

**A Study of the historical context of
Burial, Cremation and the development
of Civil Cemeteries, with particular
reference to Barton on Humber.**



Richard Clarke

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The precursor of this article was a study, published in the 2002 annual Newsletter of Barton-upon-Humber Civic Society, entitled 'The Civil Cemetery, Barton-upon-Humber: a study in Landscape History and Ecological Impact'.¹

The mystery of the end of human life and the rightful provision for the mortal remains of the body has been an issue central to human cultures from very earliest times. Various practices have been adopted by various cultures across the millennia, such practices often related to their contemporary religious beliefs. The disposal of human remains also has a public health context, a factor highlighted in times of war or pestilence when the collapse of civil society has resulted in an inability to address this issue, at least in the short-term.

Although most tangible evidence of Neanderthal culture comes from southern Europe, Africa and the Middle East it may have been that some hominids wandered as far north as the Humberside region during the Ipswichian inter-glacial.² It seems likely that these Paleolithic hominids had a culture of burying their dead in shallow graves, sometimes accompanied with simple artifacts. These may well have been the first creatures in Nature to inter their dead, although this would be impossible to prove.

With the gradual 'retreat' of the Devensian³ ice sheets across the Humberside region some twenty to ten thousand years ago, and with the corresponding advance north of vegetation zones, it became possible for Mesolithic man to also advance north. Long barrows characterize the post-death arrangements of these late Mesolithic/early-to-mid Neolithic people. In the west of Britain, Scotland, the Western and Northern Isles and in

¹ As with the initial article I would like to thank Andrew Robinson, landscape gardener, for help in researching this study.

² The final inter-glacial era before the present.

³ The Quaternary name for the last of the six Ice-Ages that impacted on the landscape of northern Britain across the last two million years.

Ireland long barrows were usually created by excavation into solid rock to create cells in which human remains were placed. These were in-turn accessed by a central passageway, this and the entrance being defined by vertical monoliths. In southern and eastern Britain earthen mounds were engineered to cover the cells and access walkways. Long barrows were a wide ranging structure, adapted to the local environment, and built to accommodate mortal remains, although some discoveries suggest that the bodies had been disarticulated and/or excarnated. Long barrows could only have been constructed by a large, supervised workforce a fact which strongly suggests a causal link with their society's culture and/or religion. If, as seems likely, long barrow interments were reserved for certain community members and not others then the burials, or otherwise, of the remaining populations is a matter of conjecture. Archaeologists have discovered that some 'primary burial' long barrows were surrounded by contemporary, 'flat satellite burials', possibly human sacrifices. 'Barrows retained their sanctity for hundreds of years' (Dyer 1969, 53) and often contained further burials from centuries later.

English Heritage has gauged that approximately 80% of Lincolnshire's long barrows have been lost to modern agricultural techniques since the early-20th century. In an area such as Barton parish, characterized by centuries of arable agriculture, any local examples may have been 'lost' much earlier.

By late-Neolithic/early-Bronze Age times round barrows, rather than long barrows, were being constructed by the now more static populations of the Lincolnshire (and Yorkshire) Wolds. Some round barrows were built over crouched burials, some contained cremations and some contained inhumations with grave goods. Some almost certainly once existed in the Barton area for as Clay states 'the region (East Midlands) was being exploited extensively, if not intensively, between the fifth and second millennium BC' (Clay undated pdf, 22). Bryant agrees, when writing of archaeological work which has discovered that on the Yorkshire Wolds by c. 2000 BC tree cover had been cleared by man and replaced by mixed farming he stated that, 'There is no reason to doubt that a similar situation would have prevailed on the Lincolnshire Wolds' (Bryant 1994,7). One

reference seems to prove the point for a letter dated 1722 referred to a number of barrows 'still discernable and easily opened' in the Deepdale dry valley of the Wolds, south-east of Barton (Bryant 1994, 22). Presumably these were relatively small, round barrows.

In his study of prehistoric Barton Bryant discussed an intact early Bronze Age beaker discovered in 1973 near the parish boundary between Barton and South Ferriby and which he considered was part 'of a funerary deposit ... below a barrow or burial mound' (Bryant 1994, 8 and see Fig. 1). Another site highlighted by the same writer and identified by aerial photography could have been 'the principal grave (of the area)' (Bryant 1994, 9 plus map 6 and see Fig. 2). Bronze Age round barrows (often 'beaker' burials) usually housed single crouched inhumations, sometimes accompanied by grave goods. Some later Bronze Age round barrows housed the remains of cremations. It was in the late Bronze Age that the first coffins have been identified in the form of hollowed sections of tree trunks. As with possible long barrows, local round barrows have been all but obliterated by centuries of arable agriculture.



Fig. 1 The area where a 'funerary' beaker was discovered. The hedgerow running north-south up the Estuary valley side follows the parish boundary between Barton and South Ferriby. The lower part of this valley later developed as a Romano-British 'ladder settlement'.



Fig. 2 The area, just east of the southern end of Eastfield Road green lane, to which Bryant referred (see above). The Elsham area (industrial estate) is on the horizon (see below).

By the Iron Age flat burials had largely replaced the construction of barrows, although in the Barton area no archaeological evidence of Iron Age burials has come to light. It is almost certain that between the 2nd and 5th centuries AD (the Romano-British era) a series of farmsteads developed along the south Humber bank just above the tidal floodplain. From the third century on it is likely that here household burial plots would have been the norm with random burials for slaves, infants etc. Prior to this in Romano-British culture cremation was the norm. Bryant refers to a cinerary urn said to have been found in 1828 during quarrying (presumably of Barton Cliff chalk quarry, (see 'Geology' article). Nearby a crouched inhumation burial was also discovered suggesting that in this vicinity was the burial ground for the nearby significant Romano-British ladder settlement at the Poor Farm site (see Bryant 1994, chap. 3 and Fig. 1 above).

The large pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon cemetery immediately east and south of The Mill, Market Place, Barton was excavated in campaigns between 1939 and 1990. It has revealed a wealth of detail about inhumations from

the 6th to the 8th centuries and showed that burials had by then become more centralized in this developing Anglian community (see Fig. 3). Initially Anglo-Saxon settlers continued their homeland tradition of ‘cremation of the dead on a pyre’, the excavation of the many cremation pots at Elsham suggesting that this was a central burial site for early Anglo-Saxon communities in north Lincolnshire (see Drinkall and Foreman). By the 6th century cremation was giving way to inhumation (Bryant 1994, 31). Most of these burials were randomly orientated, although in one section most were orientated east-west which Bryant suggests indicated the growing influence of Christian practices (Bryant 1994, 32). Evidence from elsewhere suggests that early Christians were buried alongside their pagan ancestors to respect tradition and as evidence of their belief in universal Resurrection. Graves were not dug to a consistent depth but there seems little or no evidence of multiple burials in any one grave. There is some evidence to suggest that some graves may have had an identifying feature at ground level such as a mound (barrow?) or wooden structure (Bryant 1994, 33 – 34).



Fig. 3 The site of the excavated cemetery at ‘The Mill’, Barton. The excavation was mostly on the land that is now the Mill’s car park, left of centre.

