

Short Guide

# 10 Tips to Bring Your Cemetery Stories to Life



Red  
Thunder  
bird



## How to increase the experience of a cemetery?



A cemetery is so much more than a place of remembrance. It is often a beautiful, bio-diverse park. A place full of stories with cultural-historical value where you meet, learn or just clear your head for a moment. Especially at a time when we are burying less and less, it is needed to put these other functions of a cemetery in the spotlight. One of the key words here is experience.

### History comes to life in a modern way

One way you can increase the experience is by bringing the rich history to life in a modern way. There is beauty in the fact that the past still has, or acquires, meaning today if you offer it vividly.

### What will it provide?

- Greater awareness
- New visitors & tourism
- Inspiration and motivation through learning from people of the past
- Appreciation for the cemetery
- Community spirit
- Pride in local heritage
- Resource for teaching materials and education

*You can find out more about promotion results at [redthunderbird.nl](http://redthunderbird.nl)*

So invite visitors, hikers, tourists and cultural heritage enthusiasts to visit your cemetery with fresh eyes so that they can learn about its diverse, special qualities. Because how beautiful is it to tell the moving, courageous and funny stories of its silent inhabitants in a modern, multimedia way. For example, with videos, podcasts and QR codes at the graves and funerary particularities, to be able to hear and see them. This is how you turn your cemetery into a place to learn, be inspired, give meaning and enjoy the walking park that it is.

*"At Red Thunderbird, we believe in the power of bringing your cemetery stories to life. These stories of the past have meaning for today. Scan the QR code for our vision and read and read and experience how we can help you."*

A promotional graphic for Red Thunderbird. It features a dark, textured background with a QR code in the center. To the left of the QR code is the Red Thunderbird logo and the text "Stories of the Past with Meaning for Today". To the right of the QR code is a smartphone displaying the Red Thunderbird app interface, which includes the same logo and text. Above the QR code, the text "Scan me and find out how we bring your stories to life" is written.

