

# Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 82 – January 2015

Free to members

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## Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

The first FOWNC Newsletter was published in January 1990 (see: [www.fownc.org/pdf/newsletter1.pdf](http://www.fownc.org/pdf/newsletter1.pdf)). Thus, this issue marks our Silver Jubilee! An enormous amount has been achieved since 1990 thanks to the commitment of our committee and ordinary members alike over the years. Only Jill Dudman and I remain on the committee from those early years. Especial thanks to Jill therefore for her commitment, in all weathers, to the cause.

FOWNC aims to increase knowledge and appreciation of the cemetery as well as safeguarding its rich heritage of memorials. It is therefore with pleasure that I acknowledge the continuing commitment of Council officers to the proposed cemetery development plan. The latest draft includes a Capital Investment programme that details an allocation of some £13 million over 10 years, with £1.7 million earmarked to encompass restoration of the St Mary-at-Hill plot and the 'at risk' monuments (see page 3) and £4.1 million for the restoration of the coffin lift and the Catacombs, and to build an as yet undefined structure on the site. Provision for grave reuse (no loss



*Monument to the Trodd family  
(grave 37,815, square 124)*

of pre-1966 monuments), further drainage and roadway works, including proper maintenance of the grass footpaths, and a timetable for a Heritage Lottery Fund bid are also included in the plan. Proposals as yet it must be emphasised, but unimagined progress considering our roller-coaster ride with Lambeth over the years.

### *Conservation Issues*



*Cemetery wall under repair near to Hubbard Road*

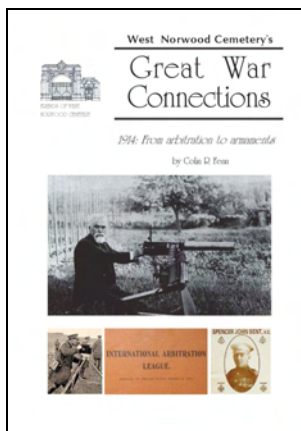
The bonded surface to the newly-reinstated roadway at the entrance to the cemetery has been laid and looks great. The new planting and the uplighting to the Tite arch and certain key monuments visible from the public roads, such as that of the Trodd family, is also very effective – thanks to Colin Fenn for having the foresight to plan for this. Repairs to the south wall at the angle near to Hubbard Road are also well in hand – those responsible for the work are doing a very thorough job. Finally, although the railings of the Gilbert monument have been repaired, the damage to the granite supporting piers has not been tackled as yet. Similarly, a supply of stone is awaited before the repair of the Birkett family monument can be completed (see September 2014 Newsletter). Credit must be given to Lambeth Project Officer Steve Wong for all his hard work on these and other projects, including the Capital Investment plan.

### *Great War Connections*

Whilst we do not have a heritage of commemoration stretching as far back as that of the Tower of London, where the traditional display of severed heads was replaced recently by one of ceramic poppies, thanks primarily to the efforts of Colin Fenn we staged our *Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches* exhibition in September (see p. 12). Colin is also producing a series of 5 booklets on the cemetery's *Great War Connections*, the first of which *1914: From arbitration to armaments* is available from the FOWNC bookstall. In addition, the article by Stephen Oxford (p. 4) gives details of one of the first British officers to die in the conflict. Finally, we plan to screen the seminal film *The Battle of the Somme* at our February meeting and to discuss the role played by Dr Distin Maddick and his family in its production and in saving the master copy (p. 15).

### *FOWNC Matters*

At the AGM in October we were pleased to welcome Jennifer Palmer-Violet and Roger Myhill to our committee. Both are already accomplished tour guides and Roger has set up a Twitter account (@fownc1837). Our membership remains strong at almost 450, and this is of immeasurable help in our dealings with Lambeth.





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## Listed Structures in the Cemetery

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Nicholas Long

The South Metropolitan Cemetery is well recognised for its architectural and historical importance. It was first designated by Lambeth Council as a Conservation Area in June 1978; was registered on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens on 1 October 1987; and is now Grade II\* listed. The cemetery contains 69 Listed structures, including 66 memorials Listed at either Grade II\* or II, mostly scheduled during the major borough list (Lambeth) revision of 27 March 1981, with further additions on 2 August 1993.

The appreciation by English Heritage (EH) of funerary monuments has grown considerably since its first survey of the cemetery in the late 1970s and it is now acknowledged that the cemetery contains many further examples of high quality memorials worthy of Listing. In the next few months FOWNC intends to propose further memorials for Listing (a ministerial decision) and members are invited to nominate memorials for inclusion in this submission. A memorial should be of exceptional quality or interest, either being of architectural importance (this could include materials, design, or other factors such as the quality of the lettering), or commemorating an individual of national or international significance. Nominations, with brief details, should be sent to Bob Flanagan (see p. 16).

