



Friends of  
LAWNSWOOD CEMETERY

# Newsletter

December 2023

Number 20

National Federation of  
CEMETERY FRIENDS

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

**Happy Christmas to all our supporters,** whether you are volunteers at our Action Days, members and donors who give us vital funds to continue the work, Committee members, or those of you working in the background on particular tasks for us.

We have again had a mixed year. Sadly, we lost Mary Koi in January, a stalwart volunteer whom we miss very much. She was an absolute pleasure to work alongside as a volunteer: always cheerful and hardworking, and she supported all our events.

Chris Raines, the head gardener, has moved on to other things, and is greatly missed by all of us who work as volunteers in the cemetery. He started in the role at the same as the Friends were established, and has been such a support throughout these 12 years. He came to our monthly Action Days on a Saturday morning; he attended the funerals of those we have lost; he came to our AGMs and even cooked us bacon sandwiches at Christmas! We thank him for all he has done to support our work, and wish him well in his new job.

We have a challenging time ahead, as Gladys Strawbridge announced at the beginning of the year that she was retiring from the Committee, effectively giving us a year's notice. She has for some time been acting as both Secretary and Treasurer, as we have been unable to appoint to either role. I am pleased to let you know that we now have a new Treasurer, Peter Tait, and we have been delighted to welcome him to the role. However, we still do desperately need a secretary to replace Gladys when she finally leaves us in April, without this role being filled the committee will have to keep its position going forward under review.

So, once again my grateful thanks on behalf of the Committee to everyone who helps and supports us, and to Leeds City Council Bereavement Services for their on-going support. We wish everyone involved a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for the year ahead.

*Janice Simpson*  
Chair of the Friends of  
Lawnswood Cemetery



## WANTED - SECRETARY

to the FRIENDS OF LAWNSWOOD CEMETERY

We are a small (and friendly!) group, so the task is not as onerous as it might first appear! Committee meetings are monthly. Other committee roles include the Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Volunteer Co-ordinator. The main tasks of the secretary include:

- taking and distributing the minutes and preparing agendas
- booking rooms for events
- contributing to the decision-making of the committee
- enjoying the tea and cakes at committee meetings !

If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please do get in touch. You can ring me on **07518 735755** or email me at [folc2020@gmail.com](mailto:folc2020@gmail.com).

## Report on the Promotion of Lawnswood Cemetery's heritage during 2023

It's been a busy, varied, and enjoyable year! Some events were a little out of the ordinary. Being invited by the Chair of the West Yorkshire branch of the Victorian Society (June Diamond, who was unable to attend the event) to introduce the speaker after their AGM on 23 March at the Leeds Library was such an occasion! Especially when their speaker was Hilary Grainger, the leading authority on cremation and its architecture, author of several books and an academic – currently Hon. Professor of Durham University. Her subject: Lawnswood Crematorium. This was a real honour, and the talk did not disappoint. Hilary put our crematorium into the national and architectural context (something I cannot do) and I certainly found it an extremely educational and interesting lecture. The illustrations used were not ones I had seen before.

The other “different” element was being invited to record a podcast. I was interviewed by Hazel for “Light on Leeds” on 3rd March and the result is Episode 77 dated 4.7.23 (7th April 2023). Do listen if you have not already done so ([www.lightonleeds.com](http://www.lightonleeds.com)). It was great fun to do and resulted from me sending the spring walks programme to a local free magazine. The walks programme was featured in the Pudsey & Horsforth Squeaker magazines and Adel Bells, the local parish magazine. Cllr Barry Anderson, a great supporter of the Friends, sent an email to his vast contact list.

As a result of the publicity, the three planned spring walks ended up as eight, to accommodate those who wished to attend. They were on three subjects – the Introduction (buildings, listed monuments, and history), Innovations (new in 2022, but the Little Nipper Mousetrap was added in May 2023) and The Early Years of Leeds City Museum (new for April 2023). This was repeated too for the Heritage Open Day event in September. About 75 people were taken around in the spring, some in quite large groups – three numbering 20 or above. A number came to all three walks and those doing two were well into double figures. Quite a few had done the walks in previous years. Thank you to Gladys Strawbridge who loyally acted as back-marker to all but one of the spring tours (a last-minute overflow group). Thanks also to Janice who did the same for the Heritage Open Day walk in September. An article on Innovations and the cemetery also appeared in the Industrial History Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society's winter 2022 magazine.

Groups also requested walks: the Wetherby Civic Society an Innovations & Introduction walk in August and the Bramhope WI had a similar walk in September. The Friends of Beckett Street Cemetery joined an Introduction walk in March. We have been so lucky with the weather. Just one of the March dates was very chilly and on two afternoons rain threatened but held off until the end. Fortunately, there is shade in the cemetery on the couple of hot days encountered.

