

The Work Goes On!

by Lynda Kitching, Friends of Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds

Working parties have been meeting since July under the supervision of one of the Council's Rangers. It's been easy to comply with the Government's Tier 2 and 3 Covid-19 regulations, as we bring our own tools and refreshments and work well apart. One of the main tasks has been to uproot the self-seeded ash saplings, or if they've become too sturdy, to cut them down, and alert our Ranger who follows on, painting the stem with a systemic root-killer.



*Photograph courtesy of
Lynda Kitching*

Two plants which have proliferated this summer have been bindweed, with its pretty white flowers but stems which choke anything within its reach, and ragwort which 'exploded' in one area. It took 4 extra working parties to remove it, and we worked an extra 56 hours – we don't mind some growing, it's good for pollinators, but this was too much! Once done, Council staff came in to mow and strim the area, jobs which had been prevented by the thick stems.

We cancelled the usual Heritage Open Days tours, and discussed an online presentation, but we don't have the e-competence to do that, - a project for the future perhaps. We issued a newsletter during the lockdown period, as our printing company was allowed to work. Some copies needed posting, but many members receive it online now.

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Enquiries continued to come in via the website, and thanks to comprehensive online records, most of them were answered by email. Once lockdown eased, photos were taken of headstones or grave areas and sent as requested.

At the end of October, we had a meeting with a Probation Service Co-ordinator, who is keen to provide work in the Cemetery for people handed Community Service orders by the Courts. The Ranger will co-ordinate the tasks, and during November, we had hoped to see groups of 5-7 working to reveal path edges, remove weeds and moss from the main thoroughfares, and resurface the side paths, tasks now on hold until 2nd December at the earliest.

There was no Remembrance Sunday tour this year, but the Friends bought a British Legion wreath, which our Chair Alun Pugh and Secretary Lynda Kitching laid on the War Memorial, observing 2 minutes silence out of respect for the service personnel buried in the Cemetery.

Newbury Civic Awards 2020

by Brian Sylvester, Chairman of the Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery

Newbury Town Council introduced the Newbury Town Civic Award in 1997. The awards have highlighted the importance of those who make a difference in our community and are presented to those who, in the opinion of a panel of judges, have made an exceptional contribution to Newbury. While current events meant that the usual awards ceremony couldn't go ahead this year, the judges felt that the awards should still be issued following the outstanding nominations that were submitted.

We are proud to announce such recognition was received by our very own Paul Thompson for "service to Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery & Newbury Astronomical Society". From our point of view, this was not only for his tremendous job of establishing and maintaining the universally-referenced Friends' website, but also for producing our informative, twice-yearly newsletter. Well done Paul and well deserved.

Update from the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery, Leeds

by Janice Simpson, Chair of the Friends

The Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery has a monthly Action Day, working in the cemetery under the guidance of the Council's cemetery ranger and the head gardener. We stopped meeting in March when the first national lockdown came into force. Since then we have kept in touch with all our Action Day volunteers every month by email or telephone, contacting them with their permission on the day we would have met, just to say hello and keep them informed. We really value our volunteers, who have been loyal and reliable and we did not want to lose touch with any of them. We resumed our sessions in September. It was fantastic to see everyone back, safe and well, and ready to get going again!

The Committee has continued to meet virtually every month throughout the restrictions in order to help keep the momentum going, and deal with any outstanding business or enquiries.

One or two volunteers who live nearby used the cemetery for their daily walk and managed to see each other, even if it was a distant wave. One even continued to do some work clearing a section of graves on her own and benefitted from the focus it gave her.

These are trying times for everyone and little did any of us know at the beginning of the year what faced us. But a common interest such as the appreciation of our cemetery has helped to keep this group together and motivated: it has helped just keeping in touch with everyone.

We will be meeting for the December Action Day but without our usual Christmas celebrations of bacon and sausage sandwiches courtesy of the head gardener, Christmas cake and cheese in true Yorkshire fashion, and our loyal little Christmas tree! But never mind. This experience has reminded us of the importance and value of a common aim and companionship. This awful pandemic has not taken that away, and we look forward to better days ahead next year and the continuation of our work to enhance, protect and promote Lawnswood Cemetery for future generations.