Following Augustine’s mission to Canterbury in 597 the random Christianization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms resulted in the Humber

becoming an arch-diocesan divide. By the 7th century Lichfield was the centre of the Mercian see, but c. 680 this diocese was sub-divided and for almost two centuries Lindsey's cathedral was at 'Sidnacester', a site of uncertain location, originally thought by many to be that of the Saxo-Norman St. Mary's church, Stow. This is now considered less likely (for an in-depth survey of this time see Vince (ed.), 1993). Ahead of the Viking incursions the cathedra (literally the chair of the bishop which once placed in any church raised the church's status to that of a cathedral) was moved initially to Leicester and then to Dorchester-on-Thames.

In his magnificent recently published study Professor Rodwell (see Bibliography) analyses the historiography of the Saxon monastic estate 'aet Bearuwe' (Rodwell, 2011, 160-167). This land, 50 hides in extent, was granted to Chad, bishop of Mercia and Lindsey, by Wulfhere king of Mercia in the 660s. Bede records the existence of the resultant monastic establishment in 731 while in 971 the same estate was granted by the king to part endow the re-founding of a monastery at Peterborough, this with a description of the boundary. Subsequent researchers have compiled a map from the description and the Saxon estate seems to have preceded the parishes of Barton and Barrow combined. The Charter of 971 states that the original monastery was destroyed by 'the heathens', this presumably an early Viking desecration.

In the 19th century building work on the west side of St Chad, a street at the north end of Barrow village, unearthed skeletons orientated east-west and laid head-to-foot with no evidence of coffins, this seemingly an orderly mass grave. In 1961 further skeletons were unearthed at 'The Island', an area in Barrow immediately south of St. Chad, again the remains were of males, laid west-east with no grave goods, one bone being carbon dated to 7th to 9th centuries. Further evidence for the late Saxon monastic site came from a formal excavation on the east side of St. Chad in the late 1970s. Finds included 75 burials of which five were stone-lined and the foundations of a small church comprised of rectangular nave and apsidal chancel. Despite this Rodwell considers that the main monastic church would have been on the site of the present, mostly medieval, All Saints

church, Saxon monastic sites being more expansive than later medieval complexes. It seems that the burials were shallow as present day residents of the post-1970s properties report unearthing skeletal remains when garden planting.



Fig. 4 All Saints church, Barrow on Humber, sited on a mound. ‘The Island’ and St. Chad are off to the left and a short way north.

Following the Synod of Whitby in 664 the Anglo-Saxon Christian Church accepted the authority of the Roman Church and at a local level most churches, eventually all, came to accept Papal authority. In 752 a Papal bull permitted Cuthbert to enable local churches to have adjacent churchyards (burial grounds) and by the 9th century it became normal for these to be consecrated by bishops. As private chapels evolved into parish churches Anglo-Saxon bishops must have been much travelled, presumably on horseback and with an entourage, carrying out this duty. Barton lay at the northern edge of the see of Lindsey, distant from its cathedral and this much more so once the cathedra had been moved to Dorchester. One wonders whether the early Christian churchyard at St. Peter’s church, Barton – that is the land immediately east of the Saxo-

Norman church and excavated under the later medieval church floor – ever witnessed the presence of the bishop.⁴

The early Christian cemetery of the ‘9th century or possibly earlier’ so thoroughly excavated in the 1980s and the findings recently published (see Rodwell, Bibliography) preceded the oldest part of the extant St. Peter’s church (see Fig. 5). It seems that bodies were exhumed prior to the building of the Saxon tower and baptistery and indeed there would have been an earlier church, probably wooden, on a nearby site serving that cemetery. Many of these were coffin burials, with an east-west orientation and without accompanying grave goods (Bryant 1994, 117 – 118). Successive episodes of medieval church building extended the floor of the church across much of the earlier cemetery while land to the north and south of the extended church became the church’s churchyard.



Fig. 5 St. Peter’s church, Barton-on-Humber. See the Saxo-Norman tower and baptistery as well as the successive medieval gothic extensions to the church eastwards across the earlier cemetery.

It might be wondered what criteria defined the extent of these early church burial grounds, especially as when consecrated by the bishop the ritual involved perambulating exactly its perimeter while speaking the relevant

⁴ Bryant considers this very unlikely. Anglo-Saxon bishops were politicians as well as religious leaders and probably spent more time at Court than at remote parishes.

prayers. Retaining walls defining this perimeter were a later addition, having the purely secular purpose of containing the rising soil level resulting from the volume of interments.

With the establishment of Norman authority by the 1070s the diocesan map of England was rationalized. Henceforth St. Peter's, Barton (and possibly by then All Saints - St. Mary's predecessor) was on the northern fringe of the diocese of Lincoln.⁵

Churchyards normally surrounded the church building and during the Middle Ages a brutish distinction existed between the north and south sides of these yards. Although consecrated (presumably) the north side was considered 'out of sanctuary', reserved for those from whom the Church withheld sacraments. Given the standardized east-west orientation of the church building this notion was apparently reinforced by the fact that the north side of the church was in shadow, dark and without light. From a more practical perspective it often meant that when the nave was expanded by the addition of an aisle it was the north aisle that was built first, the southern church-side being more in demand for burials. Officially the bodies of suicides, ex-communicants, murderers, lunatics and un-baptised children were excluded from consecrated ground, although in reality local low-profile compassion usually prevailed. The distinction between the northern and southern parts of a churchyard did not survive into more enlightened times and in no sense do existing memorials to the north of a church reflect the same presumption.

It seems possible that in some medieval churchyards men, women and children were buried in different areas while in an age with few ethnic minorities Jews were usually allocated a distinct area.⁶ In the Southwark area of London the Cross Bones Graveyard was reserved for the inhumation of prostitutes, social outcasts, paupers and un-baptized infants; this series of mass graves not being officially closed until 1853.⁷ To be

⁵ Seven other new Norman diocese were created; Chichester, Exeter, Norwich, Ely, Carlisle, Salisbury and Bath.

⁶ This usually in urban churchyards.

⁷ Significantly, this area south of the Thames was not part of the medieval City of London or the Palace of Westminster and was therefore an example of burials beyond the town being reserved for the unworthy.

buried outside consecrated ground consigned those remains to the realm of the damned, rejected from the general resurrection at the time of the Last Judgement – a notion that survived the Reformation but which was later rejected by most Nonconformist sects.

One modern echo of this type of religio-morality was the requirement to bury victims of capital punishment in the prison grounds. In Hull prison, completed in 1870, the institutional cemetery has been concreted over. It was located near the east perimeter wall the other side of which was a large public cemetery⁸, also opened in the 1870s and destined to become the site of Hull's first crematorium.

Like church buildings themselves Christian burial followed a broadly common orientation, that being head to west, feet to east. Although there were ancient theological reasons for this it remains a convention in the modern secular age. This orientation could be somewhat varied if available space was limited. Evidence from the archaeological excavation of two medieval churchyards in York (see below Spall and Toop and McIntyre) showed little or no variation from this east-west orientation. This regimentation suggested that, at the time, some sort of surface marker system existed to indicate where future graves could be dug – this long before the modern convention of headstones and footstones, and, of an age when the precise positions of one's ancestor's remains was not such an issue.

From the evidence of churchyard excavations it is clear that the buried body was usually laid in an 'extended supine position with arms either to either side, crossed over the abdomen or placed on the pelvis'. Burial in a crouched position though was not unknown. It is interesting that the two excavations in York show little evidence of multiple inhumations in single graves except where it seems likely that children were buried with a parent or other adult. The 'overflowing churchyard' which resulted from multiple burials over time and at the one spot became more of an issue in early modern churchyards (see later).

