

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER No. 33

Spring 2014

Editor: Ann Wilkinson

ISSN 1753-075X

Dr Henry Will, MBE

The cemetery friends' movement recently suffered a great loss with the death of Dr Henry Will, MBE, former chairman of the Ford Park Cemetery Trust. Arthur Tait, chairman of the NCF, in expressing his condolences said:

'We will greatly miss Henry's wisdom, encouragement and friendship and we send our deepest sympathy to his wife Jill who has supported him in all cemetery activities'.

Henry was a great supporter of the Federation and a valuable committee member since its inception, travelling from Plymouth to London for the meetings. During this time he took a special interest in the formation of the Funerary Monuments Group and served

for a period as chairman. He and Jill were also regular attendees at the ASCE conferences and he was a speaker more than once.



*Henry with his beloved dog, Bramble in the mountains above Chamonix
Photograph courtesy of Jill Will*

After a funeral service in Plymouth Cathedral, Henry was buried in Ford Park Cemetery and the wake was in the Visitor Centre with an overflow in the Chapel. Jill reported how the Friends had excelled themselves by making 35 cakes!

Continued over page

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the NCF.
All material by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

**The following tribute is from Shirley Stapley,
Chairman of the Friends of Ford Park Cemetery:**

The death of Dr Henry Will on 4th January has caused much sadness to everyone who has been involved with Ford Park Cemetery in Plymouth. It was through his inspiration and vision that the cemetery was saved in 1999 after the private funeral company which had owned it since 1848 went bankrupt. This caused a lot of worry for people who had relatives buried in the cemetery which houses the final resting place of at least 250,000 people. Meetings were called in Plymouth Guildhall in a bid to save the cemetery and that's when I first saw Henry. He spoke passionately on the need to save the cemetery and it was then that, after some difficulties, he was able to form the Cemetery Trust as a charity along with several people who became the Trustees. This was a great relief to people like myself who have so many family members buried there.

Henry had only recently retired as a solicitor in Kingsbridge and it was his particular interest in the many war graves in the cemetery that gave him the impetus to make sure that they would not be lost. In April 2000 the Trust took over with Henry as its Chairman. By then the cemetery was overgrown and it was a mammoth task to get it in some sort of order. Over the next 13 years under his wise leadership, the cemetery was gradually transformed. An office manager was appointed along with two other staff and several groundsmen were employed. A number of members of the public came forward as volunteers and they became crucial in the cemetery's survival.

Henry achieved so many things in those 13 years and one of the first things was the restoration of the Victorian Chapel which had been used as a machine store! The Heritage Lottery Fund agreed to give money towards it providing that the Trust raised at least £60,000. This led to a frenzy of fund raising until the sum was eventually raised. Everyone who visits the Chapel comments on how beautifully it has been restored. At the same time a Visitor Centre was created with a small café. Some of the volunteers attended a food hygiene course so that they could run the café. It is open when exhibitions are held there and has proved very popular with visitors. Under

Henry's guidance several Committees were formed to plan events and to research the heritage of the cemetery. Various concerts were held to raise money and there have been at least twelve exhibitions to date. The Friends of Ford Park Cemetery were formed and their main object is to raise money to support the Trust. Another big achievement was installing in the Chapel the only civilian war memorial to Plymouth people who were killed in the blitz. Again Henry worked tirelessly to raise money for the memorial.

Henry was awarded an MBE in 2010 for his work in saving the cemetery and typically of him said that nothing is achieved on one's own and he went on to praise all the other people who had helped. Some of you will have attended the Federation of Friends AGM in 2011 which was held in Plymouth much to Henry's delight. Again it was all his hard work in organizing this event which led to its success. When Henry retired as Chairman of the Trust in 2013, he paid a tribute to his wife Jill who had supported him in all his work with the cemetery.

When the Trust took over Henry had a vision as to what he would like to see achieved and it's a comfort to us that nearly everything that he had envisaged has happened. One of the last things that he was involved with was his wish to see a bell turret put in the Chapel and we are now hoping to raise enough money to complete the project. Henry will always be remembered with much affection and for his kindness and gentle nature. His wife Jill said that 'He was unfailingly courteous to everyone he met and took a great interest in their lives. He was a generous host, humorous, had a deep faith and a strong sense of duty'.

Henry has now been buried at Ford Park and there can be no greater memorial to his memory than an epitaph that one of our volunteers has found for Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral. 'If you seek his memorial, look about you'. This is so apt for the cemetery that Henry saved.

