

# FRIENDS OF WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 30 - September 1997

Price £1 (Free to Members)

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## Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

### Uncertain Future Faces Cemetery

Lambeth seem to have finally abandoned the idea of selling the cemetery. Their accountants must know how much this futile exercise cost, and I will attempt to find out. Secondly, officers appear to have dismissed the suggestion of forming a charitable trust to run the cemetery and raise money for maintenance even though they have refused to explore this possibility with me!

Plus ça change - Lambeth promised us representation on an Advisory Committee for the cemetery in 1992 and reiterated this promise before the Consistory Court in 1993-4: we still await the first meeting of such a committee...

Officers have even refused to let me see the Heritage Lottery Board's response to our 'joint' submission. I thus have had no compunction in officially withdrawing our cooperation on this venture until such time as a framework for proper collaboration between Lambeth and FOWNC can be seen to be in place.

## **Consistory Court Business**

Given Council officers' track records, it will come as no surprise to FOWNC members to learn that even the Management Committee required under the Scheme of Management for the cemetery has not yet met. Admittedly, Lambeth did get as far as discussing their representation on the committee (an officer and nominees from each of the 3 major political parties). However, even this arrangement has fallen into some disarray as the officer nominated, erstwhile Chief Planner Brian Miles, has left the Council suddenly amid rumours of a £1.8 million hole in his department's budget.

I am told that the Archdeacon has invited as his nominees Paul Barber, counsel for the Archdeacon in the Consistory Court; Julian Briant, a chartered surveyor with a family burial at Norwood; Reverend David Isherwood, Rector of Clapham and architectural historian; and Nicholas Long, Official to the Archdeacon and also owner of a family grave at Norwood.

The implementation of the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations, as required by the Consistory Court judgement, has raised a number of unforeseen problems. Some have been brought about not only because Lambeth appear to have made no provision for the introduction of these regulations, but also because they appear not to have been enforcing their own cemetery regulations! Nicholas Long (contact address PO Box 16162, London SW4 9ZP) is dealing with the fall-out from this situation.

Some relatives who have recently bought graves or erected tombstones in the cemetery seem to think that FOWNC are the cause of these problems. Members will know this is not the case! Indeed, Lambeth's own counsel suggested the implementation of the Churchyard Regulations during the Court hearing in 1993/4, a measure we were happy to agree to. In July 1994 we were told that the Cemetery Superintendent was writing to all local undertakers and stonemasons informing them of the impending implementation of the Regulations, but it seems that this simple step may not have been taken.

Be this as it may, Lambeth appear to be already in breach of undertakings given to the Court in February this year in that the repairs to the listed tombs and the reinstatement of the memorial to Sir William Cubitt have not been completed to the satisfaction of English Heritage.

I cannot see how the tomb of John Garrett can possibly be reinstated by 30 September as required by the Court, or where Lambeth will find the money to reinstate the de Normandy memorial as they promised to do in recognition of the fact that we had raised the money to restore the Mantell memorial. Lambeth also undertook to restore the Vallentin memorial by April next year.

*Bob Flanagan*



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## FOWNC Annual General Meeting

### Saturday 18 October, 14.30,

### Chatsworth Church Hall

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All your officers have agreed to serve again if necessary. Any nominations should be sent to me in writing before the meeting. I myself feel that it is time for a change 'at the top' of FOWNC, but no-one has come forward who is willing to succeed me. Also I have made no progress in trying to think of interested patrons, President/Vice-President, etc. Please contact me if you have any ideas.

Thanks to stalwarts Rosemary Comber, Jill Dudman, Paul Graham, Don Bianco, Margaret Jackman, Rosemary Dawson, and John Brown for their help during the year. Especial thanks are due to George Young who, in addition to his customary care with our accounts, has this year secured full Charity Registration for FOWNC. Thanks also to you, the members, for your continued support. Our membership nowadays is fairly static at about 250. However, as always we would welcome greater feedback on our activities and more participation in our events.

