



Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries

www.foncc.org.uk



Volunteers helping to care for the cemeteries and record the lives of those resting there

Newsletter No. 15, February 2021

Welcome to the fifteenth newsletter of the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries. This is being circulated to all those who have expressed an interest in the Friends and others who we think may be interested. Feel free to circulate this to others who you feel may be interested in the Cemeteries.

Receiving this newsletter does not cost you anything nor commit you to anything, but if you don't wish to receive future copies, feel free to unsubscribe (just email newsletter@foncc.org.uk) - we won't take offence.

Past newsletters can be found on the website at:
https://www.foncc.org.uk/the_group/newsletters.php



Carisbrooke Cemetery Chapel

Where are we? (Tony Barton)

Activity in the cemeteries during the last quarter has been frustrated by the Covid lockdown. However, with the English government's 'roadmap' to ease the restrictions, we will, hopefully, be able to re-commence our activities in the next couple of months.

Covid restrictions don't stop people from using our website and we continue to receive positive feedback regarding the information on it from people all around the world looking for their ancestors etc. We've also received queries asking for pictures of graves and other information; when we can, we deal with these or, where we can't, the person has been referred to Bereavement Services or a local monumental mason as appropriate.

We always welcome your suggestions and help in bringing the Cemeteries etc. to the attention of the community - just e-mail (chair.foncc@gmail.com) with your thoughts.

Newport Cemetery (Rob Cain)

There has been no opportunity for any activities in Newport Cemetery because of the coronavirus restrictions. However, there is some hope that we will be able to organise something in the not too distant future albeit with some limitations.

As well as clearing away foliage and vegetation from graves in the cemetery, part of what we do is to transcribe any inscriptions on the headstones or kerbs and to take a photograph of the plot all of which is then put on the FoNCC website. Since I have been involved in these projects, I have learned much about the different sorts of grave markers there are. For example, early on, I thought that the large columns on plinths where the column was broken off halfway up had suffered damage either through weather or vandalism. I now know that it was designed like that to signify a life cut short! The whole subject of headstone shapes is vast but unfortunately one where information on it is scarce with hardly any publications or even websites to help. I do have some printed matter and to give some examples, crosses are of course, a popular choice for headstones and there a number of different shapes, each with its own name.



Trefoil



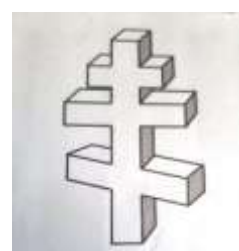
Latin



Maltese



Cross of Lorraine



Russian Orthodox



Wheel



Celtic

I may come back to this subject in future newsletters but you can of course see many types of grave markers in the photographs on our wonderful website.

As a postscript to my mention in the last newsletter of a letter to the IW County Press in 1891 by E. W. Watts, a piece of investigation by Justin Cavnor, a recipient of the newsletter, has identified the grave from which the flowers removed was that of Mary Milson Watts, aged 20 years, daughter of the Rev. Edward W. Watts, at one time headmaster of the old Newport Grammar School.

Carisbrooke Cemeteries (Tony Barton – with a bit of help from Richard Smout)

Not much work has been carried out by the volunteers in Carisbrooke Cemetery over the last quarter, so there is nothing material to report, so instead here's a piece about the cemetery Chapels.

The top of this newsletter has a picture of the Carisbrooke Cemetery Chapel, in fact there are two chapels separated by a central carriageway between them. There are identical large doors at the back of the building so Victorian funeral carriages (such as this Shillibeer, similar to one advertised by Messrs. Mew of the Bugle, Newport in the Hampshire Advertiser 1858) could pass through with the driving in place.



Above the doors appears to be the arms of the old Carisbrooke Parish although now much eroded with the weather. Also a steeple with a bell which in days gone by, the curator of the cemetery would toll for each funeral.

The chapel to the left of the large doors was the Church of England chapel, the one to the right was the non-conformist chapel – (today, only the left-hand chapel is in use and serves all denominations.)

The building itself, together with the Cemetery Lodge at the bottom of the driveway, is of an unusual style locally (possibly unique on the island?) with random shaped dark stones used as infill between the masonry corners etc.

On the outside, to the right of the doors is 'Hero's Corner' with a simple plaque installed in 1987 in memory of those who fell at Gallipoli in the 1915:



Hero's Corner plaque also showing structure of chapel walls

In 1920, the Burial Committee minutes record that the area either side of the entrance was to be enclosed by chains and known as 'Great War Heroes Corner' for the erection, without fee, of wooden crosses to the memory of those 'of our brave sailors and soldiers who have fallen, in order that their services to their King and Country in the Great War may be perpetuated.' Today nothing remains of this memorial, however the names would have been recorded on the parish war memorial in St. Mary's churchyard.

Just in front of Hero's Corner is a WWI memorial seat recently (2020) installed by the Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council.

