

# Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 88 – January 2017

Free to members

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## Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

At last I can report good progress with the HLF bid (see Newsletters passim). Firstly, a very experienced project manager, Mrs Joahanne Flaherty, has been appointed. In addition, the decision on the project consultant will be published on the week of 16 January. Nicholas Long (Chair of the Scheme of Management Committee) and I were involved with both appointments. The enlistment of a Public Engagement Officer is awaited. Let us hope we can now make up for lost time! Plans for the reinstatement of the Letts and Thomas monuments are also progressing well and work should start early this year.

On other fronts, temporary repairs have been made to Lower Road and a programme of tree maintenance has commenced using an external contractor. Plans are also well-advanced by which the Lambeth Parks and Cemeteries Grounds Maintenance Team will work through the cemetery in the winter months clearing areas of scrubland so that they will in time revert to grassland with continuing care. The areas to be tackled first are (i) that by the eastern wall of the cemetery near to the Skeen family monument (squares



*Skeen family monument  
(grave 2,326, square 9)*

7, 8 and 9; see page 3) and the Grade 2 listed monument of Anne Farrow (grave 2,512, square 7), (ii) the St Mary-at-Hill plot and surrounding area (squares 18 and 19), and (iii) Ship Path (squares 76, 77, 88 and 89). Given this commitment from Lambeth to tackle the worst of the invading scrub, it seems sensible to devote our own Saturday morning efforts to tidy-up around and record monuments revealed by their clearance operations.

### *A Bit of Mystery*

Long-time FoWNC member Judy Harris has written to say that she remembers the reclining figure featured in Newsletter 87 (p. 16) in its proper position in the cemetery. She was close to the road on the right-hand side just past the Wetenhall mausoleum (grave 23,625, square 113). At some stage in the (late?) 1980s she disappeared only to reappear later in the entrance garden. Now we have this information we can search to see if there are any photographs etc. that will help identify the precise location on which to place her.

### *James William Lawson & Family*

Newsletters 85 & 86 (January & May 2016) detailed the members of the Lawson/Hayes families buried at Norwood. An image of a granite ledger demolished during Lambeth's 'lawn conversion' operations has now emerged. Given that Eliza Lawson Hayes was the first burial in the grave (1844), the style of the memorial suggests that it is likely a replacement installed when her husband W.G. Hayes died in 1883.



*A lost Lawson/Hayes memorial (grave 957, square 78)*

### *FoWNC AGM*

I am very sorry to report that Colin Fenn has resigned as a FoWNC Trustee and as Vice-chair. Colin has been a major influence in cemetery matters and will be sorely missed. He and his wife Rose have organised many events and scrub clearance sessions, written publications, and posted thousands of newsletters to members. We are very grateful. On a positive note, however, I am pleased to record not only that John White agreed to remain as a Trustee, but also that long-term FoWNC supporters John Clarke and Robert Stephenson have now become Trustees. John brings a wealth of experience in cemetery matters from his long-term association with Brookwood, whilst Robert is already deeply involved with cemetery conservation at Brompton and at Kensal Green, and is Chair of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends. We are lucky indeed to have their help at this time. As to constitutional matters, a further revision of our proposed new constitution will be placed on the website well prior to discussion at our February meeting (see p. 19). Given that our existing constitution stipulates that 10 % of our membership (740 at the last count) constitutes a quorum, the absence of written comments from those who cannot attend in February will be taken as approval of the new constitution.

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# The Skeen Family Monuments

Philip Somervail

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Twenty years ago I explored the cemetery in search of my Skeen ancestors' graves in Square 9, but all I found was grass and shrubbery. So in my article on the life of the journalist William Skeen (1812–1873) and his family (Newsletter 37, January 2000) I recorded that their gravestones had been demolished. Now, thanks to resident bee-keeper Jean Azzopardi's work clearing undergrowth during the last couple of years, I am delighted to learn that I was probably looking in the wrong place. Because, when Jean and Bob Flanagan visited square 9 in November, Bob was pleasantly surprised to find that William Skeen's family monument not only survives, but is in good condition (see p. 1), revealing the tribute reproduced here.

Other burials in William Skeen's grave are his wife Ann (née Atchison) (1814–1864), two of their sons, Alexander (1846–1849) and Edward (1848–1866), and a daughter Jane Calder Skeen (1851–1852). Family legend has it that William and Ann eloped from their home town of Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1832 and married across the border in Scotland, settling first in Edinburgh before moving to London in the 1840s, but, like so many family legends, I have not yet found any evidence one way or the other concerning their elopement. I don't even know Ann's date of birth – but I realise that I should not abandon hope, especially in light of the discovery of their gravestone.

I have a family Bible that William Skeen signed and gave to his eldest daughter Sarah Makins Skeen and her husband James Alexander Haldane Calder when they were married in 1860. The inscription reads:

'Presented to James A Haldane Calder and Sarah Makins Calder on their wedding day by their affectionate Friend and Father.

There may be many that say 'Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us' Ps. IV. B.'

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED  
IN MEMORY OF

WILLIAM SKEEN

BY FRIENDS WHO KNEW HIM WELL, AND WHO HONORED  
HIS ABILITY HIS INTEGRITY  
HIS ENERGY AND HIS FIDELTY TO DUTY  
WHILE THEY ESTEEMED HIM  
FOR HIS MANY GENIAL QUALITIES  
HIS KINDLY LOVING AND GENEROUS HEART  
CONNECTED WITH THE PUBLIC PRESS  
FOR 40 YEARS AS A REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTOR  
HE OCCUPIED A HIGH PLACE  
IN THE REGARD OF HIS COLLEAGUES  
WHILE AS A MEMBER AND OFFICER  
OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
AND A CHRISTIAN TEACHER OF NO MEAN POWER  
HE WON THE GRATEFUL AFFECTION OF THE COMMUNITY  
WITH WHOSE WORK FOR CHRIST  
IT WAS HIS HAPPINESS TO BE ASSOCIATED  
THE MEMORIAL OF HIS SERVICE ABIDES ON HIGH  
HE DIED 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1873  
ON THE 61<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

*Inscription on the Skeen family monument  
(grave 2,326, square 9)*



*William Skeen's signature*



*James and Sarah (Skeen) Calder*

James and Sarah Calder had three daughters and two sons. James worked for the Inland Revenue for many years, latterly as Deputy Chief Inspector of Taxes at Somerset House. Sarah died on 2 October 1896 and was buried at Norwood near to her mother and father (grave 27,073, Square 9).

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*Norwood: Gravestone of Sarah Makins Calder*

Surprisingly her gravestone at Norwood is also intact. It lies between her father William's grave and the Lashbrooke monument (see p. 20). I was pleased to find the receipt of purchase of the grave in the archives of my late cousin Adrian Prestige a few years ago. He also owned the portraits that accompany this article.

After Sarah's death James Calder returned to his native Scotland. He died at Helensburgh on 3 March 1906 and is buried there. In addition to her husband two of her children are also commemorated on Sarah's monument, but also lie elsewhere, Thomas at Ludlow and Margaret in Glasgow.

James and Sarah Calder married in the Regent Street Chapel of Particular Baptists in a double marriage ceremony with one of Sarah's younger brothers, James Skeen (1837–1929), who married Eleanor Esther Levett (1839–1917). James and Eleanor are also buried at Norwood (grave 9,723, square 9; monument destroyed). James Skeen is described

IN  
LOVING MEMORY OF  
SARAH MAKINS CALDER  
TENDER WIFE AND MOTHER  
DIED 2 OCTOBER 1896 AGED 61 YEARS  
ALSO  
JAMES ALEXANDER HALDANE  
CALDER  
LOVING HUSBAND AND FATHER  
BORN 13 DECEMBER 1830  
DIED 3 MARCH 1906  
ALSO  
THOMAS CALDER  
THEIR FIRSTBORN  
17 JULY-20 AUGUST 1862  
ALSO OF THEIR YOUNGEST DAUGHTER  
MARGARET SKEEN CALDER  
14 AUGUST 1870, 16 OCTOBER 1929

*Inscription on the Calder family monument (grave 27,073, square 9)*

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# A Blue Plaque for Dr Normandy

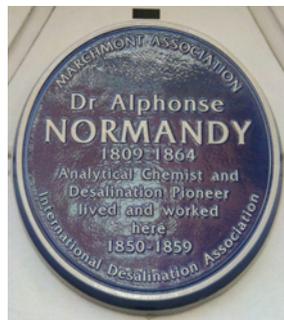
Bob Flanagan

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On Friday 23 September last, The Marchmont Association, a residents' association for part of Bloomsbury, kindly hosted the unveiling of a blue plaque to Alphonse René Le Mire de Normandy (1809–1864; grave 9,170, square 18), analytical chemist and desalination pioneer. The mayor of Camden, Nadia Shah, performed the ceremony.

Dr Normandy lived and worked at 91 Judd Street, Bloomsbury from 1850–9, and one of the current occupants, Debbie Radcliffe, had spent many hours researching his life and work after discovering a brass nameplate whilst renovating the front door! During her research on the former inhabitants of the house she had contacted me, and I put her in touch with the family of Elizabeth Panourgias-Morrison, who was of great help to us during the battle to get de Normandy's gravestone reinstated after its wanton destruction by Lambeth: see Newsletters 5 (February 1991) and 46 (January 2003). Sadly Elizabeth was too ill to attend



the ceremony, but her son Dr Niki Panourgias, de Normandy's great, great, great-grandson represented the family. The plaque was sponsored by the International Desalination Association (IDA), who were represented by their President, Dr. Emilio Gabrielli, and by Ursula Annunziata, President of the European Desalination Society.



Dr Normandy had patented an apparatus for distilling sea water in order to produce potable water in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. The process was very successful because it required minimal heat, and the product contained dissolved air, making it pleasant to drink. It was also valuable in producing fresh water for boiler feed. The process was of great economic importance as shipping lines developed worldwide in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is still important today in many parts of the world as well as onboard ship: desalination is now a \$15–20 billion a year industry. Much of the research into de Normandy's desalination process was carried out by Dr Jim Birkett, a council member of the IDA and a moving force in installing the plaque.

*The unveiling (L to R): Ursula Annunziata, Debbie Radcliffe, Jim Birkett, Niki Panourgias, Nadia*

*Shah, Emilio Gabrielli, and Prof John Nicholson (Royal Society of Chemistry)*

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# Living Memory: Commemorating 1916

Bob Flanagan

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Colin Fenn led a tour on Sunday 4 September attended by some 60 people to help commemorate the Battle of the Somme, which commenced on 1 July 1916 and continued until November of that year. Although those who died overseas whilst on active service were buried where they fell, those who died after evacuation to the UK were buried in Britain. Norwood holds 136 graves of soldiers and other combatants dating from World War I that are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), including 11 who died as a result of wounds received in the Somme campaign.



