



Friends of Darfield Churchyard

Newsletter: Summer-Autumn 2012

Work on the repair and cleaning of the grave of Ebenezer Elliott

The restoration of the grave of Ebenezer Elliott, 'Corn Law Rhymer', has now been completed.

The cleaning and restoration of the actual stonework was carried out by Roberts of Barnsley. The railings were made and

fitted by Steve's Steels. None of the work would have been possible without your generous donations for which we are extremely grateful. The monument is now once more a fitting tribute to such an eminent man.

For details of the life of Ebenezer Elliott please see the article in our newsletter of Summer 2008 (available on the church website -darfieldallsaintschurch.org.uk.)



Wildlife in the Churchyard

One of the attractions of a walk in the churchyard is the opportunity to do a spot of bird-watching!

On a dry day you may see blackbirds, woodpeckers, long-tailed tits, tree creepers, magpies and jays to name but a few of the many species to be found there but when it rains the birds can be harder to find.

However, during the many weeks of rain which we had earlier in the summer, there was an example of the devotion which birds can show to their developing young as the mother bird sits on the eggs. The 'workers' in the churchyard noticed a female pheasant sitting on a nest which it had made (uncharacteristically) out in the short grass. There she sat, day in day out, in all the deluge, protecting her eggs from the elements. Her camouflaged plumage made her difficult to see and we hoped that eventually there would be a new brood of young pheasants running around.

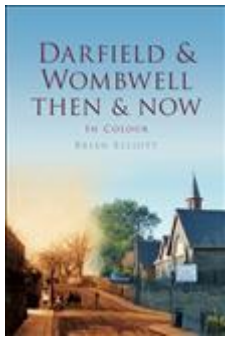
Sadly this was not the case as an early morning visit found no trace of her or the eggs and we assume that a break in the weather had led to someone, or some animal, discovering the nest and removing its contents.

This was very regrettable and we can only think that the pheasant may have been a first-time mother as they usually nest in long grass, not out in the open, thus making them hard to find.



Thankfully many birds do find the churchyard offers a good environment to raise their young successfully.

The work of our local police wildlife officer is part of the effort to protect the creatures who live in the churchyard so take note of his visit to talk about his work elsewhere in this newsletter!



Events -past and future.

One of our keenest supporters is the well-known author of many local history books, Brian Elliott. He chose to launch his latest book 'Darfield and Wombwell, Then and Now ' at a special FODCY evening in June.

His popularity was evident in the capacity audience who came along to hear a most interesting and informative talk and everyone enjoyed sharing his insight into the aspects of Darfield which have now passed into history. We were able to be among the first to delve into this collection of photographs which provide comparisons with scenes from today and from yesteryear and are accompanied with detailed text. The book is widely available locally and on the internet at the price of £12.99 (or sometimes less if on special offer) - and is well worth every penny.

The evening raised money towards our continuing work in the churchyard and the new projects in the pipeline! We do appreciate the support of our speakers and those who come to our events.

The next one is on **Friday 14th September at 7pm in Darfield Church Hall**. The talk is entitled '**Poacher turned gamekeeper and other stories**'. Paul Jameson, our local community police officer, is coming to tell us about his work as wildlife officer. Paul enjoys keeping an eye on our churchyard and its living residents and he is keen to assist us in our desire to protect the wildlife there.

Do come along to hear what Paul has to say and learn how we can all be proactive in this important responsibility.

In a completely different vein - **another date for your diary is Friday 19th October, (same time and same place) when Janet Stainer will be here to share her knowledge of 'Knickers - a brief history'** which promises to be an interesting subject!



We are involved in other local events too-

Saturday 8th September (12am -4pm) and Sunday 9th September (2-4 pm) is the Heritage weekend when we will be in the church to help visitors.

Saturday 29th September is Darfield History fair (10am -4pm). Brian Elliott will be there to sign books, and there will be local history groups in attendance plus our beautiful church will be open to visitors. We hope to have some of the old church registers available for those interested.

Do put these dates in your diary, we would love to see you there!



Bits and Bobs

As reported in our last newsletter, the two dangerous trees down the churchyard were removed and two replacement trees - a weeping ash and a copper beech have now been planted. Almost immediately one of them was the subject of vandalism and was bent over double, but amazingly it has come back to full health.

Once again we will be selling Christmas Cards this year in aid of FODCY funds. They will hopefully be on sale in Darfield Library and Post Office and Church. If all else fails please obtain them from John Kendall at 8 Meadow Drive, Darfield, S73 9HL. We would like to thank Marie and Robert Taylor of 'The Showhouse' for sponsoring the printing of the cards again this year.





Spotlight onThree Barnsley Pals

By Michael and Glenice Smith

In previous issues of the newsletter we have recorded grave inscriptions in our churchyard which refer to soldiers, sailors or airmen who served in the world wars.

One particular grave in the bottom section of the churchyard bears inscriptions dedicated to the memory of three members of one family. The grave inscription reads as follows:

In loving memory of Pte Abel Marsh, 13th Y & L regiment, who dies from wounds received in action in France, October 19th 1918 aged 22 years.

