

# NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2023



**W**e are a little over half way through what has been a busy year, which has stretched our resources somewhat. The weather has been particularly problematic, and our volunteers have done a fantastic job, giving many hours of their time to continue the opening-up and maintenance of the cemetery. Almost all graves are now accessible for visitors.

### **Open Day: 1 May 2023**

This was our first event of the year, and we hosted around 150 members of the public on a fine spring day. There were tours of the Sheffield Flood and War Graves, and opportunities for friends and family to visit graves. Visitors were also able to view the nearly complete electronic database of burials in the Long Lane section. More about the Open Day on page 2.

### **Funding Working Group**

Following our Management Committee Meeting in April, we held our first Funding Working Group meeting on 28 June to consider how to attract more income. We discussed targeting local businesses for support, as well as approaching funding organisations. Extra income could be used to replenish consumables and/or for specific projects such as interpretation boards, repairs to stone walls, providing welfare facilities, etc.

### **Burials Research Team**

One of the principal objectives of the Friends of Loxley Cemetery is to 'Create and maintain historic records connected to the Cemetery'. A group of Friends has spent many hours this year painstakingly researching various sources of information so that we will eventually have comprehensive and accurate records.

The good news is that the end is in sight, with almost 4,000 entries completed to date. The aim is to complete the exercise by the time of the Heritage Open Days.

More about Burial Records on page 6.

### **Heritage Open Days**

We have registered to take part in this year's national HOD event. We will be offering tours and free grave finding checks on Sunday 10 and Saturday 16 September between 12 noon and 3pm. For the first time we will be offering a tour of some of the most interesting monuments on site, together with information about the various symbols and iconography on display.

### **Future Burials**

The Future Burials Team met representatives from G M Lunt Funeral Services. Both representatives were former employers of John Fairest Funeral Directors in Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield, and were very knowledgeable about our cemetery. Notes from the meetings were circulated with recent management committee meeting minutes.

### **Work Days**

Official work sessions continue to take place on Saturday afternoons (13:30-16:00). The enthusiasm and endeavour of the volunteers this summer has been outstanding. New members who are able to give their time and energy are always welcome.

**Mike Ford (Chair)**

**'PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE'**

# OPEN DAY WELCOMES THE LORD MAYOR

The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr Sioned-Mair Richards, was among 150 visitors to the Cemetery on our very successful Open Day on Monday 1st May.

Like the other visitors, she was full of admiration for the work done by volunteers to clear and maintain the cemetery to enable people to visit graves that had been overgrown and hidden for many years.

Ten people signed on as Friends on the day, boosting our



membership to 116, and we also received donations that will help pay for materials for the renovation work.

In the course of the day Verity Brack and Malcolm Nunn

showed visitors round the cemetery, focussing particularly on the story of the 1864 Sheffield Flood and the many War Graves on the site.

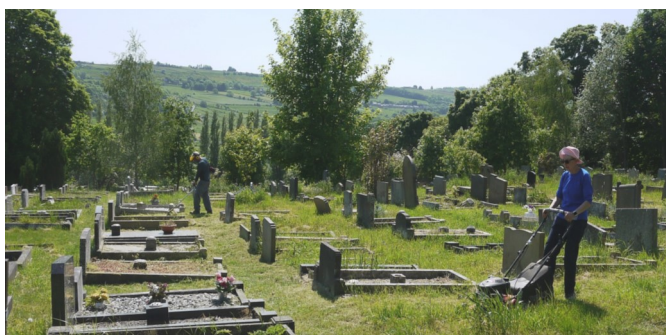


## Where your money goes ...

Loxley Cemetery covers around ten acres, has hundreds of yards of footpaths and over 4000 graves. Just three years ago only a few of the graves were accessible because of the undergrowth (brambles, willow-herb, bracken, saplings, etc) that covered them.

