



**Newsletter 27**

**Autumn 2022**

The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, c/o 100 Enborne Road, Newbury, RG14 6AN  
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## Chairman's Chatter

Brian Sylvester

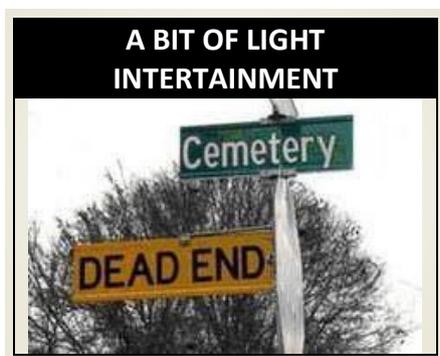
Now come on, let's be honest. How many of us receive circulars, start to read them and then, after a short scan, say "I'll come back to that later"? *But we don't!* As we receive so many these days it's not really surprising.

For those who do this to my Chairman's Chatter – *slapped wrists!*

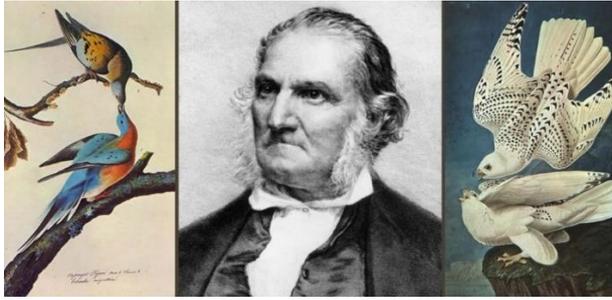


It does mean you miss the appreciation for all the support received which usually concludes my article: so this time I'm going to start with our continuing gratitude to:

The Newbury Town Council and their contractors; your committee; group leaders and their teams; the researchers; our thespians and guides; our photographers; our website guru and the website in-putters; and naturally our revered newsletter editor. And I must add thanks to those who compose the monthly Plant and Grave of the Month: I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.



Having got that off my chest you're probably now thinking "I'll come back to this later" - *don't you dare!* If you did that last time, you'll have missed my bit about "Sumer is i-cumen in". Well, it now looks as though it's "Sumer i-go-en out"! And what a bizarre one it's been but fading now to an Indian Summer? Supposedly this is the time Red Indians (or Native Americans as we now say) take the opportunity to store up their crops and logs for winter.



Strangely the famous American artist, naturalist and ornithologist, Audubon refers to it as “that extraordinary phenomenon of North America” but makes no reference to the allusion.

The term has, however, appeared in many songs: I particularly recall Frank Sinatra crooning: “Summer, you old Indian Summer: You're the tear that comes after June time's laughter”.



But others put store (sorry – not intentional) on the good things of autumn, e.g. Keats' “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun”. So let's enjoy while we can.



Autumn is also the time for our brief AGM followed by a superb, interesting talk by Ros Clow.

At the beginning of the first lockdown Ros decided to write a preface to the books that we had decided to write, using themes from the research being discovered in the cemetery. She soon realised that in order to do that she needed to find out more about the history of the Newbury Cemetery Company. This talk will cover her research in some detail. Any feedback will be useful before the book goes to print.

I look forward to seeing you there and our other events.

## The Newbury Coat

*Brian Sylvester*

Whilst on holiday last year near Stratford-upon-Avon, I visited the delightful National Trust property, Coughton Court, the family home of the Throckmortons. Why did that name ring a bell for me? On touring the rooms, the penny dropped.

It was Sir John Throckmorton who in 1811 bet 1,000 guineas with Newbury mill owner, John Coxeter, that it was not possible for the wool cut from sheep to be tailored into a coat in a single day despite the new machinery then available.



