

Musical greeting at Newcastle AGM

The 2018 AGM held on Saturday 9th June at Newcastle Cricket Club was attended by 37 members representing 18 cemetery groups. Ray Hayes welcomed members on behalf of the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery our hosts for the day and introduced the Lord Mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne, Cllr David Down who opened the day's



*Heaton Voices Community Choir
Photograph by Stuart Wilkinson*

proceedings. This was followed by the guest speaker, the writer Michael Chaplin who spoke about his connections with the Jesmond area and the cemetery where his parents Rene and Sid Chaplin OBE are buried.

Members were then invited to participate in conducted tours of the cemetery where they

were greeted at the entrance by the Heaton Voices Community Choir. Further musical accompaniment was supplied by the Backworth Colliery Band and a pair of wandering minstrels whilst the tours were underway.

Designed by the architect, John Dobson (1787–1865) Jesmond Old Cemetery, known originally as the Newcastle General Cemetery, opened in 1836. The cemetery which occupies a 10-acre plot between Jesmond Road and Sandyford Road is surrounded by a Grade II* listed stone wall with two similarly Grade II* listed main entrances.

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The principal entrance on Jesmond Road consists of a central arch flanked by square towers with single story pedimented chapels on either side. The lodge adjacent to the second entrance on Sandyford Road is also Grade II* listed.



*Above: the Jesmond Road entrance
Photograph by Robert Stephenson*

There are several Grade II listed monuments, including the impressive monument designed by John Dobson for Archibald Reed (died 1842) who held the position of the Lord Mayor of Newcastle on six occasions.



*Below: the Archibald
Reed monument
Photograph by Stuart
Wilkinson*

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery. The Friends have achieved much in improving the condition and raising the profile of the cemetery and their efforts were recognised in 2015 by Historic England with the award of a Certificate of Commendation.

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

Thank you to the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery for their hospitality on the day. The next AGM will be held on Saturday 8th June 2019 hosted by the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery in Halifax. (See page 10)

Obituary: Cemetery Friends pioneer Sylvia Barnard

Beckett Street Cemetery Friends secretary, Lynda Kitching, writes:

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our friend, Sylvia Barnard on 22nd July. Sylvia was the driving force behind the founding of the Friends in 1985, after she read that 'improvements' were planned for the cemetery, which was already a favourite place of hers. Writing innumerable letters, she succeeded in reversing the Council's decision, and with that success under her belt, she set about recruiting members, producing newsletters twice a year and with help from other like-minded people, she ran the Friends for 20 years.

One of the instigators of the founding of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, Sylvia was proud that its 2015 AGM was held in Leeds, hosted by the Friends of Beckett Street Cemetery during the 30th anniversary year.



*Left: Sylvia in full flow at NCF's 2015 AGM held in Leeds
Photograph courtesy of Lynda Kitching*

As well as producing leaflets about the history, geology and wildlife of the cemetery, Sylvia wrote a booklet about her experiences called

'Notes on Saving Cemeteries', which was to be the forerunner of the Federation's handbook 'Saving Cemeteries'. The pinnacle of her writing was undoubtedly the publication in 1990 of her book 'To Prove I'm Not Forgotten: Living and Dying in a Victorian City' taking the people in Beckett Street Cemetery and their stories as her starting point. It was reprinted in 2009 and is still selling.

Sylvia's legacy lives on, not only in her writing and research, but also with the cemetery itself, which is now recognised as an important place of social history and an oasis of calm in a busy suburb of Leeds.

Continued over page

From the NFCF secretary Gwyneth Stokes:

Sylvia's legacy is also in the drive, enthusiasm and ideas she contributed to the start and development of the Federation. Following initial meetings in London she offered Beckett Street Cemetery for the venue of what would be the first NFCF annual general meeting in 1989. Sylvia then attended every AGM until her retirement, returning appropriately as honoured guest speaker when Beckett Street friends were hosts in 2015. In my secretary's report I reminded Sylvia that representatives of six groups attended from a membership of 12 in 1989 but it was fitting recognition of her work that she was sharing her experiences with over 50 representatives of 23 groups from a membership of 90 that day. Sylvia Barnard was a true pioneer of what has become the Cemetery Friends movement.

