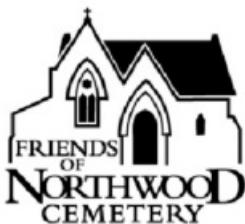


# NEWSLETTER NUMBER 18

AUGUST 2012



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## Editorial

Perhaps our biggest achievement this quarter (which is visible externally) has been the completion of the re-pointing of the front elevation of the East Chapel. We have to thank **Jamie Viney**, trading as **Wight Heritage Preservation**, for finishing this off after completion of the upper section by **Mansells**, who were contracted by the IW Council.



There are two other projects that have now been commissioned by the Trustees: firstly, the stonework around the main window is to be restored to the same state as the stonework around the main door.

Secondly, the lobby area inside the East Chapel (which is the last area to be given any attention inside the Chapel) is also to be restored. However, we intend preserving part of the internal wall in the lobby as testimony to the state of repair that prevailed before the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** was established in 2008.

We are in discussion with the Isle of Wight Council (the landowners) and Funeral Directors on the Island to 'market' the Chapel for funeral services; we are now ready but, as yet, we have not held a service in the restored Chapel. It is also available for suitable private functions and any enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary (contact details above).

We have spoken of sponsorship opportunities in the past and the Board has decided to expand these by 'beefing up' our sponsorship and fund raising programmes. We are documenting these opportunities and there'll be further details in the November edition of this Newsletter.

We continue our quest for active volunteers; as so often happens, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the members (or is it 90% / 10% in our case?). It would be so good if a few more of our "Friends" could devote an hour or two every so often (these hours can be desk-bound at home as well as on-site - so volunteers do not need to live on the Island!). So, they don't have to be devoted to strenuous activity - although some more Saturday morning stalwarts would be extremely welcome!

**Jon Matthews**  
Editor

## Serendipity

On a Saturday morning in July, **Richard Day** and I were clearing out the West Chapel when a lady appeared and spoke to us: “May I please have a look in the East Chapel?” she asked. “Of course” we replied. 10 minutes later she returned marvelling at the work that the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** had done in restoring it. “May I please make a donation? Can I give you a cheque?” she asked. Needless to say our response was the same: “Of course”.

When she handed me the cheque I saw that the signatory was a **Mrs M Matthews!** Since my specialist Mastermind subject is “*Matthews's from the Isle of Wight*” I asked if she was one. “No, my husband was from London” she replied; “I've come here because my grandmother is buried here; she was an **Antill**”. “Oh”, I said, “my cottage was once owned by an Antill family”. “Where do you live?” she asked. “In St Andrews Street” I answered. “Number 23?” she suggested; “**Yes**”, I replied! What a small world!

She has subsequently sent me a picture of her mother and her grandmother standing in my doorway- taken in the 1920s. “I used to sit on that step waiting for my grandfather to come home from work at J Samuel Whites; I have very fond memories of that house”.

And then just eight days later I had an emergency maintenance visit to make to a rental property in Cowes; the temporary tenants were two sisters in their 40s one over here from Houston, Texas. When I introduced myself, they said “our maiden name was Matthews!”; “From the Isle of Wight?”, I asked hopefully. “Yes”, they said, “From Newport”. However, their late father's name did not ring a bell with me - but I said I would ‘check him out’.

Well, blow me down, he was a fifth cousin of mine, so making them fifth cousins, once removed to me! I returned by arrangement a few hours later and ventured a “Have you got any relatives buried in Northwood Cemetery?”. “No”, came the reply. “Oh yes you have” I was able to tell them - “your great-great grandfather for starters”.

So, surprise, surprise I took them to the Cemetery the next day to show them where their great-great grandfather was buried (alas I knew he had no headstone). I was also able to tell them that his grandfather was shot dead on the beach in Niton in 1816 by Custom's men caught in the act of smuggling!

They were very intrigued and vowed to (i) become **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**; (ii) talk to stonemasons about erecting a headstone on their great-great-grandfather's grave and (iii) delve further into their family history.

