



Chairman Lora Peacey-Wilcox Barry Sowerby Tim Gladdis
Secretary David Jones Paul Fuller Richard Day
Treasurer Jon Matthews Graham Lloyd John Pullen

Please address all enquiries to
The Secretary, The Friends of Northwood Cemetery
194 Newport Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7PU
Tel: (01983) 298445
Email: dave@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk
Website: www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk

Editorial

Inevitably Christmas and the New Year celebrations detracted from volunteer activity at the Cemetery - and the cold weather has hampered matters since.

So, whilst I said in the November 2011 Newsletter that we hoped to finish repairs and the internal painting in the East Chapel by Christmas, there is still some decorating to do.

However, we fully expect to complete this, and fit new skirting boards, by the end of March. The chapel section of the building will then be cleared of all our 'riff-raff' and a new wooden floor installed in April. But before that is done we await the restoration of the stonework (by Robert - one of our specialist stone masons) around the north-facing window at the front - to the same degree as his stonework repairs around the main door. Then this boarded up window can be replaced by the new glazing (which is waiting patiently in the chapel). At the end of April, our efforts inside the chapel should be over.

The good news is that the IW Council have agreed to refurbish the toilet close to the bus shelter in Newport Road (but this will only be open to Cemetery visitors) and install new lighting in the Chapel - all by 31st March 2012. They also expect to re-point the back (south-facing) wall of the Chapel building by replacing the disastrous cement mortar (introduced many moons ago) with the proper thing - lime mortar which allows the building to 'breathe'. Jamie Viney, another of our stonemasons, will be doing the same to the front of the building, with a little bit of help from our volunteers - hoping (but not promising!) that this too will be completed by the end of April.

Quiz Night

Friday 24th February 2012

Kingston Arms, Newport Road at 7:00pm

See page 7

Annual General Meeting

Monday 30th April 2012

Kingston Arms, Newport Road at 7:00pm

See page 3

Open Day

Sunday 6th May 2012

The East Chapel at the Cemetery from 8:30am to 5:00pm

See below

Over the week-end of 5th/6th May, there will be commemorations in Cowes of that dreadful night 70 years ago when the German Luftwaffe blitzed the town and the Polish warship, the *ORP Blyskawica* (undergoing a re-fit at J S White's at the time), defended the town so heroically. We are working with the *ORP Blyskawica Society* to support their Service of Remembrance at the Cemetery at **9:00am on Sunday 6th May**.

We plan to have the East Chapel open for visitors and serve refreshments there throughout the day. Please make a note in your diaries to come and visit us that Sunday; we'll be there to 5:00pm so there's no need to get to the Cemetery by 9:00am though that would be good!

Before that we hope that we get a good turnout at the Quiz Night on Friday 24th February and at our 4th AGM on Monday 30th April; more diary notes to be made? You'll see the agenda for the AGM opposite and details of the Quiz Night on page 7 of this Newsletter.

We have had a very positive response to the "Sponsor a Tree" appeal and Richard Day will be coordinating this project. Those of you who have already pledged to sponsor a tree will require to exercise a little patience as the right time to plant new trees is in the Autumn; this will also give us time to 'recruit' sponsors for the remaining trees that are still 'up for grabs'. Please call Richard on 01983 295927 if you would like to participate.

A piece of really good news is that Valerie Diebelius has volunteered to develop a "School's Pack" to encourage schools to visit the Cemetery; this has been on the Board's "wish list" for some while now so we are delighted that someone as qualified as Valerie (see page 3) has come forward with so much relevant experience - and enthusiasm.

Finally, it's that time of the year (already!) when "subs" become due. Hopefully there was an indication of your 2012-2013 subscription status conveyed with this Newsletter - whether delivered by e-mail (if we have an e-mail address for you) or by post if we don't.

To those of you who have already paid (or who pay by Standing Order), a big thank you goes to you. For the remaining "Friends" a big thank you will be on its way just as soon as we receive your sub (due on 1st April)! The easiest way to "do the right thing" is to go on-line at

www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/shop;

if you are not on-line there should have been a Banker's Standing Order form and a Stamped Addressed Envelope included.

Jon Matthews
Editor

Annual General Meeting

**Kingston Arms, Newport Road, Cowes
at 7:00pm on Monday 30th April 2012**

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th April 2011
- 3 Approval of the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 19th September 2011

(both of these can be viewed at:
www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/FoNC/meetingminutes.htm)
- 4 Chairman's Report for the year 2011/2012
- 5 Treasurer's Report for the year 2011/2012
- 6 Election of the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and other Trustees for the year 2012/2013
- 7 Close

School's Pack

Valerie Diebelius has recently agreed to assist in organising a 'pack' for Island Primary Schools to present the marvellous amenity that is Northwood Cemetery to teachers and younger citizens.

