THE BROADSHEET

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THE TRIANNUAL VOICE OF THE FRIENDS OF BROADWATER AND WORTHING CEMETERY

HEADLINE CHANGE AND EARLY ISSUE

This issue of the FBWC Broadsheet magazine is being issued early so that all Friends and readers can note cemetery tour dates in their 2020 diaries and so that a notification can be made about alterations to our tour and meetings programme well in advance of the dates on which they would have been held or taken place. However, more importantly the early issue is to clarify the ramifications emerging as a result of the international Coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic, especially in respect of 'mass gatherings'.

CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The 39th Issue of the FBWC Broadsheet magazine was well on the way to completion with all of the planned content prepared, all of the page design completed and all of the headlines in place when the Coronavirus pandemic became a reality, impacting many aspects of day to day life throughout the country. One of the main recommendations was to avoid mass gatherings. As a consequence of high level national advice via the Government and the Chief Medical Officer your Committee have considered all of the prevailing issues and warnings and as a result we have, reluctantly, agreed to **CANCEL** the general meeting scheduled for 18.00 hours on Friday 27 March 2020 at the Town Hall's Gordon Room and also to **CANCEL** the cemetery tour scheduled for Saturday 4 April 2020, which was 'Worthing – A Seaside Resort' and to have been conducted by Sally Roberts. As regards the Clearance session at 10.00 on **Saturday 28 March 2020 this will go ahead as planned,** in the open air, two metres apart and without hand shaking. Decisions regarding other meetings and tours will be made in the fullness of time based on the national situation, to be notified via e-mail from our Secretary. To cheer us all up here is a picture of delightful cemetery primroses, photographed in our cemetery on Tuesday 17 March 2020. Spring has arrived!



SIX GREAT 2020 SEASON TOURS

After what seems to be a long wet winter and a seven month gap our Research Team have planned and researched a fascinating, indeed exciting, six (originally seven) tour programme for the forthcoming May to October 2020 programme. Hundreds of hours of meticulous researching have been completed and most of the material has been written-up for inclusion in the various accompanying booklets, which are in the course of preparation. This year all of tours are scheduled for Saturdays; as ever the first Saturday of every month between May and October inclusive, all commencing at the main entrance cemetery chapels at 11.00, with attendees recommended to arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the start time. The full list of tours, the relevant dates, the primary subject and the names of the tour guides appear below:

4 APRIL WORTHING: A SEASIDE RESORT – Sally Roberts
**********[The above tour has now been postponed]***********

2 MAY V.E. DAY 75TH ANNIVERSARY – Paul Holden

6 JUNE MORE INTERESTING INQUESTS – John Vaughan

4 JULY RESIDENTS OF LIVERPOOL TERRACE – Colin Reid

1 AUGUST LOCAL TRADERS – Pauline Reed

5 SEPTEMBER THE WORKHOUSE – Debra Hillman

3 OCTOBER THE TREE TOUR – Sally Roberts



[New cemetery security signs]

"WE'RE GONNA BUILD A WALL"

NO, not a quote by Donald J Trump but by Adur and Worthing Council! During the weekend of 8 and 9 February 2020 during the passing of storm Ciana (Ciara in some sources) a substantial tree in the far south western corner of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery blew down into Carnegie Road, in the process crushing part of the main flint-built perimeter wall. Fortunately, one might say unbelievably, no graves were disturbed. This was the scene on the following Monday morning. Carnegie Road was completely closed for a while. [All photographs contained herein and throughout by your Editor unless otherwise credited].





Full credit must be given to the Council and their contractors for their speedy response to the situation, which was quite serious. One of the fears of the Friends of the cemetery was that the wall might be rebuilt using different materials compared to the original but any fears were groundless as all of the old flints were recovered and re-used during the rebuilding. The rebuilding started almost immediately and the re-instatement was sympathetic and superb.

The main tree trunk and branches were sawn into segments and the smaller items were shredded. There appeared to be no shortage of manpower. The immediate area was fenced off to the public for safety reasons and in the views below we see the fencing and also the pile of flints and bricks that had been recovered from the fallen and crushed wall. The images also show the extent of the damage in terms of the length of wall affected.





By St Valentine's Day it was a case of 'work in progress' with all of the debris cleared and with building materials duly delivered. Most of the work was undertaken by JWP Concrete & Stone Restoration Ltd. supported by Connick Tree Care Ltd. One really did wonder whether the necessary skills to build a wall in near identical style to the Victorian example were available in this day and age but it soon became apparent that there was no cause for concern. By the 26 February 2020 the work had been completed and subject to eventual weathering the restoration looked quite magnificent and beyond expectations. See illustration overleaf.



The post storm damaged restoration outside looked grand but that still leaves the tree stump and roots inside. The picture below left shows how near the incident came to damaging graves and headstones, which was fortunate indeed.





Our Maintenance Coordinator Paul Robards has drawn attention to other large trees in the cemetery, which are leaning at alarming angles. If there should be another severe storm in the future the obvious has occurred to the Friends; if they were felled there would be severe damage to a large number of graves and headstones. This fact is illustrated in the photograph (above right), taken just inside the boundary wall at the southern end of the South Farm Road perimeter. This would be an expensive and time consuming operation but even to a layman these coniferous trees are clearly vulnerable. Time for the tree surgeon methinks or time to invoke Health & Safety legislation for the public good!

