



### THE CHAPELS



Regular meetings continue to take place between Birmingham City Council and representatives of Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery Committee and an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund is being pursued.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S LODGE AND GARDEN

Use of the Superintendent's Lodge is still under consideration.  
Work has commenced on the garden but little will happen now until winter is over and planting can begin.

### NEW VISION COMMUNITY EVENT

This event took place on Sunday 12th August and involved following a trail joining the Cemetery, Brandwood Pool, Broad Lane Allotments and Jasmin Fields. At each point children were to collect a teddy bear. Sadly the day was a washout and attended by very few. Although Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery stood huddled under a gazebo for three hours, we only gave out two teddy bears. On the bright side however, we did manage to enlist three extra volunteers for the next Litter Pick.

### LITTER PICKS

At the June Litter Pick we were joined once again by Scouts from 148th Birmingham (St. Dunstan's) Scout Group. The work they carry out in the cemetery counts towards part of their Community Challenge and we are always grateful for their help.



The dates booked for future Litter Picks are as follows:

Saturday 2nd March 2013  
Sunday 2nd June 2013  
Saturday 7th September 2013  
Sunday 1st December 2013

The Litter Picks start at 10.00 a.m. and last for one and a half hours. Litter pickers and rubbish sacks are distributed at the Superintendent's Lodge at the beginning of the Litter Pick and all you need is suitable footwear and gloves. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Why don't you join us for the next one?

### SECURITY AND VANDALISM

Please ensure that you lock your car and hide all valuables when visiting the cemetery. If you witness any vandalism, please report it.

## CROSS OF SACRIFICE

Following the First World War memorials were erected in nearly every village, town and city across the United Kingdom in memory of the Fallen and in 1929 a Cross of Sacrifice was erected on the main drive of the cemetery. The words on the base of the Cross read **“This Cross of Sacrifice is one in design and intention with those which have been set up in France and Belgium and other places throughout the World where our dead of the Great War are laid to rest.”** After the Second World War these crosses became joint memorials to all the fallen in the two World Wars and to subsequent deaths in military actions across the world, for example, Korea, Malaya, the Falklands, Iraq and currently in Afghanistan.

The two ‘Screen Walls’ on either side of the Cross of Sacrifice are inscribed with names of the fallen who are buried in the cemetery in the nearby lawn areas but do not have marked graves.



Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery extend their thanks to Dawn Harding, Bereavement Officer for Brandwood End who arranged for the War Graves Commission to clean the Cross and the screens.

## REMEMBRANCE AT BRANDWOOD END CEMETERY

Cemeteries are places of remembrance, where we remember our families and friends who are no longer with us; however, since the end of the First World War they are also places where we remember those individuals, who are strangers to us but have affected our lives by their making the ultimate sacrifice.

Since the inception of Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery, each year, on Armistice Sunday, a short

Service of Remembrance has been held at the Cross of Sacrifice on the main drive. The Service lasts for approximately 15 minutes, includes a two minute silence and everyone is welcome. In addition to this a poppy cross is placed on every War Grave and in total 330 poppy crosses are placed on individual graves and we are grateful to Chris. Gascoigne of S. Gascoigne and Sons Ltd. who very generously assisted in sponsoring the poppy crosses this year. A field of poppy crosses is also created near to the Cross, in memory of the fallen.



Second World War

Brothers  
Alfred Cox aged 22  
Royal Air Force  
and  
Leslie Cox  
Royal Navy



Sid Tropman aged 39 Fireman in the Blitz

In addition, to the east of the main drive, a Garden of Remembrance was laid out in 1952, in memory of the Civilians who died in the Second World War, victims of the air raids, who are buried in this cemetery.

In 2007 Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery were instrumental in the restoration and re-dedication of this Garden and in 2011 local school children helped to plant a hawthorn hedge around the perimeter. The Friends are actively engaged in maintaining the garden.

## **The Grave of Alderman John Bowen J.P. - 16th December 1844 - 16th April 1926**

When I first learnt that my grandfather Alderman John Bowen J.P., the founder of a firm of Victorian builders, was buried at Brandwood End Cemetery, I took my niece to look for the grave not knowing at that time the grave number. I said "you work from the left and I will do the right hand side". What I should have said was "look for the tallest and most impressive"! There it was in section A2 C/E grave no. 36, standing some ten feet high with a marble Celtic cross and dead straight as you might expect from a builder's tombstone! It needs to have some cleaning up of course and this is my goal when I have completed writing his life history by Christmas 2012.

John Bowen was the son of a blacksmith from the village of Rochford near Tenbury Wells in Worcestershire. He is reputed to have walked into Birmingham with a sack of tools on his back to start work as a carpenter in 1868. In 1870, at the age of 25, he started on his own account what later became one of Birmingham's most well known and respected firms of builders - John Bowen and sons Limited.

