



FRIENDS OF WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 34 - January 1999

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Chairman's Report by Bob Flanagan

There has been a further meeting of the Cemetery Advisory Group. The debate within the Council as to which department will take responsibility for the provision of secretarial facilities, etc. continues. A clerk has been assigned, but it still seems unclear what will happen in the long run.

The suggestion of FOWNC helping with scrub clearance either by volunteer labour, or by financing a working party from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers remains on the table, although the initial feeling from the Council (that any voluntary work would have to be done during ordinary working days) seems a non-starter.

Conservation News

We still await permission from the Diocese to erect the completed Alcock monument in the Cemetery. On 29 July 1994 the Diocesan Advisory Committee issued a certificate in response to our application recommending permission be granted to erect the memorial in the cemetery. We then applied for a Faculty from the Consistory Court on 8 August 1994. We further applied, as we were advised, for listed building consent from Lambeth in March 1996, but had no response. Then came a further session of the Court when the role of the Archdeacon's official, Nicholas Long, in 'fast-tracking' approval for works in the consecrated portion of the cemetery was clarified.

Since our initial application had not progressed we applied to Nicholas, only for him to decline jurisdiction and suggest that we apply again for Faculty. This we did some 18 months ago - we have still had no response despite repeated letters, telephone calls, etc. I don't know what more we can do....

On a positive note, the Council announced their intention to proceed with the repairs to the Vallentin memorial as required by the Consistory Court earlier in the year, but I don't know if this has been completed.

One piece of good news is that the Council have agreed to, and allocated funds for, the reinstatement of the de Normandy memorial. It seems that some £120,000 was allocated from the 1998/9 budget for capital works in the cemetery. Some of this money may have been spent on repairs ordered by the Court, but it seems that the bulk of it may go on Health and Safety and other remedial work in the cemetery. I have asked English Heritage to produce the specification for a new de Normandy monument drawn up years ago and will present this to Lambeth complete with a couple of quotations approved by EH.

FOWNC Maters

About 10 members turned up to the November meeting. This was not a one-off - attendances have been falling steadily and we have been losing money. We have planned four Saturday afternoon indoor meetings for 1999 (including the AGM), but if attendances don't pick up we will either have to abandon the lectures and just hold a short AGM, or try evening meetings.

The initial idea behind Saturday afternoons was to give members who lived some distance away the chance to attend meetings, and also because some members were reluctant to venture forth on dark autumn/winter evenings. However, 1999 is the year of decision. If you the members want lectures, etc. then turn up to the meetings. Alternatively, state your preference for evening meetings in 2000.

Thanks to all who renewed last year. We now have some 250 paid-up members. You will see that there are a number of options on the new renewal form which hopefully will make renewals easier in the medium/long term.

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

Congratulations to our sister organisation FONC who were the only London-based group to be awarded the National Commendation Award for Voluntary Groups in the 1998 Queen Mother's Birthday Awards for Environmental Improvement. FONC seem to go from strength to strength. But then there are not the pressures of re-use we face at Norwood - Southwark have a large unused area set aside for new burials in Camberwell New Cemetery not far from Nunhead. We also now face the fact of dual control over the consecrated portion of the cemetery as discussed above. Finally, FONC have many more active volunteers than we have, and they don't have to deal with Lambeth ...

Bob Flanagan

The Grave of James Davidson and Family at West Norwood

by Philip Somervail

This article came to be written, perhaps surprisingly, as a result of joining Paul Graham's Dickens Connections tour at the Cemetery in May 1997. Whilst on the tour I made an unexpected discovery. On that Sunday, as the 13 of us in the tour party snaked our way from George Cattermole's grave towards that of David Roberts RA, I glanced vaguely at a tall headstone in front of us, next to the pathway. I then did a double take. For, to my amazement, I recognised the names on it of some ancestors of mine; David Roberts could, I felt, wait for a few minutes!

I detached myself from the tour and reached for a pen and old envelope that I happened to have with me. The lettering on the gravestone was badly eroded, but in the 28 lines of inscription I could decipher the names of my 3 x great grandparents, James Davidson and Margaret Farquharson. I hastily jotted down what I could read (there were some tantalising gaps) before rejoining the tour, my concentration somewhat impaired.

I had come to know about James Davidson as a result of researching the life of one of his granddaughters, Janet Wicks (my great grandmother), of whom there was a photograph on the wall at home. From married life in Glasgow at the turn of this century I traced her back to Clapham, where she had been born in 1871, and where her mother, Susan - or Susannah as she was generally known - had been brought up.



