

Kensal Green Friends welcome NFCF

The 2017 AGM was held in the Dissenters' Chapel at Kensal Green Cemetery, London on Saturday 10th June. The attendees including representatives from 23 cemetery Friends' groups were welcomed in the morning by the hosts, the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery. This was followed by a very informative talk on the history of Kensal Green Cemetery given by the NCFE Chairman, Robert Stephenson before heading out on to guided tours of the cemetery.

Right: The Grade II listed
Dissenters' Chapel
Photograph courtesy of Stuart
Wilkinson*



Kensal Green was established as London's first commercial public cemetery by the General Cemetery Company under its 1832 Act of Parliament. The cemetery was consecrated in January 1833 with the first burial taking place shortly after. Since then over 250,000 individuals have been laid to rest in the cemetery including many notable people of which 550 are listed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Still privately owned; today the cemetery covers 72 acres and comprises two conservation areas. Principal buildings include the listed Grade I Anglican Chapel and Grade II* Dissenters' Chapel. With the support of the Friends group restoration of the Dissenters' Chapel was completed in 1997. The Anglican Chapel fitted with a hydraulic lift which once lowered coffins to the catacombs below, is currently closed requiring funding for refurbishment.

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All material by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

The monuments include many splendid mausolea and distinctive smaller monuments and graves. Over 150 monuments have either Grade II* or Grade II listing.



Above: The mausoleum of HRH the Duke of Cambridge (Died 1904 – grandson of King George III)

Top left: The monument marking the grave of engineers Sir Marc Isambard & Isambard Kingdom Brunel and others of the Brunel family and top right: the monument over the grave of Feargus O'Connor – a leading socialist and leader of the Chartist movement

Photographs courtesy of Stuart Wilkinson

After lunch, the formal AGM business took place and details can be found in the minutes sent to NFCF members. Any members who have not received the minutes please contact the secretary: gwyneth1@btinternet.com

Thank you to the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery for their hospitality on the day. The next NFCF AGM will be hosted by the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Saturday 9th June 2018.

Belgrave Great War Hero Remembered

forwarded by Dorothy Marshall, Chairman of the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery, Leicester

On the eleventh hour of Sunday 9th July 2017 the grave of a Great War Royal Marine was marked with a new headstone on the eve of the 89th anniversary of his death. Representatives of the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery and the Leicestershire and Rutland Branch of the Western Front Association (WFA) gathered with invited guests to unveil a headstone commemorating Private Archibald William Toach, 4th Battalion, Royal Marines Light Infantry, who was injured during the audacious Royal Navy raid on Zeebrugge Harbour in the early hours of St George's Day (23rd April) in 1918.



*The new headstone
Photograph courtesy of Dorothy
Marshall*



*The headstone is unveiled by
Valerie Jacques, the Branch
Secretary of the WFA
Photograph courtesy of Dorothy
Marshall*

Toach, who had fabricated his age to enlist, received severe injuries to his right arm, from which he would never fully recover. His gallantry would re-emerge ten years later when he saved two people from drowning in the sea at Bournemouth, shortly before he died at the age of 28. Laid to rest with his parents at Belgrave Cemetery near Red Hill Island on the A563 without the memorial his gallantry demands. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Friends and with donations from the WFA and Loughborough stonemasons Kevin

Sharman and Kevin Mitchell this anomaly was finally corrected. The Ceremony formed part of an Open Day being held at Belgrave Cemetery. This was an opportunity for the citizens of Leicester to gather and remember one of the City's forgotten heroes.

National Cemeteries Week: digital contribution on churchyard gives contemporary twist for St Mary's, Prestwich

St Mary's ran a Twitter campaign in September timed to coincide with their Patronal Festival and with the NCF's National Cemeteries Week, *reports the NCF secretary*. The topic celebrated the churchyard which at 3 hectares is considered one of the largest in the UK and it is looked after by St Mary's Churchyard Action Group, Prestwich, Manchester. Each day for two weeks an interesting fact was tweeted about the churchyard, accompanied by an image and a prayer. The material will be turned into a prayer booklet to complement the heritage information about the churchyard which is already available. Andrew West, communications lead at the church, said they hoped it would generate some interest in the community and that the digital angle would give it a contemporary twist. Commenting on the results he now says, 'During the campaign we generated about 5,000 Twitter "impressions" and gained a number of new followers. A podcast interview with Churchyard Action Group member Bill Cottam was a direct result of the campaign.' The podcast interview can be found at:

