



Friends of Darfield Churchyard

Newsletter - Summer 2013

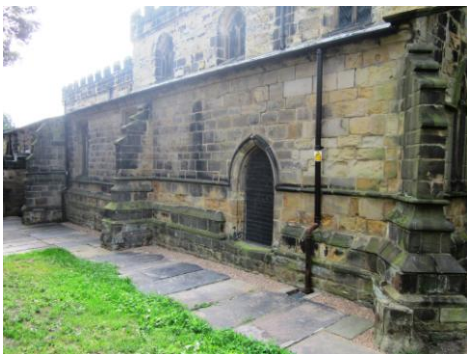
FODCY and friends have been busy over the last few months.....

The North Side of the Church

Work has now been completed on the north side of the church. If you have not been round there recently it is worth taking a look. The area used to be very overgrown, damp, dark and something of a rubbish tip.



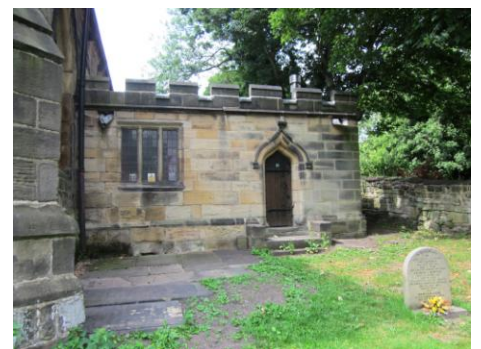
In the early 1970's the Department of Environment brought out a scheme entitled 'Operation Eyesore' and grants were made available in order to improve old churchyards. Darfield All Saints applied to Darfield Urban District Council and took advantage of one of these grants for the top part of the churchyard to the south, east and west of the church. The Council confirmed that, when the work was done, they would maintain the area in the future. Plans were drawn



up by the Church Architect. The object of the scheme was to put this section of the churchyard into a tidy state and to re-turf it so that the Council could more easily maintain it. This meant that some of the older stones were moved, the plan being that they would be used to make a paved forecourt by the west door to the church. Unfortunately this last part of the plan never came to fruition and a pile of over 28 headstones were left around the north side of the church.

This north side of the church has also had problems with damp for many years. It was therefore decided to take the opportunity to clear out and improve the drainage systems there whilst also removing the old tangle of undergrowth and rubbish, levelling off and laying down the stacked headstones so that inscriptions could be read. This involved a lot of work for a lot of people and we must give our thanks to all those who helped, especially

- ❖ the Community Payback scheme, who did all the heavy work of clearing the site and levelling it off
- ❖ Roberts Memorials (Nick Roberts and Paul 'Wally' Walton) who finished off the levelling and laid the headstones in position - and when you see the size of those headstones you will realise that this was no easy task.



We intend to record the inscriptions from the newly uncovered headstones and put them on the church website. However until we do so, here is just a basic list of the surnames on those graves -

Smith	Baram	Hargate	Day	Hicks	Drury
Birks	Scales	Latham	Robinson	Garratt	Kenyon
Firth	Cope	Wood	Pollard	Fox	Hirst
Raywood	Nicholson	Bower	Green	Walker	Wilkinson
Johnson	Day	Hattersley	Trickett	Elam	Story
Sanderson	Hick	Belk	Haxworth	Peckett	
Kirkley	Prince	Pepper	Adams	Slack	

Events

We were very disappointed when Mr. Frank Morley, our speaker booked in June, had to cancel due to ill health. He has been a very popular speaker in the past and we send him our best wishes for better days ahead.



On a pleasant evening in June, members enjoyed a walk round the churchyard with **Steve Rutherford from the RSPB reserve at Old Moor** who thinks our churchyard is wonderful! He opened our eyes to the variety of things living and growing in our own patch. The following week Steve was a speaker at a conference



of The British Naturalists Society and took an oak apple to use in his talk, promising to mention where he had obtained it! **He is coming to be the speaker at our next evening event hopefully in September so watch out for details!**

On Wednesday 13th November, Janet Stain is coming to talk about 'Ration Book Fashion.' She is an entertaining and informative speaker, not to be missed. In these days of vintage boutiques and shabby chic fashion we may all be able to pick up some tips!

As ever we rely on the support of our friends at these events. Please come along, enjoy yourself and enable us to keep up the good work.



As this newsletter is being written a leaflet is being printed which shows the location of all the headstones in the churchyard which commemorate someone who died in the First or Second World War. It also gives a short background note for each. Included are the 5 CWGC graves (the usual white headstones) but also a further 15 ordinary headstones or surrounds which mention the fallen. It is hoped to have these leaflets available in a box at the top of the churchyard, by the noticeboard - but we shall have to see how that goes. In any case they will be available from church or from members of FODCY.

