

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery



NEWSLETTER NO.21: JANUARY 1995

Price 50 pence

Chairman's Report - Bob Flanagan

We have still not heard from Lambeth Council as regards the implementation of either the Consistory Court judgement or the proposed Cemetery Advisory Committee. However, there does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel! Firstly, Nicholas Long has been invited to become the Archdeacon of Lambeth's representative in dealings with the Council concerning the cemetery. One can only guess at the feelings of some of those who planned to destroy the cemetery at this appointment...

Nicholas will not only be involved in overseeing the implementation of the judgement, but also in day-to-day matters such as the style of headstones permitted in the consecrated areas. Sadly, Nicholas felt that, having accepted this appointment, it would not be appropriate for him to continue as a FOWNC officer. We thus offer him our sincere thanks for all his past efforts to help save what remains at Norwood and look forward to working with him in his new role.

On another front, I have now arranged a meeting with the Environment spokespersons of the three parties sharing power in Lambeth to bring them up-to-date with the situation in the cemetery. I have also invited the Archdeacon's Representative, Nicholas Long, and a local councillor, John Whelan, to attend. In addition, I have written to Mr Brian Miles, Lambeth's Chief Planning Officer, asking why there has been no attempt to repair the portion of the boundary wall demolished by Council workmen some two years ago, apparently when trying to remove a growth of ivy. I have also asked Mr Miles to address as a matter of urgency the question of the repair of the roof of the Catacombs beneath the site of the Episcopal chapel (the present Rose Garden). Both the boundary wall and the Catacombs are now Grade II listed and Lambeth have a statutory obligation to keep them in good repair.

Finally, Paul Graham has received permission from the Diocesan Advisory Committee to undertake the repair/reinstatement/replacement of the memorials to:

Free to Members

Charles William Alcock (square 86), Charles Bravo (square 99), Ann Farrow (square 8), George Jennings (square 34), William Marsden (square 62), William Morley Punshon (square 60), David Roberts (square 38), Wilhelm Rommel (square 115/9), and John Stevens (square 47).

A condition attached is that a notice giving details of the memorials to be reinstated has to be displayed in the cemetery for three weeks before any works can commence. Plans showing details of the proposed works also have to be made available for inspection. I have asked Mr Mackay, Cemetery Superintendent, if the notice can be displayed in the cemetery notice-board for the requisite period. It would seem best if the plans could be held in the cemetery office at this time in case anyone wants to look at them. If any FOWNC member wants to look at the plans, then please get in touch with Paul or myself.

English Heritage and Cemetery Conservation

On 30 November last year English Heritage (London Division) held a one-day meeting on cemetery conservation in London. Our representatives tell me that the themes were (i) apply for Lottery money, and (ii) don't do things piecemeal - follow the example of Lambeth at Norwood and prepare a comprehensive Land Management strategy! Perhaps it was as well for my blood pressure that I could not attend!! Lambeth had to be dragged kicking and screaming in protest to the point where they agreed to prepare a draft Land Management strategy for Norwood. Over one year later there is absolutely no sign of any of the agreed points being implemented. It is one thing to pay lip-service to a strategy. Implementation is another matter entirely...

We have had staunch support from English Heritage over the years, most notably from Don Bianco, Philip Davies, and Roger Bowdler. However, it has to be said that there has been room for improvement in other areas. The new listing recommendations seem

to have been 'mislaid' for well over two years, for example, whilst Paul Graham has been sorely tried by the Grants division's (changing) requests for quotes for restoration work. In tomb restoration, as in many things, we all look for value for money. Sadly it is not just a question of going for a cheap quote. Only a few years ago The Greek Community, for example, spent over £50,000 on re-roofing St Stephen's Chapel. It seems that such a poor job was done that another new roof is now needed. The Mantell restoration contract was given to Minter's, a local firm. Minter's not only lost the (Grade II* listed) fragments of the original tomb, but also made a mistake on the inscription which they were supposed to copy from the fragments. Surely these practical problems should be the subject of discussion between English Heritage and interested parties such as FOWNC in addition to airy talk of strategies which may stand little chance of implementation.

The 1995 Programme of Events

As in past years, we plan to hold general tours of the cemetery on the first Sunday and either a talk on the third Saturday (October-March) or a special tour on the third Sunday, of each month (December excepted). The AGM will be held after Dr Denis Smith's talk on Tower Bridge in October. We are always grateful for suggestions for topics/speakers. Remember there must be a link with the cemetery - possible future topics, for example, include Reuters and the diving pioneer Augustus Siebe. Note that we hold our lectures on Saturday afternoons to ensure that members who live some distance away have the chance to attend, and also because some members (and possibly also some lecturers!) do not like venturing out-of-doors on winter evenings.

