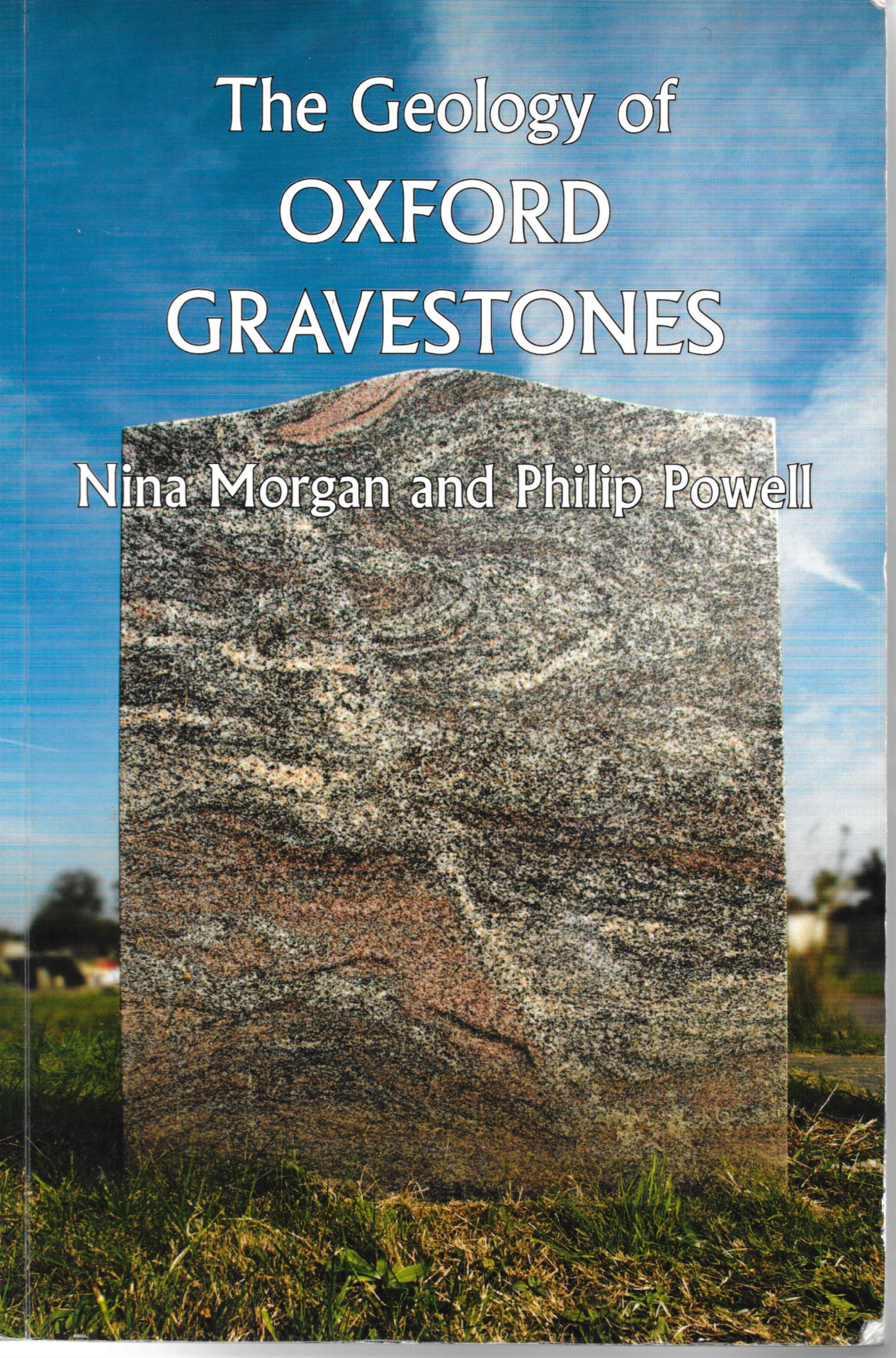
The Geology of OXFORD GRAVESTONES

Nina Morgan and Philip Powell

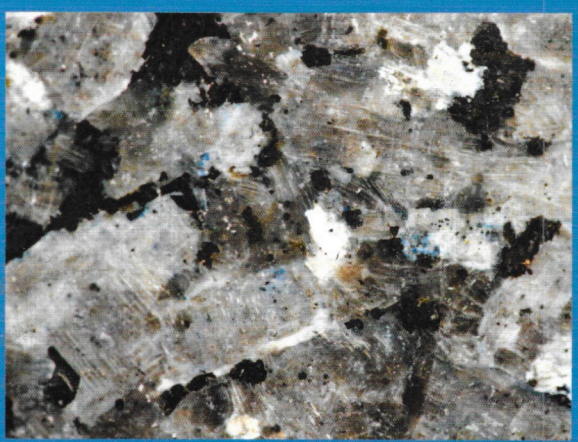












The wide range of rock types used for gravestones means that cemeteries can be geological treasure-troves. For geologists – whether amateur, student or professional – almost any urban cemetery provides a valuable opportunity to carry out scientific field work at leisure, right on the doorstep, and at no cost. The geological trails in the six Oxford cemeteries described in *The Geology of Oxford Gravestones* highlight the wide variety of rock types and geological features that can be