



Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries

www.foncc.org.uk



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

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Newsletter No. 26, November 2023

Welcome to newsletter number 26 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.

These newsletters are 'on life support', contribution required to ensure future issues.

Past newsletters can be found on the website at:

https://www.foncc.org.uk/the_group/newsletters.php



Carisbrooke Cemetery with church

Where are we? (Tony Barton)

The entrance to Newport cemetery from Fairlee Road remains closed due to the state of the entrance arch, so we haven't been able to recommence clearing sessions there. Pedestrian access to Newport Cemetery is via the steps from Newport Quay.

We've been rained off for a number of sessions at Carisbrooke Cemetery so haven't achieved much clearing, the other volunteers have managed to continue transcribing headstone inscriptions at Newport cemetery, and newspaper cutting etc.

Any help with compiling future newsletters would be welcome.

Any ideas on how you can help and contribute to the group. Just email your comments/suggestions chair.foncc@gmail.com

Memorial transcriptions:

The volunteers transcribing memorial inscriptions at Newport Cemetery continue, the current section (section H, unconsecrated) is one of the newer sections with some fairly recent interments.

There are plenty of easier to read inscriptions at Newport, Carisbrooke and St. Paul's cemeteries which need to be transcribed on fine days; so you just email if you are interested chair.foncc@gmail.com .

One of the volunteers transcribing headstones at Newport Cemetery, Kate MacDonell, explains what's involved:

Transcribing memorials is a very important part of the work undertaken by volunteers of FoNCC. The inscriptions recorded provide a huge source for both family and general historical research. National Death Registers, local death and burial records, some including cemetery maps, as well as individual church records, often give us a large amount of information before we even look at a headstone or set of kerbs. This is very useful when we are faced with a memorial which has become less legible, faded and eroded over time.

Probably the most important words we want to discover are the names of the individuals interred or remembered on the site. Not infrequently the names on the memorial are not the same as those on records we already have e.g. Saunders/Sanders, Louisa/Louise, Ethel/Enid. If the name differs from other records this needs to be stated. It could be a typo on the part of the stone mason, the recording scribe or the person who gave information to the scribe. A year of death is also very helpful, especially when one considers how many families repeat the same name through the generations - Thomas Attrill, son of Thomas, grandson named Thomas!

It would be easy to misread some headstones especially such wording as 'Ann widow of James Smith' or 'Jane daughter of James Smith', quite often such inscriptions refer to Ann, who had remarried, and Jane who had married, so neither would have the surname Smith that first appearance would suggest.

The motto for a transcriber is 'record what you actually see' and that means sometimes you have to put a question mark and not be tempted to complete what it probably says or means. This is particularly frustrating if there is a well known and popular epitaph but not all of it is legible e.g. 'Thy Will be Done' / 'Thy Will is Done'. Even something very simple - 'In Loving Remembrance' / 'In Beloved Memory of.'

Actually stating that a person has died is, not surprisingly, what we read on almost all memorials and 'Who Died' are possibly the words we record more than any other. However there exists a huge variation on this theme. How many ways do people die?

A small selection:

Departed this Life; Passed Away; Fell Asleep (or just Asleep)'; At Rest, Entered into Rest, Rest in Peace; Forever with the Lord (or with Jesus.)

Fairlee Cemetery is quite modern, (1858), erected as one of country's first municipal burial grounds in the early part of the Victorian era. Memorials from the Georgian period and before, tended to be rather gloomy about recording death. Funerary sculpture delighted in gothic symbolism such as skull and crossbones, skeletons reclining on coffins and the Grim Reaper. Words offered little comfort, mortality was inevitable, (so be warned!), death was likely to be sooner rather than later and gory details of how people died with tortured suffering and long lingering illness might also be recorded. Happily the Victorians developed a bit more sentimentality with smiling Cupid angels and reassuring words about a better life in the hereafter.

Some burials in this new enlightened, more cheerful era, retain their pessimism and despair within their memorial inscriptions.

When Ellen, Henry Read's dearly beloved wife died in 1887, the headstone reminds us - *'Watch for ye know what hour your Lord doth come.'* Henry himself died later *'After a Long and Painful Illness.'*

William Frederick Foster, who passed away in 1897, speaks to us of *'the sufferings of this present time'* but at least he adds *'I reckon ... (they) are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. VIII.18).'*

Here are some happy ones:

Eleanor Elizabeth Smith, (1898)

*'One by one our troubles meet us
One by one they pass.'*

Harriet Frances Milligan, (1898)

*Rest for the weary limbs rest for the weary head
rest from all toil and labour among the quiet dead*

Annie Jones (1911)

*Peace perfect peace
Until the day break and the shadows flee away*

Emily Alice Eliza Elderfield (1885)

