

Falmouth Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries, Cornwall

Archaeological Assessment



Historic Environment Projects

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Report author(s)	Catherine Parkes BA MfA
Checked by	Ann Preston-Jones
Approved by	Peter Rose

Historic Environment, Cornwall Council
Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY
tel (01872) 323603 fax (01872) 323811 E-mail hes@cornwall.gov.uk
www.cornwall.gov.uk

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Cover illustration

The south east corner of the Jewish cemetery, showing gravestones whose positions in this upper, inner part of the plot reflects their status as founders of the area's Jewish community; and also the semi-natural diversity of the ground with its variety of wild flowers, and lichens and moss on the stones.

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Abbreviations

CC	Cornwall Council
CCC	Cornwall County Council, now Cornwall Council
CMP	Conservation Management Plan
CRO	Cornwall Record Office
EH	English Heritage
HBSMR	Historic Buildings, Sites & Monuments Record, Cornwall's archaeological database, at HE
HE	Historic Environment, Cornwall Council
HES	Historic Environment service, now Historic Environment
ICS	Institute of Cornish Studies
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
MPPA	Monuments Protection Programme Archaeologist (reviewing schedulings)
NGR	National Grid Reference
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OS	Ordnance Survey
PRN	Primary Record Number in Cornwall HBSMR
RIC	Royal Institution of Cornwall
SM	Scheduled Monument
SMM	Scheduled Monument Management (works and management to secure and improve the condition of monuments in the county, co-ordinated by HE, CC)
SM@R	Scheduled Monuments at Risk

1 Summary

Falmouth's Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries lie at Ponsharden between the towns of Penryn and Falmouth near the south coast of Cornwall, on the end of a small spur above a creek, an arm of the Fal estuary. The surroundings are now dominated by light industrial and retail development along the A39 road, running below the cemeteries along the waterfront.

This archaeological assessment, by the Projects team of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council (HE, CC), aims to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of the cemeteries and their history, and promote their urgently needed improvement and longer term stabilisation. The report summarises present knowledge of the site, its past landscape, historical context, and condition. It provides an interim statement of significance (further features or aspects of significance are likely to be revealed by the full ground survey and other studies recommended). It also outlines relevant constraints and guidance, assesses issues, risks and needs affecting the cemeteries, and provides a framework identifying further work required for the development of a full Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Preliminary proposals for actions to address threats and realise potential are included.

The cemetery site was designated a Scheduled Monument in 2002. It was included in a survey of the condition and risks of monuments for Cornwall, co-ordinated by HE, CC, part of English Heritage's nationwide Scheduled Monuments at Risk (SM@R) assessment, and found to be 'at high risk'. A 2010 study prioritising suitable monuments at medium or high risk for improvement if possible under Cornwall's Scheduled Monument Management (SMM) programme identified the site as among those at the highest priority. The need for a CMP was noted in the 2002 scheduling, and English Heritage guidelines of 2007 on the development of CMPs for historic cemeteries have informed the present project.

The main use of the cemeteries for burials spans approximately 100 years from 1780 to 1880, the Congregationalists' ground being rather later in origin, and larger, than the Jews'. Together they cover an area of approximately one third of an acre. Each has remains of a formal entrance and of a cemetery chapel (now ruined) within; and they contain between them over 150 graves, providing rich and varied evidence of past lives and conditions. They survive well overall, despite decay and damage particularly to the Congregationalist enclosure, and their time spans, rare features, group value, siting, varied evidence for past religious, social and economic life, complexity, and natural diversity combine to make them highly significant.

However, while the Jewish ground is generally in fair condition, though subject to significant risks, the condition of the Congregationalists' site is very poor, and deteriorating, and indeed can be described as deplorable. This cemetery has many, interrelated active and potential risks, impacting on highly sensitive and unrecorded graves and associated features with ongoing loss of irretrievable remains and information.

The cemeteries urgently need comprehensive and detailed archaeological recording with targeted documentary research and ecological study, to inform an integrated CMP through further assessment, planning, and monitoring, fully involving faith and community groups and other interested parties. Management actions currently recommended include establishing ownership; extensive, expert repair or restoration of structures and earthworks; improvement of security, with provision of regular care and improved access if possible; evaluation of the use and stability of the associated scarp and roadside bay on the north; urgent, large-scale control of self sown tree and scrub growth, and long-term maintenance or restoration of flower rich grass; and monitoring for any future erosion or vandalism. Encouragement, co-ordination or development of group/s who may wish to be involved in the recommended recording and research, groundworks and care, supervision, and monitoring of the cemeteries, and in the development of any other needs or aims that may emerge, is strongly recommended to promote the long term protection and appreciation of the site.

2 Introduction

2.1 Project background

The present project has been stimulated by the poor and deteriorating condition of the cemeteries at Ponsharden, together with their national importance, recognised by designation as a Scheduled Monument (see Fig 22). The site is recorded in Cornwall's HBSMR under the reference number PRN 38921, and its English Heritage Scheduled Monument number is 15581. The project draws on several strands of earlier work, summarised below.

2.1.1 Studies of the Jewish cemetery in the 19th and 20th centuries

The disuse and physical neglect of the Jewish cemetery has prompted recording there by Hebrew specialists and others with a particular interest in it. As a result, the Jewish ground has been studied in some depth, providing a record of its headstone texts and also accounts of some of the individuals and families represented, their connections and historical context. The development of this study of Falmouth's Jewish community is outlined by Simmons and Pearce (2000a, 101). Barnett Lyon Joseph compiled a list of headstones in the 19th century, published in 1910. This was reprinted with some corrections and added details in 1954. Alex Jacob made a fuller record of headstone texts giving their dates in 1939, and in 1949 presented his historical research into the origins, structure, economy and experiences of Falmouth's Jewish community, reproduced with further similar studies by Pearce and Fry (Jacob 2000).

In 1975, de Lange and Speake transcribed and translated the Hebrew texts on the gravestones at Falmouth, and also at Penzance (see Section 4.1.1), drawing on the earlier records for badly weathered or lost inscriptions. In 1988 a revised diagram of the Falmouth cemetery was made by a group of recorders and collated by Simmons and Pearce. This is published as a table, indicating schematically how the stones are arranged in rows (Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 129).

2.1.2 The Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries a 'monument at risk'

Falmouth's Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries were evaluated in 2002 as part of English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme, a systematic revision and extension of the protection of archaeological sites through scheduling, by Dave Hooley, then Monuments Protection Programme Archaeologist (MPPA).

The joint cemeteries were designated as a Scheduled Monument (Fig 22), and as a result included in a 2006-2007 survey of the condition and risks of monuments for Cornwall, co-ordinated by the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council (now HE, CC) for English Heritage's nationwide Scheduled Monuments at Risk (SM@R) initiative (Parkes 2007). The cemetery monument was found to be at high risk. A subsequent study prioritising those monuments 'at risk' (*ie* medium or high risk) and with potential for improvement under Cornwall's Scheduled Monument Management (SMM) programme (works and management to secure and improve the condition of monuments in the county) identified the cemetery site as among those at the highest priority (Parkes, forthcoming).

2.2 Aims

This project aims to contribute to the urgently needed improvement and longer term stabilisation of the condition of Falmouth's Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries, and to the understanding and appreciation of the site and its history, through providing the following;

- Summaries of present knowledge of the cemeteries, their landscape and human stories
- A statement of significance based on current knowledge

- An outline of relevant constraints and guidance
- Assessment of issues, risks and needs
- A framework for the development of a full Conservation Management Plan
- Preliminary proposals for actions to address threats and realise potential.

2.3 Methods

2.3.1 Desk-based assessment

The project drew primarily on desk-based study, involving consultation and synthesis of readily available historical sources, databases and archives, including:

- Cornwall Council's HBSMR and GIS based digital versions of historic mapping
- Original early plans at Cornwall Record Office (see Section 10.1)
- Published histories (see Section 10.2)
- English Heritage's detailed scheduling documentation for the cemeteries of 2002.

2.3.2 Fieldwork

The assessment also included fieldwork in the form of a visit allowing the following;

- Familiarisation with the site and wider landscape
- Recording of aspects or features of the site where appropriate to inform the assessment
- Rapid review of the condition and risks of the cemeteries and immediate surroundings
- Colour digital photography to record evidence of threats and opportunities, and other issues.

3 Site location and setting

The site is located at NGR SW 179460 33840 on the outskirts of the town of Falmouth near the south coast of Cornwall (Figs 1, 21). It lies on the end of a small spur running down to the tidal mouth of the Penryn River, an arm of the estuary of the River Fal with its deep sheltered natural harbour to seaward, the Carrick Roads. The internal area of the two cemeteries together is approximately a third of an acre (0.134 hectares); the Congregationalist ground being about three times as large as the Jewish plot.

The area surrounding the cemeteries, known as Ponsharden, is now largely re-developed for light industrial and retail use along the former turnpike road (now the A39) running between the north of the site and the tidal Penryn River, this linking the post-medieval coastal town and docks of Falmouth and the earlier creekside borough and port of Penryn. (A second World War pillbox just south west of the cemeteries, recorded in the HBSMR, reflects the proximity of the spur to the waterway and the important land route beside it.)

The ground immediately west of the cemeteries, levelled by machine and scrubby in places, is currently for sale as development land. On the east and south are small-scale industrial buildings, a supermarket, and associated car access and parking areas. To the north west a relatively recent bypass climbs inland from a roundabout up a larger spur, in a deep cutting. An area across the road to the north east is now used for a park and ride scheme serving Falmouth. To the east is a marina, and beyond this, the edge of a large housing estate.



Fig 1 Aerial photograph of the area showing the location of the site, here visible as a cluster of trees

4 History and context

4.1 Origins of the cemeteries

4.1.1 Establishment of the Jewish community

Records indicate that a stable though ultimately dispersed Jewish community was formed in Falmouth, as elsewhere in Cornwall, in the mid-18th century. A group of Jews, generally well educated and employed as financiers, had lived in Exeter in the 12th and 13th centuries, and some individuals operated precariously in other parts of the South West, but all were expelled by royal order in 1290, as in England as a whole (Holdsworth 1991, 47). Jews established themselves with communities and congregations in Exeter possibly before 1728, in Plymouth by 1745, Falmouth by 1766, and Penzance by 1768, so that in 1847 there were approximately 480 Jews in total in Devon and Cornwall, associated with these four places (Orme 1991, 195; the date for Penzance, above, is that given in Pool 1974, 89).

A mid-20th century study of Falmouth's Jews (Jacob 2000, 50) found that many came from Alsace to peddle clothes or trinkets as they had done there (where they were forbidden to live in towns), initially seeking coastal towns with a busy seaport and hinterland such as Falmouth, then a major harbour for shipping and packet station for overseas mail, and a market and business centre for an area with mining as well as agricultural and fishing trade. Prominent among them were Alexander Moses (known as Zender Falmouth) and his wife Phoebe. He is thought to have been born c1715 in Alsace, married Phoebe there, and arrived in Cornwall c1740, aged 25. Zender was a founder in the sense that he was important in 'establishing the Jewish congregation and providing the community with an economic system from which it could expand' (Simmons and Pearce 2000b, 205). Some decades before his arrival other Jews may have lived in Falmouth but lacked the numbers or resources to form a distinct or stable

group; Gay notes in her history of Falmouth that ‘Robert, son of Jerubbaal Gideon’ was baptised in the town in 1719 (1903, 40).

Benjamin Woolf or Wolf arrived in Falmouth at around the same time as Alexander Moses and helped develop the first congregation (Simmons and Pearce 2000b, 207). Woolf had moved from Holland to Falmouth via Penzance. The Jewish community and congregation of Penzance, comparable in organisation to Falmouth’s though smaller, is thought to have been roughly contemporary, the synagogue there being recorded as built in 1768, though it was rebuilt in 1806-1808 (Pool 1974, 89).

4.1.2 The growth of the Congregationalists

The Congregationalists, also known as Independents, with other ‘old dissenters’ with their own beliefs and practices, separated from the Church of England following the disruption of the Civil War in the mid-17th century and (Barry 1991, 82). In Cornwall they were a small group, smaller than in Devon, estimates of their numbers c1715 showing one congregation – presumably that of Falmouth – and 350 ‘hearers’ or Congregationalists, representing 0.3% of the Cornish population (*op cit*, 87).

The origins of Falmouth’s Congregationalist community needs further study. In Cornwall and Devon generally the movement was strongest in towns and attracted tradesmen, craftsmen and merchants (Coleman 1991, 136). A general history of the Christian church in Cornwall records that Thomas Tregoss, former vicar of Mylor and Mabe ejected by the Anglican Church, founded dissenting Protestant congregations in the Penryn-Falmouth area around the 1670s, and also helped establish Baptist congregations there (Miles Brown 1964, 84, 88). Miles Brown mentions that Tregoss held popular meetings in the parish of Budock, so the Congregationalists may have had deep roots in the area.

4.1.3 Foundation of the cemeteries

The ground for the cemeteries was provided, probably initially in 1779, by the very wealthy mine and landowning family, the Bassetts, who became Lords de Dunstanville. The Bassetts country seat was at Tehidy by the north coast of west Cornwall, near Redruth, but their estates included land at Penwerris, incorporating the cemeteries’ site.

The Jews established their cemetery first, at least five years and probably 14 years or more before the Congregationalists. It is not certain at present in what year they obtained the ground, but it is thought likely to be 1779. As noted by Dawkins and Pearce (in additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 102), an entry in the Bassett estate books dated 1759 records that ‘Moses, a Jew of Penryn, applies for leave to enclose a burying place for the Jews, 50ft square, out of the green plot at Penwerris now in Dr. Turner’s possession....to have an absolute term of 99 years’; but no record has been found of the response from the estate. The MPPA in 2002 suggested that the request was granted in May 1779, interpreting a document of 1829, leasing both Ponsharden grounds for 400 years, as a renewal after 50 years of an initial lease now lost (English Heritage scheduling documentation). This would fit with Dawkins’ and Pearce’s finding that the earliest Jewish burial might be that of Esther Levy, said to have been dated on her memorial stone to 1780, though the oldest stone decipherable at the time they wrote was dated 1790 (additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 103).