Reclaiming, protecting and maintaining Farsley Rehoboth Burial Ground in Leeds

from John Barker, Secretary and Trustee of the Friends

It is now 18 months since The Friends of Farsley Rehoboth (Leeds), a UK Registered Charity, bought the long neglected historic Baptist Burial Ground that lines the north side of Coal Hill Lane. The object of the Charity is to reclaim, protect and maintain the Rehoboth as a community asset and an ecological wonderland.

Covid-19 initiated a nine week lockdown of volunteers working within the Rehoboth, but allowed external work to be undertaken on our steep and walled perimeter. All our work sessions and visits are compliant with Government regulations and rules. We organise three volunteer work sessions per week with a large, very dedicated, hardworking and experienced volunteer group (if you would like to join us, please email farsleyrehoboth@gmail.com).

Our essential fundraising initiatives have been badly impacted by Covid-19, but thanks to the generosity of local businesses, grant givers and individuals they have enabled us to continue our work including the funding of a Memorial Garden. There were nine benches installed in October within different locations throughout the Rehoboth to complement a new all weather assembly area inside the entrance. We hope to commence student placements from local academies and learning centres in December.



*Before and after work on the entrance gates
Photographs courtesy of John Barker*

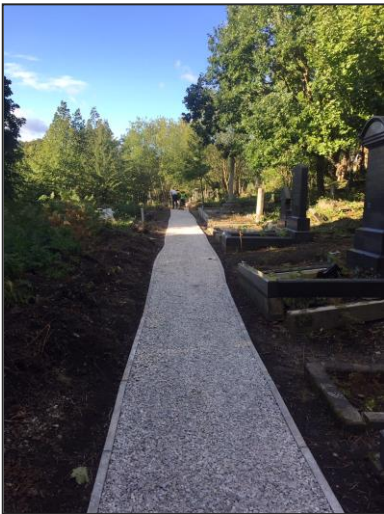
In the last eight months much has been achieved. Visible to passers-by is the work undertaken on the outside walls with masonry pointed and the suffocating ivy removed from the screen of trees. The Victorian gates are painted and a casting of the “lost lion” sculpture on the left gate has been manufactured and fitted. A new entrance gully has been created that prevents flooding from the tarmac road that is now higher than the 150 year old entrance.

Volunteers have reclaimed scores of graves from ivy, brambles and roots and we are building a network of all weather accessible roads and paths to provide safe access for relatives and visitors. In September over 32 tonnes of materials have been moved by hand to complete the 120 metre top road that links to the “Carriage Road” built in the 1880s. The majority of the funding for this work has been provided by Wade’s Charitable Trust and the Co-op Community Fund.

The first “test path” of 25 metres, fully funded from Wade’s 2020 grant was completed in October and is being weather tested over the coming weeks.



*Before starting the top path
Photograph courtesy of John Barker*



Other paths will then be undertaken to provide safe all weather access. Currently the path and road is being landscaped and planted with donated bulbs, work has commenced on our perimeter wall and a new internal retaining wall which collapsed in 1950.

*Left: The top path completed
Photograph courtesy of John Barker*

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The oldest visible area, “Old Ground” with over 100 memorials from 1832-1850 has now been reclaimed, cleared, indexed and mapped which completes the full mapping project for every visible plot. Another recently completed project is a full audit and tagging of over 100 trees including height, circumference, type and age.

More than 130 research requests from the general public have now been completed and many overgrown graves restored for relatives to visit and to be reunited with their relatives. We have identified and researched 21 military graves that are either official Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves or memorials that carry an inscription to a family member who was killed overseas.

During lockdown we produced a scanned searchable 232 page book that details all inscriptions that were visible in the 1980s to be included on our forthcoming website. We continue to recycle materials including soil, stone and wood into fundraising items such as Christmas Reindeer which are now available for £10.00 each or £15.00 with postage to anywhere in the United Kingdom.

We are indebted to our local community and businesses and thank all for your help, support and generosity.

