



Newsletter 9

Spring 2014

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

Brian Sylvester

Dear Friends



True to past form, I've been at the dictionary again – this time looking at 'chapel', a word that comes from the Latin for 'cape'. How come?

Apparently a 4th century Roman soldier named Martin, tore his cloak in half to share with a beggar who turned out to be Christ in disguise. The remaining small cape – a 'capella' - became a relic of the converted soldier, now St. Martin of Tours, and that relic was housed in a 'chapele' an old French word which then came into use to describe small places of worship, and eventually our English word 'chapel'. [Incidentally, *A cappella*, unaccompanied singing, comes from the Italian for singing 'in the mode of the chapel' – but you knew that.]

I'm delighted to report that our chapel, whilst not boasting a relic, has been fully restored by Newbury Town Council, including our treasured stained-glass window. And you will have an ample opportunity to see this when the Mayor of Newbury (Clr. Anthony Pick) formally re-opens the cemetery on **Sunday 6th April at 11 am.**

By then we hope to have installed the explanatory panels which give details of both the cemetery's history and nature.

In addition, on that day we'll be offering cemetery tours and our find-a-grave service for visitors, so come and join us for this celebration. We hope to see you then.

Then the next big event, which we are eagerly looking forward to, is our new play, **The Tragedy on Enborne Road**, written by our very own Ros Clow. This is about the true story of a local murder and suicide in 1892 which generated a lot of interest at the time. Unlike our previous production, Ros has been able to work in a modern twist to the tale. Well worth seeing.



The performance will be held in the evening of **Friday 16th May** which is the actual anniversary of the event (spooky!). It's being held at the wonderfully-equipped **Phoenix Resource Centre** which is on the Newtown Road, just up the hill from the cemetery.

Tickets are available through the Corn Exchange booking service and the modest price includes a pre-show drink.

[We will need 'front-of-house' assistance on the night: if you can help with this, or in any other way, please contact our secretary (Maureen on 01635 30108) or Ros (40188): it'll be very much appreciated.]



Also in the future – *'that period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness assured!'* – we are looking forward to becoming involved with the WW1 commemorations (we have the graves of 19 casualties of that conflict) and, at the domestic end of the scale, we're hoping to get a water supply and toilet installed shortly.

As ever, we're most grateful for the ongoing work done by the history, nature and monuments-recordings groups as well as the terrific support from our secretary, treasurer and web-master. Also to the officers of Newbury Town Council for all the restoration and maintenance work to our gem. Well done chaps and chapesses (words which have absolutely nothing to do with capes or chapels!).

Dates for Your Diaries

6th April (Sunday)	Welcome Day at the cemetery (10am – 4pm). This welcome day will also include the formal re-opening of the cemetery by the Mayor of Newbury at 11am.
3rd May – 25th May	Open Studios. Three artists will be exhibiting in the Chapel over several weekends.
16th May (Friday)	Tragedy on Enborne Road - A re-enactment by Ros Clow. Details elsewhere in the Newsletter. Helpers are required on the day. (see Chairman's Chatter for details)
21st June (Saturday)	Welcome to Wildflowers Day This Welcome Day will have an emphasis on the wild flowers and grasses that now grow in the cemetery. Having had no fertiliser or weedkiller for over 100 years (at least) the cemetery is an important "unimproved grassland", quite rare in the south of England.

Don't forget, the cemetery is open daily from 10am to 3pm. Come along, relax, see and enjoy the constant changes which occur in our peaceful local amenity.

History Group Report

Ros Clow

We continue to meet every other month to discuss our recent research. As newspaper articles are typed up by Julie Goddard or individuals are written up, Sylvia Green adds them to the website. We could do with some volunteers to transform research into short written pen pictures to be placed on the website linked to burial records. Wendy Coldwell has taken away two lever arch files (A & B) to have a go at doing this, there are plenty more left! We have about 1000 records researched now but only a minority are on the web.

More and more we are being contacted by descendants from overseas who notice their relatives on our web site and then offer more information. This is invaluable so the more information we can display the more information we will be offered.

We also share the filing of records now and newer members of the group find this very interesting (How sad we are!). Or is it that I provide cake?

Meetings are already advertised under *Events* on our web page, next meeting 2nd April. Just let me know if you want to join us.

