

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

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Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

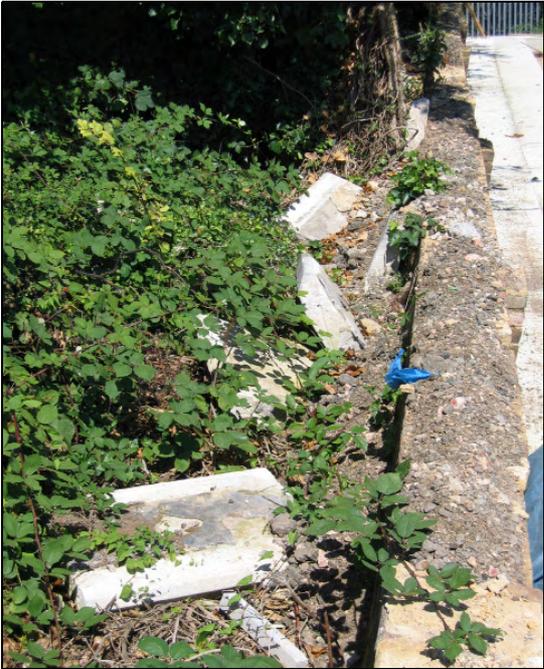
Work on the new Memorial Garden in the NE corner of the cemetery has started and is progressing well. The *South London Press* published a critical article, but it transpired that the family who had complained to them did not have their relatives' cremated remains strewn within the original garden! Of the 500 or so currently dedicated rose bushes or with expired dedication periods in the garden, there were only three complaints about the project. One was fully justified because an administrative error some 5 years ago had led to their not being notified about the reconstruction work. Of the other complaints, one person was confused as to their dedication period and one was simply unhappy that the work is going ahead regardless of any rationale. Credit to Cemetery Manager Avril Kirby and her team for all their hard work over this.

In the SE corner of the cemetery, the construction of the new housing estate on the site of the disused Vale Street Depot has led to part of the adjoining cemetery



Work in progress: The new Memorial Garden

wall and associated railings being taken down. The status of this part of the wall as far as statutory listing goes is unclear, but in any case it is protected by conservation area legislation. A temporary fence around the works has been erected on consecrated ground. The reason that part of the wall has been dismantled is said to be 'site safety'. There has been no consultation with the Management Advisory Group, the Scheme of Management Committee, or local residents over this so hence conservation area and listed building consent for the works cannot have been obtained. Be this as it may, Cemeteries Superintendent Ken Dry is trying to ensure that the wall is returned to its original condition. What a strange state of affairs, given that for several months Lambeth Planning blocked the plans for the new Memorial Garden, plans that were supported by almost everyone with a locus of interest in the cemetery!



Work in Progress:
Vale Street – discarded capstones



The layer of London clay exposed by the building works: Vale Street

Somewhat ironically, the play area for local children promised on the Vale Street site has failed to materialize, the provision of this latter space being the reason cited as precluding a much-needed extension of the cemetery. But the works have given a chance to view the thick layer of London clay that helped William Tite and his colleagues to decide on the site for the South Metropolitan Cemetery way back in 1836.

The Mausolea and Monuments Trust

As noted in the events list, Dr Cocke (chairman of the MMT) has kindly agreed to talk to us about the work of this charity. Their website (www.mausolea-monuments.org.uk) lists 34 mausolea at Norwood, including St Stephen’s Chapel, the Spurgeon monument, and the partially demolished Johnston mausoleum. Is this list correct? How many mausolea have we lost? Have we any records of the lost mausolea?

I am embarrassed that I have not managed to supply better information to this group. Their Gazetteer lists 5 unknowns at Norwood: ‘S.T.I.’, Date: Later C19, Style: Classical, Condition: Good, Location: Greek Orthodox Burial Ground. *Not known 1*, Date: C19/C20, Style: Classical,

Condition Good, Location: Plot 55. *Not known 2*, Date: Later C19, Style: Classical, Condition: Poor, Location: Plot 41. *Not known 3*, Date: Unknown, Style: Classical, Condition: Fair, Location: Plot 38. *Not known 4*, Date: Unknown, Style: Classical, Condition: Fair, Location: Plot 21. In contrast the entry for Kensal Green lists 76 mausolea, and no passes!

The MMT website defines a mausoleum as ‘a house of the dead. Larger than tombs, these buildings are free-standing roofed structures erected to receive coffins’. So if the Spurgeon monument is a mausoleum on this definition, how many similar structures should we list? I suspect there is no straightforward answer to this question, but I will see what can be done to supplement the MMT list in due course.

Cemetery Open Day

This year’s Open Day was held on 9 June. It was well attended, and well organised. Avril Kirby, site manager, and her staff produced an attractive brochure detailing the day’s events, which was handed out at the entrance to all visitors as they arrived. The usual attractions of horse-drawn and motorcycle hearses were present, and a Lambeth parks officer led nature tours. The FOWNC bookstall in the Maddick mausoleum was busy all day, and we put on two guided tours, which each attracted over 20 people. Even the weather behaved!

The Christmas service, which now takes the place of the annual memorial service, will be held in the crematorium chapel in December - enquire at the cemetery office nearer the time for more details.

Internet and Other Contacts

I never cease to be amazed at contacts that are made primarily through the internet, many of which are reported subsequently in these pages. The article on James Underwood that follows is a result of one such contact. The significance of Underwood was hitherto unknown to us. A further relative of William Knight (see Newsletters 51 and 57) has also made contact, as have relatives of the singer/comedian Paul Bedford (grave 9,290, square 72; see *West Norwood Cemetery’s Musicians*) and the ‘menagerist’ Edward Cross (grave 3,014, square 92), founder of the Surrey Zoological Gardens. No monuments survive to Bedford or Cross, but it might be possible to reinstate the Knight monument because the fallen cross (to the right of the photograph) could survive beneath another fallen monument.



