

FRIENDS OF
LAWNSWOOD
CEMETERY



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NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We hope that you will find it interesting and if you wish to contribute to future editions then please get in touch. Inside we have news from our Action Days, an article on schools education, news of our exciting First World War project and a special members' event for the summer.

But firstly a round up of what has been happening in our discussions with Leeds City Council about improvements at Lawnswood. Members of the committee, led by Mike Simpson, Chairman for 2013, met with Leeds City Council representatives in January. The following issues are just some of the matters discussed:

The Gates – we are now told that the new target date for work to start on finally replacing the gates on Otley Road is July 2013.

Cars at Lawnswood – we raised concerns that gravestones and lawns were being damaged by inconsiderate and unnecessary driving in the cemetery. The Council are not prepared to enforce the parking restrictions already in place to alleviate this problem but have promised to look into the installation of bollards to protect the Victorian Section of the cemetery from further damage by cars.

Closure of the office – as some of you may know, the Council's offices at Lawnswood are now closed. All staff have moved to Farnley

Hall, Leeds, LS12 5HA. They can be contacted there on 0113 3957400. This is far from ideal but we understand that the council has a policy that staff should not be accommodated in portakabins and that this has necessitated the move. This has meant that we have had to change our postal address and we can now be found C/O 2 Adel Park Court, Adel, Leeds LS16 8HS.



Cleaning of the Ethel Preston monument – we felt that Ethel needed a clean as she is not looking her best at the moment. We believe

that 2013 is the centenary of the completion of the monument and have spoken to English Heritage about the correct procedure to brighten her up a little. English Heritage have no objections to Ethel being cleaned and have suggested a bit of soap and water to start with! We have passed this information on to the council since the original meeting and understand that they are seeking a quote from a professional monument cleaning company.

It has been agreed that the Friends will now have regular meetings with Leeds City Council representatives so that progress on issues can be monitored and more open lines of communication established. The first of these meetings is to take place on Thursday 8th August. If any members have issues they specifically wish to be addressed at that meeting then please let us know.

Our website –

www.friendsoflawnswoodcemetery.co.uk

continues to develop and we would encourage members to have a look and give us some feedback on the site. We also regularly update our Facebook page so don't forget to keep checking there for news and events.

In Autumn 2012 the University of Leeds requested our collaboration on some student projects as part of their Education Enhancement programme. We have been working with the students to assist in the projects, which are based on their experiences of Lawnswood Cemetery. The first of these, by Laura Griffiths, can now be seen on our website. We hope that more are to follow shortly and would like to thank Tess Hornsby-Smith from the University of Leeds for her enthusiasm in setting up the partnership.

That's all for now, but we look forward to welcoming you to our member's event or our Action Days over the summer.

Friends Of Lawnswood Cemetery Committee

Chair – Mike Simpson

Vice Chair – Janice Simpson

Secretary – Ann Lightman

Treasurer – Alan Mann

Membership Secretary – Kate Vernon

Committee members – Andrea Hetherington, Bev Forrest, Stuart Shaw

Membership Update

I am delighted to report that we currently have 77 paid up members. Many thanks to those who renewed their membership this year and also a big welcome to our new members.

Membership, which runs from 1st October 'til 31st September and costs £5.00, entitles you to free admission to our guided walks programme and also reduced admission to any other events which may be planned.

The annual membership fee is vital in helping with the running costs of 'The Friends' and so I hope that we can look forward to your continued support.

Kate Vernon. (Membership Secretary)

Members Day Saturday 20th July 2013

You are invited to attend our special Members Day on Saturday 20th July starting at 3pm.

We have a guided walk followed by afternoon tea at the Friends' Meeting House, New Adel Lane, Leeds LS16 6AZ.

Andrea Hetherington will lead a new walk – "Legal Lawnswood"- about the many characters associated with the law who are commemorated at the cemetery.

Afternoon tea is available at the Friends Meeting House from 4pm onwards for those who don't wish to attend the walk.

Please note this event is strictly members only! If you are not a member, £5 per year secures you access to all of our events and news – it's not too late to join! £5 for a walk and an afternoon tea – you know it makes sense!

We will need to know numbers so we can plan the catering accordingly, so please RSVP to friendsoflawnswoodcemetery@yahoo.co.uk or ring Ann Lightman on 0113 2611363

Visit to National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM 8th June



A number of us attended the National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM at York Cemetery on a beautiful day this month.

The Friends of York Cemetery have been going for over 25 years and run the site themselves, the land belonging to a charitable trust rather than York City Council. They have done a great job, virtually rebuilding the chapel from a ruin to the impressive sight it is today. They also maintain the cemetery as a haven for wildlife. It is well worth a visit if you are in the area. They also have a website www.yorkcemetery.org.uk

The conference was well attended with Friends groups from London to Scotland being represented. We listened to some fascinating talks and had a delicious lunch in the sunshine! Thanks to the Friends of York Cemetery for their hospitality and for a very well organised conference.

We came back with lots of ideas for the future, so watch this space!

Lawnswood's Great War Stories



As those of you who were at the AGM will know, we were lucky enough to secure a grant of £3,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the "All Our Stories" programme for a project to investigate Lawnswood's links with the First World War. "All Our Stories" is a brand new small grant programme launched last year in support of BBC 2's "The Great British Story". The First World War has become something of a specialised subject for me over the last couple of years so I am delighted that we are going to be able to produce a permanent record of the many stories of that time represented at Lawnswood.