This year we are repeating three special tours which have proved popular in the past (Crystal Palace, Dickens and Artistic Connections, respectively). However, each will include new material reflecting our ever increasing knowledge of the cemetery. In addition, two completely new tours are planned, a 'wildlife' tour (as requested by members) in May and a 'mystery' tour in August. This latter tour is still an unknown quantity even to the leader, but I'm sure he'll be able to come up with something on the day!

A major innovation will be the 'open weekend' on the 17th and 18th of June. We plan to hold tours of the Catacombs on both days, for example. We are especially grateful to Mr Mackay, Cemetery Superintendent, for permission to hold this event. Further details will be given in the April Newsletter. Ideas for special events will be welcome and should be communicated to any committee member.

Review of FOWNC Events - Autumn 1994

We were privileged on 15 October to receive a visit from Richard Lockett, Senior Assistant Director of the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and a leading authority on the work of the artist Samuel Prout. His very interesting talk surveyed the life and career of Prout and looked at aspects of the artist's technique. Prout received an early start by being asked to illustrate books by the antiquarian writer John Britton (also buried at Norwood), and went on to specialize in views of France, Italy and other European countries. Although appointed "Painter in Water-Colours in Ordinary" by George IV, Prout never quite reached the highest popularity of early 19th century artists, and his work sadly became little known after his death in 1852. It was fascinating to see several examples of his method of working, progressing from the sketches made on site through to the finished paintings. In particular, we learned that he sometimes used an original site sketch several times in different modified versions to produce a number of paintings. The FOWNC bookstall still has a few copies of Richard Lockett's monograph on Prout.

The audience of nearly 40 people who gathered on 19 November were highly entertained by Nicholas Reed's recounting of the circumstances surrounding the death of Charles Bravo at The Priory, Balham in 1876. In a change of format from Nicholas's earlier presentations in which we had visited the tomb and he had taken the part of the coroner at the second, highly-publicised inquest, on this occasion he gave a detailed and copiously illustrated talk setting out the background to the mystery and introducing all the major characters. He had a display of the numerous books that have been written about this case - infuriatingly, all now out of print - and discussed the conclusions reached by each author, many of the audience joining in with their own theories. The most recent authors, Bernard Taylor and Kate Clarke (*Murder at The Priory*, 1988), end their book by relating their visit to West Norwood Cemetery to search for the grave, and give a vivid description of the wild area where it is situated and the poor condition of the tombstone. They conclude: "It will not be long before Charles's grave has deteriorated beyond repair and beyond recognition; then, his resting place will be unknown." Happily, the tomb is high on our list for restoration, and plans are well advanced.

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Norwood and the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) - Bob Flanagan

The late Eric Smith FSA published the names of 142 people buried at Norwood who are commemorated by entries in the DNB (*Collectanea Londiniensia: Studies presented to Ralph Merrifield* [London & Middlesex Archaeological Society Special Paper No. 2, 1978, pp. 436-452] and *Transactions: Volume 30* [London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1979, pp. 152-156]). Thanks largely to the work of George Young, we now know of no less than 66 more people buried at Norwood who have entries in the original DNB. Is this the final list? Somehow I doubt it, but there must be a limit...

There are some famous names in the new list. The publisher Richard Bentley was an early *bête noir* of Charles Dickens. George Dollond's name lives on in Dollond & Aitchison. The actor William Dowton is immortalised in *Vanity Fair*. Yorkshiremen still talk of Lord Hawke and cricket. Thomas Letts of diary fame. Mention of jingoism will forever recall The Great Macdermott's song *By Jingo*. Anthony Nesbit was the grandfather of E. Nesbit. Alexander Parkes is looked on as the father of the plastics industry. Felix Slade initiated the School of Fine Art at University College which bears his name and also the Slade chairs at Oxford and Cambridge.



ERIC SMITH

Some others are not so famous, but no less important. Henri Le Caron, for example, was the Government spy who infiltrated the Fenians in North America and gave evidence to the Parnell Commission. Paul Bedford was a well-known tenor. Alfred Cellier had a long association with Gilbert & Sullivan. The handwriting expert Charles Chabot gave evidence at many famous trials. The journalist Charles Dod originated the 'Parliamentary Companion'. Joseph Glass invented the first practical chimney sweeping machine thus bringing to an end the cruel usage of the 'climbing boys'. Thomas Grieve was a member of a well-known family of theatrical scene painters. John Ryder was a noted actor and friend of Macready.

