

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## Buckingham Cemetery

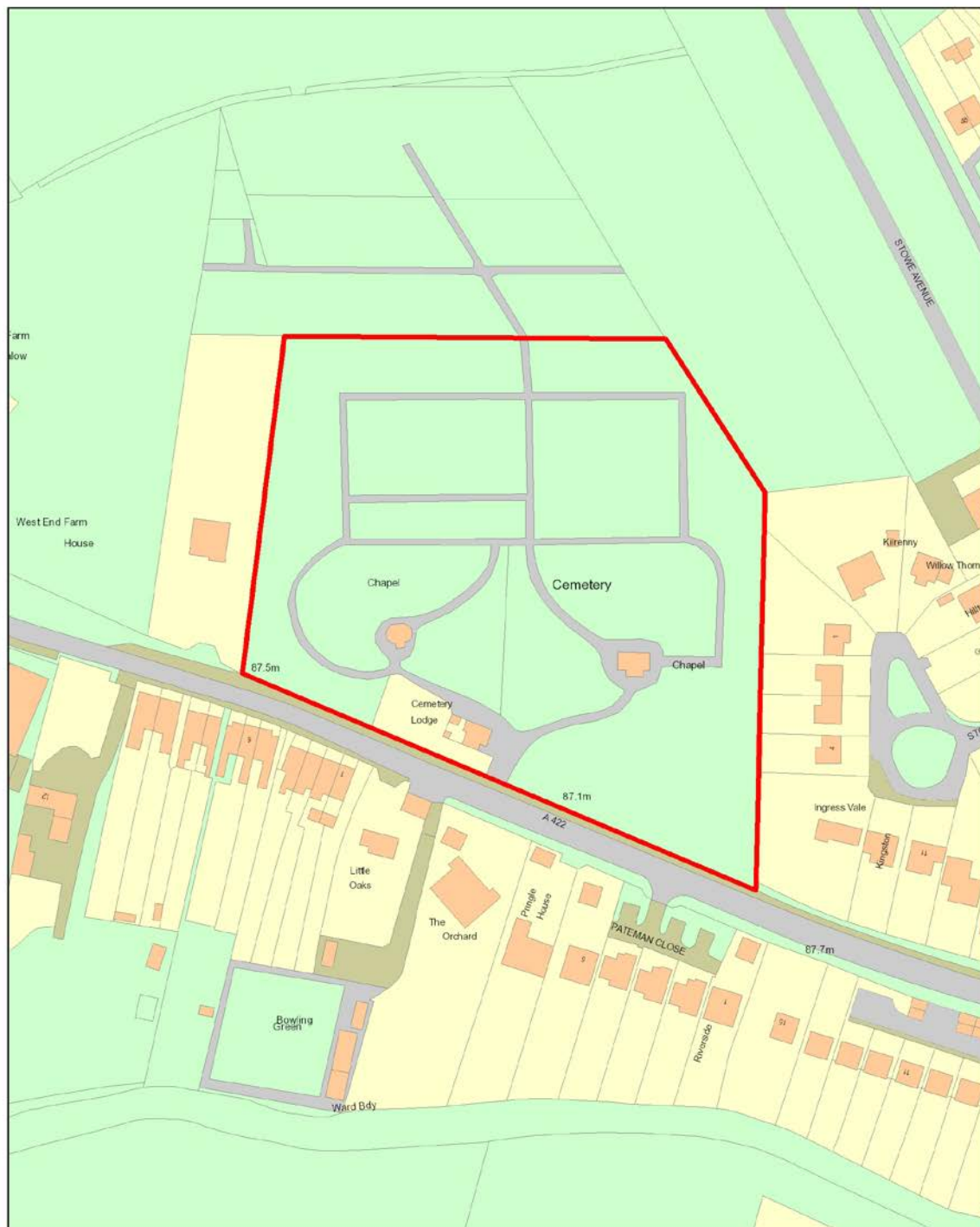
July 2020



Roland  
Callingham  
Foundation



# HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



## Buckingham Cemetery: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the Council Archaeology Service  
July 2020



Scale: 1:1,456 at A4  
N  
0 100m

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Buckinghamshire  
Gardens Trust





