

FRIENDS OF WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 27 - September 1996

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Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE CEMETERY

7.30p.m. THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 1996
at the NETTLEFOLD HALL

It is vital that as many members as possible attend this meeting and let Lambeth Council officers and members know their views as to the future of the Cemetery. This is our best chance yet to change Lambeth's approach. The meeting will be open to all members of the public and will be advertised by Lambeth as they deem appropriate.

It remains my view that establishment of a Charitable Trust to run the whole undertaking is the best option which will prevent further decay and properly coordinate use of resources for conservation and restoration work. Please come along - we may not get another chance to air our views in this way.

Legal Matters

Lambeth have continued to dispute the Consistory Court judgement. After my protest about their decision to advertise their intention to repossess all graves in the Cemetery, which had not been buried in for 75 years, the Council readvertised their intention but omitted reference to the removal of monuments!

Even this action is, in my opinion, of dubious legality and is certainly counter to their professed intention of not re-using grave spaces or doing other works in the consecrated portion of the cemetery until the Scheme of Management required by the judgement had been agreed. I remain of the opinion that the whole advert should be withdrawn to clear the way for effective cooperation between FOWNC and Lambeth.

It is especially poignant that at the memorial service to the late Chancellor, Robert Gray QC (see obituary on page 5), in Southwark Cathedral mention was made of the wisdom of the judgement and the fact that it had been welcomed by all who care about London's heritage! In reality we have made absolutely no progress on the ground since the judgement was given, and Lambeth have carried on their day-to-day operations in the cemetery as if the Court case had never taken place and FOWNC did not exist.

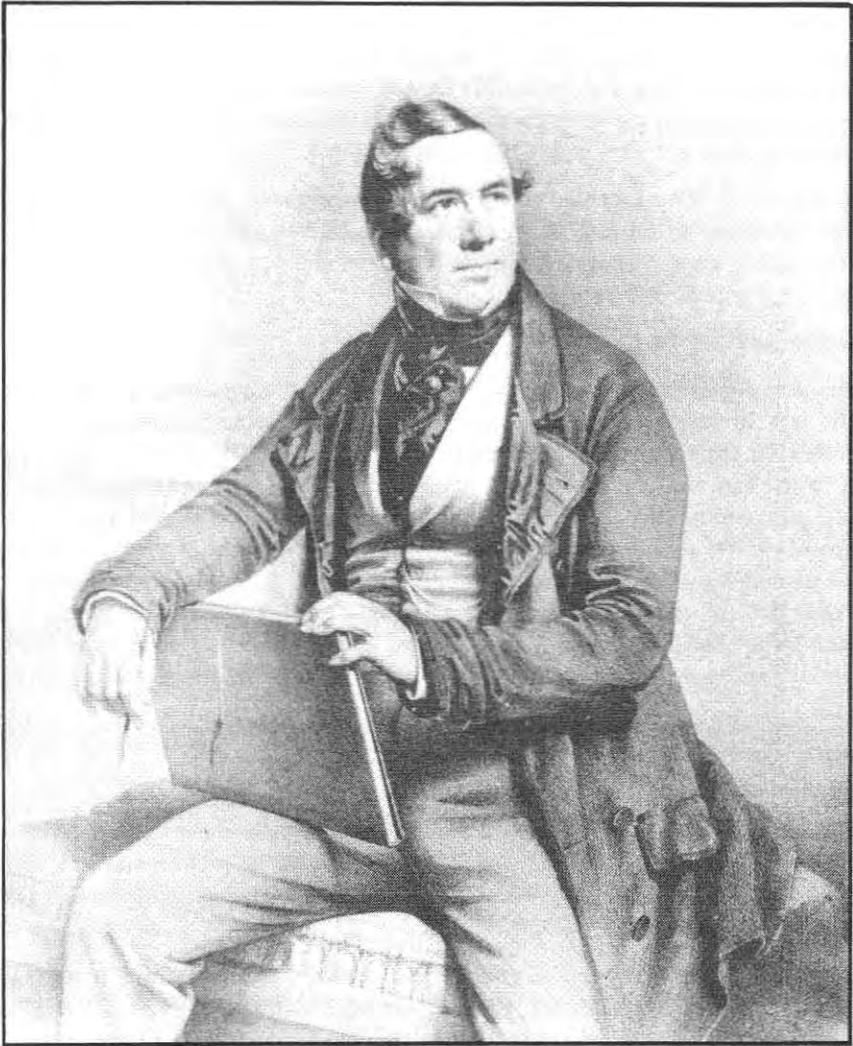
Sale of the Century?

