

Progressive Improvements Great Bowden Cemetery. 2009 – January 2010.

In addition of the valuable work completed during the years 2007/8. including the new programme of maintenance to the Gunnsbrook drain, inclusive of the new barred and meshed grill to the culvert head field side. The realignment of the Dingley road side gutter successfully bypasses the Cemetery Entrance Gateway, the new drain trap collects and channels the water through the new pipe to discharge into the field ditch on the easterly side of the burial area.

During 2009 The Harborough District Council team headed by Matthew Bills, have continued the good works.

Cemetery Tap.

The mains feed pipe below ground, the leaking water had been evident on the ground surface for a few months now.

Summer June/July, after much excavating by one energetic operative and three or four days of frustrating searching and digging ie., several leaks were found, all now repaired, the tap is performing well.

This now done the front boundary wall repairs could go ahead. The successful contractors due to start the job early July, unfortunately illness postponed commencement until 1st week August, however torrential rains delayed kick off until September, fine weather prevailed the job promptly concluded, the finished appearance to the work did seem very dust covered at the time. The correct use of lime mortar is the cause, but the October rains and this winters frost soon put that to rights.

October the handsome new gates are set in place. But, but! You cannot open the gate! it does jam and you have shake them quite a lot, Well, no need for that, take the left hand gate pull it towards you, hold it there, then unlatch, easy.

November the foregoing works done, an apron of new tarmacadam was laid to apply the finishing touch, to complete this excellent refurbishment programme to the front boundary wall and entrance all as approved and instructed by Harborough District Council.

The Wild Flower Glade. Improvements & the new planting of small shrubs & plants.

Along the East edge, Alf. dug, worked, and grass seeded a 1m. margin between the adjacent memorials and the glade, this is now established has been mown frequently, ready now for the Focsa contracted maintenance team to continue the regular grass cutting.

Now to the planting, of some small shrubs, namely several Hypericum Tutsan, a single specimen of our native Spindle Tree. "euonymus europaeus", also a few "viburnum opulus", The Guelder Rose, procured from suckers from the bottom hedge.

This springtime should hopefully reveal a high percentage of the survivors, we do have two beds of English bluebells "endymion non- scriptus, two small random patches of Snow Drops "galanthus nivalis".

The large English Yew "taxus baccatus" this was crown lifted by Alf. and John, hand hauled and burnt previously, the area under had been smothered with the epicormic. growth the ground beneath was much aggravated by the burrowing of quite a few generations of industrious rabbit activity, the area needed grading digging n' working over, to lie fallow for a season.

Now was the time to introduce the EH1 seed mix , suitably appropriate for Hedgerow and Woodland margin for naturalising, was obtained from Emorsgate Seeds who harvest pure English sourced seeds only.

You may but imagine the tangle that emerged! To add to that, in my wisdom had scattered this mixture over the beds of blue bells!

Thankfully we have The Friends of G B Cemetery Group who cut out the rampant growths, then we got on with planting donated primroses cowslips and some further tidying up.

During this operation a variety of flowering plants were noted, white campion, cowslip, red poppy, teasel, white mallow, ladies bedstraw, hedge bedstraw, red campion, oxeye daisy, meadow cranesbill, along with corn cockle and salvia, also very importantly the following grasses are part of this mixture.

Common knapweed, common bent, sweet vernal, false brome, crested dogstail, tufted hair grass, slender creeping red fescue and wood meadow grass.

No further plantings are needed for the area this 2010 season, naturalising has to take place.

Naturalised areas require a lot of management by our team ie., mowing, weeding, hand pulling of rogue elder, ivy, nettles, thistles and the like, also to discourage the ever present rabbits.

The cemetery long side to this area is under review, the boundary is rather close to the required space for new graves, this demand has occurred in the last months of 2009, a big increase more so than in many a previous year.

We expect a fractional loss of cowslips, fritillaria meleagris, red campion, oxeye daisy.

The W.I. Oak Tree "quercus robur" a new location within the cemetery is to be agreed along with the donated Coastal Redwood "sequoia sempervirens". The locations selected in good faith by Matthew Bills and Alf. during a site meeting 10.30am. 21st, September 2009, to be resolved in due course.

Stop Press! Monday 11th. January 2010. The tallest tree ("Lawsons Cypress cultivar, "pottonii) in the cemetery was felled and carted away by Waltons a very expert job carefully done no noticeable disturbance to the memorials under, despite the snow!,

This tree is probably the last to die from the legacy of the 2007/8 floods. In all eight trees have succumbed to date.

5no. unsightly stumps remain 2 only of the seven were cut down to just above ground level, yew is a very tough root to get out requiring the funding of a specialist firm, bearing in mind the close order of the memorials around each stump.

March 2010 will see the third anniversary since John Hunt had the inspiration to get we the villagers involved in finding the cause of the persistent flooding of our Cemetery.

Villagers, Councillors, and District Councillors, monetary contributions, equipment and mechanical plant freely loaned has brought us into 2010.

Future essential works have yet to be undertaken and by what order that is not known as yet.

The overall appearance has improved thanks to all concerned, but there is still quite away to go as yet.

The spoil heaps are under review

The stumps of the Irish Yews

The wobbly Headstones, as per Harborough Mail 13th August 2009 review re safety

H.D.C. do have a rolling small budget programme will arrive at the Church yard and Cemetery in due cause, John Parrott, Street Scene Services. H,D.C. is the man.

Cemetery Extension. The three sided piece of waste ground at Dingley Road is an option that I believe is in the process the planning formulation process.

Alf. Herbert

Notes re. Harborough District Council

Matthew Bills. Manager of Public Open Spaces Department

John Parrott. Landscape Officer Street Scene Services

Caroline Averille. Surveyor. Street Scene Services

Sharon Iddison. Burials Clerk.

FOCSA carry out the Cemetery Maintenance Work, who in turn, are contracted separately by H.D.C. a number of their man power is from the Harborough area

