

**Battle of the Somme remembered in The Living Memory
Project: closing event at Brookwood**
forwarded by the NCF Secretary

Last year the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) launched The Living Memory project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War. They asked for community groups to contribute by marking the 141 days of the Battle of the Somme. Thirteen NCF members were among the 650 groups who responded and who were thanked in a closing event in November at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey.

*Left: Presentation of
CWG Champion
certificates
Photograph courtesy of
Robert Stephenson*



Director General Victoria Wallace welcomed some 200 guests, CWGC Director Colin Kerr recalled the ambition of the Living Memory

Project and historian Dr Glyn Pryor gave an overview of British casualties from the Somme. A video of project events was shown and Virginia Crompton, CEO of the organiser the Big Ideas Company, introduced presentations including the Friends of West Norwood's contribution by Rose Fenn. Finally, CWGC Vice-Chairman Vice-Admiral Sir Tim Laurence presented CWG Champion certificates to those groups present.

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The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the NCF.
All material by the editor unless otherwise attributed.



*1914-1918 Memorial
Photograph courtesy of Robert
Stephenson*

The day closed with a moving ceremony in which everyone processed in the dark with hand-held candles towards the 1914-1918 Memorial led by a piper of the Royal Scottish Pipe-band Association. Following a short service the piper accompanied a choral rendition of the Last Post by Chepstow Singing Club and then the candles were laid at the memorial.

Representatives of the Friends of Nunhead, Ladywell and Brockley and West Norwood were able to receive their certificates on the day but other participating members who will have received them are Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, Ford Park Cemetery Trust and the Cemetery Friends of Bedford; Belgrave, Leicester; Brandwood End, Birmingham; Lawnswood, Leeds; Stockport (Willowgrove); Queensbury, Bradford; Tunbridge Wells and Welford Road, Leicester.

NFCF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Hosted by

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery, London

Saturday, 10th June 2017

Any members who have not received details

please contact the NFCF secretary

gwyneth1@btinternet.com

NATIONAL CEMETERIES WEEK

Saturday 9th to Sunday 17th September 2017

Details being sent to members by email

NFCF website

by Colin Fenn

The cemetery friend's website is our shop window for promoting the cause of cemeteries nationally; it attracts a stream of enquiries from national and local media, community groups and individuals who are seeking advice and encouragement for the protection and promotion of burial sites. As a national body representing our member groups, it is important that the Federation's website appeals to a range of different users, looks professional and is as good as the best of our members.

Some of our members can keep costs down by having websites that are managed and kept up-to-date by technically-capable volunteers, who are constantly available and able to take advantage of free tools, webspace and email. However, while this may be suitable for some groups, this format is not appropriate for the 'corporate' image needed by the NFCF. Nor does the Federation have access to this type of volunteer. We therefore have to purchase our website through a third party that can provide technical support that suits our abilities and needs, and can advise us on promotion techniques.

For many years, the website costs for hosting, mail and tools have been unchanged, and our supplier does not charge us for his support time. However, our supplier recently increased charges, citing rising costs and adverse exchange rates, particularly as many of the technologies originate overseas. Consequently, we put some effort into surveying the market for possible alternative suppliers. To cut a long story short, none were able to offer a lower price for an equivalent service or level of support; nor were many actively interested in the subject matter. We did have one serious alternative proposal, but it would require a large one-off fee to set up and transfer the site. As the website is a significant part of our annual costs, we urge members to make the best use of it. The technology ensures that our pages appear at the top of many web searches, so do email xxxxx@cemeteryfriends.org to promote your events that are of general interest on the NFCF site, or to suggest articles or advice which could be included on the site. Our provider has several tools which may be of interest to cemetery groups, such as the top-level "cemetery.wiki" domain (for a simple easy-to-maintain website) Contact: mail@quotes.uk.com .