And, as if that wasn't enough, four days, later during a **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** Board meeting held in the East Chapel, a lady popped her head in to ask if she could park outside and have a look around. “Of course” all nine Trustees said in unison. Encouraged by my colleagues to go and help her, I did so by asking if there was any particular name she was looking for. “Yes” she said, “**Matthews!**”.

After **Taylor** and **Jones**, the surname **Matthews** appears in the Cemetery most frequently!

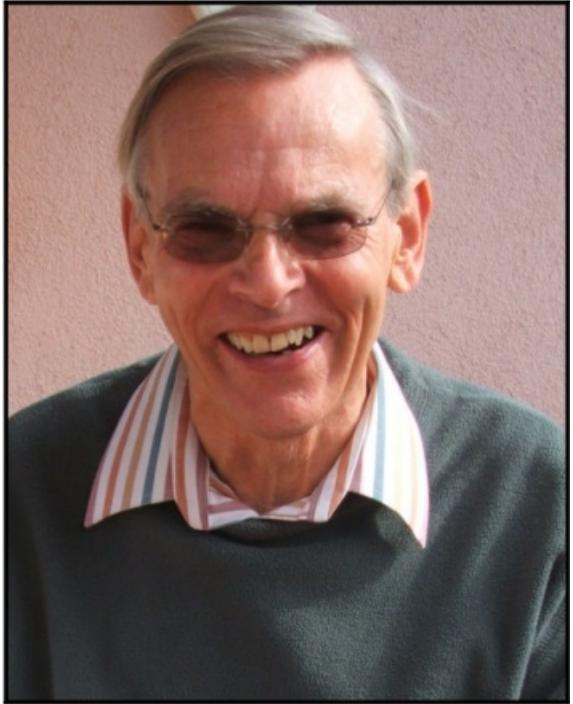
**Jon Matthews**

## **David Baldwin (1938-2012)**

David, one of our most loyal supporters, finally lost his battle with cancer and died at home in June at the age of 73.

Even though very ill, he always turned out for any event that was organised, particularly two sponsored walks that were arranged in conjunction with Northwood Church. It was David that instigated the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** becoming a Registered Charity; in fact, without our new status he would not have been able to give so generously towards the restoration of the East Chapel.

Without his extremely kind donations, the main doors would still be permanently closed due to the stonework above bearing down on them.



From the very start, in March 2008, David was interested in restoration work and was often the person to come up with a good idea - as in this case. The Board of Trustees have unanimously agreed to erect a plaque at the doors as a memorial to David.

David was well known on the Island for his sterling work in many disciplines, including finance and legal circles (including the law courts) - but one of the passions of his life was coach driving.

David's father was the Manager at Fountain Coaches for many years and, in early days, he would not allow his privately educated son to go anywhere near a coach. But the day came after his father passed away and David leapt at the opportunity to obtain his PSV licence.

Three years as a full time driver, and many as a part-timer, enabled David to live his dream of driving a coach - not just around the Isle of Wight but also on the mainland and abroad.

An avid traveller David visited all corners of the globe with his wife Gay (usually on a cruise liner) where, whilst relaxing at sea, he would take out his brochures and he and Gay would start planning their next trip.

Liked and respected by all, David will be sadly missed - not least by the Trustees of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** for his most generous support and encouragement.

