Dr Robert Moffat (1795-1883)  
& Mrs Mary Moffat (1795-1870)  
by Alan Argent

On Thursday 21 December 1995 some 30 people met around the grave (number 13,026, square 56) of these formidable and hardy missionaries to southern Africa for a brief tribute. It was the 200th anniversary of the birth of Robert Moffat and the organisers had been worried that holding an outdoor service so near to Christmas would inhibit potential supporters from turning up.

The attendance was very pleasing, therefore, especially on a cold, wet afternoon. In truth the graveside service was only the preliminary to a fuller remembrance of the Moffats at Trinity Congregational Church, St. Matthew’s Road, Brixton in the evening. There a modest exhibition of maps, books, pamphlets and photographs was mounted so that the many visitors might learn a little more of the Moffats’ work and its continuation until the present.

Moffat the Missionary

Robert Moffat and his friend and son-in-law, David Livingstone, are both commemorated in the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB).

Moffat was born at Ormiston, East Lothian, Scotland. He received little formal education. Aged 14 he was apprenticed to a gardener. Aged 18 he was employed as under-gardener at High Legh, Cheshire (now a National Trust property).
Moffat was converted to Christianity at a Methodist meeting and felt called to the mission field by seeing an outdated London Missionary Society (LMS) poster, detailing a talk to be given by Rev. William Roby of Manchester. Roby, who also features in the DNB, took Moffat under his wing and trained him for work overseas. In September 1816 Moffat was set aside for LMS work at Surrey Chapel, Lambeth (now Christ Church and Upton Chapel), at the same service when John Williams was commissioned for work in the Pacific islands.

Robert Moffat (1795-1883)
Aged 21, Moffat arrived in South Africa, being followed 3 years later by Mary Smith, his former employer's daughter, and the two were married. Mary, a tough character, contributed much to the mission work. They settled firstly at Lattako, but in 1824 moved to Kuruman where the historic Moffat Mission station remains to this day, a symbol of unity and Christian love and service in a country which, until recently, has been racked by the pain of enforced racial division.

The Sechwana Bible

Moffat made several heroic journeys - to the east into modern Botswana, to the north into Zimbabwe - and also acted as peacemaker and reconciler to the Africans. In 1827 Moffat spent two months living exclusively with the natives in order to learn Sechwana. This enabled him to begin his translation of the Bible, which he completed 30 years later. Robert Moffat returned to England in 1839 on a furlough for three years. It was then that he met Livingstone and persuaded him to go to Africa, taking in 1840 the first 500 copies of the Sechwana New Testament.

Mary and Robert Moffat consistently pursued a policy of 'always forward' which led Robert in 1857, when he was 62, to begin work among the Matabele, founding a station at Inyati, where his work still continues.
The Moffats finally left Kuruman in March 1870, returning to England reluctantly to oversee the printing of the Sechwana Bible. In this country they settled in Brixton where Mary died. She was buried in nearby Norwood Cemetery.

**Memories of Robert Moffat**

Robert Moffat lived another 12 years, lending his support to Brixton Independent Chapel, Brixton Road (now the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of the Rosary), especially its work among the poor working class community at Kennington where the Moffat Institute was established. He also spoke on behalf of missionary work in Africa on hundreds of platforms up and down the land. Somewhat poignantly he was called upon to identify the body of his son-in-law when it arrived back in Britain.

Moffat received many honours, finally dying in August 1883 at Leigh in Kent. More details of his life and work can be found in the DNB, in the Dictionary of South African Biography, and in The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat by their son John S. Moffat (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885). His stone church at Kuruman was proclaimed a national monument in 1939. His gravestone at Norwood is in good condition, as illustrated by Don Bianco’s line drawing. A large granite obelisk to his memory was also erected at Ormiston, his birthplace.

**The 1995 Moffat Memorial Services**

At the services on 21 December representatives from many churches in south London and beyond - Roman Catholic, Baptist, Church of England, United Reformed and Congregational - met with former missionaries from Kuruman and Inyati, local politicians, and members of the Moffat family (including some from Germany) to celebrate the Moffats’ work.

