

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery



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Free to Members

Chairman's Report - Bob Flanagan

There is little to report this month save that the Archdeacon has submitted the proposed Scheme of Management for the Cemetery to Lambeth, FOWNC and to other interested parties for comments before presentation to the Chancellor for approval. The proposed Scheme closely follows the Chancellor's judgement as reported in previous Newsletters. I would not be surprised if Lambeth tried to circumvent the judgement yet again.

There has been no progress on implementing the Land Management Strategy for the Cemetery, or on initiating repairs either to the boundary wall or to the roof of the Catacombs on the site of the former Episcopal Chapel. Brian Miles, Lambeth's Chief Planning Officer, has asked appropriate officers to look into the question of these repairs as a matter of 'urgency', but nothing has been done. Lambeth seem gripped by total inertia except when it suits them to send in demolition parties...

On Tuesday 17 January I held a meeting to which the Environment and Operational Services spokespersons of the parties sharing power in Lambeth had been invited with the aim of updating them as to the situation in the Cemetery. In connection with this meeting I prepared a concise history of the management of the Cemetery which we plan to publish in a future Newsletter. In the event the meeting was kindly attended by representatives of all three parties and by local councillor John Whelan. All expressed interest and support for FOWNC's attempts to preserve what remains of the Cemetery. Moreover, it was agreed that officers would be asked to respond to some of the questions I had raised. We again await developments...

And so to happier matters. Thank-you to all who have renewed your membership and for your generous donations. FOWNC could not function without your support. Thanks too to those who responded to the questionnaire about helping with FOWNC activities. Jill Dudman and Rosemary Comber will

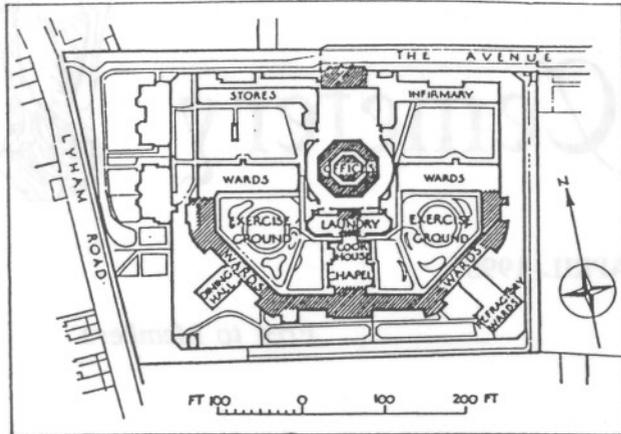
be contacting many of you in the near future, especially as regards the Open Days in June, some details of which are to be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. Support on these days and indeed for our programme of summer walks is vital if FOWNC is to carry on - attendances at this year's meetings have been poor despite excellent speakers and your committee does need some encouragement at this stage of the game!

Brixton Prison and its Treadmill - Bob Flanagan

At the January meeting there was some confusion amongst members as to the early history of Brixton Prison and of (Sir) William Cubitt's treadmill. To quote from the Survey of London (1956):

'In 1818 the Justices of the Peace for Surrey decided to enlarge the prison at Kingston and to build two new Houses of Correction, one at Guildford and the other at Brixton. About five acres of land forming a parcel of the part of Stockwell manor which had been acquired by Christopher Chryssell Hall in 1802 were bought for £400 per acre from Florence Young. A further strip of land on the west side of the prison was bought in 1836 from the Lambeth Waterworks Company. Designs for the prison were drawn up by Mr Chawner, the County Surveyor. His plan bore some resemblance to the recently erected model prison at Millbank, for the central feature was a polygonal building from which the governor could watch the prisoners at work. But whereas the six main blocks of cells at Millbank were arranged like the petals of a flower round the governor's office, those at Brixton were arranged in the form of a crescent, and so provided for expansion at a later date, "should the increasing Depravity of the lower Orders subject the County to that burthensome Obligation". The whole prison was surrounded by a high wall with a large gatehouse on the north side.

