

FRIENDS OF WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 33 - September 1998

Price £1 (Free to Members)

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Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

There has been a further meeting of the Cemetery Advisory Group and a Constitution for this body has been agreed. However, there is still a dispute within the Council as to which department will take responsibility for the provision of secretarial facilities, etc. A temporary clerk has been assigned for the meeting scheduled for 30 September, but it seems unclear what will happen after that.

On a positive note, the nature conservation bodies represented on the Advisory Group produced a report as a result of which I suggested that a working party to look at nature conservation/scrub clearance in the cemetery should be convened. This was agreed, but no meeting has been arranged as yet.

It seems that one practical step which FOWNC could take is to help with scrub clearance either by volunteer labour, or by financing a working party from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers - the Council's budget for grounds maintenance seems to have been cut even further this year and many parts of the cemetery are becoming badly overgrown again. I will try to pursue this option - we have been reluctant to try to do anything practical in the cemetery since the early days when the cemetery management claimed that our efforts at scrub clearance were damaging the cemetery.

Heritage Lottery Bid

I have at last found out why the Council's bid was rejected. The sole ground for rejection cited was that Lambeth asked for funding for the repairs/reinstatements ordered by the Consistory Court! Members will recall that I refused to countenance FOWNC support for this part of Lambeth's original proposal and only agreed to provide some match funding if these items were removed prior to submission. The fact that the Council went ahead anyway explains their reluctance to discuss things further with me in subsequent months. Such duplicity even when I was doing my best to help!

Perhaps fortunately, all those associated with this saga have now left the Council and thus the field is clear to try again. The Lottery Board rejection letter was very positive about providing some funding for conservation in the Cemetery once a sensible bid is put together and I get the impression that only a gentle push on an already open door will be all that is needed. The question of who is to do the pushing remains, however, as such spare time as I have is fully committed already.

A further problem on the horizon which mitigates against a Lottery bid at present is that I understand the Council are still claiming the right to re-sell graves in the Cemetery in which there has been no burial for 75 years. This practice was ruled illegal by Chancellor Gray in his original judgement which Lambeth accepted at the time. A further session of the Consistory Court thus seems likely. Whilst I understand the problem of finding space for new burials which faces the Council, I also understand that there is plenty of space available in Lambeth Cemetery, Blackshaw Road. Secondly, continued uncertainty over future plans for Norwood means that any application for funds for monument conservation will, in my opinion, be compromised from the start.

Conservation News

We still await permission from the Diocese to erect the completed Alcock monument in the Cemetery. However, the Council have announced their intention to proceed with the repairs to the Vallentin memorial as required by the Consistory Court. The question of the reinstatement of the de Normandy memorial remains - I will attempt to open negotiations on this once the Vallentin memorial is finished. The only other occurrence of note on the Conservation front is that Sir Saxon Tate has applied for consent to repairs to the windows of the Tate Mausoleum - we were pleased to support this application subject to agreement from English Heritage.

Bob Flanagan



FOWNC Annual General Meeting Saturday 17th October, 14.30, Chatsworth Church Hall

The time for our AGM fast approaches once again. We have at last found someone willing to audit our accounts and thus these should be available for inspection. We would welcome nominations for any office and offers of help in other areas.

A major immediate problem is that some 40 or so members (including some who have been with us since 1989) have not renewed their membership bringing our current membership total to some 230. This is particularly worrying as it means that the production of a printed Newsletter will be uneconomic next year unless we can get our numbers back up near to the 300 mark. I hope this drop in membership is not due to lack of faith in your committee, but if it is then please let us know! We get virtually no feedback from members...

As regards the Newsletter, I plan to produce an index to issues 25 to 33 (A5 format) and this may be available in time for the AGM.

In order to simplify membership renewals and therefore hopefully regain some lost sheep, we propose to institute two new categories of membership: 5 years for £10 and unlimited for £40 as an alternative to annual membership. We will also investigate the practicalities of direct debit arrangements if anyone requests this. We have been reluctant to take these steps previously, but as we now approach our 10th Birthday I feel confident that FOWNC will continue well into the new millenium. These rates are available immediately for renewals. Prospective new members will be told of them when they apply to join.