Once Listed a memorial gains a measure of protection and, in theory, can only be altered or demolished after careful consideration. This did not prevent Lambeth from demolishing four such memorials in the late 1980s, but such was their significance that the council was eventually ordered to replicate the destroyed monuments by the Consistory Court.<sup>1</sup> EH keeps the condition of all Listed structures under review and produces an annual 'At Risk' register – currently 20 memorials in the cemetery are so registered. Colin Fenn has had informal discussions with EH and understands two further memorials are to be added to this register.

Recently, EH has been in contact with Lambeth's Conservation Officer informing her that a contractor is to be appointed to undertake a formal survey of the condition of the 'at risk' Listed memorials. This is a timely first step as Lambeth is in the process of finalising a Capital Investment Programme for the cemetery that includes significant provision for memorial repairs, as reported by Bob Flanagan (p. 1). This funding will underpin the management plan for the cemetery, due to be approved during 2015, which recognises the priority to be accorded to vulnerable Listed memorials, such as the Sparenborg tomb (see p. 4).

Further funding will be required, which in part might come from proposed Heritage Lottery Fund bids, but some could also come from monies husbanded by FOWNC for monument repair. It will also be important to engage with the Greek community as to the extensive works required in their cemetery.

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<sup>1</sup> We still have a restoration order outstanding for the Grane family memorial (grave 4,894, square 34) – see Newsletter 71, May 2011

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# Captain Hans Robert Sparenborg (1876-1914)

Stephen Oxford

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Captain Hans Sparenborg, who is remembered on his mother's grave at Norwood, the Grade II listed tomb of Annie Sparenborg (1854–1904), was one of the first British officers to be killed in World War One. Born on 2 November 1876 in Calcutta, West Bengal, and baptised on 18 July 1886, he was the first child of Johann Lubbo Sparenborg and Annie Charlotte A. Sparenborg, née Belchambers. His father, Johann, had been born in Norden, East Frisia, Lower Saxony, on the North Sea coast of Germany, in 1849.

In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain had close ties with Germany, with cordial relations on each side. A German Evangelical church was built in Dacres Road, Forest Hill in 1883 to cater for the large numbers of Germans in the area - many Germans were attracted by the Crystal Palace and set up their homes in its vicinity. It is not clear when Johann Sparenborg moved to England, but by 1891 he was living with his family in Lancaster Road, South Norwood. In the 1911 census he is recorded as a chemical merchant.

Johann was the son of Jan Weets Sparenborg and Anna Dorothea Sparenborg (German subjects). Johann was granted naturalization 8 March 1906. This was followed by an announcement to that effect in the *Jewish Chronicle*. Hans was educated at Dulwich College from 1887–1894. He played in the college's First XV rugby team 1892–4, and also played in the cricket team.



*Captain Hans Sparenborg*

In 1891 the Sparenborgs were living at 37 Lancaster Road, South Norwood, less than three and a half miles from Dulwich College. The family comprised Hans, 14, his mother Annie, 36 and his brother Johann Adolf, 10, also born in Calcutta; Johann Lubbo was in India at that time. They had one servant, Bessie Oram, 20, from Wiltshire.

## *Career Soldier*

From Dulwich College, Hans went on to Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, in October 1894. From there he was commissioned into the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment and was present at the relief of Ladysmith in February 1900. On 23 May 1900 he was gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. At this time he lived at 40 Abbey Gardens, London.

In 1901, aged 24, Hans was a Student Officer at the School of Musketry in Hythe St Leonard, Kent. There he was taught skills in firearms and marksmanship, which were cascaded throughout the British army and meant that soldiers on the Western Front were able to offset in part the early superior machine-gun power of the German army.

Hans was promoted Lieutenant on 22 January 1902 and served in the West African Frontier Force, May 1902–October 1904. On 28 November 1903 he sailed on the SS *Jebba* from Liverpool to Forcados, a small town in Burutu, a Local Government Area of the Delta State of Nigeria. The town stands on the Forcados River, a major navigable channel of the Niger Delta in southern Nigeria. It is about 20 miles downstream from Aboh. He took part in the Kano-Sokoto Campaign, receiving the medal with clasp (1903). He was also present during operations in Kabba Province.

Hans was at some point a member of the Masons; Mother Lodge: Furness No. 995, Province: West Lancashire. He married Flora Alexander Vigers on 12 September 1903 at the Parish Church of St Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, London. She was two years his junior and was the fourth child of Edward Vigers, an architect, and his wife Flora. At that time, according to his marriage certificate, Hans was living at Elm Dean, Victoria Road, Surbiton. In July 1904 a son, Colin Hans, was born to Hans and Florence Sparenborg. He was baptised on 1 October 1904 at St Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood. At that time the family was living at 218 Portsdown Road, London.