**Buckingham Cemetery: 2017 aerial photograph**

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Produced by the Council Archaeology Service  
July 2020



Scale: 1:2,073 at A4



## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

### Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained by BGT in appraising designed landscapes.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and including an overview.
- A description, derived from documentary research and site visits, based on the format of Historic England's *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.*
- A map showing principal views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

### Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was funded by BGT, with significant grants from the Finnis Scott Foundation, the Roland Callingham Foundation, BCC (since April 2020 part of Buckinghamshire Council) and various private donors. Buckinghamshire Council also provided significant funding, and help in kind including current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record. The project is supported by The Gardens Trust.

The Trust thanks the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>BUCKINGHAM CEMETERY</b>  <b>BCC HER 0638900000</b>
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	AYLESBURY VALE	
<b>PARISH:</b>	BUCKINGHAM	
<b>OS REF:</b>	SP 690 341	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Overview

A Burial Board cemetery for a rural market town (1855-56), which survives largely intact. It is one of the more significant cemeteries in historic Bucks, for the number of buildings that were erected as part of the ensemble and for the Picturesque layout. The 1.2ha. cemetery was designed by Samuel Fripp of Bristol, a notable Bristol-based architect, and extended in the late C19 to the present 2.7 ha. Fripp focussed on two chapels, each at the centre of its respective consecrated and unconsecrated burial area, which form part of the largely intact group of contemporary buildings and modest C19/C20 memorials. The Picturesque layout based on a circuit drive around the original area is largely intact, and is ornamented with many mature trees, particularly conifers, reflecting the original planting style. The design is unusual for its size and type in Bucks as it does not have a strict geometric grid pattern layout as is the case with other larger cemeteries at Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.

### Archaeological interest

A typical example of successive burials of a rural market/county town since the 1850s, including war dead. Further potential arises from evidence relating to lost cemetery features such as paths and structures and former agricultural uses, a probable Prehistoric cremation burial recently identified in the C20 cemetery extension adjacent, and evidence relating to other human burials identified in farmland to the north-west, beyond the diverted stream.

### Architectural interest

An ensemble of typical mid-C19 burial board cemetery buildings and structures comprising two chapels as the focal features of the layout, with a lodge, gateway and boundary wall with elegant iron railings. The ensemble survives largely intact but the small mortuary has gone along with the low cast iron fence formerly marking the boundary between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. The ensemble is united by the use of red and yellow banded brick and Mansfield Stone dressings, and Gothic/Tudor polychrome style. The architect Samuel Charles Fripp worked with Brunel on Bristol Temple Meads Station buildings and was a noted regional architect. It is unclear if he designed other cemeteries but he did not apparently work elsewhere in Bucks. A largely intact collection of modest memorials survives including Commonwealth War Graves. The original rural setting distant from the town centre survives in part, although the town has grown out as far as the cemetery.

### Artistic interest

The mid-C19 design, apparently by Fripp, survives largely intact and is based on a curving and Picturesque circuit drive focussed on two Gothic-style buildings. This was originally ornamented with largely evergreen trees, some of which survive including apparently the monkey puzzle planted by the vicar of Buckingham at the consecration ceremony in 1856. The later phases and their planting respected this pattern and include deciduous trees and conifers. The division between consecrated and unconsecrated ground has gone.

**Historic interest:** There are strong associations between the cemetery and the history of the town. There are also connections with members of the community. The cemetery provides an important link with the past and a place for contemplation by the local community.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By the early C19 the site was in agricultural use, lying in a rural area west of Buckingham, north of the recent Buckingham to Brackley turnpike road (OSD).

With the advent of the 1850s Burial Acts in response to the general lack of decent burial space, the Buckingham Burial Board was set up. An order was issued c.1853 to close the old churchyard as a burial ground (Harrison). Councillor James Thomas Harrison, Auctioneer of The Poplars, Buckingham was a member the burial board and apparently acted as its liaison officer with the architect and completed the details of the plan: allocating grave spaces and communicating with the Civil Service in London (pers. comm. E. Grimsdale, July 2020).