The Davidson/Farquharson Grave at Norwood
(line drawing by Don Bianco)

Susannah's father, James Davidson, it transpired, was a baker with a shop at 20 The Pavement, Clapham Common¹. He had moved in early life to London from his native Melrose, and, after a period in Westminster, took over the bakery in Clapham in about 1830, when he would have been aged about thirty. He remained there until the mid-1870s, having married Margaret Farquharson, a Bloomsbury girl of Scottish descent, sometime before 1823. They had several children, of whom the youngest was Susannah, born in 1832. James was widowed when Margaret died in 1857 after some 34 years of marriage; but he continued with his bakery until he was over 70 (at the time of the 1871 census he employed four men), whereupon he retired to 15 Church Buildings on Clapham Common North Side. He died in March 1877 aged 76 at the home of a grandson in Union Road, Clapham.

And there my research rested. I had often wondered where he and Margaret were buried, and had looked in local papers for clues, but, until last May's happy discovery, I had drawn a series of blanks. So I suppose it was typical that I should stumble over the Davidsons' grave when I least expected it. Now of course I wanted to find out more.

The London Metropolitan Archives

According to my copy of 'Greater London Cemeteries and Crematoria' (Edition 3, 1994), a transcript of the Burial Register for West Norwood Cemetery for the years 1838-1918 is kept at the London Metropolitan Archives (formerly the Greater London Record Office) in Northampton Street. So two days later, after work, I went there to investigate. Time was somewhat limited before closing, but I located the copy of the register on microfilm and before long I found the following information:

James Davidson, burial no 48040, died Union Road, Clapham aged 76 years; buried 21 March 1877; officiating minister: David MacEwan.

I also found burial details of his wife, Margaret, and of two daughters who were buried in the same grave. There too was William Davidson, a son I had not previously known about, whom it transpired, sadly died in Wandsworth Lunatic Asylum in 1871 aged 47.

Having worked at great speed I found that I had some extra time to spare, so, I thought, why not look for some of my other ancestors who died in south London? On the off-chance, therefore, I looked for William Skeen, journalist, who died in January 1873 at St Ann's Road, Brixton. And, yes, there he was too (burial no 39133) - as indeed was his wife Ann (d. 1864). So also were a third set of 3 x great grandparents, Samuel Wicks, brewer, of Stockwell Green (d. 1854) and his wife Mary (d. 1868). All in all, not a bad evening's work.

Lambeth Archives

But I was not going to let the matter rest there, and on the first available Saturday I made my way to Lambeth Archives at the Minet Library in Knatchbull Road: I had learned that there was an index there of West Norwood Cemetery gravestone inscriptions which had been compiled by the late Eric Smith in the 1970s.

The original card index is now on microfiche, so it was the work of a few minutes to look up the names I was interested in. It immediately became clear that twenty years ago the Davidson grave's inscription was more legible, for the transcript contained additional details. Using the information previously copied onto the old envelope, as well as information obtained in other sources plus the transcript on fiche, I believe that the inscription originally read something like this:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
MARGARET
FARQUHARSON
WIFE OF JAMES DAVIDSON
[OF CLAPHAM COMMON]
DIED [O]N [26TH NOVEMBER 1857]
[AGED 59 YEARS]
JAMES [&] HANNAH
[CHILDREN OF THE ABOVE, DIED IN INFANCY]
WILLIAM [DAVIDSON] [...] LIFE ABOVE,
DIED 12TH DECEMBER 1871 AGED 47
MARY, [DAUGHTER] OF THE ABOVE,
WIFE OF ALFRED HAYNES S[A]R[G]JENT
[DIED ON 31ST JANUARY 1872] AGED [41]
JANE DAVIDSON
[SARGENT, GRAND-DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE]
[DIED ON] [...] [1875]
[AGED 18 YEARS]
[ALSO OF]
JAMES DAVIDSON
[DIED ON 16TH MARCH 1877]
[AGED 76 YEARS]
ALSO OF
MARGARET DAVIDSON
DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE, WIFE OF
WILLIAM PORTEOUS
DIED MARCH 18[TH] 1895 AGED 66

(Note: the words/letters in square brackets are no longer legible on the gravestone)

But this was not all I discovered at the Minet Library: I was delighted to find that there is a microfilmed copy there of the original burial register for the Cemetery. The LMA's copy is of the left-hand page of the Register only, but the Minet Library's copy also includes the right hand page which provided the following extra information for James Davidson's burial:

