



Sandymount Regeneration Project

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NEWSLETTER No. 6:

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PHASE 3 - JANUARY 2009

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to report that it has been another busy year for the trustees resulting in my annual newsletter, which has traditionally been issued in January in previous years, being issued in March this year.

Following on from the success of the Fund Raising event held in January 2009, a further fundraising event was held in Glasgow, in September....more on that later in this Newsletter.

The really good news is that, Phase 4, comprising remedial works to the final fifteen rows of memorial stones commenced on 27 January, 2010, and was completed on schedule at the beginning of March. I arranged a meeting on site at Sandymount on 15 February with our Project Surveyor, Andrew Syme, and took that opportunity to thank the team from Caley Construction for their enthusiasm and hard work throughout all the Phases.

On 23 March, 2009, an initial meeting was held at Sandymount with Anne Marie Carr, Principal Officer in the Chief Executive's Department at the Glasgow City Council. As the cemetery is within that area of the east end of Glasgow for which Anne Marie is responsible, she was very pleased to be given the 'guided tour' of Sandymount by Andrew and me, and was particularly interested to note the transformation within the Hebrew section since commencement of the Project in 2004.

I contacted Anne Marie Carr advising her of my proposed meeting with Andrew Syme in June, 2009, with a view to assessing the costs for implementation of the Phase 4 works, and also to consider initiating proposals for a Children's Memorial within the Hebrew section, of which more later in this Newsletter.

August saw a further exchange of e-mails from a regular correspondent, Dr Harry Brown from Leeds. Harry and his mother, Freda, who have family connections to Glasgow and where Harry himself went to school in Shawlands, have long been supporters of the Project. Harry and Freda were heading to Glasgow for a family stone setting at Glenduffhill cemetery, which they wanted to combine with a visit to Sandymount nearby. They particularly wanted to visit the grave of Freda Schepitein, who has a special place in their family history. She died as a teenager, aged 16, in a train disaster in Glasgow, and was Harry's grandmother's only sister..... his mother (Freda) was named after her. In Harry's e-mail of appreciation for pointing him in the direction of Freda's burial plot, he mentioned that seeing her aunt's headstone for the first time brought a tear to his mother's eye.

A further meeting was held in Glasgow on 7 September with our friends at Glasgow City Council. One of the items regularly on the Agenda at our meetings regards 'funding'. Although GCC has been most generous in the past, making a very substantial contribution towards the cost of the Phase 3 works, it was made clear to us that GCC, like most other local authorities, were reviewing their budgets in the current financial climate. Estimated cost details had previously been submitted to Anne Marie Carr to complete remedial works to the remaining fifteen Rows, 21 to 35, as the final Phase 4 of the Project. As the density of headstones within these remaining rows is generally less than in previous phases, the Trustees were anxious that the remaining rows should conclude the final phase of the works, and the advantage of an economy of scale was also taken into consideration.

At the end of September, the Trustees were delighted to receive a call from Glasgow City Council: Land and Environmental Services, advising that a further contribution of £20,000.00 was to be made towards the cost of Phase 4. Andrew Syme was duly advised of this very generous contribution, and taking account of this and other donations most graciously received from the Queen's Park Charitable Trust and many individuals, a site start in January 2010 was provisionally proposed.

Also on the agenda at our September Meeting was a proposal to implement a Children's Memorial within the Hebrew burial ground, and also improvements to the stepped entrance from Hallhill Road. Alternative sketch proposals for both the Children's Memorial and the stepped entrance were presented to the meeting by Landscape Architect, Gillian McVitie, whom the Trustees had engaged for this purpose.

Since the project was established in 2004, enquiries have been received from several countries including the Channel Islands, the USA, Canada, and Australia.....and now Israel has been added to our list. The Trustees were pleased to respond to an enquiry from Mr Stanley Shapiro, who lives in Israel and having Glasgow and Belfast family connections, in seeking the headstone of his grandmother, Zlata Shapiro, who died in 1927 and is buried at Sandymount. In his very kind letter of appreciation for sending him a photograph of his grandmother's headstone, Mr Shapiro also responded with a generous donation to the Project.

By referring to the records of the period covering the early 1900's held by the Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society, sadly, there are several hundred names of babies and young children who either died in childbirth or as infants at a time of high child mortality, and who were buried in unmarked graves. The Trustees were happy to take on the further challenge of having a small memorial erected to their memory. The proposals were also submitted to the Executive Committee of the Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society, who were happy to lend their support towards this project.

On 21 October, I was contacted by Ben Freeman, the local UJIA Community Youth Worker, who advised that he would very much appreciate if a group of volunteer youths could visit Sandymount cemetery to assist in cleaning up the Hebrew burial ground. In my acceptance reply, I thanked Ben for his kind offer for the group to weed and sweep paths and to clean headstones as part of the UJIA (United Jewish Israel Appeal), 'Mitzvah or Good Deed Day', which was held on Sunday 15 November.

I visited Glasgow to attend the 'Mitzvah Day', and was particularly pleased at being able to thank Ben and his team personally for doing such an excellent job on the day. I was very impressed by the youngsters' genuine willingness and enthusiasm to preserve a part of the history and heritage of the Glasgow Jewish Community.

On behalf of both my fellow Trustees and the Executive Committee of the Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society, we would also acknowledge with many thanks the work and effort offered by Thomas Paterson of the Clean Glasgow's Environmental Community Action Team, in providing necessary equipment and protective gear for the youth team, and for making the event so memorable and successful. Our sincere appreciation is also offered to the Jewish Telegraph for giving the Sandymount Youth Team a mention in the Mitzvah Day article which duly appeared in the next edition of their newspaper.

With imminent completion of the Phase 4 works in the coming weeks, there remain two other elements of the project on which the Trustees are anxious to focus, namely the Children's Memorial and the stepped entrance from Hallhill Road. Funding for the stepped Entrance may be assisted by community self-help. An approach has already been made by the Trustees to Mr Rizzi Mohammed, with whom the Trustees share a mutual interest in keeping our respective religious sections at Sandymount in a respectable condition.

An approach on behalf of the Trustees has been made to the Incorporation of Masons at the Trades House in Glasgow by Andrew Syme, with a view to gaining their support for these important additional elements of the Sandymount Regeneration Project. More information on these items will follow as details emerge.

With the completion of Phase 4 in the coming weeks, resulting in the repairing and re-positioning of the total of 1250 headstones covering all the Phases, there is still some work to be done in continuing the transformation of the Hebrew section of Sandymount from the condition into which it had deteriorated, to the respectable and pleasing condition which relatives and visitors can now enjoy. To assist us in our task, it is hoped that we may count on your continued support.

Photographs embracing Phases 1, 2 and 3, together with our previous Newsletter No. 5, may be viewed on our project website at www.sandymount.org.uk. Meanwhile, on behalf of my fellow Trustees, may I thank you for the interest which you have shown in our project.

That's it for now,



Stanley C Coorsh
Chair of the Trustees