

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 65 - May 2009

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Chairman's Report

by Bob Flanagan

The last few months have been very difficult, but there has been significant progress in the last few weeks. The saga of the 'air blast cooler' (ABC) inserted by the side of the crematorium continues. This was placed there in panic by the Cemetery management it seems, the original plan to place it on the roof of the crematorium being abandoned at the last minute. Officers maintain it is not placed over graves, but I don't believe them! If there are no graves there, the Cemetery management have by definition been negligent in not identifying new burial space when asked to do so over the years... Officers also issued this terse statement:

The ABC is considered by planning officers to be 'Permitted Development' under Schedule 2, Part 12 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, and therefore planning permission is not required for the same. Likewise there is no statutory requirement for the Local Planning Authority to consult the Friends of Norwood Cemetery, Cemetery Advisory Group and/or Scheme of Management Committee; however the same groups were informally made aware of the cremator installation project prior to start up.

Yes, we were informed informally that the cremators were to be replaced and *inter alia* were told of the high specification needed for the new roadway to take the weight of the new cremators. If we had also been told that a new electrical supply was going to be needed as part of this process, we would have

made sure it was planned for from the beginning, rather than digging up the new road surface to put in the supply as an afterthought.

Be this as it may, the above statement meant to me that the Cemetery management were asserting that they could do what they like, exposing what they really thought of the ‘consultation’ process that we have tried to work with for the last 15 years or so. In turn, I felt there was no point in carrying on as Chair of the Management Advisory Group (MAG) or in working with the Council over development of the Scheme of Management.

The response has been unprecedented criticism of Council officers from the Scheme of Management Committee and at the April MAG meeting together with strong support for our stand from local Councillors. There are still items to resolve, but the outcome seems likely to be a much strengthened Executive Committee in place of the MAG to which the Cemetery management MUST report on important issues. If all goes to plan I am to work with other stakeholders to draw up the constitution for this new committee.

Drainage and Roadway Works

There is no sign that the roadway works are coming to an end. The damaged memorial illustrated in the January 2009 newsletter has not been repaired, and indeed the landing is now being used to store bags of what looked like pea shingle. Let us hope the landing does not fragment under the weight.



***Monument destruction II
(grave 1,425, square 66)***

Even worse, the Cemetery outer gate was badly damaged by a Conways (Council contractor) lorry. We are assured repairs are in hand by a specialist firm. The cost is estimated at some £18,000 – the contractors’ insurance should pay. Hopefully there has been no further damage to memorials due to these works.

It was suggested that the arch, cross and associated ironwork on the damaged outer gate be done away with during the course of

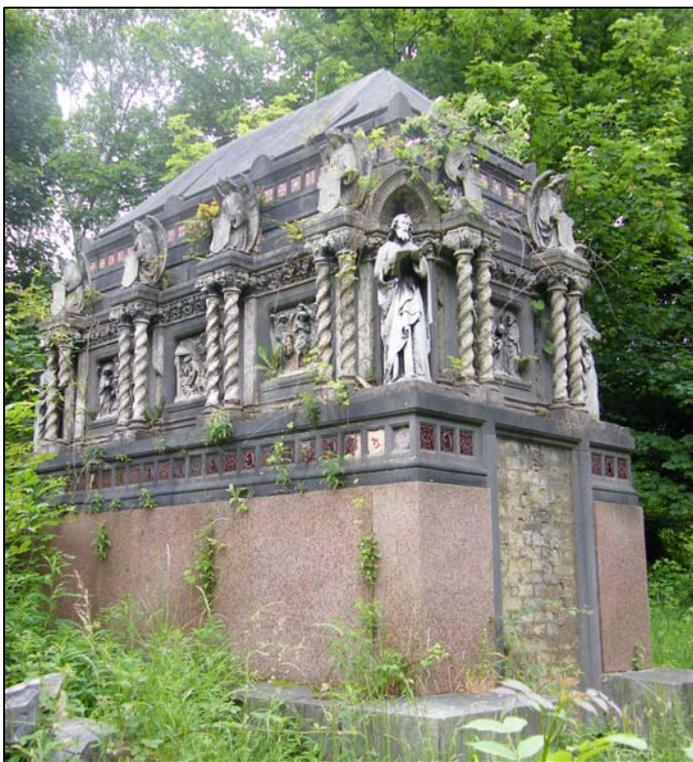


The temporary outer gateway to the cemetery

reinstatement in order to simplify entry of large vehicles to the Cemetery! We strongly opposed this on both conservation and practical grounds, the outer gateway acting as it does as a ‘loading gauge’ to the Tite arch, and so the outer gate will now be reinstated in its entirety. I have suggested that *inter alia* the Norwood High Street/Robson Road railings are repainted, hopefully to a better standard than before.

