

Friends of Darfield Churchyard

Newsletter - Summer 2008

Hello and welcome to the fourth newsletter from the Friends of Darfield Churchyard.

Our group has now been running for just over two years. Here are our latest news and thoughts .

The Bird Boxes

Back in the November issue of Darfield Parish Church Magazine, we asked for sponsors to provide bird boxes for the churchyard. There was a good response and the boxes were constructed by the Year 5 class at All Saints School with the guidance of local RSPB officer, John Clayton, from the reserve at Old Moor. Recently these boxes have been put in place and we look forward to seeing them used by the birds. Thank you to all concerned in this successful project.



Book This Date ---

We are having a special meeting in October when Martyn Johnson (Darfield born and bred) is to be our guest speaker. He has been a frequent contributor to Radio Sheffield's History programme and is a keen metal detector user. His talk, "Ramblings of a Local Metal Detector" is sure to be both informative and entertaining. We would love to welcome you to this meeting. Please come along to the Church Hall at 7.30pm on Friday 10 October 2008. Not to be missed.

Does anybody know...? ? ? ?anything about a burial in the churchyard in a glass coffin? As I was in the churchyard the other day someone asked me about this. They said that they had been told, as a child (and that is quite a number of years ago!) that a young woman had died abroad, and been shipped back to Darfield and was buried in a glass coffin. They thought that it would have been around the early 1900's. I had never heard the tale. Have any of you?

Our Next Project

We are hoping to find funds to help us to tarmac the middle path that leads from the church porch down to the newly surfaced path at the bottom of the churchyard. Our secretary is currently looking at what grants are available for this.



Spotlight on Ebenezer Elliott

He was known as the Corn Law Rhymer, and in his day was known throughout the country and even abroad. Born in Masbrough, Rotherham, in March 1781, he worked in a foundry there from the age of 16, eventually taking over the running of it. However he became bankrupt and, in 1819, moved to Sheffield and



set up as an iron merchant there. Ebenezer blamed the Corn Laws for his bankruptcy. He constantly raged and campaigned against them and voiced his rage in the Corn Law Rhymes and various leaflets. The Corn Laws were introduced in 1815 and prevented the import of wheat unless the price of British grain rose to 80s a quarter. They protected the British farmers and landowners from cheap imports following the end of the Napoleonic War. However they also pushed the price of bread so high that the urban working class had to spend most of their income on bread and grain just to survive. This had a knock-on effect as they had no money to spend on anything else and so the manufacturers suffered and they in turn laid off workers. A vicious circle. In 1841 he left Sheffield and moved to Hargate Hill in Great Houghton to lead a quieter life. He died 1st December 1849, shortly after writing his most famous poem, *The People's Anthem* - *When wilt thou save the people Oh God of Mercy! When? Not kings and lords, but nations! Not thrones and crowns, but men!* He is buried in our churchyard with his wife, *Fanny Gartside*. His grave is easy to find as it is the only one with any railings left around it. On the next grave are commemorated 8 of his 13 children. There is a bronze statue of him in Sheffield's Weston Park, which was originally erected in 1854 in Market Place, Sheffield but moved to Weston Park in 1874. Strangely, our most famous resident never really wanted to be buried in Darfield at all. It seems he came here because it was cheap! An extract from his will reads - "Burials in Rotherham Churchyard being no longer permitted, I suggest that my remains shall be interred in my own land...or if this is objected to, in Darfield Churchyard, at the least possible expense. There is a parish hearse at Darfield to be had by parishioners for a few shillings."



Darfield Parish Church Flower Festival

The flower displays were all truly magnificent. This was held over the weekend of 20 to 23 June 2008 in Darfield church. Friends of Darfield Churchyard sponsored an arrangement in the Ascension window. Here is a photograph of it.

Bird Sightings April to July 2008 by John McMillan

This report covers the area of Darfield churchyard and the Rectory grounds -

- Grey Heron - several sightings flying
- Mistle Thrush - seen frequently
- Sparrowhawk - seen regularly
- Blackcap - summer visitor
- Kestrel - seen regularly
- Common Whitethroat
- Common Pheasant
- Chiffchaff - summer visitor
- Black Headed Gull - seen frequently
- Willow Warbler - summer visitor
- Wood Pigeon - seen frequently
- Long Tailed Tit - seen frequently
- Collared Dove - seen frequently
- Blue Tit - seen frequently
- Tawny Owl - found dead
- Great Tit - seen frequently
- Swift - seen frequently flying
- Starling - seen frequently
- Green Woodpecker - heard and seen
- Magpie - seen frequently
- Great Spotted Woodpecker - heard and seen
- Jackdaw - seen frequently
- Swallow - seen flying
- Rook - seen frequently
- Dunnock - seen regularly
- Carrion Crow - seen frequently
- Wren - seen regularly
- House Sparrow - seen frequently
- Robin - seen regularly
- Chaffinch - seen frequently
- Blackbird - seen regularly
- Greenfinch - seen frequently

Song Thrush - seen regularly

Goldfinch - seen frequently

Our next meetings are Wednesday 1 October 2008 and Wednesday 3 December 2008 in the church tower room. Please come along and let us know what you would like for the churchyard. **AND DON'T FORGET** the talk by Martyn Johnson on Friday 10 October 2008 in the church hall at 7.30pm.