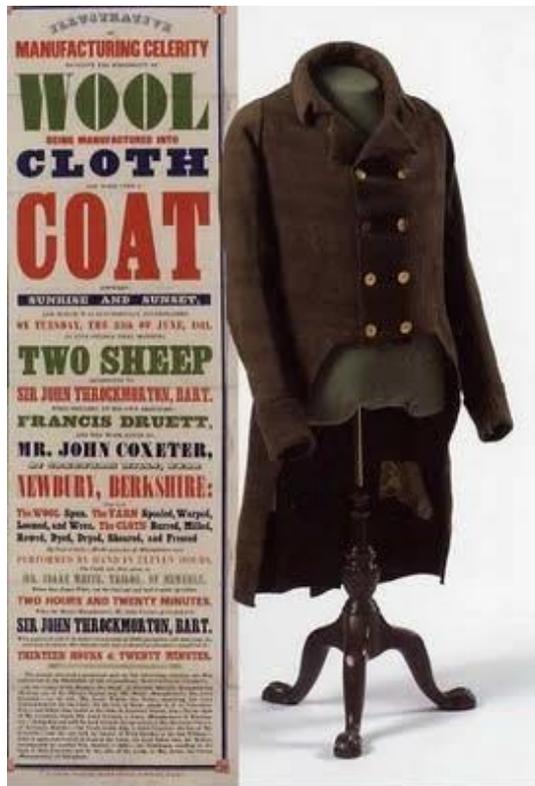
However, at 6:20 pm, following frantic endeavour, Sir John appeared wearing the coat before the “5,000 strong assemblage who rent the air in acclamations”, prior to sitting down to dinner with forty gentlemen at the Pelican. The sheep were duly slaughtered, roasted nearby and distributed to the public along with 120 gallons of strong beer, the gift of Mr. Coxeter. Cheers!

The occasion was commemorated by two charming paintings, one of which is currently owned by Sir Peter Michael who has kindly loaned it to the Town Hall where it may be seen on the staircase. The other is at Coughton Court, along with the coat itself.



The main characters in the paintings are well-nigh identical but, for some reason, the background buildings are quite different (any suggestions why?). Sir John is shown in the middle being measured up for his new garment while John C. is seen behind the shearers looking on anxiously.

“All very interesting, Brian” I hear you say: “but what’s that to do with Newtown Road Cemetery?” [Thought you’d never ask!]



Take a close peep in the bottom left-hand corner for there is John C’s wife and, holding his mother’s hand, their fourth son, two-year old Samuel Coxeter. Rather strangely he has his back to the artist in the Coughton painting; but in Sir Michael’s version he is shown in profile.



The mother, Elizabeth (née Collier) lived to be 100 years and 9 months until 1876 when *she was buried in NRC.*

Samuel lived on to 1893 when he died, aged 84, and *was also buried in NRC.*

**We also have** Samuel's wife, Mary (née Keens) who had died in 1877 aged 70.

**Additionally, we have** Elizabeth Jane Coxeter who was buried on 15th August, 1856: we are still trying to identify her.

So, there's your connection to Newtown Road Cemetery. Hope you liked it.

*For much, much more on this, visit:*

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/persondetails.asp?PersonID=11735>

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/biography.asp?BiogID=214>

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/persondetails.asp?PersonID=3768>

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/persondetails.asp?PersonID=3691>

<http://www.newburyhistory.co.uk/newbury-coat>

<https://www.coughtoncourt.co.uk>

P.S. The exercise to create a coat in a day was successfully repeated in 1991, the replica being on show in the West Berks. Museum. A further attempt was held in 2011 to mark the bicentenary of the event.

**A BIT OF LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT**



*You may be a king or a little street sweeper,  
but sooner or later, you'll dance with the Reaper!*

*"The Reaper Rap"*  
From the 1991 film, *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey*.  
© Columbia pictures

# *Hallowe'en in the Cemetery*



*Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October*

*In the Cemetery Chapel*

*The Last Long Mile*

*Story telling by Mike Brook*

*Music by Chris Foster and friends*

6.30pm for members of the public and children aged 6-16.

Volunteers needed to offer refreshment for 8.00pm performance.

