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Editorial

On 1st January there was a big change to the Island-wide grounds maintenance contract signed by the IW Council; no longer is on-site accommodation offered to the contractors for their staff who are now mobile - working in teams from lorries containing the equipment they need. This means that **Bernie Coleman**, who has been “the groundsman” for some eight years, has vacated “his office” in the East Chapel; he is no longer permanently based there although he still maintains the Cemetery with his colleagues.

The IW Council have agreed that the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** can manage access to this building and generally care for it - pending a more formal arrangement.

The structural survey which we commissioned on this Chapel last year revealed that the footings (which were inserted “sometime after WW2”) have provided enough stability to the fabric of the building for us to take the view that the Chapel is good for at least another 20 years without going to the significant expense of an underpinning scheme - as was done on the West Chapel. Having now 'parked' any major activity on the West Chapel, leaving it as a stabilised ruin for the foreseeable future, our aim is to re-open the East Chapel as a venue for funeral services.

Some relatively minor external work is required (to make the building watertight and to disperse rain water) and getting that done is now the Trustees' focus. Internally there's cracked plaster to repair, windows to restore and doors to replace (and a lot of clearing away of items such as a mortuary slab!) which brings me on to a major new initiative:

Sponsorship required for doors and windows

In the East Chapel there are 10 windows, 3 doors as well as the main Oak doors at the front (north) elevation. All these need attention and most need money spent on them. **Accordingly, we are seeking families who would like to sponsor a window (or a door).**

We are indebted to the **Watling** family and friends for agreeing to restore the main window on the east elevation and setting the trend. We are obtaining estimates for all the other individual doors and windows and ask that anyone who would like a near-permanent memorial of their loved one(s), identified by a commemorative plaque, to contact me to express an interest. The individual amounts involved will vary, of course, but are likely to be in the range £150 to £2,500. So, are **you** interested in sponsoring a door or a window?

Jon Matthews
Editor

Neville Hallifax (1925-2010)

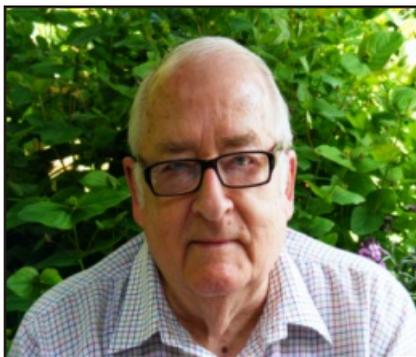
The Trustees were very saddened to learn of the death of **Neville Hallifax** on Christmas Eve. As the IW County Press put it, he was “the father of Cowes” with a love of the sea and a 35 year association with the **Sea Cadets**; he was President of the Cowes Unit.

Neville was well known to us through his weekly visits to his wife Lynette's grave, and his grand-daughter's grave, in the Cemetery.

Neville was a gentleman of the old school blessed with a wonderful sense of humour, a very positive outlook on life and respect for everyone he knew. That was reciprocated.

Neville grew up in Sweden and first came to the Island on family holidays in his teenage years; he saw active service in WW2 and was involved in the D day landings.

His daughter **Nicola Murgatroyd** became a Life Member of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** shortly before he died and two of his sons are also “Friends”.



Friends' House



At last we have a new surface in front of the Friends' House - some tarmac - and our thanks go to the IW Council for this. Now, let's not get too excited about a little piece of tarmac but it does help to 'clean up' the vista and, when the bulbs in the flower garden come through in the coming weeks, we hope this little corner of the cemetery will be more pleasing on the eye.

There's also a water tap now available so, what with the electricity which was installed last year, we have no excuses not to offer visitors a cup of tea! We also have the key to the toilet block when the need arises - although there are no plans to open it on a regular basis.

And another refinement is the now imminent installation of a new stained glass window at the back of the Friends' House - fronting onto Newport Road, replacing a broken one.

James Binfield Bird (1831-1892)



James Binfield Bird was recommended to the Ward family of Cowes who were looking for an Estate Manager for their Isle of Wight estates and he commenced his appointment with the Wards in 1860. He became engaged in the management of some 20,000 acres belonging to them - including drainage and road building. Many buildings were also his responsibility as were the sea-walls surrounding some of their coastal properties.

James Binfield Bird became an Associate Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1868 and, wishing to concentrate on his own business interests as an Estate Agent and Valuer, he offered his resignation to the Ward family in 1875.

In 1871 James had been appointed a Surveyor to the Board of Trade and had become a Commissioner of Isle of Wight Sewers and Surveyor to the Isle of Wight Railway. A very busy Island businessman you might think - but as well as practising on the Island, James had also created a large flourishing business in London.

As if that was not enough, he was a Director of the Inns of Court Hotel and several other public companies, plus a shareholder in the Newtown and Beaulieu Oyster Fishery Company which had been formed in 1880.

