

Recording Monumental Inscriptions

General Rules

In all Monumental Inscription recording the basic rule is SAFETY FIRST. Persons transcribing and recording burial grounds do so AT THEIR OWN RISK.

Be careful when:

- walking across overgrown areas;
- recording unstable or badly leaning stones;
- negotiating any railings.

Never take chances in trying to lift fallen monuments. For example, in trying to lift fallen stones you may not only damage the stone, you may well damage yourself.

Extreme care is needed when a stone is flaking. Even gentle brushing can cause the surface to crumble. Ivy should not be removed without specific permission as its removal may tear away part of the stone. Lichens and mosses should not be excessively cleared because it can ruin the look of a gravestone which some may object to.

Bring along some tools to help: a clipboard for writing on, a light brush, a water spray, a garden trowel for light digging, some secateurs or shears for undergrowth, a kneeling pad, a pair of gloves for thorns and nettles and, obviously, a pen and pencil.

Working on a Society Project

Firstly, please write CLEARLY as someone has to type up these transcripts.

Use the pages given to you as they have all been numbered. Ask for additional pages as necessary. If an "extra" stone is found in your row, please advise the organisers.

Write down in full ALL the inscription that is on the stone as it appears. You may abbreviate frequent phrases such as "In/Loving/Memory/of as "I/L/M/O". Note that line ends, as in the previous example, should be indicated with a "/".

Check the back of the stone or kerb corner for a Mason's name and address and record it. If there is a cast iron grave number plate, please record that too.

Kerbs: Check all sides, inside and outside the rim for any inscription. They may need to be excavated so seek help.

Flower vases: they often have inscriptions, even if it is just "Mum & Dad". Please record as "Flower Vase: Mum & Dad".

If part of the inscription is unreadable, mark with square brackets "[]", putting dots for the number of letters unreadable or "[illegible]", "[line illegible]" or "[verse illegible]".

When not certain of part of an inscription, indicate also with square brackets.

Footstones: record these as, for example, "Footstone: FH 1888". These are often moved away from their original position or placed next to the gravestone.

Be careful with figures:

- 4 and 1 (look for the distance between it and the next figure);
- 9 and); 6 and (; 3 and 5; 8 and 2.

If working in pairs, call back what you have written down to check for mis-hearing

Finally, if in doubt, please ask. Other eyes can help a lot.