

## Everyday Heroes

### What is a hero? What does it mean to be a hero?

When one thinks of heroism many of us think of those who fought in the two World Wars, who gave their lives for liberty and freedom. At the end of the war, there were also those British soldiers who were the first people to enter Belsen concentration camp – still thought of as heroes by those they liberated.

We all think of the men and women in the fire and police service as heroes. Now, with Covid we also think of the doctors and nurses and all those *on the front line* – interesting use of war terminology here – as our heroes.

But what about the ordinary every day acts of heroism? These generally don't get recognised today but they were way back in Victorian times. There is a little known park in central London where those people who sacrificed their lives to save others are remembered. Unless someone has taken you there you probably wouldn't know it exists. It's known as \*Postman's Park because postal workers from a nearby postal depot used to meet there to have their lunch.

Nowadays, at least before Covid, London's office workers would also go there to enjoy their lunches in the shade. Postman's Park, which opened to the public in 1900, features on guided walking tours as one of the hidden gardens of London. The site is an amalgamation of three City of London burial grounds so it also contains the relics of graves from long ago.

In more recent times, Postman's Park was featured as a meeting place in the film *Closer*.

It is unusual to have such a large green space in the City of London. But the most significant thing about Postman's Park is that it is the place where everyday heroes are remembered.

There are rows of decorative ceramic plaques where you can read about everyday bravery. Poignant tributes to everyday heroes who, in saving the life of another, lost their own.

These plaques commemorating the self-sacrifice of ordinary people were the idea of the painter and philanthropist, George Frederic Watts.



I wonder why we don't still do this, honour the small acts of bravery of ordinary people? At a time such as now, when so many people are losing their lives, wouldn't it be a good idea to have a memorial to all who died during Covid?

And why stop there? I am sure we can all think of other everyday heroes who deserve to be honoured and remembered in this way.



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