The HAPPY VALLEY

A History and Tour of the Hong Kong Cemetery

Ken Nicolson

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2 Origins of the Cemetery Garden

> Skeletons protruding from churchyard ground could be seen by passersby, and pressure from the two thousand bodies in Cimetière des Innocents had broken through an adjacent apartment house wall, spewing corpses into its basement.
>
> Culbertson and Randall[1]

The quotation at the head of this chapter describes the macabre scenes and disgraceful conditions of Paris graveyards in the late 1700s that caused a widespread public outcry. The problem was not unique to Paris. Gross overcrowding of urban churchyards throughout Europe was common due mainly to the effects of the Industrial Revolution. New industries in and around towns and cities attracted and exploited country-folk seeking better jobs and living conditions. At first, the rapid urban growth was unplanned and it is not surprising that during this era of 'dark Satanic mills'[2] the well-documented unsanitary conditions for the living were exacerbated for the dead. In France, prior to the Revolution (1789–99), Christian denial of burial to criminals meant their remains were simply thrown into the town dump with household trash and excrement.[3]

Initial response to the graveyard scandal in Paris was to ban further burials in existing churchyards and transfer the surplus bodies outside the city gates to a labyrinth of disused mines and underground limestone caverns, commonly known as the 'Catacombs'. It is estimated that the remains of over six million Parisians were interred in this subterranean ossuary. However, this impersonal manner of burial and memorial was not a lasting solution and it was clear a radical approach to the burial of the dead would have to be devised.[4]

The French Revolution provided a catalyst for widespread social change and in this context of renewed civic pride the concept of the cemetery garden was set to flourish. Attractive and hygienic cemetery gardens were considered to be symbols of government competence and efficiency and represented a new respect for the dead. Criminals were now afforded proper burial and the bodies of the deceased were no longer regarded as garbage.[5]

Père Lachaise, Paris

Churchyards are usually no more than one acre (0.4 hectares) in size and generally located next to churches. By contrast, cemeteries are much larger tracts of land, 10 acres (4 hectares) or more, normally located outside the urban area. Church law applies to churchyards but not cemeteries, although cemeteries may be partly or wholly consecrated. The new generation of Paris cemeteries was proposed for the city outskirts. One of the first was located on Mont Louis, a hill to the east of the city on a site originally occupied by a Jesuit hospice. Nicholas Frochot, Paris' first Napoleonic Prefect, initiated the cemetery project. Frochot persuaded the Baron family, who had acquired the site in 1771 and had since seen their estate destroyed during the Revolution, to sell for a very low price. A leading architect of the day, Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, was commissioned and the cemetery was promptly open for business on 21 May 1804. Initially, the new cemetery was known as 'Cimetière de l'Est' (East Cemetery) but soon became known as 'Père Lachaise' in memory of one of the former Jesuit community, Father Francois de La Chaise d'Aix, who had been Louis XIV's confessor.[6]

Brongniart's design made full use of the dramatic landscape by building a new entrance at the foot of the hill on a central axis with a series of winding and linear carriage paths connecting the lower valley around the escarpment to the upper plain. This combination of regular with irregular forms was intended to create a more formal, polished landscape in a limited central area near the Chapel and a less formal, densely planted, park-like landscape in more peripheral areas.

