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## Editorial

In September **Richard Smout**, the Island's Heritage Services Manager, told me that he had unearthed a Burial Board minute book for the period 1939 to 1951.

This was fascinating news as we know that the Cemetery saw enemy action in the war years - and much damage and human misery was inflicted. One relic still visible is the iron railing from a grave now buried high up one of the Cedars of Lebanon - propelled there by a German bomb! The middle stanchion of the rail is clearly visible peeping out on the left hand side of the tree trunk, which is immediately behind the East Chapel.



We are very grateful to a mainland "Friend", **Sarah Banks** in Winchester, who has kindly volunteered to transcribe these minutes so that we can make them available on our web-site. We expect to feature a synopsis of these gems in the February 2013 newsletter.

By the way, are you aware that the Burial Board minutes from the Cemetery's opening in 1855 right up to 1900 are already on our web-site? These have been on the web-site since 2009 thanks to the transcription efforts of **Margaret Elsdon** in Suffolk and **Andy Wood** in Solihull.

We are also able to report in this newsletter significant progress on three projects which have each taken their time to come to fruition.

These are (i) a **Schools Pack**; (ii) a new **Tree and Bench Sponsorship** programme; and (iii) detailed **Plot maps** which will be available shortly on the web-site. Please see the inside pages for further details of these three initiatives - and thanks go to three Trustees (who are, respectively: **John Pullen**, **Richard Day** and **Barry Sowerby**) for their contributions.

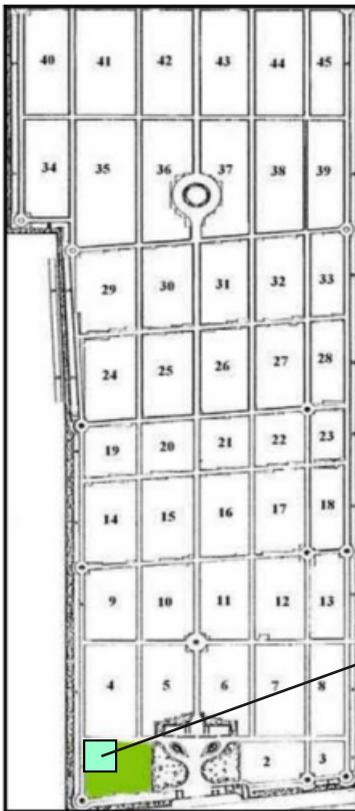
One of the big names in the early years of the Cemetery was **Hoffmeister** - and I'm very grateful to our Secretary, **David Jones**, for his research into this family; its father figure, Sir **William Carter Hoffmeister** (the first elected Chairman of the Burial Board in 1855) was in medical charge of **Queen Victoria** on numerous occasions.

**Jon Matthews**  
Editor

## Plot Maps

Searching for the resting place of a loved one in Northwood Cemetery is still somewhat of a challenge. Whilst finding the “Plot” (of which there are 45) is easy enough from the web-site, finding where *within* the plot a grave is located is not do-able on-line.

So, we have embarked on a project to address this. Starting with Plot 1 (just inside the main gates - to the left/east), we will be putting **Plot maps** onto the web-site (as in the example on the right below). These will greatly assist in locating a specific grave - but please note that the maps are *only a guide*; we just do not have the resources to produce them ‘inch perfect’.