The Jewish cemetery only appears on the 1788 map of part of the Duke of Leeds’ manor of Penryn Forryn (Fig 23); it lay outside the manor but is clearly marked and labelled ‘The Jews Burial ground’, perhaps to help locate the manor’s boundary which ran close by to the west. The use on this survey of dashed lines for its inner boundaries, indicative of fencing perhaps intentionally temporary, may suggest it was then relatively newly laid out. A 1793 survey for the Basset estate of the Barton of Penwerris (which did include the site) also shows the Jewish ground alone, named in the accompanying schedule as ‘Jew’s Burying Place’ (Fig 24).

The Congregationalist cemetery was laid out around the west side of the earlier plot, its plan respecting this and so reflecting its secondary origin. It dates from the period between the 1793 mapping already mentioned, and another survey for the Bassets made in 1814 (Figs 2, 25). The earliest of the gravestone inscriptions readily decipherable by the MPPA in 2002 was 1815 (English Heritage scheduling documentation), so it may have been founded not long before 1814. Closer dating may be possible through further research in the surviving Congregationalist archive.



Fig 2 Detail from an 1814 Tebidy estate survey, recording the two 'burying grounds', and marking the walling on the east of the Congregationalist ground, and the entrance on its north east

(See also Fig 25 for a wider view). This item is in the custody of Cornwall Record Office. It is not to be reproduced in any format without permission from Cornwall Record Office (CRO ref AD 4/7/35)

4.2 Falmouth's Jewish community

The Jewish community at Falmouth reached a peak by the 1840s when there may have been as many as 50 to 60 individuals in over a dozen families (Simmons and Pearce 2000b, 218), based in the town and using the cemetery at Ponsharden to bury and remember their dead. As indicated by a mid-19th century account of their history, the Jews of Falmouth formed a loyal group, linked by strong family bonds and distinctive economic organisation as well as religious observances (Jacob 2000). From nearly a century and a half only two mixed marriages are known among them, though they were a small minority, distant from other sizeable Jewish communities apart from one in Penzance to the west (see further below), mobile, and socially and economically active and equal with their neighbours; in 1825 they were described as 'respectable; and [conducting] a great deal of commercial business.... for a series of years in this town.'

Research by Simmons and Pearce (2000b, 205-217) shows how the community developed and functioned, with resident craftsmen and merchants in Falmouth, often living above their shops, and satellite pedlars trading for them through the surrounding district, returning to

restock, meet and worship, before eventually settling themselves here or in outlying Cornish groups. As already noted in Section 4.1.1 above, Alexander Moses (known here as Zender Falmouth) was among the founders and central figures enabling and to some extent controlling this system, arriving in Cornwall c1740, aged 25, with his wife Phoebe. He was a silversmith and recruited Jewish pedlars and hawkers to work for him on foot or with pack-horses selling buckles, small cutlery, jewellery or watches, providing them with goods on credit and loans to obtain licences. In return they would make up the necessary *quorum* for the Sabbath celebrations and perhaps change their names to approved Jewish ones, and in the longer term extend the settled community through saving to buy shops. Hawkers gathered at his large brick house at the end of the week eating, praying, meeting and being introduced to one another and sometimes to potential marriage partners, and doing business, goods being supplied to fill their heavy pack boxes for the following week. On their travels they lodged at particular inns with provision for kosher cooking.

Simmons and Pearce identify 54 Jewish traders in Falmouth in the 18th and 19th centuries, represented in the Falmouth cemetery, and provide a list of six marriages in the Falmouth Jewish community, compiled from various sources – noting that much of the original documentation of these alliances was lost due to the destruction of records in World War II (2000b 211-217). The community included pawnbrokers, jewellers, silversmiths and watch or clockmakers, merchants and shopkeepers in household goods, and itinerant pedlars; trades and skills largely chosen to be readily re-locatable, presumably because of the Jews' longer history of dislocation in Europe. Only 5 are known to have been born in Falmouth; others had come from Germany, the Netherlands, or elsewhere in Europe, or had been born in, or arrived via, Penzance, Redruth, and other Cornish towns.

Among these families researched by Simmons and Pearce is that of the Jacobs, early settlers linked to Zender Falmouth by marriage. By the 1840s they were prosperous and invested in rail and in particular in Cornish shipping and mining. In the mid-19th century their interests included the Falmouth Docks Company, Swan Pool Mine near Falmouth, and the *Dandy* tug used to carry tin from the early Redruth-Devoran railway. Another is the family of Barnet Levy (c1731-1791) and his wife Esther Elias, who rode from London to Falmouth c1770. Barnet Levy became one of Zender's protégés, and their daughter Judith (1774-1846) married Lyon Joseph (1775-1825) who was a leading merchant and founder of the new synagogue built in Falmouth in 1808 (see further below).

The study by Simmons and Pearce goes on to provide similar details and assessment of Cornwall's other Jewish community and congregation, that of Penzance (2000b 222-256). Penzance's cemetery, exceptionally well-preserved, is similar in size to Falmouth's, but the limited capacity of the synagogue there (rebuilt in 1806-8), the shell of which also survives, indicates a much smaller congregation. The cemetery shows strong links to Falmouth with groups represented by burials at both towns, such as the Levy family already mentioned, Hannah the daughter of Barnet Levy of Falmouth being buried in Penzance.

Simmons and Pearce also show how other Jewish communities in mid-West Cornwall, much smaller and more short-lived than those of Falmouth (or Penzance), looked primarily to Falmouth for a supporting religious, social, and business framework (2000b, 262-5). Truro is thought to have had 14 Jewish families in the period 1748-1844, and no more than a few of these at any one time, with a cemetery now largely destroyed at least above ground. Redruth had only 5 or 6 families from the 1760s to the 1860s. Moses Jacob (1733-1807) for example moved from Falmouth to live in Redruth as a clockmaker and dealer in mineral specimens with his wife Sarah Moses, daughter of Zender Falmouth. He was buried at the Falmouth cemetery – the authors include a photo of his grave, recorded as Falmouth 2:9 (see Section 5.2.2 for comment on this numbering system) - and a 1903 obituary of a descendant states that four generations of the family are buried here.

The history of the two, consecutive synagogues in Falmouth which with the cemetery at Ponsharden served its Jewish community is outlined by Friedlander and Fry (2000). The early settlers established their first synagogue in the town in 1766, re-using an existing building. A synagogue with seating for 80 was built new for the purpose c1806-8 in Smithick Hill, then called Fish Street Hill, overlooking the harbour. (The site is named as Porhan Hill in Gay's 1903 history of Falmouth.) It is still standing and is a Listed Building at Grade II, though it has been converted and its original internal arrangements lost. The writers suggest the choice of this prominent site quite central to and overlooking the town and harbour shows the importance and confidence of the community, and perhaps the attraction of views of the port and shipping movements to the Jewish merchants; and consider the building to be very similar in style to 19th century non-conformist chapels.

Friedlander and Fry also record that artefacts from the Falmouth and Penzance synagogues survive, in the Royal Cornwall Museum (RIC), Truro, and in the Jewish Museum, London. Those from Falmouth include several Hebrew Torah scrolls, and a prayer book dated 1752, all from the collection of Alfred de Pass of Falmouth who bought the Jewish cemetery in 1913 (see Section 4.4), now in the RIC's Courtney Library. The Jewish Museum has silver adornments and pointers for the Falmouth synagogues sacred religious texts, one with an Exeter assay mark dated to 1815 and Hebrew inscription naming a Jew of Truro. Also in the Jewish Museum is Falmouth's wooden Decalogue painted with the Ten Commandments in Hebrew.

4.3 The Congregationalists

The Congregationalists or Independents as they were also known remained a very small minority in Cornwall for most of the 18th century, but increased in number with other Nonconformists in the later 18th and early 19th centuries, so that by the 1851 census, at their peak, they formed 6.4% of Falmouth's population (English Heritage scheduling documentation). Many congregations were set up in Cornish villages during this period, and a Cornwall Association of Congregational Churches was established at Tregony at the head of the Roseland peninsula which forms the eastern side of the Fal opposite Falmouth, to promote links between the groups (Miles Brown 1964, 87). In Cornwall as a whole there were 33 Independent churches by 1821 (*ibid*), and 37 by the 1851 census, when there were nearly 10,000 (9,965) Independent 'hearers' or members of congregations (Coleman 1991, 138).

Further study is needed to provide a record of the Congregationalists represented in the cemetery at Ponsharden comparable to that achieved for the Jewish community here. They are known to have had meeting houses or chapels at Penryn as well as Falmouth. A history of Falmouth records a Congregationalist chapel made in 1715 and enlarged in 1789, and also an Independent Chapel built in Prince Street in 1713-1715 (Gay 1903, 230). Pigot's Directory of 1823, which does not include an Independent, or Congregationalist, meeting house amongst the chapels it records at Falmouth, does note one at Penryn. The 1913 Penwerris sales particulars specify that a lease for 400 years from May 28th 1829 for 'The Independent Burial Ground' was granted to William Tucker and others for the burial of persons of the 'religious Independent congregations' at Penryn and Falmouth. As well as being convenient for use by their groups in the towns to either side, Ponsharden may have had old associations with the Congregationalists through the siting of a meeting-house on the Falmouth-Penryn road, referred to in a document of 1718 (a 19th century copy of this survives at CRO, ref X850/9).

The MPPA recording the cemetery in 2002 noted that the inscriptions on its graves often state the place of origin of the community, including the Roseland peninsula across the Fal estuary as well as Falmouth and neighbouring Penryn and Flushing; and their trades or professions, including at least one Congregationalist minister and several surgeons, such as John Symons buried in 1837.

4.4 Disuse and decline of the cemeteries

Communities of around a hundred Jews survive in Plymouth and Exeter (Orme 1991, 195) but the Jewish community at Falmouth dispersed from the mid 19th century due to the withdrawal of the packet service in 1850 causing a severe and sharp decline in the local economy, and other factors including the introduction of the telegraph system which limited the necessity for ships to await orders in the harbour, outbreaks of cholera, and fires (Simmons and Pearce 2000b, 218-221). The Falmouth synagogue was closed when Samuel Jacob left with his family for London in 1880 and only a few Jewish traders remained, Nathan Vos, who died in 1913, being the last to be buried in their cemetery.

The cemetery soon fell into neglect. An appeal launched in 1889 by a Jewish London solicitor raised funds for its restoration, but there is evidence from 1896 that it proved difficult to secure the necessary care (Dawkins and Pearce, additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 103-104). Alfred de Pass, the entrepreneur, art patron and collector, and Falmouth resident, bought the cemetery on the sale of the Penwerris estate in 1913, paid for maintenance, and gave permission for the last Jewish burial, isolated in time, in the same year (*ibid*). De Pass left a legacy for the cemetery on his death in 1952, but from the mid 20th century the ground was largely neglected.

The Congregationalists fell away from the later 19th century, the Congregational and English Presbyterian Church finally uniting nationally in 1972 to form the United Reform Church (Orme 1991, 191), though the decline of the Falmouth group like much of its history remains relatively obscure at present in terms of published research. As with the Jewish ground, the last regular use of their Falmouth cemetery is dated to the 1880s, with one later grave, in this case that of Alfred and Elizabeth Cook buried in 1903 and 1912 (Fig 3).



Fig 3 Headstone in the south east corner of the Congregationalist cemetery marking some of the last burials in the joint grounds, isolated in time from the main period of use, as shown by the more modern design

5 Archaeology and landscape setting

5.1 The joint cemeteries

The Ponsharden area within which the cemeteries lie, though now predominantly modern and urban in character, is part of an extensive tract of land farmed in the medieval period and probably in prehistory. The sheltered setting overlooking the Penryn Creek can be expected to have attracted human activity particularly perhaps in the later prehistoric era and Roman period, when the Fal estuary is known from finds elsewhere to have been a focus for waterborne trade, and also for ritual activity.

There are no prehistoric remains recorded in the vicinity of the site in Cornwall's HBSMR. However at the north end of the shared boundary between the cemeteries, mostly on the Congregationalist side, is a mound with a flattish top, obscured by vegetation but apparently roughly rounded, and measuring approximately 9m across and up to around 1.1m high. The mound is not recent, being covered in well established bluebell rich vegetation (Fig 4). It could be a cemetery feature, but its rounded form and location on the shoulder of the spur may suggest it is a later prehistoric round barrow, a burial and ritual mound. This raises the question of whether the cemeteries by chance incorporate a burial site from the Bronze Age, some 4,000 years earlier; but this possibility needs further investigation through full ground survey.



Fig 4 Bluebell covered mound on the north of the site, on the line of the hedge bank between the cemeteries

Until recent times the area was farmland. A map of the Elizabethan period (as reproduced in Peter, 1903) shows that woodland associated with the deerpark of the high status medieval college and bishop's palace of Glasney, Penryn, extended at that time from Penryn east above the creek over half way to Ponsharden. On the slopes over Ponsharden the woods gave way to fields; the shapes of these visible on the historic maps, relatively long and narrow with gentle curves, indicating they were enclosed from open, early medieval strip fields.

Before they were built over or converted to development land in the later 20th century, these fields continued in use, altered in places, with their boundary banks covered in mature trees recorded on the 1880 OS map for which trees were plotted individually (Fig 27). The low lying field below the west side of the cemeteries' spur, visible from much of the Jews' plot and part of the Congregationalists' (the ground sloping this way as well as slanting northwards) was probably marshy grassland, being named as 'Moor' and classed as pasture rather than cultivable land in the 1840 tithe schedule.

