

The Chapels



22nd May 2019 was a "Red Letter Day" for the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery. The new temporary roof to one of the Chapels had been completed, the grass mown, shrubs cut back, the fence moved closer to the chapels and the doors were opened for an hour or so. For the first time since the inauguration of FBEC we were able to see inside the chapels. Mixed emotions prevailed, excitement to have the opportunity to be there and sadness when we observed the extent of the damage inside. However at last our chapels looked cared for and although we know that this is not a definite repair or refurbishment it is a determined effort to stop the buildings from further deterioration.

The work on the chapels is a direct result of the commitment of officers in Birmingham City Council Bereavement Services working in collaboration with FBEC. Acivico undertook the design, creation, and installation of the new roof and work was carried out by Solihull Roofing and Building.

The viewing was attended by officers of BCC Bereavements Staff, City Council Officials, representatives from Solihull Roofing and Building, cemetery ground staff and members of FBEC Executive Committee.

A new Notice Board has been erected at the front of the chapels and pictured are: Alison Fumagalli, BCC Registrar/South, Bev Nash BCC Registrar/North, Andy King BCC Principal Building Surveyor ACIVICO, Coral Howard FBEC Vice Chair, Kerry Tinkler FBEC Committee Member, Steve Hollingworth BCC Assistant Director Regulation and Reinforcement and Dawn Harding BCC Bereavement Officer responsible for Brandwood End and Kings Norton Cemeteries. The notice board provides a wealth of information about the plans and history of the chapels including a picture of the interior of one of the chapels in its heyday.



Although the chapels will not be used again for their original use we are still searching for a sustainable future for them. One of the most positive things to have come from this exercise is the evidence that Birmingham City Council is committed to preventing further deterioration of the buildings.

It was heartening to hear the interest the staff have and their hopes for small improvements that may eventually allow supervised public access.



Just two of the many pictures taken of the chapel interiors. More can be found on the FBEC website: fbec.org.uk



Early in September, the doors to the Chapels were opened again, this time for a visit from Councillor Sharon Thompson, Birmingham City Council Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods. Also present were local Councillors Lisa Trickett and Mike Leddy together with Bereavement Service staff, ground staff and members of FBEC.

Whilst on site Councillor Thompson did a "walk about" in the cemetery which included the graves, natural tree heritage and the extensive work that has been carried out to reduce the risk of flooding to adjacent housing.

Annual General Meeting

The fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery took place on Thursday 11th April. The annual Accounts and Annual Report were approved by those present and the following committee members were elected:

Chairman: Julia Griffin
Treasurer: Julian Pritchard
Secretary: Jane Edwards
Vice-Chairman: Coral Howard
Committee Members: Philip Brown, Sarah Courbet, Adrian Harris, Carola Klein and Kerry Tinkler.

We extend a very warm welcome to Kerry Tinkler our new committee member.

120th Anniversaries

On Thursday 13th April 1899 Brandwood End Cemetery was officially opened by Mr George Tallis, Chairman of the Kings Norton Parish Council Local Cemetery Committee. The first burial took place just two days later on 15th April. The grave is marked by a simple wooden stake in the communal grave area on the right as you pass the Cross of Sacrifice, close to the Redwood Avenue.

The burial was that of a child, Charles Downes aged five, the son of William and Ada Downes who lived in Balsall Heath. Charles died from Diphtheria on 11th April. On the anniversary of his death FBEC placed a floral tribute on the grave.



Service of Remembrance 2019

The Annual Service of Remembrance organised by Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery will take place at the Cross of Sacrifice on the main drive on Sunday 10th November. Everyone is welcome and the Service **commencing at 10.50 a.m.** will last for approx. 15 minutes to include two minutes silence at 11.00 a.m.

Poppy Crosses

This year, the placing of the Poppy Crosses will begin three weeks prior to Remembrance Sunday during week commencing 21st October. This involves placing a Poppy Cross on each of the 300 plus War Graves in the cemetery, If you helped last year and would like to help again or if you would like to join us for the first time in this important and rewarding task please contact us through our email address. Full instructions will be given.

Eldred Hallas - Significant Grave



In August Pat Franklin, a local historian, gave a graveside talk as a memorial tribute to Eldred Hallas. Born and educated in Yorkshire, Eldred Hallas moved to Birmingham in 1906, He became a prominent Labour Party member and Birmingham's first Labour MP.

Bat Walk



It is not often you can get into the cemetery at night but on the 21st August it was possible. Chris from Brum Bats and Ranger Dean led a bat walk from Jasmin Fields to Brandwood Pool via the cemetery. Thirty plus people took part and were rewarded with lots of bat sightings. A tawny owl also turned up which added to the excitement.

Many thanks to Chris and to Dean for giving up their evening for this event.



Safety and Security

Please ensure that your car is locked and all valuables hidden from view when visiting a grave however close by you are.

Autumn Tree Walk

A tree walk organised by Birmingham Parks Ranger Service will take place in the cemetery on Sunday 13th October 2019. The walk will be led by Ranger Dean. Come and join the walk, enjoy the fresh air and admire the changes of the season. Meet at the Superintendent's Lodge at 11.00 a.m.



Trees are good for our health and the cemetery is full of beautiful and unusual trees. Plus, on a walk with an expert hidden gems of knowledge can be acquired.

Litter Picks



A big thank you to the Scouts from the 96th Birmingham Scout Group (Colmore Road) who joined our usual supporters at the September Litter Pick. In all fourteen sacks of rubbish were collected.

Dates of Future Litter Picks:

Sunday 1st December 2019

Saturday 7th March 2020

Litter Picks start at 10.00 a.m. and all are welcome.

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