*Base of tombstone of William Knight
(grave 29,020, square 94)*

A further article in this issue reminds me that the tomb of John Stevens (grave 3,817, square 47) featured in our Consistory Court submission to the Chancellor in 1994 – during the clearance operations in the cemetery the landing of this Grade II listed structure was ripped away, and remedial work is now overdue. I will raise this issue with the Management Advisory Group in due course.

The Catacombs

Nick Catford (*Subterranea Britannica*) took some brilliant photographs of the Catacombs many years ago. He has now placed some of these photographs on their web site: (http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/w/west_norwood_cemetery/index.shtml).

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National Federation of Cemetery Friends 2007 AGM

Report by Pam Gray

On 9 June, the Friends of Key Hill Cemetery in conjunction with Lord Mayor's Office of Birmingham City Council hosted the NFCF AGM. After a warm welcome from Pauline Roberts on behalf of Friends of Key Hill Cemetery, the Lord Mayor opened the day's events. Patrick Baird, Head of Local Studies at Birmingham Central Library, outlined the historic development and importance of Birmingham from small village beginnings to a city of international repute.



*An attentive group
listening to Pauline Roberts*

Delegates were taken, courtesy of Aston Manor Road Transport Museum, by classic double decker bus to the cemetery located at the edge of the Jewelry Quarter. Key Hill Cemetery, Hockley, formerly known as the General Cemetery, was laid out in 1835 to the designs of Charles Edge, a prominent Birmingham architect of his day. It was the first cemetery in Birmingham and, although non-conformist, it was open to all denominations. A massive wall, with cast iron gates and railings and heavy gate piers of Weoley Castle sandstone were created, along with a chapel, designed in the severe Greek revival style so favoured by non-conformists. The chapel has long since been demolished, but the wall, railings and piers and entrance gates are extant and are listed Grade II. At the back of the site Victorian factory buildings perch high on the sheer wall of natural rock. There are catacombs and a fine collection of monuments belying the non-conformist predilection for modesty of design. Some of the most important 19th century figures are buried at Key Hill, including the Rt Hon Joseph Chamberlain, Alfred Bird (of Custard fame), and John Henderson (with Fox, builder of the Crystal Palace) and architect, J H Chamberlain.

The AGM reported on the past year's very effective initiatives that placed the NFCF at national level and helped member groups, including input to the *Burial Law in the 21st Century* consultation, further work on memorial safety, the setting up of the Funerary Monuments Working Group, development of the website, publication of a regular newsletter, involvement with BCAG and commentaries on re-use of graves, memorial rights, and regulation of burial grounds.

The current officers (Arthur Tait, Gwyneth Stokes and Ian Simpson) were elected for a further term.

Presentations were made on the Funerary Monuments Working Group, a proposal for a Graves at Risk Register, and update on the website. Discussion topics centered around the problems with a bridle path in a cemetery raised by Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery, a report of successful criminal proceedings brought against vandals, and an update on the 2008 AGM of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE), which is being hosted by Flaybrick.

Next year's AGM is to be hosted by the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park in London.

James Underwood (1771-1844)

by Jack Grady

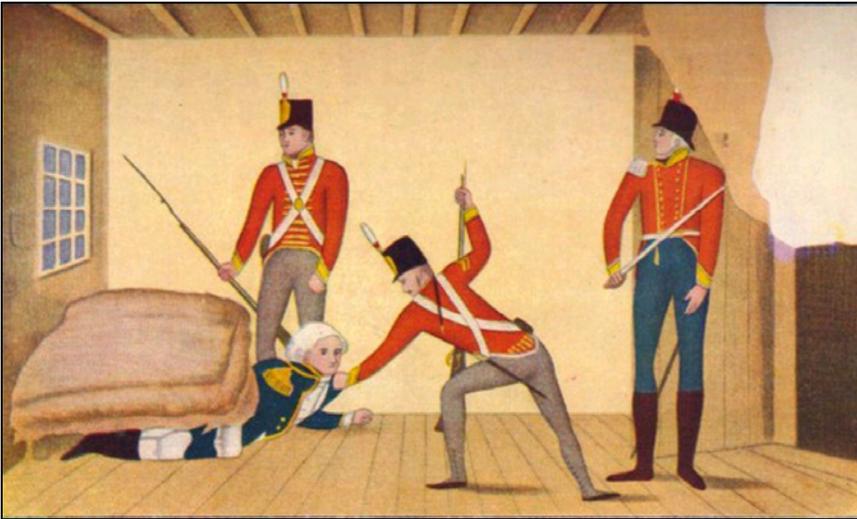


11th March 1790: James Underwood, a 19-year-old dock worker from Bermondsey, rowed up the Thames with his friend, James Innes. They passed under Richmond Bridge, and carried on up the river and disembarked at Kingston, where they were arrested and (sixteen days later) held ‘...on the oaths of Isaac Gibbs and Thomas Cave on a violent suspicion of having... broke and entered... and stole... against the Peace of our said Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity’. At the trial in Kingston, Gibbs and Cave and three others gave statements against Underwood and Innes, to the effect that they ‘...feloniously and burglariously did break and enter...’ the house of Gibbs.

