

'Gravestone Girls' share tales from Norton's burial grounds

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NORTON — Three cemetery historians found the sun while visiting Norton's graveyards this summer.

Images of suns and swirls "pop up over and over again" on Norton gravestones, according to Brenda Sullivan, one of the founders of the Gravestone Girls.

"Perhaps you had a carving house close by, or they were taken from a particular individual or group of individuals," she said.

The Gravestone Girls recently shared their insight into Norton's cemeteries with the Norton Historical Society.

Historical society member Janice Burkhart said

it's unclear how her group will use the information.

One possible future project is to catalogue Norton's cemeteries through digital photos, she said.

"We have some very significant art in our cemeteries," Burkhart said.

Sullivan said the Gravestone Girls are cemetery historians who give presentations about cemetery art, history and symbolism to area groups.

She said Burkhart invited the group to Norton after meeting her at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference in April.

In August, Sullivan's group visited Norton's cemeteries, taking 160 photos and rubbing headstones.

The mementoes were part of the group's Oct. 20 presentation to the historical society. Burkhart and Mark Cedarfield of the Norton Memorial Funeral Home sponsored the talk.

People can "get a real good flavor of the evolution of the town through these cemeteries," Sullivan said.

"We're showing the people we're talking to what's in their backyard," she said.

The Gravestone Girls will give the historical society a disk of the photos, "so when somebody looks back 50 years from now," they'll have a record, she said.

Burkhart said she'd like to see the historical society put those photos on its Web site.