

Greenock Cemetery Walks



Welcome to Greenock

Greenock Cemetery was opened in 1846. It is 31.02 hectares and is believed to be one of the largest municipal cemeteries in Europe.

The Old West Kirk was built in Greenock in 1589 and burials took place in its churchyard. One hundred years later, two more cemeteries were opened; one in Duncan Street Greenock, and the other in Inverkip. The population of the town continued to increase and by 1840 the Town Council realised more space was required for burials. Land was acquired and Stewart Murray (curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Glasgow) was commissioned to oversee the laying out of the new cemetery in 1845.

Enter the cemetery by South Street entrance. The cemetery gates are A/B listed and were constructed in 1847. They were designed by Charles Wilson in the Greek Revival style.

① Follow the road to the small car park. On the left is the Memorial to those who died as a result of the Blitz on Greenock on 7th and 8th May 1941. During these nights of terror the bombs rained down from the east to the west of the town. 280 people died and over 1200 injured - whole families were wiped out. One of the sadder aspects was that six babies and young children were never identified and were buried together.

② The Ivy House was originally part of the Shaw Stewart estate. It was removed from the Wellpark in 1852, (see plaque on side wall) and became the lodge for the person in charge of the cemetery. It is now used for storage.

③ On the right at the end of the car park are two headstones indicating the trades upon which Greenock merchants built their wealth notably shipping, cotton, sugar and tobacco.

To the left is the area known as the Recesses where graves or memorials to those who died in service in World War 2 are to be found. Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves from both World Wars can be found throughout the cemetery.

Greenock Cemetery Blue Walk

Blue Walk (see map) about 1.5 hours

④ On the right is the burial place of Neil Dougall, a well-known local composer, whose most famous composition is the psalm tune, "Kilmarnock". At the age of 15, Neil followed in his father's footsteps and went to sea. When news of Lord Howe's victory over the French reached Greenock, all armed vessels in port were asked to fire a victory salute. Neil's ship, the Clarence, decided to fire two volleys. As Neil loaded the gun for the second volley there was an explosion in which he was badly injured. Overcoming his injuries he went on to make a career out of music.

Note an unusual carved Celtic Cross and a three-pillared monument on the left hand side.

⑤ James Lockhart Brown LLD, Rector of Greenock Grammar School for 24 years, is buried here. His portrait hangs in the McLean Museum.

⑥ Captain Donald Brotchie was the Chaplain of the Greenock Seamen's Friend Society for 40 years. His memorial was erected by the public of Greenock in his honour.



Greenock Cemetery

Blue Walk

⑦ Continuing on a nautical theme, the first of three burial grounds for Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Asylum is found here. Sir Gabriel was born in Gourock in 1767 and made his fortune in Canada and the east coast of America. On his death he left a bequest that an asylum was built for destitute seamen. This was opened in 1854. Seamen who died while in the Asylum, whose families could not provide a lair, were buried within the three plots. There are 357 people buried within the plots.

Opposite the gate there is an area of common ground where stillborn babies were buried. There is now a dedicated area at the top of the cemetery for such babies. There are many areas of common ground throughout the cemetery for those who could not afford to buy a lair. There are also cholera and typhus victims buried within the common ground.

Walking uphill there is a fine example of a ship in full sail on the left hand side. As with many sandstone stones the weather and overhead trees have eroded the inscription.

⑧ This is the Jewish area – note the Hebrew script. The first recorded Jewish person to arrive in Greenock was in 1855. It is not known if he stayed or moved on. There are 15 people buried in this area.

⑨ Bear right at cross roads. On right hand side is the family tomb of Sir Duncan Carmichael who was born in Greenock in 1866 and died in London in

1922. He was a director of P&O and a partner in many London based companies. He was knighted in 1917.

⑩ On the left is the pink granite cross of the Grieve Family. James Grieve served 3 terms of office as Provost of Greenock and 10 years as Member of Parliament for Greenock. Continue uphill and look out for the small cairn with a cross lying on top.

⑪ William Simons, a Greenock born shipbuilder, is buried here. He was world renowned for building dredgers.

⑫ Bear left to the memorial to the military personnel killed in World War I.

⑬ Retrace steps and turn left. On the left is the burial ground of people who were interred in the Old West Kirk graveyard. In 1926 -28 the church was removed from its original site to its current site on the Greenock Esplanade to make way for the expansion of Harland and Wolff shipyard.