Annie Sparenborg herself died on 10 September 1904. Born in Calcutta, in the 1901 census she is recorded as living at Elm Dean, Victoria Road, Surbiton along with her daughter Dora (b. 1879, Calcutta), Adolf, Winifred (b. 1898, Dulwich) and 4 servants. Annie was buried at Norwood on 13 September 1904.<sup>2</sup> At the time of her death she was living with her husband and her son Adolf at Annenwerth, Plough Lane, Purley. She left £850 to be shared between her husband and her son. Her death was recorded in *The London Standard* of 12 October 1904.



*The Sparenborg family monument at Norwood (grave 31,119, square 81)*

In *Kelly's List* of 1908, the Sparenborg family is recorded as living at 251 Maldon Road, Colchester, a semi-detached red brick house. In the 1909 telephone directory Hans Sparenborg was living at Broughton Lodge, St Mary's, Kent. He was promoted Captain in 1910 and was Adjutant of the 4<sup>th</sup> Territorial Battalion of his regiment, 1911–3. He was also a first class interpreter of German, qualifying 6 April 1914 (*Army List*, 1914).

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<sup>2</sup> Originally she was buried in grave 30,950, square 103/104. She was removed by licence to the new grave on 6 January 1906

## *The Battle of Le Cateau*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment was mobilized as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) on 4 August 1914 in Dover, where it was stationed. They sailed from Southampton on the *SS Saturnia*, a cargo vessel commandeered by the War Office as a troop ship, and arrived in Boulogne on 23 August. The Battalion spent the rest of war on the Western Front (<http://www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com/ww1.htm>).

Within days the Battalion was involved in the bitter action at Haucourt, in the Battle of Le Cateau. The battle was fought after the British and French had retreated from Mons and had set up defensive positions in a fighting withdrawal at Le Cateau-Cambresis. On the morning of 26 August the Germans arrived and attacked the British forces commanded by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien (1858–1930). At the Battle of Mons most casualties were from rifle fire. At Le Cateau, however, the devastating results that quick firing guns using air bursting shrapnel shells could have on infantry fighting in the open were demonstrated, the German artillery firing indirectly from concealed positions.

By midday, realising that the British stand was only a rearguard action, they pressed their attack. By mid-afternoon the British left and right flanks began to break under unrelenting pressure. Shielded by French cavalry, the British carried out a co-ordinated tactical withdrawal despite continued attempts by the Germans to infiltrate and outflank them. That night the Allies withdrew to Saint-Quentin. Of the 40,000 British troops fighting at Le Cateau, 7,812 casualties were incurred, 2,600 of whom were taken prisoner. However the stand achieved its objective and enabled the BEF to retreat unmolested for a further five days.

Captain Sparenborg was one of 64 recorded killed on 26 August, less than a month after the outbreak of war and only 3 days after his arrival in France. He was first reported to have been wounded in September 1914, and in October as wounded and missing. He was included in the casualty list for April 1915 as officially reported killed ('died of wounds'). It was found subsequently that he died in action on 26 August at Harcourt. A Corporal in his battalion stated that he was killed by a bursting shell. He and Captain H.H. Shott DSO, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment, were amongst the first officers to fall in the Great War.

### *Aftermath*

In the 1911 census Hans' father Johann is recorded as a chemical merchant, widowed, living with daughter Winifred (Annie Marguerite Winifred) and three servants - cook, housekeeper, parlour maid. In 1918, 1919, and 1920 they are recorded in the electoral



*Sparenborg family monument at Norwood: Detail*

register as living at Forest Lodge. Johann died 27 March 1927 in the Grand Hotel Palina, Mallorca, Spain. He left £24,326 9s 6d (£1,250,000 at today's value) to Winifred.

Hans Sparenborg's only child, Colin Hans, died of malignant endocarditis on 13 August 1920, aged 16, at the Homoeopathic Hospital, Great Ormond Street, Holborn and was buried in his grandmother's grave at Norwood. His will was administered 2 October 1920, leaving £185 to his mother Flora Alexander Withey (she had by then married Alfred Ernest Withey). At the time the family was living at 6 Waterlow Court, Heath Close, Golders Green. Captain Sparenborg's own will did not go to probate until 8 June 1921, the sum of £80118s 2d, being left to his widow. That same year his medals were sent to her at 44 Waterloo Court, Heath Close, Hampstead Way, London N11. She died in Gloucester on 9 December 1954, aged 80.