Although £10 for 5 years will almost cover our costs for Newsletter production and postage (15 issues), should members wish to add a voluntary donation to this sum, this will be much appreciated and help us to continue our conservation and restoration work at the cemetery.

Correction: Sir Thomas Stevenson (1838-1908)

Further to the article on Stevenson in Newsletter 32, Dr Katherine Watson of Wolfson College, Oxford has written to point out that Edward Bell was not poisoned with antimony, as stated in many secondary sources, but with mercuric chloride (corrosive sublimate) and strychnine. This has been confirmed by study of Stevenson's testimony in the case which is preserved at the Public Records Office at Kew.

William Clowes senior (1779-1847) & William Clowes junior (1807-1883)

by Paul Graham

Aged ten years, William Clowes was apprenticed to a printer in his native Chichester. His apprenticeship was served on primitive hand presses that had changed little since the days of Caxton. Clowes moved to London in 1802 and worked as a compositor in George Street, Tower Hill. In the following year, with a gift of £300 from his mother, he established his own printing shop in Villiers Street, Charing Cross. Government printing work was obtained and Longmans became his first publishing customer. Four years later Clowes moved to larger premises in nearby Northumberland Court, where he employed twenty men. His was the first English firm to print books by means of steam driven machinery, thereby pioneering the mass production of inexpensive books and periodicals.

