

Friends of West Norwood CEMETERY

Newsletter No. 94 – January 2019

Free to members

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Chairman's Report

Bob Flanagan

A crop of tomb restorations to report this month. Firstly, the Grade II listed Letts (grave 249, square 33) and Thomas (grave 429, square 34) vaults have been re-instated and the associated monuments replaced. This has been a massive project and all credit to the Scheme of Management Committee, Lambeth, Sally Strachey Historic Conservation, and everyone else involved in seeing it through to completion. Unfortunately, the Letts vault had largely collapsed and had to be stabilised *in situ* prior to rebuilding and reinstating the ledger stone. The Thomas vault, however, was intact. It contained 3 triple shell, lead-lined coffins, all of which had been damaged. The wooden outer coffins had not survived, except for small fragments of the bases. Coffin breastplates were found associated with all three burials; two brass and one lead.

The coffin of Israel himself (c. 1775–1842) had borne a fine brass plate, that of his wife Betsy (c. 1791–1865) had featured a conventional pressed lead plate; the plate associated with the last coffin, that of their son John Henry Thomas (c. 1806–1843), was badly corroded and barely readable.



The restored Israel Thomas tomb

Israel Thomas was a stationer at 20 Cornhill and lived at Clapham Rise at the time of his death. Sadly, the restoration has emphasised the vandalism suffered by the monument in that the railings that once graced it have been ripped off – a similar fate befell the Gothic railings that once surrounded the Grade II listed Grissell tomb (grave 1,669, square 63).



A further discovery from the Thomas tomb is that, as with many of the early vaults in the cemetery, it was capped originally with a simple Yorkstone ledger. This is evidenced by the surviving inscription at the back of the fine Egyptian-style monument, the feature that led to its Grade II listing in 1993. One wonders what Israel himself would have thought of such grandeur?

Coffin plates of Israel (left) and Betsy Thomas



The original inscription on the Thomas vault

As with the Thomas tomb, the monument to diary manufacturer Thomas Letts (1803–1873) and family was also one of the 1993 listings. As noted above sadly one side of the vault had collapsed crushing the coffins in the process, although this is not visible above ground thanks to the excellent restoration that has been forthcoming. However, this tomb too has been vandalized in that the sleeping lamb that once adorned it was stolen many years ago (see Newsletter 86, May 2016). Given that the lamb was such an important feature of the tomb, we have made a donation towards a replacement that we are assured can be fitted firmly to the monument to ensure its future safety.



The restored Letts monument



The newly-restored Spurgeon tomb

The final restoration to report is that of the Grade II listed tomb of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) and his wife Susannah (1832–1903) (grave 24,395, square 38). The impetus for this arose from the Conference that I attended in 2017 (see Newsletter 90, September 2017). Thanks to Sara Willcocks of Spurgeons Children’s Charity for initiating the work and arranging finance, and to Rowland Brothers for doing such a splendid job. Sadly, here too there has been a loss as the adjacent monument to Spurgeon’s son Tom (1856–1917; grave 34,727, square 52), who took over the Tabernacle at the Elephant & Castle on his father’s death, was demolished by Lambeth many years ago.

The HLF Bid and Other News

Transfer of the responsibilities of the Greek Cathedral Trustees re. the Greek Enclosure to Lambeth is proceeding as planned. The decision on the HLF Parks for People bid itself will be announced in January – look out for publicity in the local and national press. Hopefully it will be good news.

As to other matters, we await recommencement of the winter scrub clearance programme and also completion of outstanding tree works, notably the removal of the tree that is growing out of the Grade II* listed tomb of William Burges (1827–1881) and family (grave 4,478, square 34). This has been on the ‘to do’ list for several years now. I will do what I can to expedite matters.

Charles Delauney Turner Bravo (1845–1876; grave 15,982, square 87)

The death of Charles Bravo took up many column inches of newsprint in the summer of 1876. The undisputed fact is that the 31-year-old barrister died in agony after ingesting tartar emetic (antimony hydrogen tartrate) at *The Priory*, a pretty white house that still stands on the edge of Tooting Bec Common. But was it accident, suicide, or murder is the enduring question (see FoWNC Newsletter 52, January 2005)?

This conundrum and others are revisited in a thoughtful article found on the web: <http://london-overlooked.com/charles-bravo/>. Bravo’s gravestone at Norwood is intact, albeit rarely visited – it lies near to the Grade II listed Pond mausoleum (grave 18,718, square 88).

