



Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

Issue No.4

April 2008

Newsletter

Spring at Woodbury Park



If you haven't visited the cemetery recently you will be impressed by the big improvements wrought by the Saturday volunteers. Having walked round, rest for a moment on the new Friends bench beside the chapel, where we plan to lay out a pleasant sitting area for those for whom the steep paths are too challenging. An information lectern will shortly be going up at the entrance.

Volunteers have been busy planting snowdrops, primroses, wild cyclamen and violets in various spots. These will fit in unobtrusively among the wild flowers which are now beginning to shoot up again.



Galanthus plicatus, with its slightly pleated leaf, comes from the Crimea. During the bitterly fought Crimean War of the 1850s British soldiers were amazed to see snowdrops springing up all over the wintry battlefields. Several took bulbs home with them. Who

knows if some of our plantings are remote descendants of these. In any event they seem well suited to grace the WPC graves commemorating some past heroes of Sebastopol and their families.

If you can spare a couple of hours any Saturday to help, contact Angela Swain on 01892 541881. Or turn up at 2.30pm with thick gloves and secateurs.

Nature conservation

A conservation regime has been agreed with the Council, with sections of the cemetery retaining undergrowth and woodpiles to shelter wildlife, and annual rotation of unmowed sections to foster butterflies and other insects. Prickly undergrowth on some boundaries will provide further shelter while at the same time helping to deter trespassers. Let us know if you would like to help with the various flower and wildlife surveys.

Helping on the leaf-miner study day



Adopt a grave

Consider also joining our new "Adopt a Grave" scheme where you would keep your chosen grave clear of returning ivy and weeds and perhaps find out more about the person buried there. None of this affects the rights of anyone with a relative whose grave they would prefer to maintain themselves. For more details contact June Bridgeman on 01892 525578.

First claimant for Samuel Garling, William IV's man in Malacca. This cat has one blue eye and one green.



Anti-social behaviour



Less welcome was the spring arrival of this individual who set up house under a spreading yew.



He was rapidly moved on by our Community Safety Officer Claire Cockburn who has been doing a magnificent job visiting the cemetery daily to keep an eye on things. The new Alcohol Control Zone covering the cemetery will hopefully help reduce underage drinking there and the appalling litter that accompanies it. We also plan to reissue our Parkwatch leaflet. Let us know if you have other good ideas to help security and reduce littering.

The entrance area

Since the last newsletter, the first permanent residents have moved into the refurbished mortuary chapel which had won a Civic Society award. From the large east window, they have a useful overview of an area where there has been past misbehaviour.

The downside flows from the Council's sale of the turning circle inside the sole entrance to this listed English Heritage site. The sight that greets visitors is now a clutter of parked cars, domestic wheely-bins, a litter bin and ugly tarmac. Outside the gate, cars parked and double parked block the pavement and access for any emergency vehicle. We are discussing the situation with



the Council. It is difficult to envisage the coveted Green Flag Award for parks and open spaces being won without an appropriate entrance area, since this is one of the key criteria.

Historical research

On a more cheerful note, those doing research are daily turning up fascinating information. A recent success was identifying Frederick Joseph Barraud as the legendary chronometer maker who founded the Clockmakers Library and museum at the Guildhall nearly 200 years ago.



Yours for £8,500

Other interesting figures to emerge from the mists of the past include:

- William Hilbert, who brought clean water to Tunbridge Wells. There is more about him on page 4 below;
- Joseph Shipton whose wife Jane, commemorated with him on his tombstone, turned out to be no such thing. A law suit was brought by his real wife to recover her property;
- Crimean heroes Colonel James Eman, fatally wounded at the Redan, Major General James Fyler, formerly of the elite 12th Lancers ("a tartar of the first water"), and Surgeon Jenkin Llewelyn of the 8th Hussars who tended the wounded survivors of the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade;
- Caroline Burges, daughter of the Knight Marshal, who in 1832 patented an invention for perfect drawing; and
- Patty Ward the "sweet tempered domesticated sister" of Dr Thomas Arnold of Rugby fame.



James Eman, before his promotion to Colonel after Inkerman

We hope to post up soon on our website (www.fwpc.org.uk) the growing list of names — now around 400 — currently being researched, so that information can be more readily shared. If you are inter-

ested in helping with this, or have information, contact Jan Holly on 01892 514833. A meeting of all historical researchers will be held shortly at Jan's house to plan further work.

Some new pamphlets are being prepared using the new information to add to the vignettes of those buried in the cemetery. Do try your hand at writing up for us a brief account of any interesting people you have found out about. We are ready to help with format and can handle the publishing.