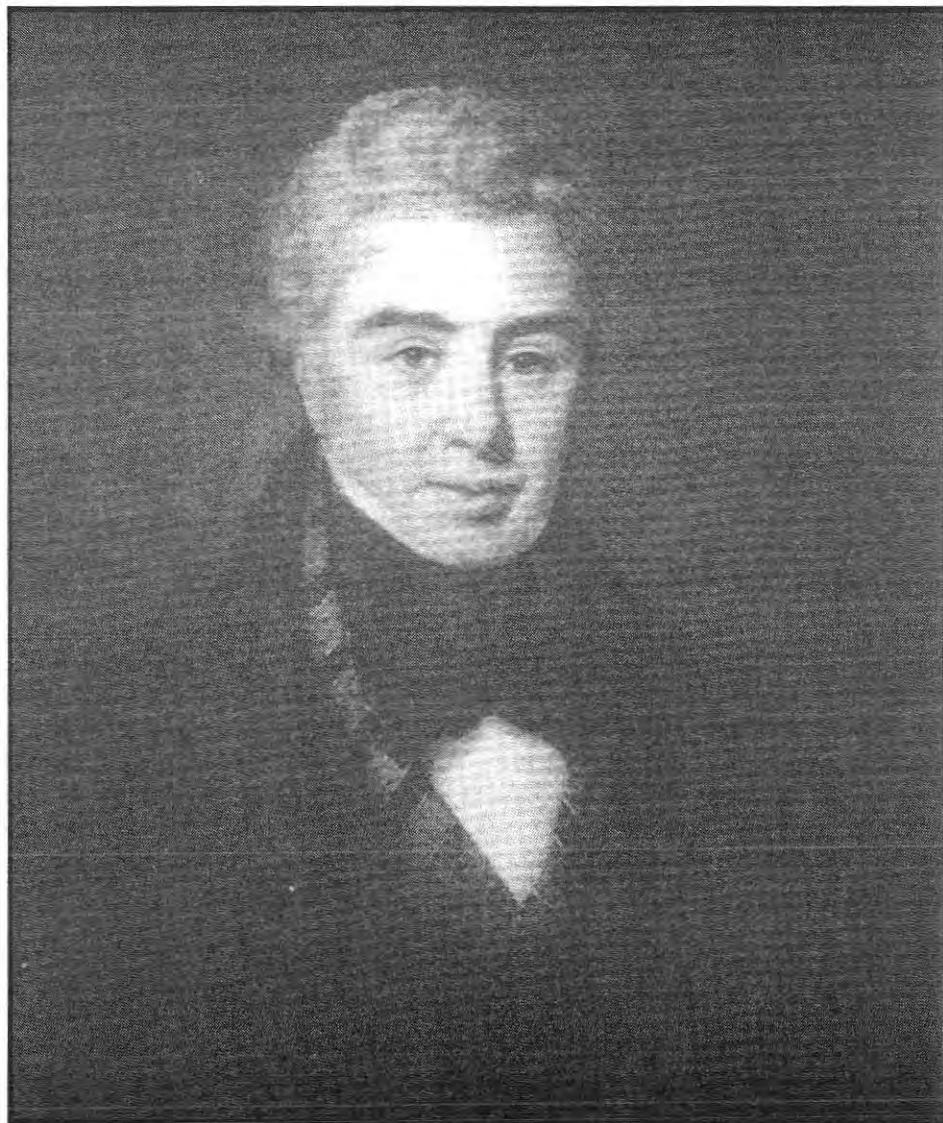
The Introduction of the Steam Press

Not everyone was enthusiastic about this innovation. When the steam presses were introduced into Clowes' premises in 1823, the Duke of Northumberland, whose garden adjoined the works, brought an action against him for damages because of the noise and vibration caused. The case was heard in the Court of Common Pleas in June 1824. One observer of the proceedings, the publisher Charles Knight, observed how:

“ludicrous it was to hear the extravagant terms in which the counsel for the plaintiff and his witnesses described the alleged nuisance - the noise made by the engine, quite horrid, sometimes resembling thunder, at other times like a threshing machine, and then again like a rumbling of carts and waggons.”

The judgement was a compromise: the presses were to be removed to other premises, but the Duke was to pay compensation. Clowes moved his works over the river to, somewhat ironically, Duke Street, Southwark, in 1827. They quickly became the largest printing works in the world, producing books on a scale never before contemplated. There they remained until they were destroyed by bombing in April 1941.

In 1839 Clowes' importance was recognised by the appearance of a long article in the *Quarterly Review* describing in detail the layout and contents of his printing works. It revealed that he had 19 of the revolutionary Applegath & Cowper machines at work, each capable of producing a thousand sheets per hour, as well as 23 hand presses and 5 hydraulic presses.



William Clowes senior (1779-1847)

Family Business 1803-1953 by W. B. Clowes
(London: William Clowes & Sons, 1953; reprinted 1997).

To house the machines a large factory had grown up on the South bank, consisting of several lofty buildings surrounding a lower one which contained the engine room and the larger printing machines. The rooms in the outlying blocks were given a variety of uses. There were composing rooms; reader's rooms; type making shops; stereotyping shops; paper warehouses; hand printing shops; machine printing shops; wood block store rooms; and stereotype plate store rooms. The type-foundry itself was a double room employing 30 men and boys. It contained 18 furnaces, each 3 feet high. The stock of type to be found in the fount-case at any one time weighed about 80,000 lb, and the paper warehoused in piles 20 feet high averaged about 7,000 reams, roughly a month's supply. Composing rooms accommodating 200 men were situated in different parts of the premises.

Despite this eminence, business life was still hazardous. In 1841 Charles Knight's *Penny Cyclopaedia* failed. Clowes lost about £40,000 as a result. Yet just two years later the stereotype department of the firm contained plates whose estimated value was around £½ million. Even valued purely as old metal, the plates were estimated at around £70,000. Each plate weighed about 7lb and in all they weighed 2,500 tons. A single plate would print one page of a book, so that a ton would print a work of 320 pages. The stock held by Clowes would therefore have been enough for 2,500 such works. He also had 80,000 woodcuts in stock, valued at about £3 each.

For over a hundred years, the printing works of no other English firm approached the size of that of Clowes. In 1866, of the firms which provided information to the Children's Employment Commission, Clowes' printing works were still comfortably the largest, with 568 employees. The Spottiswoode family firm were their closest rivals, employing 450 men. By that time William Clowes senior had died. He had entered into partnership with two of his sons William and George (1814-1886) in 1839 when the firm became known as Clowes & Sons. William was the technician and George the administrator and salesman.

