

# **The Old and the New Cemeteries**

## **Bishop's Stortford**



**Brochure 2020-2021 Issue 3**



Undated Ordnance Survey map showing the Old Cemetery and part of the New Cemetery

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## KEY INFORMATION

### Address

The postal and satnav address for the Old and the New Cemeteries is as follows:

Cemetery Lodge  
109 Apton Road  
Bishop's Stortford  
CM23 3FP

### Contact Details

For information on any of the services offered in this brochure please use the contact information below:

**Town Council's website** <http://www.bishopstortfordtc.gov.uk/>

**Cemetery Administrator**, Bishop's Stortford Town Council, Windhill,  
Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 2ND.

**Telephone:** 01279 715000

**E-mail:** cemetery.admin@bishopstortfordtc.gov.uk

### Opening times

May – September 07.30am - 08.00pm

October – April 7.30am - sunset

## INTRODUCTION

There are two Cemeteries in Bishop's Stortford under the administration of the Town Council, which lie either side of Cemetery Road, not far from the Town Centre. In this brochure you will find useful information on the many services offered.

You are advised to read page 20 for details on how to obtain a list of fees and charges and the Cemetery and Memorial Burial Regulations, which covers many of the legal aspects of burials and memorials for the Old and New Cemeteries.

A short history of burial regulations from the Tudor period to the present day can be found on page 22, which I hope will add to your appreciation of the system of recording burials in England and later, the United Kingdom.

Finally, the Town Council would invite you to visit and spend a few quiet moments to remember a loved one or simply to sit and listen to the birds in the beautiful quiet areas that the Cemeteries provide.



## THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

The outdoor and office based team, which administer both Cemeteries is committed to providing a sympathetic service and environment for clients and visitors alike. The outdoor staff can often be found working amongst the graves, weeding, mowing and generally tidying up; they are always happy to help, so please do ask if you have any questions relating to the Cemeteries.

# HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE CEMETERIES

## The Old Cemetery

The Old Cemetery is the largest burial ground in Bishop's Stortford covering an area of approximately eight acres. The Cemetery, including the Lodge House (shown below) and the two mortuary chapels, were designed by local Architect George E Pritchard in 1855, built in flint and mortar and topped with slate roofs.



The earliest recorded burial in the Old Cemetery took place in 1855. A walk around the grounds reveals a good deal of information about the people interred here. Many of the larger monuments record the names of people who had been influential in the Town such as the Brazier, Sworder and Gilbey families, others may be recognised by a simple gravestone and inscription.

Throughout the Cemetery, there are 36 war graves from various regiments of the First and Second World Wars, all of which are tended by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



In addition to the war graves, there are two sites containing multiple burials of priests and nuns who had lived and worked at The Old Monastery in Windhill, Bishop's Stortford.

The Old Cemetery contains many graves which have fallen into disrepair and on which the leases have expired. Some of these graves have now been allocated as 'heritage' graves (see pages 13 and 14).



A part of the Old Cemetery has been designated as a Country Wildlife Site due to the presence of species-rich grassland and colonies of the rare bee orchid. This area is being managed sympathetically for wildlife, whilst respecting that it is also a special place of remembrance. During the spring and summer months grass here is allowed to grow unattended, encouraging wildflowers to blossom and set seeds, which provides food for bees and butterflies. In the early autumn the area is strimmed and tidied up ready for the cycle to begin again the following spring. A walk around the Old Cemetery in the early morning or evening, at any time of year, will reveal that this area is also an oasis for numerous species of animals and birds, including squirrels, bats, deer, foxes, buzzards, woodpeckers and owls.

One of the enormous antique Cedar trees, which provides essential habitat for all types of wildlife, suffered sever trauma in a recent storm and sadly, it has now been removed. Options for the area once occupied by the tree are currently being considered. Luckily, the other large Cedar tree remains standing and, in addition to its ecological value, it provides an interesting focal point for visitors who often pause to ponder its age and origins.





## The New Cemetery



The New Cemetery was built on former allotment land in Cemetery Road, adjacent to the Old Cemetery. Wide footpaths which lead through the grounds provide excellent access for wheelchair users.

The rules regarding grave structure in this Cemetery were established at the planning stage of development and these graves do not contain large raised table top monuments of any sort. The lawned area provides a simple uniformed appearance which the Council's groundsmen take pride to keep trimmed and tidy.

This area is also a haven for wildlife and many bird species can be seen at any time of the year. In the springtime numerous cherry trees spread their clusters of bright pink blossom over the landscape and several ancient trees add to the peaceful ambiance of the site.

