



TRUSTEES OF CEMETERIES

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ANNUAL REPORT 2016

This has been a year of discovery, a long-awaited beginning, a meeting with friends and loss of a long-time supporter. We report on these below and continue to appreciate the opportunity to guide the actions by which Cemeteries and Burial Grounds and some of our Historic sites are kept safe and maintained.

We wish to begin our annual report by recognizing the passing of Richard Foss. Mr. Foss's actions in completely rehabilitating and maintaining an abandoned family cemetery created the perfect example of how descendants can act to protect and preserve a precious family site in perpetuity. At his own cost, Mr. Foss completely rehabilitated the stones, monument and general site of the Foss Cemetery and has continued to provide the annual maintenance. In addition, he established a Care Fund with the Town for future maintenance needs. We enjoyed our annual correspondence with Mr. Foss and his commitment to this important site.

We are very pleased to report that during 2016, the deed for the ground on which the Town Pound sits, as well as a 50' easement around the Pound, within which no disturbance can occur without Town approval, was officially offered to the Town by the owner, Mr. Cegelski, supported by the Planning Board and accepted by the Board of Selectmen. This provides permanent protection to this important Historic Site.

As noted in our prior report, Mr. Robert Ladd, researching ancestors he believes buried in the Hilliard Cemetery contracted with Jones Associates of Auburn, ME to perform ground-penetrating radar within the walls of the cemetery with hopes of determining the number of burials there. We appreciate the abutter, Mrs. Bartlett closing her pasture access so we all had easy access to the site for this project! Mr. Jones used a wheeled device similar to a push lawnmower; running it back and forth across the entire cemetery.



As he passed over the area, the screen on the machine showed changing density patterns of the earth underneath; changes that indicated areas of original ground, those areas that had been previously disturbed, presumably with burials, and areas of denser material such as buried stones. Mr. Ladd chose to also have the contractor provide a map of the overall results and with the permission of the Trustees marked the location of each presumed grave for future reference. Upon completion of the survey and evaluation of the results, Mr. Jones had located approximately 40 graves, including a very large, perhaps common grave in the center that may have been

established during an epidemic. He said he had never seen such a densely populated cemetery where graves directly abutted each other. Our first experience with ground-penetrating radar resulted in quite interesting findings!

And finally! At long-last! The project to repair, upright and straighten gravestones has begun! We contracted with Beede Cemetery Lettering to commence this project. We chose Guinea Ridge to begin and were also able to complete Page prior to year's end. We hope that you may have driven by one of these sites and seen the remarkable difference in appearance. The stones now stand straight, true and proud. Importantly, visitors to the site as well as the stones themselves are now protected from injury and damage that can occur when leaning stones fall. Mr. Beede did an excellent job and we have contracted with him to complete the same work at the Beech Grove, Buzzell, Mudgett, Tibbetts, Hillside and Sleeper cemeteries. At Buzzell he will also install granite posts along the internal driveway to keep cemetery vehicles from the grave areas. We look forward to moving on to additional sites during upcoming years.

As a direct result of this fine work, Mr. Henry Page made a generous donation to the Town to establish a Page Cemetery Care Fund. The interest from this fund may be used in the future to defray costs of upkeep. The fund is an open fund and donations are encouraged from descendants, townspeople and others concerned about the future of this cemetery.

Mr. Page's donation is a sterling example of how each of us can help determine the future of these sites. The taxpayers have been ever-generous in maintaining these sites through our annual budget; but each year it becomes more difficult for taxpayers to address the competing financial needs of the community. There is an alternative funding method of financing, and that is through the establishment and funding of additional Care Funds which are interest bearing funds, held by the Town, for the perpetual maintenance of these sites. Some care funds do exist, and currently help to defray costs each year; there are simply too few to alone be of significant help. The Trustees have already begun to consider these long-term matters and simply wish to put before the people that donations of any amount to the Town in the name of your preferred cemetery or for general town-wide cemetery use, either at present, or during consideration of your estate planning will help protect these sites in perpetuity and lessen the long-term burden on taxpayers. Donations to the Town for the care of Cemeteries are deductible under IRS Codes section 170(a)(1) and 170(c)(1). We thank you for your consideration of this option.

We also met the new owners of the abutting property to our third Edgerly Cemetery off Hatch Road. We are delighted that they have given us full access to the cemetery over their property so that we may begin to clean-out and add this to our list of maintained sites. Thank you!

Last, but certainly not least, the Trustees were delighted to meet with local friends, being the descendants of those buried at the Guinea Ridge Cemetery when we discussed the condition of the wire fence across the front. Olive and Bob Tibbetts, Pat Sweeney and Debbie Coleman met with us in August. It was wonderful to hear about the history of the fence and their personal concerns that it be maintained if at all possible. The fence is a twisted/braided wire fence with black metal upright fence posts topped with decorative finials. The fence is in disrepair including partial burial, sag, gate hinges and latch and damage to some posts and finials. We

recognize the importance of this fence to the community and descendants and will be focusing on repairs rather than replacement as possible. During the discussion, we learned that there may be some records or plan of the cemetery that still exists. Wouldn't that be a spectacular find! We greatly appreciate such input and history from the community!

During 2016 Trustees and Staff Also:

- Completed the sale of two graves at Beech Grove Cemetery and laid out lot graves for interment at Beech Grove (1), Hillside (2), Buzzell (1), and one headstone installation
- Continued support for the American Legion Auxiliary, Gilmanton Ellis-Geddes-Levitt Unit #102 on their "**Veterans at Rest in Gilmanton**". This project attempts to locate and inventory the site of every Veteran buried in Gilmanton. The Auxiliary continues to request the help of residents to provide the name and location of any era Veteran buried in Gilmanton. See more at www.alanh102.org/page8.html or contact the Auxiliary at P.O. Box 119, Gilmanton, NH 03237-0119, or ALA102@metrocast.net
- Attended the NH Cemetery Association workshop
- Identified for the Town's records one new private memorial site
- Hosted a visit to the Mudgett plot in Beech Grove Cemetery by the History Channel in preparation for their multi-part miniseries on Herman Mudgett

Upcoming Projects:

- Post information/regulation signs at cemetery sites
- Draft Trustee Handbook
- Work with Probate Court to simplify lot ownership process

The Trustees Wish to Thank:

- Our wonderful maintenance staff Carl Moorehead and Paul Lines, with help from Alec Carpenter and Ayden Ernst, for their great work!
- The Selectmen and Voters of the Town of Gilmanton for their continued support for the protection of these important sites
- Neighbors to many of the sites who remove brush and limbs, allow us access over their property and keep a watchful eye on these important community sites

Please remember that over time the Town has assumed maintenance duties for these sites, but in most cases, absolutely no records or plans of the burial grounds were provided to the Town. If you have information about any of the burials, lot ownership, copies of lot deeds or other details, please, please, please, consider sharing with us! Contact any of the Trustees below or e-mail directly to us at cemeteries@metrocast.net. Please visit the Town's website at www.gilmantonnh.org/index.php?pg=org&oc=ct for additional information on sites, including available lots. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your information, questions or comments.

Very Respectfully Submitted,

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