As to future FOWNC policy, given the history of our dealings with Lambeth all I can suggest is that we keep ourselves as a 'force in being' to await developments and continue our programme of events, research, and a limited restoration programme.

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## FOWNC Publications

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We have made some progress in our promised series of booklets. Music and Dance will be available in time for the AGM, and 'Entertainers' (Circus, Music Hall, etc.) may also be available at that time. Three others are in an advanced stage of preparation. In order to help make room for this new stock we have decided to offer members a 33 % reduction on our own existing items (Cemetery guide, Sportsmen, Dickens, postcards) either by post to me (address on back page) or in person at our tours and indoor meetings. In addition we are discontinuing the following items and offer the remaining stocks at the prices shown (30-50% discount) (figures in brackets indicate remaining stock) - please help if you can:

- £ .10 Burges in Wales (brief guide to Cardiff Castle & Castell Coch) (10)
- £ 6.50 Craces, Royal Decorators 1768-1899 (ed M. Aldrich, softback, 202 pp) (1)
- £ 3.00 Nature Conservation in Lambeth (very good historical section) (12)
- £12.00 Power of News (Donald Read - the history of Reuters -hardback) (2)
- £ 9.95 Pugin's Builder (P. Spencer-Silver - softback) (2)
- £ 5.00 Samuel Prout (1783-1852) (R. Lockett - many illustrations) (1)
- £ 8.95 Seaplanes Felixstowe (G. Kinsey - information on Commander J. Porte) (3)
- £ 3.00 Sir Henry Doulton (Sir E. Gosse - hardback) (5)
- £ 6.25 Transit Circle (E. Mennim - biography of William Simms) (2)

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# James Henry Greathead (1844-1896)

## Tunnelling Pioneer

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by Rob Cartwright

Greathead has been described as “the practical author of the great London Tubes” and “South Africa’s greatest engineer”. His most important invention is the tunnelling shield; even today, worldwide, modern tunnelling shields are still referred to as Greathead shields.

### Origins and Education

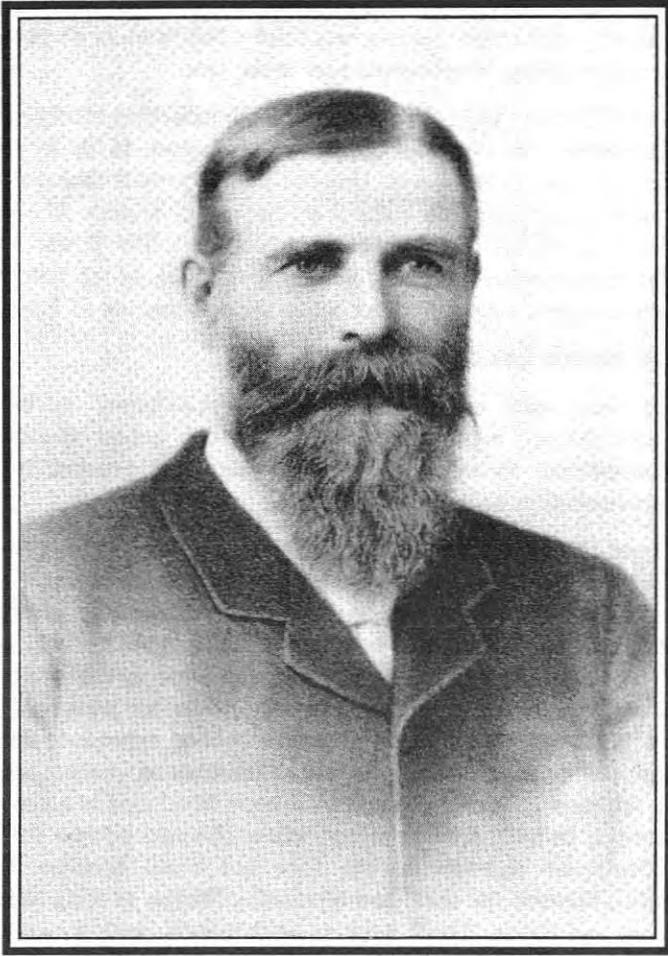
Greathead was the grandson of an 1820 British settler to the Cape. He was born at Grahamstown, Cape Colony on 6 August 1844. His early education was at St Andrew’s College, Grahamstown and the Diocesan Collegiate, Cape Town (the latter then known as “Bishops” or “Newlands”). His education was completed in England, between 1859 and 1863, at the Westbourne Collegiate School, Westbourne Grove (then in union with King’s College, London). Greathead returned to the Cape but, in 1864, made his final move to London, initially to serve a 3 year pupillage under the civil engineer Peter Barlow.