'In the midst of life we are in death'. Also Pte Arthur Marsh, 13th Y & L regiment, brother of the above who fell in action in France March 23rd 1918 aged 20 years. 'Gone but not forgotten'. Also Pte John William Marrow 13th Y & L regiment. The beloved husband of Harriet Marrow who fell in action in France May 22nd 1918 aged 34 years. 'In life respected, in death lamented'.



Harriet Marsh married John Marrow in Barnsley in 1902 and at the outbreak of war they were living with their young family at Bedford Yard in the Hope Street area of Low valley. Living with them at this address were Harriet's younger brothers, Abel and Arthur Marsh.



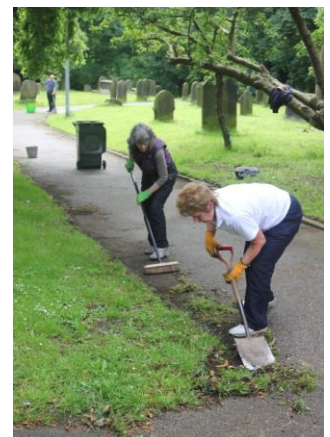
John, Abel and Arthur all joined the 13th battalion Yorks and Lancs in 1914 and embarked for France via Egypt in 1915. John and Arthur were both killed in action in 1918. Abel, although discharged in 1917, had been badly wounded by shrapnel and his family clearly believed his wounds were the cause of his death in October 1918.

The mounting casualty list of World War One devastated many communities, none more so than the Barnsley area. In our own churchyard there are many reminders in the form of memorial inscriptions of the sorrow felt by so many families in our parish. This one grave, below the bottom path, tells the story of a young Low Valley woman who lost, within a few months of one another, a husband and two brothers, all from the same household.

Just three of the many thousands who lost their lives during the 1914-18 war.

Do you know of someone in the churchyard who you think would make a good 'spotlight' subject? If you would like to write your own article it would be very welcome. Alternatively you can just give us the information and any relevant photographs and we will create the article for you. (Out there somewhere is the lady who is a descendant of John Bushby, the Registrar for Darfield. Please get in touch with us as we have lost your name and contact details and were considering him for a future 'spotlight'.)

Don't forget ... workers are in the churchyard doing clearing and maintenance on Monday and Thursday afternoons every week (John, Mike, Trevor and Glenice) plus the last Saturday morning in the month (Trevor, Chris, Pat, Kay and others). We really could do with more helpers. Now that the summer is coming to an end, we need to prepare for the winter. The work can range from heavy digging and cutting back to the lightest weeding, pruning and sweeping. Whatever you choose to do, you will be most welcome. Please help us to keep the churchyard in the beautiful condition which we have achieved over the last few years.



Recording the headstones - We reported in the last issue that Kay was on a mission to record the headstones in the churchyard. As the space for the article was very small, we could not go into full details and we must apologize here for omitting to mention the people who have helped us to be in the current good position with our records.



Firstly we would like to record our thanks to Gordon Warrington, who has spent many hours (if not days) in photographing the headstones in the churchyard and making these photographs freely available to all. He has also amalgamated the information which we had previously gathered into two (very large) plans of the graves in the churchyard. These are based on (a) a plan of headstones drawn up by the church architect in 1973 of the top part of the churchyard before alterations were made and (b) a plan drawn up of all burials from 1891 onwards at the bottom of the churchyard.

We must also thank Doncaster Family History Society, who recorded the memorial inscriptions in the 1980's and drew up a plan of the headstones within the churchyard. These are available for purchase from Doncaster FHS on CD.

Thanks also to the anonymous person who recorded the inscriptions from all the headstones which were moved (and some never replaced) in the 1973 clearing of the top part of churchyard ('operation eyesore'). This work was undertaken so that the local council would agree to keep the grass cut in that part of the churchyard.



It will probably surprise many of you that no plan exists to cover all burials within Darfield churchyard. However it must be remembered that burials have been taking place there for many centuries whereas headstones only started to become popular in the late 1600s. We do have details of the position of all burials which have taken place in the bottom part of the churchyard (from just above the bottom path to the very bottom wall). These are all burials which took place after 1891. However for earlier periods, and also for some burials

for later periods which took place in the upper part of the churchyard, we only have details of the place of burial if a headstone was erected. In other words - we know that a burial took place but we do not know exactly where.

Our current work is to find and record all the existing gravestones and check these against the information already held. We have found quite a number of extra gravestones to those recorded by Doncaster FHS. This is not surprising as they were working, in the 1980's, in a very overgrown area. Now that so much of the churchyard has been cleared, a large number of gravestones have made their reappearance. We are hoping to produce something which will eventually go onto the church website. However the work of checking the headstones has come to a temporary halt during the summer months as the vegetation has taken over once again.



Our newsletters (including back copies) are now also available to view on the FODCY pages on Darfield All Saints Church Web Site - www.darfieldallsaintschurch.org.uk

This newsletter was written by Glenice Smith, Sheila McMillan and Kay Valentine.
Photographs: K Valentine, G Smith and C Walton