



Report on Gravestones

Lumbutts Methodist Chapel Graveyard

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Storah Architecture Ltd

Chartered Architects : Historic Building Consultants

46 Halifax Road
Todmorden
OL14 5QG

T 01706 813214
mail@storah.com
www.storah.com

Directors:
J. David Storah Arch. Tech. Cert.
Richard A. Storah Dip. Arch. MA Cons. RIBA AABC SCA IHBC



Company Registered in
England. No: 9547619

Background information

Calderdale Methodist Circuit as owner of last resort, is responsible for churchyards orphaned from closed chapels within the Circuit. Some of these contain memorials which are in an unstable condition and have the potential to cause harm or serious injury.

The following parties have responsibility for memorial safety in these graveyards:

- Calderdale Methodist Circuit has health and safety responsibilities to its employees, contractors and visitors (Section 2 & 3: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974). It also places a legal duty on the Circuit to assess the risks from structures and work activities and ensure that the risks are controlled (The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999).
- A monumental mason has the responsibility to work in accordance with the Circuit's conditions and requirements for memorials.
- An owner, the Deed Holder or successor in title of a memorial, has the responsibility to maintain it so as not to present a hazard.
- Members of the public who see an unsafe headstone/memorial may notify the Circuit so that an inspection, followed by appropriate action, can be carried out.

In July 2000, a six-year-old child died as a result of a collapsed headstone in a Harrogate cemetery and in 2018 an eight-year-old boy died after a headstone fell on him at a Glasgow cemetery. Over the last 30 years, eight people in the UK have been killed when a memorial has fallen on them. This highlights the risk and liability faced by the Circuit in the management of these graveyards.

Under Standing Order 952, the Circuit Meeting is responsible for ensuring that all circuit properties are inspected at least once every five years. To meet Trustees obligations with regard to repairs, the Circuit arranges a quinquennial survey of its property. This is a visual inspection which considers the condition of paths, structures, boundary walls and randomly selected monuments. This does not include physical testing for movement. A further tactile survey has been commissioned to consider the stability of memorials in order to address safety concerns regarding loose memorials which may not have been identified during a visual survey.

Methodology

A hand survey has been carried out of the memorials in the grounds of the former Lumbutts Methodist Chapel to consider their relative stability and assist the Circuit in making decisions regarding repair and safe access.

The survey has been carried out by Chris Mace, Buildings Archaeologist and former mason under the direction of Richard Storah, Conservation Architect in September 2024. A proportionate approach to testing, with a visual inspection and a gentle hand push test, has been used to identify any movement between components. Book memorials, rests or footstones less than 450mm in height and smaller memorials for cremated remains have not been hand tested. It should be noted that dependent on conditions other monuments may also become unstable and require repair or making safe.

BS8415 suggests a five-yearly test with a test pressure of up to 25kg. This is considered to be too destructive and may cause undue damage. Guidance notes that it is unlikely that a hand test will achieve this pressure. It is intended that more regular inspections of identified memorials will be carried out as a less destructive approach.

Each memorial of concern has been photographed and is identified below. They are also identified on the graveyard plan attached as an Appendix.

Recommendations

Recommendations are the actions required to make memorials stable for the safety of graveyard visitors. They are not a specification for repair.

Where memorials are identified as being unsafe or unstable, immediate action should be taken by the Circuit to reduce the risk of death or injury. This may be by signage and/or temporary support or by restricting access.


Responsibility for repairs

An owner, the Deed Holder or successor in title of a memorial, has the responsibility to maintain it so as not to present a hazard. Where possible contact with the last known grave owner should be made, or steps taken to identify any responsible parties. They should then be asked to engage a suitably qualified memorial mason to agree the works with the Circuit and make the required repairs.


If the owner can not be identified

If the owner can not be identified within a reasonable timeframe, the Circuit will need to take action to make the churchyard safe. This may include temporary support, pocketing (sinking deeper, ideally embedding headstones by a third of their height, but remaining vertical) or laying down, either on the grave or covered within it. These options may be dependent on the size and condition of the memorial, access issues and availability of lifting equipment. The measures taken should where practicable be reversible, so that if at some point a relative wishes to have the memorial repaired and reinstated to its original position this can be done. Costs incurred in making monuments safe should be recorded and recovered from families when practicable. The memorials should be photographed and their condition recorded prior to and following any works to make the monument safe.


Recommendations for Individual Graves

Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.13.		Small upright ledger with sidestones. Granite.	In loving memory of Fenella Dorothea Trevelyan, wife of Harry Holden Crabtree	Ledger leant against wall	Tablet could be laid down within edge stones with the corner stones detached from the tablet and retained within the grave.




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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.15.		Grey granite cross, kerbed.	In loving memory Nancy, wife of Samuel Barker Of Pellon St. Walsden	Loose on base.	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements.
Bk. no. 23.		Grey granite cross, kerbed.	I.H.S. In loving memory John Edward Priestley	Loose on base. Rocking on second base.	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements.
Bk.no. 27.		Stone cross (Marble).	In loving memory of Ernest Judson	Broken in three and moved off base	Base could be reset. Cross will need dowel repair.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.30.		Stone lancet.	In loving memory of Betsy beloved wife of Halstead Greenwood	Out of ground, leant against wall	Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.
Bk.no.31.		Granite lancet.	In memory of Mary Hannah wife of Whittaker Greenwood ----- of Littleborough	Laid flat on face	Set in ground one third for stability (ideally retain base and sink to column bases) or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.
Bk.no.35.		Stone ledger.	Jeremiah Crossley	Laid forward onto face with plinth still attached	Set in ground one third for stability (ideally retain base) or if impracticable laid down flat, face up. Upper section loose on dowels and requires rebonding.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no. 83 or 90.		Kerbed stone ledger.	In loving memory of John Wild of Mankinholes	Laid flat within kerbstones	Considered safe, no action.
Bk.no 85 or 87.		Upright ledger with side stones. Marble scroll inserted in ledger.	In loving memory of Emma, beloved wife of John Sutcliffe	Rolled backwards off plinth	Reset plinth level and return to position, pinned and bonded to plinth. Note: Location is surrounded by graves with edgings which restricts access for lifting equipment.
Bk.no.159, now full.		Lancet with black etched glass inset, also Book style ledger at base, grit stone with marble inset.	Bk.no.159, now full. In loving memory of Richard Mills	Loose in ground	Set further into ground one third for stability. The black glass memorial is high quality and fragile. It should remain above ground level. This monument is unsuitable for laying flat. The book style stone will need moving forward to avoid risk of damage to the glass should further settlement occur.