'The wall and the gatehouse were built in 1819, and when they were finished 25 prisoners were sent to help in the construction of the main blocks. The experiment was not altogether successful, for three prisoners escaped



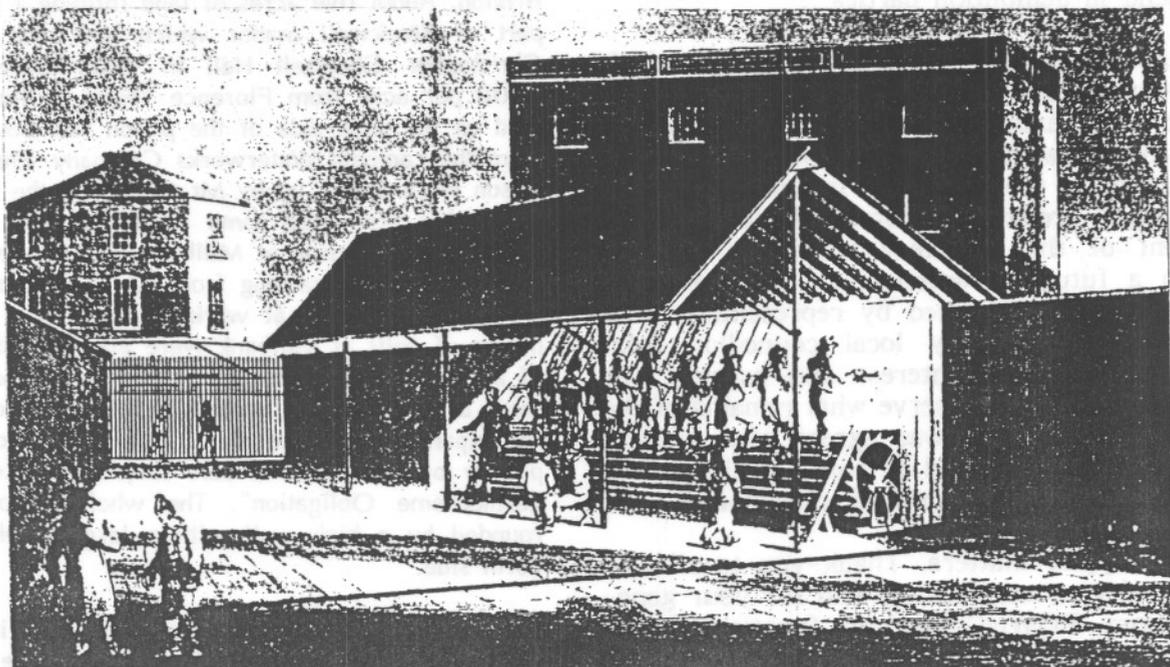
Brixton Prison, lay-out plan based on the Ordnance Survey map of 1870. The shaded portions were built before 1853

in 1820 and the governor was dismissed. When completed the prison contained 149 single cells and 12 double ones, the capacity of the single ones being 360 cubic feet, which compared very unfavourably with the 911 cubic feet of the cells at Pentonville Prison, erected in 1840-2. Estimates of the cost of the building vary considerably; Mayhew, quoting figures supplied by the Clerk of the Peace for Surrey, says that the cost of the land, the building and the erection of the treadmill was £51,780; but a report presented to Quarter Sessions in 1852 says that the original cost of the buildings and fittings was £32,000 exclusive of the cost of the land and treadmill. The first figure probably includes the cost of later works.

'During discussion of the plans of the prison the Surrey Justices asked for the advice of Mr Orridge, go-

vernor of the new House of Correction at Bury St Edmunds. A treadmill had been installed there in about 1818 by (Sir) William Cubitt and in 1820 he was asked to prepare plans for a similar machine for Brixton House of Correction. His plans were approved by the Justices, and in 1821 a tender from John Penn to erect a treadmill and keep it in repair for five years for £2,910 was accepted; Cubitt was offered £400 for his services. Radiating out from the governor's office in the centre of the prison were the airing yards in which the treadwheels worked by the prisoners were established. These treadwheels were connected to the mill-house which contained the machinery for grinding corn. Each wheel could be adjusted to the strength of the class of prisoner in the yard. At Brixton the space stepped over by each man in one hour was 731 yards. The advantages of the wheel as a method of employment were considerable; the prisoners required no instruction, they could not shirk their share of the labour nor waste or misapply materials, and there was endless work which could be started or stopped at a moment's notice. Nevertheless, the treadwheel was immediately denounced by some writers as inhumane; Thomas Allen, the historian of Lambeth, for instance, wrote that for women it was "only fit to be used in the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition".