The Board commissioned Bristol architect Samuel Fripp to design a new cemetery to succeed the parish churchyard. A 3 acre plot was bought on the Brackley Road for £525. Fripp was responsible for the layout as well as the design of the two chapels, the ornamental gates and brick walls, lodge and other structures. The process of implementing his designs was reported in various articles in the local press (*Bucks Herald* 09 June, 21 July, 05 August, 22 September, 1855; *Jackson's Oxford Journal* 28 July, 15 December, 1855).

The cemetery was designed in Picturesque style and laid out with a serpentine circuit drive rather than in the grid pattern more commonly used in Bucks and beyond (c.v. Chesham, Amersham, Aylesbury Cemeteries). The informal layout was divided into two roughly equal halves by a low fence marking the boundary between consecrated and unconsecrated ground to east and west respectively. The design of each half focused on its respective associated chapel, one for Anglicans and the other for non-conformists. Paths were laid out and ornamental trees planted, predominantly conifers (OS, 1879).

In early June 1855 £2,400 was allocated to build a new cemetery and in July plans and designs were received from Fripp and he was commissioned for the work. The money was being raised in August and in September it was agreed to invite tenders for the work and pay Fripp a premium. In November building works were well under way on the lodge and chapels, with Mr Munday as the builder who was also draining the ground. (*Bucks Herald*)

By May 1856 the 3 acre cemetery was nearing completion. The larger portion to the east was set aside for consecrated ground which was divided from that to the west for non-conformists by a 'slight iron railing' and the whole cemetery was enclosed by an iron railing. On 14 May the Rev. Samauel Wilberford, Bishop of Oxford, consecrated the Anglican half of the cemetery (at the same time as opening the National Schools in the town) with in attendance local notables including the vicar and mayor and councillors of Buckingham, and a large crowd (although no one from the family of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buckingham at Stowe).

As a 'very interesting feature in the proceedings, after the consecration service had been performed', three commemorative conifers were planted by officials at the ceremony: a Deodar cedar by the Bishop, a Monkey Puzzle (*Araucaria imbricata*) by the vicar and a *Tryptomenia Japonica* (sic) by the Mayor, presumably a *Cryptomeria japonica*. (*Bucks Herald*, 17 May 1856) These species had all been introduced into cultivation in the last 2-3 decades (*Araucaria* in 1843 including by Messrs Veitch; Deodar cedar in 1831; *Cryptomeria japonica* in 1844). Their use reflected not only the fashion for planting conifers in cemeteries promoted in John Claudius Loudon in the 1840s but also an innovative horticultural collection as a Pinetum. It was later noted that of these three trees only the Bishop's Deodar survived and became a handsome ornament to the cemetery by the early C20 (Harrison), but a mature monkey puzzle survives (2020) and may well be that planted by the vicar.

In August 1856 Mr Fripp inspected the buildings for final approval. Two crops of hay had been taken from the cemetery for £5. Works were still supervised by Fripp in September (*Bucks Herald*, 09 August; 13 September 1856).

Sheahan noted the cemetery favourably shortly after in 1862, mentioning that 'The [Anglican] chapel and that portion of the cemetery (nearly two-thirds of it), appropriated [to it] ... was consecrated by the Bishop of Oxford on 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1856; and the cemetery was opened for interments on the first of June next following. The [Anglican] portion is laid down in 1,879 graves: the 'undenominational' ground in 1,125 graves. The cost of the establishment of the cemetery was about £2,750.' This was slightly more than the £2,400 originally approved. Sheahan also noted the 'light iron railing' on a brick wall surrounding the site, and that the lodge was the sexton's house.

By 1879 (OS) the 3 acre (1.2ha.) cemetery still lay in fields to the west of Buckingham near the Buckingham Lodges at the entrance to the Buckingham Avenue to Stowe. The Picturesque layout was based around a tree-lined circuit drive linking the two chapels via the lodge and gateway off the Brackley road. The cemetery was planted principally with conifers. The two chapels picturesquely different in form, that for the non-conformists being octagonal and that for the Anglicans being simpler and rectangular.

