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250 years of Jewish burial in Liverpool

Philip Sapiro<sup>1,\*</sup>

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\*Correspondence: [psapiro@liv.ac.uk](mailto:psapiro@liv.ac.uk)

<sup>1</sup>Independent scholar

## 250 years of Jewish burial in Liverpool

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PHILIP SAPIRO

A recent project to produce a digital record of every Jewish burial that has taken place in Liverpool has necessitated the examination of the history and practices of Jewish burial in this major provincial city. The results of that examination are presented here.

While the project provided the impetus for the historical examination, Liverpool warrants attention in its own right. As described in this article, the founding of a Jewish community in Liverpool was among the first post-readmission wave of British provincial communities. Unlike the other provincial communities of the 1740s and 50s, it was located in the north of England. And unlike many of those southern county town and naval port communities, it continued to thrive. Indeed, for the first half of the nineteenth century, its size exceeded all other provincial Jewish communities, including those formed in later decades in the major industrial towns of the English Midlands and North. Focus on the Liverpool community is therefore justified by the size and uniqueness of both its Jewish community and the borough itself. As regards Jewish burial in Liverpool, the project has established that there have been at least 14,400 interments in the 250 years between 1770 and 2020.<sup>1</sup>

### *Historical context*

The oldest extant Jewish cemeteries in Liverpool are the Deane Road and the Green Lane cemeteries, which received their first interments in 1837 and 1839 respectively. There were, of course, Jewish deaths and burials in Liverpool before this. So where did they take place?

To put early Liverpool Jewish burial in context, an understanding of the history of the Jewish presence in the town is necessary (for which we are dependent on Baron L. Benas and his son Bertram B. Benas).<sup>2</sup> The

1 The Liverpool Necrology Project and Jewish Burials database, [https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Cemeteries/Liverpool/Cemetery\\_menu.htm](https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Cemeteries/Liverpool/Cemetery_menu.htm); *Year Book 2020/21* (Merseyside Jewish Representative Council, 2020), 75–8. Unless otherwise cited, descriptions of cemetery usage are based on the author's on-site observations.

2 Baron L. Benas, "Records of the Jews of Liverpool", *Transactions of the Historic Society*

Liverpool (Old) Hebrew Congregation has been located since 1874 at the Grade I listed Princes Road synagogue, described by English Heritage as one of the finest “cathedral synagogues” in Europe. Previously the congregation met at a synagogue in Seel Street. That synagogue was consecrated in 1808, when the congregation moved from a terraced house in nearby 133 Upper Frederick Street. Upper Frederick Street became the home of the congregation in 1789, the previous premises in Turton Court having become too small.<sup>3</sup> Use of Turton Court had commenced in about 1780, and this has frequently been considered to mark the start of the current Liverpool Jewish Community.

There was a Jewish presence in Liverpool prior to this, however: “Hard by, on the south side of Cumberland Street, stood a small Jewish synagogue, the Jews’ first erected in Liverpool . . . There must have been a small cemetery attached, as fragments of tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions have been found in the neighbourhood.”<sup>4</sup> Bertram Benas’s view was that this early community was probably made up of Sephardi and Mediterranean Jews who had intended to travel on to America or Ireland,<sup>5</sup> but instead remained in Liverpool. It appears that there were sufficient numbers to justify forming a congregation in Cumberland Street, certainly by 1750 and probably as early as 1742.<sup>6</sup>

While there is evidence of Jews in the British Isles in the early medieval period,<sup>7</sup> material numbers were only present after the Norman Conquest of 1066.<sup>8</sup> However, following the edict of expulsion of 1290, Jews were effectively absent until the “readmission” of 1656.<sup>9</sup> During the following decades, Jewish settlement was overwhelmingly London-focused.

of Lancashire and Cheshire 51 (1899): 45–84; Bertram B. Benas, “Later Records of the Jews in Liverpool”, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 80 (1928): 150–202.

3 David Hudaly, *Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation 1780–1974* (Liverpool: Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, 1974), 9–11.

4 Sir James Allanson Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool, Historical and Topographical: Topographical* (Second Edition, Vol. 2) (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1875), 175; corroborated by Rev. D. Thom, “Liverpool Churches and Chapels; Their Destruction, Removal or Alteration: With Notices of Clergymen, Ministers and Others. Part II”, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 5 (1852): 5–56.

5 Bertram Benas, “Later Records”, 150.

6 Lennie Isaacs, “Document sets New Date for Merseyside Jewry”, *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1996, 13.

7 J. E. Blunt, *A History of the Establishment and Residence of the Jews in England: With an Enquiry into their Civil Disabilities* (London: Saunders and Benning, 1830).

8 Robin R. Mundill, *The King’s Jews: Money, Massacre and Exodus in Medieval England* (London: Continuum, 2010).

9 Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

“Regular communal life in the provinces – measured by the acquisition of a cemetery, the commencement of public worship, or the establishment of a formal congregation – began in the decades after 1740”.<sup>10</sup>

These tentative settlements were found in the county towns of southern England and naval port towns such as Chatham and Portsmouth. The founding of a synagogue in Liverpool in the 1740s meant that Liverpool was in the first wave of communities and, uniquely, located in the north of England.<sup>11</sup> The “Register of the Jews of Liverpool” prepared by that community around 1816 (hereafter, the 1805–16 register)<sup>12</sup> records 350 individuals in seventy households, which suggests that Liverpool was the largest provincial community by the start of the nineteenth century. Both Todd Endelman and V. D. Lipman conclude that Liverpool was the largest provincial community in 1851,<sup>13</sup> so it is likely that the town was home to the largest Jewish community outside London for at least the first half of the nineteenth century.

The founding and growth of Liverpool’s Jewish community also needs to be seen in the context of the growth of the town itself. Liverpool is a major seaport and commercial centre, located at the mouth of the River Mersey, on the north-west coast of England, about two hundred miles (320 km) north-west of London. It forms the hub of the Merseyside area – one of six metropolitan conurbations in provincial England with a current population of about 1.5 million people. Although Liverpool achieved the status of town and borough through charters granted by kings Henry I (in 1129), Henry II (1173), John (1207), and Henry III (1227), it remained a small town, with the population only occasionally exceeding a thousand for several centuries.<sup>14</sup> A figure of 775 is given for the year 1662 by Edwin Butterworth in 1841.<sup>15</sup> However, growth was rapid thereafter – exceeding

10 Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 50.

11 Todd M. Endelman, “The Jews of Great Britain (1650–1815)”, in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 7: *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 949–971.

12 “Register of the Jews of Liverpool”, c. 1816, Ms., Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool.

13 Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 80; V. D. Lipman, “A Survey of Anglo-Jewry in 1851”, *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (hereafter, *Transactions*) 17 (1951–2): 171–88.

14 W. Enfield, *An essay towards the history of Liverpool drawn up from papers left by the late Mr George Perry* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1773); Janet E. Hollinshead, *Liverpool in the Sixteenth Century: A Small Tudor Town* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2007).

15 Edwin Butterworth, *A Statistical Sketch of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (London: Longman & Co., 1841), 52–66.

5000 by 1700, and double that by 1720, doubling again by the time of the founding of the Cumberland Street synagogue. The population had doubled again by 1780, and again soon after the turn of the century, and again (to 165,000) by 1831.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Liverpool was the most populous borough in England after London for the whole of the nineteenth century.

This growth was primarily associated with the development of the town as a port, particularly the conversion of the Pool into a wet dock in 1708, and the development of international trade.<sup>17</sup> The industrial revolution continued the town's growth, but rather than developing major industries itself, growth focused on the port, on import and export businesses, and it became a major centre for banking, insurance, and finance. Indeed, Jews contributed greatly in these fields, and the nature of business in the town explains the prominence of Liverpool within provincial Anglo-Jewry in this period.