PowerPoint presentations have been given to various groups throughout the year. “Behind the Chapels” (the introductory talk) was given to Meanwood Monday Fellowship and to Halton Guild in March and to Wetherby U3A in August. The former heard the “Link to Royalty” talk in October. This was repeated the next day to the 1152 club at Kirkstall Abbey Museum. This arose out of the “Links (plural) to Royalty” talk given after the Friends AGM in June. A shorter Royal Connections after-lunch talk is booked by Leeds Inner Wheel in November. Several bookings have been taken for 2024. A couple of the Royal links were written up and appeared in a beautifully illustrated article in the Horsforth (no 83) and Pudsey (no 119) Squeaker magazines (which can be read on-line). This article was mentioned in the following editions as a preface to an article on the Princess of Wales's visit to AW Hainsworth.

In addition, I am delighted to report that Chris Lamb, a volunteer with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has also taken a number of well-supported tours around the cemetery. He is a great advocate for the organisation and for the war dead in our cemetery. Finally, people have been helped to identify the location of family graves and headstones photographed where necessary.

*Ann Lightman, Founder Member*





## GRAVE SPOTLIGHT

### **‘The Friend of Poor Children’**

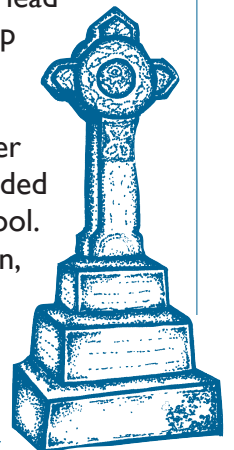
**Dr William Hall (1834-1923)**

*This article is an abbreviated version of a paper that Janet Douglas, the author, kindly shared with the Friends, anyone wishing to see a copy of the full version can email myself, the Editor, on [folc2020@gmail.com](mailto:folc2020@gmail.com) or find it on our website [www.friendsoflawnswoodcemetery.org.uk](http://www.friendsoflawnswoodcemetery.org.uk) under “Articles”*

Dr William Hall's special concern was the health of children, and today we would probably describe him as one of the pioneers of preventative medicine. With the approval of the School Board in 1902 he medically examined 1,600 board school pupils. His findings were startling: although living in similar streets he found that Jewish children weighed more and were taller than non-Jewish children, the incidence of rickets amongst the non-Jewish children in his sample was 45% as opposed to 17% amongst Jewish children. He reported a similar disparity in terms of tooth decay. Visiting gentile homes, he rarely found any milk, children seldom ate meat and subsisted largely on a diet of bread with margarine or treacle, and tea without milk whilst in Jewish families although equally poor, he found milk, eggs, fresh vegetables, some fish, sustaining soups.

Born in Greenside, Wortley in Leeds, William Hall was the son of a surgeon, Matthew Hall. Following the death of his father in 1848, he was apprenticed to Dr Radcliffe of Kirkgate and although only 15 years old he was thrust into caring for the sick during the cholera epidemic of 1848, becoming well-known amongst the Irish community as ‘the little doctor’. Later he studied medicine at the Leeds School of Medicine supplemented by some training at Guy's Hospital in London. By 1850 he was back in Leeds working as a surgical dresser to the celebrated surgeon, Samuel Smith (1790-1867). Having his own first-hand experience of the distress of the poor, Hall's concerns were augmented by those of Dr Smith who worked unceasingly against the employment of small children in factories, and from 1831 lectured on midwifery and the diseases of women and children at the School of Medicine, a position which Hall himself was to occupy from 1856-1875. He married in 1862 and for the latter part of his life resided at Hillside on North Hill Road, off Headingley Lane where he must have lived in some style, the house had 13 rooms and three servants. He was a confirmed Anglican worshipping at St Peter's Church. His brother was also a doctor in Huddersfield and an active Conservative. The distress Hall encountered as a young doctor in Kirkgate and his professional contacts with the poor marked his career. Rather than establish his own surgery in some fashionable part of the town, he opened his first practice in 1851 in a house opposite the Parish Church, moving to North Street and then Springfield House in Burmantofts. He was also employed as a factory doctor and from 1864 was a surgeon at the Women's Hospital before retiring from medical practice in 1902.