8.00pm storytelling, The Last Long Mile by Ros Clow.

Free to members, including mulled wine.

Experience the cemetery after dark.

<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing?embed&eid=31935>

## Sylvia Green (1936 - 2022)

Jenny Peet



Sylvia Green, who died recently, was a true Friend of Newtown Road Cemetery.

She had many and varied interests and skills, one being that of Family History.

The Cemetery holds a number of her ancestors. She was already researching them when the FNRC began in 2009. Sylvia readily joined the History section and with her computer skills, was soon involved.

As well as her own relatives, she researched other cemetery families and shared details and stories at our History Group meetings. She soon took on the task of inputting **ALL** the text: obituaries, NWNews reports; workhouse records; articles from the British Newspaper Archives, sent to her by others in the group. She always checked everything that was sent to her, including our spelling!

Her enthusiasm and skills will be sorely missed, as well as her friendly, lively, personality.

Thank you, Sylvia.

**Note from Ros:** I loved working with Sylvia. When she was told she had oesophageal cancer she was also told that she was too old for an operation. She dressed up, did her hair, put on make-up and then went to see the consultant! She had the operation and went on helping us for three more years. If she couldn't sleep at night, she just added a few more obituaries to our website! A privilege to have known her.

## Association of Significant Cemeteries Conference – 2022

Ros Clow

Dave and I recently visited Belgrade for the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) AGM and conference. This was the fifth time we had attended one. Previously we had visited Dublin, Athens, Innsbruck and Ghent.

We don't put in an expenses claim!

The theme this year was 'Cemeteries for Everybody' and we were promised a wonderful experience though it didn't turn out quite as planned. In future if we visit Belgrade again, which we might, we will know better what to expect!

The programme promised us 80 participants (there were more like 45), 13 presentations (nine happened), a guided walking tour ending at a new open distillery, a guided tour of Belgrade New Cemetery (too far for me to walk, Dave walked eight miles that day!), a Gala dinner, a visit to the town and cemetery of Zemun (the bus never got there although we did!) and refreshments on a river boat on the Danube. Saturday was meant to be a coach trip into the countryside, but it was cancelled for security reasons, something to do with Kosovo.



Instead on the Saturday we went into town to meet up with Janine (from Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol) at the National Museum, which we had passed on the initial walking tour. It looked very different. Raked seats and flimsy barriers had been put up so that Formula 1 racing cars could speed through the town and do stunts! Sponsored by Red Bull.



*Belgrade museum Tour*

It became obvious at this point that Belgrade has no overall systematic planning so on this day, as well as the racing cars, there was to be a massive military passing out parade, the Euro Pride march (which had been banned), and an anti-Gay march organised by the Orthodox Church, all in the town centre!

As usual the conference was a mix of unintelligible presentations supported by poor visual aids and inspirational talks from people who work in or are researching the sector. Ian Dungevall from Highgate Cemetery (a member of the steering committee) talked about 'What does significant mean when we talk about Significant Cemeteries?' He concluded that every cemetery is significant to someone.

Theodora Virginia Dalli, an elected councillor from Kifissia near Athens, spoke about her role in providing local burial space. In Kifissia cemetery (which we visited when we were at the Athens conference) bodies are removed to a different part of the cemetery (with different bugs) after three years. I asked her what happened to the very expensive marble monument, which she had showed us, when the body was removed. Sorry for the pun but this opened a can of worms!



*Unusual Gala Dinner at 'Three Hats Restaurant'.*

Theodora rounded on the one orthodox priest present and asked him about the church's attitude to cremation (they don't allow it). He waffled, embarrassed I think, and said it wasn't to do with Jesus Christ but to do with body and soul being separated. As the Greeks believe the soul leaves the body after 40 days this seemed a bit weak. So, I asked whether it was flame cremation that was the objection or would the new water cremation be more acceptable. I had only heard about this the day before during lunch. Its trade name is 'Resomation'.

