



THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER FOR THE HOLBEACH CEMETERY CHAPELS PROJECT

# Would You Like to Get Involved?

IN THIS ISSUE

## HOLBEACH CEMETERY CHAPELS

by Trudy Shephard Project Officer

### Hello!

A very warm welcome on behalf of the Trustees and Members of the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels Trust to our first ever community newsletter for the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels Project, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. The Trust has recently been awarded £49,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help raise awareness about these beautiful Victorian chapels and their surroundings and to develop the skills needed to secure their restoration and future use.



The chapels and cemetery are of paramount importance to Holbeach and the local area. Driven by the tireless efforts of the 10 volunteers over the last 5 years, this award recognizes that on-going commitment to and

enthusiasm to secure the much needed restoration costs, by providing the financial support to secure public consultation and community participation.

Over the next 18 months the Trust, in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire, will be offering local people the opportunity to participate in a number of FREE activities to enjoy, participate and explore the history, culture, architectural features and natural environment of these chapels and by doing so, enable them to inform decision making and influence change.

Chris Penney, Chair of Holbeach Cemetery Chapels Ltd said: "We are thrilled to have received this wonderful support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident that many people in the area will be delighted to participate in the wide range of activities that will be offered."



### Project Activities

From September 2016 we will be offering a wide range of FREE, fun and rewarding activities for the people of South Lincolnshire, to explore, enjoy and engage with these beautiful Victorian chapels and their surroundings. Find out more on Page 3



### Volunteering

Would you like to do more? Your contribution would really make a difference to our work. We can provide you with the support and opportunity to get involved at times that suit you. Find out more on Page 4

## HOLBEACH CEMETERY CHAPELS - a brief history

Have you ever walked through Holbeach Cemetery, which lies between Park Road and Edinburgh Walk, as a pleasant thoroughfare between these two well-used roads?

Perhaps you have relatives or friends who have been laid to rest in the grounds and welcome the dignified peace of the cemetery, as a place to remember and reflect.

Maybe you are new to the area, and have yet to discover the site discreetly hidden away to the North of Holbeach behind a boundary of evergreen trees.

But whether you are a local resident or temporary visitor, the cemetery and its chapels have served the town since 1854.

*When the first stone was laid by Mrs Morton, wife of Revd. Morton, incumbent, nearly 800 people turned up to witness the event!*

By 1830 mortality rates were increasing and the idea of the cemetery, detached from a permanent place of worship, was being discussed nationally. Cemeteries would solve the problem of overcrowded churchyards, allow for spacious and long term provision and cater for all denominations in most cases.

However publically funded cemeteries remained rare until the 1850s Burial Acts and were up to this date most usually privately funded.

In 1849, it was agreed that Holbeach needed more burial space. The population was growing and All Saints Holbeach was conducting 95 interments a year.

In 1852, the Burial Committee tried to raise funding through the sale of 51 shares but were unsuccessful, so they joined forces with Spalding, Boston and Stamford (and other smaller towns) to procure a suitable Act of Parliament to secure public funds.



By May 1854, the Burial Committee had received 44 designs for the cemetery. The commission was awarded to esteemed architects James Pigott Pritchett & Son of York, Huddersfield and Darlington, who designed churches, chapels and other public buildings such as Huddersfield Railway Station (although we believe it was actually his son James Pigott Pritchett Junior who designed Holbeach Cemetery, as he was also responsible for the sister design of Boston Cemetery in 1854, rather than his father).

The winning design was typical of the growing trend for 'garden cemeteries' inspired by the work of John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) a Scottish landscape designer who had written the influential text 'On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries' and the growing revival in Gothic architecture which was considered to be the 'correct' style for a Christian cemetery at that time.

Loudon was both an enlightened and practical man. By operating a rectangular, grid system, connected by straight drives and pedestrian paths with a controlled palette of planting restricted to the boundaries and edges, a cemetery would accommodate a greater number of graves. On the other hand, the same principles upheld and emphasized the literal and symbolic sense of enclosure, enabling the deceased to enter through the 'gateway of heaven', whilst mourners were enveloped in a 'contemplative resort', a place of 'permanent and public commemoration'.

