In the run-up to the submission of the HLF bid at the end of August, there is now general agreement of the content. This has been achieved through the hard work of the Project Officer Jo Flaherty, Activities Co-ordinator Beth Cross, and Project Consultant Paul Harrison and his team under the guidance of the Steering Group chaired by Nicholas Long. The bid may be refined still further to take account of the results of a second public consultation held in April. As noted in previous reports, the aim is to secure some £7 million of public funding to help maintain and improve our historic cemetery. An important aspect of the work thus far is that it has been undertaken with full consultation with Lambeth Planning, Historic England, and the HLF via their monitor Paul Drury.

One significant development is that, since it became clear that a new building on the site of the original lodge would be unacceptable on planning and cost grounds, a Visitor Centre on the (extended) ground floor of the existing lodge has proved the best compromise. The new plans would have the further advantage of improving the setting of Tite’s arch whilst providing secure access to the Centre if...
the cemetery itself is closed. Full details of this and other aspects of the developed bid can be found at: www.lambeth.gov.uk/consultations/help-to-shape-a-heritage-lottery-fund-hlf-bid-for-the-historic-west-norwood-cemetery.

Evaluation of the pros and cons of creating additional entrances to the cemetery in order to increase accessibility was a requirement of the initial HLF grant. Two options remain for discussion, a new entrance knocked though the boundary wall at the north-eastern corner of the cemetery, an option supported by some of the residents of Robson Road, and reopening one of the original cemetery gates at Hubbard Road on the south side of the cemetery, but this time only for pedestrians.

There are issues in both cases. At Robson Road it is not certain that the proposal would gain listed building consent, and there would be massive cost associated with this option not least because the electrical and gas supplies to the crematorium would have to be re-routed. At Hubbard Road, as with the proposed new forecourt entrance, replacement of ugly 20th Century brick walls with railings of the same design as the originals would be a clear enhancement hence there would be no listed building consent issues. The cost estimate too is advantageous, being about 30% of that of the Robson Road option.

However, house owners might object to the loss of parking space in Hubbard Road, and in the cemetery itself it seems clear that any new path would have to transgress upon a few relatively recent graves. In the event of course it could be that security and cost concerns prohibit delivery of either scheme.

As regards the essential works to the Grade II* listed St Stephen’s Chapel (the Greek Chapel) and the boundary wall of the Greek Enclosure (negotiations continue with the Trustees of the Enclosure with a view to resolving this latter issue), it has been established that the South Portico of the Chapel is falling away from the main body of the building. Hence major stabilisation works are needed in addition to the general upgrade/refurbishment works needed to transform the structure into a performance and exhibition space that could both increase public access to the building and generate income to offset future maintenance costs. Added to this is the difficult issue of providing disabled (wheelchair) access to the Chapel. The solution proposed by the consultants, i.e. a wheelchair lift embedded in the steps at the side of the North Portico (see cut-away view below) seems to me expensive, impractical, and unlikely to gain listed building consent.

Impression of the proposed new Robson Road entrance

Outline of the proposed new Hubbard Road entrance
As to restoration of the other monuments on the Historic England ‘at risk’ list, surveys and costings have been prepared and we await the outcome of the bid. Finally, Beth Cross has breathed life into the public engagement programme. For one thing she has reinstated the volunteer working parties, the aim being to capitalise on the hard work of Kevin Wallace and the Lambeth team during the winter months. Much scrub has been cleared in the areas to the west of Doulton Path and to the south of Ship Path. There is also the initiative of a cemetery Open Day (for more details see p. 19).

**Capital Programme**

I regret to report that Steve Wong, who has kept the capital programme on track these several years, has decided to move to pastures new. We wish him well. It has frankly been a pleasure to work with him and in turn to record our thanks for all that he has achieved as regards delivery of capital works. These include not only the refurbishment of the entrance to the cemetery, but also the pilot study on grave reuse, the renovation of the Letts and Thomas memorials, and the removal of many dead/dangerous trees. Lack of space precludes a photo at this stage, but there will be one in the September issue!

*Stanley Watkins (1888–1975)*

Welcome visitors at the public consultation held in the cemetery in September last were Barbara Witemeyer, and her sister who both now live in the US. In turn Barbara has provided a series of three articles (see p. 13 for Part 1) that detail something of her father Stanley Watkins’ achievements whilst working for Bell Laboratories in New York in the years immediately following World War 1. A Dulwich resident in retirement, Stanley Watkins was cremated at Norwood and his ashes were scattered in the old Rose Garden. He is commemorated by a plaque in the Recordia.

