

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 79 – January 2014

Free to members

In this Issue:

- Private Edward Francis Hughes (d. 1916) Page 4
- The Bramah and St John Families in Norwood Page 5
- Who Made the White House White? Page 7
- Sir George Shenton (1842-1909) Page 9
- The Story of Sir Henry Bessemer Page 13
- Recent FOWNC Events Page 14
- Forthcoming Events Page 15
- A Bit of Mystery Page 16

Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

The dislocation within Lambeth caused by internal restructuring is slowly being resolved it seems, and there seems to be a willingness amongst officers to get back on track as regards agreeing a way forward for the Cemetery, including a Heritage Lottery Fund submission. We are informed that a project officer is to be allocated to this work in the New Year. We can but hope! Meanwhile, the drainage and roadway works at the entrance to the Cemetery continue apace, and by chance works on Norwood High Street and Robson Road aimed in part at slowing traffic speeds in the road in front of Church Gate have also commenced.

One rather sad item of news is that Cemetery Project Officer Callum Livingstone has returned to his native New Zealand. Callum was a great supporter of FOWNC and helped guide the capital works programme through the difficult times that we have faced in the last couple of years. We wish him well, and in turn welcome his replacement Steven Wong. Congratulations also to Jacqueline Landy, who has recently been appointed Norwood Cemetery Manager. We wish her well.



Gravestone of Sir Charles Tritton (1845–1918)

The extent of the works now being undertaken in the Cemetery is evident in the accompanying photograph. The works include not only new drainage, but also resurfacing of the roads and realignment and resurfacing of the courtyards/roadways on each side of the Tite arch as well as the Church Road gates and roadway. As part of these works we hope that the railings of the Grade II listed Gilbert memorial (grave 8,659, square 115), damaged again in the previous phase of the project, are at last to be completely renovated.



December 2013: A view of the Tite arch showing the extent of the drainage and associated works



Boundary wall (square 45)

As to other matters, we have asked that attention be given to the badly subsiding trench in the road from the Greek Necropolis to the crematorium caused by the insertion of the electricity supply to the new cremators some years back (see Newsletter 67, January 2010). We have also pointed out that the monument at the top of the hill leading to the crematorium (grave 1,425, square 66), demolished in 2009 during the cremator replacement works, still awaits repair. A new concern, however, are the cracks in the boundary wall at the junction of the gardens to houses in Hubbard Road and in Durban Road (square 45). Colin Fenn has been keeping an eye on these cracks for some time, and notes that they have widened markedly this year. We have of course notified Lambeth that action is needed.

Monument Restoration

On other fronts, thanks to Chris Berens and his family and English Heritage, there is welcome progress as regards the remedial work to the Grade II* listed Berens mausoleum (grave 5,408, square 63). Our scrub clearance and monument conservation programme also makes steady progress. As notified in the last Newsletter, the memorial to the banker Sir Charles Ernest Tritton (1845–1918; grave 26,669, square 19) has been cleaned in sympathy with the Friends of Brockwell Park’s campaign to restore the Clocktower that he gave to the Park in 1897. Tritton’s house Bloomfield Hall stood opposite the Convent on Central Hill where the Bloomhall Estate now stands. The Tritton family name is also commemorated in Tritton Road SE21, just behind the Cemetery. We have also proceeded to clean and renovate the grave of the locomotive designer Robert Francis Fairlie (1831–1885; grave 20,788, square 22). Straightening the headstone proved too difficult, however, as it was found to be built into a stone vault and the whole structure has tilted. On the other hand, the cleaning and realignment of the tomb of tunnelling pioneer James Henry Greathead (grave 27,103,



The tombstone of J.H. Greathead and family: During renovation and afterwards

square 83) proved much easier. It was interesting to see how flimsy the substructure was given Greathead's pre-eminence in underground matters... But rest assured, the plinth and kerbs now rest securely on a concrete foundation thanks to the efforts of conservator Ron Knee and his team!

John Hughes Bicentennial

As reported in the *South London Press*, on 13 November a delegation from Donetsk accompanied by the Ukrainian Ambassador visited the Cemetery to lay a wreath at the grave of the founder of Donetsk, John Hughes (1814–1889; grave 18,353, square 91), in anticipation of celebrations to mark the bicentenary of his birth. Thanks to Rose and Colin Fenn and David Stripp for coordinating the ceremony.



Ukrainian Ambassador Volodymyr Khandogiy and the Mayor of Donetsk, Oleksandr Lukyanchenko (right) at John Hughes' grave

As FOWNC members will know, the grave was restored with funds donated by Mr Rinat Akhmetov, the sponsor and head of the Foundation for the Development of the Ukraine. The Ambassador was pleased to see the restored monument and discussed the possibility of planting Ukrainian flowers on the site and reinstating the railings round the grave.

