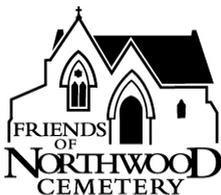


# NEWSLETTER NUMBER 46

August 2019



## Officers:

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>Peter Almond</b> | Chairman  |
| <b>David Jones</b>  | Secretary |
| <b>Richard Day</b>  | Treasurer |

## Other Trustees:

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Roger Williams</b> | Vice Chairman         |
| <b>Jon Matthews</b>   | <b>John Pullen</b>    |
| <b>Barry Sowerby</b>  | <b>Stella Watling</b> |

Registered Charity no: 1180926

Please address all enquiries to:

The Secretary, Friends of Northwood Cemetery, 194 Newport Road,  
Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7PU; **Tel:** (01983) 298445

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

**Website:** [www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk](http://www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk)

## Chairman's Report

As we go to print we have just heard that **Northwood Cemetery** has been granted the prestigious national **Green Flag Award** for the second year running. This honour, part of the **Keep Britain Tidy** scheme, celebrates a well-managed, quality park or 'green space'. **Isle of Wight Radio** News heralded the Cemetery as "one of the best kept cemeteries in the country". Congratulations are due to the conservation volunteers for their dedication.

In the last two newsletters I have mentioned the potential move by the **Isle of Wight Council** to ban dogs in all cemeteries on the Island; the good news ('good' because the Trustees want to keep the *status quo*) is that there is **no** news; long may this continue!

Another perennial item, it seems, is the erection of a cairn to be made from the broken headstones which once formed the small containing wall in front of the West Chapel; we have discussed this project with several third parties but none have offered a solution that reflects the thoughts of the Board; so it's a case of "keep watching this space".

We were saddened to learn that **Alison Parker**, our very conscientious Squirrel monitor, has been diagnosed with health issues and we all wish her a speedy recovery. Consequently she has to pass over this important role and I'm pleased to advise that **Dawn Thistlewood**, a new "Friend", has accepted the invitation to follow in Alison's footsteps. She will be conducting the next survey due in October; welcome aboard Dawn!

Please note that the Annual General Meeting takes place on **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September** (see page 8). All the existing Trustees have made themselves available for re-election; however may I please make a plea for subscribing members to support this important date in our calendar - if at all possible? The AGM will be followed by a presentation from **Mark Earp**, a well-respected local Historian, entitled **Queen Victoria on the Isle of Wight**.

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President: **Jon Matthews**

Vice Presidents: **Geoff Banks, BEM**

**Graham Lloyd**

**Lora Peacey-Wilcox**

The Trustees were delighted to accept a Display Cabinet donated by **Daphne Brudenell** (whose London-based daughter Carmine is a regular visitor to the Cemetery). The Cabinet resided in the **Mission for Seafarers'** chapel in Southampton before the chapel's demolition. In the Display Cabinet is a memorial book which contains names of many seamen (some of whom resided on the Isle of Wight) beautifully written in script. Our grateful thanks go to Daphne and Carmine for rescuing these wonderful artefacts.



**'First-Friday-in-the-Month'** Coffee mornings, orchestrated by **Stella Watling**, continue to go from strength to strength and if you haven't had the chance to pop along I do encourage you to do so; if Fridays are not good for you, the **Heritage Resource Centre** is also open on Wednesday to Saturday mornings every week (10am to 1pm); the Coffee morning dates, with 'themes', are:

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> August    | 'Golden Days'          |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> September | Puzzles and Games      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> October   | Autumn activities      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> November  | Pictures and Postcards |

But those on duty would love to see you on *any* of the other mornings if these dates don't suit.

**Peter Almond**  
Chairman

## Using Northwood Cemetery for a Funeral Service and Wake

On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 a 'celebration of life' for local bricklayer "**Jack**" Sowerby (my dad) took place. D-Day Veteran Jack (he passed away literally watching the Queen on television as she led the commemorations on 5<sup>th</sup> June) had gained much comfort in the knowledge that the recent restorations had been completed and that 'when the time came', his end of life service could take place in the East Chapel; he was 97 and lived just 75 yards away.

Jack had suggested that it would be nice to have his wake in the **Heritage Resource Centre**. As far as it is known, this was a 'first' in the 163 year history of the Cemetery and so, after Jack's committal in Plot 34, family and friends met in the HRC for refreshments and a slide-show of Jack's interesting life. Being such a beautiful day, many sat outside on the grass.

