



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. 16, May 2021

Welcome to newsletter number 16 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

Where are we? (Tony Barton)

At the end of March, Covid restrictions were eased such that 6 people could meet out of doors. This enabled us to recommence our Cemetery Clearing Sessions with just the previous group of volunteers; although we were still limited by the weather.

On 17th May the restrictions were relaxed further so that up to 30 can meet out of doors. While we are very unlikely to need that full number, we can now welcome new members to join our groups.

You'll find in this newsletter a summary of a butterfly survey carried out by the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society and also an article on the 'The Eyes On, Hands On' (EOHO) project of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) by Gary Newman, who covers our cemeteries as well as a few others.

With the coming of the warmer weather we would also welcome volunteers to transcribe inscriptions on memorials independent of our clearing sessions.

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

Newport Cemetery (Rob Cain)

The relaxation of some of the Covid-19 restrictions enabled us to start our cemetery sessions again albeit with limited numbers of volunteers attending and with social distancing in operation. Fortunately, there is plenty of space in the cemetery for us to spread out! Hopefully if the remaining restrictions are removed later in the year we will be able to return to 'normal' whatever that is.

I have said before in this newsletter about my interest in the history of the police service and every now and again this coincides with cemetery matters. I was recently made aware of a newspaper article in the Isle of Wight County Press of 10 January 1948 about the death of John James Salter who was a superintendent in the Isle of Wight Constabulary and whose grave is in Fairlee Road cemetery. Full details, including the newspaper item and a photograph of the grave can be found on our website - <https://www.foncc.org.uk/burials/grave-search/burial/10609>

Mr Salter was born at Haylands, Ryde and joined the Isle of Wight police in 1891 as a constable. He progressed through the ranks until in 1922 when he was promoted to superintendent and deputy chief constable. He retired in 1932 and died in 1948 at his home in Wootton. He and his family would have been well known on the island because of his prestigious position in the police force.

When he joined in 1891, the Isle of Wight Constabulary had only been formed in its own right on 1 April the previous year having broken away from Hampshire Constabulary which had been formed in December 1839. It was originally intended that the Isle of Wight Police would begin operating in 1889 but this was delayed because of objections by Hampshire Police. Newport Borough also had its own force founded in 1837 as did Ryde Borough, founded in February 1869. When the Isle of Wight Constabulary was being set up, Newport Borough refused to be part of it and merged with Hampshire Constabulary in April 1889. Ryde became part of Hampshire Constabulary in April 1922. The Isle of Wight Police eventually rejoined Hampshire in April 1943.

At the time John Salter was superintendent and deputy chief constable the police service was very different to today. There were only a few ranks – constable, sergeant, inspector, superintendent and chief constable. Chief constables in the early days were nearly all former military officers with no police experience appointed for their man-management and leadership skills and for their social standing. The superintendents were the experienced police officers who were key to the efficiency of the force. John Salter was in fact the first superintendent in the Isle of Wight Constabulary to reach the rank from being a constable.

All of the police officers were men. Women were not able to become fully fledged constables until well after Salter had retired. Female members of police officer's families were expected to assist in searching female prisoners, dealing with juvenile offenders and providing meals for all prisoners held in detention. There were no standardised uniforms. Each constabulary was expected to source its own supply of uniforms for constables and sergeants the design of which varied from force to force. Inspectors had better quality uniforms which they often paid for themselves. Superintendents had even more superior quality uniforms which they sourced and paid for. There were no badges or insignia at this time to distinguish the different ranks. Constables and sergeants had individual identifying numbers on their collars and sergeants did have the chevron stripes on their sleeves. Inspectors had some embroidered braid on their uniform tunics and hats. Superintendents had even more elaborate braid on their tunic fronts, sleeves and hats. Police officers were expected to wear their uniforms at all times whether on duty or not. The only exception appears to be at night in bed!



An Inspector



A Superintendent

Carisbrooke Cemeteries (Tony Barton)

We've managed two sessions at Carisbrooke Cemetery. They were productive, although we didn't uncover anything of real interest but it was good to meet up again and get out in the fresh air – the next session at Carisbrooke will be Saturday 5th June (subject to weather), all are welcome.