Prior to this visit, a reception in memory of Hughes sponsored by the British-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce had been held in London on 25 October. The Deputy Head of the Donetsk Regional State Administration, Oleksandr Fomenko, attended the event and also visited the Cemetery and laid a wreath at the grave. I was in turn pleased to attend the reception and drink a toast to Hughes!

Private Edward Francis Hughes (d. 1916)

Bob Flanagan

Whilst inspecting the cracks in the boundary wall discussed on page 2 (square 45), Nicholas Long and I came across a common grave marker in the form of a Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) memorial.

It is a fact that Lambeth during their clearance operations removed family gravestones that were not only the property of the grave owners, but also marked war graves. The CWGC have quietly been placing new headstones throughout the Cemetery over the last 20 or so years to mark the approximate places of these war graves, presumably in fulfillment of their statutory obligation. Thousands of headstones on common graves also disappeared over the years and it seems that the CWGC, when confronted with a war grave in a common grave at Norwood, chose to honour all those buried therein rather than just the one soldier. This was done without consultation either with FOWNC, or with the Scheme of Management Committee.

Whilst one cannot but admire the end result, it does seem strange to have acted without consultation. Moreover, one has to delve to find out that this marker lies on the grave of Private Hughes, who died on 16 December 1916 at the age of 33 whilst serving in the Training Reserve.¹ Given that the CWGC chose to record all the burials in the grave in this case, but have only recorded service burials in private graves, one does wonder at their logic? And clearly we need to research the other war graves in the Cemetery to see if all now have headstones of one sort or another. There are 136 Commonwealth burials

from 1914–18, 52 such burials from 1939–45, and one Belgian war burial. There were also 18 cremations from 1939–45. Private Hughes is named on the Screen Wall Memorial behind the Cross of Sacrifice in the forecourt of the Cemetery that bears the names of the 1914–18 burials not marked by specific headstones at the time the wall was constructed.



Common grave marker (grave 34,331, square 46)

¹ Before 1 September 1916, army recruits were posted to reserve battalions of infantry regiments for basic training before joining an active service unit. With the introduction of conscription, the local nature of infantry regiment recruitment was abandoned and training was centralised. The official complement of the Training Reserve was some 208,500.

The Bramah and St John Families in Norwood

Florence Heller

Some years ago I inherited portraits of Mary Ann Bramah and Frederick St John, the parents of my grandfather Henry St John, who emigrated to New South Wales in 1869, aged 17 years. Our family in Australia were told a fair amount about Frederick, after whom my father was named, but nothing about Mary Ann. On researching her background, I found that she was a granddaughter of Joseph Bramah (1749–1814), whose inventions contributed greatly to the industrial revolution.



*Mary Ann Bramah (1820–1883).
Artist unknown*

The name Bramah is associated with major features at Norwood, as described in *The Norwood Cemetery Railings* (Newsletter 68, May 2010). This mentions the coffin lift in the Anglican catacombs, the lift and railings both being marked Bramah and Robinson, with the former bearing the date 1839. Both features therefore date from after Joseph's death when his eldest son Timothy continued to operate from his Pimlico workshop, where he was soon joined by his brothers Francis and Edward. From the 1830s onwards the firm's interests seem to have been divided. In 1837 Charles Robinson joined the firm, hence Bramah and Robinson. In 1841, by which time Timothy and Francis were dead, the manufacture of the famous Bramah lock was separated from the engineering business, the former becoming Bramah and Company, and the latter Bramah, Prestige and Ball.

During the same period John Joseph Bramah, a son of Joseph's brother Thomas, described on his death certificate as an ironmaster, also worked in Pimlico. In fact he and the three brothers had a joint business venture from the late 1820s until the late 1830s, when they were the developers of the Tunbridge Wells Calverley estate, working to the designs of the distinguished architect Decimus Burton (1800–1881). Philip Whitbourn, a Tunbridge Wells historian, notes that the late Christopher Hussey, eminent art historian, described the estate as 'a landmark in English domestic architecture'.

In 1838 Timothy Bramah died from 'apoplexy' (stroke) and in 1840 Francis died from 'decline'. Both had had distinguished careers. Timothy was an acknowledged expert on steam power and hot water systems, overseeing the installation of a heating system for the orangery at Windsor Castle. Francis was in charge of the foundry. He collaborated with Thomas Tredgold (1788–1829), testing his principles on the deflection and strength of cast iron beams. In 1839 he was awarded the Telford silver medal for his paper on the

strength of cast iron. Charles Robinson continued at the Pimlico workshop and was the owner when a disastrous fire destroyed the building and its valuable contents in 1843.

