

**FREE REPORT**

***Everything You  
Need to  
Know about  
Headstones and  
Memorials to Make  
A Wise Buying  
Decision.***

**By Jim Pollard  
Pollard Memorials Ltd.**



Choosing a headstone is not something you do very often, so it is important that you know what to look for.  
Read on for sound advice.....

# Headstones and Memorials, what you need to know.

## Memorial (Me-mo'ri-al)

*“That which preserves the memory of something, a written representation of facts.”*



A headstone is so much more than the dictionary definition of a memorial. A headstone marks a person's life, and can become a focus of grief for those left behind. When you lose a loved one, mixed in with all the other feelings you may have is a desire to mark their passing.

A permanent memorial is a tradition that goes back to the beginning of civilisation, a need to commemorate your loved ones in a lasting and personal way. For many people a memorial is a visible link between their departed loved ones and themselves.

Choosing the right memorial isn't as difficult as some might think, provided that you have the right advice.

The rules and regulations differ between Cemeteries and Churchyards, and indeed between individual Local Authorities.

The following pages will guide you through what you need to know when considering buying a memorial.

**Should anything be unclear, or you wish to discuss these issues, please call Pollard Memorials for friendly advice on: 01676 534618**

# Memorials for Cemeteries

## Advice is all important for Cemeteries

Cemeteries are subject to regulations. Unfortunately, you can't just have anything you like. There are usually restrictions on size, on materials and on the wording that you want to put on the stone.

Your stonemason should be happy to advise you on the sizes and restrictions that apply to your Local Authority and to lead you through the forms which will need to be filled in, and to deal with the authority on your behalf.

There are also safety requirements that your mason has to adhere to regarding the safe placing of memorials. Masons must pass exams, and have a Fixer Licence in order to work in cemeteries.

Your mason should do all the paperwork for you, and submit it to the Authority for approval. The Cemetery will then reply giving permission, providing that all the requirements have been met, and that the forms have been signed by the **Grave Owner**.

The Grave Owner is the person whose name the **Grave Deeds** are in. This will usually be a family member who organized the funeral rather than the Funeral Directors themselves.

Most cemeteries allow any natural stone, such as

**Granite**, (*in a variety of colours including Black, Dark Grey, Light Grey, Blue, Pink, Red, Green*)

**Marble** (*White or Grey*)

**Sandstone**, (*Light Brown*)

**Limestone** (*usually Cream or sometimes Blue*)

Letters have a variety of styles (called **fonts**) and can be finished in many colours. The most popular are Silver, Gold, Black, White, Light Grey and Dark Grey.

There are now Paint Systems such as RS Colorbond which give a minimum 10 Year Guarantee on paint.

## ***Stones suitable for Cemeteries***

As well as the materials described in the ‘Stone suitable for Churchyards’ page (further on), Cemeteries also allow:

### **Granite**

Granite comes in many colours, from many areas of the world. India, Africa, Scandinavia, America and China to name a few, and is a very durable material. It can be carved and shaped into traditional designs, or into more contemporary structures. Some colours are more suited to some types of ornamentation.

### **Marble.**

Marble is usually associated with Italy, and has been a fine material for carving for centuries. However in the last decade or two it has been susceptible to acid rain, and if you look in your local cemetery you will see lots of very dirty marble memorials. However it can still be a good choice if it is cleaned once or twice a year. You will see some memorials in marble that have been maintained by the family, and are still looking as good as new.

### **Ornamentation**

Ornaments can be things like Church Windows, or Crosses, but these days for many people who do not require a religious symbol there are hundreds of different ornaments that help to express a persons interests in life.

From Fishermen to Vintage Cars, Golfers to Cats and Dogs or Military Badges, your mason should be able to show a large variety of subjects that will suit your needs. With modern technology, and scanners, your mason should be able to work with something you may bring along, providing that the quality you provide is good enough.

Very fine etchings are best suited to darker stones, like Black or Dark Grey, and deep carvings often suit lighter granites better.

Granite tends to be no, or very low maintenance.

## **Free Print-out Service**

A **free print-out service** is available in some stonemasons, which allows you to see how the setting out of the memorial will look. If the first time you see the setting out on the memorial you have ordered is in the cemetery, it will be too late if you don't like it!