There are some further DNB connections which should be documented. Thus, although he was cremated at Tooting and his ashes are interred at Brookwood, the author Dennis Yeats Wheatley (1897-1977) is commemorated on his family monument (grave 26,071, square 50). A family grave of the engineer George Robert Stephenson (1819-1905) also lies at Norwood (grave 3,264, square 47). Stephenson himself, who was a nephew of the railway pioneer George Stephenson and thus a cousin of George's son Robert, died at Charlton Kings near Cheltenham and is presumably buried there. Finally, Lady Florence Irving, the estranged widow of the actor Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905), was cremated at Norwood on 16 January 1935 aged 91, although her ashes were taken away by the undertakers and presumably lie elsewhere. Sir Henry's ashes of course lie in Westminster Abbey.

DNB 'Original' Edition - 1882 et seq.

If other family members buried in a grave feature in the DNB, and were so recorded by Eric Smith, details are given in square brackets. I am grateful to Rosemary Comber and George Young for helping research the fate/condition of the monuments. Sadly, however, more than half (those marked '*') cannot be found. If anyone has photographs or other records of the missing monuments, please let me know.

Charles Baily FSA (1815-1878) (grave 1,900, square 48) - brick vault capped with limestone slabs surmounted by elaborate iron-work (some of the finest surviving in the cemetery)

John Walker Baily (1809-1873) (grave 1,900, square 48) - brother of Charles Baily (see above)

*Charles Baxter (1809-1879) (grave 2,078, square 7/22)

Thomas Miller Beach MD (Major Henri Le Caron) (1841-1894) (grave 25,795, square 86) - simple stepped marble cross and kerbs but cross shaft broken

*Francis Bedford (1799-1883) (grave 408, square 61)

*Paul John Bedford (1792-1871) (grave 9,290, square 72)

Richard Bentley (1794-1871) (grave 736, square 61)
- large brick family vault capped with Yorkstone slab, in good condition

*Henry James Brooke FGS FLS FRS (1771-1857) (grave 1,420, square 61)

*Peter Buchan (1790-1854) (grave 4,138, square 111)

*Alfred Cellier (1844-1891) (grave 24,291, square 77/78)

Charles Chabot (1815-1882) (grave 19,333, square 99) - red granite monument, now in pieces

*Charles James Collins (1820-1864) (grave 9,526, square 119)

*James Dodsley Cuff FSA (1780-1853) (grave 3,618, square 90)

*Freeman Gage De La Motte (-1862) (grave 5,647, square 5)

*Charles Roger Phipps Dod (1793-1855) (grave 4,413, square 46)

George Dollond FRGS FRS (1774-1852) (grave 2,205, square 62) - brick family vault topped by elaborate marble sarcophagus, in need of conservation

*William Dowton (1764-1851) (grave 2,388, square 96)

John Doyle (1797-1868) (grave 105, square 26) - uninscribed body stone may be on site of grave

*Mary Emma Ebsworth (1794-1881) (grave 18,792, square 101)

William Ellis (1800-1881) (grave 781, square 64) - brick vault covered with Yorkstone slab, in fair condition [the grave of his father-in-law, the historian Sharon Turner (1768-1847)]

*James Esdaile MD (1808-1859) (grave 6,291, square 36)

*Alexander Charles Ewald FSA (1842-1891) (grave 14,935, square 114)

*Christian Ferdinand Ewald BD (1802-1874) (grave 14,935, square 114)

*Sir James Eyre MD (1792-1857) (grave 5,484, square 73)

*Frederick Field FRSE FRS (1826-1885) (grave 3,984, square 35)

Henry Gastineau (1791-1876) (grave 7,485, square 88) - grave site covered by thick undergrowth hence not possible to investigate further

*Joseph Glass (1791?-1867) (grave 11,189, square 24)

*George Glenny (1793-1874) (grave 4, square 79)



HENRI LE CARON



ALFRED CELLIER

*James Godkin (1806-1879) (grave 17,528, square 25)

*Thomas Grieve (1799-1882) (grave 19,073, square 100) - marker plaque only remains

Joseph Gurney (1744-1815) (grave 419, square 40) - large flat granite family monument with kerbs, in fair condition [grave of son, the shorthand writer William Brodie Gurney (1777-1855)]. Joseph's coffin was moved to Norwood, together with those of seven other members of the family, from a burial ground at Maze Pond, Southwark (near Guy's Hospital) in 1842

Joseph Gurney (1804-1879) (grave 419, square 40) - son of William Brodie Gurney (see above)

*James Hann (1799-1856) (grave 5,049, square 85)

