Friends of Flaybrick

December 2024



Photo: Barry Brown

Remembrance Service 2024

Now a well established part of our Flaybrick calendar, our annual Service of Remembrance was held on Monday 11th November. We were again honoured by the attendance of Deputy Lieutenant of Merseyside Dr Nicolas Jedynakiewicz, who laid a wreath on behalf of the Crown, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral. Birkenhead MP Alison McGovern was represented by Bidston councillor Julie McManus.
Professor Calum Semple, OBE, joined us to play a bagpipe lament to signal the end of the two minute silence.

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Remembrance Service 2024

Cadets and officers from 400 (Birkenhead) RAF Air Cadet Squadron were again with us, and for the first time, we welcomed veterans from the Women's Royal Army Corps. Staff and pupils from three local schools attended with children from Bidston Avenue School and Bidston CE School giving readings as part of the service.

A large crowd assembled prior to a brief introductory speech from our Chair, Rob Dolphin, with the service being led by Reverend Keith Addenbrooke from St James's Church and Reverend Joe Smith from St Oswald's Church.

On-site staff and volunteers at Flaybrick had worked hard to prepare Flaybrick ahead of the service with the site looking in excellent condition. It proved to be a fitting backdrop for such a moving event.

For the first time we appeared on the teatime edition of the BBC TV North West regional news with Rob being interviewed after the service, by The Wirral Globe and Radio Merseyside.











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Grave Search Success.

We receive search requests from various sources such as our website, social media and personal visits. To date, we have carried out nearly 600 successful searches.
Here is the story of one such request.
Earlier this year we were contacted through our Facebook page, by a lady called Kim who was searching for Annie O'Neill, her great grandmother. Kim was able to provide the minimum information required, name, date of death and religion.
We found Annie's resting place without too much trouble, but had to inform Kim that the grave was unmarked with no headstone.
As Kim and her sister Linda are not local they asked if we could appoint and liaise with a stonemason to erect a headstone on Annie's grave. We were happy to help, and when approval was received from Wirral Council, the headstone was installed.
The headstone details were added to our database and we left things at that.
A few months later, Kim messaged to say her sister would be visiting the UK from the USA, and would like to be shown Annie's headstone and some of the other family graves.
In October, Rob met Linda and her husband Jim and showed them around Flaybrick.
Kim and Linda have given permission to include the story of Annie and her remarkable family in one of our future guided walks....come along next year and you'll hear the story for yourself!

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Funding Our Work

As with any registered charity, our group has to work hard to generate income to help us continue to invest in what we do. We aim to keep annual membership fees as low as possible, as we consider the number of members to be at least as important as the fees generated. Similarly, our £2 charge for guided walks is thought by many to be rather low, but again, we prefer to see people at Flaybrick rather than increasing the charge.
Some members (you know who you are) have made individual donations, often for a specific project, and when the work has been completed, the member is informed.
We have to be aware of the availability of individual grants and we have been successful in this regard too. A grant from The Duchy of Lancaster, earlier this year, has helped us enormously towards finally obtaining accommodation after over thirty years of being 'homeless'. We were also successful in bidding for a grant from West Wallasey Car and Van Hire as they celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in 2024. A while ago, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Cheshire Freemasons generously funded costs relating to one of our annual Services of Remembrance. Local businesses Asda and Tesco also help us through their community funds.
In addition to this, we spread the news about Flaybrick as far as Chester and this year has seen us making a number of presentations to other interested groups and societies. We are aware that these groups will vary in membership numbers so rather than set a fee, we always ask each group to make whatever donation they are able.
One thing that everyone can be sure of, is that every penny we receive from these various sources, is put back into our work at Flaybrick.



People gather for a presentation given by Rob Dolphin.

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Before and After

Our Secretary, John, recently came across an old photo in his Flaybrick archive from 2007.
Last week I went to the same spot to take another.
I think you'll agree that work being carried out by the grounds staff and volunteers is paying off.



In the 2007 photo to the left, the monument at top right, can clearly be seen in the bottom photo.
Coincidently, the area to right of both photos was mentioned in a newsletter earlier this year, when Taylor's cross and other monuments were lifted back over the wall.



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An Early Christmas Present

With Christmas fast approaching, good news was received by the Friends group this week. Our first home in over 30 years is being delivered during the second week of January. What a way to start the new year!

It will be located on our own plot, within the ground staff's compound on Tollemache Rd, and will be fenced off from the rest of the compound.

The cabin is equipped with a toilet, small kitchen area, hot water, heaters and lighting and has steel shutters to all windows.

At 30ft x 10ft it's not as big as we could have wished for, but finances and prudence dictated the size. We will be able to hold meetings and have a 'cuppa' after volunteering, in a warm and dry environment, and it should adequately meet our needs.

Ground works have been completed so we look forward to delivery. More photos in the next newsletter.





