

The Chapels



It will come as no surprise to learn that nothing has changed with the Chapels during the last six months. That however, does not mean that things have been standing still. Arranged events have gone ahead as far as possible in accordance with COVID 19 restrictions and the Committee has continued to meet on a monthly basis via Zoom and is planning for the future.

Safety and Security

Recently a handbag was stolen from the front seat of an unlocked car while the owner was attending a grave nearby. Please remember to hide all valuables from view and lock your car however close by you may be.

Litter Picks

On the morning of the December litter pick we were experiencing very heavy rainfall and an email was sent to our usual pickers to the effect that we would understand if no one turned up to pick litter. Amazingly, twelve people arrived, eager and smiling and set about the task of collecting fourteen bags of litter. The rain had eased off by the end of the pick.



Due to COVID 19 restrictions the March litter pick was cancelled but hopefully the picks planned for the rest of the year will take place on the following dates:

Sunday 6th June 2021

Saturday 4th September 2021

Sunday 5th December 2021

The litter picks play an important part in keeping the cemetery clean, tidy and cared for. Why not join in the next one? Fresh air, exercise and a sense of satisfaction.

Annual General Meeting

Because of the restrictions on meetings in place at the time, the Annual General Meeting which was scheduled for a date in April 2020 was held over until 2021. The position will be the same this year and the decision has been taken to hold the AGM via Zoom. If you have an email address you will be able to join the meeting and details are contained in the annual notice which you will have received with this newsletter. The purpose of the Annual General Meeting is to approve the Annual Accounts and Reports of the previous year's activities and to elect the Executive Committee for the coming year. The date and time of the meeting is Thursday 15th April 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Poppy Crosses



This year we had a record number of volunteers who helped with the placing of the Poppy Crosses in the cemetery. Social distancing had to be observed and we are very grateful to those who took part.

We are also grateful, once again, to Christopher Gascoigne of Gascoigne and Sons who generously helped with the sponsoring of the Poppy Crosses. Without sponsorship it would be impossible to put a cross on every War Grave in the cemetery.

Annual Service of Remembrance

Following advice from the director of Public Health for Birmingham it was considered prudent to abandon plans for the Annual Service of Remembrance.

The organisations who usually lay wreaths at the Cross of Sacrifice were asked to place their wreaths at some time during the morning of December 8th, thus ensuring that social distancing rules were observed. Wreaths were laid by representatives of Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery, Brandwood Residents and the Catholic Women's League.



It was not possible to create a field of Poppy Crosses as has happened in the past but a large framed collage of fallen poppies was displayed at the foot of the cross.

A number of families and individuals were visiting the cross and several people congregated and observed the two minutes silence whilst social distancing. Despite being in the middle of a Global Pandemic, tribute was still paid to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



A wreath was also laid on behalf the Warwickshire Yeomanry Museum Gallipoli Association on the grave of Private Horace George Turner who died on 30th August 1916 at Sulva Bay. Private Turner's parents lived in Augustus Road, Edgbaston.

Remembrance Day

A small number of people, again socially distancing, congregated at the Cross of Sacrifice on Wednesday 11th November at 11.00 a.m. and observed a two minute silence. An 'old soldier' who had arrived a little late observed a full two minutes silence whilst holding a salute. He did National Service in the 1950s and was wearing his father's medals.

Addition to Screen Wall

The Screen Walls on either side of the Cross of Sacrifice are engraved with the names of those who lost their lives during wartime and are buried in the communal grass areas either side of the main drive. They were without family or their family were unable to finance a grave at the time of their death. Recently another name was added to one of the walls, it was that of Private Ernest Smith. Names are added on the instruction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, usually when a family is following up the military record of a family member.

Stonemason at Work

One of our Committee Members happened to visit the cemetery while the work on the screen wall was being carried out. She stopped and observed the stonemason at work, took some photographs and had a short chat. Not wanting to disturb him but intrigued by his work she asked him if he could send a few details of himself and what his job entails.

Mike Witham is a Charge hand Stonemason and has been a stonemason for 41 years. For 37 of those years he has worked for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Mike's area covers the United Kingdom and some Scandinavian Countries. He has also worked in Bulgaria and Canada and could be sent to any of 500 plus locations in the UK from Penzance to Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands.



The work varies from cleaning to rebuilding memorials and of course adding inscriptions. There are 414 Crosses of Sacrifice in the UK to be looked after plus other large memorials such as the Naval Memorials at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and the RAF Memorial at Runnymede.

The type of stone worked on varies depending on where in the country he is working. Portland Limestone is the most common, then Sandstone. In Cornwall, Devon and Scotland Granite is used. The Cross of Sacrifice and the Screen Walls in Brandwood End Cemetery are constructed of a type called Stancliffe. The tools used also vary according to the type of stone.

Fantastic Fungi



These were photographed in the Cemetery in late autumn by Carola Klein, one of the Committee members



Amazon Purchases

Many people are shopping online at the moment. If you scroll down to the bottom of the fbec website and click on the symbol below you will be taken to your Amazon account and Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery will receive a donation from Amazon. Every little helps!



Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery – Contact Details

Telephone: 0121 605 4316

E-mail: friendsofbec@gmail.com

Post: Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery

c/o Julian Pritchard

Lakeside Centre, 180, Lifford Lane

Kings Norton

B30 3NU

Website: www.fbec.org.uk