

# NEWSLETTER NUMBER 40

February 2018



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Registered Charity no: 1143917

## Chairman's Report

*"We are in the early stages of discussing with the IWC a submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to restore the West Chapel....."*

This was an extract from the May 2013 newsletter describing the celebration of FoNC's **5<sup>th</sup> birthday**. **We will be celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on 31<sup>st</sup> March** (see back page) and much has been achieved in the last five years - as many of you witnessed last October at the formal re-opening of the Chapels. However we must not rest on our laurels.

We already have in place the **Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP)** agreed with the **Heritage Lottery Fund** and our partners, the **Isle of Wight Council (IWC)**. This plan is designed to secure the legacy of what we have already achieved - for the next 10 years.

The MMP will be monitored by a Partnership Board consisting of FoNC Trustees and representatives of the IWC which will meet monthly to check on progress.

The Trustees consider Northwood Cemetery to be a **very special** place. In the last ten years many thousands of volunteer hours have been worked and we are determined to safeguard this investment; a 'ring-fenced' budget has been agreed with the IWC to support the MMP so that essential maintenance matters are funded.

Since last October we have noted a significant increase in the number of visitors to the Chapels and the grounds. The West Chapel (which we now refer to as the **Heritage Resource Centre**) is open to all during 5 sessions each week: Tuesday afternoons from 1:00pm to 4:00pm; and Wednesday to Saturday mornings from 10:00am – 1:00pm.

The **Isle of Wight Family History Society** will be in attendance on Tuesdays afternoons, Wednesday and Saturday mornings - and volunteers from the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** on Thursday and Friday mornings. So, if you are intrigued to discover your family history, but have not found time to explore it, help to get you started is on hand.

If you are unable to attend in person please email the Secretary (see front page) or telephone the **Heritage Resource Centre** on 01983 298099; messages can be left.

The **East Chapel** is being used again for funeral services (we have had 3 so far since the re-opening last October) and the **Natural Burial Ground** is being developed as work continues in the rest of the grounds. More graves will be restored.

Many positive comments have been made by visitors to our volunteers. If you have not been to the Cemetery recently please try to go along to see for yourself - and if you have a couple of hours to spare why not consider becoming a volunteer? Our volunteers do seem to love 'the buzz' they get from achieving so much for the community.

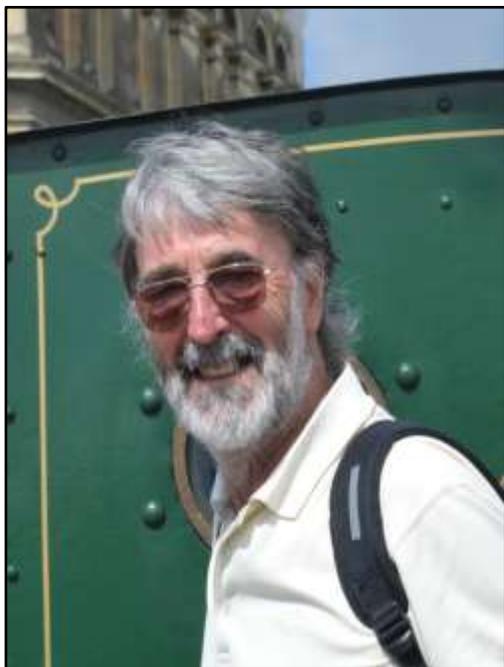
Finally I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for all their support since becoming chairman last September.

**Peter Almond**

Chairman

## Grounds Preservation Report

Anyone walking through the Cemetery will see the fantastic impact that is the result of countless hours of volunteer effort. We have a happy band of men and women (we can always do with more!) who enjoy the banter and camaraderie enjoyed on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, weather permitting. To others: **Don't be shy in coming forward!**



Having completed the clearing of Plot 10, the group have now moved to Plot 21. To those of you who haven't been able to get to the Cemetery recently, we now have 'on the ground' Plot markers - so when on site we can now identify Plots by their numbers!

We are aware that a survey of the **condition** of the trees is overdue and we are pressing **Bereavement Services** to commission one; some of them are already in a perilous state.

On a very sad note, one of our most regular and enthusiastic volunteers, **Reg Finch** (pictured left) has passed away and our thoughts go to his widow Joan, his two sons and their families.

**John Pullen**

Grounds Preservation Manager

## Membership Report

Given the new FoNC year starts on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, anyone joining **now** is considered to be paid up until 31<sup>st</sup> March **2019**. So ‘the books’ have now closed on 2017-2018 and I’m delighted to say we recorded **296** “Friends”. That’s our greatest membership number ever – fuelled, no doubt, by all there is to see at **Northwood Cemetery** these days.

Joining us since the last (November) newsletter are: **Tony Butt** (Gurnard), **Betty Dhillon** (Newport), **Mavis Sweeney** (Ryde), **Judi Keath**, **Stephen Vine** and **Stan, Ann & Megan Turner** (all Cowes). Tony joins us as our 53<sup>rd</sup> Life member.

