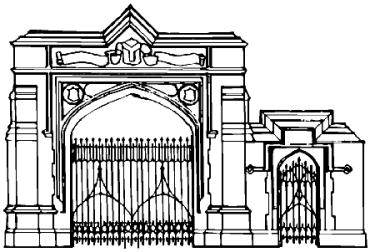

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

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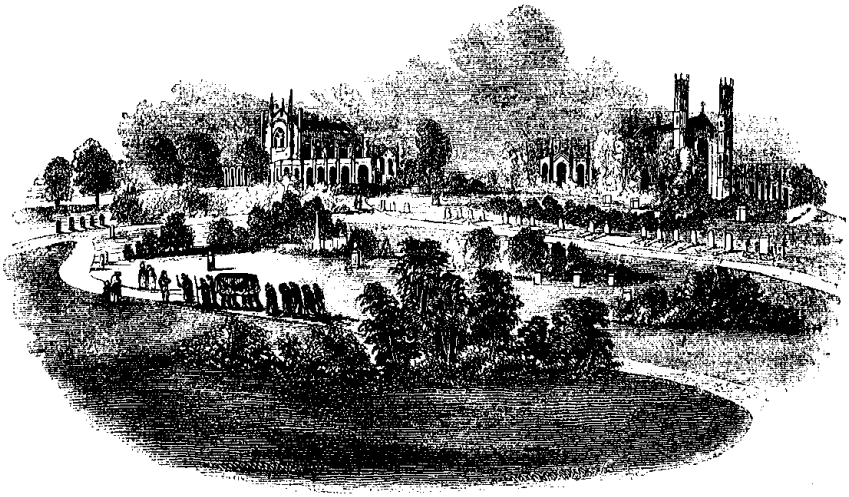
Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

Major developments are afoot at Norwood thanks to the continuing capital grant from Lambeth. In addition to continuing works planned for the Autumn such as ivy removal from the boundary walls and projected repairs to further monuments, a major programme of roadway and drainage refurbishment will commence soon. This will concentrate initially on the roadways leading from the site of the Episcopal Chapel down to the Greek Cemetery. Upgrading of the Doulton and St Mary at Hill paths will feature in a later programme as there is not enough cash for all the works envisaged as discussed in the May newsletter.

A major reworking of the old Rose Garden and adjoining maintenance area in the NE corner of the cemetery is also planned. The redevelopment will respect all existing private graves and War Graves, and will also incorporate a memorial in the form of a water feature to commemorate all those buried in the common graves that predominate in this part of the cemetery. The existing memorials from the common graves will also be retained. The new rose beds and associated features will provide spaces to hold cremated remains and other features to aid commemoration, and will hopefully provide a popular community resource as well as enhancing the appearance of this part of the cemetery. Thanks to Ken Dry and Neil Isaac (Lambeth) and architects Cracknell Ferns for their hard work on this project.

Finally, in view of our changed relations with Lambeth I'm sure offers of scrub clearance, etc. in the cemetery would be considered subject to appropriate supervision and safeguards (insurance, etc.). If anyone is interested please contact me.



Norwood Cemetery about 1851
Vignette of Norwood Cemetery from The London Burial Grounds by Mrs Basil Holmes (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1896)

Landscape Historical Survey

The survey performed by the Parks Agency (David Lambert) has proved most valuable. Notably, David has discovered an impressive remnant of the pre-1836 agricultural landscape in a line of former hedgerow trees, principally Oaks (*Quercus robur*), which runs north-south across the site to the east of the sites of the mortuary chapels. These coincide with a shallow S-shaped line of 34 trees shown on the 1836 deed plan now in Lambeth Archives, and remain a conspicuous and valuable part of the historic landscape. New survey data suggests this landscape was probably mediaeval in origin given its shape and the remnant surviving trees. The attraction of mature trees is evident in T P Grinsted's *Norwood Cemetery: A descriptive sketch* of 1857 which records one lofty tree enclosed with railings, evidently reserved for a memorial, and elsewhere a grave in 'a little nook of the grounds… in part sheltered by lofty trees'.

Seventeen trees are thought to pre-date 1836, including 13 along the mediaeval boundary shown on the 1836 deed. These are all Oak (*Quercus robur*) except for one Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The average age of these trees has been estimated on the basis of core samples. These indicate a much slower growth rate than the national average, attributable to atmospheric pollution in the past, and grave-digging activities

which would have severed roots, effectively creating large bonsai habits. Air pockets created by graves would also have restricted root-growth. The average age is between 327 and 259 years, i.e. the trees date from the late 17th or early 18th century. The oldest, an Oak, is thought to date from 1540-1640.

