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Editorial

These last three months have been very busy for the Board with much activity in and around the Cemetery and three events taking place.

In reverse order, Sunday 6th May saw our second 'Open Day' which was another great success; the sun may not have shone quite so brightly this time but we had a very good turn-out for what was a poignant day of remembrance.



On the night of 4th/5th May 1942, 160 German planes carried out an attack on Cowes and East Cowes that resulted in the deaths of 70 residents.

The death toll would have been much greater but for the actions of the Polish warship, the *ORP Blyskawica*, which was docked in Cowes undergoing a refit in J Samuel White's shipyard at the time.

To commemorate this 70th anniversary the Polish Navy sent over another warship, the *ORP Torun*, with a muster of 80 - including the entire Polish Navy band.

A memorial service was conducted at the mass grave for the victims - attended by our Chairman, **Lora Peacey Wilcox**; the Mayor of Cowes, **David Walters**; the Mayor of East Cowes **Margaret Prior**; **Roger Mazillius**, the IW Councillor in whose ward the Cemetery is located; **Tony Reeve**, the British Legion's Standard Bearer; a Bugler; **Mike Aitken**, President of **The Friends of the *ORP Blyskawica* Society**; **Geoff** and **Kay Banks**, the organisers of the week-end's events; and 12 members of the Polish Navy.



The party then had tea, coffee and biscuits in the newly restored East Chapel (the new floor had been laid just two days before!!!), signed our Visitors book and mingled with others whilst looking at the small exhibition depicting the progress since 2008 (when the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** was 'born').



All this took place before 10am on the Sunday morning and thereafter a steady stream of visitors came to see the new windows in the Chapel and the restoration work we have completed.

Amongst those was **Iain Donald**, Bereavement Services Manager at the IW Council who, like us, is keen to use the Chapel once again for funeral services.

It is now 'fit-for-purpose' with all the internal walls repaired and decorated, skirting boards fitted and new lighting installed. We have four pews, each sitting 4 people comfortably (6 if you are friendly!) and access to additional chairs when required - and, of course, an (electronic) organ!

What we would love to know is when the *last* service was conducted; there seems to be no record of this that we can find.

Many people have attended services in the Chapel in the past and we believe the last one (before the Chapel was closed on safety grounds which we have now remedied) was in the late 1990s. Did you attend one in the second half of that decade? If so, please tell us!

We have also renovated the toilet just inside the main gates (inside and out - and laid a tiled floor) which is available for Cemetery users only.

Further, all the cement mortar in the front elevation of the East Chapel has been removed - right up to the bell - and replaced by traditional lime mortar.

So, all-in-all, we have reached a milestone in our restoration efforts - but we won't be slacking and twiddling our thumbs, that's for sure! More on that in August's newsletter!



Before leaving the subject of restoration, we were thrilled to have the round window above the 'lean-to' (facing the West Chapel) sponsored by **Joan Matthew** in memory of her parents, **Cyril Lee** (1906-1965) and **Gracie May** (née **Arnell**) (1904-1967) **Phillips**. This was painstakingly made by **Dennis Bradbury** (pictured above) to a design which reflects Cowes' sailing tradition and was delicately installed by **Mick Sivell** and **Chris Wightman** of **G J Banks (I.W.) Ltd**. Thank you Joan, Dennis, Mick, Chris and Geoff for this wonderful new addition to the East Chapel!

Moving on to our second event, the AGM on 18th April, this was really a non-event (as these often are!). Constitutionally we have to have one but it was very much "Business As Usual"; all the retiring Board were re-elected and there was no business transacted.

The Treasurer gave a financial report, which can be viewed on our web-site. In summary, income for the year to 31st March 2012 was **£18,882** (down 12% on 2010-2011) and expenditure was **£11,285** (up 38% on 2010-2011). Both these are trends in the wrong direction (though for very legitimate reasons) and we are hopeful we can reverse this in 2012-2013. Income is particularly sensitive to donations and sponsorships - as well as subscriptions - so the article on **Charitable Donations** overleaf is very pertinent to this cause.

Richard Day, our Nature Conservation Leader, summarised the activities of his team of volunteers during the year - and plans for the remainder of this year. His quarterly report is on the back page of this newsletter.

Barry Sowerby, our Historian (now with a wider brief than 'keeper of the records'), presided over a slide show which showed some of the achievements of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** since our incorporation in 2008.

