



The Rectory Lane Cemetery Project

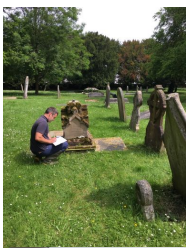
A key piece in the jigsaw of Berkhamsted's historic environment, Rectory Lane Cemetery consists of some 1,150 monuments, 7,000 burials, 540 metres of boundary walls, over 200 trees, as well as the Memorial Arch, sexton's hut, gatepiers and gateways.

In January, we heard that our Round 1 bid to the Heritage/Big Lottery Fund had been successful. Development Phase funding of £80,000 is allowing us to complete the Masterplan so as to release 2nd Round funding of £1 million in 2017.

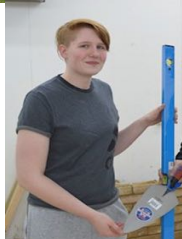


In April we were pleased to welcome Ann Masat as our new Project Manager.

The inscriptions of all the headstones at the Cemetery have been recorded by the Hertfordshire Family History Society; the publication is now available on their website www.hertsfhs.org.uk/hfphs30.html.



A full survey of all monuments has been carried out by Michael Sheppard (pictured left) of Cliveden Conservation. Looking at the condition and significance of each headstone and tomb, we will be able to prioritise which monuments can be repaired during the HLF Capital Phase. Alan Sheldon, Bereavement Officer at Dacorum Borough Council will also be carrying out safety testing on all the monuments.



Thank you to everyone who turned up to help with the Ivy removal in preparation for the scanning of all boundary walls. (Work parties are First Sunday in the Month 2-4- all welcome!) Surveyors from Terrain have now taken detailed scans and Ian Stephenson, our structural engineer and Director of SD Structures is pulling together the final report. He has been assisted by Isla Barnard (pictured left). Isla recently became the first Level 1 Diploma in Brickwork student to achieve eight consecutive distinction grades for her practical work.



Following our success in securing £8,000 funding through the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme, one of the key features of the site - the Seat of Remembrance - is now being restored to its former glory. The seat, which was erected by Lucy Foot in memory of her husband, Richard, in 1934, has been taken away by Sam Kelly, stonemason (pictured left) who is repairing the back and bench ends featuring red setters, the breed which Richard Foot showed at Crufts. We're looking forward to the bench being unveiled by Professor Sarah Foot, Richard's great granddaughter on September 11th (see overleaf.)



We're also busy collecting the stories of people interred in the Cemetery, some of which have already been published (all available on the Website - see over). We continue to receive enquiries and fascinating information from descendants. Adam Kaznowski contacted us from Poland and sent this early photo of his great grandparents grave (right). This contrasts with the sad state of the grave today (far right) but Adam's family is keen to see the headstone repaired (we've already repaired the Sutton and Blincow graves with help from the respective families). Reginald Hughes was instrumental in seeing All Saints Church come to fruition, and built the fine Edwardian House - No 4, Charles Street.



Volunteers Dave Joyner and Hugo Hardy have been opening up the Sexton's Hut, which now has a new temporary steel door fitted. Hugo will now be drawing up the building and producing the specification for its repair. Dave has also successfully installed a colony of bees at his hive at the top end of the site.

We have been running a market stall every month, which has provided a great opportunity to tell passers by about the Project, as well as recruit help and volunteers. If you could spare a few hours to help run this, please do get in contact.

Put September 11th into your diary NOW! From 2.00-9.30 pm, the Cemetery will be open as one of Berkhamsted's many special places to visit on **Heritage Open Days**. There will be tours, teas, living history (including a re-appearance by Mr Ghost, the grave-digger) a horse-drawn hearse, workshops and much more. Please come and tell us what you think of our plans. The finale of *Seeing the Light* will consist of a special evening lantern procession, featuring the original funeral bier accompanied by musicians and choirs, from St Peter's Church to the Cemetery, where we hope to illuminate the graveyard with as many lanterns and lights as possible. If you could help organise, promote or deliver the event, please do get in contact.

An IT group has been set up to explore how to integrate all the data being collected, as a start to investigating innovative ways in which the site can be interpreted. We would love to hear from you if you have IT skills to share.

Floral Artists Paul Weatherley and Lucy Glasser of *Myrtle and Bloom* in Castle Street have contributed two inspirational plantings (pictured right) as part of the 'Graves as Gardens' project, which encourages descendants of relatives, or where they cannot be traced, volunteers to 'adopt' a grave or graves – it only needs a minimum of an hour a month to come up and tend a grave or two.



Following clearance of self-seeded trees, you are welcome to come and collect the woodchips. The piles are situated in the middle cemetery (access from Three Close Lane) against the eastern boundary wall.

July has been a particularly busy month – we commissioned Phil Chambers (left), who visited the site in his wheelchair, to report back on how access could be improved for disabled users; we welcomed our first formal booked tour for local genealogists; the work party tackled removing self-seeded tree stumps growing inside the kerbing of several graves, and local architect and group member Hugo Hardy ran a workshop to look at how the top end of the site could be used. This area has important ecological habitats and a strip of land which encloses an important buffer of trees. The workshop explored ways in which this little visited part of the site could be enhanced and managed.



We'd like to thank all those organisations and businesses who have helped us with funding (Berkhamsted Town Council awarded us a grant of £500 recently). Although the Heritage Lottery Fund are providing a major grant, we still need to secure significant match-funding to ensure the project is successful.

To keep up to speed, please visit www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk/projects/cemetery/ or contact James Moir, (E-mail jamesmgmoir@aol.com). Also do let us know if you do not wish to be kept informed of our work. We would value your help – for work parties and looking after the site, research (over 1,000 headstones!), publicity (manning market stalls, promoting events); help with events, guiding, IT, mapping – or just telling others about the Project!