Your stonemason should design the memorial with you, explaining in layman's terms (or technical terms if you're technically minded) the properties of the materials, finishes and ornamentation. You can choose the style, size and position of letters, or leave it to them if you're unsure, and have the final say on how the memorial will look. They should not start work until you have agreed the lay-out of the stone. Print-outs are usually free, but a minority of masons do charge.

## **Photoplaques**

Photos of your loved ones can be set onto a ceramic plaque, which is then attached to the stone.

A good quality photograph is required, but the image can be manipulated to take out backgrounds, or other people who you do not wish to appear on the plaque.

Photoplaque manufactures now give very long guarantees that the plaque will not fade (which used to be a problem years ago).

## **Quotations**

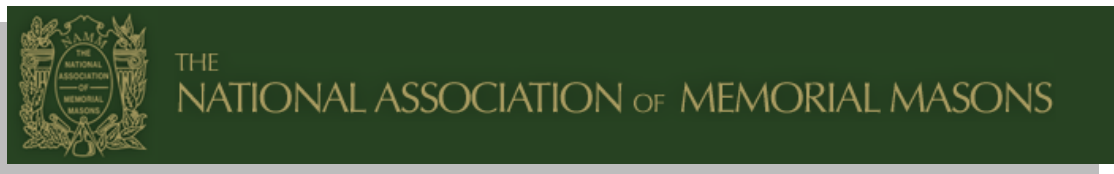
Many stonemasons include some lettering in their prices, but often you have to pay extra if you go over this quota. Prices given should include V.A.T and indicate if a Cemetery or Church Fee is payable

All sizes should be given if you have a quote. A good stonemason should have a showroom or show yard where you can see a variety of sizes and materials, and get a better idea of what you are being quoted for.

Stonemasons often require a deposit before beginning work. You should find out how much this will be, when and in what form it is payable (cheque, credit card, cash) before you place an order.

## **National Association of Memorial Masons**

Although it is not necessary for a stonemason to be a member of the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMMM), masons who are members have to adhere to strict guidelines on the quality of their memorials, and their business ethics, and are therefore regulated. If you have a dispute, and you and your mason cannot resolve it, you can approach the Association to mediate.



## **BRAMM**

The British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons is as it suggests a register of memorial masons who are registered to work in cemeteries and churchyards in the UK



***Look out for these logos when you select a memorial mason***

# Memorials for Churchyards

Memorials in Churchyards are subject to more regulation than in Cemeteries.

Churchyards usually allow Sandstone or Limestone, which have a matt finish, rather than granite which has a high polish.

Sandstone like Yorkstone is a buff colour, fine-grained stone with a warm look, and even texture, liked by churchyards. Other stones include Slate (Blue or Green), Portland (Cream), Serena (Blue-Grey), Nabresina (Cream, sometimes with small orange markings) and Celtic Limestone (Blue, but lightens with age). White marble is generally not allowed in churchyards, nor is highly polished granite.

A common misconception is that the Vicar is the person who approves a memorial, but in fact the Vicar can only permit a straight-forward stone that fits within the Diocesan regulations. More elaborate stones need to go to Faculty, which can be a lengthy and expensive exercise, with no guarantee of success. Ornamentation can be very restricted in Churchyards.

Don't assume that because there are Black or Dark Grey Headstones in the Churchyard already that they are still allowed now. The regulations change often, and a year can make a big difference.

Inscriptions need to be chosen with care, to be in keeping with the churchyard, and consistent with the Churches' faith, but should not prove to be difficult to compile. With good advice it should be easy to create an inscription that is acceptable to all concerned.

Some Diocese require that the inscription include a year span, for instance 1935 – 2015, rather than Died 2015 Aged 80.

Often Gold or Silver lettering is not allowed, with White or Black being acceptable.

Your stonemason should advise you, and deal with all the paperwork involved in getting the memorial approved, and liaise with the Vicar.

A brochure which has a section specifically for churchyards will help you to see what should be allowed, and not choose a memorial which is unsuitable.

If you wish to know the regulations for a specific churchyard, your stonemason should be able to advise you.

## **Stones suitable for Churchyards**

### **York Stone**

York Stone is a beautiful sandstone from Yorkshire, and varies in colour between brown, beige and cream, and has a fine grained texture which works well and cuts cleanly.

### **Nabresina**

Nabresina has been quarried in Trieste since Roman times. Masons and sculptors have valued its fine qualities as a stone, which is pleasing to work with. It is a gentle cream colour, sometimes with orange markings.

