

# COWGATE CEMETERY

## *Clearance Project*

*Report from Hugh & Lesley Gordon*

Both teams have achieved a great deal since we began this project in March 2001.

Initially the work was extremely hard, as most of the grass and shrubs were cut by hand, resulting in a few backaches among the mainly 'senior' volunteers, and the prospects of even clearing our allocated plots looked dim. However, the WCCP were prevailed upon to allow the use of power strimmers and the difference has already proved amazing. Those who have not already viewed the site since we began should do so. One can actually see the gravestones!

Thursday's 'Wonder Workers' (whom Jeremy pampers with tea and biscuits) have carried out most of the clearance, but Saturday's 'Slogging Slaves', who are fewer in number, have also done extremely well. The combined result is quite remarkable and we have managed to clear parts of the neighbouring plots, plus the overgrown strip between the lower path and the boundary wall.

Jeremy Cope, Barry Late and Michael Jukes, with their strimmers, have done sterling work, as has Martyn Burton, who with his fire-raising skills, trusty axe and strong arm has disposed of much of the resultant debris.

There are still some self-seeded trees and shrubs to be cut back, so any new volunteers will be very welcome to come and assist. (Dates and times are posted on our Website). After this year's spring cut (the grass will be allowed to grow for hay during the summer) it should only be necessary to carry out maintenance, to keep the plots free of ivy and other undesirable growths.

We envisage that once we have our own plots under control, we will move



on to those neighbouring plots which have not yet been dealt with. So the prospects are that this project will continue as long as we have volunteers willing to keep it up. For anyone who may care to join us, the following is a list of proposed dates, some of which clash with Dover Society outings, but that is not a problem, as we are very flexible, (the dates, not the toilers, that is) and the times are from about 09.30 until 12.30, on each of those days.

### **COWGATE CEMETERY Dates for 2002**

<i>Month</i>	<i>Thursday Wonder Workers</i>	<i>Saturday Slogging Slaves</i>
January	10th	19th
February	14th	16th
March	14th	16th
April	11th	20th
May	9th	18th
June	13th	15th
July	11th	20th
August	8th	17th
September	12th	21st
October	10th	19th
November	14th	16th
December	12th	21st

*(Please retain the above dates for your own information)*

## 6 **Recording of Gravestones**

The concerted efforts of a small band of helpers ensured that plot 2 gravestones were fully recorded and typed up early in the New Year.

Further research by Ian Murton in the Library history section, reveals that in the 1980's Mrs De Bourbel largely recorded plots 3, 4, 7 and 8, together with some vaults and other graves, mysteriously labelled 'a' and 'b', in the council's records. Ian has himself recorded plot 6 for typing up, together with a number of stones in other plots, which seem to have escaped previous attention. Plots 1 and 5, at the seaward end of the cemetery, were badly damaged during the war, although it is hoped to retrieve some of the inscriptions.

It now remains to type up, and collate, all the outstanding inscriptions and plot them on maps using both council records and alphabetical plot lists, prepared by Joe Harman, who has taken a great interest in the cemetery over many years. It may even be possible, with help promised by the council, to lift some of the fallen headstones (of which there are many) so records may be taken. In this way it is hoped to complete the museum's records and provide Dover District Council with a plan of the layout of the graves, which they currently lack, and which will be most useful to visitors researching their roots.

All in all, this combined project is turning out to be a very worthwhile undertaking of historic value.

