

"If you've lived in this area for any length of time you've probably at some point or other had a wander around Toxteth Park Cemetery. Perhaps you think of it as just another graveyard with neglected monuments and an air of melancholy. Or maybe you appreciate it as a little oasis of calm from the noise of Smithdown Road. But did you know that Toxteth Park Cemetery was the first of its kind in Liverpool? Or that it's Grade II listed and is on the National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest? Or that it contains no less than fourteen separate Grade II listed structures?

I think Toxteth Park Cemetery is special. It is a wonderful combination of a well designed green space in the heart of the city and a glimpse into the social history of this area. First laid out in 1856 it was intended to be a wholly self-reliant place of rest with on-site glass houses growing flowers and an integrated memorial masons. All denominations were catered for as were all walks of life. Even today you can contrast the ornate and expensive monuments of the rich with the unmarked pauper graves of those who had been unfortunate to find themselves in the nearby workhouse. Perhaps like me you've read some of the gravestones and wondered at the stories hinted at by the bare facts of life and death. Some monuments – like the one to firefighters who died in the line of duty or the grave of the man who'd been in the charge of the light brigade - provide more details, but every one is a testament to our ancestors heartbreak and grief. People are still being buried there and it's fascinating to compare the austere monuments of the past with more personal present day memorials.

Sadly though there are risks to the cemetery. Two of the listed structures - the memorial masons near Hartington Road and the Cemetery Chapel - are in a serious state of disrepair. Without urgent action these buildings will be lost to the city in the next few years. A combination of the elements, pigeons and vandals have left the chapel in desperate need of renovation. Without it we may only have a few years before a managed demolition is required. I am trying to do something to stop the loss of these structures. I would like to set up a 'Friends of Toxteth Cemetery' group to try to co-ordinate preservation efforts. If we are able to organise we might be able to do something positive to save the best of the site. We might be able to find an alternative use for the chapel or ensure that the history of the cemetery is better explained to visitors. In any event it's up to us as local residents to show that we care about our area and its heritage.

If you are interested in being a 'Friend of Toxteth Cemetery' then please contact me at [tim.beaumont@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:tim.beaumont@liverpool.gov.uk) or on 07954 098890

Tim Beaumont  
Resident of Bagot Street & City Councillor for Picton Ward"

Regards  
Tim