Greenock Cemetery

Blue Walk

⑭ Continue along the grass path and at the junction turn left towards wall. On the right is the plot of the world famous Scott's Shipbuilding family. John Scott's Shipyard was established in 1711 and built herring busses. The business expanded and in 1899 it became known as Scott's Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. Scott's was known throughout the world for building tankers, submarines and also oil rigs. There was also an altruistic side to the Scott family. James Scott established the Penny Bank in Greenock, known as the Penny Club, which was to help poorer families to save.

⑮ Bear right onto the main path to the railings of the grave of Highland Mary. Mary Campbell was born in Dunoon and at the age of 14 she moved to Ayrshire to work. It was there that she was nicknamed "Highland Mary" because of her lilting accent. Mary met Robert Burns at church in Tarbolton. Robert and Mary were married by Scots law. Shortly after her marriage Mary came to the port of Greenock and sailed to Campbeltown, it is thought to say goodbye to her family before leaving for Jamaica with Robert. Mary returned to Greenock with her brother Robert, who was an apprentice at Scott's shipyard. Robert became ill with typhus and Mary nursed him but caught the disease herself and died at the home of her cousin. Her romance with Robert Burns caught the public imagination and money was raised to erect a monument in the grounds of the Old West Kirk. When the church was relocated her casket was carried to its present position by members of the Greenock Burns Club; known as the Mother Club.

⑯ To the left of Highland Mary is the Cairn of James Watt; one of Greenock's most famous sons. It was Watt's improvements to the efficiency of the steam engine which helped revolutionise industry. Watt was responsible for many inventions including the horse driven pump which was used at Port Glasgow Dry-Dock. The dock was the first of its kind in Scotland. The cairn was raised by the Watt Club using stones from throughout the world. There is a marble statue of Watt in the Watt Library in Union Street, Greenock. Retrace steps and turn left. This area is known as the Esplanade. Many local dignitaries are buried here.

⑰ Looking down on Greenock is Robert Wallace. It was his wish to be buried here so he could overlook Greenock. He was the first MP for Greenock and also chaired the committee which introduced the Penny Post. The Wallace family were involved in both the tobacco and sugar trade. He claimed to be a descendant of William Wallace.



Greenock Cemetery

Blue Walk

⑱ Walking downhill note the graves of many notable Greenock families. Marion Russell was the first person to be buried in the cemetery on 15th May 1846 – her grave is on the left hand side - a small clue look behind the holly tree.

⑲ Before leaving the Esplanade spot the dog at the base of the beautiful Celtic Cross.

⑳ Turning left is the grave of Lachlan McKinnon, Police Inspector, who was stabbed to death in the line of duty on 1st January 1869.

For the more adventurous, turn down the grass path to the right. Bear left at the first fork and right at the next fork. There are two stones on the right hand side.

㉑ McInnes Family Stone the inscription reads
Commander Cecil Brooks DSO RD RNR
Born Stowerburn 14 Jan 1875
Fouly murdered in Holland June 1933
He had a bullet through his head.

㉒ Alexander Bowers joined the British India Steam Navigation Company, Burma and its development became his life's work. He built a house at 58 Esplanade which, because of its distance from the town, became known as Bower's Folly. He died in Burma when his son Henry was only three. He received a Fellowship of the Royal Geographical

Society. His son, Henry Robertson "Birdie" Bowers, is one of Greenock's most famous sons. He died on 29 March 1912 with Captain Scott on the return journey from the South Pole. They were beaten to the pole by the Norwegian, Roald Amundsen. Their return journey was hampered by blizzards - supplies ran short and they had frostbite. Two of the team died but the other three carried on until they died only 11 miles from their supply camp. Henry was nicknamed "Birdie" because of his beak shaped nose.

