

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 100 – January 2021

Free to members

Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

As members will realise, the 100th issue of the Newsletter is something of a milestone. Credit must go to our founder Nicholas Reed, who put together issues 1–12 and provided the impetus to halt Lambeth's planned destruction of what was then left of our once magnificent cemetery. Some of the trials (literally) and tribulations encountered thereafter are summarised in our 25th anniversary booklet (see: www.fownc.org/pdf/fownc25years.pdf).

In shouldering much of the burden from 1993, the enduring theme has been to try to guess the next curved ball Lambeth will come up with. They seldom disappoint.

There was a (virtual) meeting of the NHLF Project Oversight Board in September (the second such meeting, the grant having been awarded in January 2019), but no minutes have as yet been forthcoming (November 30). However, a date has been confirmed for the next meeting. In the interim Nicholas Long (chair of



St Stephen's Chapel: Damaged terracotta angel

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the Project Board) and I have had a virtual meeting with the Lambeth NHLF Grant Project Officer, who had been in post for a year, the appointment having been made without consultation. At the end of the meeting it transpired that she had been promoted within Lambeth and thus a new Project Officer was needed! And so the game goes on.

Meanwhile, it having been agreed under pressure from Nicholas and I that work on the Auffray (grave 25,249, square 54) and Baldwin-Brown (grave 7,167, square 40) tombs should be prioritized, it has transpired that consultants had demanded a 5-figure sum just to supervise let alone perform the necessary works! Other outstanding issues are repairs to the paths in the area surrounding the Sparenborg memorial (grave 31,119, square 81) and to the railings/wall and paths in the Greek enclosure. We await developments.

St Stephen's Chapel Condition Survey

In October Nicholas Long and I were allowed access to the scaffolding put up at the front of St Stephen's Chapel to view the tympanum at close quarters. Thanks to Lambeth Major Grants Officer Dan Thomas and conservators Basia and Kris Zykubek for facilitating our visit and for their expertise in planning the necessary works.

I had assumed that all the Tympanum figures were terracotta, but close inspection showed that only the three central angels are made of this material. They may not have been made specifically for their present location. Whilst one angel has lost a hand, they appear to be in fair condition overall.



St Stephen's Chapel: A frieze panel



St Stephen's Chapel: Tympanum detail

The remaining figures in the Tympanum and the panels in the frieze beneath the Tympanum are made of an as yet unidentified material (see: *A Bit of Mystery*, p. 16). Whilst finely crafted, these Tympanum figures especially are much in need of conservation/repair. The frieze panels examined seem generally in much better condition than the Tympanum figures hence may not need so much work. Time will tell.

All-in-all it was good to feel that the NHLF project had at last made at least some tangible progress!

Great Exhibition Virtual Tour

Using a combination of archive material and modern technology, The Royal Parks have recreated the Great Exhibition of 1851 in a virtual tour: [Royal Parks' new virtual tour of the Great Exhibition of 1851](#). This provides an excellent companion to my Crystal Palace Connections (www.fownc.org/pdf/newsletter92.pdf). As I said when the booklet was first published (2018), given the loss of the building itself, it can be argued that the cemetery has more tangible reminders of those who helped create the Palace than anywhere else. Indeed, I have discovered several people I missed in 2018, no doubt more will emerge in due course.



The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park

New Acquisition

John Clarke's careful monitoring of e-bay for Norwood-related items has borne fruit in the form of a mausoleum window design. The legend denotes 'window in mausoleum', and that the window was to be 9 ft from sill to floor. The design was created by James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars Glass Works, London EC. It may be possible to identify the mausoleum for which it was destined, if indeed it was actually manufactured.



Norwood: Design for a mausoleum (Jas. Powell & Sons, 1916)

19th century Gothic Revival and the increased demand for stained glass windows. The company survived until 1980.

FOWNC News

I am pleased to report that Tim Stephens (Norwood Forum) and Victoria Solomonidis-Hunter, late Cultural Counsellor at the Greek Embassy, have agreed to join FoWNC as Trustees. Secondly, as with everyone else, we are unsure as to what to do re. planning events at the moment. However, we do feel we need to hold an AGM on-line (see p. 15).

