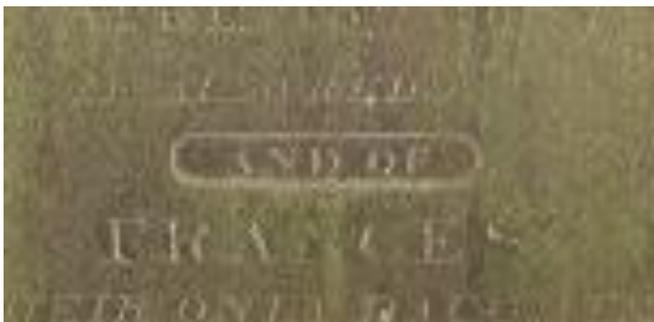


## December meeting 2025

**Chairs welcome:** the December meeting was attended by 20 members and two new attendees – under Items of interest the Hon Secretary spoke of his time with Hounslow Council from 1968 until retirement as Cemeteries Officer, mentioning that there are 9 cemeteries and 4 burial grounds in Hounslow Borough and that his position meant that he was able to indulge his passion of times past. Many people [he said] find great interest in visiting these places of disposal and particularly the reading of inscriptions on headstones.

On a visit St Mary's Church burial ground extension, which is in Oak Lane Twickenham; he during the visit came across this (image) headstone, which had the following 'inscription link! – 'where there are a number of burials in a grave the inscription on the headstone would make reference to previous burials within the grave – this particular inscription had a two-word 'relationship link' - normally the link would be the word 'also' but this one had - 'set within a small incised rectangle area, which in itself is unique, the words and of (the grave of the Richards family)



Another interesting headstone can be found at St Dunstan's church burial ground and that is one of

John Foot whose occupation was that of Overseer of the Marshalsea Prison London.

Apart from the inscription the headstone has a depiction of an hour glass incised thereon



Basically the Marshalsea was a place of holding for those who had a debt. The next 'item' concerned a question that was asked at our November meeting and concerned a style of headstone and in particular what is referenced as 'Checked shoulders'. As can be seen the top of the headstone is different! In as much it has what is called 'Checked Shoulders'



An explanation given by a speaker from the CWGC at a recent Sunbury and Spelthorne History Society meeting gave the following 'where burials are outside

the normal dates of military activity, they are not to be considered for a war grave headstone – inclusion dates are 1914 – 1919 and 1939 – 1946.

A further explanation came via Christopher Lodge of the well known and long-established funeral firm of Lodge Brothers.

*Why some CWGC headstones have an oval / curved top*

*This is the standard CWGC design for both WWI and WWII graves in the UK and abroad.*

*The curved (or “segmental”) top was chosen deliberately by the Commission’s early architects because:*

*It has a gentle, non-religious, non-denominational form*

*It keeps a consistent silhouette across cemeteries*

*It sheds rainwater better than a flat top*

*It’s easier to read inscriptions due to light fall on the curve*

*Most CWGC headstones you see will have this shape.*

*Shouldered tops aren’t the CWGC’s ‘standard’ pattern. They usually appear for one of three reasons:*

*Pre-existing non-CWGC cemetery styles*

*Some churchyards had traditional shouldered or “Oxford” shaped stones already in place. When the CWGC later erected or replaced stones, they sometimes matched the local style to maintain visual harmony.*

*Special categories of graves*

*On occasion, non-war service burials or post-war burials maintained by the Commission use different shapes, depending on regulations or what already existed.*

*Family-supplied stones*

*In the early years, some families chose to supply their own headstone rather than use the official design. These often follow Victorian or Edwardian shapes, including check shouldered tops.*

*in short*

*Oval top = the official CWGC standard for war graves*

*Shouldered top = older family stones, local cemetery style, or special/non-standard CWGC burials*

*Hope this helps*

*Best wishes*

*Chris*

*Chris Lodge*

*Commercial Director*

*Ludlow House*

*Ludlow Road, Feltham, Middx., TW13 7JF*

**Forthcoming events**

St Dunstan's Church Carol services Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 6-30

**AOB**

Short Talk (WH) Concorde SST (conclusion)

Next meeting Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026