

Watts Cemetery Records Project

Report #004 – January 2025

Progress on the project during the past two months has been significant. The approaches, methods and policies previously established and highlighted in the last report #003, have proved invaluable in making such progress.

The in-depth, per section analysis, recording, researching and diagramming of individual interment plots across Sections J, N, O, P and Q is now complete and has been added to the PDF map attached to this report.

Clickable Word files for each plot in sections D, E, F and G are also nearing completion. The overall intention of this aspect being the bringing together of data from all current documentation (including the Excel spreadsheet, Burial Grants, Grave Registers, Notice of Burials, the Red Book of plot allocations, the Brown Book of Burials by date) into individual Word Files for each interment, eventually allowing all existing paper documentation to be archived into a library. However, missing (or conflicting) data is making the creation of this online *Filofax* rather time-consuming.

Sections K, L and M:

These sections are now in the process of being investigated in combination. As previously reported, the 1993 diagram bears only a passing resemblance to what is currently in place and the Plots in Section M seem to be particularly muddled, with a significant disparity between varying sources.

Additionally, section K's plot numbering from 40 to 80 is duplicated for ashes plots and graves in that section (ie there are two K40's, two K41's, two K42's etc – ie one for ashes and one for graves – only some of which have an added 'a' in the numbering to indicate the ashes nature of that plot, or otherwise.

Furthermore, some extra plots have been added to K over the years and many have been assigned an A, B or C to indicate an additional plot alongside a plot with the same number (with, or without the small a to indicate ashes versus grave – which again is not always present). So, K44 is possible, alongside K44A and indeed K44Aa, not to mention K44Ba etc

Due to adding extra graves wherever space could be found, some K graves have been added in the middle of section L. Plot names on the diagram rarely adopt the addition of L and K as an indication to which section they belong. As research continues, further such anomalies across K, L and M are to be expected.

Consequently, it is proposed that the confusions and incongruities be resolved by re-drawing the boundaries, changing sectional allocations where necessary and re-numbering the plot spaces. Work has already started on this, with all new boundaries established and all K ashes split away from K graves and re-numbered.

Remaining Work:

Once sections K, L and M have been fully researched, resolved and plotted and all clickable files established across those and all previous completed sections, it is thought that the project could be said to be virtually 40% complete. The only sections left will be A, B, C and H – which appear to comprise around half of all interments. These, however, will be by far the most challenging parts of the entire estate.

They are the oldest groups of interments, have the most damage and decay to headstones, have experienced much adjustment due to pathing, fencing and tree growth/death, and have been subjected to potentially undocumented change for maybe a hundred years.

As mentioned in previous reports, the only guaranteed source of accurate information are the physical gravestones and ashes plaques - sometimes, not even those can be relied upon. Many interments remain unmarked and these older sections contain a larger than normal proportion of occupants being identified but with little if any indication of where they might be. This lack of accurate data and/or visual proof, will be the biggest challenge of sections A, B, C and H.

The Excel spreadsheet is also being constantly updated with corrections, corroborations and new information as it emerges and any changes to numbering and sectional allocation detailed in such a way as to allow a long term 'look-up' and 'back-reference' capability.

New Path:

Outside the main project, it has been noted that a public thoroughfare seems to have been established from the new sections of P and Q back into the older part of the cemetery, unavoidably involving walking over the graves in section N!

It is proposed that a terracotta-edged pathway be established within section O, curving around the current ashes scattering-area, thereby leading visitors away from the interments in N and onto an established walking route along the Western boundary of the estate. This proposal is now shown on the attached map. It won't necessarily stop people taking the old short cut, but it will indicate the existence of interments - which are not currently that obvious.

Ancestry.com:

As mentioned in the last report, use of the online resource, Ancestry.com, has proved invaluable in filling-in missing data and resolving anomalies, errors, spelling and contradictions. Following agreement from the Clerk, a subscription to this service has now been taken up.

Attachments:

Supplied electronically along with this report is:

- the current datafile (*cemetery – 4 January 2025.vsd*) in Visio format, together with the following images in pdf format:
 - The entire map, showing the completed sections: D,E,F,G,J,N,O,P, Q and half of K
 - An enlarged view of section O (ashes)
 - An enlarged view of section J (graves)

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