Some traces of the earlier fields are visible on the site itself. The boundary forming the west side of the Congregationalist cemetery re-uses an earlier field boundary shown on the historic mapping, probably late medieval in origin (Fig 5). It may have continued down to meet the road and creek below, before incorporation in the Jewish cemetery. The south boundary of the Jewish plot as shown on the detailed 1840 and 1880 mapping (Figs 26, 27) does take a slightly different course to either side of the earlier boundary's projected line, suggesting it straddles it; and archaeological evidence to support this is visible on the site where a break of slope runs across the Jewish ground.



Fig 5 Hedge bank on the west of the Congregationalist ground, a re-used early field boundary, supporting oaks marked on the 1880 OS map which records individual large trees

The 1880 OS map (Fig 27) shows a trackway running below the boundary along the west of the Congregationalist ground, which appears to swing west from the south west corner of the cemeteries to respect them, leaving what appears to be a truncated section of the track continuing on its original line to stop at the centre of the south edge of the Jewish ground. This might suggest that the trackway, like the boundary forming its east side discussed above, once continued down the spur, and was incorporated in the Jewish cemetery there; though on the ground this seems less likely as the ground level on the possible truncated lane site is lower by several metres than that inside the Jews' plot.

The Elizabethan map mentioned above shows a road on the line of the former turnpike road and present A39 north of the cemetery site, indicating that this route is early in origin. It may

have had a medieval bridge below the cemetery site to the north west, on a stream running west of the cemetery spur (now at least part underground), as indicated by the place-name Ponsharden first recorded in the early 13th century, which contains the Cornish element *pons*, meaning ‘bridge’ (ICS place-name index, at HE). The small, low curving promontory extending into Penryn River across the road, east of Ponsharden, appears on the Elizabethan plan; a 1788 survey labels this as The Island (Fig 23), a name which seems to reflect its isolation surrounded by the creek and the road, and which now seems to be lost.

At the time of the establishment of the Jewish cemetery in or around 1779 (see Section 4.1.3), and throughout the use of both this and the rather later Congregationalist ground for burials, the turnpike road was a major feature of the local historic landscape. As noted in the scheduling of 2002, the spur running down towards the creek on which the site lies is bounded by a steep scarp along its front, north, side, formed by the cutting back of the base of the natural slope to allow the widening of the old road for the turnpike; and a roadside bay here is likely to have been used by cemetery traffic. The Helston Turnpike Trust was created in 1761 to improve the road from Falmouth through Penryn and Helston to Marazion, and undertook some further improvements in 1802 (information from turnpikes website – see Section 10.3 - noted by Jane Powning, HE).

Access to the cemeteries was from the turnpike, their two separate entrances opening from it. The precise positioning of the associated vehicle bay, its deepest part lying at the Jewish entrance, suggests it was designed to serve this. The site is also seen clearly from the road, the truncation of the spur emphasising its natural prominence, an indication perhaps of the status of the groups using it within the local community. The roadside location between the historic built up areas of both Falmouth and Penryn would have met the traditional religious requirement for a Jewish cemetery to be situated outside the town (English Heritage scheduling documentation), and its position outside the old turnpike gate with toll house which stood some 270m along the road to the east, recorded on the 1840 tithe map, may have reinforced perceptions of this (Fig 26).

Other notable features of the historic environment during the period of use of the cemeteries were a rope walk to the south east where rope was made for ships or mines shown on the 1793 Penwerris survey (Fig 24) and later historic mapping, which introduced a mercantile character to the surrounding agricultural land; and of course the creek below the site on the north. Before the re-development of the shore across the road, the Jewish cemetery in particular offered views of the waterway and passing shipping, providing associations with the lives and livelihoods of the people visiting the cemetery, and for the many immigrants among the Jews, with their origins and relatives across the seas.

5.2 The Jewish cemetery

5.2.1 Cemetery enclosure, structures and layout

The Jewish cemetery is a compact, quite steeply sloping site surrounded by tree-covered hedge banks, with rows of slanting headstones running over much of its flower-rich grassy ground, and traces of a ruined structure in the lower corner by its modified walled entrance (Fig 6).

The cemetery is roughly rectangular in plan, its longer axis running ENE-WSW with the line of the road below, though with its broad scarp above the road, it measures approximately 20m across overall in both directions. The ground runs down the west side of the spur, and also falls towards the north. Despite its steepness it was not shaped into a series of formal terraces; though the ground level in its highest, innermost corner, on the south east, is some 0.9m below that in the Congregationalist cemetery on the south, so may have been lowered. There is also some evidence for landscaping in the form of a scarp suggesting reduction of a pre-existing boundary running across along the contour west of centre, already mentioned in the

discussion of the landscape history of the site and surroundings (Fig 6; see also Section 5.1). No old internal routes are marked on the historic maps consulted, or evident on the ground, apart from those naturally suggested by the arrangement of the graves in rows; but pathway/s could be buried under turf.



Fig 6 View across the Jewish cemetery west of its centre from its south boundary, showing the steepness of the site, with a break in slope here possibly marking an old boundary line

The ground is enclosed Cornish hedges, the stone revetted hedge banks traditional for field boundaries in the region, with some walling by its entrance (see below). The inner, south and east boundaries may originally have been fenced rather than hedged, as they appear as dashed instead of solid lines on the 1788 survey (Fig 23); they were definitely hedged in 1814, as shown by the detailed plan of that date (Fig 2). The hedges are mostly around 1-1.5m wide and 0.8m high. Facing of vertically set small local stone is detectable in places under the vegetation on the inner side of the south hedge; some similar work is visible in the outer revetment on the north, and larger, laid slabs are also exposed near the centre of this where a recent track has been worn up over it. This north side has a steep scarp some 3 or 4m high running down from it to the bay beside the road, the former turnpike. The ground also falls very sharply outside the boundary of the cemetery west of its junction with the Congregationalist ground, but this area may have been partly cut away in more recent times as part of the levelling of the land below on the west for re-development.

The access to the Jewish ground, recorded with a gate symbol on the 1793 survey (Fig 24), lies in its north west corner, at the deepest point of the bay beside the turnpike (see Section 5.1). The entrance has a simple opening in a rendered brick and stone wall now fitted with a standard modern wooden frame and board garden-type door. It opens into the site of a former cemetery structure. This post-dates the 1788, 1793 and 1814 surveys, appearing on the 1840 tithe map (Fig 26). The site is marked by similar walling surviving to around 0.9 m high to the west, with earlier walling on the east up to 2.2m high made of shillet with granite and shillet slab quoins (the south wall is no longer upstanding). The earlier fabric could represent another phase of the building, or perhaps a previous entrance walling or archway.

The MPPA suggests that the structure at the Jews' entrance is a pre-Victorian *obel*, altered in several phases; this would be one of only two known examples remaining standing nationally (English Heritage 2002). An *obel* is defined as a prayer hall at a burial ground, especially a small walk-in structure devoted to the memory of a rabbi or ordained religious leader serving the community (Kadish 2006, 213). Kadish notes that the cemetery would have had a *bet tabarah*, a mortuary (op cit, 96, 213). It is interesting in this connection that the 1880 map (Fig 27) shows the then roofed building here as measuring around 5m NNE-SSW by 4m WNW-ESE overall, very like the structure interpreted as a mortuary chapel in a comparable position inside the entrance in the Congregationalist cemetery (Section 5.3.1), suggesting perhaps some similarity in function between the two.

Approximately 50 burials spanning a century from 1780 to 1880 with one following later in 1913 are recorded at the cemetery, though not all are now evident or marked by legible gravestones. The earliest headstone remaining in place is that of Isaac son of Benjamin, dated 1790, which is one of the two designated as Listed Buildings, at Grade II (Section 7.1.2). Analysis by the MPPA of the data based on headstone transcriptions presented by Simmons and Pearce (2000a, 100-129) indicates that from 1790, recorded burials number two to six per decade with peaks of eight and ten during the 1790s and 1830s respectively (English Heritage scheduling documentation).

Graves were placed facing roughly north (NNE), so that like the cemetery itself they faced the end of the spur and the Penryn River, visible from the upper half of the cemetery where visitors may have lingered to reflect on the beauty of the water and its connections with trade, and on the distant passages from London or Europe which Jews had taken to reach Falmouth.

The graves were arranged in six quite regular rows running ESE-WNW roughly along the length of the plot, the earliest graves being in the SSW row running from the upper, inner part of the cemetery where community founder and leader Alexander Moses was buried in 1791 (cover photo), and the dates within each row generally becoming later towards the NNW where the entrance lies. Gaps in the rows, and differences between the records of them made at different dates, indicate missing stones; and each row now contains some headstones lying flat, either fallen or laid to protect them after subsidence or disturbance. The MPPA found that most are local slate while some are fine grained sandstone, and most have curved upper edges like those of some of the area's contemporary non-Jewish gravestones (English Heritage scheduling documentation). In 2010 makers' names were noted on several headstones, including 'OLVER & SONS FALM^O' on that shown in Figure 7 commemorating Esther Falkson dated 1863 (Row 3, stone 13 in the record published in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 119); work by Olver also occurs among the Congregationalist gravestones (Section 5.3.1).

5.2.2 Gravestone texts

The transcription and translation of the Hebrew texts for the Jewish cemetery carried out in 1975, with the 1988 revised diagram of their order collated by Simmons and Pearce (see Section 2.1.1), though not now fully accurate and not complemented by a full archaeological and architectural record, nevertheless adds greatly to our knowledge of the headstones, the lives they commemorate, and aspects of the conditions they experienced.

As well as recording biographical information and religious and moral values, some of the texts transcribed from the Falmouth stones refer to the social position, business role or local status of Jewish men commemorated, while the women's memorials tend to stress their home-based, family related standing. These include the following (Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 108-121);

Alexander Moses (Zender Falmouth) '...a leader and guide....His house was open and his table laid for all' (1791)

Abraham Joseph 'He gave charity generously to the needy' (1828)

Rev. Moses Hyman 'From here Falmouth' (1830)

Lazarus Lawrence 'He was free with his wealth; his business dealings were with faith' (1841).

The texts illustrate the continued importance for the community of the use of Hebrew, and the gradual adoption of English to accompany rather than replace it (Fig 7), as follows (Dawkins and Pearce, in Pearce and Fry 2000, 108-129);

Row 1 of gravestones (late 18th C, early 19th C) all inscriptions in Hebrew

Row 2 (first half of 19th C except for no.12 at one end, 1868) Hebrew, and on the 1868 stone, Hebrew and English

Row 3 (first half of 19th C except for no.13 at the end, 1863) Hebrew, and on the 1863 stone, Hebrew and English

Row 4 (earlier or mid 19th C) Hebrew, and on 5 stones, the mid-19th C ones, English

Row 5 (earlier and mid 19th C, and 1860) Hebrew, mostly with English

Row 6 one late 18th C, Hebrew only; one of 1913, the latest, Hebrew and English)

The MPPA records one flat gravestone in the south west corner of the Jewish cemetery as having an inscription in English only, to Peter Johns; he suggests this may have been moved here from the Congregationalist ground adjoining (English Heritage scheduling documentation).



Fig 7 Headstone to Esther Falkson who died in 1863, with text in both Hebrew and English; under the ornamental top of the slate stone is the maker's name, Olver of Falmouth

5.3 The Congregationalist cemetery

5.3.1 Cemetery enclosure, structures and layout

The Congregationalist cemetery is a substantial, fairly level plot, part walled and part hedged, with a tunnel-like entrance and nearby ruined chapel, and rows of varied graves covering the ground within, formerly open or with limited planting but now obscured by self sown trees.

The ground is roughly L shaped in plan, laid out around the south east part of the adjoining Jewish cemetery, and measures with its enclosing banks and wall up to approximately 50m NNE-SSW by 25m ENE-WSW (see Fig 2). It is enclosed by walling on the east and by the entrance on the north east, and by hedge banks on the west, north and south, as well as the hedges on the shared boundaries against the Jewish ground. The natural contours of the interior seem to have been preserved, with gentle downward slopes to the west and north, the diagonal, NNE-SSW cemetery path (see below) running above the west facing gradient.

The wall on the east, distinguished from the hedges elsewhere on the 1814 survey (Fig 2), has a high quality finish, possibly because it fronted the grounds of the mansion of Ashfield (see Fig 26). It is 0.5m (20") wide and 1.25m (4') high, and is made of laid medium sized local rubble slabs with an earth or subsoil core and lime pointing, and a coping of dressed granites with rounded backs (Fig 15). The coping stones each measure 0.9m along the wall by 0.5m and are 7.5cm deep at their edges, 15cm deep at their centres (3' x 20", and 3" to 6").

The hedge banks on the other sides resemble those of the Jewish ground, apart from that on the west, the re-used earlier field boundary, which is rather more substantial, around 2m high wide and 1m high, with flattish top, and has large mature oak and at least one stump, likely to be among the trees recorded here on the 1880 map (Fig 27). This western bank has a drainage ditch along its inner side, 0.9m wide and 0.5m deep (Fig 5). The walling added to the lower part of the scarp on the north, to enhance the entrance, extends some 2m either side of the gateway (Fig 8). It is made of laid granite slabs with larger, dressed granite quoins. The stonework east of the entrance has been altered relatively recently by part incorporation in a tall, modern style granite revetment extending further east along the re-modelled roadside.