There have been other developments. Firstly, Lambeth have considered inviting tenders for the 'acquisition and operation' of not only Norwood, but also Lambeth and Streatham Cemeteries. I have pointed out that sale of Norwood may not be possible because the Council inherited all the statutory obligations of the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company when it compulsorily purchased Norwood in 1965. The owners of the cemetery have a duty to maintain all the listed structures including the catacombs and the boundary railings and wall, amongst other obligations. Faculties are needed for all operations on the consecrated portions of the cemetery, and a faculty would also be needed if sale of the consecrated portion of the cemetery were planned.

Lambeth and Streatham Cemeteries also consist in large part of consecrated ground. No faculties have been obtained in respect of the clearance operations which have taken place in the consecrated parts of these cemeteries and the planned re-use of existing graves. By analogy with Norwood not only would all these operations appear to have been illegal, but also all future operations will require faculties. In addition, faculties would be required if sale of the consecrated portions of the cemeteries were contemplated. I understand that Westminster Council ignored these factors when it rushed through the sale of its own cemeteries, only to find that a Consistory Court ordered their repurchase at great cost to Westminster's Council Tax payers.

Public Meeting - Future of Norwood Cemetery

An additional and extremely important development is the Public Meeting announced at the head of this column. Paul Duffield, Head of Environmental Services at Lambeth, has called this meeting and has promised to consider carefully all the points raised. He has also identified funds for a short-term appointment as 'project manager' to coordinate conservation in the cemetery and moves to comply with the Court judgement.



David Roberts RA 1842

FOWNC Monument Conservation

At last the replacement monument to David Roberts RA has been put in place. There will be a special commemorative meeting at the British Museum and a rededication ceremony at the Cemetery in October (see events list). There has, however, been one disaster in that the Historical Diving Society went ahead with inserting a modern monument to Augustus Siebe without telling us what they were doing. This was due in part to delay in producing an architectural drawing of the original monument which was demolished by Lambeth in 1987.

This breakdown in communication could have been averted save for the fact that the Cemetery Superintendent gave the Historical Diving Society permission to do what they wanted (and charged them £150!) despite the fact that they had no permission from relatives and no planning permission, both obstacles put in our way when we were attempting to get the Roberts memorial reinstated!

Sadly the hoped for restoration of the Marsden monument (see January Newsletter) has been delayed by English Heritage not producing an architectural drawing to the necessary time-scale. I hope this project can be progressed properly even though we will miss the anniversary we were aiming for.

Heritage Lottery Fund

On the 4th September I was sent a package of papers concerning a draft Heritage Lottery bid for funds for conservation tasks within the Cemetery and which is to be submitted by the Council by 30 September. This proposes FOWNC involvement at every stage and, in principle, I am happy to cooperate. However, the document as drafted contains numerous references to the importance of Norwood as a 'working cemetery' which sit uncomfortably with the idea of 'heritage,' as well as numerous historical and legal inaccuracies. In addition, it commits FOWNC to raising a large sum (£47,500) of 'match funding'! It remains to be seen whether an agreement can be reached by the deadline. It seems very sad that so much time has been wasted in legal wrangling and underhanded dealing when there has been this important document to discuss...

Administrative Matters

I am pleased to report that our membership list now stands at some 300. Thanks to all who have renewed for 1996 - FOWNC would not survive without you. Only some 40 members have yet to renew - please remember to send your subscription to Rosemary Comber (address on page 16) otherwise we will have to delete your name from the mailing list for next year.

Sadly we have been informed of the death of Frank Brightman of the South London Botanical Institute. Frank and his wife were strong supporters of FOWNC and helped especially with the gift of the Ginkgo planted next to Gideon Mantell's tomb.

Annual General Meeting - Saturday 19 October 1996

The AGM will be held after Professor Slater's talk (see Forthcoming Events). Nominations for any of the officer or committee posts should be sent to me as soon as possible together with confirmation that the nominee is willing to serve if elected. All existing officers and committee members are willing to serve for a further term. Peter Gould (Lambeth's Chief Executive's Office) has promised to address the meeting and discuss the outcome of the Public Meeting on the future of the Cemetery.