Norwood Year of Culture 2019: a Norwood Forum Initiative

Inspired by the re-opening of the Library with its new Cinema, the ambition for our Year of Culture is to add an extra layer of community wide profile to all the arts, sports, and leisure activities that are happening throughout Norwood. Find out more, and how to get involved, on the Forum website: www.norwoodforum.org.

The Gravestone of John Britton

Bob Flanagan

The Grade II* listed tombstone of the antiquarian John Britton (1771–1857; grave 5,235, square 119) is the subject of an article in *The Builder* (4 December 1858, p. 811). The article is of especial interest in that it gives the origin of the design and of the stone used as well as detailing its construction and featuring a drawing of the monument.

‘It will be remembered that the Royal Institute of British Architects have placed a brass, in memory of the late Mr. Britton, in Salisbury Cathedral, and that the Wilts Archaeological Society have erected a memorial window in the church at the place of his birth, Kington St. Michael. His widow, nevertheless, naturally desired that the place of his interment, in Norwood Cemetery, should be appropriately marked out. Professor Hosking kindly gave his assistance, and a drawing was made, founded on a design submitted by Mr. Britton for a monument to Chatterton. Prudential reasons, however, induced Mrs. Britton to relinquish this idea, and Mr. Hosking suggested the erection of an upright stone, similar, in notion, to those at Stonehenge. This has been done, and the accompanying engraving represents its appearance.

The coffin was exhumed, and a structural foundation formed. Upon this is laid, at the level of the ground, a 6-inch York ledger, 5 feet square, and upon that is set a plinth of Bramley Fall stone, of the same superficies, and 8 or 10 inches thick. This plinth is wrought all round, and weathered at top from the base of the upright or monumental block, which is also of Bramley Fall stone, standing on the plinth, and tenon-joggled 4 inches into it. The monumental block is 3 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 4 inches, or thereabouts, at the base, 11 feet high, diminishing slightly on all sides, and is about 5 tons weight. The upright stone—the monument—is not wrought, but is as it was rent out of the quarry, with no mark of a tool upon it beyond that of the spalling hammer, which was used to throw off some rougher irregularities. There is no other inscription than the dates of birth and death, cut into the base of the wrought plinth, nothing whatever on the upright block itself.

Some time after the work was commenced, Mrs. Britton received a communication from Mr. Cunningham, the honorary secretary of the Wilts Archaeological Society, to the effect that the subscriptions towards the window were more than required for that purpose, and



John Britton's gravestone in 1858

that, at a meeting of the committee, he had proposed that the surplus money should be offered for her acceptance. The sum was about 70*l.* and this Mrs. Britton accordingly appropriated to defray the expenses of the ‘Monument’ at Norwood Cemetery.’



John Britton's monument in 1967

The 10-foot border grave (6 ft 6 in by 5 ft 0 in) was purchased by Ellen Britton of 17 Burton Street, St Pancras on 15 January 1857 for £10 10*s.* An extra 1 ft 0 in was added for £2 on 15 January 1859. A ‘border grave’ is a grave next to a road or path, which obviously attracted a premium. Others buried in the grave are Helen Britton (1900) and Clara Rosamond Britton (10 January 1931). Ownership of the plot was transferred to Herbert Henry Brayley on 8 May 1931.¹

It is noteworthy that the 1971 Lambeth publication *West Norwood Cemetery. Conservation and Landscape Improvement* by E. Hollamby not only states that the Britton stone is brown granite, but also attributes its design to George Godwin (1813–1888), editor of *The Builder* from 1844 until not long before his death. Both of these errors seem to stem from an earlier Victorian Society report and were repeated when the monument was listed in 1981.

Bramley Quarry, Leeds, dates to the 12th century. It provided millstone grit known as Bramley Fall that was soft to work, but weathered to a hard, resistant surface. It was used at Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds Town Hall, the Leeds Corn Exchange, and many other buildings. The fact that it could withstand shock made it ideal for engine beds and defensive works such as Martello Towers. In addition, it was used widely in the construction of canals and dock walls. The stone used for the Britton monument may have been obtained at a discount since the presence of the large inclusion visible at the back of the upright would have rendered it less useful as a building stone.

The monument survives intact, although an additional memorial plaque that was present when the monument was photographed by A. Rigden in 1967 has disappeared, as have the surrounding tombstones. It is indeed remarkable not only that the 1858 woodcut is a faithful representation of these latter tombs as evidenced by the 1967 photograph, but also that they survived intact until culled by Lambeth in the 1970s.