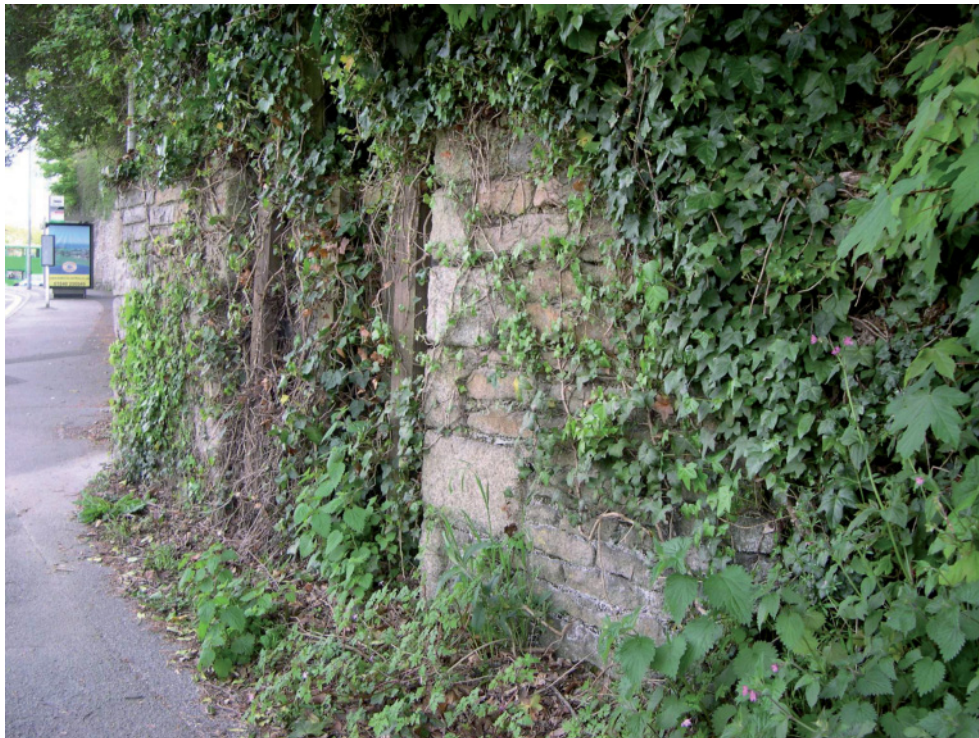


Fig 8 Ivy covered walling flanking the derelict Congregationalists' entrance on the north east of the cemeteries

The Congregationalists' entrance itself, in the north east corner of their ground at the east end of the bay beside the former turnpike road, has a round headed brick archway with remains of a wooden door, and a flight of cut granite steps 1.2m (4") across rising from this between revetment walls of laid rubble shillet, with more regular slabs forming the upper course, and rab or earth mortar and lime pointing (Fig 18). The door is traditionally made with broad timber and likely to be original. It is part broken away and dilapidated but measures 1.8m across its full width (it is not clear whether there were two leaves, as it is broken in the centre) and 2.6m high. Peeling old paint in several old colours is visible, with the ghost of a tapering iron hinge, now displaced or missing, within this on the west outer side of the door.

By the top of the steps is a ruined building on the east of the cemetery, interpreted as a mortuary chapel (English Heritage scheduling documentation). This is rectangular in plan, measuring like the ruin in the Jewish ground around 5m NNE-SSW by 4m WNW-ESE overall (see Section 5.3.1). Its walling of brick and laid shillet slabs with lime render stands up to around 1.5m high in places but is obscured by ivy and a large fallen tree lying across it (Fig 9). The MPPA in 2002 recorded traces of one or two openings.



Fig 9 Ruined mortuary chapel at the head of the steps into the Congregationalist ground, with walling obscured by ivy, and overhung by trees, one of which has recently fallen over the entrance steps (foreground)

A mound in the other 'front' corner of the ground, on the north west, could also be remains of a cemetery structure, but as it appears to lie on the line of the boundary against the Jewish plot, extending slightly into the latter, it could be an earlier earthwork (see Section 5.1, and Fig 4). Survey is needed to investigate this feature.

A path extends through the cemetery from the chapel on the north east, running south west diagonally across the ground. This is marked on the large scale historic OS maps (Figs 2, 27) and would seem to be original. Where exposed by erosion south of the chapel it is 1m wide and defined by edging 0.1 to 0.2m high, with lime mortared shillet visible along the east side and brick on the west.

Within the cemetery there are over 100 graves. The full number is very difficult to determine on the ground; the MPPA in 2002 found around 65 with *in-situ* gravestones or more elaborate memorials, and ten with fallen or displaced stones, the others visible as low mounds (English Heritage scheduling documentation). As in the Jewish ground graves are aligned NNE-SSW and lie in rows running ESE-WNW, now much disturbed by trees. Gaps in the rows, grave shaped low mounds, and damaged or displaced headstones suggest there may be many unmarked graves, some at least originally marked. Two open grave pits were noted in 2010, one south of the ruined building and the other near the centre of the ground.

The grave structures show considerable variety in their forms, styles and materials, several having granite kerbing and iron railing, and a plinth or a box like structure within often of imported white freestone slabs, though these are now badly damaged (Fig 10). A fallen cross sculpture, moss covered but probably of granite, lies by the south east corner of the Jewish plot (Fig 17). In the south east of the Congregationalist ground is the relatively recent grave of the Cooks, a slab of polished granite with an angular top (Fig 3). Most grave markers are headstones of local slate, with curving ornate tops, and sometimes intricate lettering or incised decoration. Makers' names are carved on some stones. The Snell and Browning headstone of 1813 on the east near the centre of the ground was made by 'OLVER FALM^O' a firm which also supplied at least one stone in the Jewish cemetery (Section 5.2.1). The 1815 Jenking and Downing headstone west of this was carved by 'EDGCOMBE FALMTH'.



Fig 10 Ornate tomb of the Poat family, in the south west corner of the Congregationalist ground, damaged by woody growth and by vandalism; the top slab of the central structure has been recently displaced (right)

In 2002, 55 gravestones were found to have fairly clear inscriptions, all apart from that of the later Cook grave dating from 1810 to the 1880s with the majority being mid-19th century; no clear chronological sequence across the ground was detectable, though wide spacing of the earliest marked graves suggesting early allocation of family plots was noted (English Heritage scheduling documentation).

5.3.2 Gravestone texts

The texts of the gravestones have not been fully transcribed and published for this cemetery as they have for the Jewish ground. The MPPA notes that inscriptions often record the place of origin of the Congregationalists, including the Falmouth area, and also the Roseland, and the trade or profession of males, several being surgeons, for example (English Heritage scheduling documentation). Systematic recording was not possible within the time available for the visit in 2010, particularly since as a result of ivy and tree growth, with weathering and other damage, so many of the Congregationalist texts are obscured or part illegible - though these conditions of course mean that recording is urgently needed to preserve information threatened with irretrievable loss (Fig 11).



Fig 11 Headstone with inscription commemorating James Nicholas buried in 1835, north of centre in the Congregationalist cemetery; the stone is now broken across, and has lost its rear surface above the fracture

6 Interim statement of significance

The cemeteries at Ponsharden survive well overall, despite decay and damage particularly to the Congregationalist enclosure; and their time spans, rare features, group value, siting, varied evidence for past religious, social and economic life, complexity, and natural diversity combine to make them highly significant. Their importance is recognised by legal protection, two Jewish headstones being Listed Buildings, and the whole site being a Scheduled Monument.

The chronological span of the site, used mostly from around 1780 to 1880, means that it preserves cohesive remains of that period, a time of great expansion in local industry and trade; it has not been reorganised, disturbed or expanded for more recent use. It represents religious minority groups whose importance in the area was linked to their commercial activity and whose decline is linked to an economic crash with the loss of Falmouth's role as a packet station, the Jews largely leaving the district at that time. Records of Jewish pedlars based at Falmouth show strong links to the rural hinterland, which could be further explored.

The Jewish cemetery in particular is rare, one of only 25 founded before 1830 surviving in the country, and with six others, forms part of 'the best preserved regional group of these outside London', that in the south west (English Heritage scheduling information). It has group value with another, exceptionally well-preserved, Jewish cemetery at Penzance, gravestone texts at the two locations providing evidence of recorded historic links between their communities. Other surviving associated religious structures and artefacts, including a co-eval synagogue in Falmouth, add to our understanding of the context of the site, and so to its interest.

The prominent location overlooking the old turnpike and tidal waterway between Falmouth and Penryn shows well the strength of the cemeteries' communities in both these port towns, and may also reflect early wide support for Protestant non-conformity in the surrounding parish of Budock. Despite modern development some of the former medieval farmland character of the land survives with an early hedge bank supporting old trees re-used in the boundaries of the site. This shows the Jewish tradition of siting cemeteries outside the town; and the positioning of the rather later Congregationalists' plot beside the Jews' is of interest in that it would seem to indicate respectful relations and tolerance between the two faith groups.

Both the Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries preserve irreplaceable remains of individuals, families, and religious groups; and of their funerary practices, and social and economic roles and conditions. Positioning of graves reflects such factors, with those of founders of the Jewish group in Falmouth forming a prominent cluster in the inner, upper corner of their ground. Headstone inscriptions provide much detail of genealogical and social interest. Those in the Jewish ground benefit from transcription and translation of Hebrew text; the lack of similar recording for the inscriptions on Congregationalist stones, together with the loss of legibility of many of these due to their poor condition, emphasises the unique and vulnerable nature of the information represented by these remains.

A formal entrance and associated ruined structure in each cemetery, with some other internal features, provide evidence of funerary traditions, and offer glimpses of the original use of the ground, though the relatively well-preserved Congregationalists' gateway is blocked and may be unsafe. The evidence for remains of a pre-Victorian *obel* at the Jewish entrance is very rare.

The variety of graves, and natural diversity, add to the meaning of the site. The many slate headstones provide evidence of local stoneworkers and their styles, while non-local stones reflect the geological resources of the wider region. Rich plant life now locally rare, particularly wild flowers in the Jewish ground, and broadleaf trees, evoke the hedge banks of the lost farming landscape and perhaps the medieval deerpark woods of Glasney to the west. Mature trees, lichens and woodland indicators such as bluebell contribute to perceptions of time depth; and the tangible presence of natural life contributes visual variety and seasonal renewal.

7 Designations and guidance

7.1 Designations

7.1.1 Scheduled monument

The Falmouth Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries are together designated a nationally important Scheduled Monument, reference number 15581 (Fig 22).

Scheduled Monuments have statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983. By law, any proposed work affecting such sites requires Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and should be referred to English Heritage.

7.1.2 Listed buildings

In addition, two grave headstones within the Jewish cemetery are Listed Buildings, at Grade II. These are the headstones to Isaac Ben Benjamin and to Alexander Moses, in the south of the Jewish cemetery (LB ref 489635).

For Listed Buildings, 'listed building consent' must be obtained from the local planning authority or in some circumstances the Secretary of State for any proposal to demolish or alter the structure in any way that affects its character. Grade II Listed Buildings are defined as being of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them

7.1.3 Scheduling and Listing

Where structures are both scheduled and listed, as in the Jewish cemetery, the scheduled monuments legislation takes precedence.

7.1.4 Other designations

No other specific historic or environmental designations apply to the Falmouth cemeteries. English Heritage guidance (2007; see further Section 7.2.1) notes however that cemeteries in general are an important part of the community's green spaces and are included in the Government's planning guidance on open green space (ODPM 2002).

7.2 Guidance

7.2.1 Producing a Conservation Management Plan

Recent work by English Heritage in partnership with Natural England, *Paradise Preserved* (English Heritage 2007) provides guidance for the conservation management of a cemetery, in particular, for the processes necessary to produce a 'Conservation Management Plan' (CMP) as a framework for this. *Paradise Preserved* shows the need to undertake wide and detailed study of a cemetery to identify and balance its historic, aesthetic, biodiversity or wildlife and amenity value, and capacity and vulnerability to change; and to develop an integrated CMP, incorporating these issues and involving interested parties, to address the site's needs and potential. It identifies three main stages to the preparation and activation of a CMP, as follows.

7.2.1.1 Full assessment

The first step is a full assessment, to describe accurately the cemetery and all its features, develop an understanding of the place and its many interests, its significance, the resources available and the possible constraints. Analysis and evaluation of the significance of the cemetery for the conservation management plan will require research and survey, including:

- Documentary research into written descriptions, maps and plans

- Archaeological survey of the layout, showing all features, landscape design, and subsequent adaptations
- Archaeological and architectural survey of boundary walls, gates, chapels and any other significant buildings
- Monument and sculpture survey, recording architectural design, decoration or sculptural quality, any sculptors' names, and the geological interest of the stones used
- Biographical survey of the people buried in the cemetery – social, ethnic or religious groups, or notable individuals
- Ecological survey, recording the presence, systems and diversity of wildlife – especially rare and protected species
- Tree survey showing any historic planting or other notable trees
- Survey of the cemetery community's views on what they value and how they would like to be involved.

7.2.1.2 Planning management

The second step in developing a CMP is to plan specific management policies and actions, which should always be preceded by full assessment. This would require;

- Programming management work including detailed prescriptions and standards
- Maintenance checklists
- Planning budgets and work programme
- Business planning.

7.2.1.3 Monitoring

English Heritage notes that a third stage, regular monitoring and review of the CMP in action, is also necessary, to include;

- A programme of visits or surveys to check on the condition of the site including factors such as biodiversity as well as built fabric
- Appraisal by visitors of the developing character of the cemetery and of the works undertaken to care for it.

7.2.2 Treatment of human burials

Any proposals for ground disturbing works (such as tree control) must take full account of all legal requirements, current guidance and best practice relating to the treatment of human remains; particularly as the Congregationalist cemetery includes ground, in urgent need of restoration works, where graves no longer marked on the surface may be present. Human remains require the greatest care and due reverence. Any predictable impact upon them must be avoided, and should any be disturbed, appropriate procedures must be adopted. As noted recently for HE in the context of recording elsewhere in Cornwall (Andy Jones 2008, project design for work at Bodmin Methodist Church), these are set out in *Human Bone from Archaeological Sites* (Mays 2002); *Guidance for best practise for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England* (Mays 2005) and the IfA Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains (Brickley and McKinley 2004).

8 Management issues and threats

The following Section 8.1 provides a general picture of the condition and character of the cemeteries as they may be experienced by a visitor today. In the next Section, 8.2, the issues relating to their management are identified, and explored in detail. Section 8.3 then sets out the evidence for current damage and ongoing risks to the site.

