



Friends of
LAWNSWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter

January 2023

Number 19

National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

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

Happy New Year to all our supporters! I hope you had a lovely Christmas and on behalf of the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery Committee, I wish you all that you hope for in 2023.

The year 2022 has been a difficult one for the Friends. We lost Kate Vernon, a founder member and Committee member who dedicated so much of her time to the work of the Friends and the promotion of the cemetery, which she loved so much. And we also lost an Action Day volunteer who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. We have been shocked by these events. The loss of Kate has been a major blow for us as she was so active and involved in everything we do. We are still sifting through her files and trying to get things in order. We miss her very much.



I am thrilled to let you know that we have a new honorary member in the acclaimed writer and playwright Alan Bennett! He revealed in his recent book "House Arrest: Pandemic Diaries" that as a student he worked at Lawnswood Cemetery as a gardener! In light of this information, I made contact with him to offer him honorary life membership, which he kindly accepted! (The book is short, and a delightful look at the not at all delightful lockdown experience, if you have not read it!).

I am pleased to let you know that we have co-opted a new Committee member, Colette, who is acting as membership Secretary which was one of the roles Kate undertook. We are delighted to welcome Colette and thank her very much for offering to take on this work. She is also an Action Day volunteer, which is great!

We could not continue to function without the work of many other individuals who offer their time outside of the Committee: Claire who helps with Facebook; Philip who is our Independent Examiner for the annual accounts; Paul who does most of the IT work behind the scenes for our website; Ann who offers guided walks and talks and encourages new members through this work; Anne who takes the Action Day photographs every month for Facebook, and keeps the WWI memorial bench spick and span, and of course our Committee members Gladys and Sue who do so much behind the scenes. We also now have Helen on board, who has kindly offered to help with the design of the newsletters and has worked on the design of our new leaflets. I am immensely grateful for all this invaluable work which helps to keep us going. We are also grateful to Chris and Nick for their continued support to our Action Days, and of course to Leeds City Council for their continued support and provision of equipment to keep the Action Days running.

I look forward to another productive year ahead. I hope you will renew your memberships and help us to continue the work we do to enhance, promote, and protect the cemetery for future generations. We greatly value the membership and our volunteers and thank you for your continued support.

Janice Simpson
Chair.

Report on the promotion of Lawnswood's Heritage during 2022

During the year I led at least nine walks on four themes around Lawnswood cemetery. The "Introduction to Lawnswood" was advertised through both the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery's and the Leeds & District Association of the National Trust's newsletters on 10th April. Similar walks were given to private groups on 29th May and 19th June. The "Links to Leeds University" walk advertised in both newsletters for 1st May was cancelled due to ill health. However, most people were able to join a replacement on either 22nd May or 26th June. This walk has expanded since its introduction last year – stopping at two more memorials. A brand new walk on the Heritage Open Day theme of Innovation was offered in the NT newsletter on 20th August titled "Innovation and Trailblazers" which had 15 attendees. The walk on 18th September, under the Heritage Open Day banner, organised and promoted in Leeds by the Civic Trust, attracted an audience of 25.

Two people associated with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – a Public Engagement Officer and a volunteer – were taken around to study the military connections in the cemetery. They hope to take guided walks round the cemetery in the near future. Both the Victorian Society and Beckett Street Cemetery have expressed an interest in walks for next year. I will continue with a programme of open walks hopefully with two new walks. One will be on the Heritage Open Day theme (if possible) and I am currently researching the early Presidents of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society in Lawnswood. Please email c.lightman@sky.com to be added to my mailing list. The first is probably going to be in April 2023.

Talks for groups were given on 19 January to Cookridge Methodists on "Women at Lawnswood", the Friends' AGM on 7th April, on Mary Jean Ramsden, nee Batley, and to the University of Leeds Ladies' Club on 3rd November – the title being "Behind the Chapels". This was repeated at short notice to the Leeds & District Association of the National Trust, with 68 in the audience. I have two bookings for next year following on from the walks or talks given.

There have been quite a few articles related to the cemetery in various publications. A report on the "Introduction" walk appeared in the May edition of Leeds and District Association newsletter, thanks to Tony and Jean Willshaw. An article on the elaborate wall and Portland stone plaques of what is now the cemetery car park appeared in the June edition of Adel Bells which is distributed to every home in Adel parish. The full article appeared in the Civic Trust's July newsletter and has been added to the Henry Moore Institute files. An article on Jean Mary Ramsden is to appear in an edition of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's magazine – the ICCM were helpful in supplying information for the article. This forms the basis of a profile that is now on the Thoresby Society's website, under More Leeds People. Alongside it is one on John R. Airey – son of William Airey, the builder, who is in the non-conformist section of the Victorian cemetery. Articles on Innovation and Trailblazers have been written for the Squeaker, the free magazine, based in Horsforth. Their editor kindly highlighted the Innovation and Trailblazer walk – one of just five chosen, in his piece advertising the Heritage Open Days Festival and which in part resulted in the large attendance.