Less is known about Edward, my own ancestor, who lived until 1854. Perhaps he was involved with the manufacture of the highly regarded Bramah lock since, at the Great Exhibition of 1851, he handed the 200 golden guineas prize to the American locksmith who had succeeded in picking it. At that time Bramah and Company still retained the premises at 124 Piccadilly that had been acquired by Joseph in 1784.

Frederick St John married Edward's daughter Mary Ann in 1845. Frederick was the second son of Henry St John of Hornsey, and was a grandson of St Andrew St John (1732–1795), Dean of Worcester, a descendant of the Barons St John of Bletso. Frederick became Surveyor General of Customs, playing a part in the 1851 Great Exhibition and in the International Exhibition of 1862. In 1858 the Rev Alfred James Carver MA (1826–1909; grave 23,256, square 50) was appointed master of Dulwich College to raise the standards of the school. In this same year, St John was nominated by the Master of the Rolls as a governor of the school, an appointment he retained until his death from typhoid in 1863 at the age of 54.²



*Frederick St John (1809–1863).
Artist unknown*

After Frederick's death his brother, the Reverend Father Ambrose St. John (1815–1875), acted as guardian to Frederick's children in all but name, maintaining close contact with my grandfather after he went to Australia. Ambrose is famous as closest friend and associate of John Henry Newman (1801–1890). Originally Anglican clergymen, they converted to Roman Catholicism and were ordained together in 1846. In accordance with Cardinal Newman's wishes, they are buried in the same grave at Rednal Hill, Birmingham. In 2008 church authorities tried to remove Newman's remains and place them in Birmingham Oratory in preparation for his possible canonization, but this proved impossible as both bodies had decomposed completely.

Various members of the St John and Bramah families lived in Norwood during the nineteenth century. John Coulter, a local historian, has kindly provided me with dates and the addresses at which they lived. Edward Bramah lived at Thurlow Lodge, Norwood Road from 1824 or earlier until at least 1835. Mary Ann was born in Norwood in 1820 and she and three of her siblings were baptised at St Luke's Church. Timothy Bramah lived at Springfield, Beulah Hill round about 1830. Therefore, Edward and Timothy were probably living in Norwood whilst working on the Calverley Estate.

² At his death the then Chancellor of the Exchequer W.E. Gladstone (1809–1898) requested that his photograph be placed with those of his most trusted public servants

Frederick St John is first recorded as living in Norwood in 1845, the year of his marriage to Mary Ann, when he lived at 2 Rushmore, Central Hill. This is the Westow Hill address that appears in the 1845 directory, the name then being used for a district, rather than the present street. In about 1860 the St John family moved from Westow Hill to Sydenham Hill. Theirs was the first house to be built in Dulwich Wood. After they left in 1864 it was named *The Beeches*. It was demolished some years later.

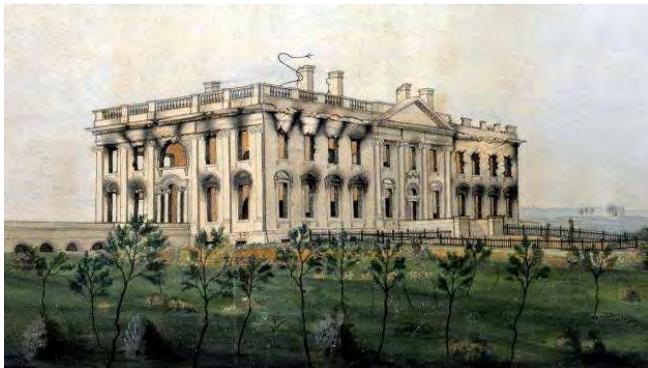
To this day the Cemetery contains tangible reminders of Bramah workmanship. Since Mary Ann and Frederick St John and their children seem to have spent the happiest days of their lives in the neighbourhood, it is pleasing to know that Mary Ann and Frederick are buried in the Cemetery (grave 8,809, square 59).

My grandfather Henry St John visited ‘beautiful old England – the land of roses and of justice and freedom’ for the last time in 1928. Later he wrote ten articles for the local newspaper. In one he described how he and his brother Edward visited Norwood and saw the graves not only of their parents, but also those of some of their brothers and a niece in adjacent graves. Grave 16,017 (to the right of grave 8,809) contains the remains of Rowland (d. 1876 from tuberculosis, aged 16), Frederick (d. 1882 from pneumonia, aged 33), and Beauchamp St John (d. 1885 from alcoholism and exhaustion, aged 34). Grave 19,465 (to the left) contains the remains of a granddaughter of Frederick and Mary Ann, Catharine M. Tyrwhitt (d. 1896). Sadly, no tombstones remain.