*La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing*

Captain Sparenborg is recorded on the La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial on the south bank of the River Marne, on the outskirts of the commune of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, 66 km east of Paris, in the département of Seine-et-Marne. The memorial commemorates 3,740 officers and men of the BEF who fell at the battles of Mons, Le Cateau, the Marne, and the Aisne between the end of August and early October 1914 and have no known graves. The monument is constructed of white Massangis stone, a light coloured

limestone, and surmounted by a sarcophagus onto which military trophies are laid. At the four corners of the pavement on which the monument stands are stone columns supporting urns that bear the coats of arms of the four constituent nations of the UK.

The memorial was designed by Major George H. Goldsmith MC, himself a veteran of the Western Front, and unveiled on 4 November 1928 by Lt-General Sir William Pulteney (1861–1941),



*La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing (detail)*

who had commanded III Corps of the BEF in 1914. Captain Sparenborg is also remembered on his mother's monument with the words: 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori', sweet and fitting to die for one's country. Clearly of German origin, his family considered him a British subject by the time of his death. Sadly their monument in the style of a small Greek temple has recently been recorded as suffering from movement to its columns and base. Plans to stabilise it are in hand.

# The Hepburns: Leather Manufacture in Bermondsey

Michael Ward Thompson

In 1841 Edward Brayley, in a section entitled *Observations on the Manufactures of Surrey*, which he appended to the fifth and final volume of his *A Topographical History of Surrey*,<sup>3</sup> stated that ‘the Tannery of Messrs. John and Thomas Hepburn in Long-lane [is] one of the largest and most complete private establishments of the kind in the world’. Indeed, John (1789–1876) and Thomas (1798–1880) had carried on and expanded the leather tanning business in Bermondsey that their father, John Hepburn (d. 1833), had purchased in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both brothers and eight other family members would later be buried at Norwood (grave 5,308, square 69), where a granite monument by MacDonald, Field & Co was erected on the plot.<sup>4</sup>

**HEPBURN & SONS,**  
TANNERS, CURRIERS & LEATHER FACTORS  
WAREHOUSES AND OFFICES  
**LEATHER MARKET, SOUTHWARK, LONDON, S.E.**  
TANNERIES—  
**Long Lane, Bermondsey and Dartford, Kent.**

<p><b>SOLE LEATHER.</b> ENGLISH BUTTS, ENGLISH SHOULDERES, ENGLISH BELLES, ROLLED BUTTALO BENTHS, HARNESS HIDES, BEEF HIDES, BUTTER HIDES, HORSE HIDES, KIP BUTTS, CALF SKINS.</p>	<p><b>DRESSING LEATHER.</b> WATERPROOFED AND OFFICED, GLASS, ROLLED RIFLES, ROLLED RIF SHOTS, HORN BUTTS, HORN CALF BENTHS, ENGLISH KIPS, KIP BUTTS, WITTED SHOULDERES, BATHY HIDES.</p>	<p><b>CURRIED LEATHER.</b> BEST AND MEREAL HIDES, WITTED SHOULDERES, BATHY HIDES.</p>
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**HEPBURN & GALE,**  
MANUFACTURERS OF  
**WIRE-SEWN AND OTHER MACHINE BANDS,**  
LEATHER HOSE PIPES, CUP & HYDRAULIC LEATHERS,  
**MAIN DRIVING BANDS IN ALL WIDTHS.**  
SINGLE, DOUBLE, AND COMPOSITE WIRE-SEWN LEATHER BANDS FOR PORTABLE ENGINES.

<p>PREPARED HIDE LACES, STRAP BUTTS, LEATHER GOODS FOR ALL MECHANICAL PURPOSES AND FOR SHIPS USE.</p>	<p>WALDEN AND HINDONSTAMFORD HIDES, AND</p>	<p>TYPE BUTTS, CUP &amp; HYDRAULIC LEATHERS</p>
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**ADHESIVE COMPOUND,**  
For pasting leather shoes and repairing their slipping soles.

Their Waterproof Lanthorn for Pump Bladders, repairs the same, and remains perfectly tight in water. It is in general use in Mines and Collieries, and may be had of all Dealers in Leather. Each Shill from the following stamp:

**Long Lane, Southwark, LONDON, S.E.**

John Hepburn senior was a descendant of the Hepburns of Monkrig, Haddington in East Lothian. His grandfather, also a John Hepburn, had established a successful surgical practice in Stamford, Lincolnshire by 1720. One of the surgeon’s sons, Patrick, owned a tan-yard in Stamford, but moved to Chesham, Buckinghamshire *circa* 1750 where he developed the local tanning industry with the help of his three sons: John, who removed to Bermondsey in the 1770s, and George and William Patrick, who remained in Chesham. In Bermondsey, John Hepburn belonged to one of the numerous dissenting denominations present at the time. The baptisms of many of his 16 children by his wife Mary (née Wilkinson) appear in Dr Williams’ Library Registry of nonconformist births and he was buried in the family’s private vault under the Independent Chapel at Collier’s Rents, White Street, Southwark.

