

Durham County Record Office

County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Telephone: 03000 267619

Email: record.office@durham.gov.uk

Website: www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk



HANDLIST 13 : GRAVE PLANS

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Introduction

This leaflet explains some of the problems surrounding attempts to find burial locations, and lists those useful grave plans which are available at Durham County Record Office.

In order to find the location of a grave you will first need to find which cemetery or churchyard a person is buried in, perhaps by looking in [burial registers](#), and then look for the grave location using [grave registers](#) and [grave plans](#).

To complement our lists of churchyard burial records (see below) we have published a book, [Cemeteries in County Durham](#), which lists civil cemeteries in County Durham and shows where records for these are available. Appendices to this book list non-conformist cemeteries and churchyard extensions. Please contact us to buy a copy.

Parish burial registers

Church of England burial registers generally give a date of burial, the name of the person and sometimes an address and age (for more details please see information about [Parish Registers](#) in the Family History section of our website). These registers are available to be viewed in the Record Office on microfilm.

Burial register entries occasionally give references to burial grounds or grave plot locations in a marginal note.

For details on coverage of parish registers please see our [Parish Register Database](#) and our [Parish Registers Handlist](#) (in the Information Leaflets section).

While most burial registers are for Church of England graveyards there are some non-conformist burial grounds which have registers too (please see appendix 3 of our [Cemeteries](#) book, and our [Non-conformist Register Handlist](#)). Roman Catholic churches keep a register of deaths which will often also give details of burials, whether in their own churchyard or other cemetery.

Parish grave registers and grave plans

Churches, from the mid 19th century onwards, will often have kept a register of grave space allocations in the churchyard, with an accompanying plan. This often refers to a particular part of the churchyard, often a new extension.

Where a churchyard is still in use the church may still have a plan and register, but where the graveyard has been closed for new burials most of these plans have not survived. The plans were often kept by the sexton or another officer, rather than in the parish chest or vestry safe. When a churchyard was closed the plans were forgotten about, as they would no longer be in daily use, and over time they simply disappeared.

Grave registers are listed in our parish register database along with burial registers.

Grave plans are listed in this leaflet, in the table below.

List of monumental inscriptions

We have a handlist of available [Monumental Inscriptions](#). These lists and plans have been compiled by antiquarians and local historians concerned by the fading of inscriptions and by the tidying of graveyards and moving of gravestones from the Victorian period onwards. They attempt to record the inscriptions on gravestones and memorials in churches and churchyards. They can only include those inscriptions that were still legible on the minority of graves that had written markers, and there is no guarantee that they mark the actual burial place of the persons listed on them.

Civil cemetery records

Until the nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of the population were buried in parish churchyards. The Society of Friends (Quakers) maintained their own burial grounds but few other non-conformists did so. With the increase in population and the growth of large towns in the nineteenth century, the Church of England churchyards were no longer able to provide enough space and other provision had to be made. In the early part of the century many private cemeteries were opened by private act of parliament, but most cemeteries were opened under various Burial Acts from 1852 to 1906 and were run by local authorities, in most cases a burial board. Later acts allowed parish councils and district councils to take over the powers of the burial boards.

Some cemeteries had areas set aside for the interment, unmarked, of infants. Some burial boards even recorded the interment of stillborn babies.

Civil or municipal cemeteries are now managed by a local authority (the civil parish council or unitary authority) and, in most cases, registers of burials and registers of grave spaces are still in the custody of the managing body; sometimes a copy can be found at a record office or library. These documents may include records of grave purchase, grave plans, grave registers and databases of burials. Some are available online and there are links to these from our website, under Cemetery Records in the [Family History section](#).

Some of the records have been microfilmed and are made available in the Record Office. These are listed on our Monumental Inscriptions handlist and also in an index to cemetery register microfilms in our search room. If you are unable to find details of the relevant cemetery or crematorium please contact us.

Other sources of information

Anglican churches, and some non-conformist churches, keep registers of services. These should include funeral services and may contain information about burials in civil cemeteries.

Local newspapers may print obituaries or funeral notices giving information about burials.

Cremations

Cremations are recorded primarily at the crematorium. Sometimes the records include a note on the location of the interment of ashes. Some church registers record interment of ashes either in a burial register or in a separate register; this is often in an area of the churchyard or cemetery set aside for the purpose. There may also be a record in a church's register of services if there was a funeral service as well as a cremation ceremony.

Grave plans

This table lists those burial grounds for which we hold useful grave plans. Plans with plot numbers are only useful if we hold a corresponding grave register, or a burial register which includes plot numbers.

Plan contents can vary enormously and may include: names or initials of the dead; plot numbers or co-ordinates; register entry reference numbers; and/or burial dates.

The approximate date range given here for the graves on each plan has been estimated by comparison with the burial and grave registers.