It appears that over half of the trees shown on the 1836 plan have survived, a surprisingly high percentage and a significant cultural and ecological resource. Four outliers, three Oaks, one a pollard, and a Field Maple, also pre-date the cemetery. The old Oak near the Greek enclosure appears to align with one of the two outliers shown on the 1836 deed.

Two of the surviving historic Oaks looking south along 'Beeton Path'

The report shows that the planting shown on Tite's 1836 plan appears to have been largely implemented, although by 1870 overlays of planting, principally coniferous specimen trees, and loss of Tite's small clumps of trees, had occurred. Archival evidence shows a pattern of planting focused on individual graves and monuments, forming a distinctive setting to the monuments. Much of the character of the cemetery as it was in 1847 depended on short-lived flowering perennials and shrubs, which have long since vanished. The planted setting of the individual tombs should be taken into account in future planting and conservation.

However, some planting, for example of Holm (evergreen) Oak, from 1836 has added to the historic character and interest of the cemetery. The subsequent layers of planting up to 1870 may reflect a philosophy influenced by Loudon, which included conifers, and these are therefore of historic significance worthy of conservation. No significant overlay of designed planting occurred in the twentieth century.

The report emphasizes that the cemetery is of national importance for its designed landscape. Conservation of the historic landscape and character should therefore be a priority. In order to achieve this aim, present and future threats to the landscape need to be identified and policies for conservation formulated as the basis of the Conservation Management Plan for the site. Much of the material for such a plan now exists in this report and the 2002 Land Management Survey.

Cemetery Tours

For the past 15 years FOWNC has been providing guided tours of the notable monuments in the cemetery on the first Sunday of every month, and also in more recent years a batch of shorter tours to accommodate the 100 or so visitors arriving on the weekend in September that is now known as Open House London. There is

currently a panel of five tour leaders taking turns to provide this service: Jill Dudman (who also organises the rota), George Young, Paul Graham, Tom Easton and John White. Another of our tour leaders, Rosemary Comber, would like to retire from this duty, and we thank her very much for her many years service (she remains, of course, our indefatigable Membership Secretary).

We would therefore very much welcome one or two new volunteers to join the tour leaders panel. In particular, since several of our current tour leaders actually live a considerable distance away, we would especially welcome one or two local residents willing to take a share of the winter morning tours. Full training and notes will be provided, and you would be introduced gradually with support from present tour leaders.

Found on the Skip

Opinion from an expert on military uniform is that our 'unknown' (see May 2005 Newsletter) is wearing an army officer's 'undress' uniform. This would be worn, for example, when relaxing in the officers' mess. There would be a small round cap to accompany it.

The date is thought to be very approximately 1900, as army officers then were still wearing their rank insignia on the ends of their sleeves (like navy officers now). Around 1914 the army changed to having pips on their shoulders, but none are visible in this portrait.

Plaque found on the skip

St Luke's Memorial Garden Project

The commanding aspect of St Luke's was obviously a major factor in determining the location of the cemetery in 1836. Sadly the splendid gates and railings surrounding the churchyard were needlessly removed during World War 2, but thanks to the church, Norwood Action Group (NAG), Lambeth Council, and other bodies including English Heritage, a move is now afoot to reinstate them as near as possible to their original design. We wish everyone well with this project. Anyone who wishes to help should contact St Luke's Memorial Garden Steering Group, The Vicarage, 6 Chatsworth Way, London SE27 9HR or the West Norwood Town Centre management team (020 7926 7996). Events to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War 2 and a Memorial Service for those who died in West Norwood are to be held on 17 September (15.00) and 11 November (10.30), respectively.

