

Guide to Choosing a Memorial Inscription

Arthur C. Towner Ltd
Monumental Masons

Introduction

Finding the right words can be the most difficult part of choosing a memorial. This guide is intended as a starting point, but our masons are always on hand with expert advice to help you.

It is worth taking time over your choices. If possible, visit the cemetery or churchyard and look at some existing inscriptions: it might help to clarify your likes and dislikes.

Although it is helpful to have a good initial idea of the wording you would like, we will invite you to check the inscription laid out on the stone before cutting, so you can change your mind about the wording or the layout if you wish.

Church of England regulations are strict on the type of wording allowed. The minister should advise you from the outset, but we are also on hand to help. Please see page 7 for more information.

Contact us to discuss your ideas with one of our craftsmen at:

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Layout of a Typical Inscription

These are the elements which commonly make up an inscription. You will find examples of each on the following pages.

Caption

A short introduction to the name.

Name

The most important part of the inscription, with the largest letters. Usually best near the top.

Dates

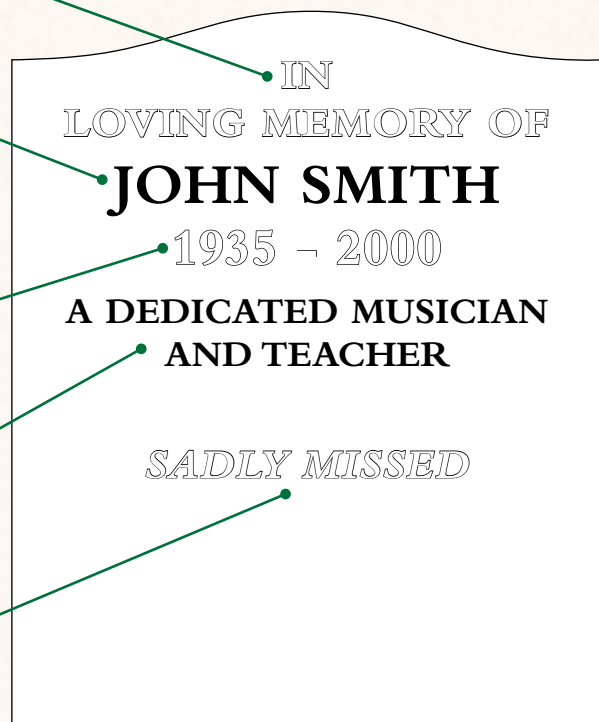
Many formats are possible, depending on the size of the stone and personal taste.

Description

How you would like your loved one to be remembered.

Epitaph

This may be some lines of poetry or scripture, or your own words to express your feelings.

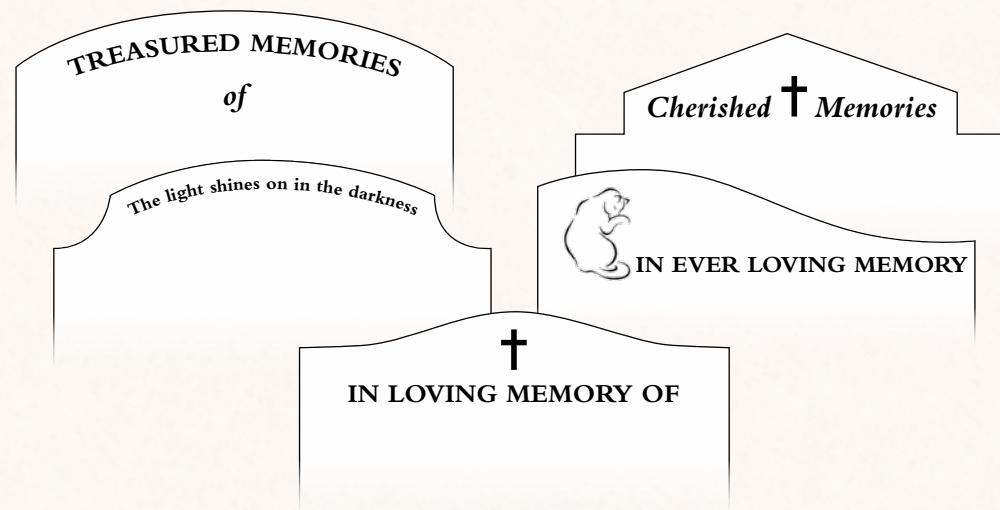


You do not have to follow this format. You can leave elements out or swap them around, or you can design your own layout.