Thus, we can be sure that there were sufficient, permanently resident Jews in Liverpool for a congregation to have been established in Cumberland Street in the 1740s. By 1780 the building was being used as a Glassite or Sandemanian Chapel,<sup>18</sup> and the Jewish congregation was based in Turton Court. The view of both Benases was that the Turton Court congregation was unaware of the existence of an earlier community, and their opinion has prevailed. I am sure that this was not the case primarily because the 1805–16 register includes at least ten people who were residents of Liverpool in that period, who were born there between 1765 and 1780. Clearly, they (and most of their parents) would have been alive and in Liverpool in both the Cumberland Street and Turton Court eras.

The make-up of the community may have evolved considerably from the 1740s to 1780, through the arrival of Jews from Germany and other parts of England (as shown by the 1805–16 register), and the departure of most of the earlier community to other places. Thus, despite the lack of evidence of precisely when the Turton Court building came into use, it is probable that the congregation simply moved from Cumberland Street to Turton Court at some point in the late 1770s, with a continuous, organized, Jewish presence in Liverpool from the 1740s to the present day.

16 Ibid.

17 Peter Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History* (Preston: Carnegie Press, 1990).

18 *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool: printed by William Robinson, 1810), p. 388, quoted by Baron Benas, "Records", 50.



1 Upper Frederick Street burial ground, 1902. Photograph by Richard Eastham. *Liverpool Record Office*

### *Upper Frederick Street*

The Turton Court building apparently had no burial facility. When the congregation moved to 133 Upper Frederick Street in 1789, they found that the premises had a back yard or garden, and this indeed was used as a burial ground until at least 1802, when the congregation purchased a separate burial ground in Oakes Street. No contemporary burial records exist specifically for either the Upper Frederick Street or Oakes Street grounds, though there is later information and other contemporary lists from which records of burials in both cemeteries have been developed. The 1805–16 register tabulates 42 deaths for that twelve-year period; in four cases, deaths of family members which took place before 1802 are recorded (with about 15 from the 1802–04 period).

David Hudaly noted that when the City Council compulsorily purchased Upper Frederick Street in 1923, and the remains were removed to Broadgreen cemetery, “there were only eight graves and it was impossible to trace to whom they belonged”.<sup>19</sup> Fortunately, the photographer Richard Eastham included a single photograph, which he had taken in 1902, of the back garden of 133 Upper Frederick Street in a collection from 1904 (now in the Liverpool Record Office). This photograph (plate 1) shows five headstones.

19 Hudaly, *Old Hebrew Congregation*, 54.

The question remains, however, as to what happened to those members of the community who died before 1789. This was an issue that had taxed Bertram Benas. In an appendix to his “Later Records” he referred to a possible Jewish cemetery at Newington Bridge (adjacent to Wood, Slater, and Bold streets), though he could find no record within the Jewish community of such a burial ground.<sup>20</sup> A close examination of Eastham’s photograph of the Upper Fredrick Street burial ground reveals that the dates of death on three of the stones are 2 June 1777, 10 December 1782, and 26 March 1788. There are only two possible explanations: either this garden was available for burials before 1789, or previous burials elsewhere were moved here when the site became available. The possible burial ground at Newington would fit the second option.

Is there any evidence for earlier availability of the Upper Frederick Street site? The indenture held in the Liverpool Record Office dealing with the transfer of land is clearly dated 14 August 1789. However, English Heritage’s *Religion and Place: Liverpool’s Historic Places of Worship* (2015) indicates the house in Upper Frederick Street as being assigned by the Corporation to Jewish trustees in December 1778, but with no source for this information.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, as Bill Williams noted in 1976, Elias Nathan (as published in the *Jewish Record* of March 1887) claimed that his uncle Lemon Nathan had in his possession “the deed by which the Liverpool community acquired a new burial ground in 1773”.<sup>22</sup> Both these earlier dates are problematic. Surely, the garden of 133 Upper Fredrick Street could not have been transferred to the community separately from the house. Maps of 1766 and earlier show the vicinity of 133 Upper Frederick Street as not yet developed, whereas a map of 1785 shows development there: if the house was available as early as 1778, why was the prayer house at Turton Court set up? Might the 1773 deed refer to land at Newington, or the Cumberland Street congregation looking for additional burial space? The truth of the situation remains a mystery.

### Oakes Street

The site of the Oakes Street cemetery was at the junction of Oakes Street

20 Bertram Benas, “Later Records”, 199, referring to material in an expanded version (untraced) of Rev. Thom, “Liverpool Churches and Chapels”.

21 Sarah Brown and Peter de Figueiredo, *Religion and Place: Liverpool’s Historic Places of Worship*, 2nd ed. (Swindon: Historic England, 2015), 11; the authors have been contacted, but have not provided this information.

22 Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740–1875* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1976), 373.

and Boundary Place, so named because it ran along the boundary of the township and borough of Liverpool. In 1802, this site (now part of the Duncan Building of the Royal Liverpool Hospital) was on the fringe of the town – a semi-rural setting for a garden of rest. This cemetery was superseded by the Deane Road cemetery, which opened in 1837.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the 1805–16 register, two further sources exist for the Oakes Street cemetery. One is the death register of the Seel Street congregation which exists for the years from 1818 onwards. The other is the information held at the Liverpool Record Office relating to the exhumation of bodies in 1904 (and their transfer to Broadgreen Cemetery soon after it opened). There is extensive, detailed correspondence, and a precise specification regarding the exhumation of each plot and its associated headstone. Details of each headstone were recorded in a book, the first page of which notes that: “127 graves were cleared and the contents were removed in 127 shells to the Jewish cemetery at Broadgreen. 79 gravestones, with three others found buried in the soil were numbered and forward [sic] to the cemetery in Broadgreen. The dedication stone taken from the west wall at Oakes Street was removed to Broadgreen 25 August 1904. 204 loads of soil were removed from Oakes St to Broadgreen. One leaden coffin only was found.”<sup>24</sup> The book has a page for each Oakes Street plot from No. 1 to No. 149. It shows that the “leaden coffin” was found in grave No. 102, and that only 127 of the 149 plots there were actually used.

Insofar as burial practices (such as allocating different parts of the cemetery to men and women, or reserving plots for subsequent adjacent burial of spouses, or burying children in a separate area) are concerned, too few of the graves had legible headstones for any conclusions to be reached.

A side note to this early era concerns Dr. Samuel Solomon, infamous for his Balm of Gilead cure-all. With his wealth, he was able to procure land at Mossley Hill for a family mausoleum where he and three of his Jewish family members (and two others) were buried. When the area was later required for railway construction, the bodies were exhumed by his Christian descendants and transferred to the Liverpool Necropolis (Low Hill Cemetery), now Grant Gardens, West Derby Road.<sup>25</sup>

23 Bertram Benas, “Later Records”, 152.

24 “Oakes Street Jewish Cemetery, Inscriptions, 1802–1836”, 1904, Ms., Liverpool Record Office.