Bob Flanagan

Rededication of the Jerrold Memorial

by Paul Graham

Douglas Jerrold memorial

A re-dedication ceremony took place on Saturday 21st May to mark the restoration of the monument to Douglas Jerrold (1803-1857) in the South Metropolitan (West Norwood) Cemetery (grave 5,452, square 97). The original monument had been erected for the burial service at which Dickens, together with William Makepeace Thackeray, had been the principal pall-bearers. Sometime in 1986-87, the monument was destroyed by Lambeth Council, the owners of the cemetery, as part of their monument clearance operations. These clearances led to the formation of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery in 1989 to oppose this municipal vandalism. In November 1993 the Consistory Court before the Chancellor of the Diocese of Southwark, Robert Gray QC, heard an action brought by the Archdeacon of Lambeth, the Venerable Richard Bird, who opposed such wanton destruction in consecrated ground. Sympathetic organisations that gave evidence on behalf of the Chancellor were the Friends, English Heritage, and the Victorian Society. Professor Michael Slater spoke specifically about the importance of Jerrold to mid-Victorian culture. The judgement, delivered at the Old Bailey in March 1994, declared several of the Council's policies illegal, and ordered the restoration of several listed monuments that had been either destroyed or damaged in the preceding years.

In 2002, after much hard work by the Cemetery Management Advisory Group and the Scheme of Management Committee, both the results of Chancellor Gray's judgement, agreement was reached on the plan to restore the Jerrold monument. The site was excavated and the vault found to have survived in good condition. The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 via FOWNC contributed £1,000 towards the substantial sum needed, which was in excess of £18,000, with Lambeth donating the rest. Towards the end of 2004, the restoration was completed and a monument was back *in situ* after a gap of almost 20 years. The work of Don Bianco on behalf of FOWNC in providing drawings and supervising the work was outstanding.

The re-dedication ceremony organised by Paul Graham was therefore a joyous event. Many Jerrold descendants had traveled from elsewhere in England and had even crossed from Ireland. Yvonne Jerrold spoke for the family in thanking all those who had campaigned over many years to see the monument restored. Michael Slater, author of the recently published biography of Jerrold, spoke of the lives and works of several

continued on page 16

National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM 2005

by Pam Gray

Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol was the impressive location for this year's gathering. Much in the national news over recent years, the cemetery opened in 1839, the Bristol General Cemetery Company having been established in 1837. It is in a spectacular landscape setting, similar in shape to a Greek amphitheatre, and as originally envisaged was planted with cypress, yew, laurel, rowan and sycamore. This provided the backdrop to the Arcadian garden area containing the neo-Classical buildings of entrance lodges and Anglican and non-Conformist chapels designed by local architect Charles Underwood. Although now the slopes have been invaded by other trees and undergrowth, and the structures, both buildings and memorials, need sympathetic repair and restoration, time has not diminished its beauty and visual impact. Hosted by the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery, their guided walks introduced the variety and richness of monuments and offered gentle exercise as we climbed the paths into the terraced wooded slopes. Perhaps the most familiar of the monuments is the distinctive 'chattri' to Rajah Rammohun Roy, 1772-1833, linguist, theologian, writer and social reformer who died in Bristol while visiting from Calcutta, his remains having been moved to the cemetery in 1843.

Prompted by press reports that the then owners planned to clear and commercially develop some of the land, the Association for the Preservation of Arnos Vale Cemetery was formed in 1987, later to be known as the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery. Thanks to their commitment and unrelenting campaigning a Compulsory Purchase Order enabled Bristol City Council to take ownership in August 2003 and grant a licence to the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust to manage the cemetery on a day-to-day basis and to be able to begin the programme of fund raising and repairs.

Tomb of Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) Arnos Vale Cemetery

The NFCF AGM business included re-election of officials: Arthur Tait (Brompton Cemetery) chair, Gwyneth Stokes (Nunhead) secretary, Ian Simpson (Surrey) treasurer; and Don Bianco's update on memorial safety.

The Federation has been actively involved in continuing consultation on the controversial burial law and policy in the 21st century; developing the membership questionnaire for a cemetery database; updating the website; and reinforcing connections with the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE). The relevance and importance of the NFCF is shown by the increasing membership from Friends' groups. Nunhead will host the 2006 AGM.

Norwood and the Dictionary of National Biography

by Bob Flanagan

Thanks to Mr Norman Crabtree of Cheam who has written to point out that Anthony Stewart (1773-1846), a well-known miniature-painter in the early days of Queen Victoria, is buried at Norwood in a now unmarked grave (grave 1566, square 97) together with his daughter Grace Campbell Stewart (-1863), also a miniature painter of some note.

Mr Crabtree has known of the grave since the 1960s apparently and there was no headstone even then. This brings the total of those buried at Norwood and featured in the original Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) to 218 (see Newsletter 36, September 1999 for details of the last such discovery).

Since 1999 the New DNB has been published and we know that the number of Norwood 'residents' included therein has grown considerably from the original – we will try to publish a list of these additional entries in a future Newsletter.

