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Running out of grave space: a UK problem

Dr Julie Rugg, Cemetery Research Group, University of York

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‘If the public are to continue to have access to affordable, accessible burial in cemeteries fit for the needs of the bereaved, there appears to be no alternative to grave re-use...We are of the opinion that legislation should be introduced allowing burial to take place in re-used graves.’

Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee,
2002.

Reclamation and re-use summary

Process	Legislation	Function	Applicable to	Disturbance of remains allowed?
Reclamation	S9, Greater London (General Powers) Act 1976	Burial authority able to extinguish burial rights	Purchased grave where the last interment was 75 years previously Unconsecrated ground; consecrated ground if faculty secured	No
Reclamation and re-use	S74, London Local Authorities Act 2007	Burial authority able to disturb remains in graves where right had been extinguished	Purchased grave where the last interment was 75 years previously Unconsecrated ground; consecrated ground if faculty secured	Yes
Re-use under faculty jurisdiction	Permitted under s25 Burial Act 1857 AMENDED BY S2 Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2014	Disturbance of remains permitted in consecrated land where body is moved from one consecrated place to another, under faculty AMENDED to allow removal in accordance with a faculty granted by the court.	No time limit on previous burial Consecrated land only, if faculty secured	Yes

Re-use protocol: grave assessment

Assessment	Definition	Number
0	No remains found	51
1	Small fragments of skeletal remains only	36
2	Significant skeletal remains	66
3	Significant skeletal remains and fragments of coffin	28
4	Clearly defined but damaged coffin and significant skeletal remains	15
5	Fully intact coffin found	0
6	Remains not fully decomposed	0

First 196 burials



IN LOVING MEMORY
of
JADE GRIN DEFOE
30th July 1982 - 28th April 2008
Our Daddy
Son, Brother, Partner, Grandson,
Nephew, Cousin & Friend
You were a special person, one in a million
who touched the lives
of those who were yours
and made the difference
to all that we hold dear
Incomparable and unforgettable
Until we meet again
R.I.P.

IN LOVING MEMORY
of
REBECCA "EILEEN" CARR
Née COBHAM
21st July 1944 - 26th June 2008
Our first mother, our mother-in-law,
Sister, auntie & friend
Always remembered, but shall never forget
For those we love don't go away
They live forever in our hearts
Your memory lives on forever in our hearts
So loved, treasured and missed in every way
until we meet again
R.I.P.

In Loving Memory
of
EDNA A. ACHEAMPONG
Died 2nd June 2009
Aged 63 Years
Mum We Miss You
R.I.P.



There may be some argument for the re-use of grave space within existing cemeteries, however re-use whilst a considered possibility would be frustrated by logistical and ethical limitations. The 'lift and deepen' options for re-use has been suspended by the Home Office and re-using single occupancy with expired exclusive rights can be a major gamble as often burial depth records tend to be very inaccurate; many cemeteries have found single depth occupancies recorded as 6 being foot [sic] turn out to be only 3 foot. Experience has also shown that members of the public are a bit particular about using second hand graves.

(2010)