

DERBY STUDENTS DONATE TREE

Over 150 years ago, the first tree in Hingham's only arboretum was planted in Hingham Cemetery. Next spring, another tree will be added to the over 500 trees now gracing this historic property. The 2007 graduating class of Derby Academy has followed tradition by donating a tree to honor the 1784 school's founder Sarah Derby, who is buried there.

Derby Academy tree donations began nine years ago with a gift of a European larch. It was given to replenish the old alley of larches planted in the mid 1800's near Sarah Derby's gravesite. In subsequent years other larches, a coral bark maple, and a yew tree were added as Derby gifts. A plaque has been placed below each tree with the common name of the tree, the botanical name, and the Derby class year. The type of tree and location of planting the Derby gift will be decided in the fall.

The old Burial Ground behind the Old Ship Church was, from the time of the town's first settlers, privately owned farmland. Few if any trees were growing on the property when Hingham Cemetery was incorporated in 1838. The old grounds and the rest of the newly acquired property were redesigned in the style of Mt. Auburn Cemetery, founded only 4 years earlier in Watertown. Terracing was done, paths and winding roads added, and exotic trees not native to this area planted throughout. Today, many of those original trees have reached the end of their life cycle. The Cemetery established a tree replacement program over 10 years ago, and many new trees have been donated as memorials, all with accompanying plaques.

The map of the cemetery grounds shows the location of many of the older trees on the property, including maples, oaks larches, lindens, and 4 varieties of beech. The free maps can be found in the designated box outside the doors of the cemetery chapel.

The 16-acres of quiet and shady grounds are a favorite place for townspeople to stroll, dog walk, bird watch, or "leaf peep" during fall season. The beauty of the large trees draw hundreds of visitors to this arboreal setting throughout the year.

"Speaking for the Directors, I want to express our gratitude to the students of Derby Academy for their generous support of this unique Hingham landmark," said Hal Goldstein, president of the Cemetery Board.