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## **The Ancient Cemetery in the Bundelkhand Region Haig road Cemetery at Saugor**

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### **ABSTRACT-**

The cemeteries at Saugor are a remarkable blend of architecture, sculpture, and poetry, making them distinctive in many ways and providing a beautifully historic environment. Conceived and designed as gardens of the dead and memorials for soldiers, these cemeteries reflect Saugor's role as an administrative and military center of the British Empire. The inscriptions on the graves, the design of the monuments, the choices of stones, and the companies involved in manufacturing the graves shed light on past social customs, making these cemeteries irreplaceable historical resources. Most of the graves belong to soldiers, comrades, and officers from various military regiments.

Cemeteries are unique historical places because they combine architecture, sculpture, landscape, wildlife, and poetry. This page explains why cemeteries, especially Victorian ones, are historically important. Cemeteries were created as both gardens for the dead and memorials. The inscriptions on memorials, monument designs, stone choices, and landscape and building architecture reveal past social customs and events, making cemeteries invaluable historical resources. They record the social history of their communities, often containing both consecrated and non-consecrated areas, and sometimes are dedicated to specific faiths.

Many historic cemeteries are still used for burials and mourning. They are cherished as places for quiet reflection, green spaces, and for their wildlife.

**Keywords-**Regiment, Consecrated, Inscriptions, Historical, Military

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### **Purpose of Research-**

- To preserve these skills will prevent reinforcing prejudices and resurrecting non-existent differences. Conservation involves actions aimed at the long-term preservation of cultural heritage, providing a sense of identity and continuity in a rapidly changing world for future generations.
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- To explore more effective ways to serve and influence society by understanding the contributions of the British and Indian mansions in developing the cultural heritage of the Malwa and Bundelkhand regions.
- To highlight the knowledge gained from studies of these regions in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and to explore the beautiful architecture of church buildings and cemeteries.

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### **Introduction-**

The development of cemeteries in the mid-19th century, including those in Saugor (Bundelkhand region), reflects the unsavoury and unsanitary conditions of urban churchyards, which had become overcrowded with burials. There was a growing desire for alternative burial grounds, leading local authorities and cemetery developers to commission leading architects and designers to create well-planned cemetery landscapes and construct chapels, lodges, gates, and walls.

In esteemed places like Haig Road Cemetery in Saugor, families commissioned grand monuments featuring fine sculpture and beautiful stones. These cemeteries not only served as burial grounds but also became sites of architectural and artistic significance, showcasing the skills of prominent designers and the community's respect for their deceased.

## Haig road Cemetery at Saugor



The cemeteries <sup>1</sup>at Saugor<sup>2</sup> are a combination of architecture, sculpture and poetry which make them distinctive in many ways by providing a beautiful historic environment. The cemeteries at Saugor were conceived and designed as the garden of the dead and memorial of the soldiers as Saugor was the administrative and military centre of the British Empire. The inscription on graves, the design of monuments, the choices of stones and the companies involved in the manufacturing of graves shed light on the past social customs and make them irreplaceable historical resources. Most of the cemeteries are that of the soldiers or comrades, officers of different military regiments. The best part of the research is that it proves that the companies that manufactured the graves at Saugor are the same as the companies that constructed graves at Roman catholic Cemetery<sup>3</sup>, Bina. For example, Narain Das company of Jhansi, Mathura Parshad & co, Jubbulpore<sup>4</sup>C.P. In addition, the research also found a few more companies like Bharat Chunar Limited and Thakoor & Company Chunar. There are four war-graved cemeteries at Saugor, especially of the British officers and sepoy's under army instruction (India) no. 196 of 1941<sup>5</sup>. mostly the graves of soldiers who died in World War II<sup>6</sup> are also placed there. The following are the names of the four cemeteries.

- The People Road cemetery – is located near the 108 Infantry Battalion (currently close).
- The old cemetery which came into existence after the construction of St. Peter's Church, Saugor (currently closed).
- Ramna Forest (small) cemetery <sup>7</sup>(currently close).
- Haig Road cemetery<sup>8</sup> is located at the end of Haig Road in the Mahar Regimental Centre near long range. The area of this cemetery is approximately 2.5 – 3 acres. (This cemetery was taken as the study of research work)

## GATEKEEPER HOUSE



At the entrance gate of this cemetery, there is a small two-room Indo-gothic house, generally constructed for a caretaker of this burial ground. The caretaker had additional responsibilities at the burial ground such as repairing the grave site for a funeral during the British time. But at present, there is no caretaker and the condition of the house is on the verge of ruin.

The building is made up of bricks held together by a strong mixture of clay, with a small round-shaped skyline window at the top centre two small pairs of arch windows and an entrance arch gate.