In summary the Vitaphone system developed at Bell Labs became the first successful method of integrating sound with film and facilitated the first ‘talkies’, *Don Juan* (1926) and *The Jazz Singer* (1927). These films

Cut-away view: proposed new Greek Chapel layout

*Stan Watkins*
revolutionized the industry by making the on-screen talent audible, and of course terminated the careers of some of the stars of the ‘silent’ era. There is an appeal for funding to produce a film about Stan Watkins’ career (see www.gofundme.com/n3rpk-stanley-watkins-documentary). Progress with the appeal and with numerous other matters are discussed in some detail on Barbara’s own website (stanwatkins.wordpress.com/). **Monserrate Revisited – The Cook Collection in Portugal**

The wanton destruction of the impressive Cook family monument at Norwood (grave 67, square 63) sometime in the 1970s is sadly a reminder of the appalling ‘lawn conversion’ policy pursued by Lambeth Council in the 1970s and 1980s (see article by Ann Griffiths, p. 8). In complete contrast, the Palace of Monserrate, Parques de Sintra, near Lisbon, that the millionaire philanthropist and art collector Sir Francis Cook (1817–1901) adopted as his summer residence in 1856 remains a much-valued asset.

Cook commissioned the architect James Thomas Knowles (1806–1884; grave 8,643, square 75, monument destroyed) to renovate the small palace that had been the residence of the eccentric builder and collector William Thomas Beckford (1760–1844), filling its rooms with precious works of art, including paintings, sculptures, furniture, ceramics and Asian porcelains, textiles, and jewellery.

An exhibition *Monserrate Revisited – The Cook Collection in Portugal* has been held at Monserrate to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir Francis. The exhibition aimed to bring together items from the collection built up by Sir Francis to emphasise the artistic and historical value of his art collection in Portugal, a collection that was dispersed on the sale of the property in 1946. Some 50 works of art were exhibited in the restored palace, including furniture by John Gregory Crace (1808–1889; grave 10,657, square 33) and a relief by the Florentine sculptor Gregorio di Lorenzo (c. 1436–1504), the latter acquired recently by Parques de Sintra in order to begin establishing a Monserrate museum collection. Photographs of the palace and the 353 acre Monserrate estate, opening times and other information can be found at: www.parquesdesintra.pt/en/parks-and-monuments/park-and-palace-of-monserrate/.

**National Federation of Cemetery Friends**

This year’s AGM is to be held on Saturday 9 June and is being hosted by the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery, Newcastle upon Tyne (www.jesmondoldcemetery.co.uk/). Nicholas Long has kindly offered to represent us, but there is room for another FoWNC delegate if there is a volunteer.
St Luke, Lower Norwood: Burial Register, 1825–1894

Lists by date of burial and by name of the 1,383 burials at St Luke’s, 3 October 1825–7 September 1894 prepared by Francis Howcutt are now available on the Norwood Society website: https://www.norwoodsociety.co.uk/st-lukes-burial-register.html. Although most burials took place in the churchyard, some coffins were placed in a crypt beneath the church and remain stacked behind a wall at the southern end. These are included in the lists. The churchyard is now closed except for burials of cremated remains.

Walking for Health

Did you know that every Wednesday lunchtime a health walk takes place in the Cemetery? The walk is part of England’s largest network of health walks, helping people across the country lead a more active lifestyle. The group walks are led by friendly, specially trained volunteers who are on hand to provide encouragement and support. The walks start at the West Norwood Health & Leisure Centre and go to the Cemetery, the one large green open space in the town centre, and most also include a short talk on a particular grave or monument. Walks are open to everyone and especially aimed at those who are least active. Members of FoWNC attending may wish to do the talk, and this would be most welcome.

Meet at: West Norwood Health & Leisure Centre (reception area), 25 Devane Way, SE27 0DF. The walk leaves at 12:30 pm on Wednesdays; please arrive 10 minutes earlier on your first visit to allow for registration. The walk ends at 1:30 pm. For more information: Telephone 020 7926 1115; or email: wnhlc@lambeth.gov.uk or visit the Walking for Health website: https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/.

The Magnificent Seven

One suggestion from the Diversity in Cemeteries seminar that we hosted in November 2016 was that a leaflet that aimed to promote awareness of the ‘Magnificent Seven’ cemeteries (Kensal Green, Norwood, Brompton, Highgate, Nunhead, Abney Park, and Tower Hamlets) should be produced. Hopefully the leaflet will be published in time for the opening of the new Friends’ Visitor Centre at Brompton Cemetery in May. A map will be the main feature of the guide, and each cemetery has supplied two photographs and a 70-word summary of its main features.

FoWNC Mailing List

A new e-mailing list is now available whereby subscribers receive news and updates from FoWNC direct to their inbox. We recommend that all our members add themselves to the list. It is free for anyone to join, including non-members. Just visit the News section on our website and submit your name and email address. After responding to a verification email you will be ready to receive any messages that we send out. If you need to update your details or unsubscribe you can easily do this by clicking a link found at the bottom of every message. There was an excellent response to the invitations that went out last month, so if you haven’t already joined please don’t put it on your to-do list. It only takes a minute… visit https://www.fownc.org/news/.
The 1851 *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations* was organized by Prince Albert, Henry Cole, Francis Henry, George Wallis, Charles Dilke and other members of the *Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* as a celebration of modern industrial technology and design. It was the first international exhibition of manufactured products and was enormously influential on the development of many aspects of society including art and design, education, international trade and relations, and tourism. It was held in a purpose-built temporary structure in Hyde Park designed by Joseph Paxton and erected under the supervision of Sir William Cubitt, then President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Douglas Jerrold writing as ‘Mrs Amelia Mouser’ in *Punch* on 13 July 1850 used the phrase ‘the palace of very crystal’ to describe the building, thus coining the name by which it is remembered today.

The subsequent purchase of the building and its reopening at Sydenham in enlarged form in 1854, and the coming of the railway to serve it in 1856, brought massive development to Upper Norwood and the surrounding area. We have identified 74 people with connections to the Crystal Palace either at Hyde Park, or at its final home in South London who are buried or otherwise commemorated at Norwood. These include not only Sir William Cubitt and Douglas Jerrold, but also Thomas Cubitt, a guarantor of the exhibition, William Wyon, designer of the Exhibition Medals, George Jennings, who made a vital contribution to the success of the exhibition by providing the public toilets, Thomas Newman Farquhar, one of the businessmen who arranged the move to Sydenham, and William Frederick Woodington, sculptor of the monumental head of Paxton that remains in Crystal Palace Park.

In all no less than 51 of those featured in this new booklet are commemorated by entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Indeed, given the loss of the building itself, it can be argued that the cemetery has more tangible reminders of those who helped create the Palace than anywhere else.

The booklet, the product of many hours of research, runs to 96 pages and is printed in full colour throughout. There are brief biographies and where possible portraits of those featured, and photographs of all relevant surviving monuments. There is also a map that gives the location in the cemetery of all the graves discussed hence the booklet can form the basis of a self-guided tour. The cost is £7 excluding postage.
The Normandy Family Graves
Bob Flanagan

I am very sad to report the death of Mrs Elizabeth Panourgias Morrison (1933–2017). Liz was a great friend in the battle to reinstate the memorial to her great great grandfather Dr Alphonse René le Mire Normandy (1809–1864) - see FoWNC Newsletters 5 (January 1991), 46 (January 2003), and 88 (January 2017). FoWNC member Debbie Radcliffe (see p. 19) has kindly alerted me to the fact that there is a second Normandy grave at Norwood, hence it seems appropriate to record details of both graves here.

Dr Normandy lies in grave 9,170, square 18 together with his mother Eugenie le Mire Normandy (1788–1867), his grandsons Alphonse Yates Normandy (died May 1872, aged 3 months) and Leigh Normandy Morrison (1875–6), and his younger sister Elvina le Mire Normandy (1827–1901). The 12-foot border grave was purchased on 10 May 1864 for the sum of £6 6s.

Leigh Normandy Morrison was one of the 8 children of Dr Normandy’s daughter Louise and William Morrison. Louise obviously wanted to keep the Normandy name alive: an older son Walter Normandy Morrison (1865–1945) also had Normandy as his middle name. Liz Panourgias Morrison’s forebear was another son, Stuart Gordon Morrison (1869–1938). Dr Normandy’s younger son Frank (1850–1938) had 5 children, but no one in this family is connected with the cemetery. His eldest daughter was however called Pauline Mary Elvina Normandy, after her paternal great-aunt.

Dr Normandy’s eldest son, Alphonse Louis (1839–1917) and his wife Elizabeth Ann Yates (1842–1906) had only two children, Alphonse Yates Normandy and Annie L. Normandy (1867–1927). Except for Alphonse Yates, who is buried with his grandfather as noted above, all are buried in a 9 ft x 5 ft plot at Norwood (grave 31,649, square 106), which was purchased by Alphonse on 17 October 1906 for £56 5s.
Sir Francis Cook of Doughty House (1817-1901)
Ann Griffiths

Sir Francis Cook Bart, textiles merchant and important collector of fine art, was my great aunt Frederica’s father-in-law. When he died in 1901, aged 84, he left an estate valued at over £1.5 million and was considered to be one of the three richest men in Britain. Tragically, the fine family tomb at Norwood (grave 67, square 63) was destroyed along with others by Lambeth Council in acts of pure vandalism sometime in the 1970s.

Francis’s father, William Cook, hailed from Norfolk and became a retail linen-draper at 7 Great Warner Street. By 1819 he had opened a wholesale warehouse at 89 Cheapside, moving to 21–22 St Paul’s Churchyard in 1834. In the early 1850s a magnificent new warehouse was designed by James Knowles.¹ The Illustrated London News said of the building, ‘It leaves nothing to be desired... We rode from bottom to top through successive floors in a moving chamber, traversing a perpendicular shaft’!

The concern became one of the largest of its kind in the country, both as a manufacturing and a distributing house, trading at home and abroad in all types of silk, linen, woollen, and cotton goods. In 1869 William died at 38 Gloucester Square leaving a fortune of over £600,000, which included Roydon Hall, a country pile in Kent.² William’s son, Francis, who was born in Clapham on 23 January 1817, took over as senior partner of the firm.

The Monserrate Estate

In 1841, on his way home from his Grand Tour, Francis had visited Lisbon where he met and married Emily Martha, the daughter of wine merchant Robert Lucas. During the summers spent in nearby Cintra (now Sintra) Francis discovered the Monserrate Estate.