Looking to the future, I am working on a guide to the cemetery's many important graves, showing their locations and identifying where further information can be obtained. This I expect to take quite some time, but when done will be a valuable resource to those interested in Leeds history. I hope, health and weather permitting, to meet many of you either on a walk or at a talk next year.

Ann Lightman, Founder Member





GRAVE SPOTLIGHT

Boris Kaufmann, 1904 – 1977

An obituary by Dr Alexander von Lünen, University of Huddersfield

Boris Kaufmann was born on 20 January 1904 in Ataki in the region of Bessarabia in the Russian Empire (today's Otaci in Moldova) into a Jewish family. In 1917, in the wake of the chaos – including antisemitic violence – triggered by the Russian Revolution the family decided to leave Russia. They eventually arrived in Germany where they started a new life as “stateless” immigrants. Boris would go on to study mathematics and be awarded a doctorate in this subject in 1930 from the University of Heidelberg; he was then hired as research assistant at the same institution. His specialism was mathematical topology, a complex and niche field at the time.

After the appointment of Adolf Hitler as head of government on 30 January 1933, the legal situation of Jewish people quickly deteriorated in Germany. One of the earliest measures of the new government was to remove anyone considered “enemy of the state” from the public sector, which for the Nazis included any Jewish person. Given that all universities in Germany are public, this led to a significant culling of academic staff, estimated of up to 1,200 academics in the first two years of Nazi reign. Boris Kaufmann thus became a refugee a second time in his life.

Academic networks, established through international conferences, journals and scientific societies, stepped up to the challenge and founded aid organisations to help German colleagues in need. On 16 May 1933, German emigrée scientists founded the Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland (Emergency Society of German Scientists Abroad; NG) in Zurich, Switzerland, to help German academics dismissed from their posts to find new employment abroad. On 17 May 1933, British scientists independently founded the Academic Assistance Council (AAC), a nation-wide organisation based in London to help dismissed scientists and scholars to find employment either in Britain or in other countries. The AAC cooperated with the Jewish Refugee Committee and other aid agencies; it also closely worked with the NG – to the point that the two merged in 1936, and renamed itself to Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL). The idea of the AAC/SPSL was to find funding to offer temporary posts or fellowships at British universities in order for German academics to get a visa to come to Britain, and then find them employment elsewhere. (The SPSL is still active, now under the name Council for At-Risk Academics, CARA.) Reception by university managements was not very warm, to say the least, fearing decreased job opportunities for domestic graduates and lack of funds. The Great Depression was still in full swing, with unemployment in Britain peaking at c. 20% in 1933.

However, there were also local efforts underway. Manchester University had set up its own aid committee to help German academic refugees in the summer of 1933. At Leeds University, under the leadership of Professor John H. Jones (1881—1973), the Leeds Academic Assistance Committee (LAAC) was set up in June 1933. It was not officially a university body, although its mission was to fund three studentships for “Special Research Students” to come to Leeds. The LAAC merged with the SPSL in 1939, but even before this they cooperated closely. The most active board members of the LAAC were Professor Selig Brodetsky (1888—1954), himself a refugee from the Ukraine coming to Britain as a child in 1895; and Sir Montague Burton (1885—1952), a refugee from Lithuania in 1900. (Both Lithuania and Ukraine were part of the Russian Empire at the time. The Leeds Jewish community, as in other British cities, had significantly grown in the second half of the nineteenth century due to refugee waves from the Russian Empire triggered by violent persecution there starting in the 1880s.)

Upon losing his post in Heidelberg, Kaufmann came to Britain in the summer of 1933 and approached the AAC, who passed him on to the LAAC. Kaufmann thus became one of the “Special Research Students” at Leeds University, working with Harold Douglas Ursell (1907—1969), who had come from Cambridge University in 1933 to become lecturer in mathematics in Leeds. Ursell then managed to get Kaufmann a small tutor role in Cambridge in 1935. However, the pay was not opulent and the LAAC supported him until the end of 1936. Also in 1936, Kaufmann married Floretta Welch, a research student in Cambridge. From there, however, things did not develop favourably for Kaufmann.