## Hepburn firms advertisement 1882

By the time Brayley visited the Long-lane premises in 1841 the business employed 250 men and possessed a vast array of steam machinery, including by 1867 a steam engine with a chimney stack 175 feet high, to process raw hide into a variety of leather products. The family firm was originally known as *Hepburn & Sons* and of John’s seven sons, the

<sup>3</sup> E.W. Brayley assisted by J. Britton (grave 5,235, square 119) and E.W. Brayley, jun. The geological section by G. Mantell (grave 273, square 100)

<sup>4</sup> See: Ron Knee, *Alexander MacDonald (1794–1860) – Stonemason* (FOWNC Newsletter 73, January 2012, p. 6).



aforementioned John and Thomas were most closely involved with the day-to-day operations of the plant. John was a tanner by trade and Thomas, later a magistrate for Surrey, had invented a machine that cut precision leather straps for ‘atmospheric’ railway carriages.<sup>5</sup> Their younger brother, Joseph Gutteridge, although a practicing London solicitor, was also a partner in the business. The firm’s other significant partners were Thomas’s two eldest sons. The oldest, John Gotch (b. 1826) was educated at the Protestant Dissenters’ Grammar School in Hendon, Middlesex before graduating LLB from the University of London. The second son, Frederic (b. 1829), who was educated at the Licensed Victuallers’ School, then in Lambeth, also graduated BA from the University of London and was a master tanner by 1861. Frederic’s two sons, Frank and Frederick William, in turn also became involved in the leather trade.

By the early 1880s, following the deaths of the brothers John and Thomas, *Hepburn & Sons* had fallen into financial difficulties and creditors sought redress through the courts, even including access to the deceased brothers’ estates. The company was finally liquidated in August 1883 and all the Hepburn liabilities were discharged by Frederick Gale, with whom the brothers John Gotch and Frederic had previously established a partnership trading under the name *Hepburn & Gale*. The sums Frederick Gale discharged were substantial, but his relationship with the Hepburn brothers was more than as a mere business partner. His father John Gale had married John and Thomas Hepburn’s sister Sarah in 1814, and she was Frederick’s mother. Sarah was buried in a Gale grave at Norwood on 7 November 1866 (grave 7,762, square 35).<sup>6</sup>



*Gale Family Vault (grave 7,762, square 35)*

On the death in 1857 of Edward Patrick Hepburn, Thomas’s third son, the family burial plot at Norwood was purchased by the brothers John and Thomas. Edward Patrick’s younger brother Arthur Davis’s burial followed in 1864, both men dying aged 22 years. Thomas’s daughter-in-law, Alice Foster (née Gotch), the wife of his fourth son, Thomas Henry, was buried there in 1872. Also listed on the south panel of the monument are two of Thomas’s grandchildren, Duncan (aged 8 years) and John (aged 5 months), both sons of Frederic and Mary (née Ingle). The inscription on the north panel contains Thomas’s brother John, the latter’s wife Louisa (née Paull) and their son-in-law, John Burford

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<sup>5</sup> Sir William Cubitt (1785–1861), engineer to the short-lived London and Croydon Railway, where he introduced atmospheric traction, is also buried at Norwood (grave 7,740, square 36). The leather strips were used to seal the vacuum tube before and after the passage of the train

<sup>6</sup> Other burials in this grave are John Hepburn Gale (buried 9 November 1861) and Frederick Gale (24 August 1905). Other Gale burials at Norwood are Augustus (17 February 1886; grave 15,996, square 68; stone not found), Joseph (9 August 1906; grave 31,601, square 35), and Samuel (1 April 1893) and Frances (Hepburn) Gale (21 May 1910) (grave 25,099, square 69; stone not found)

Carlill MD. On the modest east panel appear the inscriptions of Thomas and his wife Mary Anne (née Gotch), whose death in 1895 marks the last entry on the monument. All these burials are confirmed in the cemetery register except that of John Burford Carlill.

By the 1890s *Hepburn & Gale* were expanding operations into continental Europe. One of these ventures, to which the brothers Frank and Frederick William Hepburn were closely connected, was the factory in Županja, Slavonia (now part of modern Croatia), which produced oak extract. The factory in Županja was known locally as Tvoronica Tanina and Frank Hepburn was working as a ‘technical manager’ there from around 1890. Tannin



*Grave of Joseph Gale (grave 31,601, square 35)*

extract from the bark of trees was a highly valuable commodity for leather manufacturers as it greatly shortened the time taken to convert raw hide into the malleable condition necessary to produce finished goods. As the Hepburn firms were involved in all stages of the leather production cycle, it is no surprise that they had a great interest in sourcing their own tannin extract.



