



## Newsletter Issue No 13

**Winter 2012**

### THE CHAPELS



When Brandwood End Cemetery first opened in 1899, the Grade II Listed Twin Victorian Mortuary Chapels and the Superintendent's Lodge each had a specific purpose. The chapels, from a religious perspective, provided a final farewell for those to be interred. The mortuary chapel on the east was for non-conformist and the chapel on the west for Anglican services. The original purpose of the Grade II Listed Lodge was in relation to the cemetery offices and for the living quarters of the cemetery Superintendent. The office use downstairs continued until flooding in December 2010 and was transferred, earlier this year, to offices at Kings Norton Cemetery. The beauty of the chapels has, since the fire damage, eroded with the help of Mother Nature and the ravages of time. Once a feast for the eyes, these Victorian monuments are now derelict and in slow, but steady, decay.

The Friends have done and achieved much in partnership with Birmingham City Council, recently through the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding. The chapels have benefited from surveys and previous enabling works and we are delighted to inform our members that listed planning permission has now been granted for further enabling works to proceed on the chapels during the beginning of 2012.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The sixth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery was held on Thursday 14th April at St. Bede's Church, Doversley Road, Kings Heath.

The Officers and Committee were duly elected as follows:

Chairman:	Anne Courbet
Vice-Chairman:	Barrie Simpson
Treasurer:	Julian Pritchard
Secretary:	Jane Edwards
Committee:	Philip Brown, Sarah Courbet, Adrian Harris, Coral Howard, Carola Klein, and Brian Rai.

Following the formalities of the Annual General Meeting, a demonstration was given by Memsafe of how memorials were made safe and restored. A question and answer session followed.

### LITTER PICKS

As an experiment, the Committee have decided to hold the Litter Picks quarterly instead of bi-monthly and they will now take place in March, June, September and December.

Litter pickers and rubbish sacks are provided and will be distributed at the Superintendent's Lodge at 10.00 a.m. All you need is suitable footwear and gloves. The task is usually completed by 11.30 a.m. At the Litter Pick in June, we were joined by ten Scouts and two Leaders from 148th Birmingham (St. Dunstan's) Scout Group. This is the second time that the Scouts have helped at a Litter Pick and we are very grateful for their assistance. Why don't you come along and join in?

The date of the next Litter pick is Saturday 10th March and further dates will be inserted in the notice boards at the entrances to the cemetery.

## NEW PATRONS

The Committee is delighted to announce that we now have two further Patrons.

### **Alistair McGowan**

Multi-faceted, an acute environmentalist, a rich heritage spanning many centuries and a thorough gentleman; Alistair represents all this and much more. He has now, we are extremely happy and proud to say, agreed to be the fourth Patron of the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery (FBEC).

Amongst Alistair's lineage, there are thirty plus family linked members interred at Brandwood End Cemetery and this together with the 1,700 plus 'Brandwood End' trees and Alistair's existing patronage with 'Trees for Cities', provides an ideal backdrop to Alistair's new Friends of Brandwood End patronage.



### **Elizabeth Perkins**

Director of the Birmingham Conservation Trust, has graciously accepted an invitation from the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery's Committee to become their fifth Patron.

Elizabeth has been associated with FBEC almost since its inception in 2005 and has given a great deal of her time and expertise in supporting the Committee's endeavours to repair and restore the twin terracotta Victorian Chapels in Brandwood End Cemetery. With Elizabeth at the helm, Birmingham Conservation Trust's many successful projects include the Back to Backs and Perrotts Folly. Their latest success has been the recent award of £1m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the 19th century Grade II listed Newman Bros. Coffin Works, which is situated in the Jewellery Quarter.



## THE MCGOWAN CONNECTION

Below is an explanation of Alistair McGowan's connection with Brandwood End Cemetery and the start of his Anglo-Indian lineage:

In about 1763, Major General John McGowan, (Alistair's 5th great-grandfather) arrived in India as an Ensign and on the 12th January 1765, he married Maria De Cruz, thereby starting the Anglo-Indian lineage of Alistair McGowan and of over thirty McGowan family members interred in Brandwood End Cemetery. In 1783 the Major General (then a Major), took his two young children, Suetonius (Alistair's 4th great grandfather) and Jessie, from India to England to continue their education.

Having finished their education (Suetonius at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, and Jessie probably at a young ladies' finishing school) the two youngsters boarded the Hon. East India Company's ship, "Winterton", setting sail from Gravesend on the 28th April 1792.

