



# THE FRIENDS OF BURNLEY CEMETERIES

*Newsletter 1, May 2013*

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## **Memorial to Thomas Healey, Father of Burnley Music**

Funded by proceeds of a concert on the cricket field in 1871 with more than a thousand vocal and instrumental performers. Unveiled on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1872 when the Mayor, Mr. J. H. Scott praised Thomas Healey's 'remarkable aptitude as a teacher'

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 An Invitation
- 2 About the Friends
- 2 The Cemeteries
- 3 History of Burnley Cemetery
- 3 Nature Conservation
- 4 Royal British Legion Riders
- 4 Air Cadets
- 4 120 Years ago
- 4 Useful Information

## **AN INVITATION**

TO MEET THE FRIENDS on  
SATURDAY THE 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE, 2013 11am to  
3pm at Burnley Cemetery

11.00: ROGER FROST- welcome and  
introductory talk in the Chapel

11.30: MOLLY HAINES to lead an  
historical walk from the entrance arch at the  
bottom of Cemetery lane

12.30: Light Lunch (tea/coffee/water,  
sandwiches, biscuits etc) in Chapel foyer

1.00: Wildlife walk (leader to be confirmed)  
from the Chapel

2.00: ROGER FROST to lead an historical  
walk from the entrance arch

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Demonstrations of installing headstones will  
take place during the day.

Exhibition Stands: Royal British Legion  
Riders and Fresh Fields.

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The event takes place during National  
Volunteering Week and the Probation  
Service, The Princes' Trust and the Royal  
British Legion Riders will be working to  
improve some of the 283 war graves in the  
Cemetery.

## ABOUT THE FRIENDS

The first Friends group was set up in 2008 and has now been revived with support from Burnley Civic Trust.

The aim of the group is to:

**HELP CONSERVE AND PROMOTE THE HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE BURNLEY CEMETERIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE AREA**

The first meeting took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the Cemetery Chapel and was attended by officers from Greenspaces and Amenities, some members of the original 'Friends' group and new members from the Civic Trust, the Royal British Legion Riders and Globe Motor Cycle Club, and representatives of the air cadets and police cadets, all of whom work to improve the war graves at the cemetery.

A 'Launch' event is planned to take place on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2013 (see page 1) to promote the group and raise awareness of the value of the cemeteries.

All the original members of the Friends group are being contacted and invited to become involved again. New members would be most welcome.

Following the Launch event regular meetings will be set up and a plan of action for future activities agreed with members of the group.

See page 4 for contact details.

## THE CEMETERIES

Burnley Council manage eight cemeteries, six of which are classed as 'closed'. They are:

Burnley Cemetery and Crematorium

St. John's Cemetery, Padiham

Closed Cemeteries:

- ❖ St. Leonard's Churchyard, Padiham
- ❖ Mereclough Burial Ground
- ❖ St. Peter's Churchyard
- ❖ Holy Trinity, Accrington Road
- ❖ All Saints and St. John the Baptist Churchyard, Padiham Road
- ❖ Methodist Chapel, Burnley Road, Cliviger

More information about the cemeteries will be provided in future newsletters.



**St. John's Cemetery, Padiham**

**EPITAPH** at Burnley Cemetery:

If tears could build a staircase  
And memories were a lane  
We would walk right up to heaven  
To bring you home again.

**THE HISTORY OF BURNLEY CEMETERY:** In the first half of the nineteenth century the population of Burnley grew very rapidly, causing many problems. One of these was that by the early 1850s most burial grounds in the town were full and from 1853 onwards the newspapers carried letters complaining of the smell coming from St. Peter's churchyard and of the dangers to health which this situation created. There was obviously a need for action and in 1854 the Third Burnley Improvement Act made provision for a cemetery to be paid for from the rates.

The site chosen was at Riley's farm, near Rosegrove, where 18 acres of land were bought. Thomas Worthington, a young Manchester architect, was appointed to carry out work on the site and design three chapels, a lodge and entrance gates. The cemetery opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1856 and the first burial, that of Mrs. Mary Nixon, took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of that month.