Who Made the White House White?

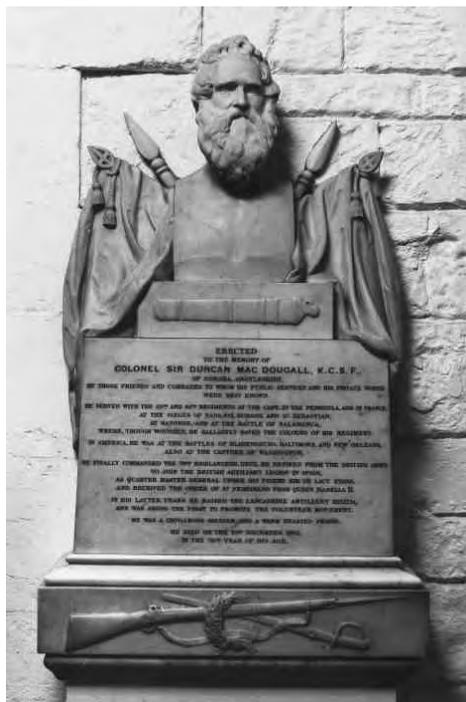
Bob Flanagan

Sir Duncan MacDougall (1787–1862) was colonel of the Cameron Highlanders and spent most of his life campaigning in South Africa, Spain, and France. He also took part in the capture of Washington during the war of 1812. The President’s house was set alight on 24 August 1814 in retaliation for the burning of the Governor General’s house in Canada. In order to conceal the repairs after the fire, the whole building was painted white.



The White House ruins, 1814–15. Watercolour by Geo. Munger (1771–1825). White House Historical Association

Duncan MacDougall, son of Patrick MacDougall and his wife, Mary, daughter of Duncan M’Vicar, was born at Soroba, near Oban in Argyll. Educated in Edinburgh, in 1804 he joined the army as an ensign. He served with the 53rd and 85th regiments on the Cape Colony frontier, at the Cape of Good Hope itself, and in the Peninsular War.



MacDougall Memorial, St Paul's Cathedral by George Gammon Adams (1821–1898)

ham (1778–1815, brother-in law to the Duke of Wellington) in the operations against New Orleans in December 1814/January 1815. Whilst rallying his troops near the enemy line at the battle of New Orleans, grapeshot shattered Pakenham's left knee and killed his horse. As MacDougall helped him to his feet, Pakenham was hit in his right arm.

After he had mounted MacDougall's horse, he was once again hit by grapeshot and died as he was carried off the battlefield. His last words were said to be to tell MacDougall to find General John Lambert (1772–1847) and to order him to send forward the reserves and to assume command. MacDougall went on to take part in the siege of Fort Bowyer in Florida, the last battle of the war.



MacDougall Family Vault at Norwood

In the Peninsula he took part in the third siege and the capture of Badajoz (6 April 1812), and in the capture of the forts of Salamanca (27 June). He saved the regimental colours and was severely wounded at the battle of Salamanca (22 July). Nevertheless, he was present at the siege of Burgos (September/October 1812) and in the ensuing retreat; at the siege and capture of San Sebastian (31 August 1813); at the passage of the Bidassoa (October); and at the battles of Nivelle (10 November) and Nive (9–13 December). He was also present at the last action of the war, the investment of Bayonne.

During the 1812 Anglo-American War, he fought at the battle of Bladensburg (24 August 1814), the capture of Washington, and the attack on Baltimore (12 September). He was aide-de-camp to Major-General Robert Ross (1766–1814), who was fatally wounded by a sniper prior to the battle of North Point, Baltimore. MacDougall later served as senior aide-de-camp to Lt-General Sir Edward Pakenham

SIR DUNCAN MACDOUGALL
 OF SOROBA, ARGYLESHIRE
 LATE COMMANDING THE 79TH HIGHLANDERS
 DIED DEC^R 10TH 1862 AGED 75
HE WAS A FRIEND TO THE NEEDY IN HIS DISTRESS
 ALSO HANNAH HIS DEVOTED WIFE
 WHO WAS BORN JUNE 11TH 1779
 AND DIED JAN^Y 23RD 1866
 ALSO
 HARRY HUGH RAWSON
 THE TENDERLY LOVED SON OF HARRY AND
 FLORENCE RAWSON
 GREATGRANDSON OF THE ABOVE (LADY
 MACDOUGALL)
 BORN JAN^Y 19 1875 DIED JULY 7TH 1875

Norwood: Inscription on the MacDougall Vault

inaugurated. He published *Hints to Volunteers on various Subjects* (1860) and raised the Lancashire artillery militia. He died on 10 December 1862 at his home in London, 112 Eaton Square, and lies in the family vault at Norwood (grave 8,306, square 22/36).³

In 1817 MacDougall had married Anne, daughter of Colonel Cornelius Smelt (1748–1832), governor of the Isle of Man, with whom he had a son, General Sir Patrick Leonard MacDougall KCMG (1819–1894),⁴ who married Louisa Augusta, third daughter of General Sir William Napier (1785–1860).⁵ In 1844 MacDougall married Hannah (1779–1866), widow of Colonel William Nicholson of Springfield House, Liverpool.

