Future Events: 2017

29 January: 2.30pm, in the chapel, Paul Avis
‘The internal architecture features of the Mansfield Houses of Broadwater Down.’

1 April: 2.30pm AGM in the chapel

18 May: Early Morning Birdsong Walk, 7-9am, led by Martin Allison (15 places)

Early August: Joint cemetery outing with FWPC

9-10 September: Heritage Open Days, Exhibition and Guided Walk

12 November: Remembrance Day and lecture on VAD Hospitals

16 November: Fungi Hunt, 10-1pm, led by Martin Allison (15 places)

Letter from the Chair:

As I take on this role for the next year I have been asked to write a little bit about myself and my thoughts on how the Cemetery fits into my life.

I was born in Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland in the next road to Andrew Carnegie (though many years apart). My formative years and education were spent in Scotland. I then travelled south to London in the swinging sixties.

Originally living in Dulwich, I have gradually moved into Kent from Bromley to Chelsfield then Sevenoaks, and finally finishing up here in Tunbridge Wells some 18 years ago.

My working life was spent in the city with 38 years as a Financial Crime Manager detecting all types of White Collar Crime.

On taking up this new role this year I am very fortunate to have a wonderful team of experts from historical research to ceremonial knowledge to some of the team who have great gardening knowledge.

Whilst there are planned events which the public will be welcomed to come along to. There are also various activities, which we, as a team, will I am sure work together to make improvements both within the chapel and more widely the grounds.

I hope therefore your visit to the cemetery will be enhanced by these improvements.

In the making of my own will, the first question my solicitor asked was ‘what your wish for your remains is?’ My decision has always been that I would like to be buried, so it seems fitting that I sit this year as your chair, but hope that my permanent residency within the grounds is a long time away.

Lorna Blackmore
Harmonium Repairs:

One of our current projects is getting the harmonium repaired. It dates from around the 1880s and was made by the long established firm used by John Christie to build an organ at Glyndebourne. Here a couple of experts are examining it to assess what needs to be done.

One of its features is its cast iron pedals onto which are embossed the comforting words "mouse proof".

Currently, as with most pianos in the home we use it for displaying our photographs and publications.

However, we are hopeful of having it in working order again early this year. Here is June trying the keys for sound and we look forward to inviting everyone to hear the restored instrument in all its glory.

December 2nd:

Upwardly Mobile

June Bridgeman gave a fascinating lecture in St Mark’s Church Hall to a packed audience on the subject of Broadwater Down and its former residents’ connections to Tunbridge Wells Cemetery.

The presentation was focused on ‘the long crescent of handsome mansions’ built in the Gothic style by George Mansfield in a ‘healthy’ area of Tunbridge Wells with commanding views across the town and adjoining countryside. We heard of families who had stocks in the booming Victorian railway business such as the Caldwell family who lived at 1 Broadwater Down, Brynbella, and Dr Thomas Hookham Silvester (1799-1877) who founded the Clapham General Dispensary, living at The Grange, 3 Broadwater Down. The 1881 census finds both the Rev. Augustus Clissold, clerk in holy orders ‘without care of souls’ and his sister Diana and also Henry Hewitson, a merchant and ship-owner and his sister Mary [in whose memory Keswick Cottage Hospital was built] also residing at 3 Broadwater Down. [Interestingly, the census has their surname spelt as Hewitson whilst the cottage hospital is called the Mary Hewetson Cottage Hospital].

7 Broadwater Down found the Newbold family headed up by William Newbold who had co-founded Mexico’s first bank and his eleven
Our favourite phrase of the evening, Broadwater Down had a ‘Salubrity and Wild Rusticity’- this is a quote from an estate agent brochure of the development of the area in the 19th Century.

This is only a brief summary of some of the stories told that evening. We look forward to extending our knowledge of this area of Tunbridge Wells and its connections with the Cemetery. The Friends are promoting this as an educational community project to help individuals become involved with local history or providing source information for their own residences. As the project develops we will be publishing a detailed booklet which will link the cemetery graves with the residences of Broadwater Down.