A couple of newspaper transcriptions:

Isle of Wight County Press 6 April 1901

NEWPORT

NOT EXACTLY SHEEPLIKE - On Monday a sheep, which with others was being driven down High-street, dashed away from the rest and jumped at the large plate-glass window of the empty shop at the top of the High-street, recently vacated by Messrs. Singer and Co. The window was smashed and the animal went clean through into the shop and then sprang through the aperture into the street again. The sheep escaped without injury, though the broken glass was sticking out awkwardly in the hole through which it passed.

Isle of Wight County Press 29 December 1951

NEWPORT

Pillar-box Improvement. – After a recent accident, in which a pedestrian was knocked down while posting a letter, the pillar-box at the Guildhall was yesterday reversed, so that the letter slot now faces the pavement.

Butterfly Survey at Carisbrooke Cemetery

Between April to September 2020, regular surveys of butterflies in Carisbrooke Cemetery were carried out by two members of the IW Natural History & Archaeological Society <https://iwnhas.org> who live locally. Extracts of their report are below.

The Carisbrooke Cemetery site

The site has thin soils, overlying chalk; the upper and middle slope is chalk from the Seaford formation, and at the lower part is on chalk from the Newhaven formation. High-quality chalk grassland is present on the site, with some planted shrubs and trees. Some small trees have grown from seed which has arrived by natural dispersal processes.

Approximately half the site, on the western end where the graves are older, is unmown during the growing season, and strimmed once in the year in late autumn. The eastern part, where the graves are generally newer and burials are still occurring, is strimmed at intervals during the growing season. Clearance of some scrub and ivy on gravestones is undertaken by volunteer working groups.

The western end of the site was designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the Unitary Development Plan 2011 in recognition of its lowland calcareous grassland, which is a national priority habitat and the presence of breeding populations of rare butterflies. The site also is important as a public open space. The site is noted for its display of cowslips in spring and it has populations of locally important species such as autumn lady's-tresses, and nationally important species such as the small blue butterfly.

Butterflies seen in Carisbrooke Cemetery 2020

Three species, common blue, meadow brown and small heath were found throughout the site, though in much greater numbers in the more favourable feeding and breeding areas. The results show that western end supports greater numbers and a greater variety of species compared to the eastern end. This is to be expected, as the areas left uncut provide both food sources and shelter for different stages of the butterfly life cycle. The botanical quality of the grassland at the western end may also be higher and would be worth investigating further.

Plants in flower provide nectar for the adult butterflies: for example, marjoram, vetches, knapweeds (particularly attractive to marbled whites), and ivy late in the season. Caterpillars of each species have precise requirements for food plants. If plants of the appropriate species are not present, the adults cannot lay eggs: for example, brown argus

butterflies require common rock-rose plants, and both are present in the cemetery. Plants also provide shelter, for roosting overnight and during inclement weather.

Butterflies seen in the eastern part of the cemetery were mostly in the sections which are adjacent to the uncut areas, suggesting that the butterflies are blown short distances here by the wind. If there are flowers here, they will use them as nectar sources.

Looking at the numbers of butterflies recorded, and considering their usual relatively limited territorial and flight range, it is likely that the following species are breeding on the site: brown argus, chalk hill blue, common blue, dingy skipper, gatekeeper, green hairstreak, holly blue, large skipper, marbled white, meadow brown, ringlet, small blue, small copper, small heath, small skipper, wall. Singles of dark green fritillary were recorded on two occasions, in the western half, so the species may be breeding. Further evidence of breeding would come from searching for eggs, caterpillars or plants with characteristic caterpillar feeding damage.

The remainder of the species recorded may have moved in from surrounding areas to find nectar, rather than being breeding species. Small tortoiseshell, peacock, red admiral, and orange tip all had occurrences of their caterpillar food plants at the extreme south-east corner of the site and along the footpaths to the south. Large and small whites range widely in their search for nectar and their caterpillar food plants were not present in the cemetery or nearby.