Robert Gray QC (1938-1996)

It is with regret that FOWNC learnt of the recent death of Robert Gray, late Chancellor of the Anglican diocese of Southwark, whose judgement in the Consistory Court was of such importance in our efforts to secure the future conservation of Norwood Cemetery.

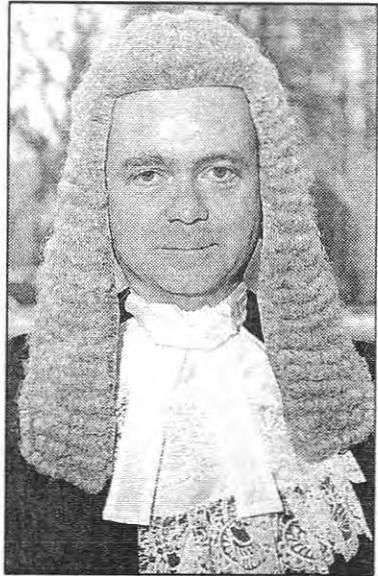
Robert Gray was born at Checkendon in Oxfordshire on August 29th 1938. He was the younger son of Brigadier Walter Gray, and was related to Robert Gray, the first Bishop of Cape Town.

He won a scholarship to Radley, where his dislike of being compelled to support the school's rugby XV led to him being beaten for standing on the wrong side of the pitch and cheering on the school's opponents in protest at his enforced attendance at the match.

He gained a First in Law at Balliol College, Oxford, and qualified as a solicitor in 1962. He was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1969.

Gray won a reputation for town and country planning law when, as junior counsel, he played an important part in Newbury District Council winning a case against The Secretary of State for the Environment in the Court of Appeal. Although the appeal was overturned in the House of Lords, many, including Lord Denning, believed the final decision to be wrong.

In 1983 Gray took Silk, and later that year began to sit as a Deputy High Court Judge, and, from 1985, as a Recorder.



Photograph © Universal Pictorial Press & Agency Ltd.

From 1990 he served as Chancellor of the Anglican diocese of Southwark and it was in this capacity that he gave judgement in March 1994 in the case brought against Lambeth Council by the Archdeacon of Lambeth in connection with the clearance of areas of Norwood Cemetery. Gray ruled that consecrated areas of a municipal cemetery were within the scope of the 1991 Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure, and as a consequence the Consistory Court had jurisdiction to order the repair of headstones and monuments damaged in a local authority cemetery clearance programme.

Gray was a very popular member of the Bar and was well known for his support for charitable causes.

Charles Woolley (1846-1922)

Patricia Jenkyns

Recent visits to Lambeth Archives, housed at the Minet Library, and to St. Mary's, the old Parish Church of Lambeth, as well as news of the sale of County Hall, have reminded me very much of Charles Woolley.

His family tombstone at Norwood was one of those destroyed in Lambeth Council's clearances, despite his grave (24,192, square 103) in the consecrated part of the cemetery being well within the law's protection.⁽¹⁾

Woolley was a remarkable man of many talents and interests, and a life-long resident of Lambeth. He gave important service to the Parish of St. Mary's and to the Borough of Lambeth; his gravestone deserved preservation, not destruction.

'Verulam'

Born in Clapham, the son of a doctor, he was educated privately and at King's College, London. As a young man he was an accomplished cricketer, oarsman and boxer, and in later years he always maintained an interest in all sports.

He spent much of his married life in Haycroft Road, Brixton, and then at 35 Dulwich Road, Herne Hill, just opposite St. Jude's Church. He called his house 'Verulam' after the city of St. Albans, of which his maternal grandfather was twice Mayor, and where the family had held extensive freeholds.