Martin Bladen, Lord Hawke (1860-1938) (grave 31,528, square 23 - ashes) - attractive marble cross and kerbs in good condition, the grave of his wife and her first husband, the millionaire Arthur Cross

*Robert Walter Honner (1809-1852) (grave 3,372, square 36)

*Frederick Yeates Hurlstone (1800-1869) (grave 6,106, square 32)

*Thomas Claverhill Jerdon (1811-1872) (grave 13,852, square 91)

*Charles Johnson (1791-1880) (grave 8,044, square 110)

*Percy William Justyne (1812-1883) (grave 19,687, square 110)

Thomas Letts (1803-1873) (grave 249, square 33) - impressive limestone monument with ram's head decoration, although lamb stolen from top (Grade II listed)

John Locke QC MP (1805-1880) (Catacomb 31 North)

Gilbert Hastings Macdermott (1845-1901) (grave 24,074, square 98) - large upright Gothic headstone and kerbs, in good condition

Lt-Colonel Sir Duncan Macdougall (1878-1862) (grave 8,306, square 22) - large horizontal slab over brick vault, in good condition (DNB wrongly states that Macdougall buried in St Paul's Cathedral)

*Robert Mimpriss (1797-1875) (grave 11,146, square 121)

Eliza Nelson (Mrs H.T. Craven) (1827-1908) (grave 31,155, square 124) - upright granite headstone and landing in good condition [the grave of the actor Henry Thornton Craven (1818-1905)]

*Anthony Nesbit (1778-1859) (grave 397, square 73)



WILLIAM DOWTON



LORD HAWKE

- *Alexander Parkes (1813-1890) (grave 20,927, square 7)
- *Henry Wyndham Phillips (1820-1868) (grave 11,677, square 60)
- *John Tidd Pratt (1797-1870) (grave 10,798, square 90)
- Ellen Henrietta Ranyard (1810-1879) (grave 4,220, square 40) - large ivy-covered limestone family mausoleum near to the Greek cemetery
- *Lovell Augustus Reeve FGS FLS (1814-1865) (grave 3,295, square 5)
- *William Rendle FRCS (1811-1893) (grave 4,494, square 25)
- *Henry Thomas Riley MA (1816-1878) (grave 16,962, square 77)
- *John Ryder (John Nicholas Robins) (1814-1885) (grave 15,086, square 118)
- *Elizabeth Sarah Sheppard (1830-1862) (grave 7,969, square 18)
- Felix Slade FSA (1790-1868) (grave 5,736, square 62) - brick family vault faced in limestone and capped with Yorkstone slab, in fair condition but family crest missing
- *Robert Somers (1822-1891) (grave 21,578, square 29)
- *John Edward Sowerby (1825-1870) (grave 3,408, square 19)
- Charles Stanford DD (1823-1886) (grave 21,161, square 56) - upright marble headstone and kerbs, now anonymous because presumably inscribed oval bronze plaque missing
- *William Tegg (1816-1895) (grave 12,097, square 88)
- Francis Sheppard Thomas (1794?-1857) (Catacomb 34)
- *Joseph Towne (1808-1879) (grave 4,045, square 35)
- *Frederick Vining (1790-1871) (grave 3,539, square 47)
- *Henry Widdicombe (1813-1868) (grave 11,341, square 79)
- *John Esdaile Widdicombe (1787-1854) (grave 4,158, square 31) - common grave hence there may not have been a memorial
- William Wright DD (1837-1899) (grave 16,899, square 39) - upright Gothic marble headstone, in 'lawned' area hence kerbs removed



PAUL BEDFORD



G.H. MACDERMOTT

[Copies of the above-mentioned Eric Smith articles of 1978/1979, which contain lists of his original 142 Norwood DNB discoveries, are held by the committee. Please contact Jill Dudman if you wish to see them.]

DNB 'Missing Persons' - 1993

Five more famous Norwood names occur in the recent 'Missing Persons' edition of the DNB. It is perhaps strange that they were missed in the first place - one would have thought that Reuter should have made the 1903 supplement, for example!

Isabella Mary Mayson, Mrs Samuel Beeton (1836-1865) (grave 8,348, square 64) - 1930s replacement gravestone. Has anyone any idea what the original looked like?