Anthony Stewart was born at Crieff in Perthshire. According to the DNB, he received a good education, and while a youth was introduced to the family of General Campbell of Monzie, whose daughters he assisted in painting medallions for the decoration of a summer-house. These ladies were pleased with his work and articled him at their own expense to the landscape-painter Alexander Nasmyth of Edinburgh.

Stewart produced many sketches of Scottish scenery, which were said to display more of the feeling of Richard Wilson and John Cozens than of his master Nasmyth. He then devoted himself to painting miniatures. He practised for a time in Edinburgh, and later London, where he met with considerable success.

Stewart was introduced to the Royal Family, and painted the Princess Charlotte. Subsequently he executed the earliest miniatures of Queen Victoria, who sat to him when a year old, and afterwards for several years in succession. One of these portraits was engraved by Thomas Woolnoth.

Between 1807 and 1820 he exhibited a few miniatures at the Royal Academy. He excelled in painting children, and for the last fifteen years of his life he devoted himself almost exclusively to them. He died at Stockwell in December 1846. His daughters, Margaret and Grace Campbell Stewart, both painted miniatures. Margaret married Job Seguier, Superintendent of the British Institution. The younger daughter Grace exhibited a few of her miniature works at the Royal Academy, 1843-1856.

The England Vault and Grave at Norwood

by Martin Knight

I was for a long time puzzled by a reference in a family letter to the transfer of bodies to Norwood Cemetery from the Flemish Burial Ground, Southwark. Where was that, and why where the bodies moved? While surfing the web, I found the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, to whom I owe the discovery that the site of the Flemish Burial Ground, Carter Lane is now under London Bridge Station.

The letter is dated 7 June 1913 from 20 Chestnut Road, West Norwood, and is from Charles Crellin to his cousin George Alexander England (my wife's great-grandfather) with details of members of the family buried in a family vault and a grave at Norwood. The letter reads:

> 'In the year 1840 our grandfather bought a grave in West Norwood Cemetery. That grave is 2 ft 9 in from the vault - to the left of the vault. As no headstone was erected there and as the grave has not been opened for many years, it is, at the present time, only a grassy path between two other graves. In this grave were buried the bodies of Robert England in 1840 and M.A. Barron in 1845.
>
> In the year 1841 grandfather bought the vault and transferred to the vault in 1847 the bodies of Robert England and M.A. Barron, and in the earth grave were buried Emily Sophia Crellin in 1846, Charles Henry Crellin in 1847, and Alfred H. Crellin in 1852. These were my sister and two brothers, who died in childhood, and this record confirms what my mother used to tell me, that as £10 was the charge for opening her father's vault, this expense was not incurred in the case of the children, but they were buried in an earth grave.
>
> Further, grandfather deposited in this vault the bodies of Sophia Alexander, his wife (d. 1819), Elizabeth Alexander [England] (d. 1819), Elizabeth Alexander (d. 1758), Daniel Alexander (d. 1773), Daniel Alexander (d. 1773), and Jane Smith (d. 1747). All of them were brought from the Flemish Burial Ground, Southwark.
>
> Further, from the books at the office here, I learn that Charlotte Sarah Burren aged 21 was buried in the vault in 1849 and, as we know, our grandfather was buried there in 1859.'

What do we know about those buried at Norwood? Well, Thomas England (1784-1859) ('our grandfather') was born in Southwark and is described in a family tree of about 1945 as being a London shipowner. His father, John, may well have been a shipowner as well: he lived in Bermondsey, is buried near Sheerness, and his daughter married a hoyman of Sheerness. Thomas married Sophia Alexander in 1807. They had eight children, of whom five survived to adulthood. Sophia died at the birth of

Elizabeth Alexander England in 1819, the baby surviving her by only a few days. Robert England (b. 1788) was Thomas England's older brother, who is described in an early twentieth century letter as having been 'a very clever engineer'.

M.A. (Mary) Barron (or Burren) (1787-1837) was Thomas's sister. She married Henry Barron, 'hoyman of Sheerness'. Charlotte Sarah Barron was presumably their daughter. Emily Sophia Crellin, Charles Henry Crellin and Alfred H. Crellin were the children of Thomas's only surviving daughter, Sophia Alexander England, who married Horatio Nelson Crellin in 1839. The Charles Crellin who wrote the letter was her youngest child.