### **Portland Stone**

Portland stone is a beautiful buff/cream coloured stone from Portland in Dorset. It blends well with many church buildings and their burial grounds. In some areas it is not as long lasting as other stones.

### **Serena stone**

Serena stone is a bluish sandstone which was chosen to build many of the fine buildings in Florence. It is hard wearing and both carvings and lettering remain clear and crisp for decades.

### **Celtic Limestone**

An Irish limestone which is darkish blue in colour. Light grey lettering shows up well on this, but the stone itself does lighten with age



## **Purbeck Stone**

Purbeck stone is from the south coast of England, and is a warm, dark buff colour. It has many shells and fossils, and lines produced by seams when the sediment was formed, and this makes it an 'interesting' stone, but can be difficult to get hold of at certain times of the year.

## **Headstone, Cremation Stone or Kerb ?**

There are often different areas in Cemeteries and Churchyards where specific styles of stones are allowed.

**Lawn Sections** are for headstones only, (with the possible exception of a 'mini kerb', which is restricted in size, though this is not allowed everywhere).

**Cremation sections** tend to have smaller stones, or flat tablets, and

**Kerb or 'Traditional' Sections** allow for full surrounds.

Occasionally all of these appear on one section, but some cemeteries have different sections for each.

Generally Full Kerb surrounds will not be allowed on lawn sections, but headstones with no surround will be allowed on Kerb sections.

## **Fixing of Memorials**

Safety has become a major issue with both Cemeteries and Churchyards after a number of incidents with memorials being pushed or pulled over.

The industry has undergone an overhaul to ensure that masons are competent to erect memorials safely.

A scheme called BRAMM was established, in which Memorial Masons are tested on their competence, and entered onto a register if they pass the exams

Masons who are not on the BRAMM or NAMM register, and therefore not licenced, are not able to work in Cemeteries or Churchyards.

Masons also have to have a Public Liability Insurance of £10,000,000 in case of accidents.

Meanwhile masons are required to erect memorials to the National Association 'Code of Working Practice' which stipulates the size of dowel, and size of hole, and size of foundation that must be used to ensure a memorial's safety.

A '**Ground Anchor**' must also be used. This is a way of securing the memorial to it's foundation so that the stone cannot be pulled or pushed over.

You may see in the Cemeteries that some older stones have been cordoned off, or laid flat. This is because the Cemetery has tested the stone and found it to be unsafe, and not properly secured to it's foundations. A ground anchor will ensure that this no longer happens.

Your Local Authority will try to contact you if you have an old stone that needs to be rectified, and you will have to bear the cost.

Headstones today, fitted with a ground anchor will not fail these tests in future. So there is greater peace of mind for you.

There are several types of Ground Anchor available, (all of which must have been tested by the National Association, and passed as safe).



Methods of Safely Fixing Memorials to ensure that they cannot come loose, or be pushed over

Due to new Safety Requirements, All memorials must now be fixed using a "mechanical fixing method" to ensure that memorials cannot be pushed or pulled over.

