

# COWGATE CEMETERY Deborah Gasking

Despite the virus, lockdowns and stay-at-home's, Cowgate is in pretty good shape. We've managed the few work parties when legislation allowed and, with nature sleeping its chilled sleep of winter, this beautiful site is calming, not so overgrown and (following a few prudent pick-ups) litter free.

A tree from the slopes above the cemetery has fallen across the top wall and onto a grassed pathway, and was reported to a Dover Town Council maintenance worker, (who was conveniently shoring up a bank in the neighbouring allotments).

A little of what you might already know (but there again...):

The site was gifted by Mr. William Mowl of a prominent family. The 2.25 acres of pastureland on the edge of the town

became a burial ground for St Mary's Parish Church whose churchyard, soon be inadequate, was on a site now traversed by York Street dual carriageway. This extension, upon the lower slopes of the Western Heights, was consecrated as St Mary's New Burial Ground and the first interment took place in April 1837.

The layout was completed with a mortuary chapel and a lodge for the sexton.

William Ebenezer Petchey had been born in the lodge and, succeeded his father and grandfather as sexton. He died at the age of 105, at a Whitfield residential home, on 21st February 2006 and was the last person to be buried here.

The cemetery is enclosed on three sides by a high ragstone wall. Its upper boundary consists of a row of vaults excavated in the chalk hillside. This row of vaults has features in common with the terraces or catacombs of London's famous Highgate Cemetery.

At its lower boundary, is a six feet drop to a lane, which runs along the rear of the Sarah Gorely Alms houses, built in 1877. At the junction of this lane and Cowgate Hill, tall double gates adorn the entrance for hearses. A small gate (now bricked up) at the other corner of the lower boundary wall afforded access for handcarts or biers pushed up a path from Snargate Street and the populous dockside district.

The New Burial Ground was closed for interments in the 1870's save to those with existing vaults or tombs, and became known henceforth as Cowgate Cemetery.

## Maison Dieu Guest House Dover



**89 Maison Dieu Road, Dover, CT161RU**

Quality affordable Bed & Breakfast guest accommodation, located in Dover town centre – great for friends and family.

Single, Double, Twin & Family En-suites available with free parking & Wi-Fi.

**Barry & Di French Tel: 01304 204033**

**[www.maisondieu.co.uk](http://www.maisondieu.co.uk)**