By 1898 the consecrated portion had become full and it became necessary to enlarge it. The cemetery was extended to the north with 2 acres at the top of the hill, purchased from the Baroness Kinloss (of Stowe) to 4.6 acres (1.9ha.). This was consecrated by Bishop Randall of Reading in March 1898. The cemetery was again extended to the north in the 1980s (outside the historic boundary). It is managed by Buckingham Town Council.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING**

Buckingham lies in the Vale of Aylesbury at c.100m AOD some 2 miles south of Stowe landscape gardens. The cemetery lies adjacent to the north of the Brackley Road, 0.6 mile west of the town centre, in a rural area with some development to the south and east. Nearby to the east are the Buckingham Lodges and the south end of the 1760s Buckingham Avenue leading to Stowe.

The cemetery as laid out in 1855-56 covered 1.2ha. It was extended northwards successively in the late C19 and C20 to its present area of 2ha (the C20 extension is not included within the historic boundary). Dwarf red brick boundary walls with stone coping supporting elegant 1m high iron railings with *fleur de lis* tops enclose the 1850s section of the site including against the Brackley Road. This is the 'light iron railing placed upon a brick wall' noted in 1862 (Sheahan). The corners of the mid-C19 area are marked by brick piers with stone banding and pyramidal caps similar to those of the main gateway. The railing dates from 1856, and survives well except in part to the north by the first extension where the north boundary was broken through. The north boundary of the late C19 extension is hedged.

The ground is level. Views are largely contained within the boundaries and focussed on the 1850s chapels. Views out are limited by the trees and external development but there are filtered views of the Brackley Road. When it was laid out, the cemetery was surrounded by agricultural land, but with the growth of Buckingham in the later C19 and C20 it is now partly within setting of light industrial and residential premises, to the west, south and east.

### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

The main entrance is towards the centre of the 330m long Brackley Road boundary. The gateway comprises two pairs of 2m high red brick stone piers with Mansfield stone banding and gabled caps, flanking the main vehicle gateway and two pedestrian gateways. Nearby to the west, set back behind a lawn, is the lodge (originally the sexton's house), of two storeys, in similar red brick with yellow brick banding and stone dressings, in Picturesque



Victorian Polychrome Tudor style. It was formerly roofed in red Staffordshire tiles. This was originally the sexton's house. The structures are by Samuel Fripp, designed in 1855.

From the gateway a short drive leads north before dividing to west and east, leading towards the chapels. Spurs lead off the south side northwards around the two chapels and continue to the centre of the north section. The Anglican chapel is entered via a large arched doorway on the south side. The non-conformist chapel is entered from the west. This approximates to the early layout (OS, 1879) with a serpentine perimeter drive around the original area, with spurs encircling the chapels.

The main drive continues from the west section into the northern extensions where it is supplemented by various paths reflecting the grid layout.

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS**

The two chapels, intended for religious ceremonies before the interment, are the focal points of the 1850s layout. They stand sited towards the centre of their respective parts of the burial ground: the non-conformist being in the smaller west half, c.70m west of the Anglican chapel in the east half, and both originally reached via spurs off the circuit drive.

Sheahan noted in 1862 that the mortuary chapels were, 'neat structures of red brick, with white [actually yellow] brick laid at intervals, the quoins being of Bath [actually Mansfield] stone. The consecrated chapel is in the Decorated style, and has a good window in each end, of four lights, with three quatrefoils in the head. It has also a porch, and the gable ends are surmounted by small floriated crosses of Bath [actually Mansfield] stone. In the interior, the roof is open wood work stained and varnished. The side walls are pierced with five windows which are filled with green tinted cathedral glass. The Dissenters' chapel is octagonal in form Early English in style, and is lighted by seven windows. The roofs of both chapels are slated, and ornamented with tile cresting, with spiral bell turrets in the centre.' This remains largely the case today, although the bell turret has been lost from the Anglican chapel. The non-conformist chapel is more Picturesque in style and form than the rather plainer Anglican chapel. The stone was not Bath Stone but Mansfield White which degrades quickly in polluted air (also used on Houses of Parliament with such results). This has occurred on the cemetery chapels, particularly the Anglican chapel (pers. comm. Ed. Grimsdale).

The chapels were the focal points of Fripp's design for the cemetery in 1855. See Appendix for further information about him.