The Great Exhibition

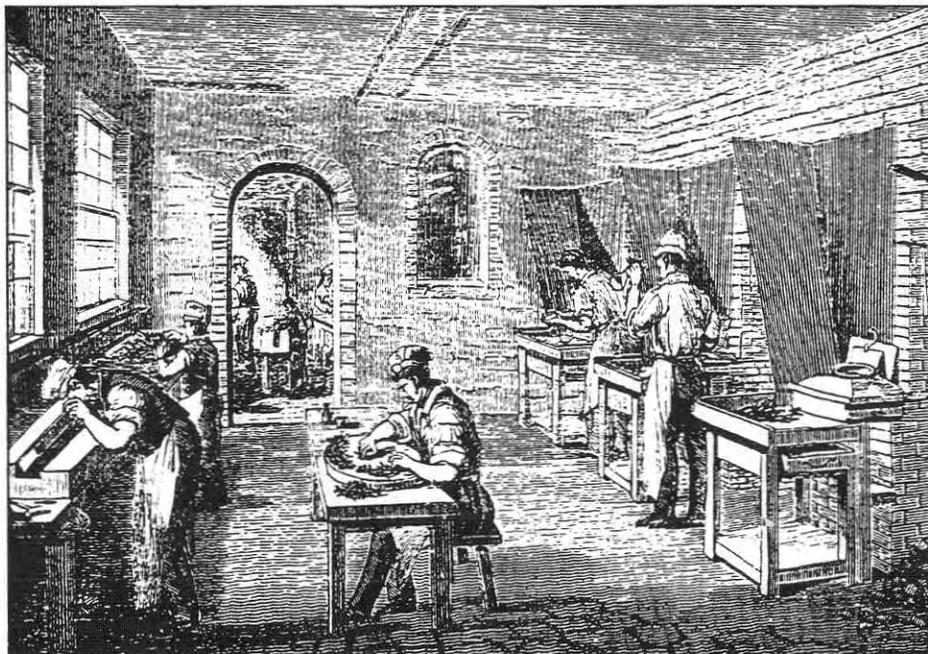
The firm produced the official catalogue for the Great Exhibition of 1851, for which they received £3,200. 500,000 copies were printed and sold. They absorbed over 50 tons of type; 30,000 reams of paper; and 3 tons of ink. The catalogue was bigger and heavier than anything produced before - the firm was awarded a medal by the Commissioners of the Exhibition for printing it.

The authors whose works were printed by the firm included such literary luminaries as Charles Dickens; Wilkie Collins; Harriet Martineau; William Cobbett; and William Harrison Ainsworth. The business relations of William Clowes junior with another eminent Norwood "resident", the publisher Richard Bentley, are recorded in a study of the firm of Bentley, *A Victorian Publisher*, by R. A. Gettmann. In 1855, when Bentley was experiencing severe financial difficulties and his creditors were pressing, Clowes

was one of two “inspectors” appointed to overlook the business and ensure it remained solvent. Despite the difficulties, the firm was fundamentally sound and the financial situation rapidly improved.

In August 1861 Bentley published Charles Francastelli’s book *The Cook’s Guide* on an equal profit sharing basis with the author. The sales were remarkably good and promised to continue so for many years. Despite this, the author sold his half share of future profits to Bentley in March 1863 for £600. It proved a shrewd and profitable investment for Bentley, but at the time he did not have the ready cash available to complete the purchase and borrowed it from William Clowes.

In January 1866 Bentley bought the monthly magazine *Temple Bar* for £2,750, £1,000 of which had to be paid in cash. Again, this proved to be a lucrative property. In order to gain the contract for producing the magazine, the rival printing firms of Clowes and Spottiswoode competed for the privilege of advancing the cash payment needed. Clowes was preferred as “he had generously lent money to Richard Bentley at a time when other creditors were insistently presenting their bills.” This generosity accords with Clowes’ reputation as a philanthropist and benevolent employer.



The type foundry at Clowes’s Duke Street works in 1840

Family Business 1803-1953 by W. B. Clowes
(London: William Clowes & Sons, 1953; reprinted 1997).

