

# Friends of St. Matthew's Churchyard

Number 3

November 2012

Dear Friend,

When I last wrote to you all, we were just heading into the summer and now we are heading rapidly towards Christmas – where did the time go?! I do hope you had a good summer. Since the last newsletter, we have had a successful working party, held a fundraising talk, set up a new email address - [lightcliffchurchyard@gmail.com](mailto:lightcliffchurchyard@gmail.com) - and made progress towards formally establishing the group. Here's what's been happening and what's to come...

## Working Party

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our second working party on 10 June, when, once again, we were lucky with the weather. We timed this to take

place during 'Cherishing Churchyards Week', which is organised by 'Caring For God's Acre' (for more info see [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)). In addition to clearing a patch of nettles, brambles and other weeds, we had headstone rubbing for the children – thanks to John Brooke – and delicious homemade cakes – with thanks to Susan Wood and Kathryn Buck's family.

There was excitement when we unearthed a number of 'buried' gravestones, which

gave us a good headline in that week's Brighouse Echo! – see above. We also got some coverage in the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's 'Living Churchyards' newsletter, which is attached for information (<http://www.ywt.org.uk/what-we-do/conservation-projects/living-churchyards>).



Headstone rubbing (above) and one of the 'unearthed' graves (right)

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## Next Meeting

### **Inaugural General Meeting**

**at 7.30pm on Thursday 10 January 2013**

**in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Wakefield Road, Lightcliffe**

#### **Agenda**

- **Adoption of the Constitution**
- **Election of the Committee**
- **Restoration Plans for the Churchyard**
- **Activities for 2013**

**Mulled wine and mince pies**

The Friends' Steering Group (comprising Rev Kathryn Buck, Mike Wood, Colin Painten, John Brooke and Angela Monaghan), have drawn up a constitution for the group - see attached - and this has now been agreed by the St. Matthew's Parochial Church Council (PCC). The **aims** of the group, set out in the constitution, are:

- The sympathetic restoration, conservation and maintenance, for the public benefit, of St. Matthew's Churchyard, Lightcliffe.
- To ensure the churchyard is cared for in a way which makes it:
  - a place in keeping with the function of burials, with an atmosphere of respect and commemoration for the departed;
  - a pleasant, attractive, accessible place for all visitors;
  - a haven for plants and animals;
  - a place that values and protects the local heritage.

You are now warmly invited to formally **become a member** of the Friends and to **attend the Inaugural General Meeting on Thursday 10 January**. There is no charge for membership and anyone who supports the aims of the group is welcome – so encourage friends, family and neighbours to join too! Members are also invited to nominate themselves, or others, for the Committee. At the meeting, we will formally adopt the Constitution, elect the Committee and then hear about restoration plans for the churchyard and the calendar of events for 2013. To become a member and/or make a nomination, please complete the attached form and return by post or email to Angela Monaghan.

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## **Churchyard Survey**

Following the visit of two volunteers in April and June to survey the churchyard, we received the survey report from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. This gave details of various plant species present, along with brief recommendations for future management. Here's an extract:

'The graveyard contains an interesting variety of common trees and plants. Its chief value is in providing an environment for birds, small mammals and insects, as well as the plants, and as an amenity for the local community. The challenge facing the Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard is to balance these two interests.[The old part] can be enhanced to help wildlife by maintaining the paths and clearing brambles and willow-herb, where possible, to allow other plant species to colonise and flourish. The mature trees in this area lend themselves to the sighting of bird and bat boxes. Some well presented notice boards positioned near the entrance of the graveyard and highlighting its importance for wildlife would be a useful addition.'

The Steering Group is now using the recommendations to draw up draft plans for the restoration and maintenance of the churchyard, which will be presented at the Inaugural General Meeting on 10 January. Please come along to find out more and share your views and ideas.

## **Fundraising Talk**

On 17 October, we were fortunate to have well-known local historian and Chair of the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery, **David Glover**, give an illustrated talk at the church hall entitled 'After Death: Funerals, etc. in the Parish of Halifax Before 1900'. Around 30 people attended and we raised over £100 for the Friends. Many thanks to David (pictured right) for his support.



## **Who is Buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard?**

Have you ever wondered who is buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard, or perhaps wondered if one of your ancestors is buried there? Well, the Gravestone Photographic Resource has photographed and indexed 218 of the graves and you can search the index on their website at

<http://www.gravestonephotos.com/public/cemetery.php?cemetery=805>

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This website doesn't contain details of all those buried in the churchyard but is a fantastic starting point.

In addition, you may be interested in attending a future talk by **Chris Helme** at **7.30pm on Wed 6 March 2013** entitled 'Lightcliffe Cemetery', which will recall the lives of some of the local people buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard. This talk is organised by the **Lightcliffe and District Local History Society** and will take place at Lightcliffe CE Primary School. Entrance £2.00.

[www.lightcliffehistory.org.uk](http://www.lightcliffehistory.org.uk)

## **Help!**

The Friends' Steering Group needs special advisors in a number of areas to help develop the management plans – if you have special knowledge and can offer assistance in any of the following, then please get in touch:

- **Plants and plant management** including trees;
- **Wildlife and birds;**
- **Stonework** re. the walls and headstones;
- **Fundraising.**

## **Your Contact Details**

If you have received this letter by post, that means we don't have an email address for you. If you have an email address and are happy to share it, please send an email to [lightcliffechurchyard@gmail.com](mailto:lightcliffechurchyard@gmail.com) to let us know. We'd like to stay in touch and it's so much quicker, easier and cheaper to communicate by email! If you don't, then that's fine. We will only ever use your contact details to send you information about Friends of St. Matthew's Churchyard and will never pass them on to anyone else. If you would like to stop receiving information, then please let us know.

**Best wishes,**

**Angela Monaghan**

**Comments, ideas and suggestions always welcome!**

**Contact: 07941 286821 or [lightcliffechurchyard@gmail.com](mailto:lightcliffechurchyard@gmail.com)**