At the AGM of FODCY, held on 26 June 2013, the following members were re-elected -

John Kendall - Chairman

Sheila McMillan - Secretary

Pat Myers - Treasurer

A summary was given of the work achieved over the last year and also of the forthcoming projects. The next project will be the restoration of the Canon Sorby headstone for which we have a quote of £708. The treasurer reported that, at the end of the financial year, there was a total of £1792 in funds - but some of this was due to be immediately paid out to Roberts Memorials for their work on the north side of church. This amount also included donations which had been given specifically for the Canon Sorby headstone restoration.



Spotlight on Two Mothers

An interesting headstone, just to the east of the vestry, near the boundary wall, marks the grave of two mothers who came to this parish during the war, to a safer location than London



Harriet Mary Anne was born in Plymouth to Augustus and Lydia Roper. She was one of six children. By 1861 the family was living in London and Harriet's father was a Civil Engineer in the city. In July 1877 she married William Wyatt.

During the spring of 1881 William and Harriet Wyatt were bringing up their family in Marylebone, London. William was then 39 and was working as a clerk to a provision merchant in the city. Harriet stayed at home to look after their young family - William, Nellie and John. By 1891 they had four more children born in Hampstead, London, where William was now a Foreign Correspondent. One of the daughters was called Gertrude Agnes and it was she who, on 9th September 1914, married Harold Drown in St Cuthbert's Church at Hampstead. When they married Harold was 29 years old and working in the church, Gertrude was three years older.

William Wyatt died in December 1927, aged 75, leaving his widow Harriet to live alone in Middlesex. In his will he left £2,865-17s-4d to his daughter Gertrude - a good sum of money in those days. Gertrude is the first of the two mums.

The other mum was born Fanny Amelia Smith, born and raised in Croydon, Surrey. In the latter part of 1884 she married Frank Drown. Frank had been brought up by his parents, William and Elizabeth, and in 1861 they were living at Milton Abbott. William was an inn keeper and blacksmith and Elizabeth was looking after the family. When Frank had married Fanny they lived in London where he was a grocer and sub-postmaster. They had two children, Harold and Norman. By 1911 Harold was a clergyman at an established church in Hampstead London. It was here in Hampstead that he married Gertrude Agnes Wyatt, as shown above.

Frank Drown died in May 1928 in Surrey. In his will he left £2,067-12s-5d to his widow Fanny Amelia and son, the Rev Harold Drown.

So, by the time of the second world war, when Harold Drown was Rector of Darfield and living in Darfield Rectory with his wife, Gertrude, both his mother and mother-in-law were widows in London. It would appear that they came to the comparative safety of Darfield, and it was here that they died and are buried. Harriet Wyatt died January 29th 1944, aged 88 years. Fanny Drown died three years later March 7th 1947 aged 93 years.

Harold Drown was Rector of Darfield All Saints' Church from 1935 to 1950. Older residents of the village may well remember being presented with their Sunday School prizes by him.



It was with the arrival of Harold Drown in 1935 that the old Rectory was replaced with the Rectory which is still in existence today



One of the bonuses which FODCY members enjoy is making contact with people whose ancestors are commemorated in the churchyard. In recent months we have had two such contacts which were particularly significant-just as we are working towards **the restoration of Canon Sorby's grave.**



First, we had a query from a descendent of the brother of Lydia Sorby (the canon's wife) and so we arranged to show David Walker and his family the church and churchyard. He was especially interested in Charles Clifton Malin Sorby, killed in May 1915 at the second battle of Ypres. You may know how Charles was shot as he rescued his sergeant under heavy shell fire when serving with the Monmouthshires and died the following day. His original grave cross is on the south wall inside the church. Copies of the letter from the sergeant and from the chaplain who was with Charles when he died can be read in Darfield museum .

As often happens we benefit from the knowledge of our visitors and David told us about Charles' education and how he came to enlist in a Welsh regiment.

Shortly afterwards we got in touch with a grandson of the Canon, Mr Nicholas Sorby, who last came to Darfield for the centenary service of the Ascension Day Case. He too was most supportive of what we are planning and sent a generous donation.

It is really encouraging to have the support of the family and we will be keeping them informed of our progress.

Now we press on with the fund raising!

As has been mentioned above and in previous newsletters, we are about to start the restoration of Canon Sorby's grave. The cross on this gravestone is becoming insecure and unsafe and the lettering is becoming illegible. As Canon Sorby was such an important figure in the life and history of Darfield Church, it has been decided that this would be a worthy project. We have already received a number of donations towards this project but are happy to receive more.



Christmas Cards.... Yes I know that this is the Summer newsletter, but just in case you are already thinking ahead to Christmas, please remember that we will be selling Christmas cards again for FODCY funds. We hope to sell them in all the usual places so please keep an eye open for them in the coming months.

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, and photographs were taken, by Glenice Smith, Sheila McMillan and Kay Valentine. Photographs of the rectory are from Church Archives. Photograph of C Sorby by kind permission of D Walker