



Newsletter 22

Spring 2020

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A Note from the Editor

Paul Thompson




I do not normally indulge in an editorial piece to your newsletter, but this is no ordinary newsletter. The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery were formed in the autumn of 2009 and one of our commitments at the inaugural meeting was to provide a twice-yearly newsletter to keep them apprised of what the various groups were doing and of upcoming events as well as including some of the fascinating stories of our 'residents' that have been uncovered.

The first newsletter was in the spring of 2010, which makes this one our **tenth anniversary edition!**

I have to say a very big thank you to all those who have contributed over the years. Your articles are what make the newsletter something to look forward to in the spring and autumn for our Friends, both local and international.

With our newsletter growing in popularity and the web site ever growing in size, we are now becoming a resource for other groups. You may be aware that toward the end of last year, we were contacted by the London Science Museum about Albert Alexander (the first person in the UK to receive experimental penicillin treatment) who is buried in the cemetery. They were planning a large display on medicines and had seen our material on Albert wanted to use some of it in a special display on penicillin as part of the exhibition. We agreed and liaised with Albert's family for the use of the photographs that we have on site by kind permission.

PENICILLIN'S FIRST BRITISH PATIENT



On 12 February 1941, Albert Alexander became the first British patient to be treated with penicillin. The 43-year-old had a cut that became so infected he went blind in one eye and his body was covered with abscesses. With few medical options, penicillin was tried, in doses every three hours. Dose after dose, he improved.

To stretch scarce supplies, penicillin was recycled from Alexander's urine and reinjected. It ran out after four days, after which he died.

Albert Alexander after joining the police force in 1921
Linda LeBlanc

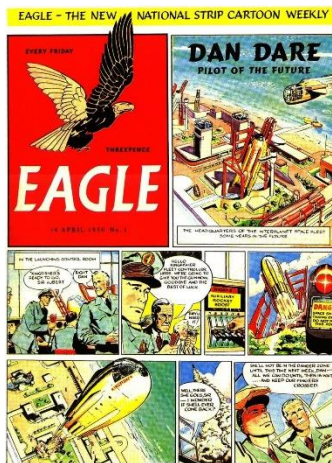
I am pleased to say that the exhibition is now open in the 'Wellcome Gallery' and I have recently been to see it. Albert's is a small part of the display, but he played a major role in the development of penicillin and we are proud to have played our part helping to create this interesting exhibit.



Admission to the Science Museum is still free if you are up that way, once it is safe to go out again!

Chairman's Chatter...

Brian Sylvester



In my last Chatter I referred to time travel – remember? [Of course you do!] Inspired by a question which cropped up in the TV quiz “Egg Heads”, I’m going to take you for a moment back into the past; to 14th April 1950 – way before your time I hear you say!

Following an enormous publicity drive the first issue of the “Eagle” comic came out. I had a free voucher (worth “thruppence” – 3d. Wow!) but the uptake had already been exhausted long before I arrived at the newsagents. Issue one achieved a circulation of a staggering 900,000 despite government paper quotas, and such was the success of its 20-page design and content, it regularly had a circulation of nearly a million copies each week, which included my copy from issue 2.

It had a most clever mix of fact, adventure and fun, inspiring the imagination of a generation of children as well as being read and enjoyed by many adults!

But with falling sales, changing owners, editors, and attitudes and no doubt the lure of television, the comic's last issue came on 26th April 1969 - just short of its 1,000th edition - and the comic was merged with its rival, IPC's “Lion”.

OK, going back to Day 1, featured in colour on the front cover was its most recognisable story **Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future**, created with meticulous attention to detail.

During his many years, Dan undertook various exciting missions in the future – all successfully completed, I’m pleased to say.

And so, it is we have *dared* to engage in our own mission of "Taking the Past into the Future". Are we succeeding? I believe we are. Of the 12,000+ souls buried in our cemetery, we have been able to expand on and bring forward the fascinating past lives of 3,000+, and what an amazing revelation that has been.

So the good news is there's now less than 9,000 to have a go at in the future!!!

Finally, feet fixed firmly in the present, our appreciation and admiration for Newbury Town Council, owners of our blessed plot, and the dedication of your committee, the teams of researchers, the helpers, our website wizard, and by no means least, the editor of this newsletter.

