



Friends of Darfield Churchyard

Newsletter - Spring 2014

Another project has been completed!



The gravestone of Darfield's long serving rector, Canon Albert Edward Sorby, has now been fully restored. Once again Roberts of Barnsley have done a splendid job for us. The stonework has been cleaned several times to remove the grime of eighty years, the lettering renewed and the base levelled and given new chippings. All this was possible because of supporters at our events and the generosity of many others, notably Mr Nicholas Sorby and Mr David Walker, descendants of the Sorby family and it is rewarding to be in contact

with them. To everyone who has helped we give our sincere thanks. The total cost of this restoration was £732 and this has now been paid in full.

It is well worth coming to have a look. The grave can be seen on your left as you come through the gate.

A Darfield exile, Mr Frederick Upton, wrote recently with a revealing anecdote about Canon Sorby .

"Our home on School Street was exactly opposite my grandmother's at no.19. I woke early one morning to find the home deserted, so I went over to No. 19 to find out what was going on. Believe it or not, my Gran told me my parents were on the church tower roof!!! It was June 29th 1927 and England was having its first view of a total eclipse of the sun for more than 200 years. Canon Sorby had permitted a party of parishioners to climb to the roof to get a good view of this unique event. My parents were full of what they had seen from this splendid point. You can see why Canon Sorby was so respected in Darfield."

Now we turn to our next project which is to resurface the paths leading from the gate towards the tower and towards the north side of the church.

Another project in our sights is the re-erection of several very large headstones by the bottom path of the churchyard. We have just been informed that we have been given a grant of £750 towards this project. It is probable that we will be combining the path project and this project together. A quote so far received for this combined work is for £2995 - so we really need to keep up our fund-raising efforts.



To begin the fund raising we have our first speaker of the year coming on **Wednesday 21st May** when Linda Hutton, who is spearheading the Barnsley War Memorials Project, will tell us about **Darfield Soldiers in the First World War**. It is a most appropriate subject in this year of the war's centenary. Put the date in your diary now and come along (7pm in the Church Hall). Linda is doing research especially for this illustrated talk and she is an excellent speaker with a real passion for her subject.

Later in the year we hope to have two of our popular speakers - our own Martyn Johnson and Janet Stain. Watch out for details!!

What a lovely thought -

Two of our long-time supporters, Ian and Pam Walker, friends of this very Martyn Johnson and his mum Esther, took the chance to help FODCY by getting each of the members of their family (including his young grandchildren) to give a pound on the occasion of Esther's 99th birthday. This was a good start to fulfilling her wish to donate £99 to our group to help us in our work. Here is what she said with her donation -

"A gift of £99 in appreciation of all the hard work and dedication done by the men and women of FODCY which allows Darfield Churchyard to remain in the beautiful and pristine condition that it now enjoys - thanks to you all from E Hunsley and the rest of the Johnson family."

Here is a photograph of Martyn with the letter and also a birthday card with ten pound coins taped inside. We are very grateful to this lovely lady for her kind and generous thought.



Christmas Cards.... Once again a big thank you to all who bought and sold our Christmas cards and helped to support the work of FODCY, we sold about 190 this year.

Also on the Christmas theme, FODCY took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at Darfield Church in November 2013. Our 'Christmas carol theme' was 'We Three Kings' (we realise that there is no connection between that carol and the churchyard, but 'The Holly and the Ivy' had already been taken!) Many visitors to the church enjoyed the festival and asked further about FODCY. Kay and Glenice were in charge of decorating the tree.



We try to let as many people as possible know about our work and projects at FODCY. Every August at the Annual Craft Exhibition organised by Darfield Amenities Group you will find a FODCY display. Here is our treasurer, Pat, with the display last August. We also had a similar display in the church hall on the Saturday of Christmas Tree Festival. If you come across us and our display, you are very welcome to let us know your thoughts on FODCY!

Update....

In our newsletter of Spring 2013 we had a 'spotlight' on John Bushby, who became Registrar of Barnsley, and mentioned the mystery of the lack of a headstone. Since that newsletter the great-grand-daughter of John Bushby has arranged for a headstone to be placed on the grave and it looks very smart.