Initially as a builder and taking premises in Balsall Heath he began in a small way by erecting villas, residences and various buildings. The company's premises were in George Street on the former site of the Balsall Heath Baths. John Bowen's shrewdness and the excellence of his work laid the foundations for his success and he made rapid progress as a contractor, building public buildings in Corporation Street, Victorian Board Schools in Birmingham, Kings Norton and Aston, and several Swimming Baths and Churches.

One of the firm's most well known projects was the Victorian Law Courts. He built many other public buildings and big business premises nine of which were in Corporation Street, which included the Victorian Law Courts (1887) and the Wesleyan Central Hall (1900). Other buildings were the Corporation Baths in Monument Road (1881), the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms (1883), the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute (1883), Kings Heath Wesleyan Church (1896), Cornwell buildings in Newhall Street (1897) St. Agatha's Church Sparkbrook (1899), the Birmingham Meat Markets, Hollymoor Asylum for the city of Birmingham (1900-1905) and Netherne Asylum for the County of Surrey (1905-1909).

Following John Bowen's retirement in 1909 the firm went on to build such buildings as Hockley Post Office (1911), the Old Repertory Theatre (1913) the Hall of Memory (1922) and the Beacon Insurance building in Hall Green (1937).

John Bowen had his business premises in George Street, Balsall Heath which was then in the County of Worcestershire and built a house in 1884 close by at the corner of Strensham Hill and Edgbaston Road in Moseley which he called 'Rochford' and where he lived until his death in 1926.

During his life John Bowen was involved in many charitable and public duties, was High Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1916 and had his own Coat of Arms. He was both a prominent Mason and a committed Wesleyan Methodist and was generous in financially supporting the building of churches in the Moseley Road Methodist circuit.

The grave of such a man, like so many that are buried at Brandwood End, needs to be kept in good order and I am grateful to \*FBEC for their encouragement to work with others, whose relatives are buried at Brandwood End, to ensure that the graves are restored and cared for.

If anyone has any further information on John Bowen and sons please contact me direct. E-mail: anthonyrcollins@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 454 1034 mobile: 07979 247400 You can also Google - Alderman John Bowen J.P. (Article provided by Anthony Collins)

**\*Editors note:** Contact FBEC if you are interested in obtaining an estimate for the restoration of a grave(s).

## **CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBER**

There is a new telephone number for Kings Norton and Brandwood End Cemeteries. **0121 303 5583**

If you are in the cemetery and wish to contact the offices there is a red telephone box on the left hand side of the main drive as you enter the cemetery by the Woodthorpe Road gate. The phone box is opened Monday to Friday in conjunction with office opening hours. The box has a handle to open it and the telephone inside will ring Kings Norton Cemetery as soon as the handset is picked up. You cannot make any other calls on this telephone which also means that you cannot make emergency calls.

## TREE SURGERY

Many of you who visit the cemetery will have noticed, with horror, the severe pruning of the Oak on the island in the main drive.

Unfortunately this has been necessary as the oak has been weakened by fungus at the base which has resulted in a number of lower branches becoming dangerously rotten. This tree also had a very heavy canopy and it was feared that in wet and windy weather the tree could be in danger of falling. To try to give it a chance of recovery the leaf bearing branches have been removed thus reducing its wind resistance and it will be watched closely by the Birmingham City Council Tree Officer over the coming months. It is not a foregone conclusion that this tree will survive but every effort will be made to retain it.

There are a number of trees on site that have had to be treated in a similar manner but Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery are pleased that there is some appropriate tree husbandry now happening in the cemetery which will encourage the replacement of any trees that may have to be removed.

## WOODLAND PLANTING NOVEMBER 2012

Children from St. Alban's Catholic Primary School joined Bereavement staff and the Friends to plant 23 trees in a newly designated 'Diamond Woodland'. The area, close to the main entrance, will be used for the burial of ashes and has been enhanced with trees that have interesting and colourful bark or foliage. Penny Smith from Birmingham City Council cut the ribbon to declare the area open and the school led a short prayer for

all those buried in the Cemetery. The children participated with enthusiasm and made short work of the planting before making their way back to school in time for lunch.

Many of the pupils involved have previously worked with the Friends, in the planting of the hedge surrounding the Garden of Remembrance and we hope to work with St. Alban's on future projects.



Anne Courbet FBEC Chairman with pupils from St. Alban's

## CIVILIAN GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

On a very wet day in August two Committee members and a volunteer worked for over two hours removing weeds and debris from around the hawthorn hedge bordering the garden. This resulted in a vast improvement to the borders and three people soaked to the skin. The benches surrounding the garden which were in a sorry state have been re-painted by yet another Committee member. Help is always welcome in the garden and if you wish to volunteer please contact the Friends by using one of the methods on our contact list.

## 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)

Post: Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery  
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