After postings in France, Ireland, and Nova Scotia, in 1832 MacDougall took command of the 79th Highlanders, then based in Montreal. However, in 1835 he left the army to join the British Auxiliary Legion in Spain (First Carlist War, 1835–1838). He was quartermaster-general and second in command to General Sir (George) De Lacy Evans (1787–1870) and received the Order of Knighthood of St Ferdinand from Queen Isabella II in thanks for his services.

MacDougall was knighted at St James's Palace on 18 July 1838 and presided at the meeting at St Martin's Hall in London at which the 1859 volunteer movement was

Sir George Shenton (1842–1909)

Sally Helvey

My great, great grandfather George Shenton was a prominent businessman in colonial Western Australia, the first Mayor of Perth, and a Member of the Western Australian Legislative Council for over thirty years. He bequeathed his house to the University of Western Australia. His fifth child May Theresa (b. 1880/1) was mother to my grandmother, who died aged 95 on 16 August 2010.

Shenton was born at Perth on 4 March 1842, the eldest son of George Shenton snr, Perth's first pharmacist and a wealthy businessman. From 1855–8 Shenton attended the

³ The Dictionary of National Biography is mistaken in stating he is buried in St Paul's

⁴ Buried at Putney Vale Cemetery

⁵ Sir William Francis Patrick Napier lies just behind the MacDougall vault (grave 6,853, square 22)

Wesleyan Collegiate Institute (Queen's College) in Taunton. Back in Perth he gained experience in a range of his father's businesses, including running his store in Geraldton, and managing the family farm on the Greenough River.

On 5 March 1867 George Shenton snr (b. 1811) drowned when his schooner, *The Lass of Geraldton*, capsized in a storm off Mandurah, some 40 miles south of Perth. George jnr then took over the family firm. However, from 1884 his youngest brother Ernest took over the Perth store, and another brother, Edward, the Geraldton business. This left George the responsibility for his father's shipping interests. In partnership with John Monger, Shenton exported wool, timber, sandalwood, and minerals to London, and pioneered Western Australia's trade with Singapore. Shenton was also agent for Lloyd's of London, and Felgate's, a London company that in the 1870s controlled most of Western Australia's trade with Britain.

Shenton was Chairman of the Western Australian Bank from 1886 until his death and was first president of the Perth Chamber of Commerce (1890). In 1894 he helped finance Leslie Menzie's expedition that discovered the gold field that is named after him. The first lease, the Lady Shenton mine, yielded over 130,000 ounces of gold and over £150,000 in dividends. Shenton later became a shareholder and director of the Gold Estates Mining Company. In 1903 he merged his shipping company with the South Australian company Elder Smiths, to form Elder Shenton and Co. Ltd., now Elders Ltd. Shenton became a principal shareholder and Chairman of the new company.



*Sir George Shenton and his wife
c. 1880*

Into Government

The first Western Australian Legislative Council elections were held in October 1870 and Shenton was elected unopposed to the seat of Greenough. The main political issue of the day was free trade. Shenton took a protectionist stance, helping to push for an import duty on flour. Governor Sir Frederick Weld (1823–1891) opposed this move, and when the Legislative Council adopted an amendment on the matter, Weld in turn dissolved the Council. Shenton was re-elected for Greenough, comfortably defeating his opponent, Geraldton merchant Henry Gray. However, Shenton was absent during the election, and his campaign was run by his friend Charles Crowther. On the evening after the election Crowther held a ball for Shenton's supporters and Gray alleged bribery.

In July 1873, the Supreme Court upheld his complaint, finding that Crowther's actions might have induced electors to vote for Shenton and his election was thus declared void. He then declined to stand again, so Crowther stood himself, heavily defeating Gray. In 1875 Shenton was again elected to the Legislative Council, this time defeating Andrew Dempster for the seat of Toodyay, a seat he held until October 1890. As member for Toodyay, Shenton continued to favour protectionism, and staunchly opposed responsible self-

government. However, he gradually changed his stance, and in 1889 was re-elected on a platform of immediate self-government under a compromise constitution.

