



Newsletter 11

Spring 2015

The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, c/o 100 Enborne Road, Newbury, RG14 6AN
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Chairman's Chatter...

Brian Sylvester

Dear Friends

What with last year being the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One, and this year being the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two, our thoughts are being well and truly focussed on conflict, and commemorating the huge sacrifices made by many. Those of us who saw the display of ceramic poppies in the moat at The Tower of London, couldn't fail to be moved by the realisation of the enormity of the losses.



Each year our attention turns to the impressive ceremony held at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and, you know me, I got to wondering what a Cenotaph is, and so out came my trusty etymological dictionary. It transpires the word comes from the Greek for 'Empty Tomb'.

I don't think we have any empty tombs as such in Newtown Road Cemetery. We do have 20 Commonwealth War Graves; that is to say buried in our grounds are 20 casualties of WW1 and WW2 whose graves are maintained by the Commission. Each year, just before Remembrance Sunday, we give tours of these, pointing out the brave but sad stories associated with each.

Last year the Trefoil Guild kindly crocheted poppies and placed these on each WW1 grave. What a nice thought.

In addition, we have a further forty graves which, whilst not exactly 'empty' because they are occupied by other family members, do not contain the servicemen's remains but they are memorialised on the gravestone. Each of these we are researching to find their individual stories and, in the meantime, we ensure each grave is also remembered every year by a poppy cross.

As an example, we've previously mentioned the Maccabee family grave, and the recognition by the CWGC of the bravery of Thomas. Alongside his name is remembered his 23 year-old brother Reginald who died in the same battle, although he is actually buried in Manancourt, France.



By the way, as a result of our findings, 12 members of their family turned up in November to pay a moving tribute, most of them previously unaware of the history attached to their ancestors. It was interesting to note that several of them had also been in the armed services.

As one often sees inscribed on memorials – 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore', and we must not

allow them, nor the heavy price they paid, to be forgotten.

One of Friends, Phil Wood, has taken matters further still: he has established a central website of **all** the war memorials in West Berkshire including, wherever possible, the story behind each loss. It is a magnificent piece of research, and I thoroughly recommend it to you again. It can be found on: westberkshirwarmemorials.org.uk

You'll see elsewhere in this newsletter an article about an event on 14th March for new members and volunteers. Do come along to this and bring others who might be interested in sharing the appeal of the history and nature of our cemetery.

Many congratulations to the History Group for their efforts which amazingly brought us the first prize at the recent Volunteer Fair at the Corn Exchange.

Very well done. And to Ros Clow and her team of trusty thespians who so successfully ran two performances of her Tragedy on Enborne Road. I hope you all got along to see and appreciate it.



As ever, I close with my sincere thanks to your committee for their tireless contribution to "Taking the Past into the Future".

Monuments Recording Group

Doug Larsen

We have had three new volunteers for recording and they will be introduced to the secret arts of reading monument inscriptions as soon as we get some warmer weather. We are hoping that they will be able to attend our Open Day in the Chapel on March 14th to meet other members of the Friends and hear about the work they are doing uncovering family history, exploring the wild life, reaching out to other groups in the town and generally making the Newtown Road Cemetery a living part of area.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth has been busy recording the area to the Northwest of the Chapel, untangling the almost random arrangement of monuments and gravesites before the summer growth starts.

We have recorded in excess of 800 monuments in the past few years and hope to increase the rate once we have the new members on board. We look forward to welcoming them and to the discoveries they will make.

'Tea in the Chapel'

Saturday 14th March 2015

2.00 - 4.30 p.m.

in the Chapel at Newtown Road Cemetery

An opportunity to meet with Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery Committee and other Friends and to learn more about the Cemetery and the work of The Friends.

Accompanied tours of the Cemetery will be available.

We look forward to welcoming you and please let us know for catering purposes, if you are able to come.

RSVP to: maureen.hudd@btinternet.com

Success At Newbury Volunteer Fair

FNRC wins top award at 2015 Fair

Over the years Newbury Volunteer Fair has provided us with high quality Friends: Paul Thompson (our webmaster); Brian Snook (our record transcriber) and Judith Bunting (who played Mum in the recent tragedy) were all dragged in from their visit to the Corn Exchange.

When Brian Sylvester started his calendar this year he was surprised to note that the fair was going to be on the next Saturday! So a few stalwarts jumped into action, mostly the usual suspects, except this year we asked Isabel Carmona to help us with the display. Isabel is the artist who has exhibited in the Chapel for the last two Open Studios event.



