

People visit graveyards/cemeteries for lots of different reasons but if you are there to see and read a few headstones for yourself, perhaps this will be of help.

Check if you need permission to visit. I take the view that if it is locked you will need permission and a key, if open then permission is not needed. If there is a rectory or presbytery attached I email in advance as a courtesy.

The reason the dead have a headstone is to ensure that they wouldn't be forgotten so the inscriptions are meant to be read. Show respect, try to avoid stepping on the graves themselves and don't lean against or sit on the headstones.

Make sure you are suitably dressed. Legs covered to avoid nettle stings and stout boots. Old graveyards tend to have uneven grounds and even on a summer's day can be shaded and cold.

You will need to take the following along.

Mirror and torch

Kneeler

Gloves

Soft brush

Water and spray bottle

Notebook and pen/pencil

Camera

Remember the **ONLY** thing you can use on a headstone is water and a soft brush. Do not rub, use chalk, charcoal, flour, grass or other organic material. Take plenty of photographs and sketch a map of where the graves are in relation to other static objects and take some photographs outside the graveyard and of any signage. And if you are transcribing a whole graveyard... well that is a post for another day.