In the event Western Australia adopted an elected Legislative Assembly with a nominated Legislative Council as its upper house. Shenton did not stand for the Assembly, but was nominated to the Council, becoming Father of the House. His stated reason for entering the upper house was that it would take up less of his time, but when the first Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest (1847–1918), invited him to become Colonial Secretary, he accepted. As the only Government minister in the Council, Shenton was kept busy. When the less demanding office of President of the Council became available in 1892, he resigned from the Cabinet to offer himself for the position. The following year he was appointed Knight Bachelor.



Sir George Shenton

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JULIA THERESA
THE BELOVED WIFE OF
SIR GEORGE SHENTON
PRESIDENT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
DIED AT SOUTH KENSINGTON
JUNE 4, 1897 AGED 47 YEARS
PSALM XXIII
THE HONOURABLE
SIR GEORGE SHENTON
DIED IN LONDON
JUNE 29 1909 AGED 67 YEARS.

Inscription on the Shenton gravestone

larger pipe organ. Another gift was a stained-glass memorial window for the chancel.

Shenton and his wife Julia Theresa née Eichbaum (–1897) were married at Fremantle on 4 November 1868. They were faithful members of the church. On Sundays at the stroke of 10:45 by the Town Hall clock, he and his wife, leading all the members of their family and followed by their servants, could be seen stepping towards Wesley Church almost in procession. They always sat in the three front pews, Sir George and Lady Shenton in the centre of the front pew, the family in the second pew, and the servants in the third. At the end of the service they left the Church in the same manner and order as they had entered.

In July 1894, the Council became elective, and Shenton stood for a Metropolitan Province seat, holding the seat and the Presidency of the Council until he retired in May 1906. Shenton was a member of the committee of the Perth public library and museum and the first chairman of the Perth hospital board. He also helped found the children’s hospital, becoming its first president. On the death of his father he took on the responsibility of building a new church on the corner of William and Hay Streets, donating £1000 to the Church Building Fund. He saw too that his father’s wish that the new church be called Wesley Church was fulfilled. In 1875 he donated the first pipe organ in the colony and just before his death he donated a second and



*Frank Norwood Shenton
(d. 1874)*



The Shenton grave at Norwood (grave 27,466, square 11): Then and Now

Shenton and his wife lived in Perth for most of their lives, but they both died when visiting daughters in London. After his death on 29 June 1909 Shenton's estate was valued at £186,627 (£13 million today). His legacy survives principally as Westpac Bank and buildings and districts in Perth including the suburb of Shenton Park. His home, Crawley Park, named after a previous owner, was situated on a 200-acre site, much of which is now occupied by the University of Western Australia. The suburb Crawley is named after Shenton's land. The Crawley Park homestead in which Shenton lived, Shenton House, still stands in the University Grounds and is managed by the National Trust of Australia.

The Shentons' only boy, Frank Norwood, is buried in grave 14,925, a grave that seems to have been subsumed under the later monument. His headstone is clearly visible in a contemporary photograph,⁶ but is now either buried, or mislaid. It read '*... to the Memory of Frank Norwood, Died at Upper Norwood August 7th 1874, aged 9 months*'. The Shentons did, however, have seven healthy daughters and two others who died before Frank came along.

The fifth child was my dear Granny's mother, May Theresa. In 1907 she had married Albert Edward John Waddington at St George, Hanover Square. In July 1942 their youngest son Sergeant John Noel Waddington RAFVR (b. 1920), a veteran of many raids including the first 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne, was shot down and killed whilst on a bombing mission to Germany. His father never recovered from his loss and did not work again. Albert's father, also John, had restored the family 'seat', Waddington Old Hall, nr Clitheroe in Lancashire. When the Hall had to be sold in 1950, my grandmother and her husband Ralph salvaged what they could afford to buy from the auction of her family chattels. Her parents spent the rest of their days living modestly in Brighton.

⁶ In addition to showing the extent of Lambeth's clearance operations, comparison with the modern photograph suggests that the East wall of the cemetery has been cut down since 1900



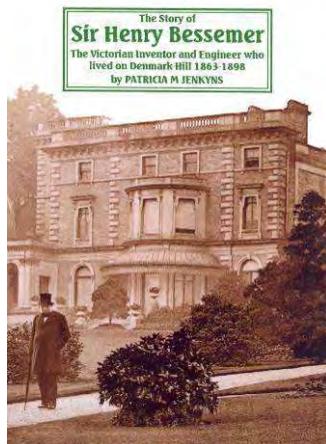
The Story of Sir Henry Bessemer

Book Review – Bob Flanagan

Edition 2. Patricia M. Jenkyns. London: Herne Hill Society, 2013. Illustrated, 52 pp. Softback, £5.00 (+ £1.50 p&p, or from the FOWNC Bookstall).