We can help by making drawings of alternatives to make it easier to decide. Please see page 7 for information on churchyard regulations about wording.

Caption

We will usually lay out the caption to complement the shape of the stone. If a design such as a cross is required, this may be incorporated with the caption. Here are some examples.



Name and Dates

Your loved one's name is the most important part of the inscription. We will help you decide how to lay the name out to suit your chosen stone design. There are various formats for dates. Here are some examples.

1935 - 2000
19TH AUGUST 1935 - 2ND DECEMBER 2000
WHO DIED 2ND DECEMBER 2000
AGED 65
19 AUG. 1935 - 2 DEC. 2000
WHO FELL ASLEEP 2ND DECEMBER 2000
AGED 65

Description

You might think of this as an opportunity to describe your loved one as if to a stranger, celebrating their character or achievements.

Please see page 7 for information on churchyard regulations.

HE LIVED LIFE TO THE FULL

A GENEROUS FAMILY MAN
LOVED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM

She lived for her children

A DEVOTED AND INSPIRING TEACHER
FOR FORTY YEARS

SKILLED WITH HER HANDS
GENEROUS WITH HER HEART

Entrepreneur and Bon Vivreur

A GENTLE MAN
AND A GENTLEMAN

RECTOR OF THIS PARISH
WHO FOUND JOY IN HIS FAITH

Epitaph

Short or long, depending on taste and the available space on the stone, this is a chance to record your feelings about your loved one.

Here are some examples, but we can also help you find your own words.

REST IN PEACE

GOD HAS YOU IN HIS KEEPING
WE HAVE YOU IN OUR HEARTS

PEACE, PERFECT PEACE

AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT
Zech. xiv.7

*But O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still*

LOVE NEVER DIES

*He leadeth me by the still waters
Psalm XXIII*

MEMORY IS A GOLDEN CHAIN
THAT BINDS US TILL WE MEET AGAIN

A loved one sleeping

Further Inspiration

Here is a further selection of some of our favourite sacred and secular lines.

True love is an ever-burning coal,
Burning brighter as the shadows fall.
John Masefield

How many loved your
moments of glad grace.
W. B. Yeats

So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.
George Eliot

We are such stuff,
As dreams are made on, and our little life,
Is rounded with sleep.
Shakespeare

Let us sleep now.
Wilfred Owen

And yet is love not less, but more.
Tennyson

In the deserts of the heart,
Let the healing fountain start.
W. H. Auden

The deep and lovely quiet,
Of a strong heart at peace.
D. H. Lawrence

What will survive of us is love.
Larkin

Nothing can surpass the mystery of stillness.
E. E. Cummings

The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want.
Psalms 23

Many waters cannot quench love.
Song of Songs 8:7

Come unto me all who are weary and
burdened and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28

For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.
Philippians 1:21

I know that my redeemer lives.
Job 19:25-27

For God so loved the world that He gave His
one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him
shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

I am the resurrection and the life
says the Lord.
John 11:25

I have fought the good fight, I have finished
the race, I have kept the faith.
Colossians 3:3

To God we belong,
And to Him we shall return.
Quran

Churchyard Regulations

Chichester Diocese regulates all Church of England churchyards in the Hastings area. The regulations encourage inscriptions which say something about your loved one - their work, their interests, their place in the community, or perhaps their personality.