25 Gabriel A. Sivan, “Samuel Solomon (1745–1819): Quack or Entrepreneur?” *Jewish Historical Studies* 42 (2009): 23–51.

*Deane Road*

By the early 1830s it was clear that the Oakes Street cemetery would soon be full, so a committee was set up in 1833 charged with finding a suitable site for a new cemetery, and with raising the funds necessary to procure it. It is not clear how the committee became aware of the Deane Road site, or why it was selected, but the congregation bought land adjacent to Deane Street (as it was then called) from the estate of the late Edward Falkner for £900. The entrance to Deane Road cemetery with its impressive screen wall, together with the caretaker's cottage and *ohel* (prayer hall), which stood inside the cemetery to the left and right of the central gateway respectively, were designed by the architect Samuel Rowland. Holmes and Bennison were the contractors for the cemetery, which received its first burial on 5 September 1837. The "Deane Road Cemetery" guidebook of 2014 provides extensive information on the history and development of this cemetery, including biographies of many of the occupants who were prominent in both the Jewish and wider Liverpool community and nationally in the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from a few large houses on the east side of Deane Street, and some development on Kensington, the cemetery was in a semi-rural area, only just within the new boundary of the Borough of Liverpool, extended in 1835. As with Oakes Street, development ultimately surrounded the cemetery as the town expanded. Deane Road was the main burial ground for the (Old) Hebrew Congregation from its opening in 1837 until the Broadgreen cemetery opened in 1904.<sup>27</sup> It continued to be used as a place of burial for stillborn and neo-natal (under one month) children until 1911. In addition, one or two adult burials took place (primarily in reserved plots) each year until 1915, with five final interments later than this, the last in 1929. The terraced housing built towards the end of the nineteenth century still surrounds the cemetery. Since then, little has changed, apart from the loss of the caretaker's lodge and the *ohel*, demolished in 1952 as they had fallen into disrepair.<sup>28</sup>

A number of documents still exist for this cemetery including the Deane Road Cemetery Register 1837–1919 (held at the Liverpool Record Office). This covers the entire period of the cemetery's use, though it appears to

26 Saul Marks et al., *Deane Road Cemetery, Liverpool's Oldest Jewish Burial Ground: Guide Book* (Liverpool: Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, 2014).

27 Bertram Benas, "Later Records", 152.

28 Marks, *Deane Road Cemetery*, 3.

have been compiled from other records rather than contemporaneously with the burials. The “Burial Registry Book for the Cemetery, Deane Street 1837–76”, the first ninety-eight pages of the “Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation: Register of Deaths 1875–1982”, and a set of more than three hundred photographs of Deane Road headstones, taken by the late Sam Lipson in 1979 are all now held at Princes Road synagogue.

The cemetery consists of a large central section, surrounded by a path which is separated from the boundary by a strip along the south (left), west (back), and north (right) sides; the strip is three or four plots wide. Adult burials were focused principally in the central section and right strip. Child burials (630 in total) largely took place in the rear and left boundary strips. The burial register subdivides the child burials into six geographic sections and time periods, though there is some doubt as to the precise location of most individual graves. From 1866 onwards, the burial register shows that stillborn and neo-natal interments took place in an unspecified area of the cemetery. This practice (which may have been in operation earlier but was not recorded) was widespread for Jewish cemeteries of the Victorian and Edwardian era. At least 290 burials of this type took place. The practice of burying stillbirth and neo-natal babies in a different manner from older babies derives from Jewish law: “The infant, if it dies even including the full 30th day, we do not mourn for it”.<sup>29</sup> This echoes an earlier ruling by Maimonides. It is probably derived from the fact that thirty days is the age at which Jews are commanded to “redeem” their firstborn sons (Numbers 18:15–16), thought to represent the point at which the child becomes fully viable. Traditionally, there would be no funeral service, parents would not attend the burial, and there would be no formal period of mourning for a neo-natal death. In earlier times when frequent pregnancies, followed by stillbirth or neo-natal death, were commonplace, the practice of not recording or marking the place of burial was intended to reduce the impact on the family, and encourage looking to the future and not dwelling on past sadness by visiting the grave.

During the entire life of Deane Road cemetery there was no separation of the genders; conversely, relatively few plots were reserved for the later burial of a surviving spouse. Indeed, on only forty occasions were plots reserved for a later family burial – out of eight hundred adult burials. There is also no evidence of the practice of burying Cohanim next to a path or in a special area, as sometimes found elsewhere. Cohanim, the descendants of

29 Joseph Karo, *Shulchan Arukh* (Code of Jewish Law), (Venice, 1565), *Yoreh De’ah* 374:8.

Moses' brother Aaron, had to avoid becoming "unclean" so that they could fulfil their priestly duties (Leviticus 21). Coming into contact with a dead person, or being in the same building or enclosure as a deceased person, or being within a certain distance of an occupied grave would make a Cohen unclean (Ezekiel 44). Therefore, some cemeteries designate an area for Cohen burials so as to allow a Cohen to visit a family grave without contravening the rabbinic regulations.

### *Broadgreen*

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, it was clear that the Deane Road cemetery would soon be full, and could not be expanded. So the search began for a new burial ground. The possibility of acquiring land at Broadgreen arose, and the Old Hebrew Congregation purchased an area of land which, as with the congregation's previous cemeteries, was in a semi-rural area, just within the city boundary, extended yet again in 1895. Part of the cost was offset by the monies received by the congregation from the city council for the compulsory purchase in 1904 of the Oakes Street cemetery.<sup>30</sup>

Access to the new cemetery was provided only from a minor road – Thomas Drive, the dual carriageway which runs adjacent to the cemetery, did not then exist. By 1927 the dual carriageway had been extended along the southern frontage of the cemetery as far as the city boundary, but the small area of land separating the cemetery from the road along part of the frontage (the "New Ground") was not incorporated into the cemetery until the late 1950s. Little has changed since then, except that an area of land at the eastern end of the cemetery has been sold off for housing.

In addition to the active register, a number of documents exist for this cemetery. A chronological register for 1904–45 is located in the Liverpool Record Office. The Princes Road synagogue holds a plot order register for 1904 to the mid-1950s, a 1904 plans book, and an alphabetical register for 1904–95. Only the alphabetical register includes an "under four weeks and stillbirth" section. This has about sixty entries from 1907 onwards, for which no burial location is specified; stillbirth and neo-natal entries after 1950 have plot references in the main children's area.

Broadgreen cemetery is almost 330 yards (300 m) long, split into left/south and right/north blocks by a central path onto which the plots face. Instead of the more conventional arrangement of plots being numbered along the rows, the plot system set out in the 1904 plans numbers the plots from front (nearest the path) to rear.

<sup>30</sup> Hudaly, *Old Hebrew Congregation*, 53.

The central section of the southern half of the cemetery was reserved for infant and child graves. Presumably based on the experience of the number of child burials at Deane Road, the original plans envisaged that thirty files of graves would each be subdivided into four child plots, sufficient to accommodate about 730 children.

Burials at Broadgreen commenced in July 1904, in the south block. From the start, there has been no separation of genders, and Cohanim are buried among everyone else. In July 1938 it was deemed necessary to use plots beyond the children's area for adult burials. The amount of space thought necessary to reserve for child burials must have been reviewed at that time, because, instead of adult burials re-commencing thirty files to the right, only six files of graves were reserved for children. Child burials had commenced in 1904; by 1938, there had been about 120 child burials, and four files of plots were almost entirely full. However, all but seven of the 120 burials had taken place by the end of 1917. Clearly, there had been major advances in healthcare from the end of the First World War, so it was not unreasonable for the congregation to set aside only two further files of graves for child burials. Use of the north side (for adult burials) of the cemetery started in March 1973. To date, about 1700 adult burials have taken place.

#### *Green Lane*

The Liverpool Hebrew Congregation had prayed in the Seel Street synagogue since 1807. On 1 October 1838, a meeting was held in the Clarendon Rooms, South John Street, which soon led to the formation of the Liverpool New Hebrew Congregation. It appears that the "privileged members" of the Seel Street congregation (primarily members of the founding families, who controlled the affairs of the congregation) were rejecting applications to become privileged members from seat holders (the majority of the membership who had no say in its running), or were levying an excessive admission fee. The privileged members were unmoved by the arguments of the seat holders, and this led to a group of members, under the leadership of Barnard Lyon Joseph, seceding from the Seel Street congregation, with the intention of forming a New Hebrew Congregation.<sup>31</sup> A consequence of this was that those who continued to pray at Seel Street

<sup>31</sup> For the history of the New Hebrew Congregation and its cemeteries see Philip Ettinger, *Hope Place in Liverpool Jewry (being the annals and records of the New Hebrew Congregation, now the Hope Place Hebrew Congregation, Liverpool, 1836–1930)* (Liverpool: Hope Place Hebrew Congregation, 1930).

became known as the Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, rather than simply the Liverpool Hebrew Congregation.