Before the firm of William Clowes installed steam presses, books were luxury articles bought either by the wealthy or by the circulating libraries for lending to their subscribers. The importance of the firm to the establishment of the modern printing industry, and therefore to the production of cheap literature and the spread of literacy, cannot be overestimated. It is acknowledged in several works that have been consulted in the preparation of this article, notably: Marjorie Plant *The English Book Trade* (1939); W.B. Clowes *Family Business* (1953); and Graham Gibberd *On Lambeth Marsh* (1992). William senior and William junior are both accorded entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

William Clowes senior lived in Banstead, Surrey, but died in Wimpole Street, London, on 26 January 1847. He was buried in the family vault at Norwood he had built when his wife died eleven years before. His four sons, four daughters and sixteen grandchildren all attended the funeral, as did around four hundred friends and workmen. His son William died at his home in Gloucester Terrace, Bayswater, on 19 May 1883. Father and son are buried side by side in square number 34, grave numbers 645 and 1616 respectively, under similar York stone slabs which remain in good condition. Happily, the firm that bears their name survived the Blitz and is now based in Beccles, Suffolk. The present day Clowes Group have a museum at Beccles which is open June-September, weekdays only, admission free.



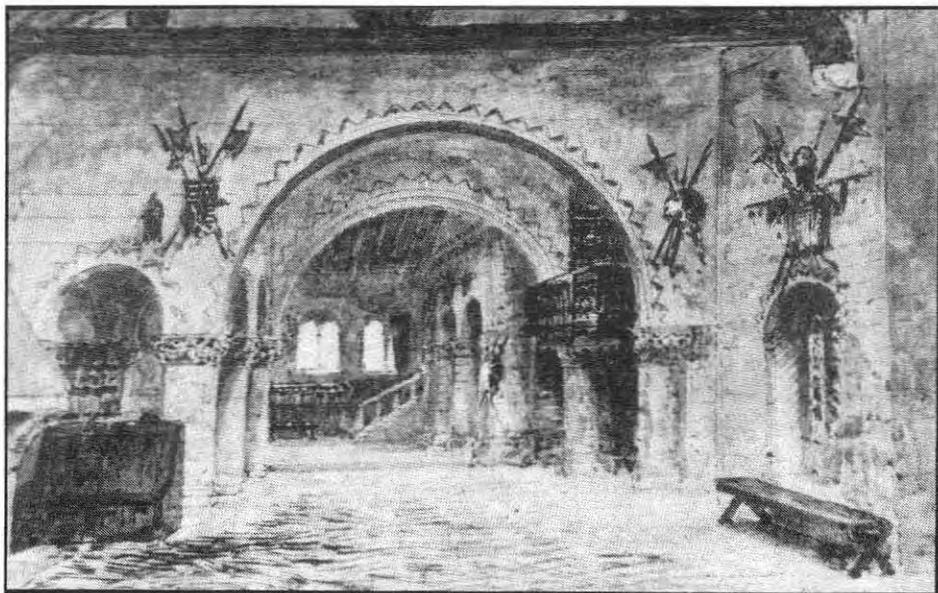
Clowes family graves at Norwood
(line drawing by Don Bianco).

Walter Hann (1838-1922), Scenic Artist

by Betty Griffin

Walter Hann (b. City of London, 11 January 1838) was the son of Robert Hann and Mary Ann Hann (née Carcy). He married Harriet Frances Daws (b. Brixton, 1838). They had several children: Harriet (b. St Pancras, about 1864), Walter (b. St Pancras, 1867), Arthur (b. 1868), Constance (b. Brixton, 1877) and Ernest (b. Brixton, 1879). The family lived at 51 Arthur Road, Brixton from about 1874. By 1881 they had moved to 24 Guildford Road, South Lambeth. His wife Harriet died on 15 April 1887 and was buried at Norwood (grave 21,746, square 39). Arthur died in 1888 and was also buried in the family grave. Hann married again some time after 1891, his second wife being Emily Mary Mathews. Hann senior died on 16 July 1922 at 2 Alderbrook Road, Balham, and was buried in the grave at Norwood; no trace of the monument remains although it was recorded by Eric Smith in the 1970s.

The children Walter and Harriet both became Professors of Music; Harriet was a music teacher when she was 19 years old, and lived at 24 Guildford Road for many years. Ernest, the youngest son, followed in his father's footsteps as a scene painter and sculptor.



Stage design by Walter Hann showing interior of Hamlet's Palace (Princess's, 1884)
(Photograph by Betty Griffin courtesy of V & A Picture Library)

Hann senior worked from a studio at 4 Murphy Street, Oakley Street, Westminster Bridge Road SE1, which he initially advertised as the Painting Room, occupying it from about 1870 to 1910, and his son may have carried on using the studio after that date. Indeed, Ernest had joined him about 1900, after which the firm was advertised as Walter Hann & Son, Scene Painters.