Commemoration of four firefighters

Forwarded by Gail Spelman, Friends of Philips Park Cemetery,
Manchester

On Remembrance Sunday last year, the Reverend Leonard Young of St Cross Church, Clayton dedicated a memorial commemorating four local firefighters: John Curley, Richard Sykes, Charles Pimblett and Samuel Astle whose lives were taken during service. Due to the efforts of the Friends of Philips Park Cemetery and the generosity of Manchester City Council, this permanent memorial now stands alongside the war veterans' memorial stones.

(www.manchester.anglican.org/news/1410/clayton-honours-fire-service-war-dead)

'Recording Angels' complete another parish

The latest publication of 'Recording Angels' covers the Midlothian parish of Dalkeith. Formed in 1998 'Recording Angels' is a voluntary organisation (and associate NCF member) set up to collect, collate and publish all aspects of memorial within the current administrative area of Midlothian. For details of this and their other publications see:

www.recordingangels.org.uk

Successful lottery fund application for Brompton Cemetery

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £3.7m to the Royal Parks for Brompton Cemetery who applied in partnership with the Friends. The grant has the twin purposes of restoring the Grade 1 site and widening its appeal to visitors. The Friends are now seeking more volunteers to help with this development and they with the Royal Parks staff will provide the required support and training.

NFCF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Hosted by the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis
Saturday, 14th June 2014

Any member who has not received details please
contact the NFCF secretary: gwyneth1@btinternet.com
(07789 315 333)

FONC marks ‘monumental life of an overlooked Victorian artist’

The Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, London, commemorated the 200th birthday last September of a celebrated Victorian polymath, John G Waller (*writes Gwyneth Stokes*). Artist, antiquarian and brass engraver, Waller along with Pugin, led the revival of the medieval art of brass engraving. With his brother Lionel Waller he exhibited a magnificent brass in the Gothic style at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and designed a stained glass window of Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

Members of the Monumental Brass Society (MBS) and the Church Monuments Society joined for a ceremony around the grave, which had been made accessible by the FONC work team. MBS past president the Ven. David Meara, who is Archdeacon of London, led a short service. The Friends felt a successful occasion was well rewarded when David Meara also contributed an article on the event to the heritage section of *The Times* under the heading ‘Monumental life of an overlooked artist’.

Cemetery care revival in Edinburgh

Following the setting up of the Friends of Warriston Cemetery (see New Members); other Edinburgh groups may soon follow their lead. According to *Scotland on Sunday*, under a model being piloted in Edinburgh’s world heritage site – where five historic cemeteries have been on an international ‘at risk’ list for five years – they would be run by a new graveyards trust. They are Canongate, Greyfriars and St Cuthbert’s Kirkyards and the New and Old Calton Burial Grounds.

The plans follow the publication of a damning report which highlighted a string of problems including poor security, vandalism, rough sleepers, poor access and a public perception of them as unwelcoming and unsafe. It is hoped a network of campaign groups and an army of volunteers will help care for the cemeteries and promote them as visitor attractions.

Notes from the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group (BCAG) meeting

Geoffrey Seamark attended the December 2013 meeting of BCAG on behalf of the NCF.

There was further discussion on local authorities and town councils who took on the responsibility for maintaining closed churchyards and then reclaimed the cost of maintenance from parish councils at a higher rate. Although not illegal, it was considered this practice went against the spirit of the 1992 Local Government Finance Act and it was requested that a small act of legislation could be passed to prevent it happening.

Problems concerning the out of hours coroner's service still remain and the Chief Coroner is to be invited to the next meeting in order to respond to issues and concerns raised by the industry.

A draft proposal on Death Certificate Legislation provoked heated discussion about the lack of consultation and certain aspects were considered unworkable. The deadline of October 2014 for full implementation of the bill was considered very unlikely.

Concerns were raised about burial grounds which have lost records of ownership. It was suggested that the Ministry of Justice website should include guidance on how to trace such information and there should be a simple central register of burial grounds. Natural England is in the process of creating a spatial map of all green spaces in the country including burial grounds and cemeteries but there will be no reference to ownership.

A charter for natural burial has been issued to members of The Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management with the aim to standardise the practice and quality of this growing alternative option.

The industry is about to commence work with reputable laboratories on structural and analytical compounds with the intention of arriving at an acceptable standard for the manufacture of coffins.