This is a welcome revamp of FOWNC founder member Patricia Jenkyns' 1984 booklet, long out of print, that details the life and times of 'The Victorian Inventor and Engineer who lived on Denmark Hill 1864-1898'. In fact it is a much-expanded and revised edition that includes many new illustrations, some previously unpublished, produced as a contribution to 'Bessemer 200' (see Newsletter 78, September 2013).

The cover notes that the name Henry Bessemer is today largely forgotten. Youngsters and not-so-youngsters coming to King's College Hospital, where there is a Bessemer Road and a Bessemer Wing, sadly do indeed say 'Who he'? Be this as it may, Bessemer is in the context of world history probably the most important name associated with Norwood, Hiram Maxim, Mrs Beeton, *et al.* notwithstanding, and this book is an excellent tribute to his life and work.



Family grave of Alfred and Mary Bessemer

Bessemer's family grave (grave 27,463, square 99) is especially important in keeping his name alive because the only tangible reminder of his once grand, 40-acre estate on Denmark Hill is thought to be an oak tree in the grounds of Bessemer Grange School. But let us not forget that, as the booklet records, Bessemer and his wife Ann née Allen (1814–1897), whom he had married in 1834, had 4 children, Elizabeth (1835–1915), Frances (who died in infancy), Henry Edward (1838–1907), and Alfred George. Of these Alfred is buried at Norwood (grave 19,570, square 99), the purchase of his grave antedating that of parent's grave.

Alfred Bessemer was born in Clerkenwell and he too was an engineer. At one point he lived at Southcliffe, Bournemouth. He died at St Michaels, Ascot, Berkshire on 9 August 1918, aged 78, leaving £76,134 in his will. On 2 May 1867 he had married Mary Jane Tetley (d. 1883) of Dartmouth Park, daughter of Edward Tetley (1815–1898) and niece of Joseph Tetley (1811–1889), tea dealers, at Christ Church, Forest Hill. Mary also lies in the family grave, as do their sons Howard Frank (1872–1931) and

Alfred George (1868–1906). The fate of a third son Henry E. Bessemer (1870–) is unclear. Edward Tetley himself, latterly of Ebor House, Teddington, and his wife Elizabeth May (1815–1898) are buried in Teddington Cemetery, but of course the Tetley name lives on in Tetley's Tea.

Alfred Bessemer jnr was born at Norwood on 13 July 1868 and was educated at St Leonards and at Finsbury Technical College, where he shone in mathematics. After an apprenticeship with the Brush Electrical Engineering Company, he joined them as an assistant. When he left in 1893, he worked for a time in the mechanical engineering works of Messrs. W.H. Allen and Sons of Bedford. Subsequently he went to Chatham as an assistant to Louis Brennan CB (1852–1932) at the Brennan Torpedo Factory established to develop the wire-guided torpedo that Brennan had invented. Alfred was elected an Associate Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers on 9 January 1894. He married Edith Mary Burke (c. 1871–1922) in 1894. He died suddenly at Wimbledon on 19 February 1906, aged 37.



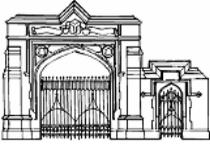
Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

Yet again Network Rail decided to cut off trains to West Norwood and Tulse Hill for Open House London Weekend on 22 September. However, some 75 visitors managed to travel here for our tours of notable monuments that included the Greek Chapel. Thanks to everyone who helped with leading the tours, stewarding at the Greek chapel, and staffing the FOWNC bookstall in the Maddick mausoleum.

After our AGM on 19 October, we welcomed Ron Knee BA, head of the monument conservation firm that has carried out work on many tombs in the Cemetery, most notably the Tate and Doulton mausolea, and the headstone of ironmaster John Hughes. Ron has a great depth of practical knowledge about all types of monument and issues surrounding their conservation, and also has great passion for art history. He spoke about the rich heritage of monuments made by Alexander MacDonald and his firm in Aberdeen that survive at Norwood. MacDonald's important contribution to the art of memorial masonry was to perfect a technique for polishing granite using steam power from an adjacent sawmill (see the article in FOWNC Newsletter 73, January 2012).

Dr Fiona Subotsky, a retired psychiatrist, Camberwell resident, and FOWNC member, is Honorary Archivist of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. She talked on 16 November about her research into the origins and the work of the Camberwell House Lunatic Asylum (1846–1955), which led to the discovery that several of those who founded and managed it are buried at Norwood: its first Medical Superintendent, John Hayball Paul (1816–1899), and a partner in the business, Alfred Richards (1821–1887), along with numerous relatives – for a more detailed account of this subject see FOWNC Newsletter 73, January 2012. The principal buildings of the asylum survive on Peckham Road; the Superintendent's House is now Southwark Register Office.