### The Tower Subway

Barlow was a great advocate of the shield method of tunnelling which had been initially developed by Marc Brunel to cut the first Thames Tunnel between 1825 and 1843. This project had resulted in the loss of 10 lives and had been extremely costly and slow. Hence, no contractor had been keen to use this tunnelling method again.

In 1862, while sinking cast-iron cylinders through the blue London clay to form the mid piers of the old Lambeth Suspension Bridge, Barlow perceived that such cylinders could be driven horizontally to form tunnels under rivers. Two years later, he patented a circular wrought iron shield, with provision for grouting, the process of injecting liquid lime or cement through holes in iron segments to fill the space left by the skin of the shield. In 1867 he proposed, for the relief of London street traffic, a system of underground railways in “tubes” constructed using shields and lined with cast-iron segments. Single carriages, to seat 12 passengers each, were to be propelled by cable traction; access was to be by shafts and hydraulic lifts.

Barlow gained the Royal Assent for a trial of this system called the Tower Subway, between Great Tower Hill and Vine Street, in 1868. It was to be the second tunnel under the Thames, but no contractor could be found to undertake the work, due to memories of the immense difficulties of Brunel’s first Thames Tunnel. However, Greathead, then only 24, tendered for the construction of the shafts and tunnel for



James Henry Greathead (1844-1896)

£9,400. He devised a cylindrical wrought iron tunnelling shield, forced forward by six powerful hand screw jacks as the material was excavated in front of it, the jacks bearing at their rear against the completed segment wall of the tunnel.

Greathead's shield was effectively a sleeve as large as the tunnel, which, as the excavation proceeded, was forced ahead to act both as a ring-shaped cutter and a protection to the workmen. It was 4 feet 9 inches long, half an inch thick, and weighed 2 and one-eighth tons; it moved in one piece, unlike Brunel's large and unwieldy rectangular shield which weighed 120 tons.

The shield was made with a slight taper at the front to reduce friction against the surrounding clay during movement. The front of the cylinder was stiffened by a cast-iron ring bolted to it; behind this ring was fixed a bulkhead, or diaphragm, having a doorway through which the miners could pass to the face.

Work on the Tower Subway began in early 1869, with tunnelling starting in April and finishing in December. The Subway opened on 2 August 1870; it was the first underground tube railway in the world. Unfortunately it proved financially unviable, too few passengers being carried to make it a commercial success. The speed of the 12 seater carriage was too slow, and the cables often broke. The Tower Subway went into receivership in November 1870, and became a walkway in the following month. This venture proved highly successful long before the construction of Tower Bridge.

### **The City and South London Railway**

Fourteen years were now to elapse before the opportunity to build another underground tube railway presented itself. During this period Greathead mainly worked on conventional railways, but also devised and patented a number of significant improvements to his tunnelling shield.

