

Dates for your diary

Little work is done in the cemetery grounds during January and February but having planted more than 1000 crocus bulbs last autumn we hope to see them flower early in the year. We know that badgers and squirrels have been rooting through the grass so are not sure how many bulbs have survived the winter. If there is a good show we will advertise a viewing day during February or early March.

Volunteers will be working in the grounds and the cemetery and chapel will be open to visitors from approximately 10.00am to 4.00pm (depending on the weather) on the following dates;

Saturday and Sunday 15th & 16th March

“ “ 12th & 13th April

“ “ 10th & 11th May

Additional dates throughout the summer will be notified through What's On in the Wells Journal and posted on the Cemetery notice boards.

Table-Top Sale—with honey!

The sale will be held on Saturday February 22nd in St Thomas's Church Hall from 9.30am to 12.00noon. Entry is free and there will be a Tombola, home made cakes and preserves, Brica-a-Brac and this year, for the first time, honey from the Cemetery bees will be on sale!

Because the first year's harvest was limited we have filled a number of small pots of honey so that everyone can sample the result of the bees' work. The 42g pots will be on sale on Saturday 22nd February—but numbers are limited so come early to avoid disappointment!



Horrington Fair—May 26th 2014

The Friends will also be having a stall at the Horrington Fair on Bank Holiday Monday May 25th when more honey products may be available. Look out for us there...

Annual tea party



On Sunday June 15th from 2pm to 4pm we are holding our annual event when tea and cakes will be served to visitors in the Chapel. All Friends and members of the public are very welcome to join us. If the sun shines we hope it will be an



opportunity to stroll down to the hives to see bee-keeping in action with our Master Beekeeper – but more details about that exciting possibility later!

Annual General Meeting

Please accept this as formal notification of the Friends of Mendip Hospital Cemetery AGM to be held on Friday March 14th 2014 at 7.30pm in St Thomas Church Hall. All subscribing members and members of the public are warmly invited. Light refreshments will be available after the business meeting.

Friends on-line

Contacting you by e-mail really does help to save money on paper and postage which in turn enables us to spend more on maintaining the grounds. If this newsletter has come through your letter box and you are on-line, please send an e-mail to ljogborne@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Membership by standing order.

Earlier this year we suggested you might consider paying your subscription by setting up a standing order with your bank. A standing order can be easily stopped for any reason but it will help us to plan our expenditure from year to year. If you feel able to set up a standing order the information you need to give your bank is as follows: Our Charity banks with:

The Charities Aid Foundation Bank Ltd (CAFB)

25 Kingshill Avenue, Kingshill

West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

The Bank's sort code is 40 – 52 - 40

Our account no. is 00009332

Thank you!



The Friends of Mendip Hospital Cemetery

Newsletter

looking forward to

Spring 2014

Contact us:

www.mendiphospitalcemetery.org.uk

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Registered Charity no. 1085981

The **co-operative membership** community fund

Work on 'Plan B' supported through the Co-operative Membership Community Fund will continue during 2014. The project has enabled us to:

- distribute five Newsletters since January 2013
- produce the photographic display of the history of the Mendip Hospital and its Cemetery now in the Chapel
- provide notice boards and improve access via Cemetery Lane
- improve our grass cutting schedule so that visitors can gain access to the sculptures, gravestones and other features
- add new bee-friendly shrubs in the flower beds
- plant 1000 crocus bulbs
- fill small pots with the bees' honey for sale.



But now in the hive the queen bee and her daughters have kicked out all the male drones and have hunkered down for the winter. Although this winter has so far been mild (but very wet) the next cold snap will send the bees shimmering their wings around the queen to keep the hive temperature around 17C. On a fine, sunny day, even if the outside temperature is as low as 6C, some bees will fly on 'airing' or 'cleansing' flights to rid themselves of a build up of waste products.

And during February bees will need to become more active to gather early pollen from catkins, crocus, and ivy in order to start replenishing depleted food stores. This is a critical time for the colony and its survival may depend on the beekeeper topping up hive stores with sugars.

With spring around the corner work on the site will soon begin again. If you can spare an hour or two once a month to help with weeding, grass cutting, planting or chapel cleaning please get in touch. You will be made very welcome!

One of the Cemetery honeybees sipping water from the wildlife pond during summer 2013.

Photo by Carl Haigh



Focus on sculptures

We are very fortunate to number among our Friends local chain-saw artist, Peter Bolton. Peter has given freely of his time and considerable expertise over the past few years to produce the seven tree sculptures you see in the cemetery today. Each one has been carved from a tree grown in the grounds which was either felled due to disease or blown down in the winds of January 2010. Three of the standing sculptures still have roots in the ground and are weathering well but those lying on the ground are showing some signs of natural decay.



"It is easy to tell the toiler
How best he can carry his pack
But no one can rate a burden's weight
Until it has been on his back"
Ella Wheeler Wilcox, American author
and poet 1850 - 1919

This year, following consultation with Peter, we will be adding a quotation or few words of description beside each of his sculptures. And we would like to know what you think of them. (Above is the first of our 'focus on sculptures' (labelled 1 on the Cemetery site plan available in the Chapel.))

News!

Hot off the press is exciting news of a potential addition to the sculptures in the cemetery. You will remember the gale on October 27th 2013 that felled the 128 year old 'Tree of Heaven' in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace (left). Peter is currently engaged in sculpting a hand for the gardens from part of the tree and he has reserved a large branch from which he plans to carve an angel to bring to the cemetery. So in the future we can hope to welcome an additional sculpture that will be 'an angel from the Tree of Heaven'! A delightful prospect!



The Friends help families seeking lost relatives

For the past twelve years The Friends have been providing a free service to family history researchers seeking the graves of relatives who may have been staff or patients in the old Mendip Hospital.

It began in March 2002 with a letter from Poole from a man whose father had died in the Hospital in 1941 as a result of serving in the First World War. We were able to establish the area of the cemetery in which he was buried and helped the family plant a crab apple tree and a memorial plaque near the site.

Originally each of the 2009 graves was marked with an individual iron cross but sadly these were taken up in the 1980s without recording their positions before we took over the site. Now we cannot identify the exact position of graves but we try to be as close as possible.



Establishing our website resulted in many more enquiries and to date we have responded to more than 50 of these - most of them from local towns and villages around Somerset but one from distant Alloa in Scotland and others from New Zealand, the USA and New Brunswick in Canada.

Lives remembered

James Henry Jetsum was a widower of 42 when he entered the Asylum in 1879 as an 'Ordinary Attendant'. His working record was 'without fault'. In 1891 he married Jane Allen who had been in charge of the female infirmary for six years and described as 'an excellent nurse'. But from 1893 with failing health James worked as the Hall Porter and on January 29th 1897 he died and was buried in the Cemetery.

Six months later his 48 year old widow left Somerset and became a mental nurse in Mission House, Kington, Herefordshire - privately owned and minimally staffed. Apart from the Master, his wife and a 19 year old cook, Jane Jetsum was the only nurse for 56 mentally ill inmates. Among them were four young boys and one five year old girl. After the well-ordered Somerset Asylum Jane must have found it extremely challenging to work in such appalling conditions. She died aged 75 in 1926 in her home town of Preston Lancashire after a lifetime of caring for the mentally ill.