I led the services. At the evening service the preacher was Alan Butler, who has spent many years in charge at Kuruman and who knows more about the Moffats’ continuing work than anyone. His passionate and sensitive preaching warmed the hearts of his listeners who noticed clearly, as Alan’s wife Hilda confirmed, that he has come to resemble the patriarchal Robert Moffat himself with his long white beard and flowing locks. One of the scripture readings was read by Or Gerd Peters who had travelled from Germany especially to be present for the day. The blessing was given by Rev. Rupert Hambira in Sechwana.

Sadly the Moffats are little known in Britain today, but in southern Africa they remain heroic figures, as attested by the gift of a book, on places of worship, to the exhibition from an official at the South African High Commission. The talk in the church hall over tea before the evening service, and during supper afterwards, was animated and lively. This was a memorable occasion to which many contributed and which properly commemorated the unique service of these redoubtable Christian pioneers.

(Alan Argent is minister of Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton)
The monument erected to the memory of Robert Moffat at his birthplace, Ormiston in Scotland
Chairman's Report

There is little to report at present as regards the implementation either of the Consistory Court judgement or of the Land Management Strategy for the Cemetery. Clearly we have succeeded in stopping the wholesale clearance of monuments, but monument restoration/reinstatement has seemed a continuing struggle without active cooperation from Council officers. However, I think we have grounds to hope that real progress will be made in the next few months. I will invite Council officers to attend the AGM on Saturday 19 October, and hope that details of formal collaboration between FOWNC and the Council will have been agreed well beforehand.

Recently the Council issued a policy statement on nature conservation within the Borough which referred to the management plan for the cemetery. I have accordingly written back asking if and when the management plan is to be implemented - I await a reply. Meanwhile, we remain grateful to Mr Mackay (Cemetery Superintendent) for arranging for the removal of undergrowth from the area around the Pond mausoleum - this area does give an idea of what the rest of the cemetery looked like (density and quality of monuments) before the clearance operations of the 1970s and 80s.

The only other comparable area which has not suffered some removal of monuments is the Greek section. We understand that moves are afoot to interest more members of the Greek community in the conservation of this unique area - details from: Tielman Nicolopoulos, c/o Unit 1, Bellenden Road Business Estate, 110 Bellenden Road, London SE15 4RF (tel 0171 639 2846). We wish Mr Nicolopoulos well in this venture. We have of course maintained contacts with the Greek Community, the official guardians of the section.

Monument Conservation

We understand that a new headstone commemorating David Roberts RA has been carved and is ready for erection in the cemetery. We also understand, however, that the Cemetery management have demanded permission from family descendants to erect the new stone. Somewhat surprising given that the original monument was removed and used as part of a wall, leading to the loss of most of its lead lettering, without permission from the family? The family members we have contacted wished us well with the restoration project...

In the case of the monument to Dr William Marsden (see January Newsletter) a full restoration (urn, railings and inscription) is planned. Don Bianco is preparing a detailed drawing to be used as a basis for obtaining quotations. The Diving Historical Society
have also expressed interest in reinstating the tombstone of Augustus Siebe. Again, Don is preparing a drawing. There has been no further progress with the Cubitt and Garrett monuments (again see January Newsletter). However, in addition to the restoration of the monuments of John Doulton and Sir Henry Doulton, conservationist Ron Knee has been commissioned to undertake work on the Tate mausoleum and at least one other monument.

**Administrative Matters**

Thanks to all who have renewed their membership thus far - FOWNC would not survive without you. From discussions with a few members the availability of a standing order facility for membership renewal might be welcome. We have been worried by the cost of this, but will make enquiries.

New FOWNC publications (‘The Drama’, ‘Entertainers’, and ‘Music and Dance’), and possibly a monograph on Gideon Mantell, will hopefully all be ready in time for the AGM. The format will be that adopted for ‘Sportsmen’ and ‘Dickens’, both of which continue to sell steadily. Booklets on Crystal Palace Connections and on the Greek Cemetery are also being considered.

