

**FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK CEMETERY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2014
1930 TO 2100**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Richard Bell, FoHPC Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and then summarised the format of the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES.

Sheila North. Andria Johns, Helen Slade, Ruth Simpson, Doreen Gravil, Harry Santiuste.

3. "WHAT LIES BENEATH – OPENING OF THE COOKE FAMILY VAULT"

Presented by Symeon Waller.

Symeon Waller - who is a local historian and owns the website doncasterhistory.co.uk - told the story of the opening of the Cooke family vault at Arksey Church. Salient points:-

Symeon was approached by the daughter of the 12th baronet of Wheatley Hall - Sir David William Perceval Cooke - regarding the location of the long lost vault of the Cooke family which could possibly become the last resting place for her father – the 12th baronet.

At first, a connection with Hyde Park Cemetery was suspected, as there is a very grand monument to a family called Cooke. However, research found that this was a different family, who hailed from Fishlake and were farmers and brewers.

Thanks to a book republished on Google called 'IN MEMORIAM – SIR W. BRYAN COOKE' which was first published in 1852, Symeon established that the vault was, in fact, located in the north transept of Arksey Church, as the Cooke family were Lords of the Manor of both Wheatley and Arksey.

Permission was obtained and the vault was opened for the first time since 1851. when the 8th baronet - Sir William Bryan Cooke - was interred. This was no easy task, but eventually stone steps were found leading to a vault 12 feet wide and 6 feet deep with 7 lead-lined coffins intact but signs of other burials, with bones and skeletons scattered. Further research found that at least 10 people were interred there and it is assumed that 3 coffins had disintegrated over the years, as this area is prone to flooding.

HOW MUCH ROOM IS LEFT? This was the main question to be answered. Symeon's conscience said the vault was now full, with at least 10 people, which is why it was sealed in 1851. However, without expressing an opinion, the facts were reported back to the baronet's daughter, to make a decision as to whether her father should be laid to rest there.

Symeon has written a short book about this subject called: AN EXTRAORDINARY DAY – THE OPENING OF THE COOKE FAMILY VAULT.

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2013.

Hard copies were available at the start of the meeting and have been available on the website for the last 12 months. Questions and comments were invited but none received.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

Read by Richard Bell and is attached at the end of these notes. Questions invited but none asked.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Financial Statements circulated at the beginning of the meeting and are attached hereto. Signed and bound copy examined by our accountants available.

Margaret Bark took over the Treasurer's role from the previous incumbent who had left Doncaster and the job has been like making up a jigsaw. The accounts issued last year were incorrect but now corrected as circulated. Weldricks should have been invoiced for £300.00 in 2013 but the invoice was never sent, no money received, yet this was shown as received in 2013 accounts. This has now been corrected.

Also found that the public liability insurance had not been purchased in 2013. This has now been purchased.

One off Rotary club donation in 2013 not repeated in 2014 – hence the income in 2013 being far in excess of 2014.

No questions asked.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2015:-

6. Election of Executive Committee for 2014/2015:

By show of hands:-

- Chair – Richard Bell.
- Vice Chair – Margaret Herbert.
- Secretary - Robert Wise.
- Treasurer – Margaret Bark.
- Others – Sheila North, Andria Johns, Helen Slade.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR FOR 2014/2015.

Resolution: ***“That Ashworth Bailey Limited, Chartered Accountants, be appointed to examine the 2014/15 accounts”.***

CARRIED – NO VOTES AGAINST.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTIONS.

One question asked: Question: “Are there any guided walks arranged?”

Answer: “One each month is expected to take place from May to September 2015. See website for details once they have been planned. The Working Mornings are held on the second Saturday of the month. Heritage Circuit walk available anytime, walking in an anti-clockwise direction from the Carr Lane entrance, opposite Adrian Welch.” See accompanying Heritage Circuit leaflet.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2115.

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery
Chairman's Report for 2013/14 and up to the current date

I am pleased to report to this AGM on activities undertaken and progress made by the Friends since the 2013 AGM.

At the AGM held on 18 November 2013, the following Officers and Committee Members were elected:

• Chair – Richard Bell	• Committee – Bill Brinkley (Resigned)
• Vice-Chair – Margaret Herbert	• Committee – Andria Johns
• Treasurer – Margaret Bark	• Committee – Sheila North
• Secretary – Robert Wise	• Committee – Helen Slade
	• Committee – Vacancy
	• Committee – Vacancy

In March 2014 Bill Brinkley resigned from the committee due to poor health, leaving three vacancies that continued up to the present date.

In spite of the 30% vacancy gap, all members of the committee have made significant contributions towards furthering the aims of the Friends throughout the past year. I wish to place on record my gratitude for everything that they have done.