Flaybrick moving closer to major HLF bid

by John Moffat, Secretary of Friends of Flaybrick

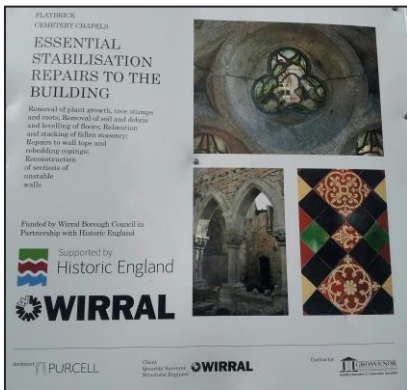
Flaybrick's Grade II gothic revivalist chapels were last used in 1975 and have been roofless and derelict from the 1980s. In 1997, the top third of the spire was removed for safety reasons. Although we were given assurances that the parts would be numbered and photographed this was not done. To compound the problem the masonry was placed within the chapels causing the suspended floors to collapse. Despite their fine architecture, the chapel walls had rubble infill and without a roof some of the walls went out of plumb. Problems were compounded by numerous self-seeded trees on the walls some reaching 20 feet in height. In short one of the worst problems faced by any UK cemetery.

In 2010, we did a prelim bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) but it was rejected as being too ambitious and insufficiently innovative in its advocated future use. In 2014, we were rescued by English Heritage placing the cemetery on the Heritage at Risk (HAR) survey. In addition, the site was awarded regional priority. This was a decision that was reached because of Wirral Borough Council (WBC) involvement, the strength of our Friends group and the on the edge condition of the chapels. Pressure from our patron Frank Field to lift the site off the HAR helped but in fairness WBC were keen from the start to achieve this. English Heritage, now Historic England (HE), saw the project as having real potential to go all the way to a major HLF restoration. That said the route forward was a complex one with a balance having to be struck between sensitive conservation of the fabric and the need to quickly make the site safe for workers.

In 2015, a steering group was set up consisting of a case officer from HE; WBC's Asset and planning departments; Flaybrick management; The Friends of Flaybrick; the Local Conservation Areas Forum and relevant architectural firms. HE was keen to push Flaybrick along in parallel with Anfield Cemetery in Liverpool, (also designed by Edward Kemp and in need of a lower level of restoration).

Clearance work was carried out in 2015 by a local construction firm at limited cost as they did not scaffold up. A large crane lifted out all the spire masonry. Then all trees on the chapel walls were removed using a

cherry picker and then stump killer applied. A structural condition survey was then carried out by WBC and HE engineers. The survey identified a number of areas of dangerous masonry that would have to be made safe. This considerable work was awarded to a local stone work company. The work was done at a cost of £26k funded half by HE and half by WBC. The company were not conservation specialists and there were a few problems over work quality. A local architect was then appointed to produce a condition survey, funded by HE. This confirmed that full conservation work was a viable possibility and costed building stabilization and conservation work at £350K.



*Above: On site signage
Right: Eight levels of scaffolding
Photographs courtesy of John Moffat*

In March 2016 against a withering economic background for councils WBC agreed to fund £170K and HE immediately matched funded £170K. Purcell's were appointed as project architects. They have previous cemetery experience at Arnos, Becket Street and Macclesfield cemeteries.



Work commenced in August with the erection of scaffolding over the whole building. For me after 23 years involvement it was a great day indeed when I stood at the top of the building and looked down on the first serious work to take place at Flaybrick. This work is due to finish mid-May and the scaffolding is already coming down. We can now see the wonderful condition of the building. Fully re-pointed walls with their tops rendered and sealed and off plump verticals rebuilt. The building is now good to stand as it is for at least 10 years.

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*At the top with Dave Groves, WBC asset management
Photograph courtesy of John Moffat*

That said neither ourselves, or WBC want to stop at this point and we intend to bring the building back into use in a viable future role. That a 4200 square feet chapel can go from ruin to a stabilized and conserved monument in 2 years is hopefully an encouragement to any groups with buildings that are in a similarly parlous state.

Restorations at Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire

by Joanna Moody, Chair of the Friends of Pateley Bridge Cemetery and St Mary's Churchyard

February 2017 saw the last of our planned cemetery and churchyard restorations - we have thus completed the task for which our group came together in 2004. We decided to repair the damage done when memorials were taken down for safety reasons by Harrogate Borough Council (HBC), after a child was killed playing in a Harrogate cemetery in 2000.

