

# Hope Cemetery & Woods

Summer 2019 Newsletter

Volume V, Issue 2

## From The Presidents of the Boards...

**SUCCESS!** Following a two-year campaign, we are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the Hope Woods Conservation Initiative. In collaboration with the Kennebunk Land Trust, the Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods exceeded the goal of \$1.4 million. Through the generosity of over 375 individuals, local businesses, the voters of Kennebunk, and grants from local foundations and the Land for Maine's Future fund, the 72 acres of Hope Woods are now permanently protected by a conservation easement. This beautiful open space in the heart of Kennebunk is available for everyone to enjoy forever!

The conservation easement is held by Kennebunk Land Trust, who will enforce the easement provisions and provide stewardship. The property continues to be owned by Hope Cemetery Corporation, who has assigned management of the Woods to Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods.

Proceeds from the sale of the conservation easement will allow Hope Cemetery to invest for the future, care for its ancient sentinel trees (some of which are over 200 years old), repair roads, continue to maintain old and new grave sites, and more.

Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods has begun the design process for the creation of a Universally Accessible Trail through Hope Woods. Once installed, along with ADA compliant parking, this trail will make the Woods accessible to anyone with a mobility issue.

Hope Cemetery was founded in 1790 by a few local citizens and has continuously operated as a burial ground for local residents and others, and has memorialized people lost at sea. The Cemetery continues to sell burial plots and plans to continue its high quality of maintenance into the 22nd century.

The woods, trails and cemetery have never looked better. Please come and enjoy!

George C. Harrington, President, Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods

Betsy T. Stevens, President, Hope Cemetery Corporation

### Hope Cemetery Corporation, Barnard Lane, PO Box 211, Kennebunk, ME 04043

**Email:** [hopecemetery@yahoo.com](mailto:hopecemetery@yahoo.com)

**Phone:** 207-985-7846

**Website:** [www.hopecemeterykennebunk.com](http://www.hopecemeterykennebunk.com)

**Superintendent:** Thomas Litchfield

#### Board of Directors:

Betsy T. Stevens, President   George C. Harrington, Vice President   Gail Preble, Secretary   Tom Dobens, Treasurer  
Pam Eagleson, Tom Kasprzak, Betsy MacDonald, Steve Mahler, Cheryl Price

### Hope Cemetery & Woods, PO Box 1550, Kennebunk, ME 04043

**Email:** [friendsofhcw@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhcw@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.hopecemeterykennebunk.com](http://www.hopecemeterykennebunk.com)

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## Cleaning the Copse

*Enjoy this article written by Merrick (Rick) McCabe. He and his wife, Alexandra Dix McCabe, are volunteering their time to restore a section of the Old Church Yard section of the cemetery.*

The roots of volunteering at Hope Cemetery Kennebunk stem from the arrival of a stowaway aboard a vessel from Ireland docked at Boston Harbor in 1792. The stowaway's name was "Smallpox." Amongst the 8,346 persons infected during the 1792 smallpox epidemic, the lives of a married couple were claimed, leaving nine children who were sent to relatives in Portland, Maine.

A search for information about their surviving daughter led to Hope Cemetery to search for and explore transcriptions on burial sites of the children's guardians: John Low, Dr. Jacob Fisher, Parker Webster and Benjamin Brown. Most convenient access was at the passage to the "Old Church Yard" from the Kennebunk Free Library parking area. On that northwest side, broken granite posts, that formerly held steel rails, mark the boundary of the cemetery. The footpath entrance to the historic cemetery opens to the Mendum family site including the headstone of patriarch Nathaniel, uprooted by the tree bordering the parking area, and other toppled and damaged Mendum headstones.

The "copse project" emerged from the intention to preserve and stabilize the headstones in family plots, repair the granite posts adjacent to the library parking area, and beautify the grounds. The "copse" is an area of small trees, shrubs, and invasive plants that follows the granite posts and parking area boundary northwest from the Hearse House to the wetland area below the Old Church Yard, and along the parking area behind the hip-roofed Federal style building at 5 Fletcher Street.