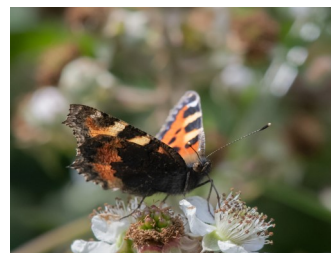
Volunteers have given many hours of their time to clear the undergrowth and keep the paths open. They have spent extra time this year to prepare for the Open Day in May and keep on top of the summer growth.

Their time may be free, but they are using a lot of petrol, strimmer line and other materials for the work. Most of our income is used to pay for these materials. Subscriptions and donations enable us to continue to make progress.



## Our flora and fauna on film

*Jenny Owen is a well-known amateur photographer living in Walkley who recently became a Friend of the cemetery. She has been visiting with her camera and captured delightful images of some of the things she has seen. Another of her images is on page 1.*



# THE MAGNIFICENT SWIFT FAMILY MEMORIALS



*The vaults of both Benjamin and William Swift's families are in the original 19th century section of the cemetery. They consist of huge sandstone slabs and decorative ironwork, although William's (above) lacks the imposing monument on his brother's vault. The vault containing William and his family is directly in front of Benjamin's.*

**T**he magnificent burial vault and monument containing nine members of the family of Benjamin Swift is one of the largest in the cemetery and probably also the tallest.

Benjamin Swift, his wife, Amelia, and their two daughters Florence Alice and Ann Eliza are interred there. George Ward, husband of Ann Eliza is also there, with their daughter Florence Amelia Ward, granddaughter of Benjamin and Amelia.

Florence Ward married Ernest Harrington Baker, with whom she had three children: Ernest Swift Baker, Elfreda Baker and Kenneth George Baker, the great-grandchildren of Benjamin and Amelia. Kenneth George Baker died in 1923, aged only 17 months, and is interred there along with Elfreda's husband Roy Granville Foyle.

The monument has the following inscriptions on three sides, the south side being left blank:

Amelia Swift 1841-1900

Benjamin Swift 1840-1920

Kenneth George Baker, 1921-1923

Ann Eliza Ward 1866-1940

George Ward, 1863-1946

Ernest Harrington Baker 1886-1950

Florence Amelia Baker 1888-1963

Florence Alice Marr 1872-1892

Roy Granville Foyle 1912-1954

It seems that the monument was erected on the death of Benjamin and Amelia's younger daughter, Florence Alice Marr, who died in 1892, aged 20.

The monument itself is, I think, polished granite in two colours: grey and pink. The sandstone base for the monument is 1m high and 3m by 1.6m. As well as the part on which the monument sits, there is another large section, again covered by sandstone slabs, which is the area of the entrance to the vault.

In 2021, when the Friends started to work at the cemetery both these memorials were barely visible. Self-seeded saplings surrounded them, and the Benjamin Swift monument was covered in ivy. They are both now clearly visible, but it is difficult to read the names and inscriptions in some places. A task for the future?

More information about the Swift family is on page 4.

## **JOIN US ON ONE OF OUR HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

**There will be guided tours of the cemetery on  
Sunday 10 September and Saturday 16  
September between 12 o'clock and 3pm.  
Come and learn about the fascinating history  
of this 200-year-old cemetery and see the  
amazing work done by our volunteers.**

## THE SWIFT FAMILY OF LOXLEY CEMETERY

Benjamin Swift was the fourth son of James Swift, blacksmith, and Elizabeth Phoenix. Benjamin and his brothers William and James had bought the Storrs Bridge rolling mill, which lay between Stacey Wheel and Old Wheel, after the Great Sheffield Flood of 1864.

The brothers were variously described as forgerman, tilter and steel roller in early censuses, and in 1871 they were all living at Storrs Bridge Works beside the river.

By 1881 Benjamin and his family had moved to Burrow Lees, the area around Burrowlee House near Hillsborough Park, and were still there in 1891,

at 45 Burrowlee Road. Florence, who married Henry Marr in 1891 and died the following year, lived at 49 Burrowlee Road. Henry was by that time a law stationer's clerk.