The project will involve researching further what we have at the cemetery, then presenting that information in a variety of ways. The challenge is to try and build on our knowledge of the cemetery and WW1 and hopefully locate personal accounts of life both in Leeds and on the front line to link to our Lawnswood "residents". We want to try and find original source material, hopefully with the input of members and the wider public, and through archive searches in Leeds and elsewhere.

We will have a dedicated website for the project, will produce a leaflet for a self guided walk, and, most excitingly of all, we will have a live performance at Lawnswood in August 2014 where actors will present the amazing stories we have uncovered.

Though I will be leading the project it cannot be a solo effort and there are lots of ways that you can become involved, the following are just a few examples.

- Can you photograph and record the names on your local war memorial?
- Do you have relatives at Lawnswood with First World War connections you can tell us about?
- Do you have any First World War related memorabilia at home – letters, photos, etc, which you are willing to share with us?
- Do you want to help us to record the WW1 commemorations at the cemetery?
- Would you like to research a particular soldier or family?
- Could you write a monologue based on our research?
- Do you want to act in our final performance?

We do not officially start until September 2013 but it is a big project so expressions of interest from people at this stage would be great.

You can contact me direct at ahetherington123@btinternet.com, speak to me on the Action Days or write to our postal address – Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery, C/O 2 Adel Court, Adel, Leeds LS16 8HS.



Cemeteries & Education

At the heart of all good history teaching is connecting with the people and communities of the past and I believe a study of a cemetery enables us to do just that. Here at Lawnswood we have thousands of souls buried whose memorials tell the story of their lives and our city. As a teacher trainer I have been researching how to use cemeteries in the teaching of primary age children for the past couple of years. I was amazed to find that these wonderful free resources were very much neglected. I became aware of the rich legacy of memorials at Lawnswood and was delighted to be invited to talk at the Friends AGM about the topic.

Since then progress has been made on how Lawnswood could be used by schools with the first primary school, Ireland Wood, visiting in the autumn. The class of 9 & 10 year old pupils were led by Tom Connelly, one of my former students. The visit formed part of a topic on the Victorians. As well as being part of their history work it led to lots of work in other subjects.

Tom commented, *"The children absolutely loved it. They didn't know where to look first"* Once the initial excitement was over they had to select an interesting grave and carry out some detective work to make themselves experts. They made notes, sketches and photographs to help with their studies back in school. They were also directed to take a closer look at the Ethel Preston memorial. Tom found that they were fascinated by Ethel and loved it when one of the gardeners came across and told them why the memorial is designed in that way and what actually happened following her death. Some of the children already knew her as 'Lawnswood Ethel' and had plenty of theories as to why she is standing there.

An important consideration had been accessibility to all children, including those with mobility difficulties, as Ireland Wood prides itself on being a truly inclusive school. The success of the visit also put an end to the view that cemeteries aren't a suitable place for children for health and safety reasons, or because they will be too scared. Tom emphasises how children need to be properly prepared for the visit. He said *"Lots of mine didn't understand what a cemetery actually was. Some were rather shocked when they realised they would be walking only a few feet from people's bodies under the ground."*

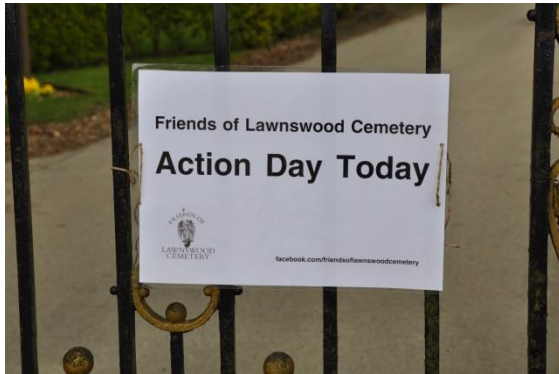
Some teachers may be put off by the possible reaction of the public finding children on site. During Tom's visit a number of mourners passed the group and were very interested in what the children were doing and stopped to talk. The pupils were also very concerned about the condition of some parts of the cemetery with one child commenting to Tom, *"It was emotional where some of the graves had been damaged."* This shows how we can use this type of visit to develop a sense of community and caring for the environment.

Tom is now looking at how a whole unit of work could be planned around visiting the cemetery. It is hoped that the Friends can support Tom by making documentation available and enabling him and his team to become more familiar with the site and some of the less obvious graves which we think would be of interest to children.

The Friends would love to see more schools using Lawnswood Cemetery. If you would like to become involved in developing this work or you are able to help us to make contact with a school please get in touch via [our postal address or our Facebook page](#).

Bev Forrest

Action Days



Our Action Days continue to achieve good attendance but we could always do with more, so if you haven't been down to see us yet then please come along. Refreshments and tools are provided and you can stay as long or short a time as you like – all help is greatly appreciated.

We have uncovered a number of graves in the Victorian Section which have not seen the light of day for many years, including that of J.Wormald, Victorian photographer whose purpose built studios were on Great George Street, behind the Town Hall.

We planted bulbs in the winter, fearing that they would not survive the harsh weather, but were delighted to see them emerge in the spring and brighten up the cemetery.



We have been working primarily in the Victorian Section but recently returned to the

1910 extension to carry on with the old favourite, edging!

Thanks again to Dave Blackham from the Countryside Rangers and also to Chris Raines and Dale Askwith from the Lawnswood gardening team for their assistance with the Action Days.

Further dates for your diary are as follows:

Saturday 6th July

Saturday 3rd August

Saturday 7th September

Saturday 5th October

Saturday 2nd November

We meet in the main car part at 10am and usually finish around 2pm, though earlier in poor weather.

