

Historic Cemetery Advisory Commission 2025 Annual Report



The commission met twelve (12) times in 2025.

Attendance at meetings:

Lew Keen (12)

Penny Fitch (11)

Deborah Peart (10)

NHS-Bert Lippincott (10)

PSNC- Gary Ruff (10)

Bob Conway (9)

Elliott Caldwell (9)

Scott Wheeler (9)

Jimmy Lappin (8)

RIBHS- Theresa Stokes (6)

Nina Barbaresi (8)

Zachary Russell (5)

Pam Kelley (5)

Barry Fitch (2)

Sharon Hussey (2)

Dominique Alfandre (2)

Larry Davis (1)

Becky Schlip (1)

Jane Carey (1)

Steve Marino (1)

Eileen Costa (1)

Rob Vitello (1)

Activities/accomplishments

Stonework/sitework

1. 72 marble or granite stones, and 13 slate stones were treated this year.
2. All stones that were down in Braman and Old City Cemetery have been reset.
3. Stonework in the Common Burying Ground continues with about 200 marble or granite stones still down, about 22 box or ledger stones needing work and a number of slate stones needing treatment.
4. Stonework by Beyond the Gravestone was masterfully accomplished. The city is fortunate to have them working in Newport.
5. Fencing between Island Cemetery and God's Little Acre was installed. This replaced fencing that was taken down due to storm damage. GLA Preservation Plan funded half the cost of the fence (\$18,000), Island Cemetery contributed \$11,000 and the city contributed \$7,000.
6. GLA Preservation Plan removed nine stones for treatment that included the stone for Roger William's daughter and granddaughter located in the Clifton site.
7. The commission created signs to mark the sections in the Common Burying Ground to help people navigate the site (sample sign image below). An updated map of the site was created to use on the signs by way of a QR code. The map was added to the commission webpage on the city web site.
8. Volunteer Dougald Parkinson straightened more than 250 leaning or down slate and marble stones in the Common Burying Ground
9. All the marble stones in Braman Cemetery were treated with D2 to reduce biological growth.
10. The commission refocused attention on the Jonathan Easton burial site. The city solicitor was contacted regarding the role of the city with the site.
11. The banner signs along Farewell Street were replaced.
12. Our landscapers, All Island Landscapers, did an excellent job in our burial sites this year.

Community engagement

1. The commission worked with Center Aquidneck who presented Life After Life, a theatrical event in the Common Burying Ground (November 1st and 2nd). The event engaged more than 300 people with the site's history and importance.
2. An exhibit, Opening the Book on Newport Burials, was featured in the Newport Library lobby May-September.

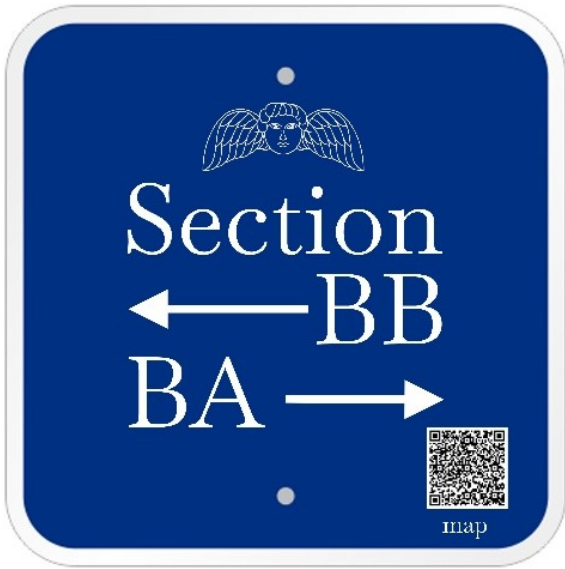
3. The commission offered a number of free programs during Rhode Island Historic Cemetery Awareness months.
 - a. Lecture- The Kings of Newport- presented at the Edward King House, April 23rd
 - b. Open House- Coggeshall Burial Ground, May 10th rescheduled from April 26th due to rain
 - c. Lecture- Farewell to Newport, April 27th in the Belmont Chapel
 - d. Tour- Wilbur burial site and Bliss House, May 3rd
 - e. Lecture- Newport Neighborhood Burial sites, May 11th in the Belmont Chapel
4. A tour of the Common Burying Ground featuring Patriots and Loyalists was well- received on July 4th following the ceremony at the Ellery grave.
5. The commission restarted a conversation with the organization maintaining Jewish burials in Braman Cemetery about enhancing the fencing on Farewell Street
6. The commission supported tours and programs offered by other organizations including Trinity Church, Historic Music of Newport, Museum of Newport's Irish History, Center Aquidneck, United States Lighthouse Society, and Island Cemetery.

We are very pleased to be part of the team that maintains our historic burial sites. Very little could be accomplished without the support of City Council and the efforts of city staff.