It was such a resounding success that, thanks to Jack's foresight, the Trustees are pleased to announce that they can offer the **Heritage Resource Centre** for a wake to all comers. Catering will be the responsibility of the family although tea, coffee and soft drinks can be provided by the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery**. The HRC holds up to 40 people.

**Barry Sowerby**  
Historian

## Another New Volunteer's Perspective



In November 2018, I wandered into the **Heritage Resource Centre** and asked about becoming a **Friend of Northwood Cemetery**. Before I knew it, I'd joined the Transcription Team and, with guidance from **Barry Sowerby** and **Lu Farnsworth**, began the task in hand.

But what does that task involve? Simple answer – writing down what's on the headstones – though it's not quite as simple as it sounds.

There's a fair bit of standing or sitting around the Cemetery with a clipboard, making notes, taking photos, chatting to curious dog walkers or just enjoying the surroundings.

I started working on the older Plots (1 to 5 around the chapels) below a canopy of trees. Tentative stepping through thick carpets of wet leaves, balancing on wobbly borders, pushing back stubborn tree branches and clearing weed-clogged structures, removing decades of moss and mould to reveal long-hidden words beneath.

There's quite a bit of squinting, stepping back and forth and head tilting, trying to find the angle at which the inscription might best be read and photographed. Some headstones reveal a brief but poignant dedication; others almost tell a life story.

Originally from Carisbrooke, and a resident of Cowes for over 40 years, I have enjoyed learning more about local history since taking on this role.

My transcribing time is a form of 'educational therapy' for me. I often smile at scurrying red squirrels. I am surrounded by colourful wild flowers, birdsong and soft breezes whispering through the towering treetops. All this and recording a bit of history as well.

Clearance work constantly carried out by the conservation volunteers has brought sunlight to previously overgrown areas and revealed many more headstones. I look forward to spending more time in some of those sunnier spots!

So, if anyone has an interest in local history or nature, I would encourage them to speak to the dedicated team of volunteers at **Northwood Cemetery**. I am glad I did.

### **Lin Hayward**

Transcription Team Member

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September at 3:00pm</b>   | <b>Poetry Reading in the Heritage Resource Centre</b> |
| <b>Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 7:30pm</b> | <b>Scottish Fiddlers Concert in the East Chapel</b>   |

## Funeral Plans

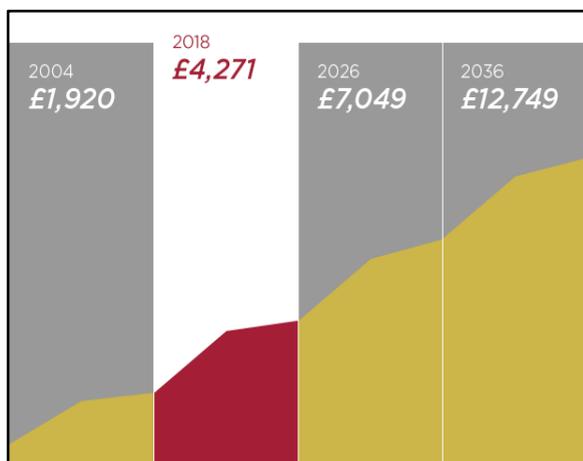
**Funeral Plans** have been in the news of late – but what are they? Well, the theory is that it should be a less stressful period for your family ‘when the time comes’ if you have taken one out with a **Funeral Director**.

On the Island **Funeral Directors** fall into 3 groups: (i) the **Independents** (of which **Geoff Leather Funeral Director** is the only one in the Cowes area); (ii) those in the national **Dignity** group (**F L Lloyd** in Cowes - as well as **Hamilton & Marshall**, **Downer and White** and **Henry Ingram** on the Island); and (iii) **Co-op Funeralcare**, a wholly owned subsidiary of the national Co-operative group with 6 offices on the Island, one of them in East Cowes.

Each of these three groups has its own specific **Funeral Plan(s)**; I’m in the market for one so I set out to better understand how they operate. Of course it’s not mandatory that you have a **Funeral Plan** at all – and it is entirely possible to specify ‘a personal plan’ in your Will; but that would not give your family any protection from inflationary costs.