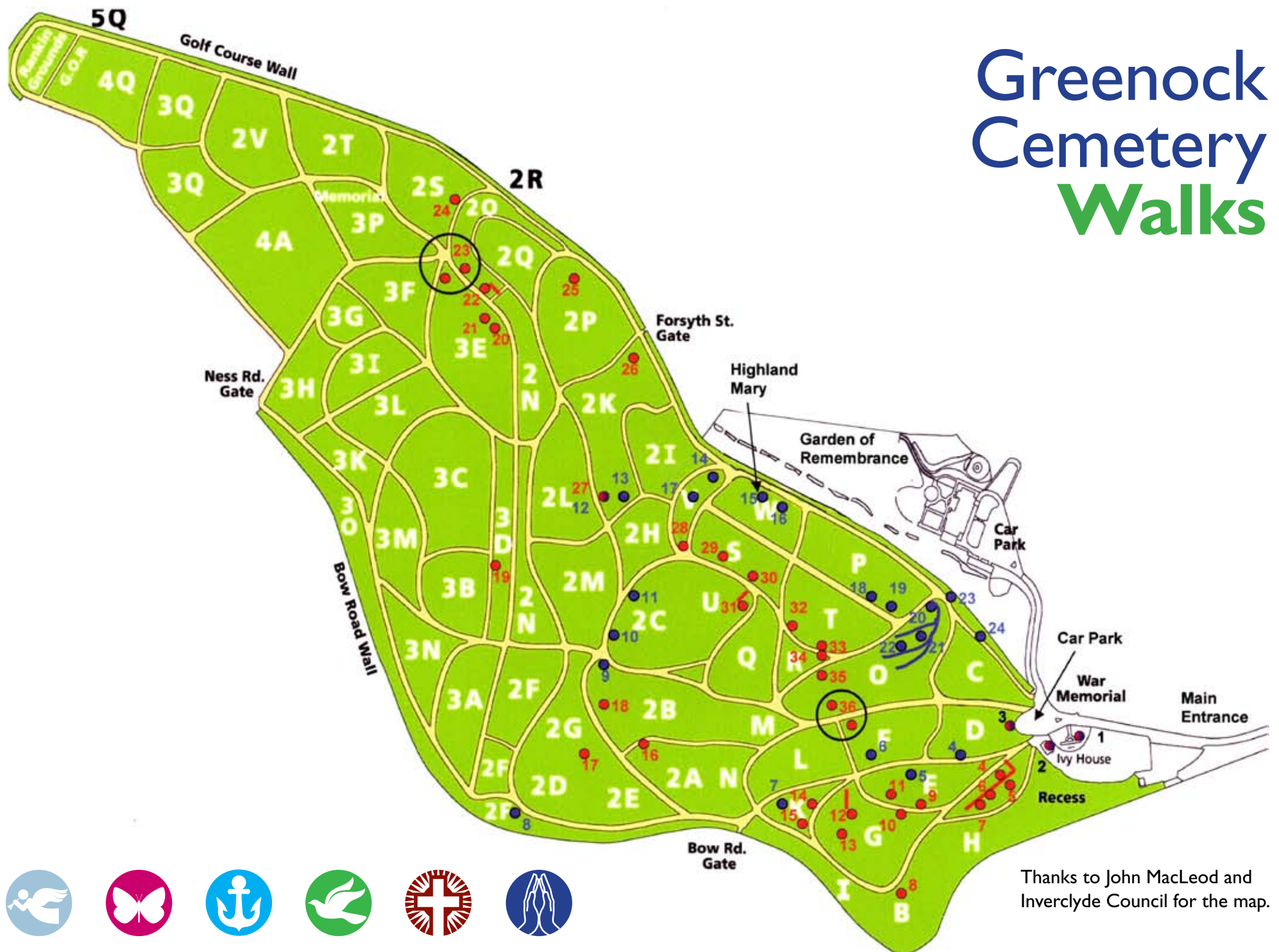
㉓ Returning to the main path there is a memorial to Colin McDougall who was the 1st engineer on the war steamer Nemesis. He died at Chisan, China during the first opium wars. The Nemesis was built in Birkenhead by Greenock born John Laird. It was the first iron clad vessel to carry guns and sail round the Cape of Good Hope.

㉔ On the left hand side is the grave of John Struthers who was the Minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for 33 years. It is said that his funeral procession stretched from the church to the cemetery. The Struthers Memorial Church is named after him.

Carry on downhill to car park.



Greenock Cemetery Walks



Thanks to John MacLeod and Inverclyde Council for the map.

Greenock Cemetery

Red Walk

Red walk (see map) about 2 hours

④ Along this path there are three stones together belonging to children which have examples of the symbols for purity and innocence – spot the lamb!