The case was cited on Thursday 1 April, but was adjourned until the following morning, when it was *not* cited. Instead, for that date, there appears in the Fair Agenda book under a bill of costs, a payment of £3 to a Thomas King made by J.U., and £1 7s. paid by William Innes on behalf of his brother. They were found not guilty of breaking and entering, but guilty of stealing goods of a value that clearly exceeded the sum that should have earned them the noose. Yet, on 17 March 1790 Innes and Underwood were sent to the prison hulks at Portsmouth. What happened to the system? In Liz Parkinson’s book *The Underwoods: Lock, Stock and Barrel* (Lazy Lizard, 1989), she speculates as to whether the men had been set up. Victims of slum-clearance perhaps? Or of a drive to populate a far-flung corner of empire? There remains some doubt about the case because the allegation and sentence survive in the Surrey Lent Assize felony files, but there is no transcript of the trial. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* records sentence being passed at Maidstone.

James Underwood had been born 4 September 1771 at Bermondsey, son of Thomas Underwood and his wife Mary, née Forster. He waited ten months off Portsmouth aboard the *Admiral Barrington*. Day by day the ship’s cargo (the one destined for sale at the Cape of Good Hope) took up more and more of the living space allotted to her human freight, the convicts bound for Botany Bay. Conditions were not good to say the least. During the voyage 36 of the 260 on the manifest escaped their sentence by ailing, and starving, and drowning.

However, on 16 October 1791, James finally saw Sydney Harbour. Three years before his arrival the First Fleet had anchored at the mouth of the Tank Stream, the early colony’s most ready supply of potable water. The course of this small river ran down the path of today’s Pitt Street. Despite the spelling this thoroughfare was not named for an Earl of *Chatham* Pitt, but a *dirt* pit. Down the years, as the watercourse was disturbed by over-use, the spring was muddied and sank its way beneath the streets of the colony. But in 1798 having served his seven-year term, and while the Tank Stream was still swift and clear, James Underwood (a Thames denizen familiar with boats) chose this strategic location to build his shipyard.



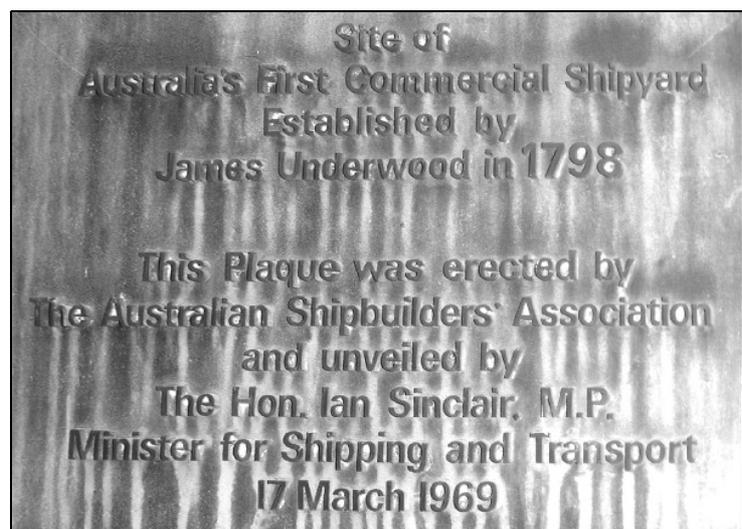
Populist propaganda exhibited in Sydney soon after *The Rum Rebellion*

He started out by dry-docking the vessels of the colony. There followed small commissions, then bigger ones, and finally he joined with partners to form Kable, Lord & Underwood. They built and ran their own merchant fleet to shuttle goods about the harbour. They then ferried coal and cedar from northern New South Wales. As the business grew even bigger it

fashioned ships and hired crews for whaling and sealing. KL&U shipped oil and pelts to London, and brought back rare luxury items. However, they were edged out of this trade after their ships in the Pacific were attacked by those of the Delano brothers - forebears of US President Roosevelt. At one point they even got into hot water with the East India Company when, poaching on a British preserve, an Underwood ship brought the first sandalwood to Australia, via Fiji.

As Kable was illiterate, and Lord unlikable, Underwood was key to the entire sprawling enterprise. It was he who haggled with Governor Bligh over the petty regulations that delayed trans-shipments on the harbour. And though James signed a welcoming address to the new governor when Bligh arrived in the colony in 1806, it was to no avail. As his own career drew rapidly to a close Bligh took up what he must have viewed as something of a hardship post, and, under the circumstances, had little time for convict whiz kids. On 1 October 1807 he wrote to The Rt Hon William Windham in England:

'I consider it necessary to inform You that the following Persons leave this Colony in the Sydney Cove:- James Underwood, formerly a Convict but now a Trader concerned with a Simeon Lord & a bad character; also Francis Williams and Richard Rawlinson who were left here by the Lucy Privateer & I ordered out of the Colony. These men I apprehend will apply to become Settlers - if they do, I beg leave to request that they may not be allowed the indulgence..'

