



Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries

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

Newsletter No.3, February 2018

Welcome to the third 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 others who I think may be interested. Feel free to circulate this to others who you feel may be interested in the Cemeteries, or to unsubscribe if you don't wish to receive future newsletters.

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.



Spring is on the way in Newport, Fairlee Cemetery.

Overview:

Some more good progress has been achieved in the last 3 months with:

- Clearing sessions at Newport and Carisbrooke cemeteries,
- Addition of burial maps and details to the website,
- Transcription of newspaper reports of deaths etc of those buried in the cemeteries added to the website.
- Contributed details about those buried added to the website.

It has been decided to try having a couple of fixed dates for clearing sessions at the cemeteries:

The 1st Saturday in the month at Carisbrooke Cemetery

and

The 3rd Saturday in the month at Newport Cemetery.

Obviously these will depend upon the weather but it should enable volunteers to plan ahead.

Subject to weather conditions, funerals etc., weekdays sessions will be arranged on an ad hoc basis. **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](#).

Interest has been received about tidying St Paul's Cemetery, Halberry Lane - this will be kept in mind and if sufficient volunteers show interest, sessions will be organised there - there's enough to keep us busy at the other cemeteries and switching resources may be undesirable. That there is no on-site parking may cause logistical problems (there is often not much on road parking nearby), but such problems are just opportunities to be creative! We would need to liaise with Bereavement Services regarding their conservation policy for the St Paul's Cemetery before we started any work.

Cemetery clearing sessions:

Newport (Fairlee Road) Cemetery (Rob Cain)

Clearing sessions have been continuing at Fairlee Road Cemetery by volunteers who, while small in numbers, have not been lacking in commitment, determination and physical effort. It has been nice to welcome some new volunteers. Several more grave markers have been uncovered and shrubs, brambles and ivy cut back or removed from other areas too, improving the overall look of the cemetery. The efforts of the volunteers together with the routine maintenance by the contractors have made a noticeable difference.

A lot of time and effort is expended in clearing away the foliage and vegetation and cutting it up small enough to place in bags and sacks which can be removed by volunteers. On some of the sessions, an arrangement has been made with the co-operation of Newport Parish Council, whereby a trailer is brought to the cemetery and large pieces of foliage can be loaded on and removed in bulk at the end of the morning. This enables more time



The mass of ivy covering the headstones of Amelia Jane Harris (died 1874, wife of Charles Harris, Butcher) and Frederick William (died 1872, Cattle Dealer).



Having the use of the Newport Parish Council trailer enabled this to be removed in large pieces thus saving time and effort.

The sessions organised so far have been on an ad hoc basis depending on the availability of volunteers, the weather and if any funerals are being conducted. Whilst this random arrangement has worked well we thought it may be easier for volunteers to organise their attendance if a more structured approach was adopted. It has been decided therefore that on the **3rd Saturday of every month** there will be a clearing session at Fairlee Road Cemetery. This will still be dependent on the weather of course and will not take place if the forecast is not good. It is hoped that this will make forward planning easier and increase the numbers of volunteers attending.

The first fixed Saturday for Fairlee Road Cemetery is **17 February at 10.30am**. See you there!

Carisbrooke (Mountjoy) Cemetery (Tony Barton)

Clearing sessions have been continuing at Carisbrooke Cemetery by volunteers, like at Newport Cemetery they are small in numbers, but not lacking in commitment, determination and physical effort. The weather conditions haven't been very good on a number of sessions which may well have discouraged some volunteers.

The volunteers have been concentrating on a large area of shrubs at the western end of the cemetery covering about 20 grave markers as mentioned in the last Newsletter, the images below show the starting condition, a 'work in progress' view and an image of one of the grave markers previously hidden.



The 'shrubby' as it was before the volunteers started work



The 'shrubbery' with the clearance in progress (none of the grave markers on the far side of the road was visible before we started)



The magnificent grave of Esther Cowlshaw, widow (died 1860) of Thomas, Blacksmith on the way to being fully revealed - Thomas died 1835 and is buried in St Mary's Carisbrooke.

The co-operation of Newport Parish Council has helped in removing large pieces of foliage by trailer.

The volunteers have also spent some time removing ivy and brambles from the conifers at the entrance, in front of the chapel; this, hopefully, gives a better 'first impression' to visitors to the cemetery.

Like the sessions at Newport Cemetery, it has been decided to try a fixed session once a month at Carisbrooke Cemetery to enable people to plan ahead. These fixed sessions will be the **1st Saturday of every month**, subject to weather conditions, meeting at 10.30 by the Chapel. Ad hoc sessions will be arranged on weekdays depending on the availability of volunteers, the weather and whether any funerals are being conducted.

Memorial transcriptions:

Collecting memorial transcription is really a 'fine weather' activity, so not much has been done in the last 3 months.

Characters buried here (Brian Greening)

The Rev. John Selby Watson, died 6 July 1884

Within our local cemeteries there are various groups of people. For example the first two persons buried in Mounjoy in 1858 were Roman Catholics, one a nationally recognised artist, the other a Servant from the House of Industry. These were later joined by the Countess of Clare, the lady who funded the building of the nearby Nunnery. Other groups include members of the military, those of various religions as well as atheists. There are the very wealthy, Workhouse paupers, inmates from the County Asylum, convicts from our nearby prisons and members of the clergy. Death does not discriminate.

One man who qualified as being in the last two groups was the Rev. John Selby Watson who in 1872 became known as the Stockwell murderer.

This man around 1860 became the headmaster of a London school. However he later elaborately planned and then proceeded to murder his wife by hitting her around the head with a heavy horse pistol. He then placed an order with a nearby carpenter to make him a crate in which he somehow was going to dispose of the body. For all this he stood trial and was sentenced at London's Central Criminal Court to hang. Throughout he showed not a fraction of remorse. Queen Victoria however controversially granted him a reprieve and he spent the rest of his life behind bars, much of which was spent inside Parkhurst prison. When he died there in July 1884 he was buried in Mountjoy and the cost of his funeral, that probably included his gravestone, was all paid for by one of his ex pupils who was also the only mourner.



Headstone for Rev. John Selby Watson at Carisbrooke Cemetery

The Website:

Work continues to add description/occupation, address and other information to the burial records from the Burial Registers.

Grave maps have been produced and added to the website for all the cemeteries; the names shown on the maps have not been checked and are not complete but the location of plot numbers should help locating graves. The maps have been drawn for A3 and some are difficult to read when printed out on A4 paper. These issues need to be address at some time but at least it's a start.

As and when they become available, images, transcriptions of grave markers and life stories etc. are being added to the burial records.

Future events:

At the last meeting held at the Riverside Centre (20 June 2017), it was agreed to run the group on an informal basis until this spring and then review the situation. A meeting will be

convened during March or April so that the structure of the group can be reviewed. It is hoped that as many people as possible will be able to attend so that the group can move forward with increased support.

Can you step forward ?:

The group is open to contributions by anyone, whether it's volunteering at the clearing sessions, transcribing the inscriptions or anything else you would like to contribute - just make contact via the form on the website with any offer of assistance.

This newsletter, as well as previous newsletters, in pdf format can be found on our website in the [Newsletter Archive](#)



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

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