One of the first acts of the New congregation, indeed in advance of securing premises for prayer (though an alternative narrative refers to premises at 46 Hanover Street being used for prayers as early as 1836<sup>32</sup>), was the purchase of a small parcel of land in Green Lane, in West Derby township, adjacent to the Tue Brook, for use as a burial ground. The land was part of the estate of Almond's Green House. A cemetery associated with the New Hebrew Congregation opened in Green Lane in 1839. It was a small plot, apparently only 40 by 35 feet (12 by 10 m). It is believed that the first interment took place in 1840, though by 1930 the oldest legible stone related to the 9 September 1842 burial of Lyon Marks. However, the congregation was soon running out of space, and a much larger adjoining plot was purchased. A title deed from 1849 deals with the transfer of a plot almost 250 feet (76 m) deep, comprising 1102 square yards (920 sq. m).<sup>33</sup>

Green Lane was at that time a much narrower road than today's wide carriageway, and much of the original cemetery was located on land which the West Derby local board wished to acquire to widen the road. In about 1860, remains were exhumed and re-interred further east.<sup>34</sup> At some later point further land was added, as the cemetery footprint is currently about 115 by 260 feet (35 by 80 m). A keeper's house and mortuary/*ohel* were constructed to the left and right of the entrance gates, and the perimeter wall constructed. A main path led directly ahead from the entrance, subdividing the cemetery into right and left sections (see plate 2). The cemetery remained the New Hebrew Congregation's sole burial ground until 1921, when the Long Lane cemetery at Fazakerley opened. A small number of burials continued each year until 1933, and the final burials, in reserved plots, took place in 1940, 1942, 1944, and 1952.

The New Hebrew Congregation had secured premises at the junction of Hardman Street and Pilgrim Street in 1840, before moving to the purpose-built synagogue in Hope Place in 1857.<sup>35</sup> The year 1937 marked the consecration of the congregation's Grade II\* listed Greenbank Drive

32 *Ibid.*, 17.

33 I thank Arnold Lewis, the Merseyside Jewish Community Archivist, for giving me access to items pending deposition in the Liverpool Record Office, including the plot layout plan, summary list of headstone names, and headstone transcription sheets (all produced by the 1979 survey), copies of 19th-century land deeds, photographs, and items of correspondence.

34 Ettinger, *Hope Place*, 70.

35 *Ibid.*, 31, 53.



2 View along main path of Green Lane cemetery, 1979. *Courtesy of Arnold Lewis, Merseyside Community Archivist*

synagogue, described as “the finest surviving synagogue in Europe dating from the inter-war period”.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, a fire in the offices of the Greenbank Drive Synagogue in 1965 destroyed the cemetery register and records, and no extant copy has been found. However, in 1979 a small group of individuals surveyed the cemetery. Names were extracted from about 400 accessible headstones, with a further 16 noted as being illegible, overturned, or destroyed. Handwritten transcriptions of the inscriptions on about 240 of the 400 headstones were also prepared.<sup>37</sup> The cemetery has a capacity of about 770 plots, and it is likely that most of the plots are occupied, but either no headstone was erected, or it had decayed, or the plot was in parts of the cemetery which abandonment had made difficult to access. The presence of a children’s area was noted at the time of the 1979 survey, but no observations taken. Given the era of burials in the cemetery, several hundred stillbirth, infant, and children’s burials must have taken place, but there is no record of these.

Although there is no evidence of separation of men’s and women’s graves (or indeed separation of Cohen burials from others), there is also limited evidence of the modern practice of reserving plots for the later burial of the surviving spouse. While the headstone survey was not completely comprehensive (particularly for early years’ burials), only twenty-four plots appear to have been so reserved.

36 Joseph Mirwitch, “Greenbank Drive Synagogue, Liverpool”, *Twentieth Century Society, Casework*, 3 May 2008, <https://c20society.org.uk/casework/greenbank-drive-synagogue-liverpool> (accessed 17 Nov. 2020).

37 Green Lane cemetery 1979 survey.

At various points since 1960, the keeper's house and *ohel* were demolished, and the main gateway walled across to prevent entry (and avoid anti-social activities in the cemetery). More recently, the pedestrian entrance has also been sealed and the cemetery cannot be entered for safety reasons, given the overgrown state of vegetation and probable unsafe condition of stones.

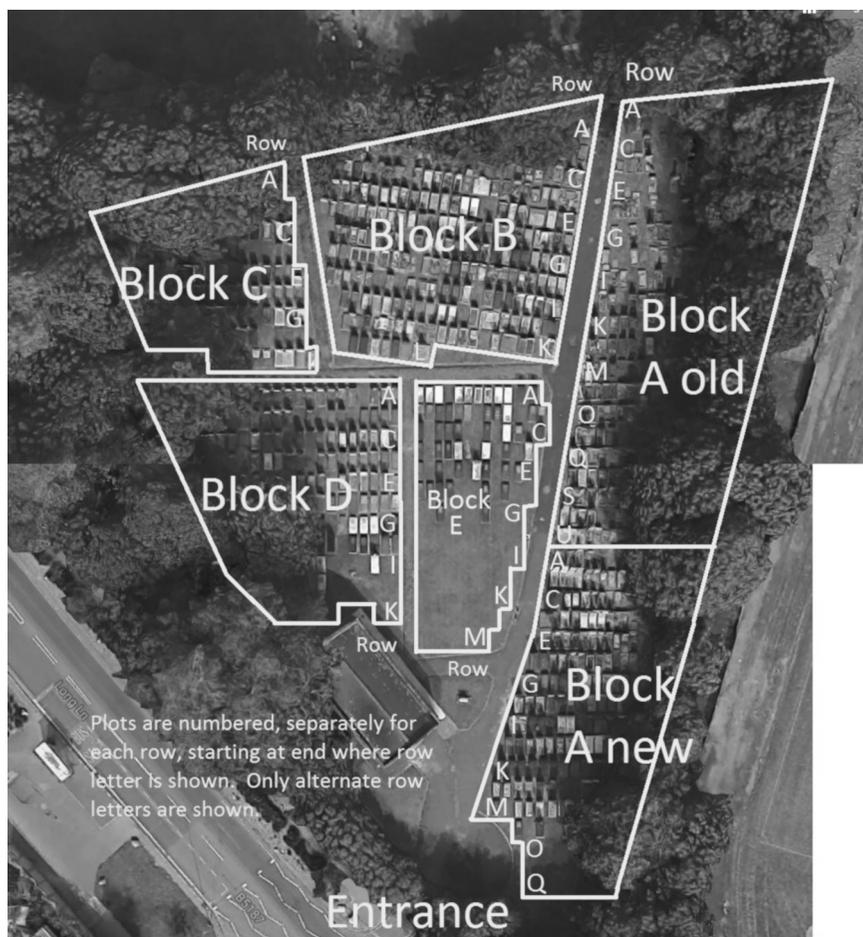
### *Long Lane*

During the 1910s the Green Lane cemetery was approaching capacity and the search began for a new cemetery, as development precluded any extension of the Green Lane site. Eventually land in Long Lane, Fazakerley, was acquired and was prepared for use as a Jewish cemetery. When the first Long Lane burial took place in October 1921, there were only about thirty unreserved plots still available at Green Lane.

Maps published in 1893 and 1927 (that is, before and after opening of the cemetery) show that the land had originally been part of Liverpool City Council's Everton Cemetery. The Jewish cemetery consisted of a small triangular field, plus a section of a much larger plot that had already been laid out with paths to accommodate municipal burials. In addition, the 1927 and 1956 maps show the position of the original *ohel* directly opposite the entrance gates, whereas the 1962 map shows the current *ohel*, to the left on entering the cemetery.