Valerie and her husband Michael have lived on the Island for 40 years and, during that time, she has been a Brownie and a Rainbow Guider, a Trainer for the Guide Association and now a Governor of Hunnyhill Primary School. Quite a CV for the role!

Clearly Valerie has the experience of working with children which has helped her to understand what interests them; she has knowledge of the National Curriculum and the support of the staff at Hunnyhill who assist where they can.

Welcome Aboard Valerie!

James William MATTHEWS (1860 to 1892)

The Victorian era was one of great advances - railway travel, metal ships, steam power, great steps in medical knowledge and better awareness of public health issues - but as is seen from Charles Dickens' books there was a downside too. Before all the innovations some sections of the public suffered, regardless of their social standing. No doubt Northwood Cemetery can give us many examples - but here is one story of a family where tragedy visited 3 generations.

James William Matthews had a short, tragic but varied life. He was born in Debourne Manor off Baring Road, inside “the Walls” of Northwood Park. His parents, James and Catherine, came from Herefordshire in 1858 to work for “Squire Ward”. James (senior) was the Bailiff on the Ward Estate being paid £90 per annum with the use of a house.

James and Catherine were married at Llangarren in 1852 and James William (perhaps he was called William for clarity) was their youngest son. Born on 9th December 1860 he had an elder brother, Harry, at least two older sisters and then a younger sister Elizabeth born in Cowes in 1863.

Life seems to have been going well for the Matthews family but on 6th September 1863 James (senior), the bailiff, died. He was just 36 years old. The family folklore is that he contracted anthrax from the Hereford cows he was farming. In fact his Death Certificate states that James died of typhoid fever, which is usually caught by drinking contaminated water. His son James William was just 2½ years old when he died.

Double tragedy struck within weeks when Catherine died of Phthisis (now called TB) on 27th October. She was aged 33 years and left the children as orphans. James and Catherine are buried in Northwood cemetery very close to the East Chapel's ornate window. The headstone reads “*Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive*”, a quotation from the Bible (*Jeremiah 49:11*).

The Matthews family attended the Sun Hill Congregational Church, which was also where Maurice Dear worshipped. A photograph of Maurice Dear, passed down through the family, has written on it “Guardian of Harry and William”.

There is no knowledge of what happened in the years following their parents' death but in the 1871 census the children are all being educated at establishments in Hampshire. James was recorded as William, a pupil at New College, Totton near Southampton; two of his sisters were at a school in Alresford.

The photo opposite, showing James (William), has also been passed down the generations. From the article on **Maurice Dear** in Newsletter 7 (November 2009), he was seen to be very philanthropic and we must surely credit him with educating the Matthews' children. By 1881 William James, now aged 20, is back in Cowes and living as a boarder in Weston House, the home of Maurice Dear, along with the housekeeper and a servant.



James William married Emma Jane Clark on 2nd September 1886 at Sun Hill Congregational Church, Cowes. Her parents ran a sweet shop at 12 Shooters Hill.

A Herefordshire connection also occurs in that James William and Emma Jane supposedly spent their honeymoon at Byford Court, in the small village of Byford on the River Wye, west of Hereford.

The 1891 census shows James William and Emma Jane having 2 children: Maurice aged 3 and Hilda just a one year old. They lived in Beckford Road and he was recorded being employed as a Grocer's assistant.

We know that he was worked for *Dear and Morgan* in Cowes High Street. Another daughter, Hilda, was born early in 1892.

Tragedy then strikes again. In August 1892 James, at the age of 31, dies of acute nephritis. His widow remarried and lived until 1952. Hilda married Bertram Cooke at Sun Hill Congregational Church in 1915 and she lived in Cowes until she died in 1983, aged 93.

James William is buried in Northwood Cemetery in Plot 17. On his headstone are his details and then rather poignantly below: *Also Doris, daughter of the above, whom Jesus called, May 14th 1893, aged 16 months.*

In the space of 30 years three members of this Matthews family, each from a different generation, lived and died in Cowes.

Fred Caws

Gurnard, Isle of Wight

Ed: Fred's wife Julia is a great granddaughter of James William Matthews.

Although James William is buried in the grave adjacent to my great uncle William Alfred Matthews, and is also two away from my great-grandfather John Henry Matthews, Fred and I have been unable to establish any connection between the two Matthews families.

That's a pity as James William Matthews looks very handsome in the picture above!!!

Nature Conservation Report

The last 3 months have seen a great deal of activity within Plots 6 to 8 - down the right-hand side of the Cemetery (adjacent to the Cowes Medical) Centre) as you enter through the main gates . There's no problem at this time of year with nesting birds, so it is an ideal time to be cutting down sickly looking trees and trimming offshoots on those trees we want to keep.