seen in the graveyards throughout Britain – and provide an introduction to geology that anyone can enjoy.

Front cover: Garnet gneiss headstone in Headington Municipal Cemetery

Above: Forest Marble in the churchyard of St Andrew's Church Headington

Top right: Fossiliferous Portland Stone in Headington Municipal Cemetery

Middle right: Shap Granite in St Sepulchre's Cemetery

Lower right: Serpentine discs in Holywell Cemetery

Bottom right: Larvikite in Headington Municipal Cemetery

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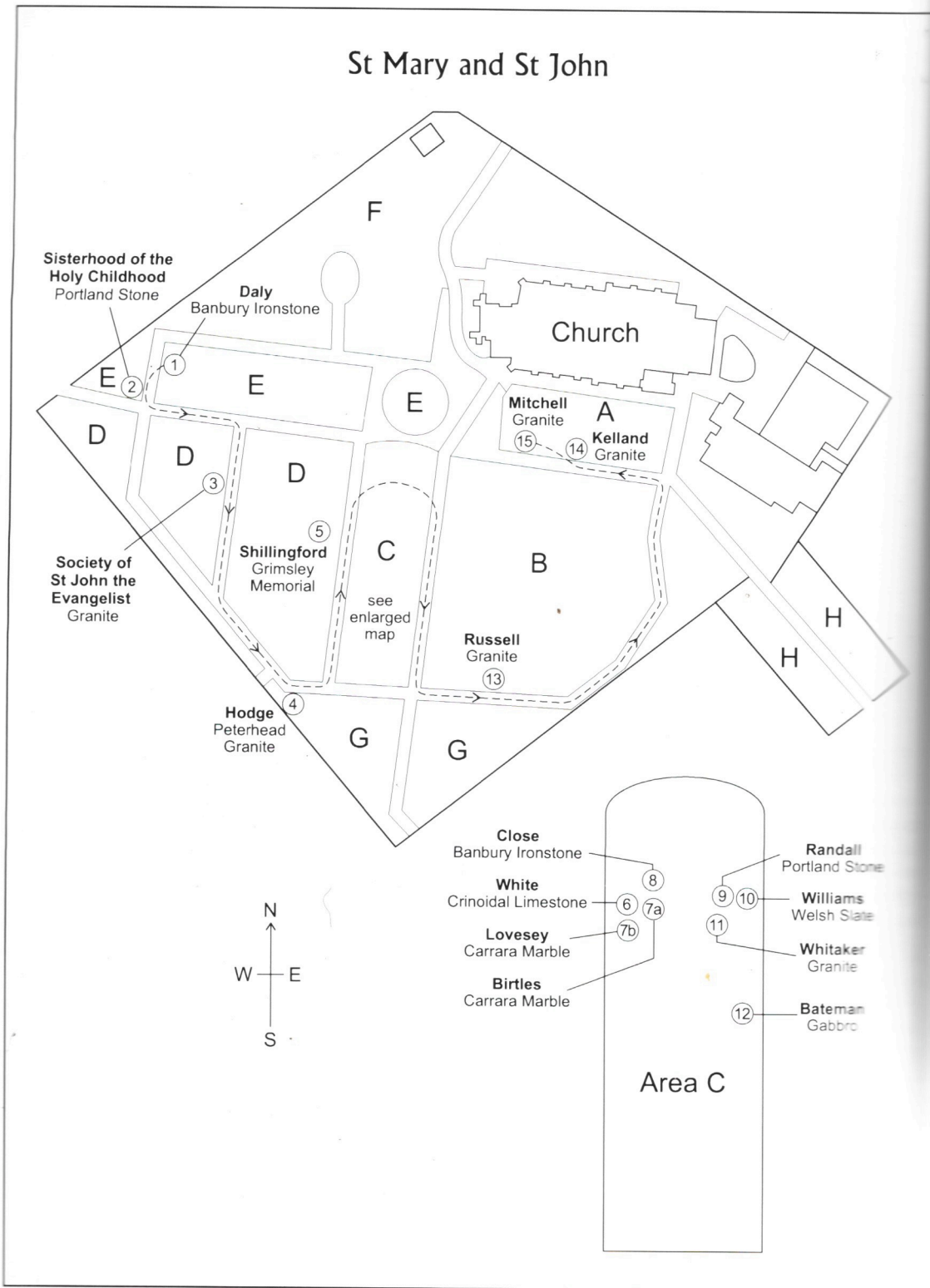
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Contents

Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	vii
Cemeteries Location Map	ix
Ages of Gravestone Rocks	x
Hollywell Cemetery	1
St Sepulchre's Cemetery	29
St Thomas the Martyr	45
The Churchyard of St Mary and St John	65
St Andrew's Headington	83
Headington Municipal Cemetery	101
Glossary	125
Further Reading	138
Index	139


St Mary and St John
F
Church
Sisterhood of the Holy Childhood
Portland Stone
Daly
Banbury Ironstone
1
2
E
E
E
D
D
D
3
Mitchell
Granite
A
15
14
Kelland
Granite
5
Shillingford
Grimsley
Memorial
C
see enlarged map
B
Society of St John the Evangelist
Granite
Russell
Granite
13
H
H
4
Hodge
Peterhead
Granite
G
G
N
W
E
S
Close
Banbury Ironstone
8
White
Crinoidal Limestone
6
7a
Lovesey
Carrara Marble
7b
Birtles
Carrara Marble
9
10
Randall
Portland Stone
Williams
Welsh Slate
11
Whitaker
Granite
12
Bateman
Gabbro
Area C

3 Society of St John the Evangelist

Granite



This tall narrow and highly decorated Celtic cross, standing on a small square plinth is a monument to members of the Society of St John the Evangelist (SSJE), also known as the Cowley Fathers. This order was the first Anglican religious community for men since the Reformation. It was founded 1866 by Father Richard Meux Benson, the founding parish priest of the parish of Cowley St John. The Society dedicated itself to mission work. Its first mission house was in Magdalen Terrace on the Iffley Road, and the Fathers moved to Marston Street in October 1868. The Society played an active role in the Parish of Cowley St John, where the Fathers were affectionately known locally as the 'Cowley Dads' or even as the 'Cowley Daddies'. Many of them were buried in this churchyard in graves marked by simple roofed wooden crosses. Most have now been replaced by the elaborate composite memorial seen here, which is positioned over the grave of Father Benson.

Composition

The monument is made of a very pale **granite**, which may have come from Cornwall.

What to look for

Granite is typically composed of **quartz**, **feldspar** and varying amounts of dark minerals. If you look through a hand lens you can tell the difference between the quartz, which appears translucent and glassy, and the light-coloured rectangular feldspar crystals, which are more opaque. Because this granite is so light in colour, it is tempting to imagine that it contains no dark minerals at all. But with a hand lens you can see that these are present – just not in great quantities. Even without a lens you will also be able to recognise the light and dark coloured **micas** which sparkle in the sun as you move your head from side to side.

Right: The composite memorial marking graves of the Cowley Fathers
Below: Light-coloured granite
Bottom right: The granite magnified



