RECORDING MEMORIALS

- Visit your local burial ground
- Photograph memorials
- Record inscriptions
- Interpret the gravestones
- Understand the symbolism
- Uncover the past

Discovering Gravestones

If you are someone who enjoys spending time in burial grounds, fascinated by the gravestones and what they teach us about past lives, you can start your own graveyard survey using this pack. Prepared by one of the countries leading experts on the archaeology of gravestones, Professor Harold Mytum's system is easy to use with a little practise by individuals and community groups alike.

The pack includes instructions and a sample recording form to get you started. Measuring, recording and deciphering gravestones and memorials tells us more than who lived and died there; it can show trends and fashions in monument and inscription styles and also social history of longevity. In some parts of the country, occupations of the deceased are mentioned. The shapes and symbols have their own meanings too and some of these are listed here

You may wish to check if there are records or a plan of your chosen burial ground. Local history departments in libraries may have some information, or the local council if it is a municipal cemetery. Churches and chapels might also have this information available and if you are sufficiently interested or plan to do a lot of recording it may be worth asking the vicar or minister about these.

Please remember that although burial grounds and graveyards are open to the public, some people may be visiting loved ones' graves. Try to avoid areas where there are recent graves and of course, if there should be a funeral being held, avoid intruding.

Recording Memorials

Recording memorials can be a very enjoyable, rewarding experience. Even very worn and difficult gravestones often retain more information than you might notice at first glance, and will repay the effort taken to decipher them. Record the details you observe on the recording form (see next page), including the inscription, a photograph, and many other features of the memorial such as shape and size.

The recording form included is quite a complex one but it is fine to only fill in those parts with which you feel comfortable. The main form has boxes for the name of the burial ground and a code, which you make up from the place, and the year of recording (e.g. SUTM20 for Sutton, St Mary's, recording done in 2020). Add your name and how you've numbered the memorials, and the site location (a site grid reference is useful). The inscription is written on the left, and information about the memorial, taken from the coding sheet is on the right, with space for comments and a sketch.

The location of the monument within the burial ground also needs to be recorded and the denomination of the designated area (i.e. if it is in an area for particular faith). This is most easily achieved on a sketch plan of all the memorials (annotated with their number) and other features such as boundaries, structures, paths and trees. Not every monument will have all the features mentioned on the form and you can cross through those which are not visible or applicable.

There may already have been a survey of the graveyard in the past or the burial ground may have a management system by which all grave plots are identified. If you have an identifier for the plot use it in the form so that the new survey can be cross-referenced with any existing documentation. But also use a new set of numbers for the new survey even if there is an existing set.

The next page contains a form which you can print to make your gravestone recordings on. The pages after that are notes to help you know what to do.

Burial Ground name	Burial Ground Name code							
Grid reference	Memorial number							
Recorder name	Memorial number of existing system							
Date of recording	Denomination of burial area							
Inscription	Memorial number of plot if part of a complex							
	Condition of monument							
	Condition of inscription							
	Height (incl. any base) mm							
	Width (excluding base) mm							
	Thickness/length (excl. base)							
	Height of any base mm							
	Width of any base mm							
	Orientation (in degrees)							
	Materials of monument							
	Material of base							
	Monument type							
	Additional elements							
	Shape of any text panels							
	Definition of any text panels							
	Techniques of inscription							
	Letter styles							
	Dec motifs central							
	Dec motifs marginal							
	Tooling back							
	Tooling sides							
	Repairs to monument							
	Date of monument							
	Reason for monument date							
	Comments/sketch							
	Digital photograph							
Field check	Base check							

Reading & Writing the Inscription

There is a box on the form to write the inscription - the words on the gravestone that tell you the person's name, dates of birth and death and other details. Try to copy these down as accurately as possible, but you don't need to copy the style of the text, just make sure that (for example) if the name is bigger than any other text on the stone, you show this in your recording. Copy all the details such as starting a new line to match the memorial, and add all punctuation and symbols that might be included in the text, such as spirals or swirls. If there is an inscription on both sides of the stone, record these separately. Sometimes there are kerb stones around the edge of the grave and these too can be recorded - write them in a separate area on in the inscription box.

Different lighting may help bring out text which is hard to read, so try using a torch, or shining a light on a board covered in tin foil and reflecting the light back at the stone. Sometimes it is possible to feel the letters even when they can't be seen too well. Rubbings, chalk and the like are not recommend as they can damage the stone. Sponging or spraying the stone with water can also bring out the text, or try a gentle brushing.

Measuring & Orienting the Stones

Measure the height, width and depth of the gravestone and note the measurement in millimetres. The height is measured from the ground surface, and the width measured at the widest part.

Some stones will have fallen, but you may be able to judge the original height from marks where ground level was, or where ivy or lichen has not grown.

All monuments, including tombs, have an orientation. The orientation of the stone indicates which way it faces. This is based on the side with the most important primary inscription. Even horizontal slabs have an orientation - one considers which way they would face if they were set up on end. To measure orientation, a compass of a type used by walkers, which has a sliding ring with 360 degrees marked on it, may be used, but many mobile phones now can have a compass app. The compass is set on the top or side of the stone, the fixed arrow pointing outwards from the inscription. The sliding ring is then turned until north on the ring (0 or 360 degrees) lines up with the compass point which is pointing to magnetic north.

Do remember, however, that the material the stone is made of may be magnetic itself and this might throw the reading out. One way of finding out is to swivel the compass about and see if the needle adjusts back to the expected general direction or just floats about aimlessly. With such stones, orientation needs to be calculated against the base or kerbs, as the magnetic field does not extend any distance from the stone. It is easy to use a phone app as this just gives the reading in degrees. A stone facing directly east would have a reading of 90 degrees.

You should also note the condition of the memorial and the condition of the inscription and mark these on the form accordingly.

How to use the form & coding sheets

The first material to be listed on the form should be the dominant one the stone is made of. For example, a sandstone headstone with a white marble inset of a cross would be coded 40 21. **Please refer to the coding sheets which begin on page 12.** A surprising number of memorials are made of more than one material; many chest tombs have a brick base with a stone slab, and Gothic revival monuments may be polychrome by using a variety of materials. Many monuments from the early and middle part of the 20th century have chippings of coloured stone or glass within the kerbs.

Coding types of gravestone

Ledgers
Flat slabs level with, or just protruding from the ground, can be coded 0100.