Our amazing stand, painted by Isabel Carmona

The theme was West End Musicals and we chose “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat” mainly because we could lay our hands on some Arabic/Egyptian costumes! So on Saturday morning Brian Sylvester, Ros Clow and Sylvia Sellwood turned up, dressed up and spent the morning chatting to everyone who passed by! This included the three judges who asked questions about why we were dressed so strangely and what kind of volunteers we were looking for.

It all paid off! About 12.30pm we were announced as the winners of the display entries and Brian received a cheque from the Newbury Weekly News for £100. Amazing!



*Brian and Sylvia.
(The cup is a genuine Egyptian relic... Honest!)*



Ros, Brian and Sylvia attending our stand

Dates for your diary

14th March (Saturday)	Tea in the Chapel. See advert elsewhere in the newsletter.
19th April (Sunday)	Spring Wildflower Day at the cemetery (10am – 4pm). Walking tours of the Cemetery and talks about the flora in our cemetery.
24th June (Wednesday)	Summer evening event with walking tours.

Life Cycle Of The Lime Hawk-Moth

Nature report by Rita Gardner



A knowledgeable person once pointed out that if one looks up at the crown of the lime trees in the cemetery in early summer, you might see a light orange haze. This will be a myriad of Lime Hawk-moths.

The Lime Hawk-moth is found primarily in the southern half of England and in Wales. With warmer weather, they are beginning to be seen in Yorkshire. They are commonly found in parks, gardens and woodland. They are on the wing during May and June on warm nights. They rest during the day to avoid predators.

The life span of the adult moth is up to 5 weeks. They do not feed during the adult stage; the main task is finding a mate. Once mating has completed, the female will deposit the eggs on leaves and will drop some eggs in grasses during flight. Within 3-4 weeks, small caterpillars will emerge from the eggs (June-July). When first hatched, they are green with oblique yellow stripes along each segment and will have a red-brown horn at the tail. As they feed on the lime tree leaves, they will increase in size and shed their skins several times. By late August, the caterpillars will be large and distinctive. It is green with pale streaks on each segment and has a bluish horn at the tail end. In late summer, the caterpillar will fall out of the trees looking for a place to hide and pupate. They change colour during pupation to a dull grey or purple. They are most often encountered during this stage. They will burrow into soft ground and remain there until April.



When the moth emerges from the chrysalis, the wings vary in colour from light pink/orange to red/brown. The wings have a distinctive ragged cut out at the tail edge which helps it to

stay hidden amongst the foliage. The top and base of the wing greyish-green. The wings are held at a right angle to the body. The wing span is up to 80 mm.

The female is usually larger and less strongly marked, having a brownish forewing ground colour. She emerges from the chrysalis with fully formed eggs and has a straight, fat abdomen. The male forewing ground colour is decidedly green. He has a slender, strongly curved abdomen.

With lime trees aplenty, and a fair amount of grasses, hopefully, we may have the flutter of a pink/orange haze over our lime trees on a warm, early summer night.

Sources: www.wildlifetrusts.org; uksafari.com/limehawkmoth.htm; ukmoths.org.uk

Images: wikimedia.org; abugblog.blogspot.com

A New Addition

Brian Sylvester

Following their visit last year, we have been kindly gifted a new tree by **Linda and Graham Sanderson**. This arrived last month and was duly planted together with a commemorative plaque.

It came about following the investigative work carried out by Linda and Graham into their family background which resulted in them tracing **Mary Elizabeth Faircloth** having been buried in Newtown Road Cemetery in 1923. As with so many 'residents', there's quite a story to be told and we've asked this to be passed on in order that it may be added to our ever-growing database. So, as they say, watch this space!



The tree they've kindly donated is a Japanese Rowan (*Sorbus Commixta*), and this particular species is described by the Royal Horticultural Society as follows:-



Embley is an erect medium-sized deciduous tree with pinnate leaves composed of up to 17 lance-shaped, finely pointed leaflets turning bright red and orange in autumn. Flowers creamy-white; fruits glossy scarlet.

This will become a beautiful addition to our arboreal collection.

There's no recorded gravestone for Mary so, as mentioned above, the Sandersons have arranged for a plaque to be placed alongside the gift. Both may be viewed in an open space in the north-west of the cemetery, now looking very attractive amongst the snowdrops.