¹ James Thomas Knowles FRIBA (1806–1884; grave 8,643, square 75; monument destroyed). His daughter Isabelle Susanna Knowles (1831–1901) married my cousin James John Russell Stilwell (Stilwell being my middle name). The other girls married Henry Gay Hewlett (–1897) and Conrad Dumas. His son Sir James Thomas Knowles KCVO FRIBA (1831–1908) was a well-known architect and editor
² See: A Manor Through Four Centuries by AR Cook. London: OUP, 1938
In 1856, he agreed a sub-leasing contract for the palace, which was in a parlous state, later buying it along with fifteen farms to protect the views. Francis again employed James Knowles to rebuild the property in an extravagant Moorish and neo-Indian style. Trees and plants were imported from as far away as Australia, Chile, and Japan for the landscaped grounds, where many local workers were employed.

Cook wrote in later life of his passion for Monserrate and how ‘I stuffed the property with a veritable museum of treasures from the four corners of the world and I used to like to frighten my guests by showing them the Etruscan Sarcofage collection’. For his work in revitalising the district and his benevolence to the poor Francis was created the first Visconde de Monserrate in 1870 by the King of Portugal. The estate was advertised for sale in 1929 as having 13 bedrooms, 6 reception rooms, and grounds of some 350 acres. The site is now open to the public and in 1995 Sintra Hills, including the Park of Monserrate, was defined as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape by UNESCO.

On Richmond Hill

By 1851 Francis Cook and his family were living atop Richmond Hill in the 18th century Doughty House, originally built in the finest Portland stone and London brick for Sir William Richardson in 1769. The house is named after heiress Elizabeth Doughty, who bought the house in 1786.

In 1884–7 Cook financed the building of Alexandra House near to the Albert Hall. It was designed by Caspar Purdon Clarke (1846–1911) and built to accommodate 100 women who wished to study art, music, or science. It contained a large concert hall, a well-equipped gymnasium, and a dining room fitted with twelve tile pictures designed by John Eyre and donated by Messrs Doulton. In 1910 the name was changed to Queen Alexandra’s House and this interesting red brick building, currently housing 109 students, is still being used
as originally intended. Francis Cook’s act of generosity in financing the building of Alexandra House was followed by his being created a baronet in March 1886.

**Tennessee Claflin**

Cook’s wife had died in August 1884 and in 1885 he married the extraordinary Tennessee (‘Tennie’) Celeste Claflin (1843/6–1923), daughter of Reuben Buckman Claflin of New York, who was described variously as a ‘snake-oil salesman posing as a doctor’, a shoe man, a lawyer and ‘a man of dubious reputation’.

Tennessee was a prominent advocate of women’s rights, a spiritualist, a writer on social issues, alleged mistress of the railway magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794–1877), and nearly 30 years younger than Francis. She and her sister Victoria were very bright, but from a poor background and were encouraged as children to act as mediums and fortune tellers. Tennessee was also expected to act as a healer and to cure cancer with a ‘Magnetic Cure’. As adults the girls set themselves up as stockbrokers and publishers in New York before moving to England in the wake of the notorious Henry Ward Beecher adultery trial.3

In 1887 Sir Francis’s son Wyndham Francis Cook (1860–1905) married my highly organised great-aunt, Frederica Evelyn Stilwell Freeland (1856–1925), a doctor’s daughter from Chichester. She soon became used to high society life and in 1889 attended the Queen’s Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace, where she was presented to Queen Victoria by her sister-in-law. It was reported that ‘Mrs Wyndham Cook had a silver and white brocade dress with one of the prettiest heart-shaped bodices and elbow sleeves of transparent lace. The front of her dress was embroidered with pearls and her train was silver and white brocade, the sides being bordered with arum lilies and lilac’.4

In 1894 Sir Francis was the defendant in a scandalous breach of promise case, which was fully reported in *The Times*. Although Mrs Holland’s barrister offered no evidence on the day two of the trial, the fact that Sir Francis had corresponded with the lady in question could not be denied as Mrs Holland had sold 60 of his letters to Lady Cook’s sister. Between 1897 and 1901 the neurotic Lady Cook had her husband followed as far afield as Boulogne and Jersey by their private secretary, John Wallace, as she suspected Sir Francis of conducting another affair.

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3 Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887), brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896), was a noted Congregationalist minister and abolitionist

4 Frederica Cook’s will is thought to be the longest ever filed for probate (95,940 words). She is buried in Richmond Cemetery
Death and Burial at Norwood

When Sir Francis Cook died in 1901 the Richmond and Twickenham Times reported his funeral. Prior to interment the coffin was laid in the private chapel adjacent to the long gallery at Doughty House. On the day of the funeral a family service was held before the cortège set off for Norwood, with the coffin in an open hearse followed by 10 coaches. At the graveside the mourners included over 500 employees. Mr D Grove represented the people of Cintra and the tribute from the assistants at Monserrate was inscribed ‘simply from humble hands and grateful hearts’. There was a notable tribute from the warehouse staff at St Paul’s Churchyard, ‘which consisted of a large cushion of violets and five hundred picked specimens of lilies of the valley, the letters of the firm being interlaced in violets at the corners’.

‘The plain but impressive service took place in the chapel and at the graveside and the family vault was lined with evergreens. The body was enclosed in a shell, lined with lead, and an outer case of oak with massive but plain brass furniture. The inscription on the plate was: SIR FRANCIS COOK, First Baronet. Died 17th Feb. 1901. Aged 84 years.’

Sir Francis Cook was buried at Norwood in the same brick vault as his sister, Eliza Jane, who had died in 1839 when the family was living at Clapham Rise. Two of Francis’s infant children, William Francis and Laura Ann, were also buried there, in 1847 and in 1852, respectively, as was their mother Emily in 1884.

In 1903 John Wallace took the Dowager Lady Cook to court where he obtained remuneration for services rendered and damages in respect of his allegedly spreading a rumour that Lady Cook had murdered Sir Francis. The Times fully reported the extraordinary case and the appeal that followed, when the charges were set aside.
Lady Tennessee Cook died in 1923 at 32 Hamilton Terrace, the London home of Sir Thomas Beecham (1879–1961) and his then wife Lady Utica Celestina, daughter of Dr Charles S. Welles of New York, her great-niece. Lady Cook lies buried with her husband in the family vault at Norwood.

The Cook Collection

Sir Francis Cook amassed a valuable collection of art works, including over 500 paintings, and in 1885 he built a 125 ft long, two-storey gallery next to Doughty House to accommodate his pictures, sculptures, bronzes, gems, Italian Majolica and other antiquities. He was assisted by Sir John Charles Robinson (1824–1913), a former curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, who was surveyor of the Queen’s pictures 1882–1901. The gallery was open to scholars and loans were made to major exhibitions. Pictures of the lavish Victorian interior and Cook’s art gallery can be seen on-line.\(^5\)

Cook’s grandson, Sir Herbert Frederick Cook (1868–1939) was also an art collector and connoisseur. In the 1920s their firm, after suffering badly during the Great War, was in decline, and Cook, after attempting to revive its fortunes, resigned as chairman in 1931. The last years of his life were spent in ill health.

Amongst the paintings Sir Francis collected were works by van Eyck, Velazquez, Lippi and Turner, and what is now claimed to be Leonardo da Vinci’s *Salvator Mundi*, recently sold by Christie’s for £335 million + commission. Once owned by King Charles I, its whereabouts from 1763–1900 are unclear. Sir Francis Cook’s great grandson Sir Francis Ferdinand Maurice Cook (1907–1978) sold it for £45 at Sotheby’s in 1958. The last remaining works from the Cook collection were sold at Christie’s in 2005.

Doughty House: The art gallery

\(^5\) Doughty House is currently being restored. The cost of the bespoke joinery alone is estimated at £4.5 million and the house is expected to fetch up to £100 million when sold. When I visited in the 1990s there were buckets on the art gallery’s marble floor to catch the leaks through the roof, and holes in the floors of the main house. The owner, Andre Metaxides, was living in a couple of downstairs rooms and wondering how he was going to restore it
A lifetime ago a Londoner led a group of engineers at Bell Laboratories in New York where they developed the Vitaphone system, which by 1926 had successfully integrated sound with film. One engineer was George R. Groves (1901–1976), the other was my father, Stanley Sylvester Alexander Watkins (1888–1975), who in retirement became a Dulwich resident and is commemorated by a plaque in the Recordia at Norwood.

On 1 October 1996 a British Film Institute plaque honouring George Groves and my father was unveiled at Warner Bros. cinema, Leicester Square. Over 30 people including Dad’s widow Molly, Bob Allen of the Association of Motion Picture Sound, and Peter Dobson of Warners Theatres (UK). The plaque was situated in a prominent position, but when Warners sold their cinemas in 2003, the new owners removed the plaque. Its present whereabouts is not known.

America Calls

But to start at the beginning. Stanley Watkins was born in St John’s Wood on 29 May 1888, the only child of Betsy Caroline Doughty and Sylvester Alexander Watkins. His mother had been a concert pianist, his father was a watchmaker, a mild, gentle man, though not very successful in business. When in 1902 an uncle in California invited the family to join him on a lemon ranch in Lakeside near San Diego, my father and his mother went, leaving her husband behind.

This was quite an adventure for a boy of 14. The train took them through Albuquerque, where they ate in the Fred Harvey lunchroom of the newly built Alvarado Hotel. With his box Brownie camera, my father took photos of the railway porter, and of some Indian women selling pottery. After an exciting year full of snakes and shotguns, bareback rides to the one room schoolhouse, and ‘hubbubs’ when all the far-flung neighbours would gather for communal entertainment, the Watkinses decided lemon ranching was not for them and returned to England where dad finished his education. Three decades passed before he would return to the Southwest. But before that, New York beckoned.

From England, the Watkins family had kept in touch with their California friends. The daughter of one had gone East and married Gwilym Miles, a small, Welsh man with a
large baritone voice. He was known as The Great American Elijah and gave singing lessons at his Mount Vernon, New York, boarding house, where several of his pupils lodged. After dad had finished at University, Miles urged him to come over to the US, and the invitation was accepted.