From 1940 onwards, there was a gradual increase in the number of funerals, peaking around 1980. After 1980, the trend has been generally downwards, until the closure of Greenbank Drive synagogue in 2008. Since 2008, burials have continued under the auspices of Greenbank Drive Limited, generally of former Greenbank Drive members, and primarily those with reserved plots. The fire in the offices of the Greenbank Drive synagogue in 1965 destroyed many documents. It appears that no records for the Long Lane cemetery prior to that date still exist, though a register book for the period from May 1965 to June 2007 has been found.

Pathways divide the cemetery into five distinct blocks (see plate 3) that were brought into use in 1921, 1955, 1975, 1984, and 1999. There has been no separation of genders in the Long Lane cemetery (or separation between *Cohanim* and others). However, in the early years of the cemetery, the reservation of an adjacent plot for the later burial of a surviving spouse was unusual, continuing the practice adopted at Green Lane. Reserving such plots became more popular from about 1940, and standard practice from about 1960.



3 Long Lane cemetery layout. Prepared by the author

At Long Lane there is no evidence of a separate area for children’s graves or infant and stillbirth burials, unlike all other Liverpool Jewish cemeteries operating in the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, of the more than nine hundred burials for which an age at death is known, only four relate to children. Based on the proportions found at the other cemeteries, more than twenty non-adult burials would be anticipated. There is nothing in the extant records or on the ground which supports that number of burials at Long Lane. It must be assumed, therefore, that either such burials continued to take place at Green Lane, or perhaps that all such burials were directed to the non-synagogue-affiliated Rice Lane and Lower House Lane cemeteries.

*Rice Lane*

There was a major influx of Eastern European Jews into the United Kingdom from the 1880s onwards. Many (particularly those who intended to proceed to America) made their way to Liverpool.<sup>38</sup> There they set up their own congregations and *minyanim*, membership of the established Old and New Hebrew Congregations either being beyond their financial means or providing a too modern form of service.<sup>39</sup> The only burial grounds available were those congregations' Deane Road and Green Lane cemeteries, so the Liverpool Hebrew Burial Society was set up to provide funerals at a more affordable cost than non-member funerals at those cemeteries.<sup>40</sup> It established the Rice Lane cemetery, now administered by Merseyside Jewish Community Care (MJCC). The first burial took place on 4 July 1896, and the cemetery was in regular use until 1981; the last two burials occurred in 1991 and 2004. In total, more than 4,700 people were interred in its grounds, including 270 stillbirths, 480 neo-natal and infants below the age of 1 year, and 350 other children below the age of 13 years. Three centenarians are buried at Rice Lane and another 50 individuals aged over 90.

Although we now think of it being located in Walton, the site was actually to the north-east of the Tue Brook and thus technically in the township of Fazakerley. In 1895 the Borough of Liverpool was extended to include Walton on the Hill township, but it was not until 1905 that Fazakerley (and the cemetery) came within the City boundary. The cemetery site was previously a small part of a much larger field, but the building of the Cheshire Lines Railway severed this north-west corner. The 1908 Ordnance Survey Map shows the cemetery occupying the same area as it does today. However, the 1927 map indicates that the eastern part of the site was being used as allotments. Indeed, burials in the eastern half commenced only after 1929.

The entrance to the cemetery is adjacent to the west corner of the site, and the headstones in all but two rows of graves face the south-west boundary. Two paths divide the cemetery into left, central, and right areas. Rows run across the full width of each block, except where poor alignment of plots or the shape of the cemetery necessitated shorter rows. While

38 Mervyn Goodman, "The Jewish Community of Liverpool", *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 2 (1996): 96.

39 Bertram Benas, "Later Records", 158–62.

40 *Ibid.*, 171.



4 Rice Lane cemetery, simplified usage by year. Prepared by the author

there is no physical division representing the pre-1929 boundary line on the ground, it is discernible when viewed in an aerial photograph.

How the cemetery was used is interesting, as it demonstrates the custom (*minhag*) of the management or religious authority of the time. Rice Lane's somewhat complex pattern of burials can be split into distinct periods (see plate 4). The key feature for 1896–1910 was that men and women were buried in the same area. However, plots were used consecutively; they were not reserved for subsequent burial of spouses. In 1907, Rabbi Josiah Silverstone was buried in the row behind the active section. This may have set a precedent for the practice, evident from 1917 until 1930, of burying only men considered to be of religious distinction in that row.

There was a major change in practice from November 1910: men and women were no longer to be buried in the same section. There is nothing in Jewish law (*halakhah*) requiring gender separation of burials. However, some communities have a tradition of separate areas (or rows – see Lower House Lane cemetery later in this article) by gender. The reason is not clear, but is possibly an extension of the separation of genders in certain situations while living, or possibly to avoid burying a woman next to a man who was not her husband. That is another tradition found in some

cemeteries, sometimes provided for by burying married couples man, woman followed by woman, man. The change at Rice Lane in 1910 may reflect the influence of Rabbi Samuel Jacob Rabinowitz who had been appointed as senior rabbi to the community in 1906. He sought to apply more traditional practices,<sup>41</sup> and the separation of genders may have been the custom in those Eastern European communities where he had been brought up. (Rabinowitz was laid to rest at Rice Lane in 1921.) From 1910, the “old” section became a men-only area, and women were buried in the area between the path separating left and central areas and the pre-1929 eastern boundary of the cemetery.

By 1931, the eastern half of the site had been brought back within the cemetery confines and the right-hand part of the central area was brought into use. From then on, the vast majority of women’s burials occupied the new area, and by 1964 this women’s section was fully occupied. Men’s burials followed a parallel pattern: in 1930 use began of the right-hand area of the cemetery; this section remained the main location for male burials until 1965 when it became full. July 1964 marked the start of the use of the most forward (south-westerly) part of the rightmost area for women’s burials. However, from March 1965 men were also buried in this section, and the separation of males and females for the majority came to an end. This section was where most burials for both men and women took place until 1970, when it became full.

Apart from a number of scattered unused plots, all the burial sections were now full. The cemetery management was obviously keen to continue to provide burial facilities, and the area against the south-west boundary was pressed into service, providing two rows of graves facing the opposite direction to all the other graves. This area, together with infilling of unused plots elsewhere, provided for (mixed) burials up to 1972.

It seems that at this point the cemetery management obtained rabbinic authority to re-use the area set aside for children’s burials (described shortly). This is the part of the left area that has a raised ground level compared with the rest of the cemetery and is surrounded by a low wall. It is plausible that the ground level was raised in 1972 to ensure that new burials did not disturb the infants buried below. Few of these children had had a headstone erected; those that did are now located towards the right-hand side of the area, though they may have originally been located

41 See his entry in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/rabinowitz-samuel-jacob> (accessed 13 Nov. 2020).

elsewhere, as their plot numbers are not consecutive. This area provided for the majority of burials between 1972 and 1978, alongside use of a few reserved or unused plots elsewhere. The twenty-six burials that have taken place since the end of 1978 have used reserved or unused plots scattered across the cemetery.

For many years men and women were buried in different parts of the cemetery, but even before 1910 when the genders were not separated it was not the practice to reserve an adjacent grave for the subsequent burial of a spouse. Despite the strict separation of genders that applied in the main sections of the cemetery from 1910 to 1964, it was clearly possible from 1936 onwards to reserve an adjoining plot for later burials in what must have been the most “prestigious” parts of the cemetery, as 22 plots in the front rows of the central and left sections were so allocated. In addition, between 1951 and 1964, 14 plots in the gender-separated areas were used for burial of a spouse. Since 1965, with the genders no longer separated, there have been 13 couples buried side by side. In total there are only 54 couples (out of more than 3,500 adult burials) buried in adjacent plots anywhere in the cemetery.