**National Federation of Cemetery Friends**

This year’s AGM is to be held at Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, on Saturday 15 June. Please contact me in the first instance if you wish to attend. The Federation currently has 22 ‘corporate’ members including ourselves (see below). We have contact names and addresses if further information about any of these groups is required.

- Abney Park Cemetery, N16
- Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol
- Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds
- Brompton Cemetery, SW10
- Brookwood Cemetery (Friends and Society)
- Edinburgh Cemeteries Support Group (covers Warriston, Newington, Dalry/North Merchiston, Comely Bank, Saughton and Corstorphine Hill)
- Flaybrick Cemetery, Birkenhead
- General Cemetery, Sheffield
- Golders Green Crematorium, NW11
- Hampstead Cemetery, NW6
- Highgate Cemetery, N6
- Kensal Green Cemetery, W10
- Morningside Cemetery, Edinburgh
- Nunhead Cemetery, SE15
- The Rosary Cemetery, Norwich
- Shepton Mallet Cemetery
- Tottenham Cemetery, N17
- Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Park, E3
- Woodgrange Park Cemetery, E7
- York Cemetery

*Bob Flanagan*
Recent research has added 2 further names, William Grieve and Maria Macarthy (Mrs R. Honner, Mrs F. Mellor, Mrs F. Morton), to the 211 we already knew to be buried at Norwood and commemorated in the original edition of the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB).

William Grieve (1800-1844)

William Grieve (grave 1,028, square 100), a theatrical scene painter, was the second son of John Henderson Grieve (1770-1845) and brother of Thomas Grieve (1799-1882).

He was employed as a boy at Covent Garden Theatre with his father and brother, but subsequently worked largely at Drury Lane and the King’s Theatre, later Her Majesty’s (the Italian opera house). When Clarkson Stanfield and David Roberts abandoned scene painting in 1834, William Grieve was left at the head of his profession.

His moonlight scenes were especially notable - after a performance of Robert le Diable at the King’s in 1832, the audience are said to have called him before the curtain, then an unprecedented occurrence. He died at Durham Place, Lambeth, on 12 November 1844. He left a wife and five children.

Maria Macarthy (1810-1870)

The actress Maria Macarthy (grave 3,372, square 36) was born in Enniskillen. Aged 14 she is said to have appeared in southern Ireland. Later in Dublin she was noticed by Edmund Kean and Macready. Her first important character was Rosalie Sumers, which she played to Kean, with whom she became an especial favourite.

After appearing in Scotland in 1831 she was engaged by John Farrell for the Pavilion Theatre in London. In 1833 George Davidge engaged her for the Coburg, and later for the Surrey. In June 1835 she played Julia in The Hunchback at Drury Lane to the Master Walter of Sheridan Knowles.

Together with her husband Robert Honner (1809-1852) she acted at the Surrey until Whitsuntide 1838, when they moved to Sadler’s Wells. She retired after Honner’s death and later married Frederick Morton (real name Mellor), stage manager of Charing Cross Theatre. She died on 4 January 1870 in St John’s Street, Clerkenwell.
In early life Webster was justly famous as an athlete. In 1864 he won the two miles at the University sports, and in 1865 he won the half-mile, mile and two miles. In the 1865 Inter-Varsity sports he won the mile and the two miles on the same day. He was President of the AAA, 1890-1915. Details of his athletic career are given in our booklet West Norwood Cemetery's Sportsmen. One of our postcards features him in sports dress. Webster had musical interests too, his rich baritone voice gracing the choir of St Mary Abbot's, Kensington, for 40 years. He was a shining light of the Old Madrigal Society.

In professional life Webster was a noted QC, being said to have earned more money at the bar than anyone had ever done before! He was MP for the Isle of Wight, 1885-1900, and also Attorney General at various times during this period. He was created Master of the Rolls in 1900, and was Lord Chief Justice, 1900-1913.