From what parish removed?	-
Consecrated or unconsecrated?	Unconsecrated
Mode of burial?	Own grave
Place of burial?	[Grave no] 5666, Border ground, 9 ft, Sq. 24
When & by whom	Private
vaults, Graves, etc. purchased?	1st December 1857, James Davidson

This information confirmed what I had already guessed, namely that the grave had been purchased at the time Margaret Davidson had died. It also showed that they were buried in unconsecrated ground, a common fate for nonconformists. A useful little book in my possession, the Clapham Guide [ed. John R. Battley. Westminster City Publishing, 1935] had already informed me that David MacEwan, the officiating minister at James Davidson's funeral, was Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Clapham Road from 1875 until 1902.

Using the same method I located my Skeen and Wicks ancestors, and members of their respective families. I think that to date I have discovered 7 ancestors and 24 other relations buried at West Norwood Cemetery in 12 different graves: not a bad outcome from a chance discovery one sunny day in May!

The one remaining thing for me to do, armed with the numbers and locations, was to return to the Cemetery to see if I could find the other graves... However, I was disappointed: all the other headstones on my list have vanished. Only the Davidson grave by the pathway in Square 24 has survived - but what an interesting trail its discovery had caused me to follow.

And so, after paying my respects to James and Margaret Davidson's grave, I slowly made my way back to the car and drove home. But I have no doubt that I will return to Lambeth Archives before long to see what further fascinating items of information await discovery.

Note 1: A 1910 photograph of 20 The Pavement appears in Lambeth, Kennington & Clapham by Jill Dudman (Britain in Old Photographs series, p. 118)

John Belcher junior RA (1841-1913)

by Tony Wilson



John Belcher junior
(line drawing by Don Bianco)

In Newsletter 20 (October 1994), we featured an article by George Young about the architect John Belcher (grave 33,607, square 93), whose monument in the cemetery still survives albeit now laid flat. The Builder (21 November 1913) carries an obituary of Belcher. A recent Victorian Society Journal carried an article by Tony Wilson entitled John Belcher: Building for the Millennium. This concentrates on the connection between Belcher's architecture and his religious beliefs. Mr Wilson has kindly agreed to speak on Belcher at the November 1999 FOWNC meeting. By way of an aperitif we print an abridged version of his article.

John Belcher was born at 2 Montague Terrace, Trinity Church Square, Southwark. He had a privileged, cosmopolitan education including architectural studies in Paris in 1862/3, where he studied new buildings rather than old ones. He inherited both his membership of the Catholic Apostolic Church and his architectural practice from his father, John Belcher senior. Belcher junior worked for his father until the latter retired in 1875. One of their joint designs was for the Mappin & Webb building in the City, sadly recently demolished.

The sociable, agreeable Belcher was immensely successful and prolific. His buildings ranged from country houses to vast office blocks. He was President of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1904 to 1906. He was a talented musician of semi-professional standard. He was happily married and died childless at Redholm, the large, comfortable, Tudorbethan house he had built on Champion Hill, Camberwell, on 8 November 1913. He fostered younger talent in his partners James Walter James, Arthur Beresford Pite and John James Joass, the latter two becoming prominent in their own right. He was regarded as a bold, innovative and influential architect.

The Catholic Apostolic Church

The Catholic Apostolic Church was founded in 1833 by followers of Edward Irving, a defrocked Scottish Presbyterian minister. Numbers were of crucial importance to the adherents. The Church deliberately built seven churches in London because seven was a holy number. There were seven epistles. In Revelation there were sevenfold protest, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven golden candlesticks.

The Testimony of the Stars to Christ, a Catholic Apostolic pamphlet of 1899, referred to the Old Testament Book, Numbers, as proof of the all-importance of numbers in the divine scheme: "Seven is the number of completeness, a seven fold rainbow is seen in the vision of Ezekiel. Seven covenants were made with Man." In Revelation (Chapter 1, Verse 20) "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

The Church believed that within the lifetime of the Apostles - its twelve founding fathers - the world would end. They were so certain of this that only the Apostles were empowered to ordain priests. As the Apostles started to die and the world had not ended, the members began to have doubts. Three died in 1855. By 1869 only three were left alive. The last one died in 1901. He was the last person who could ordain priests.