Grave-rails and grave-boards
In a few areas of Britain grave-rails with a shallow horizontal (0310) and grave-boards with a deeper horizontal plank (0330) survive. Grave rails and boards were originally in timber, but they can also be found in stone and cast iron. They have the same codes for their form, but the materials codes would be different.

Low monuments
If no differentiation within other low monuments is attempted, all can be coded 0500. However, low monuments come in a range of shapes, and some of the most common have been given sub codes.

Kerbs

When kerbs form the monument itself, they are given a code 0900. If they form an additional element, to, for example, a headstone or tomb, they should be recorded as Additional elements. Simple kerbs should be given 0920, those with raised posts at the comers 0940, and those with three posts on each side 0960. In some cases, the kerbs have railings (0970), even when there is no additional element inside, or chains (0980).

Chest and table tombs

If you do not want to divide up these tombs, or there is only the top slab and it is not possible to tell what type of monument it originally formed a part of, use 1000. Chest tombs are rectangular box-like monuments with flat slabs on top and closed-in sides, and all have 1100 numbers. Table tombs (1300) also have flat slabs but these are raised up on legs. There can be four legs, in a variety of shapes, of which the most common are straight (1410), baluster or column (1420), with slightly curved animal legs (1430), or those which expand in the centre (1440).

Crosses

Crosses as a whole can be numbered 2000, but it is easy to differentiate the main types and give them separate codes. The simple Latin cross (2100) is the most common, but others frequently found include the ringed cross (2200), often with Celtic or other revival interlace, crosses with expanded terminals (2300), and those with Gothic revival finials at the terminals (2400). The bases of the crosses vary considerably. Many are stepped, and this can be indicated by the third digit, where **10, **20 and **30 each indicate the number of steps as 1, 2 and 3 respectively. A rocky base (**50) is also found, and many wheeled crosses and some others have a roughly square base (**60). As the steps can sometimes include one in a diamond shape, this can be indicated using the final digit (***5).

Sculpture

Sculpture occurs rarely in churchyards, but is quite common in cemeteries, especially in areas in use in the first few decades of the 20th century. All sculpture, whatever its scale, is coded 3000. The most frequent figures found are angels (3100). These can be subdivided into angels standing (3110), sitting (3140) or kneeling (3160). Sculpted cherubs (3200) also occur, especially on child graves. In Catholic areas, the Virgin Mary (3400) is often found.

Headstones

Headstones (4000) are by far the most common form of memorial, and they come in a great variety of shapes. Many of these were only popular at certain times and in a few regions, so providing a national design scheme which would encompass every possibility would be impossible and horrendously complicated. This system is not the simplest, but it does allow a logical development of types to fit most situations. To give headstones the variety of forms necessary, not only the 4000s but also the 5000s, 6000s and some 7000s and 8000s have been allocated to this type. For traditional headstones, some of the 4000-6000 numbers have been used, with each digit of the code indicating a particular feature.

The first two digits indicate the basic shape of the top: round (4100), Gothic pointed (4200), triangular/gabled (4300), pedimented (4400), slightly curved (4500), sinuous (4600), flat (4700), concave pointed top (4800).

Pedestal tombs

Though far less common than headstones, pedestal monuments are frequently encountered, and are very common in some burial grounds. The pediment may be solid or hollow, but the classification used here is based on the shape of the main block of the monument. If this cannot be assessed, or all are to be placed under a general number, then 9000 should be used. An upright cuboid shape (9400) is the most common, though a squat form that really is a cube (9300) is occasionally seen. Those with oval or circular cross sections, making a columnar form (9100) or multifaceted, polygonal cross sections (9200) are also encountered.

Mausolea, partially subterranean vaults and other upstanding structures

All upstanding structures can be just labelled 9500, but some obvious subtypes deserve separate coding. Mausolea occur occasionally in churchyards and more frequently in cemeteries. They have been given the code 9800 as a general heading, but can be further subdivided; some common forms are already allocated codes – simple Classical revival form (9840), an Egyptian style (9850), and a Gothic revival structure reminiscent of a chapel (9860).

Decorative motifs

In some parts of Britain almost all memorials are plain, in others they are highly decorated. The extent and nature of decoration, and the motifs used, also varies greatly over time. The range of decorated motifs given here is larger than that likely to be needed on any one survey undertaken at one place, but is a useful overview of the range. By subdividing in the same way as with the memorial type it is easy for those motifs with a similar theme, such as flowers, or symbols of mortality, to be grouped together for analytical purposes.

Sketching & Photographs

Comments/sketch box

The comments box is for use to record any features that are not otherwise covered, to elaborate on any interpretation (or doubt about it), and to note when further investigation may be worthwhile, for example in better light. It can also be helpful to provide a sketch of the stone or any particular motifs here. Experience shows that though these may be very inaccurate they can still convey the essential features of the stone.

Photography

A single lens reflex (SLR) digital camera is really needed to photograph the stones because the files are higher quality. It is usually easiest to set the camera to automatic, but if a team member if more accomplished with digital cameras, it can be helpful for some of the images that are of the inscribed and decorated face of the monument to limit the depth of field so that any background is blurred. Details of lettering, motifs and any mason names may require a close-up setting. Photographs should be taken face on to the headstone, with the face filling most of the frame, though for more complex memorials an oblique view may be more informative.

A scale should be included in all record photographs; 30cm or 50cm lengths are not too intrusive. They should be coloured red and white, or black and white, and set against or beside the memorial. They can be made by painting a ruler or length of dowel; it is possible to use coloured tape (such as electrical tape) to create the alternate stripes. These can look less elegant that painted scales, but these are time-consuming to create. In order to avoid any confusion, the graveyard code and monument number should be provided.

Graveyard Recording Code Sheets

Denomination

10 Christian (denomination not known)

11 Anglican/Episcopalian

12 Roman Catholic

13 Baptist

14 Presbyterian

15 Methodist

20 Orthodox (denomination not known)

21 Greek Orthodox

22 Russian Orthodox

50 Jewish (denomination not known)

51 Jewish (Ashkenazi)

52 Jewish (Sephardic)

60 Islamic

90 Pet cemetery

Condition of monument

1 Sound and in situ (even if leaning)

2 Sound, but displaced

3 Falling apart, incomplete but recognisable

4 Collapsed and form unknown

5 Overgrown

Condition of inscription

1 Mint

2 All legible

3 Mainly legible

4 Traces

5 Illegible/destroyed/face down

9 Never inscribed

Orientation

The orientation of a stone indicates which way it *faces*. Most headstones are at the head of the grave and *face* towards the east. The orientation is measured in degrees

Monument dimensions

Where to take measurements for monuments *without* a base.

