

FODC News Bulletin



Update on the Nature Memorial Garden Project

FODC volunteers have been learning a new skill in the Nature Memorial Garden. We had quite a few plain grave edgings from when putting the headstones back in the Old Cemetery in lawn style. One of our volunteers, Mick Walsh, is a skilled dry stone waller and he has been sharing his expertise with some of our volunteers and they have almost completed a stone seat out of the edging stone. As well as being a welcome seat for visitors to use, small insects and other wildlife will be able to make use of the holes and crevices of the seat. The group will continue learning their newly acquired skill and are now making a compost bin for the garden.

We have been working with Lancashire Wildlife Trust to hold Wildlife Sessions for children and adults. The first event was making bird boxes and bird feeders for the Cemetery. We also were able to supply some bird box making kits to local schools. Our second event was a Bug Hunt and making Bug Hotels. The children drew pictures of some of the insects they spotted and a few will be chosen to be engraved onto seating going in the garden shortly.

The next public event will be a Bat Walk which will take place on Friday, 9th September at 7.30pm. We are being helped by East Lancashire Bat Group who will come along with bat detectors and inform us about the bats who live in the cemetery. These events have been sponsored by The Big Lottery Awards for All.



Do you remember the three Chapels in the Cemetery?

There's nothing left these days of the three chapels that once graced Darwen Cemetery. Just a few old photos, and those of just the Church of England chapel (1) and the Roman Catholic chapel (2). There's no sign of any picture of the chapel used by the Nonconformists (3) or, as they were called in Victorian times, "Dissenters." Unless *you* have one tucked away that we can borrow?

However, thanks to the excellent filing system of Cemetery expert Billy Briggs, old plans, curled and stained, in a battered tin box in the Whitehall Park "hut", have been dug out for historian Tony Foster to find and photograph.

He passed the photographs of the chapel plans on to colleague Harold Heys who tidied them up on his Apple Mac and here they are.

Admittedly there's not a lot to see but anyone at all conversant with the old cemetery will be able to place them immediately.

What isn't apparent is just how small the chapels were. You can see at both the Nonconformist chapel and the Church of England chapel that they not only fitted easily on to the two "mounds" but were surrounded by graves.

It is likely that the RC chapel was slightly smaller. It was where the top soil and bark chippings have been put, hopefully temporarily. But it won't be long before himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed smother the area.

Halloween Walk Sunday 30th October 2011

The foul murder of the defenceless and grizzled "Owd Aggie" in a robbery at her remote cottage over by Step Back about 150 years ago is part of local folklore. Three local louts were caught splashing her money on drinks at a town centre hostelry and were arrested and hanged ...

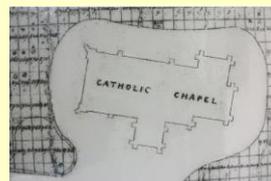
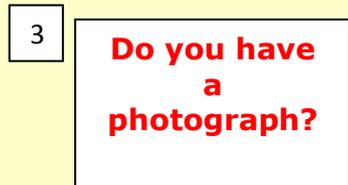
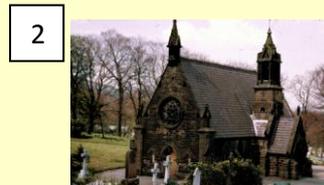
Or so the story goes. In fact "Owd Aggie" was alive and kicking a year after her "murder." She must have been a tough old bird.

Tony Foster and Harold Heys will be telling the story when they conduct another of their cemetery walks on the eve of Hallowe'en on Sunday, October 30.

This time you will meet victims of murders, tragedies and other disasters. Let Old Aggie's nephew tell you the story of his aunt. Also learn about the victims of the Second World War bombings, the throat slitters, the stranglers, the poisoners and many more.

But be warned. Anyone of a nervous disposition should stay well away. Children will love it! Meet by the Ashton memorial at 4pm and bring a torch and a pair of strong boots and a coat.

It will be getting quite dark and scary as they finish with the lurid tale of the Blacksnape farmhouse which was drenched in blood ...



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