*The Hepburn Family Vault (grave 5,308, square 69)*

Frank had been educated at Amersham Hall School in Caversham, but soon afterwards became a tanner and leather factor. His brother Frederick William, who had been educated at Mr Eustace Button’s School in Clevedon, Somerset, arrived in Županja from another nearby extract operation in 1893. He soon met and married a local woman, Katarina Horvatović, with whom he stayed until his death and burial in Županja in 1940, long after the other *Englezi*, as

the locals uniformly referred to the British and Canadian workers, had left following the Balkan Wars of 1912. In an age of fairly rigid social hierarchy and conservative mores, the marriage was viewed with some consternation by both the ex-pat and local communities. Nevertheless, the couple, who didn’t have any children, became widely respected

in the area. After the communist regime that took power in Yugoslavia at the end of World War Two had dispossessed Katarina of her home and most of her possessions, she was brought to England in 1948 by, it is thought, Frederick's brother, George Hepburn. She died in Surrey in 1954 and her ashes were buried in her father-in-law Frederick Hepburn's family plot in Sutton Cemetery, Alcorn Close, London Borough of Sutton (grave 45, sector E). Županja, a marginal military village on the border separating the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia and the Bosnia Herzegovina region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the arrival of the tanning extract plant, was transformed into an urbane 'western' town by the *Englezi*. To this day, the people of Županja are proud to boast that their town was the first in the whole of the Balkans to play both football and tennis, just one enduring legacy of the leather tanning extract operations there at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The firm of *Hepburn & Gale* continued the leather tanning and manufacturing business in Long Lane, Bermondsey until 1903 when it merged with the *Ross Company* and became known as *Hepburn, Gale and Ross*. During World War One this firm was important for producing in great quantities a wide range of leather goods necessary for the war effort, both military and civilian. After the war, in 1920, the company amalgamated with another Bermondsey family concern, that of *Samuel Barrow & Brother* and became known as *Barrow, Hepburn and Gale Ltd*. It was capitalised at £2,500,000. Their company motto was 'Everything in Leather' and they were a going concern in Grange Mills, Grange Road, Bermondsey until the 1970s. Despite a devastating fire on 5 September 1898 at their premises at 239 Long-lane, which largely destroyed the whole of the *Hepburn & Gale* six-floor warehouses, processing and production facilities, and the damage suffered during the Blitz in World War Two, one can still see today the *Hepburn & Gale Ltd* stone lintel at the Long Lane site, which was reconstructed as an office building in 2011.



*The derelict Barrow, Hepburn & Gale Ltd works in Long Lane, Bermondsey in 2007*<sup>7</sup>

Frank Hepburn, brother of Frederick William Hepburn, was the husband of Helen Marion Miller, whom he married in 1894 in Pennsylvania, USA. Hence I am related to the Hepburns through my paternal grandmother's maternal grandmother, an Eliza Miller of Quebec, Canada. Eliza Miller was the aunt of Helen Marion Miller. The Millers and

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/albedo/412696552/>

Hepburns were associated in business in the 1890s. For example, the Millers also had a tanning extract operation in Županja.

The last *Barrow, Hepburn and Gale* leather manufacturing operation in London fell into disuse in 2007, although a small workshop named *Barrow and Gale* still makes the famous Ministerial Red Boxes and Royal Maundy Purses. Over two centuries after John Hepburn, a nonconformist tanner by trade, purchased three of the five tan-yards in Bermondsey, the local leather-working industry still carries on.

#### *Acknowledgements*

I thank Ms Danijela Kegalj, teacher and historian in Županja, Croatia, for providing invaluable information regarding the Hepburns in Županja, Ms Clare Wasteney for many helpful comments, and Ms Jacqueline Landy, West Norwood Cemetery, for assistance with the cemetery registers.



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## Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches

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Colin Fenn

To coincide with the Lambeth Local History Festival in September and the anniversary of the start of World War One, Jolanta Jagiello curated an art exhibition in the cemetery's handsome Maddick mausoleum. Seven female artists each produced three pieces on the theme of Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches, marking the start of the hostilities in 1914, the middle of the war, and the Armistice.

The artists' diverse backgrounds inspired unique and very personal narratives on the conflict. They employed a mixture of sources for their material: period artefacts and material, new work, and novel treatments of everyday items. For example, Louise Kosinska's pieces included bottles of coffee caked in clay, as her grandfather complained that everything tasted of dirt in the trenches. Sara Scott encased tin cans in photographs of a munitions factory, illustrating her family's cannery business and how it re-gearred to refurbishing brass shell cases.

Nicky Scott-Francis devised a sinister collection built around duck boards, Brodie shrapnel helmets, gas masks, and sacking. Nearby, Louise displayed a muslin face cloth, designed to be soaked in urine and used as a primitive gas mask.

