

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

WOODBURY PARK CEMETERY

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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**WOODBURY PARK CEMETERY**

Name:	WOODBURY PARK CEMETERY
County:	Kent
District:	Tunbridge Wells (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.138733 Longitude: 0.26412661 National Grid Reference: TQ 58491 40155 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001665 Date first listed: 28-Mar-2003

## Details

A municipal cemetery laid out by a board set up by Holy Trinity Church, Tunbridge Wells, and consecrated in 1849.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The town of Tunbridge Wells did not have a parish church until 1829, when the church of Holy Trinity was completed. The issue of a cemetery was raised at this date but burials initially took place in the new churchyard. Within twenty years it was apparent that the available space would run out and a site for a new cemetery was found. The site chosen was at Woodbury Park, on the northern edge of the town. The cemetery (then known as Trinity Cemetery) was laid out and planted, and was consecrated in 1849.

The cemetery was described by William Bracket in his *Descriptive Illustrated Hand Guide* (1863): 'This resting-place is beautifully laid out as a mortuary garden. Shrubs, trees, flowers, evergreens, moss-covered graves, and sculptured tombs, impart to it a pleasing aspect.

Due to an unanticipated expansion in the population of Tunbridge Wells, the size of the cemetery proved inadequate. As it was not possible to extend the existing cemetery, a new one (Tunbridge Wells Cemetery) was laid out in 1873, on a much larger site that was then in open countryside.

Interments in existing family plots continued in Woodbury Park Cemetery into the C20, with the last burial in 1934. The cemetery is now (2003) managed by the Borough Council as a public open space.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Woodbury Park Cemetery, c 1.2ha, is located c 0.5km north of Tunbridge Wells town centre, in the county of Kent. It is bounded to the west by residential housing, with a bus depot beyond, to the south by housing, to the north-east by housing and a builders' yard, and to the south-east by undeveloped land with housing beyond. The cemetery is bounded by mid-C19 stone walls along the west and south sides, and by a wire fence to the south-east and north-east. The cemetery is laid out on sloping ground with good views over the site from the high, terraced ground along the west side. From the terrace, the ground falls steeply down to the centre of the cemetery, from where it falls gradually to the east.

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**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The cemetery is entered from Woodbury Park Road at a single, mid-C19 entrance in the north-west corner. A drive leads through a mid C19 gateway, with wrought-iron gates set within simple stone piers. The drive sweeps around to the south-east, with a mid-C19 single-storey lodge immediately inside the entrance to the north.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** A single-storey stone chapel stands c 10m to the east of the entrance, across an area of hard-standing.

**OTHER LAND** From the chapel, a terrace walk runs south along the full length of the west side of the cemetery, with graves on a raised bank between the path and the boundary wall. To the east of the terrace the ground falls steeply, with views over the collection of mid to late C19 tombs and monuments, scattered amongst mature and semi-mature trees and shrubs. A mown grass path leads from the main terrace walk, c 50m south of the lodge, and descends down to a granite drinking fountain, which is the focal point of views towards the centre of the cemetery. The fountain is inscribed: 'In Loving Memory of Lieut Gen Molyneux Williams K.H. Died May 10th 1871. Erected by his widow.'

The terrace walk continues for a further c 100m and then curves to the east to descend the slope and loop around the southern end of the cemetery. Near the southern end of the terrace, c 150m south-south-west of the lodge, is the memorial to Jacob Bell, founder of the Pharmaceutical Society. The memorial is situated on raised ground amongst other mid-C19 tombs; it was restored in 1959 by the Pharmaceutical Society on the centenary of Bell's death.

The walk continues as a mown grass path which leads north back to the fountain at the centre of the site, and from there in a further loop around the east side of the site, with three short paths leading from it and joining at the centre of the loop. The paths follow the mid-C19 layout and lead through fine mature trees including *Chamaecyparis pisifera* and *Chamaecyparis lawsonia*, *Cupressus* sp, Scots pine, ilex oak, holly, an Atlantic cedar, and mid to late-C19 yew. From the northern end of the cemetery there are views up to the chapel, which stands on a rocky outcrop.

Other tombs and memorials include those to Henry Thomas Austen (1771-1850), brother of Jane Austen, and a chest tomb to ten members of the Willicombe family, including William Willicombe, who continued Decimus Burton's development of the Caverley Estate, Tunbridge Wells.

#### REFERENCES

Bracket W, *Descriptive Illustrated Hand Guide* (1863) *Bygone Kent* 10, no 1 (1989), 3-9

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1867 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1873

Archival items Beavis I C, *Woodbury Park Cemetery, 2001* (MS Notes, Museum of Tunbridge Wells) *Tree Survey, 1997-2002* (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)

Additional information from Mr and Mrs Way, 2003.

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION** Woodbury Park Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* An early example (1849) of a garden cemetery for the local Anglican congregation. \* The design is based on an informal and imaginative layout of paths in Picturesque style set on an undulating site, which survives essentially intact, together with much C19 planting. \* A variety of social and artistic historical interest is expressed in a notable collection of monuments.

Description written: February 2003 Register Inspector: CB Edited: December 2009

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.