



### **Obituary – Mrs Anne Courbet**



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mrs Anne Courbet to whom we owe the very existence of Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery. For a number of years Anne lived almost opposite the cemetery gates in Broad Lane. Although she had no relatives buried in the cemetery, she walked through it on a regular basis and came to love the cemetery and the Chapels.

She was horrified at the damage done by vandals to the chapels following their closure and was determined to do something about it. In 2005, with support from local councillors, she called a public meeting of local residents. As a result a committee of likeminded people was formed and Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery was born.

Anne was Membership Secretary for the first few years and worked tirelessly to recruit new members and inform the general public of the aims of FBEC, often burning the midnight oil as she did so. Her dream was to have the chapels restored to their former glory but it became evident that they would not be used for Funeral Services again and so she focused on finding a sustainable future for them. In the meantime she channelled her energies into other projects in the cemetery. The general impression of the cemetery was that of neglect and the very first project was the establishment of regular litter picks. Other projects swiftly followed and her knowledge of local organisations and City Councillors was invaluable because it meant that she was able to get influential people on board.

Anne was Chairman of FBEC from 2011 until 2013 when she decided to give more time to her many other interests. She knew many of the members by name and became a true friend to the other committee members. After retiring from the committee she continued to support our public events and was always on hand for advice and encouragement, whenever needed. Despite being unwell she proof read our last newsletter.

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Anne's Funeral Service took place at St. Peter's Church, Harborne on 14th December 2021 and was attended by her family and many friends and associates. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her daughter Sarah and son Martin.

Anne has left us an important legacy and we owe it to her to continue her good work in finding a sustainable future for the chapels.



The above picture of Anne and Barrie Simpson, another of our founder members, was taken in 2006 and demonstrates the contrast of how the chapels looked then and how they look now. See page 3.

## Annual General Meeting

With the lifting of Covid 19 restrictions we will once again be able to hold our Annual General Meeting in person. It will take place in the Superintendent's Lodge in the Cemetery on Thursday 7th April at 10.30 a.m. This will be the first time that we have been able to hold the AGM in the Superintendent's Lodge.

The purpose of the AGM is to approve the Annual Accounts, review the previous year's activities and elect a new Committee. It also gives members the opportunity to ask questions and air concerns.

## Poppy Crosses

Following an appeal on our Facebook page, our loyal members who help with the Poppy Crosses each year were joined by a number of other volunteers and every War Grave in the cemetery was commemorated by having a poppy Cross placed upon it. This annual task is carried out willingly as a mark of our respect for and gratitude to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We are extremely grateful to those who gave up their time to carry out this task.

We are also grateful, once again to Christopher Gascoigne of Gascoigne and Sons who generously helped with the sponsoring of the Poppy Crosses. This sponsorship makes it possible to put a cross on every War Grave.

## 202 Field Reserves

On Saturday 13th November twelve members of 202 Field Hospital Reserves spent over 5 hours in Brandwood End clearing War Grave areas then moving on to clear a large area of Section 10 and another in Section A2. They also removed holly on the main drive and trimmed the hedge around the Cross of Sacrifice. They ended the day by placing flags on the two Polish Graves in the small War Graves area. 202 are unable to attend the Remembrance Service but pay their tribute to the victims of war each year, by tidying the surroundings.



## Annual Service of Remembrance

This took place on 14th November 2021 and it was satisfying to see that, although we had missed a year through Covid restrictions, the numbers attending were back to normal. The Service was attended by officers and members of Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery. The local Member of Parliament, local Councillors and residents, also representatives from various organisations with a connection to the cemetery. The Service was conducted by the Rev. David Fairbotham, Deacon at St. Dunstan's Church, Kings Heath. We extend our thanks to David, whose homilies are always worth hearing and to our young bugler Madeleine who is a Year 3 Undergraduate Student at the University of Birmingham.

Wreaths were laid by Mr. Steve McCabe MP, local Councillors Lisa Trickett and Mike Leddy, FBEC, West Midlands Police, The Gallipoli Association, the Catholic Women's League and all three Sections of 148th Birmingham Scout Group.



## Council Officers Visit Chapels



Early in February Councillor John Cotton, Birmingham City Council Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety, Equalities and Bereavement Services, paid a visit to the cemetery accompanied by Paul Lankester who is the Interim Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement. Also present were Alison Fumigalli and Dawn Harding from Bereavement Services. Councillor Cotton had kindly invited FBEC Committee members to attend. The first stop was to view inside the Chapel buildings. The visitors were impressed with the interiors and agreed it would be good if more could be made of the buildings.

We then moved on to other areas in the cemetery, including the small War Graves area. Here we came across a gardener employed by the War Graves Commission who was working on refurbishing the area and he was doing a great job.



## Civilian Garden of Remembrance

A big thank you to Deb and Alan Wilkes who travelled from Walsall on the 16th November to donate and plant 2 mini standard red rose trees to replace the failed ones in the small quarter beds. New well-rotted compost and Mycorrhizal fungi was added to the planting holes and the trees were staked.

In February the benches in the garden were removed and taken away for stripping, neutralising, drying, sanding and oiling. By the time the newsletter is published they should be back in position, looking like new.

## Litter Picks

At the March Litter Pick a record number of 19 people collected 27 sacks of rubbish. Well done and thank you everyone.

### Dates of Future Litter Picks:

**Sunday 5th June 2022.** This is the celebration weekend of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the pick will end with cake and a Loyal Toast to her Majesty.

**Saturday 3rd September 2022.**

## Becketts Farm Shop Community Token Scheme



Becketts Farm Shop had allocated one of their token collection boxes to Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery. On the same day as the visit from Council Officers, four of the Committee Members were able to collect a cheque for the sum of £463 from Becketts Farm who had a member of staff available to present the cheque and pose for a photo. We express our gratitude to the Management and staff at Becketts Farm.

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