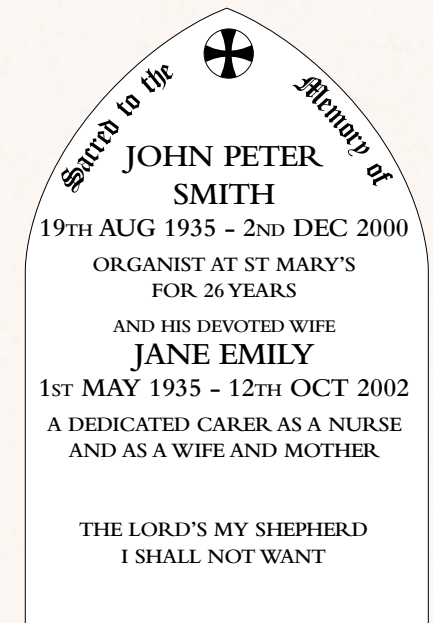
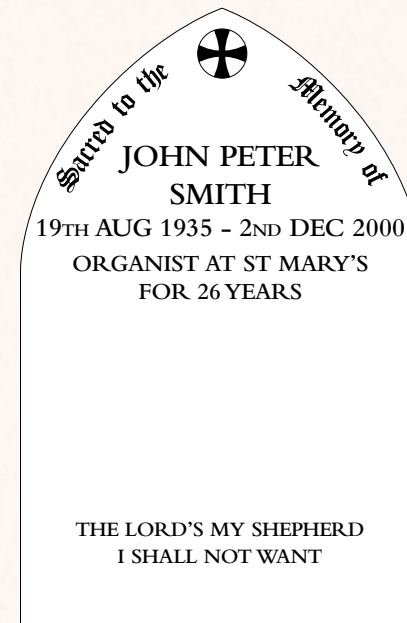
The rules do not allow the deceased to be addressed directly. For example, **“You were our inspiration”** would not be permitted, but **“An inspiration to all who knew her”** would be acceptable.

Proper names must be used, not nick-names or pet names. For example, **“John”** should be inscribed, if that was the given name, rather than **“Jack”**, even if that is how he was always known.

The regulations are not intended to produce bland uniformity. It is worth taking time to find personal and original wording that works within the rules, and we are happy to help with this.

Additional Inscriptions

Although it is never pleasant to think about, it is important to decide whether room should be left on the stone for a future name.



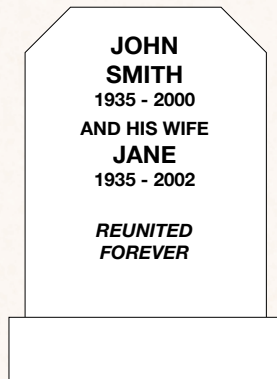
Letter Style

In our workshop, we offer letters cut by hand and by machine. Hand cut letters, which are drawn and cut by hand, give the most flexibility in style. Machine cut letters, where a computer cuts a stencil through which the letters are shot-blasted, are limited to the available fonts. We generally use this technique for granites, which are too hard and coarse to be ideal for hand-cutting.

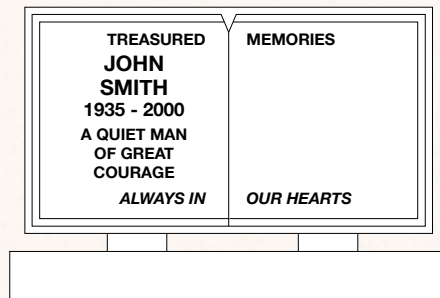
Most people are familiar with computer fonts. However, these are designed for print, rather than cutting in stone, compromising legibility at a distance and resistance to weathering. Our masons will advise on suitable fonts for stone.

As every piece of stone and every inscription is different, we prefer to make decisions about letter style when preparing the stone for cutting. At this stage, we will invite you to come to the workshop to see the stone and discuss all aspects of the inscription.

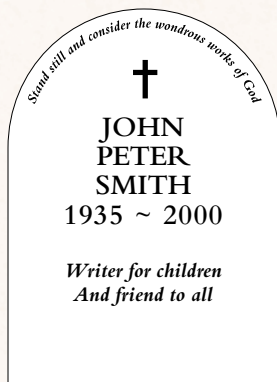
Some examples.



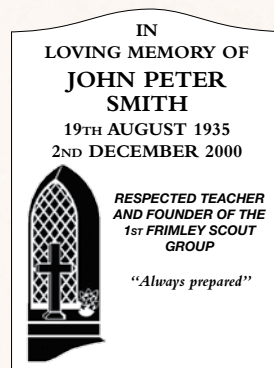
Smaller memorial suitable for an ashes area, with a simple inscription.



Book memorial with room left for a second inscription.



Inscription suitable for a churchyard.



Inscription for a cemetery.

EST.  1875

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