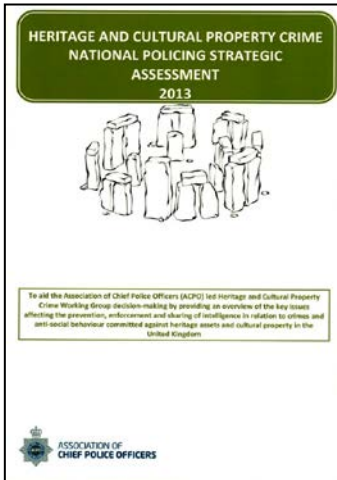
The launch of the Heritage and Cultural Property Crime National Policing Strategic Assessment

Report by Robert Stephenson

On the 18th of November 2013 the Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group (H&CPCWG), a new top-level committee instigated by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), launched its Heritage and Cultural Property Crime National Policing Assessment (H&CPCNPA). This was held with premeditated aplomb at the New Armouries Building in the Tower of London, a location chosen because of its “not inconsequential role historically in the country’s justice system”. About half of the 20-strong Group are law enforcement officers; while the rest are representatives from important organisations like English Heritage, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Arts Council, the Home Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Along with about 60 national organisations dealing with heritage, I attended as a representative of NCFE, at the invitation of Andy Bliss, the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire and the Chairman of the H&CPCWG. Three concise presentations were given by Andy Bliss, who is the driving force behind this new venture; Mike Harlow, the Legal Advisor to English Heritage and Vernon Rapley, the Head of Security at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Chairman of the National Museum Security Group. Together they highlighted the alarming increase of cultural crime and its wide range of manifestations. At the top of the list is the targeted theft of valuable works of art, while lower down the scale is the wilful damage to the cultural environment that subtly erodes everyone’s quality of life. The meeting concluded with a panel of experts taking questions from the floor. This did not last long and the event was really an extended Press Conference aimed at attracting media attention to the new venture. Thereafter journalists had access to the speakers.

The Assessment report is a substantial 32-page document that defines what is meant by cultural property and lists a broad spectrum of heritage crimes, which unsettlingly points out the vulnerability of many cultural artefacts. The report considers the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats inherent in the current



situation. Regardless of whether cultural property resides in museums, art galleries, and public spaces or in private hands, it constitutes our communal heritage, and when it gets damaged it hurts us all. However the tone of this booklet (which is available on online, www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2013/201311-cba-heritage-cult-prop-strat-assmnt.pdf) is positive and proposes that the various stakeholders share information and combine forces to combat this menace. Theft and damage in cemeteries is not mentioned specifically but it is clearly recognised as

the request for the NCF's participation demonstrates. This new initiative, under its present energetic leadership, is something that cemetery Friends groups are sure to welcome. We look forward to the Group strengthening its power by developing networks and devising effective tactics to deal with cultural crime. It is intended to be a listening ear for community groups, like cemetery Friends, as well as being a provider of practical advice and support in the fight against major and anti-social crimes committed upon our cultural environment, of which cemeteries are an integral part.

FOR YOUR DIARY.....

Saturday, 30th August 2014

In the Chapel of Brompton Cemetery, London

SECURITY SEMINAR

The NCF will examine the problems caused in cemeteries by metal theft, catacomb damage and other criminal activities. *John Strutton, Community Safety & Crime Prevention Manager of TfL (Transport of London)* will discuss 'Urban exploration – benign hobby or security threat?

There will be an opportunity for a tour of Brompton Cemetery
Times and further details will be sent to members by email and will be posted on the NCF website

The Great Yarmouth Cemeteries Project

Forwarded by Paul Davies, Friends of Great Yarmouth Cemeteries

The Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust has delivered a project to clear and conserve graves in the Old and New Cemeteries and in the Minster Churchyard in Great Yarmouth; a total area of 40 acres containing over 3000 gravestones and monuments. Originally, it was planned to select 15 monuments for conservation work, but thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers and trainees participating in this project, 50 have already been conserved and more are in process of repair.

The Trust has been working in partnership with organisations such as the Prince's Trust, the Conservation Volunteers and Great Yarmouth and Waveney MIND, and with the support of the Jobcentre, Great Yarmouth Green Network, GYB Services, Ageless Opportunities and the Great Yarmouth Library. It has also been working with Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Conservation Volunteers to ensure protection of habitat during clearance and to enhance future biodiversity.