'The House of Correction was frequently very overcrowded. By 1846 as many as four prisoners sometimes slept together in a single cell. In the following year the Justices resolved to build a large new House of Correction at Wandsworth. After this prison had been completed the Justices decided to sell the Brixton House of Correction, and in 1852 they offered it to the Government. An Inspector of Prisons reported very favourably on the possibility of using it as a criminal lunatic asylum, but no



TREADMILL, BRIXTON HOUSE OF CORRECTION, 1821. William Cubitt, engineer

action was taken, and on September 8, 1852, the prison was sold by auction to (Sir) William Tite, the architect of the South Metropolitan Cemetery at Norwood, for £8,450.

'Tite bought the prison as an investment, and intended to demolish it and sell the materials. He was therefore quite prepared to sell the prison as it stood to the Government, provided that he made a reasonable profit. Discussions for the purchase of the prison began immediately after September 8, 1852, and in November Tite gave the Government one month's option to buy it for £12,930. But in December Lord Derby's ministry resigned, Lord Palmerston succeeding Spencer Walpole as Home Secretary. Owing to the change of government nothing was done about Tite's offer, and in January 1853 Colonel Jebb, Surveyor General of Prisons, reported against the purchase of the prison. Meanwhile Tite was becoming justifiably impatient and arranged for an auction of the fabric to take place on February 28, 1853. Lord Palmerston was, however, intending to introduce a Bill for the partial abolition of transportation, which would require a considerable expansion of prison accommodation at home. On February 16 Colonel Jebb suggested that Brixton prison might be very useful for this purpose, and nine days later a provisional agreement for the purchase of the gaol for £13,000 was signed. The formal conveyance was dated May 14, 1853, and left Mr Tite with a profit of £4,550. [Jebb Avenue next to the Prison presumably is named after Colonel Jebb.]

'The prison was intended for use as a convict prison for women. A new block of cells was built at each end of the crescent, and other additions made in 1853 included a chapel, wash-house, baths, infirmary, kitchens

and houses for the officers; these alterations provided accommodation for 700 women. The first prisoners entered on November 24, 1853. New prisoners were confined to the old part of the prison for probationary discipline.

'The prison has been considerably altered and enlarged since 1853. It is now largely used for the confinement of unconvicted prisoners and debtors.'

HM Prison Brixton, much altered, is of course still in use. However, the treadwheel and the crank, a totally useless form of hard labour, were banned by Act of Parliament in 1898. The wheels at Brixton and elsewhere, with one exception, were then demolished except that the wheel from York Castle prison, where it had powered a circular saw, was sold to Madam Tussaud's museum - I wonder if it still exists?

The modern traveller to Anglesey can visit the only surviving treadwheel in Britain still in its original position (information dated 1984). Beaumaris Gaol was built in 1829 as a result of the 1823 Gaol Act which aimed to rectify the existing scandalous state of prisons. Although one of the 38 small establishments closed in 1877 when gaols under local authority control were transferred to the Home Office, Beaumaris Gaol then became a police station and town lock-up. The gaol has survived reasonably intact and is now open to the public. In the courtyard is the treadwheel to which prisoners sentenced to hard labour were committed. It could accommodate six prisoners at a time and operated a pump which supplied the watertanks in the roof of the gaol and so provided the building with running water.

