



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.4 May 2018

Welcome to the fourth 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, or to unsubscribe (see at the bottom of this newsletter) if you don't wish to receive future newsletters.- we won't take offence.

Receiving this newsletter does not cost you anything nor commit you to anything.

Past newsletters can be found in the [archive](#) on the website.



Newport Cemetery

Where are we?

The weather prevented us from holding some cemetery sessions back in March/April (The Beast from the East etc.) but the weather has been more co-operative recently and a few new faces have made appearances at our clearing sessions - hopefully, more new recruits will join in the coming months.

Also, hopefully those volunteers who seem to have taken the winter off, may be inclined to join in more sessions now that the Spring/Summer has arrived.

A number of contributions have been received from unconnected people who had details regarding those buried - a 'thank you' to them and any further contributions would be gratefully received.

Transcription of newspaper reports of deaths etc continue to be added to the website - Brian Greening has highlighted some more such reports so **additional volunteers to transcribe these would be welcome** - [email us](#) for more details if you are interested. There is a poster and handout available from the website - if you can find a place to display a poster or would like to give a handout to someone, feel free to print off either - they are available [here](#).

Cemetery clearing sessions:

Newport (Fairlee Road) Cemetery (Rob Cain)

Work has been continuing on some further clearing of the foliage and vegetation at Fairlee Road cemetery by the small, but dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers. We usually only have four or five members who regularly attend the sessions which is somewhat disappointing but it is amazing what progress has been made in any event. Other members have sometimes indicated they would like to attend or would be coming but then are unable to do so for whatever reason. Nevertheless, their support is appreciated and we look forward to seeing them on sessions in the future maybe. We have the regular fixed session on the 3rd Saturday of every month and other occasions as circumstances allow, all of course, dependent on the weather. The clearance has gone so well that in the most recent sessions we have reduced the time spent on removing foliage and some volunteers have started transcribing inscriptions from memorials and this information will be entered on the FoNCC website together with any other information and photographs. At this time of year, we also have to be aware of any nesting birds and other wildlife which may be affected by our enthusiasm to remove foliage! It really is worth walking around the cemetery to enjoy the peace and tranquillity and to see the results of our labours.

I am really grateful to the volunteers who turn up so regularly, and would welcome anyone else who would like to join us (or just come along to see what we are doing).



Above shows possibly the most intricate memorial we've tackled so far (Mary Ann Pittis in Newport Cemetery) - over the years, the ivy had wound itself around and into the leaves etc. decorating the cross. Having cut off the ivy as low down as possible last Autumn, the ivy was allowed to die back over the winter, and we are now carefully cutting away the dead ivy piece by piece exposing the artificial ivy sculptured on the memorial cross!

Carisbrooke (Mountjoy) Cemetery (Tony Barton)

We have been holding our first Saturday of the month sessions at Carisbrooke Cemetery and, like at Newport Cemetery, we've welcomed a few new faces and have been concentrating on the 'massive shrubbery' shown in the last Newsletter. We have now exposed some 20 grave markers which must have been hidden for years and are now planning to move onto another area in the old part of the Cemetery.



The 'massive shrubbery' exposed

Memorial transcriptions:

With the coming of better weather, we look forward to some more Memorial Inscriptions being transcribed and added to the website.

As mentioned by Rob above, he has started transcribing inscriptions at Newport Cemetery and adding them to the website.

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Characters buried here (Brian Greening)

Horace Henry (Donald) Biles, died 28 July 1932

The Islands farming community went into deep mourning in July 1932 when the death was announced of a member of one of the Islands foremost farming families, that of Mr. Horace Henry (known as Donald) Biles. Mr Biles suffered fatal internal injuries after being gored by a bull at Week Farm, Whitwell.

The funeral service took place in St. John's Church, Newport and the County Press reported that almost eight hundred people attended. The list of mourners reported by the local newspaper must have mentioned a member of every farming family stretching from the north to south and the east to west of the Island. Such a well attended funeral it was difficult to imagine. This was in spite of the heavy rain that fell during the day and the route

from the church to the cemetery at Mount-Joy was thronged with people. There were over one hundred and eighty floral tributes that required not only the hearse but plus two lorries to carry them to the deceased's final resting place. The funeral arrangements were made by Messrs. Hamilton and Sons.



*The coffin of Donald Biles going into St John's Church
(Do people take pictures of funerals these days ?)*

(Note: Sam Biles has supplied a more detailed account of the death of Donald Biles which is available as a Research Note connected to the burial record.)