#### MONUMENT



This memorial was erected by the non-commissioned officers of 1 Battalion of 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusilier. It was built in the memory of departed comrades as inscribed on it. This memorial is made up of stones stationed on the three-square steps platform at the left side of the entrance gate with a tablet at the centre of the monument which gives information about the Battalion.

The architecture of this memorial is unique and compact. The length of the cenotaph is 7'5" with a breadth of 3 feet and a height of 6 feet.

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#### Findings-

#### GRAVE NO. 1



The architecture of this grave is alluring. As the headstone of the grave is represented as an Angel, look down towards the open Bible, which is placed on the base stone of the grave.

This grave belongs to Mary Fernandez who died on Easter Sunday on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 1933, at the age of 18 years and 2 days. The date of birth of the deceased was 8<sup>th</sup> April 1915.

This grave is completely made of marble.

The length of the grave measures around 7'6" and the breadth of 3'11". The height of the Angel is 4'4".

The allegory behind the Angel statue is that angels represent the connection between Heaven and Earth. According to the Bible, the Angel is the symbol of strength, peace, faith and protection.

This grave shows the Angel looking down into an open book, which is the Bible, is likely symbolizes the Book of Life. According to biblical passages, if a person's name appears, they will be admitted to Heaven on Judgement Day.

#### GRAVE NO. 2



This grave is laid in the memory of Cecil Arthur Earle, who served in the British Army with the rank of lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. The cause of his death was Cholera. He died on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1869.

The grave is made in a cross shape of marble with the left and right divisions. The left side gives facts about the deceased person and the right side engraved the verse from the Bible.

The architecture is in the shape of a cross on base stone. The cross is defined as a structure with two intersecting pieces. It is the symbol of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The length and breadth of the grave are 9 and 5'5" respectively.

**GRAVE NO. 3**

This grave is constructed by Narain Das Rati Ram Sons & co, as inscribed on it. it was a grave construction company in the Jhansi region. This grave was erected by the deceased wife in memory of her husband, who died on January 18, 1928, at the age of 70 years and 6 months.

The architecture of the grave had an Epitome as a headstone, on which the information of a deceased person is Chisel. The headstone had given the shape of three steps of different ratios and proportions. Below the headstone, is the marble cross. The entire grave is built on the base stone.

The height of the headstone is 2 feet and the length of the grave is 8'5" with the breadth of the grave being 4'5". The length of the cross, symbolized the suffering of Jesus Christ as he died for us.

**GRAVE NO. 4**

This is the most unique grave at Saugor cemetery, as the two sepoy were buried in the same burial place in the same year but in a difference of 2 months. The decreased information includes not just names but their service numbers also engraved on it.

- The grave belongs to Drummer (army) J. Frawley who died on 18 January 1895 at the age of 27 years. His service number was no. 2030.
- The other sepoy named J. Foley who died on 31 March 1895 died at the age of 23 years, his service no. was 3724.

The latter monument is erected by the non-commissioned officers and men of a company of the above regiment as a token of esteem.

The monument was made of stone usually referred to as a gravestone or tombstone and the tablet is placed at the centre of the stone. The architecture is a compact. The length, breadth and height is approximately 3' 2" and 4.5 feet respectively.

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## Importance of Research-

Conserving British architecture in the cemeteries of the Bundelkhand region in Madhya Pradesh holds significant importance for several reasons:

- These cemeteries are a testament to the colonial history of the region, reflecting the era of British presence and their cultural influence in Bundelkhand. Preserving them maintains a tangible connection to this period.
- British cemetery architecture often features unique design elements such as Gothic arches, intricate stone carvings, and classical motifs. These structures add to the architectural diversity of the region and represent a fusion of British and local styles.
- The cemeteries are part of the broader cultural landscape, contributing to the identity and historical narrative of Bundelkhand. They offer insights into the social, religious, and cultural aspects of the British community during their time in India.
- These sites serve as open-air museums, providing educational opportunities for students, historians, and tourists to learn about colonial history, architectural styles, and the social dynamics of the past.
- Preserved historical sites attract tourists, which can boost local economies. The cemeteries can become part of heritage tourism circuits, drawing visitors interested in history, architecture, and cultural heritage.

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## Conclusion-

The Haig Road Cemetery in Saugor, Bundelkhand, stands as a poignant reminder of the region's colonial past and architectural heritage. Preserving this site not only honours the individuals interred there but also maintains a vital link to the cultural and historical legacy of British presence in India. By safeguarding its unique architectural features and historical significance, we ensure that future generations can continue to learn from and appreciate this important part of Bundelkhand's heritage.

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