¹ Edward Wedlake Brayley (1773–1854) was an English antiquary and topographer. His friendship with John Britton lasted for 65 years. They became joint editors of *The Beauties of England and Wales*, themselves writing many of the volumes. Brayley's son Edward William Brayley FRS (1801–1870) was a noted English geographer, librarian, and science author. The *London Gazette* (3 June 1910) records Herbert Henry Brayley as a Second Division clerk in the Inland Revenue on transfer from the Post Office

William Tidd (1760-1847): Legal Writer

Bob Flanagan

William Tidd was the second son of Julius Tidd, a merchant of the parish of St Andrew, Holborn. Admitted to the society of the Inner Temple on 6 June 1782, he was called to the bar on 26 November 1813 after having practised as a special pleader (a lawyer who specialized in written statements or opinions) for more than 30 years. Three future Lord Chancellors (John Singleton Copley, Baron Lyndhurst; Charles Pepys, Earl Cottenham; and John Campbell, Baron Campbell), and Lord Chief Justice Thomas Denman were amongst his pupils.

THE
PRACTICE
OF THE
COURT OF KING'S BENCH
IN PERSONAL ACTIONS:
WITH
REFERENCES TO CASES OF PRACTICE
IN THE
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

THE THIRD EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

BY WILLIAM TIDD, Esq.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES AND CO. LOMBARD-STREET, WHITE FRIARS;
FOR J. BUTTERWORTH, FLEET-STREET; AND R. BROOKE AND
J. CLARKE, SKILL-YARD;
AND J. COOKE, OMBUD QUAY, DUBLIN.
1803,

ton Road) on 14 February 1847 and is buried at Norwood (grave 1,633, square 62; monument destroyed). His wife, Elizabeth, who died on 21 October 1847, and Mary (–1860), Maria (–1866), and John (–1870) Gould are also buried in the grave. Tidd bequeathed the copyright of the *Practice* to Edward Hobson Vitruvius Lawes (1781–1849), serjeant-at-law. Tidd's house at Kennington is now the offices of the *Walcot Foundation*, sponsors of the 2018 *Lambeth Heritage Festival*.

Tidd is remembered for his *Practice of the Court of King's Bench* (vols 1 & 2: 1790 & 1794, respectively), for long almost the sole authority for common-law practice. The last of nine editions appeared in 1828. A final consolidated volume incorporating supplements appeared in 1837. The work was used extensively in the US: a 4th American edition, with notes by Francis J. Troubat and Asa I. Fish, appeared as late as 1856.²

Tidd was favoured by the approbation of Uriah Heep: 'I am improving my legal knowledge, Master Copperfield,' said Uriah. 'I am going through Tidd's *Practice*. Oh, what a writer Mr. Tidd is, Master Copperfield!' (Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*, Chapter xii).

William Tidd died at Walcot Place (now Kenning-



Tidd's house, Kennington Road

² Francis Joseph Troubat (1802–1868) and Asa Israel Fish (1820–1879) were Philadelphia lawyers. Fish was also a director of the Camden & Amboy Railroad in New Jersey. Various versions of the book are available for free on the internet

The Cinquevalli Monument at Norwood

Bob Flanagan

Lambeth's actions in the cemetery following the compulsory purchase of 1965 resulted in the illegal and unrecorded destruction of thousands of gravestones and in turn the illegal re-sale of some 1100 graves. Less widely appreciated is that their 'lawn conversion' policy also involved the removal of railings, kerbs, and landings from hundreds of surviving monuments and the laying flat of many others.



The original Cinquevalli monument

ent that remedial work will soon be needed. Sadly, the fate of the monument in some ways mirrors the misfortune that befell Cinquevalli himself towards the end of his life. Having lost his wife to cancer in 1908, his career was blighted by the anti-German hysteria that gripped the country in 1914 despite the fact that many people of German origin joined the British Army and fought on the Western Front. He died in Brixton a broken man to all accounts and was buried at Norwood on 19 July 1918. In July last year The Music Hall Guild kindly placed a wreath on the monument to mark the centenary of the death of this remarkable man. His second wife Dora Nowell Cinquevalli (1877–1953) is also buried in the grave.