He presided at many famous trials, including the Crippen trial in 1910. He was sympathetic to many reform movements, helping to pass the Criminal Evidence Act (1898) and many acts concerning child welfare, culminating in the Children Act (1908). He helped found the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. A portrait of him as Lord Chief Justice appears on another of our postcards.
Alverstone Commemoration - 1996

To commemorate Alverstone’s life and work, The Edmonds Family Association is holding its Seventh Annual Reunion at Alverstone Village Hall, Alverstone, Sandown, Isle of Wight at 12 noon on Saturday 29 June 1996 (buffet lunch 12 noon to 1.30 pm). Tickets (advance booking) are £7.50 (includes lunch) from: Mr William Lippett, 6 Charbury Walk, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 9UU (0117 982 1881).

Athletic events will be held from 2.30 pm at Arreton Cricket Field, near Haseley Manor, Arreton, Isle of Wight. Athletes in unusual dress from the University of Cambridge Alverstone Club will be competing with a team arranged by the Isle of Wight Community Health Trust in an athletics match. There will be an opportunity for all members and guests whether able-bodied or disabled, junior or senior, to participate in track events, the shot put and the high jump. Tea will be served in the Pavilion, where there will be an opportunity to view photographs and former possessions of Alverstone as well as the family tree. We hope to take a small exhibition and at least inform family members of the condition of the monument at Norwood (grave 16,457, square 76). Alverstone’s sister Mary Emily Webster (1817-1855) and wife Louisa Mary (1846-1877) are also buried in the grave.

Viscount Alverstone (1842-1915)
Sir Henry Bessemer (1813-1898)
Bob Flanagan

Bessemer Grange Schools stand on the site of the lake which once lay within Sir Henry Bessemer's Denmark Hill estate. In 1898 the estate covered 40 acres: there were two imposing houses, Bessemer House itself, which was designed by Charles Barry junior, and Bessemer Grange (built for Sir Henry's daughter) in addition to a model farm, underground caverns, and an observatory which housed the second largest telescope in the world.

Sadly the estate was demolished in 1947 to make way for a large estate of 600 houses and the schools which perpetuate his name. Ironically, Sir Henry's relatively modest family tombstone survives intact at Norwood (grave 27,463, square 99), and is listed Grade II.

The Bessemer Process

Sir Henry was a prolific inventor (he took out 144 patents), but it is for the Bessemer Convertor for producing steel from pig iron that he is best remembered. The spur to this invention was his experience of ordnance manufactured using cast iron during the Crimean War. However, it was his ignorance of conventional metallurgy, indeed his total lack of systematic scientific training, which led him to develop his famous and spectacular process which was announced in 1856 and which, after a series of false starts, introduced the era of cheap, mass produced steel to the world.

The seeds of competition were sown as early as 1857, however, with the introduction by the Siemens brothers of their regenerative furnace which became the basis of the more predictable, less violent open-hearth process.

All this of course is largely history now. Continuous methods using the Basic Oxygen Steel (BOS) process, which was originally suggested, although not put into practice, by Bessemer himself, can produce high quality steels in quantities Bessemer can only have dreamt of at the flick of a switch.

The Bessemer Connection

Sir Henry died on 15 March 1898. To coincide with the centenary of his death, Bessemer Grange Schools aim to create a centre of excellence for the promotion of design and technology (the Bessemer Connection) on the site of Sir Henry's Denmark Hill estate. We wish them well in this venture.

For more information, please contact The Bessemer Connection Working Party, Bessemer Grange Infants' and Junior Schools, Dylways, London SE5 8HP.
Thomas Cubitt

Thomas Cubitt (grave 649, square 48) was the subject of the talk on 17 February. The lecturer, John Gardner, a retired architect who worked for 35 years in Belgravia, has made a detailed study of Cubitt’s life and work, particularly his development of that area.

Belgravia was a low-lying marshy district with little building until the early 1800s, when Cubitt and other builders began to develop parts of the Grosvenor estate. Grand houses were built with basements formed by excavation, the spoil being deposited to build roadways above the level of the marsh.