Berens Mausoleum

I am pleased to report that a descendent of Otto Alexander Berens (c.1797-1860) has taken over title to the Grade II* listed Berens mausoleum (grave 5,408, square 63), universally acknowledged as the finest monument in the cemetery outwith the Greek section. Berens was a Prussian-born linen draper who lived at Raleigh House, Brixton Hill. His firm, Berens, Blumberg & Co, importers and dealers in fancy goods (lace, etc.), had premises at St Paul's Churchyard in the 1830s and at Cannon Street in the 1850s. The mausoleum was designed by Edward



Middleton Barry (1830-1880), son of Sir Charles Barry, and was built by a Mr Field of Parliament Street for £1,500. The statues are by Thomas Earp (1828-1893), who is buried in Nunhead Cemetery (and may have been a relative of Wyatt Earp of Gunfight at the O.K. Corral fame!). The course of Minton encaustic tiles features alternately the letter B and a bear holding a sword, the Berens arms. The bronze doors and surrounding iron railings have unfortunately disappeared, as indeed have the Gothic iron railings of the adjacent Grade II listed Grissell tomb (grave 1,669, square 63). We hope to have a more detailed account of the Berens family history in a subsequent Newsletter.

FOWNC Membership

Many thanks to all who have sent donations and/or renewed their FOWNC membership. If you have yet to renew you will find another slip enclosed with this Newsletter. Vice-chairman Colin Fenn (with help from Jill Dudman, Don Bianco, and James Slattery-Kavanagh) has produced a new FOWNC membership leaflet. Copies are enclosed with this Newsletter. I trust you approve – perhaps you would consider asking a friend or neighbour if they might want to join us? An expanded membership would be especially helpful at this time, given the renewed problems we have had with Lambeth over the last few months.

Finally it is my sad task to report the death of FOWNC stalwart and good friend Betty Griffin. She was a good friend to the Cemetery and a strong supporter and I personally will miss her cheerful face at meetings and other events (see Obituary, page 5).

Cemetery Open Day

Unfortunately the Cemetery Open Day, which in recent years has taken place at the beginning of June, has had to be postponed this year, owing to uncertainty as to when

the current major drainage and roadway works will be finished. There is a possibility that an Open Day may take place in July or August, but this seems unlikely given the very slow progress with the works. If an Open Day is to be held it will be advertised on the Cemetery notice board and in the local press, but feel free to e-mail me if you wish to check (chairman@fownc.org) or contact the Cemetery Office (020 7926 7999).

Friends of Streatham Cemetery

Long-time FOWNC member Celia Smith, Projects and Memorials Supervisor at Lambeth Cemetery, Blackshaw Road, London SW17 0BY, reports that the first meeting of the Friends of Streatham Cemetery was held on 10 February. For further information contact Celia or e-mail lucy@lucyneal.co.uk. We wish them luck.

A Week for Discovering European Cemeteries

The Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) has members in 120 cities and may well be the biggest Cemetery organisation in the world. ASCE holds an annual event in the first week every year in June which involves all member groups. I'm ashamed to report that we have never really participated in this to the full. It's too late to plan anything for this year, but next year FOWNC will 'come of age' (we were founded in 1989) and so we will do our best to join in then.

The European Cemetery Route

The European Cemetery Route is a major ASCE initiative with which we are associated. The proposal is to publicise a series of cemeteries that can be visited as part of a coherent whole to gain an impression of the range and quality of funerary art and architecture that can be viewed in different countries. Work will define the definitive route for approval by the Institute of Cultural Routes and to achieve the Council of Europe recognition.