James is reported as being a kind and friendly man, with a very active interest in the town of Cowes, where he resided over thirty years.

He had represented the Board of Guardians for the Parish of Northwood and was Lieutenant in the Cowes Battalion of the Isle of Wight Rifle Volunteers.

James Binfield Bird died on the 5th February 1892 and a fitting monument to him and other members of his family can be seen in the Cemetery. Mystery still surrounds the fact that the official Burial Register records the position of his grave as being about thirty yards west of the Bird family obelisk. Short of a clandestine dig and a DNA test, I am not sure if this mystery will ever be resolved!

Barry Sowerby
Archivist

Erecting Memorials within the Cemetery

In the February 2010 edition of this Newsletter, I explained that before you can inter a body into a grave, the **Exclusive Right of Burial** for that grave space must be purchased. The cost of this *exclusive right*, which can be purchased by anyone at any time, is £493 (for an inner grave space in a plot) to £1,023 (for a grave space on the outer border of a plot).

There are 45 'plots' in Northwood Cemetery, each containing hundreds of grave spaces. There is also an Internment fee of £703 levied when the time comes (by the way, all charges mentioned here are exempt of Value Added Tax).

If you would like a **memorial** (typically a headstone) erected then you must first have purchased the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave space, or have permission from the owner or his/her executors.

An application form to place a memorial on a grave is obtainable from **Bereavement Services** based at the Crematorium. Details that will be required include:

- Name of the owner of the exclusive right;
- Name of Stonemason carrying out the works; and
- A diagram / photograph of intended memorial, together with dimensions, the fixing details and the intended full inscription to be placed on the memorial.

Once this application has been received Bereavement Services will check the details to ensure that the memorial and the inscription fall within the current regulations for Isle of Wight cemeteries; if so then the stonemason carrying out the work is given the authority to go ahead and erect the memorial within the Cemetery.

After a burial has taken place, it is advised that a period of one year is left before any memorial is placed on a grave. This is to allow the soil placed back onto the grave time to settle. During this period it will be possible to place a temporary memorial in the form of a wooden cross or other wooden marker.

There will be a cost involved when applying to erect a memorial and this fee will be dependent on the type and size of memorial. The IW Council has a set scale of charges that are reviewed each year and is currently set as follows:

- Headstone / Footstone / Book / Tablet up to 0.6m (nearly 2ft).....£98
- Headstone / Footstone / Book / Tablet over 0.6m (over 2ft).....£223
- Vase.....£72
- Each inscription after the first.....£68
- Placement of a temporary memorial for 1 year (wooden cross).....£46

Once a memorial has been erected it is advised that the memorial is insured; this is a responsibility of the owner of the *exclusive right* as is the responsibility to ensure the memorial is kept in good order and does not breach any of the IW Council's regulations relating to Health & Safety (Health & Safety at Works Act 1974).

Under this Act the IW Council is responsible for ensuring that its 12 cemeteries are safe places for both operatives working in them and the public using them.

In 2006 the ombudsman issued guidance to Burial Authorities in a special report on memorial safety within Local Authority cemeteries. This guidance places a responsibility on the Burial Authority to ensure that all memorials within a cemetery are safe.

The IW Council are empowered to carry out inspections of memorials under both the **Health & Safety at Works Act 1974** and the **Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977**. These Acts empower the IW Council to take any action that is necessary to remove a danger that arises because of the condition of a memorial.

Where a memorial is checked / tested and found to be in a poor condition it is cordoned off and wherever possible the owner of the *exclusive right* is informed and asked to make the memorial safe through employment of a stonemason. A reasonable timescale will be given to make the stone safe and if, after that time has elapsed, the memorial has not been made safe then we may be required to exercise our right to carry out appropriate works.

The IW Council also recognise that many *neglected* memorials have a lot of local history attached to them. Where such a memorial is found to be in a dangerous state, we will discuss the matter with the Trustees of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** and decide what actions should be taken to restore the memorial for the benefit of local communities.

The **Friends of Ryde Cemetery** have been successful in securing funding for such purposes, which can be seen through a visit to Ryde Cemetery where a good example of community involvement has seen the full restoration of a number notable historic memorials within the cemetery; one of these is the Carter Sisters grave that has been fully restored from it being a serious danger to cemetery users.

Iain Donald

Bereavement Services Manager
IW Council

Southern Co-op sponsorship

The picture shows Treasurer **Jon Matthews** and Chair **Lora Peacey-Wilcox** accepting the Southern Co-op's cheque outside the main Cowes store; well, the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** shared the Co-op's sponsorship with the **Cowes Theatre** group; both groups received **£12,500**.