8.1 Summary of present character and management of the cemeteries

The joint cemeteries today form a reservoir full of historic and natural interest in a local environment dominated by modern development and traffic noise; rich and diverse, but largely hidden, neglected, and threatened.

To some extent the hidden nature of the cemeteries reflects their original, designed, enclosed character. The scarp above the road, dating from the improvement of the latter to form a turnpike in the 18th century, is high, and this with the natural elevation of the cemeteries on a spur conceals much of the interior of the site, though some headstones in the steeper Jewish ground can be glimpsed from below particularly when the trees on the scarp are not in leaf.

However the ‘front’, north boundary is now difficult to identify as a feature of historic significance, perhaps surprisingly so, given that it fronts a busy main road. The banks are shrouded in scrub and ivy, and slumped or worn in places, and the impact of the walling by the Congregationalist entrance is reduced by its incorporation in a high modern stone revetment extending to the east (Fig 8). The separate cemetery entrances are obscured – the Congregationalists’ once rather dramatic tunnel-like gateway now boarded up and left to dereliction, and the Jews’ entrance modified with its simple modern garden-style door and a bulky humming gas installation to one side (Figs 8, 13).

The other, upper boundaries of the site are obscured and difficult to identify or access, ruinous, worn down, or overgrown, and surrounded by the rear sides of industrial units, waste ground, or fenced development land (Fig 12).

Within the site, there is a great contrast between the two cemeteries in terms of the condition and stability of their remains, and of the quality of visitors’ experiences, due to differences in the management of the grounds.

The vegetation across the Jewish ground is cut regularly, at fortnightly intervals, by Cornwall Council under contract for Falmouth Town Council (information from Mr Mark Williams, Falmouth Town Clerk, and Mr Simon Penna, Cornwall Council). As a result this plot is covered in grass, rich in wild flowers in season, above which the headstones marking the Jewish graves, and their arrangement across the cemetery, can be readily seen and appreciated. The periodic nature of the cutting maintains the wild flora, and preserves the sunlit, benign character of this cemetery as a whole, making it stable but naturalistic, disused but clearly cared for (Figs 6, 20).

The Congregationalist ground has no regular active management, though Cornwall Council has carried out several works there for Falmouth Town Council in the recent past (Mr Simon Penna, pers comm), and it is dominated by the adverse effects of neglect over many decades. Invasive tree and scrub growth makes the ground dark and difficult to move around, even to see. With collapsing walling, and widespread damage to graves from root disturbance, it creates a pervasive atmosphere of abandonment and neglect. This in turn encourages vandalism, rough camping and other casual use of the cemetery, with rubbish, fires, and improvised shelters (Figs 10, 17). Overall the condition of the Congregationalist cemetery is very poor, and rapidly deteriorating, and indeed it can be described as deplorable.

8.2 Issues relating to present and future management

8.2.1 Obscurity of ownership

The 2002 scheduling notes that ownership of both the Jewish and the Congregationalist cemeteries is unclear. The legal status of the sites, or the documentation of this, seems to be obscure, though a measure or attempt to regularise it in 1829 is recorded. The schedule entry for the Jewish site in the 1793 Tehidy estate survey book includes a faint, apparently pencilled comment, possibly original, 'No Lease'. The 1840 Budock tithe apportionment would seem to indicate that both cemeteries were freehold, listing the one as owned by 'The Jews' and the other as owned by 'Independent Society', and both as being occupied by these groups 'Themselves'. The particulars for the auction of the Penwerris Estate in 1913 state that the plots were leased to the Jews and Independents respectively for 400 years from May 28th 1829.

According to Simmons and Pearce in their contribution to the recent history of the Jewish communities of Cornwall (2000a, 100) the Falmouth cemetery is privately owned and under Jewish supervision with the Board of Deputies of British Jews as trustees. In the scheduling of 2002, the Board of Deputies of British Jews is taken as being the owner of the Jewish cemetery, though this is not confirmed and there is a complex and poorly documented history of ownership there. The 2002 scheduling documentation treats the Congregationalist cemetery as having no known ownership, and therefore as under the responsibility of the local authorities, Falmouth Town Council and Cornwall Council. (Also in 2002 Cornwall Council - then Cornwall County Council - is named as the owner of the northern strip of the protective margin of the monument, this extending over pavement forming part of the highway owned by the Council.)

The two cemeteries would therefore seem at present to be separate properties with obscure origins and legal status, lacking asserted or apparent ownership. This has contributed to limited provision for maintenance groundwork, or at the Congregationalist cemetery, to general neglect (see Section 8.2.4); and any future management initiatives informed by the heritage value of the site may encounter a lack of owners' input and support.

8.2.2 Lapse of burial function, and loss of local congregations

The last Jewish burial took place in 1913, after an interval of 55 years, and the Falmouth synagogue closed in 1880 (Dawkins and Pearce, additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 103, 104). In the Congregationalist cemetery the most recent use appears to have been in 1912, this being the date given on the Cook headstone in the south east corner for the burial of Elizabeth Cook (Fig 3); prior to that the most recent was in the 1880s, when the Congregationalist population declined in number (English Heritage scheduling documentation, 2002).

The long lapse of the burial function and the associated congregations of both cemeteries adds to the historic value of the site as an embodiment of lost identities. However it has clearly contributed to their neglect, and means that there is no surviving local group with a strong natural interest in the site which might supply funding or other resources for its care.

8.2.3 The highly sensitive character of the site

With the loss or shifting of their associated congregations, the Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries are not affected by the requirements of new burials. They continue to preserve the human remains of past people of Falmouth, which may be of great personal or family significance to living individuals, and represent the varied practices and beliefs of their faith and social groups, and require the greatest respect and care. The known presence of unmarked graves means that disturbance of the ground must be avoided.

Visitors will wish to find a stable and peaceful environment in the cemeteries as part of their experience of this continuity. The collapse or loss of walling or graves is clearly a threat to this, but groundworks designed to redress or prevent this such as control of tree growth may also be considered threatening, at least initially. As such the site is highly sensitive to change and perceptions of change, and consensus as well as expert advice is needed for any works. The cemeteries are also subject to the constraints of the law relating to human remains, as well as those associated with Scheduled Monument status (Section 7).

8.2.4 Physical neglect, and lack of supervision and security of the site

For the Jewish cemetery, Dawkins and Pearce (additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 103-105) record sporadic maintenance since the closure of the synagogue in 1880. Neglect was an issue by 1889 when a solicitor in London launched a Restoration Fund Appeal. When de Pass bought the freehold in 1913 he arranged for its maintenance, and in 1947 his son gave £100 towards clearing undergrowth; and when De Pass senior died in 1952 he left £200 for the cemetery. After that time there has been little provision for care of the Jewish ground. However periodic scrub control and cutting of the grass, both highly beneficial, have been undertaken by a local businessman in the 1970s; more recently by the former Town clerk of Penryn, Mr Dawkins, as caretaker for the Board of Deputies of British Jews; and currently by Cornwall Council under contract for Falmouth Town Council, as noted above in Section 8.1.

For the Congregationalist cemetery, there is no record of systematic maintenance following the cessation of burials, though limited, occasional work has been carried out by Cornwall Council for Falmouth Town Council relatively recently (again, see Section 8.1).

The cemeteries have no regular supervision, and as there are no residential areas adjoining or busy pedestrian public spaces such as footpaths overlooking them, they do not benefit from daily informal supervision by the public in the neighbourhood. The general physical neglect and lack of supervision and security of the site have contributed to vulnerability to vandalism as well as collapse of structures, and disturbance by tree growth (Fig 12, and see Section 8.3).



Fig 12 View across the north part of the Congregationalist ground from outside its eastern wall, showing its long neglect and resulting collapse of walling, growth of self-sown trees, erosion and spread of rubbish

8.2.5 Degradation of landscape setting

The area around the site has been developed in the later 20th and 21st centuries so that it has an industrial estate on its east and south sides with a large supermarket to the south east; a part machine levelled, part scrubby development site on its west; and the altered, former turnpike road between Penryn and Falmouth on its north (Figs 1, 8, 13). The modern design and fabric of the surrounding buildings and access ways, and the widening, materials, signage and heavy traffic on the road, obscure the earlier landscape setting of the cemeteries, and take no account of their character. They form a physical, visual and conceptual barrier to integration of the site with other features of the historic environment in the vicinity, notably the modified Ponsarden waterfront, and to the east the terraces including grand houses for the mercantile classes marking the 19th century extent of Falmouth town.

This has resulted in further isolation of the cemeteries and reduction of perceptions of their meaning and value, leading in turn to increased vulnerability to vandalism.

8.2.6 Limited and unofficial nature of access

The access to the cemeteries is currently limited, unsatisfactory and potentially unsafe.

The formal entrance to the Congregationalist ground from the road on the north east is disused, part blocked and potentially dangerous (Fig 18). Though this ground can be entered through its dilapidated perimeter, or via the recent path worn over the boundary from the Jewish ground, this diminishes appreciation of the enclosed character of the cemeteries, may cause further wear or collapse, could be hazardous, and does not allow access by people unable to scramble over bank or walling.

The Jewish ground's original entrance is still used but the gate has been forced, as shown by broken padlocks and bolts; and the walling immediately inside it on the east, some 2m high, is bulging and unstable.

8.2.7 Lack of understanding of the site

No full, detailed archaeological and architectural survey exists of the cemeteries. Transcriptions with translations of the texts of Jewish gravestones have been published, and these are accompanied by a useful plan of the Jewish cemetery (Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 105-109). However this plan is essentially a partial schematic diagram showing relative positions of graves as numbers only. It includes in its numbering system, marked with asterisks, graves which are either without a headstone, or which have or had one that is damaged, fallen, displaced or illegible; but does not distinguish between these. Overall, it represents an invaluable and very timely contribution to the record of the cemetery, but is not intended to provide a full measured record of the site with its features and their chronological and other relationships.

The history and social context of the Congregationalist cemetery in particular is little known, probably largely because no comparable Congregationalist groups survive to provide the current if physically remote interest and impetus for research sustained for the Jewish ground by the Jewish community and the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London. No systematic recording of the site, or study of the documentation of its community, is known.

These factors contribute to the lack of awareness and understanding of the combined site in the district. Moreover, in practical terms, the absence of a full ground survey makes it difficult to monitor condition, undertake management, and record damage. It also greatly increases vulnerability to irretrievable loss of knowledge and appreciation of features, particularly in the Congregationalist cemetery, should these be damaged or lost, for example through displacement or theft of memorial stones.

8.2.8 A Scheduled Monument at 'high risk'

As noted in Section 2.1.2, the cemeteries have been identified as a Scheduled Monument at high risk, due to the active damage and threats affecting the site – neglect, instability, collapse and vandalism of enclosure walls, building remains, and memorials, and disturbance of structures and ground by tree growth (see further Section 8.3, below). The scheduled status of the site means that to secure its protection legal constraints would apply to any ground disturbing conservation works proposed, and the agreement and support of English Heritage would be essential to the development of any management plan.

8.2.9 Natural diversity at the site

The natural history and diversity of the cemeteries are not thought to have been systematically studied or recorded. Natural features and forces combine with human activity to shape the historic environment, and will be affected both by present care or benign neglect, and by any future management. Natural or semi-natural features noted during the fieldwork for this assessment, in mid May, include;

- Across the Jewish ground, its north boundary bank and the north part of its east hedge bank, unimproved grass rich in native wild flowers –prolific bluebell, primrose, primrose and violet, and also orchid, campion, sorrel, plantain, with some invasive species - three-cornered-leek, and alexanders along the south edge
- Bluebell and ferns present in much of the Congregationalist ground, and on its south and east hedge banks, though ivy and sycamore are widespread and increasing here
- Bees and butterflies in the Jewish ground, and nesting birds in the hedgerow trees
- Mature oaks, shown on the 1880 OS map, and stumps of these, in places on the external hedge banks
- Other old trees including sycamore and holly on boundary banks, as well as self sown trees and invasive saplings, mostly sycamore, over nearly all the Congregationalist ground
- Possible limited evidence for ornamental planting, with a yew like tree in the Congregationalist ground
- Lichens and mosses on gravestones, the Jewish headstones in particular supporting grey, green, yellow and orange lichens
- Local shillet or slaty rubble stone in walling and bank revetments, and cut slate forming most headstones; with granite, probably from adjoining inland parishes used mostly for grave kerbs and wall copings; and some limestone or sandstone gravestones

Potential impacts on animals, plants and stones are therefore a major factor for consideration in the context of the cemeteries' management. Natural diversity can be expected to contribute greatly to the experience of visiting the site, and to be valued as such (see cover photo).

A very important aspect of this issue is that the diversity of the site at least in terms of ground cover is far greater where periodic vegetation control has been undertaken in recent decades, that is, in the Jewish cemetery, with its flower rich ground.

8.2.10 Potential for increasing public appreciation and enjoyment of the cemeteries

Faith groups and individuals may have strong personal connections with the cemeteries and should be able to enjoy visits to them. The complex remains at the grounds, their significance in terms of the history of the district, and associations with other local sites, together with their natural diversity which is lacking in the surrounding area, could potentially also be of wider interest to the public, providing that the experiences of visitors with religious affinities or family relationships with the people buried here are respected and if possible enhanced.

8.3 Current damage and potential risks

This summary of the damage and threats affecting the cemeteries incorporates previous findings, notably those made at the time of the scheduling in 2002, with any relevant earlier records of condition, and further observations made on the site visit for the present project.