The *main* measurements for a monument with a base
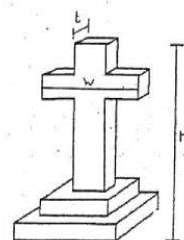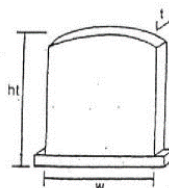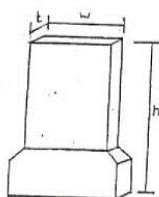
The *base* measurements

Materials
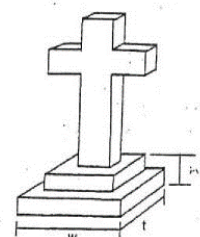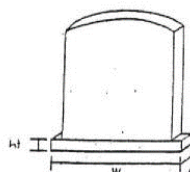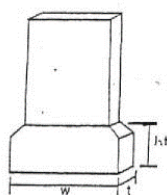
10	Slate
13	Purple slate
20	Marble (usually white but often discoloured)
30	Granite
31	Pink granite
32	Grey granite
33	Black granite
40	Sandstone
41	Yellow sandstone
42	Red sandstone
50	Ceramic
51	Brick
52	Tile
53	Terracotta
54	Black-glazed ceramic
55	Brown-glazed ceramic
56	Cream-glazed ceramic
60	Iron
65	Brass
70	Conglomerate
75	Concrete
78	Mosaic (any materials)
79	Glass
80	Limestone
81	White limestone
82	Grey limestone
90	Other
95	Wood

Memorial Type

There is a four-digit numbering system which allows for recording and analysis at different levels of detail, and so is very flexible. The first digit indicates the type of monument (e.g. headstone, cross), the second a subset of this (e.g. round-topped, ringed), and the third can be used for further subdivision (e.g. indented sides, with stepped base) as can the fourth (e.g. with square shoulders, one step diamond shaped).

The monuments have been broken down into the following broad categories:

Kerb	0900
Chest and table tombs	1000
Crosses	2000
Sculpture	3000
Headstones	4000, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000
Pedestal tombs, mausolea	9000

Kerbs

When kerbs are not additional to any monument, but they form the monument themselves. 09 indicates kerbs; the third digit if there are stone posts, the fourth if the interior faced of the kerbs are bevelled (these often were used for text).

0900 Kerbs
0920 Plain kerbs
0940 Kerbs with posts at the corners
0960 Kerbs with 3 posts on each side
0970 Kerbs with high railings
0978 Railings only (no kerbs visible)
0980 Kerbs with chains
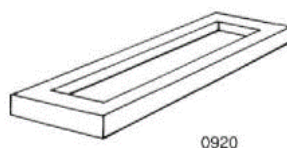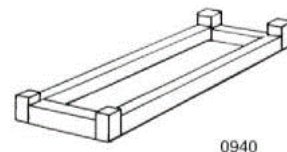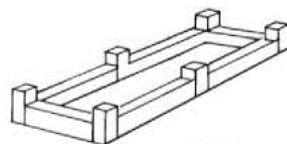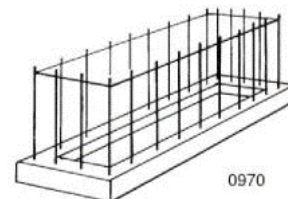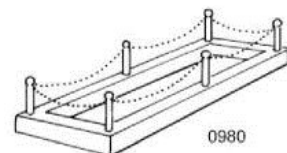
Kerbs with bevelled/moulded internal faces:
0921 Plain kerbs
0941 Kerbs with posts at the corners
0961 Kerbs with 3 posts on each side

Low monuments

0100 Ledger
0105 Ledger on a base or step
0200 Coffin shaped ledger
0310 Grave-rail
0330 Grave-board
0500 Low monument
0510 Low monument with flat top
0520 Low monument with convex top
0530 Low monument with gable top
0540   Low monument with hipped top
0550 Low monument with gabled cross
* * * 5 Low monument on a base or low step
0600 Cremation plaque set flush or
        almost so with ground
0700 Rectangular plaque set flush with ground
        (lawn cemetery style)
0705 Rectangular plaque set on low base
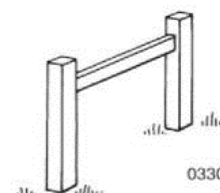   almost flush with ground (lawn cemetery style)
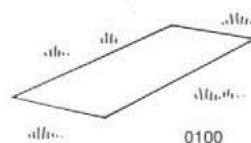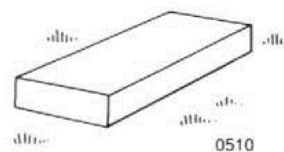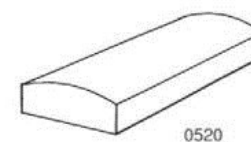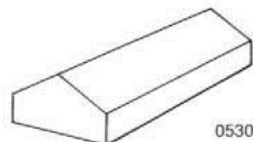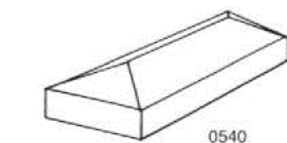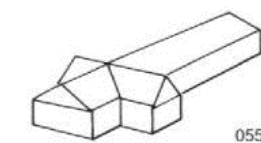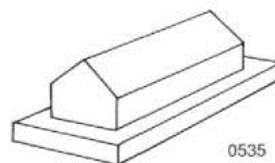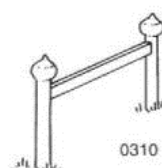
Table and Chest tombs