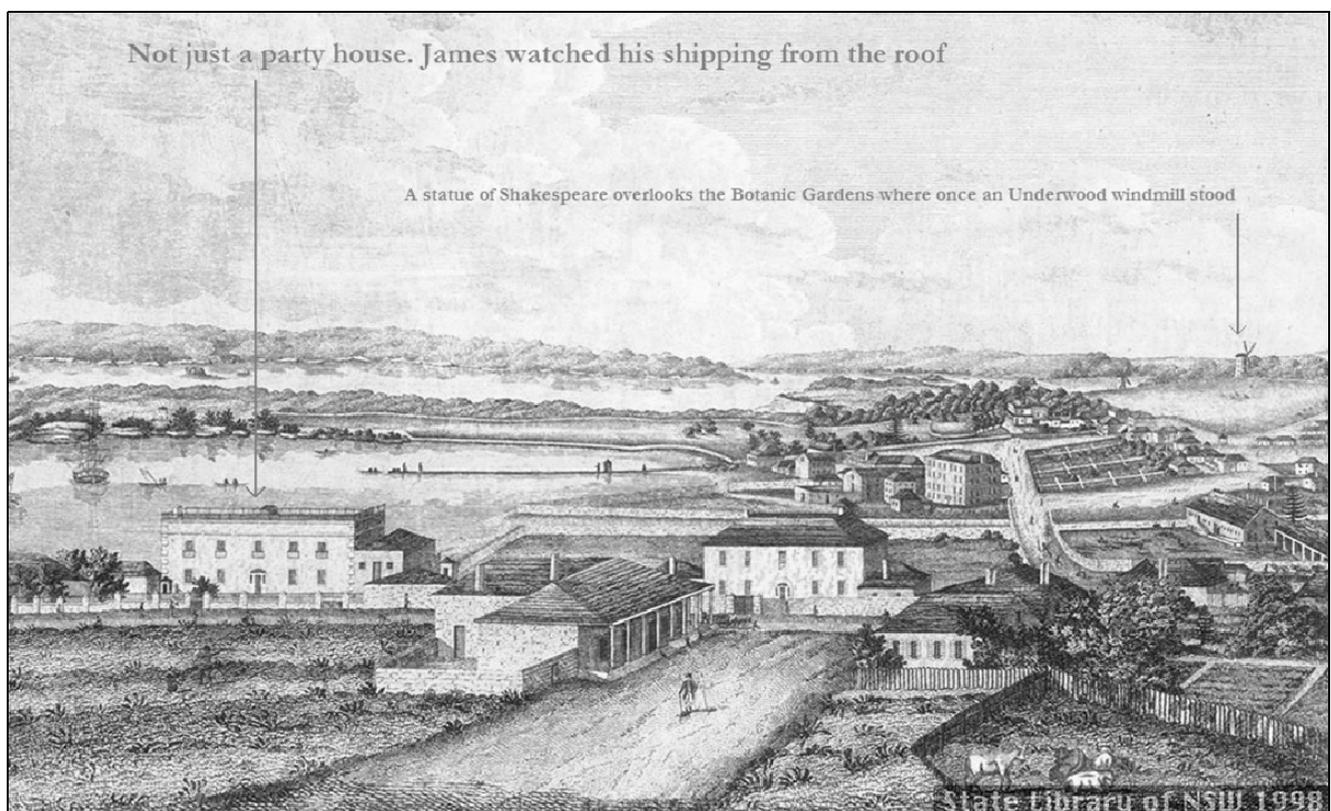


Brass plaque on Underwood House in Underwood Street, near Circular Quay

In fact it was Bligh himself who was to be ejected from the colony. In an event unavoidably compared with his experience aboard the *Bounty*, Bligh's command rose up and rebelled against him. After just two years of his governorship, for the first and only time the colony was inspired, if not to revolution exactly, then a military coup. Although Underwood was on a visit to London at the time, he was among those who sanctioned the ousting of Bligh.

In his book *The Australian Colonial House: Architecture and Society in New South Wales, 1788-1842* (Friends of Historic Houses Trust, 1997), Dr. James Broadbent opines that the great houses of Underwood and Lord, built either side of the Tank Stream, set the pattern for '... the ostentation, rivalry and vulgarity which were to become recurrent themes in the history of domestic architecture in colonial New South Wales'. Yet he admits, almost grudgingly, that James' house did bear some fine Georgian features.

In 1810 James threw a harbourside party to celebrate the arrival of Governor Macquarie. A band serenaded the evening with patriotic songs and every window in the Underwood mansion was illuminated by exquisite coloured transparencies. One spelt out *Vivant Rex Regina*, another *Commerce*, yet another depicted Underwood's flagship the *King George*. Below the terrace a bonfire was lit in the grounds leading down to the water and from 8:30 till 10:00 pm fireworks were set off from his rooftop parapet. Afterwards his doors were thrown wide to the public for refreshments and dancing. In the same year the first colonial race meeting took place at Sydney's Hyde Park. James entered a horse, as did Simeon Lord, D'Arcy Wentworth and Captain John 'Point' Piper.



James Underwood's house in Sydney

James Underwood's interests diversified into windmills, and *gin* mills. In 1824 he opened Australia's first distillery, in Trumper Park. The ox carts that dragged his gin, rum and peach brandy uphill to Oxford Street formed the wiggly track that today is Glenmore Road. Indeed, this was the first road through what became Paddington. His hundred acres in the area were universally referred to as *Underwood's Paddock*, and to honour the burgeoning suburb of the same name in London, Underwood then dubbed his domain 'Padd-ington'.

When the distillery partnership broke up, the western plot went to Robert Cooper of Juniper Hall. James paid him £1,640 - in Spanish Dollars - and was left sole proprietor of the operation. On 28 October *The Gazette* and *The Australian* both described the street party that took place when the 'King of Spirits' rode into town accompanied by all his 'courtiers' not to mention 300 gallons of the colony's very first rum.