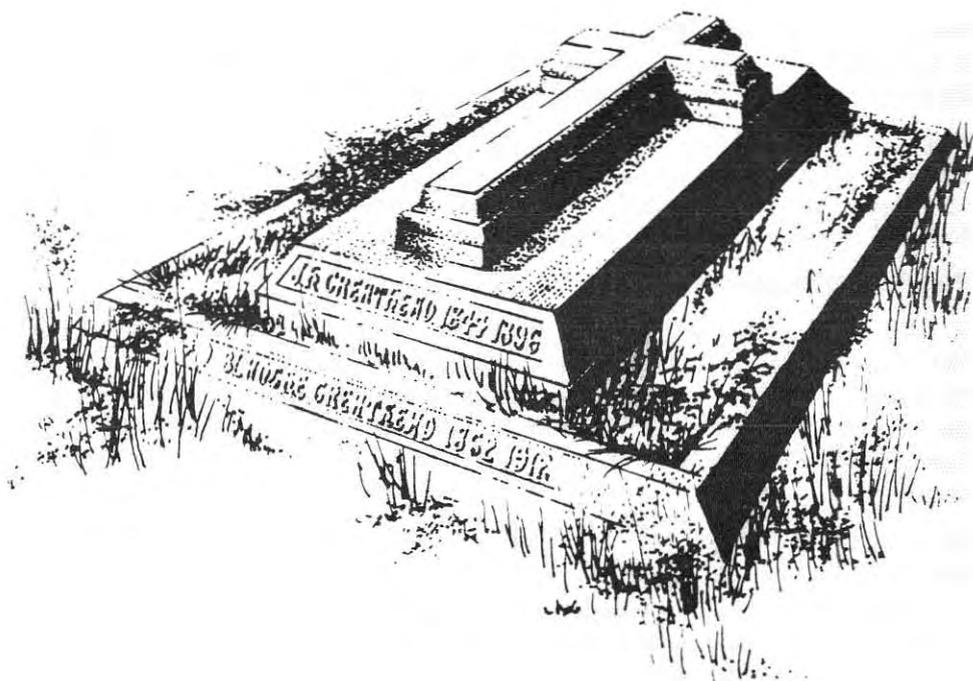
Meanwhile, since 1860 cut-and-cover underground steam railways had been developed. The construction of these involved digging out the route of the railway, lining it with bricks, and roofing it over. A massive trench was dug, principally under existing roads, causing substantial interference with traffic, and necessitating demolition of property, shoring up of buildings, and even diversion of rivers. Site values pushed up the cost of compensation payable, while the growth of sewers, gas pipes and water pipes beneath the roads involved mounting expense in diverting these services. Large teams of navvies with their construction traffic added to the congestion. By the early 1880s cable traction had been developed as a practical system for street tramways. In 1884 Greathead and others obtained powers for the City of London and Southwark Subway (as the City and South London Railway was originally known), between the north end of London Bridge, at King William Street, and the Elephant and Castle. There were to be 2 tunnels, with a continuous cable driven from a power station at the Elephant and Castle. The Bill was given the Royal Assent in July 1884; its passing was a great parliamentary triumph for Greathead in the face of severe opposition, and the following day he was engaged as Engineer in Chief. In the same year he had lodged another shield improvement patent, which included the use of compressed air and forward propulsion by hydraulic jacks instead of hand screw jacks.

The first tunnel was commenced in October 1886 and the second in March 1887, and both tunnels were completed under the river by June 1887. The improved shield used for this tunnel cutting was a steel cylinder 6 feet long and was driven forward by hydraulic jacks, compressed air working being used on some sections of tunnel in water-logged areas.

## Extension of the Line to the Elephant and Castle

Also in 1887, the promoters, having in mind the commercial viability of the line, obtained powers to extend the line from the Elephant and Castle to Stockwell, making the route 3 miles long. In August 1888, in a display of courage and technical foresight, a decision was taken to use electric rather than cable traction.

The line was opened by the then Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) on 4 November 1890; it was the first electric underground tube railway in the world. Most of the line survives as part of the Northern Line. Greathead's tunnelling shield had solved both the problem of expensive, slow and dangerous tunnelling under rivers, and the problem of expensive, slow and disruptive construction (by cut-and-cover methods) of underground railways in cities.



James Greathead's Tombstone at Norwood  
(Drawing by Don Bianco)

## **Other Projects**

As a result of his electrical expertise developed on the City and South London Railway, Greathead was appointed Joint Engineer, with Sir Douglas Fox, on the Liverpool Overhead Railway, the first overhead electric railway in the world. A pioneer in the use of automatic signalling, it was also the first electric railway of industrial importance in the UK. Construction began in 1889, and the line was opened on 4 February 1893. It soon became known affectionately as the "Dockers' Umbrella".