However if you are thinking of taking out a **Funeral Plan** perhaps the first consideration is to talk to your family and executor(s) – to give them the chance to discuss its contents with you. That’s not easy as it seems almost everyone is uncomfortable with discussing matters to do with ‘when the time comes’ and often awkward silence prevails. All you can do is give them the chance – if they choose not to take it then you’ve at least given them the option to express what **they** would like for your funeral. But it is **your** choice.

It is estimated that an average funeral now costs over £4,000 (thankfully there’s no VAT to be added) and reports suggest that this is largely down to the increase in basic charges being made by Local Authorities who, in these austere times, see revenue from funerals as a cash cow - and it is usually the first to be targeted for increased charges year on year.



Source: 2018 Sun Life Cost of Dying Report

This cost has more than doubled during the **Friends of Northwood Cemetery’s** lifetime – just a short eleven years. Further, fees levied by Funeral Directors are rising above the rate of inflation – and, if you anticipate a headstone, then stone masons’ charges come on top of these costs.

Typically those who have entered into a **Funeral Plan**, and have paid for it in advance, will benefit from the Funeral Director’s costs being frozen at the time the plan is paid in full.

It is important to stress that **Funeral Plans** offered by **Funeral Directors** do not include the costs of ‘third parties’ (eg: doctor’s fees, chapel fees, minister’s fees, burial fees, grave diggers’ fees etc etc) - since such fees are outside the control of the **Funeral Directors** - but they usually make a financial provision for them. An allowance (typically in the range £1,200 to £1,500) is made *within* the cost of the **Funeral Plan**. For example if you wish to use the East Chapel at Northwood Cemetery the fee levied by the **IW Council** for such use at a funeral is (currently) £75 - but this can be taken out of the provision in the Plan.

When the day of your funeral arrives, do you sometimes try to envisage what will occur? Or are you content to pass the responsibility to your family - at a time when, one imagines, they will be grieving at your loss and would almost certainly be consumed with other matters in their busy lives.

- Do they know if you would prefer to be buried or cremated? (over 70% of people are cremated these days).
- Do they know the type (natural or traditional) of funeral you would like?
- Do they know your favourite music for such an occasion?
- Do you have a preferred hymn or reading - or would you like a non-religious service?
- ...and there are many more questions - too numerous to mention here.

These are all very personal questions and different people will have different preferences. A **Funeral Plan** is where you can specify *your* preferences.

So, I’m off to see what Funeral Directors offer and then I can decide which one best meets *my* expectations. I know it makes sense to have a **Funeral Plan** and my family will be thankful that I spared them having to make awkward decisions ‘when the time comes’.

Rather like contributing to a Pension Plan, the earlier you have a **Funeral Plan** the better. So, the people who would benefit the most are the younger generations – but are they ready to consider **Funeral Plans**? I rather think it will struggle to get off their ‘To-Do’ lists.

Of course there is an alternative to taking out a **Funeral Plan** offered by a Funeral Director; you can specify a lot of what you would like in your Will – and leave an amount in your Will to contribute to the costs of the funeral; a sort of *DIY* funeral plan with which, perhaps, you can involve your family. Or better still you could invest an amount (say £5,000?) as soon as possible to be set aside to cover the cost of your funeral and burial/cremation.

However, you may prefer the help of a professional from the Funerals industry to draw on their experience and to guide you through the process - hopefully covering all the bases. Of course, you should bear in mind that, in doing so, they will have their ‘sales hat’ on!

**Jon Matthews**

President

## Hewitt & Son, 74 High Street, Cowes

This is a look at a father and son business that traded in Cowes for over 200 years.

Founded in 1790 by **Jacob Hewitt** (1769-1832) it initially offered “hot plunging and salt water baths, vapour and swimming baths”. Reputed to be among the bathers were the exiled French Emperor **Napoleon III** and **Charles Dickens**.



Bath Road gets its name from Hewitt's Bath House which was situated at 74 High Street (at the bottom of Market Hill; today it is PHG Art & Housewares).

As the bath business declined *Hewitt & Son* expanded into groceries and was eventually able to display royal warrants by appointment to **Queen Victoria** and the **Prince of Wales**. Jacob was supported by his son, **John Hewitt** (1790-1875).

John ran the business following Jacob's death; he in turn was aided and then followed by his son **Alfred Hewitt** (1831-1910) who in turn was also aided and then succeeded by his son **Frederick Entwisle Hewitt** (1865-1937).



