

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 68 - May 2010

Price £1.00 (Free to members)

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Chairman’s Report

Bob Flanagan

This year marks our 21st Birthday and to celebrate we are hosting the National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM on Saturday 31 July. For the occasion we have hired both Nettlefold Halls adjacent to the Cemetery, so there will be plenty of space not only for delegates from other groups, but also for FOWNC members. The event starts at 10.30. We have scheduled a brief series of talks (no more than an hour in total) followed by tours of the cemetery and Greek Chapel. Lunch is scheduled for 13.30 with the AGM following thereafter. We expect 50-100 delegates from Friends groups across the country.

Please contact Jill Dudman (details page 16) if you can help with the NCFC AGM (stewarding, refreshments), or with events such as Open Garden Squares (12 June) and Lambeth Cemetery Open Day (11 July) - see page 15.

Mr Keith Lucas

Sexton Keith Lucas has decided to take early retirement from his duties in the Cemetery office from 1 July. We wish him every happiness for the future. I personally will miss him. He has been a great friend to the Cemetery and to FOWNC over the last 21 years – virtually the only constant in what has at times been a jungle of deceit emanating from others. It is not often I am moved to use the word irreplaceable, but I fear it is justified on this occasion. It is sad to reflect on the years that have been wasted because of the attitude of the Council initially to the Consistory Court judgment, and more recently to conservation issues. If so much time had not been lost in the times of relative plenty, we would be better placed to weather the storm now.

There are other changes afoot. Angela Li, Cemetery Superintendent, who has been a good friend too, is leaving on promotion within the Council. We wish her well. The good news is that we welcome long-time friend Julie Dunk, a doyen of historic cemetery research, who will be providing cover (one day a week) for the time being.

Conservation Issues

Vegetation clearance has proceeded apace over the last few months – the contractors City Suburban have done an excellent job and estimate that they took five tons of ivy off the remaining uncleared 20 yards or so of the Robson Road wall! Secondly, a piece of the railings surrounding the Gilbert memorial, cracked during the recent roadway works (see Newsletters *passim*), has fallen off and been placed in safe keeping by Keith Lucas.

On a more positive note, Byron Miller (Lambeth's Head of Parks and Cemeteries) and the Scheme of Management Committee have commissioned repair/renovation to the Norwood High Street/Robson Road railings. One missing major finial opposite St Luke's Church, perhaps broken off by a falling branch (see illustration), is to be replaced.



*Damage to railings,
Norwood High Street*

Closer inspection of the section of railings surrounding the Nettlefold Halls reveals that they are of tubular steel construction with what appear to be the cast iron finials from the original railings inserted at the end of the uprights. Presumably this reflects loss of the originals as a result of the bombs that destroyed the Cemetery office and the adjacent houses during the Second World War. Be this as it may, they are an elegant substitute.

The Cost of Burial at Norwood

Colin Fenn

Whilst researching the operation of the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company I have gained an insight into the cost of burial at Norwood. Publilius Syrus (1st century BC) may have said 'we are all equal in the presence of death', but the Victorians ensured the grandeur and expense of their funerals reflected their standing in life. The charges certainly support Norwood's reputation as the "Millionaires' Cemetery".

For a basic send-off, the Economic Funeral Company of Blackfriars & Baker Street advertised a 'Best-class funeral, with hearse and four, two coaches pulled by pairs, full equipments, shell, lead coffin, case, &c' for £30 (some £25,000 today¹). They also offered a far simpler 'Artisan's funeral, hearse and one, and coach and one' for £3 18s (£3,000) (*Times*

¹ The cost of labour increased intermittently during the later Victorian era, which is reflected in the conversion into today's money. I have used an 'exchange rate' based on wages over time, as being the closest representation of the value attached to a funeral

15 June 1865). For a grander funeral, a wealthy family might require a 'hearse and four horses, two mourning coaches with fours, twenty-three plumes of rich ostrich-feathers, complete velvet covering for carriages and horses, and an esquire's plume of best feathers; strong elm shell, with tufted mattress, lined and ruffled with superfine cambric, and pillow; full worked glazed cambric winding-sheet, stout outside lead coffin, with inscription plate and solder complete; one and a half inch oak case, covered with black or crimson velvet, set with three rows round, and lid panelled with best brass nails; stout brass plate of inscription, richly engraved four pairs of best brass handles and grips, lid ornaments to correspond; use of silk velvet pall; two mutes with gowns, silk hat-bands and gloves; fourteen men as pages, feathermen and coachmen with truncheons and wands, silk hat-bands, &c; use of mourners' fittings, and attendant with silk hat-band, &c.' Fees for such a grand occasion might cost £55 (£40,000) (*Household Guide to Death in the Household*, London: Cassell, c.1880).

