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CEMETERY WITH A DIFFERENCE



Have a good look at this picture, there is something odd in it. A big battle rages around this cemetery which belongs to Chavannes near Renens in the canton of Waadt and which is quite different from ordinary cemeteries. It is a so called landscaped cemetery which was designed to a very strict code. For one, the crosses are not all in the same position. Some are at

the head, some in the middle and some at the foot of the graves. There are also quite a number of restrictions in force: no photographs, no exotic flowers or shrubs, no headstones, no flower vases, nothing that could detract from the general design. No surrounds are allowed either, so that visitors can freely wander around without hindrance even though it may mean that

people could walk right over the dead.

Until recently, there had been no complaints but when old Mr. Roy died, the battle started. Didier, Mr. Roy's son, objected violently to the cross being put right over his father's stomach. So he went to the cemetery and repositioned the cross at the head of the grave. He was promptly fined by the local constable for interfering with the by-laws governing the cemetery. Didier did not take this lying down. He put in a complaint to the public health services of the canton of Waadt. But the mayor of Chavannes was unimpressed and insisted that by-laws are by-laws which must be obeyed otherwise there would be total anarchy...

Finally a solution was found. A few graves further on, the overall design would allow the cross to be positioned at the head again and it was agreed that poor old Mr. Roy would have to be exhumed in due course and buried again in that particular grave where the cross would then be in the right place according to Didier.

ADOPTIONS

According to a decision by the Swiss Federal Courts, grand-parents can now adopt grand-children. However, each case will have to be extensively investigated before such adoption rights are granted.

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