



## Monthly news from the cemetery Friends of Spital Cemetery (FoSC) April 2018

### March Roundup

In spite of the very uncertain weather on 14th March we welcomed about 40 people at the grave of Nurse Fletcher who died while looking after injured service men who had returned to this country during WW1. For us she represented the many women whose contribution to the war effort is to be celebrated. We were welcomed by Cllr Tricia Gilby, leader of Chesterfield Borough Council. Wreaths were laid by the British Legion, UNISON and The Royal Hospital. The Last Post and Reveille were sounded and poems and the Exhortation and Response were read by Cllr Gilby, Cllr Flood and members of the British Legion. Members of the Friends of Spital Cemetery welcomed people for tea and cake after at St Leonard's Centre and Margaret Hersee told us about Veronica's short life but remarkable war work.



We were serving tea and cake again on 24th after a small group of Friends walked among the real daffodils and primroses, finally looking their best, and considered the meaning of the stone flowers and other symbolism found in the cemetery. Feedback from one of the participants: 'There's so many questions that spring to mind following the tour - I certainly haven't put so much thought into gravestones before!!' Thanks Helen!

### Looking ahead:

#### Cleaning the War Graves

In Spital Cemetery we have 43 graves that are on the list of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. These were from both WW1 (35) and WW2 (8), in the main, men, who were injured in active service but died back in this country and are buried here. Over the next month the CWGC are coming to the cemetery to clean them.

Last year Friends of Spital Cemetery marked these graves with wooden poppy crosses and red ribbon on the headstones or on a stick beside them. We will be temporarily removing these decorations while the cleaning work goes on.



You will still find poppy crosses and ribbon on some of the graves but these are not CWGC graves and are for the most part on family graves where reference is made of a husband, son or nephew who was 'killed in action' or 'lost at sea' as a direct result of military action and in the main will be buried abroad and may be remembered and/or buried in one of the war cemeteries in France or Belgium. But you may see the memorial to Clem Collis who died and is buried in Sierra Leone.

If you would like to know more about our war graves, or indeed are a descendent of one of these guys, please get in touch. Follow us on Facebook or look on our website to see other events we will be holding this year. After our AGM on 2nd October 2018 Cllr Brunt will give an overview of WW1 and talk about the Memorials and War Graves in France and Belgium.



## Membership

We welcomed 15 new members in March. Please keep in touch and support our work by downloading a membership form from our website or email us and we will send you one through the post. [thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com)  
[www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk](http://www.friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk)

## Miles Medals Unveiled

Following a successful campaign by us to raise the funds to purchase the war medals belonging to Henry Miles they are now back in Chesterfield. We are negotiating for them to go on display in Chesterfield Museum in May, prior to their major exhibition 'The Trench Experience' from 13th October - 12th January. Further details to follow.

## Anzac Day

On 25th April it's Anzac Day! If you hail from NZ or Australia you will know this day well but, I'm ashamed to say, I had to google it! We are hoping that a bugler who is coming to Chesterfield will be announcing daybreak from Spital Cemetery. Please follow us on Facebook and on our website/twitter for further notice about this.



## Flowers for pollinators in the cemetery - PLEASE HELP

We're very excited that Grow Wild, an initiative from Kew, have sent us packets of wildflower seed to use in the cemetery. However we need a bit of help, or rather the wild flower seeds do. As the cemetery is mainly grass there is just too much competition. We need to give the seeds a head-start and sow them in trays or pots and plant them later in the year when they are stronger plants. This is where you come in. If you would be willing to take a packet and

**GIVE IT A GO**, please get in touch.  
email [lizcook80@icloud.com](mailto:lizcook80@icloud.com)



## Walking for Health

To further our efforts to encourage people to come and enjoy the trees, views and green space in the cemetery, we are pleased to announce that Margaret who organises our monthly general cemetery tours is now officially a Walking for Health leader; she has the certificate and the Hi Vis jacket to prove it! Well done!

## Liz's recommendation - Celebrating our Elm Tree

Elm trees were a common site in my youth but Dutch Elm Disease wiped out many of the elms that covered our country. We do however have a magnificent survivor in the cemetery. Follow the path uphill parallel with Hady Hill, between the bottom and top entrances, and half way up, on the left you will see it, a magnificent Wych Elm. Photo of it flowering, the flowers come before the leaves, on April 20th last year. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/native-trees/wych-elm/>



## April Dates for your diary

14th April Task team Meet at the chapels at 10am

15h April General Cemetery Tour Meet at the bottom entrance at 1pm

25th April At daybreak, a bugle call to announce Anzac Day. More details to follow.