

Fast Facts

Grave robbing was a problem when West Hill was built so the keeper in the lodge had a vicious dog to help protect the graves of those recently buried.

In medieval times travellers stopped to pray for a safe journey or to give thanks for a safe arrival at the churches of St James and St Giles, which are on the major routes out of Winchester.

When a gravedigger at St James was excavating new graves near the west wall, he found skulls with a Government stamp on the head. These were convicts who were hanged and had their bodies used for dissection.

During the French Revolution, up to 1000 French priests took refuge in Winchester and were buried near St James cemetery, an area obliterated when the railway was brought in during the 1840s.

Until an Act was passed in 1823, those who committed suicide were buried in a public highway with a stake driven through them. The Act directed that instead they

could be buried in the churchyard but only in the restricted time period of between 9pm and midnight and without the usual church rites.

St John's is on the Pilgrims Way between Winchester and Canterbury. Nearby is Beggars Lane where the poor used to wait for alms from pilgrims.



St Bartholomew



Angelic sculpture

Please be respectful when visiting the locations mentioned on this trail.

Health & Safety and Disclaimers

Please note that St Petroc's graveyard is situated in a private garden, and as such can only be viewed from the public road.

Some of the sites may present access difficulties to visitors who use wheelchairs, have pushchairs, restricted mobility or who are visually impaired. Please be aware that paths in graveyards and cemeteries are often uneven, and care should be taken when visiting the locations in this leaflet. Care should also be taken when crossing roads. No responsibility will be accepted for injury or accidents related to this trail.

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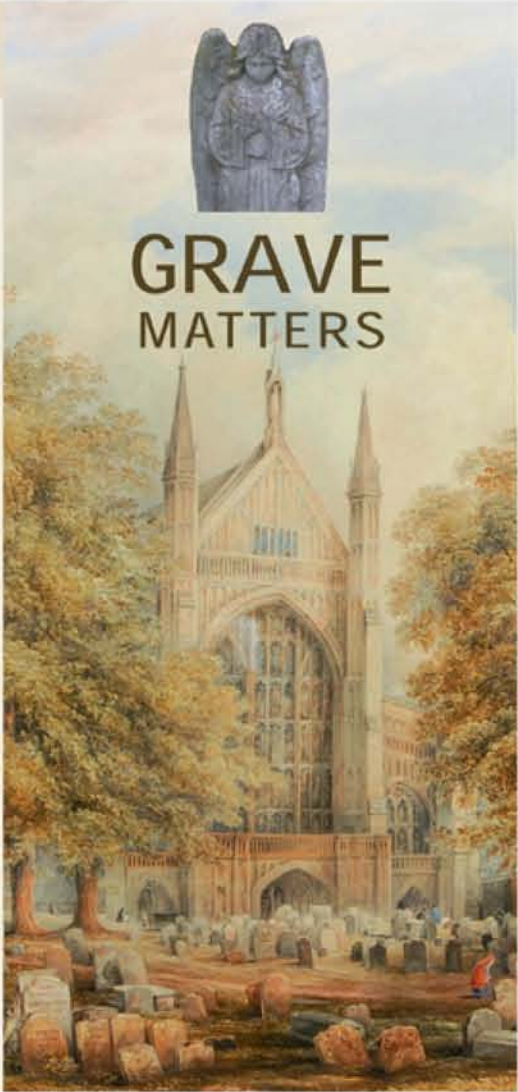
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All the churches and cemeteries and sites featured in this leaflet.

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This Trail is around the graveyards, cemeteries and churches of Winchester to uncover the stories they hold. The trail will take visitors to different, less frequented corners of the city, providing an insight into the city, its inhabitants, history and attitudes to death, memory and memorials.

There is no set route, but it would take approximately three hours to visit all the sites listed.

Places on Route

1. Nunnaminster
2. Cathedral
3. Winchester College
4. St Maurice
5. St Lawrence
6. St Petroc
7. West Hill Cemetery
8. St James Cemetery
9. Plague Monument
10. St Bartholomew
11. Hyde Abbey
12. St John the Baptist
13. St Giles Hill



Sculptured tombstone

Other interesting places to visit:



Celtic cross

St Cross (Admission fee)

Cathedral (Admission fee)
(Jane Austen and Isaac Walton, are buried here.)

City Mill (Admission fee)

City Museum (free)

Interesting people buried in the City

West Hill

Inspector Tanner (location near the railings on the right of the cemetery).