Landscape Artist and Scene Painter

Walter Hann was principally a landscape artist and was skilled at town- and sea-scape, and architectural subjects. He exhibited sketches and water colour paintings from about 1860 to 1904 at various galleries. His works included views of London, an interior of *Rochester Castle* exhibited at the Suffolk Street Gallery, *Boscastle* and *Bosiney Haven* shown at the Royal Hibernian Gallery, and a shoeing forge exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1904 based on an original sketch from 1868.

Hann was a prolific designer for the stage. He commenced work as a scene painter at the Surrey Theatre in 1853, as a junior under J. W. Calcott. Three years later he was engaged by Frederick Gye (see *Norwood Musicians* by Bob Flanagan) at Her Majesty's on Royal Italian Opera work. He designed act drops and stage scenes for many well-known London theatres; early designs do not appear to have survived, but some sketches dating from about 1870 to 1906 were saved by his son Ernest. After Ernest died (he had been living at Fenton House, Cranbrook, Kent) the designs were bequeathed through the executor W. A. Davis to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1966.

In 1857 Hann did his first complete scenery for *Ambition* at the old Adelphi, Sheffield. In 1863 he was engaged with Frederick Lloyds at the St James's Theatre, and from 1865 to 1868 he painted scenery at the Princess's for productions such as *The Streets of London*, *After Dark* and *The Huguenot* under George Vining's management. There are some sketches for scenery in the collection which are unidentified; one of these is of a street scene in brown wash on grey with a background of smoky chimneys - perhaps for *The Streets of London*?

He designed the new act drop for the old Lyceum in 1868, and another in 1870 for the newly-reopened theatre. In the 1870s he was doing work for the Princes Theatre, Manchester and the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham. He painted scenery for all the Marie Litton productions at the Court Theatre between 1871 and 1874, for Covent Garden in 1872, and for the opera *Rienzi* at Her Majesty's in 1878. He worked again at the Lyceum in 1877 and in 1879 for Henry Irving.

Shakespearean Scenes

In the 1880s he designed scenery for several Shakespeare plays at different theatres. These included Wilson Barrett's productions of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Court in 1881 and *Hamlet* at the Princess's in 1884. The sketch of the interior of the palace shows a baronial hall.

Then followed *Twelfth Night* at the Lyceum in 1884 produced by Irving; the act drop depicts a rocky coast. All the Bancroft productions at the Haymarket between 1880 and 1885 were designed by Hann. He painted the scenery for *Junius* by E. Bulwer-Lytton at the Princess's in 1885; the sketch depicts a Roman temple with background steps. In *The Lord Harry* by H. A. Jones, produced by Wilson Barrett at the same theatre in 1886, the scenery consists of flooded fields with a cottage by moonlight painted in a dark grey wash.

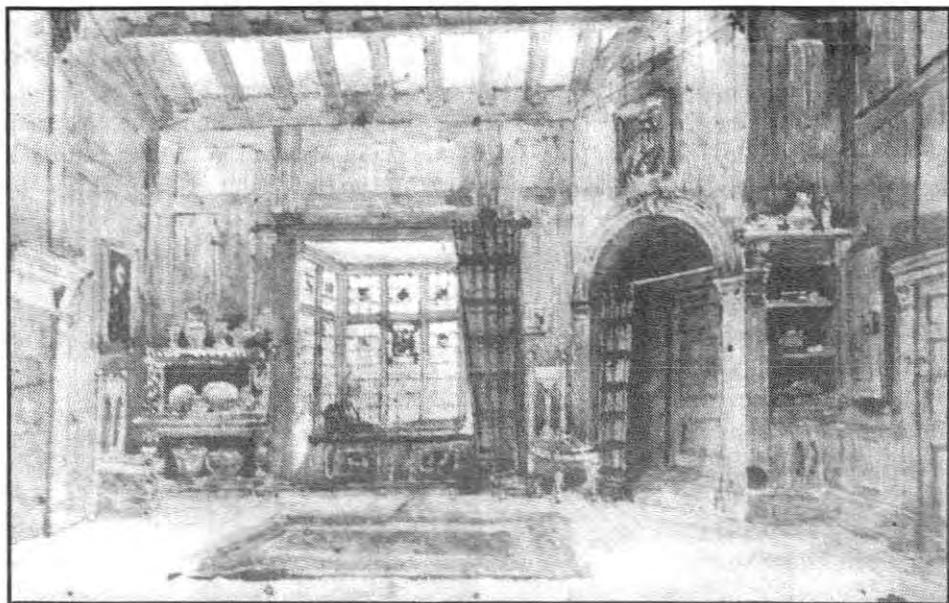
The *Middle Man* by H. A. Jones at the Shaftesbury in 1889 is illustrated with a background of an old smithy and a furnace in the foreground in brown and blue water-colour. This was based on a sketch done in 1868 of a smithy and a shoeing forge on the Albert Embankment.