The New Cemetery contains a small location dedicated to stillborn babies which was last used in 1970. The graves of three German airmen from WWII can still be found in the New Cemetery, although the bodies were repatriated to a German military cemetery after the war. Several other WWII graves can be found here, in addition to a few Old Contemptibles from WWI.



An interesting piece of Victorian cast iron work is the water pump situated near the entrance to the Cemetery, which, it is believed, once stood in North Street. The water pump has been converted to incorporate a tap for modern day usage.



## The Chapels

Of the two mortuary Chapels in the grounds of the Old Cemetery, only one is currently used for funeral services. The Chapel on the left hand side, as one enters the Cemetery through the main gate, can be used for funerals of any faith, although historically, the building was used solely for Anglican services. This Chapel has recently been refurbished.



The Chapel will seat approximately 25 people. A music system (MP3 player) can be arranged on request, however, the hirer is responsible for providing music, if required. The hire of the Chapel is chargeable and details of how to obtain information can be found by using the contact details on page 4.



## **FUNERAL OPTIONS**

The following options can be organised through your funeral director or the Town Council's Cemeteries Administrator.

### **Options for Coffin Burial**

#### **Lawned Grave**

A lawned grave in the New Cemetery can accommodate two coffins and up to six cremation urns. It will consist of a plot on which a headstone can be erected with optionally, a planting area, 300mm deep, in front of the stone. The planting area will be the responsibility of the family to maintain. The remaining area will be grassed and cut by the Cemetery maintenance team. The area in the New Cemetery currently available for new graves is unconsecrated.

There is a designated area for baby coffins and baby ashes only. Please contact the Cemetery Administrator for more information.

The design of headstones or memorials and their inscriptions will require the permission of the Town Council.



## **Lawned Heritage Grave**

Through its Heritage programme, the Council is now able to offer a final resting place in the beautiful historic area of the Old Cemetery.

A lawned heritage grave can accommodate two coffins and up to six cremation urns. It will consist of a plot on which a headstone can be erected with optionally a planting area, measuring 300mm deep, in front of the stone. The planting area will be the family's responsibility to maintain. The remaining area will be grassed and cut by the Cemetery maintenance team. The area in the Old Cemetery currently available for new burials is consecrated.



A full description of the Heritage programme is available on page 20, or by contacting the Cemeteries Administrator.

## Traditional Heritage Grave

A separate area of the Old Cemetery has been designated for those who would like a 'traditional' grave that is one with full kerb sets and/or a cover tablet. A Traditional heritage grave can accommodate two coffins and up to six cremation urns and will consist of a previously used plot which can accommodate two coffins and up to six cremation urns.

The materials used for kerbsets and /or cover tablets must be unpolished and light grey in colour in order that they are in keeping with the Heritage memorials in this area, which will remain in place at the present time. These memorials also are restricted by height to conform with modern safety standards and the design and inscriptions will require the permission of the Town Council.



A full description of the 'Heritage' programme is available on the Town Council's website, or by contacting the Cemeteries Administrator.

## **Options for Cremated Remains**

There are several options for the interment of cremated remains which can be arranged through a funeral director or directly with the Town Council's Cemetery administrator.

### **Plots for Cremated Remains**

Cremated remains can be interred in specifically designated plots, on which either a tablet or a headstone can be placed. Cremated remains plots can accommodate two ashes containers or remains can be interred loose. Plots are available both in the New Cemetery and in a delightful wooded area of the Old Cemetery.

Ashes can also be interred in existing graves, including those graves in the Heritage area, subject to space and with the registered owner's permission.

### **Scattering of Cremated Remains**

A garden of remembrance is available in the Old Cemetery in which cremated remains can be scattered. Please enquire about the memorial options available for loved ones whose ashes are scattered in the garden.

Cremated Remains can be scattered on an existing grave, with the owner's permission and with the permission of the Town Council.



## Funeral Options at a glance - Coffin Burial



Lawned Heritage Grave

Old Cemetery

Area A

Set in a wooded backdrop in a heritage environment with scattering of heritage memorials

Consecrated, Heritage plot (see Note 2) in the Old Cemetery

Plot size 1950x760mm (78"x30")

Memorials and Kerbsets to be light grey in colour

Up to 2 coffin burials



Traditional Heritage Grave

Old Cemetery

Area A

Set in a wooded backdrop in a heritage environment with scattering of heritage memorials

Consecrated, Heritage plot (see Note 2) in the Old Cemetery

Plot size 1950x760mm (78"x30")