The third event, a Quiz Night, was another most enjoyable evening at the Kingston Arms; our thanks go to **Jackie Hunt**, "mine hostess", for once again keeping us all entertained.

Congratulations go to the winners on the night who were the team comprising of: **Rachel Beasley, Betty Clarke, Ian Gutteridge** and **John Miles**.

Jon Matthews
Editor

Walter Henry Warrior (1873-1950)



Walter Henry Warrior, the son of **Alfred** and **Louisa** (née **Polton**) **Warrior**, was born in Northam, Southampton - but at the age of 8 is listed in the 1881 census living in Brunswick Road, Cowes, the home of his grandparents. Aged 18 he was living at 2 Mary Street (now St Andrews Street) and was apprenticed as a Shipwright to the local boatbuilding firm of *Groves and Gutteridge*. Aged 23 he married **Annie Louisa Lee** - 'a girl from along the road' - and they lived all their married life at 13 (now re-numbered 26) Milton Road, Cowes. 'Walt' remained in the boat building industry throughout his working life.

These were harsh times - before the Welfare State existed - and voluntary organisations were set up to support the needy. Walt showed his commitment to the welfare of the poor, the sick and the elderly - even sacrificing his wages in their service.

He became a member of many organisations, including the Public Assistance Committee and the IW Employment Committee, the Preventive Detention Committee, Parkhurst Prison and Camp Hill Borstal Committees. He was a member of the advisory committee for the appointment of magistrates and, indeed, was a magistrate himself. The Magistrates' Committee included people in high office, such as General **Jack Seely** and **Sir Godfrey Baring**. A committed Christian, Walt also found time to be a Church Warden at St Mary's Church at Cowes.

He was also a pioneer of the Trade Union movement and, for thirty six years, was Secretary of the Cowes branch. He was a founder member of the Isle of Wight Labour party, a member of the Co-operative Society's General Committee and a member of the Island's County Council, representing Medina Ward - being elected a County Alderman in 1940. He was Chairman of the Public Health, Maternity and Child Welfare Committee until the 'new' Health Committee was established in 1947, to which he was also elected Chairman, serving on it until his death in 1950.

Walter Henry Warrior was a great opponent of injustice and sacrificed much in his own life to help others. Warrior Avenue, a cul-de-sac off St Faith's Road in Cowes, bears his name - a small token of appreciation for his immeasurable service to the needy of Cowes. A memorial window has recently been installed in the East Chapel in his memory.

Barry Sowerby
Historian

Charitable Donations

It is said that only two things in life are certain: death and taxes.

But there is a way to draw the sting from both - by leaving money to charity in your Will. Anything left in a Will to a Registered Charity is **exempt** from Inheritance Tax!

If, when you die, your estate is worth over £325,000, Inheritance Tax may be due. But now, due to a change introduced on 6th April 2012, there is an even greater incentive for you to include a legacy in your Will to a Registered Charity.

If you leave 10% of your estate to charity, such as to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**, the tax due will be calculated at a reduced rate of 36% instead of 40%.

It works like this; any gifts you make to charity - during your lifetime or in your Will - will be exempt from Inheritance Tax.

The net value of your estate is the value of all your assets after deducting debts, liabilities, reliefs, exemptions - and the 'nil-rate band'.

Here is an example to illustrate:

Someone dies leaving an estate valued at, say, £750,000 (after allowable deductions). In the Will let us say £50,000 is bequeathed to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**.

1. Deduct the £50,000 donation to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** from £750,000 (the net estate). This leaves a figure of £700,000.
2. Deduct £325,000 (the current nil-rate band for Inheritance Tax) from £700,000. This leaves a figure of £375,000. Normally the Inheritance Tax payable on this amount would be £150,000.
3. Add £50,000 back (the value of the donation to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**) to £375,000. This gives a figure of £425,000 - the 'baseline amount'.

10% of this taxable element of the estate is £42,500. So, this estate qualifies for the reduced rate of Inheritance Tax because the donation of £50,000 is greater than 10% of the tax value of the estate.

The Inheritance Tax payable on the net estate of £375,000 will be £135,000 (at the reduced of 36%) compared to £150,000 (at the normal rate of 40%) - so benefiting your heirs to the tune of £15,000.

So, I wonder if a call to your financial advisor or solicitor merited?

