



Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries



www.foncc.org.uk

Volunteers helping to care for the cemeteries and record the lives of those resting there

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Newsletter No. 29, January 2025

Welcome to 2025 and newsletter number 29 of the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries. This is being circulated to all those who have expressed an interest in the Friends and others who we think may be interested. Feel free to circulate this to others who you feel may be interested in the Cemeteries.

Past newsletters can be found on the website at:

https://www.foncc.org.uk/the_group/newsletters.php



Major Gen. Tombs, VC, cleaned memorial

Review of the past year (by Tony Barton)

I regret we haven't produced a newsletter since last May, that's been due to a combination of pressure of other activities and lack of contributions; it would be nice to receive contributions for another newsletter before this year is out.

Our volunteers continue working in the cemeteries, transcribing memorial inscriptions and obituaries etc. We are always looking for new volunteers to help with our activities, whether you can transcribe at your computer obituaries etc. which we'll send you, transcribing headstone inscriptions or joining us in our sessions in the cemeteries (1st Saturday in the month at Carisbrooke Cemetery, and the 3rd Saturday at Newport Cemetery – always subject to weather – more details on our website), please contact us with your offers of help, comments/suggestions chair.foncc@gmail.com

Memorial cleaning at Carisbrooke Cemetery



In the beginning of last September a team of volunteers from the Victoria Cross Trust were on the Island cleaning and restoring the grave memorials for holders of the VC there are here. The team spent an afternoon at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Mount Joy where they cleaned the grave memorial of Major General Sir Henry Tombs R.A., K.C.B., V.C. who died in 1874, aged 49 years. He was awarded his VC in 1857 for his bravery during the Siege of Delhi while serving in India. (see previous page for picture of his cleaned memorial).

Whilst at the cemetery, the volunteers also cleaned a number of family memorials with inscriptions to family members who had died on active service overseas during WW1. One of these memorials, shown above with cleaning in progress, included an inscription to Corpl. Alfred Edgar Tayler, who died from wounds received at Gaza in 1917 and is remembered on his parents magnificent memorial.

The equipment used was not a pressure washer, but specialised equipment using low pressure. A PRESSURE WASHER SHOULD NEVER BE USED TO CLEAN HEADSTONES.

Whether it's better to leave memorials in their natural 'weathered' condition or clean them is a matter of personal opinion. There are examples in the cemeteries of memorials that were cleaned a few years ago and now look as they did before being touched. Although the equipment used by the VC Trust is 'low pressure', it isn't 'no pressure' and so it must present a risk of damage to delicate memorials; other people who clean memorials, don't use this type of equipment.

MoD Roll of Honour burials (updated in Newsletter 29a as another RoH serviceman identified)

Most people will probably be aware of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) database which records those service personnel and civil victims of enemy action who died during the two World Wars. It is less well known that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) maintain a 'Roll of Honour' of those who died while in Service after 1947 (includes Palestine 1945-47); there are 8 such burials in the three cemeteries – these are listed at - <https://www.foncc.org.uk/burials/grave-search/mod-roll-of-honour.php>. Most of these died while 'not on duty'; however, LCpl Hill, Pilot Officer Muff and L.Cpl Adams did die while on duty and they are also included on the [Armed Forces Memorial](#) at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Two of the other graves, those of PO Arnold, RN, and WO Rann, have MoD style headstones, similar to the CWGC style but with notched corners at the top.

Although not buried in our cemeteries, it may be of interest that Lt. Graham John Goulding, whose parents lived at 171 Carisbrooke Road, is recorded on the Carisbrooke War Memorial in the churchyard, he died in 1954 in Malaya and is recorded on the MoD Roll of Honour (<https://shorturl.at/A4Xg9>) and on the Armed Forces Memorial.

Other military deaths predating the MoD Roll of Honour recorded on family memorials in the cemeteries include:

James Flux, died 3 November 1866 in Hong Hong, Quarter Master on board H.M.S. Salamis, recorded on Jane Flux's headstone at Carisbrooke Cemetery – (more info would be welcome)

William Henry Stephen Crouch, died 30 January 1900, died at Ladysmith, South Africa, remembered on the 18th Hussars monument, Ladysmith and also on his grandparents' headstone in Newport Cemetery.