A BIT OF LIGHT INTERENTAINMENT

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there, I noticed 4 gravediggers walking about with a coffin...
3 hours later and they're still walking about with it. I thought to myself...
"These blokes have lost the plot!"

Tim Vine

Dates for your diary

Coronavirus

In these uncertain times, with Coronavirus affecting all our lives in many different ways, our schedule of events is subject to change.

Any of the events listed below may be postponed or cancelled at short notice. Please see the website for up-to-date information or if you are unsure, please contact a member of the committee.

We have already cancelled the spring Primrose Day, nature walks and tours and the Open Sutdios days during May. Newbury Town council have also cancelled the Newbury VE day event.

Other events later in the year are still scheduled (see below), but are subject to cancellation, depending on government advice and restrictions at the time.

Friday 26th June - Cemetery 6.00pm

Mid Summer Evening Opening.

Guided tours. Moth collection and release.

Saturday 27th June - Cemetery Chapel 10.00am

Nature activities

Thursday, 27th August - AGM 7.00pm Cemetery Chapel

As the chapel is being redecorated and having new lights and new heaters, we thought we'd take advantage and bring our AGM forward rather than have it on a cold winter evening

somewhere else. Jane Burrell is going to speak to us, after a very quick AGM, about Newbury's Churches and Chapels.

THE LIFE OF A CAVALRYMAN

Deirdre and Alastair Duff

The Cavalry of the British Army has long been famous for its "dash" and the 19th century witnessed many overseas conflicts and famous cavalry events, such as the charge of the Union Brigade at Waterloo and the charge of the Heavy and Light Brigades at Balaclava.



Buried in Newtown Road Cemetery is John Richard Coleman who was born in 1830 into a military family in Bangalore in the Madras Presidency. Bangalore was one of the major garrisons in India and young Coleman grew up immersed in the daily routines of British garrison life and benefiting from a basic education at the army schoolhouse.

On 3 March 1845 at the age of 14 ½ years, he attested into the 15th King's Hussars and his army service would also include the 12th Royal Lancers and the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, from which he retired in November 1869. In the 1840's, the British Cavalry in India was undertaking a detailed review. A key figure in the development of cavalry tactics and organisation was Captain Louis Edward Nolan who had served in the Austrian cavalry before joining the British Army in the 15th King's Hussars. He played a pivotal role in modernising the British cavalry which developed from his position as Regimental Riding Master in Bangalore. He also wrote 2 important books on Cavalry Theory and Horsemanship. As a Trooper and Trumpeter, Coleman would have undertaken the training programme developed by Nolan at Bangalore. Central to Nolan's work was the belief that horses were best trained "by gentleness not by harshness".

Coleman did not return with his Regiment to Exeter in 1854. He transferred to the 12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) who had recently arrived from South Africa. He remained a Trooper and Trumpeter.

France and Britain were becoming concerned about Russia's ambitions towards the Turkish Empire and war broke out in March 1854. The Allies landed in the Crimea which led to an



*The Crimean Medal
with Clasp for Sevastopol*

"I consider the 12th Lancers the most "respectable" Regiment we have. They send home more money and put it to better uses than all the other Regiments here put together."

Written by Florence Nightingale (23 January 1856).



*The Turkish
Crimean Medal*

assault on the naval base of Sevastopol. Following the Light Brigade charge at Balaclava in which Captain Nolan was killed, it was essential to replace the losses. The 10th Hussars and 12th Lancers were summoned from India as reinforcements to the Crimea in the Spring of 1855. The 12th Lancers travelled via the Red Sea, and across the desert to Alexandria, where they took ship to Balaclava. They saw action before Sevastopol and Eupatoria. Coleman received two campaign medals – The Crimean Medal with Clasp for Sevastopol and the Turkish Crimean Medal. He was promoted to Corporal on 29 July 1855.

The Regiment subsequently returned to India and took part in operations in Central India under Sir Hugh Rose during the Indian Mutiny. Coleman was promoted to Sergeant on 8 June 1858. The Regiment returned to England in 1860 but he remained in India by transferring to the 1st King's Dragoon Guards on 29 February 1860.