Nature Report

Rita Gardner



Comma butterfly

The latest survey for the Newtown Road Cemetery was one on the entomology of the site. The survey was done by the Newbury Town Council; its purpose was to establish a base line of the existing insect species. 89 species were identified; the entomologist believes that in a year with more favourable weather, the site will probably yield more diversity.

The report stated that the cemetery is in good condition and is well managed. Several suggestions were made regarding plants for food sources: 1) more frequent cutting of the dense grass in the northern section in order to allow the seeding of more flowers; 2) planting more buddleia, lavender and golden rod to ensure that there is a continuous source of nectar rich flowers

(different bushes flowering at different times of the year); 3) as the site is surrounded by urban development, trying to maintain a 'wild' meadow habitat is a constraint—"a mixture of wild and of cultivated flowers would benefit nectar-feeding insects..."

NTC is cutting back the grassy areas around grave monuments more frequently as they need to be more visible to the maintenance team in order to prevent damage to equipment. Also, the buddleia that has seeded itself into the cemetery wall has to be removed as it is damaging the wall as the trunk diameters increase. Buddleia which seeds itself elsewhere will be left to grow.

The post of Grounds Maintenance Officer has been inactive for over a year. This poses some problems in maintenance, as directions for plant clearance is not always done correctly. It has been difficult to supervise the actual work as is being carried out. The activation of the post will be welcomed in order to ensure that the cemetery continues to be a pleasant public amenity as well as a wildlife habitat—both aspects being sensitive to the fact that the site is a cemetery.

There is positive development on the nature notice board. Jo Lempriere, (NTC community services team), has pulled together the factual information, has obtained copyright for detailed photos of wildlife and has organized the graphics—a splendid achievement.

We look forward to welcoming visitors on Sat., 21 June, for an open day at the cemetery to view the flowers. There were 22 species of butterflies and moths recorded in the entomological survey; hopefully, they will be gracing the flowers on the 21st.

What has Joshua Reynolds ever done for us?

A History Group Article by Ros Clow



*Sir Joshua Reynolds
Self Portrait*

Well, not a lot actually but I found a link on our last visit to the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich. We were there so David could look up some more of my family history so to stem off boredom I asked if they had any records of the Tollemache family. They did, a lot, all indexed by the family, indexes only kept at the record office.

Now those of you who have done the Angels, Artists and Authors tour might remember the story of Herbert Finn (the angel on the curved path north of the chapel). Herbert trained as a brewer at the Ipswich Steam Brewery and married the boss's daughter. He became a partner in the brewery. Then things went wrong. Elizabeth died leaving him with three children. Presumably Elizabeth's sister moved in to help and Herbert fell in love with her (I am a romantic). Herbert wanted to marry Margaret Maria but in the 19th century marrying your dead wife's sister was still illegal.

So the Brewery with lists of public houses and workers' cottages was auctioned in 1888 and bought for £65,300 by Lord Tollemache as a business for his three younger sons (he had 10!). It later merged and became Tolly Cobbold. While researching all this for the tour I came across an article in a New Zealand newspaper saying that Lord Tollemache had sold two paintings to raise the money to buy the brewery. How would I ever find out which two paintings?



Lady Jane Halliday
by Joshua Reynolds

Well, luckily, the Tollemache records index listed several letters about selling paintings in 1888 and the mystery was solved. The two paintings were *Thais* and *Lady Jane Halliday* both by Joshua Reynolds. They were bought by Ferdinand de Rothschild and are now at Waddesdon Manor.



Thais
by Joshua Reynolds

Herbert married Margaret Maria in London and when the Phoenix Steam Brewery on Bartholomew Street came up for sale in 1893 he bought it and ran it very successfully till his death in 1922. Unfortunately in 1901 Margaret died aged 43, about the same age as her older sister died. It is in her memory the angel was erected and Herbert is buried with her.

Monuments Recording Group

Doug Larsen

In spite of the bad weather, which only limits work in the cemetery itself, we have been busy with data input and doing what we can from our photos of Monument Inscriptions until we can check them and clear overgrown or sunken graves later. It's also a time to do a little research to check dates and pass on interesting facts to the History group for further research. It is important to update and expand Mrs Pattison's record and to have it on-line



with photos. This must be done quickly before more inscriptions are lost to weathering etc. For this we need more recorders and we hope more volunteers will come along and join our group.