A SIGN OF GOOD IN-TENT !

No sooner had our cemetery tent dweller departed from the grounds after a notice to quit was posted with a real threat of having his ‘tent and belongings’ confiscated, than another tent appeared. [See Page 7 of the last Broadsheet, Issue 38, Autumn 2019 for full details of the previous occasion that tent erection as a permanent dwelling within the cemetery occurred].On this occasion the full process of removal took much longer. The second tent was pitched towards the eastern side of the cemetery and sure enough rubbish started to appear. Furthermore, and this is the disgusting part of the story, dog type ‘poo’ bags started to appear in the waste bin beside the central Friend’s Bench, a situation that could not be tolerated. One of the problems was finding anybody ‘at home’ during the day; see tent below left.





Fortunately when the site was revisited on 10 February 2020 the tent and personal belongings had all disappeared (above right). As said previously the Friends have sympathy with these presumably otherwise homeless folk but we simply don’t want a precedent to be the start of a ‘tent city’ within the boundaries of ‘our’ cemetery with the associated hygiene problems.

CHRISTMAS PARTY HIGHLIGHT

Although the Friend’s Christmas social gathering was not the best attended function ever, those present just crept into double figures and the event was very light-hearted and to that extent enjoyable. However the attendee who stole the show was the pub dog who spotted one of the Friends with a bag of crisps and little time was wasted by our four legged friend in trying to steal the crisps from a non-sharing individual. Everybody was highly amused.



FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP INCREASES

Our Membership Secretary Mary Pickett has confirmed that as of the date of publication there are now 102 fully paid up Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery. This is particularly encouraging as we enter our twelfth year of existence. Spread the word!

WONDERFUL DONATIONS

The Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery are always both pleased and grateful for all donations received because every penny is allocated to improving the cemetery, ranging from cemetery benches, grave restoration, plants and flowers, maintenance equipment, improvements to the entrance, signage, literature, informative booklets and a whole lot more.

In this issue I would like to personally thank on behalf of the Friends donations from Christina and Michael Fletcher from Ivybridge, Devon £50, a donation of £25 from Bob Grange and Rory the dog, plus a new membership and a donation of £21 from 92 year old Mrs Joan Taylor. Joan attended a cemetery tour last year but she found the journey too onerous. She wrote "Now it is time to become a member and show my appreciation of the pleasure you have given me." Well Joan I can, in return, say "Thank you so much for your generous donation and it is a pleasure for us to have you as a Friend".

OTHER CEMETERIES - PIONEER STYLE IN THE OLD WILD WEST



This image captured by Chris Davis shows a cemetery 'wild west' style at Dagget, near Barstow in California, U.S.A. Passing these crude marker crosses is a Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train with four locomotives. Although still open such cemeteries are normally called 'Pioneer Cemeteries' with the oldest graves dating back to the 19th Century.

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE SCENES

There has, of late, been a worrying decline in the numbers attending our monthly Maintenance and Clearance sessions held on the last Saturday of every month all year round. One of our primary activities is maintaining the cemetery, especially the parts that the Council cannot or do not reach. On a good day we could expect nearly 20 Friends to turn-up at 10.00 on the appointed date for a two hour workout but at an individual's own pace. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a 'before and after' situation or discovering a long lost grave beneath the undergrowth. There is a great atmosphere and as said many times in this tome Friends can work alone if they prefer or join a group for a couple of hours. Activities can range from the light, as in removing ivy from headstones, to heavy, such as lopping larger tree branches and chopping down brambles. Of course the weather plays its part and although we have always done well with the prevailing weather a couple of Maintenance sessions have been rained-off during the past few months. Below are some amusing maintenance scenes



[Janet Green has her arms full!]



[A mega load - chapel bound]

As 10.00 approaches on 28 December 2019 half a dozen Friends have already turned-up, including your Editor/photographer. How many more would arrive and get a seasonal mince pie from the cemetery Maintenance Coordinator, in the shape of Paul Robards who is wearing his Father Christmas hat?



Below is another happy scene later in the day with cuttings and prunings ever growing.



Unfortunately although the Council were really ‘on the ball’ when it came to perimeter wall repairs and we have already complemented them in their efforts, which were impressive, what has been most unimpressive is the failure to remove mountains of waste and cuttings beside the cemetery Chapels that has been accumulating for many months. It is discouraging to spend hours clearing the cemetery when the material cleared is not disposed of. We are pressing for action but there seems to be a complete lack of Council pro-activity!

The problems started with yet another organisational change within the Council, the creation of a ‘Bereavement Services’ Department and aligning duties with the Rangers. Below is a photograph of the growing pile of green waste, which is becoming an eyesore. Our Chairman has been vigorously pursuing the matter and a (further) meeting is planned. [See Page 17].



On a happier note below are ‘before and after’ images following Clearance in November .



[Left before. Below after.]



[30 November 2019.]