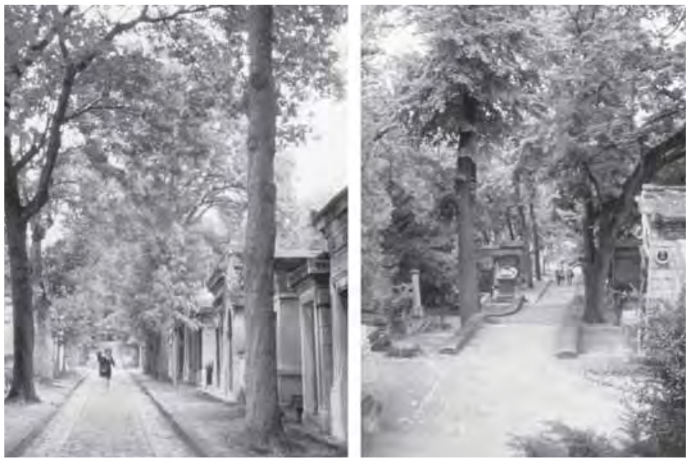

Fig. 2.1 Views of avenues in Père Lachaise Cemetery

Business was rather slow at first because the cemetery was located on the outskirts of the city. To 'prime the pump' Frochot shrewdly persuaded the municipal authorities to rebury Molière and La Fontaine, as well as relocate the tomb of the famed lovers Abélard and Hélöise in Père Lachaise.[7] This gave the cemetery instant status with the rich and famous and affirmed the government's dedication to improving the image and conditions of the city. By now, the main avenues had distinctive planting: limes along the central esplanade and chestnuts along the grand transverse avenue with poplars and acacias along connecting looping paths. As intended, Brongniart's Romantic-inspired design soon became more than just a cemetery. It was also an open-air museum and grand memorial garden where families would stroll at weekends and society's notables, past and present, could be noted.

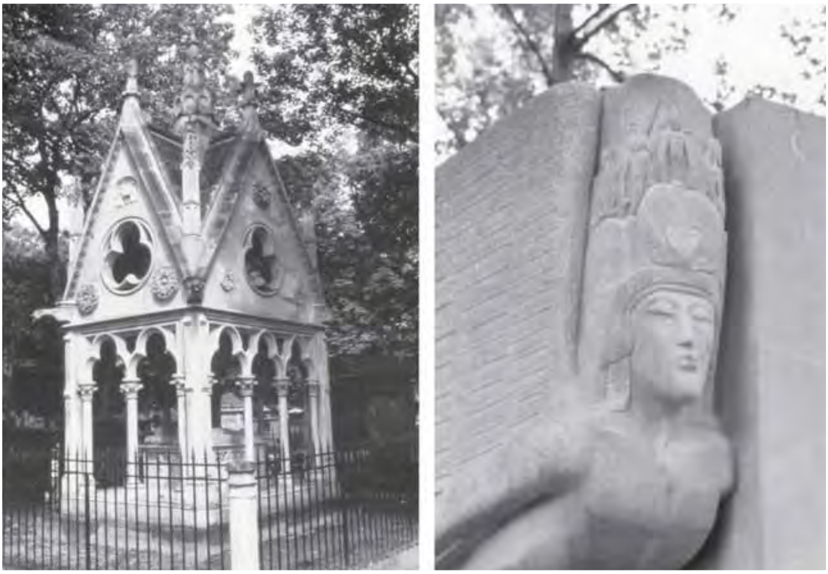

Fig. 2.2 Contrasting memorials in Père Lachaise: (left) the first relocated memorial to the famed lovers Abélard and Hélöise, 1804, and the memorial to Oscar Wilde almost a century later

A cross-section of some of the other famous 'residents' of Père Lachaise include the composers Bizet, Chopin and Rossini, scientist Claude Bernard, American writer Gertrude Stein, novelists Honoré de Balzac and Marcel Proust, French popular singer Edith Piaf, opera singer Maria Callas, Moulin Rouge dancer Jane Avril, impressionist painter Camille Pissarro, comic dramatist Jean-Baptiste Moliere, jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli, and actor Yves Montand. One of the most popular graves with visitors is that of Irish novelist, poet and playwright Oscar Wilde. It is common for admirers of Wilde to leave a lipstick kiss mark on the headstone as a sign of respect.

The grave of the French journalist Victor Noir is also a big crowd puller. Noir was killed by Pierre Napoleon Bonaparte with whom he had been discussing terms for a duel with Paschal Grousset. The grave is marked by a lifelike bronze statue of Noir laid on its back, made all the more eye-catching by the bulge in the trousers suggesting that he was well-endowed. Placing a flower in his top hat and rubbing the genital region of the statue is said to increase fertility. Judging by the high polish on this particular part of the sculpture, it still seems to be a popular tradition. In 2005, a security fence was erected to prevent people from touching the statue. However, there were loud protests from local women visitors and the fence was taken down.

The most visited grave is that of American Jim Morrison, former singer-songwriter of the rock band *The Doors*. Over the years, fans have covered Morrison's grave with graffiti, signatures or lipstick kiss marks and often leave a pack of cigarettes instead of flowers on the headstone. In the past, it was necessary to post a full-time guard at Morrison's grave to stop further defacement and help disperse crowds of sightseers.