Parkhurst Convict Deaths/Burials

(Contributed by Tony Bevis)

Parkhurst Prison opened, in the former Parkhurst Barracks, in 1838 as a reformatory for boys with the objective of training them in a trade which they could practise, as apprentices, in one of the new colonies of Australia or New Zealand. With typical Victorian thoroughness, when the barracks were converted, a burial ground was laid out, roughly north of where Clissold Road now runs.

The first deaths did not occur until 1842 when John Lloyd and Archibald McIndoe both died and were buried after Inquests were held - Inquests are a legal requirement for any deaths in custody. One anomaly with Parkhurst having its own burial ground was that, once the Inquest had been held, the authorities could bury the prisoner without any further paperwork and occasionally they forgot to register the death.

By 1886 the burial ground was full and proposals were made to extend it which showed that it cost 16s 6d, for the cost of a coffin, to bury a body at the prison, whereas it cost £2 for a burial at Carisbrooke. The Home Office turned down the plans and instructed the authorities to use Carisbrooke cemetery, which they did. The Parish of Carisbrooke were up in arms about the Prison this on the grounds that using the cemetery would put a heavy burden on the parish and besides the Prison had plenty of land in which to bury their dead. Letters were exchanged between the Home Office and the parish, held in the National Archives referenced PCOM 7/351, and ultimately the Home Office pointed out that as they

contributed significantly to the parish rates they were entitled to use the cemetery – to which there was no rejoinder.

From 1887 nearly all deaths at Parkhurst have been buried at Carisbrooke Cemetery; prison regulations stipulated that the family be notified of the death and given the opportunity to make their own burial arrangements. Few families did, other than the occasional more affluent family, or those whose religious conviction required their dead to be buried with members of their own faith, according to their customs. In practice these were overwhelmingly members of the Jewish community; very few Sikhs, Hindus and Moslems died at Parkhurst, those that did were buried at Carisbrooke.

By 1914 some 400 convicts had been buried at Carisbrooke, a number swollen by the use of Parkhurst as a prison for elderly or sick convicts. Since that time Parkhurst, and the associated Camp Hill and Albany Prisons, has changed its role several times. Until 1980 Carisbrooke Cemetery continued to fulfil the role of Prison Burial Ground, since then prisoners have been cremated. In recent years more bodies have been taken for funerals elsewhere including several gangland bosses who have received lavish East End funerals and Michael Gaughan, the IRA hunger striker, who was buried in Leigue Cemetery, Ballina.

In the meantime the original Prison burial grounds were left to their own devices and nothing further seems to have happened to them until 1935 when the walls and cross were removed and the ground levelled for use as a training area in landscape gardening by the inmates of Camp Hill prison. The remains of over 300 inmates were left in situ; a seemingly callous resolution to the problem of what to do with an abandoned cemetery.

[Ed note: having transcribed the Cemetery Burial Registers, there are 678 burials of convicts, all but one at Carisbrooke Cemetery. Only a handful of these have grave markers; one 'interesting' one is John Turner who died 17 November 1918 and has a *Commonwealth War Grave Commission Headstone*! He served with the Army Cyclist Corp before deserting, then stole a couple of motor-cycles, was tried in a Civilian Court, was sentenced to 3 years penal servitude and died at Parkhurst Prison through pneumonia, following Influenza.]

The Website:

More pictures, transcriptions, inscriptions etc. have been added to the website - it's going to be an ongoing task 'for ever'.

I did see a visitor from Portsmouth in Newport Cemetery the other day with printouts of various burials and maps from the website in hand. Also, it proved popular at the Isle of Wight Family History Society meeting (see below). While its popularity won't help clear the vegetation, it may be useful if/when we need any funds.

Recent event:

The 'Friends' were invited by the Isle of Wight Family History Society to provide a display at their One Day Conference at the beginning of May at the Riverside Centre. Tony and Rob were able to provide a display relating to our activities and, with a laptop connected to the website, were able to provide some burial 'look-ups'.



Display at the iwfh Conference, 12 May 2018

Unfortunately, most of the people who showed an interest were from abroad or the mainland so we weren't able to recruit any new volunteers for work in the cemeteries, but it did show that our efforts are appreciated and this may be useful at some time in the future. If there are any future local events where a display would be appreciated, please let us know (or ask the organiser of the event to contact us.)

Can you step forward ?:

If you would like to help in any way, please contact us; as well as clearing vegetation in the cemeteries, transcribing inscriptions, and newspaper reports; we are open to any suggestion of other help.



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Our mailing address is:

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