



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.1 - August 2017

Welcome to the first e-newsletter of the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries. This is being circulated to all those who have expressed an interest in the Friends or others who I thought may be interested. Feel free to circulate this to others who you feel may be interested in the Cemeteries.

Receiving this newsletter does not commit you to anything, but if you don't wish to receive future copies, feel free to unsubscribe; we won't take offence.

My name is Antony Barton, I've been involved with the Isle of Wight Family History Society for a number of years and have been associated with various of their Burial Record initiatives. I have had a fairly large involvement with getting the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries off the ground, but for the Friends to succeed in the longer-term, others need to step forward to take over activities. See later in this e-newsletter for 'activities' others could pick up.

Anyone wishing to express an interest in the Friends, whether as a volunteer to help in the cemeteries or just as a supporter, can do so easily on the website - http://www.foncc.org.uk/foncc/new_member.php.

The 'bottom line' is, that the Friends group is not mine; if I start proposing or doing things you don't agree with; please voice your concerns.

Where are we?

After a number of months and meetings, the Risk Assessment and Guidelines for working in the Cemeteries have been agreed with the IWC's Bereavement Services. So there's nothing to hold us back.

It's been agreed (well, nobody has objected !!) that until at least Spring 2018, the Friends will be a 'volunteer' group without a formal membership structure; the only thing volunteers working in the cemeteries will need to do is to read and sign the Risk Assessment and carry out work in accordance with the Guidelines.

If we can keep any expenditure to a minimum and/or obtain support locally for what we want to do, there's no reason why we couldn't continue as an informal, 'no membership fee' group – we'll probably know the answer to this question by Spring 2018 having seen how things have worked out over the intervening months.

I'd like to keep all communications via e-mail and the website, this will avoid printing and postage costs.

We may find that some people living overseas with relatives buried at the cemeteries wish to contribute financially to our work (as other Cemetery Friends have found). This may mean a more formal structure to handle any financial contributions, but we can think about that in the Spring.

Cemetery clearing sessions:

So far, 2 sessions have been conducted at Newport Cemetery and one at Carisbrooke Cemeteries of clearing growth from grave markers and also cutting back ivy/brambles growing through bushes and up trees.



The above are before and after pictures of a memorial at Newport Cemetery.

One of the main issues, as I see it, is the disposal of cuttings etc from the site (a condition also applied to the other Cemetery Friends on the island and the grounds maintenance contractors), but if we work in a co-operative way, this shouldn't be a stumbling point. Some activities, such as removing ivy/brambles growing through shrubs and cutting ivy growing up trees, produce relatively little waste for time spent, so by mixing activities, removing waste should probably not be a problem even if some volunteers are unable to remove waste.

IWC Bereavement Services and their ground maintenance contractors have their own policy of conservation (largely leaving areas of grass uncut for part of the year). We will respect this policy and not attempt to over-tidy the cemeteries. We will also respect the wildlife living the cemeteries and try to enhance the habitat.

Memorial transcriptions:

This has yet to get into 'full swing'. Until we get copies of official plot maps showing the position of graves, we'll have to rely on maps I can produce from other sources. Initial attempts have produced maps which appear to contain few errors for memorial positions, it just needs proving on a larger scale.

Volunteers required to work in pairs (as a minimum) to carry out transcribing of inscriptions.

The Website:

Records are being added to the website, currently there are over 10,000 individual names in the database; some with associated images and transcriptions. Details of those listed have come from actual memorials or the Burial Registers.
<http://www.foncc.org.uk/burials/index.php>

Originally we just had copies of some Burial Registers; now we've access to all the registers. The approach I'm adopting is to add names with minimal information from the registers and then revisit the database to add other information from the Registers (i.e. occupation, address etc.)

Future events:

Details of future cemetery clearing sessions will be circulated to those interested as weather conditions permits. Unfortunately, there have been far too many days with rain forecast this summer for a long-term programme to be drawn-up, so sessions will probably continue to be advised with only relatively short notice.

Brian Greening is hoping to pull together a 'show' in September to show the public our activities and present a number of interesting lives we've uncovered. More details to follow.

At the last meeting at the Riverside Centre, Newport, it was agreed that we would have another meeting in September to review how things were going. Details will be circulated nearer the time.

Can you step forward ?:

For the long term future of the Friends, various tasks need to be spread around to share the workload – nothing arduous, here are some topics, **let me know if you are 'willing to give it a go' for anything listed or anything you can offer not listed.**

Members 'secretary' – basically just keeping a list of those who have expressed an interest together with their level of interest.

E-newsletter - Pulling together and circulating an E-newsletter, it can be every 3 or 6 months, just so everyone 'feels' part of the group even if they aren't volunteering. Being an E-newsletter, there will be no need to fill a prefixed amount of space or organise printing. A good starting point might be the headings used in this newsletter – something for each section could be provided by different people, so producing the Newsletter should just be a case of pulling these inputs together. This Newsletter has been generated and circulated using an on-line service; so it's fairly undemanding.

Publicity – Someone to keep the group in the public eye, possibly finding places to display posters/leaflets and highlighting to other members ‘special events’ where the group’s presence would be appropriate. Some posters and leaflets are being circulated, but someone needs to keep these up to date.

‘Wildlife Officer’ – the cemeteries are teeming with wildlife and although the IWC Bereavement Services and their ground maintenance contractors have their own policy of conservation, it would be good if someone would be willing to look at this and identify any additions which would help conserve and enhance the wildlife, such as adding bird boxes (as other Cemetery Friends have done). Such ‘enhancements’ would need to be accepted by IWC Bereavement Services but it will need us to come up with suggestions.

‘Education Officer’ – it should be possibly in the longer term to use the cemeteries for education purposes; Ryde Social Heritage Group have done a lot of good work in using Ryde Cemetery for this (see <http://rshg.org.uk/education-section/>) and looking at their website might suggest some options we could adopt. Someone may like to take this on and start thinking about what we can do and what others need to contribute to make it work.

‘Military memorials’ – as well as the Commonwealth War Grave Commission graves, there are numerous memorials on family graves to others who fell in the two World Wars but who are not buried here. There are also memorials to peacetime military deaths, ranging from James Flux, from H.M.S. Salamis who died in Hong Kong 1866 to a CWGC peacetime style headstone for WO J Rann, 1999. There are also numerous memorials to military who died at Albany/Parkhurst Barracks.

Other activities – If anyone has a particular area of interest regarding the cemeteries which I’ve not thought of; please put the suggestion forward, the more activities we can base on the cemeteries, the better.

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You are receiving this e-mail as you have expressed an interest in FoNCC (or I think you would be interested).

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