James Powell and Sons, also known as Whitefriars Glass, were glassmakers, leadlighters and stained glass window manufacturers. The company had been founded in the 17th century, but became well known as a result of the 19th cent-

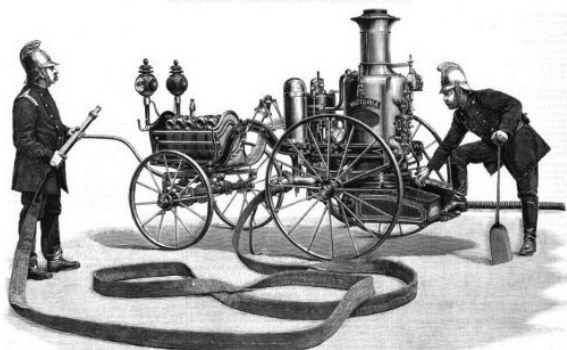
The Norwood Merryweathers

Jill Dudman

The name Merryweather became synonymous with horse-drawn and later motorised fire engines and steam trams in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many examples of their work survive in museums around the world. The company exhibited (and won an award) at the 1851 Great Exhibition and at the 1862 London International Exhibition. By 1862 they were known as Merryweather & Field, with the engineer Edward Field (1825–1908) designing (vertical) steam boilers for the fire-engine pumps to improve water pressure.

Moses Merryweather (1793–1872), was born in Welbury, Yorkshire. He came to London in 1807 and was apprenticed to Hadley, Simpkin & Lott, who made fire-engines at the corner of Bow Street and Long Acre. He took over the business in 1836 when all the original proprietors had retired. Also in 1836 he married Lott's niece Sarah Edwards née Taylor (1815–1910). They had 3 sons: Richard Moses (1838–1877), James Compton (1840–1917), and Henry Lott (1846–1881), and 3 daughters Mary Compton (1842–1905), Alice Thurlow (1844–1897), and Emily Harriett (1856–1919).

STEAM FIRE ENGINE FOR SOUTH AMERICA
MERRYS, MERRYWEATHER AND SONS, GREENWICH, ENGINEERS.



Merryweather – Steam Fire Engine for South America

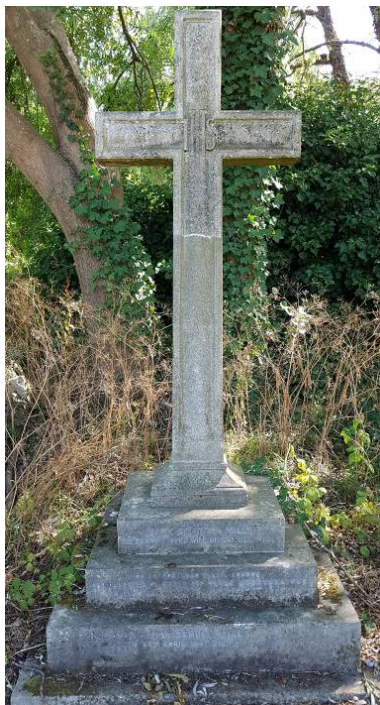
Moses was a great friend of Lord Thurlow,¹ who took much interest in his family and his factory and acted as godfather to Alice. In his later years Moses gave up the management of the firm to his sons and they became known as Merryweather & Sons. When he died on 25 September 1872 he was by then living at *Clapham House*, West Side, Clapham Common. He was buried in Abney Park Cemetery in the grave of his wife's uncle Henry Lott (1785–1859).

In 1876 the company moved to premises in Greenwich. The eldest son Richard Moses Merryweather had been assisting his father with the management since 1859, and later became head of the firm. A work stress-related breakdown eventually led to his death at *Clapham House* on 19 May 1877, aged 38. He was buried at Norwood (grave 16,533, square 79; monument destroyed). He left some £12,000. His sister Alice Thurlow Merryweather of 185 Brixton Road was also buried in this grave on 18 February 1897,

¹ Edward Thomas Hovell-Thurlow, 3rd Baron Thurlow (1814–1857). Edward Thurlow (1730–1806), 1st Baron Thurlow, had been a major landowner in Norwood

aged 52. His mother Sarah, who died at *Claremont House*, 185 Brixton Road, on 29 June 1910, aged 95, was a further burial in this grave. She left some £16,958.

The youngest son Henry Lott Merryweather became a partner in the firm in 1872. He achieved AMICE, MIMechE and FGS. In 1877 he gave evidence before a House of Commons Select Committee on the subject of using steam or other mechanical power for tramways on public roads. He lived at 158 Cromwell Road, South Kensington, and died of typhoid at 41 Marine Parade, Brighton on 29 December 1881, aged 35. He was buried at Norwood near to his elder brother (grave 16,520, square 79; monument destroyed). He left £26,093. Three infant grandchildren of Moses and Sarah were also buried in this same grave, namely Harvey Richard Merryweather (buried 9 May 1877, age 4), Compton Merryweather (buried 10 September 1884, age 6), and James Compton Merryweather (buried 24 March 1887, age 2).



