



Friends of
Newtown Road Cemetery

The Friends of

Newtown Road Cemetery

Newsletter

Spring 2011

*The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, c/o 93 Old Newtown Road, Newbury, RG14 7DE Newsletter 2
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The Passing of Two Friends

2011 has already seen the sad deaths of two Friends.

Catherine Penney died suddenly on January 10th of a brain tumour. Catherine joined the Friends in 2010 and immediately made her presence felt as a member of the History Research Group and in very practical ways at meetings and with the catering. She was a very sociable person who particularly enjoyed meeting and greeting people, as she did at the Remembrance Sunday Tours (November 2010) when she stalwartly stood at the cemetery welcoming visitors on a cold and wet day. She was also a regular helper at the Corn Exchange and had many entertaining stories about the animals and peacocks they kept at Hillview Farm, Headley.

A Few days later on January 19th, Honorary Friend **Margaret Pattison** died. Margaret was born on a Scottish island and moved to Wendan Road when her husband, a veterinary scientist, came to a job at Compton Laboratories. She later moved to be near her son in Shrewsbury where she died on 19th January aged 93. She kept in touch with Julie Goddard until December when she had a heart attack was moved into a home.

In the late 1970s, Margaret undertook a complete survey of the monumental inscriptions in Newtown Road Cemetery. This was published in 1982 and lodged in Newbury Library as well as family history societies.

This work made the task of locating graves and accessing details of inscriptions possible and FNRC could not have progressed so far and so fast without her efforts. It was in recognition of this work and its importance to FNRC that Margaret was made an Honorary Friend at our inception in October 2009. Margaret's books are still the only guide to where people are buried in the cemetery.

New Secretary & Treasurer

We have recently filled two posts on the Committee. Celia Pay joined us recently as Treasurer, bringing lots of previous experience of similar roles with her. Also Maureen Hudd has taken on the Secretary's role. Again Maureen is very experienced in this role with other organisations and brings a wealth of experience to this vital role.

Another recent addition to the committee is John Guild. He worked for the council in the 1970s as environmental officer which included care of the local cemeteries and so is very familiar with Newtown Road Cemetery.

We hope you will join us in welcoming them all to the committee.

General Progress Update

Over the past year, the Friends have been working with the Town Council to get the cemetery ready for re-opening to the public. No date has yet been officially given when the opening will take place, but of course everyone hopes it will be sooner

rather than later. The history Research Group have continued finding out about as many people buried in the cemetery as possible and documenting their lives. The Monuments Group are now busy recording all the information and locations of the graves as well as their general condition. Several monuments have been recently restored.

The Friends are also continuing to provide tours of the cemetery for certain events.

Remembrance Day Tours

The Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery are interested in re-building the life stories of the military personnel who died in the First or Second World Wars and conducted tours in memory of soldiers buried in Commonwealth War Graves at the cemetery on November 14th Remembrance Sunday. We are also endeavouring to learn more about other military personnel who died overseas and are remembered on family memorials at the cemetery. If you have information on any of the above that you could pass on to us we would be most grateful as we are planning to expand this event to include these people in future years.



Brian Sylvester leading a tour of the war graves on Remembrance Sunday. On the tour was Mayor Ian Grose.

Nature Notes

The ornithological survey identified 18 bird species present on the site during the late breeding season, 9 of which showed evidence of having bred on the site. The nest box scheme which has been started this year will provide a large number of predator-proof nesting areas for many species, this should increase the number of pairs present and the success of the broods they have. It is recommended that thought is given to increasing the number of native bushes and shrubs present on the site, this could provide additional nesting areas for Song Thrush, and berry bearing shrubs could provide an additional valuable autumn and winter food resource.

Bat boxes have been installed on the site, the first survey of these found no evidence of use by bats; however they had only been erected for a couple of months. It is recommended that further checks of the bat boxes are undertaken by a licensed bat worker during April.



Fungi can be found all over the cemetery

Walter Wilson

In 1882 a local man Walter Wilson died unexpectedly at the age of 32. As he was the

Master of a Freemasons' Lodge, the members at that time paid for a tombstone for him.

That had fallen into disrepair so last week a team of the present members of the Lodge visited the cemetery and carried out some restorative work under the direction of Joss Nankoo, a monumental mason who you may have seen in the Newbury Market Place on Saturdays.



Join us and help to bring the cemetery to life!

As a Friend:

- You will receive our 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.

Date for your Diary

Wednesday 19th May

Re-enactment of the 1847 Enquiry into the creation of Newtown Road Cemetery.

£2 for Friends £5 for non-Friends.

Newbury Town Hall; 7.15pm

Friends' website

Paul Thompson

I am pleased to announce that through the hard work of the Friends in the History Group, the first part of the new burial transcriptions project went back online in early December. This covers all record from March 1917 to the last full burial in November 2006 and each record shows a copy of the burial register page itself for validation purposes. The search facilities and the "On this day" page are now available again from the menu.

Currently, 2,527 records exist on the database out of over 7,500 that we know of in the Burial registers. We are working with Newbury Town Council and the Berkshire Record Office to obtain the two earlier registers from the BRO so that they may also be imaged and transcribed.

As always in transcription projects, errors can occur. If you find any errors on the database, please e-mail me at paulgt@btinternet.com with the details of the record and the error so that we can correct it as soon as possible.

As the website moves forward, we want to include more things that the Friends would like to see. If you have a page or feature you would like included, please get in touch and I'll do my best to make it happen if possible.