



JULY UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL

Danger! Men at Work : Memorial Planter Progress

In last month's edition I promised an update on work in progress to excavate and completely redesign the Memorial Hall Planters either side of the old porch – in readiness for Remembrance Sunday this year.

You can see from the banner photograph above and the other couple of photos below, that work is now well under way and on schedule. Stage One was a tough and difficult job – removing all the old, tired earth and straggling, deeply rooted plants, which required diggers, skips and skilful manual labour. The trustees are so very grateful to Barrie Thornley and Colin Phillips, who are volunteering their time and expertise to undertake the project. That's them below hard at work during the two-day excavation; Barrie is on the left with his long, roughneck crowbar and Colin is on the right with his heavy-duty shovel!



Over now to Barrie, who I asked to write a short summary of the work done so far and, importantly, what happens next!

"Date: Monday, 4 May; Location: The Memorial Hall. Our objective was to dig out and remove all the overgrown vegetation from the planters in front of the building. I was helped in no small way by my good friend

Colin Phillips, an excellent excavator pilot. Driving and manipulating a 1.5-ton machine in such a confined space would test Colin's skills to the limit. The planters were narrow and heavily overgrown. Our initial task was to remove an old conifer entwined with shrubs. With the help of a crane sling it was eventually hoisted skywards! The first bed was then stripped of exhausted soil and plants – so far so good.



But the second planter posed a different problem. It was located adjacent to two doorways and an unforgiving safety rail, but Colin was equal to the task. Little by little we emptied the second planter with only slight damage caused to a few of the bricks in the one corner. These will be replaced and reset during the next stage – which will be to refill both planters with around 3 tons of good quality soil so that new planting can begin!! This work has now been scheduled and we're on track to have the whole project finished in good time for Sunday, 9 November – Remembrance Sunday."

Meanwhile hires in May and June reached new levels, with 40 in May (including 2 weddings) and 47 in June (including 1 wedding). And July looks set to continue that trend with 37 bookings in place to date, including

another wedding. It's so pleasing to see that our heritage community building continues to be seen as an attractive, affordable and welcoming open-access space for all to enjoy.

Next month we can share some exciting news about our plans to refurbish the original porch, again in time for Remembrance Sunday.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees