Bray Parish Council met for the first time in January 1895 and by the end of February the cemetery committee of the Parish Council had presented a report to consider a parish cemetery.

It took seven years to purchase the land, owned by the Municipal Church Charities Trustees and farmed by Stroud Farm, Holyport, and finally open the Bray Parish Cemetery on the Windsor road. It was considered a feat of endurance and perseverance to overcome all the obstacles and red tape involved. Their hard work was rewarded and Bray Parish Cemetery was considered to be one of the prettiest to be found in any country district.

The location ensured that residents of Bray and the surrounding area could be buried in their neighbourhood rather than in Maidenhead. At the time the nearest property to the cemetery, Bray Court, was located 300 yards away.

The opening of the Parochial Cemetery and Chapel was considered unique as the vicar of Bray could not attend and the dedicatory prayer was offered by a Non-Conformist minister. The ground was well laid out, the chapel attractive and everything had been done to ensure that the cemetery worthy of the historic and popular Parish of Bray.

The Parish Council had to borrow funds from Berkshire County Council to build the

cemetery - land £200, mortuary chapel (not consecrated) £475, fencing £275, gates £100, planting £75, plus an additional sum of £1300 for architect, legal expenses and redemption of tithe. It's worth noting that the cemetery has six medium sized Sequoiadendron (Redwood) trees with a maximum girth of 4.73 metres plus two further younger specimens planted in a short avenue.

In April 1902 the cemetery received its first occupant; a resident of Bray, the undertaker was a Bray man and the Vicar of Bray performed the funeral ceremony.

In November 1902, after the vicar of Bray wrote to the Secretary of State, all land to the right hand side as you enter the gates of the parish cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Reading with the clergy and choir of St. Michael's church in Bray in attendance.

One local resident buried at the cemetery in 1924 was Lady Elizabeth Dawson of Canon Hill, aged 55, daughter of the 4th Earl of Clanwilliam, Lady in waiting and personal friend of the Queen. She fell whilst walking on her own in Scotland and walked over a mile with a broken limb to get help. She was well known in Maidenhead and the local area for her support of many local charities.

Job Good, part of the Good family of dairymen of Holyport, was buried aged 80 in 1928.

The Vicar of Bray, Reverend W S Riddelsdell MA was buried in 1931 having served as vicar since 1915.

The most controversial burials during the history of the Parish cemetery took place in November 1918 when a German flying Officer, Lieut. Eugen Hermann Wilhelm Mahn from the Internment camp at Holyport was buried having died at Cliveden Hospital from complications following a bout of flu. He was laid to rest with about 100 of his fellow officers in attendance as well as British Officers from the Royal Defence Corps and members of the public. His coffin was covered in a German flag, carried on a British gun carriage drawn by four black horses. A squad of British soldiers presented arms with fixed bayonets and the last post was sounded by their buglers and drums rolled and finally three volleys of fire over the grave from the English firing party. The ceremony was repeated a couple of days later for another German, Lieut. Stanislaus Matuzak and then three days later Lieut. Wehrmann.

These three burials were difficult for many residents to accept. It was later found out that these three German Officers had no right to be buried in Bray Parish Cemetery as they had died in the neighbouring county of Buckinghamshire however it was considered inappropriate to move them elsewhere. However in 1939, Lieut. Mahn was exhumed and returned for a burial in Germany and much later in 1963 both of the other officers were exhumed and reburied at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. This military cemetery was established in 1959 after an agreement between the UK and Federal Republic of Germany to transfer all the graves of 5000 German servicemen and civilian internees of both World Wars into a new single central cemetery.

The most renowned burial was that of Lord Milford Haven, brother of Lord Louis Mountbatten, with full Royal Naval honours at the age of 45 in 1938 which was attended by the King and Duke of Kent.

In 1982 the local council considered selling Bray Parish cemetery Mortuary chapel to be converted into a residential property but it was turned down by Bray Parish council. Burials still take place at this cemetery, the most recent, at the time of writing, in Mid-September 2025.

Youtube video
Funeral of Lord Milford Haven (1938)
at St. Michael's Bray and Bray Parish Cemetery, Windsor Road

click on image