Memorials and Kerbsets to be light grey in colour



Lawned Grave

New Cemetery

Area B

Set in an open aspect in the New Cemetery

Unconsecrated plot

Plot size 1950x760mm (78"x30")

Up to 2 coffin burials



## Funeral Options at a glance - Cremated Remains



Cremated remains plot  
Small headstone permitted

Area C (Old Cemetery—wooded area.  
Sandstone colour (Nabresina) only

Area D (New Cemetery) —colour  
optional, (grey or black granite recom-  
mended)



Cremated remains plot  
Tablet permitted

Area E

(colour optional, black granite recom-  
mended)



Scattering of cremated  
remains in Memorial Garden  
Plaque on shared  
Memorial Bench is optional

Area F



Cremated remains may also be scattered on purchased graves provided at least one burial has already taken place and the Registered Owner of the grave is in agreement

# Cemetery Plan

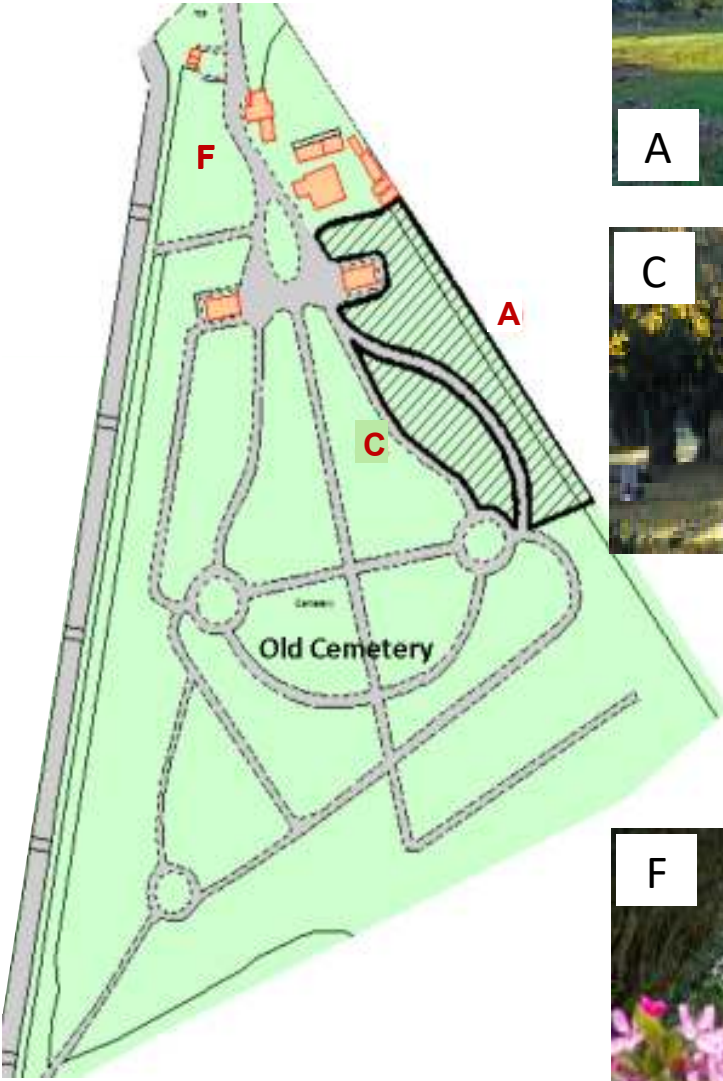


B: Lawned Grave

B1: Baby Area

D: Cremated Remains (Small Headstone—headstone shown inset)

E: Cremated remains (Tablet inset)



A: Lawned & Traditional Heritage Grave  
 C: Cremated Remains (Small Headstone - headstone shown inset)  
 F: Memorial Garden (Scattered remains—memorial bench shown inset)

## REMEMBRANCE OPTIONS

The Cemetery offers a tranquil space to commemorate a loved one and memorial options are available. All memorials and inscriptions are subject to the payment of the applicable fee and to the approval of the

### Remembrance Stone

The Remembrance Garden is a space for quiet reflection and remembrance and can be found at the back of the New Cemetery adjacent to the wooded area known as the Firs. No burials or cremated remains are allowed in this area however memorial stones, which may be inscribed, can be erected.



### Memorial Benches

Subject to the availability of space the Town Council will permit the installation of memorial benches. Space is currently available both in the New and Old Cemeteries and commemorative plaques can be attached to any of the range of designs available.



