

Wobbly Gravestone Testing. Great Bowden Cemetery

Monday May 10th. 2010.

This work as instructed by H.D.C. was completed this day, the contract was won by a Welsh based firm "Memsafe".

I met up with this trio of well mannered, informative operatives who incidentally had travelled from Telford Staffordshire. Our working party of the friends of G.B. Cemetery were active that morning as well, our interest was met with a warm smile, this was their last day here and we watched the process of staking & strapping of the loose headstones.

H.D.C. have worked to the guidelines issued a few years ago by the Ministry of Justice, stressing that local authorities should carryout the implications of the Health & Safety directive in a sensitive manner , as we have seen it done.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF MUCH GROUND WORK commenced some three decades ago by such bodies as M.A.B. "Memorial Advisory Bureau". N.A.M.M. The National Association of Memorial Masons.

Later B.R.A.M.M. British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons.

N.A.M.M. produced The Code of Working Practice. Supporting- British Standard 8415.

B.R.A.M.M. Ran the training courses to issue certificates for the successful monumental masons who had undertaken and passed the course to meet with the new requirements.

Our Cemetery as most of this area stands on calcareous medium density clay," Clay a malleable substance, Disturbed by digging and returned back whence it came, does create more difficulties to be compacted which aggravates the subsidence problems we witness here and more so in the Cemetery at Market Harborough.

Modern day memorials are a great deal lighter than those erected by our predecessors.

Lawn cemeteries were contrived to assist with access for the burial process, and contract grass cutting. Initially white marble was the choice of the day.

Due to our rather damp climate the very durable granite its choice of colour leads the way today.

But where as marble & stone bonded well, with the concrete foundation slab.

The impervious granite memorial incurred a bonding problem with the porous concrete, wet and frost caused over time a separation of the two, a national problem!

The Wobbly Gravestone Test

City Cemeteries were first on the list due to the larger demand. Well it is our turn now.

H.D.C. Instructed "Memsafe" to reset some 50 approx. old type memorials, these are no longer unstable.

The remaining memorials detected, are of more recent years, these are now staked and strapped to secure them until the upgrading is carried out by the grave owners.

Plots are purchased from H.D.C. on a 100 yr., lease, once a memorial is in place it is the responsibility of the owner to keep it in good order! It is always wise to trim the grass away from the edge of the concrete foundation slab, this action does help the grass cutting as carried out by the service contractors, to minimise contact with your memorial.

Always photograph the headstone on both sides, do note the date for your records!

New memorials can be insured against accidental damage!

When a memorial is upgraded. It may be eligible for insurance purposes. Do ask the Memorial firm for a valuation and get confirmation from his recommended Insurance company, ask for the terms and grounds for a claim.

Do take photographs, dating the finished work, and in the present times, do this on an annual basis.

Alf. Herbert

Member of The Friends of G.B.Cemetery

