



Newsletter 20

Autumn 2019

The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, c/o 100 Enborne Road, Newbury, RG14 6AN  
Website: [www.fnrnewbury.org.uk](http://www.fnrnewbury.org.uk)

Tel: 01635 30108  
E-mail: [committee@fnrcnewbury.org.uk](mailto:committee@fnrcnewbury.org.uk)

## Chairman's Chatter...

Brian Sylvester



What a funny old summer we've had this year what with record high temperatures, autumn in August, flash floods and drought. Still it gives us plenty to talk about, far safer than indulging in the political shenanigans elsewhere we've had to endure. I wonder what the 38 Newbury Mayors buried in Newtown

Road (yes, **thirty-eight**) would make of it all!

I've talked in the past about Mausoleums (Mausolea?) and thought you may be interested in the following I've stumbled across.

Following Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and subsequent defeat by Nelson in 1798, ancient Egyptian artefacts began to flood into Europe and they inspired a new architectural style - the Egyptian Revival. This style was popular particularly during the first half of the 19th Century, and as well as inspiring the design of buildings it also influenced funerary monuments both here and abroad. One of the most famous revivals in Britain is the Egyptian Avenue at Highgate Cemetery.

But I want to share with you the mysterious Courtoy Mausoleum, a twenty-foot tall trapezoid of dark polished granite with a pyramidal roof and a huge copper door, which stands as the largest monument in Brompton Cemetery.



Since its construction in 1854, the mausoleum has fostered a legend that it secretly houses a time machine, a Victorian news story that inspired H G Wells to write his novella, "The Time Machine".

Built as the final resting place of the 19th century barmaid turned heiress, Hannah Courtoy and her two daughters, the monument was designed by the eccentric Victorian inventor Samuel Warner with the Egyptologist and sculptor Joseph Bonomi. Its legend as a time machine was borne out of the mysterious inscriptions based on Egyptian hieroglyphs, and some of Leonardo da Vinci's more obscure sketches that cover its exterior walls.

These allegedly contain the secret of time travel. Indeed, Samuel Warner was murdered in mysterious circumstances, and shortly after the key to the mausoleum's great bronze door went missing. A later replacement was again lost in the 1970s. If you came across it, would you have the courage to go inside?

I'm not aware of any Egyptian-Revival influence in Newtown Road Cemetery, but if our "residents" (like the Mayors I referred to earlier) could time travel to the present, ask yourself what would they make of us and our modern world?

You won't need to be a time traveller to come along to our future events which are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. Do come: they're there for you to savour and enjoy.

Finally, it wouldn't be Chairman's Chatter without heartfelt thanks being extended to the cemetery owners, Newbury Town Council and its officers, your committee, our webmaster, and the many friends who generously chip in to assist our time-travelling mission of ....

### ***Taking the Past into the Future.***

## **In search of John Osgood**

*Ros Clow*

John Osgood, Artist, has his place on the Angels, Artists and Authors tour of the cemetery. His grave is on the curved path near the Chapel. He died aged 91, in 1903 while living with his daughter Emily in Tottenham but was returned to Newbury to be buried with his wife Jane.

I know enough about him to include him in the tour but for someone who made his living as Artist, Drawing Master and Portrait Photographer his work is incredibly evasive. Walter Money used an engraving of Osgood's

