

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2024



Message From The Chair

I hope that you are all making the most of a very changeable summer.

Open Day — 6 May 2024

Our Spring Open Day has become an annual event on or near to the May Day holiday. This year we took the opportunity to plant a tree in memory of Councillor Vickie Priestley who was influential in founding our Friends Group in the 2019. Unfortunately, Vickie passed away late last year, and it was decided to plant a Hornbeam in her memory. Several members of the Priestley family attended on what was a glorious day, and fellow local councillor Penny Baker gave a personal and moving address (see page 2).

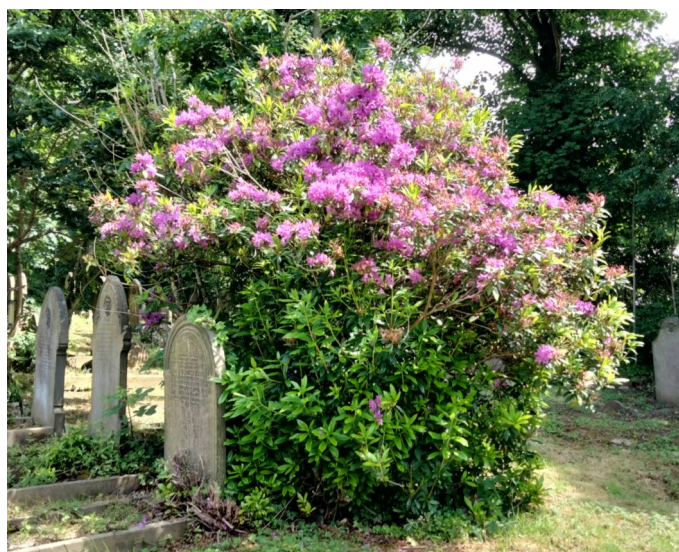
The tree stands prominently in the Long Lane section and is marked with a plaque on a marble plinth. We ask that any visitor gives the tree a drink: a receptacle has been left nearby, with running water to be found at the Long Lane gate.

We also had our first Book Sale on the day, which was very successful. Thanks go to everyone who donated books and 'manned' the stall.

Loxley Primary School — 15 May 2024

Around 30 pupils from our local primary school took part in a grave clearing session on 15 May. The Year 5 youngsters (9-10 years of age) were accompanied by their form teacher, Dan Eaton, and five adults — see page 4. The visit was a great success, with the pupils clearing an area near the Chapel and also studying the wild-life they discovered (mostly slugs and snails!). In the future they plan to investigate the histories of people buried there.

Thanks are due to locally based toolmakers Burgon & Ball, who have donated hand tools for the children to use on future visits.



Funding Group

The Funding Group continues to keep abreast of opportunities for funding to support our work. A meeting in July followed an event hosted by Joined Up Heritage Sheffield, at which the National Heritage Lottery Fund explained its grant process. Our meeting also discussed a workshop held by the South Yorkshire Funding Advisory Bureau (SYFAB).

Interment Records Team

Following the completion of the Burial Records for the Long Lane section, we have decided to photograph grave plots with monuments and transcribe any legible inscriptions. These records will be added to the spreadsheets so members will have access to them.

Volunteer Sessions

Last but by no means least is an update on the work of the fantastic team of volunteers who have been giving up their time through the Spring and Summer. The results are wonderful — see more on page 4.

Mike Ford
Chairman

'PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE'

Tribute to Vickie Priestley



Councillor Vickie Priestley, who sadly died last year, was a valued supporter of our work to regenerate Loxley Cemetery. She represented Stannington Ward on the City Council from 2000 until her death and was Lord Mayor of Sheffield in 2013-14, with her husband Lloyd as Consort.

In recognition of her support, a tree was planted in the course of our Open Day in May attended by family and friends. Her colleague Councillor Penny Baker and the Chair of Friends of Loxley Cemetery, Mike Ford, warmly praised her help and commitment.

The photograph shows Lloyd planting the tree.

