

**CORNISH CEMETERY DEPARTMENT**  
**2010**

The Cemetery Department had a busy, productive year in 2010. Robert Edgerton and William Thurber were hired to maintain the cemeteries. They did a great job – I thank them for that.

Cornish has 18 cemeteries. Of these 18, 8 are kept maintained on a regular basis. The other 10 are maintained as necessary throughout the year. We are also responsible for mowing several other town properties.

Several projects were completed this year:

The storm in February 2010, dropped half of a large pine tree in/around the Chase Cemetery. In trying to clean it up prior to Memorial Day, we relied on volunteers for help. Leo Maslan Troop Leader of Boy Scout Troop 332 and member Lucas Jameson stepped up to help. Lucas organized members of the troop along with parents to assist. Several loads of branches were hauled away thanks to Leo Maslan and Larry Dingee. Lenny Pillsbury offered assistance by removing the last of the large piece with his logging truck. Several headstones along with granite fence posts were broken. Mike Stringer who has knowledge of repairing headstones was called in to help. He repaired the headstones and granite posts, some broken into several pieces. The rest of the broken fence will be replaced in the spring of 2011, by Boy Scout Troop 332.

The Tool Shed/Vault at the Comings Cemetery has been completely restored. This building, a large piece of Cornish history, had the potential of caving in and being lost forever. Fritz Maslan made the decision to restore this building as his Eagle Scout Project. A huge undertaking but one that left the building to stand another 100+ years. A grant from the Tasker Fund along with donations from Colleen O'Neill, Cheston and Nancy Newbold supported this project. A quilt, restored and donated by Ms. O'Neill, was raffled with the proceeds also used to help offset the cost of materials.

After consultation with Richard A. Boisvert, PhD, State Archeologist, the decision was made to move several cornerstones from plots previously purchased by residents that had been set in previous years to either other locations within those cemeteries or in one case, to another cemetery. Dr. Boisvert stated "Concerns about the sale of new plots in these cemeteries in Cornish are well founded. It is my experience that in any cemetery of any size which dates to more than 100 years there are many unmarked graves for which there are no indications of their existence. Grave markers often disintegrate, have been removed or may never have existed. Regardless, the graves should be left intact". With permission from the Selectmen, people whose cornerstones would be moved were contacted. Their patience and understanding has not gone unnoticed. Several cemeteries, or portions of cemeteries, have now been officially closed to further internments by the Selectmen. This will help reduce the chance of disturbing a grave.

In order to allow the relocation of cornerstones in the Huggins Cemetery, some sight work was necessary. The removal of tree stumps, relocation of a drainage ditch and fill was needed. I was able to hire Kyle Witty to remove the tree stumps prior to the ground freezing. Unable to get any of the roadside ditching this summer, put a halt to the expansion and the relocation of previously placed cornerstones. I have been assured that this summer, 2<sup>nd</sup> in line to the landowners themselves, any ditchings will be delivered to the Huggins Cemetery. I thank those with cornerstones to be relocated, for their patience in resetting their stones and apologize for the delay.

Another project for this summer will include the continued maintenance of our cemeteries and town properties. In addition, we will continue work on the Hearse House restoration. This past summer, Travis Callahan reset the stones on the west side of the building to support the building. The stones had become loose leaving the building off its foundation on that back corner. This building was built back in the 1800's and enlarged by James F. Tasker, to accommodate the Town's new hearse. It is another piece of our history and most definitely worthy of restoration. This project is partially funded by the Cornish Historical Society.

I am also trying to obtain some information regarding the Johnson Cemetery. According to records, this cemetery was vandalized back in the 1950's leaving only one headstone standing. It is on private property and I thank the landowners for their willingness to allow access as I research information. If you have any information that might be helpful in piecing it back together, please give me a call.

I am also working on drafting a set of Cemetery Guidelines which will help clarify existing rules along with updating information. These guidelines will also include the State Statutes on cemeteries, burials, etc... These guidelines will help set a standard that can be followed for years to come.

I would like to thank those who supported me in my first year as Cemetery Sexton. I look forward to serving another year as Sexton to continue the work we began last year.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to purchase the right to inter in any of our open cemeteries, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale H. Lawrence  
Cemetery Sexton