A year later he married Mary Bishop, a Newbury-born girl, in Holy Trinity Church, Bangalore, on 7 February 1861. How, where and when did they meet? His official record does not state that he went to England. Two children were born in Bangalore – Richard Bishop Coleman on 6 March 1862, and Hannah Coleman on 18 October 1863. Another daughter, Frances, was born in Secunderabad on 25 September 1865 and by this time the Regiment was ordered to return to England to replace the 17th Lancers at Aldershot. Soon after arrival in England he was appointed Troop Sergeant Major on 27 March 1866. His fourth child, William Alfred Coleman, was born in 1867 at Aldershot.

After completing over 24 years of faithful service to his Queen and Country, he was officially discharged in November 1869, in consequence of his being unfit for further service. He was diagnosed with “valve disease of the heart, the result of service with perhaps some constitutional tendency”. On discharge he was described as 6' 1", freckled complexion, with dark brown eyes and hair. He had a total of 5 Good Conduct Badges, and he was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with a gratuity of £5. He moved to Newbury with his family to live with Hannah Bishop, his mother-in-law, at 3 Alton Place, Northbrook Street. Another son, Charles Henry Coleman, was born on 5 December 1869. Coleman died a few months later, aged 39 years, on 11 March 1870: his mother-in-law, formerly a nurse, was present. Cause of death was “diseased liver and phthisis”. He was buried on 16 March leaving effects of less than £200 to his widow Mary.

Mary, now left with 5 young children to bring up on a soldier's pension, worked as a Cook/Domestic for almost the rest of her life. She died aged 80 years on 9 November 1912 at 11 King John's Almshouses, Argyle Road, and she was buried alongside her husband on 13 November. Finally, both are at rest after a life filled with the adventure and the shared hardships of a military life. Their son William Alfred and their daughter Frances (later Fanny Dunk) are buried with them.

Northbrook Street: 1891 – 1911

Sylvia Sellwood

In 1989 the Creative History Group produced a book called 'Newbury Roundabout'. One of the entries was by Pamela Haynes about Northbrook Street 1850-1900. Inside the back cover were census entries for 1851 - 1881.



I decided to have a 'go', with the encouragement of the History Group, at the 1891, 1901 and 1911 censuses. I had the same difficulty as Pamela Haynes with the 1891 census as she had found doing the 1851 - 1881 censuses because the houses were not numbered just the census entry. Using her 1881 census and personal knowledge it was possible to give each house a number. Davies the china shop, No. 63, was on the corner of West Street and Northbrook Street and is now McDonalds. The Anchor, No. 101, was on the corner of Northcroft Lane and was Starbucks until recently.

General impressions are that in 1891 and 1901 Northbrook Street had not changed that much since 1851, there were however changes between 1901 and 1911.

Northbrook Street was one of the main shopping streets in Newbury and until 1901 most of the shop owners lived over the shop and there were still some private houses. The shops could supply you with everything you needed in life. Many of these types of shops such as gun makers, tobacconists and a cycle dealer are not on Northbrook Street anymore instead there are coffee shops, mobile phone shops, estate agents and insurance brokers.

In 1911 Newbury 'names' including Toomer's, Davies, the china shop, Davies the chemist, Hopson of Camp Hopsons were still living on the street. There were public houses (The Monument amongst them), churches, breweries, boarding houses (including the Jack Hotel) and medics.

A notable difference in 1911 was that the owners of some of the shops were no longer living over the shop, they had moved out of Newbury to presumably new houses in places such as Donnington Square and Porchester Road. They either had their shop managers living over the shop or they rented the rooms out.

Examples are:

- Mac Farland Davies, china & glass had moved to St. Osyph, Buckingham Road.
- Louisa Long also china & glass had moved to Westleigh Villa, Chesterfield Road.
- William Coldicutt, Master Butcher was at Springdale, Howard Road.
- John William Righton, photographer had moved to Ques, Porchester Road.
- Others had moved to Donnington Square.
- Alfred Camp had moved from Northbrook Street to Rosecroft, Speen by 1901.

Also by 1911 there were three medical people living and/or working on Northbrook St. one doctor and two dentists.

The doctor was Robert Wyllie who was living and working on the street on the 1901 and 1891 censuses. He lived at No. 92, currently Vision Express, and is buried in the cemetery and has been researched by the history group.