8.3.1 The approach to the cemeteries, and their immediate setting

- **Recent and ongoing unsympathetic treatment of the associated bay in front** The MPPA in 2002 found that the verge in front of the cemeteries, site of the roadside bay provided to give access to their entrance, had been planted with shrubs and conifers, and was used for a large sign; he noted that this could potentially lead to further similar damage or degradation to the original approach. This area is specifically included in the scheduling (see Fig 22). In 2010 the planting and signage seemed to have been removed, and a cycle way running past appeared to be potentially beneficial, encouraging more people not in vehicles to pass by the cemeteries (though there is no official access to them from the adjoining original entrances at present). However a large gas installation has been placed in the deeper part of the bay just east of the entrance to the Jewish cemetery (Fig 13). The bulky functional design of this is highly incongruous in the bay closely associated with the cemeteries (it also emits a humming noise, though at any distance this is drowned by the sound of passing traffic).
- **Recent intrusion on the north margin of the scheduling** The gas installation already mentioned has been set within the constraint area of the Scheduled Monument. The scarp forming the north side of the cemeteries and the roadside bay below this on the NNE is specifically included in the protection (English Heritage 2002). The box-like structure stands inside the bay, only 1.6m from the base of the scarp. The concrete platform it stands on extends to 1.2m from the scarp, and the cut for it is only 0.85m from this, in the spread material at its foot.



Fig 13 The roadside bay, at the entrance to the Jewish cemetery (right of photo), with gas installation affecting the approach and setting of the site and extending back into the scheduling

- **Partial collapse of front of scarp forming north side of cemeteries.** On the visit in 2010 part of the surface of the steep scarp above the roadside on the north, roughly below the junction of the two cemeteries, was found to be slumping, with fresh earthy material falling away over an area some 3m square, to accumulate in a heap about 1.5m above road level (Fig 19). There is a danger of more widespread slumping, and perhaps also an associated risk of the authorities responsible for road maintenance undertaking unconsented inappropriate works to address it.
- **Dumping and neglect in margin and immediate setting on the east and south.** In 2002 the MPPA found some dumping or fly tipping evident around the site, particularly waste thought to derive from light industrial units east of the Congregationalist cemetery. Rubbish was also visible by the east boundary in 2010, mostly outside it but also inside where the walling is tumbled (Fig 12). This directly affects the 2m wide protective margin included in the scheduling around the east and south, and the immediate surroundings of the site; and is also likely to encourage neglect or abuse of the interior of the ground.
- **Potential for further development adjoining and extending from the west of the site.** At the time of writing the area immediately west of the cemeteries is for sale with a notice on the ground advertising it as suitable for development. Though part levelled by machine this remains largely open and is currently the only substantial open area in the setting of the cemeteries, not currently under buildings or road (Fig 20). Lying low beneath the spur occupied by the cemeteries it is visible from both grounds, and would be much more so should control of the invasive woody growth there be undertaken as recommended. Development of the area may result in the introduction of incongruous structures and/or hard surfacing, and may involve a significant increase in the already quite severe traffic noise, and so there is a clear potential risk of adverse impact on the experiences of visitors to the cemeteries, and of degradation to their immediate setting.

8.3.2 Jewish cemetery

The Jewish cemetery is generally in fair condition as a result of the periodic maintenance undertaken, this having established optimum and potentially stable ground cover, and having preserved an air of belonging, which is likely to have had further, indirect benefit, making vandalism or theft less likely. However the site remains subject to significant risks – some associated with the presence on its east and south of the Congregationalist ground with its far more extensive and severe damage and threats (see Section 8.3.3).

- **Decay, wear and collapse of enclosure walling or hedge banks.** The MPPA in 2002 noted the potential instability of the walling at the entrance on the north west of the Jewish cemetery, and active wear to part of the hedge bank on the east (English Heritage scheduling documentation). These risks continue to affect the boundaries in 2010. Also, a track has been worn up the steep scarp to the roadside forming the outer face of the north boundary east of the entrance; this could de-stabilise the scarp there, though it does not appear very fresh and may not have been used since the most recent removal of the lock from the entrance gate.
- **Decay and collapse of structural remains inside the north west entrance.** Damage can be expected with small to medium sized sycamores rooted in the walling on the east inside the entrance, associated with rare remains of an early *obel*. Serious de-stabilisation was already apparent here in 2002 (English Heritage scheduling documentation) and the walling is currently bulging.
- **Forcing of access through the north west entrance.** In 2010 the gate in the formal entrance here was unsecured, and in daily use by people passing through it to make use of the Congregationalist cemetery as rough ground (see further under 8.3.3 below). Remains

of two broken bolts and padlocks were visible. Public access to the site may be considered an important aim, subject to consultation with the Jewish community, and unauthorised access may not necessarily result in damage. However in the present circumstances, with the general neglect of the cemeteries, and lack of supervision, it adds significantly to the risks of vandalism, theft, and – in the more hidden and abandoned Congregationalist cemetery reached through this one - erosion, burning and dumping (see under 8.3.3).

- **Scrub and tree growth and root action** was considered in 2000 to be a serious threat to the cemetery, having dislodged ‘many’ Jewish gravestones by then (Dawkins and Pearce, additional notes in Simmons and Pearce 2000a, 101-102). The MPPA noted woody growth to be a serious risk to the interior as well as the boundaries of this ground, which had already dislodged some gravestones and could cause further displacement or splitting. The small size of the plot and the extension of burials to its edges means that graves are affected by the roots of the self sown sycamores spreading and growing on the enclosing banks, and root action may be responsible for the toppling or cracking of stones. In 2010 this threat appeared to be still present though very much less severe than in the Congregationalist ground. The interior was mostly free of trees or scrub, but a substantial young oak had established itself in the centre of the ground towards its western side, and a sycamore sapling was growing in the north east corner.
- **The flower rich grassland is potentially vulnerable** unless appropriately timed and careful periodic cutting is maintained to renew it and prevent loss to trees, scrub or other invasive growth such as the alexanders currently spread along the south edge. There may also be a danger of encroachment by three-cornered-leek at the expense of bluebell, threatening the historically significant predominance of this species.
- **Localised erosion of the ground surface** A narrow track, 0.5m wide, runs from the entrance to the centre of the east boundary and on over this into the Congregationalist cemetery, its surface showing some wear though mostly still grassy. A low linear mound, possibly an unmarked grave, on the line of the eroding track in the north east of the cemetery, could be affected, showing a potential risk to burials from associated erosion.
- **Vandalism or theft of gravestones** There is a threat to the Jewish cemetery of deliberate damage, displacement or theft of gravestones. There is evidence for loss or theft of gravestones here prior to the scheduling, in the 1992 diagram of the Jewish graves which indicates known former positions of ten where the headstone was missing by that time; though some stones may have been moved or overgrown within the cemetery. The MPPA in 2002, noting the wear over the hedge bank forming the shared boundary of the cemeteries, suggested this could facilitate the spread of deliberate damage from the already vandalised Congregationalist cemetery (see further under Section 8.3.3). The scheduling of the site now affords legal protection, but its lack of security or supervision together with its neglected condition, and perhaps the presence of headstones now lying on the ground rather than standing, means it remains exposed to these threats.
- **Weather and pollution damage, and lichen growth** Weathering, and pollution damage presumably derived from the traffic on the adjoining road is mentioned by Dawkins and Pearce as affecting some of the Jewish headstones (Pearce and Fry 2000, 102). This has been addressed to a large extent by the detailed recording of the inscriptions on the stones here, meaning that vulnerable information has been recovered. However there is an ongoing risk of loss of unrecorded details such as style or maker’s names of stones, particularly to the stones now lying down exposed to all weathers, rather than standing. Lichen growth was also found to be a significant threat in this lighter cemetery in 2010, obscuring inscriptions or parts of them on many headstones though apparently not damaging the fabric.

- **Loss of unrecorded features, details or relationships** A general threat to evidence for features or their details or relationships between them was noted at the time of the scheduling; the graves (apart from the memorial texts on the gravestones) and boundaries and other structural remains being unsurveyed and not systematically described or photographed, and so vulnerable to loss of knowledge without record, should they be affected by the threats outlined above. In 2010 the reality of this threat was clear, with cracked and displaced gravestones; a small broken fragment of a headstone lying ex-situ (Fig 14); gradual deterioration or obscuring of stones due to weathering, lichen growth or absorption of fallen ones in the turf; and potential for confusion between transcribed stones where these are lying between rows rather than standing in them, or further shifted; as well as the low linear mound, possibly a grave, exposed to wear in the north east of the cemetery, already mentioned.



Fig 14 Displaced fragment of a headstone lying on the grass in the Jewish cemetery, illustrating the general vulnerability of the site to loss of remains and of irretrievable knowledge (the scale is 25cm long)

8.3.3 Congregationalist cemetery

As noted in Section 8.1, the condition of the Congregationalist cemetery is generally very poor, and rapidly deteriorating. The site has many, interrelated active and potential risks, impacting on highly sensitive and unrecorded cemetery remains with ongoing loss of irretrievable remains and information.

- **Decay, wear and collapse of enclosure walling or hedge banks** was described by the MPPA in 2002 as a major active risk at this site, large scale collapse or instability affecting the cemetery's boundaries. In 2010 the most serious damage was found along the east wall, where much masonry has bulged or collapsed inwards or out, with extensive displacement or loss of the high quality granite coping stones potentially vulnerable to theft (Fig 15), and where a breach has been made for access south of the mortuary chapel. Paths had also

been worn over the south hedge bank at its centre and west end, and as already mentioned, in the hedge against the Jewish cemetery, north of its centre.



Fig 15 The boundary on the east of the Congregationalist cemetery south of its centre, showing instability, bulging and partial collapse of the walling and its granite coping, with tree and ivy growth

- **Inappropriate repairs to walling and failure of fabric of these** Inappropriate repair aimed at securing the east wall was identified as a risk related to the above at the time of the scheduling, in that inappropriate modern materials and methods could be introduced through well-meaning efforts to counter decay, as shown by work with cement based mortar south of the mortuary chapel. The subsequent designation of the cemeteries as a Scheduled Monument should have countered this risk in that any repairs would now require Scheduled Monument consent. However there may be potential for well-meaning but unconsented repair, and it is also possible that the existing repair fabric with cement based mortar will deteriorate or fall, as it is non-flexible and liable to cracking.
- **Decay and collapse of the north east entrance** is also ongoing. The MPPA recorded in 2002 the rampant growth of ivy here, obscuring and destabilising the remains, and also noted the vulnerability of the probably original door, specifically including it in the scheduling. In 2010 the brick arch over the entrance appears unstable with ivy and tree roots, and the door is decaying and broken, its centre lost or displaced (Fig 18). The revetments flanking the steps within are severely destabilised by tree roots and ivy, that to the west in particular bulging out greatly over the steps. The steps themselves are deep in leaf litter and may be stable at present, but are vulnerable to theft, particularly since the doorway is insecure.
- **Erosion, root, ivy, and tree fall damage to the mortuary chapel** was visible in 2010 with a path into the cemetery wearing down its south east corner, woody growth covering or rooted in much of its walling and affecting its interior, and a fallen tree lying over its north end (Fig 9).
- **Scrub and tree growth and root action** The extensive action of the root systems of proliferating trees across the interior of the Congregationalist ground was so advanced by 2000 that it was considered to be ‘effectively destroying’ it (additional notes by Dawkins

and Pearce, in Simons and Pearce 2000a, 102), and the impacts evident on the 2010 visit are indeed varied and widespread. The self sown trees here are obscuring graves, grave rows, the original path, and even in places the cemetery boundaries; and the relationships between these features. Trees are growing on graves and on at least one memorial, embedding stone in wood (Fig 16); greatly limiting restricting movement around the cemetery; and blocking views. Their roots are breaking and displacing gravestones, and causing subsidence of graves. Altogether the extent and level of active damage and risk is extremely high, and the adverse impact on perception and appreciation of the site as a cemetery is severe.



Fig 16 One of the earlier slate headstones in the Congregationalist cemetery, dated 1813, still standing in the east end of a row of graves but embedded in one of the many trees invading this ground

- **Impact from tree fall** The substantial fallen tree lying over part of the mortuary chapel and the entrance steps below in 2010 indicates a potential wider risk of damage from tree fall to the ground's grave and other structures. There could also be a danger to visitors from unsafe trees.
- **Vandalism or theft of gravestones** By the time of the scheduling in 2002 vandalism had significantly affected the Congregationalist cemetery with its more permeable outer boundary and more advanced neglect. Although the scheduling provides legal protection, the lack of security and supervision at the site, and lack of community awareness of and identification with it, means that both vandalism and theft could continue. For this cemetery these threats are thought to be particularly serious in terms of their implications for loss of knowledge as well as their extent, as little recording of the gravestones' inscriptions has been undertaken. In 2010 there was evidence of recent vandalism, particularly in the northern part of the cemetery eroded by frequent casual use (see below). In general across the ground damage appears to be worst at the more ornate graves with breakage, shifting or loss of iron railings, stone slabs, etc (Fig 10). This makes the damage more readily apparent, and so may encourage imitation.

- **Weather and pollution damage** Some of the Congregationalist headstone inscriptions are no longer legible due to weathering or atmospheric erosion; as in the case of the Jewish cemetery, pollution from the busy main road running along the north to the north may be a factor contributing to this.
- **Subsidence or collapse of grave coverings or markers** In 2002 the MPPA found at least two graves with exposed brick-lined cuts, one with displaced corroded iron sheeting which may formerly have covered it, indicating potential for wider instability in the cemetery, if others have similar covering which could collapse.
- **Loss of unrecorded features, details or relationships** The potential risk of loss of evidence for features or their details or relationships between them is very great for the Congregationalist cemetery, as its headstone inscriptions as well as the graves, boundaries and other features are unsurveyed and not systematically described or photographed, and so exposed to irretrievable loss without record to the threats outlined above (Fig 17).