Caroline Auckland

Remembrance Sunday

November 13th

Wreath laid by the Friends made by Felicity Brown

The service at the cemetery was organised by the Royal British Legion, Tunbridge Wells Branch, and was well attended in this centenary year marking the Battle of the Somme.

Wreaths were laid at both World War One and World War Two Cross of Sacrifice memorials by

Declaring Officer, Jennifer Watts, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Royal British Legion, Tunbridge Wells Branch.

Buglers from the Reunion Band, TS Brilliant provided the music.

The minutes silence was observed at each Cross of Sacrifice followed by Reveille and the Royal British Legion Standard lowered.

1 http://www.bernoulli-society.org/index.php
the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells Councillor David Neve, Peter Blackwell JP, DL on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Royal British Legion, Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch, Mrs Jill Neve, Mayoress for TWBC, the Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and Hawkenbury Allotment Holders Association along with personal tributes.

Thank you to David Wakefield, President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch of the British Legion for arranging the service which was then followed by the Remembrance Day lecture.

Alison Sandford Mackenzie gave a lecture on the Belgian refugee community in Tunbridge Wells 1914-1918. She reported that of the quarter of a million refugees who arrived in the UK, approximately three hundred came to stay in Tunbridge Wells. After arriving at the town railway station, they were housed throughout the town including premises in Warwick Park, East Cliff Road, Upper Grosvenor Road and Pennington Road. Many local notables including Mayor Charles Whitbourn Emson, Mrs Lydia Le Lacheur, Gertrude Mosely and Amelia Scott, all important figures in the National Union of Women Suffrage Society were involved with welcoming, rehousing and providing supplies for the new residents. Refugees included the sculptor Paul Vandekerckhove, Madame Ensor and her daughter. Her brother, Expressionist artist James Ensor was the subject of a recent major exhibition at the Royal Academy in London.

Of the seventy eight men, one hundred and forty four women, thirty five boys and forty girls who were looked after by the various Tunbridge Wells committees, seven refugees found their final resting place to be Tunbridge Wells Cemetery. These include Rosalie Gebruers-de Pauw, Madame Hélène Schuermans-Denyn and her daughter Emma Carolina Maria Denyn, aged twelve, Joseph Van Nuland, aged 2 and Wilhelmina Florentina Van Hercke.

After the fascinating talk, Ann Bates escorted a number of the audience to visit the graves of some of the refugees which were indentified with Belgian flags and floral tributes.

Refreshments were provided by (Jordan) Tesco Metro, Tunbridge Wells for which we are very grateful,

whilst visitors had another chance to view the Friends exhibition on the Somme displayed within the Friends Chapel.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Belgian refugees in Tunbridge Wells there is an exciting new project commencing in January and more details and contact information can be found on Alison’s blog: www.belgianstrw.wordpress.com
Fungi Walk, 3 November

Led by the extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic mycologist Martin Allison and accompanied by Ian Johnston from Kent High Weald Partnership a group of fourteen fungi enthusiasts met at the Victorian chapels armed with notebooks and cameras.

Martin Allison and Ian Johnston and the Fungi explorers.

Despite concerns over the recent weather which had apparently been unsuitable for the development of fungi we had a treat in store as we explored the extensive grounds of the cemetery. We learnt of the importance fungi play in nature’s eco system in terms of their symbiotic relationship.

A Clouded funnel agaric fungi (Clitocybe nebularis) being closely examined.

An example of Honey Fungus (Armillaria mellea).

We looked for mulch heaps as they are a particularly favourable environment for fungi growth and located birch trees to hunt for the red Fly Agarics. The group of hunters were awarded with a surprising bumper crop of over 40 different species of Boletes, Agarics, Puffball, Club and Cup fungi being recorded and photographed. These included the following, Stinking Dapperling (Lepiota cristata), Mousepee Pinkgill (Entoloma Incanum), Deceiver (Laccaria laccata), False Chanterelle (Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca), and Ugly Milkcap (Lactarius turpis).

Martin Allison with a trug of specimens.
Heritage Open Days

The 2016 event took place over the weekend of the 10th and 11th September. The chapel was open on the Saturday for an exhibition and on both days the Friends offered a guided walk to accompany our new heritage guide, *Memorial Symbols*, launched that weekend. Alongside the booklets, leaflets and cards for sale, refreshments were provided and plants were offered for sale underneath the cover of a gazebo.