The two dentists had moved to Newbury in the 1890s and their children were born in Newbury. They both rented rooms on Northbrook St. Walter Griffiths Parker, No. 93b, from Alice Davies, a draper and milliner; and John Larbalestier, No 104, from Arthur Lanceford, a Superintendent Assurance Company.



Another interesting finding was the number of national chain shops in Newbury in 1911, among them Hills & Rowney, Timothy Whites, WH Smith, Freeman, Hardy & Willis, Singer Sewing Machines and Archille Searle. Also on the street by 1911 were Newbury Building Society and Blackett & Turner.

Newbury in 1911 appears to have been an affluent place. There was a great variety of shops plus some national chains and some shop owners had moved to larger houses on the outskirts of the town.

The growth of the town and its wealth maybe attributed to the up- grading of the railway to a main line with direct access to London.

The John Allee Appeal

Brian Sylvester

It's over a year since the Newbury Weekly News kindly printed an appeal by the Friends of the Newtown Road Cemetery for relations of J.W.T. Allee who'd tragically lost his life whilst bravely saving his father from being run over in 1920. The beautiful and unusual gravestone was in a sorry state, so the Friends attempted to reconnect with his family in order to facilitate some restoration work.



The original condition of the Allee grave

This is a photograph of how it had deteriorated in nearly a

hundred years since being set up, and this is the picture the NWN kindly printed in the appeal.

We're happy to report the call was taken up at first by relative Michael Stevenson and then gradually other family members, including a modern-day Jonathan Allee, and funds were raised - as indeed was the column!

And so it came about that recently relations convened at the cemetery (many of whom had not met before or were even aware of each other!) to raise a glass in memory of heroic JWT, to see how they fitted into the family tree, and to reminisce.

So, Newbury Weekly News, many thanks!

Details of the accident and its repercussions were fully reported by the Newbury Weekly News at the time: these make fascinating reading, have been transcribed by the Friends, and may be viewed on <http://www.fncnewbury.org.uk/persondetails.asp?PersonID=2341>

Ps. The 'broken column' design is deliberate and frequently used to symbolise a life cut short.



Restoration of the Allee grave celebrated by his descendants

The Birth of FNRC: The Founder's View

Elizabeth Capewell

A happy 10th birthday FNRC!

As Founder, I feel like a Midwife seeing the baby grow and flourish under the care of its guardians, in this case Brian, Ros Clow and an excellent team, including the back-room IT & Newsletter team led by Paul Thompson.



Elizabeth Capewell

The Cemetery has been part of my life since moving to Newbury in 1986. I can see the Southern end now from my window as I type - the sun picking out the shapes of the headstones, the moss on the tombs, the patches of yellow primroses amongst the grass and the winter bare lime trees. The patterns of the old flint and brick wall help me when in meditative mood! I take my grandchildren in there to look for insects and moths, flowers and grasses, and to teach them about my two favourite hobbies of geology and fungi.

Through recording the graves as part of Doug Larsen's team, I have got to know the people buried there who made Newbury

what it is today – the Hopsons and Toomers, the poor and the wealthy, the women only defined by their menfolk and so, so many children.

So how did FNRC begin? In 2009, the Cemetery had been closed for 10 years and the Town Council of the day decided to consult the community on what should be done with it. Too many old cemeteries had been closed for good or turned into car parks.

Our heritage & a valuable wildlife space were at risk, never mind the graves of relatives of many who still cared. In April 2009, the Town Council held a public meeting at St John's. Most people consulted shared the view it should be saved, though one persistent letter writer to the NWN felt a cemetery scared children and should be made into a park.

The Town Council agreed with the majority but were keen to have local involvement in the form of a Friends' Group, like the one being set up for Victoria Park. They asked for a Volunteer to set one up. Silence ensued! My reluctant brain started working - recently retired; my greatest skill had been initiating many new community based projects; it was close at hand & interesting; I wanted the Cemetery opened again; but I wanted a change from death & disaster, my area of work for the last 22 years. I found my hand rising. It would be my task to facilitate a rebirth alongside the Town Council. I agreed to build solid foundations and lead the group for its first year.

I set about gathering a Steering Group to work with the Town Council. They worked & discussed hard and a group of Founder Members was recruited. A basic structure of interest groups was established to delegate and involve more people – updating the Monument records, history, nature, fabric, PR, community involvement.