New volunteers for Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh

by Caroline Gerard, Secretary of the Friends

During the most stringent phase of lockdown, as did many other groups, we suspended our activities and didn't re-commence until restrictions were eased a little. (Oh, how the weeds grew in our absence.) Even then, of course, we observed Scottish Government guidelines. But the gates are never locked! This meant that local people “discovered” the cemetery as a pleasant walk for daily exercise. It's at the end of a cul-de-sac and so can be overlooked. We've now collected a slew of new volunteers, who are all most welcome. And in the midst of all this, a new group started at one of our “sister cemeteries”, Dalry. It's much smaller than Warriston, and was designed by the same architect, David Cousin. This group is making excellent progress already.

Socially Spaced Green Flag Award

by John Moffat, Secretary of the Friends of Flaybrick, Birkenhead

Am very happy to report that despite Covid we have had a good year at Flaybrick. One reason for that is that our executive committee has continued to meet every month, except for some lock down absences. We were able to do this thanks to the permanent pergola we have access to, allowing us to meet outdoors socially distanced. Meetings were productive but very cold and windy at times!

However, our members' meetings and AGM were stopped and our guided walks were massively reduced to a handful of walks. These were limited to 6 people, all of which had a big effect on our income. Also, against the odds we managed to hold a scaled down Armistice Day ceremony with socially distanced people attending and no hymn singing of course.

Our volunteers also worked pretty much throughout the year, keeping socially distanced but still compliant with council reporting and Health and Safety standards.



*Above: Boards awaiting installation stored in a member's garden
Left: The Friends and council staff share the glory!
Photographs courtesy of John Moffat*

We also installed interpretation boards which we managed to produce inhouse and installed with the council's help. In fact one very encouraging development was the site supervisor starting to refer to, "Team Flaybrick", meaning the Friends' volunteers and the council staff.

A final outcome was that on our third attempt Team Flaybrick achieved the Green Flag award in October!

Repair of the Walter Stone memorial

by Dorothy Marshall, Chairwoman of the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery,
Leicester

When, due to the dreadful Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Bereavement Services suspended the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery, Leicester, from all activities, the committee continued to work from home for the benefit of the cemetery. Cemetery records were available and members continued to visit their family graves.

Walter Stone, who died 1st June 1928, is laid to rest in section B with three family members. When the lean of his headstone became worse, the Friends, supported by local councillors, successfully applied for an Abbey Ward grant for the repair of the Walter Stone memorial.



*The Walter Stone memorial before (left) and after repair (right)
Photographs courtesy of Dorothy Marshall*

The memorial is carved in white Carrara marble in the style of a 6ft scroll depicting 'A Life Unfolding', with the lily as a sign of purity, and lead lettering. The work, which involved a new foundation, was completed in July.

Working through Covid-19 restrictions

by Chris Powis, Friends of Welford Road Cemetery, Leicester

It has been a testing time for us all since the sudden lockdown in March when all activities were stopped, and our Visitor Centre closed. We are fortunate here in Leicester to have a very good working relationship with our Council Bereavement Services Dept and they allowed us to have access to the building to remove project work, cash etc so that we could have something to be getting on with at home. We are currently transcribing all of our grave owner details onto a data base which we have been accessing through a shared Dropbox, so during the lockdown a lot has been completed.



*The Wildflowers
Photograph courtesy of Chris
Powis*

We also setup a Volunteers Facebook group so that we could keep in touch, swap ideas and tales of how things were going. On our Friends Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/91841216874> we started to post more often and our membership there has increased significantly. Local people started to use the Cemetery for their daily walks and, as all mowing etc stopped for a while, the wildflowers gave a spectacular display from March to Aug.

Not being able to do our usual walks, talks and events has obviously had a knock on effect on our income, so our Chairman made an appeal in our home printed Newsletter in May asking if anyone felt able to make a small donation to ensure that we had sufficient funds to cover our ongoing expenses. Readers have been most generous, in fact we have received as much in donations as we would have made from the cancelled activities.

