



TRUSTEES OF CEMETERIES

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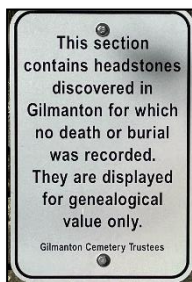
ANNUAL REPORT - 2022

Today's Quiz! How many cemeteries/burial grounds does Gilmanton have? Today there are 45 known cemeteries/burial grounds, but new sites are added periodically as more historic burial sites are located. One of the 45 sites was closed/relocated, four are private memorial sites, and two of the largest, Smith Meeting House and Pine Grove, are owned and operated by private non-profit organizations.

The remaining 38 sites with the addition of 2 historic sites are owned and/or managed by the Town through their Cemetery Trustees. Two Town cemeteries, Beech Grove and Buzzell, have graves for sale and accommodate new burials. The remaining sites have few opportunities for burials. All are maintained and protected by the Town. There is lots of mowing, trimming, leaf blowing and repairs for our staff as they crisscross the community throughout the maintenance season. This year, Sexton/Groundskeeper Paul Lines and Groundskeeper Karen Stockwell, have worked 331.5 hours maintaining these sites.

But then there is the false assumption that we have the burial records for all the cemeteries. The Town began maintaining these sites when the owners, descendants, neighbors, or other interested parties ceased to do so, and they were found to be "abandoned". There was no record of the names/number of burials they contained. We have an amazing inventory of those stones that existed in the 1990s but walking through any site you will find many grave depressions with no stone. Currently we list 1,134 known burials, but there is evidence of many more. From time to time, we get information from a family or an attic, and this is so important for us to be able to piece together names of those buried here.

A great recent example of this was Mr. Morrison, a very motivated descendant of those buried in the Merrill Cemetery who has done extensive research on his ancestors and was able to confirm the number and names of those buried there. He funded the repair of a broken stone and established a care fund for the continued maintenance of the site. Projects like this help repair sites and provide important records.



This year we created a place in Buzzell Cemetery to display "orphan" gravestones given to the Trustees. They were found on stone walls or in basements and barns of older homes. Some we match with existing graves, finding that they were replaced with a newer stone. But in some cases, there's no record of the name here or in surrounding communities. Although the State now regulates such removals, many occurred in the past and we struggle to find a way to reasonably accommodate these earlier stones. We will now erect them in a small, clearly marked section of Buzzell Cemetery. They will be respected in a protected site instead of being used as steppingstones in a garden and are available for genealogical research.

2022 year:

- The remaining dead, diseased and over-hanging trees within the Beech Grove Cemetery have been removed with the assistance of a special 2022 warrant article approved by the voters
- Completed the initial clearing of the Town Farm burial ground
- Completed an access to the Ayers Crypt for future crypt rehabilitation
- Ten-grave lot sold at Beech Grove
- Site sign replacements with new signs at Buzzell, Copp, Friends, Page and Tibbetts



- Security cameras continue to be used at selected sites

Upcoming Projects:

- Spring of 2023 the Trustees will be hosting a gravestone cleaning workshop led by John Lord of the NH Old Graveyards Assoc. If you are interested in learning these techniques and perhaps assisting to maintain stones in Town, contact us in April when we will have a confirmed date for this session (the tentative date is 10am, June 24, 2023, at the Friends Cemetery, adjacent to 484 State Route 140).
- Complete the rehabilitation of the Ayers crypt
- Reclaim Sanborn burial ground
- Gravestone repair and rehab at Tibbetts and Friends
- Continue erection of additional site name signs
- Create additional parking at the Beech Grove Cemetery
- Develop Trustee Handbook

The Trustees Wish to Thank:

- The Selectmen, Budget Committee, Trust Fund Trustees and Voters for their support
- The Road Agent and our assorted contractors for their help
- The Historical Society for assisting in inquiries and hosting tours of cemeteries
- Neighbors of cemeteries who help keep them safe and allow us access over their property
- The American Legion Auxiliary, Gilmanton Ellis-Geddes-Levitt Unit #102 for "Veterans at Rest in Gilmanton" to locate and inventory Veteran burials in Gilmanton. The list is available at <https://www.gilmantonnhistory.org/organizationsmilitary.asp> Contact ALA102nh@gmail.com.

The Primary Duty and Goal of the Trustees is to ensure the protection and maintenance of all sites now and in perpetuity by achieving financial security for our cemeteries. This will only happen in the form of private donations into cemetery care funds. The annual income from the funds is available for the maintenance and protection of these sites. Currently the total annual income from funds covers an average of only 37% of the annual costs. The balance is generously paid by taxpayers.

Donations into the funds is the only reasonable method to minimize or eliminate the need for taxpayer participation. We encourage everyone to consider a donation, in any amount. Donations can occur directly or through your estate planning process and are deductible under IRS Codes section 170(a)(1) and 170(c)(1). See https://www.gilmantonn.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf4451/f/uploads/donations_0.pdf. We thank you for your consideration of this option.

Lastly, if your burial plot was obtained prior to 1990, please confirm with us now that our records are correct as to who can be buried there. The Trustees are strictly constrained by law as to who may be buried in a plot for which there are no records (sadly the situation for most of the sites as they became the responsibility of the Town after lots had been transferred). Do not wait until a burial is imminent to do this. Contact any of the Trustees below for this or any other question or comment or e-mail directly to us at cemeteries@gilmantonn.org.

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Very Respectfully Submitted,
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<https://tinyurl.com/Cemetery-Site>