Edward Neale (1805-1846) - Bob Flanagan

An anonymous phone call to Rosemary Comber has confirmed that yet another famous prize-fighter is buried at Norwood. Ned Neale was born in Streat-ham. His first recorded fight was against 'Deaf' Davis at the Barge House, Essex on 21 May 1822. Neale (the 'Streatham Youth') emerged victorious (100 min, £40). In turn Neale then defeated: Bill Cribb of Brighton (11 rounds, 15 min); Miller, the 'Pea-soup Gardener' of London (7 rounds, 7 min); and Hall of Birmingham (26 rounds, 30 min); in 1823, David Hudson (25 rounds, 53 min, £80); in 1824, Tom Gaynor, the 'Bath Carpenter' (21 rounds, 70 min, £100); Ned Baldwin 'White-headed Bob' (40 rounds, 73 min, £200); and finally Jem Burn, 'My Nevvy' (54 rounds, 98 min, £400).

After visiting Ireland, Neale married Mary Weston at St Luke's, Old Street Road, on 29 June 1825.

A honeymoon in Margate followed, but sadly Mary died in childbirth in March 1826. Neale, who had by now become landlord of the Black Bull, Cow Lane, Smithfield, then fought Phil Sampson in December 1826 at South Mimms Wash, Neale emerging victorious (11 rounds, 66 min, £400). In 1827 he beat Tom Cannon, the 'Great Gun of Windsor' at Warfield, Berkshire (22 rounds, 30 min, £400) and Jem Burn again (43 rounds, 46 min, £120 to £100). In April 1828 Neale fought a re-match with Ned Baldwin for £400 at Hatchard's Lane, Berkshire, but the fight was abandoned due to 'magisterial interference' (75 min, 84 rounds). A re-match was staged on 28 May at 'No Man's Land' in Hertfordshire - in the event Neale suffered his first defeat (66 rounds, 71 min, £500).

A match with John Nicholls for £200 was now proposed at Fisher Street, Surrey on 23 September

1828. Despite elaborate preparations, the match was disappointing, Neale being the easy victor in 18 rounds. In December 1828 Neale also easily defeated Roche of Exeter (30 rounds, 30 min, £200), the match seemingly being arranged with the idea of bribing Neale to lose. The 'Streatham Youth' then announced his retirement to Norwood where he was landlord of the Rose and Crown.

However, in 1829 he fought Samuel Evans ('Young Dutch Sam') for £200 at Ludlow, but was defeated in 71 rounds (101 min). Neale also lost a re-match on 18 January 1831 (£220 to £200, 14 rounds, 52 min). His last battle was a close-fought affair with an early opponent, Tom Gaynor, on 15 March 1831 at Warfield, Berkshire (£300 to £200). Neale was

the loser after 45 rounds (111 min) and subsequently retired, this time for good.

Whilst not featuring in lists of champions together with the noted Norwood 'heavyweights' Tom King, Harry Broome and Tom Spring, Neale was nevertheless a noted performer in his day. He died at the Rose and Crown on 15 November 1846 and was buried at Norwood a week later, the plot (grave 1,556, square 61) having been purchased by a family member after his death. It seems that Neale's tombstone survives, but the inscription is illegible. The site of the grave, immediately to the east of Tom Spring's, must have been chosen deliberately - Spring acted as Neale's second on many occasions and attended many of his benefits.

Ronald Reed was a founder member and keen supporter of FOWNC. His son Nicholas was the driving force in the creation of the society and of course its first Chairman. We are honoured to have had such a notable personality among our membership, and we offer our condolences to Mrs Reed, Nicholas and the family.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1995

Ronald Reed

RONALD REED, who has died aged 78, was a key figure in the Security Service during and after the Second World War.

As a wireless expert he supervised the communications of several "double-cross" enemy agents who transmitted the first bogus messages to Germany in 1940.

In later years he worked in Britain and abroad on counter-espionage operations. He participated in the investigation of Burgess and Maclean in 1951 and between 1957 and 1960 liaised with the New Zealand authorities.

Ronald Thomas Reed was born in London on Oct 8 1916; his father, a waiter at the Trocadero restaurant, was killed on the Somme soon after his birth. Young Ronald was educated at the Thanet Street Church of England School and the Regent Street Polytechnic.