1000 Tomb
1100 Chest tomb
1110 Chest tomb with plain sides
1120 Chest tomb with rectangular
     panelled sides
1130 Chest tomb with console ends
1300 Table tomb
1410 Table tomb, 4 straight square legs
1420 Table tomb, 4 baluster legs
1430 Table tomb, 4 animal legs
1440 Table tomb, 4 expanded legs
1610 Table tomb, 6 straight legs
1620 Table tomb, 6 baluster legs
1630 Table tomb, 6 animal legs
1640 Table tomb, 6 expanded legs
1700 Tomb with single central panel
     between end panels
***1 Square cut top
***2 Bevelled top
***3 Coped top
***4 Moulded top
***5 Single bale on top
***6 Double bale on top
***7 Low monument on top
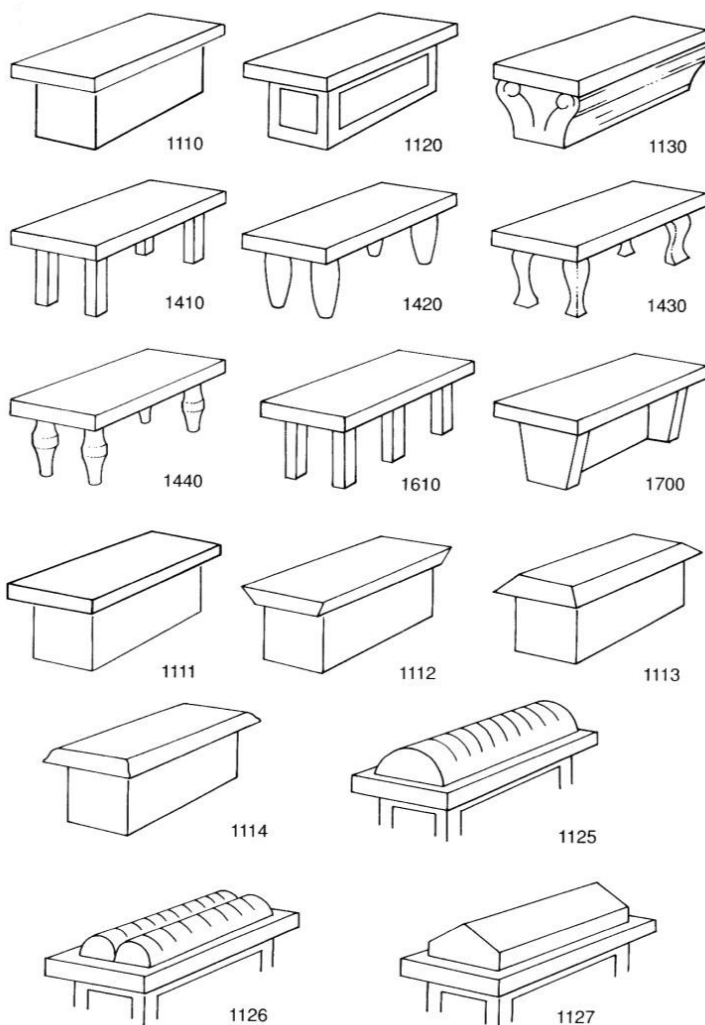
Crosses

2000 Cross
2100 Simple Latin cross
2200 Ringed cross
2300 Cross with expanded terminals
2400 Gothic cross
2500 Cross of Lorraine
     (with second arm at an angle)
2600 Cross with third arm
2700 Cross with gable
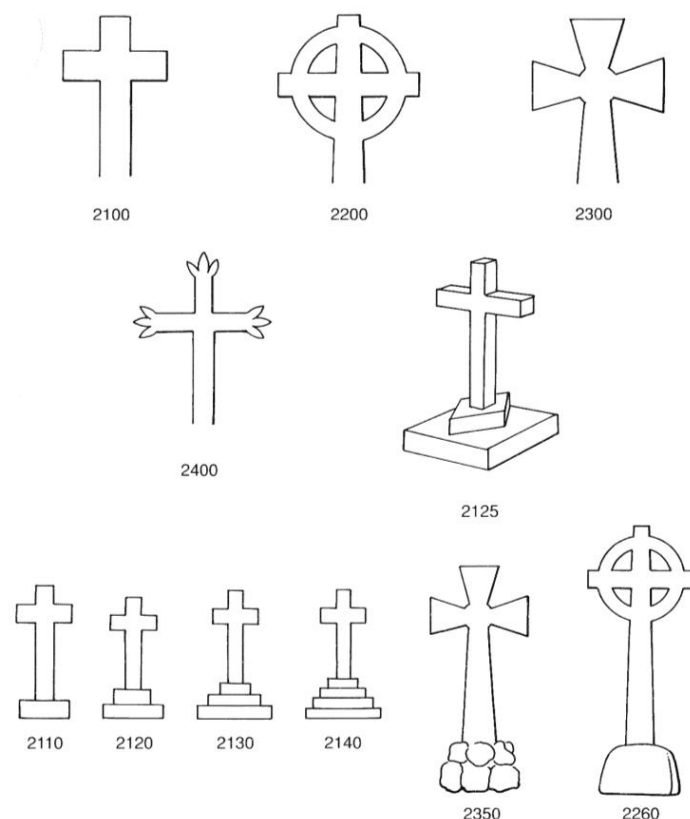**10 with 1 stepped base
**20 with 2 stepped base
**30 with 3 stepped base
**40 with 4 stepped base
**50 with rocky base
**60 with roughly square base
***5 with one step diamond shaped