Greathead was also involved in three more tunnelling projects. He was Joint Engineer on both the Waterloo and City Line (on which work began in June 1894) and the Central Line Railway (on which construction at the site of Chancery Lane Station began in April 1896). He was Consulting Engineer, together with Sir Benjamin Baker, on the Blackwall Tunnel, for which he prepared the designs of the shield and the specification.

Work on the Blackwall Tunnel commenced in March 1892 and river tunnelling started in September 1893. The shield used for this work was the largest shield being used in the world at the time, and tunnelling was finished on 8 October 1896.

Tragically, Greathead did not live to see the completion of these last three projects. He died from stomach cancer at his Streatham home on 21 October 1896 at the early age of 52, only days after undergoing an abdominal operation, and was buried at West Norwood Cemetery (grave 27,103, square 83).

## **Public Recognition**

A statue of Greathead was unveiled at Cornhill in the City of London by the Lord Mayor on 17 January 1994. London Underground decided to honour him after the Corporation of London suggested they build their new 18 feet high ventilation shaft in the form of a plinth which could support a statue. The 10 feet high bronze statue is by James Butler RA, who is recognised as one of Britain's most outstanding figurative sculptors.

In a speech at the unveiling ceremony, London Underground Managing Director, Dennis Tunnicliffe, said:

"Greathead shields are still used for short lengths of tunnel, and even the giant tunnel boring machines used on the Jubilee Line extension operate on the same principle. Although long respected in engineering circles, Greathead has not received public recognition until now". On performing the unveiling, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Paul Newall, said: "I am delighted that London Underground have acknowledged Greathead's contribution to transport and London in this way, and thank them for generously donating this magnificent statue to our street scene".

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# West Norwood Cemetery and the Dictionary of National Biography

by Bob Flanagan

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**R**ecent research has added two further names to the 213 we already knew to be buried at Norwood and commemorated in the original edition of the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB).

## **Alexander Perceval (1787-1858) (Grave 3,296, square 49)**

Perceval (b. Temple House, Ballymote, Co. Sligo, 10 February 1787) was an Irish landowner who went into politics and rose to become Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Lords, a position he held from 1841 until his death. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He became Conservative MP for Sligo in May 1831 and denounced the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Lord Plunket, for charging the Irish county magistrates illegal fees. He was Treasurer of the Ordnance, December 1834-April 1835. He was also treasurer of the Orange Association of Ireland, but helped wind up this society 'for the sake of peace' on Government advice.

He died at 28 Chester Street, London, on 9 December 1858 and was buried at Norwood on the 15th of that month - no trace of a monument remains.

## **Thomas Archer (1789-1848) (Grave 1,603, square 17 - common grave)**

Archer was a noted actor and dramatist who specialised in Shakespearean roles. A native of Bath, he trained at Bath and Birmingham. He first appeared at Drury Lane in 1823 as the King in Henry IV Part I. He appeared in the US in 1827 at the Bowery, New York and opened Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1830. He was a member of Miss Smithson's company in Paris, and led a Shakespearean company in Belgium and Germany. He returned to Drury Lane in 1839 and is recorded as appearing at Covent Garden in 1845. He played the hero, Colonel Blood, at the premiere of his notable original work Blood Royal, or The Crown Jewels in New York in 1847. His other successful melodramas were in reality translated from French originals.

He died of 'acute laryngitis' on 1 May 1848 at 15 Mount Gardens, Lambeth in the presence of his wife Georgiana. He was buried at Norwood on 9 May 1848. There is no trace of a tombstone.

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# William Pett Ridge (1859-1930)

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by Paul Graham

**W**illiam Pett Ridge was born at Chartham, near Canterbury in Kent in 1859. He was educated locally and at Birkbeck College in London. He worked in the offices of the South Eastern Railway Company at London Bridge, but was ambitious to become a writer. After his first sketch was accepted by the editor of the St. James's Gazette in 1890, he abandoned office work and devoted his life to literature. He wrote short stories for both the London and provincial journals under his own name and under the pseudonym of Warwick Simpson.