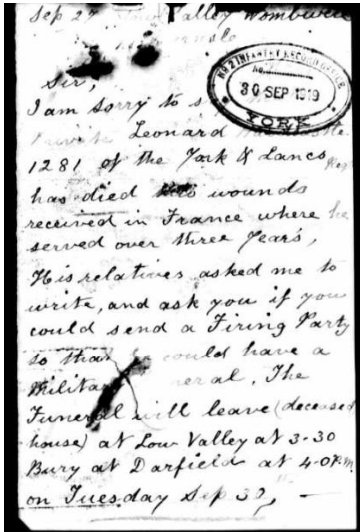




Spotlight on
Two Darfield Soldiers' World War 1 Graves

Leonard Hardcastle

Leonard was born to George and Emma Hardcastle in 1897. They had both been born in Barnsley and it was there that they were married in 1876, as teenagers, in the parish church. George's father, James, was a joiner at this time and Emma's father, William Hardy, was deceased and, prior to his death, had been a weaver. At the 1911 census Leonard lived in Hope Street, Low Valley, with his parents and four sisters. Although only 14 at the time, he was working as a pony driver. He joined the 13th battalion of the Yorks & Lincs at the age of 19 years and 4 months at Christmas 1914, when he was still pony driving.



Having served throughout almost the whole war, Leonard died in August 1919 of wounds he received in France. He was buried on the 30th September, his family having requested a military funeral with an attendant firing party.

Peter Short

Peter was born in 1881 to Noah and Sarah Short in Elsecar. His parents were both born in Staffordshire and were married in 1866 when Noah was working in the area. Peter had six brothers and sisters and his mother, Sarah, died in 1885 aged 39. At the 1911 census Noah and his family were living in George Street, Low Valley, and ran a Grocer/Draper's shop. Peter worked as a general carter and was still single at this time, living at home with ten members of his family.



Peter joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in June 1915 and served in France from October 1915 to November 1917, in Italy from December 1917 to April 1918 and then, later in April, he was back in France on the Western Front. In May 1918 he was taken prisoner of war and remained a prisoner until his repatriation in January 1919. It seems that conditions during his imprisonment

took a toll on his health. However he seemed to be in reasonably good health when, in June 1919, he collapsed and died at his home on George Street. He was 39 years old. Peter had taken a great interest in Church affairs and his friends from the Mission Church, Pitt Street, Low Valley, bore him to his grave. The Rev A E Sorby conducted the funeral service.

The remaining two WW1 graves will be featured in our next newsletter.

As we said in the last newsletter, a leaflet has been 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 (4 of which have the usual white headstones and one of which is included on the family headstone) and also a further 15 ordinary headstones or surrounds which mention the fallen. These leaflets are available in a box at the top of the churchyard, by the noticeboard.





Our regular three churchyard workers have been busy recently in straightening and re-aligning many of the leaning headstones. They estimate that they have dealt with about 25 so far. This is very necessary work in order to avoid future problems. They also managed to reinstate the cross, which had fallen down, on the grave of Nora Spencer. Nora died at the age of 23, just six months after her marriage. Canon Sorby wrote the following about her in the Church Magazine

"I cannot pass this opportunity over without expressing deep regret and sorrow at the sudden and almost tragical death of Mrs Norah Spencer, one of our Sunday School teachers and Church workers. She has been taken away by Him who has the prior claim over the lives and Souls of us all - why, we do not know - in the full tide of her early womanhood and married life."



The Older Generation



And speaking of these three churchyard workers - John, Trevor and Mike - we have recently had to adjust our insurance policy as it only covered our workers to age 75 and that meant that one of them was over-age! I am sure that we would all like to say a big thank you to our three main labourers. They are in the churchyard every Monday afternoon and Thursday afternoon, weather permitting, and it is thanks to them that the churchyard is maintained so well. It does not happen by magic but by a great deal of hard work.

The Younger Generation

Spring is always such a lovely time in our churchyard and it attracts many photographers - of all ages. Here are three beautiful photographs taken by William Smith, aged 14.



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 crocus, snowdrops and snowdrops with church are by William Smith