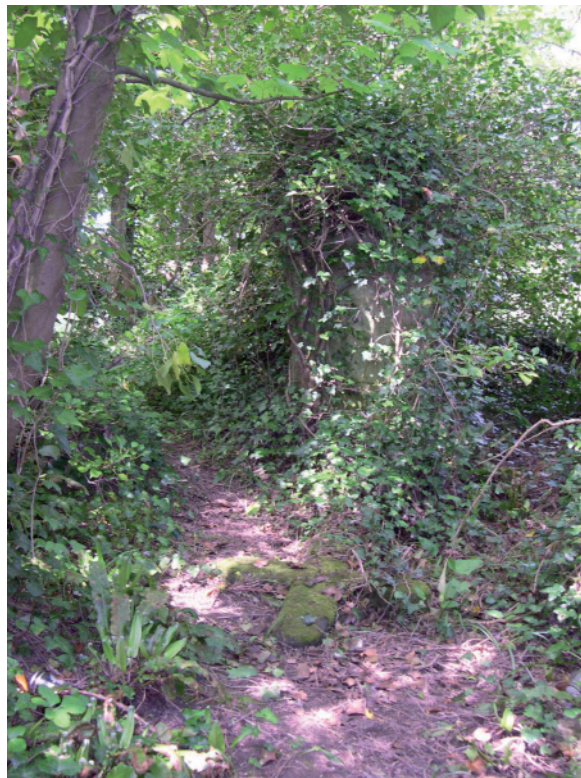


Fig 17 Some of the many remains vulnerable to loss; overgrown grave structure with cross fallen or pushed over in front of it, on the west in the Congregationalist ground by its junction with the Jewish cemetery

- **Frequent use of the ground as waste, causing erosion, burning and dumping.** The neglect and dense tree cover of the Congregationalist ground, its isolation by roads and the generally disused rear sides of commercial premises, and its situation outside but close to busy towns, have led to its use as a *rendez-vous* or rough campsite. On the visit in 2010 it appeared that this is a daily occurrence, though of course it may be seasonal or temporary. In the northern part of the ground, between its ruined chapel and the access path worn over the hedge from the Jewish cemetery, an area some 20m across is eroded by use so that its surface is bare of vegetation, and has an improvised shelter using wooden pallets, rubbish, traces of fires, and a concentration of broken or displaced gravestones.
- **Potential for personal risk to cemetery visitors** As noted by the MPPA in 2002 the exposure of several grave cuts may have safety implications. Rubbish, brambles and tumbled masonry or headstones may also adversely affect visitors' experience or safety.

9 Recommendations

Overall, the active risks and threats affecting the cemeteries are severe; and as noted in the scheduling documentation of 2002 the need to address these is urgent, though many threats such as structural decay, erosion and tree growth are gradual (and though related issues such as lack of clear ownership and management have long roots).

Careful management and protection of the cemeteries, as well as protecting burial remains of great individual, family, faith group and wider human interest, would also have high potential for enhancing public awareness, experiences, and appreciation of the site, as a nationally rare and complex monument, and a signifier of lost communities, both formerly distinctive, yet at the same time integrated with strong economic roles in the local town and wider region.

9.1 Development of a Conservation Management Plan

A management plan for the cemeteries is identified as a ‘pressing need’ in the English Heritage scheduling documentation of 2002. To promote adoption of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the varied and urgent needs of the cemeteries, and realise their potential, a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) following the English Heritage and Natural England guidelines for such sites reported in *Paradise Preserved* (see Section 7.2.1) is recommended.

The Sections below outline the work recommended to develop a CMP for the cemeteries, following the framework set out for this in *Paradise Preserved* and summarised in Section 7.2.1. It should be noted that to provide a basis for this, as for any management actions, it will be essential to identify, and work with, the owner/s of the cemeteries (see Section 9.2.1).

9.1.1 Further recording and assessment

9.1.1.1 Archaeological and historical research and recording

- **Full archaeological and architectural recording of the cemeteries** is needed to show the actual distribution and forms of their graves, enclosing boundaries and other structures, relationships between these features, local topography, etc, and allow plotting of aspects relevant to the consideration of future management, such as tree growth, exposure to weathering, damage or collapse.
- **Safety assessment for potentially unstable structures** should be included in the above. The cemeteries’ entrances in particular may be unsafe; and the stability of many grave structures in the Congregationalist ground needs assessment.
- **Further historical study of the Congregationalists** is necessary, to increase understanding and awareness of this community and its ground, and inform any management proposals. This would involve researching individuals or families represented in the cemetery; the religious group and its practices, place/s of worship and any other physical legacy; and the wider social and economic context. Sources might include the archives of the Cornwall Record Office, the Royal Polytechnic Society of Falmouth, the Courtney Library of the RIC, Truro, and any records elsewhere of the Congregational or United Reform Churches, as well as publications. Cornwall Record Office has a substantial collection of records of the Falmouth Congregational Church dating from 1780 onwards, reference X850 (Graeme Kirkham, HE pers comm). These contain an account of the church's history from 1663 with contemporary annual chronicle, including collection lists, 1780-1853; also register of baptisms, 1783-1853, and register of burials, 1808-1853 (Access to Archives website).

- **Research into relations between faith groups** should also be considered to enhance interpretation of the site. The juxtaposition of the cemeteries, and their location in an area where Protestant non-conformity was historically strong, might be explored.

9.1.1.2 Ecological recording and evaluation

- **Studies showing the ecological resource and diversity of the site** should be undertaken, recording and evaluating any planted or other notable trees, wild flowering and other plants, fungi, lichens, shrubs, birds, mammals, reptiles and insects, and identifying any rare species. A tree safety study should also be carried out.
- **Integration of ecological and historical considerations** using the above is needed to show the wider environmental interest and importance of the site, and the interplay of natural and human factors which shape the landscape. It would also be necessary to help balance any conflict in conservation interests which may occur, for example, lichen growth enriches biodiversity but may obscure headstone texts.

9.1.1.3 Re-assessment of significance, and setting of overall vision and policies

- **Updating of the interim statement of significance** (Section 6) will be necessary to include any relevant findings of the further archaeological, historical and ecological studies.
- **Redefinition of issues and constraints** may also be needed as the ecological study is incorporated; for example measures may be required to avoid disturbing rare species.
- **Setting of an overall vision for the cemetery** is recommended to present the principles and aims informing the management plan. The vision, with any management proposals it generates, must fully respect legal controls, Ministry of Justice guidance and other official guidelines and ethical constraints on the treatment of human remains, graves and their setting; and should be developed in consultation with local people, the Jewish community, and any individuals or groups connected through family or faith with the Congregationalists.
- **Specification of Conservation Management Plan policies** applying the vision for the cemetery should then follow. These may relate where appropriate to generic types of remains such as the enclosing walls, or areas with shared aspects of historic and ecological character such as bluebell rich grassland.

9.1.2 Management plan processes

Paradise Preserved sets out the Conservation Management Plan processes required to implement policies and realise the vision for the cemeteries. These include identifying and planning groundworks and other management actions, with prescriptions, standards, and checklists; and budgeting and programming consultations, works, presentations etc. (Management actions currently recommended for inclusion in these processes are set out in Section 9.2.)

9.1.3 Monitoring the plan in action

The third stage of the framework for cemetery Conservation Management Plans set out in *Paradise Preserved* is regular monitoring and review of the management plan and its implementation. The monitoring would involve a programme of condition surveys; this would require a thorough record of condition before any management actions on the site, against which changes could be identified, emphasising the need for full survey to provide a basis for this (see Section 9.1.1). It would also include appraisal of the care of the cemetery by visitors as well as any future guardian or other supporting individuals or groups.

9.2 Management actions currently recommended

The present study indicates, in addition to the further studies already recommended to develop a CMP (Section 9.1), a number of actions for consideration under the management plan processes, listed below. Note that the full survey recommended in Section 9.1.1 should be undertaken in advance of any groundworks, to record fabric prior to any interventions, identify any vulnerable low earthworks, provide a guide to styles and materials to be used, etc.

9.2.1 Identification of, and consultation with, site owner/s

A major, initial requirement is to establish the ownership/s of the cemeteries and immediate surroundings. This may be challenging in view of the history of separate and obscure ownerships here (outlined as currently understood in Section 8.2.1), but is essential to allow the owner/s to be consulted on, and to take a lead in, any development of a CMP and management actions.

9.2.2 Repair or restoration of the boundaries

Works on the boundaries should be undertaken as soon as possible to prevent further decay, erosion or collapse, or theft, and also to restore the original fully enclosed character of the site.

9.2.3 Restoration of the formal entrances

Careful clearance of woody growth at the entrances, and securing of their doorways, was recommended at the time of the scheduling in 2002. This would prevent imminent collapse of brickwork and masonry, and further damage to the early door to the Congregationalist ground; and with the repair of the associated boundaries, may be expected to greatly improve security and enhance perceptions of the cemeteries as a valued and historic place, and so reduce the risk of vandalism more generally. The Congregationalists' doorway can be expected to be lost in the near future unless recording and restoration are undertaken (Fig 18).



Fig 18 View down the steps to the arched Congregationalist doorway, one of the original features potentially offering rich experiences of aspects of past lives, but now disused, ruinous, unstable and possibly dangerous

9.2.4 Improvement to the security of the site

Provision of regular care is highly desirable to help secure the site against vandalism or theft. Repair of the boundaries and entrances would contribute greatly to security, but could not realistically provide full physical impermeability, as the enclosing hedge banks and walls are mostly relatively low, and secure fencing may be considered inappropriate on aesthetic grounds. Any potential for visits by a guardian, or for supporting individuals or groups, should be investigated and promoted (see related recommendation 9.2.15, below).

9.2.5 Consideration of the potential for improving and extending access

This should form part of the review of security, in full consultation with the site owner/s, religious representatives, local residents, and any other interested groups and individuals.

9.2.6 Revision of the use of the associated roadside bay

A review of the treatment of the bay was recommended in 2002 to enhance as far as possible the integrity of the site and its original approach. This appears to be particularly necessary in 2010 due to the presence of the gas installation which represents an encroachment into the scheduled area, and may lead to related disturbance or visual intrusion in the future.

9.2.7 Assessment of the stability of the scarp forming the cemeteries' north side.

A professional safety assessment of the scarp is recommended in view of the significant slumping above the road evident in 2010; if appropriate, measures to address this damage should be carefully considered, in liaison with the authorities responsible for road maintenance or other interested bodies.



Fig 19 Slumping fresh in 2010 on the cut scarp forming the north side of the cemeteries, requiring assessment

9.2.8 Control of self sown tree and scrub growth

Clearance and control of woody growth is recommended both on the boundaries and within the cemeteries, particularly in the Congregationalist ground where it is needed urgently and on a large scale to prevent further tree invasion of the ground and root disturbance of the graves. Work would need to be carried out very carefully to protect old trees and any other important wildlife habitats, and to avoid incidental damage to graves. Specialist tree safety checks should also be undertaken.

9.2.9 Consideration of renewal of any early planting in the Congregationalist ground

Limited renewal may be appropriate should any of the trees here be found to be planted ornamental species.

9.2.10 Maintenance or restoration of grassy ground cover

Periodic, appropriately timed and careful cutting within the grounds is necessary, both as part of the long term control of woody growth, and to protect and encourage the bluebells and other species which indicate historic landuse and ecological diversity and enhance visitors experience, and are vulnerable to being shaded out by dense scrub, ivy etc.

9.2.11 Repair, restoration, or re-erection of gravestones

The conservation needs of the stones in both cemeteries should be evaluated in detail following or as part of full recording. Some will require specialist work, such as the 1835 headstone to James Nicholas and his wife Mary Ann near the centre of the Congregationalist cemetery, which is fractured across and has lost its rear surface above the fracture (Fig 11).

9.2.12 Consolidation, repair or restoration of cemetery buildings

The ruined cemetery buildings at the site, one in each of the two grounds, should be made stable as soon as possible to prevent dangerous collapse, and restoration or part restoration may be appropriate.

9.2.13 Renewal of the original pathway in the Congregationalist cemetery

The path through the Congregationalist ground, part eroded and elsewhere obscured and overgrown, should be restored, both as an original feature, and as a means of providing renewed access without impacting inadvertently on unmarked graves which will respect it.

9.2.14 Monitoring for any future erosion or vandalism

Monitoring is recommended to evaluate the effects of the above measures, and to allow and inform prompt and appropriate responses to any future threats and opportunities.

9.2.15 Investigation of potential for encouraging or co-ordinating supporters.

Work with any individuals or group/s who may wish to contribute to the recommended recording and research, groundworks and care, supervision, and monitoring of the cemeteries, and in the development of any other needs or aims that may emerge, is strongly recommended to promote the long term protection and appreciation of the site. As faith groups using the cemeteries for burial or congregations associated with them no longer exist, and as there are many, complex pressures on the site, supporters valuing its history and remains would seem essential to ensure its survival and use.

9.3 Other recommendations

9.3.1 Treatment of adjoining land as the immediate setting of the cemeteries

Future use of the area west of the site at Ponsharden, advertised on the ground as development land at the time of writing, can be expected to affect it in several ways. The area immediately adjoins the cemeteries, and is overlooked from them (Fig 20). The impact of any proposed development on the Scheduled Monument should therefore be very carefully considered through any due process of assessment.



Fig 20 View from the Jewish cemetery, showing how it overlooks low ground to the west currently for sale as development land

9.3.2 Investigation of potential for strengthening links with associated sites and artefacts

Should the opportunity arise, further work might include research into the desirability and feasibility of establishing links with other sites and artefacts associated with the Jewish and Congregationalist heritage of the Falmouth area and west Cornwall as a whole.

Finally, the concluding comments in the recent volume of research on Cornwall's Jewish history identify the physical legacy of this as 'a heritage which can only be saved through diligence and great care' (Pearce and Fry 2000, 306). It is hoped that the present report will help to show the nature and urgency of the care needed at both the Jewish and the Congregationalist cemeteries at Ponsharden, which share aspects of their histories and fates, yet represent separate, unique rich strands of our heritage.