Elizabeth Alexander (d. 1758) and Daniel Alexander (d.1773) were presumably Thomas's parents-in-law, about whom we as yet know nothing, except that they lived in Southwark. The second entry for Daniel is a problem. Is it an accidental repeat of the line above? Is it a partial repeat, with a mistake in the date? Did two Daniel Alexanders die in 1773?

Jane Smith is a complete mystery and we do not know how she fits into the family tree. Finally, George Alexander England, son of Thomas's eldest son (also Thomas) to whom the letter was sent was a parson, vicar of St Marks, Hull, of Eastwood, Rotherham and of Wawne, Hull.

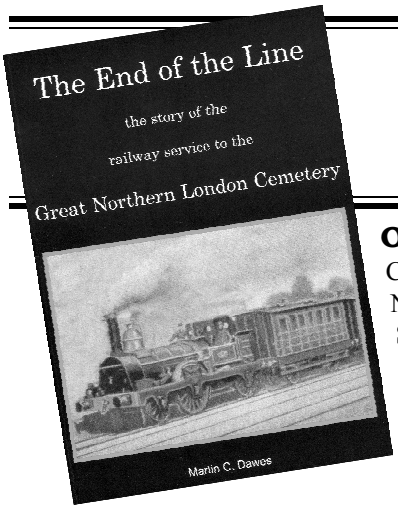
The last paragraph of the letter reads:

> 'I am inclined to have a piece of Portland stone laid flat over the earth grave, with a record of the names of those buried there. If in accordance with your inclinations, I will have an estimate made at the same time showing the cost of recording the names of all who are buried in the vault and if the expense be not great I should be willing to share it with you'.

It seems unlikely this was ever done. Research by Jill Dudman has shown that the large brick England vault (grave 258, square 64) is still there topped with a large flat York stone slab on the path between Mrs Beeton and the crematorium. However, the inscription only records the death on 30 May 1859 of Thomas England himself at the age of 76.

There is no trace of a monument on the adjacent England grave (grave 184, square 64) bought in 1840. However, the late Eric Smith recorded the 'Family Vault of Mr England of Cadogan Place, Chelsea', but there is no trace of such an inscription on the existing vault and the addresses given in the burial register are all in Southwark. So a hint of mystery remains…

England Family Vault (grave 258, square 64) at Norwood



The Great Northern London Cemetery

by Ian Simpson

On the warmest March day for many years, Martin C Dawes gave a fascinating talk on the Great Northern London Cemetery (GNLC) at New Southgate and its short-lived funeral railway service from Kings Cross Station. Martin, a Minister in the Methodist Church and a train enthusiast since childhood, has recently published *The End of the Line* telling the story of the railway service.

Martin introduced the talk by referring to his hobby of train ticket collecting and his collector's 'bible' which listed all stations not mentioned in train timetables. From this book he found a reference made to the GNLC station and thus began his search which culminated in *The End of the Line.* Unfortunately as yet he has been unable to find a ticket used on the line.

The draft prospectus of the GNLC stated the intention of the company to play its part in meeting the need for burial space for Londoners, particularly the poorer classes who were not sufficiently catered for by the 'Magnificent Seven'. The company optimistically expected to sell 30,000 shares at £5 each which could then be converted to burial space in the new cemetery. It forecast likely returns in excess of 7 % based on interring 5 % of London's dead although the prospectus went on to say that it was not unreasonable to expect to bury double this figure. The Bill to establish the cemetery received royal assent on 15 July 1855 and the company purchased 150 acres of land adjacent to the Great Northern Railway (GNR) ¾ of a mile north of GNR's Colney Hatch & Southgate Station. The land was in two pieces separated by East Barnet Lane.

The Eastern section was laid out with an Episcopal chapel in the centre with avenues radiating out from this point. The chapel was designed in the Early English lancet style with a broach spire 150 feet tall by Edmund Alexander Spurr FRIBA. An imposing building, it could accommodate over 120 mourners and was subsequently converted to a crematorium in 1953.

In the Western section bordering the railway the cemetery station, a house and a second chapel were built but only part of the land was laid out for burials. This included section 'WO' which was leased to the parish of St George the Martyr, Bloomsbury. Agreement had been made with the rector and churchwardens of this parish for the lease of 2½ acres of land within the cemetery prior to the GNLC Act being passed. Provision for other similar agreements was made, but no such further

agreements have been identified. Early plans for a second chapel in this section did not come to fruition. After the termination of the railway service these station buildings became known as The Retreat. In 1876 the GNLC obtained an act of parliament enabling it to dispose of those parts of the western section not used for burials. In 1968 authority to exhume the 229 burials from this section and sell the remaining land was obtained. The site now comprises a business park and a small housing estate.