However, by 1901 Benjamin and his family had moved to Olive House, next to Olive Wheel, the brothers having bought the Olive Wheel paper mill in 1892 and converted it to a rolling mill. The brothers had also built another rolling mill at Owlerton Bridge in 1870, and these businesses all proved successful.

There is obviously more to learn about the Swift brothers and their families. Watch this space!

*Many thanks to Rosemary Swift for the information she has provided for this article.*

Verity Brack

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## THE HISTORIC LOXLEY LAND SOCIETY

*In the process of transcribing the Burial Records for Loxley United Reform Churchyard we have found that a number of people interred there have 'Land Society' as their address.*

*I have done some research on this subject and find that organisations had been formed throughout the country as 'Freehold Land Societies' in the 1840s and 1850s, with some still operating into the 20th century. A few still exist today, mostly in the south of England.*

*The original purpose of these organisations was to acquire land that could be divided into plots or allotments of a size that would entitle the (male) owner to a vote. The key stimulus was the Reform Act 1832 which, under the county franchise, gave the vote to "Forty-shilling freeholders" -- men in possession of land worth 40 shillings (£2) a year 'free of all charges'.*

*Initially the Liberal Party was the main promoter of the policy; the Conservative Party took up the idea later. By the 1850s there were around 180 societies in England, the first being the Birmingham Freehold Land Society, founded in 1847. While the new law extended the right to vote, it also allowed land to be acquired with a*

*commercial aim, as cheap land for housing,*

*It seems that the Loxley Society was formed in 1871, which subsequently bought land on either side of what is now Hanson Road and Leaton Close near the Admiral Rodney pub. At that time and right up to the 1950s the address of properties fronting these streets was simply 'Land Society'. Hence the addresses in the Burial Records. The roads were then only rough tracks. When new housing was built in the 1950s, they*



*were re-surfaced and given the names they have today.*

*The archives at Bradfield have a copy of 'The Rules of The Loxley Freehold Benefit Building Society' printed in 1871 – it had six Trustees and eight Directors, including a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. The first meeting was on Tuesday 7 November 1871 in the Rodney Inn, Loxley.*

*The Rules were detailed and specific, covering all aspects of the government of the Society, including how subscriptions should be paid, the duties of the officers, and how matters such as bankruptcy, embezzlement, larceny, the forfeiture of shares and the death of a trustee should be dealt with. It is not known when the Loxley Society ceased, although the original street name was in existence in the 1950s.*

Malcolm Nunn



# Successful search for a family history

## *Judith Lievesley's story of her connection with Loxley Cemetery*

Three or four years ago I started looking into the family trees of my maternal grandparents. Family trees focus on the male line, and I was curious about Nannan Taylor's (nee Morris) family and Grandma Lievesley.

I had invaluable info from my cousin and my Dad's genealogy research as a starting point. Then I joined a walking group and met Malcolm Nunn, who is very knowledgeable about the Loxley area. He showed me where in Stannington (Clod Hall) Nannan (Taylor nee Morris) would have lived as a child, where her father and brothers worked (a local brickworks) and where my Great Great & GGG grandparents (Morris) are buried at Knowle Top Chapel at Stannington.

My Mum remembered that her Grandma and Grandad Morris had attended Loxley Chapel (or church as it became), and Malcolm suggested I go to the Sheffield Archives where there was a map of the cemetery and a listing of every grave and its inscription! There I found that the grave of my Great Grandma and Great Grandad Morris (Nannan's Mum and Dad) was at Loxley Cemetery.

So I visited the cemetery . . .



I already knew from online articles that the chapel was a wreck and the cemetery overgrown, but when I went there in February 2020 it was way more overgrown than I bargained for! It took two visits to figure out where the grave was even, with a cemetery plan! Then I went again armed with gloves, secateurs and trowel. It took nearly two hours to hack through brambles and move the soil and weeds on top!

