



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. 2 November 2017

Welcome to the second e-newsletter of the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries. This is being circulated to all those who have expressed an interest in the Friends and to others who I think may be interested in what the group are doing. Feel free to circulate this to others who you feel may be interested in the Cemeteries, or unsubscribe if you don't wish to receive future newsletters - we won't take offence.



Carisbrooke Cemetery - Autumn Colour

Overview:

The Group has made good progress in the last 3 months with:

- Clearing sessions at each cemetery,
- A successful public talk and slide show by Brian Greening,
- Addition of the names of all burials up to year 2000 to the website,

- Commencement of grave marker transcriptions at Mountjoy,
- Transcription of newspaper reports of deaths etc of those buried in the cemeteries.
- Contributed details about those buried added to the website.

Clearing sessions will continue to be organised throughout the winter depending on weather conditions, they are supposed to be enjoyed so cold, wet or windy weather will be avoided. **VOLUNTEERS TO CLEAR VEGETATION ARE STILL REQUIRED;** if you live on the island and haven't yet volunteered, you are welcome to come and just observe us at one of the sessions, you won't be 'press ganged' into joining in. To be added to the circulation of the Clearing Session schedules, just complete the on-line [Expression of Interest form](#).

It will be quite alright for volunteers working in pairs (or more) to work outside the times of the organised sessions providing they stick to the guidelines and preferably clear vegetation in the designated areas but please make contact before you start (you'll need to be given hi-vis tabards, have signed the risk assessment and keep a record of hours worked).

Cemetery clearing sessions:

Newport (Fairlee Road) Cemetery (Rob Cain)

We have had several sessions at Fairlee Road cemetery clearing graves of vegetation and foliage with the number of volunteers varying on each session from two to about six and the weather going from clear blue skies and very hot to grey skies, damp and drizzly. The work has been very successful and rewarding with lots of graves cleared to reveal interesting monuments and inscriptions. Considerable effort has been put in by all the volunteers so far, particularly in clearing away the rubbish from the site and tidying up afterwards. Their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Here are some examples of 'before' and 'after' and what can be achieved in just a few hours:



*The top pair of pictures are of the marker for Joseph and Euphemia Mew
The lower pair, for Amy Morgan (the group of stones to the left are the broken memorial
for her daughter Winifred who had died aged 10 months)*

We have been concentrating on the area immediately to the left inside the Fairlee Road entrance to start with as this is the area first seen by users and visitors to the cemetery. Some effort has also been directed to the trees lining the paths and roads around the cemetery to clear them of ivy and brambles.

In the longer term, it is planned to clear the memorials which are hidden beneath larger bushes and shrubs and to use a trailer to remove the foliage in bulk which is more efficient than chopping it up into small bags for removal by volunteers. This has already been successfully tried at Mountjoy cemetery.

If you are interested in joining in on any future sessions, or know anyone else who might be, please do send us your contact details via the '[express an interest](#)' form on the website.

Carisbrooke (Mountjoy) Cemetery (Tony Barton)

A number of sessions clearing ivy etc from individual grave markers have been held at Carisbrooke Cemetery, here's an example from just west of the chapel.



*The above shows the grave marker for John Tucker,
'Dealer in antiquities', buried 27 March 1902*

We are now embarking on a more substantial clearing effort; opening up an area where shrubs (especially ivy) have completely covered and hidden some 20 to 30 grave markers. Having use of a trailer to remove the vast volumes of ivy etc which can be quickly cut away really makes the task easier.

The picture below shows part of the area after a couple of sessions; very much a 'work in progress' but already a number of grave markers have been exposed. It may well take all winter to clear the ivy etc and tidy up the exposed area, but the finished result should make it all worthwhile.



Memorial transcriptions:

Carisbrooke (Sally & Lynne)

We started work in September and so far have managed 4 X 2 hour sessions. This has resulted in us transcribing memorials, where possible, in 12 rows of graves. Partly through necessity and also through choice we are fair-weather workers. On a clear day the views towards Newport and Cowes are truly amazing.

Although the work is slow and time-consuming it is interesting. **However, the project would undoubtedly benefit from other volunteers joining the transcribing efforts.**

The transcriptions need to be added to the website, probably when winter sets in and we can't work outside.