Henry Hakewill, the cemetery manager, negotiated with Seymour Clarke, the General Manager of the GNR, on the details of running a railway service to the cemetery and draft terms were considered by the GNR board in January 1855. It would appear from these that most, if not all, of the risks of the project were to be born by the GNLC and subsequent events confirmed this. The GNR provided a single coffin van and two modified passenger carriages for the service. Despite this early agreement progress was slow and in June 1857 a letter from the GNLC indicated that it wished to change the location of the proposed funeral station at Kings Cross. By March 1859 final agreement had still not been reached between the two parties, but this was eventually achieved in June of that year.

In 1860 the GNLC built the funeral station at Kings Cross on GNR land to the north of Gasworks Tunnel on the eastern side of the main line. The station was an imposing building of coloured brickwork in neo-gothic style. It was about 150 ft long and 25 ft wide, a two-storey building with a wedge shaped spire some 20 ft high at its northern end. Built into a cutting, the upper storey was at street level and one entrance led into a long corridor lit by large pointed arch windows with waiting rooms opening off it. The other street entrance opened into an entrance hall within which an hydraulic lift lowered the coffins to the track level. The chapel of rest was to be found here also. Unfortunately nothing further is known about the lift. Stained glass was used in the windows and gas jets were kept lit at all times to ensure an upward current of air through the building. Despite its short life as a funeral station the building was to survive until the summer of 1962. The site is now an RMC concrete works.

On 10 July 1861 two thirds of the 150 acre cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Rochester. Advertisements in *The Times, Daily News* and other newspapers also invited the public to apply for free tickets to travel to and visit the cemetery. The service was planned daily at 11 am returning at 3 pm covering the 7½ miles in 15 minutes. The first burial, the next day, is recorded as Fanny Armstrong, aged 21 months of 3 Grove Road, Colney Hatch Park. The first London burial, that of Jane Williamson aged 63 of 157 Upper Street, Islington occurred the following day.

Business was slow and by December 1861 Henry Hakewill was writing to the GNR asking for a reduction in the minimum charge for the coffin coach. Two months later the GNLC had to agree a minimum payment per train to make it worthwhile for the GNR to continue the service. The daily service introduced in July 1861 was reduced to Monday, Wednesday & Friday the following month. From February to August 1862 there was one train a week on Fridays. Then the introduction of a Sunday service did bring about some improvement with a second train running on Wednesdays. However

gaps soon appeared in this schedule and the last train would appear to have run on 3 April 1863. The Kings Cross funeral station was still used for its mortuary facilities, but by April 1865 the GNLC had vacated the building and was seeking a termination of its lease.

This does not appear to have been quite the end of the funeral train however as oral tradition asserts that two sidings at Kings Cross just north of the old potato market became known as Cemetery Sidings because they were used for loading bodies into vans for the cemetery during the cholera epidemic in the East End in 1866. Certainly that year the GNLC had a peak of 3069 burials, a number it was not to exceed for several more years. It is worth noting that burials at Brookwood had peaked two years previously at 4578 and were only 800 greater than the GNLC in 1866, from which point they continued steadily to decline, falling below 2000 by 1910.

Martin believes that the main reason for the failure of the railway service was the nearness of the cemetery to London. This was exacerbated by the delays in opening the cemetery and the subsequent high proportion of pauper burials which provided little additional revenue to either the GNLC or GNR. The delay in opening the service may have been crucial as it enabled Brookwood to enter into agreements with a significant number of London parishes. In addition further cemeteries were opened in north London during this period. The GNR also seems to have driven a harder bargain than that achieved by Brookwood with the L&SWR. Brookwood also benefited from an excess of cheap land, although it should be noted that dividends were only paid by the London Necropolis Company out of land sales in its early years.