For the first time since the creation of our association, a new Treasurer has had to take over the running of our financial affairs. The transition was made all the more difficult by our previous Treasurer, Reverend Alan Murray, moving away from the area and having very little contact with us after his move. Nevertheless, Margaret Bark has succeeded in gaining a thorough understanding of the Friends' finances and has prepared a detailed report on the 2013/14 financial year, which she will present shortly. I am confident that the increased rigour that Margaret has brought to the Treasurer's role will stand us in good stead for the future.

Practical work undertaken at the cemetery since the 2013 AGM includes the following:

- **Monthly Working Mornings** have continued, with litter picking and tree and shrub trimming once again being key activities. 51 shifts have been worked during these monthly sessions since the 2013 AGM. This is an

average of 4 people per occasion, down on the 5 average of the previous year and 6 of the year before. We need to find ways of reversing this downward trend. As the most tangible way of helping to look after the cemetery, I would encourage everyone to make the effort to take part whenever they can. It really is rewarding;

- The turnstile, gates and railings at the **Green Dyke Lane entrance** have been fully restored, thanks to a very generous donation of £2,700 by a local couple who wish to remain anonymous;
- Two groups of young people, working on the **National Citizen Service** scheme during the summer holidays, built an impressive insect hotel and cut back all the low-hanging tree branches;
- The **Heritage Circuit** marker post No.11, which was stolen late in 2013, was replaced and there have been no further thefts;
- The Friends' **notice case** near the New Street entrance had its Perspex pane broken in October. Adrian Welch Glass & Glazing replaced it for us at cost price, using polycarbonate, so two out of three notice cases have now been made vandal-resistant;
- Although not carried out by the Friends, I must mention also the removal of the 5 **Black Poplar trees** from the New Street boundary, undertaken by Doncaster Council in March 2014. Not only were the trees beyond their safe lifespan and a safety hazard, but their roots had also caused significant damaged to the boundary wall. We are investigating the possibility of restoring this boundary wall;
- **Other improvements** carried out by others include:
 - Repair of a **war grave headstone** at the Friends' instigation, following a Doncaster Free Press article showing Corporal Tommy Booth's stone lying flat on the grass;
 - **Cleaning the Cross of Sacrifice** by the Victoria Cross Trust, with the blessing of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The above practical work is in addition to the ongoing maintenance work carried out by the Doncaster Council grounds maintenance staff. They continue to keep the site tidy by regular grass-cutting, emptying the bins, weed-killing and similar tasks.

The Friends have continued to produce information and raise the profile of Hyde Park Cemetery through a range of activities. In retrospect, this is where the majority of our efforts have been directed in the past year.

- **Five guided heritage walks** have been hosted in 2014, with average attendances well up on previous years. They included two World War 1 walks, which were especially popular in this year of commemoration;

- Following a trial **Bat Walk** last year, we hosted a second one this year, with the help of the South Yorkshire Bat Group. Common Pipistrelle and Noctule bat species were detected and our visitors had a thoroughly enjoyable time;
- After the success of our previous **Family Halloween Walks**, using local actors to play characters who are buried in the cemetery, we held another such walk in 2014. Although the attendance of 120 was a little down on last year, it was extremely well received. Those involved all agreed that this was our best so far;
- The **Friend's website** has now had over 13,000 visitors, with numbers since April 2014 being 20% up on the equivalent period last year. It continues to reach an audience around the world. Volunteer Nick Slade is currently working on a new design for the site, which we plan to launch during 2015;
- **Quarterly newsletters** continue to be sent out to all members and other interested parties. Weldricks Pharmacy once again agreed to sponsor the hard-copy newsletters and we are very grateful for their support. With the Summer 2014 edition we issued a request, to everyone who receives their copy by Royal Mail, to confirm that they still wish to receive it that way in future. We suspect that many of the hard copies that we send out go unread. Anyone who fails to confirm that they still wish to receive a hard copy newsletter after being sent another reminder will be removed from the distribution list;
- **The Friends exhibited** at the Doncaster CVS Awards last December, the Doncaster & District Heritage Association Local History Fair in May 2014 and at the Family History Society Fair in October. We also exhibited at the launch of the Doncaster 1914-18 heritage project, at Doncaster Minster, last week. All four generated a good deal of interest, but so far they have not noticeably increased our pool of active volunteers;
- On the subject of the **Doncaster CVS Awards**, we are nominated for the 2014 Community Group of the Year Award, to be voted for by readers of Doncaster Free Press. Please vote for us when the poll opens;
- In April we took delivery of 5000 copies of a full-colour **A5-size flyer** to promote Hyde Park Cemetery and the Friends. The majority were delivered to homes near to the cemetery, while others have gone to the Tourist Information Centre or been handed out at our events. They have undoubtedly helped us to inform people, but they, too, have so far not brought forward new volunteers;
- In 2014 we became founder members of the **Doncaster GreenSpace Network**, a collection of community groups within the Borough with the common aim of improving their own little part of Doncaster. The network is aimed at spreading good ideas and lending support when required. It will also liaise with the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces;