Join in National Cemeteries Week 2019: 11th to 19th May review by Emer Seamark

NFCF's National Cemeteries Week (NCW) took place this year from 12th to 20th May and, despite short notice of the change of date from September to May, eighteen cemeteries registered their activities: these included walks, talks and special events.

With growing confidence, we move into the fourth year of NCW and wish to continue with our efforts to raise awareness of the existence of cemeteries and advertise the tremendous work being carried out by volunteers to improve and maintain them and, in some cases, rescue them from years of neglect. All members have been informed of the date by email. We now invite those who have not yet registered to take part in this opportunity to show the wonderful asset a cemetery can be to a community, not just a final resting place and a memorial but a quiet refuge, a habitat for wildlife and a valuable source of history.

Thanks to all those groups who took part this year:

BERKHAMSTED: Friends of St Peter's

BIRKENHEAD: Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

DONCASTER: Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

EDINBURGH: Dean Cemetery Trust

EDINBURGH: Friends of Morningside Cemetery
EDINBURGH: Friends of Warriston Cemetery
GLASGOW: Friends of Cathcart Cemetery
GLASGOW: Friends of Glasgow Necropolis
GREAT YARMOUTH: Friends of Great Yarmouth Cemeteries (see below)
HALIFAX: Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery
HARTLEPOOL: Friends of North Cemetery
LEEDS: Friends of Beckett Street Ceremony
LEEDS: Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery
LONDON SW: Friends of Brompton Cemetery
LONDON SE: Friends of Nunhead Cemetery
MIDDLESBROUGH: Friends of Linthorpe Cemetery and Nature Reserve
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE: Friends of St James Graveyard, Benwell
SOUTHAMPTON: Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery

To register (even if not finalised) email Emer at ncw@cemeteryfriends.com

The Friends of Great Yarmouth Cemeteries from Paul Davies

The Friends of Great Yarmouth Cemeteries celebrated National Cemeteries Week with a tour studying the amazing display of sculpture on display and their meanings. It was good to show the public details on monuments, which are often passed by unnoticed. Participants were surprised to learn that, on close examination, even simple headstones showed different designs, especially in the "weeper" category. We discussed the Gothic Victorian Revival, Baroque influences, the different styles of crosses, tiles and some of the eminent stonemasons.



Photographs courtesy of Paul Davies

The Beautiful Burial Ground Project

by the Community Coordinator, George Sharp

The Beautiful Burial Ground (BBG) Project is a Caring for God's Acre initiative funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Through this project we will put burial grounds across England and Wales on the map by revealing their hidden heritage and importance to biodiversity. We will be working with church communities, interest groups and individuals to learn about, research and survey the natural, built and social heritage of their local burial grounds, hoping to inspire an understanding of how important these special places are.

To increase the amount of knowledge held about the biodiversity of specific burial grounds we aim to gather 75,000 biological records (recorded sightings of all types of wildlife) across the four years of the project. To do this we are both encouraging existing wildlife recorders to visit and make records in burial grounds and are organising training sessions for people with an interest who could potentially become recorders in the future.

Sessions are being run both by The Beautiful Burial Ground team directly and partners across the country. Norfolk Wildlife Trust got off to a flying start by running sessions for training keen volunteers to record birds, bees and butterflies. Essex Wildlife Trust ran sessions on bats and swifts and veteran trees and The Beautiful Burial Ground team ran botanical identification sessions in churchyards in Shropshire and on the Welsh borders. These sessions generate a species list for a site; this information is now being channelled into the National Biodiversity Network Atlas where we are working with the Church Heritage Record to develop a system enabling anyone to locate online wildlife records for any burial ground in England and Wales.

As well as valuable wildlife habitats our burial grounds encapsulate the stories of our communities. They tell us about changing fashions and traditions, of immigration and of lives both long lived and tragically short. Through this project we will encourage people to explore and record these stories and the built heritage of our burial grounds by running sessions in county archives and training days in monument recording. We will then connect the location of the built and social heritage records

with that of the wildlife records for a site. This will enable burial ground managers, and anyone else with an interest, to have access to information on all the significant components of an individual burial ground.