| Plot 1                   |                     |                               |                    |                        |                  |                          |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 23<br>MORGAN             | 2654<br>BROWNE      | 2655<br>[AUBREY<br>headstone] | 2656<br>HAXTHAUSEN | 2657<br>HUMAN          | 2658<br>MORGAN   | 2659<br>CHESSELL<br>PAGE |
| 22<br>CHALK<br>MORGAN    | 2705<br>AUBREY      | 2706<br>HAXTHAUSEN            | 2707<br>RICHARDS   | 2708<br>MORGAN         | 2709<br>MORGAN   | 2710<br>PAGE             |
| 21<br>RUSSELL<br>REDFERN | 2716<br>HOFFMEISTER | 2717<br>HOFFMEISTER           | 2718<br>CARD       | 2719<br>CAWS           | 2720<br>NOBLE    | 2721<br>LEIGH            |
| 20<br>SCOTT<br>REDFERN   | 2727<br>HOFFMEISTER | 2728<br>HOFFMEISTER           | 2729               | 2730<br>CAWS           | 2731<br>MUNCEY   | 2732<br>ROBERTS          |
| 19                       | 2738<br>RICKETTS    | 2739<br>RICKETTS              | 2740<br>CURWEN     | 2741<br>CAWS           | 2742<br>BISHOP   | 2743<br>COURTNEY         |
| 18<br>MARKHAM            | 2749<br>HOFFMEISTER | 2750<br>HOFFMEISTER           | 2751<br>DYETT      | 2752<br>CAWS<br>CORKE  | 2753<br>BRITTON  | 2754<br>BISHOP           |
| 17<br>MABERLEY           | 2760<br>MAYELL      | 2761<br>WESTON                | 2762<br>CARD       | 2763<br>CAWS           | 2764<br>HAYMAN   | 2765<br>unknown          |
| 16<br>MABERLEY           | 2771                | 2772<br>TRITTON               | 2773<br>ROWE       | 2774<br>HEWITT<br>CAWS | 2775<br>HOLLIS   | 2776<br>BOOKER           |
| 15<br>MABERLEY           | 2782<br>BIRD        | 2783<br>BIRD                  | 2784<br>DAVIS      | 2785<br>HOLLIS         | 2786<br>BASCOMBE | 2787<br>RAMBANG          |
| 14                       | 2793<br>BIRD        | 2794<br>BIRD                  | 2795<br>MELTON     | 2796<br>HOLLIS         | 2797<br>MOTH     | 2798<br>HISCOCK          |

The plot maps link directly to the burials database - so if we edit the database the surname in the plot map will be updated automatically. Above is just a small portion (the south-east corner) of Plot 1 (showing the location of the Hoffmeister vault - see page 6).

Working from plans held at the IW Bereavement Services at the Crematorium, surveying the plot and creating a map of Plot 1 (which contains 253 graves and 382 recorded burials) has taken two of the Trustees over three months! So, this project is going to take a year or two before all plots are completed; however, it is said “*more hands make light work*” so if anyone would like to volunteer (perhaps by taking one plot to do?) then we would be delighted to hear from you. My contact details are on the Notice Board at the main entrance to the Cemetery.

**Barry Sowerby**  
Historian

## Grave Concerns

What an apt name for a new service offered by two ladies starting a business to tend to graves and headstones that are in need of attention. We have plenty of those!

The Trustees and the volunteers have all aged nearly 5 years since their good intentions to offer to do just that were mooted at the time the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** was born in 2008 - but the bones are no longer up to it!

So it is really good news that **Nikki Lovett-Taylor** and **Wendy Simpson**, of a younger generation, have seen this opportunity - and we are delighted to work with them to make headstones and graves in the Cemetery return to their original splendour - and so making it an even better place to visit.

Their service can be tailored to suit your needs and your budget - ranging from maintaining a grave with care and respect on a regular basis (eg: annually); to laying posies/bouquets on a special anniversary - or simply (*Ed: "simply" he says - this is the **real** toughie as we know from experience!*) **cleaning headstones**.

As a new Island-wide organisation they have yet to earn their spurs in Northwood Cemetery but here is an example of what they can do - taken from Ryde Cemetery:



Before



After

So, if the grave or headstone of your loved one needs some attention, you can e-mail them on [graveconcerns@live.co.uk](mailto:graveconcerns@live.co.uk) or telephone 07833 376842.

You can also contact any of the Trustees who would be only too pleased to effect an introduction for you.

**Barry Sowerby**  
Historian

# New TREE and BENCH

With this newsletter the Trustees are launching a new opportunity for “Friends” to sponsor a *tree* and/or a *bench* in the Cemetery.

After much consultation, the Trustees have agreed that the trees will comprise of a selection of the following species: **Copper Beech, Green Beech, Poplar, Field Maple, Holm Oak, Lime, Horse Chestnut, London Plane and Silver Birch.** However, if you have a preference not listed here (other than Common Oak of which there is already an abundance in the Cemetery) then the Trustees would certainly consider it.

The trees will be planted on the north borders of Plots 43, 44 and 45 and the east border of Plot 43 (please see the map on page 2 - but note that on this map south is at the top!!!) - at the far end of the Cemetery (as viewed from the Chapels). Currently there are no trees on these borders. Although the cost of these different species is marginally different across the range selected, the sponsorship fee of *all* trees will be a standard **£250**.

Each tree will be around 2 metres (6 feet) high when planted and will be surrounded by a protective fence which will provide a means of supporting the tree, enabling easy viewing of the tree and give adequate access for its maintenance. Each tree will have weed protection matting around its base - topped with slate or stone.

