

# Graves: how to find where someone is buried

## Background

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Many people researching their family history are eager to find out where their family members are buried. Gravestones can often contain information about the life of the person who is buried there. This can be much more than the date of death. Information about their family members is sometimes given, e.g. "beloved wife of X".

## What records are there and what information will they contain?

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### Burial Registers

To find out which graveyard or cemetery the individual is buried in, you will need to consult the relevant burial register. Most burials were in a churchyard until the late 1700s. After this time civil cemeteries were opened up. The registers rarely specify where in the graveyard the grave is. If a plot number is given, this can be used with a plan to locate the grave.

For more information on church burial registers please see *Research Guide: Parish Registers*.

For more information on civil cemeteries please see *Research Guide: Civil Cemeteries*.

### Graveyard Plans

For some churchyards and cemeteries, we hold plans. These show the layout of the graves. Plot numbers are usually given and sometimes a surname is noted. Plans usually date from when the graveyard was extended and are not always updated. For example, a plan made in 1900 may only show graves that were used before this date; people buried after 1900 may not be shown.

### Memorial and Monumental Inscriptions

These are surveys of the headstones and monuments in a graveyard or church. They usually contain transcripts of the writing on the headstones. Some surveys also include a plan of the graveyard, showing where each grave is. Key series of inscriptions include:

- The Bigland volumes, 1794 - 1873 (available onsite in our Searchroom),
- The Women's Institute series (catalogue reference **D5102**)
- Surveys conducted by the Gloucestershire Family History Society

## How to Find the Records

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Digital images of many of our Church of England parish and burial registers from 1538 up to 1988 can be viewed and searched on the Ancestry website. Please see the *Parish Register Guide* on our website for more information. The *Parish Register Research Guide* also lists the references for monumental inscriptions of the churchyard.

If the individual was a non-conformist, (for example Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Quaker), you will need to use the *Non-Conformist Research Records* guide, available on our website and on site.

For a burial in a civil cemetery please refer to Research Guide: *Civil Cemeteries*

You can search for plans and monumental inscriptions on our online catalogue

<https://catalogue.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>

Please note that we do not hold inscriptions or plans for all graveyards. A good set of monumental inscriptions is held by the [Gloucestershire Family History Society](#)

Plans of a churchyard may still be held by the church. You may wish to contact them directly. Contact details for churches can be found at [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) or

[Contact clergy and churches – Diocese of Gloucester \(anglican.org\)](#)

A website has also been created for those interested in researching graveyards and cemeteries around the Cirencester area. It can be accessed at: [www.sitechsurveying.co.uk/graveyards/](http://www.sitechsurveying.co.uk/graveyards/)