

Season's Greetings to One and All



FRIENDS OF
LAWNSWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter no 9

December 2017



A member of
National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

To enhance, promote and protect Lawnswood Cemetery, including its monuments, buildings, landscape and records.

A Message from the Chair

Dear members and supporters,

As another year comes to a close I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your fantastic support over the year which has enabled us to continue the work of the Friends.

The Committee has met every month throughout the year and I do want to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the Committee members, Gladys Strawbridge, Kate Vernon, Sue Harris and Steve Miller. Alan Mann was co-opted back onto the Committee last month and we are delighted to have his valuable input. Ann Lightman, although no longer a member of the Committee, continues to keep busy with walks and talks on behalf of the Friends and we greatly appreciate her continued support which helps to maintain the profile of the Friends and the cemetery with local groups and individuals.

We have made progress this year with the website. I hope you check it out from time to time. We now have additional support with the website from Paul Harris which we really appreciate. Those of you who like social media, our Facebook page will let you know what we are up to!

We could not keep going without our membership behind us and we are delighted that we have topped 100 members this year and are now at 101. Our Action Day volunteers continue to provide invaluable practical help within the cemetery, supporting the Council's gardening team. Every month Tony Hinton cleans down and prepares the memorial benches ready for the volunteers to treat them with wood preservative. Anne Baxter also keeps the WW1 memorial bench beautifully clean and Sue Harris looks after Mike's memorial bench.

All these individual and collective contributions are invaluable to the work of the Friends and greatly appreciated, and at this "season of goodwill " demonstrate the good will that is in abundance and keeps our small organisation going, along with the support we receive from the Council's Bereavement Services. Although we are small, we believe our impact is greater than the sum of our parts thanks to all these efforts.

So, on behalf of the Committee may I wish you a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes for the New Year. We look forward to seeing some of you at the AGM in the spring; details will be sent out nearer the time.

Kate will be getting in touch shortly with reminders for subscriptions for 2018 and I do hope we will have your continued support.

Janice Simpson.

Chair

Philip Henry Barran

A casualty of the Battle of Britain



A grave in the unconsecrated section of the Victorian part of Lawnswood Cemetery commemorates the death of *“Philip Henry Barran, Flight Lieutenant, Royal Air Force, son of Austyn and Dorothy Barran, Chapel Allerton. Born 20.4.1909, killed in air action 11 July 1940”*.

His ashes are interred in B392 where his parents, Philip Austyn and Dorothy Curren Barran are buried. They lived in “The Elms” Chapel Allerton, Leeds, a Georgian mansion house in the heart of Chapel Allerton (2 Church Lane) which has since been converted into apartments.

His mother Dorothy was the daughter of Donald Arthur and Helen Currer Briggs, former Lord and Lady Mayoress of Leeds. Their grave in Lawnswood is marked by a Grade II listed memorial by Wm. Hamo Thorneycroft, the London sculptor at the time. Austyn was a descendent of the famous John Barran, who introduced mass production in the clothing trade by his adaption of the band knife for cutting cloth.

Philip (aka Pip) was educated at Repton School, Derbyshire from Sept 1922- Dec. 1926, a member of their Mitre house. He then entered Leeds University where he studied for a B.Sc. in Mining 1928-1932, He did not graduate but he was the captain of their cricket team. On leaving university he joined Henry Briggs and Co Ltd., colliery owners (his mother’s family firm) as a trainee mining engineer and was in charge of their brick works.



Pip had been a keen airman before the war. He joined the RAF 609 Auxiliary Squadron at Yeadon in 1937 and was called up for full time service on 24th August 1939. He was sent to RAF Middle Wallop on 6th July 1940 as pilot no 90323, with spitfire Mk1 Fighters. On 11th July, a day after the start of the Battle of Britain, his Spitfire Mk 1 1069 was severely damaged in combat with Bf 109 of III/JG27 over a convoy off Portland. He was forced to bail out five miles off Portland Bill, picked up wounded, badly burnt and died, aged 31, before reaching land. His fellow 609 Squadron pilot was also lost in this engagement.

Pip’s funeral service was at Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel in Leeds. Pip’s fiancée, Miss Edith Jackson, was in Mesopotamia. His father had been since 1938, Food Divisional Officer for the North East (Region 31) and was well-known for his active interest in the Leeds maternity hospital, of which he was at the time chairman. These

organisations were represented at his funeral plus others which he and his parents supported including the Leeds Liberal Party and the Leeds Poor Children's Holiday Camp which was started by his maternal grandmother when she was Lady Mayoress.

