



Christ Church
Aughton

SAFETY IN OUR GRAVEYARD

In 2007, Government data showed that over the previous 7 years, there had been 21 serious accidents in graveyards in the UK, caused by falling memorials. (A memorial being a headstone, tombstone or gravestone.)

In 2009, Government data showed that over the previous 30 years (1979-2009), falling memorials in graveyards/cemeteries in the UK, had caused 8 deaths.

Since 2000, 3 children have been killed in this way:-

- 1) In 2000 a 6yr old in Harrogate
- 2) In 2015 an 8yr old in Glasgow.
- 3) In 2025 a 4yr old in Rawtenstall.

Responsibility for maintaining individual memorials remains with the owners i.e. the families.

Christ Church Aughton has a duty of care under Health & Safety rules and also under the Occupier's Liability Act 1957 to ensure that the graveyard is safe for our visitors. As such, we have the power to take any action deemed necessary to remove a danger that arises because of the condition of a memorial.

The graveyard is inspected at regular intervals by the Wardens and our Stonemason. They check the condition of each grave, and if needed carry out any work deemed necessary to maintain safety, for example dangerous headstones will be laid down.

Such an inspection this year showed that a number of the memorials are loose and therefore unsafe. Unfortunately, we had to make the regrettable decision to have the most dangerous headstones laid down, whilst others will attract attention in the next few years.

We are advising that children are supervised at all times when in our graveyard and that everyone avoids climbing on, sitting on, leaning on or pulling on the memorials.

If the memorial you are visiting has been laid down and you would like to have it restored to comply with today's regulations or if you are concerned about it, please contact the Ministry Centre for further information.

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