The monument to the great juggler Paul Cinquevalli (real name Emile Otto Lehmann-Braun, the name Braun is recorded in the cemetery register; 1859–1918) raised to his wife, the equestrienne Adeline Price (real name Agrippina Alexandrine Adeline Braun; 1857–1908) (grave 32,152, square 82) is amongst the structures that have suffered in this way. I am grateful to Hermann Sagemüller and The Music Hall Guild for supplying the adjacent photograph, taken in the 1970s, which clearly shows not only the original aspect of the monument, but also the serried ranks of gravestones in good order behind it. The outline of the lost landing is clearly visible on the monument today.

Perhaps inevitably, removal of the landing has destabilised the surviving structure to the extent



The monument today

Stanley Watkins: The Sound of Silents ~ Part 3 ³

Barbara Witemeyer

In *The Warner Bros. Story*, AT&T archivist Clive Hirschhorn praised my father Stan Watkins and his colleague George Groves for their ‘painstaking experiments in the field [of sound which] resulted in as perfectly synchronized a picture as was possible at the time, skillfully varying the density and volume of sound as the performers moved from long-shot to close-up’.⁴

Dad was as valuable to the launching of the Vitaphone system in his role as a gracious, public relations figure as for his engineering expertise. In his own words: ‘Naturally during the run of the Vitaphone production in the Warner Theatre it had great publicity value, and I had to give explanatory talks to a number of press and other groups. The interested parties would meet for luncheon at a restaurant in the Broadway district, I would give a short talk about the birth and babyhood of the talkies, and then I would pass the group into the theatre to see the show’.⁵

Don Juan was a success with the critics as well as the public, and dad and his Vitaphone engineers took it around the country setting up the equipment and testing the acoustics in Warners’ theatres before each opening. The crew encountered gangster warfare in Chicago, bomb threats from the musicians’ union, themselves feeling threatened by the new recording technology, and in Atlantic City when the lights along the boardwalk came on the first evening, the change in voltage had Will Hays’ speech alternating ‘between roaring like a lion and cooing like a dove’. Dad remembered: ‘One of our chaps had to spend the evening holding onto a bit of string to close a circuit breaker that kept blowing’. The second day went without a hitch as a special feeder was run in to provide a constant supply of electricity.



Stan Watkins

Despite the nationwide activity of Western Electric engineers equipping Warners’ chain of theatres for sound, many of which were bought especially for that purpose thus creating a ready-made market for Vitaphone talking pictures, the rest of Hollywood still felt this was a balloon ready to burst. Of the major studios, only Fox saw the future of sound as a viable possibility. They developed a

³ For Part 2 see Newsletter 93 (September 2018)

⁴ Clive Hirschhorn. *The Warner Bros. Story*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1979: 32

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, the quotes in this article are from my father’s unpublished manuscript *The First Sixty: a Sortabibliography* (1946)

system of sound on film, called it Movietone, and in 1927 the first Movietone News was released. Eventually they came in with Warner Bros. and adopted the sound on disc system, although Vitaphone and Movietone News were still shown as separate productions. There were still relatively few theatres equipped for sound, and the cost of sound equipment was high, but so were the prospects. It was not yet what dad called the Sound-Rush of 1928, but the race was about to begin.

Al Jolson and The Jazz Singer

In the event, the starting-gun went off almost by accident. The next sound feature film Warner Bros. produced was *The Jazz Singer*, which starred the popular entertainer, Al Jolson.⁶ As with *Don Juan* this was supposed to have a soundtrack of orchestral music and songs. The letter 's' was less sibilant in songs than in speech, so singing was easier to record, and exact synchronization of voice and words was not quite so crucial. However, where the human factor was concerned, there were other problems to deal with.

My father had had experience dealing with the volatile, excitable Jolson during the filming of a Vitaphone 'short' in 1926. Dad's first wife, Frances Cowles, told me about it in 1991: 'Jolson began to make such a fuss, he got everybody upset. He was a nervous wreck himself. You know that famous time when he leans forward and says "Mammy", well when they ran it through, he got everybody so upset that it didn't work; he opened his mouth and nothing came out. He blew up and [Stan] went up to him in his calm, quiet way and said "Mr. Jolson, you are making everybody miserable and upset and you are behaving very badly. If you would just go out in the lobby and smoke a cigarette or something for five minutes until I get this thing [sorted out] and then come back and do it again, I assure you it will be all right." And Jolson went off muttering, and he came back and he did it, and it was all right.'