TREASURER: FBWC FINANCES

Your Treasurer (and Editor) is delighted to report that the overall financial situation of the Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery remain in a healthy state with sufficient cash assets to be able to fund a number of projects during the current accounting period. Even before the income generating season we have received 102 membership fees and some generous donations mention on Page 7 herein.

At the date of publication of this issue the Friends now have the sum of £6,499.13 deposited at HSBC Bank and a rather lowly £9.98 in our two cash floats, giving a grand cash total of £6,509.11. There are no other assets of value, all equipment having been written-down to zero due to depreciation. There are no debts, loans or other liabilities. Our revised tour programme starts on Saturday 2 May 2020 as does our further accumulation of funds, which in the fullness of time will be used for worthwhile projects within the cemetery's boundary walls.

SUSSEX BY THE SEA WEEKLY SURVEY

By Carole Manning

The substance of this article was extracted from a local publication dated 19 March 1913.

The possibility of being buried alive is a very present terror to many good people and the existence of a Society for the Prevention of Premature Burial shows how the minds of some are exercised in that direction. Perhaps the officials in that organisation are in possession of information which justifies a continuation of their operations; but most of us have a consciousness that proper precautions are ordinarily taken. This son of Sussex offers the accompanying case of local origin as proof of this contention. [Written in 'period' style-Ed.]

There died at East Preston Workhouse a young woman of twenty five. To those in attendance upon her matter admitted of no doubt. But it was suspected by relatives that death had not actually occurred and there was something in the external appearance that appeared to support their view. There were none of the customary indications of death, for the colour was maintained in the cheeks and there was a total absence of clamminess and rigidity of the limbs. The relatives were fortified in their contention by the remembrance that an aunt of this very same girl once lay in a trance for six weeks, and is alive up to this very day. In order that the natural distress of those immediately concerned might be effectively allayed, the Master of the Home called special attention of the Medical Officer to the matter and that gentleman fortified himself with the opinion of another properly qualified medical man.

Acting in association, these two gentlemen made a most minute examination of the supposed corpse, applying all sorts of tests to determine whether there was any possibility of life being still existent and the ordinary functions in a state of temporarily suspension. But the opinion at which they at last arrived was that there could be no question whether that death had actually taken place; and I am given to understand that the anxious mother herself was fairly well satisfied in the end. Accordingly the burial took place in due course.

PAUL'S PAGES

Our Maintenance and Clearance Coordinator Paul Robards continues his Fauna and Flora series, all examples being found in Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery.



SNOWDROPS: The delicate white flower is always a pleasure to see after the winter gloom, although some species flower in early spring. There are a large number of species of this well established plant, which has linear leaves and single small white drooping bell shaped flower with six petals. [All photographs in this feature by Paul Robards].



PRIMROSES (Primula Polyantha): A universal favourite with a name that literally means 'first rose'. The plant is an herbaceous perennial with a low carpet of pale deep yellow flowers, which are normally seen from March until May and often earlier. There are pink and purple variations. Primroses are normally found in woods and hedgerows. They were once heavily picked for medical purposes but that is now an illegal practice.



LESSER CELENDINE (Ficaria verna): One of the first heralds of Spring, a low hairless perennial with solitary glossy yellow flowers, which are similar in appearance to buttercups. The Lesser Celendine flowers from February until May; the leaves being dark green and heart shaped. The plant is found in grasslands, open woodlands and hedgerows.

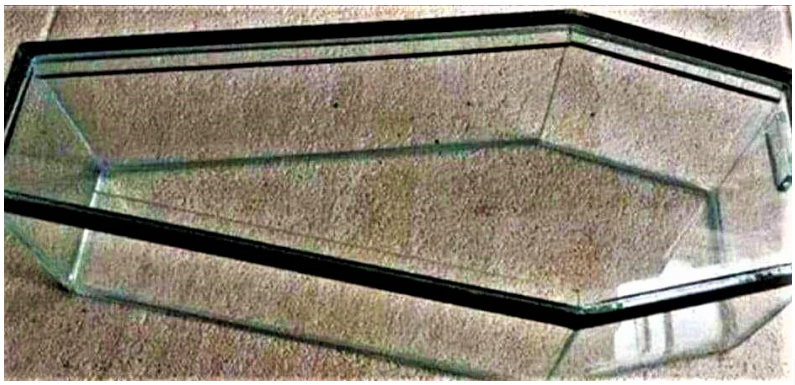


COMMON LUNGWORT (Pulmonaria officinalis): A roughly downy perennial with red, pink and blue bell shaped clustered flowers. The leaves contain silicic acid, which was used to treat all manner of lung ailments. Flowering between late February and May the plant can be found in woods, hedge banks and road verges [and cemeteries! Ed.].

CEMETERY HUMOUR RETURNS !

Reported in 'The Metro' national free paper during December 2019 was the fact that the traffic police in Wales were trying to trace the owners of a hearse that had been abandoned on the A55 dual carriageway. A police spokesman said "It's not often we find an abandoned hearse but thankfully there were no passengers in the back!

Questions have been asked as to whether glass coffins are increasing in popularity:



[Photo: courtesy Peter Marsh]

However in response a spokesman said "that 'remains' to be seen"!!