This is probably the grave of Inspector Tanner who gained fame for his arrest of Franz Muller, who murdered Mr Thomas Briggs on board a London train in Hackney in 1864. He was found on the track with serious head injuries, from which he later died. Both his hat and his pocket watch were stolen, but it was the hat which provided the vital clue! In his hurry the murderer had put on Mr Briggs' hat instead of his own, leaving his hat at the scene of the crime. The hat was so unusual in design that it enabled him to be traced, but he had already made his escape to America. Tanner caught a quicker ship and was waiting to arrest him when he arrived. He went on trial at the Old Bailey and was executed in Newgate in November 1864.

Cathedral Green

Thomas Thatcher was a Grenadier who died on 12th May 1764 aged 26 from drinking small beer when hot. People would drink small beer instead of water because it was considered safer. However, it was likely that Thatcher died because the small beer he drank was watered down, and therefore may have contained contaminated water.



Thomas Thatcher's grave

St James

Paul Atkinson (His grave is No 104 behind the mausoleum), born 1655, was a priest who worked in London. He was denounced as a Catholic priest to the authorities by a servant and imprisoned in London but was so successful at converting fellow inmates that he was sent to Hurst Castle in the Solent. He was kept there for the next 30 years until he died in 1729. He was buried at St James with great pomp. He was the last of the so-called 'priests in chains' who were imprisoned for their faith.

Mary Neil (Grave No 381 to the right of the mausoleum, near the wall). She was a black slave, brought back from the West Indies by plantation owners Arthur and Eleanor Neil. She was buried on 14th January 1803 and her 'owners' were buried close by. She was a slave for 30 years, 15 of which she lived in Winchester.

Mary Farquharson (buried in the grave with iron railings near the entrance). Mary Farquharson died in 1829 and her husband Capt Farquharson had the wall and lodge built. Because he was not a Catholic, he was not allowed to be buried with his wife and so chose the closest spot to her in the new Cemetery (West Hill) for his burial. He was buried in 1843 in a huge vault at the extreme top corner. In 1983, a parish priest was moved by the story and wanted to reunite them but the vault had disappeared with road widening!



Victorian and modern gravestones, West Hill



Look out for...

- * Funerary architecture – different styles of gravestones – slabs, chest tombs, triangular, obelisks, celtic style, scrolled, neo-classical.
- * Symbols on the stones, such as urns, roses, passion-flowers, grapes, angels and winged cherubs.
- * Military graves. There are military graves at St Giles, St James and West Hill.
- * Lettering and script – Latin text, Old English, copperplate and classical.
- * Flora and fauna – cemeteries are green oases in the middle of cities and often afford lovely views as well.
- * Finally! Epitaphs – there are many beautiful epitaphs in these cemeteries. Take a moment to read some of them. What would yours be?

Nunnaminster

These coffins were found during excavations, the earliest of which date from the 13th Century. Some are of extremely high quality, being made from a single slab of stone or marble. Note the interesting ways the coffins on display have been cut with riches for the head. The old Nunnaminster was built in 10th century on land King Alfred had granted to his wife, Ealhswith. The original building that housed the community of nuns was a wooden construction, but these ruins are of the replacement stone building.

Cathedral

During the Middle Ages, the Cathedral had a virtual monopoly on burials in the city and suburbs. From the 15th century there were occasional burials at other churches but they had little land for graveyards until the Plague caused massive depopulation in the city. The cover picture by Prosser shows how many graves used to be here. In the 19th century the gravestones were cleared, as in many cities, because graveyards had become overcrowded and unhygienic.

Winchester College

Winchester College was founded in the 14th century by the Bishop of Winchester to educate boys to replace the many educated priests killed by the Plague. Inside the College are chapels, cloisters and tranquil memorial gardens dedicated to the memory of the many former pupils who died in the Crimea, Boer and the First and Second World Wars, amongst others.

St Maurice

Look out for the gravestones in the pavement. These and the tower are all that are left of this medieval parish Church.

St Lawrence

This medieval church was built on the site of William the Conqueror's palace. It never had a graveyard, but there are many interesting gravestones and memorials inside. Note the benefactors board on the right side of the church.

St Petroc

This graveyard garden is all that survives of the medieval church of St Petroc, which was demolished in 1864. The graveyard is now the property of St Lawrence.

West Hill

By the 1830's, the churchyards in Winchester were full, so a commercial company was set up to build West Hill Cemetery with a Chapel for the Church of England and another for dissenters. These were both demolished in the 1930s. The Cemetery was full by 1918 and fell in to disrepair until taken over by the City Council in 1952. Look around you, there is a rich variety of Victorian gravestones and sculptures as well as some interesting epitaphs!

St James

This graveyard is all that remains of the medieval church of St James, which became disused after the plague and disappeared. In the late 16th Century it acquired a new use as a Roman Catholic Cemetery, which was unusual at this time because it was illegal to be a Catholic, and burials therefore, presented a problem to the authorities.

Plague Monument