Ann Lightman

Sources:

www.yorkshireindexers.com (burial & cremation registers)

www.cwgc.com

Repton School Archivist: Paul Stevens – details of his RAF service, demise and photograph. John Larder, air historian. Findmypast; Press: July 1940: 13th Yorkshire Post (YP) & Yorkshire Evening Post (YEP), YEP 16, YP 17th.

Come rain or 'shine.....

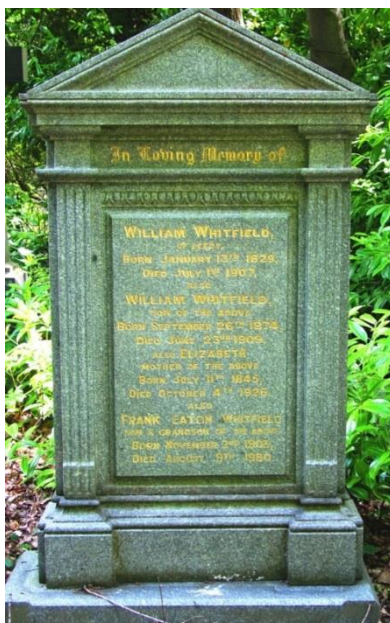


August 2015 saw the unveiling of our World War 1 memorial seat which is situated adjacent to the War Memorial. On that sunny summer day the new seat looked so shiny and new that someone questioned how long it could stay that way. Well, we needn't have worried! Among the people who attended the unveiling was Anne Baxter.

Anne joined the Friends at our inaugural meeting in 2011 and was present at our first Action Day and she has hardly missed one since. She offered to look after the new bench and, true to her word, Anne can regularly be seen giving it a good clean and polish! It still looks brand new. Many thanks Anne, we really appreciate all you do.

Kate Vernon

Grave Spotlight on William Whitfield of Leeds



The gravestone above is my family memorial for my grandfather, great grandfather, great, great grandfather and great great grandmother. This stands in Section C Row 16, 50 yards directly behind the crematorium at Lawnswood.

William Whitfield's (gt, gt grandfather) story is one of rags to riches. He was born into poverty on 13th January 1829 one of seven children of George and Esther Whitfield of Pudsey.

Shortly afterwards George began work as a porter on The Calls and so the family relocated to the centre of Leeds - 63 Swinegate. Bibis Restaurant now stands on the spot.

William became a bricklayer at 15 and went on to become a Clerk of Works for Leeds Borough Council. Aged 26 he married Mary Farrar of Farnley, at Leeds Parish Church and they had two sons, Charles and George, the latter went on to become Chief Constable of York.

William progressed with his skills to become a civil engineer and started work on the development of the local railway. He then joined the Leeds Waterworks and the Bradford Water Corporations for the construction of reservoirs, built to supply the quickly expanding cities of Bradford and Leeds. This work included Eccup 1843, Grimwith 1864, Chelker 1866, Lindley Wood 1869, Swinsty 1871 and Fewston 1879.

Whilst working on the Thornton and Denholme Beck reservoirs and lodging in Clayton Heights, Bradford, William met domestic servant Elizabeth Walsh who was born in Dublin on 11th July 1845 and came over to England with her parents.

William left his wife Mary and both sons for Elizabeth; on 26th September 1874 she gave birth to **William Whitfield Jnr (gt grandfather)** in Thornton, Bradford.

At this time William Snr started to acquire and develop properties in the Meanwood, Little London and Woodhouse Carr areas of Leeds. These were mainly Victorian terrace and back to back houses, shops and warehouses. By the turn of the century he owned over 30 properties.



William's Pawnbroker shop

William "Willie" Whitfield Jnr

William Jnr started work as bricklayer but soon gave that up to become a jeweller and pawnbroker. He had a shop on Bulmer Street, at the bottom of Meanwood Road.

William's two sons with his wife Mary would travel across Leeds each week to collect maintenance payment and this continued until 1907. I believe William and Mary never divorced and therefore he couldn't marry Elizabeth.

William Snr died in the family home at 68 Spencer Place, Potternewton on 1st July 1907.

His estate of almost £1.5 million in today's worth was passed onto his son Willie who bought this 5-vault plot at Lawnswood for £30 11s where his father was laid to rest.