⑤ Retrace steps and enter grass path on right, then turn. 4th stone on the left has the inscription - “All the World is a stage and all men and women merely players”. George Maskell was a stage manager and 1st comedian of a theatre group. He had connections with Greenock dating back to 1867. He also performed in London, Dublin, Belfast and America. After arriving in Greenock to perform in a play in the Theatre Royal, George went out for a walk. He never returned. The next day his body was found floating off Gourock Pier. It was thought that he took a wrong turning and fell into the water. His gold watch and money were missing.

⑥ Further along is the burial place of four Russian sailors. The first is the Chief Officer of the steamship “Novgorod of Odessa”. He died at the Tail of the Bank on 4th February 1917. The other sailors were onboard the HIRM Ironclad “Peter the Great” which was being refitted at Elder & Co. in Glasgow. They died in 1882.

⑦ At the end of this path is the tomb of the Kinipple family. Walter Kinipple was the civil engineer responsible for the design and construction of the James Watt Dock and Sugar Sheds.

⑧ Continuing on to the main path, further down on the left is the Cuthbert family plot, well worth a closer inspection. Close by is an example of what was a typical family plot surrounded by railings.

Retrace your steps and turn left

⑨ On right hand side, back from the path, the pink granite obelisk of Thomas Fairrie – a Christian Philanthropist.

⑩ On the left is a gravestone with anchor and chain. This is the burial place of Robert Niccol. The stone was erected by friends of India Steam Navigation Company.

⑪ On the right is the Hamilton family stone with realistic looking rope.

Turn left at junction

⑫ Enter the first grass path on the left - look in amongst the trees to spot the girl on the Haddow family stone.

⑬ To the right below the Haddow stone is the Hill family plot. Ninian Hill founded St Andrew’s Church in Jerusalem - his ashes are buried there.

Rejoin path and go left.

⑭ On the right is the stone commemorating David Gow. He was a precentor of the Nicholson Street UP Church - note the musical instruments and manuscript at the top of the stone.

⑮ At the junction with the path on the right hand side is an ornately carved obelisk erected by James Black, a joiner.

Turn right and then turn left at junction and pass the Bow Road gate. Bear right at next junction. Continue uphill and enter the path on right at Edward Wilson’s grave.

⑯ On the right is the Lochhead family. In the winter of 1864/65 over a period of four months, five Greenock doctors died of typhus. At that time they represented one third of the medical profession in Greenock. They became known as the Greenock Medical Martyrs. There are four buried within this cemetery and one in Inverkip Street cemetery. James Lamont Lochhead was the last doctor to die and was the only family man of the five. He had four children, the youngest being born after his death. There is a memorial plaque to the martyrs in the Wellpark Mid Kirk.



Greenock Cemetery

Red Walk

⑰ Return to the path and turn right. On the mound to the left is one of three Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Asylum plots. Now known as Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Home.

⑱ On the right is the obelisk of Adam McKay who, for 20 years was the House Governor of Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Home.

Keep on the main path and at the junction turn left, then 2nd road on the right. Along this road are examples of the many trades and famous family names in Greenock's history.

⑲ Enter break on path on left hand side beside the Lockhart stone and find the Greenock Working Boys' Home Grave. Greenock Working Boys' and Girls' Religious Society was established in 1869. Its aim was to "elevate socially, educationally and spiritually" youngsters who started work at an early age. Young people were encouraged to attend educational classes. To encourage thrift the Society set up a Penny Bank. In 1872 a Working Boys' Home was opened. A separate body was established to run this. This home was a safe haven for boys from within and outwith the area to live while learning their trade.

Return to the main path and turn left.

⑳ On the left hand side is the grave of the Boden family. Leonard Boden was born in Greenock and is famous for painting the Royal Family. He also painted the only portrait for which Pope Pius XII granted a sitting. The painting of Queen Elizabeth II displayed in Greenock Arts Guild is an example of his work. His father co-founded Rowan and Boden, a company which furnished the ships Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth.