When Jolson was hired to play the Jewish cantor's son who loved singing jazz, he was already a big name on Broadway. Being an irrepressible stage performer, Jolson was soon ad-libbing during the filming of his songs. At first the studio did expensive retakes, but in the end Sam Warner persuaded his sceptical brothers to leave the spoken lines in; they did, thinking there was not enough talking to make a difference. How wrong they were. Dad knew that Jolson's venture into the Vitaphone studios had turned him on to sound movies, and could not help wondering if this so-called ad-libbing 'was a put-up job between Sam Warner and Jolson'.

The foresight of Sam Warner and his extraordinary efforts, aided by my father, in bringing sound to moving pictures, was overshadowed by his untimely death just before the New York opening of *The Jazz Singer* on 6 October 1927. Dad, who had worked side by side with Sam Warner during that first Vitaphone year, felt the loss deeply. They stand next to each other in a Vitaphone group photo, taken in 1926 during the filming of musical 'shorts', with Stan in his customary shirtsleeves, Sam beside him in his usual three-piece suit, his hand resting on my father's shoulder. Their partnership brought sound to the movie industry, but Sam died before hearing the clarion call.

⁶ Al Jolson (real name Asa Yoelson) (1886–1950). American singer, comedian, and actor

‘Wait a minute, wait a minute; you ain’t heard nothin’ yet folks, listen to this’. Those few words, and Jolson’s hammy, one-sided conversation with his stunned, nearly speechless co-star, Eugenie Besserer playing his mother,⁷ launched *The Jazz Singer* as a Talking Picture, and sealed the fate of silent films (and, incidentally, some silent actors) forever.

The gala opening at the Warner Theater in New York delighted the audience, if not all the critics, but neither group were aware of the tensions experienced by the technical crew, and the actors too. As the surviving Warner brothers had flown back to California to be at Sam’s funeral, my father was put in charge of rehearsals, and attended the opening performance to oversee things. At the last rehearsal ‘Al Jolson sat on one side of me and Louis Silvers,⁸ who had done the music for the film, squatted in the aisle on my other side. Throughout the rehearsal they provided running comments somewhat like this:

JOLSON: Can’t you bring up my voice a bit?

SILVER: I can’t hear my music. Make it louder.

JOLSON: The hell with your music, I want to hear my voice.

SILVER: Your voice is OK, Al. Pipe down.

Throughout... I pretended to keep pushing buttons at a rate that would have sent the projectionists round the bend. At the actual opening performance everyone was satisfied with the result’. So, once again, his diplomacy soothed the prima donnas and ensured that the show went on. Afterwards, dad recalled, Al Jolson signed autographs with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Seeing the enthusiasm with which *The Jazz Singer* was received, the other Hollywood studios at last realized they had to get on the bandwagon or miss the parade, and the motion picture industry swiftly moved from ‘Sound Pictures’ to ‘All Talking’ and finally ‘100 % All Talking’ pictures. Warner Bros. had led the way, but others quickly followed. The Vitaphone system, and its engineers, were wooed by all the major Hollywood producers, and dad visited studios to discuss licenses for producing sound pictures using Western Electric equipment.

Having been in at the start of the new phenomenon, as head of ‘the only group who had any experience in handling sound’, my father was highly regarded in Hollywood.

Warner’s musical director, Herman Heller, was a constant companion. He enjoyed the society of Roy Pomeroy, head of sound and special effects at Paramount. Eddie Mannix,



Stan Watkins in retirement in Dulwich

⁷ Eugenie Besserer (1868–1934). American actress

⁸ Louis Silvers (1889–1954). American composer and film score writer

the head of MGM studios,⁹ introduced dad to Louis B. Mayer¹⁰ by saying ‘Louis, I want you to meet the Pope’. The Industry truly respected the sound and other technicians’ contribution to the talkies boom. As Albert Warner said ‘We supplied the showmanship. The importance of the engineer in the field of motion picture development has never been fully appreciated. Few persons know how much we owe you men’.¹¹ This deference was not always so patent. Generally, the pattern was for the studio to intimidate the visitor. Despite his sought-after expertise, which gave him a position of authority, dad was a patient man who was nothing if not adaptable. He soon learned to time his studio appointments according to the whims of the movie executives, rather than the clock.

In 1928 my father’s period as Chief Engineer with the Vitaphone Corporation came to an end. Western Electric had now formed a subsidiary company, Electrical Research Products Inc. (ERPI), ‘to handle the record and talkie end of the business’. He thus joined the new organization and was kept busy ‘travelling back and forth between New York and Los Angeles helping the movie people design their sound stages and training their crews to work with sound, and so on’.

