

PUBLIC GRAVE

Another type of common grave. The grave was filled up completely after each internment, so that the deepest burial involved most work and cost the largest amount (14 shillings during the nineteenth century).

This type was still known as a 'public grave' in 1921.

Headstones were sometimes added by families sometime after the internment.



The Common Burial Grounds of Flaybrick (Birkenhead) and Greenock Cemeteries
(Note that Flaybrick's burials include two Commonwealth War Graves)

PRIVATE GRAVE

A plot of ground purchased by a person who then had the burial rights to the grave(s) dug in it, confirmed by a parchment certificate, a 'grave paper', or in Scotland a Lair Certificate. The Burial Grounds Authorities kept a duplicate.

Separate fees would be paid for the plot, for the making of the grave (sometimes as a brick-lined vault), for each burial in it, and for the right to erect a headstone or other monument.

Usually there is no time limit on the right of the owner or his family to the grave; they could expect to lie there for all time.

Some graves were well cared for, usually by the relatives of those buried in them. Other families paid a retainer to ensure that the cemetery authority would tend the grave for evermore; this was called a 'perpetuity', but these agreements are now, frequently, no longer honoured.



A private grave in Rutherglen Cemetery