

# NEWSLETTER NUMBER 38



August 2017

## Officers:

Chairman Jon Matthews  
Secretary David Jones  
Treasurer Richard Day

## Other Trustees:

Peter Almond Graham Lloyd  
John Pullen Barry Sowerby  
Stella Watling Roger Williams

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Registered Charity no: 1143917

## Chairman's Report

Here's a very important date for your diary:

# Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017

The **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** trustees and all the volunteers will be holding an **Open Day** to celebrate the completion of the restoration works - together with a variety of other initiatives that have taken place around the Cemetery grounds.

**The chapels will be open from 11:00am to 4:00pm and *everyone* will be welcome.**



On the previous Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> October, the **Heritage Lottery Fund** will formally "hand over the keys" at an invitation-only event.

The resources available on display will include Cemetery burial records, information leaflets about the Cemetery, artifacts, exhibits from the Victorian era and guides on how to research your family history.

It's been over 9 years in the making – but we now have two chapels that have no *safety fencing* and no *scaffolding* surrounding them - and they will be 'open for business' in October. We made it!!!

As well as the **Heritage Resource Centre** in the **West Chapel**, also open to view will be the **East Chapel** (this will once again become available for funeral services), the **Natural Burial Ground**, the Gazebo, restored front boundary wall and gates, new Information Boards, new Plot markers, new Benches and new Litter Bins - and **resurfaced roads!**

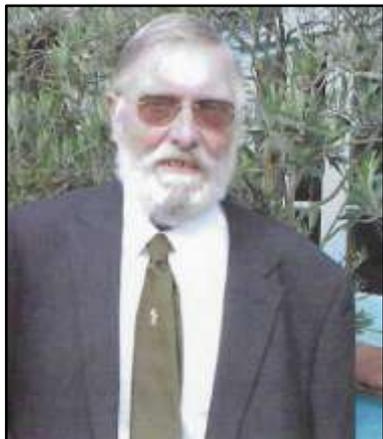
Yes, as the main contractors, **G J Banks & Co (IW) Ltd**, are vacating the site in September, roadway engineers will move in and resurface the main driveway down to the Gazebo - as well as some 'spur' pathways. It's a tight schedule – but we're confident!

**So, all being well, we should have lots to celebrate and I do hope that we've selected a date that you can make. Feel free to just turn up on the day!**

**Jon Matthews**

## **Membership Secretary Report**

In the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, we continue to enjoy the support of **248** (to date) "Friends" by virtue of having banked their 2017-2018 subscriptions – and dozens more 'subs' are pledged from existing Friends; this number includes **51** Life members. So, we are well on the way to surpass last year's total membership of 284.



We were very saddened to lose one of our Life members, **Charlie Taylor**, in June. Charlie was a well known and much loved Cowes historian, often seen with his long beard smoking his beloved pipe treading the pavements of Cowes; he was a font of much local knowledge and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts go to his many friends and family.

We have welcomed in recent months (all living, unless otherwise stated, in the PO31 Postcode area):

**Sharon Beddard, Susan Dingwall, Marcia Fairbairn** (Eastbourne, West Sussex), **Catherine Fitton, Paul & Sally Gibbs, Sheila Kennedy** and **John & Mary Pearson**. In addition, **Joy Hickson** and **Simon & Claire Nerval** have joined as Life members.

Our grateful thanks go to **Steve Callar** who has relinquished the Membership Secretary role; this gap will be addressed at the AGM on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September (see back page).

**Jon Matthews**

Acting Membership Secretary

## Natural Burial Ground - a natural haven in the making

Northwood Cemetery's **Natural Burial Ground** is situated in the south-eastern corner of the Cemetery, close to the Gazebo, at the far end from the main entrance and is now *open for reservations*.

For those who would like a more environmentally-friendly final resting place 'natural burial' is an increasingly popular option that leaves a positive legacy for future generations.

The aim of a natural burial is to keep everything as 'eco-friendly' as possible, thus encouraging species of plants and wildlife that are native to the area.

A natural burial is very different in both its appearance and in its methods. Burials within the **Natural Burial Ground** will all be single depth; thus, with a shallower burial, the body is less likely to release methane into the ground and so it will degrade more quickly.

Burials in coffins, shrouds and caskets will be acceptable; however all materials must degrade naturally, therefore no plastics, metal fittings or linings will be permitted. Wood must be natural and neither veneered nor contain toxic material (eg: MDF cladding and varnish coatings will not be allowed).

As stone memorials are not permitted, graves will be identified by wooden markers laid out by **Bereavement Services** (based at the Crematorium). Plans will also be available in the **Heritage Resource Centre**.

It will be possible to apply for a tree, a bulb or seeds to be planted as 'living memorials' to loved ones. These must be species that are native to the area and will be subject to a fee. Bereavement Services will predetermine the areas where all living memorials can be placed to ensure a balanced environment throughout the woodland area.

As we go to print the cost of a grave space in the **Natural Burial Ground** is being finalised by the **Isle of Wight Council** and it is our intent to announce it at the Open Day on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Reservations for burial spaces in the **Natural Burial Ground** can be made by either ringing **Bereavement Services** on 01983 882288 (or 01983 883010) or by letter to:

Bereavement Services, Isle of Wight Council, Station Road, Whippingham, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO33 6NJ.

### Iain Donald

Bereavement Services Manager  
Isle of Wight Council

## "The Sisterhood of West Hill"

This headline in the *IW County Press* of 11<sup>th</sup> December 1886 led me to the grave of the two daughters of George Ward, one-time owner of the land where they are buried. **Charlotte Ward**, the fourth, and **Honora Sophia Ward**, the seventh and youngest, were daughters of this most formidable of businessmen. Of his 15 children they are the only ones to have been buried in Northwood Cemetery.



