

2024 RHC Request for volunteers to adopt historic gravesites in Rye yielded a core team of four individuals.

The volunteers have reviewed the several conflicting lists of sites on file with the RHS, and consolidated into one master listing for use going forward. There are 60 locations on the master list. This includes some which are located on Star Island and one on West Road which is technically in North Hampton.

Each of the sites has or will be visited by someone from this group. There are a few sites remaining to be confirmed with a visit and the team is continuing to complete this part of the project. Visits confirm the location, condition and new photographs are taken.

Caretakers who are looking after sites have been identified and we have their contact information. As more are confirmed, they are added. Several sites are being maintained already. We continue to look for new caretakers to maintain sites once cleared.

2024:

Sites were cleared by the group and adopted by caretakers: 166 Locke, 252 Washington, 410 Washington

2025:

Sites were cleared by the group and adopted by caretakers: 605 Brackett, 125 Cable, 3 Rands Lane, 300 Sagamore, 435 South, 241 Washington

A hands-on workshop was conducted June, 2025 in coordination with the New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association. Volunteers participated to learn headstone maintenance and other infrastructure needs such as fixing broken markers, righting toppled markers and dealing with sunken stones. This workshop was held at the Varrell family burial site at 300 Sagamore Road. Three headstones were returned to their upright position. Volunteers also repaired one of these headstones which had been broken into three pieces.

2026:

One new site has been identified located at property address 400 Sagamore Road, believed to be Trefethen family burials.

Geo-location info has been obtained for all sites and will be provided to the town to be marked on the town tax maps. Some sites are already indicated by a cross on the town tax map, this project will make identification more complete in our town records.

Eagle Scout project to install a reflection bench at the 605 Brackett site was approved by RHD, RCC, Building Inspector, Select Board and is moving forward towards completion.

Ongoing:

Update the driving tour of Rye gravesites to include more locations.

Obtain signage for about 20 road side burial sites.

Continue group volunteer cleanup days which are typically held in the spring and fall. There are several volunteers who have stepped forward to offer general assistance in clearing and maintaining sites as needed.

The master list spreadsheet of gravesites is a fluid document. It is posted on the RHC website page for access by anyone. Contact info or other sensitive data is not be included for public access. Historical information documented by Louise Tallman is being retained.