



Friends of Spital Cemetery (FoSC)  
e-Newsletter  
October 2017  
Number 11

Autumn is upon us and already there is amazing autumn colour to some of the trees in the cemetery. We get to thinking about Remembrance Sunday and for us, this year is of special importance. Kate's lovely piece about her family reminds us that it is not just the 43 who are commemorated with Commonwealth War Graves in the cemetery but there were many others who left their families to serve in the two conflicts. We will salute them all.

#### Looking back and forward

We did not sit back and rest after the excitement on Cemetery Day in August, but also had a busy September. The Cemetery Task Team concentrated on sweeping paths in the old part of the cemetery around the chapels. We launched an appeal to raise money for the medals to return to Chesterfield belonging to a member of an important family from the area, see below. We welcomed new faces in the cemetery who came for events over the Heritage Open Days. This was featured on Radio Sheffield on Sunday morning and there was mention of it in Reflections Magazine. Our first well dressing received a lot of compliments and donations. Thanks to all for the hard work that has gone into these events and to the visitors who supported us.



Plans are already in place for our AGM. Please consider becoming actively involved with the group: on the committee, with the research and recording group, with the cemetery task team or helping with walks or stalls. We are actively looking for new committee members in particular someone who would be willing to help with the role of secretary as Margaret, who has been our secretary for some time now is taking over the role of Treasurer. Please email Margaret to find out what this would entail on [thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com) or email me on [lizcook80@icloud.com](mailto:lizcook80@icloud.com)

We have an exciting year ahead. We would love you to join us.



#### Memories of my family who were caught up in two wars and are finally at rest in Spital Cemetery by Kate Parsons

I remember as a child my mother walking my sister and me up through Spital Cemetery, regularly, to visit my father's parents buried there. We carried seasonal flowers and enjoyed rambling through the garden cemetery seeing the many rhododendrons, flowers, trees and old headstones. Now a lot of this is no longer there.

My grandmother had died just prior to my birth in 1948 but my grandfather I remember. He only had one leg having lost one in the 1914-18 World War. He finished his working life as doorman at the old Hippodrome Theatre on Corporation Street, demolished in the late 1950s. He died losing his remaining leg as a result of diabetes in 1954.

His son, my father, was born in 1905 and started work in the coal mines. He enlisted as a stoker in the engine rooms in the Royal Navy in 1923. His first ship was H.M.S. Repulse, built in 1916. This ship was later sunk in the harbour as the Japanese overran Singapore in 1942 during the Second World War 1939-45. Prior to the war years my father did many tours in the South China seas making friends and very good memories.



He and my mum married in 1939 and having survived the war years, my father serving on minesweepers and destroyers on convoy duty and having ships sunk whilst on duty, he never spoke of these experiences being happy just being together with his family.

When he was demobbed he joined local firm Robinsons working for Goyt Side as warehouseman and second jobbing still tending fires (boilers) in Lloyds Bank basement. He died in 1969 and my mum died in 1973, their ashes being buried in our cemetery as was their wish. They have since had the ashes of my oldest brother join them. And in time my sister and myself will complete the set.

Spital Cemetery has always has a particular atmosphere and is important to many local people, not only as a final resting place but as a pleasant area for a walk, solitude and a quiet time, open, airy and attractive, and long may it remain so.

## Appeal to bring the Miles medals home to Chesterfield



Friends of Spital Cemetery have launched a fundraising appeal to bring back to Chesterfield war medals of one of the towns leading military families.

The medals of Henry Miles are currently for sale in Canada and we are asking local people to donate to try and get the medals back and on display in the Town's museum.

It's not very often that an auction abroad and the history of Chesterfield and the event of World War One coincide but given the importance of these medals, of this family and our pride in tending the War Graves in Spital Cemetery we have decided to launch this fundraising campaign to bring them home to Chesterfield.

The project to bring the medals home is being co-ordinated by local resident Ed Fordham. "This is a very exciting opportunity," said Ed, "the medals are a complete set and very significant as it includes the Distinguished Conduct Medal as well as photographs and original paperwork on the bravery citation. Lieutenant Henry Miles was awarded the DCM in World War One. His uncle Charles Miles, who also won the DCM in World War One, is buried in Spital Cemetery."

The Miles family were a big family in Chesterfield and lived on Hady Hill. Fanny and George Miles had 9 children: George, Tom, Henry, Frank, Jack, Allen, Charles, Susan and Agnes. Tom worked as a printer at the Derbyshire Times and Frank was a reporter there too. Henry had a son also

called Henry and it is the junior who won these medals. Henry Miles lived in Quarry Bank Road, Spital.

It is thought that it will cost best part of £2,000 to purchase the medals, bring them back to Chesterfield and get them on display and that is the fundraising target that has been set. People can donate by sending a cheque payable to Friends of Spital Cemetery (marked MILES MEDALS) to Liz Cook 10 Alexandra Road East, Chesterfield, S41 0HF. Ability is being set up in the next day or so to donate via the website [www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk](http://www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk)

The campaign to bring the medals home is backed and supported by George Miles's great grandson Andy Miles who lives and works in Chesterfield.

To give residents of Chesterfield time to raise the money, the sellers have withdrawn the medals from sale, and are holding them subject to the appeal. A sale price has not yet been agreed, but it is hoped that an agreement can be reached subject to the fundraising.

The withdrawn medals can be seen here: <https://www.emedals.com/distinguished-conduct-medal-group-t...> (Please note we have not yet agreed a purchase price and that is dependent on how much we raise!)

## Commemorating our War Dead

Monday 6th November 10.30-11.30

We will be hosting a public event in order to recognise, tidy and prepare the war graves in Chesterfield's Spital Cemetery. We are delighted to confirm that the Mayor Cllr Maureen Davenport will be present at 10.30am and we would like to invite anyone else who wishes to be part of this brief, solemn and formal ceremony.

We are especially keen to involved relatives of those soldiers and combatants who are buried in Spital Cemetery - please do get in touch. [ed.fordham@gmail.com](mailto:ed.fordham@gmail.com)

## Dates for your diary

Monday 2nd October Friends of Spital Cemetery AGM followed by a talk The Stonemasons of Spital Cemetery by Lauren Butler. See website and Facebook page for details.

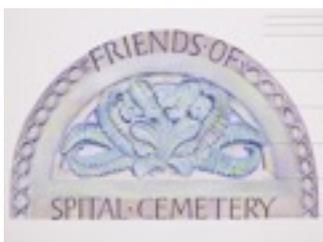
Saturday 14th October Cemetery Task Team Meeting 10am - 12.30pm

We sweep paths and remove sticks, are building insect homes and monitoring the bird boxes and remove the occasional buddleja and holly that try to take over individual graves, the sort of jobs the busy council guys don't really have the time for. We welcome new members. All tools are supplied but please wear stout shoes and gardening gloves. Meet at the chapels.



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**About us.** Friends of Spital Cemetery celebrate Spital Cemetery which is the oldest public cemetery in Derbyshire outside Derby. It is a fine example of a Victorian Garden Cemetery. We work to ensure that Spital Cemetery remains for public benefit and enjoyment by encouraging biodiversity, recording and fostering its heritage of monuments and its use as an educational and community resource. For more details about our activities and how to get involved please contact the Secretary [thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com)  
[www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk](http://www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk)