

Replacement of Headstones

Recently one RSHG Member and her husband, Pamela and Michael Hartnall, decided to refurbish or replace the headstones on the graves of Michael's Great Grandfather, Great Great Grandmother and Great Great Grandfather. They approached Wight Stonemasonry Ltd to carry out the work and their men were kind enough to explain to David Earle how the new stones had been constructed and how they would be erected on site.

The first stone to be refurbished was that of Michael's Great Great Grandfather, Ebenezer Hartnall and his daughter Bessie. This grave is detailed on our Website as Plot 2170 in Old Section P on Map RSHG 009 D1.



The stone was intact and still upright but needed extensive cleaning and the pictures show the headstone before and after cleaning. The grass surrounding the stone suffered but is recovering.

The second headstone was that of Lavinia Hartnall, who was Michael Hartnall's Great Great Grandmother and is detailed on our Website as Plot 1321 in Old Section I on Map RSHG 023 B2.



This stone was broken and in very poor condition and had to be completely replaced. A concrete base was installed below ground level together with a stone slab drilled for stainless steel dowels. The bottom of the new headstone was drilled to accept the dowels and was further supported by two stone blocks against the front and back as haunching. Only the stone itself remains visible above the ground.

The third stone, that of Michael's Great Grandfather John Chamberlain Hartnall, was much more elaborate. It consisted of a Bed Base, a Middle Base and a Top Base surmounted by a cross in New Section G which has not, as yet, been mapped by the Group.

The stone was re-instated with two new bases and a new cross with all new inscriptions. The three bases are aligned by slate dowels and bonded together with a hydraulic lime and sand mixture. The cross has a tenon at the base and is secured in a mortise cut into the Top Base. The new headstone is pictured below.

The original stone was provided by Ellerys Stonemasons and the letters 'ELLER' can still be seen on the stone that forms the Bed Base. Ellerys premises were on the corner of Hill Street by the East Gate of the Cemetery.

Both of the new headstones incorporate an inscription detailing the fact that they were replaced or reinstated by Michael Hartnall.

On Sunday 14th December 2008 the weather was fine and Janette Gregson and David Earle were very pleased to meet Pamela and Michael Hartnall, from Godalming together with a cousin, Christopher Westcott, who lives in Ryde. They had all come to the Cemetery to see the headstones that had been cleaned or replaced and were very pleased with the work that had been done. The picture is of Christopher and Michael by the grave of their Great Grandfather, John Chamberlain Hartnall.



Details of all the graves and the full inscriptions on each headstone can be seen by going to our Website at www.rshg.org.uk and using the Surname Search facility to bring up all the Hartnall graves.