



Friends of Darfield Churchyard

Newsletter: Autumn 2011

The Houghton Main Cage Disaster Memorial Restoration Project - Completed



Our project started in 2008. At a meeting of FODCY group, when we were discussing possible future projects, Glenice Smith proposed the restoration of this memorial. She had already tried to obtain a grant from one source



without success and it soon became apparent that we were unable to obtain a grant from anywhere to help us with the restoration. Our enthusiasm wavered a little but Glenice was adamant and asked that the subject be mentioned in the newsletter. This was done in Spring 2009 and immediately Martyn Johnson stepped forward with some ideas for raising money and it was not long before he managed to arrange for Catherine Bailey (author of 'Black Diamonds') to come to Darfield as our guest speaker. That evening set our money-raising off to a magnificent start. We can never thank Martyn or Catherine enough.

There followed a number of speakers - Ian McMillan, Stephen Smith, Brian Elliott, Frank Morley, as well as our own Martyn Johnson. All the evenings were well supported and greatly enjoyed by all who attended. And, amazingly, all the speakers offered their services for free. We would like to record here our heartfelt thanks to them all. But none of this would have been a success without all of you who came to these events and supported us with your presence, your money and your encouragement. Thank you so much.

So at last the money was raised and Roberts of Barnsley were asked to undertake the work. This they did - and they even maintained the price at their original estimate even though we were unable to start the work for well over a year.

The memorial was rededicated at a very moving service on the morning



of Sunday 26 June 2011 which was led by Rev David Hildred. The weather stayed fair for the event. We were privileged to have Houghton Main Male Voice Choir performing two items at the service and their singing brought a tear to a few eyes. Several of the speakers, who had so freely given of their time and expertise, were also present and Brian Elliott retold the story of the actual disaster during the service. The specially designed service leaflet showed the memorial and listed the ten men.





It was also very fitting that descendants of the two Hardcastles killed in the disaster were able to lay the wreath at the memorial. The beautiful wreath (with 10 white roses to represent the 10 miners) was provided free of charge by a Darfield florist.

The turf for the grave was provided free of charge, and delivered, by

Yew Tree Garden Centre of Darfield. This turf had been the subject of much discussion as the grave is under a large tree and the ground is very dry - would the turf survive? We are pleased to report that it did, and it looked beautiful on the day.



As you can see from reading the above, a great number of people have been involved in this project and it has been inspiring and even humbling to see how freely so many people have given of their time, their talent and their money to enable the project to reach fruition. The memorial is once more a fitting tribute to the lives of the ten miners - as well as all the other men who gave their lives and their health in the local mines over the years.

Our Next Project - Ebenezer Elliott Grave



Ebenezer Elliott featured in the Summer 2008 newsletter. His was the only gravestone in the churchyard to retain its railings. However these were rusting away towards the bottom and then, following a safety inspection by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Bereavement Services staff, it was decided, for safety reasons, to remove the spikes at the top. This action created quite a stir amongst the local community. We therefore decided to 'upgrade' the Ebenezer Elliott grave to become our next fund raising project.

We have now received estimates for the work of cleaning the stonework on the grave and replacing the railings. We need to raise about £2,500 but have already made a start on this. Darfield Amenities Society gave us £500 to start off the fund-raising and we are very grateful for this. At the end of September Christine Johnson gave a very interesting talk on bee-keeping and brought along honey to sell (I've just had some on brown toast - gorgeous!). This raised more money towards the project. And in between we have received various donations from members of the public who, after complaining about the state of the grave, felt that they should 'put their money where their mouth was'. If you would like to help us with this project please send any donations to Mr John Kendall, 8 Meadow Drive, Darfield, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S73 9HL (cheques made payable to Friends of Darfield Churchyard.)



Christmas Cards are on sale at 75p each - all proceeds for FODCY funds. We have two designs this year. Orders to John Kendall as above.



We still need more helpers to carry out the actual physical work of maintaining the churchyard. Weather permitting, we have working groups in there every Monday and Thursday afternoon and have now also started a Saturday morning session on the last Saturday of each month. Light work is available. Please join us.



Remembrance Day – 11th November. (This year it will be 11.11.11)

Each year we keep the two minute silence. Each year, on the nearest Sunday, we hold a service at church and process up to the cenotaph near the library. But who exactly are we remembering? Darfield churchyard holds 5 war graves and a great many other graves which mention people killed in the First and Second World Wars. Here are details of just a few -