Burial Ground	Plan Ref. No. (and/or film no.)	Plan Contents (inc. approximate date range)
Aycliffe, St Andrew	EP/Ay 1/22	Names, Plot numbers and Dates (c.1936-1970)
Barnard Castle, Victoria Road Cemetery	ND/Te 6	Names (up to 1976)
Blackhall Colliery Cemetery	CP/MH 82	Plot numbers, of limited use; plan relates to registers of memorials and of war graves (1941-1989)
Brandon Village Cemetery, Pit Lane	EP/Brd 4/13	Plot numbers and 23 Names in Section "G" only (but no plot numbers given in registers)
Burnopfield, St James	EP/Bur 4/66 EP/Bur 67/1-3	Plot numbers; plan relates to marginal numbers in burial register (1873-1901) Plot numbers; 67/1 also includes names (1931-1962)
Castle Eden, St James	EP/CE 24	Names (poss. 1896-1912).
Chopwell, St. John	EP/Cho 4/29/1	Plot numbers in part of graveyard
Cockfield Cemetery	CP/Coc 63	Plot numbers (starting 1883)
Cockfield Cemetery	M78/41	Plot numbers and initials; plan integral to register (1979-1988)
Craghead, St Thomas	EP/Cra 1/19	Rough sketch and scribbled notes
Dalton-le-Dale, Holy Trinity (Murton)	EP/DD.HT 4/4/99	War graves only
Durham, St Bede RC Cemetery, Redhills	RC/Du.SG 3/4-5	Plot numbers; plan relates to Durham, St. Godric, death registers (c.1866-1903)
Durham, St Giles	EP/Du.SG 122	Plot Numbers 801-967 in new burial ground (c. 1884-1888)
Durham, St Giles	EP/Du.SG 355	Sketch with around 20 Names and Plot Numbers; plan relates to burial register (1927-1970)
East Rainton, St Cuthbert	EP/ER 175-180	Names (1925-1972)
Evenwood Cemetery	BB/EV 15/3	Proposed layout of numbered plots, possibly as per registers (1871-1998)
Gainford, St Osmund RC	RC/Gai 3/10	6 Names only (c. 1900)
Hamsterley, St James	Ep/Ham 167	12 Names only (on last page of volume) (1966-1970)
Heworth, St Mary	EP/Hew 136-9	Names and Plot numbers
High Spen, St Patrick (all gravestones removed)	EP/HS 2/12	Plot numbers; plan relates to burial register (c. 1909-1965)

Houghton-le-Spring, St Michael and All Angels, Hillside ("Old") Cemetery	EP/Ho 549	Names and Plot numbers in NW corner of cemetery (c. 1890s)
Kimbleworth St Philip and St James	EP/Ki 4/33	Names; plan relates to burial registers (c. 1923-1980)
Monk Hesleden Cemetery	CP/MH 83 M78/50	Plot numbers and some names; plan relates to burial register (1887-1932)
New Seaham, Christ Church	EP/NS 43/14	Names and Plot numbers.
Norton, St Mary	EP/Nor 4/126-130	Names (1902-1915)
Pittington Hallgarth Cemetery	CP/Pi 160	Names and Plot numbers for first, western, part of cemetery
Romaldkirk Cemetery	EP/Rom 4/160-161	Names (and Plot numbers on one); plan relates to registers (starting 1890)
Ryhope, St Paul	EP/Ry 77-79	Names (and Plot numbers)
Seaham, St Mary	EP/Sea 29	Names
Sherburn Cemetery	M78/49	Plot numbers (1960s)
Startforth, Holy Trinity	EP/Star 4/86-87	Names (20 th century?)
Sunderland and Bishopwearmouth, Friends' Burial Ground, Nile Street	SF/Su 115/5/3	Names; plan integral to register (1822-1856)
Sunnybrow, St John	ND/WV 2/1-2	Plot co-ordinates; plan relates to numbers in burial register (1917-1980)
Whickham, St Mary	EP/Whm 400-402	Names in plot B, and Names and Plot numbers in plots 1 and 2; plan relates to grave registers (1894-1992)
Whitburn, St Mary	EP/Whit 40 M43/582	Names and Plot numbers; plan integral to register (1798-1812)
Willington, Our Lady and St Thomas RC	RC/Wil 1/5 M5/103	Numbers; plan integral to register (1881-1896)
Winlaton, St Paul	EP/Win 4/120-121	Names and Plot numbers; plan relates to grave registers (1879-1979)
Winterton Hospital Cemetery (chapel of St Luke)	H/Wi 528	Initials, Plot numbers and Dates. NB Burial register is closed to public.
Woodland Cemetery	M78/49	Names and Plot numbers but no corresponding registers (1885-1960)

There are other graveyard plans listed in our catalogues which do not include information that is useful for identifying graves, or which are related to surveys of monumental inscriptions (dealt with separately, see above). These include:

Bearpark;
 Brignall (new);
 Castle Eden;
 Cockfield cemetery;
 Cockfield, St Mary;
 Darlington, St Cuthbert;
 Durham, St Margaret;
 Escomb, St John;

Fatfield;
 Gainford, St Mary;
 Greatham;
 Hutton Magna;
 Long Newton;
 Pelton, Holy Trinity;
 Rokeby;
 Shadforth Cemetery;

Thornley [Kelloe], St Bartholomew;
 Trimdon Grange Cemetery;
 West Rainton, St Mary;
 Wheatley Hill, All Saints;
 Winlaton.