When Prince Albert died in 1861, Queen Victoria's extended period of mourning set the style. Etiquette dictated that close family would go into mourning for a year, starting with a period of 'deep mourning'. Joyful events, such as parties, weddings or theatrical soirées would be avoided. Black ribbon or crêpe might be tied to the door to warn callers to be silent. Correspondence would be written on black-trimmed notepaper and mourning cards would be sent to distant friends and relatives, perhaps with a pair of gloves.

The less well off would put their clothes in the washing copper and dye them black. More affluent ladies would wear deep veils over their faces, with black crêpe, *the* fabric to be worn, as its dark crumpled texture contrasted with fashionable silks. Servants might be dressed in plain black livery and the family's carriage trimmed and lined in black fabric. A gentleman's buttonhole might be replaced by a weed. Later, perhaps after six months, the family would move to 'half mourning', with dresses made of black or purple silk grenadine, black grosgrain fabric, or crêpe-lisse, trimmed with black fur or seal-skin.

At the funeral, mourners would be supplied with silk or crêpe scarves and kid gloves by the grieving family. There would be black hatbands; 7 inches wide for a spouse, down to 2 inches for a distant relation. Women would wear black gowns made of crêpe, with deep black veils and black gloves, although they were discouraged from attending the actual burial lest they display too much emotion. White might be worn for the death of a child. The family might have commissioned a photographer to record an image of the floral tribute, or of the deceased, especially if it was a child who had never been recorded before by photograph or portrait. Some may have taken a lock of hair that could be kept in an expensive locket or made into some other *memento mori*.

It was bad luck to keep mourning clothes in the house after the prescribed period, so at subsequent deaths the family would need new outfits. Samuel Courtauld's company flourished on the back of this fashion as he had a near monopoly on the supply of crêpe. Fred-



Queen Victoria in half mourning, 1862

erick Nettlefold (1833–1913) (grave 19,602, square 37) of Norwood Grove was a director of Courtaulds from the 1890s.

The Burial Plot

The family would need to purchase a suitably large vault or a simpler burial plot. In 1849 the South Metropolitan Cemetery charged between £1 5s (£1,000) and £4 4s (£3,300) for a single adult burial. The Cemetery charged more for prime locations, i.e.

the chapels, major roads and paths. In 1860 the Greek Brotherhood charged £5 5s (£3,500) for an adult burial in a vault or brick grave, or £1 2s for a child (£700), to be buried in the Greek enclosure. By 1880 £5 7s (£3,000) would only purchase a third class private brick-lined grave in the main Cemetery. In Highgate or Nunhead this would buy a superior second class plot, in a better position (*Cassell's Household Guide*).

CEMETERY, NORWOOD, SURREY (established by 6 & 7 Will. IV) - Part of the Ground and a Chapel have been consecrated for the use of Members of the Established Church; and part, with a Chapel, appropriated for Dissenters.

The charge for a single interment	£1 5 0
Private grave in perpetuity	3 3 0
Interment in public vault	4 4 0
Private catacombs of all sizes.	

No parochial fees payable.

Tables of fees to be obtained at the Cemetery; and at the Company's office, 70, King William-street, City:- By order of the directors,
GRIFFITH THOMAS, Clerk and Registrar.

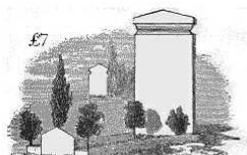
Daily News 17 February 1849

These charges were far too expensive for the average Londoner to consider interment in Norwood; if he was able to work a full week, a building labourer might earn 14s to £1 - even a £3 artisan's funeral would most likely push the family into debt. To address their needs, the London Necropolis at Brookwood offered a first class plot for a single adult for just £2 10s, a second class plot for £1, or a 'package deal', with religious service, coffin, all undertaking expenses, and a private grave for from £2 5s. to £17 4s (*London's Necropolis* by John Clark: Sutton, 2004; *Times*, 15 June 1865).

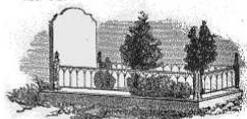
Catacomb Interment

I have not yet located a price list for a loculus or full-sized catacomb at Norwood, but the will of John Lake (-1855) shows he set aside £300 (£160,000) to purchase and fit out a family-sized catacomb at Norwood, which would probably take eight standard coffins. A comparable single interment in the catacombs at Highgate or Nunhead cost £17 10s (£9,000) in 1880, while a vault there would be charged at £40 to £50 depending on capacity (£20-25,000) (*Cassell's Household Guide*).

The South Metropolitan Cemetery Directors' minute books show their expenditure on specific vaults and works. In 1875 building a vault in the grounds cost £15 (£8000), whilst fitting out two chambers in the catacombs cost £69 (£35,000) (*SMC Minute Books*, Minet Archives IV/100/ AD3/1-5). Costs almost doubled between the 1860s and the 1880s. Once a family had purchased their 'exclusive rights of burial' they



£9 9s



£20



£22



Cassell's Household Guide: Memorial Types

could erect a memorial stone on the plot. In the 1880s a typical memorial might range in price from £7 (£3,750) to £22 (£11,000) if in Portland or York stone with iron railings, or more if in marble or granite. The Cemetery also required owners of plots held in perpetuity to make a subscription to the ‘Memorial Perpetuity Fund’, an account that was held by the Company to pay for future maintenance of the memorials. By the 1880s this fund was valued at about £4,000 (£2 million) – I wonder what happened to all the money?