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10.1 Primary sources (in chronological order)

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10.2 Publications

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10.3 Websites

Access to Archives (A2A), database cataloguing documentary archives in local collections, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/>

Turnpike Roads in England, <http://www.turnpikes.org.uk/Cornwall%20-%20Helston.htm>

11 Project archive

The HE project number is **2008206**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration.
2. An information file containing copies of documentary/cartographic source material.
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.E-H\Falmouth Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries

This report text is held in digital form as: G:\Historic Environment (Documents)\HE Projects\Sites\Sites F\Falmouth Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries\Report 2010R039 Falmouth Jewish and Congregationalist cemeteries.doc



Fig 21 Modern mapping showing the location of the cemeteries at Ponsbarden, and their surroundings

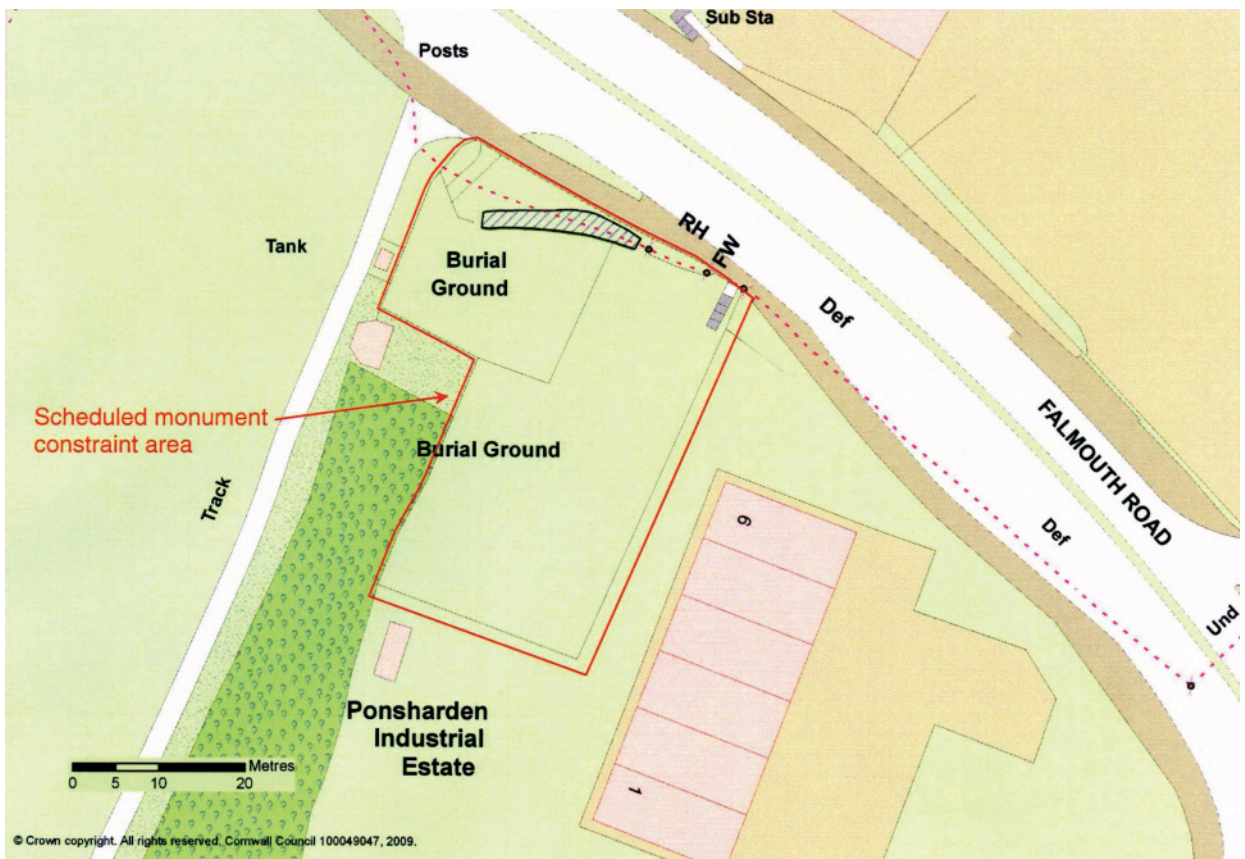


Fig 22 The scheduled area, as described in the English Heritage documentation, on the modern map base



Fig 23 The site captured on the edge of a Duke of Leeds' estate map, 1788, showing the Jewish cemetery only with dashed, possibly fenced inner boundaries. Note also 'The Island', surrounded by the river and turnpike

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Fig 24 The area as surveyed for the Basset Estate in 1793 showing the Jewish ground (labelled 'b' on the plan) still standing alone, with a gate symbol depicting the entrance in the north west corner

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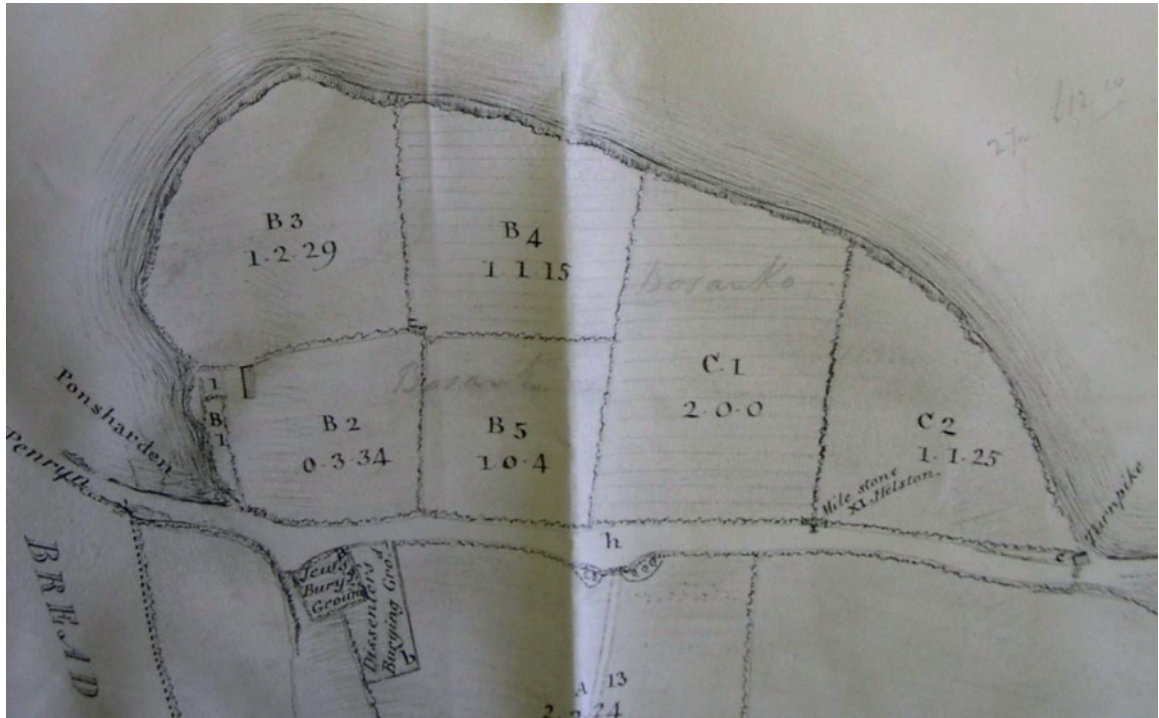


Fig 25 Richard Thomas' 1814 survey for the Bassett Estate, the earliest plan found depicting both cemeteries, named here as the Jew's and the Dissenter's Burying Grounds. No cemetery buildings appear to be made (See also Fig 2 for a closer view). This item is in the custody of Cornwall Record Office. It is not to be reproduced in any format without permission from Cornwall Record Office (CRO ref AD 4/7/35)

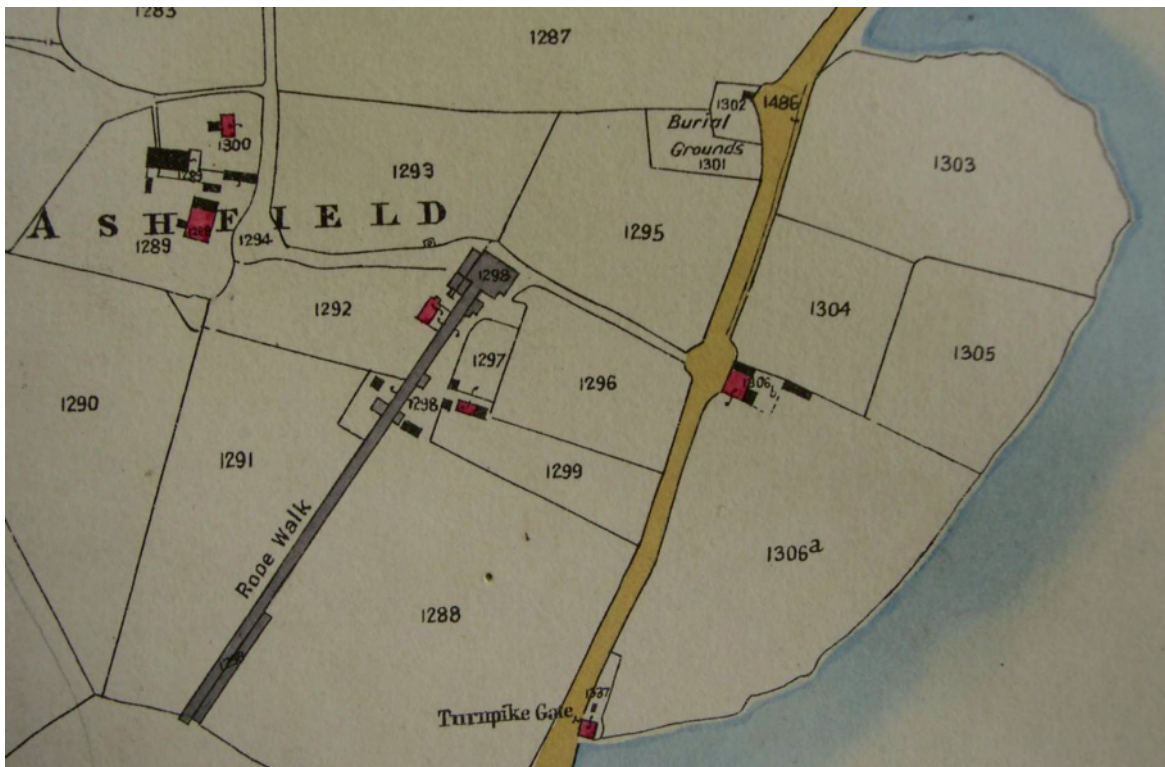


Fig 26 The site as recorded on the Budock parish tithe map of 1840, with the building in the Jewish cemetery. This item is in the custody of Cornwall Record Office. It is not to be reproduced in any format without permission from Cornwall Record Office (CRO ref P/22/27/5)

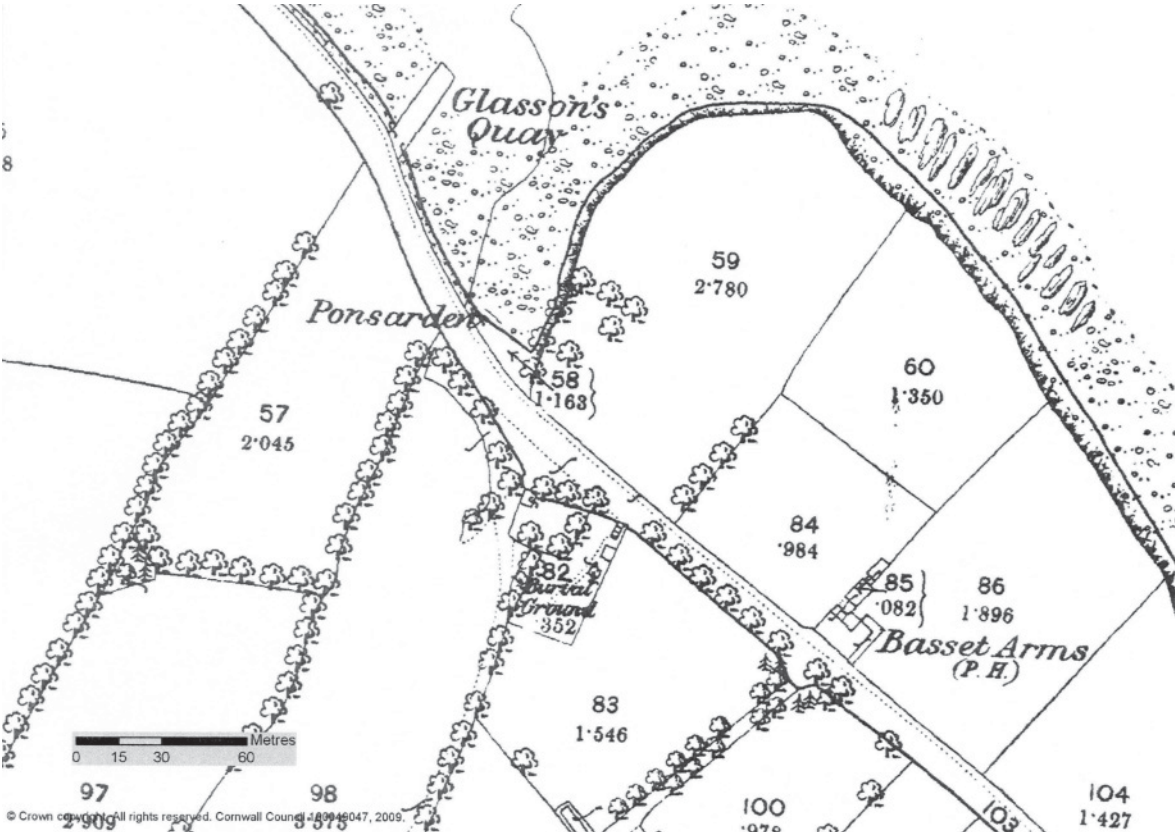


Fig 27 The OS mapping of 1880, recording buildings at both cemeteries, and also individual trees on the hedge bank boundaries of the grounds