



How to Read a Graveyard: Journeys in the Company of the Dead

Peter Stanford

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Death is the one certainty in life, yet, with the decline of religion in the West, we have become collectively reluctant to talk about it. Our contemporary rituals seek to sanitise death and distance us from our own inevitable fate. If we want to know how previous generations dealt with death, graveyards (famous and not) tell us the history -- if we are able to read them. If we want to know how we struggle today with understanding or facing up to death, then graveyards provide a starting point. And, if we want to escape the present taboo on acknowledging our mortality and contemplate our own end, then graveyards offer a rare welcome.

From Neolithic mounds to internet memorials via medieval corpse roads and municipal cemeteries, war graves and holocaust memorials, Roman catacombs, Pharaonic grave-robbers, Hammer horrors, body-snatchers, Days of the Dead, humanist burials and flameless cremations, Stanford shows us how to read a graveyard, what to look out for in our own, and how even the most initially unpromising exploration can enthrall.

This enhanced edition includes suggestions of over 40 graveyards and cemeteries to visit in the UK and beyond, a photographic tour of Saint Margaret's Cemetery, Burnham Norton and an audio tour by the author of Paddington Old Cemetery, London.

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Stephanie Gilley:

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Florence Davis:

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