*Bees Workshop in Horstead Churchyard, Norfolk
Photograph by Lucy Seely*

A key aspect of the project is to engage with sections of the community who may benefit from exploring the potential of burial grounds as places to learn about and connect with wildlife and the stories of the communities they are in. Many of our burial grounds are in the

midst of our communities yet are underappreciated as the accessible, calm and beautiful places they often are. Specifically, we are looking to work with people with physical disabilities and mobility issues, people with mental health issues and families.

This summer we have enjoyed working with Visions Links, a Hereford based charity supporting those with visual impairments, who joined us in a rural south Shropshire churchyard to learn to identify bird song, and Shrewsbury Cemetery was the location for a session looking at wildlife in the burial ground with a group from the Shropshire Disability Network. Around the country, family days have been run by our partners in North Wales, Lincolnshire and Norfolk helping visitors of all ages to discover the, often hidden, wonders of burial grounds. We are now looking forward to the autumn, to fungi forays, archive training and monument recording sessions and are starting to plan for next spring's botanical recording season. If you would like to be involved with the project there are several ways you can do so:

Join a training session

Training sessions are taking place across England and Wales for a wide range of wildlife identification and recording, archive research and monument recording.

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Host a training session

Are you a burial ground manager or part of a group looking after a churchyard, cemetery or chapel yard? If you would like to find out more about what is on your site, get in touch.

Run a training session

Are you an expert in monument or wildlife recording with experience in training people? Contact us and we will try and match your skills with an interested group. We can help towards your expenses.

Upload your records

Whether an established recorder or new to wildlife/biological recording your records are vitally important to improving our knowledge of biodiversity in burial grounds.

For more information visit The Beautiful Burial Ground pages on the Caring for God's Acre website www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk or contact the project team, Sue: Project Manager, sue@cfga.org.uk, Liam: Data Manager, liam@cfga.org.uk, George: Community Coordinator, george@cfga.org.uk

Notes from the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group Meeting

Colin Fenn attended the July BCAG meeting on behalf of the NFCF

There had been concerns about delays to burials and cremations caused by staff working short hours; the relevant institutions had not responded.

It had been the practice for funeral directors to remove pacemakers and recycle them for charity. However at least one firm of funeral directors had been raided by police for doing so. It appears this occurs because of 1983 legislation that claims pacemakers as the property of the NHS and should be returned. However, they cannot be reused, and hospitals do not want them. But the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) had received legal advice that pacemakers *could* be sold on for recycling; the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was asked to seek counsel to confirm this so that this valuable scrap can be put to good use.

MoJ ministers had recently changed; as well as Sajid Javid as Secretary

of State, Edward Argar was now the Minister for Youth, Justice and Victims, with a brief that included burials. Matthew Hancock was the new Health Minister.

Other discussion points included new cremation regulations being introduced; some of the new forms specified what to do with the ashes, this raised difficulties regarding data processing, while bodies held in medical schools may have already had old forms used to indicate what to do with the remains, which have become invalid. The new forms also state that in some instances no ashes may be available; this did not make it clear that condition only applied to infants.

There are currently pilots underway in Gloucester and Sheffield, where a medical examiner has been appointed to scrutinise deaths not seen by the coroner prior to cremation or burial. They will act as a safeguard against another Dr Shipman. However, there was concern that these new checks on the Death Certificate will introduce delays in releasing the body for burial, and that the extra costs will be passed on as additional fees. As it currently relies on self-referral by GPs and is not planned to become a statutory role until 2021, there were doubts expressed about its usefulness before then.

The government has announced a Children's Funeral Fund, whereby Local Authorities' charges for a child's funeral will be met by the state. Members noted that this already happens in Wales. Some cemeteries and funeral directors already discount or give their services for free. The extent of coverage, scope, and scale of charges is yet to be decided. Would a free funeral affect costs? e.g. would it provide a free double plot in advance for other family members with a memorial, would it pay for extravagant funerals? Would cemeteries and FDs that give their services for free now start charging?

