



Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

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www.fwpc.org.uk

September 2010

Newsletter

Walking through history

The Friends marked the Heritage Open Days, September 2010, with guided historical walks on three of the days. Many visitors came, over £100 was raised by sales of pamphlets and tea-towels, and there were several very welcome expressions of interest in joining the Saturday working parties. Do consider giving the odd few hours.

New information boards

The new information boards will help you if you come at other times. Besides a replacement walk guide by the gate, you will find a new nature board below the chapel beside a handy new bench and litter bin. TWBC have done an excellent job. Our next project to help visitors will be a new sign at the gate, with the original Borough coat of arms, a more fitting insignia than today's vapid logo.



Memorial repairs

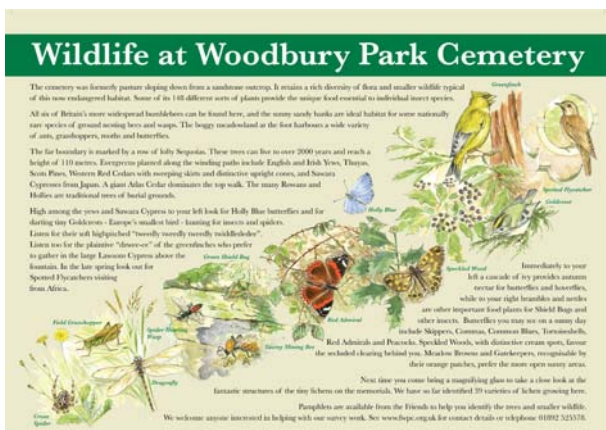
During your walk look out for some of the latest restored memorials. Shining on the left of the top path is the white marble cross of 9 year old Katharine Mary Stewart, whose father became Commander in Chief in India. He won fame during the Indian Mutiny as a young captain in a daring 250km ride from Agra to Delhi with despatches. You will also see as you descend the path at the south end the reconstructed vault of Jenkyn Homfrey Llewelyn, Crimean surgeon, and that of Canon Hoare of Holy



Tomb of Jenkyn Humphrey Llewelyn

Trinity, the "Protestant pontiff of Tunbridge Wells". We plan to mark the latter with a lecture in December, and publication of a pamphlet about him and his wife Maria.

Another notable churchman in Victorian Tunbridge Wells, Joseph Ridgeway of Christchurch, will also be commemorated with a lecture and a pamphlet next May. See future events below.



The Nature Board



Tomb of Canon Hoare

Daniel Bech

The death of Daniel Bech since our last issue has been a sad loss to many good causes in the town. FWPC owe him a special debt of gratitude for his enthusiastic help in our early days. He designed our logo and our website. Thereafter he was a constant source of advice and ideas. We are most grateful to Katharina Bech who has offered to maintain our website.

Summer Outing

For our summer outing this year we were given a tour of Nunhead Cemetery by the Friends group who had visited us last year. Over 60 acres compared with our three! It



Our Group

was a fascinating trip and we resolved to include in next



The designers of Nunhead, like those of Woodbury Park Cemetery, used a hillside to great scenic advantage.

year's programme a similar outing to Brompton Cemetery, another of the "magnificent seven" built to cater for London in the 1830s.

Fund-raising

To help finance the repair work, we repeated in May our highly successful plant sale raising over £600. Plans are already in hand for next May. Angela Swain on 01892-541881 would love to hear from you if you are willing to grow a few plants or cuttings for this.



Talks and walks

We continue to accept invitations to give talks to various groups and take them on guided walks. Please let your local church and other organisations know we are happy to do this.

Council plans

A welcome feature of the Council's long term draft town centre plan is the proposed "green links", one of which would run through WPC. The Committee welcome this. If a footpath exit from the bottom is created, it would create a convenient traffic free route away from the busy St John's Road, simplify access, and increase the range of circular "heritage walks" for visitors to the town. We are emphasising the importance of great sensitivity in the treatment of the adjoining Arriva site, and also pressing again for the acquisition of the flanking patch of woodland that is so important for the canopy and wild life of the cemetery. It would be helpful if all the Friends would write to the Council and their own ward councillors asking about progress on this. We feel this would offer a greater, cheaper and more achievable benefit to the north of the town than some of the grandiose plans currently being mooted.

Artists wanted

We plan to sell sets of notelets in aid of repair funds. Jessica Kempster has contributed this delightful pastel



sketch. Further offerings warmly welcomed.

Publications in print

Twenty noteworthy people commemorated in monuments set in WPC (£1.50)

Frederick William Barraud: Victorian Clock and Watch Maker (£2)

Jacob Bell – a useful and honourable life (£4)

William Charles Cripps & Son: Solicitors serving Victorian Tunbridge Wells (£2.50)

William Law Pope & Henry Bishop: two clerics in Victorian Tunbridge Wells (£3)

The story of Clayton Stanford Willicombe (£1.50)

William Willicombe – the Cubitt of Tunbridge Wells (£3.95)

The smaller wildlife of WPC (£2)

The trees of WPC – a walk (rev. & illus. edn, £1.50)

Either buy your copies at a meeting, or send a cheque made out to FWPC (adding 50p per item for postage) to the Secretary at Bridge House, Culverden Park Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9QX.