Although **Jacob Hewitt** is buried in St Mary's churchyard in Cowes succeeding generations are buried in Northwood Cemetery. John lies under quite a plain headstone in Plot 1, grave 2882 joining his wife **Elizabeth Hewitt** who was buried there in June 1866.

Alfred was buried in May 1910 under a granite cross (left) in Plot 7, grave 2596, joining his son **William Horwood Hewitt** who had died aged just 4 months in 1871. Alfred's wife **Mary Elizabeth Hewitt** was also buried there in May 1916.

**Alfred Hewitt** was prominent in local affairs being a member of the Local Board (Council) and the **Northwood Cemetery Burial Board**. He was very active at **All Saints church, Gurnard**; he was on the building committee which saw the new church built in 1893.

The family home was at Ormscliffe on Tuttons Hill.

Alfred's funeral in 1910 was accompanied by displays of mourning in Cowes and Gurnard while the list of attendees demonstrated his standing in both communities.



Alfred's son **Frederick Entwistle Hewitt** continued the association with All Saints Church, Gurnard; unfortunately he suffered a severe breakdown in health in 1933 resulting in his retirement from the business. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1937 and is buried beneath a rustic cross (left) in Plot 24, grave 7287.

Frederick's son **John Leslie Hewitt** did not continue the father and son business; instead he opened a gift shop in Shanklin High Street. The last Hewitt involved with the business was Frederick's daughter, **Mrs Irene Salkield**, who was the sole owner when she died in 1981.

Disaster hit the firm on the night of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> May 1942 when the premises were completely destroyed by a bomb during the Cowes blitz. The photo below shows the destruction.

The present single storey building at 74 High Street is a post-war construction. On either side of it was the old **Post Office** and *Green's* (later *Transatlantic Plastics* then *Galerias Segui*), both of which were damaged - but these buildings survived.



On 15<sup>th</sup> November 1975 the *Isle of Wight County Press* featured an article with the headline: "*Cowes firm founded 185 years ago celebrates*". The article indicated just how long many of the staff at *Hewitt & Son* had worked for the firm; their loyalty was legendary.

Latterly the business was purchased by former manager **Roger Cross** who, with his long serving assistants **Peggy Prouten** and **Beryl Clarke**, kept this independent grocer's shop open - long after others in the town had succumbed to competition from the multiples. When the shop closed in 2003 Roger, Beryl and Peggy, between them, must have worked there more than 120 years.

So after 213 years the name **Hewitt** disappeared from Cowes High Street.

**David Jones**  
Secretary

## 2019 Annual General Meeting

Please accept this as formal notification of the **2019 Annual General Meeting** to take place on **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September** in the **Heritage Resource Centre** at 7:00pm. The agenda is:

- Apologies for Absence
- Approval of the Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting
- Presentation of the 2019 Chairman's Report
- Presentation of the 2019 Treasurer's Report
- Election of a **Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer** and other Trustees
- Close *(please note: all existing Trustees are standing for re-election)*

If members ("Friends") are unable to attend, can you please tender your apologies to me (see Front page for Contact Details); feel free to nominate a proxy to carry your vote.

**David Jones**

Secretary

### Summary of Financial Performance and Health (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018-31<sup>st</sup> March 2019)

The year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 was our first full year operating since the completion of the restoration work in October 2017. Our commitment to the **Management and Maintenance Plan** (MMP) of £3,000 per annum was met largely through fundraising activities, subscriptions and hire fees from the **Isle of Wight Family History Society**. The **Isle of Wight Council** met its financial obligations to the MMP by funding a tree survey and site work, contributing in excess of £6,000.

Outgoing costs were mainly associated with on-going site clearance, insurance, memorial restorations, new chairs for the **Heritage Resource Centre**, audio equipment for use on guided walks and general running costs.

Total income was **£18,516** and our outgoings of **£19,246** (which this year included numerous 'one off' costs) resulted in a small net loss of **£730**. Our cash position is strong with a closing balance of **£12,019** in the bank.

In all, a very successful year and we are confident that we will continue to have both the people and financial resources to achieve our aims in the future.

**Richard Day**

Treasurer

**Jo Mckinnie**  
Editor

FoNC is a member of the  
**National Federation of**  
**CEMETERIES FRIENDS**