The cemetery was unusual in having three chapels as most had only two; one for Anglicans, in consecrated ground, and one for Dissenters, but in Burnley the Roman Catholics also had their own chapel. The cemetery was laid out in a tasteful manner, with serpentine paths, and was described as 'a sweet and secluded spot' - a fit place for the repose of the dead and very different from the overcrowded and unhealthy church burial grounds. The original entrance to the cemetery was at the bottom of Cemetery Lane but the original 18 acres of land proved insufficient for the needs of a growing town and more land was bought at intervals until, by the early 1920s, the site had increased to 59 acres and reached as far as Rossendale Road. In the newer part of the cemetery the paths are straight and angular as, according to George Houlden, who was cemetery Registrar for many years, they take up less room than the older curving paths.

In the 1920s a number of changes took place in the cemetery. New entrance gates were built on Rossendale Road and a new chapel, to be used by all denominations except the Catholics, was opened. The Cross of Sacrifice and War Memorial were erected facing the new entrance. The original entrance gate was moved further up Cemetery Lane, away from the Lodge, to accommodate a new road within the cemetery and the Dissenters chapel was demolished in 1924, when the site was immediately used for burials. The other chapels were demolished later, in the 1960s and 70s and the Baby Remembrance Garden now occupies the site of the Catholic chapel. In recent years part of the cemetery has been set aside as a Muslim burial plot for use by the Asian Community.

The memorials and headstones in Burnley cemetery are a reminder of people and events which are part of our history, and as such should be cared for and preserved for future generations to appreciate.

## NATURE CONSERVATION

As quiet places, whether urban or rural, cemeteries can provide a range of habitats that can support a diversity of wildlife.

Many trees in the lower part of Burnley Cemetery date from its creation including this Turner Oak (*Quercus x turneri*) - one of four - an uncommon semi evergreen oak which is a hybrid of the English Oak and the Holly Oak (raised in Essex by James Turner in 1783). We would like to work with nature conservation organisations and groups and others to carry out habitat surveys and improve bio-diversity at the cemeteries.





## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION RIDERS BRANCH

is one of the  
Legion's "National" Branches  
and membership is open to

everyone. We have members from all corners of the world, brought together by our enthusiasm for motorcycles and willingness to support the aims and charitable efforts of the Royal British Legion.

Our Membership covers all the Armed Forces and those who have not served but wish to support the Royal British Legion through the Riders Branch. We take part in all types of biking from the smallest to the largest rallies, major bike shows, on all types of motorcycles, not forgetting formal Legion organised events and fund raising.

We encourage you to play a pro-active role within the branch at local and National level. We try to attend as many events as possible throughout the year, we use these events to raise awareness and funds for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Both Burnley and District MCC and Globe MCC typify this philosophy by becoming part of this local initiative to help maintain the local war graves. **"Service Not Self"**

Not forgetting, we are Bikers and enjoy ourselves in all the best biking traditions.



### AIR CADETS:

This was taken 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012 when we first started looking after

the war graves with the police cadets. Since then, we have contacted the CWGC and adopted the 12 graves in this area. Going forward, we are going to maintain the area around them as part of a Duke of Edinburgh Project.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

Friends of Burnley Cemeteries:

[www.fbc.btck.co.uk](http://www.fbc.btck.co.uk)

Chair: Roger B. Frost M.B.E 01282 435836

Secretary: Susan Barker 01282 423016

E-mail: [burnleybarker@btinternet.com](mailto:burnleybarker@btinternet.com)

**Next Meeting:** 14 May 2013 at Cemetery Offices, 2.00pm

Bereavement Services: Cemetery Offices

01282 477148 & 477232,

[www.burnley.gov.uk](http://www.burnley.gov.uk), Email:

[bereavementservices@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:bereavementservices@burnley.gov.uk)

Cemetery and Crematorium Grounds

Opening hours: every day 9 am to 8 pm (or sunset whichever is earlier)

Family History Burial Records:

Cemetery Office holds Registers for Burnley Cemetery and Crematorium and for Padiham Cemetery. Burnley Central Library hold basic burial records on microfiche.

Please Telephone to arrange to view.

## 120 YEARS AGO

The Manchester Times, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 1893 reported:

### **The Fatal Fire at Burnley: Funeral of the Policeman**

The remains of P.C. Lockwood, who met with fatal injuries at a mill fire in Burnley on Easter Monday, were interred on Friday at Burnley Cemetery. Thousands of spectators lined the route taken, and there was an enormous crowd at the cemetery. The procession comprised nearly 200 members of the borough and county police forces and representatives of neighbouring fire brigades.