A newspaper report of the Carisbrooke Joint Burial Committee in January 1920 included a suggestion from the Rev I. Rees of:

'.. the necessity for a shelter, like a sentry-box, which might be placed at the grave when it was wet and windy, for the use of the officiating minister. A clergyman was dependent on his voice and he did not want to catch cold and such a box would act as a sounding-board, so that his voice could be heard better in rough weather.' A member of the Burial Board asked 'what about the poor mourners as well as the clergymen', and as to the necessity for a sounding-board, he suggested 'that if they could get all the clergy to read the service distinctly instead of "jumbling it over," as he heard some do, it would be better. He did not believe in providing shelter for one and not all attending a funeral service.' Another member said 'it would be a good thing if on stormy days the officiating minister would ask those present to keep their hats on. That would indicate no lack of respect and it would be as much protection as a screen.'

Having decided on nothing, the meeting moved on to the next item!

As a result of the 1933 Local Government Act the local Burial Committees in the area (Carisbrooke & Gatcombe Joint and Newport & Barton Joint) were combined under the single Newport and Gatcombe Joint Burial Committee which took responsibility for all three cemeteries. In later years the Burial Committee became departments within Medina Borough Council and, today, within the Isle of Wight Council.

In 1952, the Church of England Chapel was redecorated and the costs defrayed by that denomination. However, the Nonconformist churches in the town couldn't agree to contribute to redecorating their chapel and the Burial Committee asserted that they were no longer entitled to maintain a denomination chapel (another IWCP report).

St Paul's Churchyard ('a bit off topic')

Without much to report on the cemeteries, so it might be interesting to mention a couple of round 'tablets' set into the inside of the boundary wall of St. Paul's church, by the side of the south-east gate.



The Isle of Wight Observer, 1 October 1853 records under Newport General News:

"A very handsome monument (designed by Mr. W. Dashwood, of this town executed by Mr. E. Joyce, of Ryde, and paid for by the whole of the ship's crew, from the Commanding Officer to the common seaman) has been erected at St. Paul's Church, in memory of three of the crew of the "Cockatrice" schooner, who were drowned by the capsizing of a boat off the coast of California. On one side of the tablet is engraved:-

'Sacred to the memory of George Dowden, aged 29 years, Joseph Shrubbsell, aged 25 years, able seaman, and Gabriel Victoria, 48 years, pilot of Mazathan, who were unfortunately drowned by the capsizing of a boat off Talava Point, Gulf of California, April 5th, 1852.'

And on the other side:-

'This Tablet is erected by the Commanding Officer and ship's company of Her Majesty's schooner, 'Cockatrice,' to mark the esteem and respect they held their unfortunate shipmates.'

The first named was a native of the immediate neighbourhood of the above church, which was no doubt the reason it was placed there."

Today, the monument has been mounted into the wall, probably when the wall was rebuilt in the 1960's as part of road-widening, showing just the first inscription, the other plaque, apparently produced at another time, shows an illustration of three figures on rocks and a ship.

St Paul's Cemetery, Halberry Lane. (Liz and Steve Priddle)

Not much is happening with this third lockdown, thank goodness for the red squirrels that visit the cemetery and keep us entertained!

We haven't really got much to put forward this time round, we've just tidied up some fallen branches. I did do the RSPB bird watch a couple of weeks ago. We were lucky with the weather and managed a great count (last year's count is in our Newsletter No. 11).

- Blue tit 7
- Jackdaw 20
- Blackbird 2
- Chaffinch 2
- Coal tit 1
- Collared dove 4
- Goldfinch 10
- Great tit 2
- Magpie 2
- Robin 1
- Woodpigeon 4
- Jay 2
- Crow 2
- Great spotted woodpecker 2

Buried here - Tom Woolgar – boot merchant and benefactor (by Tony Barton)

When Tom Woolgar, a retired boot merchant, died on 25th March 1928, his funeral appears to have been a quiet affair at the family graves in Carisbrooke Cemetery conducted by Mr Alfred Fry, his colleague from the Clifford Street Mission Hall. Although the mayor of Newport and the Corporation were represented at the funeral, the newspaper reports don't refer to 'widespread signs of mourning across the town' or similar as often appeared in funeral reports of the time. In fact, to the average Newportonian, Tom's death possibly didn't register until the contents of his Will were made public.

Tom had been born to James and Eliza Woolgar in 1874 at Carisbrooke, the third child of four – he had two older sisters and a younger brother, Fred.

James had been born in Brighton and he first appears in the island in the 1861 census with his parents, John and Sarah, in Ryde where John was a Shoemaker residing in Princes Street. In 1864 Sarah died and was buried at Ryde Cemetery, John appears to have then returned to the mainland leaving two of his sons (John and James) on the island. The 1871 census shows John, married with a family living in Orchard Street, Newport working as a bootmaker.

James, meanwhile, had married local girl Eliza Guy at St Mary's Carisbrooke in February 1870. In 1871 James was recorded as a Boot Maker and the family, Ellen and their first daughter Ellen, living on Carisbrooke High Street, above the church.

By 1881, James and Eliza had completed their family with the birth of another daughter, Annie, and sons, Tom and Fred (although Fred died in 1877, aged just 8 months). The family had moved to 82 High Street, Newport and James was recorded as a Bootmaker employing 3 men and the 3 surviving children were scholars.