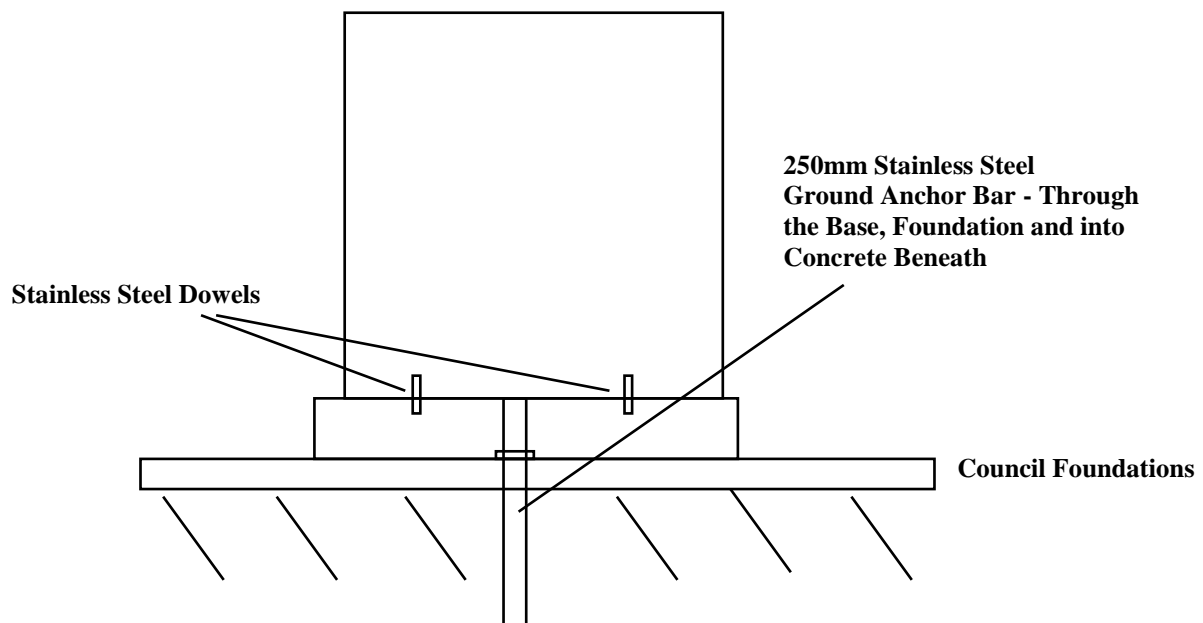
Councils will now be testing every memorial in their Cemeteries, and Churchyards, to a pressure of 35kg **every five years**, to ensure that the memorials have not become unstable. (Memorials which fail are the responsibility of the grave owner, and must be rectified!)

Pollard's, in association with the National Association of Memorials Masons (NAMM) guidelines, guarantee that memorials fixed by us to the specifications below will withstand these tests and will not be pulled or pushed over. **All Memorials from Pollard's will be fixed to these specifications.**

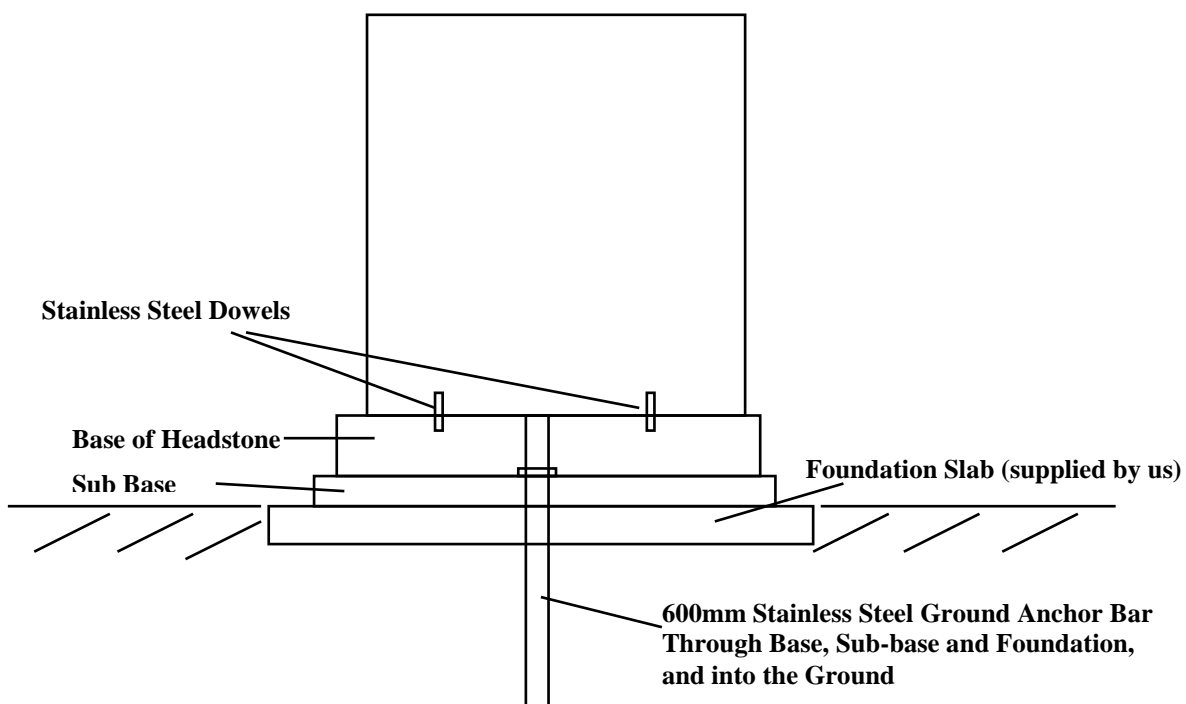
*This is Peace of Mind for you and your family.*

**Pollard's for *Peace of Mind.***

**Onto Grave with Council Foundation (foundation already exists)**



**Onto Grave which presently has no foundation**



## Cleaning of Memorials

**Polished Granite** is the easiest material to maintain, and really only requires a wipe over with a cloth or sponge to keep as good as new.

