

The land for **Collyhurst Cemetery, Thornton Street North** was purchased in 1843 by the New Synagogue which was a breakaway orthodox synagogue. Despite the information given on the memorial plaque on site, this cemetery was only for members of the New Synagogue (and not the Great) and it was only in use from 1843 to 1872. The plaque is a fairly recent marker and the information is not accurate. This cemetery was mainly for pauper burials and for children and was established by recently arrived immigrants at that time.

### Conservation area

Approximately 200 people are buried here but virtually all the graves are overgrown with just small portions of a few graves visible. Manchester City Council has erected a board stating that the area is being renovated and conserved. It is enclosed but accessible to the public and when we were there, a few youths were playing on the grass, unaware that it was a cemetery until our guide informed them.

**Prestwich Cemetery, Bury New Road, Prestwich** was more elitist and the plot of land was purchased by the Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation in 1840 when there were few houses in the area. The burial ground was consecrated in April 1841 and there are more than 300 graves. Wealthy families who belonged to The Great Synagogue on Cheetham Hill Road buried their dead here. The Prestwich Cemetery closed in 1951 and part of the land was turned into a Garden of Rest by the borough council to celebrate the Festival of Britain.

On the day we visited, access was impossible because it is completely overgrown with bushes and trees. A brick wall surrounds the cemetery and through a wrought iron gate we could see a little of the area. Appeals have been made to the Great and New Synagogue and Bury Metropolitan Council (who administer the Prestwich area) to provide funds to clear the undergrowth, but so far without success. The area to the side of the cemetery which once housed the mortuary house is now a well-maintained memorial garden with flower beds and seating.

### Well maintained

**Higher Lane Reform Cemetery, Besses o' th' Barn, Whitefield** is a spacious brick-walled cemetery used only by Reform Jews and was opened in 1858 by German immigrants who were members of the Manchester Congregation of British Jews.

The cemetery was officially in use for about 100 years and although it is now closed, several plots are still available because wealthy families purchased whole sections of the cemetery for their own use. The wording on most of the headstones is either in English or German with little Hebrew. Some old headstones have a thin hard-wearing protective cover of glass on the upright section, and others have long flowing inscriptions in German. The cemetery is well maintained.

We managed to go into the *Ohel* (prayer house) where we saw the columbarium containing the ashes of approximately 200 people, set into the walls at a low level. Each section had gold lettering on the white marble front indicating the name of the deceased and the date of death.



Gothic style headstone at  
Whitefield Reform Cemetery

Any readers who can offer further information about these cemeteries, or who would like more information, can contact Yaakov Wise by e-mail at [yaakovwise@msn.com](mailto:yaakovwise@msn.com). He has written a 40-page illustrated booklet<sup>4</sup> which fills in a lot of the background detail of individuals who made their mark in this part of Manchester.

● The author is Chairman of the Manchester branch and regional group co-ordinator of JGSGB.

### REFERENCES

1. Further information on the area can be found in a book *Brindle Heath—A Salford Village*, by Ike Chapman, publisher Neil Richardson, ISBN 0950625728. [www.salford.gov.uk/living/bmd/historysearch/hlibrary](http://www.salford.gov.uk/living/bmd/historysearch/hlibrary).
2. Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Central Library, St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD. Tel: 0161-234 1979/1980. [www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arlsl/](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arlsl/).
3. More information is available at Salford Local History Library, Peel Park, The Crescent, Salford M5 4WU. Tel: 0161-736 2649.
4. *A Brief History of the Jewish Community in Prestwich, Whitefield and Bury*. To obtain a copy, e-mail the author at [yaakovwise@aol.com](mailto:yaakovwise@aol.com). The book is privately published; costs £4.50 including postage, and the proceeds go to charity.

The oldest established synagogue in Manchester was in **Halliwell Street** which was on the site where The Printworks now stands in Manchester city centre (at the corner of the former Withy Grove). This was where the earliest immigrant Jews lived in Manchester, a distance of some four miles from the cemetery in Pendleton, but much closer than having to make the journey to the cemetery in Liverpool.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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