Headstones

4000 Headstone / Boulder /
      Rock grave marker
4100 Round top
4200 Gothic pointed top
4300 Triangular top
4400 Pedimented top
4500 Slightly curved top
4600 Sinuous top
4650 Topped with a cross
4660 Topped with a ringed cross
4700 Flat top
4770 With a cross on the side
4800 Concave pointed top
4900 Discoid (circular on shaft)
5100 Flat top with semicircular
      central feature
5200 Flat top with triangular central feature
5300 Flat top with slightly curved central
      feature
5400 Flat top with pointed oval central feature
5800 Asymmetrical top
**50 Topped with a small cross
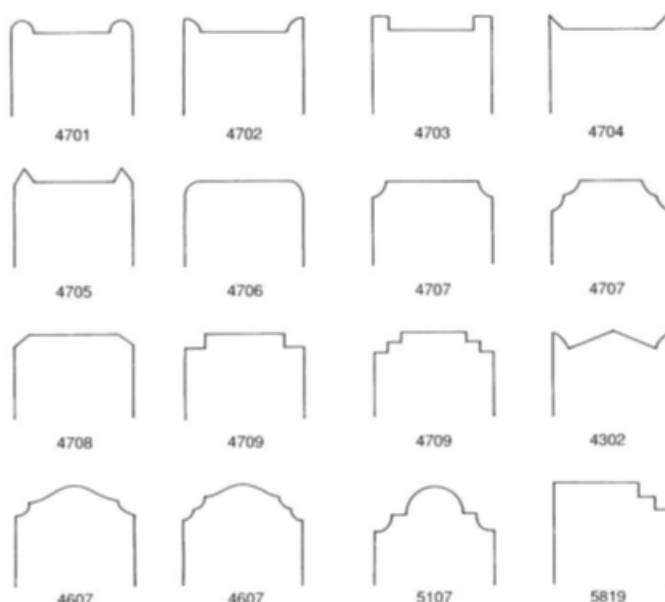   (often a separate piece)
**60 Topped with a small ringed cross
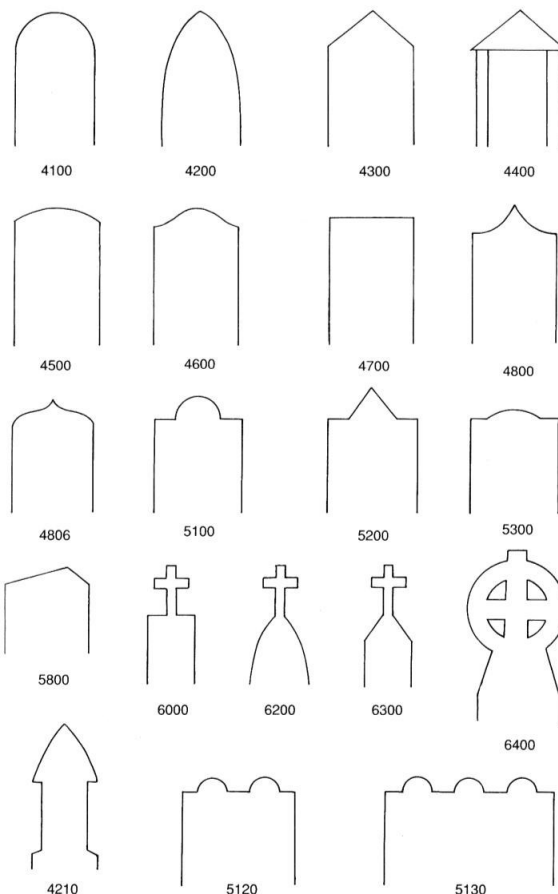
Headstones with substantial integral cross on top
      (see **50, **60 for small crosses on top)
6000 With cross on top
6100 With ringed cross on top
6200 Gothic pointed headstone & cross on top
6300 Gothic pointed with ringed cross
6400 Triangular with cross
6500 Triangular with ringed cross
6600 Rounded top with cross
6700 Rounded top with ringed cross

### Other features of the headstone

**10 Indented sides
**20 Shape of top repeated twice
**30 Shape of top repeated three times
**40 Incorporating a scroll
**50 Small cross on top
**60 Small ringed cross on top
**70 Cusped top centre to headstone
**80 Cut away either side of centre

Features on shoulders of headstones

***1 Semicircular   ***6 Convex shoulders
***2 Quarter-circular ***7 Concave shoulders
***3 Square   ***8 Angled shoulders
***4 Triangular   ***9 Stepped shoulders
***5 Pointed
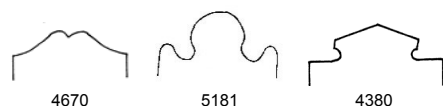
Wall monuments

7000 Wall monument
7010 Wall monument on church exterior
7020 Wall monument on boundary wall
7030 Wall monument on freestanding section of wall
7050 Panel covering loculus for interment in upstanding communal block
7060 Panel covering wall niche for cremation

Other monument shapes

7100 Flower holder in place of a stone and no other form of memorial
7300 Thick, low memorial at head of grave – often originally part of a plot with additional kerbs
8100 Desk
8120 Desk with open book
8150 Desk with scroll
8200 Wedge shaped slab
8220 Wedge with open book
8250 Wedge with scroll
8350 Low stone, top shaped like a scroll, but not at the bottom
8400 Rock, rough
8450 Rock, rough, with scroll
8480 Rock, smooth
8500 Log pediment
8600 Heart
8700 Circular disc
8900 Bench as memorial
8960 Plaque on railings/tree
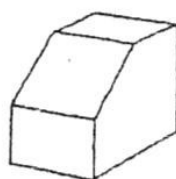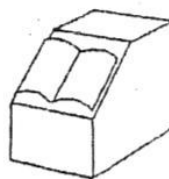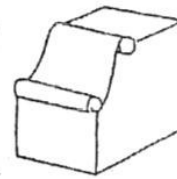
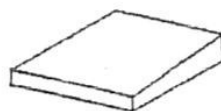## Sculpture

3000 Sculpture
3100 Angel
3110 Angel standing, pointing upwards
3140 Angel seated, mourning
3160 Angel kneeling, praying
3200 Cherub
3400 Virgin Mary
3500 Calvary
3600 Male figure
3650 Male bust
3700 Female figure
3750 Female bust
3800 Other design (e.g. car)

***3 on stepped base
***5 on rocky base
***7 on cubed base

Pedestal tombs

9000 Pedestal tomb
9100 Columnar pedestal
9200 Polygonal pedestal
9300 Cube pedestal
9400 Cuboid pedestal

**10 2nd stage cube/cuboid
**20 2nd stage gable
**30 2nd stage Gothic structure
**40 2nd stage obelisk
**50 2nd stage pyramid
**60 2nd stage dome
**70 2nd stage column
**80 2nd stage broken column
**90 2nd stage sarcophagus

***1 Topped with urn
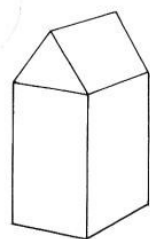***2 Topped with draped urn
***3 Topped with finial
***4 Topped with a sphere
***5 Topped with a neo-classical
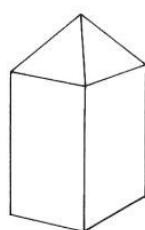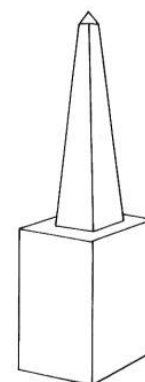   sarcophagus
***6 Topped with a gothic cross
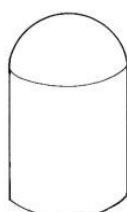***7 Topped with a cross
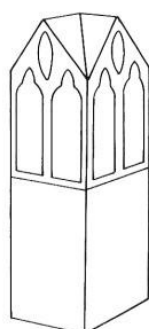***8 Topped with a ringed cross