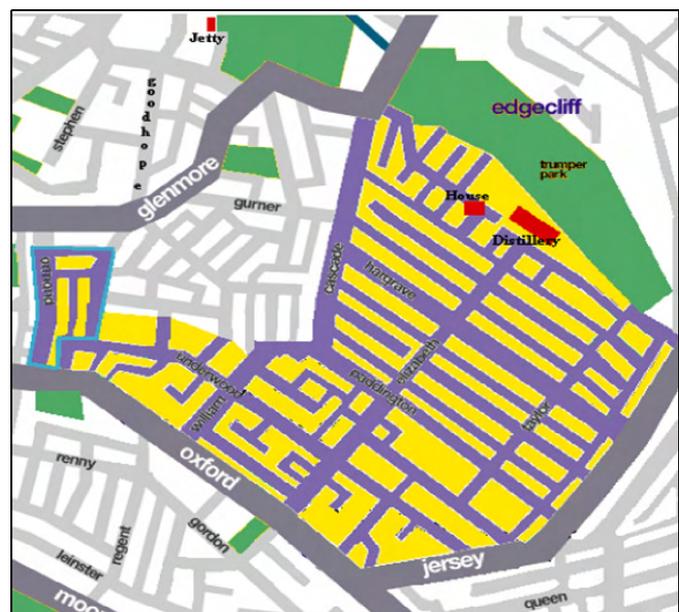
From a visitor to Sydney writing in *The Gazette* of March 1827 we learn that James was *nearly* Australia's first theatre owner:

'The next place which arrested my attention was an elegant mansion on my right, & on my left a splendid pile - which had been some time begun. Upon enquiry I found that they were both the property of Mr James Underwood, the one his residence, & that the other, which was in a state of progress was intended for a theatre'.

A neighbouring wall of *The Gazette* offices (also on Underwood premises) had collapsed during construction of the playhouse. James paid damages of £65 to Mr Howe the proprietor, but work on the theatre was never resumed.

By 1840 his property acquisitions across Sydney were extensive. Having pioneered the suburbs of Paddington, Summer Hill, Ashfield, Homebush and Minto, he then turned formidable attention to his own birthplace. He went to live in London, in Tulse Hill. Advised to take things quietly James ignored his doctors and - quite unable to resist his passion for real estate - had eleven houses built in Prince of Wales Crescent, Kentish Town. In the middle of planning a trip to India he died of 'gout in the stomach'.

The Sydney Morning Herald 25 June 1844 reported the event thus: 'At his residence, Paddington House, Tulse Hill, Brixton, Surrey on 10 February, James Underwood Esq. Many years a resident of this colony, aged 67 [sic], deeply regretted by his family and friends'. He is buried at Norwood near to the site of the Episcopal Chapel (grave 852, square 62), adjacent to the Slade and Davidge family tombs (see Newsletter 59). His monument is in good condition, a plaque recording his time in Australia as a free man (1797-1840) and also the burial of his wife Elizabeth (1800-1881).



Underwood's Paddington, Sydney estate

An extract from *Sydney in 1848* (dedicated to Governor Fitzroy by its author, Joseph Fowles): ‘Of ... the Old Government Spirit Store ... nothing now remains ... The houses opposite, from Mr. Gaunson’s - formerly the Bank of Australia (today’s Westpac) - to the ‘Herald Office’, are generally known as Underwood’s Buildings, having been erected by Mr. James Underwood on his grant of land, which reached from the street in front to the water’s edge. It was here that the first Colonial ship, named the King George, was built by that spirited proprietor, and launched on 19 April 1805. The space intervening between the ‘Herald Office’ and Bridge Street, had previously been enclosed as the Garden of the Female Orphan School ...’.

To consider certain details of James Underwood’s story - the hard start aboard a prison hulk, the fortune made in the colony, and the death in London - is to be reminded of Magwitch in *Great Expectations*. When we hear about *The Underwood Inheritance* - the lawsuit that ran for nearly forty years after his death - one is inevitably put in mind of *Bleak House*. If one then remembers that both of Dickens’ sons, Edward and Alfred, spent most of their lives in Australia, is it too outrageous to suggest that Jimmy Underwood’s rags-to-riches career may have got a mention or two in their letters home? And that thus he may have been an unwitting contributor to some of Dickens’ plots?

James left £500,000 - over £36 million today. Two Acts of Parliament were passed in an attempt to sort out the labyrinthine ‘entailments’ of his will. The assets were finally liquidated in the late 1870s, whereupon the family seems to have proceeded to spend the entire fortune on pleasure. Between 1802 and 1807 he had had three children, Charlotte, Thomas and James, by Phyllis Pounds, and a daughter Sarah by Letitia Reynolds in 1810. He married Mary Ann Powell in 1812 and by her had Joseph, Edward, Mary and Richard. Two other children born in 1822 and 1824 died in infancy and his wife died in February 1825. In November Underwood had married Elizabeth Sherwell, who bore him a son William.

Joseph Underwood (1779-1833), younger brother to James, arrived in New South Wales in the KL&U vessel *Sydney Cove* in June 1807. He bore a letter of introduction from Windham to the governor and was accompanied by his wife and ‘large yet infant’ family. He collaborated with James in sealing and in mercantile trade. He too died a wealthy man at his estate, Ashfield Park, Sydney, on 30 August 1833.



Further information about the Underwoods and also some of their contemporaries such as Robert Cooper (1776-1857), Henry Kable (1763-1846) and Simeon Lord (1771-1840) is available in Liz Parkinson’s book cited above and from the Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm>)

*The Underwood grave at Norwood
(grave 852, square 62)*

John Stevens (1779-1861) and James John Stevens (1807-1881)

by Lesley Kitching

Two leather-bound books on my father's bookshelves on Famous Sea Battles started me looking into family history. They contained the name William Kitching and the date 1868. Having traced this branch of the family back to North Yorkshire, I reached a dead end at around 1799.