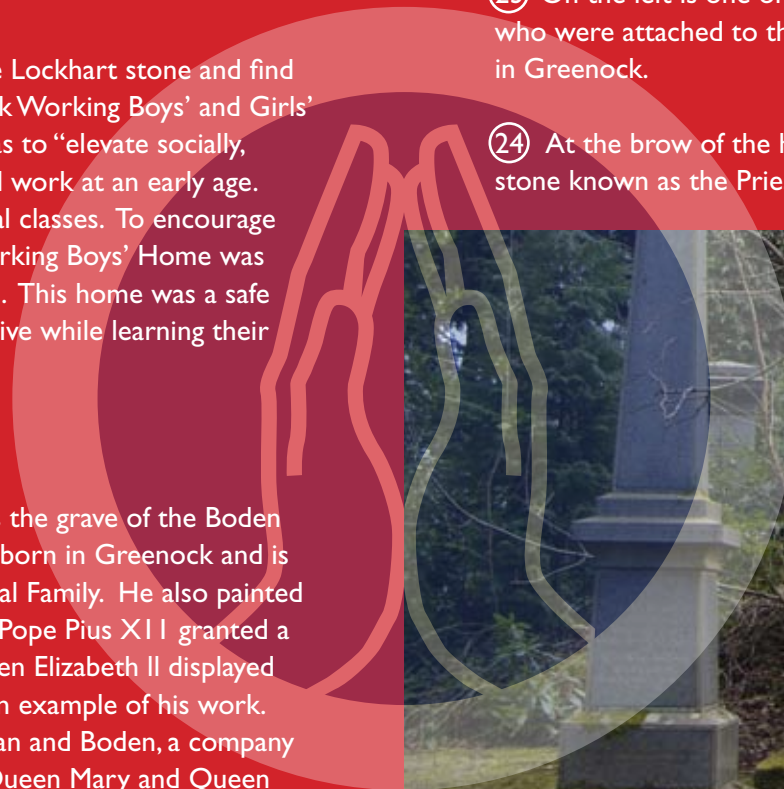
㉑ Note Smith's stone. Smith's Warehouse is another well known Greenock family business.

Turn right onto the grass path then turn left.

㉒ On the right hand side is the memorial to Thomas Reynolds who was born in Newry, Northern Ireland on 9th July 1843. He was killed on 18 June 1862, three weeks before his 19th birthday, at the battle of Fair Oaks in the American Civil War. Thomas had enlisted as a private in the Union Army and died in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Continue uphill and stay on the grass path.

㉓ On the left is one of the burial sites for the nuns who were attached to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Greenock.

㉔ At the brow of the hill, on the left hand side, is a stone known as the Priests' Stone.



Greenock Cemetery Red Walk

Rev William Burke from County Limerick was known as the “apostle of Ayrshire”. He died in Greenock on 26 April 1872. A monumental cross erected by the generosity of the Greenock Roman Catholics in April 1874 marks his grave.

Rev Michael Condon was the first priest of St Laurence’s Church. He wrote that “with a generosity characteristic of their race, his flock presented him with a hundred guineas” with which he purchased in 1866 a large plot for Catholic burials.

Rev. Daniel Gallagher was born and educated in Derry. He came to Scotland at the age of 19 and taught a night school class where one of his pupils was David Livingstone. During the day the two were workmates in Blantyre Mill. They developed a close friendship and corresponded until Livingstone died in 1873.

There is also a stone which was brought from the Old West Kirk inscribed with the names of Father Lemoine and the Rev. John Davidson, the latter founded the Greenock Mission in 1808.

Continue on this path and join the main path. Heading downhill, to the right, is the only mausoleum within the cemetery.

②5 Dame Frances Caroline Cameron died in 1899. After a service in the church her remains were taken on a horse carriage to Fort Matilda Station, Greenock. A specially hired train carried them to Glasgow where she was cremated and her ashes returned to Greenock for burial in the mausoleum. Dame Frances` husband was Sir Charles Cameron MP, who was instrumental in introducing several Acts of Parliament one of which was the Abolishment of Imprisonment for



IN MEMORIAM
KATHARINE L. DENHOLM
BORN 21ST JULY 1897,
DIED 4TH JANUARY 1983,
BELOVED WIFE OF
ROBIN L. BROWN
BORN 12TH APRIL 1896,
DIED 11TH NOVEMBER 1966.

Debt in Scotland. Another Act was the right for women to vote in municipal elections in Scotland.

Continue along the path; turn right opposite the gate on the wall.

②6 Abram Lyle was born in 1820 and died in 1891. He was one of Greenock’s most prominent citizens. In partnership with three others, he bought Glebe Sugar House in 1865. Lyle also had a share in the Diamond K ships which were involved in the sugar trade in the East and West Indies. He became Provost of Greenock in 1876. During his term as Provost the site for the New Municipal buildings was acquired and the building of the James Watt Dock was started. Lyle Road was also constructed to give work to the unemployed following a severe economic depression. He gifted the Lyle Fountain in Cathcart Square to the people of Greenock.

