

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S ROAD CEMETERY

In 1856 a public meeting resolved that land be acquired, separate from Blackburn Road Cemetery, for non-conformist burials. Two acres of land in what was then Hapton was obtained from Charles Towneley's Estate. A local Burial Board was formed with two representatives from each dissenting church and three ratepayers. The first burial was in February 1857.

In 1893 the cemetery was transferred to Padiham and Hapton Local Board. Padiham Urban District Council acquired a further four acres of adjoining land from Towneley Estates in 1924 and two acres of this form part of the existing four acre cemetery. In 1933 formal approval was given for a designated Catholic Burial Ground – Plots 12, 16, 22 & 28. Walls of Remembrance were created about 1967 for memorials to those cremated. Since 1974 the cemetery has been Burnley Council's responsibility.

THE WALK starts in Plot A, the first plot to be used. Take the main path to the left after coming through the gate and walk towards the church:

1. Thomas Holland, grocer Church Street was one of the promoters of the Public Cemetery and one of the founders of Padiham Gas Company.
2. Richard Starkie of Padiham was one of three men killed and three men seriously injured in December 1872 when a new pit was being opened on the Gawthorpe Estate at Habergham. A new shaft had been sunk and almost completed when a waggon accidentally fell down the shaft. Richard left a widow and five children.
3. Ann Law, the first person to be buried on the 23rd February 1857, aged 21. It is not known whether this is an original headstone.
4. Walter Wilson Helm Iron Founder of Victoria Works with the grave of his father Francis, who established the company, nearby. Walter was associated with many social and religious activities, a chairman of Padiham Building Society and President of Hapton Golf Club.

Note the lines of mature trees which surround the original part of the cemetery, many of them Horse Chestnuts.

5. George Moorhouse JP, tailor & outfitter of Garden Street was very active in public life as a councillor and member of Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel. A multitude of organisations were represented at his funeral. Perhaps the quote at the base of the headstone refers to his public works.
6. Private Robert Bullen of the 11th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment (Accrington Pals). Died in Huddersfield Military Hospital of injuries received at the beginning of the Somme offensive. His is one of fifteen WW1 Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves for soldiers buried in the cemetery.

7. A new house now sits on the site of the former Lodge buildings shown on the front page of this leaflet. The Lodge, known as Cemetery House since at least the 1861 Census combined a mortuary chapel with the residence of the Sexton/Registrar. Three generations of the Helm family occupied the post of Registrar; Daniel 1873-1917; Walter to 1942; and George until 1967. Walter's widow, Leah, lived at Cemetery House until her death in 1955 and she and Walter are buried in Plot C

8. Rev. Joseph S. Langley was for 25 years the Burnley Road Baptist Chapel Minister and had previously had a distinguished career in other parts of the country.

9. Private Elisha Lofthouse of the 2nd Battalion East Lancashire Regiment was killed in action in France at the Battle of the Somme and is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. He is one of twenty two soldiers whose deaths in battle are remembered on family headstones in the cemetery.

The walk continues in the extended part of the cemetery which was laid out for use about 1930. The headstones in this part of the cemetery are generally of a simpler design and more recently of highly polished black granite rather than stone. Although the planting has already matured it is not of the same age as in the older part of the cemetery and contains different species. The boundary wall is of brick rather than stone.

10. From 1933 the area in this part of the cemetery adjacent to St. John's Church was designated as a Catholic Burial Ground and the headstone of Father's Baron and Hart from St. John's Church is sited close to the boundary with the church.

11. The walls of remembrance were created in the second half of the 1960's, the first commemoration dated 1967.

12. Private Christopher Wheeler of the Kings Own Scottish Borders Regiment was wounded whilst serving in Burma in 1944 and died of his injuries in a military hospital in Liverpool in 1947. His is one of six WW2 Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves for soldiers buried in the cemetery. Although CWGC headstones were of standard design families could add dedications at the base of the stone – this one is very personal and touching.

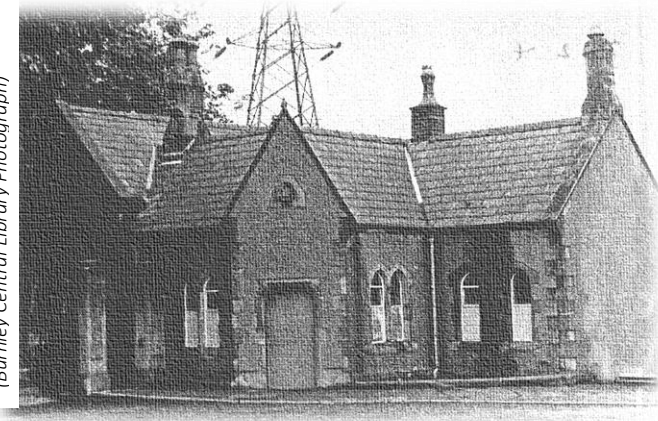
The Friends were formed in 2013 to help promote the historic, social, architectural and ecological aspects of the cemeteries in the Burnley District. We hold meetings every couple of months and amongst other events organise guided walks. We aim to publish other walks leaflets and hope that you enjoy this walk which gives a brief introduction to the history of the cemetery.

We welcome new members. Find more about us on www.fbc.btck.co.uk



FRIENDS OF BURNLEY CEMETERIES

Original Lodge
(Burnley Central Library Photograph)



A HISTORY WALK IN ST. JOHN'S ROAD CEMETERY PADIHAM



Please take care when walking around the cemetery. Although the trail is mainly on footpaths the paths and grassed areas can be uneven and slippery. You are advised to wear suitable footwear.