On a recent session I found two new monuments which didn't appear in Mrs Pattison's book. One of these, a headstone, had been buried under some grass in a totally random location so it is anyone's guess where the real grave is. The names on the monument appear in the burial register but, as is the case with all of these records, there is no indication of

where the grave is located. For relatives who may wish to visit their family grave this may be a sadness but at least we can help them make a connection by means of the monument.

Anyone interested in schools may like to look further into recently recorded graves with school links in Row WB in the SW section. One is WB22, the grave of the Dears, a family of teachers from Speen. A fine monumental cross (WB24) is the memorial to Geoffrey Garland Curwood who died on 25 Feb 1929 aged 13 years and 9 months at Christ's Hospital School, Horsham. It would be interesting to know if he was one of the Newbury West's Scholars & the cause of his death.

If any Friends are on ancestry they can find out more about the people being recorded as we are trying to save anything we find about them on there, along with photos of the graves.

Web site News

Paul Thompson

The web site continues to grow in the amount of information available to our online visitors. We are now in the process of adding the memorial details collected by the Monument Recording Group and hope to have all the images for the Newbury Cemetery Company Ledgers added to the site over the summer months with transcribing following on after that.

On average the site gets 360 hits per month. Over 82% of visitors are from the UK, but we still get regular visitors from the United States, Canada and Australia. Increasingly I have noticed that some visitors are using mobile devices to access information, so we may have to start thinking about a mobile version of the web site at some point in the future.

Situations Vacant

Looking for a fascinating and fulfilling situation? Looking to work with a team of enthusiasts? Looking to be involved in a useful contribution to Newbury's past and future?

Then look no further - we have vacancies for a **Public Relations Officer** and also a **Schools' Liaison Officer**. Remuneration? The delight in being associated with this exciting project.

For further details, please contact our Secretary, Maureen, on 01635 30108

Another Town Crier

Brian Sylvester

Articles have been written in the past about HENRY BECK, Newbury's Victorian Town Crier.

Readers may be interested in further research, this time on his successor, WILLIAM BUCKERIDGE, as his obituary has been tracked down in our local Newbury Weekly News: This can be read below.

Of particular interest is the reference to his hat when the local council attempted to revert from the Victorian topper to the former tricorn which, apparently, was the cause of much merriment and ridicule.

WILLIAM BUCKERIDGE died 30th December 1889

Buckeridge, the late Town Crier, is dead, and with him disappears another link with the past, of which he was so typical a representative. For the greater part of his life Buckeridge has been the very embodiment of municipal authority, whether as a member of the old borough police force, of which he is almost the sole survivor; or as one of the town sergeants bearing aloft his mace at many a civic ceremony; or in the more familiar character of town crier, when his stentorian lungs were at the service of all and sundry, and, in the words of the local poet, announced -



***“Lost purses, concerts, straying dogs, fish fresh to sell,
New showmen come to town, - what news he had to tell!”***

Buckeridge, who succeeded the well-known Beck, as crier, was a very obliging and courteous officer, with a civil word for all whom he met.

Some ten or eleven years ago the Corporation thought fit to dress Buckeridge in something of the costume of the ancient parish beadle, of which the three-cornered hat was a distinguishing characteristic. Buckeridge came in for a good deal of chaff when he first made his appearance in this unique attire, and the poet above quoted published in the columns of the Newbury Weekly News a poem on “The new civic head-piece.” Here is a specimen verse:-

***“Oh honoured then, thrice honoured, the three-cornered hat,
Which with new dignity surmounts the functionary that
In full-blown grandeur of municipal attire,
Scarce can we recognise our friend the old Town Crier.
Never in Newbury’s palmy days of yore, I ween,
Was head-piece so imposing in its fashion seen.”***

But the three-cornered hat did not exist for long, and Buckeridge went back to the more sober top hat with gold lace.

Of later years his natural force abated, and he was obliged to resign his office to a younger and more energetic man. But the Corporation showed their appreciation of his services by giving him a pension, and he was also elected to an almshouse in which he peacefully ended his days at a ripe old age.’

Newbury Weekly News 2nd January 1890.