Dates for your diary

Wed. 20th October: Ceremonial tree planting by the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, 3.30pm, Woodbury Park Cemetery

Fri. 3rd December: *Canon Edward Hoare, "Protestant pontiff" of Tunbridge Wells*, illustrated talk by June Bridgeman. 7.30pm, Camden Centre

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Fri. 4th February: *Victorian Tunbridge Wells*, illustrated talk by Philip Whitbourn. 7.30pm, Camden Centre

Fri. 20th May: AGM, followed by *Joseph Ridgeway of Christchurch*, an illustrated talk by David Bushell. 7.30pm, Christchurch

Sat. 21st May: Plant sale

The October event is part of our tree regeneration programme. Pink and white hawthorns will be planted. All Friends welcome.

Grave Humour

Two men were walking home after a party and decided to take a shortcut through the cemetery. Right in the middle they were startled by a tap-tap-tapping noise coming from the misty shadows. Trembling with fear, they found an old man with a hammer and chisel, chipping away at one of the headstones.

"Wow, Mister," one of them said after catching his breath, "You scared us half to death -- we thought you were a ghost! What are you doing working here so late at night?"

"Those fools!" the old man grumbled. "They misspelled my name!"

Contributed by Graham Salmon

WPC Burials

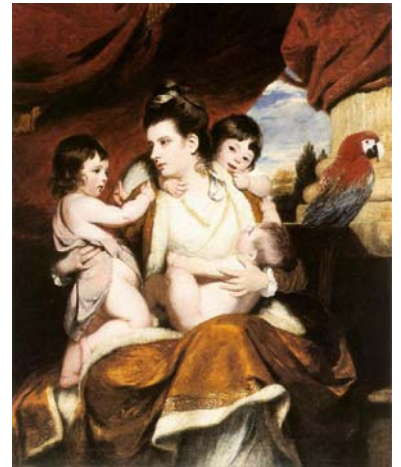
7. Caroline Archdall (1819–1870)

A well-preserved headstone two rows up from Canon Hoare's tomb marks the grave of Caroline Archdall, “beloved wife of Lt Colonel Archdall of Clifton Lodge Co Fermanagh”, who died 11 June 1870 aged 51. She spent half her life in Wales and the other half in Northern Ireland. It is a mystery how she came to die in Tunbridge Wells, but she brings an intriguing link to Dylan Thomas.

Her father Charles Claude Clifton, who had married Frances Lucas, had in 1817 bought and refurbished “in the English manner” an estate at Tymawr, just outside Brecon. The same year he became Sheriff of Brecon.

Edward Archdall was her second husband. The first in 1840 was a young naval officer, John Francis Theophilus Starke, whose family owned Laugharne (pronounced Larn) Castle in West Wales by the mouth of the Taf river. This is one of the chain of massive Norman fortresses built to subdue Wales. After four stormy centuries it became a romantic ruin following fierce fighting between Royalists and Roundheads. However Castle House, a handsome mansion was built in 1730 beside the gateway by the then owners and the castle bailey laid out as a garden. It was later described by Dylan Thomas who often stayed there as “the best of houses in the best of places”. John Starke's grandfather had made a comfortable fortune as Governor in Madras and consolidated his position by marrying in 1798 the heiress who owned Laugharne. The castle has many literary and artistic associations, having been painted both by Turner and Augustus John. During the 1930s and 1940s, Castle House was occupied by Richard Hughes, author of *A High Wind In Jamaica*. He introduced Dylan Thomas to Caitlin, his future wife, when she came to stay at Castle House with her then lover, the artist Augustus John. After marrying, Dylan and Caitlin lived for many years in Laugharne and both are buried there. Dylan wrote *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* in the castle gazebo and much of *Under Milk Wood* at the castle Boathouse Cottage where he lived for four years with his family. *Under Milk Wood* was said to have its genesis in talk around the Castle House dinner table.

But all this lay in the future. In 1843 Lieut Starke died at Castle House aged 35. The widowed Caroline found consolation, for fourteen months later, she married a young army officer in the 14th Foot, Lieut Edward Archdall from a prominent family in Fermanagh, Ireland. Save for acting as colonel of the Fermanagh Volunteers, his modest army career, achieved through purchase, ended in the early 1850s and they settled as local gentry in a 263 acre estate in Archdall country at Clifton Lodge, Lisnaskea. Edward remarried four years after Caroline's death in 1870. When he himself died in 1886, he was buried at Lisnaskea.



Caroline's grandmother, Lady Cockburn.



Dylan Thomas, by Augustus John.



Tymawr House – Caroline's birthplace.



Laugharne Castle as Caroline knew it.