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Once 6 people were allowed to meet outside, the volunteers started to meet once a week, socially distanced, with their own pack lunches and folding chairs, to chat and see if there was anything else, we could do. We started with a bit of weeding and requested that we be allowed to do some gardening work and eventually this was allowed, so we have been edging paths and clearing Ivy off a few of the headstones, that had been tested for us. Large piles of vegetation started to be dotted around, so we asked for a skip and last week it arrived, so through rain, wind and the odd bit of sun these piles have now been collected up and will go off to make manure. We want to carry on this work in certain areas on a regular basis so that if, no when, we host the AGM next June the site will look its very best as we are looking forward to showing off our amazing Cemetery to you all.

We have also during lockdown created a member's page on our website and loaded onto it most of our old newsletters and a new leaflet about the 51 Mayors of Leicester who are buried in the Cemetery. This has been completed with the help of a student from the local University and numerous online meetings!



*Putting the last Poppy Cross
in place
Photograph courtesy of
Chris Powis*

Happily, we were able to re-open our Visitor Centre on 21st of Aug and since then we have had lots of visitors through the door. Many of the visitors had found us because they had more time on their hands or had been using the site to exercise. The council has supplied us with screens for the desk area, hand gels, signage and cleaning equipment and have been constantly updating us as the situation changes. Much of our display material has however had to be put away for the time being.

Last but not least we have filmed a socially distanced commemoration for Armistice Day at the War Cemetery within the cemetery which will be loaded onto our Website and Facebook Page at 11 o'clock on Saturday 7th November, the day when we should have held our full service. We

always hold it on the Saturday so that our members can attend larger events in their local areas. We had 6 people there: a Chaplain from the University and our Chairman who hosted the service, 1 person to lay a wreath on behalf of the Friends Group and 1 member who laid a wreath on behalf of The Victorian Society and 2 people to deal with the sound and filming. Seven hundred and sixteen crosses had been put out the day before by 4 volunteers, these represent all those buried or commemorated on family graves within the Cemetery from all conflicts. The majority of which are from WW1 and were therefore born in the Victorian era.

However, as I write this, we are heading back into lockdown measures so we will look forward with interest to see what the other Friends Groups have been able to achieve during this time.

Lottery funding for the Friends of Ponsharden Cemeteries, Falmouth

Falmouth Town Council together with the Friends group have been awarded £296,000 of National Lottery funding. This will be put towards a heritage project which will oversee restoration work at the Dissenters Burial Ground and the adjacent Jewish Cemetery.

The project will include restoration of gravestones and vaults; work to restore the arched stair to the Dissenters Burial Ground; a new pathway to link the two burial grounds; additional landscaping and restoration of stone walling to improve the boundaries. It will also offer members of the local community opportunities to get involved.

News of the funding and the heritage project posted by *The Packet* is available to read online at:

<https://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/18838437.lottery-funding-secures-future-ponsharden-burial-ground-falmouth/>

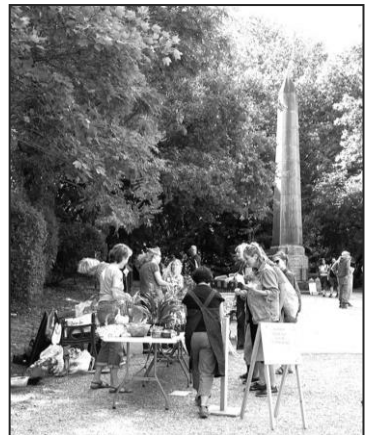
Thank you to Leslie Lipert for drawing our attention to this news.

London Open House weekend goes ahead at Nunhead

Jane Hart describes how FONC did it, all socially distanced

As with so many other planned annual events, this year's London Open House weekend, although still taking place in September, was severely restricted by the pandemic. The trustees of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC), after careful consideration of how we could run Open House in the cemetery, decided that we would be able to go ahead with a socially distanced event on both days. We would offer both crypt visits and cemetery tours. We had undertaken a risk assessment and as a result Southwark Council had permitted us to offer tours of up to 10 attendees, but on the Monday prior to the Open House weekend, the rule of six was introduced thus limiting our tours to five participants plus the guide. To help organise tours effectively we had decided that pre-booking was necessary and after advertising the tours on the notice boards within the cemetery, both cemetery tours and all five crypt visits each day were quickly filled.