Norwood: The Mills family grave

The deaths of his brothers left the remaining son James Compton Merryweather, who had joined the business in 1864, as head of the firm. Merryweather & Sons developed greatly under his direction, including machinery other than fire-engines, for example water supply (pumping and well-boring) and steam tramways. The first motorised fire-engine in London was a Merryweather appliance delivered to Finchley Fire Brigade in 1904.

The youngest sister Emily married firstly in 1874, Sir John Blundell Maple Bt (1845–1903), head of the Maples furniture shop in Tottenham Court Road, and secondly, Montague Ballard (d. 1936) in Nice in 1906. It is not known where either James, or Emily are buried.

The eldest sister Mary married Samuel Mills MD (1841–1911) in 1871. She lived in turn at 3 Southampton Street, Strand; 8 Suffolk Place, Pall Mall; and 24 Portland Place. There were no children. She died at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne on 11 September 1905, age 63. She is also buried at Norwood (grave 31,309, square 81). She left £24,269. Samuel too is buried in the grave. The inscription records that she was a daughter of Moses Merryweather. It was restored in 2001 or thereabouts.

Merryweather & Sons continued in business until 1970 when they were acquired by Siebe Gorman, the firm started by diving engineer Christian Augustus Siebe (1788–1872; grave 4,522, square 24 – replacement headstone). His second son, Henry Herapath Siebe (c. 1832–1887, also grave 4,522), and his son-in-law William Augustus Gorman (1835–1904) ran the business after Augustus retired. William is buried at Claygate in Surrey, but his wife Mary née Siebe (c.1835–1875) is buried in grave 4,522.

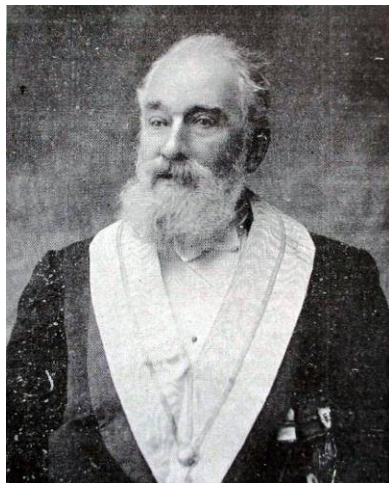
Thomas Higgs (1835-1913)

John Clarke

Thomas Higgs was Superintendent of the Running Department of the London & South Western Railway Company (L&SWR) for over 20 years. He was born on 12 August 1835. His career began on the London and North Western Railway (L&NWR) where he joined at an early age as a fitter's apprentice under James McConnell.²

At that time, drivers (or engineers as they were then called) had to first qualify as fitters before they could be promoted to fireman. After he became a fireman, Higgs served only a short time on L&NWR locomotives before obtaining an appointment on the North Staffordshire Railway. Later he joined a private firm and superintended the erection of some large pumping machinery in Ireland. On completing this project he returned to England and in September 1856 joined the L&SWR at Nine Elms under Joseph Beattie.³

He served the L&SWR as an engine driver at Dorchester, Southampton and Salisbury. During this period, towards the end of 1858, he married Mary Hyde Collins. He was sent to Exeter in 1860 following the extension of the railway. In the early part of his career as a driver at Exeter, Higgs received a reward and silver medal from the Directors of the L&SWR for his 'alertness and promptitude' in stopping a train that he was driving when a miscreant placed on the railway line an obstruction which would have caused a serious accident. Higgs not only stopped his train short of the obstruction, but left the footplate and gave chase to the man whom he then hauled to Crediton Police Station and thence to the Assizes. The man was sentenced to a long period in prison.



Thomas Higgs

Higgs remained in Exeter for eight years after which he was appointed Locomotive Foreman in succession to Joshua Abbott. In January 1872 Higgs became Locomotive Superintendent of the Western District and remained in this post for ten years. During this period he witnessed the extension of the L&SWR system from Bideford to Torrington; the opening of new branch lines to Ilfracombe, Holsworthy and Sidmouth; and the extension from North Tawton to Lydford and thence over Great Western metals to Plymouth.

² James Edward McConnell (1815–1883), was Locomotive Superintendent of the Southern Division of the L&NWR (1847–62). He resigned this position to become a consulting engineer

³ Joseph Hamilton Beattie (1808–1871) was Locomotive Superintendent of the L&SWR (1850–71)

In March 1882, Thomas Higgs returned to London and was appointed Superintendent of the Running Department under William Adams and subsequently under Dugald Drummond.^{4,5} He remained in this post until he retired at the end of July 1902. During his service as Superintendent of the Running Department he travelled with all Royal trains and had the honour of conducting the train that conveyed the coffin of Queen Victoria from Gosport to London.