Woolley was a prominent 'City man': a Director, President, Vice-President, Fellow, Trustee, Chairman or Member of many Institutes, Companies, Associations, Societies and Clubs. He was an expert on Company Law, and gave evidence to a House of Lords Select Committee on amendments to a Bill on that subject, which successfully proceeded to law. He helped secure a Charter for the Institute of Secretaries, of which he became President, and he was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Regent Street Polytechnic. As a Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners, he took particular interest in their educational programmes and yearly exhibitions at the Mansion House.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and published books on his travels, 'A Cruise Round the British Isles' and 'A Voyage to Viking Land', which proved very popular. He was a Member of the Chartered Institute of Journalists and of various Press Clubs, and contributed articles on the history and mysteries of Lambeth to a local newspaper, 'The Free Press', under the name of 'Argus Tura'. He also wrote fiction, and a book on monetary matters, 'Phases of Panics'.



Charles Woolley (1846-1922)
Drawing by Don Bianco

Local Interests

Woolley was an 'all-rounder': he had mechanical talents, and patented several of his inventions, including one for pneumatic tyres for cycles and other vehicles. Although his principal work was within the financial world and the City, he was deeply interested in local matters and this led him into politics.

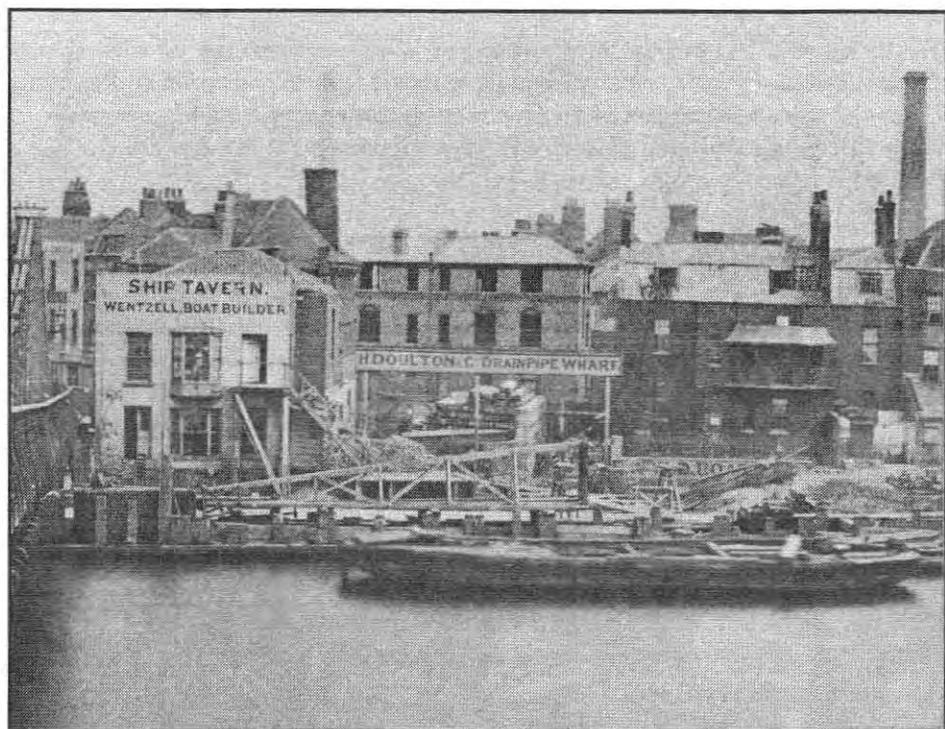
When the Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth was established in 1900 he stood for and won one of the Council seats for the Ward of Tulse Hill (which then included his own Dulwich Road, now in the present Ward of Herne Hill). At one time he considered involvement in national politics, when it was suggested that he stand for St. Albans, but he decided against it as he would have to forgo his local interests and involvements.

His financial expertise made him Lambeth's natural choice for the Chairmanships of the Finance, and the Lighting and Watch Committees. His literary interests led to membership of the Minet Library Joint Committee, which he continued until his death. In 1906 he was elected one of the first Aldermen of Lambeth (he considered this to be one of his greatest honours), but he parted company with Lambeth Borough Council in 1908, when they proposed the sale of the "Pedlar's Acre" to the LCC as part of the site for the new County Hall. He did not believe that the land was the Borough Council's to sell, but that it was the property of the Parish Church of St. Mary's, Lambeth, to which it had been bequeathed in the 1600s.⁽²⁾ The bequest had been administered by Lambeth Vestry until that body's responsibilities were adopted by Lambeth Borough Council, following the creation of the London Metropolitan Boroughs in 1900. Woolley was a principal witness for the Church in its contention that the "Pedlar's Acre" was an Ecclesiastical Trust, but, because the Court would not consider documents prior to 1826 in evidence, the case was lost, although the Church did succeed in having the funds (nearly £82,000) invested and not dissipated.