Red Thunderbird

Stories of the Past with  
Meaning for Today

Scan me and find out how  
we bring your stories to life

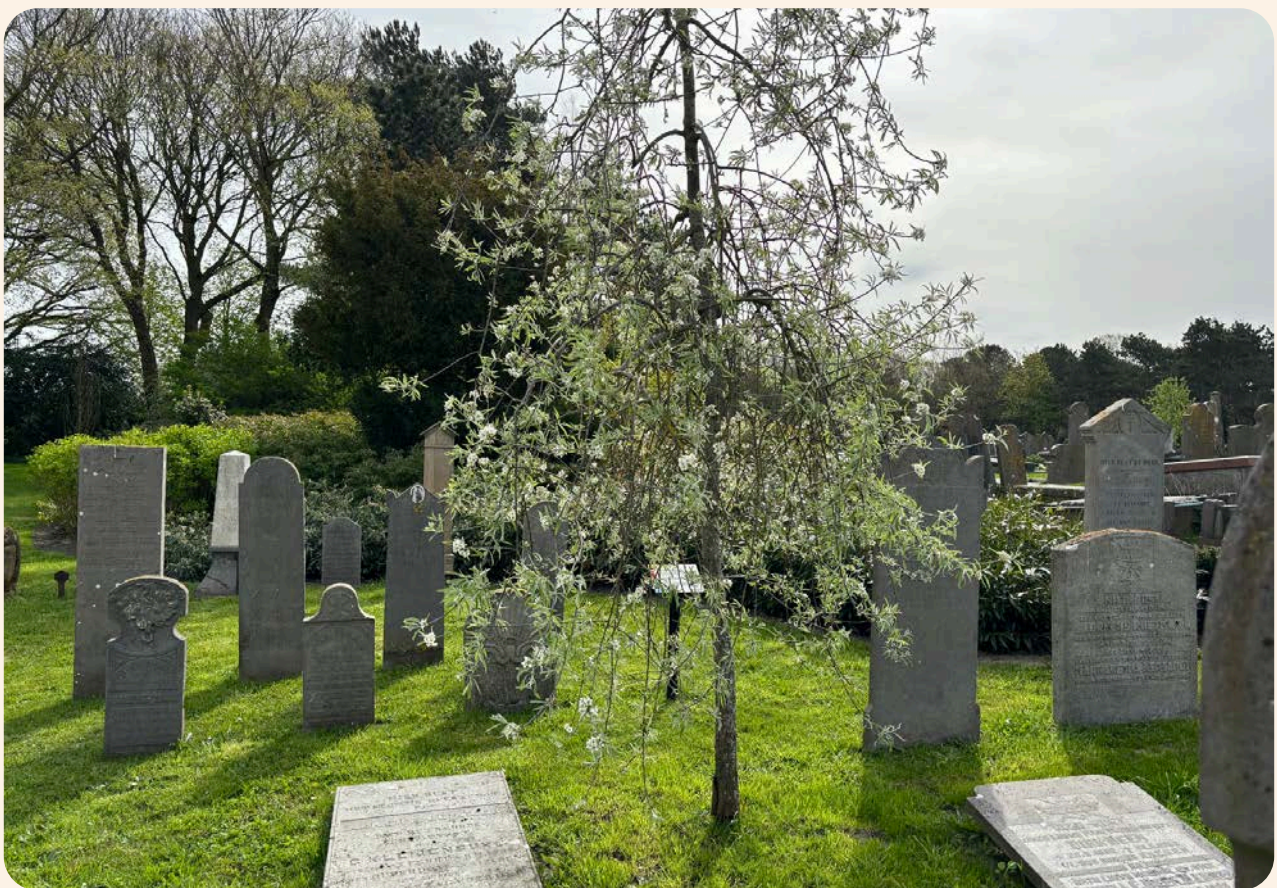
Red Thunderbird

Stories of the Past with  
Meaning for Today

Introduce your vision, history, insights and  
cultural heritage enthusiasts to the touching,  
brave and funny stories of the silent residents of  
your cemetery. In doing so, make your cemetery a  
place to learn, be inspired, find meaning, and  
enjoy the beautiful park it offers.

www.redthunderbird.nl

Therefore, in this guide we give you 10 tips to get started yourself on unlocking the rich history hidden under the headstones of your cemetery. We hope these recommendations will inspire and guide you in setting up an engaging and meaningful project in which the stories of the past become meaningful for today.





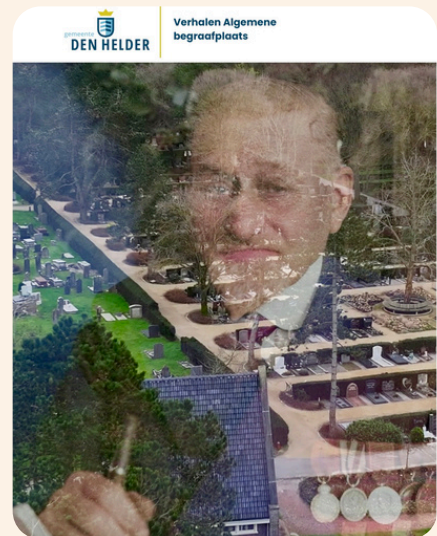
## 1

### Bring your local heroes into focus

---

Research which historical figures or families in your cemetery have special significance for local history. Their stories can serve as anchors for the project. What have these people meant to the community? Is this still relevant today and why?

*Dorus Rijkers is one of the most famous if not the most striking personality at Den Helder General Cemetery. In 1926, he was the most famous sea hero in the Netherlands and even beyond. He now invites interested parties to visit this more than 400-year-old cemetery.*



## 2

### Dig into available resources

Make an inventory of available archives, old newspapers and local historians. Interview local experts and residents to discover new perspectives and surprising stories. There is often a lot of knowledge available at local historical associations. Often visual material too. Make use of it! Along the way, provide good documentation in the form of notes, recordings, or visual material so that you can develop everything into attractive stories.

