

Introduction and Rededication

Reverend Henry Corbett
(Chaplain to Everton Football Club)

Welcome everyone to this service. We are here to give thanks for the life of Thomas Keates and for his contribution to the life of Everton Football Club and to re-dedicate his grave with its new headstone.

He was a writer of Everton's history and we have two much loved writers of Everton's history here, Ken Rogers and David Prentice, and they are going to speak about the life of Thomas Keates and about Everton's links with this Anfield Cemetery, and another much loved Everton historian Peter Lupson would love to be here too, but he is unable to attend because of his wife's ill-health.

Then Sarah Deboe is going to read a piece about Everton's history and Thomas Keates, and I think you will find that piece has a strong contemporary relevance with a great example for us to follow.

Finally, Jamie will bring a piece called *A Wander through Walton with Thomas Keates*.

The pieces are not short and so settle back for the life of Thomas Keates, for Everton Football Club's links with Anfield Cemetery, for a very relevant excerpt from our club's history, and for a wander through Walton with Thomas Keates.

(Readings)

I loved the "Shouts, shrieks, groans, cheers, then handshakes all round" and the "hope for better results and hatchets buried by the score" (*in the piece read by Sarah*). That's a good message from history for today.

So now a prayer of thanksgiving for the life of Thomas Keates, and I loved reading that he was also an advocate of free schooling and campaigned for that.

Loving God, we thank today for the life of Thomas Keates.
We thank you for his love of history, of writing,
for his concern for schooling, for free schooling for all,
for his love for Everton Football Club
and his willingness to serve and speak out,
for his love for his family and his resilience in the face of difficult times, especially when
within four years his father, his mother and his first wife all died,

and we pray that we will pay our respect to him by putting into practice the good examples he leaves for us, including the handshakes all round and the hatchets buried. We ask this in the name of the one who came not to be served but to serve, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Now the rededication of the restored grave with its new headstone:

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb,
Bless this grave and headstone as the place where the body of your servant Thomas Keates was laid to rest.
May this grave and headstone be a reminder to all who see it that Thomas Keates was a man who loved and served Everton Football Club, his family, his community, and may his love for history and service be an example to all.
We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

The Blessing for us all, amidst the twists and turns of life, on a football pitch and off it:

May the blessing of God the Creator Father,
God the alongside Son,
and God the inspiring Holy Spirit,
be with each one of us,
this day and for evermore,
Amen.

Henry Corbett
9 September 2023