Our only problem is rain although we continue to be lucky with dry Saturday mornings. As usual, depending on transport and volunteer numbers, we continue to try to ensure that the brash is regularly carted away to the bottom of the cemetery for disposal.

From time to time piles of brash and logs will be seen around these plots. Any timber left in piles may be taken away by any member of the general public for use in their home.

Average attendance for volunteers this quarter is running at about 6 per session. Having said that, we could always do with more volunteers so if you want to give up a couple of hours on Saturday mornings, just come on down any time between 9.30am and 12.30pm.

If you want to contact me first, my number is 01983 295927. Rest assured not all of our work is “heavy”, I can usually find lighter tasks if that's what you want!

Currently we supply one of our 'Friends', who is quite ill, with logs and we intend to expand that operation next Winter into supplying the elderly in the Cowes area with logs that we've cut up and dried during the Summer months.

The lady gardener who donated the Judas tree a few months ago has now donated a Spindle tree which has been planted in the area behind the hedge on the right. On the subject of this area we could do with some opinions on what to do with it current Trustee opinion is to grass it over with small trees and shrubs dotted around. What do you think about this? Let me know, please!

One success that I must bring to your attention is that the Yews we cut down 3 years ago in Plot 1 have now started to re-grow. Our expectation is that we can trim these into interesting, but befitting, shapes over the next couple of years. Rest assured we will not let them grow back to become the ugly, over tall jungle that was there before we started in 2008.

One other job that the Saturday team will be tackling in the dryer months is to repaint the vehicular and pedestrian gates at the front; please watch out for wet paint signs!

Finally, please call me if you are interested in “Sponsoring a Tree” (to be planted) as mentioned in the Editorial. Each sponsorship is priced at £100.

Richard Day

Nature Conservation Leader

Are you well organised?

If you consider yourself to be well organised, have a spare couple of hours a week and have a computer at home, would you be interested in the voluntary job of being the **Membership Secretary** of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**?

This Registered Charity is looking for someone to take on this role. It entails collecting annual subscriptions from its 250 or so members and banking them.

The membership database is held on computer and it is the Membership Secretary's responsibility to keep this up-to-date (with payments, address changes, etc).

Access to e-mail would make the job considerably more efficient - as would being a local resident but neither are essential pre-requisites.

Every one of the 9 Trustees has the responsibility to attract new "Friends" and it is hoped that the new Membership Secretary may also adopt a recruiting mode. However this is not a pre-requisite.

If this opportunity appeals to you, please contact the Chair **Lora Peacey-Wilcox** on 01983 247177 or lora@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk.

Quiz Night

Friday 24th February at the Kingston Arms, Newport Road at 7:00pm

Once again Jackie Hunt, our hostess, will be entertaining us with her own very special brand of questions and revelry.

The entrance fee is just £1 per person and there will be approximately 10 teams of 4 pitting their wits against one another. You can just turn up on the night but it would be helpful to know you are coming before the event.

From the experience of our previous Quiz Nights, there's going to be a lot of hilarity and fun!

There will also be a Raffle with some amazing prizes, including a tour of Southampton Football Club for two so if you are a **SAINTS** fan there's another reason to be there (**POMPEY** fans will also be welcome).

Prizes will be awarded to the winning team and last year's clear winners from Cowes Heritage, led by David Jones our Secretary, will not be competing as we have carefully arranged the date during a period he is on holiday in the Mediterranean!

For more details please contact our Quiz Night organiser **Lora Peacey-Wilcox** on 01983 247177 or lora@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk.

The Spindle Tree

In front of the toilet block (itself behind the Bus Shelter) is a newly planted Spindle Tree, which was kindly donated by **Judith Betchley**.

The Spindle tree (Latin name *Euonymus*) is native to East Asia but has distribution in Europe, Asia, Australasia, North America and Madagascar. There are about 180 species of *Euonymus* but only one or two varieties are English.

The wood of some species was used traditionally for the making of spindles which is how its English name originated.

The flowers occur in small groups of yellow or green. The fruit is a pinkish 4 or 5 valve pod-like berry. Birds eat the berries, digest the seed coat and disperse the seed in their droppings.



Katsura Tree



There are two types of Katsura; both are native to Japan and China. The first is *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* and the other is *Cercidiphyllum magnificum* - they are classed as hardwoods.

Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) wood is often used to make boards for board games such as chess and draughts.

Japonicum can reach 45 meters in height but *magnificum* rarely reaches 10 meters. Both are grown in this country as ornamental or specimen trees.

The trees produce flowers in the Spring and the fruits mature in Autumn; the fruits are released during Autumn and Winter.

Richard Day

Nature Conservation Leader