**Part Polished Granite**, where the face of the memorial is polished but the rest is honed or sandblasted, is the same as above on the polished face, but may need a brush and water to clean the other sides which may go green over time. This green only sits on the surface and doesn't harm the stone.

**Rustic or Pitched Granite**, where the granite is rough like a boulder needs to be cleaned with a scrubbing brush and water when it becomes green. Again the green only sits on the surface, but because of the roughness of the stone it requires a little more effort to remove.

**White Marble** is the most difficult material to maintain. Over recent years Acid Rain is eroding the material making the surface rough, and making the stone much more susceptible to dirt. Although Marble can be professionally cleaned, the cleaning doesn't last for more than a few years and the problem recurs. If a marble memorial is cleaned on a regular basis from new than it will obviously stay clean for years, but as soon as the regular cleaning stops, the erosion can become a problem



**Sandstone and Limestone memorials** sit between granite and marble in ease of cleaning. Although they can become dirty over time, Limestone memorials have a closer grain and don't erode as quickly as marble. They tend to stay cleaner for longer, and don't suffer erosion in the same way. **Sandstone memorials** have a coarser grain than limestone, and can become dirtier more quickly, although they clean much more readily than marble. Again, if cleaned regularly, they stay looking good for a long time

## *Some Suggested Inscriptions*

In Loving Memory of  
**MARGARET JOHNSON**  
 Who Died 5th February 2003  
 Aged 72 Years  
 Beloved Wife of  
**THOMAS**

Treasured Memories of  
 A Loved and Loving Husband,  
 Dad and Grandad  
**DAVID FLEMING**  
 Born 5th January 1930  
 Died 29th March 2002

IN MEMORY OF  
**JOHN D. SMITH**  
 1952 - 2000  
*AT REST*

In Ever Loving Memory  
 of  
 A Dear Husband and Father  
**JOHN ALBERT JONES**  
 Who Fell Asleep  
 20th January 2005  
 Aged 79 Years

## *Alternatives*

Sacred to the memory of  
 In Remembrance of  
 In Affectionate Memory of  
 With Love We Remember

Gone from our home  
 But not from our hearts

Always Remembered  
 In God's Keeping  
 Forever in our thoughts  
 To live in the hearts of those we love  
 is not to die  
 Only goodnight beloved, not farewell  
 Peace Perfect Peace

His Life a Beautiful Memory  
 His Absence a Silent Grief

Resting in the Lord  
 At Rest  
 Rest in Peace  
 Loves last gift remembrance

Who Died  
 Who Passed Away  
 Who Entered into Rest  
 Who Departed This Life

Resting where no shadows fall

A tiny flower lent not given  
 To bud on Earth and bloom in Heaven

Reunited  
 Until the day dawns  
 To wake again in Heaven  
 Grant him Thy eternal rest  
 Peace after pain  
 Lord-Hear my prayer  
 Thy will be done  
 Rest after weariness  
 R.I.P  
 Safe in the arms of Jesus  
 Gone From Us But Not Forgotten

Gone is the face we loved so dear,  
 Silent the voice we love to hear

## **Checklist.**

### **Questions to ask yourself**

1. What Stone will suit me best?
2. What colour of Stone?
3. What inscription?
4. What colour of letters?
5. Do I want an ornament? If so what?
6. Do I want a flower container? If so where?
7. Am I the Grave Owner? If not who is?

### **Questions to ask your mason**

1. How much is the Cost?
2. Is this the Total Cost? – Does it include the Lettering, V.A.T, Fees?
3. How long will it take to place my memorial?
4. Do you use a ground anchor?
5. Do I have to pay a deposit?
6. When do I pay the balance?
7. What method of payment do you take? Cheque, Credit Cards, Cash?
8. What guarantees do I have?
9. If you are unsure about any of the above, your mason should be pleased to help you to find the answers.

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**For a Free Brochure go to :  
[www.pollardmemorials.co.uk](http://www.pollardmemorials.co.uk)**



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