Jill Rock's pieces described her German family who were interned at Alexandra Palace. They included a touching poster drawn by fellow internees as a memento, showing her grandfather gazing wistfully at a closed window, watched over by a dove of peace, whilst a coil of barbed wire in the corner emphasized their miserable circumstances.

In contrast, *No Man's Land* by Elisabeta Chojak-Mysko featured symbols



*Reflections on the exhibition*

of violence and remembrance, while Monica Wheeler produced dramatic photographs alluding to the division of families in Poland, a state whose very existence was in doubt over much of the last century.



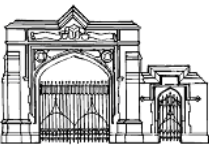
*No Man's Land*

Jolanta's metal sculptures re-examined the war in the Italian Alps, with its use of avalanches as weapons of war. As well as symbols of remembrance, she introduced sound and ephemera to illustrate and add atmosphere to the displays, complemented by pages from our new guide on Norwood Cemetery's connections to the Great War (p. 2). Visitors told us they liked seeing these personal stories set alongside the memorials in the cemetery. Many were inspired to go on and explore the site and join our tours.

Distin Maddick claimed to be the War Office's director of Kinematography in 1916 (see Forthcoming Events, p. 15). As a location for the exhibition the mausoleum could not be bettered – the exhortations inscribed inside, such as 'Fear No One', provided a thought-provoking counterpoint to those in the artworks, 'Your Fear ... is terror'.

Thanks to the Outer London Fund we were able to repair the roof lights and marble interior of the mausoleum to provide a venue for events such as this exhibition. The Fund also allowed us to buy cable to connect to the electricity points installed as part of the extensive upgrade of the entrance and roadway. Enhanced by the new planting by Lambeth and FOWNC, the mausoleum sits in a well-tended spot and is subtly uplit at night.

Thanks are due to the FOWNC volunteer stewards, the cemetery staff, and above all to Jolanta, who secured sponsorship from the London Borough of Southwark, and brushed aside the fact that her leg was in plaster during the event! Finally, thanks to the other artists who produced and also helped steward the exhibition – their ability to share the thinking behind their works greatly enhanced our visitors' experiences.



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## Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

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Once again (how many times in the past few years has this happened?) Network Rail decided to cut off train services to West Norwood station for Open House London Weekend on 21 September. It was therefore very pleasing to count some 80 or so visitors who managed to travel here for the series of tours of notable monuments, including the magnificent Greek chapel (St Stephen's Chapel). Thanks to everyone who helped with leading the tours, staffing the FOWNC bookstall, and especially Colin Fenn for giving a series of talks in the Greek chapel.

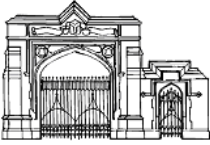
Before our AGM on 18 October, Dr Ian Dungavell, FOWNC member and Chief Executive of Highgate Cemetery Trust, spoke about the early rivalry between Norwood and Highgate. In 1836 Acts of Parliament created the South Metropolitan Cemetery and the London Cemetery Companies, and both set up head offices in the City. However, whilst the South Metropolitan Cemetery was consecrated in 1837, Highgate did not open until 1839. The Parliamentary Bill for Highgate received its first reading on 7 July 1836, and the very next day a petition was submitted by a Director of Highgate objecting to the equivalent bill for Norwood. The Highgate bill received Royal Assent in August 1836, but not before amendments had been made (for which Norwood was thought responsible!) to require the consent of residents with properties in close proximity to the cemetery; three in particular withheld this. A further vocal opponent was Harry Chester, the son of Sir Robert Chester who owned the nearby house, *Old Hall*. Another objector curiously turned out to be a shareholder of the Company – a former managing director who had previously been dismissed by the other directors! At some stage, a Company Minute book mysteriously disappeared...

In the end, the disputes went to a church court, further delaying consecration (which was not a legal requirement, but meant that the ground was preserved in perpetuity) and opening. Eventually, on Monday 20 May 1839, Highgate Cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of London, Charles Blomfield.



*The life-size marble statue of Frederick Gye in the foyer of the Royal Opera House*

On 15 November, FOWNC member Barbara Thomas spoke about Frederick Gye (1810–1878) and his father-in-law Richard Hughes (1773–1856). Barbara is a descendant of the Hughes family. On moving to London, Richard Hughes's father, also Richard, who had managed several provincial theatres, took over Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1792. His daughter Maria married the clown Joseph Grimaldi. In the 1820s, Hughes jnr went into partnership with Frederick Gye's father (also Frederick) in tea and wine companies, and with Gye senior and Thomas Bish (promoter of the State Lottery, for which Gye printed the tickets) to buy Vauxhall Gardens. Gye jnr married Hughes's daughter Elizabeth in 1834. He became manager of the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden Theatre in 1849, but the building burnt down whilst sub-let in 1856. In six months Gye raised £120,000 to rebuild the theatre, which re-opened in 1858. He died as the result of a shooting accident. Nothing remains to mark the Hughes/Gye family grave at Norwood (grave 939, square 98), their vault having been demolished by Lambeth in the 1980s. Moves to reinstate a monument in the 1990s sadly proved unsuccessful, but we learned from Roddy Gye, a descendant of Frederick present at the talk, of a willingness to now provide some funding for this purpose.