Père Lachaise is definitely not a depressing place to visit. Quite the contrary, a trip to the cemetery is like taking a stroll through history, rubbing shoulders (and other body parts) with the famous personalities that have shaped history. After two hundred years of operation the cemetery has over seventy thousand permanent residents and is still the most popular in Paris for those who can afford the high tariffs. At 110 acres (44 hectares) it is the largest park in the city, attracts around two million visitors annually[8] and is home to several hundred feral cats.

At this peaceful site, amid trees and flowers,
Sorrows and laments come to cry their tears;
Here they can find a sympathetic shade;
Death hides from their eyes its hideous scythe,
As it spreads its subjects throughout a vast garden;
For the home of the dead has become the new Eden.

(Written in French on a terrace wall, Père Lachaise, Paris 1813)

Glasgow Necropolis: The Scottish Père Lachaise

Père Lachaise set the standard for subsequent cemeteries throughout Europe and was much praised by Britain's leading cemetery designers. In Britain, prior to the nineteenth-century cemetery movement, almost all burials were in churchyards. Recycling of graves had been a long-standing tradition. When new graves were needed, bones from the oldest graves were removed to an ossuary to make space. This relatively sustainable system worked well so long as sufficient time was allowed for proper decomposition. However, the grave recycling interval reduced steadily as the urban population swelled and pressure on limited burial space increased. The Church of England exacerbated this situation by having a vested interest in the status quo as it received a fee for each burial within churchyards.[9]

Dissent towards the restrictive Church of England burial system and unhealthy conditions of the overcrowded churchyards was strong among the new Protestant religions, particularly Methodists. The Protestants were predominantly middle-class and relatively wealthy. They admired the lifestyle of the landed gentry and their picturesque country estates as a setting for family tombs. So much so that establishing attractively landscaped private burial grounds, unattached to the Church of England, became a religious cause of the Protestants.

The first British non-denominational cemeteries were established by Joint Stock companies in Norwich (The Rosary in 1821), Liverpool (Liverpool Necropolis in 1825 and St. James Cemetery in 1830) and by a Merchants' House in Glasgow (Glasgow Necropolis in 1832). Of these great city cemeteries, the Glasgow Necropolis is generally regarded as being the finest.[10]

> There is no cemetery in Britain as spectacular as the Glasgow Necropolis for it is literally a city of the dead on its site beside the cathedral. It provides a unique architectural and townscape experience, of almost unparalleled magnificence outside Italy.[11]

The cemetery founders had visualised the Glasgow Necropolis as being a Scottish Père Lachaise where attractive planting would complement the tombs and provide visual relief to the smoke-blackened city churchyards. Glasgow was one of the leading industrial cities in Europe in the early 1800s. The rapid population growth overwhelmed the city's basic water supply and sanitation infrastructure. Cholera and typhus epidemics were common and in the 1830s over five thousand people were dying each year. Urban church graveyards could not cope with the demand and were soon in a disgusting condition. A guide to Glasgow Cathedral and the Necropolis in 1843 referred to conditions in the Cathedral graveyard, before the Necropolis was built, as 'revolting to human nature and . . . destructive to the health of the living'.[12]

Members of the new middle or merchant class, driving the industrial economy, were keen to avoid such epidemics and desired better living conditions. They also sought the means to display their success and have their achievements remembered for posterity. The Merchants' House that established the Necropolis was, at that time, an extremely powerful and influential committee of prominent tradesmen with jurisdiction over the finances of many public services, such as the police force, roads and street lighting. The Merchants' House had the primary functions of promoting fair trade as well as charitable works, e.g., providing pensions to widows and orphans.[13] Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising to discover that, although the concept design for the Necropolis was born partly from a desire to emulate the grand country estates of the landed gentry, almost all of the monuments are erected in the memory of ordinary folk who made their wealth by their own hard work.

A vision for the design of the Necropolis came from the Chamberlain of the Merchants' House, John Strang. His book, *Necropolis Glasguensis with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture*, published in 1831, was a treatise on the veneration of human remains and burial rites throughout the world. Strang grasped the opportunity to transform the fear and horror of the typical Glasgow graveyard into a source of civic pride by means of a well-designed cemetery garden. Recording his impressions of Père Lachaise Cemetery as a model for the Glasgow Necropolis he wrote:

> All the disagreeable sensations which are here coupled with a churchyard are dispelled by the beauty of the garden, the variety of its walks, by the romantic nature of its situation.[14]