May Day books sale ...

As well as tours highlighting Commonwealth War Graves and symbolism on some of the gravestones, our Open Day in May had added interest this year with the inclusion of a second-hand bookstall. We intend to repeat this at other events. Spread the word!



Two Loxley Ministers at rest

Lying in adjacent graves in the Long Lane section of the cemetery are two of the seven former Ministers of the Loxley Chapel in the cemetery.

The Reverend Andrew McKittrick was the Minister from 1920 to 1926. He had what the Sheffield Independent's obituary in November 1935 described as a 'striking career' in which he was minister at Baptist, Presbyterian, non-sectarian and Congregational churches in places as far apart as Sheffield, Worcester and Devon before retiring to Hope in Derbyshire. His obituary also noted that 'he was a Celt with a strong individuality . . . a very effective preacher with a keen appeal to both old and young'.

His gravestone (Row E grave 34) is in poor condition. His 'beloved wife Clare', who died about 30 years after him, is included in the inscription.

By contrast, the headstone for Henry Stephenson Shepherd, who succeeded Rev McKittrick in 1926 and served until 1939, is in fine condition, and the inscription is clearly legible. His wife, Anne Margaret, who died some 15 years before him, is remembered in the inscription.



Before his time at Loxley, according to his obituary in the Huddersfield Daily Examiner, the Rev. Shepherd had been Congregational Minister at Clayton West before going to Rotherham and then Loxley, where he retired. He died ten years after retiring, age 84.

The sad tale of Joseph Ashton

Joseph Ashton was only 16 years old when in 1874 he drowned in the Derwent at Chatsworth. He is buried in Loxley Cemetery, in the section in front of the Chapel (Grave CSS 6-12). His memorial inscription reads:

In affectionate remembrance of JOSEPH the beloved son of ABRAHAM & ANN ASHTON of Woodland View, w was drowned at Chatsworth July 20th 1874 age 16yrs & 9mos. Short was my race, long is my rest, God took me when he thought it best. My time was come, I in a moment fell, & had not time to bid my friends farewell.

bathe in the river as the day was warm. Six or seven of them went into Chatsworth Park, and near Queen Mary's Bower they went into the river. Joseph was heard to say that he would go as far as he could before it got too deep, as he was unable to swim. However, he must have misjudged the depth and sank, and never rose again. None of the other boys could swim either.



One of the boys ran to get help but it was too late. The river was dragged' and Joseph's body recovered by P.C. Spick who stated that 'it was quite dead'.

A sad tale indeed.

Do you know this family?

Sam Bowskill, one of our Friends, has found this photograph, which was taken in Dungworth around 1900. She would like to know who these people are. If anyone can help, please contact our secretary.



The grave also contains Joseph's parents, Abraham and Ann, Joseph's sister Annie and her infant daughter, and the infant son of Joseph's older sister Sarah. The headstone is now clearly visible, having been cleared of ivy and other vegetation.

Joseph was the first-born son of Abraham and Ann Ashton, who lived in the Woodland View area of Stannington. Abraham was a coal miner who became a colliery engine driver. Joseph followed his father's occupation and in the 1871 census is listed as an assistant engine driver. There were several small collieries in Stannington, so we can assume the Ashtons worked in one of those, close to home.

On the day in question, Joseph was on an outing to Chatsworth with the children and friends of the Woodland View Primitive Methodist Church. At around tea time Joseph and some other boys were having their tea at Baslow, when they decided to go and

Volunteers at work ...

Our Saturday volunteers have been hard at work throughout the summer and continue to make impressive progress restoring and maintaining the cemetery.

All the graves in the Long Lane section are accessible now, and it is a pleasure to see so many graves have been visited and tended by relatives and friends of the deceased after many years when this was not possible.

However, the wet spring and summer have boosted the grass, and it has been a challenge to keep it under control while staying on top of other work.

In the last two years some of the self-seeded trees that were damaging many graves were cut down. These have now been chipped and are being used to level paths and some of the most hazardous graves.