There was also discussion on the terms of reference of the group. Julie Rugg stated that she was responsible for its formation c.2003, as there was then was no forum for stakeholders to meet. She said the intention was not that the Ministry would pass on information to stakeholders, rather that they would gather information from them. The group should consider issues such as the National Planning Policy Framework, such as placing cemeteries in the greenbelt, how to consider capacity, and what constitutes a 'full' cemetery.

Halifax's General Cemetery

by David C. Glover, Chairman of the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery

Lister Lane Cemetery is the last resting place of many past citizens of Halifax, and a few from further afield. In effect, the names on its memorials tell much of the story of late 19th Century industrial Halifax. Here lie founders of Halifax Building Society, the Crossley brothers of Dean Clough, soldiers, businessmen, shopkeepers, Chartists, and working people. Murder victims and independent church ministers are also included. But how and when did the cemetery begin?

It was in May 1836 that an advertisement appeared in the *Halifax Express* newspaper convening a meeting to form a cemetery company, in response to the extreme overcrowding in existing burial grounds in the town. The three original members were respectively Methodist, Unitarian and Congregationalist, and the ensuing meeting resulted in the formation of The Halifax General Cemetery Company, which organised the first non-denominational Halifax burial ground. Its prospectus stated that people of any religion, or of none, could be buried there, provided the interment was carried out with dignity. This was quite a radical statement for those days. The following November, the constitution was agreed; and £5 shares were sold to raise money for the venture of which £1,000 would go towards the purchase of land for the new cemetery. Funds being assured, approximately 3 acres (c. 1.2ha) of land situated between Gibbet Street and Lister Lane well outside the limits of the town centre were purchased.

The cemetery founders wanted not only a safe and hygienic place of burial, but also a graveyard whose design and buildings would contribute to the improvement and respectability of the town. In 1839 a surveyor was commissioned to survey the site, and produce a design for the layout of walks, and the position of the chapel. An onsite lodge, a home for the cemetery keeper who doubled as the stonemason was also provided. Approximately £1,845 was paid to construct the burial ground, chapel, and lodge; and the cemetery was opened at the end of 1841.

Costs of burial varied, but the Cemetery Committee retained flexibility to charge less to the poor, and to ensure that all received a proper burial. Records show that vast numbers of working and poor people were buried

in the cemetery, as well as those with greater means. And, yes, there were many burials in “public” graves.

Following the opening of the first municipal burial ground at Stoney Royd Cemetery by Halifax Corporation in 1861, a slight reduction in burials at Lister Lane was noticeable; but Lister Lane was filling up rapidly; by 1900 it was seven-eighths full, and few new graves were opened after that date, most burials taking place in existing plots. By 1950 the chapel was in disuse, and in that year the local Council took over its care from the defunct cemetery company. In 1963 a decision was made to close the cemetery, by which time over 19,000 interments had taken place there. In 1980 the lodge was demolished, but before that, Lister Lane had already fallen into a terrible decay.

Formation of the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery

In 1998, Calderdale Council’s environmental officer, deeply concerned about controversial development proposals, called a meeting to discuss the future of the cemetery, which was by then very overgrown; the gates had been stolen, and cars were being set on fire in the grounds. An appeal was made for people to help look after the cemetery and Harriet Dell and Sheila Williams decided to start a group to improve the cemetery, and with a few willing people the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery was formed. By 2000, the Friends had a constitution, and soon became a charity, accessing grants for tools and projects. Utilising volunteers, successive clearance projects were carried out and much was achieved, and for the first time in years the gravestones of many past Halifax residents could be read.

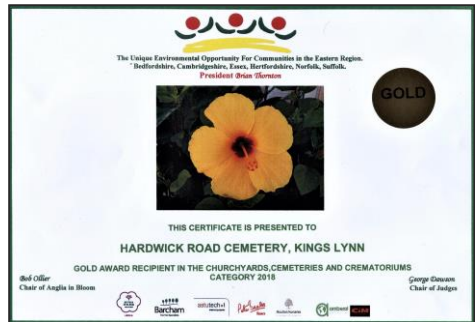
Since that time, thanks to the determination of its dedicated volunteers – and with the assistance of Calderdale Bereavement Services - Lister Lane Cemetery has become a green oasis in what is now a heavily populated area of Halifax. The transcription of the original Halifax General Cemetery burial books has enabled the Friends to provide information and assistance for people seeking help with their family history, and for researching the lives of people buried in the cemetery. Some wonderful facts and stories have come to light as a result.