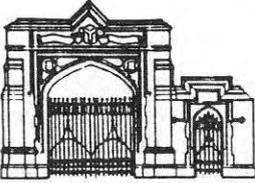
His first novel, *A Clever Wife*, was published in 1895, but he achieved his first great success and established himself as a writer with *Mord Em'ly* in 1898. This had as its heroine a girl from the Walworth Road. He subsequently published thirty novels and collections of short stories of London life, together with a book of reminiscences, *A Story Teller: Forty Years in London*, which was published in 1923. In 1924, fellow novelist Edwin Pugh recalled his memories of Pett Ridge in the 1890's:

I see him most clearly, as he was in those days, through a blue haze of tobacco smoke. We used sometimes to travel together from Waterloo to Worcester Park on our way to spend a Saturday afternoon and evening with H.G. Wells. Pett Ridge does not know it, but it was through watching him fill his pipe, as he sat opposite me in a stuffy little railway compartment, that I completed my own education as a smoker... Pett Ridge had a small, dark, rather spiky moustache in those days, and thick, dark, sleek hair which is perhaps not quite so thick or dark, though hardly less sleek nowadays than it was then.

Pett Ridge was a compassionate man, giving generously of both his time and money to charity. He founded the Babies Home at Hoxton in 1907 and was an ardent supporter of many organisations that had the welfare of children as their object. This charitable zeal, and the fact that he established himself as the leading novelist of London life and character, led to him being characterised as the natural successor of Dickens. All his friends considered Pett Ridge to be one of life's natural bachelors. They were rather surprised therefore in 1909 when he married Olga Hentschel.

Pett Ridge's great popularity as a novelist in the early part of the century declined in the latter years of his life. His work was considered to be rather old fashioned, though he still wrote and had published at least one book in each year in the final decade of his life. His last work, *The Eldest Miss Colingwood*, was published in the year of his death.

William Pett Ridge died, aged 71, at his home, Ampthill, Willow Grove, Chislehurst, on 29 September 1930 and was cremated at West Norwood on 2 October 1930. His ashes were taken away by his surviving family, his wife, a son and a daughter.



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# Recent FOWNC Events

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Jill Dudman

The special tours on 18 May and 15 June were repeats of popular favourites, Dickens Connections by Paul Graham and Notable Women by Rosemary Comber. Accounts of them may be found in FOWNC Newsletters Nos. 16 (October 1993) and 28 (January 1997), respectively.

## Funerary Symbolism Tour

A sizable crowd turned out on 20 July for a new tour by Don Bianco on funerary symbolism. Don had prepared copies of a substantial treatise for handing out to the "tourists", in which he explained the (mainly Christian) meaning behind the various symbols to be found on tombstones.

Some of the more common symbols are the anchor (hope), torch (immortality, if upturned symbolises life extinguished), draped urn (funeral - from the Greek custom of cremation), broken column (life ended), angel (messenger of God) and palm leaves (victory over death). Letters with Christian symbolism often appear: alpha and omega (God as the beginning and end), chi-rho (first letters of the name of Christ), IHS (abbreviation of the Greek word for Jesus), the dove (Holy Ghost), heart (love), ivy (lasting remembrance), poppy (sleep) and handshake (sharing and affection, particularly between husband and wife).

Don identified three statues along the front of the Greek Cemetery as Faith, Hope and Charity, and explained the different forms of cross; the 3-stepped base often supporting a cross refers to the Trinity. The highlight of the tour was a monument which featured in minute detail all the instruments of the Passion.