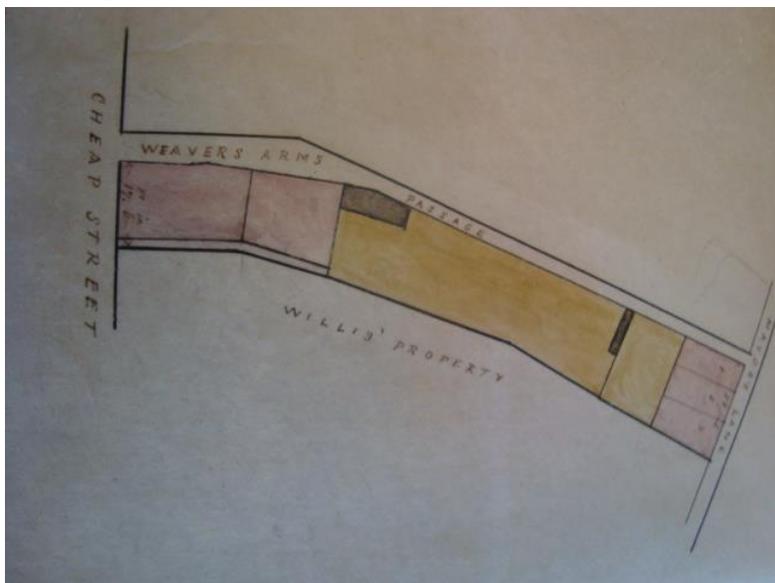


painting of the Old 'Pelican' Inn, Speenhamland in his book, History of Newbury. I have no idea where the original painting is. The image was repainted for permanent display on the clock House on the Broadway.

Other than that, there is one portrait by Osgood in Reading Museum, the subject is William Corbett, famous as a political agitator and journalist and author of Rural Rides in which he regularly stayed at Burghclere. I wonder where!

But where are all his other pictures and photographs? Maybe Jane had to open her Berlin Wool Repository on the Bridge because John's income was insufficient?

Recently an Indenture was for sale on eBay and it mentioned John Osgood, Artist, so I decided to buy it. The document was in wonderful condition, so I was quite easily able to decipher it. Creating a timeline convinced me that this was the same John Osgood. The document created



in 1871, was for the sale of a group of dwellings between Cheap Street and Manor Lane, probably where 'The Plaice' is now. They had originally belonged to Harry Osgood who died in 1842 and had left them to his wife Betty until she died. Betty aka Elizabeth died in 1858 and was buried on 21<sup>st</sup> April in NRC. The properties then passed to their four children: Robert George, Harry George,

John and a daughter (obviously not important enough to be given a name in the will!). By the time Harry died the son Harry had pre-deceased him. No information is given about the daughter. However in 1871 Robert and John sell all the premises for £400 to George John Deane, coachbuilder.

Robert is also buried in NRC, having died aged 81 in 1879 at Raymond's Almshouses. Robert and Martha Osgood had stayed living on Cheap Street, raising a family there and working in the leather trade.

But why have I never seen a photograph by Osgood? Why are there no pictures coming up for sale? When he died, he was worth nearly £4000, where did that come from?

Over to you.

## Subscription Reminder



Thank you very much for your support as we continue on this fascinating journey we have undertaken.

Even if, for whatever reason, you are unable to take an active role with the Friends, please don't forget to support the on-going work through your subscription. A membership renewal form and standing order can be found with this newsletter and as an extra attachment to the email version of this newsletter. Subscriptions are due from October 1<sup>st</sup>.

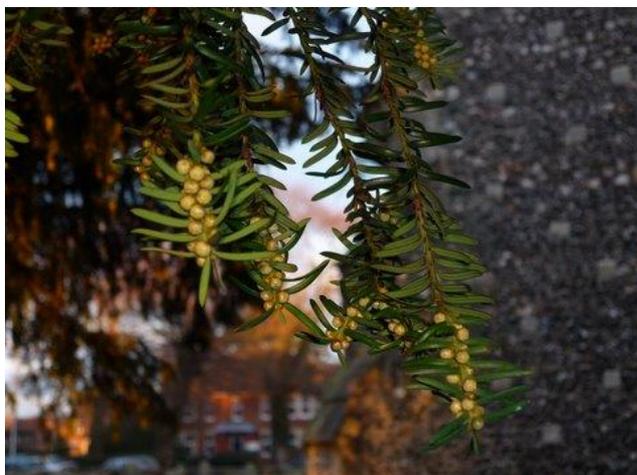
## Dates for your diary

These are some of the events coming up over the next few months.

