

the steadfast 'snip snip' sound lost in the overgrowth and traced the source to an elderly lady using kitchen scissors to cut a path to her family grave. Dave had the long term vision of a wildlife haven; and instead of opting for the short term approach of using chemicals to reclaim the landscape, with dogged perseverance he and the small cemetery maintenance team cut back and cut back re-growth until the brambles didn't have the strength to cause any more problems.

In the 1840's Ford Park was on the edge of the city, surrounded by farm and park land. Now busy urban life is evident on three sides, and in the lower valley it borders Central Park. It is easy to tune into the season walking in this lovely site off Ford Park Road - with petite but hardy primroses, the haze of bluebells, white drifts of ox-eye daisies with splashes of poppies and autumnal leaf colour. The formal landscape with sombre yews standing like sentinels at path junctions in the old quarter blends into the softer country feel. The Trust has planted 500 trees and encourages tree memorialisation. Much of this work could not have been achieved without the enormous commitment of volunteers and support of friends of Ford Park.

The aspirations of the Trust are faithful to the cemetery founders but also look to the future by creating a space of both immense visual appeal and use to local people for decades to come.

There is so much to Ford Park - a biography of its community and the history of Plymouth, a burial ground which can serve generations to come and a beautiful green gem.

The Trust has had its ambitious Heritage Lottery Fund stage one grant application, to restore the original chapel and to convert the other into a centre for local history studies, approved. In order to achieve this project we have to match the funding from the HLF and will launch an appeal in April. We need to raise £60,000 by October, 2008; a daunting hurdle but manageable, if the affection and appreciation which saved the cemetery and turned its prospects around is anything to go by.

To keep in touch with Ford Park cemetery and find out why you should visit, log on to www.ford-park-cemetery.org or call 01752 665442 and become a Friend of Ford Park.

A Memorable Place

Wendy Shaw, Trustee of Ford Park Cemetery



You could be forgiven for thinking that cemeteries are a place for the dead but at Ford Park Cemetery in Plymouth it couldn't be further from the truth. As well as keeping the memory alive of those buried at the Victorian cemetery, the charitable trust which has owned and managed this special place since 2000 is also committed to making sure that Ford Park is relevant, informing and inspiring to the community it serves today and in the future.

Ford Park is full of life - whether it is the stories of courage, endeavor and innovation discovered through painstaking research by volunteers into lives gone by; or the hundreds of visitors and school groups who come to learn about the Victorians, the Second World War, notable graves and the wildlife thriving on the 34.5 acre site. As well as the events and guided tours, Ford Park also draws walkers and local residents who appreciate having somewhere to reflect.

The Trust, which took on the ownership and management of the cemetery when the original cemetery company went into liquidation, has transformed the landscape and prospects of Ford Park. Back then accessibility was denied by waist-high brambles. This Sleeping Beauty was being smothered. Head Groundsman, Dave Wickett, recalls the time when he heard