⁸ Hull Prison includes an exhibition of the Prison's history, open to members of the public by prior agreement.

Apart from those under the floor of medieval churches, coffined burials were a minority, even more so stone coffins.⁹ More commonly cloths or shrouds enclosed the body, the right to be buried in one's clothes being reserved for priests. By the 17th century flat-board wooden coffins were coming into more general use (Child 1982, 49). Between 1666 and 1680 four 'Burial in Woolen Acts' required corpses to be buried wrapped in shrouds made of English woolen cloth, thus providing a guaranteed market for the nation's ailing industry. Technically the 1680 Act endured until the early-19th century.

Grave goods were not unknown in medieval inhumations. Rings, keys (?) and pilgrimage badges were found in the York excavations – these, of course, significant of the person's life rather than objects to be used in an afterlife.

From early medieval times to the Reformation and beyond, churchyards were a source of income for the incumbent and patron. Burial fees (mortuary payments), like undertaker's fees today, were a charge on the individual, not the institution or the State.¹⁰

Officially medieval churchyards were sacred locations, a place of respite for human remains until the Day of Resurrection. Papal orders of the 13th century forbade the grazing of animals in the churchyard or that it should be defiled in any way. However, despite an enduring superstitious fear of disturbing the dead, medieval churchyards were often used for communal events, being open public spaces they were handy locations for annual fairs, saint's day celebrations, church ales, markets and the like.¹¹ Ironically the rejection of papal authority from the 1530s onwards did not result in a greater democratization of churchyards which generally were no longer seen as suitable locations for social frivolity. Pragmatically however it did provide grazing for a few of the incumbent's or rector's sheep, once fenced, which in turn ensured that the churchyard did not become

⁹ This seems to be true of most of eastern England, differing geological areas may well have had differing trends in this respect.

¹⁰ In certain circumstances the modern welfare state will pay for the interment of a citizen.

¹¹ For a more thorough examination of past secular uses for church property see Bettey, 1987.

overgrown. The growing fashion for precise location headstones from the 18th century onwards meant that in turn this utilitarian usage was frowned upon. In his sketches of local churches in the 1790s Jean-Claude Nattes, a water-colourist of some renown nationally, often showed what appear to be fences at the base of the church wall below the windows. Maybe this was to keep away farm animals grazing in the churchyard or maybe other explanations exist.

The second half of the 20th century saw a return to debates on the proper management of churchyards. Procedures required before headstones could legally be removed from their original site were often invoked to de-clutter churchyards while in late century a number of diocese, including Lincoln and York, encouraged parochial church councils to create nature reserves in at least part of their churchyard. Various examples across the Humberside region include St. Peter's, Barton New Cemetery (see later), St. Nicholas, South Ferriby and St. Andrew's and St. Mary's, Paull. Some parochial church councils preferred the manicured approach to their churchyards, usually relying on a sit-on motor mower and bedding plants.

A horrifying prospect, understandable from the perspective of modern medical knowledge, was the possibility of being buried alive. Might not, then, a person suffering from a coma, or severe stroke or trance and with shallow breathing be deemed dead? Might not stories of disinterred coffins showing evidence of scratch marks on the inside be further evidence? Might not stories of bells attached by ropes to the inside of newly interred coffins and a nightly 'graveyard shift' listener be reasonable? In fact, although not inconceivable, it seems that much of the above is an embellished 'urban myth'.

During the 18th century churchyards changed in two significant respects; the growing issue of 'intercutting' and the growing fashion for identifying specific burial plots with which descendents could identify and, possibly, share.

The problem of 'intercutting', that is the disturbance of previous inhumations when new graves were dug, was an inevitable result of the

churchyard having to accommodate the dead of the parish over a prolonged period of time. The inevitability of this problem was exacerbated by the population explosion nationally of the late-18th century and further dramatic increases in the 19th century. Furthermore, the churchyard was often encircled by buildings and private property so the option of expanding its boundaries in proportion to the growing 'demand' was unavailable. Often the practicalities of this graveyard overcrowding were tackled in various local, unofficial ways resulting from an 'understanding' between the incumbent and gravedigger, the latter post best served by someone of a not too squeamish disposition.

The medieval solution to the problem of graveyard overcrowding whereby some churches had 'charnal houses' as official repositories for unearthed human remains did not become universal, surprisingly so given the growing problem defined above. Most charnal houses have not survived. St. Mary's church, Beverley provides a good example of the ways progressive graveyard overcrowding might be tackled (see Fig. 6). Here there is documentary evidence that by late medieval times the crypt served as the charnal house. Then, with a graveyard constrained by roads on two sides and later residential development on the other sides, a detached cemetery was consecrated on available land in North Bar Within (this is now a small public park). Once this became over-full a much larger area of land off North Bar Without was acquired, and this was later expanded to become Beverley's first civil cemetery. Even by the 17th century some London churches were being forced to use burial grounds beyond their churchyards.

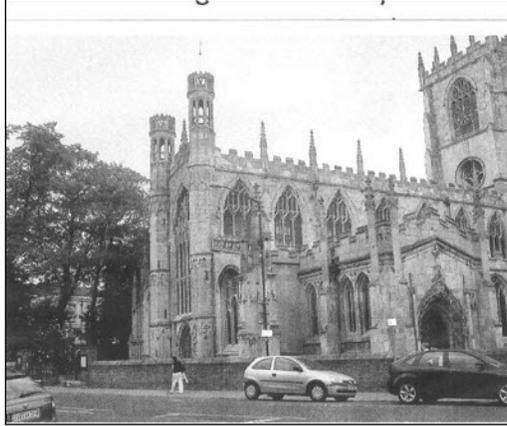


Fig. 6 St. Mary's church, Beverley, surrounded by its constricted churchyard. Notice the low retaining wall and large perimeter wall along the northern boundary of the churchyard (before the large Georgian property).

The rapid erosion along the Holderness coast of East Yorkshire during the last millennia has resulted in a number of medieval churchyards being washed away, the two best documented examples being at Kilnsea and Ravenser Odd. George Poulson's *History and Antiquities of Holderness*, published in 1841, includes a dramatic illustration of the medieval church at Kilnsea being 'destroyed by inroads of the sea'. There some human remains were rescued and re-interred in the churchyard of All Saints, Easington, a replacement church not being built in the parish until 1864. Information on the loss of the 'chapel' at Ravenser Odd comes from the *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa* compiled by the retired abbot Thomas Burton between 1399 and 1420 and translated and published in the Rolls Series, 1866. Burton records that by 1330 the dynamics of the channels in the Humber Estuary were changing and the 'sandbank' on which the port of Ravenser Odd had rapidly developed from the 1260s was then being eroded. He recorded that by the 1340s 'the chapel of Ravenser ... and the majority of the buildings ... by the inundations of the sea and the Humber ... were almost completely destroyed'. Burton further recorded that human remains from graves were re-interred in Easington churchyard. It seems likely that the Easington re-interments of both the 1340s and the 1830s were in mass graves.

