Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

SCOTFORTH CEMETERY

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 33



The doubling of Lancaster's population between 1801 and 1851 had necessitated the establishment of Lancaster Cemetery (the town's first municipal cemetery) in 1854–5 on Quernmore Road to the east of the town. The further doubling of the population between 1851 and 1891 required additional cemeteries – in Scotforth in 1890 to the south of Lancaster and in Skerton in 1904 to the north.

Enlarged in 1908, the 11 acres of Scotforth Cemetery were then just fields, west of Scotforth village and what is now the West Coast Main Line railway. Such a large area of flat land was not available in Lancaster Borough and the nearest Anglican church (St

Paul's, 1874–5) did not have a graveyard. Lancaster had to go outside the borough to Scotforth township to find this site. By 1900 the Cemetery and the northern part of Scotforth parish had been incorporated into Lancaster Borough and the Lancaster Corporation Tramways' service reached Scotforth in 1903.

Lancaster Cemetery, described in Guides 2 and 3 in this series, became the resting place of, amongst others, the more prominent of the town's citizens – the mayors, professionals, business people and landowners – as well as many paupers in unmarked graves. In Scotforth Cemetery we find the perhaps less prominent – the hotelier, schoolmaster, artist, teacher, pastor and organist.



The interments at Scotforth during the twentieth century reflect some of the recent cultural changes in Lancaster. The Cemetery has a Polish section serving that community, many of whom arrived during and after the Second World War. Their language on the headstones and their metal crosses mark out this area on the east side of the Cemetery.

A section for Catholics – some with Irish heritage – is in the south-east corner. In the south-west corner is the Muslim section. Their graves are aligned differently – south west to north east – so that the deceased, lying on his or her right side, faces the Ka'aba in Mecca (Saudi Arabia).

The graves form mounds and are marked, if at all, by some flowers and increasingly by headstones often with Arabic script. The Bahá'í graves nearby have a similar alignment, but towards Acre in Israel, their spiritual centre. Chinese script can be seen on some headstones on the west side of the Cemetery. Other graves celebrate those of Italian and Galician heritage.



During the twentieth century the design of headstones and their lettering have changed from the Gothic Revival and Celtic styles of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, through Art Nouveau and Art Deco/Moderne styles to the more personal and secular forms of the twenty-first century. On headstones we now see more often photographs of the deceased, often in their prime, poems, engravings of items that were important in their lives and lists of their family relationships.



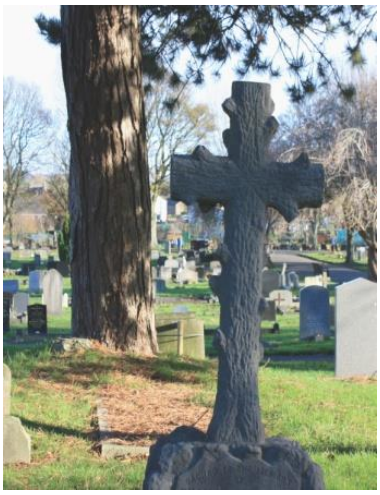


In the north-east and north-west corners of the Cemetery you can find the small plaques and flowers in the Gardens of Remembrance that mark where cremation ashes have been placed.

With fields and allotments on three sides and with its tall Scots Pines and cherry and sycamore trees Scotforth Cemetery is a wildlife haven.

Scotforth Cemetery is on Ashford Road (LA1 5AD for sat-nav). It is cared for by Lancaster City Council and is open to the public every day. The small chapel in the north-west corner is open only for burial services.













Another guide of interest - 53 Scotforth village.

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