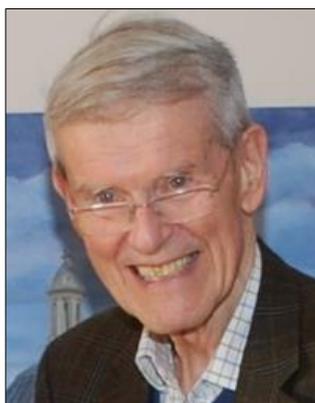


Arthur Tait BEM

28.7.1934 - 13.1.2021



Arthur lived in west London, near to Brompton Cemetery; the cemetery being unique in being owned by the Crown and managed by The Royal Parks. Arthur had a great love for this tranquil and special place, devoting 23 years to championing and supporting the restoration and conservation of this Victorian 'garden cemetery', originally opened in 1840.

In 1986 the Friends of Brompton Cemetery came into being, originally as a protest group, and in 1998, having recently retired, Arthur was asked if he would become chairman. He was reluctant at first but decided to pay a visit to this green oasis; he was hooked at first sight and for over 20 years, working with The Royal Parks, led the Friends in their drive to help improve the cemetery for local people and visitors alike. During this time, the Friends have grown to over 500 members.

Key to the work of the Friends is aiding the conservation and interpretation of the site's rich heritage of buildings and monuments, whilst supporting the protection and enhancement of the cemetery's biodiversity. Under Arthur's leadership the Friends have built up a group of around 100 active volunteers to help with this important role, including the running of the Visitor Centre. It is now an impressive volunteering force that fundraises for the cemetery, assists with landscape memorial maintenance, undertakes heritage projects and gives guided tours.

During Arthur's tenure the Friends played an important role in supporting The Royal Parks' ambitious plans to restore the cemetery to its former glory through a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Subsequently, funding was forthcoming which led to the transformation of this historically important Grade 1 listed site.

In 2018, working with the Royal Parks Guild, The Royal Parks and the Chelsea Pensioners, Arthur and the Friends were involved in the unveiling of a memorial plaque commemorating the names of the Royal Parks staff who went to fight in World War I and did not return. This took place alongside the restoration of the Chelsea Pensioner's burial ground with the creation of the 'Battlefields to Butterflies' wildflower meadow.

Arthur was a modest man who was reluctant to take any credit for what had been achieved by the Friends during his period of office and he would point to all the others he felt had made a difference. However, in recognition of his work in the community and especially in relation to Brompton Cemetery, Arthur was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2019 New Year's Honours list. This award, applauded by all who knew him, was a well-deserved and timely acknowledgement of his tremendous contribution to Brompton Cemetery's renaissance.

This achievement was underlined by Loyd Grossman CBE, Chairman of The Royal Parks, who, commenting on the award of the BEM said, "It is wonderful that Arthur Tait's sterling contribution to Brompton Cemetery over many years has been recognised in this way. This is a well-deserved honour for someone who has contributed so much".

Arthur will be sadly missed by all those who were privileged to know him. We offer our condolences and kind thoughts to his wife, Ann, and family.

The Royal Parks Guild