A further anxiety relating to churchyards was that they might be a risk to public health.¹² Possibly the severely overcrowded churchyard led to too shallow burials while the security of above ground vaults might be compromised. By the 18th century most graveyards had been enclosed by retaining brick or stone walls (see Figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9). Although the maintenance responsibilities were usually clearly defined, water seepage might still occur and the collapse of a section or all of a perimeter wall could be offensive to those living nearby and to public health generally. John Evelyn, the 17th century diarist, writer and royalist, wrote during his travels 'I observed that most of the churchyards were filled up with earth, or rather the congestion of dead bodies one above the other, to the very top of the walls'.¹³



Fig. 7 South wall of St. Mary's churchyard, showing the difference in height between the street and the surviving headstones.

¹² The focus of this concern was often 'in church' burials (not part of this study). Despite being discouraged by papal dictat in the early middle ages, under floor church burials and above ground tomb burials gradually became more common, often providing considerable income for the church. Some monastic churches drew great wealth from pilgrims visiting the church burial sites of those canonised by the Roman Catholic Church. To address public health concerns further burial in parish church vaults was prohibited by legislation of the 1850s.

¹³ In 1706 Evelyn was buried in a sarcophagus in the floor of his parish church in Surrey. Although the word sarcophagus could be used to identify an ornate tomb technically the word referred to a type of stone which when used to construct a coffin was said to 'consume' the enclosed flesh rapidly – thus an aid to public health.



Fig. 8 The precarious St. Mary's churchyard retaining wall overlooking the Beck Hill body of water.



Fig. 9 A section of the modern retaining wall north of St. Peter's church.

The growing preference for memorials further exacerbated pressure on space in the churchyard. During the Middle Ages the churchyard cross was the only memorial to those buried there. This new fondness for a

private, exclusive location, identified by a memorial on the surface (usually a headstone with an east facing inscription, and sometimes with a footstone and the oblong perimeter of the site defined by linear coping stones),¹⁴ became the accepted norm.

On Chapel Lane in Barton there was one Nonconformist burial ground that preceded the opening of the civil cemetery – the Independent Chapel burial ground immediately west of the chapel and adjoining minister’s house (see Fig. 9). This building dates from 1806 and its style has been described as ‘a restrained mixture of Gothic (the Y-tracery windows) and Classical (the triangular pedimented gable and the overall proportions of the building)’ (Clarke ... 2009). Independent congregations in England were descendents of the Congregational Church, a branch of ‘Old Nonconformity’ established in the late-16th century.¹⁵ Old Nonconformist sects had a stronger tradition of creating their own burial grounds than the later ‘New Nonconformist’ sects such as the Methodists.¹⁶ In 1972 the sect and building were amalgamated into the newly created United Reformed Church. The 1854 Burial Act paved the way for civil cemeteries to be established outside London (an Act of the previous year had dealt exclusively with the metropolis) and as part of this Act a national survey was conducted of existing burial grounds, this in the wake of growing public health concerns especially following a recent national cholera epidemic.

¹⁴ It is not the intention here to discuss the evolution of graveyard memorials, to explore further this aspect of churchyard landscape history the reader could start with the two books by Rex Russell here identified.

¹⁵ Originally often known as ‘separatists’ or ‘independents’.

¹⁶ Although the legal right of a Nonconformist minister to take a burial service in a Church of England churchyard was not established until the 1870s.



Fig. 10 The Independent Chapel, Minister's house and the front part of the burial ground, Chapel Lane, Barton.

The hand written 'Return' for 'The Independent Chapel and Yard', Barton survives as does a government order of 1855 referring specifically to the three burial grounds in Barton, they being St Mary's, St. Peter's and the Independent chapel. The 'Return' confirmed that the 'Providence Chapel burial ground' dated from 1806 and figures given show that the total number of interments between 1847 and 1853 (the only seven years for which figures were requested) was 31. There was one family vault on the site and four 'family graves'. Graves were dug to a depth of six feet and were three feet wide. Apparently there were five interments under the chapel floor but by 1855 this practice had been discontinued. Most graves were recorded as being ten plus yards away from the building's walls, a figure hard to reconcile with the area of the burial ground as seen today (see Fig. 10).

The legalistic language of the 'government order', dated August 1855, makes interpretation difficult. It specifically refers to the three burial grounds in 'Barton-on-Humber' and the burial grounds in four other places.¹⁷ The reason behind this specific identification is not known to the writer. It appears to be prohibiting any further burials in St. Mary's church and churchyard, in St. Peter's Church and churchyard and in 'Providence

¹⁷ Loughborough, Leicester, Horncastle and Whalley.

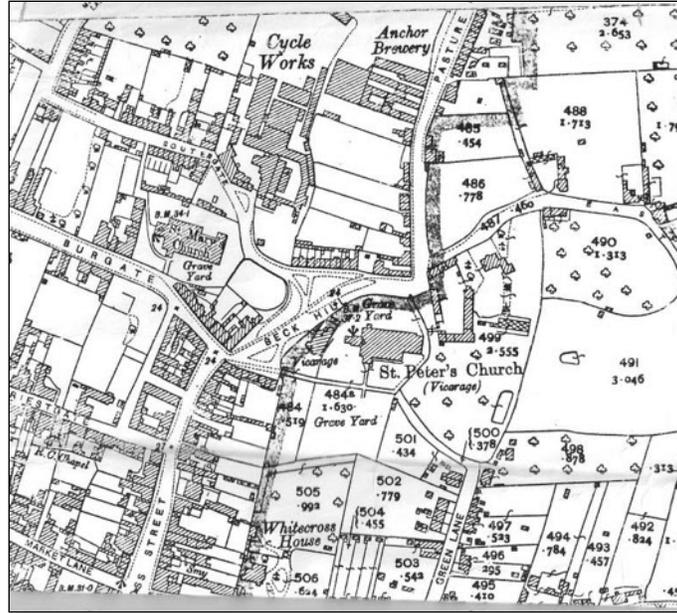


Fig. 12 The part of the 1908 1:25 OS map showing St. Peter's church and church-yard.



Fig. 13 'The new burial-ground' today.

In 1993 the Great Grimsby group of the Lincolnshire Family History Society compiled a 'Transcript of the Monumental Inscriptions of the Providence Congregational Church, Barton upon Humber' from headstones removed to the edge of the site and some laid as hard-standing at the front of the once minister's house. Clearly not all interments had a headstone, and of those

that did the earliest dated from 1833, so for the first 27 years of this Nonconformist burial ground no interments had headstones or the headstones have been lost. Two headstones recorded members of the congregation buried in 1855, but earlier in the year than the date of the 'government order', while another family headstone recorded that an elderly relative who died in 1876 was 'interred in the cemetery'.

However, a few later burials slipped through the net of regulation. The final deceased to be placed in the Winterbottom family tomb was John who died in 1860 having been minister at the Providence Chapel since 1824. Three other post-1855 burials were recorded on the headstones, of which two were installed in the pre-existing Burton family tomb. Either the Winterbottom or the Burton family tomb must have been created after 1855 (see above). It seems likely that regulations requiring an end to interments often allowed exceptions for pre-existing family vaults and graves.

By the early 19th century the British churchyard was in crisis. Two developments saved the day; the gradual acceptance of cremation and the development, initially, of private necropoli and, more significantly, the enabling legislation of the mid-19th century which allowed the creation of civic cemeteries.