To achieve this Loudon counselled on certain elements being present: a gateway to herald the entrance to the cemetery; a lodge for the gatekeeper, whose role it was to prevent trespass, theft or vandalism; a hierarchy of

roads and paths with planting to evoke mourning and contemplation and a chapel to be placed in a 'central and conspicuous situation' to act as focal point for both the cemetery and the committal service itself.

Holbeach Cemetery typifies many of the larger cemeteries being constructed in Victorian Britain at that time. It features a splendid gateway and central path, a harmony of trees and other planting to create an oasis of tranquility and is furnished with two chapels (for Anglicans and Non Conformists services), presented as a single composite building, united by a central archway and imposing spire.

The first stone was laid on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1854 by Mrs Morton, wife of Revd. James Morton, Vicar of Holbeach before a gathering of nearly 800 people.

*The first burial was James Lawson, aged 7 years who was interred on 11 October 1854.*

Although designed to evoke mourning and contemplation, Loudon and his followers also believed that a cemetery was more than just a 'repository for the dead'.

They believed that it also offered the community 'a school of instruction in architecture, sculpture, landscape gardening, arboriculture, botany and general gardening, as well serving as historical records for local history and biography.

**Source:** See Credits

# Activity Programme 2016-2017

**Heritage Open Day**  
**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September**  
**10am to 4pm**  
**FREE**

Holbeach Cemetery lies off Park Road and is only a short walk from the town centre.

We are delighted to be able to promote the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels as part of the countywide **Lincolnshire Heritage Open Day Festival**. A trail created around the cemetery and chapels will give opportunities to learn more about this iconic site, it's local history and natural environment.

Special activities for children, refreshments and generally suitable for wheelchairs. Public conveniences in Park Road.



**Cemetery Trail**  
**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October**  
**2pm – 3pm**  
**FREE**

Holbeach Cemetery lies off Park Road and is only a short walk from the town centre.

We are delighted to be able to promote the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels as part of the **South Lincolnshire Walking Festival**. A trail created around the cemetery and chapels will give opportunities to learn more about this iconic site, it's local history and biography.

**Terrain:** Paths and mown grass **Level:** Easy  
**Cost:** Free but donations welcome.

**Open Workshop &  
Community Embroidery  
Project**  
**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September**  
**(Open Workshop)**  
**10am to 4pm**  
**FREE**

**Location:** Reading Rooms, Holbeach  
PE12 7LL

Working with renowned community textile artist Carol Parker, participants will be able to engage in an exploratory workshop that blends traditional techniques with contemporary design to learn new skills or develop existing ones.

Carol will then work with volunteers over a period of 12 months to develop a community embroidery project that will culminate with the creation of three long panels (approximately 160cms x 50cms) formed from a variety of fabrics and traditional and contemporary techniques, to capture the historical and conservation aspects of the Holbeach Cemetery & Chapels.

The panels will be on display in different places in the locality, before ultimately being displayed in the restored cemetery chapels.

**Skill:** The workshop and on-going community embroidery project are accessible to all ability levels but we welcome skilled embroiders who will be required to optimize specific elements of the design.

**Reminiscence Day**  
**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November**  
**10am – 4pm**  
**FREE**

**Location:** Reading Rooms, Holbeach  
PE12 7LL

A chance for local people or those with former connections to Holbeach to share their memories of loved ones buried in the cemetery to enhance our understanding of the local history and biography of the site.

## To be announced:

We will be hosting the following activities but details still need to be confirmed. More information in our next newsletter!

**Heritage Skill Workshops:**  
**Stained Glass**  
**Lead Work**  
**Masonry**

We will be offering three FREE taster workshops to learn more about specific heritage skills that would have been used in the construction of the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels. Limited availability.

## Graveyard Survey:

A volunteering opportunity for participants to help develop a survey of the gravestones across the lifetime of the project and collate the biography of the deceased. There will be the opportunity to learn more about graveyard conservation through training with Lincolnshire Archives.

## Archives & Family History Skills Training:

FREE training to learn more about how to use genealogical resources both online and in person through training with the Lincolnshire Archives.