In 2019, the Friends will be hosting the AGM of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends on the 8th June 2018 and we look forward to welcoming its members to our green oasis.

Hardwick Road Cemetery win *Anglia in Bloom* award.

by Julian Litten, Chairman of the Friends of Hardwick Cemetery

Proud of its landscape and maintenance, the Friends of Hardwick Road Cemetery, King's Lynn, Norfolk decided to enter this year's *Anglia in Bloom* competition in the Churchyards, Cemeteries and Crematoriums category. Judging took place in early July and it was at the end of September that the awards were announced, with Hardwick Road Cemetery picking up the Gold Award, which came as a welcome surprise for the Friends and for the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who own the cemetery's freehold and looks after its maintenance. The Friends were all the more pleased when they realised that they had been voted best in category for the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and, of course, Norfolk.



*The Gold Award
Image courtesy of Julian Litten*

Established in 1856, Hardwick Road Cemetery was laid out by Aiken and Capes of London with specimen trees and shrubs provided by the nurserymen H & F Sharp of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. The local authority's intention was that the cemetery should also serve as the town's arboretum and includes a fine example of a tulip tree and four Giant Redwoods. Having been created from a meadow it also has many natural wild plant and flowers.

Members Publications

Living memories - Belgrave friends remembered

Edited by Sandra Moore, the book recounts the stories of over 140 of those laid to rest in Belgrave Cemetery, Leicester, as told in words and pictures by their friends and families. Priced at £10.00 plus p&p. Copies obtainable from Sandra, sandramoore@sky.com

Tamlyns Titanic victim memorial rededication

by Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson, Chairman of the Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery

A small memorial service was held in the Wembdon Road Cemetery on Friday 13th July to rededicate the memorial of Cyril Ricks (1890-1912), a victim of the sinking of the *Titanic*. The memorial had been toppled and broken but was repaired through the generosity of Tamlyns Chartered Surveyors. Tamlyns, Bridgwater's oldest business, are celebrating 140 years since their foundation in 1878. To publicly mark this occasion, one of their projects is to honour one of their ancestors. Tamlyns paid for the restoration of Cyril's memorial, as he was the brother-in-law to the company's director at the time, W. H. Tamlyn.



*At the rededication service
Photograph by Andy Slocombe*

Cyril was born in Bridgwater and his father ran the George Hotel in George Street. Cyril worked as a shopkeeper on luxury liners and signed up to work on board the S.S. *Titanic* in April 1912. When that famous and doomed ship collided with an iceberg, Cyril was serving first-class customers. He and his fellow shopkeepers were some of the last people on the deck of the stricken vessel. Together they jumped overboard as the *Titanic* made its final plunge into the water. While his friends survived, Cyril was knocked unconscious by falling debris, and he drowned in the icy waters of the Atlantic. Here in Bridgwater, his name was added to a small memorial in the Wembdon Road Cemetery, which marked the burial place of some of his siblings. In recent years this memorial had been forgotten about and its cross toppled over and broken.

Continued over page

Moved by Cyril's story, and by the efforts of the Friends of the Wembdon Road Cemetery to restore the neglected burial ground, Tamlyns stepped forward to pay for the memorial's repair. The cross has been pinned back into place and the whole memorial fully restored and cleaned, so it should stand for at least another hundred years in Cyril's memory. The work was carried out by Fine Memorials of Bridgwater. Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson, chairman of the Friends of the Cemetery, remarked 'we're delighted that Tamlyns have generously stepped forward to repair this memorial to one of Bridgwater's lost sons. It's a credit to the town that their company are keen to honour their history and do something for the town's benefit'. James Venton from Tamlyns said 'When the Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery contacted us and told us about Cyril's story, and his close family links to Tamlyns, we felt that it was only right that as a company we contributed towards safeguarding Cyril's memory

The small service to rededicate the memorial was attended by representatives of Tamlyns and the Friends, Cllr Gill Slocombe representing the Ward and Sedgemoor District Council, and the Mayor of Bridgwater, Diogo Rodrigues, and Brian Smedley, representing the Town Council. The memorial was blessed by Rev. Trish Ollive, the Vicar of St Mary's, who recited the same prayers and Rosary as performed by Fr. Thomas Byles that night on the deck of the *Titanic* as the ship made its final plunge. Those attending remarked how moving it was to think that these would have been heard by Cyril in the moments before his untimely death.