The mews at the rear of each terrace, some of which have ornate entrance arches, were built at the original ground level and thus their access roads slope down from the main roads.

Cubitt is credited with being the first to organise all the various trades involved in house-building under one contractor, and he set up a permanent work-force with whom he undertook speculative building, generally defying predictions of ruin.

He seems to have been a good employer, and also concerned himself with public health matters such as drainage and sewerage, pressing the authorities hard for action over the disgusting state of the River Westbourne which flowed as an open sewer through the heart of Belgravia. John concluded his talk with some views of a ceremony held in Pimlico last year to unveil a statue of Cubitt near to the site of his building works.

Dr William Marsden

On 16 March we welcomed Dr Edith Gilchrist, archivist at the Royal Free Hospital, who gave a talk in celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of Dr William Marsden (grave 269, square 62).
The outline of his life began with his medical studies in London to qualify as a surgeon. Soon afterwards he discovered a poor and sick young woman lying on the steps of St Andrew's Church, Holborn, and attempted to gain hospital admission for her. His failure to do so led him to gather a group of colleagues to set up an establishment, initially just a dispensary or out-patient service, where the poor could go for medical treatment without any fee or doctor’s letter: this was the London General Institution for the Gratuitous Cure of Malignant Diseases, opened in 1828 in Greville Street. Research suggests that behind this wording lies a reference to venereal disease, and that the girl Marsden found was a prostitute.

In a subsequent cholera epidemic, when many hospitals had closed to patients, Marsden took on additional staff to provide in-patient beds. These remained as general beds from 1832, the name Free Hospital being adopted and patronage being obtained from Queen Victoria who granted the Royal prefix. Having outgrown the original building, the Royal Free Hospital moved in 1843 to premises in Gray’s Inn Road, where it remained for many years.

Marsden then turned his attention to cancer sufferers and set up the first specialist cancer hospital in the world in 1851 in Westminster. The Free Cancer Hospital moved to Fulham Road in 1859; only in the present century have the words Royal and Marsden been incorporated in its name.

James Hopgood (1811-1897)

An interesting connection between the two talks emerged. James Hopgood (grave 23,369, square 115) was Thomas Cubitt’s solicitor and provided him with much financial assistance in the form of mortgages. He also drafted Cubitt’s will, the longest on record! Cubitt’s yard was next door to the Royal Free in Gray’s Inn Road and this seemingly was Hopgood’s introduction to the hospital.

Hopgood became a great benefactor, and was Chairman of the Board of Governors for 22 years. After a chance meeting with the treasurer of the London School of Medicine for Women whilst on holiday in Whitby in 1876, he persuaded the medical officers of the Royal Free to accept students from the School into the wards for clinical teaching thereby opening the way for them to qualify for a place on the Medical Register. Ironically, the South London Hospital for Women was subsequently built on the site of Hopgood’s house at Clapham.

The Anderson Connection

A further hitherto unsuspected Norwood connection emerged in discussion with Dr Gilchrist. It seems that the husband of Mrs Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836-1917), James Skelton Anderson, whom she married in 1871, had been sent to London on leaving school to work in his uncle’s shipping firm! Presumably the uncle in question was Arthur Anderson of P&O?
Forthcoming FOWNC Events
May - August 1996

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (5 May, 2 June, 7 July and 4 August) and will hopefully include a brief visit to the catacombs. Special tours will also be held in May, July and August as detailed below. All these tours start at 2.30 pm 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 19 May 1996
Special Tour - Echoes of Empire - Jill Dudman

Many who served overseas in the last century in the civil or military service, as missionaries, or in commerce, retired to south London and were buried at Norwood. These include James Busby, first British Resident in New Zealand; Hannibal McArthur, member of the legislative council of New South Wales; and Robert Moffat, missionary to southern Africa and father-in-law of David Livingstone (see page 1).