## **OTHER LAND**

The cemetery is laid out Picturesque style with the 1850s chapels intended to be the two foci, centrally in their respective halves of the site. The cemetery was constructed so it would be regarded with civic pride and therefore care was taken over the design; the layout by Fripp remains largely intact. The boundary bisecting the consecrated from unconsecrated ground to the west was marked by a 'slight iron railing' running north from the lodge straight to the original north boundary (*Bucks Herald*, 17 May 1856; OS 1879). This has not survived to any great extent. The serpentine circuit drive and spurs that define the layout are integral to the design as was the planting of trees, as shown on the 1879 OS 25", with largely conifers in a distinctive pattern. Several specimens of the C19 largely evergreen planting survive, including upright Irish yew, the battered remains of a Deodar cedar which may have been planted by the Mayor at the consecration ceremony in 1856 (*Bucks Herald*), and a fine *Chamaecyparis*. A mature monkey puzzle (*Araucaria*) is that planted by the vicar at the 1856 ceremony but there is no sign of the *Cryptomeria*. The extensions to the north are laid out in more utilitarian grid pattern.



A collection of modest memorials includes Commonwealth War Graves for 11 casualties from both World Wars.

## REFERENCES

*Bucks Herald* (09 June, 21 July, 05 August, 22 September, 1855; 17 May, 09 August, 13 September 1856).  
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Harrison, JT, *Leisure-Hour Notes on Historical Buckingham ...* (1909), 78.  
RIBA, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1900* (1993), 331.  
Rutherford, Sarah, *The Victorian Cemetery* (2008).  
Sheahan, J.J., *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire ...* (1862), 244.

## MAPS

1814, Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing, 2" scale (BL).  
OS 6" and 25" to 1 mile: 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1879.  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1897.  
Revised 1923

SR, June 2020.

# APPENDIX

## Biography of Samuel Fripp, Architect

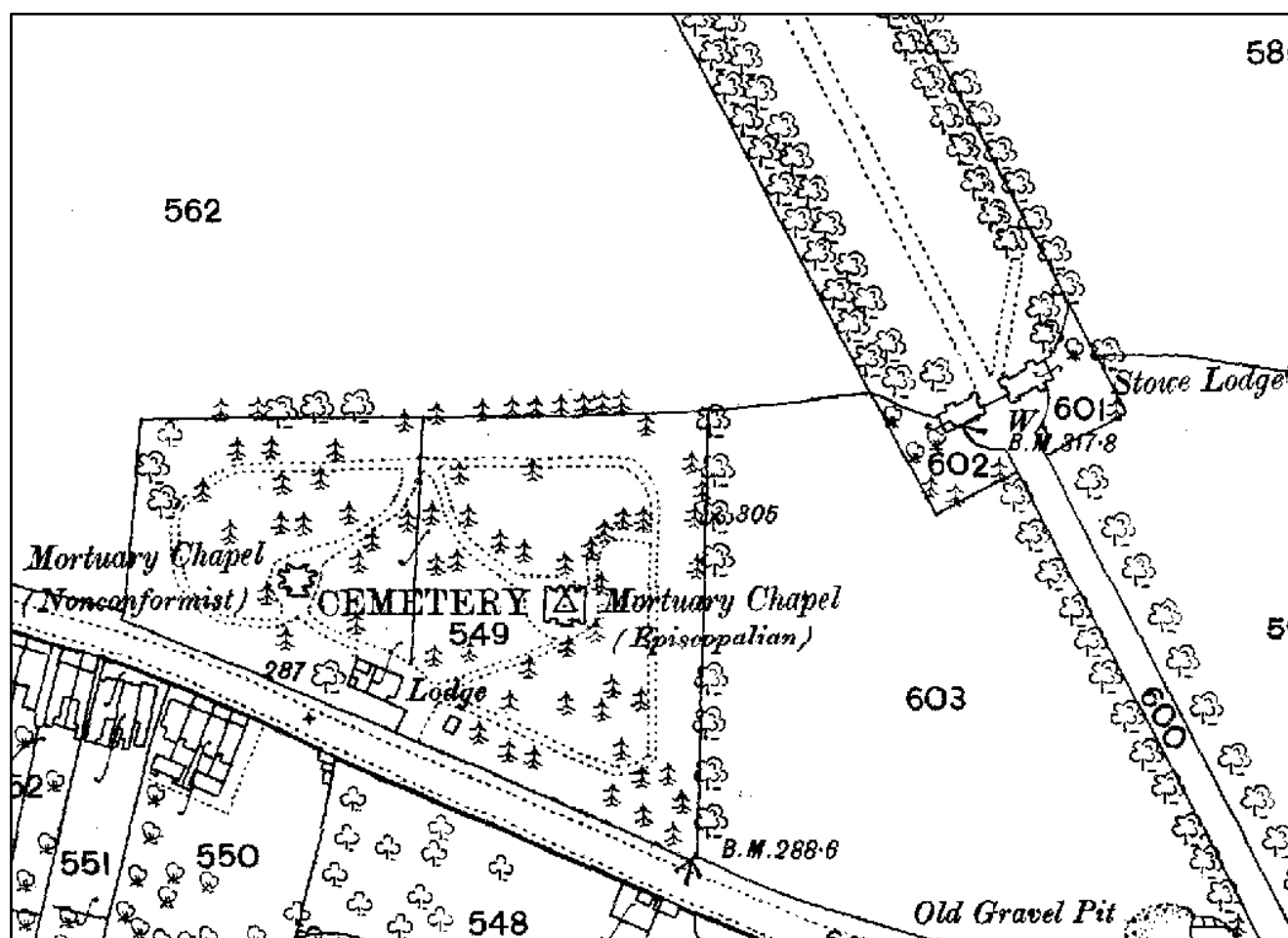
Samuel Charles Fripp (1812-82) was a prominent architect and sculptor based in Bristol, who was active from c.1839 until his death in 1882. He was born in Rainham, Kent and died at Avondale House, Clifton Down, Bristol. At his death he was worth £745 0s. 0d. He was buried in Redland Green, Bristol.