National Federation of Cemetery Friends

We welcome the publication of much needed guidance to local authorities on the safety of monuments that discourages staking, the laying down of memorial stones, and the use of mechanical test instruments. It is estimated that more than £1 million of damage was caused by Councils in their rush to destroy our cemeteries. Justice Minister Bridget Prentice in announcing this report commented that too many burial ground operators were taking these actions when there was no serious risk to the public. The new guidance makes it clear this should only be done as a last resort. The full report *Managing the safety of burial ground memorials* can be seen on the Ministry of Justice website (<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/safety-burial-grounds.htm>) or a copy of the booklet may be obtained from Brian.Webb@justice.gsi.gov.uk.

Note that the 2009 NCF AGM will be hosted by Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery, County Durham (see NCF website for further details).



Obituary: Betty Griffin (1923-2008)

by John Brown and Jill Dudman

Betty was a founder member of FOWNC, and was one of our most consistent supporters. She was a seemingly permanent presence at our indoor lecture meetings, and came on every cemetery tour until the last few years when her legs began to fail her. She regularly helped with minding the bookstall at events such as Open Days, and carried out research into cemetery notables, especially the artists buried here, her favourite subject, about whom she wrote a number of newsletter articles.

When Betty was 4 years old her family moved to Covington Way, adjacent to Biggin Wood (just to the south of Streatham Common and Norwood Grove), and she spent the greater part of her life there, before moving to near Gipsy Hill. The wood became her childhood playground and prompted her life-long interest in natural history. She had an extensive knowledge of wildlife and plants, and gardening was a life-long enjoyment for her. It was only a few years ago that with great reluctance she had to give up her flourishing allotment.

Betty spent most of her working life at the Inland Revenue, and afterwards was a keen member of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship, for which she was the secretary of the Dulwich & Norwood Group, attending their monthly meetings and their outings to places of interest. She was also a member of the Civil Service Motoring Association and their Britannia Rescue service, whose praises she frequently sang after they rescued her from the numerous breakdowns she experienced with her car, an ancient Austin Allegro (top of the range Vanden Plas Princess model, with walnut dashboard).

Betty had an immense knowledge of local history, and was an enthusiastic member not only of FOWNC, but also of the Norwood Society, Streatham Society, Crystal Palace Foundation, and other organisations, regularly attending their meetings, and going on their walks until her health failed, and giving a number of local history talks herself. She was a founder member of the Edith Nesbit Society. Painting was another of her pleasures, and she was a member of (Streatham) Vale Artists. The church also played an important part in her life, and she worshipped first at St Oswald's, Green Lane, and later at All Saints, Beulah Hill.

Betty died of a heart attack on Christmas Day 2008, and leaves a brother-in-law and a nephew. Her funeral service at All Saints Church on 27 January was attended by at least 100 friends and relatives, and she was then cremated at Croydon. John Brown of the Streatham Society, and publisher for FOWNC, a close friend of hers since the 1980s, read a eulogy for her, from which most of the above information is taken, and

he also added some personal memories thus:

"Betty was a very modest lady who often said about any of her activities, be it gardening or painting or local history writing, that it was not much good. An example is her history of Biggin Wood; her notes that were supposedly not much good turned out to be a 30 page typescript, with numerous illustrations and old photographs, well researched and beautifully written, and it took me 14 years to persuade her to let me publish it.

"One afternoon when Betty and I were having tea in my garden, I apologised for the unkempt state of it. She was quick to say that it was beautiful, and identified all the wild flowers, birds, butterflies and insects, and encouraged me not to tidy it too much for fear of driving the wildlife away. I have since continued my regime of neglect!

"Betty was a lovely lady, and despite her failing health in recent years she still had a sparkle in her eyes and a wonderful smile and mischievous laughter that I shall always remember."

Elizabeth (Eliza) James (1856-1927)

The Watercress Queen

by Bob Flanagan



200 Floral Tributes at Funeral of Covent Garden 'Queen' – so ran the headline in The Undertaker's Journal of October 1927.

'A huge wreath of watercress lay on the coffin of the Watercress Queen, Mrs Elizabeth James, who was buried at West Norwood Cemetery. She was one of the best-known figures in Covent Garden Market for over 50 years, and had so entirely devoted her life to the cultivation of watercress that she was often chaffed by her sons and daughters, who said "You shall have a wreath of watercress when you die, mother".'

It was from them that the wreath came. The watercress of which it was formed was freshly collected and woven into a wreath at one of Mrs James's vast beds at Hurstbourne, Hampshire. There were 200 floral tributes from big West End stores to the humblest costermonger'.

