

INTRODUCTION-

Ralph Birdsall (1871-1918) served as rector at Christ Church from 1903-1918. In addition to serving his flock he had a profound interest in the history of both the church and the greater community. He gave us the definitive village history, *The Story of Cooperstown*, (1917) and a fine book about the graveyard, *Fenimore Cooper's Grave and Christ Churchyard* (1911.) In 1909 he had made a detailed map of the graveyard identifying each grave by a number that refers to his handwritten booklet, *Epitaphs of Christ Churchyard*, a valuable resource considering that now, a century later, many inscriptions are no longer legible. This map, his compilation of epitaphs and an index form the core of the current guide.

Since Birdsall's time more burials have taken place; in recent decades, except for the Cooper plot, all interments have been in the two columbaria where only the dates of the deceased are recorded. A few stones are memorials; the bodies lie elsewhere. Newer graves are indicated with an x followed by a number, viz. x01. These graves have been added to the Birdsall map. Columbarium interments are indicated by the appropriate sector, either V for the original wall or I-II (because the wall bridges both) for the newer wall; both are shown on the revised map. Note that the numbers are written for a viewer facing south, i.e., as if standing on church street with chapel and church to the right and lych gate to the left.

Some inconsistencies were uncovered in this project, some relatively minor as misspellings and others potentially more confusing to those searching for an individual's grave. A married woman's stone is either engraved with her maiden name only as in the case of Delos van Nort's wife, Anna McConaghy (more often, the name is followed by "wife of") or by her married name. In rare cases, no surname at all is given, as in the case of Rev. Birdsall's wife, Jessie.

This guide is designed to be useful both to on-site researchers and those on-line. *Sector maps* are available for on-site use to facilitate finding a given stone and *epitaphs and inscriptions* in two books to show what is written on the stone. The latter will be useful for on-site researchers whose stones are no longer legible.

How to use the guide-

- 1 Find the name of the decedent in the alphabetical list and note the sector and grave numbers.
- 2 For those on-line, next look up the grave number in one of the two Epitaph Books
- 3 For those on-site, find the number on the enlarged appropriate sector map. You may borrow a copy to take with you to the churchyard. (Please return it!)
- 4 If inconsistencies or errors are found, please report same to the parish administrator's office.