This chronic situation, found particularly in the rapidly expanding factory towns of the First Industrial Revolution, was in some places somewhat relieved by the development of private cemeteries as financial initiatives. A well known example was Low Hill Necropolis, opened in the Everton area of Liverpool in 1825. Harking back to the medieval perception of graveyards it was laid out by the then Curator of Botanic Gardens to accommodate interested visitors perambulating the site in their 'Sunday best' and had drives wide enough to take the carriages of those able to see and be seen in grander style. This was a facility later introduced into civil cemeteries and Victorian public parks. Unlike local churchyards most interments at Low Hill were single graves with memorials. When in 1898 Low Hill was 'full' and closed the memorials were removed and the site became a public park.

Two influential writers who advocated the ‘beautification’ of cemeteries were William Robinson (see Bisgrove, 2008) and John Claudius Loudon (see Simo, 1988). Cemeteries were central to Robinson’s¹⁸ interest in public parks, ‘efficient’ horticulture, city planning and garden design. He wrote that cemeteries should be ‘among the most beautiful of public gardens’ such as ‘in the great cities of the eastern states of America, which (cemeteries) are parks in extent, and flower gardens in keeping and in the beauty and abundance of their shrubs and flowers’ (referenced in Bisgrove, 106). Loudon¹⁹ concerned himself with the proper planning, drainage, flora and chapel architecture of cemeteries. He predicted the need for cremation and promoted the idea of civil cemeteries as preferable to churchyards and profit making cemeteries (necropoli).

Although technically illegal in Britain until 1885 cremation was given increased social credibility when in 1874 Queen Victoria’s surgeon founded the Cremation Society and went on to oversee the building of Britain’s first crematorium at Woking, Surrey.²⁰ At about the same time William Robinson (see Bisgrove 2008) published the influential *God’s Acre Beautiful or the Cemeteries of the Future* in which he campaigned for cremation rather than burial, arguing that space for burials would soon run out, that crumbling headstones and ‘intercutting’ were unseemly as was the destruction of headstones to enable landscaping of an exhausted cemetery. He argued that cremation ‘urns’ in purpose built ‘elegant buildings’ (protected from extremes of weather) would be more fitting and egalitarian. At the time Robinson was decried by many Christians.

In Hull the first crematorium was built in Hedon Road Cemetery (next to Hull Prison) in 1901 and the present crematorium in Chanterlands Avenue North cemetery was opened in 1961.

¹⁸ William Robinson, 1838 – 1935, advocate of the principals of the ‘English Cottage Garden’.

¹⁹ John Claudius Loudon, 1783 – 1843, architect, landscape designer, agriculturalist and town planner. His book *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*, published in 1843, was collated from a series of articles he had published in the Gentleman’s Magazine. His plans for an early civil cemetery outside Southampton, 1843, advocated the ‘stacking’ of coffins at four/grave!

²⁰ This near the site of the London Necropolis, opened in 1849. Woking is now part of the Greater London Area.

Traditionally Jews abhorred cremation, believing in the notion of bodily resurrection. However, in the early 20th-century liberal Jews began to accept the practice especially as ‘overcrowding’ had become critical in many Jewish cemeteries. The Crematorium at Golder’s Green, an area of north London with a high Jewish population was, by the 1930s, conducting 25% of the nation’s cremations.

Most civil cemeteries (as opposed to private burial grounds or necropoli) were created under the provisions of one or more of a series of Burial Acts passed by Parliament between 1852 and 1885 to regulate and standardize local authority provision of burial-grounds. The story of Barton’s civil cemetery on Barrow Road began in 1867 when the ‘Burial Board’ for the parishes of St. Peter’s and St. Mary’s jointly²¹ tendered a ‘contract and specification for burial ground works’. This presumably was facilitated by the terms of the 1855 Burial Act, Section 11, which empowered churchwardens to convene a vestry meeting in parishes where no burial board had previously been created but where a new burial ground was felt necessary. This local initiative by the ‘Burial Board’ explains why the minutes of the Local Board of Health (normally the body to take the initiative) make no mention of the cemetery. This remained the position until the creation of the Urban District Council (hereafter UDC) in 1895.

Detailed late-19th century maps show the site chosen for the civil cemetery was a rectangular post-Enclosure field north of Barrow Road, to the east of the field on which ‘Seaforth’ house was later built and west of a narrow rectangular plot with a small farmstead at its Barrow Road end (see Fig. 14). In November 1866 the Barton Burial Board gained a loan of £3000 from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. The required repayments were to be £150/half year which would come from town rates and such initiatives were overseen nationally by the Home Office.

²¹ Since 1855 the two parishes had been interring in the ‘new burial-ground according to the Regulations for New Burial-grounds’ (see above).

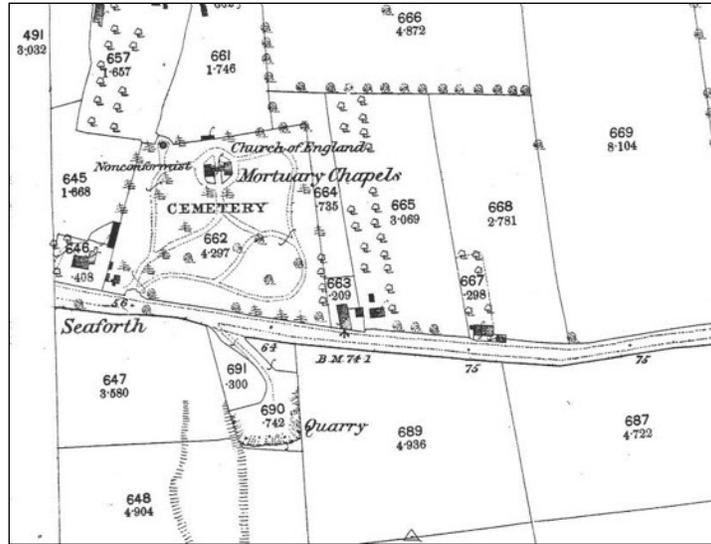


Fig. 14 Extract from the 1887 OS map, 25inch to one mile, showing the configuration of the original cemetery and the surrounding post-Enclosure fields.

By early 1867 Bellamy and Hardy of Lincoln had been appointed architects and surveyors for the scheme and A. Swanson, a Barton gardener, had been contracted to plough, harrow and grass seed the 4.5 acre site. Swanson was also to plant trees, shrubs and plants as prescribed by the architects, dig out existing hedgerows, reduce the 'bank'²² beside Barrow Road and generally maintain the site for its first year. This location may have been a result of land availability but generally accessible out-of-town locations were much preferred for cemeteries, workhouses and prisons.

The site chosen was on gently sloping land leading down to the Humber floodplain at a gradient of approximately 1:44 (see Fig.14). The original cemetery area has been added to as further space was required in later years (see later). The main 12 feet wide carriageway (to accommodate both private and undertakers' horse-drawn vehicles) and the winding 4 feet, six inches wide paths (see Fig.14) were to be dug out, given a stone foundation and a 'Harwich gravel' surface. It seems quite likely that the

²² Early photographs show Barrow Road to have had the appearance of a sunken lane, 'terraced' into the hill-side. Alongside the cemetery Barrow Road remained narrow until a road widening scheme of 1931, for which a detailed plan survives. To achieve this widening and to create a new footpath a wooden retaining wall had to be built to hold back Park Field on the other side of Barrow Road. This 'bank' was landscaped when the secondary school was built in the 1950s.

foundation 'stone' for the carriageways and footpaths came from the 'Town' chalk quarry, sited across Barrow road (see Fig. 14, and in which a small housing estate now stands). The terrace on which the chapels were to stand was to be embanked, leveled and grassed.