I had always fought shy of trying to trace my maternal grandparents, their names being Smith and Williams. Strangely enough, both families were living in Birmingham in the early 1800s, although my grandfather and grandmother met in London. My great grandfather, Walter Arthur Williams, lived in the Peckham/Herne Hill area and, so I have been told, had produced a family tree. This was lost when he died and the house and contents were dispersed, but my Aunt had been shown the tree when my cousin's name was added and always maintained she had seen the name Stephenson linked to the family. My father in particular was totally dismissive of this suggestion.

Walter Arthur Williams owned the Britannia Public House in Peckham, where my grandmother performed on musical evenings. He was also a decorator and I understand his initials WAW were to be found on the covers of the drains in South London. He was the only son of William Henry Williams and Mary Ann Henry (née Bourne), being born when his father was 63 years old. William Henry Williams was described in the census as an agent and traveler for railway stores, and manager to a contractor. He was born in Birmingham in 1802 and had been married at least once before, having three older children. I found the baptisms of 7 children in Birmingham to John Williams, a gun stocker and Barbara Bolt (or Bott). Among the children were William Henry Williams and Caroline Matilda Williams, born 1809. Here the trail ran cold...

Ancestry.com has a lot to answer for. I did not know when the Williams family came to London. It could have been that William Henry Williams arrived with his first wife and family, or that John Williams had moved down after 1817, i.e. after the birth of Frederick George Williams. On the off chance, I searched for Caroline Matilda Williams and was delighted to find a woman of the correct age, born in Birmingham and now married to a James John Stevens, with her mother Barbara Williams living with them. James was described as an engineer living in Southwark Bridge Road. Further research opened up a whole new view of the family.

James John Stevens was the son of John Stevens, a gas engineer. The Stevens, like the Williams, were from Birmingham. The progress of the family firm can be traced through London trade directories. In 1832 they featured in *Robson's Directory* as 'Stevens & Son, gas fitters, 4 St George's Circus', and then in more detail in *Pigot's Directory* of 1834 as 'Stevens & Son, gas fitters & gas & oil contractors for illuminations'. Their entries continued in much the same vein (save that 'brass founders' was added) until James Stevens filed his first patent (no.11,612 in 1847) for

using lamps in railway signalling. In that year their entry in the *Post Office Directory* grew considerably: 'Stevens John & Son, engineers for gas & water works, brass founders & gas fitters, patentees of the semaphore railway signals & manufacturers of railway lamps for carriages, engines, signals, &c., 19 Southwark Bridge Road'. It should be noted that the Stevens firm did not invent semaphore signals, but pioneered the combination of coloured lamps with semaphore arms. Thus began a long association between Stevens and railway signal manufacture.

At the death of his father James Stevens continued and expanded the business. The Directories featured full page adverts for Stevens and Sons, who now owned the



*The Stevens tombstone at Norwood
(grave 3,817, square 47)*

Darlington Works, Southwark Bridge Road and Signal Works, New City Road, Glasgow. They pioneered various important developments, notably the tappet system of interlocking, and installed much equipment for the London and South Western Railway, including a large signal box at Waterloo. At the end of the Crimean War, the firm was employed by the Government to carry out the gigantic gas illuminations given in honour of the event. As well as semaphore signals, their range included wrought and cast iron girder bridges, gas works, and registering turnstiles. They took out patents for improvements for their signaling systems until 1897.

Although I have no proof, I feel sure William Henry Williams and at least one of his sons, as well as brothers of William Henry Williams were working for Stevens and Sons. James died at Clapham Common on 16 May 1881. William was named in his will. At this time the business passed on to James' three sons. I felt sure a man of such substance must have purchased a plot for his burial. I knew that both the Stevens and Williams families were Roman Catholic, but burials at St. George's Cathedral had stopped and therefore I began to look at records of the big three Victorian Cemeteries.

Taking the advice of the Lambeth Archivist I began with West Norwood. Luck was with me on that day, as not only did I find James John and Caroline Matilda Stevens (d. 19 November 1871), but also John Stevens (d. 4 December 1861) and Barbara Williams (d. 25 March 1854) in the same plot. Other burials in the grave are Anna Maria Stevens (d. 26 June 1858 aged 75, presumably John's wife) and Stafford Evan Stevens (d. 12 March 1866 aged 21, presumably a son of James and Caroline).

Equipped with the plot number (grave 3,817, square 47), the librarian directed me to booklets with maps and details of monuments to be found in the cemetery. I have never been so shocked as to see a picture of the tall grey granite obelisk with incised decoration by Anderson & McKenzie of Aberdeen erected to John Stevens, and to find that it is one of the more important monuments in the Cemetery, being listed Grade 2.

A visit to West Norwood with the plot number to hand seemed the next logical step. These things are never as easy as they seem. After much walking and stumbling over brambles, I finally spotted the monument well concealed by self-set trees. On writing to Bob Flanagan, I also discovered that Sarah Isabel Stephenson (1827-1893), the second wife of George Robert Stephenson (1819-1905), is buried in the next plot but one (grave 3,264, square 47), which was obviously purchased not long before the Stevens family plot. Bob had always wondered why two families with such obvious railway connections came to be buried in adjacent plots.



Now knowing the railway connection, I am rather less sceptical about my Aunt's tale. Perhaps there is a link, but that part of the story is still to be researched!

George Robert was nephew to the railway pioneer George Stephenson (1781-1848). George Robert inherited the family business when George's son Robert Stephenson (1803-1859) died without an heir. Other burials in the Stephenson grave at Norwood are his daughter Annie (1850/1-2), his sister Mrs Elizabeth Schmidt (1808-1861), and his son Henry (1855-1896). George Robert himself died at Charlton Kings near Cheltenham and is presumably buried there.