The Higgs family monument at Norwood

anage and noted for his unstinting help and support of railwaymen of all grades. A remarkable man of drive and vision, he had been appointed Vicar of All Saints' Church in 1874. Despite several offers – including a Bishopric – Canon Edwards declined a more comfortable living and preferred to live his Ministry of 42 years in the South Lambeth Road surrounded by the people whom he loved.

With the support of railwaymen, initially at Nine Elms and Clapham, but over time from across the L&SWR, a bold decision was taken to purchase the freehold of No. 76 and also renting the house next door. This was the Orphanage's position when Higgs became its Chairman in February 1890. His election to this role was not a foregone conclusion: he was only elected after a second ballot following the original result which was declared a tie with Frederick Sims, the first Chairman of the Board of Management.

A significant feature of the Orphanage's management was that it comprised a small number of railwaymen, none of whom were Directors of the L&SWR. Hence the 'L&SWR *Servants*' Orphanage'. Thomas Higgs's period as Chairman would prove significant in the growth and development of the institution. Support for the Orphanage was growing across the L&SWR, as demand for accommodation continued. It should be remembered that railway work was a dangerous occupation at the time, with accidents

⁴ William Adams (1823–1904) was successively Locomotive Superintendent of the North London Railway (1858–73), of the Great Eastern Railway (1873–78), and of the L&SWR (1878 until his retirement in 1895).

⁵ Dugald Drummond (1840–1912) was successively Locomotive Superintendent of the North British Railway (1875–82), the Caledonian Railway (1882–90), and the L&SWR (1895 to death)

causing significant injury or death. William Short, the father of Nellie, one of the first girls admitted, was a porter killed in a shunting accident in November 1885. In 1894, the Board of Management was able to purchase the freehold of the second house in Jeffreys Road; whilst in 1895, following a generous donation by the General Manager of the L&SWR, a third house was bought. Finally, in 1900, a fourth house was acquired in Guildford Road, which became the girls' home. Jeffreys Road was then used exclusively for boys. But demand for accommodation continued and therefore in the early years of the 20th century the decision was taken to move the Orphanage from Clapham to the country. The new building was opened in July 1909 on a site close to Woking Station and facing the main railway line, with accommodation for 150 children.⁶

At the time of its opening, reference was made to the 'unstinted praise due to Mr. Thomas Higgs, who has been Chairman of the Board of Management for nearly twenty years'. Higgs continued as Chairman of the Board until his death, and such was the interest taken in this work by his family, two of his daughters became members of its House Committee and continued to serve in this capacity after their father's death. Higgs was also a prominent Freemason and took a deep interest in everything concerned with the Order. He was P.M. of the Sun Lodge, P.Z. of the Sun Chapter; and P.M. and P.Z., Treasurer and Founder of the Beach Lodge.

His funeral took place on 20 January 1913 at All Saints' Church, South Lambeth. Nearly 300 mourners packed the church, including representatives of all grades of staff of the L&SWR, staff of the Orphanage (including 12 boys), and representatives of the Order of Freemasons. An eloquent and impressive eulogy was delivered by Canon Allen Edwards, who said that Mr Higgs had been connected with him in his work for the Orphanage, and also as a sidesman, and a regular communicant at the church.⁷

During this time he had found Mr Higgs a noble example of a true, upright and honest Englishman. Referring to the children from the Orphanage present, Canon Edwards made a touching allusion to the great loss they had sustained and appealed to them to follow in his footsteps. Following the service, the coffin was conveyed to Norwood and was followed by a large number of those who had been in church.

There have been five further burials in the grave at Norwood (grave 33,424, square 104): his widow, Mary Hyde Higgs (b. 20 March 1834, d. 16 September 1918); their son-in-law, William John Dibb (d. November 1929, aged 61); their daughter Mary Ellen Dibb (d. 4 November 1938, aged 72); their son-in-law Charles Kelsall Cleator, husband of Alice Louise Higgs (not buried at Norwood), who died in October 1940, aged 73; and their son-in-law Samuel Waters, husband of Ann Elizabeth Higgs (likewise not buried at Norwood), who died in October 1943, aged 83.