9420 9450 9440
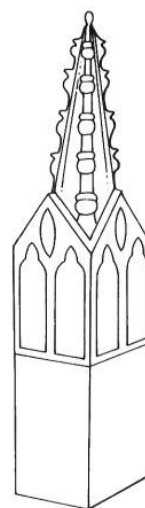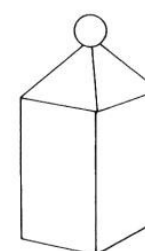
9160 9430 9433 9454
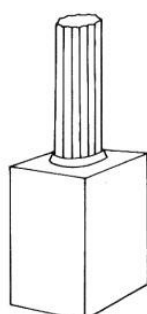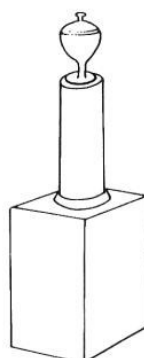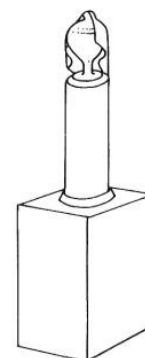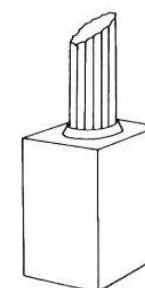
9470 9471 9472 9480

Mausolea, partially subterranean vaults and other upstanding structures

9500 Major upstanding structure
9550 Columbarium for cremations

9600 Large box shape tomb
  with the main additional visual feature:

9620 flat slab
9622 scroll
9625 open book
9630 vertical headstone
9640 cross (horizontal)
9650 cross (vertical)
9660 sculpture

9800 Mausoleum
9840 Classical revival mausoleum
9850 Egyptian revival mausoleum
9860 Gothic revival mausoleum

9900 Partially subterranean vault
9910 with barrel vault just visible
9920 with barrel vault roof and
      vertical sides
9930 with gabled roof and vertical
      sides
99*5 with ends that extend higher
      than the main tomb roof

Additional elements

Additional elements refer to features associated with a memorial, usually a headstone.

The first digit refers to the presence or absence of footstones. Footstones may be blank or they may have dates and initials inscribed on them that link them to the people commemorated on the headstone. They will not have a full inscription.

The second digit refers to the presence or absence of body stones or whatever covers the grave in front of the monument. The third digit refers to the presence of absence of kerbs and their design. The fourth digit refers to the presence or absence of any sort of filling within the kerbs, for example chippings.

For example, 0024 means that a monument has:

0*** no footstone; *0** no body stone; **2* plain kerbs; ***4 pink chipping infill

Box 1

0 No foot stone

1 Foot stone

Box 2

0 No body stone

1 Body stone, parallel sided, flat

2 Body stone, parallel sided, raised

3 Body stone raised more like a tomb

4 Body stone, coffin shaped, flat

5 Body stone, coffin shaped, raised

6 Wrapped body shape

8 Flower holder built in at the base

Box 3

0 No kerb

1 Kerbs

2 Plain kerbs

3 Kerbs with posts at feet

4 Kerbs with posts at head and foot

5 Kerbs with two pairs of posts,
   neither at the head

6 Kerbs with three posts on each side

7 Kerbs with railings

8 Kerbs with chains or other fittings

9 Kerbs ornately carved and shaped

Box 4

0 No chippings

1 Green chippings infill

2 White chippings infill

3 Grey chippings infill

4 Pink chippings infill

5 Peat or soil infill

6 Gravel/Pebbles

7 Shale Fragments

9 Other

Text Panels

Many monuments have text set in a panel. This may mirror the shape of the stone, but often it is of a different shape. If there are two panels on a headstone the panel at the top of the headstone would be entered first. The codes for the text panel shapes are made up of 4 parts. For example, 8270 represents:8*** is a vertical rectangle; *2** is a semicircular central feature; **70 has concave shoulders or corners.

Shape of text panels

1000 Square
2000 Circle
2300 Oval, vertical
2500 Oval, horizontal
2800 Octagon
2900 Lozenge
3000 Sarcophagus
4000 Shield
5000 Cartouche
6000 Open Book
7000 Rectangle, horizontal
8000 Rectangle vertical
9000 Scroll
Text panel with:
*100 Rounded top
*200 Semicircular central feature
*300 Pointed top
*400 Triangular top
*500 Triangular central feature
*600 Slightly curved top
*700 Slightly curved central feature
*800 Sinuous top
**60 Convex shoulders/corners
**70 Concave shoulders/corners
**80 Angled shoulders/corners
**90 Stepped shoulders/corners
***2 Shape repeated twice
***3 Shape repeated three times
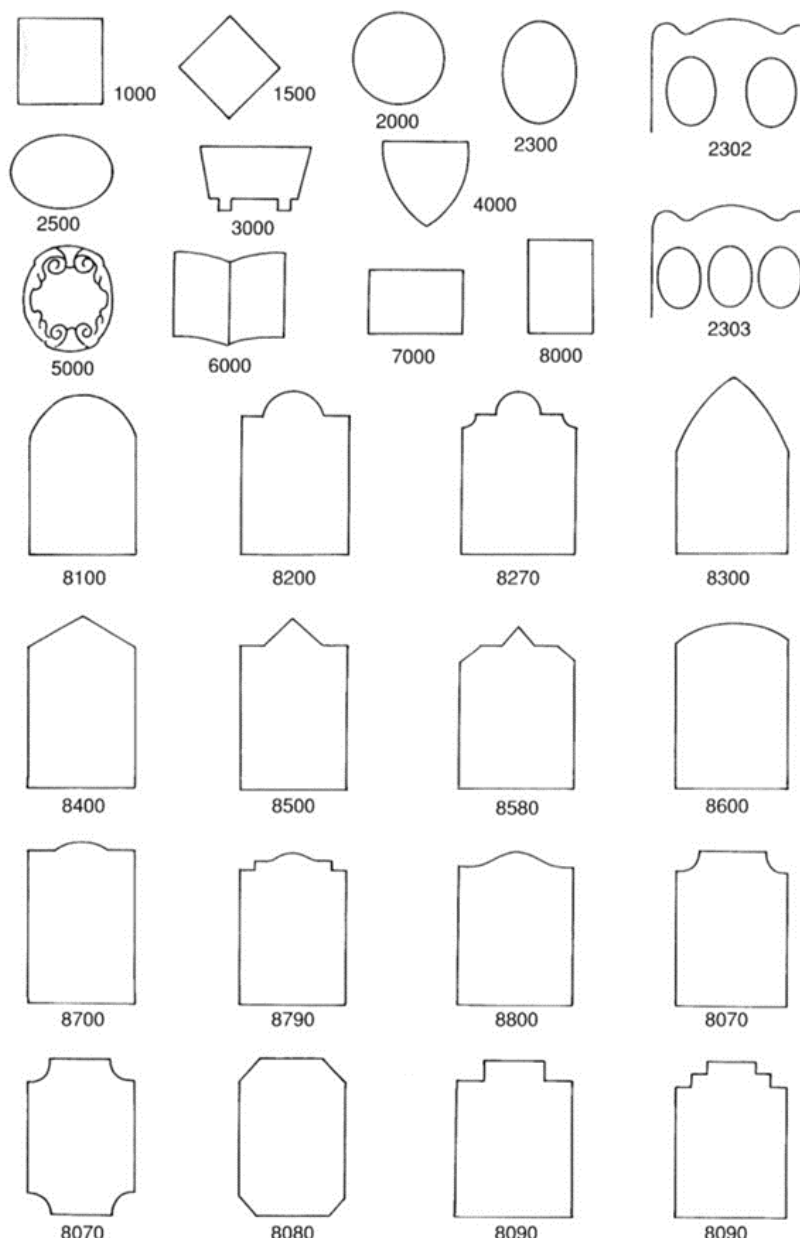
Definition of text panel