*Colin Fenn speaking beside the Cross of Sacrifice*

unteer nurse serving in England, it was deemed 'not a war grave' in 1921. Contrast this with the thoughtful memorialisation given to Lt Archibald Robert Dean MC (1883–1916; grave 26,753, square 82/83). Born in Herne Hill, Dean served with the 14<sup>th</sup> Btn Australian Imperial Forces in Egypt and Gallipoli before participating in the attack on Pozières in August 1916. Badly wounded in the action for which he was awarded the Military Cross and evacuated to England, he died in a military hospital on Denmark Hill (there were several) on 17 November. He was buried at Norwood in a family grave with full military honours. The CWGC have in turn added a simple

The war dead at Norwood were often buried in private graves, sometimes in family graves. There are several examples where a standard CWGC headstone has been inserted to mark a grave that is already marked by a private memorial. In other cases, notably where the family memorial was demolished during Lambeth's clearance operations, the CWGC have inserted a headstone to mark the approximate position of the grave.

Colin did an amazing amount of research for this tour. One of many sad tales he recounted was that of volunteer nurse Hilda Ayre Smith (c. 1878–1916; grave 34,235, square 82 – monument destroyed). Hilda contracted septicaemia whilst changing infected dressings at Hyland Hospital, Chelmsford in February 1916 and died two days later. Her grave remains unmarked because, as she was a vol-

## COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES CHAMPION CERTIFICATE

**Congratulations and thanks to**

*Friends of West Norwood Cemetery*  
**for visiting and championing the war graves in**

*West Norwood Cemetery*  
**restoring the men and women buried  
there to Living Memory.**

  
Signed by Colin Kerr Director External Relations,  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

*The CWGC Champion Certificate*

horizontal stone similar to those used in Gallipoli, where the climatic conditions make use of conventional headstones unwise, to the family memorial, which survives intact except that it has lost some of its lead lettering.

Colin's efforts in putting together this event, which was accompanied by poetry readings from *Poetry Slabs*, were rewarded not only by the thanks of those that attended, but also by an official commendation from the CWGC in the form of a Champion Certificate. Details of some of those featured on the tour are given in Colin's *Great War Connections* booklet *1916: The Somme and Shells* and in other booklets in the series (all available from the FoWNC bookstall).

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## The Magnificent Seven at Norwood

Bob Flanagan

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Saturday 5 November saw the annual get-together of those involved in managing the *Magnificent Seven* cemeteries (Kensal Green, Norwood, Abney Park, Brompton, Highgate, Nunhead, and Tower Hamlets). We are grateful to Jacqueline Landy and Kevin Crook for allowing us to use the main Crematorium chapel for this meeting. In fact the chapel proved to be an ideal venue and in subsequent discussions with Jolanta Jagiello (Nunhead) and Jacqueline it seems that Lambeth would be pleased to see use made of the small Crematorium chapel for short exhibitions, for example, provided that we (FoWNC) could provide stewards.

The subject of the meeting, which was organized by Halima Khanom and Royal Parks (Brompton) in partial fulfilment of their commitment to the HLF, was *Diversity in Cemeteries*. Halima I think chose the topic and did an excellent job in pulling the programme together. The opening talk, *Rules, glorious rules: Challenges in introducing Diversity at Highgate Cemetery* was given by Ian Dungavell, Chief Executive at Highgate. He observed that there had to be rules to limit diversity in working cemeteries, be it the behaviour of visitors, or the insertion of tombstones. Having too many rules risks alienating visitors and creates problems for those who have to police them. Having no rules invites mayhem. In contrast, Tom Simpson, manager of Abney Park Cemetery, felt that for cemeteries that are no longer working cemeteries, increasing the diversity of park users and uses is crucial in preserving and protecting these unique sites.

The theme *Biodiversity in Cemeteries* was addressed by Kenneth Greenway (Tower Hamlets Cemetery). His experience showed that managing the cemetery for biodiversity was the way to allow people access to the heritage and create a space that was welcoming, safe and good for wildlife. *Holistic Site Management: People and Wildlife* was the title of the next talk, delivered by Harriet Carty of the charity *Caring for God's Acre*. They had devised a five-step plan to help plan holistic site management for people and wildlife whilst reaching out to and involving local communities.

After lunch/networking John Clarke discussed the diversity in burial practices and in memorialization that have featured at Brookwood Cemetery over the years. The development of distinct burial areas within the cemetery was facilitated by the size of the

cemetery and the proactive manner in which the London Necropolis Company forged links with interested groups wishing to open their own burial grounds. Many, such as the Parsee ground (1862–), the original Muslim (‘Mahammodan’) ground (c. 1895–), the Roman Catholic area (1859–), the Oddfellows’ burial ground (1859), that of the Swedish Congregation (1857–) and of the Ancient Order of Foresters (1863) are unique in the UK. Added to these have been the lawn cemetery (initially in the Military sections from 1917), and the creation of a woodland cemetery for the Glades of Remembrance (1947).

Next on was Colin Fenn, who discussed creative ways of developing community engagement via themed events such as walks and exhibitions held in conjunction with other activities such as West Norwood’s volunteer-led local Feast market. These were especially important in view of the progress with Norwood’s current HLF bid. Jolanta Jagiello continued this theme and explained how art exhibitions had been used at Nunhead, Norwood, and in other cemeteries to engage diverse audiences. Her organization *Art Going Places* is currently delivering public art exhibitions commemorating the First World War (2014–2018), viz. *Wrenches, Trenches and Stenches* (2014 - see FoWNC Newsletter 82, January 2015), *ANZAC In Spirit: Diggers in Gallipoli* (2015), and *Animals In Service* (2016).



*John Clarke, Jolanta Jagiello, Toni Assirati (Royal Parks) and Colin Fenn answer questions on their presentations*

(1848–1920) Muirhead (grave 20,839, square 21): Alexander is not only credited with recording the first electrocardiogram and helping initiate radio, but also in 1875 invented a system of duplexing signals on telegraph cables, nowadays multiplexing, the basis of the internet. This helping draw the rueful comment from Ian Dungavell that he wished Highgate could boast as many famous names as Norwood!

