

MEMORIAL TRAIL – CHESHUNT CEMETERY

1. Start at the gate from Dark Lane and head into the old part of the cemetery. By the Dark Lane boundary wall, you will find the grave of Hannah Nicholas. She was the very first person to be buried in the cemetery, and has the oldest surviving memorial as well. Internment No. 0001 and grave number 01 E, Hannah died in Cheshunt Common on 7 December 1855 at the age of 69.



2. After reading Hannah's inscription, look at the small building to your left. This is the 'Hearse House', of about the same age as Hannah's memorial, where the communal hearse – horse drawn, of course – used to be kept, with doors opening onto Dark Lane.

3. With the hearse house behind you, walk along the red tarmac path. There are many interesting memorials on the area to your left, but you will notice in particular the large red and white one, not far back from the path, in the 14th row down from the hearse house boundary, No. 14EJ/14EK. This belongs to the Rochford family, local nursery owners. This memorial was damaged during the enemy raids of World War II.



4. Another nursery-owning family, the Oylers, own a very beautiful memorial just a little further down the path, and a little further to the left, No.19EQ/19ER. Note the very fine carving of the thorn branches wrapped around the cross – superb workmanship of the highest quality.



5. Go back to the path last walked down, and continue the same way. At the path crossroads, turn right passing the chapel. Turn left at the main cemetery road and walk down towards the Bury Green Road gate. A short way before it though, on your right, is a simple marble memorial with five names on it, Grave Number 35 BH.

The five were all workers at a nursery in Waltham Cross, and were killed in a 'Motor Omnibus' accident at Amwell roundabout, north of Hoddesdon, on a works outing in August 1913. It is difficult to imagine such a tragic accident in those slow moving days, with so few vehicles on the road.



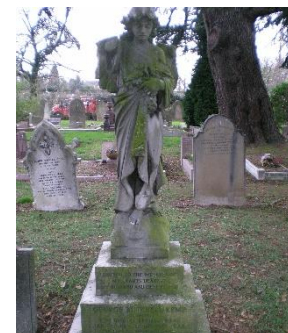
6. Walk back towards Dark Lane either across the grass or, if wet, on the Cemetery road. Opposite the Chapel, on your left, you will find a nice example of a Welsh Slate memorial on grave No. 20 AX. Although only a plain rectangular memorial, note how well it has weathered, and how well the slate holds the very fine lettering.

7. Next, continue towards Dark Lane across the grass and path, and onto the next grass area, moving slightly to the left as you go. About eight rows of graves along, you will find a nice example of a Tomb Chest on grave No. 11 CP/CQ. Please note that the body is interred underneath the ground as normal, not within the chest.



The next 10 memorials to see are towards the top of the grass area that you are currently on.

8. Continue towards Dark Lane past seven rows of graves, to row four. On grave No. 4 BR you will find a beautiful example of a carved angel. Note that this is hand carved, whereas most modern 'carvings' are in fact moulded from marble dust and resin. Examine the fine detail, even though one arm of the statue is broken off.



9. In the next row towards Dark Lane, on grave number 3 BY, you will find an unusual memorial. There are three medallions with inscription fixed to the stone. Each is for one of three brothers who were killed in May, June and September of 1917 while fighting for their country.

For more about Sidney, Ernest and Tom Arnold, see the Borough publication 'Companion to the War Memorials of the Borough of Broxbourne'.



10. One row further up towards Dark Lane, and slightly to the left, have a look at the cross on grave No. 2 CO, and especially at the ornate branch carving forming part of the memorial. There are no joints, so the cross and carving must have all been made out of the same piece of marble.

11. Three rows further towards the Dark Lane boundary you will find a lovely example of a mix of stone – white marble and red Balmoral granite – on grave No. 02 BR / BS. This has nice fluted columns and some impressive engraving.



Please note that row 1 is not the top row of graves. After row 1 comes row 01, then 02, 03, 04, 05 and 06.



12. In the next row back there is an unusual memorial for a well-known family on grave No. 03 BX. The memorial is made of 'pulhamite', and it is to the Pulham family. The firm of James Pulham and Son were eminent landscape gardeners during the 19th and early 20th centuries and worked on several royal palaces. They set up a manufactory for 'pulhamite' (a mixture of Terracotta and cement) garden ornaments at Broxbourne in the late 1840's, and the firm continued in production until the Second World War. Note the picture on the left of how the memorial previously appeared, as the angel has since been removed.

13. A little to the left of the above, on grave No. 03 CJ, there is a nice marble wheeled cross with some good carving on it. This style of memorial was very popular in Scotland and Ireland, and sometimes known as 'Celtic' crosses.



14. In the same row, but a little further to the left, you will see what is probably the tallest and grandest memorial in the whole cemetery. This is across several grave spaces, centred on 03 CV / CW, and is to the Nockold family, who were diamond merchants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The memorial is of a light grey granite, with iron railings and chains.

The very ornately designed memorial stands on top of the family vault – an underground brick chamber. This has steps leading down to it, the steps being in the front of the memorial and covered over with concrete slabs, soil and turf.

To gain access to the vault, the family has to remove the turf, soil and slabs to expose the steps, and then knock down the bricked-up entrance to the vault. The vault consists of a shelved room, where the coffins are placed on the shelves. Afterwards, the vault is bricked up again and sealed.





15. In the row behind the Nockold grave, and just to the right, on grave No. 04 CV there is a good example of a type of memorial that was common during the Victorian era – the broken column – and this is amongst the best that will be seen anywhere.

The broken column memorial was usually dedicated to the father of the family, although occasionally to the mother, representing the support of the family having been taken away. There is another ‘broken column’ memorial not too far away – see if you can find it, and work out what grave number it is.

There are many other memorials well worth looking at in the old part of the cemetery (1855 to 1928) but this brings us to the end of the old cemetery part of the trail.

There is, however, at least one memorial worth a look in the new section of cemetery (1929 onwards).

16. Walk back to the gate from the old cemetery to Dark Lane, and cross from it to the opposite gate, into the new part of the cemetery. Walk along the path immediately to your left, go almost to the end, and on your right you will see a large marble anchor on a cross, set within a larger set of marble kerbs.

This is the grave of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hedworth Meux (pronounced ‘Mews’). Sir Hedworth was born with the surname Lambton on 5 July 1856. At the end of the 19th century, he was captain of one of the largest battleships in the Royal Navy, H.M.S. Powerful. In February 1900, he became a nationally famous figure for his land-based endeavours when he was sent to assist British forces fighting in South Africa during the Boer War. In particular, he played a major role in relieving troops besieged at Ladysmith. Landing six heavy naval cannon, he had his sailors haul them over the mountains, and thus help force the retreat of the besieging forces.

He changed his surname to Meux for his lover, Lady Meux, as a condition for inheriting her fortune. For the remainder of his career, Sir Hedworth was an ‘office admiral’, and spent his time on his land at Theobalds Palace and with his horses. He died on 20 September 1929. Before his death, he had given five acres of ground to Cheshunt Urban District Council to be used as an extension to Cheshunt Cemetery, which was becoming full, and Sir Hedworth is buried in his vault in this area.

While in this case the anchor memorial is appropriate because Sir Hedworth was a sailor, this is certainly not always the case. The anchor has a meaning – like the broken column. To a sailor, the anchor is his last hope, when all else fails. The anchor memorial is meant to symbolise God as our last hope when we die.