Thanks to ambitious fund-raising, generous donors, and working in cooperation with HBC Bereavement Services, we have been able to restore over 345 memorials, including ancient box and table tombs, many crosses and headstones, and surrounding kerbs and railings. The work was done mainly by Memsafe, a firm of professional restorers - but we were also aided at one stage by a community payback group organised by HBC.

There has been wonderful local support, and appreciation that both the cemetery and churchyard are transformed.

Appeal for information on Zulu War memorial inscriptions from Tim Needham

Having been fortunate enough to have visited the battlefields of Zululand, South Africa, I have developed an interest in the individual soldiers who fought and died there during the Zulu War of 1879 and have spent the last few years locating and recording memorials which commemorate them.

In particular, I am hoping to 'discover' further memorial plaques, windows and gravestone inscriptions to men who were killed in action at the battle of Isandlwana (or *Isandula* as it normally appears) which took place on January 22nd 1879, and which remains the worst ever defeat inflicted on the British Army by a native force; the massacre occurred just hours before the legendary defence of Rorke's Drift in which eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded.

Over 1300 British and Colonial troops perished at Isandlwana, and although I have managed to track down quite a number of memorials across the UK with the help of a number of Family History Societies and Cemetery Friends groups, I am confident that there must be many more family gravestones scattered around, both within local Victorian churchyards and cemeteries.



*Pte. W. Watkins 1st Btn 24th (2nd
Warwickshire) Regiment, killed in action at
Isandlwana – Memorial inscription (Old
Hereford Road Cemetery, Abergavenny)
Photograph courtesy of Tim Needham*

If you know of any relevant monumental inscriptions within your respective cemeteries which relate to Isandlwana or the wider Zulu War, I would be extremely pleased to hear from you.

Email: timneedham79@yahoo.co.uk or mobile: 07890136041

Members New Publications

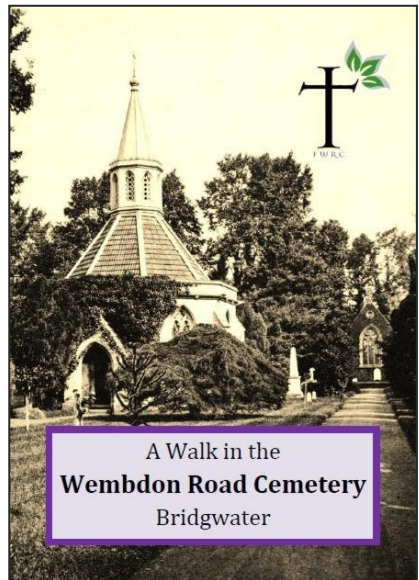
A new walking tour book

Bernice Lashbrook, Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery

After some six years of sheer hard work by a small group of Member volunteers of the Friends of the Wembdon Road Cemetery in Bridgwater (FWRC), Somerset, we felt we were ready to invite visitors to take guided tours of the cemetery in comfort and safety. They have proved extremely popular and we plan more in 2017. So much so, that our Founder and Chairman, Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson with input from other FWRC members has produced a booklet 'A Walk in the Wembdon Road Cemetery'.

It has been generously funded by Bridgwater Town Council and Sedgemoor District Council. The guide takes the form of a short walk round the cemetery, taking in eighteen important or significant memorials and features. Here you will find out about the history of the cemetery and the people buried there; both men and women, rich and poor, scientists, industrialists, soldiers and more.

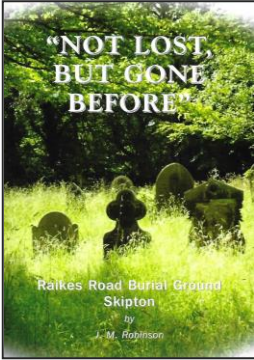
You will also learn about the Friends' efforts towards the conservation of this special place. Funds raised from the sale of the booklet will be put towards a future project – a Sensory Garden – for the disabled which we hope to locate in the ruins of the former Anglican chapel.



Photograph courtesy of Bernice Lashbrook

The booklet is 30 pages in length and is full colour. It is priced at a very reasonable £2.50. Please go to www.bridgwatercemeteries.org.uk if you would like to obtain a copy.