Belcher, like his father, designed churches for the Catholic Apostolic Church, one of which was the Southwark Church in Camberwell New Road (1877). His father, although recently retired, seems to have had a hand in it, as the drawing is signed by both. It is now the Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Nothing particularly Catholic Apostolic survives except the WC at the entrance, an amenity stipulated in the Church's eminently practical Regulations on the Building and Repairing of Churches (1863).

A sketch survives of Belcher's plan for the Catholic Apostolic church near the Regent's Canal in Paddington. It is adorned with angels. But then Belcher festooned all his buildings with angels: on an office block in Hanover Square (1899), angelic heads on Winchester House, Old Broad Street (1905-6), whole angels on Holy Trinity Church, Holborn (1910-12). And lions on the Ashton Memorial, Lancaster (1904), on Electra House for the Eastern Telegraph Company, Moorgate (1902-3), on Winchester House, and on Whiteleys Department Store in Bayswater (1910-12).

What does it all mean? In his own time his baroque extravagance - the Belcher Style - was widely imitated. Since then historians have tended to comment on the vigorous baroque style reflecting British confidence. The significance of Belcher's lions and angels has been lost because you can see them everywhere in buildings of the period. Walk round St James' and Piccadilly, and there are enough lions to fill a safari park

To Belcher, however, angels were more than decoration. Angels, as in wings and harps, play a key role in Revelation. His church also used the word, as it is used in the New Testament, to denote a priest. Belcher was an Angel, the highest rank attainable to him, as had been his father. He was an Angel of the Southwark Church in Camberwell from 1908 until his death in 1913.

But why lions, and so many of them, on his buildings? Revelation has the answer: "And I saw in the right hand of him a book written within and on the backside, sealed within seven seals... And no man in heaven, nor in earth nor under the earth was able to open and read the book, neither to look thereon. And the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." (Chapter 5). The lion would play a key role in the destruction of the Old World and the creation of a new Heaven on Earth.

The precise numbers of the lions and angels on Belcher's buildings are symbolic. The original design for Electra House, built in 1900 for the Eastern Telegraph Company, has 8 lions on the Moorgate side and 4 on the side street, a total of 12. One corner was never built, but there are 12 lions on the cupola which was built according to plan. On the Royal Insurance Building at the corner of St James' and Piccadilly there were 12 figures high up, rather like overgrown putti. Eleven remain today. Twelve features elsewhere in this building: 12 pilasters on the ground floor; 12 columns on the sixth floor. Twelve was one of the most important numbers to the church which, of course, was founded by 12 apostles.

On the facade of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the City of London, which was started in 1890, two giant angels swirl either side of a rusticated alcove above the side entrance in Great Swan Alley. There is a row of angels above the ground floor piers of the two street frontages. There are 7 on the Moorgate Place facade, the main entrance. The Swan Alley facade originally had 5 as designed and built by Belcher, but the number was increased in 1930 when Joass extended the building.

The number of angels on Moorgate Place was a deliberate decision. In Revelation, Chapter 8, seven angels with seven trumpets unleashed disasters that overwhelmed the world. "The first sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green was burnt." In Chapter 16, seven angels pour out the vials of wrath of God upon the earth, "and the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea: and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."

The original two facades had a total of 12 angels above the piers. Revelation, Chapter 21, explains how after the End of the World "And I John saw the holy city; new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... And had a wall great and high, and at the gates twelve angels and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel." Twelve angels brought in the New Jerusalem.

Why the Institute of Chartered Accountants? Belcher clearly seized every chance to present his beliefs in allegorical form on buildings. With a client prepared to spend considerable sums on sculpture he was able with this building to express them most fully. And all accountants have one thing in common with the Catholic Apostolic Church even if the number-crunchers would not express it in quite the same way as in The Testimony of the Stars to Christ: "All numbers are committed by God to a special ordinance."



The grave of John Belcher junior at Norwood (line drawing by Don Bianco)

Obituary

David Comber (1920-1998)



David and Rosemary Comber

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death on 10 November, at the age of 71, of David Comber, former Treasurer of FOWNC. David made a major contribution to getting our fledgling society off the ground by agreeing, even though he was busy as Treasurer of the Norwood Society, to serve on the inaugural committee and take charge of our finances. Using his expertise as a retired Tax Inspector, he set up our accounting systems and looked after them well for several years.