*Before stone restoration
Photograph courtesy of Paul
Davies*

The number of people, who offered voluntary or gave in-kind support up to the beginning of October 2012 amounted to 214 of whom 120 were involved in training, and 67 volunteers contributed to the project in other ways. Additionally, services have been offered by 27 skilled or professional members of the community working on a volunteer or in-kind basis, such as historians, archivists, council personnel, artists, teachers etc.

Conservation skills training programme

Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust delivered a conservation skills training programme over the period 12th January to 25th June 2013. This was divided into two modules, the first delivered over a period

of ten weeks with 20 volunteer trainees recruited from the Jobcentre learning how to categorise, record and survey stones and tombs. The trainees worked in two groups, one on Mondays and the other on Tuesdays. They were introduced to materials and decay mechanisms, methods of research using historical records in the library, creating a database for their recording activity in the churchyard, making measured drawings and understanding the history of the site. Training was delivered by conservation specialists and research experts. Individual learning support and development were given. By the end of the module they were able to make specifications and show enough understanding of conservation issues to select tombs to be repaired in the 2nd module.

The 2nd module started on the 25th March 2013 with 14 trainees and ran to the end of June. The programme provided hands-on practical training in basic conservation skills. Trainees worked in pairs and selected the tombs they wished to repair, working under the supervision of a professional conservator.

During the 2nd module, many in the team started attending both Monday and Tuesday sessions and they achieved far more than the expected outcomes, having taken real ownership of their conservation work. Additionally they participated in other events, such as contributing artwork to the Art Amongst the Stones exhibition presented in the Minster, attending Norfolk Wildlife Trust workshops, supporting the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Mind group and continuing work on drawing up a plan of the remaining marked graves in the churchyard.

The trainees have often commented on how rewarded they were by appreciative comments made by the many people who walk through the cemeteries and churchyard, revealing the real impact this project has had within the community at large. The volunteer trainees have been magnificent, attending in all weather conditions, freezing cold, wind, rain and searing heat and showing enthusiasm and commitment throughout.

When the project was completed two of the trainees were taken on as apprentices with a local building contractor. Four are continuing

work in the cemeteries on a part-time, self-employed basis with a view to taking up further training opportunities and developing a livelihood in conservation. Another is continuing further education in conservation studies. The Trust already has a waiting list for similar training opportunities on other projects pending.

Acknowledgements and achievements

The Heritage Lottery Fund, Eastern Region, visited the project on 2nd July 2013, when Great Yarmouth was chosen for their annual Away Day and English Heritage visited on the 4th June. Both were impressed with what has been achieved and described the project as "inspirational".



*Restoration of tomb
Photograph courtesy of Paul Davies*

The Norfolk Hawk and Owl Trust have built a peregrine platform, which has been installed on Great Yarmouth Minster tower and a local school has made bird nest boxes and ten pupils have volunteered to create an animation about the cemeteries. Young volunteers from Great Yarmouth and Waveney Mind have helped towards completing the record of gravestones and monuments in the churchyard and huge progress has been made and most of the stones have been cleared and plotted so that a churchyard plan can at last be drawn up.

Talks on conserving the monuments and guided tours have been carried out for the public and a Friends of Great Yarmouth Cemeteries has been inaugurated. The Friends have begun to help to maintain and care for the site. There are already 26 members with a team meeting regularly for hands-on work on site.

The project was shortlisted for the English Heritage Angels Award. It did not win in its category, but we were glad to receive very positive comments and, given a budget of only £120,000, it is a great acknowledgement of what has been achieved to have been shortlisted out of 900 projects nationwide. A youtube video made by

English Heritage is available to view under the heading “Angel Awards Nominee: Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust”. (See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3A5Yn1Htg8)

The Great Yarmouth Cemeteries Project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, the Broads Authority Sustainable Development Fund, TCHC (ESF Community Grant) and Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust.



*Above: Tomb before and after restoration
Photographs courtesy of Paul Davies*

New Members

Friends of Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh

Since the Edinburgh Support Group was unable to continue in 2007, Warriston Cemetery again suffered neglect. Now a new group has taken up the challenge as they describe here.

Warriston, opened in 1843, is Edinburgh's first Victorian garden cemetery. It became one of the most important final resting-places for Edinburgh Society, and also for both industrialists and the industrious. Its walls contain an important slice of history and cultural heritage, a fine example of garden design and natural heritage, and an outstanding display of funerary sculpture and fashions. One of the best-known “residents” is Sir Jas Young Simpson, one of the pioneers of anaesthesia, whose family declined to have him interred in Westminster Abbey.