Friendly rivalry notwithstanding, the clear message from the day was that we should all work together to promote the Magnificent Seven brand despite the clear difference in emphasis that applies between operational cemeteries and those closed to new burials.

After a ‘break-out’ session, Claire Brown spoke on the growing use of social media to engage diverse audiences. Attendees were encouraged to apply what they learnt from this session in the brief tour of the cemetery that I led at the end of the day. The tour was well attended, but I’m not sure how much social media involvement occurred in the gathering gloom. I was, however, able to point out the tomb of John (c. 1808–1885) and Alexander

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# William Wright DD (1837~1899) – Part 1

Samuel Wright

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A noted author and biblical scholar, my great, great, great uncle William Wright (grave 16,899, square 39) was missionary to the Jews at Damascus, 1865–75, and was editorial superintendent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1876–99. He is remembered especially as the first to recognize, in 1872, archaeological remains in northern Syria as belonging to the Hittite empire, a subject that later became a major area of research.

William Wright was born on 15 January 1837 in the Townland of Finnard, Co. Down. His father, also William, was a farmer and his mother Jane Niblock, who died whilst William was still an infant, was also of farming stock. William jnr had at least two brothers and two sisters - there must have been others who died in infancy because he was to tell his daughter Rachel that she was the 7<sup>th</sup> child of a 7<sup>th</sup> child.

William jnr began his education at the local Primary school. He was an able and ambitious student and subsequently attended Belfast Royal Academical Institution. He entered Queens College, Belfast as an undergraduate in 1858, where he studied Latin and Greek Literature. This same year William came under the influence of C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892; grave 24,395, square 38), who was visiting the city. Plans for a career in the Civil Service changed and William trained for the Presbyterian ministry. He graduated BA in 1864 having studied at the then relatively new Union Theological College in Belfast and at Geneva. He was ordained in 1865 and decided his call was to the mission field.

At that time the Presbyterian Church had many mission stations, but none physically tougher than the Foreign and Jewish Mission at Damascus where William chose to go. He was well equipped physically for this tough posting. He weighed 13.5 stone (86 kg) and his fellow students described him as having



*William Wright BA DD*

‘a bodily strength which in every scummage bore down all before it, an exuberance of spirit which knew no bounds, a courage which feared nothing and an open manly frankness which won the heart and confidence of all’.

At about this time William had one of his many brushes with danger, plunging into a swollen river to rescue a drowning woman, a feat for which he was awarded the Royal Humane Society’s Diploma for courage.

### *From Ballynaskeagh to Damascus*

During his undergraduate days William spent a lot of time at Ballynaskeagh Manse, the home of the Rev. David McKee, minister of Annaclone Presbyterian Church. The Rev. McKee had been a neighbour of the Brontës (Brontës) and the girls' novels were readily received and read in the Manse. William was so impressed that one summer whilst still an undergraduate he spent time in the South of Ireland dressed as a peasant trying to trace the source of some of the Brontës' early stories, a trip that furnished material for a book he published many years later.

But William had another reason for visiting Ballynaskeagh. Her name was Annie, the Rev. McKee's daughter, and they married in Annaclone Church on 9 March 1865, two days after William had been ordained into the Foreign and Jewish mission of the Church. Almost immediately they set out for Damascus, and whilst the trip out may have served as a honeymoon their destination was no holiday resort, but rather one of the most dangerous and brutal destinations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

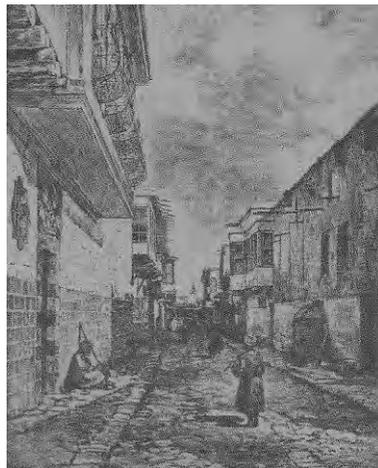
At that time Damascus was part of the Ottoman Empire. William's predecessor had been murdered by being stripped naked and left in the baking heat of the desert. In 1860, only 5 years before William and Annie's arrival, there had been a Muslim uprising when an estimated 11,000 people had lost their lives. In one particularly brutal three-day period 2,500 people in the Christian sector had been killed. What must the Rev. and Mrs McKee have been thinking as they stood at the dockside and bade farewell to Annie? They had already buried 6 of their 8 children, all victims of consumption, the disease that in time was to claim the lives of Annie and her brother as well. And although she could not have known, Annie was not to see her father again as he died two years before her first trip home in 1869.

By June 1865 William and Annie had arrived in Syria, but found themselves unable to go on to Damascus immediately due to an outbreak of cholera there and spent the next four months stranded in the mission outstation of Bludan. By mid-October, however, it was deemed safe to continue their journey to Damascus. William wrote:

'We formed a long and very ridiculous cavalcade indeed. We halted in the evening in a Mohammedans village and slept all night under the trees. Our supper was bread, water, and grapes. After an early start the next day and driving hard we reached Damascus, and learnt that the cholera which had been somewhat abated had increased in virulence'.