My father had graduated with a degree in electrical engineering from the Central Technical College, later known as the City & Guilds Engineering College of the Imperial College of Science and Technology in South Kensington. Although this was only 1908, the Electrical Department based its teaching on the new ‘heuristic’ methods. As dad described it: ‘they did not consider that a graduating student should have his head packed with an enormous stock of facts, but that he should have been taught how to reason, how to look up things that he didn’t know, and how to write his results in intelligible English’.6 This was useful training when my father arrived in New York in the late summer of 1911 to look for work. He was 23 years old, with $50 in his pocket. Luckily, he had friends awaiting him.

Bell Telephone Laboratories

Gwilym Miles had contacts in the world of engineering, which led to several interviews. Dad soon landed a position in the Physical Laboratory at Western Electric, the ‘Western’ part of the name reflecting its Chicago origins. The Engineering Department was based at 463 West Street, New York, and later, in 1925, it was incorporated as Bell Telephone Laboratories.

In his early years with Western Electric, my father worked on a variety of projects. By the time the US entered World War I, he was involved exclusively in military work. This included gun-ranging, and aircraft and submarine detection. Because of this he was exempt from active service. The urgencies of war and the increased funding made available for development produced some technical advances that were to prove useful in future. He explained: ‘We came out of the Kaiser’s war with some much more sensitive and reliable microphones and with advances in amplifiers and loudspeakers that made it possible to push the development of sound engineering equipment in leaps and bounds. Not to speak of the improvements in radio apparatus’.

With the onset of better speaker systems, my father was given the task of advising on the installation of ‘the right sort of equipment for specific jobs and seeing that it was used to best advantage’. This took him to hotels and ballrooms, sports stadiums, theatres and concert halls around the country. He installed a microphone and loudspeaker system in the Roxy Theater in New York which ‘seated about 3000 and showed [silent] movies and had a very elaborate stage show as well’.

Western Electric had provided ‘Roxy’7 with a microphone and loudspeaker system ‘to augment the sound from his singers and orchestra’, and ‘a special set up’ to help him conduct his rehearsals in the huge theatre. However, when excited Roxy would often forget about his microphone and rush around shouting directions anyway, as he had done

6 Unless otherwise noted, the quotes in this article are from my father’s unpublished manuscript The First Sixty: a Sortabiography (1946)
7 The impresario Samuel Lionel Rothafel (1882–1936)
in the past. This was a problem my father encountered later when trying to record artists unused to such new-fangled aids.

Around 1920, my father was sent out again, this time to introduce the newly developed hearing aids. These were ‘miniature versions of our speech amplifying system, but using earphones instead of loudspeakers’. Replacing ear trumpets, these were elaborate, expensive pieces of equipment, and in the early days only for the wealthy. When the young Stanley Watkins called on Mrs J.P. Morgan, she kindly invited him to lunch with her, but at another house he was sent round to the servants’ entrance and introduced as ‘the electrician man’. When situations like these arose, my father’s easy charm and diplomacy proved invaluable.

While he was improving the sounds heard by individuals, my father was intrigued by a colleague’s work with binaural circuits, what we now know as stereophonic sound. His appetite for learning was nourished by his work on the electronic part of electrocardiographs, and demonstrating a device invented in ‘The Labs’ for an artificial larynx. He kept up this interest in medical apparatus in later years when working on visible speech equipment for the deaf. All this time he had been working on variations of sound production, but after the war he began work on electronic recording processes and another step was taken towards talking pictures.

**Voice Recording**

By the early 1920s much experimentation had already been done towards making sound movies. Most attempts used a combination of film and phonograph, such as Thomas Edison’s short-lived *Kinetophone* around 1895, and the more successful but still unsatisfactory French *Chronophone*. Edison improved and revived his *Kinetophone* in 1913, but success still evaded him. America followed with the *Cameraphone*, a pre-recorded soundtrack on disc, synchronized (if they were lucky) with the picture film. The German-made *Synchroscope* was also fraught with difficulties. Along with bad surface noise, one of the major drawbacks of all these systems was the inability to achieve consistent synchronization. Another was the lack of suitable amplification, forcing the actors to shout. Edison insisted that the spoken word belonged on the stage, but in 1921, the idea of a ‘talking picture... was gathering strength in the laboratory’. Microphones made the difference.

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8 Frances Louisa Tracy, known as Fanny (1842–1924)

9 The radio pioneer Alexander Muirhead FRS (1848–1920; grave 20,839, square 21) worked at St Bartholomew’s Hospital 1869–72, where he is credited with recording the first human electrocardiogram.
Edison’s phonograph used wax cylinders with large horns as amplifiers. Even with discs that were covered with a thick layer of ‘metallic soap’ that could be shaved to remove mistakes, the sensitive mechanism made recording a chancy business for solo artists; orchestras proved even more difficult to record, as each player jostled to be heard. The new condenser microphones were a great improvement and the new equipment was soon put to use. ‘With electrical recording, using microphones’, dad explained, ‘the orchestras and bands can be as big as you like and can sit in the usual arrangement and play as though they were in a concert hall’.