'Faces from the past' idea from Beckett Street Friends
from Lynda Kitching,

We have created on the website, www.beckettstreetcemetery.org.uk a section 'Faces from the Past', under the 'Records' section. We put word out via, our newsletter, our Facebook page and links with several Leeds websites, that we are keen to have pictures of people who are buried in the Cemetery. We can locate their graves and sometimes information about them. This has proved popular - with several people telling us that they were wondering what to do with the photos, which have been at the back of a cupboard and other family members not that interested. We do not keep the photos but will scan them if requested.

Brompton Cemetery's ambitious restoration project completed

by Gwyneth Stokes

After four years Brompton Cemetery's £6.2 million restoration project has been completed with a transformation of such style and efficiency that it has been awarded the Museum + Heritage top prize for Restoration or Conservation.

The funding for this Grade I listed, 39-acre site included a £4.5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the BIG Lottery Fund awarded to The Royal Parks charity, who manage the cemetery, supported by the Friends of Brompton Cemetery. LDA Design were later appointed to design the scheme which included the restoration of the North Lodge as a visitor centre on one side of the entrance and a cafe, run by franchise on the other side.

The restoration was officially launched on a hot day in July when many of those who contributed to the project were welcomed in the new information centre, given short tours, then seated outside the chapel to hear the full story. The speakers included Loyd Grosman (Royal Parks Chairman), Wesley Kerr (Trustee), Ros Kerslake (CEO of HLF), Tristram Hunt (Director, V & A Museum), Lee Snashfold (Descendant of discovered burial) and Arthur Tait (Chairman of the Friends of Brompton Cemetery and former NCFE Chairman.)

Arthur Tait happily announced that 'this is a dream coming true' but reminded the audience of the start 21 years ago 'when the Friends were a small group of volunteers working from a long - neglected building in the cemetery with snail trails across the floor and buckets in key positions when it rained.' The cemetery was severely overgrown, so the Friends set to work to clear acres of four-to-eight feet high brambles and ivy growth.

He outlined their early difficulties but also the triumphs and excitements such as discovering the grave of Princess Gourama, an Indian girl from a distressed noble family who became a god-daughter of Queen Victoria

Continued over page

and with The Times newspaper support, the restoration and rededication of the grave of the eminent First World War correspondent, Sir William Russell. Arthur's hopes and advice for the future were that the Friends double their volunteer base to fully deliver the cemetery's many cultural and other activities, and that the Royal Parks need to strengthen their resource on site with a resident cemetery manager.

The event concluded with tea in the chapel where admirers of the restored splendid dome and stone floor were wondering if they were in Italy.

How the Friends of Saint Mary's Churchyard, Horden, came to be by Irene Styles

In the summer of 2017 my American cousin Barbara, an avid family tree researcher, was coming to the UK and asked if she could visit our grandfather's grave in Horden Churchyard, Co Durham. Alas, I had to inform her that the churchyard was no more and had fallen into disrepair.

This prompted me to try and discover what information was available about our family graves and what had happened to them. I put out an appeal on Facebook's, 'Peterlee Have your Say.' Bobby Fishwick answered immediately, followed swiftly by many others. Some were able to give information, others like myself were seeking answers.

After some online discussion we all agreed how good it would be to form a group, willing to tidy up what had fallen into disrepair. A meeting was held to find out who would be interested and how we could go forward and create a Memorial Garden that would respect our loved ones, including soldiers of both World Wars and miners resting there.

After several monthly meetings in Horden Catholic Club, a successful fund-raising event, commitment and continuing hard work, our goal is in sight. I am proud to be part of what will eventually be an inspiring memorial to those who are buried in the churchyard and a place of peaceful, reflection for their families to visit.