For administrative purposes the cemetery was to be divided into rectangular blocks. Some were to be consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln to accommodate the requirements of the Established Church while the non-consecrated blocks were often preferred by Nonconformists. There is some evidence that disputes arose over the proportion of land allocated to Nonconformists.²³ Over the decades burial became less denominational, more ecumenical, although a reserved area for Roman Catholics remains. Barton cemetery has no specific area to accommodate the preferences of ethnic minorities.

As was usual in cemetery design the site was to have three buildings; a cemetery man's 'lodge' with a range of outbuildings including a 'Registrar's office', chapels-of-rest and a 'dead house'. These were all constructed by Alexander Stamp, local builder, to a total cost of £1865, of which 40% was for incidentals, the most expensive of which was the ornamental wrought iron railings and entrance gates alongside Barrow Road. These survive, sturdy and impressive (see Fig.14).



Fig. 15 The original main entrance, wrought iron railings and the surviving 'Lodge'.

²³ See Barnard, 1990 for evidence of disputes between denominations at Beckett St. Cemetery, Leeds (said to be the first municipal cemetery in the U.K.).

The 'Lodge' also remains in good condition, retaining most of its original features.²⁴ The surviving architect's specifications were detailed and catalogued the brick type, bond, mortar constituents, size and colour of floor-tiles, air bricks, yard asphalt, stone dressings for doors and windows, roofing slates, ridge tiles, skimming plaster constituents, staircase design, skirting boards, bargeboards, gutters and fall-pipes. The scullery was to have a stone sink on brick piers which drained to a modest 18 inch deep cesspit(!). Water supply was to be drawn from a well and hand-pump although there is no evidence as to its location.²⁵

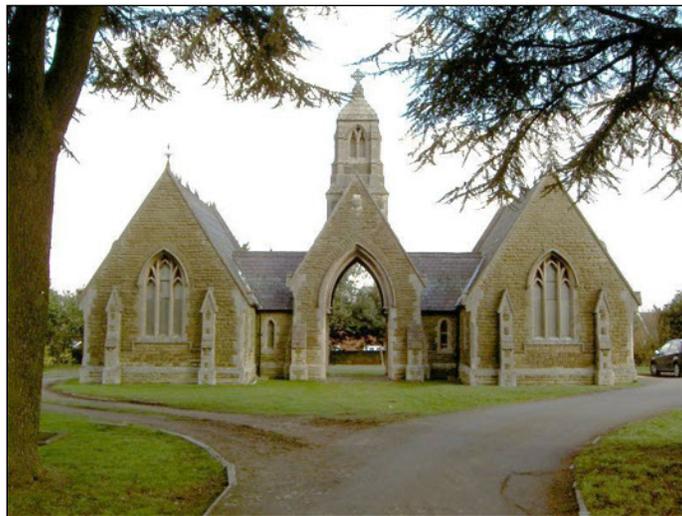


Fig. 16 The Chapels-of-Rest building (viewed from the south).

The Chapels-of-Rest remain, although no longer serving their original purpose (see Fig. 16). Unlike many across the country, the building remains in reasonable condition, retains its original external features and the 1867 date-plaque is still visible. The Nonconformist chapel was to the west of the central 'steeple', that of the Established Church to the east.²⁶ The cost of building the Chapels-of-Rest was £790 and, like the Lodge, the specifications were detailed. There were to be two rooms in each chapel, the smaller referred to as the 'vestry' while the chapels were to have 'best

²⁴ Recently the house had built, on its east side, an extension designed to blend with the 'neo-gothic' style of the original building. The extension was awarded a commendation by Barton Civic Society.

²⁵ For a more thorough study of this example of local 'institutional housing' see Clarke 2012, 47-49.

²⁶ It seems likely that in the original cemetery the eastern half was mostly consecrated ground, the west not.

memel' (pine) pews. 'Cathedral glass' with 'suitable lead' was to be used in the lancet windows and the floor tiles had the same specification as the Lodge. Presumably the chapels would be used for a pre-interment service/meeting following the service in the church or chapel. There was no reference to altars.

The Dead House no longer exists but on the 1887 OS map is shown in the north-west corner of the cemetery with a path leading to it from the main drive. It appears to have been a small, round building and the man-made mound on which it stood can be discerned in the present day topography (see Figs.14 and 17). The writer does not know when this building was demolished, of any picture of it or when the chapels ceased their original function. References to 'ridges', 'gables' (difficult to reconcile with a round building!) and specific blue roof tiles for the Dead House suggest a design similar to that of the Chapels. However, the floor was to be of bricks set in sand and the window glass ¼ inch 'rough cast sheet' (opaque?). Presumably the coffins were placed here for viewing prior to burial.



Fig. 17 The north-west corner of the original cemetery, the mound of the 'Dead House' just discernible (St. Peter's church in the middle distance).

Of the access paths shown on the 1887 map only the main drive which led from the entrance to the Chapels and the drive around the Chapels and to their east (later extended) remain hard-surfaced. The configuration of

some of the other paths can still be discerned on the ground although not the two paths leading to the Dead House. A study of headstone dates in the north-west corner of the cemetery and of the evidence from the 1908 OS map suggest that the Dead House ceased to be accessed early on. However, the round structure shown on the 1887 OS map also figures on subsequent maps through to 1937 (or maybe it was just the surviving mound that was being identified).

A surviving booklet dated 1911 (in private ownership) entitled *Byelaws, Table of Fees and Charges and Rules and Regulations adopted by Barton-upon-Humber U.D.C. (by virtue of the Public Health (Interments) Act, 1879)* makes no mention of the Dead House. It does, however, clarify the rules relating to vaults, burials, coffins and monuments in Barton cemetery, although it is not clear whether this is a re-stating of such rules or a response to some change. The 'vaults' referred to were built structures underground, Byelaw 2 requiring that the walls be of 'good brick or stone' and 'properly bonded' with lime and sharp sand mortar or 'good cement' mortar. Byelaw 7 decreed that a body in a vault must be covered in a layer of concrete at least six inches thick or sealed in slate or stone flags 'properly jointed or mortared'. Finally vaults were to be covered with at least 12 inches of turf and soil and could only be constructed at a point in the Cemetery where the family had purchased 'exclusive right of burial in perpetuity'. Such 'vaults' were clearly the descendants of table vaults constructed on the surface of Georgian and Victorian churchyards for families who had purchased the right to such monuments. It is not known how many vaults were constructed in Barton Cemetery.

A number of rules codified the burial of infants. Byelaw 3 required that stillborn infants or babies under one month of age be buried at least two feet below the surface – this reflecting the practice of placing such small coffins in random graves.²⁷ The charge on the parents was to be 18 pence. The coffins of infants over one month of age at the time of death were to be

²⁷ Some confusion is evident here as Rule 1 states that the coffin of a child under one month of age must be buried at least four feet deep.

at least four feet below the surface, the charge to parents here being two shillings.

