



transcribing the burial register to create a digital database which will make research and plot location easier.

Much of the locality's identity as an independent and industrious town has disappeared.

The cemetery has many memorials and there are examples of funerary art ranging from high Victorian splendour to those which reflect a less affluent 20th century. Research into the history of the graves is one of the Friends ongoing projects however the following are examples of some of whom the history is known.

#### War Memorials

Towns have memorials to their war dead and this location is no different, the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission records ninetyseven war graves and six civilian deaths at the cemetery the majority of the war graves being in the Western Cemetery.

The UK National Inventory of War Memorials lists three memorials.

1. Commonwealth War Commission Cross of Sacrifice.
5. Designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield the memorial is usually present in cemeteries where there are forty or more Commonwealth War Graves.
3. Local Primitive Methodist Church
4. The monument was relocated to its current site in 2002 following a public campaign. The owners of its previous site wanted it removed and public opinion was that it should occupy a prominent position.
6. A half stone tablet to an unknown Sunday School.
7. Perhaps rescued during demolition, the broken tablets provenance is currently unidentified.

Please see Appendices 6-15 for specific details of the interred.

#### Memorials of local interest

Three young boys were lost on the moors in December 1917 - an account of their tragic deaths is retold in the pages of a local publication.

"Young Catholic Priests come to town to set up new Mission"

Two young priests came to the local area to assist in setting up a Catholic Mission in the town. A source identifies the priests as Father and Father. The two priests died of scarlet fever which they contracted whilst visiting the sick. Both aged 25 years, they had only been in the town a few weeks.

The priest in charge at St. Joseph's at this time was Rev. and he is noted as parish priest for the period 1858-1898. His obituary notice describes the religious and municipal ceremony accorded to him on his final journey to the cemetery.

The Town Crier and the Bellman: Little research into the lives of the Town Crier and the Bellman, has been done at present. Both are believed to have been working in the town during the second half of the 19th century and are known to be buried in the cemetery.

Shaws Graves: In contrast to the ornate memorials of the Victorian age there are also simple terracotta graves. It has been confirmed that many of these terracotta graves were supplied by Shaws of the town. The firm, established in 1897, is noted for its terracotta architectural work and has been involved in the restoration of several famous buildings e.g. Harrods, London; Tower Building Liverpool; Old Technical College and Town Hall, East Ham, London; Hyde Park Hilton, Bayswater Road, London; The Coliseum, London.

#### **Architectural Interest:**

The Municipal Cemetery is actually located on two sites, the Western Cemetery on the west side of Anywhere Road and the Eastern Cemetery on the opposite, east side of the road. The Western Cemetery dates from 1861, whilst the Eastern Cemetery dates from 1947. Being the earlier burial ground, the Western Cemetery is a lasting repository to some of the town's important heritage (Appendix 1).

#### Western Cemetery

First proposed by the local Burial Board in 1858, it opened in 1861 to provide a public burial ground. Additional land was acquired in 1876, bringing the total area covered to in excess of 20 acres. Although one burial ground, the two areas are sometimes identified as the old part and the new part. Newspaper reports of the time indicate that Mr Ashton provided the land for the 1876 cemetery extension and park. (Appendix 2)

The western site occupies a disused quarry (Local record office 2005), with the older part being particularly hilly. There are no new plots available for purchase, and currently interments only occur in family plots if space is available. No specific area is set aside for the interment of cremated remains.

### Design

The earlier burial ground was designed by the architect JS of Manchester and Macclesfield (Appendix 3) working in collaboration with T W R, the Borough Surveyor. The first burial was made in June 1861 and at the time of opening, the Town Times described the area:

a pleasant resort particularly for the toiling operatives who would be able to enjoy the serpentine walks, especially on a calm summers day after they had finished their days work.

SS plan included two lodges at the main entrance, South Lodge to be occupied by the Burial Registrar and North Lodge by the cemetery's gardener. Both properties are now privately owned. To the northern side of North Lodge was, according to a local residents recollection, a working garden with greenhouses. The garden area is now used for modern, private housing. Within the landscaped grounds there were three mortuary chapels (Church of England, Nonconformist and Roman Catholic) which have been demolished. The original plans for the design cannot be located in local archives. Comparison of this map, images of the mortuary chapels prior to demolition and the Lodges as they are however a map, possibly dating from the 1930s, has been provided by the cemetery office. Today with SS designs for Macclesfield Cemetery reveals they are somewhat similar (Appendix 4), S adopting the Gothic style for his buildings.

At the Anywhere Road entrance, and to the rear of the two lodges, are lawns which have formal flower beds. With the temporary nature of this type of planting, and as the original design plan is not available, it is not possible to state whether or not this area is in accordance with the original design. The formal lawns and flower beds do however contribute to the Victorian design requirement for an impressive entrance where lodge, offices and gateway led onto the ride linking entrance to mortuary chapel. The entrance off the Carriage Drive, to the rear of the cemetery, would have been equally impressive; the funeral procession would have progressed along the tree lined avenue which offered views into an adjacent designed Park to the right and the Cemetery to the left.

The boundary stone walls remain intact and encircle all sides of the extensive cemetery site. Within these walls are three entrances each having stone gate-posts but it is only the Bird Street entrance which has retained its metal gates. To the rear of South Lodge is a decorative stone wall separating accommodation from the burial ground. It has been built out of large stone boulders, sculpted to fit firmly together, and creates a strong retaining wall between land of differing levels. Within this wall the stonemason has provided two stone stepped openings.

