

Glossary / FAQ

Glossary of funeral and cemetery terminology:

Bier: platform or stand on which a corpse or a coffin rests before a burial;

Burial: [a] of a body: burial in a grave or placement in a vault or walled grave or in a mausoleum or catacomb; or

[b] of cremated remains:

by scattering: distribution on the surface of the ground;

by strewing: distribution beneath a layer of turf or directly onto the soil underground;

by burial: placing in a container in a hole in the ground (a grave) or a vault or walled grave below ground;

by placement: placing a container in a columbarium niche or mausoleum or catacomb above ground;

Casket: a container for a corpse or cremated remains which is rectangular rather than tapered;

Catacomb: building or structure above or below ground comprising niches arranged in rows on several storeys into which en-coffined corpses and urns or ashes are deposited and sometimes walled up or enclosed by gates or glass panel;

Catafalque: temporary raised platform on which a body lies in state before and / or during a funeral service;

Cenotaph: a sepulchral monument without remains;

Chapel of rest: where a body is kept prior to a funeral, perhaps for viewing euphemism for a mortuary;

Columbarium: building having a room or rooms with shelves or niches to take urns with ashes either on display or sealed with a plaque. Also a structure above ground comprising niches arranged in rows and on several storeys into which urns are deposited and usually sealed with a plaque.

Crypt: underground cell, chamber for the deposit of en-coffined corpse(s);

Diocese: district / area under the jurisdiction of a bishop;

Eco-coffin: coffin made with concern for the ecology or environment i.e. from cardboard, willow etc;

Exclusive Right of Burial: a right granted by deed by a burial authority to a person or persons for the exclusive rights to bury a body in a piece of ground;

Exhumation: [a] of a corpse or cremated remains: disinterment or removal after deposition;
or
[b] of cremated remains: digging up after burial;

Faculty: a permit issued by the Church of England to allow the introduction of memorials, permit exhumations from consecrated ground in cemeteries or church yards and carry out other developments in a church and churchyard or on consecrated sections of a cemetery;

Garden of Remembrance: lawn or garden where ashes are deposited by scattering, interment or strewing, often with associated memorials;

Grave owner: the person named as the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial;

Headstone: an upright slab carrying an inscription, and often ornamentation, set at the head of a grave;

Interment: burial in the ground;

Inurnment: deposit of an urn or casket containing cremated remains in a columbarium, mausoleum, vault etc or into the ground;

Kerbs or kerbset: strips of stone set to surround a grave and containing a grave garden, chippings, paving or body slab;

Landing stone: a single piece of stone or concrete placed flat over a grave as a foundation upon which a monument is constructed;

Lawn cemetery: a cemetery comprising rows of headstones with mown grass in between, intended to simplify ground maintenance. Memorial objects are strictly limited.

Mausoleum: roofed building with shelves or niches to take en-coffined corpses, usually reserved for a family or group;

Memorial: generic term for a monument to a dead person or persons;

Putlogs: wooden struts placed across the grave on which to rest the coffin prior to committal;

Shoring: wooden planks or equipment used to support the sides of an excavation in order to prevent collapse;

Strewing: the placing of cremated remains beneath the turf;

Urn: container for cremated remains or a decorative feature on a monument;

Vault: an underground chamber for the deposit of corpses or cremated remains;

Walled grave: a grave that is lined with brick, stone, concrete or similar material