The Pauper Funeral and the Parochial Benefice

Parish churchyards had long been used for burials by vestries because they were cheap and convenient. The public health consequences of this practice were highlighted by ‘The Great Stink’ and by the Enon Chapel scandal. The Enon Chapel was located on Clement’s Lane (today St. Clement’s Lane) near the Strand and was built around 1823. In 1839 the remains of some 12,000 people were found in a 12 ft by 59 ft by 6 ft pit beneath the chapel. They were collected by a corrupt Baptist minister named Howse who had promised that, for a fee of 15s, he could provide burials, as many as 9 or 10 taking place each Sunday. People praying in the church regularly experienced fainting and sickness due to the stench from the decaying corpses a few inches below their feet.

After it was closed, new owners covered the existing wooden floor with a single brick floor, in turn covered in a new wooden floor, and opened the premises as a ‘low dancing-saloon’: ‘Enon Chapel - Dancing on the Dead - Admission Threepence. No lady or gentleman admitted unless wearing shoes and stockings’. In 1848, a surgeon, Mr George Walker, bought the chapel and, at a cost of £100, had the bodies removed to West Norwood where they were reburied in a single grave 12 ft square and 20 ft deep.²

Walker then sold the chapel and George Sanger, the Circus Impresario, briefly took the lease (December 1850) and fitted it out as a theatre for pantomime and circus. However, after being informed by the police that Mr Walker had not quite finished the job and that the remains of minister Howse, amongst others, were still there, he rapidly moved out!

Meanwhile, Parliament had at last intervened and the 1852 Burial Act outlawed all burials within London, putting the insanitary churchyards out of bounds. Norwood, of course, sat in countryside outside the city at that time. This Act explains an indignant inscription at Norwood on the memorial to Henry Dawkins, on the north side of Ship Path: *Born 28 Jan 1773 buried 28 Jan 1857. Indicted by Parliament from mingling his ashes with his wife and family who lie buried in St Margaret’s Westminster graveyard.*

For those who could not afford their own funeral, the responsibility of burying paupers fell to the local



*Memorial to Henry Dawkins
(grave 5,260, square 76)*

² Further research is needed here to locate the grave within the cemetery

parish vestry. Denied of the use of their own (free) churchyards, vestries looked to strike an economic bargain with the established cemetery companies and the new municipal cemeteries. The South Metropolitan Cemetery offered a pauper's unmarked shared plot for 17s. 6d. (£700) and Nunhead charged £1 (£800). However, Victoria Park and Tower Hamlets charged 7s and 9s respectively, with discounts for children and infants.

Understandably most of the London vestries dispatched their poor to the cheaper sites. But the high fees for paupers' graves only partly explain why the wealthy outnumber the poor at Norwood. The other reason was a system of back-payments to the clergy. During epidemics some Lambeth clergymen were said to earn £100 in burial fees from their churchyards in a single week – obviously the extra expense of sending these burials to distant and expensive cemeteries such as Norwood threatened their comfortable living! To encourage parish vestries to use cemeteries, Parliament sanctioned a *parochial benefice* – a bounty paid for each body sent from their parish. The South Metropolitan Cemetery Act (1836) was typical in allowing benefice payments; the Company sent 7s 6d (£300) to any parish sending a full-price adult, but only 1s 6d (£60) for a pauper.

The vestry books of most London parishes were closed to public scrutiny and these clerical bounties became known only gradually. Public reaction was predictable: 'Thus it is the bodies and not the souls of the parishioners that obtain the solicitude of the divine' (*Era*, 3 March 1850). Parliament eventually outlawed this practice in 1880. Henry Richard MP summed it up: 'by the present Cemetery Acts, the clergy were asserting a sort of vested interest in their dead parishioners for all time. It was impossible that this extraordinary regulation could continue' (*Hansard* 25 April 1883, Vol. 278).

Cheaper Funerals at Last

Attempts were made to simplify mourning practices from the 1870s, in the hope that the poor would no longer be beggared by the cost of dying. But they still regarded a grand send-off as the last chance to compensate for a life of poverty, indignity and crushed aspirations. This attitude changed with the Great War. The vast casualty lists made the grand gestures of the Victorian funeral appear self-indulgent. The lawn cemeteries crafted by the Imperial War Graves Commission cemented the public preference for a simpler memorial style, and made affordable memorialisation more acceptable.