Since FONC's annual Open Day in May had to be cancelled, many of the plants grown in anticipation of that event were still looking for new homes, so Nicola Dunn and her eager band of volunteers offered to run their highly sought-after plant stall on the Saturday of Open House. In addition FONC volunteers set



*The plant stall took a record
£631 over the weekend.
Photograph courtesy of Carol
Stevenson*

up further stalls, offering refreshments, the FONC publications and enquiries desk and monument inscription recording on both afternoons. Beautiful weather over the weekend encouraged many people to come out and visit the cemetery and, although sticking to clear social distancing, the whole weekend was very successful and enjoyed by all who participated - both those helping out and those attending.

This article originally appeared in the recent Winter issue of FONC News, a Special Edition with colour covers celebrating the 150th edition of this quarterly journal.

The Friends have more time for research

by Rod Sambrook, Friends of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels, Cambs

This has been a difficult time for our group owing to the health concerns of our older volunteers during the pandemic. Heritage Open Days and normal fundraising events had to be cancelled. However, fundraising was quickly undertaken in the period between the two lockdowns. Fortunately, maintenance work has been possible, within social distancing rules, in the cemetery grounds and on the Chapels with the replacement of weather damaged stonework.

The main activities of the group have centred on researching and identifying the early graves in the original cemetery using a 1860-1861 map of the grave plots. Photographs have been taken of individual headstones to enable a permanent record of the engraved details to be made before weathering of the engravings render the letters illegible.

We also continue to research the

origin and nature of the largely intact Contagion Windows (possibly known as viewing windows) of which there is one in each Chapel. The Contagion Window is essentially an alcove, accessible by exterior doors, in which the coffin is placed allowing the mourners to view the coffin through a plate glass window in the Chapel. Research to date has failed to identify other Chapels with Contagion Windows in England. However, mention has been made of the possibility of others located in Cornwall and Scotland. We would be grateful if members of the NCFC would contact us if they know the location of Cemetery Chapels with Contagion Windows.



*The Mortuary Chapels above
and one of the contagion
windows below
Photographs courtesy of Rod
Sambrook*



Virtual Maps for Cheriton Road Cemetery, Folkestone

Jan Holben of the Friends reports on grave search idea

The old Folkestone cemetery – an oblong slice of land running alongside the railway track contains around 15,000 plots. Given some plots have been reused two or three times, this means there are around 27,000 people buried there. The cemetery is made up of 30 sections: to the right are consecrated plots, to the left are unconsecrated plots, with some consecrated at the far left.

Apart from huge mature yew trees, once planted, or smaller self-seeded trees, there are no identifying landmarks to help locate individual graves – plots are numbered, and unless you know if a plot you are looking for is consecrated or unconsecrated you will be on a wild goose chase.

We often help families to find their relatives' graves, because it is not easy especially as many have never had headstones, or the headstone may have fallen and is now covered over in earth and grass.

Our Friends volunteer group are excellent at finding their way around the cemetery – and their range of skills is also excellent. We have volunteers who just want to work alone quietly clearing scrubby growth away from plots, we have others who are great at researching family history, and some that locate a headstone that may be under inches of earth which they uncover and clean up to lay it neatly on the grave. Real teamwork.

James, one of our members, had the great idea to create virtual cemetery maps on Google to help people who are looking for a grave but perhaps can't visit in person. James has put together a number of virtual maps (using Google My Maps) for our cemetery; this involved finding the location for each corner of the 30 sections, then adding equally spaced markers for the number of graves in each row.

Because there are so many graves, the map is split into ten smaller maps to limit the number of markers which appear on each map. For each person there is a link to their Find A Grave memorial and for each grave there is a link to an Ancestry search. The markers are coloured to show whether the grave is unmarked, has a photo, is shared (and

unlikely to have a headstone), has not been recorded yet or is unused. All the virtual maps are hyperlinked from our website (<http://www.fofc.uk/links-to-burial-plots/>).

Carole, Karl and Stephen are currently working to put a photo of every existing gravestone on the Find A Grave memorial for that person, and they have completed over half of the graves so far. James has also created Google virtual maps for various groups: notable people, Commonwealth War Graves and military people, etc.

Lockdown has not been easy for anyone, but it has not stopped our volunteers, who are always working within social distance guidelines, from doing some excellent work.