History Group Report

Ros Clow

What do we do? We gather up information about those people buried in the cemetery, meeting about five times a year to discuss our progress

Sources: Group members volunteer to read the microfilm of the Newbury Weekly News held in Newbury Library. To date the years 1867, when the NWN started to 1879 have been allocated. Alan Vince and Sylvia Green have been stars in this area taking on and completing several years. They photocopy any death announcements or obituaries and for that matter other articles relating to our 'residents'.

Similarly one or two Friends search the British Library Newspaper Archive online for mentions of Newbury Cemetery and print items off.

Cemetery visitors offer their own research into their family history. And Group members, such as Sylvia Sellwood and Julia Radbourne, take away names for further research; maybe we only have a death announcement or an advert to start us off.

And most exciting our website brings us family historians from all over the world. Over Christmas we had contact from Australia and Canada. Sometimes they have photos they can send us as well as a write-up about family members who lived in Newbury.

Process: Having received this information any photos or certificates can go straight to Sylvia Green who puts them on the website as long as there is already an entry for that person. Any text is typed up ready to go on the website by Julie Goddard, and recently by a new volunteer, Margaret Barter. I print off all the information collected and this goes into a pile for filing (currently six inches high!). We have filing afternoons (we know how to live) where all the hard copy is filed alphabetically into Lever Arch files – now about 20 on a trolley in my office. At the same time as printing off, the data are sent to Sylvia Green for the web.

It is worth here explaining the limitations of the website. Brian Snook has completed entering all the Burial Registers which of course leaves us without the 'Missing Years' (before 7 October 1868 and between 1st October 1884 and 3rd January 1898). At the moment we can only add information to those listed in the burial register. All other information is loaded under the heading History Research Group (The Friends, Project Groups). This is not listed alphabetically or by date order but by the date it was added to the website. However the Google search bar on the Home Page will turn up everything on this long list directly.

Brian Snook will move on to entering the names from the Cemetery Burial Accounts, which Phil Wood photographed and Dave Clow has put into Drop Box (so available to all our researchers without having to have a printed copy). This will fill in the gaps left by the Burial Registers though it will still omit one or two. Recently we discovered that James Martin (murderer and suicide), who was buried at midnight by Coroner's order is not in the Account

Book as no-one paid for his grave. Eventually almost all the data will be linked to at least one individual buried in the cemetery.

Spreadsheet: Twice a year Dave and I update the Individuals Spreadsheet which is the index for the 20 Lever Arch files. It takes ages for all kinds of reasons. Here is an example:

The Durbidge Mystery

In the 'D' file we came across two record sheets for Durbridge (note spelling). One was for John (d. 1892) and his wife Emma (d. 1900), the other for Charlotte (d. 1876). Quite straightforward; all we had to do was enter the details on the spreadsheet –but- Charlotte was the wife of John and had died at the Rokeby Arms, and the researcher of John and Emma had written a query “Was this the landlord of the Rokeby Arms referred to in ‘Newbury Then and Now’ by Dr Nick Young”. We decided we had better check. There were no matches on any of the names in Free BMD or Ancestry, then we realised that the names on both forms (different researchers) had been mis-spelled so we started searching for Durbidge. This turned up John (rake and mopstick maker in Crookham) but his wife, also buried in the cemetery, was Henrietta (d.1915). We never found any mention of Emma anywhere!



Charlotte proved even more difficult. She was not mentioned in the 1871 census (five years before she died). Eventually a search on all the Johns and Charlottes living together in 1871 showed us such a couple were around and they lived at The Rokeby Arms. Eureka! Why could we not find them before? They are listed as Deaterage in the 1871 census. And was her John also buried in Newtown Road Cemetery? It seems not. He died in Kingsclere and doesn't feature in the Berkshire Burial Index so presumably is buried in Hampshire – so of course is of no interest whatsoever!

Cemetery Notice Boards

John Gardner

The notice board is being updated each time I am sent an article but at the moment the page sizes are restricted to A4. The larger window, A3 size, has a crack and I have removed it and I am now in the process of replacing the plastic window and fitting hinges and a waterproof seal. Once this is done I think larger notices will be easier for viewers to read from outside the boundary railings.

I would also like to place a heading on the notice board. I think this will have to be painted directly onto the wooden frame. Any suitable design suggestions would be welcome.