
Grave Issues – Issue One
the newsletter of the Isle of Wight—Cemetery Wardens
New Year 2011

Cemetery fans train to save heritage...

The Footprint Trust's Cemetery Warden scheme held its first training event in August at the historic All Saints Church in Freshwater. Some 25 keen Islanders have volunteered as wardens and 17 of those are now trained. The project, which covers the whole Island, has been made possible thanks to support from Heritage Lottery funded West Wight Landscape Partnership.

Cemetery Wardens attending were given guidance on managing sites for nature conservation, the landscape,

heritage and the community. Those at the training event represented all types of burial grounds, including municipal cemeteries and churchyards.

One of the issues raised was that of not cleaning graves due to the damage that can be caused to rare plants and the monument itself.

Household cleaning chemicals such as bleach can eat away at gravestones. A War Grave in Dorset has been severely damaged by this action.



Old grave damaged by bleach in Dorset

The importance of involving the wider community and informing them of the need of sympathetic management was also stressed.

Wardens were issued with a folder containing useful information and contacts.

Visit to Crematorium

Thanks to our colleagues at the IW Council, Cemetery Wardens are to be given a unique tour of the Crematorium at Whippingham on Saturday February 26th at 10am. The Isle of Wight

Crematorium was built in 1961. About 80% of deaths on the Island result in cremation, which is slightly more than the national average. Please feel free to bring a guest with

you. We understand it will be dead good! Please let Ray know if you would like to come along by leaving a message on 82-22-82 or email ray@footprint-trust.co.uk



**WOULD YOU LIKE
TO JOIN US IN
SAVING OUR
HERITAGE?**

CALL 82-22-82

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- *Free CD on managing burial grounds for wild-life –see page 4*
 - *Free visit to your burial ground –see page 2*
 - *Holly & Ivy—festive cheer or fear? see page 3*
 - *Buzzing around – informing the public – see page 3*



Would you like a visitation to your place?

As stated at the training day Ray and Mark are happy to visit your burial ground. We have set aside the week commencing the 14th March for visits. We are free every day from 8am to 5pm, except Wednesday.

Please email or phone us with a choice of suitable times and dates. We will then try and do a 'tour' spending around 2 hours at each venue.

mark@footprint-trust.co.uk
Tel 82-22-82.



More Cemetery Wardens Wanted — call Ray on 82-22-82 for more details. Free training will start this year...



First Cemetery Warden training day in August 2010 at All Saints Parish Church Freshwater

The IW Cemetery Warden Scheme is financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, through the West Wight Landscape Partnership and supported by the Isle of Wight Council.



The Holly and the Ivy....festive cheer or fear?

'The Holly and the Ivy' is a well-known English traditional Christmas carol. The carol intermingles Pagan imagery with the Christian message. The song's roots probably go back 1,000 years or more. Many Christian places of worship were built on the foundations of older pre-Christian sacred places. Holy, Ivy, Yew and other evergreens were seen as a sign of hope. Whilst the rest of nature died these plants mysteriously stayed alive. They would be taken into the home and church during the cold bleak days of winter. These plants are often found in churchyards and cemeteries and in the case of Yew and Holly are generally welcomed, or at least tolerated.

The same cannot be said of Ivy – which has been persecuted since Roman times and possibly earlier. This is due to the persistent belief that English Ivy is a parasite and will

strangle a tree. Both of these beliefs are ill-founded.

Ivy has its own root system and gains nutrients from its roots and thus does not live off the tree. The Forestry Commission and the Royal Horticultural Society state that Ivy clad trees grow just as well as non-ivy clad ones. If a tree is dieing and has Ivy on it – then something else has caused its demise.

Ivy is an important food source to butterflies, bees, birds and indirectly to bats. It provides a food source when little else is around.

But what of its damage to buildings and structures? This is when the subject becomes complicated.

Initial research by English Heritage suggests that leaving

ivy in place can help protect a structure from weathering.

Ivy creates a micro-climate keeping out the extremes of the weather. It is the removal of ivy that often causes the damage, a delicate old gravestone can have its facing removed along with the ivy. Carefully trimming ivy so that gravestones can be read is better than ripping it off.



Ivy torn from grave stone...

This message needs to be proclaimed in church newsletters – to prevent well-meaning people damaging our heritage and wildlife. A similar message also needs to be put in family history publications.

We will return to this subject in future newsletters and please read the info put in your train-

Buzzing around...

The word buzz is today associated with flying insects . It can also mean to talk excitedly. For enthusiasts of wildlife it isn't hard to get passionate about seeing a butterfly, bird or a rare plant. Not everyone shares our excitement – and the sight of long grass and habitat piles of dead wood – both known to benefit so many of our creatures – can

be contentious. To prevent misunderstanding it is important that the policy of allowing a 'space for wildlife' is explained. Burial grounds are often remnants of ancient meadows and have not been touched by modern agricultural methods. The fact that fertilisers and pesticides have not been applied means that rare wildflowers have survived -

these in turn support the bees, birds and other creatures. Making sure that pathways are maintained for tended graves can help prevent conflict. Simple notices at the entrances to the churchyard and in the church porch can inform and educate. At the same time why not ask for assistance in caring for the area?

Cemetery Warden Scheme IW

The Footprint Trust Ltd
The Riverside Centre
The Quay
Newport PO30 2QR

Phone: 01983 82-22-82

Email: info@footprint-trust.co.uk

Web : footprint-trust.co.uk

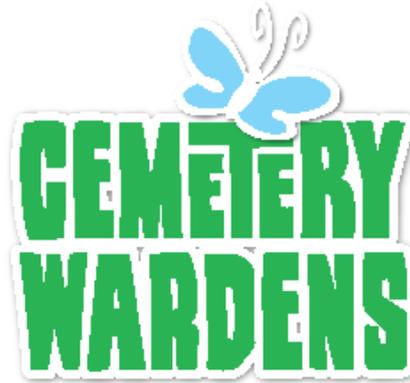
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Free CD from the Wildlife Trust

Enclosed is a CD that has the presentation from the Wildlife Trust, which was shown at the training day. It covers management for nature conservation and can be viewed at your local library if you do not have your own computer.

Alternatively we can print out the information for you.



Graveyard meadow...



This picture says it all— the benefits of leaving the grass long during the summer months...