Jon Matthews
Treasurer

The Big Ben Connection

Earlier in the year, whilst passing the time of day in Northwood Cemetery with Bill Shepard, the Island's highly respected nonagenarian historian, he asked if I had any idea of the inscription on the bell at the top of the East Chapel.

Surprised that such a humble bell would even have one, I set up my birding telescope and tripod to see if I could read anything on it. Letters were visible, but the inscription is cast around its circumference - so just few odd letters were in view.



In April, scaffolding was erected against the north elevation of the East Chapel in order that re-pointing of the masonry could be carried out. This gave the stonemasons the chance for a closer inspection of the bell. They told me that the inscription read:

C & G MEARS FOUNDERS
OF LONDON 1856

After some research I discovered that the brothers **Charles** and **George Mears** belonged to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry which has been in existence for over 440 years - being established way back in 1570.

The foundry is listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as Britain's oldest manufacturer.

Tradition dictates that the Master Founder's name is cast into the surface of each bell rather than the actual foundry name. There have been in excess of forty Master Founders at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry and, between 1844 and 1861, **Charles** and **George Mears** were amongst them. Northwood Cemetery was set out in 1856 and the chapels built then.

The foundry has produced bells for many cathedrals, churches and chapels around the world, but is probably most famous for the casting of Big Ben on 10th April 1858.

Big Ben weighs in at just over 13 tons and is the biggest bell ever cast at the foundry.

So, arguably the most famous bell in the world, Big Ben, has a connection with our little bell in Northwood Cemetery which is but a very small relation!

Barry Sowerby
Historian



Membership Report

We welcome these 13 new members this quarter: **John Anderson** (Shanklin), **Penny Bennett** (Rotherham, South Yorkshire), Daphne Brudenell (Chandlers Ford, Hants), John Charvet (London N10), Roger Crew (East Cowes), Lorna Hooper (Blackwater), Bill and Marilyn Martin (Cowes), Sue Martin (Romsey, Hants), Helen Smith (Hornsea, East Yorkshire), **Pamela Taylor** (Freshwater), Patrick Tuffin (Huntingdon, Cambs) and (Ms) Sam Westbrook (Laurencebrook, Aberdeenshire).

Those in **bold** above have joined as Life Members - and **Charlie Arnold, Carol Flux** and **Joan Matthew** have upgraded to become Life Members also - bringing the total number of Life Members to **22**

At the time of writing, less than two months into our new fiscal year, we have already received **208** subscriptions for 2012-2103 so our 'going rate' of 250+ per annum looks very achievable. If you are in doubt as to whether you are 'paid up', please contact the Treasurer (pictured here in his stonemason's guise - chipping out the old cement mortar!).



Friends of Ryde Cemetery

A welcome group of our **Friends of Ryde Cemetery** came over to our Open Day on 6th May.

Pictured opposite are (left to right):

Janette Gregson (Chair)
Poppy Higgin
Shelagh Gaylard
Ann Barrett
Carol Strong
Kate Macdonell
and
Dave Bushell



Green Winged Orchid

Spotted on 6th May, at the southern end of the Cemetery, the **Green Winged Orchid** is very localised and rarely seen.

It gets its name from the green veins that line the flower's hood. A threatened plant, dependent on nutrient poor grassland, it has declined over the past six decades due to agricultural improvement of its grassland habitat.

The flowers lack nectar but still attract insects - particularly the queen bumble bee emerging from hibernation.

They flower between April and June and are usually purple - but can sometimes be white or pink. The leaves are lance shaped and unspotted, which help distinguish it from the Early Purple Orchid.

Nature Conservation Report

Average attendance for this quarter is a little over 6 per session. The Saturday morning team has regularly included **Brian Buckett, Brenda Hill, Bill & Marilyn Martin, Jayne Murphy, Gary Peacey, Sarah Salero, Rob Smith** and **James Toole**.

Brian has taken over working on the right hand side (as viewed from the main gates) garden patch. We have transferred some earth which had been covering the mortuary slab by the West chapel onto this garden patch; the slab is now residing in the West Chapel.

A hedge has been planted to (eventually) obscure the rather unsightly toilet building.

This quarter's work has included several bonfires and clearance of brush, further cutting of two Yews missed at the top of Plot 8 and three Yews missed in Plot 3.

A large amount of timber, which is being cut into logs, has been placed in the West Chapel to dry out ready for distribution to the elderly next winter. If you know of any elderly people who would benefit from some logs, please let me know (01983 295927).

Richard Day

Nature Conservation Leader