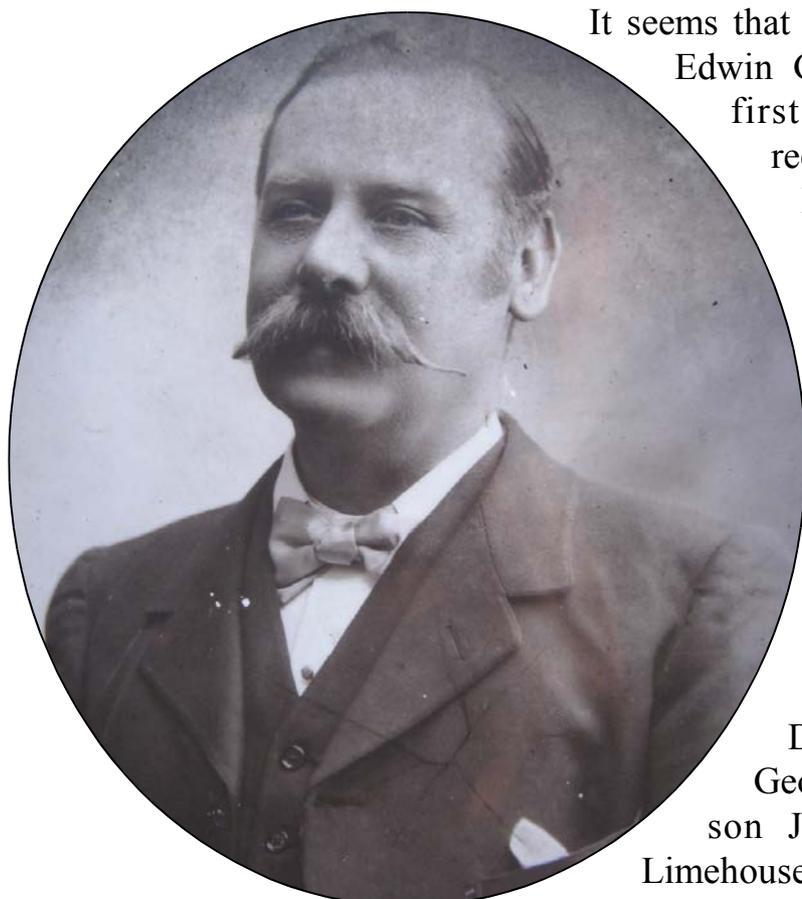
The Times records that she died at her home at Kennington Oval on 26 September 1927. Yet there seemed to be no record of either burial or cremation in the cemetery records under this name. However, thanks to diligent research by Brian Parsons, Colin Fenn and Jill Dudman the story has been unravelled. Thanks also to the website <http://www.watercress.co.uk/historical/queen.shtml>.

Burial at Norwood

Although Eliza James does not feature in the burial records, an entry does record the burial of Mrs Eliza Fleet, 47 Kennington Oval, on 3 October 1927 (grave 33,533, square 105). She had purchased the grave on 24 June 1913 and the headstone is still there complete with a marvelous ceramic portrait of her husband James Fleet, who died 23 June 1913 aged 52. Eliza herself, who died aged 71, William Griffiths who died 3 March 1937 aged 59, Annie Brownbridge who died 30 November 1945 aged 69, Doreen Joyce Welham who died 16 November 1916 aged 2 weeks, and 'Lucy' who died 6 December 1918 aged 21, are also commemorated on the headstone.



James and Eliza Fleet's monument at Norwood (grave 33,533, square 105)



James and Eliza Fleet's monument at Norwood (grave 33,533, square 105): ceramic portrait of James Fleet

It seems that William (buried at Norwood) and Edwin Griffiths were her sons from her first marriage. The 1901 Census records 'Eliza Griffiths, age 45, born Birmingham, Warwickshire, resident of Lambeth, occupation salad sales woman'. The General Record Office records the marriage of James Fleet and Eliza Griffiths, both of Lambeth, in the 2nd quarter of 1902. Going further back, the 1881 Census records 'James R. Griffiths, head of family, aged 28, of Bethnal Green, Middlesex, General Dealer; wife Eliza aged 25 of St George in the East, Middlesex; and son James R. Griffiths aged 10 of Limehouse, Middlesex living at 82 Eastfield St, London'. Is this Eliza and her first husband? It seems that 'Eliza James' was a contraction of their two names.