The setting chosen for the Necropolis was a partly quarried hill, known as Fir Park. This high ground, beside the Cathedral, still provides a superb view across the city. The main entrance is dominated by a handsome, single-span sandstone bridge, completed in 1833. Known as the 'Bridge of Sighs' (alluding to the 'Bridge of Sighs' in Venice) this is the route of funeral processions and provides a symbolic link between the lively bustle of the inner city and the eternal peace of the cemetery. At the end of the bridge, the entrance to the Necropolis is highlighted by an ornamental stone façade. Behind this wall it was intended to provide catacombs extending far into the hill. Catacombs were considered to be necessary to foil body snatchers who would dig up freshly buried corpses and sell them to medical schools for dissection. With the passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act, which expanded the legal supply of medical cadavers, grave robbing was brought virtually to an end and the plans for the catacombs at the Necropolis were abandoned.[15]

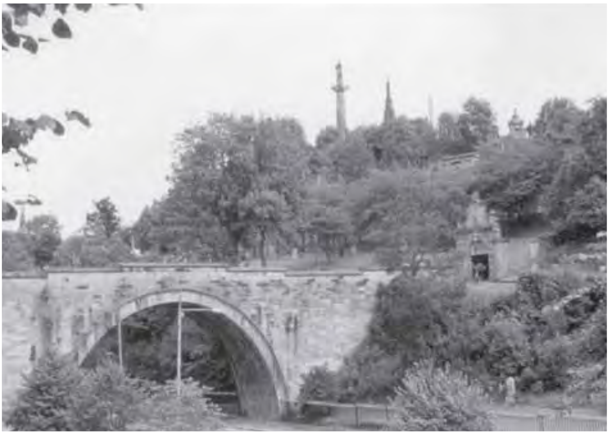

Fig. 2.3 Bridge of Sighs with the John Knox memorial (tallest obelisk on the skyline)

The design for the Necropolis was decided by a competition arranged by the Merchants' House. A panel of judges decided that the ideas from the best five designs should be combined and that the work should be carried out under the supervision and management of the well-respected local landscape gardener, George Mylne.[16] The Necropolis was laid out on a grand scale based on Père Lachaise. Rows of tasteful and exquisitely carved memorials were set in terraces of lawn, subdivided by gently curving paths and lined with elm, plane, poplar, sycamore and oak trees. Much of the Necropolis architecture was designed by local architects John Bryce, David Hamilton and his son James. Similarly, many of the larger memorials were created by renowned architects and sculptors of the day, including Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. Indeed, some of the monuments are better known for their designer than the commemorated deceased.

The most visually striking monument is that of John Knox, the famous Calvinist religious reformer. A bronze statue of Knox stands on top of a 20-metre high stone column near the entrance to the Necropolis gazing down sternly upon visitors. With similar Calvinistic discipline, the Merchants' House took great care to protect the reputation of the Necropolis and ensure a high standard was maintained. All new designs for memorials and inscriptions had to be submitted for approval. In particular, memorials erected near the John Knox monument were scrutinised by the cemetery architect David Hamilton to prevent construction of anything considered to be in bad taste.[17] These management strategies paid off handsomely. Prominent visitors, such as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert during a visit in 1849, expressed their delight at the sight of the cemetery.[18]