1 Incised design
2 Moulded design
3 Relief decoration (e.g. a wreath)
4 Inset panel, flat surface
5 Inset panel, convex surface
6 Raised flat panel
7 Raised convex panel

Technique of inscription

There tends to be a fairly restricted number to techniques used in inscriptions, though on the same monument there may be several treatments.

Where a letter is inlaid, this does not also count as incised, even though there has to be incision or cutting to prepare for the inlay. Where the inlay has fallen out, as is quite common with the normal soft black lead lettering, the small drill peg holes, which should still be visible, indicate that this was not incised lettering and so should be coded as inlaid.

Raised inlaid lettering is not where lead lettering is gradually coming out (or the marble has eroded back) but is deliberately created to stand above the surface; it is often chunky lettering in black.

1	Incised	3	Relief	5	Incised painted	7	Raised inlaid
2	Inlaid	4	Painted	6	Relief painted	8	Applied

Letter styles

A basic set of different generic styles is offered here. Often more than one letter style will be used on a monument.

010 Cyrillic lettering
020 Chinese lettering
030 Arabic lettering
040 Hebrew lettering
050 Korean lettering
060 Greek lettering
100 Roman
150 Roman Italic
200 San Serif
250 San Serif Italic
300 Clarendon
400 Egyptian
450 Egyptian Italic
500 Copper Plate
600 Gothic
800 Bold with serifs
900 Thin
950 Other
960 Flared

Roman
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Roman italic
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Sans serif
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Clarendon
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Egyptian
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Copper plate
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Gothic
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Decorative motifs

For a headstone the 'central' motifs are those found in the centre and across the top of the stone. The motif to be recorded first should be the most visible. The 'marginal' motifs on a headstone will be found down the edges and they often include architectural designs such as columns, rope work and foliage.

Central decorative motifs

Mortality:

110 Separate bones
111 Crossbones
112 Skull and bones
121 Skull facing forward
122 Skull facing sideways
125 Winged skull
130 Skeleton
135 Bell
140 Hour glass
145 Winged hour glass
147 Sundial
148 Candles
150 Coffin
152 Spade
154 Pick
160 Scythe
162 Father Time
170 Torches pointing down
171 Torches pointing up
172 Time's dart
173 Death (figure)
174 Memento Mori text
    e.g. Tempus Fugit
    Be ye ready
176 Serpent
177 Serpent eating its tail
180 Scale
187 Broken column
191 Star
192 Moon
193 Sun
194 Sun rising/setting

Cherubs and Angels:

210 Cherub head and wings only
212 Two cherubs
213 Three cherubs
220 Cherub with body
230 Cherub with trumpet
250 Angel
260 Angel kneeling
270 Angel flying

Vegetation:

300 Flower
310 Rosette/marigold
311 Rose
312 Tulip
313 Lily
315 Yorkshire rose
316 Thistle
317 Daffodil
320 Flower with broken stem
325 Flower with sickle
330 Leaves
332 Stylised leaves
333 Shamrocks
335 Vine
337 Ivy
340 Fruit
345 Grapes
350 Tree
355 Willow
357 Palm
360 Sheaf of wheat
370 Wreath

Crosses:

400 Cross
405 Cross with expanded
    terminals
410 Celtic/Ring-headed cross
420 Maltese cross
430 Gothic cross
440 Two-barred cross
450 Chi Rho

Figures:

500 Figure
505 Jesus
506 Madonna
507 Virgin Mary full figure
508 Justice with scales
509 Head of Jesus
510 Portrait of deceased
511 Head of Mary
515 Saint
520 Full figure of deceased alive
530 Full figure of deceased dead
540 Classical figure, unknown
543 Classical figure, Hope with
    anchor
545 Classical figure, mourning
547 Classical figure, mourning,
    with altar/urn
550 Anchor
580 Other mourning

Christian:

610 Book (uncertain) closed
611 Trinity
612 'Gloria in excelsis deo' text
613 Line of Bosses
615 Book open
620 Bible closed
625 Bible open
626 Scroll (not pattern or text panel)
627 Banner
630 Crown
631 Crown with radiance
633 Triangle with radiance
635 Eye with radiance
637 Cross with radiance
640 Crucifixion
641 Crucifixion – complete scene
642 Crucifixion – church interior
645 Symbols of the Passion (see advice documentation)
650 Crown of thorns
655 Lamb
656 Lamb of God with cross, banner
657 Lamb of God – no banner
660 Heart
661 Heart pierced by Time's dart
662 Sacred Heart
663 Sacred heart with radiance
664 'Squirting' heart
670 IHS
672 IHS interwoven
673 IHS with cross on bar of H
674 as 673 in radiate circle (often dog tooth pattern)
680 Adam and Eve
685 Day of Judgement/ Resurrection
686 Day of Judgement/ Resurrection with radiance
688 Alpha and/or Omega