Record companies such as the Victor Talking Machine Company and the Columbia Phonograph Company had Western Electric equipment in their studios. My father was assigned to assist at Columbia where, as he had done in the Bell Labs, he made test records on which he did the singing. He wrote that the Columbia people considered ‘one of them was the best recording of that song that they had made’. He also recorded artists like Bessie Smith\(^{10}\) and Eddie Cantor,\(^{11}\) thus getting his first taste of handling touchy, show business people. Cantor he said ‘was a bit of a nuisance because he couldn’t understand that a new system couldn’t be expected to work 100 % all the time.’

It was not always the equipment that caused problems. In 1913 Western Electric had bought the rights to the Audion, the vacuum amplification tube invented by Lee de Forest.\(^{12}\) De Forest then pursued his interest in making sound movies ‘by photographing a voice record simultaneously with the image on the same piece of celluloid’. Though he had some success, his efforts were wasted when he fell out with his business partners. This left the field open for the work being done at Bell Labs.

*Talking Pictures*

My father had seen his first talking picture, what he called a ‘singie,’ probably by Edison, in London in 1909. Now, in 1922, he was to take part in making one himself. The idea sprang from an animated film called *The Audion* that explained how de Forest’s device worked. This was shown during lectures aimed at recruiting graduate students into Bell Labs. It was decided to produce a set of records to accompany the film and dad was delegated to write a script and make the records.

As it was only a commentary to go with the pictures, strict synchronization was not necessary. However, at the first public performance, a meeting of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers at Yale in 1922, they took no chances. Dad, whose voice was already on the disc, was to take over the commentary should the equipment fail. From where he was perched with his microphone, up among the organ pipes in Woolsey Hall, he could not see the screen clearly and all the diagrams looked alike. It was just as well that nothing broke down!

\(^{10}\) Bessie Smith (1894–1937), the ‘Empress of the Blues’

\(^{11}\) Eddie Cantor (Edward Israel Itzkowitz; 1892–1964), ‘illustrated song’ performer, comedian, dancer, singer, actor, and songwriter

\(^{12}\) Lee de Forest (1873–1961) self-described ‘Father of Radio’, took out over 180 patents. His most famous invention (1906), the three-element Audion (triode valve), was the first practical current amplifier
Who’s Buried Where in London
Book Review – Brent Elliott


The illustration on the front cover shows a scene in Highgate Cemetery, but don’t let that put you off. There have been several books on London graves before: most recently Richard Barnes’ Art of Memory: Sculpture in the Cemeteries of London (2016), but before that London’s Cemeteries by Darren Beach (2006), Cuthbertson and Randall’s Permanent Londoners (1991), and the four editions of Hugh Meller’s London Cemeteries (starting in 1981), as well as more specialised surveys like Malcolm Johnson’s Crypts of London. So what does this work have to distinguish it from its predecessors? Meller gives a far greater number of names, but his biographical notes seldom fill more than a sentence. Many of Matthews’ people have a quarter-page paragraph to themselves; the largest number is ten to a page. There is a rich selection of colour photographs, usually three or four to a double-page spread.

There is no point in grumbling about who has been left out: nobody with the possible exception of the compiler is ever satisfied with such a selection. Treatment of names is a more important point, and here there are some annoying inconsistencies. At least our author has not fallen into the common trap of assuming that the first name and the surname are an automatically correct version of a person’s name; he more usually falls into the opposite trap of including names that might be useful when chasing birth records on ancestry.com, but which were not used by the people themselves. Malcolm McLaren and Lionel Monckton might not have been pleased to find themselves rendered as Malcolm Robert Andrew McLaren and John Lionel Alexander Monckton, respectively. An unnecessary clutter of middle names affects Ernest (Christopher) Dowson, Sir Astley (Paston) Cooper, Gilbert (Charles) Harding, George (Henry) Borrow, but Philip James de Loutherbourg loses the ‘James’. Heath Robinson and Leigh Hunt are given additional forenames, and for reasons best known to the author are indexed under H and L, respectively. All this has taken some research and is not simply based on tombstone inscriptions: Highgate Cemetery, it seems, has a resident named Francis Montague Holl, but the name on his stone is Frank Holl.

The book is generally speaking as serviceable as its predecessors, and the photographs of monuments are splendid and will help many people to speed up their searches. The picture of Thomas Hood’s monument at Kensal Green, stripped of its bronze ornaments by an unknown offender in the 1960s, has been supplemented by a Victorian engraving,
to show what has been lost. And a touch of heartbreak: the Goscombe John tomb in Hampstead is shown both before and after the theft of its magnificent statue. If, like me, you have deliberately avoided Hampstead Cemetery for years in order not to be confronted with the disfigured monument, then I advise you not to turn to page 156.

Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

Buried at Norwood are several members of a family of highly successful architectural and monumental sculptors and modelers: James Mabey (1812–1871; grave 13,205, square 43) and his sons Charles Henry (1835–1912; grave 20,220, square 43) and James jnr (1838–1883; grave 19,865, square 43). A grandson Charles Henry jnr (1867–1965) continued the family business on into the 20th century.

On 20 January Rev. Philip Young, a great-grandson of C. H. Mabey jnr, presented the results of his family history research. The rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster after the 1834 fire, to designs by Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, provided James Mabey snr with his first major work. In 1842 he was engaged by the sculptor John Thomas (1813–1862) as foreman of the Modelling Department, a position he held until 1858. His models of the Victoria and Central Towers survive and are kept in an archives room in the Victoria Tower. He also exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Charles Henry snr built the Temple Bar memorial, designed by Sir Horace Jones (grave 12,335, square 89) in 1880, and in the Greek section at Norwood the grade 2 listed mausoleum of Eustratios Ralli, designed by E.M. Barry, carries the inscription that it was built by the firm of C. H. and J. Mabey. The firm also modelled the ornate dolphin lamp-posts on the Victoria Embankment.

On 17 February Emma Sparre-Slater, South London Regional Training Officer for Dignity Funerals, presented a history of the firm Francis Chappell & Sons. The business was founded in 1840 by John Chappell, a cabinet maker in Deptford (almost invariably Victorian cabinet makers were also making coffins), although it was not until the 1871 census that they were calling themselves undertakers. Francis joined his father in the firm in 1875, and eventually began using his own name on some branches. The firm steadily expanded through south east London, and by the 1930s Chappell's (counting branches then variously under the names of John and Francis, but soon dropping the name John) were the single largest network of funeral homes in the country. The late 20th century saw the firm change hands several times, at one point being owned by a huge US-based funeral company, but in 2002 a British management buy-out created the group Dignity Funerals. An excellent illustrated history booklet is available from Emma.
Starting from a study of the history of her house in Judd Street, Bloomsbury and its former residents, Debbie Radcliffe was drawn into extensive researches of the life and work of the man born in Rouen as Alphonse René le Mire, but better known later when living in England as Dr Normandy (1809–1864; grave 9,170, square 18), chemist and inventor. On 17 March she presented her accumulated knowledge, now considerably greater than that of Normandy’s ODNB entry.

In addition to what we already knew of him, particularly through his great-great-granddaughter Elizabeth Panourgias-Morrison (see p. 7), we learned more about his early life and his family and his character, and the number of patents he took out. The principle of his sea water desalination process is still used today, whilst some information on his evidence to a House of Commons committee on the adulteration of food and his friendship with Henry Minchin Noad FRS (1815–1877; grave 16,626, square 21 – monument destroyed), Professor of Chemistry and Physics at St George’s Hospital, 1847–77, was especially interesting [see FoWNC Newsletter 71, May 2011 for the connection between Noad and Henry Gray (1827–1861) of *Gray’s Anatomy* fame].

Forthcoming Events

May – August 2018

Introductory tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (6 May, 3 June, 1 July—6 July, 3 June, 1 July – but see events list below, and 5 August), starting at the cemetery main gate off Norwood Road at 14.30, and lasting for about 2 hours. These tours coincide with West Norwood Feast (http://westnorwoodfeast.com/, street markets and other town centre events). There is no formal charge, but we welcome donations. To receive notifications of additional events, please join our email list (see p. 5). To volunteer to help with clearance work in the cemetery, please contact Beth Cross at BCross@lambeth.gov.uk.

Sunday 1 July, 11:00–17:00: Norwood Cemetery Open Day

Lambeth Bereavement Services and FoWNC plan a programme of events and short talks in the large Crematorium Chapel and tours of the cemetery – further details in due course.

Other Events

Local History Walks in South London

The 2018–19 walks leaflet is now available either at Lambeth libraries, or as a PDF from http://www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk/home/2018walksleaflet/.

Saturday 19 May, 11:00–16:00: Abney Park Cemetery Open Day

Stoke Newington High Street, N16. All proceeds on the day will be going towards restoring the monument of Dr Isaac Watts: http://www.abneypark.org/news/209/17/Give-Isaac-Watts-a-hand/d,news.

Saturday 19 May, 11:00–17:00: Nunhead Cemetery Open Day

A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan

Graves 33 and 105 (square 26/7) are next to each other in the unconsecrated part of the cemetery. Grave 33 contains Ann Conan (–1839), Frances Doyle (1828–1843), Adelaide Doyle (c. 1831–1844), Elizabeth Conan (–1851), and Ann Conan (–1867), whilst grave 105 contains Marianne Doyle née Conan (1795–1839) and her husband John Doyle (1797–1868), a notable political cartoonist, caricaturist, painter, and lithographer known by the pen name ‘H.B.’ Frances and Adelaide were their children. A further son Charles Altamont Doyle (1832–1893) was the father of the physician and novelist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930). No identifiable gravestones survive at Norwood, although it is possible that the anonymous bodystone illustrated is all that remains of John and Marianne Doyle’s monument. Is there any information as to the original appearance of the Conan and Doyle gravestones at Norwood?

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