Certain rules related to the interment of more than one coffin, or subsequent coffins, in one grave. Here coffins had to be separated by a layer of earth at least 12 inches deep and Byelaw 6 stated that a burial in the grave of a previous interment was not to disturb the initial coffin. Initially every grave was to be dug to a depth of six feet and once filled-in a grave was to be 'turfed', leaving no 'bare earth'. Only those plots where 'exclusive right of burial in perpetuity is first purchased' (as with vaults) could have surface stone-work other than headstones, inscriptions were to be vetted by the Council, monuments were to be kept in good repair and all carts bringing monuments to the Cemetery had to have tyres at least four inches wide – this so the 'drives' were not cut-up.²⁸

Documentation was kept in the 'Lodge' and all payments had to be made here 'before the work is begun'. Here was kept a 'register' of burials in consecrated and un-consecrated ground. The cemetery-man enforced a 'no smoking' rule across the site at all times.

At the first meeting of Barton-upon-Humber UDC on the 4th January 1895 the Rev. Hipkin proposed that the 'Powers, duties, property, debts and liabilities of the Burial Board for the parishes of St. Peter and St. Mary in Barton-upon-Humber ... under the Burial Acts 1852 – 1885 shall be conferred to the Council as from 15th April next'. The motion was eventually carried on 1st March 1895 and in April the Clerk to the UDC took custody of the 'Deeds, Register, Book of Accounts and other documents of the Burial Board'. A Burial Committee was appointed comprising a Chairman and six councilors, while the Clerk to the UDC had the post of 'Registrar of Burials' added to his responsibilities.

Two hand-written minute books survive for the Burial Committee, one for 1915 – 1929, the other 1929 – 1932. The surviving typed minutes for Barton UDC refer to the presentation of Burial Committee minutes, but few

²⁸ Presumably this would be less of an issue once the 'drives' were tar-macadamed.

details are given. By the late-1920s the Committee had become the Burial and Allotments Committee (allotments including land allocated as such on the 1887 map and on which the Caistor Road estate now stands). By 1933 this Committee had been subsumed to the Park, Hunt Charity, Burials, Allotments and Forage Committee.

At the December 1923 meeting of the Burial Board of Barton UDC it was decided that the 'new extension' to the cemetery should begin 'being used' from 1st January 1924. From the description given it seems that this extension was field 665 as shown on both the 1887 OS map (see Fig. 14) and the 1908 OS map (see Fig. 18). Burials had progressed from west to east and clearly the original cemetery had become congested. At some point between 1906 (the 1908 OS map was surveyed in 1906) and 1923 the oblong field 664 must have been acquired by the Burial Board. There seems to be no clear archival reference to this acquisition.

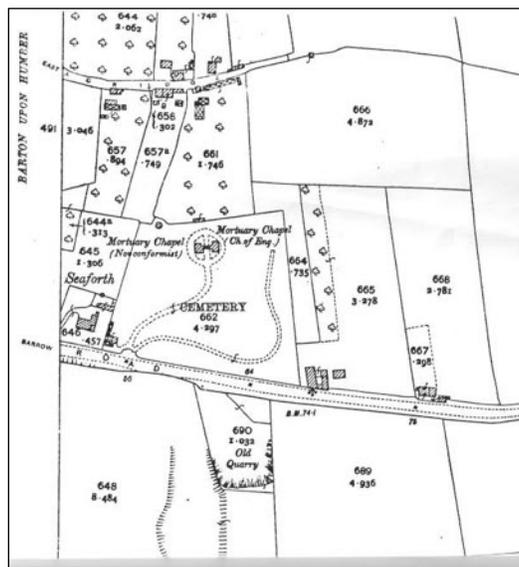


Fig. 18 The cemetery as shown on the 1908 OS map, 25 inch to one mile.

Within the landscape of the cemetery there is a ridge corresponding to the eastern boundary of the 1860s cemetery and certain shrubs and mature trees survive from the original planting by A. Swanson (see Fig. 19). The headstones in the part of the cemetery that had been field 664 date from the 1910s (including some references to Great War casualties) whereas

headstones at the eastern edge of the original cemetery plot date from the early 1900s. Field 664 must have been acquired early in the 20th century. The western edge of the 1923 acquisition is evidenced in the landscape by a further low, north – south ridge and a small brick pier (see Fig. 19) in the front perimeter railings marks the south – west corner of field 665, at which point the ornamental front railings had to be continued east of the original ones to a point where the south-east corner of field 665 had previously been (these survive).

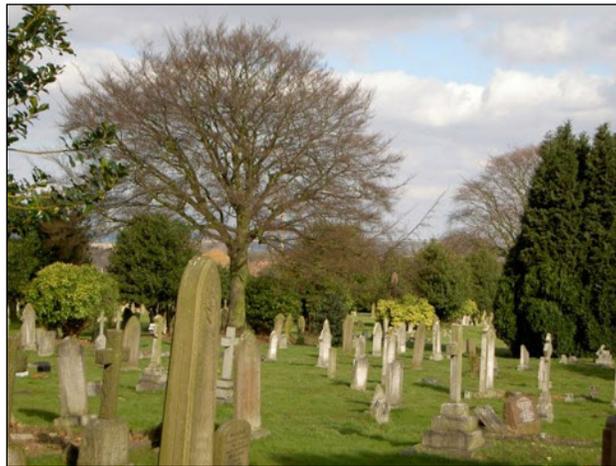


Fig. 19 The eastern boundary of the original cemetery as apparent from the ridge and the line of mature copper beech trees.

It seems that in fact the Burial Board had acquired field 665 ahead of the then existing cemetery being full for in March 1919 the Burial Board Committee minuted a request to a local land owner 'To quit cemetery land' and to 'sow oats and later seeds and send his bill to the Council for seeds and labour'. Perhaps the local farmer was renting back his previously owned land until such time as it was needed for burials. In 1919 that time was fast approaching and the Board wanted to take over the field already sown to grass. Also in expectation that this eastern extension to the cemetery would be needed, in September 1919 it was decided to tender for the 'palings' fronting Barrow Road to be extended to the new eastern boundary and for a new main entrance to be constructed. However, the railings and entrance gates were not erected until 1925 as a proposal to site a war memorial at the new main entrance to the cemetery necessitated

revisions to the original plan. Once built the new railings, which extended from the small brick pillar to the cottage (date-stone 1837) and orchard identified as plot 667 on both the 1887 and 1908 OS maps, were a copy of those erected in the 1860s and equally well constructed (see Fig. 20).



Fig. 20 View east, up Barrow Road, from the 'brick pillar'.

There are references to a dispute involving the acquisition of buildings by the Burial Board and these almost certainly refer to the buildings shown in plot 663 in 1887 and in field 665 in 1906 (see Figs. 14 and 18). By 1906 these buildings appear to be those of a small farm with buildings around a central fold-yard and one detached building dating back to before 1887. If it is assumed that the field(s) acquired by the Burial Committee belonged to this farmer there was clearly a long running dispute between the two parties. As late as January 1921 the Burial Committee minutes were still quoting the 'probable' cost of the land (and, presumably, farm buildings and farmhouse) at which point an application for a loan of £1500 was submitted to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, part of the Ministry of Health which had been created two years previously. Surprisingly then, the 'outbuildings of the new cemetery ground' had been pulled down in 1920 but in March 1921 a legal judgment was required before the Burial Committee could gain possession of the 'house'.