Meanwhile work on clearing the original cemetery area around the chapel continues. Brambles, ivy and other tough vegetation are still being tackled here. But we are making progress!



Peter and Eddie make chippings for footpaths



Jane lays chippings to level a footpath

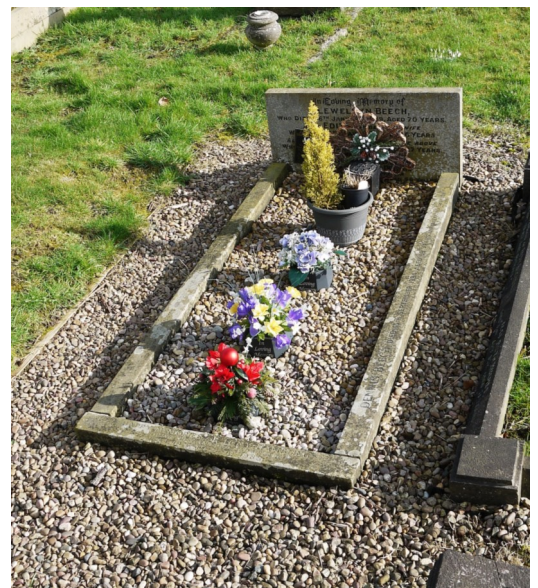


Peter E at work in the original area near the chapel



Peter P continues the battle with the grass

...and some of the graves now being cared for



Burial inquiries now on-line

During 2023 Sue Fisher, Malcolm Nunn and Mike Ford took on the daunting task of transcribing the existing hand-written burial records on to an electronic database. It consists of over 9000 names!

The chapel drew worshippers from a wide area of north Sheffield, not just the Loxley Valley, and we also have records of baptisms by date and name.

Inquiries about these records can now be made on-line, using this link —

<https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofloxleycemetery/forms/burial-enquiry/>

We are happy to carry out **basic research** of our records and provide a grave reference at no cost to all requests. We will provide more detailed information to members of FoLC free of charge also.

For non-members we are suggesting a minimum donation of £15 for the more comprehensive service.

The detailed information would include a monument inscription (if there is one), the burial record, photograph of the grave and monument, and a plan showing the exact location of the grave.

To pay for the research, people can donate using the Donation form on our website (ideally) or send a cheque.

Stage 3 of the Tour of Britain cycle race starts from Sheffield city centre at 11am on Thursday 5 September. Not long afterwards the riders tackle Long Lane on their way to Oughtibridge. It's the first categorised climb of the 106 mile stage.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

*Our **Heritage Open Day** this year is on Sunday 15 September. Volunteers will be on hand from 11am until 4pm to give advice and information about the cemetery, our 'Find a Grave' service and the work we are doing. There will be tours of significant graves at 1pm and another visiting War Graves at 1.45. Booking is via an Eventbrite link —*

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/submission-event/loxley-cemetery-our-titanic-connection.html>

*Our **Annual General Meeting** is on Wednesday 16 October in the Conference Room (BU10) at the Burton Street Foundation in Burton Street, Hillsborough, S6 2HH. It starts at 7pm and will finish by 9pm. It is important that we have a quorum for this meeting, so please find time to attend. And it is a great opportunity to hear about the year's work and plans and ideas for the future.*

Young volunteers lend a hand



In May we welcomed pupils from Loxley Primary School for a work session in the cemetery. We are very grateful to Burgon and Ball for donating tools for the children to use.



How to contact us . . .

For general inquiries and volunteering, please email our secretary, Verity Brack:
loxley.secretary@yahoo.com

For membership and subscription inquiries, please contact our Treasurer, Jane Pratt:
loxleytreasurer1@gmail.com

For archive and committee business, contact our chairman, Mike Ford:
loxley.chair@gmail.com or Tel: 07879 075619

Our website:
e-voice.org.uk/friendsofloxleycemetery