Here are some wonderful and **REAL** headstone inscriptions:

.....

I came here without being consulted and I leave without my consent.

She always said her feet were killing her but no one believed her.

Damn it's dark down here.

If you can read this you are standing on me.

Now I know something you don't.

I've finally found a place to park.

Here lies John Yeast – pardon me for not rising.

I will NOT be right back after this message.

Go away – I'm asleep.

.....

A man on a FBWC tour asked how many people were buried in Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery. The tour guide replied "All of them".

How do you get into a locked cemetery? With a skeleton key!

I went a funeral and the undertakers came to the cemetery with the coffin and then promptly went away before returning again! Apparently it was a dress rehearsal!

My ex-wife has just texted me "wish you were here". She does that every time she passes the local cemetery!

DAUGHTER OF A CENTENARIAN - A SUSSEX HERO

By Mary Pickett

Two of our long term Friends of the Cemetery and stalwart attendees to our Saturday tours, Vasant and Ann Shah, have passed on some information about Joan Strange. Joan was the daughter of Emily May Strange who featured in our very first cemetery tour in 2011, 'The Centenarians'. Ann Shah, in the course of her work in the 1960s, met Joan Strange who, together with her mother, worked for many years assisting refugees who came to Worthing to seek a better life. Joan has been hailed as a hero for her tireless enthusiasm looking after those who were less fortunate than herself.



[Joan Strange]

Joan was born in 1902 and grew up in Worthing with her parents and three siblings. Her father, George Strange, was a partner in the drapers firm of Smith and Strange, an established Worthing firm founded in 1797 by the Smith family. In 1914, when it was reported that the troops stationed at Shoreham Camp, who were destined to go and serve in the trenches, were short of blankets, the Strange family, who had no spare ones at home, took down their thick winter curtains and sent them instead. They also took in a Belgian family who had fled to Britain in the early months of the war.

Joan trained as a physiotherapist and first worked for two years at the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford before returning to Worthing where she built up a thriving practice in the town and the surrounding villages. In the 1930s many refugees, mainly Jewish, were fleeing the Nazi regime and Joan was one of the first to sign up to a committee to aid their plight, which became known as the Worthing Refugee Relief Committee. The members of the committee set about finding new homes for them and helped them to find jobs and to start their lives anew. A number of them stayed with Joan and her mother, often for several weeks at a time.

After the war Joan continued to take an active role in charitable work, being involved with sending Red Cross parcels to people in Germany who were suffering much hardship after the conflict. She became the driving force behind St Paul's European Relief Committee which collected food, clothes, medical necessities, packaged them up and sent them monthly to Germany over ten years. In the 1950s Joan became greatly involved with assisting refugees who had settled in Worthing, offering them friendship and support.

She received many grateful messages of thanks. In World Refugee Year (1960) Joan and her mother, then aged 92, worked overtime in the kitchen of their house in Langton Road making marmalade and sausage rolls for refugees. Mr Strange had died in 1919 and Joan lived with her mother and looked after her until her death in 1968 at the age of 100. Emily Strange is probably the only person to have received two congratulatory telegrams from a British monarch. When the first arrived a spelling mistake was spotted; the word 'hundredth' lacked the second 'd'. Joan wrote and thanked her majesty for the telegram and the family compiled a letter to the Postmaster General saying that they wished to frame the letter but not with the 'Royal' mistake. The Postmaster General telephoned Buckingham Palace and was given permission to send a second, correct, one. They both remain a family treasure.

Ann Shah has shared an item she found at a 'bring and buy' sale some years ago. See below.



The fascinating item was a set of notelets which were decorated with seaweed, which had been pressed onto a card and covered with cellophane. On the back of the card it bears the words '*Seaweed Original. Made by refugees from real plants at Curwen House, Worthing'*. This was possibly made by a refugee that Joan helped in one of her many acts of charity!

NEW WASTE BINS DELIVERED

In the past few weeks new waste bins have replaced the older versions. The new bins are especially base weighted to add stability, a real bonus in recent storms. Paul Robards took the 'old and new' photograph below before the old ones were removed. History in the making!



WHAT A LOAD OF OLD RUBBISH!

On Page 3 of this issue your Editor **complemented** the Council on their prompt and efficient response to the cemetery boundary wall following the fallen tree incident as a result of storm Ciara. Credit where credit is due, so they say. Unfortunately in another aspect of our cemetery life their performance has been found wanting, creating a problem that has now been going on for many months. The problem has been clearing cuttings and green waste that has been deposited by the Friends beside the cemetery chapels during our clearance sessions.

In the past the removal of waste has worked extremely well with regular visits by the Council clearing the product of our efforts in cutting back undergrowth that the standard cyclical Council maintenance regime would not regularly be tackling. The problems started with organisational changes, the emerging role of the Rangers and the creation of a 'Bereavement Services' department. The Park Rangers have visited the cemetery and below is photographic evidence of occasional attendance but not apparently to clear rubbish! [See Pages 9/10].



[Photo: 31 December 2019]

The pile of rubbish has been growing month by month and has become a depressing eyesore. Our Chairman Debra Hillman has tried to move the situation forward but promises and deadlines have come and gone without any signs of action. She is shortly going to attend further meetings when the problem will be vigorously pursed. Below is the rubbish mountain.



