



Friends of  
Newtown Road Cemetery

# THE FRIENDS OF NEWTOWN ROAD CEMETERY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010

The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, c/o 93 Old Newtown Road, Newbury, RG14 7DE Newsletter 1  
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## Welcome from the Chair

**Elizabeth Capewell**

Welcome to our very first Friends' newsletter. We aim to supplement our regular e-mail updates with two newsletters a year.



*Spring flowers arrive in the  
Cemetery*

Digging the foundations for a new group and project is never easy as the hard work doesn't always show tangible results but it is good to use the Newsletter to highlight our achievements so far, even before the cemetery has been opened. The July gathering, and the AGM, and the displays at the Town Hall and Corn Exchange showed the enthusiasm amongst local people for this wonderful historic and natural space and the affection they have for it. Of the special interest groups that were started, the history group has really taken off and a few of the interesting discoveries are reported here. Another attempt will be made to mobilise the nature group in May. The hard work of various Friends has produced all the systems for finances, membership, partnership and administration that

take up so much time but easily go unnoticed. We have also linked up with other local groups and are represented on the West Berks Heritage Forum.

It has been my privilege to get to know so many interesting Newbury people, to learn about and visit other Victorian cemeteries and I hope you will continue to support the Friends as we develop our activities in the coming year.

## General Progress Update

One of our Friends, artist Karen Wells, very kindly created a number of logos to represent us. Thank you to our members who provided their feedback and comments on the shortlist of logos Karen produced. The final logo is displayed on the front page of this newsletter. A huge thank you to Karen for her time and skills: it is much appreciated.

To-date we have made five grant applications to cover activities and items which the Town Council are unable to provide. Three of our applications have been successful and have raised £2,500. This will provide a notice board, sited in the cemetery, to keep people informed of our activities and two interpretation boards: one detailing the key points of historical interest in the cemetery; the other covering the wildlife to be found there.



We would like to thank Newbury Town Council for £500 for the notice board and Greenham Common Trust and The Englefield Trust for £1,000

each which will provide the interpretation boards.

We also appreciate

Newbury Town  
Council's support



and assistance in the printing and distribution of this newsletter.

BBC Radio Berkshire visited the cemetery back in October and, as well as interviewing our Chair, Elizabeth Capewell, on the eve of our first AGM, they also created a beautiful photo slideshow of the cemetery on their website. Visit it at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/berkshire/hi/people\\_and\\_places/newsid\\_8298000/8298832.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/berkshire/hi/people_and_places/newsid_8298000/8298832.stm).

New committee member Paul Thompson has very kindly agreed to create a website for us. The address will be [www.frcnewbury.org.uk](http://www.frcnewbury.org.uk).

## *History Group update*

### **Ros Clow**

This group was formed to research the history of the cemetery and our initial findings attracted a lot of interest at the Friends meeting in July.

The group now stands at 13 core members and has met four times so far. Members typically choose what they investigate or, if willing, can be allocated subjects.

Dave Clow is a keen genealogist and was able to give a presentation and reference guide to all members on how to conduct this type of research and what resources are commonly available to us all.

Many different threads of research are being pursued with the intention of compiling a comprehensive history of the cemetery itself, case studies of many of the people buried there and

aspects of the wider history of Newbury which touch on the cemetery.

As more and more research is undertaken and compiled it will be used to provide material for notice boards, leaflets, presentations and maybe even a book in the future.

If you want to be part or have any information to offer please contact Ros on 01635 40188 or [raclow@ntlworld.com](mailto:raclow@ntlworld.com).

## *New Cedar Tree Planted*



This Atlantic cedar sapling was planted in March 2010 in memory of a local person. The severe winter was hard on the older cedar trees in the cemetery: one tree lost three branches when they broke under the weight of the snow.

## *Past lives: links with Newbury Racecourse*

### **Ros Clow**

Hopefully this is the first of many articles about people who are buried at Newtown Road cemetery. If you know more please get in touch.

### *John Staples (1824–1900)*

When the History Group started we were joined by Friends who had already researched family members. One of these is Frances Bale who lives in Caversham. John Staples was married to her 3xgreat aunt, Mary Miller, the daughter of William Miller of Speen Nursery, in 1849. John was in his mid-50s when Mary died of cancer in April 1881.



*John Staples with his second wife, Helen*

He went on to marry again, in 1882, in Portsmouth to Helen Quinton, who was 10 years younger than him. John and Helen are both buried in the

cemetery, to the left of the path between the lodge and the chapel.

John served in the Royal Berkshire Yeomanry Cavalry for 43 years and was well known around the county for his dedication. His confectionery shop at 32 Northbrook Street provided outside catering for all kinds of events such as weddings and Hunt Balls and race meetings. After his death and until World War I Staples provided all the catering for the Racecourse, which opened in 1905.

