



# Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

Issue No. 1

10<sup>th</sup> December 2006

## Newsletter

### Keeping you all informed

First of all, welcome to our first newsletter. The Friends got off to a flying start on 16<sup>th</sup> November and 75 people have now signed up as members. We plan to use newsletters to keep you all in touch with what is happening and the opportunities it presents.

□ Some of you have already told us what specially interests you and the help you can offer. We should love to hear from more of you about this. Everybody can get involved in some way, however small, in making the right things happen.

□ We also know – though you are modest people – that some of you have valuable specialist knowledge, eg conservation, architecture, ecology, local history and publishing. Please don't hide your light under a bushel. Tell our Secretary ([jbman@britishlibrary.net](mailto:jbman@britishlibrary.net) or 01892 525578) what you can offer. It could make all the difference to what the Friends achieve.

□ There are some people who have told us they want to start right away with practical work on the ground. There is plenty to do. For instance, you and your teenagers might like to come along to "action days" to clear saplings and brambles from graves.

□ Or you may be a plant and wildlife enthusiast keen to make observations and prepare a conservation plan or publications.

□ Or your enthusiasm may be historical research. The opportunities are many. Besides digging in the archives, you may want to collect memories of how things once were. We loved the



*Wild and wonderful*

story from one of you about air-raid wardens in 1940 housed in the disused mortuary chapel. "They fixed up a pole with a contraption like an old-fashioned gramophone horn on top to listen for incoming aircraft. But it also picked up sounds from the courting couples in the nearby area."

□ Another of you told us of the sketch her husband made of the chapel many years ago when he used to sit in the cemetery to eat his lunch time sandwiches. Old photographs and pictures would be most welcome.

□ By way of making a start, you will find below some information about three areas where we plan to get down to work right away. Do get involved in one of these or look in the "Vacant Situations" list to see if you might offer to take on a specific role.

□ And don't forget to check the section on planned events and talks noting that, in view of the Museum plans for an exhibition of Tattershall Dodd works in the autumn, we have changed the planned April talk.

Angela Phillips  
Chairman of the Friends

## Project plans

We want to start right away on three projects — “action days” to do clearing work; collecting ecological material; and researching the lives of people buried in the cemetery.

### Project 1: Action days

Some graves are still shrouded in bushes, brambles and ivy. Others have been “rough-cleared” by the maintenance contractors leaving roots and stumps. Angela Swain will be organising working parties to work on these as soon as the ground has dried out a little — maybe February. Borough Council staff will be there to advise and help. If you want to get involved in action days, please contact **Angela Swain** on 01892 541881.

### Project 2: Ecological work

Brian Kempster is coordinating this part of the effort. Mary Page is going to make available her remarkable series of wild flower and butterfly observations in the cemetery over 25 years as the basis for some guided nature walks. Keith Palmer is surveying lichens and ferns and also plans to record bird-life there. Are there other bird enthusiasts to help with this? Ian Beavis will be conducting a year-long survey of insects. Besides providing immediately valuable information, all this material will be brought together in a biodiversity plan. If you are interested in all or any of these things and are willing to help, please contact **Brian Kempster** on 01892 618347 or [brian@reynoldslane.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:brian@reynoldslane.fsnet.co.uk).

### Project 3: Historical work

Everyone buried in the cemetery is connected with Tunbridge Wells Victorian and Edwardian life in some way. Michael Clegg who is taking an overview of this, is planning to liaise closely with local historical groups. The immediate project will be to build up a dossier on each grave and the people buried there, so that their lives and personalities are remembered by more than their memorial inscriptions. Information will be sought from anybody who has relatives buried there or has researched their lives. This will be followed up by searches for other references to them in

local records and newspapers. Photographs would be particularly welcome. Anyone who is already engaged on, or wants to tackle, historical work connected with the cemetery and the people buried there is invited to contact **Michael Clegg** on 01892 525753 or [micky.clegg@virgin.net](mailto:micky.clegg@virgin.net).

## Currently planned 2007 events

5<sup>th</sup> February: “WPC Funeral monuments — conservation challenges”. Mr H Whitelaw, Burslem Stonemasons. Tunbridge Wells Town Hall, 7.30pm

4<sup>th</sup> April: AGM and presentations/discussions on projects. Tunbridge Wells Town Hall, 7.30pm

14<sup>th</sup> June: *Guided Civic Society WPC walk*, 7.45pm

16<sup>th</sup> June: WPC Nature Discovery Walk with all the family — Ian Beavis

6–9<sup>th</sup> September: *Civic Society Heritage Walks*  
September/October: *Museum Exhibition of the work by Tattershall Dodd brothers*. Possible associated lecture

October: “Ecology of WPC”, lecture by Ian Beavis. (Date, time & place tbc)

## Situations vacant

Can anyone help with any of the following?

- ◆ planning and overseeing publications and exhibitions;
- ◆ making a photographic archive;
- ◆ sketching and illustrating;
- ◆ architectural preservation advice;
- ◆ carrying out a survey of users; or
- ◆ clerical and practical work arranging events.

And please let me have your thoughts on the sort of information you would like to see in future newsletters. Mrs June Bridgeman 01892 525578 [jbman@britishlibrary.net](mailto:jbman@britishlibrary.net)