

## Reepham Old Burial Ground Wild Life Garden – part 1

In a recent “Parish Council News” you may have noticed an item entitled “Norwich Road Cemetery” which informed that for the last two years the Council had ceased to maintain this old and unused cemetery due to the cost and that they had received a request from the Reepham Society to turn it into a nature reserve.

The present cemetery, on the Whitwell Road, was formed in 1856 at a cost of £200 for 1½ acres for Hackford and Whitwell at a cost of £450 for half an acre for Reepham and Kerdiston. The four civil parishes were united in 1935 to form the new parish of Reepham and the Parish Council took over the responsibility of the cemetery. It seems that the Norwich Road cemetery was redundant to the extent that a new burial ground was required in the 1850s, the old cemetery has therefore been a redundant area to be maintained for a long time.

In the *Norfolk Chronicle* the following article appeared in September 1954:

Norwich Road Cemetery is a headache reported the Chairman of the Labour Committee (Mr. B.G. Hall) at the bi-monthly meeting of the Reepham Parish Council at the Town Hall on Wednesday. Mr. G.F. Faircloth presided.

The observations arose on consideration of the reply from St. Faiths and Aylsham R.D.C. concerning a suggestion from the Parish Council whereby the cemetery could receive better attention by the levelling of the graves.

The R.D.C. asked a series of questions on the original provision of the ground, whether by the Parish Council under the Burial Act or by the Church authorities. whether it comprised all consecrated graves, when it was first used, and when did the last burial take place; has any person a perpetual right of burial there and what were the conditions imposed when permission was given for gravestones to be erected on various graves. Only in the light of answers to these questions could advice be given.

The Clerk (Mr. D. Kendall Chapman) said he had had occasion recently to consult the Minutes of the old Reepham Parish Council from 1894, and he had failed to find any reference to the provision of the ground, and it must be assumed, apparently, that it was provided by the Church. There was also doubt as to whether perpetual rights of burial had been exhausted, and the Council agreed to let the subject lay on the table.

It is with little surprise that considering the questions posed by the St. Faiths and Aylsham R.D.C. that it was another 30 years before the Parish Council decided to offload this maintenance responsibility and we hope that the Reepham Society can come up with an acceptable set of proposals to turn this area into an amenity area.

The Committee has agreed that the Old Burial Ground Wild Life Garden should be a Society project for the Civic Trust Environment Week which is from 25th April to 4th May 1987. It is hoped that the formal opening of the garden will be during this week.

*From an article published in the Reepham Society Newsletter, Spring 1987*