I visited the cemetery again in the summer of 2021. The Friends Group had got going and made a good start to clearing it up. (You have to look at their website to appreciate what they achieved.)

When I visited again at the beginning of 2022, I actually could not find my Great Grandparents Morris's grave

initially! I walked right past the headstone, as the tree I had used as a reference point before had been cut down to reveal a tall memorial a couple of plots down.

I joined the Friends of Loxley Cemetery (FoLC) in 2022 and began going to the work afternoons, and with the help of other volunteers I spruced up my Great Grandparents' grave. I went to the cemetery for the Friends Open Day on Monday 2nd May that year. What a transformation for all to see!



An inscription on my Great Grandparents' headstone remembers my Great Uncle Allen who died in WW1. He is also remembered on the Stannington War Memorial along with his brother George. Allen is buried in Poziers in France and George's name is on the Thiepval Memorial in France. With the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission I was able to find historical records relating to the battle that the two brothers were part of and tragically died in within just two weeks of each other.

Earlier this year I became an Eyes On Hands On volunteer with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, inspired to do so by all I had learned from the Commission and from Malcolm Nunn about my Great Uncles and the war graves at Loxley Cemetery.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2023 AGM is on Tuesday 3 October at the Burton Street Foundation, Burton Street, S6 2HH, starting at 7pm. Please put the date in your diary. Tea and coffee will be served!

As usual, there will be important matters to discuss, and the officers and committee members need to be elected to ensure the Group is properly organised and managed. We need as many members as possible to attend.

## BURIALS RESEARCH PROGRESS

The Burials Research Team held its second meeting on 19 July and continues to reveal fascinating glimpses into Sheffield history. The photo shows Verity Brack, Malcolm Nunn, Sue Fisher and Lynda Barnett at work.

In total, the cemetery has 4012 graves — 1772 in the original graveyard round the chapel and 2240 in the newer Long Lane section. But many graves were used for more than one burial, so there have been approaching 10,000 interments to date, split almost equally between the two sections.

A recent discovery links the cemetery to an outbreak of smallpox in Sheffield that led to the building of Lodge Moor Hospital. More about this in a future newsletter.

Our plans include a link on our website to an electronic register of the first baptisms performed in the Chapel (1795-1830), which has been produced by Sheffield Indexers from records in the Sheffield Archives. Other Baptismal Records and Wedding Registers will also be available on our website:

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

## ... AND SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

The committee is working to improve our website and other ways in which people can learn about the cemetery, its history and the work that is going on there.

- We are putting on more local history information
- The subscriptions process will soon be interactive and easier to use
- Visits to FaceBook and NextDoor are steadily growing
- All previous newsletters can be found on the website, read and downloaded
- There are many photos and articles about the people buried there and the on-going restoration

## PARISH COUNCIL AWARD

*Friends of Loxley Cemetery have been officially recognised and rewarded by Bradfield Parish Council for the work we have carried out renovating the cemetery over the four years since our formation.*

*At a ceremony in the Council Offices in June the chair of the Parish Council, Vickie Priestley, presented us with a Recognition Award and cheque for £100.*

*The award is testament to the many hours of work that have transformed the cemetery and enabled many people to visit relatives' graves for the first time.*

**The photo shows (LEFT TO RIGHT) Stuart Mellard, Jane Pratt, Verity Brack, Sue Fisher and Sandra Mellard with Parish Council chair Vickie Priestley**



## How to contact us ...

**For general inquiries and volunteering, please email our Secretary, Verity Brack:**  
[loxley.secretary@yahoo.com](mailto:loxley.secretary@yahoo.com)

**For membership and subscription inquiries, please contact our Treasurer, Jane Pratt:**  
[loxleytreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:loxleytreasurer1@gmail.com)

**For committee information, archive and specific inquiries, contact our Chairman, Mike Ford:**  
[loxley.chair@gmail.com](mailto:loxley.chair@gmail.com) or Tel: 07879 075619