In the other nineteenth-century cemeteries, the practice was to bury stillborn and neo-natal deaths in an unrecorded part of the cemetery, and for children to be buried in small graves in their own section. The Rice Lane registers include two series of non-adult interments – burials with a specific plot reference, and burials with some form of number that is not a plot reference (or with no reference at all). Many of the former are unmarked on the ground (probably because the families could not afford a stone). Those which can be found are located in three areas of the cemetery: the rear two rows of the left half of the cemetery (in use up to 1921); the rear row of the right section of the cemetery (1931 to 1955); and the raised area near the front of the cemetery (1921 to 1931). The second group (with no physical plot reference), which includes stillborn and neo-natal deaths as at other cemeteries, also includes almost 300 infant (1 to 11 months) burials, and more than 200 child burials mostly aged up to eight years old. It is not at all clear where these burials could have taken place (no headstones have been found), though the implication is that they did not have individual plots – probably a reflection of the impoverished state of many families associated with this cemetery.

*Lower House Lane*

The Lower House Lane Jewish Cemetery in north-east Liverpool is owned by the city council, and administered as part of the larger West Derby Cemetery located further along Lower House Lane. Burials at Lower House Lane are associated with the Liverpool Hebrew Federated Burial Society, which was not linked with any specific synagogue. The society was formed in 1927 with a view to providing lower-cost funerals compared with the charges levied at the existing cemeteries. It successfully petitioned the city council for a suitable plot of land, which the council granted at Lower House Lane.<sup>42</sup> The cemetery was in regular use until about 1991, since when only burials with reserved plots have taken place.

Lower House Lane cemetery is adjacent to the service road on the north-east side of the Lower House Lane dual carriageway, which was constructed during the later stages of building the Norris Green housing estate, in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Prior to that, the current service road was a country lane, and the site of the Jewish cemetery formed part of a field within Lower House Farm. Much of Lower House Farm was acquired for burial purposes in the 1880s, and the main West Derby Cemetery opened in 1884. However, it was not until 1927 that the Jewish cemetery was founded on a 1¾ acre (0.7 hectares) site, separated from West Derby Cemetery by the farm buildings. Over succeeding decades, the remainder of the farm was taken for development.

The graves are arranged in eight sections, four each side of a central aisle (see plate 5). Between 1930 and 1980 typically 25 to 35 burials took place each year; over the next decade numbers fell away, with burial society members (particularly those who had not needed to reserve a plot for a spouse) preferring to be buried in the Springwood cemetery in the south of the city. The last three burials (in 2005, 2006, and 2015) were all of women aged 101.

In many cemeteries, plots are allocated in sequence, sometimes using completely separate areas for men and for women. Where the genders are not separated, many cemeteries allow or indeed encourage reserving an adjacent plot for the surviving spouse. The Lower House Lane system appears to follow a somewhat bizarre combination of some of these practices. Section I was the first to be used. Plots were not used in sequence,

42 Liverpool Hebrew Federated Burial Society, minute books and accounts, Liverpool Record Office.



5 Lower House Lane cemetery layout. Prepared by the author

and genders were not completely separated. However, Rows 1, 4, 6, and 8 were clearly allocated for female burials, whereas Rows 2, 3, 5, and 7 were used for male burials. Notwithstanding this, it was clearly possible to reserve the plot adjacent to a male burial for a surviving wife, and adjacent to a female burial for a surviving husband, resulting in a strange ultimate pattern of male and female burials. It has been possible to identify 316 married couples where both partners are buried in the cemetery. Of these, 165 are buried in adjacent plots, and 8 are buried end-to-end. The others are buried in separate locations.

From the start, an area of graves towards the left end of Section 2 was reserved for stillbirth and children's burials. Section 2 was also used for adult burials from 1934. While not as clearly defined as in Section 1, rows and sub-areas of Section 2 also seem to have been allocated for either male or female burials though, again, with opposite-sex reservation of adjacent plots permitted. A similar pattern can be seen in Sections 3 to 6. By the time burials started to be carried out in Section 7 in 1968, the pattern of allocation of rows or sub-areas to different genders seems to have become

somewhat less clear, and no attempt was made to separate genders in Section 8 (in use from 1975). Altogether, the cemetery includes 1,661 plots; eighteen plots were used for multiple stillbirth and/or children's burials, leaving 1,643 for adult burials.

The only other quirk of usage is that a hedge was planted to separate the furthest right two or three files of graves in Sections 1 and 3. Persons who had married out of the faith, or taken other actions also considered contrary to Jewish law (perhaps suicide), were allocated plots to the right of the hedge, and were thus hidden from sight. Few of the graves in the two areas have headstones, and the inscriptions do not hint at the particular circumstances. However, those who can be traced in the General Register Office civil marriage index all appear to have non-Jewish spouses. Use of these areas had largely ceased by the mid-1940s, and there is no evidence of this practice at any other Liverpool cemetery.

#### *Reform congregation burial ground at Allerton Cemetery*

The Liverpool Liberal/Progressive Hebrew Congregation (latterly the Liverpool Reform Synagogue) was formed in February 1927. Almost immediately, the congregation sought a location for burials.<sup>43</sup> In 1906, Liverpool Corporation had acquired a very large area of Allerton Hall estate (primarily agricultural land forming Oak Farm and Short Butts Farm). At that time, Allerton was a rural area, not incorporated within the City until 1913, and space for burials was nearing capacity in other municipal cemeteries. From 1908, part of the purchased land was laid out as a cemetery with a grand central avenue, starting in the central part of the area, and burials commenced in 1909. By the late 1920s, land towards the main entrance at the western end of the cemetery was being prepared for use, and by 1929 the Liberal/Progressive congregation had been allocated an area now referred to as General 1C. This area was one of twelve similar rectangular sections, flanking the main access avenue. The distinctive style and architecture of the cemetery layout was recognized when it was granted Grade II listed status in 2002.

Each of these twelve areas is approximately 160 by 130 feet (50 by 40 m) and is surrounded by surfaced paths or roadways. The original plan envisaged major planting areas in the four corners of each of the cemetery blocks, but this was never fully implemented. Section General 1C has

43 Bertram B. Benas, "A Survey of the Jewish Institutional History of Liverpool and District", *Transactions* 17 (1951-52): 32.

hedges set back from the boundary roadways along parts of all four sides. As in the other areas, the plots are laid out with pairs of rows facing each other. The section has space for five pairs of rows, with an eleventh row facing the rear hedge. In addition, the layout provides for a row of graves between the rear hedge and the roadway. Following the modern trend of cremations in the Reform/Liberal community, the plots behind the rear hedge are reserved for the burial of cremated remains, and each of those plots (following the style elsewhere in the cemetery) can accommodate multiple interments. Although cremation is not explicitly forbidden in Jewish law (and thus is accepted though not usually encouraged in the Reform/Liberal community), Orthodox Jews do not permit cremation, based on a number of biblical statements and rabbinic interpretations. Deuteronomy 21:23 commands that the dead be buried, which has been interpreted (in the Jerusalem Talmud) as that the whole body should be buried. Jewish tradition is that the body is only on loan to a person, and therefore should not be defaced in any way. Furthermore, in Jewish mysticism, the soul does not immediately leave the body on death, so cremation would interfere with this process and the ultimate resurrection of the dead.

By the end of 2019, just over 200 of the “standard” plots and four of the cremated remains plots in the Reform cemetery have been occupied. Genders are mixed, and married couples generally have adjacent plots.

*Orthodox burial ground at Allerton Cemetery (Springwood)*

As part of the continuing migration of the Liverpool Jewish community from the city centre, firstly to the inner suburbs, and then to the outer suburbs (which had been incorporated into the city in 1913), the Childwall Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1935, and quickly secured land for a synagogue in Dunbabin Road.<sup>44</sup> The congregation was not the direct successor to any particular earlier *minyan*, nor was it associated with any specific burial ground. For a number of years members continued to be buried primarily in the Rice Lane and Lower House Lane cemeteries. However, in the late 1940s the congregation decided to develop a burial ground directly affiliated to the synagogue.

Discussions between the congregation and Liverpool city council led to an area of land at the extreme east end of Allerton Cemetery being allocated to the Childwall congregation. This area of land was fenced and gated, water and electrical connections made, and an *ohel* constructed.