Some species are difficult to see, particularly small blues and brown argus, which are among the smallest butterflies and so may be under-recorded. Observations are very dependent of the prevailing conditions; butterflies are unlikely to be on with wing in windy or overcast conditions. Over a number of years, fluctuations in populations will be caused by wet and/or cool summers; early frosts in the autumn will affect breeding success and the number of generations produced in any year.

EYES ON, HANDS ON (Gary Newman)

The Eyes On, Hands On (EOHO) project is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) initiative which seeks to involve local communities in the monitoring and care of many of the thousands of War Graves scattered throughout the United Kingdom.

I applied back in 2019, along with hundreds of others in the UK, to act as an EOHO Volunteer, and help look after some of the War Graves here on the Island. After an unfortunate delay, due to the current pandemic, I was accepted around September 2020 and asked to complete some online training. The training is divided between 'Eyes On' (EO) and 'Hands On'; the EO being how to, safely and respectfully, check grave sites and headstones to ensure they are in good order and to report back to the CWGC. The HO training, again due to pandemic restrictions, has not been undertaken, but when able to, will impart the necessary skills to gently clean and look after the headstones. My areas of responsibility are: East Cowes Cemetery, St Mildred's Churchyard in Whippingham, Parkhurst Military Cemetery, Newport Cemetery, Carisbrooke Cemetery and St Paul's

Cemetery in Halberry Lane. I also temporarily monitor two graves in St Olave's Churchyard in Gatcombe.

What do I look for? Well, that the area around the grave and headstone is neat and tidy; that the headstone is upright, undamaged, clean and accessible; that all badges, emblems and inscriptions are clear, legible and recognisable. This information, along with photographs, is sent to the CWGC via the Area Coordinator, who if necessary, will arrange for repair or replacement of CWGC headstones. However, it must be stressed that replacement is always the last resort as the CWGC have a conservational approach so will only replace if absolutely necessary. After all some of these headstones are a hundred years old and may have been seen and touched by the grieving relatives.

Personal headstones and monuments to war casualties (where the family chose to erect their own memorial rather than accept a Commission headstone), are not under the care of the CWGC but they will still be monitored, to ensure the casualty's name remains legible, and as volunteers, we are asked to monitor these and keep the CWGC informed.

I'm also part of the Kantor Speakers program that offers free talks, donations to the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) are gratefully received, on the history and work of the CWGC. These can be delivered 'face to face' (COVID restrictions permitting) or remotely via Zoom. If you know of any organisation that may be interested in such presentations please contact me at <mailto:garycn28@gmail.com> for more details.

So if you see a stranger wandering around, looking at headstones, wearing Hi Viz. and holding a clip board, it's probably me. If so, please stop me for a chat as I'm always happy to talk about those in my care.

Post WW2 Service graves (Tony Barton)

I've often wondered what records there were for Service Personnel who died out of the periods covered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It used to be said that there hadn't been a day since World War Two that there wasn't a British Service Person in some conflict zone somewhere around the world - I think that is still a valid comment. One major difference for the families of Service Personnel dying overseas post WW2 to those who died in the World Wars periods is that the bodies are now usually repatriated.

Having had a talk with Gary Newman, he pointed me in the direction of the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), which led me to the Armed Forces Roll of Honour database (<https://www.gov.uk/search-armed-forces-memorial-roll-of-honour>), which includes all those who died while in the Services after WW2. It also includes whether the person is recorded on a memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire – this would probably indicate that they died on duty.

Unfortunately this database does not provide a facility to list all those buried in a particular cemetery. However, from headstone inscriptions, newspaper transcriptions, the descriptions in the Burial Registers, and the MoD, I've identified seven burials in our cemeteries listed on the Roll of Honour database, with two of those also recorded at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Memorial transcriptions:

We are sometimes recording a few inscriptions during our clearing sessions.

New volunteers would be welcome 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 Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society have offered to supply us with a series of 'Butterflies, month by month' articles, the first article for May is now online (https://www.foncc.org.uk/the_group/butterflies/Butterflies-May.php), other articles will follow.

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 and new volunteers would be welcome to join us – check out the website for details.

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