Vitacress

Eliza James was pre-eminent in the watercress industry. Aged five she sold watercress in Birmingham, being given 40 bunches of wild watercress a day by her family. She continued to sell watercress, eventually becoming almost the sole watercress supplier in London. She was well-known in Covent Garden, and worked at her stall there for over 50 years, arriving each day on a watercress cart driven by either her son or her son-in-law. She was said to be the biggest owner of watercress farms in the world, with vast beds at Mitcham and Beddington in Surrey, and at Warnford, Overton, and Hurstbourne Priors, on the estate of Lord Portsmouth, in Hampshire. When she died her company James & Son was selling 50 tons of watercress every weekend.

In her obituary, the *Daily Mirror* reported: *'For a woman by her own unaided efforts to have amassed £20,000 three or four times over by selling watercress is surely one of the most wonderful romances of business London has ever known'*. £20,000 in 1927 is equivalent to about £3.5 million today.

The farms Eliza founded in Hampshire still produce watercress and are now owned by *Vitacress Salads*. The registered trade mark *Vitacress* was applied for on 5 June 1929 by Edwin Griffiths, trading as E. James & Son, 8 Porden Road, Brixton and is still in force (no. 503,393). The name was later sold on to Mr. Malcolm Isaac, chairman of *Vitacress*, who in turn sold the business to a Portuguese company in 2008.

The headwaters of the Bourne Rivulet, the location of one of Eliza's farms, and its trout fishing were immortalised by the Irish bass-baritone Harry Plunket Greene in his book *Where The Bright Waters Meet* (1924). The Bourne Rivulet is the uppermost tributary of the River Test. The 'bright waters' are the confluence of the Test and the Bourne. The book is celebrated as a classic of fly-fishing and a lyrical evocation of the Rivers Bourne and Test, whilst giving a snapshot of the life of Hurstbourne Priors in the early twentieth century. The watercress beds, which we now look upon as part of the landscape, were a novelty when Plunket Greene wrote his book, and he comments in the final chapter:

'The watercress beds above the viaduct have scarred her face and marred her beauty forever'.



Workers at the watercress beds at Beddington Corner in the early 1900s

Brevet Major Stewart Walter Loudon-Shand VC (1879-1916)

by Bob Flanagan



To conclude this short series about Victoria Cross winners commemorated at Norwood (see January and May 2008 Newsletters), mention must be made of Stewart Walter Loudon-Shand.

He was born in Ceylon, the first of five sons of Mr JL Loudon-Shand, of 27 Alleyn Park, Dulwich. He enlisted in the Pembrokehire Yeomanry for the duration of the Boer War. Afterwards a merchant in Port Elizabeth and Ceylon, he returned to the UK at the outbreak of war in 1914. He was gazetted to the 10th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own).



Promoted Major after his Colonel and both Majors were killed in action, he was awarded a posthumous VC for bravery whilst assisting his men in the assault near Fricourt on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916. His company went into action with five officers and 117 men, and returned with 1 officer and 27 men. The attacks of that day were watched by the poet Siegfried Sassoon and recounted in his diary.

His VC was cited (London Gazette No. 29740, 8 September 1916) 'For most conspicuous bravery. When his company attempted to climb over the parapet to attack the enemies trenches they were met by very fierce machine gun fire which temporarily stopped their progress. Major Loudon-Shand immediately stepped on to the parapet, helped the men over it and encouraged them in every way until he fell mortally wounded. Even though then he insisted on being propped up in the trench, and went on encouraging the non-commissioned officers and men until he died'.

*The Loudon-Shand family memorial at Norwood.
The inscription at bottom right of the cross reads: 'In
loving memory of Stewart Walter Loudon-Shand, V.C.
Temp. Major 10th Yorkshire Regt'*

He is buried in Norfolk Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, Somme (plot 1.C. 77, see <http://www.ww1cemeteries.com/ww1frenchcemeteries/norfolk.htm> and see <http://www.ww1-yorkshires.org.uk/html-files/norfolk-cemetery.htm> for a photograph of his gravestone). He is also commemorated on the family tombstone at Norwood (grave 23,120, square 108).