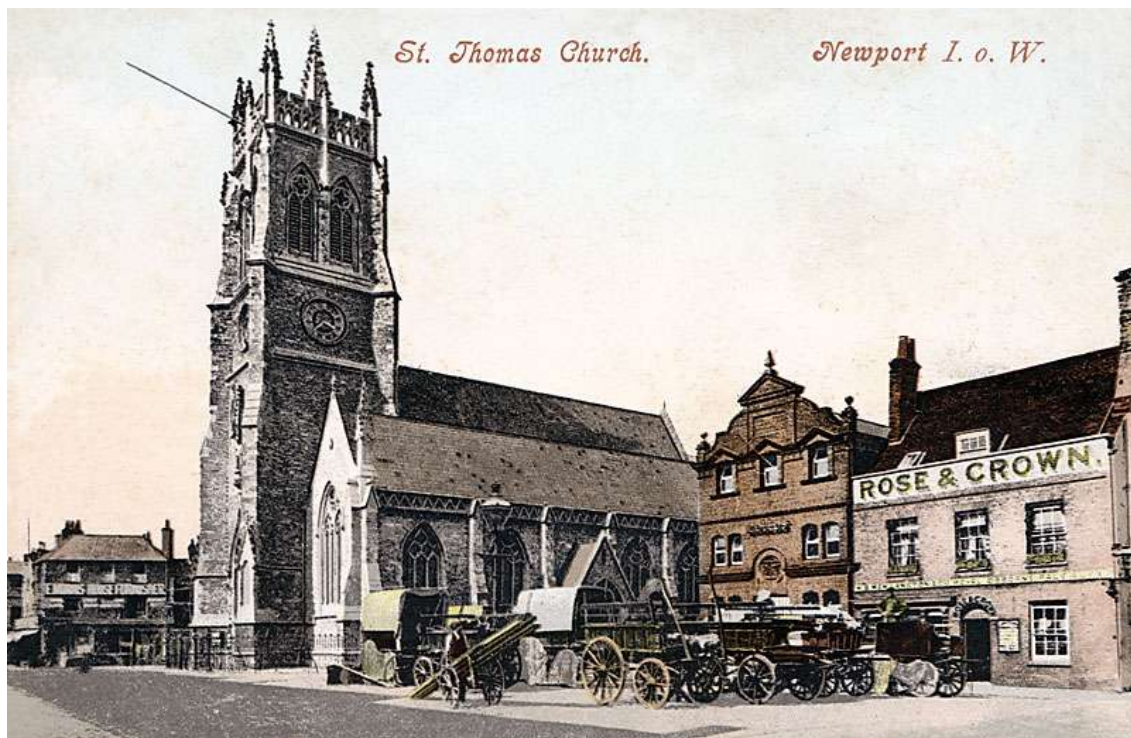
Characters buried here (Brian Greening)

Edwin Snow - The ringer of the curfew bell. Died 1899.

Each week that goes by we uncover yet another interesting character of Newport's past. Mr. Edwin Snow was employed by local grocery firm Upward and Rich for over thirty seven years. Out of working hours however he had an enduring hobby that demanded punctuality every day of the year for he was the ringer of the curfew bell in St. Thomas's church, a sound that "told the knell of parting day." This was an old Norman custom and Mr. Snow performed it every day as well as ringing the early morning bell, a task done at six o'clock in the summer and at seven o'clock in the winter.

Not content with those duties he was also chief organ blower, a humble but very necessary task. He had stopped doing these tasks only three years before his death as tolling the bell demanded that he climb the steps up to the belfry, something he then found beyond him. In 1892 he had been given a testimonial and a purse of gold by one hundred and fifty of the town's grateful inhabitants. He died aged seventy four and was buried in Newport cemetery.

Alas, there is no grave marker for Edwin Snow, but here's a picture of St. Thomas' Church from the early 20th Century (Edwin may well have popped into the Rose & Crown after climbing up and down the tower).



The Website:

The names from the Burial Registers for Carisbrooke, Newport and St Paul's Cemeteries to year 2000 have been added to the website.

Further activities will be to:

- Add description/occupation, address and other information from the Burial Registers.
- Create grave location maps.
- As and when they become available, add images and transcriptions of grave markers, life stories etc.

Events:

A successful public slideshow and talk, 'Tales from our local Cemeteries' by Local Historian, and member, Brian Greening was held at the Riverside Centre on 29th September. A number of additional volunteers were recruited from those attending.

It has been decided between the volunteers that a meeting of the original group will be arranged in the Spring of 2018 as that would give the group a chance to 'settle down'; any comments regarding this decision are welcome.

Over the winter months, we will consider what events we could hold in 2018 to encourage support etc.; any suggestions are welcome.

Can you step forward ?:

Alas, there wasn't a rush of volunteers to take over the positions suggested in the last newsletter, if we are going to become a 'proper' group, then people do need to step forward. I repeat below the suggested positions from Newsletter 1;

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 (ie like this), 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. The Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society's Botany Group carried out a survey at Carisbrooke Cemetery at the beginning of September which shows a wide range of species on what is chalk downland.

‘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/ryde-cemetery-education/>) 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.

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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(or I think you would be interested.)

Our mailing address is:

FoNCC,
c/o 138 Worsley Road,
Newport,
Isle of Wight PO30 5JB
United Kingdom