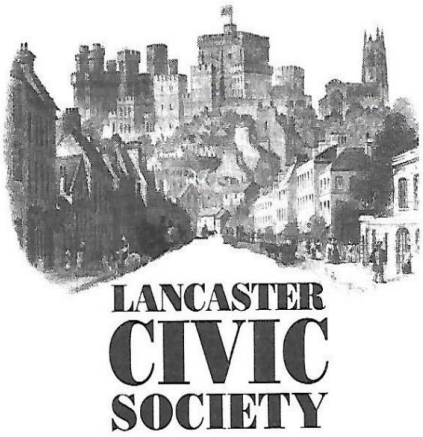


LANCASTER CEMETERY: NOTABLE GRAVESTONES AND MEMORIALS

Lancaster Civic Society Leaflet 63

Since it opened in 1855, Lancaster Cemetery on Quernmore Road has been the resting place of many Lancaster citizens. Those buried here remind us of the major changes in Lancaster's economy and society in the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

In the mid-Victorian period one of the crises facing government was what to do with the dead. Churchyards in towns and cities were filling up, the UK population was expanding and was becoming concentrated in ever-expanding cities, putting a particular pressure on the cemeteries there. Cremations, which needed little extra land, were rare at this time.

More space was needed. The Burial Acts of the early 1850s allowed local authorities to raise the money to buy, lay out and operate cemeteries for the general public, not just for those of a particular religious faith.

The Lancaster Burial Board developed Lancaster Cemetery in 1854–5 on an 18-acre site on Quernmore Road overlooking the town. It was planted rather like a public park as well as a cemetery and the Cemetery is a Garden of Special Historic Interest (Grade II). More details about the Cemetery can be found in Leaflets 2 and 3 in this series.

At the centre of the Cemetery is the slender memorial commemorating all those from Lancaster who died in the Great War and who are buried in Lancaster. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission notes that 116 war dead are buried in this Cemetery – many from the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regimen). Overlooking the town is the obelisk, erected in 1860, to the 19 local men who died in the Crimean War.

Among the thousands buried here are the headstones of some of the town's notable citizens – names known beyond their families. Some of them are listed here. They are arranged here for convenience in the categories of commerce, professions, medicine and public office, though

some transcend these categories, public office in particular often being held by those who had already made their mark in commerce or the professions.

Together they give a glimpse of the make-up of some of Lancaster's better known citizens. Of course all the gravestones commemorate an interesting life-story.

The poor of Victorian society, who could not afford a personal burial plot and headstone, are also buried in Lancaster Cemetery. Along the west side and in the north-east corner are the town's pauper's graves (as they were then called), unmarked and unnamed. They too should be remembered.

Commerce:

The economy of Lancaster diversified and expanded greatly in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. There were of course the major and well known manufacturers like the Williamson and Storey families but there are also the smaller firms and the banks, hotels, railways, shops and newspapers.

James Williamson, Lord Ashton (1842–1930) Manufacturer of linoleum in Lancaster, owner of Ryelands House and Ashton Hall and benefactor to the town. MP for Lancaster 1886–1895.

Sir Thomas Storey (1825–1898) Manufacturer of textiles and covering products at White Cross. Mayor in 1867/8, 1873/4, 1874/5 and 1886/7. Benefactor to the town.

Charles Blades (1818–1893) Owned one of Lancaster's largest carpentry and joinery firms; a major timber importer and owned a sawmill; director of the Lancaster Banking Company; Mayor of Lancaster four times.

John Coulston (1797–1866) The first manager of the Lancaster Banking Company (1826–1907) and its manager for nearly 40 years.

Mary Dalton (died 1945) and her four daughters. The Daltons were major landowners based at Thurnham Hall near Lancaster who in an earlier generation had developed Dalton Square.

Thomas Fell (1841–1907) Owner of the *Lancaster Observer* newspaper after 1874.

Albert Gorrill (1863–1924) Haberdasher and shop owner in Lancaster; a family business over several generations.