<https://disceyes.org/2017/10/11/churchyard/>

Other members who took part in NCW:

Friends of Bedford Cemetery; St Peter's, Berkhamsted; Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff; Ponsharden Cemeteries, Falmouth; Lister Lane Cemetery, Halifax; Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds; Belgrave Cemetery, Leicester; Brockley and Ladywell Cemeteries, London; Brompton Cemetery, London; Nunhead Cemetery, London and York Cemetery.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES WEEK 12th to 20th May 2018

The NCF has a new month for National Cemeteries Week. Having started two years ago within the umbrella of the UK Heritage Weekends and London Open City, we now feel it is time for the NCF to have our own dedicated week.

Please make a note in your group's 2018 events calendar, and you will receive further information by email.

The Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery invite you to visit their hidden gem in Newcastle upon Tyne

by Ray Hayes

Jesmond Old Cemetery, originally known as Newcastle General Cemetery, was designed by the celebrated North-east architect, John Dobson and opened as a private cemetery in 1836. It is situated on a 10-acre site, sandwiched between Jesmond Road and Sandyford Road in South Jesmond and forms part of a designated local conservation area and wildlife corridor. It is a fine example of an early 'garden cemetery' and it is often described as the 'Highgate of the North', containing a wealth of social history, particularly in relation to Newcastle's founding fathers of the Victorian era, including John Dobson himself, retailer John James Fenwick, 'Father of the House of Commons' Thomas Burt and 'The Bard of Tyneside', Joseph Wilson, to name but a few.



Above: The South Lodge

Left: Jesmond Old Cemetery's principal entrance

Photographs courtesy of Ray Hayes

The cemetery itself is surrounded by a Grade II* stone wall, some 2.5m in height, with two entrances, again both listed as Grade II*. The principal entrance consists of a central arch with iron gates flanked by square towers, with a single storey pedimented chapel attached to each side. J.C. Loudon, the celebrated 'cemetery designer' described this entrance as "the most appropriate cemetery lodge" which could "never be mistaken for an entrance to a public park or to a country residence".

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The second entrance is flanked by massive square-section pylons capped by sarcophagi and pierced by pedestrian entrances, with the South Lodge, another Grade II* structure, lying adjacent to this particular entrance. Additionally, there are eight Grade II listed monuments within the grounds of Jesmond Old Cemetery, with the most prominent monument being designed by John Dobson for Archibald Reed, six times Lord Mayor of Newcastle, in the form of a tall, Gothic Revival-style pinnacle.

The inherent challenges of managing a 'garden cemetery' design, resulted in the City Council favouring a 'hands off' approach to the management of Jesmond Old Cemetery, concentrating only on maintaining those areas that were either easily accessible to modern grass cutting machinery or adjacent to graves that were still being tended by relatives and descendants. This meant that the vast majority of the site succumbed to the advances of nature, with brambles, ivy, self-seeded saplings and Japanese knotweed encroaching on and covering many of the monuments, obscuring their visual impact, and concealing footpaths, thereby impeding access around the site.



*The Grade II listed Archibald Reed monument
Photograph courtesy of Ray Hayes*

However, since the formation of the Friends group in April 2008, we have been a catalyst in raising the profile of the site, reversing years of neglect and lack of maintenance, and re-engaging the City Council in a collaborative approach to its management. As a result of our presence and lobbying, the Grade II* perimeter walls were renovated after the City Council were able to identify internal funding for the project and, more importantly, we were heavily involved in rescuing the similarly graded 'South Lodge', resulting in it being removed from Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk Register' and being brought back into sustainable use by the Friends group and the local population.

In improving the physical and aesthetic condition of the Cemetery, we have also seen a major upturn in its popularity - essentially, we have brought life back to Jesmond Old Cemetery. This is ably demonstrated by the long - empty East and West Chapels now having new tenants, all of whom have signed long term leases and are keen to collaborate with us on further enhancing the cemetery. Other examples of this renaissance include our very popular heritage walks, corporate 'team building' events and promoting its wider appeal via our website www.jesmondoldcemetery.co.uk. Finally, with regard to local biodiversity, whose benefits reach far beyond the cemetery walls, we have installed nests for bees, bat and bird boxes, squirrel feeding stations and planted wildflower and nectar producing flowers throughout the cemetery. Indeed, as a result of our efforts, we were awarded a Certificate of Commendation from Historic England, in 2015, as formal recognition of our role in rescuing Jesmond Old Cemetery.