Saturday/Sunday 15/16 June 1996 - Special Tours Weekend

We aim to provide a range of tours on each afternoon (starting at the main gate at 2.00 pm, 2.45 pm and 3.30 pm) to attract existing members and new visitors, hopefully with access to the catacombs and St Stephen’s (Greek) Chapel. The FOWNC bookstall will be present with a full range of stock.

Sunday 21 July 1996
Special Tour - Parliament and the Law - Paul Graham

A tour featuring not only elected and non-elected MPs and those trained in the law such as solicitors and barristers, but also parliamentary officers, shorthand writers, journalists, printers and publishers. Arthur Anderson, Sir John Easthope, Charles Pearson, William Roupell, Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd and Sir Richard Webster are just a few of the MPs which spring to mind.

Sunday 18 August 1996
Special Tour - The Great and Good - Bob Flanagan

The unconsecrated portion of the cemetery especially is notable for the well-known clergymen buried therein, principal amongst them being Charles Haddon Spurgeon. This tour will feature the graves of some of these worthies together with early educationalists and others associated with philanthropic works such as William Baker (1849-1920), Honorary Director of Dr Barnardo’s Homes, 1905-1920.
Other Forthcoming Events

The following forthcoming non-FOWNC events may be of interest to members. Further details of these events may be obtained from either Bob Flanagan or Jill Dudman (contact details on back page). Please note there may be a charge for some of these events.

Brookwood Cemetery Society

Sunday 2 June:  Open Day at Brookwood Cemetery, 11.00 am - 5.00 pm
Sunday 1 July:  Tour of Oriental Sections at Brookwood Cemetery, 2.30 pm
Sunday 4 August:  Tour of Glades of Remembrance at Brookwood, 2.30 pm

Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery

Saturday 18 May:  Visit to the exterior of the Kilmorey Mausoleum.
     Leader: Alan Urwin,
     Meet: Ailsa Tavern, St Margaret’s Rd, Twickenham at 10.30 am
Wednesday 29 May:  Brookwood Cemetery and its Railway. Lecture by John Clarke
     Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly at 7.00 pm
Saturday 6 July:  Open Day at Kensal Green Cemetery 11.00 am - 2.30 pm
Saturday 24 August:  Visit to St Pancras and Islington Cemetery. Leader: Brent Elliott
     Meet: East Gate, off High Road, East Finchley, N2 at 2.00 pm
Wednesday 2 Oct:  Church Monuments and the Gothic Revival
     Lecture by Dr Thomas Cocke
     Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly at 7.00 pm
Wednesday 6 Nov:  Frogmore Mausoleum and the Royal Burials
     at St George’s Chapel Windsor
     Lecture by Leslie Grout
     Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly at 7.00 pm
Wednesday 27 Nov:  Preserved Corpses. Lecture by David Pescod
     Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly at 7.00 pm

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

Thursday 16 May:  AGM and Lecture: Old Peckham by John Beasley,
     Linden Grove hall (entrance on Nunhead Lane) at 7.45 pm
Saturday 18 May:  Open Day at Nunhead Cemetery 11.00 am - 5.00 pm
It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mrs Joan Warwick who died of cancer on 18th March 1996. Joan was a founder member of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery and a keen supporter of our work. She was cremated on 25 March at West Norwood in a private ceremony. Beforehand a large gathering of family and friends had attended her memorial service at St. Margaret’s Church, Chevening Road.

Joan’s service to the local community was extensive. She was a founding member of the Norwood Society, and her contribution to the group’s work in her role as Vice President and as a very active member of the planning sub-committee, will be hard to replace.

Her knowledge of the history of Norwood and the surrounding area, together with her natural aptitude for hard work, also made her a treasured member of the Croydon North Area Conservation Advisory Panel and a member of the Crystal Palace Triangle Community Association.

Joan not only had a passionate love for Norwood and the community in which she lived, but also backed this enthusiasm with action, making a very real contribution to the various local organisations to which she belonged.

We extend our condolences to Joan’s family at this time of their sad loss.