②7 Turn left at the junction. Follow the path, on the left is the Memorial to the Soldiers and Sailors who died in World War I.

Stay on the path until it joins the main path - turn left.

②8 The obelisk at the next junction is that of Charles Hill Patten - an Argyll & Sutherland Highlander; he served in South Africa, India and Malta and for 5 months in Flanders. He was severely injured at Ypres in May 1915. He died at Lahana, Salonica in October 1916. There is a monument to him in Finnart St Paul’s Church.

Bear right at the junction and follow the path downhill. Here are many families associated with Greenock’s shipbuilding heritage.

②9 There are three memorials to the Caird family in this area. In 1809 the family established an iron foundry in Greenock. In later years the firm expanded into marine engineering and shipbuilding. In the 1840s they also built locomotives for Scottish Railway Companies. Their Arthur St engine works were later sold to J G Kincaid.

③0 John G Kincaid’s was established as an engineering company in 1868. The firm was famous for its Burmeister engines.



Greenock Cemetery

Red Walk

- 31) Off to the right on the small grass path is another shipbuilding family James Brown Shipbuilders. The shipyard was known locally as “Siberia” because of its exposed location.
- 32) Stay on the main path and continue downhill branching to the left at the junction. On the left hand side look out for the headstone of William Tough, Clyde Rope Works, with realistic rope around the stone. Beside this large gravestone is a simple inscribed boulder.
- 33) On the left is a monument erected by his grieving family to John McGuckin - Pawn Broker who drowned at the West Harbour. He was well respected and especially beloved by his church.
- 34) Turn right at the junction and on the right hand side is the grave of James McLean. He was a wealthy timber merchant who gave funds to build the museum in Greenock which bears his name
- 35) The monument to Walter Baine on the left hand side overlooks Greenock. He was Greenock’s 1st Provost and also an MP for Greenock. There are memorial windows to the Baine family in the Old West Kirk.
- 36) Bear left on to the main path and head downhill. There are two ladies on either side of the path. The one the right is the burial plot of the Marshall family. William Marshall was a tanner, skinner and wool merchant.

Continue downhill to car park.



Symbols

- Anchor:** Christian symbol for hope and steadfastness, deceased was a seafarer.
- Angel, flying or with trumpet:** Resurrection
- Angel, weeping:** Grief and mourning
- Baby face with wings:** The departure of the soul.
- Bird:** The soul or spirit, resurrection.
- Butterfly:** Resurrection, the soul or spirit.
- Celtic cross:** The unity of heaven and earth
- Column or pillar, broken:** One who died young, especially one of great promise.
- Column or pillar, complete:** The linking of heaven and earth
- Cross and Crucifix:** Christian death and resurrection.
- Door:** Passage from this life to the next.
- Fleur – de – lis:** The three prongs represent the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Garland:** Victory in death.
- Grapes and vines:** Sacrifice, good works in the vineyard of life.
- Hands clasped:** Friendship and farewell.
- Hourglass:** Reminder of mortality.
- HIS/IHC:** First three letters of Jesus name in Greek.
- Ivy:** Immortality, fidelity and eternal life.
- Lamb:** Sacrifice, purity and innocence.
- Lamb with flag and/or cross:** Symbol of Christ’s sacrifice, Lamb of God (Agnus Dei).
- Palm Branch:** Martyrdom, righteousness, resurrection.
- Pelican:** Sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
- Rays of sun:** Triumph of day (life) over night (death), resurrection.
- Scales:** Justice and balance.
- Skeleton, skull:** Death and transitory nature of life on earth.
- Snake – biting tail:** Rebirth, immortality.
- Snake wrapped around staff:** Symbol of medicine.
- Square and compass:** Masonic symbol of judgement and geometry.
- Star:** Light overcoming darkness, divine guidance, wisdom.
- Sun rising:** Resurrection, immortality.
- Torch, inverted:** If burning, resurrection; if unlit, death.
- Urn:** Mourning, draped indicates older person, undraped, a younger one.
- Wreath or laurel leaves:** Triumph, immortality.





Inverclyde
council



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