“Children grieve too”

Gail Spelman tells of the Friends’ innovative project for bereaved children

This has been designed by the Friends of Philips Park Cemetery in Manchester and joint funded with the City council bereavement services.

The project is planned to support children going through grief. The initiative incorporates educational activities, community working and signposting to bereavement support services. A new "Teddy Paws" nature hunt trail features 4 animal themed rubbing posts and 12 wooden animal carvings hidden in the trees along the trail. Activity sheets have been created to help children follow the trail, and signs created at the start and finish points, give contact details for bereavement support for children.



*Upright and tree
Photograph courtesy of Gail
Spelman*

An update on the Beautiful Burial Ground Project by the Community Co-ordinator, Georgina Sharp

In 2018 the conservation charity Caring for God's Acre launched The Beautiful Burial Ground Project; we are now 2 years and one lockdown further on, so here is an update on how the project is going ...

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Beautiful Burial Ground Project aims to inspire and support people to learn more about the biodiversity and social heritage of their burial grounds. The project was to run for 4 years until early 2022 but due to the enforced covid hiatus will now run until December 2022.



*Identifying plants on a grave
(pre-covid)
Photograph courtesy of
Georgina Sharp*

The project to date has run 137 sessions in all types of burial grounds with 1,869 participants looking at plants, lichen, birds, reptiles and amphibians, insects and fungi as well as practical sessions in on site memorial recording and sessions in county archives. We are optimistically planning for a busy spring and summer in 2021 and will have a further season in 2022. Should you feel your site could be a suitable host for a session please get in touch. Take a look at the gallery of photographs on our ***The Project so Far*** page (<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/about-us/projects/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/the-project-so-far/>) to get a feel for what our sessions are like.

In each session we hope to inspire one or two people to start to record the biodiversity they see via our specific burial ground activity on the recording platform iRecord. This in turn feeds into the National Biodiversity Network's atlas (<https://burialgrounds.nbnatlas.org>) helping to build a picture of how important the 20,000 plus burial grounds we have in England and Wales are for biodiversity. We are happy to

receive species lists from any burial ground, including historic lists, in a number of formats.

Visit our **Share Your Records** page (<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/get-involved/recording-2/share-your-records/>) for information and contact details. To date the project has received 53,000 records from 769 sites via 268 recorders.



*Learning about burial ground fungi from a social distance
Photograph courtesy of Georgina Sharp*

The project runs bespoke sessions for, families, people with physical disabilities and those with mental health issues. These sessions have proved transformative for some participants giving them access to landscapes and subjects they may not have accessed before yet are hiding in plain sight in the centre of our communities. It has been an honour to watch a fungi expert work alongside a sign language interpreter to open up an area of the natural world for deaf participants or to try to distinguish different bird song alongside a group with visual impairments and to invite all of us whose lives are overwhelming to consider a burial ground a breathing space to pause, observe and maybe refresh a little.



*Studying tiny fungi with a hand lens
Photograph by Nick Blayney*

If you would like to keep up with project news please sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter <https://cfqa.us20.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=a08339adffa00e4da80d66f6e&id=0ff60a4d4f>.

We have also put together a few resources to complement the work of the project: these can all be

found in the **Resources** section of our website.

Short Films – <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/films/> showing how important burial grounds are for biodiversity.

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Starter Guide – for complete beginners or families who are investigating burial ground wildlife and heritage for the first time. The Starter Guide is free to download <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/about-us/projects/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/starterguide/> or contact george@cfga.org.uk for a free hard copy in the post.

Burial Grounds for All – Practical guidance on how to improve the accessibility of your burial ground without breaking the bank. Free to download here <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/burial-grounds-for-all.pdf>.

Friends keep busy adding to their database

by Robert Wall, Chairman of Down Cemetery, Trowbridge

The Friends of the Down were asked to stop work for the first national lockdown, but this gave me the opportunity to do some work whilst the country was in hibernation. As the cemetery is only a short walk from my house, I used this as my daily exercise and whilst there started the task of transcribing the nonconformist side of the cemetery headstones. The weather was perfect and over the summer I managed to complete this task. Then there are over 4500 grave sites (not all have headstones) and these have now been added to our database.