But cholera was not the only problem they encountered. Suitable accommodation was always difficult for European families in Damascus and William and Annie spent the first days walking around Damascus looking for somewhere to live - with constant risk of cholera and with Annie already four months pregnant this was a baptism of fire indeed, but worse was to follow. They eventually found a house that seemed suitable, but a grizzly surprise awaited them when they went to the well in the rear courtyard, which was to provide their water supply. There they found three skeletons thought to have been Christians murdered in the 1860 riots. A fact later confirmed by their landlord who told William and Annie that these three unfortunates had in fact been murdered in what they called their living room, before being dumped in the well.

William later recounted how he never again could look at the living room floor in that house without imagining seeing the outline of a large crimson stain. That they stayed in the house at all bears testament to the desperate housing conditions in that city. The house did, however, have one claim to fame: its address, surely one of the most ancient and historic addresses in world history. It was situated in the *Street called Straight* where Paul of Tarsus recovered his sight. The house, No. 21, was still standing prior to the present conflict in Syria, and may still be standing today.



*Straight Street, Damascus*

### *Life and Death in Damascus*

William was a gifted linguist and spent the early days in Damascus learning colloquial Arabic. This was to prove useful as he was on more than one occasion when in a life-threatening situation able to surprise the Arabs by his fluent command of their language. He was also said to have an adept way of quoting their proverbs to them and making them laugh.

As well as his pastoral duties William oversaw a major building programme during this first stay in Damascus. A school, a book depositary, and several missionary outstations were added during this period. But the completion of the first Christian Church in Damascus gave him most pleasure. He wrote that:

‘It is a plain, substantial, beautiful little church capable of seating 300. It is built of chiseled stone neither Gothic, nor any other style. It has an English iron roof and is the first house in Damascus to have a ceiling of lath and plaster. Our services are in the simple Presbyterian form, and our congregation, mostly Arabs converted to Christianity, are attentive, interested and devout, with them Christianity is not a symbol of respectability, but a devoted life’.

But even as he was reporting this good news the hardship of life in Damascus once again reared its head. A young girl, the daughter of one of William’s colleagues, died and William recorded that she was the 10<sup>th</sup> member of missionaries’ families to die in that field of work. When you consider Annie had three children while they were in Damascus the following quotation from William has the ring of personal experience about it:

‘We have no doctors we can trust and it is dreadful that missionaries have to become Physicians and Surgeons to their own families in cases of life and death’.

Part of William’s work was in visiting outstations some up to 80 miles from Damascus. These journeys were of course all made on horseback and very largely on one horse, a mare which he had obtained from some friendly Bedouin and of which he wrote affectionately

‘she was a beautiful bay, with deep chest, large soft eyes, cup like feet, long pasterns and springy step, and a pedigree stretching back as far as the bluest blood in England. She brought me out of many a scrape in the desert and we became fast friends’.

It would be difficult to overestimate the danger faced on these journeys to outstations, the details of which appear in his correspondence not as sensational happenings, but as casual references to frequent occurrences. On one such journey from Bludan he came across the bodies of four Druze, seen and treated as heretics by the Muslim community. Europeans found them trustworthy and William frequently used them as escorts on these dangerous journeys. But on this occasion the bodies of these unfortunates had been dragged from the hastily assembled mound of stones which had served as their final resting place and something was clearly using their bodies for food:

‘their clothes lay scattered around and a red jaw blade was lying on the ground. All was, fresh, new, real, and to heighten the picture a large bear stood on a mound looking down on us. This was the first wild bear I had seen and I took a great interest in him, but the ground was stony and I could not bring my mare up with him. And it was as well for the report of a gun-shot would certainly have brought the Arabs upon us. My companions pointed out 30 or 40 such mounds of stone, and it is evident the bear had a very good living indeed’.

Whilst William seems to have thrived on these scrapes with danger, the same cannot be said for Annie. By 1869, four years after they had left Ireland, the stress and strain began to take its toll on her health. The Rev. Orr Scott, described by William as an old friend and fellow student, had joined them in Damascus in the autumn of 1868. The Rev. Scott and his wife had also married just prior to coming out, and no doubt Annie awaited their arrival eagerly. It was to prove a tragically short friendship, however. Barely six months after their arrival Mrs Scott was dead, a victim of tuberculosis. It must have been a devastating blow for Annie, who was now pregnant with their third child and already exhibiting signs of what was to develop into full-blown tuberculosis and claim her life.

#### *Alexandria and Home*

It was time for Annie to go home. Beirut, a mere 60 miles away and the natural choice of port for the journey to England, was as unreliable as a staging post then as it is now. Thus William and Annie were forced to take the 500 mile boat trip to Alexandria in order to board a vessel bound for Liverpool. On the way they anchored in Haifa and William visited Acre, the scene of many Crusader struggles. On reaching Alexandria, William bade farewell to his family and, whilst waiting for a ship back to Beirut, visited missionary stations in Alexandria and spent three days visiting the pyramids. By the end of July he was back in Damascus.

In early 1870 another new church was opened in the town of Rashern, a 12-hour ride in the saddle from Damascus along a road with no natural water. William made the journey 16 times in six months to supervise construction work. Towards the end of 1870 he returned to Ballinaskeagh to find Annie much improved in health and nursing their third son named David McKee Wright after his recently deceased maternal grandfather.<sup>1</sup> Annie had by now been home for over a year and had made a sufficiently good recovery to accompany him back to Syria with their two eldest children.

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<sup>1</sup> David McKee Wright (1869–1928) emigrated to New Zealand and thence to Australia and became a well-known poet, journalist, Congregational minister, and Bohemian (he left his wife in New Zealand and 6 children resulted from liaisons with two women in turn in Australia)

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# The Child Family Graves

Kenneth Edmondson

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The Child family were amongst the early developers of estates in Clapham. In the 1820s Francis, George, Thomas, and Samuel Preston Child built Crescent Grove across from Clapham Common. Francis acquired the land in 1824 from City banker Edward Polhill for £7,320. Here he built 39 ‘capital messuages’. The first plan on which this development appears is by Thomas Cubitt (1788–1855; grave 649, square 48) who in the 1830s was developing Clapham Park.