MARIA LOUISA (ELDRIDGE) WOOD (1841 – 1926) By Wendy Ford

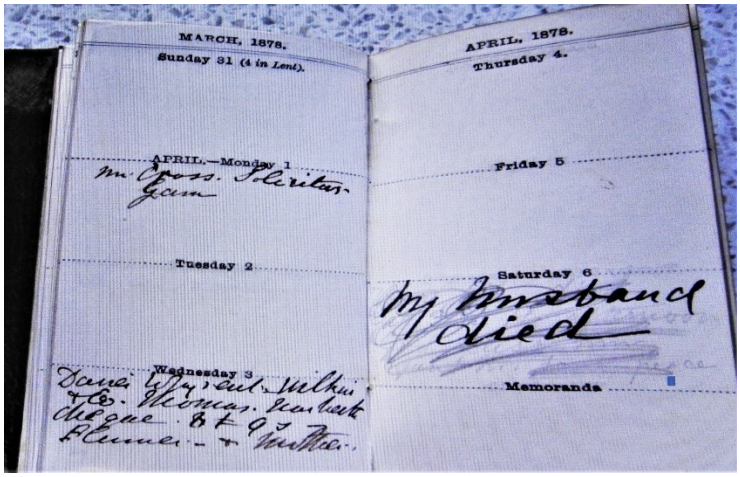
[Editor's note: Wendy Ford contacted the Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery because she had attended an antiques fair at Lyndhurst, Hampshire in the heart of the New Forest and acquired an 1878 diary, which had relevance to our cemetery. Wendy, who originally hails from London but who now lives in Bournemouth, has conducted her own research into the original diarist and has prepared the following article for the Broadsheet.]

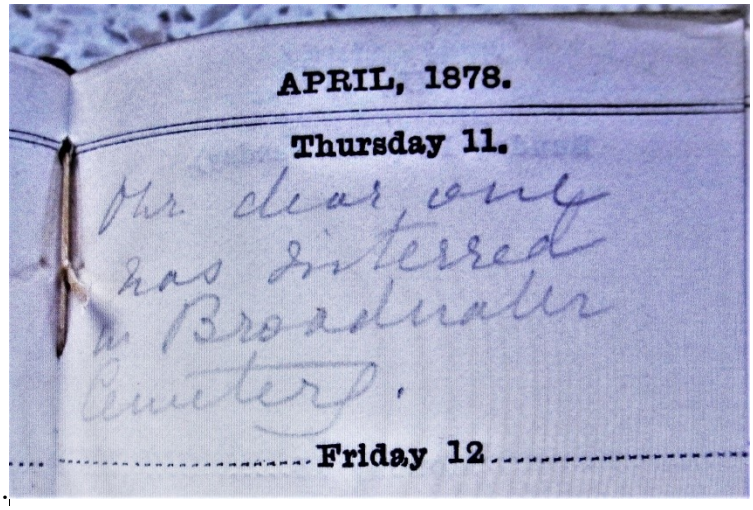
In 2015at an antiques fair I bought a small diary for the year 1878. There are very few entries. The diary is bound in brown leather and has a small green label presumably for the shop keeper who sold the diary, which reads 'G D S Kirshaw, book and music seller, The Library, Worthing'. It was priced 1/6d. The scattered entries include 'wrote Mother and Alex', amounts paid to tradesmen etc. and then, on 1 April 1878, 'Mr Cross, Solicitor'. On Saturday 6 April, in black ink the entry reads 'My husband died'. On Thursday 11 April 'Our dear one was interred Broadwater Cemetery.' The entries then peter out until on Friday 30 August with the entry 'Notice to quit Brookleigh'. In the Morning Post newspaper on Wednesday 10 April is the announcement 'WOOD – on the 6th last at Worthing, of acute laryngitis, Captain Harcourt Wood, eldest son of the late Colonel Charles Wood of Carleton Lodge, Pontefract, aged 57.' This notice was also published in the York Herald.


[The Capt. Harcourt Wood headstone.]

I believe that the diary belonged to Maria Louisa Wood who was the wife of Charles Watkins Harcourt Wood (also known as Harcourt Wood). This is what I have discovered. Maria was born in 1841 in Lockswood, Yorkshire. Her parents were Benjamin Dickson Eldridge (1805 – 1879), a solicitor's clerk who originally came from London, and Mary Ann (Brook) Eldridge (1801 – 1850). Maria married Charles Arthur Harcourt Wood (known as Harcourt) on 7 September 1864 at Holy Trinity, Tower Hamlets, London. On the marriage certificate both Harcourt and his father Charles were shown to be of the rank/occupation of 'Gentleman', although both had been officers in the British Army. The bride was 23 years old and the groom was 43. Maria and Charles' first child, Ethel, arrived in 1866, born in Filey, Yorkshire, followed by Charles in 1867 (born Pennally, Wales), twins Arthur and Alexander in 1868 (Tenby). Arthur died as an infant in 1869. Mabel was born in 1870 (Lampeter) and Maximilian in 1873 (Tenby).