It is apparent care was made in the design of the 1876 extension, ensuring both old and new sections were complementary. A small portion of the original stone boundary wall of the old section remains and can be found to the north side of North Lodge.

### Planting

An aerial view shows the extent of the mature trees and the two circular rose gardens (Appendix 5.) There is a selection of trees e.g. beech, lime, oak, sycamore, cherry, and ornamental trees e.g. fir, rhododendron, holly are also present. A tree surgeon has confirmed that most of the trees are probably original planting, being in excess of 100 years old. There are some specimen trees - several fastigiate fir trees and a mature monkey-puzzle tree in section B. The two large circular ornamental beds at the centre of each burial area were once planted with roses but, due to neglect, have become overgrown. Through the Friends of the Cemetery, it is hoped to develop them into memorial gardens for the interment of cremated remains.

Little alteration seems to have been made to the 19th century landscape, and there do appear to be elements which adhere to J C Loudon's advice included in his book *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries* (1843) (quoted in English Heritage 2007). Occupying a hilly site, sweeping curved paths provide more comfortable access to the various sections of the cemetery and specimen trees are planted at key points. The high path along sections Y and F is an excellent vantage point from which there are particularly fine views across the valley towards Blacksnake and beyond. Most of the town's many mill chimneys have been demolished but from this elevated position it would have been possible to look out onto them. This area is planted with beech trees which create a natural woodland landscape and, in spring, bluebells bloom under the trees' canopy. Along the path, adjacent to the wall, is a natural stone construction. Known as the Platform it may have provided a working ledge to ease the passing of heavy loads into and out of the cemetery area.

In contrast to sweeping curves, from the Bird Street entrance is a wide straight avenue. Here the formal avenue landscaping is further emphasized by regularly spaced trees which have been planted along it. A straight path which borders sections B, E and Y is similarly planted although with a less formal appearance as this section has a steep gradient.

### Eastern Cemetery

The eastern cemetery is located on the opposite, east side of Anywhere Road. Dating from 1947, it operates as a municipal burial ground for the Council. The paths are laid out in a geometrical grid arrangement. The entrance gates are interesting in that both have metal (brass?) plates which are of the town's insignia.

### **Artistic Interest:**

Dating from the late 1860s there are several interesting Victorian monuments. As well as obelisks, there is evidence of Victorian symbolism in the grave features e.g. a tree stump, birds, urn (sometimes cloth draped), wreath, cross, statue, etc.

There are also many terracotta graves which are known to have been supplied by Shaws of the town. This firm has been in existence since 1897 and is involved in restoration work of several buildings of historic note e.g. Harrods

### **Threat**

Many of the monuments have been toppled for health and safety reasons and they are in danger of being lost. Little maintenance work to the paths is done and in some places they are dangerous.

A local action group has formed to save the cemetery.

### **Photographs**





**Documents**  
[Uploaded documents](#)

1. Victorian plan of Macclesfield Cemetery by James Stevens - Advisory Panel Report
2. Misc correspondence taken from Bolton Local History Archives re: Ashton Memorial ref:ZBGH
3. Newspaper article from The Darwen Observer, Blackburn Standard Sat 28/04/1877 pg 8 Iss 2172
4. Appendix Contents
5. Appendices 2, 3, 4, & 5
6. Appendices 6, 7, & 8
7. Appendices 9, 10, & 11
8. Appendices 12, 13, 14, & 15

### **Bibliographic References**

1. English Heritage Publication, Paradise Preserved (2007)
2. Book reference: M. Hyde, Macclesfield: a photographic history of your town (2001)
3. Book reference: J.& T Lingard, Bradshaw, Gass & Hope: the Story of an Architectural Practice. The first one hundred years 1862-1962 (2007)
4. Book reference: JG Shaw, History and Traditions of Darwen and its people (1889)
5. Journal reference: DB Smith, Past Times of Macclesfield, Volume 1 (2004)
6. Website reference: Friends of the Cemetery, online digital resource
7. Website reference: Parks and Gardens UK, [www.parksandgardens.ac.uk](http://www.parksandgardens.ac.uk)
8. Other reference: Local Archive and Local Studies Service, B, G and H Architects - Archive papers ZBGH covering period 1873-1936
9. Website reference: Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press online digital database [www.oxforddnb.com/](http://www.oxforddnb.com/)
10. Website reference: 19th Century British Library Newspapers, Gale Group, <http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/>
11. Website reference: The Times Digital Archive, <http://www.timesplus.co.uk/tto/news/?login=false&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Ftto%2Farchive%2F>
12. Website reference: Who was Who, Oxford University Press, <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199540891.do>

### **Comments**

The Western Cemetery Park is adjacent to Greenhall Park which is already listed. The two areas were identified as necessary at similar times and land provided by the same person (Mr A) was used. Little alteration to the cemetery landscape has occurred and therefore, particularly in the older part of the Western Cemetery, it is a good example of a Victorian burial ground. Excellent views over the valley can be had from the upper path; it is a particularly pleasant place to walk.

The Western Cemetery is situated in the Greenhall area of the town and is in close proximity to other English Heritage listed sites. The cemetery does not lie within a designated Conservation Area.

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