⁶ Yet demand for places continued, and a new wing was added in 1935 to provide for a further 90 children. Changing times meant the Orphanage closed in 1988. Much of the site was sold for residential redevelopment and the subsequent demolition of the 'home in the country'

⁷ The church was badly damaged in World War 2 yet remained in use as the *All Saints Institute* until 1978. It was then demolished and the site developed for residential use in 1980 (Lansdowne Green). The site is off Hartington Road, with Allen Edwards Drive as the only reminder of the church and its Vicar

Thomas Lynn Bristowe MP (1833-1892)

Helen Hayes MP

There have been nine MPs for the Norwood constituency and two for the successor seat of Dulwich and West Norwood, of which I am proud to be the second. It has been fascinating to have had the opportunity to explore the life of one of my predecessors, and to reflect on the contrasts between Thomas Lynn Bristowe's experience and mine own.

I must, however, pay tribute to my immediate predecessor Tessa Jowell DBE PC (1947–2018). Much has been said about Tessa, but I think it is true to say that she broke the mould of her predecessors, building on the work of both John Fraser MP (1934–2017) and Sam Silkin PC QC (1918–1988). John and Sam both pioneered a much more engaging and accessible approach to politics. Tessa, I think, took that to a different level altogether – her approach could not have been more different from her Victorian predecessors, including Thomas Lynn Bristowe.

MP for Norwood

The 1832 Reform Act gave rise to the Lambeth constituency. Two MPs per session were returned under the 'first two past the post system'. These included the Radical Charles Pearson (1794–1862; grave 5,534, square 52), City solicitor and promoter of the Metropolitan Railway; the Radical/Liberal William Roupell (1831–1909; grave 5,541, square 62; monument largely destroyed), later a convicted forger; and the Liberals Frederick Doulton (1824–1872; grave 1,808, square 40), solicitor and 3rd son of potter John Doulton; and Sir William McArthur (1809–1887; grave 22,050, square 41), Lord Mayor of London, 1880-81.

Bristowe became Conservative MP for Norwood when the constituency was created by division from Lambeth in 1885, and he remained so until his death.⁸ The

Norwood constituency was described in 1885 as 'The Norwood ward and the parts of Brixton and Stockwell lying south of Acre Lane and Coldharbour Lane'. It seems clear that the Norwood ward stretched further west than the current Herne Hill ward into the areas now known as Tulse Hill and Brixton Hill. Constituencies generally tended to get smaller in area with time in line with population growth until the current round of boundary changes, which aims to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600.

Bristowe had an electorate less than 10 % the size of the current Dulwich and Norwood constituency: 7,501 registered voters in 1885, compared to almost 80,000 today. His



Thomas Lynn Bristowe

⁸ Bristowe was succeeded as MP for Norwood by the banker Sir Charles Ernest Tritton (1845–1918; grave 26,669, square 19). The seat remained in Conservative/Unionist hands until 1945

Parliamentary contributions were modest. There are very few records of him speaking in the House of Commons, but he appears to have been concerned about some of the conditions he saw in his constituency, asking about the ‘processions of the unemployed’ in South London, which may have been connected to unemployment riots which took place in the West End in the same year. He also asked about the level of stamp duty collected by the Treasury on the indentures of apprentices, probably with a view to getting it reduced.

Charles Booth's London

London in 1885 had just seen an intensive period of development and expansion. The population grew from one million in 1800 to 6.9 million a century later. In that same year social reformer Charles Booth (1840–1916) found that 35 % of the population in the East End were living in abject poverty.⁹ Average life expectancy in the 1880s in London was 43 for men and 47 for women, compared with 78 for men and 83 for women now. The city was beginning to face up to the challenges that industrialisation had brought, including challenges to public health: there had been a cholera epidemic as recently as the mid-1880s, the connection being made between slum housing and poor health.

We know that housing reformer Octavia Hill (1838–1912) was active in south London at this time and interestingly worked with John Ruskin at Dulwich Picture Gallery. There were also infrastructure challenges: this was the period when Joseph Bazalgette was building the sewer network, which also resulted in great change in Dulwich and Norwood, including the diversion and culverting of the River Effra that used to run beneath the cemetery.¹⁰ There is still sometimes flooding in the cemetery where it ran.

London was also getting to grips with the administrative and democratic challenges of an expanding population. Despite the Representation of the People Act 1884 that established the modern one Member per constituency system, and expanding the suffrage, it remained the case that all women and 40 % of men did not have the vote. However, Bristowe's tenure as MP saw the creation of the first ever London-wide tier of government, the London County Council (LCC).

The 1880s were an age of seeking benefactors and raising funds by private subscription for a wide range of projects from hospitals to schools to libraries, but increasingly philanthropy was not fit for purpose as a means of addressing the many social challenges that industrialisation had brought. The middle of the 19th century, for example, saw a dramatic drop in life expectancy. Within that backdrop, what would we have recognised of our area of London if we were able to visit during Bristowe's tenure as an MP from 1885 to 1892?