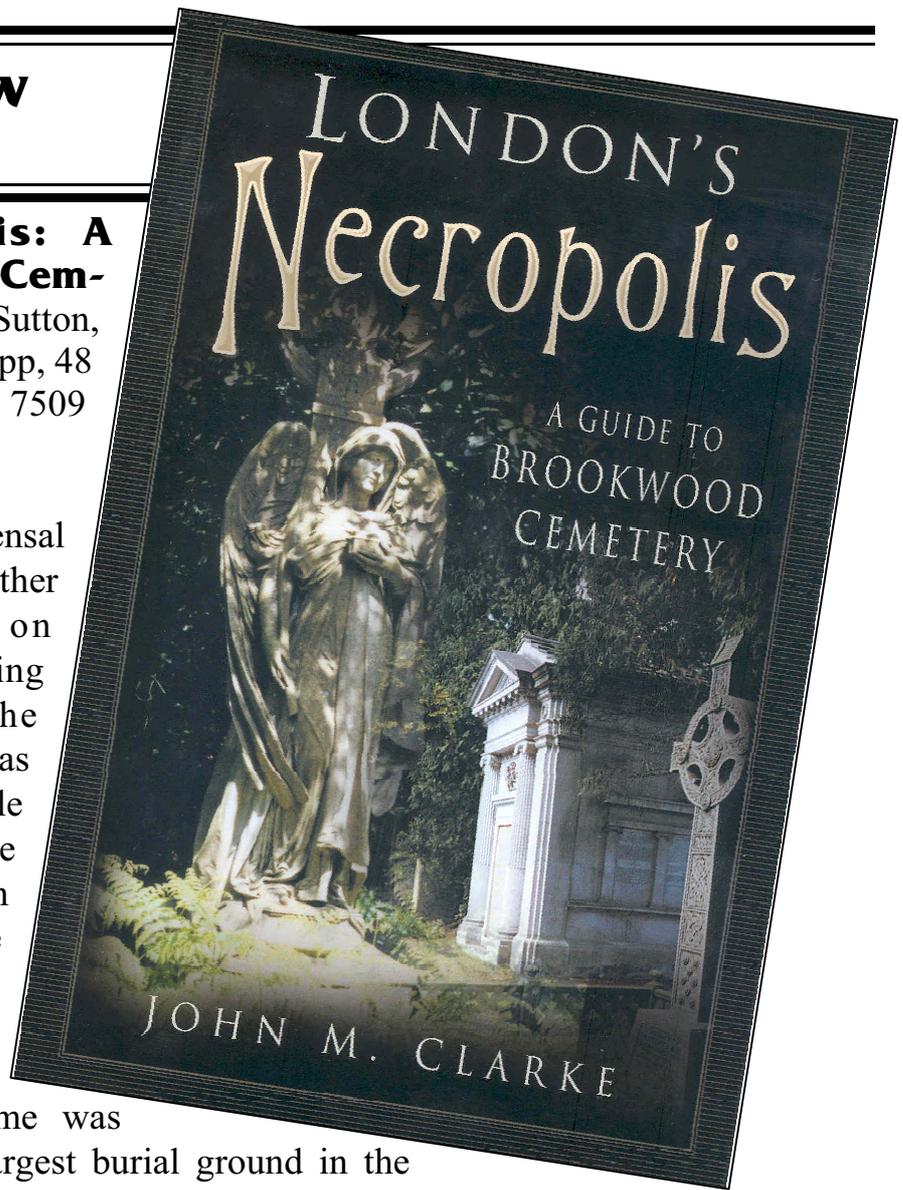
The Stephenson tombstone (grave 3,264, square 47)

Book Review

by Bob Flanagan

London's Necropolis: A Guide to Brookwood Cemetery by John M. Clarke. Sutton, 2004, £30.00. Hardback, 300 pp, 48 pp photographs. ISBN-10: 0 7509 3513 8.

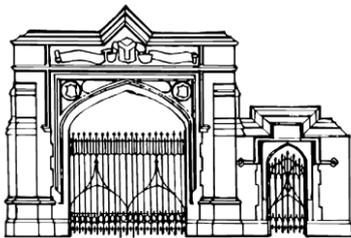
Despite the opening of Kensal Green, Norwood, and the other commercial cemeteries on 'greenfield' sites surrounding London in the 1830s, the volume of London's dead was still a cause of considerable public concern. So in 1850 the idea of great metropolitan cemeteries, situated in the suburbs and large enough to contain all of London's dead for an indefinite period, was promoted. The only outcome was Brookwood Cemetery, the largest burial ground in the world when it was opened by the London Necropolis & Mausoleum Company in 1854.



In addition to publishing the third edition of his book on the Necropolis Railway (see FOWNC Newsletter 58, January 2007), John Clarke has produced a detailed and very welcome guide to the cemetery itself. This is the first major history of Brookwood. The cemetery contains nearly 235,000 burials and is still privately owned and administered.

A recent Home Office Report suggests it has the potential to become a World Heritage Site. The book includes brief biographies of over 800 individuals of interest who have been buried there. Each chapter is supported by maps, and there are nearly 140 black and white photographs to illustrate some of the most interesting memorials and cemetery buildings.

This is a very welcome volume and sets a standard for other cemetery friends groups to aim at in due course.



Forthcoming FOWNC Events September- December 2007

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (2 September, 7 October, 4 November and 2 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.