Theodora then ranted that as an elected councillor it was her job to provide for everyone not just the Orthodox Church. At present bodies have to be transported to Bulgaria to be cremated and the ashes brought back. She then admitted that, in a new project they are building, cremation will be possible.

All this was very exciting but what I decided as a result of this presentation was that every tour we do needs to include ordinary people, not just celebrities who can afford gravestones.

Another fascinating presentation was from Dr Ole Jensen, Danish-born, who has researched the minority sections of Brookwood Cemetery. This began with the Muslim (Mohammedan) burial ground in Brookwood set up in 1884. He pointed out that when an immigrant dies the body is sent back home, but as time goes on there are more members of the family living locally than there are in the village they came from, so they start to bury locally. He ended with a list of 14 minority burial grounds found today at Brookwood. It included Serbian Orthodox, Latvians, Ismaili and Zoroastrians.

Best of all was Janine Marriott's *WELCOMED AND RESPECTED: FINDING THE BALANCE WHEN WELCOMING VISITORS TO UK HISTORIC CEMETERIES*. She pointed out that Welcoming includes advertising, events, tours, drama but that you have to be very clear about what is

acceptable and what is not in your space. Of course, it was great to see **Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery** listed in her references – at an international conference.

Next year the ASCE AGM & Conference will be in Mantua, Italy. I hope to be there.

## Subscription Reminder

*Paul Shave*

Thank you for continuing to be a Friend. We depend on Friends' donations to keep us going and it's time to renew your subscription. The annual Membership form for renewal is on the link below. Subscriptions are due on 1st October.

If you're not currently using a standing order for your payments, we would appreciate it if you could - it makes it easier for you and the Treasurer as you don't have to do anything each year. Link below. If you have received the paper version of this newsletter, the forms are included.



Membership form:

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/docs/FNRC%20Membership%20Form.pdf>

Standing Order:

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/docs/Standing%20Order%20Instruction.doc>

## Recording Monuments – Past and Present

*Doug Larsen*

Back in the days when the Friends Group was first started (circa 2009) it was decided that we should have a website that not only listed all the graves but provided a means for the general public to search for monuments so they could pay their respects to long-dead relatives. Not only that but also attach to the search some history of the person's life.

For anyone who visits the graveyard for the first time, this would seem an impossible task as there was no apparent order to the monuments. Where would you even start if you wanted to find Granny Smith's gravestone or great, great Uncle Walt's vault? You clearly needed a strategy to find your way to the correct monument

Well, fortunately, we have a solution laid in our laps thanks to one woman's obsession to discover old paths in the graveyard and assign some order to the Victorian layout of these paths. This lady was **Margaret Pattison** whose self-imposed task was to record every monument and assign a location according to its position in the graveyard.

This record was typed out (in triplicate!) and placed in Newbury Library. There it gathered dust for many years until The Friends of Newtown Cemetery was established and is consulted almost every day by people doing family research or obsessives like The FNRC History Group who are getting material to attach to the Monument records.

Bringing us up to date, the Monument Recording Group are busy working their way through areas of the graveyard that have not yet been recorded. They have covered about 85% of the monuments (1,930 against a total of approximately 2,229).

So, clearly, there is some way to go but that takes nothing away from the huge effort made by the recorders

## A Composting Toilet for Newtown Road Cemetery

*John Gardner*

As we expand the number of activities taking place in the cemetery, the need for a decent loo to improve our overall offering has become urgent. In addition to busy activities our cemetery is a great place for contemplation and peace away from the busy metropolis of Newbury. What better place to have a loo on which to dream. Unfortunately, a dream is all we have at the moment.



The Friends have campaigned for a composting toilet for the last 6 years. The type of toilet is odourless and does not require water, except for hand washing. The fittings are standard but the building can be tailored to suit the location, wheelchair access and budget. Estimates range from £10000 to £15000 depending on the overall design.