Publication – “Not lost, but gone before”

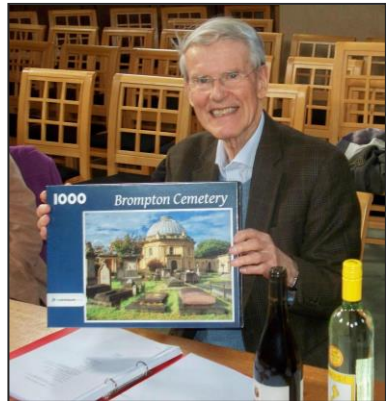


The author, Jean Robinson, chairman of the Friends of Raikes Road Burial Ground says the book title, is a suitable title not only because it is taken from one of the gravestones but because the Ground had been 'lost' to Skipton having been neglected and forgotten after its formal closure in 1878. The book tells the story of the overcrowded parish graveyard from which Raikes Road became an overspill cemetery and some of the life stories, previously unknown, about the Georgian and Victorian people buried there.

Copies can be purchased from: Jean Robinson, 30 Pasture Road, Embsay, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 6PN at £9.99 plus £2.50 p&p. All profits are going to the work of the Friends of Raikes Road Burial Ground.

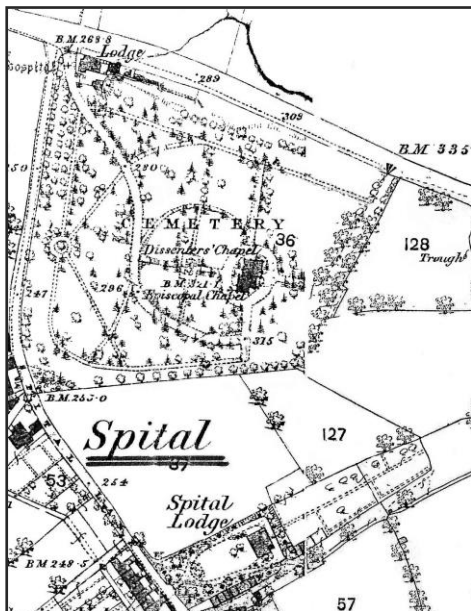
Arthur's presentation from Robert Stephenson

In recognition of his twelve years of distinguished service as chairman of the NCF Arthur Tait received a small presentation from the Federation. Although he modestly asked for his departure to go unnoticed, the NCF committee felt that Arthur's wise and even-handed stewardship of our affairs for so long deserved to be marked in some way. His farewell gift was a thousand-piece jigsaw depicting the chapel at Brompton cemetery (see image right) - where he continues as chairman of the Friends' group - plus two bottles of wine. He later wrote "How very kind. And such a surprise! It is occasionally so nice to have one's expressed wishes ignored! The gifts from the NCF are lovely."



Photograph courtesy of Robert Stephenson

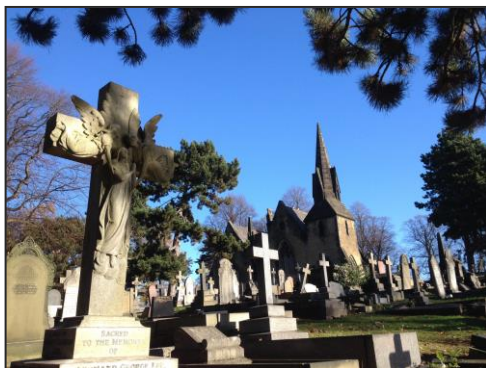
Birthday celebrations in Spital Cemetery, Chesterfield from Liz Cook



Original layout from 1876
Image courtesy of Liz Cook

Spital Cemetery is the oldest public cemetery in Chesterfield and the second oldest in Derbyshire after Derby. The newly established Burial Board had a competition to lay out the cemetery and for the design of the chapels. George Bidlake (1829/30-1892) and Henry Lovatt of Wolverhampton were the architects who were chosen and Francis Calvert Gillett (1824-1896) laid out the grounds. He will have followed the fashion of the time to make a place that resembled a garden (Eden) with trees and winding paths to give comfort to people mourning their dead.