<b>22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019</b> (Tuesday) From 7.30pm	<b>The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery AGM.</b> Venue: St Francis de Sales Parish Hall, Warren Road, Newbury RG14 6NH. This year's talk is by Entomologist and Newbury Councillor Chris Foster on insects in the cemetery.
<b>31<sup>st</sup> October 2019</b> (Thursday) 6.30pm	<b>Storytelling for Hallowe'en</b> Venue: The cemetery chapel A New story by Martin Strike for All Souls night! Admission £3 or free with a City Arts Halloween mask (mask making sessions cost £5). Mask info at <a href="https://cityartsnewbury.co.uk/">https://cityartsnewbury.co.uk/</a> when updated. <b>Special Members' Storytelling 8.00pm Thursday 31st October.</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b> (Saturday) 10am – 4pm	<b>Remembrance Cemetery Open Day</b> Venue: The cemetery and chapel Please see details elsewhere in the Newsletter

## Nature Group Report

*Martha Vickers*



Good news: The Nature Group is now in a stage of renaissance and the following are getting together:

Joan Stacey, Dorothy Leddy, Councillors Chris Foster and Martha Vickers, with enthusiastic support and encouragement from our very own Ros Clow!

Joan and Dorothy (pictured right) are our flower experts, Dorothy is a qualified botanist, and Chris an entomologist. Martha is doing a splendid job helping to co-ordinate meetings. The idea is to meet in the Cemetery for a survey of what's in flower, possibly monthly in Spring and Summer.



So far, they've managed to meet twice; once in early Summer and again in September for a late-Summer/early-Autumn walk. On their most recent visit they had the benefit of a very skilled photographer Lucie Robinson.

The plan is to record these visits in an album. This was begun some time ago and has been passed on to Joan by Ros. In this way we can see over time whether species are diminishing or improving.

We know our Community Services Manager, David Ingram, is planning to review the management of the Cemetery as regards wildlife. We will be requesting that we be included in any discussions.

We have also discussed how we could build on the successful Midsummer Event which features a very popular Moth Count. And a Bat Event is another suggestion.

So watch this space!

## Help needed

*The committee*



Our small, but friendly committee requires some help. There are some roles for which we need a little help as we currently do not have anyone to fill them.

The roles are varied such as a membership secretary, a member for young people to encourage visits by individuals and schools. Public relations is also another role that has been vacant for some time.

These are by no means full-time roles; a few hours help at a time would help greatly. If you (on your own, or in partnership with a friend or spouse) can help us out, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact our committee secretary, Maureen, at [committee@fnrcnewbury.org.uk](mailto:committee@fnrcnewbury.org.uk) or 01635 30108 or just come along to the AGM. Thank you!

## Monuments Recording Group

Doug Larsen

We continue to get enquiries from overseas for information about their relatives buried in the Cemetery, mainly from Australia and New Zealand. Often all that is requested is a photograph of the monument to provide a very powerful, and emotional link in family research and for those building family trees.

We always request more information from these researchers so that we can complete our own records but, sadly, we seldom hear from them again. Why this should be so, we don't know but a grave photograph seems to close all interest although we can often offer information about their ancestor's life over here.



It is also interesting that most enquiries come from Australia and New Zealand. They were obviously a popular destination for emigrants over the last few hundred years and, dare we say it, a punishment destination for misdemeanours over here; but let us not go there!



And, like the Mounties, we always get our man (or woman) in terms of finding the monuments. That this is possible is down to the hard work of the Monument Recording Group and the skills of Brian Snook who has to make sense of our scripts before posting them on the website. I'm not suggesting that we are slouches when it comes to entering our data, but it can be a long timeline between approaching a monument for the first time and finally firing off the completed spreadsheet to Brian; anomalies do creep in.

## Notice of AGM

The friends of Newtown Road Cemetery AGM will take place on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019** at St. Francis de Sales Church Hall from 7.30pm.

