

# Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 81 – September 2014

Free to members

## In this Issue:

- **Betts Family Grave** Page 3
- **Highgate Cemetery** Page 5
- **National Federation of Cemetery Friends** Page 6
- **Brockwell Park Clock Tower** Page 8
- **The War Graves Photographic Project** Page 9
- **EG Honey: the Two Minute Silence** Page 11
- **London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb** Page 12
- **Commander John Cyril Porte** Page 13
- **Forthcoming Events** Page 14
- **A Bit of Mystery** Page 16

## Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

There has again been much progress over the last four months in respect of the negotiations over the future of the cemetery. Crucially, a way forward on grave re-use that would safeguard all pre-Lambeth era monuments has been agreed in principle with officers. This has been the cornerstone of our stance with the council over the years. Advice from Counsel for Lambeth is that a joint petition to the Diocesan Chancellor from Lambeth and FOWNC, if properly framed, could well meet with approval. This being the case, a submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund could follow quite quickly given that appropriate governance procedures will also be implemented.

A further advance has been agreement for at least three stages of provision for heritage/education/visitor provision, stage 1 being a Lambeth-financed permanent presence in the planned Nettlefold Hall cinema complex, stage 2 being use of a likely increasing amount of space in the existing Lodge, and 3 being a commitment to explore provision of a visitor centre in a proposed new building above the catacombs.



*Clare and John Whelan, our two new Honorary Members*

## *Clare and John Whelan*

Longtime FOWNC supporters and Conservative Councillors for Thurlow Park Ward John and Clare Whelan decided not to stand for re-election in May. As a token of our appreciation of their efforts over the years on behalf of the cemetery, your committee thought it appropriate to offer them honorary FOWNC membership. I'm pleased to report that they were pleased to accept our offer. Moreover, John Whelan has now joined the Scheme of Management Committee as the Conservative Party nominee.

## *Conservation News*

Work continues apace on the Berens monument. All the corners, eaves, apostles and barley twists are now stable. The eight angels have been removed for repair and cleaning. The roof has been removed and the sycamore damage repaired. The stonework has been cleaned and shows the fossils in the limestone really well. Some remains of the iron crests and finials have been found. Funding is mostly from English Heritage, topped up by Chris Berens, who has our deep gratitude for coming to the rescue of his family monument. We have undertaken to keep a watching brief on the mausoleum once the repairs are completed. As to the Maddick mausoleum, Colin Fenn was able to organise money from the *Curious* budget to ensure that the roof windows are (almost) watertight. Moreover, the sarcophagi have been repaired and the floor cleaned. The mausoleum will host the *Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches* exhibition in September (see page 14). Finally, work has commenced on refurbishment/repair of the railings of the Gilbert monument (grave 8,659, square 115) and of the memorial of the Birkett family at the top of the hill near to the Crematorium (grave 1,425, square 66 – see May 2014 Newsletter).

## *Norwood and the First World War*

The Cross of Sacrifice in the cemetery forecourt is an immediate reminder of the World War One, which really began on 28 July 1914 when Austria declared war on Serbia. Austrian gunboats steamed down the Danube and bombarded Belgrade the next day. I remember vividly standing atop the Citadel in Belgrade overlooking the Danube in pouring rain on 21 July 2008 trying to imagine the scene in 1914. I remember the date so well because Radovan Karadžić had just been arrested and the city was full of very damp, very unhappy riot police, the potential rioters having been washed away it seemed.

The Kingdom of Serbia lost more than 1,100,000 inhabitants during the war (army and civilian losses), some 27 % of its population and 60 % of its male population. According to estimates by the Yugoslav government (1924) Serbia lost 265,164 soldiers, or a quarter of those mobilized. What has all this to do with Norwood? Well, see the article by Jill Dudman on page 12.

At Norwood, there are 136 Commonwealth burials of the 1914–1918 war and 52 of the 1939–1945 war, and an additional 18 cremations from 1939–1945. There is one Belgian war burial. Full details of all these burials and cremations are available on the CWGC website. Of course there are many more commemorations of those lost during both world wars, but who were buried or cremated elsewhere (see article by David Ayling on page 9). Sadly, we don't know how many more such memorials were lost as a result of the wholesale clearance of headstones from many parts of the cemetery that occurred from the late 1960s through to 1991.