James Henry Greathead (1844-1896) (grave 27,103, square 83) - very attractive horizontal marble raised cross on slab, in good condition

Alexander Muirhead FRS (1848-1920) (grave 20,893, square 21) - striking decorated grey granite obelisk over family grave, in good condition

Baron Paul Julius de Reuter (1816-1899) (grave 28,319, square 23) - upright red granite monument topped by an urn, in good condition but not very attractive to my eye (Grade II listed)

Richard Thornton (1776-1865) (grave 9,815, square 63) - brick family vault topped by marble sarcophagus, in need of conservation



MRS BEETON

Postscript - Tombstone Conservation

Of the surviving monuments discussed in this article, that of Baron de Reuter has been adopted by Reuters and is regularly maintained. Sadly, we seem to be alone in caring about the rest. London Underground and Dollond & Aitchison have been approached about the maintenance of the Greathead and Dollond tombs, respectively, but no positive response has been forthcoming. London Underground in fact said that they could not spend public money on maintaining a private grave, even though they have commissioned a bust of Greathead to be displayed outside one of their new stations! Fortunately the Post Office had no such qualms when they agreed to maintain the tomb of another Norwood Notable, William Wyon RA...

Of the monuments discussed in this article, I think that at least those of the Baily brothers, James Greathead, G.H. Macdermott, Alexander Muirhead and Felix Slade should now be listed. Would any member like to assist Paul Graham and myself in attempting to safeguard these and the other surviving tombs by trying to contact surviving relatives, for example, or by trying to raise grants for maintenance/restoration from bodies other than conventional sources such as English Heritage?



JULIUS REUTER, 1861

Book Review: Nature Conservation in Lambeth by I. Yarham, M. Waite, A. Simpson and N. Machin. Ecology Handbook 26. London Ecology Unit, 1994. Paperback, 98 A4 pages, £4.95. Many maps and full colour illustrations.

Like West Norwood Cemetery, the rest of Lambeth is nowadays largely a man-made environment. This being said there are a number of places where semi-natural habitat survives in one way or another. This attractive and modestly-priced book does an excellent job in delineating and describing the flora and fauna of these areas. [N.B. The Cemetery is in fact categorised together with the River Thames, Tooting and Streatham Commons, Brockwell Park and a number of smaller sites as of either 'Metropolitan Importance' or 'Borough Importance, Grade I'.] However, there is much of general interest in the book. Not only are the first 20 pages devoted to the geology, geomorphology and general history of the Borough, but also each gazetteer entry gives the history of the site in question. To me the only jarring note comes in the section 'The Role of the Borough Council', large parts of which have been lifted from Lambeth's Unitary Development Plan, but all-in-all it is excellent value and a credit to the production team. Copies can be obtained from the FOWNC Bookstall.

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Bob Flanagan and Jill Dudman

Happy New Year.....

And it's membership renewal time again! Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find a renewal form and an envelope addressed to the Membership Secretary. We should also be pleased to hear from any member who would be willing to help FOWNC with one of a variety of important tasks - please indicate on the form, if you are able to do so.

Forthcoming FOWNC Events - Jan-Mar 1995

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (1 January, 5 February and 5 March), starting at 11.00 at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road and lasting (depending on the weather!) 1½-2 hours. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Talks will be held as detailed below in Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way, SE27, starting at 14.30. Chatsworth Way leads off Norwood Road, but the entrance to the meeting room is at the side of the Church in Idmiston Road. Again, we welcome donations to help cover costs.

Saturday 21 January: Lecture - George Myers, Pugin's Builder - Patricia Spencer-Silver

George Myers was one of the great master builders of the Victorian age. His name will always be linked with that of the young architect Augustus Pugin, for whom he built four Catholic cathedrals including Birmingham and Southwark, and the famous Medieval Court at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Patricia's biography of Myers is available from the FOWNC bookstall.

Saturday 18 February: Lecture - Lord Hawke and Victorian Cricket - Tony Bradbury

Martin Bladen, 7th Baron Hawke of Towton, although born in Lincolnshire, captained Yorkshire from 1883 to 1910. Together with Lord Harris and W.G. Grace, Hawke dominated English cricket until World War I, once declaring "Pray God no professional shall ever captain England". His ashes lie in his wife's grave at Norwood. Tony Bradbury is a cricket historian and Yorkshire CCC member.

Saturday 18 March: Lecture - Brookwood Cemetery - John Clarke

In 1852 the London Necropolis & National Mausoleum Co purchased 2,000 acres of land at Woking, as well as land at Waterloo for a station. Their advisers included the architect William Tite and the engineer William Cubitt. Necropolis trains ran regularly until 1940, and there have now been some 240,000 burials. John Clarke is Chairman of the Brookwood Cemetery Society.

Norwood Society Event

Tuesday 31 January at 20.00, All Saints' Parish Rooms, Beulah Hill, SE19: Lecture - Great Buildings of London - Brian Bloice

A speaker familiar to many FOWNC members, Brian will talk about some of the builders who have helped change the face of London, including Thomas Cubitt and William Higgs.