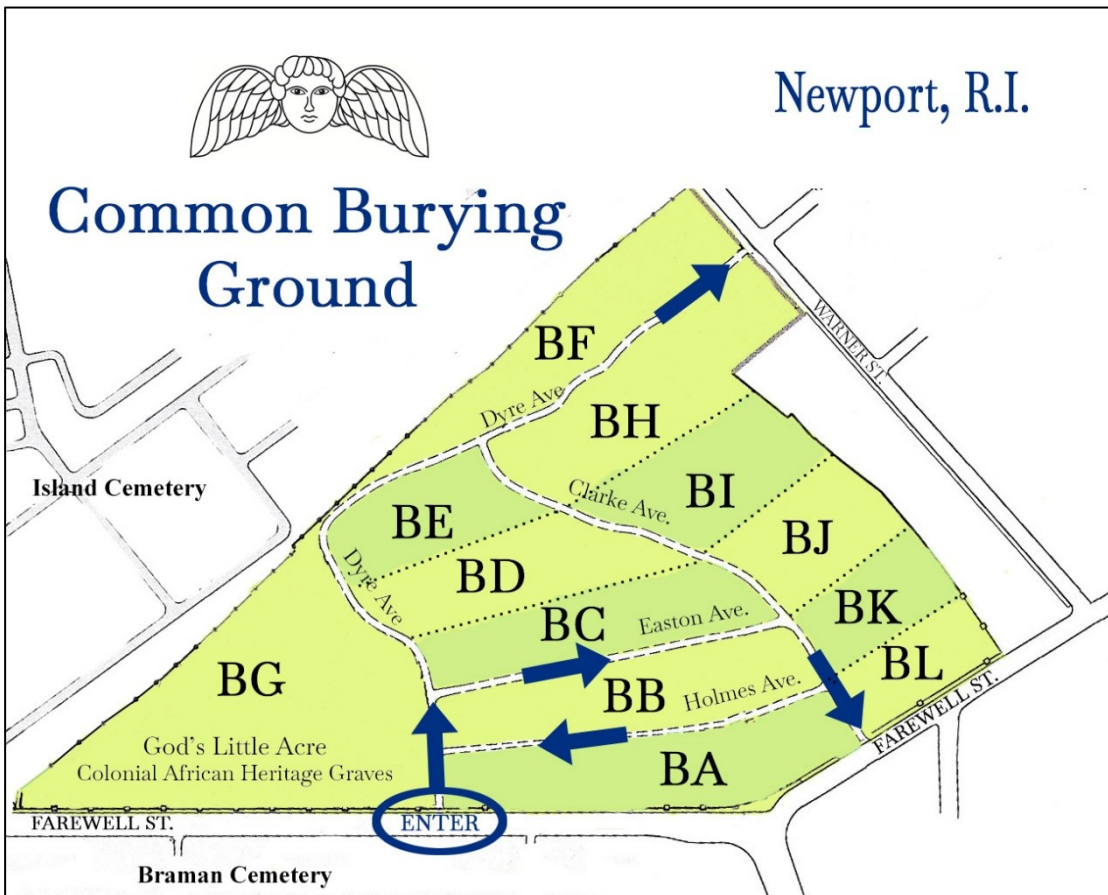
Part of the library exhibit



One of the section markers for the Common Burying Ground



New Common Burying Ground map linked to the QR code on the signs.



New banner signs along Farewell Street.

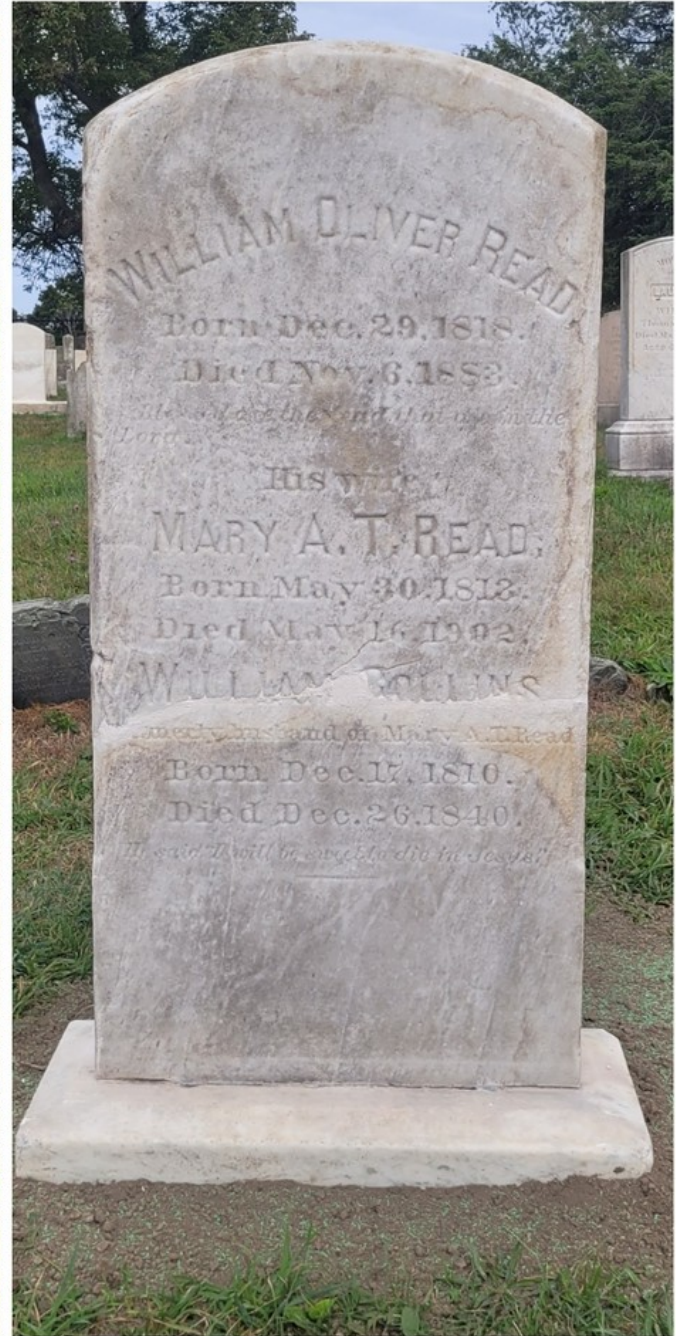


A Section of the new fence between God's Little Acre and Island Cemetery.



Some stones that were treated this year.

marble



granite



8. George Mason

Slate



This stone was reconstructed from about 50 pieces.



Hannah Ward