

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

Dundee City Archives - Research Guide 01

Background

Before the 16th century most burials in Dundee would have taken place at St Clement's (where the City Square is now) and St Mary's Churchyards. In 1564, to ease overcrowding, Queen Mary granted a parcel of land to Dundee for the use as a burial ground. This became known as the Howff and was the main burial ground in the City. As the city grew the churches of St Andrew's and St Peter's opened burial grounds. The Howff became overcrowded itself and the New Howff was opened in 1836. Burials in pre-purchased or family plots still took place at the old Howff. There were other small burial grounds on the outskirts of the city—including Logie in Lochee and Roodyards on the Broughty Ferry Road. The Western Cemetery was opened as a private burial ground in 1845. In 1870 the burial grounds at Logie, Roodyards, the New Howff, St Peter's and St Andrews were all closed. The Council opened the Eastern Necropolis in 1863 and the Western Necropolis, now known as the Balgay cemetery, in 1871. A new cemetery was opened in 1989 at Birkhill.

Please note that Broughty Ferry also had burial grounds which are not listed in this guide.

Some records have been indexed by the Friends of Dundee City Archives and are available online.

What type of records are there?

Registers of Burials or Internments

These are the most useful records. The registers record the people who were buried, usually including date of burial, age at death, address, occupation, cost of burial. Sometimes they include cause of death and next of kin.

Register of Lairs

These record the purchase of a lair. They will contain information about the individual who bought the lair, when and how much they bought it for. Their occupation and address may also be included. The register may also note who the lair was bought for. In most cases this will be for the purchaser and their family. It is important to note that not all lairs were used by the purchaser. There could have been a large gap between purchase and use. These registers will not tell you which individuals were buried in each lair

Sales of Ground/Certificates of Purchase

Will contain much the same information as a register of lairs. Usually there is one certificate per page.

Monumental Inscriptions

These are surveys carried out to note down the inscriptions on gravestones. Therefore they will only give the information shown and only contain information on graves where a headstone existed at the time. This can be useful if the stone has faded over time or has been damaged.

Plans

Show the location of gravestones or plots. Can be used with registers or monumental inscriptions to locate a burial. These rarely survive or may have been created much later after the burials took place.

Records Available at Dundee City Archives

The Howff (1564-1854)

Registers of Burials	1772-1854	Indexed by FDCA
Register & Plan of Tombstones	1832	Dundee City Archives
Monumental Inscriptions*	C.1984	Dundee City Archives*

St Andrew's Churchyard (1774-1870) - some burials may have taken place after 1870

Register of Burials	1794-1953	Dundee City Archives
Monumental Inscriptions*	C.1984	Dundee City Archives*

Logie Churchyard (closed 1870)

Monumental Inscriptions	1813-1857 (1962)	View on FDCA Website
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The New Howff (1836-1935—Demolished in 1962) - see also the Howff records

Burial Register or Index	1836-1938	Dundee City Archives
Register of Lairs	1848-1902	Dundee City Archives
Register of Internments	1855-1902	Dundee City Archives
Monumental Inscriptions	C.1960	Dundee City Archives

St Peter's Churchyard (1837-1870)- some burials may have taken place after 1870

Registers of Burials	1837-1907	Dundee City Archives
Monumental Inscriptions*	C.1984	Dundee City Archives*

Roodyards (19th century—closed 1870)

Some burials recorded in the New Howff Registers and Cash Books		
Monumental Inscriptions	C.1950	View on FDCA Website
Monumental Inscriptions*	C.1984	Dundee City Archives*

*Monumental Inscriptions published in 1984 by the Scottish Genealogy Society, Angus vol. 4 Dundee and Broughty Ferry.

Council Cemeteries

Records of the Council operated cemeteries are still held by the Council's Burials Team, these include:

- Western Cemetery (Perth Road) (1845 onwards)
- Eastern Necropolis (Arbroath Road) (1862 onwards)
- Balgay Cemetery (Western Necropolis) (1870 onwards)
- Birkhill (1989 onwards)
- Pitkerro Grove (2015 onwards)

To get details of a burial in one of these cemeteries please contact the Burials Administration team: Tel: 01382 431536, Email: parks.burials@dundeecity.gov.uk. To get information about a burial you will need the person's full name at birth (e.g. a woman's maiden name) and the exact date of death.

If you do not know the exact date of death you can obtain information or a death certificate [from the Registrars](#) (Email: registrars@dundeecity.gov.uk; Tel: 01382 435222). Alternatively the date of death might be recorded in a local newspaper. These are held at Dundee Central Library in the Wellgate Centre.

Please Note

It may not always be possible to work out the location of a burial. In older cemeteries there is often no plot number or plan of graves. In some cases graves have no headstones, either because it has been destroyed or was never there. In the modern cemeteries a plot number should be recorded. Some burials are in semi-private ground. If this is the case, a member of staff will explain what this means.