When Douglas Shearer¹² from the newly formed MGM sound department was sent to New York to be ‘instructed’ by my father they would go into Central Park, near ERPI headquarters, to ‘lie on the grass and discuss sound technique’. Even in a big city dad cherished being outdoors. When in Hollywood, he took every chance he could to go up to the Hollywood hills for the nature walks that he loved. On one occasion he drove south with his friend, Bryan Foy,¹³ one of Warner Bros. directors, to revisit Lakeview, near San Diego. There he renewed acquaintance with some former school friends, to whom he had bid farewell some 25 years before.

Europe and Retirement



Stan Watkins’ plaque in the Recordia at Norwood

Now my father was once again saying goodbye to good friends, some of the engineers who had helped give birth to the talking picture industry. He referred to them as ‘the gallant little band’ and ‘a wonderful group’. Most of them returned with him to the Bell System and dad ‘deployed them in New York and Holly-

⁹ Joseph Edgar Allen John (Eddie) Mannix (1891–1963). American film studio executive/producer

¹⁰ Louis Burt Mayer (born Lazar Meir) (1884–1957). Russian-born American film producer and co-founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios (MGM), 1924

¹¹ Frederic Milton Thrasher. *Okay for Sound: How the Screen Found its Voice*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946: 229.

¹² Douglas G. Shearer (1899–1971) Canadian American sound designer and recording director

¹³ Bryan Foy (1896–1977) American film producer and director, head of the ‘B’ picture unit at Warner Bros. (“the keeper of the B’s”)

wood according to the changing requirements of the jobs'. Some, including his fellow Englishman George Groves, who became Al Jolson's sound man, went on to hold key positions in the movie industry.

As Hollywood embraced talkies, the task of wiring cinemas around the country for sound and installing Western Electric equipment went on apace. In fact, dad brought Western Electric equipment to Europe and set up the sound systems in studios here. A dedicated Bell Labs man, dad was proud of the fact that some of the original equipment 'turned out at breakneck speed in 1928' was still being used in studios some 40 years later.

My father retired in 1948 and returned to England, at first staying at his mother-in-law's home in Birchington in Kent. In retirement he had had time to indulge in his hobbies. He was an avid collector of Lepidoptera, pipes of all kinds, and of English folk songs, which he sang when asked, accompanying himself on his ukulele. In 1954 he moved to Burbage Road in Dulwich, where he remained until his death on 2 February 1975, aged 86. After cremation at Norwood, his ashes were scattered in the old Rose Garden.

A little band / Of engineers
A piece of wax / Some silent gears
A little sound work / A little ground work
For making ERPI
A Flatbush barn / Some strips of felt
And the acoustics / Oh, how they smelt
The things we made work / To do the spade work
For making ERPI
Pigeons in every corner / Rumble of subway trains
Prayers by the Brothers Warner / Stop shooting if it rains
And then the whole world / Was hearing *Mammy*
And other things that / Were just as hammy
That's, I'm afraid / The price we paid
For making ERPI

Stan Watkins, 40 years on, was in England writing his memoirs of the hectic, heroic, wonderfully exciting time when the dream of talking pictures became a reality. In 1966, unable to attend an ERPI engineer reunion in New York, he sent a recorded message (what else?). It included this song that he wrote during those heady days, sung to the tune of Eddie Cantor's popular hit, *Making Whoopie*. My father said of those times 'That pretty well tells the story'.



Book Review: London's Necropolis

Bob Flanagan

Clarke, John M. London's Necropolis: A Guide to Brookwood Cemetery. Edition 2. Catrine: Stenlake, 2018. Hardback, 344 pp, 130+ monochrome illustrations. £40. ISBN-13: 9781840337334

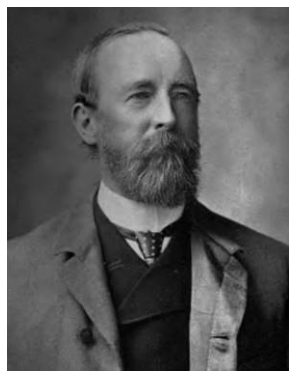
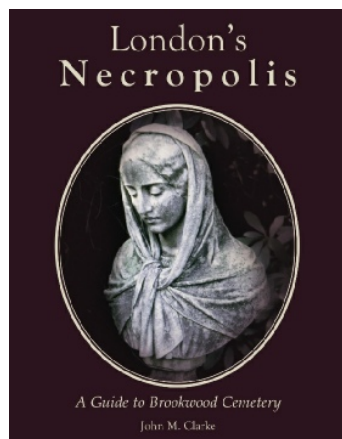
This book is the definitive guide to Brookwood, the largest burial ground in the world when opened by the London Necropolis & National Mausoleum Company in 1854. Designed with avenues of sequoia and its own internal railway connected to the London and South Western Railway line to Southampton, funeral trains ran regularly from the Company's own station near Waterloo to stations within the cemetery until the 1940s. Now owned and managed by Woking Borough Council, the cemetery contains nearly 235,000 burials. In 1917 an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside for men and