Charitable Work

Leaving the Council meant that Woolley could devote more time to local matters. He had always been a committed member of the Church of England: he had been a boy chorister, and as an adult he attended St. Mary's regularly. He was a licenced Lay Reader and a Church Warden. Many of his charitable works stemmed from his Church activities. He was a member of the Ruridecanal Conference and of the Southwark Diocesan Conference. He became a Trustee, and later Vice-President, of the Royal Waterloo Hospital for Women and Children; a Trustee and Foundation Governor of the Walcot Estate; and a Trustee of the Hayle Estate (which dated back to the days of Charles II). He was a member for many years of the Brixton Dispensary, a charitable Trust set up in the 19th century to provide basic medical care for subscription holders and their families.⁽³⁾ He represented the Lambeth Charities on the Beaufoy Institute, and was also a Trustee of the Lambeth Savings Bank (overseeing the amalgamation of the several Societies which made up the Bank).

He was involved in many 'one-off' events, such as the dinner for the poor of London to commemorate the Coronation of Edward VII, and in trying to preserve Coade stone plaques, headstones and statues from destruction, not always successfully. He fought many battles for the people of Lambeth: his best known fight, for the "Pedlar's Acre", was lost, but that for saving the old Lambeth Pier (on the river beside Lambeth Palace) was won, and the pier still survives.



River frontage beside Lambeth Bridge c.1866,
showing Henry Doulton's drainpipe factory.
(Woolley Collection, London Borough of Lambeth Archives Department)

A Museum for Lambeth?

Woolley's intense interest in history and architecture led to his becoming an authority on London churches, particularly his own. It also led him to compile a large collection of prints, books, maps and photographs of local topographical import, as well as glassware, and over 200 pieces of stoneware, among which were 54 of Doulton origin and many pieces made at other Lambeth potteries. In 1915 he gave his collection to Lambeth Council, with the expressed wish that it should form the basis for a Museum of Lambeth. He continued to collect artefacts and to give them to the Council until the end of his life.

That nothing occurred during the 1914-18 War, and the immediate post-war period, to create a Museum of Lambeth is not surprising. The country had used so many of its resources in the conflict, it needed time to recover. In 1922 Woolley wrote to Lambeth Council asking them to open negotiations with the LCC for permission to use Brockwell House as a Museum.

This house and its grounds were situated in a north-eastern part of what is now Brockwell Park (a short distance from the present Lido); they dated from the 1860s, before the main southern part of the private estate had become a public park, and were being vacated by the Burroughs and Wellcome Laboratories to move to a larger site in Beckenham.

The letter was read to the Council, hopes were high, but a week later Woolley died suddenly of a heart attack. He had been suffering from heart trouble for some years; a few months before his death he had been very ill, but had subsequently recovered much of his vitality and zest for life. He was nearly 76 years old, but looked ten years younger, and everyone had thought that he would continue his work for many years to come. Brockwell House was demolished shortly after his death, and the surrounding land was incorporated in the Park.

The Woolley Collection is now housed at the Minet Library and administered by Lambeth Archives Department. It has remained largely unseen: occasionally some items are shown, but never the entire collection. And neither do we have a Museum of Lambeth.

Notes

(1) The last burial in the Woolley family grave (Charles Woolley's son Harry Ernest) took place as recently as June 1938.

(2) St. Mary's was once the Parish Church for the whole of Lambeth, the Parish boundaries extending from the Thames to Croydon and from Camberwell to Clapham. It was also the Church of the Archbishops of Canterbury, many of whom are buried within its precincts.

The disputed acre of land was bequeathed to St. Mary's by a pedlar who, with his dog, had taken refuge one stormy night in the Church porch, and had afterwards prospered. It was a condition of the giving that the pedlar and his dog would always be depicted in one of the Church windows: this stipulation is still honoured by the present stained glass window.

St. Mary's was declared redundant in 1972, and was due for demolition. Destruction of housing around the Church during the 1939-45 War had led to a decline in population and thus congregation. The Church was rescued and restored by the Tradescant Trust, and now houses the Museum of Garden History.