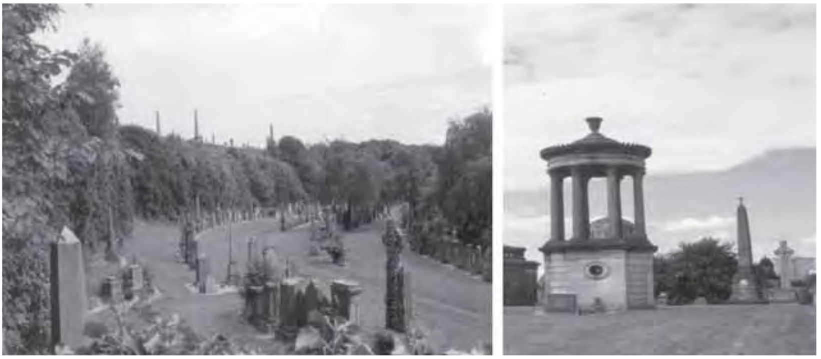

Fig. 2.4 Views of the Glasgow Necropolis

Loudon's Law

Another great admirer of cemeteries like Père Lachaise and Glasgow Necropolis was the Scot, John Claudius Loudon — one of the foremost proponents of the cemetery garden in Britain during the nineteenth century. Loudon was a horticulturist and prolific writer on all matters of farming practice as well as the design and management of public gardens and cemeteries. In his books and articles on cemetery design Loudon describes in exhaustive detail everything from the optimum method of digging a grave to the ideal species of trees and shrubs to plant. Loudon admired the dignity of cemeteries like Père Lachaise and Glasgow Necropolis that performed the dual role of memorial garden and public open space. Loudon's book *On the Laying out of Cemeteries*, published in 1843, had a lasting and widespread influence on the layout and plant selection in nineteenth-century cemetery design. It was the first English language book on the subject and Loudon summed up the importance of this new concept of cemetery gardens thus:

> Churchyards and cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect, but they serve as historical records.[19]

The earliest cemetery gardens were inspired by the desire to create a memorial garden similar to a country estate landscape, i.e., sweeps of lawn, serpentine paths, large copses of trees and eye-catching architectural features, with a chapel as a substitute for the mansion house. However, Loudon scorned this imitation of the English landscape garden in some British cemeteries.[20] Instead of creating copses of naturalistic broadleaf woodland, Loudon advocated the use of evenly distributed upright conifers, arguing that a regular grid system allowed the most rational layout of memorials and made it easier for visitors to find individual graves. These ideas and his promotion of the cemetery as an educational, contemplative and dignified environment were well-received by Victorian society. Most cemetery gardens follow one or the other approach in their layout, or even a combination of the two. Comparison of the two styles is best illustrated in engravings, shown below, prepared by Loudon of the South Metropolitan Cemetery at Norwood in Surrey.

Loudon wanted cemeteries to have a clearly distinguishable landscape character. For example, his preference for slender conifers with dark evergreen foliage created a sombre atmosphere and visual image that could not be mistaken for anything else in the English countryside.[21] This aesthetic ideal complemented the practical aspects of planting evergreen conifers that cast less shadow, allowed better drying of the ground and speeded up the decomposition process. Furthermore, clearance of fallen leaves from deciduous trees in winter creates additional maintenance work. Although not specifically stated by Loudon or his commentators, it is interesting to note from the South Metropolitan Cemetery illustrations how similar the tall slender conifers are to the stone monuments, further reinforcing the image of a cemetery landscape Loudon promoted.

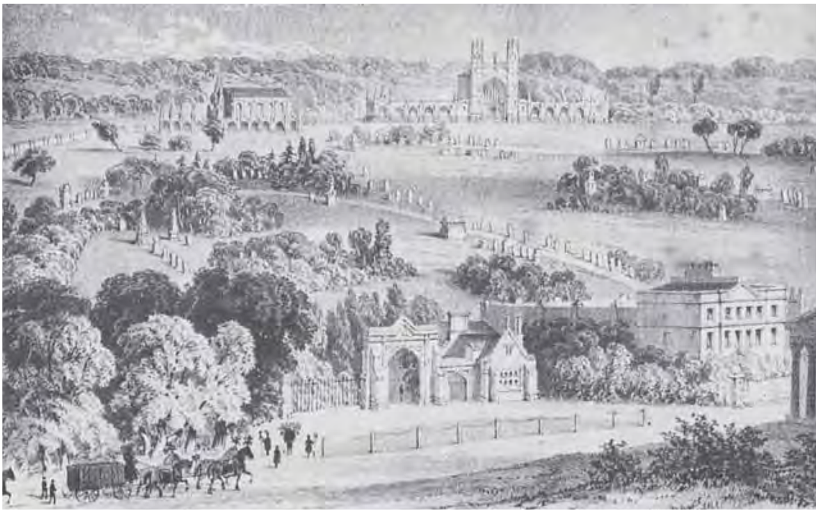

Fig. 2.5 Loudon's image of the South Metropolitan Cemetery planted in the pleasure ground style. Reproduced with the kind permission of Ivelet Books.