David and Rosemary, our Membership Secretary, also played a great part in the Norwood Society, regularly organising that society's publications stall at numerous events including the Lambeth Country Show and Archives Open Day. Other shared interests ranged from active membership of Lambeth Horticultural Society and Norwood Grove Social Club to ballroom dancing, and David, a keen pianist, had a large collection of classical and light music records.

David had been suffering from cancer for nearly two years, and we extend our deep sympathies to Rosemary and their family. The very large number of people attending the funeral service at West Norwood Crematorium demonstrated the esteem in which he was held by so many.

RIP - If You Are Lucky!

A Tale of Resurrectionists in Streatham in 1814

by John W Brown

It is taken for granted today that once the dearly departed have shrugged off the mortal toil of life on earth their soul will be transported to heaven or hell, while their earthly remains are safely interred six feet below God's acre in the parish graveyard. Alas, this was not always the case for in the late 18th and early 19th centuries grave robbing was a serious problem for the church authorities. Teams of so-called "Resurrectionists" would break into parish graveyards late at night and exhume recently interred bodies which they would then sell to doctors and surgeons for experimentation and research.

Recent investigations have revealed that Streatham was not exempt from this practice and while Burke and Hare were still to make a name for themselves in Edinburgh, three ne'er-do-wells called Lane, Watts and Butler, had set their sights on the parish graveyard. Having ascertained that two burials had recently taken place in Streatham the three felons made plans to snatch the bodies.

Late, one cold and frosty February night in 1814, Thomas Watts crept silently through the Streatham Streets. Carefully making his way through the darkness he headed for St. Leonard's Graveyard. Whilst the inhabitants of the village lay asleep in their beds he began to dig at the soft earth atop one of the recently used graves.

As his spade slid easily through the soft earth, unbeknown to him he had been seen. As he steadily dug away at the grave, little did he know that a villager was heading towards the White Lion inn with word of his evil deeds. Bursting into the tavern, the villager found gathered there a team of late drinkers. Telling them of what he had seen the burly men of Streatham left their tankards on the table and hurried off towards the church. Meanwhile, Watts was making good progress with his labours; the earth was fresh and easy to dig. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the men of Streatham to remain unseen and unheard, Watts, hard at work on the grave, suddenly looked up as the party approached. Realising that the game was up, he dropped his shovel and leaping over the churchyard wall sought to make his escape into the night. However, he was much fatigued by his digging and those in pursuit were well fuelled with ale. The fleeing felon was soon apprehended by his pursuers and he was quick to spill the beans and name his accomplices.

Once the unofficial grave digger had been safely secured in the village lock up the party headed for the Red Lion, an isolated inn on the London Road at Streatham Hill, where a Southwark dentist called Thomas Butler was waiting for his accomplice,

William Lane, to arrive so they could set off to collect the body. It must have been quite a surprise when instead of the friend he was expecting Butler was suddenly confronted by a hostile group of Streatham's late night drinkers.

Lane was quickly rounded up and joined his companions in the lock up. That night seven Streatham stalwarts guarded the three felons to ensure that they did not escape, for which they received a guinea to split between them as payment for their labours, and an ample supply of bread and beer to keep them well fed and watered throughout the night.

Conviction and Imprisonment

The three resurrectionists - Thomas Watts, a labourer, also known as Thomas Light, Thomas Butler a dentist, and William Lane, a cap maker, also known as William Harnett or William Arnott - came from the parish of St. George's Southwark. This trio were subsequently found guilty at the 1815 Epiphany Quarter Sessions of "having unlawfully entered the church yard of the Parish of Streatham with the intent to take away the dead body of a certain person named James Burton there buried" for which they each received a sentence of 3 months imprisonment.

James Burton of Brixton, who died aged 35, was buried on the 6th February 1814. The other burial which had taken place at St. Leonard's that day was of James Daws, aged 68 of Streatham. Obviously as far as the grave robbers were concerned the body of the younger man was more highly valued.

The incident involved the Streatham rate payers in substantial expense. The court case cost the parish over £100 and the vestry was eventually forced to erect railings around the graveyard in 1831, at a cost of £480, in order to secure the area. These railings were cut down in 1942 to help the war effort for which the church received £18 13s 9d in exchange for 13.5 tons of scrap iron.

This is the only instance of body snatching at Streatham I have discovered to date, so those members of the FOWNC with ancestors buried in our parish churchyard can sleep easy in the knowledge that their relatives still rest peacefully in their graves, notwithstanding of course the dreadful din of the traffic journeying along the A23!