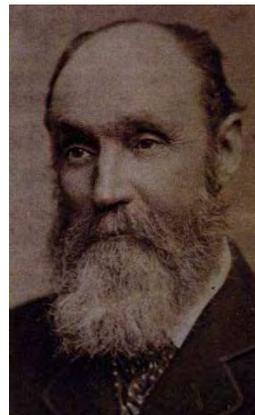
Thomas Fleming McLachlan (1830-1900)

Grant McLachlan

Tom McLachlan, my great-grandfather, was a major figure in the Transvaal Gold Rush. It is thought that he came over to London from South Africa to visit his youngest son Ronald, who was studying medicine at Guy's Hospital³, and died here, hence his burial at Norwood on 19 September 1900. There are no other burials in the grave.

³ Mr Arthur Ronald McLachlan FRCS (England, 1901), hon. surgeon to the Woodstock and New Somerset Hospitals and civil surgeon in the South African Field Force during the Anglo-Boer War died at his home in Claremont, Capetown (*British Medical Journal*, 4 November 1939)

Maria Shires Waterfall, near Graskop at the southern end of the Blyde River Canyon, Mauchsborg, South Africa, is named in honour of Maria Shires, née Taylor (1814–1875). She was the mother of Joseph Brooke Shires (Junior), who planted the first Eucalyptus and Wattle at Onverwacht (now Brooklands) in 1876 and of Ann Maria McLachlan. Her son-in-law, Tom McLachlan first discovered gold in a gully on the slopes of Spitskop near Hendricksdal in February 1873, in the Kaap Valley in January 1874, and alluvial gold at Jamestown in the Barberton area in 1881.



Thomas Fleming McLachlan (1830-1900)

Tom McLachlan acquired Geelhoutboom Farm in February 1873. The gold he found was the richest strike so far and miners were attracted from all over the world. Jansen, the Landrost of Lydenburg, visited the diggings and organised a diggers' committee and appointed an American, Major W. MacDonald, as Gold Commissioner. President Burgers named the camp Mac Mac because of the predominance of Scottish names amongst the diggers, and declared the area the New Caledonia Gold Fields. The greatest rush since the discovery of diamonds ensued, establishing the Transvaal Republic as the largest gold producer in the world at that time.



Thomas Fleming McLachlan's tombstone at Norwood (grave 29,327, square 6)

According to Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer⁴ 'The three men described as the real gold developers in the eastern Transvaal were all Natal men, viz. Edward Button, Thomas McLachlan and George Pigot Moodie. Button found the first workable gold in the Transvaal in 1871 at Eersteling in the Marabastad area and he later became the Transvaal's first Gold Commissioner. Thomas McLachlan pioneered the Barberton gold field, while the land surveyor G.P.

Moodie, son of Donald Moodie earlier mentioned, discovered gold near Barberton and secured the Moodie Concession, thus owning the land on which the goldmine was situated. In later years he built a mansion at Rondebosch, which he called Westbrooke (now the State President's official residence, Genadendal).

The ensuing tale paints a vivid picture of the time. In September 1882 McLachlan paid his last visit to Duiwels Kantoor (Devils office). The diggers there tried to get him drunk so that he might divulge his secrets, but he refused to tell them anything. He did however inform them that he knew where Auguste Roberts (French Bob) and his companions were

⁴ *British Settlers in Natal – 1824–1857*, www.shelaghspencer.org

finding gold. After more drink, he agreed to lead them there after he had finished some business. Two hundred diggers packed their things waiting to be shown the way. McLachlan finished earlier than they realized and left a note telling them to meet him at a certain spot on 2 October. When they got there they found a note under a stone leading them to another spot, and then another note, and so on. This went on for days through really rugged country. The exhausted diggers eventually returned to Duiwels Kantoor. McLachlan, so the story goes, wisely never went back! For more on Tom McLachlan, French Bob, The Golden Dane, Cockney Liz, Florrie and Trixie, and other personalities see: www.mpumalangahappenings.co.za/barberton_personalities.htm.

The Norwood Cemetery Railings

Bob Flanagan

A chance observation on the way to a Management Advisory Group meeting last year has proved of great interest. At the base of the right hand gate (see illustration) of the little used Church Road Gate on Norwood High Street opposite St Luke's Church is a fragment of a plate that reads 'AMAH' in Gothic script. From the size of the adjacent mountings it requires little imagination to complete 'BRAMAH & ROBINSON'.

Joseph Bramma (1748–1814) was born near Barnsley. Aged 23, he walked to London. Spelling his name as Joseph Bramah, he was a prolific inventor: a valved flush toilet (an example survives in Kew Palace), a machine for automatically printing bank notes with sequential serial numbers, the beer pump, and famously an 'unpickable' lock were amongst his innovations. The Duke of Wellington was an admirer of the Bramah Lock, as was Tsar Alexander I of Russia. Bramah had been granted a patent for his lock in 1784 and set up the Bramah Lock Co., Denmark Street, St Giles, quickly moving to 124 Piccadilly. Henry Maudslay (1771–1831) began to work for Bramah while still in his teens. He made a padlock to Bramah's design and Bramah offered a reward for anyone who could pick it. Finally in 1850, an American locksmith named Hobbs opened the lock and received the reward, after working on it for 16 days.