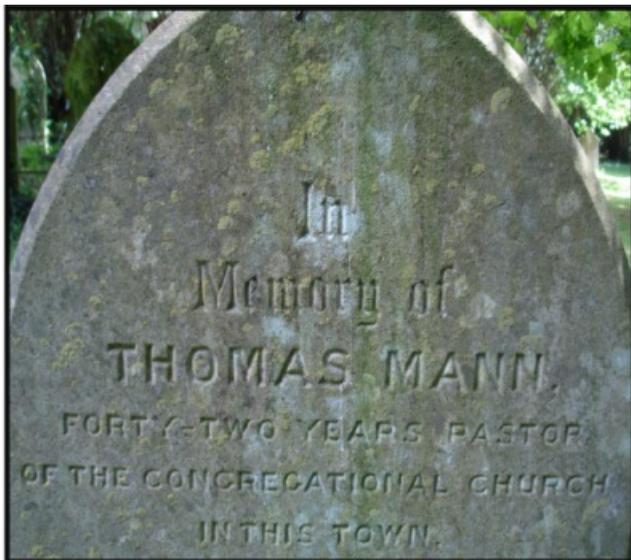
**Barry Sowerby**  
Second Cousin

## Reverend Thomas Mann (1796-1876)

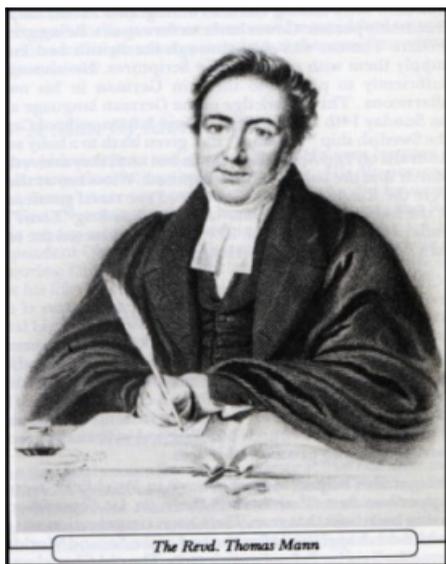
This simple headstone marks the resting place of **Thomas Mann**. He was buried on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1876 in plot 8, grave number 3675.

Thomas was Pastor of Sun Hill Congregational Church (then Union Road Chapel) for 42 years from 1822 to 1864. He retired in the same year as his third wife, Eliza, died; she was buried on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1864 elsewhere in the Cemetery.

It was Thomas who performed the burial service of **James Cribb**, the first person buried in Northwood Cemetery in 1856.



Thomas was also an author, his *Gift of Prayer* received national acclaim; he also wrote a biography of Richard “Holy” Adams, an earlier Minister at the Chapel and *Barnabas - a manual for those who are cast down*” His writings show him as a gentle, uncritical soul with a love for his fellow men.



In 1860 it was reported that a male child born off the coast of Australia the previous year was baptised by Reverend Mann at Sun Hill, Cowes - being the first landfall for the Swedish ship *Torefors*. Witnesses of the ceremony included the Russian consul and two Swedish sea captains.

Thomas conducted the service in German, in which he had become fluent preaching and assisting migrating Germans en route for America. The boy was christened Holger Australius.

For many years he lived at 7 Shooters Hill and, when he retired, a grant from the Pastor's Retiring Fund allowed him to remain in the town when he moved to Northwood Place in Terminus Road.

His first wife Eunice, had tragically died in 1823 - the same year that his first child, Mary, was born. His second wife, Ann, was just 31 when she died in 1847. Their eldest son, the Reverend William Henry Mann, with his wife and child sailed to South Africa in 1864 as a missionary.

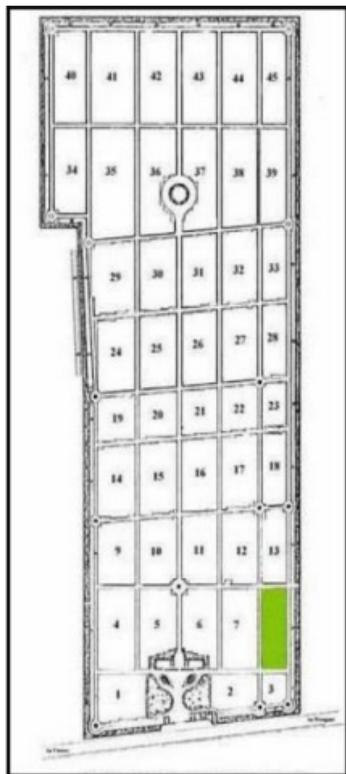
During his tenure the Chapel flourished. In 1828 side galleries are added to the Chapel as the congregation grew - and a debt of £240 outstanding from building costs was cleared.