On 19th August 2017, it will be 160 years since the Bishop of Lichfield came to Chesterfield to the opening of the new cemetery and chapels at Spital. The Friends of Spital Cemetery invite you to join in their birthday celebrations. There will be new information boards and entertainment in the cemetery. During the day, 11am to 5pm at St Leonard's Mission Room, Valley Road, S41 0HQ there will be stalls advertising the work of local conservation, garden and history groups with refreshments available all day. In the



Spital Cemetery today
Photograph courtesy of Liz Cook

evening, 7pm to 9pm, the Friends are delighted to welcome Professor James Stevens Curl who will talk about 'Transformations: Landscape Garden to Garden Cemetery'. Professor Stevens Curl has established an international reputation for scholarship and thorough investigation in little known fields of which 'The Garden Cemetery Movement' is one.

Tickets for the talk are £10. Please email Liz Cook, Acting Chair, Friends of Spital Cemetery at lizcook80@icloud.com for further information and how to book.

First World War commemoration

by Geoff Thurley, Chair and Secretary of the Friends of Brockley and Ladywell Cemeteries, SE London

Like many other members of the Federation, the Friends of Brockley & Ladywell Cemeteries has its group of researchers and amateur historians investigating the histories of people buried in the two cemeteries.

Part of the focus has, of course, been on the First World War. The group has taken part in the pilot of the Living Memory Project in 2015, staging a guided walk that connected with Gallipoli and the ANZAC forces. With 2016 being the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, several guided walks concentrated on this, highlighting the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) memorials in the two cemeteries. The group was honoured to receive recognition of this work from CWGC in the form of a certificate and Remembrance Rose.

There are two memorials to civilian victims of bombings during the First World War. Funding has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the local Ward Assembly towards the restoration and renovation of these memorials. Work on the project, which includes explanatory pamphlets and an information pack on the aerial attacks for schools is proceeding, albeit slowly.

The group holds its open days in July, but as July 2017 marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the group, a special sub-committee has been set up to make this Open Day the best ever!

Notes from the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group (BCAG) meeting

Ann Wilkinson attended the November 2016 meeting of BCAG on behalf of the NCF

To add weight to the issue concerning the growing shortage of burial space, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) recently undertook a 'snapshot' electronic survey of its membership regarding burial space and provision. The SLCC membership consists of over 5000 of the 10,000 local (parish, community and town) councils in England and Wales. As the survey deadline (of 18th November) had only just passed; the 410 responses from 45 counties were still being evaluated. However, initial analysis indicated 34% expected to run out of burial space in their cemeteries within the next 10 years whilst 17% would do so in under 5 years. There was a similar indication for availability of burial space within churchyards still open for new burials.

The Department of Health aim to publish their response document to the consultation on the introduction of medical examiners and death certification reforms in England and Wales in December 2016.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) response document on the consultation regarding infant cremation was published in July which includes plans for introduction of new regulations and statutory cremation reforms; information for bereaved parents and addressing the issue of cremation of babies lost before 24 weeks of pregnancy. New regulations which came into being on 1st October; introduces a statutory definition of ashes and changes to how cremation authorities keep records. A National Cremation Working Group has been set up consisting of representatives with relevant expertise who will advise on amendments regarding disposal of ashes and new regulations for handling and cremation of foetuses of less than 24 weeks' gestation.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's (ICCM) metal recycling scheme had raised £700,000 for charities in the last year. The ICCM are to launch an accredited HNC diploma in the Management of Natural Burial Grounds.

New Members and Associates

Friends of the Down Cemetery, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

Formed last year, with the support of Wiltshire Council, the Friends have made an impressive start. They have set up a website and published their first newsletter which is available through the website. It includes dates and details of the regular working parties, plans for documenting a cleared area, promoting a diverse wildlife eco-system, and preparing guided walks. They recently planted about 400 daffodil bulbs donated by Trowbridge Garden Centre and a successful bid to the Area Board means they will be purchasing tools and a first-aid kit.

The cemetery opened in 1855 and is owned by Wiltshire Unitary Authority. It is Grade II listed and has retained its two chapels and lodge. Several significant monuments and mausolea reflect the prosperity of Trowbridge in the 19th and early 20th century.