To those of you who pay subscriptions annually, it’s approaching that time of year again when subs become due. You can pay online (unless you pay by Banker’s Standing Order) at: [www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/about-us/become-a-friend](http://www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/about-us/become-a-friend) or, if you pass me in the street, I’m more than happy to extract your sub there and then! Of course you can always send a cheque to the Secretary (see the front page) of this newsletter).

A single membership is £10 per annum and for joint members it’s £15 per annum. If you feel inclined to take out **Life** membership (and why not?) then it’s £100 – and then there’ll be no more reminders that you need to action!

Many of you will know that data protection is a ‘hot potato’ and that there is a national **Information Commissioner’s Office** that governs how organisations use personal information. There is legislation that applies to the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** just as much as it applies to the ‘big boys’ (eg: HM Revenue and Customs – “the tax man”).

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 a new piece of legislation (with the catchy title: the “GDPR” – **General Data Protection Regulation**) comes into effect and strengthens the UK’s **Data Protection Act**, various forms of which have been in force since 1998.

The Membership Form now includes a **consent statement** which the applicant must sign in order for me to publish their personal data (eg: their name and location). This includes mentioning them as a new “Friend” in these newsletters.

The golden rule is: “no **explicit** consent, no mention”. By **explicit** the GDPR insists that there is a specific, isolated question on the Membership Form requesting their consent and this question must be signed in isolation (a ‘tick box’ is **not** sufficient).

So we will no longer be broadcasting the names of new “Friends” (and where they live) **unless** we have their **explicit** consent that we may do so.

**Jon Matthews**

Membership Secretary

[membership.secretary@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk](mailto:membership.secretary@friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk)

## The Hansen Obelisk

This sizeable memorial in Plot 8 beside the path on the western boundary of the Cemetery is the final resting place, amongst others, of **Charles Hansen** (1815 -1890). His firm, *C Hansen & Sons*, were significant yacht builders, described in the *1894 Directory of Industrial Great Britain* as “probably the oldest yacht-builders in the world”.



While this claim is perhaps questionable they can trace the firm back to Charles’s grandfather **George Hansen** (1763-1849).

In their heyday the firm owned the shipyard at “Point” – the land on the right of the Floating Bridge slipway (on the Cowes side).

The article also states that the company “employs about 200 highly skilled hands”.

When the article was written Charles and his eldest son **George Edward Hansen** (1845-1892) had already died and the firm was downsizing.

An *Isle of Wight County Press* report in the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1899 edition lists an important

property sale held at the Fountain Inn in Cowes in which, among other properties, the shipbuilding yard at Point was auctioned; it was purchased for £2,975 by J S White Company Limited adding a 55ft stone built landing quay, sheds and 2 slipways to its already thriving yard.

Some idea of the demise of the firm is shown in an *Isle of Wight County Press* report of 19<sup>th</sup> January 1901 regarding the adjudication in the bankruptcy of **Charles Cleaver Hansen**, Charles’s second son and a partner in the firm.

Charles married **Mary Coundley** in 1841 and they had 4 sons and 5 daughters. Mary died in 1877 aged 56 and is buried in the same grave (Plot 8/Grave 3690) as Charles (as is their eldest son **George Edward Hansen** who died in 1893 aged 47).

The Hansen grave comprises 4 adjoining grave spaces; while burials are rightly listed under their grave numbers they should be viewed as a single family grave. Buried in grave 8/3711 is Charles's father **George Hansen** (1787-1865), his wife **Jane Hansen** (1815-1889) and **Lillian Mary Archer Hansen**, the 10 week old daughter of **Charles Cleaver Hansen** who died in 1877.

Buried in an adjacent grave (8/3697) are **Annie Hansen** and **Emily Ruddle Hansen**, the wife of **Charles Cleaver Hansen** (he is buried elsewhere). Mary's father, **Edward Coundley** (1787 -1874), is buried in grave 8/3704 and is remembered on the Obelisk. Buried in Grave 8/3610 are Edward's son **Edward Halsey Coundley** (1842-1921) and grandson **George William Coundley** (1876–1877).

The **Isle of Wight Family History Society's** BMD (Births, Marriages and Deaths) Index at: [www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/bmd/startbmd.html](http://www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/bmd/startbmd.html) indicates that the last **Hansen** born on the Island was in 1913.

So, a once important Cowes family appear to have now vanished from Island life.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

## **Becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**

Following the Charity Commission's announcement in 2017 of a new form of legal entity, the **Charitable Incorporated Organisation** (CIO), the Trustees are currently considering whether the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** should adopt this change of legal form.

The main benefit of being a CIO is that it gives extra protection to trustees - rather like the directors of *limited* companies; their personal financial liability is then limited.

This appears to be a straightforward process which will affect neither our Objectives nor the day-to-day running by the Board of Trustees. Membership will also be unaffected.

Applications to change by individual charities are being phased by the **Charity Commission** by income band and, because of our large income during the last financial year (due to the **Heritage Lottery Fund** grant we received), we are grouped with larger charities whose applications, the **Charity Commission** has determined, will not be considered before August 2018.