*Oh call it not death it is life begun
For the river is passed the haven is won
The ransomed spirit has reached the shore
Where sin and sorrow are known no more
She is safe in our Father's home above
Prepared for us by our Saviour's love.*

Joseph Hayles (1863)

*Come unto me all who labour and are
heavy laden and I will give you rest*

Mary Emma Millidge (1873)

*Not gone from memory
Not gone from love
But gone to be happy
with Jesus above.
He maketh his beloved sleep.*

Old newspapers:

Hampshire Advertiser, 18 May 1872

NEWPORT

PROPOSED FAIR AT KING'S FIELD. – Happily the annual nuisance, Whitsun Fair, within the borough has been abolished, but it seems that some of the leading caterers at fairs, who still think it worth their while to attend Cowes Fair are intent on getting up a fair for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Whitsun week, just outside of the borough, if they can hire a field for the purpose. Application has been made for King's Field, near Mr. Dashwood's coach factory, on the east bank of the River Medina. There is a strong feeling here against the nuisance, and it is hoped that if they hold one this year the returns will be such as to deter them from coming another year.

Buried here (by Tony Barton):

Johanna Hendrina Catrina Simmonds

Some time ago, the fallen headstone for Johanna Simmonds at Carisbrooke Cemetery, largely written in Afrikaans was pointed out to me by Gareth Sprack, he had acquired a photograph album of her husband's military career (some pictures used here, courtesy of Gareth).



In summary, the headstone reads 'Johanna Hendrina Catrina dearly beloved wife of Frank Edward Simmonds.' For full details, see the record on the website - <https://www.foncc.org.uk/burials/grave-search/burial.php?rec=19745>

In addition to the information on her headstone, the report of Johanna's death in the Isle of Wight County Press, 3 January 1925, adds the fact that she was 'first cousin of the late General Louis Botha, first premier of the South African Union.'

Frank Edward Simmonds was born in Newport in 1883, the son of William and Charlotte Ann Simmonds. Both parents are buried at Carisbrooke Cemetery, their memorial includes reference to another son, Arthur James, who was reported missing at Sulva Bay in 1915 and who is also recorded on the Newport Parish War Memorial.

Johanna's headstone suggests that Frank had spent some time in South Africa; I could not find any records to confirm this, but these pictures from the album supports it.



The 1911 census has Frank Edward Simmonds, a saddler with the army, single, at Gibraltar Barracks, Aldershot. At the same time, Johanna was living as Johanna Simmonds, a married (under 1 year) woman at 36 Lysons Road, Aldershot. Frank and Johanna appear to have actually married in 1913 in the Medway district Kent!

The left picture is of Frank in service dress taken in 1908, the other is thought to show Johanna, however I have not found any record of a child born to Frank and Johanna.



In 1919 a bar for Frank's Distinguished Conduct Medal was awarded to him:

"No, 6851 Company Sergeant Major F. E. Simmonds, D.C.M., Royal Engineers"



In 1921 Frank, as a Company Sergeant Major in the Royal Engineers, was in the Cambridge (Military) Hospital, Aldershot; while Johanna was in married quarters in St Michael's Road, Aldershot.

When he left the Army, Frank entered the Prison Service at Parkhurst.

At the end of 1924, Johanna died while living at Camp Hill, and early in 1925 was buried in a double plot in Carisbrooke Cemetery. Buried beside her is Frank's brother, William Thomas Simmonds, who died in 1954.

Frank E. Simmonds, then a widowed Prison Officer, went on to marry Lily Denness in 1927 at St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke. He retired from the Prison Service in about 1939 and they moved to Lake where they lived the rest of their lives. Lily died in July 1963 and was buried in Sandown Cemetery; Frank died July 1969 and was cremated at Whippingham.

Frank's obituary in the IW County Press in August 1969 doesn't mention his service in South Africa, or Johanna, his first wife. However it does give details of his later military service, which was impressive enough.

Originally senior saddler in the 23rd Field Company, Royal Engineers, Frank was one of the most highly skilled at Aldershot before the 1914-18 war. He won the D.C.M. and bar as company sergeant-major of the 23rd Field Company, Royal Engineers and was one of the few survivors of his unit at the end of four years in France with the first Imperial Division. Frank Simmonds held the Meritorious Service Medal, the 1914 Star and Clasp, the long service and good conduct medal and a number of campaign medals.

Following cremation at the Isle of Wight Crematorium, the remains were scattered in the garden of remembrance there. His entry in the Crematorium's Book of Remembrance reads:

'SIMMONDS, Frank Edward
Of Lake. Born 25th June 1883, died 1969.
Late of 23rd Field Company Royal Engineers
DCM Bar, MSM 1914 Star Clasp
1914-1918 war, mentioned in Despatches'.

Future events:

Subject to weather, 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 or our Facebook group for details.

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