

North Lopham Parish Council

Burial Ground Memorial 'Topple Testing' Inspection 27th March 2009

Although there has never been an accident (so far as is known) caused by falling Memorial Stones in North Lopham Burial Ground, an inspection was carried out by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council on March 27th 2009. This date was chosen as it is just before the start of the grass cutting season and it was considered that perhaps the largest risk of injury is to the contractors who could accidentally knock the stones with their equipment.

It is estimated that there are approximately 280 memorial stones in the burial ground. Of these the vast majority (over 95%) were deemed to be of no concern. Many of these are quite recently installed, very low (less than 300 mm high), already laid flat, or very deeply inserted into the ground. In this latter category although slight movement can sometimes be detected when pushed very hard, it was deemed that the chance of toppling was very remote.

However, a total of 9 stones were considered to be in immediate risk of toppling. In all cases these were stones which has been 'cemented' to a base let into the ground but time / frost / earth settlement had caused this joint to come apart. In all cases there were no 'pegs or pins' to keep the parts together and a gentle push was all that was necessary to topple them. In the circumstances it was decided that these stones posed an immediate danger and that they should be laid flat pending further enquiries. Each stone in this category was photographed and a notice put against the stone asking relatives or anyone with an interest to contact the Clerk within 6 weeks. In the meantime, attempts will be made to contact those whom we believe could be relatives of the deceased. The most recent 'date of death' on any of the stones was 1973, the earliest 1892.

Name on Stone	Date of Death	Grave No.	Notes
Eva Cooper	1972	640	
Helen Pratt	1973	651	Relatives identified – steps being taken to repair memorial
George Pratt	1963	650	
George Baker	1936	117	
Jesse Yeats	1930	149	
Ellen Stevens	1967	405	
Robert Hogg	1955	375	
Annie Hogg	1953	372	
Arthur Beales	1892	112	

If relatives wish to have the stone repaired they will be advised to contact a Memorial Mason to have the job done. If no repairs are carried out, the Burial Authority will decide the best course of action – probably burying about the first 15 inches or so of each stone in the ground to make it stable, but leaving it undamaged and available for repair at a later date is so desired.

The next inspection was scheduled for March 2010.