Alfred James Henry Taylor, died 9 July 1929 onboard HM Submarine H-47 which sunk after collision with another submarine in the Irish Sea, 2 seamen were saved, 24 lost. Remembered on the grave of his parents at Carisbrooke Cemetery.

Old newspapers:

Sometimes it was better in the Workhouse than out:

Hampshire Advertiser 19 January 1861

NEWPORT

The recent case of ill-treating a child at Carisbrooke. - This child, George Rann, is in safe keeping at the House of Industry; but he is said to be still in a very weakly state of health. The trail of the step-mother comes off at the approaching assizes.

(Hannah Rann, the step-mother, appeared at the Hampshire Summer Assizes in July 1861 indicted with neglecting and assaulting her step-son, she was found guilty and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. Hamp. Ad. 13 July

George appears to have died at the Workhouse, aged 17, in June 1866 and was buried in the Workhouse Burial Ground.)

Buried here: (by Tony Barton):

James Yelf, died December 1879, buried Newport Cemetery

Usually we record here the life of one of 'the great and the good' of the area, but James Yelf doesn't fit either description. Despite that, his death was reported in newspapers across the country; including the 'Isle of Wight Observer', 'Windsor and Eton Express', 'Edinburgh Evening News', 'Belfast Morning News' and many more. All the reports had a similar heading – "Death of a Miser."

James was born in Newport to Thomas Yelf, a tailor, and his wife Susanna, he was baptised in St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke in March 1823. In the 1871 census he was living with his widowed mother, Susan, at Extons Yard, in lower South Street, Newport with two of her grandsons (logically, James' nephews), his occupation given as 'Income from rent of houses'. His mother died in 1872 and was buried in Newport Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

At the time of his death, James was known locally as 'Cakey', after an incident some years previous when, at a tea meeting, he was caught stuffing his pockets with cake. At other times, he would collect and eat any garbage he could pick up. He lived in the attic of a house in South Street and let the rest of the building to 'loose characters.'

One report included that for some years he had been in 'the habit of advertising for a wife with money, exchanging *curtes* with his fair correspondents incog. sighing for connubial bliss'.

He was found death by a relative after he had failed to come downstairs one morning; finding the attic door locked from within, the relative had to break open the door. The lifeless body of James Yelf was found wearing a shirt which consisted of a few remnants of calico in a filthy condition, and lying on a number of dirty rags which formed his bed, with his head resting on a chair as a pillow.

At the inquest, the Police reported that a search of the attic had revealed £17 in gold, £4 8s. in silver, and two bank books, one showing £182 and the other £20. (about £34,000 in 2025 terms). It was also reported that James owned a number of tenements.

The inquest returned the verdict that death was due to natural causes, accelerated by a want of nourishment which the deceased had the money to provide for himself.

James had a funeral in St. Thomas' Church and was buried in Newport Cemetery on 16 December 1879; whether he would have appreciated the headstone erected on his grave, or considered it a waste of money is an open question.

Probate was granted for the Will of James on 2 March 1880, the value of his personal estate was given as 'under £450'. The Executors were George Newman Henton of Newport, 'brother by half blood' and George Henry Henton of Loverstone Farm (which is at Chillerton).

The following year:

In May 1880 a newspaper carried a report of the sale by H. C. Wadham, at Warburton's Hotel of a number of 'small tenements' owned by the late James Yelf.

Lot 1. Four dwelling-houses in Upper Field Place (today's Field Place), with large garden, let at £32 pa, sold for £275.

Lot 2. A dwelling house, also in Upper Field Place with large garden, let for £8 9s. pa, sold for £77 10s.

Lot 3. A tiled and weather-board dwelling house in Cross Lanes with large garden, let at £7 3s. pa, sold for £70.

Lot 4. Two brick dwelling houses, known as 'Belmeade place', Cross Lanes, with front and rear gardens, let at £16 4s., sold 'after a very keen competition' for £210.

Notes:

- Source used for research include: *Isle of Wight Observer* 20 December 1879, *London Daily Chronicle* 16 December 1879, and *Hampshire Telegraph* 29 May 1880
- I've not found any connection between James Yelf and other members of the Yelf families who have contributed to the life of the area over the years. But the names 'Henton' and 'Loverstone Farm' relating to the Executors may bring to mind to some 'Albert Henton' who was a prominent farmer, builder and businessman (he was a director of Vectis Stone and W. Hurst & Son, the ironmongers) in during the 1960's and 70's.

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