Every sponsor will be given a keepsake (a framed Certificate) of the individual tree(s) that they have sponsored - together with a graphic showing its location and a photograph *with* the sponsor if desired) taken as soon as possible after the planting. A display will be mounted in the East Chapel with this information duplicated - but please bear in mind that access to the Chapel will be restricted to times when there is a Trustee on-site.

The costs to the Trustees of purchasing the trees, planting them, performing essential maintenance, buying site ancillaries, photographing them - plus a contingency in any case of vandalism, accident or disease to the tree (resulting in a replacement tree being necessary) are all included in the sponsorship fee. Also, as these programmes are designed to help fund raising, there is a donation element within it to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**.

There is a Tree Sponsorship Application form on our website at:

[www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/FoNC/Forms/TreeSponsorshipApplicationform.pdf](http://www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/FoNC/Forms/TreeSponsorshipApplicationform.pdf)

Applications should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Secretary, **David Jones**; his contact details are included on the home page of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**'s web-site - and on the front page of this newsletter.

Payment of the sponsorship fee will be required before the Trustees make the purchase of each tree - though it is hoped that the Trustees will be purchasing several trees before Christmas!

# SPONSORSHIP programmes

Our aim is to enhance the rather bland look of this area of the Cemetery; it is currently so devoid of trees that it just cries out for some!

Our wish is that we have no more than two examples of one specie in this area; however, we will not be prescriptive should a third be requested. Importantly, *no more than 12 trees* will be planted in this area in the foreseeable future - and these will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate each sponsor's preferred specie(s), the final decision will rest with the Board of Trustees.

And now to **benches**; we have purchased *two* Oak Benches that are currently stored in the West Chapel awaiting installation in the grassed centre of the roundabout at the top of the Cemetery.



□

As you can see, the benches do not have 'backs' but a carved memorial board will be mounted under the seat. We are looking for *one* or *two* sponsors for these benches at **£250** per bench. Please contact me (or **David Jones**, our Secretary) if you wish to take up this sponsorship opportunity with a lasting memorial to your loved one(s).

*(Ed: these quality benches were Island-made by Clifford J Matthews, Ltd, English Timber Merchants of Whitwell - no relation!).*

**Richard Day**  
Ground Preservation Leader

## Sir William Carter Hoffmeister, KT, MD, LRCP, FRCS

**William Carter Hoffmeister** was born in Portsmouth on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1817 - the second son of a local Custom's Officer.

He was the first elected Chairman of the newly formed Burial Board created in 1855 to run Northwood Cemetery.

He is buried (with fifteen other family members) in this vault situated in the south east corner of Plot 1). He lies there with his father, two uncles, his wife, nine of their thirteen children, a daughter-in-law and a grandson.



He gained his MD at the University of Glasgow before continuing his studies at University College, London where he became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. Further studies led to his FRCS in 1855 and LRCP (Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians) in 1861.

In 1841 William set up a medical practice in Cowes in partnership with his brother-in-law (they married Cornish sisters) **William Cass**. Many successful careers need a lucky kick start and his came in the shape of **Lord Yarborough**, first commodore of the Royal Yacht Club (later the Royal Yacht Squadron) who nominated him for the post of Surgeon to the club.

When **Queen Victoria** and **Prince Albert** purchased Osborne House in 1845, he had the honour, together with William Cass, to be appointed Apothecaries-in-Ordinary to the Queen.

This led to a long and close association with the Royal family - both at Osborne House and Balmoral. He frequently attended Prince Leopold (who was a haemophiliac) and was present at the birth of several of Queen Victoria's grandchildren, at home and abroad, including Princess Alexandria of Hesse, the future and ill fated, Czarina of Russia.

Despite him being only two years older than Victoria, she clearly had great faith in his ability - possibly influenced by Prince Albert's high opinion of him. He was knighted in 1884.

The family's Royal connection continued when his sons, Bernard, John and William (Willie) joined him in service to the Royal family.

William Carter Hoffmeister was active in local affairs; he was Chairman of the Local Board of Health, a body responsible for, among other things, clean water and sewerage. It is probable that the resultant improvement in health saved more lives than his medical attention.

In January 1855 he was elected Chairman of the Burial Board. It was this group of local worthies that purchased the land, chose plans for the layout of the Cemetery and approved the design of the twin chapels - and made the decisions that created the Northwood Cemetery we know today.