In the 1871 census Harcourt and Maria were living in Lampeter, Wales, at Kilanow House with their four children. The family had four servants, a cook, a housemaid and two nurses to look after them. Maria's husband's occupation is described by the enumerator as 'landowner'. The year 1877 must have been traumatic for the family as on 28 April Harcourt's brother, Price, died, aged 52, and on 13 December Harcourt's father Charles (1790 – 1877) also died at his residence in Pontefract. The Yorkshire newspapers reported an 'unusual' funeral in some detail. The Colonel, who had been aide de camp to Wellington at Waterloo, had left written instructions as to how the funeral should proceed. It should take place at 08.00 hours, without pomp or show. No horses or mourning coaches were to be used and the coffin should be carried shoulder high. Placed in the coffin were the Colonel's many medals and his old Waterloo sword. Alexander Wood was named as his executor and his will was probated in February 1878. Harcourt (Maria's husband) was his only living child. As we know from Maria's diary, just two months after his father's death Harcourt also died. Below are the diary entries recording the death and burial of her husband.





Perhaps it was because of the relatively short period between the death of father and son that there was a long delay in settling Maria's husband's estate; 17 years. The Letters of Administration (apparently no Will was found) were eventually granted to Maria in 1895, when she was 50 years of age. This delay would probably have meant that Maria had little or no funds for all those years. Her own father died in 1879 so that there was no one from her own family to help her.

The probate for Maria's brother-in-law Price dragged on even longer, for 19 years, eventually being granted in 1896. At the time of her husband's death Maria was 34 years old and she had been married for 14 years and had five children between the ages of 5 and 12. Although there was money in the Wood family the outlook for Maria must have been daunting. In the 1881 census Maria and three of her children, Ethel, Mabel and Maximilian are living at 15 Seldon Road, Broadwater, which I believe was 'Brookleigh'. If this is correct then she must have sorted out the 'Notice to Quit' mentioned in her diary.

In 1891 Maria is at her late father-in-law's residence, Carleton Lodge in Yorkshire with the same three children, being cared for by five servants, a cook, a housemaid, a kitchen maid, a parlour maid and a valet. Next door lived a coachman and a footman. It was difficult to find Maria in the 1901 census but there was a Maria Wood living at 77 Earl's Court Road, Kensington. She was born in Yorkshire and of 'private means'. Her daughter appears to be working in the area as a nurse. In 1903 Ethel married Arthur Cole Lowry, a Naval Captain and a recipient of the Albert Medal (the equivalent of the George Cross), who in 1901 was a patient in Hailey Sanatorium, Henley.

Sadly Arthur died in the same year they were married. His address on the grant of probate was given as Bramshott Cottage, Liphook. Ethel was named as executor. In the 1911 census Maria is with her daughter Ethel at the Liphook address with Ethel being described as 'The Mistress of the House' and Maria as 'Mother of the Head of the House'. Their staff included a cook and a housemaid. They are both shown to be of 'private means'.

All of Maria's sons had exceptional careers in military service and became high ranking officers. Maria's son Maximilian was killed at Gallipoli in 1915. Maria's younger daughter, Mabel, appears to have been an invalid for most of her life and in census returns she is shown as 'boarding within doctors' households as their patient. Maria never married again and she died on 3 October 1926 aged 85. According to the probate notes Maria died at the Plage Hotel, Hyeres, France with her home address being given as Bramshott Cottage, Liphook.

Many questions remain unanswered, such as how on earth did the diary survive the passage of time? Who in the Wood family delayed probate on the estates for 17 and 19 years respectively? Ethel died in 1938 and so who had the diary in their possession between that year and 2015? Some questions will never be answered and any secrets will have died with the family members mentioned in this article. [Thanks for that Wendy – Ed.]

YOU CAN'T WIN THEM ALL!

Over the years we have been very fortunate with the weather but this was the sign posted on Saturday 29 February 2020, when our 2 hour Clearance session had to be abandoned.



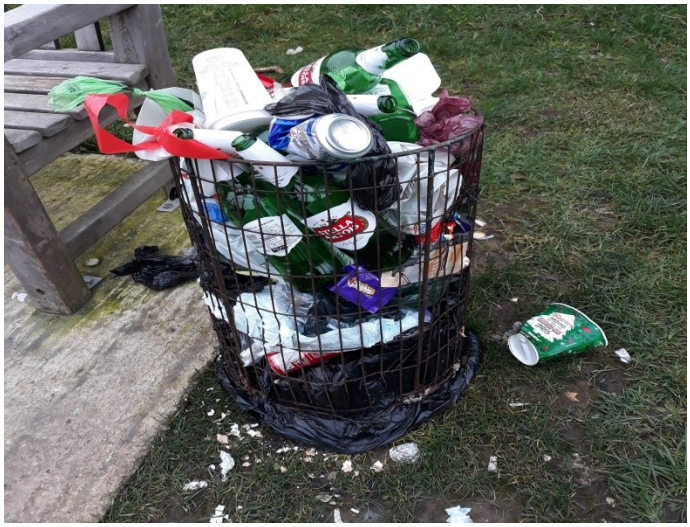
QUICK: TURN THE PAGE NOW! CENSORED - CEMETERY HORRORS



[Bird's Mess!]