The Taming of the Shrew

His work continued in the 1890s when he designed scenery for *The Taming of the Shrew* (Daly's, 1893); sketches for four scenes have been preserved. Act I shows Verona with shaded foreground, terraced houses and towers in the background. Act III has a wall in the foreground with a gate and trees and buildings in the background in water-colour. Act IV Scene 2 shows Petruccio's house with bay and mullion windows in brown water-colour, while Scene 1 is a classic Italian market-place with buildings and date palms - one of the best paintings of that play.



Walter Hann
(line drawing by Don Bianco
from a photograph in the Era, 25 May 1912)



Stage design by Walter Hann for Petruccio's House in Act 4 of *Taming of the Shrew* (Daly's, 1893) (Photograph by Betty Griffin courtesy of V & A Picture Library)

In 1897 another Shakespeare play *Othello* was produced by Wilson Barrett at the Lyric, with illustrated scenes by Hann showing a stormy sea with two towers in the foreground.

Peter Pan

Hann also worked on many productions at St James's for Sir George Alexander, but no sketches have survived. Most famously, he designed the scenery for J. M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan* (Duke of York's, December 1904). A sketch for a back drop depicts a child's sampler with the name "Wendy Moira Angela Darling aged 9 years" in cross-stitch, with red strawberries, trees and alphabet in water-colour on a green ground.

Other sketches in the collection are unfortunately not inscribed with the name of the production. Several are of interiors, whilst one sketch shows classic buildings in the background in cream, a temple in profile in the foreground in brown and two cypress trees. Another has an Italian style courtyard with doorways and steps and a grey background street leading to a church in blue, pink, grey and brown; both of these look as if they could be Shakespeare play settings.



Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

Paul Graham's tour on 17 May covered a selection from the more than 200 notables buried at Norwood who are commemorated by entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography* - a good indication of the prestige this cemetery held in the 19th century. To avoid having to stand talking over bare patches of grass, Paul chose personalities whose monuments are still in existence, although of course sadly this excludes such major figures as playwright and journalist Douglas Jerrold and almanack founder Joseph Whitaker. Full listings of DNB persons can be supplied (contact Jill Dudman, address/telephone on back page).

On 21 June I led a tour of tombs of personalities who had homes or businesses in the Camberwell area (including Dulwich and the edge of Herne Hill). The building firm of Benjamin Colls (later to merge with Trollope) was based in Camberwell. In the large houses on Herne Hill and Denmark Hill resided such worthies as art collector Elhanan Bicknell, steel process inventor Sir Henry Bessemer, and another figure in the steel trade, Alfred Longsdon, the London agent for Krupps. Here also lived the Benecke family, relatives of Mendelssohn, whose graves have an attractive set of matching granite crosses; it was during a stay with them that the composer wrote his famous *Spring Song*, originally titled *Camberwell Green*.

Don Bianco brought his expert knowledge to the fore on 19 July with his tour featuring the major architects buried at Norwood, as well as others responsible for designing monuments in the cemetery. Those interred here include City architect Sir Horace Jones, of Tower Bridge fame; William Burges, noted for some extraordinarily ornate interiors; John Belcher, whose Mappin & Webb building sadly is no more; and of course the cemetery's designer, Sir William Tite, in the Catacombs. The work of several leading architects is represented at Norwood: the largest two Greek mausolea, both for branches of the Ralli family, are respectively by G. E. Street and E. M. Barry; the Berens mausoleum is also by Barry, and the Tate mausoleum by Sir Ernest George.