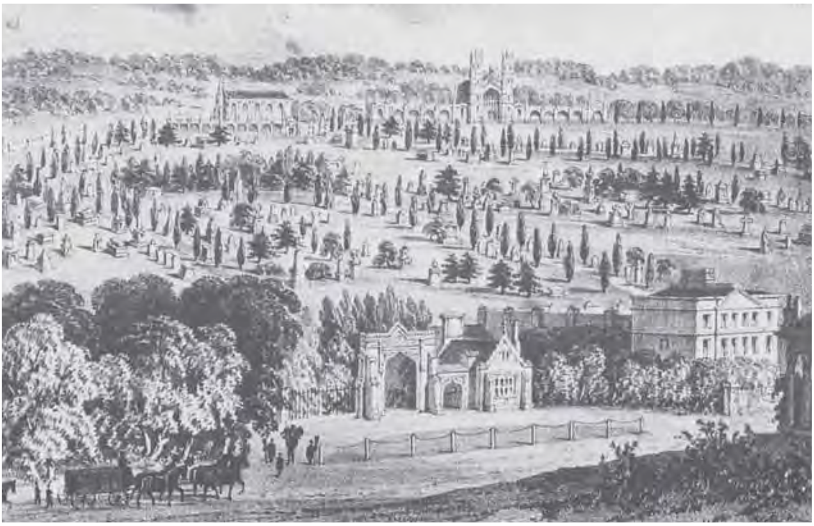

Fig. 2.6 Loudon's image of the South Metropolitan Cemetery planted in the cemetery style. Reproduced with the kind permission of Ivelet Books.

To reinforce his design arguments, Loudon referred to contemporary examples of cemeteries in Turkey where cypress trees were traditionally planted and in China where he remarked that trees of various forms and character were traditionally planted.[22]

These references by Loudon to cemetery design in the East need to be qualified. Upon closer examination they, in some respects, appear to contradict rather than reinforce Loudon's arguments. For example, the Chinese burial grounds quoted by Loudon included a variety of broadleaf tree species including willows. Willows (*Salix*) with their 'weeping' form were a popular choice for planting in early Western cemetery gardens to represent mourning. However, they soon fell out of favour as they are typically associated with wet ground conditions and, as Loudon demonstrated, cemeteries are ideally located on gravelly, well-drained soils.[23]

Upright conifers, typically Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*) or Buddhist Pine (*Podocarpus macrophyllus*), are common features in modern Chinese cemeteries in Hong Kong. Is the similarity between Loudon's nineteenth-century design principles and twenty-first-century Chinese cemetery landscaping a coincidence or by design? Although Loudon travelled widely throughout Europe and would likely have been exposed to the prevailing nineteenth-century interest in Oriental artifacts, it is not recorded that he visited China.

Loudon's references to nineteenth-century burial grounds in China appear to have been selected to illustrate the traditional use of well-drained hillside locations for cemeteries rather than the use of upright conifer trees. This suggests that Western and Eastern cemetery designers arrived at the same conclusion independently. That is, the best sites for cemeteries are well-drained hillsides instead of productive, low-lying farmland and that slender, evergreen trees which are drought-resistant, take up less space, and cast little shadow are the optimum choice.

Loudon's Turkish examples have even more fundamental contradictions. Like the Garden of Eden to Christians, the garden is central to the Muslim vision of paradise. The Turks have a tale to explain the importance of gardens to their faith. A famous holy man, Sheikh Hasan Efendi, was asked at a religious gathering whether any Muslim could be certain of going to paradise when he died. Hasan replied by asking if there were any gardeners present. When one member of the congregation stood up, Hasan pointed to him declaring that the gardener will go to heaven. In response to the resulting hubbub he explained that according to the hadiths (the oral traditions of the prophet Muhamad) people will do in the afterlife what they most enjoy doing on earth. Since all flowers belong to heaven, gardeners will surely go to paradise to continue their work.[24]

Thus, even during the austere Ottoman Empire, pious Muslims regarded flowers with reverence and often wore blooms in their turbans. Of all the flowers in the Muslim garden the tulip with its vibrant colours was regarded as the holiest. In Arabic script the letters that spell *lale*, 'tulip' in Turkish, are the same as those that form *Allah*.[25] Loudon himself notes that although Turkish cemeteries were typically planted with sombre cypress trees, individual graves were usually adorned by planting flowers on top.[26] This Turkish penchant for floral embellishment in life and in death is an interesting contrast to the more sober tones advocated by Loudon who was strongly opposed to planting flowers in cemeteries. He believed that the regular turning over of soil to maintain flower beds would spoil the sense of repose that should permeate a cemetery.

