



Autumn Newsletter 2019

The Friends are working to improve the condition of the Cemetery as a burial ground, and to develop it as a place of quiet recreation for the local population and a haven for birds, bees and small mammals

As we did not publish a newsletter last year, here is the Chair's review of 2018:

On **Sat 21 April**, Geoff Simmons led a history walk from St Mary's Summerstown to Streatham Cemetery. He identified the graves of service men and women connected with the Royal Air Force to mark its centenary. Particularly interesting, with the recent anniversary of the first women to get the vote, Geoff showed us the graves of the 'magnificent seven' women buried in the cemetery who served in either WW1 or WW2.

On **Sat 12 May – Bat walk**: The friends regret that this event was cancelled at short notice due to bad weather which would have prevented any bats from appearing. Ray went to meet the people who turned out for the walk and explained what had happened. The walk was rescheduled to **Saturday 1 September** when it attracted a good crowd. Guy was praised for his Bat Walk posters.

On **Sun 22 July** Cherry led a Butterfly walk attended by over 30 people. About eight varieties were spotted and those attending all enjoyed the walk around the cemetery and a chance to discuss nature. One of the beekeepers, Stephen King and his family set up a stall with FoSC's 'Dead Good Honey' and exchanged about 30 jars for donations.

On **Sun 16 September** we held a successful Open Day. Geoff Simmons helped draw visitors with his 'Stripes of Peace' workshop in preparation for Remembrance Day. Once again, Stephen King brought jars of 'Dead Good Honey'.

Bees: Guy and our team of bee keepers have been tending the apiary. There is one strong colony and a second smaller one. Hopefully with warmer weather on the way, the bees will continue to thrive. Many thanks to Guy for repairing the perimeter fence around the enclosure.

Planting round the apiary: The trees and hedging plants around the apiary are looking good. Many thanks to Ray, who mulched and put down weed suppressing mats to help them along.

Review of 2019

This year marks ten years since Friends of Streatham Cemetery was founded by Lucy Neal and Lucinda Denning. So it was a particularly happy coincidence that we unveiled our signage boards this year, during the launch week of London National Park City. A very big thank you to Lucinda Denning for her wonderful illustrations and to Guy Eaglestone for fundraising and liaison with contractors to complete our signage project.

On **April 15th**, Kath gave a talk about Streatham Cemetery at the Streatham Society in the Woodlawn Centre SW16 2PJ. She covered history, monumnets, burials of celebrated people and the aims and work of the Friends. It was well received and Kath has been asked to give another talk to Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

On **Saturday 11 May**, after the committee meeting, some of the Friends went for a walk round the cemetery, to identify the best spot for a new access gate into the proposed Springfield Park. It was agreed that an artist's impression of a gateway would be hung there at Open Day.

On the morning of **13 July**, there was a gathering in Streatham Cemetery to mark the discovery and restoration of John Thomson's grave and headstone. He was a celebrated Victorian photographer who spent many years in Asia, and is credited with opening up China to the West, through his large collection of glass plate photographs, which are currently in the Welcome Collection. Kath represented FoSC at this event.

Sunday 21 July was a big day with our Butterfly Walk and Unveiling Procession at 12.30 pm, followed by tea, homemade cakes and honey from FoSC hives at 2 pm. The Mayor of Wandsworth, Jane Cooper, attended the event which attracted over a hundred visitors. The procession combined a butterfly walk led by Cherry Balchin, with stops at each new signage board. The boards were ceremonially introduced and unveiled at each stop.



Broadwater Gate illustration by Lucinda Denning

At our Open Day on **Sunday 15 September**, the friends invited Geoff Simmons to set up a table making daffodils for his event the following week. This was in addition to our usual tables showing wildlife, bees in the cemetery, crafts and of course teas, homemade cakes and honey from a local beekeeper. There was a walk to the proposed site of the new gate.

The friends were out again the following Saturday on **21st September**, organising tea and cakes for visitors to Geoff Simmons event – unveiling a plaque to Peter Barr, the daffodil King, whose nursery was very near the site of Streatham Cemetery. Thanks to Marion, Victoria, Carole and Angela for organising the tea & cakes at all our events.

News

In spite of all this activity and large numbers of people visiting the cemetery, we have had a couple of setbacks in the last year. Very sadly, the Friends' bench near Broadwater Gate was criminally damaged and had to be removed to await repair. Similarly, after the installation and unveiling of the signage boards, the one near Broadwater Gate was also damaged. However, Lambeth staff rescued the broken board and leg and put them safe keeping, until we can repair and relocate the board.

All our events are publicised on our website in the diary or news section. Please go to

www.friendsofstreathamcemetery.org

to see pictures of wildlife in the cemetery, go to

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/StreathamCemeteryWildlife>

for information about events organised by Geoff Simmons, please go to

www.summerstown182.wordpress.com

for information about burials in the cemetery, contact Lambeth staff in the office on the right of the main gate. Or email

bereavementservices@lambeth.gov.uk