Norfolk Cemetery, by the Somme, contains 549 First World War burials, 224 being unidentified, and was designed by Sir Herbert Baker. It is so-called because it was begun by the 1st Norfolk Regiment in August 1915 and used by other units (including the 8th Norfolks) until August 1916. After the Armistice it was nearly doubled in size when graves were brought in from nearby battlefields.

Sergeant Pilot Geoffrey Llewellyn West (grave 39,476, square 56)

by Bob Flanagan

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records 208 casualties of the two World Wars to have been buried or cremated at Norwood. There are 136 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 52 of the 1939-1945 war, plus 18 cremations of the 1939-1945 war and one Belgian war burial (in the Catacombs). About a quarter of them made their way back to England only to succumb after hostilities ceased. The Screen Wall behind the Cross of Sacrifice by the main gate bears the names of all 1914-1918 burials not marked by headstones. There are additional panels naming those of the 1939-1945 war with unmarked graves and to those cremated or recorded in the Columbarium.

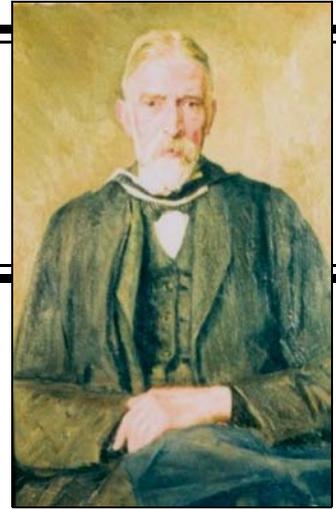
Clearly there are tragedies behind these statistics, but one has come to light recently via a website enquiry. On 6 January 1942 at 07:00 Hampden AD896 M-Mother approached Scampton in Lincolnshire to land after night training. As the aircraft passed over the small hamlet of South Carlton, one of the engines suddenly cut out. The aircraft stalled then fell into Middle Street killing the pilot, Sergeant Pilot Geoffrey Llewellyn West of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and the wireless operator, Sgt George Atkins. Fortunately there were no civilian casualties in the village. It cannot be established if these were the only two airmen aboard the aircraft. Sergeant West was interred at Norwood in a plot purchased by George and May Ethel West, presumably his parents – the burial register does not give an address for them. May Ethel was buried in the grave in 1946.

*CWGC headstone of Sergeant GL West RAFVR at
Norwood (grave 39,476, square 56)*



Professor Arthur Beresford Pite (1861-1934)

by Jeanne Trend-Hill



Arthur Beresford Pite was a pupil of John Belcher RA and became an important architect in his own right. I own a large collection of Pite memorabilia including an extensive collection of photographs of his many commissions. I was lucky enough to work in his fine building at Euston Square for 26 years and was instrumental in having it listed Grade 2 in 1999. My website about Arthur, his life and work is at: www.members.lycos.co.uk/askjeane.

Arthur Beresford Pite was born on 2 September 1861 in Newington, North London, son of Alfred Robert Pite and brother of William Alfred Pite (b. 1860). The Pite lineage originated from Woodbridge, Suffolk and can be traced back to the late 1600s. Arthur was educated at King's College School and was articled to his father's firm, Habershon and Pite.

In 1877 he entered the office of *The Builder* journal; he also attended the Royal Architectural School. In 1881 he entered the office of the notable architect John Belcher RA (1841-1913) (grave 33,607, square 93). He worked in Belcher's office until he won the RIBA Soane Medallion for his design for the West End Club House (1882). Following this he travelled to the continent with his brother William (also an architect) and they were joined by Belcher and JW James for part of the trip. Arthur returned to Belcher's practice as a partner and stayed for the next 12 years.

Family Life

The Pite family moved to Ramsgate in Kent where Arthur and William shared rooms and an architectural office. On 20 April 1887 Arthur married Mary Kilvington Mowll at the Parish church of Whitfield near Dover, and they moved back to Brixton. They had four children, Grace Sarah (1888), Ion Beresford (1891), Molly (who died shortly after birth), and Arthur Goodhart (1896). Arthur continued working on commissions that included the Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly; Christ Church, Brixton; Kampala Cathedral, Uganda; a hospital in Jerusalem; The Institute of Chartered Accountants, Moorgate; and a library in West Islington, to name but a few.

