



Newsletter 5

Autumn 2012

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Chairman's Chatter

Brian Sylvester

Dear Friends... Or, (as I recently learnt from the TV programme "QI") should I be saying "Dear Fellow Taphophiles"? Looking up Taphophilia on the web I found it to be the love of cemeteries and funerals, and those of us involved with the Newtown Road Cemetery have certainly found it can be a very compelling pastime.



Summer flowers flourish in the uncut grass

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find details of our forthcoming A.G.M. - now don't duck for cover! I know how boring these can be and how one avoids them to ensure not being "lumbered" with a job. So let me hasten to assure you, we intend making this the shortest AGM ever, and that all the current officers are prepared to stand again. So, unless you are particularly keen to become further involved, you won't be high-jacked.

Another good reason for attending, besides meeting and sharing with other Friends, is that we are to have a talk by the Town Council's Grounds Maintenance Officer, Steve Attrill. He will be extolling the virtues of our very own Nature Reserve in Newbury, reporting on the progress that is being made by the flora and fauna we have, and giving us tips of what to look out for. Fascinating stuff!

And I take this opportunity to thank the Mayor, Councillors and Council Staff for their continuing support, encouragement and guidance: it's such a help.

Work in all departments is cracking ahead and the year has revealed some extraordinary finds. The History, Nature, and Monuments-recording Groups have all made considerable progress; and our web-site just gets better and better (have you looked at it recently?). We are most fortunate to have these teams beavering away and we owe them our grateful thanks. Their reports, together with one on the very successful Heritage Weekend (and grateful thanks to all making that possible), may be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

the Council to allow growth in certain areas because they don't want to disturb the habitat of invertebrates and other wildlife that enjoy this space. We applaud this, of course, and where some clearing is required to read monument inscriptions we try to keep any disturbance to a minimum.

We are still making steady progress in spite of challenges that confront us from time to time. We are using Mrs Pattison's book as an index to the graves but there are occasional, inexplicable, omissions of graves which requires some creative thinking to make additional entries to our lists. We are determined to record every visible monument.

Our aim is to complete all of Group 1 graves, partly because these are the easiest to find, being either side of the main peripheral path (Path 1). We will then have to plunge into depths of the cemetery to cover the next group of graves which hasn't been decided yet. These will require observational skills that are presently being honed to a high standard in Group 1. Due to the complexity of the numbering system devised by Mrs Pattison it requires a systematic approach and keen eyesight to follow the numbering order and match it to the monuments. This is not a criticism; the layout of the cemetery is very picturesque but is far from being a recorder's dream and it must have been a huge challenge for her to organise.



Discover Newbury weekend in the cemetery.

We were open both Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September with 15 Friends being on duty between two and 10 hours each. For the first time since we started Open/Welcome Days we had warm sunny weather which probably boosted the total of 87 visitors.

Maureen Hudd and Wendy Coldwell led their first Introductory Tours, all of which were well received. Ros Clow lead the new 'Angels, Artists and Authors' on both afternoons, Sunday afternoon always seems to be the favourite time to do guided tours.

There were two exciting developments. Great-great grandchildren of William Corden The Younger (painter to Queen Victoria) came on the AAA tour and Nick Corden signed up as a Friend



The great-great grandchildren of William Corden the Younger at his grave.



Visitors on the Discover Newbury Weekend viewing the cemetery maps looking for graves.

and has promised lots of new photographs, paintings and other memorabilia as well as a write up from the family perspective in the not too distant future. There are some exciting stories here.

And a Fewtrell grave was found which highlighted that Mrs Pattison had missed out one of the rows near the Chapel; not surprising when you consider her mammoth undertaking to record all the monumental inscriptions.

Several other visitors were able to locate graves for the first time and most say they will come back and tidy their graves up.

We had several visitors from Newbury's twin town Eeklo in Belgium and they shared some different and promising ideas on graveyard management.

History Research Group

Ros Clow

Things go on as normal so I thought it might be interesting to give more detail about what normal is!

Members of the group meet about once every two months, an informal meeting usually in our or the Chairman's home, although we did have a meeting in the Cemetery Chapel in the summer. The usual turn-out is about 12 members.

Everyone has a chance to say who or what they are researching and the others chip in if they know anything relevant, especially those in the group who have lived all their lives in Newbury – a great resource. We might choose to research one of our own ancestors, or a particular grave stone that took our eye or follow up an obituary or funeral report in the Newbury Weekly News. Having decided who to research a form is completed which then becomes the basis of the system. Each form is put into a plastic 'punch pocket' and filed alphabetically by surname in the, now, seven lever arch files kept at 30, Priory Road. The filing is often done at the end of the meeting. Copies of certificates, photos, and other news articles are put in the appropriate pocket.

We are very lucky that Julie Goddard has volunteered to type all the newspaper articles ready to go on the website, so they can be clearly read.

About three times a year Dave and I go through every single record and update our Excel spread-sheet which is then sent to all members of the History Group and Maureen Hudd, the FNRC secretary. By June there were 573 records on the spread-sheet. So if someone contacts us through the website or at an event we can check whom we already have information on and share it with them.

Also gradually Sylvia Green and I are putting this research on to the website; proofreading it as we go.