When we were allowed back, I was worried that we may have lost the momentum of support, but we found that as people had been out walking during lockdown, and used the cemetery, they found out about our project and our membership and support has increased. We managed to do 127 working hours before the new lockdown, and one of our members had been to the local history centre and photographed some of the burial books. This will keep us busy entering this information into our database over the next month. We also managed to complete the restoration of two pre-WW1 war graves, the funding for these sourced while in lockdown .

Although we may not get another working party in before Christmas, I am optimistic that next year will be a good year for the Friends.

How small group continued its large reclaim job

by Pete Lowden, Friends of Hull General Cemetery

The National Federation of Cemetery Friends wondered how such groups as ours were responding to the Covid-19 crisis and requested any information that could be shared. Here's how the Friends of Hull General Cemetery were and are dealing with the pandemic.

As the core of volunteers working in Hull General Cemetery is small, and the area to be reclaimed is large, social distancing was never a problem. I'm sure the same is true for all such groups.

An area that had been earmarked for reclamation from the neglect of the last 30 years or so was sited at the back of a line of shops that fronted onto a popular shopping district called Princes Avenue. The land that the shops occupied had originally been the Cemetery's, but it had sold it off in 1907 when it had realised that, with the expansion of Hull, the rural lane of Newland Tofts Lane had now become a much more salubrious area and as such its land could be sold to help with its cash flow problems. The shops have had numerous occupants over the years and now the area is second only to the city centre for its bars, cafes and restaurants. A boon for the café culture but such enterprises often come with a surfeit of rubbish. Unfortunately, some of that ends up in the cemetery by design or accident.

The other problem issue with this area is I'm sure shared with other Cemetery volunteer groups; the sycamores that have occupied any vacant space. That coupled with rampant ivy and blackberry bushes gives the reader a flavour of the area. The piled-up rubbish is just the icing on the cake so to speak. The Friends knew that they could only take on this area during the period when birds were not nesting and laying their eggs. Effectively, at least in our area, this period is the middle of October to the beginning of February.



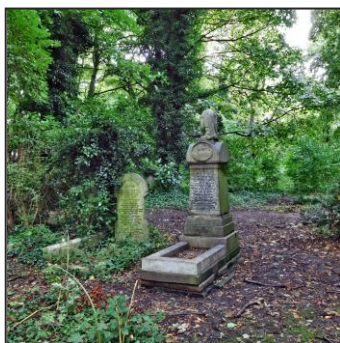
Reclaiming the paths through the cemetery

Photograph courtesy of Pete Lowden

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So, during the period of the first lock down, the volunteers continued with their efforts to reclaim the paths of the cemetery. This was achieved mainly through the use of the chipping machine, bought through the aid of a grant from a local charity, to reduce the copious wood cuttings into chippings that could be spread onto the paths and allow more access to the site by the public including enhancing disabled access.

A bulb planting exercise in August and September took place and this appeared to attract more volunteers as it was undertaken by the side of a very busy roadside. Upon the advice of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, two areas were earmarked for the creation of wildflower meadows to attract invertebrates, especially moths and butterflies, and these areas were cleared in early October as was the ground that contained over 10,000 workhouse burials. A granite memorial was purchased with a suitable inscription to commemorate these unfortunate people who were denied any token of remembrance at their burials. Further planting of native trees and shrubs was also undertaken in this area.



*Clearance around the Gravill monument
Photographs courtesy of Pete Lowden*

By the time Hull had achieved (?) Tier Two level, and just prior to the second national lockdown, the work outlined above to the area behind the Princes Avenue began in earnest. It still continues and will until it ends in a satisfactory conclusion or it has to halt for the birds beginning nesting again. The photographs above are before and after of the burial place of John Gravill, a listed monument with Historic England, who died on December 26th 1866 whilst his whaler was entombed in ice in the Davis strait. His body was brought back for burial in Hull and his funeral was attended by over 20,000 people, probably about a third of the entire population of the town at that time.