Headingley & Burley Cemetery, nr. Leeds.—Unconsecrated Ground. No. 1505

Received from Mr. *William Whitfield*,
the Sum of *thirty* Pounds, *eleven* Shillings, and *—* Pence
for a FREEHOLD GRAVE (bricked) and the INTERMENT of *Mr. William Whitfield*,
in Section *C* No. *16*

Freehold Grave *21* . . .
Interment . . .
Excavating . . .
Brickwork and Slabs (*5* Vault(s)) *8* 8 . . .
Set of Slabs *Section Stone* *13* . . .
Removing and Refixing Memorial }
Extra charge for short notice }
Fee on Grant and Stamp } *5* . . .
Total for the Board *30* 6 . . .
Minister's Fee *5* . . .
Total £ *30* 11 . . .

Dated the *5th* day of *July* 190*7*

S. Ralph Dixon Registrar.

William Jnr's property, jewellery and pawn broking businesses took him up and down Meanwood Road. It was here he met Emily, known as Emmie Eaton Bosworth Hunt, a milliner working in her stepfather's greengrocers shop at 578 Meanwood Road situated diagonally across the road from the current Waitrose Supermarket.

William and Emmie had married on 11th August 1903 and their son, **my grandfather Frank Eaton Whitfield** was born on 2nd November 1903. They all lived together at 68 Spencer Place with William's mother Elizabeth Walsh.

William Jnr died from cancer on 23rd June 1909, only two years after his father. The family wealth passed on to Emmie who continued to run the property business and live at Spencer Place with her mother in law Elizabeth.

Emmie opened her own Millinery shop on Meanwood Road and here she was to meet and subsequently marry her second husband Walton Nutter in July 1931.

From this time the Whitfield estate began to depreciate quickly owing to the depression, the Second World War and post war austerity in the late nineteen forties and early fifties.

Elizabeth Walsh died at Spencer Place in 1926, Emmie remarried, decided to sell up, retire and move to the village of Bishop Monkton north of Harrogate.

My grandfather Frank had joined the Ellermans Wilson Shipping Line in Hull aged 14 and went on to obtain his Captains Ticket. He met my grandmother Jennie Nichol a teacher from Newcastle Upon Tyne and they were married in Leeds 1922. They lived on King Lane where my father Keith Eaton Whitfield was born in 1930.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Frank Eaton Whitfield aged 36 went to sea with the Merchant Navy and undertook a number of perilous convoys across the Atlantic and through the Baltic Sea to Russia. In April 1941, he was transferred to The Royal Naval Reserve with the officer rank of Lieutenant.



Frank now aged 38 was posted to Greenwich and later Liverpool and like most servicemen spoke little of his wartime service up until his death in 1980. However, I have been told he saw Royal Navy action in the Mediterranean, The Suez Canal Zone and North Africa.

In April 1944, posted to Liverpool, he was an Admiralty Advisor on the shipping of equipment to Europe for the D Day landings and in February 1945, he was an Advisor to the Royal Navy and US Navy for the secret preparations for shipping of equipment for the invasion of Japan.

This information was still classified until 1995 and my grandfather had signed a declaration of secrecy.

After the war Frank met Margaret Clark in Newcastle where he had set up a business involved in ship building. He and Jennie were divorced and Frank died in Long Benton Newcastle upon Tyne in 1980. He was cremated there and his memorial was added to the grave in Lawnswood.

Frank Eaton Whitfield

In the late 1950s Leeds Council began slum clearance and area redevelopment. In 1957 most of the Whitfield properties were subject to compulsory purchase to make way for new social housing and the Inner Ring Road off Clay Pit Lane. Almost all of the properties went for a fraction of their value and the rest have either been demolished as unsafe or sold on. The row of shops and a warehouse at the bottom of Meanwood Road are still there but no longer belong to the family.

Jon Eaton Whitfield

Friend of Lawnswood Cemetery

ACTION DAY REPORT

The second half of the year brought a reduction in the average number of volunteers from 15 to 12 mainly due to holidays. Ably led by Ranger Pete and Head Gardener Chris, participants enjoyed mostly fine dry weather throughout; the rain at the end of June softened the ground and made edging rather less arduous work. Gravel laying continued in the Victorian Section together with tidying of graves and tackling of invasive weeds. Bench preservation was paused for the summer, recommencing in November which saw the outdoor team focused on leaf collection. Refreshments, including Sue's famous homemade cakes, were available at morning coffee break to provide encouragement and an opportunity to chat and socialise.