As an active church member he ran a bible school for young students and a weekly bible class for prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs Prison. In 1889 he built a large family house, Earlywood, for himself at Frinton in Essex. Here he enjoyed many happy holidays with his wide circle of friends and relatives. In 1903 he moved to York Gate, Regents Park, and it was there that his beloved wife Mary died in 1905. Following Mary's death his sister Annie cared for him and his family.

30 Euston Square

In 1906 Pite began to design the headquarters of the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company at 30 Euston Square. It became a magnificent seven storey building of Portland stone in the Greek style and was opened on 22 January 1908. The main entrance hall was decorated with yellow and sage green Doulton Parian ware, tiled arches and a curious ceiling of dentils. The mosaic floor features an astrological design. The directors' boardrooms on the first floor were lined in oak with oak strip floors and stunning marble fireplaces as focal points. The basement housed the records for the Assurance Company; the walls were three feet thick in places and were further protected by steel doors. The new office building was fitted with a passenger lift, electric lighting and oil-fired central heating.

Pite's detail was meticulous: each window arch was lined with white glazed brick, which can only be seen if you lean out of the window backwards. Light, which flooded the lower floors, was provided by five light wells also lined in white glazed brick. Further light was provided to the basement level by skylights. Pite was asked to add further extensions fronting Melton Street almost as soon as the Euston Square building was finished. He continued to enlarge the building for almost 20 years, the addition of the 9 Melton Street tower being his final work. With the widening of Euston Road in the late 1920s the final expansion took place: the architect this time was not Pite but a contemporary, Josiah Gunton. The London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company having moved out in 1910, the new occupants were the National Amalgamated Approved Society.

Later Life

At least half of Pite's smaller commissions were in the Marylebone area where he always retained an office. At 48 Harley Street, Pite was asked to make alterations for Gibson Sankey - his trademark mosaic tiling, this time in blue glass, still remains today surrounding the entrance. Pite also built 82 Mortimer Street in about 1900 for Doctor Dudley Buxton as a 4-storey family house and consulting rooms. It was constructed of red brick and Portland stone with a basement and slated mansard. The sculptures flanking the 2nd floor, seated male and female figures, were produced by Farmer and Brindley. Pite regularly attended Nash's All Souls Church, Langham Place, where he was invited to design the Peace Memorial floor (1918/19). Its Byzantine mosaic style is reminiscent of his floor in the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company's entrance hall.

Pite received many honours. He was President of the Architectural Association in 1896 and held the appointments of Professor of Architecture at the Royal College of Art, 1900-23, and of Architectural Director at the London County Council School of

Building, Brixton, 1905-28. In 1914 he had moved to Hampstead. His daughter Grace, who was never well, spent most of her time at Earlywood with Sadler, the family's nanny, as she felt the coastal air more beneficial. In 1930 Arthur moved to 22 Manor Way, Beckenham in order to live near his brother William, and this is where he died from exhaustion and skin cancer on 27 November 1934. He was succeeded in practice by his eldest son Ion Beresford Pite.

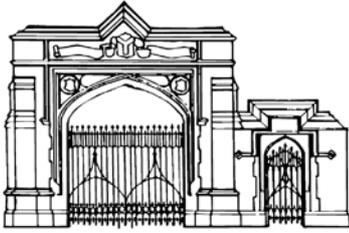
The Search for Arthur's Grave

Pite is buried in his family grave at Norwood (grave 31,852, square 23). But I did not know this when I first decided to find out where he was buried. It took some 18 months to track him down. I was informed that he was buried with his wife Mary in her family vault at Cowgate Cemetery, Dover. I jumped on a train the next day and two hours later arrived in Dover. When I visited the grave I found a long list of Mowlls commemorated there and noticed the inscription stated 'Mary Kilvington Mowll wife of Arthur Beresford Pite'.

Continued on page 16



Graves of Arthur Beresford Pite (grave 31,852, square 23) and (centre) his wife Mary (grave 27,719, square 23) at Norwood