Norwood High Street Gate

Maudslay became Bramah's foreman and in 1791 married Bramah's housemaid. In 1797 he asked Bramah for an increase in his wage: Bramah refused, and Maudslay left and opened his own workshop. In 1810 he joined forces with Joshua Field (1786–1863) (grave



*High Street Gate:
Remains of
BRAMAH &
ROBINSON plate*

3,804, square 27 – Field’s sarcophagus features in our postcard of St Stephen’s Chapel), and the firm became famous as Maudslay and Field, later Maudslay, Sons and Field. Henry’s fourth son Joseph (1801–1861) is also buried at Norwood (grave 4,361, square 77; for illustration see Newsletter 50, May 2004).

But what of Joseph Bramah? In 1807 his eldest son, Timothy, joined the business and from 1814 the firm became Bramah & Son. Between 1821 and 1836 two other sons, Francis and Edward, became partners and the company became Bramah & Sons with factories in Pimlico. In 1835 they made the roof girders for the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

A new partner, Charles Robinson, joined the firm in 1837. Bramah and Robinson supplied steam engines and also structural ironwork, including that for Buckingham Palace. In 1841 the lock business was separated

from the engineering business. The former became Bramah and Co, and the latter Bramah, Prestage and Ball. The Pimlico factory burnt down in 1843 and some records were lost. The site is now the new Bramah Buildings development next to the main line into Victoria station, next to the Embankment pumping station.

A further Bramah invention was the hydraulic press, hence it is no surprise that Bramah and Robinson were invited to design and install a silent hydraulic coffin lift at Norwood. It seems that this ‘catafalque’ was not part of the initial plan for Norwood since it does not feature in the original catacomb plan in the Cemetery office.

According to JC Loudon⁵ the cost of the lift was about £200, and it had one drawback: during very severe frosts the water was liable to freeze. This was guarded against by shutting all the outside doors of the vaults and by the use of stoves to keep the place warm. This description does not square with the structure in the catacombs that appears to be a boiler house of sorts, presumably installed to provide heating for the Chapel above, unless this was an afterthought – as with the coffin lift itself, the boiler



The Norwood coffin lift and detail of maker’s plate

⁵ *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries and on the Improvement of Churchyards*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1843

house does not feature on the original plan. Be this as it may, the General Cemetery Company was obviously impressed with this design hence Bramah & Robinson were called in to re-model the coffin lift at Kensal Green (see Newsletter 40, January 2001).

There is a reference to the Piccadilly Hyde Park gates being cast by Messrs Bramah and Sons (Smith, Thomas. *Historical Recollections of Hyde Park*. London, J Smith. 1836): ‘They are of iron, bronzed, and fixed or hung to the piers by rings of gun-metal. The design consists of a beautiful arrangement of the Greek honeysuckle ornament; the parts being well defined, and the raffles of the leaves brought out in a most extraordinary manner’. The Wellington Arch gates are said to be by Bramah as well. The Hyde Park gates are painted light green, whilst the Norwood gates and railings (obviously in Gothic style) adjacent to Robson Road/Norwood High Street are ‘spice’ brown and the railings adjacent to Hubbard Road are a shade of green. Both the latter colour schemes were chosen to match the original paint samples as a result of English Heritage analyses.

The railings and gates enclosing the Cemetery forecourt were added in the 1890s. As yet I have no information as to their provenance. There is, however, one final complication. Inspection of the main gate beneath the Tite arch reveals the nameplate: ‘GB COOPER, 121 DRURY LA’. The style of the lettering looks to be more recent than that of the presumed Bramah plate. So far, I have not found any information about GB Cooper of Drury Lane.



Detail of plate on the Main Gate (image rotated 90°)

John Hilton (1805-78) & Joseph Towne (1806-79)

Bob Flanagan

The exhibition *Exquisite Bodies* at the Wellcome Foundation last year that featured some of Joseph Towne’s anatomical models (see Newsletter 50, May 2004) reminded me that I had done some further research regarding relevant graves at Norwood. During his tenure at Guy’s Hospital (1826–77) Towne constructed more than 1,000 wax models of anatomical preparations from dissections made by John Hilton (1805–1878) and of cases of skin disease selected by Dr Thomas Addison (1793–1860). Some 630 of these models survive in the Gordon Museum, now part of King’s College.

John Hilton was born at Sible Hedingham, Essex on 22 September 1805, the eldest son of John and Hannah Hilton. He was the uncle of the physician Charles Hilton Fagge (1838–1883) (grave 19,889, square 21 – monument destroyed), who became keeper of the Guy’s Anatomical Museum and thus custodian of the models.