There have been debates about where the toilet could be located and whether or not permission would be required from the church commissioners. It now appears that these questions have been resolved and at a recent Town Council meeting our Secretary, Maureen Hudd, reported that the friends would like to position the toilet as close as possible to the Chapel. The Town Council said that they were prepared to contribute up to £10000 towards the cost and the Friends to find any extra cash that may be needed. The Friends are currently updating the budget and designs so the dream may

be moving towards reality.

If nothing else this subject has created a rich collection of potty talk but the recent motion by the Town Council suggests we are nearly there!

To keep things moving [sorry!], the pictures featured in this article are a few examples of composting toilets in churchyards, taken from the website of one of the main suppliers of composting toilets.



*It is plain to see how urgent a toilet was needed in this cemetery!*

## Forensic Filing

*Ros Clow*

Since I started our History Group in 2010, I have been coordinating research into individuals either buried in or associated with Newtown Road Cemetery. Early on I designed a 'front sheet' for each individual. (We are now on Version #7). When a 'front sheet' is completed, it is filed alphabetically, in a plastic sleeve, together with any relevant documents e.g. photographs, certificates, newspaper articles and obituaries. So far, I have 4,200+ files in my office.

Husband Dave has started checking that all the information in the files has also been transferred to our website. He has started at A (Elizabeth Abel died 1873, researched by Alan Vince) and has completed everyone up to the end of the Js (Stephen Justice, died 1874, researched by Brian Sylvester). This means he has completed one trolley and is officially 'off his trolley'!



I have been questioning if the system works and have decided that, almost accidentally, it works really well. I will try to explain why.

Initially one of our members, or someone who has contacted us through the website, sends us information about an individual. Secondly, I read the information, print it off and put documents in a drawer ready for filing. Before each filing session Brian Sylvester comes round and sorts everything into alphabetical piles. He reads the information as he does it.

Then the filing day arrives. We work in pairs checking that all the information required is completed. Each pair takes one of the piles, puts it in alphabetical order, and then works through the pile. They read the documents, check that

Date first filed:

<b>Surname</b>	<b>First names</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>DODeath</b>	<b>D of burial</b>
<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Gravestone Yes/No</b> <i>Mrs Patt. page</i>	<b>Where is the grave?</b> <i>Code</i>
<b>Note for spreadsheet</b>		

there is a 'front sheet' and that it is properly completed. This can include looking up information on our records (Berkshire Burial Index, Cemetery Accounts, Mrs Pattison's Memorial Inscriptions [Mrs P]) or online. When all that is done, the sleeve is added to the appropriate file and tagged with a post-it note.

The next stage is that Dave and I work through the newly tabbed files (this includes those where new information was added to existing files) and add the names and information to the spreadsheet index. This is available to all on the website.

Complicated, yes? But it means that each new resident's details are read by six people and thus we discover themes, stories, crossovers, and those doing the filing become knowledgeable about the issues that pertain to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For instance, if someone gets married somewhere other than where they live there is usually a reason, probably it is an illegal marriage. We have many cases of these: bigamy; uncles marrying nieces; men marrying their dead wife's sister (illegal till 1907).

Another theme is that when the last person in a family dies there will not usually be a memorial inscription. Who would pay for it? For instance, Thomas Kains died in 1875. His wife Elizabeth was already buried with her mother, ten years earlier. It is very likely that Thomas is buried with her but as we have no Plot Book, we do not know if he is. There is, in this case, no entry in the Accounts book either so no money changed hands. That was probably because Kains had donated the bell on the Anglican Chapel. He entitled himself to a free burial.

So, we will continue this process. Of course, I would like more of you to volunteer to help. Just give me a ring. 01635 40188.