## 3

### Choose your themes

Decide which specific themes are relevant to your local history. Whether it is entrepreneurship, women's emancipation, seafarers, special grave markers, monuments or war heroes, themes help you create a common thread in your stories. Also, always check whether that the chosen theme matches the target audience you want to reach.

Wondering what this might look like?

*Red Thunderbird unlocked for the Den Helder General Cemetery over 40 stories in the 4 themes: Whalers and Seafarers, Great Monuments, Jewish Cemetery and Old Stones and a bonus theme. For inspiration, visit the story route's [website](https://www.redthunderbird.nl).*



## 4

### Explore the terrain

Walk around the cemetery and note which facilities and infrastructure are already in place. These could possibly be used or adapted for the placement of QR codes or information boards. Also map out whether your cemetery is easy to find in Google Maps, so you can map out a route for visitors on a map.

5

## Build a network

Identify local stakeholders such as the municipality, historical societies, heritage foundations or schools. They can be valuable partners for support, funding or as targets for the stories. Also be sure to ask them what stories they know about the graves. You will be surprised how much they know! And in that, you are sure to find the historical storytellers who, experience shows, are eager to collaborate on your project. Below are the storytellers from the project in Den Helder.



**Maarten Noot**  
Historische verhalenverteller



**Jack Ambricola**  
Historische verhalenverteller



**Anita van Breugel**  
Cultuurhistoricus



**Paul van Niel**  
als Dorus Rijkers

6

## Exploit unique features

List the unique features of the cemetery, such as architecture, landscape design, biodiversity, mosses or symbolism on headstones. These elements can enrich your story route. There is a lot of literature available on funerary heritage. For example, take a look at the [Terebinth](https://www.terebinth.nl) website.

7

## Create a promotion plan

---

Think about how you want to publicise your project. For example, are there seasonal or annual events related to your cemetery or local history? These could be perfect times to launch or promote your story route. Are there associations, foundations or clubs that would find the historical stories interesting? Take a look at [this](#) page for an impression of how Red Thunderbird has promoted The Story Route of Den Helder to interested parties.

8

## Address diverse audiences

Think about what your target audience looks like. Are they residents of your city or tourists from further afield? How old are they? We recommend making your stories relevant to different groups, such as schoolchildren, tourists and local residents. This increases the reach and impact of the project. Take your target group into account when choosing the stories and how you tell them.

*Want to do something special with the stories of the silent residents of your cemetery? Ask Red Thunderbird for help.*

*We like to think along with you about a suitable approach and take care of it from A-Z.*





## 9

## Assess your capacity

---

Consider how much time, money and other resources are available for the project. This will affect how many stories you can unlock. In doing so, also make an honest assessment of the digital skills within your organisation. This will help you determine what support you may need for the online aspects of the project such as creating a website, videos or podcast.

Practice shows that collecting and telling the stories can be quite timeconsuming. Is extra help needed? Or resources? Call on funds or subsidies if necessary. Red Thunderbird helps with that too, by the way.

10

## Opt for multimedia

Unlocking stories can be done in many different ways. We ourselves choose a modern and multimedia way. The various media forms can often complement each other well, forming a dynamic whole. Some media forms you can consider are a website, podcast, video and, of course, written stories told in a special way. Or opt for so-called user experiences, a great way to tell a story on your mobile phone. Just click on the QR code in the banner on the next page for an idea.



## Bonus tip: Be sensitive

Reflect on possible sensitive or controversial stories associated with your cemetery. Develop a strategy to deal with them in a respectful and informative way.