The Dulwich Estate was already 277 years old and may in fact prove to be the institution which outlasts all of us! We would recognise Edward Alleyn House and the Old College and Christ's Chapel, and also the ‘new’ College (1870). Obviously, we would recognise the form and beauty of Brockwell Park and Brockwell Hall, built 1811–13 for John

⁹ See: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/16/-0.1385/51.4719/100/0>

¹⁰ Sir Joseph William Bazalgette CB (1819–1891) was a pupil of Alfred Burges (1796–1886; grave 4,478, square 34)

Blades (1751–1829), a wealthy City of London merchant of fine glassware with showrooms at 5 Ludgate Hill. Belair House was in 1885 already 100 years old. Dulwich Picture Gallery had opened in 1817. Norwood cemetery was first consecrated for burials in 1837 and was the major tourist attraction in south London.



Brockwell Hall: bust of Thomas Lynn Bristowe

Herne Hill Velodrome was built in 1891 - now restored in large part due to Tessa's support through her work on the 2012 Olympics. Work started in 1892 on the building of St Barnabas Church in Dulwich, destroyed by fire in 1992. Maps from the 1850s indicate the presence of St Jude's Church on Dulwich Road and St Paul's on Herne Hill. The essential structure of Herne Hill, two railway lines and the station, Brockwell Park, Dulwich Road, Norwood Road, Half Moon Lane, Herne Hill, and Denmark Hill are already in place by the mid-1850s.

Many of the institutions we rely on today were not yet developed, although some were emerging. The Tate Library in Brixton opened the year after Bristowe died. King's College Hospital was still up near Lincoln's Inn Fields and did not move to Camberwell until 1909, though Dulwich Hospital was built in 1887 by the St Saviour's Poor Law

Union. In 1880 a committee was formed to establish a new cottage hospital in Norwood, which was built eventually on Hermitage Road off Central Hill (1882).

As to transport, there was huge expansion in railway development in particular in the rush to get passengers to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. However, many Londoners were reliant on bicycles and horse buses, and later on trams, to get around. Victorian public transport in London required 50,000 horses to keep it moving. But some things don't change – the rail infrastructure we have now is largely that built by the Victorians.

The Bristowes of Camberwell

Thomas Lynn Bristowe was the third son of John Syer Bristowe, a surgeon, of Camberwell and his wife Mary Chesshyre of Rock Savage, Cheshire. A stockbroker in the firm of Bristowe Brothers, he was born on 31 March 1833. He married Frances Ellen Mason in 1857. They lived at Dulwich Hill House, Denmark Hill. He was a member of the committee of the Stock Exchange for 17 years.

His elder brother John Syer Bristowe jnr MD FRCP Hon LLD FRS (1827–1895; grave 11,243, square 34) was appointed curator of the museum and pathologist to St Thomas's Hospital in 1850 and elected Physician in 1860. An extremely distinguished clinician, he was lecturer in medicine at St Thomas's (1876–92), and medical officer of health for Camberwell (1856–95). Amongst many voluntary appointments he was president of the Pathological Society of London (1885), of the Neurological Society (1891), and of the Medical Society of London (1893).

It seems likely that Thomas Lynn Bristowe would be little remembered today if it were not for his part in the campaign to save Brockwell Park from development. The move to purchase the estate from John Blades' grandson Joshua Blackburn (1822–1888; grave 6,801, square 60) to secure a public amenity in south London was clearly a major issue at the time.¹¹ Bristowe was strongly committed to it, campaigning to divert a Metropolitan Board of Works proposal to acquire land for a public park on the east side of Brixton Hill to help buy the Blackburn estate, and at one stage committing to underwrite the purchase with his personal fortune.

The move to create the LCC appears to have provided the additional opportunity to progress this issue, in part because wrapping the very popular proposal to purchase the estate into the legislation that established a new tier of government, which was inherently controversial, appeared to guarantee the support of several south London MPs.

In April 1889 Bristowe was elected to chair a committee to activate the campaign. The LCC provided half the funds, the rest came from the Vestries of Lambeth and Camberwell (now the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, respectively), plus other bodies and private individuals. However, sadly he collapsed and died in the refreshment room in Brockwell Hall at the opening ceremony on Whit Monday, 6 June 1892, aged 59. His last address was 55 Cadogan Square, Chelsea. He was buried at Norwood (grave 24,575, square 36) on 10 June 1892. He left £137,388.