*The Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery
Photograph courtesy of Ray Hayes*

Next year, 2018 will be the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery and, as part of our planned celebrations, we are hosting the AGM of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends on the 9th June 2018. It really is a great honour for us to be given the responsibility of hosting such a prestigious annual event, and we are looking forward to sharing our beautiful hidden gem with you all.

News from Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds

from Lynda Kitching, Secretary of the Friends of Beckett Street Cemetery

Heritage Open Day / National Cemeteries Week



Photograph courtesy of Lynda Kitching

We are pleased to report that the Cemetery attracted around 80 visitors for our two one-hour tours, ably led by our Chair, Alun Pugh. The picture left, shows some of our visitors, including a few young people – good news! We were part of a tremendous city-wide effort for Heritage Open Days by the volunteer Co-Ordinator's from Leeds Civic Trust, who publicised very well the 120 events over the four days.

Anglican Walk

Earlier this year, the Friends were successful in obtaining approximately £20k of funding to restore the remaining part of one of the main thoroughfares of the Cemetery, Anglican Walk. This original stone-setted structure had been part-tarmacked many years ago, and the remaining part damaged gradually by maintenance wagons too heavy for the base, which was originally intended for horses and carriages. The Friends were keen to have it restored, rather than see it tarmacked as had been suggested, and set about raising the money. Nothing happens quickly, but five funders, including local ward Councillors have contributed to the cost, and work has begun. It being labour-intensive, the contractors have scheduled four weeks for the work.



Day one on re-laying Anglican Walk

Photograph courtesy of Lynda Kitching

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

Ann Wilkinson attended the June 2017 meeting of BCAG on behalf of the NCF

Ministerial changes following June's general election include the appointment of David Lidington MP as the new Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. Dr Philip Lee MP continues in his ministerial role with responsibility for coroners, burials, inquests and inquiries providing some degree of continuity.

It was reported that the New Southgate Cemetery Bill concerning grave reuse in that cemetery had prior to the election reached the point where it was due for a third reading in the House of Commons, if approved it will be put forward for royal assent.

A matter was raised concerning the interment of ashes in grave plots and exhumation of ashes to make way for a later burial as some burial authorities are failing to follow the correct procedures. The Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management offered to provide guidance on this issue.

The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities suggested that it should be the requirement that all crematorium technicians receive the appropriate training and be examined to a certified level of competence.

Publication of the Department of Health's consultation response document on the introduction of medical examiners and death certification reforms in England and Wales was still pending. No new timescale was given for its publication.

Members of the National Association of Funeral Directors have found that the National Health Service are reluctant to take back cardiac pacemakers once the person has died. As a result, there is a growing number of these used pacemakers left on their members' premises with no means of disposing of them. One potential outlet is that used pacemakers could be refitted and sent out for use in the developing world. Clarification regarding ownership of the used pacemakers was requested from the Department of Health.

The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

by Colin Fenn

An important part of every Cemetery Friends Group is the data we keep on members for newsletters and mailings. This will be affected by a new GDPR law that comes into force in May 2018. These rules will strengthen the previous UK Data Protection Act of 1998 through the EU's GDPR directive. In essence, the law will require verifiable consent to be obtained from UK (and EU) residents that is informed and freely given. This means you must ask for consent and be explicit with what you do with people's data. The rules apply equally whether personal data is held on computer or on paper records. They apply to 'natural people' only, so information you collect on organisations are outside the scope of the rules. It places no requirements about privacy of the information about dead people. There is no allowance made for the historic use of data, so after May 2018 you cannot assume that that you can continue to contact your members in the same way as before. You will not be able to send them information about your events or other 'marketing' without having asked for their consent. Nor can you share your mailing list with other groups or do mailings on the behalf of others without consent.

