



Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

Issue No.3

14th September 2007

Newsletter

Forthcoming events

First and foremost, here are some dates to put in your diary. Do bring interested friends to these events. We need as many supporters and helpers as possible.

Wed 26th Sept.: *"The Dodd Brothers and the changing face of Tunbridge Wells"**. Lecture by Dr Philip Whitbourn. Museum at 7.45 pm. Contact the Museum to book a place — it's free.

Sun. 30th Sept: "Looking at Leaf Miners". Stroll round the cemetery on a natural history walk with Keith Palmer. Meet 2.30 pm, WPC gate.

Fri. 19th Oct.: "Natural History of Woodbury Park Cemetery". Public lecture by Dr Ian Beavis with pictures of some of the interesting small creatures to be seen there. 7.30 pm, Town Hall.

Fri. 7th Dec.: "Looking at Memorials". Talk and display on photographing interesting memorials in Woodbury Park Cemetery, and looking at some of the symbols used. A joint event with the U3A Camera Club. 7.30 pm, Town Hall.

Fri. 29th Feb. 2008: "Researching Local History in Woodbury Park Cemetery". Joint event with the Family History Society. How to find out about some of the people buried there. 7.30 pm, Town Hall.

* *The exhibition "Reunited: the landscape art of Charles and Joseph Dodd" is in the Art Gallery until 27th October.*



We took MP Greg Clark on a guided tour of the cemetery in early July. He was enchanted and promptly became a Friend. He is here looking at some rare yellow-flowered Victorian strawberries uncovered by one of the Saturday working parties.

What's happened since April

We have enjoyed meeting up with many of you at various walks round the cemetery. They included a dawn chorus walk at 5am in May, a Civic Society heritage walk and a Family Fun Day nature walk in June, and a moth-trapping session on a velvety summer evening in July (yes, there was one!), when we also established there are indeed resident bats.

Philip Whitbourn led another guided walk round the monuments as part of the Heritage Open Days in September. 75 people turned up for that, very few of whom had visited the cemetery before. We hope some will become members. Many of them bought our two monuments pamphlets covering 20 of the tombs, making a useful contribution to our conservation funds.

You can get copies of these pamphlets at £1 apiece from the secretary. They are ideal to take with you when showing a friend round the cemetery.

We hope some of you managed to get along to see our display about Woodbury Park Cemetery at St Barnabas church during the Heritage Open Days. If you know a local church or other group interested in hearing a talk about the cemetery, please tell us and we will bring the display along as part of that. Tell them to contact the Secretary on 01892 525578.

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

As the events list shows, the last of this year's guided walks is on a Sunday afternoon, 30th September at 2.30, when Keith Palmer will reveal the mysteries of leaf miners (24 kinds found there so far). Or you can simply stroll around under the trees and look at interesting graves. So don't miss that opportunity, or the Ian Beavis talk in October. We will bring along copies of the monuments pamphlets if you haven't already bought them.

Liaising with TWBC

We continue to work closely with the Council on a long-term plan for the cemetery. This embraces all aspects of management and security. There is a tricky path between preserving wild-life and maintaining the cemetery's character as a lovingly tended memorial garden.

Now for some less agreeable news

Teenagers at a loose end during the holidays have regularly gathered for bouts of underage drinking, creating a lot of noise and vast quantities of litter. Tombstones have been daubed, 3 fires lit, rubbish dum-



ped, contraceptives discarded, and an 1859 grave stone to George and Nancy Landsdell completely destroyed. Most recent has been a horrible incident of a chicken interred alive in a hole dug in a grave. We are working closely with the police and TWBC about tackling this totally unacceptable behaviour and desecration. It lends weight and urgency to our pleas to the Council to improve the boundary fencing with Upper Grosvenor Road – the main route for intruders.

Both the newly refurbished chapel and the gate lodge are up for sale. The present owners of both are Friends and have kept an eye out for misbehaviour. We hope to engage the new ones too.

Concluding on a happier note

We have kept our much-admired new website www.fwpc.org.uk posted with news of what is happening. Get anyone who might be interested to take a look at it. It has drawn quite a few inquiries from all over the world about whether specific relatives are buried in the cemetery. We have supplied details and photos wherever possible and in return been given some fascinating information. And we have even corrected an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography!

Currently over 170 people are being researched. If you are interested in this sort of detective work contact Michael Clegg (01892 525753) to tell him who interests you or get some suggestions about where and how to delve, using the library, reference books or the internet. Be warned – it is a fascinating topic and once you start you won't be able to stop.

Found by a working party



What is it? — Answer in the next newsletter.

Working parties to clear and tidy up graves regularly meet on Saturday afternoons at 2.30. If you would like to help, just turn up with stout gloves and secateurs. Or contact Angela Swain on 01892 541881. The wet summer has meant the bramble sprays have burgeoned, but there have been compensations in the heavy crop of magnificent berries. You will still find a few if you hurry!

Call to all members

Can you hold a coffee morning, bridge party or plant sale to raise funds? If each member hosted just one small event, we would be able to lay out a sunny sitting area by the chapel accessible to wheel chairs, and do more conservation work. Please help! Contact the Secretary on 01892 525578 if you are able to do so.