As well as the business side of the AGM which, as always, we will keep as short as possible, we will have a talk, given this year by Cllr. Chris Foster who, as mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter is an entomologist, which is the study of insects. As a new member of the Nature Group Chris has been spending time in the cemetery to find the answers to such questions as why there is a greater diversity of insects in Newtown Road Cemetery compared to Shaw.



We promise not to volunteer you for a job, but if you can offer some time, please let us know at the AGM or contact our Secretary Maureen whose details are at the very top of this newsletter.

## A Personal Trip Down Memory Lane

*Paul Thompson*

Whilst editing this newsletter I came to realise that earlier this year was the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my great-grandmother's death and subsequent (fortunately) burial in Newtown Road Cemetery, so I thought I would share a memory or two of those times as I remember them.

I remember going to visit her at her home with my mother and grandmother in the early seventies. We would walk through town and go in the International Stores in Bartholomew Street to get Granny's shopping. We kids used to get treated to a can of Top Deck shandy (a kid's drink that contained real alcohol? True, but unheard of in this day and age!). The trip continued through West Mills, sometimes stopping at the little cobbler's shop on Kennet Road (by the allotments) and then on into Berkeley Road where she lived.

Mabel was born at Hazel Hangar Farm in North Heath, a hamlet just west of Chieveley in 1883. The family were domestic servants and labourers. At the age of 19, the 1901 census shows her living with her uncle in Dothan Place; a very poor neighbourhood off Cheap



*Mabel Rawlings*



*Entrance to Dothan Place*

Street, the only part of which that still stands is the entrance way. This was presumably because of her job as a domestic servant, which was probably based somewhere in the town. Whilst there, she met and married Brice Rawlings. The marriage took place in St. Nicolas Church in 1902 but by this time, they already had their first child, Bertha, who had been born the year before. They moved to "The City" area of Newbury, and eventually to Rosemary Terrace (off Buckingham Road) before eventually moving on to Berkeley Road.

They had nine children in all, the third of which was my Grandmother in 1905 and the last was Stanley in 1924, who was buried in the cemetery in a commonwealth war grave after his death in 1945.

Brice passed away in 1942 (not because of the war) aged 58, and is also buried in the cemetery, but in an un-marked grave. She remained in the house on her own after that.



My memory of Mabel is her sitting in her armchair (left) in the corner of the room with her budgie in its cage on the shelf beside her. She would be chatting away to her daughter and granddaughter (my mother), talking about family, neighbours and friends (names I remember such as Prosser, Bushnell and Maccabee), whilst we sat on the sofa trying to behave. The house had very limited amenities at that time. The kitchen had a sink with only a cold-water tap, a cooker and a huge mangle and the toilet was

still down the garden. She lived in the two downstairs rooms presumably because she could not manage the stairs. I never went upstairs in that house. The stairwell was dark and dusty and I thought it was haunted. A feeling shared with my cousin, Brenda, many years later who felt the same.

The one sentence that I can still hear her saying even now was *"I want to be buried with 'Our Stan'!"* At that time, I thought it a very odd thing to say and I didn't know who Stan was! It was perhaps this one saying that started me down the family history road many years later.

She passed away in 1974, aged 91 and 2 days, and was indeed buried with Stan. But her story did not quite end there. At the time the council were (as now) ever mindful of saving money and had brought sheep in to keep the grass down instead of employing someone to cut it. When Mabel was buried, many floral tributes were placed on the grave and a fence was erected around the grave by the council, to protect them from the sheep, but they could not resist all the tasty colourful blooms and forced their heads through the fence and ate the lot! This made the local paper (see Mabel's page on the web site; details below) and despite the council refusing responsibility for the sheep's actions, they "sheepishly" removed the ovine menace shortly after.



I remember sometimes cycling up to the cemetery as a child and "hunting" for the grave and wanting to know more about 'Our Stan', and so my Journey into family history began.

Link to Mabel's FNRC page including the article from the NWN about the sheep!

<http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk/persondetails.asp?PersonID=1933>