Thomas Lynn Bristowe's family vault at Norwood

In 1893 a drinking fountain surmounted by a figure of Perseverance and topped with a life-size bust of Bristowe, the whole some five metres high, was erected to his memory in the park near the Herne Hill gate. Sadly, road widening in 1958 led to the removal of the memorial. The bust, however, was saved and given to the Bristowe family. It has since been cleaned and now resides in Brockwell Hall.¹²

In conclusion, I think Bristowe would recognise Herne Hill if he were able to visit today. He would recognise it because of the stewardship and concern of local people, informing and holding to account local and national government; and he would recognise it because the passion and concern for the park he established remains as intense as it was during the campaign to purchase the Blackburn Estate. I think he would be very proud of his achievement.

¹¹ *The Brockwell Hall Estate in the 19th Century* by George Young (FOWNC Newsletter 77, May 2013)

¹² *Thomas Lynn Bristowe: A Brockwell Park Celebration* by George Young (FOWNC Newsletter 75, September 2012)

John Denis Fraser MP (1934-2017)

Nicholas Long

John Fraser was Tessa Jowell's predecessor as MP for Norwood and the last MP for the constituency, it becoming Dulwich & West Norwood from the 1997 election. Generally, he was an assiduous constituency MP. However, in relation to the difficulties faced by those of us fighting to protect the cemetery in 1989-91 it was both sad and surprising that he did not seek to assert any influence with Lambeth Council to get them to either desist, or seek to assist us. This was most probably connected with factionalism within the Lambeth Labour group and the need to pick his battles with care.

Fraser was born in Lambeth on 30 June 1934, the son of a fireman, Archibald Fraser, and his wife, Frances (née Benedict). He attended Sloane Grammar School where he was a near contemporary of Ted Knight (1933-2020), the future Leader of Lambeth Council. Joining the Labour Party in 1950, at the same time he started work with the Australia and New Zealand Bank. In 1952 he commenced National Service, serving in the army's education corps. This was followed by studies at the Co-Operative College at Loughborough followed by the Law Society School of Law, where he won the John Mackrell prize. He joined the firm of Lewis Silkin and rose to become senior partner.



John Fraser MP

Fraser was first elected a councillor on Lambeth Borough Council in 1962 and continued after local government reorganisation as a member of the London Borough of Lambeth until election as a Labour MP on 31 March 1966. He was a Chairman of the Town Planning Committee and Leader of the Labour Group. During this period he became a founder member of the Co-Operative (Housing) Development Society.

Once elected as an MP, almost immediately he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Barbara Castle at the Department of Trade and Industry, followed by his first ministerial job as Under Secretary of State for

Employment 1974-6 where he was much involved with the Sex Discrimination Bill. Later, as Minister of State at the Department of Prices & Consumer Protection 1976-9, he took the opportunity to require petrol filling stations to display the price of fuel. More importantly, Fraser was largely responsible for steering the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 through Parliament. He was with Barbara Castle at the time of her attempt to drive through reforms to industrial relations with her *In Place of Strife* plan, from which he gained much political experience. For her part, Barbara Castle admired his 'shrewd mind and steady personality'. After Labour lost office in 1970, Harold Wilson promoted Fraser to the opposition frontbench in 1972, where he became a spokesman on home affairs.

My first contact with John was during this period when, as a volunteer housing adviser (from 1972) at the Brixton Advice Centre in Railton Road and assisting some of his constituents, I would seek his support in resolving some of the most appalling cases. He was unfailing in his understanding of the pressures caused by poor and insanitary housing conditions and helpful in resolving issues. He was also aware of the rising widespread discontent locally over police misuse of the ‘sus’ laws and in 1979 had tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce a Bill in the House of Commons repealing them. It was ironical that the (Thatcher) government that had failed to support his Bill, in the aftermath of the April 1981 disorders in Brixton, abolished the repressive laws with the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

John was highly respected in the community and by parliamentary colleagues. I had further dealings with him during the late 1980s and early 1990s (in various capacities connected with the Community-Police Consultative Group) when community confidence in the police in Lambeth was very low. He was always available to provide advice and counsel, invariably sound, and in a quiet way to untangle issues – particularly within the Labour group – that were seemingly otherwise unresolvable.

John Fraser had married Ann Hathaway in 1960 and they had three children: two sons, Mark and Andrew, and a daughter, Sally. Andrew predeceased him. He was survived by five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. His Roman Catholicism was important to him and he often gave readings. He was a natural linguist. He died on 6 April 2017 and was cremated at Norwood on 5 May.

