

Celebrating Birmingham's Burial Grounds Project



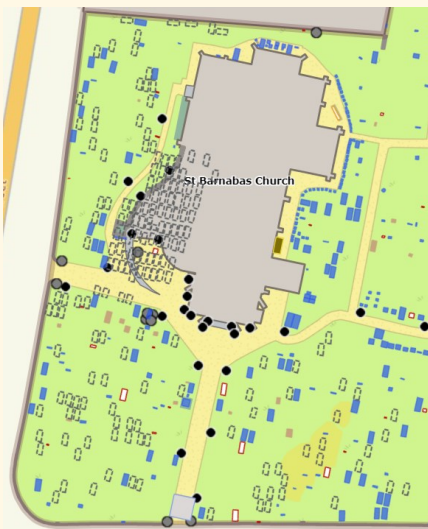
Over the past two years the Celebrating Birmingham's Burial Grounds Project has

Led **44** memorial recording sessions which (alongside some wonderful independent recorders) recorded the inscriptions of over **4,338** memorials and the details of **7,610** people have been added to the **5** digital maps in **12** group sessions and many, many hours of people continuing this work at home. We have also ran **2** (very early) dawn chorus walks, **1** BioBlitz, **1** family session, **1** Churches Count on Nature session. Organised **6** talks, part funded **3** afterschool club sessions, and ran **2** fungi walks.

And this has only been possible because of you! So **THANK YOU** for coming to a session, walk or talk, for choosing to spend your precious time collecting inscriptions, adding details to the maps, sharing our social media posts, passing on information to friends and for being interested in what we were doing. Projects like this simply can't happen without people like you!

A roundup of the sites and progress ...

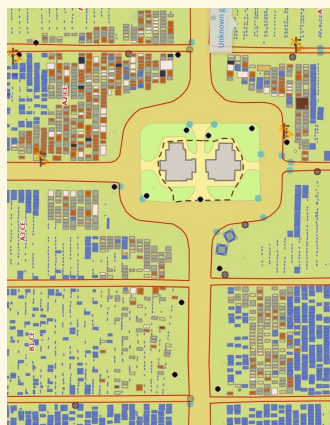
St Barnabas, Erdington.



St Barnabas has been wanting for sometime to tackle some of the issues they are facing in their churchyard with grave subsidence and misuse. The mapping came along at just the right time so that a record of the churchyard could be made whilst plans to make the churchyard a safe and welcoming space were being developed. Robert & Sandra from Erdington Historical Society got to work and recorded all the current memorials and then went back to a previous survey and added the details of those that have since been moved. They now have all the churchyard information in one place and have been able to identify any graves they particularly want as a focal point for any future plans. 302 unmarked graves were added to the map from a previous survey which is useful when families make enquiries. In some cases there are photographs of the original memorials which have been added to the map as well. The un-

marked graves are shown as dashed rectangles. Find out more about the plans for St Barnabas' churchyard on their website [here](#).

Brandwood End Cemetery



Brandwood is a huge cemetery of over 28,000 memorials so we have been focussing on the oldest memorials around the chapels and the main route through the cemetery. We have managed to add the details of almost 2,000 people so far and have several people working on their own patches independently. Keep in touch with what is happening in the cemetery via the Friends of Brandwood End [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

The Jewellery Quarter Cemeteries

The neighbouring Cemeteries of Key Hill and Warstone Lane are Birmingham's original cemeteries. Initially we focussed on Warstone lane cemetery and have recorded the details of almost 5,000 people. This huge number has been achieved not only in our

sessions but also by Francis who worked his way through large patches of the cemetery alone and Alan who has entered hundreds (probably into the thousands) of records onto the map in our group sessions and at home meaning we have covered about 75% of the area of the cemetery to date. Pat and, more recently, Richard have been taking photographs of the memorials and adding them to the maps meaning that the whole of Warstone lane has been photographed and Richard is now busy at Key Hill.

We only stated in Key Hill this year. It is a beautiful shady site to work in hot weather but progress is slow due to the huge amount of leaves that collect on the graves and as we try and not trample the bluebells in the spring. As the first of the two cemeteries to open it has an interesting mix of graves and is well worth a visit. The Friends of Key Hill & Warstone Lane Cemeteries run a program of tours throughout the year with proceeds going towards grave restoration, find out about these and other events [here](#).

St Mary's, Handsworth

This was the last site to be mapped, so we were a little slow getting started at St Mary's. It is a remarkable, ancient site known to have had a church there for over a thousand years. It has the oldest memorials in the project dating from the 1700s when the practice of putting in individual grave markers started. At St Mary's we are taking a slightly different approach as there is an existing survey of the churchyard made by the Handsworth Historical Society in the 1980s. We are taking the original survey and checking it against what is still there in the churchyard before adding the information to the digital map. Through this process we are able to add inscriptions that were visible in the 1980s and are not now, ensuring that information isn't lost. So far we have managed to check the area immediately around the church. But still need to add the details to the map.

Still to come!

Josie has written a research guide for anyone investigating their family history at the Birmingham Archives. We are just putting the finishing touches to it and when it is ready it will be free to download from our [project webpage](#). Keep an eye on our social media for all our news.



One of the legible gravestones from the 1700s

So what happens now?

The current, funded part of this project is ending now. To date the project has been run by the burial ground conservation charity Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) via George (Community Coordinator) and Josie (with a range of hats on including Jewellery Quarter Cemeteries Project Manager, Freelancer and most recently Cemeteries Activities Manager for Birmingham City Council's Bereavement Services).

As volunteers on all sites have expressed a wish to continue with the project, Josie will now be taking the overview of activities and coordinating volunteers. Be kind, her remit covers activities in 9 cemeteries and 3 crematoria of which this project is just a small part. We at CfGA are delighted that we can pass the project on to such capable hands and thank Josie for taking it on.

There will be the usual hiatus in site activity over the winter and Josie will be in touch with her plans in the spring. You have received this newsletter because you have booked onto a project event or have been connected to the project in some way. If you wish to be removed from the contact list please email george@cfga.org.uk before the 10th December when we hand over the project.

Access to information on the maps

Information on the map can be accessed via the organisations we have been working with and you will be able to view and explore it yourselves at the Birmingham Archives soon. Until mid December you can contact george@cfga.org.uk for information.

[Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery](#)

[The Friends of Key Hill & Warstone Lane Cemeteries](#)

[Handsworth Historical Society](#)







[St Barnabas Church](#)

We are working to make the maps as accessible as possible and are reaching out to a number of organisations. Please get in touch with George, before the end of the year, if you know of any organisations who might benefit from access.

Thank you to the above organisations and to Erdington Historical Society for their collaboration and support in this project.

For your interest

Caring for God's Acre run an Autumn Webinar Series on a range of biodiversity and heritage subjects connected with burial grounds, including one by Josie. There several dates remaining, have look at our [Eventbrite page](#) to see the details. Webinars are free to members and £4 for non members with the exception of the 15th November that is £6 to non members.

 <p>Mammals in Burial Grounds Wed, Nov 9, 2022 2:00 PM GMT</p>	 <p>CfGA Online AGM and talk by Cat Irving on The Ossuaries of Europe Tue, Nov 15, 2022 7:00 PM GMT</p>	 <p>Depicting funeral workers' feigned sorrow in 18c England. Wed, Nov 16, 2022 2:00 PM GMT</p>
 <p>Caring for Fungi in Burial Grounds Wed, Nov 23, 2022 2:00 PM GMT</p>	 <p>"An Island of Peace Among the City Noise" Tue, Dec 6, 2022 2:00 PM GMT</p>	 <p>Saints, Springs and Sanctuary - Stories of Sacred Ground Wed, Dec 14, 2022 2:00 PM GMT</p>

From the 1st January 2023 your contact at CfGA will be Anna (anna@cfga.org.uk)

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