*Enjoying the display which accompanied the new booklet.*

*Jo Hunt with the plant sale.*

*Guided walk lead by Historian June Bridgeman*

Broken columns and Angels are traditional symbols seen in cemeteries but do you know what *Mizpah* refers to?

*Also, what might this eye make reference to? You need our new publication.*

*Contributors Caroline Auckland and Sue White with author June Bridgeman.*

*The range of publications is growing.*
Entitled *Memorial Symbols* the new publication is designed for people to use at their own convenience. Formed of a ‘walk round guide’ with maps and notes it takes the visitor round 22 viewing points on a 40 minute stroll of a recently researched area, explaining the features and symbols to look out for when ‘reading the stones’ in a graveyard.

This new title joins our other two publications:

*A walk round some interesting memorials: Tunbridge Wells Borough Cemetery*

William Brentnall 1829 - 1894 Surveyor and Engineer: A many-sided man

A self-taught engineer, Brentnall carried out a huge range of public works to benefit Tunbridge Wells. These involved the water supplies including sewerage and drainage for the town plus its lighting, brick pavements and asphalting of dusty roads. He also designed the Cemetery.

The memoir is compiled by Carol Mellors and June Bridgeman

Copies of all publications available from:
June Bridgeman,
Bridge House,
Culverden Park Road,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent,
TN4 9QX
Telephone: 01892 525578
Email: jbman@btinternet.com
Price £3 each (or £3.75 each UK postage paid)
Cheques payable to: The Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery.

Twenty interesting memorials to visit. Containing a map and details of some of the Victorian and Edwardian residents of Tunbridge Wells who are buried in the cemetery.
Gardening Report

Upon inspection of the two Friends' beds late December 2016 it was very pleasing to note how much colour remained, particularly the smaller bed along the wall which looked splendid in reds, cerise and pinks. The salvias planted earlier in the year were full of colour and looked very pretty.

The larger bed is doing exceedingly well and, again, plants still flowering to year end. A wonderful splash of yellow and blues have been a delight through the autumn into winter. The plants are making good growth and look healthy.

Having discussed the trees in the larger bed with the Council gardening team, it was good to see the overhanging boughs have been cut back giving more light to the bed and the expectation of a high flower yield this year.

Earlier in 2016 Kasia (TWBC Park & Open Spaces Dept.) and Felicity discussed the planting of native trees in the cemetery and the following were planted in the autumn and looking very healthy indeed. These will bring great pleasure in the years to come:

- Sorbus aucuparia Edulis
- Sorbus torminalis
- Acer campestre
- Prunus avium
- Liriodendron tulipifera Aureomarginata – which is planted in the centre of the lower rose garden.

Do look out for these newly planted trees and enjoy their journey to maturity

The Primrose circular bed has much to be done and this will take priority once the weather is suitable for tackling this task. The lavender was cut back last year and it is yet to be decided whether this will remain or need to be replaced. It is hoped it will regenerate.

The gardening team are hoping for a good summer and that the Friends' beds will continue to give pleasure.

We are delighted that the Cemetery and Crematorium were awarded a Silver Gilt for Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom in September.

Should anyone feel they would like to be involved in working with our team then do please get in touch with Jo (01892 523462) more hands will be most welcome.

Jo Hunt and Felicity Brown

Dicken from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who visits every fortnight to tend the war graves.
Wildlife

It was with great interest that we came across this report on a Tunbridge Wells Facebook page posted by Julia Pithouse and her son. Julia has very kindly given her permission to share this photograph and story:

‘One polecat seen peering over the wall from the K&S cemetery into a neighbour’s garden. Thinking it was a ferret at first we tried to capture it to take to Folly Wildlife only for it to bite my son and let off a disgusting smell. Of course it escaped. Then we were told it was a polecat. Imagine turning up at Crowborough Minor injuries to tell them you’ve been bitten by a polecat!’