## Photography Workshops:

FREE workshops to learn basic photographic techniques for the amateur family historian.

## Architecture Workshop:

FREE workshop to learn more about the history of the chapels and their architectural features in context with the Victorian's interest in the Gothic Revival and creation of the 'garden cemetery'.

## Children's Drama Workshop:

FREE two-day workshop that enables children to learn more about the history of life in Holbeach during Victorian times, through creative techniques including drama, film and music. Culminates with a presentation to invited family and friends.



## VOLUNTEERING: Would you like to help us?

We will be creating a number of opportunities over the next few weeks for local people to help us with our work. If you would like to volunteer with us, please contact [info@holbeachcemeterychapels.org.uk](mailto:info@holbeachcemeterychapels.org.uk) for more information.

These opportunities will allow you to get involved in something you enjoy, meet new friends, gain experience and provide a real sense of supporting your local community.

Our volunteer roles will best suit people living in South Lincolnshire and will include public facing roles as well those 'behind the scenes' as part of a number of one-off, short term or on-going opportunities, which can often be tailored around your other commitments. There really will be something for everyone!

We promote an inclusive, non-discriminatory approach and welcome applications from everybody over the age of 16. If we do not offer a volunteering opportunity that you feel you could help us provide, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



## CREDITS

### Holbeach Cemetery Chapels – a brief history

#### Informed by:

A History of Holbeach  
by Reverend Grant Macdonald (1878)

Holbeach Cemetery Chapels  
by Robert Meeds (Revised Edition 2013)

The Victorian Cemetery  
by Sarah Rutherford (2008)

### Photographs

All photographs taken by Trudy Shephard, Project Officer except the photograph of the Trustees on Page One, Lincolnshire Free Press/Heritage Lincolnshire.



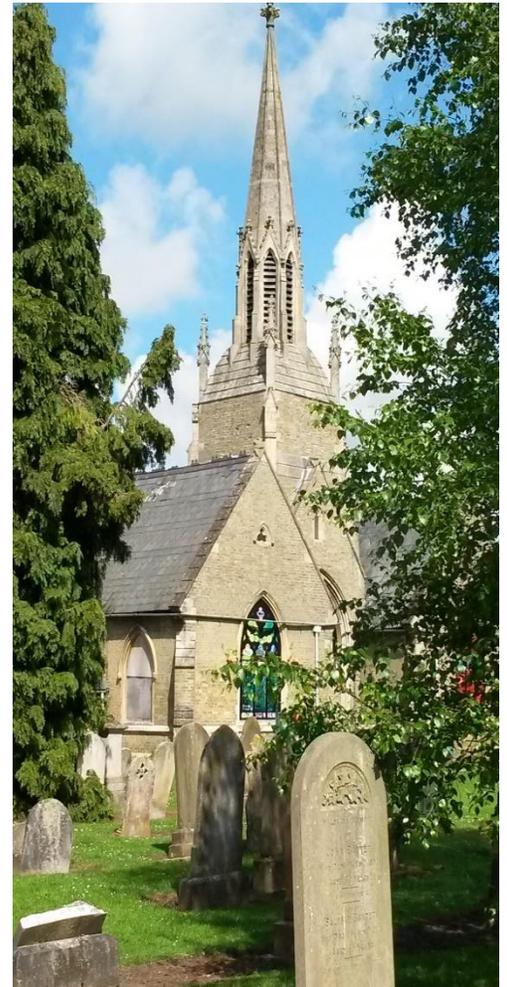
For more information about the Holbeach Cemetery Chapels Project or any of the activities mentioned here please contact **Trudy Shephard, Project Officer** on:

07501 823993

or

[info@holbeachcemeterychapels.org.uk](mailto:info@holbeachcemeterychapels.org.uk)

Holbeach Cemetery Chapels Limited is registered in England  
Company Number 07838143  
Registered as a Charity in England  
Number 1148567



#### We'll be at the:

- Holbeach Town & Country Fayre on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2016
- Holbeach Food Fayre on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016
- Spalding Food Festival on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> July 2016
- Ayscoughfee 1940s Weekend on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Hope to see you there!