

1981
CHURCHYARD SURVEY
CREETING ST. MARY.

On May 16th 1981 members of Creeting St. Mary W.I. met at the churchyard. to begin this survey.

It was agreed to meet on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons to compare notes and receive new assignments but recordings should proceed at individuals own convenience.

Work began in the cemetery adjoining the churchyard. No problems - an encouraging start on this site which has been in use since 1952.

After further experience in the old churchyard we did return however and found a kerbstone inscription which had already been buried.

The churchyard itself presented various problems. The section to the east of the Church is not so straightforward as it at first appeared.

Many headstones had footstones placed up against them thus concealing part of the inscription. Later research revealed most of the missing information but gaps still remain. This section also has the greater number of lengthy verses, popular in the 19th Century.

In the North West corner only a few of these chevron stones were visible before the overhanging brambles were cut back.

Although we usually worked in ones and twos we found it helpful to get more heads together over the difficult ones!

Other stumbling blocks, (apart from concealed kerbs) were the first encounters with the old form of the letter 's' and the use of relict for widow.

A popular footpath runs through the churchyard and many people stopped to look, ask, questions and some even stayed to help.

The tragedies revealed were numerous; deaths of children in the same family were common until the beginning of the 20th century.

Spades, as well as shears and scrubbing brushes, were needed to help clear the stones as some had either sunk or the earth had built up around them over the years.

Luckily this stone is inscribed on the top so the ivy remained. intact. Number 29 by the gate in the South wall.

The earliest inscribed memorial is the brick altar tomb, with stone slab on top by the south wall of St. Mary's Church commemorating John Rozer 1688.

By the end of July all the recording was completed – but the work was not finished! Catherine Rayner after making a few trial sketches volunteered to record them all, three hundred and ninety one plus the War Memorial. Work was also started on checking the previous records at the record office. Slowly the pieces began to fit together – dates were discovered whole headstones, where only a few marks were discernible suddenly made sense.

As Creting previously had two churches, St. Mary's and All Saints in the same churchyard , two sets of registers had to be searched. One elusive person missing from earlier records of the churchyard appeared on the tomb as ..IZ KILBURN 18... starting from 1800 ELIZABETH KILBURN was eventually found to have died at the age of 94 in 1846 A cheer almost shattered the silence of the Record Office.

Another interesting discovery was the stone coffin top, covered in grass and moss near the North wall of the Church, belonging to Samuel Blogg. As the road between All Saints Hall and Woolney Hall is commonly called Bloggs Lane it was satisfying to find the only monument of that name.

The deadline to finish this survey has left many tempting avenues unexplored. Two family names appeared to change spelling, Moor to Moore and Willson to Wilson, but time to check in registers was not available. In the earlier churchyard survey to 1900 are many memorials-no longer to be found. At some time the churchyard to the West of the: Church was rearranged and stones placed in neat rows Many of those that were lost were recorded as wooden shields within rails and it is possible these may have rotted away. If the deadline does not beat us an appendix of this earlier record will be included at the end of this survey but whether the stone still exists duplicate details will not be repeated only the survey number