44 Bertram Benas, “Survey of Jewish Institutional History”, 28.

At that time, the area was detached from the main sections of Allerton Cemetery. The Childwall burial ground was consecrated on 4 November 1951, the service being led by Dayan H. M. Lazarus and Rabbi Z. Plitnick, and included the interment of disused books and damaged Torah scrolls.<sup>45</sup> This burial ground was originally known simply as the Orthodox Jewish section of Allerton Cemetery.

As part of the general move to the outer suburbs, Jews were also moving into the Allerton area. Land at the junction of Mather Avenue and Booker Avenue was secured, and a function hall was constructed and opened in 1956. With the assistance of War Damage Compensation received by the trustees of Liverpool Central Synagogue (whose synagogue in Islington had been destroyed in the Blitz), it proved possible to construct the Allerton synagogue, which opened in time for Rosh Hashanah 1959.<sup>46</sup> Again, the congregation was not associated directly with any of the existing burial grounds. However, within a few years the congregation wanted to establish an affiliation with a specific cemetery. Discussions were held with the Childwall congregation and Liverpool City Council in 1968, which led to an agreement under which the Allerton congregation would share the Orthodox Jewish section at Allerton Cemetery.

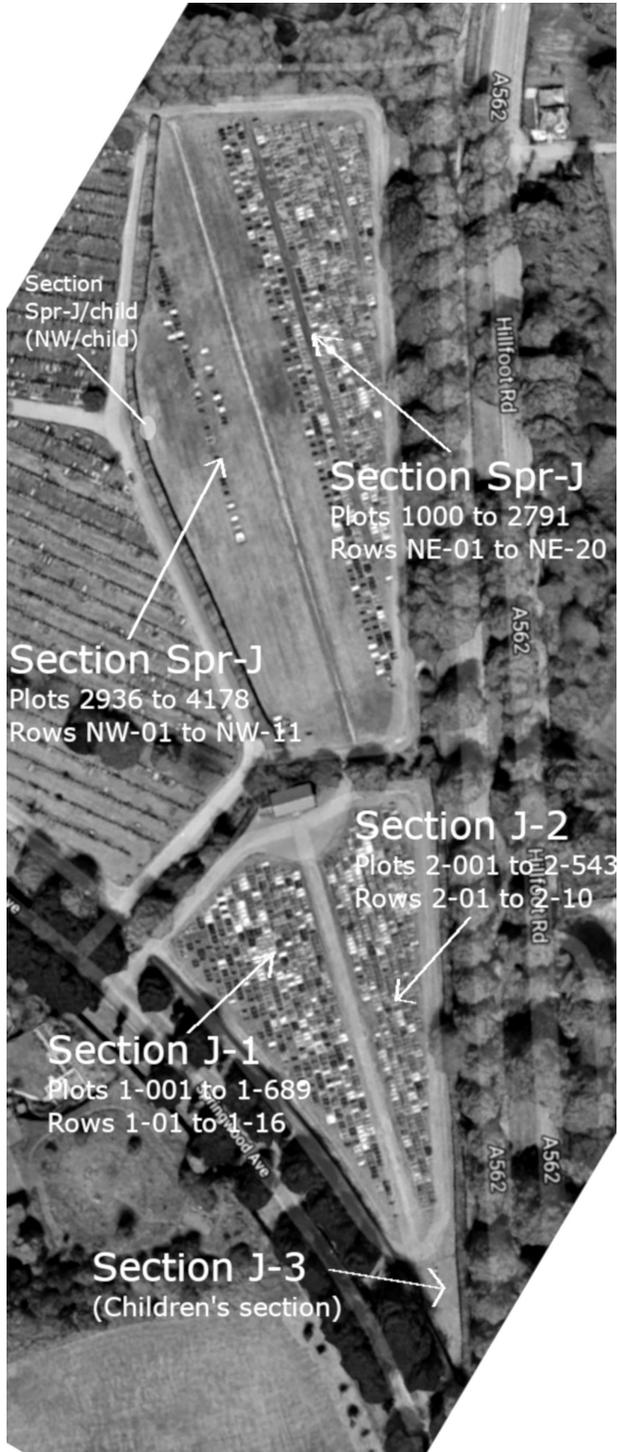
Around the same time, the community's umbrella body, the Merseyside Jewish Representative Council (MJRC), became concerned that the Rice Lane cemetery would soon be fully occupied and there was no plan in place for continuing burial provision for (otherwise unaffiliated) members of the community. Discussions were held with the city council, which led to the securing of land adjacent to the existing Childwall/Allerton burial ground for the wider community in 1969.<sup>47</sup>

By punching a route through the hedge just east of the *ohel*, and erecting a suitable fence, a large field could be added to the Orthodox burial ground without major expense, making use of the existing entrance gates and *ohel*. This "communal" area is administered by MJCC. The combined area is now universally referred to (within the Jewish community) as Springwood Cemetery. Officially, it is split into four sections, visible in an aerial photograph of the whole cemetery (see plate 6). The original southern, kite-shaped part of the cemetery is split into three sections, referred to as J-1, J-2, and J-3. The whole of the northern section is officially referred to

45 *Liverpool Jewish Gazette*, 15 Nov. 1951.

46 See *A Short History of the Allerton Hebrew Congregation*, Liverpool (Liverpool: Allerton Hebrew Congregation, 1965), from notes by Rev. Hyman Goldman.

47 Goodman, "Jewish Community of Liverpool", 92.



6 Springwood cemetery layout.  
Prepared by the author

as the Springwood Jewish section. This area includes room for 31 rows of graves. A surfaced path splits the area into a north-east section with 20 rows, and a north-west section with 11 rows. At the rear of the Springwood Jewish section is a second area reserved for child burials.

The first burial in the cemetery took place in November 1951 in Section J-2. Subsequent burials generally radiated out from this fairly central location in all directions. From time to time burials took place in the front row of Section J-1. While some of these were Cohen burials, they did not all fall into that category. All the earliest burials were, of course, under the auspices of the Childwall congregation. By 1968, when the Allerton congregation began to share the cemetery, there had been burials in both J-1 and J-2. It was decided that Allerton would be allocated all the plots south of a line roughly halfway along the central pathway. Given the triangular shape of the sections, the Allerton area consisted of about 300 of the 1,200-plus plots in the cemetery as it then stood. By the early years of this century it was clear that (taking into account plots reserved for burial of surviving partners), the Allerton area would soon be full.

Use of the “communal” (Springwood Jewish) area to the north of the *ohel* commenced in July 1974. Initially, those buried in this section might otherwise have been buried at Rice Lane, but by 1974 that cemetery was largely full, and Springwood gave families the opportunity to choose a burial in south Liverpool where most families by then resided. By 1983 the Federated Burial Society’s Lower House Lane cemetery was almost fully occupied, apart from reserved plots, and members of that society started to use Springwood as their main burial ground, as did those members of the Greenbank Drive congregation who preferred a south Liverpool burial place, rather than Long Lane in north Liverpool. The “communal” section of Springwood also caters for Jews in the Liverpool area not affiliated to any synagogue or burial society. By October 2019, use had advanced as far as row 16.

As the Allerton synagogue area was approaching capacity in the early 2000s, discussions were held between Allerton and Childwall synagogues and MJCC, and it was agreed that some rows of graves towards the rear (west) of the Springwood Jewish section would be allocated to the Allerton and Childwall congregations. This plan was agreed with the city council, and a surfaced path was laid out along what would have been row 21. MJCC retained the plots to the east of the new path, the north-east section. To the west of the new path, the Childwall congregation was allocated the first four rows; the next row would be held in reserve, with the final five rows of

the north-west section allocated to the Allerton congregation. They started to make use of this extra area in January 2009, and the Childwall part was first used in December 2015.

To date, Allerton burials include about 120 married couples, more than 90% of whom are buried in adjacent plots. The equivalent figures for Childwall and the communal area are 280 couples (85% adjacent) and 190 couples (75% adjacent), respectively. Percentages are highest for the more recent burials.