The regulation makes a special case for 'sensitive personal data'; this includes political opinions and religious beliefs. So, while there is no problem collecting information that is in the public domain (e.g. titles such as Rev, MP, Councillor) you need to be especially careful if you record that a member represents a particular denomination or is active in a political party. Data subjects can ask you to tell them what information is held about them within 30 days, and demand that inaccurate information or opinions are corrected, removed or destroyed from your records. The Information Commissioner is able to impose fines for non-compliance. On a practical note, almost every commercial and not for profit organisation now has to review its customer data policies and contact processes. So, while we should all be ready by May 2018, it is likely that in the short term the Information Commissioner will have bigger worries than friends groups.

As you prepare to collect your annual membership fee, it is worth reviewing the wording on your membership forms and websites that that you send out for renewals or new joiners. If your forms are not already explicit in stating that members will receive newsletters, then you should

ask members to tick boxes to receive newsletters. You should add more tick boxes, so they can be contacted about events or issues and campaigns. You should record their answers in your membership database and only contact those members who agree to be contacted, about the subjects they agree to be contacted.

See the Information Commissioner's Office publication, 'Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): 12 steps to take now', <https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf>

York Cemetery Friends win Gold

from Clive Dawson, Chairman of the Friends of York Cemetery

Early in the year the Friends Committee decided to enter the Open Spaces and Cemeteries category of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Awards run in conjunction with Yorkshire in Bloom. This would be a beneficial exercise for the cemetery to have an outside recognised body evaluate what we are about. A lot of work has taken place on the pond, rockery and herb garden which are now rather show gardens and we just kept working on the rest. A portfolio on all cemetery activity was put together which including before and after pictures of garden tasks, how many volunteers work on different aspects of the cemetery and the involvement of the community which plays a large part of RHS judging.

On 13th July John Stanley visited from RHS to evaluate the work at York Cemetery. John was taken back by the size of the site and the diversity of plants, trees and wildlife but also the activities under taken by Friends throughout the year. He was pleased with what he saw which gave us hopes of an award, possibly bronze or even a silver. Tuesday 12th September was the award ceremony at York Racecourse attended by Hazel Hall and Pauline Beckwith on behalf of the Friends. Hazel recalls that she was on tenterhooks waiting for the result to be announced but when it came, what a surprise, the Friends of York Cemetery were awarded a Gold Award. A 2017 Yorkshire Rose Open Space of Gold. The award is recognition to everyone who has volunteered and worked in York Cemetery in any capacity since 1984. Congratulations to everyone.

North Cemetery - Books of Interment



The Friends of North Cemetery are pleased to announce the release of sixteen 'Books of Interment', containing approximately 54,000 names of those interred in North Cemetery and are available to view at the Central Library Hartlepool.

More about the project can be found on the Friends website at:

<http://www.northcemeteryhartlepool.co.uk>

Photograph courtesy of Julie Rudge

New Members and Associates

The following groups have recently joined the NCF

Friends of St James' Garden, Liverpool

Formerly known as St James' Cemetery –built on a disused quarry and opened in 1825 – the site is now a Grade I listed park. The Friends have played a pivotal role in its restoration, and now working with the owners, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Cathedral and National Museums, to deliver a landscaped, green and open space for the inner-city community, and encourage the promotion of cultural activities and a healthy lifestyle in a safe environment.

Website: www.friendsofstjamesgarden.org

Contact: Dr Emlyn Williams, emlynwilliams@mypostoffice.co.uk

Friends of Camberwell Cemeteries, SE London

Camberwell Old Cemetery (30 acres) opened in 1856 originally as a burial ground for St Giles, Camberwell; and Camberwell New Cemetery (68 acres) opened half-a-mile away, in Honor Oak. They are owned by the London Borough of Southwark.

Website: www.savesouthwarkwoods.org.uk

Contact: Blanche Cameron, savesouthwarkwoods@gmail.com

Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery, Cambridgeshire

The Friends started in 1992 to maintain the three-acre closed cemetery in a busy part of Wisbech. They are supported by the owners Fenland District Council and the Wisbech Society who are seeking Heritage Lottery funding for the renovation of the chapel for its use as a public study/learning amenity.

Website: www.wisbechgeneralcemetery.co.uk

Contact: Sarah Ledger, sarahledger64@gmail.com

Friends of Teignmouth Cemetery, Devon

A 'first step' ribbon was cut by the Mayor and Mayoress of Teignmouth in a ceremony to mark the completion of the Friends' first project. This was clearing and restoring graves and new planting in an area near the chapel, made possible with a small grant for tools from Teignmouth Council.