So if you are still awake and you'd like to know more please email raclow@ntlworld.com and I will send you the spread-sheet and/or the Record Form. If you have ancestors in NRC and you haven't filled in a form they may not be on the list, unless someone else has filled in the form for you. It would be shame if they dropped through the net!

If you would like to be on the History group circulation list, let me know and if you would like to come to the next meeting it is on Thursday 1st November, to plan for the Welcome Day on the 4th, as well as to share progress reports. The venue is decided nearer the time, depending on numbers attending.

Nature News

Rita Gardner

A follow-up botanical survey was commissioned by Newbury Town Council in late May. The diversity of plants has increased with the new grass cutting schedules. Some less common vetches have appeared.

Steven Attrill, Grounds Maintenance Officer, will be talking at our AGM In October. He will be able to answer questions The Friends may have about the management plan for the cemetery.



Fungi growing in the autumnal cemetery

The lime trees along the west boundary of the cemetery are to be pollarded in the near future. The top branches are becoming too thick and are in danger of breaking off and damaging the health of the trees.

Progress is being made on completing the permanent nature notice board for the cemetery.

James Young - A Victorian Soldier

Sylvia Sellwood

James Young was born in Newbury in 1823. In 1858 at the age of eighteen he enlisted in 'The Buffs'. He remained in the Army for twenty one years during which time he saw service in many parts of the British Empire.

He was in India for two and a half years where he was at the Battle of Punnier (1843) one of the shortest battles in history lasting less than twenty four hours. For this he received the Bronze star of India. After this, his regiment was in Ireland for two years and Malta for three. In November 1854 they wintered in Greece before taking part in The Crimea War. He was at the Battle of Sevastopol for which he received the Crimea Medal with the Sevastopol Clasp and the Turkish Medal.

His regiment was recalled to Malta and then spent two and a half years in Cyprus before returning to India (Calcutta). In 1859 he spent six months in Canton, China stationed at Dumdum returning to England in 1861. The battalion was then stationed at The Wellington Barracks in The Tower of London for two years before moving to Aldershot in 1863.

He was discharged in 1863 with five good conduct medals, the medals already mentioned and a Medal for Good Conduct and Long service with a gratuity of £5. He also had an Army Pension.

He was never Court Marshalled but had been entered in the Regimental Defaulter book three times.

By 1881 he was living in Chapel Street, Thatcham with his wife Eliza who had been born in Dorset. She died in 1886 and is buried in Thatcham. In the 1891 census he is living in Westcombes Bridges, Newbury with his second wife Anne Eliza and three daughters, Irene, Gertrude and Daisy. Gertrude died in 1902 aged 12 years and is buried with her father.

During his time in the Army he was an officer's servant and when he retired was given a silver goblet as mark of respect by the Colonel. This was mentioned in his obituary in the NWN which also said that he was well known as a waiter and a familiar figure in the Cricket Ground.

The History of the Buffs

Raised in 1665 as the Holland Regiment, and absorbed into the standing army of Charles II - although the lineage can be traced back to 1572 and the 'trained bands' of men from the city of London serving in Holland to free the United Provinces from Spanish domination. (Bands which formed the nucleus of the Holland Regiment) This ancient link gave the regiment the privilege of marching through the City of London "Drums beating, colours waving and bayonets fixed". In 1669 they became known as the Prince of Denmark's Regiment. 1747 saw

the name "Buffs" come into popular usage from the colour of the facings of the uniform - becoming part of the official title by 1751 as "The Buffs" or 3rd Regiment of Foot. A second battalion of the regiment was operational 1803-1815, 1857-1881, 1881-1949.

History extract © North East Medals 2007

www.northeastmedals.co.uk/british_regiment/buffs_royal_east_kent_regiment.htm

Website Report

Paul Thompson

I am busy making changes to the website to include the good work of the Memorial Recording Group on the burial pages and to add in links from individual's pages to the memorial database and other external links outside of our website, such as the Commonwealth War Graves site and the fantastic West Berkshire Memorials website by Phil Wood. (www.westberkshirerwarmemorials.org.uk)

As our transcribers add new entries from the burial registers, so we are able to add details of the research about those individuals by the History Research Group. Once the burial registers have been fully transcribed (we are just over halfway at the moment) we then have to add what information we have from the missing years that no registers seem to exist for. This is being obtained from the grave memorials, Workhouse records, Funeral receipts, obituaries etc.

The site is continually growing and it is a collaborative process involving many people and I am grateful for all their assistance. I hope to add some of the new features during the autumn including a more comprehensive search facility. All changes will be noted on the website news section.

The Tramp's Ball

Brian Sylvester

As Friends of the Cemetery, we really appreciate the support we receive from the Mayors of Newbury, particularly Arthur Johnson.

Well here's a chance to combine a repayment and have a jolly good time too. Arthur is organising a Charity Tramps' Ball at the British Legion, Pelican Lane, Newbury on Saturday, 20th October (8pm).

Tickets are only £10 each and that includes a fish-and-chip supper! (A vegetarian option is also available so no excuse.)

Prizes will be awarded for fancy dress, and the proceeds will be donated to the da Vinci Robot Appeal and the Mayor's Benevolent Fund.

Why not get up a group and come along for some great fun? Tickets are available from the Town Hall or the British Legion.

Hope to see you there.