A sense of urgency to dedicate resources to restore and preserve the area developed after witnessing the impact of a couple of winters of intense frost heaves, and summers of boundless, invasive growth that has hidden headstones from view. During an exploratory evaluation of the copse, the headstone of the child Louisa A. Webb, and Mendum family members were re-discovered. It is possible the invasive growth has covered the Nason and Hatch family plots

recorded on Old Church Yard surveys, whose headstones are no longer visible.



Developing a plan for learning conservation practices and implementing the work led to joining and volunteering with Spirits Alive, in Portland Maine, a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the historic Eastern Cemetery. Their model is founded on the pillars of sustainable restoration, education, and advocacy efforts for years to come.

What started as a personal goal to beautify the copse has grown into a vision to generate community interest in restoration, preservation and maintenance of The Old Church Yard. Once the first phase of cleaning the copse is completed, the intention is to solicit First Parish Unitarian

Universalist congregants who are descendants of family members interred in the burial ground. The project to restore the Hearse House, one of the few left in Maine, has been initiated, and a proposal will be developed for the restoration of the steel rails to reconnect the granite posts.

## A CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS!!

We exceeded our goal of \$1.4 million! This allowed for the sale of the Conservation Easement protecting Hope Woods forever and significantly improving the financial stability of Hope Cemetery Corporation.

On Sunday, May 19th, Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods and the Kennebunk Land Trust held a celebration in the meadow in Hope Woods marking the successful completion of the Hope Woods Conservation Initiative. Attendees included campaign donors, town officials, representatives from Senators Collins' and King's offices, and representatives from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Land for Maine's Future.



Refreshments were provided by Destination Catering, who brought whoopie pies and other sweet treats and switched their mobile Caravan cocktail bar to ice cream and homemade rhubarb soda for the day.

A ceremonial ribbon cutting was held with assistance from the



Chamber of Commerce. Trail walks with Maine Master Naturalists Gordon Collins, Linda Grenfell, and Joan Hull concluded the day.

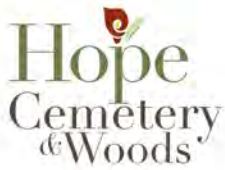
Photos courtesy of Cynthia Fitzmorris

### Universally Accessible Trail

Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods has begun an exciting new project! The design process and grant applications are underway for a universally accessible trail in Hope Woods. This new trail will be a little less than a mile long with a bypass creating a shorter path for those who prefer it. Once installed, along with ADA-compliant parking, the trail will make the Woods available to anyone with a mobility issue.

### Thousands of Burial Plots Available in Hope Cemetery

The sale of the conservation easement protects Hope Woods from future development. When the decision was made to preserve those 72 acres, the Hope Cemetery Corporation Board of Directors was careful to retain enough property to allow for future growth of the cemetery. The cemetery now has enough space for over 2000 burial plots, enough to take the cemetery well into the 22nd century! Information about purchasing deeds and all services provided by Hope Cemetery can be found on our website by clicking on the "Services" tab. Superintendent Tom Litchfield will answer any questions at 207-985-7846.



PO Box 1550  
Kennebunk, ME 04043

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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### **Join a Committee!**

Both the Hope Cemetery Corporation and Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods are forming committees to address specific needs more efficiently.

If you're interested in learning more about joining any of the following committees, please email us at [friendsofhcw@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhcw@gmail.com) or call Betsy at 207-985-2627.

Finance Committee - budgets and financial planning

Stewardship Committee - trail maintenance, assist with universally accessible trail

Publicity/Events Committee—press releases, social media, newsletter, website, event planning

Planning Committee—long-range planning

### **Donations Always Greatly Appreciated**

Moving forward from our successful campaign, Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods will continue to seek support for ongoing maintenance of Hope Cemetery (such as road repairs and tree work) and improvements to Hope Woods (such as the universally accessible trail, interpretive signage, and kiosks at trail entrances). We're thankful for your ongoing enthusiasm and support!

Checks payable to Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods may be mailed to:

PO Box 1550, Kennebunk, ME 04043

Or you may make a credit card donation via the Friends page on our website:

<https://hopecemeterykennebunk.com>