The 1891 census records the family at 89 High Street, Newport, with James again recorded as a Bootmaker with the three children all described as 'Bootshop Assistants'. 89 High Street, shown here, is today a Grade 2 listed building incorporated in the larger business premises extending to Mill Street – the Historic England 1972 description for 89 & 89a High Street includes "... Modern shop fronts, but in centre doorway retains hood and ornamented brackets", obviously now lost.



Tom's sister Annie died in 1894 and was buried in Carisbrooke Cemetery.

In 1901 James was described as a Boot Seller and his 2 surviving children as 'Assistant Boot Sellers'.

Tom's remaining sister, Ellen, died in 1907 and was buried next to her sister in Carisbrooke Cemetery. The 1911 census records James, Eliza, his wife, and Tom with both James and Tom described as 'Bootmaker (dealers)'.

Tom's mother, Eliza, died in 1913 and his father, James, in 1925, both were buried next to their daughters in Carisbrooke Cemetery.

Tom retired from business shortly after his father's death while in his early 50's and seems to have increasingly been involved with religious work at the Clifford-street Mission-hall. He died, aged 54, at 89 High Street in March 1928 and was buried alongside his family members in Carisbrooke Cemetery.



The Woolgar family graves at Carisbrooke Cemetery

The obituary in the IW County Press described Tom as 'a man of strict religious views, and of a retiring disposition, but was always ready to help those in distress. He was at one time the owner of considerable property in the Upper High-street, but had recently sold the greater

part of it. He was very fond of gardening, and with the object of improving the appearance of the Mall he offered to plant trees there, but the Corporation did not favour the proposal.'

When Tom's Will was published, his estate was valued at £24,517 (equivalent to approx £1.55M in 2020 terms).

Tom's Will required that his executor (the London & Westminster Bank) employ the doctor in attendance at his death 'to open one of my arteries or take some other certain means of making sure that my death has really taken place,' and that he should be buried with the other members of his family, that there should be no flowers at the funeral and that a headstone, of similar design to those for the other family members, be erected on his grave. All this appears to have been done and he left £50 (circa £3,000 in 2020) to the Carisbrooke Burial Board to be invested and the income used to keep the family graves and kerbing in good repair and condition.

Personal bequests included £2,000 (circa £126k) to each of two cousins (children of his mother's sister, Annie Spencer (nee Guy)) and to his 'lifelong friend', Albert George James.

He also left sums to his housekeeper and his other employees.

To each of his tenants he left the property they occupied; however, Tom's obituary referred to him having 'recently sold the greater part of his properties', so there were probably some disappointed ex-tenants.

Another sum was left to the Clifford Street Sunday School 'for the upkeep of such school and the provision of prizes.'

Further sums were left to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Newport Nursing Association, the Royal Isle of Wight County Hospital, Ryde, and to two mainland religious organisations.

Finally his Will left £2,000 to the 'Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Newport' to be invested and the income 'applied for the relief of the deserving poor and aged in their borough'.

After these bequests, any residue was to be divided between the beneficiaries in the same proportions as the original bequests – there was a surplus and the bequests were increased.

Reporting these bequests, the IW County Press observed that 'these handsome bequests follow many generous gifts to the deserving poor made by the deceased during his life, but these acts were always unobtrusively performed, and few but the grateful recipients ever heard of them.'

Another report in the County Press covered the Newport Town Council meeting 11 April 1928, at which Ald. Harvey said that he thought 'Mr. Woolgar had set a noble example to rich bachelors with tons of money' – and the Mayor observed 'that all members of the Council were then looking at Harry Shepard' – another rich bachelor!

The bequest to the 'Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Newport' (which ended up greater than £2,000) formed the basis of the Tom Woolgar charity. The IWCP, 15 March 1941 reported that Newport Town Council had re-elected Ald. Mrs. Chandler and Mr. Salter as trustees to the charity (that's the only mention of trustees over the years I could find).

The charity continues in the 21st century under the trusteeship of two Newport Community Council councillors, the aim of it is 'to give relief in the form of additional winter fuel allowance to those in need, aged 65 or over and who reside in the area of the former Borough of Newport.' The Charity continues to 'tick over', making annual awards to around a dozen applicants each year. The Fund is advertised locally each winter, but receives fewer applicants each year.

(We would welcome contributions of stories regarding people buried in the cemeteries for future newsletters – just email us.)

Memorial transcriptions:

Recording memorial Inscriptions in the cemeteries has been suspended for the time being due to the Covid crisis.

New volunteers are welcome providing they are either in a 'bubble' or can maintain social distancing, either as part of our clearing sessions or at times of their own choice – just email if you are interested chair.foncc@gmail.com .

The Website:

More pictures, updated grave plot maps, transcriptions etc. have been added to the website - it's an ongoing task 'forever'.

The small, dedicated, team of volunteers are continuing to transcribe newspaper reports of the lives, deaths and funerals of those buried in the cemeteries. These 'research notes' are attached to individual records and also listed alphabetically - see website [BURIALS/Research Notes](#). Smaller reports have been added to the individual records themselves.

Future events:

Clearing sessions in the cemeteries will continue as possible with the regular volunteers.

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