffield Archives: Searchroom Library SYCRO 1016*)

Note of his paintings of Sheffield in *Sheffield by Henry Tatton*, vol. 2, p. 403
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74 SQ*)

Note on family in *Notes and Queries*, vol. 12, Series 10, p. 481 and vol. 1, Series 11, p. 46
(*Sheffield Reference and Information Library: 052 ST*)

Notes and pictures of the Sykes Monument in Weston Park, 1884
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 25, p. 77 942.74 SF microfilm*)

Odom, William, *Hallamshire Worthies: Characteristics and Work of Notable Sheffield Men and Women* (J W Northend, 1926)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 920.04274 S*)

Picture of his residence on the site of Highfield Police Station
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 8, p. 28 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

Picture of "Rivelin, near Sheffield" bequested to the city by Godfrey Sykes
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 10, p. 32 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

Picture of the house at Highfield which is reputed to be the birth place of Sykes (he was actually born in Malton)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 39, p. 27 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

Picture showing his birthplace
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 17, p. 79 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

Reproduction of his picture of Rivelin
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 12, p. 309 942.74 SF microfilm*)

Reproduction of painting of interior of a grinding wheel, Endcliffe Woods
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, vol. 9, p. 118 942.74 SQ microfilm*)

'The Heritage of Godfrey Sykes' in *Quality of Sheffield*, Nov/Dec 1984, pp. 35-37
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 380 SQ*)

Information accompanying the unveiling of the Mechanics Institute Frieze by Godfrey Sykes, 30 Oct 2009
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 6117 M*)

The Sykes Style of Design (Sheffield Hallam University, 2009)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 709.42 SYKE S*)

Newspapers

The main titles available at Sheffield Local Studies Library include: *Iris or Sheffield Advertiser for the Northern Counties*, 1794 - 1856; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1855 - 1986; *Sheffield Mercury*, 1807 - 1848; *Sheffield Independent* 1819 - 1938; The *Sheffield Independent*, 1819 - 1900 and *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 1855 - 1903 are available online at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Archives of some national newspapers are available on the internet, notably *The Times* (<http://archive.timesonline.co.uk>) and *The Guardian* (<http://archive.guardian.co.uk>)

Photographs

Over 70,000 images from the Sheffield Local Studies Library photographic collection are available to search online at www.picturesheffield.com. Images of Sykes' work are available on Museum Sheffield's website at www.museums-sheffield.org.uk.

Photograph of his monument and details of his work on Weston Park Gates in Lea, C. H., *Photographs relating to Sheffield*, vol. 13, pp. 14-15
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 914.274 SQ)

Photographs of terra cotta columns modelled for the lecture theatre at the South Kensington Museum, with descriptions and a brief memoir of the artist's life, (London, 1866)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 721.34 SSTF)

Library and Archive collections held elsewhere

Godfrey Sykes, cuttings, 1850 onwards
(*Sheffield Hallam University Adsetts Special Collection*: 709.2 Sykes)

The Cornhill Magazine, April 1912 (a bound copy of the *Cornhill Magazine* with cover designed by Godfrey Sykes)
(*Sheffield Hallam University Adsetts Special Collection*: 709.2 Sykes)

Milburn, Fred, *The Development of Schools of Art and Design: With Special Reference to South Yorkshire* (Thesis submitted as part of Advanced Certificate in Education, University of Sheffield Division of Education, 1971)
(*University of Sheffield, Western Bank Library*)

Quennell, Peter (ed.), *The Cornhill Magazine*, No. 969, Winter 1946 (John Murray, 1946)
(*Sheffield Hallam University Adsetts Special Collection*: 709.2 Sykes)

The Sykes style of design, (Sheffield Hallam University, 2009)
(*Sheffield Hallam University Adsetts Special Collection*: 709.2 Sykes)

The National Archives Discovery catalogue includes catalogues describing archives held locally in England and Wales <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

The Archives Hub contains catalogues describing archives held in universities and colleges in the UK www.archiveshub.ac.uk

The National Archives (TNA) holds records of central government departments and agencies. You can search the TNA catalogue online at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Useful Websites

The following websites have several examples of Godfrey Sykes' work

www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/sykes

www.collections.vam.ac.uk

www.collections.museums-sheffield.org.uk

www.shimmer.shu.ac.uk

Biographical details can be found at www.oxforddnb.com

www.sculpture.gla.ac.uk - Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851 - 1951

Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12th century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

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<p>Sheffield Local Studies Library 1st floor Central Library Surrey Street Sheffield S1 1XZ</p> <p>Tel: 0114 273 4753 Fax: 0114 273 5009</p> <p>archives@sheffield.gov.uk</p> <p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p> <p>(selected) Sheffield Local Studies Library catalogue https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html</p>	<p>Sheffield City Archives 52 Shoreham Street Sheffield S1 4SP</p> <p>Tel: 0114 203 9395 Fax: 0114 203 9398</p> <p>archives@sheffield.gov.uk</p> <p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p> <p>(selected) Archives catalogues: https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/catalogues.html and http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/</p>
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	<p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p>
	<p>www.twitter.com/shefflibraries</p>
	<p>http://shefflibraries.blogspot.co.uk/</p>
	<p>www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries</p>
	<p>www.youtube.com/user/SheffieldArchives1</p>
	<p>www.facebook.com/shefflibraries</p>