After attending King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford, John Hilton studied in Boulogne. He entered Guy’s Hospital as a student in 1824, was admitted a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons (1827), and was appointed demonstrator in anatomy at Guy’s (1828). Concurrently, Towne began his work at Guy’s as a wax modeller. As demon-

strator in anatomy, Hilton was familiar with human physiology. While studying innervation, he recognised that an inflamed joint not only referred pain to the skin over it, but also caused muscle spasms that immobilized and protected the joint from further injury. Today, this phenomenon is known as Hilton's Law. He was elected FRS in 1839. In 1841 Hilton was chosen for his most sobering duty, the post-mortem examination of Sir Astley Cooper, who had stated in his will that he was to be anatomised (see page 14).



John Hilton
(Gordon Museum)

In 1844 Hilton was appointed assistant surgeon at Guy's Hospital. He was in effect starting his surgical apprenticeship, as until this point his work had been restricted to anatomical dissection and teaching. He was promoted full surgeon in 1849. Hilton was the greatest anatomist of his time, hence his nickname 'Anatomical John'. In his grasp of the structure and functions of the brain and spinal cord he was far in advance of his time. As a surgeon he was more cautious than brilliant. This was doubtless due partly to learning his trade before the introduction of anaesthesia, and partly to his own consummate anatomical knowledge, as is indicated by the method for opening deep abscesses that is known by his name. Hilton was one of the earliest surgeons to practise lumbar colostomy. In 1846 he performed one of the first recorded English operations of surgical relief of an internal strangulation.

In 1860 Hilton was appointed professor of anatomy and surgery in the Royal College of Surgeons. In this position he presented the 18 lectures that were published as a volume entitled *On the Influence of Mechanical and Physiological Rest in the Treatment of Accidents and Surgical Diseases, and the Diagnostic Value of Pain* (1863). He was appointed surgeon-extraordinary to Queen Victoria in 1867.

After retirement in 1870, Hilton continued in private practice. He died at Hedingham House, Clapham, from carcinoma of the stomach on 14 September 1878. He was survived by his second wife, Elizabeth Mary Ann née Clarke, his stepson Fielding Clarke, and children from his first marriage. John Hilton's tomb at Norwood, a simple flat granite slab (grave 17,174, square 91) sits in the undergrowth in that part of the Cemetery.

As to the career of Joseph Towne, the arrival of Madame Tussaud in 1802 had brought expertise in wax modelling to England. Joseph made a 33-inch wax model of a human skeleton and this was taken to William Clark, professor of anatomy at Cambridge. Encouraged, aged 19, Towne travelled to London. His brother Jireh and cousins Jonah and Alexander (the latter training as a surgeon at the Webb Street School) were living in the City. On 17 February 1826 Towne was introduced to three doctors, including W.O. Grainger, lecturer in anatomy and physiology at Webb Street, who referred him to Sir Astley Cooper. Cooper authenticated his wax model and Towne was given a letter of recommendation to Mr Harrison, the treasurer of Guy's Hospital, who engaged him as the modeller for the new medical school.

Towne's wax skeleton was subsequently entered in the Society of Arts' competition and won the silver medal. A year later Towne exhibited models of the brain, highly praised by Cooper, and secured the gold medal. In his first 10 years at Guy's he produced some 200

anatomical wax models. The work was carried out in a room in the old anatomy theatre at Guy's, which he always kept locked. During this time he trained his younger brother Elihu (-1834). No-one else was privy to his technique and the secrets of his skills in preparing and colouring wax died with him. The models, however, are still used for teaching.

Towne also exhibited thirteen marble sculptures at the Royal Academy. Amongst them were two busts of the Duke of Wellington, and busts of Benjamin Harrison, Sir Astley Cooper (1841) and Thomas Addison (1852). His bust of Florence Nightingale (marble, 1850) is in the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth. He was still exhibiting at the Royal Academy aged sixty. He produced a small equestrian statue featuring the Duke of Kent which was presented to Queen Victoria by Benjamin Harrison on 1 November 1837. Towne himself was also presented to the young queen.

Frederic Griffith MD recorded this impression of Towne (*Medical Library and Historical Journal*, 1905; 3, 41–5):

“With a desire to learn somewhat of the personality of this man who had been gone so long from the scenes of his work, I sought where I could. It was in vain that I searched until in the person of ‘Mills’, the door-keeper of the nurses’ house, I found the last one who had met the wax modeller and still retained connection with the institution. They were pleasant recollections to the old man which my questions aroused, for he smiled as he paused for a moment to let his memory go back.

‘Oh yes’, he said, ‘I knew Mr. Towne. He’s been dead this long time, though. I was a young man and, being bright and active, he sent me errands. There’s no one left about here that knows him, except me.

‘He was a strange man, was Mr. Towne. He worked in the basement over there under what is now the eye ward. Mr. Towne never liked to have anybody around when he worked and none of us ever saw him at it. Being forward then, I used sometimes to try and find out how he did it. But he would never let me get close enough to see anything before he would stop work and come over to me and say, “Well, do you want anything?”’ Mr. Towne always wore a cloth over his head when he was putting on his colours. Oh, Mr. Towne was mortal afraid of dust. “Don’t make a dust, Mills”, I can hear him say over and over. Besides me and Francis, the Italian plaster-mixer, Mr. Towne had for an assistant one William Bouch, who was used as a model. Mr. Towne was a silent man. Bouch and I used to joke about it. “Mills, it’s awfully cold down there setting so long all day”, and “Well Mills, the old man’s been jawing me all day again”, which meant that he had never opened his mouth’.