Our Logo was developed, surveys were commissioned by ourselves and the Town Council and experts helped us identify the Geology, wild animals, flowers and grasses, fungi and lichen. Vodafone sent a team of Volunteers for a day, local artists and photographers found inspiration, Open Days were organised, bits of stained glass were rescued from the Chapel floor.

We joined the National Federation of Cemetery Friends and made links worldwide. Six months after we began, our first AGM was held to incorporate the Friends of NRC. Dr Julie Dunk, CEO of the Institute of Cemetery Management gave the inaugural address in the Town Hall. Mrs Margaret Pattison, who had recorded & indexed all the graves with little help in the 1970s was made an Honorary Member, just before her death in her mid-90s. Thus, FNRC was born on 7 Oct 2009.



Two Chairs – Elizabeth Capewell and Brian Sylvester at the last AGM

I handed over the reins a year later and was fortunate that Brian stepped forward to develop the next stage of the story. It is heartening to see how FNRC has brought families together, created links worldwide, attracted new helpers, and this year a new Nature group and above all to become an entry point to for local people to learn about the town’s history and to enjoy this wonderful patch of wildlife in the heart of Newbury.

Monument Recording Group

Doug Larsen

Following the recent Volunteer Fair held at the Corn Exchange and the subsequent social evening for new volunteers held at St. Francis de Sales Church, Wash Common, we had four people who came forward to volunteer for Monument Recording. This is very welcome for this group because, although we have recorded over 70% of the monuments, we still have a long way to go to achieve 100% of the approximately 2,220 monuments known to be here.

So why do we say “approximately” 2,220 monuments? Surely we have an exact figure in the records that were produced by Margaret Pattison, plus the aerial photography that was done a few years later?



Unfortunately, after some 170 years of the inauguration of the cemetery, nature has taken over, as has gravity and many monuments have subsided into the earth, sometimes to the extent that there is a thick mass of grass growing over it, rendering it almost invisible.

Fortunately, we have a very astute group of recorders who recognise these rectangular impressions in the grass (in the case of a monument with four kerbstones) as being a hidden grave and begin digging. Sometimes this results in the discovery of a “lost grave” which then gets added to the total number of monuments.

A BIT OF LIGHT INTERENTAINMENT

I wanted to find out more about my family history. I started doing a bit of digging, but I didn’t get far before I was thrown out of the cemetery!

Even the widely used headstones subside to some extent, hiding lettering in the ground so again the trowels have to come out. (This is assuming it hasn’t already toppled over on to the inscription side!)

So I’d like to offer a welcome to the new members and, as always, a big thank you to those who have toughed it out for the past 9 years when recording started.

Maud Graham Vincent died 1918, aged 48

Ros Clow

Maud Vincent came to Newbury in 1897. Her husband Samuel J L Vincent was at that time appointed Borough Surveyor for the council. My interest in the family started with a small photograph album that I bought on eBay. It was advertised as relating to 5 Porchester Villas in 1903 and it cost £25.

When it arrived it was much smaller than I expected and contained about 20 snaps of the front and back of what is now 5 Porchester Road, a young bowler hatted man mowing the front lawn and two little girls, who were taken by horse-drawn coach to the "Fever Hospital"

I was disappointed and put it on the shelf until recently. Then by amazing coincidence a friend, Derek, I made through the French group of the U3A mentioned that when he first came to Newbury he rented a small flat in 5, Porchester Road. So I searched out the album to show him and then decided to do a bit more sleuthing. The 1901 census showed that the occupier was S J L Vincent, Borough Surveyor, wife Maud Graham with two daughters Eva (4) and Sybil (3). Almost certainly the little girls in the photos.

We were on a roll! Ancestry, Free BMD, and British Newspaper Archive provided more information. BUT first the essential check, so often forgotten, were they buried in our cemetery?

Only one of them was and it is Maud, the wife and mother and as so often is the case, I could find very little information about her but lots about her husband, and she isn't in the photos.