In 1834 the Chapel was enlarged at a cost of £300. Later an organ was installed and gas lights replaced oil lamps. He was involved in the purchase of land on the opposite side of Union Road where the Sunday School, with its distinctive large round window that later became the church we know today, was built in the same year that Thomas Mann died.

Source: *Candle on a Hill - a history of Sun Hill Church* by **Peggy Morton**.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

### Plots and Graves



We refer to the location of graves in the Cemetery as being “within a *plot*”. In total there are 45 plots - each containing numerous graves (though plots 40 to 45 are not yet used - apart from five Muslim graves in plot 42). Indeed plots 40 and 41 are so dense with trees, shrubs and foliage that they seem a long way from ever being used!

The plots at the front of the Cemetery (around the two chapels) contain less than 200 graves each - but, at the other end of the cemetery, in the more open space, the plots are larger and contain many hundreds of graves.

Using the Burial Records database on the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** web-site, a search for a person will show you in which *plot* he or she is buried (the image opposite highlights plot 8 where **Thomas Mann** is buried) - but not *where* within the plot.

Our long-term aim is to provide a hyperlink (a double mouse click to the technically challenged!) on the green rectangle shown here that will reveal a matrix showing the surnames of those buried in each *grave* in the plot - thus enabling the location of the grave to be shown. Then it will be possible to see *exactly* where **Thomas Mann** (plot 8, grave 3675) is buried.

## In Praise of the Isle of Wight Family History Society's "BMD Index"

Almost every day since our inauguration on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 I have 'tinkered' with the on-line Burial Register although, for the first eighteen months I was transcribing, *verbatim*, from the accredited hand written registers to our website database. Since then I have been actively engaged in seeking further information relating to the deceased or correcting the odd spelling mistake.

Many entries have no home address and, if possible, I like to include these. Occupations fascinate me so, if a relative can provide me with relevant information, it can also be added. Recently it was made possible to attach photos and documents (eg: obituaries) to a person's record - or any other relevant detail offered by the deceased's descendants.

Often, something will come to my notice whilst strolling in the Cemetery (as I often do!). Just last week I was walking by Plot 24 and the word 'Gallipoli' on a headstone caught my eye. I went home with a photo of the headstone to investigate, as it seemed likely to me that the person mentioned had been killed during the war, but not brought home, and the entry on this headstone may just be a memorial.

My hunch was correct and the inscription read: *Maurice Edgar, the 34 year old son of James and Henrietta Lucas who died at Gallipoli on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1915*. Because he is not actually buried in Northwood this is, indeed, 'just' a memorial and therefore his details are not in the Burial register.

After performing an Internet search on his name, I also discovered that he was a Private in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Worcester Regiment and it gave me great pleasure to be able to add this information into our on-line database. Furthermore his sister Isabella is mentioned on the headstone but, again, this is just a memorial - so her name has now been added too.

We all like our surname to be spelled correctly and I occasionally see a name in the register that could be incorrect. Simple errors might be Clark or Clarke, Matthews or Mathews. Whatever, I very often double check a name for accurate spelling.

For almost all names in Northwood Cemetery I access the Isle of Wight Family History Society's "BMD Index" (Births, Marriages and Deaths Index).

I cannot praise the creators of this database enough. I know from experience (as an IWFHS volunteer doing register transcriptions) that the information within the database is as accurate as is humanly possible - and searching for a name could not be easier.

If struggling with what appears to be a strange name, just type the initial letter followed by a percent sign (%) into the search field and you will have access to every person buried on the Isle of Wight with a surname beginning with that letter - from 1837 to 2010!

The link is at: <http://www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/bmd/startbmd.htm>

**Barry Sowerby**  
Historian

## Grounds Maintenance report



One of our youngest, and longest serving, volunteers, is **Rob Smith**. At aged 23 Rob is seeking full-time work and was originally referred to the Trustees by the RCC (the Rural Community Council - a somewhat arcane name to what is the voluntary sector support group on the Island). The RCC suggested he should 'keep his hand in' by doing some voluntary work. We are very glad they did!