[Dog's Mess!]



[Human Mess!]

MY VISIT TO BROOKWOOD CEMETERY

By John Stepney

I saw the 'Open Day' for Brookwood Cemetery advertised for a Friday in June 2019. Brookwood was a cemetery I had always wanted to visit as it contained thousands of miltary burials and memorials. Pam, my wife, and I left in plenty of time to get to Brookwood at opening time, the journey from Findon via Guildford taking about one hour. We arrived early and drove into the cemetery looking for a parking area, displays and stalls. We couldn't see any signage but did see some workers attending the well-manicured lawns. Winding the car window down I asked "please can you tell me where the parking area for the Open Day is"? You can park anywhere you like, on a road or in the car park but you will have a long wait as you are one week too early! The man I spoke to asked about my interest in the cemetery and I told him about my connection with Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery.

What an idiot I felt for not checking the date before leaving home, but as this was not the first time I have ever felt like or been called an idiot [No comment – Ed.] I did not concern myself too much. The following Friday, the correct date, I travelled to Brookwood alone as Pam was not keen and had been there the previous week. I arrived on time and followed the car parking signs. I had brought with me copies of the A to Z and the military burials in 'our' cemetery, which I gave to Kevin, the man I met on my previous visit. There were many exhibitions and displays on site, including a Spitfire aircraft from WW2, several re-enactment groups, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Friends of Brookwood Cemetery and stalls representing allied armies from both World Wars.

I visited all of the exhbits and various military displays, all of which were well represented. I then went on tour of the military parts of the cemetery, visiting medal winners from both world wars as well as interesting graves from our allies, including the U.S.A.



[

Above, John Stepney tending a U.S.A military grave at Brookwood.

At the American part of the cemetery I had the chance to clean and enhance one of the graves. I enjoyed the experience and a jar of sand was given to me to rub into the engraving on the stone cross. The sand was taken from Omaha beach, which was one of the beaches where the U.S. troops landed on D-Day. Every few years sand is sent to Brookwood for use on the crosses. This experience was rather moving for me as my father landed on Gold beach a few months after D-day.

THE HISTORY OF BROOKWOOD CEMETERY

The Cemetery was opened in 1854. The growing population of London could not support the need for burial sites as more land was needed for building houses. A site hearWoking was selected as there was plenty of suitable land and the railway was nearby, indeed a branch line was later constructed from the main line into the cemetery. As most of the burials were from London area a designated station was also built next to Waterloo station in Central London.

Planning for the cemetery began in 1848 by the London Necropolis Company and the first burial was on 13 November 1854 when the still born twins of Mr and Mrs Hore from Ewer Street in Southwark were buried. All the burials of the first two weeks were classified as paupers graves and therefore unmarked. The first burial with a memorial was on 25 November 1854 when Sir Henry Goldfinch was buried.

Brookwood was one of the few cemeteries that permitted Sunday burials. This proved to be a popular choice for the poor people of London who could attend a funeral without losing a day's work and hence pay. Also as theatrical performances were not allowed on Sundays this also proved a popular choice in that discipline for the same reason. In fact so many actors were buried at Brookwood that a section nearest to the station was designated specifically for actors.

Among notable people buried at Brookwood are a daughter of Horatio Nelson who died in 1890 and twelve Victoria Cross winners. In addition, three others who were awarded the Victoria Cross are remembered on other graves. The first VC winner was William Reynolds who was awarded the medal in 1854 at the Battle of Alma in the Crimean War. Seven of the medal winners were from World War 1.

The cemetery, which contains nearly a quarter of a million burials is divided into various sections, each separated by well maintained paths or roads. There are sections for various faiths, Chelsea Pensioners, Corps of Commissionaires as well as several railway companies. The major part of the cemetery, about 37 acres, is used for military burials. The cemetery contains 1,601 Commonwealth War Graves from WW1 and 3,476 from WW2. Also buried here are eight German soldiers from WW1 and forty six who died in WW2.

There are sections for our allies in both World Wars including Czech, Polish, free French and Canadian casualties. Another section is dedicated to the brave men from Poland, Canada and other countries who fought alongside the RAF. Included in the Canadian section are the graves of forty three soldiers who died of their wounds following the ill fated raid on Dieppe in August 1942.

BURIED? CREMATED? DISSOLVED!!!!

By John Vaughan

About three years ago disposing of the dead by effectively dissolving their bodies in a water based solution, a process known as alkaline hydrolysis, hit the headlines. As an eco-friendly alternative to burial or cremation bodies would be placed in a 'Resomater' (effectively a water tight metal tube) where water and potassium hydroxide would be introduced and heated to 306F or 152C. The solution wouldn't boil because the thick metal container was pressurised. This process is now legal in Canada and in 19 U.S.A. States.

The body tissue is dissolved after a period of about 90 minutes and this is followed by a washing process lasting a similar amount of time. The tissue liquid is drained off into a special tank and subjected to a water treatment systen before being flushed into the general waste water system. Remaining bones are then pulverised into a course powder, these effectively being the cremation equivalent of 'ashes', which in a way is a misnomer anyway! The process is gentler than cremation by fire and is seven times more 'eco-friendly' than cremation.