Loudon's strict layout and planting design principles were highly influential and widely adopted in nearly all British public cemeteries formed after 1850.[27] Grave plots were typically laid out in lawns either on a geometric grid or a neat patchwork of geometric units within a framework of gently curving tree-lined roads, paths and terraces. The selected trees were mainly coniferous with the main avenues supplemented by highlight planting of specimen trees or topiary. Loudon only designed three cemeteries himself — Abbey Cemetery in Bath, Southampton Cemetery and Histon Road Cemetery in Cambridge. Interestingly, only the latter (opened in 1843) exhibits his innovative ideas most faithfully.

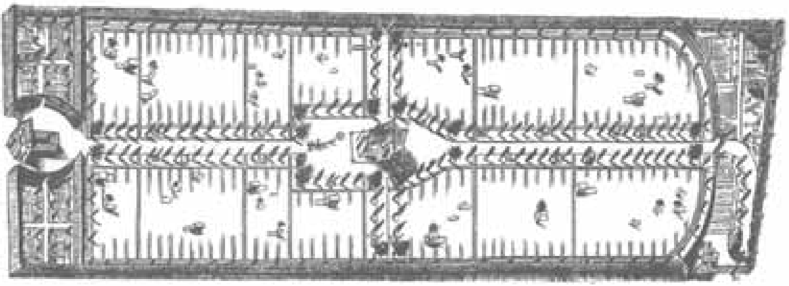

Fig. 2.7 Loudon’s design for Histon Road Cemetery in Cambridge. Reproduced with the kind permission of Ivelet Books.

Histon Road Cemetery was laid out in a simple rectilinear form divided into four equal areas of lawn. A lodge house was built at the main entrance for the cemetery curator and a funeral chapel at the heart of the site where the two access roads intersected. The central road was bordered by an avenue of European Black Pine (*Pinus nigra*). This species was preferred by Loudon for its dark and solemn air and suitability for pruning into slender columnar shapes. Some cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) were proposed as special features at the junction of the access roads, near the chapel. The slightly elevated terrace and footpath that ran around the cemetery perimeter were bordered by Irish yews (*Taxus baccata Fastigiata*) on the inside and Holly (*Ilex*) on the outside to create an effective boundary hedge. The widths of the central road and turning circle around the chapel were designed to accommodate a hearse drawn by four horses.[28]

In the late 1870s, Loudon’s ideal model for cemetery design came under attack from landscape professionals and cemetery superintendents who were keen to introduce a broader spectrum of planting. Too many conifers were considered to be depressing and a more uplifting style of planting was sought. Deciduous trees began to dominate cemetery designs and oaks, elms, limes, maples and planes were commonly chosen for avenue planting. By the turn of the century, every aspect of horticulture common in public parks, e.g., potted plants, flowerbeds, and rock gardens, could be found in cemeteries as well.[29]

One practical disadvantage of evergreen conifers that Loudon seems to have played down is that deciduous trees are able to shrug off their grimy, dust-laden leaves each autumn and are rejuvenated with fresh foliage in the spring. For example, the Scots pines that once occupied Fir Park, the former site of the Glasgow Necropolis, all died due to the increased pollution from the city’s coal-fired industries in the early 1800s and were replaced with hardier broadleaf trees when the cemetery was established.[30]

The new generation of cemetery gardens brought a dignity to death and a new civic pride and self-confidence to the city as a whole. Because the burial lots were typically sold in perpetuity, people were more willing to spend money on the headstones, sculptures and engravings. In the Necropolis, the legacy of this investment of money and effort in memorial design is a unique, tangible record and representation of the art and architecture of Victorian Glasgow. The wording of inscriptions, use of different kinds of stone, choice of icons and ornamentation, all reflect the fashions, social trends and religious beliefs of the day.

As described above, the main catalyst for the cemetery garden movement was the public outcry in the late 1700s and early 1800s against the sordid living (and dying) conditions in the industrial cities of Europe. A century later, a second public outcry began to be heard. In Paris, Père Lachaise Cemetery had become encircled by urban expansion and city planners wanted to clear the site for residential and commercial development. The plan was to build a mega-cemetery several kilometres outside the city, linked by a railway to facilitate funerals. However, Père Lachaise had, by then, become one of the city's most popular public parks. The people of Paris protested, their slogan being, 'Without a cemetery, there is no city.'[31] Perhaps fearing another revolution, the city government backed down and Père Lachaise was allowed to rest in peace.