We will use this welcome funding on repairs to the East Chapel (see page 1).



Annual General Meeting - Monday 18th April 2011

Please accept this as the required notice of the **Annual General Meeting** to take place at the **Kingston Arms** in Newport Road, Cowes on **Monday 18th April 2011** at **7:00pm**.

If you have any motion that you, as a **Friend of Northwood Cemetery**, would like tabled to be discussed at the AGM, please contact the Secretary, **David Jones** on 01983 298445 - or email him at david@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk before Monday 21st March 2011.

Moth Event



Following last year's very successful butterfly field meeting, which was held on 21st July, the **Isle of Wight Butterfly Conservation group** is organising a **moth** event to take place in the Cemetery on **Saturday 16th April 2011**.

Most moths are active during the hours of darkness - and therefore difficult to observe. However, many are attracted to light and, if an ultra-violet light source is used, moths can more readily be seen.

This is the principle behind a *moth trap* and it is intended to have one or two ultra-violet light sources in operation during the event (please note that a *moth trap* does not cause any distress to the moths and moths will be released unharmed at the end of the night).

As the device needs to be plugged into an electrical socket, this will limit our activities to the area in the vicinity of the **Friends' House**, but if anyone can provide a generator and/or extension leads, we'll then be able to access other areas of the Cemetery.

There is difficulty in attempting to predict which particular species are most likely to be seen - but April is a good month for a range of woodland moths (eg: the **Waved Umber** pictured above).

The event will begin at 8pm and is likely to finish around midnight. Meet at the **Friends' House** (on the left, just inside the main gates); please bring a torch - and wear warm clothing!

Hot drinks and light refreshments will be provided.

Rob Wilson
Lepidoptera Consultant

Nature Conservation Report

We have worked on quite a wide variety of jobs in the last quarter including continuing to clear and level the area behind the curved right hand hedge in front of the West Chapel; commencing to trim and remove 'spindly' Yews (and other trees) in Plot 2 - we started this because we either haven't had the right people or the necessary special tools to cut back the dead and low hanging branches in Plot 1; and we have had several bonfires at the far end of the Cemetery to dispose of the brash.

Our work throughout the Cemetery was hampered with the snowfalls in December but we have made a start on clearing out the East Chapel, now that the groundsman no longer uses it as an office and store.

The area immediately in front of the **Friends' House** has at last been tarmaced and the water supply connected, so we now have a tap right by the door of the Friends' House - and the bulbs planted last year in front of the Friends' House are starting to break through.

We have helped a new Saturday morning volunteer, **Sarah Salero**, clear her family's graves of a large bramble bush ready for a headstone to be erected and we look forward to seeing her regularly in 2011.

But we could do with more volunteers - so if you have a couple hours to spare on Saturday mornings and don't mind a bit of hard graft, getting your hands dirty and enjoying a bit of camaraderie, then please either come down between 9.30am and 12.30pm any Saturday or ring me on 01983 295927.

Richard Day

Nature Conservation Leader

Nesting Boxes



Four new Nesting Boxes, which were kindly donated by Mr & Mrs Cann of Cambridge, have been erected by **Vectis TV Aerials** of Cowes.

Can any children in the family find them all?

Our thanks go to both the donors and the erectors alike.

Barry Sowerby

Meet the Trustees: John Pullen



John Pullen, his wife Hazel and family of two children came to the Island in 1981 from the Bristol area. John, who was in the Prison Service, was appointed to HMP Albany where he worked until his retirement in 2005.

John and Hazel had moved to Northwood in 1999 and John became a member of the then **Northwood Community Partnership**.

He was also involved in the **Northwood Village Management Committee**, preparing the Northwood Village Plan.

When in 2008 Northwood became a parish in its own right John became the first Chairman of the **Northwood Parish Council**, a post he still holds today.

In his absence on an extended holiday in Spain, John was elected Treasurer of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** at its inaugural meeting on 31st March 2008 - but the immediate needs of the job resulted in him passing this post over.

Hazel is a member of the **Isle of Wight Family History Society** and is very keen on genealogy. Consequently, John and Hazel have spent a lot of time tramping around cemeteries in various parts of the country. It was not until they walked around Northwood Cemetery that they realised what a wonderful asset we have and saw the need for the work that we now see coming to fruition.

The energy and enthusiasm of the Trustees is catching, and when he was asked to become a Trustee last year, he gladly accepted. "The Trustees have achieved a great deal in a relatively short time and the preservation and conservation work being undertaken is vital", said John who hopes to make as substantial a contribution to his role as a Trustee as his other commitments allow.

Quiz Night

Another **Quiz Night** is planned for **Friday 25th February** at the **Kingston Arms** starting at 7:00pm. Teams of 4 at £1 per head; prizes to the winning team; *be there or be square!*