Draped Urn Memorial  
on the Grave of Tom King,  
Prize-fighter

## Manufacturing and Retailing Tour

On 17 August another new tour was led by Jill Dudman, featuring manufacturers and retailers of food, drink and a variety of other household goods. A number of notables from our standard tours appeared: sugar manufacturer Sir Henry Tate (see illustration below), Bovril inventor John Lawson Johnston, cocoa maker James Epps, potter Sir Henry Doulton, and silk and ribbon merchant William Leaf - and we couldn't omit Mrs Beeton, even though she was just a writer on the topic. Less often visited are the tombs of vinegar manufacturer Henry Beaufoy, brewer John Courage, mustard manufacturer Thomas Keen (immortalised by the phrase 'as keen as mustard'), and Edward Colman, partner in the Norwich mustard business. John Oakey senior and junior manufactured knife polish, emery and glass paper, whilst Edward Mappin was a partner in the family cutlery firm (a brother co-founded Mappin & Webb). One notable retailer was draper William Edgar, co-founder of Swan & Edgar, but more locally connected were Cornelius Quin and several members of the Axtens family: draper Cuthbert Axtens set up shop in Kennington, and his son William later joined Quin to found one of Brixton's major department stores.



The Prince of Wales taking tea with Henry Tate (Right)  
after opening Brixton Library in 1893



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## **Forthcoming FOWNC Events September - December 1997**

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**G**eneral tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (7th September, 5th October, 2nd November and 7th December). A special tour will also be held in September as detailed below. September and October tours start at 14.30, while 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 21 September**

#### **Special Tour - Crime and punishment - Paul Graham**

Many eminent figures in the legal profession are buried at Norwood, including both the trial judge and the prosecuting counsel in the Crippen case. In company with them are characters from some notorious Victorian crimes, such as murder victim Charles Bravo and will forger William Roupell.

Talks will be held in October and November as detailed below, at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27 (enter by second door on right in Idmiston Road), starting at 14.30. Again we very much welcome donations of at least £1 per person to help cover increasing room hire costs.

### **Saturday 18 October**

#### **Lecture - Sir Henry Tate and his legacies - Brian Blolce**

For the centenary year of the opening of the Tate Gallery, an illustrated talk featuring Tate's art collection at his Streatham home and the subsequent founding of the gallery, as well as benefactions such as the public libraries given to Lambeth.

The 1997 AGM will follow at approximately 16.00.

### **Saturday 15 November**

#### **Lecture - Other Lambeth burial grounds Tony Fletcher & John Cresswell**

The oldest surviving burial ground in Lambeth is the churchyard of the former parish church of St Mary, which contains some notable tombs. The borough now owns three cemeteries, including Lambeth, where music-hall comedian Dan Leno is buried, and Streatham.

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## Other Forthcoming Events

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**Saturday 27 September 10.00-17.00**

**Lambeth Archives Open Day**

**Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, London SE5**

This year's theme is "House and Family History in Lambeth". FOWNC Secretary Jill Dudman will be giving a talk on researching in the cemetery records held at Lambeth Archives, and FOWNC member Judy Harris will be talking about the Roupell family. The FOWNC bookstall will be present as usual, and volunteers to help staff it will be welcome.

**Daily until Sunday 19 October 10.00-17.00**

**Exhibition - Henry Tate's Gift**

**Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1**

To mark the centenary of the opening of the Tate Gallery in London, a special exhibition has been mounted called Henry Tate's Gift. The Gallery was erected at a cost of £80,000 which was donated by Sir Henry Tate, who also presented the Gallery with paintings from his private collection. The exhibition includes some of his best paintings, including works by Millais, Leighton, Landseer, Orchardson and Waterhouse.

**Friday 24 October 9.00-17.00**

**Funding London's Heritage Landscapes**

**Conference of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust**

**Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, New Burlington Place, W1.**

This is the first major conference since the advent of Heritage Lottery funding to examine the opportunities for conservation and restoration in London and public and private sources of funding. The conference will also review a number of selected projects, including those recently funded under the Urban Parks Programme. The conference fee is £45. On Saturday 25th October there will be an optional day of visits by coach (cost £15), to view some of the projects in progress.

**Wednesday 29 October, 18.00**

**Lecture-David Roberts and the Holy Land, 1838-39: Then & Now**

**Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1**

FOWNC member Peter Clayton, who has devoted much effort to raising funds for the new Roberts monument, will be lecturing to the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society. Members of FOWNC are welcome to attend.