Memorials

Excellent news on this front — a KCC community grant of £2500 towards repairs, thanks to some splendid championing by Councillor Scholes. The Civic Society and King Charles the Martyr have made generous donations to swell the money that we ourselves have raised and TWBC have come up trumps with a £4000 Heritage Partnership grant for the memorials work. The next step will be to commission the stonemasons to tackle our priority list of significant monuments. We should greatly welcome offers of help in managing and further developing this programme.



Education

One of our aims is to extend the educational use of the cemetery. Skinners School have entered into a local partnership with us on this, with a view to using it for O-level course work. St John's and St Barnabas Primary Schools have agreed to advise us on a Key Stage 2 primary school study pack which KCC are supporting with a £850 grant, again thanks to Councillor Scholes. The proposal is to link material at the cemetery with objects in the Museum and information sources for family research in the Library. We should welcome help in rolling out this project.

Summer programme

Last, but not least, be sure to put this list of events into your diary.

- Sat. 10th May: Dawn Chorus (Keith Palmer). Meet 5.30 am, WPC gate. **Very quiet please, not to disturb neighbours – and birds.**
- Fri. 16th May: AGM and associated presentation of work, 7.30pm, Town Hall.
- Sat. 7th June: *National Moth Survey Night*. Moth trapping evening (Keith Palmer). Meet 9 pm, WPC fountain.
- Fri. 27th June: Tree walk (Chris Reynolds, Director of Bedgebury Pinetum). Meet 7.30pm WPC gate.
- Sun. 13th July: Family fun day nature walks (Dr Ian Beavis). Children 6 years and upwards welcome, if accompanied by an adult. Bring bug boxes if you can. Meet 10.30 am and 2.30 pm, WPC gate.
- Sat. 13th Sept.: *Heritage Open Day*. History walks. Meet 10.30 am and 2.30 pm, WPC gate.
- Sun. 12th Oct.: Autumn walk (Keith Palmer). Meet 2.30 pm, WPC gate.

Do come to the outdoor events with your friends and family. And do come to the AGM on Friday 16 May to get a full report of all that the Friends have been doing, to hear about some of the interesting things we have found out and to help us develop plans for the coming year.

Useful Contacts

Saturday afternoon working parties:

Angela Swain, angelaswain@tiscali.co.uk
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History research:

Jan Holly, jan.holly3@virgin.net
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Membership:

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“Adopt a grave” and general enquiries:

June Bridgeman, jbman@btinternet.com
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WPC Memorials

I. William Hilbert — the man who brought clean water to Tunbridge Wells

We plan to re-erect the headstone of William Hilbert and some of his family in the first phase of the conservation work on memorials.

The inscription on the stone, whose present condition is shown to the right, reads:

In memory of William Hilbert, engineer of Tunbridge Wells, who died March 12th 1857, aged 53 years. "I shall go to him but he shall not return to me." 11. Samuel. 12c.23v.

Also of William Hilbert, son of the above, engineer of the Ramsgate Water Works, who died August 12th 1860, aged 30 years. Much respected and deeply regretted by all who knew him.

Also his infant son who died August 11th 1860.

Also Sarah Hannah Hilbert, daughter of the above, who died December 21st. 1862, aged 25 years, after a short but painful illness.

Also of Mary, relict of the 1st above, who died January 21st 1889, aged 85 Years.



The younger William's inheritance from his father had included the latter's "watch and appendages and drawing and mathematical instruments and all my books on mathematical and scientific subjects". Sarah's share was a house, No 1 Agnes Villas. As the memorial shows neither enjoyed their legacies for long.

Another daughter, Lydia, married Charles Strange. One of the elder William Hilbert's projects had been the water-works, which he set up for John Ward at Jackwood Springs to supply clean water to the Calverley estate. The water-works site later became the Grosvenor recreation ground. In 1931 William Hilbert's grandson Councillor Edward Strange donated adjoining land, calling it Hilbert recreation ground in memory of his mother Lydia Hilbert who had died aged 29 in 1874, when he was 5 years old.

*That I give and devise all those my three messuages tenements or cottages with
tofts and curtils premises and appurtenances thereto belonging situate at Tun-
bridge Wells aforesaid and known as Nos 3, 4 and 5. Queen's Terrace for
the said John Jackson Hilbert and William Hilbert their heirs and assigns
for ever. Upon the same or the like trusts for the benefit of my daughter Lydia
Hilbert and her children or their issue as are herebefore declared for the same.*

*Extract from the will of William Hilbert senior, endowing a trust for his daughter Lydia.
She was about 12 years old when he died.*

If you can tell us more about William Hilbert and his life, we should love to hear from you.

Any queries on, or suggestions for, this newsletter: contact the Editor, 01892 525578, jbman@btinternet.com