(3) Many of the Trusts and Institutions for which Woolley worked so hard no longer exist, or have been incorporated within other Trusts. The need for many, so essential in Victorian and Edwardian times, has been superseded by today's Social Services.



Henry Millichamp's drainpipe factory, Princes Street, c.1866
(Woolley Collection, London Borough of Lambeth Archives Department)

[N.B. Henry Millichamp's monument at Norwood, a tall granite obelisk (grave 15,577, square 36), is not far from Sir Henry Doulton's terracotta mausoleum (grave 22,589, square 36).]



Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

Tour of those 'parts of the cemetery not reached by other tours'

This spring and summer have seen a varied range of special tours. On 21 April Bob Flanagan repeated his exploration of 'parts of the cemetery not reached by other tours', for the benefit of those who missed its first run last year. As before, mausoleums were a particular feature, while the opposite extreme of wealth (i.e. lack of it) on the part of those interred was to be found in the areas of common graves around the periphery of the cemetery, where a few tiny stones may be seen. Included in both this tour and the following one was the monument to James Busby, administrator in New Zealand, author of the Treaty of Waitangi, and founder of the wine-making industry in that country and Australia by introducing the vine.

Echoes of Empire

On 19 May, probably the windiest day a tour has ever been held, I struggled to hang on to my notes for my 'Echoes of Empire' tour. Numerous personalities of military and civil service and commerce in the colonies were included, notably Hannibal H. McArthur, magistrate and legislator in New South Wales, whose monument has been demolished despite the fact that it was restored by the Queensland Women's Historical Association in 1964. Meteorology in Canada was represented by Charles Carpmael, harbour building in South Africa by Sir John Jackson, railway catering in Australia by Christopher Pond (see the illustration of his mausoleum opposite) and piloting in the Bay of Bengal by James Imray. Indian Army officers abound at Norwood, amongst whom General Jeremiah Dyson has on his monument the most impressive display of standards and arms in the cemetery. The tour ended on a religious note with the missionary Robert Moffat, who spent much of his life in Africa.

Parliament and the Law

We were pleased to welcome in the 'audience' on 21 July Keith Hill, MP for Streatham, who has long taken an interest in the cemetery - very much a live MP arriving for, as he put it, a 'tour of dead MPs'. Paul Graham's 'Parliament and Law' tour was most timely: the constituency of Norwood will disappear with boundary changes at the next General Election, its history being preserved by the tombs of its first two MPs. Thomas Lynn Bristowe won the new seat in 1885 when the former Lambeth constituency was subdivided, and is chiefly remembered for his work in saving Brockwell Park as a public open space.

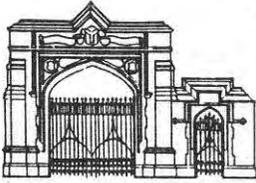
Sadly, he collapsed and died at its opening ceremony (and indeed in the middle of a General Election campaign) in 1892, and was succeeded by (Sir) Charles Ernest Tritton, who in his turn contributed to the creation of Norwood Park.

In an earlier era, a notorious MP for Lambeth was the forger William Roupell (subject of a FOWNC lecture by Judy Harris a few years ago), who was succeeded after his conviction in 1862 by Frederick Doulton, brother of Sir Henry.

Probably the foremost legal figure buried here is Sir Richard Webster, Viscount Alverstone, who served lengthy terms as Attorney General and Lord Chief Justice, but whose fine monument is hidden in 'jungle'.



Christopher Pond's Mausoleum
Drawing by Don Bianco



Forthcoming FOWNC Events September - December 1996

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (1 September, 6 October, 3 November and 1 December - the September tour will hopefully include a brief visit to the catacombs). A special tour will also be held in September as detailed below. September and October tours start at 14.30, and November and December tours start at 11.00, at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road, and they 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 15 September

Special Tour - Women at Norwood - Rosemary Comber

Although half the people buried in the cemetery are women, they rarely feature on tours, Mrs. Beeton excepted. This tour will redress the balance by visiting the graves of Sister Eliza Roberts (Florence Nightingale's principal nurse in the Crimea), Greek Princess Eugenie Palaeologue, temperance campaigner Mrs. Woodford Fawcett, ballet dancer Katti Lanner and "escaped nun" Edith O'Gorman, amongst others.