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## Forthcoming Events

January–April 2015

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Introductory tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (4 January, 1 February, 1 March at 11.00; 5 April at 14.30) starting at the cemetery main gate off Norwood Road and lasting for 1½-2 hours. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations towards conservation projects. The April tour coincides with the return of West Norwood Feast (street market & other events: see [www.westnorwoodfeast.com](http://www.westnorwoodfeast.com)). Please register an e-mail address ([secretary@fownc.org](mailto:secretary@fownc.org)) to receive notifications of any additional events, including occasional members-only tours of the Anglican Catacombs (advance bookings only). For details of our regular scrub clearance sessions contact Ellen Barbet (p. 16).

### *Winter Lectures*

Talks will be held in the Lounge of Chatsworth Baptist Church (access by the Family Centre entrance), Idmiston Road, SE27 as detailed below, starting at 14.30. There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations to cover refreshments and room hire.

**Saturday 17 January: Funerary Art in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.** Veronique Barbستا

Staglieno in Genoa, Père Lachaise in Paris, and the Monumental Cemetery in Milan are just some of the cemeteries of Europe known not only for the important people buried there, but also for the magnificence of their monuments. FOWNC member Veronique has photographed funerary monuments in many European cemeteries with the aim of capturing common themes expressed in different ways.



**Saturday 21 February: Film - *The Battle of the Somme*.** Bob Flanagan

In 2005, this 74 minute World War One documentary/propaganda film was the first British artefact designated of world significance by UNESCO's *Memory of the World Programme*. Whilst the battle continued in France, the première was held before an invited audience on 10 August 1916 at the *Scala Theatre* in Charlotte Street owned by Dr Edmund Distin Maddick (1854–1939). Given the use of his mausoleum to host the *Wrenches, Trenches, and Stenches* exhibition in September (p. 12), it seems appropriate to show the film again in his memory and discuss the role of the Maddick family in creating and preserving this milestone in the history of the cinema.

**Saturday 21 March: Gideon Mantell – Unfair dismissal?** Professor Joe Cain, UCL

One of the most important fossil collectors and theorists of his day, Gideon Mantell MRCS, FRS (grave 273, square 100) was quickly eclipsed by competitors such as Richard Owen. They worked to humiliate and erase Mantell from scientific importance and ultimately he was reduced to a medical curiosity, with portions of his spine extracted for display. This talk examines Mantell's paleontological work, especially his theories about the prehistoric beasts he discovered, and assesses his contributions.

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## A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

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William Clarke (1798–1856) (grave 5,078, square 65) founded Trent Bridge cricket ground and the All England XI, and thus helped initiate international cricket. He died at Priory Lodge, Wandsworth Road on 25 August 1856. A note in F. Lillywhite's *Cricket Scores* (1860) states that a 'tombstone is about to be erected by contributions of his admirers as a cricketer'. In 1966, cricket historian Peter Wynne-Thomas found what he was fairly sure were the railings that surrounded the grave although there was no sign of a tombstone. Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club have shown interest in placing a monument on his grave. Was there a tombstone originally, and if so what did it look like?



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### FOWNC Officers

*Chairman & Publications Officer:* Bob Flanagan, 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW (Tel: 020 8670 3265)

*Vice-Chairman:* Colin Fenn, 20 Selsdon Road, London SE27 0PG (Tel: 020 8670 4146)

*Secretary & Tours Organiser:* Jill Dudman, 119 Broxholm Road, London SE27 0BJ (Tel: 020 8670 5456)

*Hon Treasurer:* Anna Long, 58 Crescent Lane, London SW4 9PU (Tel: 020 7622 7420)

*Conservation Coordinator:* Ellen Barbet, 66 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3NR (Tel: 020 8650 0766)

*Webmaster:* James Slattery-Kavanagh, Quotes, 3 Cricketfield, Newick, East Sussex BN8 4LL (Tel: 0871 703 2210, Fax: 0871 703 2220)

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Website: [www.fownc.org](http://www.fownc.org); e-mail: [chairman@fownc.org](mailto:chairman@fownc.org) or [secretary@fownc.org](mailto:secretary@fownc.org)

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

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