Fripp carried out extensive work in Bristol, London, Bridgwater and Clevedon. Most of his work was in Somerset and Gloucestershire. He was a pupil of Thomas Rickman, one of the three city surveyors and was an 'architect of this city' by 1839. He was Brunel's assistant at Temple Meads Station, Bristol, and worked on Keynsham and Bath stations. In 1850-1 he refaced the private asylum, Brislington House, Bristol. He was a partner with Archibald Ponton 1859-65 and went bankrupt in 1864-65. It is unclear whether he worked on other cemeteries.

## References

RIBA, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1900* (1993), 331.  
[https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib1\\_1218015784](https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib1_1218015784)  
<https://hestories.info/somerset-architects-index-v2.html?page=19>  
*Bristol Mercury* (11 September 1882).

## HISTORIC MAP



1878 Ordnance Survey 25" scale showing original planting of cemetery with largely conifers and a few deciduous trees. ©Landmark Information Group  
The 1760s Buckingham Avenue to Stowe is seen top right.

## KEY HISTORIC FEATURES



**Key to numbered features**

1.	Main Entrance off Brackley Road	2.	Main drive (mid-C19)
3.	Anglican chapel	4.	Non-conformist chapel
5.	Mortuary or hearse house (site of)	6.	Late C19 extension
7.	Early C20 extension		



## CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Ken Edwards and Rosemary Jury



Main entrance, Brackley Road, lodge and gateway.



Non-conformist chapel



Anglican chapel



Boundary wall, railings and corner piers of 1850s cemetery with extension beyond.

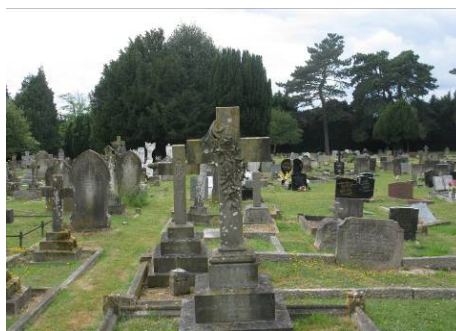




North boundary of 1850s area; Deodar cedar (remains of) possibly from ceremonial planting by clergy and officials during consecration in 1856. ?*Chamaecyparis*.



Memorials



Memorials