Maud Osborne was born in 1870 in Christchurch, Hampshire, to Frederick, a carpenter, and Ellen. She had an older sister Ellen and a brother Stewart. By 1881 things had changed and she was still living in Holdenhurst but with her widowed grandfather Francis Graham, a gardener and her aunt and uncle, George and Sarah Allen. Her older sister Ellen was living in locally as a domestic servant and her brother Stewart was a pupil at the Boys Farm Home Industrial School in Barnet. Further research showed that Maud's mother had died in 1872 while Maud was still a baby and Frederick married Annie Cooke in 1874. They went on to have more children.



Boys Farm Home Industrial School in Barnet

Maud's grandfather's surname was Graham which explains why when Maud married Samuel she was calling herself Maud Graham Osborne.

By 1891 Maud is living and working as a staff nurse at the Bedford Infirmary and Fever Hospital. Patients tended to be quite young, many of them children.

Meanwhile Samuel, born in 1871, son of a Wesleyan Minister who moved around the country as so many of them did, is living as a boarder in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, and is Clerk of Works to the Town Council. They were married in 1894. How did they meet? And why did they get married twice, first in Great Yarmouth (8th May) and then Bedford (28th June)?!

Eva Maud, their first child was born in 1897 in Great Yarmouth, so presumably Maud moved there after her marriage. From the Newbury Weekly News we know that S.J.L. Vincent was appointed Borough Surveyor in 1897, and indeed their next daughter, Sybil Mary was born in Newbury in 1898.

By 1901 they are living at 5 Porchester Villas, by the time of the photos they have had a son in 1902, Stewart Lee Vincent. On the back of one photo it states that x marks the window of the room Stewart was born in, the final proof that we had the right family. In 1905 Dorothy Lee was born – in the same room!

So what of the trip to the “Fever Hospital”? Originally, prone to embellishing stories as I am, I thought maybe Maud was in hospital there and the children taken to visit. Then when I discovered she had been a nurse in a fever hospital I thought maybe she worked there? Incidentally it is always referred to as the “Isolation Hospital” in Newbury and I know that because Samuel’s job description grew to include Sanitary Inspector and he reported each year on how many patients were in the hospital and which diseases they had. So maybe he was going out there to inspect the new extension and looking after the girls as Maud was still lying in?

The hospital made of corrugated iron, designed for patients with scarlet fever, typhoid, TB but not smallpox, 2 miles out of Newbury, opened just before Samuel arrived. He improved the sanitary arrangements there and in 1905 a telephone link was agreed!

By 1911 the family had moved to a new house in Clifton Road. But Maud died in 1918, at 56 Bartholomew Street. This is now the betting shop next to



Indigo Bay. Didn't it used to be called Vincent's? Samuel remarried Winifred Holding and moved away but his widow also died in Newbury, but she's buried in Shaw Cemetery. Maud has a gravestone in our cemetery and I shall be adding her to the Medical Matters tour.

Welcome

Following our volunteer evening in February, the committee would like to extend the warmest welcome to some new helpers and also to existing friends who have taken on new roles.

- Emma Dunlop-Walters has joined the team as public relations officer.
- The monument recording group has grown with the addition of Peter Thorn, Martin Strike, Judy Colley and Richard Papworth.
- Martin Strike and Christine Gambles have also taken on projects for the History Group.

The committee would like to express their gratitude to **everyone** who gives up their time to help preserve, record and research the Newtown Road Cemetery for future generations.

Albert Alexander – Setting the record straight

Paul Thompson

In the editorial I mentioned the exhibition on medicines and Albert Alexander, the first person in the UK to receive experimental penicillin. Albert has appeared in a number of newsletters in the past, the first time was Spring 2013 when we first found out who he was and his remarkable contribution to medical science and history.

We did the same research anyone else would do and found him listed on places like Wikipedia. The stories we found at the time said that Albert had scratched his face on the thorn of a rose bush, which became infected. He was taken to the John Radcliffe in Oxford, where he was treated with the new experimental penicillin and, whilst the drug seemed to be curing him, there simply was not enough of the drug to complete his treatment and he died on March 12th 1941, aged just 44.

This was fascinating stuff and so we published it in our newsletter, but since then, more information has come to light that has thrown doubts on the beginnings of this story, namely the source of the infection.

Recently, through further research and assistance from Albert's daughter and granddaughter, we now know what really happened.

This is a transcription from the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) newsletter of Spring 2004 and has been confirmed to us as accurate by the family.