Honouring the nurses buried in Glasgow Necropolis

by Ruth Johnston, Chairperson of the Friends

To commemorate the 15th year of the charity, The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis, we aim to repair and restore the monuments to the nurses from the Glasgow Royal Infirmary (GRI) which overlooks the Glasgow Necropolis and undertake full research of all the nurses commemorated on these three monuments. We really feel that it is important to find out as much as we can about them and why these specific people are buried there. At least seven of them were over 60 when they died and it is possible that, as single women, they had no surviving relatives to claim their body after long years of service in the GRI and as such warranted burial by the Infirmary. As for the younger ones we know that at least one came from Orkney so her family could not easily bury her.

The incredible work undertaken by nursing staff and the NHS during this pandemic needs to be widely recognised and celebrated. We feel that ensuring that these nurses' monuments survive, restored and conserved, into the future would be a fitting tribute.

Glasgow's Doors Open Day Annual Festival was run digitally this year and we produced drone footage of the cemetery as our contribution to the event in September 2020. Our film can be found on our YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E14eJggRpZg>. Getting the permissions in place for flying the drones for the filming was the most difficult part.

Our Remembrance Day Tour unfortunately was cancelled this year but we have, as usual, put poppies on all of our 160 graves. No small task. Most of our First World War graves are family graves scattered throughout our 37 acre site. Our Roll of Honour on the website has full details on most of the people commemorated in the First World War and their locations in the cemetery.

We produce a newsletter on a regular basis called 'Grave Matters'. This is produced by our family Researcher, Morag Fyfe, who is running our Burial Indexing Project. We are at Grave Matters number 13 and all are available on our website - www.glasgowneecropolis.org

New awareness brings new members

from Margaret Hobbs, Secretary of the Brookwood Cemetery Society, Woking, Surrey

I am writing this at the start of the second lockdown, and I expect, like a lot of friends of cemeteries, the society has had a challenging year. The society managed to have a monthly guided walk in March and another in October this following Covid-19 rules. Sadly, all other walks and Heritage Day were cancelled.

During the first lockdown Brookwood Cemetery was discovered by the local population, as a marvellous place to walk, and this new awareness of the cemetery has led to an increase in the Brookwood Cemetery Society membership.

To continue this awareness our webmaster has enlarged the scope of the webpage; this now includes a Natter Section with short articles of notables buried within the cemetery and a video page. The latter has virtual tours with commentaries and verbal histories to further interest the 'virtual' visitor. Archive newsletters have also been added.

With the increase of footfall within the site a screen at the society lodge plays a continuous video of scenes of the cemetery during the day, and judging by the number of leaflets and maps taken from the external pamphlet holders this is a success.

The Brookwood Cemetery Society has continued with the restoration programme with the Gwinner and Keith mausoleums by opening the bricked-up doorways and installing wrought iron gates, with a replacement door on the latter. Now funds are diminishing the restoration programme has been forced to be put on hold, until our regular income from walks donations can restart.

The Brookwood Cemetery Society continues to work behind the scenes and are hopeful for better times next year.

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park in the *New Scientist*



The Friends group featured in the 3rd October 2020 edition of the *New Scientist* magazine. Through their Signal Boost project launched in May, the magazine is giving charitable organisations the opportunity to get 'their message out' to a wider audience. They are offering a full page, free of charge in the magazine. For more information about the magazine's Signal Boost project, See: <https://www.newscientist.com/signalboost/>

Thank you to Carol Stevenson for drawing attention to this item and for forwarding the photograph.

New Member

The following group has recently joined the NFCF

Dockroyd Graveyard Trust, Oakworth, West Yorkshire

When he retired from dairy farming Andrew Heaton had time to take an interest in his family history, many members of which were buried in Dockroyd Graveyard at Oakworth..This has led to Mr Heaton buying the graveyard and, with the support of councillors, local organisations and volunteers, embarking on a restoration project.

More details of this success story will be told in the next NFCF newsletter but meanwhile see their interesting website for photos, an information leaflet and links to the considerable publicity they received. The pandemic has slowed down their activities but seeking funds a priority.

Contact: Andrew Heaton: dockroydgraveyardtrust@heatonfamilyonline.co.uk

Website: www.heatonfamilyonline.co.uk/dockroydgraveyard

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