The tour on 16 August continued this year's music and entertainment theme, coinciding with the publication of the second of Bob Flanagan's new booklets, *West Norwood Cemetery's Music Hall*. Taking place towards the end of the summer, the tour revealed the minimal amount of grass cutting and vegetation clearance that has been done this year; the tomb of music hall singer G. H. Macdermott, though not far from a path, was smothered by almost impenetrable jungle.



Forthcoming FOWNC Events September - December 1998

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (6 September, 4 October, 1 November and 6 December). It is hoped that the September tour will include a Catacombs visit. 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.

Talks will be held at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27 (enter by second door on right in Idmiston Road), starting at 14.30. To help cover the hall hire fee, donations of £1 per person will be most welcome.

Saturday 19 September

London Open House Weekend

For the first time, the Borough of Lambeth is taking part in this London-wide event. FOWNC's contribution will comprise tours each lasting about 1½ hours and concentrating on the rarely-open Catacombs and Greek Chapel, starting from the main gate at 14.00, at 14.30 and at 15.00. The FOWNC bookstall will be on display.

Saturday 17 October

Lecture - Which Monuments Matter? - Roger Bowdler

Why are certain tombs listed and not others? This controversial topic will be examined by our special guest speaker, Dr Bowdler of English Heritage's Historical Analysis and Research Team.

The talk will be preceded by the 1998 AGM.

Saturday 21 November

Musicians and Entertainers at Norwood

Continuing these themes from earlier in the year, a presentation relating to the work of some of the composers, conductors, and performers of the concert hall and the music hall buried here. It is planned to have performances/recordings of some works. The two new FOWNC booklets by Bob Flanagan, Musicians (£3.95) and Music Hall (£3.50), will be available.

Other Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 16 September, 19.00

Lecture - Burial Vaults of the Aristocracy - Jullan Litten
Dissenters' Chapel, Kensal Green Cemetery, Ladbroke Grove, W10.

This lecture will include some fine examples of the monumental masons art in creating tombs for the aristocracy, many of which were interred in vaults befitting their status in society. Admission £3.

Saturday 26 September, 10.00 - 17.00

Lambeth Archives Open Day
Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, London SE5.

This year's theme is Downtown: the development of Lambeth's five town centres. As usual, the FOWNC bookstall will be present.

Tuesday 20 October

Lambeth Older Persons Festival

For the Norwood section of this week-long event (defined as being for Lambeth's residents aged 50 or over), the FOWNC bookstall will be on display during the day in the Nettlefold Hall (West Norwood Library), and it may be possible to run a tour suitable for the less agile - details not yet finalised.

Wednesday 21 October, 19.00

Lecture - Spontaneous Human Combustion - David Pescod
Dissenters' Chapel, Kensal Green Cemetery, Ladbroke Grove, W10.

David Pescod's lecture will cover the fascinating topic of spontaneous human combustion, which was the subject of a recent television documentary. Admission £3.

Tuesday 27 October 20.00

Lecture - Henry Tate and His Gallery - Brian Bloice
All Saints Church Parish Room, Beulah Hill, SE19

If you missed Brian's talk on Sir Henry Tate and the Tate Gallery at last year's AGM, there will be another opportunity to hear this facinating account when Brian speaks to members of the Norwood Society on 27th October. Entry charge is £1 for members of the Society and £1.50 for non-members.

**West Norwood Cemetery's
Music Hall
by Bob Flanagan**

West Norwood Cemetery's Music Hall is the latest in our series of booklets and is now available price £3.50p.

FOWNC members can claim a 33% discount on the published price.

Among those featured in this 56 page publication are juggler Paul Cinquevalli, comedian Fred Kitchen, singer/writer/manager G. H. Macdermott (the "Great Macdermott"), and illusionist John Henry Pepper.

Copies of the book can be obtained from Bob Flanagan at 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW (Tel: 0181 670 3265).

Bob is now working on a further volume which brings together actors, managers, scene painters, etc. who worked principally in theatres and other places of entertainment on the South bank.

**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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The FOWNC Newsletter is published three times a year by
The Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW.
Registered Charity No. 1063450/0
Member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends
