



Burials and Interments of Ashes at St Mary's Churchyard, Dunblane: Some Frequently Asked Questions

St Mary's Dunblane is one of only a handful of Scottish Episcopal churches which has a churchyard still in use for burials. An area has been set aside behind the church for the interment of ashes after cremation. Note that the term 'burial' is used below to refer to both burials and the interments of ashes.

1. Who can be buried in the churchyard at St Mary's?

Any member of the Scottish Episcopal Church can ask to be buried in St Mary's churchyard, but as space is limited, the custom is that only those with a direct connection with the church or who have family already buried in the churchyard are granted permission. It is the Rector and Vestry together who decide who can be buried in the churchyard. (The Vestry is a group of trustees appointed by members of the congregation to oversee the running of the church.) The first contact when enquiring about a burial is the Rector.

2. How can I reserve a lair?

It is possible to reserve a lair for either a single burial or for use by a couple or family. 'Reserving a lair' means reserving the right to be buried within a particular plot. (The land in the churchyard remains in the ownership of St Mary's Church). It is the Rector and Vestry together who give permission for the reservation of a lair. Preference may be expressed for the location of the grave but it is the Rector and Vestry have the final say about this. There is no charge for making a reservation, but a donation to St Mary's Church would be appreciated. The first contact when enquiring about reserving a lair is the Rector.

3. How do I go about having a funeral or memorial service at St Mary's?

The first step is to contact the Rector directly or through an undertaker. There is no charge for carrying out a funeral or memorial service, but a collection for St Mary's Church or a donation would be appreciated. If you are having a problem funding the cost of a funeral, please let the Rector know as help may be available.

4. What is involved in the burial of ashes at St Mary's?

Ashes may be buried in the area set aside for the interment of ashes behind the church or in a family plot elsewhere in the graveyard. The first step is to contact the Rector directly or through an undertaker. The church does not undertake the work of preparing the plot or filling it in after the burial but the Rector can give advice on who you can contact. Ashes may be poured into the grave or buried in a suitable casket, but the scattering of ashes is not permitted. There is no charge for carrying out an interment of ashes, but a donation to St Mary's Church would be appreciated.

5. *How do I go about putting a memorial on a grave?*

The first step is to contact the Vestry Secretary to obtain permission to erect or lay a stone in the burial ground. Work to erect a monument can only be undertaken by a Council registered Monumental Mason. You will be asked to give information regarding the intended positioning of the stone, the material, size, colour and style of the stone, the direction in which the lettering is facing, the wording, the style and colour of the lettering, for approval by the Vestry. The only type of memorial allowed in the area set aside for interment of ashes is a 455 mm² stone tablet laid flat in the grass.

6. *Who is responsible for the maintenance of a memorial in the burial ground?*

After the memorial is erected it remains your property and you are responsible for it. The Vestry Secretary will ask for the name and contact details of a 'lair holder' to be recorded by St Mary's Church in case of future need. For example, if a stone becomes unsafe the Vestry will approach the lair holder or his/her descendants to arrange for it to be secured. Vestry encourages lair holders to arrange periodic maintenance of memorials, by a qualified monumental mason if possible.

7. *What can be placed on a grave?*

Flowers or wreaths may be left on a grave but they will be removed as they wither. Other mementos such as toys or windmills are not generally allowed but please contact the Vestry Secretary to seek permission for a specific permanent memento. The permission of the Vestry is also required for the planting of bulbs or small bushes on the grave.

8. *Who looks after the burial ground?*

The congregation of St Mary's Church is responsible for the upkeep of the burial ground, paying for the regular cutting of grass and doing other work themselves. As a number of graves in the churchyard date back to mid-nineteenth century, the church has been undertaking a restoration programme over the last few years and has, through the generosity of donors, been able to make most headstones safe. This work will need to continue as stones become loose over time and their owners cannot be traced. All donations received for the reservation of lairs, funerals, burials and interments are invested in the continuing upkeep of the church including the churchyard. Regular donations by families whose loved ones are buried at St Mary's would be welcomed. Please contact the Treasurer who will send you a Gift Aid form if applicable.

9. *How can I obtain information about individuals buried at St Mary's?*

The church keeps a register of the names of everyone buried in the graveyard and the location of all the graves. Eventually it will be accessible on-line but in the meantime, please contact the Vestry Secretary if you need assistance.

Contacts

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