**OYEZ,  
OYEZ,  
OYEZ!  
BE IT  
KNOWN  
THAT ...**

***The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery  
will be holding the briefest of***

## **Annual General Meetings**

**before a fascinating exposé on**

## **The Newbury Cemetery Company**

**by that renowned raconteuse**

**Mrs. ROS CLOW**

**at the Parish Hall of  
St. Francis de Sales**

**Warren Road, RG14 6NH**

**at 7:30 of the horologe**

**on 6th October 2022**

***Free Admission***

## Old Book Review

Meg Thomas MRCGP MFFP DRCOG

### **Minor Medicine: A Treatise on the Nature and Treatment of Common Ailments by Walter Essex Wynter**

Published: 1908/10

Available on [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

I found this book fascinating as well as culturally significant. But I also found it very difficult to read owing to the non-contemporary prose. The language is very dense.

Essex Wynter has an understanding of physiology and anatomy which is not much different from that of 21st century medics even though this book was written at a time when diagnostic tests were very limited.

Wynter is giving advice about minor ailments and I'm sure he helped a lot of his patients, as well as these young doctors. That said, most of his recommendations and explanations seem completely wacky. Nevertheless, some of his treatments are still around today and have a good evidence base. Morphine obviously, but also choral, senna and podophyllin are all still used. I noticed women's issues were covered in just one page, though I don't think men's problems were given much more emphasis.



*Walter Essex Wynter*

Again, some of his advice about non pharmaceutical interventions has stood the test of time; for example, fluids for constipation and his advice to work up a bit of a sweat when exercising. The importance of dental health for general health is now well recognised.

Otherwise Wynter seems to make it all up or go on hunches or handed down 'wisdom'. We have to remember that the Victorians had hardly moved on since Hippocrates in terms of medical practice. His chapter on 'individual health' is also relevant today other than the great amount of information on alcohol and when to use it.



A GIFT FOR MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL.  
Mr. W. Essex Wynter, who has given Bartholomew Manor, Newbury, Berkshire, to Middlesex Hospital. He was formerly senior physician of the hospital. Our photograph shows him in the manor grounds.

All of this has to be understood in a wider and important context. When I started training as a GP in the 1980s, I was told 'basically it's all bluff' and the senior partner was still prescribing various tonics (which have now been proved useless). The idea of evidence-based medicine did not really take off till the 1990s when it was recognised that most interventions had no real research base or evidence behind them.

Wynter's idea of a manual about minor symptoms for new doctors is really good. Medical school in Wynter's day would have been similar to mine: just about the 'serious stuff'. It wasn't until the early 1980s that GPs had to train in more than just medicine and surgery. Even then psychiatry, dermatology and ENT, the mainstay of general practice, were pretty marginalised. Going into general practice was treated with disdain, as was the bread and butter of this branch of the profession. So, Walter Essex Wynter was definitely well ahead of his time. Yet his approach did not become established

till decades later, as is the way with all the best medical practice.

### Dates for the diary

Thursday October 6 <sup>th</sup> 7:30pm – 10pm	St. Francis de Sales Parish Hall Warren Road RG14 6NH	Annual general Meeting and Talk. See details elsewhere in the newsletter.
Sunday October 30 <sup>th</sup> 6:30pm – 7:45pm	Newtown Road Cemetery Chapel	Mike Brook will read a new story about ghosts in the cemetery at 8.00pm Free for Friends including refreshments.
Saturday November 12 <sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm	Remembrance opening of the Cemetery	Displays in the Chapel. Guided Tours. Find-A-Grave service.

## POST SCRIPT

Joan Stacey

You may recall in my Plant of the Month I mentioned the Flanders and Swann wonderful song, 'Misalliance', about the Convolvulus (AKA the Bindweed) meeting with the Honeysuckle when they "touched tendrils, smiled, and fell in love".

Well, I came across such a meeting recently shown in the photograph (right).

I have to admit, I didn't see any evidence of them falling in love nor, at the end of the day, *pulling up their roots and shrivelling away*. They are still hard at it!

The full lyrics of this clever song may be found online, for example:



<https://www.justsomyrics.com/1653566/flanders-and-swann-misalliance-lyrics.html>