- We continue to use **Twitter and Facebook** to provide regular updates on our activities;
- In August 2014 we hosted a visit by **BBC Radio Sheffield's** outside broadcast programme, '*Clueless*'. Listeners had to phone in to solve a clue that led the roving reporter to Hyde Park Cemetery;
- Also in August, we were invited to take part in a site meeting between Rosie Winterton MP and the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**. This not only enabled us to maintain our profile with our local MP, but also to find out much more about the Commission, which is responsible for maintaining 108 war graves in Hyde Park Cemetery;
- In September, several members of the committee attended the first local performance of "**Only Water Between**", a very moving play based on the love letters between a WW1 soldier, Jack Adam, and his wife, Gertrude. The couple lived in Stirling Street and Gertrude is buried in the cemetery. Subsequently, the playwright, Peter Spafford, was given a guided tour of the cemetery;
- We have provided one **illustrated talk** about the cemetery in the past year.

Other significant matters to be noted are as follows:

- The Friends' **Grave Finder Service**, providing information about burials and graves in return for a fee, is going from strength to strength. We answered 11 enquiries during 2012/13, 16 enquiries during 2013/14, and so far in 2014/15 the number is already 23, bringing extra income for the association. This year's enquiries have all come from various parts of England;
- The **Cemetery Lodge** was sold by Doncaster Council earlier this year. It has been bought by Adrian Welch, who has already begun work on its restoration. We have helped by providing historical information about the building. A restored Lodge and entrance arch will give a much better first impression to anyone arriving via the Carr Lane entrance and is likely to lead to improved security at the site;
- Within the past week we have benefitted from a significant **financial donation**. Woodfield Tenants & Residents Association has disbanded and they chose to split their residual funds between two groups, one of which is the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery. We are extremely grateful for their generosity. The donation will appear in the 2014/15 accounts, to be presented at next year's AGM.

We had hoped to make a start with restoring some of the fallen and damaged memorials during 2014 but, sadly, this has not happened. The limitations

imposed by having a committee which is 30% under-strength have restricted our project management capabilities. It should be noted that Rosie Winterton MP has had two meetings with senior personnel from Heritage Lottery Fund recently and HLF have expressed interest in funding work at Hyde Park Cemetery. After each meeting Ms Winterton has called me, in person, to urge the Friends to make a funding application. With that level of support and encouragement we must look for ways of making such a project happen. Please offer your services to us if you would like to help bring a restoration project to fruition.

The Friends have once again benefitted from, and are grateful for, the support and encouragement given by, amongst others:

- Amanda Carr and her team at Doncaster Council Bereavement Services;
- Councillor Glyn Jones, Deputy Mayor of Doncaster;
- Central Area Safer Neighbourhood Team;
- Adrian Welch Glass & Glazing;
- The Doncaster & District Heritage Association;
- The National Federation of Cemetery Friends;
- Mark Rowing and the team at Club 39;
- And the many volunteers who have contributed to activities throughout the year.

Finally, if re-elected, I shall look forward to continuing to lead the Friends and making yet more improvements at Hyde Park Cemetery.

Richard Bell

18 November 2014

FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK CEMETERY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 5TH APRIL 2014

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery
Income and Expenditure Account
year ended 5th April 2014

Unrestricted Funds

		2014	2013
Income			
Donations			
Flowers	25		
General	<u>68</u>	93	400
Events			
DMBC - Halloween	177		
Talk to Chat Room	<u>30</u>	207	285
Walks		123	90
Gravefinder		<u>160</u>	<u>87</u>
		583	862
Expenditure			
Meeting expenses			
Speaker	30		
Room hire	<u>52</u>	82	33
Memberships			
DDHA	20		
NFCF	<u>20</u>	40	30
Insurance		197	166
General office expenses		173	-
Newsletter		300	-
Web hosting		208	-
Course fees		-	35
Repairs		132	-
Plants		46	-
Flowers		46	-
Halloween event		177	80
Donation		30	-
Accountancy		<u>60</u>	<u>-</u>
		<u>1,491</u>	<u>344</u>
Income over Expenditure		<u>(908)</u>	<u>518</u>

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery
Income and Expenditure Account
year ended 5th April 2014

Restricted Funds	2014	2013
Income		
Donations		
Gates - Green Dyke Lane	2,700	-
Expenditure		
Gates - Green Dyke Lane	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
 Income over Expenditure	 <u>2,700</u>	 <u>-</u>

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

Balance Sheet

31st March 2014

	2014	2013
Current assets		
Cash at bank	3,540	2,255
Current liabilities		
Creditors and accruals	<u>60</u>	<u>567</u>
Net current assets	<u>3,480</u>	<u>1,688</u>
Represented by		
Accumulated Restricted Funds	2,700	1,144
Weldricks	-	300
Accumulated Unrestricted Funds	<u>780</u>	<u>244</u>
	<u>3,480</u>	<u>1,688</u>