The members of the Child family buried at Norwood are descendants of Francis Child snr of Hertfordshire. A document of 24 September 1771 states ‘William... Son of Francis Child Citizen and Baker of London and was born after his Father’s Admission into the freedom of this city and hath thereby a right to the same in the Company of Bakers, but being a Dyer by trade prayed to be admitted in that company.’ This was granted and it seems that William Child ‘amassed a large fortune’. He bought a home in the early 1800s on Clapham Common and lived there until he died in 1825. Three of his sons, Thomas, Robert, and Samuel Preston Child were also dyers.

William Child, his wife, Susannah Boddington Child, and his sons John, William Henry, and Thomas Child are buried in Southwark Cathedral, whilst Robert is buried at Kensal Green. Samuel Preston Child also amassed a large fortune and when he died in 1869 had assets of some £160,000. He is buried at St. Botolph’s in Hertfordshire, which is now a private residence. William’s other sons, Francis and George Child, are buried at Norwood.



*George Child snr (1791–1858)*

Francis Child was born on 25 December 1779 in Bankside and became a respected solicitor in London. George Child was born on 7 November 1791 also in Bankside and became a seed merchant. On 12 July 1814 George and Francis married Elizabeth and Martha, respectively, daughters of William Clulow, at St. Pancras Old Church. William Clulow hailed from Macclesfield, where his father was a very successful baker. William attended John Wesley’s *Kingswood School* in Bath. His mother had a long-term relationship with John Wesley and William became his attorney. They met at William’s home in London in February 1789 where they wrote his will. This is signed by William Clulow, either his wife or mother, Elizabeth, and John Wesley. Rev. Wesley, who in general held attorneys in low regard, referred to him as ‘a skillful and honest attorney’.

George Child was an innovator in all aspects of the seed business. He acquired a patent in 1841 for ‘improvements in the manufacture of bricks and tiles, part of which improvements are applicable to compressing peat and other materials’. In the 1830s he introduced *Child’s New Early Long-Pod*, a type of bean ‘This variety is only of recent introduction by Mr. Child, an eminent Seedsman in London: it is full prolific as the *Common Long-pod*; considerably earlier; its seeds are more irregularly shaped, and much thicker, especially towards the eye’ recorded Lawsons’ *Agriculturalist’s Manual* in 1836. In 1851 George Child sold his business to his son George Child, jnr. for £10,000. The document of sale was written by Francis Child, brother of George, and Francis’ son Sydney Clulow Child.

*Crescent Grove*

The long narrow, lozenge shape of the development was dictated by the route of Brixton Lane (now Crescent Lane) and the estate of Samuel Thornton to the east. The north side, originally called *The Grove*, is a straight run of ‘St John’s Wood villas’, nine pairs of similar semi-detached houses linked by two-story coach houses. The coach houses had a room over for a manservant reached by an internal staircase, and a stable behind. The porches have Ionic columns, which were originally painted to simulate marble, and acroteria finials to the balustrading. Francis Child built a large detached house, *Grove Lodge*, with an extensive garden for his own use at the end of the estate.



*Mrs Elizabeth Child (-1855)*



*Crescent Grove, Clapham*

Crescent Grove is today little altered except that *Grove Lodge* was demolished in 1936 when headquarters buildings for the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers and the Post Office Workers’ Union were built. Samuel Child did not live in Crescent Grove, but Thomas apparently did, his daughters living there until 1886. George Child owned several houses in Crescent Grove and raised his family there. He may also have had a house at 119 Lower Thames Street near his business.

In the early 1850s George Child and his wife bought a house at Brighton, 10 Clarence Square, where they apparently spent most of their time. George did maintain their home at Crescent Grove, however, as it is mentioned in his will with other units in the complex.

On 20 February 1851, two days after the death of his 18-yr-old daughter Georgiana, George Child purchased a brick grave for six coffins for £15.15.0. Sadly, his wife Elizabeth, who died on 10 September 1855 in Brighton, became the next burial in the family tomb. The early months of 1858 were even more devastating to the family. George himself died at their home in Brighton on 9 February. His son Horatio Helen apparently had mental health problems and died at Moorcroft



*George Child snr's family vault (grave 2,827, square 34)*

House in London on 30 March. For quite some time I thought Horatio was a girl and wondered what a sweet little girl could have done to have convinced her parents to name her 'Horatio'. As it turns out, Helen was a daughter of George and Elizabeth and had died aged 12 only a few months prior to Horatio's birth and they honored her in his name.

### *Octavius Child*

Octavius Child, my great great grandfather, and son of George, died aged 31 at the family home at 10 Clarence Square, Brighton of tuberculosis only 10 days after the death of Horatio. He is buried in the Extramural Cemetery in Brighton. Octavius had studied navigation at The Naval Academy, 157 Leadenhall Street. He joined Her Majesty's Indian Navy in 1842 as a midshipman. Over the next 10 years Octavius sailed to China, India, and the Persian Gulf. He had married Isabella Keiskamma Frennd in Brighton at St. Nicholas on 13 August 1852. Isabella was born in South Africa into a military family in 1829. Four years later both of her parents died in India of cholera. She and a sister, Sarah, were adopted into the wealthy Clulow family by Joseph and Emily Catherine Robertson Clulow. Joseph was the brother of Octavius Child's mother, Elizabeth (Clulow) Child.