### *H. K. Hauser (1869–1914)*

My first research was to inspect the burial record still kept at Shaw cemetery. This lists all the burials in Newtown Road cemetery since 1917. I was very surprised to find that in 1963 the remains of H. K. Hauser had been exhumed and reburied in the German War Cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffs. He had died in 1914, obviously near Newbury. Dave and I began to search the equivalent of the War Graves Commission in Germany, but to no avail. Then we found a Hauser in the UK 1911 census living in Holland Road, Brixton, London. He had been born in Hamburg, Germany, but was now aged 41, had been married for one year to Florence (aged 22) from Leeds and had a one-year-old daughter Constance, as well as a servant. In 1911 Charles Henry Hauser was a head waiter in a restaurant.

How did he come to Newbury during World War I? His death certificate provided the answer. He had died, aged 45, from pneumonia in 'The Hospital, Prisoner of War Camp, Racecourse, Greenham', on the 5th December 1914. We do not know when he came to England; he had anglicised his name, presumably from Hans Klaus, married and had a good job but because he was German he was transported to Greenham and interned.

## *Local Layabouts!?*

At the AGM I asked if anyone knew what to call the people who are buried in a cemetery, especially our cemetery. David Hickman suggests 'layabouts'! Any other ideas?

## *Ms Jenny Saady*

Does anyone know this lady? Apparently she is also researching William Corden the Younger (Queen Victoria's painter, who is buried in the cemetery) through the Royal Collection Trust at Windsor Castle and the curator wants to avoid duplication of work.

## *Join us and help to bring the cemetery to life!*

### *As a Friend:*

- You will receive our twice-yearly printed newsletters and regular email updates.
- You will be able to attend our special events, such as the forthcoming history group update on Wednesday 26th May (see below for details).
- You will be able to have your say in our plans by attending and voting at our AGM on Wednesday 6th October.

You have a choice of fee: £5, £10 or £15 or more. Please send a cheque payable to '**The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery**' to our Membership Secretary, Jane Burrell, Walnut Tree Cottage, Oxford Road, Donnington RG14 3AG; Tel: 01635 46497.

## *Dates for your Diary*

### *Sunday 25th April*

A Tour of Nunhead Cemetery, London.

Contact Elizabeth Capewell for more details.

### *Wednesday 26th May*

Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery: presentation by Ros Clow and others from the history group on research findings.

Newbury Town Hall; 7.15pm

### *Saturday 31st July*

National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM at West Norwood Cemetery, London.

### *Wednesday 6th Oct*

Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery AGM; Newbury Town Hall; 7.30pm

## *Comments and Questions*

Please let us know if you have any comments, questions or suggestions about our plans and activities.

## *Visit to two cemeteries in Oxford*

### *John Gardner*

In November 2009, four of the Friends visited two cemeteries in Oxford: Ss Mary & John in Cowley Road and Holywell in St Cross Road. Both are about 20% of the size of our Newtown Road Cemetery, and present fascinating examples of cemetery preservation. Both cemeteries no longer receive new burials and were in danger of deterioration. Now they have been given new leases of life with the help of Friends' groups. Ss Mary & John has been rescued from a derelict wasteland that had become a haven for drug addicts and vagrants and unsafe for the general public (visit their excellent website for the full story of how the site has been transformed: [www.ssmjchurchyard.org.uk](http://www.ssmjchurchyard.org.uk)).

Holywell was in a more fortunate position and the task of the Friends was to help formulate a management plan for controlling the undergrowth



*Ss Mary & John Churchyard, Cowley, Oxford: a quiet and tranquil place for all to enjoy.*

whilst retaining the unique wildlife. In both cases the Friends sought expert help, raised funds, carried out renovation and set in place management plans. Ss Mary & John have a very detailed plan covering activities in small areas of the cemetery; Holywell's is much more basic and involves partial grass cutting on a rotational basis. Next time you are in Oxford we recommend you make a visit to these two unique examples of our heritage. See if you can find Kenneth Grahame's tombstone!

## ***Friends' website***

### ***Paul Thompson***

The design of the friends' website is coming along nicely. I hope to have it up and running fairly soon. As always, it is good to have ideas from others as to what ***your*** website should contain.

All of the usual things are there as you would expect including pages for the newsletter archive, the nature and history groups and what the friends are up to. The site will also contain details

of every individual buried in the cemetery in a searchable database. As time goes on, research provided by the history group will be added to the individual's own page with pictures and documents where available.

I have already put some features in remembrance of the people buried in the Newtown Road Cemetery. The front page will hopefully include a list of all people buried 'on this day'.

Another section contains a 'zoomable' map of the cemetery. It is hoped that at a later date, I will be able to link the map to the database to provide another method of searching for individuals.

If you have any ideas or suggestions about what you would like to see on the website, please contact me at [paulgt@btinternet.com](mailto:paulgt@btinternet.com).