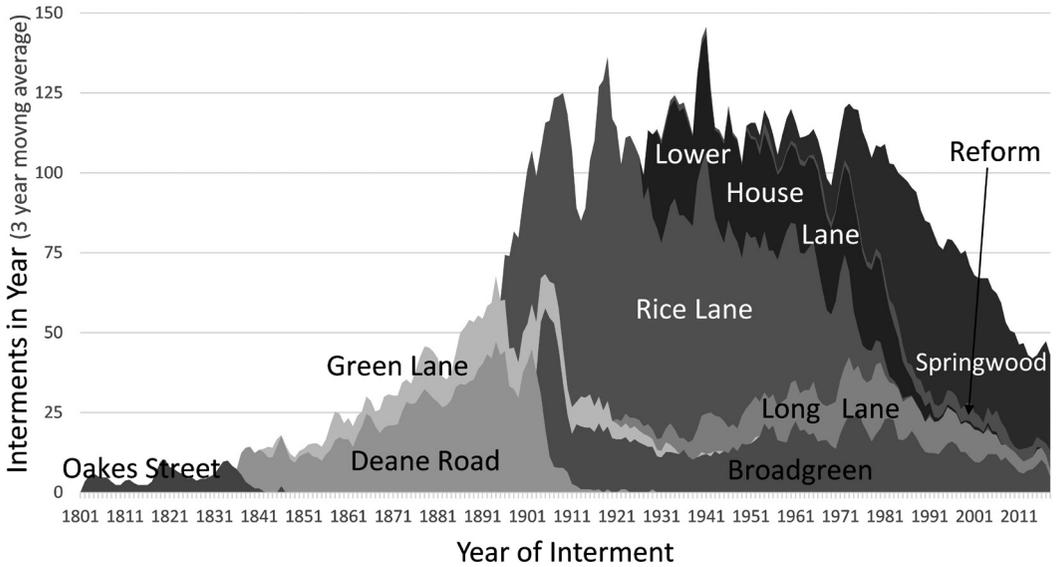
More than eighty men with the surname Cohen or the Hebrew name ending with ben ... HaCohen have so far been buried at Springwood. Unlike all the other Liverpool cemeteries, there has clearly been an intention to bury Cohanim either in rows adjacent to wide paths, or at the start of rows – designated Cohen graves. Insofar as each of the constituent groups at Springwood is concerned, about 60% of Allerton Cohanim, 75% of Childwall Cohanim, and 50% of communal Cohanim are buried in such areas.

#### *Overview and conclusions*

The text has described the history and usage patterns associated with Jewish burial in Liverpool chronologically by congregation and cemetery. In this section an overview of the whole 250-year period of recorded Jewish burial is provided and some conclusions drawn.

Approximately 14,400 interments have taken place between 1770 and 2020; while there must have been Jewish deaths in Liverpool prior to 1770, no documentary or physical evidence remains. The population and its age profile have varied considerably during the centuries, giving rise to an uneven pattern of interments over the period. The graph summarizes the contribution of each cemetery to the total numbers of burials from 1801 to 2018 (see plate 7). There was a slow climb in the number of burials until a level of 100 per annum was reached at the end of the nineteenth century. That number remained above 100 per year until the mid-1980s, since when numbers have been falling. The importance of the non-synagogue affiliated cemeteries (Rice Lane and Lower House Lane) since 1900 can clearly be seen: burials in those cemeteries dwarf the numbers undertaken in the cemeteries of the established Old and New Hebrew Congregations, until 1975.

Major advances in maternity services and healthcare in general over the last two hundred years, resulting in much reduced infant mortality



7 Number of burials by location, 1801–2018. Prepared by the author

Table Interments by age category (percentage) at Deane Road and Springwood cemeteries

	Stillborn	Neo-natal	Infant	Child	Teenager	20–69	70+	Number of Burials
Deane Road	8	9	17	19	2	29	15	1720
Springwood	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	21	78	2060

(Neo-natal: death at under 1 month; infant: 1–11 months; child: 1–12 years; teenager: 13–19 years)

and much increased life expectancy, are easily demonstrated through comparing the mix of burials which have taken place in the Deane Road and Springwood cemeteries, as tabulated here. Use of the former coincides with the reign of Queen Victoria, and of the latter with that of her great-great-granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth II.

At Deane Road, more than half of all interments were aged twelve or less; at Springwood, the median age is eighty years. While the comparison is stark, by the time the Deane Road cemetery opened in 1837, the Liverpool community was well established, and in the mid-nineteenth century the leading families of the community were among the elite of the town’s business and financial community.<sup>48</sup> The health and social advances of

48 Marks, *Deane Road Cemetery*, 16–49.

the twentieth century can be seen in an even more pronounced way, by examining the data for the Rice Lane cemetery, between its opening in 1896 and the start of the First World War at the end of 1914. Most of these burials are associated with impoverished post-1880 Eastern European immigrants. For the almost one thousand interments in that period, the median age was only six years, and only seven per cent related to persons aged seventy or more.

The examination of burial practices has identified a number of differences between the cemeteries (and the organisations overseeing their management). A clear example of this is the practice at the Rice Lane cemetery between 1910 and 1965 of burying men and women in separate areas. The Lower House Lane cemetery demonstrates a modified form of this separation until a similar end date. The burial societies associated with these cemeteries provided mainly for the less affluent, more recently arrived Eastern European Jews, who were more committed to traditional practices than the long-established families of the Old and New Hebrew congregations. While the established congregations separated men and women inside the synagogue, they had, from the earliest days, set aside any separation in death.

Despite no separation of genders in most cemeteries, reservation of an adjoining plot for the later burial of a surviving spouse (or other family member) has only been common practice in recent decades. Two issues may explain this. Firstly, it is probable that a family would have had to purchase the second plot at the time of the first burial, a cost that the majority in the community could not commit to at a time when the household income may have been drastically impacted by the first death. Secondly, many adult deaths occurred at a relatively young age through childbirth, infectious disease, or accident. In such cases, particularly if children were present, a second marriage would be arranged, as encouraged by Jewish law,<sup>49</sup> so a burial next to the first spouse might not be appropriate. As a result of this, the cemetery management may have discouraged reserving plots in case a subsequent marriage resulted in an unused and difficult to re-allocate plot. In the modern era, with far fewer early deaths and, for the most part, greater affluence, these factors are less relevant, and reservation of plots is the norm.

A final difference in practice, between Springwood and all the earlier

49 See Reuven Bulka, *Jewish Marriage: A Halakhic Ethic*, 2nd ed. (New York: Ktav Publishing, 2016).

cemeteries, is the burial of Cohanim in plots adjoining the main paths. Given that this pattern is not present in any of the earlier cemeteries, it might initially be concluded that this distinction implies a heightened consideration of restrictions on Cohen visits to the cemetery in the modern age. However, the opposite is the case. The Springwood situation represents a more lenient interpretation whereby a Cohen could view a relative's grave without coming within 4 cubits (about 6 feet or 2 metres) of any grave.<sup>50</sup> In earlier days there would have been concerns that the Cohen might inadvertently move closer than this in order to obtain a clearer view of the grave. The "safe" solution was therefore for Cohanim not to visit the cemetery (except, as is permitted, for the funerals of their closest relatives) and thus there would be no point in burying Cohanim in designated places.

Liverpool's rapid and sustained growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries means that a large number of historical and modern Jewish burials have taken place there. There has thus been sufficient scale of interment over the 250 years for burial practices to be examined and conclusions drawn. While it has not proved possible to locate any information detailing pre-1770 burials associated with the Cumberland Street synagogue, data identified through this study have demonstrated that, contrary to the previously accepted view, there has been a continuous organized Jewish presence in Liverpool from the 1740s to the present day.

50 See Karo, *Shulchan Arukh*, 2 Yoreh De'ah, 371.