He died on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1890 and his funeral was attended by many celebrated dignitaries, including representatives of the Queen and other members of the Royal family.

Queen Victoria wrote a personal note of condolence to his family, which included the lines “He was so much esteemed by myself, the dear Prince Consort and my children whom he had known from their earliest childhood... ..many, many will miss his skill and care, as well as his kindness very much”. It seems appropriate that he was laid to rest in the Cemetery he helped create.

Two of his sons, **John Bates Hoffmeister** (named after a friend and one time Secretary of the Royal Yacht Squadron) and **Harry Aubrey Hoffmeister** (Aubrey being an ancestral name on his mother's side), took **Aubrey** as the family name rather than **Hoffmeister** - probably because of virulent anti-German feeling during the First World War.

Harry was still known as Harry Hoffmeister when he married in 1915. Confusingly other family members took the surnames **Seymour**, **Cosway** and **Halliday** - and the name **Hoffmeister** disappeared.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

## Membership Report

Firstly, we are still looking for a Membership Secretary. *Could that be you?* If you are quite well organised, use e-mail and have an hour or so a week to spare, *it really could be!!!*

Notwithstanding this void in our administrative structure, since the last membership update we are very pleased to have welcomed another 14 “Friends” of Northwood Cemetery. These are (in alphabetical):

**Frances Alderton** (Southampton), **John & Wendy Barry** (Fair Oak, Hampshire), **David Biles** (Northwood), **Jean Daish** (East Cowes), **Patricia Kemp** (Cowes), **Rachel Issaias** (Cowes), **Marea Lisk** (Southampton), **Nikki Lovett-Taylor** (Ryde), **Maureen Matthews** (Yarmouth - *Ed: no relation!*), **Malcolm & Rebecca McGregor** (Cowes), **Wendy Simpson** (Ryde) and **Michael Winstone** (Warlingham, Surrey).  
Of these, Michael has joined as a **Life Member**.

So, for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** has attracted over **250** members - of which **25** are now **Life Members**.

**Jon Matthews**  
Treasurer

## **The Schools Pack is here!!!**

One of the visions of the Board of Trustees, since the early days back in 2008, was the use of the Cemetery as place of educational inspiration to local schools.

This vision has been a long time in the making - but thanks to the efforts of **Valerie Diebelius**, a Hunnyhill Primary School (in Newport) governor, that vision has now become reality - with the creation of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery's "Schools Pack"**. Our thanks must also go to **Kate Macdonell** for letting us share her work originally designed for **Ryde Cemetery**.

Valerie also has a very long association with the Guide movement - another 'string to her bow' - that has enabled her to bring a practical side to the material she has produced.

In order to be attractive to schools any educational aid must conform to the **National Curriculum** and Valerie's expertise as a school governor has produced what the Board believe is a "teachers' delight". It also acknowledges that the **National Curriculum** is currently under review - so the available documentation is designed to be easily modified.

The **Friends of Northwood Cemetery's** Schools Pack currently has 17 Activity Sheets for teachers to use with children from Key Stages 1 and 2. These have been built around those produced, aided by a Heritage Lottery grant, by the **Friends of Stanton Road Cemetery** in Ilkeston, Derbyshire - whose generosity in sharing their material with us is gratefully acknowledged. It made Valerie's task a lot easier!

In the pack there are 6 Story Sheets (with accompanying Work Sheets for the children to complete - with 3 more still in production), about some of the people at rest in **Northwood Cemetery**. These Work Sheets are intended to be used by teachers to assist their pupils in their understanding of the written word. There are also exercises in numeracy in the pack.

Of course we know that **Northwood Cemetery** is very rich in natural history and the Schools Pack takes full advantage of this attribute. There are exercises in observation included - and the hope (*Ed: nay, the expectation!*) is that visiting children will develop a keen appreciation of Mother Nature - in all her guises: flora, fauna, bird life and animal life. It is also expected that children will learn to respect the Cemetery as a resting place for those who have departed this world - and that the rare instances of vandalism we experience will be eliminated.

Naturally, in this age of concern over health and safety matters, these subjects have been fully addressed - and a proforma Risk Assessment is included.

The Schools Pack has been presented to the Board of Trustees and has been received with much acclaim. It represents many, many hours of dedication from Valerie to whom we are extremely indebted. Naturally what we would like now is to see regular school trips to the Cemetery - and a marketing campaign to local schools is underway.

**John Pullen**  
Trustee