Recent FOWNC Events

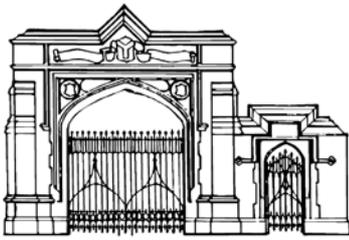
by Jill Dudman



On 21 February FOWNC committee member Paul Graham talked to us about the many persons buried at Norwood who have connections with Charles Dickens. There is just one relative, his uncle John Barrow, a journalist who taught him shorthand (grave 5,815, square 17). However, Dickens attended the funerals of three of his friends: the barrister, politician, playwright, poet and judge Sir Thomas Talfourd (1854; grave 1,452, square 34); the playwright, journalist and radical satirist Douglas Jerrold (1857; grave 5,452, square 97); and the artist George Cattermole (1868; grave 8,071, square 23) who illustrated some of Dickens' novels. Also buried at Norwood are his publishers Richard Bentley (grave 736, square 61) and William Bradbury (grave 24,774, square 21), with both of whom he fell out. Paul has particularly studied Dickens' relationships with his friends and colleagues, and it is clear that after any disagreements (which seem to have been frequent) Dickens would never make the first move, apparently preferring to remain estranged from even previously good friends, such as Jerrold, who were left to repair the relationship. Paul's book describing these personalities and more is available from the FOWNC bookstall, price £2.95.

Last year marked the centenary of the death in 1908 of the leading forensic scientist and toxicologist Sir Thomas Stevenson (grave 26,543, square 95 – see Newsletter 64, January 2009 and Newsletter 32, May 1998). FOWNC chairman Bob Flanagan, who shares the same profession, gave a talk on 21 March in which he discussed Stevenson in the context of the development of not only forensic science, but also biochemistry and medical science. There were several celebrated trials involving poisonings where Stevenson gave forensic evidence, most notably that of Adelaide Bartlett, who was acquitted thanks in large part to his testimony. The alternative view was succinctly expressed by Sir James Paget of St Bartholomew's Hospital who opined 'In the interests of science, she should tell us how she did it!' Stevenson's pupil Sir Frederick Hopkins, who shared a Nobel Prize for the discovery of vitamins, also featured in the talk. Hopkins became Sir William Dunn Professor of Biochemistry at Cambridge – Dunn, a wealthy businessman, endowed laboratories at Oxford and at Cambridge and is buried not far from Stevenson (grave 33,242, square 43 – see Newsletter 61, January 2008).





Forthcoming FOWNC Events

May - September 2009

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month. Tours on 7 June, 5 July, 2 August and 6 September will start at 14.30, at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road, and will last for about 2 hours. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Saturday 13 June, 12.00: Tour of the Greek section of West Norwood Cemetery

A special tour arranged at the request of the Anglo-Hellenic League, to which FOWNC members will also be welcome. The Greek chapel will be open.

19 & 20 September: Open House London Weekend

FOWNC will be opening the Greek chapel on the Sunday afternoon - visit www.openhouse.org.uk or look for the booklet in libraries, nearer the time, for details of this and much else to see around the capital.



Other forthcoming events

Saturday 16 May, 11.00-17.00: Nunhead Cemetery Open Day

Linden Grove, SE15. Displays, stalls, guided tours, choral performances, birds of prey, plant sales, children's activities, and refreshments (Friends of Nunhead Cemetery).

Sunday 12 July, 10.30-16.00: Lambeth Cemetery Open Day

Blackshaw Road, SW17. Historic hearses and other vehicles, demonstrations of memorial masonry, displays of coffins and caskets, rides in a motorcycle hearse, tours of the cemetery and crematorium, and refreshments. We hope to take the FOWNC bookstall – please contact the Secretary if you would like to help.

Sunday 19 July, 11.00-17.00: Brompton Cemetery Open Day

Fulham Road, SW10. Exhibitions, tours of the cemetery and catacombs, birds of prey, children's activities, and refreshments (Friends of Brompton Cemetery).

Prof. Arthur Beresford Pite

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So there the matter rested until I found an entry in a FOWNC Newsletter on-line that recorded that 'Arthur Beresford Pite (1861-1934) architect and educator' was buried at Norwood. Also buried with Pite is his sister Mary who died on 12 June 1930, aged 73.

In an adjacent grave (27,719, square 23) lie his daughter Mary Hephzibah (Molly) Pite, who died 12 November 1897, aged 5 weeks; his wife Mary, who died 27 June 1905, aged 49; and his daughter Grace Sarah, who died 29 October 1924, aged 36.

The graves are sadly decrepit, but it is planned to restore them with help from the Heritage of London Trust and other bodies. Unfortunately the bronze plaques that once graced the stones were stolen many years ago, but a suitable replacement will be sourced.

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

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

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