Contact: Robert Wall, robertw@fotdc.org

Website: www.fotdc.org

Friends of Toxteth Park Cemetery, Liverpool

A community group in the Toxteth area of Liverpool worried about the state of this Grade II listed cemetery and the derelict chapel have become Cemetery Friends to work to improve matters.

Toxteth Park was the first publicly funded cemetery in Liverpool, opened in 1856 with buildings by T.D. Barry and layout by William Gay of Bradford who also designed Undercliffe Cemetery. Now owned by Liverpool City Council the 16 hectares site is in Southdown Road, Liverpool, L8 0SE. Various buildings including the derelict chapel and a pair of lodges at the Southdown Road entrance are Grade II listed. In addition to the significant number of obelisk and Celtic cross gravestones in the cemetery, the cemetery also contains Toxteth War Memorial.

Contact: John Gunning, scouser@freeuk.com

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St James' Heritage and Environment Group, Newcastle upon Tyne

St James' Graveyard is an important part of the heritage of the west end of Newcastle. This area was once home to some of the richest and most powerful families on Tyneside, many of whom are buried in this graveyard which was opened in 1832. Also, here are thousands of other local residents who were not so wealthy and famous, including pitmen, boatmen, miners, soldiers, shopkeepers and engineers. St James' Heritage and Environment Group has been looking after the graveyard for more than seven years and has brought about many improvements.

A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project linked with the graveyard has paid for a specialist conservator to restore damaged gravestones (see website). The HLF funded project also included a new outdoor interpretation board, two new heritage trails and a series of short films about people buried at St James'. The group holds information about all the burials in this graveyard and can provide advice about family and local history.

Contact: Michael Young, [stjamesbenwell@gmail](mailto:stjamesbenwell@gmail.com)

Website: [stjameschurchnewcastle@wordpress.com](http://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com)

The Thomas and Elizabeth Mayhook Charity (for St David's Cemetery, Carmarthen)

Richard Goodridge MBE JP, chairman of the Thomas and Elizabeth Mayhook Charity is currently negotiating for the charity to take on ownership of St David's Cemetery, Carmarthen. The charity was set up for the preservation and upkeep and maintenance of the historic St David's Cemetery which is in the centre of the town.

Mr Goodridge describes the cemetery as 'in a terrible state, having been sold to a developer who had done nothing for years but seek planning permission for house building.' They look forward to full control so they 'can begin work in earnest of restoring this important piece of Carmarthen history.' The charity, which has joined as an Associate member is named after Mr Goodridge's grandparents who are buried in the cemetery.

Contact: richard.goodrich@btinternet.com

Members News

A selection of news and events from Members newsletters and websites

Abney Park Cemetery Trust, London

Abney Park has recently received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out a two year project entitled Abney Unearthed. With the help of volunteers the intention is to remap the cemetery and conduct research into those buried there. The outcome will be the production of an online digital plot map of Abney Park and a searchable database.

Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds

A large, dead beech tree uprooted during the strong winds in January fell onto several headstones, damaging three. The old tree was cut up and removed by the Council's Forestry team and masons came in to repair broken headstones. A survey of the cemetery's trees identified another eleven dead trees to be removed or pollarded by the end of June.

Brompton Cemetery, London

Refurbishment on the cemetery chapel is now underway. Removal of the old carpet and lino flooring in the chapel revealed an attractive Portland stone floor. It appears certain stone slabs were stained darker sometime after the floor was laid to accentuate the concentric and radial design. The stone floor will be left uncovered and become a feature of the restored chapel.

At the North Lodge site, pouring of the foundation platform for what will become the new Interpretation Centre was delayed due to the discovery of a sub-surface circular brick structure accessed via a round flat capstone with an iron ring in it. This feature has been identified as the cess pit which once serviced the North Lodge and will be preserved in situ, visible beneath a sheet of glass in the new building.

Newtown Road Cemetery, Newbury

In January, the Friends announced that their zoomable cemetery map was back online. About two years ago, their website was one of thousands who lost access to images when Microsoft dropped their Zoom.It project. A group of former users took on the mammoth task of rebuilding the Zoom.it library onto a new site called ZoomHub.

NFCF contact details

A list of members is available from the Secretary

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