

# BURIALS in the Churchyard of the Parish Church:

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a partial analysis of available data on numbers of burials.

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## ANALYSIS of BURIAL REGISTERS

The three books record a total of 2330 burials, starting in Feb. 1845. Evidently, however, not quite all the entries relate to interments in this churchyard; for example mention is made of 25 burials in Farnham Cemetery, Badshot Lea Cemetery and one or two other places. More important still is the Upper Hale Cemetery, opened Nov. 1872; Vicar Mertens (May 1941 - Dec. 1944) is the only one to record that an entry corresponds to burial there - he added information on burial-place for every entry; he shows 99 of his 132 burials as being there. He may have been exceptional; certainly Vicar Sellors (1967 - 1983) did not record burials which took place at Upper Hale in this Register; and this practice continues.

We may make two simple assumptions:

- (a) Merten's practice was standard, from Nov.1872 through to Dec. 1967, and the proportions between the burial grounds remained the same;
- or (b) Merten's practice was exceptional, all other burials being in the churchyard.

In the total absence of other data, we make a third assumption:

- (c) the 1386 burials recorded before Nov.1872 took place in the churchyard.

On assumptions (a) and (c) we find an estimated 1648 burials in the churchyard, 639 at Upper Hale, and 43 elsewhere.

On assumptions (b) and (c) we find an estimated 2206 burials in the churchyard, 99 at Upper Hale, and 25 elsewhere.

## KNOWN BURIALS AND SITES ON THE GROUND

A survey of the churchyard in 1974 showed 269 burial sites having legible inscriptions, recording 501 names; and 25 others, which might (pro rata) account for a further 47 names.

Since 1974 the records show 56 further names; of which 12 are interments (including ashes) on existing sites; adding some 44 new sites. Thus on about 338 sites there appear to be about 604 interments. This may be a slight overestimate, due to the practice of occasionally adding an 'in memorium' name on a gravestone when the deceased was not buried there.

## DISCREPANCY

Our best estimate of the number of burials in the churchyard, from the Registers, thus lies between 1650 and 2200 approximately; but we are not able to identify the sites of more than about 600. Therefore there are between 1050 and 1600 uncharted burials.

The first four identifiable graves are dated between 1849 and 1855, by which time about 300 burials had been recorded; the Farnham cemetery was not opened until 1856. Initially, 37% of burials were of persons from "Workhouse ", "Union" or "Pesthouse", the last such entry being in 1871 and the total being approx. 300. Many others were from known impoverished areas. Doubtless these were simply unmarked interments even at the time; the number of burials per year is dramatically high between 1845 and 1872, when 1386 of the total 2330 occurred.

Probably the only clue to the location of the 'missing' sites is that they will be in areas avoided by gravediggers of a slightly later era, and therefore where there are now open spaces with grass or trees. This is however no more than speculation.