

## UNDERCLIFFE CEMETERY

Undercliffe Cemetery is a 26 acre site high on a hillside above Bradford. It was opened in 1854 by the Bradford Cemetery Company and for many years was tended like a formal park with lawns, flower beds and shrubberies. Victorians understood the recreational potential of cemeteries, as did Undercliffe's founders. "They desire," said the first handbook of rules and charges, "to throw the cemetery open to the public as much as possible. So long as propriety of behaviour is observed, none will be excluded from the grounds who desire to avail themselves thereof, either as a place of relaxation or for contemplative retirement".

Many persons instrumental in the Victorian growth of the city, local families, entrepreneurs, the professions and traders are buried in the cemetery. William Mawson, the eminent Bradford architect now rests beneath a large decorative obelisk depicting his portrait on a bronze plate. In remembrance of William Andrews, another notable Victorian architect, there is a stone decorated with a classical Greek pattern band.

Symbolism is considered important within the cemetery with such items as angels, and ladies in arches common with other Victorian cemeteries. However some monuments and tombs are held to be fine examples of Victorian funerary art and craft and 6 are included in the statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

After the original Cemetery Company went into liquidation in 1975, the cemetery became very neglected and overgrown. However not until 1984 did the site become a Conservation Area, with the intention of protecting its historic interest and restoring it to its former glory. The designation also indicated the Council's confirmation that the cemetery makes a heritage contribution to the district, as well as to local residents, grave holders and the deceased's families. The designation was also a method of gaining access to Central Government funding and other conservation funds. In addition protection is afforded to the boundary walls, although work on monuments and graves remains outside listed building control.

The cemetery has been restored in several respects. In some the original layout has been enhanced such as in the 'historic core'; elsewhere landscaping has been carried out to treat the sites of demolished cemetery buildings. All the original cemetery buildings were lost before the designation of the Conservation Area. The present lodge building was reassembled at Undercliffe having formally stood at 'Birchlands' on Rooley Lane (now demolished). Two car parks have been laid out within the cemetery on cleared land.

The Conservation Area also contains Westfield Crescent and as such the normal policies to control new development and alterations to prevent the encroachment of urban development apply. The designation of the Conservation Area also controls the felling of tree, an element of particular importance in this Conservation area, since the woodland adds much to the character of the area.