Pressed to describe further his personality and characteristics, Mills continued: ‘Mr. Towne was rather heavy set, not very tall, with sparse, gray hair. He never ate much. A sandwich and a mug of beer lasted him all day. He didn’t have many instruments and they looked like masons’ tools, and he used to mix the wax in a pewter bowl’.



Joseph Towne: The thorax at the level of the heart (Gordon Museum)

The instruments have been preserved and are on view in the Gordon Museum: they consist of a light gouge, or chisel, two or three spatulas and a dull, knife-bladed instrument. How was the work accomplished? Perhaps the brilliance of the colours is explained by the semi-darkness under which he worked.

Joseph Towne died at his home, Sefton House, Eltham on 25 June 1879. Sadly his gravestone (grave 4,045, square 35) has been demolished. He had purchased the grave in 1854 when living at 4 Holland Place, Kennington for the burial of his son Joseph Marius Towne. Julia Towne (1876), Mary Towne née Butterfield (1881 – they had married in 1832) and Emma Mary Towne (1921) are also buried there. In an adjacent plot (grave 4,980, square 35 – headstone also demolished) purchased by his father-in-law Walter Butterfield of 5 Stanhope Terrace, Hyde Park Gardens, lie Jane Butterfield (1856), Walter Butterfield himself (1869), and Monica Towne (1928). I wonder what happened to Mills, William Bouch, and Francis, the Italian plaster-mixer?

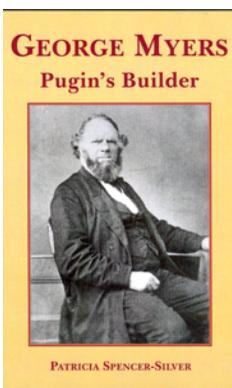


George Myers – Pugin's Builder

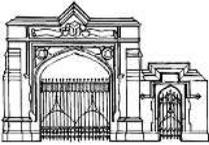
Book review - Bob Flanagan

Gracewing Publishing, 2010. Hardback, 298 pp, many b+w illustrations, £20.

FOWNC member Patricia Spencer-Silver has updated and expanded her 1993 monograph on her relative George Myers (1803-1875), one of the great Victorian master builders. He executed many works of national importance including the army camp at Aldershot, Broadmoor Hospital, the Herbert Hospital at Woolwich, the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley (sadly largely demolished), and the Bethlem Royal Hospital, St George's Fields, the central portion of which now houses the Imperial War Museum, and Southwark Roman Catholic Cathedral. As the title of the book points out he also worked extensively for A.W.N. Pugin, who called him 'a rough diamond, but a real diamond'. Myers' house on St Georges Road, SE1, bears a Blue Plaque in his memory (see Newsletter 35, May 1999).



Space cannot do justice to the mass of interesting information in this book. Suffice to list the Norwood connections I spotted, and to lament once again the destruction of Myers' gravestone (grave 3,114, square 37); we don't even know what the monument looked like. Those listed in the book also buried at Norwood are (grave, square): John Allnutt (-1863) (8,360, 22/23), Thomas Talbot Bury (1811-77) (5,935, 7), Frederick Crace (1779-1859) (6,642, 34), John Gregory Crace (1809-89) (10,657, 34), Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855) (649, 48), Sir William Cubitt (1785-1861) (7,740, 36), Sir Thomas Gabriel (1811-91) (5,534, 52), James Thomas Knowles snr (1806-84) (8,643, 75), Sir William Tite (1798-1873) (Catacomb 90), and finally Sir John Jackson (1851-1919) (21,994, 33), Myers' son-in-law and subject of *Tower Bridge to Babylon: the Life and Work of Sir John Jackson* (see Newsletter 57, September 2006).



Recent FOWNC Events

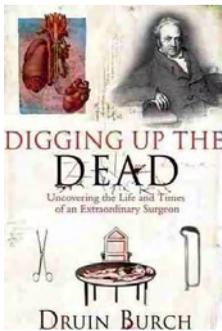
Jill Dudman

On 20 February FOWNC vice-chair Colin Fenn gave a presentation about the Greek section. Colin is preparing a guide map with notes about the monuments and those buried there. He gave a detailed account of the history of the Greek community, from the 1822 massacre on the island of Chios, which caused the flight of many of those who finally came to settle in this country. He then explained the development in stages from 1842 of the Greek enclosure, and a selection of the outstanding monuments to be found here. The mortuary chapel, commissioned by Stephen Ralli in memory of his son, and the J.P. Ralli mausoleum by G.E. Street are both listed Grade II*, whilst 16 others, including the Eustratios Ralli mausoleum by E.M. Barry, are Grade II.