On the 19th August 1792, the ship struck a rock off the coast of Madagascar and foundered. Out of the 288 persons on board, only a crew of 11 with 14 passengers and 34 soldiers, bound for Madras and 19 passengers bound for Bengal, survived.

As the ship broke up, the passengers and crew were forced to abandon ship. Traumatized, dehydrated and exhausted, some of them spent days at sea before they finally reached shore. One of the surviving senior officers organised a daring rescue mission in the "Winterton's" one remaining lifeboat. Months later, he returned to discover that the living conditions and a mysterious fever had taken its toll of the remaining survivors.

Jessie died when the ship foundered; Suetonius survived and reached Madras over a year after the wreck of the "Winterton". He married and had at least two children, Suetonius the 2nd (Alistair's 3rd great-grandfather) and Mary. An official enquiry found that he died of extreme grief in May 1798, just a month before his father, the Major General.

## SECURITY

Please ensure that you lock your car and hide all valuables when visiting the Cemetery.

## CIVILIAN GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE



On Tuesday 5th July pupils from St. Alban's Catholic Primary School in King's Heath gathered in the cemetery to help Councillor Timothy Huxtable unveil a plaque highlighting a Big Lottery Funding Award. Earlier in the year the children, working alongside Biodiversity Champions from Quadron Services, Bereavement Services Ground Staff and members of Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery planted a hawthorn hedge surrounding the perimeter of the Civilian Garden of Remembrance. They were blessed with sunshine for the planting and unveiling. Following the ceremony, spectators joined the pupils in a quiet prayer under the shade of a nearby tree. Councillor Huxtable and all three local Councillors then spent a short time chatting to the children.

## A DAY AT THE MARKET

During the summer months, members of the Committee attended Farmers' Markets in Kings Heath, Kings Norton and Moseley with our display boards and armed with plenty of FBEC publicity leaflets.



These events help to raise awareness of this beautiful cemetery and hopefully increase membership.

## SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

A short Service of Remembrance was held at Brandwood End Cemetery on Sunday 13th November 2010. The Service, attended by approximately thirty people, commenced at 10.59 a.m. with Reveille and concluded with the Last Post, both played on the bugle by fireman, Gareth Bond. The Service was led by Mr. David Fairbotham from St. Dunstan's Church in Kings Heath and included two minutes' silence in memory of the fallen. Wreaths were laid on the Cross of Sacrifice by Councillor Neville Summerfield and Mrs. Anne Courbet on behalf of Birmingham City Council and Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery respectively. We are very grateful to David and Gareth whose contributions greatly enhanced the Service.



## POPPY CROSSES

Once again a poppy cross was placed on each of the war related graves in the cemetery and we are grateful to the Midlands Co-operative Funeral Services who once again generously sponsored the crosses. In addition a field of poppy crosses was created and these crosses were sponsored by an anonymous donor to whom we also express our gratitude. Thanks are also due to the committee member who puts in the time and effort to place these crosses.



## RESTORATION OF MEMORIALS

During the month of November Memsafe carried out repairs and restoration work to six of the memorials in the cemetery. This project was funded by an award from Brandwood Ward Community Chest. Below are the before and after photos of one of the memorials.



## POSTAGE COSTS

The membership fee for Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery has only increased once since its inauguration in July 2005. Unfortunately postage costs have increased greatly in the intervening years. In the interests of economy the committee asked that as many members as possible indicate their willingness to receive the newsletter by e-mail by supplying their e-mail address and ticking the appropriate box on their subscription renewal form. A number of members did this and Newsletter 13 will be the first one to go out partly in this way. This will mean a saving on postage and we appeal to other members who have an e-mail address to forward it to:

**friendsofbrandwoodendcemetery@blueyonder.co.uk**

Members who do not take this option will receive their newsletter in the usual way and those who agree to receive it by email may unsubscribe at any time.

## TELEPHONE BOX

A red box on a pole has now been erected on the left-hand side of the main drive as you enter the gates on Woodthorpe Road. It does not contain a life-belt but a telephone. This telephone will eventually be for the use of visitors to the cemetery who wish to make contact with the office at Kings Norton Cemetery. It will be operational in a few weeks time.

## APOLOGIES

This newsletter is overdue because we wanted to pass on to you the very latest on the listed planning permission. Please accept our apologies.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

If you wish to contact Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery with a query, idea or article for this newsletter please use one of the contact methods below.

Telephone: 0121 628 1186      Website [www.fbec.org.uk](http://www.fbec.org.uk)

E-mail: [friendsofbrandwoodendcemetery@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:friendsofbrandwoodendcemetery@blueyonder.co.uk)

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