John was an active member of the Turney Road Residents’ Association and a welcoming and friendly face to any new residents in Turney Road. He was a keen runner, regularly spotted pounding local streets and parks. He put his running to good use in leafleting residents and encouraging residents to sign up to the residents’ association. He was also a keen gardener and enjoyed opera immensely. He was always willing to chat about the flowers, trees, and wildlife species in his garden with a fondness for hedgehogs and maintaining wildlife habitats.



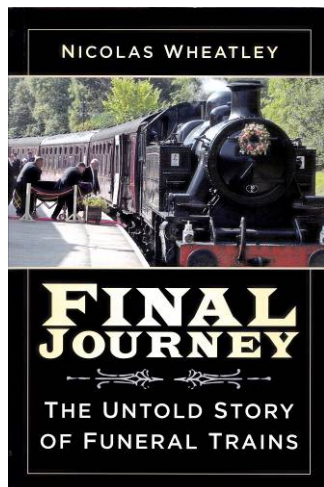
Book Review: Final Journey

John Clarke

Nicolas Wheatley. Final Journey: The Untold Story of Funeral Trains. The History Press, 2020. Paperback, 304 pp. Many monochrome and 17 colour illustrations. ISBN 978 0 7509 9433 0. £20.

This book describes how and why railways were used to transport the dead to their final resting place. It is a tale that, until now, has been largely hidden, often because the evidence for these final fares is difficult to locate. Nevertheless, Nicolas Wheatley has produced an impressive account of these important journeys. Starting from the first recorded rail fatality on the Middleton Railway in 1813, the author considers cemeteries with railways, military repatriations, two airship tragedies (the R38 and the R101), Royal funeral trains, Sir Winston Churchill (and his wider family), and other known (and lesser

known) people who were transported by train. Also included are descriptions of the vehicles and equipment used in transporting the dead, funerals by tram, models of coffin carriages, and a review of the cessation of this traffic over the national network in 1988. The author goes on to consider the continuation of this traffic on 'heritage' lines.



The role of the railway in the repatriation of the Unknown Warrior in a special van built and operated by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway is well known. The van used was numbered 132 and had been used in 1919 in the repatriation of the remains of Nurse Edith Cavell and of those of Captain Charles Fryatt. The latter had been in charge of a ferry operated by the Great Eastern Railway between Harwich and the Netherlands when he was alleged to have rammed a German submarine that was trying to detain his ship. He was captured and executed by the Germans in July 1916 causing, as with the execution of Edith Cavell, much international outrage. Van 132 survives (mytenterden.co.uk/directory/the-cavell-van-article-277.aspx#.X6-VLMj7SUK).

Worthies noted whose mortal remains are said to have been transported by rail to Norwood are George Attree, a funeral director, from Brighton to Victoria in 1880 (this is an error: George Attree, funeral director, died in 1892 and is buried in the Extra-Mural Cemetery at Brighton), and Sir Richard Webster, Viscount Alverstone (1842–1915) (grave 16,457, square 76) from Cranleigh to London in 1915. The author also refers to the 'gate in the wall on the side facing the railway', which he speculates may have been used to deliver coffins from scheduled trains. However, it is not clear which gate this refers to (Church Road gate, or the lower gate on what was then Pilgrim Hill), and no supporting evidence is presented. Be this as it may, the book is informative and includes a wealth of fascinating and previously unpublished photographs and drawings. Highly recommended.



Forthcoming Events

January – April 2021

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, we do not know when we will be able to start tours in the cemetery again. Realistically we would hope to be able to start in May hence we will plan for that. If we are able to start tours before that we will notify members via our e-mail list and Twitter feed. However, in order to fulfill our constitutional obligation we will hold our AGM on Saturday 16 January 2021 at 11:00 on-line via Zoom. I will give a short talk and Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods at Lambeth, will give an update on the NHLF project. To register please e-mail Jill Dudman by Saturday 9 January (secretary@fownc.org). We will circulate agenda, minutes, and reports and ask for questions via e-mail to registered attendees and send them a link to join the meeting.

A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

The condition survey of the pediment of St Stephen's Chapel (see p. 2) has not only highlighted the poor condition of many of the figures, but also raised the question of the process used to manufacture the statues representing the Resurrection of the Dead. They were clearly purpose made for the pediment. All have the same face. They are hollow and there is no metal armature apart from in some repaired fragments. They are made of single layer of fine material with internal modelled walls supporting the structures. They have a very good surface finish with marks suggesting the use of modelling tools and brushes. Conservation expert Kris Zykubek tells me he has not encountered such exceptional stoneware statues before. In time we may learn more about the method used to manufacture them and where, when, and by whom they were designed and made.



St Stephen's Chapel: damaged casts

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