Octavius and Isabella had two daughters and one son, Albert Octavius Child who was born in Santander, Spain on 24 August 1857 where Octavius was employed in railway construction. Albert emigrated to America and at the encouragement of a cousin of his mother, who was living in Knoxville, Tennessee, settled there in the village of Powell, Tennessee a few miles outside Knoxville with his sister Isabella E.S. Child. There he married a local school teacher, raised a large family, and died in 1933. Although my father was only three when 'Bert' died he has very distinct memories of his grandfather.

The next to be buried in George Child snr's family vault at Norwood was the son of George Child jnr, William D. Child, who died aged 38 on 4 May 1877. George Child jnr was the final family member laid to rest there after his death on 18 March 1891.<sup>2</sup> An obituary recorded:

'Mr. George Child, formerly a partner in the firm Beck, Henderson and Child, of the Adelphi and Upper Thames Street, died on March 28, 1891 at his residence at Balham, at the age of 74. Some forty years or so ago the seed business of Field & Child became incorporated with that of Beck & Allen. The reorganized house was known as Beck, Henderson & Child, at the Adelphi wharf. The construction of the Thames Embankment caused the firm to remove around 1859 to Upper Thames Street and on the death of Mr. Henderson it became incorporated with that of Waite & Co., of Southwark Street. Mr. Child was at one time a liberal supporter of the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institution, and for some years chairman of the stewards of the annual dinner. He was greatly respected and esteemed within the circle of the wholesale seed trade, but little known outside of it'.

George Child jnr's son George John Child died at Topeka, Kansas, on 9 January 1886. His son George William Child, who was born on 10 August 1865, died at Chichester, West Sussex, on 11 November 1951 and is buried there. George Leslie Child, the son of George William Child, was the last George Child buried at Norwood. He died aged 7 on 8 July 1900 and is buried in the same grave as his mother Hilda Murly Child (grave 29,252, square 83; monument destroyed), who died on 16 November 1900.



*Francis Child snr's family vault at Norwood*

### *Francis Child*

Francis Child's wife, Martha Clulow Child, died in Brighton, where two of her brothers lived, on 29 March 1844 and was buried at St. Nicholas Church, the parish church of Brighton. The family tomb at Norwood (grave 7,155, square 34) was purchased on 27 August 1860 by Francis William Child four days after his father, Francis Child snr, had died at *Grove Lodge*. Francis' son, Major Arthur Child, was born 4 August 1824. He married Lucy Caroline Ross on 8 August 1862 in Ootacumund in India. His wife and four-month-old daughter died aboard the ship *Achilles* one day apart on their voyage

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<sup>2</sup> His wife Mary Ellen Sporle Child was buried at Norwood on 19 January 1892 (grave 24,335, square 44; monument destroyed). Buried with her are (i) Amy Maude Child, the daughter of Septimus Child and the grand-daughter of George Child snr. She died on 13 August 1892 at Dartford, Kent seven days after her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday; her residence is noted as 16 The Grove, Clapham in the cemetery register, and (ii) Ellen Child, (b. 31 March 1843), who was the daughter of George jnr. and Mary Ellen Sporle Child; she continued in the business of her father and grandfather and was a cashier at a seed merchant until her death in 1921

from India. Arthur erected a memorial to them at Falmouth Cemetery in Cornwall. Francis and Martha Child's children Arthur (1869), Martha (1881), Francis William (1885), and Caroline (1887) were the final burials in Francis Child's vault.

### *Frederick Rugge Lloyd*

Frederick Lloyd married Emily, the daughter of Francis and Martha Child, on 4 September 1845 in Kennington. He was a wholesale druggist. By 1863 they had 10 children ranging in age from 3 months to 17 years. Tragedy struck though, starting in 1863. On 27 August Annie Francis Lloyd, aged 13, was buried at Norwood, temporarily in her grandfather Francis Child's vault, but soon afterwards moved to a new family vault (grave 8,823, square 48; monument destroyed). Then on 21 November Frederick and Emily buried three of their sons: Arthur Clulow Lloyd aged 10, Edward Price Lloyd aged 8, and George Edward Lloyd, who was only aged 8 months when he died. George Edward is not listed on the cemetery records, suggesting he is likely buried with one of his brothers.

Emily Lloyd died the following August 1864 aged 18, and two months later Alice Maud Lloyd passed away aged 7. In 14 months, six of their children had died. Some 29 years passed before the next burial in the family grave, that of Frederick Rugge Lloyd, who died on 4 October 1893 at Wandsworth. His wife, Emily Child Lloyd passed away in June 1900 at 26 Crescent Grove. Six years later, on 4 December 1906, Emily's daughter, Kate died at 26 Crescent Grove and became the last burial in the grave.

Her sister, Lucy Mary Lloyd Atkinson, age 49, was living in the same residence with her husband, Joseph Priestman Atkinson, age 69, in 1911. At that time, she was the last living member of the family.



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## Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

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This year our contribution to Open House London Weekend on 17 September was made in co-operation with the Clockworks Museum in West Norwood. Some 50 or so visitors attended the tours of notable monuments, finishing at the Greek cemetery. Thanks to everyone who helped with leading the tours, staffing the FOWNC bookstall, and especially Colin Fenn for giving talks to all the tour parties at the Greek cemetery.

On 15 October we welcomed City of London Guide Tina Baxter, who gave a lively and informative talk on Mrs Isabella Beeton (1836–1865; grave 8,348, square 64). Mrs Beeton was of course one of the earliest celebrity cooks. Her childhood was remarkable. She was the eldest daughter of Elizabeth Mayson (d. 1871) who, as a widow with four children, had married Henry Dorling (d. 1873), Clerk of the Course for Epsom races, a widower with four children, the union going on to produce another thirteen children. As a result, Isabella grew up well accustomed to helping with organising the cooking and managing the household for a huge number of people.