† Seaman Frank A Purple , killed by enemy action March 11 th 1941, aged 23 years
† Gds'n Harold Horbury , Coldstream Guards, died of wounds in Egypt 1941 aged 31 years
† L.A.C. Edward A Sizer aged 23 years, killed in India, February 21 st 1945.
† P ^{te} Abel Marsh , 13 th Y & L Regt who died from wounds received in action in France Oct 19 th 1918, aged 22 years.
† P ^{te} Arthur Marsh , 13 th Y & L Regt, brother of the above, who fell in action in France March 23 rd 1918, aged 20 years.
† P ^{te} John William Marrow , 13 th Y & L Regt who fell in action in France May 22 nd 1918, aged 34 years.
† 72711 Private J Wigley , Machine Gun Corps. 29 th September 1917, aged 31
† P ^{te} Ernest Needham , 13 th Y & L Regt, killed on the Somme, July 2 nd 1916, aged 20 years.
† Frank Shaw of Gt Houghton, Sergt 10 th L & Y Regt, fell at Arras July 27 th 1917, aged 24.
† 13/1281 Private L Hardcastle , York and Lancaster Regt. 27 th August 1919, aged 22.
† H Venables , Stoker 1 st CL. R.R. ss 113403. HMS Queen Elizabeth. 1 st July 1918, age 25
† George Hukin Woodyatt killed in action nr the Dardanelles May 6 th 1915, aged 23 years.
† Sergt Rowland Patterson 2 nd Batt Y & L who was killed in France March 21 st 1918 aged 22
† 59716 Private P Short . Royal Army Medical Corps. 28 th June 1919, age 39.
† William Henry Watson killed in action Sept 26 th 1918 aged 23 years, interred in the cemetery Le Grande, Beaumart west of Steenwerk
† 2 nd Lieut Charles Malin Clifton Sorby , 3 rd Monmouthshire Regt, killed in action Ypres, having just rescued his wounded sergeant under heavy shell fire, 8 th May 1915, aged 20.
† Eric Francis Howard Taylor , Second Lieut 23 rd Royal Fusiliers, killed in action July 27 th 1916
† Albert Greenow , killed in action 3 October 1918.
† Pte Walter Jobling killed in action and buried at Dickiebusch, May 8 th 1918, aged 22

My Great Uncle Walter

Walter Jobling was born 17 June 1895, the youngest of the 10 children of William and Elizabeth Jobling of Darfield. He is shown here with his parents and older sister, Nora, at Cambridge House (which still stands today, close by the Post Office). After leaving school, he worked in the local mines and, by the age of 20 was employed in the wagon-weigh office at Houghton Main Colliery. He was a member of Darfield All Saints Bible Class and was also interested in sports and wrote regular sports reports for the local newspaper. He appears to have been a happy young man, secure in his family and loved by many. But the year was 1915. A war had started and, despite popular belief that it would be over very quickly, it was becoming more and more serious. Pressure was on all the young men to 'do their duty' and join up to fight the enemy. Walter, along with his friends, took up that call and joined up with the Yorks and Lancs Regiment in Wombwell on 10 December 1915. He spent his first months in training, and for some time was stationed in Ireland.



It is not clear when he actually first went to the front line, but by early 1918 he had been home on leave and was on his way back to France. He sent a postcard to his parents telling them to 'keep



smiling'. He was by now in the Scottish Rifles. During the war so many battalions were decimated that the remaining men were moved from battalion to battalion to make up numbers. In April 1918 the 5/6 battalion Scottish Rifles were behind the front lines near Ypres, resting. The worst of the fighting was around this area at this time. The same piece of land had been won and lost so many times that it was now just one huge desolate space of mud. Men and horses drowned in this mud even where they managed to survive the bullet and blast. On 8 May 1918 the battalion was once more on the front line, at a small town called Dikkeboos (Dickiebusch in English translation), lined up for attack near the lake there. Unknown to them, their every step was watched by German troops ensconced at the top of the only piece of high ground in the vicinity. However the battle that day was won by the British, with most Germans handing over their arms and being taken prisoner. There were few fatalities - but one of them was Walter Jobling, shot by a sniper.

In June 1918 a letter arrived at his parents' home from a lady called Josephine O'Madden in Ireland. She appears to have something of a 'soft spot' for Walter. She wrote - "A chap out of Walter's company told me he was killed instantaneous by a German sniper, but I can't believe it yet. He was beloved by every one, young and old alike. He was always so cheery, so apt to look on the bright side of life, yet under all that there was a seriousness, a love for home.... God's will

must be done. I hope aye I know he is happy in heaven if it is true he's gone".



Walter has no known grave - like thousands more who were killed in that area. The Menin Gate memorial was already filled with 54,389 names, so Walter's name is on the huge wall at the Tyne Cot Memorial, along with over 34,000 others. But he is also remembered in his own village on this grave stone.

I have stood by the lake at Dickiebusch and I have stood by the Tyne Cot Memorial. Both places are so peaceful now - and pretty. It is hard to see them as they must have appeared in 1918. But I wept at both places for the loss of such a lovely man - just one amongst hundreds of thousands, no better or worse than the others, but he was my great uncle.

On 11 November remember all who have died to bring peace to their country.

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 with additional photographs by Chris Walton

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SIT BACK AND LET US DO THE WORK!

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