Over the years, our experienced volunteers had expressed the view that time and effort would be more effectively spent if there was a supply of tools available on site for the exclusive use of the Friends. Following discussion with Chris and Pete, a comprehensive list was drawn up, a safe, secure storage area identified and a sum of money authorised by the committee for the purchase. Bereavement Services liaising with the Friends organised the procurement of the tools and contributed to the cost, enabling purchase of all the items on the list. The Friends are grateful to Chris, Pete and other colleagues at the Council for their support in the successful achievement of this project.

The Action Day Team



Some of our Action Day volunteers, where would we be without them?



Before.....

After..... Great job ladies!

Email from America

Leeds City Council's Bereavement Services receive many requests from folk trying to locate their family graves, and the surge of interest in family trees has increased that number.

However an enquiry in February this year was a little different having come from the United States. Christopher J. Boes M.D. Professor of Neurology at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, in Rochester, Minnesota, was searching for the grave of Sir William Richard Gowers.



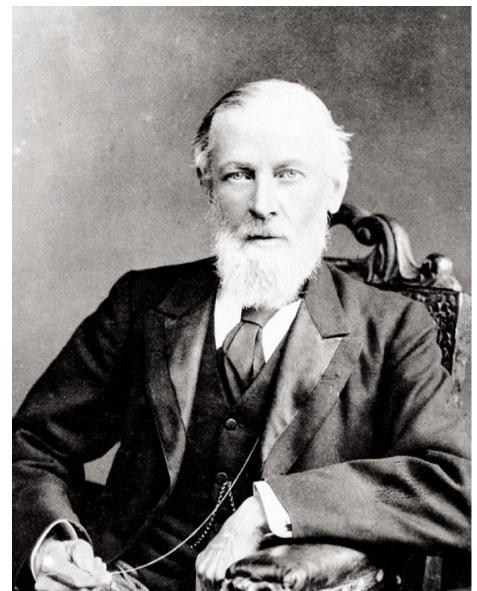
Christopher Boes MD

Having recently been looking into 'things neurological', the name Gowers instantly struck a chord. It seems to crop up each time 'Neurology' is put into the search engine! Was it possible that the man who has been described as 'probably the greatest clinical neurologist of all time'* was in Lawnswood Cemetery and if so, why hadn't we come across his grave?

So I looked him up again..... William Richard Gowers was born in London (1845), lived and practised in London and died in London (1915). He was cremated at Golders Green so it would make sense for his grave to be in London.

Chris Simpson, Head of Bereavement services came up with the answer. It was as simple as this:—

In 1875 William Gowers had married Mary, the daughter of Frederick Baines who was proprietor and editor of the Leeds Mercury newspaper along with his brother Sir Edward Baines Jnr. When Mary died in 1913 her remains were brought to the family grave in Lawnswood and in 1915, after his death in London, Sir William's cremated remains were interred with those of his wife.



**SIR WILLIAM GOWERS,
M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. 1845 – 1915**



The Baines Family grave.

Dr Boes research interest is the history of neurology. He has written a number of articles on Sir William Gowers and won the 2017 LAWRENCE C. MCHENRY AWARD: an award for the History of Neurology. If he had not asked the question, would we ever have known that we have another star name for our guided walks on "Victorian Medical Men"?

Kate Vernon

* Described thus by Macdonald Critchley, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.R, F.A.C.P. (Hon.)

Members' Tea party

Our annual members' tea party which took place in August gave members something more to think about than afternoon tea! Thanks to Gladys and her cryptic Wild Life Quiz, the room looked more like a school classroom with members huddled over their paper, jealously guarding their answers. The groans that went up as answers were read out hinted at just how seriously it was taken!!

This was followed by a delicious afternoon tea provided by the committee who did a wonderful job. To round off a very pleasant afternoon, a talk was given by historian Janet Douglas on 'Joseph Lupton – Unitarian and extreme Liberal', which was most interesting and thought provoking.



Don't forget to follow us on Face Book and if you haven't yet visited our web site, then please give it a go!

<http://lawnswoodcemetery.org.uk>

Should you wish to contact us for any reason (joining the committee, article for the newsletter, leading a walk or talk etc. among them!) we would love to hear from you.

Email: friendsoflawnswoodcemetery@yahoo.co.uk

Kate Vernon