women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War, and is now but one of several military cemeteries at Brookwood.

It is no exaggeration to say that our knowledge of Brookwood owes much to the efforts of FoWNC Deputy-chair John Clarke, who has researched and championed it ceaselessly for over 40 years. His book on the Necropolis Railway first published in 1983, for example, is now in its 4th edition, and I can add little to the praise heaped on the first edition of the volume now under review.

The contrast with Norwood is best summarized by the observation that private burials (burials in private graves) did not reach 10 % of total burials at Brookwood until the early 1900s, and ‘pauper’ burials (burials paid for from public funds) remained at 75 % of annual burials until this time. There are some Norwood connections, however. Although John has found no evidence to support the widely-held view that William Tite was responsible for the landscaping and planting of the cemetery, Tite in consultation with Sir William Cubitt (grave 7,740, square 36), the Company’s engineer, did design the original private Necropolis Station at York Street adjacent to Waterloo that opened in 1854.

As to individuals, the novelist Dennis Yates Wheatley (1897–1977) was cremated at Tooting, but for some reason his ashes were interred at Brookwood in the Glades of Remembrance. He is however commemorated on the Baker/Yates family monument at Norwood (grave 26,071, square 50). The ashes of Maria Stillman (1844–1927), daughter of Michael Spartali (1818/9–1914), owner of the Spartali mausoleum in the Greek enclosure at Norwood (grave 7,655, square 28), and her husband William James Stillman (1828–1901) are likewise interred at Brookwood (Plot 25). Maria was a noted beauty and a member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle.



Allan Octavian Hume CB

One Brookwood burial that has always puzzled me is that of Allan Octavian Hume (1829–1912; plot 36). Hume settled in Upper Norwood after leaving India in 1894, where he had worked as an administrator. He was awarded the CB for services during the Indian Mutiny (1860). When he had retired in 1882 he helped found the Indian National Congress that was held in Bombay in 1885 and became its first general secretary. He was an expert on the birds of India and donated his collection of bird skins and eggs to the British Museum of Natural History in 1885. He also helped found and endowed the South London Botanical Institute on Norwood Road in 1910. Why then with his Norwood connections was he buried in deepest Surrey and not at Norwood?



Recent FOWNC Events

Jill Dudman

The late Eric EF Smith FSA, long time Secretary of the Clapham Antiquarian Society, researched many Clapham notables who found their last resting place at Norwood. FoWNC Chairman Bob Flanagan has extended this work and has identified more than 60 such people, discussion of which provided the basis for his talk on 20 October.

Space permits mention of just a few. Baptist minister Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) (grave 24,395, square 38) was the most popular preacher of his day. He lived for many years in Nightingale Lane, Clapham. Builder and architect Thomas Cubitt (1788–1855) (grave 649, square 48) was a pioneer in organising all stages of house building under one contractor. He built much of Pimlico, and lived in his Clapham Park estate.



*John Doulton's
gravestone*

Civil engineer Sir William Cubitt (1785–1861) (grave 7,740, square 36) constructed many canals, docks and railways, and was responsible for the erection of the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park. He lived at Clapham Common. Palaeontologist Dr Gideon Algernon Mantell (1790–1852) (grave 273, square 100) started his career as a medical practitioner in Lewes. An enthusiastic fossil collector, he found pieces of one of the earliest known dinosaur fossils in a quarry, and named it *Iguanodon*. Selling his collection to the British Museum, he moved to Crescent Lodge, Clapham. Potter John Doulton (1793–1873) (grave 1,808, square 40) joined the Vauxhall Walk pottery in Lambeth, along with John Watts, laying the foundations of the firm later to bear his name. He lived at Clapham Common. Ballerina Katherina Josefa Lanner (stage name Katti Lanner) (1829–1908) (grave 21,835, square 40) was the daughter of Austrian composer Joseph Lanner. She became ballet mistress at the Empire Theatre, and lived at Clapham Common. General Sir William Francis Patrick Napier (1785–1860) (grave 6,853, square 22) fought in many campaigns and suffered many wounds. In retirement he wrote *History of the Peninsular War* and a biography of his elder brother General Sir Charles Napier. He lived in Clapham Park.