Over time, the site became neglected, overgrown and vandalised. The older parts of the Cemetery have suffered from ivy (as well as Himalayan Balsam) which is now taking over, obscuring and damaging the stones and their inscriptions. The City of Edinburgh Council implemented a Compulsory Purchase Order in the 1990s for this and several other burial grounds and set about clearing the worst of the invasive species. The older parts of the Cemetery are now a Local Biodiversity Site.

The Friends set up in July 2013, with about 35 members, having gained the consent and co-operation of the Council. In nine months, the number of members has trebled. During the autumn and winter, several hundred stones were rediscovered, and during the spring into summer, attention switched to general tidying-up and the introduction of more suitable plantings. The Council has performed the more hazardous task of freeing the catacombs from ivy and self-seeded trees.

The citizenry loves what we're doing – as do we! We look to promote the cemetery through talks and social media, and we are always happy to show people around.

Contact: Caroline Gerard, caroline.gerard@btinternet.com

See [http://restinpixels.us/Friends of Warriston Cemetery.html](http://restinpixels.us/Friends_of_Warriston_Cemetery.html)

Associate members

Lancaster Civic Society is taking an active interest in Lancaster Cemetery, a working cemetery of 18 acres, opened in 1855. They are running monthly tours.

Contact: Roger Frankland, rfrankland6@gmail.com

Malvern Civic Society has a group recording memorial inscription in the Great Malvern Cemetery where the 'Swedish nightingale' Jennie Lind is buried.

Contact: Valerie Greenwood, greenwoodvalerie@yahoo.co.uk

Members News

A selection of news and events from Members newsletters and websites

Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds

Last autumn, Estelle Skinner, an ecologist with West Yorkshire Archaeology Services spent a day in the cemetery carrying out a survey of trees, shrubs and plants of which 119 species were recorded.

Bedford Cemetery

With help from volunteers and students from Bedford College, the Friends are intending to undertake a project of cleaning and the photographic recording of 12,000 memorial stones.

Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham

In March, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress joined pupils from St Alban's Roman Catholic Primary School to help plant hawthorn whips around a Commonwealth War Graves Commission burial area. Other attendees included representatives of Veolia Environmental Services, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Bereavement Services and local residents. Following the planting, everyone enjoyed refreshments and a chance to talk to the Lord Mayor about his role and regalia.

Brookwood Cemetery Society

The clearing of undergrowth by military cadets from an area off All Hallows has uncovered numerous plots which have not been seen for many years including the Eysoldt family plot complete with cherub and fountain.

Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff

Work has been underway to make the chapels more habitable including the installation of a 'floating' floor, watertight windows, water and power services and disabled access.

Darwen Cemetery

The Friends have been presented with a cheque for £2650 from the East Lancashire Masonic Charity to fund a Muck Truck for the volunteers to use in the restoration of the cemetery.

Hyde Park Cemetery, Doncaster

A local couple have offered to fund the restoration of the Green Dyke Lane cemetery gateway which will involve the repairing and repainting of the double gates, turnstile and adjacent railings.

In April, Doncaster Council auctioned off the Grade 2 listed cemetery Lodge, built in 1855 from local stone to a design by Robert James Johnson of Newcastle. The new owner has restored a former school near the cemetery and as a supporter of the work the Friends do, it is hoped the Lodge has a bright future.

Jesmond Old Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne

The Friends hosted a celebration in April when Reverend Rob Hawkins carried out a rededication service of the restored Thomas Burt Memorial.

Northwood Cemetery, Cowes, Isle of Wight

In February, the Friends submitted their application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to secure a grant to restore the Cemetery and should know by June 2014 whether they have been successful.

Park Cemetery, Ilkeston

The Minton tile floor in the Chapel has been professionally renovated with the help of a grant towards the cost from Erewash Borough Council

Raikes Road Burial Ground, Skipton

The Friends have received a £9,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the restoration of the burial ground.

Stanton Road Cemetery, Ilkeston

In March, the War Graves Commission re-installed headstones on the graves of five servicemen who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars. The headstones were removed when the cemetery fell into disrepair following its closure.

NFCF contact details

A list of members is available from the Secretary

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<http://cemeteryfriends.org.uk>

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Copy date for next issue: 15th September 2014

Printed by Inprint + Design Ltd, WBO7 Richmond Building, Carlton Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP and published by the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (Editor's address above).