His teaching pay in Cambridge was barely enough to make ends meet and he repeatedly had to inquire with the SPSL and LAAC for subsidies. However, suggestions by the SPSL and Brodetsky to broaden the range of mathematical topics in order to get more teaching jobs, or find work in the insurance industry as a statistician, fell on deaf ears. Kaufmann insisted on sticking with his specialism and pursuing an academic career. First signs of mental health

issues began to show, and the SPSL got increasingly irritated with him; not only because of Kaufmann not doing enough in their eyes to find employment outside academia, but also because of Kaufmann’s apparently abrasive demeanour – at one point the general secretary of the SPSL called him “deceitful” with “unpleasant manners”. Teaching at Cambridge came to an end in 1938, and also the SPSL ceased their support. Harry Ursell, however, felt compelled to support Kaufmann further, perhaps because he felt responsible for his situation after recommending to him to move to Cambridge.

The stress of his situation, combined with possibly an already existing mental health issue, led to Kaufmann being institutionalized eventually, spending the years 1940 to 1945 in the City of London Mental Hospital in Dartford, Kent. His marriage also broke down, with his wife returning to her native South Africa in 1942. He was released 3 August 1945, after Ursell personally vouched for him. Kaufmann then lived in Croydon and worked as farmhand. But he lost this job – and subsequent ones – due to arguments at work; however, he eventually found a job as market porter. Ursell tried to help him, but Kaufmann initially had developed a hostility towards British society, blaming them to have unjustly incarcerated him for five years. At one point he tried to return to Russia/USSR, but the Soviet authorities were not keen of having him. He never received German or British citizenship and was “stateless” throughout his adult life, having lived in Germany and Britain; this made him suspicious in the eyes of the Soviet government, and he never managed to leave Britain again.

Ursell moved to Calgary in Canada in 1967, but Ursell’s wife, who had remained in England, then looked after Kaufmann. (Harry Ursell died in 1969 due to a heart attack). In 1970 Kaufmann had to move out of his flat in Croydon, and the Ursells took him in to their home in Leeds, but due to space issues he moved into Shaftesbury House in Beeston (renamed to Greenhouse after renovation in 2010), a men’s hostel in those days, after a few years.

Kaufmann died 1 October 1977 and is buried in Lawnswood Cemetery in section K6. He left behind no family. His fate is a timely reminder that those having escaped persecution and violence does not mean that they are “saved”.

Alexander von Lünen is Senior Lecturer in Modern German History at the University of Huddersfield, and course leader for the MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies there. The information compiled into this article was derived from primary sources in Leeds University Library Special Collections (files on the LAAC), Bodleian Library Oxford (files on the SPSL) and the National Archives, Kew (immigration records, census records, and records on enemy aliens during World War Two), and from information given by Harry Ursell’s children.



Review of Action Days over 2022



2022 has been a busy year for our volunteers, who meet monthly. A group of our regular keen Action Day supporters start tackling tasks before the normal start time under the guidance of Chris the Head Gardener and Ranger Nick. We have now built this into the day and have an early start for those who want to begin earlier, then our normal 10 am start for everyone else! We have lopped branches, cleared debris, laid mulch and gravel, weeded edged and pruned: not to mention removed moss from paths to make them less slippery, cut down self-seeding saplings which can over time damage graves and applied preservative to benches. There is always litter picking as well for those who prefer that satisfying task! Nick has also organised corporate groups to help tidy and plant in the baby garden.



We are very lucky to have such dedicated volunteers who care and want to make a difference to the cemetery and we are usually blessed with surprisingly good weather!

Our thanks as always to Chris and Nick for all their support.



Activities of Committee members over 2022

The Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum meets 4 times a year, and we try to make sure we are represented there by one of us from the Committee. This is a Forum for organisations involved in supporting and caring for green spaces across Leeds, whether parks, woodland, cemeteries, community orchards or other projects that aim to protect and enhance green space. It is supported by Leeds City Council but chaired independently. We are a member of the Forum and it gives us up to date information about the Council's priorities and activities within parks and other green spaces, and support and advice from other similar organisations.

We were also represented at the National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM which for 2022 took place in Leicester. It was good to have a physical AGM again after the pandemic restrictions. This is a very helpful organisation we are a member of, which gives information, advice and support to members on all things supporting the sustaining of cemeteries across the country, and has international links as well.

In June 2022 Beckett Street Cemetery arranged the unveiling of a headstone to mark the burial place of the sculptor, Edward Caldwell Spruce, and we were invited to attend. Lawnswood Cemetery has an interest in this artist as he has two magnificent monumental sculptures in the cemetery: the stunning Sam Wilson monument from which our logo is taken (and has Grade II listed status with Historic England), and the beautiful angel that adorns the Jacques memorial. Born in 1865, he was successful in his day, and worked for Burmantofts Pottery, and had a studio in Leeds. Sadly, he was buried in an unmarked grave in Beckett Street cemetery in 1922. The Friends of Beckett Street Cemetery raised funds to pay for a memorial stone, and relatives of the artist were invited to the unveiling along with interested local groups and individuals, including ourselves. We were delighted to see this talented sculptor properly recognised in his place of rest.