The polecat or mustela putorius with its distinctive facial markings has a very strong smell and is related to the ferret family. It consumes rodents and birds. Once hunted for its fur the legally protected European polecat is now making a comeback in England according to recent research by the Vincent Wildlife Trust.

If you would like more information about this mammal do have a look at the Kent Wildlife website and if you see one whilst walking around the cemetery do inform them as they are considered to be a rare species, here is the link:

http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/species/polecat

Membership

At the last Executive committee meeting, it was decided that we would invite local companies and undertakers to become corporate members. The annual membership subscription would be set at £100 and benefits of membership would include listing as corporate members on all publications. It would be greatly appreciated if Individual members with corporate contacts would encourage their contacts to become Corporate Members.

Individual members subscriptions for 2017 of £10 are now due (and any unpaid 2016 subs) and can be paid be cheque payable to "Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery" and sent to the Honorary Treasurer, 32 Birling Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5LY or in cash at Friends events.

Barry Melbourne Webb

Would you like to see your company name here?

Contact Barry Melbourne Webb for details
Email: barry.melbournewebb@btinternet.com
Tel: 01892 525500

Corporate Member
The Friends are delighted to work in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and have been very happy to contribute to the excellent new Council website. Do take a look here: http://kentandsussexcrematorium.com/cemetery/

The Friends Committee could not undertake the work that we do. Without the help of Ken Dry, Lizzie Goodwin, the Bereavement Services team especially Annette Proctor-Williams (who answers our endless stream of burial location requests), Peter Every and Kasia Olszewska.

*The grounds were looking wonderful this autumn:*

*We hope to see you soon and do keep in touch by visiting and attending the Friends events. We appreciate all your support.*
The Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery

Executive Committee:

Chair: Lorna Blackmore

Secretary: June Bridgeman

Membership & Treasurer: Barry Melbourne Webb, 01892 525500

Head Guides and Historical Researchers: June Bridgeman & Ann Bates

Communications & Social Media: Caroline Auckland, carolineauckland@btinternet.com

Gardening: Felicity Brown & Jo Hunt

Webmaster: David Sandford & Caroline Auckland

Committee Members: Caroline Auckland, Ann Bates, Peter Blackwell, June Bridgeman, Felicity Brown, John de Lucy, Jo Hunt, Barry Melbourne Webb, Carol Mellors, David Wakefield,

Contact:

General Enquiries: June Bridgeman, 01892 525578, jbman@btinternet.com

Website: foftwc.wix.com/foftwc

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TunbridgeWellsCemetery

Twitter: TW Cemetery @FoHCTW

Noticeboard

We also have a noticeboard adjacent to the twin chapels which displays our latest events. So do have a look when you are next visiting. In time we hope that there will be a noticeboard near to the Crematorium.

Photography © Caroline Auckland, Lorna Blackmore, June Bridgeman, John De Lucy, David Hodgkinson, Jo Hunt, Carol Mellors (2017, All rights reserved.)

Newsletter Editor: Caroline Auckland

HMRC Charities Ref number EW36118
Postcard from the Past

Another in the series of postcards relating to the Cemetery and our connections. The top image is a postcard from the 1920’s purchased from eBay. It is blank in terms of correspondence, but the image describes it as the ‘Borough Cemetery, Tunbridge Wells.’ In the right hand corner there is an identification reference J.R.4501. Deltiologists, does anyone recognize this reference? As no mention is made of the postcard publisher. As before, replication is approximate due to the changes in camera technique. However, note the white finish to the granite and marble. The well-tended beds. Plus the change in the landscaping of the trees.

The Friends Group was set up in 2014 with these aims:

- To further the protection, conservation and sympathetic enhancement of the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery for public benefit and enjoyment;
- To record and foster its heritage of monuments and its ecological importance: and
- To foster its appropriate use as an educational resource for the community.

We have the following projects in hand, with more to follow:

- Researching and recording the lives of the people buried in the cemetery
- Recording the plant and wild life
- Clearing up around the graves
- Identifying the graves in need of restoration

Further copies of this newsletter and our publications also available in the Cemetery Office situated inside the entrance to the Crematorium driveway.

Thank you to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for all their support in printing and collating hard copies of this Newsletter.