Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

CROSSES IN LANCASTER CEMETERY

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 2



Lancaster Cemetery opened in 1855 and for over 150 years families have erected gravestones in commemoration. Lancaster Cemetery is on Quernmore Road – for satnav use LA1 3JT. **Further details about Lancaster Cemetery can be found in Guide 3 in this series.** Other local cemeteries with an interesting range of crosses and gravestones are in Morecambe (by Holy Trinity Church), Scotforth and Skerton.

This guide explores the design of the gravestones in the Cemetery. Some gravestones have a Christian cross, which can be very simple. However, there are many variations and designs of cross to be seen in Lancaster Cemetery, and this guide shows some of them.

Names on the gravestones and crosses have been omitted or obscured.

The crosses you can see in Lancaster Cemetery vary considerably in their shape, construction, materials and additional elements, as this guide shows.

The shape of the cross

Most crosses are of the simple Latin form, but at times Celtic designs have been popular. There are other designs of Christian cross not found in this cemetery (e.g. Coptic, Jerusalem and Lorraine crosses).





The material

Most crosses are of stone, some being sandstone, which erodes more rapidly, and others being of harder igneous or metamorphic rocks, perhaps with a highly polished surface in the more recent ones. Other crosses use metal (a central and east European preference) or wood.





Stone can be used to simulate wood or mimic a natural rock formation or cubes of stone.



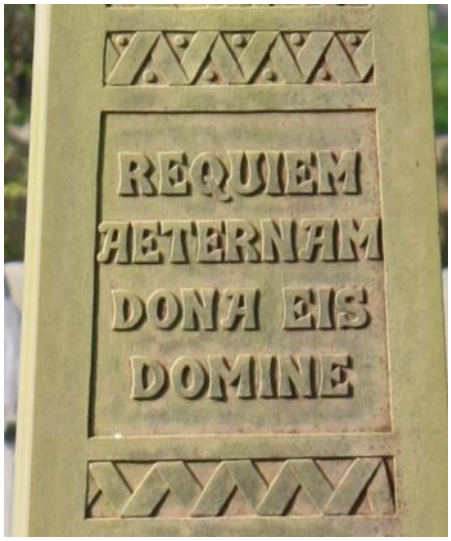


Additions to the cross

Often the basic cross has additional elements that convey a traditional spiritual or symbolic meaning. The letters IHS are often carved on the shaft of the cross. This may stand for "By This Sign" (*In Hoc Signo* in Latin), or for "Jesus, Saviour of Man" (*Iesus Hominum Salvator* in Latin) or for the first three letters of Jesus in Greek (*IHΣ*). Inscriptions or symbols may also be added.







On the western and north-eastern sides of Lancaster Cemetery are the paupers' graves, unmarked by any gravestone or cross.













Some other guides of interest include Guide 63 Lancaster Cemetery – Notable Gravestones and Memorials.

Text and photographs – Gordon Clark.
Published by Lancaster Civic Vision (©2014; revised 2022)
Lancaster Civic Vision is the trading name of Lancaster Civic Society, registered charity no. 258434