Talks (and film show) will be held in October, November and January as detailed below, at 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. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person to help cover the cost of hiring the room.

Saturday 19 October

West Norwood and the Victorian Theatre - Michael Slater

Professor Slater is well-known to FOWNC members for his entertaining lectures on Douglas Jerrold and on Dickens and his Circle. In his talk he will discuss aspects of the Victorian theatre with especial reference to those buried at Norwood.

This lecture will be followed by the 1996 AGM (see Chairman's Report) - we hope that as many members as possible will make the effort to attend.

Saturday 16 November

Film Extravaganza - Tony Fletcher

This year sees the 100th anniversary of film-making in Britain. To mark this occasion film historian Tony Fletcher has assembled details of early films which feature some of those buried at Norwood. The lecture will be illustrated by archive material, most notably films starring the actress Mary Brough (1863-1934).

Saturday 18 January 1997

J. H. Greathead (1844-1896) - Rob Cartwright

With a view to writing a biography, Rob Cartwright is studying the life and work of the Victorian underground tunnelling pioneer James H. Greathead, the centenary of whose death falls in October this year. He will be opening the 1997 FOWNC lecture programme with probably the most deeply-researched talk yet given on this subject.

Other Forthcoming Events

Saturday 26 October, 10.00-17.00: 'Looking at Lambeth'

Lambeth Archives Open Day & Lambeth Art Show. Minet Library & Longfield Hall, Knatchbull Road, SE5. This year's theme is the visual recording of the people and places of Lambeth by artists, photographers and others. The FOWNC bookstall will be present.

Saturday 26 October, 10.00-16.30: 'David Roberts, RA (1796-1864)'

A series of 4 lectures in celebration of the bicentenary of Roberts' birth. Topics include 'David Roberts in Egypt and Nubia, 1838-9' (George Hart), 'David Roberts in the Holy Land, Syria, Idumea and Arabia, 1838-9' (FOWNC member Peter Clayton) and 'Spreading the Image of Exotic Lands: Louis Haghe and the Production of David Roberts' Lithographs' (Hilary Williams). Tickets: £18 (FOWNC members £15) from Education Service (Roberts Day), British Museum, WC1B 3DG (enclose SAE).

Sunday 27 October, 14.30: David Roberts and Louis Haghe Graves

Visit to graves of David Roberts and Louis Haghe at West Norwood. Inauguration of new tombstone to David Roberts.

Wednesday 30 October, 19.00: 'Necropolis of the Metropolis'

Lecture by Julian Litten including discussion of Kensal Green, Highgate, Norwood, Nunhead and Abney Park. Victoria and Albert Museum. Tickets: £5 (Friends of the V&A £3) from Box Office, V&A, Cromwell Road, SW7 2RL (enclose SAE).

Friday 1 November, 9.00-17.00: 'London Cemeteries and Churchyards - A Dying Legacy?'

One day meeting (12 lectures). Speakers include Chris Brooks, Roger Bowdler and Brent Elliott. Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, New Burlington Place, W1. Tickets: £45 including refreshments (students under 25 years £25).

Other Events cont.

Saturday 2 November, 9.00-17.00 **'London Cemeteries and** **Churchyards - Cemetery Visits'**

Either (1) Kensal Green, St. Pancras & Islington, Marylebone, Abney Park; or (2) Norwood, Nunhead, Camberwell Old, Camberwell New. Coaches depart from Central London. Tickets : £10 (can be booked separately from November 1st meeting).

Details of both the above events from: The London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, Duck Island Cottage, c/o the Store Yard, St. James's Park, SW1A 2BJ (Tel: 0171 839 3969).

Saturday 2 November, 9.30-17.00 **'Mysterious Murders and Sex** **Scandals in Victorian South** **London'**

Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19. This one day seminar will include lectures and discussions on the Charles Bravo case and Edith Nesbit. Tickets: £10 (£7.50 concessions) full day, £5 (£4) half day. Contact Nicholas Reed, 1 Dover House, Maple Road, SE20 8EN (0181 659 5776).

[N.B. Nicholas has also set up the Edith Nesbit Society. E. Nesbit is best known for 'The Railway Children' - both her father and grandfather are interred at Norwood.]

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