Following his retirement, Dr Hall devoted his life to championing the rights of children to lead healthy lives. In 1903 at his own expense to demonstrate his theories about the relationship of health and food he set up a pilot group of 60 seven year olds who were given half a pint of milk and bun each day and after six months he found that their weight and general well-being had improved. During the Christmas holidays, the same children were given a dinner of meat and potato pie as well as a glass of milk and a bun. The experiment was then extended by providing breakfasts for 100 children using as a kitchen a cellar in St Peter's Square School. The Local Education Authority became involved by providing more spacious accommodation, and the Board of Guardians provided some funds for the several hundred children to be fed every day. By 1908 800 children were being served with nourishing food often served by Hall himself. Although it was no longer possible to regularly weigh individual children,



Hall was reported as having 'the proud pleasure of watching crooked limbs straighter, bodies plump, faces become bright and happy'.

Dr Hall became a tireless campaigner for poorly nourished children. His major theme was the lack of bone-making foods in the diet of the slum child. The problem, he argued began in infancy: fifty years ago, when he first visited the homes of the poor, babies were breast-fed at least for the first twelve months of their lives, now he believed that only 10% of poor mothers did this. Dr Hall contended that food altered the whole condition of the individual and that deterioration in health was due to poverty: previously a woman stayed at home but now it became necessary for her to leave her fireside and work for her family.



Dr Hall appeared before a public meeting on underfed children at Leeds Town Hall. Having acknowledged that there were probably 3,245 poorly nourished children in the city, the Mayor of Leeds, Robert Armitage pointed out despite what was being done in nearby Bradford, legally there was little that the City Council could do about this dire situation. The matter had to be dealt with either by voluntary subscriptions or the Board of Guardians. Hall's response was that it cost only 2d to provide a wholesome dinner for a child, and for him there were only two possible courses of action: ways must be found of increasing voluntary subscriptions or intervention by the State, and Leeds Corporation needed to vigorously lobby the Government for a change in the law. Hall's was not a voice in the wilderness. All over the country there were philanthropic efforts such as his own, to provide meals for undernourished children but such ad hoc arrangements were proving incapable of solving the problem. There was actually a School Dinners Association, and the National Union of Teachers at

their annual conferences regularly stated that poor pupils were unable to benefit from what was now compulsory state education because they were too hungry to be able to concentrate on their learning. Even the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration set up in the wake of the Boer War in 1903, recommended that if voluntary schemes were unable to cope then Local Authorities should be given the power to intervene.

The 1906 General Election returned a Liberal administration, the first for twenty years. Fred Jowett elected as an Independent Labour Party for Bradford West, immediately introduced a private members bill to allow Local Authorities to levy an up to half penny rate to fund a programme of providing school meals for poor children. The legislation was carefully guided through the House of Commons by Robert Morant, the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education. The following January, an Education Circular was issued to all LEAs explaining that the purpose of the legislation was 'to ensure that children attending public elementary schools shall as far as possible, be no longer prevented by insufficiency of food from profiting by the education offered in our schools'. Only 4% of Local Authorities adopted the Act immediately. Leeds was not one of these. In 1906, the Liberal Lord Mayor of Leeds, Joseph Hepworth offered £500 for the provision of what were called 'food feeding stations'. A year later the city adopted the school meals legislation with some reluctance and was to be funded by only an eighth of a penny rate. Over-all the impact of the 1906 Act was a gradual one, only 113/328 LAs adopted the legislation before the First World War and only about 8% of school children were in receipt of school dinners – in fact school dinners didn't become the norm until after World War II.

Two years later in 1907 the medical inspection of school children was made compulsory, but Leeds was tardy in its response, and it was not put into operation until May 1909 with the appointments of one part-time School Medical Officer and 20 part-time staff (all of whom were local GPs), and a year later the post of School Medical Officer was made full-time. Whilst Dr Hall had also campaigned for



the legislation, for him it didn't go far enough, pointing out that the Act drew a distinct line between inspection and treatment, the latter remaining a parental responsibility. In 1912 Leeds appointed its first School Nurse, partly to help with medical inspections but also responsible for infestations of lice, ('the nit nurse') and in the same year the LEA opened a school clinic in Portland Crescent to tackle the problem of the divorce between inspection and treatment. The Corporation also must have made arrangements for local hospitals to treat pupils because in 1916, it opened five branch clinics because the hospitals it had previously been using, were now overwhelmed by nursing wounded soldiers.

Although primarily concerned with the malnourishment of slum children, Hall was also troubled by their lack of clothing and poor personal hygiene. From 1904 his Leeds Barefoot Mission provided free boots to poor children: 'Little children like old people have difficulty keeping up their heat. It should not run to waste by uncovered feet in cold weather: want and cold are great destroyers of vitality'. Between 1904-1912 the Mission distributed 10,000 boots and some pairs of stockings for the poor children of Leeds. Hall also believed that children's self-respect was increased by their own cleanliness. In another experiment in 1908 he supplied a school in a poor district with soap, towels, brushes, combs, and hot water and under the supervision of the caretaker and his wife, pupils were given the means to care for themselves. Although this scheme was extended to other schools, it never received the same public support as the Barefoot Mission. In 1912, Hall revived his breakfast project, organising breakfasts in six schools for 3,000 school children who were not in receipt of free school meals. Present day teachers still maintain that 'a good breakfast' is a vital element in successful learning.