Meanwhile the Board would welcome any comments from "Friends" in this regard. The Board will keep "Friends" informed of any decisions via our quarterly newsletters.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

## Unique to the Island – a Terracotta Art Nouveau Memorial



This terracotta grave stone in Plot 24 is not only unique to Northwood Cemetery it is also unique to the Island.

The grave in question is that of Rear Admiral **Arthur Woodhall Gillett** who had a long and successful career in the Royal Navy, serving in the Crimean War and, thereafter, on training ships at Woolwich.

An honorary member of the **Royal Yacht Squadron** he lived in Cowes until his death in 1913, aged 83. Arthur's grave, a recumbent Celtic cross, is noteworthy because it is entirely made of unglazed terracotta.

The surface is decorated with the sinewy forms of grapevines growing up from the base; partridges and peacocks drinking from a chalice on the stem; and more grapevines filling the cross at the top making a delightful representation of the tree of life.

It is a most beautiful example of Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement of the late Victorian/Edwardian period.

It was made at the **Compton Pottery** in Surrey. **Mary Watts**, the second wife of the artist and sculptor **George Frederic Watts**, ran the pottery overseeing the designs and production. They were no strangers to the Isle of Wight themselves, being part of the Freshwater set, friends of **Alfred Lord Tennyson** and **Julia Margaret Cameron**.

The Pottery was given the job of building and decorating a new mortuary chapel for the village of Compton. This is now the renowned **Watts Chapel**, a glorious brick building richly decorated with terracotta tiles both inside and out.

The adjoining cemetery has several terracotta graves and it was the similarity to Gillett's grave that inspired me to contact the Chapel to see if this was one of their designs.

**Hilary Calvert**, who lives in Ely, Cambridgeshire, has spent many years researching and recording them, each one unique and hand made to order.

With no records surviving of to whom orders were sent, she has set herself the monumental task of tracking them all down.

Her visit to the Island in the autumn confirmed another 'find'. So far she has found over 100, mostly around the Guildford area - but some have been found as far away as Scotland.

What is the reason for this grave stone being here? **Arthur Woodhall Gillett** was the brother of **Hugh Hodgson Gillett**, who was the Rector of the parish of Compton. It was **Hugh Gillett** who commissioned this work of art before his own death two years later.

### **Ken Wheeler**

Chairman, Friends of East Cowes Cemetery

## **Tree of Remembrance**



On the two weekends before Christmas, and on Christmas morning, the East Chapel was open to visitors. All were welcome but particularly those wishing to hang a decoration on our **Tree of Remembrance**.

This event was well supported and warmly received by many. People came to visit the Chapel and see the Tree.

They shared treasured memories of loved ones with both smiles and tears. Loving messages were written by both adults and children and hung on the Tree in memory of those now missing from their lives – but not forgotten.

Distant relatives and friends, from as far away as Australia, sent messages of remembrance; the response to this initiative far exceeded all our expectations.

The Tree finally held no less than **81** decorations, each with its own personal message.

These will be kept and can be viewed on request. Most of those remembered are buried in Northwood Cemetery but also included were some whose final resting places are elsewhere. It was a very special way to celebrate precious lives.

The **Tree of Remembrance** was such a successful event that we plan to repeat it next Christmas. Perhaps then we can add some *live* music – and we'll probably need a larger tree!

### **Stella Watling**

Fund Raising Coordinator

## Dates for your Diary

As well as our regular **grounds maintenance working parties** every **Wednesday** and **Saturday** mornings (to which everyone is invited) and fortnightly **Quiz nights** at the **Cowes Ale House** we have three other events that we really hope you can support:

### Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February



An **Auction Night** at the **Cowes Ale House** where over 50 items will be put on auction - and bargains are sure to be had. Just turn up anytime during the evening to see what appeals to you. If you have any items yourself ( maybe unused Christmas presents? ) that you would like to donate, please give **Stella Watling** a call on **01983 281597** and she'll be pleased to discuss how you can get them to us. Where we are able to collect, we will.

### Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March

In association with the **Friends of St Mary's Church**, Cowes, **G J Banks (IW) Ltd** will be hosting a presentation in the church, starting at 7:30pm, showcasing their work (which was funded by the **Heritage Lottery Fund**) that restored the Chapels at the Cemetery.

Admission will be free but there will be a retiring collection which will be shared equally between the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** and the **Friends of St Mary's Church**.

### Easter Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March – Friends of Northwood Cemetery's 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday

A major 'open' event will take place in the Cemetery to celebrate the **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the forming of the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery** - on this day in 2008. It is free!

Commencing at 10:00am there will be a variety of exhibits and entertainment including: choirs from local schools, guided walks, trails for children with Easter Egg prizes and we are currently organising skills and craft workshops - amongst other highlights. Soft drinks and cakes will be available – including, naturally, a Birthday cake!

The guided walks, at 11:00am, 1:00pm and 3:00pm, will focus on the abundant natural history in the Cemetery – particularly attractive in the springtime.

**We hope you can come along and join us in celebrating this auspicious day.**

Jo Mckinnie  
Editor