While still a student he joined the BBC as an engineering apprentice, and when the Second World War broke out his interest in radio brought him to the attention of MI5. In Septem-



Reed (1945): espionage

ber 1940 he was seconded temporarily to MI5's Counter-Espionage Division, to supervise the signals of a double agent, the parachutist Wulf Schmidt, code-named Tate.

As the double-cross system developed, with a dozen more agents being "turned" against their Abwehr controllers, Reed took responsibility for monitoring all the traffic of Snow, Tate, Celery

and Zigzag. He helped to handle the messages hidden in secret writing by Treasure; a notoriously volatile woman of Russian origin.

Reed was despatched to rescue Zigzag (the safe-cracker Eddie Chapman), who ran into trouble in Lisbon while ostensibly on a mission for the Germans to sabotage British ships carrying explosives disguised as lumps of coal.

Reed was commissioned in 1942 and shortly before D-Day was posted to the American forces as an intelligence liaison officer in France. After the surrender he remained in Germany briefly before accepting a permanent position in the Security Service as principal technical adviser.

He travelled around the world advising colonial special branches on surveillance techniques and in later years he worked in the Protective Security Branch and, finally, the Training Section.

Between 1951 and 1957 he headed the counter-espionage section, attempting to investigate the KGB moles suspected of having pene-

trated the British Establishment. Although a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party, he was a committed anti-Communist.

After his official retirement in 1977 Reed was invited to remain in the Security Service and one of his later tasks was to contribute an anonymous chapter on clandestine wireless techniques to the official history *British Intelligence in the Second World War*.

An enthusiastic "ham" operator, he was a long-standing member of the Radio Society of Great Britain, and used the call-sign G2RX almost daily for 50 years. In retirement he worked as a community volunteer in Dulwich.

Reed married, in 1946, Mary Dyer; they had two sons.

Review of FOWNC Events - Winter 1995

This season has been marked by three extremely enjoyable lectures, well researched and presented, and fully illustrated with slides - those who did not come missed some excellent entertainment!

On 21 January we welcomed back Patricia Spencer-Silver to speak on her specialist topic of the builder George Myers. As a follow-up to her tour last summer in which we visited the graves of Myers and some of his colleagues, this talk concentrated on the life and work of Myers and particularly on his association with the young architect Augustus Pugin. A chance meeting when they were both working at Beverley Minster, Pugin still in his teens, was to lead to a long and close collaboration in which Pugin felt no need to supervise Myers' work at all, the rapport between them being such that Myers knew instinctively what Pugin wanted. Many other architects also used Myers' team of fine craftsmen, and a number of important government contracts were undertaken, notably for military barracks and hospitals. Patricia's biography of Myers is still available from the FOWNC bookstall, price £14.95.

Tony Bradbury, a member of Yorkshire County Cricket Club and keen student of its history, began on 18 February by professing that he was unaccustomed to speaking to groups such as FOWNC, and then proceeded to give a very good talk to a disappointingly small audience. His account of the life of Lord Hawke gave us much information about

the beginnings of modern cricket, and in particular some interesting insights into the rigid distinctions that were maintained between amateur and professional players - separate dressing rooms, styles of names on scorecards (Mr for amateurs), etc. In recent years, some cricket writers have represented Hawke as a domineering autocrat who ruled his players' lives off as well as on the field; Mr Bradbury carefully examined the evidence and gave us a balanced view of Hawke's character and his contribution to Yorkshire cricket during his many years of captaincy.

Finally, on 18 March John Clarke, Chairman of the Brookwood Cemetery Society, delivered virtually two lectures in one. Starting at Waterloo, he gave detailed descriptions of the two successive station buildings of the Brookwood Necropolis Railway, and then of the trains and their operations - the special coffin tickets (single journey only) produced some ironic amusement. Having travelled down the line to Woking, we were then taken on a conducted tour of the Brookwood Cemetery station buildings and chapels, and a selection of the most notable monuments. One special connection for FOWNC is that the ashes are interred at Brookwood of the writer Denis Wheatley, whose name is commemorated on a family monument at Norwood. Within this enormous cemetery are several areas used by particular organisations - for example, a section containing war graves and administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. John Clarke's guide book of Brookwood Cemetery is still available from the FOWNC bookstall, price £1.50.

FOWNC Officers - 1995

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Bob Flanagan and Jill Dudman

Membership Renewal

Out of our total membership of nearly 300, a small number have not yet renewed for 1995. We do hope this is just an oversight, and that we shall be able to count on your continued and much valued support - a further renewal slip is enclosed with this Newsletter where appropriate, and should be returned to our Membership Secretary, Rosemary Comber (address opposite).

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Forthcoming FOWNC Events - April-June 1995

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (2 April, 7 May, 4 June) and special tours will be held as detailed below. All tours start at 14.30 at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road and last for 2 hours or so. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Sunday 16 April: Special Tour - Crystal Palace Connections - Jill Dudman

Our research has revealed that some 40 notables connected with the Crystal Palace either in Hyde Park or at Sydenham now lie at Norwood. These include the engineer Sir William Cubitt, Thomas Farquhar (first chairman of the Crystal Palace Co), the author Douglas Jerrold (who coined the name 'Crystal Palace'), the conductor Sir August Manns, Sir Hiram Maxim of the famous flying machine, and dinosaur discoverer Dr Gideon Mantell.

Sunday 21 May: Special Tour - Nature at Norwood - South London Botanical Institute

This tour, led by members of the SLBI, will concentrate on the flora and fauna of the cemetery. Although we were kept in the dark at the time, English Nature and the London Ecology Unit both protested vigorously against Lambeth's wholesale clearance of parts of the cemetery in 1990-91. An especially important feature is that patches of old grassland survive, notably behind the site of the present Rose Garden.

FOWNC Open Days: Saturday/Sunday 17/18 June

The detailed programme for this event is still in the planning stage, but we are hoping to run a range of specialist tours on each afternoon, including visits to the Catacombs and St Stephen's (Greek) Chapel. To cater for the large number of first-time visitors that we hope to attract, we would ideally like to run a series of shorter-than-usual tours setting off at perhaps half-hourly intervals, but this will depend on a plentiful supply of volunteers to staff the FOWNC bookstall and to steward while the committee members lead tours. Other cemetery groups will also be invited to bring their displays and bookstalls. The event is being sponsored by W.S. Bond, Funeral Directors, who will kindly provide displays of stone-masonry and vintage hearses. We are grateful to Lambeth and particularly to Mr R. Mackay, Cemetery Superintendent, for their co-operation in arranging this event.

Forthcoming Events at Other Societies

Thursday 13 April, 20.00: James Allen's Girls School, East Dulwich Grove, SE22

Dulwich Decorative and Fine Arts Society lecture - The History of Royal Doulton by Louise Irvine (author of *The Doulton Story* which we stock on the FOWNC bookstall). Preceded by coffee at 19.30. Admission £4.

Saturday 3 June, 11.00 to 16.00: Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington High Street, N16
Abney Park Cemetery Trust Open Day - conducted tours, displays by local amenity societies and other cemetery groups.

Sunday 4 June, 11.00 to 17.00: Brookwood Cemetery, Woking, Surrey
Brookwood Cemetery Society Open Day - based in the grounds of the St Edward Brotherhood within the cemetery - guided tours, displays, etc.

Saturday 1 July, 11.00 onwards: Kensal Green Cemetery, Harrow Road, W10
Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery Open Day - specialised conducted tours (including the catacombs), displays by local amenity groups and other cemetery Friends.

Puzzle Corner



Who is the rather foppish looking gentleman pictured above? In a recent article about the Cemetery in *Brixton Village* magazine, he was described as 'a bookseller and publisher who published the first English edition of a dreadful book called Uncle Tom's Cabin'. Be that as it may, he is much better known for publishing in 1861 a very famous book by a member of his family, who shares his grave in square 63 - frequently visited on FOWNC tours. Answer in the July Newsletter.