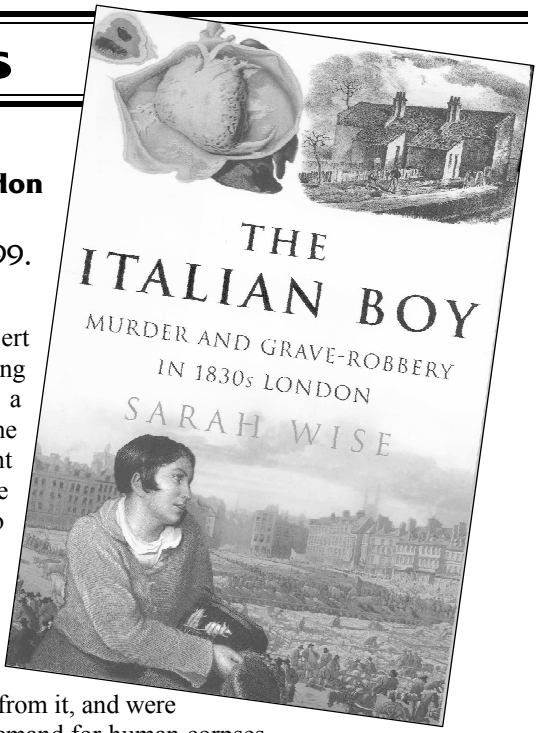
Whilst its combination of railway and cemetery may not have been a success, the GNLC itself did become popular and thus a reasonably successful business.

Martin illustrated his talk with a number of photographs and plans, all of which appear in his book published by the Barnet & District Local History Society in 2003 (copies can be obtained from the FOWNC bookstall, price £7.50).

CHRISTMAS CARD

Christmas card (with envelope, 50p) (6 for £2.50): W T Brande & Michael Faraday, painting by Thomas Phillips RA, 1816. This card (words inside: Season's Greetings), produced by the Royal Society of Chemistry, features a delightful colour reproduction (illustrated right) including the eminent 19th century chemist Prof William Thomas Brande (1788-1866) (buried at Norwood, grave 1,177, square 98). Postal/telephone/e-mail orders: Jill Dudman, 119 Broxholm Road, London SE27 0BJ (Tel: 0208 670 5456) (secretary@fownc.org) or at FOWNC meetings. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of West Norwood Cemetery'. (N.B. Postage is not included in the above prices)

Book Reviews



The Italian Boy - Murder and Grave-Robbery in 1830s London
by Sarah Wise. Jonathan Cape, 2004. Hardback. 347pp. £17.99. 82 monochrome illustrations.

Those members who attended Robert Stephenson's talk about body snatching at the October AGM may recall a passing reference to the case of 'the Italian Boy'. This sensational event brought the reality of 'burking' (the murder of people to supply bodies to medical schools for dissection, in the style made infamous in Edinburgh by Burke & Hare) to London. This excellent book records the history of the crime itself, and reveals the lives of those who perpetrated it, benefited from it, and were victims (or potential victims) of the demand for human corpses.

Sarah Wise tells how, in November 1831, a boy's body was presented for sale at King's College. The salesmen were known 'resurrection men' who made their living from trading the recently dead to London's none too scrupulous surgeons. One of the men, John Bishop, later estimated that he had supplied 500-1,000 corpses in this manner, a rather large variation which suggests that he had no real idea of the numbers he had dealt in. On this occasion, to quote the title of chapter one, the body was 'suspiciously fresh' with no signs of being disinterred. Three men were arrested and two were eventually executed. It was quickly accepted that the victim had been an Italian who earned his living by begging in the street with two white mice in a cage as props. The fact that he was an innocent visitor to England, a stranger whose trust had been savagely betrayed, led the press of the day to mount their moral high horse and pontificate about the horrors that lurked on the streets of the capital. In fact, as Ms Wise shows, the identification was far from certain and the murderers themselves in last-minute confessions stated that their victim was a drover of livestock from Lincolnshire.

Those are the bare essentials of the story of 'the Italian Boy' but they do scant justice to the meticulous research and the compelling narrative of events that constitute this work. Sarah Wise evokes the 'Era Without a Name' which was in the process of flux and would shortly be a distant memory as the era of Victoria succeeded it. Improvements in living conditions would destroy the areas of slum dwellings where the under-class who populate this work lived (and died). The details of everyday life that are revealed are

fascinating. The sheer volume the murderers drank throughout the day of the murder, and the variety of public houses they drank it in, is incredible. The details of the operation of Smithfield meat market (the destination of the unfortunate Lincolnshire drover) are vividly recalled and are often revolting, as are many of the details of the insanitary lives and work of London's poor.

Although generously illustrated, criticism can be leveled at the quality of some of those illustrations. Several maps of the time are reproduced but they are generally too small and indistinct for the print identifying the street and road names they contain to be read. That apart, this is a highly readable work about an event that otherwise would be a largely forgotten footnote in London's voluminous history of bloody deeds.

