



Sandymount Regeneration Project

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NEWSLETTER No. 5:

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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 February this year.

Two principal events have featured in the activities of the Charity during the past year, namely the execution of the Phase 3 works and a significant Fundraising Event.

Two meetings were held with our friends at the Glasgow City Council during the year, the first was on 12 February, 2008. Improving access to all the religious sections of Sandymount including the Hebrew section via the stepped entrance from Hallhill Road, and also to provide a ramped entrance to comply with current regulations, were again on the agenda.

The 12 February was also the date on which the Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society celebrated its 100th Anniversary. At the centenary dinner the Chairman, Dr Barry Cooper, acknowledged the work done to date by the Trustees in restoring the Hebrew section of Sandymount to a respectable condition.

The Trustees also enjoy a good exchange of information with our contacts at the 'Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis'. We received a communication from the Deputy Chair, Ruth Johnston, advising of their proposal to name the pathways within the Glasgow Necropolis, and to name the main pathway to the Jewish Enclosure after one Joseph Levi - the first Hebrew burial within the Necropolis in 1832.

Ingathering of funds continued throughout the year to meet the £45,000 cost for the Phase 3 works, covering rows 15 to 20 of the total of 35 rows, again involving repairs to a further two hundred headstones, most of which were laid flat as in previous Phases. The Trustees most gratefully acknowledge the continued support given to the Project by the Glasgow Jewish community, Queens Park Charitable Trust, Glasgow Jewish Community Trust, and Glasgow City Council, by way of their generous donations, which contributed to the satisfactory completion of the Phase 3 operations.

The Trustees have been extremely gratified to receive many e-mails and letters, together with sundry donations to the Project, all expressing appreciation of the work being done at Sandymount. In addition to donations from various corners of the UK, several donations have also been received from further afield in North America, Canada, and Australia, from those having family connections to Glasgow.

We also appreciate the *Jewish Chronicle* publishing an article on the work of the Project in the Local News-Scotland section of their edition of 24 October, which resulted in several generous donations from ex-Glaswegians living 'South of the Border'.

Thanks to the wonders of internet technology and the Project website, many e-mails have been received from people having family connections both to Glasgow and to Sandymount cemetery.

One such e-mail was from Mr. Leonard Pearlman, whose father George Pearlman, left Glasgow in 1922, just barely out of his teens and heading for Canada. Eventually, he settled in Portland, Oregon USA, where he met and married Len's mother, a native of Portland, and where Len was born and raised. Anxious to trace his family connections in Glasgow, Len was pointed in my direction by Harvey Kaplan, Director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (www.sjac.org.uk). Len was also particularly pleased when Harvey was successful in finding his cousin, Freda Brisbar, who now lives in Hove, West Sussex, and who Len and his wife have subsequently visited.

Freda had not been in Glasgow for many years, and wished to visit her family's gravesites. She was also particularly interested in establishing the condition of the gravesites of her twin brothers, Bernard and Maurice Pearlman, who died in 1923 when only two months old, and buried in the children's section at Sandymount. As was the custom in those days, children who died either in childbirth or at a very early age were buried in unmarked graves. This prompted Freda to arrange with a Glasgow stonemason to provide a small memorial headstone for the graves, and on 16 September, she visited Sandymount to view the plot where her brothers were buried. The occasion was made even more special by the kind words spoken, and the comfort given to Freda by Rev. Soudry, as he recited the appropriate paragraphs from the Memorial Prayer Book. The Scottish edition of the *Jewish Telegraph* also marked the occasion with a very nice front page article, under the headline: 'Tragic Twins Finally Laid to Rest after 85 Years'.

Project Meeting No 20 was held on 6 October with Andrew Syme, of Andrew Syme Associates, our Glasgow based chartered surveyor, and Ms Lucille Furie, Bereavement Services Manager, Land and Environmental Services Department of the Glasgow City Council prior to the start of Phase 3. As in previous Phases, approval was sought for Phase 3 to proceed. An assurance was also given to Ms Furie that all Health and Safety elements of this Phase would again be complied with in accordance with current regulations.

Phase 3 duly commenced on 8 December, and the site work was again supervised by Andrew Syme Associates. The duration of the work took just over the estimated period of three weeks, and was carried out in sometimes inclement weather. Grass seeding remains to be completed where the ground has been disturbed around the headstones, and this will be carried out at the start of the growing season in April 2009.

As the condition of the Hebrew Section at Sandymount Cemetery is gradually being transformed, the Trustees are most anxious that the work of restoring the remaining fifteen Rows should be completed as soon as possible. A meeting will be convened with our surveyor to assess the extent of work required in the remaining rows, and to establish an estimate of cost.

As a result of the work of the Project the Trustees have received enquiries regarding the burial plots of babies and infants buried in the Children's Section at Sandymount.

By referral 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 children who either died in childbirth or as infants, and who were buried in unmarked graves at that time. The Trustees, in conjunction with the Burial Society, have assisted relatives and siblings who are now in their latter years in establishing and marking the resting places of their brothers and sisters.

One further challenge which the Trustees are pleased to accept is the establishment of a Children's Memorial, on which the names of those children whose burial plot is not individually marked can be collectively shown.

There still remains considerable work ahead to restore the Hebrew section at Sandymount Cemetery to a respectable and dignified condition, befitting the loved ones resting there. Our Fundraising Event held in London on 24 January this year raised the sum of £4,360.00, added to which the Charity can claim some £865.00 from HM Revenue & Customs through Gift Aided donations from UK Tax Payers, resulting in a grand total of £5,225.00, which provides an encouraging start towards Phase 4. With the help of Tom Coorsh in Chicago, contact with other branches of the Coorsh family has been re-established, and they have also contributed to the accumulation of funding for Phase 4.

We would now wish to acknowledge and to show our grateful appreciation for the regular ground maintenance work carried out by GCC: Land & Environmental Services within the Hebrew section at Sandymount Cemetery. Our further appreciation is extended to the Burial Society for additional ground maintenance undertaken within the completed Phases by their team from Glenduffhill cemetery.

The Trustees also wish to record their appreciation for the expertise provided by our Chartered Surveyors, Andrew Syme Associates, in supervising the site work in progress, and regular liaison with our colleagues at Glasgow City Council. The results of these physical contributions, combined with the financial contributions by everyone involved, are helping to transform the appearance of the Hebrew section at Sandymount.

Thinking of financial contributions, we now look ahead towards Phase 4, and, having come this far, the enthusiasm of the Trustees and others towards completion of the Project remains as strong as when the Project was established in November 2004. Any possible financial contribution by you this year, towards the ongoing progress of the Project, would be most gratefully received.

Photographs embracing Phases 1, 2 and 3, together with our previous Newsletter No. 4, may be viewed on our Project website at www.sandymount.org.uk. Meanwhile, on behalf of the Trustees, may I thank you for the interest you have shown in our Project.

That's it for now,



Stanley C Coorsh
Chair of the Trustees