Now in his late 70s, Hall's last probable public appearance was when he spoke at the Town Hall at a conference during National Baby Week on the need for pure milk, and in his last letter to the press, he threw his support behind the Open-Air Schools movement, claiming that 'there are streets in Leeds in which we can scarcely see a straight leg amongst the children'. Dr William Hall died at his home, Hillside in Headingley, on 30th October 1923 and was interred in Lawnswood cemetery.

What is remarkable about William Hall's career is how many of his concerns are still with us today: the need for breakfast clubs, meals during the school holidays, the efficacy of breast-feeding infants and the need for fresh vegetables in our diets.

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## Review of Action Days over 2023

On the first Saturday of every month volunteers of all ages meet at 10.00 clock in the car park at Lawnswood for Action Day. There are tasks for everyone from litter picking to lopping branches and everything in between: removing leaves, moss, self-seeders, laying mulch, gravel and top soil.

A lot of time has been spent tending the woodland in The Green Burial Area. The council has sadly had to give attention to trees that were damaged by disease. Bulbs will be underplanted, ground has been levelled, paths created from wood chippings and wild flowerseeds have been scattered to create a naturalised space. Grass cutting will be kept to a minimum and no horticultural chemicals will be used.

Key actions from the year included clearing shrubs and self-seeders in the Victorian Section; bench painting; gravel laying near the chapels; edging flowerbeds and cutting down self-seeders in the 1910 area; working in the green burial area levelling the ground, creating a path from wood chippings, and sowing seeds of wild flowers; laying wood chippings in the car park flowerbeds.

We are very lucky to have a group of regular dedicated volunteers who help every month come rain or shine.

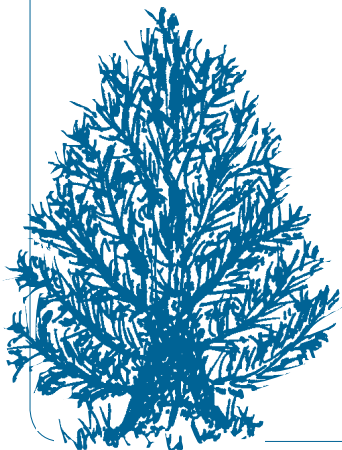


# Report on committee activities during 2023

It was not possible for anyone to attend the AGM for the National Federation of Cemetery Friends this year. However, the following activities were undertaken:

- Committee met every month throughout the year
- A member of Committee attended each of the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces meetings
- For the first time, we combined the AGM and annual Summer Tea Party which went very well and seemed to be enjoyed by all who attended.
- Janice met with the Manager of Bereavement Services, Chris Simpson, to discuss matters of mutual interest
- We are continuing the maintenance of two family plots in the cemetery for people who live a distance away. We do not make any charge for this, but have received generous donations from both families, who are delighted that we are tending the plots for them and ensuring they are kept in good order, and we keep in touch with them through the year
- We have updated the membership leaflet and produced a new leaflet for volunteers at our Action Days
- We laid a wreath at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday
- We have produced two newsletters this year

Janice Simpson  
Chair of the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery



# New Adel Lane



*The poultry farm was situated in  
the upper part of New Adel Lane before  
you get to the Meeting House.  
The paddock was situated further down  
by the entrance to Lawnswood  
from New Adel Lane.*

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I enter the lane and re-enter time,  
time that shows the poultry farm where I went  
to buy eggs sold loose in a paper bag  
and carried them home in my schoolboy cap,  
time that brings me to Adel Meeting House  
that gave room to a library of books  
where I roamed the shelves in Quaker quiet.  
Plant border, porch steps and lantern remain,  
as do the graves marked with the names of souls  
whose earthly remains to earth have returned.

Paved and built upon the paddock I see,  
where the horse allowed his mane to be stroked  
by one who tendered him a tea biscuit,  
his tongue rough like sandpaper to her hand.

Time delivers me to the woodland path,  
where I clean my parents' memorial plates.  
A shrub has grown where their ashes were strewn:  
at time's choosing, there my journey will end.



Thanks to Robert Hill, one of our Action Day volunteers, for contributing this lovely poem.  
He seems to have become our resident poet !