There is also a regular non-FOWNC event: Activity Walks in the cemetery start from West Norwood Library every Wednesday at 12.30.

Sunday 16 September: Open House London

For this London-wide free event in which many buildings normally closed to the public open their doors, there will be tours of the cemetery starting at the main gate at 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 room hire.

Saturday 20 October: AGM and Lecture - The Mausolea and Monuments Trust - Thomas Cocke

Following this year's AGM, Dr Cocke, chairman of the MMT, will speak about the work of this charity, founded in 1997 for the protection and preservation of mausolea and funerary monuments (see Chairman's Report, page 2).

Saturday 17 November: Lecture - Remembering the Fallen: War Memorials in Britain - Hilary Rosser

A topical talk just after Remembrance Day, and with 2008 being the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Our speaker is a FOWNC member, and a lecturer and guide at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Streatham War Memorial



Other forthcoming events

Tuesday 18 September, 19.00-20.30: How to Trace Your Norwood House History - Don Bianco and Lambeth Archives Staff at West Norwood Library, Norwood High Street, London SE27.

This lecture is part of a series of talks and workshops being run by Lambeth Archives designed to get you started on researching the history of your house. Don will be describing the history of West Norwood.

Saturday 6 October, 10.00-17.00: Lambeth Archives Open Day at Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, London SE5.



This year's theme is '*Having a Field Day - Sport in Lambeth*'.

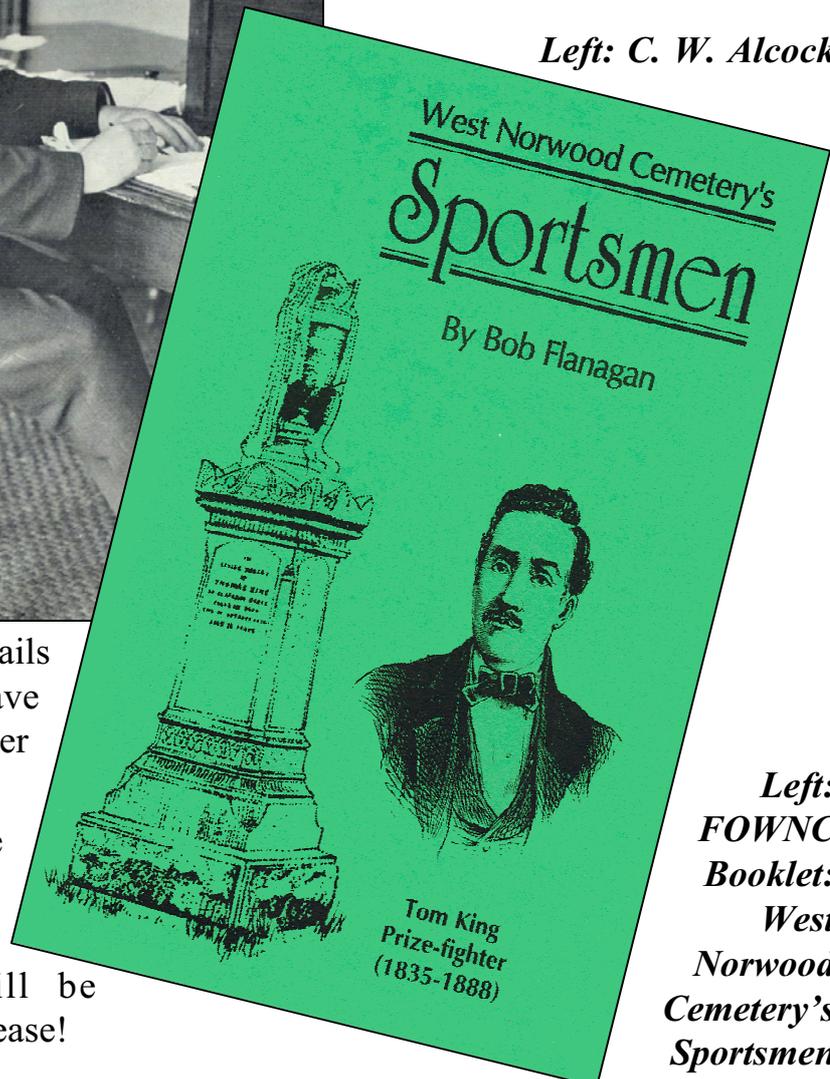
FOWNC members will know that Bob Flanagan has written a study of eminent sporting personalities buried at Norwood in our booklet *West Norwood*

Left: C. W. Alcock

Cemetery's Sportsmen, and details of other sporting connections have appeared in the Newsletter over the years.

Bob and/or Jill Dudman will be giving a talk based on these researches.

The FOWNC bookstall will be present as usual - volunteers please!



*Left:
FOWNC
Booklet:
West
Norwood
Cemetery's
Sportsmen*

continued from page 3

Of course the Catacombs have been closed for several years because of Health & Safety fears, but I did manage a brief visit with a US film crew in June.

Whilst much drier because of the temporary roofing that has been in place for over two years now, I was surprised that there was still a feeling of dampness in the air.

I have suggested that formal monitoring of the environment in the Catacombs should be considered, and also that supervised tours should again be allowed with due regards to H&S considerations. The US crew, by the way, spent 3 days in the cemetery and Brent Elliott, Avril Kirby and I each spent time with them. Their series for US educational TV features 3 European cemeteries: Père Lachaise, the Jewish Cemetery in Prague, and Norwood, and should be broadcast later this year. They have promised us a DVD.

Bob Flanagan

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

The annual subscription to the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery is £3. For further information please contact the Chairman (address above).

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