Sir Norval W Helme (1849–1932) Senior partner in the textile firm founded by his father at Halton Mills. MP for Lancaster, 1900–18. Mayor of Lancaster 1896/7.

Arthur William Hunt (1849–1917) Key figure in the development of Shrigley & Hunt, the stained-glass firm. Succeeded in the firm by his son, Arthur Edward (1876–1929).

John T Murray (1866–1924) Stationmaster at Green Ayre (Lancaster) Station.

Adam Russell (1828–1913) Captain and Harbourmaster for Lancaster Port Commission.

Matthias Saul (1786/7–1860) A businessman who established a scientific laboratory in a house on Green Ayre (Lancaster) to advance scientific knowledge, agriculture and education. He was a supporter of the Mechanics Institute in what is now The Storey.

Joseph Shrigley (1824–1869) Founder of the stained-glass firm of Shrigley and Hunt of Lancaster.

Joseph Sly (1814–1895) Landlord of the King's Arms Hotel, 1856–1877.

T.D. Smith (1838–1906) Well-known grocer and shop owner in Lancaster.

John Thistlethwaite (1841–1891) Stationmaster at Lancaster Castle Station.

Frances Geraldine Whalley (1882–1939) Stepdaughter of Lord Ashton and benefactor to Lancaster (Miss Whalley's Field, Westfield War Memorial Village).

Professions:

The Victorian and Edwardian eras saw a major expansion of the professions, such as architects, lawyers and educators.

Edmund Sharpe (1809–1877) Architect and engineer. Founder of the Lancaster practice of Sharpe, Paley and Austin. Mayor of Lancaster in 1848/9.

Edward G Paley (1823–1895) Architect in the above practice. Designed Lancaster Cemetery and the Crimean War Memorial there.

Hubert Austin (1841–1915) Architect in the above practice.

Joseph Bardsley (1868–1928) Vicar of Lancaster.

William Bonsey (1845–1909) Vicar and Archdeacon of Lancaster.

Major-General Cuthbert Eccles (1832–1903) of The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. Served in the Crimean War.

Thomas Gibson (1838–1923) Solicitor in Lancaster.

William H Higgin QC (1820–1893) Barrister; Recorder at Preston; Deputy Lieutenant, Lancashire.

Edward P Marriott (1845–1906) Chaplain at Lancaster County Asylum.

Medicine:

As the county town Lancaster had a wide range of major hospitals and asylums that were set up by doctors and which attracted other doctors and surgeons to the town.

Alexander Colquhoun (1840–1867) Surgeon at the (Royal) Lancaster Infirmary.

Edward Denis De Vitre (1806–1878) Physician at Lancaster County Lunatic Asylum, co-founder of the Royal Albert Asylum (later Hospital), Lancaster. Pioneer in the more humane treatment of those with mental illnesses. Mayor of Lancaster in 1843/4 and 1855/6.

Harold Gilbertson Taylor (1855–1887) Doctor at the Royal Albert Asylum, Lancaster.

William Wingate Wingate-Saul (1842–1906) A surgeon and doctor in Lancaster.

Public Office:

Annie E Helme (1874–1963) The first woman to be a magistrate in Lancaster (1920), the first woman councillor in Lancaster (1919) and the first woman to be Mayor of Lancaster (1932/3). She was a notable suffragist in Lancaster.

Captain James Hansbrow (1790–1862) of the 3rd Lancashire Militia was Keeper of Lancaster Castle (1833–62); succeeded by his son, Arthur (1862–7).

Thomas Swainson, William Oliver Roper and T Cann Hughes were successive Town Clerks of Lancaster between the 1860s and 1922.

A very few of the many others:

Mary Elizabeth Baldwin (1804–1889) Wealthy spinster by inheritance from her sister, Charlotte. Benefactor of the clock on St John's Church, Lancaster.

Pythagoras de Nictheroy (c.1830–1879) Ship's Captain and husband of Ellen Breaks.

Let us know of others you think should be included in this leaflet.

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