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# Mr. Tate's Noble Lesson and Admirable Example

by John W. Brown

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One of the most famous Victorians to be interred at West Norwood Cemetery is Sir Henry Tate, the sugar magnate of Tate and Lyle fame, whose family mausoleum is a Grade II\* listed building.

Sir Henry lived at Park Hill, Streatham Common, and his house survives today as St. Michael's Convent. Some of the ground floor rooms remain little changed today from the time when he occupied the house and they provide a fascinating glimpse of the splendour in which he lived. Although Sir Henry and his family lived in some opulence at Park Hill, he was also a very generous charitable benefactor. Locally he is perhaps best remembered for his funding of public Libraries, of which Brixton Library, and the recently refurbished Streatham Library, are fine examples of his philanthropy. Nationally, however, he is associated with the Gallery on Millbank which carries his name - The Tate - which this year celebrates its centenary.

Prior to the opening of the Gallery, Mr. Tate used to occasionally open his private Gallery in Park Hill to the public. The opportunity to view his magnificent collection of paintings in the splendour of his home was a popular event in Streatham's social calendar .

I was fascinated to recently receive from a friend a newspaper clipping taken from The Times of the 22nd July 1897 concerning the official opening of the Tate Gallery by the Prince of Wales on the previous day. It reveals that the building was then officially known as the National Gallery of British Art, and it is a fitting memorial to Sir Henry's generosity that by popular acclaim the Gallery soon became known simply as "The Tate".

The opening ceremony was a truly Royal occasion with the Prince of Wales being accompanied by his wife, the Princess of Wales, the Princess Victoria of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of York, and Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, who arrived at the main entrance to the building at 4 o'clock that afternoon.

Mr. Tate presented the Prince of Wales with a handsome gold key and requested him to unlock the main doors to the Gallery by which act the building would then be officially opened.

Amongst the speeches rendered on the occasion, that by Sir William Harcourt was most fulsome in its praise for Mr. Tate's generosity. Sir William referred to the old Millbank Prison which formerly occupied the site and contrasted this with the splendid new building which now adorned the northern bank of the Thames. To great cheering from the gathered throng he said:

"When I first recollect Millbank it was the philosophical specimen of a reformatory prison: today it contains the palace of art which by the generosity of Mr. Tate has been erected.

"Mr. Tate has conferred upon us great benefits, not only in the present but in the future.

"The wealth of this country is increasing in a marvellous degree - a degree probably never known in any other age or nation; and what I think we have to learn is the lesson of the best use that can be made of that wealth, and in that respect, I think, Mr. Tate has given a noble lesson and an admirable example."

There is no doubt that Henry Tate was a wealthy man. When he died the value of his gross estate exceeded £1,250,000 despite his many charitable donations.

Today, when there are many in our community whose wealth would be on a par with that of Mr. Tate's, it is a pity there are so few who have been inspired to learn from his "noble lesson" and "admirable example".

### **Friends of West Norwood Cemetery**

The annual subscription to the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery is £2. For further information please contact the Membership Secretary.

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## **FOWNC OFFICERS**

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### **Chairman & Publications Officer:**

Bob Flanagan,  
79 Durban Road,  
London SE27 9RW  
Tel: 0181 670 3265

### **General Secretary:**

Jill Dudman,  
119 Broxholm Road,  
London SE27 OBJ  
Tel: 0181 670 5456

### **Hon Treasurer:**

George Young,  
12 Swinburne Court,  
Denmark Hill, London SE5 8EP  
Tel: 0171 274 5267

### **Membership Secretary:**

Rosemary Comber,  
63 Bradley Road,  
London SE19 3NT  
Tel: 0181 653 2741

### **Conservation Coordinator:**

Paul Graham,  
Flat 4, 9 St. Andrew's Road,  
Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4DT  
Tel: 0181 287 6976

### **Events Officer:**

Tony Fletcher,  
11 Claverdale Road,  
London SW2 2DJ  
Tel: 0181 671 6551

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