Police Constable 231 Albert Alexander was a member of the Berkshire Constabulary. He was born in the parish of Woodley in February 1897 and joined the Force in July 1921.

At the outbreak of the war he was stationed at Wootton and was a member of the Force's Mutual Aid Team and was on standby duty to go anywhere in the Country.

At about 7 pm on 23 November 1940 men from the County were required to assist the Southampton police. Thirty men were mustered, one of whom was Constable Alexander. They reported to the Civic centre in Southampton. Upon their arrival there were sporadic raids, but the following week was comparatively quiet. Their time was spent on patrol and surveillance of damaged buildings.

At approximately 5:50 pm on 30 November a surprise attack came. A police station took a direct hit killing a sergeant and injuring two constables, one of whom was Constable Alexander. After treatment he was transferred to Abingdon Cottage Hospital where he developed blood poisoning. He was moved to the Radcliffe Infirmary Oxford for treatment. It was agreed that he would be injected with the drug penicillin. His condition improved as a result of the drug, but after 5 days the supply ran out and a month later he died. The problem of manufacture was taken up by the Americans.

The method they used to grow the cultures was in hundreds of BEDPANS.

So what about the rose thorn story? We do not know how or where this rumour started. We can only assume it was a bit of misinformation created by someone at the time to divert attention away from his death being a wartime casualty in a dangerous arena outside his normal working beat.

In-Vince-ible

By Ros Clow

I first met Alan Vince when he joined the History Group in its early days. His great-great grandfather was Charles Midwinter, the local corn merchant. Alan was in possession of the Family Bible and so was able to contribute information on his family (Midwinter and Salway) for our records.

When that was completed, he asked for more work! One of our major issues has always been that the cemetery 'plot' record has been missing since the 1950s. And the Berkshire Burial Index (BBI) also has large chunks of data missing, what we call the Missing Years (pre 7th October 1868 and then between 1st October 1884 and 3rd January 1898). Our aim has always been



Alan Vince (sitting) with Liz Evans at the remembrance event in 2016.

that everyone buried in Newtown Road Cemetery, rich or poor, should be remembered on our website.

One resource we do have access to is the Newbury Weekly News microfilm in the library. So in 2014 I asked for volunteers to read every issue from its inauguration in 1867, copy the death announcements and any obituaries or funeral reports and pass all this information to me for filing. Ten members, including Alan, volunteered. At the time of his death in November 2019 Alan was the only one still working away, about to start his 10th year! But he did more than just copy. He checked each individual against Mrs Pattison's Memorial Inscriptions, the BBI and the newly discovered (at the Berkshire Record Office) Cemetery Accounts. And he completed one of our research forms for each individual thus making filing so much easier.

Every time we had a Welcome Event at the cemetery Alan always offered to do a stint on the gate, chatting with visitors as they arrived. He did this in the freezing cold and even after he had had heart surgery. He regularly attended our events, History Group and filing sessions. It was at one of these sessions that Alan queried a 1903 newspaper cutting which reported that Charles Midwinter was up before the magistrates. I assured him I would work it out! Several months later Alan's query resulted in our 2017 production "Passive Resistance". I had wanted Alan to play his ancestor but he felt three performances would be too much, so Garry Poulson ably stepped in – he had after all worked for Midwinters when he was a teenager!

When we updated the spreadsheet index in January 2020 and logged the last of Alan's research, we found that over the years Alan had contributed 784 records of individuals, now remembered on our website in one way or another.

I loved his gentle sense of humour. His wife, Jenny, and all the family must be missing it too.

What will we do without him?

And finally...

We have to say a very big thank you to everyone who has contributed to all the amazing things that the Friends have been able to do in the past 10 years. Getting the cemetery re-opened to the public, the massive amount of researching done by the History group, the recording, restoring (and digging up) of the monuments, the work of the nature group in preserving and documenting the beauty of the cemetery.

We also cannot forget the work of Ros Clow and the Resurrection Players for the grand plays and monologues they put on as this is a great way to raise funds.

We would not be here if not for the tireless work of Newbury Town Council in helping to preserve the places that make Newbury special, so to them goes a very special thank you.

Stay safe everyone in these strange and uncertain times and here's to the next 10 years!