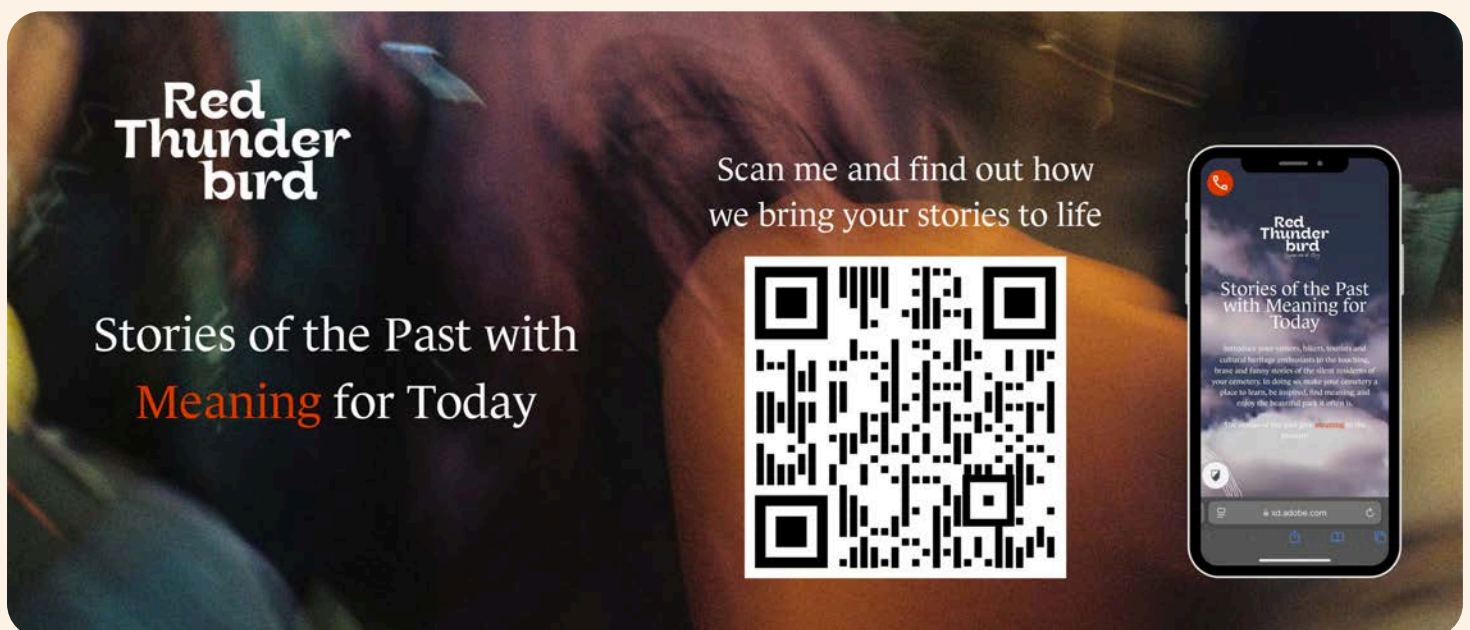
## Get started!

---

We hope these tips have inspired you and given you an idea of the possibilities and points of attention in unlocking your cemetery stories. Bringing your stories to life is a wonderful way to do justice to the past while adding new experiences to the cemetery so that it can continue to exist in the present.

**Are you excited and do you want to take the next step in bringing your cemetery stories to life?**

Don't hesitate to contact us if you could use some help. Our heart beats fast and passionately for bringing cemetery stories to life. We are ready to support you with our expertise, ranging from drawing up a project plan, applying for funding, to the multimedia disclosure and presentation of the stories. If desired, we will also work out the communication from AZ. Contact Regina van de Berg for a consultation, no strings attached. Our team is ready for you!



Red  
Thunder  
bird

Stories of the Past with  
Meaning for Today

Scan me and find out how  
we bring your stories to life

Red  
Thunder  
bird

Stories of the Past  
with Meaning for  
Today

Intuitive genealogists, historians, local and  
cultural heritage enthusiasts for their location,  
trace and family stories of the silent residents of  
your cemetery. In doing so, make your cemetery a  
place to learn, be inspired, find meaning, and  
enjoy the beautiful park it often is.

www.redthunderbird.nl