Colin has made some new discoveries, such as tennis players Theodore Michel Mavrogordato (1883-1941) and his mixed doubles partner and later wife Mabel née Squire (1881-), who won the Wimbledon Mixed Doubles in 1911 (grave 35,594, square 27/28, Greek no 48). A comparatively modest cross marks the grave of diplomat and bibliophile Joannes Gennadius (Ioannis Gennadios) (grave 38,040, square 43, Greek no 279), who in 1926 donated his collection of 26,000 books and archives to the American School in Athens - the Gennadius Library is now a national treasure. We were pleased to welcome Anglo-Hellenic League member Sophia Economides and FOWNC member Elizabeth Panourgias-Morrison (Alphonse de Normandy's great-grand daughter, see Newsletter 46, January 2003), who were able to contribute to Colin's presentation.



*Joannes Gennadius
(1844-1932)*



On 20 March we welcomed Dr Druin Burch, who spoke about the life and work of surgeon Sir Astley Paston Cooper (1768–1841), now chiefly associated with Guy's Hospital. Dr Burch placed Cooper's life and work in the context of his times – for example, his keen interest in the radical politics of the day, to the extent of spending his honeymoon in France in the post-revolutionary period! However, as Cooper's career developed his radicalism was left behind and he became surgeon to many members of the royal family. Cooper was largely responsible for creating the post of modeller to the hospital for Joseph Towne (see page 10). One of his students was the poet John Keats. The talk was based loosely on Druin's excellent biography of Cooper *Digging up the Dead* (2007). For much of Cooper's career the law allowed the anatomisation of only a limited number of executed criminals. Cooper placed great importance on the regular practice of dissection in order to improve his surgical skills,

thereby reducing as far as possible the suffering of his patients in the pre-anaesthetic era. This need was met by ‘resurrectionists’, who were well-paid for unearthing newly-buried corpses (and were looked after by Cooper in the event of their getting caught); Cooper even boasted that there was no one whose body he could not steal. The 1832 Anatomy Act, which allowed bodies from workhouses, if not claimed by relatives, to be used for dissection, brought body-snatching to an end. However, the public perception that burials were inherently unsafe persisted for many years hence the high walls and iron railings found at Norwood and other contemporary cemeteries.



Forthcoming FOWNC Events

May – September 2010

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (6 June, 4 July, 1 August, 5 September) starting at the cemetery main gate off Norwood Road at 14.30 and lasting for 1½-2 hours. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Saturday 12 June, 11.00-17.00: Open Garden Squares Weekend

London Parks & Gardens Trust features the ‘Magnificent Seven’ cemeteries this year. Guided tours will start at the cemetery main gate at 12.00, 14.00 and 15.00, and the bookstall will be selling London OGSW tickets to give access to a wide range of private, communal and institutional gardens (www.opensquares.org).

Sunday 19 September: Open House London Weekend

We will be opening the Greek chapel and running tours on the Sunday afternoon. From mid-August see open-city.org.uk/activities or the Open House booklet in libraries for places of architectural interest to see for free around London throughout the weekend.

Other Forthcoming Events

Saturday 15 May, 11.00-17.00: Nunhead Cemetery Open Day

Linden Grove, SE15. Displays, guided tours, viewing from the top of the chapel tower, plant sales, craft demonstrations by the woodland bodger, choral performances, children’s activities, refreshments (Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, www.fonc.org.uk).

Saturday 3 July, 11.00-17.00: Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery Open Day

Harrow Road, W10. Introductory and themed tours of the cemetery, catacomb tours throughout the day, displays and stalls, and lots more. (FOKGC: www.kensalgreen.co.uk)

Sunday 11 July, 10.30-16.00: Lambeth Cemetery Open Day

Blackshaw Road, SW17. Historic hearses and funeral vehicles, displays of caskets, memorial masonry, rides in a motorcycle hearse, tours, refreshments, FOWNC bookstall.

Sunday 18 July, 11.00-17.00: Brompton Cemetery Open Day

Fulham Road, SW10. Displays, guided tours of the cemetery and catacombs, children’s activities, refreshments (Friends of Brompton Cemetery, www.brompton-cemetery.org).

A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan



Shadows of long-lost monuments – Steep Hill

What happened to the monuments that used to grace this portion of the Southern boundary wall of the cemetery (squares 72/84)? What did they look like? Why was only this portion of the wall used in this way? There is no clue as to the presence of unusual burials or features in front of the wall on maps of the cemetery. Given this clear precedent, however, could sale of similar space for memorials be a future source of income, Listed Building Consent permitting?

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The FOWNC Newsletter is published three times a year by

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If you would like further information about the Friends, please contact the Secretary.

The annual subscription is £3.

Registered Charity No 1063450. Member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF, www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk) and of the Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe (ASCE, www.significantcemeteries.net)