690 Other Biblical
695 Chalice
710 Altar
713 Altar, Christian
715 Altar, Classical
720 Tomb
730 Urn
735 Draped urn
740 Romanesque tracery
750 Gothic tracery in relief
755 Gothic window
760 Ecclesiastical building
761 Gate of St. Peters
770 Interlace (Celtic)
780 Vine scrolls with animals, birds

Other:

800 Hand
810 Hand pointing up
812 Hand pointing down
820 Hands clasped/shaking
825 Hand in prayer
833 Trefoil
834 Quatrefoil
850 Birds
851 Bird and bush/flower
852 Feathers
855 Dove
860 Animals
861 Dog
870 Scrollwork (pattern)
880 Shell
883 Palmette
885 Cornucopia
890 Fan
895 Swags of cloth – central
896 Canopy
897 Curtains

900 Masonic symbols
901 Square and compass
902 Compass
903 Square

Other:

909 Horse
910 Fleur-de-lys
920 Shield
921 Diamond
922 Circle
924 Full formal Heraldic Arms
925 Shield with design on it
926 Lion
927 Crossed swords
928 Helmet
929 Military Regimental insignia
930 Transport scene
931 Horseback/cart
932 Ship
933 Train
934 Bicycle
935 Car
936 Motor cycle
937 Lorry/Bus
938 Aeroplane
939 Gun/Cannon
940 Occupation (other)
941 Ploughing
945 Blacksmiths tools
946 Horseshoe
947 Weaver's tools
948 Carpenter's tools
950 Hobby
955 Toys
956 Cartoon character
960 Rural scene
961 Hunting
970 Urban scene
980 Pews
990 Portrait photograph
991 Portrait etched

Marginal decorative motifs

200 Columns
210 Baluster columns
220 Fluted columns
230 Barley sugar spiral columns
300 Swags of cloth
400 Leaves
410 Flowers
420 Bird with flower

450 Fruit
470 Foliage scrolls
500 Scrolls
550 Circles
600 Rope
610 Dog tooth
620 Gothic crockets

700 Egg and dart
710 Triangles
720 Gothic arcading
730 Ribbons
800 Border (outline)
801 Border (decorative)
802 Cross

Tooling back

0 Smooth
1 Masons Signature
2 Rough
3 Deep Hand Tooling
4 Fine Hand Tooling
5 Decorative Tooling
6 Machine Cut Tooling
9 Other

Tooling sides

0 Smooth
1 Masons Signature
2 Rough
3 Deep Hand Tooling
4 Fine Hand Tooling
5 Decorative Tooling
6 Machine Cut Tooling
9 Other

Repairs

These can be repairs either to the main monument or the additional features such as kerbs.

0 No repairs
1 Repairs
2 Iron clamps

3 Copper alloy clamps
4 Lead clamps
5 Mortar/concrete/adhesive

Date of monument

One of the most important features to establish about the monument is its date. Occasionally, the date of erection is explicitly stated, but in the vast majority of cases an inference has to be made. Some memorials can be erected before anyone later commemorated on it has died. In other cases, the monument is only put up decades after the last person mentioned, such as with some war memorials. It is normal, however, for the stone to be erected within 2 or 3 years of either the first person mentioned, or the latest in a group all inscribed at the same time when the stone was first used. The date for the monument is therefore inferred from the inscription.

Reason

There are various ways of dating the monument from its inscription and these are coded to make the recorders thought processes clear.

1 Stated date of erection
2 Inferred date from first mentioned individual
3 Inferred date from latest of a group first inscribed together
4 Inferred date of footstone from associated monument
5 Inferred date from associated headstone
9 Dates of those commemorated not relevant to monument date

Additional Resources

If you have developed or furthered your interest in recording as a result of this information you may like to visit the website for the **Discovering England's Burial Spaces (DEBS)** project at http://www.debs.ac.uk

This page gives more detail about recording:
http://www.debs.ac.uk/recording.html

Examples of how the material can be placed in a spreadsheet and analysed, and how data can be interpreted:
http://www.debs.ac.uk/interpreting.html

On the **Caring for God's Acre website**, the following link may be useful:
https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/recording-memorials

Information for children, from the **Caring for God's Acre** Education Pack:
https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/education-pack/marvellous-monuments/

Caring for God's Acre works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds and graveyards.

There are over 20,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, ranging from small rural medieval churchyards to large Victorian city cemeteries, spanning different cultures, religions and centuries. Many churchyards date from Medieval times and may be the oldest piece of enclosed land in a parish. The encircling wall will date from that moment of enclosure. Originally, churchyards did not contain monuments to those buried within them; the lord of the manor and family would have been buried beneath the church in a crypt and commemorated within the church itself, but other people were buried with no permanent marker. Churchyards are believed to contain approximately 10,000 graves, mostly unmarked and unrecorded. Have a look at the ground level on either side of a churchyard wall; the ground inside is often considerably higher as a result of all the burials. In the 18th century permanent memorials for those buried in the churchyards started to become fashionable. Symbols on gravestones denoted concepts such as eternal life, the Holy Spirit, purity and love as well as showing tools of the deceased's trade such as carpenters' tools, ships, anvils or musical instruments. The 19th century saw great social upheaval and migration, with a burgeoning urban population. Many churchyards became full and the great urban cemeteries were constructed to act as public open spaces as well as places for burial. These 'Gardens of Remembrance' were on the outskirts of towns and cities and became destinations for weekend visits, often by newly constructed railway.

Burial grounds encapsulate the history of communities whilst offering refuge for our native wildlife. For many people, burial grounds are the only locally accessible green space nearby. But burial grounds are under threat from development, closure, under-management and mismanagement and their heritage value, and even their continuing presence, cannot be taken for granted.

Join the movement. Let's keep burial grounds beautiful, accessible and connected to their communities.
Visit https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk for information about our work and how to support it.