After marrying the publisher Samuel Orchart Beeton (1830–1877), Isabella took over the household hints and cookery columns in his *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, working in his city office. She did not create recipes herself but was adept at collecting them from other sources, and tested them all at home. Her famous *Book of Household Management* appeared in instalments in the magazine before being published in a single volume in 1861. Sadly their first two children died in infancy, and she herself died aged 28 of puerperal fever following the birth of their fourth child. Given that the family had lived variously in Pinner and Greenhithe, the Norwood connection may not be obvious, but it results from Samuel's father Samuel Powell Beeton (1804–1854), already having a family grave here (grave 3,956, square 63 - see articles in Newsletters 41, May 2001 and 74, May 2012).

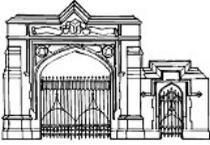
After our AGM on 19 November, Jean Kerrigan, Chair of the Friends of Windmill Gardens, spoke about the history of Brixton Windmill. The mill was built in 1816, and thus 2016 was its bicentenary. The first lessee was John Ashby and thenceforth his family ran the mill for the whole of its working life. John Ashby (d. 1845) was married to Hannah Luetchford; her nephew Jonathan Luetchford (1804–1889) and his wife Elizabeth (1810–1895) lived in Mill Cottage for many years, and may have helped run the mill after John's death. Both are buried at Norwood (grave 15,260, square 11; monument destroyed - see Newsletter 87, September 2016).

The mill went through several phases of activity. Its sails were removed in 1864 because building development in the area prevented wind reaching them. For the next 40 years the business was carried on using a water mill at Mitcham, but increasing activity on the Wandle led to frequent failures in the water supply. Thus in 1902 the Ashbys decided to use Brixton Mill again with a steam (later gas) engine installed. They obtained the freehold to the mill and milling continued until 1934. John Ashby senior had handed over to his son Joshua Ashby (d. 1888), and he in turn handed over to his son Joshua John Ashby (1858–1935). Joshua John lies buried at Norwood along with Ellen (d. 1891), Ernest (d. 1894), Hannah (d. 1924), and Bernard (d. 1925) Ashby. Their grave survives with headstone and footstone, although presumably there were once kerbs too.

Finally, Jean described the restoration work of recent decades, including replacement of the sails. Using electrically powered millstones, flour is once again being produced. Of particular interest to us were the efforts of volunteers from the Friends of Windmill Gardens since 2003, and their problems of dealing with the Heritage Lottery Fund on the one hand, and with Lambeth Council on the other.



*Family grave of Joshua John Ashby  
(grave 23,919, square 54)*



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## Forthcoming Events

January-April 2017

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Introductory tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (1 January, 5 February and 5 March at 11.00; 2 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 after its winter break of West Norwood Feast (street markets and other town centre events, see [www.westnorwoodfeast.com](http://www.westnorwoodfeast.com)). To receive notifications of additional events, including occasional members-only tours of the Anglican Catacombs (advance bookings only), please register an email address at [secretary@fownc.org](mailto:secretary@fownc.org) or a telephone number at 020 8670 5456.

Lectures 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 18 February – The Cemeteries of South London – Dr Brian Parsons**

There are over 130 cemeteries in the London area, approximately half of them south of the Thames. Norwood and Nunhead were amongst the first privately-owned garden cemeteries, but from the 1850s they were joined by a raft of burial board cemeteries making local authorities the largest provider of burial space. Between the wars a third wave of cemetery provision occurred before the demand for space was challenged by the shifting preference for cremation. Brian Parsons is the author of *Committed to the Cleansing Flame: The Development of Cremation in Nineteenth Century England* (see Newsletter 55, January 2006) and co-author (with Hugh Meller) of Edition 4 of *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer* (see Newsletter 63, September 2008).

### **Saturday 18 March - The Talfourds - Prof Michael Slater**

Dickens biographer Michael Slater will speak about one of Dickens's dearest friends, the MP and playwright Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795–1854; grave 1,452, square 34), who later became a judge (see Newsletter 87, September 2016). He will talk especially about Talfourd's son Frank (1828–1862), a true Bohemian, who wrote some of the best Shakespeare burlesques of the mid-Victorian period, notably *Hamlet Travestie* and *Shylock, or the Merchant of Venice Preserved*.

### **Additional Event**

#### **Monday 16 January, 20.00: Lecture: The Murder at the Priory? - Helen Long**

Streatham Society: The Woodlawns Centre, 16 Leigham Court Road, London SW16

The lingering death of 30-year-old barrister Charles Delauney Turner Bravo (grave 15,982, square 87) from antimony poisoning in April 1876 provides an endless source of fascination and controversy, hence the question mark that professional tourist guide Helen Long has put in her title. Was it murder, suicide, or accident?

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## A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

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This granite tomb (grave 86, square 8/9) is one of the most impressive in the cemetery, yet it is hardly visited. The first burial in the brick vault, Elizabeth Lashbrooke, was moved from the Catcombs on 21 November 1839. Other burials include members of the Harrison and Lashbrooke families removed from Bow Church, and Frederick Henry (d. 1851), Henry (d. 1877), and Matilda Lashbrooke (d. 1881), Ellen Reeve (d. 1855), and Frederick (d. 1861), Mary Ann (d. 1873), and Emma Marion Harrison (d. 1894). The motto beneath the crest (*Animo non Astutia, By Courage, not by Craft*) suggests an association with the Clan Gordon. Any further information anyone?



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