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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.162.		Marble Lancet on grit stone base.	In loving memory of Sarah Ann wife of Abraham Fielden	Laid forward onto face off base. Broken off plinth	Remove base and set on plinth. Set memorial in ground one third for stability in front of base.
Bk.no.167.		Upright grit stone ledger.	In loving memory of Thomas Clegg	Loose in ground, movement, including plinth	Could be sunk by one third for stability.
Bk.no. 172.		Grit stone cross.	In loving memory of Arthur, youngest son of James and Sara Halstead	Repaired (inadequately) and loose on base	Base of column snapped, with poor quality lime mortar repair (failing). Rebond base, cut shaft to remove damaged section, dowel and refix, or remove shaft and lay flat within grave.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.173.		Grit stone cross.	In loving memory of Nancy Louise daughter of Rev. J.T. and Alice Newton	Repaired but loose on base	Remove crumbling lime mortar fillet. Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements.
Bk.no. 178 and 179.		Grit stone ledger.	In loving memory of Susannah the beloved wife of John Stansfield	Laid flat on ground, face up, sunken	Considered safe, but sunken so possible trip hazard. If considered a trip hazard, backfill and turf over. No action.



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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.183. Unmarked		Large stone lancet	owner John Mills	Laid flat on ground, face up	Considered safe. No action.
Bk.no. 196.		Sculpted lancet with marble side pillars.	In loving memory of Ethel Mary daughter of Ernest Edwin and Agnes Wild	Slightly loose on base	Could leave for now. Dependent on weathering (ice expansion in open joints), further work in likely to be identified in the near future.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.199 A.		Kerbed cross, grit stone.	In loving memory of Mary Alice Thorp	Loose on base	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements. May require new pins to secure, or laying flat (last resort option).
Bk.no. 218.		Marble upright ledger.	In loving memory of Sarah Jane Finch	Loose in ground, including plinth	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements. Dependent on success of works, additional stabilisation may be required, either ground compaction or laying flat.
Bk.no. 247.		Upraised ledger at an angle, gritstone.	In loving memory of Ruth the beloved wife of Joseph Gibson	Pushed back off base, laid flat face up	Considered safe, but out of position on grave. No action.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
G.bk.no.4 17.		Limestone ledger.	In loving memory of Edith the beloved wife of Charles E. Fielden	Movement in ground including plinth	Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.
Bk.no. 420 and 421.		Gritstone lancet	In loving memory of William Crowther	Loose, sounds like in socket	Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.



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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.435.		Pink granite cross.	In loving memory of Jane , widow of Gibson Horsfall	Second base loose	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements.
Bk.no. 529, 530 and 531.		Very large grey granite headstone.	In loving memory of Henrietta, daughter of James and Hannah Gaukroger	Loose in waterlogged ground	Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.
Bk.no.668.		Sandstone cross.	In loving memory of William Henry son of Mitchell and Mary Greenwood	Loose on base. Base is also loose and rocking on one corner (possible foundation stone).	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements. If stability can not be achieved, sink in ground to base of shaft of cross.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
G.bk.no.6 79.		Sandstone cross.	In loving memory of Sarah daughter of William Henry and Susy Sutcliffe	Loose on base	Pack joints with lead and rebond loose elements.
Bk.no.742.		3 segment sandstone, with heavy cap.	In Memoriam Johnson Greenwood	Loose in ground, very top heavy, could topple over.	<p>Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.</p> <p><i><u>Due to weight and top heavy nature of memorial particular caution is advised. Demarcate a clear zone around prior to public access.</u></i></p>


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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.845.		Upright ledger.	Arthur Dawson 1873 – 1921	Out of ground, leant against stone behind	Set in ground one third for stability or if impracticable laid down flat, face up.
Bk.no.891.		Red reconstituted marble pedestal with sidestones.	Treasured memories of my dear husband Samuel Fielden	Loose in ground	Lay flat within grave.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.987.		Black marble upright ledger with sidestones (vault).	In loving memory of James Dullenty	<p>Completely loose, danger of falling over.</p> <p>Laid flat (inscription down) as unsafe.</p>	Turn to face up and lay flat within grave.
Bk.no.994.		Pale grey marble upright ledger with sidestones (vault).	In loving memory of Alice wife of Tom Greenwood	Loose in ground, could fall over	Lay flat within grave.

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Ref	Image	Description	Part Inscription (identifier)	Condition	Recommendation to make safe*
Bk.no.997.		Granite upright ledger (vault).	In loving memory of Sarah Ellen beloved wife of George Holden	Loose, could fall forward	Lay flat within grave.

* Recommendation to make safe is to return the monument to a safe condition in as economic and practicable a manner as possible, retaining elements to allow restoration at later date if families wish to maintain and reinstate the memorials.

Report prepared by:

Richard Storah