Why the city planners contemplated redeveloping Père Lachaise, may have been partly due to the speed at which the cemetery was filling up. One of the main attractions of the cemetery garden concept was that the burial plots were permanent. This encouraged a high standard of memorial design and maintenance. On the other hand, once the burial plots were all sold, the flow of income to the private enterprises managing the cemetery started to run dry. The Merchants' House faced a similar problem managing Glasgow Necropolis. By the late nineteenth century, two final extensions had been added to the north and south-east, doubling the size of the cemetery to 38 acres (15 hectares). These extensions were never as popular as the original portion surrounding John Knox's monument and the cemetery went into a prolonged decline.[32]

Throughout Britain, many cemetery joint stock companies went bankrupt and the cemeteries became choked with weeds and vines. Often, local authorities had to take over responsibility for their maintenance using public funds. Understandably, such private enterprises soon gained a bad reputation and were viewed with suspicion. The Merchants' House eventually gave the Necropolis to the Corporation of the City of Glasgow in 1966 with a one-off payment of £50,000 to help with its upkeep.[33]

Inevitably, local authorities looked for ways to minimise the cost of maintenance and repairs to the cemeteries now in their charge. A common solution was to grass over the high-maintenance flower beds and remove obstructions such as benches and grave surrounds to facilitate mechanical mowing.[34] As is often the case with lower standards of maintenance and supervision, private cemetery gardens that had become overgrown, or those managed by local authorities on limited budgets, became soft targets for vandals who pushed monuments over or defaced them with graffiti.

This sorry state of affairs continued throughout the 1900s until, in the late 1970s, a third public outcry started to be heard calling for action to prevent further damage by vandalism and neglect. The Victorian Society identified a number of prominent cemeteries in Britain that needed protection, including London's Abney Park, Kensal Green and Highgate; the latter being advertised on the London underground using poignant images of marble angels overgrown with ivy. Subsequent studies by the Cemetery Research Group (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council) noted that most cemeteries have significant heritage value and recommended that, instead of concentrating resources into conserving a handful of the oldest and most famous company cemeteries, it would be more appropriate to take a broader approach and seek to understand and promote protection of privately and publicly managed cemetery landscapes as a whole — even those still in operation.[35]

This approach acknowledges that cemetery gardens were designed to function as both memorial gardens and public open spaces. Although under stress from financial constraints and occasional anti-social behaviour, historic cemetery gardens like Père Lachaise and Glasgow Necropolis are wonderful heritage resources — museums of art, architecture and social history as well as botanical gardens and nature reserves. One of the joys of visiting Glasgow Necropolis is to look up from reading a headstone inscription and come face to face with wild deer that roam round the fringes of the cemetery.

Halfway around the world, the Hong Kong Cemetery also holds surprises for the visitor, such as spotting a roost of bats hanging overhead in a palm tree, or finding a bird nesting in the crook of a marble angel's arm. Introduced 165 years ago by the British to a fledgeling colony, this cemetery garden has evolved in parallel with its European counterparts and today boasts a rich collection of built and natural heritage resources. No other urban public open space can offer this kind of experience. Making the effort to understand and protect such sites will be well worthwhile and getting the balance right between conserving the memorials and protecting the natural wildlife habitats will be a rewarding challenge.

Notes

1 Grave Concerns

1. Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (London: Edward Lacey, 1838), 4.
2. *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*, often abbreviated to *Rasselas*, is a novella written by Dr Samuel Johnson in January 1759 to raise money to support his sick mother. Dr Johnson was one of England's greatest literary critics, poets and essayists. He was also responsible for the Herculean task of compiling the first English dictionary.
3. James Bodell, *A Soldier's View of Empire: The Reminiscences of James Bodell, 1831–92,* edited by Keith Sinclair (London: Bodley Head, 1982), 66.
4. W. F. Mayers et al., *The Treaty Ports of China and Japan* (London: Trübner & Co., 1867), 12–13.
5. Hong Kong Government, *Historical and Statistical Abstract of the Colony of Hong Kong 1841–1930* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1932), 4.
6. Henry Knollys, *English Life in China* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1885), 18.
7. Ibid., 20.
8. Sydney B. Skertchly, *Our Island: A Naturalist's Description of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Kelly and Walsh, 1893), 49, and James J. Walker, 'A Preliminary List of the Butterflies of Hong Kong; based on Observations and Captures made during the Winter and Spring Months of 1892 and 1893', *Transactions of the Entomological Society of London* Part IV (December 1895): 439.
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