

Cemetery bee at New Carlow cemetery May 7

By Mike Riley

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According to a posting on the Bancroft and Area history Facebook page on April 29, there is going to be a cemetery bee at New Carlow cemetery on May 7 at 9 a.m. They will be accepting monetary donations and donations of time and effort for those who want to help out with the maintenance. Alan Woodcox, the chair of the New Carlow cemetery board, talks more about the bee that will be taking place this weekend.

The New Carlow cemetery is located at 220 New Carlow Road, south of Boulter Road in Maple Leaf. Woodcox says that all the cemeteries around the area, including New Carlow cemetery, have a yearly work bee to cut the grass, fix any broken fence posts or repair any grave sites that have been damaged or fallen over. He says it is usually the first Saturday of May every year, and takes about two to three hours. This was with the exception of the past couple of years with COVID-19. Even then, he says that people who lived really close by would keep up with maintenance as best they could.

"Our hunting camp is close there too and a tree fell down so we just came out during hunting season. A bunch of us there and cleaned it up. If anything needs to be done, you get hold of people and go get it done," he says.

Woodcox says there was a time when there were enough people who lived around the cemetery to do the work, but now not so much, as people inevitably pass away. Consequently, they need donations to continue some of the work, especially hiring somebody to do the grass cutting, which is even more expensive with gas price increases nowadays.

"One of the guys has a backhoe that's not too far up the road. There'll be a couple of four wheelers with trailers on them taking pine needles away and that and a couple of limbs that need to be cut off some trees," he says.

Woodcox says that in addition to fixing damaged or fallen over tombstones, they reorient stones that have settled.

"Over the years, sometimes you have tombstones that settle. They're 80 or 90 years old and they've settled a bit. So, we get a couple of bars and lift them up and straighten them out. Somebody from the family comes and sees it and they're all happy which is good," he says.

Woodcox told Bancroft This Week on May 2 that his great grandfather, great aunts and uncles and some cousins are buried at the New Carlow cemetery, and he says that most of the people living in the area are third or fourth generation and have family and friends buried at the cemetery.

"Pretty well every cemetery has these [bees] and they're always needing more to fix something or to do stuff," he says. "It's the church and the community of that cemetery that step up to the plate when stuff needs to be done."