Website: gravetales.wordpress.com

Contact: Marti Howell, martijoyhowell@gmail.com

Friends of the Old Burial Ground, Blaby, Leicestershire

Associate member Blaby Parish Council are setting up this Cemetery Friends group while seeking funding to restore a neglected Victorian nonconformist mortuary chapel and its associated burial ground. This is one of two separate sites bought in 1864 when the churchyard became full. The Anglican chapel and burial ground are still in use,

Website: www.blabyparishcouncil.org

Contact: Erica Statham, ericastatham@btopenworld.com

Friends of St Mary's Churchyard, Horden, Co Durham

A recent group formed to look after the churchyard of their local church St Mary's. Opened with the church in 1911, the churchyard is now closed for burials. Contact: Claire Fishwick, clairefishwick35@outlook.com

Correction

Under the 'New Members and Associates' section in Newsletter 39, the email address of the contact for The Thomas and Elizabeth Mayhook Charity (for St David's Cemetery, Carmarthen) was misquoted. The correct email is richard.goodridge@btinternet.com Thank you to Richard Goodridge for pointing out this error.

Members News

A selection of news and events from Members newsletters and websites

Belgrave Cemetery, Leicester

The commitment and hard work of the Friends has been acknowledged this year; with the presentation of a certificate from Belgrave Network Busy Bees Awards and a Commonwealth War Graves Champion Certificate (CWGC).

Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham

In August, the Friends announced that the Heritage Lottery Fund had agreed to a three-month extension on completion of their 'Help the Hedgehogs' project and that the remaining funding could be spent on the design and installation of an interpretation board highlighting hedgehog facts, to be placed in the cemetery.

Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff

Cathays Cemetery were awarded the Green Flag Award in July which was the seventh year running.

Brand new gates have been installed at the entrance of the chapels central bell-tower. The gates nicely match those to the cemetery on Richmond Road. A plaque to the donors who supported the building restoration has also been erected on the bell-tower wall.

Hyde Park Cemetery, Doncaster

For the fourth year running, in August the Friends welcomed a group of young volunteers on the National Citizen Service scheme who helped with the restoration of three large overgrown shrub beds.

Three years ago, the Friends uncovered the broken CWGC headstone of Corporal Thomas William (Tommy) Booth which had cracked at ground level and lay flat on its back on the grass. The CWGC carried out a temporary repair by digging out the original base and sinking the upper section of the headstone into the ground. The CWGC ordered a new headstone from their manufacturing facility in France which has now been erected, providing a fitting memorial once more for a brave WW1 soldier.

Hyde Park Cemetery achieved a Silver Award in the Yorkshire In Bloom competition held in association with the RHS.

Northwood Cemetery, Cowes, Isle of Wight

The Friends report that the restoration of the two chapels and the toilet block were signed off by the managing architect in the middle of September. An open day to mark the completion of the restoration work is planned for 14th October 2017.

Raikes Road Burial Ground, Skipton

New gates have been installed at the burial ground entrance. The gates made by Restoration Ironwork for a private drive nearly thirty years ago were never used and were put into storage. Designed in a 1/3:2/3 configuration incorporating a pedestrian gate, the gates were refurbished to include an extension to fit the burial ground opening and repainted. The gates replacing an old wooden field gate have substantially improved the approach to the burial ground.

Rectory Lane Cemetery, Berkhamsted

In July the Friends of St Peter's Berkhamsted were awarded £907,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the transformation of Rectory Lane Cemetery from a 'Dead Space to a Living Space'. Over the next three years, this transformation will include a Garden of Remembrance; a wildlife domain; areas for picnics and live performances; better pathways and disabled visitor facilities. It is also the intention to restore many of the original features such as the Sexton's Hut which will become an information resource for visitors.

West Norwood Cemetery, London

Following their HLF award, first steps include advertising for an Activities Coordinator, and the Project Team have been having consultation sessions open to the public on the various proposals.

Wombwell Cemetery, Barnsley

In support of a Yorkshire In Bloom entry, one member of the Friends group pulled together a portfolio of all the things the Friends have accomplished over the years which has been published as a web booklet on their website. (The booklet is available to view at: <https://www.fowcemetery.org/friends>)

NFCF contact details

A list of members is available from the Secretary

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