Forthcoming FOWNC Events

January–April 2014

Introductory tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (5 January, 2 February and 2 March at 11.00; 6 April at 14.30) starting at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road and lasting for 1½–2 hours. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations towards conservation projects. The April tour coincides with the return after its winter break of West Norwood Feast (www.westnorwoodfeast.com). We also offer members-only tours of the Anglican catacombs (advance booking only; please contact Jill Dudman, details p. 16, and register an e-mail address to be notified of dates).

Lectures will be held at Chatsworth Baptist Church Family Centre, Idmiston Road SE27 (ten minutes walk from West Norwood railway station), as detailed below, starting at 14.30. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations to help cover room hire.

Saturday 18 January: Lecture – Alexander Parkes & Henry Bessemer 200 Years On – Susan Mossman

Dr Mossman is materials science specialist at the Science Museum, where a showcase detailing the achievements of plastics pioneer Alexander Parkes (1813–1890; grave 20,927, square 7; monument destroyed) has been displayed from December 2013. Houses he lived in (in Rosendale Road and in Park Hall Road) still survive. In addition to discussing Parkes, she will speak on the life and work of Sir Henry Bessemer who, as chance would have it, was also born in 1813 (see Book Review, page 13).

Saturday 15 February: Lecture – George Bolwell Davidge – Michael Slater

Michael Slater is Emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at Birkbeck College. He will discuss the fraught relationship between two notable figures of the 19th century London theatre, G.B. Davidge (1793–1842), a noted Harlequin who became Manager of the Coburg (later the Old Vic) and Surrey Theatres, and Douglas Jerrold (1803–1857). He will introduce us to Jerrold's hilarious caricature of Davidge, *Bajazet Gag, the Manager in search of a 'Star'*, serialised in *The New Monthly Magazine* in 1841–2. Davidge's monument (grave 398, square 62) in the form of hexagonal pulpit survives in good condition opposite that of his best friend, Dr William Marsden (grave 269, square 62).

Saturday 15 March: Lecture – The Browns and the Leifchilds – Malcolm A Cooper

Grave 7,167 (square 40) contains the remains of the Rev James Baldwin Brown, his wife Elizabeth Leifchild, and their children, including their son Gerard and his wife Maude Annie née Terrell. James was Congregationalist minister at Brixton Independent Chapel. Elizabeth was a friend of Christina Rossetti, and her eldest brother Henry Leifchild (grave 20,386, square 40) was a Pre-Raphaelite sculptor who mixed with key figures including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Ruskin. Gerard was the first Professor of Fine Art at the University of Edinburgh and became not only an expert on Anglo-Saxon architecture, but also a key figure in the development of the conservation movement in Britain. Malcolm Cooper was until 2010 Historic Scotland's Chief Inspector and is now an honorary research fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

Recent work by the scrub clearance team has laid bare the remains of the grave of John Colam, who as secretary of the RSPCA 1861–1905 was largely responsible for establishing the financial base of the organization we know today and also helped develop the (N)SPCC – yes concern for animals did come well before similar concern for children. He died at Ingeborg, South Park Hill Road, Croydon on 25 May 1910 and was buried at Norwood on 28 May 1910, aged 83 (grave 13,162, square 88). Sadly time has not been kind to his family tomb. Does anyone have a photograph or drawing of the original monument?



Family grave of John Colam (1827–1910)

FOWNC Officers

Chairman & Publications Officer: Bob Flanagan, 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW (Tel: 020 8670 3265)

Vice-Chairman: Colin Fenn, 20 Selsdon Road, London SE27 0PG (Tel: 020 8670 4146)

Secretary & Tours Organiser: Jill Dudman, 119 Broxholm Road, London SE27 0BJ (Tel: 020 8670 5456)

Hon Treasurer: Anna Long, 58 Crescent Lane, London SW4 9PU (Tel: 020 7622 7420)

Conservation Coordinator: Ellen Barbet, 66 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3NR (Tel: 020 8650 0766)

Webmaster: James Slattery-Kavanagh, Quotes, 3 Cricketfield, Newick, East Sussex BN8 4LL (Tel: 0871 703 2210, Fax: 0871 703 2220)

© FOWNC January 2014

The FOWNC Newsletter is published three times a year by

The Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW

Website: www.fownc.org; e-mail: chairman@fownc.org or secretary@fownc.org

If you would like further information about the Friends, please contact the Secretary.

The annual subscription is £5.

Registered Charity No 1063450. Member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF, www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk) and of the Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe (ASCE, www.significantcemeteries.net)

Printed by SRA, a charity providing training and employment for people with mental health problems (www.sra-ltd.co.uk)