Paul Graham

Trapezoid Tombstones in Estonia by Mari Loit (2004). Tallinn: Estonian National Heritage Board

Mari Loit is an expert on conservation in the Division of Conservation of the Estonian National Heritage Board. Most of the trapezoid tombstones can be found in Saare, Muhu and Lääne counties. According to the latest data, 83 tombstones and fragments and 14 probable tombstones and fragments have been counted. Two gravestones of the same type are situated in Ambla and Peetri churches in Järva County, which shows that they must have spread over a much wider area.

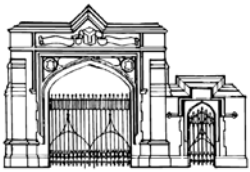
Trapezoid tombstones spread widely in Europe between the 7th and early 14th centuries. Their heyday was between the 11th-13th centuries. Some scholars have suggested that the tombstones were made in Estonia after the conquest of Estonia by the German and Scandinavian crusaders in the early 13th century and that they mark the beginning of Christian burials in the churches and churchyards founded in the 13th century. Others have surmised that they date back to the pre-conquest period. The truth probably lies in between the two. It is not possible to assign an exact date to the trapezoid tombstones, since they usually lack texts (on the edges), but it is certain that they are the oldest surviving sculptural works in Estonia.

To find a satisfactory explanation for the symbols used in the tombstones - cross, rhombus, ring, horn, tree, human figure/warrior - is a difficult task. For modern people their deeper meaning is never to be grasped - during the past centuries our collective memory has lost track of the perceptions of the ancient world.

The National Heritage Board hopes that this publication will help people who wish to improve their knowledge of our common heritage and to cast the light to the possible meanings of the symbols depicted on these ancient stones.

The book is available in three languages: Estonian, English and German - see: http://www.muinas.ee/tekstieelsete%20hauaplaatide%20kataloog%20inglise%20k.doc or e-mail: info@muinas.ee for more details.

Bob Flanagan



Forthcoming FOWNC Events September-December 2005

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (4 September, 2 October, 6 November and 4 December). September and October tours start at 14.30, and November and December tours start at 11.00, at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road, and they last for 1½-2 hours. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Sunday 18 September: Open House London Weekend

For this London-wide free event in which buildings normally closed to the public open their doors, there will be tours of the cemetery starting at the main gate at 13.30, 14.00, 14.30 and 15.00, each lasting 1½ hours and finishing at the Greek Chapel, which will be open for viewing, with a short talk by Don Bianco from English Heritage. The FOWNC bookstall will be on display inside the Maddick mausoleum. Volunteers to help will be most welcome!

Autumn Lectures

Talks will be held at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27 (enter by second door on right in Idmiston Road) as detailed below, starting at 14.30. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person to help cover the hall hire.

Saturday 15 October: AGM and Lecture

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Ian Randall

Following this year's AGM, the Deputy Principal of Spurgeon's College, the Norwood-based training college for Baptist ministers, will be relating the life and work of its founder, who lies in one of the most notable tombs at the heart of the cemetery, where his funeral in 1892 attracted thousands of mourners.

Saturday 19 November: Lecture

Last resting places of notable South Londoners - Brian Bloice

Well-known as a local history lecturer, FOWNC member Brian will be speaking about a selection of interesting personalities and their graves, at Norwood and other cemeteries - for example, Streatham architect Sir Ernest George, designer of (and himself cremated at) Golders Green Crematorium.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 24 September, 10.00-17.00: Lambeth Archives Open Day

Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5. This year's theme is 'Lambeth childhoods'. The FOWNC bookstall will be present as usual - volunteers please!

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members of the Jerrold clan who are commemorated on the monument. To Michael, it was an important triumph for our shared culture that the burial place of a man who did so much to champion the poor and oppressed by his writings is again appropriately marked. Bob Flanagan spoke on behalf of the Friends and gave a summary of the restoration campaign and its principal players. Finally, the Reverend Robert Titley, Vicar of All Saints, West Dulwich, then conducted the re-dedication and blessing of the stone. He revealed that he had done his research by remarking how appropriate it was that a humble parish vicar should officiate, given Jerrold's known opinions of the higher clergy of the established church. The Dickens Fellowship was represented by Tony Williams, the Joint Honorary General Secretary.

Photographs of the event can be found on the internet at the following web site: http://www.yvonnejerrold.com/JerroldRededication/

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

The annual subscription to the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery is £3. For further information please contact the Membership Secretary.

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