Following a successful application made by the UDC to the Ministry of Health it was decided, in September 1920, to erect a 'war memorial at the

principal entrance to the new cemetery'. Plans were being made by a local War Memorial Committee from December 1917 but the decision to site it at the proposed main entrance to the new cemetery was not made until July 1920, at which point the Surveyor to the UDC was asked to produce a 'detailed sketch'. In fact a pattern-book design was chosen as there were others of similar design in north Lincolnshire parishes. A photograph records the unveiling ceremony. The railings were not yet erected but the farmhouse (plot 667) and distant shelter-belt of trees which still exists can be seen (see Fig. 21).



Fig. 21 Photograph apparently showing an ecumenical blessing service at the newly completed Barton War Memorial, 1922 (photograph courtesy of David Lee, Photographer, Barton-upon-Humber). Members of the brass band are resting on their instruments. The cottage and distant shelter belt of trees survive.

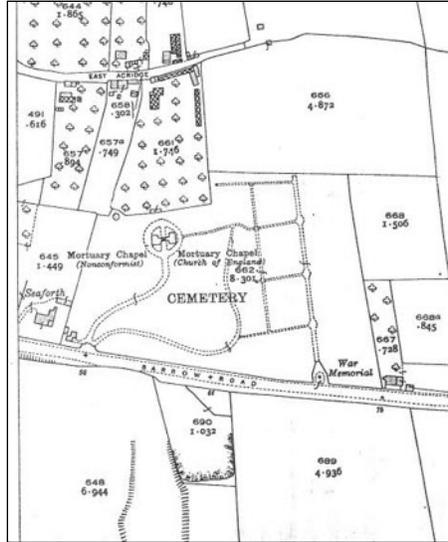


Fig. 22 The extended cemetery as shown on the 1932 OS map, 25 inch to one mile.

The 1932 OS map shows the layout of the grid plan footpaths and main drive which was created east of the original cemetery (see Fig. 22). Here the landscaping and investment was much more utilitarian than in the Victorian cemetery. No deciduous trees and few shrubs were planted. As yet (in 1932) the eastern section of the extension acquired in the 1920s was not needed, a fact confirmed by the dates on the headstones now standing there. The main drive appears to have been created along the eastern edge of the oblong orchard shown on the 1908 map (see Fig. 18, then part of field 665). This continued to the road. It seems that the access paths shown on the 1932 map were not laid out immediately after acquisition as it was not until June 1928 that a footpath was constructed between 'the old and new cemetery'. The minuted 'tar-spraying' of paths and roads in the summer of 1927 may therefore have just been in the original cemetery. A 1931 decision by the annual Visiting Committee that the 'Eastern Cemetery' should not be 'beautified until laid out' presumably referred to the land east of the newer main drive.

At some point after the Second World War the northern two-thirds of field 668 was bought to enable a further eastwards extension of the cemetery (a study of headstone dates would be instructive in this regard). This area

continues in use today. The field to the east and south of this current cemetery area is earmarked for residential development in the Local Plan, and, at the time of writing, some houses have been built (see Fig. 23). Although cremation is now a preferred option for up to 70% of the population (nationally) it will not be so long before the cemetery here will also be full up!



Fig. 23 View east across the part of the cemetery currently in use. A housing estate is being developed beyond the hedge.

The Victorian Burial Acts heralded a secular solution to an age-old problem and led to the establishment in most civil parishes of a landscape feature of social and environmental significance.²⁹ Frequently sited on the outskirts of communities and benefiting initially from high quality planting regimes, cemeteries became a place of resort and civic pride. Sadly, over the years, notions of functionalism, minimum input and economy of maintenance have come to predominate.

²⁹ In some parishes it has been more feasible to extend the churchyard rather than create a separate civil cemetery. One local example is at South Ferriby where the churchyard has been extended to the south along the scarp slope. Here the churchyard extension benefits from the surrounding diverse environment (see Fig. 24).



**Fig. 24 The south-eastern extension of St. Nicholas churchyard, South Ferriby.
View north-west from a point near Middlegate lane.**

In many communities chapels-of-rest and old headstones are in a sad state of repair, trees and shrubs from the original landscaping are nearing the end of their natural life and the current burial site seems bleak and regimented. In Barton the built structures are in relatively good order and although many trees and shrubs are old they still afford a degree of biodiversity lacking in the eastern section. Thus the cemetery can be divided into three areas;

- The 'Old Cemetery' – here large ornamental trees form an avenue alongside the original main drive and three majestic copper beech trees define the original eastern boundary. Some smaller ornamental trees survive from the original planting alongside the winding footpath between the main drive and the eastern edge of the original cemetery. There was also close linear planting along the northern and southern boundaries of the original cemetery.
- The Later Extension – the area of the eastward extensions of the first third of the 20th century is characterized by linear plantings of small ornamental trees, almost exclusively of one variety.
- The Current Cemetery – (previously field 668) here no landscaping exists except for a row of small ornamental conifers.

The development of Barton Cemetery thus exemplifies the retreat from high status landscaping so typical of public places in the 20th and 21st centuries. Furthermore, if the character of the original landscaping is to be preserved a replanting management plan is required.

Along with considerable numbers of cultivated and wildlife-friendly gardens in the locality the diverse flora of the Old Cemetery and the conifers of the later extension encourage a diverse wild bird population. Depending on the season swift, swallow, pied wagtail, starling, wren, robin, blackbird, fieldfare, redwing, song thrush, mistle thrush, tits, yellowhammer, chaffinch, tree sparrow, carrion crow and sparrow hawk may regularly be seen on site.

Conclusion.

Proper disposal of the human body after death has been a fundamental element of successive cultures since at least Neolithic times. In pre-Christian cultures the location of burials and cremations varied from what seem to have been centralized regional burial grounds to a scattered distribution, this presumably relating to where the people had lived. Given that many ancient burial sites must remain undiscovered and that we can only have the vaguest idea of population figures nevertheless it seems likely that in ancient cultures there was some sort of correlation between burial and status in life. If so the question arises as to the disposal of the remaining bodies.

Cremations must have taken place 'out in the open', this inviting speculation as to how the ashes of the cremated dead could have been isolated prior to being placed in a cinerary urn. Along with agriculture, domestic heating, boat building and defensive structures funeral pyres must have consumed much of the native woodland.

Romano-British culture seems to have been characterized by dispersed burial while pre-Christian Anglo-Saxons in this region seem to have returned to collective, centralized burial grounds.

With the development of Papal authority across Europe between the 7th and 12th centuries the parish became the unit within which the disposal of bodily remains took place, except for those of very high status interred in sites of national focus. With the rejection of cremation the centralized burial ground became the churchyard while under-floor and tomb burial in the church evolved as an option for the local 'great and good'. Burial fees were a source of income for the rector and so churchyards developed across many centuries.

The rejection of Papal authority by a series of legislative changes to church governance in the 16th century and collectively known as the Reformation had little impact on the convention of churchyard burial. Thus the problem of accommodating the bodily remains of a growing population mushroomed in the 18th and 19th centuries. The radical and long overdue Victorian social reform which brought in the establishment of civil cemeteries transferred burial from the preserve of the Church to secular authority. This and the promotion of cremation as a socially acceptable alternative to burial 'saved the day'.

Thus in the 21st century death puts far less pressure on land availability, this aided by a convention to have one's ashes scattered rather than interred at one point. However despite the above many cemeteries, including those locally, will run-out of space sooner rather than later. This, like the forward planning for preserving our nation's churches when declining congregations can no longer hope to do so, needs a national forward plan, a further social reform.

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