But even on an invigorating Saturday morning, the volunteers take a break and our roving photographer caught Rob relaxing here between tasks - as well he might!

Our average attendance on Saturday mornings has dropped to 4½ - perhaps a reflection on the time of year. There is no compulsion on the amount of time you spend with us; perhaps every Saturday, every other Saturday, once a month or whenever it suits you; it matters not to us. We normally work from 9.30 to 12.30 so if you are interested please contact me on 01983 295927 (home) or 07909 650792 (mobile) or send me an email at [richard\\_day\\_272@hotmail.com](mailto:richard_day_272@hotmail.com) - or just turn up one Saturday morning!

Our recent tasks have included anything from pruning Yew trees to complete removal of them - and cutting them into manageable sizes to be either burned or stored. We are frequently asked why we burn the waste and there is a simple answer to that: the whole of a Yew tree is toxic which precludes chipping - and removal to 'the tip' is too expensive.

We have three gardeners in our midst: **Brian Buckett** who is currently tending the garden patch on the right of the entrance (in front of the toilet block); and **Marilyn & Bill Martin** who are dedicated to transforming the garden on the left hand side in front of the Friends' House. The rest of us will steadily clear the undergrowth, brambles, overgrown shrubs and trees in the grave spaces - paying particular attention to ensuring we are not disturbing any birds or animals as we go.

We also ensure attention is paid to Health and Safety procedures by putting barrier tape round working areas, as appropriate, before we leave each week.

### **Richard Day**

Grounds Maintenance Leader

### **Cemetery Observation**

One of the Trustees went into the Cemetery a few weeks ago to lay some flowers on a grave. As he was standing there he saw 4 grave diggers walking about with a coffin. Some three hours later he noticed that they were still walking about with the coffin. He thought to himself "*have they lost the plot!*" Boom, boom

## The Queen “Drives by” Northwood Cemetery!

On a gloriously hot and sunny Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July the Queen visited Cowes. She arrived by sea onto “the Parade” from a luxury motor cruiser, the *MY Leander*, to a crowd estimated to be in excess of 12,000 people (I wonder how many residents knew she and Prince Philip were moored overnight in Thorness Bay?).

She left Cowes at about noon in a Range Rover to catch a helicopter from Somerton Airfield and, in doing so, passed the entrance to Northwood Cemetery. I can hear her saying to Prince Philip “*doesn't that look nice*” (gesturing to the East Chapel); “*I bet the corgies would enjoy a walk there - on their leads, of course*”. Well, we can but dream!

She had several official engagements in Cowes that morning: (i) unveiling a plaque on the Parade to commemorate her visit; (ii) listening to Cowes Primary School's choir sing a new anthem written by their music teacher; (iii) opening a new RNLI lifeboat station; and (iv) inspecting exhibits put on display by local marine groups.

You may not all know that the Officers of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** (that is the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer) are all Cowes Town Councillors (by the way, also on our Board is the Chairman of **Northwood Parish Council** and the Chairman of **Gurnard Parish Council** - and two **Isle of Wight Councillors!**).

Our three **Cowes Town Councillors** were instrumental in getting the Queen to unveil the plaque - so it is fitting that we should include a picture of the event here. Royal visits to the Island don't happen that often (it was only the Queen's fifth visit to the Island and her third to Cowes in her 60 year reign!).



Pictured here with the Queen on Cowes sea front is the Mayor (Cllr **David Walters**) and the Deputy Mayor (Cllr **Geoff Banks**, far left) with their wives; and, as I'm sure you would expect, they are all **Friends of Northwood Cemetery!**

The historical significance of the plaque is that **Queen Victoria** had a similar plaque installed (just a few yards behind where the Queen is standing). Although Queen Victoria did not unveil ‘her’ plaque herself, she inspected it some 5 weeks later .

Thus the only two monarchs to have celebrated Diamond Jubilees both visited Cowes on their Diamond Jubilee tours and have matching plaques commemorating the two occasions - 115 years and two days apart.

**Jon Matthews**  
Editor