A booklet about the incident called *The Streatham Grave Robbers* has recently been published and is available from the FOWNC book stall at £1.50, or by post at £1.76 from Bob Flanagan at 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW (Tel: 0181 670 3265).





Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

London Open House Weekend

This year saw FOWNC's first foray into the London Open House Weekend, a now well established annual London-wide event on the third weekend of September, when many buildings not normally open to the public are so opened. In keeping with this theme, on Saturday 19 we ran a series of tours each concentrating in detail on the Catacombs and the Greek Chapel. The inclusion of these tours in the widely-circulated official brochure for the event resulted in about 140 visitors arriving in the space of little more than an hour, necessitating an extra tour to be run after those advertised. A great success!

AGM

We were pleased to welcome Roger Bowdler of English Heritage's Historical Analysis and Research Team to speak at the FOWNC AGM on 17 October. Well illustrated by slides of interesting monuments in various London cemeteries, he explained the several criteria for listing: historical importance of the person, architectural merit of the monument, unusual material, etc. Numerous monuments were discussed as to why they were or were not listed, in a very entertaining presentation.

Musicians and Music Hall

On 21 November a rather unusual meeting rounded off this year's theme of Musicians and Music Hall, which has included the publication of two new FOWNC booklets by Bob Flanagan and their accompanying tours. It was a combined effort by several contributors, and grateful thanks go to Barry Anthony, a collector of old music hall recordings who supplied, via committee member Tony Fletcher, a tape of songs and comedy sketches recorded by Ben Albert, Sammy Shields, Arthur Conquest, and Fred Kitchen. I myself and member John White supplied music recordings including an overture first conducted by August Manns, the Schubert string quintet quoted on the John Saunders headstone, and Safroni-Middleton's march Imperial Echoes. Bob linked it all together with slides of portraits and monuments of the people concerned.

Copies of *West Norwood Cemetery's Music Hall* (Price £3.50) and *West Norwood Cemetery's Musicians* (Price £3.95) are available from the FOWNC bookstall or by post from Bob Flanagan at 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW (Tel: 0181 670 3265). FOWNC members can claim a 33% discount on the published prices.



Forthcoming FOWNC Events January - April 1999

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (3 January, 7 February, 7 March and 4 April). A special tour will also be held in April as detailed below. January, February and March tours start at 11.00, whilst April tours start at 14.30, 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 would be most welcome.

Saturday 20 February

Lecture - Two Victorian Horticulturalists - Brent Elliott

Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward FRS (d. 1868) was a botanist and plant cultivator who invented the Wardian case for transporting plants. George Glenny (d. 1874) was a horticultural writer and a founder of the Royal Gardeners' Benevolent Institution. The contributions of these two Norwood 'residents' will be examined by RHS Librarian and Archivist Brent Elliott.

Saturday 20 March

Lecture - Charles Alcock Father of Modern Sport - Eric Midwinter

Among Alcock's achievements were the organising of the first cricket Test match between England and Australia in this country, and the creation of the FA Cup. He was for many years the secretary of both the Football Association and Surrey Cricket Club, and was a notable sports journalist. Eric Midwinter is a retired university Professor of History.

Sunday 18 April

Special Tour - Manufacturers and Retailers - Jill Dudman

For those who missed it last time, another run of Jill's tour featuring personalities involved in manufacturing and retailing, particularly of food, drink and household goods - indeed, an array of household names.

Also for your Diary

Wednesday 21 April

Lecture - Excavating The Crypt of Christ Church, Spitalfields

Lecture by Jez Reeve of English Heritage organised by The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery at 7.30pm in the Dissenters' Chapel, Kensal Green Cemetery, London W10.

Norwood in 1842

A fascinating glimpse of Norwood in 1842 has recently been unearthed among the writings of an old resident who recalled the area then, when "the church (St. Luke's) was surrounded by a vista of fields where cattle grazed, corn was ripened in the summer sun, and hounds could occasionally be seen in pursuit of their fox. There were few houses and few roads; the Effra stream meandered lazily along from the hill above Elder Road and widened into a reedy pool just below the church hall. The Cemetery, newly opened, did not as yet mar the prospect of green meadows with its tombstones, but presented to the eye a further stretch of rolling grass. ... The High Street and Knight's Hill were among the few roads and were frequented chiefly by horsemen and a stray rumbling coach. The vicarage stood opposite, on the other side of Knight's Hill Road, and close to a very rustic tavern, and no railway had yet been laid down to interrupt the peace of the sylvan scene."

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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