### *The St Mary-at-Hill Plot*

Newsletter 74 (May 2012) featured a photograph of the St Mary-at-Hill plot at Norwood taken we think in the early 1930s. As noted in the article, the City Church of St Mary-at-Hill acquired exclusive rights of burial in a plot in consecrated ground in the SE corner of the cemetery (in the middle of and wholly within square 19) in 1847. Originally delineated by iron railings on limestone kerbs, some 350 bodies were moved here from the church vaults in



*Norwood: St Mary-at-Hill plot (photo: Allan Rigden)*

1892–3. The subsequent fate of the boundary walls and railings and indeed of any monuments that had been placed with the plot was obscure, although I do remember seeing remains of the railings when attempting to stop Lambeth bulldozing this part of the cemetery in 1990.

Recently, Scheme of Management chair and long-term FOWNC member Nicholas Long rediscovered the accompanying photograph of the late Eric Smith (see FOWNC Newsletter 51, September 2004). The photograph was taken on 26 July 1967, and not only confirms the nature of the plot boundary, but also dates its survival into the Lambeth era. Armed with this information and following scrub clearance by a community-payback working party, it has been possible to not only clearly trace the foundations of the boundary wall, but also find an intact limestone pillar and capstone together with remnants of the railings. Work is now in hand under the Lambeth-funded capital works programme to reinstate the plot as far as is possible, given that a number of modern graves were illegally inserted within the plot in the 1980s.

---

---

## The Betts Family Grave

Matthew Betts

---

---

The Betts family settled in Croydon and Penge during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and lived in the area for many generations. My 2 x great grand-uncle Frederick lived in Croydon, and two of his children and his first wife are buried at Norwood (grave 25,990, square 95). I am still researching the local Betts family, so if you are a Betts or a Betts descendant, or if you have any information on Frederick, please contact me at [betts@one-name.org](mailto:betts@one-name.org).

From my researches so far I have found that Frederick Betts was born in Croydon in 1859, and aged 19, married his second cousin Ellen Betts. They had six children. Sadly three died in infancy, and Ellen herself died on 10 September 1898, aged 41. Ellen and two of their children, Hilda Elizabeth (d. 28 September 1894, aged 9, and Adeline Olive,

d. 23 February 1893, aged 12) are buried in the family plot at Norwood, whilst their first son Frederick, who died on 11 August 1881, aged 4 months and is buried at Crystal Palace Cemetery, Elmers End, is remembered on the gravestone.



Norwood: Betts Family gravestone

Frederick, a builder and major property owner, was a well-known local figure. He donated £3,000 to Penge Council to fund the purchase of Betts Park in Penge in memory of his mother Sarah (my 3 x great-grandmother) in 1927. *Oak Lawn*, at one time the vicarage of Holy Trinity, Penge, on the corner of Croydon Road and Anerley Road, was purchased with the money. Its extensive grounds included a remnant of the Croydon Canal almost as far as Seymour Terrace. Parts of the back gardens of two adjacent houses were also purchased to form an L-shaped park with an access road down to the present entrance in Croydon Road. The park originally included a public library, since demolished, and *Oak Lawn* itself was demolished after bombing in World

War Two. The Park and Library were formally opened on Saturday 3 December 1928 at a private event in the library, and were opened to the public on the following Monday. The rest of the canal was bought from the Vicar of Battersea in 1933.

In August 1939 a playing field area called King George's Field was added at a cost of £15,000 in memory of George V. The Weighton Tennis and Bowls Club's courts in the area around the present children's playground were taken over by Penge Council during the World War II and the courts area was later added to the Park. Further extensions were made over the years, and demolition of some houses on Anerley Road created a wide front onto the road.

Through his business, Frederick was responsible for a number of streets, roads, and properties in the area that are still in use today. He died in 1944 and received an obituary in the *Beckenham & Penge Advertiser*, although he emerges as the sort of landlord we would all worry about! According to the newspaper, he was often at the local police court. On one occasion, after being heavily fined, he shook his fist at the magistrates exclaiming 'I should like to throw the whole lot of you over the nearest bridge into the water'. He certainly seems to have been quite a character!



Betts Park: Anerley Road gate

---

---

# Highgate Cemetery: 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Bob Flanagan

---

---

It was a pleasure to attend the celebrations of this notable anniversary of Norwood's great north London rival. Highgate was founded by the London Cemetery Company and opened on 20 May 1839, some 18 months after Norwood was first ready to accept burials.

The party was held exactly 175 years after what is now the Western cemetery at Highgate was consecrated by the Bishop of London. The weather was kind, and Highgate councillors and representatives of the Highgate Society, the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, local schools, and other cemetery friends' groups enjoyed a hog roast. The cemetery's stonemason Neil Luxton was on hand to teach guests how to carve their own epitaph (!), whilst the Highgate Choral Society and the North London Brass Band played for the crowd of more than 150 people, some of whom enjoyed short tours of the cemetery in the evening light.



*The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party in full swing*



*Cutting the anniversary cakes!*

Undertakers T. Cribb and Sons showed off their Victorian horse-drawn hearse next to the UK's first electric 'eco-hearse', a development by Lev-erton & Sons. The evening ended as three cakes covered in an edible version of the ivy growing on many of the cemetery's graves were cut by Dr Ian Dungavell, Highgate Chief Executive (centre), assisted by Friends of Highgate Cemetery chairman John Shepperd (right), and vice-president Ian Kelly. Note that Ian Dungavell is speaking on Highgate Cemetery and its long-standing rivalry with Norwood immediately before our AGM on 18 October (see page 15).

---

---

# National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM

Colin Fenn

---

---

This year's NCFCF AGM was held at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Art in the grounds of Glasgow Cathedral. It was hosted by the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis, who work with the City Council to protect their central burial ground. The City kindly offered a reception on Friday evening with a tour of the Provost's offices in City Hall.

The NCFCF's proceedings followed on the Saturday. After a spirited introduction by the local group's patron, the discussion included a review of finances (healthy), an inconclusive discussion about changes to subscriptions, some feedback about a logo and branding, and a discussion on the current NCFCF website. As an entry point to some 80+ Friends groups' activities, there has been a concern that the current website needs significant improvement. I am pleased to report that a proposal from our own webmaster James Slattery-Kavanagh to redevelop it over the next two years was accepted.



*Delegates gather for the tour of Glasgow Necropolis*

The report on ASCE activities was a little more difficult. There has been progress with the European Cemeteries Route (in which Norwood features), but ASCE are asking for large contributions to maintain this venture, even from voluntary groups such as ourselves. Our representative is fighting our case! Concern was also expressed that the new 'simpler' application process for Heritage Lottery grants has not become any simpler, and that the HLF have complained that there are currently too many applications from cemeteries for them to cope with.

As to other matters, it was announced that the NCFCF were to hold a security seminar in London in August. Many cemeteries have suffered from metal theft, break-ins, graffiti, vandalism and anti-social behaviour in general in recent years. Norwood has not been exempt – not only have we suffered metal theft (see Newsletter 73, January 2012), but also I have been involved in the prosecution of some so-called 'urban explorers' who broke in and damaged our site. Given our unfortunate experiences, I have been asked to chair this meeting, with contributions from a panel of security professionals.

Finally, the current NCFCF committee was re-elected, although following the death of Henry Ford (Plymouth) my offer to join the committee was accepted.

The highlight of the NCF AGM is often the visit to the host cemetery, and this year was no exception. The Glasgow Necropolis is built into a hill to the north east of the city centre, and is in essence an extension to the Cathedral grounds. The slopes and geology help to define the character of the site: from the entrance bridge that spans the burn at the foot of the hill (and the modern roadway) through to the sinuous winding paths that wend their way to the highest parts of the city. The impressive gates were cast at MacFarlane's Saracen foundry in Glasgow, and were recently restored and repainted through generous donations from the Friends.

The Ground was established by the merchant guild, and was designed (and priced) to appeal to the commercial fathers of the city. It attracted grand monuments and mausolea of the wealthy, who could continue to watch over their enterprises in the City below after their death. There is a proliferation of the red and grey sandstones and granite that define the older buildings in the city. They are frequently tinted with the soot produced by the industries that once lined the River Clyde. The ground is challenging, with some of the 'lairs' (plots) produced by blasting out the rock that lies just below the shallow soil. This produced trenches that were then built up into brick vaults, capped with iron and stone slabs, and then topped with a thin layer of turf. The result is a series of very wide rows of memorials that roll off the crests of the hill. There are few trees.

Although it holds some granite monuments by Alexander MacDonald of Aberdeen (see FOWNC Newsletter 73, January 2012), the most dramatic monuments are home-grown, particularly the sculptural and stylistic designs of the prolific local firm of Mossman. Founded in the 1830s, Mossman remains a family business, having passed down many generations before control was passed to a foreman, Smith, under which name it still operates. In addition, there are works by local architects and the



*Glasgow Necropolis: Allan Family Memorial*

Glasgow School of artists, most notably Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) and Alexander 'Greek' Thompson (1817–1875). The City and the Necropolis both benefit from their contributions, and from the sculptors that Mossman trained.

Like many other cemeteries, the Necropolis suffered over the years from both vandalism and the City's policies (the current site owner) of removing kerbstones. However, there is now a significant project underway under the council to repair and restore some of the more significant mausolea. This is producing some striking results, with mauve and powder blue ironwork in evidence! The neighbouring Cathedral kirkyard is also worth exploring, not least for its Georgian-era caged iron mortsafes that line the boundary walls. After all, Scotland was the home of Burke and Hare!

---

---

# The Brockwell Park Clock Tower

Jill Dudman

---

---

On Saturday 3 May at 3 pm a large crowd gathered in Brockwell Park for a ceremony to re-dedicate the restored clock tower. This Grade II listed structure, an ornamental cast iron tower supporting a four-faced clock, dates from 1897. It was given to the park by Sir Charles Ernest Tritton (1845–1918) to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It is very similar to, but smaller than, the clock tower erected in 1892 at the intersection of Vauxhall Bridge Road and Victoria Street, Westminster that is currently in storage during upgrade works to Victoria Station. Both towers were manufactured by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon. The Brockwell Park clock tower weighs two tons and cost £150 to purchase. It is decorated in green and gold. Unfortunately, the mechanism stopped working about 20 years ago.

Sir Charles came from a wealthy family of bankers, and was a senior partner in the firm of Brightwen and Co. He served as Conservative MP for Norwood 1892–1906, and was created Baronet in 1905. He lived at Bloomfield Hall, Central Hill, where the Bloomhall Estate now stands, adjacent to Norwood Park. Tritton played a major part in acquiring the land to create this park in 1911, in much the same way as his predecessor as MP for Norwood, Thomas Lynn Bristowe (1833–1892; grave 24,575, square 36) had done for Brockwell Park in 1892. Tritton served also as President of the Norwood Cottage Hospital and on the management board of the British Home for Incurables. His family name is commemorated in Tritton Road, SE21.

This restoration project was organised by the Friends of Brockwell Park, Brockwell Park Community Partners, the Herne Hill Society, and Lambeth Council. The fundraising campaign, which raised £20,000, was launched in 2013 by the principal donor, former Mayor of Lambeth Rudy Daley, in memory of his wife Una Maud who loved to sit in the park near the clock. The work was carried out by Gillett & Johnston, who were founded in 1844 and are obviously still in business! At the ceremony, Mr Daley and representatives of the above groups spoke in turn, and the clock was formally re-started, the base of the tower being left open for a short while to allow people to see the mechanism operating. FOWNC recently arranged for Tritton's gravestone at Norwood (grave 26,669, square 19 – see last FOWNC Newsletter) to be cleaned in sympathy with the campaign to restore the clock tower.



*Brockwell Park: The restored Clock tower*

---

---

# The War Graves Photographic Project

David Ayling

---

---

An article in the January 2014 FOWNC Newsletter discussed the war grave of Private Edward Francis Hughes (grave 34,331, square 46) in particular and the War Graves in the cemetery in general. Bob Flanagan suggested the need for a survey to see if they have headstones of one sort or another and as I am also a volunteer with The War Graves Photographic Project (TWGPP, [www.twgpp.org](http://www.twgpp.org)) this aroused my interest as the Project needed to re-record the war graves and memorials at Norwood.



*Crew from HMS Edinburgh at the graves of sailors from KMS Graf Spee in Montevideo (TWGPP founder Steve Rogers 4<sup>th</sup> from right)*

TWGPP was founded in 2002 by ex-RN Warrant Officer Steve Rogers. His interest arose whilst his ship was in Montevideo when he and his fellow officers commemorated the German sailors who were killed during the Battle of the River Plate and the subsequent scuttling of the pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* in December 1939. The British casualties from this action were buried at sea and are commemorated on memorials in the UK.

Most people are familiar with the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), but it is not so well known that the TWGPP work in association with them. The group's aim is to photograph every war grave and memorial worldwide. A joint venture with the CWGC was announced formally in November 2007, with the TWGPP website going live in February 2008. The ethos of TWGPP is simply to enable families and researchers to obtain, via its website, a photograph of a grave or memorial that many cannot visit personally. Initially, the project was confined to Commonwealth graves or memorials for the two World Wars, but the scope has now widened to include all nationalities and all conflicts always provided that the casualty died in service.

The project also records the details of servicemen and women who are commemorated on private graves in the UK and abroad, but who died elsewhere. It is very common to come across memorials on a family grave to a soldier 'killed in action on the Somme 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916' or 'killed over Germany on Air Operations in 1944', etc. There is no record whatsoever of these often poignant memorials, and the only way of discovering them is to simply walk through a cemetery or churchyard looking at every likely headstone.

Here at Norwood there are many examples of these memorials as shown by the grave of the Koenigsfeld/Kaye family. The inscription highlights the fact that their son Gustav served under the name Kaye rather than his family name to avoid anti-German prejudice. A further memorial (grave 29,648, square 77) records the death of Asst Paymaster Sidney James Seton RNR, who died aged 22 when the pre-dreadnought battleship *HMS Formidable* was torpedoed and sank off Portland on 1 January 1915.<sup>1</sup> He is commemorated on the Royal Naval Memorial at Chatham hence it seems he was one of the 537 of the crew who were lost at sea.<sup>2</sup> A third memorial records the death of Temporary Major Stewart Walter Loudoun-Shand VC (1879–1916) (grave 23,120, square 108). A veteran of the Boer War, he was killed on 1 July 1916 whilst serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own). He was awarded the VC for bravery whilst assisting his men 'over the top' near Fricourt on the Somme and is buried in Norfolk Cemetery in France.

The TWGPP website currently contains well over 1.78 million images of memorials from 23,000 cemeteries in over 150 countries. Photographing in beautifully maintained CWGC cemeteries is one thing. Tramping through the undergrowth of often neglected churchyards or vast corporation cemeteries looking for a single headstone is another thing altogether as volunteers can testify with many a frustrating or amusing story. The project has over 1,000 volunteers worldwide from all walks of life. All that is required is motivation, a digital camera, and the CWGC location data supplied by the project coordinators. Indeed, this project owes its existence to modern technology; viz. the facility to download from camera to computer to website with ease and speed. So, to kill two birds with one stone, I set about photographing the 207 war graves and related memorials at Norwood. Without data from the CWGC and site reports from the TWGPP it would have been an immense, if not, impossible task.



*Koenigsfeld/Kaye family monument (grave 33,151, square 80)*

<sup>1</sup> Also buried in the grave, but not commemorated on the headstone, are Bertha Perrer, interred 28 January 1935, and William Joseph Perrer, interred 17 September 1937.

<sup>2</sup> The sinking of *HMS Formidable* has a curious postscript: a half-breed collie dog *Lassie* is said to have laid by one of the sailors, Able Seaman John Cowan, who had been brought ashore with other bodies and was presumed to have drowned, and drew attention to the fact that he was still alive - this is said to have been the inspiration for the eponymous Hollywood dog star.

The CWGC reports give the location of private war graves, normally in relation to either other CWGC headstones, which are usually very easy to spot, or to other prominent memorials. Then it is just a matter of tracking them physically, or in the days that I was in the cemetery, squelching through sodden undergrowth. Being unused to carrying a mobile phone I make sure that I do now, as one false step in say somewhere as remote as the back of the Greek section could have possibly dangerous consequences! However the recent shrub clearance work in the cemetery has made the job a lot easier and safer than it could have been.

Happily I found that all the war graves and memorials listed at Norwood now have either a headstone (private, or CWGC), or an inscription on the Screen Wall at the entrance of the cemetery. There remains just one outstanding item to track down, the coffin of the Belgian World War I soldier Henri Louis Pirson, who lies in Bay 32 of the Catacombs under the Crematorium Chapel. His coffin now lies behind panelling and is thus inaccessible.



*Inscription: Koenigsfeld/Kaye monument*

---

## Edward George Honey: the Two-Minute Silence

Bob Flanagan

---

An Australian journalist from Melbourne, Edward George Honey writing as ‘Warren Foster’ in the *London Evening News* on 8 May 1919 was the first to suggest a Two-Minute Silence to mark the Armistice. Honey died on 25 August 1922 and according to contemporary reports and the Australian Dictionary of National Biography was buried at Norwood (see FOWNC Newsletter 39, September 2000).

All sources agree that E.G. Honey remained in London after the Great War, contracted tuberculosis, and died in 1922. However, some sources note that he died at Mount Vernon Hospital<sup>3</sup> and was then buried in the cemetery at Chestnut Avenue, Northwood. Indeed, British Pathé has film showing his unmarked grave taken 5 years after his death: <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/stills/here-and-there-2>. Angela Thompson (Hillingdon Council) has confirmed that E.G. Honey was indeed interred in August 1922 (grave 486, section C) in Northwood Cemetery. End of mystery.

---

<sup>3</sup> Originally founded as the North London Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest in Fitzroy Square, St. Pancras, the hospital moved to Mount Vernon in Hampstead in 1864, and moved again in 1904 to its current site on part of the Northwood Park estate.

---

---

# The London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb

Jill Dudman

---

---

The London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb was founded in 1792 by the Rev. John Townsend (1757–1826). Townsend followed the ideas of Thomas Braidwood (1715–1806) in Edinburgh, who in 1760 had pioneered a teaching method for deaf and dumb children. Its first Principal was Joseph Watson LLD (1764/5–1829), who had worked with his uncle Thomas Braidwood.

A new Asylum building was opened in 1810 at Bricklayer's Arms in the Old Kent Road. Nearby Townsend and Mason Streets are named after its founders.<sup>4</sup> After a number of changes, the pupils moved to Margate<sup>5</sup> and the building was sold to the London School Board. In 1903 the Old Kent Road School opened on the site, with a school for physically handicapped children



*London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, Old Kent Road*

on the ground floor and one for deaf children on the second floor. In 1968, this school in turn moved to Grove House in Elmcourt Road, Norwood, where it survived until 1999.

Thomas James Watson MA (1788–1857) had followed his father Joseph as Principal of the London Asylum, and in time was buried at Norwood (grave 5,684, square 19). Other burials recorded on the family gravestone are his third son Musgrave Watson (1834 /5–1901), Captain 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers, and his wife Mary Glasgow (1839–1904) and their children Ivan Musgrave (d. 1928) and Mildred Jane Musgrave Watson MBE (d. 1949), and most recently Gilian Margaret Askew (1916–2013), adopted daughter of the above.

Miss Askew had been a FOWNC member almost since our foundation in 1989. She had been orphaned when her parents, Alice (b. 1874) and Claude (b. 1865) Askew, both writers well known in their day, were drowned when the Italian passenger ship *Città di Bari* was torpedoed by the German submarine UB-48 and sank in the Ionian Sea off Paxos in October 1917. They had been doing relief work and journalism in Serbia, and were sailing to Corfu where the remnants of the Serbian Army were then quartered after their epic march across Albania. In turn, Alice Askew's best friend Mildred Watson adopted Gilian, hence the connection with Norwood.

---

<sup>4</sup> Henry Cox Mason (c.1755–1804), Rector of Bermondsey.

<sup>5</sup> Now the Royal School for Deaf Children, Margate.



*Norwood: newly-restored Watson family gravestone*

ence with stonemasons from long ago, the original monument could be recreated. In 2010 her relative Mr Nick de Courcy-Ireland organised its reinstatement. Miss Askew also left a legacy of £500 to FOWNC, and it is a privilege to be able to acknowledge her generosity in this way.

Gilian Askew spent much of her working life as first an employee and then a director of the London School of Journalism, which taught journalism and creative writing through correspondence classes. She remained with the School until her retirement.

The Watson family monument, which is immediately adjacent to the St Mary-at-Hill plot, had suffered severe damage over the years. Thanks to Miss Askew keeping records of correspond-

## Commander John Cyril Porte (1884-1919)

Colin Fenn

A chance remark at the NCFE AGM in Glasgow revealed a family connection to the Seaplane Experimental Station at Felixstowe and to its commandant in 1915, John Porte (grave 35,422, square 95). Porte, a Royal Navy officer who had contracted tuberculosis and thus been discharged, worked in the US with aircraft pioneer Glenn Curtiss to develop a practical flying boat (see FOWNC Newsletter 23, July 1995).

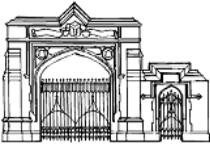
With their long endurance and seaworthiness, flying boats were invaluable during the Great War, important roles being to patrol the North Sea and hunt down German U-Boats and to give warning against Zeppelin and other raids on London. The story emerged that one of the engines of a massive Felixstowe flying boat disintegrated in flight during a U-boat



*Bristol Scout hooked on the upper wing of a Felixstowe Porte Baby[sic] flying boat, 1916*

patrol over the North Sea in 1917. The aircraft made a safe landing and made it back to base, although a propeller broke up and badly injured the pilot, necessitating the amputation of one of his arms. As a grim reminder, he kept the misbehaving propeller blade. His daughter still has it and is a member of the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis, hence our meeting. She kindly brought it in to show at the Glasgow AGM, along with some wonderful photographs of her father's time with the flying boats at Felixstowe, where he served under Commander Porte. Some of the original photographs can be seen in the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton.

Very little remains of these massive flying machines. Not that long ago an old plywood garden shed was recognized as the nose of a Felixstowe flying boat! It is now on display in a Suffolk aircraft museum. Now we have found a propeller! I wonder if more pieces of Porte's handiwork await discovery?



---

---

## Forthcoming Events

### September–December 2014

---

---

Introductory tours are held on the first Sunday of each month (7 September and 5 October at 14.30; 2 November and 7 December at 11:00), starting at the cemetery main gate off Norwood Road, and last about 2 hours. These coincide with West Norwood Feast (street markets and other town centre events, see [www.westnorwoodfeast.com](http://www.westnorwoodfeast.com)). There is no charge, but we welcome donations towards conservation projects. Additional events may be offered at short notice, including occasional members-only tours of the Anglican Catacombs (advance bookings only). Please register an e-mail address with us ([secretary@fownc.org](mailto:secretary@fownc.org)) to receive notifications/book a place.

#### **Each weekend in September, 11.00–16.00: Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches: An art exhibition commemorating the First World War**

Seven female artists give perspectives on the war from the landscape of battle on the front line to life on the home front. Each artist has produced artworks, relating in turn to the start of the war in 1914, 1916, and Armistice Day in 1918. The exhibition, funded by Southwark Council and curated by Jolanta Jagiello, will be held in the newly-restored Maddick mausoleum, a short distance inside the entrance arch.

#### **Sunday 21 September: Open House London Weekend**

Tours will start at the cemetery main gate at 14.00, 14.30 and 15.00, and end at the Greek chapel, where there will be short talks. The FOWNC bookstall will also be present. Visit [www.openhouselondon.org.uk](http://www.openhouselondon.org.uk), or look for the booklet in libraries for details of many other places of architectural interest to see for free in London over the weekend, including several in West Norwood.

#### **Autumn Lectures**

Talks will be held at Chatsworth Baptist Church Family Centre, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27 (enter by 2<sup>nd</sup> door in Idmiston Road) as detailed below, starting at 14.30. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations to help cover room hire.

## **Saturday 18 October: Lecture & AGM: Norwood's great rival: Highgate Cemetery – Ian Dungavell**

In 1836 Acts of Parliament created The South Metropolitan Cemetery Company and the London Cemetery Company. Whilst Norwood was consecrated in 1837, Highgate did not open until 1839, and Nunhead not until 1840. What took them so long? Highgate's attractive layout was created by the Company's architect Stephen Geary and landscape designer David Ramsay. The Eastern extension followed in 1855. Dr Dungavell, formerly Director of the Victorian Society, is now Chief Executive of Highgate Cemetery Trust.

## **Saturday 15 November: Lecture – Tea & Opera: Hughes & Gye – Barbara Thomas**

Barbara is not only a FOWNC member, but also a descendant of the largely forgotten Frederick Gye (1810–1878), founder of *The Royal Italian Opera*, and of his father-in-law Richard Hughes (d. 1856), 'the father of provincial theatre'. There was a strong link between these two families through the State lottery, and through wine and tea companies and 19<sup>th</sup> century entertainment. Sadly nothing remains to mark their grave at Norwood (grave 939, square 98), the monument having been demolished by Lambeth in the 1980s.

### **Other forthcoming events**

#### **Lambeth Heritage Festival**

This will run throughout September and will include many talks, walks, workshops, exhibitions, and other events. Visit [www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk/home/news](http://www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk/home/news) for the full brochure, or pick up a copy in Lambeth Libraries. Local events include:

#### **Sunday 7 September, 11.30 & 14.30: Walk – Knights Hill and Norwood Road**

Retrace a path across what was once known as Lower Norwood, where you could have seen grand villas, squat terraces, and gypsy encampments. Meet outside Rosebery's, 74 Knights Hill, SE27 0JD. Duration: about 1 hour.

#### **Sunday 7 September, 13.00 & 16.00: Lecture and exhibition – The Clock Factory**

The Clockworks, 6 Nettlefold Place, SE27 0JW. Dr James Nye will explore the history of the Telephone Manufacturing Company's (TMC) West Norwood clock factory, the historic Hollingsworth Works (now Parkhall Trading Estate), next to the cemetery. TMC was a significant local employer, escaping Luftwaffe targeting along the way, and The Clockworks holds a number of TMC objects.

#### **Sunday 14 September, 19.00. Portico Gallery - A Music Hall Extravaganza**

Sing-along with songs of World War I, including *Goodbyeee, Kiss Me My Honey Kiss Me, Shine On Harvest Moon, Pack Up Your Troubles, The Girl I Left Behind Me...* Tickets from the Portico Gallery, 23A Knight's Hill, SE27 0HS (0208 761 7612).

#### **Saturday 27 September, 10.00–16.00: Lambeth Archives Open Day**

Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5. This year's theme is *It'll all be over by Christmas – Lambeth and the Great War* and will focus on the centenary of the outbreak of war from various perspectives – the local volunteer force, conscientious objectors, men who are commemorated on the Stockwell War Memorial, and the contribution to the war effort made by the black community. Stalls from local organisations including FOWNC will be present.

---

---

## A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

---

---

Prior to the renewal of the cemetery forecourt, this sculpture was used there simply as a garden ornament. However, many years ago Dr Brent Elliott recognized it as a gravestone illegally removed from the cemetery during Lambeth's clearance operations some 30 years or so ago. Unfortunately we do not know which grave it came from. Has anybody any information as to its proper



location in the cemetery so that it might be reinstated? In the interim and in the hope that reinstatement might one day be possible, we have arranged for the monument to be protected and displayed in an appropriate place within the cemetery.

---

---

### 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 Co-ordinator:* 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 September 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](http://www.fownc.org); e-mail: [chairman@fownc.org](mailto:chairman@fownc.org) or [secretary@fownc.org](mailto: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](http://www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk)) and of the Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe (ASCE, [www.significantcemeteries.net](http://www.significantcemeteries.net))

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

---

---