Walk among graves to improve health and



The chapel at Brompton Cemetery Friends of Brompton Cemetery

Brimming with mausoleums, tombs and grave stones, historic cemeteries are usually associated with bereavement or gothic horror. However today, Victorian cemeteries are being revived as places for communities to relax and connect with nature.

Brompton Cemetery reopens today following a £6.2million restoration and conservation project, mostly funded by the National Lottery.

Grade I registered, it one of London's 'Magnificent Seven' garden cemetery's that were built during the 1800s to alleviate London's over-crowded graveyards. With its Gothic mausoleums, domed chapel and statues of angels keeping guard over tombs, there's no question it's an atmospheric place for a quiet stroll.

Visitors can submerge themselves in its architectural splendour and its abundant history. The leader of the suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst and Sir Henry Cole, who was instrumental in the Great Exhibition and founding the V&A museum, are among the 205,000 people buried at Brompton.

But can a cemetery really improve health and wellbeing?

Trustee of The Royal Parks Wesley Kerr, said: “The astonishingly beautiful Brompton Cemetery was always intended for respectful enjoyment by the living as well as burial spaces for the dead. London’s 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries are prodigious landscapes, full of wildlife amidst amazing architecture, magnificent monuments - a great legacy.”

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Brompton is the first cemetery project jointly funded by HLF and the Big Lottery Fund to reopen following restoration. It has been rejuvenated as both a place for people to enjoy its heritage, but also as vital community greenspace in a densely-populated part of the capital.

It is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and as well as restoring, conserving and better sharing the history of its many unique listed monuments and architecture, the project has created a wildlife haven. 633 trees from around 60 species, 200 moth species and many types of bats, invertebrates and birds call Brompton Cemetery home.

It’s been proven time and again that access to greenspace and nature improves wellbeing, and with both in such abundance in our historic cemeteries, perhaps they do have the power to improve the health of the nation.

Today we’ve also announced £6.2m to revive and restore Sheffield General Cemetery Park; Belfast City Cemetery; and London Road Cemetery, Coventry for the benefit of their local communities. That takes joint National Lottery investment in historic cemeteries to £15.1m.