## **HERITAGE PROGRAMME**

The Town Council has developed a exciting Heritage programme which has been fully approved by the diocese of St Albans and which will only be available in the consecrated ground of the historic Old Cemetery, where its profusion of ancient trees, beautiful monuments and flourishing wildlife ensure a delightful resting place for you or your loved ones. Should you chose this option, a fully prepared grave will await the funeral cortege on the day of burial, and in this respect, is no different to a burial in the New Cemetery. Heritage graves will be chosen from those where the most recent interment was more than 100 years ago. Should you wish to discuss this option, please contact the Cemetery Administrator.

## **CARING FOR YOUR GRAVE**

Grave owners, or the family of those buried in the grave are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the headstone, removal of dead flowers and upkeep of the planting area. The Cemetery management team will ensure cutting the grass in both the Old and New Cemeteries is cut on a regular basis throughout the spring and summer months.

## **CEMETERY REGULATIONS, FEES AND CHARGES**

The legal requirements which must be fulfilled before a burial can take place or a memorial erected as well as the terms on which rights are granted or transferred are set out in the Cemetery and Memorial Garden Regulations. These are available from the Town Council website or on request.

A list of fees for the burial and memorial services is published the Town Council website or available on request.



## **FACILITIES**

There are a number of facilities in the grounds of the Cemeteries for our clients and visitors to use, these include those listed below:

### **Toilets**

The toilets are situated in the little stone building at the Old Cemetery, just inside the main gate, on the right hand side. Unfortunately, as the toilets are over 150 years old, they are unsuitable for disabled use.

### **Disabled Access**

The New Cemetery is fully wheelchair accessible.

The Old Cemetery is moderately wheelchair friendly. However, due to the nature of kerbed graves, disabled access may be restricted in areas where these graves are located. In addition, some of the footpaths are a little uneven and caution should be exercised when using these walkways.

### **Water Points**

There are water points and receptacles near the entrances in both Cemeteries. You are respectfully requested to return the receptacles to their positions by the taps when you have finished using them.

### **Notice Boards**

There are a number of notice boards, located near the entrances, in both Cemeteries, all of which contain information and maps to help visitors familiarise themselves with Rules and Regulations and locations of graves and facilities.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF BURIAL REGULATIONS IN ENGLAND

In 1538, Thomas Cromwell, issued a Mandate which ordered written records to be kept by clergy, of all baptisms, marriages and burials which took place in their parishes. Many of the early records were kept as loose leaf entries and few of these records are extant.

In 1598 Queen Elizabeth I ordered that parish records be made on better quality parchment and kept in bound books. Around Easter each year, the records for the year were copied and sent to the Diocesan Registrar. These records are called 'Bishop's Transcripts'. Very few have survived before 1608 and many more of these records fell prey to fire, pests, flooding etc. during the following centuries.

Throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries many details were badly recorded, incomplete, damaged by bugs or damp and destroyed by revolution. To counter the damage problem it was decided to deposit the records in county record offices. Here they were safely stored and today these documents are made available to the public on request.

In 1812 an Act was passed in Parliament called the 'Act for the better regulating and preserving Parish and other Registers of Birth, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials in England (28 July 1812).' This Act demanded that separate books were kept for each category of ceremony and proper entries made to record the events. In addition, copies of the books were to be made soon afterwards. Any false entry, alterations, forgeries, counterfeits, or wilful destruction or defacement of the books (for which the Rector, Vicar or other officiating Minister was held responsible) was considered a felony and deportation overseas the consequence.

Since 1855 burial records have been kept in three different forms; the Index to the Register, the Register of Purchased Graves and the Register of Burials. The early records make interesting reading, often containing information regarding the deceased person's occupation. However these records have now been archived and the information they contained has been transferred to the Cemetery database. This database is not yet available online but please contact the Cemetery Administrator with any queries.

**BURIALS in the Burial Ground of the Bishop  
in the Court**

NAME	Age	Quality, Trade, or Profession	Date of Death	Place or Place Interred
✓ Sarah Mary Young No. 312	87 years	Widow	26 <sup>th</sup> Novemr 1840	Bishop's Stortford
✓ John Phillips No. 312	72 years	Bar Shaver Widow	27 <sup>th</sup> Novemr 1840	Bishop's Stortford
✓ Martha Cox No. 312	68 years	Widow	12 <sup>th</sup> Janury 1841	Bishop's Stortford
✓ Sarah Glasscock No. 312	84 years	Widow	27 <sup>th</sup> Janury 1841	Bishop's Stortford

The Town Council has access to the books relating to burials in the Bishop's Stortford Cemeteries and it is quite possible to locate a grave through a search of the burial records. Please contact the Cemeteries Administrator for further information.