FoWNC member Jean Azzopardi has kept bees in the cemetery for several years past. On 17 November Karin Courtman, former Chair of the London Beekeepers' Association (LBKA) and a beekeeping tutor, gave a fascinating talk on a year in the life of a beekeeper. Jean was one of Karin's students, so Karin continues to take an interest in the cemetery. Starting from the autumn, she explained that bees do not fly around when the temperature drops below 50 °F, but cluster in their hives to stay warm. Hives must be well wrapped to protect against cold, damp, and mice. Checking for any *Varroa* mite infestation is also needed, with treatment with oxalic acid if necessary.

When activity resumes in the spring, numbers will start to increase from eggs laid by the queen, and eventually may reach a point that swarms develop and leave the hives. These must be controlled and the bees transferred to new hives, no easy task. We learned much about how bees pick up the pollen from plants, and how they construct their honeycombs, and how the different plants they visit affects the nature of the honey made. Karin brought with her a dozen jars of honey from the cemetery hives, and these have sold fast!

Anyone interested further should visit the LBKA website and read their highly informative newsletters at <http://www.lbka.org.uk/newsletters.html>.



Forthcoming Events

January – April 2019

Introductory tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (6 January, 3 February, 3 March at 11:00; 7 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. The April tour coincides with the return after its winter break of West Norwood Feast (street markets and other town centre events, see <http://westnorwoodfeast.com/>).

To be notified of additional events please register an email address on our website (www.fownc.org/news/). To join the team of volunteers carrying out conservation work in the cemetery, please contact Beth Cross (BCross@lambeth.gov.uk).

The 6 January tour may be linked with a film at the new Picturehouse cinema adjacent to the cemetery: Alfred Hitchcock's *Young and Innocent* (1937) starring Derrick de Marney (1906–1978: grave 41,974, square 56), with an introduction and post film talk/discussion from film lecturer Graham Rinaldi, starting at 14:00.

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

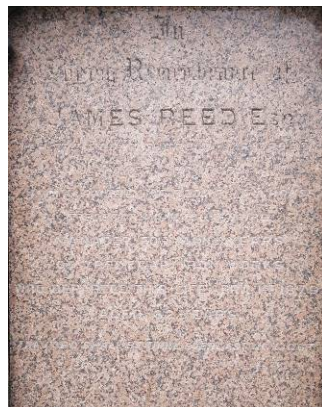
Saturday 16 February – Iron Men: Henry Maudslay and his Circle – David Waller

In the early 1800s, Henry Maudslay opened a factory in Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth. He invented precision engineering, which made the industrial revolution possible. His partner Joshua Field (grave 3,804, square 27), his son Joseph (grave 4,361, square 77), and his grandson Thomas Henry (grave 20,047, square 92; monument destroyed) lie at Norwood. David Waller is an author, business consultant, and former FT journalist.

Saturday 16 March – Gideon Algernon Mantell in Brighton 1833–38 – John Cooper

In 1833, Gideon Mantell, famous for his discoveries of the large fossil reptiles later called dinosaurs, moved from his Lewes, Sussex base to a new home in Brighton. With his eyes set on a glittering future for both his medical and his palaeontological career, Mantell suffered a downturn in fortune, culminating in the end of his marriage, the closure of his Museum, and the sale of his prized collections. Where did it all go wrong?

A Bit of Mystery – Bob Flanagan



The large red granite obelisk that marks the grave of James Reed (c. 1817–1879) and family (graves 17,479 & 18,081, square 122) had lain in pieces for many years until reinstated in 1999. The inscription records that Reed, of *The Mount*, Thurlow Park Road, Lower Norwood, and formerly of *Bedwellty House*, Tredegar, had been Master of the *Tredegar Iron Works* for many years. *Bedwellty House* is a Grade II listed house in Tredegar, South Wales. It was built in the early 19th century on the site of an earlier building and subsequently enlarged into its present form by mid-century. The then owners, the Morgan family, allocated the house to the manager of the works for many years, but donated the house and grounds to the public at the beginning of the 20th century. They were restored a century later and are now open to the public. Has anyone any further information about the Reed family?

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