Recently tidied up by FoNC volunteers, the interesting surround to this once neglected grave is now more visible. Their grave (in Plot 1, Grave 2891) can be found close to the imposing Atkey obelisk, complete with a sapling Ash tree.

Gushing in its praise, the article by the Rev. Edward Boucher James, vicar of Carisbrooke followed the death of the only married sister Mrs **Harriett Beckford**.

The Ward family owned the West Hill estate which consisted of the land between four roads in Cowes: **Mill Hill Road**; **Birmingham Road**; **Beckford Road**; and **Consort Road**.

When the West Hill estate was sold in 1888, following the death of the last surviving sister, the Local Board is recorded (*Isle of Wight County Press* of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1888) as recommending the names of roads bordering the estate to be changed: Khartoum Road to become Beckford Road and Osborne Road renamed Honora Road (this has subsequently been changed to Consort Road).

The epitome of Victorian gentility, these wealthy sisters were well known for their local charitable work. Their father believed in restricting money left to male heirs, believing females less likely to waste their income on folly and extravagance.



This picture shows some of the Ward sisters' servants with pets standing in the West Hill estate grounds (behind the hedge is what is now Birmingham Road; on the seaward side of Birmingham Road is Melbourne House, facing the camera, and this still exists today). This places the group standing roughly where the Cowes Methodist Church was built, following the sale of the West Hill estate in 1888.

The brick pillars at the entrance to West Hill Grove in Mill Hill Road are the only reminders of what was once a centre of Victorian wealthy society.

The article quotes one of the sisters, saying *"Our first duty is to the Isle of Wight"* and continues *"There is no pleasanter house in all the Isle of Wight than that over which these ladies presided. Rank, wealth and intellect found their way there and the humblest personage who was admitted to their table was welcomed with a pleasant smile by the graceful and courteous hostesses"*.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

## Ralph Lashmar (1886-1916)



Regular readers may recall Newsletter No 31 (November 2015) containing an article by local historian Brian Greening relating to the tragic deaths of the Lashmar Boys (Ralph and Allen) on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1916. The Type 840 Land Bomber they were test flying for their employer local firm J S White Ltd crashed into a field near Ruffins Copse at Northwood.

Ralph left a widow, Amy Mildred (nee Saunders) and recently their grandson Christopher Lashmar contacted me to help locate her grave. Ralph and Amy had two children; Ronald, and Christopher's father Leslie.

After making contact via the FoNC Website requesting a grave search, Chris, and his daughter travelled over from the mainland to view his grandmothers grave. On their return to the Ferry terminal he promised to email an interesting document relating to his grandfather. How excited I was to receive a copy of Ralph's pilot's license; a document that I feel sure will be of interest to many of our readers.

The Lashmar graves are a regular stop on our guided cemetery walks:

[www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/future-events](http://www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/future-events)

Why not keep a lookout on our 'Future Events page' and join us in paying respect to one of the Cowes families that lost so much in support of the war effort during WW1.

**Barry Sowerby**

Historian

## Do you have a few hours to contribute as a Volunteer?

After a long haul of almost ten years, and thanks to a £1.6m grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** and the **Big Lottery Fund**, the twin Chapels of Northwood Cemetery will become fully operational again.

The **West** Chapel has been restored to become a local **Heritage Resource Centre** with a myriad of facilities, including aids for the Cemetery, local and Family History research. Facilities will include a small library of useful books on many relevant subjects, from historical research to wildlife. It has a well equipped kitchen, giving staff and visitors the opportunity for refreshments and it features good lighting and heating.

Whilst the Chapels are in use, a disabled toilet is available nearby. By offering these facilities to the local community we need volunteers to supervise the daily running; possibly on a 'half day' rota basis.

Accordingly the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** would like to hear from anyone interested in joining us as a Volunteer, in particular becoming involved with Chapel management operations.

It is quite possible that many readers think that volunteering for a cemetery group is all about trimming trees and bushes. It will become very apparent after 14<sup>th</sup> October, when the chapels reach their restoration goal and become 'open to the public', that there are many other volunteering roles that are needed to support the group.

If you are interested in becoming a FoNC Volunteer, please send your contact details to [info@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk) to arrange a very informal introduction.

**John Pullen**

Heritage Resource Centre Manager

## The BIG Butterfly Count



On 18<sup>th</sup> July the **BIG Butterfly Count** was blessed with beautiful weather which brought out 14 enthusiasts and 15 species of butterflies; the **Gatekeeper** (pictured left) and the **Meadow Brown** proved to be the most prevalent with 14 sightings of each.

Our thanks go to **Richard Smout**, the Island's **Heritage Services Manager**, for organising the event and guiding us on the day. .

## Annual General Meeting

The 2017 Annual General Meeting will be held on

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 7:00pm**

(as announced in the May newsletter)

*in the newly restored West Chapel.*

There will be presentations on our finances; on the Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) that will govern activities in the Cemetery over the next 10 years; and a discussion on the future legal form of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery.**

Officers will be elected for the new year with the Chairman standing down, in accordance with the Constitution in which a maximum term of 3 years for the Chairman is stipulated.

Nominations for the roles of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer (and other Trustees) should be forwarded to me by 28<sup>th</sup> August, 14 days before the AGM, proposed and seconded by members ("Friends").

Nominations already received are:

Chairman:	Peter Almond	
Secretary:	David Jones	
Treasurer:	Richard Day	
Other Trustees:	Graham Lloyd	Jon Matthews
	John Pullen	Barry Sowerby
	Stella Watling	Roger Williams

If you are a Friend but you are unable to attend, please let me know:

**email:** [secretary@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk);

or **telephone:** 01983 298445.

**David Jones**

Secretary

**Jo Mckinnie**

Editor