With burial space running out in many parts of the UK over three quarters of funerals in the UK are now cremations. Worldwide 150,000 people die every day and so there are bound to be pressures to introduce alternative ways of body disposal. In 2017 a machine costing over £300,000 was acquired by a crematorium in Rowley Regis in the Midlands but problems arose because the water company was not content at the resulting solution simply being washed down the drains and that remains the case. However the 'green' movement is exerting pressure for the dissolving of bodies process to be adopted and discussions are continuing.

Sheffield University recently collaborated with families to run a trial of resomation (dissolving corpses). Five bodies were treated this way and an analysis of the resulting chemicals has been passed to the local water company for analysis. They need to approve the disposal of the chemicals in this way. Legal advice is that disposal in this way is not illegal, although it is presently unregulated. If it proves acceptable, this may be offered as an alternative to cremation. There are other approaches also being pioneered overseas, such as reducing dead bodies to compost.

So there you have it! Would you be happy for most of your remains to be flushed down the loo in order to help 'save the world' from potential global warming. Your Editor is a burial man but if there was ever a more personal choice then surely that must be it!

Finally it seems that the issue of recovery and ownership of pacemakers and the like from the deceased has at last been resolved. The NHS have now issued a policy statement that confirms that they regard pacemakers and the like as single use items and are part of the deceased's estate. Therefore the family can instruct a funeral home to remove the device(s) and donate it/them to overseas charities for re-use!

Also worth a mention is the fact that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has launched an 'Eyes On – Hands On'initiative to train volunteers in inspecting war graves and safe cleaning techniques. This is being piloted for four years in the South West and East of England.

HEDGEHOGS IN ‘OUR’ CEMETERY

Our Maintenance Coordinator Paul Robards has been in contact with ‘Elaine’ of the local Wadars animal welfare organisation regarding the importation into the cemetery of rescued but recovered Hedgehogs. They discussed the various issues and Elaine said that our cemetery would be an ideal location for their release and recommended assiting the little guys by the provision of Hedgehog houses.

Below is an image of Paul discussing the Hedgehog proposal with Elaine of Wadars.



At a past general meeting the matter was discussed and after general approval was given to the proposal the FBWC Treasurer said that he would be happy to release the sum of £100 for the provision of three hedgehog houses, Paul having given some indication of cost beforehand. The probable location for the houses would be against the northern boundary below the wall dividing the cemetery from the nearby school. Paul has since purchased three hedgehog houses but getting them into his car was a challenge, see image below. He has since added preservative to the structures and we await future developments. The Friends are not giving the initiative ‘outside’publicity because the little creatures should be left in peace.

[Photo: Paul Robards].



EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

Well, who would have thought that after all of our success stories and our carefully prepared plans for 2020 that we would be responding to a worldwide pandemic, thanks to the Chinese! The situation is of course evolving every day but we have tried to keep up to speed with developments and have, sadly, agreed by Committee that our general meeting on 27 March and our first cemetery tour on Saturday 4 April should be cancelled, or at least postponed. At the moment our 28 March Maintenance and Clearance day is 'on' and your attendance will be welcome, remembering to stay a couple of metres apart and not to shake hands!

This has been an encourgaing issue to edit. People say to me "how on earth can you fill a magazine with the activities within a long closed cemetery"? Well we try to paint a broader pictrue, keep our editing ears to the ground, lace our activities with photographs and report on all events and tours. We also try to feature articles of relevance and biographies of those interred within the cemetery boundaries. It's not easy but it all eventually fits into place. On this occasion there have been several contributors for a change and I hereby thank all individuals who have submitted material for possible publication. Contributions are always welcome. The next issue will be published at the end of July 2020.

We have had some new waste bins delivered and we are about to be foster parents for hedgehogs. The mountains of rubbish have still to be collected and it seems that the retrograde and unintelligent decision of not locking the Carnegie Road gates Monday to Friday looks as though it is not going to be reversed. Wait for the vandalism and undesirables to return! Then there was the wall when during a series of storms a tree crashed through a cemetery boundary wall, which is fully reported and illustrated on Pages 3 -5 herein.

Our membership looks really healthy climbing above the 100 mark again and our finances are very sound indeed. We await progress on a number of 'Wish List' projects and with increasing pressure and pro-activity we are hoping for some early progress. The Christmas function was not particularly well attended and the numbers turning up for maintenance activities has reached an all time low and so we really must inject some form of super-drug into the membership to get the wheels rolling again. That is the only bad news in our positive world of cemetery friendship.

Let us all hope the current national problems pass quickly and that we can get back into our happy summer routine of tours, booklets, refreshments and happy visitors appreciating our tour content and enjoying an interesting Saturday outing. Seasons greetings to all and sorry that this issue is a full fortnight early but needs must! Enjoy your Broadsheet read which includes 26 pages, 40 photographic images, 7,315 words, was 6 days in preparation consuming 574 minutes (including a considerable amount of switched on but idle or 'down' time) and has a compressed value of 12Mb. There, you all wanted to know that!

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