The use of drones in cemeteries

by Stuart Wilkinson

There are some justified concerns about the use of drones in many areas due to inexperienced operators who are not aware of the laws governing their use. At present there is no licensing requirement to fly a drone for pleasure and inappropriate use can become a nuisance. This inexperience can lead to damage to property and injure livestock and humans. To alleviate these problems highly trained professional Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) approved drone pilots can be used to get useful images of cemeteries for both surveys and publications.



Aerial view of Lister Lane Cemetery, Halifax taken with a drone by Stuart Wilkinson

One novel use is a video placed on the cemetery's website where people abroad can get a flyby of where their relatives may be buried. Another use is to produce high definition images of the cemetery from several hundred feet this can give an overview and a much clearer view than by other means. These drones can also be used to inspect monuments and buildings to alleviate the need for scaffolding and the health and safety risks involved.

So, in conclusion, drones can be a great benefit if used appropriately by trained operators; however, before any work commences it is your duty to have sight of the CAA approval and insurance certificate.

Information on all aspects of drone usage can be found on the CAA website: <https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

Rededication of the memorial of Alderman Richard Hallam

by Dorothy Marshall, Friends of Belgrave Cemetery



Left to right: Dorothy Marshall, Chair of FoBC, Deputy Lord Mayor of Leicester, Cllr Annette Byrne and direct descendants of Alderman Richard Hallam

Photograph courtesy of Dorothy Marshall

The Belgrave Cemetery Open Day on 10th June was a resounding success. Introduced by Leicester's new Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Annette Byrne, the service for the memorial rededication of Alderman Richard Hallam conducted by the Rev'd Pam Haynes was attended by members of the Hallam family, the Head teacher and two Deputy Heads of the Alderman Richard Hallam School. Cllr Byrne accompanied by Cllr Vijay Riyait explained how Alderman Hallam became Lord Mayor of Leicester in 1935.

The headstone having been deemed to be unsafe had been laid flat on the ground some years ago. Because of the interest shown by Cllr Riyait, the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery (FoBC) committee applied for a grant from Abbey Ward. This was successfully obtained through Leicester City Council and now the large 5ft high grey granite stone is once again upright. With the Hallam family contributing towards the cost and the Alderman Richard Hallam School fund raising events the silver lettering was regilded.

Syston Cemetery

forwarded by Dorothy Marshall

Syston Cemetery near Leicester opened in 1879. The 5-acre site is immaculately maintained by Syston Town Council. The original Chapel has been restored and available for visitors to say a prayer and light a candle for the departed, there is a rest room and facilities available for funeral followers. Headstones deemed to be unsafe are carefully sunk into the ground in an upright position.

With neatly trimmed borders and meticulously cut grass, no wonder Syston Cemetery achieved at least two gold and a silver award for Best Kept Cemetery. Knowing that our lost loved one's final resting place is well cared for brings comfort to the bereaved. Full marks to the Syston maintenance team.



*Syston Cemetery
Photograph courtesy of Dorothy
Marshall*

Where do you store your information?

asks Robert Wall, Chairman of the Friends of the Down Cemetery,
Trowbridge

I have been wondering for quite a while where do we all store the large volume of information that we accumulate whilst doing our research on our cemeteries. If we take just one grave at our cemetery, we may have up to three people buried in each plot. So, we have the information of the gravestone inscription, all the information from burial books, picture of the gravestone and that is before we have done any research on the people that are buried there. So that amounts to a huge amount of paper work. The cemetery that we are working on is divided into twenty sections and we have only just completed our first section and that has already filled six arch lever folders and we have yet to add any photographs.

So, what is the solution: bespoke software, Access database or off the shelf program? This is where I hope you can help. "Where do you store yours?" I have looked at Access, but I am a bit of a Luddite and am not sure where to start. When it comes to off the shelf programs, I have found the likes of Crypt Keeper, but they all look like how to run and manage a cemetery and nearly all are based in the USA and do not seem to worry about the historical aspect. This leaves a bespoke program, and I would imagine that this would be very expensive. If you already have a solution and are willing to share it, please feel free to email me at robertw@fotdc.org

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A list of members is available from the Secretary

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