



The Friends of Hampstead Cemetery

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1994 - 2019

Here, in no particular order, is a list of some of the things that have happened during the past 25 years of the Friends of Hampstead Cemetery.

Happily, the list is also of twenty-five items!

Not all have been the work of the Friends but all have affected the Cemetery and the community that use it. We are grateful to all our Friends and colleagues, past, present and future and look forward to continuing our efforts to support this beautiful and special space.

Jubilee Tree: In 2012 we planted a Paulownia tomentosa tree (also known as the Princess tree) on the front lawn with a stone inscribed to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee.

Lottery Grant: Working with Camden council and English Heritage the Friends were instrumental in applying for, and then getting, a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Much restoration, improvement, renovation, and conservation work over several years transformed the cemetery.

Management Meetings: As part of the Lottery grant a management plan was written and the Friends sit in on regular maintenance and management meetings as stake-holders in the Cemetery.

St Luke's Church: The Cemetery lies within the Parish of St Luke's Hampstead and thanks to their Vicar, Rev. Tresidder, have built close links. In particular:

Christmas Carol Concert: In recent years a tradition has become established of holding a candle-lit carol service in the Cemetery's consecrated chapel shortly before Christmas.

Armistice/Remembrance Day Service: On, or close to, 11th of November each year an act of remembrance for the dead of all wars takes place at 11am at the military war memorial. This is followed by a similar act at the Cemetery's civilian war memorial.

Camden-Islington Cemetery Merger: Hampstead is Camden's only cemetery actually

within the borough. Having similar needs and offering similar services it was beneficial to merge with neighbouring Islington. Camden continues to own the Cemetery but day-to-day management is undertaken by the joint service.

Parking: Grave owners and visitors are of course welcome to park but with the spread of controlled parking in nearby streets more non-visitor car parking takes place. An equitable solution has not yet been found.

Dogs: Dogs and their owners enjoy walking the grounds and we do not want to deprive them of this pleasure but want this to be balanced with respect for the graves, the deceased, the bereaved and other visitors.

Toilets: As the Cemetery became less used the toilets became subject to vandalism and were closed. The Friends want to see the provision of satisfactory facilities.

Sager Building Development: The large grey-brick housing development overlooks the Cemetery and the Friends submitted their opinions during the planning process. As part of the approval the developers made local improvement grants available.

Wildflower Meadow Area: With advice from ecologists and grant funding a less-used area of the Cemetery was planted as a wild area to encourage butterflies and other wildlife.

Electronic Information Kiosk: An interactive electronic display helps visitors locate celebrated graves and the people buried here. It is hoped to expand this to include more grave records as more data becomes available in electronic form.

Good Grave Guide: Camden History Society and local historians Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling produced this book, a history of the Cemetery with biographies of notable people buried here.

Tours, Bats, Solar Walk and Dawn Chorus: From time to time historians, conservation volunteers and commercial companies organise guided walks. As well as daytime walks of the graves we have enjoyed twilight bat spotting and early morning dawn chorus bird-song walks. With a football sized Sun in nearby Fortune Green a walking scale model of the solar system places the giant planets in the Cemetery.

Records microfilmed and digitised: The entrance Lodge formerly housed the burial records and offices, after the merger with Islington this became redundant. Records were archived and filed with modern techniques.

Tenant in Lodge, Photos Competitions: The upstairs part of the Lodge has been rented on a commercial basis and we have excellent relations with the tenant, Plastic Sandwich Ltd, who have kindly sponsored several photography competitions.

Lodge Garden Remembrance: In a small circular area behind the Lodge we have added our thanks for deceased Friends who had worked especially hard for the Cemetery: Joyce Pinto and Bradley Brown.

Unconsecrated Chapel: To put this otherwise under-utilised structure into use negotiations are currently underway to accept a tenant in the unconsecrated chapel. This arrangement may also see the ground floor of the Lodge used more too.

Civilian War Memorial: Parts of the civilian war memorial are badly weathered and some names are no longer legible. The Friends have financed a project to augment the memorial with new stones to preserve the information but leave the existing monument unaltered.

Cinderella Cemetery: At the end of the last century the Cemetery was declared full as no new available plots could be identified. This meant only reopening existing graves or already reserved plots. It is hoped one day it will be possible to find ways of making plots available.

Ash Plot: In a bid to keep the cemetery available to the community a special area has been made available for the interment of ashes with small memorials. Even small additional revenue income from sources such as these is important.

National Federation of Cemetery Friends: The problems we face are shared by many other groups and we are pleased to be members of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends.

Memorial Safety: Following accidents in other cemeteries a programme was undertaken to identify unstable memorials. As a result, a few have had to be laid flat to make them safer.

Annual Jester Festival: When volunteer availability permitted, we have promoted the Friends and the Cemetery by participating at the festival held every July nearby on Fortune Green.