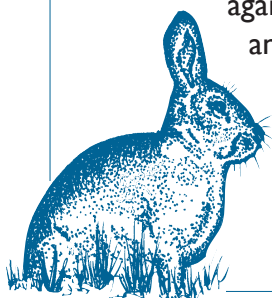


In September we had the Heritage Open Day event. Ann Lightman provided a very successful guided walk at the cemetery. In previous years Kate Vernon and her daughter Caroline had also offered a walk for this event, organised by Leeds Civic Trust, but sadly we lost Kate earlier in the year.

Each year we lay a wreath at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. The Committee met on Sunday 13th November to lay the wreath and invited our Action Day volunteers and others to attend. It is a short and simple event but important to us as so many people who lost their lives in the two world wars are either buried, cremated or remembered on family graves in the cemetery.

Please note we have changed our postal address for the membership secretary and all postal contact. It is now c/o Lawnswood Cemetery, Otley Road, Leeds LS16 6AH. It is now membership renewal time again and we value your support very much, so we hope you will renew your membership and support us for another year. Thank you!

Janice Simpson
Chair of the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery





Snowman takes a sleigh ride

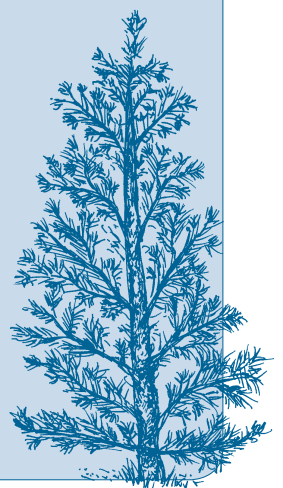
Snowman, Snowman,
Carrot nose shining bright,
Red button eyes like lanterns in the night,
Swirling, whirling, snowflakes so wondrously white

Put on your mitts,
fasten your coat up tight,
Our frozen friend will ride with us tonight,
Swirling, whirling, snowflakes so wondrously white

Mind out, Snowman, lest that big chimney pot
knocks off your hat ker-plop!
Skimming, sliding, Snowman smiling,
we never want to stop!

See the snow owl
flying up to greet us
If we're lost the owl patrol will meet us
Happy Snowman sitting on a silver sleigh!
What a wonderful way to spend the holiday!

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Dates for your diary 2023

Combined AGM/ Afternoon Tea Party will be on Saturday 24th June. More details nearer the time.

Heritage Open Days will be from 8th – 17th September. A national event to celebrate history and culture. Look out nearer the time for walks in the cemetery to mark the event.

Remembrance Sunday wreath laying at the War Memorial will be on Sunday 12th November, meeting at the War memorial by the Adel lane gates at 10.45am

Action Days take place every month on the first Saturday of the month. Meet at 10am in the car park opposite the entrance

Guided walks by Ann Lightman: Spring Programme

March 19th: “Introduction to Lawnswood Cemetery”. Meeting point in the car park opposite the main entrance on A660 Leeds-Otley Road. The walk covers the history, buildings and listed monuments in the Victorian cemetery. The route varies according to what spring flowers are at their best.

Reserve date 26th March

April 16th: “Early Years of the Leeds Museum” – new walk this year. Meeting point in front of the chapels. The walk covers the memorials in the Victorian and 1910 sections of eminent people who were curators or Presidents of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, owners of the museum in the early years. Some interesting and different monuments.

Reserve date 7th May

May 21st: “Innovation and Trailblazers” – introduced last year. Meeting point at the Friends notice board just inside the main entrance. The walk goes to the Columbarium, the Victorian cemetery and the 1910 extension. A varied walk!

Reserve date 28th May

All walks start at 2.00pm on Sundays at no charge. The meeting point varies according to the walk. Expect each to last about 2 hours, tailored to suit group or individual needs. Paths can be uneven or slippery depending on weather conditions so suitable footwear is advised. Reserve dates will come into operation should the first date be cancelled due to weather conditions (especially heavy rain or wind) or other unavoidable reasons (illness, road closures etc.)

To book any (or all) of these free guided walks, please contact
Ann on c.lightman@sky.com or phone 0113 216 0630.

Ann also does walks “Art in Leeds” and “Links to Leeds University” in addition to those above and talks “Behind the Chapels” and “Women of Lawnswood” for private groups – please contact her to discuss your requirements.

