

Newsletter March 2012

Council Starts to Move on Flaybrick

At a meeting on 12th January, the Council made clear to us that they wished to start work on a Landscape Restoration Project (LRP). Although not turning their back on the chapels completely, they are now intending to bypass the chapels problem and concentrate on a major capital project for the landscape.

Our position remains clear in that we wish to prioritise the chapels, however we now have a situation where the Council is prepared to get seriously involved in Flaybrick and we cannot ignore this opportunity. We have now notified the Council that both our Committee and Trustees are happy to support the LRP. In early March the Council has appointed

Eileen Wilshaw as Project Manager for the LRP.



The landscape of Flaybrick

Wirral History Fair

Wirral's sixth Annual History & Heritage Fair took place on Saturday 3rd March in the beautiful surroundings of the former Birkenhead Town Hall. The fair was opened by Professor Stephen Harding, an expert on Viking Wirral and the author of several books on the subject. The Major, Councillor Moira McLaughlin and the Mayoress, her daughter Anna, also attended. This year we had 64 stalls including those of Local History and Family History Societies, Friends Groups and Commercial Organisations. There were also stalls representing Wirral's Art Gallery and Museums Service, Wirral Archives and the Conservation Section of Wirral Planning Department.

Our café was very busy as usual and Angus from Swan Movies put on a programme of local archive films for visitors to view. There was also an exhibition commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Hovercraft service from Rhyl to Wallasey.

The Woodside Hotel was open, with its sound commentary running. It was made by members of the Merseyside Model Railway Society, took 10 years to build and was finally finished in 2001. In addition to the 4 members manning our stand we had about 12 others manning other stands within the fair! It was a most enjoyable day.



John Quinn, Pat Dawson, Daphne Nock and John Moffat at the Wirral History Fair, Birkenhead Town Hall

Flaybrick Website

The Friends of Flaybrick website has been going from strength to strength over the past year. Thanks to a free online service called Google Analytics, we are able to see how many people have visited our site over a period of time and which pages have proved the most popular.

There were a total of 2,645 visits to the Flaybrick site in 2011, almost double the number of visitors compared to the previous year. 30% of these were repeat visits and it is encouraging to know that people are visiting our website again and again.

We can even see which geographical areas of the world our web visitors come from. As we would expect, the majority of our visitors come from the UK, however we have had over 200 visits from overseas visitors including the USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

The Great Trees section of the website has attracted over 800 'web hits' in the past year, which has really added to the number of overall visitors to the Flaybrick website.

www.flaybrick.com

Historic Postcard



The above postcard view was very kindly donated to us by Jim O'Neil recently. The postcard is dated 1st April 1907 and shows Tam O'Shanter cottage and the Cemetery Chapel.

Great Trees

The latest tree to be added to the Great Trees section of the website is the Copper Beech at Willaston. Although not the largest copper beech on the Wirral, it is certainly a very fine specimen. It crowns the village green and acts as a marker of the seasons for the community. At Christmas it is lit with coloured lights and in the spring its canopy is denoted by an underplanting of colourful crocuses.



The tree has been superbly photographed by Marianthi who sadly will no longer be able to continue working on the project. However, member David Casement has very kindly agreed to act as photographer for the project. It helps the success of the project if members log on and look at the site. All of which is helping to establish a future role for Flaybrick as a centre for the understanding and appreciation of trees.



Frederic Sanderson

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Frederic Sanderson, was the maker of Flaybrick Hill Cemetery. He was born in 1831 in Nottinghamshire, educated at Clapham College (London) and worked as an architect at Baysford, Notts. He married Harriet Jane Taylor in 1858 at Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland and she died in 1877. They had six children: Eleanor, George Frederick, Harriet, Arthur (who died in 1866), Lillian (died 1867) and an unnamed child (died 1870).

He moved to Birkenhead in 1864 and undertook the enlarging and planning of the cemetery for the Board of Commissioners. The supervision of the cemetery was under his sole direction, and it was said that it was the most beautiful cemetery in the country.



Photo of employees on cemetery steps. Frederick is the man with the top hat and beard top right.

In about 1878 he invented and placed before the Corporation the single internment vault system, without which the cemetery would have been closed well before 1908. This system was the means of saving much land and it proved so successful that other cemeteries used it. He was also the author of several booklets relating to the cemetery. He retired in

1904 after 40 years service and died in 1908. His son Fred (George) Sanderson was appointed Superintendent.



Photo of the office and Roman Lodge in 1875-1878

He is buried in Church of England 2 with his wife and young children. The grave faces the lodge that he lived in.

Unfortunately the grave stone has fallen forward. The Friends managed to unearth the stone and lift it but unfortunately most of the stone is missing.



If anyone has a photo of the grave stone please let the Friends know.

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Our thanks go to Chris Morris for researching this item.

Farewell Jean Pateman, M.B.E

It is with great sadness that I have to report to you the death of Jean Pateman at the age of 90. Jean effectively blazed the trail for the cemetery restoration movement in the UK.

Jean was born on 14th July 1921 at Bromborough and had a strong attachment to the Wirral for the rest of her life. She particularly enjoyed her time here in 2008 when she spoke at the European Cemeteries Conference.

In 1975 she founded the Friends of Highgate Cemetery and became its Secretary. In 1985, she became Chairman, only relinquishing the post in 2009. In 40 years she never missed a board meeting and worked at Highgate most days of the week. Possibly her

greatest achievement was in raising millions of pounds in funding which has put Highgate on a sound financial footing. Although her work helped to make Highgate one of the tourist attractions of London, she referred to herself as the dragon at the gate determined to protect Highgate from the inappropriate, the disrespectful and the frivolous.

She also was a key figure in the founding of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends. I am fortunate to have enjoyed her friendship and the hospitality of her house, as recently as 2011 when we attended the NCFE AGM together.

Above all else, her dedication remains an inspiration to me.

John Moffat, Secretary



Left to right: Jean Pateman, John Moffat, Louisa Yzaguire (President of ASCE),
Gwenola Groud (Patrimonial Director Paris Cemeteries)